CHAPTER - III

DYNAMICS IN VALUES SYSTEMS IN MANIPURI SOCIETY :

INTERNAL DYNAMISM AND CHANGING SCENE

I

A crime is a social act, deviating from the legal norms (or living law) — whether it springs from the custom or legislation. Being a social action, it should also be studied at the value-orientation and motivational-orientation. "The concept of value-orientation ... is ... the logical device for formulating one central aspect of the articulation of cultural traditions into the action system" (Parsons, 1951, p. 12). All values involve what may be called a social reference. In so far as they are cultural rather than purely personal they are in fact shared.(ibid.).

B.M. Anderson (1911, p. 93) says of the value as something more than the total utility of a good, or the marginal utility of a good, to an individual, and it is more than a ratio of exchange". He defines value (ibid., p. 106) as "a quantity of motivating force, power over the actions of a man, embodied in an object". Such power may be positive and negative, "the positive values attracting us, the negative values repelling us" (p. 107).
In his essay in Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (1951), C. Kluchhohn takes value as "any concept referring to a desirable or undesirable state of affairs". It is a mental conception which is attached strongly to the emotional feelings. The ways to understand the existing ways, as discussed by Kluckhohn in James P. Spradley and D.W. McCurdy (1975, pp. 471-84), are (i) it is frequently possible to infer values from observable behaviour, (ii) discovering the ways of parents' teaching of their children the proper behaviour, (iii) the way they express the values verbally. Value is a matter of desirable or undesirable state of affairs, not merely a state of affairs. Hence, value dictates what ought-to-be and failure of which seldom goes unnoticed.

In a similar fashion, borrowing from Weber and Durkheim, Parsons emphasizes values, internalized by the cultural system, as the standard by which it (act) was evaluated. All the actors have various modes of orientations, one of which is value orientation. Again, "the patterned activities and their mutual relations are given stability through being endowed with value; they appear to the actor as good and proper. Values at once motivate action and ratify it" (Murphy, 1971, p. 65). Not only evaluating the act, values are also cathected i.e., "emotions are attached
to them, and these emotions are commonly seen as reinforcing personal attachments that may have other emotional roots. In short, values serve to guarantee the tendency of the social system toward equilibrium by virtue of the fact that they also serve to promote social solidarity” (ibid., p. 65-6).

In the writing of Harry M. Johnson (1960, p. 49), the personal conception is also equally added in the concept of value. He defines value "as a conception or standard, cultural or merely personal, by which things are compared and approved or disapproved relative to one another - held to be relatively desirable or undesirable, more meritorious or less correct ... (Such values are 'cathedted') i.e. the individual (or group, the value is a cultural one) is emotionally committed to the relevant standards - i.e., accepts them and uses them, to some extent, in making choices and in judging things". The personal values, in a situation of failure in ego-alter expectation relation, may create a crisis in the cultural value system. This situation is obviously seen in Manipuri society (both the Meitei and tribal) because of the modernization. Thus the value-orientation of the actors is in flux which, in turn, affects the action system of the individuals.

The value system in Manipur faces a state of fluctuation in the core value system (it is called as focal value
by Cora Du Bois, 1955; Central value system by Edward Shils, 1975). The traditional system is disturbed with the structural change occurring in the social system — the raising up of new statuses, mainly achieved ones and the emergence of new social groups which are foreign to the traditional system. The role conflict at the individual level also pushes the traditional 'standard' aside in order to cope with the new social situations and hence new value system is emerging. However, as the society is in search of new equilibrium, the value-fluctuation is inevitable.

The core value shifts from the community efforts to the individual achievement. In the ongoing processes of modernization and westernization in the Meitei and the Maram social systems, the individuals are encouraged to achieve their own statuses and their ascribed statuses are often uncounted. The raising up of missionary schools, public schools, wide spread engagement in trade and commerce push the individuals to stand on their own feet. This situation gives pressure on the traditional value which was mainly clustered with the ascribed statuses. Now it is often heard that the people say: "the end justifies the means". One does not bother on the way how individual attains certain statuses — may it be through the corrupt practices or threats. The means-values (expressive values) are seldom
counted in the social situations by now. A youth says of unfair means in the examination hall: "in the mark-sheet, it is not written as the mark of copying. With good mark you can choose any trade and when you hold a good post, no one will say of copying". Thus the individual actors are encouraged to attain the goals. The means are immaterial when one can get through.

In every walk of life in the society — may it be playful activities or career choice — the individual achievement is highly taken into consideration. The parents encourage their children to dominate others in games and sports, academic activities or other pro-social activities. They like to equip their children with all sort of necessities.

The achieved status is frequently seen in conflict with the ascribed status. Among the Marams, the modern educated christian youths challenge the office of the hereditary Khullakpa (the chief); even they can manage to influence the office in exercising the powers conferred to him. The social value of such an ascribed status is minimized by the newly emerged Marem 'leaders' who are in contact with or in the government and who can influence the government officials on taking 'loan, aid or scholarship.'
of many fields. But, the office of Khullukpa and his council is highly praised on its function of judiciary matters, not on its executive functions.

Relating to the individual, achievement value is the value of work. The government services are much weighted among which the department where one can get 'extra-money' above the normal salary is most highly valued. Every Manipuri likes to hold a post in government service for the salary as a regular source of income. It is reflected in Manipuri popular saying that "Tindi Louda Tai, Tolop'ta Tade" (Insects/pests attack the paddy fields, not on the salary). The government service is also related with one's prestige. Being a clerk is more prestigious than being a farmer. An educated Maram dreams of holding a post in a government establishment because it will be easier to approach any girl for courtship; this is true to the Meitei, too.

Any private establishment with regular income is preferred next to the government service. The value of the establishment is determined by the less manual labour involved and high return. The shops, hotels, small-scale industries are usually preferred; the driving auto-rickshaws or taxi comes next. The traditional works, inspite of modern
techniques, such as cultivation, fishing are low in individual preference. They consume more time and energy. Such a work is not respected by others. The economic value in terms of income may be high or low, but the cultivators are taken to be 'unruly, foolish' persons. The cultivators like to free their children from the manual works in the 'muddy field'.

Both the Meitei and the tribal societies positively value the material comfort of life. Success in life is counted in terms of materials owned/consumed by the individual in question. Right from bodily comfort to the motor cars are the ones which give the key to the success. The activities of the actors tend to the attainment of such material comforts. Even a cultivator whose income can meet only the societal needs also dreams to acquire electric fan, pressure cooker, even a scooter, not because of necessity but of the esteem. "One should not be lower in the esteem scale; no one will not see your kitchen, but your appearance" is the common attitude to the modern materials. The uses of materials are controlled by the fashion, too. The longevity of comfort materials not only depends on the stuff but also on the fashion-trend. A pair of shoe may be replaced still in good condition because of its being out-dated.
The family value system is also in flux. The core values at this level are obviously seen changing very rapidly in the post-colonial period. But the new pattern is not yet emerged in its full form. The value of patriarchal authority is challenged or disturbed with the differentiation of working woman statuses in the social system.

Though traditionally all the Manipuri women (including both the Meitei and the Maram women) engaged in many extra-familial activities, they were fully under the control of male-authority in the family. But the educated working women, by and large, become almost independent in their 'out-door' activities. Husbands are not expected to inspect their wives in the office establishments. Though it is clearly seen here that the value of patriarchalism is disintegrating, the value of equality between the sexes is still far to be attained.

The value of wives' income is still looked at very ambivalently. Their income contributes a lot to the family income. Economically, the wives' income is a positive aspect but it hurts the age-old male-chauvinism. Hence, many a family face serious problem of adjustment. Men know the changing pattern but they still hesitate to recognize it.
The actors are motivationally oriented, too. Their actions are determined, like other modes of orientations, by the motives. The motivation "consists in orientation to improvement of the gratification-deprivation balance of the actor" (Parsons, 1951, p. 12). The imbalance arisen in a state of interaction "ordinarily leads to effort or expenditure of energy on the part of the individual to get into more favourable or satisfactory relation to his environment" (Kimball Young, 1947, p. 43). In such a situation, an individual is said to be motivated. Motivation is sprung from a disequilibrium in the ego-alter relationship, and is goal-directed. A motivated individual moves to find an object, a situation or so to restore the disequilibrium.

Thus, motive is a socially determined direct attempt at satisfying the need or relieving the tension. Kimball Young (ibid., p. 46) says "motives are acquired drives which arise in man as a result of his membership in society and as a participant in its culture". Motives are associated with mental sets, values, attitudes or ambitions which are shaped and/or internalized by the cultural system. But, "the judgement of significance on which the statements of sociological problems of motivation are based must .... be couched in terms of the frame of reference of the social
system, not of personality, though of course they must be compatible with established knowledge of personality" (Parsons, 1949, pp. 339-40). The sociologists "concern the balance of motivational forces involved in the maintenance of, and alteration in, the structure of a social system" (ibid., p. 340).

The social matrix in the larger social situations other than that of the family causes the individuals to develop the second-order derivations of motivations. These second-order derivations of motivation refer to the needs for affection, physical (including emotional) security, sociality, power, creativeness and recreation, religio-philosophy. Such derivations are different from the first-order derivations which are arisen from the primary drives such as needs for oxygen, water, temperature, food, sex etc.

The motivational balance is maintained with the internalized role expectations. Individual at different social positions are not equally moved to action as their secondary needs are not equal. Moreover, their interactions at interpersonal/inter-group level are not equal. Hence their motives, drives, incentive and interest are also different.
In an equilibrium state of social system, the individual motivation is tended towards or conformed with the institutionalized role expectations. The individual roles are motivated to perform in the normal ego-alter relationship and to maximize their need-disposition. But, any tension in the motivational balance because of any strain "in any part of the social situation or from organic or other intra-personal sources, may threaten individual motivation to conformity with the institutionalized role expectations (Parsons and Smelser, 1956, p. 17). The tension is frequently arisen because of the value in flux. Robert Wuthnow and et. al (1984, p. 202), on the impact of value in flux on the crises of motivation, rightly points out: "crises of motivation stem from an erosion of cultural values which make sense of contemporary social, economic and political conditions".

III

The strain in the value system in the Manipuri society moves the individuals to different social actions and the motivational tensions are obviously noticed. The individuals' changing scene of motivation is readily observable in their second-order derivations. It is important to note such a change because such changes directly exert
pressure on the role expectations, collective goals, even the norms. A general picture of the changing scene is discussed hereinafter.

The affectional needs cover mainly the mother-child relations — nursing, bio-social need of bodily warmth, clothing, bathing and other motherly cares. The child-rearing is the sole responsibility of mothers with slight assistance of fathers in the Manipuri society. As working women are increasing in number day by day and the individual achievement value is much counted, the children are left to the husbands' mothers (mothers' mothers look after the babies in some cases). Use of the feeding bottle is becoming popular to substitute the mothers' breasts. This situation creates two-way frustration (a) to the children because of deprivation of their mothers' care that transform into loud and prolong crying and breaking of feeding bottles; (b) to the mothers who work in establishments half-heartedly to become quarrelsome over minor domestic matters. The deprivation of affectional needs is indicated in many cases of working women's families. Their common problem is of adjustment of time, fatigue and heavy domestic burden. To minimize their work load, they like to have separate family (nuclear) in order to gain certain time for their children.
The physical security, at the level of adult, is associated with the core value of the economic success. In the post-colonial period, the individuals in Manipur, activated with the need of white-collar jobs and better monetary rewards, are moved to act for 'money'. The pecuniary command is the indicator of one's prestige. This pushes the individuals to the employment market at large scale; this increasing number is partly because of the value of white-collar job and partly of the limited ways to attain better monetary rewards. A few individuals, with enough capital, run private business. Those who are unemployed and having a little or no capital, are motivated to choose either (a) contractual works/supplied under certain establishments such as P.W.D., Education Dept., Electricity Dept., or (b) deviant paths such as drug-trafficking, wine vendor, smuggling goods on trans-border scale. Both the Meitei and the Maram able persons are seen in almost all kinds of activities having monetary gain. The Maram youths are seen to run in between Tribal Welfare agencies and the villages to get their commission.

The need of sociality for adjusting to the existing social system is also an essential part of a social being. The individual actor expects to be valued from other actors. He extends his part of role expectation and he has his own
value of other actors. In the network of the interaction, the ego, because of other social factors, may develop a sense of valuelessness of his own and he may feel that the other actors do pay any value to him. Such 'valueless' (perceived by the actors themselves) actors become isolated from the interaction and take themselves as being ostracized by other actors. The failure to get money to meet social demands - in terms of fashion, contribution to the community fund, Potyeng etc. - pushes the ego to live aloof. The actors are compelled to deviate from the community life. They set aside the festivals, ceremonies etc. These isolated individuals, in Manipur's present scene, are generated by the unemployment in the government service or failure in the better-monetary-rewards competition. The latter factors hurt the ego's need of sociality. This part of motivation is clearly noticed in the Meitei society. In case of the Maram, the ostracism is still checked by the social solidarity as its social differentiation in the economy is relatively less. Though the modern economy operates in the Maram society, the community economic institutions of land and the resource distributions are still working on the basis of the customary norms which take each household into consideration. Each household is given more or less equal share in the distribution. This minimizes the ego's sense of ostracism produced by the gratifi-
cation-deprivation of the white-collar job/better monetary rewards. Among the Meiteis, on the other hand, the deprivation of the need of sociality for want of better monetary reward, causes serious blow to the individual's action pattern. The esteem-rooted job/better economic reward pushes the individual and the failure of which dominates the conformity component of his action. The frustrated actor becomes a deviant and develops a state of isolation, ostracism or in Melvin Seeman's vocabulary 'alienation'. The compulsive alienated component is expressed either (a) actively as in many criminal forms such as prostitutes through agents or (b) passively in the form of petty theft etc.

Motives at the axis of power are relatively less obvious in the Maram social systems. The Maram power structures are still determined by the tradition. The newly emerged middle class and educated youths cannot influence the traditional authority. There is a conflicting situation between the hereditary offices, such as Khullakpa and the emerging class; but the conflict is managed within the traditional frame of interaction. The new class has to wait for its own time, otherwise they will be subject to ostracism. The older men still control many of the aspects of life. The tension is obviously seen on the existence of the Morung2 (the club, traditional). The older men like to preserve it
as a part of their tradition and to be one of active social institutions. But the modern christian educated youths look at it as an historical relic and an 'uncivilized part of custom'. The females in the Maram social system are subordinate to their male counterparts; despite their active role in economy, they are less concerned with power and authority. They are not motivated to move against the traditional power structure; to them challenging the tradition means degradation of their own value. Even an educated woman noted, "Living in the group-life means to follow certain irrational custom; things will change slowly. Moving against the custom will give you a painful isolated life".

The traditional power structure is, in the Meitei social system, to a greater extent, disintegrated. This disintegration is, at the family level, explained by the break-down of patriarchalism and the newly emerged value of individual achievement. The sex concept at power level is much changed; though the traditional concept of woman as being a subordinate to man is still in the Meitei's mind, the male domination is challenged by individual female elites. But they fail to organize themselves and/or to examine the cultural system. Even the most leading women's organization, Manipuri Chanura Leishem Marup (MACHA LEIMA) gets confused on the role and/or value of women in the
social system. They like to advocate the equality of sexes but they also like to preserve the culture. The culture still gives the aspiration of male-chauvinism. Despite all these confusions, the women like to stand in front of their male counterparts as being an equal being in the society. This causes a tension in between these women and the men who still like to command their wives. But, it is notable that the lower class women still believe that "Pap Chamana Nupi Sai" (a sum total of hundred sins turns to woman) to be a woman means to bear various tortures; it is just a salvation. So they think of equality of sexes in the power structure.

The younger girls are much motivated to hold their own decisions and to force the alters to give sanctions. They seldom submit easily to their parents or co-leikai members. (A Leikai is socio-political unit of the society see f.n. 1 to Chapter IV). If their decisions are in conflict with the leikai-decisions, they try to press the leikai to accept theirs. But, there arises the situation of motivational imbalance. The imbalance is not allowed to exist for longer period; after marriage, these girls are controlled by the husbands' families. However, some women are often seen acting against these families. They like to express their powers and to get a social sanction thereto.
Suming up the situation in the Meitei social system, the educated women are motivated because of the imbalance between newly emerging concept of equality of sexes and age-old concept of Nupi, Angang, San, Brahmin. This imbalance does not take into a shape of 'powerlessness' sense as the society can make compulsively conformity personality structure of those women through its mechanism of social control.

The religico-philosophical motives, associated with the supernatural world and supernatural beings, are also a driving force of human actions. These motives are internalized into one's concept of self and his/her future life. He acts in many irrational manners or non-logical ways because of these motives. The compound forms of religious ideals are seen in both the Meitei and the Maram societies. The Meitei have a configuration of Meiteism and Hinduism. The two religious faiths are more or less synthesized; but the configuration of these faiths sometimes pose a politico-religious conflict. Such conflicts are, again, unable to spread to other aspects of society because of the fact that Meiteism is also being taken as a part of larger Meitei Hindu universe. Thus the religious idea and ideals are shaped independently out of the interaction of the two faiths. The individuals are expected to entertain both the superna-
tural beings of the two faiths. At present, the indivi-
duals cannot be controlled by the religious practices except
in the crises periods.

The Maram religious faith is seen in a paralleled situ-
tion of conflicts of traditional animism and christianity.
The society can be divided into two sets of religious prac-
tices and it is obviously seen that villagers below 45 years
of age are in favour of the christian way of life whereas
those above still stick to their traditional animism. The
conflict between the two sets are obviously observed in the
Maram Khullen where the institution of the Morung is still
socially sanctioned as a part of their traditional way of
life. Some of the youths attend the Morung as a sign of
their hatred to the new faith. Christianity is spread with
various techniques of propaganda and several church activ-
ities. An old man of Maram Khullen remarks, "Though a
christian father told us that God is one, he did not like
to respect ours". Thus, in the Maram society, the religico-
philosophical motives are seen in a conflicting situation,
too. In the Meitei society, the religico-philosophical
needs do not concern much with next-life or community soli-
darity, rather they concern with the individual tension-man-
gement. The concept of hell and heaven can no longer bind
the Meitei to the social system. However, in the Maram
society two hells are operating independently in the mind of the peoples. The common to both the societies, however, is that the religico-philosophical tensions are provoked either from the (a) other religious faith or (b) national mind.

IV

One of the most stable values which are seldom affected by social change is that of religious institutions. Though the concept of God and its value keeps on changing with the expansion of scientific knowledge, modern education and empirical sciences, various religious values are still highly accepted unconsciously by the actors. One of them which motivates the actors is the son-preference. This dynamic force is not shaped by the patriarchalism alone because the decline of it does not affect much on son-value. The internalized religious value system shapes the individuals to praise the in-coming sons because a son is not a mere new member of the society/family but a symbol of many religious activities.

The value of individual achievement does not favour the daughters much in shaping their religious images. Though the preference of nuclearization of family is a great blow
to the economic importance of son as well as to kin-based male solidarity, the feudal/semi-feudal son-value exists in the society as a residue. The democratic social system still cannot wash out the residuary son-image. Again, the religious function of the son and his values are still a dynamic force in value-orientation of social action. The sex-equality in socio-political sub-system cannot give positive in-flow to the religious sub-system.

The 'son' is the torch bearer of a lineage. In the patriarchal society, it is only the son who perpetuates down the lineage from one generation to another. A sonless deceased is, according to religious beliefs, denied entering the gate to the heaven. This son-concept is strengthened by another belief that a son is one's second life. He exists in the body of his son. A daughter is not valued as a son is. She is rather taken as economic liability by many persons. So the kin-based activities are generally male-oriented ones. A daughter is forbidden to take the fruits offered to lineage ancestors (Apokpa). This is on the belief that by eating such fruits the women will destroy the lineage. Religiously speaking, women are the symbols of sin as reflected when the Meitei folk definition of woman as "the sum total of hundred sins" as well as in their treatment of woman as a source of all the evil works. The
higher religious value of a son over that of a daughter makes the colourful 6th day birth-ceremony of a son. A daughter’s ceremony is marked with routine manners only.

In the Hindu Manipuri universe, a son is much valued as he is the one who will offer the pinda so that he will save the ancestors from hell. The son (in Manipuri Icha-nupa), in Hindu world, is one who will save from Put or hell – the hell into which sonless parents fall and the Sanskrit term Putra (son) is derived from the root Put (hell) (See Dubois and Beauchamp, 1906), f.n., p. 205). The offering of pinda links with the life after death. So the sonless parents cease their lives and they will go to hell after death. This religious value of son motivates the sonless mothers to go from temple to temple, from Maibas (shaman, medicine-man) to Maibis (traditional priestess) for consultations on the prospect of having a male child.

The social threat of divorce on their being barren is a direct consequence of the religious value. A married woman is not secure in her husband’s lineage until she gives birth to a son. Husband is often advised by local elders including his parents to marry for second time if his first wife is proven barren. Barrenness is taken as a failure in a woman’s life; man is assumed to be fertile in
all cases. This traditional sexist logic encourages such husband to divorce the sonless/issueless wife. The sonless/issueless woman is motivated in her cathected relation with her husband and his kin folk. On the other hand, divorced woman is less esteemed in the society. She is nowhere in case she is proven barren. The motivational crisis is at high peak at the end of second year of her marriage if she cannot give birth to a child.

The son is, thus, in the traditional value system, an indispensable social need of a married woman. It is the solution to her mental tensions, a token of her married life. The motivational crises developed because of alleged barrenness may transform into either of two ways (a) she commits adultery to get a son from someone who will not disclose the secret affair in order to save her life in the husband's lineage; or (b) she lives submissively in husband's lineage as a co-wife. But husband divorce such wife in many cases because polygamy poses family crises in various social situations. Love ends when a wife fails to give a son who is a religious demand of the parents.
FOOT NOTE TO CHAPTER - III

1. *Potweng* is a form of reciprocal gift exchange (mainly in cash) in which one individual receives it only on the ceremonies, occasions of rites of passage.

2. *Morang*: The term is derived from the Assamese word whose meaning is youth dormitory or youth's night club. The institution of *Morang* is no longer functioning in North-East India except in the village of Maram Khullen, Senapati District of Manipur. The non-Christian Marams, including some Christian youths, still maintain two huts - both for girls - at the border line of the settlement area of the village. This institution is taken by the older members of the village as an agent of socialization much superior to the church.

3. *Nupi, Angang, San, Brahmin*: Literal meaning is "woman, children, cow/bull, Brahmin". It is a stereotypic class of actors in society whose opinions should not be considered in the decision-making process. These members are treated as second-rate members in almost all vital aspects of the society. The class has, however, a hierarchical arrangement of positions within it in which woman is placed at the top and Brahmin at the bottom.

The image of woman in this stereotypic class links with another prejudiced statement - "He who takes advice from his wife is *Adhamora* (half-death; a Hindi-origin term)." Any responsible man should not take advice from woman.