Chapter V

ANALYSIS OF DATA
5.1.0 Introduction

The analysis of data has been done keeping in mind all the 11 items listed in the interview schedule. These items are pointers to:

a) the type and the extent of change in the family system;

b) the deviation from the traditional practice that cross-culturally married couples might have gone through; and

c) the adaptation that these couples have made to accommodate themselves to the changes.

Each couple is given a code number, indicating the region or the area, the place or locality, and the serial number; e.g., S-Ma1 for Shillong-Mawlawino.1; or G-Tu2 for Garo Hills-Tura serial number 2.

In the course of collecting information, the investigator received every cooperation from heterogamous couples in which the husbands were Khasis, and the women were non-Khasis, and also from couples where both husbands and wives were Khasis but following the patrilineal pattern of family. Instead, among couples the women are rather reticent and unwilling to give any personal information about themselves. In one case in Tura, a young woman even refused to come out to be interviewed.

5.2.0 RESIDENCE

Group A

KA=nKO —— KD=nKO
In Group A where Khasi men (K\(\dot{A}\)) are married to non-Khasi women (nKO), the distribution of residence is as follows:

- **Virilocal** 84.75%
- **Uxorilocal** 13.56%
- **Neolocal** 1.69%

**Group B**

K\(\dot{A}\)=KO --- K\(\dot{A}\)=KO

In Group B, where both husbands and wives are either both Khasis, or from matrilineal societies, the distribution of residence is as follows:

- **Virilocal** 92.86%
- **Rented** 7.14%

**Group C**

nK\(\dot{A}\)=KO --- nK\(\dot{A}\)=KO

In Group C, when non-Khasi men, generally from patrilineal societies, are married to Khasi women, the distribution of residence is as follows:

- **Virilocal** 62.5%
- **Uxorilocal** 31.25%
- **Neolocal** 6.25%

The high percentage of virilocal residence is due to the fact that
Pie diagram no. 1

Three concentric circles showing the distribution of residence in cross-cultural marriages.

The outer circle shows the distribution of residence in the $K4 = nK0$ type of marriages.

The middle circle shows the distribution of residence in the $K4 = KO$ (pat.) type of marriages.

The inner circle shows the distribution of residence in the $nK4 = KO$ type of marriages.
there were many couples in Guwahati, Tura and Resubelpara, where husbands are sons of the soil (see pie-diagram no. 1).

5.3.0 DESCENT

Group A

Kα=nKο

a) In Group A, where Khasi men are married to non-Khasi women, the pattern of descent was found as follows:

   a) Patrilineal 74.59%
   b) Matrilineal 16.96%
   c) Both 1.69%
   d) Title of a friend 1.69%
   e) New title 1.69%
   f) Not yet 1.69%
   g) Changed in 1987 from matrilineal to patrilineal 1.69%

b) In the case of couple no.S-La:2, the mother is a Naga by birth who was saved and adopted by a Khasi nurse at the time of birth. She grew up in her adopting mother's residence and has her title. The adopting mother has no children. All the three children of the adopted woman, one by a Mizo husband who abandoned her and two by a Khasi man who died in 1988, have the title of the adopting grandmother. They will also
get her property through their mother. In this case, descent remains essentially matrilineal.

c) The children in one case, coupled no. S-P:2, were found to have adopted the titles of both the father and the mother, Ranee-Raulim. Ranee from the father, and Raulim from the mother. There are more cases of such combinations, such as Shadap-Sen. So someone asked: "Balei Das-Swer?" (Why Das-Swer?)

d) In one case, the man is married to a Naga woman and living in Nagaland, but not in the place of his wife. For fear of losing the educational benefits and other facilities for his children, the man refused to give his title to his children, and so did the wife. As a way out of the dilemma, the man gave his children the title of one of his close friends, who readily agreed to it.

e) In another case, the man is married to a Nepali woman who grew up in Shillong and was thoroughly 'Khasiised'. He is Nongrum, and she is Chetri. The man refused to give his children his title as it is against the tradition. He gave his children the title of Kharnongrum.

Couple No.S-Ma:2 is a case in which a Khasi man is married to a Bodo girl. He gave his children his title and no one had any difficulty. But when his mother refused to accept her son's children as members of her clan (kur), the man asked his wife to give them her title, but she refused. He finally chose his father's name as the title of his children.
f) Had no children till the time of enquiry.

g) Couple no. S-Mk15, in which a Khasi man is married to a Nepali woman since 1969, had been living uxorilocally, with the parents of the wife. The children lived like Nepalis and had the title of their mother. In 1987, the house was razed to the ground by a fire. Then the family of the man came and lived virilocally and changed over from matriliny to patriliny.

**Group B**

\[K_A=K_0\]

In Group B, where both partners are Khasis, descent was found as follows:

- Patrilineal: 91.67%
- New: 8.33%

**Group C**

\[nK_A=K_0\]

In Group C, where non-Khasi men are married to Khasi women, descent followed the following pattern:

- Patrilineal: 43.75%
- Matrilineal: 56.25%
Pie diagram no. 2

Three concentric circles showing the distribution of descent in cross-cultural marriages.

The outer circle shows the distribution of descent in the $KA = nKO$ type of marriages.

The middle circle shows the distribution of descent in the $KA = KO$ (pat.) type of marriages.

The inner circle shows the distribution of descent in the $nKA = KO$ type of marriages.
Couple no.G-Tu2, a Khasi woman is married to a Garo, and living with him in Tura. The husband is a Marak. To fit into the Garo moiety system, the woman abandoned her title Diengdoh, and adopted the title Sangma, which title she passes on to her children. One reason for her doing so was to keep the matrilineal practice, and get the benefits of living in Tura. (See pie-diagram no. 2).

5.4.0 REACTION OF CLAN MEMBERS

One of the interviewees expressed his opinion that, in general, rural people are less enlightened than the towns people and more resistant to cultural changes and innovations, such as cross-cultural marriages and their consequences.

When speaking about the reaction of the clan members, one has to clarify whether the reaction is due to the heterogamous unions, or to its consequences - the identity of children, or the matters of inheritance. Since, choosing one's mate is very much a matter of choice of any adult individual, parents ultimately do not have any real say in the matter. The discussion in this section will be about the reaction of clan members to the consequences of cross-cultural marriages. Secondly, the discussion will be limited to those heterogamous couples where the men are Khasis and the women are non-Khasis, and to those tribe-endogamous marriages in which both partners are Khasis, because: 
a) These are the primary interest of the study;

b) In all the cases of cross-culturally married couples where women are Khasis, with their residence in Shillong and were interviewed, follow the matrilineal pattern. In the course of the enquiry, I came across two families that had been following the patrilineal system, but had changed over to the matrilineal system. The case of one Basaiawmoit in 1982, and the case of one Kharbuki in about 1988, and another in which one Bareh back-tracked to Ngapkynta, because Bareh was his father’s title are examples of such change over. In Tura, there is a family where the mother is a Sun and the father a Shira. The children follow the matrilineal system.

c) In cases where the men are patrilineal non-Khasis and the family lives in viriloclal residence, the system has been found to be patrilineal.

1) In Group A, where the men are Khasis and married to non-Khasi women, the reactions of the parents and the clan members are as follows:
   a) 69.57% are either positively or tacitly in favour;
   b) 26.09% are not in favour;
   c) 4.34% are undecided.

2) In Group B, where both partners are Khasis but follow the patrilineal system, the reactions of parents and clan members are as follows:
   a) 60% are either positively or tacitly in favour;
   b) 30% are not in favour;
c) 10% are undecided.

a) 69.57% and 60% of the parents and relatives respectively of the above groups are either positively or tacitly in favour of the patrilineal pattern of family. Two couples were blessed and encouraged by their parents, and in the case of one couple, the choice had been entirely left to the man. Generally, children of the couples are accepted into the clan. In one case, the match had been made with the knowledge, consent and cooperation of the parents of the boy. Another man married against the wishes of his parents. Naturally, his parents are still not happy with the match, but accept the children.

There is an interesting and peculiar case of an IAS officer who is married to a non-Khasi lady. His original title is Laloo. But at school where he studied as a boy, he and his brother were registered under the father's title, Lyngdoh. His brother reverted to Laloo; but he keeps on to Lyngdoh, partly for convenience's sake.

b) Those who are opposed to such cultural deviations are 26.09% and 30% respectively. One man married a non-Khasi, against the advice of his parents because they felt it is "against the Khasi cultural practice; they do not understand each other's culture or language." The parents are to date against the marriage. In fact under such restrictions, it happens that the couple elopes. (See pie-diagram no. 3).

To those who argue that such unions are "against the Khasi cultural
Pie diagram no. 3

Two concentric circles showing the distribution of reactions of clan members to cross-cultural marriages.

The outer circle shows the distribution of the reactions of the clan members to the $K_A = nK0$ type of marriages.

The inner circle shows the distribution of the reactions of clan members to the $K_A = K0 \text{ (pat.)}$ type of marriages.
practice; they do not understand each others' culture or language", one can ask:

i) **What is against the Khasi cultural practice, the marriage **per se** or its consequences?**

ii) **If one of their daughters is married to a non-Khasi, is that marriage also or its consequences against the Khasi cultural practice? Do they understand each others' culture and language?**

In another case a Khasi man is married to a Nepali lady whose title is Sunar. The parents and the clan refused to accept the children into their Marbaniang clan. All the same the man gave the children his title, Marbaniang, but adds the wife's initial "S" for Sunar. Similarly, in couple no.G-Tu:7, the wife, a Diengdoh, is married to a Bodo man, a Narzary. The children are Diengdoh, but the man is keen on adding an 'N' to their title.

A more peculiar case is couple no. S-Ma:2 where a Khasi man is married to a Bodo girl. Initially no one raised any objection. It was only when the first child came that his mother objected to his giving the child the mother's title, Duia. The man asked the wife to give her title to the child but she refused. With the understanding of his father, the man gave his child his father's name Dliton as his child's title.

In another case, a Khasi man is married to a Naga lady. He lives in Nagaland and is not sure of how his relative would accept his children.
For that reason he has not given them his title, but that of a friend. He is afraid to bring his children to Shillong, lest they be rejected by his parents and relatives.

Some parents have not consented to cross-cultural marriages, and more especially K4=KO marriages with patrilineal characteristics, for fear of Ka Sang, that is, of future possible forbidden unions that may arise out of ignorance of one's original and true descent. Couple no. S-501 is a case in point. A Marbaniang is married to a Kaur, a Punjabi girl. His family follows the patrilineal principle. One of his sisters is married to a Khasi, and her family is matrilineal, while another of his sisters is married to an Assamese and the family follows the patrilineal system. He has a brother who is married to a Khasi and gave his children his title, Marbaniang. Later their mother forbade him to do that for honest fear of Ka Sang. So the family reverted to matriliney and children are now Nongrum. The entire thing is a bit of a mix-up; but what one wonders at is the fact that the mother forbade the second son to give his children his title for fear of forbidden unions later. Why did she not forbid her second daughter from going patrilineal for the very same reason? Why is it Ka Sang only for the boy and not for the girl?

Again, a case is that of a Government officer who had been posted in U.P. where he married a girl from U.P. and lived at Nainital. The children are Lyngdoh. The father, the link man, died a few years ago. The children want to come and live in Shillong with the relatives of the father. The
clan members are not so keen on their coming; they are not sure a) of their responsibility towards those children, b) what work they (children) can do.

A second notable case is that of a Nepali couple who had a baby girl. Shortly after, the mother went mad. The father of the baby abandoned the wife and left the child in the care of the Sisters of a convent. Later the child was adopted by a Khasi couple who had no children. They loved and looked after the child as their own. The adopting mother Khasiised the girl and gave her her own title, Warlarpih. Years afterwards, the girl grew to a marriageable age and did marry a Khasi boy. It was then that the clan objected to her keeping the title of her adopting mother for obvious reasons. The lady changed her title from Warlarpih to Kharlarpih, and her children too are Kharlarpih.

5.5.0 INTENTIONALITY

In the case of K₁=KO families following the patrilineal system, the marriage was always intentional, and the change from matrilineal to patrilineal pattern was deliberate.

In the case of K₁=nKO couples, wherever the system changed from matriliney to patriliney, the intentionality has been found as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentional</td>
<td>77.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pie diagram no. 4

Pie diagram showing the distribution of intentionality of the K4 = nKO type of cross-cultural marriages.
The people who intentionally went for cross-cultural marriages, or where both parties are Khasis, with a view to adopting the patrilineal system, expressed a variety of motives and intentions.

1. Among S-Bs— couples, the majority married cross-culturally and adopted the patrilineal system in order to be able to stay in their own homes and look after the parents, the younger brothers and sisters, and to keep the parental property intact. One boy is the youngest in the family, and everyone else is already married. His parents expressed the desire that he stayed at home. They asked to marry outside the tribe and bring the wife home which he did in order to look after his parents and inherit the property. In another case, the boy is the eldest, and his father had died earlier. He felt obliged to look after his mother, younger brothers and sisters, and the family property.

2. Two cases mentioned that they wanted the title to themselves and thus increase membership of their own clan. Some felt that their children should be truly theirs.

3. Eight men were very explicit in their intentions in going for patrilineal arrangements either through cross-cultural marriages or even through homogamous marriages, and that intention was that each one wanted
to be the master of his own house and family.

4. In one case the man had gone in for cross-cultural marriage for no special reason but sheer preference for a non-Khasi.

5. A young man had been in love with a Khasi girl. He had been living with and brought up by his grandmother. But he wanted a companion for his grandmother and so married an Assamese Muslim girl.

6. a) Khasi women: Several interviewees feel that Khasi girls and women are too bossy, too dominant, whereas the men concerned believe they are the ones who should be masters of their own houses.

   In case one, the young man's mother encouraged her son to look for a non-Khasi girl, because "our girls go about too much and too freely".

   At least 3 men interviewees were very explicit in the expression of their doubt of the reliability and virginity of Khasi girls of today in general. They are too absorbent, taking in just anyone at all along the way, thus making themselves cheap and easy. Khasi girls too easily allow themselves to be exploited.

   b) Khasi men: Several of the men who were interviewed feel the system has been unfair to them, they are made to feel that they are nobodies. It is quite natural that Khasi men should be irresponsible and divorce their wives too easily.

   Quite naturally a new generation, with a new self-consciousness
and new awareness is appearing. Three interviewees did say that they aimed at being responsible men in their families and society. One said that the life and death of his family are in his hands. Many feel that the patrilineal arrangement is an excellent opportunity for preserving self-acquired property.

The man in couple S-Lab:1 holds an MBBS degree. In his family he has seen things of which he would never approve, and which he did not want to be repeated. There were seven brothers and sisters, born of one mother and several fathers.

7. Quite a few did view the Khasi matriliney as a system riddled with weaknesses. The man is couple S-Mk:18, for example, is very unhappy with the way things are going in his mother's house. His mother had died several years ago. It pains this man to see the family property being recklessly squandered by the husband of his younger sister.

8. Seven men, including an IAS officer, married heterogamously, or homogamously but with the patrilineal mode of living, in order to get away from the undue interference of the in-laws. They felt that a man is both the procreator and provider for his family; it contravenes the law of nature not to have authority over their own children. Couple S-Mk:13 feels that too many Khasis do not care to respect their in-laws who come into their house.
5.6.0 PROPERTY DECISIONS

In couple no. P-J:1, the man holds an MBBS degree and got his share of the parental self-acquired property, but his non-Khasi wife, also an MBBS, brought only herself and her education.

In couple no. S-Lab:1, the husband is an MBBS. To-date he has not been offered any share in the parental property. He feels that his education is given to him by his parents. He does not expect anything more. If he is offered, he will accept; but if he is not offered he will have no hard feelings either. His non-Khasi wife is from a patrilineal society, and did not bring anything.

In couple no. S-Mk:14 - the husband is an IAS officer. His parents had divided the entire property equally among the sons and the daughter. The officer's non-Khasi wife comes from a patrilineal society and brought her share of the property in case and kind.

Couple no. S-Mk:1 - the young man is not certain of getting any share in the property of his parents. His non-Khasi wife comes from her patrilineal society empty handed.

In couples no. S-Mk:13 and 18 the men are Government servants and their wives are non-Khasis. The man got a share of the inheritance, while their non-Khasi wives, from patrilineal societies, brought nothing.

In couple no. S-Mk:20 - the man is engaged in business. He is keeping the family business that was started by his father on a brisk pace. His
father had promised all the children a share in the property. His non-Khasi wife from a patrilineal culture brought no inheritance.

In couple no. S-B:19, both husband and wife are Khasis, but the family has adopted the patrilineal pattern. According to Khasi customary laws of inheritance the lady should have had a share in the parental property. As things were and are, the lady had not been offered any share in the inheritance, and she does not expect it either because she has opted for the patrilineal pattern of residence and descent. The man, instead, has received a part of the parental inheritance and has also built up a sizeable amount of property through his own industry. The same is true of couple no. S-La:7.

Couples nos. S-B:1 to 20, are all from one area. In each case, the husband has a just share of the inheritance. Several of the couples were married as the result of the desire and suggestion and encouragement of the parents. Their wives are all from non-Khasi patrilineal societies and none of them brought with them any property.

In the case of couple no. S-P:1 - the wife is a Nepali, Thapa; she is an orphan who had been living with her uncle. At the boy's request, the parents went to the girl's uncle and asked for her hand on behalf of their son. The match was struck. On leaving her uncle to join her would-be husband, the girl was stripped of every and was let go only in what she had on. All that was, as she said, because she married outside the
group. All that the family has today is the boy's share of property and what the man acquired by his own work. The same is true of couple no. S-Mkt4, where the girl is an Assamese Muslim.

Most of the remaining who, either by choice or by necessity, went in for the patrilineal pattern of family, have had to begin from the scratch, with the sweat of their own brow. The man in couple no. S-Mkt15 refused to have any share from his wife's side so as to avoid any sort of mix-up, to offset any claim on his children or his property, so that he would be the sole master in the house.

In the consideration of property decision among their children, 76.92% of the couples have decided to share all their property equally among all their children. Probably the word "equally" is to be understood as meaning something like "appropriately", as some couples seemed to suggest and that "appropriately" will be guided by norms other than the traditional customary laws of inheritance.

23.08% of the couples were inclined to be more considerate towards their daughters, but the motivation for that consideration is not guided by matrilineal traditions, but by reasons like the following:

Daughters are by nature the weaker sex and need more parental support; sons instead can survive better. Some couples will give the house to their daughters. It is generally believed that the Khasi customary laws give more responsibilities to girls, hence they deserve more consideration.
Pie diagram no. 5

Pie diagram showing the distribution of decision on property sharing.

equally to all children

more consideration for daughters,
The father in couple no.P-J:1 wants to give his sons a place each within the same compound.

Couple no.G-T:15 has decided that the sons will share equally the father's property in Shillong and the daughters, the mother's property in Tura.

Another couple was prepared to make some compromises on the Khasi customary laws of inheritance with boys getting their share of the property, but the youngest daughter getting more than the rest.

In couple no.S-Ma:6, the man is married to a Nepali. The father has divided the property and wealth among his children, and fears that after his death, his kur (clan) may claim all the property. The reason behind this fear is that according to the traditional practice, the children belong to the wife and not to the father's clan.

Couple no.S-Lab:1 want to provide for all the children equally, so that the boys are well equipped, and the daughters should be well provided for, so that they would be independent of their husbands in case of maltreatment.

Couple no.S-Mk:5 want to provide for all their children. Succession will be to the eldest son, he will look after the others and will get the house.
Couple no. S-Mk:19 will provide for all, but the house will go to the youngest daughter. Instead another couple feel that they should provide for all equally and the house would go to anyone of their children.

Couple no. S-Mk:21 are waiting for time to advise them on what they should do. The man feels that if daughters marry outside the group and if the sons marry inside the group, they should not receive any share in the property.

5.7.0 SUCCESSION

The question of succession to authority does not seem to have bothered the interviewees. Only couples nos. S-Mk:5 and 19 were very explicit that they wanted their eldest sons to succeed their fathers and look after the other brothers and sisters.

The man in couple no. S-Mk:20 is the eldest in the family. For all practical purposes he has already succeeded his father in power and authority. He controls his brothers and sisters, and the business of the family.

Couples no. S-Mk:15, P-J:1 and S-La:7 would like to see their eldest sons succeeding their fathers in their families.

In 1961, an association came into existence at Sohra (Cherrapunji) by the name of KA SENG IKTIAR LONGBRIEW-MANBRIEW, under the inspiration and leadership of Dr. A. Lyngdoh, M.B. The declared intention
no.1(b) of the association was to promote social support for the succession of the father by the eldest son. The association is thought to be the forerunner of KA SYNGKHONG RYMPEI THYMMAI of recent origin.

5.8.0 STATUS OF HUSBAND, WIFE, SON AND DAUGHTER

Interviewees did not seem to have calculated what kind of treatment to dole out to their wives, or their children. Things are quite spontaneous with the broad guideline of equity. Most of the wives are from patrilineal cultures, and came with an undeclared readiness to submit. Only in the case of couple no.S-Mk19, the wife, a Nepali, declared, "I have surrendered myself to him."

Apart from the fact that the men considered themselves masters of the house, they took their wives as partners in life on par with themselves. Reportedly, one is a wife-beaten, his wife having had to run away to her parents in Assam several times; and another one, some say, is hen-pecked.

In general, however, the status of the male, the father and the son, seems to have been enhanced, and his status rising, while that of the female, mother and daughter, has not diminished. Wives are happy, and some of them did suggest that they received a fairer deal than they would have otherwise.
5.9.0 STATUS OF U KNI (THE UNCLE) AND OF U KPA (THE FATHER)

The uncle in the clan is respected, but in general people do not attach to him any longer all that importance he used to be given. Marriages are arranged, if at all, by parents. The uncle is, at the most, informed, not consulted. In these families the father gradually evicts the uncle.

5.10.0 KINSHIP TERMS

The perception of relationship is often recognized in the type of kinship terms that are used in respect of particular relatives. The swing from matrilineal to patrilineal pattern of family brings about changes in the relationships between the children and the kins on both sides.

In the above figure, 8 and 5, husband and and form a family unit with their children 11 and 12 (black rectangular). Both are Khasis. The green enclosure
is the matrilineal clan, and the red enclosure is the patrilineal one.

If the black enclosure is a matrilineal family, then:

1) All who are included within the green enclosure belong to the same kur.

2) 3 is the uncle of 11 and 12.

3) 4 is the sister of 5, and share in the motherhood of 5, and is called younger or older-mother by 11 and 12.

4) 9 is the brother, and share in the fatherhood of 8, and is called younger or older-father by 11 and 12.

5) 2 is the mei-ieid (grandmother), 1 is the pa-ieid (grandfather).

6) 7 is the meikha (father's mother) and 11 is the kha (father's sister) of 11 and 12.

Instead, if the black rectangle follows the patrilineal pattern, then:

1) All who are included within the red enclosure belong to the same clan (kur).

2) 9 becomes both the uncle of 11 and 12 (because they belong to the same clan) and also younger or elder father who shares in the fatherhood of 8.

3) 6 and 7 become the grandparents (pa-ieid and mei-ieid), only if the relationship is calculated on the basis of clan title.

4) There is a confusion as to how to address 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10.
Hitherto relationship is perceived on the basis of:

a) **Title** - the title of the mother, indicating the clan to which the children belong; they are the *kur,* the title of the father, indicating clan to which he belongs; they are the *Kha.*

b) **generation** of the one who addresses and generation of the one who is addressed.

Kinship terms express two things:

a) Biological reality - the source of one's own existence, father and mother.

b) Social perception and the expression of the relationship.

When a family changes from matrilineal to patrilineal pattern, the biological reality remains unchanged, while the social perception undergoes changes. This fact is the present confusion from this fact. For example, to-date if one hears a boy addressing a man as *pasan,* one immediately understands that the addressee is the elder brother of the boy's father and that the two (the boy and the *pasan*) do not belong to the same clan. Instead, if one hears the same boy addressing the same man as *maheh,* one understands that the man is the elder brother of the boy's mother, and that the two (the boy and the *maheh*) belong to the same *kur.* Thus any kinship term is descriptive of both the biological reality and the social perception of the relationship.

When a family switches over from the matrilineal to the patrilineal
system, kinship terms may indeed remain unchanged but the thought content may have undergone a change. The adjustment is not easy because whereas the biological reality remains constant, the social perception is no longer the same, so that the boy may still use the term maheh to mean mummy’s elder brother, but the uncle is not of the same clan as the boy; whereas now the term pasan means more than merely daddy’s elder brother; he is also of the same clan as the boy.

Generally, the children in these families follow the matrilineal types of kinship terms, as in couples no.S-B:19 and S-La:3, couples no.S-La:5 and 6 say that they are the matrilineal kinship terms also because they are all living under the same roof. The children of couple no.S-Mk:15 are spontaneous and use whatever type of kinship terms they like.

5.11.0 RELIGIOUS DISPARITY

One of the questions put to couples who were from different religious backgrounds was if religious disparity was something they had to reckon with. In such instance, religious disparity was certainly a question that couple could neglect or bypass. But it did not seem to have ever become a major issue since it was quite easily overcome by temporary or permanent cohabitation, or an eventual changing over of one of the other partner. In couple no.S-La:5, the wife came over to Christianity only after the birth of the fourth child. However, they all seemed to agree that religious uniformity is preferable. The wife, a Nepali, in couple no.S-Mk:19, for
example, said: "How can he go one way I go another way?".

5.12.0 KA SANG

The question of Ka Sang is a sensitive issue, because it is not only a question of convenience, but of taboo that can affect the social as well as the moral integrity of the family. Hence, 35.27% of the parents were against their sons marrying cross-culturally for fear of the possibility of inadvertent forbidden marriages in the future.

Concealed behind this objection is the implicit belief that even when a family where both parents are Khasis and have adopted the patrilineal pattern of family, the children do not, in reality, belong to the clan of the father, but to that of the mother, and the children later may inadvertently marry another one from the clan of the mother. Hence, before launching into either cross-cultural marriages or before switching over from the matrilineal pattern to the patrilineal, the parties concerned did have that question very much in mind. How did they take care of that question?

One man in couple no.5-Mk:15 dismissed the question aside with one sweep of the hand saying that "it is all rubbish." He wants his children to "have a broad outlook." Others, like couple no.5-La:7 say they will instruct and warn the children. Couple no.5-B:19, said that they will inform the children and leave them to decide. Couples no.5-La:5 and 6 believe in ka sang (incest taboo) only up to the third generation, after which one
should feel quite free. They will instruct their children accordingly.

In one case, the man is the product of a cross-cultural marriage between a Khasi woman, a Suting and a non-Khasi. Later on in life, the man himself married another Suting, a close relationship of his mother. The man's escape device was to adopt the title of his father.

This opposition is often seen to be stringent on boys than on girls. There are boys who are married to Khasi girls and want to adopt the patrilineal way of life. They get their parents against them, for fear of ka sang. What about girls who marry non-Khasis and who, whether willingly or by force, surrender their titles to their husbands isn't there equal possibility of Ka Sang in what the boys do as in what the girls do? Why do not parents raise a hue and cry against their errant daughters also?

The family of the man in couple S-Sol is again a case in point. A Marbaniang boy is married to a Kaur, a Punjabi girl. His own family follows the patrilineal principles. One of his sisters is married to a Khasi and her family is matrilineal, while another of his sisters is married to an Assamese and her family follows the patrilineal system. He has a brother who is married to a Khasi and gave his children his title, Marbaniang. Later their mother forbade him to do that, for honest fear of Ka Sang. So the family reverted to matriliny, and the children are now Nongrum.

The entire thing is a bit of a mix-up; but what one wonders at is the fact that the mother forbade the second son to give his children his title for
fear of forbidden unions later. Why did she not forbid her second daughter from going patrilineal for the very same reason? Why is it ka sang for the son only and not for the daughter also?

5.10.0 TREND-SETTERS?

Are the cross-cultural marriages, or the homogamous marriages with patrilineal principles, sporadic cases, or are those the initiators of a new trend? Are the parties concerned interested in the trend to continue after them? Would they encourage their children, their sons, to do as they have done, to keep the ball rolling?

The men in general 56.72% would like to see their sons follow their example. Couple no. S-La:5, for instance, expects his sons to do as he has done; couple no. S-La:6, has 3 daughters only; but if he had sons he would want them to do the same as he himself. Instead couple no. S-La:7 is not sure of what his children will do; he will leave them free. No. S-Mk:17 will encourage his sons, but he will not force them. No. S-Mk:15 feels sure that his sons will follow his example; about his daughters ... "it depends".

No. P-J:1 wants to give as many members to his clan as possible. So, he wants his sons to marry non-Khasi girls, and his daughters, to marry within the tribe so that all his grandchildren, from his sons and daughters, will belong to his clan. In fact, he had made up his mind that he will not give any share of the inheritance to any of his sons who marry within the
tribe, and to any of his daughters who marry outside.

5.14.0 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Regarding the general educational level of the people in the social contexts where the $K\Delta=KO$ and the $K\Delta=nKO$ types of matrimonial alliances with patrilineal principles, are found, two situations are noted:

1. The situation where, except for the rising generation, people are either illiterate, or with basic literacy. The older ones have not gone beyond the primary school level. There are indeed a few boys and girls who are attending High School. The people have enough exposure to influences from patrilineal groups. The one forceful compelling reason for the deviation was circumstantial necessity.

   Of the 20 $K\Delta=nKo$ couples, the men did have more education than the women, most of whom have never been to school, or gone beyond primary school education. Only in one case, the woman was matriculate, and the man was only a class-VI pass. In the two cases of $K\Delta=KO$ families with patrilineal principles, the men have had more education than their wives.

2. The second situation is found in towns where people are well informed and are educated. They were exposed to cross-cultural influences either because of education or physical contiguity. Generally, the men in the $K\Delta=nKO$ and the $K\Delta=KO$ types of marriages with patrilineal principles have had better education. In one case of the $K\Delta=KO$ type, the woman
was more educated than the man.

5.15.0 CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS

One of the questions that were raised in the pre-submission seminar discussion was about the constitutional implications of the $Kd=nKO$ type of marriages with patrilineal pattern of family. Are the children Khasis?

A.S. Khongphai's "Non-controversial definition of a Khasi" is that a Khasi is "a person born of a Khasi mother irrespective of the fact whether the father is a Khasi or a non-Khasi." Khongphai specified further that "Khasis reckon their jait from the mother, and cannot take the jait of the father." What then is the status of the children of $Kd=nKO$ patrilineal families?

Interesting and relevant as this question is, it cannot be discussed at length in this paper simply because the question has never been asked seriously before. At best, the subject is likely to be a moot point.

However, it may be noticed that the question is a two-sided reality.

a) The legal biological reality is that a Khasi is one whose mother is a Khasi. (Incidentally, the Jews have this same way of establishing their identity. Yet their society is very much patrilineal). The $Kd=nKO$ type of marriages falls short of this requirement.

b) The social reality is that a Khasi is a Khasi if he takes for him or herself the title of his mother, which requirement is taken care
of neither by the $K_d=nKO$ nor by the $K_d=KO$ type of marriages with patriarchal principles.

Granted the ideological thrust and time difference between them, A.S. Khongphai's definition is very different from that of C. Lyngdoh who, in 1938, had equated the identity of a Khasi with his religion; he wrote: "A Khasi is a Khasi because of his religion ... more than anything else. This is a great fact." Yet both were men of jurisprudence.

The above definitions leave certain naive questions unattended:

1. Are the definitions above definitions or descriptions of Khasis?
2. Is Khongphai defining/describing a Khasi person or the Khasi matriliney?
3. How comprehensive and adequate are the above definitions?
4. How viable are they in the light of the current developments? What are their social implications?

This subject is beyond the scope and competence of this study. It is a potential area for further enquiry.

5.16.0 REACTIONS TO CROSS-CULTURAL MARRIAGES

The reactions of people to cross-cultural marriages are of the type that are called 'mixed feelings'. It does not mean that all those whose reactions were called for necessarily had anything to do with such marriages in that they might have had to deal with such situations in their homes.
such as they themselves, or any of their sons or daughters, or brothers or sisters, being cross-culturally married. Some of the interviewees were young men and women, married or unmarried; others were elderly people.

6.66% were not particularly committed to being either for or against cross-cultural marriages.

26.67% looked on cross-cultural marriages as something that one cannot help coming across these days, and to which one must learn to get reconciled, and which one must learn to accept.

66.67% were positively in favour with a qualified stand. These were not in favour of the KO=nKO type of cross-cultural marriages, because of the following reasons:

a) differences in cultural and lingual backgrounds make communication and concurrence difficult;

b) in such marriages, it is men from other cultures who come into the family, and most come to interfere and for personal advantages;

c) it perpetuates the weaknesses of the matrilineal system, or even makes it weaker. (See pie-diagram no.6).

The same people, however, were positively in favour of the Kd=nKO type of marriage, for the following reasons:

a) in this type of cross-cultural marriages, it is the woman who comes into the family, and she is not likely to meddle in the family affairs,
Pie diagram showing the distribution of the general reaction to the $K\Delta = nKO$ and $K\Delta = KO$ (pat.) types of marriages.
nor can she take advantage of the family;

b) most of the interviewees want boys to come up. "Ultimately, the future of the nation is in the hands of boys/men". "Man is the natural head of the family, not the woman";

c) we shall be in line with the other communities with and around us. Many of the difficulties arise out of cultural differences, and there will be less opportunities for other communities to take advantage of us.

Asked if they were ready for the changes that this type (K =nKO) of marriage calls for, they said that not all are ready for those changes, but that they believe people can and will change with the spirit of the time and the need of the hour.

Notes and References


2. In October 1978, in the annual convention of the Catholic Youth League from Shillong, a young lady did say that our society is sang-ridden (or sang-infested), obsessed with ka sang, to the detriment of the more fundamental and more important values. I agreed with her, and many did.

