CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Land is important for the existence and survival of a community. It is a determining factor even with a nation. Nation cannot exist without land. Prof. Elliot (1999) defined state in terms of territory (which territory of a state includes land). According to him,

"Territorial sovereignty or the superiority of the state over all within its boundaries and complete freedom from external control has been a fundamental principle of modern state life."

Thus, land is one of the essential constituent of state sovereignty as state cannot exist without fixed territory for its existence. Most of the political issues be it local, national or international are connected in some way or the other way with land.

Land is a basic input in the production process. It is also a preferred store of wealth. There is a legitimate interest in ensuring optimal utilization of land both in the static and dynamic sense. Land is not only a gift of nature but is a way of life.

Nez Perce (1877) in 1877 thus said,

"The Earth is part of my body... I belong to the land out of which I came. The Earth is my mother."

It (land) remains as the source of food, source of wood, a place for hunting, a place for playing and settlement. Land in economic concept has been defined as a sum total of natural resources over which the possession of the earth’s surface gives control. It covers the earth’s surface, building sites, farm soil, growing forest, mineral deposits and water resources.³

In every society, land occupies a special place. The issues of ‘underdevelopment’, ‘uneven development’, ‘insurgency’, ‘homeland movement’ and ‘ethnic conflict’ are always related to land. It has been defined by Ricardo⁴ as the original and indestructible power of the soil. Karl Marx⁵ in his ‘Pre-Capitalist Formation’ has remarked that man’s objective of existence lies in his ownership of earth which is antecedent to his activity. Looking into the history, a man’s prestige is count by his land ownership. His control over land determines his affluence and poverty. Thus, different social divisions existed were base on land ownership. It is also the basis for political power. In the colonial Virginia the landed property governs the colony is an example. The quality of land is also important that the Middle East states got significance with the discovery of oil on their land which makes them got prominence. A large area of land with abundant availability of natural resources makes a state powerful.

Traditional Society

4. David Ricardo (19 April 1772 – 11 September 1823) was an English political economist, often credited with systematizing economics, and was one of the most influential of the classical economists, along with Thomas Malthus, Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill.
5. Karl Heinrich Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a German philosopher, sociologist, economic historian, journalist, and revolutionary socialist who developed the socio-political theory of Marxism.
In traditional society land was the common property of all. The community owns the land and was shared among them as much as was required by the community members or the community itself. There were abundant virgin lands for cultivation and for other purposes. When the people first settled down in their respective villages, they occupied or earmarked uninhabited land. The area of land so occupied or earmarked became their village land. Such settlement was subject to any dream indication or omens they may have received, as by nature they are a superstitious people and believed in the powers of the supernatural. When a group of people came to a certain place to settle, the leader of the group always pray to mother Earth to show some sign of approval if they are to settle there. If the leader sees a favorable indications or omen, they start making arrangement to settle down.

Emergence of Individual Ownership

Ancient community ownership and common property system was in the course of history came to be gradually replace by individual private ownership due to various factors such as new pattern of agricultural practices, modernity, economic value, etc.

1. Settle Agricultural:

In the early nomadic lifestyle, the tribes owned weapons which they would have owned collectively. In those stages of nomadic agricultural practices, the pieces of land that were cleared for cultivation were held under the common property of the tribe. However, with the emerged of modernity, modern legislation recognized individual land ownership.

These practices have mainly begun with the practice of settled agricultural everywhere. Thus, settled agricultural activities created the necessity of individual land ownership system. Marxist on the beginning of private property holds the view that, with the gradual development of productive forces and increase in labour productivity, the people identify the means of production, even to produce what was more than needed. As a result accumulation of material wealth and the appropriation of production became possible.\(^8\)

2. *Satapatha Brahamana*

The tradition embodied in the *Satapatha Brahamana*\(^9\) mentioned that land should not be given away even on the plea of sacrificial fee. Land grant practice was seen up to the Mahabharata period around 1200 BC. In the Vedic and Post Vedic period, land was no longer held as common property of the tribe. As such individual ownership was gradually established. With the establishment of individual land ownership there came up of the formation of large landed estates. It began to have a strong conditioning effect on human attitudes, tendencies and activities. It also effect and shape the property structure and socio-economic institution.\(^10\)

Individual ownership of land thus, came to be justified. Atul Goswami (1986) on the concept of individual ownership has stated,

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9. *Satapatha Brahamana* is a Hindu sacred text which describes details of Vedic rituals, including philosophical and mythological background. It was committed to writing about 300 B.C.E., although it contains portions which are far older, transmitted orally from unknown antiquity. Specifically, there are references throughout to primal mother-Earth worship, unnamed snake deities and human sacrifice.
“He who first began to use it acquired therein a kind of transient’s property that as long as he was using it. Whoever was in the occupation of any determined spot of it for rest, or for shade or the like, acquired for the time a sort of ownership from which it would have been unjust and contrary to law of nature to have driven him by force until he quit or occupation of another”.

3. Manusmriti

Land was considered to belong to the person who first cleared it and the title to property in land was also link to the labour put to make cultivable land in the early period. According to Indian text, the Manusmriti\(^2\) land belongs to him who first cleared the timber and a deer to him who first wounded it. This concept is similar to Ricardo and Marx’s Labour Theory of Value which adopted that exchange value of a commodity is determined by the labour put on it.\(^3\)

Property Ownership

An owner of property has the right to consume, sell, rent, mortgage, transfer, exchange. Widely-recognized types of property are real property (land), personal property, private property, public property and intellectual property, although the latter is not always widely recognized or enforced. A title, or a right of ownership, establishes the relation between the property and other persons, assuring the owner the right to dispose of the

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12. Manusmriti is the most important and earliest metrical work of the Dharmasatra textual tradition of Hinduism. Generally known in English as the Laws of Manu, it was first translated into English in 1794 by Sir William Jones, an English Orient lists and judge of the British Supreme Court of Judicature in Calcutta. The text presents itself as a discourse given by Manu, the Progenitor of mankind to a group of seers, or rishis, who beseech him to tell them the “law of all the social classes”. Manu became the standard point of reference for all future Dharmasastras that followed it.
property. Some philosophers assert that property rights arise from social convention while others find it in morality or natural law.\textsuperscript{14} Scholars in the social sciences have conceived property as a bundle of rights. They consider that property is a relationship between people with regard to things. Property is also thought of as being protected by the local sovereignty.

Rights such as mineral rights, development rights, air rights, and such other rights can be worth segregating from simple land ownership. Ownership laws are widely different among countries depending on the nature of the property of interest. In the Inca Empire, the dead emperors, who were considered gods, still controlled property after their death.\textsuperscript{15}

\section*{Manipur}

In Manipur three distinctly different property (real property) rights are found. In the hills, the property rights are governed by traditional unwritten laws, customs and conventions. Among the tribal Kuki-Chin (hereafter Kuki\textsuperscript{16}) community the chief of the village hold the absolute right over the land. The entire village land belongs to him. Among the Nagas, the community ownership of land is practised. The entire village land traditionally belonged to the Village Council.

Another system is the private or individual property ownership system that prevails in the valley. In the valley individual owners have sole right of use and transfer. But in the absence of effective public law,

\textsuperscript{16} Many scholars and writers use Kuki-Chin, Kuki-Chin-Mizo or Zo which all of them are taken as one community or nation. But in this work Kuki is taken as it is the accepted name in the study area.
misuse of land is on the rise. While the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960 is ineffective, the Manipur State Land Use Board remains practically unknown without any convincing activity whatsoever so far.\textsuperscript{17}

In the tribal societiesland ownership is one of the most remarkable possessions so far as they depend mostly on land base activities. It also has close relation with their socio-economic and political system. These tribal groups have traditionally practice autocratic chief ownership anddemocratic community ownership. Among the Naga clans ownership is also found. But they have different land ownership system which varies from one village to another village and from one tribe to another unlike the Kukis.

Generally, there are three types of land ownership system in North East India. They are:

i. land ownership by a single chief who distribute lands among the individual households,
ii. land ownership by the whole villager collectively, and
iii. land ownership by individual.\textsuperscript{18}

Here, the traditional land ownership system practiced by Kukis and Nagas fall in the first and second category respectively. The land ownership and land holding system of the tribal people of Manipur are different from the non-tribal groups of the state.

\textsuperscript{17} Chapter III, \textit{State of Environment Report, Manipur, Environment and Ecology Office, Manipur.}
\textsuperscript{18} Ganguly, J.B ‘Socio-Economic Problems of the Transition of Shifting to Sedentary Cultivation in North East India’ in \textit{Shifting Cultivation in North East India}, Indian Council of Social Science Research- North East, Shillong,1976,p.56.
It is immensely important to understand the land ownership system of the tribal people to understand their socio-political, cultural and economic system. The sovereign power of the tribal people over their land existed since ancient time. This ancient relationship has given rise to a symbolic relationship with nature which is the basis of land. Land to the tribal is like mother and child relationship. For the tribal, land is the only space where their freedom springs, they are slave without it.

Land Cover and Use

In Manipur about 63.59 percent of the total population depends directly on land. This shows that high proportions of its population are utilizing land base resources such as wet land cultivation in the valley and shifting or jhum cultivation in the forest. Land also remains as the largest employment giver to the people with little alternative employment opportunity available in the state. Secondary and tertiary sectors still remain underdeveloped. In Manipur about 72% of the people depend on agricultural for their sustenance by way of jhuming in the hill areas of the state.19

According to State Environment Report, land available for cultivation in the state is 1, 48,572 hectares accounting for 6.65 percent. Jhum cultivation is widely practice in the hill areas. More than 83,000 families are reportedly engage in jhuming in the total area of jhum cultivation which is 1,832 sq.km in 1976. In 1983 it increased to 3,600 sq. km and 4,905 sq.km in 1990. The main districts where jhuming is practiced are the five hill districts viz. Churachandpur, Ukhrul,

Tamenglong, Chandel, Senapati. The Jhum recycling period is generally 3-4 years.20

Land use identified in the state are build up land with plantations, cropland of *kharif* season, agricultural plantation, evergreen forests degraded forest, marshy land and jhum cultivation. The following table 1.1 shows the percentage distribution of land categories in the hill district of Manipur. The covering of land by different purposes and using of the land by the people in different ways shows the value of land to the people in one hand and shows the stages of the development of society in connection with land on the other hand.

### Table 1.1
Land Use Categories, 1988-1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Senapati</th>
<th>Tamenglong</th>
<th>Churachandpur</th>
<th>Chandel</th>
<th>Ukhrul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Built Up land</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Built-up land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with plantation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cropland of <em>Kharif</em></td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agricultural plantation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Shifting Cultivation</td>
<td>42.43</td>
<td>15.37</td>
<td>26.96</td>
<td>19.77</td>
<td>15.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evergreen semi evergreen forest</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Deciduous forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Degraded forest or Scrub land</td>
<td>51.06</td>
<td>75.45</td>
<td>68.35</td>
<td>76.94</td>
<td>79.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Marshy/swampy land - - - - -
10. Water bodies - - - - -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (in km)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


'Tribe'

The word tribe is explained by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a race of people; now apply specially to a primary aggregate people in primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief.'

The British use the terms to denote 'primitive', 'little community', 'barbarous', 'uncivilized', 'preliterate', 'non literate', 'aboriginal', 'native', etc. for the communities under their control. It is called 'Jat' in Konyak and Nagas, and 'Jat' or 'Nam' in Kuki. Generally, all the tribes have broad affinity in their way of habitation and mode of festival. They have certain common features such as simplicity and honesty.

All the definition of tribe or tribal so far, however, has lack the meaning. The decision to which community is a tribe seems to be taken by the administrator and not by the social scientist. It is made an administrative category. In India, Scheduled Tribe is the constitutional name covering all the tribals. They are known by different name which have meaning like the people of the hill or the original inhabitants and so on. Different writers gave different implications of 'tribal' with references to their research findings and purposes of their studies. Anthropologist, economists, historians and social scientists gave different meanings in their own ways.

22. Ibid.
Elizabeth E. Becon (1956) an Anthropologist in the Encyclopedia Americana observed as follow:

"Tribe is a group of families who have a feeling of community through occupying a common territory and following similar customs..."²³

D.N Majumdar (1961) an economist wrote,

"A tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, member of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations. A tribe is ordinarily an endogamous unit, the members of which confine their marriage within the tribe."²⁴

H.H Riseley (1891) defined,

"The tribe represents a collection of families, or groups of families, bearing a common name, which as a rule does not denote any specific occupation: generally claiming common descent from a mythical or historical ancestor and occasionally from an animal, but in some parts of the country they are held together rather by the obligation of blood feud than by the tradition of kinship, usually speaking the same language; and occupying or claiming to occupy a definite tract of country. A tribe is not necessarily endogamous,

i.e. it is not an invariable rule that man of a particular tribe must marry woman of that tribe.\textsuperscript{25}

According to Dubey (1960), a historian, “The tribe generally refers to territorial communities living in the relative isolation of hills and forests. Their comparative isolation, in some ways has kept them apart from mainstream of society in the country. Partly because of this isolation and partly because of their limited world-view characterize by lack of historical depth and an overall tradition orientation, they are integrated in terms of certain themes rooted in the past. These integrative themes and a special cultural focus gave them a separate cultural identity and they often possess latent or manifest value-attitude and motivational systems which are remarkably different from those of the other peoples.”\textsuperscript{26}

Thus, there is no unanimity regarding the definition of tribe. One best example is the Constitution of India which does not give any specific definition of the term. The term Adavasi or aboriginal is synomous to the term tribe. Tribals are known as “primitive” to the economist, to the ordinary man “folk living in the hill and forest”, to people who are little better inform “folk famous for dance and song”, to an administrator it means “a group of citizen who are special responsibility of the President of India” and to an anthropologist and a sociologist it indicates a special field of study of a social phenomenon.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Dubey, S.C ‘Approaches to the Tribal Problem in India’ in Journal of Social Research, Ranchi, Vol. III No.2, 1960, p.11
\textsuperscript{26} Kumar, B.B, Op. Cit, p.3
\textsuperscript{27} Sahoo, Rajen Kumar, Tribal Development in India, New Delhi: Mohit Publications, 2005, Pp. 41-42.
Encyclopedia Britannica defined tribe a "A social group of simple kind the member of which speaks a common dialect has a single government and act together for such common purposes as welfare."  

A tribe in India is recognized as follows:
1. The least functional inter-dependence within the community;
2. Economically backward;
3. Geographically isolated;
4. Speaks a common dialect;
5. Politically a unit under a common tribal authority;
6. Members are averse to change; and
7. Have its own traditional laws which differ from those of majority communities.

In India the President under the provision of Article 342 of the Constitution is empowered to notify in consultation with the Governor of the state any tribe as a Schedule Tribe. The following four points of criteria are generally followed for classifying a tribal community as Schedule Tribe:
1. Geographical isolation;
2. Shyness of contact with community at large;
3. Distinct culture; and
4. General backwardness.

Tribal Population in India

In India the number of tribal population was 84.3 million in 2001 census which was 8.2 percent of the total population of the country. The country has the largest tribal population in the world, next to Africa with 427 tribal communities which are subdivided into groups and they concentrate mostly in the hilly and forest regions of the country. According to 2001 census Schedule Tribes are largest in Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Jharkhand. The Schedule Tribe formed the largest proportion of the tribal population in Lakshadweep, Mizoram and Nagaland. 31

The tribal population at the time of partition of India as determined by the constitutional order 1950 was 1.79 crores and it rose to 1.91 crores in 1951. As a result of the modified order 1956, their population increased to 2.25 crores which was 6.25 percent of India’s total population. In the 1961 census their population rose to 3.00 crores which was 6.87 percent of the India’s total population. Their population rose to 3.8 crores of the total population in 1971 and 5.2 crores in 1981 which is 7.76 percent of the total population. In 1991 census the total population of the tribal in India increases to 6.7 crores which were 8.08 percent of the total population. 32

Racial Classification

Racial unity is one of the stronger bonds of cohesion. Writer like Zimmerin put emphasis on purity of one’s ethnic group and consider it as a vital factor helping in the formation and strengthening the idea of nationality. But unity of such ethnic group is not a necessary element of

nationality, for it can claim its purity.\textsuperscript{33} Anthropology and history have shown that there is no pure ethnic group anywhere on earth. From the historic and prehistoric process of development and amalgamation mankind found themselves split into a number of broad divisions mainly on geographical lines.

Classification of the Indian people was attempted by B.S Guha. According to him the population of India constitutes the following main races:

1. Negritos
2. Proto Australoid
3. Mongloid
4. Mediterranean
5. Alpine or Armenoid
6. Nordic or Caucasoid\textsuperscript{34}

The first three ethnic groups are found among the tribal population of India. Mongloid groups occupied the North East of India who came from various routes at different time and they speak Tibeto-Burman language. The language however is divided into two main branches:

1. North Assamese formed by various Arunachal tribes like Abhor, Aka, Dafla, Miri and Mishmi.
2. Assamese-Burmese which includes three groups. They are Bodo, Naga and Kuki. The Kuki tribes are distributed in the southern region of Assam and Chin Hill in Burma.\textsuperscript{35}

Captain Lewin classified the North Eastern tribes into three categories:

\textsuperscript{34} Prakash, Ved \textit{Encyclopedia of North East India}, Volume 1, New Delhi: Asiatic Publisher and Distributors Pvt. Ltd., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ibid}, p.40.
1. Those who paid tribute to the government and subject to the latter’s control,

2. Those who pay no revenue but were subject to the British control,

3. The independent tribes which include the Lushai-Kuki tribes but this independent was not enjoyed by the Lushai tribe afterward.\(^{36}\)

The tribal areas of North East are provided a separate administration under the VI Schedule of the Indian Constitution read with Article 244 (2).

Part I  (i) The North Cachar district, and
(ii) Karbi-Anglong district of Assam

Part II (i) The Khasi hills district
(ii) The Jaintia Hills district, and
(iii) The Garo Hills district of Meghalaya

Part III (i) The Chakma district,
(ii) The Mara district, and
(iii) The Lai district of Mizoram

Part IV (i) The Tripura Tribal Areas district.\(^{37}\)

The state of Manipur was not included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution however, made a special consideration into the condition of the hill people of Manipur and as such in order to safeguard them from their grievances, the Parliament passed the Manipur (Hill Areas) District

\(^{36}\) Chakraborti, B.C \textit{British Relation with the Hill Tribes of Assam since 1854}, Calcutta: Firma K.L Mukhopadhyaya, 1964, p.48

\(^{37}\) Kumar, B.B \textit{Op.Cit}, p.1
Councils Act, 1971. The Act stood for the establishment of District Councils in the Hill Areas of Manipur. So in Manipur, there is a system of District Councils in the Hill Areas under Sixth Schedule of the constitution.

Demographic Features of Manipur

One of the unit states of India, Manipur which is described as "Jewel of India" has an area of approximately 8,628 sq. miles (22,327 kms.) which constitutes 0.7 percent of the total land surface of Indian. It has 352 kms long international border with Myanmar and 502 kms long border with the state of Nagaland on the north, Cachar district of Assam on the west and Mizoram on the south and south west. The state has a total population of 2,721, 756 lakhs comprising 1,369,764 lakhs of male and 1,351,992 lakhs of female as per 2011 census.

The state can be divided into hill and valley areas. The hill areas covered an area about 20,082 sq. km and the centrally located valley area of the state cover an area of about 2,238 sq.km accounting for only one tenth of the total area of the state. The state has nine districts out of which five viz. Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong, Ukhrul and Chandel are hill districts.

The tribal groups are distributed in all the five hills districts of Manipur. Scattered tribal pockets are also found in the valley and urban areas. Manipur state presents remarkable social, cultural and linguistic

38. Section-3 (i), The Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971.
diversity. The non-tribal community constitutes the largest share of population accounting 61.27 percent.  

Distribution of population in Manipur is uneven. The oval shape small valley area is its targeted place for all section of the people in the state for any purposes e.g. dwelling, agriculture, business, industry, etc. The most thickly populated district is Imphal West and the thinly populated one is Tamenglong district with 856 and 25 persons per sq. kms respectively. In area wise the biggest district is Churachandpur and the smallest one is Bishnupur district with 4,570 and 496 sq.km respectively.

The main region for wide differences in the population density between the Hill and the Valley are:

a) The hill areas are occupied only by the tribal people; and

b) The valley areas are inhabited by non-tribal people (like Meitei, Meitei-Pangal-Muslim, Schedule Caste people and few tribal peoples from the hill areas.

The most peculiar characteristic of the present Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reform Act in Manipur is that, the non-tribal people in Manipur cannot acquired landed property in the hill areas whereas, there is no restriction for the hill people to dwell and acquired in the valley region. The central valley which covers an area of 2,238 sq.km has a

concentration of 65 percent of total population whereas the remaining 35 percent live in the vast hilly and mountainous tracts of the state.\textsuperscript{44}

The sex ratio for the state as a whole has improved from 958 females per 1000 males in 1991 to 978 females per 1000 in 2001. In term of literacy Manipur ranks third among the North East states of India as per 2001 census. It has increase from 59.89 percent.\textsuperscript{45} There is apparent disparity in the level of income and consumption between the rich and the poor, between the have and have nots and between the public living in the hill and the valley.

**Population Density**

To understand land-man ratio the study of population density is important. The population of Manipur is based on ethnicity. The density of population of Manipur per sq. km in 1991 and 2001 was 82 and 97 respectively. There are differences in land population ratio in the hill districts and valley districts which the hill areas is occupied by the tribal and the valley by non-tribal with few tribal pockets. The hill districts have as low as 37 persons per sq. kms and valley districts a high population density of 630 persons per sq. kms.\textsuperscript{46} An analysis into the table 1.2 shows the population density between the year 1991 and 2001. This shows that the increase in population density is more prominent in the valley districts than the hills. There is immense population pressure on land in the valley region of the state.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State District</th>
<th>Areas (in Sq. Km)</th>
<th>Percentage Share of Population (per sq.km)</th>
<th>Density of Population Density</th>
<th>Chang in State's Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991 - 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>22,327</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill Districts</td>
<td>20,089</td>
<td>89.97</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senapati</td>
<td>3,271</td>
<td>14.65</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamenglong</td>
<td>4,391</td>
<td>19.66</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>4,570</td>
<td>20.46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandel</td>
<td>3,313</td>
<td>14.83</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>4,544</td>
<td>20.35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Districts</td>
<td>2,238</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoubal</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>2.30</td>
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<td>Bishnupur</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>2.22</td>
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<td>Imphal</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Climate

Manipur has sub-tropical monsoon type of climate. She is largely influenced by the topography of this hilly region which defines the geography of Manipur. Situated at an elevation of 790 meters above the sea level, the state of Manipur is wedged between hills from all sides. Manipur enjoy equitable climate. It has sub-tropical temperate climate and most of the places in the valley and hills have cool and pleasant climate. The mean annual temperature is recorded 23.6 degree Celsius in Jiribam,
21.5 degree Celsius in Tamenglong, 21.3 degree Celsius in Thanlon and 21.7 degree Celsius in Churachandpur in the western hills.\textsuperscript{47}

The rainy season starts from June and lasts up to September, and the winter makes its presence felt from November to February. Eventually the state has received adequate amount of rainfall, its distribution is higher in the hill area than in the valley. Although the state received adequate rainfall for agriculture purposes, it suffers from its temporal variations. The average rainfall in Manipur till 1984 was 2,077.7 mm.\textsuperscript{48} The annual rainfall of Manipur in 2001 was recorded at 17, 9405 mm. The state has salubrious climate.\textsuperscript{49}

The hilly state is drenched in rains from the months of May and continues till the middle of October. It receives an average rainfall of 1467.5 mm. annually. The downpour ranges from light drizzles to heavy showers. The normal rainfall of Manipur enriches the soil and helps in agricultural processes and irrigation. However, the heavy and sustained fall of rain is largely responsible for the soil erosion down the hill slopes. The south westerly monsoon picks up moisture from the Bay of Bengal and heads towards Manipur, hits the Eastern Himalaya ranges and produces a massive amount of rain in the state.\textsuperscript{50}

Maximum and minimum temperature is becoming changing year after year in Manipur but the general maximum temperature recorded in the summer months of Manipur is 32 degree Celsius. In winter the

\textsuperscript{48} Sen, Sipra, \textit{Tribes and Castes in Manipur: Description and Select Bibliography}, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1992, p.9
\textsuperscript{50} Brown, R \textit{Statistical Account of Manipur}, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1975, p.94.
mercury often falls to subzero temperature making it frosty in the wintertime. The coldest month in Manipur is January and July experiences the maximum summer temperature.\textsuperscript{51}

**Natural Relief**

The Manipur hills, base on the basis of physical set up, can be broadly divided into two groups- the Manipur Eastern Hills and the Manipur Western Hills which differ in their layout, structure and relief.

1. **The Manipur Eastern Hills:**

Forming a continuous chain along the Indo-Myanmar frontier for about 200 kms and it attains an average height of about 1,500 meters and the breath ranges from 50 kms in the north to about 30 kms in the South. They are south ward continuation of the Tuensang and Kohima hills of Nagaland. Important peaks are Khyangbung (2,833m), Siroy (2,568m), Kachaobung (2,498m). The hills also include ranges like Mapithel, Chengai, Mulian and Saramati. The slope of this ranges are gentle to the west and are mostly made of limestone, chromites, talc, nickel and copper areas.\textsuperscript{52}

2. **Manipur Western Hills:**

It is more elevated and extensive than other areas of the state. The ranges runs up to the Barak River in a direction nearly southern state for about 128 kms with a breath of 50 kms to the extreme southern limit of the Manipur. Important peak in this area are Tenipu (2,994m), Leikot (2,831m), Tampaba (2,664m), Koubru (2,662m) and Iso (2,460m). Barak, Irang, Makru and Jiri are important river.\textsuperscript{53} The length of the region is 180 kms in the north to south and width about 50kms, composed of the

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\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
compact sandstones, shales and clays of the Barial series, mudstones, etc but on the eastern slope these hills found sandstones, sandy shales, mudstones are found.\textsuperscript{54}

3. Manipur Valley:

Manipur Valley is encircled by the Eastern and Western hills of Manipur. It is an oval shape. The altitude of the valley varies from 838 m in the north and 792 m in the south above the mean sea level. There are, however, a number of dotted hillocks in the plain such as Langol, Langjing, Chingkhu, Langthabal, Waithou and Langathel, etc. In the south corner of the valley lies Loktak Lake which is 12 km long and 8 kilometers wide.\textsuperscript{55}

4. Barak Valley:

The Barak plain has an area of about 250 sq. kms and it is an extension of Cachar Valley of Assam. It is an alluvial plain and is formed mainly by the head ward erosion and subsequent deposition of Barak and its tributary, Jiri. \textsuperscript{56}

Tribal Ethnology in Manipur

The hill area of Manipur is occupied by the ethnic tribal groups which is their abode. They are the second largest population in Manipur with their population (ST) recorded at 7, 41,141 while the non-tribal population recorded at 15, 52,755 according to 2001 census.\textsuperscript{57} Here the Schedule Tribe population constitutes about 34.41 percent of the total state population. Schedule Tribe population in the valley areas was

\textsuperscript{55} Singh, Hawalbam Biren, Op. Cit, p.16.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Statistical Abstract, Manipur, 2004, p.17.
56,247 and the urban dweller has numbered 28,058 according to 2001 census.58

The tribal of the state are multilingual and pluralistic. There are 33 tribal groups in Manipur recognize by the government of India as Schedule Tribe. They are Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Koirao, Koireng, Kom, Lamgang, Mizo, Lushai, Maram, Maring, Mao, Monsang, Moyon, Paite, Ralte, Sema, Simte, Suhte, Tangkhul, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, Poumei Naga, Tarao, Kharam and Any Kuki Tribes.59 As per the proposal of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in November 2009, the six communities’ viz. Inpui, Liangmai, Rongmei, Thangal, Zeme and Mate will be included in the list of Schedule Tribes in the state of Manipur by amending the existing entries. The proposed bill will be tabled before parliament and after passing of the bill by both Houses, the ascent of the President of India will be obtained for notifying the changes.60 This will total Schedule Tribe list in the state to 39 tribes.

In Manipur some of the Schedule Tribe groups, their population are very few. According to 1991 census Purum tribe has a population of only 388. The Maram tribe who inhabit part of Tadubi and Kangpokpi division in Senapati district is the only primitive group in the state.61

The tribal of Manipur are divided into two broad categories viz. Kuki and Naga communities. Kuki affiliated tribes are dispersed over the five hill districts with larger concentration in Churachandpur, Chandel and Senapati districts. Naga tribes are concentrated mainly in the district of Ukhrul, Tamenglong and Senapati.

Table 1.3
Tribal and Non-Tribal Population in Manipur
(1951-2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Tribal Population</th>
<th>Non-Tribal Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1, 94,239</td>
<td>3, 83,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2, 49,049</td>
<td>5, 30,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>3, 34,466</td>
<td>7, 38,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>3, 87,977</td>
<td>10, 32,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>6, 32,173</td>
<td>12, 04,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7, 41,141</td>
<td>15, 52,755</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Kukis

The Kukis area linguistic group speaking in dialects that have a common root belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group. They are numeroustribes whose proper limit according to Horatio has been not defined: They are a sub family of the Tibeto-Burman group on the basis

of linguistic classification adopted by G.A Grierson.\textsuperscript{64} Most scholar and British administrators described them as belonging to Mongolian stock.\textsuperscript{65} Majumdar (1930) recorded that, the Kukis existed in prehistoric India.\textsuperscript{66} Prof. JN Phukan (1992) writes,

"If we are to believe Ptolemy's "Tilade" as the Kuki people, as identified by Gerini, the settlement of Kuki in the North East India would go back to a very long time in the past."\textsuperscript{67}

During 90 – 168 A.D, Claudius Ptolemy the geographer identified the Kukis with Tilade who are associated with Tilabaras and place them to the north of Maiandros that is about the Garo Hills and Shylet.\textsuperscript{68} Stevenson's reference to Kuki in relation to Ptolemy also bears critical significant to its existence in this period.\textsuperscript{69} The Rajmala or Annals of Tripura refers to Shiva falling in love with a Kuki woman around AD 1512.\textsuperscript{70}

British Anthropologist divided the people of Kuki into two groups- Old Kukis and New Kukis.\textsuperscript{71} This classification is on the basis of their arrival into Manipur.\textsuperscript{72} The Kukis who migrate to Manipur around 19\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{68} Gereni, G.R \textit{Research on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia}, (Further India and Indo Malay Archipelago) Published in conjunction with the Royal Geographical Society, London.
\textsuperscript{70} Dalton, E.T \textit{Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal}, Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1872,p.110
\textsuperscript{72} Dun, E.W \textit{Gazetteer of Manipur}, Delhi: Vivek Publishing House, 1975, p. 32.
The term 'Kuki'\(^{80}\), is a Bengali and meaning hill men or highlanders.\(^{81}\) According to J.H Hutton the term 'Kuki' first appeared in Bengal from the writing of Rawlins (1792).\(^{82}\) Col, A.S Reid (1976) says that, 'Kuki' is a Bengali word for 'Hill People' or 'Highlander'.\(^{83}\) It is a term given by the outsiders. It is a generic term covering numbers of tribes and clans.\(^{84}\) Elly (1978) recorded that the Bengalis called the tribe 'Kuki', or 'hill people'.\(^{85}\) G.A Griereson (1904) also describes the term 'Kuki' as an Assamese or Bengali word applied to such hill tribes as Lushais, Rangkhols, Thadous, and so on, who were residing in India.\(^{86}\)

The clear meaning of the term 'Kuki' is unknown to the people themselves. This could mean any uncivilized or savage people living in the hill areas in the eastern side of India, and their national identities were unknown to the Indians. The same person is also known as Chin in Myanmar. It is the corrupted word of the Chinese words ‘Jin’ or ‘Yen’, meaning ‘man’. Lushai was the name adopted by the British officially for the Shailo clan in particular and later used for all the Kuki people living in Lushai Hills. The term ‘Lushai’ was rejected and officially changed into Mizo on the 9\(^{th}\) April 1946, at Muallunthu Conference.\(^{87}\)

3. Kuki-Chin-Mizo:

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\(^{80}\) Cooci, Kookie, Cuci or Kukie are spellings of the same phonetic and pronunciation applied by Western Writers in English that refers to the "Kuki" of Indian and Kuki writers' usage in Roman's letter.

\(^{81}\) Reid, A.S *Chin Lushai Clan, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1893*, p.5

\(^{82}\) Rawlin *The Cucis of Mountaineers of Tipra*, Asiatic Researcher, IX x II, 1792, p. 35.

\(^{83}\) Singh, A.S Reid, *Chin Lushai Land: Including a description of the various expeditions into the Chin-Lushai Hills and the final annexation of the country; with maps and ill*, K.L.M Pvt. Ltd. 1976, p.5.


The people of Kuki-Chin-Mizo are the same and one. They have common culture, customs, and tradition, mode of living, language and social life. Various records made available during the last nearly two centuries reveal the truth that the people with different names (nomenclatures) of today as Kukis, Chins and Lushais (Mizo) are one nation. Kukis, Chins and Lushais (Mizo) accept that they are one nation. Historical records are more than enough to prove that Kukis, Chins and Mizos (Lushai) are of one origin, meaning one nation. To quote one record will suffice to demonstrate this fact. Bertram S. Carey and H.N. Tuck (1896) wrote as follows:

"Without pretending to speak with authority on the subject, we think we may reasonably accept the theory that the Kukis of Manipur, the Lushais of Bengal and Assam, and the Chins originally lived in what we now know as Thibet (Tibet), are of one and the same stock; their form of government, method of cultivation, manners and customs, belief and traditions all point to one origin."

Another historical record, which proves that these people are one nation, is the so-named Anglo-Kuki war fought since 1770 and continued fighting till 1919. The truth of the one nation is that the war is between this nation on one side, and the Britishers on other. The war has been recorded with different names such as Lushai expedition, Chin expedition, Khongsai gar, Zo gal, Thadou gal, Haokip gal, Kuki Rebellion and Kuki War of Independence, etc. Though different names are assigned to, the war is between the Britishers and this nation.

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G. A. Grierson (1904) has divided Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes into four sub-groups \(^{90}\) as follows:

a) Old Kuki Sub-Group:
   1. Bete (Biate)
   2. Rangkhol (Hrangkhol)
   3. Hallam (Halam)
   4. Langrong (Ranglong)
   5. Aimol
   6. Chiru
   7. Kolren or Koireng
   8. Kom
   9. Kyan or Chaw
   10. Mhar (Hmar)
   11. Chote, Muntuk and Karum
   12. Purum
   13. Anal

b) Northern Chin Sub-Group:
   1. Thado
   2. Sokte
   3. Ralte
   4. Paite.

c) Central Chin Sub-Group:
   1. Shunkla or Tashon
   2. Zahao or Yahow
   3. Lai

\(^{90}\) Ibid, P.6-7
4. Lakher
5. Lushein gente
6. Bangjogi
7. Pankhu (Pangkhu).

d) Southern Chin Sub-Group:
1. Sho or Khyang
2. Khami.
3. Chinme
4. Welaung
5. Chinbok
6. Yindu
7. Chinbo

4. Zo

There are some local scholars who suggest that the Kuki people should be called Zo.\textsuperscript{91} Fanch’o, a diplomat of the Tang dynasty of China wrote in 862 A.D about a kingdom in the Chindwin valley.\textsuperscript{92} The princes and chiefs in this kingdom were called ‘Zo’.\textsuperscript{93} Vumson believes that the rise of the Tang dynasty (618-906 A.D.) brought contact between the early Zo people in the Chindwin and the Tang Chinese. The Tangs widely travelled and recorded the existence of three kingdoms in Burma viz. the Pyus, the Pegus (Mon), and the Sak, which Vumson speculates to be Zo. Vumson also mentions Father Sangermo, who wrote in 1783, “the petty nation called ‘Jo’,” the name not used by the tribes such as Zo or Yo or

\textsuperscript{91} One of such scholar is Vumson who used the name ‘Zo’ to be the name of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo-Zomi nation.
\textsuperscript{92} Chindwin valley is all the bay areas beside the Chindwin River, one of the most important rivers in Myanmar (Burma).
Sho, and British officer Tom Lewin’s record, indicating “The generic name of the whole nation is Dzo.”

5. Kuki Jewish Theory of Origin

The origin of the Kuki people is complicated; it is shrouded in myth and mythologies. The people have their own legends regarding their beginnings. They have the traditional belief that they came out of the bowels of the earth- a cave called Khul, Chhinlung or Sinlung in Western China. William Shaw (1929) mentioned Khul in China as the origin of Thadou Kuki people. Shinlung and Chhinlung are the same word for Khul in Mizo and Chin. Another popular theory put forward in regard to their origin in recent time is the Kuki-Jewish theory of origin. This theory have gain much popularity with more research work undertaken in recent time.

The Kuki people believed they are the descendents of the children of Israel of the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph in the Bible one of the ten lost tribes of Israel to be their ancestor forefather. The claim appeared after a Pentecostalist dreamt in 1951 that his people’s pre-Christian religion was Judaism and that their original homeland was Israel. The

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98. Myer Samer, an Australian Anthropologist who wrote ‘Judaism in Manipur and Mizoram’, is one of the first to study the issue and who did an empirical study by undertaking field work covering Chin Hills (Myanmar), Mizoram and Manipur. The others are Hillel Halkin, Khuplam Lenthang, beside others.
100. Sheleg, Yair ‘In Search of Jewish Chromosomes in India’, Haaretz Jerusalem, April 1
101. Personal interview with Lenthang, Khuplam Milui (a researcher on Kuki- Israeli Identity) at Moreh, Chandel district, Manipur on 4 September 2008.
ten tribes of Israel were "lost" around 720 B.C when the northern
Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians and exiled the tribes
that compose it. The southern kingdom of Judah was spared from it, and
the Jews of today are primarily descendent from the tribe of Judah and
Benjamin, which composed the southern kingdom. The Jews had
eventually split into different political entities after King Solomon's death
around 920 BC. The Manasseh were taken a slave by the Assyrian and
brought to Assyria after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70
AD.\textsuperscript{102} From Assyria they migrated to Afghanistan, Kashmir region and
Tibet plateau, and they settled in the Chhinlung region of China.\textsuperscript{103}

Few centuries back, there was a great wave of migration from
China toward the South. The spread of Mongoloid races to Myanmar
(Burma) and the North-Eastern region of India were in continuation of this
migration. Folklore of the Kuki says that they came out from a cave which
is believed to be the Great Wall of China, which they call Chhinlung or
Siinlung or Khul, which was situated in China bordering the Shan state of
Myanmar (Burma). They were led out of Khul by their ancestor Songthu.
Recently a new development took place with regard to the route of
migration. The latest research found the source or beginning of migration
beyond China. Hillel Halkin\textsuperscript{104} wrote that the ancestors of Kuki lived at
some point in Central Asia a part of a community from which Central
Asian Jew descended.\textsuperscript{105} Their mythical ancestors were known as
'Manmasinao' which means mortal. The word 'Manasseh' or 'Manmasi'
means a human as distinct from a spirit and is generally used with

\begin{footnotes}
\item[102] The Bible, 2 Kings 17-41.
\item[103] De Krassel, Peter G. \textit{Custom Maid Knowledge for New World Disorder: The Post-
\item[104] Distinguished writer, a Jewish born in New York who made an in-depth
investigation into the claims of Kuki tribes as Israel /Jewish origin. In this connection,
he has written 'Across the Sabbath River - In search of the Lost Tribe of Israel' in 2002.
\item[105] Halkin, Hiller \textit{Across the Sabbath River: In Search of the Lost Tribes of Israel},
\end{footnotes}
reference to legendary epoch when the distinction was less marked than it is now.  

T. Bhattacharyya's article that appear in the Telegraph wrote, "...during the time of Alexander invasion the tribe moves along Kashmir area and Tibet plateau to escape to Mongolia and to Chhinlung in China. They also settle in Laos, Vietnam and Burma before they migrated to Mizoram in India".

David Roy (1947) on Kuki migration stated, "the Kukis group from Western China (between the source of the Yangtze and Huang-Ho rivers) moved towards North West along with the Pyu-Burmese-Kachin groups. They reached the shore of Bay of Bengal from moving south west following Irrawaddy and the Chindwin rivers".

This is supported by Birendra Chandra (1856) who wrote, "...they(Kukis) turned back to North and settled and occupied the whole length and breadth of the hilly region of the Indo-Burma boundary lines. Records of the tribe living there begin with the arrival of the British in the area in the 18th century".

During the British period in India Christian missionaries working in North East regions were astonish to see that the Kuki tribes-men worship god who was closely related to stories found in the Bible. It is said that a

letter from *Bnei Menashe*\(^{110}\) was passed along to Rabbi Eliyahu of Jerusalem who seeks and assists ‘Lost Jews’ by an Indian Jews living in Israel which begins the investigation into the claim of the Kukis in Manipur, Mizoram and Myanmar (Burma).\(^{111}\) With this begin the investigation that these tribes are Israel.

The Kukitribes did not maintain any written historical records before they are converted to Christianity, as such there are no documents to support their Israelite’s connection. Their culture, tradition and beliefs and practices were passed down from generation to generation to generate by means of the oral tradition. They base their connection from the wording of songs, chants and customary practices.\(^{112}\) The Kukipeople have ancient songs and chants with words from the Bible. For centuries they have been singing “Litenten Zion” which means “Let’s go to Zion”, “Tuipisan Kanla” which means “Dried up of RedSea”, although they have no idea what Red Sea or Zion was. One of their song “Tupi San Kanla” (Red Sea Song) during their migration sung during the *Sikpui*\(^{113}\) festival is given below:

*Sikpui inthangkan we laia,*

*Changtuipui aw; semmah rilikaninteng,*

*Keralawna, kale do aw,*

*Sunnah sum ang, zanahmeilaw in vak e,*

*Aturasa, thlu a ruol aw,*

*In phawsiel le in ralfeite zuong thaw ro,*

*Sun razawlakaleido aw,*

*Kara lawn a, meisumang lawn in vak e,*

---

110. *Bnei Menashe* is groups of tribes in North East India who believed they are the descendent of one of the lost tribe of Israel.


113. A winter festival celebrated by Hmars tribe - one of the Kuki tribe.
Sun razaw lakaleido aw,
Laimisaang changtuipui in lemzova,
Ava ruolkha la t ache,
Suonglung chunga tuizuong put kha la ta che.\textsuperscript{114}

Free translation:
While we are preparing for Sikpui feast,
The big red sea became divided,
As we are marching forward fighting our foes,
A cloud is leading us during day,
And by a pillar of file during night,
Our enemies, ye folk, are thick with fury,
Come out with your shields and spears,
Fighting our foes all day,
We marched as long as cloud-fire goes a fore
The enemies we fight all day,
The big sea swallowed them like a beast. Collect the quails,
And fetch the water that springs out of the rock.

Another traditional farewell song of the Kukis which record of their
migration to the East and West is given below:

\textit{Phungol Changang Kkhena,}
\textit{Somma kailhang dingpimum,}
\textit{Sim le marla thongnu asena,}
\textit{Sihselangtuipi in, mano tang,}
\textit{Mano tang, manmasi chaten.}\textsuperscript{115}

Free Translation

"The high mountain is the place where all the clansmen were ever separated and marches towards east and west direction"

The folk songs and chanting of these tribes have mostly the words 'Selah', 'Aborizah' and 'Elo' at the end. The meanings of these words are found in the Bible. Selah is found in the book of Psalm which means to repeat again and again and Aborizah a Hebrew word used for praising the God. These tribes are also said to be having Bulpjem. The Scroll however, got lost during the reign of King Shih Hungtai in China in allegedly dated back precisely to 214 B.C.

The similarity in customs between the two, recorded stories from grant parents about their (Kukis) ancient customs all pointed that they belong to one of the tribe of Israel. While many people started to believe that they are one of the lost tribe of Israel there are however, claim and counter claim going on among Christian group and pro-Jewish group known as Bnei Menashe in the state.

The Nagas

Unlike the Kukis the Nagas are linguistically not homogenous and they belong to the Mongoloid stock and Tibeto-Burman linguistic group. Their historical origin according to some scholar is believed to be a place called Makhel in Senapati District, Manipur. The tribe from there disperses to other parts. They have no written historical record about their origin and the route of migration to their present inhabitation. Some writers however, believed that Nagas immigrated from three directions -

116. Own writing script consisting of 32 alphabets which have Jewish connection.
North East, North West and South East. It is a generally believe that the majority of the Nagas immigrated from South East through the corridor of Indo-Myanmar border to the Naga Hills.\textsuperscript{119}

The origin of the term ‘Naga’ is in mystery. According to Grierson (1911), the term was derived from the Assamese word ‘Naga’ which applied to the hill tribes of the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts.\textsuperscript{120} Johnstone (1885) suggests that the word ‘Naga’ is derived from the Assamese word ‘Noga’ which means ‘Naked’. He had written on the origin of the word ‘Naga’ as follow.

‘The Assamese word for Naga is naked and they called the Naga so, because in the olden days, most if not all of them were naked. The word as tribal name certainly came from Assam’\textsuperscript{121}

Hutton and Mill (1965) suggest that the word, ‘Naga’ is derived from the word ‘Nanga’ a Sanskrit word meaning “naked”.\textsuperscript{122} There is also Sanskrit word “naga” meaning the “mountain” or “mountaineer”\textsuperscript{123}. R.K Shimray(1985) noted Naga scholar believe that the word ‘Naga’ was derived from Burmese word ‘Naka’ which means ‘pierced ears’\textsuperscript{124} According to Prof. Gangumei Kamei (1985) the term ‘Naga’ was popularizes by the British i.e. the name given by the inhabitants of Brahmaputra and the Barak valley to mean the Nags.\textsuperscript{125} E.W Dun (1886) suggests that the word ‘Naga’ originated from Sanskrit word ‘Naga’ which

\textsuperscript{119} Hudson, T.C \textit{The Naga Tribes of Manipur}, Delhi: Low Price Publication, 1911, p.1.  
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid}.  
\textsuperscript{121} Stone, John \textit{Diary 1885}, (N.p.), p.32.  
\textsuperscript{125} Shimray, R.R \textit{Origin and Culture of Naga}, New Delhi: Samsok1985,p.278  
means serpent. Many people however cannot accept it for the reason that Naga are never know to worship snake nor do they have felicitate such animal worship. Theories on the origin of the term 'Naga' are too many and they are appearing to be controversial.

According to J.P. Mills (1922), the Nagas live in the area, bounded by the Hudkawng valley in the North-East, the plains of Brahmaputra valley to the North-West of Cachar to the South-West and of the Chindwin to the east. In the south, the Manipur valley roughly marks the point of contact between the Naga tribes and the very much more closely interrelated group of Kuki tribes - Thadou, Lushei, Chin, etc.\textsuperscript{126} Both in fact, have relationship not only as a tribal group but also as a people living together in the hill areas with similar beliefs and practices.

Kuki and Naga Relationship

The tribals both Kuki and Naga have history of friendship and enmity. They help each other as neighbor against enemy attack. There was peace between the two communities. They have remained as 'jol'. \textsuperscript{127} It helps in maintaining cordial relation between the two communities. Giving a slice backbone flesh of animal killed between jol was a common practice. They have to exchange things like paddy, chillis, seeds and lending paddy without interest and organizing feast together. There are different levels of jol relation. Jol can be established between two individuals, families and villages. The two communities also shared a territory and its resources. When such join sharing took place they organized 'Nehbom Gam' meaning Neh=eat; bom= sharing,

\textsuperscript{126} Mills, James Philip \textit{The Lothas Nagas}, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1922, p-xvi
\textsuperscript{127} Jol in Kuki means friendship. Ka- jol means my friend or relation. Kabui Naga called it \textit{Champan or Chamran} and Tangkhul Naga called Mangai or Ingai.
Gam=territory. The Nagas invited the Kukis to establish Kuki villages and to protect them from the attack of wild animals and their enemies. Kholep Kuki village in Ukhrul is an example which was set up for the purpose. Kamu, Saichang, Bongjiang and Mongliham village in Sadar hills and in Ukhrul have maintained close relationship.

The Nagas have some differences among themselves in terms of customs, beliefs and on religious view. These differences can be seen by their way of dressing, type of houses and languages. They are showy and colorful whereas the Kukis are conservative and are peculiar in their reserved nature. Both the communities have been living together through the ages and share the well and woes of life together and their continued mixing up and familiarity have endeared in them the feeling of friendship and natural respect.

With the coming of Christianity their relationships become stronger. But, there are strain and conflict among these communities too due to various reasons which are mainly created by the changing land relations in the hill areas. The contemporary hill tribes of Manipur are on the contest for land control to acquire more land and land base resources which invariably lead to ethnic strain in between the two groups. Kuki-Naga ethnic clash in the 1990s and the Naga opposition to the Kuki demands for district to be name as Sadar Hill within Senapati district of Manipur by claiming that it is within Naga area are an example.

128. Personal interview with Chongloi, Lungholam at Kaimai in Ukhrul district, Manipur on 5 May 2009.
129. Vaiphei, Prim The Vaiphei Tribe, Imphal: Author, p. 54.
131. ‘Kuki Hills District’ A memorandum submitted to Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India by the Kuki Chief’s Zonal Council, Manipur, N.p, p. 11
Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. to study the tribal land ownership system in Manipur (with special reference to the Kukis) which have direct bearing on the community socio-economic and political system,

2. to study the changes taking place in traditional land ownership system (with that of socio-economic and political changes) in the tribal society during colonial and post colonial periods in Manipur, and

3. to study and find out the natures and causes of tribal revolts and movements in the hill areas of Manipur in the pre-independence period.

Study Area

The study area is limited to the present state of Manipur. The area is situated between 23°51' N and 25°41'N latitudes 93°2'E and 94°47'E longitudes. It has five hill districts and four valley districts containing within its boundary about 854 kms including 502 kms border that separates it from the state of Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland. Her international boundary with Myanmar to the East and South East is about 352 kms. It is rectangular in shape with plain in the center. The altitude of the state above the mean sea level varies from 900 meters to 2100 meters.132 It is topographically hilly and they are broadly divided into the Manipur Eastern hills and the Manipur Western Hills. While the valley area is mainly occupied by the non tribal groups the hill areas which constitute 90 percent of the total geographical land is occupy by the tribal both Kukis and Nagas.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research work will include both primary as well as secondary sources of data collection. The primary source of data collection will include field work undertaken base on well structure schedules which will includes devices like interview and questionnaire to get first hand information. We will also base our study on observational method with special reference to the historical analysis. Though there are books, journals magazines, historical records, reports and monographs, etc they do not suffice the requirement of our study. Therefore, while we will also depend on secondary sources of data collection like literature, it however, will extensively undertake field work to make the work authentic, empirical and original.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the present work has covered the land ownership system of the tribal of Manipur who are broadly classified into Kukis and Nagas. It covers the time from pre colonial to post independent. While it study land ownership pattern of the tribal people it also covers land use and holding system, socio-economic, political and other aspect which are inter related. In fact, one cannot study land ownership alone and leave the other system.

To make the work neutral and unbiased, we will limit our focus/work to the study, analysis and investigation the traditional and modern practices of land ownership in the tribal society, tribals revolt against the British rule on their land and the changing land relations in modern time thus, avoiding the contemporary conflicts arising out of contest for land ownership in the state between the two tribal communities on the one hand, and tribals and non-tribals communities on the other hand.
Review of Literature

The present study depends not only on primary but it also depends on secondary sources of data collection as well. Various books, journal, document remain to be a good source. Binodini Devi 'Tribal Land System in Manipur' publish by Centre for Manipur Studies and Akansha Publishing House in 2006, gives detail account of all the social and cultural aspects of the tribal people which are the instrument for the evolvement of land ownership system of tribal people based on their costume and tradition. It also mentioned the condition such as no uniform pattern of tribal land system in Manipur except some scattered information of the land use pattern. Recent publication 'Tribalism and the Tragedy of Commons, Land Identity and Development: The Manipur Experience' carefully edited by Ch. Priyoranjan Singh is very helpful for getting information on land system of Manipur. The volume contains chapters on land related issues, problems and challenges. It remains very helpful for understanding the nature of land and land relations with socio-economic and political development which are responsible for today's identity assertion, contest for land and development. Another edited book by N. Lokendro Singh 'Land use System in Manipur Hills', too remain as a treasure in getting information on the land use system of tribal people both Kukis and Nagas in Manipur. The land system practiced by tribal communities in the state has been studied from customary practices to changes over in recent time. Walter Fernandes and Melville Pereira 'Land Relations and Ethnic Conflicts: The Case of North Eastern India', publish by North Eastern Social Research Centre, 2005 studies problems of migration and its effects on land relations and land base conflict in the region. It also made a comparative study between tribes of North East through a longitudinal study.

Some Ph.D thesis submitted to different universities such as the work of L. Chinzakham Ngaite, 'Agrarian System of the Zo' (Manipur University, 1991), Lunkhosei Haokip 'The Kukis: A Socio-Cultural Study (Manipur University, 2003), Thuanliang 'Land Use System in Tribal Areas of Manipur: Problem and Prospect' (Manipur University, 1997) which deals on land ownership and land holding system were also referred and consulted.

Significant of the Study

The significant of the present study is manifold. Tribal polity more or less is base on their lands system. It is also immensely important to understand land ownership system of the tribal people to understand their socio political, culture and economic system. Land ownership system remains to be the main pivot around which socio-economic –politto-cultural system revolved around in tribal society. Land being the vanguard of sustenance and livelihood for both Kukis and Nagas it is built into their psyche. The tribal mode of production and the nature of ownership of the resources of the community are the basis of their identity.
Land for the tribal is their identity, their custom and all the customary laws have their source in their land system. Their access to land and other land based resources in Manipur in particular and North East in general is one of the most significant areas of research in contemporary social science displine. The study has become more important in recent time with the issue of land become synomous with the present turmoil in the in North East India particularly Manipur.

There is little or few publication available on the subject. Study on tribal land system in fact, is lacking. The available materials do not suffice our need. Gangumei Kamei (1985) wrote,

"Yet intensive studies are lacking and we have the gap in our knowledge of the tribal land system" 133

It is a known fact that an intensive studies on the tribal land ownership and holding system are lacking. The present work is a humble step to bridge this gap. It will enhance promote wider knowledge on tribal studies.