CHAPTER I
CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction:

Manipur is a native state lying to the east of the province of eastern Bengal and Assam. It lies within the latitude of 23 ¼° N – 25°.41 N and a longitude of 93°.2°E– 94°.47°E. It is surrounded on the North by Nagaland, East by Burma and Mizoram and on west by Assam. It have an area of 22,356 Sq. Km and a population of 2,388,634 according to 2001 Census. Its density is 107 per Sq. km. The growth rate 1991-2001 is 2.6%. The Valley which comprises about 1,813 Sq. km is 790 meter above the sea level and the hills rise in places to nearly 10,000 ft but are mostly about 5,000-6,000 ft. It has 9 districts and 33 communities’ development blocks. The state has a rich traditional culture of its own and has many spectacular contributions to world culture. Special mentions are Manipuri dance, Music, Theatre, Martial Art, Weaving, Laiharaoba and Polo. Formerly, it was a princely state having its own constitution, later it was merged into the Indian Union on 15th October 1949.

The major language spoken in the State is Meiteilon/Manipuri. Indigenous people like the Meities, different Hill tribes, Muslim, Brahmins and migrated people from India and abroad inhabit it. Various hill tribes who constitute about one-third of the total population of the states inhabit the hill areas. There are 30 tribes and their sub-tribes falling into two main groups of the Nagas and the Kukis. They have their own dialects. It is not only the gateway to the Northeastern region of our country but also a fascinating destination for discerning tourists.
Many scholars pointed out that however small it has been for centuries the meeting place of several people of the east and west. It is the homeland of many communities.

Manipur enjoys the sub-tropical monsoon type of climate. Rainfall occurs mainly during the southwest monsoon period from May-September but the retreating monsoon also brings some rain. It receives enough rainfall, which varies from 600mm-1600 mm with an average of 1,400 mm. Since the rainfall is important for the luxuriant growth of vegetables and other floral vegetations.

As regard to the climate Manipur is still having a good one. It is neither too hot nor too cool. In summer it is little hot in weather. The temperature ranges from 0°-36° above. The fairness of the climate is due to its elevation from the sea level. Nature has endowed Manipur with some of its gifts. The soil is so fertile that crops are grown most abundantly. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Manipuris. More than 80% of the people depend on agriculture. The Natural vegetation mainly consists of forest and wild lands. The flora and fauna of the state is similar and related to those of the neighboring regions. There are many rivers flowing in Manipur. The Barak River is the largest river flowing from the northern portion of Manipur and fixing the boundary between Manipur and Cachar. The Imphal River is also the most useful one. It runs through the middle of the valley and town. The Iril River is one of the useful rivers in Manipur. Its current is swift and its banks are steep. It flows towards the eastern portion of Imphal and falls into the Imphal River at Lilong.
Manipur has full of lakes, Loktak, Waithhou, Pumlen, Kharungpat are noteworthy. The Loktak is the biggest fresh water lake in Manipur and north-east India. It is 8 miles long and 5 miles wide at its peak season. Manipur has its own endemic species too. The brow-Antlered Deer is the only species found in Manipur. The Keibul Lamjao National Park is the only floating park in the world.

The education system is increasing day by day. According to 2001 census the literacy rate is 68.9% (77.9% men and 59.7% women) respectively. As the education system is increasing day by day the unemployment problem is also increasing. The problem of unemployment is going to be intensified with every successive year.

1.1. **Definition of Manuscript:**

Manuscripts are those, which were preserved as the writings by the manual labor of hands. Manuscripts unquestionably are invaluable sources for the reconstruction of history and culture of a country. These reveal their contemporary society and provide vital link to culture and knowledge. Etymologically the word Manuscript has been derived from the Latin word Manu Scriptum written by hand. Literally writing of any kind, whether on paper or any other material in contradiction to such as printed. According to encyclopedia of Library and Information Science the use of the term manuscript in the United states refers to handwritten materials including ancient inscription on clay tablets and stone, medieval and renaissance manuscripts books codices and modern Manuscripts such as literary Manuscripts, historical Manuscript or personal papers and Institutional records. In case of modern Manuscripts it also refers to typewritten materials. The study of Manuscripts is usually confined to materials written by hand or leather,
paper, vegetable materials wax, wood and sheets of metal. But we will
deal primarily with handwritten document on vellum and paper from
the beginning to present day.

1.2. **Value of Manuscript:**
The principle and policies for the study of Manuscript have come to be
recognized only gradually. There were hundreds of catalogs of
medieval Manuscripts collection but few of them were more than
descriptive lists and generally rather poor ones from the standpoint of
accurate cataloguing. Although the humanists performed invaluable
services in rescuing Manuscript they contribute little to paleography as
a science since their primary objective was to get a text in print often
regardless of its accuracy. Manuscript has its personality and reveals the
personality of the scribe and the characteristics of his milieu. If the
Manuscript disappeared we lost not only the fundamental evidence for
the textual transmission but also an irreplaceable nuga of medieval
cultural history demonstrating the appreciation of past and his impact
on a specific age.

1.3. **Manuscript of Manipur:**
Learning and production of Manuscripts were seriously taken up during
the reign of Khagema till this date i.e. before the advent of Hinduism
a good number of Manuscripts were written in different topics like
chronicles mythology, administration, astrology, the study of hills,
clouds and pure literature dealing with romance and heroism.
Unfortunately these works do not carry the name of writers and date of
their composition. However it can be clearly seen that in these
Manuscripts there is not a single trace of the influence of the great
religious use of Bengali and Sanskrit words. Thus, we can say that
Manuscript was written before the coming of Hinduism and belong to
the early period of Manipuri Literature. The Manuscript of Manipur is
mostly written in Meitei script. Many eminent scholars have collected
the Meitei scriptures of the early and medieval period, which are the
meitei counterparts of the epics, literary heritage and similar early
written evidences of human civilization. The Manipuri literary council
and the State Kala Academy had published the catalogue of some of the
Manuscript but still there are many more yet to be classified. Most of
the works of the early and Medieval Manipuri literature contain no
particulars in respect of their author’s compliers and editors. A literary
tradition was there of not disclosing the authorship of their works. The
chronicles was written and kept at the royal place. Nowadays most of
the Manuscript is found in Public and private custody. The Manuscript
which are in private and public custody need systematic study for
understanding the history and culture etc. The State Archives, State
Kala Academy and some museums are in possession and preserve them
but these cannot estimate the Manuscript lying scattered in every known
and unknown place in public and private custodies in an
organized/disorganizes stage. So it is therefore necessary to make a
study of this Manuscript.

1.4. Importance:
Long before the modern scientific graphologist began their important
contributions, the paleographers had realized that every Manuscript has
its personality and reveals the personality of the scribe and the
characteristics of his milieu. When the manuscript disappears we lost
not only fundamental evidence for the textual transmission but also an
irreplaceable cultural history demonstrating the appreciation. An arch
type is the most important of all Manuscript no matter how accurate the
transcription, how ingenious the scribe's emendation how learned the commentary. The identification of Manuscript is the major problem and the medieval European Manuscript are typical often the same work is ascribed to different authors in different Manuscripts or different titles are given the same work. It is the chore of the paleographer to use every possible bit of evidence to make proper identification and descriptions and while he leaves literary evaluation to the literary historians and analysis of illumination to the art historian he is also making his own contribution to cultural history. Every detail and all possible sources for evidence must be used to secure information on the provenance and content of a Manuscript as well as the time and place of its production. Even the binding and the physical structure and arrangement of the leaves are pertinent. The nature of the writing material, the ink, the lineation, punctuation, erasures, insertion abbreviations and possible presence of different hands are among the many points to which the paleographer much give attention. Historical studied of both public libraries and private collections are important. We cannot depend on a single Manuscript of the same text however clear and uncomplicated the transmission may have been. It is quite impractical to think of eye legible facsimiles of all Manuscript collection to facilitate this type of comparative study.

1.5. **Detail account of Manuscript available in Manipur:**

As per the catalogue published by Manipur Sahitya Parishad, Imphal and State Kala Academy there are some 1000 manuscripts available at present in the custody of Manipuri scholars. Many eminent scholars has collected the manuscript and kept it in their custody. Shri. N. Khelchandra an eminent scholar has collected about 500 meitei scriptures of the early medieval period that are the meitei counterparts
of the epics, literary heritage and similar early written evidence of human civilization. Other scholars who had a good number of manuscripts collection are B. Kullachandra Sharma, M. Chandra Singh, O. Bhogeswar, R.K. Sanahal, T. Madhob, N. Indramani etc. Most of the works of the early medieval Manipuri literature contain no particular in respect of their author compilers and editors. This omission is accounted for by the fact that it was then a literary tradition of not disclosing authorship of their works and some works whose authorship was dedicated by the writers to their royal patrons. The names of the authors and scholars have therefore to be ascertained form indirect source like the royal chronicles, clan chronicles. Some of the works of the later medieval period contain particulars of their authors. This represents a significant departure from the old tradition and may probably be due to the influence of the Vaisnava tradition giving names of the authors in the Bhanitas.

The variety and richness of the historical literature is a striking feature of the early Manipuri literature. The subject coverage of the Manuscript available in Manipur ranges from Administration, Arts and culture, Astrology, Charms and mantras, Creation, Lexicography, Fine arts, Earth science, Genealogy, Poetry, Prediction, Prose, Religion and Philosophy, Meitei scripts, Supernatural stories, Meitei confederacy to Family Genealogies.

1.6. The Custodians:

The Manuscripts of Manipur are found mostly in the private and public custody. The custodians keep the Manuscripts as a sacred entity with proper care. They are not allowed to use anytime we want. They did
their own processing to differentiate the subjects with which it deals. Translation and transcription are done by some of the eminent scholars and published already and there are many more not yet published. Though the state Archives and some museums collect the Manuscripts they cannot estimate the Manuscripts lying scattered in every known and unknown places. The custodians played an important role in keeping these invaluable Manuscripts saving our cultural heritage.

1.7. **Historical Background:**

Manipur has been describing as "A Jewel of India by late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Indeed Manipur is one of the India's most precious assets. Its natural beauties bewitched the beholders and its cultural paraphernalia have been the wonder of the world. The term Manipur comes from the words Mani meaning "Jewel" and Pur means "full of" but the exact meaning is yet to be known. Manipur was known by different names in the past by a number of countries. The early Manuscript and chronicles had recorded the names like Poirei Meiteileipak and kangleipak among a host of others. According to a writer of the early British administrators "Manipuris are the descendants of a Tartar colony which probably emigrated from the north-west border of china during the sanguinary conflicts for supremacy which took place between the different members of the Chinese and Tartar dynasties"(Pemberton, 1966 37).

The royal chronicle cheitharol kumaba maintain an uninterrupted historical record of the land and its people since 93 AD. Throughout the history the valley was continue to be the core region where the
distinctive Manipuri culture and way of life took shape and where political developments having repercussion throughout the Indo-Burma region often originated.

Manipur was once an independent kingdom with its own culture, religion and lineage of kingship when the king Pamheiba embraced Hinduism as the official Meitei religion in 1724 Manipur came in contact with India and this brought abrupt change to social structure with the introduction of caste system. Their food, dress, written script and religious practices underwent significant changes. Further disruption occurs when the British grasped political control starting in the 1890s. In 1949 the king was forced to sign a treaty with India and thus Manipur merged into the Indian political mainstream. Since then dissatisfaction with the inferior treatment has given rise to many insurgent nationalistic groups wishing to break away from India and gain independence. The major occupation of the Manipuris is agriculture. The educated, eagerly seek government job or pursue small business endeavors. The women are hardworking. They are busy in home maintenance, farm work, fishing and merchandising. The Manipuris people are easy-going yet short-tempered at the same time. They are helpful and warm hearted to strangers and friend alike. Singing, fishing, joking are integral parts of their life. They rarely marry outside community. Marriages are generally arranged but they are also allowed to choose their own partners. Polygamy is accepted but extremely rare. The Manipuris are known for their skill at games and sports. They have gifted to the world in sagol kangjei i.e Polo, Martial arts, boat racing etc. Thus cultural dances are graceful, delighted,
colorful and acclaimed worldwide. Manipures are nominally Hindu and they have their own ancient indigenous religion Sanamahi.

The state of Manipur, stretching along the border with Burma centres on a vast lowland area watered by the lake system south of its capital Imphal. The area around Imphal is now devoid of trees, the outlying hills areas are still forested and shelter exotic birds and animals as the spotted Linshang, Blyths tragopan, hume’s bar-backed peasant, slow Loris, Burmese pea-fowl and the beautifully marked clouded leopard as well as numerous unclassified varieties of orchids. Probably its most unused natural habitat is the floating mass of vegetation on Loktak Lake south of Imphal inhabited by the unique Sangai, the brow-antlered deer.

1.8. Literature Review:

The concept of information service is a 20\textsuperscript{th} century phenomenon. They are becoming increasingly vital to the progress of any society. We are late in realizing the importance of Information. So it has been slow to develop. As the universe of knowledge is expanding with the downpour of literature from all over the world it gives rise to the phenomenon called “Information explosion”. To deal with its various information institutions services and products have emerged over the years. One of such is the literature search. By literature search we meant the systematic and exhaustive search for published materials on a specific subject. The micro and macro documents were consulted in the process. The macro documents may be a book, treatise or document embodying macro thought. The micro document like the periodicals, journals, that embodies micro, thought help in providing the latest information. It not only helps the researchers glean the ideas of others interested in a
particulars research question but it also let them see what the results of other studies of the question have been. A detailed literature review in fact is usually required to complete a thesis. Library Science researchers then weigh information from a literature review in the light of their own concerns and situation. Researchers need to be familiar with their basic type of sources general references, primary and secondary sources as they begin to search for information related to the library science research question. A researcher who seeks information on a given topic would refer first to one or more general references to locate primary and secondary sources of value. For detailed information about the research that have done primary sources should be consulted, key words should be used to help locate relevant primary sources and when taking notes on a study the researchers should record the five essential points problem, hypothesis, procedures, finding conclusion and computer search has to be performed as they have a number of advantages like fast, fairly, inexpensive, provide printouts and enable to search using more than one descriptor at a time. Normally literature review report consists of an introduction, the body of review, a summary of the researchers, conclusions and a bibliography.

1.9. Scope of the Study:

The scope of the work will be limited to the following area:

- Study of historical development of Manuscript in Manipur.
- Study of Manuscripts written in paper media only.
- Analysis of the thought content of the Manuscripts.
- Find out the possibilities for the preservation of Manuscripts and dissemination of information from the Manuscripts through electronic media.
1.10. **Objectives:**

The main objective of the studies include to:

- Know the availability of Manuscript in the state of Manipur (private custodian and Govt. agencies).
- Examine the techniques used by the private custodian and Govt. agencies for maintenance of Manuscripts.
- Analyze the problems faced by the scholars in searching the information from the Manuscripts.
- Find out the possibility for the transfer of the format of Manuscript from paper to electronic media i.e computer and other information technology.
- Examine the thought content of the Manuscripts.
- Design a suitable model for easy retrieval of information from the Manuscripts.

1.11. **Hypothesis:**

A preliminary study has been done to carry out the present study and the following hypotheses are formulated:

- The Archives and Museums have been playing a great role in organizing, preserving and disseminating information from the Manuscripts.
- The private custodian preserves the Manuscripts as a sacred entity.
- Most of the Manuscripts are found in Meitei script.
- The use of the Manuscripts is found less within the research scholars perhaps because of the lack of proper wider publicity/Dissemination.
- The usefulness of the thought content of the Manuscripts is still relevant for research work.
1.12. Research Methodology:

The study will be conducted by adopting the following methods and procedures. Both primary and secondary data will be collected for the study. The major source of the data may be collected from:

- The institution, organization associated with the collection of Manuscripts.
- The annual report of the concerned organization current literature and other related documents.
- The interviews/interaction with the scholars in the subject.
- The interaction with the custodians of the Manuscripts.
- The thought content of the Manuscripts.
- The thought content of the Manuscripts is scanned transformed into key terms, classified under recognized classification scheme and systematically well organized.
- To make the study more empirical, statistical methods and techniques are employed in analyzing the data.

1.13. Chapterization:

The work has been divided into 5 chapters including suggestion and conclusion.

In the first chapter:
Introduction, Definition of Manuscript, Value of Manuscript, Manuscript of Manipur, Importance, Detail account of Manuscript available in Manipur and their Custodian, Historical background, Literature review, Scope, Objective, Hypothesis, Research Methodology and Chapterization have been discussed.
In the second Chapter:
Cultural history of Manipur is discussed with the sub-headings: Preservation of knowledge in different formats and form, the origin, time period, Author and subject of the Manuscripts.

In the third Chapter:
Manuscripts of Manipur: The present status. It discussed the present status of the Manuscripts of Manipur, Custodians, Institution, and Purpose of preservation, Preservation and Conservation, Dissemination, Retrieval, Use Pattern etc.

In the fourth Chapter:
Manuscripts of Manipur: Analysis of the thought contents of the Manuscripts is the main part of the research, here the discussion is concerned on the thought content, transform into keywords, and organization of keywords under classification scheme, analyzing the information using statistical tables and other methods observation are given importance.

In the fifth and last Chapter:
Suggestions and Conclusions. It gives a bird eye view of the future prospects; the plan for the development with the emerging of Information technology especially the computerization, the problems faced by the private custodians/ Govt. agencies in preserving the Manuscripts and the suggestions to improve the system. It also leaves scope for further research in the untouched areas. Bibliographies and appendix are also given at the end of the Chapters.