CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

LAND AND THE PEOPLE

1.1.1 The Land. The land, Manipur is one of the eight Sister States of the North-East India. The beautiful land comprises of a large area of hills and a small valley in the middle. Manipur has been aesthetically described by many as “a little paradise on earth,” “The land of Gems,” “The jewel of India,” “a flower of lofty heights,” “The Kashmir of India,” and “the Switzerland of India.”

In olden days Manipur was known by various names. In Rennell’s Memoir and Maps of India it was called Meeklay. In the Narrative of Symes and in their Maps Manipur was called Cassey. To the Shans it was known as ‘Kase’ and to the Burmese as ‘Kathe’ a corruption of the same word. The Ahoms called it Makeli and the Kacharis Magli, while the old Assamese named Maglen.

Thus, we get different theories and beliefs as to how the state came to be known as Manipur. According to some writers, it came to be known that “there was much diamond ore in the land in ancient times, to them ‘Mani’ means diamond ore and “pur” mean

1. BK.Ahluwalia and Shashi Ahluwalia, Social Change in Manipur-Delhi, 1984, p.1
2. Jyotirmoy, History of Manipur, Imphal 1973, p.3
place. Thus, the land came to be known as Manipur. One legend also goes that the
country as at one time was water logged; Lord Shiva and Uma known as Nongpok Ningthau
and Panthoibi in Manipur were performing Ras Lila Dance there, the Snake god Ananda
who came to see the dance had lit up the whole country day and night with the help of his
magic Mani(Diamond). From this the land was named Manipur, the city of Gem."

Thus, Manipur had been praised by different corners of peoples with beautiful
names. However, the princely State was annexed by the British since the last part of the
19th Century and extended till the middle part of the 20th Century (1947). Manipur
regained her independent kingdom and merged to Indian Union in 1949. She finally got
statehood in 1972.

1.1.2 Location and Size. Our Country India, the Seven largest Country in the world is
often described as a 'land of Contrast.' This is because of the fact that she possesses one
of the oldest Deccan plateau, youngest Himalayas, highest Himalayan Peak, lowest Ganga
Delta, driest Thar Desert, wettest Chirrapunji region etc. Three major land forms
constitute the topography of India. The Himalayas form the great mountain wall on the
North, in the South, there lies the old plateau of Peninsular India, in between the two, the
Indus-Ganga-Brahmaputra plain extends from the North Western border upto the
North-eastern part of the Country. Manipur the 'jewel of India' is a part of it.

Geographically, Manipur is located in the extreme corner of the North-eastern part of India. It lies between 23.83° to 25.68° North latitude and 93.03° to 94.78° East longitudes. The Tropic of Cancer passes through the South of Manipur at a distance of about 38 kilometres from its Southern boundary. The land lies at the altitude ranges between 781 metres and 2020 metres above the sea level. The capital Imphal is intersected by 25th parallel North latitude and 94° East longitude and 790 metres above the sea level.⁴

The geographical area of Manipur is 22,327 square kilometres. It occupied only 0.7 percent of the earth surface of India. The small oval-shaped central plain known as Imphal Valley covers only a small area of 1,843 square kilometres.⁵ In other words, the hills of Manipur covers more than nine-tenth of its total area. Being a hilly region, Manipur is at an elevation varying from 800 to 3000 metres.

**Boundary and Geographical Division.** Manipur is isolated from the rest of India. Geographically the land is located in the extreme corner of the North-eastern part of the Indian Union. Manipur has a total borderline of about 854 kilometres.⁶ The whole border line can be broadly divided into two as, (i) the international boundary line with Myanmar

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for about 352 kilometres on the North-eastern part of the state extending to South-east Chandel District. (ii) the second one is the inter-state borders. They are, on the Western parts including Tamenglong District as bounded by Cachar District of Assam, while on the Northern parts of the state including Senapati and Ukhrul Districts are bounded by the Nagaland State and on the South particularly the Churachanpur District is bounded by the state of Mizoram. Further, it is also very interesting to mention that the only 10% of area lying at the centre of Manipur is surrounded by many beautiful and well decorated hills. It is not only good for visual but important in strategical point of view too.

Structurally Manipur belongs to the young fold mountains of the Himalayas which were uplifted from the bed of the ancient Tethys sea. The hills of Manipur belongs to the Alpine system of new fold mountains. The Imphal valley represents a lacustrine plain-form due to the sitting up of lake.

According to its physical features, Manipur can be divided into two division viz. (i) the Imphal valley and (ii) the hill region.

The Central Plain or Imphal Valley. This plain is an oval-shaped depression located in the central part of Manipur. It is also known as the Imphal valley because the Imphal river run through the middle of this valley from North to South. The North-South extend of this valley is about 60 km. while the East-west extend is about 30 kilometres. The average elevation of the valley is about 790 metres above the sea level. As the Imphal valley was formed due to the filling up of an ancient lake, a part of which is still found in the Southern part
of the valley. This large, fresh-water lake is known as the Loktak.\textsuperscript{8} A number of rivers are found in Manipur, such as the Imphal river, the Thoubal river, the Iril river, the Nambol river, the Moirang river etc. but they are not navigable.

The Hills. The surrounding areas of the valley are the hills. The hill areas of the state is about 20,513 square kilometres. Thus about 90 percent of the land mass is occupied by the hills. The average elevation of the hill lies in between 1500 to 1800 metres above the sea level.

The hills of Manipur are southward extension of the Naga hills. They consist of a series of parallel ranges extending from the Naga hill upto to the Southern part of Manipur. These ranges may be divided into two viz. (i) the Eastern hills, that lie in the east of the Imphal valley and (ii) the Western hills, that lie in the west of the Imphal valley. "The hills are higher in the North and gradually diminishes in heights towards the South. The valley also slope downward to the South."\textsuperscript{9} The Mapithe, the Chingai, the Mulai etc. are the important ranges of the Eastern hills with the average height of 1.500metres. The important peaks include Khayangphung 2.833 metres, Shiroy 2.568 metres and Kachaophung 2.498 metres. The western hills consist of the Yangpujilong, the Uningthau, the Kaobru, the Khaupum etc. The important peaks are the Mount Iso (Tenipu) the highest peak of Manipur at the height of 2.994 metres, The Leikat 2.831 metres, The Kaubru 2.562 etc. The Barak, the largest river of Manipur which became the natural

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p.79.
\textsuperscript{9} R.K. Jhalaljit, A Short History of Manipur, Delhi 1975, p.4.
boundary between Manipur and Nagaland on the North and Manipur and Assam on the west. The Maklang, the Tuyungbi, the Chalou, the Chingai, the Thoubal, the Lokchao, the Taret, the Chakpi, and the Khuga are the important rivers in the hill.

1.1.3 Climate. Manipur has a Sub-Tropical Monsoon climate. It is hot and wet during summer months while the winter months are cold and dry. Manipur enjoy a healthy and comfortable climate in most of the places of both the hills and the valley. However, we find variation of climate on account of differences in elevation. We also get oppressive heat in summer at the Barak basin, Jiribam and lower foothills of western Manipur hills have a warmer climate than the central valley and its surrounding Imphal valley is warmer than the hills. However, many factors influence the climate of Manipur. They include topography and elevation, Cyclones originating from the Bay of Bengal and the South China etc. The year in Manipur is divided into four different seasons. They are, (i) the cold season which includes December, January and February, (ii) the hot-dry season, it incudes March, April and May, (iii) the rainy season, i.e. June, July August and September, (iv) the retreating monsoon season i.e. October and November.\(^\text{10}\)

The cold season. The actual winder season in Manipur starts in December and lasts till the end of February. The temperature rarely drops below freezing point. The average temperature ranges between 12°c to 18°c in this season. In January, frost is seen on the

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10. H. Shyamsunder, op.cit., p.82.
roof of thatched houses. Morning fogs are very command in the valley areas. Such a fine weather is sometimes disturbed by western disturbance of the Mediterranean sea, which cause light winter rain.

The Hot-Dry Season. The beginning of March is characterized by a sudden increase in temperature and gusty wind. The average temperature varies between 18°C and 28°C. The differences of heating of the hills and valleys is responsible for the nature of the wind of the season. Sometimes, the temperature in Manipur rises up to 34°C in May.  

The Rainy Season. This is the longest season of Manipur, i.e. June to September. This is a season of high temperature and heavy rainfall. By this time, the South-west monsoons provide abundant rain throughout the state. Cloudiness and humidity make the weather oppressive. The average rainfall in the state is 200 cm. in a year. Tamenglong District received the heaviest rainfall of 400 cm. in a year, while central Imphal received 140 cm. and the Ukhrul District receives 180 cm.

The Retreating Monsoon Season. This is a transitional period between the rainy season and the cold season. The South-west monsoons starts retreating and as a result rainfall decreases considerably. Skies became clear and moonlit nights of this season are charming.

1.1.4 Rainfall. Manipur enjoys a sufficient amount of rainfall every year. The average annual rainfall in the state is 200 cm. The Tamenglong District receives the highest amount of rainfall. Tamenglong, which is located in the Western hills has an average annual rainfall of 400 cm, while Imphal in the central valley has only 140 cm. The rainfall towards the eastern hills is higher and thus, Ukhrul has an average annual rainfall of 180 cm. The rainfall recorded in the year 1999 was 264.69 cm. in Churachanpur, while the lowest was 139.53 cm. in Thoubal. The rainfall varies from place to place on account of varying elevation of different places. The distribution of rainfall is higher in the hill than the valley. Manipur receives rain during the months of June, July, August, September and October. The maximum coming down of rain is from June to August. By this time, the South-western monsoon provides abundant rain throughout the state. Floods are very common in the Imphal Valley during this period while September and October gives moderate rain in the state. There is no threat of flood in the hills, yet landslides are very common at all places in the hills. Sometimes Thundershowers squalls also occur during the months of March, April and May. This is because of the interaction of dry westerly air and moist Southerly air from the Bay of Bengal. During the cold season December, January and February too get rain sometimes. Clear skies and fine weather is sometimes disturbed by the western disturbances blew from the Mediterranean sea. Thus, occasionally it caused light winter rain in Manipur.

12. H. Shyamsunder, op.cit., p.82.
The rainfall can be termed as favorable. People enjoy reasonably with the just manner of rainfall. Crops and natural vegetations grow favourably. Thus the rainfall in Manipur is neither too small and nor very high.

1.1.5 Soil. The soil of Manipur can be classified into six categories viz., Alluvial soil, Redy soil, Lateritic soils, Red soil, Ferruginous red Soil and Ferruginous gravelly soils. In other words, we can classified it into two as the residual and the transported soils. The residual soils are found in the hills. The residual soils are formed due to the decomposition of parent rocks in the original place. Residual soil are of two types viz., red soils and laterite soils. Red soils covers most of the western and eastern hills and the laterite soils are confined to the western slopes of the western hills. The quality of soils in the hill areas are very poor. It is mainly due to the erosion and age long shifting cultivation. Thus, only virgin lands are productive in the hills.

The transported soils are confined to the Imphal valley and the Barak Basin. The soils which are brought down by rivers, glaciers, winds etc. from one part and deposited to low laying areas are elsewhere is a transported soils. Thus, being a transported soils, the soil of the valley of Manipur is one of the most fertile soils in North-east India. The soil of the valley has a high quality and productive. "Though, there is a much quantity of potash and lime ingredient the soil of manipur is generally in nitrogenous and phosphate contents."\(^\text{14}\)

1.1.6 The Forest. The forest of Manipur covers an area of 15,154 square kilometres, which is 67.67 percent of the total area of the state.\textsuperscript{15} Out of which, 50 percent of the area is tree forest, 20 percent is the bamboo forest and 28 percent of the area is the open forest.\textsuperscript{16}

The forest of Manipur can be broadly classified as follows: (i) the sub-tropical deciduous forests, (ii) Sub-tropical evergreen forests, (iii) tropical moist deciduous forests and (iv) tropical moist semi evergreen forest.

(i) The Sub-Tropical Deciduous Forests. These forest exist in and around the Imphal Valley, particularly in the hill slopes overlooking the valley. They have a denuded appearance because of excessive cutting of the trees to obtain timber and firewood. Various species of oak, toon and chestnut are found in these forests. Pine mixed with oak are found towards the South.

(ii) Sub-Tropical Evergreen Forests. The Sub-tropical evergreen forests are found in the North-eastern part of the state at an elevation varying from 1,200 to 2,400 metres.\textsuperscript{17} The climate of the region favours the growth of soft coniferous trees like pine at its highest altitude and the lower altitude favours the growth of oak and chestnut. The total area of these forests is 1,300 square kilometres.

\textsuperscript{15} Statistical Hand Book of Manipur, 1981, \textit{op.cit.}, p.111.
\textsuperscript{16} Arun's \textit{op.cit.}, p.15.
\textsuperscript{17} H. Shyamaunder, \textit{op.cit.}, p.86.
(iii) **Tropical Moist Deciduous forests.** These type of forests are found in the South-eastern parts of Manipur along the international boundary with Myanmar. The region is hot and moist. It favours the growth of trees such as teak, gurjan, toon, khen, arecanut etc. these forests cover about 510 square kilometres at the elevation of 900 metres.\(^{18}\)

**Tropical moist semi-evergreen forests.** These forest occupied the narrow belts along the Barak river with South-western part of Manipur. The high temperature and heavy rainfall of this region favours the growth of dense vegetation. Bamboo is the most important vegetation. More than 13 major species of bamboos are found in these forest. Moreover, cinnamon and cane are also found here in large quantity. It covers an area of about 510 square kilometres.\(^{19}\)

Further, the forest of Manipur can also be classified into two as natural forest and the artificial forest. Natural forest occupied almost 99 percent and only one percent is occupied by the artificial forest. Out of the total forest area of the state, 9 percent is the reserved status, 27.5 percent is the protected status, and the rest 63.5 percent is the unclassified status.\(^{20}\)

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Extensive bamboo brokes is found in the West, North and the Southern parts of the state with an approximate area of 3268 square kilometres. To sum up, the main forest products are timber, roundwood, bamboo, canes, terpentine and rexin, dalchini, gum fibres, oils, honey, wax and medicinal herbs. The main crop of the state is paddy, oilseeds, pulses, sugar-cane, cotton, fruits such as pear, pineapple, orange, litchis, papaya, guava, mango and a great variety of vegetables are also found in this state.

1.1.7 Fauna. The fauna of the state can be considered as very rich. Some of the rarest animals in the world are found in this state. Among them the most important one is the Brow-antlered deer, locally known as “Sangai”. It is one of the rarest and most beautiful deer species in the world whose only home in the world is Keibul Lamjao Floating National Park in the state21. Among others, mention may be made of tiger, guar, pagolin the local name is “saphu”, elephant, sambar, barking deer, wild dog, godwall pink headed duck, night heron, teal, cotton tail, langer falcon, Himalayas black bear, locally name “Singom/Sawom,” leaf monkey, leopard cat, slender loris, locally name is “laodraobi,” wild buffalo, great hornbill, leopard, goral, hogdeer, wild pig, sloth bear, python, etc.

Though the state being very rich in fauna, most of the species are decreasing day by day and vanishing gradually. The decreasing rate of tiger population, the extinction of

21. Souvenir, Symposium and exhibition on Conservation of Flora and Fauna sponsored by Wild Life wing of Forest Department, Govt. of Manipur, held at G.M.Hall, Imphal on 4, 5 and 6 October, 1983. pp.19-22
the rare species of flora and fauna are mainly due to the increase of our population. With the increase of population, the rate of deforestation also increases. People cut trees for timber, firewood and the tribal nature of shifting cultivation etc. lead to the causes of deforestation. Unless we fail to preserve our forest the valuable fauna will definitely disappear in the near future. Such an ecological imbalance became a global concern.

1.1.8 Industry. Industrially Manipur is listed as one of the backward states of India. This is because of the fact that the state is poor in mineral resources like oil, coal, iron etc. and the bottle-neck problem in term of communication and transport system.

Large Scale Industry. There are some large scale industry in Manipur such as, spinning mill at Loitang Khunao, Khandsari Sugar Factory at Khangabok and a cement factory at Hundung. However, a number of small-scale industries are well developed in Manipur. They include industries such as carpentry, blacksmiths, pottery, cane and bamboo works, etc. 22

The Khansari Sugar Factory. This factory was established in the year 1973 at Khangabok village in the Thoubal District. It has a crush capacity of 60 tones of sugarcane per day. The factory is running smoothly with about 200 persons of its employees.

Spinning Mill. The spinning mill of 25,520 spindle has been functioning since March 1978. It produces about 800 bales of cotton yarn annually and employs nearly 800 persons.

Cement Factory. This factory was established in 1981 at Hundung in Ukhrul District. The lime stone, the raw material of this industry is obtained from nearby places. The factory has a total production of 150 tones per day.

Cottage Industry. Handloom Industries is the oldest industry of Manipur. The state is famous throughout the Country for its handloom products. Manipur is the 6th state in India having the largest number of looms. At present the state has more than 2 lakhs looms and this industry provides employment to over 2 lakhs of people as part-time or full time workers. The important handloom products are bed covers, bedsheet, pillow cover, screen and curtains, table covers, sarees, crowns, etc.

Sericulture Industry. Sericulture is the next important cottage industry in Manipur. The industry was practiced in Manipur from ancient times. Silkworm feed on the plants of castor and mulberry. This plants grow abundantly in the valley. Tasar industry has became an important source for the production for silk in the state. Oak tree grows extensively in the hills. Since 1972 about 25 to 100 crores of cocoons harvest annually. In 1991-92, the total production of silks yarns was 163000 kilograms.

In 1985 there were 1,270 registered small scale industrial units in the state. They include 962 rice mills, 102 oil mill, 118 sawmill, 46 flour mill, 14 dal mill, 7 motor work, 5 printing press, etc.
1.1.9 Transport and Communication. Prior to independence, transport and communication systems of Manipur were very bad. However, with the implementation of five year plans after independence there were rapid development in the transport and communication systems of Manipur. Inspite of these developments, many parts of the hill areas are still inaccessible.

Road. The total length of roads in the state as on 31st March, 1985 was 4,324.54 kilometres of which 2,532.4 kilometres were metalled. These included National Highways, State Highways, District roads municipal road and village roads. The National Highway No.39 and No.53 passing through Mao and Jiribam respectively are the two important roads connecting Imphal with the rest of the country.

The 215 kilometres long National Highway No.39 Imphal - Dimapur road connects the rail-head in Nagaland crossing through Senapati, Kohima, etc. Another important road is the 222 kilometres long New Cachar road National Highway No.53 connects Imphal with Silchar in Assam, are the important lifelines of Manipur. Among the state Highways, the Tiddim roads, Imphal Sugnu road, Imphal Ukhrul road, Imphal Tamenglong road, Imphal Kangchup road, etc. are important.

Airway. Air transport is another important mode of transport in Manipur. There is daily air service between Imphal and Kolcatta. There is also air link between Imphal Delhi via Guwahati and Patna. The service is operated by Boeing aircraft. It is indispensable at the time emergency.
1.1.10 Urbanization. Growing urbanization is a recent phenomenon in developing countries. The proportion of the urban population in Manipur has declined from 27.52 percent in 1991 to 23.88 percent in 2001. The corresponding figures for all India are 25.72 and 27.78 respectively.23 Unfortunately the state figure moves lower than that of national one. Demographers recognize that the increase in urban population has been attributed both to natural growth and mobility from rural areas because of employment opportunity, attraction of better living condition and availability of social services such as education, health, transport, entertainment, etc. In this view, an in depth research is necessary to look into the causes of declining the state figures during the last decade 1991-2001:

Though traditionally an agrarian and rural state, Manipur has registered a marked urban growth in the last three decades. There was only one town in 1961. However, by 1980, the total urban area of the state was 36.73 square kilometres. By 1980 there was a city and seven towns in the state. By 1991, the urban population of the state was 5,05,645.24 It may also be pointed out that the urban areas of Manipur are generally concentrated in the valley district. Urban areas in the hill district of Manipur are comparatively very small in term of area and population.25

1.1.10 Economy. Agriculture is the prime occupation of the people. It has occupied a dominant place in the economy of the state Manipur. Rice is the main crop, occupying 82 percent of the total agricultural area in the state. For the modern irrigation system is not fully developed the seasonal monsoon rain is the main source of water. There are two methods of cultivation such as Jhum and Shifting cultivation. Rice, wheat, maize etc., are the main food crops while ginger, gram, chilli, cauliflowers, cabbage, Sugar-cane, Cotton, Pineapple etc. are the main cash crops. Since agriculture has been the main economic source and occupation of the hill man too, their entire way of living also an agriculture oriented one. Thus, their social and religious are connected with agricultural pursuit.

In addition to this, Manipur is little known to the other world in economy by her handloom. It is the biggest industry in the state. There are around 6000 small scale industrial units in the state. The small scale and cottage industries like weaving Pottery making, carpentry works, etc. are found in the hills too.

The land is limited in natural resources. Their mineral resource is next to nil. She gets some forest products such as varieties of timbers, cane etc. But one of the main problems in her economic field is the bottle neck nature of geographical location. Still the state is facing an acute communication problem. Lacking big industries, factories, geographical location, communication problems and lack of resources together make the standard of manipur economy far behind the national level.

1.1.12 **Administrative Set Up.** The state Manipur is break up/divided into 9(nine) districts and 34(thirty four) sub-divisions. Out of which 4 districts are in the valley and 5 districts are in the hills. The following are the names of districts and their corresponding sub-divisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Sub-Divisions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Imphal west</td>
<td>(i) Lamphel (ii)Lamsang (iii) Patsoi (iv) Wangoi</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Imphal east</td>
<td>(i) Porompat (ii) Keirao Bitra (iii) Sawombung (iv) Jiribam</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Thoubal</td>
<td>(i) Thoubal (ii) Kakching (iii) Lilong</td>
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<td>4. Bishnupur</td>
<td>(i) Bishnupur (ii) Moirang (iii) Nambol</td>
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<td>5. Senapati</td>
<td>(i) Mao-Maram (ii) Saikul (iii) Kangpokpi (iv) Paomata (v) Purul</td>
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<td>6. Chandel</td>
<td>(i) Chandel (ii) Tengnoupal (iii) Chakpikarong (iv) Machi</td>
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<td>7. Ukhrul</td>
<td>(i) Ukhrul (ii) Chingai (iii) Kasom Khullen (iv) Kamjong Chasad (v) Phungyar</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Tamenglong</td>
<td>(i) Tamenglong (ii) Tousem (iii) Nungba (iv) Tamei</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Churachanpur</td>
<td>(i) Churachanpur (ii) Singhat (iii) Parbung(Tipaimuk) (iv) Thanlon (v) Henglep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are altogether 8(eight) municipalities in the state which are headed by the municipality commissioners. They are (i)Imphal (ii)Thoubal (iii)Kakching (iv)Nambol (v)Bishnupur (vi)Moirang (vii) Churachanpur (viii)Jiribam. There are 4 Zilla Parishad and 166 Gram Panchayats in the state. At the moment 33 blocks regarded as functioning and out of which 9 are C.D. Block in valley areas and 24 are T.D. Blocks in the hill areas.
There are 6 (Six) District Councils in Manipur. They are:

1. Manipur North Autonomous District Council - Senapati
2. Manipur West Autonomous District Council - Tamenglong
3. Manipur East Autonomous District Council - Ukhrul
4. Manipur South Autonomous District Council - Churachanpur
5. Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council - Saikul
6. Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council

However, these councils cease to function since 1985 for their demand for the 6th Scheduled.

1. 2 THE PEOPLE

1.2.1 Population. The population of the world is 6.2 billions (July 2001) today. India’s population has more than double during the last 30 years and its exact figure is 1,027,015,247 of 2001 census. As regarding on the 1st March, 2001, the population of Manipur is 2388,634 consisting of 1207,338 males and 1,181,296 females. Manipur is the 23rd rank by its population in India. 21 percent of the total population is concentrated in Imphal West District, which is the thickest populated District. And only 4 percent of its population is recorded in Tamenglong.

The growth rate of Manipur from 1951 onward has been alarming as it is much above the national level. The growth rate of the state has increased from 29.29 percent in

1981-1991 to 30.02 percent in 1991-2001. On the contrary it has declined from 23.86 percent in 1981-1991 to 21.34 percent in 1991-2001 for all India figure. Further the rural growth rate of population for the last decade is 36.55 percent as against the growth of 12.81 percent for the urban area.\textsuperscript{28}

The density of population in Manipur is 107 percent per sq.km. as against 324 for all India according to 2001 census. The density of population is much higher in the valley than in hill.

The sex ratio is defined as “the number of female per 1000 males. The sex ratio of Manipur according to 2001 census is 978, which is higher than the corresponding all India figure 927. The ratio in urban area is higher than that of rural area.

1.2.2. The People. The tiny state Manipur is inhabited by various colourful people with diverse cultures. Historical originality of the people of Manipur is uncertain but they are predominantly Mongoloid, speaking Tibeto Burman Languages. Manipur consist of different ethnic groups viz., the dominant group Meitei, the Naga tribe, the Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribe, the Pangal and some other Indian communities. The people of Manipur can be broadly classified under three main groups.

1. The Manipur speaking people or the Meiteis.

2. The Naga tribes.

3. The Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p.2.
In otherwords, we can classified the people of Manipur into two as the Hill people and the valley people. There are 33 officially recognised tribes in manipur. Some percent of Manipuri Muslim as Meitei Pangal inhabits together with the Meiteis in different places in the valley. The other Indian such as the Bengali the Marwaris, the Punjabis, the Nepalis, the Biharis and many others as we so called Mayang inhabits at the Imphal centre for business purpose. Some of them also found residing in the hill district Headquarters too. "Thus, Manipur is the land of a bewildering variety of people, kindred tribes and languages."²⁹ We can discuss about the major communities in brief.

1.2.2 (A) The Meiteis. It is cleared from the points stated above that the Meiteis/Manipuris are the dominant ethnic group of Manipur. They live in the valley. Genetically they belong to the Mongoloid and speak a Tibeto-Burman language. Smaller percent of them belong to Aryan origin. They differ culturally from the hill peoples because of following Hindu culture, custom and religion. "According to T.C.Hodson, the name 'Meithei' has been derived from mi means man and thei means separate."³⁰ Though their origins are obscure it is believed that they are decendence of Tator colony immigrated from the North-East border of China, during the conflict of China and Tartor in the 13⁰ and 14⁰ centuries.

Originally the Manipur valley was inhabited by seven clans viz., Ningthouja or

Mangan, Angom, Moirang, Luwang, Khuman, Khaba Nganba and Chenglei or Sarang Leishangthem. Ningthouja clans was also known as Meitei. All these seven clans were different communities with separate culture and territories of their own. These seven clans were often at war with one another. "When the Ningthouja or the Meitei established their authority over the rest clans, the word Meitei came to be used to mean all the seven clans."\(^{31}\)

Meiteis are dominant group inhabited in the Imphal valley. They occupy more than 2/3 (two third) of population of the state. They are very industrious people. They dominate in education and in all fields of the state.

1.2.2. (B) The Nagas. The origin of the Nagas are in obscurity as there is no authentic historical record. It is much depend on the stories, songs, legends, talk, etc. which are passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. "They belong to Chinese Tai and Tibeto-Burman and certain elements of Philipino Borneo blood."\(^{32}\) Physically the Nagas are predominantly Mongoloid. They are fair in complexion. The Naga peoples inhabit in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of the North eastern part of India and in Myanmar.

The name Naga is a generic name for a group of tribes. "History uphold the

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existence of a people known as 'Naga' as early as the 13th century. The Ahom kings had political and commercial dealing with the Nagas. And even earlier reference to them was made by Ptolemy, the great geographer and historian in the 4th century AD.  

There are various theories regarding the word and meaning of Naga. According to some theories, Naga means Snake in general and the Cobra in particular. Because they believed that Nagas worshiped the Snake god. But it is found to be wrong that Nagas were never Snake worshippers. There are many Indians who worship snake but not Nagas.

The second theory according to J.N.Hutton, the word Naga derived from the word "Nagna" meaning mountaineers, mountainous or inaccessible place. Another theory traces the word Naga back to Nag to mean; Naked Savages or just Naked means naked man. This also found to be not true that there were man non Naga hill tribes in other parts of India as well. "Another theory forwarded by Peal the word Naga simply means people. According to him the term occurs in Burmanjies and that its correct form from the root word "nag" or "nok" both words meaning people, in the language of some Eastern Naga tribes."

Though, there are different theories regarding the word Naga and hard to arrive at

34. Ibid., p.24.
an acceptable conclusion, the fact remains that it denotes a particular group of tribes or people. Whatever the word may meant, the Nagas knew themselves as Naga.

There are more than 40 Naga tribes. Out of which 18 tribes are in Manipur. They are (i) the Tangkhul, (ii) the Rongmei, (iii) the Leingmei, (iv) the Mao, (v) the Paomei, (vi) the Maram, (vii) the Thangal, (viii) the Maring, (ix) the Anal, (x) the Mayon, (xi) the Chothe, (xii) the Lamkang, (xiii) the Zemei, (xiv) the Koireng, (xv) the Kharam, (xvi) the Tarao, (xvii) the Puimei and (xviii) the Monsang.

1.2.2 (C) The Kuki-Chin-Mizo. The Kukis are the most scattered tribes among the tribals of Manipur. They are regarded as wondering tribes. They are mostly migrated from Burma now Myanmar. They are heard for the first time in this land Manipur in between 1830 and 1840AD.35 "As they began to pour into the hill tracts of Manipur in the year 1845, though it caused anxiety, Lieutenant Mc.Culoch understood the fact that they were looking for land for cultivation and settlement. Therefore, he allotted them lands in different places, to where their presence would be useful to expand frontier."36

The Thadau Kuki clans known in Manipur are, the Haokip, the Kipgen, the Changloi, the Hangsing the Khongsai, Gene, the Mate, the Vaimale, the Singsit, the Dongel, the Gile etc. Most of them inhabit in Churachandpur District and some are in Kangpokpi area.

of Senapati District and in Chandel District. The peculiar thing of these tribes is the homogeneity of dialects, customs, cultures, traditions, behaviour and physical appearance among them. They can converse among themselves yet they belong to different tribes.

All those clans or tribes which inhabit on the Burma border are called Chins. The Lushai consisting two words 'Lu' and 'Shai'. Lu stands for head and Shai stands for shoot. Lushai thus, said to be mean the characteristic of a Mizo as head hunter.\textsuperscript{37}

The name Mizo is also hard to explain. Some says that the people living on the hills could be named Zomi or Mizo or people of cold region by valley peoples. In this 'Zo' means cold region and mi means man. "Some others say that the name Mizo derived from the word 'Zopui'. This is a name of a big town which they build. It appeared in the last part of 18\textsuperscript{th} century."\textsuperscript{38}

Thus, there is diversity of community, custom among the people of this tiny state Manipur. Inspire of all the facts there is unity in diversity.

\subsection*{1.2.3 Religion.}

\subsubsection*{1.2.3 (A) Hinduism.} The people of Manipur comprises of different racial groups with different religions. About 2/3 (two third) of the total population living in the valley belong to

\textsuperscript{37} L. Jeyaseelan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.17.

\textsuperscript{38} L. Jeyaseelan, \textit{op.cit.}, 19.
Religion: Of Hinduism, the people of Manipur comprise of different racial groups with different religions. About 1/3 of the total population lives in the Imphal valley. Hinduism and few of them are Islam. Thus, Hinduism is the dominant religion in the state.

"It is usually practiced by the Meiteis. However, Hinduism was not practiced among the Meities in ancient time." In the beginning, the Manipuris (the Meiteis) worshiped mostly nature such as the fire, the sun, the Soraren (the god of rain and thunder) etc. thus they had their own religion. They had their own dieties which may be classified into three groups viz. (i) ancestral dieties (ii) dieties associated with a yak (clan) and (iii) household dieties.

"The Hindu religion come in general during the reign of Garib Niwaz about 1750 AD." 39

The present Hinduism in Manipur is more or less a synthesis of the old Meitei religion and the Brahmanical Hinduism.

1.2.3 (B) Christianity. Among the hill tribes, Christianity is the predominant religion. About 90 percent of them are Christian at present. The origin of Christianity in this land can be traced back to the arrival of Rev. William Pettigrew in the year 1896. He came to Imphal for the first time from England of a short pause in Assam. When he was about to start his missionary works at Imphal with the permission of A. Parteaus the incharge, Political agent of Manipur during the absent of Maxwell, an objection was raised by the Maharaja of Manipur. He thought that Rev. Pettigrew was trying to impose the Government religion upon the people of Manipur, which was not acceptable to them. Thinking all the possible troubles in the region, the political agent Maxwell served an ultimatum to leave him Imphal. Further, other Khulakpas and chiefs of Mao areas also did not allowed him to enter.

39. R. Brent, Statistical Account of Manipur, Delhi, 1975, p.75.
Thus, Pettigrew turned toward Ukhrul and started his missionary work in the Tangkhul Naga land in June 1896, Rev. Pettigrew came to Assam under the sponsorship of Arthington Missionary Society. The Arthington Mission Society was not in a position to support William Pettigrew when he left Assam or withdrew their support. He later got sponsorship from American Baptist Union. Thus, the seed of Christianity came to be sown at Ukhrul in Manipur for the first time.

1.2.3 (C) Islam. There are no original Muslim in Manipur. The first settlement of Muslim in Manipur took place in the year 1606. They were all prisoner, captured by king Khagemba. Most of them were from Bangladesh, Cachar, etc. They were known as Bengal. Pangal is a corrupted word. They married Manipuri women. There were no Mosques in Manipur till 19th century and did not have contact with their counterpart outside Manipur. However in the early part of the 20th century they sent some persons to North-east India for their religious training as Moulains. The Islamic revivalism started in Manipur in 1910 when the Moulavis returned to Manipur.40

Others. In addition to the above religions, Buddhism and Jainism are also little known in Manipur. And no particular original community is found to be practised these religions.

1.2.4 Language. Manipur is inhabited by different communities there are 29 tribes other

than the Meities. The people of Manipur speak different Tibeto Burman languages. Many and writers studied the linguistic traits of Manipur. Hodson studied the linguistic traits of some languages of Manipur along with some other Tibeto-Burman languages and find out the linguistic unity of these languages in 1828. The first serious attempt was made by Prof. Khan and Komrady in their work "Philology of Tibeto-Burman languages."41 The languages of Manipur, according to Griersan, came under Assam-Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burmese sub-family of the Tibeto-Chinese family. Languages of Northern Manipur formed a part of the Naga group of languages. Similarly, all the rest of the languages are included in the Kuki-Chin group. The Zomi Liangmei, Kabui, etc. formed a link between the Naga and the Bodo languages and contributes Naga Bodo Sub-group of the group of languages. The Naga languages of North and North East Manipur such as Mao, Tangkhul, Maram, Maring formed a link between Naga and Kuki language and constitute Naga-Kuki sub-group of the group of languages.42

Meiteilon or Manipuri is the most important language of Manipur. Meiteilon or Manipuri language is the official language of Manipur. It is the mother tongue of the Meiteis in Valley. It is an independent member of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. One of four groups of the great Sino-Tibetan speech family.43 It is the lingua-franca of the state. During the British period in Manipur also, it was the state language. Formal annexation of Manipuri

42. Ibid., p. 91.
war, 1891, and the subsequent grant of native statehood to it by queen Victoria did not affect the state language status of Manipur (1891-1947) the status of Manipuri as state language continued.\textsuperscript{44} The Manipuri language has a very ancient and rich heritage of literature consisting of fiction, allegory, philosophical problems, history including local history, astrology, chivalry, song, fold tales, legends, code of behaviour pattern war-craft, forestry, medical science agriculture treatise on the use of sword, spear etc. It has its own scrip with the advent of Hinduism in Manipur since the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, the original Manipuri script was gradually replaced by the Bengali script.\textsuperscript{45} At present also, inspite of a renewed interest and its inclusion in the VIII Scheduled of the constitution of India, the Bengali script is popularly being used by the Manipuris.

\textbullet The tribals did not have their own scripts, therefore they adopt the Roman Script for them. The 29 (twenty nine) officially recognised tribes speak their own languages. Some of the languages like the Tangkhul language, the Lushai language, the Hmar language, the Mizo language, etc. are recognised by the state of Manipur and study upto college level. Among the tribal dialects the Tangkhul dialect is mostly used in Ukhrul District, the Mizo Hmar, Pait\textsuperscript{4}, etc. dialects are spoken in Churachanpur District. Unlike the Kukis the different sub tribes of Naga speak different dialects of their own. They are independent from one another in dialects. When we brought it on the whole they are more

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., pp.37-38.

\textsuperscript{45} Senjam Mangi Singh, \textit{op.cit.}, p.10.
closely related to the Tibetan than the Burman. On the contrary the Kuki Chin dialects are closer to Burmese than the Tibetan.

1.2.5 Literacy. With 68.87 percent consisting of 77.87 percent for male and 59.70 percent for female, the literacy rate of Manipur is higher than that of all India figure i.e., 65.38 percent. Consisting of 75.85 percent for male and 54.16 percent for female respectively. On the contrary the total number of illiteracy has continued to increase from 6,13,840 in 1991 to 6,46,287 in 2001. There is a remarkable improvement in the female literacy rate in the state since India Independence. The female literacy rate in the state is higher than that of all India i.e. 59.70 percent and 54.16 percent respectively according to 2001 census.

Further, if we look at the literacy rate into district wise we get the Imphal west as the highest with 80.61 percent which is followed by Imphal East 76.38 percent, Churachanpur 74.67 percent, Bishnupur 71.59 percent, Ukhrul 68.96 percent, Thoubal 67.90 percent. The literacy rate and status of the remaining three hill districts viz. Tamenglong, Chandel and Senapati are lagging behind the nation level.

Thus, the percentage of literacy of Manipur is very good in all respects. It is even higher than that of the national level for both males and females. The literacy rate is higher in the valley than that of the hills.