CHAPTER - IX
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Ethnic Interaction

Kanglatongbi is one of the most thickly populated village inhabited by the Gorkhas. It has a mosaic ethnic composition like Meiteis, Gorkhas, Nagas, Kukis, Biharis etc.

The Gorkhas of Kanglatongbi are simple minded, trusted and hard working etc. Each person shows actual kin ties of acquaintance, friendship or neighbourhood with the habitat. Every person has to interact with each other within the village.

Interaction between individual within kin groups was influenced by age and sex. Age and sex shows a similar importance in this context among the villagers unrelated by kin ties. Women of the village are more relaxed and sociable with other women than in the presence of menfolk.

Nowadays in public meeting or public feast the educated women participated. The young male and female of the village also participated in function like Musical Nite, Drama, Thabal Chongba even Picnic Party which is organised by the village club. In such function the Gorkhas were maximum as Kanglatongbi is predominantly settled by the Gorkhas. Nearly 85% of the inhabitants are of this group. But the rest 15% is occupied by the Meiteis 10%, Bihari and Garwali about 4% and few Kacha Naga tribes nearly 1%.
In Kanglatongbi village there are 6 hamlet out of this 5 hamlet are predominantly inhabited by the Gorkhas and 1 hamlet is inhabitant by the Meiteis, Naga, Kuki, Bihari etc. which is known as Mantriband. Thus individuals of each ethnic activities in close contact with the Gorkhas within the village.

Kanglatongbi village is bounded by Charhazar and Motbung Kuki village on the North and Sekmai (Loi schedule caste) village on the south. Luwang sagol Kuki village and Leikinthabi on the East and Makhan Kacha Naga village on the West and Lengmei naga village and Khenjang Kuki village on the North West side.

The relationship between the Gorkhas and non Meiteis are rather congenial and devoid of any conflict. Most of non Gorkhas who came from outside are mainly barbers. Shoe makers, Shop-keepers etc.

The Bihari are fluent speaker of Gorkha language, on the other hand many Gorkhas are fluent in Hindi. One group has pick up the language of the other is an indication of harmonious inter community relationship with the surrounding village.

There are many active member in the Gorkha Youth Club other than Gorkha and Meitei communities of Kanglatongbi. The boys and girls are readily participate in the Drama Play or other activities organized by the school authority because educational institution like school there is a ethnic composition between Gorkha and other communities. By understanding the Manipuri language it helps a lot in interaction with each other. During Durga Pujah the Gorkha Youth Club organized Cinema and Drama shows, on such occasion it has been observed that member of the Meitei Youth Club, Mantriband, were used as volunteer so that the function may be conducted peacefully.
Even in Holi festival (Yaoshang) thabalchongba dance is organized by the Gorkha Youth Club and dance is performed. In this dance, a number of Meitei come and take part in dancing along with the Gorkhas of the village. On the other hand Meitei Youth Club of Mantriband also organized the thabalchongba dance for 2-3 days in the month of March - April of a year. In this Thabalchongba the active member of the Gorkha Youth Club of Kanglatongbi help as volunteers. A number of Gorkha Youth Boys and Girls participated in dancing thabalchongba along with Meiteis and other communities from neighbouring village. Beside this Meitei Youth Club Mantriband organized an Annual Sport Meet festival, for the Sport they visit house to house for donation money, all the family of Kanglatongbi have donated voluntarily. In sport meet different item were conducted for boys and girls upto veterans level. Here all the communities joined the sport meet.

**Inter village relation:**

Kanglatongbi is surrounded by a number of village. The inhabitants of this village are proud of their respective communities and tradition. Kanglatongbi maintain diverse relationship with the people of these surrounding village.

Nowadays they influenced many of the Meitei customs even in food some of them prepared in Meitei style. They take many food items which are taken usually by the Meiteis, the Gorkhas women were used many casual dress which are mainly used by the Meitei women. It is more comfortable to them and easy to wear. The Meitei dress commonly known as ‘Phanek’ and ‘Innaphee’ were commonly used by the Gorkha women folk.

In socio economic relationship between the Gorkha of the village and the tribal of these surrounding village are closely contact with each other.
Meitei language i.e. Manipuri is the common means of exchanging views among the Naga, Kuki and the Gorkhas. Kanglatongbi is at the centre of inter tribal interactional zone where most of the inhabitants of Luwangsagol, Makhan Langmai and Khenjan villages who come in contact with the inhabitants of this village in day to day communication. They come for buying commodities and selling their cash crops and other items e.g. fire wood, vegetable etc. in the shops and weekly market of Kanglatongbi. Thus in the economic sphere exist a relationship and this leads to ties of friendship of course they borrowed money from each other as a friendship as well as sympathy and barter system also still existing amongst the communities of the Kanglatongbi.

There is no hostility in between the Gorkhas of Kanglatongbi and surrounding village. Only a case of inter village dispute occured involving in July 1983. It was the first such case between the two communities. While the misunderstanding lasted for about 10 days, Kuki found it difficult to go office, college, market and the alike through Kanglatongbi. Similarly due to this temporary out break of hostility the Gorkhas of Kanglatongbi were unable to carry their agricultural activities. For many of the household of Kanglatongbi have their agricultural land near the Luwangsagol village. This disputes was settled by the Goan Burrah of the Kanglatongbi.

**Socio - economic relationship:**

The socio - economic relationship between the Gorkhas of the village and the tribals of these surrounding are of great significance in both groups. The Gorkha depend a lot on the economic use of the surrounding hills, upon
which the tribal Khullakpa (village chief) have their right. Most of the Gorkhas household collect fire wood, various items for constructing houses etc. from these surrounding jungle by payment of cash to the Khullakpa of tribal village. These jungle are the grazing places for the cattle of Kanglatongbi people during winter, on the other hand tribals of these villages come to sale all plough, venison, vegetable, tubers etc. frequently to the Gorkha households of the village and in return they obtain cash.

Such regular economic transactions have facilitated the building up of ties of friendship between the members of the involve ethnic groups inhabiting the area. Among the youth and educated individual the pattern of relationship is a different one. Thus educational institution situated at Kanglatongbi plays a vital role in the ties of friendship and mutual understanding since childhood. The young people become friends and visit each other when invited wedding and other festival occasions. The Kanglatongbi Gorkha Youth Club frequently organized competitions and games and sports. On such occasion clubs are invited to participate, such activities also strengthen inter village and inter community ties and help consolidate mutual understanding.

The relationship between the schedule caste Meitei of Sekmai village and the Gorkhas of Kanglatongbi is neither dispute nor hostility in spite of contact in day to day activities. Some Gorkha households cultivate in the land own by Sekmai lois on adhya. The other observable economic relationship is the supply of rakai (distilled liquor) by women vendors of Sekmai to some Gorkhas. Sekmai is very popular with its rakai production in Manipur.
Since the Presidency College which is situated at the Motbung it is the meeting centre of younger of both Kanglatongbi and Sekmai communities. The friendship among the younger section are emerging phenomenon. Besides, the Cinema hall located at Sekmai is the nearest such recreational place for the people of Kanglatongbi.

A number of Gorkhas specially the younger one visit the cinema hall. This provides scope for contact between members of the two communities and they can speak Manipuri. There are many occasion to develope and extent ties of friendship between the member of the different communities (tribal - meitei and lois) and the Gorkhas of the village. Such ties help to bring about a regional harmony in inter ethnic relations and assist the Gorkhas in adopting to the immigrant setting i.e. at KanglItongbi.

The educational institution and other voluntary organization based on activities are very important in extending the ties of friendship and mutual understanding. The relationship between the Meitei community and Gorkha community were very closed and cooperated with each other. Election of Gram Panchayat of 1991 Shri Usham Leirijao was elected as second pradhan of the Kanglatongbi village. He was from Meitei community. Though all the Gorkha community were fully supported and cooperated with the Meitei candidate (Leirijao). Due to such ethnic inter cooperation he was successful.

**Pattern of inter - caste relationship**

The settlement pattern of the villagers reflects that the five different hamlets are numerically,dominantly inhabited by one caste groups Gorkha over the other.
The settlement pattern further shows that most of the day to day interaction are confined within the caste group of the hamlets. However in inter caste relationship is extended outside the hamlet.

In the Kanglatongbi inter caste marriage is taking place even inter ethnic marriage are increasing. The social sanction governing marriage are broken specially in the context of the caste. But in the village such cases are recently occuring among the villagers.

Hari Prasad Bhattarai of Chhetry caste of Hathikhwa hamlet married Jeeba Kala Devi a daughter of Rai caste group member of 4th Assam Rifle Colony hamlet in the year 1981.

Rajendra Katwa of Chhetry caste eloped with the wife of Mr. Jadhul limbu in the year 1980. The wife was a limbu caste group.

Gopal limbu of limbu caste of Shantipur hamlet have had a wife named Purnima Mao, a member of Mao (Naga) tribe of Manipur.

Bishnu Rai of Hathikhwa hamlet have married Miss Umo Mao, a Naga tribe of Manipur.

Miss Bhuma Devi, a girl from Kharel household of Kumai caste of Tispari hamlet married Jagdish Singh, a Bihari resident of Hathikhwa hamlet in 1984.

Suryadhan Rai a member of Rai caste group of Hathikhwa hamlet have married Miss Umang Jalen, a lady from Naga tribe.

Lakshima Devi daughter of Purna bahadur Katwal a chhetry caste group married with G. Ghos a Bengali caste family in April 1984.

Indu Devi, a girl of limbu caste of A.R. colony hamlet married a Meitei of (Sekmai loi caste) community of Sekmai in 1978.

No strong sentiment have been roused by these violations of caste or community rules of endogamy.

In spite of the emerging pattern in the inter caste social relationship there are various observances where intercaste relationship is limited. Though no specific cases of conflict arose due to caste consciousness oriented rivalaries, in day to day life interaction are confined within the caste group member only. Generally inter caste marriage are not appreciated by people of either caste group.