PREFACE

The principal aim of this present study is to understand the political aspiration of the tri ethnic community of Manipur, the Meiteis, the Nagas and the Kukis in order to analyse their political implication at the backdrop of identity crisis. Also, efforts has been made to understand the dynamic political culture, its changes in the politicisation process by the external forces like religion from outside, British colonialism and existing Indian political economic system which led to assertion of interests and relations among the various ethnic groups as spiral in character. So it is said that Manipur is paradise for the anthropologists and politically it is hotbed. Furthermore, there is a big question ‘where is the hidden paradise on earth where the god and goddess are dancing?’ That is a place called Manipur where we live.

Moreover the glorious past of the people of Manipur, the ancient most of the region i.e. the hill and the plain people, confer a sense of pride on each one of them even
today. Decades of year ago, these people led a peaceful, jovial and prosperous life. They live together in an atmosphere of love, care and mutual sharing of responsibilities. And they looked forward to live as happily forever. However, the indelibility of this glorious past seems to be threatened to extinction by the animosities among the tribal and the plain people of the present days. So much of that the existing conditions of tribals and that of plain people spell out continuous conflicts, misunderstandings and miseries not only among the people of the respective tribes and groups but also for the governments of the nation. In these situations of conflict, it is possible to initiate the actions that would restore the glorious past and revive the traditions of peaceful co-existence and accommodation of vested interest. The question could be answered only by studying with a detailed probing in this area. This is the thrust of my work.

For a clear understanding of emerging conflict situation of Manipur, the genesis of it is traced and its concomitant
identity crisis and its political implications. Identity crisis means an acute anxiety state experienced by a person or group who finds it difficult to establish a clearly defined personal or group identity. Whenever there occurs a phase or period seeking new set of definition amidst unclear role choices of an individual or group, there occurs the psycho-social phenomenon of identity crisis. To Eriksson “Crisis means a crucial time or an inescapable turning point for better or worse”. ‘Better’ means a confluence of the constructive energies of an individual or society. Therefore, identity crisis is a recurring phenomenon in the social development of a group or community. In every new generation, there is always a demand for identity. A society has to respond to these demands and confirm positive identity to regenerate itself and preserve. Such psycho-social phenomenon has also occurred in the social situation of Manipur.

So the intention of taking up this present study is to produce a comprehensive and critical analysis of identity crisis and its political activities behind it. Different socialisation
process with different political culture in hill and valley and the crux of democratic institution without democratic politics are intended to be explored. It is also my intention to analyse 'unity through criticism' towards understanding accumulated discontentment of both hill and valley, because it creates ethnic nationalism with ethnic armies.

For the sake of convenience, the dissertation has been divided into chapters on the basis of different elements of identity crisis and its political implication. Chapter 1 deals with conceptual study of identity crisis. Mention has been made in this chapter about the identity crisis due to ethnic plural society. Here the emergence of tribal identity with their expansion movement, crisis of Meitei identity and repercussion of identity crisis are also highlighted in a very systematic way. Chapter II deals with emerging of conflict situation among the hill tribes. Genesis of conflict, Naga nationalism, different political aspiration of Kukis and broken out of ethnic clash from 1992 onwards in the hill areas are mainly dealt with. Chapter III tries to throw light about
different political culture and political socialisation which creates different political interest and not common political culture and its impact on participant culture. Chapter IV deals with demanding of Southern Nagaland and Struggle of Kukis for Kuki homeland. In this chapter, Self determination, external as well as internal is explored with Accord, Agreement and peace talk which already took place and which has been continuing at different levels in the region. Chapter V is dedicated to the study of the political aspirations of the Meiteis. In this chapter assertion and reaction of interest, failure of democratic institution because of not having democratic politics, emergence of communal politics and accommodation of interest are focused in detail for arriving at an amicable solution. The sixth and final chapter which forms a conclusion of the thesis gives a summary of the preceding chapters. In addition, it also fulfills the stated aims of the study as well as substantiate the argument and propositions that the political aspirations of the people in the state has been to fight against the
structural injustice which is actually a manifestation and overt expression of having democratic institutions without democratic politics.

The present study has to depend mainly on Government and official publications, documents like pamphlets, press notes, leaflets and other publications. Besides, interview with a quite number of activists who by virtue of their experience of dealing with the dynamics of inter-group relations cutting across community lines proved to be of great help in the present study thereby forming and supplementing a part of experienced survey.