Conclusion

The study of Manipuri poetry unfolds the emergence of a new stream of poetry born out of the exigencies of history and times and is worth considering for its form and content. The poetry of the region is marked by simplicity, directness, and is untouched by what Makarand Paranjpe says 'seasoned literary traditions'. From early period (pre-vaisnavism) to the contemporary times, the journey of Manipuri poetry has been an adventurous one. This journey of poetry, shaped and molded by the various historical incidents forms a parallel literary history in terms of shifts in culture, religion and even language. Thus, an inter-disciplinary outlook (sociological, anthropological) is also necessary in discussing the poetry. The chapterization of the thesis is based on a discussion of poetry through the course of history keeping in mind the various aspects of sociological, political, cultural and religious events that conditioned the poets to write of the times. This feature can be seen in the poetry from the ancient times to the contemporary times.

The first chapter, Socio-political, Historical and Cultural background of Manipur is in the form of an introductory chapter that records the socio-political, historical and cultural study of Manipur. The chapter looks into the influences of the historical events (coming of the Vaisnavism in the 18th century, British Colonialism in the 19th century, Independence and Merger in the 20th century) on the people and society at large. It also discusses the Manipur and its culture, as it was before the advent of Vainavism to have a clear picture of all the changes that happened after Vaisnavism was forced upon the people of Manipur. Finally, the chapter overviews contemporary socio-political scenario of Manipur and the imprint of the past on the present.
The second chapter is A Survey of Manipuri Poetry, written or recited or sung (oral as well as written) from the earliest recorded time to the contemporary times. This chapter tries to connect the events such as The Advent of Vaisnavism, The Coming of the British Colonizers and The Merger Agreement with the Indian Union discussed in the first chapter with the poetry produced as a result of these events. Another point of discussion in this chapter is the changing face of poetry (from Pre-Vaisnavism to Vaisnavism era or from Vaisnavism era to the modern western education era) in different time framework.

The third chapter Themes of Fear, Violence and Terror in Modern Manipuri Poetry, discusses prominent poets* of the post-independence period who have dealt with the themes of fear, violence and terror through their poetry. (* Sri. N. Biren, Thangjam Ibopishak, Yumlembam Ibomcha, R.K Madhubir, Saratchand Thiyam etc.) The discourse of fear and violence and terror from global (9/11, bombing of Afghanistan and Iraq) to the local (various insurgency/military groups) is elaborated as also the experiences of the people (most particularly in Manipur) and the reflection of it in the form of creative writing (poetry) is closely looked into.

The fourth chapter, Issues of Identity Negotiation tries to bring out the various identity issues faced by the people of Manipur by discussing poetry of the modern period. As discussed in the first chapter, because of the various historical events that altered the political-social-cultural aspects of the lives of the people in Manipur, identity negotiations became the pivot around which all forms of writings negotiated. This chapter traces this identity negotiation in poetry over time, like, Hindu identity vs Meitei identity, ethnic vs the national and mainstream vs the sub-stream through analysis of poetry.
The fifth chapter, Eco-Critical approach to Modern Manipuri Poetry is an attempt to study selected Manipuri poets using an eco-critical approach. The first part of the chapter tries to define and understand the critical theory which is comparatively new in the literary field yet very important. Eco-criticism which is a way of looking at the relationship between literature and the environment also talks about how human culture is connected to the physical world and is affected by it and language itself is a cultural artifact that studies the relation between the writers, the text and the world. As such, aesthetics, language, human habitation and phenomenology are integrated in a holistic manner, one complimenting the other.

The final chapter, Women's Poetry entails a discussion on the Manipuri women poets and the treatment of various themes in their poetry. An important feature of this chapter is the accounting of the late emergence of women poets on the literary scene. The reason behind Manipuri women venturing late into writing poetry could be the lack of education for women, prior to the 1960's. Even though they came in late in the literary scenario, they have contributed significantly both in terms of form and content. This is one of the reasons, why the Manipuri women poets have not figured in the earlier chapters. It also deals with the status and the changing role of women in Manipuri society who have overcome the complexities of the gender roles in the society and carved out their own space as creative individuals. The feminine sensibilities of these poets and the awareness of their sexuality and womanliness are some of the issues discussed. The fiery elements, the proactivist roles that women have always exercised in Manipuri society are seen embedded in their poetry.

Some of the major themes of these poets like peace and harmony, fear, violence and terror, longing for romantic love and idyllic, utopian society have been
identified. They also used myth to convey powerful characters. The main poets taken up for study are A Memchoubi, Thoibi Devi, M K Binodini, Ch Jamini Devi, Y Indira, M Borkanya, Sorokhaibam Gambhini and S Haripriya.

Thus, the themes and issues that have been discussed in the study have direct/indirect links with the historical events, most prominently the advent of Vaisnavism and the Merger agreement with India. The focus of the study is the modern period (the 20th and the 21st c) that bears the brunt of the various upheavals that the region faced and affected the psyche of the people who wrote poetry which reflects their angst from ancient to present day.

Rootedness is one feature found in the poetry of the region, in terms of culture, nature or ethnicity. The poets are rooted in the past, their beloved land and their culture. That may be one of the reasons why the poetry of this region is marked by honesty of expression and is unpretentious. There is also an element of self-consciousness present in poetry, perhaps triggered by the troubled time (specially the post-independence period). The Post Independence Poets who are conscious of the changing social values, the continuous violent conflicts between the militants and the state, concerns of identity etc., have come out with a new language of poetry and thus, setting up a tradition of their own. The anti-romantic fervor found in the post independence poets is an evidence of their disillusionment because of the troubled times they have lived through. The generation after ‘the angry young poets’ of the 70s is more self-introspective and they look inwards for peace and harmony. The women poets of Manipur can be particularly romantic and there is a simple charm in their poetry. In a way, the women poets manifest sensibility in a more holistic manner treading on both known and unknown paths.