CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION
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The Thesis has come to a close and it is indeed a precarious situation for the scholar to conclude. Firstly, because the investigator does not think it proper to arrive at a general conclusion for the study covers quite a number of facets of the so-called primitive community. Secondly, he thinks that conclusion might appear as the broad generalisation laying down certain sociological and anthropological formulations. Traditionally anthropology has been closely associated with small scale society nevertheless its scope is wide encompassing a varieties of topics. In its proper perspective anthropology is the study of man and his environment -- physical and social. In this sense of the term it is rather a human science dealing with human being at various stages and in various levels. I have certain reservations about the concept of 'tribal community' because there is a great deal of controversy regarding the concept. Therefore the communities who depend on subsistence economy, are technological backward, possessed with their own dialect by each of the groups and have a set of rituals and also fit well in the classical design of kinship model postulated by the 19th century institutionalists.
The Tarao is one of the smallest tribal communities of Manipur. It is relatively culturally isolated from other people. The meaning of Tarao is that a band of people very close to nature appearing on this earth with lot of happiness and joy. The group has its own speech as discussed earlier. Linguistically they are closer to Maring and Lushai Kuki groups. Recent trend is adaptation of Manipuri (Meitei-lon) words to their mother tongue which may open up a new vista to their ambition. It has been discussed earlier that the Taraos and the Meiteis (plain dwelling peasantry) share many features in common so far as the legends and mythology are concerned. I do not think that this community should be denied of a distinct scheduled tribe status in view of their individual identity which has been maintaining by the people from time immemorial. At present the community is striving for this and identifying themselves as one of the Naga groups with a view to meet their greater socio-political interests. Let me take this opportunity to speak on behalf of the people by claiming a distinct status of one of the tribals of Manipur so that there are avenues and efforts by the Governments towards all round development. The community continues to suffer from a
number of social, economic, cultural, health and administrative problems. There is no reason why they should not be treated as a special group for their all-round development, especially when the population is dwindling. The present situation is that the group in question is faced with dire consequences of rapid and uncontrolled change. I am afraid in near future this group might lose its identity and totally disappear by withering away the distinct style of life. This does not mean that the author is a protagonist of isolationism. It is the right time for us to put a check to the uncontrolled and haphazard change that confront them. There is no denial of the fact that social change is a must to come. But what is intended is that the change should be quite natural and systematic so that the forces of social change may be directed properly and bring benefit to the people concerned rather than disturbing the equilibrium.

Demographic profile of the community has given a clue to understand the socio-biology. It indicates that the people are well-known for their migratory habits. Mortality rate is significantly contributing to the decrease of population. Infant mortality rate has been found to be quite
high. There are many factors like high morbidity, social and economic reasons, etc. which may be held responsible for this. Longevity of female member is lower as compared to the male member which may be attributed to an unsatisfactory health status of the Tarao women. When we turn to fertility the picture dismay. Although 13'46 is the age at menarche, the mean value of the age at first conception indicates a very late age i.e. 20'78 years. This is probably due to the effective age at marriage prescribed by tradition. There are many cases of stillbirths and neonatal deaths from which the community suffer. In such a small population the infertility is of a high order. It seems that with the increase of literacy rate the mortality has slightly improved and also reproductive performance of the people have been controlled to certain extend with the spread of education.

A traditional Tarao family is an autonomous unit of production and consumption, patrilineal and patriarchal in nature and based on male supremacy. Its culture rigidly preserved the belief in hierarchy, unity and cohesiveness of the domestic group. The eldest male of the family is considered the master and expected to be obeyed. Next to him is the eldest female member in the family.
Apart from sex, the hierarchy is built upon the respect due to age and experience. Marriage concerns not only between the two individuals but also between the two lineages of different clans by playing such a pivotal role in the maintenance of the social system. Ideally there are joint and unclear family structures but the number of nuclear families are increasing day by day, outnumbering the number of joint families. So far as the power structure is concerned it is vested on the active father or the husband. The same individual may represent his family at the clan level and community level. There is a clear-cut division of labour among the family members based on sex and age. The people have lot to do with household rituals and functions and at times they may have autonomy duties in this regard. Therefore within the house there exists a complex system of rituals. It seems that the Taraos believe in privacy as reflected from the houseplan. The belief in traditional norms have not completely disappeared and they still maintain certain religio-ritual ideas in their day-to-day life. The practice of adoption in Tarao society is governed by the custom that has been illustrated with a ritual ceremony known as Markheeng-kung-maring. The children are taken care of mostly by the mothers who are their content companions. No longer the traditional system of
transmission of property continues. Of course, male inheritance is the law of inheritance but the eldest son does not always get the lion's share. Nowadays all the sons get share of their father's property. The daughters may receive a small share of the property at the time of their marriage. Khullakpaship is inherited by the eldest son but at present chieftainship does not pass from the father to son.

We have come to realize that the worth of a woman is not properly evaluated by the group in question. They do not seem to realize potentialities of their female members and therefore treat them not equal to their male counterpart. Probably this issue could be taken up properly from the native concept of person.

There were certain situations in the past which reflected cruelty towards women. But gone are the days now. At present females have some say and at least they can play the role of a spectator. In the family and in the village the women's opinion is not being completely ignored now.

Traditionally the Taras are endogamous people who maintained clan exogamy. Today it deviates from what Levi-Strauss and Shakespeare observed about marriage among different clans. It is now free for a man to make choice
of his wife from any of the existing clans. Ideally matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (Mo Br Da) exists but in reality day by day this is becoming unpopular. Out of 98 married couples there are as many as 17 couples who have had intertribal marriages which comes to -- 17.35 per cent and is statistically significant. We have noted that 17 women from other tribal communities were brought in by the Tarao as their marriage partners while 12 Tarao women married and went out of the Tarao group to other tribal groups. The incest prohibitions go even beyond the limit of nuclear family. Marriage between half-siblings, uncle-niece, aunt-nephew, grandparents-grandchild, parallel-cousins, once father's sister's children, husband's brother is not considered as legitimate. The actual marriage ceremony is an elaborate process which may take one year's time to complete all the three stages. The role of son-in-law is vital in any of the marriages that may take place in his father's-in-law family in addition to his role in many other affairs. Child marriage in the form of betrothal has long been changed and widow marriage is sanctioned. Among the Taraos, the family bondage is very strong. A patrilineal genealogy is built up of father-son ties and brothers-brothers ties which display the relation of hierarchy and inequality on the one
hand and relation of equality as well as identity on the other. In the words of Levi-Strauss Tarao marriage system may be termed as asymmetrical alliance system which operates on the principles of generalised exchange. It appears that the Tarao lineages interact primarily on the basis of wife-giving and wife-receiving relationships. The traditional form of elopement marriages are still being continued but it has changed its shape and content. Nowadays elopement is for the name sake only and it is only a mock show. At present the members of Tarao community follow church marriage both in thought and action. When a divorce is sought there must be substantial charges levelled against one's spouse and the tribal council would be the only authorised body to deal with the affair. The Tarao social structure is thus built around segmentary lineages which remain stationary.

Khulpu, Katrimsa and Chanasa are the three intermarrying clans among the Taraos who have their legendary origin. The origin reflects their intimate relationship with nature and supernatural belief and practices. There are many interesting stories that reflect their courage and valour and also romantic experiences. Many a gods and deities came in course of their long history of origin
and resemble to that of the Meiteis. In fact the entire mythology describes the harsh life confronted with many difficulties and troubles. It also indicates the adaptability and adjustment of man in varied situations. In brief the legends are in fact the expression of their world view and the projection cosmology. Traditionally all the clans have specific roles and duties to perform on different occasions. If I look back to the history of Khullakpaship in different villages it will be found that majority of the Khullakpaships are from Khulpu clan. There is also a ritual link between all the three clans. The two social groups known as Shakes (clan) and Salai (lineage) dominate the domestic organisation and influence socialisation, the use and transfer of property, the settlement of dispute, religious activities (ancestral worship or worship of the reified deities like Shangkhu and Engourokpa).

In the last part of the thesis kinship system has been studied as an integrated whole in its ecological, bio-social, and economic contexts. The author has tried to explain the relation between culture as a system of social interaction in the frame work of native ideology, symbols and social structure. The kinship terms were
studied with the assumption that classifying people
and groups through consanguinity, affinity, descent
filiation, etc. are basically the cultural responses.
The Tarao believed that the relationships are determined
by biology and shared biology is essence of kinship. It
may be supplemented from their reluctance to adopted child
of unknown parents cause its heredity and character that
might develop in future are not known. The basic idea of
shared semen, shared blood and derivation from a common
proximate womb have taken abode in the mind of the com-
munity. They think that since the parents have a number
of primary relatives it is quite possible that some charac-
ters one may inherit from the grand-parents. Blood is one
of the shared biological stuff of kinship and thereby em-
phasis is laid on the integration through the feeling of
Lukhang-eensung. Within the same degree of genealogical
distance the kinship ties to female seems to be conceived
stronger than that of male. Both socially and biologically
consanguineal kins are held to be closer than affinal kins.
Normatively paternal descent is given more weightage than
the maternal descent although they have recognised biolo-
gical groupings. There is a set of duties, rites and obli-
gations between the ego and the alter which may
be manifested during the rites of passage observances. There are reciprocal relationships between the kinsmen. Close kinsmen within the core kindred at least are always addressed by their appropriate kin terms only and have both specific mode of physical and moral respects to each other. It is not only kinsmen as a group thereby cognitively differentiated from non-kinsmen, but within the kinship group, the terminological system, which carefully differentiates kin types according to such distinctive features as relative age or generation, serves further to cognitively underscore of the differential moral obligations found within the kinship field. The economic relationship within different categories of kinsmen have been described in great detail. It shows that mutual help and cooperation, obligations, executions of duty and fulfilment of objectives run through the various levels of kin group. Right from household level to village level it pervades, Kin group is one of the criteria for the formation of political bodies. Political and administrative offices must belong to a particular clan or lineage. The Tarao vests political authority in the clan. For instance, the clan is a rare form of tribal organisation based on kinship bond. Leadership is hereditary and vested in man who is the eldest in the family.
In the light of above points emerging out of the study the following concluding remarks may be mentioned as under:

1. The population of the Tarao does not indicate a normal growth because of some bio-social problem stated earlier.

2. The direction and process of change does have a definite shape and hence the community has been facing a number of problems.

3. The community lack the resources to obtain the types of diets, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which the members belong yet they do not seem to be in poverty. That means they do not feel they are poor.

4. A Tarao thinks that women are closer to nature than men and therefore inferior to men. It is because their bodies and physiological functions are more concerned with 'the natural processes surrounding the reproduction of the species' viz., menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and
lactation. Women's social role as mothers is also seen as closer to nature. They are primarily responsible for the socialisation of the young. Infants and young children are seen as 'barely human', as one step away from nature because their cultural repertoire is small compared to adults.

5. Contemporary Tarao society has undergone a process of disengagement. There exists a religious dichotomy in the presence of church and animism. Church today provides little more than traditional tribal pantheon. The traditional rituals dramatise important turning points in the life cycle, namely, birth, marriage and death. In fact, today's Tarao religious pluralism may be interpreted as evidence of secularization. Resultantly the religion can no more effectively reinforce social norms and values and integrate society. Nevertheless, members share a common faith and at certain times of the year, the entire community gathers to express this faith in religious rituals.
On the basis of my thesis there may some suggestions to improve the condition of the Taraos.

1. New economic opportunities based on culture, ecology and people should be created by a service of programmes.
2. The community must be given recognition of a scheduled tribe.
3. It should be designed to re-enculturate the members and remove their presumed deficiencies.
4. Health and hygienic condition of the villages requires to be improved.
5. Programmes have to be developed to instill work habits.
6. Educational facilities must be extended with the provision of imparting primary teaching in Tarao speech.
7. Job training schemes have to be started to encourage work incentive and provide the skills required for employment.
8. The ultimate aim of all these development schemes must be by fostering ambition, motivation and initiative.
9. The social forces of change have to be controlled and led to a definite path with innovations suited to their life and culture.