CONSTRUCTION OF PAITE IDENTITY

For a community to exist, the group must have self-identification that differentiates it from other communities. In the first chapter it has been pointed out that community consciousness presupposes prior existence of 'self-identification' based on commonalities such as language, customs, culture, etc. which enable an ethnic group or community to view itself as a homogenous cultural entity. However, in the making of an ethnic community normally it is the socially relevant features, not cultural differences that are 'actually there', which are crucial. Select cultural commonalities are used to create and maintain socio-cultural boundaries of the group.¹ Many eminent scholars have recognized the crucial role of language and literature in the formation of ethnic political consciousness. As language is intrinsic to the expression of culture, any discussion on identity has to take into account the question of language in identity formation. As has been noted in chapter II, scholars like Benedict Anderson, Adrian Hastings, Paul R Brass and Mrinal Miri have identified language, especially print language as fundamental in the emergence of conscious political community. According to Anderson, the convergence of capitalism and print technology creates the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which sets the stage for the modern nation.² Adrian Hastings believes that translations of religious texts (such as Biblical texts) into a range of vernaculars

significantly altered and extended the existing identities, and even created new ones. However, the mere evidence of translation of religious text does not establish the enhanced status of a written vernacular. Its social effects depend upon the extent to which the written vernacular impinges upon popular usage and becomes something of a recognized standard, a medium that ordinary people can respond to. According to Mrinal Miri, "A community which has not developed a literature has not realized itself". Even Paul Brass has noted that the formation of community depends on factors like the growth of literacy, development of mass media especially newspapers, standardization of local language, existence of books in the local language, ability of leaders to communicate with the group members effectively, and finally the strategies pursued by the community leaders. In northeast India, manifestation of ethnic political consciousness and its subsequent collective articulation usually took place under the leadership of the most awakened sections of the society, the emerging elites. The emerging elites made use of materials and information provided by the past and highlighted one or more of its distinguishing features to differentiate themselves from others. By doing so, they nurtured the ideas of ‘they’ and ‘we’, which are essential to creation of a community. In the background of these general theoretical innovations, an attempt is made in this chapter to study the process of construction of Paite identity.

4 Ibid., p. 21.
Making of Paite Identity

It is still not clear at what point of time ‘Paite’ emerged as a community name. Some scholars and writers contend that their neighboring tribes gave the name Paite to them. Outsiders might have been responsible for identifying the people as a Paite, but they were not responsible for giving the people with a common identity and their language. Like all other communities of the northeast India, the Paite claim that they have customs, culture, language that is exclusively theirs, distinct from their neighbors. As already pointed out in the preceding chapters, the Lusei, Paite, Thadou, Hmar, etc, have many things in common and are very easily distinguishable from Nagas and Meitei. Despite the commonalities, each Zo community considers itself distinct from others. All of them zealously try to safeguard and promote their own language, literature and identities. As Paul R Brass stages of ethnic community formation suits the Paite as well, the analysis of Paite identity formation is based on the insights of Brass formulation.

Elites, Script Language and Paite Identity

According to Paul R Brass, creation of a self-conscious language community

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8 Refer Memorandum of the Paite National Council demanding recognition of Paite as a Scheduled Tribe of India, submitted to the Government of India on November 18, 1955. (Here after referred to as PNC Memorandum 1955). In a survey conducted by the author, several modern Paite elites pointed out customs, tradition, and language as distinct identity markers of the Paite.
out of a group of related speakers, or a community of believers of common religion or faith, or the formation of caste organization (read ethnic organization), constitutes the first stage in the emergence of conscious ethnic community. In the year 1903, a Welsh Calvinistic Foreign Missionary Rev. David E Jones and T Vialphung (1889-1936) prepared Paite Primer. The following year, i.e. in 1904, Grierson’s Linguistic Survey was published which referred to Paite language. In Tedim region in Chin state of Burma, Rev. J H Cope, a Christian missionary, who was also a linguist, prepared Chin Primers in Tedim (Paite) dialect in the year 1913. The New Testament of the Bible was published in Tedim in 1932. Dr. Crozier, a North East India General Mission (NEIGM) missionary, went with Pu H Chinlang NEIGM worker-cum-headmaster and some other Paite to Tedim and brought the Primer, songbook and the New Testament of the Bible to Manipur. Under Crozier’s guidance, the Bible and songbooks prepared by the missionaries in Tedim were used in the mission schools run by NEIGM in Churachandpur, Manipur. The arrival of one H Nengzachin on the scene during the last part of the 1930s had set a new trend in the development of Paite language in India. H Nengzachin was a close associate of the missionaries of the NEIGM. He passed class X from Shillong in the year 1934. With the assistance of H H Coleman, the General Secretary of the Home Council in Philadelphia, H Nengzachin went to America to study in a Theological Seminary in the year 1936. After his return in 1939, he devoted his life to the activities of NEIGM. Being one

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13 The Home Council in Philadelphia supported and funded NEIGM.
amongst the first educated Paite of India, he could easily influence his community members.

H Nengzachin was a strong defender of Paite identity. At the cost of incurring the displeasure of the missionaries in charge of NEIGM, he often attended meetings of the tribal leaders and stoutly defended the distinctive identity of the Paite tribe. In *He Leads Me (An Autograph Anecdote)*, H Nengzachin mentioned that he declined the British government’s offer to join the British army. In the words of H Nengzachin, “It (the offer) will be good for me; and it will greatly help me in eking out a living. However, I was convinced that this was not the will of God, who had guided me this far. Therefore, I choose to remain with my people, write books on theology, and especially translate the whole Bible”. It is important to mention here that H Nengzachin had a Remington typewriter, which he brought with him from America. He used his typewriter for translation of the Bible in Paite. H Nengzachin used to correspond with S T Haugo of Burma, as he believed in the unity of the Paite people living in India and Burma. In the year 1941, H Nengzachin wrote a hymnbook *Labupi*, which was later published by NEIGM. In 1944 Nengzachin started translation of the New Testament of the Bible with Psalms in Paite. It was written in his *He Leads Me (An Autograph Anecdote)* that he and his family fled from the NEIGM headquarters (mission compound) to Kaihlam village during the Second World War. It was during his stay in Kaihlam, he started translation of portion of the Bible in Paite. To use his words, “From this village (meaning Kaihlam), in the midst of my people, I started the work of the Lord God. When I look back, I began to wonder

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16 S T Haugo was one of the leading Paite-Tedim (Paitedim) / Zomi leaders of Burma.
17 All other mission workers also fled NEIGM headquarters, Mission Compound.
whether God had indeed brought about the Great War so that His work could start at the centre of the land of my people’.\(^{18}\) In the year 1945, H Nengzachin prepared Paite Primer *Sintung Bu*. Talking about it, he said, ‘To learn Paite, I wrote *Sintung Bu*.’\(^{19}\) Later H Nengzachin and H Chinlang, published another Hymnbook in the year 1950. H Nengzachin has thus laid the foundation for Paite literature on the Indian side.\(^{20}\) According to T Gougin, ‘the entire Zomi of Manipur had acclaimed H Nengzachin’s service as a missionary. H Nengzachin had awakened the Zomi and turned them towards the Gospel. He used his intelligence, caliber and energy for the upliftment of an illiterate masses’\(^{21}\) In addition to the works of H Nengzachin, some of the early books in Paite are *English-Paite-Manipuri Words Book* (1948) and *English-Hindustani-Paite Primer* (1950) written by T C Tiankham and T Gougin respectively. T C Tiankham was a contemporary of H Nengzachin. He graduated in the year 1944 and was the first graduate among the Paite-Zomi of India. He became a member of Manipur State Constitution Making Body 1947. T Gougin became trendsetter of Zomi politics in Manipur. His contributions will be discussed in the next chapter.

As different persons were involved in developing the script for the Paite, one could see differences in spelling and writing. Although songs, poems, folklores and folktales of the Paite are same, one can see differences in script. Differences in scripts can be compared to that of American English and British English. In this connection, the view of John Deng, former President of Paite Literature Society is worth noting. He writes, ‘In Tedim, Rev. J H Cope prepared Paite-Tedim primer using Roman alphabets, and in 1925 it was taught in school in Tedim sub-division up to class IV.

\(^{20}\) Tualchin Neihsial (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 145.  
Dr. Crozier and some local youth brought the Primer and Reader[^22] texts from Tedim to be used in mission schools run by NEIGM in Churachandpur, Manipur. After 1940, H Nengzachin prepared Sintung Bu. During that time, some people say to H Nengzachin whether they cannot use and depend / rely on those texts and books that they have in Tedim. As a result of this, there is (spelling) difference in writing which almost make us two different people (sic)"[^23]. To overcome these limitations, the Paite elites made efforts to develop uniform script. Notwithstanding such limitations in the script, the very development of a print language had a positive impact in arousing community consciousness. To put it in the words of Adrian Hastings, “the impact of a relatively small increase in the number of books in a community which has hitherto, had none or very few could be enormous"[^24]. Development of print media increases opportunities for people to communicate and share ideas with their community members and helps to mould community opinion. This in the process helps in construction of a sort of social boundary among the communicative people of the said community. Once a significant vernacular literature comes into existence with translation of the psalms, summaries of the gospels, it fulfills religious as well as secular needs of the people[^25]. It creates a more conscious community and builds up an enhanced sense of historical and cultural awareness. In the case of Paite also, the development of Paite script became an instruments for strengthening their consciousness as a political community.

[^22]: Reader is name of the textbook.
[^23]: When John Deng wrote this, he was the President of Paite Literature Society. See John Deng, ‘Paite Zoumite Laipau Thupi’, in S Ngulzadal (compiler), Paite Zoumite Laipau (Paite Zoumi Literature), Convention Press, Lamka, 1999, pp. 238-244. Also see Khup Za Go and Thangchinlam, ‘Laigelhzia Tawmkhat’, in S Ngulzadal (compiler), ibid., pp. 146-150.
[^24]: Adrian Hastings, op. cit., p. 23.
[^25]: Ibid.
Elites, Organizations and Paite Identity

The emergence of formal and informal ethnic organizations reinforces community solidarity through the pursuit of ethnic goals. Success of any social or political movement requires (political) organization, skilled leadership and resources. Ethnic organizations seek to protect community against external political competition and ensure unity of the people by managing internal rivalries and differences.\(^{26}\) The importance of community organizations grows as the communities become more conscious of their rights and identity. The community organizations articulate the interests of community both within and outside the social boundaries. Among the Paite people, one can see emergence of different Paite organizations having varied intentions in their endeavor.

Siamsinpawlpi (SSPP)

One of the first organizations formed by the emerging Paite elites was Siamsinpawlpi formerly known as Paite Students’ Association.\(^{27}\) It was formed on January 13, 1947. The founder members of the organization were H Nengzachin, T Thangkhai, H Tualvung, T C Tiankham, T Thangkhogin, Phungdal, Ngulthong and T Jamkhothang.\(^{28}\) The desire to involve student community in the affairs of the community prompted the community leaders to form the student’s organization. The other reason is to safeguard the identity of the Paite. The SSPP pledged to be non-

\(^{26}\) Paul Brass, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
\(^{27}\) The Bukpi Conference of 1953 changed Paite Students’ Association to Siamsinpawlpi (SSPP).
\(^{28}\) The designations of the founder members are Rev H Nengzachin: matriculate, went to America in 1936, NEIGM pastor; T Thangkhai: village chief and NEIGM worker; T C Tiankham: graduate and became first speaker of Manipur Assembly; T Thangkhogin: NEIGM worker and teacher; T Jam Khothang: passed VII, later graduated, went to America and became one of the important church leaders of the community; H Tualvung, Phungdal, Ngulthong.
political and its stated objectives are social, economic, and academic in nature. The aims and objectives of the SSPP, as spelt out in the preamble to the constitution of the organization are, “to educate ourselves in various fields of learning; develop our skills; encourage ourselves towards manual work; train ourselves in various constructive games and sports; faith in behavior, laborious, truthful and God fearing; work for the good of the society; commit ourselves to the nation; cooperate with other student’s welfare organization; strive forward unitedly...(sic)”. Some of the social agenda taken up by the SSPP include compulsory education for children and women, personal cleanliness and public hygiene in the villages. The SSPP holds annual conferences every year. The 1949 conference was held at Lamka. When the conference was over, the organization sent out volunteers to Paite villages. The volunteers conducted house-to-house campaign on issues related to public health and hygiene. Debates, sports, singing competition, quiz, and social meets were some of the early activities and programmes of the SSPP. Annual magazines were brought out by the SSPP with contributions from different scholars, writers and activists. Other noteworthy activities of the association include free coaching class for students appearing the board examination, giving ‘meritorious awards’ to students and persons who have made commendable achievements especially in the fields of academics and education, running of a residential school in Lamka with financial assistance from the Government of India.

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29 Siamsinpawlpi Constitution - Ki-ukna Dan, 2005 (eight amendment).
31 For more information on the activities of SSPP, refer SSPPnet.
Paite Tribe Council (PTC)

In 1949, Paite National Council (now called Paite Tribe Council) was founded at Tangnuam village, Lamka. The founder members of PNC were T Thangkhai, T C Tiankham, Rev Siamkung, Val Lalau, T Tualchin, L Nengzatun, Thangau, H Lianzamang, Thangzachin Tombing and some others. Initially, there were three opinions among the participants about the naming of the organization. The participants deliberated on what nomenclature they would adopt for their common identification. Choices before them were Chin, Guite or Paite. T Thangkhai, one of the participant wanted that they should call themselves Paite as the British officers had recognized them by that name.32 H Lianzamang of Bungmual village argued that they should adopt Guite, as Guite is believed to be their forefather, and moreover, the name (Guite) was recognized in Burma and Assam.33 But it was not acceptable to others since Guite is just one clan among the Paite. Thangzachin Tombing of Tangnuam village on the other hand voiced his support for Chin. According to Thangzachin Tombing, as they all came from Chin Hills it is reasonable for the community to call themselves Chins.34 The participants deliberated upon the matter for three days and the proposed names were put to vote. Finally, PNC was formed with T Thangkhai as the first President of the organization. In course of time, PNC emerged as the political platform of all Paite speaking people.35 H Kamkhenthang writes that the official adoption of the name Paite with the formation of PNC was necessitated by a heavy pressure to include the Paite people under either Kuki or

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
Lushai categories. According to Thuamson Hangzo, the intention of emerging Paite leaders in forming PNC for the common platform of the Paite was to safeguard the distinct culture, customs, traditions and identity of the Paite. V Dongzathang writes, the leaders thought that it was fit to adopt the nomenclature Paite for the common identification of the people and for the common language. He further noted that the formation of PNC was to keep up the pressure and pursue the national interest.

According to the Constitution of PNC adopted on June 27, 1949 at Tangnuam village 'Pai' means to go, 'Te' is a plural suffix-equivalent to 's' added after a noun in English. 'Paite' therefore, means those who go or went. They are called so because they moved away from their kith and kin in their original home, Chin Hills, now in Myanmar. The term Paite, in the view of the PNC, included all communities in the state of Manipur and Mizoram minus the Meitei and the Nagas of Manipur and Lusei in the Lushai Hills. The argument for this was that they all come from Burma especially from Chin Hills. It further defined Paite as those inhabiting all parts of Chin Hills in Burma, some parts of Manipur and some parts of Lushai Hills. This was the first known definition made by the indigenous Paite leaders. The definition reveals that the term Paite emerged as a result of their migration. Nevertheless, formation of PNC symbolizes the nature of political consciousness of Paite leaders and the intention to work for their community. This has been clearly seen from the

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objectives of PNC as provided under article 3 (1), (2), (3) of the original constitution viz.,

i) To resume or reorganize their Council as it was before the British rule;

ii) To introduce or establish government of the people, by the people, for the people; and

iii) To preserve and develop their culture, customs and usages and to achieve the betterment of their economic and political status.\(^{40}\)

Since its adoption in the year 1949, the constitution of PNC has been amended eleven times as on 2010. The PNC now has the following objectives,

i) To reunify the Zo people under one political administration;

ii) To introduce or establish government of the people, by the people, for the people;

iii) To achieve social, economic and cultural Development;

iv) To achieve the betterment of their political status for their land and the nation;

v) To preserve and develop their culture, customs and usages and language and literature.

vi) To strive unitedly with other cognate Zo communities for the development and security of the Zomi.\(^{41}\)

\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Refer, Paite Tribe Council Ki-ukna Dan (11-vei puahphatna), 2004, Paite Tribe Council, Lamka, Manipur, 2005 (reprint).
Young Paite Association (YPA)

YPA came into existence on March 3, 1953. It is a voluntary and non-political social organization. Explaining about its objectives, role and activities, the preamble of the constitution of YPA states as follows: "We, the Paite Young People, having solemnly resolved to adopt and impart to ourselves and to our people the spirit of altruism in line with and in implementation of Sacrosanctity of Christian values; rural development and reconstruction; relief and rehabilitation; and creative utilization of leisure hereby constituted ourselves...[sic]."\(^{42}\)

Paite Literature Society (PLS)

Paite Literature Society (PLS) is another important organization of the Paite people in Manipur. In fact, the history of PLS can be traced back to the pre-independence period. Paite Literature Fund founded on 1945 collected money from the Paite people for production of books. In the year 1953 Paite Literature Committee was formed which was later rechristened as PLS on May 10, 1954. The objectives of the PLS are “i) to adopt basically and as far as practicable Roman characters to write the Paite language and where necessary to adopt others characters and signs; ii) To cooperate with the government in production of Paite literature, and iii) to endeavor for the improvement of Paite literature”.\(^{43}\) With the establishment of PLS, the language of the Paite was institutionalized. Since its formation, PLS has been working for the promotion and development of Paite language. The PLS is a representative body with twenty-five executive members headed by a President. The Board of

\(^{42}\) *YPA Ki-ukna Daan Bupi (The Constitution of the Young Paite Association)*, Manipur, 2003 (amended).

\(^{43}\) *Paite Literature Society Limited Bye-law*, Lamka, Manipur, December 12, 1992, p. 3.
Directors of PLS consists of ten members viz. President of Paite Tribe Council, President of Young Paite Association, President of SSPP, representative from Evangelical Baptist Church, one editor of daily Paite newspaper, two editors of monthly Paite magazines, and four others from the executive members of PLS.\footnote{Based on the composition of PLS, Board of Directors for 2008-2011.}

The emergence of such organizations reflects the intentions and desires of Paite leaders to promote and strengthen the identity of the Paite. With the exception of PLS, the other organizations have their units in different localities and areas in Manipur as well as outside the political boundaries of Manipur where the Paite people inhabit. Each organization has its own organizational set up and objectives, nevertheless, they all work together on issues related to social, economic and political life of the community. These organizations become platforms through which Paite leaders / elites articulated and propagated the identity and interests of the Paite community. Besides the desire to uphold and safeguard the identity of their community, PNC leaders aspire to secure economic development and political status for the community. PNC leaders also envisaged Paite as an overarching identity and they imagined Paite as a ‘nation’ or at least, aspired to make it into one. Hence, they added the expression ‘National’ to their organization’s name. The use of the term ‘nation’ by the tribal communities of Manipur gives us the impression that they are either ignorant of the meaning and connotation of the word ‘nation’ as interpreted by political scientists.\footnote{Siamkhum Guite, ‘A Study of the Changing Faces of Paite Community’, Ph. D Thesis, Manipur University, 1989, p. 295.} Or, despite their awareness of the real meaning of the term, by using the expression, “nation”, they are showing their desire to project themselves as independent people.
Development in NEIGM: Birth of Church Denomination

After Christianity was introduced in Churachandpur in 1910, different Zo tribes (communities) began to worship together under the platform of NEIGM. Initially there were no separate church denominations based on dialect / community lines. This was possible, as they could understand each other’s tongue / dialect. NEIGM in its General Assembly held at Parbung village, Manipur in 1947 proposed to divide the NEIGM into five regional based presbyteries (Resolution 31 of General Assembly, 1947). The decision regarding this matter was later endorsed in the next General Assembly held at Lunghthulian in the year 1948. It appeared that the Paite speaking delegates opposed the proposal. The Paite leaders were afraid that they would not be able to manage alone as they had a very few workers and no money. Moreover, majority of the tribe were yet to be evangelized.\footnote{Luaizakham, *Nidanglai Hinkhua leh Tuni 1989*, Lamka Printing Press, Churachandpur, 1991, p. 125.} They appealed to Rev. Paul Rostad, the resident missionary of NEIGM, not to divide. However, when the proposal was put to vote, the Paite delegates, who were in minority, were sidelined.\footnote{Gouzakap Hatlang, 'Evangelical Convention Church', *Siamsinpawlpi Annual Magazine*, op. cit., pp. 352-355.}

Accordingly, NEIGM was sub-divided into five regional based presbyteries, namely Simsak Presbytery, Simkhang Presbytery, Hmarsak Presbytery, Hmarkhang Presbytery, Vangai Presbytery. The General Assembly also appointed Chairman and Secretary for each presbytery. The Assembly further resolved that the decision would be again ratified (final resolution be taken) in the year 1949.

The stated reason for division of NEIGM was administrative convenience. However, the Paite delegates felt that the real motive behind this division was the other tribes’ intentions to use funds for their respective tribes. One Paite Church
leader, T Jam Khothang, openly expressed this point. According to him, earlier as majority of the Paite tribe were yet to be evangelized, they used to get a large percentage of the NEIGM fund. Other tribes that resented this arrangement were behind the idea of dividing the mission. Although such arguments were quite appealing to the Paite, it appears that the decision was motivated more by practical consideration of running the mission. With the expansion of the mission activities, conducting services in their own tongue seem to be more convenient for the people. As the people started becoming conscious of their respective ethnic identities, the feelings of ‘they’ and ‘we’ began to grow among the NEIGM members. Lai Dena pointed out that as in-group consciousness became stronger, each and every community, how-so-ever, small it might be, began to think that one’s mother tongue was the best means by which one could worship, read and study the Bible. An examination of the people that constitute each presbytery makes it clear that the division was carried out, keeping in account the community background of the people. The Simsak Presbytery consisted of the Paite speaking people, Simkhang Presbytery the Vaiphei, Hmarsak Presbytery the Hmar and so on. The NEIGM missionaries seemed to endorse the step taken by the mission. When the matter was referred to H H Coleman, the General Secretary of the Home Council placed in Philadelphia, he readily affirmed that he would not bother about the expenditure, if worship in every tongue would contribute to the speedier growth of churches among different communities.

49 Lal Dena, Christian Missions and Colonialism, Vendrame Institute, Shillong, 1988, p. 65.
50 Ibid., p. 65.
The Paite delegates were the first to oppose the move to divide the NEIGM into different presbyteries and they were also the first to form their separate church organization. The perception of the Paite leaders was that as the NEIGM was subdivided, they would not participate in the 1949 NEIGM conference. Their position further hardened when the NEIGM leaders changed the venue for the 1949 General Assembly from Pherzawl to Saikot village. When the Paite leaders came to know about the change of venue by NEIGM leaders, they called an emergency meeting at Sialbu village in Thanlon sub-division from March 5-7, 1948. In the meeting, they decided not to participate in the Saikot conference. Instead, they decided to organize their conference at Kaihlam village in the year 1949. At Kaihlam conference, they constituted an Executive Committee (it was later called Standing Committee). Again, in 1950, they held their conference at Songtal village and decided to organize themselves as Manipur Christian Convention. To quote H Nengzachin, "our faction, so to say, led by U Nengthawn, Pu Vunghawn, Goukholian and Goihpum called a conference at Songtal in 1950 and there we decided to organize ourselves as the Manipur Christian Convention (MCC)". Today, MCC is known as Evangelical Baptist Convention (EBC) with its headquarters at Lamka, Manipur. Some other church organizations that operate among the Paite-Zomi apart from EBC are Chin Baptist Association, Presbyterian Church of India (Reformed), Zomi Baptist Church, Khris Saptuam.

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51 Initially, it was resolved by the NEIGM General Assembly that 1949 conference would be held at Pherzawl village. The reason for the change of venue was to enable the Rostads to attend the conference.
52 H Nengzachin, op. cit., p. 16.
Demand for Tribe Recognition

According to Paul R Brass, the second stage in the political formation of community involves articulation and acquisition of social, economic, and political rights for the members of the group or for the group as a whole. The community claims status and recognition, either as a superior group or as a group at least equal to other groups. The demand of the community may range from a relatively modest civil, educational, and political rights and opportunities for the individual members of the group to that of the recognition of the group’s corporate existence as a political body or nationality. The nature and degree of demands is dependent upon the perceived needs and demands of the group, its size and distribution, its relations with other groups, and the political context.\(^{53}\)

The Paite demanded their rightful place in the political system and claim official recognition of the community as a distinct scheduled tribe in India. To achieve that goal, they formed PNC as the official political platform for the Paite speaking people. The first and foremost task of PNC was to achieve constitutional recognition of the Paite as one of the scheduled tribes of India.\(^{54}\) It may be pointed out that in 1951 the President declared India’s scheduled tribe list as authorized by the Constitution. The President order categorized the tribes of Manipur as any Naga tribes, any Kuki tribes, and any Lushai tribes. The same year in 1951 India conducted her first General Elections (Parliamentary Elections). The PNC nominated T Thangkhai, a village chief cum church leader to contest the elections as Paite from

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\(^{53}\) Paul R Brass, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Outer-Manipur constituency, which was reserved for the scheduled hill tribes of the state. However, his candidature was rejected by M N Phukan, a Returning Officer on the ground that the tribe to which he claimed he belonged to was not in the scheduled list of tribes recognized by the Government of India. Hence, to avoid disqualification, the candidate was advised to declare himself as a Kuki or Lushai or Naga. But the candidate declared that a Paite was neither a Kuki nor a Naga nor a Lushai but a distinct tribe. Thence, his candidature was rejected. The Paite leaders felt offended and disappointed at this development. They viewed rejection of their candidate as denial of Indian citizenship to the Paite community. This incident made all the Paite to unite and work for the interest of the Paite.

To achieve political recognition of Paite as a distinct tribe of India, Paite leaders and PNC initiated peaceful and democratic means. In the year 1951 when Manipur Industrial and Cultural Exhibition was held at Lamka, PNC not only helped the government in organizing the programme, but also displayed Paite dances and songs on this occasion. PNC also helped the government in maintaining law and order by assisting them in collecting unlicensed arms. Impressed by the support and cooperation of the Paite, H Singh, Chief Commissioner of Manipur wrote to PNC, "The Paite National Council of Churachandpur gave an excellent display of Paite dances and songs in Manipur Industrial and Cultural exhibition of 1951 and also exhibited a few interesting articles of local manufacture such as handloom products, baskets, weapons, etc. I warmly congratulate Tualchin and Thangkhai for the successful organization of these activities and wish the Paite every prosperity. The Paite tribe has been most loyal and helpful to the Government and I have no doubt,

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55 See PNC Memorandum 1955, op. cit.
they can always be relied upon". In the year 1953 Kaka Kalelkar (MP), Chairman of the Backward Classes and Tribes Commission of the Government of India, visited Imphal. In the public meeting held at Adim Jati Shiksha Ashram in Imphal on November 22, 1953 where Kaka Kalelkar was also present, Paite students in Imphal displayed Paite dances and songs. Kaka Kalelkar remarked, “I am very glad to see the dances of the students of the Paite community this morning at Adim Jati Shiksha Ashram, Imphal. The dances showed both grace and vigor. I congratulate the Paite community”. Recalling the event after four decades, Rev. T Jam Khothang, one of the participants in the dance wrote in 2007, “My memory goes back to my college days in the 1950s when we demanded recognition of our tribe in India. I wrote a letter to the editor of one of the national newspapers against the nefarious practice of imposing designations to any communities, which the community itself never accepted. I also took part in performing Zangtalam dance at Imphal. The Zomi students at Imphal at that time were very few in number, we did not have enough girls to perform the dances. So, we dressed up the fairer skinned and more presentable boys as girls. We did well and indeed drew an ovation from the viewers. I love my make-up whiskers even now! Why such a show? We wanted tribe recognition. Though our consciousness (identity) was sharp, it was the beginning”.

To keep up pressure on the government, PNC presented a memorandum to the Government of India in the year 1955. Pu Van Lalau of Pearsonmun village, Lamka was the President of PNC at that time. The memorandum demanded recognition of Paite as a distinct community (tribe) of India. The memorandum stated that Paite have

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57 Cited in PNC Memorandum 1955, op. cit.
58 Cited in Ibid.
59 Zangtalam is one traditional dance of Paite-Zomi.
their own customs, language and literature, and identity different from the Kuki, Lushai, the Meitei and the Nagas. The PNC's memorandum asserted that "the Paite cannot be dubbed as Kukis, Nagas or Lushai; the Paite is a distinct community". The memorandum sought promotion of Paite culture, customs, and language and demanded all benefits and safeguards be guaranteed to the tribes under the Indian Constitution. It further pleaded to the government to rectify its earlier policy of not permitting the Paite to contest elections as Paite. The concluding paragraph of the memorandum read, "...Hence, our request and demand is a kind reply of recognition of the Paite as a distinct tribe in time for the next general election of India, otherwise, the Paite will take it for granted that they are not wanted to be an integral part of India, and, therefore, can join any other government which will give them due recognition, and they cannot be blamed for that if the order, dated 8-12-1951 of the Returning Officer, Outer-Manipur Parliamentary Constituency is to prevail (sic)". It may be noted that at that time, the Paite were the only community in Manipur that had submitted a memorandum to the Government of India demanding political recognition. Ultimately, in the year 1956 as a result of their continued pressure tactics, the Paite was recognized as distinct scheduled tribe of India.

Codification of Paite Customary Laws

The Paite leaders made an effort to codify all customary laws and practices of the community. As the book Paite Pupa Ngeina Dante, 1986 (The Paite Customary

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61 PNC Memorandum 1955, op. cit.
62 Ibid.
Laws, 1986)\textsuperscript{63} published by PNC stated that the codification became necessary for the following reasons:

i) "Traditionally well-versed elders on whom we depend for legal advice are dying out and the society has now been dominated by a new young generation, which is ignorant of the customary laws and practices. A person can be a carefree and unconcerned for the customary laws and practices so long as he/she is buoyant without any problem. But it is inevitable to resort to customary laws and practices whenever one is in a crisis as fallen leaves resort to the base of the tree.

ii) The government also recognized the importance of tribal customary laws for the administration of justice amongst the tribesman themselves. As such, the Gauhati High Court has been studying and researching the various customary laws of the tribes of North East India under the sponsorship of North Eastern Council. Preliminary studies on the Paite community had been done for reference of the High Court by the High Court itself.

iii) The Indian Penal Code is not always applicable to the tribals who have distinct and diversified customary laws of their own. It has now been recognised that cases dealing with the tribals can be settled easier by application of tribal customary laws (sic)".\textsuperscript{64}

PNC at its 1985 Annual General Assembly held at Sinjawl village set up a two-man commission comprising G Thangchinlian and T Jamkhanthang to compile and codify the usages and practices of the Paite customary laws. The Commission


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p. Forward.
consulted twelve persons who are conversant with the customary practices of the Paite. In the year 1986, three Block level conferences of PNC were held at Moleikot village. In this conference, the Commission submitted its first draft of the customary laws before the delegates for review. It was later referred to the joint meeting of the Young Paite Association, Siamsinpawlp, Paite Literature Society, and church leaders. The draft was finally accepted and published in the year 1986. Prior to 1986, the customary practices of the Paite were unwritten and there were variations in interpretations of the laws across time and place. The codification of Paite customary laws made it possible for application of common and uniform laws in dealings with cases, which concern the Paite. As laid down in the book, the provisions of the code may be applied to any person belonging to Paite tribe. It can be invoked through the Indongta, the village authority, Paite Tribe Council Court and any court of law set up by the government. In the year 2007, the Paite Tribe Council Court took up seventeen cases based on the customary laws of the Paite. Out of the seventeen cases, the court could settled fourteen cases. The codification of customary laws and practices and its acceptance by the community as a whole furthered the process of strengthening the Paite identity.

Elites and Language Politics of the Paite

Language and literature has been one of the focuses of a cultural movement among the Paite. In fact, development of Paite language and literature has positive impact on the growth and development of Paite identity. A number of Paite writers have noted the importance of language and literature for strengthening the identity

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base of the community. One native writer Khamkhokam Guite writes in his article ‘Literature: Mihing Khutsuak Thil Hoih leh Etلوم (A Layman’s Rumbling),’\(^6\) that literature is the index and mirror of community and is crucial for the survival of a community. A community with rich literature has the advantage of asserting their views and ideology over others. Therefore, one should not think of his / her present generation, but should think for the survival of the generation to come and work for the preservation of his / her language and literature.\(^6\) In another instance, Khamkhokam Guite says that it is necessary that every one (read every Paite-Zomi) should contribute in every possible way for the development and promotion of Paite language and literature.\(^6\) Language and literature is not a living organism, but the people who speak the language can promote it. The more a community develops, the more it has to adapt to the times. Using borrowed words from other communities does not tantamount to changing one’s language and literature. Instead, it enriches the language and literature of the community. It is a well-known fact that English literature has become the richest literature in the world due to its adaptability and its open use of many borrowed words and vocabularies from other languages. Another Paite writer Tualchin Neihsial writes that language and literature are the markers of a community and a communicative group with no literature can never be considered as a developed community. Therefore, it is important to develop, promote, propagate and preserve ‘our’ (read Paite) language and literature.\(^6\) For development and growth of


\(^6\) Ibid.

Paite language and literature, Tualchin Neihsial made three suggestions. They are i) organizing seminars, symposiums, workshops at regular intervals, ii) undertaking public campaigns on the importance of literature, iii) encouraging the people to buy books and value all literary works, and iv) providing incentives and recognition to Paite writers in the form of awards.  

The Paite, like many other communities, seeks to use its language and literature to promote its ethnic identity. Apart from making efforts to develop common scripts for all Paite-Zomi speakers of India and Burma, the Paite elites led a movement for introduction of Paite as vernacular subject in schools in Manipur. Different Paite organizations presented a number of memorandums to the Government of Manipur. Initially, Paite vernacular was introduced in 1975 from class I to class V in Manipur. Since the academic year 2004-2005, Paite vernacular paper under Major India Language (MIL) has been introduced as a subject at college level also. This achievement has been considered by many Paite as one remarkable event in the history of Paite. The community has regarded inauguration of local radio station of Lamka (Churachandpur) with Paite as link language by O Ibobi Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur on April 13, 2010 as another significant achievement. Official recognition to a language gives status to the language, and enhances its social standing. This not only provides ample scope for its further development, but also safeguards the language and the people who speak that language.

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70 For more views, opinion, and discussion on Paite-Zomi language, literature and related articles, refer http://www.zogam.com/ and http://www.zogamonline.com/
71 Paite vernacular for Classed 1-V was introduced in the year 1975 (vid Government letter No. 18/6/73-SE (Pt), dated 15-10-74 and 27-7-1975).
72 In a survey conducted by the author, quite a number of Paite elites mentioned introduction of Paite vernacular paper as one remarkable event in the history of Paite-Zomi.
Many contemporary Paite writers have come out strongly advocating 'common literature' for all Paite-Zomi community. In his article ‘Paite Nam Lailam Politics’, John K Ngaihte, present President of PLS says that ‘common literature’ is an easy thing to achieve, it does not go against anybody’s laws, it needs no boundary, no government on earth can oppose it, and the day when the people agreed to say yes and adopt, one can say is the day we achieve uniformity of writing Paite. Tualchin Neihsial in his article, ‘Common Writing System Mainawtna’, writes, “Whether we live in north and south, in Lamka and in Tedim county, all our poetic expressions are same. Even the root of our language is same; there are some differences in word formation. We cannot say that one is correct while the other one is wrong”. Rev. T Jam Khothang, one prominent Paite Church leader thinks that language and literature can be developed further. While preserving the existing terms and words, new words and vocabularies need to be explored to make the language rich and adequate to the needs of the time they live in. Language keep on growing and the language speakers know what is best and acceptable to them. In the year 1982, a joint meeting of different Paite organizations was organized by the PNC at Lamka on the theme “If the people do not follow their language they will become slaves?” The meeting adopted certain resolutions. The meeting recognized the need for using common alphabets, if Paite speakers of India and the Zo people of Chin Hills of Burma were to have uniform writing. The participants unanimously agreed that all Paite should use uniform script. For this, the meeting entrusted PLS to prepare guidebook on ‘Correct System of Writing Paite Language’ (resolution 1). The meeting also entrusted the PLS

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to work out on issues of common script with the Zo people of Chin Hills of Burma. Resolution 4 of the meeting states that in order to have uniformity in Paite script and to promote development of the language, it is agreed that any person who wants to write a book in Paite should first get the approval of PLS. A joint meeting of Paite organizations was also held at YPA hall, Lamka on October 15, 1983. T Phungzathang, the then president of PNC chaired the meeting. Rev. T Jam Khothang one of the participants in the meetings said, “We are the best authority to develop good, correct and appropriate language and literature for ourself. In order to have common script with Tedim people of Burma, we should have ‘common goal’, discuss among ourselves, and come out with systematic script. Any means that will integrate our literature is good”. The meeting resolved that in order to have ‘common alphabets’ at the earliest possible time among the Paite (Zokam) speakers of Manipur and Mizoram and the Zo people of Burma, the meeting resolved to send representatives to the proposed joint seminar between PLS and the Zomi Christian Literature Society (ZCLS) of Burma. The proposed seminar was slated to be held in Moreh, Chandel district in 1984. The PLS was given the responsibility to select delegates to attend the meeting (resolution 1). The joint meeting also accepted in principle Paite (Tedim) Pau Gelh Dingdan, a guidebook for correct writing of Paite language written by H Kamkhenthang (resolution 2). The guidebook was changed to Zoulai Gelhdan (meaning writing system of Zo language) in the year 1992 with the aim to make it more inclusive in its application. The PLS and ZCLS joint seminar of 1984 came out with a resolution that came to be known as ‘Moreh Resolution’. One of the resolutions was that all Paite-Zomi writers should use twenty-six Roman

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77 S Ngulzadal (compiler), *ibid.*, pp. 35-37.
alphabet while writing Paite. They also agreed to promote the Primer for common use. As a result of this Moreh meeting, common school textbook for beginners was published. The title of the textbook was different but the contents of the book remained same. In Tedim, Myanmar, the book is known as Zo Lai Sim Bu Tan Langh and in India, it is Laisimna Bu.\textsuperscript{80}

In the year 1988 the PLS passed a resolution on issues related to the use of alphabet ‘c’ and ‘ch’.\textsuperscript{81} Under resolution 3 (III) of November 6, 1988 the Board of Directors of PLS agreed to give freedom to Paite writers to use either ‘c’ or ‘ch’ depending on their personal choices. Students opting Paite vernacular paper were at liberty to use either of the two letters and this was even spelt out in the introductory note in Paite vernacular textbook. The SSPP also organized a two-day workshop on ‘Harmonization of Paite Vernacular Language’ at YPA Hall at Lamka between October 21-22, 2004. From time to time seminars, writers’ conferences, and orientation courses for teachers were organized by PLS in collaboration with other organizations. The PLS has been issuing various guidelines and instructions to the native writers. Students of various schools in Manipur who have opted Paite subject were taught to write as per the guidelines laid down by the PLS. In a recently held meeting in November 2009, PLS took the decision to set up a Library and Research Centre. The meeting also decided to publish a quarterly journal. Sub-committees were constituted to follow up the decisions.\textsuperscript{82}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[80] John K Ngaihte, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 295.
\item[81] The use of alphabet ‘c’ and ‘ch’ becomes an issue as some writers prefer to use only ‘c’ while other prefer ‘ch’ as for instance in ‘Chin’ and ‘Cin’, ‘Ching’ and ‘Cing’, ‘ciah’ and ‘chiah’, etc.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Constructing Identity through Promotion of Vernacular Writings

Apart from the several initiatives taken by Paite leaders to promote Paite language and literature, the exposure of the community to typewriters, printing machine, computer and of late the internet further contributed to a gradual growth in vernacular writings, newspapers, magazines / periodicals. There are also books written and published by individual persons with their own resources, or with assistance from friends, NGOs and the government. A brief survey on development of print media and books among the Paite helps to understand the process of identity formation among the Paite.

Growth of Vernacular Writings: Religious Texts and Commentaries

The Christian missionaries played an important role in transformation of traditional oral culture of the Paite into modern print culture. In fact, most of the early vernacular works in Paite were religious texts, pamphlets and hymnbooks. In addition to hymnbooks and the Bible, different commentaries on the Bible were published. Apart from his rendition of the Bible in Paite, which was published by the Bible Society of India in 1950, Rev. H Nengzachin wrote more than ten Bible commentaries in Paite.\(^3\) Rev. Dr. G Khamkam, who began writing since the early part of the 1960s contributed more than twenty-five Bible commentaries in Paite.\(^4\) Other notable contribution of Rev. Dr. G Khamkam was his translation of Bible into Paite.\(^5\) The contribution of Rev. T Jam Khothang, the Executive Secretary of Evangelical Baptist

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\(^3\) To see the number of commentaries written by H Nengzachin, refer Tualchin Neihsial (compiler), Paite/Tedim Pau a Laibu Neihzah Saina, Paite Literature Society, Lamka, 1992, pp. 29-31.

\(^4\) For the number of commentaries written by G Khamkam, refer ibid., pp. 18-21.

\(^5\) G Khamkam translation of the Bible in Paite was released on December 7, 2008.
Convention (EBC) from 1975 to 1994 was also worth noting. He worked as the editor of Kristian Thukizakna for more than eighteen years. It is important to note that in the year 1966, EBC started a printing press. In 1975 during T Jam Khothang’s tenure as Executive Secretary, EBC constructed its headquarters building ‘Dorcas Hall’ at New Lamka, Churachandpur. In the year 1980, the church started a mission school known as Ebenezer Academy. In 1977, EBC started Grace Bible Institute, which became Grace Bible College in the year 1981 with Rev. Dr. G Khamkam as the first Principal.

Commenting on the role of the church, (L) T Thangthuam IPS wrote, “Dorcas Hall with its institution of learning at its vicinity becomes important place of learning and centre of missionary works. Because of God’s blessings, it can be regarded as ‘centre of civilization’ for our (meaning Paite) community”. Another remarkable contribution of Rev. T Jam Khothang was in the translation of Bible into Paite with assistance from Bible International (BI), USA. In this work, Rev. Kamkhanthang Mangte, Rev. N Phungzapao and others, assisted Rev. T Jam Khothang. Printed in Korea, the Bible was released in February 2005 at Lamka, Manipur.

Commenting on Rev. T Jam Khothang’s rendition of this Paite Bible, Grace Singh writes, “Everyone knew that Pu Jam had problems and responsibilities that could have weighed him down; instead he labored tirelessly to translate God’s word for his people”. P Hantz Bernard, Division Director, BI, writes, “For nearly half a century brother Jam Khothang had desired to see an accurate, legible translation of God’s word in his Paite language...he longed so much to hold a completed copy of the Paite Bible in his

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86 For details, refer, Lalremkung, Toupa Khuta Om Ka Hi... (A Tribute to Upa (L) T Thangthuam IPS), Imphal, 2008, pp. 110-136.
87 During this translation work, Jam Khothang was suffering from cancer.
hands that he reserved a suit in a box, waiting for that special day of dedication." M Vumhau called Rev. T Jam Khothang as a man of vision and compared him with an oasis in the desert for the Paite people. Other church leaders like Rev. Dr. Luai Chin Thang, Rev. L Kham Kholun, Rev. Dr. S Langzakham Ngaihte, Rev. Kamkhanthang Mangte, Rev. Khup Za Go, Rev. Paukhanmang Guite, etc. have also contributed to the vernacular religious literature of the community.

Development of Vernacular Print Media: Monthly Journals and Magazines

As written by H Kamkhenthang, John H Cope, an American missionary in Tedim sub-division, Chin State, Burma started the first Paite weekly journal *Tedim Thukizakna* in 1919. According to Tualchin Neihsial, in India the first Paite journal, *Voice of Churachandpur* was published in 1952. In the year 1963, the EBC started publishing *Kristian Thukizakna* the first monthly Paite Christian journal in Manipur. Today *Kristian Thukizakna* is the largest circulated vernacular Christian magazine published from the district. Other Paite monthly Christian journals published and distributed from Lamka (Churachandpur) are *Thutak aw, Gamdaai a Kikou Aw, Lungdamna Aw, Thuhilhna Dik.* *Ruth Messenger* an inter-denominational magazine is another faith-based periodical distributed from Lamka. All faith-based journals educate the general masses on the tenets of Christian principles. They also

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89 T Jam Khothang died in February 2004 and was not alive to see the dedication of Paite Bible that he initiated.
90 M Vumhau, *op. cit.*
91 The weekly journal was published in Madras and the distribution was made in Tedim area, Burma. H Kamkhenthang, *op. cit., in* Siamsin Thugousiah, *op. cit., pp. 18-22.
92 The editor of the journal was Khatchin Dousel. The journal is no longer published. Tualchin Neihsial, 1992, *op. cit., p. 70.*
93 *Thutak aw* is the mouthpiece of Presbyterian Church of India (Reformed), *Gamdaai a Kikou Aw* is distributed by Jehovah Yahweh, *Lungdamna Aw* is published by Chin Baptist Association. The Church of Church distributes *Thuhilhna Dik.*
94 *Ruth Messenger* is the only Paite monthly journal managed and distributed by women.
disseminate information about the activities and performance of the Church(es) to the general public.

There are also vernacular journals started by different Paite with the objective of enriching Paite language and literature viz., Tongluang, Zogam Tangkou (Tangkou), Zingdaitui, Suangmantam. In addition to them, there are periodicals brought out by Paite organizations from time to time. For instance, Lamka based student organization SSPP has been publishing annual magazine of the organization since 1960. The magazine saw its 44th volume when the SSPP celebrated Diamond Jubilee in 2008. The branches and / or Joint Headquarter of SSPP based at Delhi, Aizawl and Shillong also bring out their own magazines from time to time. Different native writers contribute articles on culture, politics, education, sports, etc. to these magazines and journals. Commemorative magazines published by different organizations and NGOs also help the communities in getting information on different places, personalities, peoples and associations that are crucial to Paite history and culture.

Development of Vernacular Newspapers

Coming to vernacular newspapers, the first Paite daily newspaper Lamka Bazar was published from Lamka with G Thangvung as the editor on August 13, 1989. Tongluang magazine was started by Eugene Chinzahao during the 1980s. Zogam Tangkou (Tangkou) was started by John K Ngaihte in the year 1990 and continues until June 1997. Other periodicals, which are no longer published are Tangsam, Zokhankhual, Limlangh.

In the year 1978, two daily newspapers *Thupuaktu* and *Thuzakna* were started from Lamka town. Another Paite newspaper *Manipur Express* has been in circulation since May 30, 1981 with L Chinkhanlian as the editor. Today, *Manipur Express* is the most widely circulated and read newspaper in the district. *The Lamka Post* with Thangzalian as the editor is another newspaper published and circulated from the district. Besides daily newspapers, quite a number of local weekly newspapers are also there. Local weekly newspapers are meant for a certain locality; as such, their area of distribution is limited. However, as some of them are posted on the net, people from other places also can have access to them.

**Growth of Vernacular Writings on Socio-political and Cultural Issues**

Over the years, several vernacular writings, which gives insights into the custom, traditions and culture of the Paite-Zomi were published. J Gin Za Tuang book *Pupa Ngeinate* written in 1951 describes the customary laws of the Paite (Tedim). It also contains information on the rules for village administration to be followed by the village chiefs. The PNC's Memorandum of 1960 on *Reunification of the Chin People*, spoke about the political aspirations of the people and the traditional customary practices respectively. Other books by different authors are *Singtang Mite Khangthu* by Vung D Tombing, the works of Piangzathang, *Guite Khangthu*,

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97 This newspaper is no longer published.
98 G Thangzalam was the editor of *Thupuaktu* and N K Thomte was the editor of *Thuzakna*. The two newspapers are no longer published.
99 Some of the local weekly newspapers are *Voice of New Lamka, Bungmual Weekly, Pearson Bell, Nipi-pak, Phualva (Ka Thaitong), Siamsin Bulletin, Zo-lawkta.*
100 Cited in T K Maana, op. cit., p. 37.
Hausate Tangthu, and Folks Songs of the Paite,\textsuperscript{103} H Kamkhenthang’s Paite Folktales,\textsuperscript{104} Nok Suan Lian’s Kam Hau Ngeina (The Customary Laws of Kam Hau),\textsuperscript{105} Paite Pupa Ngeina, 1986.\textsuperscript{106} T Liankhohau’s Paite Kalchar,\textsuperscript{107} G Zamzachin’s Paite Tanchin, and the work of Sinkhokam Pu-Pa Nun.\textsuperscript{108} All these works provide historical and anthropological accounts of Paite-Zomi.

In Guite Kual a Luutna\textsuperscript{109} Tualchin Neihsial narrates migration of various clans and communities of the contemporary Zo people of India to areas / regions that came to be known as Guite Kual. Guite Kual, which means ‘Guite circle / area’, indicates the region under the suzerainty of Guite dynasty / chieftainship. The area is presently located in Churachandpur district. In 1987, Tualchin Neihsial wrote Paite Ngeina Dan a Kimawlina leh Sabet Galbetdan\textsuperscript{110} wherein he presented a brief account of the traditional games and sports of the Paite. In Mangkang Gamkeekte Nuai a Zomite,\textsuperscript{111} Tualchin Neihsial narrates the encounters and status of the ‘Zo people’ under the imperialist British government. In 1986 D Khaizalian wrote Tangthupha Tunma leh Tunnung\textsuperscript{112} that provides the social, cultural and political practices in the Paite society prior to the coming of Christianity and the impact of Christianity and modern education on the traditional social practices and lifestyles. Mention may also be made of introduction of Paite vernacular papers in schools and colleges in

\textsuperscript{104} K Kamkhenthang, Paite Folktales (Paite and Meitei), Manipur State Kala Academy, Imphal, 1983.
\textsuperscript{105} Nok Suan Lian, Kam Hau Ngeina (The Customary Laws of Kam Hau), Lamka Printing Press, Lamka, 1984.
\textsuperscript{107} Sinkhokam, Pu-Pa Nun, Lamka, 2005.
\textsuperscript{108} G Thangchinlian and T Jamkhanthang, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{109} Tualchin Neihsial, Guite Kual a Luutna, Convention Press, Lamka, Manipur, 1986.
\textsuperscript{110} Tualchin Neihsial, Mangkang Gamkeekte Nuai a Zomite, Convention Press, Lamka, 1987.
\textsuperscript{112} D Khaizalian, Tangthupha Tunma leh Tunnung, Convention Press, Lamka, 1986.
Manipur. Paite vernacular school textbooks contain topics on Paite grammar, folktales and folksongs, poems and accounts of the Paite.

There are also some published books in the form of memoirs and bibliographies. For instance, the autobiographical work, *Leivui Panin* written by Rev. Khup Za Go gives an exhaustive account of the life history and work done by the author during his lifetime. It also contains various articles that the author has written and different places and meetings that he visited. From this book one can get to know the ideas and philosophy of the author. A tribute to Upa (L) T Thangthuam, IPS *Toupa Khuta Om Ka Hi...* published in 2008 by Mrs. Lalremkung, wife of the police officer contains articles, seminar papers, and songs written / composed by the police officer.

**Publication of Dictionaries and Other Informative Books**

J H Cope, American missionary wrote *Tual Lai Sintawnna* in 1910 and *Zolai Sin Bu* in 1922. These books gave instructions and rules for reading, writing and learning Paite. After two decades in 1945, *Sintung Bu* (a primer) was published by Nengzachin in India. In India, the first Paite dictionary appeared in 1948. Again, in 1950 T Gougin wrote *English-Hindustani-Paite Primer.* In the year 1961, the first enduring and systematic Paite dictionary *English-Paite Dictionary* was written by Chinzam Tawmbing. In appreciation of Chinzam Tawmbing’s *English-Paite Dictionary*...

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115 T C Tiankham, *op. cit.*
116 T Gougin, *op. cit.*

Another person worth noting is H Kamkhenthang. He wrote *English-Paite (Tedim) Chin Dictionary*¹¹⁸ in the year 1972. In the year 1990, he wrote a book *Lapau*,¹¹⁹ a sort of dictionary of Paite poetical words. Again, in 1993 H Kamkhenthang wrote *Paite Paunak*¹²⁰ a dictionary of Paite proverbs wherein various sayings and aphorisms of the Paite are explained. His book *Zoulai Gelhdan*,¹²¹ written in 1999 is remarkable as it provides guidelines for systematic writing of Zo language. Again, in the year 2000 he wrote Paite grammar and composition *Pau leh Lai Gelhdan*.¹²² *Paite Zoumite Laipau*,¹²³ a book compiled by S Ngulzadal contains minutes and proceedings of meetings of Paite organizations on issues related to literature. It also includes documents and papers presented in seminars by different Paite leaders. Persons like Vung D Tawmbing, K G Tungdim, Eugene Chinzahao, H Pau Za Cin, Dr Dallian, L T Ngaihte, Thangkhanlal Ngaihte, Kimbawi Pa, Pauzagin Tonsing, Haumuanlun Samte, Kam Khansiam Ngaihte, were some other prominent vernacular writers.

The writings on Paite vernacular have increased considerably both in the secular and non-secular domains. From the available vernacular literature, one comes to know the history, customs, traditions and culture, and history of the Paite.

¹²³ S Ngulzadal, (compiler), *op. cit.*
Vernacular texts also speak of the dominating contemporary thoughts and ideas of the elites. As such, the development and growth of Paite vernacular writings serves as a link between the past and the present. In recent years, internet and personal blogs have also facilitated wider dissemination of ideas, which were earlier confined only to the scholars.

**Conclusion**

Community life or community interests are not determined by individual / personal choices. Objective material conditions in which they live determine the nature and dynamics of the community. In addition, certain leaders / elites, who emerge from within, lead major social, political, cultural / identity movements of the people with the support of the community members. The chapter shows that Paite elites played active roles as agents in the construction of Paite identity. The modern Paite elites facilitated the transformation of the spoken dialect of the Paite into a print language and the progress of Paite literature. The formation of different Paite organizations, which reinforced the social boundary of the community, became possible because of the crucial role played by the most awakened section of the community. In the process of constructing Paite identity, objective cultural markers such as language and literature were used by the community / leaders to distinguish themselves from others. Initially, the emerging Paite elites developed script for the community and gradually standardized it. The Paite community / leaders have also succeeded in achieving political recognition of the community. They also played important role in promoting their language and literature through the introduction of the language in schools and colleges in Manipur. All these initiatives and endeavor by
the Paite elites have been helping in strengthening and consolidating the identity base of the community.

In spite of the attempt made by Paite leaders to construct ‘nation’ out of Paite identity, the community leaders realized that Paite alone cannot become a nation. Consequently, the community leaders renamed Paite National Council as Paite Tribe Council. How this complex process of consciousness and/or realization took place in the case of the Paite will be discussed in detail in the next chapter highlighting the Paite’s contribution to Zomi consciousness.