CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION
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Churachandpur district is the biggest district of Manipur in terms of area and is inhabited by tribes who are very closely related but drifted a far. The movement for their integration and unification is gaining ground in the recent past. The tribes include the Chin, the Gangte (Mizos), the Hmars, the Komrems, the Lushai (Mizos), the Paites (Zomis), the Simtes, the Thadou-Kukis, the Vaiphei and the Zou tribes. There are also a good number of Meiteis and other businessmen from mainland India mostly in and around the Churachandpur town.

In spite of the closeness and affinity of the tribal communities of the district, a common nomenclature acceptable all these people has not evolved till today. Some want to call themselves as Chin, some prefers Zomi. Other wants Kuki and still a good number of people wants Mizo. The most important reason why there can be no such common nomenclature till today may be because of the fact that there always was the apprehension of one tribe dominating the others if any of the above names is accepted.

Chin, the term used by ‘foreigners’ to denote a group of tribes and popular more in Burma is unaccepted and rejected by many. The term, Zomi although claims by many to be the correct grammatical terms to denote all the above noted tribes cannot be accepted by many as they identified the term with the Paites and, not even with the Zou tribes. Kuki is dominated by the Thadou speaking communities whereas, Mizo is dominated by the Lushai speaking groups.
The fact that many smaller tribes of Mizoram including the Pawis, the Lakhers, the Ratels, etc. have identified themselves as Mizo made close observers feel that the last of these lists may at last prevails if the process for the unification of these tribes goes in the right earnest. The most important reason for this belief is that the Lushai dialect also known as Mizo dialect by some people is the most advance and widely spoken than any other 'Zo' dialects. It has also the maximum number of literature of all types than and most importantly it is the state official language in the state of Mizoram and has always the back-up of the government in all respect.

Vumson remarks that, "No matter how hard 'Zo' clans try to unite, they seem to have difficulty in adjusting to names which do not reflect their particular clan perspective. On the one hand they talk about unity and on the other hand they are not ready to adopt compromise or sacrifices." In the words of Prim S. Vaiphei, "Though they are not united in one body, they all have linguistic and cultural affinities. They all have the words Nu (mother), Pa (father), Pi (grandmother), Pu (grandfather), U (elder brother/sister) in common. In most cases the members of different tribes can converse one another using their own respective dialects. However, there are some groups who are more remote in the linguistic chain, but one can make out some idea out of the speech in the course of conversation.”

Vaiphei also give some characteristic differences of these people whom he prefers to called 'Kuki' with the Nagas. They are

1. **Origin:** Whereas the Nagas have a common tradition that they had either originated or dispersed from a place called Makhel near Tadubi village in Manipur. On the other hand, all the Kuki tribes have a tradition that they ancestors came out from a cave.

2. **Cultivation:** The Nagas have a more developed terrace cultivation whereas, Kukis merely jhums in a most untidy and wasteful manner.

3. **Hair Style:** The Nagas do not keep their hair long, whereas the Kukis (with the exception of Chirus) wore their hair long. Some group tied their hairs in a knot on the forehead while some of them tied in a knot on the top of their head.

4. **Dances:** The Nagas have vigorous forms of dances, whereas the dances of the Kukis are very slow and sober. Moreover, all the dances of the latter group has similarities in many respect although they gave their own local name. The Nagas dances are more attractive due to their swift movements.
5. **Construction of Houses:** When constructing a house, the Kukis do not level the foundation of their houses. They elevate the floor evenly by bamboo. The Nagas construct their houses on a flattened surface of ground.

6. **Musical Instrument:** One musical instrument common among the Kukis is Goshem or Roshem (bamboo pipes fixed on a dry gourd - a typical musical instrument of the Kukis). This musical instrument is unheard of the Nagas.

7. **Weapons:** The Kukis used arrow and gun for war and hunting. They poisoned the arrow and used it for hunting. The use of arrow and gun was unheard among the Nagas.

With a mere 79,357 persons in the whole Churachandpur district in 1951 there are already 2,23,886 persons in the district. The present Churachandpur town was occupied by its first inhabitants only in the late 1890’s. When the town was notified as township in 1961, it covers an area of 6.5 square kilometre. The population of the town in 2001 rose to 1,29,959 from a mere 33,666 in the 1991 census, that is an increase of 386 percent, that is an increase of almost four fold. The percentage of people living in the Churachandpur town out of the total district population rose from a mere 19% in the 1991 census to 59.09% in the 2001 census.
The different tribes of the present Churachandpur district of Manipur are believed to have originated from a cave called Sinlung somewhere in central China sometime in the fourth or third century B.C. They were also believed to have been pushed out of China along with several tribes during the Chin Dynasty of 221-207 B.C. They came southward in successive waves through the borders of the Himalayas and moved on eastward in search of suitable settlement.

Their next known settlement after Sinlung was in Shan. It is not known whether this Shan is the present Shan state of Myanmar or somewhere else. While many Historians and writers believes that this historical Shan is the modern Shan state of Myanmar, others believes that it is within the Nanchao kingdom in Yunnan province of China itself. Because of the disastrous famine that swept the land they moved to the north and northwest along the present borders of Myanmar and India mostly in the Chin Hills of Myanmar and the present eastern areas of Mizoram. It was from this time onwards that the different tribes that now occupies Churachandpur district are believed to have seperated from each other to occupy different areas to have their own distinct but not much different style of living and dialect afterwards.

These tribes are also believed to have reached their present areas of settlement at different times and through different routes. Whereas the Hmars, the Thadous and the Lushais mostly came through Champhai and its adjoining areas of Mizoram in batches, others seems to have come directly from Chin Hills taking the short cut routes.
The Hmars are one of the major tribes inhabiting the district of Churachandpur. They are concentrated mostly in the Thanlon and Tipaimukh Sub-division in the south-western side of the district bordering the state of Assam and Mizoram where their fellow Hmar tribes settled. They also occupied a the areas around the Khuga river in the Churachandpur sub-division as well as Jiribam Sub-division of Imphal east district. A good number of Hmars has also settled in Moreh and Muolcham in Chandel district and also the capital Imphal for the last many years.

Prior to the arrival of the British and the Christian missionaries in the district, first at Senvon, one of the biggest Hmar village in the south-west of Churachandpur district bordering Mizoram, the traditional life style of the people of the district was marked with inter-tribal conflicts and war. The villages they occupied were chosen from the point of security and availability of land for cultivation. As the area they occupied all through the ages are mostly hilly terrains, they don’t have enough time and place to practice wet cultivation at a fixed place for many years. As such, they moved from one place to another in search of a suitable unconquered mountain tract and hitherto uninhabited jungles to cultivate and hunt wild animals for food. Cut off from each other due to lack of communication systems and roads, people lived a life of isolation, of mistrust and suspicion.
However, in spite of all these social insecurities and political instabilities the Hmars and their closely related tribes have a systematically administered way of governance and sufficient avenues for self expression and growth of the individuals and the community as a whole. Their villages were ably administered by the Chiefs with the help of certain officers including the Council of Ministers, the Priest, the Blacksmith, the Village crier, the Val-Upas, etc. They also have enough unwritten customary laws and practices most of which are still followed till today with slight modifications here and there.

For instance, although they don’t have a formal schools like in the present days, their informal and traditional schools mostly revolved around the family and the Youth Dormitory. Knowledge to a child was imparted through actual contact or practical demonstration and participation in the domestic, social and religious life of the people.

The Hmar family is a closely knitted social institution. Every member contributed towards the welfare of the family. The father, as the nominal head of this institution tried his best to instill a sense of pride and belongingness among the children. Meal time is regarded as the best time where all family matters are discussed and incorporated.

The Youth Dormitory then took care of the growing youth, who played a vital role in the society. The youth was taught all the tribal arts of war and crafts and also the tribal art of living with a strict discipline by the youth commanders known as Val Upa. The youths in group sang heroic songs and told stories to preserve their cultural and historic past which were handed down from generation to generations.
These primitive tribals have their own system of marriage, bride prices and divorces, fees and fines for offenders of their laws, festivals and dances where traditional rice beer known as 'Zu' was compulsory in all of these. Their religious life was marked by certain beliefs and practices. They believe in the one omnipotent god and almighty. They solemnly worship this god, offer prayer for the well being of their individual and tribe and also give thanks to this god. They, in the meantime believe in evil spirits of different kind who are thought to have causes pain, illness and death. They offered sacrifices through the performances of rites and rituals with the help of the village priest which in most time were expensive and time consuming. They also believe that their forefathers and ancestors played a vital role in their welfare, in some forms of life after death, and also the existence of heaven and hell.

Funeral ceremonies varies from one tribe to another. Several types of ceremonies were performed before the corpse was taken for burial. Animals and foods were sacrificed and offered to the spirits of the death thinking that these sacrifices would accompany the death to the next world, the abode of the dead.

The invasion and administrative contact of these tribals with the British in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the coming of Christian missionaries and the introduction of modern education since from 1910 has greatly change the socio-economic and political life of the people of Churachandpur district. It paved the way to stop the inter-tribal wars and clashes by giving a sense of British justice and freedom. Since from that time, the people began to move freely from one place to another without much fear and anxiety thereby making the different tribal groups closer with one another.
The Christian religion proclaimed by the missionaries and the new system of education they introduced faced some stern opposition from a good section of the community at the first instance. However, the general belief and acceptance of a few native christians, educated with the modern system of education among the people as an elite groups outgrows the primitive thoughts and beliefs of the people by leaps and bounds. The wind of change was fast and progressive. It brought about a positive changes and progress among the people.

Children who were in the first place being offered with certain incentives in order to make them willing to study in the school have now came to realised the benefits of getting education. Parents who are being requested and convinced with much difficulty for sending their children to school and those who thought that making their children educated is a waste of time and energy have now come to realised that education can make them earn much more than what they earn through manual labour. Even in those villages where there were no schools, the villagers will try all what they can to have one such. Education made a rapid progress until the Englishmen left them.

In the meantime mismanagement of educational institutions by those who matters - private or governments has really brought down the level of development and progress of education. The students blamed the teachers, the teachers blamed the parents and the parents blamed the government and so on. The problems are there for all to see and the solution has to be search by any means. These problems are however so serious that they cannot be solved within a very short period. They require constant study and research and sincere efforts for their solution.
However, it may be remember that the progress of these people depends upon the solution of these problems in education and the sooner they are solve the better it will be. It is hard to imagine how the people of Churachandpur will survive in this era of competition in the field of education if all these problems of education remains neglected and unsolved for another decade.

In order to work for this improvement of education standard, there must be a concerted effort in which the government, the officials, teachers, parents and students has an important role. One cannot expect the state government which is struggling to pay even the monthly salaries of its employees to instantly pumped in considerable amount of money to revamp the ailing government schools. De-recognition of non-performing schools, although it may sounds to be a very possible option may also not necessarily be the best thing for the whole set up.

Some of the more important remedial measures suggested from different corners in the process of this study are as follows

1. The two most important agencies of education among the Hmar people- the state government and the church must joint hands and works for the betterment of the present position and system of education. They can give room and opportunities to each other by stepping aside in areas where either of them can play more effective role.
All Mission schools in villages where good and effective government school is functioning can be abolished or transferred to another village where such government schools is not available and vice-versa. Informal amalgamation of government high schools, withdrawal of mission schools, incentives to performing teachers, identification of bright and prospective students, local participation and devolution of power, etc.

The state government and the Christian missions can also share responsibilities in the stage of education. The Missions can stress more on the primary education and the government can stress more on the secondary education. There is no need of the present schools of different types to be abolish or plucked. Just an informal arrangement and understanding on the parts of the two agencies will be enough.

In all the three government recognised high schools and one aided high schools in the Tipaimukh sub-division, there are not even one hundred students enrolled in it. Not all the teaching and non-teaching are also present at all time because of certain reasons which may not necessarily be related with the schools. It is difficult to run the school smoothly when there are such a few number of students enrolled and fewer staffs present.
As such, if there is a temporary and informal arrangement made by the concerned government department with the co-operation of the people so that all the staffs and students of these schools are made to attend in one village. This arrangement can bring together enough students and teachers to make the school functioning without much problem. Such an informal and temporary arrangement would not effect the service of any teachers who are always ready to go a long distance if their service is affected by anymeans. For doing this, the government officials, the villagers and educated elites of the community must joint hands and play their respective parts.

3. The practice of every christian denomination opening a school in every village without considering the number of students and qualified teachers and also just to pleased their church members must be immediately stop. A stringent resolution or law must be adopted by the council of churches or the Hmar Church Leaders Forum against those church who does not comply to this law. A common syllabus and examination can also be conducted through this forum on all the mission schools.

4. The curriculum should be reformed and modified as per the needs of the community and the locality. It should me made more practical and useful. It should be diversified and flexible to cater the interest and aptitude of the students. The curriculum should be closely related to the social life of the students so that it may help in developing the capabilities of the students. Vocational subjects should be introduced as far as practicable especially in the secondary stage.
5. Schools buildings should be constructed in an open and healthy environment with provisions of blackboards, furniture, equipment and teaching aids. A nominal fee may be charged from some if not all students in order to meet the basic requirements of the school such as chalks and dusters.

6. Better examination system can be introduced thinking in mind the local needs and conditions and the present system is not sufficient to measure the academic achievement of a learner. While making the final evaluation of the academic achievements of the students, importance should also be given to the internal assessment, periodical tests and attendance records in order to acknowledge the importance of all activities and exam conducted in the schools and thereby minimising the defects of the present system of examination. Essay type questions can be minimised in the exam and replaced with short answer type and objective questions.

7. Certain incentives must be arranged for teachers who wholeheartedly involved in their profession so as to encourage and acknowledge their contribution towards the welfare of the students. In the meantime, those who are not performing to their capabilities should be penalised though not with a severe one so that they understand the value of their profession.
8. The school administrators and those who matter in the field of education must try their best in identifying bright and prospective students with higher percentage of IQs and other qualities. These students must be carefully groomed and nurtured so that they maintain their own pace of growth and development in their career. If possible they can be send to bigger and better schools in the towns and cities so that they can compete with better students in a better environment with the support of the society or the tribe.

9. For raising the quality of education, well trained and efficient teachers should be appointed. The existing teachers in the government schools can be sent for training in the government teachers training college. Mission school teachers can also be sent to this institution with their own support or with the support of the missions. Short term training courses, workshops and orientation programmes can also be arranged by the missions and other private agencies as well as the state government.

10. The willing participation and involvement of the local people in the administration and functioning of educational institutions is very much important. Past history tells us that schools of all type in the Hmar areas in the earlier days are successful with the participation and involvement of the people.
11. One of the most important reasons for the introduction of modern education among the Hmars was to make the new Christian converts to be able to read and write. Considering this aim, one can say that the education among the Hmars in the first half of the 20th century was quite successful. However, in a period where the aim of education was not just to make the learner to be able to read and write, the aims, methods, and system needs to be change according to the needs and situation. Vocational and job-oriented subjects must be included in the curriculum so that learning is a joy for the learner.

12. The problem of law and order must be effectively tackled by the government. It is sad to note that many teachers complaint that they cannot go to their place of posting because of bad law and order situation. Besides, a large chunk of money meant for education are either siphoned off by certain persons by using unfair means and through intimidation. The government must take serious note of this development and give confidence to the people so that teachers and educational administrators work without any outside disturbance.

13. Headmasters and teachers must be given freedom to work for the betterment of their school. Political interference must be minimise to the greatest extent.

If all the problems of education of the Hmar people are carefully noted and tackled the community will be in the position to compete with the rest of state, the country and the whole world. It will be for the benefit of all in the long run.