Chapter II

The Field Setting

2.1 The village

Kabui is one of the scheduled tribes of Manipur, a northeastern most State of India. They live in both hill and plain areas of the state. In Manipur, they are mostly concentrated in the Tamenglong District of Manipur. They also settle in the foothills of Sadar hills and Loktak project areas. A good number of the Kabuis are also settled in the districts of Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal and Bishnupur. Kabuis are inhibited in different parts of other North Eastern states like Nagaland and Assam. In Nagaland, they confine in Peren Sub-division, Dimapur and Kohima, the State Capital. In Assam, they are mostly found in Haflong Sub-division of the North Cachar Hills districts, Sonai and Lakhimpur West of Silchar Sub-division of Cachar district (Kamei, 2004).

Basically, the Kabui villages are structurally similar to each other; though they live in different geographical regions of the Manipur. The Sawombung Kabui village is one of the oldest villages in the valley of Manipur. It is located at Imphal East District, around 12 Km away from Imphal, the State Capital. It is under the Jurisdiction of Lamlai Police Station. The National High Way 150 (Imphal-Jessami Road) passes through the village. It is also surrounded by Meitei villages, such as Nungoi in the north, Yourabung in the east, Phaknung in the south, etc. as well as by Imphal River and its tributaries. This village consists of 185 household and having a
population of about seven hundred. People still maintain their traditional social structures and they are strictly embracing their culture, traditions, beliefs, mores, and norms till date. Though the village is culturally closed, it is not totally free from external influences like modern education, transport and communication. It rather gives a tremendous impact in the society. Interestingly it gives an opportunity to observe both the traditional and modern elements of the society in the present study site. Moreover, the village thus serves the microcosm of the present study.

2.2 Family

There are both nuclear and joint families among the Kabuis. Nevertheless, the first is now much more common than the latter. For them, family is a primary institution where different patriarchal values are usually inculcated to the individuals. Male is the head of the family and holds the supreme power as well as the unique responsibility in the maintenance and administration of the family. He is not only responsible for looking after the welfare of his wife and children, he also takes a great responsibility for performing family worship, religious duties like village genna, house genna, and all other social and customary duties observed in the village from time to time. Women also have a great responsibility in the maintenance of the family. In the words of Colonel McCullock “In the grey of the morning, the females of the family are active and the village resounds with the blow of the long pestle in the wooden mortar beating out the rice from the husk. The finished, breakfast is cooked both for the family and pigs, for the latter the husk mixed with other refuse serves the purpose. Breakfast over, which it usually is about sunrise, the women proceed for water, which they fill into bamboo tubes and bring on their backs in baskets. Then, they go for firewood, and this brought, they set about the internal
economy of the house; that is, to see to their husbands’ drink being in proper quantity and quality, to their spinning or to their weaving, or any of the other household occupations except sweeping the house clean, an act in which they have no pride” (Hodson, 1911). In spite of their unique responsibilities and duties, their voices are hardly counted and they are still considered to be inferiors in the society.

2.3 Kinship

The Kabui is a patriarchal as well as patrilineal society. Kinship is reckoned and determined through the male line only. The rights of inheritance and succession both to the moveable and immovable properties of the family are vested in the male line only. Inheritance is ultimo-geniture; the youngest son inherits parental properties, both moveable and immovable. Traditionally women have no rights to the inheritance of parental properties; both moveable and immoveable in the society.

Among the Kabuis, there are four major exogamous clans. They are, i) Gonmei ii) Kamei iii) Gangmei and iv) Rongmei. Every clan has its own totem locally known as Kagai, which may be a bird, an animal or a plant. For instance, the people of Gangmei clan cannot eat a tiger and so do the people of Kamei clan cannot eat a bird called Ahuina (a wild pigeon). Traditionally they are believed to be belonged to the same group of origin. However, in course of time, many lineages with different totems grew out of these clans and claimed themselves to be a clan (Kamei, 2004). So, Khandangmei, Malangmei, Phaomei, Pammei, Kamson, Marangponmgmei and Singgongmei are sub clans of Kamei clan whereas Gonthangmei, Remmei, Panmei, Thaimei, Maringmei, Dangmei (Dhangmei) and Gondaimei are the sub clans of Gonmei. Pheiga Gangmei, Sidou Gangmei, Kamhang Gangmei and Jukhao Gangmei, Goijaichaang Gangmei, Kamangmai Gangmei, Jumakna Gangmei, Mukti
Gangmei are the sub clans of Gangmei clan. Nevertheless, Rongmei clan has not had any sub-clan. Though they normatively follow the rules of clan exogamy in marriage, there is a unique tradition known as Kai Pammei. It is an adoption one’s clan under certain circumstances like the person in question has no relatives or no other option for the survival. The person may be from different clans of the same community or from different communities. Once he adopted the clan and became one of the members of the clan, traditionally he cannot get married with a woman from the same clan.

2.4 Marriage

Marriage establishes the legal parentage of children and gives spouse rights to each other’s sexuality, labor and property (Kottak, 2008:228). It also forms an alliance between the two clans or between two different villages. Monogamy and polygamy (polygyny) are the forms of marriage. However, the latter is very rare. They strictly follow the rules of clan exogamy. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (Mother’s Brother’s Daughter) and marrying of deceased elder brother’s wife (junior levirate) are preferential forms of marriage among the Kabuis. The marriage of Mother’s Brother’s Daughter is locally known as Kanei Pidoikadoimei (a follower of her aunty). In doing so, the marriage ties between the two clans are believed to be more secured.

2.4.1 Ways of Acquiring Mates

Among the Kabuis, there are different ways of acquiring mates. They are as follows, i) Thanmei Noukao or Khamthan (Marriage by engagement) ii) Charai Noukao or Saam tuanmei (love marriage) iii) Nimjaimei (marriage by force) iv)
Meinou Kasoumei (marriage the wife of the other man by force or by wooing) vi) Noumangmei (marriage by servitude or espouse) vii) Chami (marriage to defray debt) and viii) Kakhaomei (marriage of the widow of the elder deceased brother).

Widow re-marriage is acceptable. The bride price of a widow is just the half of the girl’s price. Every item of the bride price is given in single and not in pair like the girls. Divorce is simple and easy every spouse has the right to seek get divorce in the village court called Pei as per customary laws (G. Kamei, 2004).

2.4.2 Engagement

The marriage by engagement is a long and time-consuming process. Traditionally the sending of some married women having their husbands is the first step of such marriage. They will move directly to the house of girl along with an iron hoe (Laogai) and bottle of wine. The iron hoe will be placed under the mattress of the parents of the girl. The holy wine is offered to Ragang and other related gods. This is known as Lakpui Lamkeo. If the iron hoe is returned, then the process of marriage ceases and discontinues (Kamson, 2013). This is locally termed as Nou Kalanmei (declination of the proposal). And if the iron hoe is not returned, the engagement will continue further.

In case, the bride and groom are from different villages then they have to find a Nouthan Kaibang (a liaison house or a house to be hosted by the solicitors of the marriage). Any sort of negotiation of marriage such as Manthing Lemmei (fixing the bride wealth), Manhutmei (presentation of the bride wealth), etc. will be started from the house of liaison and proceed to the house of the girl. They will then return to the Nouthan Kaibang eat there and take rest. They are to report the progress of the
engagement to the groom’s parents. Traditionally the groom’s family pays a little monetary remuneration to the Nouthan Kaibang for providing them shelter during the entire process of marriage negotiation and ceremony. It is a kind of courtesy and obligation.

The Pei authority of the groom’s village usually selects two elders having wives among the Banja as Nouthanpou (marriage negotiators or matchmakers). And the groom’s family invites all the members of the Pei to the eating of chutney of dry meat or dry eels and holy wine will offer to Ragang, the Supreme God and other village deities. This is traditionally known as Nouthan Kimei (feasting of marriage negotiators or solicitors). The chutney distributes not only to the members present but also to the elders who are absent in the process of selection of Nouthanpou.

The Nouthanpou will seek the favor of the parents and relatives of the girl. There is no fixed number of negotiations to approach to the girl’s family. Rather it depends upon the agreement of both the families. The girl usually has no right to say no. If the parents and relatives accept the proposal for marriage they will give their daughter to the boy.

When the girl is being betrothed, traditionally the members of Khangchu (boys’ dormitory) come and sing Luchen Lu (lamenting songs) towards every evening at the residence of the bride. They will continue these lamenting songs throughout the journey of marriage procession till the bride reaches the groom’s house. Apart from that, the members of the Luchu (girl’s dormitory) and Khangchu (boy’s dormitory) bid farewell to the bride hosting a feast before the marriage ceremony. They used to sing traditional lamenting songs as well as love songs the whole night.
2.4.3 Examination of pig’s spleen at the residence of bride

Traditionally a big pig is usually killed early morning on the day of marriage ceremony for the examination of the omen of the spleen. Elders interpret the omen whether it is good or bad and it is followed by the oblation of wine to Apou Ragang for his blessing upon the bride with peace, prosperity and long life. Some portions of pork will be taken out for the preparation of Bangdun (square shaped piece of pork). The elders eat Zeigan (a curry prepared from pig’s internal organs and blood) at the residence of the bride. Lugan (son-in-law) usually carries the liver, head and Bangdun of the pig when the bride sets off the wedding procession (Kamson, 2013).

After lunch, the two negotiators and their party will present a cow or a buffalo which is known as Noulagoi with a golden brass bowl which is locally termed as melot or kalot to the parents of the bride.

In the olden days, the bride family used to hold the delivery of their daughter to the boy unless a cow or a buffalo and the kalot were not presented to the parents of the girls. Sometimes, the parents of the groom were not in the position to give a cow or a buffalo. So they often used to request the parents of the bride to accept cash in lieu of a cow or a buffalo or the matter used to settle down by giving symbolically a golden brass bowl only. This system is still prevailing in the Kabui society. After paying Noulagoi, the two negotiators or matchmakers and their party will proceed to the liaison house and they will pay a fee of hosting of house with a reasonable amount to the host and hostess who provide their house to the negotiators engaged for settlement of marriage. The reason for giving some money to the liaison house is that from the very beginning of marriage process, ceremony etc. disturbance were given to the house. It is up to the owner of the house whether he will accept the money or not.
It is a kind of courtesy and obligation. The negotiators will return to the groom’s house.

2.4.4 Payment of bride wealth

After the lunch, the negotiators and their party present the bride wealth at the presence of Chanao Gannei (two brothers of the bride), Lugan Gannei (two sons in law of the bridal party) and host and hostess of Nouthan kaibang (liaison house) to the bride’s parent.

The bride wealth is traditionally consisted of Goiroi Kachipu (one male buffalo), Goroi Kaku (one female buffalo), Laogaibangpipmei (a pair of iron hoe tightly bound and it is traditionally considered to be a chief item of every bride wealth), Zeisen (a plate made of metal), Senpaak (a plate of different designs), Kou Kharam Phei (a shawl of Kharam tribe), Themphei (a shawl), Pongnai (a cloth), Sinjik Bui (a spear), Tangkhul Bui (a Tangkhul spear), Bang (a dao), Tadu (a pair of bangles), Nathang (a pair of bangles), Baanpom Ta (a pair of armlet), Banteng Ta (a pair of wristlet), Gangkam (a necklace made of conch shell), Bangchaku (ornamental dancing dao), Sendai (a brass dish), Natri (a big dish of different designs) and Bamlin Sen (a coin).

As a customary practice, a maternal uncle of the bride should wear the Pouphan, (a traditional male shawl given by the groom). In return, he would give some cash locally known as Khuklan Shen (pocket money) or material gifts.

2.4.5 Lupot (property brought by the bride to her husband at marriage)

Traditionally the bride brings some movable wealth and foods at the time of her marriage which is locally known as Lupot (bride’s property). Her bridal
procession usually associated with Zoumu (a dried gourd full of rice beer), boiled liver of pig packed with plantain leaf binding at the neck of the dry gourd, Chabang or Bangdun (some square shaped piece of boiled pork), Gakpi (one head of the pig), Nai (an undergarment wrapper for the bride), Pheingao (one shawl for the groom), Masin Pheipong (a traditional shawl worn by elders) for the father in-law, Pheisoi (a female wrapper for mother in-law), Pheisoi (a wrapper for the oldest woman belonging to bridegroom’s family), Khook (a long basked having four stands made of bamboo and cane) inside which some money will be kept for the bride, weaving implements like Tak, Tangnu, Tamen, Mui, Tareng, one Kalong (a long female basket having four stands without cover), one Gaknai (a female piglet for further breeding), one Roiduna (a hen for further breeding), Kaipui Napdom (seven packets of delicious food and meat curry) and finally one Khoujai (a bamboo or cane case containing a few items like dried eels, meat, fish, for personal use till the bride becomes familiar with the mother and father in-laws in the family.

The women of the groom’s family eat the food packets (Kaipui Napdom) brought by the bride’s party. There is a saying that a woman dies twice because seven packets of rice (Napdom) are offered to her at the time of her marriage (especially during marriage by engagement) and another seven packets at the time of her dead. And the food packed along with the Zoumu (rice beer kept in a container of bitter gourd) will be carried to the male dormitory where the boys will partake and this is known as Langton Lamei.
2.4.6 Marriage procession

After the bathing ceremony of the bride, the parents, brothers, sisters and relatives of the bride will give blessings to her. Then the bride will start for wedding procession.

The Lugan (son-in-law) usually leads the wedding procession by carrying the head of a pig, Bangdun (square shaped pieces of pork), boiled liver, Napdom (packets of rice and curry), wine, weaving implements, etc. When the procession reached the groom’s village gate, traditionally some boys of the village will run a race to inform the arrival of the bridal procession to the groom’s family.

2.4.7 Marriage ceremony

Traditionally when the bride reached the groom’s place, she must be welcomed by offering wine (Zoungao) and escorted up to the groom’s bed. The best man and bridesmaid usually sit beside the bride and groom on the bed. A priest performs the rite of Mailakmei (a rite of social recognition and taking of an oath as man and wife). This rite performs twice in case of marriage by engagement, one at the time of payment of bride wealth and other when the bride reached the house of the groom. When the bride and groom are ready, the priest recites the marriage hymn holding a big cock as follows:

“Anthei namshukho suditei, Anthei namsukho shuki pou gaan chanei thaoponnitei, pou gaan chanei thaopontiki pou kamkhumeikhang kakham makkhonnetei; duiba phukeiti phutometei(bihorang, pheirang, laikak rangloubamme phutomakhe). Duipi phugangti, tunapui khatko kadui jubam khonnetoi, kachai gaandaimeirui(gaan chaneikhou

It says, “In the early human migration and settlement, there were seven brothers. Among them, the youngest one had no wife yet. His brothers were looking for his wife. When they searched in the south, they found no one else. But when they looked in the north, they found a girl drawing water from a pond. The eldest brother asked the girl that whether she got married or not. The girl replied that she already got married. They moved further in the north again. They felt tired and the youngest brother felt thirsty. When he came down to drink near the bank of the river, he found a Langu, (a basket with a cap made of bamboo for keeping small weaving materials),
full with a lady hair floating the river. With a great enthusiastic mind and anxiousness, when they moved further in the north, they found the girl taking bath hanging her long hairs on the pole. Duithoilu was her name. The eldest brother went to the girl and asked her that whether she got married or not. She replied that she didn’t get married. Then he proposed her to get married with his youngest brother. The girl readily accepted the proposal and she came along with the seven brothers. Notwithstanding, she didn’t work, talk and eat. She was so dull, sleepy and benumb.

The youngest brother told everything about his wife to his eldest brother. He suggested him to go to local oracle or Shaman. They knew nothing but suggested him to ask Apou Mujungpu Mu Charakhandipu, the great shaman. When he came to him, he suggested him to perform a ceremony locally known as Mairaakmei (a ceremony of consecration and taking an oath to Apou Ragang, the Almighty God as husband and wife) with a beautiful cock in the name of Apou Ragang, the Almighty God and then she would be alright. She will be more active. She will work double times than others. She will work like spinning machine and busy tail of a cow. Hence, from today let the couple not split forever. Let the husband and wife has sons and daughters as much as the wild boar’s, frog’s and crab’s breed. Let the husband and wife live a peaceful, prosperous and plentiful life with their sons and daughters forever”.

After the recitation of the hymn, the priest kills the cock by strangulation. He observes the cock’s legs and announces the omens. The ceremony ends with the oblation of holy wine to Apou Ragang, the Almighty God.

The sons-in-law cook the chicken reserving some items of it such as Gangshang (head with a long neck), Kanang Kanei (two thighs), Kashukangnang
Kanei (two wing thighs), Katan Kanei (two feet), etc. are distributed among the Banja (elders) of the village.

Among the Kabuis, traditionally the husband and wife usually do not sleep together for four days. The bride sleeps with the bridesmaid for four days. In the past, marriages were often against the wishes of the girls and hardly could say no to the wishes of the parents. They often got married with the one who she really did not love. In order to pacify the restless mind of the bride, two or three fellows of her friends were allowed to sleep with her for four nights. During that period, her friends console her not to think seriously the happening of the past and it was destined by god. On the fifth day, some women of bride side would come and take away her friends from the house of the groom. It is also believed that it redeems the sins committed in the past life.

2.4.8 Duida Keimei (reconciliation ceremony)

It is a rite to purify the unholy union of man and wife and to neutralize the embittered relation between the two families. All the marriages other than Khamthan (marriage by engagement) need this rite. It is usually performed after a few days or months or years of the marriage. The marriage without the consent of parents or against the wishes of the parents often involves hatred, ill feelings, misunderstanding and many more things between the two families or villages. It is believed that the performance of this rite subsides those feelings. In this sense, it is often said that it is a reconciliatory ceremony. Until and unless this rite was performed, the two families cannot visit to each other. A cock is arranged by the family of the girl. A pair of hoe bound tightly with a rope and a bottle of holy wine will be brought by the family of the boy (Kamson, 2013).
The priest rites the ritual chant as,

“Che aseimu kumeipure kumeipuineiso kapui kapu lat chumakna, bangton luirem niremloutina, kapui kapuruina kasonrei panreirui meinon phailoubaminta aseimu kakai gaanneitasho rong duiraang gaitung ponlana duida kei putongdithe; aseikumkhourui makai gaanneinina. Apou Ragwang tan chukum chu, Apou Ragwang tan rengkum rengna, panti nungsingna, katou kana gouna gana kum ponrana kakhu kakhipui kaibang shuna, kangang phangdonrempu shu, baangtan ditanmei shuna, dishang gaikum lung bamkandutho.”

It says, “Though the husband and wife went against the wishes of their parents and they were being cursed by their parents, brothers and sisters and other relatives, both the husband and wife have been purified in the name of Apou Ragang using the holy water of the village. From today, by the grace of Apou Ragang, let the husband and wife have a number of sons and daughters and live a peaceful, prosperous and plentiful life forever”.

2.4.9 Mandu

Among the Kabuis, the two families traditionally do not visit to each other until and unless the rite of Duida Keimei (reconciliatory ceremony in case of marriages other than Khatham, marriage by engagement) is performed. Accordingly they cannot also perform the ceremony of Kaman Manna Kapot Sumei (the giving and taking of bride wealth and Lupot, the moveable property brought by the bride to the husband at the time of marriage). So, unfortunately if the wife died before the performance those rites, the brothers or relatives of the deceased wife have the right
to demand the price of the bone which is locally known as Mandu. McCulloch writes, “On the death of a man’s wife, the extra ordinary practice exists of taking from her husband “Mandu” or the price of her bones”. If he be alive, this will be demanded by her father in fault of the father by her nearest of kin. Mandu is also payable on the death by her children (Kamei, 2004).

The brothers or relatives of the deceased wife usually kill a pig while demanding the bone price. This is traditionally known as Theigui. The relatives of the man and wife used to talk about the Mandu before eating the food. And traditionally in the past, the bone price was fixes at one buffalo. However, sometimes, the payment of Mandu may be resolved just having a cup of tea or a meal. And traditionally it is verbal, not mandatory. This practice is one of the most extra ordinary peculiarities of the Kabuis and some scholars often consider it as a part of bride wealth. Once Mandu has been paid and taken the traditional relation or alliance between the two families came into an end. It is locally called Laoreithing Satmei (the end of the alliances or relations). Therefore, it is generally not demanded. Notwithstanding, no Mandu is payable when the wife is killed by enemies or wild beast or whose death has been caused by any swelling or the small pox or the cholera (Kamson, 2013).

2.4.10 Incest taboo or prohibited marriage

Among the Kabuis, there are some marriages which are socially disavowed and not sanctioned in the society. Breaking the rules of clan exogamy usually gets the curses of God, they believe. Such marriage not only brings biological defects to their offspring, the couples are usually hostile with thunderbolt, tigers or other wild beasts. Some of the marriages like Tanpui Tanpu Noukao (marriage between brothers and sisters or parallel cousin marriage), Tankhi (marriage between a brother’s son and a
sister’s daughter or reverse Mother’s Brother’s Daughter marriage or FZD marriage), *Puna Puina Kaomei* (marriage to his / her own daughters or sons), *Tanan Kaomei* (marriage of his own aunt or his own daughter in-law, marrying of a mother and a daughter to two brothers or marrying of two sisters to a father and a son, *Kaikang Khatnakhou Bamchammei* (marrying of two sisters to two brothers), etc. are strictly prohibited among the Kabuis. *Langsang Bamkhekmei* (the marrying of two men to each other sisters) is tabooed because it breaks the rules of matrilateral cross cousin marriage.

In case of parallel cousin marriage, the garments of the spouse are burnt to ash at the village northern gate by the elders of the *Pei* which is locally known as “*Maikhounmei*”. The parents of the groom have to pay a fine one big pig for violating the rules of clan exogamy. This is traditionally known as *Long Gairak*. The family also has to give a cock for cleaning the village and calling the souls. Apart from that, the society put various socio-religious sanctions to the spouses as a form of punishment in the society. For instance, he cannot hold any post of the *Pei*. He cannot perform the rites of *Rangpammei, Duikhun Khumei, Danshanpung Sommei*. Moreover, he can neither own any kind of social institutions (*Thien*) nor can he perform different feasts of merit like *Tarangkai Sumei* (construction of traditional ornamental house), *Maku Banru Dungmei* (celebration on the bounty harvest), *Bamzou Kimei* (promotional feast in the society), etc. (Kamson, 2013).

### 2.4.11 Divorce

There are two types of divorce. One is simple and verbal divorce and another is divorce by giving an iron hoe. The latter is very serious. It severs the relationship between two families and no chances for further reconciliation. The families are also
looked in despise way in the society. Divorce among the Kabuis, is usually applied giving a bottle of wine as petition to the Pei, the village authority. In the past, one who applied for divorce must pay a buffalo or a cow as Changamjang (compensation) to the divorced wife or husband. This is traditionally known as Kabanteng Goi Khat Taarouna. And if the compensation is given in cash it is locally known as Pheiran Sengor. So, in case the divorce is initiated by husband, he is to pay a sum of `10, 000 as compensation (Changamjang) to divorced wife and it is locally known as Goinaiman (the price of a cow). Nevertheless, if the divorce is initiated by the wife, traditionally she is to pay a sum of `8000 as compensation to her divorced husband which is locally known as Goichiman (the price of a bull). However, the amount is changed from time to time. Among the Kabuis, divorce may be one of the reasons like adultery, issuelessness (no children), intolerable cruelty, mental sickness and insolvency. Whenever the divorce is granted, traditionally the two elders from the Pei will escort the divorced wife to the house of her parents or brothers.

2.5 Economy

Kabuis largely depend on agriculture. They generally practice both shifting and terrace/wet cultivation simply in the forms of traditional means of production using simple implements like hoe, dao and axe for shifting cultivation. However, however, for wet cultivation, they use modern technology like power tiller, tractor, pump, etc. Kabuis too practice fishing and hunting too as an important means to support their livelihood. They do fishing in the forms of groups and individual using nets, bamboo baskets and even poisons made of tree barks. Hunting is also practiced actively which is not only for food supplement but importantly associated with the customs and traditions like war and festival. They hunt different types of
wild animals like deer, tiger, leopard, elephants, and etc. They hunt python even today as a part of a favorite sport which is even reflected in their folklore. The hunted wild animal and fish flesh were dried and smoked for the future use during scarcity of food.

In past, the trade was conducted through the barter system. They used to do barter with the neighboring communities like Angamese, Cacharis and the Meiteis. agricultural products such as raw cotton, ginger, chilly, etc. were exchanged for clothes, ornaments like brassware, cornelian beads, sea shell, as well as utensils, agricultural implements like hoe, dao, etc. Now the barter system of exchanged has been changed in the form of monetized with the introduction of modern economy. It gives a drastic alteration in the socio-economic life in particular and community life in general. In the traditional economic system, they worked in the field and produced to meet the domestic requirements. Whenever they had surplus in agricultural production, the village community expected the family to perform a feast of merit without the ideas of saving. Among the Kabuis, the wealth was measured in terms of cattle, mithun and metal heirlooms like gongs and dishes, and paddy was viewed in terms of money earning, spending and savings (Kamei, 2004). In short, their economy was always productive and self-sufficient. They lived an isolated, peaceful and blissful life.

Moreover, the Pei, (the council of elders) controlled the entire economic activities in complete harmony. When there was scarcity of food, or a famine or other natural calamity occurred, there was strong cooperative effort to provide food and shelter to the affected people through the clans and lineage. Their kinsmen and relatives stood by them. The Pei is now losing its autonomy with the introduction of
modern economic system in the society. The people have to pay house tax to the government. It multiplies extra burden in the struggle of individual family to survive.

What they have been domesticated for domestic consumption in the early days become the source of their income. In this modern world they purposefully planted Rice, Cotton, Ginger, Chilly Taro, Pumpkin, Turmeric, etc. for domestic consumption. People were heavily engaged in cottage industries like loin loom weaving, blacksmith and carpentry for domestic consumption as well as a part of subsistence economy. They produced clothes, basketry products made of bamboo and cane, and some blacksmith and carpentry products like hoe, dao, spear and wooden appliances. They also rear pig, cow, buffalo, and poultry for domestic consumption during the festivals.

They now try to produce the surplus to sell in the market. They planted vegetables like cabbage, potatoes, chilies, beans and pulses, brinjals, tree bean (*Perkia roxburgi*) and sugarcane of different types and qualities,. They produce different varieties of fruits like oranges, banana, pineapple and local apples. Oranges are widely planted in the Tamenglong areas. The oranges produced in these areas are of high quality and in great demand in the valley of Manipur. Trade in oranges becomes quite profitable. They also trade other products like mushrooms, taro, sweet potatoes, bamboo shoots and dried fish. They started the plantation of new wood species like teak, pine along with other exotic plants like eucalyptus, acacia and gulmohar in the private farm and forest as a part of supplementary economy.

Apart from that with the introduction of modern economy, there emerge a new tribal middle class of rich people such as businessmen, bureaucrats, and professionals like doctors, engineers, teachers, and contractors. Roads, electricity, water supply,
and new bus services are introduced in the country with the economic modernization. The educated, unemployed are also rising in dramatic rates. The land holding system has undergone changes from the community and lineage based land ownership to privatization with the coming of the private economic enterprises. Village industries have developed and new technology has been introduced in housing and agriculture sectors. Modern electronic gadgets like refrigerators, radio, television, motor vehicles, rice mills and computers are no longer luxurious amenities. Rather it becomes a basic necessity in the society. The gap between poor and rich thus became wider day by day.

The situation of poor Kabuis who live in the valley of Manipur is very crucial. They mostly live on the business of Zou (wine) brewing or producing. Besides a principal cultural food item, it also provides a livelihood to many Kabuis. There are different varieties of Zou namely Zouju or Charingzou (wine), Zoungao or Bulan gaimei (rice beer), Timpui or Kachingpui zou (rice beer), etc. They are basically prepared from different raw materials like rice, banana, pineapple, passion fruits, etc. with or without Khai, a raw material made of pounded rice and plant locally known as Khaiproibang(Albizia myriophylla Benthab) for speedy microbial actions in the process of fermentation. Apart from, brewing business, they also earn their livelihood by selling food items like Zeitin (a food item prepared from internal organs of a pig), Goigi Tam (chutney prepared with the skins of cow or buffalo), Gakjan-Goijan Taomei (deep fry of pork and beef), Gakjan-Goijan gan (curry of pork and beef), and etc³. And many of them support and maintain their families selling vegetables in the local market and running a small scale grocery shop as well.
2.6 Religion

Kabuis are polytheist. They traditionally worship Apou Ragang, the Almighty God and his other subordinate gods. With the introduction of Christianity in Manipur, most of the Kabuis who are living in the hill areas are converted to Christianity. However, the Kabuis living in the valley of Manipur are still maintaining their traditional belief system. Some of them try to revitalize the Heraka cult founded by Haipou Jadonang and Rani Gaindinliu. As a response to Christianity, Heraka cult was came into being mostly in the hill areas under the leadership of Haipou Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu, and Kabui Dharma Sabha and Tingkao Ragang Chapriak (TRC) in the valley areas of Manipur. Heraka literally means “pure” in Zeme. It believes in Tingong, the Supreme God who is the cause or the root of all creation, the creator of the universe. He is good and benevolent and is worship by all. The belief in the worship of one Supreme God by Heraka is based on a concept of monotheism. It does not worship smaller gods and deities. Genna were abolished. The mode of worship is very simple. It is in the form of prayer at the individual or community congregation singing the hymns in the praise of Tingang on every full moon day known as Bu-Pu-Ngai. It has a simplified the rites of birth, marriage and death. It is a reform monotheistic religion (Kamei, 2004).

TRC, a modernised form of indigenous religious movement, came into being in 1994 and its first ever temple at Chingmeirong, Imphal. The name itself derived from the name of the supreme God worship by the people. Kamei (2005) defines that Tingkao Ragang Chapriak is polytheism, a religion which worships many gods, goddess, deities though it gives great emphasis to the worship of the Supreme God.
It has henotheistic features and it believes in the Supreme God as the highest god out of the many gods. The doctrines of *Tingkao Ragang Chapriak* argue that *Tingkao Ragang* is the creator of the universe, gods and man. He is benevolent and protector of men. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. It believes in the existence of many gods and deities who are assigned by the heavenly God to look after the different aspects of the world, nature and humans.

It believes in the worship of the deities presiding over the villages and places (*Shong* or *Bambu*) to act as the guardian deities of man in a village. It also believes in the concept of ancestor worship, the performance of the rites of passage relating to the birth, membership of social institutions, marriage and death, concept of heaven, concept of sin which is traditionally known as “*Non*”.

There is also a Champa Society, a small denomination with strong beliefs in monotheism, belief in the *Tingkao Ragang* only (Kamei, 2004). They do not worship his subordinate gods.

### 2.7 Death

Many anthropologists write death as the last crisis in the life cycle of an individual and the general theory of the process of death is the separation of the soul from the body (Kamei, 2013). However, Kabuis believe that there is another world after death called Taroilam, the land of dead. It is also believed that everything is reversed. For instance, our right is their left or vice versa. A person is believed to go to the land of dead when they died or live permanently in *Rangangkai* (in the place of God) according to his/her deeds in the world. Hence, the dead person is buried with full traditional attires along with foods and paraphernalia. In a myth it is said that
dead person used to visit his home. One day, the dead father-in-law came home, when her mother in-law was not there, carrying his coffin on the head and wearing earth worms as ear rings. The daughter in-law had beaten him away from the home with Naphaobuilong, a bamboo bar use for ward off the birds or fowls while the paddy is exposed to sun. Since then, the dead person never visits home again. The belief is also supplemented by the tale of Meijipu who visited to the land of dead to meet his beloved deceased wife through the grace of Taroigong, a god presiding over the land of dead (Gonmei, 2003).

The funeral rites vary among different peoples and that further variations depends on the sex, age and social position of the deceased (van Gennep, 1960). Among the Kabuis, the death may broadly be categorized into two—such as natural and unnatural. And natural death is again sub-divided into three depending on his/her social position. They are, i) ordinary death (the death of ordinary person) ii) special death (the death of a person who successfully performed special religious ceremonies like Banru (celebration of bounty harvest), Tarangkai (construction of traditional ornamental house), etc. iii) Kamang Lamei and Ri Ngammei Ramthei (the death of the person who killed tigers or enemies in defense of their village.

The natural dead bodies are buried with a series of rites inside the village or in the usual burying place. And basically the unnatural death consists of the death killed by tiger or other wild animals, falling from the trees, drowning, killed by other persons or suicide by hanging, jumping from the trees or into the rivers. Apart from that, Nashi Theimei (the death of women during the delivery of a child) and Nabung Theimei (premature death of a child which includes the dead of a child before the rite of Najumgaimei, a rite to recognize a child as human being) are also considered to
be unnatural death. Generally their dead bodies used to bury outside the village. However, the dead body of Nashi Theimei used to bury inside the house or used to abandon the house and its contents completely (Hodson, 1911).

2.7.1 Dead disposal

The dead body is usually buried with a series of rites such as Kaholoumei (bidding farewell to the death by one of the elders), Gu Kaset Keimei the offering of ginger and wine near the hearth to the spirit of the dead person),iv) Khoirammei (the collection of Khoi bang or Chakhung bang for bathing and the latter turn away the flies from the dead body), Khulpaomei (offering of foods to the death digging a pit near bed of the dead body), Theipha Dapmei (offering of a hen or cock killed by beating on the ground mentioning the name of the dead person and usually cook by Kengiapei, the old women), Chakhul Poumei (conveying the information of the death to all the relatives living in different places sending two youths), etc.

Apart from that, it is a custom on the part of the family or lineage to offer Takan (an animal or a bird) as well as Theiguî (an animal or a bird) in case the deceased is a married woman and some portion of the cooked food are included in the making of Napdom (food packet for dead). It is done in the belief that the woman to be born again in her father’s lineage (Kamei, 2013).

The eldest son of the deceased or one of the family members initiates and decides the location of the grave by holding Laogai (an iron hoe) and offering wine to the dead. This is traditionally known as Tarou Phumei (locating the home of the dead). Traditionally speaking, the dead body is usually buried along with food packets and paraphernalia for using in the land of dead, Taroilam. They are, i)Phu
(one spade) ii) *Bang* (one dao) iii) *Bui* (one spear) iv) *Kah* (one basket used mainly by males in case the deceased is male) or *Karong* (one basket used mainly by females in case the deceased is female) v) *Bangkhoi* (one sickle) vi) *Napdom chanei* (seven food packets) vii) *Zoumu* (a bitter guard) viii) *Tu* (a necklace) ix) *Tangnu Tangben* (a set of loin loom weaving implements) x) *Ta* (a wristlet) xi) *Nukon Tadip* (an earring in case the deceased is a child) xii) *Shaobon* (one set of thorn to defense against the enemies) xiii) *Kharou Janrou* (a bone of fish or animal) xiv) *Goiphotasitthai* (a fruit to give to Jougangpu, a notorious monkey when he/she approached) (Gonthangmei, 1993).

_Thei napdom_ (food packet) is seven in number and believed to have it in different place on his/her journey to the land of dead, *Taroilam*. Accordingly, the first packet is for taking after crossing the boundary of village gate(*Rangbang Khou Tunimei Napdom*), the second for eating when he/she reached the big sitting seat (*Bamdondai*), the third for giving to those relatives died earlier who receives him/her, the fourth for eating at the time when he/she reaches at the bank of *Kanung Duipang*, (a bank of *Kanung* river), the fifth for feeding the dogs, the sixth for giving *Khannananun*, the children who died premature and the seven for those parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, who died ahead of him/her. The funeral ceremony ends with the rite of sanctification. Everyone who attends the funeral sanctifies his/her body by touching the lower jaw with *Than Zou* (holy wine) and *Ga* (a wild species of turmeric plant). This rite is locally known as *Garoumei* (sanctification of body using holy wine and *Ga*).
2.8 Feasts of Merit

Among the Kabuis, there are different forms of feast of merit such as Ragaidai Jeishanmei (worship of Ragang offering wine and animals), Maku Banru (celebration of bounty harvest), Tarangkai (construction of traditional ornamental house), etc. The worship of Apou Ragang, the almighty God and offering of wine (of different kinds) and animals are the common features associated with these ceremonies. Apart from that, feasting and presentation of gifts to the guests are also characterized the events. Some scholars describe it as one of the highest forms of worship of God.

There are different forms of worshipping of Apou Ragang, these are, 1) Bu-Kaomei 2) Ragaizou Jangmei 3) Ragangjang Lamei 4) Bamzou Kimei 5)Ragaidai 6) Ragaidai Muleng 7) Mulengdai 8) Maku Baanru 9) Tarangkai 10) Kaichangkai 11)Lakpuikai 12) Hoikai 13) Shenlonkai 14) Thingukai 15) Beijikbungkai 16) Khongkai 17) Apuilekai(Chonglenkai). Apou Ragang pleases with these prayers. However, of these, Maku Banru is one of the most prevalent forms of worship of Apou Ragang.

The name Maku Banru itself derives from the term Banru (Ban=hand, Ru=ten). Literally it means the measured of ten hands. This feast of merit is usually celebrated when one gets bounty harvest. In the past, the harvest was often measured by stretching both the hands in the field. Thus, if the harvest reached the mark (Banru) or more than that, the family was expected to perform a feast of merit called Maku Banru. It is usually celebrated before the Gan Ngai and declared by one of the elders holding a Laogai (a hoe) at the courtyard of the host or village Pei in some villages. This ceremony traditionally associated with the offering of ten pigs or a
mithun (Bos frontalis) having a size of ten Ku (a traditional measuring unit), threshing of paddy and feasting of all guests who attend the function. Among the Kabuis, there is a traditional belief that if people are pleased, one who hosted the mega event received abundant blessings from the people and God, the Almighty and their soul will go to heaven and rest in peace when they died.

The performance of feast of merit serves two important functions in the society. First, it wins prestige and promotes status in the society. Whenever a family got a bounty harvest or became rich, the family usually performs a feast of merit to get the blessing from the villagers and Ragang, the Almighty God. Second, the performance of feast of merit cures all the sickness or illness. So the family is often expected to perform a feast of merit whenever one of the members of the family is sick with no hope of curing or some unusual things happened in the family like giving birth of a piglet without an eye or an ear or inflorescence of banana comes out in the middle of the body, etc. Such things are believed to be cured by the blessing of the fellow villagers and the Supreme God, Ragang.

2.8.1 Power and functions of Mairupou (priest) in the Maku Banru

Traditionally Mairupou is usually selected from the elders of the clan having a wife. He sits in near the fireplace and prays to God till the end of the event. He will be served by two clean men throughout the end of the ceremony. He cannot have any conjugal relations during the event. Before the ceremony, he worships apou Ragang offering a cock which locally known as Kapum Kanmei (self-protection). He also worships Bambu (presiding deities of the village) offering gingers.
He will initiate most of the important rites and remain sitting in the specified place. It is his duty and responsibility to *Apou Ragang* for not causing any troubles in singing, dancing, and any other ritual performances in the ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony, he will pray to *Apou Ragang* again by holding a *Laogai* (an iron hoe) and give blessing to the host. The same *Laogai* will be given to him.

### 2.8.2 Threshing of paddy in *Maku Banru*

Threshing of paddy is one of the main parts of the event. On this day, the father will give some paddy to his married daughters which are traditionally known as *Tansokmei*. It is a love and kindness to his married daughters. It also strengthens the marriage ties between the two clans. The daughters also bring some boiled rice and delicious curries of chicken, pork, beef, fish, etc. The food packets brought by the daughters or sisters are locally known as *Lu Napdom* (boiled rice packed brought by married daughters) and *Gandom* (curry packet brought by the married daughters) whereas the food packets brought by the host are known as *Kaipei Napdom* (boiled rice packet brought by the host) and *Gandom* (curry packet brought by the host).

When the threshing is over, the blessed paddy will bring to the host’s granary without any break with a rilai hoi (a traditional form of ho hoing especially in working). Taking a break on the way to granny loses the blessings, they believe. The blessed paddies are categories as *Gan gun* (paddy carried by young men), *Tuna gun* (paddy carried by young women) and *Jougangpu gun* (paddy carried by old men). It is believed that carrying such gun gets some blessings and so people usually try to
carry it. It is a paddy which is blessed by *Apou Ragang* and which makes the host prosperous and plentiful in the life.

2.8.3. *Tarangkai* (traditional ornamental house)

*Tarangkai Sumei* is also a form of feast of merit. It is believed that *Apou Ragang* first performed the celebration of *Tarangkai* and *Apou Tingpurengsonnang* followed him.

In the construction of Taraangkai, a mithun or buffalo is usually sacrificed in the name of *Apou Ragang*. The elders or functionaries will get some honor meats in such occasion. The two *Banja* will get one hind leg each whereas the two *Gansin Gandai* (elders who look after the task of preparing meat) will one front leg each in the ceremony.

The members of the *Khangchu* who are responsible for the erection of post for tying the mithun (*Bos frontalis*) or buffalo in the ceremony are given some meats like blood, cartilage bones, some muscles, etc. such shares of meat are locally known as *Kailenmei jan, Kaichei Kasemmei jan*. *Zousinmei* (the elders who are in charge of wine) also will get some honor meat. Some of the daughters and sisters of the host get some meat. But those who were absent are not counted. And all the relatives eat the heart of the mithun or buffalo to solidify the tied among the relatives and kinsmen.

2.8.4 *Nami Lumei*

It is also known as *zoulumei* (presentation of food and other items as gift). The family will get ready and brings all the food items at the courtyard with chanting *rilai hoi*. This ceremony begins with a prayer to *Apou Ragang* by offering *Zou* (wine).
And all the food items are distributed to all the guests mentioning the event and the name of the host.

Generally the food items consist of Ga (scrabs), Gushuk (grounded gingers), cooked blood of pig or buffalo or mithun, Bangdun (boiled square shaped piece of pork), Karou, (rib bones or cartilage bone of pig), Karei (intestines of pigs), Takin (a food item prepared out of rice, sesame seeds and salt), Ngakha kang (dried small fishes), Thunkang (dried bamboo shoots), Kharui kang (dried eels), Bi (Colocasia esculenta), Ru (yam), Rudeipui (sweet potatoes), Karuthu (seeds of beans), Pongma (pumkin), Tingsaisu (chili), Gankhengkang (Hibiscus cannabinus Linn), Makhounong (tobacco leaves), Langpan (cotton or cotton seeds), Teikok (salt plate), Lengtu (Elsholtzia blanda Benth), etc^4.

2.9 Polity

The myth of migration and settlement of Kabuis tells many more things about the community such as their world views, social and political structures of the community, etc^5. It is transmitted from generation to generation through legends, folk songs and folk tales. The process of migration and settlement involves with a series of rites and rituals. These rites and rituals are also believed to be taught by the Almighty God, Apou Ragang. They do not merely migrate and settle a place. They perform a number of critical traditional observations before the settlement. They meticulously examine factors like military security, the direction of the wind through the omen of fire and smoke, fertility of soil and good vegetation, availability of water and water supply, etc. They also try to find out whether the place is a disease prone area, Tarourongcho (potential graveyard), Maolongcho (the place where women are seductive and sexy) or fertile or favorable for plantation of rice, vegetables and
domestication animals. Apou Ragang also taught them to fulfill some more conditions before they settle down. He said that there must be a chief, norms, mores, laws and law court, blacksmith, shamans, medicine man, etc. for the survival of mankind. Only when these conditions are fulfilled, there will be a human settlement. They meticulously examine and analyze the weather condition and water supply to the village, airy and good air, direction of the wind and fire, before the settlement in the areas. When these conditions are fulfilled elders decide to migrate and settle the place. But they cannot decide themselves that who will be the Nampou (chief) and the Khullak (administrator) of the village. They leave it to the Ragang’s decision. He decides who is who in the village.

The Kabuis still believe and observe this ritual. They still perform some important part of it at the end of the Gan Ngai festival. Traditionally elders from the clans of Gangmei, Gonmei, Kamei and Longmei, and their fellow villagers involve in the migration and settlement of a new village. Before entering the new village, they perform a series of rites and rituals. The leaders of the clan members bring a cock each and keep in the basket of their own for easy identification. The priest will remain chanting different hymns of migration and settlement and fellow villagers out there will follow him the whole night. Meanwhile the leaders of the clan members will sleep with a prayer and leave everything to Apou Ragang’s decision. The person whose cock crows first will become Nampou (owner of the village), the second one will become Nampei or Namgakpou or Khullak (Administrator), the third one will become Duikhun Khumei (functionary in-charge of water) or Nammupou (functionary in-charge of agriculture) and fourth one will become Riganpou (functionary in-charge of warfare). It will be inherited from generation to generation hereditarily or among
the clansmen. It is not the individual choice; rather it is, they believe, the wish and decision of the Ragang, the Almighty God.

In the early morning, they will erect the pillars of the gate of the village which is traditionally known as Rangteng Khunmei in which the Nampou will hold the head and the Namgakpou the tail. Then, they will worship and sacrifice the cocks used in the divination to Apou Ragang. This ritual is traditionally known as Raren Loumei or Changlammei. The meat cooked in the worship should eat by Banja, Kangjapei and innocent children only. Married women, unmarried boys and girls, person below the rank of Ganchang are tabooed to have the meat cooked in the worship. After this ritual ceremony they can enter the village.

But according to Gangmumei Kamei (2004), the Nampou would raise an iron spear with cornelian beads (Tadantu) tied at the top of the spear. Everybody who entered into the village would touch the spear as a token of purification in the village entry. He will perform the Namgutmei ceremony (a new village entering ceremony). A black cow or a boar would be sacrificed and buried as offering to God Dimei, the wise and peaceful God of the underworld or the earth. The Gutam, the ginger grounded into pieces would be offered to the God.

All the settlers gathered at the village gate and the priests performed the ceremony. The cow dung in the stomach of the slain cow would be thrown in the four directions of the village. He would also perform the Khunnunmei ceremony. He would dig a hole in the earth (Khun) and place an iron hoe, intestine of the pig or cow and Gutam into the hole. He then prays for the welfare and prosperity, good harvest, fertility of the population and livestock. He would symbolically perform this ceremony every year in the festival of Gan Ngai. The priest or elders of the village
would locate a suitable place for Danshangpung or Thenpung, a sacred place for the
divination before starting anything. Traditionally this ceremony may also perform
when there is frequent unnatural dead, extreme fall in productivity, a high degree of
illness and diseases, loss of unity and integrity among each other, turmoil in law and
order situations, losing the values of religion and morality, extreme troubles,
inconveniences, hardships and loss of peace in every way. It is traditionally
considered as Kandi Karanna (superannuated and barren) (Kabui, 2012:3). In this
situation, the village priest will see one fine day and the rituals which have been
performed at the time of early migration and settlement will be performed again. It is
believed that the performance of this ritual brings refreshingly new fertile,
prosperous, plentiful and peaceful life to all. It is also believed to be very words of
Ragang, the Almighty God and he himself involves in the ceremony. And it is
therefore performed with outmost care. It is also believed that there will be no peace
and prosperity if there were some mistake in the performance of the ceremony. It has
to be performed again.

2.9.1 Pei: the council of elders

A Kabui village is managed and controlled by a council called Pei. It is a
council of elders. The Pei of the Kabuis is a form of gerontocracy par excellence.
Only the opinion of the heads of the clans, lineages or sub-lineages or their
representatives is counted. It is the highest and most powerful institution of a village.
It is believed to be a sacred institution of Apou Ragang, the Almighty God. All the
political, social, economic and religious life is being controlled by it. It deals with
how a new village establishes and what are its related rites, how the founder of the
village is being selected and how the village council is come into being, and what are
its compositions and functions. In fact, it is the sole authority in matter of all administrative, judicial, religious and military actions.

Nevertheless, to Meijinlung Kamson, a former Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, the present concept of Pei was newly developed one after the Anglo-Japanese war in Manipur. The term Pei derived from the word Kapeimei (dissection). In Kabui, Kapeimei means the dissection of animal into different parts or organs such as head, tail, ribs, hind leg, fore leg, liver, spleen, etc. for distribution among them. Similarly, the members of the Pei normally discuss and observe meticulously any matter put up to them before giving any judgment in the Pei. So the institution is traditionally known as Latkapeikai or in short it is known as Peikai or Pei, the place where any problem or issue discusses and resolves there.

Traditionally there were mainly three such institutions among the Kabuis. Ganchang and Banja Kaibang (a house of elders) is the highest and most important body of Pei. It consists of an even number of membership, for instance, 4 or 6 or 8 in number. The resolution of disagreements in marriage, extra marital relations, and divorce, trial of murder, arson and demolition of one’s house, distributions of shifting lands and religious affairs like Thousumei (a prayer or worship) and declaration of the performance feast of merit in the village. These are the realm of Ganchang-Banja Kaibang. Next to Ganchang Kaibang is Khangchu (boy’s dormitory). This institution takes care of all the military services like to defense the village against the attack of enemy and to attack the other village.

In the festival, the members of the Khangchu take the responsibility of decorating the village, beautification of the village, of catching and killing of the pigs or cows for the festival, preparation and participation of long jump and short put, etc.
It has its own power to resolve any sorts of disagreements and disputes among the members of the Khangchu.

And every institution must try to resolve any disagreements and disputes among themselves. And in case it is beyond its power to resolve it will appeal to a higher institution such as Ganchang Kaibang for further trial and judgment. Third one is Banja Kaibang. This institution takes care of all the religious affairs in the village. They perform prayers like Raren Loumei (to worship seven brothers of Ragang and neighboring deities), Bukaomei (calling of soul), Chusku Garoumei (resolving disputes by taking oath to Ragang), Rasrei Kathaopatkhang (to ward off evil spirits), Mun Danmei (to pray for redeeming the cursing to one another) in the village when there were frequent dead of villagers, sickness and epidemic diseases, frequent fights and disagreements among the fellow villagers. In short, Banja controls all the spiritual and religious affairs in the village.

In the past, every institution had its own responsibilities and power. For instance, when there is a problem in Khangchu and could not resolve it in the Khangchu itself, it first goes to Ganchang Kaibang for the resolution. In this sitting, Khangchu Ganpi (Khangbon) is compulsory to present there. If the Ganchang Kaibang failed, it again goes to Banja Kaibang for a final decision. It is a highest joint sitting in a village. And both the Khangbon and Ganchang must present the sitting. They are the representatives of their respective institutions. But Banja are independent in these matters. This tripartite sitting is locally known as Pei. This sort of proceeding is long and time consuming. They often skip the process and directly come to the Banjakai (the house of elders of the village) for trial. So people now assume that Banja is the only Pei in a village. Among the Kabuis, the Mathenmei
Kaibang traditionally looks after by the house of Gaanchang, Luchu by Khangchu and so does Kengjapei Kaibang by Banja.

However, most of the powers have now been concentrated in the Banja Kaibang. When one talks about the Pei, the supreme body in a village, it now refers to Banja Kaibang. In the Mundanmei prayer of a person or a family, it is compulsory to reach foods to these three institutions such as Banja Kaibang, Ganchang Kaibang, and Khangchu. However, foods are not given to those institutions like Luchu (girls’ dormitory), Mathen Kaibang (house of married women) and Kengjapei Kaibang (house of old women). These institutions are not Munkai, i.e. these institutions have no say in the village administration.

On the top of that, age and sex are also important criteria to become a member of the Pei. The members of the Pei are selected from the elders of the village. Traditionally the Pei consists of Nampou (owner of the village), Nampei or Namgakpou (administrator of the village), Nammupou (functionary in-charge of agricultural rites), Duikhun Khumei (functionary in-charge of water and water supply), Taku or Chaku (priest and the eldest in the village), Pei Kumei (the elders of the village council from the age group of Ganchang- Banja or a man qualified to be an official of the Pei), and finally Changloi (Advisor-assistants).

Nevertheless, the introduction of political control of Meitei kings involves with a change in the nomenclature of functionaries of the village and at the same time introduced some new terminology for the functionaries of the village as well. For instance, Khunbu for Nampou (owner of the village), Khullakpa for Nampei or Namgakpou (administrator of the village), and some new functionaries like Luplak Mantri (functionary assisting the Khullakpa), Meitei Lambu (functionary to deal with
the Meitei/Meitei kings), were coming up in the Pei of the village. On the top of that there is also a change in the power and functions of the Nampou and Namgakpou (Kamei, 2004).

2.9.2 Qualification for the posts of Nampou and Nampei

Among the Kabuis, generally a consanguine or incestuous marriage person cannot hold any posts in the society. The persons who are going to be the Nampou or Namgakpou must have a wife and physically fit. A mentally and physically handicap person can neither be a Nampou nor Namgakpou of a village. They believe that if the village is ruled by a widower Nampou or unmarried man Nampou, then the village will be full with widowers and unmarried in the society. On the top of that he will perform the ritual of Rangpammei, the ceremony performed at the time first migration and settlement of Kabuis, every year in the festival of Gan Ngai. He will start with every inevitable ritual in the village. The tasks of Khun Nummei, Rang pammei, and Duikhun Kadengmei are unavoidable responsibilities of the Nampou in a village. He will perform the ritual of Laothakmei and in case he is absent, Namnuupou performs the ritual. In the night before the ritual of Laothakmei, he will not sleep with his wife. He will sleep on a clean bed and in the next morning he rises without any words and performs the ritual of Laothakmei. A widower or physically unfit might have some inconvenience in performing those responsibilities and ritual practices in the village.

So, traditionally the fellow villagers will help him to get married within five days in case the new Nampou is unmarried. Nampou is basically selected from the age group of Banja. Nevertheless, if need be, it is often selected from one of the members of the Khangchu. And he must belong to the clan of Nampou. His post will be inherited to the eldest son in case the father died when he was holding the post. In
this way, it is hereditarily transmitted from one generation to another. The post of Nampou, Nampei, Duikhun Khumei, Nammpou and Taku are the most important and the highest social space in the society.

2.9.3 Power and Functions of the Pei

It is a collective supreme body of a village. Though it is represented by all the heads or representatives of the clans, lineages or sub-lineages it is normally administered by the chief of the village or the founders of the particular village.

All the secular functions like general administration, judicial and social practices are under the control of the Nampou (Khunbu) and Nampei (Khullakpa) of the village while the religious affairs are controlled by the Taku or Chaku. The Taku used to occupy a high position in the administration of the village as well. Even the Nampou and Nampei had to accept his primacy, that he still holds an important position in the village. He used to control most of the social and religious functions in the village. He therefore may, sometimes, regard as the head of the village Pei and Pei as a form of theocracy (Kamei, 2004). Nampou and Nampei will take care of the village administration where the Nammpou, on behalf of Nampou, takes care of ritual activities related with the agriculture in the year. In case there was no Nampou, the Nampei or Namgakpou will chair the session in the Pei.

Most of the decisions are taken by the Nampou and Nampei in the village. Once the decision has taken, it is the duty of the Namgakpou (Nampei) to make known all the fellow villagers. The Nampou will germinate the paddy for plantation for first time before anybody else in the village. It is a tradition. And similarly, he will reap the paddy first. After him, Nammpou will do the same. In the past, they
used to perform a prayer to goddess of paddy for more production and prosperity in the family and village. They used to erect a pillar and some bunches of paddy were hung there and worship there killing a cow or a pig. They believe that if the *Nampou* cursed the village, the village will ruin. So the *Nampou* is very important in a village. A village without a *Nampou* is not possible. Even if he migrated to other village, the fellow villagers used to try to convince him and bring him back to the village again. He is believed to be chosen by God, the *Ragang*.

And similarly, Makuga Gonthangmei, a retired officer, Nagaland Civil services, Nagaland, put that *Nampou* is the executive head of the village as well as of the *Pei*. As an executive head of the village *Pei*, he exercises full power of the village and all the actions taken by him in the name of Pei. His status was as good as the governor of an Indian state and the *Pei* authority was like the members of council of ministers. In the village administration, he used to pass orders after the consultation and discussion with the other members of the *Pei*. He used to execute and perform any action on the behalf the village by himself or through *Namgakpou* or *Nammupou* by verbal orders announced to the villagers. In the past, he had the privilege to open or inaugurate any functions of the village like spiritual ceremonies, sacrifices, festivals, traditional and cultural dance, games and sports, etc. in the village (Gonthangmei, 2007:63-64).

Traditionally *Nampou* (*Khunbu*) and *Nampei* (*Khullakpa*) were the heads of the village. The two officers were almost equal in social and ritual hierarchy and normally addressed as the *Nampou- Nampei* or the *Khunbu-Khullakpa* in Meitei language. But the office of the *Khullakpa* became more important to the British ruler or king of Manipur.
Though *Nampou* is the owner of the village, the state sponsored *Khullakpa*, the administrator of the village, was given a greater importance by the state. In most cases, both *Khullakpa* and *Khunbu* existed. Exceptionally in some villages, the *Nampou* was appointed as the *Khullakpa*. The question of power relation between *Khunbu* and *Khullakpa* turned out to be a bone of contention when the Manipur Hill Areas Village Authority Act, 1956 was introduced.

According to this Act, the *Khullakpa* or the administrator of the village has been made the ex-officio Chairman of the Village Authority. The Law Department of the Government of Manipur nevertheless, issued an order that *Khunbu* and not the *Khullakpa* shall be the Chief and the ex-officio Chairman of the Village Authority (Kamei, 2004).

Though there is some controversy in the power equation between the *Khunbu* and *Khullakpa*, the *Pei* still functions as the most powerful body in the village. It maintains social cohesion, decides areas for shifting cultivation, announces the dates for agricultural operations, *gennas* and punishes the violation of it. It collects rents from the tillers of the agricultural fields. The *Pei* has the sole authority to decide on any vital matter and in course of time their decisions become a customary law in the village (Kamei, 2004).

It is the wielder of all administrative, judicial, religious and military power. It controls the general administration of the village and functions as a court of justice. It decides on disputes, criminal civil cases based on the customary laws. The *Peikai* is believed to be the house of God and justice is expected from the members of the *Pei* in the discharge of their judicial functions. All the cases are tried in the *Pei* except the
emergency cases like murder, killing, etc. which are settled in the household of the killed. The *Pei* usually tries to intervene and negotiate to such cases in time.

According to the customary laws of the Kabuis, the boundary disputes in respect of paddy fields or shifting lands, adultery, Murder, cutting the house of another person, cutting the village gate, calling somebody as vampire and beggar are classified as crimes in the society. The banishment and excommunication is the severest punishment in the society. When the banishment is inflicted not only upon the culprit but also upon his close relatives according to the severity of the crime, it is traditionally known as *Kapu Phukmei*, the eradication of the clump.

Besides judiciary functions, it regulates and controls the social institutions like the dormitories and different age-sex organizations of the elders and married women. The *Pei* appoints the owners of the dormitories (*Khangchu* and *Luchu*) and other social institutions like *Ganchang-Banja Kaibang* (house of the old man), *Kengjapei Kaibang* (house of old women) and *Mathenmei Kaibang* (house of married women).

The *Pei* is the supreme body that works to maintain cohesion and harmony in the functioning of these institutions. The strength and prowess of the village as military force, center of culture, religion and social discipline depends on the quality of the members of the dormitory and other organizations (Kamei, 2004). It supervises the defense and security of the village. In the early days, it had a supreme command over the fighting forces and decided on war, raids or defense of the village. All the member of the *Khangchu* other than *Khangbon* must be *Riphen*, the fighting force of the village and it used to lead by skilled and experienced warriors known as *Khangtan*. The group discusses the defense matters and submits their proposal to the *Pei* for approval. Once it is approved, they execute the plan under the leadership of
the Khangtan. At night, two Riphen will guard the village moving up and down and across it, and which makes a sense of security among the women and children of the village.

In the hill areas, the Pei regulates and manages the forest and lands for shifting cultivation, water supply, etc. There is a three-tier land ownership system in every village. The Nampou is the owner of the village land, Rampou, the owner of the clans land, and Laopou is the individual tillers of the cultivation fields. It also regulates the transfer of land within the village and does not permit the transfer of land to a person outside of the village. It maintains the village forests and forest lands for Jhuming in a particular year. It fixes the rents in the form of paddy payable by the tiller of the agricultural land to the land owner, Rampou and Nampou. In the valley areas, in some village it has been paid in cash. Moreover, the Pei regulates the cutting of timber from the village forest and takes the toll from the forest contractors.

Not only in the realms of judiciary and secular public administration in the village, have they also had the power to supervise the religious affairs in the village. So the Pei authority participate and supervise all the festivals and feast of merits like the Tarang Kaisumei, Banru, Matui, Mureng, Ragaidai Zeishanmei, etc. performed by the individual families and the dormitories in the village. The pollution or sanctification of the village is conducted by the Pei through the regular observance of Numei (taboo) and Neimei (observance). It supervises the performances of different ritual ceremonies like birth, marriage, dead, etc. in the village. It also performs a sacrifice for good harvest in the house of Nammupou. It is traditionally known as Napkaomei, a prayer for good harvest to Apou Ragang.
Though the Pei exercises its autonomy in all the affairs of the village, the power of the Taku cannot be denied. It usually works on his advice. It reflects the elements of theocracy (Kamei, 2004). All the religious customs and practices of the Kabuis are produced and reproduced through the Pei. It entrusts the priest and the elders to perform the religious rites connected with the community and individual welfare.

Politically Kabui women are still considering as lesser partners and inferiors. They are not counted in the process of decision making in the village. The members of the Pei are generally selected from the males only but not from females in the village. However, they sometimes, may influence their husbands in the process of decision making in the village.

Women are hardly come to the Pei. And if need be, they are called upon to ask question. But unnecessary they are asked and harassed in the Pei. It is the question of their prestige and images in the society. So, husband or one of the relatives will represent the wife or daughter in the Pei if they need interrogation. Women especially unmarried women who frequently come to the Pei for interrogation and all abuse or tarnish the dignity and prestige of the family and clans members in the society. So they are usually represented by clan’s members or husbands or fathers. If need be, they come with some of their mothers and grandmothers to give their statement in the Pei. They can come to the Pei but those who were frequent in the village Pei are looked in despise ways in the society.9

Traditionally women are not involved in the administration of the village. There is no women representative in Pei. Fathers and husbands are their representative. They have their own institutions to take of them. Mathenmei kaibang,
for instance, takes care of the grievances of married women in the village. Similarly the Kengiapei Kaibang and Luchu control their own affairs. Any problem will be discuss first in the institution concerned and inform matters to the authority of Pei. If a pig is killed in the Khangchu, the elders will get some honor meat.

2.9.4 Methods of trial in the Peikai

Anthropologists define that customary law is the written and unwritten rules which have developed from the customs and traditions of communities. So to become law, the customs and traditions must be known to the community. They must also be followed and enforceable in the community.

Accordingly the customary laws, among the Kabuis may be divided into two types. The first one deals with the civil cases like of marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, succession, land ownership right, property right, recovery of debt, refund of bride wealth, etc. and another one involves with criminal cases like assault, adultery, abduction, arson, kidnapping, marriage by forces, rape, theft, robbery, fighting, injury, hurt, grievous hurt, dacoit,, house breaking, etc. which are considered to be crimes among the Kabuis (Gonthangmei, 2007).

The trial is usually held in the village Pei. It will be presided by village Nampou and in the absence of him or his illness; it is usually presided by Namgaakpou (Khullaakpa). Any decision or judgment is taken by considering the facts and evidence put by complainant against the accused with certain witness. The complaint is being lodged by giving a bottle of wine or a pot of rice beer (Tingpui) in the Peikai.
On the received of the complaint or at the request of the complainant, a village elder will call a session immediately or fix a day, date and timing for trial and hearing in the *Pei*. Such announcement is usually done by *Taku* personally or beatings drum. All the parties and their witnesses are summoned to the *Pei* through the *Chaangloj*. The Kabuis traditionally adopt ordeal of God (*Sengding Dingna Rangam Jaomei*) as the best form of trial.

There are different forms of ordeal of God. They are, 1) *Duiilupmei* (diving), 2) *Kamangnei Sinmei* (to take oath by holding the tooth of tiger), 3) *Ganritao Sinmei* (to take oath by holding the thunder stone), 4) *Munlaineng Sinmei* (to take oath by holding landslide mud), 5) *Napsaam Loumei* (trial through boiling rice), 6) *Roidui Loumei* (trial by boiling eggs), 7) *Sengthingnui Sinmei* (to take oath by holding Sengbang), 8) *Tachubang Sinna Sengmei* (to take oath by holding the Tachubang), 9) *Pou Nimmei* (diving by using bamboo bar)

It is believed that if any one who is not ready to take the challenge or failed in the trial, and then he/she will be treated as guilty. The guilty has to pay the necessary compensation to the aggrieved party or family or person. The compensation may be in cash, cattle, immovable property or whatever as being decided by *Pei*.

In another system of trial, the elders in the *Pei* meticulously observe and discuss the statements and evidences with certain witnesses put up by the complainant and defendant in the *Pei*. Judgment will pronounce verbally in the presence of both the parties. Those who are found guilty will be convicted or fine and those who are not found guilty will be acquitted. This judgment is considered to be final and collective decision of the people. Nowadays, *Kabui Samiti* or *Zeliangrong Union* involves in resolving the cases like inter-tribal dispute, murder, succession, etc.
2.9.5 Forms of punishment

In the past, social deviance was controlled by imposing different forms of punishment to the guilty. There are different traditional forms of punishment such as, 1) Mat Tumei/Ronggailak (giving fine), 2) Douloimei (capital punishment), 3) Bang Tibaiemei (enslavement), 4) Charum Khapmei (compensation), 5) Khapat Loumei (ex-communication, expulsion), 6) Kaidoumei (demolition of house), 8) Kapi Gotkokna Kapheiso Lumlaimei (shaving head and naked parade in public), 9) Tan Phidokmei (payment by labor).

Some of them are still prevailing in the society. The Mat may be in terms of wine, pig, buffalo, mithun which are measured in bottle or pot, Ku (a traditional unit) and Kachei (length of a horn as a traditional unit) respectively. It has now been replaced by cash.

In the past, it is permissible to kill the accused person for the crime of theft, force marriage of other’s wife and murder before they were in the custody of Pei. The aggrieved husband had the right to demolish the house of the accused in case the life attempt of the accused was failed. There was also a tradition to enslave the guilty to the aggrieved family for his crime. But it has now been abandoned.

The Charum Khapmei (giving fine) is one of the critical forms of punishment and which is still practice in the society. It is a payment of compensation either in cash or movable or immovable property to the aggrieved family for the dead body.

Khapat Loumei (excommunication) is the most common and the most practicing form of punishment among the Kabuis. It is applied when a person violates the orders of the Pei.
And when a person committed a serious immoral crime and sin against the society and God, then the accused will walk naked and shave the head. In case, a person has not the capacity to repay his debt or of his forefathers or has no relatives to help him, the person is liable to work as laborer till the debt has been completely recovered. Nevertheless, the imposition of punishment to the guilty is not always homogenous. There is a slight variation from one village to another.

2.9.6 The other social institutions under the Pei

There are several other social institutions in the society. They are usually arranged in a hierarchical order and work under the supervision of Pei, the village authority. They are Nek Kaibang (the house of children), Khangchu (boys’ dormitory), Luchu (girls’ dormitory), Mathenmei Kaibang (the house of married women), Kenjapei Kaibang (the house of old women). The Nek kaibang lies at the lowest rung and does not count in the administration whereas the Pei is the highest administrative body in the village. In the village administration, Khangchu and Pei are very crucial.

Khangchu is an executive body whereas Pei is a law giving body in the village. The Khangchu will take care of military services under the supervision of the village Pei. The members of the Khangchu are arranged in a hierarchy. Traditionally the newly admitted boys in the Khangchu are known as Shingkhangloi (14-30yrs of age). It lies at the lowest rung in the hierarchy. Their main duty is to serve the elders in the Khangchu. They are controlled by some leaders known as Ganpi (30-50yrs of age). It has two categories. They are Phongchapmei (newly married who sleep at Khangchu) and Kaijipmei (those who have children and permitted to sleep at home). From the position of Ganpi, they will be promoted to Khangbon (50-60 yrs. of
They are selected from the persons who are the eldest among Kaijipmei. They are the elders of the Khanchu. Their minimum number is four in a village. Two of them will administer the Khangchu and other two of them will look after the administration of the Luchu. The elders who look after the administration of the Luchu are locally known as Tuna Munsinmei. After the post of Khangbon, they will be promoted to Gaanchang, the elders having the age of 60-70yrs or elders in between Khangbon and Banja having the age of 70-100yrs. The promotion of Ganchang is being decided by the Pei (council of elders). They are in the middle of the Khangchu and the Pei. The two Ganchang will look after the affairs of Mathenmei Kaibang (house of married women) and it is traditionally known as Lakpui Munsinmei. Then from the post of Ganchang, they will be promoted to the Banja. It is the highest rung of a hierarchy for male in the society. However, there are only four lines of promotion for female in the society. The new admitted girls are known as Tuna. From Tuna, they will be promoted to Tunapi (leaders of the girls), from Tunapi to Lakpui (married women), and from Lakpui to Kengiapei (old women).

Whatever the things decided by the Pei, will perform or execute by the Khangchu. All the youths in the village usually learned many more things such as discipline, war strategy, folk songs and tales, etc. in the Khangchu. It is traditionally known as Khangnarot (a traditional form of socialization). Whenever a villager took a head of an enemy or killed a tiger, he must announce it to all the villagers and village elders confirm it with incantation and invocation. All the men in the village who could hold weapon come and chop or hit the head by saying that I am also the one who could take the head of the enemy. Those who did not chop or hit the head of
the enemy are not allowed to participate in digging the grave of the person locally known as *Make Mare Pekna*.

It is believed that those who chopped or hit the head will be treated as they also took the head of the enemy. It assumes to be a perfect man in the society. The members of the *Khangchu* used to protect the person who killed or took the head of the enemy. All the villagers will remain awakening him for five days. He will observe food taboo. He must eat only boiled rice for five days. If he failed to do so, he will also die in the hand of his enemy.

And traditionally whenever a person killed an animal which may be a tiger or a python or a deer, he will not eat the animal. He must observe the same restriction imposed when one took the head of an enemy. A hind leg must be given to the *Nampou* and the rest will be distributed to all his sisters who got married, and to all fellow villagers. His sisters will bring some foods like wines, chicken for his brother. He will eat the food. It is believed that if he ate the game he killed, he could not kill animal anymore. The head of the animal will be hung at the door, he will pour wine on the head and pray and perform the ritual for another game.

2.10 Ethnic Affiliation and Identity Crisis

Identity is neither rigid nor concrete. It is like fluid in nature. Social scientists basically use three paradigms to explain the reality of this phenomenon: the primordial, the instrumentalist and the combination of the both. The first stream of thought believes that the ethnic differences among the people are the given one, and thereby inherited. These differences engender the form of ethnic conflict between the groups. The second stream of thought or paradigm believes that the ethnic differences
are not a given one; they are created by the elite, who could be politicians, teachers, religious leaders, etc. It manipulates the social cleavage for the attainment of their goal. Sometimes the ethnic differences culminate in the form of ethnic conflicts, riots, autonomy movement or insurgency. Besides, the bases of social cleavages, which are turned into ethnic groups, are not always real. Some of them are even invented or constructed by the elite. The third advocates the combination of the both. The first two approaches divide the issue into bipolarity rather than to address the issue.

The identity crisis within the same group of people poses a number of questions. The debates over the nomenclature of people whom the Constitution of India recognizes as Kabui become more and more complex. The nomenclature is challenged by a quarter of the same people who like to rename the tribe as Rongmei. The heat of the controversy is further complex with the formation of a larger identity of Zeliangrong that embraces three different tribes, the Zemei, the Liangmei and the Rongmei (Kabui). The nomenclature, Zeliangrong, is the combination of three syllables of the names of the tribes: Ze, Liang and Rong. Among the Kabuis (Rongmeis), it seems that pro-Kabuis adopt the first paradigm in retaining the name, Kabui; whereas pro-Zeliangrong individuals consider the second in asserting the new name of a larger tribe.

Tracing the history of the controversy is necessary in order to understand the dynamics of the debate over the identity and its dynamics. On 15 February 1925, there was a first ever formal conference of the tribe and discussed the need for unity of their tribe, uniformity of their customary laws and the development of Hao-Keithel, (literal meaning, the tribal market) near Majorkhul, within the heart of the Imphal town. It was established in 1911. The members present in the conference
continue to hold meetings, conferences etc. Meeting was convened, at least once, every month. Such meeting was known as Agaangmei (literally, the public) meetings (Union, 2009 reprint)

In course of time, it gradually develops to be an apex body of the tribe. It settled inter-village disputes, acted as the apex body to deal with cases under customary laws and acted above the Peikai (village authorities) of individual villages. It is true that prior to this body, inter-village feuds among themselves were order of the day, without any common authority to settle the disputes. It was the response to the new challenges that had been brought by the colonial rule and its administration. To stand united for facing the colonial imposition on the tribe, formation of the apex body was historical necessity. Initially, the association had no formal office and structure as well as no written constitution. The headmen of different villages took collective decision. The customary laws were codified under the leadership of the association. The code was recognized by the British administration in the State. It was used in the adjudication and settlement of tribal cases. As Kabui villages were distributed in the hill and plain areas of the State and they were far away from each other, the association could not convene meeting every month. At interval times, they sat in different villages. The sitting held at Tamenglong came to be known as Kabui-Chingsang. Likewise, for Imphal sitting, they called Agangmei.Kabui Chingsang functioned as regional units of the same body.

In 1934 (March7-8, Wednesday-Thursday), the regional units both Agangmei and Kabui Chingsang organized a conference at Keishamthong Kabui Khul, a Kabui colony in Imphal. The conference announced that the association would be formally known as Kabui Samiti. The Kabui Samiti convened another conference at the same
place on 21-22 October 1934 to facilitate the King of Manipur Maharaj Churachand Singh on his achievement of the British title, KCSI as well as to normalize the misunderstandings and ill feelings existing between the hill people and plains people since the execution of Haipou Jadonang, a Kabui leader, by the British government in 1931.

Like the parental association, Kabui Samiti had no formal secretary or president in the beginning. One Atorsing, one of the main conveners of the first Agaangmei conference of 1925, used to sit as the chairman in most the meetings of Samiti. In order to overcome the inconveniences in functioning, Kabui Samiti had to divide two administrative regions on geographical basis. The Kabui Samiti in valley region came to be known as the Imphal Sadar Area Kabui Samiti with its office at Imphal. This Samiti consisted of fifteen members nominated from the headmen and prominent leaders of Kabui colonies in Imphal. Similarly another set of fifteen members nominated from the hill areas functioned as the West Tamenglong Area Kabui Samiti with its office at Tamenglong HQ. Each unit had the full powers to function as Kabui Samiti in their respective areas. Its decisions were binding to all the Kabui villages. However, on rare occasion, the Kabui Samiti had joint meeting to discuss very important issues.

In 1940, there was a big conference of the Samiti at Sawombung Kabui Khul, a village about 12 km from Imphal, on the agenda of reformation of social customs in the tune of changing times and development of modern education. Soon after the joint meeting, the Samiti became defunct for more than three years during the Second World War. The war brought a drastic change in the State; the Imphal valley witnessed a series of bombings in 1942. In 1945, the Samiti came back again with a
new name, as *Kabui Association*. This time, the Association had its written constitution for the first time. Very soon, the Association had to change its name again as *Kabui Naga Association (in September 1945)*, following an allotment of a plot of land in the name of Kabui Naga Association, by one Steward, the then Political Agent of Manipur. This Association was also divided into Hill area and Plain area having an area committee each. Each area was further sub-divided into Northern and Southern division with one division committee each. All the committees were elected bodies under its Constitution.

On 15 February 1947, a conference of representatives of different Kabui villages at Keishamthong, Imphal was organized. The Conference resolved to form an organization comprising the entire Kabuis of Manipur and *Kacha Nagas* of Naga Hills of Assam. To bring different cognate tribes of this region, the Conference coined a new nomenclature as *Zeliangrong* to cover the Kabui and Kacha Naga (namely *Zemei, Liangmei, Rongmei, Puimei*, etc). The new organization formed was named as *Zeliangrong Council*, with its Head Office at Kohima (now in Nagaland) and branch offices at *Imphal, Tamenglong* (both in Manipur), *Haflong* and *Birema* (both in Assam). the *Kabui Naga Association* meeting at Dailong on December 14, 1947 also opted for the newly coined nomenclature(Zeliangrong) and accordingly changed its name as *Manipur Zeliangrong Union (MZU)* but its Constitution and hierarchy of offices remained as same.

The Union started taking active role in the political activities of the State. They even contested and won 2(two) seats (Kamei, 2004:193-194) in the Assembly Election of Manipur in 1948, under the Manipur State Constitution 1947. It also tried to explore all the possible means for their political future in post-colonial period. In
the wake of Naga armed struggle for independence started in 1950s, they discussed to
organize over ground civil organizations. But, it did not come into light after the
Annual General Meeting of MZU on February 26, 1960 at Zoute-Pabram. The
Meeting aimed for wider political identity and hence the name MZU also changed
into Zeliangrong Naga Union by omitting the word Manipur and inserting the term
Naga (Kamei, 2004; Union, 2009 reprint).

On March 14, 1976, ZNU and Maram General Board (the Maram is another
scheduled tribe in Manipur) jointly performed a customary rite of Chuk Sumei at
Majorkhul for unification of both the tribes as one people of same origin. They tried
to replace the name of their tribes as Maram+ Zeliangrong or Haomei (Union, 2009
reprint).

Again, on 15 October 1976, the special meeting of ZNU at Longmai (Noney)
discussed the proposal for replacement of the nomenclature of Zeliangrong by the
‘original’ name- Haomei/Hamei. The proposal was rejected by many and there was
no other alternative name to cover these cognate tribes, they retained the name,
Zeliangrong. However, on 26 February 1985, ZNU at Chingmeirong unanimously
passed a resolution to use Hamei (Haomei) as common name for the tribes: Zemei,
Liangmei, Rongmei/Kabui, Puiron, Kourang, Maram and Thangal which were
kindred tribes of the same origin. They also passed another resolution to bring out a
common language for Zeliangrong based on the existing languages of its ‘sub-
groups’. However, they did not adopt a specific resolution towards the changes under
discussion. In 1995, the Union Assembly held at Jalukie, a village in Nagaland,
approved to change the name ZNU into Zeliangrong Union by omitting the word
“Naga” from it, as proposed by a local organization called Zeliangrong Hojam.
Apart from the flip-flop issues in the nomenclature of the organization, some critical problems arise as it does not cover some of the sub-groups of the ‘tribe’ in Zeliangrong. In 1959, the Puimei group (of Manipur) made a formal complaint that the newly coined tribal nomenclature, Zeliangrong covered only Zemei, Liangmei and Rongmei, the group, Puimei was left out. They demanded to include their name Pui in nomenclature and suggested the name as Zeliangrong+pui. Interestingly, the executive members of MZU appreciated the Puimei’s argument and clarified that Zeliangrong was the name of the organization and the name of tribe is Hamei/Haomei. The committee decided to adopt the true name Hamei/Haomei for the name of the organization, too, in the next Annual General Meeting of the Union. For time being, the Puimei did not say anything against the Zeliangrong movement. In 1998, the Union Assembly at Namdailong, a village in Assam, again reaffirmed the earlier resolutions in the favor of Hamei/Haomei nomenclature. But the issue is still unresolved.

2.10.1 The Inpui case

The Inpui tribe has a population of 11,000 persons, mainly concentrated in 15 villages: 9 in Tamengrong and 3 each in Imphal and Senapati districts. They also live in Nagaland. In the past, several Inpui villages had totally assimilated into other neighboring tribes. It is noteworthy that the Inpui tribe is constitutionally recognized under the name Kabui. It is ambiguous and controversial; moreover the tribe does not like to be recognized in such a way. Hibou Khumba, a principal Kendriya Vidyalaya Sivasagar, Assam, was of opinion that, according to the legends and origin myth of the Inpui, the cave of Ramting Kabin from where the Inpui originated, was located in Makuulongdi near the present Oaklong village under Mao-Maram sub-division in the
Senapati district, Manipur. The original men and women settled there for many generations. After many generations, their population increased and hence they migrated from their original settlement to other places.

Taking a stand that the Inpui tribe is a separate tribe, they formed an association under the banner of *Inpui Group* (March 20, 2002). The Group later developed into the Inpui (Kabui) Naga Union, Manipur and Nagaland. They claimed that ‘Inpuirwan’ is the original name of their tribe. The names like Kowpoi, Kaupui, Koupooee, Kapui, Kabui, Puiron, Pooeeron, Puimei, Inpuimei, etc. are misnomers of the tribe. Abungswan, a *lambu*, an administrative post, from Haochong village, migrated to Yurembam village, Imphal, was believed to be the first Inpui who got formally registered as Kabui under the government of Manipur (Khumba, 2012). As the Rongmeis (who are identified as the Kabuis) were dominant group, the Rongmei culture dominated those Inpuis who married Rongmei women. This created the problem of identity crisis among the Inpuis. Inpuis thought that the Rongmei, by no means, can be Kabui. The Sungbu is the tribe which is now known as Rongmei. To them, Kabui is another name of the Inpui and Kabui is different from the Rongmeis. This is, however, palatable among the Kabuis though there is a debate among them over the name of their tribe. Some like to be called Rongmei and some other like Kabui. But, the stand of the Inpui is different from this debate. To them, Inpui is the real Kabui. Even if Inpuis are dominated by Rongmeis because of great differences in population, leadership and education between them that Inpuis are the real Kabui cannot be denied (Khumba, 2012).

The Inpui argument is that the term Kabui is derived from Inpui which means big house in Inpui language. Gangmumei Kamei (2004), a renowned historian,
however, denying that Inpui is Kabui, is of the opinion that the Kabui is an old name referred to in several historical literatures, literary texts and chronicles of Manipur. The claim that Puimei was older than Kabui is simply baseless. The Puimei origin of the Kabui will put the Rongmei out of historical texts; this is criminal and a historical crime. To him, in course of time, the three composite groups have developed their own written literature. Gradually, they began to move for a separate linguistic identity and finally their separate ethnic identity (Kamei, 2004).

Moreover, in Manipur, the name Kabui is a Meitei (the dominant group in Manipur) word, used as early as the first century AD. The term Kabui or Kapui has been extensively used to mean ‘Rongmei’ people in the chronicles of Meiteis before the coming of British (Kamei, 2004). Therefore, the claim that Kabui was originated from Puimei is a wrong proposition. The Puimei consists of people of Liangmei and Rongmei origin who are ethnically common but speaking a different dialect (Kamei, 2004).

In an interview with Makuningpu Kabui, General Secretary, Kabui Samiti, Manipur and D L Kabui, President, Kabui Dharma Sabha, Manipur, they said that Inpuis are the people who settled down in Manipur since long time back. They were probably recruited from somewhere in Burma by the then King of Manipur and helped in the military services of the then Kings of Manipur. They got married with the Kabui women and lived in Manipur since then. They further said that, though there are similarities in culture, customs and traditions, they are linguistically more akin to Kuki-Chin groups. They are now concentrated in nine villages in Imphal, Senapati and Tamenglong districts of Manipur.
On 1 December 1963, in the Naga Hills District before the statehood of Nagaland, the Kabui was recognized as a scheduled tribe. In Nagaland, Zemei and Liangmei were recognized as Scheduled Tribes, not the Rongmei as some of the Rongmei leaders refused to accept their position under the name, Kabui. They argued that it is a named given by the Meiteis and the British rulers. The controversy was centered on the origin and connotation of the name Kabui. Unlike the stand of Professor Gangmumeei Kamei, some of them (Rongmei) even opined that the name Kabui should mean only the Puimei.

On the other hand, the Puimei/Inpui claim was based on the fact that the word ‘Kabui’ is derived from the ‘Puimei’. The word Kabui therefore, should mean only the Puimei. They demand to recognize their tribe as Puimei or Inpui instead of the entry as Kabui in Schedule List of Indian tribes.

The formation of Zeliangrong and its movement have lifted the position and identity of the cognate tribes (Zemei, Liangmei and Rongmei); however, it gave a serious blow to the identity of the smaller Inpui tribe. In fact, the Inpui tribe objected the non-inclusion of Inpui tribe or Kabui on the day of formation of the acronym Zeliangrong at Keishamthong (Imphal). It was not heard properly. Thereafter the Inpui tribe had formed a separate organization under the banner of Inpui Group which later on developed into the Inpui Naga Union, Manipur and Nagaland. Some Inpui leaders feared that the Zeliangrongs would completely dominate them and assimilate them.
2.10.2 Rongmei-Kabui cleavage

There was no Rongmei-Kabui divide in the early days. They are all Kabuis. During the colonial period, the hit and trial methods in British administration gave a brutal blow not only to the administration but also to the relationship between different sections of the people. It also affected the socio-economic life of the people.

As a part of their policies, the tribal people living in the hill areas were totally Christianised with some economic incentives and western ways of life. They gradually converted to Christianity thereby giving the hills and plains divide in general (Hindus in the plain and Christian in the hill areas) and Christian and non-Christian in the same society. They started giving western education through missionary works and charity. They trained many people and some of them become fully fledged evangelists. They worked tirelessly in spreading the Christian doctrines in different part of the Manipur. The converted individuals had different perspectives and world views from those who were not.

The Kabuis living in the valleys were not ready to adopt Christianity. It might have been due to the limited activities of Christian missionaries in the valley areas under a British administrative policy. Rather they were struggling to maintain their own traditional belief system and ways of life.

The Kabuis living in the hill areas were readily Christianized. The first Christian church in Kabui areas was established in 1914 at Keishamthong Kabui Village, Imphal. One Maipak alias Namrijinang and his wife were converted to Christianity in the same year. He was the first ever Christian convert among the Kabuis (Kamei, 2004).
As a response to Christianity, there are Heraka cult mostly in the hill areas under the leadership of Haipou Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu, Kabui Dharma Sabha and Tingkao Ragang Chapriak (TRC) in the valley areas. TRC came into being in 1994 and its first ever temple at Chingmeirong, Imphal. It is name after the supreme God worship by the people. Tingkao Ragang means the Heavenly God, the Supreme God. They also believe in the existence of many gods and deities who are assigned by the heavenly God to look after the different aspects of the world, nature and humans. Culture and religion are inseparable in this belief system. Culture is the vehicle of religion. Culture is a form of worship of God. The festivals performed by the Zeliangrong people through the ages are the cultural and aesthetic expressions of the worship of the divine (Kamei, 2005). They formed the State Level Gan Ngai Celebration Committee, Manipur. They celebrate it at the State Level every year and enlisted in the state holiday list. They are also trying to temporallize their belief system and to assert their identity. There are TRC temple in Assam and Nagaland.

2.10.3 Rongmei on Kabui

Makuga Gonthangmei (1993) claimed that Gongphungring is the place of origin of the Rongmei Nagas according to the legends of their forefathers. It is located at Makuilondi or Makhel near Oaklong under Mao-Maram sub-division. In the ancient past they live inside the earth and in course of time men emerge out of the earth through a hole of the cave called Ramting Kabin which is probably located at Gongphungring. He believed that the three kindred tribes of Zeliangrong namely Zemei, Liangmei and Rongmei like other preceding Naga tribes such as Ao, Angami, Sema, Lotha, Rengma, Tangkhul, Mao, etc. perhaps might migrated from Burma and followed the advanced Naga tribes through Barail southerly route traversing through
the impassable hill tracts along the Barak river in order to avoid the conflict with other advanced tribes. These three sub-tribes migrated almost at the same time, Laingmei, one of three groups, followed the Angami tribe towards the north whereas the second group consisting Zemei turned towards the north west hills and the third group, Rongmei followed the first and the second up to the west hills tract of Manipur where Rongmei Nagas made their home land and settled there permanently. But his narration has certain self-contradictory elements. He traced the place of origin to northern district of Manipur and at the same time, he claimed that Rongmeis migrated from the south towards the west hills tract of Manipur making their homeland there without any chance to move further. He also claimed that the Kabui is derived from out of Mpuir or Apui.

Many pro-Rongmeis (those who prefer to use Rongmei over Kabui) think that the word ‘Kabui’ has a derogatory connotation. To them, the word sounds like word that signifies ‘male sexual organ’. Another ground for their rejection is that the name is associated with ‘a group of people’ who were sweepers or of low level occupation in Imphal town area. It reminds them the low level occupation11.

On the other hand, Mangthoi Thaimei (1995) who is one of the advocates of the Kabui argues that the name, Rongmei indicates geographical position, rather than a name of the ethnic group. He says that ‘Rong’ is ‘south’, ‘-mei’ is ‘man’ and hence Rongmei means ‘man of the south or southerners’. Similarly, the name Rengmei means ‘man of the north or northerner’. From this, he likes to suggest that the name Rongmei was wishfully used as an honorific epithet and later became the name of the tribe. He further says that this group of people is not of recent origin. He also assumed that, in those remote past, this group of people, the Rongmei, was the only
people originally living in these solitary hill ranges (presently in Tamenglong District of Manipur), and the other groups living in this part of Manipur came much later. He also mistakenly claimed that Rongmei is called Meelong by the Kukis. In fact, Meelong does not refer to Rongmei only but to all Nagas.

He also said that the land where the Rengmei people were originally living in the ancient past was known as Renglam. This often referred to in the folk songs of the Rongmeis as “Apui Renglam,” which means motherland of the northerner. It is a fact that the Rongmeis of the ancient days were migrating from north to the southern side, and as such they were the southern neighbors of the Rengmei people, the people of the north. He also talks about the origin of the term Rongmei and the Rongmei’s migration in a peaceful manner as if there were no other tribes at that point of time. However, the legends, the traditions and culture history of the Rongmeis say a lot about the blood feud and inter-village feud. Equally the so-called educated elites of this tribe demanded many times for the discontinuance of use of the term Kabui as their tribe name and to use the word Rongmei in its place. They feel the word Kabui bears some derogatory meanings. In this sense, how one could simply conclude that the Rongmeis were the first inhabitants and others were migrants from other places, and the honorific epithet for this group of people. So the statement or the stream of his thought on the origin of the term Rongmei needs further research.

2.10.4 Kabui on Rongmei

There are a number of theories regarding the origin of the name Kabui. One of the theories argues that it is derived from the word Kambuimei. The word is still used in the rite of \textit{Nashan Kanmei} and whenever the village elders give blessings to the family they use the word-“Tu Kambui Jang Kambuimei Subamlatho” (literal
meaning, “Be plentiful in life with abundant and ever inexhaustible wealth”). So the name Kabui is derived from or corrupted word of the term Kambuimei.

In an interview with Chandrasingh Haomei, an advisor of Zeliangrong Union and a free-lance researcher, he said that there were 7777 household at Makui Longdi, a mythical place\(^3\). The people were known as Haomci/Hamei. From there, a section of group of people were moved to the valley in search of their lost mithun but settled down there. In Liangmei dialect, mithun is called *Kabui*. The word is derived from *Kabui louwamei* or *Kabui Luimei* (literal meaning, the followers of the foot print of the mithun). The word *Kabui* itself is the shorten form of Kabui Louwamei or Kabui Luimei.

In due course of time, they migrated towards the South. The people believe that they originally came out of a cave called Mahou-Taobei, situated at Ramting-Kabim, a mythical place. The place is mythically placed somewhere on the north-western direction of the Senapati district of Manipur. They came out of the cave due to scarcity of food, in search of a wider place (Kamei, 2004; Makuga, 1993; Thaimei, 1995). They even settled in Ningthi village (present Shalangthen, in Churachandpur District, Manipur).

The idea of Kabui derivation from *Kabui louwamei* or *Kabui Luimei* is refuted by Mr. DL Kabui, President, Kabui Dharma Sabha in an interview. He says that, in Liangmei language, the mithun (*Bos frontalis*) is known as Buichang; Kabui is buffalo. The mithuns live in the high hills, not in the swampy areas. He thus argued that the Kabui cosmogony and place of origin should be traced from the south, not from the north. According to him, Rason or *Kapu-Kana Bam* (*Kapu* means father, *Kana* means son and *Bam* means place) is the place of origin which is located at

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Laimatongning, a place in the northern part of Churachandpur district. It is the place from where seven brothers of Ragang migrated to different directions\textsuperscript{12}.

According to him, it is not necessary to look into the origin of the word/term. One should look at how old the term is used over the ages. He points out use of the word Kabui in various forms Kabui Maimu, Kabui Salang Maiba, Kabui Tomba, Kabui Lamsang and Kabuiru, mentioned in historical texts like Cheitharol Kumpapa, Poiroteion Khunthok and historical epics of the Moirang. He said the Kabuis believe that Kabui Salang Maiba was the seventh and last incarnation of the Ragang, the mythical hero. The Kabuis and different ethnic groups of Manipur are observing his incarnation and power and will continue through the year, 2012. He also argued that it was customary to letting the Kabuis to live first in the place where the palace was to be constructed. Mahabali, Ramjikhul, Langthabal in Imphal and Thaninkhul in Bishnupur district as examples, he cited.

Makuga Gonthangmei, (retired, Nagaland Civil services and an author of Introduction to the Rongmei Nagas, 1993) goes a little beyond the present debate over the Kabui-Rongmei; he said the two names represent different tribes. The Rongmei and the Kabui are not identical. He blamed that the confusion was made by the British official reports. The British authorities entered the presumptive name of tribes residing in the hill tract between Cachar and Manipur valley on their first entry into Manipur without proper enquiry from village to village and without minute study of the villages.

In spite of the similarities and affinities between the Kabui and the Rongmei, these two tribes are different. The Kabui and the Rongmei have their independent
languages, customs, arts and culture. The Kabui used to call the Rongmeis as Rongbangsang (it means very clumsy and ignorant people).

2.10.5 Way out: Common identity or Different identities

There are differences of opinions and conflicting views among the leaders of the tribe over the question of Inpuis in Zeliangrong, over the question of name of the tribe Rongmei or Kabui. Because of these differences the villages are well segregated with one or other identity. One can ask question if these differences and conflicts are mainly generated by their religious and political affiliations. From the fact that the name Kabui is preferred mainly by a section of the tribe inhabiting in the valley areas, while the name Rongmei is preferred by the section of the same tribe living in the hill areas. Majority of the valley section who prefer Kabui as the name of the tribe are non-Christian. They follow their traditional religion. Majority of the hill section are Christian. The Naga secessionist movement that see Christianity as a common thread of the Naga societies and its open call for “Nagalim for Christ” sharpen the dividing line between the Kabui-preference and the Rongmei-preference. Another important fact is that there three or four Assembly segments where the hill section of this ethnic group predominate the areas. These segments are reserved seats for Scheduled Tribes. Therefore, there are three or four MLAs in the State Assembly elected from these segments. As they always prefer Rongmei over Kabui, they have all possible means for lobbying State government. Though the valley sections of the tribe are numerous, their villages are scattered in different Assembly segments. There is least chance of electing a Kabui-preferred MLA in the Assembly. Due to various factors, the internal division of the tribe over their identity becomes widened along the hill-valley divide.
The independent assertions of the cognate tribes of the Zeliangrong and theoretical crisis among the members of this larger identity recalls each of them their separate identities on the basis of religion, customs, tradition, language and geographical variations. The effort of Zeliangrong Naga Union to gain recognition of the Zeliangrong as the name of the tribe did not meet any success. Rather it engraves the pro-Kabui and pro-Rongmei cleavage.

In addition to the internal debate, recently Indian Parliament has amended the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 to modify the list of Scheduled Tribes in the States of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh under the provisions of Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2011. Earlier, there are 33 communities appearing in the list of the Schedule Tribes in Manipur. The new Amendment Act inserts six new tribes in the list. They are the Inpui, the Rongmei, the Liangmai, the Zeme, the Thangal and the Mate. The new Scheduled tribe status for the Rongmei brings exaltation to pro-Rongmeis and anti-Kabuis. However, many persons feel that the insertion of the Rongmei as independent tribe is arbitrary in nature. This does not solve the crisis between the Kabui and the Rongmei over the nomenclature of their tribe. The Kabui is already in the list of Scheduled Tribe list; the new insertion of the Rongmei is not in place of the Kabui. Therefore, the two names become two ethnic entities at least in the Constitution of India. It had been done without proper examination of the debate by the Indian Parliament.

After the Rongmei is also included in the Scheduled List of Indian tribes, the debate over the name of the ethnic group comes up again. The debate seems turns towards ugly scene as there is no visible sign of reconciliation. On July 7, 2012, an interaction programme was organized at Sangaiprou, a Kabui village, Imphal West to
have a free talk on the nomenclature of the tribe\textsuperscript{13}. There are still four lines of thought and their arguments:

i) the Kabui should be retained as it has been used for long

ii) the Rongmei should replace the Kabui

iii) a new name should be used such as Hao Makammei

iv) asserting Zeliangrong as a tribe would solve the problem.

Notes

1 Interviewed with Mr Munthaga Kamei, on 18\textsuperscript{th} January 2012, Sawombung Kabui Village, Imphal

2 Interviewed with Mr Phaomeidun Phaomei, on 2\textsuperscript{nd} February 2012 at Sawombung Kabui Village, Imphal and interviewed with Mr DL Kabui, on 19\textsuperscript{th} July 2013, Hindi Office, Paona Bazar, Imphal

3 Interviewed with Mrs. Pantisinglu Gonmei and Lusinglu, on 7\textsuperscript{th} October 2012 at Sawombung Kabui Village, Imphal

4 Interviewed with Mr Chandra Haomei, on 14\textsuperscript{th} September 2012, Zeliangrong Union Office, Paona Bazar, Imphal

5 Interviewed with Mr DL Kabui, on 18\textsuperscript{th} October 2012, Keishampaat, Imphal

6 Interviewed with Mr Chandra Haomei, on 24\textsuperscript{th} July 2013, Zeliangrong Union Office, Paona Bazar, Imphal and interviewed with Mr Meijinlung Kamson, on 29\textsuperscript{th} August 2012, Majorkhul, Imphal

7 Interviewed with Mr Chandra Haomei, on 14\textsuperscript{th} September 2012, Zeliangrong Union Office, Paona Bazar, Imphal

8 Interviewed with Mr Chaoba Kamson, on 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2013, Kakhulong, Paona Bazar, Imphal and interviewed with Mr DL Kabui, on 19\textsuperscript{th} July 2013, Hindi Office, Paona Bazar, Imphal
9 Interviewed with Mr Meijinlung Kamson, on 29th August 2012, Majorkhul, Imphal

10 Interviewed with Mr Gangmei Makuningpu Kabui, General Secretary, Kabui Samiti and DL Kabui President, *Kabui Dharma Sabha* on 16 July 2012, Keishamthong, Imphal

11 Interviewed with Mr Gangmei Makuningpu Kabui, General Secretary, Kabui Samiti on July 16, 2012, Keishamthong, Imphal

12 Interviewed with Mr DL Kabui President, *Kabui Dharma Sabha* on 16 July 2012, Keishamthong, Imphal

13 An interaction programme held on 7 July 2012, Sangaiiprou Kabui village, Imphal