Chapter One

INTRODUCTION
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Language is the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in human society for communication and self expression.\(^1\) Language is the most important means of human communication. Language presupposes both logically and factually the interaction among people. Language can be a great unifying as well as a decisive force.\(^2\) Language is a social product, a kind of societal activity. It is through language that human society is organized and engaged in productive activities. Language is a social phenomenon and it is used for communication, which is a social activity that requires a coordinated effort of the speaker and hearer. And it is true that the use of language always involves speaker's meaning and the hearer's understanding, further no discourse is free from social meaning, and the selection of social meaning appropriate to the context has a direct bearing to the communicative events and context or social situation. Therefore even the simplest type of speech act or communication should have a social situation in which time and place go together in a culturally accepted way.\(^3\) Thus language and society are intimately connected and related to each other.

Eminent socio-linguists like Labov, Bernstein, Trudgill, Gumperz and Hymes etc. have clearly projected that there is a keen relationship between language and society. In this connection W.A Havilland writes “Languages are spoken by people who are members of societies, each of which has its own distinctive culture. Social variables such as class and status of the speaker will influence people’s use of language. Moreover people communicate what is meaningful to them, and what is or is not meaningful to them is defined by particular culture. In fact, our use of language affects and is affected by our culture.”\(^4\) Language is a means of transmitting information and sharing with other both cultural and individual experience. It is definitely through language that enables us to translate our concerns, beliefs and perception into symbols that can be understood and interpreted by others.


The term ‘Movement’ has been theorized by the Scholars in different ways. The ‘Movement’ is a series of actions and endeavours of a body of persons for a special object. According to Heberle, while discussing the sociology of social movements that “a social movement as an attempt by certain groups to bring about fundamental changes in the social order, especially in the basis institutions of properly and labour relationships.” Joseph Gusfield defines social movement is socially shared demands for change in some aspect of social order. It also has an ideological component, which is set of ideas which specify discontent, prescribe solutions and justify change.

In regard to the criteria for classification of the movements, according to M S A. Rao, the locus of a movement provides another criterion of classification. On this count, movements may be classified into linguistic, religious, sectarian, caste, peasant, worker, tribal, ethnic, feministic and student etc. Movements may also be classified on the basis of their scale and spatial spread. While some may be all-India, others may be regional and local. Another criterion of classification is the dominant issue of interest such as temperance, women liberation and a distinctive expressive art form.

Paul Wilkinson makes a comprehensive analysis on the conceptual definition of social movements. To give a more comprehensive idea, he tries to define the term ‘movement’ as “autonomy, self-generated and independent action, control of hardship, a mechanism of organization and discipline following in place of an untamed surging crowd.” He is of view that the term movement is series of action for social object. He further mentioned that the movement’s concept is also directly related with the concept of culture. He stressed that the idea and language in every movement have got the reflection of the wider cultural change in given existing society and so sometimes it makes themselves as agencies of cultural change. Under this understanding he mentioned that “social movement is a series of action and endeavours of a body of persons for a special object.” In this regard, Wilkinson has pointed out five main issues which he regarded as the most important basic problem of the concept of social movement. They

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6 Ibid.  
7 Ibid.  
8 M. S. A Rao. (Ed), Social Movements in India. Manohar, New Delhi, 2004, P.3  
9 Paul Wilkinson, op.cit, P. 11.  
10 Ibid, p. 12
are the problem of generality, danger of ambiguity, problem of reification, problem of the type concept and problem of comparison. He is of the view that the term ‘movement’ is freely used by many writers with words such as organization, association, group and union.\textsuperscript{11}

Social movement exists not only in advanced and developed society but also in the traditional and backward society or any given society as well. Therefore, social movement may be defined as many concerted effort on the part of a society to bring about changes in the existing system. Wilkinson defined social movement as ‘a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any means, not excluding violence, illegality revolution or, withdrawal into ‘Utopian community’. According to him two basic elements, namely ‘a minimal degree of organization’ and ‘a commitment to change’ are necessary for the existence of a social movement.\textsuperscript{12}

According to M. S. A Rao, the social movement may be characterized by three important features, i.e. collective mobilization, ideology and orientation to change further says that the character of movement as an instrument of social change is quite different from an imitative or emulative process of mobility and change.\textsuperscript{13} The former is emphasis on contraction and conflict and latter centres around acquiescence and emphasizes the functional unity of social system. He further stresses that the social mobility and change are brought under two bases. One is based on challenge, protest, confrontation, revolt etc. and the second type perpetuates the established order. However, social movements based on the former type definitely bring about qualitative changes in the traditional structure of social relationship. And he concludes that the mobility and change brought about by social movements definitely lead to social transformation and traditional balance of power.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, even though it is a very difficult task to give a clear cut conceptual definition of the term social movement, it is an accepted view that social movements are a specific kind of concerned group action, they last longer and are more integrated than mob, mass and crowd, yet are not organized like political club and other associations. Whatever the opinion may be social movement deals with a class of social phenomena and also deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in the existing system in any direction by any means. It is now clear that social

\textsuperscript{11} N. Joykumar Singh, Social Movements in Manipur, Mittal, New Delhi, 2005, P. 4
\textsuperscript{12} Paul Wilkinson, op cit, p.27.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p.25
\textsuperscript{14} M. S. A. Rao., op.cit, p. v
movement is a collective attempt to change the existing social order and so in order to bring social mobility and change it involves a collective efforts.

LANGUAGE MOVEMENT:

The history of a language is a product of the history of human culture and civilization. Its growth and development are interlinked with the socio-political and cultural movement of the society. The importance of historical study of socio-political movements lies in the fact that it not only lays out the events chronologically but also shows various implications of such movements and struggles in the course of human developments. Language movement generally means an organised effort of a linguistic community either to assert their linguistic identity or to established their own language as per with other languages in a given social structure. The language movement may arise out of a form of domination by another linguistic group or the official attitude. Therefore, language movement ingrains within itself the elements of subordination, marginalization and repression.

Language movements were instituted and instigated by the elite middle class who are bilinguals and speaking English in addition to a regional language. Apart from occasionally laying emphasis on their own regional languages, they consolidated their action towards the relation of English, which gave to them power and status. Language movements are outbreak due to effect on the formulation of language policy and its implementation. The official language policy has been shaped through stress and strain and compromise and reconciliation. It is for these reasons that politically the democratic system existed through the agencies external to its structure and the integrated outlook was evolved not by the development capability of the dominating ruling party but by the dispersal and amalgamation facilities of decisions makers.

In a multilingual Country, where one language is held to be more important than other, this situation may arise because the language has more speakers more prestigious history, or has been given an influential role by the government. Similarly, within a bilingual individual, we may speak of one language being the dominant language the person knows it better or use it need

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16 Ibid., p.88.
not always be so many of the people who left continental Europe for the USA in the 1930s ended up with English as dominant language.

There are different concepts of the language movement. To mentioned few (1) Anti Classical Language Movement, (2) State Policy Centric Language Movement, (3) Anti-Colonial Language Movement and (4) Language Movement from within etc.

(1) ANTI CLASSICAL LANGUAGE MOVEMENT:

Anti classical language movement is undertaken against the classical influence on a language that creates conditions for homogenizing effect on the linguistic community itself. The classical influence generally results in the inclusion of diverse non-classical language groups within its fold and does not acknowledge the existence of those non-classical backgrounds of the languages.

(2) THE STATE POLICY CENTRIC LANGUAGE MOVEMENT:

The State policy centric language movement is basically against the policies of the State. It generally takes place in the federal structure. Where there are multilingual communities. The language of the majority is imposed on the linguistic minorities. Example: Soviet Russia on Azarbyzan.

(3) ANTI COLONIAL LANGUAGE MOVEMENT:

Anti Colonial language movement is the colonialism influence on the colonized linguistic groups and tries to erase the indigenous languages from the colony. It generally happens in white sellers colonies like that of Africa.

(4) LANGUAGE MOVEMENT FROM WITHIN:

Language movement from within is another concept of language movement, which is launched to improve the status of language from within the language itself. This generally takes place among elites of the language group.

Among all these concepts, the Anti classical, Anti Colonial and State policy centric language movement can be applicable directly to the Manipuri language movement.
LANGUAGES IN INDIA:


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17 Census of India 2001, Statement 1, Part-A
44. Paite, 45. Pawi, 46. Phom, 47. Pochury, 48. Rabha, 49. Rai, 50. Rengma, 51. Sangtam, 52. Sema, 53. Sherpa, 54. Simte, 55. Tamang 56. Tangkhul, 57. Tangsa, 58. Thado, 59. Tibetan, 60. Tripuri, 61. Vaiphei, 62. Wancho, 63. Yimchunger, 64. Zeliang, 65. Zemi, 66. Zou, with a total population of 1.00% and (5) Fifth family: **Semito-Hamitic**, total- 1 language i.e-1. Arabic/Arbi and a few Andamanese are spoken by at most a few hundred among the indigenous tribal peoples in the Andaman Islands, and have no agreed upon connections with families outside them. Then again, there are languages that are not even recorded because they are spoken by less than 10,000. From the out of **122** languages of India that mentioned in the Census Report, 2001, till today only a total number of **22** languages were recognized as the Eighth Schedule languages of Indian Constitution according to 92\textsuperscript{nd} Amendment of Constitution of India, 2003.

**THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF INDIA:**

The official language of the Republic of India is Hindi. Article 343(1) states "The Official Language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script." And that English could be also used for official purposes. Article 345 of the Indian Constitution provides recognition to "official languages" of the union to include any one or more of the languages in use in the state or Hindi language adopted by a state legislature as the official language of that state. Until the Twenty-First Amendment of the Constitution in 1967, the country recognized 14 official regional languages as the Eighth Schedule languages in the Indian Constitution. Then, according to the Seventy-First Amendment, 1992 provided for the inclusion of Sindhi, Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali, thereby increased the number of official regional languages of India to 18. And once again according to the Ninety-Second Constitutional Amendment 2003, four new languages-Bodo, Maithili, Dogri, and Santali – were added to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and with that the number of Eighth Schedule official regional languages of India is **22**. Individual states, whose borders are mostly drawn on socio-linguistic lines, are free to decide their own language for internal administration and education. The following table-1.1 shows the

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18 Ibid.
20 http://www.Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, accessed on 10/03/2012
lists of the 22 Eighth Schedule languages, their genetic affiliation, speakers and geographical distribution in India.21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Genetic affiliation</th>
<th>Speakers (as of 2001, millions)</th>
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<td>Assamese/Axomiya</td>
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<td>Assam</td>
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<td>Bengali</td>
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<td>West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Tripura</td>
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<td>Bodo</td>
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<td>Dravidian, South-Central</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Orissa</td>
</tr>
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</table>

21 Ibid.
LANGUAGE POLICY OF INDIA:

Language Policy of India is elucidated in the Constitution, implemented through various executive orders that have been issued from time to time and the judicial pronouncements since 1950. It deals with the use of languages in administration, education, judiciary, legislature and mass communication are pluralistic in its scope. It is both language-development oriented and language-survival oriented. All the provisions related to language can be found in Part Seventeen in Article 343-51 of the Indian Constitution. Article 343 declares that the official language of the Union would be Hindi in the Devanagari script. Article 345 permits the States and Union Territories to have their own official language that could be used for all official purposes of the States. The Policy is intended to encourage the citizens to use their mother tongue in certain delineated levels and domains through some gradual processes, but the stated goal of the policy is to help all languages to develop into fit vehicles of communication at their designated areas of use, irrespective of their nature or status like major, minor or tribal languages. The policy is accommodative and ever-evolving, through mutual adjustment, agreement and judicial processes. The accommodative spirit may be dim at times and the decisions vacillating and uneasy, but this spirit was continuously prevalent from the early days of the struggle for independence from the British rule. This was seen as a necessity in nation-building. Political awareness or consciousness relating to the maintenance of native languages has been very high, both among the political leadership and among the ordinary people who speak these languages.

For the development of the status of languages in the education system in India, the Government of India has introduced a numbers of language policies. These language policies are (1) Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage, (2) School education, (3) Language education and (4) Eighth schedule (ES) of the constitution of India.

LANGUAGE PROBLEMS IN INDIA:

India is a sub-continent extending for about two thousand kilometers from north to south and east to west. Within an area almost equal to Europe without Russia, a population highest in

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the world next to China and a geographical position turning it into a meeting ground throughout history for people of diverse racial and demographic origin, it is hardly to be wondered that there should be great multiplicity and variety in the forms of speech in this country. In such a historical setting, the problem of language in India is plagued with complexity as also apparent difficulty. Language being an important constituent of nationality and culture, there cannot be any genuine solution to the problem without proper recognition of the urge for self-expression of the different cultural entities that constitute the complex reality of India.23

The Indian linguistic scene is dominated by a variety of languages. Grierson’s ‘Linguistic Survey of India’ had put the total number of languages at 872 covering all the known languages families.24 The unique feature of the linguistic scene is the fact that there are over a dozen different languages each spoken by large number of people. Thus, India is a veritable ‘tower of Babel’ and the multilingual nature of the land affects every aspect of Indian life.25

Language demands in independent India have been expressed at several levels. One of these levels can be identified as the demand for the reorganization of the regional language as the medium of official transaction. The formal provisions in the Constitution of India regarding the official language question set a formidable task for the Indian political authorities at both the Union and State levels. The Constitution envisaged the replacement of English by Hindi for the official language of communication between one State and another.26 The partition of the country into two separate States did not in any way; facilitate the solution of the language problem either in India or in Pakistan. If anything partition further complicated the language question and brought in its wake a complex set of new problem. The communal trouble, the integration of the princely States and the difficulties of organizing the various nationalities into a single constitutional State structure were some of the most important problems that confronted the Indian States.27

The language problems in India that have overwhelmed after Indian independence is the question of a common language for communication, which was generated resistance from

23 Sandhya Goswami, Language Politics in Assam, Ajanta, New Delhi, 1997, p. 1
25 Sandhya Goswami, op.cit., p. 4
26 ibid., p. 19
27 ibid., p. 20
smaller speech communities. Language became a sensitive issue in 1950s when it was made the basis for reorganizing states in India. It still remains so, as it is a medium of instruction, a means of expressing one’s ideas, and a source of identity. As Rabindranath Tagore wrote: ‘A language is not like an umbrella or an overcoat that can be borrowed by unconscious or deliberate mistake; it is like the living skin itself.’ Sensitivity associated with linguistic identity and the fears of being linguistically subjugated by the dominant communities are the most important factors that trigger social movements among various speech communities in India.

The demand of a new State by Telugu speaking communities in the Madras Province led to the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1953. Subsequently, similar demands from other linguistic groups multiplied. These demands were endorsed by some of the nationalist leaders in order to appropriate powers in the new states. As a result, today, many linguistic groups have their own states, such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Orissa etc. The reorganization of states on the basis of language has encouraged assertion of linguistic identities. But it has still denied various other groups belonging to subaltern tribal communities, who inhabit their own homelands, the right to nurture and promote their languages.

As against the principle of linguistic basis of state formation, the states in Northeast India were constituted on the basis of tribal identity and ethnicity. The formation of the states of Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh etc. can be traced to the fear of being linguistically subjugated by bigger ethnic communities. The Assamese demanded the recognition of the Assamese language as not only the medium of instruction in the primary and high school but also in the university. This had damaging consequences to the healthy growth of broader Assamese nationality. It directly created a sense of alienation among the tribal groups whose mother tongues are not Assamese. With the growth of the middle class among these tribes, alienation developed in the form of ‘anti-Assamese’ feeling, which became stronger with time and finally led to the creation of tribal states Meghalaya and Mizoram etc. Therefore, the state formation in Northeast India was not based on the linguistic basis.

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LANGUAGE MOVEMENTS IN INDIA:

The present study seeks to focus in brief on the language movements in India. Language being one of the most significant explicit markers plays a pivotal role in the development of a nationality and in keeping it apart from other nationality. In India as elsewhere language has thus became a significant rallying point of focus for socio-political action and in creating, sustaining and furthering the awareness of a common identity among the members of a group. It further forms a basis for permitting or denying entry into a specific group. Multiplicity of different language movements in the country has to be viewed and interpreted from this point of view. They become more meaningful and significant social actions in the development of the pluri-ethnic, pluri-cultural and pluri-linguistic character of the country. They also explain the competition, conflict and tension among different communities in the country on the other hand and the development of national integration on the other.

The role of language as a fiscal rallying point for nationality formation and development of nation-states has been studied by linguists and social scientists, especially sociologist and political scientist in the past decades. Such studies have analyzed the causes for the success of such movements or the deficiencies and short-comings thereof when they have not made much headway and have not yielded successful results. The studies of such political movements and language movements in the Indian context have been made in recent years.

India is a multi-ethnic society containing a large number of ethnic groups varying from highly localized caste and tribal groups to large language and religious groups. None of these groups is clearly dominant and boundaries between them are not entirely fixed. These groups vary in terms of their awareness of a common group identity multiplicity of groups but also of ethnic features which are not always congruent or cumulative. Thus it is a system in which the segments are characterized by parallel ethnic structures, which are in turn hierarchically divided within them. This has resulted in the regionalization of the different ethnic groups as a result of inter groups competition but has some short of real and sustained conformation between

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polarized communities for dominance of the entire system. Thus India is in fact, a developing multi-national state containing a single nationality.\textsuperscript{31}

In independent India, the language issue emerged as one of the most intransigent problems. In the wake of the reorganization of States on linguistics basis in 1956, a number of unilingual states were carved out in India. But even this operation could not solve the acuteness of the linguistic problems.\textsuperscript{32} And this fact was acknowledged by the Language Commission, 1956 itself in these words. The scheme of redistribution of state boundaries which we have recommended will result in many cases in bringing together people speaking a common language. To what extent, it will reduce the number of linguistic minorities. It is however, quite evident that even if the linguistic principles were applied very rigidly the problem of linguistic minorities will by no means solve. However, the linguistics formation of states can be identified as a major gain of the democratic movement as far as the national problem in India is concerned. Even this has been affected shabbily as can be seen form problems that remain even now. Thus, we find that the national problem remains unsolved leading to the emergence of various problems like communalism, separatism and linguistic chauvinism both at the state and regional levels.\textsuperscript{33}

The reorganization of States undertaken after the Independence in order to make linguistically homogenous Indian States has created substantial number of minority language groups in several states. Most of these minority language groups are politically powerless tribal communities indigenous to the states, while other are speakers of major languages, migrated from other states. In every State (except in newly formed states such as Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya etc.) the language of the majority linguistic community is used for official transaction and as the medium of instruction in educational institutions. Political importance attached to the regional languages in respective states has enhanced their functional value and this has exerted enormous sociopolitical pressure on the

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p.70
\textsuperscript{32} Sandhya Goswami, op.cit., p. xi.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
speakers of the minority tribal languages to learn the regional languages for their social, occupational and areal mobility and for their educational development.\textsuperscript{34}

In India different ethnic and language movements have developed and have been launched in the past hundred years in the different parts of the country. Such movements have two main focuses. One is concerned with the nature and form of the standard language and/or the language of written literature. And other is concerned with the political demands involving creation of separate state or administrative units based on linguistic and cultural considerations, granting of certain rights and privileges including the use of language in education, administration and mass media. Movements of either or both kinds have developed and/or are still in progress in different parts of the country.\textsuperscript{35}

**MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT (1924-1992):**

Manipuri language movement is one of the most important language movements in India. It was a kind of Anti classical, Anti colonial and State policy centric language movement. There were two kinds of Manipuri language movements that took place in states of Manipur and Assam during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. One kind was the language movement for the introduction of Manipuri language as a vernacular in Manipur and medium of instruction in Manipur and Assam and other was the language movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The language movement for the introduction of Manipuri language as a vernacular and medium of instruction in Manipur that outbreak due to suppression of Manipuri language due to adoption of Vaishnavism by King Pamheiba alias Garib Niwaz (1709-1748 A.D) during the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century and the process of completely dominating to this language by both Bengali and Sanskrit languages was started and again due to the initiative for the introduction Western Education in the state by British during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century made Bengali and Sanskrit languages along with English language as a medium of instruction languages, these processes of dominations were continued in the State up to 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The movement for replacement of Bengali, Sanskrit and English languages by Manipuri language was outburst in Manipur and Manipuris inhabited areas of Assam during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The movements were took place in the state of Manipur during 1920s and continued up to 1940s. But the same movement was

\textsuperscript{34}Francis Ekka, “Language Loyalty and Maintenance Among the Kuruxs”, In E. Annamalai, Ed. Language Movements in India, CIIIL, Mysore, 1979, p.99

\textsuperscript{35}Bal G. Misra, op.cit., p.71
Manipuri Language Movement, 1924-1992

started in the state of Assam from 1930s and continued up to 1980s by different intellectual group of people and masses against the government of Manipur and Assam to get their legitimate demand for introduction of Manipuri as a Medium of instruction language in the education system in Manipur and Assam.

The language movement for inclusion of Manipuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India started during 1950s in Manipur and 1960s in Assam and other Manipuri inhabited areas of India and the movements continued up to 1992 in the both States and other Manipuris inhabited areas of India.

I

MANIPURI LANGUAGE AS A VERNACULAR AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN MANIPUR

The advent of Vaishnavism in Manipur had a considerable influence on the Manipuri language, in that a lot of Indo-Aryan elements entered within Manipuri language as borrowings. The standard dialect, which is based on the Imphal dialect (Grierson, 1904) is significantly different from the dialects spoken in Kakching, Andro, Sekmai, Kwatha and the Yaithibi dialects. The later dialects are comparatively not influenced by Bengali or Sanskrit. The Pangal (Manipuri Muslim) dialect is another main dialect of Manipuri language.

The Vaishnavism came to Manipur in during the 15th century but it becomes the state religion during the 18th century A.D. Since then most of the sects of it came from Bengal and Syllet (now in Bangladesh), it was quite evident that Bengali and Sanskrit script were associated with the practice and propagation of the religious doctrines. The script of Bengali and Sanskrit languages was later enforced by the King Garib Niwas as the state-owned-script that replaced the earlier Meetei script (after the burning of all the pre-Hindu Puysas; Puys- Secret manuscript of the Meetei) the event happened on 17th Mera (October) Sunday, 1729 and this incident is still observe as 'Puya Meithaba'. Then gradually started the Hindu dominance to the socio-cultural and religious life of the people, though there was resistance from the people; consequently, the Meeteis have been discarding the use of their own scripts for more than 250 years. Manipuri Script was in used till to 18th century A.D. But after second half of the 18th century A.D, Manipuri language left their own Script and began to use Bengali script for official purpose as
well as writing purpose in their literature. And again with the arrival of the British rule in 1891, retained and adopted the Eastern Nagari or Bengali script for Manipuri language. This Bengali script is being used till date; however, at present there is a strong desire and movements among the populace for reviving the old script (Meetei Mayek) and to introduce the same in the schools to eventually replace the Bengali script. This new movement for the revival of their own script can be traced back to first half of the 20th century A.D., when with the establishment of socio-religious organizations like Apokpa Marup in Cachar (Assam), Meitei Marup in Manipur and Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha etc. started a movement to revive their culture, religion and script. Subsequently, many educated youths also started to initiate the movement for reviving and developing of the Meetei script. At the same time, they also wanted to replace the Bengali script by the Meetei script. This was followed by the demand for acquiring constitutional recognition of Meetei script in the Eight Schedule of the Indian constitution and to introduce and regulate the script in both primary and higher education in Manipur. Thus, the script has been introduced to many governmental, convent and private schools by providing training to the school teachers by script experts in collaboration with State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT). Further, the demand for recognition of the language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and introduction of the same in schools is a major effort to fully implement till higher education is achieved; therefore the development of their society and identity is to be ensured. The Meeteis also believe that ‘language is ‘father’ and script is ‘mother’, and that script is part and parcel of a particular culture. Lack of knowledge of the script will deprive the younger generation from understanding the traditional texts (Piyas; Holy books of the Meeteis) and the underlying philosophy therein.

Since the inception of Modern/Western Education in Manipur, the medium of instruction were through Bengali, Sanskrit and English. As far back in 1902-03, efforts were made for the introduction of Manipuri language as a medium of instruction. In 1907 his Highness Maharaja Churachand Singh being the President of the Manipur State Durbar passed a resolution for the introduction of mother tongue in the lower primary stages of education. There was a decline in the number of boys attending schools for the purpose of medium. Then again Bengali has been

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since re-introduced as it is no doubt the wish of the people to have their children taught that language. Since then, translation of Bengali literature into Manipuri language started. On 15th May, 1907 Sir Churachand Singh took the responsibility of Durbar as a Chairman took resolution to teach mother tongue as the medium of instruction in lower primary schools. Hijam Irabot Singh can be considered as one of the pioneer of the Manipuri language movement of the 20th Century. The movement for introduction of the Manipuri language in the education system of Manipur and also revert to use the ancient Script of Manipuri language in the place of present Bengali Script, the role of Hijam Irabot Singh is remarkable. With coming of the Western education in Manipur, people of Manipur began to be developed and awakened. A number of literary organization and nongovernmental organizations etc had also taken active part in the movement. A few of organizations that joined the movement from Manipur were Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahashabha (later converted to Nikhil Manipuri Mahashabha), Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, Naharol Sahitya Premee Samiti. As a result of the movement, Manipuri Language was first introduced as a vernacular language up to Matric (H.S.L.C) Level in 1924 in Manipur under Calcutta University according to Order no 101, Senate House on 20th August, 1924 that “Manipuri be added to the list of Vernacular language from translation into English.” Manipuri Language was for the first time recognized as MIL Subject for Matriculation Exam by Calcutta University in 1927, then Intermediate Exam in 1931 and for B.A Exam in 1949 respectively. Manipuri was introduced as a Medium of Instruction up to H.S.L.C Stage in Manipur was affected from the year 1977 according to the Notification No CS/7 Dated, Imphal the 26th October, 1976. Then now the language is taught as a subject up to Post-Graduate level, M.Phil and PhD levels in Universities of India.

II

MANIPURI LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN ASSAM

Naoria Phulo was the pioneer of the Manipuri language movement in Assam. He was also the pioneer who launched a movement to revive the Meetei indigenous religion in the early part of the 20th century. The dream of the Naoria Phulo was started by Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM), Manipur in the year 1935 and subsequently by establishment of its Branch i.e. Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM), Cachar Branch in same year. NHMM, Cachar Branch became pioneer organization for the introduction of Manipuri as a medium of instruction
in Assam. The incomplete work and movement for the introduction of Manipuri as a Medium in Assam started by Nikhil Manipuri Mahashaba, Cachar Branch was restarted by Naha Marup (NM), Cachar in the year 1953. As a result of movement, Manipuri language was introduce as a medium of instruction up to Lower Primary level in the year 1956. According to office of the Deputy Inspector of Schools, Sichar under Memo No. 10626 Dated Silchar, 23rd October, 1956 letter no. EMI 211/53/10, P.F. Shillong, the 7th June 1956 from Under Secretary to the Govt. of Assam to the Director of Public Instruction and received in this office with Assistant, Inspector of schools, Cachar’s Memo No. 9544-46, dated 8.10.56. The movement for introduction of Manipuri medium at Middle English Schools was started in the year 1959 by NM, Cachar along with other Manipuri organizations like Thaugan Marup, Jaffirbond, Assam Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Cachar, All Assam Manipuri Society, Cachar, Assam Bengal Manipuri Association, Cachar Manipuri Sangrakhini Samiti, Cachar Manipuri College students’ Union and Cachar Students Union etc. use their best effort to introduce Manipuri Medium at the M.E School level in the existing those M.E Schools of Bengali and English Medium situated nearby the Manipuri inhabited areas of Cachar District. But unable to success the movement, at last, the Manipuris of Assam unitedly under the various leading organization like Naha Marup (NM), Cachar, Thaugan Marup (TM), Jaffirbond and Manipuri Sahitya Parishad (MSP), Cachar Branch started to establish M.E Schools in the year 1963 in different areas of Assam by their own cost for the education of those students who passed LP level in their own mother tongue. As a result of the movement, accordingly in the year 1965, the Govt. of Assam recognized those Manipuri Medium M.E Schools who were established during 1963. Thus as a result of the movement in the year 1965, Manipuri Medium was recognized as a Medium of Instruction at the M.E Level in Assam.

Language Movement for introduction of Manipuri language as Medium of Instruction at the H.S.L.C Stage in Assam was started in 1963 by the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Cachar Branch, Naha Marup, Cachar and Thaugan Marup, Hailakandi. But it cannot get any positive results from the Govt. of Assam up to 1972. Then form the year 1972 Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Cachar Branch along with other different Manipuri Organizations of like Assam Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Cachar, All Assam Manipuri Society, Cachar, Assam Bengal Manipuri Association, The Manipuri Literary Forum, Cachar, Assam Manipuri Education forum, Cachar,
Cachar Manipuri College students' Union, Cachar Students Union and Assam Manipuri Education Forum, Cachar etc. unitedly came out and participated in the movement and continued up to 1984. As a result of the movement Manipuri Medium was introduced up to H.S.L.C in Assam in the year 1978 on temporary basis and finally in the year 1984 according to order No. EMI.150/79/112.

III

MOVEMENT FOR INCLUSION OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE IN EIGHTH SCHEDULE

Language movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India can be divided into two Phases. The First Phase Movement (1953-1989) which deals with the movement that outbreak during the period for the inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The Second Phase Movement (1989-1992) which deals with the movement that outbreak during the period for the inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

THE FIRST PHASE MOVEMENT (1953-1989):

The First Phase Movement (1953-1989) for the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution which deals with the movements that outbreaks during the period by various voluntary Organisations and Associations. In the year 1953, Manipur Constituency has taken a resolution for the recognition or inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution. This resolution has become the first demand for the recognition of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule and this demand was placed before the Central Government of India. Then in the year 1963, a special meeting of the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal (Estd.1935) has taken a resolution for the recognition of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule and began to give pressure to the both state as well as Central Government for the same. During this phase various voluntary Organisations and Associations from Manipur like (1)The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal (2)The All Manipur Students’ Union (AMSU), (3) The Naharol Sahitya Premi Samiti,(4)the Cultural Forum, (5) The Teachers’ Forum, (6) The Universal Literary Association, (7) The Ipathaukok and (8) All India Youth Federation etc. All these organisations have taken the key roles for the recognition of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution.

In Tripura also various voluntary Organisations and Associations like (1) The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Tripura, (2) The Manipuri Socio-Cultural Organisation, Agartala etc. In Meghalaya also The Meghalaya Manipuri Welfare Society, a non governmental organisation can be mentioned. All the Above organisations from Manipur, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya States etc. have played a great role and launched a series of democratic form of movements by – Public meeting, Seminars and Demand Rally etc. for the recognition of Manipuri Language into the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution.


The Second Phase Movement (1989-1992) for the inclusion Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution deals with the movement that outbreak during the period under the banner of Manipuri Language Demand Co-ordination Committee (MLDCC), N.E, a co-ordination committee formed by various Organisations and Associations from the North Eastern States. This Phase Movement is quite different from the First Phase Movement and under this Phase Various Manipuri Organisations and Associations from NER unitedly organised the movement under MLDCC, N.E and able to give much pressure to the both State as well as Central Government of India.

It is fact that the Co-Ordination Committee was formed under the sprit of the proceedings of the meeting held on 10th September, 1987 in the premises of the Sanskriti Bhavan at Silchar was organised by Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Assam. The major constituents of the Co-ordination Committee were (1) The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, (2) The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Assam, (3)The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Tripura,(4) All Manipur Students’ Union, Manipur, (5) The Manipur University Students’ Union, Manipur, (6) The Cultural Forum, Manipur, (7) Tripura Manipuri Cultural Organisation, Tripura, (8) The Naharol Sahitya Premi,
From the First Phase Movement onwards, the political parties of Manipur have been spearheading in the venture for the inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution. Again in the year 1987, four political parties – (1) Congress (I) Party, (2) C.P.I, (3) C.P.M and (4) M.P.P also took vigorous role in this issue. In the later period the most tremendous roles have been triggered off by a joint political parties- (1) Manipur People’s Party, (2) Janata Dal, (3) Congress(s), (4) National People’s Party, (5) Bharatiya Janata Party, (6) Communist Party of India, (7) Communist Party of India (Marxist), (8) Congress(I) and Kuki National Assembly.

After more than four decades of struggled by Manipuris inhabitant in North-Eastern Regions in general and the Manipuris inhabitant in Manipur, Assam and Tripura particular in the different forms of struggle by sending and presenting of memorandum to the Government officials, agitation, hunger strike, hunger strike unto death and band of Schedule languages organized by various non-governmental organizations like Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Assam, The Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Tripura, Pan Manipuri Youth League, Imphal, All Manipur Students’ Union (AMSU), Manipuri Language Demand Co-ordinating Committee (MLDCC), NE, All Assam Manipuri Students’ Union(AAMSU), Assam and various political parties like Manipur People’s Party, Janata Dal, Congress(s), National People’s Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Congress(I) and Kuki National Assembly etc. As a result of all these effort of the Manipuris inhabitant in NER, Manipuri language was included in the Eighth Scheduled of Indian constitution on 20th August, 1992, according to the 71st Amendment of the Indian Constitution.

It is interesting for a student of history to study the language movement from historical perspective. Of various language movements took place in India, Manipuri language movement is one among them. This movement has not been explored and the contributions of its leaders were unacknowledged. Language movements of the Manipuris started during the beginning of the 20th century in Manipur and during the late half of the 20th century in Assam. Jananeta Hijam Irabot Singh has played great role in Manipuri language movement in Manipur as well as in Assam. The recognition of Manipuri Language in the Eight Scheduled of Indian constitution is
the unexplored fields of language and social movements. The contributions of Irabot Singh to the language movement need to be explored. The present study attempts to focus on the ideology and events which influenced his philosophy and outlook. Moreover, the participation of the different classes of people in the language movement of the Manipuris and its relation with their nationalism and sub nationalism has to be explored. No one has so far sufficiently analyzed the causes of the Manipuri language movement (1924-92). Which sections of the people were participated in the movement? Can it be compared with different language movements took place in other parts of the country? How Manipuri Language was begun to be used for reconstructing the history of the Manipuris? How did Irabot Singh mobilize people in Manipur as well as in Assam? How did he organize the language movement for its status at the national level, sub-national level and also for specific purposes viz. education etc? What are the roles played by Hijam Irabot Singh towards Manipuri language movement to bring the political consciousness and national identity amongst the Manipuris? What are the roles played by Naoria Phulo towards Manipuri language movement in Assam? What are the roles did by various organizations towards the establishment of language movement of the Manipuris? How was Manipuri Language introduced as a Vernacular language and Medium of Instruction up to High School Leaving Certificate (H.S.L.C) in Manipur and Assam? What are the causes behind outbreak of the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule languages of India? How Manipuri language became the first Tibeto-Burman (TB) language to receive recognition as an 'official' or 'scheduled' language of India in the year 1992? What were the significance and impact of the Manipuri language movement in Manipur and Assam? How far the movement was successful? The present study tries to analyze all these problems. With this end in view the present study tries to study Manipuri Language Movement, 1924-1992.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objective of the research work is to study the Manipuri Language Movement (1924-92) in Manipur and Assam. The major objectives of the work are as follows:

⇒ To focus on the conceptual framework of the Language Movements.
⇒ To highlight the language group of the Manipuri People.
⇒ To explore the contributions of Hijam Irabot Singh to the Manipuri language Movement.
⇒ To explore the contributions of Naoria Phulo to the Manipuri language Movement in Assam.
To find out the causes of Manipuri Language Movement in Manipur and Assam.
To focus the role of various organizations in the Manipuri Language Movement.
To explore the role of language movement to create Political Consciousness, Cultural identity of the Manipuris.
To find out the significance and impacts of the movement.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY:

A large number of Data are available in the form of Secondary Sources like books, magazines, journals, articles and newspapers etc. For the collection of these Secondary Sources the present study depends on different libraries like Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, New Delhi, Assam University Central Library and District Library, Silchar etc. The Primary Sources for the present study are available in Director Printing & Stationary, Directorate of Secondary Education, Manipur and Assam, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, Manipur State Archives, Imphal, Gauhati Archives, Guwahati, National Library, Calcutta.

The methodology adopted on this work is mainly based on historical and empirical method consulting the Manipuri language movement related old Manipuri scriptures, leaflets and memorandums of the movement, books, journals and Newspapers etc. The documents and records available in the Governmental departments are consulted in preparing this thesis. Interview method is also adopted in this work. Many prominent leaders, persons who participated in the movement and those persons having the knowledge in the area are interviewed and their views are taken into account. The oral sources have been adopted in the work, in order to write in a systematic way. The analytical method has also been applied in this work.

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS:

CHAPTER ONE — INTRODUCTION

The Chapter One is an introductory one, which deals with the meaning of the language, the concepts of the movement and social movement, language movement, languages in India, language policies in India, language problems in India, language movements in India and the backgrounds of the Manipuri language movement in Manipur and Assam are discussed here. The objectives, data and methodology of the study and organization of chapters are also highlighted in this chapter.
CHAPTER TWO — THE MANIPURI PEOPLE AND MANIPURI LANGUAGE

The Chapter Two deals with numbers of Manipuri Speakers in India, North East India, Manipur, Assam and Tripura on the basis of Census Reports of India. The Manipuris settlements in Manipur, Assam and Tripura are highlighted here. The name of the total Manipuri inhabited villages in the Assam and Tripura are also separately discussed in this Chapter. It also evaluates the history of origin of the Manipuri People, their religion their language and the status of Manipuri language in the pre-vaishnavite period, early vaishnavite period (1467-1709 A.D), the vaishnavite period (1709-1891 A.D) and during the British period (1891-1947 A.D) etc.

CHAPTER THREE — MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT IN MANIPUR

Chapter three is mainly concentrated on the background and main causes for the outbreak of the Manipuri Language Movement in Manipur. The contributions of Hijam Irabot Singh to the Manipuri language movement and his efforts to organize the movement are highlighted here. The role of different nongovernmental organizations and associations for introduction of Manipuri language in the Education system of Manipur and also revert to use the ancient script of Manipuri language in the place of present Bengali Script are discussed here. This chapter also highlighted about the movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India.

CHAPTER FOUR — MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT IN ASSAM

Chapter Four has analyzed the Manipuri language movement in Assam. The role played by Naoria Phulo in the Manipuri language movement in Assam. The role of different nongovernmental organizations and associations for the introduction of Manipuri language as Medium of Instruction in Assam are discussed here. This Chapter has highlighted about the movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India.

CHAPTER FIVE — THE IMPACTS OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

This Chapter has examined the significance and impact of Manipuri Language movement in Manipur and Assam.
Chapter Six is concluding one, which summarizes the major findings and suggestions of the Research work.