With expectations of the process of structural and functional analysis of Historical contexts, that 'Social Changes' indicates continuous flux, all changes are purposive and a ubiquitous phenomenon as well as an alteration in the state of society resulting in modifications of old ways or in new social forms. It is an unintended consequence of human action, as well as change is rarely isolated. Many aspects of the social change can be affected by a new idea, invention, or discovery. But it changes whenever new forces of transformation emerges with the help of external and internal forces. Social change takes place only when there is a shift in social structure, transformation in social institution and assimilation of the new social values, norms, folkways, mores etc.

Every social change essentially involves a human aspect. Society is a group of human beings who bring about changes and are themselves affected by change. Our society is not constant, but it is always changing. The environmental circumstance and human aspects of social change are the necessary conditions under which changes take place. Therefore, every society is witnessing social changes and the process of change is an ongoing and continuing process.
Kingsley Davis observes that 'Men are social creatures, social change means human change. To change society is to change man.'

Indeed, we are living in a rapidly shrinking World. A social change is caused by some environmental circumstances. It must take place within a geographical or physical and cultural context. Both the contexts have impact on human behaviour and in turn man changes them. The social conditions in societies all over the World are being increasingly influenced and reshaped by the significant social changes. For example, social change persists, and man uses the skills and knowledge in various ways. Thus, it proves that the statement 'to change society is to change man.'

Mead observes that 'Human history began with man separating himself from the animal kingdom and acquiring some specific human features.'

Indeed, human history is a chain of generations, cultures, civilizations and ages. The human society cannot be understood outside the context of nature. Human beings have always regarded themselves as a unique species. They have been keenly aware of a great gulf between themselves and the rest of the animal kingdom. In human history,

the mass of the people are drawn into a process of national
and deliberate transformation of social life. Thus, social
change has been brought, to some extent, under human control.

With expectations of historical orientation that exists
independently out of human consciousness and the interpreta-
tion of the social process of dynamism as well as trans-
formation in the politico-cultural aspects; the Manipur
society had been changing right from the early periods of
History. The region now known as "Manipur" is situated
on the tertiary ranges of eastern 'Himalays' which protrude
towards the south along the 'Indo-Myanmar' border, is one of
the earliest ancient states in the 'Continent of Asia',
including the 'Indian sub-continent'.

The state of Manipur lying on the Eastern Frontier
of India and bounded to the north by Nagaland, Myanmar in
the east and the south, Mizoram in the South-west, Assam in
the west etc., is still, a land of beauty and culture,
rightly called 'The Jewel of India' by late, Prime Minister,
Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Irwin described her as 'Switzerland
of India', and Sir Geoffrey Evans and Anthony Brett James
as, 'a flower on the lofty height', and it's location is

5. Geoffrey Evans, Sir, and Anthony Brett James, The
identified with places within the jurisdiction of Tugma, Triglyptor, Mareura and Krrhadia as per the sources of G.E.R. Gerini cites Ptolemy's probable knowledge of Manipur. Again, Alfred Lyall rightly describes it as 'an Oasis of comparative civilization amidst the barbarians'. Manipur has extended her bosom from East Longitude 93.03° to 94.78° and North Latitude 23.33° to 25.68°; covers an area of 22,327 sq.km.; at an average elevation of 2,500 feet above sea level having a rainfall approximately 1528 m.m. per year. At present its temperature per year is about maximum is 39° c and minimum is 0° c. The 1991 Census records a population of 18,26,714 (Males 9,13,511 and Females 8,95,203) in Manipur State.

Manipur is divided into plains and hills. There are thirty different hill tribes recognised by the Constitution of India and still some minor tribes are also existing in the land. This geographic division is a determinant factor in the Socio-Political historical development of the land.

Before 18th century, there was no land in 'Kangleipak' or 'Meiteileipa k' that we properly call 'Manipur' nowadays. Moreover, in India, another 'Aryan Origin of Manipur'

located in or around Kalinga in Orissa and Mahendra Mountain's, which was absolutely different from the former, by then.

According to 'Sanamahi Laikan', the name of Manipur was first officially introduced in the 18th century during the reign of Hinduised king Garibaniwaz (1709-48 A.D.)

Indeed, the land was called 'Poirei', 'Wangngam', 'Hanna Shemba Konna Loiba', 'Tillikoktom', 'Kangleipak', 'Sana Pungmayon', 'Sana Leipak', etc., according to the Old Meitei nomenclatures, of different ages.

The above names were vividly written there in the archaic Meitei indigenous scripts. From my reading of such scripts, I would proudly conclude that there was no land called 'Manipur' before the 18th century A.D. In my opinion too I would corroborate the above views that before 18th century, we had fairly a reliable source of history with chronicle and chronology as well as archaeological evidences for example, Numismatics and Epigraphical evidences, which did not indicate any such name as Manipur.

11. *ibid.*, p.89
16. MS., Pakhangba Tuthok Lairong.
In the legendary or proto historical period, the principality which centred at 'Kangla', the capital of the later Meitei kingdom was known by several names which were referred to in both historical and literary works. This ancient land was known by different names in different countries, for example, 'Poirei Meitei Leipak' or 'Kangleipak' to the indigenous people of this land or Meiteis, 'Kathe or Ponnas' to the Burmese, 'Hsia Po-io-mein' to the Chinese, 'Cassay' to the Shans, 'Monglai' to the Cacharis and the Bengalies, and 'Mekhle' to the Assamese as well as to the British in the 18th century.

Since the down of history, the Meiteis developed a monarchical form of government. Manipur had established political alliance with the British Yoke as early as 1762 A.D. She enjoyed an independent and sovereign status, excepting for an interregnum of seven years (1819-1826 A.D.) during which she was occupied by the Burmese forces. As regards, from April, 1891 to August 1947, Manipur was a subordinate State under the British Paramountcy, as the Mani-

22. Chandramani, op.cit., p.5.
puris were defeated in the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. They established a form of government under the British Protectorate known as 'Native Rule' run by the Raja of Manipur with the assistance of a Political Agency. The British Paramountcy over Manipur lapsed on the 15th August, 1947 with the passing of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 by the British Parliament. Manipur was declared as a Part 'C' State with effect from 1952 till it became a Union Territory in 1957. Under Territorial Council Act, 1957 it had been converted into the Territorial Legislative Assembly in June, 1963. Then, Manipur emerged in the political map of India as a full-fledged State headed by a Governor in the 21st January, 1972.

In Manipur there flow a large number of rivers and streams which traverse her mountains and valleys. Among the rivers, the 'Barak' is the longest and largest, starting from a point of Northern hills flows into western and southern hills, then to Cachar and the Surma Valleys of Bangladesh. The next big river is 'Imphal River', starting from the hills to the North of valley flows into Chin hills and to the Chindwin in Myanmar. The Iril, the Thoubal, the Nambul rivers run across the valley. The 'Loktak' lake is the biggest lake of Manipur. The important mountain peaks are the 'Mt. Essau' or 'Tenipu' (9824 ft.), 'Mirohi' peak in the east and the 'Koubru' peak in the west.24

Owing to the influx of archaeological discoveries in Manipur, pre and proto historic periods are found from caves and open-air-sites boths in the hills and valley of Manipur. The leading among them are: the caves of Khangkhui (Ukhrul), Songbu (Chandel), Tharon (Tamenglong), and the open-air sites at Machi (Chandel), Nongpok Keithelmanbi (Seapati), Mongjam (Imphal), Wangoo (Bishenpur) etc. According these sites may be divided into Stone Age site and Metal Age site. The former can be studied under three cultural groups: Palaeolithic, Hoabinhian and Neolithic. But the latter appears to be very late and so far no separate Copper-Bronze and Iron Age relics have been found there.

Pakhangba became the first king of Manipur in its history in 33 A.D. The consolidation of the principalities of Meitei was started by king Kiyamba (1467-1508 A.D.). Moreover, the whole unification of the people even if king Khagema started the work was completed during the reign of king Garibaniwaz (1709-1748 A.D.). About the beginning of 19th century, the Meiteis were the so called 'Seven Salais' or 'clans', viz, Ningthouja, Moirang, Luwang, Angom, Khuman, Chenglei and Khaba Nganba; though the term (Meitei) meant at first 33 A.D. and literally the people of the Ningthouja clan were founded by king Nongda Lairen Pakhangba.

The People of Manipur:

The earliest settlers were the ancient Meiteis of the valley area, the Naga and Kuki-Chins of the surrounding hills—except the Muslims the people are predominantly Mongoloid Stocks with some Non-Mongoloid Stocks, who speak Tibeto-Burman languages. Historically, these groups of people grew independently with varying degrees of cultural development and civilization, of whom the Meiteis are the most dominant and advanced nationality.27

The Meiteis live in the valleys. They have colonies in Assam, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, East Pakistan and Burma/Myanmar. There are a class of people in Manipur known as 'Loi', i.e., the backward or Scheduled Caste who constitute the degraded section of the society. They are divided into a number of sections, viz, Phayeng, Kameng, Andro, Sugnu, Chakpa etc. The Haris or Yaithibis are regarded as even more unclean than the above named group. According to one theory, they are the descendants of Moirang tribe which settled in the south and were subdued section rather than a pure Meiteis.28

In ancient times, persons of the bad character who were condemned by the kings were deported to the different

Loi villages. There is another class of 'Loi' by purchase which means a person who becomes a Loi by his voluntary will.

Many Indian communities who migrated to Manipur at the end of the nineteenth century were the Bihari Oil crushers, the Bengalis and during the colonial period, came the Marwaris, Nepalis, and after India's independence, the Punjabis both Hindus and Sikhs, Tamils and others. Thus, Manipur with her pluralistic social fabric presents a picture of homogeneity and heterogeneity with the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual base of culture and civilization. The history of Manipur is the unending process of evolution of such a culture and society.

Bamons (Brahmins):

The Brahmins had migrated to Manipur in the past. But during the reign of Kyamba (1467-1508 A.D.), the 'Bamon Khun-thok', (the migration of the Brahmin) a text in Manipuri, records the migration of Brahmins to Manipur. And they were employed to act as astrologers and to look after the Hindu temples. The other Non-Brahmin Hindu migrants were the 'Lairikyengbams' who were employed as royal scribes.

29. Ibungohal Singh, L., Introduction to Manipur, pp.192-93
31. ibid., p.199.
The Brahmins expected a separate social fold (later on Caste) outside the Meitei society and they also presented themselves as missionaries of Hinduism. R.K. Jhalajit describes, 'The arrival of Brahmins enriched the cultural life of the kingdom. The Brahmins brought with them knowledge of Sanskrit and some scriptures and astrology. Their arrival and permanent settlement continued up to the close of the nineteenth century. The Brahmins began to speak Manipuri and became good Manipuris. The influence of Sanskrit on the literature of Manipur can be increasingly felt from the time of Kyamba. According to 'Bamon Khunthok', immigrants Brahmins were converted into a new family names like Adhikarimayum, Sija Guru Mayum, Leihaothabam, Thakurchangbam, Phurailakpam etc., absorbed in Meitei society and they came from Gujarat, Kanpur, Assam, Sylhet, Nandagram and Kharadah, respectively.

Pangans (Muslims):

The Muslims began to live in Manipur from 1606 A.D. They were brought as war captives by king Khagemba (1597-1652 A.D.) from Sylhet and Cachar. The Muslims were given several economic occupations and they married local women but the liberal social policy of Manipur allowed the Muslims to follow their religion. They adhered to the Islamic

33. Ms. Bamon Khunthoklon.
culture in dress, customs, eating and family arrangements. The pluralistic foundation of Manipur society was further strengthened by the influx of immigration of foreigners.

**Nepalis:** During the colonial period, the illegal migrations of foreigners like Nepalis are direct threat to the existence of Manipuri identity and these illegal migrations mainly from Nepal, Bangladesh and lands from the east of the Brahmaputra river. The area of Sadar Hills was the nucleus of Nepali expansion in Manipur as well as they had settled in all the directions of Manipur. A large group of them, mostly pastoralists, was settled and afield at Serou, Ayapurel, Singhat, Sajik Tampak, Karong, Kalapahar. Also they had despoiled and spilt over into the Manipur Nagas and Kukis areas. Nevertheless, the Nepali immigrants were land-grabbers and they subverted the original ethnic character of the hills of Manipur and threatened the process of Meitei identity.

**Nagas of Manipur:**

Except a few theoretically plausible propositions and to provide some empirical evidence to support the Naga way of life and their culture there is no sufficient proof. But it is clear how the name 'Naga' was derived from what.

There have been several attempts to trace out the etymological origin of this popular ethnonym. Therefore, as Verrier Elwin points out, 'the derivation of the word is still obscure'. According to Sanskrit literature, the theory of 'Naga' originates from Hindu 'Nag' meaning 'Snake' but there is no snake worshipping cult among the Nagas. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many European and Indian writers accepted that the word was derived from Sanskrit/Hindu 'Nag'. But in the end of the nineteenth century, a new theory was propounded by Peall and Holecombe that it came from the word, 'Nok' meaning 'Man' in some of the Tibeto-Burman languages like that of the Aos, Noctes, Garos, etc. As the tribes call themselves mostly man or people indicative of the absence of any class or distinction in the social order and social mobility.

Though no final word has been said about these derivations. In this manner, the theory of Naga coming from the Sanskrit/Hindustani Naga cannot be easily discarded.

The Naga tribes of Manipur consist of the Tangkhul, Zemei, Langmei, and Rongmei (Zeliarong), Mao, Maram, Maring.

Anal, Moyan, Monsang, Lamgang, Chothe, Purum, Thangal, Koireng, Chiru who are all Tibeto-Burman speakers and now become the Indian Constitutional categories under the label of 'Scheduled Tribes'. There are legends current among the Nagas as regards their origin and migration; these traditions tell more about the migration within Manipur, and the 'Trans-Chindwin region. Moreover, these tribes were in occupation of the present habitat in the centuries before Christ. The Meitei historical and literary works refer to the Naga tribes as having been in occupation of the hills of Manipur.

The Kukis:

The historical evidence indicates that the tribe of the so-called 'Kuki' group migrated to Manipur hills in the earlier period along with or after the Meitei advent in Manipur valley. These tribes referred to as the 'Old Kuki' which migrated from the Chin-Hills region of Burma/Myanmar. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, greater migration occurred due to the great Kuki exodus in search of vacant land for shifting cultivation which affected the demographic landscape of the hills of Manipur and adjoining areas are called now the 'New Kuki'. The Kukis, both the Old and New are linguistically related to Meiteis. Sir James Johnstone observes, 'the Kukis are

wandering race consisting of several tribes who have long been working up from the south. The Kuki-Chin tribes are the Hmar, Thadou, Paite, Vaiphei, Gangte, Simte, Zou, Biete, Mizos. There are attempts made to cover these tribes under a new name 'Zomi'. In the recent past, i.e., in the Post-independence period, almost every tribal communities in Manipur are at a stage of religious transition—from animism to Christianity.

Origin of Meiteis:

In the pre-historic times, the erstwhile kingdom of Manipur was inhabited by several tribes; each of them occupying definite territorial areas as well as independent of the other. The majority of the tribe comprising historically expected 'Seven clans' viz., Ningthouja, Luwang, Khuman, Moirang, Angom, Khaba-Nganba and Chenglei; the hill, by the hill-tribes. The seven clans again underwent an age long struggle amongst themselves till the Meiteis finally established supremacy over the rest and some people from surrounding hill tribes were merged into the 'Sageis' of the seven clans. The clan or lineage is known as 'Salai' which literally means the Ancestor-God of the lineage (Sa=Sagei=lineage and Lai = God-ancestor).

42. Khelchandra and Ibunghohal, op.cit., p.4.
43. Gangmumei, op.cit., p.69.
Owing to the influx of the process of assimilation of each Salai was affected, the Meitei people whether the Meitei Authochthons or the newcomers were collectively known to the outside world as the 'Meiteis' finally.

Ancient chronicles indicate that the seven major principalities were descended from a Supreme-Being, 'Taibung Mapu Sidaba', who is a formless divinity having myriad manifestations (the Divine ancestor).

The recorded history of Manipur begins from the second quarter of the first century of Christian era when 'Pakhangba' (the first king of Meiteis) ascended to the throne of 'Kangla', the historic capital of Manipur.

The ethnic name, Meitei, B.H. Hodgson in the nineteenth century thought, was a, "combined appellete of Siamese 'Tai' and Kochin Chinese 'Moy' (Moy Tai = Moy tai = Moitai = Meitei) and that the Meiteis belong to the Moi section of the great Tai race." 44

T.C. Hodson suggested that it was derived from the blending of two words: 'Mei' means man or people and 'Tii' meaning separate: Meitei = separate people. 45

Another theory observes, 'Mitei' (not Meitei) is derived from the creation of man by God in His image: Mi = image.

44. Quoted in T.C. Hodson, p.10.
45. Ibid., p.10.
Tei = Modelled = modelled after God's image = Meitei. 46

Dr. Ch. Budhi Singh describes that this ethnonym is a blending of two tribes of ancient China: Mei and Ti = Mei + ti = Meiti = Meitei. 47

Moreover, it is well known that historically, the word Meitei was used during the period of the establishment of the Ningthouja dynasty by king Pakhangba, to mean this clan or dynasty.

The above statement proves that the plain people of Manipur are a mixture of different tribes who inhabited in different parts of South East Asia.

McCulloch describes, 'the Meiteis were the descendants of the hill tribes who came from different directions. He came to this conclusion on the basis of cultural and language affinity between the Tribals and Meiteis. He also relied on the tale that the Meiteis are the offshoots of the hill tribes.' 48

R.B. Pemberton also writes 'the Meiteis are the descendants of Tartar Colony in China who immigrated to Manipur during the conflicts for supremacy between the Chinese

47. ibid., p.
and the Tartars in the 13th and 14th centuries. 49

There are other theories too about the origin of the Meiteis but so far there has not been a universal theory acceptable to all.

Gangmumei Kabui observes, 'the origin of the Meitei is not of Aryan, there is an Aryan element in the Meitei society.' 50 He also describes that there is a relationship between the Meitei, Mon-Khmer and Tai for historical reasons: conquest and sociocultural contacts which produced 'Tai' influence on the language and the culture of the Meiteis. 51

According to Dr. G. A. Grierson, the Manipuris (Meiteis) belong to the family of Tibeto-Burmese speakers and their origin noted from the upper courses of the Yangtze and the Hoang-Ho in China. They moved out from their ancestral places and arrived at the head waters of the Irrawaddy and the Chindwin. From there, some of them spread out along the Himalayan tracts and some moved further down the course of the Brahmaputra in Assam and settled there. A section of them halted at the tip of the Assam valley, turned south and entered the hills of the present day Nagaland. They, thus became the ancestors of the speakers of the heterogeneous languages, called the Nagas. A sizeable number of

those who moved out from China still remained round the upper waters of the Irrawady and the Chindwin where Kachin is now spoken. This group halted there for further migrations. Again he wrote, "Early settlers in Manipur must have been the Manipuris, for their language, Meitei, shows not only points of agreement with that spoken at the present day in its original home in what is now Kachin country but also with those of all the other emigrants from that tract." 52

Johnstone observes, "Hills and Plains people evolved separately although intermittently the hill people then two groups mixed during the chequered course of history." He further wrote, "The Manipuris themselves are a fine stalwart race descended from an Indo-Chinese stock with some admixtures of Aryan blood, derived from the successive waves of Aryan invaders that have passed through the valley in pre-historic days. Since then the race has been constantly fed by additions from the various hill tribes surrounding the valley." 53

Dr. S.K. Chatterji observes, "The Mongoloids appear to have been already established in the southern Himalayan slopes and in eastern India by about 1000 B.C. for there is mention of the Kirata people in the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda. They represent two or three different people racially, all speaking forms of Sino-Tibetan and

belonging to the same culture type which originally developed somewhere in eastern China either in the area to the east of Hoyang-He valley near about the head waters of the Yang-Tze Kiang. 54

Gangmumei Kabui put forward the view that 'prior to the coming of the Tibeto-Burman speaking Proto-Meitei tribes there were Mon-Khmer speaking Austroloid-Mongloid people who were absorbed by the Tibeto-Burmans . . . the process of such absorption took place according to him in the case of 'Aryans' and 'Tai' who came to Manipur and concludes saying that ethnologically and linguistically, the Meiteis are Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid with Austroloid, Aryan and Tai admixture.' 55 The above statement is reasonable and true that Meiteis have absorbed these foreign elements and completely integrated them in their social structure and ultimately the Meitei as a distinct ethnic, linguist, cultural as well as social entity was formed in Manipur valley.

In this manner, Meiteis belong to a group of 'Tai' who were the administering part of Manipur valley and hybrid groups of Veddoid and Himalayan tribes like Mon-Khmer etc. were inhabiting the place. Thus, such a historical group subsequently grew and flourished as Meitei in the plain area of Manipur.

'The origin of Meitei may be traced to the cradle of Shan race, which was in the Kilung mountain tracks, north of Szechuen and south of Shensi, in China proper.'

Some of the ancient Meitei scripts aver that in gone by days successive waves of immigrants had been pouring into this kingdom and they made the nine mountain tops their permanent homeland and also had an isolated life rearing with a jealous care their culture and tradition to be represented by the different hill tribes of Manipur. Some of them preferred the green fertile valley to the lofty peaks in spite of many odds of external aggression and internal conflicts, ultimately these immigrants became the ancestors of the 'Meiteis'.

In this regards, the passes of Manipur along with other hill tracks of North-East India expected as the corridors and through these gate-ways developed the transcontinental migration of flora, fauna and human species.

The influx of immigrants evolved continued even in the historical days with politically inspired attempt at demographic manipulation into this kingdom by way of expansion, i.e., the Chinese, Shans, Burmese, Hindus, Muslims, etc. at the different periods and presented the permanent settlers of Manipur.

Those who came from the east were purely Mongoloides consisting of Chinese, Burmese, Shan which got assimilated into the Meitei society was known as the 'Nongpok-Haram' — people coming from the east. The rest consisting mostly of Indian races who entered into this land from the western direction are known as 'Nongchup-Haram' or 'western stream'. They were merged into the 'Sageis' or 'lineage' of the 'Seven Salais' or 'Clans' of the Meiteis.

Owing to the influx of assimilation of these different groups of people at different stages of societal evolution in the Manipuri society, Primitive or Pre-literate, Intermediate or literate and Modern society have been expected. For this instance, both internal and external forces were at play in bringing about social change in Manipuri society. Different aspects of change and process of the evolution of Manipuri society during the period from 1597 to 1798 A.D. have been focussed in some detail under review in a historical perspective.

The present thesis attempts to examine and evaluate the changes which were taking place in Manipur during the period from 17th to 18th centuries. There were many significant changes during this time which marked a great departure from that of earlier ones.

It further aims to emphasise the social change in Manipur within the period under a systematic order.
period introduced many new methodologies in social, political and economic changes and implementations for the smooth administrative change of the country with the coming of the Shans, Chinese, Burmese as well as the Hinduism and the Sanskritization of Manipur. Indeed, this administrative transformation was followed by a chain of changes in different fields — education, religious, social and economic. It produced far reaching consequences. As a result of these processes of change, new social consciousness gained momentum and found expression in political and religious movements.

All these changes, even if they were formulated on the fundamentals and principles of influxing cultures from all directions, these had structural, anatomical, radical and basic rules and regulation. They had separate appearance and attires from those which were inflowing in where the east and west united. The evolution of Meitei society was changed from the level of primitive society to a well organised stage of feudal societal system.

Keeping these in mind, one may rightly take up this topic for the interest of oneself as well as for the public. It will enable one to get the main objective which can fill up the gap of the social history of Manipur during the periods 17th to 18th centuries find out indigenous cultural idioms which were in use during the two centuries and it
also will identify those problems which had either decayed or modified over time. It will also be helpful to establish a linkage between the traditional cultures and those of the newly introducing Hindu culture of the 18th century. Hinduism brought about certain changes in the socio-cultural life of the Meiteis, that is, in the form of worships, food-habits, dress, writing of scripts etc. As a result of these external forces there was a flourishing civilization in Manipur. Moreover, changes in Manipuri society cannot be assigned to these external forces only. But both indigenous and exogenous changes i.e., change originating within and outside were unitedly responsible for bringing about a change in the Meitei society. So my interest is to find out the indigenous culture and change of the society as to introduce the social change which has been rolling up from time to time in the society of the history of Manipur. Important manuscripts written in 'Puyas' have been extensively used in the preparation of this thesis as primary sources. This research work is the result of a pains-taking labour. One may aptly say that this project will fill up a gap of the social history of Manipur.