CHAPTER - III
MEITEI STATE FORMATION
With the survey of the theoretical formations on the different units, an attempt is made whether these models can be applied to the process of the formation of the Meitei State. No historical records are found to indicate Morgan's savagery status in the ancient Meitei society. That is why before the different ethnic groups entered the valley of Manipur, in a wider perspective, they might have enjoyed their savagery status in course of their migration to their homeland. When they entered into the present Manipur valley, they probably were the culture possessed people. Certain circumstances such as the successive wave of ethnic migration and the absorption and amalgamation of different smaller tribes of the Mongoloid and some Indo-Aryans in later period into present social formation led to the evolution of the Meitei civilization.

The emergence of Asiatic Meitei state is not a sudden phenomena but it arose out of the society's long historical development. Thus, the study of the Meitei state is to be examined from the bottom of the society. There were certain different segments in the pristine Meitei society, before the advent of clan and lineage based society. These segmentations can be divided into number of social groups
like individual, family and lineage. The institution of family came into existence out of the marriage of individuals, lineage or agei was formed by an assemblage of the number of related kinships gathered for social and religious purposes. The hierarchical social order of the Meitei society was transformed in order to respond to the primary material needs of the community.

The great epochs of human progress have been identified, more or less directly with the enlargement of the sources of subsistence. Each stage in the development of productive forces corresponds to a type of human relations linked to production and distribution. The development and replacement of the modes of production became the main instrumental factors for society's existence and replacement of one social system to another.¹

In the pristine period, the Meiteis used to live together under a single roof of a family. Institutional social actor particularly marriage ties was an offspring of patriarchal Meitei family. Absolutely definite and serious mutual obligations were the essential parts of the family. They were under the common control of the head of the family.
The assemblage of numerous families led to the evolution of the lineage groups or sagei groups. The size of society expanded over time, due to the increase of population through the absorption of migrants and natural process. However, the change of demographic dimension primarily fostered the existence of disorder among the descendant groups of the ancient Meitei society. These social crises were solved by informal ties which were strong enough only for a small society. But with an increase in the size of population, the social boundary also extended and the bonds became ineffective. Essentially, under these pressure society came to be divided into number of sageis or lineage groups.

Considerably all the members of the lineage groups were bound to defend their freedom. They were equal in privileges and in personal rights. The lineage chiefs did not claim superiority beyond their ascribed powers. The people of Meitei lineage society was a brotherhood bound together by the ties of kinship. The Meitei kinship relation of lineage based society was dynamic in character. Its relation was the key factor in the organization of social life of the Meitei society. It again developed the harmonization within the groups. The lineage was the unit of a social
system. Gangmumei Kabui mentions that Manipur valley in the historical time had a social system and lineage based political units which ultimately emerged as the principality. That is why, before the birth of the state lineage was the fundamental feature of social institution in the pristine Meitei society. There was mutual assistance among the individual members. Direct relation bound the lineage chief and his fellow kinsmen. In this society the roles of individual members were very effective.

Fried's description of the character non-rank or non-stratified or egalitarian society is closely relevant to the lineage based Meitei society. "In the egalitarian society the simplest and the most universal criteria of different status of the division of labour are age and sex. The individuals who possessed some characters such as strength, endurance, ability and other which made one a good provider in hunting and gathering which helped to meet the maintenance of subsistence. Characteristically, in the society, production is household matter. Within the local group or band the economy is also reciprocal but less obviously so. Neither the specialization of occupation nor the regular division of labour prevalent of that society. Probably no political power can reside in this status. Exchange in such society takes
place between individuals who belong to different small-scale kin-groups. It tends to be casual and is not bound by systems of monetary value based on scarcity.  

Inevitably, there was no surplus production in each generation of lineage Meitei society because of the lack of knowledge of techniques of production, a little knowledge in the art of agriculture and scarcity of cultivable areas, while the cattle-rearing, hunting and fishing were their main occupation. Different lineages were obliged to share the same pastures grounds or hunting lands. Therefore, solidarity was set up among them. Again it led to the development of a network of production relation between the lineage groups. Considerably, the kinship structure of different lineages of the Meitei society resulted in rationalizing the social relation of production which was the determined factor of social formation as well as social change in lineage based Meitei society.

On the other hand, nature directly influenced on production system of the pristine Meitei society. Nature reflected to their each and every experience. In a nutshell, their productive activities were restricted to natural gifts. They exploited these gifts and used these as their subsistence.
With the change of population dimension, their method of exploitation and equipment have an almost revolutionary improvement. From the collective experience of ancestral generations, they realised of course, how to take full opportunity of natural conditions.

The religion of lineage-based Meitei society was really not so critical, since it had close relationship with nature. The natural forces which can not be controlled by them and the natural objects, which were the main source of their imitation, directly influenced on their religious life. From the sociological point of view, it is believed that the Meiteis in such time were the believer of animism. Since they were animist, it was a great problem of ambivalent spirits which can be good or evil. They always thought that spirits caused harm to human beings, animals and vegetables. Again the natural phenomena around them reflected on their change of ideological dimension. Now, the people were forced to search the means of salvation or protection from these natural disturbances in order to preserve lives of human, animal and plant. Their ideological means is to please these harm-makers. Their aim at pleasing these natural destroyers brought to formulate the idea of presentation or offering was the main factor to develop the institution of ritual practice. The
lineage chief was considered as a religious head. The chief's highest enjoyment in each and every religious works provided a large room to establish his spiritual supremacy over the people.

The techno-physical changes (i.e., the technique of production and the increase of population) and the status change of the lineage chief effected the geographical and economic position of lineage society. These developments tended to shift from lineage society to clan society.

THE MEITEI CHIEFDOM

"A chieftdom was rather loosely defined as a centralised polity that organizes a regional population in the thousands. Some degree of inheritable social ranking and economic stratification was considered characteristic." On the way of the evolution of the Meitei state, the emergence of the chieftdom institution the immediate factor of state in a society is a universal process. The most important striking feature in the Meitei clan society is the clear-cut existence of chieftdom. There are certain favourable conditions caused to influence the evolution of the chieftdom. The conditions are 'expanding, the dependent population, structural precondition of hierarchy
or Patriarchical set up society and geographical position.  

(a) **Expanding the dependent population:**

The process of population control has carried on through conquest and alliances. R.Carnerio emphasises that warfare has been recognized as a common characteristic of chiefdoms. However, the way of the power control over the population should be treated differently according to the regional variation. In the context of the Meitei, it emerged out of the absorption and amalgamation of various ethnic groups.

There was gradual migration of different ethnic groups of South-East of Tibet and South-West of Yunnan plateau. The migration might have been caused by certain reasons like the need to search a new land where they found better means of livelihood and/or most have been forced to resort to the migration due to defeat in the hands of neighbouring tribes in the struggle for power or the war for possession of cattle and grazing grounds. These migrants moved towards the southern valleys and some of them entered into the present Manipur valley. These proto-Meitei tribes settled on the different parts of the valley and they were absorbed to the Meitei.
The historical evidences prove that number of tribes like the Lei-Hou, Ka-Hou and Heirong were absorbed to the Mangang tribe. Likewise many tribes were absorbed to Moirang, Angom, Luwang, Khuman etc. Besides this, amalgamation between the migrant and these tribes took place. Of course, these absorbed or amalgamated tribes gave up their full share to the over-lord of bigger tribe. Considerably, number of dependent population began to increase. Now, the head or piba (i.e. of the Mangang tribe) became the master of bigger population. His status came to change vertically under pressure. It is the beginning factor to loosen the direct relationship between the clan leader or chief and his kinsmen or territorial subjects. Society in such stage was frequently threatened by external powers. In order to protect their life and property, the person who possessed the qualities of leadership in decision making and successful military venture to maintain the confidence of this kinsmen or followers is essential to select as a leader or chief of them; but his success should be achieved through demonstrated ability rather than ascribed by kinship. Having consolidated his position, he extended his suzerainty over the depended population. The chief designated that his descendent was only the eligible successor to the throne. Thus, the chief's post became hereditary and the chiefdom became institutionalized.
(b) **Structural pre-condition:**

In early period, family was ruled by father. When the family was transformed to Sagi or lineage, the right and duty of father was passed to the Pipa or head of Sagi or lineage. The association of various lineages ruled by Pipa or head brought the existence of the clan governed by a Piparel (the chief of the chiefs).

It is reluctant to mention that there were two types of Pipa or head at that time. One is lineage Pipa; another is clan or Salai Pipa (Piparel). Former is ascribed by kinship and later is perhaps achieved through demonstrating his abilities. E.K. Service mentions that "the inheritance of status by primogeniture must be a nearly universal feature of chiefdom. Since the primogeniture became an established custom or rule, the chief got the stability power of leadership". Such ascribed status enjoyed constantly by Pipa or head from the family down to the clan brought to install an institution known as the chiefdom.

However, the evolution of clan marked the offing of superfamily and its chief was holding a leading position in Meitei society. Following the emergence of clan principality,
the little 'Ningthou' (King or Chief) was also formulated. More or less, definitely the structural precondition played a vital role to the rise of the institution of chiefdom.

(c) Ecological factor and Trade in the formation of the Chiefdom:

Figure I shows a valley surrounded by a chains of mountain with lakes and numerous smaller rapid streams and a rapid small rivers gradually slowing and meandering over a rich alluvial valley.

The smaller streams join to the main rivers. Except Nambul river which flows into the Loktak Lake, all join each other on the middle and lower part of the valley respectively. Then it runs further and finally, it flows into the Chindwin river in Burma.

Usually the current of the main rivers such as Nambul, Imphal, Iril, Thoubal, Khuga, etc. are very sweep in their upper stage. When these reach at peripheral area, the current of these rivers are slower where the rivers start to form small long river valley suited for habitation. The rivers' currents are, of course, meandering; when the rivers
reach at middle stage. The rivers start to build here up a good alluvial valley, where large numbers of people are attracted to settle. The rivers are navigable with small wooden trunk boat.

The valley can be studied separately, upper and lower, smaller long river bank valley or narrow peripheral belt. In the peripheral belt, human habitation is found scattered. There is no favourable chance to go beyond the foot hill fringe because of hazardous mountain chain. Therefore, they are automatically forced to move towards the middle valley. They are not so good for cultivation of rice due to the absence of good broad lands, and the swampy areas and lakes particularly lower and eastern parts. The main occupations of these peripheral society are fishing, hunting, pottery, food gathering etc. Since the habitation started, the relation between the peripheral societies of northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the valley and the core societies of the valley's good bottom land areas was set up.

The most important dynamic feature is the good bottom valley. It is usual that middle portion of the valley is highly fertile and wider. It attracted large number of people to inhabit here. Throughout the valley is linked by land, lake and river routes.
The important products are agricultural products like paddy and craft products like cloth. Besides these, some horticultural products and cattle products help to supplement societies' need. Of course, the core societies became the central place of exchange of goods and a reproduction centre. The core societies are not so dependent on the exchange as the peripheral societies did, having a better agricultural production and being equidistant from the localized peripheral areas.

The goods brought from peripheral societies and the products of core societies, would be exchanged in balanced reciprocity between the peripheral societies and core societies. Again exchange takes place among the core societies themselves also.

On the other hand, all the core societies like Moirang, Khuman, Luwang, Mangang etc. were particularly advantageous in position; because of the all around well position i.e. higher products, advantageous of transport and high density. The core societies could be communicated through lakes and river routes and land route. Having possessed centrally located land these societies not only received more exchanged goods than peripheral societies but also these
said core societies got more absorption of smaller ethnic migrant tribes. However, these core societies' structure came to undergo change.

In general such a society could hardly produce anything what was needed for their subsistence. The transformation of settled agriculture brought the question of property right on land owned by the Piba or clan leader at the cost of community. Considerably, the chief extended his sway not only over his kinsmen but also exercised his power over the agricultural land, grazing fields, hunting grounds and fishing areas. As an exchange of protection, he received presentation, loyalty honour etc. from his territorial subjects from time to time. Now, the Piba became the Pibarel of (Chief of Piba) different united tribes. The rise of his status caused the perpetuation of his position.

Since these societies became the centre of economic activities and the sheltering places of different smaller tribes, small lineage core societies came to transform into village chiefdom. This horizontal change of society caused to effect the lineage chief or Piba. The vertical rise of his status brought to strengthen his chiefly position. Thus, when chief of the Mangang tribe, who settled at the good
bottom land core society, absorbed and amalgamated by different peripheral or migrated tribes like Poirei, Heirong etc. The chief of the Mangang clan became the chief or Pi-barel of different Fibas. The Pi-barel's descendant was found to be the highest-rank descent line in the Mangang society.

Then, the eldest son became the compulsory successor of him and the law of primogeniture evolved. Of course, the chief's line was considered as the direct descendent of the god. More or less, when the Mangang clan was completed to form the full-fledged chieftain institution existed.

Houtart and Lemercinier define "the clan as the social space structural by a system of kinship, in effect constitutes the social entity of reference with which groups and individuals identify themselves. It is also at the level of the clan that the instance of individual or collective authority is situated. It controls the principal means of production, land settles important conflicts and directs the activities of lineage based groups. Finally it is the clan which constitutes the endogamous entity". Gangmumei Kabui also states that "a Jalai (Clan) of the Meiteis was originally an ethnic group or tribe speaking a distinct language or dialect occupying a territory, having an autonomous principality under a ruler who was both a political chieftain and social head of the clan".
Presumably, the clans or salais of the Meitei emerged, when lineages or sageis expanded and the segments and lineages members came to inhabit more than one community. Perhaps the clan was originated out of chaos. It may be possible that the lineage Meitei society was threatened frequently by external forces. In order to save themselves from external onslaught, they united each other and formed a single unit called clan.

Historical evidences proved the existence of seven clans such as Ningthouja, Mangang, Luwang, Khuman, Moirang, Angom, Khaba-Ngamba and Sarang-Leisangthem (Chinglei). There are two theories of clan or Salai formation. One is mythical and another is historical process.

There were two popular myths perhaps evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to one myth the clans originated out of the limbs of body of Guru, the Lord of the Universe, in the form of a cattle. The body of Guru was floated on the water in the form of a dead cow, which was cut off into seven pieces on the advice of Atiya Guru Sidaba, primeval father. Tradition further states that Kuptreng received the neck and his clan was named Angom. Shantreng received the portion of the eyes and his clan was given the
name of Ningthouja. Pammarangba’s clan has been coined as Luwang since he got the head portion of dead cow. Leishang-tao got the front legs and his clan was known as Khuman. Konshouren’s clan was Moirang because he received one stripped belly. Khaba was the clan of Asangba who received left side of the head. The portion of red heart was received by Tumganba and his clan was entitled as Nganba. 

The traditional version is that Angom springs from the right eye of the Taibangpanba Hapu (The Lord of the Universe), Ningthem (Ningthouja) from the left eye, Luwang from the right ear, Khuman from the left ear, Sarang-Leishangthem from the right nostril, Nganba (Khaba-Nganba) from the left nostril and Moirang from the teeth. Here is also briefly discussed about the historical process of clan formation. Before the amalgamation with Poirei the Mangangs absorbed member of tribes belonging to Lei-Hou, Ma-Hou and Heirong. The Mangang clan was the genesis of the ethnic fusion of Poirei and Mangang tribes. The amalgamation between the Nung and Chakkha tribe evolved the Chakkha-Nung and the entire Chakkha-Nung was converted to Luwang clan or bigger tribe and later on Leinung tribe was again absorbed in to Luwang. According to W. Ibohal Singh Khuman clan is an amalgamated tribe of Khu and Han. The assemblage of the
Mongyi and Kharoi tribes respectively with the Khuman tribe transformed it into a bigger tribe or clan. The Angom clan or tribe emerged out of the ethnic blending of Kongba and Mongbal tribes. Their association with the Shelloy-Langmais resulted in the rise of the Angom, a powerful clan or tribe. The absorption of a number of tribes like Senbi, Lai, Kabaw, Khuyon, Kayensicha, Mayang, Heirem, Khunjai and Keuba to Moirang tribe took place before they entered into the present Manipur valley. The Moirang tribe got an amalgamation with the Kages, Moriyas and Ngaoniois on the eve of its advent in the valley of Manipur. Probably, the Khaba and Nganba clan must be the product of the union of the Khaba and Nganba tribes. The Chenglei clan emerged out of the assemblage of Thangnaga and Kampong.

**CLAN SOCIETY**

The clan or Salai was generally ruled by a chief or piba. The office of the chief's or Piba's perpetual line inheritance provided a good opportunity to the clan piba or chief to get an effective control over the communal works like distributive works and ritual works. E.R. Service's opinion ought to be considered here and he writes "a chiefly line is likely to become a priestly line. Thus Chiefdoms are known ethnologically theocracies".
With the passage of time the Divine Theory of Chieftainship came to exist in Meitei society. Gangmumei Kabui observes: "the tradition of Pakhangba as the divine king of the earth and Sanamahi as spiritual deity of the Meiteis perhaps was myth created by rulers of Ningthouja dynasty founded by Mongba Lairen Pakhangba in the later historical time to give a garb of divinity to the king. Sanamahi as the spiritual divinity and Pakhangba as the royal divinity were the basis of which the Sanamahi-Pakhangba cult was propagated by the Ningthouja dynasty." 20

Thus, the clansmen or territorial subjects were forced to accept the ancestral head of the chief as their god and later he was worshipped. The religious role of the Piba or chief evolved a new idea among his territorial subjects that the line of Piba or Chief was seriously considered the direct descendant of the god. The divinity status of the chief gathered the pretention. The chief prevailed upon his clansmen or subjects and claimed that he and his blood were only the eligible for the post of chief. The chief assumed the responsibility of performing the rites and religious works. Now he came to enjoy the position of high priest of the community, as well as the social head.

Many developments were seen, since the transformation of society from lineage to clan. He became the protector of
his clan and subjects. Therefore, his protection extended to the agricultural land, pastures grounds, forests and fishing areas. Over and above, the chief claimed the ownership of natural products of his clan territory. Of course, the clan society on such stage emancipated itself from immediate dependence on the caprices of raw nature. It was based on a relatively simple technology using primary human and animal power, the clan community is partly self-sufficient, while they resemble producers in a pristive economic system in many ways. Originally, the land was protected by the chief for the clan, but gradually, his protection was converted into theoretically ownership, though the possessing rights of the clan were represented by him.

There was a found division of labour in the clan society of the Feiteis, but almost every individual engaged in the production of food for consumption. In a clan based economy, the producers were tied to wider market system which played the vital role in developing redistributive system among the clan or territorial subjects. Now, the producers no longer enjoyed the complete autonomy in their production because it was controlled to some extent by the ruling chief.

Therefore, the producers produced marginal surplus which could enable them to pay a part of the products to the
chief. The increase of population and the development of settled agriculture compelled the reclamation of new lands for habitation and agricultural lands from swamp forest etc. pushed up the yield of rich, corn, food-stuffs etc. The clan subjects became predominantly agriculturist. L.H. Morgan emphasised that presumptively when field agriculture demonstrated, the whole surface of the earth could be made the subject of property owned by individuals in severally and thus the new property career of mankind was inaugurated. The wide demonstration of field agriculture by and large brought the system change of property owning that unequal access to the means of production emerged. However, wealth as well as strategic sources like land, grazing fields, forest areas etc. were unequally distributed. The difference of property owning resulted in stratifying the entire society. The society came to divide into two social categories — producers and enjoyers. While the producers were the clan subjects, the enjoyers were the chief and his family and his immediate satellite like the nobility sections. The bulk of the population was the main source of essential labour of a clan principality. Thus, the entire society was stratified.

Numit Kape (shooting of the Sun), an ancient Meitei literary work indicates that in the Mangang clan there was
stratification. The Mangang social stratification was not so complex but the distinct peasant community including slave was there and on the other side, there was nobility consisting of ruling class. Romila Thapar pleads that "the establishment of peasant economy is the prime mover towards the state formation. She further assures that stratification is regarded as a precondition to the birth of state". 22

The successive development of the pattern of taxes shows the clear example of the advance of society towards the stage of state society. Voluntary presents of kinsmen to their pibas or leader during the lineage period registered as the beginning factor of tax in society. At the time of the clan period apart from the voluntary presents, tribute and war booty became the main source of income. When some tribes and clan were amalgamated to Ningthouja clan under Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, the source of income extended to various fields such as fishing areas and agricultural areas etc.

Another new development came to appear between the clan territory and its neighbour tribes or clans. The most important was inter-clan relationship. The clansmen might go beyond their boundary in order to collect or purchase their necessary things. They might present those goods particularly
luxurious things to their chief. Such type of system partly helped to meet the certain basic needs of the clan subjects. It strengthened the mutual understanding between the neighbours and sometimes it induced the chief for conquest of more land. Having got control over the production and commenced to pay attention to redistribution, the chief intensified his suzerainty over his subjects. Again, it caused to change the chief's designation from chiefship or Ribaship to kingship or Nangthouship.

The society was found already stratified. Fortunately, Mongda Lairen Pakhangba the founder of Ningthouja dynasty inherited the full stratified Mangang society. Under his prowess, the early primary Meitei state was installed by means of both conquest and consensus confederation. However, the stratified society was transformed into the primary Meitei state under the stress of certain contemporary conditions like water-work, circumscription and warfare or conquest.

**WATER WORK**: One of the basis of the emergence of state, according to several scholars, the massive irrigation work has been carried out by the powerful person. E.R. Service classifies public
work into two major types like religious and secular. Out of these two 'secular' means the complex system of water control is suitably considered in the context of the early Meitei state. Such managerial system became the significant role to make the integration which was brought by the large scale participation of the people in the network of construction of mud dams and the programme of the dredging of the rivers.

The valley of Manipur was periodically flooded and sometimes violent flood destroyed the planted fields and turned them into swamps. In order to restrict from eventual flood, river water control is, of course, tremendous necessary, whereas the settlement extends to low lying areas or river banks. Since the Meiteis are decidedly agriculturist, the growth of power was essentially interrelated to the development of political control. More specially, this new relation favoured the growth of social structure or adjudical structure of Meitei society. The ancient Meiteis performed large water-works. Historical record like Tutenglon mentions that 'both Ngangoi Yoimomba and Yoiheiton Teothingmang planned to dredge the Iril and Turel Achouba (Imphal river). It is learnt that Ngangoi Yoimongba organized large human labour including women to dredge the Turel Achouba'. Probably,
their main aim of draining river was to control river flood. The water work of the pristine Meitei was done through the following process like dredging of river (Turel Tengba) construction of mud dam across the river (Turel Thingba or Pan Thingba) and public pond (Meeyamgi Fukhri).

Water managerial work requires some basic mechanisms such as organization, maintenance and personal quality. It needs sufficient manpower in order to carry out the water work. Mongda Laihen Pakhangba ordained that all the able bodied males had to render labour for welfare work of the state.

More or less, in ancient Meitei society, water control favoured to develop a centralized organization of large human labour under a single authority. Such type of organization could be successfully carried out by capable person whose sole responsibility was management. Management needs capital, labour and personal ability. In case of the Meitei only the kings were able to do such work.

If an organization exists, power maintenance is highly part and parcel. In order to generate the organization or programme expenditure should be efficiently allocated. The pristine Meitei kings were not only competent organizers but
also very tactful managers. Thus, the water control work brought to strengthen managerial political powers and the centralized power of the king.

Wittfogel and his followers used Marx's ideas i.e. Asiatic mode of production, when they described the characters of the irrigated societies and the basis of their model of China and Southeast Asia. He modifies his prototype hydraulic society because some of the conditions of his ideal model can not be met by the scale of society and the scale of the irrigation. Therefore, part of his major theory (i.e. the despotic quality of the state) applies specially only to the case of China. Probably, the special elements of the hydraulic are a single physical irrigation system, massive in scale, managed by a highly centralized despotic regime. There were many types of society practicing irrigation. But the forms of irrigation differed from one another to another according to different topography. Some are well developed, while others are unsystematic. 25

The water managerial work was prevalent in the ancient Heitei state. To a greater extent, the main object was not only to control flood but also irrigation work. Obviously, the pristine Heitei society can not be coined as real hydraulic society formulated by Karl Wittfogel.
The water managerial work was done in the following processes.

(a) Dredging of river (Turel Tengba): The main object of this was to prevent any impending danger of flood.

(b) Construction of mud dam across the river (Pan Thigba). Its aims were to control flood and to provide water to low-lying limited agricultural areas.

(c) Public Pond (Meeyamgee Pukhri): The purpose of digging pond was to preserve water for public use.

So far in view of the available historical evidences, it is sketchy to estimate large scale irrigation work in ancient Meitei society. On the other hand, the valley enjoys both the South west monsoon and North East Monsoon. The South west monsoon was the determining factor for the ancient Meitei agriculturist. The annual amount of rainfall of those days is more enormous than the present days. Hence, monsoon provides sufficient amount of water to cultivate most of their agricultural land areas. Thus, it can be concluded that enough amount of water provided by monsoon causes to limit the irrigational programmes.

CIRCUMSCRIPTION:

Natural location is also a necessary condition for the
formation of a successful state. Robert Carneiro observes that "those regions in which areas are fertile land or good land, should be surrounded by deserts or unproductive mountains or by the sea. When the population pressure results to increase competition and warfare in such regions, the weaker or defeated or subjugated groups can not simply move away, as they typically do in regions where resources are less differentiated. When very rich land is tightly circumscribed, subordinated groups become absolutely tied down in their lower-class or caste status." 26 Circumscription as a required influential factor for the formation of the early Meitei state has been discussed. The valley of Manipur is surrounded by the mountain ranges. The valley was highly fertile drained by small rivers. And the numerous lakes are scattered in different parts of its valley. Both riverine and lake facilities are the common feature. Though, it is a sub-tropical monsoon valley, the climate is moderate around the year because of its natural location. Again its climate is probably monitored by its lakes. The various ethnic tribes were attracted to this fertile valley. Diffusion and absorption of these different ethnic groups are well documented and finally formed as many as seven clans. Actually, these clans people were tropical monsoon agriculturists living in permanent village setting up their own separate small principalities fixed in definite boundaries ruled by their own
respective chiefs. Although, they had their different culture and ethnic identity, in brief, their occupation and food habit were almost similar to inhabitants of the valley. Having failed iron-curtain boundary, it is easy to penetrate from one territory to other. However, the clan boundaries can be categorically studied:

(a) **Pasture grounds:**

Both the clan subjects enjoyed togetherly such boundary pasture field. It is easy to penetrate from one territory to another.

(b) **Forest:**

The people of neighbouring clan principalities used to earn their livelihood materials and went to hunt from the same forest. There was no hazard to cross the said boundary forest. There were sometimes conflicts over the hunting rights in such clan forest. One of the best examples was that when the Luwang chief Luwang Punshiba went to hunt deer, he entered the Khuman territory. And he was arrested but released after his daughter was given by marriage to Khuman chief.

(c) **Lake:**

The clan people used to fish together their boundary lake which is easy to navigate by sailing trunk boats.
(d) **Hill:**

It also serves as boundary line of the clans. Usually, it is easy to climb and cross.

(e) **River:**

Since the rivers are smaller and sweep currents, it was healthy to cross the boundary rivers.

The environment is an important factor in the development of the early Meitei state. There was already the migration of different ethnic groups to the valley of Manipur. Most probably, their aim of migration was to search a new habitable lands where are found abundant livelihood materials. Those hordes of migrants who entered into the valley would be satisfied by the fertile riverine facility and good climate of the valley. They might definitely choose it for their habitation. Their further migration would be restricted by the mountain chains. Being induced by the availability of livelihood materials, they would not have the will of further migration. In course of time, population grew under certain conditions like ethnic migration and natural birth. This caused to increase the number of population dependent on agriculture. The eventual circumstances compelled the population to be a permanent force of competition and warfare. As the
mountain ranges surround the valley of Manipur, they are unable to escape from the emerging happen. The people were in a position to meet the escalating demands of the society. So, the weaker or defeated groups cannot simply move away. In spite of settlement on the same altitude of same valley, where resources are less differentiated, inter-clan trade contacts prevailed. The occupations of the clan people are almost similar to that of the vanquished clan people or weaker tribes and there are well suited to amalgamate with the victorious clan. However, the subordinated groups like Jairei, Khaba-Nganbas etc. became absolutely tied up with the Ningthouja clan and they were recognized as the subjects of the Ningthouja.

The Meitei civilization is the gift of the barrierless geographical structure of the valley. This provides a good appointment for hastening the evolution of the Meitei confederacy. Such process was brought under the close association of their settlement.

WARFARE OR CONQUEST?

The Meitei state developed through different structural phases. Thus, when the structure reaches at its apex, a new social phenomenon like warfare or conquest, one of the
important factors for the birth of the state, came to appear: ever, when population came to increase but cultivable and habitational lands within short supply. On the other hand, the surplus production is highly essential to the clan chief or Ngthou in order to meet managerial requirements of their respective clan principalities. The control of surplus production became the basis for acquisition of the political power. Hence, the clan chiefs became eager for new territories or more wealth (i.e. control of agricultural land, cattle and local population). The defensive pose of their respective territories means the defence of wealth and offensive means acquisition or control of the surplus wealth. This became the common objective of the clans. Such atmosphere brought the form of frequent warfare amongst the clans.

Herbert Spencer observes that "the inter-societal conflict i.e. conquest cause to make the forceful permanent subjugation of defeated group and the compounding of society which are the important factor in promoting centralization of the regulating agency". The Khabas defeated Mongua Lai-ren Pakhangba for the first time, but very soon with the help of Moirang King Pakhangba retaliated and smashed the power of the Khabas. Many of them fled away and took shelter to the hill areas and Puleiromba of Angom respectively. Apart from these, one Khaiba Nongampa surrendered to Pakhangba. Then
Pakhangba confronted one colonizer named Poireiton, who marched towards the Ampal valley. Poireiton finally accepted the suzerainty of Pakhangba. After a hard struggle against his own kinsmen, the Khubes and Poireiton, Pakhangba the first historical Heitei King ascended the throne of Kangla with the great support from the Angom chief Puleirmomba, Luwang chief Langba Langmaiba and Mangang chief Sapanba. Other tribes and the leaders of the Chakpas also accepted his suzerainty. The successful war against Poireiton and the Khubes, the coordination of Puleirmomba, Langba Langmaiba and Sapanba and the acceptance of Pakhangba's supremacy by many tribes and the Chakpa leaders brought high degree of subordination within his own territory and outside his kingdom and increased manpower i.e. military power and men labour.

After occupying the throne of Kangla comprising the Mangang, Angom and Luwang territories and having defeated the Khubes and Nganbas and Poireiton, he became the first Heitei king. Only the Khumans and Moirangs were left out of the Heitei confederacy. But socially, they were brought under fold of the Heites, though the political autonomy was maintained for several centuries. Thus, the pristine Heitei state came to hatch out under the iron hand of Angom Leiren Pakhangba.
The Meitei state came to mature during the reign of King Loyamba. When the primary satellite institutions of the king were registered for parallel development that might be regular or irregular and the people were given separate suitable assignments according to the lineage (Yumnak), their occupation and their status and position.
REFERENCES

Foot Note No.

5. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
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9. Ibid., pp.76-78.
12. Ibid., p.69.
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15. Ibid., p. 334.
16. Ibid., p. 338.
17. Ibid., p. 340.
18. Gangmumei Kabui, op. cit., p. 66.
19. Alan R. Service; op. cit., p. 76.
20. Gangmumei Kabui; op. cit., p. 57.
22. Romila Thapar; From Lineage to State, New Delhi, 1983, p. 5.
24. N. Ranaoyaima Singh; Tutenglon, Sakening, 1930, p. 5.
26. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 83.
30. Ibid., p. 84.