Chapter Three

MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT IN MANIPUR

(1924-1992)


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The ancient people of Manipur had left a wealth of knowledge inscribed on copper plates, coins and stone pillars etc. There are many books written in Manipuri script on History, Religion, Medicine, Dance and Drama, Apocalypse, Hunting, Fighting, Philosophy of life- birth and death, etc. However, specialized books which dealt with educational theories and practices were hardly existence in olden days. From the available records in literatures, documents, cultural, social, political, religious and vocational traditions of the Manipuri people in the past has highlighted something about the system of education in the early days in Manipur. The system was by and large methodical, scientific and it emphasized the all round development of the individuals. Such type of educational system was the outcome of the constant interaction between teachers and taught. The Manipuri word “Maheirof” which means the pupil or learner and “Oja” means teacher. The system was based on learning trough oral transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other, prior to its being put down in the form of manuscripts. The significance of oral transmission lies in the belief that the sacred words should be stored inside one’s head. This is one of the main reasons why it was difficult to find specific books on educational theories and practices.

The ancient people of Manipur maintained and practiced by an educational system of their own tradition. This traditional educational system was mainly aimed at all round development of an individual based on learning through oral transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other by teachers to its students. But after the annexation of Manipur to British India in 1891A.D, the traditional education system of Manipur was gradually declined and a new system of education i.e. English or Modern Education system was emerged in the state.

The seed of the Western/Modern Education system was first started by Captain Gordon when he founded a Primary Education centre in Manipur in the beginning of the 19th Century. However, due to his unfortunate death, the seed could not develop and had decayed without bearing any fruit. In 1872, Major General W.E. Nuthall, then the Political Agent opened a School

1 Dr. Jamini, Education in Manipur, Rai Pravina Brother, Imphal, 2006 (Second Edition), p.3
2 Ibid., p.4
at Imphal with English language as the Medium of Instruction. For this purpose, the Government of Bengal presented books, maps and other requisites of the value of Rs. 400/500. But the School failed to function properly due to lack of local co-operation and encouragement. The people of the land were averse to the establishment of English School and had no love and fancy for English Education and consequently the parents did not send their children to that school and attendance in that School became nominal. ³

In 1885 a Middle English School was opened by the then Political Agent, Sir James Johnstone with the permission of Maharaja Sir Chandra Kirti Singh, K.C.S.I., who was great patron of learning. Since then, Modern education has been making gradual progress in Manipur⁴. In the year 1892-93 a Lower Primary School was established at Sekmai and subsequent efforts were made by then Government to open more schools in the suitable villages in the valley and Mao Thana at the Naga Hills frontier. In the year 1893-94, a school at Thoubal in the valley was opened, but was closed down again for lack of support. The reasons for the lack of support on the part of the people towards Modern Education in Manipur were numerous. As Manipur had been conquered by the British in 1891, the people were suspicious towards the intentions of the alien rulers and, therefore, discouraged their efforts. Secondly, they had their own system of indigenous education, through the Medium of Meetei Mayek (Manipuri Script) as old Manipuri character was still in use in parts of the valley and that the Bengali character had not yet entirely ousted it. Thirdly, there was general apathy towards the Western Education. The Manipuris considered it as unclean and polluting⁵.

The value of education was realised very late in Manipur. Parents did not encourage their children to attend schools. Those who attended up to Entrance standard could become Teachers in the Johnstone School; and qualified minor or a little upgraded to Class one and Class two (at present Class Six, Seven or Eight) was appointed to the posts of Clerks and Mohorirs (those persons who measured the acquisition of the land possession) only. Those qualified below Minor were appointed to Amins and Peons. On the other hand, Head of the Departments in the State Administration were forcefully reserved for the British and Anglo-Indians. For the lower to the higher posts, there were long series of panels for the Bengalis and other foreigners, Members of

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³ Dr. Jamini, op. cit., p.30
⁴ M. Shanti Devi, Development of Education in Manipur, Rajesh publications, New Delhi, 2001, p.18
⁵ Ibid., p.19
the Darbar, the Cherap (court) and the Panchayet Courts were reserved for the royal bloods only.\(^6\)

Gradually Primary Schools were established at Sekmai, Phoijing, Tera, Thangmeiband and Moirang in the valley areas of Manipur in 1895-96. In the year 1885-86, there were 8 Schools, out of which 7 were Primary Schools and 1 was Middle School in Manipur. By the end of 1900-1901 there were 16 Schools, out of which one was a Middle School and 15 were Primary Schools in the whole of Manipur State (13 in the valley and 2 in the hills).\(^7\) During the year 1910-11, the numbers of Primary Schools were 66 and there were 2 Middle Schools. By the end of 1920-21, the number of Primary Schools further increased to 83 and Middle Schools to 3. And thus the number of Primary Schools and Middle were gradually increased in the State. The following table-3.1 will show the increase of number of Pupils and Schools in Pre-Independence Period in Manipur.

Table-3.1

The total numbers of Pupils and Schools in Pre-Independence Period in Manipur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lower Primary/Primary Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Middle Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1877-92</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-06</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2248</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4086</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-16</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3713</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>5667</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-26</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>6435</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>6615</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-36</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: M. Shanti Devi, Development of Education in Manipur, p.22)

\(^6\) Karam Manimohan Singh, Hijam Irabot Singh and Political Movement in Manipur, New Delhi, B.R Publishing Corporation, 1989, p.37

\(^7\) M. Shanti Devi, op.cit., p. 21
The Western education broke the slumber of the Manipuris from its traditional beliefs and outlook. Before Western education, the world they assumed was world of Manipur and her surrounding only. Superstition was wide-spread, remained embedded in the minds of the people and they were enchained by traditional beliefs and customs. The Meeteis considered the hill men and the Manipuri Muslims (Pangals) as impure or outcaste. It was the Western education which gave a new world outlook and instilled a global knowledge to the mind of the people. It slowly and gradually freed the mass from the superstitious ideas and beliefs and loosened the holds of customs. Modern education made boys of Hills and Plain sit together in the class room, thereby reducing the social distance between the Hill and Plain. It also accelerated the place of social mobility and on the eve of independence a small group of urban elite was produced. It was this elite group who directed the masses to many social and political movements. It will not be out of place to mention that Modern Manipuri literature is the product of Western education. Although the modern form of language is traceable in some early works like Chandrakriti Jila Changba, written in the 19th Century, the real literary merit flourished for the first time in the works of Kabi Chaoba and Dr. Kamal. The Western education also initiated a literary movement in Manipur by publishing journals and magazines etc. For the first time local Newspapers appeared in Manipur to educate and to provide information of the then developments. In fact the Western education acted as a powerful agent to change the Manipuri society from its traditionality to modernity.

With the introduction of Western education in Manipur and its gradual development in State, many European and Bengali educationist came in Manipur to teach the students of Manipur with the new Education system. The Modern period of Manipuri language really came into existence with the beginning of the 19th Century, after English education had found a place among the Manipuri people. European officials and missionaries, who came to Manipur and Bengali teachers, helped the Manipuris to build a new literature in their language. Men like the Rev. W. Pettigrew, Mr. Wince, Babu Ramsundar Roy, and educated Manipuris like Makar Singh, Munnal Singh, Jatiswar Singh and Haodijam Chaitanya Singh came forward.

8 Dr. N. Basanta, Socio-Economic Changes in Manipur, 1891-1947, Author, Imphal, 1998, p.55
9 ibid, p.55
10 N. Khelchandra Singh, Manipuri Language, Status and Importance, N. Tombi Raj Singh, Imphal, 1975, p.38
From the reign of King Pamheiba (1709-1748 A.D) to King Chandra Kirti Singha (1850-1886 A.D), due to the influence of Bengali and Sanskrit language, there was no place for Manipuri language in the education system in Manipur. And again during the second half of the 19th century, when the Modern education was introduced in Manipur, Bengali, Sanskrit and English languages were made as a medium of instruction, which led to the continuous process of neglecting for the use of Manipuri language in Primary level as well as in the Upper Primary level in the education system of the state. At that time, only available books of Manipuri language are the First Manipuri Primers Book of Makkar Singh and Second Manipuri Primers Book of Munnal. After passing the Third Class, all the student were bound to learn the books, which were written in Bengali language due unavailability of Manipuri books. During that time, the available books of Bengali language were Shishu Shiksha, Bodhadoy, Panchampath, Sudhpath and Priyapath etc. After that if we talk about literature of that time means only Bengali literature and Bengali language. Those students who passed the Upper Primary exams were bound to learn not only to Bengali literature but also other subjects like Mathematics and Geometry etc. At that time in the syllabus of Upper Primary level not a single book of Manipuri was available. But in the later period a book entitled Laubook written in Manipuri language was included in the syllabus. From the Class VII to Class X not a single book was available at that time. During that time, if we talk about Vernacular language means only Bengali literature and language. The High school level students learned their education only in English, Bengali and Sanskrit.

But gradually a group of Educationist intellectuals from Manipur and beyond Manipur began to started the use of Manipuri as a vernacular language in the schools of Manipur in the year 1907, after the administrative machinery of Manipur was undertaken by King Churachand Singh in that year. And he has also taken a Manipur State Durbar Resolution for the introduction of Manipuri Language as a vernacular language in the Schools level. Thus, as a result of the efforts of Maharaja and Manipuri educationist groups, Manipuri language was first started to use as a vernacular language in the schools in Manipur in the year 1924 A.D. 11

HIJAM IRABOT SINGH AND MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

Hijam Irabot Singh (1896-1951) can be considered as one of the pioneer of the Manipuri language movement of the 20th Century. He was born on 30th September, 1896 at Pishumthong, Oinam Lekai, Imphal in a very poor family. His father’s name was Hijam Iboonghal Singh and mother’s was Chongtham Chanu Hijam Ongbi Thambalngangbi. Orphaned at an early age, with no one but an old aunt to look after him, Irabat Singh grew up in poverty and suffering. After studied up to class VIII in Johnstone High School, Imphal, he went to Dhaka in 1913 for further studies. In Dhaka, he studied at Pujak High School up to Class IX but before appeared the Matriculation Examination, he was forced to leave his study because of the financial problems. Irabot Singh left Dhaka in early 1915. Rather than coming back to Manipur immediately, he went to Tripura and stayed there for some time. Then he came back in Manipur in the later part of that year. After return to Manipur, Irabot Singh soon became well-known and famous as a dramatist, sportsman, pioneering poet and educationist and in fact in almost every sphere of life. He was not only popular in his own time but also among the later generations.

Coming back from Dhaka to Manipur, Irabot Singh began to work for the betterment of the people of Manipur in many fields like social, political and economic spheres etc. But at this stage he was not aware of the happening in the State in both political and social matters. His youthful enthusiasm was diverted to literary undertakings and his first endeavor was brought out in 1922, in the form of a hand-written magazine called ‘Meitei Chanu’. Birchandra Singh, son of Jubaraj Tikendrajit Singh was the first publisher of the Magazine and Irabot was its Editor. The magazine could become the pioneer work amongst the early publications of the Manipuri Journals.

The movement for introduction of Manipuri language in the education system of Manipur and 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, the people of Manipur began to be developed and awakened. During this time, Irabot Singh and a group of educationist people try their level best for the development of their society, mother

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12 Rajendra Kshetri, Emergence of Meetei Nationalism, Mittal, New Delhi, 2006, p.47
13 Ibid., p.48
14 Karam Manimohan Singh, op.cit, p.39
tongue and literature etc. In this endeavor under his editorship, ‘Meitei Chanu’, the first Manipuri literary journal of Manipur was published in 1922.\textsuperscript{15} And this journal covered the message for development and use of Manipuri language in every sphere of life. Because during that time those Manipuri people, who spoke Bengali language were recognized by the society as educated and intellectual and their position in the society was high. Irabot Singh also started the work for the inclusion of Manipuri language in education system in Manipur. For this task he started to write a text book called ‘Sheidam Sheireng’ (a Poetry book) in the year 1929 and the same was prescribed as a text book for the High School students of class V (Five).\textsuperscript{16} He has written a numerous number of articles in those days’ journals like Yakairol, Lalit Manjuri Pratika and Manipuri Sahitya Parishad Pratika etc. At that time, writers in Manipuri language were also not numerous, and so, Hijam Irabot Singh wanted to organize some literary conference with enthusiastic young and talented Manipuri poets and intellectuals. His dream turned into reality only in the late thirties of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. Looking into the responsibilities he took of the various organizations, as well as his persistent efforts to produce literary writings, Irabot, among other contemporaries of his time, could be regarded as one of the great pioneers of Manipuri Renaissance. For the first time in the literary history of Manipur a conference took place at Imphal City on 26\textsuperscript{th} May, 1935, under the Presidentship of Shri Angoubi Singh. The meeting was specially conducted in the light of establishing in Manipuri Sahitya Sammeloni, which in fact became a recorded event in the emergence of the “Manipuri Sahitya Parishad” on 23\textsuperscript{rd} June, 1935. It is an organization devoted to the development of Manipuri, literature and culture. And this Parishad has worked hard about a decade by taking the responsibility of writing and publishing textbooks of Manipuri books for the recognition of Manipuri language in B.A Examination and at last in the year 1948 Calcutta University recognized Manipuri language as a Vernacular subject for B.A Examination.

NIKHIL MANIPURI MAHASABHA AND MANIPURI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT:

Language movement for introduction and development of Manipuri language, the ‘Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha’(NHMM) has also played great roles. Irabot Singh started his first mass campaign for the socio-economic upliftment of the people and the result was the formation of the ‘Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha’ mobilizing all the Manipuris inside and outside the

\textsuperscript{15} Karam Manimohan Singh, \textit{Loc.cit}

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}
State. Under the patronage of the Maharaja Churachand Singh of Manipur, the Mahasabha was established in 1934 inside the palace ground. The establishment of this organization was a great significant development in the future social, educational and political history of the Manipuris in Manipur and outside Manipuris inhabited areas. The first session of Mahasabha was held on 30th May 1934 under the president-ship of the Maharaja. On the same day, Irabot as President of the Reception Committee addressed the members and the delegates:

To All Brothers,

Today's assembly of the Mahasabha is composed not by the Manipuri representatives only, but also it is an assembly of all the representatives from other nations. The significant points of this assembly are:

First: An introduction and congregation of all brothers, near and their ones from far corners of the country.

Second: An intellectual and emotional communication among ourselvés.

Third: A complete integration bounded by love and affection to bring a collective strength of the nation.

Fourth: To bring prosperity and flourish in the nation.

Education: It has not been long, but about 40 years only, that education in Manipur was first born. During those days English Education was looked down and hated by the Manipuris. Even text-books printed in English were not touched by hand. Some educated people were not allowed to mix freely with their family members. Now during the reign of His Highness Maharaja Churachand Singh, education has been much developed due to his encouragement and many a people have now been enlightened by virtue of higher education. It is not meant for the boys only, but the full responsibilities of Western education have also been opened wide to the females who have received good results through their developed faculty of intellectuals reasoning. But for the unbounded kindness of the Maharaja, most of the Manipuris would have remained ignorant and dull. The whole of the people are naturally indebted to His Highness. So as a courtesy to His

\[17 \text{Ibid., p.46.}\]
Highness, we must endeavor to concentrate fully in the matters of business communication and in production of handicrafts.

**Religion:** To-day Manipur has embraced the sacred Hindu religion. This is due to a kindness of His Highness the Maharaja. The national religion is the only rein to effect integration. To preserve our traditional as well as time-bound religion and its sacred ideologies we should seek shelter under the protective shadow of the royalty. The divine father has sent our Ruler to govern us and to give justice and celebrate religion. May we not immerse in the stream and sacrifice our best?

**National Prosperity:** There has been a certain evidence of national advancement with a bright glow of civilization in Manipur. Among the Indian alphabets the ancient Manipuri script has been placed in the 20th category. It is a sign of recognition much valuable to the Manipuris. It is our sacred property. Although I am no expert in linguistic science, it is evident that the script is most appropriate in spelling and pronunciation. I feel most strongly in favour of a sincere linguistic knowledge and to preserve the script carefully.

During the reign of ancient Manipuri Kings they did not encourage to perform Kirtan in Manipuri language. But His Highness the Maharaja has introduced it in our mother-tongue, and we all must continue it in a wide scope.

**Proceedings of the First Session of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahashaba held at Imphal, Manipur On the 30th May, 1934**

In the First Session of the NHMM held at Imphal, Manipur On the 30th May, 1934. In that Session Irabat Singh as the President of the Reception Committee of the Mahashaba delivered his speech and a total number of 19 (Nineteen) Resolutions were resolved and passed. Out of that total, only those resolutions which were related with the Manipuri language development policies are discussed here.

**Resolved:**

4. "The Manipuris have no original history of their own, and the available history books by the foreign authors are not acceptable, as because they do not reflect intimate backgrounds on

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our religion and the racial origin. The Mahasabha therefore, would encourage with remunerations and honour for the writing of a national history.”

5. “That all the Manipuris living inside and outside the State be requested to adopt Manipuri Language as Vernacular in the Schools, after its formal recognition by the Calcutta University.”

11. “That every Manipuri parents be requested to encourage their children to send in Primary Schools.”

(a). “That the girls students should be allowed to read in the boys’ schools up to Primary Schools.”

12. “That in order to increase High School educated persons more numbers of High Schools be established in convenient places of the States.”

16. “That the Manipuris be asked to make themselves familiar with the Meitei Mayek (Manipuri Akshar).  

The Second Session of the NHMM held at Tarapur, Silchar, Assam on the 30th January, 1936. In that Session Irabat Singh as a General Secretary of the Mahashaba delivered his speech and a total number of 13 (Thirteen) Resolutions were resolved and passed. Out of that total, only those resolutions which were related with the Manipuri language development policies are discussed here.

6. “That the Manipuri songs be encouraged to spread far and wide, as a means of advancement for Manipuri literature.”

7. “That for a teaching of the Manipuri language, efforts be made for the establishment of Primary Schools in every Manipuri villages of other provinces.”

The Third Session of the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahashaba held at Mandalay, Burma (presently Myanmar) on 2nd March, 1937. In that Session Irabat Singh as a Vice-President of the Mahashaba delivered his speech and a total number of 13 (Thirteen) Resolutions were resolved. Out of that total, only one resolution which was related with the Manipuri language development is discussed here.

19 Ibid., pp.50-52
Resolved:

1. “That one Middle English School will be established, where Manipuri boys can learn Manipuri language in the town of Mandalay and local authorities there can be approached to help the institution.”

The Fourth Session of the NHMM held at Chinga, Imphal, Manipur on the 29th and 30th December, 1938. In that Session Irabat Singh as the Vice President of the Mahashaba delivered his speech and a total number of 30 (Thirty) Resolutions were resolved and passed. Out of that total, only those resolutions which were related with the Manipuri language development are discussed here.

Resolved:

4. “This Mahasabha has deleted the word “Hindu” in the name of this organization, ‘Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha’ to ‘Nikhil Manipuri Mahashaba’.”

7. “That not even one out of a hundred Manipuri people are literate. It will take many years before they will all become literate under the present conditions literacy campaign be launched among the illiterate adults that most of them may become literate within, at most, half of the period of time that will be required for the purpose at the present rate of progress.”

20. “This Mahashaba conveys it’s thanks to His Highness the Maharaja of Tripura for His Highness kindly exempting the Manipuris settling in the Tripura State from paying their tuition fees in the Schools in the State.”

22. “That the authorities be approached to introduce Manipuri language recognized by the Calcutta University, in the Schools where only the Manipuri boys read and in those where Manipuri boys also read.”

Thus under the leadership of Hijam Irabot Singh Nikhil Manipuri Mahashaba has played a great role in the Manipuri language movement.

For the development and use of Ancient Manipuri Scripts Irabot Singh edited a Journal “Anauba Yug” in the year 1947. He began to use the Manipuri Scripts in his editorial Journal. For the better understanding to the readers he also write the same version of those articles which
were written in the Manipuri Script into Bengali version side by side. Seeing the contribution of Hijam Irabot Singh in the literary activities of Manipuri language famous poet Hemanga Biswas write:

“Iravat was not only a mass leader but also a pioneer in the movement for a new literature and journalism in Manipuri language.”

II

MANIPURI LANGUAGE AS A VERNACULAR AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN MANIPUR

Manipuri Language movement aimed to recognize Manipuri language as a vernacular and medium of instruction at the school levels in Manipur and thereby ensured that Manipuri is to be used for this purpose. The issue of language in education in Manipur was posed by a section of the Manipuri intelligentsia belonging to Manipur and beyond Manipur. In the beginning of the British Rule in India no provision was made for teaching or use Modern Indian Languages as medium of Instruction and administration. Only the classical languages like Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic were taught along with English, which after the famous Macaulay Minutes of 1835 became almost the sole medium of instruction in all the Schools and Colleges recognized by the Government. It was only in the year 1921, with the introduction of Dyrchy in India that some major modern Indian literary languages were included among the school subjects, but even then they were not given the proper place in school education, in spite of the Official recognition accorded to them in 1854 in Sir Charles Wood’s Dispatch. The Dispatch very clearly laid down that the study of the spoken languages of India was to be encouraged and that they were to be regarded as media of instruction along with English. Since the inception of Modern Education in Manipur, the Medium of instruction was through Bengali, Sanskrit and English language.

As far back in 1902-03, efforts were made for introduction of Manipuri language as a Medium of instruction by some Manipuri intellectuals. But they could not succeed because that time there was a rapid decline in the number of boys attending Schools. According to the Administrative Report of the Manipur Political Agency, 1902-03, Mr. Pettigrew, Honorary

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20 A. Kritamala Singha, Irabotki Punshi Amashung Mahakki Sahitya (The life of Irabot and his Literature) , Imphal, 2001, p. 63
22 Ibid.
Inspector of Schools attributed to the decrease principality by having done away with Bengali in the Schools and also insisting on a better average of attendance at Schools. Bengali has been since re-introduced as it is no doubt the wish of the people to have their children taught that language.\textsuperscript{23} And then again on 15\textsuperscript{th} May, 1907 his Highness Sir Churachand Singh being the President of Durbar passed a resolution for introduction of Manipuri Language as the Medium of Instruction in Lower Primary Schools.\textsuperscript{24} The act of the Durbar was a stepping stone for the gradual development of Manipuri language and literature in Manipur. For the introduction of Manipuri language in the Schools, the outsider Manipuri, Englishmen and Bengali educationist form Sylhet, Cachar, Dhaka and others parts of the world has played a great role and their contributions in the field of writing books is remarkable. Among them are the First Manipuri Primers (1901) of Sri L. Makar Singh and Sri Ksh. Munal Singh’s the Second Manipuri Primers (1903), Third Manipuri Primers (1907), Main Stories (1906) and Compile book of Letters (1914), Shatramacha (1913) of Khawairakpam Chaoba, the First Meitei Story and Meitei Mathematics and New Lesson (1918) of Sanajaoba, Manipuri Grammar (1912) of Rev. W. Pettigrew, Manipuri Purabarta (1917), Manipuri Itihas (1918) of Pukhrambam Parijat and other etc.\textsuperscript{25} can be mentioned.

MANIPURI LANGUAGE AT LOWER PRIMARY STAGE:

With adopting of Hindu religion in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century, the Manipuris in Manipur began to use Bengali language in their day to day activities. Then instead of Manipuri language, Bengali language now began to use in the Schools and also given much important to this language by those Manipuri people who adopted Hindu religion. By coming of the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century, we have seen a combination of both Manipuri and Bengali were used in the Stone Pillar of Maharaja Marjit Singh (1813-19) and Copper plates of Maharaja Chandra Kriti Singh (1850-86)\textsuperscript{26}, presently these plates can be seen in Manipur State Museum. The annexation of Manipur by Britishers on 27\textsuperscript{th} April, 1891 also lead to the introduction and expansion of Bengali Script instead of Manipuri Script after she was defeated by British India in Anglo-Manipur War. When Western education was gradually developed in the year 1885 in Manipur, they introduced Bengali, Sanskrit and English language were as Medium of Instructions in Manipur. After

\textsuperscript{23} M Shanti Devi, \textit{op cit}, p.26
\textsuperscript{24} ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Laishram Kamini,\textit{Manipuri Sahityada Longi Yaol}, PhD Thesis(unpublished), Manipur University, 1990,p.153
Manipur was annexed by British India, then they began to almost completely neglected Manipuri language, now Manipuri language could not became State language and thus it became only a Court Scholar’s language in the State. All the religious books, which were written in Bengali languages, were interestingly begun to learn by the Manipuris. And at that time, it wasn’t comfortable and possible for making of blocks in Manipuri Script by printing press. It has also given the opportunity to spread Bengali language in the Education.

Apart from acting as an agent to change the society in its outlook, beliefs, customs, mobility, to its birth of an elite group etc., western education in Manipur encouraged the minds of the people and led to social awakening. A group of the Manipuri intellectuals came out and started to establish Schools in the State. And gradually a new revolution was emerged in the fields of language, literature and cultures in the Manipuri Society. In 1907, Maharaja Churachand Singh had undertaken the administrative machinery of Manipur and started the stepping stone for gradual development of Manipuri language and literature. Thus, after 1909-10 Manipuri language was introduced as a Medium of Instruction in Lower Primary Schools in Manipur.

MANIPURI LANGUAGE AT UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS, MATRIC (H.S.L.C) AND INTERMEDIATE (H.S.S.L.C) LEVELS:

Since the people started receiving Modern education, quite a good numbers of graduates came out and they contributed to writing books in their own vernacular as well as translating books in Manipuri language. It is needless to say that the curriculum of the schools in Manipur was overburdened with dominance of Sanskrit and Bengali language. In July 1914, the Director of Public Instruction (Assam) had suggested that Bengali and Sanskrit could be dropped from syllabus of the Manipuri Matriculation course. Thus with initiative started by Maharaja Churachand Singh and other Manipuri educationist likes Hijam Irabot Singh, Sir Sanjaoba, Pukhrambam Parijat, Khwairakpam Chaoba, Potshambam Chauba, Rajkumar Setusana, and Wahenngbam Yumjaou etc. at last on 19th September, 1922 Calcutta University formally recognized Manipuri as vernacular language. Finally on 20th August 1924, J.C Ghosh, Registrar, Calcutta University passed an order for the introduction Manipuri language as Vernacular Subject in Matric (H.S.L.C) Exam. The order can be seen here.

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27 Karam Manimohan Singh, op.cit., p. 39
With the recognition of Manipuri language as a vernacular subject in the Matriculation Examination by Calcutta University, it began to be taught regularly in all the classes of the Schools. Due to the scarcity of suitable books for the pupils, they found it difficult and thus make a slow in the speedy progress. Its introduction in the schools also entailed with it the question of its introduction in Arts courses for the University examination. This was also not possible without suitable Manipuri literature. To meet this question, as well as to solve many other problems in connection with the public instruction in Manipur, the Durbar in 1928 sectioned the formation of a Standing Committee on Education matters with the Education Member as Chairman. Since its formation, the Committee had continued to do excellent work and was establishing itself as the body which spoke with authority on all Educational matters affecting the State. In 1926, the books *Fidam* (1926) and *Thainagi Leirang* written by Khwairakpam Chaoba Singh were recognized for Matriculation Examination Syllabus. And in the year 1933, the First centre for Matriculation Examination was recognized in Imphal.

The Language movement for introduction of Manipuri language as a Medium instruction in the Matric (H.S.L.C) level in Manipur, the role of Hijam Irabot Singh and Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal was remarkable. A meeting was held on held on 26th May, 1935 at Khwai Nagampal, Imphal by the some notable literary figures of the time such as Irabot Singh, Dorendrajit, Nabadwipchandra, Shymsundear, Nabakumar, Shitaljit, Aber Singh, Khwairakpam Chaoba and Tarpan Singh for the formation of one literary organization in Manipur and accordingly in the meeting it was decided to form Manipuri Sahitya Sanmeloni. Again another meeting was held on 23rd June 1935 at the Manipur Girls' High School under the President-ship of Laienmayum Iboongohal Singh. On this day some important resolutions were passed among which one was unanimously accepted by all the members. "That, on this day i.e. 23/06/1935, it is resolved to rename Manipuri Sahitya Sanmeloni to Manipuri Sahitya Parishad and its location

28 Dr. Sharatchandra Long-Jomba, *op cit.* , p.22
29 Dr. N. Basanta, *op cit.*, p.44
The main objectives of the Parishad were to develop the Manipuri language and its literature, to encourage the Manipuri writers by awarding degrees, certificate of honours etc. to make propaganda and stimulate young writers to produce standard prose works, to publish a journal of good literary writing.

After 1920 onwards, a number of Manipuri Journals with literary works began to come out. Among those journals to mention some of them are *Meetei Chanu* (June, 1922) edited, hand written and published by Hijam Irabot Singh; *Yakairol* (October, 1930) edited and published by Dr. Ningthoujam Leirel; *Lalit Manjuri Pratrika* (September, 1933) edited and published by Arambam Darendrajit Singh; *Manipuri Sahitya Parishad* (1935) and *Manipuri Sahitya Parishad Pratrika* (November, 1937) edited and published by Thokcham Madhu Singha; First Johnstone High School’s Monthly Magazine (August, 1939) edited by Mutum Radheshyam; *Naharol* (1941) edited by Laishram Gopal; *Meitei* (January, 1941) edited and published by Phuraitlatpam Gaurahari Sharma; *Chatra Jagat* (December, 1946) edited by Ningthaukhongjam Tombi and published by Manipuri Chatra Sanmeloni; *Palem* (October, 1947) edited by Thambal Angau Singh and published by Meitei Mayek Thaugal Marup, Wangkhei; *Immarol* (November, 1947) edited by Wahengbam Naran Singha; *Mingnaidabi* (August, 1948) edited by Khwairakpam Chaoba and published by Young Writers’ Association; *Jyoti* (December, 1948) edited by Ashangbam Minketon and published by Manipur Sanskrit Parishad; *Khonjel* (December, 1948) edited by Phanjaubam Gaurahari Singh and published by Calcutta Manipuri Students’ Congress; *Sahitya Ichel* (September, 1950) edited by Iboohal Singha and published by Meitei Sahitya Seba Sanmeloni etc.

By that time only a few vernacular Newspapers were available in Manipur. But, its numbers were increasing gradually due to the number of Manipuri educationists were increased day by day. Among those Newspapers were *Dainik Manipur Pratrika* (1932) edited by Thongbam Gokulchandra; *Tarun Manipur* (weekly, 1938) edited by Rajkumar Shitaljit; Manipur Matam (1939) edited by Devendranath Bejboruwa; *Ngashi* (1946) edited by Keisham Kunjabihari; *Vhaigabati Patrika* (1946) edited by Maisnam Birmani; *Prajatantra* (1946) edited by Keisham Kunjabihari; *Vhaigabati* (1946) edited Arambam Lalmoni; *Praja* (weekly, 1947) edited by Hawaibam Ranbir; Ekhoigi Manipur(1947) edited by Sagolshem Indramani; *Sandhyagi

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30 Karam Manimohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.43
31 Dr. Sharatchandra Long-Jomba, *op.cit.* , p.22
With the help of those above mentioned Journals and Newspapers, the Manipuri people began to know about the incidents happened in inside and outside Manipur. These influences greatly help to the people of Manipur to learn and spread of their education in their own mother tongue. And with the recognition of Manipuri as a vernacular language in the Matric (H.S.L.C) Examination by Calcutta University in the year 1924, a number of High Schools began to establish in Manipur. Again in the year 1928 Manipuri language was recognized as a Vernacular language in H.S.S.L.C Examination by Calcutta University. Till 1974 Manipuri language was recognized as a Medium of instruction up to Class VIII by the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur. So in order to recognize it up to H.S.L.C level as Medium of instruction, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad in their 38th Annual Conference held at Nambol Shanoi College on 27th, 28th and 29th October, 1975 has taken some important resolutions, among those one resolution was unanimously accepted by all the members that it is resolved to request to the Government of Manipur to recognize Manipuri language as a Medium of Instruction up to H.S.L.C level. And at last, according to the Notification No-CS/7dt, Imphal 26th October, 1976, Manipuri language was recognized as a Medium of Instruction in the H.S.L.C level in Manipur.

III

MSP, IMPHAL AND LANGUAGE MOVEMENT IN MANIPUR

The seed for the establishment of Manipuri Sahitya Parishad (MSP), Imphal was held on 26th May, 1935 at Khwai Nagampal, Imphal. The meeting was presided over by Chingakham Angoubi Singh and many distinguished persons including renowned scholars, poets, dramatists and social workers were present at the meeting and unanimously decided to form Manipuri Sahitya Sanmeloni. Another meeting was held on 23rd June, 1935 at the Manipur Girls’ High School under the Presidenship of Lairenmayum Iboongohal. On this day some important resolutions were passed, among which one was unanimously accepted and passed by all the members that it is resolved to rename the Manipuri Sahitya Sanmeloni, a literary Sanmeloni

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32 Ibid., p.24
33 Ibid., p.27
34 Sorokhaibam Manikchand, Meetei Khunai, Naharol Khorinol Shilup, Cachar, Assam,1984, p.36
35 Ariban Kumar Sharma(Ed), Manipuri Sahitya Parishad Platinum Jubilee Celebration Souvenir-1, G. Secy, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, 2010, p. xxvii
(Society) under name ‘Manipuri Sahitya Parishad’ (MSP). The main aim and objectives of the Parishad should be to make every effort for the development of the Manipuri language and its literature, to encourage the Manipuri writers by awarding Degrees, Certificates of merit, Medals and Upadhis etc., to make propaganda and stimulate young writers to produce standard prose works, to publish a journal of good literary writings. The first General Secretary of the Parishad Hijam Irabot Singh took the responsibility for organizing the first annual session of the newly formed organization which was held on the 10\(^{th}\) October, 1935 at Imphal with Shri L. Iboongohal Singh in chair. Later an Executive Committee was also constituted with the following office bearers:

1. Shri L. Iboongohal Singh ------------------------- President.
3. Shri Hijam Irabot Singh------------------------- Member.
4. Shri Khwairakpam Chaoba Singh------------------- do---
5. Shri S. Lalit Singh ---------------------------- do---
6. Shri Hijam Anganghal Singh ---------------------- do---
7. Shri Hawaiibam Nabadwipchandra Singh ---------- do---
8. Shri Nongmeikapam Gopal Singh --------------- do---
9. Shri Hijam Angouba Singh ----------------------- do---
10. Shri Arambam Dorendra Singh --------------------- do---
11. Shri Waikhom Chaoba Singh --------------------- do---
12. Shri Arambam Ibungohal Singh --------------------- do---.

The MSP, Imphal has played immense role in the language movement for recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular subject for B.A Examination. The Parishad worked hard for about a decade i.e. from 15/11/1939 to 21/07/1948 by sending the Memorandums to the President of the Manipur State Durbar, Registrar and Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University and also taken the responsibility of writing and publishing textbooks. At last taking into consideration of the long and rich tradition of Manipuri literature, Calcutta University recognized Manipuri language as a Vernacular subject for B.A Examination in the year 1948.

The task of MSP, Imphal in the language movement for the recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular Subject at the B.A Examination is significant. For the recognition of Manipuri at

\[36 \text{Loc.cit.}\]
Undergraduate level, MSP had sent and submitted numerous numbers of memorandums to the President of the Manipur State Durbar, Registrar and Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. The first memorandum on the behalf of MSP, Imphal was sent on 15th November, 1939 by Th. Modhu Singh, Secretary to the President, Manipur State Durbar (MSD), Imphal. In the memorandum it was stated that “I have the honour to draw your kind and pointed attention to the difficulties felt by the Manipuri Students in the B.A Class out of the non-recognition of Manipuri vernacular for the B.A examination and to the checking of the advancement of learning in this Manipur State.

The motto of the Calcutta University is the advancement of learning, but the same motto when applied to this States seems to be a bit vague, as for this State the candidates in the topmost class are being handicapped unlike students of other nationalities. How this affected is shown below.

Since the Manipuri students in the Colleges faced immense difficulties due to their inabilities to take their vernacular as the major languages and forcibly taking alternative English, despite Calcutta University’s effort to establish Manipuri language as a vernacular in undergraduate level. The Calcutta University is laying greater and greater stress on the importance of Vernacular, and so it has recognized Manipuri up to I. A. Standard. But to stop the cause of a natural growth midway is to make confusion everywhere and to launch a surprise attack on the vanguard of the Manipuri competitors who are and will ever be legging behind every other competitor, because of this handicap.

Gradually, the Manipuris were quite awakened and had come to realize that until and unless this obnoxious ban upon the young men of Manipuri is lifted the progress of Manipur is a dream. The MSP, Imphal consisting among others of graduates who had experienced the difficulties is now up to the next in action writing and collecting books for this examination. They know the University says the books submitted by the Durbar are not up to the mark and so Manipuri cannot be recognized up to B.A Standard. But in this connection it may be said that Assamese and Khasi books are nothing compared with Bengali and English books. We have never heard that there is a Shakespeare or a Rabindranath among the Assamese not to speak of the Khasis. We can never be expected to produce Bankims, Michaels, Sharatchandras. They are
great writers are. The following books may be recommended for selection for the B.A Examination:

2. A book of stories ..................do........................
5. A Kavya..........................do..............................

The list is not exhaustive but they are found to be of high standard and some of them may fittingly be prescribed for B.A, besides them there may be some more. In the circumstances the Durbar is requested to move to Calcutta University to recognize the Manipuri Vernacular for the B.A Class.

Getting no reply from the President of the Manipur State Durbar, a meeting of Working Committee members of the MSP was held on 20/09/39 and in the meeting a resolution was unanimously accepted and passed by all the members that it is resolved to send a memorandum to the Registrar of the Calcutta University for the recognition Manipuri as a Vernacular subject for B.A Examination. On 21-09-39 Sjt. Th. Madhu Singh, Secretary, MSP, Imphal send a memorandum to The Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta that “I have the honour to draw your pointed attention to the recognition of Manipuri language as a Vernacular in B.A Examination of the Calcutta University. There is a Parishad Known as the Manipuri Shahitya Parishad working hard for the improvement of Manipuri literature. It was established in 1935 and since then it has been working to advance the cause of this wretched language by declaring medals for essays in Manipuri and by publishing magazines and the like. Very recently also it is trying to collect essays and poems to compile two books i.e. one prose selection and other poetry selection of the B.A Standard. We are going to spend some rupees on them.........”

Interestingly, some languages such as Khasi and others recognized by the University for B.A Examination though they seem not very much advanced. In our opinion some translation works may also be necessary as such works as Kalidas’s Sukantala, Shakespeare’s Hamlet and

38 Ibid.
others, Bankim’s Novels are rare in this world and writers like them cannot be expected everywhere. Their works ought to be translated in easy language and taught to the students of every nation, we may be permitted to translate some of their works and to prescribe them for B.A. We know we are not expected to recommend translation works alone for B.A. We shall have to recommend other original works also for which we are trying our best.

In the circumstances we shall be very grateful to you if you kindly inform me of what standard and kind of works we are expected to submit to you for the recognition of Manipuri literature in B.A Examination. Your advice will be very helpful in our attempts to write books and collect essays. Hope to be favored with your kind note as soon as possible.39

On 9th February, 1940, the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta send a reply letter to the Secretary, MSP, Imphal under its Notification / No Pub/1664/98 dated 09-02-40 stated that “the matter has received very careful consideration of the University during the last few years but the authorities have not been so far satisfied that the literatures in Manipuri language has yet attained a sufficiently high standard justifying its inclusion in the list of subjects prescribed for B.A Examination. The Hon’ble the Vice- chancellor and Syndicate will be glad to consider the matter sympathetically after the condition has improved and a complete list of available printed books in Manipuri with an indication of the subject matter dealt with in each and also of the standard up to which each such book may be prescribed for study has been submitted through the Political Agent in Manipur.”40

In reply to the Registrar, Calcutta University on the behalf of the MSP, Imphal Sjt. Lairenmayum Iboongohal Singh, President, MSP, Imphal send a letter under Memo - No.19/R IV Dated 16/04/40 for the Recognition of Manipuri language in B.A Examination that “I have the honour to refer to the correspondence sending with your letter No. pub/1668/98 dated 09.02.1940 to the Secretary, MSP intimating41 that the “Hon’ble the Vice Chancellor and Syndicate will be glad to consider the matter sympathetically after the condition has improved and complete list of available printed books in Manipuri with an indication of the subject matter dealt with in each and also the standard up to which each such book may be prescribed for study has been submitted through the Political Agent in Manipur”. The MSP very earnestly and

39 Ibid. pp. 7-9
40 Ibid., pp. 10-11
41 Ibid.
honestly thank the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor and Syndicate for the above mentioned Memo and I with the approval of the working Committee. MSP beg to submit the list of printed books in Manipuri as desired by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate. But I am afraid that the list submitted by me may not be able to satisfy you, the more o when compared with Bengali and other advanced literature. It may be probably being argued why we should approach the University for the Recognition of the Manipuri language in B.A though we have such a poor literature. In reply to this I beg to ask after making proper apology why the university for the recognition of the Manipuri in Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations. When Manipuri was recognized in Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations, there were very few manuscripts not to speak of printed books, which could be recommended for Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations. Now our humble submission is that the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate will not leave us in a wilderness after leading us on a good path before reaching our destination. The Alternative English is as we understand for the Anglo-Indians and those their Vernacular is not recognized in any of the University Examination.

As the reading public is very small, printing books is not a paying concern; so very few people print and publish their writings. In the former two occasions viz.; when Manipuri was recognized in the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations the manuscripts were bought from the writers and printed by the State.

At the request of the MSP, Imphal several literary persons have written several essays and stories. We are collecting and compiling them. Some of them are quite fit for B.A Vernacular. This Parishad is going to publish a Magazine in Manipuri literature. We have almost finished writing English to Manipuri Dictionary and are going to print and publish it very soon. One of the members of the working Committee of the Parishad has almost completed a Manipuri to English Dictionary. It will we hope be printed by this year. In this connection we want to print out that our present literature of any small community like us.

With these few words stated above I beg to forward the list of the Manipuri printed books and some of the manuscript. I hope that this will receive the sympathetic consideration of the
Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate so that the lamentable difficulties of the Manipuri Students may immediately be removed.42

On 31st January, 1941, the Registrar of Calcutta University, Calcutta once again replied to the President, MSP, Imphal under its Notification / Memo No Pub/1186/98 Dated. 31-01-41 that "The matter will be considered when a grammar for the use of students and also needed printed books suitable for being prescribed as text books for the B.A Examination in the subject are available."43

In reply to the Registrar, Calcutta University on the behalf of the MSP, Imphal Sjt. Lairenmayum Iboongahal Singh, President, MSP, Additional Member, Manipur State Durbar send a letter on 29th April, 1941 for the Recognition of Manipuri language in B.A Examination stated that “I have the honour to refer you to your Memo No. Pub/1186/98 Dated. 31-01-41 intimating that our Vernacular may be recognized when printed books fit for B.A and Manipuri Grammar are available; I have referred the matter to the working committee of the Parishad. At one of its meeting on 16-02-41, it was resolved that certain books be circulated among the members of the Committee for selection for the B.A Examination. At another meeting of the body it was resolved that the following books be chosen for recommendation to the University for being prescribed for the B.A Examination.

The books are:-

3. Nara Singh.... A Drama- by Sjt. L.H Iboongahal Singh, B.A, B.L, Additional Member, Manipur State Durbar, the writer of Brabubahana Pokpa, now prescribed for Matriculation Examination.

The first two books are already printed and the third is now in the press. Frequent failures of many Manipuri Students in the B.A Examination have dragged our most pointed attention to this matter. We have resolved after long consideration that the books we are now recommending may be safely prescribed for the B.A Examination for the time being.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14
43 *Ibid.*, p. 15
As for Manipuri Grammar there is already a book in two parts written by Sjt. W. Yumjau Singh, Superintendent, State Printing Press. Though this book is not very big the principles of Manipuri Grammar are being dealt with precisely and clearly. We think that it will serve our purpose for the present.

We have the learnt with deep concern that this year also the Manipuri candidates for B.A Examination have fared very badly in the alternative English. They say the passage set for the substance was too stiff to be answered for average students and so most of them have not attempted it well last year also all the Manipuri candidates for B.A came out unsuccessful. In this way our boys and girls are suffering every year. In these circumstances I beg to place this matter before you kind consideration of our requests and disposal of it at earliest time possible.”

After this letter of the MSP, Imphal finally the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta send a sympathetically letter to the President, MSP under the Notification /No Pub/2209/98 Dated. 14-07-41 mentioned that “With your letter Memo No. 24 R-IV Dated 29-04-41, the matter is under consideration. A further communication will be sent to you in due course.”

In reply to the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta on the behalf of the MSP, Imphal Sjt. Lairenmayum Iboongohal Singh, President, MSP, Additional Member, Manipur State Durbar send a letter on 14th July, 1941 under Memo No.33/R-IV for the Recognition of Manipuri language in B.A Examination that “I have the honour to refer to your Memo. No. Pub 2209/98 Dated 14.06.41, Senate House intimating that “the Memo. No 24/R-IV Dated 29th April, 1941 from President of the Parishad is under consideration. A further communication will be sent to you in due course.” Meanwhile, a resolution passed by the annual session of the Parishad requesting the Calcutta University for the early and sympathetic disposal of the matter regarding the recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular for B.A Examination was sent to you under this office Memo. No 28/R-IV dated 1st July, 1941. We are very thankful to the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate for the above mentioned Memo. We beg to point out that not a single regular Manipur candidate with English Alternative could pass the B.A Examination for the last two consecutive years. So we earnestly request you to kindly decide the matter favourable as

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44 Ibid., pp. 16-18
45 Ibid., p.20
46 Ibid.
early as possible. So that Manipuri Students can appear at the B.A Examination with Manipuri as their Vernacular from the year 1942.

In this connection it will not be out of place to mention here that as we are so far in a position to be able to satisfy the university with all the requisites calculated to materialize the early recognition of Manipuri as Vernacular for the B.A Examination, the University we fervently hope will soon very kindly respond sympathetically to our humble prayer.*

On 21st August, 1941, the Registrar of Calcutta University, Calcutta send a reply letter to the President, MSP, Imphal under the Notification / No. Pub/420/98 Dated. 21-08-41 that “The attitude of the University of Calcutta has always been very sympathetic towards all backward languages, but the case for Manipuri for recognition as a language with an equal status with Bengali and other developed Modern Indian languages up to the B.A Examination is not at all a strong one. The total number of printed books available in Manipuri is not yet 100(one hundred), and most of these are school books with a good few no longer in print. For Manipuri to be included in the B.A Curriculum there should be at least half dozen good prose works, translations for original ones available in print, besides an equal number of verse ones. Looking at the list submitted to the University of Calcutta, it seems that there is hardly any printed book which comes up to the required standard. A number of works suggested as suitable for the B.A have already been prescribed for the Matriculation and the Intermediate Examinations. There ought to be a few reserve works for change for these two undergraduate Examinations.

The University feels very sympathetically towards the representation made on behalf of the Manipuri for inclusion in the B.A course, but things stand in the interest of higher education it cannot now receive this representation favourable. The University will insist on the publication of a good Grammar of Manipuri in either Manipuri or English which will be suitable for advanced students. Singel Indu (No.89) and Moirang Thoibi (No.88) would appear to be suitable for the B.A judging from the subject-matter, but the University must have a look at the books before these can be accepted as suitable. Some portions of the Srimad Bhagavata Purana in Manipuri translation should be also eminently suitable and also the Manipuri translation of the Chaitanya- Charitamrita but these should be sent to the University for Inspection and opinion.

* Ibid , pp. 20-21
If the supporters of Manipuris including the Manipur Government were to make available in print the following texts in addition say within one year then the question of inclusion of Manipuri in the B.A will be substantially assisted when it is presented before the University again.

No. 90 (in the type list) *Khamba Thoibi* (Query: Is it a new and original composition by ballads and songs about Khamba and Thoibi? A collection of the extant popular literature about this hero and heroine will be very welcome and will form a very important item in Manipuri literature).

No. 91----------------------Yaithing Konu.
No. 93----------------------Ibemma.
No. 94----------------------Kangsa Badha.
No. 95----------------------Bhagya Chandra.
No. 99----------------------Essays.
No. 100----------------------Essays.
No. 101----------------------Essays.
No. 103----------------------Sakuntala
No. 104-106-----------------------Translations from Bengali.

In case original works are not forthcoming, the MSP and other friend literary organizations of Manipuri language and literature should take immediate steps for the publication of translations of suitable books (Essays, Fiction, Popular Science and Philosophy etc) from English and Bengali. For present, the University considers that the question of including Manipur as a Vernacular for B.A candidates should be kept in abeyance.\(^{48}\)

After the reply of the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta, the President, MSP, Imphal send a letter to the president, Manipur State Durbar under Memo No. 38/R- IV-F Dated, Imphal, 23\(^{rd}\) July, 1941 that “I beg to forward the attached copies of some of the correspondence made between the MSP and the Calcutta University regarding the recognition of Manipuri as Vernacular in the B.A Examination for favour of taking any action you deem fit so that the Manipuri may be recognized in the B.A Examination of 1942. This is with reference to our conversation regarding this. I think any further representation may be stayed until we hear from

\(^{48}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24
Then, the Durbar President, E.F. Lydall by taking responsibility of the letter of the President, MSP send a letter on 19th June 1945 under Memo No. 10777 D, Dated 19-06-1945 to the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta that "Please refer to your letter No Pub. 420/98 dated 21-08-41 to the president of the MSP, Imphal in which you agreed to examine certain Manipuri works were sent to you with their gist. You also expressed the hope that other original works and, failing them, translations would be forthcoming.

Since the receipt of your above-quoted letter, the Education Standing Committee of the Manipur State and the MSD have selected some further original works. These are sent herewith with gist in English and you are requested to examine them also to see whether you consider them suitable for inclusion in the B.A Syllabus. Your decision is requested at an early date to enable the printing of the works selected to be completed in good time.

The books sent here with are:-

1. "Prachya Nari" by Sjt. S. Nadiachand Singh, B.A.
2. "Nara Singh" by Sjt. L. M Ibungohal Singh, B.A. B.L.

Shri B.B. Dutta, the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta on his reply to the President, MSD under the Notification / No Pub/883/98, Dated 10-01-46 stated that "I beg to invite a reference to your Memo No. 10777-D dated, Imphal 19th June, 1945 regarding the question of recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular for the B.A Examination of this University. The matter was duly placed before the University authorities for consideration. They are of opinion that while the University is in full sympathy with desire to give Manipuri its proper place in the Higher intellectual life of the Manipuri people, the paucity of suitable books in print still from a bar preventing the acceptance of Manipuri as a recognized Vernacular for the B.A Examination of the University of Calcutta. They, therefore, regret that Manipuri cannot be recognized as a Vernacular for the B.A Examination at this stage."

After that once again on 18th April, 1947 Srejut L.M Iboongohal Singh, President, MSP, Imphal send a letter under No. 1 R-IV dated 18/04/1947 to the Registrar, Calcutta University,
Calcutta for the Recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular for the B.A Examination. In the letter mentioned that “I have the honour to refer to the correspondence between the MSP and Calcutta University sending with your letter No. Pub, 420/98 dated 21.08.1941 (a copy of which is attached here with for easy reference) regarding the recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular for the B.A Examination advising us to send copies of some selected book and to have twelve books which you so kindly selected from the typed list, printed within one year which you said will substantially assist the question of the inclusion of Manipuri in the B.A, when it is presented before the University again. Your said letter was received by me on timely. But from the letter part of 1941, Imphal had become No.1 town regarding Japanese invasion on India. Imphal was bombed on 10-05-42 for the first time, then Manipur had become a regular residence of the United Nation’s Army, lines of communication Area war zone and a large portion of her area became no man’s land. It is only some months that Imphal has become the home of civil population but reconstruction of Imphal has just been commenced. So I could not reply to your letter so long for which I regret very much. I am glad to bring this to your notice that even in those hard days the Parishad did not stop their activities. Sreemati Jamini Devi the widow of Sjt. Arambam Dorendrajit Singh author of Kangso Bodh and Bhagyachandra Nos. 94 and 95 respectively in the typed list has printed these books as soon as she had heard that her husband’s books had been selected by the University for the B.A Vernacular. First canto of Meghnad Tuba (a translation from the Meghnad Bodh Kabya) has been printed and published. I am sending one copy each for your kindly inspection. Printing of Khamba and Thoibi (No. 90) has been commenced I am sending one volume which probably be one tenth of the whole book of Khamba Thoibi, one essay collection also has been being printed. Some leaves are sent for your kind inspection, so of the 12 books which you have so kindly advised to make available in print within one year, five very important books have already been printed. Author late Angahal Singh’s son Romoni Singh is printing Yaithing Konu (No. 91) And Ibeema (No. 93). As for the remaining five books I am glad to say that Pandit Atombabu Deva Sarma Bidaratna proprietor of the Churachand printing works has very kindly offered to print them within a short test possible time.

As for the query about Khamba Thoibi by H. Angahal Singha, No.90 in the typed list, it is a new and original composition. After sending the typed list Nara Singh (No. 102) was printed and published. 1. Yum-banlol- book dealing with how to lead a domestic life by Mutum Jhulan

1. *Chanakya Sloka*- Translation from Chanakya Sloka.
2. *Bedanto Sar*- A translation from Bedanta Sar.
3. *Bidhi Bakyam*- A translation from Bidhi Bakayam.
5. *Stabanjanli Chintamani*- Translation.
7. *Nityachar*- Translation.

I should like to recapitulate that Manipuri has kindly been recognized by the University both in Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations. As it is not recognized in B.A Examination on Manipuri students are to take up English alternative. The result is that several students go plucked in B.A Examination.

Last not the least I should like to point out that several books translation original are in manuscript. I hope that they would be available in print as soon as the paper control will be off. The following books namely *Shingel Indu* (No.89), *Moirang Thoibi* (No.88), Translation of *Srimad Bhagabat Purana* and that of Cheiteinya- Charitamrita, which you kindly advised me to send for inspection, are send herewith for your kind inspection. Over and above that 3 newly printed books namely No. 94 *kangsa Bodh*, No.95. *Bhagya Chandra* and No. 104 *Meghnad Tuba* (a translation of Meghnad Badh Kabya, only one can to has been printed though the whole books has been translated). One volume of *Khamba and Thoibi* and some of essay which you suggested to make available within a year are also sent for your kind inspection. I am sending Atombapu Deva Sarma, Bidyaratna’s *Gita* -History of Manipuri language for your kind inspection. I am also sending one copy each of *Mainu Pemcha* and *Thadokpa* which, I think would be suitable for B.A Vernacular for your kind inspection.
I on behalf of the MSP, Manipur pupils in general and students in particular join me that
this letter will receive a very sympathetic consideration from the University in the B.A
Examination for 1948.”

P. S, I do not think that this book of Chaiteinya Charitamrita will be suitable for the B.A
Vernacular. I, however send this as desired. In its place I suggest that the books of leikonnungda
and Leinungsi taken together (they are of the same nature will be suitable for the B.A. I am
sending copies of these 2 books and one copy of Netajee Subhas Chandra Bose and Azad Hind
photos for your kind inspection. Kindly return the books I am sending today when done with.

After no reply come from the Calcutta University side then again on 27th August, 1947
No. 20 R-IV Srejut L. M Iboongohal Singh, President, MSP, Imphal send a letter to the
Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta for the Recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular for the
B.A Examination. That “In continuation of my letter No I R-IV Dated 18th April, 1947 regarding
requesting you to recognize Manipuri in the B.A Examination and sending books for your kind
inspection I have the honour to send the following more books which are published recently for
your kind inspection. I think some of them will be quite suitable for B.A Vernacular.

1. *Ima* (a novel) by R. K Sitoljit Singh,
2. *Satningbi* (a series of Poems) by R.K Surendrajit Singh,
3. *Kaboloi* (Punishment of Thoibi by her father for loving Khamba) by Surchand
   Sharma,
4. *Manipur Prativa* (a research work that this Manipur is the Manipur of Mahabharata)
   by Pandit Atombapu Vidyaratna with Sanskrit translation in a separate Volume,
5. *Angangsingi Rajniti* (Boys’ Politics-a translation),

I am sending one copy of *Bijoy Panchali* with an English translation for your kind
and State Press Department has promised to print the remaining seven books (copy of the letter is
attached herewith). So now I beg point out that since 1942 up to now several books including a
translation of Sakuntla by another person have been printed. You promised in August, 1941 that
if those 12 books be made available within one year recognition of Manipuri in B.A would be

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52 Ibid., pp. 34-38
53 Ibid.
considered very favorably, now we have published several books. This time I hope that you will find no difficulty in recognizing Manipuri in the B.A Examination kindly complies with our request.

I am very sorry to say that I get no reply to my former letter No. I R -IV, dated 18/04/47. I hope that you will kindly send a reply this time. Kindly return these books I am sending today and those already sent on 18/04/47.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 42-43}

On 19th September, 1947 Srejut L. M Iboongohal Singh, President, MSP send a letter to the Registrar, Calcutta University under Memo No 24 R-IV dated 19/09/1947 for the Recognition of Manipuri as a Vernacular for the B.A Examination. That “I have the honour to refer to my letter No. 20 R-IV dated 27th August, 1947 in continuation of my letter No. 1 R-IV dated 18th April, 1947 (that you have received on 26/04/47) regarding recognition of Manipuri in B.A Examination and forwarding several books as desired by you for your inspection. To my great astonishment I have received no reply to my letters and even a letter acknowledging the receipt of my letters. We are very sorry to think that you have not attended to our letters which are of vital importance to the Manipuris especially to the guardians and students.

I hope that after receiving this reminder you will very kindly give a favourable reply considering that the prayer has come from the Manipuri race who is occupying the Eastern Frontier of India Dominion for a language spoken by several lakhs and which is the Langue-Franca of Manipur that is the home of several tribes speaking different dialects.”\footnote{Ibid., pp. 44-45}

The same copy of the letter was also send to the Honourable, Dr, Shyama Prasad Mukhopadhyaya, The Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, Calcutta for the matter by L.M. I. H Singh, President, MSP, Imphal under Memo No. 25-26, R-IV D/-19-09-47.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 45}

The reply from the Vice-Chancellor, University of Calcutta to the President, MSP, Imphal on 25th September, 1947 stated that “The request regarding recognition of Manipuri in B.A Examination is receiving the attention of the Syndicate of the Calcutta University. As soon as the decision is made it will be communicated to your formally. In the mean time I shall be very glad to receive suggestions about the list of text books. The Manipuri language, if
recognized as a language for the B.A Examination should have the same status as that of any other language in India."

After the reply came from the Vice Chancellor, University of Calcutta, Calcutta then the Sjt. L. M. Ibunghohal Singh, President, MSP, Imphal again send a letter to the Vice Chancellor, University of Calcutta, Calcutta 11th October, 1947 under Memo No.28 R-IV for the Recognition of Manipuri in B.A Examination that "I thank you very much for your letter dated 25th September, 1947 informing that the request regarding the recognition of Manipuri in B.A Examination is receiving attention of the Syndicate of the Calcutta University and that as soon as the decision is made it will be communicated to me formally and advising me to suggest the list of text books. I am glad to inform you that the working committee of the MSP has selected the following books for the B.A Examination.

1. Translation of Sakuntala in the press.
2. Translation of Kapal Kundala.
3. Translation of Meghanad Bodh Kabya (1st canto only) printed and published.
4. Kanso Bodh Kabya by late Dorendrajit Singh, B.A (first two cantos only) printed and published.
5. Khamba Thoibi Seireng by late Hijam Angahal Singh (First two Chapters up to page 38 of the first part of the first edition) printed and published.

I should like to add that the Education Minister of the State Council has commenced to print one of the 7 remaining books and has informed that the printing of all the books might be completed within about 3 weeks. A Copy of the letter from the Education Minister is attached herewith, now I beg to point out that the Sahitya Parishad has fulfilled the condition laid down by the University the letter No.420/98 Dated 21-08-41. Moreover, I beg to point out further that since 1942 several Manipuri books have been written, printed and published (vide my letters No 1 R-IV of 18/04/47 and No 20 R-IV Dated 27th August, 1947). May I therefore request you to kindly recognize the Manipuri in the B.A Examination with effect from 1948?"

Again on 5th December, 1947 L. M. I. H Singh, President, MSP, Imphal send a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University under No. 31 R-IV, dated 5/12/1947 that "In continuation of my letter No. 28 R/IV dated 11th October, 1947, I beg to send this one regarding

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57 Ibid, p.47
58 Ibid, pp. 47-49
the question of recognizing Manipur as a Vernacular (mother tongue) for the B.A Examination of the University of Calcutta.

I have since had an opportunity of meeting Prof. Sunti Kumar Chatterjee of your University who came on a visit to Imphal, and we have discussed the matter together. He has come to know of the literary and publishing efforts, we are making and I am sure that he will give a report to you of what he has seen and heard. We have no our part fulfilled the condition you imposed on us. Already we have the following and other works in print and in the press and a few more are printing.

1. Singel Indu (Poetry).
2. Moirang Thoibi (Prose Drama).*
3. Translation of Srimad Bhagabat Purana.
4. Translation of Cheiteina Charitamitra.
6. Bhagya Chandra- Prose Drama.
7. Translation of Meghnad Bodh Kabya (1st Canto).
8. Khamba and Thoibi (Poetry).
10. Translation of Srimad Bhagabat Gita.
11. History of Manipuri language.
12. Mainoo Pemcha (Drama).
13. Thadokpa (Prose).
14. Leikonnungda (prose).
15. Leinungshi (Prose).
17. Nara Singh (Prose Drama).*
18. Yumballol (Prose).
20. Ima (Prose).
21. Madhabi (Prose).*
22. Thainagi Leirang (Poetry).
23. Phidam (Prose).*
24. Wakhalgi Ichon (Prose).*
25. Basanta Sheireng (Poetry).*
27. Satningbi (Poem).
29. Bijoy Panchali (Prose).
30. Translation of Sukantala.
32. Wareng Nachom (Prose) in the press.
33. Luwang Nongban Yaithing Konoo (Prose) in the press.
34. Ibema (a prose drama) in the press.
35. Manipur Itihas etc.
(Those already prescribed by you for the Matric, I. A &I. Sc Examinations are marked
with an asterisk).

Of the above, we suggest the following to be prescribed for the B.A Examination in
Manipuri Vernacular. (Dr. Chatterjee and I discussed the nature and merits of these works and he
agreed with us as to their suitability.

1. Translation of Sukantala.
2. Translation of Kapal Kundala.
3. Translation of Meghanad Bodh Kabya (1st canto only).
4. Kansa Bodh Kabya by late Dorendrajit Singh, B.A (1st & 2nd cantos only).
5. Khamba Thoibi Seireng by late H. Angahal Singh (1st & 2nd Chapters).

As for the reserve of the 29 books from the above list excluding 6 prescribed books for
the Intermediate and Matriculation Examinations 80% may be fit for the prescription for the B.A
Vernacular beg to point out that the above list does not include the small books (original and
translation). There are many other small publications.

Manipuri is a growing language and we believed it to be now the language spoken by the
largest number of people in Assam after Assamese and Bengali. There is a good deal of
enthusiastic work going on in the language with the support of Manipur Government to bring it
up to the level of the more advanced languages of India like Bengali, Hindi, Assamese, Oriya
etc. by both original composition and translation. Moreover by the script and culture we are
specially linked with Bengali. As such, it has special claims upon your practical sympathy and support.\textsuperscript{59}

Mr. P.N Banerjee, Honourable Vice-Chancellor, University of Calcutta, Calcutta on his reply to the President, MSP, Imphal on 13\textsuperscript{th} December, 1947 stated that “Your letter No. 31 R-IV dated 5\textsuperscript{th} December, 1947, the question of including Manipuri as a Vernacular (mother tongue) for the B.A Examination of the University of Calcutta engaged the attention of the Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate last night. Then have decided to recommend to the faculty of Arts that the report of Professor Suniti Kumar Chattarjee be adopted. The Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate do not assume any difficulties in regard to this matter.”\textsuperscript{60}

MSP, Imphal did not stop in their effort to recognize Manipuri Language as a vernacular subject in the B.A Examination. Meanwhile, Sjt. L.M Iboongohal Singh send a letter to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee on 26-01-48 for the matter that Sir, “I wrote a letter to you ago. Unfortunately I did not get any reply. But I learnt from Shreeman Hari Charan Singh that you were ill. I was very sorry for that I hope that you are quite alright by now. I received a letter from the Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate had decided to recommend to the Faculty of Arts to accept your report regarding the recognition of Manipuri (mother tongue) in B.A Examination. I thank you very much for your recommendation. As desired by the Working Committee of the MSP in their Resolution No.2 of 10-01-48, I sent the following two wires on 12-01-48.

1. Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University. Thanks your letter 13\textsuperscript{th} December, 1947, Parishad express joy your recommendation to the faculty of Arts. Please write final position regarding recognition of Manipuri in the B.A, 1948 Session Commencing.

2. Professor Sunti Chatterjee,
   16, Hindusthan Park, Calcutta

Received Vice-Chancellor’s letter 13\textsuperscript{th} December recommending to the Faculty of Arts accept your report regarding recognition of Manipuri in the B.A. thanks very much please expedite result 1948 Sessions commencing.

Both the wires were reply paid. But sorry to say I get reply neither from you nor from the Vice-Chancellor. The Vocal Manipur especially those interested in education, guardians and students are very anxiously waiting to hear the good news that Manipuri Language (our mother

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., pp. 49-53
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 53
tongue) has been recognized in B.A Examination. Many people are waiting to celebrate the occasions. Enquiries from different quarters are made “when Manipuri will be recognized in the B.A Examination.”

I shall be much obliged if you would very kindly give a reply by return of post in respect of the development of the recognition of Manipuri in the B.A Examination. Am well and hope that this will find you in excellent health. Excuse me for the long letter.”

At last the president, MSP went to Calcutta and met with Prof. Suniti Chatterjee and Registrar, Calcutta University on 3rd, 7th and 10th April, 1948.

Finally a letter was sent from the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta to the President, MSP, Imphal on 26th April 1948, through Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, M.A, D, Litt, No. Pub 1364-65/66 dated 26-04-48 that “I am to inform you that Vice-Chancellor and Syndicate have been pleased to add Manipuri to the list of Vernaculars for the B.A Examination with effect from the Examination of 1949.

I shall feel obliged if you will kindly forward to me for your suggestion as early as possible regarding books to be prescribed in Manipuri so that the suggestion may be placed before the board of studies concerned and the recommendations of the Board placed before the Syndicate for adoption.”

After that letter of the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta then MSP, President, Sjt L.M Iboongohal Singh send a letter on 12th May, 1948 to the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta under Memo No. 46 R-IV for suggesting books for B.A Vernacular Manipuri that “With reference to your letter No. Pub 1364-65/66 dated 26.04.48 to Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee informing that Manipuri has been added to the list of Vernaculars for the B.A Examination of 1949 and asking him to forward the suggestions regarding the books to be prescribed in Manipuri. I have the honour to refer to my letter No. 28 R- IV of 11th October, 1947 in which the working Committee MSP recommended as desired by the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor in his D.O letter dated 25.09.47, 5 books subsequently Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee after full consideration had kindly approved of them when he came to Manipur. The result of his discussion was sent to the Calcutta University in my letter No-31 R- IV of 05-12-47 copies of

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61 Ibid., pp. 54-55
62 Ibid., p.56
those two letters are attached herewith for easy reference. So we have already submitted the list of suitable books for the B.A Vernacular Manipuri.

Now as desired I beg to submit the list of books with the approval of the Working Committee Manipuri Sahitya Parishad.

2. Translation of Kapal Kundala by Sjt. M. Koireng Singha, B.A.
3. Translation of Meghnad Bodh Kabya (1st canto only) by late H. Nabadwip Singh.
4. Kansa Bodh Kabya (Narrative Poetry) by late Dorendra Singh, B.A (1st canto only).
5. Khamba Thoibi Seireng (Lyrics) by late Angahal Singh (1st, 2nd Chapters only).

The following books are recommended as showing the standard of style in the language up to which the candidate will be expected to read. Krishnamohan Singh.... Wareng Nachom (Essays). Dorendra Singh.... Bhagya Chandra Drama based on the life of Bhagya Chandra, a King of Manipur. Surachand Sarma.... Kabaloi (lyrics) based on a part of the Romantic story of Khamba and Thoibi. Rajkumar Sitaljit Singh-Ima (a Novel).”

Finally a letter was send from the Registrar, Calcutta University, Calcutta to the President, MSP, Imphal stated that “With reference to your letter No 28 R-IV dated 11-10-47, I am to inform you that “Manipuri” has been added to the list of Vernacular recognized for the B.A Examination under sub section (2) Section 6, Chapter XXXII of the regulations. I am to add that the above regulation will be given effect to form the Examination of 1949.”

Copy of Calcutta University Notification No T. 797 Dt. 25-08-48 forwarded to the President, MSP, Imphal under Calcutta University letter No. 23 Dt. 22-09-48.

Orders by the Vice- Chancellor and Syndicate of the Calcutta University
Notification No T. 797, 25th August, 1948

“Manipuri” has been added to the list of Vernacular recognized for the B.A Examination under Sub section, (2) Section -6, Chapter XXXII of the Regulations.

Sd. /- P. N Banerjee
Vice- Chancellor and Syndicate
Calcutta University

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Ibid., pp. 56-58
Ibid., p.59
Ibid., p.59
PhD Thesis  

*Manipuri Language Movement, 1924-1992*

Thus as a result of the effort of more than one decade struggle with the Manipur State Durbar, Manipur, Calcutta University, Calcutta by the MSP, Imphal for the recognition of Manipuri language as a vernacular subject in the B. A Examination, at last on 1948 according to the Orders by the Vice- Chancellor and Syndicate of the Calcutta University Notification No T. 797, 25th August, 1948, Manipuri language was recognized as a vernacular subject in the B. A. Examination.

IV

**MANIPURI LANGUAGE IN THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE**

Before going to the language movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, let us discussed about Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, its features, functions and rights and beneficiaries of the Eight Schedule languages of India.

**EIGHT SCHEDULE (ES) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA:**

The Eighth Schedule (ES) was included in the Constitution in 1950 and provides formal and Constitutional recognition to dominant regional languages in the spheres of administration, education, economy and social status. The major languages with literary traditions, having scripts of their own and already in use in newspapers and the radio became the natural and undisputed candidates for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. In the beginning the Eighth Schedule listed 14 languages i.e. Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu as the official languages of Indian States. Since then, this has been expanded thrice, once in the year 1967 according to 21st Amendment of the Constitution of India included Sindhi in the Eighth Schedule list. For the Second time in the year 1992, according to the 71st Amendment of the Constitution of India for the inclusion of Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Again for third time in the year 2003, according to the 92nd Amendment of the Constitution of India for the inclusion of Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India and by adding these four languages at presently there are a total of 22 languages became the Eighth Schedule languages of India. Since 1950, when the time the Constitution of India introduced Language Policy of India and under that Policy 14 languages

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are recognized as the Eighth Schedule languages of India. However, The Constituent Assembly did not formulate any criteria for including particular language under the Eighth Schedule. But by analyzing certain criteria of the those 14 Eighth Schedule languages, we can assume the following criteria are necessary for Eighth Schedule languages.

(i) Literary tradition and Scripts of their own.
(ii) Spoken by the largest number of people in large contiguous geographical zones as dominant languages of certain regions.
(iii) Political concessions.
(iv) Being recognized by States as official languages of the State.
(v) Being recognized by Sahitya Akademi.
(vi) Being spoken by more than one million people as their mother tongue.

Now let us discussed about the some important functions of the Eighth Schedule are as follows:

EIGHTH SCHEDULE (ES) AND LITERATURE:

The Government and private literary bodies use the ES as a select list of languages for literary awards and other purposes. The Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi recognizes 22 languages as literary languages whereas; the National Book Trust treats the languages of the ES and English as the major Indian languages for preparing the source-books in English for highlighting about 600 ancient and modern classic in the project ‘Masterpiece of Indian literature. Similarly the Bharatiya Janapith also restricts its literary awards to literature in the ES languages.

EIGHTH SCHEDULE (ES) AND EDUCATION:

The ES has played the important role of an arbitrator in deciding the medium of instruction in secondary schools. The mother tongue formula could not be fully applied for the use as the medium of instruction at the secondary stage of education. This stage gives a more advanced education to enable students to follow a vocation after school leaving stage and also prepares them for higher education in universities. The languages used should be modern Indians languages mentioned in the ES of the Constitution as well as English.

68 Ibid., p. 71
EIGHTH SCHEDULE (ES) AND ADMINISTRATION:

In the use of languages in administration too, the ES has played the role of controller of recognition of languages. There are many districts where a majority of the population of the district uses a language other than the official language of the State. Since the language of the minority group should be recognized as an official language in that district in addition to the State official language. Recognition for this purpose may, however be given ordinarily only to major languages of India specified in the ES of the Constitution.\(^6\)

EIGHTH SCHEDULE (ES) AND EMPLOYMENT:

The Union Public Service commission for its civil Services Examination allowed the candidates in 1969 to write the Essay and General Knowledge papers in English or any other language included in the ES. Since 1979 the same facility is extended to all the subject papers. In the present scheme of Preliminary and Main examinations, the Preliminary examination, which functions as a screening test has two papers, one each on General Studies, and one paper on optional subjects selected from among 22 subjects. This multiple-choice question paper is set only in Hindi and English. But the candidate can answer in English or any one the languages in the ES.\(^7\)

THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE (ES) LANGUAGES AND THEIR RIGHTS AND BENEFICIARIES:

The rights and beneficiaries can be availed by any of the Eighth Scheduled languages are as follows:

1. An M.P member belonging to any of the ES languages can speak and deliver his/her speech in own mother tongue.
2. An M.P member belonging to any of the ES languages can participate in Language Commission and Committee, according to the Article- 344(1) of the Constitution.
3. Any of the ES languages can broadcast their language in AIR and T.V, Delhi.
4. UPSC for its Civil Services Examination allowed the candidates of the ES languages can give their answers in mother tongue.

\(^6\) Ibid., p.73
\(^7\) Ibid., p.73
5. For the development of Indian languages, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi established CIIL head quarter at Mysore and four other regional centres at Mysore, Pune, Patiyala and Bhubaneswar.

6. For the preparation of Syllabus and Teaching aid in National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi only Schedule languages can get opportunity.

7. Only the films of the ES language can participate in the National and International films award competition.

8. The States of ES languages can implement their language as compulsory subject in their own States.

9. Central government give one core of rupees to the States of the ES languages for the development of their language.

10. The States of the ES Language can establish Official language Department, Training Institutes and Translation Bureau offices in their own States.

11. According to the Three Language Formula one Schedule language can learn as third language in Central governmental schools and Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.

12. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education Department, Language Division, New Delhi give financial assistance to the Schedule language for the translation of their language into English and other different languages of India.

MOVEMENT FOR INCLUSION OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE IN EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

It is relevant to mention that all the languages that recognized and included by the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India are either in language family of Indo-Aryan or Dravidian. But despite of having been lapsed for more than four decades from the right time of Independence of India, none of the language families of the Tibeto-Burman or Tibeto-Burmese and Austric or Austro-Asiatic families in which number of speakers in 1891 were 4,071,701 and 7,705,011 respectively has not been yielded to compassion for the inclusion in the ES of the Constitution of India.

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72 S. Manik Chand Singh, Manipuri, A Language Under Political Arena (with special reference to the 8th Schedule), Progressive Youth Front, Lakhipur, Cachar, 1990, p. 4
PhD Thesis  

*Manipuri Language Movement, 1924-1992*

The Articles 344(1) and 351(1) Constitution of India give the list of 15 languages ES languages recognised by the Constitution. But no specific criteria have been mentioned for inclusion of a language in the ES. Nevertheless, we can speculate the major criteria for inclusion of a language in the ES to the Constitution of India from the remarks of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. On the 7th August, 1957, Pandit Nehru told Frank Anthony that if a language is to be recognised it must fulfil two important criteria: the more wide-spread character of the language and use of the language by the large of people.73

Manipuri language, a developed language among the language of the Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman) family has all the fulfilment the criterias for its inclusion in the ES of the Constitution of India can be perceived with the relevant records and findings:

I. COURSE OF MANIPURI LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE:

The Manipuri language and literature have been flourishing with its sublime status of existence dating back at least 1500 to 2000 years. The fact is supported with the lucid accounts of Ancient Manipuri literature, epitomised in the “Ariba Manipuri Sahityagi Itihas”, 1969 by N. Khelchandra Singh and from the relevant remarks of Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, an eminent linguist of world-wide fame that “Among the various Tibeto- Burman languages, the most important and in literature certainly of much greater importance than Newari is the Meithei or Manipuri language.”74

II. MANIPURI LANGUAGE AS A STATE, OFFICIAL AND COURT LANGUAGE OF MANIPUR:

Manipuri language has been the State, Official and Court language of Manipur from the days of old. The relevant records and findings have been depicted in different works, remarks and treasures. The facts of the Ningthourol Seireng (A ballad of Kingship of Manipur), Cheitharol Kumbaba (Royal Chronicle of Manipur), significant remarks of Dr. Grierson that “Meithei is the official language of the State which all other tribes have to use their dealings with the rulers”75, The expert of Imperial Gazetteer of India described that “Meithei the Official language of the State is only one of them which possesses an alphabet and literature”,76 Manipur State Constitutional Act, 1947 the proceedings of the meeting of the Manipur Territorial Council

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73 Ibid., p.6
76 Imperial Gazetteer of India, *Indian Empire*, Vol.-I, 1907, p.387
III. MANIPURI LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SECONDARY STAGES:

Manipuri language is a Medium of Instruction up to the Secondary stage of education under the Boards of Secondary Education, Manipur and Assam. It may be mentioned that the Boards of Secondary Education Manipur and Assam have been conducting the Manipuri Medium in the H.S.L.C Examination. Since 1977 and 1979 (under Notification No. CS/7 Dt. Imphal, the 26th October, 1976 and Vide Memo No. SEBA/CA/4515-4516 Dt. Gauhati 8th June, 1978 & Memo No. SEBA/AM-LM/Man.8687 Dt. Gauhati 28th July, 1979) respectively.

The Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi, The Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal, Meghalaya Board of School Education have recognised Manipuri as a Major Indian Language subject.

IV. RECOGNITION OF MANIPURI BY SOME LEADING UNIVERSITIES:

Manipuri language has been recognised by some leading Universities of India like Calcutta University, Delhi University, Gauhati University, North Bengal University, North Eastern Hill University. Under the Manipur University, there are B.A, Hons., Post Graduate Degree course in Manipuri, M.Phil and Ph.D Research theses have also been recognised as a Method subject for B.T Examination of the Gauhati University.

V. NUMBER OF MANIPURI BOOKS:

At present more than three thousand Manipuri Books in different kinds are being preserved by Manipuris. The treasury of the books covers the Puyas (Meetei religious Scripts), historical treaties, chronicles, poetry, drama, novel, essay, short story, literary criticism, linguistics and translation works etc. Some of the masterpieces works of century’s old and modern Manipuri literature may be mentioned categorically as below:

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77 S. Manik Chand Singh, *op.cit.*, p.9
A. CENTURIES OLD MANIPURI SCRIPTURES:

*Meihourol Pukok, Ningthourol Singkak, Tauroinai Yangbi, Sanamahi Laihui, Pakhangba Thiren* and *Leithak Leikharol* etc.

B. MODERN MANIPURI LITERATURE:

*Khamba Thoibi Sheireng* (Epic), *Shingel Indu* (Poem), *Kangsa Bodh* (Epic), *Madhabi* (Novel), *Wakhalgi Ichel* (Essay), *Cheitharol Kumbaba* (Royal Chronicle) etc. which were composed by eminent Manipuri poets and writers like Hijam Angahal Singh, Arambam Dorendrajit, Lamabam Kamal Singh and Lairenmayum Ibungohal and Ningthoukhongjam Khechandra Singh etc.

VI. MANIPURI LANGUAGE- A RECOGNIZED LANGUAGE BY THE SAHITYA ACADEMI, NEW DELHI:

This language has been recognized by the Sahitya Academi, New Delhi in 1971. During the period 1973 to 1989 as many as 15 Manipuri literary figures had been awarded national level recognition. The names of the Manipuri literary figures which had been conferred Sahitya Academi Award are separately furnished in the Annexure part.80

VII. MANIPURI SCRIPTS:

It is relevant to be mentioned that with the development of Manipuri language and literature, the old Manipuri Scripts which had been replaced by the Bengali Scripts during the 19th Century have been reinstalled by the Govt. of Manipur recently (vide Notification No. 1/2/78-SS/E, Dated Imphal, the 16th April, 1980) can see in the Annexure part. Manipuri script is very ancient, although Dr. Kalidas Nag has simply asserted that the script was as old as the Pre-Asoka period. One of the earliest epigraph evidences recorded in the script is represented by a coin issued by Urakonthouba, the King of Manipur (568-658 A.D).81

VIII. MANIPURI AS A MEDIUM OF BROADCASTING:

The Government of India and Bangladesh have installed the Manipuri language as medium of broadcasting through A.I R, Imphal, Gauhati, Silchar and Agartala and Radio Bangladesh (Shyllet) respectively. It may be mentioned that 78% of the total programme hours of All India Radio, Imphal are covered by Manipuri.82

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80 Ibid., p.12
81 *Loc. cit*
82 Ibid., p.13
IX. NUMBER OF MANIPURI SPEAKERS:

The number of Manipuri speakers in the entire globe is more than 2 (two) Million. Out of this, the total population of about one and half million are in the State of Manipur according to 1981 Census, Manipuri speakers in Manipur alone mounted to 878,922. Although chunks of Manipuris live in India, Burma and Bangladesh, some limited numbers of Manipuris speakers are also residing in Thailand, Kuwait Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, West Germany, United Kingdom, USA and Canada etc.\(^3\)

X. MANIPURI LANGUAGE, A CULTURALLY FLOURISHED LANGUAGE:

Manipuri language is culturally flourished language. It has been flourishing with worldwide famed Manipuri culture which is very rich and ancient. The Manipuris originally believed in hierarchy of Gods, the chief of whom was Soraren (Sora-God, ren-chief). Although various religious elements were changed following the adaptation of Puranic Hinduism in the 18\(^{th}\) century A.D., the Manipuris never discard their traditional way of life and past-form of worship. Dr. Sunti Kumar Chatterjee has rightly observed that like Japanese who maintain Ryobo-Shinto, the Manipuris maintain two cults i.e. Puranic Hinduism and old Meiteism simultaneously.\(^4\)

The Manipuri dance form, a class- by themselves is one of the noted Indian schools of dances. Outside Manipur, the Manipuri dance was taken up by Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan in 1919. Shree Budhimanta Singh was the first Guru of Manipuri dance and the second Guru was Thakur Nabakumar Singh. Later from Santiniketan, Manipuri dance got spread to far Western India and occidental world.

In film screens too, Manipuri is now playing with distinguishing features. ‘Imagi Ningthem’, Sangai- the dancing deer of Manipur, etc., are often exhibited in the International Films Festivals and have scored worldwide reputation. It is obvious to note that Manipuri culture with its substantial and limelight merits highly contributes to the Indian culture and heritage and thus leads to National Unity and Integrity.\(^5\)

From the above enchanting and enshrining records and findings, it is virtually revealed that Manipuri language, a developed language in the Tibeto-Burman family is fully imbued with all requisite elements and merits that deserve worthy of its recognition and inclusion into the

\(^{3}\) Loc. cit  
\(^{4}\) Ibid., p.14  
\(^{5}\) Loc cit
Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. By virtue of its immense potentialities, it is highly hoped that the Manipuri language would not be edged out during the extension of Eighth Schedule under any political phenomenon or imbroglio.

V
THE PHASES OF THE MOVEMENT FOR INCLUSION OF MANIPURI IN THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE

Movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India can be divided into two Phases i.e. The First Phase Movement (1953-1987) and The Second Phase Movement (1987-1992). In the First Phase Movement, the different organizations like MSP, Imphal, AMSU, others and political parties of Manipur come forward with their own aims and motives for the inclusion of Manipuri language in ES of the Constitution. But in the Second Phase Movement, the maximum numbers of organizations of Manipur and outside Manipur come forward unitedly under the single umbrella organization ‘Manipuri Language Demand Co-ordination Committee’ (MLDCC), N.E worked hardly during the movement period for the inclusion of Manipuri language in ES of the Constitution. During this phase, frequently MSP, Imphal, AMSU, the Political Parties and other organisations also worked individually and contributed a lot in the movement for inclusion Manipuri language in ES.

THE FIRST PHASE MOVEMENT FOR EIGHT SCHEDULE (1953-1987):

The First Phase Movement for the inclusion of Manipuri Language in ES of the Indian Constitution which deals with the language movements that outbreak during the period by various voluntary Organisations and Associations (especially MSP, Imphal, AMSU and others etc.). In the year 1953, Manipur Constituency has taken a resolution for the recognition or inclusion of Manipuri language into the ES of the Indian constitution. This resolution has become the first demand for the recognition of Manipuri language in the ES and this demand was placed before the Central Govt. of India.\(^\text{86}\) Then in the year 1963, a special meeting of the MSP, Imphal has taken a resolution for the recognition of Manipuri language in ES and began to give pressure to the both State as well as Central Government for the same purpose.\(^\text{87}\) In the year 1967, Sindhi was recognized as one among the ES languages by 21\(^\text{st}\) Amendment of the Constitution of India. After the recognition of Sindhi, then once again the demand for inclusion

\(^{86}\) Ingudam Binod Singha, ‘ Manipuri Longi Ihaou’(Manipur language Movement), Imalon, MLDC, Assam, 1993,p.21

\(^{87}\) Loc.cit
of Manipuri language in ES was started in the year 1967 and that demand was placed by Pan Manipuri Youth League (PMYL), Imphal.

After 1967 the movement and demand for inclusion of Manipuri in ES became stronger day by day. From 1970 to 1977, the 2<sup>nd</sup> May of the every year was observed as ‘Manipuri Language Day’ by PMYL, Imphal and its Cachar Branch. In this day a big rally was performed in Manipur as well in the Cachar, Assam, after finished of the rally Memorandums were send to Central Government of India through concerned department.

During this phase various voluntary Organisations and Associations from Manipur like (1) MSP, Imphal (2) 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 in ES of the Indian constitution.

**MSP, IMPHAL AND FIRST PHASE MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:**

History about the formation of Manipuri Sahitya Parishad (MSP), Imphal and its aims and objectives are discussed in the earlier part of this Chapter. Since its inception in the year 1935, Parishad has been playing a great role for the development of Manipuri language and also able in succeeding its aim and objectives. In the First Phase Language movement for inclusion of Manipuri language in ES of the Constitution of India, MSP, Imphal has played enormous role. In the year 1963, MSP, Imphal submitted its first demand memorandum to the State and Central Government of India for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES. In that year a special meeting of the Parishad was held at Imphal and has taken a resolution for the recognition of Manipuri language in ES and by sending memorandum they began to give pressure to the both State as well as Central Govt. The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the MSP, Imphal was held at Aryan Hall, Imphal on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1971. The conference was presided by Shri Aribam Brajabihari Sharma and a total number of 9 (Nine) Resolutions were resolved and passed. Out of that total, a resolution which was related with the language movement for the inclusion of Manipuri in ES is discussed here.

**Resolved:**
Resolution No.-3: To work hard for the inclusion of Manipuri language in ES of the Constitution of India.
Manipuri language has her unique and excellent place among the other languages of India. The language has its own script. Its literature is very old. The ancient literature of Manipuri language is existence Before Christ is the confidential opinion of the scholars. According to this opinion, Manipuri literature can be placed just after Tamil literature, which is considered as one of the oldest literature among the schedule languages of India. Till today we collected 995 numbers of books. Recently it has been recognized by Sahitya Academi. Though it's gorgeous, old and developed nature, it is depress for us to keep a place in the ES. For this, from the last two years onwards Parishad requested and worked hard for the recognition of our language into the ES. Till today the members of the Parishad went to Delhi and met with Prime Minister, Concerned M.P and Petition Committee Members of Parliament for the matter. Two M.P s of our State also placed it in the Two Houses. To understand M.Ps of the two Houses about the matter, Parishad is ready to organize an exhibition of old books in the Parliament library Hall. So this conference unanimously resolved that as quickly as the matter for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES, the Parishad need to take much effort and request to the Government of India.

Proposed by: Shri S. Nilbir Sharma
Seconded by: Shri H. Guno Singha

The 38th Annual Conference of the MSP, Imphal was held at Nambol Shanoi College, Imphal on the 27th, 28th and 29th April, 1973. The conference was presided by Shri L. Iboyaima Singh and a total number of 14 (Fourteen) Resolutions were resolved and passed. Out of that total, a resolution which was related with the language movement for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES is discussed here.

Resolved:
Resolution No. 3: To Include Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Manipuri language among the scheduled languages of India is very old and it has its own fulfill literature from the ancient time and which is continuing by them. By acknowledging the prettiness and high status of the language, Sahitya Academi recognized it. At presently, the Manipur State Kala Academi established by Government of Manipur has given a big Literature Department for this language. This language became the mother tongue of the more than 1 lakh people of outside Manipur and lingua-franca language of more than one 1lakh hill people of

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Manipur. So that by including Manipuri language in the ES of the Constitution of India will bring not only the benefit of Manipur but also national integration of the whole India. For this Parishad has already given a numerous number of memorandums to the President of India, Prime Minister, Home Minister and concerned departments for the matter, but very sad is that till now the Manipuris were unable to get their desire. So that this conference unanimously resolved to once again request and look into the matter with sympathetic manner to Prime Minister, Home Minister and concerned departments for the matter for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES. It also resolved in the conference that Parishad will request to the Govt. of Manipur for whatever their kind favour and possible steps about the matter. It also decided that the Working Committee members will do whatever necessary work about the matter.\(^9\) (See in the Appendix-II)

The 39th Annual Conference of the MSP was held at Gandhi Memorial Hall, Imphal on the 7th April, 1974. The conference was presided by Shri L. Iboyaima Singh and a total number of 4 (Four) Resolutions were resolved and passed. Out of that total, a resolution which was related with the language movement for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES is discussed here.

Resolved:
Resolution No. 1: To Include Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Manipur language is the most developed language, which has a literature tradition of more than 2000 years among the Tibeto-Burman language family of India. More than one million people speak and know this language. Manipuri language is used as a lingua franca among the 29 different ethnic groups of Manipur. It has already recognized by Sahitya Academy, Delhi. The language is recognized by Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi as a subject in M.A Examination. The Secondary Board of Manipur and Assam has prepared Text Books for Manipuri language for H.S.L.C Examination. Such type of language is still not included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. For this reason, MSP, Imphal in its previous conferences has already taken a number of resolutions and works for the matter. The delegation team of the Parishad went to Delhi two times. Due to our effort, private bills were already placed before the Parliament. For the M.Ps, very soon an exhibition of Manipuri books will be organized in Delhi and for this purpose we have already got help of money from Govt. of

Manipur. So this conference unanimously resolved to do hard effort for the inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule. It is also resolved that to perform this work, Parishad request to the Government of Manipur for necessary help.

On 28th August, 1978 MSP, Imphal observed the day as the day of Language Demand Day. From this day the movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language had overcome on a new chapter, when the movement was penetrated through the banner of the joint Movement of Sahitya Academy recognised six (6) languages i.e. - Manipuri, Nepali, Konkani, Dogri, Meithili and Rajasthani for the inclusion of the six languages in the ES. But such a joint movement had been creeping by six languages for several years without getting any considerable benefit from the Central Government of India. However, it left a stubborn impression in the history of ES Movement for the above languages.

Since the Central Govt. of India still declines to recognise Manipuri language, the Manipuris living in India have launched a series of democratic way of movements by- Public meeting, Symposium, Seminars, Book Exhibition highlighting the centuries –old and modern literary treasures of Manipuri from 23rd to 25th November, 1987 in New Delhi, by MSP, Imphal. Various rallies were organised by Parishad in the different places of India especially on 2nd May, 28th August and 2nd November, 1987.

The political parties of Manipur have been spearheading in the venture for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES 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.

From the year 1987 onwards 2nd November of every year were observed as ‘Language Demand Day’ by performing the rallies in the Manipuris inhabited areas of the NER by the MSP, Imphal, the MSP, Assam, AMSU, Manipur, AAMSU, Assam, The Cultural Forum, Manipur, Naharol Sahitya Premi Samiti, Ipathoukok and their Branches in the States of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
THE SECOND PHASE MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

The Second Phase Movement for the inclusion Manipuri language in 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 maximum number of Manipuri Organisations and Associations from the North Eastern States. In this Phase, MLDCC, N.E and its Branches worked hardly for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. During this phase, frequently MSP, Imphal and AMSU, the unit organizations of MLDCC, N.E and other organisations and political parties of Manipur and National also worked individually and a contributed a lot in the movement for the Inclusion Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule.

MLDCC, N.E AND MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

With view to more intensifying on language movement for inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES, Manipuri Language Demand Co-ordination Committee (MLDCC), N.E, a co-ordination committee was formed by maximum numbers of Manipuri Organisations and Associations of the North Eastern States in the year 1989. The two days National conference of all the major Manipuri organizations and associations of NER was organised by Shri. Thokcham Yogendra Singha, General Secretary, MSP, Imphal on 24th and 25th January, 1989 at Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal. In the conference almost all the major Manipuri Organizations and Associations of NER were present. The delegates of the conference unanimously accepted to take a resolution to form a co-ordination committee in the name of Manipuri Language Demand Co-ordination Committee (MLDCC), N.E. In the conference, R. K Jhalajit Singh, President, MSP, Imphal was selected as the Chairman of the Co-Ordination Committee and S. Brajeshore Singh, President, MSP, Assam as the Vice-Chairman and Shri. L. Sharatchandra Sharma, Ex. President, All Manipuri Students’ Union as the Convener of the said Co-Ordination Committee. 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 MSP, Assam. The major constituent organizations and associations of the Co-ordination Committee were (1) The MSP, Imphal, (2) The MSP, Assam, (3)The MSP, 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,

90 Personal Interview with L. Sharatchandra, age-67yrs, Convener, MLDCC, N.E on 06/11/2011

The MLDCC is now undertaking the substantial part and key role in the Manipuri Language Movement having collaboration with other sister voluntary Organisations and Associations of Manipur, Assam and Tripura. The committee will launch a series of “mass mobilization” programmes soon in different parts of the region to arouse public opinion for the recognition of this “old and rich” Tibeto-Burman language in the ES of the Constitution.

The first movement of MLDCC, N.E. was seen in Manipur on 6th-7th November, 1989 by calling 24 hours Manipur Bandh all over the State. This Bandh has become the First Bandh for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES. In the leaflet of the 24 Hours Bandh called by MLDCC, N.E some inspire message were given. That message of the leaflet greatly helped to the Manipuri masses all over the country to aware about the issue. In the leaflet of 24 Hours Bandh “The Manipuri masses in many times demanding for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES of the Constitution of India from the last 30 years. But the Govt. of India is still negligence about the matter. Manipuri language is not weaker than those Schedule 15 languages. But the exclamations of the Manipuris were not listening till today is despised to our nationality. The mass rally of the public, students and youths all over the country on last 2nd November, 1989 organised by MSP, Imphal also clearly shows that how much the Manipuris were serious about their language. Manipuri language has its independence before the independence of India, but now she has lost it. So in order to safe our nationality by today’s generation, it is need to do today itself whatever necessary for bringing the independence of Manipuri language. In order to safe our embodiment our ancestors have already sacrifices their lives, now it is time for us to sacrifices something for mother tongue. So, MLDCC, N.E will call 24hrs Bandh from 6th November, Monday 7 P.M to 7th November, Tuesday 7 P.M. Please support the Bandh by all the people of Manipur except essentials services (Doctors, Electricity, Water Supply, Press etc.)”

--------Bandh Called by MLDCC, N.E.

While continuing 24 hour “Manipur Bandh” on 7th November, 1989, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Honb’le Prime Minister came to Imphal as a part of his routine scheduled election campaign.

91 M. Nigamba Singha, *op.cit.* p. 265
92 S. Manik Chand Singh, *op.cit.*, p.18
93 The Statesman, Calcutta Dated: 26th January, 1989
The bandh was also supported by other organisations like the AMSU, Cultural Forum, Teachers Forum, Universal Literary Association, Ipathoukok, Naharol Sahitya Premmee and MSP, Imphal. The chairman of the Committee, R.K Jhalajit Singh in consultation with the Chief Minister, Shri R. K Jaichandra Singh had independently taken the decision of withdrawing the bandh without consulting its constituent bodies. However, the bandh was widely observed in Manipur on this day inspite of fact that its chairman took the decision of withdrawal, in which 2 persons were killed, about 50 people were injured, 7 vehicles got set ablaze. The MLDCC, N.E in its meeting held on the 11th November, 1989 suspended its chairman. After the suspension of R.K Jhalajit, the first Chairman from the MLDCC, N.E on 11th November 1989, Dr. M. S Ningomba was selected as the second Chairman of the MLDCC on same day.\footnote{Personal Interview with L. Sharatchandra, age-67yrs, Convener, MLDCC, N.E on 06/11/2011} The second Annual conference of the MLDCC, N.E was held at Manipur University, Cachipur, Imphal on 28th and 29th January, 1990 and that conference was presided by Dr. M. S Ningomba. In that conference it is unanimously resolved to organise rallies, hunger strikes till the inclusion of Manipuri language into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In month of February, 1990, Dr. M. S Ningomba, Chairman, MLDCC with other members went to Delhi and met with Shri V. P Singh, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India and submitted a demand memorandum for the inclusion of Manipuri language.

A special Convention of the MLDCC, N.E was organised by MLDCC, Assam on 27th May, 1990 at Silchar Mahakuma Parishad Hall, Silchar. In the convention the demand for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES were discussed. In the discussion, it is a widely acclaimed phenomenon that the world Manipuris has been demanding for the inclusion of the Manipuri language in the ES to the Constitution of India. This language, rightly speaking, possesses all the criteria for its being included in the Constitution. It is rather spoken read and used as literacy in Manipur, Assam, Tripura and other countries like Burma and Bangladesh. Groups of speakers are in UP and West Bengal. Public meetings, Symposia, Seminars, Book-exhibitions highlighting the age-old literary treasure of this language, various rallies, bandh-calls, memorandum-submission to the Union Govt. and what not have been in great compliance with the movement by the Manipuris before the Central Government. After long discussion in the convention, it is decided to escalate the democratic movement on its way of inclusion in the Constitution of India. As decided to perform the democratic movement in their special
convention held on 27th May, 1990 at Silchar Mahakuma Parishad Hall, MLDCC, N.E boycotted the official language of the Central Govt. of India on 17th June, 1990 in protest against the non-inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES of the Constitution of India. MLDCC, N.E has also appealed to the Manipuris people not to see the Hindi Films on that day to express extreme unhappiness of the people over the non-inclusion of the language and people of Manipur also not seen Hindi Films on that day. The third annual conference of the MLDCC, N.E was held at Imphal on 25th August, 1991. In that conference it is unanimously resolved to organise and perform ‘One month complete relay hunger strike’ and ‘Manipuri language demand month’ from the next month i.e.-September. The whole September month was completely performed hunger strike in different parts of the every the Manipuri inhabited areas of the NER.

MLDCC, N.E AND MANIPURI LANGUAGE DEMAND YEAR:

The fourth annual conference of the MLDCC, N.E was held at Imphal on 8th January, 1992. In that conference it was unanimously resolved to organise the year 1992 be ‘Manipuri Language Demand Year’ by perform the ‘Relay Hunger Strike’ in the whole year. The Resolution of the MLDCC, N.E was seriously taken by its member States especially Manipur, Assam and Tripura. The ‘Relay Hunger Strike’ was first started by Hijam Guno Singha, the President, Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal and others members of the Parishad, the unit organization of MLDCC’ from 9th to 17th January, 1992 at a place nearby Johnston M.E School, Imphal. Then from 18th-6th February MLDCC continued the strike at the same place. The strike was continued by other organizations from 7th-23rd February in the different places of Imphal. Then the strike was followed in Jiribam District, Imphal, from 24th February- 21st March. In Assam the ‘Relay Hunger Strike’ was performed by MLDCC, Assam from 21st January -12th March, 1992 in Silchar, Hojai and Guwahati area.

During this time on 4th March, 1992 Professor Ch. Manihar Singha, Khumanthem Prakash, L. Sharatchandra Sharma, Makhonmani and a group of people went Delhi and meet with P.V. Narasimha Rao, Hon’ble Prime Minister and Mr. A. Chauhan Home Minister and discussed about issue and submitted a demand memorandum for the matter. On 27th March, 1992 a Dharna (Sitting Protest) was organised by MLDCC, N.E and Delhi Manipuri Students’ Union at Boat Club, Delhi. The Dharna was participated by renowned personalities like Shri. Yumnam Yaima Singh, M.P, MPP Party, Manipur W. Kulabidhu Singh, M.P, Janata Dal, Manipur,

95 Personal Interview with L. Sharatchandra, age-67yrs, Convener, MLDCC, N.E on 07/11/2011
Mohan Singh, M.P, Uttar Pradesh, Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, M.P, South India and other opposition M. Ps of the Country and members of MLDCC and Delhi Students. On that day all the opposition M. Ps were walked out from the Parliament due to failure by the Government in declaring the fixed move towards the issue for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES.

MLDCC, N.E AND HUNGER STRIKE UNTO DEATH:

During the month of April, 1992 while going the Winter Session of the Parliament, the opposition M.Ps frequently place their questions for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES. After no response come from the Central Government, MLDCC, N.E decided to take a hard action against the Central Govt. by performing the ‘Hunger Strike Unto Death’ at Boat Club, Delhi from 30th April, 1992 by Prof. M. S Ningomba, Chairman and other members from Manipur, Shri. Ng. Nabadip Singh, Chairman, MLDCC, Assam and other members were participated in Hunger Strike. While continuing the hunger strike on 6th May Prof. M.S Ningomba and Shri Ng. Nabadip Singh were arrested by Delhi police and took them for treatment to Ram Manahor Rohiya Hospital, Delhi. After the treatment was over, they are forced to take the foods by both doctors and police men. But both the leaders were not accepted to take any foods, then they were free from the arrest and again re took to the Boat Club. This hunger strike unto death done by MLDCC, N.E greatly effected to reach the goal of Language movement for inclusion of Manipuri in the ES. Meanwhile in Manipur, AMSU called Manipur Bandh from 26th April to 2nd May, 1992 and started Non-co-operation movement with the Central Government of India, which able to change the negligence decision of the Central Govt. And on 8th May, 1992, Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, M.P, South India placed a Private Bill question for the inclusion of Manipuri and Nepali language into the ES in the Parliament. In reply the question of Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, Mr. M.M Jacob, Home Minister of India appeal to stop the movement and said that “In coming Summer session of the Parliament by discussion with others Parties, we will surely amend the Eighth Schedule by inclusion of Manipuri, Nepali language and some other language in that Schedule.” Though after getting this assurance copy signed by Mr. M. M Jacob, Home Minister of India, Prof. M. S Ningomba and Shri Ng. Nabadip Singh still continued their ‘Hunger Strike unto Death’ up to 15th May, 1992. According to the assurance given by Mr. M. M Jacob, Ex-Home Minister, on 17th May, 1992 Shri S. B Chauhan, Home Minister and other
Political parties accepted the matter in the Parliament. Meanwhile on 26th -27th June, 1992 the fourth annual conference of the MLDCC, N.E was held at Gandhi Bhavan, Silchar. In the conference, Shri Santosh Mohan Dev, Central Minister, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises as the Chief Guest in his speech delivered that “from the coming summer session of the Parliament, Manipuri will get the status of ES”. The summer session of the Parliament was held in the month of August, 1992. On the last day of the summer session which was held on 20th August, 1992 both the houses unanimously accepted to amend the Constitution of India by inclusion of Manipuri, Konkani and Nepali in the ES. And according to Bill No.142 of 1992, a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India passed by S. B Chauhan, Home Minister of India on 20th August, 1992 Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali languages are included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India by the 71st Amendment of the Constitution of India.

MSP, IMPHAL AND SECOND PHASE MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

The language movement for inclusion of Manipuri into the ES of the Constitution of India the role of MSP, Imphal is extraordinary and uncountable. From the First Phase Movement onwards Parishad has taken a key role in the movement and further it also continued to played enormous task in the second phase of the movement. During this phase, Parishad along with MLDCC, N.E and sometimes individually has performed a numbers of Bandh, Strike, Hunger Strike not only in Manipur but also in Delhi and also submitted number of memorandums to President, Prime Minister, Home Minister and other related authorities for the matter for consideration. One among the Memorandum submitted by the President, Parishad to the Hon’ble Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India in the month of November, 1989 can be seen here.

(1) On the behalf of the MSP, Imphal and on my own behalf, take this opportunity to place before you this humble memorial on the demand for the inclusion of the Manipuri Language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

(2) The Manipuri language has all the characteristics warranting its recognition as a national language among other national languages included in the said Schedule. The demand for such recognition has been there before the Government of India since 1965. However, the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs raised some objections to the demand, and expressed apprehension that recognition of Manipuri would lead to the demand for similar recognition of Manipuri would lead to the demand for similar recognition of other languages and thus create

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99 Lok Sabha, A Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.
problems. Our reply to such objections was given in time to the Home Ministry, Government of India under letter No. MSP/ML/7/84 dt 27/02/84 from the President, MSP to the Home Ministry.

(3) The language Policy of India:

(l) It has been observed that the basic feature of the language policy of the Government of India are as follows: (i) Implementation of measures for the promotion of schedule; (ii) Implementation of some of these measures for the development of the non-schedule languages; (iii) Recognition of deserving non-scheduled languages as scheduled languages as for example; i.e. Sindhi. We are glad that the Sindhi language has been given due recognition by its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. The turn has now come for the due recognition of Manipuri, the deserving non-scheduled language of the Tibeto-Burman speech family of India, by its inclusion in the said Schedule.

(4) Justification for inclusion of Manipuri in the ES to the Constitution:

(l) The following six functions are discharged in common both by Manipuri and the languages included in the ES (except Sindhi): (i) As mother tongue of the majority of the population of a State of India and as its lingua-franca: More than one million people constituting 67% of the population of Manipur speak Manipuri as their mother tongue; the remaining about half a million people also use Manipuri as a medium of mutual communication, vide Census Report of India, 1981; (ii) As official language of a State of India: Manipuri had always been an official language in Manipur and this status has been codified in the Manipur Official Language Act, 1979 (Act. No 14 of 1979) of the Manipur Legislative Assembly; (iii) As Court language of a State of India: Manipuri is a court language in all the courts in Manipur subordinate to the High Court; (iv) As Medium of Instruction and Examination from the primary to the post-graduate level in relevant disciplines for each stage: Manipuri is now the medium of instruction and examination in all non-language subjects up to the Higher Secondary Examination. There are B.A, Honours and Post-Graduate courses in Manipuri, and M.Phil and Ph.D Thesis have been produced in Manipuri; (v) As the station language of all India Radio in the station or stations located in the state: Broadcasts in Manipuri language cover 78% of the total programme hours of all India Radio. There are, besides, Manipuri programmes in the Guwahati and Silchar stations of All India Radio in Assam; (vi) As a Major Indian Language recognized by the Sahitya Akademi with the conferment of Manipuri has been recognized by the Sahitya Akademi of India as a major Indian
language from 1971, and annual awards are conferred by the Akademi on distinguished writers in Manipuri;

It is therefore, clear that Manipuri language discharge all the functions which justify its inclusion in the ES to the Constitution.

Additional justification for the inclusion of Manipur in the ES to the Constitution:

1. Additional justification for recognition of Manipuri as a national language by its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India is provided by the following features of the Manipuri language:
   (a) As the vehicle of one of the most ancient and developed literatures of India.
   (b) As the most developed language of the Tibeto-Burman speech family of India: Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterje in his Kirata-Jana Kriti (1974, p. 157) says: “Among the various Tibeto-Burman languages, the most important, and in literature certainly of much greater importance than Newari, is the Meithei or Manipuri language” and further “Manipuri literature is most emphatically an advanced modern Indian literature, and cannot be described as the backward literature of a so-called Adivasi and primitive people- the Manipuri writers are already in front line of modern Indian writing and translation” (p. 166).
   (c) As a language spoken outside Manipur by lakhs of people in India, Bangladesh and Burma.

2. The Importance of Representation of the Tibeto-Burman Speech Family of India in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India:

   The existing list of languages in the ES to the Constitution of India is restricted to the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages only, and excludes the Tibeto-Burman languages of India altogether. It does not, therefore, properly represent the composite culture of India. Recognition of Manipuri, the most developed language of the Tibeto-Burman speech family of India, will thus serve the purpose of removing this deficiency, and strengthening the national policy for the promotion of national integration and the composite culture of India.

3. Hon’ble Sir, You have brought about new thinking in this country in so many fields.
You must have been aware that a new thinking is called for in our approach to the Indian languages. It is time that concrete and adequate steps are taken for the promotion of the study of the life, language and literature of all sections of the Indian people, big and small by, members of each section so that they may know each other better and thus strengthen the foundations of national unity. Given the right attitude and willingness to exert for integration of the Indian people, addition of a few more languages to the ES to the Constitution, and their recognition as
national languages on merit, should not create any insurmountable difficulty in the academic and administrative fields.

4. As stated above more than a million people speak Manipuri as their mother tongue, and more than a half a million people use it for mutual communication in this State of Manipur alone. There are also several lakhs of people speaking Manipuri as their mother tongue in other parts of India and the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Burma. In 1977 the Manipur Legislative Assembly passed a Resolution to the effect that since Manipuri had always been the lingua-franca and defacto official language of Manipur, the Government of Manipur should take action for legislation to make Manipuri the official language in addition to English. The said Resolution further requested the Government of India expedite the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES to the Constitution of India. In pursuance of this Resolution the Manipur Legislative Assembly subsequently enacted the Manipur Official Language Act 1979. (See in Appendix-III.A).

The said Assembly passed another Resolution (Resolution No-48 dated 29-02-84 of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, See in Appendix-III.B) urging the Government of India to take action for immediate inclusion of the Manipuri Language in the ES to the Constitution. The strength of the case for Manipuri was fully recognized by our late lamented Prime Minister Smti. Indira Gandhi. In our interview with her on the 30th November, 1983, she spoke words which we felt as an assurance, awaiting processing only. And it is our earnest belief and prayer that you, Sir, as their noble successor in this great tradition of understanding and wisdom, will complete the process and fulfills the assurance given in this connection.

In view of the facts mentioned above, we beg to urge upon you most earnestly to take up to the matter personality and expedite the inclusion of the Manipuri language in the ES to the Constitution of India for which act of kindness we shall ever remain deeply grateful to you.

AMSU AND MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

The All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) came into being in 1965 following a bloody confrontation on 27th August 1965, when police fired upon students protesting against scarcity of rice and killed four persons and injured many others. AMSU has been taking part in the movement for ES from 1970s onwards. Since late Nineteen Seventies, the demand for the

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inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES has been made as one of the agenda of AMSU. But somehow it remained as side issue as AMSU was directing its energies more on the political and economic issues.\textsuperscript{101} On 3\textsuperscript{rd} March, 1978, a memorandum was submitted to the Yangmaso Shaiza, Chief Minister of Manipur along with a charter of demands Viz., (1) Correction of the wrong History of Manipur and the teaching of corrected history of Manipur up to class X; (2) Establishment of a full-fledged University in Manipur; (3) Instruction of Meetei Script and inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES of the Constitution of India. The students given a dateline time to the Chief Minister for solve the demands placed by them. The movement of the AMSU was intensified in the month of August, 1978, after the ultimatum given by them expired. Then the Union began organizing a series of mass demonstrations in the greater Imphal area. On 18\textsuperscript{th} August, a group of about 450 students gathered at the gate of the Chief Minister’s bungalow shouting their demands. The demonstration was repeated again on 23\textsuperscript{rd} August and picketed the Chief Minister’s office. When four representatives of AMSU met with Yangmaso Shaiza, Chief Minister, no solution could be reached. Then, violent activities followed. On 28\textsuperscript{th} August, AMSU staged another procession of about 500 students from different parts of greater Imphal. Thirty three students were arrested in that connection. The police unable to control the students resorted to firing on the demonstrators. Luckily no one was seriously injured in the police firing. A press note of AMSU issued the next day flayed the police action and termed it as a sign of inefficiency. It asked – “why should the students be fired upon, when all they were asking was that they should be taught the true history of Manipur, that their own script should be taught, that a full-fledged University should be established?” It further added, “Where is our freedom when we are fired upon only because we like our true history lessons, secularism and our own script?”\textsuperscript{102}

The State Government issued a clarification on the police firing, which said, “... there was no other alternative as number of students, who joined the demonstrators multiplied that day. About one thousand students of Schools and Colleges staged a long procession in front of the New Secretariat building, Government of Manipur. They shouted their slogans and demanded to release the arrested students. Another group of about 500 students also approached the spot from southern direction. The Manipur Rifles personnel tried to stop them on the way. There was

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p.54
\textsuperscript{102} M.C. Arun, op.cit., pp 50-51
confusion in the situation among the security personnel. When some students tried to set fire a petrol tank, police opened fire at 2.30 pm. angry students pelted stones....That day eleven students were arrested on the spot. Nobody was reportedly injured, however, in the firing..."103

On 31st August, 1978 the State Government announced certain steps to be taken up in response to the demands of AMSU. The steps were:

1. Correction of the wrong history of Manipur and corrected would be introduced up to class X. the Press Note further informed that three scholars have been appointed to examine the lesson in history of Manipur. The scholars are expected to submit their report within 3 months. The government also agreed to consider the recommendation of the scholars and make necessary changes in the syllabi as it considered necessary.

2. In relation to the instruction of Meetei script that the Government of Manipur had already invited applications for the post of two research fellows and submit their findings regarding the correct versions of the old script. Another important additional point which the government made its assurance that she “will make efforts to adopt the universally accepted Manipuri script.” It promised that the appointment of scholars would be made by 31st October, 1978.104

On 7th September, AMSU and the government signed an agreement consisting of three points: (i) Introduction of Meetei script and inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES to the Constitution of India; (ii) Adoption of one village by each college for undertaking development; (iii) The establishment of an Engineering college in Manipur State.

Then gradually after this incident, language issue has brought the forefront demand of AMSU. As AMSU landed its pressure to the demand, it became a Political issue and Peoples’ Movement. On 15th May, 1989, Mr. Y. Priyokumar, President, AMSU sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES. In the memorandum he noted that “Manipuri language may be compared with the Schedule language…….”as follows:

1. Mother tongue of the majority of population in concerned State;
2. Official language of the concerned states;
3. Language of the courts other than the High Court;

103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
4. Primary Medium of broadcast of All India Radio programme;
5. Vehicle of an advanced and developed literature;
6. Medium of Instruction and examination from Primary to Post Graduate level;

On 6th - 7th November, 1989, 24 Hours Manipur Bandh for language demand was called by MLDCC, N.E. in the State. In that Bandh, AMSU, a unit organization of MLDCC, N.E also participated in the Bandh. This Bandh has become the first Bandh for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES.

The language movement for ES by AMSU during the 1989 and after were different from earlier one. In their earlier movement, they used to send a numbers of memorandums to the related authorities for their demand. And from the related authorities also they got enough assurances. But practically Government of India is still unable to issue an order for the Amendment of ES Bill. So, AMSU decided to work togetherly with the other Manipuri Student’s organizations of the North Eastern Region to extend their explicit support with strong force to the cause of Manipuri language. The decision taken by AMSU was written in this way in the Economic and Political Weekly, dated 20th July, 1991, that “until 1989 it was solely the MSP, Imphal an organisation of intellectuals and literary figure, which had been articulating the aspirations of the Manipuris on the language issue. Their method of such articulation was confined to rallies and seminars both at Imphal and Delhi and to sending memorandums to the government. However, at the time of the 1989 general election the AMSU not only took the lead in the formation of MLDCC, N.E but also succeeded in persuading organisation like Tripura Upjatiya Yuva Samiti (TUYS), All Assam Manipuri Students’ Union (AAMSU) and Manipur Apunba, which is the co-ordinating body of the Manipuris living in various North Eastern States other than Manipur, to extend their unequivocal support to the cause of Manipuri language. AMSU also asked the political parties in Manipur and asked their candidates to spell out their stand on the language issue in clear cut terms. Parties other than Congress (I), like Manipur People’s Party and Janta Dal promised that they would exert pressure on the Central Government to include Manipuri in the Eighth Schedule. According to Professor M. S Ningomba, some of the candidates even promised that if they failed to solve the language issue they would resign their seats.”

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According to decision taken in the last part of the 1989, on 26th January, 1990 AMSU boycotted the Republic Day and through leaflet they requested to the all people of Manipur should participate in it. In the message of the leaflet, “there were total numbers of 1652 languages in India and out of these total only 15 languages are included in the ES. Instead of recognising Manipuri language for purpose of communication and Educational Institutions, these Schedule languages are now forced to use in the State, so it is necessary to obstruct these Schedule languages. The Manipuri speakers are come out to fight against the divide and rule policy of the Government of India by introducing ES. So, at this moment, if Manipuri language is not included in the ES, all the Manipuri speakers wanted to extract Eighth Schedule from the Constitution. Such moment come, still policy of the Government of India is not favour for the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES. So, now the Manipuri People will continue to boycott Hindi and Scheduled languages till to include Manipuri language in ES. As a result of the language movement for inclusion of Manipuri in the ES, the language issue was reached to the ear of the Parliament of India. In this critical moment, why we have to celebrate the day i.e. 26th January when India became a Republic and we are celebrating the day with March Pass by getting some food items and cloths from Governmental side? When the country became fully vanished and you too, at that moment who will come to survive you? Our unity will able to correct the mistakes the policy of the Government. Our effort is to include Manipuri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. It is requested to all Students, youths, culturalist groups, Band parties and Govt. servicemen not to participate in Mass Pass and also to Mass people not to see the Mass Pass. Your contribution is waiting by your mother tongue, participate in this by unitedly.”

The Language movement for ES was much intensified by AMSU in the year 1991 and 1992 by performing protest and demonstration, mass rally, hunger strike, bandh and boycotted the National Newspapers and Hindi Films and Songs. Mr L. Sharatchandra Sharma, founder and last convenor of the MLDCC, N.E, the Co-ordinating Committee whose immense role in ES Movement of Manipuri language till to her inclusion in the ES was also the Ex. President of AMSU. Thus, AMSU participated in language movement on ES till to her inclusion in the Schedule.

106 Republic Day boycott Leaflet of the AMSU on 26th January, 1990.
MUSU AND LANGUAGE MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

Manipur University Students’ Union (MUSU) a unit organization of MLDCC, N.E during the movement period had also played immense role in the Language Movement for ES. In the 24 hours Bandh, hunger strike and peace rally of the language movement for ES MUSU along with MLDCC, N.E had played a great role. On 6th February, 1991, MUSU submitted a memorandum to Shri Chandra Shekhar, Hon’ble Prime Minister for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES. In the Memorandum “I, the undersigned on behalf of Manipur University Students’ Union take this opportunity to present before you this Memorandum on the demand for the inclusion of Manipuri Language in the ES to the Constitution of India.

First of all, we would like to say that the existing list of languages in the ES to the Constitution of India is restricted only to the two families of languages in India out of four families, namely, Indo-Aryan and Dravidian families of languages (eleven languages from Indo-Aryan family and four languages from Dravidian family), and excludes the Tibeto-Burman languages of India altogether. It does not therefore maintain proper linguistic representation. It is indeed a dark spot in the Indian Democracy. We therefore strongly feel that recognition of Manipuri, the most developed language of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages in India will definitely serve the purpose of removing undemocratic state of affairs in the National Language Policy of India and strengthen the national integration and the composite culture of India.

The Manipuri language possesses all the requisite characteristics for its recognition as a national language among other national languages already included in the ES. The demand for such recognition had been persistently made to the Government of India for the last three decades, and assurance after assurance had been given by successive Prime Ministers of India to the effect that the demand for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES will be met at an appropriate time. So far nothing positive has happened.

In this connection we hope that you will be indulgent enough to allow us to recount the following positions in support of our demand:

1. That Manipuri is the mother language of the majority population of a State of India.
2. That Manipuri is the official language of a State of India.
3. That Manipuri is used as medium of instruction and examination from the primary to the post-graduate level in the relevant disciplines for each stage. M.Phil and PhD Thesis have been produced every year in Manipuri.
4. That the well known culture of Manipur in the fields of dance, drama, film (the first Indian film to get the Grand Prix at the Nante International Film Festival was the Manipuri film- Imagee Ningthem, martial arts, handicrafts, etc. have been expressed through Manipuri language.

5. That Manipuri has its own treasure house of old literature which no one can deny the fact. Such literatures are written in its own script called Meitei Mayek (Manipuri Script).

6. That from time immemorial Manipuri is the lingua-franca in the State and beyond, for example in the Kabaw valley in Burma (now Myanmar).

7. That Manipuri is spoken at various places in three sovereign countries, namely India, Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma).

Before the annexation of Manipur in 1891 by then British India authorities, it was only in Manipuri language that records were kept and all communications both inside and outside Manipur were made. It was during the British regime (1891-1947) that English language became an additional official language in the administration of Manipur had to acquire fluent Manipuri in order to facilitate communication with people. The Britishers left Manipur in 1947 and Manipur merged with India two years later in 1949, thereby creating a sort of administrative vacuum which was to be filled up by officers from outside the State. And ironically those were more anglicized than the real English. They alienated themselves from the people and gradually the linguistic freedom of Manipur, which Britishers preserved so cautiously, was snatched away by them. In other words, we lost our political freedom without losing the linguistic freedom. But when we attained the political freedom, we lost our linguistic freedom. Our demand is very legitimate and it cannot be compared with the case of any other languages in India.

The youths of Manipur would like to emphasize the fact that they are born Indians, though they live in a remote corner of India which is more than 2000kms away from New Delhi. They, therefore, hope that their genuine desires and aspirations should not be dampened in any way by political chicanery. Moreover, the age old problem of Insurgency in the State originated from the alimentative feeling which can be counteracted by giving a proper place in the Indian mainstream. I therefore, earnestly beseech you to study the matter personally and expedite the inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES to the Constitution of India."^{107}(See in Appendix-V).

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^{107} Memorandum copy of MUSU Submitted to Shri Chandra Shekhar 6th February, 1991 at Imphal
THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND MOVEMENT FOR EIGHTH SCHEDULE:

There is no denying fact that the political parties of Manipur have been spearheading in the venture for inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES of Indian Constitution. In the year 1965, the three political parties- (1) Congress Party, (2) Communist Party and (3) Socialist Party adopted spontaneous movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language by urging the Central Govt. of India. We can see the following memorandums submitted by all the political parties of Manipur for the Manipuri language into the ES of the Constitution of India. In the Memorandum submitted in the month of May, 1990 by the Political Parties of Manipuri to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri V. P Singh in the Matter of the demand for inclusion of the Manipuri Language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India that "Hon'ble Prime Minister, We the undersigned representatives of the Political Parties of Manipur, on behalf of the people of Manipur, beg to place before you this humble Memorandum on the demand for the inclusion of the Manipuri Language in the ES of the Constitution of India.

1. The Manipuri language possesses all the merits justifying its recognition as a national language as those included in the ES of the Constitution of India. As the State of Manipur was merged in the dominion of India on 15th October, 1949 it was not separately represented in the Constituent Assembly during the process of the framing of our Constitution. As a result the case of including Manipuri as a national language in the said Schedule could not be considered. Since the said merger the people of Manipur have been making persistent demands for the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES. But this legitimate demand has not been met favourly so far. More than one million people speak Manipuri in the Manipur Valley as their mother tongue while more than half a million people freely use this languages in the Hill Areas as the means of communication with members of other tribes and their brethren in the Valley. Again there are more than half a million Manipuri people who speak Manipuri in the rest of India. Meanwhile Sindhi, which seems to fall far short of the standard for recognition as a national language as compared to Manipuri was included in the said Schedule by the Constitution (21st Amendment) Act, 1967. Manipuri is the lingua franca of the State of Manipur. While we are happy that the Sindhi language found a place in the said Schedule we fervently hope that the legitimate demand of the Manipuri language will also be conceded.

2. The basic features of the language policy of the Government of India appear to lay down, Inter-alia, the following postures:
a. Implementation of measures for the promotion of the Scheduled languages;
b. Implementation of some of these measures for the development of the non-schedule languages;
c. Recognition of deserving non-scheduled languages non-scheduled languages, as in the case of the Sindhi language.
d. Manipuri, an ancient and arguably the most developed of the languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman Speech family of India should enter into the said Schedule in as much as it has all the deserving merits in the light of the basis features of the language policy of the Government of India mentioned above.

4. Justification for inclusion of Manipuri in the ES is briefly elucidated under the following six functions, inter-alia, which are shared by Manipuri with languages (except Sindhi) included in the said Schedule:
   a. As the Mother tongue of the population of a State of India and as lingua franca:
   b. As the Official language of a State of India:
   c. As a Court language of a State of India:
   d. As the medium of instruction and examination from the primary to the post-graduate level:
   e. As the language of the Station of all India Radio:
   f. As a Major Indian Language recognized by the Sahitya Akademi:
   g. From the facts and arguments marshaled above it would be clear that in terms of intrinsic worth as also wide application in the affairs of the State and lives of the people of Manipur stands on an equal footing with sister languages included in the ES.

5. Manipuri is a very developed language having an ancient and rich literature of its own. Works in different genres of literature like poetry, drama, novel, short story and essay etc. covering varied facets of life have enriched it. Literary journals have also added to its literary and cultural heritage and made a significant contribution to Indian literature and culture.

6. There are also several lakhs of people speaking Manipuri as their mother tongue in other parts of India like Assam, Tripura, U.P and West Bengal and also in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Burma. In many parts of upper Burma it is used as a means of communication among people of several ethnic groups thus attaining an international character (in the Kabow Valley).
7. The Manipur legislative Assembly passed a Resolution in 1977 to the effect that since Manipuri had always been the lingua franca and de facto official language of Manipur the Government of Manipur should take action for legislation to make Manipuri the official language in addition to English. The Resolution further requested the Government of India to expedite the inclusion of Manipuri in the ES of the Constitution of India. Pursuant to this Resolution the Manipur Legislative Assembly subsequently enacted the Manipur Official Language Act, 1979. The said Assembly passed another Resolution urging the Government of India to take action for immediate inclusion of the Manipuri language in the ES.

8. There might be some section of opinion which opposed inclusion of languages like Manipuri in the said Schedule on the ground that the ES has now become superfluous.

9. It would be pertinent to mentioned that the commitment of the people and the Government of Manipur for increased usage of Manipuri in official business and in the field of Higher Education is a direct function of the level of development of this language. Comparison may obviously be made to draw parallels with the position of Nepali language in Skkim. Despite this being the majority language of that State, it has no official recognition.

10. Our late revered Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with his characteristics catholicity of mind and imaginative understanding delicately nourished the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic North Eastern States of India and paved the way for their greater integration with India. He appreciated the culture of Manipur and kept this small State as a separate constituent unit of India for which we as a people remain indebted to him forever. The late Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, recognized fully the strength of the case for inclusion of Manipuri in the said Schedule. The United Front Government and as a dynamic leader of our great Nation you will fructify the promise made and fulfill the aspiration of the people of this State of the Country by including Manipuri in the ES of the Constitution and thus consolidate the firm foundation for national integration.

11. In the circumstances stated above we, on the behalf of the people of Manipur, sincerely urge you to take personal interest in the matter and expedite the inclusion of the Manipuri language in the ES of the Constitution of India for which of your kindness the people of Manipur shall ever remain grateful to you. Submitted By (1) Manipur People’s Party, (2) Janata Dal, (3)Congress(S), (4) Bharatiya Janata Party, (5)National Peoples Party, (6)...
Communist Party of India, (7) Communist Party of India (Marxist), (8) Congress(I), (9) Kuki National Assembly."

Again another Memorandum Submitted February, 1991 by all the political parties of Manipur to the Hon’ble, Prime Minister Shri Chandra Shekhar in the Demand for inclusion of Manipuri in the ES of the Constitution of India. In the Memorandum mentioned that “Hon’ble Prime Minister We, the undersigned representatives of the political parties of Manipur on the behalf of the people of Manipur beg to place before you this humble Memorandum on the Demand for the inclusion of the Manipuri Language in the ES of the Constitution of India........We on the behalf of the people of Manipur, sincerely urge you to take personal interest in the matter and expedite the inclusion of the Manipuri language in the ES of the Constitution of India for which act of your kindness the people of Manipur shall ever remain grateful to you. Submitted By (1) Manipur People’s Party,(2) Janata Dal ,(3)Congress(S), (4) Bharatiya Janata Party, (5)National Peoples Party, (6) Communist Party of India, (7) Communist Party of India (Marxist), (8) Congress (I), (9) Kuki National Assembly."

It is to be mentioned that the Political parties of Manipur have taken the pivotal roles on the basis of their commitment made in the election manifesto and in pursuance of the commitment of extension of ES by the National Front during last Lok Sabha Election-1989. With the emergence of the National Front Government at the Centre, it is highly hoped that under the spirit of commitment on Language Policy during the last Lok Sabha Election-1989, the Central Govt. would take effective steps for inclusion of Manipuri, a Tibeto-Burman family along with other counterpart languages in the ES to the Constitution of India. The Hon’ble Ex-Deputy Prime Minister, Shri Devi Lal has ensured that the National Front Government would implement all promises made during the last Lok Sabha Election (1989). It is also stated that Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri V. P Singh as also assured to Shri Nar Bahadur Bhandari, Chief Minister of Skkim that positive steps would be taken by the Centre for inclusion of Nepali, Manipuri and Konkani in the ES to the Constitution of India.

The political demand for inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES gained momentum in the late 1980s when all the political parities of Manipur highlighted this demand in their election

\[^{108}\text{Memorandum copy of All Political Parties of Manipur Submitted to Shri V. P Singh, Hon’ble Prime Minister on May, 1990 at Imphal}\]

\[^{109}\text{Memorandum copy of All Political Parties of Manipur Submitted to Shri Chandra Shekar, Hon’ble Prime Minister on February, 1991 at New Delhi}\]
manifestoes for the Lok Shabha elections of 1989 and also for the mid-term State election 1991. The delegations of all the political parties called on three successive Honourable Prime Ministers of India, namely Shri V.P Singh, Shri Chandra Shekhar and P.V. Narasimha Rao, and all the Honourable Prime Ministers conceded the reasonableness of the demand and gave some sort of an assurance for introducing an appropriate Bill for the same.

Though, Manipuri language movement got a numbers of assurances for inclusion of it in the ES by successive Honourable Prime Ministers of India, still they are unable to introduce a Bill for inclusion of it in the Parliament. The matter was raced by M.Ps of Manipur in different occasions in the Parliament.

Gradually in the year 1992, the movement for inclusion of Manipuri language in the ES began to get sympathy from the numbers of the Members of Parliament (MP) from different States of India. Among them to mention a few are Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, M.P, Sikkim, L.K Advani, M.P, Delhi(Gandhi Nagar), Shri Mohan Singh, M.P, Uttar Prdesh (Deoria), Shri Moreshwar Save, M.P, Maharashtra (Aurangabad), Shri Harish Narish Narayan Prabhu Zantye, M.P, Goa (Panji), Shri Saifuuddin Choudhury, West Bengal (Katwa), Shri A. Charles, M.P, Kerala (Trivandrum), Shri Shyed Shahabuddin, M.P, Bihar (Kishanganj), Shri Citta Basu, M.P, West Bengal (Barasat), Shri Peter G, M.P, Shillong, Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya, M.P, Madhya Pradesh (Mandsaur), Shri Swarup Upadhayaya, M.P, Assam (Tezpur), Shri Jitendra Nath Das, M.P, West Bengal, (Jalpaiguri), Shri P.C Thomas, M.P, Kerala (Muvattupuzha). Finally on 10th April, 1992 in the Parliament (Lok Shabha), Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, M.P, Sikkim put A Private Bill to the Mr Chairman for the Amendment of ES in the Constitution.

Thus the above mentioned M.Ps from different States of India in their speeches supported to pass the Bill for Amendment of ES. At last on effort of all the Non Governmental Organisations and Associations of Manipur and outside Manipur and all the political parties of Manipur and some other National Political Parties on the last day of the summer session held on 20th August, 1992 both the houses unanimously accepted to amend the ES of the Constitution of India by inclusion of Manipuri, Konkani and Nepali in the ES. And according to Bill No.142 of 1992, a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India passed by S. B Chauhan, Home Minister of India on 20th August, 1992 Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali languages are included in the ES of the Constitution of India by the 71st Amendment of the Constitution of India. The details
information regarding the Political significance and impact of Manipuri language movement will be discussed in Chapter Five.