ABSTRACT

The Manipuris/Meiteis/Meeteis, who consider themselves as the original inhabitants of Manipur, are spread all over the North East and other parts of the Indian sub-continent due to various historical reasons. In the aftermath of the conversion of the community to Vaishnavism, a section of Hinduism propitiating Lord Vishnu, this relocation saw them, carrying their new found faith along with deep rooted traditional religious and cultural behaviour which persisted as embedded structures. Free from the diktats of a powerful clergy and monarchy of Manipur, the traditional religious and social mores started reasserting themselves and a reviverist movement of the old faith called *Apokpa-ism/Sanamahism* started since 1930s amongst the Meitei population settled in Assam and the movement gradually found a way back to Manipur. This work delineates the historical tangents and cultural as well as political significance of religious revivalism amongst the Meiteis with a particular reference to Assam.

The thesis, consisting of five chapters dwells upon the above problem of research in detail as outlined below.

**Chapter 1: Introduction; Historical Overview:**

It depicts a historical overview of the Meiteis and their diasporic locales in the north eastern part of India. It also discusses the overall social set up of the Meiteis.

**Chapter 2: Theoretical Parameters of the Study of Revivalist Movement, Ethnicity and Manipuris of Assam**

This chapter studies the theoretical parameters involved with the study of the present problem including socio-religious movements, revivalism and ethnicity on various theories put forward by different social scientists to categorize the particular movement in question.
Chapter 3: Manipuris of Assam and Their Socio-Cultural Practices

This chapter aims at drawing perspectives on religion adhered by the Meiteis and social as well as cultural practices associated with it with special reference to the Meiteis of Assam.

Chapter 4: Revivalism; Rhetoric and Practice amongst the Manipuris of Assam

This chapter discusses the various aspects of the reviverist movement and its overall impact on the Meitei society and how the Meitei society absorbs and synthesizes the two distinct cultures produced by the religious practices of Vaishnavism and their age old traditional belief system. This chapter also describes the life and philosophy of Naoria Phulo, who pioneered the reviverist movement of the traditional religion of the Meiteis in 1930s, and looks at the movement gradually gaining its ground in Manipur where it has taken newer socio-political dynamics.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter draws a conclusion about the above discussions and also discusses how the movement that had started in the 1930s still remains abiding in the Meitei society in general and the Meitei of Assam in particular.