PREFACE

The study entitled "Manipuri Language Movement, 1924-1992, has been undertaken in the partial fulfillment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History, Assam University, Silchar. Of various language movements took place in India, Manipuri language movement is one among them. It was the Anti classical, Anti colonial and State policy centric language movement. There were two kinds of Manipuri language movements that took place in states of Manipur and Assam in India during the 20th century. One kind was the language movement for introduction of Manipuri language as a vernacular in Manipur and Medium of Instruction in Manipur and Assam and other was the language movement for inclusion of Manipuri language in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Needless to say that this area i.e. Manipuri language movement was failed to draw adequate attention by the Scholars and Historians. There is a few published literatures are available on the language movement of the Manipuris in Manipur and Assam. There is no major published work depicting more or less in complete form about causes, significance and impact of the Manipuri language movement in Manipur and Assam. The main objective of the work is to fill up the gap left behind by these published literatures. The major attempts of the work is to highlight on the contribution of Hijam Irabot Singh and Naoria Phulo to the language movement, the causes, significance and impact of Manipuri language movement in Manipur and Assam and the role of various organizations to the movement. The main objective of the work is to give the basic ideas of the Manipuri language movement more or less in a complete form.

The methodology adopted in this work is mainly based on historical and empirical method by consulting Manipuri language movement related old and new scriptures, books, leaflets and memorandums. The documents and records available in the Governmental departments are consulted in preparing this thesis. Interview method is also adopted in this work. Many prominent leaders and persons, who had participated in the movement and those persons having the knowledge in the area, are interviewed and their views are taken into account. The oral sources have been adopted in the work, in order to write in a systematic way. The analytical method has also been applied in this work.
According to the findings, Manipuri Language movement specifically took place in Manipur and Assam and generally in other North Eastern States during the period from 1924-1992, two kinds of movements can be seen. The first kind was the language movement for the introduction of Manipuri language as a vernacular and medium of instruction in Manipur. After adoption of the Vaishnavism by King Pamheiba alias Garib Niwaz during the 18th Century and the process of completely dominating to Manipuri language by both Bengali and Sanskrit languages were started. And again due to the introduction of Western education in the state by British during the 19th century made Bengali and Sanskrit languages along with English language as a medium of instruction in Manipur, these processes of dominations were continued up to 20th century. The movement for replacement of Bengali, Sanskrit and English languages by Manipuri language was outbreak in Manipur and the Manipuris inhabited areas of Assam during the 20th century. The movements were took place in state of Manipur during 1920s and continued up to 1940s. But the same movement was started in the state of Assam from 1930s and continued up to 1980s by different intellectual group of people and masses against the Government of Manipur and Assam to get their legitimate demand for introduction of Manipuri as a vernacular in Manipur and medium of instruction in Manipur and Assam.

The second kind was the language movement for inclusion of Manipuri in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India was started during 1950s in Manipur and 1960s in Assam and gradually spread to the other Manipuri inhabited areas of India and the movement was continued up to 1992 in the both states and other the Manipuris inhabited areas of India.

The first chapter is an introductory one, which deals with the meaning of the language, the concepts of the movement and social movement, language movement, languages in India, language policies in India, language problems in India, language movements in India and the backgrounds of the Manipuri language movement in Manipur and Assam are discussed here. The objectives, data and methodology of the study and organization of chapters are also highlighted in the chapter.

The second chapter deals with the numbers of Manipuri Speakers in India, North East India, Manipur, Assam and Tripura on the basis of Census reports of India. The Manipuris settlements in Manipur, Assam and Tripura are highlighted here. It also evaluates the history of origin of the Manipuri People, their religion and language and the status of Manipuri language in
the pre-vaishanavite period, early vaishanavite period, the vaishanavite period, and during the British period etc.

The third chapter mainly concentrated on the background and main causes for the outbreak of Manipuri language movement in Manipur. In the first part of this chapter, the contributions of Hijam Irabot Singh to the Manipuri language movement and his efforts to organize the movement are highlighted here. The role of different nongovernmental organizations and associations for introduction of Manipuri language as a vernacular and medium of instruction in Manipur are discussed here. The second part of this chapter highlighted about the movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The fourth chapter has analyzed the Manipuri language movement in Assam. In the first part, the role played by Naoria Phulo in the Manipuri language movement in Assam. The role of different nongovernmental organizations and associations for the introduction of Manipuri language as a medium of instruction in Assam are discussed here. The second part of this chapter highlighted about the movement for the inclusion of Manipuri language in Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The fifth chapter has examined the significance and impact of Manipuri Language movement in Manipur and Assam.

The sixth chapter is the concluding one, which summarizes the major findings and suggestions of the Research work.

M. Ningamba Singha