

# Changing Vaiphei Society: A Geographical Study

(Abstract)

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## 1. Introduction

Geographers have long been accustomed to study the change of landscape wrought by nature itself and indiscriminate use of nature due to biotic pressure. The placement of tribes in spatial segments may be an outcome of a social history of contact, confrontation and contestation between the ethnically differentiated tribes. Any understanding of social change remains incomplete without a proper conceptualization of its spatial parameters. It is a common place of understanding that the nature, direction and pace of social change are never uniform in its spatial coverage. The organized and socially concretized space provides friction to a uniform spread of social change; thereby making social transformation spatially fragmented response. The geographical distribution of different social categories differentiates the impact of social change as diverse categories have different capacities to respond to the changes affecting them (Chandra, 1991). Thus, the rate of social change may be phenomenal in areas which have experienced large scale agrarian development historically, whereas, the dominantly tribal areas have been only marginally exposed to such changes. The pace and direction of social change would be determined to a great extent by the limits imposed by the nature or human freedom and the capacity of man to overcome such constraints through his own creativity and dynamism. Therefore, change is observed over space i.e. areal or spatial variations. In case of the Vaiphei tribe also, change is seen over two areas; the area of concentration and the area of dispersion over different periods of time.

Social change is essentially a change of social structure like population change and changes in the relationship of the components of the social structure. The position and role of the individual has also change over a period of time. In static society, the status and role of the individual do not undergo noticeable change from generation to generation. A dynamic society is one where basic social changes occur. The process of social change within the tribal societies have consequently operated at a low key, perpetuating the older mode far too long and thus leading to a socio-economic stagnation of a high order. The rigorous environment acted as a constraint and fostered physical and social isolation for

ages. The tribal communities have been by and large brought under the influence of exogenetic forces only marginally (Ansari, 1991).

Any meaningful understanding of social change is not possible without an insight into the very nature of changing human-environment relationship in its correct perspective. Change in the social system and structure inevitably brings about transformation in the very nature of the man-environment relationship. Any change in a society has to take place, at least, initially in close correspondence and co-operation with the natural environment. The pace and direction of social change would be determined to a great extent by the limits imposed by the nature or human freedom and the capacity of man to overcome such constraints through his own creativity and dynamism.

## **2. Review of Relevant Literature**

Among the geographers, the study of social change is relatively recent development. Although some aspects of social change and economic development were done by sociologists and economists earlier but the spatial context was missing. Most of the works are of very general nature and lack in depth study of any particular area. Relevant literatures have been reviewed here to have a better comprehension of the research problem.

The important scholars in the field of social change include Lapiere (1965), Moore (1987), Singh (1986), Kuppaswamy (1990) and Srinivas (1972).

Ahmad (1999), states that the origin of the socio-cultural diversity in India lies in the physico-geographical framework of the sub-continent. Societies have been undergoing wide ranging changes throughout history, although the pace of change has not been uniform in all regions or among all sections of our society. Processes, such as education, urbanization, penetration of market forces, expansion of administration, spread of political institutions, particularly since independence have all induced the society towards change.

Ansari (1991) gives tribal demography of Manipur as a whole. He emphasized right from the in-migration of the tribes into the state, the growth of each tribe, their habitat economy and society. He examines such information as death, birth, actual rate of growth, areal distribution, and classification according to their occupations and also

literacy and about socio-economic conditions of the different tribes. Ansari pointed out that the two most important factors, which effected changes in tribal life, is conversion to Christianity and spread of education. These changes have raised the tribal communities to a higher social pedestal. Apart from these two factors, the Five Year Plans also greatly contributed to the advancement in the socio-economic of the tribes.

Breese (1969) observed that developing countries are experiencing rapid population explosion resulting in large-scale unemployment in the rural country side. This has generated incessant swing of migration from one region to another or from rural to urban and industrial centre in search of job opportunities. Rural-urban migration has special significance for the developing countries, as this constitutes a major component of the process of urbanization taking place in those parts of the world.

Casette (1979) examined the spatial temporal dynamics of out migrations, economic development and population growth in Europe during the war period. The massive movement occurred as Europe went through social and economic changes similar to the ones currently in the less developed countries.

Das (1985) unfolds the richness of social anthropological data in Manipur and seeks to examine the relationship between the various tribes and the Meiteis, who dominate the scene. By virtue of their dominant position, the Meiteis probably influenced the course of the tribal history in Manipur more than the tribes themselves did. But, however successful they might in exerting political influence, it could not affect the core of tribal cultures. He emphasized on the trends of change among the tribes of Manipur.

Green (1974) in a study of temporal model of migration in Nigeria postulated that the principal population movement took place from more developed areas to less developed areas of an agricultural country possessing vast and virtually uninhabited parts of virgin land.

Harbison and Myers (1963) have identified three methods of human resource development for socio-economic change: (i) by formal education, beginning with primary and ending with university education, (ii) by on-the-job through systematic or informal training programmes in employing institutions, (iii) by self development as individual

seeks to acquire greater knowledge, skills or capacities through preparation on their own initiative by taking formal courses by learning from others in informal contacts.

H. Ian Hogbin (1958) gives a very lucid and illustrative treaty on social change. He explains different aspects of social change indicating in detail the approach to the study of change, voluntary acceptance of change, enforced change and chain reactions and changing institutions. Hogbin (1958), in his descriptive study of the village of Busama, New Guinea, also described the changes brought about by war and the enforced changes on the natives of Busama as soon as the foreign rulers ruled the country. There was change in money economy, in the status and leadership due to the impact of government machinery and changes in the religious beliefs as the natives took to Christianity.

Captain K.A. Khupzathang (2000) unfolds the origin and classification of the Vaiphei into different sub clans in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Kaihau Vaiphei (1999) emphasis on the early settlement sites of the tribe in Manipur and their probable route of migration from the east, i.e.Chin Hills in Myanmar. He also highlights the post migration of the tribes within the North-Eastern Region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Khaitingen (2001) throw lights on the route of migration of the tribe in the historical past. He also stressed some information about the customs of the tribe.

In 'Social Change', Lapiere (1965), described that social change are not in any sense a product of the society *per se* or a consequence of some universal or unvarying law of social life. It is something different from the changes that take place in individual organism. An organic change invariably takes place in all organisms as an essential law and follows a particular pattern of birth, growth, maturity and death. But social change occurs as a result of social life itself- emanating from the common way of living. There is no inherent invisible principle or law that causes social change.

Mibang (1994), present the fundamental features of the social, economic, religious and cultural life of the Adi Minyong people and the influence of various factors responsible for socio-economic change. He mentioned that social change is brought about to a great extent by changes in economy. The change in the system of cultivations has brought in a world of changes in the socio-economic life of the people. The advancement

of technology is affecting the tribal societies in various directions. One of the most impressive features is the attainment of greater efficiency and speed. Due to advance technology, productivity has greatly increased. This has made the people adjust themselves to the new tempo of life.

Milton S. Sangma (1987) described the works of Christian missionaries in the region that drastically change the socio-economic conditions of the people. When the missionaries open preach in the streets, bazaars, and in the villages timing millions of people failed to bear any fruits, they switched on to other methods such as opening of schools, publication of religious texts and opening of dispensaries and other humanitarian works. He described the history of education, literature, medical care and other humanitarian works as organized and run by the missionaries as adjuncts to their basic objective of evangelization.

According to Moore (1987), social change is unpredictable and yet it involves some elements for predictability. New orders or patterns ripen within the old order and thereby sustains some of its elements. Change is neither a break-point nor a destruction-point. Through the process, the older order gets transformed to new ones, retaining some of its earlier elements in some form or the other. Some other elements of future are predictable because the changes will be the product of deliberate intent and action.

Prothero (1969) in his study of West Africa, observed that economic opportunities in relatively developed areas offer an incentive for migration, but this is possible only when conditions are not favourable in areas of origin for stimulating the people to take up the employment opportunities offered elsewhere. Bartle (1980) examined the patterns of rural-urban migration in Ghana and emphasized the role of socio-economic motivation.

Sanajaoba (1995) gives ethnographic accounts of the Hill tribes of Manipur, who together with the Meiteis constitute the indigenous people of Manipur. In this compilation, various authors have highlighted the social and cultural life of the different tribes of Manipur. One of the authors, by name Doliand Capvung, described the social institution of the Vaiphei tribe in their traditional form. Sen (1992), attempts to provide a brief

description of the state of Manipur, its districts and also brief ethnological accounts of the different tribes of the state.

Vaiphei (1975) described the historical, social and economic background of the Vaiphei as well as their traditional religion. He also gives a brief account on the impact of Christianity upon the social, cultural and religious life of the tribe. Christianity, through which literacy has been introduced by the missionaries, was the driving force of changing Vaiphei society.

Vander Camp (1968) observed that unemployment played an important role and substantial impact on the overall rate of geographical mobility in Canada and particularly in the spatial pattern of migration to such areas in which migration adds to their population. Inter regional mobility is closely related to differential provincial incomes and negatively related to distance, received impressive and empirical support in Canada.

Verma,(1990) present a glimpse into the historical perspective of Indian tribes, their demography, constitutional provisions relating to their protection and development as well as problems and challenges of tribal development. He pointed out that the economy of the tribes is mainly based on agriculture and forests. Due to unauthorized alienation of tribal land and deprivation of their forest rights, the tribal economy has been seriously affected. The main causes of their backwardness are exploitation and illiteracy.

Vumson Suantak gives comprehensive analysis of the people mostly known as Chin-Kuki-Mizo. It analyses how these people migrated from Western China-Myanmar to different states of the North-East and why they migrated to the rugged hill areas they occupy now. He also emphasizes on the sub tribes of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo and their historical backgrounds.

Zelinsky (1971) has studied the migration component of population in a completely different perspective. He applied the principle of spatial innovations to the laws of migration in his hypothesis of the transition mobility. Zelinsky's idea spatial innovation has also been supported by Lee (1969) who emphasized the need of restrictions to control the volume and rate of migrations as they tend to increase with time. There is a

definite pattern of empirical regularity in the growth of personal mobility through space-time and these irregularities are associated with the modernization process.

### **3. Statement of the problem**

The process of social change, historically, has not operated at the same pace uniformly over space and their manifestations have been determined to a great extent by the exigencies of geographical considerations. The geographical space as it is organized and translated by human practice provides a friction to the uniform spread of socio-economic change. It is in this context that the problem of social change among the tribal population assumes considerable significance. Historically speaking, the tribal population has suffered diverse degrees of isolation as they are in hilly and geographically negative areas and away from the main foci of human civilization and progress, which experienced unprecedented changes in their society and economy. Difficult environment permitted marginal agricultural development only in a few favoured parts of the valley bottom. The hilly area also witnessed a unique survival of the primitive modes of economies like gathering and shifting cultivation. Under such conditions, the process of change operated at a low key and only marginally integrated with developed economies of the plains. Large agrarian surplus production in the plain areas produced unprecedented changes in the socio-economic sphere leading to social changes of a very high order. Lack of such a surplus generation in the hilly and tribal areas experienced such changes only at a low key.

Before the advent of the colonial power to this region, the tribal communication remained almost segregated. There was little scope for mixing together with other people of the country. As such, in the early days, tribal communities in the hill areas were left alone to lead a life according to their own ways of life, following their own customary laws in all matters of their activities. But the situation changed considerably with the contacts with the colonial economy (Gori, 1984). The British interest in the resource base exposed the tribes to modern developments and process of change. So, the year 1891 forms a significant landmark in the history of the hill tribes of Manipur, for in that year the English, had come to the state and established their political domination. During the next sixty years till 1947, which marks the end of the British colonial rule in India, far-reaching

changes had been introduced into the tribal society transforming them in many ways. Again, with the advent of Christianity in 1910, the tribes of Churachandpur, particularly the Vaiphei, were obliged to break their age-old isolation. The most spectacular achievement of the Christian missionaries was the introduction of western education or spread of literacy and exposing the tribes to a variety of modernizing influences. However, the presence of negative aspects of changes in their society also cannot be denied.

The purpose of the study is to examine the changing social pattern of Vaiphei society in Manipur, from their earlier times to the present day. The society has developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910. The aspects of change studied here are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative change includes changes in the tools and artifacts; modes of socialization, in their language (writing) and in their moral concepts. The quantitative changes are the changes in population, educational and recreational organizations, occupational structure, birth-rate and sex ratio. To crystallize the subject matter of the study the earlier social structure such as family, religious, political, economic and the overall social institutions of the Vaiphei, as it existed during the pre-Christian era, is studied in their village community level. As a matter of fact, the present Vaiphei community is the result of a series of change in the history of the Vaiphei society. The study also examined briefly as to what factors and forces brought about the change among the Vaiphei people in its historical and geographical perspectives. The present study is not intended to give a theoretical analysis of social change on either of the community or its social evolution: rather, it is an attempt to examine the extent of social change visible in the Vaiphei community through the process of development.

#### **4. Objective**

In the light of the above discussion, the present study examined the process and the level of social change in the Vaiphei community to the new situation from the old, which had developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910; keeping in mind the following objectives:

1. to trace the origin and the process of migration of the Vaiphei in the past,

2. to reconstruct the traditional structure of Vaiphei community as it existed before the introduction of Christianity and to identify the geographical space of the Vaiphei settlements; and
3. to examine the salient social changes and its impacts in Vaiphei society.

#### **5. Research Issues**

1. The geographical setting influences the processes of migration, distribution and the general pattern of change in Vaiphei society.
2. The physical mobility of the Vaiphei community brings it into contact with other communities and leads to change in their socio-economic organization.
3. Literacy not only enlightened the individual, but also brings a definite impact on the existing social and cultural spheres of the community as a whole.

#### **6. Data Base and Methodology**

The study is based upon data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data is based on a comprehensive field observations seeking information about occupations, educations, social and cultural aspects; and also discussions with eminent elders and through household survey schedule. Field data is especially collected pertaining to migration, size of family, literacy level, age-group, occupational structure and changes in their society. For intensive study, three villages namely; Kangvai, Pengjang and K.Kawtlian; which are in the area of Concentration of the Vaiphei, and another three villages namely; Leisanbung, Phovaibi and Haukhongching from the area of Dispersion, have been surveyed. This is done in order to have a clearer picture of the changes undergone as a whole and also the present scenario of the socio-economic condition of the Vaiphei tribe in their area of Concentration and in their area of Dispersion. The selection of the villages has not been made at random; certain factors have been taken into account before the study was taken up. The main criterion for the choice of the sample villages was the extent of their adherence to tradition, socio-economic organization and culture. Another factor was the villages were ethnically homogenous and could be considered as the representative of the Vaiphei villages. The sample villages comprises of 245 households with a total population of 1,267 persons in area of

Concentration and 79 households with a population 451 persons from the area of Dispersion. Two villages in the area of Concentration are close to the highway, one village on the highway; whereas one village in the area of Dispersion is connected by road and two villages are somehow remotely located. The assumption in this choice was that the remote villages would be closer to their tradition than those on or near the road; so that comparison can be made. The following techniques were adopted to collect data:

- i) **Village schedule:** general data about the village regarding the geographical location, number of households, duration of dwelling in the village, population and house-pattern.
- ii) **Household schedule:** data with reference to size of the family, age-sex composition, occupations, educational status, marital status etc.
- iii) **Discussions and interviews** with senior citizens to record statements pertaining to historical accounts, viz. inherited traditions, customs and practices; and the factors which influenced shift from traditional customs and practices.

The secondary data, on the other hand, includes census reports and statistical handbooks, published and unpublished literatures, journals, magazines and newspapers. For the study of the historical background and process of migration, books and seminar papers written in Vaiphei and other regional dialects as well as English by various authors are consulted. Based on this information, a map of their route of migration is prepared. The study area being agriculturally backward, traditional aspects of economic life are more prominent here. Therefore, the following variables are studied for assessing the changing social pattern of the Vaiphei society; occupational structure, distribution, literacy, sex ratio, percentage of main workers, family size, dependency ratio, health standard and infrastructural facilities.

Materials for reconstructing early Vaiphei history and their migration are extremely difficult to obtain due to lack of written records. As such, the task of reconstruction of their history and migration has been done mostly relying on informal interview with senior citizens having profound knowledge of early Vaiphei history i.e. oral tradition. To analyze the distributional pattern of the Vaiphei population, various census

handbooks are used. Apart from these, information is based on observations, experiences, church sources and visits to the area of Concentration and area of Dispersion of the Vaiphei settlements. In order to understand present distributions, maps are prepared by using suitable cartographic methods whenever it is found necessary and applicable. To develop an understanding of the factors responsible for the change, i.e. how far the role of the British and Christian missionaries has influenced the Vaiphei by spreading the gospel along with education have been examined and analysed. The present social status of the tribe is analyzed by graphical representation of their occupational structures and literacy levels of the study villages. Attempt is also made to understand and compare the living conditions of the people based on family size and occupational structures. Their area of Concentration and Dispersion areas are identified by using quantitative techniques. The area of Concentration is the area where the percentage of the Vaiphei population is most substantial while the areas of Dispersion are those areas where there is a sizeable population of the Vaiphei.

**7. Chapters:** The thesis comprises the following six chapters:

**Chapter I: Introduction:** The introductory chapter attempts to conceptualize the needs and relevance of the present study such as statement of the problem, objectives, selection of the study area, hypothesis, data-base and methodology adopted in the study.

**Chapter II: Physical Setting of the study area:** The second chapter offered a general description of the physical setting of the study area. The physiographic, climate, drainages, soil types of the state are discussed in order to understand the role of the physical conditions of the study area on the people. Attempt is also made to analyze the social and demographic composition of the study area.

**Chapter III: Origin, Migration and Traditional Society:** This chapter highlighted the traditional institutions of the Vaiphei society of Manipur viz. the society, marriage, village, dormitory, dress, customs, and status of women etc. side by side with their economy; so as to understand the changes they have gone through. It also elucidates their myth of origin, the dispersal from their original place and the process of migration in the past, based on different views, to understand their historical and cultural background. It also deals with

the present pattern of distribution of the Vaiphei, and in the process, their area of Concentration and area of Dispersion of their settlement are identified.

**Chapter IV: Change in Vaiphei Society:** This chapter analyzed the changes in social economy of the Vaiphei tribe on various social dynamics of human life; as it existed on the eve of British occupation the hill areas of Manipur towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D, and in particular, before the advent of Christianity in 1910 to the present. Attempt is also made to highlight the factors that led to the socio-economic changes in their society.

**Chapter V: Impact:** This chapter assessed the impact of the major factors of change in their society through the ages i.e. Christianity with education, in terms of literacy and health standards of the tribe. Attempt is also made to explain the responses to this change to their traditional social order.

**Chapter VI: The Sample Villages of Study:** This chapter deals with the six sample villages (three villages from the area of Concentration and the other three villages from the area of Dispersion), in terms of their family size, house type, occupational structure, dependency ratio, age and sex composition, sex-ratio, and literacy level.

**Chapter VII: Summary, Findings and Conclusion:** This chapter is the summary of all the five chapters and conclusion of the thesis.

## **8. Summary and Findings**

### **Origin, Migration, past Vaiphei Society and their Distribution:**

- 1) Due to the location and the physical setting of the region which is characterized by rugged terrain, steep slopes and deep river valleys, the Vaiphei lived in isolation from the outside world. The geographical settings of their settlement area have given rise to socio-cultural, economic and political isolation from outside influence for years. The spatial distribution of the Vaiphei was characterized by settling in few defensible hill-tops, which is by and large unsuitable for settled agriculture.
- 2) The physical setting of the region had an impact upon the migration and settlement pattern of the Vaiphei in the state. The physical environment of the region allowed only particular type of economic development and they perhaps found that it was suitable for

their way of life. So, they opted for hilly and forested tracts of the region that offered them scope to practice jhumming which was the only way they knew to produce food grains. Another reason is due to the fact that these areas of the region were less settled as compared to the valley regions. Being settled in the negative region, it was not possible for them to modify the environment according to their needs, but to adjust to the natural physical environment.

- 3) Two different views on the origin of the word 'Vaiphei' have been set up:
  - (i) The first view is based on the 'Khaw-Vaiphei Theory'. It is believed that the name 'Vaiphei' is derived from the name of the village 'Khaw-Vaiphei'; '*Khaw*' means village; '*Vai*' means breadth and '*Phei*' means plain: which means the village was at length and breadth and vast. The people who lived in that village for a pretty long enough time and moved out last of all came to be identified as the Vaiphei people.
  - (ii) Another view is the 'Liankhama Village Incident Theory' (1850-1875). The Suantak people who lived together with other groups in the village had failed to take revenge on a hatred Pawi killer, due to the implications of their custom. They felt no more desirable to live in that village side by side with their enemy. They migrated from that village en masse; which is expressed in Duhlian(Lusei) dialect as "an vai-in an phei tawh" meaning they all left in body or exodus. People started calling them 'Vaipheihoh', meaning Vaiphei people; and thence, wherever these people lived, they came to be known as Vaiphei.
- 4) Every Vaiphei understands and accepts that '*Khul*' is his ancient home from where their ancestor originated. The Khul tradition is substantiated by their folksongs or songs of brave called *Hanla*. The sequential order of their migration from Khul is 'Khaw-Sinlung', Kale valley, Chindwin valley, Chin Hills and Mizoram-Manipur. This is due to the inter-tribal feuds, in search of a better land for cultivation, the need for shelter and peaceful settlement. Further, they had to face famine (*mautam*) at a regular interval of 50 years and consequently they had to change their place of habitation. Apart from these, nomadism was prevalent and this migratory spirit scattered them.

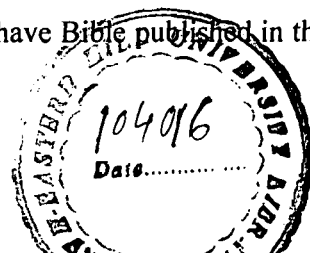
- 5) The past Vaiphei society was close-knit, simple and homogenous. They have their traditional institution called as *Sawm*, (Bachelors' dormitory) in which they have been imparting oral instructions and training to their youths for shouldering social responsibilities when they turned into adulthood. It is a symbol of solidarity and collective effort; its members defend the village from enemies, perform works in a collective nature during natural calamity such as death, famine, fire, or works which require community services through the philosophy of *Tawmngaina*- that is, self-sacrifice, selfless devotion, respect for the elders and bravery. *Sawm*, in fact, acted as a social institution and served as a training centre which in turn exercises the greatest influence in establishing the social norms and customs.
- 6) The early Vaiphei village state was economically self-sufficient because their needs were less and most of the needs of the villagers were produced in the village itself. Agriculture i.e. *jhumming* played the most important role in the economy of the Vaiphei, subordinated by handicraft, weaving, pottery and trade. The food habit of the Vaiphei was simple and cooked rice is their staple food. Rice beer called 'Zu' was the most specialized and the chief beverage of the Vaiphei. It was very common and used in every occasion. No important functions or ceremonies can be done without *zu*.
- 7) The choice of marriage was governed by the cultural norms intrinsically connected with and attached to the agriculture work and bravery. There are, generally, four types of marriages in Vaiphei society, namely (a) *Chawngmo*, (Pre arrangement from both side) (b) *Sainapua*, (Elopement) (c) *Thepthak*, (Convinced) and (d) *Kigaisak* (Impregnation kind of marriage). Apart from these types of marriage, the Vaiphei also have a system of marriage by servitude called '*Kawnglaw*'.
- 8) The Vaiphei are found in all the districts of the state. Their main concentration is in Churachandpur district, where 61.75 percent of them live. A large chunk of Vaiphei people inhabits Manipur North district, i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district that accounts for about 19.22 percent; followed by Chandel i.e. 12.32 percent of their total population. Churachandpur district has been identified as the area of Concentration of the Vaiphei; whereas Manipur North i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district, Tamenglong

district, Ukhrul district and Chandel district are identified as the areas of Dispersion as these together constitute about 33.80 percent of the Vaiphei population in Manipur.

- 9) In their area of Concentration, more than 100 villages that are Vaiphei dominated or wholly their villages can be identified. However, most of these villages are very small in terms of their population. Only one village of the Vaiphei settlement has a population more than 1,000 persons and three villages with a population between 501-1,000 persons. About 47.09 percent of their total population lives in villages that have a population less than 500 persons. This indicates the lack of the Vaiphei to concentrate in large groups.

**Changes in Vaiphei Society:**

- 10) In Vaiphei society, most of the houses are constructed with their limited knowledge in accordance with their tastes; generally one front entrance with one big window-type of opening called '*namthak*'. The house pattern underwent changes as the residential houses are now constructed in different patterns- 'L'-shape, 'U'-shape, 'T'-shape and so on. About 74.8 percent of houses in the sample villages are constructed according to what is known as Assam type houses, followed by semi-permanent accounting for 20.7 percent. Concrete building recorded only 4.7 percent of the total houses.
- 11) The bachelors' house (dormitory) called *Sawm* which has been the most important institution not only changed but practically disappeared. The prohibition of head-hunting, with the ushering-in of Christianity in the villages, has led to the erosion of this important social and cultural institution of the Vaiphei. Church activities in the form of youth fellowship meetings have come up and the activities of the youths also changed.
- 12) It was the first two Christians from Churachandpur District, Mr. Thangkai and Mr. Lungpau, with the help of the pioneer missionary W.R. Roberts, who initiated to alleviate Vaiphei language into written form. In 1911, they introduced alphabets to construct vocabularies by using 24 alphabets of Roman scripts. Using these alphabets, Bible Quiz and gospel song books were published in 1913. St. John portion of the Bible was published in 1917, which makes them the first tribe to have Bible published in their



own dialect among the tribes of Manipur South. The first beginner book entitled 'Simpatbu' was prepared by Evan. Manghen in 1921.

- 13) With the advent of Christianity, festival and dances gradually lost its significance and popularity. The gradual declined and disappearance of festivals and animal sacrifices promoted to the economic growth of the Vaiphei. The reason was that these festivals lasted for several days with *Zu* and meats abundantly served; which consumed a large portion of all the earnings of the people. So, a considerable amount of rice has now turned into regular food for the family. Quarrels and fighting as consequences of drinking *Zu* did diminished and the family began to have a better relationship and peaceful atmosphere.
- 14) The number of years the villagers live in their respective villages is categorized as 0-10 years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years and those people who live in that particular village for more than 30 years are categorized as living permanently. It is observed that 67.38 percent of the households in the sampled villages lived more than 30 years in those villages. Those who settled in the village for 21-30 years recorded 8.6 percent and 11-20 years and 0-10 years accounts for 17.56 percent and 6.45 percent respectively.
- 15) Male and female population in every age group is evenly distributed in all the six sample villages. Young population in the sample villages is only 25.20 per cent of the total population whereas the average young population of the state, as a whole is about 35.20 per cent in the 2001 census. These villages have a high proportion of workers which is characterized by low dependency ratio. The proportion of the working population accounts for 67.27 per cent of the total population as against 58 per cent for the state. The sample villages, thus, has a desirable percentage of working age group. However, the degree of diversification of their work is very low, as agriculture is their main occupation.
- 16) The concept of joint family life appears to be non-existent in the Vaiphei community from time immemorial. It is, therefore, observed that 98.2 per cent of the sample villages live in nuclear family which is the usual norm for the Vaiphei. The average size of the family is calculated as 5.47 persons. Small families, which comprises of 1-3 members

accounts for 9.32 per cent. Medium size family (4-6 members) is found to be 59.86 per cent and big size family with 7 and above members, which accounts for 30.82 per cent of the total households from the sample villages.

- 17) Cultivation of crops is the dominant economic activity and there is not much diversification of occupation in the Vaiphei society. In the area of Concentration, the proportion of cultivators to the total working population accounts for 54.90 per cent followed by the daily wage earners that constitute 17.40 per cent. The proportion of persons who are in government services are about 13.68 per cent where as private service holders accounts for 9.49 per cent. About 4.56 per cent of the working population has been grouped in business occupation category. This category includes small variety shop owners including pan-shop owners, NGO workers and small traders.
- 18) It is observed that the dependency ratio of the study villages in the area of Concentration is found to be 45.63 percent. However, the dependency ratio for the area of Dispersion i.e. 70.2 percent; is comparably higher than that of the area of Concentration. The young dependency ratio and that of the old dependency ratio of the study villages in the area of Concentration are calculated as 33.91 percent and 11.72 percent respectively. The study villages in the area of Dispersion show a very high degree dependency ratio for the young and very low for the old, being 64.15 percent and 6.04 percent respectively. However, it should be bear in mind that children below 15 years contribute their share in agricultural pursuit.
- 19) The total literate person in the sample villages at the time of enumeration constitute 93.6 per cent of the total population, excluding the age-group 0-5. On further classification of the literates into various categories shows a clearer picture of the level of their educational attainment. Primary level of education is recorded to be 40.71 per cent. High school category forms 35.38 per cent of their total population. The number of persons in higher education i.e. 10+2 level constitutes 12.89 per cent. In the category of University education i.e. graduate and above accounts for 4.62 per cent only. So, it is observed that the literacy level of the Vaiphei in the area of Concentration is desirable even though higher education and professional level of education still needs an improvement. The

study villages in the area of Dispersion have a much lower literacy rate than in the area of Concentration. The total literate person in the three sample villages at the time of enumeration accounts for 72.78 per cent against 93.6 percent in the area of Concentration. Out of the total literates, primary level of education is the highest and accounts for 43.89 percent. Matriculation and university level of education together constitutes only 6.11 percent of the total population.

## **9. Results and Conclusion**

Religion serves the central and crucial function in society of supporting what has been variously called social integration, social solidarity and social cohesion. Religion is an all-pervading supernatural phenomenon in man's life. For this reason, perhaps, it has been considered universal. Religion has exercised the most profound influence over man's thoughts and behaviour from times beyond human recollection. Conversion to Christianity after the coming of the British missionaries has brought about changes in family, marriage, social life of the Vaiphei, their life's styles, food habits and health seeking behaviour. Among the Vaiphei, religion becomes all the more important for it is inter-woven in their entire social life and shapes most of their entire social behaviour. Thus, we can see the changes in the social behaviour encompassing the culture of the people.

The history of the Christian movement can only be understood as an integral part of a larger process of political, social, economic, cultural and religious change among the tribal people. The most important contribution made by the Christian Missions was the introduction of alphabet for the Vaiphei, thereby reducing their language into written form. These had laid the foundation of modern education system among the Vaiphei.

Conversion and activities of missionaries had by far one of the most significant impacts on the Hill tribes in general and the Vaiphei in particular. Its aim was not only to convert the people to Christianity, but also to pacify and change the people. As for the Vaiphei, the conversion to Christianity started right from 1910 when Thangkai and Lungpau were converted on the 1<sup>7th</sup> March, 1910. They became the first Christians in Churachandpur district. By 1951, the Vaiphei were about 67 percent and by 1991 they become cent per cent Christians.

The belief in the world beyond or life after death was instrumental in moulding the cultural norms and values. This is one factor which determined the people in favour of the new religion. The idea of heaven and hell proclaimed by the missionaries did work in their favour which the people digested and became closer to it.

Another receptivity factor for the new religion was inculcation of the use of a major cultural element- *Khuang* (drum) in praise and worship by the new converts, whose intrinsic value cannot be denied in their society. During their pre-Christian eras, they used to compose such as war songs, patriotic songs and romantic poems accompanied by drums and traditional dancing. As a matter of fact, any kind of group songs in the church or *Lengkhawm* are always leaded by the drummer.

The time factor also was another important factor of receptivity. Christianity was introduced to them at a time when no other religion was preached to them.

However, there are certain drawbacks on the work of the Christian missionaries initiated a century ago. They suggested that their way of life was better and superior; and labeled the tribal customs such as dances, songs, folklores etc. as pagan and sinful. Hence, the people were forced to feel inferior and ignorant. Parental control over their children has diminished; the high morality among the youths and justice in spite of their illiteracy degraded over the years. Many became victims of allurements of the world. The community centred-life, the joys of sharing has been relegated to the back bench.

It is also desirable to mention that this study has its obvious shortcomings and its own limitations mainly due to paucity of materials and vastness of the area under investigation or study. The changes as a result of cultural contact with the British and the Christian missionaries along with education that have been indicated in this study may not be all the reasons responsible for the changing Vaiphei society. Further studies could be taken up in this respect to ascertain the factors and magnitude of this changing society.

So far as the development of the entire Vaiphei community is concerned, the villagers opined the importance of giving more stress on education. During the time of survey in the field, most of the villagers told that cultural contact and communication are more or less social processes which will come automatically in their social life, through

time. But the advent of Christianity, according to them, is the most important factor for the changes in their society, because along with it comes education. All the Vaiphei are now Christian and majority of the respondents in the sample villages preferred education as the foremost criterion for development of their society. They agreed that after having proper education they can eradicate social evils from their society. Almost all the respondents do not want their children to follow the traditional occupation of their society. Instead they want their children to have a quality education in cities and towns; which, they believed, will develop not only their society but also will lift the economic condition of their family.

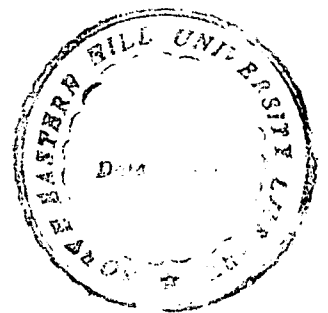
Broadly speaking, Christianity did bring about substantial change in the life and in the society of the Vaiphei tribe. The history of the Christian mission also reveals that it was the educational drive of the missionaries that largely changed and transformed the outlook of the tribe and broadened their world views. The introduction of primary education at several villages created a sense of thirst for more knowledge. Using this educational institution as means of spreading the Christian religion, the missionaries were successful in planting churches wherever schools were established. Apart from educational institutions, medical care began to take shape in the form of dispensaries, resulting into consciousness of health care and sanitation.

It is to be noted in conclusion that the process of change in Vaiphei society, as observed in the field, cannot be strictly regarded as development in the truest sense of the term. However, the agents of change like cultural contact and advent of Christianity, gradually changed the attitude of the Vaiphei in all aspects of life including economy, health care, sanitation, education etc. which are regarded as the development of the tribe. The reason is that this change in attitude in their changing society will ultimately lead to the socio-economic development of their society. It is hoped that this study will provide basic materials for a future in-depth study towards Vaiphei society in Manipur. Nevertheless, there is enough scope for improvement upon the present work and this requires further research and detail field study covering every nook and corner of the Vaiphei settlements in the state.

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 Inter by

*In loving memory of my former supervisor*

*Prof. R. Gopalakrishnan*



# Changing Vaiphei Society: A Geographical Study

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the  
Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)

Soilalsiam

Supervisor  
Dr. N.K. Sinha

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DECLARATION

I, Mr. Soilalsiam hereby declare that the thesis topic entitled “*Changing Vaiphei Society: A Geographical Study*” is a bonafide research work done by me for fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D). This has not been previously published or submitted to any other University for any other degree. This is being submitted to the Department of Geography, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong with a request to be placed before examiners for evaluation.

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The 25<sup>nd</sup> November 2009  
Shillong.

  
Soilalsiam

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CHAPTER-I  
INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER-I

### 1.1 Introduction

Geographers have long been accustomed to study the change of landscape wrought by nature itself and indiscriminate use of nature due to biotic pressure. However, there is a general tendency among geographers to treat tribes as homogenous category under such broad terms as 'Scheduled Tribes'. Numerically small tribes, often lesser known, are often neglected ignoring vital aspects of their demographic, social and economic problems. This is true in the North-Eastern region of India, particularly in the state of Manipur; which has a legion of numerically small tribes. These smaller and lesser-known groups, no doubt, contribute to the building up of a culture complex. But their contribution often goes unnoticed and un-acknowledged. Unfortunately, many such groups, by virtue of their subordinate position, face a variety of problems ranging from the preservation of their socio-cultural identity and adjustment to economic ones. All these problems are reflected in their demographic structure and behavior.

The organization use and meaning of space is a product of social transformation, translation and experience. Organization of space is a social product. It arises from purposeful social practice (Soja,1980). Space and spatial organization are concepts that are basic to geography. Spatial organization is the sum total and result of spatial process and structure. Structure and process are cartulary causal and result in the evolution of particular spatial organization. People generate spatial processes in order to satisfy their needs and desires and these processes create spatial structures, which in turn influence and modify spatial processes. Activities of the people generated by different processes interact with each other depending on the different attributes of places and distance is the key determining factor in the generation of such processes and evolution and spread of activities in space. (Raza & Ahmad, 1977).

The organization of space in tribal regions may, thus, be seen as a manifestation of the ways of adaptation to the environmental setting. These are determined by the historical process of peopling of the traditional habitats by homogenous clan and kinship groups. As a result of their initial occupancy of the habitats, clusters tribal hamlets acquired the character of a monolithic tribal core region. A hill range served as a boundary separating the core region of one tribal group from the other (Mackenzie, 1988). The placement of tribes in spatial segments may be an outcome of a social history of contact, confrontation and contestation between the ethnically differentiated tribes and between them and the peasant groups, who hastened the process of their displacement from the river valleys. Any understanding of social change remains incomplete without a proper conceptualization of its spatial parameters.

It is a common place of understanding that the nature, direction and pace of social change are never uniform in its spatial coverage. The organized and socially concretized space provides friction to a uniform spread of social change; thereby making social transformation spatially fragmented response. The geographical distribution of different social categories differentiates the impact of social change as diverse categories have different capacities to respond to the changes affecting them (Chandra, 1991). Thus, the rate of social change may be phenomenal in areas which have experienced large scale agrarian development historically, whereas, the dominantly tribal areas have been only marginally exposed to such changes. However, a geographical variation in social transformation depends to a great extent on the policy measures in developmental interventions. But these changes have neither been uniform in social coverage nor in spatial extent. The pace and direction of social change would be determined to a great extent by the limits imposed by the nature or human freedom and the capacity of man to overcome such constraints through his own creativity and dynamism.

## 1.2 Concept of Social Change

Change and uncertainty are characteristics of human society, and various forces are at work to make change inevitable. The tempo and extent of change vary from society to society and from country to country. Some parts of India have experienced speedy transformation due to industrialization while some rural areas have change very slowly. Some of the tribal societies in Africa and some Pacific islands have remained relatively static for centuries. There are changes in human composition in society, institutional structures and functions undergo transformation, and their technological and ideological perspective changes. Social change is the development of new meanings and values, or the substitution of new ones for old, and thus it involves changes in the characteristic behavioural patterns in society. Social change is a fairly large-scale transformation in a number of related meaning and values affecting the behaviour of most people in a society. In a sense it involves a large number of persons engaged in activities which differ from what they were doing before, or what their parents used to do. Social change is essentially a change of social structure like the population changes and changes in the relationship of the components of the social structure. Individual in a society occupy different position of play different roles over a period of times. The position and role, which the individual has also, change over a period of time. In static society, the status and role of the individual do not undergo noticeable change from generation to generation. However, such static societies are rare in the modern world. A dynamic society is one where basic social changes occur. Structural aspects like status and role are measurable to a certain degree, and aspect like employment, place of residence, educational attainments, income, marital status; numbers of children are taken into account.

Social change is often associated with progress, but this is not widely accepted as change can be either for good or for bad, and hence this is to be treated as neutral. Progress

means change in as positive valuation. In the post-independence era, India has undergone rapid social changes, most of which are planned changes. Similarly, Western Europe and North America have undergone tremendous social changes since the Industrial Revolution. Rapid industrialization, improved means of transport and other means of communication, industrialized agriculture and urbanization have created tremendous changes. Cities develop distinctive social climates. As urbanization increase this social climate diffuses until the ideas and practices radiate throughout the society.

The study of social change in modern India is vast and complex which has not only a fathomless historical depth and plurality of traditions but is also engulfed in a movement of nationalistic aspiration under which concepts of change and modernization are loaded with ideological meaning and an adequate understanding of it will require the collaboration, for many years, of a number of scholar in such divers fields as economic, social, politics, education, geography and sociology.

Associate with Sankritization are Srinivas concepts of 'Westernization' and 'Secularization'. Srinivas (1962:55) used the term "Westernization" to characterize the 'changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels...technology, institutions, ideology and values'. Thus, westernization refers to all cultural changes and institutional innovation in India as this country came into political and cultural contacts with the Western nations.

'Change' is an event that occurs when something passes from one state or phase to another. It is a rational difference between states; especially between states before and after some event. Change, in a geographical perspective, can be defined as become different in essence, losing one's original nature partly or wholly. In other words, become different in some particular way, without permanently losing former characteristics or essence.

Geographer perspective of 'change' is seen over space i.e. spatial variation. Any meaningful understanding of social change, therefore, is not possible without an insight into the very nature of changing human-environment relationship in its correct perspective. Change in the social system and structure inevitably brings about transformation in the very nature of the man-environment relationship. Any change in a society has to take place, at least, initially in close correspondence and co-operation with the natural environment. The natural factors may contribute to the first order of social differentiation; but with the progress of mankind, the grip of natural constraints gradually loosens, while the grip of social constraints gradually hardens. The pace and direction of social change would be determined to a great extent by the limits imposed by the nature or human freedom and the capacity of man to overcome such constraints through his own creativity and dynamism.

The process of social change within the tribal societies have consequently operated at a low key, perpetuating the older mode far too long and thus leading to a socio-economic stagnation of a high order. The rigorous environment acted as a constraint and fostered physical and social isolation for ages. The tribal communities have been by and large brought under the influence of exogenetic forces only marginally (Ansari, 1991). Thus, over time the tribal communities seems to have developed a mode of living generically linked to the ecological conditions in the enclaves which have provided them with a resources base and have favoured the survival of their way of life with marginal modifications. It is in these enclaves that the tribes have shown its strong tendency of clustering and concentration.

The purpose of the study is to examine the changing social pattern of Vaiphei society in Manipur, from their early days to the present day, which had developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910. Here mentioned may be made that Christianity per se did not bring change to the Vaiphei directly; but it brings along a formal or western education that paved the way for the

tribe to change for the better. The changes are visible in the educational, political social and economic life of the people. The objective of examining these changes is to ascertain how far the dimension of changes had an impact on the Vaiphei people and the role of space and environment in it. The aspects of change studied here are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative change includes changes in the tools and artifacts; modes of socialization, in their language (writing) and in their moral concepts. The quantitative changes are the changes in population, educational and recreational organizations, occupational structure, birth-rate and sex ratio. To crystallize the subject matter of the study, the traditional social structure such as family, religious, political, economic and the overall social institutions of the Vaiphei, as it existed during the pre-Christian era, is studied in their village community level. As a matter of fact, in dealing with the present, we cannot ignore the past, because the present Vaiphei community is the result of a series of change in the history of the Vaiphei community. Unless this is done, the focus of the present study will remain vague and inadequate.

### **1.3 Review of Literature**

Among the geographers, the study of social change is relatively recent development. Although some aspects of social change and economic development were done by sociologists and economists earlier but the spatial context was missing. Most of the works are of very general nature and lack in depth study of any particular area. Relevant literatures have been reviewed here to have a better comprehension of the research problem. The important scholars in the field of social change includes Lapiere(1965), Moore(1987), Singh(1986), Kuppaswamy(1990) and Srinivas(1972).

Ahmad (1999), states that the origin of the socio-cultural diversity in India lies in the physico-geographical framework of the sub-continent. Societies have been undergoing wide ranging changes throughout history, although the pace of change has not been uniform in all

regions or among all sections of our society. Processes, such as education, urbanization, penetration of market forces, expansion of administration, spread of political institutions, particularly since independence have all induced the society towards change.

Ansari (1991) gives tribal demography of Manipur as a whole. He emphasized right from the in-migration of the tribes into the state, the growth of each tribe, their habitat economy and society. He examines such information as death, birth, actual rate of growth, areal distribution, and classification according to their occupations and also literacy and about socio-economic conditions of the different tribes. Ansari pointed out that the two most important factors, which effected changes in tribal life, is conversion to Christianity and spread of education. These changes have raised the tribal communities to a higher social pedestal. Apart from these two factors, the Five Year Plans also greatly contributed to the advancement in the socio-economic of the tribes.

Breese (1969) observed that developing countries are experiencing rapid population explosion resulting in large-scale unemployment in the rural country side. This has generated incessant swing of migration from one region to another or from rural to urban and industrial centre in search of job opportunities. Rural-urban migration has special significance for the developing countries, as this constitutes a major component of the process of urbanization taking place in those parts of the world.

Casette (1979) examined the spatial temporal dynamics of out migrations, economic development and population growth in Europe during the war period. The massive movement occurred as Europe went through social and economic changes similar to the ones currently in the less developed countries.

Das (1985) unfolds the richness of social anthropological data in Manipur and seeks to examine the relationship between the various tribes and the Meiteis, who dominate the scene. By virtue of their dominant position, the Meiteis probably influenced the course of

the tribal history in Manipur more than the tribes themselves did. But, however successful they might be in exerting political influence, it could not affect the core of tribal cultures. If culture simply means 'a distinctive way of life', the tribes were definitely not without it. He also emphasized on the trends of change among the tribes of Manipur.

Green (1974) in a study of temporal model of migration in Nigeria postulated that the principal population movement took place from more developed areas to less developed areas of an agricultural country possessing vast and virtually uninhabited parts of virgin land.

Harbison and Myers (1963) have identified three methods of human resource development for socio-economic change: (i) by formal education, beginning with primary and ending with university education, (ii) by on-the-job through systematic or informal training programmes in employing institutions, (iii) by self development as individual seeks to acquire greater knowledge, skills or capacities through preparation on their own initiative by taking formal courses by reading or by learning from others in informal contacts.

H. Ian Hogbin (1958) gives a very lucid and illustrative treatise on social change. He explains different aspects of social change indicating in detail the approach to the study of change, voluntary acceptance of change, enforced change and chain reactions and changing institutions. Hogbin (1958), in his descriptive study of the village of Busama, North-eastern New Guinea, also described the changes brought about by war and the enforced changes on the natives of Busama as soon as the foreign rulers ruled the country. There was change in money economy, in the status and leadership due to the impact of government machinery and changes in the religious beliefs as the natives took to Christianity.

Captain K.A. Khupzathang (2000) unfolds the origin and classification of the Vaiphei into different sub clans in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Kaihau Vaiphei (1999) emphasizes on the early settlement sites of the tribe in Manipur and their probable route of

migration from the east, i.e. Chin Hills in Myanmar. He also highlights the post migration of the tribes within the North-Eastern Region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Khaitingen (2001) throw lights on the probable route of migration of the tribe has taken in the historical past. He also stressed some information about the customs of the tribe.

In 'Social Change', Lapiere (1965), described that social change are not in any sense a product of the society *per se* or a consequence of some universal or unvarying law of social life. It is something different from the changes that take place in individual organism. An organic change invariably takes place in all organisms as an essential law and follows a particular pattern of birth, growth, maturity and death. But social change occurs as a result of social life itself- emanating from the common way of living. There is no inherent invisible principle or law that causes social change. Of course, social change is not a direct product of society, as society is essentially a system that attempts to maintain its own structure and is generally resistant to change.

Mibang (1994), present the fundamental features of the social, economic, religious and cultural life of the Adi Minyong people and the influence of various factors responsible for socio-economic change. He mentioned that social change is brought about to a great extent by changes in economy. The change in the system of cultivations has brought in a world of changes in the socio-economic life of the people. The advancement of technology is affecting the tribal societies in various directions. One of the most impressive features is the attainment of greater efficiency and speed. Due to advance technology, productivity has greatly increased. This has made the people adjust themselves to the new tempo of life. Villagers are now losing their attachment to their villages, and are moving large numbers to the cities in quest of a better life. They are sending to schools hoping that they could move up in the socio-economic scale.

Milton S. Sangma (1987) described the works of Christian missionaries in the region that drastically change the socio-economic conditions of the people. When the missionaries open preach in the streets, bazaars, and in the villages timing millions of people failed to bear any fruits, they switched on to other methods such as opening of schools, publication of religious texts and opening of dispensaries and other humanitarian works. He described the history of education, literature, medical care and other humanitarian works as organized and run by the missionaries as adjuncts to their basic objective of evangelization.

According to Moore(1987), social change is unpredictable and yet it involves some elements for predictability. New orders or patterns ripen within the old order and thereby sustains some of its elements. Change is neither a break-point nor a destruction-point. Through the process, the older order gets transformed to new ones, retaining some of its earlier elements in some form or the other. Some other elements of future are predictable because the changes will be the product of plans or deliberate intent and action.

Prothero (1969) in his study of West Africa, observed that economic opportunities in relatively developed areas offer an incentive for migration, but this is possible only when conditions are not favourable in areas of origin for stimulating the people to take up the employment opportunities offered elsewhere. Bartle (1980) examined the patterns of rural-urban migration in Ghana and emphasized the role of socio-economic motivation.

Sanajaoba (1995) gives ethnographic accounts of the Hill tribes of Manipur, who together with the Meiteis constitute the indigenous people of Manipur. In this compilation, various authors have highlighted the social and cultural life of the different tribes of Manipur. One of the authors, by name Doliand Capvung, described the social institution of the Vaiphei tribe in their traditional form. Sen (1992), attempts to provide a brief description of the state of Manipur, its districts and also brief ethnological accounts of the different tribes of the state. The Vaiphei are traditionally independent and male dominated society.

Vaiphei (1975) described the historical, social and economic background of the Vaiphei as well as their traditional religion. He also gives a brief account on the impact of Christianity upon the social, cultural and religious life of the tribe. Christianity, through which literacy has been introduced by the missionaries, was the driving force of changing Vaiphei society.

Vander Camp (1968) observed that unemployment played an important role and substantial impact on the overall rate of geographical mobility in Canada and particularly in the spatial pattern of migration to such areas in which migration adds to their population. Inter regional mobility is closely related to differential provincial incomes and negatively related to distance, received impressive and empirical support in Canada.

Verma,(1990) present a glimpse into the historical perspective of Indian tribes, their demography, constitutional provisions relating to their protection and development as well as problems and challenges of tribal development. He pointed out that the economy of the tribes is mainly based on agriculture and forests. Due to unauthorized alienation of tribal land and deprivation of their forest rights, the tribal economy has been seriously affected. The main causes of their backwardness are exploitation and illiteracy.

Vumson Suantak gives comprehensive analysis of the people mostly known as Chin-Kuki-Mizo. It analyses how these people migrated from Western China-Myanmar to different states of the North-East and why they migrated to the rugged hill areas they occupy now. He also emphasizes on the sub tribes of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo and their historical backgrounds.

Zelinsky (1971) has studied the migration component of population in a completely different perspective. He applied the principle of spatial innovations to the laws of migration in his hypothesis of the transition mobility.

Zelinsky's idea spatial innovation has also been supported by Lee (1969) who emphasized the need of restrictions to control the volume and rate of migrations as they tend to increase with time. There is a definite pattern of empirical regularity in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history and these irregularities are associated with the modernization process.

#### **1.4 Statement of the problem**

The process of social change, historically, has not operated at the same pace uniformly over space and their manifestations have been determined to a great extent by the exigencies of geographical considerations. The geographical space as it is organized and translated by human practice provides a friction to the uniform spread of socio-economic change. It is in this context that the problem of social change among the tribal population assumes considerable significance. Historically speaking, the tribal population has suffered diverse degrees of isolation as they are in hilly and geographically negative areas and away from the main foci of human civilization and progress, which experienced unprecedented changes in their society and economy. Difficult environment permitted marginal agricultural development only in a few favoured parts of the valley bottom. The hilly area also witnessed a unique survival of the primitive modes of economies like gathering and shifting cultivation. Under such conditions, the process of change operated at a low key and only marginally integrated with developed economies of the plains. Large agrarian surplus production in the plain areas produced unprecedented changes in the socio-economic sphere leading to social changes of a very high order; lack of such a surplus generation in the hilly and tribal areas experienced such changes only at a low key.

Before the advent of the colonial power to this region, the tribal communication remained almost segregated. There was little scope for mixing together with other people of the country. As such, in the early days, tribal communities in the hill areas were left alone to

lead a life according to their own ways of life, following their own customary laws in all matters of their activities. But the situation changed considerably with the contacts with the colonial economy (Gori, 1984). The British interest in the resource base exposed the tribes to modern developments and process of change. So, the year 1891 forms a significant landmark in the history of the hill tribes of Manipur, for in that year the English had come to the state and established their political domination. During the next sixty years till 1947, which marks the end of the British colonial rule in India, far-reaching changes had been introduced into the tribal society transforming them in many ways. Again, with the advent of Christianity in 1910, the tribes of Churachandpur, specially the Vaiphei, were obliged to break their age-old isolation. The most spectacular achievement of the Christian missionaries was the introduction of western education or spread of literacy and exposing the tribes to a variety of modernizing influences. However, the presence of negative aspects of changes in their society also cannot be denied. Despite all these changes, there are also some traditional aspects which are still continuing; if not, transformed into different style according to time.

The purpose of the study is to examine the changing social pattern of Vaiphei society in Manipur, from their earlier times to the present day. The society has developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910. The aspects of change to be studied here will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative change will include changes in the tools and artifacts; modes of socialization, in their language (writing) and in their moral concepts. The quantitative changes are the changes in population, educational and recreational organizations, occupational structure, birth-rate and death-rates. The early history of the Vaiphei is based on legends, traditions, customs and beliefs. There is a common belief that their ancestor emigrated from a place called 'Khul', somewhere in

Southern China; more particularly from the Tan Valley in Kansu province. Some researchers claimed that the Vaiphei are one of the tribes settled in the Tibetan foothills after their exodus from China. Due to some socio-political and economic reasons, they gradually move down along the Chindwin valley and spread in Kachin and Shan states of the then Burma at about 996 A.D. It is a well-known fact that people with low socio-economic status are more mobile as they have little landed property to tie them to their native or original place (Vaiphei, 1975). Moreover, insecurity was the order of the day during the early history of the Vaiphei. During those days, there were no fixed boundary and frontiers of kingdoms. Each ethnic group would like to have complete authority on the land of their occupation and would preserve their land from any interference from any other groups. But smaller or weaker groups would be overpowered and driven away by the more powerful ones. Thus, inter-tribal or even inter-clan feuds were common. So the perpetual fear of attack by other social groups compelled the Vaiphei to move to safer and defensible location in the interior. Most of their migrations were happening under the threat of subjugation. They also move to new places for better and adequate land for cultivation. The areas, which have acute population pressure upon their limited cultivable land resources, thus, generate out migration. Apart from all these, nomadism was prevalent among the Vaiphei and this migratory spirit scattered them. Even in the few areas they occupied some decades back, they have been either outnumbered or overshadowed by other ethnic groups. All these compelled the Vaiphei people to break and scatter resulting in dispersion over different areas. In this study, attempt will be made to identity the area of concentration and areas of dispersions of the Vaiphei settlements after all those waves of migration.

The tribe is at desperate stage of their social evolution and practices diverse modes of economies taking advantages of the rich natural resource base of their habitation. With the advance of time, they have been developing new attitudes, new ideas and institutions so

as to make their society richer and vigorous through the process of cultural assimilation. Given the historical and social complexities of development in tribal areas, the present study aims to evaluate the degree and nature of such changing social pattern of the Vaiphei society of Manipur.

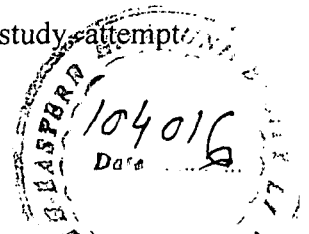
### 1.5 Objective

In the light of the above discussion, the present study examined the level of social change in the Vaiphei community to the new situation from the old, which had developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910. Thus, the basic objectives of the study are:

1. to trace the origin and the process of migration of the Vaiphei in the past.
2. to reconstruct the traditional structure of Vaiphei community as it existed before the introduction of Christianity and to identify the geographical space of the Vaiphei settlements; and
4. to examine the salient social changes and its impacts in Vaiphei society.

### 1.6 Research Issues

Given the spatial dichotomy in the distribution of social categories in Manipur, it will be interesting to study the pattern of social change through the ages of the social composition of the tribal segment of the population. It is true that a lot of changes take place in the hill districts of Manipur in the past few decades. Education as an agent of bringing all round change has been greatly influenced by historical, social and environmental factors in the study area. It is a very useful attribute for measuring the level of change in a society and its attainments are essential to gear up backward society towards an enlightened one. Here too, education, along with Christianity is both the main cause as well as the main consequence of social change in Vaiphei society. Therefore, in the proposed study, attempt



will be made to carry out a rational analysis on literacy level and it may be worthwhile to test the following research issues:

1. The geographical setting influences the processes of migration, distribution and the general pattern of change in Vaiphei society.
2. The physical mobility of the Vaiphei community brings it into contact with other communities and leads to change in their socio-economic organization.
3. Literacy not only enlightened the individual, but also brings a definite impact on the existing social and cultural spheres of the community as a whole.

### **1.7 Study Area**

Manipur is a small state in the periphery of North Eastern Region covering an area of 22,372 Sq.Km. which constitutes only 0.7% of the total land surface of India, with a population of 23,88,634 (2001 census). The State is divided into nine districts of which five districts are in the hills. Manipur is lying between 23°80'N to 25°68'N latitudes and longitudes of 93°03'E to 94°78'E; bounded on the north by Nagaland on the west by North Cachar hills and Cachar districts of Assam, on the east by Myanmar and on the southwest by Mizoram. Manipur has a boundary line of 854 Kilometres; out of which 353 Kilometres is an international boundary shared by Myanmar. Location of Manipur is of considerable geo-political importance (Dun, 1992). It is the melting point of the South-East Asia, not only in geographical sense, but also in historical and cultural sense too. Mountain ranges of about 20,089 Sq. Km lengths surround the ovals shaped valley of 2,238 Sq. Km. looking like a flat-alluvial lake. In geographic classification, it may be simply divided into a valley at the centre and the hills surrounding it. The two regions set the geographic limits for two types of cultural phenomena. From the geological point of view, the valley is of recent origin. It is believed to have form out of 'a large lake which has been gradually filled up by deposits from the surrounding heights'. [W.McCulloch]

Manipur is facing an enormous growth of population from 2,84,465 in 1901 to 23,88,634 persons in 2001. Out of the total increase, more than two-third has been added during the last three decades; and at present, the increase is taking place at a rate of 41,620 persons per year (Laiba, 1992). An interesting paradox about Manipur is that whereas nine-tenth of its territory is constituted by hills and only one-tenth by the valley; only about one-third of the population lives in the hills and two-third in the valley.

The tribal people of Manipur are multi-lingual and pluralistic group of people. There are as many as 29 scheduled tribes in the state. According to 2001 Census, the tribal population is nearly 34% of the state's total population. Though the tribe under study is distributed unevenly in almost all the districts of the state, their main concentration is in Churachandpur district. In order to get a clear picture of their changing society, six villages have been selected for a case study; three villages in their area of concentration and another three villages in their area of dispersion, which will be described in the latter chapter.

District Churachandpur is located in the Southern part of Manipur between the Manipur river in the East and the Barak river in the West; covering an area of 4,570 Square Kilometres. It lies within the latitudes of 24°N to 24°40'N and the longitudes 93°E to 94°E. Churachandpur district assumes an isolated entity not only in its geographical settings but also in peopling by virtue of the land. The whole of Churachandpur district is hilly and is covered with rough and uneven terrain that has a narrow scope for rapid economic development. Due to the economic disadvantage, the region is thinly inhabited by several tribal groups whose main occupation is *Jhum* agriculture, which depends solely on the vagaries of the Monsoon.

Senapati district was earlier known as Manipur north district. On November, 14<sup>th</sup> 1969 Manipur North district was formed out of the erstwhile Manipur district and was inaugurated on 16 November of the same year. It was renamed Senapati district on 15<sup>th</sup> July

1983. The district borders Nagaland on the North, Thoubal and Bishenpur district with Imphal from the southern boundary line, Ukhrul district on the east and Tamenglong district in the west. Senapati district is mainly a hilly region varying in altitude from 1061 to 1788 metres generally. The total area of this district is 3771 square kilometers. It is made up of three constituent sub-divisions namely; Mao-Maram, Sadar Hills East and Sadar Hills West. The total population of the district according to 1991 census was 2,08,406 persons, and in 2001 it increases to 379,214 persons. The district is essentially rural in terms of its population composition the scheduled tribe population in the district as per 1991 census is enumerated at 175206 persons i.e. constituting about 9.5 percent of the total tribal population of the state.

### **1.8 Data Base and Methodology**

In geographical studies, it is quite possible that necessary spatial data will be made available from different sources. The basic data for this study is collected from various documentary sources; published and unpublished. The study is based upon data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data is based on a comprehensive field observations seeking information about occupations, educations, social and cultural aspects; and also discussions with eminent elders and household questionnaires. Field data is especially collected pertaining to migration, size of family, literacy level, age-group, occupational structure and changes in their society. For intensive study, four villages have been studied in order to have a clearer picture of the changes undergone by the Vaiphei as a whole and also the present scenario of the socio-economic condition of the tribe. The total sample comprises of 279 households with a total population of 1,473 persons in four villages. The methods for collecting data specifically for this study are:

- i) Experiences and Observation,
- ii) Interviews, and

iii) Filling in household census schedules for each family.

The secondary data, on the other hand, includes census reports and statistical handbooks, published and unpublished literatures, journals, magazines and newspapers. For the study of the historical background and process of migration, books and seminar papers written in Vaiphei and other regional dialects as well as English by various authors are consulted. Based on this information, a map of their route of migration is prepared. The study area being agriculturally backward, traditional aspects of economic life are more prominent here. Therefore, the following variables are studied for assessing the changing social pattern of the Vaiphei society:

- (i) occupational structure, (ii) distribution, (iii) literacy,
- (iv) sex ratio, (v) percentage of main workers, (vi) family size,
- (vii) dependency ratio, (viii) health, infrastructural facilities, etc.

Materials for reconstructing early Vaiphei history and their migration are extremely difficult to obtain due to lack of written records. As such, the task of reconstruction of their history and migration has been done mostly relying on informal interview with older persons having profound knowledge of early Vaiphei history i.e. oral tradition. To analyze the distributional pattern of the Vaiphei population, various census handbooks are used. Apart from these, information is based on observations, experiences, church sources and visits to the core and peripheries of the Vaiphei settlements. In order to understand present distributions, maps are prepared by using suitable cartographic methods whenever it is found necessary and applicable. The present social status of the tribe is analyzed by graphical representation of their occupational structures and literacy levels of the four study villages. The study is conducted with a time frame since the coming of Christian missionaries, who inculcate western education system in the area till recent time, during which the change is examined and analyzed. Attempt is also made to understand and compare the living

conditions of the people based on family size and occupational structures. The core district of their concentration and their peripheral areas are identified by using quantitative techniques. The core district is the area where the percentage of the Vaiphei population is most substantial while the peripheral areas are those areas where there is a sizeable population of the Vaiphei.

### **1.9 Chapterisation**

The thesis is incorporated into six chapters as below:-

**Chapter I:** Introduction: the introductory chapter attempts to conceptualize the needs and relevance of the present study such as statement of the problem, objectives, selection of the study area, hypothesis, data-base and methodology adopted in the study and review of literature.

**Chapter II:** The second chapter offered a general description of the physical setting of the study area. The physiographic, climate, drainages, soil types of the state will be discuss in order to understand the role of the physical conditions of the study area on the people better. Attempt is also made to analyze the social and demographic composition of the study area; and also the relationship between the geographical setting and process of migration and distribution of Vaiphei in the study area.

**Chapter III:** This chapter highlighted the traditional institutions of the Vaiphei society of Manipur viz. the society, marriage, village, dormitory, dress, customs, status of women etc. side by side with their economy; so as to understand the changes they have gone through. It also elucidates their myth of origin, the dispersal from their original place and the process of migration in the historical past, based on different views, to understand their historical and cultural background. It also deals with the present pattern of distribution of the Vaiphei, and in the process, the core and peripheries of their settlement areas are identified.

**Chapter IV:** This chapter analyzed the changes in social economy of the Vaiphei tribe on various social dynamics of human life; as it existed on the eve of British occupation the hill areas of Manipur towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D, and in particular, before the advent of Christianity in 1910 to the present. This chapter attempts to take up the methodological approach of the study. Attempt is also made to highlight the factors that led to the socio-economic changes in their society.

**Chapter V:** This chapter assessed the impact of the major factors of change in their society through the ages i.e. Christianity with education, in terms of literacy and health standards of the tribe. Attempt is also made to explain the responses to this change to their traditional social order.

**Chapter VI:** The Villages of Study: this chapter deals with the four study villages in terms of their family size, house type, occupational structure, dependency ratio, age and sex composition, sex-ratio, and literacy level. This chapter, not only examine the present scenario of the socio-economic condition of the Vaiphei, but also the aspects in which it has maintained the continuity.

**Chapter VII:** Summary and Conclusion is a summary of all the five chapters and conclusion of the thesis.

## CHAPTER-II

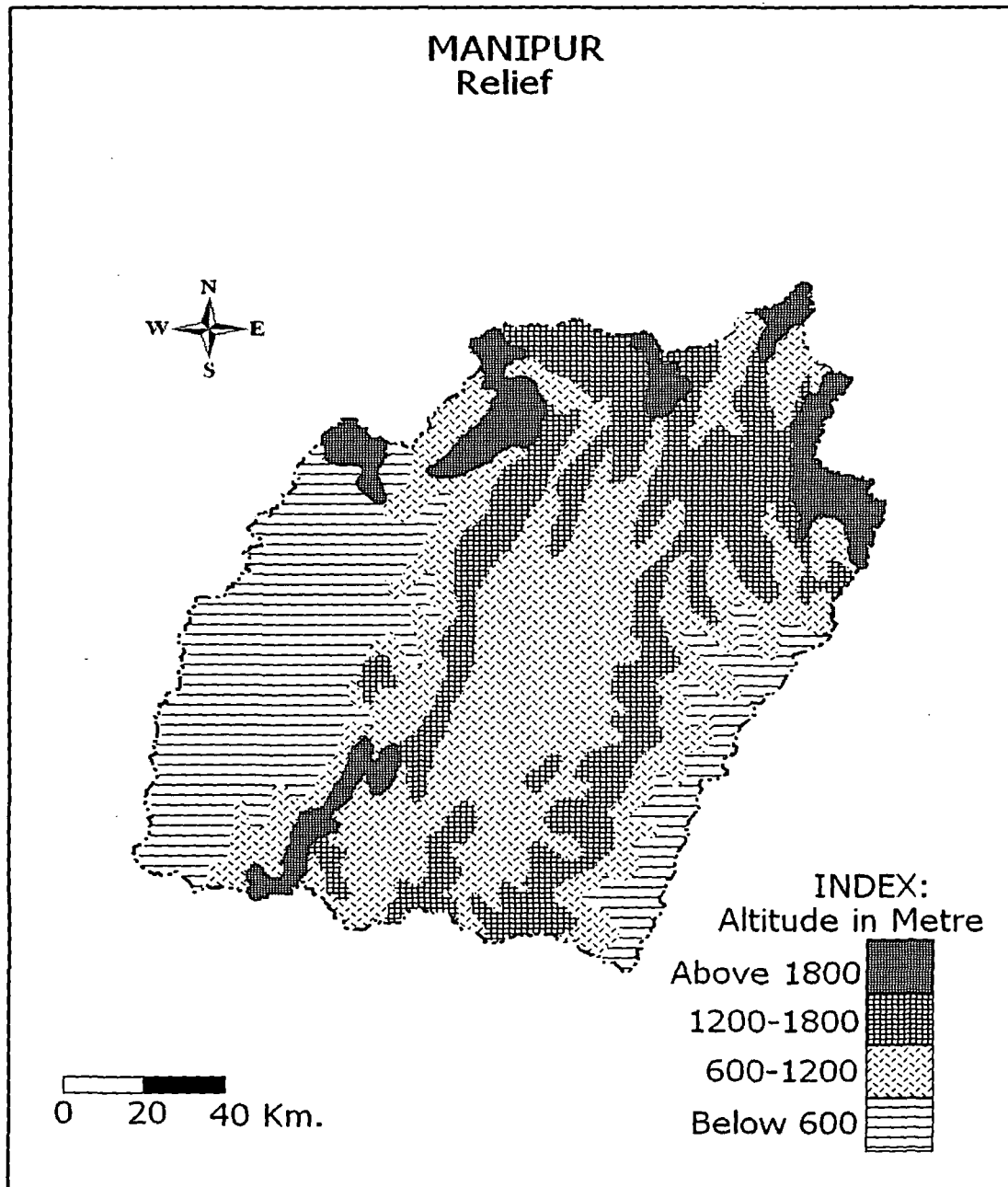
### Physical Setting of the Study Area

#### 2.1: The Land

Manipur, one of the seven sister states of the North Eastern Region of India, is an isolated hill-crest state stretching between Longitudes 93.03°E and 94.78°E and Latitudes 23.80°N and 25.68°N; bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the west by North Cachar hills and Cachar districts of Assam, on the east by Myanmar and on the southwest by Mizoram. Having a varied history from the earliest time, it came under the British rule as a princely state after the defeat in the Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891. Only after the Indian Independence in 1947, the princely state of Manipur was merged into the Indian Union on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 and became a full-fledged state of India on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972. It is a charming place encircled by nine hill ranges on all sides with a small and beautiful oval valley at the centre.

Manipur is a small state in the periphery of North Eastern Region covering an area of 22,372 Square Kilometres which constitutes only 0.7 Percent of the total land surface of India, with a population of 23,88,634 (2001 census). The State is divided into nine districts of which five districts are in the hills. Manipur has a boundary line of 854 Kilometres; out of which 353 Kilometres is an international boundary shared by Myanmar. Location of Manipur in space and time is of considerable geo-political importance. It is the melting point of the South-East Asia, not only in geographical sense, but also in historical and cultural sense too. Mountain ranges of about 20,089 Square Kilometres lengths surround the oval shaped valley of 2,238 Square Kilometres looking like a flat-alluvial lake. In geographic classification, it may be simply divided into a valley at the centre and the hills surrounding it. The two regions set the geographic limits for two types of cultural phenomena. From the

geological point of view, the valley is of recent origin. It is believed to have formed out of 'a large lake which has been gradually filled up by deposits from the surrounding heights'<sup>1</sup>.



Map No. 1

Manipur is facing an enormous growth of population from 2,84,465 in 1901 to 23,88,634 persons in 2001. Out of the total increase, more than two-third has been added during the last three decades; and at present, the increase is taking place at a rate of 41,620 persons per year. An interesting paradox about Manipur is that whereas nine-tenth of its

territory is constituted by hills and only one-tenth by the valley; only about one-third of the population lives in the hills and two-third in the valley. The overwhelming majority of the hill dwellers belong to the Scheduled Tribes and there are as many as 29 tribal communities in the state, who are at different stages of socio-economic development. The tribal people of Manipur are multi-lingual and pluralistic group of people. There are as many as 29 scheduled tribes in the state. According to 1991 census, the tribal population is 34 Percent of the state's total population and tribal inhabit nine-tenth of the total geographical area, which is a hill portion. The Vaiphei are one of the tribes inhabiting the hill regions of Manipur mainly Churachandpur district and Sadar Hills area of Senapati district. According to 2001 census, the total population of the Vaiphei in Manipur is 27,791. The state of Manipur is splits up naturally into two tracts; the hills and the valley. The hill comprises of five districts of which Churachandpur district is the main study area. Therefore, it will be wise to study the physical environment of the district rather than describing the physical setting of Manipur state as a whole.

According to the surface configuration of Manipur, the state can be broadly divided into two main regions, viz., the Valley Region and the Hilly Region.

### **2.1 (a): The Valley Region**

The Valley Region comprises an area of about 1,843 square kilometers; where 900 meters contour is taken as the outer limit. It is roughly an oval-shaped running about 60 kilometers from North to South and about 32 kilometers from East to West. The elevation of this region varies from 746 meters to 850 meters above mean sea level. This is a flat basin surrounded by hills and the valley extends right up to the foot of these hill ranges in all sides. In the middle of this Valley situated the saucer-like Loktak Lake; which covers an area of about 64 square kilometers in the dry season and about 104 square kilometers during

the rainy season. It is approximately 10 kilometers in length and 8 kilometers in breadth with an average depth of 2 meters.

### **2.1 (b): The Hilly Region**

The hilly region of Manipur which encircle the central valley occupies an area of about 20,571 square kilometers. Geologically; Manipur belongs to the alpine system of young folded mountains which came into existence as a result of the tertiary folding of the sedimentary strata formed in the shallow Tethys Sea, some 40 to 90 million years ago.<sup>2</sup> These hills have a gradual slope towards the south. It has an elevation of about 900 meters to 3000 meters above the mean sea level.<sup>3</sup> They are the off shoots of the mighty Himalayas and constitute the central part of the Indo-Myanmar Mountain system. They are the southward extension of the Naga Hills and consist of a series of parallel young fold ranges. They extend from the Naga Hills in the North to nearly 24°North parallel in the south where they joined the Chin and Mizo hills.<sup>4</sup> The Hill ranges fall into two groups-the Manipur Eastern Hills and the Manipur Western Hills.

The Manipur Eastern Hills forms compact and continuous mountains chains which run along the Indo-Myanmar border for about 200km. and 50 km. wide in the Northern part and 30 km wide in the southern part. Important ranges of the eastern Hills are Mapithel, Chingngai, Mulein etc. and their important peak are Khayangbung (2,833m), Siroi (2,567m) Kachaobung (2,498m) etc. the average height of these hills are about 1,500m above mean sea level.<sup>5</sup>

The Manipur Western Hills consists of parallel ridges and valley and occupy the whole western part of the state; running north to south direction is about 180 km long. It is about 50 km wide in the northern part and 70 km wide in southern part. The hills are relatively higher in the north and west. Its important ranges re Yangpugilong, Daimikilong,

Uningthou, Koubru, Khoupum, Nungba, Kala Naga etc.<sup>6</sup> their important peaks are Tenipu (2,994), Koubru (2,652m), Iso (2660), Tamphaba (2,664m) etc.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.2: Geographical Framework of Churachandpur District**

District Churachandpur is located in the Southern part of Manipur between the Manipur river in the East and the Barak river in the West; covering an area of 4,570 Square Kilometres. It lies within the latitudes of 24°N to 24°40'N and the longitudes 93°E to 94°E. Churachandpur district assumes an isolated entity not only in its geographical settings but also in peopling by virtue of the land. The whole of Churachandpur district is hilly and is covered with rough and uneven terrain that has a narrow scope for rapid economic development. Due to the economic disadvantage, the region is thinly inhabited by several tribal groups whose main occupation is *Jhum* agriculture, which depends solely on the vagaries of the Monsoon.

### **2.2 (a): Geology**

Churachandpur district is considered more or less a virgin region as far as Geological Survey of India is concerned. The whole of Manipur hills are part of the Indo-Myanmar (Burmese) Arc which came into being along with the Himalayan system in the early Tertiary period. The sedimentary strata of the whole region was formed in the shallow Tethys sea more than 40 million years ago and came up during the Tertiary folding. The orogenic movements of the first and the second Himalayan upheavals can be seen from the nature of the present day landscape as Brown and Dey put it:

*The whole of Assam-Arakan Tertiary belt has undergone strong folding, and long anticlinal axes can sometimes be followed for many miles, the more sharply folded ones being associated with thrust faults trending more or less North-East and South-West. Though some anticlinal crests remain intact at the surface, they have been removed at depth by thrusting.*<sup>8</sup>

The formation of the major portions of the Western half of Manipur coincided with the developments of the ancestral domesticated animals. Of all the rock formations of Manipur, the Ukhrul limestones are the oldest rocks being formed during Cretaceous period. The Disang, Barail, Surma and Tipum groups of rocks were formed during Eocene-Miocene period, and the Imphal Alluvium or Imphal valley was formed only as the deposition of the former groups and it is younger by 10,000 years. In Churachandpur district, all these series of rocks, except the Ukhrul lime stones, are found; but some only in small scattered areas.<sup>9</sup> They can be discussed in the following ways:

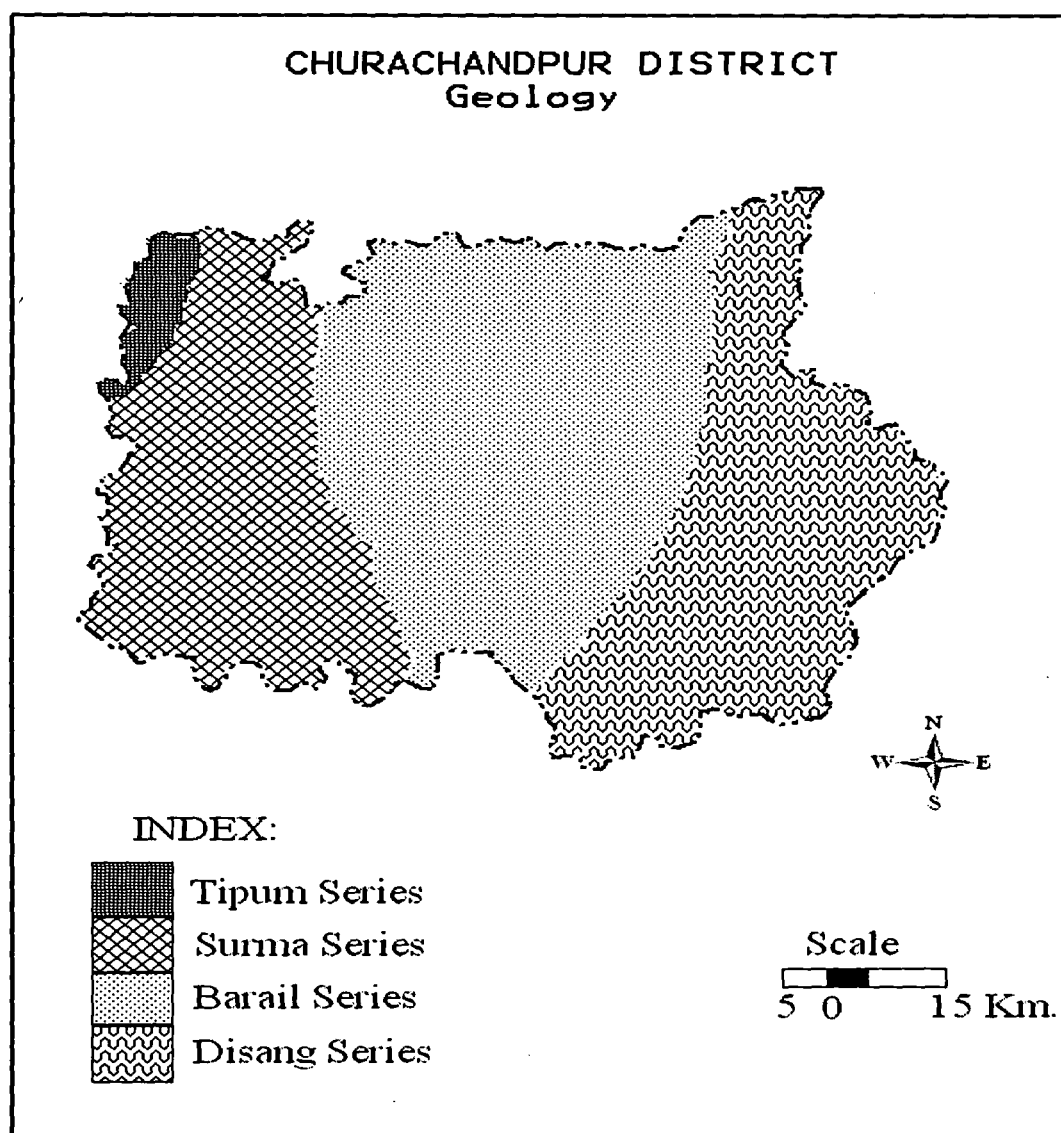
***Disang group:***

The Disang group of rocks were deposited during the Middle and lower Eocene periods. They consist of monotonous sequence of dark grey splintery shales with fine sandstones, minor mudstones and silt stones.<sup>10</sup> The Disang groups of rocks are found all along the eastern half of the Singat Sub-division and almost the whole of the Churachandpur sub-division. The Southern corners of the Singat Sub-division and the Teisieng Hill ranges are characterised by sandstones, minor buffed coloured shale, grit and conglomerates. The Disang beds are much crumpled and have a thickness of about 3,000 metres.<sup>11</sup> Several hill ranges such as the Len Tang (a hill ranges running north to south in between *Gun* (or Imphal River and its tributary the Tuithapi; extending upto Burma in the South) and the Tangbung-Teising-Loikhai (Thangching) extending from the North to Singat through Hiangkot Tang and some other Hill remnants of the last geomorphologic processes are composed of the Disang group of rocks.

***Barail Series:***

The Barail group rocks were formed during the Oligocene to the Upper Eocene periods and this coincided with the first Himalayan upheaval. They overlies the Disang group of rocks and have a thickness of about 4,000 metres. They occupy the whole of Henglep

Sub-division, the greater parts of Thanlon Sub-division and the Western half with some portions in the South-east of Singat Sub-division. The Barail group of rocks consists mostly of well-bedded sandstones, clay, shales, sandy shales and due to the abundance of carbonaceous materials they can be of economic importance.<sup>12</sup> But the area has to undergo further detailed geological survey. The Kailam range, running north to South in the Thanlon Sub-division is not only the most important geological features in the region but also the highest peak in the district. The Kailam peak is recorded as 6606 meters above mean sea level.



Map No. 2

***Surma Series:***

Overlying the Barail Series, the Surma group of rocks have a thickness of about 4,000 to 4,500 metres. They are formed during the Lower Miocene period and equivalent to the upper Nari, Gaj beds of Sindh and the Murree series of Kashmir.<sup>13</sup> The faults scarps along the Western flanks of the Kailam range indicates that the Surma series in the district was formed just as the faulting took place. The Surma group of rocks occupies the whole of the Tipaimukh Sub-division and the South-western corner of the Thanlon Sub-division. The Vangai range, Senvon Tang and Tinsong-Tualbung Tang are the most outstanding ranges composed of the Surma series of rocks. They are composed of sandstones, sandy-shales, mudstones and thin conglomerates, generally free from carbonaceous and arenaceous in their formation.

***Tipum series:***

The Tipum group of rocks are contemporary of the Lower Siwalik system of the Himalaya and were deposited in the Upper and Middle Miocene period. Overlying the Surma series, the Tipum group of rocks have a thickness of about 2,700 metres. They are almost negligible in the whole district as it is found only in the Tuilung (Barak River) basin to the West of the Vangai range of the Tipaimukh Sub-division. The Tipum group of rocks are composed of fairly coarse to gritty, false-bedded, ferruginous sand stones inter-bedded with shales, sandy-shales, clay, mottled sandy clay, fossil wood, lignite and conglomerates.<sup>14</sup>

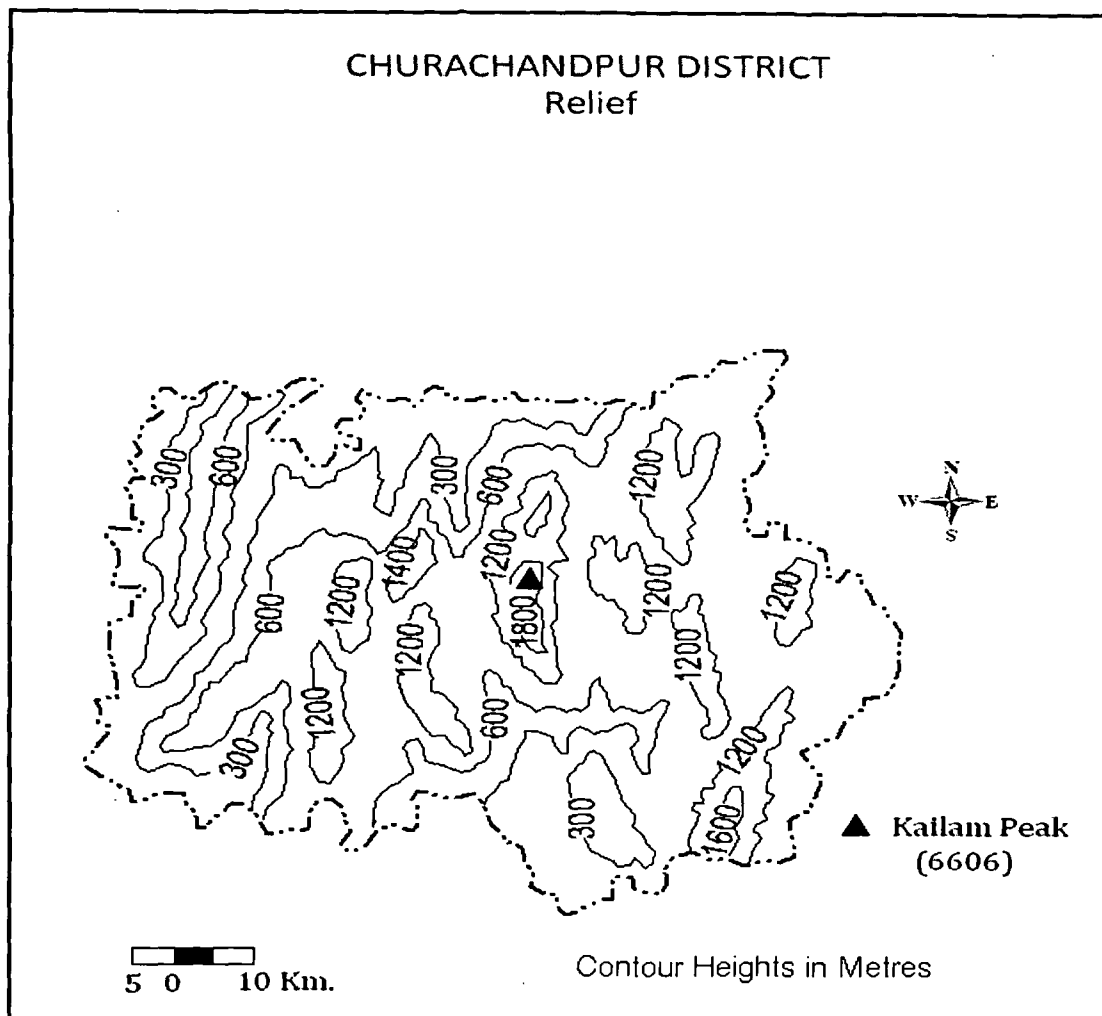
**2.2 (b): Relief**

The hills and mountain ranges of Manipur, as a part of the Eastern High Lands (Purvanchal) of India, runs from North to South up to the Cape Negrais of Myanmar. This highland consists of hill ranges which pass through Eastern Arunachal Pradesh and the states having common borders with Myanmar. The hills of Manipur are that part of the Purvanchal which are in between the Naga Hills in the north and the Mizo Hills in the South; not only in

its location but also in its elevation as the mean elevation of the Purvanchal gradually decreases towards the south. They are the southwards extension of the Naga Hills, the mountain chains which continues in the Mizo Hills and Chin Hills till Arakan Yoma of Myanmar. The hills attain greater elevation in the North and slopes towards the South.

On the basis of geology, soil, climate, topography and natural vegetation, the hills of Churachandpur district have been divided into three, (i) the Western hilly region; covering the whole of Tipaimukh sub-division and more than half of Thanlon sub-division, (ii) the Eastern hilly region covering Churachandpur, Henglep sub-division and some portion of Singat sub-divisions, and (iii) the Southern hilly region covering the south-east side of the district. The hills of the district are only the southern end of the Manipur Western Hills whose boundary with Mizoram is marked by the Tuivai River; with only one ejection of the mountain range into Mizoram. The major range of Churachandpur district is the *Len Tang*, which extended from the East of Churachandpur town through the eastern parts of Singat Sub-division up to the Chin Hills of Myanmar in the South; and this range runs in between the *Gun* (Manipur River) and its tributary- the Khuga River. On the Western side, there are four hill ranges of which the maximum height is found near Zoutung Village which is 1,555 metres above mean sea level. The minimum height of these ranges is about 200 metres above sea level.<sup>15</sup> The Eastern side has three hill ranges; the maximum height being 2,109 metres above sea level near Ukha Village and the maximum height recorded in the Southern ranges is 1,752 metres above sea level near Theigotang Village. The other important mountain range and the highest in the district is the Kailam range, which runs from the Western side of the Singat Sub-division and extending upto the Henglep Sub-division in the North. This Mountain range marks the Eastern and Western sides of the district and is cut across by the Tuivai River in the Eastern side of the Thanlon Sub-division. The highest point of elevation of the district is in this range, in the South-western side of Churachandpur town,

called Kailam Tang, which is about 2,202 metres. The third important mountain range is the Vangai range in the Tipaimukh Sub-division, running from North to South. The Vangai range is the southern continuation of the Kalanaga range in between the southern and the northern flows of the Barak River (Tuilung).



Map No. 3

Besides the above three major ranges, there are some other important hills in the district, such as, *Behiangtang*, *Gallamtang*, *Hiangkottang*, *Hausapitang* and *Thangchingtang*. The important peaks of the district are *Kailam Tang*, *Thangching Tang* and *Thimbung Tang*; all of which are higher than 2,000 metres. There are some other minor peaks such as *Chawngkhawzo Tang*, *Maite Tang*, *Thanlon Tang*, *Parbung Tang*, *Teising Tang* etc. which are named after the villages which situated on the peaks. According to

geologist, these hill ranges belong to the young fold mountain of the Himalayas and most of these hill ranges extend southwards. The geology of these regions is related to Barail Series and Simang formation in Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The soil is usually of a mixture of high base status soil of humid region, brown and alluvial soils of recent origin. Small gravels are found mixed with sand and silt.

### **2.2 (c): The Alluviums**

The Alluviums are of recent origin deposited in the river basins of Tuiluang (Barak River) of Tipaimukh Sub-division, Gun (Imphal River) and Tuithapi (Khuga River) of Churachandpur and Singat Sub-division. They are the uppermost deposits (youngest) and about 100 to 300 metres thick, ranging from place to place. They are high levelled alluvium deposits containing clay, sand, sandy-clay, silts and shingles. They are the most fertile regions for agricultural purposes.

In the whole of the Churachandpur district, thus, one finds that the older rocks are overlain by the younger rocks towards the West. From these, one can suggest that the geomorphological processes like faulting and upliftments are more prominent in the Tipaimukh and Thanlon Sub-divisions and the Singat and the Churachandpur Sub-divisions, the geological structure extends towards the Arakan Hills of Myanmar in the South. In the Thanlon and Tipaimukh Sub-divisions particularly, it has been found that “the mountain building forces are still continuing their work”<sup>16</sup>.

The geological formation of the Western half of the district is the continuation of the Mizo Hills. It was formed during the Miocene period of the Tertiary. At a later stage of the Tertiary, probably there was uplift in the Southern part of Manipur and Mizo Hills which caused the Tuiluang (Barak) in this area to be reversed, compelling it to take a sharp bend in its course northwards. This reversal of drainage in this area could be ascribed to be uplift, where the Barak could not adjust itself to the rising land across its path. “The Manipur River

(Gun), on the other hand, could adjust itself and maintain its course across the rising land of the South. This phase, however, ...led to impounding of water and formation of a lake (Loktak) in its upper reaches, where we have the plain of Manipur today. It was followed by gradual silting up of the land and the formation of the plain"<sup>17</sup>.

### 2.3: Climate

It is well understood that climate is one of the principal ecological factors affecting the character and possibilities of agricultural land-use, apart from creating the natural resource-base of the region. The climate of Manipur is characterised by a sub-tropical monsoon type as it is near the tropic of Cancer (23½ N Latitude). But the state has tropical to temperate climate depending upon the elevation. Although altitude plays a very important role in determination of climatic types, the whole of Manipur belongs to the Koppen's Humid Mesothermal or Temperate Rainy climate Regime. This is characterised by hot and wet summers with cold and dry winters. July and January are the hottest and coldest months respectively. The orographical structures, besides altitude; such as alternating Sub-continental pressure cells of North-west India and the Bay of Bengal, the predominant moist Maritime Tropical Air-mass, the periodic Western disturbance, local mountains and valley winds, the nature and intensity of forest covers etc. influences the pattern of climate in the state.<sup>18</sup> Apart from the above factors, topographical varieties within short distances results in rapid climatic changes in the state.

Other important climatic controls of Manipur are the location and seasonal rhythm. The foothills of the Manipur-Myanmar border and Manipur-Assam border area have more or less the same type of temperature, but the amount of rainfall in the Western part of the state is much higher as they are in the windward side while the Eastern hills are in the leeward side of the Manipur Hills. Even when one considers only the North to South mountain ranges in the west of Manipur Valley, it is found that places located in the same

latitude have a different temperature and a different amount of rainfall. This is because the windward side is much lower than the leeward side and the Hill ranges runs from North to South, in the way of South West Monsoon winds.

The physiographic location of Churachandpur district is of worth consideration. It is in the South-West corner of the state, which is the foremost zone of Manipur in the paths of South-West Monsoon winds. Moreover, there are no high reliefs to the South-Western part of the District. The low Hills of Tripura and northern Mizoram cannot obstruct the South West Monsoon winds. But, it should also be kept in mind that, the mountain ranges of Manipur increases in elevation towards the North. This also plays an important role in the determination of rainfall distribution and temperature of the State. Nevertheless, the general climatic pattern prevailing in Churachandpur district does not differ much from other hilly areas of Manipur. During the summer months, the district is under the influence of south-west monsoon and during winter months, it is influence by the north-east monsoon.

The whole year can be divided into four seasons, namely; Winter (December to February), Pre-monsoon (March and April), Monsoon (May to September) and Retreating monsoon (October and November). Although irregular shower begins as early as March, the rainy season starts in the latter part of May only with the onset of south-west monsoon. June and July are the months of heavy rainfall which continues till September ends. Churachandpur district receives a relatively abundant rainfall, well distributed over the region; although it is slightly lesser towards the East. Meteorological records relating to rainfall, number of rainy days in a year, maximum and minimum temperature and humidity are maintained at some selected centres, like in Progeny Orchard Centre at Thanlon, Tinsuong, Soil Conservation Research Centre at Geljang, and at Churachandpur town. The rainfall data collected from these stations for the period from 1983 to 1990 showed that the rainy season is spread over 125 days in a year on an average record. The total average

rainfall of Churachandpur district is recorded to be 2,097 mm. per year when the total annual rainfall of the state records 2,077 mm. On an average, rainfall recorded on the western parts of the district is much higher than those recorded on the eastern side.

**Table 2.1: Rainfall at Selected Centres in Churachandpur District in mm.**

Year	Thanlon	Tinsong	Churachandpur	Geljang
1991	3370.1	3740.3	2683.5	2003.5
1992	2319.4	2105.1	1481.4	252.4
1993	577.5	3149.1	1999.8	249.2
1994	233.8	2792.6	2026.6	259.2
1995	178.5	2887.6	—	337.0
1996	141.1	2255.5	1668.6	282.0
1997	2646.8	2778.8	1969.9	551.0
1998	2224.4	3080.0	2012.2	597.0
1999	3031	2765.6	2351.3	600.0
2000	2193.9	3383.9	2324.0	1279.0
2001	2848.9	2639.0	—	2448.7

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002.

This is due to the reason that the eastern slope of the hills lies on the leeward side of the monsoon whereas the western side of the district lies in the windward side of the monsoon. Moreover, the Loktak Lake has some influence on the climate of the adjoining eastern parts of the district. Winter season in Churachandpur district starts in the month of November and lasted till the beginning of February. December and January are the coldest periods of the year, during which the temperature falls as low as below 0°C.

Being a hilly region, the temperature in Churachandpur district varies from place to place and this variation is mostly according to altitude. As a general rule, the temperature decreases at a rate of 1.6°F at every ascend of 300 feet altitude. The temperature of the district varies from 0°C to 39°C and the mean annual temperature decreases from west to east. During the hottest days of the summer season, the temperature fluctuates between 28°C and 39°C.<sup>19</sup> The minimum temperature is recorded in Churachandpur town at 0°C in the month of January; though in the western side of the district, the minimum hardly comes to

3°C. The mean annual temperature of Churachandpur district is about 22°C and the average temperature in the district as in the state decreases with the increase in height. Humidity, however, is very high with a maximum of 100 percent and minimum of 24 percent in almost all parts of the district. On the whole, the hill areas are marked by temperate climate with mild-wet summer and cold winter due to its high elevation as well as its thick vegetation covers. The average annual rainfall in the hilly areas of Manipur is about 2,000 mm. Regionally, the Tipaimukh Sub-division records the highest temperature, specially in the valleys. The Sub-division can be represented by Tinsong as shown in the table below. The Kailam range in the Thanlon Sub-division provides a divide between the East and the West which respectively means the lesser maximum-minimum range and greater maximum-minimum ranges of temperatures as in the following table. Thus, the micro-climatic units of Manipur have to be based on altitudes, winds, vegetation, topography, exposure to the Sun etc. in the deep narrow valleys, the climate is different from that prevailing on the slopes and tops of the hills.<sup>20</sup> The valleys have higher temperature, high humidity and the air is almost stagnant during day time. The temperature falls at nights both in summer and winter. Fogs and mists fill the intermontane valleys specially, to a greater extent, in the winter mornings. Enough warmth can be found on the mountain slopes which are exposed to sunshine. Mountain and valley winds are most prevalent in the District. From the higher slopes, the flowing of cold air down the valleys leads to displacement of warmer air from the valley bottom to the slopes upwards. More sunshine and stronger winds can be found during days. During winter, nights are cold and on occasions, temperatures are below freezing point; more so early in the mornings. Churachandpur District is under the influence of the out-blowing North-East monsoon winds for about half of the year and the in-blowing South-west monsoon wind for the rest that exhibits a strong seasonal rhythm in its climatic pattern. That is why, there is a lot of temperature differences in summer and winter.

**Table 2.2: Maximum and Minimum Temperature at Selected places in degree Celsius**

Year	Tinsong		Churachandpur		Geljang	
	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum
1991	28.0	6.0	30.0	0.0	35.0	0.2
1992	29.0	6.5	30.0	1.0	34.0	1.0
1993	28.5	6.0	29.0	1.0	35.0	1.0
1994	30.5	6.0	35.0	1.0	39.0	1.0
1995	31.0	7.0	24.0	3.0	38.0	1.0
1996	38.0	18.5	32.0	0.2	37.0	0.0
1997	29.0	6.0	32.0	0.3	37.0	0.0
1998	31.0	8.0	28.0	0.4	39.0	1.0
1999	31.0	8.5	28.0	4.0	32.0	0.0
2000	40.0	6.0	26.0	5.0	37.0	1.0
2001	39.0	10.0	31.0	3.0	25.0	0.5

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002.

In Manipur State, as determined by the location and landscape, the South-West monsoon winds are responsible for the rainfall while the North-East monsoon winds are cold and dry. Based on the two monsoon winds, the seasons in Manipur can be grouped in the following types:-<sup>21</sup>

- (i) Seasons of North-East Monsoon:
  - (a) Cold Weather or Winter Season (December to February)
  - (b) Hot Weather or Summer Season (March to April)
- (ii) Seasons of South-west Monsoon:
  - (a) Seasons of general Rain or Rainy Season (May to September)
  - (b) Seasons of retreating Monsoon (October and November)

The Winter season from starts from December and lasts till the month of February. The temperature suddenly falls down at the beginning of the season and reaches down to freezing points in the month of January and it gradually rises in the month of February. Cool, gentle Northerly and North easterly winds blow during this period. Fogs are very common during winter, particularly in the river valleys. In Churachandpur District Tuivai,

Tuilang, Tuining Khuga River (Tuithapi) etc. are filled with fogs specially in early winter mornings. Rainfall is the lowest during this season and January is the driest month.

The hot weather season and the season of the general rains can be taken together as summer season. But the months of March and April are particularly taken as Spring season when the temperature suddenly rises while the rainfall is still very scanty. This season is characterised by vanishing fog, increasing temperature, occasional thunder showers, cool and pleasant mornings and hot and cloudy afternoons. With the advance of this season the amount and frequency of rainfall increases, finally heralding the beginning of the rainy season in early May. The Summer rains are generally associated with afternoon or evening thunder storms and squalls.

The rainy season comes after the Summer and it the longest season of the region in a year. It lasted from May to September. The rainfall and thunder storm becomes more intense and heavier as the system develops. The temperature continues to rise until it reaches the average of about 30° C in July. But at the same time, the rainfall also rises till it pours down its highest amount mostly in the month of June, and this modifies the rising temperature. Then the rainfall gradually becomes comparatively moderate in the months of August and September. This season is characterised by wind spread cloudiness, very high atmospheric humidity, weak variable surface winds making the weather dull, sultry and oppressive. The climate of the state in general, is very enjoyable and pleasant and has a great importance in the state economy as Singh put it:

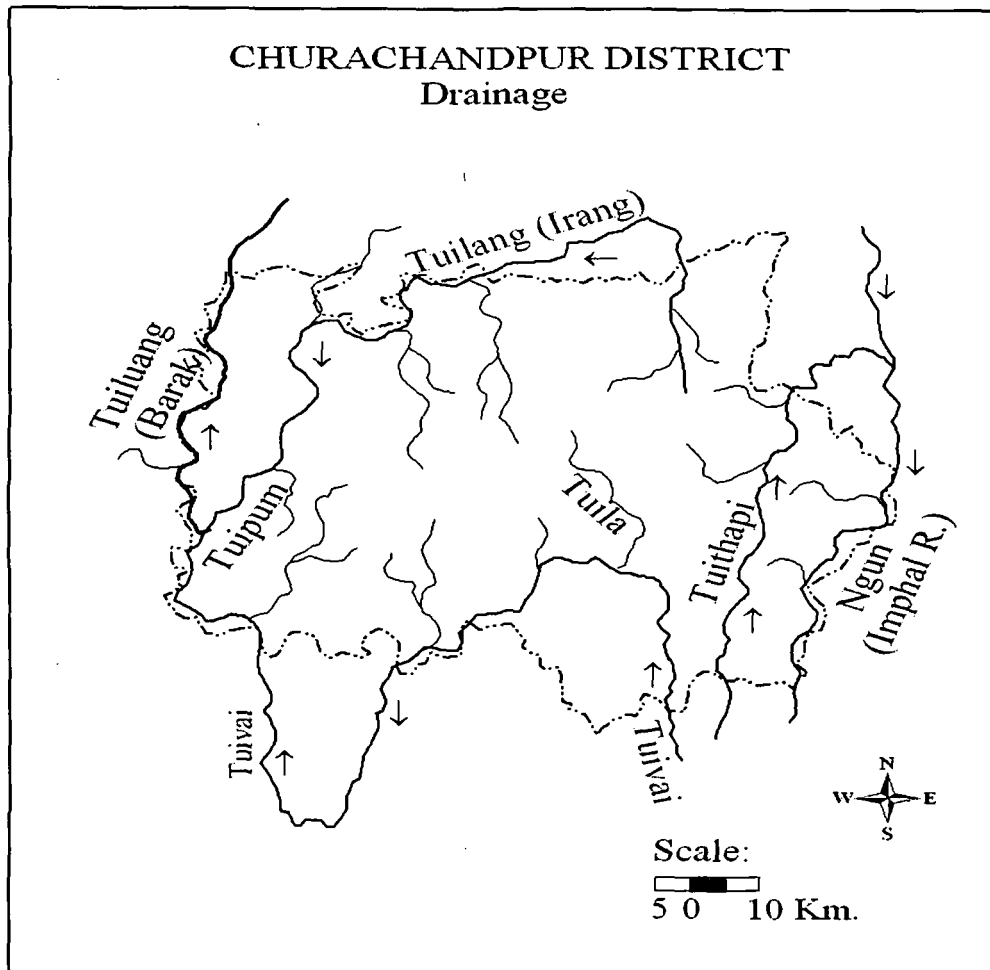
*Climate exerts a great influence on agriculture, which is the backbone of the state economy. The failure of monsoon rain, in the absence of irrigation facilities seals the farmers' fortune, who normally grows one crop-rice, in the course of the year. Good and timely rains improve the prospect of rice and maize cultivation. Thus, surpluses and deficits on the food front in the state are mostly a creation of the monsoon rains.*<sup>22</sup>

The South-west monsoon winds become feeble towards the end of September and the following two months experience their retreat. The amount of rainfall of temperature gradually decreases and the sky becomes clear. Morning fogs are of shorter duration and the weather remains fair and pleasant. October and November have very bright and sunny days and pleasant cool nights. The retreating monsoon season can be called as the Autumn of Manipur.

#### **2.4: Drainage**

Manipur is drained by two major rivers, namely; the Imphal River and the Barak River along with their tributaries. The Imphal River and its tributaries drained all the Eastern half of the state including the central plain and the western half of the state is drained by Barak River and its tributaries. The Imphal River originates from the hills north of Kangpokpi in West Sadar hills of Senapati district at the height of about 7,217 feet above sea level. It runs from North to South and is about 960 kilometers long. The important tributaries of Imphal River are Iril, Khuga, Thoubal, Chakpi and Sekmai rivers. Iril River is the longest river in Manipur which is about 1,200 kilometers long. The Barak River is the largest river of the state whose valley area is about 250 square kilometres. It rises from the northern ranges of the state about 16 kilometres east of Mao and follows a south-westerly course. Some of the important tributaries of Barak river are Jiri, Makru, Irang, Tuivai and Leimatak.

Besides these two major drainage systems, there are a large number of small rivers and streams which drained the hilly region of Manipur. Churachandpur district is drained by many rivers and streams, of which the most important ones are the Barak, the Manipur river, the Khuga, the Leimatak and the Tuivai. The river system that originate and flows through the district can be grouped into two types- one group flowing into the east into the Chindwin river in Myanmar; and the other to the west into the Barak river.



The Manipur river and its tributaries belongs to the first group and the Leimatak, the Tuivai and the tributaries of the Barak belongs to the second category of the river system. The Barak, the biggest of rivers in the district has its source in Mao-Maram area of Senapati district. The river flows South through Tamenglong district all the way down to Tipaimukh Sub-division in Churachandpur district, meeting on its way other important rivers such as the Irang, and the Makru. The Leimatak River has its source in the district itself and is the most important tributary of the Irang River. The Tuivai River originates in the Southern hill of the district, flows west, turns south and then west, disappearing into Mizoram for a short period of its course. Then it again turns north and ultimately joins the Barak at Tipaimukh in the South-Western part of the district.

Of the rivers that flow towards the west into Manipur River, the Khuga is the most important one in relation to the socio-economic conditions of the people. The river has its source in the hills of Singat sub-division of Churachandpur district. Before it reach Churachandpur town, a dam is constructed between Saipum and Mata villages; called as Khuga Dam. It flows north, past the district headquarters at Churachandpur town and takes a direction eastwards. It joins the Manipur River at Ithai in Bishnupur district at the southern edge of the Loktak Lake. The Manipur River forms the eastern boundary line of the district with Tengnoupal before its final entry into Myanmar to join the Chindwin River.

### **2.5: Soil and Vegetation**

The weathered materials of the exposed rocks and vegetative cover supplying decomposed organic matter are the two primary factors for the formation of soil. This process in nature goes on imperceptibly, and in course of time, the parent rocks are encrusted by a layer of soil. The thickness of the soil varies from place to place depending upon a number of factors responsible for the formation of soil, such as the parent rocks, relief features, vegetation, climate, intensity of erosion and time. The parent rock in the region belongs to the tertiary series unconsolidated and young. Rugged and dissected topography is its typical relief. Tropical rain forest and coniferous trees covers this rugged mountainous region of Manipur and the rainfall is normally heavy. Soils are formed under these natural conditions. The practice of shifting cultivation from time immemorial has proved that the soils are not very productive. Only virgin soil is productive especially in the hilly region. Soils are generally light, except in the river valleys where silt has accumulated. The continuous burning in course of *Jhum* cultivation has rendered the soil devoid of humus. The physical composition of the soil is loose and porous and, as such it is almost impossible for it to hold water. On exposed hill slopes, the combination of tropical sun and torrential

rain has leached minerals from the soil.<sup>23</sup> The soil types of Manipur can be broadly classified as:

- (i) the Soils of the plain and
- (ii) the Soils of the mountains and hills.

The ferruginous red soil, which is poor in lime, potash and iron oxide uniformly low in phosphorous content, constitutes a large portion of the state. This type of soil is suitable for cultivation of paddy and large varieties of crops can be grown with irrigation specially in the plains and valleys. According to the physical properties, the soils of the different localities may be divided into three broad groups:-

- (i) Sandy Loam Soils,
- (ii) Clayey Loam Soils, and
- (iii) Loamy Soils.

The Sandy Loam soil is generally poor in plant nutrients, low in water holding capacity and possesses excessive internal drainage. The Clayey Loam soil is rich in plant nutrients and possesses excessive water holding capacity. The Loamy soil occupies an intermediate position in respect of plant nutrients, water holding capacity and drainage.<sup>24</sup> All these three types of soils can be found in Churachandpur district. Sandy Loam and Loamy soils are found mostly in the regions while the Clayey Loam soils are found in the river valley of Gun, Tuithapi and the Lower parts of the Tuiluang Valley.

**Table 2.3: Area under Forest by legal and composition in Sq. Km.**

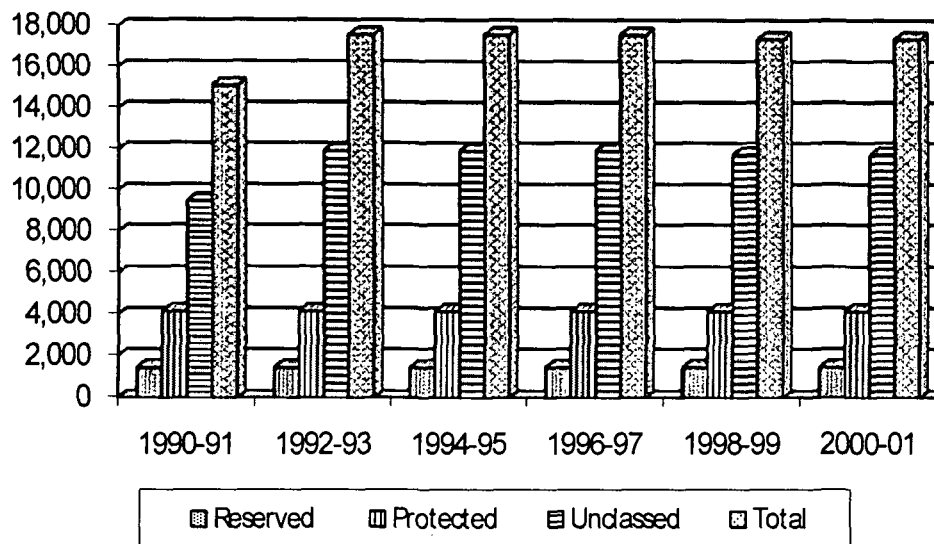
Class of forest	1990-91	1992-93	1994-95	1996-97	1998-99	2000-01
Reserved	1,463	1,467	1,467	1,467	1,467	1,467
Protected	4,171	4,171	4,171	4,171	4,171	4,171
Unclassed	9,520	11,983	11,983	11,983	11,780	11,780
Total	15,154	17,621	17,621	17,621	17,418	17,418

Source: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Manipur.

Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002.

The state of Manipur is considered rich in terms of its forest resources. It possesses a large number of species of plants. The forest of Manipur is of a mixed character and has a vast area covering as much as 15,154 square kilometres. It constitutes 68 percent of the total geographical area of the State and accounted for above 23 % of the States' total area. The entire area of Churachandpur, except the low lying areas in and around the district headquarters, is covered with forest of different varieties; mostly of tropical moist evergreen forest types. The hilly terrain nature, the rainfall and other climatic conditions prevailing in the district are conducive to a large and rich range of dense forest and bountiful natural vegetation. These dense forests support an abundant growth of many valuable trees, bamboos and grasses. Important types of trees found in these forests are *bombax malbaricum* (silk cotton tree), *cinnamomum tamala* (bay leaf), mango, champac, teak, *tal*, *uningthou* etc. These forests provide housing materials in the shape of timber, round wood, thatching grass, bamboos and canes. Other important forest products of the district are post and poles, charcoal, broomstick, cinnamon, mushrooms, bamboo-shoots, smilax, honey and wax. These major and minor forest products are a constant source of income to the meagre resource of the district. Fire-wood, timber and cane are the three most important forest products of these districts accounting for more than 89 percent of the total forest revenue. In short, almost all sorts of forest species which can adapt in the Tropical, Sub-tropical and Temperate climatic conditions can also be found in Churachandpur district. But the forest types have to vary according to the altitude.

Fig. 2.1: Area under Forest in Sq. Km.



Besides these forests products, there are many rare species of orchid, medical herbs, animals and birds. In spite of the vast forest resources available in all parts of the districts, nothing very tangible has been done to exploit it in a systematic way. Whatever little had been exploited was done by the private entrepreneurs without any planning and proper consideration for an early recuperation of the forests in future. The climate and the dense forests also favoured the wild life, but in the recent past, many were killed by hunters and thus their number has reduced tremendously. Elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pigs, deer, jackals, foxes and stags are some of the wild animals found in the forests of the two districts.

## 2.6: Social and Demographic Composition

Population of a state is its most important assets and demographic indicator. While dealing with population of any country or region, one should also concern with temporal spatial expressions of various population attributes; the explanation of such temporal spatial expressions and the processes involved in the creation of these temporal spatial expressions.

But we shall perhaps, not be able to deal with all these systematically and scientifically in case of the area which is under the present study. The main reasons for these are, first, because of the inefficiency of the population data for the Hill districts. Secondly, the data which are at our disposal are, perhaps, unreliable. This is because the Census is done by mostly Third and Fourth grades Government servants and not by Field surveys but usually by assuming the number of family members from the number of houses in the village. Thirdly, Censuses are mostly done with the purpose of election and due to this, the ages of most of the family members become more than twenty one in order to be eligible to vote. Lastly, there are no reliable maps which show the exact locations and directions of settlements. Most of the rural villages are not yet scientifically surveyed.

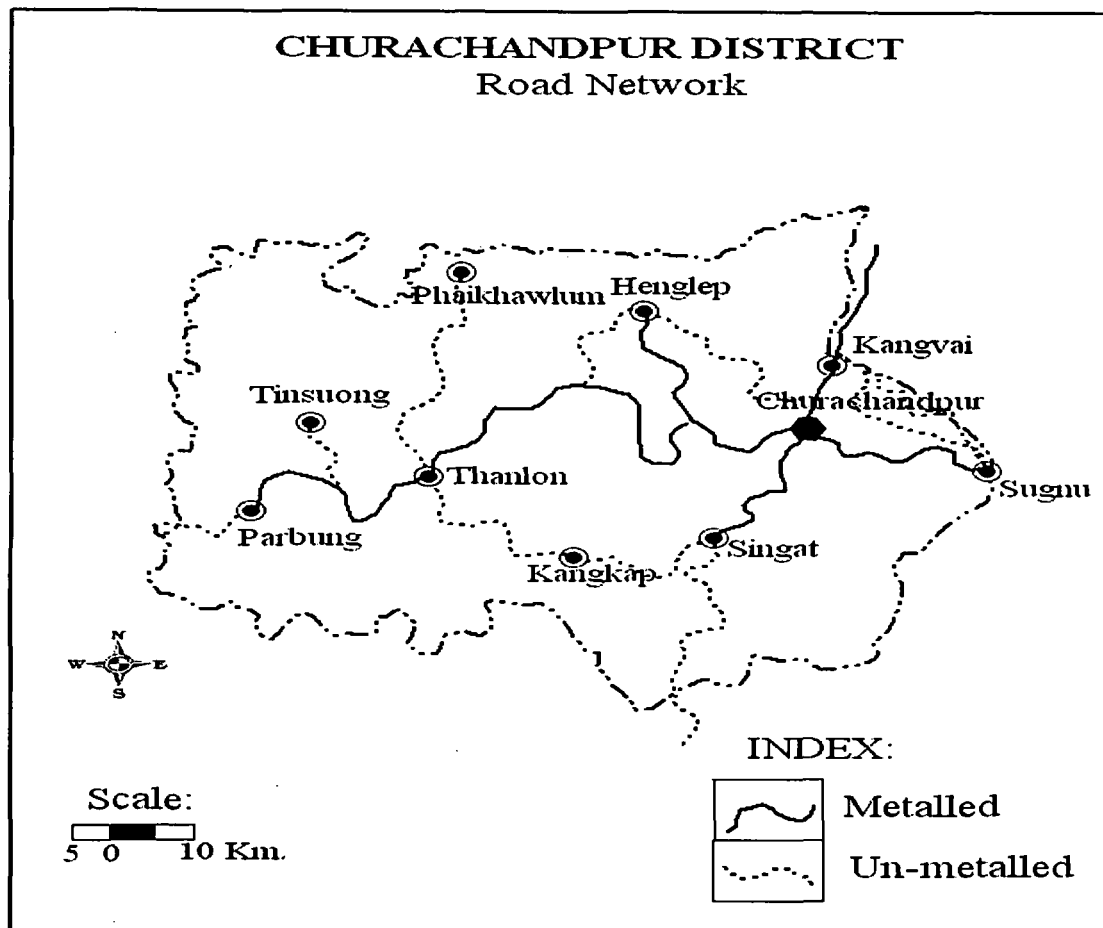
**Table 2.4: District wise Distribution of ST population in Manipur**

Sl. No.	State/ District	Percentage of STs to total population of the State/ District	District wise percentage of total ST population
1	<b>MANIPUR*</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Ukhrul	95.5	18.1
3	Tamenglong	95.4	14.3
4	Churachandpur	93.2	28.7
5	Chandel	91.9	14.7
6	Senapati*	78.5	16.6
7	Imphal East	6.3	3.3
8	Imphal West	4.8	2.8
9	Bishnupur	2.9	0.8
10	Thoubal	1.2	0.6

\* Excluding three subdivisions (Paomata, Mao-Maram, & Purul) of Senapati district  
Source: Office of the Registrar General, Census of India, 2001.

The People of Manipur belong to Indo-Mongoloid stock mainly but there is a great diversity of feature among them. They can be broadly divided into three groups, the Meiteis, the Manipuri Muslims or Pangans, and the hill tribes. With the exception of the Manipuri Muslims the other two are indigenous people of Manipur. Racially majority of them belong to Mongoloid stock and linguistically, affiliated to Tibeto-Burman and Chin-Kuki groups of language.<sup>25</sup> The Meiteis, the Lois and Manipuri Muslims live in the valley, whereas the hill

tribes settled throughout the entire surrounding hill areas of the state. A paradox about Manipur is that nine-tenth of the territory is constituted by the Hill and only one-tenth by the valley. Only one-third of the population lives in the hills and the remaining two thirds live in the valley.



Map No. 5

The Meiteis form the majority group of the population of Manipur. Majority of the hill dwellers belong to the 29 different recognized Scheduled Tribes' communities; viz., Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha-Naga, Koirao, Koireng, Kom, Lamgang, Mao, Maram, Maring, Lushai tribes, Monsang, Moyon, Paite, Purum, Ralte, Sema, Simte, Sukte, Tangkhul, Thadou, Vaiphei and Zou; who are distributed in the surrounding Hill districts of Manipur.

**Table 2.5: Population of Major STs of Manipur, 2001**

Sl.No.	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Total population	Proportion to the Total ST population
1	All Scheduled Tribes	741,141	100%
2	Thadou	182,594	24.6
3	Tangkhul	146,075	19.7
4	Kabui	82,386	11.1
5	Paite	49,271	6.6
6	Hmar	42,933	5.8
7	Kacha Naga	42,013	5.7
8	<b>Vaiphei</b>	<b>38,267</b>	<b>5.2</b>
9	Maring	23,238	3.1
10	Anal	21,242	2.9
11	Zou	20,567	2.8

Source: Office of the Registrar General, Census of India, 2001.

It is worth recalling that the aforesaid 29 Scheduled Tribes of Manipur is the modification of the constitution (Schedule tribes) [Part C State] Orders, 1951, the scheduled Part VI- Manipur, where it included only umbrella terms like any Naga tribe, any Kuki tribe and any Lushai tribe as Scheduled Tribe names; without the specific ethnic names of the different tribal communities of Manipur. Population pressure is found to be increasing day by day. The total population of Manipur, according to 2001 census, is 23,88,634 persons. With such a size of population to support on its small area, the state of Manipur finds itself in great difficulty in making any significant impression on its poverty and economic backwardness. In spite of the distribution and concentration of the tribes in specific areas, the question of alienation and alignment is the major problem in Manipur. The nature of distribution of the tribes of Manipur is indicated in the following table. This table also shows the nature of distribution of the study tribe – the Vaiphei in different districts of Manipur.

**Table 2.6: Territorial Distribution of STs in the Districts of Manipur**

Sl.No.	District	Tribe
1	Churachandpur (South)	Hmar, Paite, Thadou Kuki, <b>Vaiphei</b> , Simte, Mizo (Lushai), Gangte, Zou
2	Senapati (North)	Mao, Maram, Thadou Kuki, <b>Vaiphei</b> , Tangkhul, Maring, Chiru, Koireng, Kabui, Keirao, Kacha Naga
3	Tamenglong	Kabui, Thadou Kuki, <b>Vaiphei</b>
4	Bishnupur	Kabui, Chothe,
5	Chandel	Anal, Maring, Thadou Kuki, <b>Vaiphei</b>
6	Ukhrul	Tangkhul, Thadou Kuki, <b>Vaiphei</b>
7	Thoubal	In these three Central Districts, most of the Tribes are found in small numbers
8	Imphal East	
9	Imphal West	

Source: Office of the Registrar General, Census of India, 2001

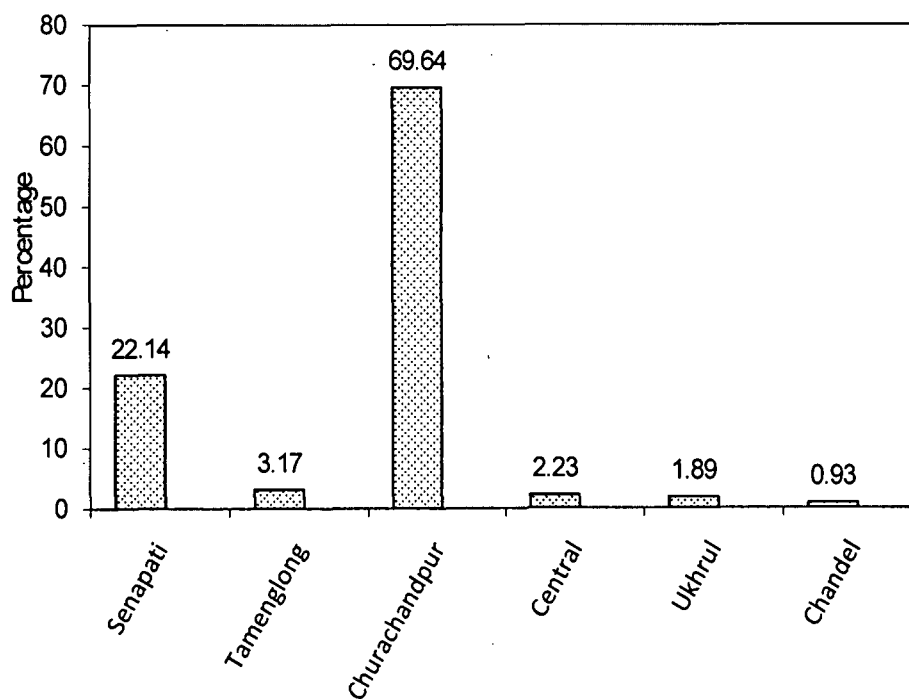
The district-wise concentration of population shows a great difference in terms of density. According to 2001 census, Imphal West district had the highest density (847 persons per square kilometre) while the lowest was recorded in Tamenglong district, with only 25 persons per square kilometre. The population of Manipur valley accounts for 64.56 percent of the State's population in 1991 but decreases to 58.84 percent of the state's total population in 2001(P). On the other hand, the population of all the hill districts which constituted only 35.44 percent of the State in 1991 rose to 41.16 percent of the total population of the state in 2001. In other words, the growth rate of the hill districts is higher than those of the valley districts in the decade 1991-2001. The following table indicates the district-wise decadal growth rate of population and their ranking by population size during 1991-2001.

**Table 2.7: District-wise Percentage Distribution of Population by Mother Tongue**

Mother Tongue	Senapati	Tamenglong	Chura-chandpur	Imphal, Thoubal Bishhnupur	Ukhrul	Chandel	Total Manipur
Hmar	0.44	2.11	87.03	9.38	0.03	1.01	100.00
Kabui	7.32	68.08	4.91	19.61	0.05	0.03	100.00
Kuki	30.76	10.48	12.07	6.71	13.39	26.59	100.00
Manipuri	0.46	0.13	0.81	98.08	0.13	0.30	100.00
Mao	98.50	0.01	0.00	1.39	0.04	0.06	100.00
Nepali	67.69	0.19	2.25	26.30	1.96	1.61	100.00
Paite	0.23	0.05	71.18	27.30	0.21	1.03	100.00
Tangkhul	8.98	0.04	0.68	4.68	85.13	0.49	100.00
Thadou	40.00	8.80	31.75	2.71	7.52	9.22	100.00
<b>Vaiphei</b>	<b>22.14</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>69.64</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>1.89</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Lushai	5.15	0.03	76.80	5.34	0.20	12.48	100.00
Others	18.68	12.59	22.08	13.47	6.81	26.37	100.00

Sources : Economic Review, 1994-95 (Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

Govt. of Manipur Imphal), p. 12.

**Figure 2.2: District-wise distribution of Vaiphei Population**

**Table 2.8: Ranking of District by Population size in 1991 and 2001**

Rank in 2001	District	Population 2001	Percent to Population 2001	Population 1991	Percent to Population 1991	Rank in 1991
1	Imphal West	439,532	18.40	380,801	20.73	1
2	Imphal East	393,780	16.49	330,460	17.99	2
3	Senapati	379,214	15.88	208,406	11.34	4
4	Thoubal	366,341	15.34	293,985	16.00	3
5	Churachandpur	228,707	9.57	176,184	9.59	6
6	Bishnupur	205,907	8.62	180,773	9.84	5
7	Ukhrul	140,946	5.90	109,275	5.95	7
8	Chandel	122,714	5.14	71,014	3.87	9
9	Tamenglong	111,493	4.67	86,278	4.70	8
	<b>Manipur</b>	<b>2,388,634</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,837,149</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Note: 1991 District figure are provisional recast as per jurisdiction of 2001.

(Census of India 2001, Series 14, Manipur Provisional Population Totals, Part 1 of 2001, Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur).

Churachandpur district (the study area) assumes an isolated entity not only in its geographical settings but also in peopling by virtue of the land. The aerial difference of the district in case of population is such that there are only very few areas of attraction and about 90 percent of the region fall under an area of isolation. These small pockets are thickly populated while large areas are not at all inhabited. It will also, perhaps, be worthwhile to state that there are only three towns in the whole district and even among these three, two of them can barely be called as town. The main ethnic groups such as the Zou, the Paite, the Thadou, the Vaiphei, the Hmar, etc. were in the surrounding hills. The Non-aboriginal groups of Indian origin and immigrants from Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar who had been migrated to Manipur have been contributing in part and partial in the making of the present day of people in Churachandpur district. The total population of the district in 2001 census is 2, 28,707 against 1,76,184 in 1991. It covers an area of 4,570 Square kilometres and is the biggest district in the state. The high growth rate of population and relatively slow

growth, if not stagnation in the economy, is proving detrimental to the overall development of the district. Of these the share of rural population is as high as 81.12 percent of the total population in 1991. Considering the ratio between area and population of the district, it can be called as a low population density area with only 50 persons per square kilometres, which is much lower than the state's i.e. 107. The following tables highlight the decadal growth of population in sub-division wise in the last few decades.

**Table 2.9: Decadal Growth of Population in Churachandpur (1971 –2001)**  
(Sub-division wise)

Sub-division	1971	1981	1991	2001
Churachandpur	46,418	63,993	93,882	1,34,147
Henglep	12,114	16,732	20,455	26,401
Parbung	15,214	21,176	23,995	25,374
Thanlon	12,889	17,939	19,209	22,947
Singat	11,480	14,936	18,643	19,838
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,114</b>	<b>1,34,776</b>	<b>1,76,184</b>	<b>2,28,707</b>

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002.

The district wise decadal growth of population in Churachandpur district in percentage, between the years 1951-2001 is portrayed in the following table No. 2.10. The percent of the decadal population growth increased till 1971 but shows a decreasing trend since then. The decadal growth of population in the district increased from 46.20 percent in 1961 to 57.19 percent in 1971. However, from 57.19 percent in 1971, it sharply dropped down to 37.37 percent in 1981. It still dropped down to 30.72 percent in 1991. Since then, the decadal growth of population in percentage became almost stable, where it was registered 29.85 percent decadal growth in 2001. This may be attributed to the growth in the level of education and world view of the people, where a small family is considered as a happy family.

**Table 2.10: Churachandpur-Decadal Growth of Population (1951-2001)**

Year	Total Population	Decadal Population Growth (%)
1951	42,696	-
1961	62,418	46.20
1971	98,114	57.19
1981	1,34,776	37.37
1991	1,76,184	30.72
2001	2,28,707	29.85

Source: Directorate of Census Operation, Manipur.

Looking at the sub-division wise distribution of villages and their population, there is a lot of differences in each sub-division. In Parbung sub-division, there are only 42 villages with a population of 23,995 whereas in Henglep, 107 villages are recorded with a total population of only 20,455. If these figures are true, it can safely be assumed that in Parbung sub-division, people have the tendency to live in large groups whereas in Henglep sub-division, the villages would have been very small in terms of their population. In fact, the distribution of different tribes in the sub-divisions along with the tendency of different tribes to live in small or large groups is the main reason behind this. The following table No. 2.11 shows the sub-divisional headquarters and the distribution of villages:

**Table 2.11: Distribution of Villages and their Population in Churachandpur District**

Sub-divisional Headquarters	No. of villages	Total population
Churachandpur	207	80,149
Parbung	42	23,995
Henglep	107	20,455
Thanlon	87	19,209
Singhat	65	18,643
Samulamlan	36	13,733
Total	506	1,76,184

However, it is interesting to note that 546 villages were inhabited in Churachandpur district as per 2001 census (provisional), a recorded increase of 40 villages from 1991 census. The literacy rate also increased to 74.67 percent excluding age group 0-6 from 58.17 in 1991. The total population of the district soared up to 2,28,707 persons in 2001. The main ethnic groups such as the Zou, the Paite, the Thadou, the Vaiphei, the Hmar, etc. were in the surrounding hills.

**Table 2.12: Growth of Vaiphei Population in Churachandpur District, 1961-2001**

1961		1971		1981		1991		2001	
Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%	Pop.	%
5,965	10.02	8,648	9.40	11,026	9.53	15,524	9.42	23,629	11.12

The high growth rate of population and relatively slow growth, if not stagnation in the economy, is proving detrimental to the overall development of the district. Of these the share of rural population is as high as 81.12 percent of the total population in 1991. Considering the ratio between area and population of the district, it can be called as a low population density area with only 50 persons per square kilometers which is much lower than the state's i.e. 107 persons per square kilometres.

## Notes and References:

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- <sup>1</sup> Laiba, M.T. (1992): *The Geography of Manipur*. Imphal. p-44
- <sup>2</sup> Singh, Ravindra Pratap (1982): "Geography of Manipur" p.15
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid p. 102
- <sup>4</sup> Bhakta, G.P., (1992): "Geography of North-East India", Akashi Book Store, Shillong, p.137.
- <sup>5</sup> Laiba, M.T., op.cit., p.103.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.104
- <sup>7</sup> Op.cit., p.137
- <sup>8</sup> Brown, J.G. & Dey, A.K. *India's Mineral Wealth*. Oxford University Press, Calcutta. P-98 (1955)
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- <sup>11</sup> Singh, R.P. *Geography of Manipur*, National Book Trust of India. New Delhi 1982. p.17
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>14</sup> (a) Wadia, D.N., Op. cit., p-302.  
(b) Singh, R.P. Op. cit., p-15.
- <sup>15</sup> District Census Handbook, Villages and Towns, 1991. Series-15, Part-XII, A & B. p-11
- <sup>16</sup> Singh, R.P., Op. cit., p-15
- <sup>17</sup> Ansari, S.A., *Economic Geography of Manipur*, 1976. P-18
- <sup>18</sup> Singh, R.P., Op. Cit., p-26
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- <sup>20</sup> Ansari, S.A., Op. Cit., p-22
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- <sup>23</sup> Ansari, S.A., Op.cit., p-23
- <sup>24</sup> Singh, L.U., *Analysis of Soil Samples of Manipur*. Imphal: Government of Manipur. 1963. p-1.
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## CHAPTER-III

### Origin, Migration and Traditional Society of the Vaiphei

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, attempted has been made to study the socio-economic, political and cultural evolution of the Vaiphei tribe of Manipur. This has been done with a view to underline the contours of changes among the Vaiphei in particular and the different tribes in general, to highlight the historical perspectives covering almost every behaviour of the tribe. Writing history of people who do not possess neither written language nor written record is a challenging task in itself. The process of migration and settlement was a part of the struggle for economic and social survival and political domination. There are contacts between various ethnic groups leading into integration and assimilation of their respective cultural traits. Every ethnic group of the state has their own dialect, customs, traditions and way of living which formed the occupational structure of their society.

The history of the Vaiphei, like many other hill-tribes, is shrouded with myths and mythology. As the sources of information available are very limited and very few scholars have attempted to study them; it is rather difficult to trace their earlier history. In view of the fact that the elders who depended upon words of mouth from their memory bank could not provide a complete process of historical change and development, but often tends to create more confusion than solution. There is also no written history of the Vaiphei as they did not possess any script of their dialect. In the absence of any written records, it is not possible to develop any full proof theory about their origin and the route they have taken to their present settlement. It, therefore, becomes necessary to analyse from their folktales, poems or songs, legends and traditional accounts that had been handed down through generations. In this chapter, attempt is being made to trace the origin of the word 'Vaiphei'; their traditional institution as well as their processes of migration.

### 3.1: Who are the Vaiphei?

Like many other names of the hill tribes of Manipur, especially the Chin-Kuki group, the problem of this study starts right from the origin of the name of the tribe itself. 'Vaiphei', not being the name of a person, does not find a place in the genealogical tree of the Chin-Kuki group of people. The name 'Vaiphei' is, therefore, considered as a nickname or an alias.<sup>1</sup> So, there are different theories about the origin and meaning of the term 'Vaiphei'. These theories will be discussed in order to understand who are the people called as Vaiphei.

Different theories of this derivation have been given by the Vaiphei themselves. But most of these theories are considered baseless and unacceptable. One of the most widely accepted theory about the origin of the Vaiphei is 'Khaw-Vaiphei Theory'. According to the historical account that had been passed down through the generations, it is commonly believed that the nomenclature 'Vaiphei' has been originated from '*Phaiza*' which was a village of Suantak family, located in the Chin hills of the then Burma. The village *Phaiza* was big enough and vast in length and wide. So, the villagers changed the name of their village into '*Khaw-vaiphei*', which means the village was at the length and breadth and vast. The literal meaning of '*Khaw-vaiphei*' is: *Khaw* means village, *Vai* means breadth and *Phei* means plain. The people who lived in that village for a pretty long enough time, i.e. from about 1760 to 1830; had acquired the name Vaiphei as the name of their group or tribal identity, from the name of their village "*Khaw-vaiphei*". There are a number of folksongs or cry of triumph or success called *Hanla* that proves this derivation theory. Some of those songs are:

*"Lailu tawh tuanglam zawt, lam thei puante  
Laisimlu tawh Khaw-vaiphei thil in zawt ing;  
Sua mual lungngui tin dal jing ka thaw sa"*

Meaning-

“Unable to dance, trudging along with enemy’s head,  
Walking on with hunted enemy’s head towards destination Khaw-vaiphei;  
Suffered great worries at village gate for my sake”

Another song which substantiated the Khaw-vaiphei theory is:

“*Sial lum leh in Khaw-vaiphei jang masuan ing,  
Ka leido mangpa chung ah ka chuang e*”!

This means:

“Spotting a shield (*mithun*), walking towards Khaw-vaiphei,  
I triumph over my great earthly foe”!

There are also a number of *Hanla*, which are songs of triumph or boasting cry. One of these songs called *Vaiphei Hanla* will be worth cited to substantiate Khaw-vaiphei theory, which goes like this:

“*Ka thang e! ka thang e!  
Ka chun leh zua'n thangnan chembang ei chawi e,  
Namtin Khaw-vaiphei lai ah,  
Gual lai lawi ang, ka thang e!*”

This, when translated, means:

“I am famous! I am famous!  
My parents praise me like double-edged sword,  
In the village of many people in Khaw-vaiphei,  
Even among cohorts, I am famous”

It is said that after all other kindred tribes further moved on to other different areas, some people remained and continued to live on in the village Phaiza alias Khaw-vaiphei. This people lived there for a pretty long enough period and migrated last of all, acquired the name of this village as their group identity, and thereafter, came to be known as ‘Vaiphei’ people.

Another version says that the Suantak people who latter came to be known as Vaiphei lived with other social groups in the village of Liankhama Sailo in the present Mizoram.<sup>2</sup> One particular day, one Pawi (one particular group of people in Mizoram)

member of that village by the name-Thangvuka, killed one of the Suantak people; and ate the heart of the man he killed in front of his relatives. This infuriated the Suantak people so much that they chased the killer Pawi all over the village, with intent to kill and avenge themselves. Sensing the danger to his life, the Pawi run hastily inside the house of the village chief and hugged the prime pillar. According to their custom, such a criminal who seek refuge under the protection of the chief is safe from any harm by becoming the slave of the chief the rest of his life. This is known in Lushai as '*Chemsen bawi*'. Realizing the implication of the custom, the enraged Suantak people, who failed to take revenge felt no more desirable to live together in that village side by side with that hatred Pawi killer. So, they migrated en-masse out of the village, which is express in Lushai dialect as "*an vai in an phei tawh*", which means 'they are all gone or mass exodus'. Since then, wherever this Suantak people, who left that village lived, they came to be known as 'Vaiphei people', in short Vaiphei. According to the genealogy of the Sailo clan in Mizoram, Liankhama Sailo lived during the period from 1850 to 1875. The settlement of the Vaiphei people in Mizoram during this period can also be supported by the writing of Shakespeare, who mentioned:

*A short distance to the East of Aijal (Aizawl), there is a village site called Vai-tui-chhun i.e. the watering place of the Vai- which is said to commemorate a former settlement of the Vaiphei. It seems probable, therefore, that the Aimol and Vaiphei left their former homes in consequence of the forward movement of the Lusheis.<sup>3</sup>*

Whichever theory may be the truth as to the meaning and origin of the word 'Vaiphei, the above two theories have been established. If the former theory i.e. the "Khawvaiphei Theory" is to be accepted, then it is very safe to assumed that the term 'Vaiphei' was used to referred the present Vaiphei tribe long before they had even entered the North-East India. As the probable date of the Phaiza village in the then Burma could not be established right now, there is no means to find out the total population of the people who lived and

acquired the name 'Vaiphei' from that village. However, researchers concluded that the total population of Vaiphei in 1850 could be around 600 to 700 people. Again, if 'Liankhama Village Incident Theory' is to be accepted, then one can most probably conclude that the term 'Vaiphei' was first used not too long ago, but only after settling in the present Mizoram. One can also assumed the possibility that the Suantak people who latter acquired the name 'Vaiphei' could have lived there in Phaiza village several years, ahead of the incident and could have been already using Vaiphei dialect, which is believed to derive from Lushai dialect.

After developing the above two theories on the origin and derivation of the name 'Vaiphei', a question can be raised in the genealogy of this people: is any person, irrespective of their clan or tribe who lived in that village are known as Vaiphei? The oral genealogy maintained by the Vaiphei in Manipur as well as the written accounts by the Zo historians of Sizang, Myanmar; claimed that Vaiphei are the descendants of *Neilut* and *Vanglua*. The following researchers in the books such as Dr.Vum Kho Hau's book '*The Profile of a Burma Frontier Man*', Captain K.A.Khupzathang Suantak in his book '*The Genealogy of the Zo(Chin) race of Burma*', Vumson's '*Zo History*' and Chawngkunga's '*Genealogical tree of Mizo*' all placed *Neilut* and *Vanglua* as the second and fourth sons of Suantak. Moreover, these names have been always spelled out in their '*Hanla*'- a cry of triumph on killing prized animals such as tiger, bear, wild boar etc. or on occasions such as '*Chawng*', '*Bu-aih*' and '*Sa-aih*'. Example can be cited from one of the songs of '*Sa-aih*' called '*Salu-la*', as:

*Losua mual leh Neilut tu kilawm lawm hi,  
Nathing nuai leh Vanglua tu kilawm lawm hi.*

That means,

The descendant of *Neilut* and the way to *Jhum* field goes-together,  
The descendant of *Vanglua* and safari goes-together.

The above song signifies that the descendants of Neilut were enthusiastic cultivators, for whom going to the field was the order of the day and obviously have paddy all year round whereas the descendants of Vanglua engaged mostly in hunting game in the jungle and lacks no meat. In the light of the above analysis, we can concluded that the people called 'Vaiphei' are just a small section of the descendants of the Great Suantak Family; and because of this fact that all people who trace their pedigree to the Suantak trunk find a home in the recognized tribe Vaiphei.<sup>4</sup> In other words, there are many cognate tribes of Suantak family who are identified by other name than 'Vaiphei'; as the name Vaiphei originated from one of the many villages of the Suantak people in the then Burma.

### **3.2: Origin**

The Vaiphei tribe belongs to the Kuki-Chin group, which is a sub family of the Tibeto-Burman branch. They are of Mongoloid stock. Their characteristics, behaviour and their colour identify them as being Mongoloid race. Beside, a particular unique Mongoloid characteristic which is found among the Vaiphei is a distinctive blue birth-mark found on the lower back of babies. The word 'Chin-Kuki' is used to mean many tribes like Thado, Lusei, Paite, Hmar, Simte, Gangte, Vaiphei, etc. as a whole. There is still no proper nomenclature comprising all these tribes. Moreover, there is a common principle running through them all; their traditions, religions, social and cultural lives are more or less the same. They have different dialects that are similar to each other. This may be the reason why an outsider frequently failed to distinguish these tribes from one another. In other words, the Vaiphei are a small tribal group, who are dispersed and scattered over a large area of southern Manipur (they are also found scattered in the northern districts of Manipur), northern Mizoram, parts of N.C. Hills in Assam and even in Meghalaya.

According to their tradition, the Vaiphei people came out of a '*Khul*' (Cave) or '*Chhinlung*'. However, they have no physical proof of their claim. The Vaiphei were a

primitive tribe who did not possess any script until the early twentieth Century; and did not leave behind any written records of their past history. Therefore, the oral traditions in the form of legends, folktales, folklores, folksongs and verses chanted by the priests have to be relied upon. Apart from this, place names also have to be taken into consideration. Even though the exact location of 'Khul' is still not known, every Vaiphei understands and accepts that *Khul* is his ancient home from where his ancestor originated. This *Khul* tradition has been substantiated by a number of their songs of the braves or cry of triumph called '*hanla*'. One of the songs of the braves that substantiated the *Khul* tradition goes as:

*Ka thang e! Khul ah ka pian in Aw;*  
*Ka chun leh zua'n thangnan chembang ei chawi e;*  
*Namtin guallai lawi ang ka thang e!*

Which, translated, means

"I am famous! Since I was born from *Khul*;  
 My parents praise me in the village of many people;  
 Among many people I am famous!"

The above *hanla* bears testimony of the claim that the Vaiphei people originated from *Khul*. From this song, it can be understood that *Khul* is a place revered among the Vaiphei and they were proud to be originated from it. There is a controversy regarding the exact location of *Khul*. The scholars and historians who have attempted to absolve the problem seem to have only confused the matter even more. However, the various theories formulated upon *Khul* or *Chhinlung* are nevertheless very interesting and have to be taken into consideration.

It is, therefore, necessary to highlight briefly the various theories developed on *Khul*. The first view, shared by some writers, believes that the location to be some where in China; probably the name given to the bowel of the earth or a cave from where the kindred tribes including the Vaiphei had come out.<sup>5</sup> Their reasoning is that the word '*Khul*' itself means a hallow or cavern, and the word '*Chhinlung*' is a combination of two words in

Lusei; 'Chhin' meaning cover, and 'lung' meaning stone; and thus it implies 'stone covering'. Although this view is based only on simple literal translation, yet it is a common belief shared by other kindred tribes like the Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Thado etc.<sup>6</sup>

Mc Cullock (1959:55) contended that all these cognate tribes were known as Kukis, and that they:

*".....bring their progenitors from the bowels of the earth, and they relate the manner of their reaching its surface thus: one day their king's brother was hunting hedgehogs; when his dog in pursuit of one, entered a cavern, and he waiting for its return remained at the mouth. After lapse of sometime.....he found himself suddenly on the surface of the earth. Returning to his brother, he related about his adventure and counselled him to annex the new country, which the king did".*

By way of explanation of their amalgamation with the tribes who speaks different languages, if not dialects, they relate:

*".....the three grandsons of the chief: while, one day, all playing together in their house; were told by their father to catch a rat. They were busy about it when, being suddenly struck with a confusion of tongues; they were unable to achieve their object. The eldest son spoke Lamyang, the second the Thado, the third, some say the Vaiphei and some the Manipore language. Thus, they broke into distinct tribes".*

Several writers and scholars have attempted to locate 'Khul' or 'Chhinlung' some where in China. Songate suggests the possibility of the present day Tailing or Silung of South-west China being misunderstood as Chhinlung or Sinlung. V.L.Siama suggest that these cognate tribes had come from North-East China. There are also some scholars who maintained the view that Khul/Chhinlung is located in Tibet. (Ginzatuang 1973:5). Further, Khul, according to some other scholars and writers, is at the source of the river 'Gun' which seems to be identical with the Imphal River in Manipur. Etymologically, the word 'Gun' in Vaiphei means the Imphal River.<sup>7</sup> Some even believed that it is somewhere in the South-Eastern border of the Great Wall of China. Whatever the arguments and believes may be, all the scholars and writers of the Vaiphei people accepts and agree that Khul is the original place of their forefathers which is believed to be located somewhere in Southern China.

### 3.3: Process of early migration:

One of the distinguishing characteristics of human being is his tendency to migrate and Vaiphei are no exception to this character. After the Vaiphei people came out of the Khul, they settled at '*Khua-Sinlung*'.<sup>8</sup> As far as their old-men can trace; their origin, dispersal and the process of migration began the moment they left Khua-Sinlung. Before they came to Chin Hills, they crossed a very big river called Chindwin by what they called *Pum*\* at about 996 A.D. They settled and lived there for about two hundred years.

The migration of the Vaiphei people from one place to another and to their present settlements took place due to several reasons. They moved to new places for better and adequate land for cultivation. The other important causes of their migration can be the feeling of insecurity which they felt during their habitation. The frequent inter-tribal disputes and pressures from numerically more powerful tribes compelled them to migrate to safer places. So, it appears that the Vaiphei migrates due to the notion that the general streams of Chinese immigrants as well as political and social pressures in their earlier habitation.

It is not known exactly what direction they took to, but there is a strong possibility that they could have followed the other cognate tribes who headed southwards. So, it appears that the Vaiphei followed a step migration, if not a nomadic way of wandering. They did not know where and what kind of new land they would eventually be led to, in the process of their earlier migration. According to Lalbiakthanga as well as Vumkhohau, the Zo people including the Vaiphei, migrated from Kale Valley to the Chin Hills around 1374 A.D. under the pressure of a cruel Shan king, which coupled with a severe famine. During those days, most sub-groups of the Zo were not in a position to stand on their own, which results in many groups living within the limits of more powerful groups.<sup>9</sup> B.Lalthangliana (1977:28) writes:

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\* *Pum*: A platform or frame made of bamboo and used for sailing in the water as boat.

“.....in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, ‘Seipui’ became fairly prosperous. Relying on its defensive power, such groups as Vuite, Vaiphei and Ralte came to live within the limits of Seipui. That period coincide with the period of Teddim, in which Mualbem strove with such contending tribes as Vaiphei, Guite, Thado and Yo; most of whom fled Teddim to seek refuge outside Teddim.”

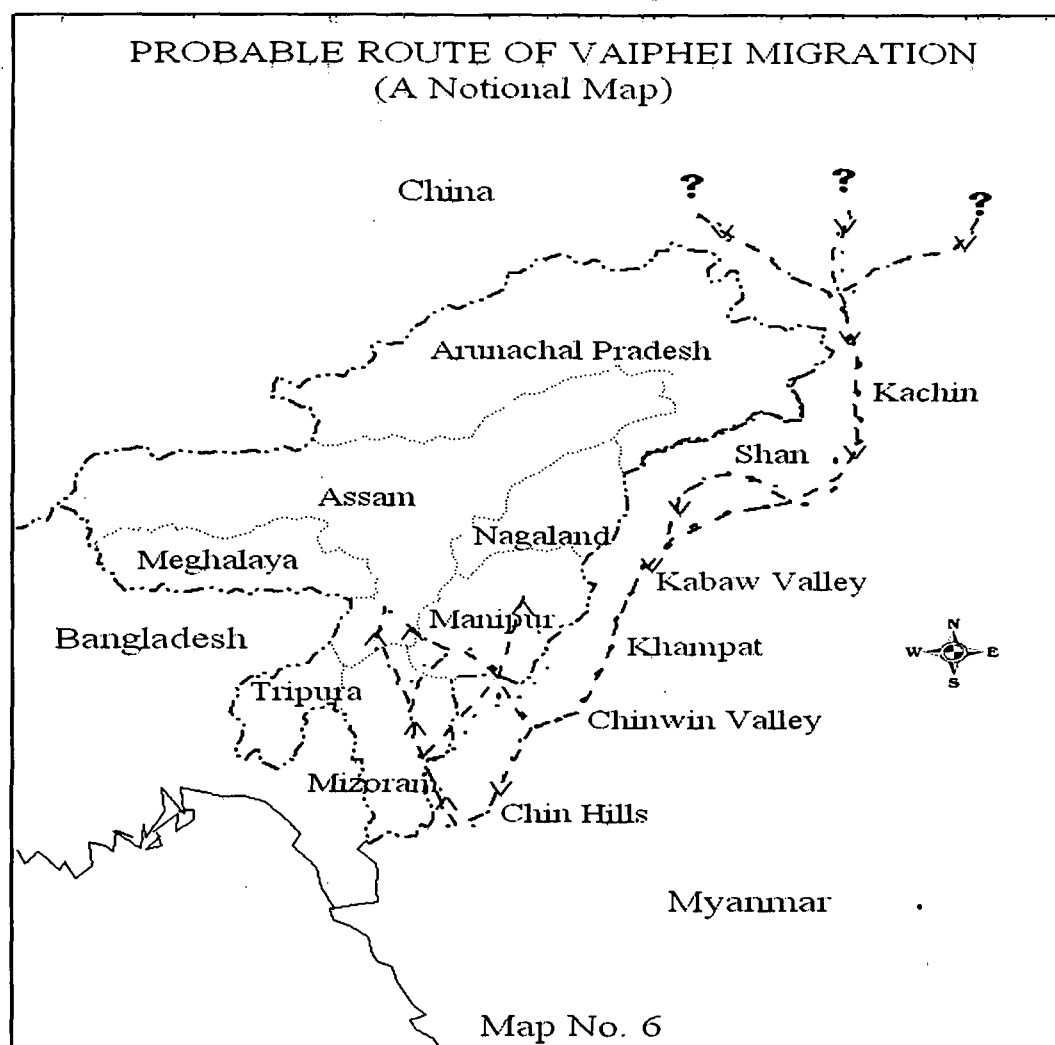
The people who lived in Teddim under Kamhau are said to have comprised of Saizang, Teizang, Thado and Vaiphei etc. A Vaiphei song that tells the oligarchic rule of Kamhau is preserved as this:<sup>10</sup>

*Sinthu sawiding TualAwn Pa;*  
*Dokim tu lu AmThang Pa aw.*  
*Dokim tu lu AmThang Pa aw.*  
*Vannuai lutsial a tuna ZaTual Pa aw e!*

This means;

[The Statesman TualAwn’s father;  
 Generalismo AmThang’s father.  
 Generalismo AmThang’s father.  
 The collector of any riches ZaTual’s father!]

E.R.Leach advances a theory that the ancestors of these people did indeed come from the North, but they did not come as the social and cultural units we know today and cannot be identified with any particular groups of today.<sup>11</sup> The migration of these people continued throughout the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century. Their migration had made them developed migratory nature. But it should be noted that their migration was an aspect of their struggle for survival from the attacks of the more powerful and aggressive clans, their search for better cultural lands and their needs for shelter and peaceful settlements.<sup>12</sup>



It is believed that the Vaiphei, the Thado and the Yo (Zou) have lived together for many years; until the Vaiphei and the Thado quarreled over the tails of a deer and a flying squirrel. It is said that the Thado killed a deer and as was tradition, distributed the meat of the deer to every one in the village. The Vaiphei then killed a flying squirrel. He did not share the meat with the other villagers as it was too small; but hung up the squirrel skin to dry in the sun. The tail of the squirrel was much longer and bigger than that of the deer. The Thado thought the squirrel must have been a very big animal. The Thado were, then, angry with the Vaiphei for not sharing the meat. A quarrel broke out and the Vaiphei have to move out and settled near a salt spring called 'Sizang'. Some section of the Vaiphei moved to Tuitawng, on the border of the plains and the hills. After sometime, they were in conflict

with the Shans of Nansaungpu and those who lived in Tungzang were under the yoke of the Sukte. They migrated to the west, settling in the hilly regions of Mizoram and Manipur.<sup>13</sup> How and when did the Vaipheis come to Manipur is still obscure. It seems there were times when Manipur experienced several foreign invasions. The fertile valley of Manipur also witnessed the invasions of different tribes through out the history of Manipur. At different periods of time, the Nagas, the Kukis, the Shans etc. came and settled in the land and merged themselves into Manipur community.<sup>14</sup>

The two sons of Suantak, Ngengu and Daitawng, founded Khuasak village which is located a few miles from the present Khuasak village in Chin Hills. Ngengu's son Lamtam founded the village of Lophei. Vanglok's son Hangsawk founded Tavaak village; and Thuklai founded Vumzang village which is near the present Thuklai village in Chin Hills. The Vaiphei have been in this area for about seventeen generations. It can be safely assumed that when they reached the Chin Hills of Myanmar, they must have established villages according to clans. Under such circumstances, a feeling of territoriality and ethnic identity could have easily developed. This would naturally lead to unhealthy relations and rivalry among themselves. Apart from inter-tribal feuds, inter-clan clashes were also there and the losers would have no other choice but to leave and try to settle somewhere else.<sup>15</sup>

Carey and Tuck in their book "The Chin Hills" Volume I (1932:2) remarked:

*"...We know from our experience that the drift of migration has changed and is now towards the North. The Gwite, Vaiphe (Vaiphei) and Yo (Zou), who within the memory of men resided in the Northern Chin Hills, have almost entirely re-crossed the Northern border, either into the hills belonging to Manipur or to the South of Cachar; and their old village sites are now being occupied by Kamhau clan of Sukte".*

The above Map No. 6 is a notional map prepared from the limited information available on the early process of migration of the Vaiphei to their present settlement. It

shows the probable routes the Vaiphei could have taken in the process of their migration from Khul to their present settlements.

### **3.4: Distributional pattern of the Vaiphei**

To understand the pattern of distribution of a tribe, it is necessary to identify the process of migration with cultural dynamics. The spread of social and cultural traits seems to have been affected through movement of different groups, who were involved in a process of displacing each other. There are phases in the history of migration whereby smaller groups were displaced time and again by larger groups. It always happened that the less powerful ones preferred to move elsewhere at the slightest opportunities rather than to live as captives of the larger groups. The historical outline of the Vaiphei people gives the picture that they were very widely scattered in the North-East region. This picture is more or less the same till now. The Vaiphei are very unevenly distributed in the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and even in Meghalaya. As the Census of India is not cent per cent reliable in case of the Vaiphei people, or is quite different from the ground truth, another method is being applied. In the present study, an attempt is being made to collect all the Vaiphei villages in Manipur, in order to get more accurate picture of the Vaiphei population and their distribution in the state.

Before analyzing the Census of India for their distributional pattern, it will be appropriate to highlight the villages where the Vaiphei people resided in the state. In Manipur, the Vaiphei are found scattering in as many as 180 odd rural villages, excluding those who settled in towns and the state capital, Imphal. The following are the number of Vaiphei villages, in a region wise, in Churachandpur district:

- (I) South-Western part of Churachandpur District- 57 Villages.
- (II) South-East Churachandpur District- 50 Villages.
- (III) North Churachandpur District- 24 Villages

According to Census of India-2001, the Vaiphei population in Manipur State is 27,791 persons. If the states as a unit are taken to analyse the distribution of the Vaiphei population, it is observed that the Vaiphei population is very insignificant, as their population is very low in percentages to the total population of the state. Even if the percentage of Vaiphei to the total Scheduled tribe population is taken, the figures are still low. When the percentage of the Vaiphei to the total tribal population of each district are taken, they become a bit more significant. As mentioned earlier, the Vaiphei are the tribe, widely scattered in a small numbers and are found ubiquitous in almost everywhere, not only in Manipur state but also in the different states of North-Eastern region of India.<sup>16</sup>

**Table No. 3.1: Percentage of Vaiphei to total S.T.s Population in Manipur**

Year	Vaiphei Population	Percentage to total S.T.s Population
1961	8,215	3.30%
1971	12,347	3.70%
1981	15,462	4.00%
1991	25,136	4.18%
2001	27,791	8.59%

The distributional pattern of the Vaiphei population in the districts of Manipur is also very uneven. They are found in all the districts of the state. However, their main concentration is in Churachandpur district, where 69.64 per cent of their total population in the state live. A large chunk of Vaiphei people inhabits Manipur North district, i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district that accounts for about 22.14 per cent of their total population in the state. These two districts together accounts for 91.78 percent of the total population of the Vaiphei in Manipur whereas all the other districts accounts for only 8.22 percent of their population in Manipur. So, the Vaiphei people are unevenly distributed in all the districts of the state. The following table shows the distribution of Vaiphei-speaking population in the districts of Manipur.

**Table 3.2: District-wise Percentage Distribution of Population of Selected Tribes**

Mother Tongue	Senapati	Tamenglong	Chura-chandpur	Imphal, Thoubal Bishnupur	Ukhrul	Chandel	Total Manipur
Hmar	0.44	2.11	87.03	9.38	0.03	1.01	100.00
Kuki	30.76	10.48	12.07	6.71	13.39	26.59	100.00
<b>Vaiphei</b>	<b>22.14</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>69.64</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>1.89</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Paite	0.23	0.05	71.18	27.30	0.21	1.03	100.00
Thadou	40.00	8.80	31.75	2.71	7.52	9.22	100.00
Meitei	0.46	0.13	0.81	98.08	0.13	0.30	100.00

Sources: Economic Review, 1994-95 (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Manipur), p. 12.

### 3.5: Concentration and Dispersal Areas of the Vaiphei

To understand the pattern of spatial distribution of the Vaiphei tribe, a more effective means can be used by identifying the areas of Concentration and Dispersal of in the region. This identification of Concentration and Dispersal areas is based on the assumption that if the Vaiphei people have a high proportion of its total population concentrated in a certain area, that area would be the Concentration area of the tribe. The following table shows the district-wise distribution of Vaiphei speakers in the state (2001 Census).

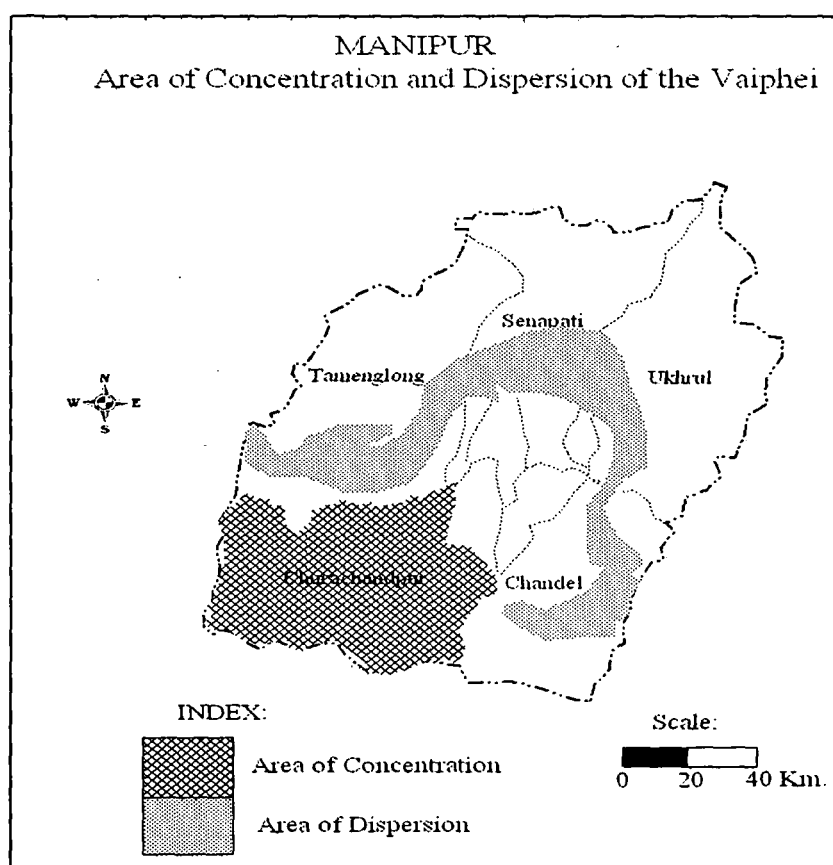
**Table 3.3: District-wise Distribution of Vaiphei Speakers in Manipur, 2001**

District	Total	Male	Female
Churachandpur	23,629	11,936	11,693
Senapati	7,357	3,710	3,647
Chandel	4,715	2,370	2,345
Ukhrul	700	372	328
Imphal	1088	554	534
Thoubal	504	258	246
Tamenglong	161	82	79
Bishnupur	113	53	60
Total	38,267	19,335	18,932

Source: Census of India. Scheduled Tribe-14, 2001.

The number of the Vaiphei speaking population in the Churachandpur district of Manipur is 23,629 persons, accounting for 61.75 percent of the total Vaiphei speaking population of the state. The other notable concentration of the Vaiphei people is found in the Sadar Hills area of Senapati district in North Manipur; where Vaiphei speaking population

amounts to 7,357 persons (i.e. 19.26%). This is followed by Chandel district where they amount to 4,715 persons accounting 12.33 percent of the total Vaiphei speaking population in the state. It should be noted here that the Census record of the total Vaiphei population and the Vaiphei-speaking population in the state is not the same. The reason could be that many Vaiphei speaks other language like Thadou or Paite.



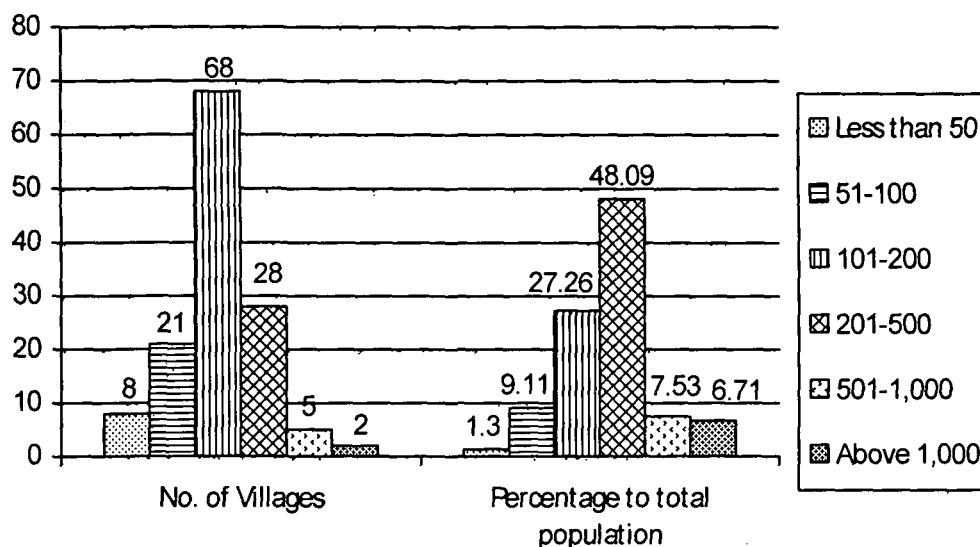
Based on the above table, Churachandpur district has been identified as the Concentration area of the Vaiphei, as it had a substantially high proportion of the total Vaiphei population in the state. The Dispersal areas of the Vaiphei distribution are Sadar Hills area of Senapati district, Chandel, and Central districts of Manipur. The Concentration and Dispersal areas of the Vaiphei distribution in the state are presented in the above Map No.7. It should be noted that the Concentration and Dispersal areas of the Vaiphei distribution were identified purely on the percentage of concentration of the Vaiphei

population or people. The following table shows the number of Vaiphei villages in the core area classified by their population.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>o</sup>Table3.4: Number of Vaiphei Villages classified by population in Churachandpur

Size of population	No. of Villages	Percentage to total population
Less than 50	8	1.30
51-100	21	9.11
101-200	68	27.26
201-500	28	48.09
501-1,000	5	7.53
Above 1,000	2	6.71
Total-	130	100.00

Fig. 3.1: Number of Vaiphei Villages classified by Population



Even though the Vaiphei people live in as many as 130 villages in Churachandpur district alone, most of these villages are very small in terms of their population. Only one village of the Vaiphei settlement have a population more than 1,000 persons and three villages with a population between 501-1,000 persons. About 47.09 percent of their total population live in villages that have a population less than 500 persons. Furthermore, about 27.26 percent of the Vaiphei population settled in villages whose populations are below 200 persons.

<sup>o</sup> This table is prepared by the author from the information collected from various sources, for better understanding of the Vaiphei distribution and concentration in the core area.

### **3.6: Status of Vaiphei Dialect**

Each tribe wants to preserve and maintain their own distinct dialects and cultures in Churachandpur district. The Vaiphei are no exception to this. They tried hard to preserve it from being lost or assimilated, though many of them are using more prominent dialects other than Vaiphei. This created the fear among the Vaiphei of losing not only their dialect but also their identity to the more numerous social groups. This led to the break up of the common church of different tribes on the ground of dialects in 1953.

In the church, Vaiphei people used their own translated Bible and they have their own hymns composed by themselves or translated from English or Mizo. They have no problem being Vaiphei in Churachandpur district of Manipur or their core area. Thus, the status of Vaiphei dialect in different churches of the Vaiphei is absolute, in the sense that Vaiphei is used in all these church services and activities. Apart from this, those schools run by churches include Vaiphei literature or subjects in their syllabus up to Class-VI. This greatly helps in providing basic educational facilities to the majority of the rural Vaiphei.

In the market places or public, all the dialects in the district enjoy more or less the same status. The people there understand one another's languages or dialects. The problem of using a common language does not arise. A Vaiphei would speak in his own dialect and a non-Vaiphei would understand him and vice-versa. This is one of the peculiar characteristics of Churachandpur district of Manipur.

### **3.7: Problems of Economic Adjustment**

Predominantly rural in character, the agriculture scenario of the district is dominated by *jhumming* or shifting cultivation. Farming techniques is either out-modeled or too traditional, not only to have any decisive impact on production, but also to meet the minimum requirements of food-grains. Only along the banks of Khuga river is permanent cultivation of rice practiced. Here also the farmers have to rely on the vagaries of the

monsoon rains due to the absence of proper irrigation. Very few Vaiphei have surplus productions, which were marketed. Most of them do not even produce enough food-grains for their own consumption and are very poor. The main workers account for 44.2 percent of the entire population of the Vaiphei and the non-workers represent 55.2 percent. The cultivators account for 84.5 percent of the main workers. There is, therefore, concentration of main workers in agriculture, which only reflects the economic backwardness of this tribe as they cultivate the land and grows crops for consumption and hardly they have any surplus for the market. On their jhums, they grow whatever they needed for consumption, though their production is usually very low. Apart from food-grains, they also produced pineapple, orange, ginger, chillies etc. which were marketed in Churachandpur town. Due to a number of factors like unfavourable locations from market, inadequate transportation, negligence from the government etc., all the developmental processes of the district, especially in the Vaiphei villages, were arrested. The resultant outcome is frequent famine, apart from a routine famine '*mautam*' (bamboo flowering) at the interval of 50 years.

Transport and communication is inadequate and not properly developed in the district. Most of the road networks are fair weather roads and during raining seasons, the villages are cut off from the town due to landslides or the bad condition of the roads. Further, there are not enough buses to carry people to different areas of the district to and fro. When a bus does ply, it is usually over-crowded with passengers piling up even on the top of the bus. It has been often referred to as one of the important factors that retarded the economic development of the district as a whole.

### **3.8: Problems of Political Adjustments**

There was no political consciousness among the Vaiphei people earlier and no sense of their separate identity from their neighbouring sister tribes. The Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes as a whole regarded themselves as one. Due to a steady development in the field of

education, people become more and more conscious about their separate identity from others. This resulted in separation or disunity within the cognate tribes in the district.<sup>18</sup> In Churachandpur district, the Vaiphei areas are divided into various constituencies, thereby reducing them to a minority in each constituency. This has subdued the political voice of the Vaiphei people in the state. The electoral opportunities to project themselves in the government were diluted.\* The other tribes living in the district are politically more united as compared to the Vaiphei. This frequently leads to an impasse when specific interests in developmental programmes are projected.

Besides the above problems, there is one major issue, which has divided the Vaiphei for a long time. This is the division of the Vaiphei into different Church administrations. This dividend directly or indirectly affects the development of the Vaiphei in general, as they are a divided lot. Recently, there is a movement to unite all the Vaiphei into one Church organization. Though this movement is not cent percent successful, majority of the tribe is now under one umbrella. If the Vaiphei can become united as one consolidated front in Church administration, they could have been more united in body and soul and the pace of development could have been faster.

### **3.9: Traditional Society**

The human pattern of life in response to man's environment is expressed in physical forms such as agriculture, arts, technology; in inter-human relations such as institutions, laws, customs; and in forms of reflection on the total reality of life such as language, philosophy, religion, spiritual values, world views.<sup>19</sup> Culture is a design for a living, which is a plan according to which society adapts itself to its environment.

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\* The Vaiphei are one of the first tribes to have their own MLA in Manipur state among the hill-tribes; (Dr. Damzakhai in 1948) as well as Minister of State (Pu, Pauneikhai in 1967). After this, no Vaiphei have come up in the list of MLAs; until the MLA election(2001), where two Vaiphei candidates, namely, T. Manga Vaiphei and Thangso Baite, were elected from Henglep and Singat Constituencies respectively.

The Vaiphei society has been patriarchal and a male dominated one since time immemorial. The Vaiphei society is divided into many clans and sub-clans and is organized on the basis of clan or village. Each clan has a chief or head called '*Upa*', who is of the main head branch of the original stock and to whom great respect is shown by all his clans living in different villages. However, there are no restrictions or rules for the same clan to live together in one village. Being the head of the clan, the *Upa* not only enjoyed respect but also '*Sating*', that is, a slice of flesh taken from the backbone of the animal- if any person from his sub-ordinate clan kills an animal. The head of each clan is supposed to be able to trace his origin and the genealogical tree of his clan from generation to generation.<sup>20</sup>

The social organization of the Vaiphei tribe is based in a system of community obligation which exists under the term '*tawmngaina*' meaning selfless service to others. Every citizen is expected or rather bound to contribute his or her good will towards the society. Under this term '*tawmngaina*', no one expects to receive a reward or profit in return for rendering service to their fellow human beings. In their society, there is also a free social life between sexes with no restriction. However, the age-wise seniority is very much respected. The young ones are not supposed to address or call the elder ones by name; but they must use a prefix like '*U*' (elder brother or sister), '*Pa*' (father or uncle), '*Pu*' (grand father), '*Pi*' (grand mother), '*Ni*' (aunty) etc. before their name; as the elder one they address is fit to be called.

### **3.9 (i): Family**

In the social fabric of any society or community the family is the nucleus and this is also true of the Vaiphei society. It is through families that societies present themselves biologically and culturally. Families have varied considerably in form. From one region to another, one generation to another and from one culture to another. The Vaiphei family consists of members related to each other by blood, marriage and adoption, all having the

same social, economic and religious status under a single head. The family has patrilineal continuity, each generation being linked to the next in a genealogical succession through males. The position of father in the family carries the highest authority and his decisions are regarded as final in all matter. He is known as '*in khat pa*' or '*in nei pa*' which means head of the family or owner of the house. The honour, prestige and the success of the family solely depend on him. One calls one's father *Pa* (Father) and never mentioned the name. Wives would also call their husbands with a prefix *U* (used to call elder or to show respect) to their name. Wives also can call their husbands after the name of the eldest son or daughter, i.e. father of so and so. Even after becoming husbands or wives, sons or daughters considered disrespectful to utter their parents' name. Children's are thoroughly trained to perpetuate the socio-cultural, religion and traditions of his family before he leaves his parents to start a new home of his own.

The family basically consists of grandparents, a father, a mother, married or unmarried children and grand-children and the father is the head of the family. The attitude towards the father-being the head, is always one of respect, and usually has a say in all matters that concerns the family. He has control over the activities of his wife and children; and it is his responsibility to arrange the marriages of his sons and daughters. Above all, he enjoys supreme authority over the household possessions as well as landed properties. He can purchase or dispose properties including land, if he thinks it is for the welfare of the family. Family lineage has been reckoned on the basis of the father's line. Inheritance follows the male line and no female has any right to claim property.<sup>21</sup> The eldest son inherited all the moveable and immoveable properties of the paternal home, and he is at the liberty to share it or not with his younger brothers. In the absence of a son, the nearest male relative becomes the heir; the daughters receiving nothing. Moreover, it is the custom of the Vaiphei to trace their genealogy from the male line.

The life of the Vaiphei people is well regulated from birth to death through a number of ceremonies which are performed to mark certain stages or occasions in their life. They are quite sophisticated in their own style of life. When a woman becomes pregnant, she has to observe certain restrictions and taboos. She is not allowed to eat the meat of ferocious animals and also not allowed to kill snakes etc. Even the husband of the pregnant woman is not allowed to go out hunting or killing an animal and also cannot participate in grave-digging.

### **3.9(ii): Child-naming**

The practice of child-naming was given great importance by the indigenous Vaiphei society. The birth and naming ceremonies of a new-born child were usually almost performed simultaneously. The naming ceremony of a child was performed usually in the seventh day of the birth. A village priest called '*Thiampu*' was invited to perform the ceremony. Some of the village elders and the relatives of the parents were invited to attend the ceremony. However, the naming of the child was usually done by the parents. It is interesting to note that a unique or a special formula of naming was adopted by the Vaiphei for both boys and girls. The first children would take the end syllable of his or her paternal grandparents to be the first syllable of his or her name. Likewise, the second born children would be named after his or her maternal grandparents' names. For example, if the name of the grandfather is *Mangzalal*, his first grandson's name will start from the last syllable of his name i.e. *Lal*; like *Lalminthang* or *Lalliansang* etc. depending upon their choice. The same pattern was being followed for the girl child also.

Another interesting thing about child-naming was that a name is given to a child with great significance attached to the name apart from the last syllable of their Grandparents' name. For example, if the name of the grandfather is *Pautinmang*, the child may be named *Mangzakap*, (*Za*-hundred, *Kap*-shoot; which means killing hundreds of wild animals); to signify the braveness of the grandfather. This means the child's grandfather or father is a

brave hunter who killed hundreds of wild animals. Likewise, if the father or grandfather happened to hunt an elephant, the child's name could be *Mangsaikap* (*Sai*-elephant, *Kap*-shoot). This naming system is quite meaningful and has an advantage, because from the name of the first male child, one can have an idea and trace the genealogy of the person concerned; at least for three to four generations. However, there is no hard and fast rule in naming the third born children and beyond. There are also some instances that a child is named after their clan's name or the name of their sub-clan.

### **3.9 (iii): Status of women and their role**

The status of women, in the traditional circle, was lower than their men counterparts in Vaiphei society, though they enjoyed a good deal of respect. Apart from their overall responsibility in the household chores, they had a busy life, helping their men folks in almost all walks of life. They are under the complete control of their husbands or fathers. Apart from helping men, all domestic duties are performed by women. This domestic duties includes not only preparing meals, but also includes carrying water, collecting fire-wood, cared for children, chickens, pigs etc. Besides, it is considered the sole duty of women to spin cotton and weave or even husking paddy. They are the first to get up early in the morning for all those works and then go to the field. After working the whole day, they must carry back firewood or foods for domestic animals of which they are the sole charge. In the evening, again, they take care of all the household chores; and they are the last to retire to bed. This condition applies for girls or unmarried women. Even if they feel drowsy at night; they are not allowed to go to bed before the men-visitor left. Family management entirely lies in the hands of the mother, and good harvest and prosperity of the family rest on her. Indeed, whenever, there is shortage of food grain before the harvest comes, it is regarded as the poor management of the housewife and she is accused of this misfortune. In fact, wives used to remain so pre-occupied with domestics and other obligatory activities that they could

hardly find time to look after their children. Even then their husband would never help in sharing their duties, for helping the wife was often called '*Thaibawi*' (a hen-pecked husband), which is a derogatory term in the Vaiphei society. The following are some of the sayings that explained the status of women in Vaiphei society in the past:

*"Numei gilo leh palsia san di mawng ahi"*

(Collapsing fence and bad women shall be changed)

*"Numei pilna 'n luigal aki kai puai"*

(No one cross a river with the wisdom of a woman)

*"Numei leh akcha 'n sakhua a nei puau"*

(Women and chicken have no religion)

*"Aisa sa ahi pua, numei thu thu ahi puai"*

(Crab's meat is not a meat; as women's word is not counted as word)

Spinning cotton and weaving is solely the duty of women. As such the mother has a great responsibility in imparting the knowledge of making cloths to her daughters. A girl of four or five years starts to learn the art of weaving from their mother; and when they become adolescence, the girl exchange their skills of making cloths or embroidery to one another. When a household is poorly dressed, the fault is with the womenfolk of the family. They considered weaving clothes as holiday from the more strenuous works. Their society being an extremely patriarchal one; women had no place in it. This kind of gender bias is seen in their inheritance and ownership laws. The nearest male relative of the deceased is his legal heir. The order of preference goes like this: a son, the eldest if the deceased has sons; in case of a man without a son, his brother inherits; and in the absence of a brother, the nearest male relative inherits. In the absence of any male heir, the woman may head a house only as a caretaker and to control the disposition of the family's property. Custom and usages circumscribe their freedom of action. Widow's with minor son do not sell or dispose off their property. Under certain compelling hardship only, and after discussions with the nearest male relatives, they may do so. A mother with minor children is, therefore, regarded

as the trustee of an estate until the son assumes the headship on maturity. In the case of death of the family head, the adopted son, if any, will succeed as the head of the family and will inherit all the family property.

Thus, among the Vaiphei, women are under an autocratic dominance of their men folk. Though they continued to enjoy affectionate bond with the natal family and were entitled to receive presentation on certain occasions, they ceased to be legal members of the natal family after marriage, and they could never acquire true membership in the conjugal family in the socio-political domain. Mention may be made here that the above old-sayings are thing of the past and the Vaiphei women now enjoys a respectable positions, if not equal rights with their male counterparts.

### **3.9(iv): Marriage**

*Marriage is an institutionalized mating arrangement between man and woman. It helps the family, the basic form of social grouping, in its formation and puts itself in the process to achieve the target- the family. This institution is the most intimate and private of human relations.- Vidyarthi and Rai.*

Marriage is an important phase of life in human beings since marital union influences all the other associated facts of life. After it, both the partners assume new roles and their individual life changes according to the duties norms of the customary law. It is therefore, necessary to have knowledge of the customs around marriage to understand social life. In Vaiphei society, marriage ceremony is usually performed before cohabitation. It is not restricted to any particular clan or family. There is rule prescribing clan exogamy or clan endogamy. Any Vaiphei could marry with members of one's own clan or outside of one's clan. A Vaiphei could marry almost any women except his own sister, aunt, mother or grandmother. In spite of this, marriage among usually took place with members outside or one's clan perhaps because of the general tendency to view endogamous marriage as incestuous even in the absence of formal taboo against it.

Before marriage the parents of both the prospective bride and bridegroom usually has a close watch and detailed observation of each other family history to prevent taking of a spouse from a family having a hereditary diseases. While selecting son-in-law, the economic condition of the family was considered to be more important than boy's personal qualities, provided he had no physical or mental defects. Likewise, in the case of a daughter-in-law the greatest attributes were physical beauty, physical health to ensure progeny, efficiency in domestic work, ability to exert hard labour in agriculture work and a good reputation which means that the girl was not known for clandestine pre-marital sexual practices with other persons. This was mainly because of the cultural value on virginity of girl and social approval of illegitimate child. While the society was tolerant of the free mixing of boys and girls, there was social degradation on pre-marital sex on the part of the girl which did not permit intimate relationship with boys.

After sunset, young men of marriageable age, stuffed with pouches of tobacco went about in village and started courting girls of their choice. The boys and the girls would sit around the kitchen's furnace (*thuk*) and fireplace (*tapkho*), and it is around this *Tapkho* that a boy or a girl would lead them to matrimonial bond. Here, the boy would watch the girl rolling tobacco called *Dumzial*- bind with a thread and it is through the waistband of this *Dumzial* that the message of love is conveyed between the boy and the girl. Any acceptance or rejection of the boy's proposal by the girl would be expressed in the form of coloured thread used as *Dumzial's* waistband. Green or blue thread would indicate reciprocated love and acceptance, while red waistband signifies refusal and rejection. In this unique language of love, a strand of the girl's own hair used as a *Dumzial's* waistband is a mark of intense passion and symbolizes the deepest love. When a girl does not know how to respond a visitor, she can simply use a white colour thread as waistband while offering the *Dumzial* to him. It indicates that her mental frame is in a neutral state and therefore the suitor has to wait

while scores of white-banded *Dumzjal* are being reduced to ashes during the visits. The girl, however, must not discriminate between her lover and the rest of visitors in her attention and hospitality before getting marriage.

Monogamy is the most common and the general form of marriage, although there are some exception cases among the well-to-do, who practiced polygamy. The people considered marriage as a sacred bond which cannot be broken by any human action. However, widows are either inherited by the brother of the deceased husband or allowed to re-marry, particularly when they are without a child. As far as Vaiphei marriage system is concerned, Shakespeare was quite right in saying- 'the patriarchal and patrilocal society allowed polygamy, though only Chiefs could afford plural wives'.<sup>22</sup> However, polyandry is absolutely unknown till date.

Before going into the details of different kinds of marriage in Vaiphei society, it is interesting to note that 'matrilateral cross-cousin' (mother's-brother's-daughter) marriage system is prevalent among the Vaiphei. This system is not only encouraged but almost obligatory in the past. In this marriage system, a young man is supposed to marry the daughter of his maternal uncle. He is known as the '*Neipa*' (deserve to marry with) of the girl, and the girl is his '*Neinu*' (deserve to marry to).<sup>23</sup> But the word *Neipa* signifies father-sister's-son for the girl whereas *Neinu* means mother's-brother's-daughter for the boy. Usually, marriage is negotiated; and the groom had to pay bride price to the guardian of the bride. There are, generally, four types of marriages in Vaiphei society, namely (a) *Chawngmo*, (b) *Sainapua*, (c) *Thepthak*, and (d) *Kigaisak*. Apart from these types of marriage, the Vaiphei also have a system of marriage by servitude called '*Kawnglaw*'. *Kawnglaw* meant a system in which a boy served the family of a girl for some specific time in order to win her hand in marriage. This kind of marriage was not very popular and people hardly urged for it.

(a) *Chawngmo*: A marriage performed under the initiation and pre-arrangement of the parents of both sides. This type of marriage can be both 'arranged' as well as 'love', meaning, both the groom and bride may be a lover and they can also be a stranger. Even if they are strangers, the boy willingly agrees with his parents' choice and accepts the girl they like. In most cases, this is marrying Mother's-Brother's-Daughter; which is called as *neinu*. This practice is more or less an obligation on both sides. In case Mother's-Brother's-Daughter is not available; a person is obliged to seek the bride from his mother's side, who can still be regarded as representing the *neinu*. One, however, must not marry his father's-sister's-daughter. This kind of marriage is strictly prohibited. The question of marrying any girl from father's side does not arise and cohabitation with such girl is strictly forbidden. If no girl is available from mother's side, one may marry a girl from his father's side, but the distance of this relationship should be not less than three generations. *Neinu* marriage provides a means of establishing relationships between lineages within the society by establishing consistent recurring links between related groups. This marriage is a kind of kin-group alliance, a sort of implicit contract that must be honoured by the respective parties. The parents or relatives of the boy go to the house of the girl with 'Zu' (rice beer) and place a marriage proposal before the parents of the girl to give their daughter to their son in a traditional way. If the girl's parents express their willingness to the proposal, a pig is killed, called 'sumtansa', which served as a kind of covenant or promise. On this day, they discuss about the bridal price and fix the day for marriage. From this day onward, the girl, unofficially belongs to the boy, if not, the girl is being engaged to the boy. If nothing unfavourable turned up till the day fixed for marriage, offering of bridal price along with traditional rice beer is performed by the boy's family. This indicates the final decision for marriage, after which the bride is allowed to be taken for the marriage ceremony. In fact, this is the most desirable of all the marriage patterns in Vaiphei society.

(b) *Sainapua*: This kind of marriage is also known as '*Kizampi*' or '*Kitaipi*', which means secret marriage or elopement. The prior permission or consent of the parents is seldom sought. The two lovers run away and have a secret marriage. This kind of marriage usually happens when either side of the parents or relatives are totally against their marriage. Attempts may or may not be made to negotiate the marriage proposal. However, the two lovers are sure that their parents will never agree with their marriage. If the parents of the boy are not convinced with the marriage, they can separate the lovers by killing a pig and paying one *mithun* to the girl parents. Where as, if the girl parents want to do the same, they can only take back their daughter, without getting or paying anything.

(c) *Thepthak*: It is also known as '*nungak-gu*'. The literally meaning of this is persuaded, forced or convinced where *nungak* means girl and *gu* means take away. Here, the girl is convinced by the boy and two or more of his accomplices and take her away without the knowledge of her parents. In the truest sense, it is a kind of kidnapping, because, the girl may or may not be persuaded or convinced, but she is being forcibly carried away. In any case, it is a marriage without any prior agreement or understanding. The boy has a crush on the girl and marries her immediately.

(d) *Kigaisak*: This kind of marriage is also called as '*Kizawlgaih*'. The literal meaning of this is impregnation kind of marriage, considered unlawful and of unprecedented marriage, which is un-called for. Such a practice of marriage by impregnation is also considered as the ugliest form of conjugal planning; and social intercourse is abhorred.<sup>24</sup> In short, this is pre-marital impregnation that leads to marriage.

### **3.9(v): Divorce**

Though divorce or separation takes place in some cases, it is a rare phenomenon in Vaiphei society. In the terms and conditions of their marriage contract, they vowed 'till death do us apart', and do not mention about divorce. Marriage is considered a sacred bond

of union sanctioned by God. Divorce is usually resorted to maintain high ideals of morality, as reflected in their practice and thinking. However, it is permissible and a marriage may be dissolved either by the husband or the wife due to some compelling reasons common to both. Such reasons may be incurable diseases, lunacy, desertion, cruelty, negligence of duties, repeated unfaithfulness, adultery etc. The village council or the clan elders however, examined the cases intensively before divorce is actually granted. But divorce only becomes imminent if either of the couple led a life of immorality and corruption. If a divorce is there, the bride is free from the marriage bond and she will leave the house and find her shelter somewhere else. Customarily, she is not allowed to go back to her parents' house. It is considered a disgrace to the family to receive back divorced women and also she will bring misfortune to the family. If the divorce takes place due to her fault, she is, traditionally, not entitled to get any share of the husband's properties. She is compelled to leave the house with her dress alone. However, in case of a divorce where the fault of the husband is proved, she is allowed to receive some part of moveable properties of the husband like food-stuff, plates, clothes, cash-money and animals etc. but immovable properties always remains with the husband. In certain cases, the divorced wife is allowed to take over the guardianship of a female child. The Vaiphei also practices widow re-marriage. There is no compulsion on marrying one of the younger or elders brother's of her husband (in case of death). However, there is no additional restriction in the choice of mates for the widows. On the second marriage full bride price is not taken for a divorced widowed or any run-away wife.

### **3.9(vi): The Village and its administration**

In the social organization of the Vaiphei, several families of blood relations through fathers formed a clan, and several clans made a village. Naturally, a Vaiphei village was, and is, composed of several clans because of the exogamous nature of marriage. In early days, the Vaiphei selected very inaccessible locations for the sites of their villages; mostly

on the hill-tops, due to inter-village feuds. There were to considerations underlying in selecting a village site. The first was to be near a water fountain or a stream ensuing regular water supply of drinking water, facilities for bathing and washing. The second consideration was for security reason. Those were the days of widespread sense of insecurity among the people because of constant inter-tribal disputes. A vicious pattern of inter-tribal feuds, attacks and counter-attacks, over possession of land, contributed to a sense of uncertainty and mutual suspicion. Under such condition, the primary consideration of selection of a village site was to ensure natural or geographical protection and a good defensive position against surreptitious attacks. Therefore, in many villages, drinking water become a constant problem and was often carried up in bamboo tubes from the lower springs by the women. This isolation of their villages ultimately enhanced the independence of the Vaiphei village.

Every Vaiphei village is entirely an independent entity with a well demarcated village land, which is administered by a chief also called '*Hausa*' or '*Khawpa*'. The words of the chief carried weight and were obeyed respectfully and promptly. Thus, chieftainship originated in the physical and intellectual prowess of a person. In those days, when disputes arose between two villages, it was decided by physical force and the land was held by the stronger one.

Chronologically, '*Hausa*' is the person who established the village with all his energy and income. The entire land of the settlement is owned by him. The chief, in the interest of better and more efficient administration of the village, appoints council of elders and advisers called '*Inpi-siamang*'. They are selected from experts in traditional customs and rules, and socially in the upper ladder. However, the common man might also attain high status by displaying themselves through basic values such as chivalry, bravery, and prowess in hunting and in war in the traditional setting. The '*Inpi-Siamang*' is collectively responsible to the chief, if not the mouth-piece of the chief. The chief assisted by the '*Inpi-*

*Siamang* exercised autocratic powers, allotted land every year to the villagers for cultivation. He had power to veto the decisions of his council of elders. Every dispute between the villagers must be appealed to the chief through '*Inpi-Siamang*' and '*Pachawng*' (tax collector) with a jar of '*Zu*' (rice beer). All the elders from each family gather together in the house of the chief to try the case. The guilty one is fined one jar of '*zu*' one pig and one *mithun*, if the case is a serious one.

The chief is also entitled to certain privileges. One of these is '*Saliang*' a traditional flesh tax, which is a portion of meat of wild animals; the villagers have to give the chief, when they killed one. The '*Saliang*' was the fore leg, including the shoulder of every quadruped beast the villagers shot or trapped.<sup>25</sup> Another tax or privilege is '*Busun*' a traditional paddy tax. That is a yearly contribution or tribute of 2 to 5 baskets of paddy each household have to give to the chief after every harvest. The chief also enjoy the '*Saliang*' and '*Busun*' from other neighbouring villagers who use hi land for cultivation or hunting ground. Besides the *Inpi-Siamang* (elders and Councillors) and the *Pachawng* (tax-collector), the *Hausa* appoints the following officials: *Thiampu* (Priest), *Tangsam* (Village Crier), *Thiksekpu* (Balcksmith), and the *Val-Upa* (Youth Commanders).

### ***Thiampu***

In the Vaiphei administrative set-up, the *Thiampu* (priest) is holding high office next to the Chief and his (elders and councillors) *Inpi-siamang* in the village. The *Thiampu* is an indispensable person in the village, whose religious services is required in almost all walks in life. He, therefore, becomes the obligatory intermediary between the people and the god or the gods in the society. His power, especially on religious matter is beyond challengeable and final. In his priestly capacity, while performing religious sacrificial, on behalf of the whole village community, even the Chief would bow to him for his blessing. He would perform sacrifices and rituals at least twice in a year for the good-health and well-being of

the community. He also performed sacrificial services both for the family and the individuals, on their request, for their well being. He also performs all sacrifices for the sick and the dead, offers prayer for the prosperity of the crops, and 'sanctifies the village' from the influence of demons and evil spirits. For performing those connected with cultivation, he received a basket of rice, but for some it is not customary to take payment and the fees depend chiefly on the position of the person who had to pay them.

Above all, the *Thiampu* can exert tremendous influence upon the mental outlooks of the people, and it is perhaps, owing to their egoistic tendencies the superficial beliefs are implanted in the minds of the ignorant masses thereby paving the way for the ushering in of pluralistic world view. The *Thiampu*, therefore, dominates the social and religious life, and the man's lodge constitutes the bulwark of tradition.

### ***Tangsam***

The *Tangsam* plays an important role in the village administration the Vaiphei society in the past. He is messenger of the Chief and his Councillors, announcing any emergency and other social announcements to the people. He also supervises and takes care of public works in the village. The *Tangsam* was exempted from forced labour and actual works in the community labour. He is entitled to remuneration of a small basket of paddy from each house in the village annually for his services to the people. Though he held an important place in the society, it may be mentioned that he is normally selected from a relatively low status family, as the occupation is considered to be low and cheap by the well-to-do families. However, the Chief usually use this occupation to favour one of his favourite among the low status families, thus, gradually diminishing the social stigma attached to it.

### ***Thiksekpu***

Though not a member of the village Council, *Thiksekpu* is the key person in the agricultural life of the people in the village. He is responsible for making all kinds of

agricultural implements and tools of the villagers. Every villager is bound to avail his expert service which is the only available means to make or repair their agricultural tools. Every Vaiphei village is not without *Thiksepui* for all metal work is done by him. *Thiksepui* levied a small basketful of rice per household annually from who uses his services. In some cases, he receives a day's labour from every household in the village for his remuneration, which is called as '*thik-tha*'<sup>26</sup>.

### ***Val-Upa***

The *Val-Upa* are one of the greatest assets of the Chief as they alone has the organisation force and capacity in the traditional social setting through the institution of *Sawm* (youth dormitory). It is the *Val-Upa* who mobilized the youth and rendered voluntary services to the society in time of peace, natural-calamities, war etc. The *Sawm* under the command of *Val-Upa* also served as a sort of military wing of the village political organisation by imparting strict discipline and vigorous training in the art of tribal warfare, defence, and services to protect and to give security to the village in time of inter-tribal feud. The Chief and his Councillors are very much aware of the *Val-Upa*'s influential power and thus, they constantly try to please them as they are the very backbone of their power and prestige in the society.

### **3.9(vii): Dormitory**

Dormitory system is an outstanding trait of the cultural life of most of the tribal people in India. In Vaiphei society too, one of the most important and significant social life is the practice of dormitory called '*Sawm*', which is also called as 'Bachelor's dormitory'. In the Vaiphei traditional society, social control is a village-wide affair and its chief instrument is the institution of *Sawm* - a bachelors' quarter or youth dormitory, which occupies a central position in the village organisation and administration. Origin of the *Sawm* institution among

the Vaiphei cannot be traced back but one may assumed that is as old as the tribal culture itself.

Every village whether big or small, practiced the system of *Sawm*. All unmarried young men above fifteen years of age sleep together at night until they got married. Those young men could respond at any moment's notice to any emergency, such as fire, surprise attack, etc. In some cases, where the village is big and the number of young man is high, they constructed a special hut called '*Tham*' (or '*Zawlbuk*' in Lushai) for such purpose.<sup>27</sup> It is a spacious sleeping bunk built in the front verandah of the house of certain person of importance. But in most of the Vaiphei villages, they used the bigger house in the village where there is more than one young women of the house to serve them.<sup>28</sup> The labour co-operative organization of the youth is called as '*Lawm*'; which main motive is helping each other. The girl in whose house is the '*Sawm*' has to serve the young men, looking after their garments, wash them and mend them if torn; and has to comb even their hairs. She should regard this job as privileged rather than finding it boring. Organization of *Sawm* not only have a great purpose in regard to defense and security matters but also it served as a learning institution for the younger ones in the *Sawm* about manners and their way of life.

Expert in all activities, excelling other and possessing the highest social status, because of his performance, is called *Val-Upa* and he is the leader of the *Sawm*. All the inmates of the *Sawm*, under the supervision of the *Val-Upa* perform their duties whenever necessary. They young boys, before attaining puberty, have to keep up the supply of firewood and water for the *Sawm*. This duty continued till they reached the age of puberty. When they reached puberty, they ceased sleeping in their parents' houses and join the young man in the *Sawm*. In this way, a very strict rule is observed for the young men in the Vaiphei society and there is no room for idleness.

It is in the *Sawm* that unmarried men gather in the evening to sing a song, tell stories and make jokes. In case of any emergency or difficult in the village or when there is any threat from the enemy, these men are always on great alert to meet such situations. In the dormitory, the youth learn their folk tales, traditional customs and laws, agricultural methods, hunting and everything about their community life. By the time they left the *Sawm*, they knew all about sex, morals and social customs of the tribe. In short, all the basic qualities which comprise the socialization process are inculcated in the *Sawm*. As an institutionalized mechanism of social control and socialized education, it plays a very significant role in imparting their tribal philosophy of life - *Tawmngaina*- that is self-sacrifice, selfless devotion, respect for the elders and bravery. Thus, a man who practices the precept of *Tawmngaina* is looked up-to and respected.

In fact, it is a symbol of solidarity and collective effort; its members defends the village, perform works in a collective nature during natural calamity such as death, famine, fire, or works which require community services through the philosophy of *Tawmngaina*. Thus, the *Sawm* for the Vaiphei act as school and made the youths perfectly train for their future life. The *Sawm* usually organized an annual merry making social function every year by killing one or more *mithuns* or pigs with *Zu* (rice beer). This annual social function is termed as '*Sawm-kikhai*' which is also called as '*Lawm-zu-nek*'. Hence, every work performed as well as every function or merry-making are collective in nature.

### **3.9(viii): Hairstyles and dresses**

Hair dressing is an important aspect of the Vaiphei dress-habits for both males and females. The Vaiphei males also wear long hairs like their female counterparts. The hair is brought downward together to the back of the head and is knobbed behind, which is termed as '*Tukcha*'. The women folks cared their hair by applying oil made from pig's fat, fowl's fat etc. and parted their hair precisely at the centre. The two portions are plaited together

with a bunch of cotton thread called '*Samkhau*'. The plaited hair called '*Samphek*', is thus brought towards the back and crossed each other behind and brought around over to the front, just above the fore-head. This meeting end is tied with a special knob, thus making special coiffure called '*Samkawp*'. Those women, particularly, young ones, having extra long and lustrous hair are admired by all. It is, in fact, regarded as a special asset and an undeclared show of excellence among the women folk. However, the Vaiphei men and women are not very fond of ornaments or tattooing.

The Vaiphei have peculiar traditional dresses of their own, which is very simple for both the sexes, prepared only by women as a Vaiphei girl takes great pride in her weaving and sewing skills to supply sufficient clothes for her family. They have their own significance and meanings as a result, there are dresses for various occasions, age group, sex, social status, etc. Different designs on the dresses not only made them attractive but they are symbols of identity of the tribe since time immemorial. Moreover, designs of an individual's dresses and ornaments also reflected one's position in the socio-cultural life in their society. Men wear a small cloth about 5x3 feet on their waist and a simple shirt made by their women in their own fashion. Every man carries a knife with case, which is usually tied around the waist with a special thread or rope.

As regard to the dress of womenfolk, they are better dressed than their male counterpart. Indigenous Vaiphei women have a great fascination for coloured clothes, neatly designed. A Vaiphei woman uses a cloth of such a length as to go round the waist down to knees. Women wear a kilt shape piece of coloured cloth just below the navel reaching half way down the thigh called '*Nik*'. Another cloth or sheet is worn over the breast reaching down the knee called '*Puanchen*' or '*Puanve*'. Most Vaiphei women also wear ear ornaments such as black wool, brass rings, cogwheel or flowers etc. The favourite earring among others is the large disc of silver called '*Bilkam*'<sup>29</sup>. Various kinds of beads were worn

around the neck such as the white beads made from the inside of conch shells, cornelian and black beads. One of the principal ornaments worn is the ivory armlet beside the brass armlets. Besides, the black kilt is worn as the outer garments, which were generally embroidered with cowries in three or four lines. The dresses of women also consists of sleeveless bodies formed by cloth crossed under one arm and fastened on the opposite shoulder, and of a petticoat made by wrapping a cloth round the waist and tying it or tucking it in so as to keep it from falling. They wore no ornaments on their leg or feet. They wore single-shaped bracelet on the upper arm and brass wristlets. They also wore plain brass bracelets, sometimes in large numbers. They also wore different types of necklace (*Khi*) such as red beads, yellow beads, black beads and white beads. The cloth worn by women on the occasion of ceremonies depends on the occasions in which women took part.

### **3.9(ix): War and Head-Hunting**

War and head hunting was not only common but also the order of the olden times in Vaiphei society. The Vaiphei method of making war was very simple: to raid the enemy's village and carry off as many captives and as much loot as possible. They placed great values on heads because of two reasons. First, each head meant an additional slave for the soul at '*Mithi-khua*' (village of the dead). Secondly, able to take the enemy's head showed their physical power, if not the power of their clan or village.

Before setting out for a raid, the gods were consulted first by the priest-'*Thiampu*'. The *Thiampu* will hold up a fowl while another chopped off the head. The position in which the head fell depended the success or otherwise of the expedition. If the beak of the chopped off head of the fowl pointed towards the village to be attack, the omen was taken as good. But if it pointed towards the opposite direction, it was considered a sign of defeat. When the omen was favourable, the priest blessed each of them, and the attacking party set out. When they returned from the raid with the heads of the enemies, the villagers met them at the

outskirt of the village or village gate called '*Khawmual*'. A war dance was held round the trophies, which are placed at the village gate on poles. With drums and gongs, the raiders sang '*Hanla*' (song of the braves). These heads were exposed in the village gate and preserved. When fighting with an enemy or when doing any hard work, they usually cited their geneology.

### **3.9(x): Economy**

The early Vaiphei village state was economically self-sufficient. The use of the term 'self-sufficient' in the context of the Vaiphei economy seeks to explain that most of the needs of the villagers were produced in the village itself. Agriculture i.e. *jhumming* played the most important role in the economy of the Vaiphei. It was, and continues to be, the mainstay of their economy subordinated by handicraft, weaving, pottery, domestication of animals and trade. However, trade did not constitute a very important aspect of the Vaiphei economy. It was used to supplement certain deficiency and requirements and trade it not necessarily touch all their villages. Though the Vaiphei did not establish industries as such, small manufacturing units and handicrafts like blacksmithy, basketry, pottery, weaving and salt manufacturing had been well developed in their villages.

The Vaiphei have also developed a level of technology within the phenomenon of similar ecological adaptation. Land is cultivated by slash-and-burn method. Settled plough cultivation or terracing was not conceived as necessary when low population density in the midst of vast forest land could allow them to go for an easier method, where a *dao*, a fire, a small basket and seeds as the indigenous capital gave them a tolerable subsistence. The Vaiphei developed, in a certain sense, a forest based material culture. Their houses were made of wood, bamboos, thatch, canes and creepers without the used of iron nails. Various forms of basketry, bamboo-made-benches and desks, cane-chairs as well as bamboo-water pipes are a common scene in a traditional village. Most of their musical instruments, pipers,

flutes, horns and drums were made of forest products. Colourful feathers of birds featured as indispensable ornaments in dance performances. They made mattresses and blankets from cottons grown in their fields; but some mattresses were also made from hay. Big hats, used as umbrellas, were made from broad leaves, clipped together with pieces of split bamboo. Fishing traps of various kinds were made of split bamboos and one particular roots of a creeper-plant were used for poisoning the water for fishing. Since his childhood, a Vaiphei gets used to all-purpose-bush-knife with him, because he has to be versatile at using bamboos and woods for preparing the objects for his material culture.

### **3.9(xi): Food and Beverages**

The food habit of the Vaiphei is simple, but formed an integral part of their social living. Cooked rice is the staple food of the Vaiphei people. They eat it with curry usually with chilies mixed with a local soda known as *Changal* (salty ash water, drained through wood ash). *Changal-mepawk* (stew-soda curry) was the most common curry usually mixed with a little dry meat. They consumed almost all the flesh of animals and leafy vegetables grown in the kitchen gardens. Due to scarcity of food and low yield from the slash and burn cultivation practiced by them, they consumed various types of roots, tubers and seeds collected from the forest. They hardly used any medium of cooking. All their food preparation was based upon boiling and smoking. They liberally used burned red chilies. The consumption of milk or milk products by children or adults is not known in the past. They relish flesh of game collected through hunting jointly or individually. Rice and its by-products like rice-beer, rice baked-cake, maize, millet and vegetables were the main items of their food. The Vaiphei rarely practice any process of cooking other than boiling. The staple food-rice was taken with boiled vegetables and liberal helpings of chilies with salt. As a matter of fact, there was no variation in the menu at different meals. Morning meal and dinner formed their main meals with noon meal (lunch) in the field. Almost the same items

were served in all these three meals. Their main vegetables include yam, beans, mustard, cucumber, water-melon, pumpkin, spring onion, brinjal and bamboo-shoot. Their garden fruits included mango, banana, guava, jack-fruit, papaya, orange, pine-apple, sugar-cane and plum.

The Vaiphei are non-vegetarian and they are fond of meat such as beef, pork, mutton, chicken, *mithun*-meat, dog meat and the meats of jungle beasts including monkeys and birds which were considered special delicacy. Therefore, in order to meet their demand for meat, they domesticated and reared animals as much as they can. Rearing animals served not only to supplement their diet, but also used for commercial purposes. No doubt, their daily meals could not be enjoyable without the taste of meat. But there was no regular butcher for daily supply of meat which compelled every family to rear their own live stocks. Again, entertaining a guest without meat, in Vaiphei society, was and is disgraceful and meat should be made available for the guest who may come unexpectedly. Further, during festivals, meat and rice-beer were the most important items without which a festival was not worth the name. All kinds of festivals have been favoured by killing a number of cows and pigs. The strength of the feast of merit offered by rich man used to be measured by the number of cattles killed. Moreover, bride price to the parents of the girl is paid in terms of cattle heads. All the criminal punishments were also measured in terms of cattle heads. Indeed, cattle were regarded as the highest unit-value of the moveable properties. Hence, animal husbandry plays an important role in the economy of the Vaiphei and served as the commercial purpose of the people. In this way, a person earned social prestige by the strength of cattle wealth he had. Hunting, fishing and trapping formed another source of meat supply to the Vaiphei.

There were two main kinds of intoxicating drinks, one was simple-partially fermented rice with husk known as *Zupi* (rice-beer); the other type was made from sticky

rice which they fermented and distilled called *Zuhaning*. Rice beer called 'Zupi' was the most specialized and the chief beverage of the Vaiphei. It was very common and used in every occasion. No important functions or ceremonies can be done without *zupi*. The other type- *zuhaning* was never a daily item of diet for the ordinary home, it having being rather the mark of some special feasts. On the other hand, the place of *zupi* in the traditional Vaiphei society was as that of tea in the modern civilized society. They also had different kinds of *zu* brewed and prepared by their women folks. Even the *Thiampu* (priest) can not mutter his charm or magic words without *zu*. The way or style of consuming wine has been described by Rev. S. Prim Vaiphei as:

*The first type is normal drinking; the other way is sucking the wine out of zobel (jar) by means of a long reed which is passed from mouth to mouth. For drinking cups, they used the horns of mithun. Besides drinking at celebrations, social gatherings and annual festivals, the Vaiphei had three main ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death where excessive zu are available. They believe that they came out of Khul (cave) with their 'zu'.<sup>30</sup>*

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  - <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>3</sup> Shakespeare, J. in N.Sanjaoba Edited (2003) *Manipur- A British Anthology Vol.-II.* pp-570.
  - <sup>4</sup> Vaiphei, S. Op cit. p-5.
  - <sup>5</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. *The Vaiphei Tribe.* p-3
  - <sup>6</sup> Lalrinawma, 'Settlement patterns of Mizos.....' p-14.
  - <sup>7</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. Op cit. p-3
  - <sup>8</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. Op cit. p-3
  - <sup>9</sup> Lalthangliana, B. (1977) 'History of Mizo in Burma' p-28
  - <sup>10</sup> Singkhawkhai (1995) 'Zo People and their Culture' p-29
  - <sup>11</sup> Lehmann, F.K. (1978) "The Structure of Chin Society" in Journal of Burma Research Society. Aizawl. Vol.42. P-1.
  - <sup>12</sup> Gangumei, K. (1995) 'Genesis of the Ethnoses of Manipur' in "MANIPUR: PAST AND PRESENT". Vol.III. P-44.
  - <sup>13</sup> Vumson, "Zo History" P- 83
  - <sup>14</sup> Roy, J. *History of Manipur.* P-4.
  - <sup>15</sup> Soilalsiam, *The process of Early Migration of the Vaiphei and their Distribution in the North Eastern Region of India.* Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, NEHU, 2004.
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  - <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>18</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. Op cit. p-58.
  - <sup>19</sup> Mbiti, J.S. 'Christianity and African Culture' Journal of Theology of South Africa. Sept, 1977. p-26
  - <sup>20</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. Op. cit. p-5.
  - <sup>21</sup> Gupta, P.D. *A Common Perspective of North East India,* p-130. Calcutta, 1967.
  - <sup>22</sup> Shakespeare, J. 'The Lushai-Kuki Clans'. p-50
  - <sup>23</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. opcit. p-8
  - <sup>24</sup> Doliand Capvung, S. *The Social Institutions of the Vaiphei,* in Manipur- past and present-III ed. N.Sanjaoba p.252
  - <sup>25</sup> Liankhohau, T. *Social, Cultural, Economic and Religious life of a Transformed Community.* p- 32.
  - <sup>26</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. Op cit. p-17.
  - <sup>27</sup> Donna Strom, *Wind Through the Bamboo.* p-26.
  - <sup>28</sup> Capvung, Doliand, S. Op cit. p-248.
  - <sup>29</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. op cit. p-12.
  - <sup>30</sup> Vaiphei, S.P. Op cit. p-14.

## CHAPTER-IV

### Changes in Vaiphei Society

#### **Introduction**

The context of this chapter spans from the period when the earliest known outside observers encountered the Vaiphei to the time the Vaiphei started to become Christian and other social institutions began to feel the impact of Christianity. The earliest known outside observers of the tribe who left records were the British expeditionary officers or agents, whose expeditions date roughly in the late the nineteenth century. The documents and notes taken on their survey tours, and during the tenure of their office in Manipur, form the earliest written records available on the people. These sources are valuable in reconstructing the history of the people as they are the only written record about the people who at that time had no written language. So, these documentary notes form the earliest written documents on this people; without which some of the important aspects of traditional culture and custom could have become lost altogether, considering the rapid pace of change subsequent to the inroads of modernity.

Some of the obvious limitations concern the reliability of such documents: these were products of Westerners who had their own preconceived ideas, suppositions and interpretations. Also some of them were products of brief and necessarily superficial observations and were not based upon prolonged research. These early studies could have been with or without national interpreters, but it has to be borne in mind that the people were not yet accustomed to dealing with the kinds of questions the foreigners would have asked. It is also possible that for security reasons they could have provided 'misinformation'.

One of the values of the early studies was that they made observations about the rapid cultural changes and the disappearance of the tribal cultures and tradition that had already begun to take place as a result of the changes introduced by the British government and the Christian missionaries. Even though people like Hutton and Mills admitted that the

British regime and administration is responsible for the changes that were taking place, they were critical of the way in which missionary activities were contributing to those changes. They believed that in the process of Christianizing the people, the missionaries were deliberately and unnecessarily discarding some traditional practices. They lamented the rapid loss of cultures and traditions in exchange for the western lifestyle that the missionaries were, in their view, propagating. Whether or not this was entirely true, can be disputed in so far as it is evident that while the early converts rejected some elements of the traditional culture which they considered to be explicitly religious, they retain other elements that were not perceived to be in conflict with Christianity.

Before going into the details of the socio-economic changes the Vaiphei people have gone through, it will be interesting to highlight the agents of change. Change is the law of nature; like most things in the world, society also undergoes changes of various types and seldom remains static. Social change is very important to enable people to march with the time and have development. In 'English Social History', Trevelyan writes "Social change moves like an underground river, obeying its own laws or those of economic change, rather than following the direction of political happenings that move on the surface of life." It is a fact that all societies are characterized by both continuity and change. Continuity is maintained by social controls particularly by the methods used in child rearing and education which transmit the accumulated social heritage to the new generation. In every society, there are some conditions that pave a way for social change. Most important are the growth in knowledge and occurrence of social contact and social conflict with other groups.<sup>1</sup>

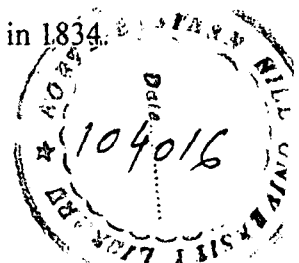
It is an acknowledged fact that since the breakdown of their century-old isolation, there have been remarkable changes in the Vaiphei society. However, no analytical study has been made yet as to how these changes were affected. There were major confluent

factors that affected the changes in the socio-economic conditions of the Vaiphei. The agents of change can be broadly grouped into Cultural contact and Christian Missions.

#### 4.1: Cultural contact

British administrative involvement in the North-eastern states began with the first Indo-Burmese war and the Treaty of Yandaboo that ended it in 1826.<sup>2</sup> The war itself was thought to be due to the instability that existed in the North East at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The then dominant power in the region, who claimed the Ahom throne, enabled the Burmese to occupy not only Assam but neighbouring Cachar and Manipur as well.<sup>3</sup> During this time, the Maharajah of Manipur was an ally of the British government, and remained so till the end of the British rule in India. For the first time, a politically fragmented area was brought under a single government and this brought with it irreversible force of change in the economic, social and cultural field.

After the death of Manipur ruler Bhagyachandra, Manipur entered into the period of destitute due to constant conflicts among his sons for succession. Thus, the Burmese took advantage of the situation and invaded Manipur in 1819, during the reign of king Marjit. The Burmese rule from 1819 to 1826 (seven years) constituted something of a reign of terror which is still remembered as 'Seven Years Devastation' (*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa*). The Burmese army appointed Huidromba Subol as a Meitei king who was later expelled by Herachandra. The British took interest in the affairs of Manipur and assisted in fighting against Burmese. Gambheer Singh, the youngest son of Jai Singh, in 1823, obtained help from the British and war was declared and the Burmese were defeated and forced to enter into a peace treaty in 1824. Thus, the war came to an end and the Treaty of Yandaboo was signed on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1826 between the British and the Burmans. Gambheer Singh was recognized as the Raja of Manipur and ruled with the British till his death in 1834.



The second stage of British participation in the affairs of Manipur came in 1891, which is termed as 'the last Independent war of Manipur' or 'the Anglo-Manipuri war' or the memorable 'Khongjom War'. The British government captures political power and subsequently Manipur became Princely state in 1892. After gaining control over Manipur, the British initially declared a policy of religious neutrality. Not only that, the hill tribes "were brought under a common administrative system, but they were separated from the administration of the valley of Manipur inhabited by the Hindu Meiteis".<sup>4</sup> The administration was only confined to the valley and there was no proper contact between the hill-men and the administration at Imphal due to lack of proper transport and communication. It was only after the Rebellion of 1918 that new rules were framed for the hill areas of Manipur. Thus, for the better administration of the hill areas, it was divided into four sub-divisions with its headquarters at Imphal, Churachandpur, Tamenglong and Ukhrul. In 1919, the Political Agent and the President of Manipur State Durbar were given the control over the hill tribes. Inevitably, this administration had tremendous impact on the people unlike anything they had previously experienced.

The control and annexation of the Hill areas of Manipur was gradually done over a period of time in the early twentieth century. Thus, the isolation of the area was gradually diminished and the traditional independent political structures were brought under a comprehensive central administration. So, with the British occupation of the state in 1891 and their subsequent introduction of payment of house tax in cash, the traditional economy of the hill tribes which was so far characterized by isolation and self sufficient in their own way came into a direct contact with the economy of the most advanced people of the time. In fact, this was a decisive break with the past, and the new rulers restructured the traditional economy into colonial lines. F.S. Downs, in his analysis of the situation in the North East

India in general, describes what he called “traumatic change consequent upon British annexation”, as follows:

*The subjection of the tribes to an external political authority for the first time in their history;*

*The introduction of an alien administrative and judicial system and the imposition of entirely new principles of authority and jurisprudence;*

*The introduction of money economy and consumer goods such as mill cloth and kerosene lanterns which undermined the largely self-sufficient economies of the tribes and created new concepts of wealth;*

*The development of modern communications including postal system, roads and new forms of transport;*

*The imposition of laws that seriously affected the traditional institutions.<sup>5</sup>*

The introduction of modern modes of transport and communication affected not only the traditional system but also the attitude and thought patterns of the tribal people. As a monetary system replaced the traditional barter economy, development of towns brought new consumer goods, books, clothing materials and modern shops. The introduction of these new administrative structures and material goods had far-reaching political, social economic and cultural implications which are potentially serious threat to the traditional way of life of the tribes. In the traditional Vaiphei society, all of these elements are inter-connected. If one element is affected, the whole system would be affected. All these elements contributed and influenced the changed life style of the people. However, it must be pointed out that there is no evidence of the British rule bringing about direct-rapid economic changes. In fact, they did not raise enough revenue to meet their expenses, so the goal of the administrative machinery was to check inter-tribal wars, headhunting and raiding. By this time, the British realized that the tribals and their way of life could be changed only by the intervention of the Christian missionaries. Though the British administration in Manipur made no effort to introduce the modern education system; the political involvement of the British in the affairs of Manipur, however, paved the way for the Christian missions to extend its missionary activities.

With the advent of the British colonial rule in Manipur, the tribal life of Manipur underwent a process of change. The colonial administration marks the beginning of a new historical period which is the dawn of modernized way of life for the tribals. They began to move away from their traditional way; from ignorance, superstitions and isolation to a brighter and better way of life. In fact, the Britishers restructured the traditional economy into colonial lines, introduced new policies and made efforts to exploit the native natural resources to meet their own imperial interest. Dr. Kamei Gailangam, in his paper 'Economic Changes in Tribal Areas of Manipur during the Colonial Rule: 1891-1947', discussed the changes under the colonial economic policy under the following heads:

- (i) House tax;
- (ii) Trade;
- (iii) Agriculture and Forest.

**(i) Change in payment of House tax:** The traditional way of payment of tax was in kind, where the King received the services of his countrymen through *Lallup* system. The currency of the state i.e. the metal coin, therefore, did not have an important place in the socio-economic life of the people. With the introduction of the British colonial rule, the system of payment of House tax and land revenue began to be in cash, both in the valley and in the hills respectively. The annual House tax was fixed at the rate of Rs.3/- per house and that of the Land revenue was Rs.5/- per *pari* (*pari* is about 1.3 acre). This introduction of House tax and Land revenue in cash revolutionized the whole socio-economic system of the state.<sup>6</sup> Such a heavy taxation, on people who did not practiced money system, was very hard for the tribals. In order to pay the tax, they leave aside their field works and got themselves employed in the construction of roads and bridle paths just to earn 6 annas per day. As reported in Administration Report of Manipur State in 1939-40, as many as 64,942 hill-men were recruited as coolies, in order to pay the tax levied on them. There were many occasions of the imprisonment of the village chiefs or headmen for the failure to pay taxes. The

following table shows the receipts and expenditure of the government for the decade from 1901-1902 to 1908-1909 for a deeper analysis:

**Table 4.1: The Incomes and Expenditures of the Colonial Government from 1901-1909**

Year	Total Income (Rs.)	Total Expenditure including expenditure on the Hills (Rs.)	House tax from Hills (Rs.)	Expenditure on Hill Tribes (Rs.)
1901-02	3,87,862	3,73,192	52,609	4,131
1902-03	3,96,061	4,64,409	63,566	3,873
1903-04	50,115	36,365	51,294	3,412
1904-05	3,95,395	3,87,800	45,742	3,332
1905-06	4,12,989	1,72,908	66,696	3,805
1906-07	4,21,437	1,25,266	55,569	4,000
1907-08	4,47,130	4,53,412	67,175	8,695
1908-09	4,79,164	4,72,614	59,933	12,719
Total	29,90,153	24,85,966	4,62,584	40,897

Source: Administration Report of the Political Agency, Manipur (Corresponding Years From 1901-02 to 1908-09)

During their long rule in the state, the British Colonial Government had economically exploited the hill tribes and extracted from them several lakhs of rupees in the form of tax mostly to meet their own imperial interest. One can say this; because they spent the least amount of money on the socio-economic development programmes of the hill tribes. The above table clearly shows how the Government has taken care of the Hill areas of the state. Out of the total income of Rs. 3,87,862/- including that of house tax of Rs. 52,609/- for the year 1901-1902, the total amount spent by the Government was Rs.3,73,192/- out of which Rs.4,131/- was the expenditure incurred on the hill tribes during the same year. Throughout the decade, the average percentage of expenditure incurred on the hills was about 1.40 percent only. Thus, during the decade, the colonial authorities had a total income of Rs.29,90,153 /-, out of which Rs. 4,62,584 /- was the house tax from the hill tribes. Out of this income, the expenditure incurred by the government was Rs. 24,85,966/- and the amount spent on the hill tribes was Rs. 40,897/- only i.e. 1.37 percent of the total expenditure of the state.

**(ii) Changes in Trade:** The hill tribes of Manipur, traditionally, enjoyed a self-sufficient village economy. Their wants were few which were easily met with the produces of their fields and forests. Therefore, though there were interactions among themselves and with the people of the valley, trade did not form indispensable economic activity as much as agriculture for them. It may be noted that trade was done not to earn profit but to meet their basic household and local needs which were done only through barter system. With the imposition of compulsory cash payment of house tax in 1892, the nature of traditional trade of the hill tribes also underwent tremendous changes. Trade in cash had since then, become one of their indispensable economic activities, because without trade, they had hardly any other source of income to pay house tax of Rs.3/- to the colonial government. Thus, they were forced to take up money system of trade as their economic activity. Some of the important items of goods mostly trade were rice, orange, cotton, honey, bee-wax, horns of wild animals especially deer, clothes and agriculture implements.

**(iii) Agriculture and Forests:** As mentioned earlier, the tribals were traditionally self-sufficient in economic spheres. Forest was their treasure house from which almost everything was extracted. Right from collecting their daily needs to the collection of raw materials for constructing their houses were all from the forest. Apart from this, some sources of their economy includes hunting, fishing, collecting honey and trapping animals. The hill forests are abounding in varieties of trees, plants, animals and natural resources. The tribes since time immemorial had been enjoying the ownership right over the land and forests and exploited the resources to meet their house-hold needs. But with the British occupation of the region in 1891, the right was taken over from them and the virgin forests had been opened up for commercial exploitation. The important forest resources which were commercially exploited by the colonial government includes timber, bamboo, cane, fire-wood, sun-grass, pan-leaves, honey and bee-wax, elephant tusks, deer horns, etc.

In the agriculture sector, the colonial government did not introduce any remarkable changes in the hills of Manipur. Therefore, the traditional agricultural land ownership system also remained unchanged. In fact, the hill tribes did face a lot of socio-economic crisis since the colonial rule. For example, the construction of roads and prohibition of road-side cultivation within 30 feet of the roads affected the hill people, because; compensation was not given to them for the permanent loss of their lands in the construction of the roads through their fields and forests. This resulted in the shortage of land for the people living along the road thereby making the duration of the rotation of shifting their Jhum fields shorter. Eventually, the land became less fertile and unproductive as the duration of the rotation of Jhum fields became shorter.

#### **4.2: Christian Missions**

The arrival of the missionaries and the advent of Christian missions in Manipur was only at the fag end of the Nineteenth century in the North districts and beginning of Twentieth century in the Southern district i.e. Churachandpur district. Prior to this, the tribal areas of Manipur, which is about 90 percent of the total geographical area of Manipur, was a neglected region. The people live in their pristine traditional life, unaffected by the wind of change. Therefore, the history of the Christian movement can only be understood as an integral part of a larger process of political, social, economic, cultural and religious change among the tribal people. The response to Christian missionaries contributed to the beginning of socio-economic change in the tribal areas of Manipur.

The role of Christian Missions in social change cannot be denied as they were the one introducing modern education apart from the new faith. More than any other elements like the British administration and political force, education and Christianity played a more effective role in transforming the tribal society. Thus, it is necessary to assess the advent and growth of Christianity and Christian Missions. Through the introduction of modern

education, through its schools, indigenous leadership and ideology, the new religion created a new inclusive tribal identity. While the Welsh Mission contributed the most due to the fact that it was the first mission to work among the Southern Hill tribes of Manipur, particularly the Vaiphei; those that came later, including the Roman Catholic and others small missions; all contributed to this end. Many areas of social life such as educational and health services, social welfare, literary activity, even agriculture and economic endeavours had been affected by Christianity. Hence, Christianity was the main agent of change as it was a means whereby people could accommodate themselves. As Downs put it:

*The history of Christian movement in the North East India can only be understood as an integral part of a larger process of change – political, social, economic, cultural and religious change.<sup>7</sup>*

Very few missionaries made systematic studies of the culture and tradition of the people they have to evangelize. They came out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelicalism, which was strongly oriented towards bringing about conditions favourable to the establishment of the kingdom of God through socio-economic changes. They were, therefore, more interested in changing society than in preserving it. In North-East India, they were thus more interested in what type people should become than what they have been, more geared towards change rather than looking for elements of continuity with the past. Their aim was to gain converts who would become agents of social change. This change-oriented evangelism was most evident in their educational activities. Christianity and education become inseparable. Though Christianity is not *per se* modernity, the process of modernization was begun by Christianity with education as its main vehicle.

In course of time, the attraction of the Christianity for those who came to have dominant influence on the tribe has to be related to the trauma created in the minds of the people by the loss of their traditional autonomy to the British-India rulers. There was a loss of the economic self sufficiency when a monetary system replaced the traditional barter

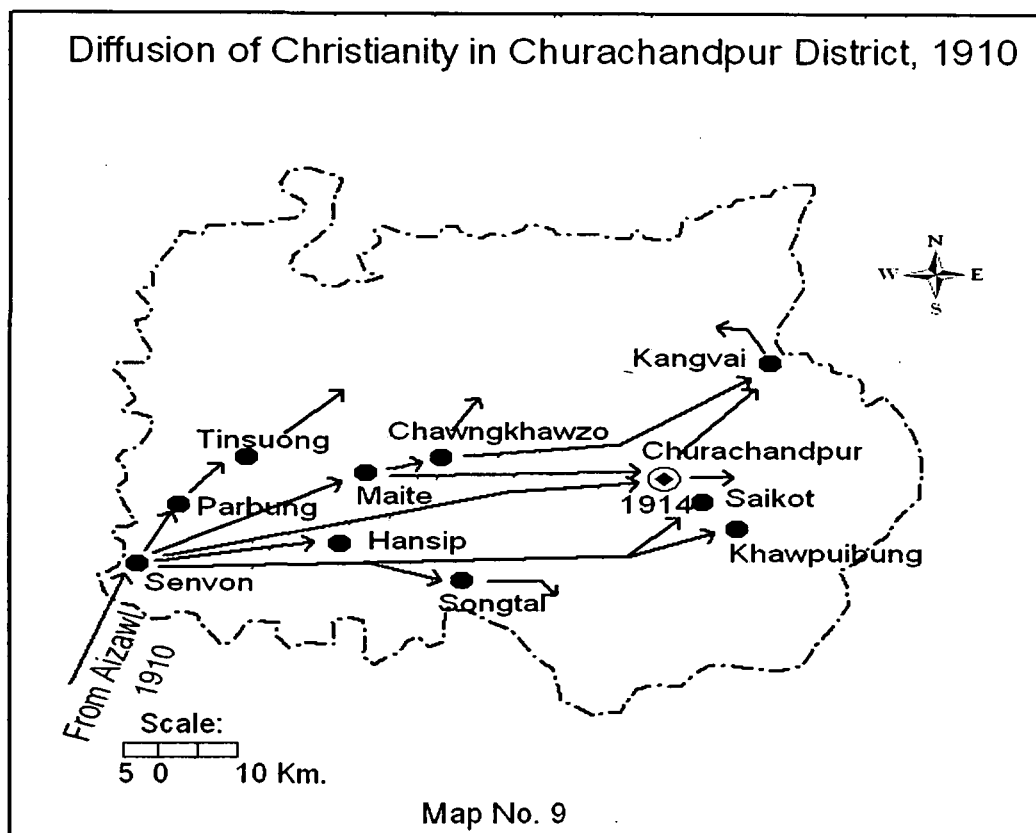
system. Again, the identity of the people which was based on isolation and control of their own affairs was adversely affected. Modern communications also undermined the traditional autonomy. The whole process not only brought in Non-tribals, but often placed them in dominant position, either politically or economically. There was no alternative but to accommodate themselves to the new order. When the traditional culture could not explain or deal with the new order, people sought the alternative way of preserving their essential identity in the face of irresistible change, which Christianity provided.

#### **4.2.1: Arrival of Missionaries in Manipur**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 1894, the first Christian missionary by the name- William Pettigrew of American Baptist landed in the soil of Manipur. As the valley people were mainly fanatic Hindus, his mission work in Imphal could only last six months, after which he was not allowed by the Manipur Raja to continue. However, he had no strong objection to allowing the missionary to work in the hill-districts where people were savaged, wild and practiced head-hunting. Pettigrew first went to Southern hills (Churachandpur district), but was not allowed to start his mission there as well. It was after this that he went to the Northern hills and made Ukhrul as his centre in 1895.<sup>8</sup>

In 1909, another missionary name Mr. Watkin Roberts of the Welsh Presbyterian organized the 'Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission' for mission work in the Southern Hills of Manipur. In March, 1910, Watkin Roberts set out towards Churachandpur taking with him two Vaiphei young men Thangkai and Lungpau, who were at Aizawl for education, as his janitors. On March 17, 1910, the two young men accepted Christ and became the first converts among the Chin-Kuki tribes of Manipur in general and the Vaiphei tribe in particular. This was the beginning of the exploration of the land-lock Southern hills of Manipur and the advent of the gospel to the people. Senvon village in Churachandpur South

became the first headquarters and gradually schools were set up. In the year 1930, the headquarters was shifted to Churachandpur which eventually became the permanent one.



The initial stage of the Christian Missions in the tribal areas of Manipur was not only difficult but also not without a high risk from the missionaries; which was infested with wild animals and hostile tribesmen. Moreover, the people were suspicious of the white man on the scene, as they thought the missionaries were there to subdue them. Many a times, the missionaries were humiliated and mocking at as R.R. Shimray describes:

*The missionaries were humiliated and they were laugh at because they had blue eyes and hairy bodies like animals contrasting to the smooth bodies of the tribals. When they tried to photograph them, they spread the news that their souls would be taken inside their camera box, if they were photographed. Hence, they took to their heels. The white missionaries had to live just like one of them in order to win over the hearts of the turbulent tribes. Only when they realized the real intention of the missionaries, they accepted their presence and later their gospel.<sup>9</sup>*

From then on there was no looking back. From Senvon village, Christianity continued to spread steadily not only in its surrounding villages, but also as far as Khawpuibung, near Saikot; where a school was opened at the request of the local people. Spread of Christianity along with education dispelled prejudice from the tribal society. Primary schools were started in more accessible villages, which, however, was not widespread in the initial stages. The incentive was not only getting education, but also some form of employment and income. Any attempt to study education of the people and its impact on the society cannot be done apart from the spread and role of Christianity. In fact, Christianity, at least for the Vaiphei, has become identified with education, at least to the literacy level, at the beginning. Evidently, at a later stage, there was an increased desire for education among the people. Though the motive for such interest was not explicitly stated, it became clear to the missionaries that the tribals' interest in education was not in order to become better Christian, rather the great interest in it was the aspiration to uplift their socio-economic condition. In other words, their interest in education was the will to get government job with good income. It may be stated, in retrospect, that today the things that had happened were incredibly true. If any religion could play a vital role in changing the life-style of a society, it is Christianity and its missions that have affected this miraculous socio-economic change among the Vaiphei in Manipur. It is Christianity that broke their age-old isolation from other civilization.

**Table 4.2: Population Distribution of Manipur by Religion in 1881**

Religion	Population
Hindus	1,30,892
Muhammadans	4,881
Christians	7
Buddhists	2
Hill tribes (Indigenous religion)	85,228

Source: Dun EW Gazetteer of Manipur, Reprint 1992 p.14

The above table shows the population distribution of the whole of Manipur by religion in the year 1881, where merely seven Christians could be identified, in comparison to the other groups. The whole tribal populations at that time were predominantly practicing indigenous religion. It was only after the commencement of the missionaries after 1894 in the North and 1910 in the South that the tribal population started converting to Christianity. Within a span of a century, several Christian denominations have established their churches in the hill areas among the tribes and the record shows a steady increase in the number of Christians in the state.

#### **4.2.2: Growth of Christian Population**

The number of Christian converts had grown from 12 in 1902 to more than 68,394 in 1951 and it increased to 1,52,043 in 1961 and to 2, 79,243 in 1971 and to 4,21,702 in 1981. Table-4.3 clearly reveals the fact that the proportion of Christian population in the state increased phenomenally after 1951. The increase in the proportion of Christian population was not so much at the cost of Hindus who populated the valley, but really at the cost of the animist tribal people shown in the table as belonging to “other religion and persuasion”. The proportion of animist population declined from a high of 34.80 per cent in 1931 to less than one per cent in 1991 while proportion of Christian population increased from a low of 2.33 per cent to a high of 34.11 per cent during the same period. It is evident that the period between 1951 and 1971 witnessed the largest increase in the proportion of Christian population with a corresponding decrease in animist faith. It is clear that the religious transformation was confined to the tribal segment of the population living in the hills while the other groups living in the plains in close proximity hardly experienced any such change. The Christian population as a percentage of tribal population however varies from tribe to tribe. The pattern of decadal growth of Christian population in whole of Manipur is highlighted in the following table.

**Table 4.3: Decadal growth of Christian Population in Manipur, 1901-1991**

Year	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
Percentage	2.33	Not available	11.84	19.49	26.03	29.68	34.11

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002

The spread of Christianity in the initial stage was rather slow. Contrary to popular belief the hill tribes accepted Christian faith not so much during the British period, but after India achieved Independence. In fact, the period after 1951 has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the proportion of Christian population largely due to conversion of the tribal animists. At present, the Christian population was more than 35 percent of the total population of Manipur. Conversion and activities of missionaries had by far one of the most significant impacts on the Hill tribes. Its aim was not only to convert the people to Christianity, but also to pacify and civilise the people. While the British realised the importance of propagating Christianity among the hill tribes, its introduction was seen as a necessity for enlightenment and uplift-ment. Looking at the educational level of the state as a whole, by that time, E.W.Dun puts it as:

*The Manipuris prefers remaining ignorant. So illiterate are they, that some of the highest officials can neither read nor write, are not a whit ashamed for their want of knowledge.<sup>10</sup>*

Such was the condition of education in Manipur that the question of education among the hill tribes does not arise. As mentioned earlier, the Christian Missionaries were the one introducing education among the tribals. Therefore, it is natural that Christianity was identified with education among the tribal people. The method adopted by the missionary for spreading of the new faith was through education and health care. The spread of Christianity was through the converted students who have attended those schools run by the missionaries. The mission work especially through education proved to be the base for the future expansion of the mission work. The introduction of medical facilities too helped in

discarding their old traditional belief and practices, thus encouraging the people to accept the new faith.

### 4.3: Education

The one and foremost agent of social change in every society is education. Education is the most important social infrastructure for the upliftment of the quality of life of the people in a society or the state. So, education has great significance in every society. In fact, education is supposed to be the inner eye of human being. It is only through education that human beings can penetrate beyond the appearance and every phenomenon. In pluralistic societies like India, it is only education that can synthesize and crystallize value-based social justice. It plays a significant role in the economic and social growth of both individual status and also prestige. Level of education and its growth has a direct impact on development, standard of living and is characterized by the broad outlook and modern ideas. Above all, education is the primary instrument for the improvement of quality of life. As B.D. Sharma writes, it is education more than anything else that shapes the new tribal society:

*Education is moulding the entire human society in a new frame. In some tribal areas, particularly in the North-East, education plays a big role in moulding the natives. The beginning was made by the missionaries as early as the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>*

As no human society exists and grows without education of some kind, the tribals too had their own traditional way of education even before the art of reading and writing was known. Moral laws, tribal etiquette, idealisms, behavioural patterns, jungle-lore etc. were taught through myths and folktales. Practical knowledge about the types of food, the place of their occurrence and the means of preparing were learnt from elders and parents. But this jungle-lore education was incomplete and much less practical to be the instrument of cultural, social and economic progress.

The impact of Christian missionaries' efforts on the overall educational development can be observed, if one looks at the literacy scene in the different Hill Districts of the state.

Education, which is the art of reading and writing, was introduced in the tribal areas of Manipur by the Christian missionaries. The pioneering effort to develop the tribals had started with the introduction of education and health services as part of their missionary activities in the interior part of the hill areas of the state. For years the government left the responsibility of educating the people to the missionaries; however a change in the policy soon became apparent. In the early twentieth century, the state government established schools to provide a healthy competition and provide opportunity to those sections of population who were unwilling to send their children to missionary sponsored schools for fear of conversion. Three English Medium schools were established by missionaries in Imphal but as the activities of Pettigrew caused resentment among the Meitei Hindus, he was instructed to go to the hill areas. In 1896, Pettigrew moved to Ukhrul and setup the first mission school serving as the first inspector of schools having been appointed by the Government. However, in Churachandpur district, the first primary school was started in 1912 in Senvon. Due to numerous problems, education could not spread fast and it took many decades to produce a 1 percent literacy population among the tribals in general and the Vaiphei in particular.

**Table 4.4: Progress of Literacy in Manipur**

Year	Total Population	Total % of Literacy	Male	Female
1951	5,77,635	11.4	20.77	2.36
1961	7,80,037	30.4	45.12	15.93
1971	10,72,753	32.9	46.40	19.53
1981	14,20,953	41.3	53.29	29.06
1991	18,37,149	59.9	71.63	47.60
2001	23,88,634	68.87	77.87	59.70

*Source: Census of India; 2001*

There has been a great deal of accomplishment in the field of education in Manipur since 1950. Prior to Independence, the overall literate population of the state was very low particularly that of the tribals, and it picked up momentum only after Independence. The

total number of literates was 65,895 persons in 1951, including that of the Valley. The literacy rate of the state has gone up from 11.4 percent in 1951 to 68.87 percent in 2001. As shown in the table above, there has been a steady increase in the literacy rates for both male and female. The rate of male literacy is as high as 77.87 percent while the female literacy rate records 59.70 percent in 2001.

**Table 4.5: Literacy among Major STs of Manipur, 2001**

Sl.No.	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Percentage of Literate		
		Total	Male	Female
1	<b>All Scheduled Tribes</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>58.4</b>
2	Hmar	79.8	84.3	75.2
3	Paite	79.0	85.2	72.8
4	Any Mizo	74.0	79.8	68.0
5	Tangkhul	72.7	79.4	65.9
6	Kabui	63.9	72.5	55.2
7	<b>Vaiphei</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>51.7</b>
8	Thadou	57.1	64.5	49.6

Source: Census of India, 2001. Office of the Registrar General, India.

Social progress is indicated by the level of intellectual development among the people. Educational backwardness is the main factor of social degradation. Its relevance is more so in a district like Churachandpur which is socio-economically backward. The number of literates in the district are 1,48,829, accounting for 74.67 Percent of the total population in 2001. Schools and colleges are the main institution for imparting education in the district.

According to 2001 Census, district Churachandpur had 74.67 percent effective literacy rate as against 68.87 percent for Manipur state as a whole. Like most part of the state, the progress of literacy in the region was slow prior to independence. It was only after independence that the increase in the number of literacy has gained such a momentum i.e. 11.40 percent in 1951 to 68.87 percent in 2001. The literacy rate in Churachandpur was 35.40 percent in 1961 and it reached as high as 74.67 percent in 2001 after four decades.

Fig.4.1: Progress of Literacy in Manipur (in percentage)

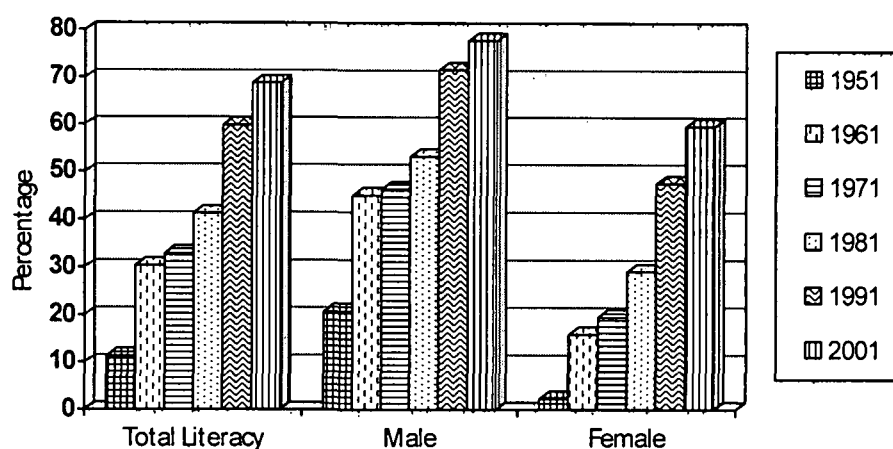


Table 4.6: Literacy in Churachandpur district (1961-2001)

Year	Total population	% of literate
1961	62,418	35.4
1971	98,114	34.7
1981	1,34,776	44.30
1991	1,76,184	58.17
2001	2,28,707	74.67

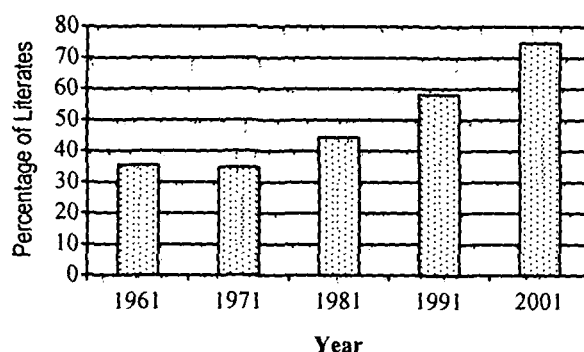
Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2002.

As for the Vaiphei in the district, separate data cannot be obtained. However, the four sample villages of the Vaiphei shows as high as 88.8 percent literacy for female and 94.2 percent for male. Although the literacy rate is absolutely high in these sample villages as against the state and the district, yet in terms of persons having professional educational level in different fields, they still presents a dismaying picture. On the other hand, the growth of literacy is not uniform in all the Vaiphei villages or in all the sub-divisions of the district.

Table 4.7: Sex Ratio of Churachandpur District

Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Sex Ratio	1048	1004	976	929	931	913

Fig.4.2: Literacy in Churachandpur District



The above agents of change are the main factors responsible for the socio-economic change of the hill tribes in general and the Vaiphei people in particular. A process of transition from the old order to the new order has set in the Vaiphei society with the number of notable developments. The Vaiphei society is no longer static; it has changed and is changing. An attempt is made to examine the extent of social change of the Vaiphei society to the new situation that had developed since the British involvement in Manipur towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. and after the advent of Christianity in 1910.

#### 4.4: Changes

##### (a) Family

The change in the Vaiphei society brought about by the various factors of change has a profound effect on the life of the people. A change feature is observed in the structure and function in a family. The existence of age-old primary relationships including bond of love and affections among the members of the family has been distorted or weakened contemporarily as most of the members stay out of home or village for want of studies and employment. The family as a corporate unit of economic production hardly exists as all members are not equally engaged in the same stream of economic pursuits but are engaged in different fields, where all the pursuits may not be necessarily be economic. The practice of working together in the *jhum*-field has been replaced by the offices, school and such other gainful entrepreneurs. Socialization is done mostly from outside than at home now. The

educational and religious functions which were normally performed at home and in the youth dormitory have been mostly transferred to educational training institutes, hostels and schools. Inter-generational gaps between the parents and the children including emerging mal-adjustment between old parents' culture and new younger generations' culture further deteriorates the contemporary family structure and its relationships.

#### **(b) Status and Role of Women**

Before analyzing the status and role of women in the Vaiphei society, it will be imperative to get acquainted with the term 'status'. The term status stands for position and role a person hold and perform in a society. It signifies the sum total of the various culturally ascribed roles one has to play the rights and duties inherent in a social position. Besides the ascribed status in a society, there is also an emergence of achieved status, which results from one's personal achievement in life.<sup>12</sup> The concept of status, here, is used to indicate the ordering of the individuals in terms of attributes such as occupation, income, level of education, perception of one's status within the home and the community, restrictions imposed on one's activities, decision making roles in a family and community and so on.

In the modern setting, Vaiphei society is no longer considered to be exclusively a traditional or conservatives as it is gradually being exposed to forces of change which have in turn brought with it a radical transformation in the socio-economic, religious and political spheres of life. The status and position of women have considerably increased with the advent of Christianity. The coming of Christianity in 1910 led to the establishment of mission schools which exerted much influence on the traditional life of the illiterate Vaiphei people. Thus, the introduction of formal education laid the foundation of change among the Vaiphei, especially to the so called 'weaker-sex'. Today, the change that can be observed in the socio-economic, religious and political life of the Vaiphei people may be largely attributed to the spread of modern education through Christian missionaries. As discussed

earlier, the class of woman was quite a neglected one in the indigenous Vaiphei society. However, through the process of social change, the emancipated Vaiphei woman of today has paved her way successfully in her search for higher position and a more meaningful role in the society. In spite of their inherent weaker position, in recent years, the hidden hands of Vaiphei women can be seen in any field and have great influence over men folk.

In their traditional set up, life was without any competitions and tension. The customs barred the participation of women in performing religious duties. However, under their new found religion- Christianity, women are participating and playing more and more role even in the religious field and the limitation imposed of them has diminished. One of the most important developments among women folk in Vaiphei society is in the realm of higher education and intellectual pursuit. The spread of education among the women has led them to shed off their traditional status, which gives them inner confidence in tackling problems. The introduction of modern education offered them a hitherto unknown world of interaction and participation where they recognized themselves as having the potential and in fact, the responsibility to act as contributory members of society. The church offered them a sense of belonging and created space for them to participate and to a certain extent, make decision and policies that were not only to affect the women's work but also the church. The new religion gave them a sense of freedom from traditional practices that had confined them within cultural norms related to dos and don'ts, rights and wrongs and food taboos.

Educated women began to assume the roles equal with men in both the church and public life. Nevertheless, discrimination of gender continued though it was subtle and on the ground that man had traditionally always exercised authority. Nevertheless, women displaying talents and creative forms of expression were respected and encouraged. With the rise in their literacy level, educated women are becoming aware of their importance in family and society. Their attitudes and value are increasingly becoming higher by the

equalitarian ethos. Today, even married woman with professional degree felt that they are wasting their talent if they sit at home. Moreover, family planning has made the spacing of children possible, which helps women to continue with their jobs even after child bearing. The preference of urban families for small family also makes it possible for modern women to take up jobs. Today, there are a number of Vaiphei women who are gainfully employed in different fields such as medicine, teaching, designing, air-hostess, police etc.

The factors responsible for the change in the status of women in Vaiphei society are numerous and varied. One of the chief factors responsible for the change in women's outlook is Christian philosophy, whose doctrines and teachings of equality of men and women have influenced them. They began to take part in different social activities. And this change thought enlarged their ideas culminating in the formation of Women's Association which acted as agency to offer anything that the transformed women may need.

The modern educational system has also been one of the factors that changed the position of women. Education acted as both a transformer as well as a transmitter. It transformed women's personality. It elevated their position in the family as well as in the society that they no longer regard men as superior but equal. The impact of expanding education to the younger generations has gradually percolated and affected their elders in substituting their narrow attitudes, superstitions and localism to broader outlook and scientific approach to problems. The change in the economic position of women also brought further change in their status in the society. Now there are women who control and own financial interests, running shops, tea stalls or engaged themselves in contract works. The old traditional outlook has been diminishing. This also has brought profound changes in the marriage pattern of the Vaiphei; where the women can have a partner of their own choice. The educated women are in favour of the concept of economic independents as such, they thought it better to earn themselves. Their perception and value system has been

changed. The traditional work culture and dresses are on the verge of extinctions in many Vaiphei villages. Instead of the traditionally ascertained family career, they choose to enhance the family income which in turn enhanced the living standard of the family. Male ideas about the position of women in society have also been changed to a great extent. Menfolks began to recognize the new role of women in society. Armed with economic and political rights, Vaiphei women is now on its march towards equality and freedom.

**(c) Marriage**

In the traditional Vaiphei society, the choice of marriage was governed by the cultural norms intrinsically connected with and attached to the agriculture work and bravery. In those days, as soon as the male child is born, he was blessed with the skills in war and hunting which fall outside the domestic domain; and a female child was blessed with physical beauty and skill in domestic works. It was generally arranged after protracted negotiations in which the consent of the boy and the girl were taken into account. The criterion of selecting a good wife was seen from many angles like the knowledge and abilities of traditional work culture like cooking, weaving, brewing rice beer and other aspects like generosity, chastity and good outer appearance. The girls once married, became the possession of the husband and as such she takes up all the responsibilities of the house. In recent years, the traditional value have been modified, a new value scale based on education assumes precedence in marriage. Thus, the earlier personal status through individual achievement like expertise in war and hunting or physical beauty and skill in domestic works gradually loss its traditional significance in the choice of spouse where a semi-class structure plays more and more significant role. Marriages between members of the educated class and economically well-to-do families are prevailing and common in their society. In the face of this, marriage choice in future will show more and more emphasis on class line thus creating class system in a classless society.

Though certain taboos are still maintained in principle, marriage in the Vaiphei society has definitely undergone changes. A very important change in marriage system of the Vaiphei in the post-Christianity is abolition of *Kawnglaw*-marriage i.e. a type of marriage in which a boy served a girl's family for her hand in marriage. This type of marriage lost its significance and the Vaiphei have completely stopped such practice. They do not wish to marry under the name '*Kawnglaw*' anymore. This type of marriage, being completely wiped out of the traditions of the Vaiphei, is not known, even by name, by the present generation. With the advent of Christianity and education, the usual practice of marriage arrangements by parents is gradually disappearing and the girls' and boys' consents are becoming deciding factors. Cross-cousin marriage (*Mother's-Brother's daughter*); which was very obligatory, also gradually diminished. Marriages, forced by their parents in order to have a family relation or marriage against the wish of the girl's parents are dying away. In place of all these, love marriage within the tribe or even outside becomes common, but not as a rule. However, the practice of marriage by elopement is still followed even by the educated girls and boys. The arranged marriage system through negotiations in Vaiphei society is gradually losing its importance among the educated generations. Now love marriage is commonly practiced. Still the greater impact is the choosing of partners among same level of education or at least from the educated group of people. A highly educated boy or girl hardly goes back to rural areas and marries illiterate one. Earlier, simplicity, loyalty and work experience were the criterion of choosing a good bride which is taken over by level of education and economic condition. This tendency of the Vaiphei people has further motivated and encouraged the girls to go for higher education for better security in future.

With the coming of Christianity in the Vaiphei society, marriage known as '*Dan-thiangtho-a-Kicheng*' (holy matrimony) came into being. In this Christian marriage, both the would be bride and bride-groom must obtain approval of the Church claiming that they are

the bonafide member of the Church and they have not done anything against the Christian principle and hence there is no objection in giving them approval for conduction the holy marriage in the Church. It is administered by an ordained priest where the bride and the bride-groom swear in the name of God that they will remain as husband and wife and never part till death makes them separate. This kind of marriage replaced traditionally most desirable marriage called *Chawngmo*, and become he most preferred marriage now.

There is also another kind of marriage after they become Christian called '*Pindan-a-Kicheng*', which is regularized through performance of post marriage rites. In the truest of the sense, this marriage is elopement; which is not approved by the church. After their elopement, the couple is expelled from the Church for a specific period of time; which barred them from participating in any kind of activities in the church. After the expulsion time is over, the couple seeks permission from the Church to acknowledge and be marriage in Christian's way; as a sign of their submission to the ethics of the Church. This kind of marriage is usually solemnized in the house of the Church Elder, administered by a priest or the Elder himself. By performing this kind of marriage, the out-casted couple is welcome back in the Church and become a full member again.

The traditional ways of marriage also could not retain some of its traditional characteristics in such a way that it had become a mixture of traditional Christian way of marriage. The new religions, in some way, has little effect upon the basic structure of the traditional nuptial rites, except that the marriage was solemnized in the Church where an ordained priest conducted the oath of allegiance according to Christian practices in place of the traditional priest. The part once played by *Zu* (liquor) during marriage negotiation and on the wedding day was now replaced by a simple marriage feast or tea and snacks. Therefore, the traditional norms and social obligations still have some weight in matters relating to marriage ceremony. In this regard, it may be rightly said that no Christian marriage can

taken place without following the traditional formalities. However, among the modern Vaiphei, this custom, in actual practice, is observed only for the sake of formality without much of its true significance.

In general, bride-price usually reflected that social status of the contracting parties. It is observed that the higher the social status of the girl's family the higher the bride-price. However, this great variation in customary rules and practices in different villages and between different contracting parties were brought under a uniform system by the Vaiphei People's Council (VPC), which is applicable to all the Vaiphei tribe. Moreover, the distribution of bride price among specific relatives which was once regarded as one of the important means of strengthening clanship ties within the clan organization assumes less and less importance. This is mainly because of the changing socio-economic situation without a corresponding change in the amount of bride-price. Today, bride-price and its distribution becomes simply a formality to the fulfillment and spatial rites on traditional line.

#### **(d) Divorce**

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, divorce or separation takes place in only few cases and is a rare phenomenon in Vaiphei society. In the terms and conditions of their marriage contract, they vowed 'till death do us apart', and do not mention about divorce. Marriage is considered a sacred bond of union sanctioned by God. Divorce is usually resorted to maintain high ideals of morality, as reflected in their practice and thinking. However, it is permissible and a marriage may be dissolved either by the husband or the wife due to some compelling reasons common to both. Such reasons may be incurable diseases, lunacy, desertion, cruelty, negligence of duties, repeated unfaithfulness, or adultery. The village council or the clan elders however, examined the cases intensively before divorce is actually granted. But divorce only becomes imminent if either of the couple led a life of immorality and corruption. Most of the divorces in Vaiphei society are

reasonably acceptable, in a sense that most of it are because of barrenness, infidelity and incompatibility in conjugal relationship. In case of a divorce, the bride is free from the marriage bond and she is allowed to go back to her parents' house. In certain cases, the divorced wife is allowed to take over the guardianship of a female child. There is hardly any case where a woman divorces her husband without his consent. A divorced woman can remarry; Vaiphei society does not impose restriction on it unless social norms are violated.

A divorced woman can take the youngest female child in her possession but cannot keep a male child. Even when she is allowed to keep an infant male child, under certain circumstances, she cannot give her own title and have to return him when grown up. A widow is allowed to possess the properties of her husband but cannot inherit it. She can use it in her lifetime if she is not remarried, but she has no right to dispose or transfer any of the landed properties. In case a widow remarries outside the family, her right to claim or possess the properties of her husband automatically stands cancelled.

**(e) Dormitory**

The bachelors' house (dormitory) called *Sawm* has been the most important institution which served as socializing agent in the traditional Vaiphei community life. The prohibition of head-hunting, with the ushering-in of Christianity in the villages, has led to the erosion of this important social and cultural institution of the Vaiphei. Church activities in the form of youth fellowship meetings have come up and the activities of the youths also changed. The other important factor for the extinction of *Sawm* was the introduction of formal education along with youth activities in the church. The changes also came into existence because the pre-Christianity days of social life came in conflict with Christian principles on matters of the amount of freedom given to the youths in the name of *Sawm*. The Christian parents became concern about the laxity of the morals of their boys who roam freely in the nights wooing girls. With the establishment of schools in their villages, the parents found their

home a better place of studies and to discipline their boys. Church leaders and school teachers began to dislike the idea of *Sawm*. So, it acted as a real hindrance to the proper functioning of dormitory. Most of the parents would now prefer to send their children to formal schools since they realized that they would gain more in sending their children to schools. They began to feel that *Sawm* was only a waste of time and hindrance to their pursuit for development. Thus, slowly and surely, the *Sawm* institution relegated to insignificance and people began to abandon it. With the disappearance of *Sawm* institution where men folk assemble regularly, they could now give more attention to more productive activities such as education and domestic affairs. As such, it brought about much relief to the women folk as well as parents since responsibility of the family is now shared jointly by men and women. This, in turn, sowed the seed of better atmosphere and understanding in the family. However, in the present day, it is seen that the same trend of *Sawm* idea of diligence and grace is being handed down to their society in the form of Young Vaiphei Association (YVA). This is a social welfare association, to render help to the society in times of needs like severe sicknesses, deaths, accidents and any kind of calamities.

**(f) Prohibition of *Zu* (Liquor)**

In the traditional Vaiphei society, *Zu* was considered as one of the unavoidable items which was consumed, if not daily, in all the important feast, festivals and ceremonies such as *Kithawina* (sacrificial offering), *Kichenna* (marriage ceremony), *Gualvakna* (feast of honour), etc. Moreover, serving *Zu* to the village chief and his council of elders was a must while dealing with all cases between the aggrieved villagers. No social custom or family relationship formalities could be performed without *Zu* whether it be at home or at any place of social gathering. It is a necessary part of its life that it became a culture and firmly planted in the society. Therefore, nothing can be more difficult to do away the drinking habits of the Vaiphei than any other elements in their society. With the coming of Christianity, the

missionaries simultaneously with their evangelical task took step for social reformation in the Vaiphei society by prohibiting consumption of *Zu* as it was very closely linked with the animistic sacrifices and other tribal customs which belonged to their old pagan life and atmosphere of such festivities was un-congenial to Christian principle and spiritual growth. The steps taken by the missionaries and the churches, thus, resulted in the gradual reduction of *Zu* consumption and total cessation of *Zu* as a common drink on all occasions. They cultivated the habit of having '*thingpi*' (tea) as substitution to *Zu* and today, offering tea to a guest and visitors has become the social practice of the Vaiphei people.

With the gradual decline in the consumption of *Zu* as a common drink which engrossed the agricultural surplus products in *Zu* brewing, a considerable amount of rice has now turned into regular food for the family, thus improving the economic condition of the society. Quarrels and fighting as consequences of drinking *Zu* did go away and the family began to have a better relationship and peaceful atmosphere in their home. Even though *Zu* becomes popularized again in modern days and they have largely reverted to consuming it, the Christian Vaiphei society did not endorse to drinking *Zu* as a normal life-style.

#### **(g) Festivals and Dances**

In pre-Christianity days, festivals and dances were a very important part of life for the Vaiphei. In the initial stage of embracing the new religion, festival and dances gradually lost its significance and popularity among the new converts. As a result, there occurred misunderstanding between the traditionalists and the converts Christians at a certain point of time. The former blamed the missionaries and Church leaders for undermining culture and rejecting old values. In contrast, the missionaries and the newly converts felt that most of the cultural festivities and dances were profusely connected with old religious practices and the drinking of *Zu*, which were inappropriate of Christian's way of life. The converted Christians were, therefore, forbidden to participate in such activities, not only because of its

unethical approach for Christians but also to prevent themselves from the temptation of falling back to their old ways. In due course, Christmas and New Year celebrations with community feast, although of recent origin, have gained dominant position over the traditional festivals in celebration and observance. The first Christmas Celebration was done in Bualtang and Maite village in the year 1912. The gradual decline and disappearance of festivals and animal sacrifices promoted to the economic growth of the Vaiphei. The reason was that these festivals lasted for several days with *Zu* and meats abundantly, which consumed a large portion of all the earnings of the people. This could also be one of the reasons why the missionaries discarded the celebrations of their festivals. Conversion to Christianity meant the renouncing of traditional religious rites. They even refused to take part in traditional dances, since they felt it was linked to traditional religious rituals.

#### **(h) Introduction of Written Script**

Before the advent of Christianity, there prevailed total illiteracy in the Vaiphei society. Not only that, they had no written language of their own. The missionaries in their pioneering days among the tribals, simultaneously with preaching, concentrated their philanthropic works in enlightening the masses by introducing formal education. It was the first two Christians of Churachandpur District, Mr. Thangkai and Mr. Lungpau, with the help of the pioneer missionary W.R. Roberts, who initiated to alleviate Vaiphei language into written form. Thus, in 1911, they introduced the following alphabets to construct vocabularies by using 24 alphabets of Roman scripts, which is still used by the Vaiphei:

A	AW	B	CH	D	E
F	G	NG	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O	P
R	S	T	U	V	Z

The same year, Thangkai and Lungpau, with the help of Watkin Roberts started translating St. John. By that time, Roberts was well equipped with Lushai (Mizo) language. So, he narrates it in Lushai and the two young men translated again in Vaiphei. In 1913, some Bible Quiz with answers entitled '*Thu ki sang*' and gospel song book called *Labu-vawm* (Black cover songbook) were published. Another gospel song book, which they called *Labu-san* (Red cover songbook), was published the following year.<sup>13</sup> Another early Vaiphei convert by the name Manghen, was able to read and write in Vaiphei by that time. So, in 1916, Thangkai and Manghen along with Roberts went to Bible Society of India and Ceylon in Asansol, Calcutta, for proof reading and to publish. It was finished in 1917, which became the first book published in Vaiphei.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the Vaiphei were the first to have St. John published in their own dialect among the Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes of Manipur.

As time rolled by, there was a definite increase in people's thirst for knowledge, if not at least to write and understand what are written. In order to improve the situation, the first beginner book entitled '*Simpatbu*' was prepared by Evan. Manghen in 1921. This was the one and only legal instrument for the Vaiphei to learn how to read and write their dialect. Hence, there was a definite improvement in the number of literates among the Vaiphei.<sup>15</sup> After a gap of twenty-six years, '*Simpatbu*' was revised and improved by Mr.Thualzakap in 1947. It was used and taught in Mission schools for young learners as vernacular. With a view to improve the standard of the book for school children, Rev.Khupkhawthang revised and enlarged the contents in 1960. The reprinted version of this book is still used in Mission schools in Vaiphei area. Subsequently, several other books in Vaiphei language were published for the young learners.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the indigenous oral practices of Vaiphei language got its written form in the hands of Christian missionaries which ultimately paved the way for further progress in the Vaiphei society.

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## CHAPTER-V

### Impacts

Since the advent of Christianity along with education, a number of significant changes have taken place, which had an impact on the lives of the hill tribes of Manipur. These include the nature of development itself. Specific interventions through state agencies, which have had its effect on the livelihood, work, cultural practices etc., have undergone change. Religion serves the central and crucial function in society of supporting what has been variously called social integration, social solidarity and social cohesion. Religion is an all-pervading supernatural phenomenon in man's life. For this reason, perhaps, it has been considered universal. Religion has exercised the most profound influence over man's thoughts and behaviour from times beyond human recollection. Conversion to Christianity after the coming of the British missionaries has brought about changes in family, marriage, social life of the Vaiphei, their life's styles, food habits and health seeking behaviour. Among the Vaiphei, religion becomes all the more important for it is inter-woven in their entire social life and shapes most of their entire social behaviour. Thus, we can see the changes in the social behaviour encompassing the culture of the people.

The Christianity and its movement penetrated within the cultural milieu of the hill tribes of Manipur. It was within the culture that the gospel message was preached, adorned, accepted, worshipped and believed. Christianity brought forth far-reaching effects on the Vaiphei society. The Christian missionaries, apart from evangelism introduced western education and modern medicine to the tribal society. These therefore, acted as the forces of social change among the tribal people. The missionary contribution in the field of education, health care and society besides spreading Christianity is highly commendable. In both the fields, pioneering works were taken up by the missionary with the help of government. Thus, the adoption of new religion led to the inculcation of new outlook, new cultural values, and eliminations of their traditional animistic belief and embedded them to a new

concept in their attitude. We briefly analyzed their contributions in education and health standard of the people among the hill tribes of Manipur particularly the Vaiphei.

Joan S. Mbiti does indeed make correct statements that the gospel does not throw out culture; to the contrary, it comes in to our culture, it settled there, it brings its impact on our total life within that culture. How was conversion affected among the Vaiphei? How did the growth of Christianity took place from within and not from without? Would their Christianization have taken place in the same way without education and would the impact of education have been different if it had not been coupled with the proclamation of the new religion? How did these animist people quickly responded to the called to wed the traditional with Christianity? What has Christianity offered them that were different from their traditional religious practices? What were the socio-cultural implications of that decision? Did their turning to Christianity have economic considerations?

There is no ready made answer to any of these complex questions. Some of these questions are beyond the scope of historical analysis. A careful analysis and understanding is therefore, needed about the impact of Christianity on Vaiphei society. The traditional religious practices of the Vaiphei, as also in many other religions, are such an integral part of the culture that to differentiate any aspects of life as exclusively religious becomes difficult. The entire culture was engrossed fully in religious rites and rituals. In other words, their daily life is governed by religious rituals and practices; without which no one would perform any other duties. In spite of this fact, the response to the new religion has been remarkable due to the zeal of the missionaries and the receptivity of the people.

### **5.1: Receptivity Factors**

The response of the people to the new religion-Christianity was generally favourable. Looking back at the religious institutions of the pre-modern society, 'the pattern is one in which the society relates to the ultimate religious order of the universe'. The material agent

or solution to such problems as natural calamities and epidemics were the immediate performance of religious ceremonies either by the village priest or an expert in the society. From this standpoint, when the term 'religion' is used, it implies a close relationship between men and the higher power or supernatural forces that exist beyond the vision of human world. The traditional Vaiphei religion and the Christians have one thing in common, i.e. accepting the spiritual view of life. They do not need to be convinced of the supernatural being and this opens the ways for dialogue. The divinity of '*Pathian*' (God) is an object of perpetual worship, although there are, of course, other forms of henotheism (the belief in one God, but without denying the existence of others), and polytheism among the Vaiphei people. The monotheistic worship of '*Pathian*' was perhaps the oldest form of worship as per the historical evidence available. With the advent of time, however, the religious condition of the people has turned chaotic. We have witnessed the rise and popularity of polytheism which became the rein of control of the masses. Under these circumstances, excessive ritualism, frequent sacrifices and other burdensome feasts might have led the people to accept the new religion. This shows that '*Pathian*' was not only the heart of an ancient Vaiphei religious philosophy, but also the core of the entire Christian theology.

There is another religious conceptual affinity of human soul and life after death. The belief in the world beyond was instrumental in molding the cultural norms and values. As a rule, they recognize two stages of spiritual world. One was ordinary known as '*Mithi-khua*' (village of the death) and the other was '*Pialgal*' (Paradise/heaven). *Pialgal* was meant for those who distinguished themselves during their lifetime in social conduct, in economic wealth by giving a number of prescribes ceremonies and feast of honour, or, in bravery or in hunting skills by killing a number of wild beasts. The prestigious position attainable in the Vaiphei social world were thus, intrinsically and intimately connected with the belief in the life after death; and it was this belief which prescribed the traditional social values on

bravery and wealth. Moreover, even after the full conversion into the new faith, the people used *Pialgal* to mean the same paradise/heaven. This is one factor which determined the subject in favour of the new religion. The idea of heaven and hell proclaimed by the missionaries did work in their favour which the people digested and became closer to it. Christianity, therefore, did not provoke offensive resistance and appeared as just a modest surprise even from the aggressive Vaiphei people.

Another receptivity factor for the new religion is inculcating the use of a major cultural element- *Khuang* (drum) in praise and worship by the new converts, whose intrinsic value cannot be denied in their society. The Vaiphei are known for their love of traditional fine arts-poetry, music and song. During their pre-Christian eras they used to compose such as war songs, patriotic songs based on their ethnic social life, traditional love songs and romantic poems in their tribal religious tunes accompanied by drums and traditional dancing. The Vaiphei would not sing or dance without the same. The people preferred much to their possessed '*Khuang*' to the highly sophisticated modern musical instruments. The truth of the matter is that the people have an innate capacity to develop and preserve the rich resources of their musical heritage. With the new found religion the Vaiphei traditional songs and poetries were replaced by new songs of praise and worship for God. For example, there are certain cultural elements involved with celebrations of Christmas and New Year till date i.e., they did not give up their traditional way of serving community feast on such important days. After Church services, they gathered somewhere in a temporarily constructed hall and sing gospel songs in their own traditional tunes for the whole day and night; sometimes it lasted for a week or more. Such collective singing known as '*Lengkhawm*' are usually accompanied by dances. In fact, any kind of group songs in the church or *Lengkhawm* are always leaded by the drummer. This characteristic of unity and cooperation in the tribe encouraged the persistence of Christianity in their society.<sup>1</sup>

## 5.2: Tribal Solidarity and Identity

The new religion opened the door to more advanced community and exposed them not only to the mainland Indian but also to the international community. The process of Christianization has helped to foster a feeling of solidarity and identity among the tribe. It has also helped them to come to terms with the process of modernization and development. While Christianity opens the door to international community, it influenced the tribal of their specific tribal identity. In many cases, this was done by adapting the Christian message to the tribal mentality and cultural needs. In other cases, this was accomplished by giving permanent grammatical and literary forms and structure to their language, by developing the literature, the vocabulary and modes of expression. S.M Dubey says 'in the Pre-British period most of the tribes were not conscious of their ethno-tribal identities and their world was confined to their family, clan, *khel* and village'. Christian theology provided the intellectual and emotional understanding for a wider solidarity than the inter-clan, or inter-tribe solidarity. In the process, religious institutions played a major role. Common endeavours and goals like translation of a common Bible or gospel hymn book, inter-Church councils, etc. served as a platform and occasion for inter-tribe interaction and a sense of solidarity.<sup>2</sup> These church activities along with education helped them to judge critically the economic and political aspects of social life. In short, the Vaiphei have acquired a new vision with which to look at their own society and the world at large.

The introduction of Christianity also brought a qualitative change in inter-tribal, and tribal and non-tribal relationship. Traditionally, tribal solidarity was weak as it was confined to a single sub-ethnic group speaking the same dialect. To become Christian meant to enter into a worldwide community and solidarity. The tribal isolationism and inter-tribal hostility gave way to a feeling of true internationalism, sort of political ideologies.<sup>3</sup> The passport of Christianity also made the tribal acceptable to other Christian communities thus, bringing

about a worldwide solidarity in faith, despite internal tensions and divisions arising from theological and historical reasons.

### **5.3: Transfer to Religious Life**

Religion is an important institution and a basic cultural characteristic of a population. It plays an important role in influencing and modifying the cultural traits and social behavior of a society. Before the advent of Christianity, the Vaiphei believed in a variety of gods and spirits. *Most of their sacrifices were directed to pacify the evil spirits who were believed to have caused misfortune or any illness to the people.* The traditional Vaiphei habitat was occupied by countless hostile spirits inhabiting every natural object who were regarded as stronger than himself. Each spirit had to be appeased by appropriate sacrifices, otherwise disease, misfortune and even death might ensue. All illness was set down to the wrath of certain spirits which had to be appeased by sacrifices, if health was to be restored.

With the coming of Christianity, these fears or phobias that grew out of their traditional animistic belief causing them to perform many ritualistic offerings have diminished. The practice of offering sacrifices in the form of food, meat and others to please the spirits of their dread was given up in due course. Instead, eternal life as outlined in Christian doctrine replaced their assumption *pialgal* or *vangam* (heaven) of their old religion. Moreover, the practice of offering a series of costly feast for securing a right place in the life-after death has also come to an end.

### **5.4: A new World view**

Prior to the advent of Christianity, the tribal world view was limited to a clan, village or at the most to a particular area. Christianity has brought a new world view not only by exposing them to the plain Indian but also to the international community. Through the church, exchange of personnel, studies and service abroad have been made possible. Exposure to a new world with its culture, its political philosophies and forms of government,

its educational and social infrastructures, in general, totally different from those of tribal people living in isolated geographical and cultural pockets was bound to alter the world view of the tribal people.<sup>4</sup> And this can be identified and considered as the first major impact of Christianity for better or worse, on the tribal people of Manipur, specially the Vaiphei.

### **5.5: On Education Sphere**

Formal education of the Vaiphei in reality and practice as we see today has its beginning since the advent of Christianity with the arrival of Watkin R. Roberts, a Welsh missionary, in 1910. After a few days of in-depth communication with exposure to the Lushai translation of the Scripture portions of the Bible and preaching the Gospel at Senvon and its surrounding villages, Robert returned to his Headquarter in Aizawl and invited three native Bible students namely Savawma, Vanzika and Thangchhingpuia (Taitea) to look after the new Mission field. These three evangelist-teacher reached Senvon village on May 7, 1910 and latter on opened a primary mission school as part of their evangelical activities.

In the early days, teaching at first was in the simplest form mainly confined to reading of the Bible since education was initially imparted with Bible preaching. Since there was no age limit, children and adults sat together and learnt the same subjects. The mission schools, in those days did not necessarily emphasize vocational training. Whatever training they offered was mainly for the development of teachers, clergy and other native workers to work in the missionary effort. As a result, most of the early educated Vaiphei were employed in the mission services as low-paid workers. Thus, it appears that formal education introduced by the missionaries were so designed at religious instruction to serve the need of the missionaries than in giving vocational guidance to develop the Vaiphei.

Since basic education was sufficient to serve the purpose of the missionaries they did not see any need for introducing higher education. Burman observes, "one of the most striking features of the impact of Christianity on the social and political life is the

introduction of modern western education, which in turn has a profound effect on the lifestyle and consumption pattern".<sup>5</sup> But till 1941, apart from the numerous primary schools, there were only three middle schools and not a single high-school in all the hill areas inhabited by the tribals. The condition of education was very poor with no school facilities either from the government or from the mission. Though the mission started primary schools, it transferred to any place where the evangelists were transferred by the mission. However, with the increase in Christian population there was a corresponding increase in the number of mission schools. From a very humble beginning, the new Christian educational project gained momentum through the instrumentality of the native pioneer missionaries.

The course of history of the church and its education in Churachandpur district was changed by the arrival of Paul Rostad and his wife Ella Rostad in 1928. Apart from upgrading some of the primary schools to middle schools, they started a bible school in the name of Dinwiddie. As time passed by, new schools of elementary standard were started in other villages as well. Thus, the mission made good progress in educating the people. In the year 1935, the first Middle English School was opened at Pherzawl with H. Daia as its head. In the same year, another Middle English School was started at Rengkai with Siakzalam as its Headmaster. All these contributed a lot in the field of education of the people. It is encouraging to see that after twenty-five years of its ministries, the mission was able to produce a good number of native leaders, who could look after the churches.

A brief review of the historical development of formal education among the Vaiphei in Manipur brings to light that Christian missionaries, inspired by the zeal of spreading the gospel became the most important agency in the spread of education. It is true that Vaiphei education in the pre-independent period mainly confined to the primary level. Nevertheless, it is also true that the missionaries laid the foundation of education among them in Manipur.

Thus, the tempo of educational progress during the post-Independent period would have never been the same but not for the ground-work prepared by the missionaries.

Today, education is highly valued and a rapid increase in literacy is observed. In the words of B.D. Sharma; "It is education more than anything else that shapes the new tribal society... In some tribal areas, education played a big role in molding the natives. A beginning was made by the missionaries as early as the eighteenth century"<sup>6</sup>. According to 2001 Census, district Churachandpur had 74.67 percent literacy rate as against 68.87 percent for Manipur state as a whole. As for the Vaiphei in the district, the four sample study villages of the Vaiphei shows as high as 88.8 percent literacy for female and 94.2 percent for male. Although the literacy rate is absolutely high in these sample villages as against the state and the district, yet in terms of persons having professional educational level in different fields, they still presents a dismaying picture. However, it is significant to note that the literacy performance in the Vaiphei dominated areas is considered to be profound; as compared to the progress made in the valley and considering the fact that the Vaiphei areas consisted of totally non-literate population prior to the Christian impact. The difference in literacy rate between the valley and the hills is declining sharply and it is remarkable that some of the hill districts now have a literacy rate comparable or even better than the valley.

### **5.6: Medical Impact**

The Christian missionaries were the pioneers in introducing modern medicine to the hill tribes of Manipur. The missionary involvement in the medical work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was undertaken mainly for evangelism. The early missionaries employed it as Christ like ministry of healing men's body as well as their soul. Moreover, in those day, the value of modern medicines and surgery become more appreciated in America, it was also felt that the best available healing should go out to the mission field, hand in hand to supplement the preaching of the gospel.<sup>7</sup> Thus the missionary

in the medical work helped in accelerating the breakdown of the traditional worldview and has become one of the major impacts in the social transformation of the hill tribes.

The medical work in the southern hills of Manipur was started by the North East India General Mission with aid from the government. They started five Dispensaries at Churachandpur, Tinsuong, Hanship, Khanpi and Patpuihmun. The mission apart from opening dispensaries sent students to Dibrugrah to study Compounder class. By 1938, there are said to be one local medical person, 4 compounders. In short, the missionaries apart from evangelism established Dispensaries had a great impact on the health care and sanitation of the people. It helped in the breakdown of the traditional belief and accelerated the spread of Christianity in the state. Thus, the missionaries laid the foundation of health care a century ago from those humble beginning emerged the present day hospital.

### **5.7: House type**

Change is also perceptible in the house-type of the Vaiphei. Traditional huts of the Vaiphei were built above the ground on wooden or bamboo posts, the walls and floors were made of split and plaited bamboo, thatched roof, generally one front entrance with one big window-type of opening called '*namthak*'. The house is separated into two halves, one half as bed room for all the family members and the other half served as common room with kitchen. This traditional housing pattern of the Vaiphei is changing due to the impact of Christianity with education. The house pattern underwent changes and the residential houses are now constructed in different patterns- 'L'-shape, 'U'-shape, 'T'-shape and so on. The houses build, now, have lighted rooms, ventilated with more than two main doors and several windows. Bricks, C.I. sheets, cement, window-glasses and buying and selling of land for house construction are going on progressively. The designs of houses so built are modern with a verandah in the front. The sitting and living rooms are separated from the kitchen.

Vaiphei society in general was practically unacquainted with hygienic ways of living before the introduction of education in 1910. With the introduction of formal education, the educated young man and women became flexible to retain the enduring elements of materials and non-material culture. As such, attention was paid to the prevailing unhygienic conditions of the Vaiphei way of living. Today, houses are provided with sanitary latrines and bathrooms. Use of modern furniture and utensils are becoming part and parcel of the housing equipments.

### **5.8: On dresses**

The introduction of formal education among the Vaiphei people has a far-reaching impact in their mental outlook. In the initial period, the newly converts were the most educated people as Christians were the forerunner in getting western education. As such, the western-educated group took the Westerner as models intended to become pro-western in outlook and attitude. The most discernible are the changes in clothing patterns; use of skirts, sport-shirts, trousers, pants etc, by young men and girls and tailored blouses of varying a leave lengths by young ladies are very common. Before the advent of Christianity, a Vaiphei had only one dress which he worn everyday. With the process of Christianization, a slight development was effecting by getting one more dress in addition to the existing one; commonly known as '*vanh hawi*' meaning good dress. Use of ceremonial and traditional dresses especially for men are out of Vaiphei modern fashion; wearing of '*dial chen*' (loin cloth around the waist) by the male is completely discarded. Hairstyles too have changed a great deal. Thus dresses are perhaps an area where fast change is witnessed among the Vaiphei people till date. There is no hesitation on the part of the people to dress themselves on the model of the latest pattern. Coming of cable T.V. has made quite an impact on the Vaiphei youths. Jeans and T-shirts of the latest trend from across the border town of Moreh-Tamu (Indo-Myanmar) have ushered in a fashion trend and dresses, which, especially

among the females have changed unrecognizably. Today, unless enquiries are made it is not possible to identify a Vaiphei women by her dresses especially in the Imphal valley. In recent years, seminars and conference have been conducted that have considered the importance of the preservation and usage of the colourful Vaiphei traditional attires.

### **5.9: On Management and Health Care**

In the pre-Christian period, to heal the sick, the common practice was by offering bloody sacrifices to the evil spirits by the village *Thiampu* (priest). In fact, the Vaiphei people did not believe that they could be cured of sickness or disease by any means other than sacrifices performed by the *Thiampu* since disease was closely associated with powers of a spirit or a wizard. The health conditions of the people were miserable and pathetic which is expressed in the statement of a missionary; “Malaria was of course prevalent everywhere. There was also dropsy, internal parasites, hookworm, dysentery, tuberculolosis and other dread diseases. Many mothers died at childbirth due to lack of care and superstitious ideas”. In order to overcome the condition of people’s health, the missionaries used to give them medicine and took up the dual function of education and medical care. Tablets and syrups supplied by the missionaries have worked instant miracles among the tribe. It convinced them in a practical way that the new religion was indeed beneficial. The missionaries established clinics and made them improved their mental and physical health.

In the days of yore, the Vaiphei family has one large house in which they would accommodate the entire family and other household articles including their domestic animals such as cow, pigs, hens, dogs, etc. However, the missionaries and the evangelists taught the people about cleanliness in their day-to-day life. Care of sickness, simple hygiene and first-aid are included in their education curriculum. They learnt better ways of life. Today, as for instance, a mother’s chewing food for their babies for mouth-to-mouth feeding is replaced by special cooking for babies and spoon-feeding. The Vaiphei had given up their

age-old traditional practice of curing diseases by observing sacrificial rituals and re inclined to the use of medicines for any sort of disease.

### **5.10: Political Development**

In the traditional political setting, the village chief was the only central figure thus reducing the village into a semi-independent community, maintaining its own internal order and internal administration. Moreover, lack of cultural contact in the beginning rendered the institution of chief-ship and the authority intact till the advent of the British towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The British, following the policy of non-interference, did not interfere much in the internal administration of the villages and the chiefs were largely left to themselves in maintaining their own internal and external affairs without external encroachment. However, inspite of their “indirect rule” policy over the hill territory, a few administration changes were brought about in the traditional setting. The chiefs, thus, continued to enjoy their traditional political and social status and the institution of chiefship remained the guardian of the society. With the British consolidation of the hill authority, the colonial authorities assigned the chiefs the task of collecting hill house tax of Rs. 3/- from each household; where they were getting 3 *annas* as commission per household. The colonial authorities were bent on using the chiefs to perpetuate their hold over the people. This introduction of House tax and Land revenue in cash revolutionized the whole socio-economic system of the state. Such a heavy taxation, on people who did not practiced money system, was very hard for the tribals. In order to pay the tax, they leave aside their field works and got themselves employed in the construction of roads and bridle paths just to earn 6 annas per day. As reported in Administration Report of Manipur State in 1939-40, as many as 64,942 hill-men were recruited as coolies, in order to pay the tax levied on them. There were many occasions of the imprisonment of the village chiefs or headmen for the failure to pay taxes. This practice often induced the chiefs to abuse their privileges and treat the

villagers as personal servants. Thus, the chief became a pivotal link in the colonial administration and exploitation of the masses.

If for any reason a villager failed to render these services, severe punishment awaited him. In this way, the British laid down the basic foundation of indirect rule to have effective control over the turbulent tribes in the hill areas through the chiefs. Changes in the grass root politics among the Vaiphei is noticed in its leadership structure. Under the influence of formal education introduced by the missionaries with the backing from the colonial administration provided the material basis for the emergence of new leadership in their society. The new ethos brought about by modern education basically transformed itself in negative orientation towards the traditional political set up. In the initial period, the emerging new leaders started mobilizing themselves against traditional leaders specially the chiefs and their councilors who followed the dictates of the colonial rulers.

#### **5.11: Emergence of New Leadership**

Traditionally, the village chief (*Hausa*) and his *Khawnbawls* (councilors), the Thiampu (priest), the *Val-upas* (youth-commanders) and experienced elders with gift of gab constituted the leadership structure in the village. But all these are fast changing under the influence of formal education introduced by the missionaries with the backing from the British officials provided the material basis for the emergence of new educated groups giving rise to two set of leadership-church leaders and political leaders. As Vaiphei society transformed itself from a simple-mechanical society to a semi-organic society, the selection of elites are done from a pool of people, not determined at birth, but who have managed to acquire during the course of their education and training certain characteristics.

- (a) **Church Leaders:** In the initial period, the most educated people were the converts as Christians were the forerunners in getting western education. Most of this educated Vaiphei were employed in the mission as workers. What is significant here is that the educated and

trained natives workers began to consider themselves belonging to a higher status group with what M.N Srinivas has describe as the 'Sanskritization' of social behaviour, and assumed new leadership, educator, administrator and spiritual leaders, in the leadership structure which posed a challenge to the traditional elites, thereby giving rise to a conscious attempt to dethroned the traditional leaders. In this way, the British rule and the introduction of Western education by the missionaries gradually loosened the traditional holds resulting in a declining tendency of the traditional leaders' powers and traditionalism in general.

The emergence of church leaders and consequently mobilizing themselves against traditionalism was hindered due to the administration's desire to preserve chief-ship at all cost as it rendered easy administration, while at the same time the emerging church leaders were all out to eradicate all forms of traditionalism to spread Christianity. Thus, the chiefs were supported by the administration while the missionaries supported the church and the interests of the commoners. The traditional division of the society, although a fluid one and the privileged class a kind of mobile character, thus, gave rise to the conflict situation in which the chiefs and their traditional elites were the worst sufferers.

**(b) Modern Political Leaders:** The opening of mission schools resulted in the emergence of educated groups whose basic orientation became removed from the traditional holds. With the low level of production in agriculture, standard of education achieved increasingly become the standard of manipulating the new openings brought about by the gradual incorporation of Vaiphei people with larger dominant society. Achieving higher level of education has a status consider as of belonging to a higher status group in the society and they are naturally the potential leaders in the leadership structure. This shows the importance of modern education and, moreover, the ability to communicate in English and Manipuri as political asset. Thus, the new political leaders are those who have had modern education,

working knowledge and better equipped with personal resources such as, the willingness to invest material resources to gain political power.

The present situation demands that one should mobilize all the available resources to gain political office and influence. Unlike leadership in the traditional system, today, it is almost impossible for a man without education to enter the higher stratum of leadership in the political arena. This is mainly due to the new leaders' responsibility to serve the purpose of being agents of out-group contacts to facilitate the process of modernization. Thus, the winds of political consciousness brought by western education and the modernization process come along the emergence of modern political leaders. Education and acquaintance with modern political processes of the leaders rather than their age and experience are being given more and more importance in the village level also.

#### **5.12: Changes in Economy**

Social change is brought about to a great extent by changes in economy among the Vaiphei. In the previous Chapter, some of the highlights of the traditional economy have already been explored. Primitive economy was rigidly traditional in its attitude even four decades ago. About 90% of the total cropped area in the Vaiphei area was under the system of shifting cultivation. Economically, as already pointed out in the previous chapter, majority of the Vaiphei population depend on agriculture for their living. Traditionally, the entire population of the people can be classified as cultivators. Hunting and rearing of animals, etc. are practiced only as secondary occupations. Most of them practice shifting cultivation and only few of them are engaged in settled cultivation and only few of them are engaged in settled cultivation mostly whose settlements are in the plain areas of Churachandpur. The number of households practicing shifting cultivation and partly shifting in the five sub-divisions of the district is much higher than that of the households engaged in

permanent cultivation. This is due to the traditional practice of shifting cultivation coupled with the hilly nature of the terrain.

**Table 5.1: Percentage of Households engaged in Cultivation in Churachandpur**

Sub-Division	Shifting	Partly Shifting	Permanent
Churachandpur	17.3	16.8	26.7
Thanlon	77.7	17.3	0.2
Henglep	55.3	7.8	5.6
Tipaimukh	87.2	4.2	4.8
Singat	67.7	21.5	8.3
Total	61.04	13.52	9.12

As the society became more stable with settled agriculture as the mode of production, the more educated people started advising and suggesting the local farmers by way of demonstration that there existed yet one more method of growing crops on fixed plots - fruit plantation to supplement their income. The land abounds in a rich flora of indigenous fruits growing with so much ease without very much human aid as in the Henglep and Tipaimukh sub-divisions. It already enjoys an importance of its own from the horticulture standpoint. The qualities of fruits such as orange, lemon, papaya, banana, etc. grown in this area are very high even without proper care. The area is gifted with diverse agro-climatic conditions due to different elevation zones ranging from a few hundred to over a thousand feet above sea level. Because of this wide range of conditions, there is an immense scope for growing a number of varieties of horticulture crops.

Banana is also another important commercial fruit of the people, but its cultivation is still in a primitive stage. As there is no attempt to identify and classify the varieties correctly there has been much confusion in their proper identification, in spite of its commercial value, no one has taken up extensive plantation of bananas uptill now. The area is very rich in both wild and cultivated varieties. Miscellaneous fruits like jackfruit, papaya, lemon,

guava, etc. are also cultivated successfully. Cultivation of pineapple have been introduced which are thriving well and will shortly come into bearing stage. Regarding sugarcane, cotton, maize and yam, the yield per hectare is not very encouraging as compared to the agriculturally advanced areas of the states perhaps due to the under utilization of resources - natural and human.

With the spread of modern education a new economic class has emerged. The educated jhumias are absorbed in government employment and thus engaged in non-agricultural activities. Most of these households owned a paddy field but most of them have given it out for renting to landless agriculturists. Thus, most of the educated jhumias left their traditional agricultural and allied occupations and moved to urban and industrial areas for white collar jobs in public and private enterprises and business which help them making progress on the economic front also.

Moreover, the village households are stratified on the basis of the ownership of land, inequality in economic condition of the household tends to grow overtime. The poor jhumias are often required to borrow either in cash or kind or both. The well-to-do farmers, therefore, becomes money lenders and earn interest as an income. Since available land in the village especially in Churachandpur and its surrounding plain areas which can be used for wet cultivation is very limited it opens up the door for leasing out land on rent by the land owners. On the other hand, the landless jhumias are becoming poorer and poorer as they are often to borrow for survival and to sell their labour to the other class to earn wage and even to pay rent on leased in land from the farmer. Therefore, it appears that a considerable degree of socio-economic differentiation has grown among the Vaiphei society. However, class-consciousness still seems to be absent in the Vaiphei society and the relations between the landlords and the labourers is non-hostile because they belong to the same community and are sometimes related to one another through blood ties.

Vaiphei economy during the absolute regime of the politics of village chieftainships was not remarkable. It was simply to meet the bare necessities of the people's daily needs. However, the British colonization and the consequent modernization resulted in the emergence of cash economy and set in motion the process of modernization. Jhumming continues to be the main occupation of the Vaiphei people particularly in the interior villages, but it gradually lost its traditional importance as a means of basic subsistence, source of wealth and prestigious position in the society. In spite of the emotional and sentimental attachment to the village land, people become less attached to agricultural work due to the dwindling yields of jhumming and look for non-agricultural jobs and commercial openings offered by the various programs of developmental planning under the state government, thus leading to rural-urban migration. The hitherto undifferentiated traditional society of the Vaiphei was however, transformed into occupationally differentiated society since only a section of the population benefited from the process of change while the masses still cling to their traditional occupation.

No doubt, desire for change and material progress results in the breakdown of traditional boundaries and familiarity with new socio-economic system. With the spread of educational opportunities, more and more young people are entering into the field of job market, leaving their ancestral villages. Today, a significant number of Vaiphei have started residing in all the major urban centres exposing themselves to the experiences of wage employment and to the urban commercial practices and institutions. They exhibit the characteristics of participant culture.

***Transitional Landscape:*** Land and land-based activities acted as the economic base of the traditional society of the Vaiphei, till the time land resources could meet the subsistence of the increasing number of households with traditional technology. In the absence of any centralized political authority, the inherent tendency towards fission is sought to be

counterbalanced by rules of exogamy and the unavoidable interest in land. But beyond the optimum point of land-population relation and in the event of any conflict in interests, forces of fission lend themselves to the dispersal of settlements. The economic base of the idealized social balance was also not well arrayed at the household level. Each of the households was essentially an autonomous economic unit that pursued an individual policy of production primarily with own labour resources and occasionally with mutual labour exchange. Division of labour and production relations were confined to the household and hardly moved beyond the domestic circle to bind others in interdependent relations till the rise of market and monetary relations among them. Integrative role in traditional relationship called as *tawmngaina* is, not only maintained properly, but also the driving force of their economy till the traditional mode of production could provide them their culturally set subsistence.

Along with emerging crisis of shifting cultivation, there has also been a gradual rise of a unifying political order from the days of British power to the present day. Expanding administration, communication, money, market, western education, religion and other exogenous factors started producing their impact on the people. Both the endogenous and exogenous factors providing for push and pull forces of occupational changes has helped the people in organizing an economic order appropriate to their technical capacity, and in affecting such a change, their innovative and motivational faculties have been able not only to diversify the uses of land but also to go beyond for a shift towards non agricultural occupation hitherto unknown to the traditional society. There has, thus, been a conspicuous change in the number of occupations as well as in the variety of occupational combination that a household can now pursue for its livelihood. Each of the households has, thus, developed different economic interests for its survival and economic stability by diversifying the risks and uncertainties that are inherent in a period of transition.

In this phase of economic dynamic, the predominant course of household activities, exchange, earning, expenditure, saving has got to be involved in the use of money and markets with the indigenous non monetary sector trailing behind. Since the change is not generally sudden in an evolutionary scale, traditional practices linger on and are used by the people with suitable modifications. Mutual exchange of labour has been partially replaced by monetary use of wage-paid-labour one or by contract service. Whenever feasible, social obligations are met by monetary payments along with or in place of traditional sacrifices or presentations. Villagers have made a blend of both traditional and non-traditional means of social living in a situation of transition. Forms of exchange have changed from barter to money and credit, and the types of such transactions covered not only production and consumption, but also traditional cultural practices. Monetary exchanges have no longer been localized as were in the earlier, but extent as a regular course beyond the village and involved not only people of different clans but also those outside the ethnic group.

### **5.13: Land Holding System**

Ownership of land in Vaiphei village in Manipur is claimed by the Chief of the village. He, in consultation with his council of ministers (Khawnbawl) selected land for jhuming by each family at the beginning of each season. No other part of the village land other than the agreed ranges or stretches of land should be cleared for the year's cultivation by any family. The Chief and his council of ministers had the privilege of selecting a tract of land within the agreed ranges. Next to them came a few individuals - the chief's favorites selected by him like the village black-smith, who had the second choice in jhum-land. The rest of the ranges were then publicly opened for the year's jhum cultivation by lot.

The cultivator had to pay a part of the paddy (usually 3-5 kerosene tins) to the Chief every year and the front-leg of any animal killed in the jungle. This was actually a sort of rent in kind and was called *Busun*. Cash rent was accepted when the cultivator did not have

sufficient quantity of paddy to spare. The forest inside the village belonged to the Chief. The village possessed fixed boundaries within which the Chief exercised absolute power. No individual could transfer the land which was under his possession, though the Chief could do so. The chief could even chase out a wayward villager, who defied or disobeyed him. The hill-people were left undisturbed to follow their own customary land-system by the Rajas of Manipur since the earliest time. In the absence of land ownership rights by the individual, particularly in the hilly interior villages, landowner cannot receive necessary financial aids or loans from various financial institutions for the improvement of land and raise the production. Under such circumstances, mortgage of land in favour of the lending agency cannot be legally created. Therefore, it is necessary to surveyed farms like orange, sugarcane, tea etc. and prepared land records so that the owner may be able to receive necessary financial aids or loans from various financial institutions such as Government, banks, co-operatives societies, etc. in order to improve the farms and its production.

#### **5.14: Transport and Communication**

The forms of communication among the people in the pre-technological days were through sign, fire-signal, gongs, and drums. Owing partly to the spread of modern education and partly to the convenient terrain of the topography, the people had become expert in transmitting message by signals: long, short light or sound signals. This preceded the advent of telecommunications. Roy Burman and Thukral (1970) have tried to provide a picture of the dynamic process of interaction among the various tribes and non-tribals as:

*A change is taking place in the perspective of the larger setting for social interactions. It is significant to note that for most of the tribes of this region the etymological meaning of their name is 'man'. It appears that in their traditional world view they divided the mankind into two groups- one consisting of themselves only and other consisting of the rest of humanity. With the expansion of communication..... the frame of reference to these communities for social interaction is rapidly undergoing change. For various purposes they perceive their reference groups differently depending on their stage of cultural development.*<sup>8</sup>

These happenings are the result of communication and interaction among the people-both tribes and non-tribes. For these interactions, people must have the communication facilities which ultimately help in accepting new or the so called modern ideas. Scientific and technological advancement have brought about changes in attitudes, beliefs, and even traditions. For instance, the introduction of radio set out common standard of speech and thus brings about uniformity in speech among the various clans within the society cutting across state boundaries. Thus, the tremendous stride made in the field of media communication is another important factor of social change especially among the rural population. The publication and circulation of newspapers and magazines in Vaiphei language which are now being circulated in considerable quantity are example of the impact of change in their society.

The improvement of roads in Vaiphei area is a recent phenomenon. The villages of the present study have been getting the opportunity of road transportation: two villages with black-top facility and the other two with *kuccha* road. With the construction of roads and development of transportation, the villagers have the opportunity to develop contact with the outside world, thereby changing their attitudes, economy and culture. At the very outset, the roads break the isolation of the tribal people. They have moved from the stage of oral communication, signs and symbols to modern written communication. The primitive system of communication and transportation were replaced by jeeps, buses, post and eventually by telephones. Availability of books, newspapers, radios and telephones help in the expansion of communication system of the Vaiphei. Now-a-days, newspaper and telephones are used as means of mass communication. Villagers are now gradually losing their sentimental attachment of their land and villages; rural-urban migration takes place in large numbers in quest of a better life which has also meant the possibility of vertical mobility of a Vaiphei who could never thought of it in the pre-technological days. However, the result of contact

with the outside world has not always been positive. It had many negative impacts on the traditional setting of the tribal society. In this context, Elwin (1964) may be quoted, who writes from the logical point of view on Arunachal tribes, as follows:

*Roads, of course, can be a curse as well as a blessing to the tribal people. In some places, they have been the means of corruption and exploitation. They have brought new diseases, moral decline and cultural decadence. They have made it easy for the money-lenders, the rapacious merchants, the liquor venders, the lawyer's tent to penetrate deep into the hills and forests. They can bring money in, but they can also take money out. They have helped to destroy the handloom industry by the import of cheap bazaar cloth; they have brought vulgar and inferior goods to the very doors of the people.<sup>9</sup>*

These are the negative effects of the impact of modern communication in tribal areas and Vaiphei are no exception to this impact. These are all happening due to the improvement of roads and transportation. As a result of breaking their isolation, the Vaiphei people became part of the regional and national communication network; and gradually, deformation of the superstructure society of the people began. The crux of misunderstanding by the Western-education rests upon a mistaken assumption that anything Western is higher and the accepted norm and that anything tribal is uncultured, thus, becoming pro-Western in their outlook and attitude. Without critical analysis they interpreted the missionary work as 'civilized mission' which brought them into 'light'. Such has threatened family norms, social ethics and culture-religious meanings in the name of modernization.

The impact brought about by modern education, however, has not proved to be an unmixed blessing in Vaiphei society. Their outlook, attitude and personality as a whole, no doubt has been improved considerably at the same time the very traditional social fabrics has been threatened. The tribal ethics of simplicity and solidarity along with *tawmngaiña*- a community service before self- has been eroded. The age old customs and traditions have been tampered in the name of modernization and development. As a result, certain unwanted

things, like disrespect for the aged and elders, negligence of duty towards the community, and so on has increased among the younger generations. These evil affects of social change are but inevitable and universal. It is, therefore, necessary for the educated and conscious section of the society to preserve the traditional heritage by modifications, as per the need of the time thereby minimize the damage on the social and moral values in the society.

The introduction of formal education by the missionaries among the Vaiphei had a profound impact in their traditional setting. In the early days, teaching at first was in the simplest form, mainly confined to reading and understanding of writing since education was initially imparted with Bible reading. Nevertheless, it may be remembered that education was never the chief objective of the missionaries. Their main objective was, rather, to train native workers and operate through them. In fact, education had been only a part of their evangelical activities. The missionaries felt that most of the culture and traditions of the early Vaiphei society were profusely connected with old religious practices. As such, there was a tendency among the new converts to think that anything that was 'Western' was 'good and civilized'. This sudden change in their mental outlook from the old ways of life to the new has resulted in a decline in the qualitative Vaiphei way of life and has produced an uncertainty of future for many.

**Notes and References:**

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<sup>2</sup> Karotemprel, S. 'The Impact of Christianity on the Tribes of Northeast India' in Changing phase of tribal area of Manipur Ed.G.K. Gori. BR Publishing Corporation Delhi (1984)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Roy Burman, J.J.(1998) "Christianity and Development Among the Hill Tribes of North-East India" in M. Hussain and R. Sahu (Eds.) *North-East India in Transition*. Rima Publishing House, New Delhi. pp-13.

<sup>6</sup> Sharma, B.D. (1984) *Planning for Tribal Development*, Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi. p.34

<sup>7</sup> Sangma, Milton S. A. (1992) *History of American Baptist Mission in North East India* (vol. 2), Mittal Publications, New Delhi, p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Roy Burman, B.K. and Thakral, S.P. *Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of the hill areas of North-east India*. Census of India 1961. pp-107.

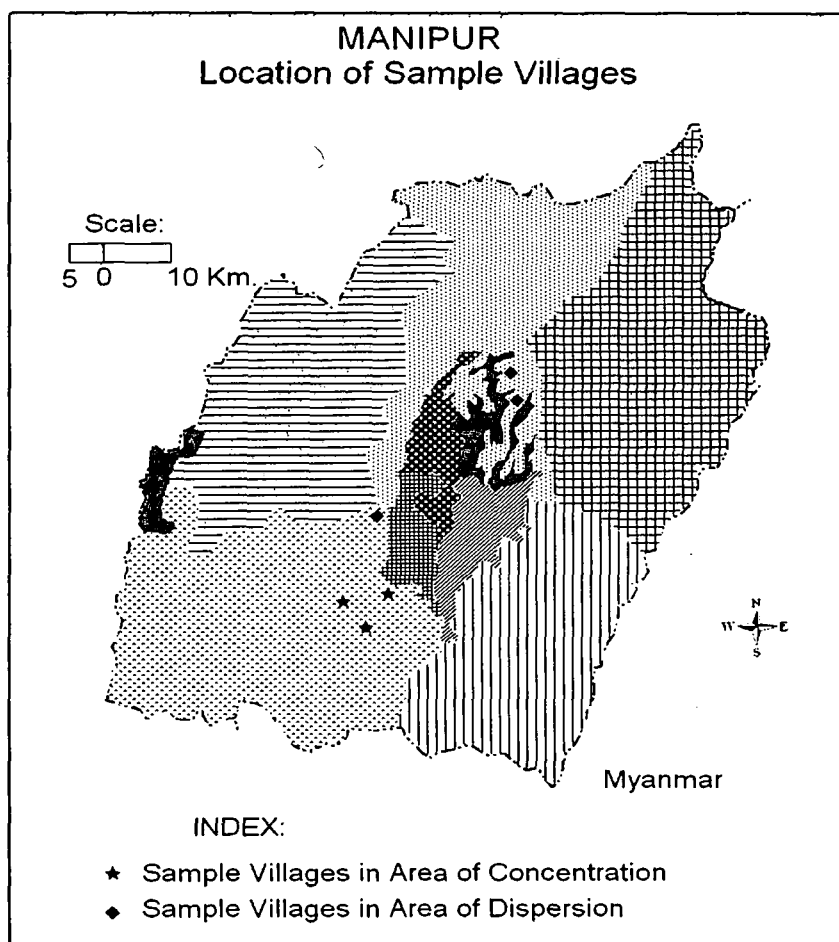
<sup>9</sup> Elwin, Verrier (1964) *A Philosophy for NEFA*, pp 74-75.

## CHAPTER-VI

### THE SAMPLE VILLAGES OF STUDY

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to discuss the salient features of the villages under study. Attempts have also been made to examine the core social and economic institutions of the Vaiphei life in Manipur. The region-wise distribution of the Vaiphei tribe in Manipur can be mainly grouped into six pockets, excluding the capital Imphal and main towns; such as Kailam-chung, Kailam-nuai, Lamka-chung, Lamka-nuai, Sugnu-kual and Ngun-gal. Both Kailam-chung and Kailam-nuai are in the North-western part of Churachandpur district, divided by a mountain range called Kailam. Lamka-chung includes those villages in the Southern part of Churachandpur whereas Lamka-nuai is the area in the Northern part of Churachandpur. Sugnu-kual is in both the Eastern part of Churachandpur district and South-Western part of Chandel district; and Ngun-gal refers to those Vaiphei settlements in the Northern districts of Manipur, mainly Sadar Hills area. Looking at the settlement pattern of the Vaiphei, one can say that their villages are situated either near the bank of a river or in remote areas which lack regular contact and communication with other people. Only some of their villages are having regular communication system and transportation. In order to get a clear picture of their changing society, six villages have been selected for a case study; three villages in their area of concentration and another three villages in their area of dispersion. The selection of the villages has not been made at random; certain factors have been taken into account before the study was taken up. The main criterion for the choice of the study village was the extent of their adherence to tradition, socio-economic organization and culture. Another factor was the villages were ethnically homogenous. Road and connectivity with the district headquarters is also taken into account while selecting the study villages. Therefore, one of the study villages is on the Highway, two villages are close to the highway and the

remaining three villages are remote which are connected with the nearby villages by a narrow-unmetalled road. However, the people of the sampled villages are in touch with the valley people to a great extent; they interact and associate with them in most of their day to day socio-economic activities. The field survey was conducted in November 2006 to January 2007 and again in July to August, 2007 and November to December, 2008.



Map No. 8

The general aspects of the six study villages are presented here below.

### 6.1 (a): Sample Villages in the area of Concentration

(i) **Kangvai:** The first village selected for the study in the area of Concentration is Kangvai, which is located on the Imphal-Churachandpur highway, about 11 Kilometres North from Churachandpur town. This village also marked the district boundary of Churachandpur and

Bishnupur in a South-West to North-East direction. The village and its fields are drained by a small perennial river called Kangvai Lui. It is one of the modern Vaiphei villages having regular modern system of transportation and communication. The village is composed of 132 households at the time of survey with a population of 654 persons of which 330 are male and 324 are female. The average size of the family in the village is 4.95 persons with a sex ratio of about 982 females per thousand males. The population of the village as per sex is very even in every age-group, despite of their society being male dominated. The village runs from East to West and is sub-divided into three localities; such as Bazaar, Khawpi and Uzuak. Bazaar is on the highway and situated in the eastern most part of the village. There are shops and vegetable market, and this locality is the main commercial area where economic activities are operated. Khawpi is the main settlement area of the village, which lies between Bazaar and Uzuak. Churches, playground, Community hall and cemetery are all in this part of the village. The western extension part of the village is called Uzuak and this locality lies in the foothill of a small hillock. Along the lanes and bye-lanes, there are rows of shady trees, bamboos and shrubs. The whole village, except settlement area and forest on its western side is covered with wet paddy fields. The village forests are located to the west of the village, where from they get their requirements of wood and bamboo for household purposes. The village is located in the same place since its formation and subsequently, there has been an extension by new construction of houses time to time to provide settlement for new families migrated from other villages. A sketched map of the village is shown in Figure No.1 in order to have a better understanding of the settlement pattern as well as the social amenities. The village being located in flat-plain area with a regular water supply from the river, agriculture continued to be the mainstay of their economy.

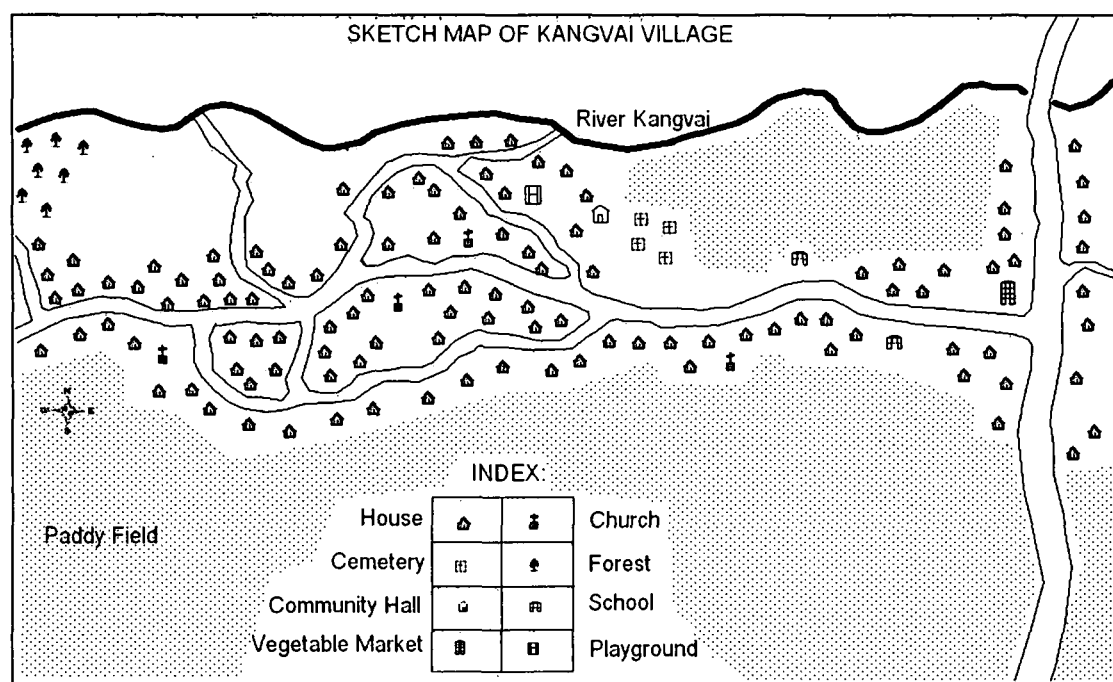


Figure 1

**(ii) Pengjang:** Pengjang is the second sample village in the area of Concentration and is located in the same region with the other two villages. It is situated at the foot-hill of the Thangching hill. It is about 10 Kilometers from Churachandpur town and about one kilometer from Imphal-Churachandpur highway in the West direction. The village is electrified and has a private high school. Unlike the former village, for availing transportation i.e. to catch transportation for daily life purposes, they have to go walking about a kilometer to S.Kawtlian village, where Imphal-Churachandpur road passes through. At the middle of the village, there is a playground, around which houses have sprung up. The village is drained by a river called Loklai which is a perennial source of water to the villagers. This also helps in maintaining water table to crop land and a year-long humidity for the paddy fields.

Pengjang has a total population of 352 persons with 63 households. The average size of family in this village is 5.6 persons per family and the sex ratio, in terms of thousand male to female is 956. Agriculture, both wet-permanent cultivation and jhum is the mainstay of their economy. In fact, permanent wet cultivation is more prominent than jhum in the

economy of cultivators of this village. A sketched map of the village is presented in Figure No.2.

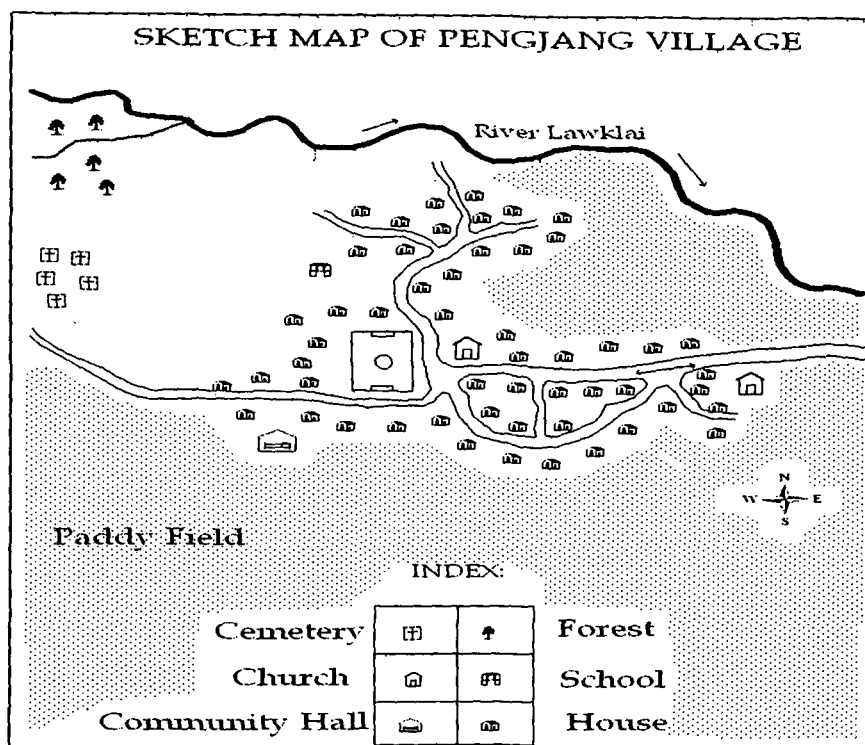


Figure 2

(iii) **K. Kawtlian:** The third village in the area of Concentration under study is K. Kawtlian which is situated at the foot-hill of a small off-shooting hillock of Thangching range. It is about 12.5 Kilometers from Churachandpur town and is situated adjacent to Kangvai village. It lies in the South-Western direction from Kangvai village. The only road that connected the village is the Kangvai road, through which they availed transportation and markets. During the time of survey, the village has 50 households with a population of 261 persons. The average family size of the village is 5.22 persons. They are laborious, hard working and sincere and have a sturdy looks. In spite of a strong wind of change around this village, the people are still strongly bound in their traditional lifestyle. Movement of youth organizations like the Young Vaiphei Association, the Vaiphei Students' Association and Youth Department of the Church plays a key role in any function and ceremony of the village. The approach road of the village K.Kawtlian, which is non-metalled, passes through

Kangvai village. There is no transport facility directly connecting the village for which the villagers have to go to Kangvai village to avail transport facility. A sketched map of the village is prepared in Figure No.3 to show a bird's eye view of this village. Like the other study villages, agriculture, mainly jhum is the mainstay of the village economy. Availability of flat or plain lands in the East side of the village, gives them a chance to practice settled agriculture with rain-fed irrigation system.

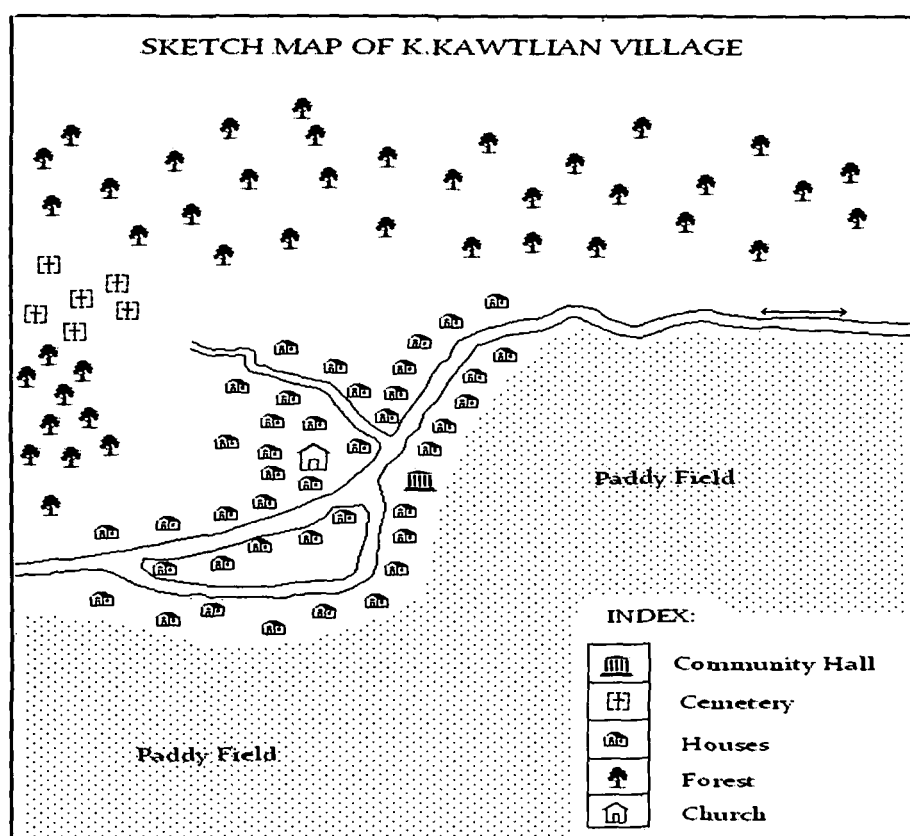


Figure 3

### 6.1 (b): Sample Villages in the area of Dispersion

(i) **Leisanbung:** Leisanbung is the first village under study for the area of Dispersion. It is located about two kilometers West from Imphal-Churachandpur road in Churachandpur district. This village is situated at the foot-hill of Thangching mountain range. It has a total population of 206 with 34 househods; that makes the average size of the family 6.1 persons. Its distance from Churachandpur town is about 20 Kilometers in the North-West direction. It

is connected to the highway by a non-metalled road which is often un-motorable during rainy season.

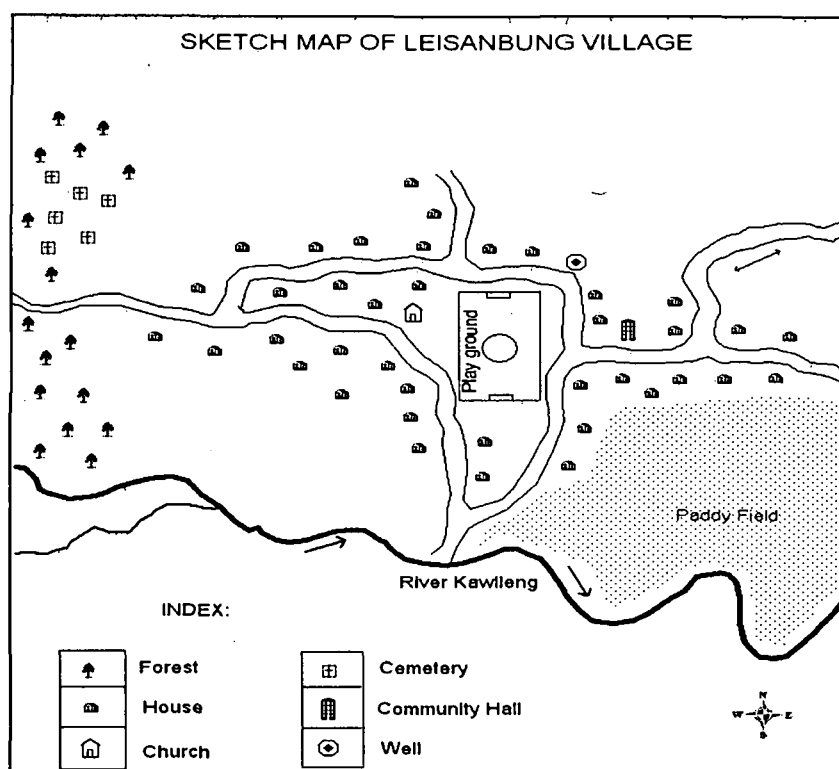


Figure 4

The village playground lies in the foot-hill, around which settlement comes up. The nearest market centre is at Moirang town which is about 7 kilometres away from the village. So, the villagers have to go walking till Imphal-Churachandpur road for catching a bus to Moirang or Churachandpur in order to avail market and medical facilities. This village is electrified but without school till the time of survey. There is one river called Kawleng and two rain-fed seasonal streams which served the requirement of the villagers. There is also a seasonal lake called Paatlian which is about 120 Square Metres in area. This lake is fed by rain fed seasonal streams which in-turn act as a water reservoir for the agricultural fields. When the amount of rainfall is high throughout the season, the lake did not dry up in that particular year. However, it usually remains dry from end part of January to early part of April. A sketch map of the village is prepared that shows the village road and the settlement pattern of the village in Figure No. 4. Agriculture, both wet-permanent cultivation and jhumming is

the mainstay of their economy. Collecting woods from the forest selling it to the market for fuel and timber purpose is another occupation of the villagers.

**(ii) Phovaibi:** Phovaibi is the second sample village in the area of Dispersion and is located in the East Sadar hills in Senapati district. It is about 20 Kilometers from Imphal. The village is electrified and has a private middle school. The village is drained by a river called Haukhong which is a perennial source of water to the villagers. This also helps in maintaining water table to crop land and a year-long humidity for the paddy fields. Agriculture, both wet-permanent cultivation and jhum is the mainstay of their economy. In fact, permanent wet cultivation is more prominent than jhum in the economy of cultivators of this village. A sketched map of the village is presented below in Figure No.5.

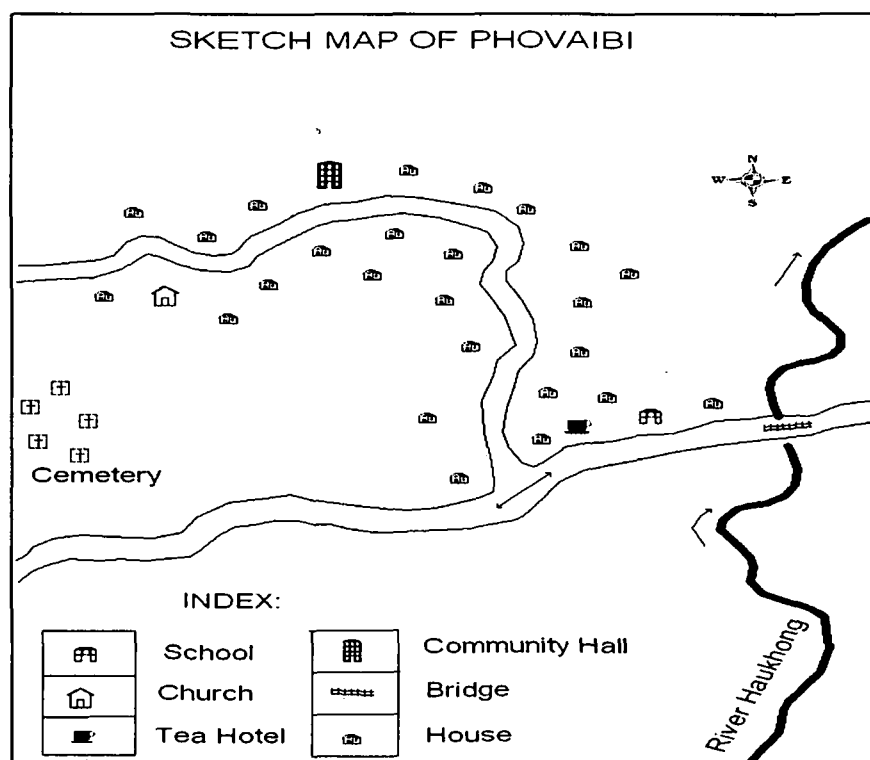


Figure 5

**(iii) Haukhongching:** The third village in the area of Dispersion under study is Haukhongching which is situated at a foot-hill. It is about 16.5 Kilometers from Imphal and is situated in the same area with Phovaibi village. It lies in the South-Western direction from Phovaibi village. During the time of survey, the village has 20 households with a population

of 114 persons. In spite of a strong wind of change around this village, the people are still strongly bound in their traditional lifestyle. Like the other study villages, agriculture, mainly jhum is the mainstay of the village economy. Availability of flat or plain lands in the East and South sides of the village, gives them a chance to practice settled agriculture with rain-fed irrigation system. A sketched map of the village is prepared in Figure No.6.

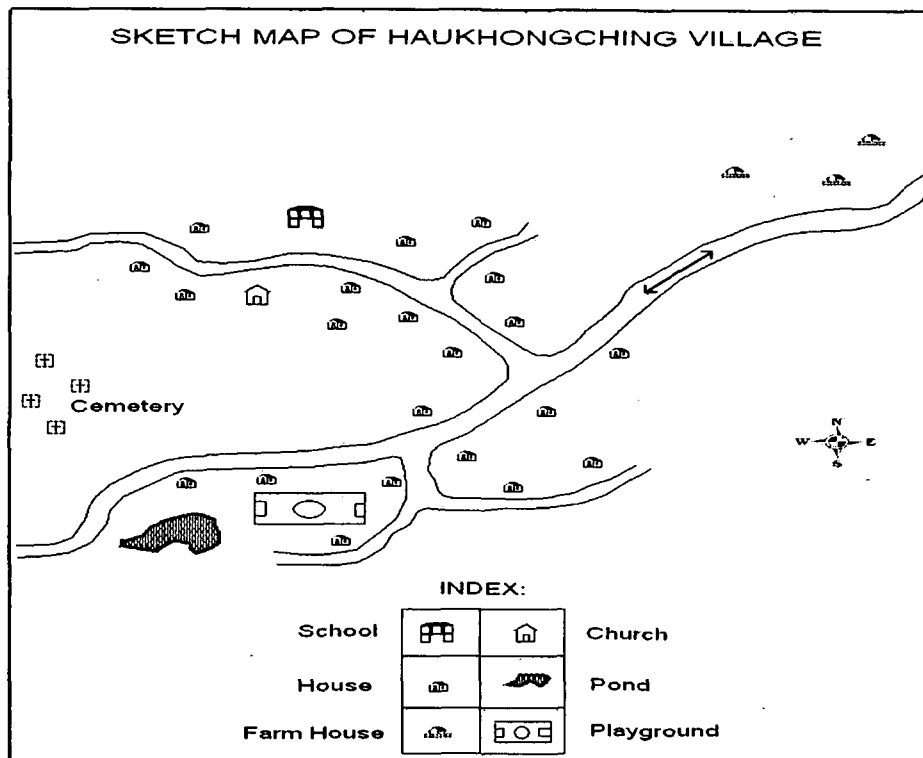


Figure 6

## 6.2: House type

There is not much variation in the type of houses in rural Vaiphei society. Most of the houses are constructed with their limited knowledge in accordance with their tastes. However, certain change is perceptible in the house-type of the Vaiphei. As mentioned earlier, traditional huts of the Vaiphei were built above the ground on wooden or bamboo posts, the walls and floors were made of split and plaited bamboo, thatched roof, generally one front entrance with one big window-type of opening called '*namthak*'. The house is separated into two halves, one half as bed room for all the family members and the other half served as common room with kitchen. In this connection, it may be pointed out that the

Vaiphei prefers to entertain their visitors in their kitchen till today where a separate sitting room is available. So, the house pattern underwent changes as compared to their traditional patterns with no ventilation, which was stuffy with dark room without separate kitchen, dining room and hardly for bedroom. The residential houses are now constructed in different patterns- 'L'-shape, 'U'-shape, 'T'-shape and so on. It is not that all the traditional type of houses has been totally replaced by new ones; old huts still exist in many villages, depending on the economic condition of the householder. With the process of modernization, houses built in these villages have lighted rooms, ventilated with more than one main door and several windows. Bricks, C.I.sheets (tin), cement, window-glasses and buying and selling of land for house construction are going on progressively. The trend is towards building houses of wooden on cement concrete pillars with corrugated sheets roofing. The designs of houses so built have changed a great deal with a verandah in the front. The sitting and living rooms are separated from the kitchen. As far as the building materials of the study villages as well as the Vaiphei as a whole is concerned, the categorization of the house type in the following tables depicts the picture; in a sense that the houses of the families of the same economic category have more or less the same materials in all the villages. The materials for Semi-permanent house type are simple and cheap; which are easily available in and around the village. These materials are mainly thatches and bamboos; which hardly needs skilled labour to construct it. The following Tables No. 6.1 and 6.2 shows the present house type of the Vaiphei from the study villages.

**Table 6.1: House type of the study Villages in Area of Concentration**

Village	No. of Household	Semi-Permanent	%	Assam-type	%	RCC	%
Kangvai	132	34	25.76	90	68.18	08	6.06
K.Kawtlian	50	17	34.0	30	60.0	03	6.0
Pengjang	63	04	6.35	57	90.48	02	3.17
TOTAL	245	55	22.45	177	72.24	13	5.31

The house type in the study villages is categorized into three groups; such as Semi-permanent, Assam type and RCC. Out of the three villages in the area of Concentration, K.Kawtlian has the highest number of Semi-permanent house i.e. 34.0 percent and Pengjang has the least Semi-permanent house i.e. only 6.35 percent. Altogether, Semi-permanent house in the area of Concentration accounts for 22.45 percent. During the time of survey, as much as 72.24 per cent of houses of the study villages in the area of Concentration are constructed according to what is known as Assam type houses. Pengjang village recorded the highest percentage of Assam type which is 90.48 percent. The least number of Assam type houses are recorded in K.Kawtlian which still accounts 60.0 percent. This clearly shows that Assam type of houses is the most common house pattern in the area of Concentration of the Vaiphei in Manipur. These types of houses are more comfortable with more rooms than the typical house type of the Vaiphei. The shape, size and division of these houses may vary from one to another. The popularity of Assam-type houses can be attributed to the suitable economic conditions and lifestyle of the Vaiphei; in a sense that it is comfortable and affordable. It is also observed that concrete building starts to be noticed in the Vaiphei villages. Concrete buildings have been observed in all the three villages in the area of Concentration and accounts for 5.31 percent of the total houses in the three villages.

**Table 6.2: House type of the study Villages in Area of Dispersion**

Village	No. of Household	Semi-Permanent	%	Assam-type	%	RCC	%
Leisanbung	34	10	29.41	24	70.59	-	-
Phovaibi	25	04	16.00	19	76.00	02	8.00
Haukhongching	20	03	15.00	17	85.00	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21.52</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>75.95</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>2.53</b>

The picture is more or less similar for the other three villages in the area of Dispersion. Semi-permanent house type consists of 21.52 percent in the three villages;

where Leisanbung records the highest with 29.41 percent. Assam type housing pattern dominates the three villages with 75.95 percent of the total houses, where Haukhongching has the highest with 85 percent and Leisanbung, the lowest, still accounts for 70.59 percent. Out of the three villages studied in the area of Dispersion, only one village has RCC house type, i.e. in Phovaibi village and account for 8 percent for the village and only 2.53 percent for the study villages in the area of Dispersion. Traditional huts or traditional pattern of houses in the study villages are included in Semi-permanent house type category. However, the typical Vaiphei traditional houses are no more existed at least in the sampled villages, both in the area of Concentration and area of Dispersion.

Each house is attached with a compound, enough playgrounds for small children of the family, is left between the village foot-path and the houses. This space is also used to dry paddy usually on a big bamboo mats. The chicken shed and the pig sty, if any, are always at the back or side of the house; also is the kitchen garden where vegetables and fruits are grown. Table 6.3 shows the number of years the villagers live in their respective villages in the area of Concentration. It is categorized as 0-10 years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years and those people who live in that particular village for more than 30 years are categorized as living permanently. The duration of dwelling in the village is closely related to the above house-types in the sample villages.

**Table 6.3: Duration of dwelling in the villages in Area of Concentration (No. of years)**

Village	No. of Household	0-10 Yrs	%	11-20Yrs	%	21-30 Yrs	%	Permanently	%
Kangvai	132	07	5.30	28	21.21	02	1.52	95	71.97
K.Kawtlian	50	02	4.00	08	16.00	05	10.00	35	70.00
Pengjang	63	06	9.52	07	11.11	10	15.87	40	63.50
TOTAL	245	15	6.12	43	17.55	17	6.94	170	69.39

It is noticed that most of the Semi-permanent house type belongs to those who settled in the villages for lesser number of years where as RCC buildings and most of the good houses belongs to those families who resides there for more number of years. It is observed that 69.39 percent of the households in the sampled villages in the area of Concentration lived more than 30 years in those villages. Those who settled in the village for 21-30 years recorded 6.94 percent and 11-20 years and 0-10 years accounts for 17.55 per cent and 6.12 percent respectively. The percentage of the family who migrated to these villages, especially to Kangvai, is more for 11-20 years category than the other two categories, because of the ethnic clash of the District that broke out in 1997. As many as 25 family or households migrated to Kangvai village during 1997 and they accounted for 25.7 per cent of the total households in that village during that period. In the other two villages too, people from other villages migrated during the year. This shows that these studied villages are a safe place to take shelter for the Vaiphei people in times of crisis. It is also to be noted that migrations to these villages are still ongoing process. The pull factor for these migrations may be due to the availability of land for settled agriculture, the friendly attitude of the villagers towards the migrants and the security of the villages for the Vaiphei people. Moreover, transport and communication as well as connectivity to the district headquarters town is another important criteria that attracts the migrants. In short, the ideal geographical setting of the region for settlement and the availability of enough space to accommodate migrants are important pull factors.

**Table 6.4: Duration of dwelling in the villages in Area of Dispersion (No. of years)**

Village	No. of Household	0-10 Yr	%	11-20Yr	%	21-30 Yr	%	Permanently	%
Leisanbung	34	03	8.82	06	17.65	07	20.59	18	52.94
Phovaibi	25	02	8.00	03	12.00	06	24.00	14	56.00
Haukhongching	20	-	-	01	5.00	03	15.00	16	80.00
TOTAL	79	05	6.33	10	12.66	16	20.25	48	60.76

The study villages in the area of Dispersion show a slightly different picture. It is recorded that 60.76 percent of the households in the three villages live more than 30 years. The first two villages i.e. Leisanbung and Phovaibi record a meager 52.94 percent and 56 percent respectively; whereas Haukhongching records a huge 80 percent who lives permanently. The former two villages record more or less the same in other categories also. However, Haukhongching village somehow did not attract migrants and in the past ten years, no one migrated to this village. This can be attributed to the remoteness of the village and the unfavourable geographical condition for agriculture.

### **6.3: Population as per Age and Sex**

Every population has a unique structure which can be described in terms of its age and sex composition. Among the various components of population composition, age composition and sex composition hold an important place for analysis of other demographic characteristics such as natality, mortality, migration, marital status and economic characteristics. The balance of sex ratio affects the social and economic relationships within a community, since the two sexes play partly contrasting and partly complimentary roles in the economy and society. Thus, the knowledge of sex ratio is essential for understanding the employment and consumption patterns and social needs of a community.<sup>1</sup>(Chandna,1986). In most populations the members of males and females tend to be merely equal, with males outnumbering the females at the younger age and females outnumbering the males at the older ages. It does appear to be true that social, economic and community life are affected in many ways by large imbalances in the sex composition.<sup>2</sup> The following Table-6.5 shows that male and female population in every age group in the area of Concentration is evenly distributed in all the four sample villages. It is interesting to note that the young population below the age group of 15 years is quite low in these three villages. Young population in the sample villages is only 23.28 percent of the total population whereas the average young

population of the state, as a whole is about 35.20 per cent in the 2001 census. This age group is economically unproductive and most expensive age group as it is to be provided with food, clothing and education.

**Table 6.5: Population as per Age-group and Sex in Area of Concentration**

Village	Age-groups																		Total Population
	0-5			6-14			15-30			31-45			46-60			61-up			
	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	
Kangvai	36	32	10.4	37	40	11.8	101	95	30.0	70	71	21.6	62	65	19.4	24	21	6.8	654
K.Kawtlia	18	15	12.6	17	14	11.9	46	39	32.6	30	27	21.8	17	18	13.4	12	8	7.6	261
Pengjang	20	21	11.6	21	24	12.8	57	41	27.8	37	36	20.7	27	31	16.5	18	19	10.5	352
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>1,267</b>						

The adult age group or working population, though a further classification is made on the above table, is taken as to comprise of people falling in the age group of 15 to 60 years. This age group is synchronized with active population; biologically reproductive, economically productive and demographically most mobile. It supports the bulk of the other two age groups in feeding, clothing, educating the young ones and looking after the olds. The working population in the three villages accounts 68.67 percent. This is incredibly high in comparison with Manipur state which is about 58 per cent. If we break up further as in the above table, 15-30 years category records the highest percentage i.e. 29.9 percent.

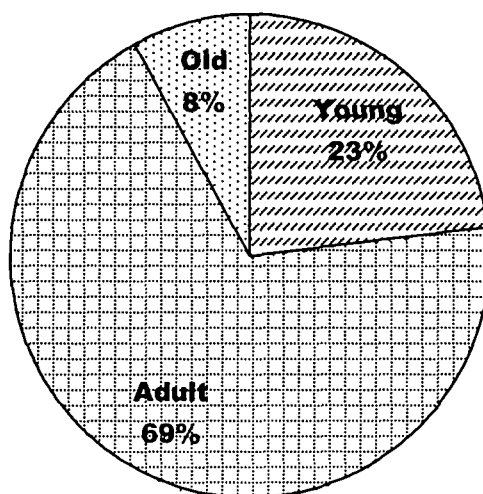
**Table 6.6: Population as per Age-group and Sex in Area of Dispersion**

Village	Age-groups																		Total Population
	0-5			6-14			15-30			31-45			46-60			61-up			
	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	
Leisanbung	21	16	17.9	18	21	18.9	37	34	34.5	12	11	11.2	14	13	13.1	3	6	4.4	206
Phovaibi	15	13	21.4	14	12	19.8	17	20	28.2	10	9	14.5	9	9	13.7	2	1	2.3	131
Haukhongching	10	10	17.5	12	8	17.5	16	13	25.4	17	14	27.2	4	6	8.8	3	1	3.5	114
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>451</b>						

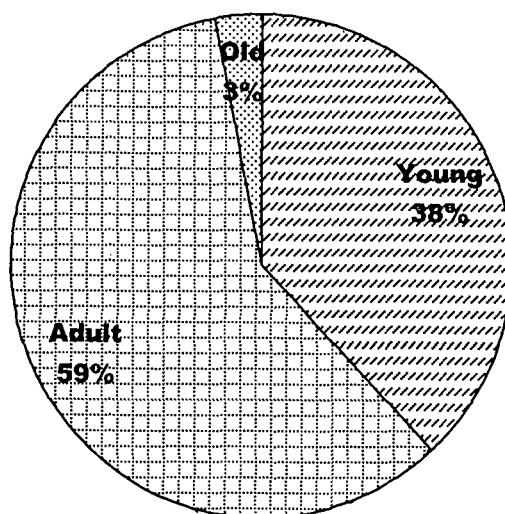
According to the Census of India (1971), any person whose main activity is participation in any economically productive work either by his physical or by his mental activity is classified as worker<sup>3</sup>. Thus, work involves not only actual work but also affective supervision and direction. By this definition, these villages have a high proportion of workers which is characterized by low dependency ratio. The study villages in the area of Concentration, thus, have a desirable percentage of working age group. However, the degree of diversification of their work is very low, as agriculture is their main occupation.

As seen in the above Table 6.4, the population as per age-group and sex in the area of Dispersion is slightly different from those in the area of Concentration. Young population below the age of 15 years in these three villages accounts for 37.69 percent; much more higher than the percentage of the same age-group in the area of Concentration i.e. 23.28 percent. The adult age-group comprising 15-60 years accounts for 58.76 percent of the total population of the three villages as compare to those villages in the area of Concentration which is 68.67 percent. This clearly shows that the study villages in the area of Dispersion have a lower working population and a higher dependants or economically unproductive population than those study villages in the area of Concentration.

**Figure 6.1: Age group division of the Study Villages in area of Concentration**



**Figure 6.2: Age group division of the Study Villages in area of Dispersion**



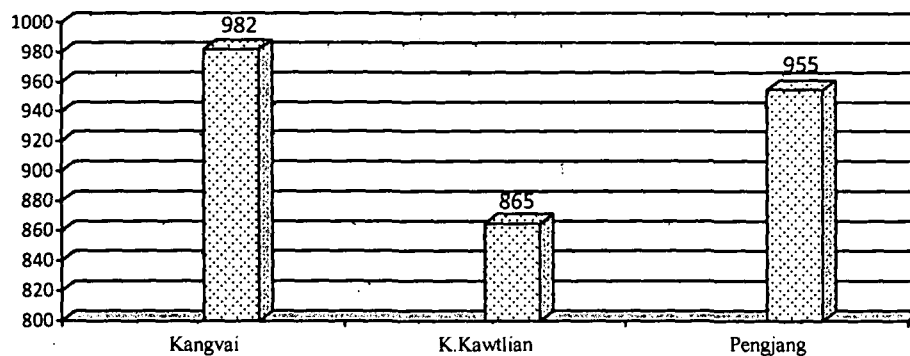
With the improved health care and the impact of education, the life expectancy of the people also increased resulting in the higher proportion of the old age group. This age group is also termed as non-productive and non-reproductive and the proportion of their population is governed largely by mortality rates. The proportion of this age group i.e. 60 years and above in the study villages in area of Concentration are 8 percent whereas in the area of Dispersion, it is 3.5 percent to the total population of the villages in both the areas. The percentage of senior or old population in area of Concentration is still higher than the State's i.e. 6.1%; however, it is lower in the area of Dispersion.

#### **6.4: Sex Ratio and Status of women**

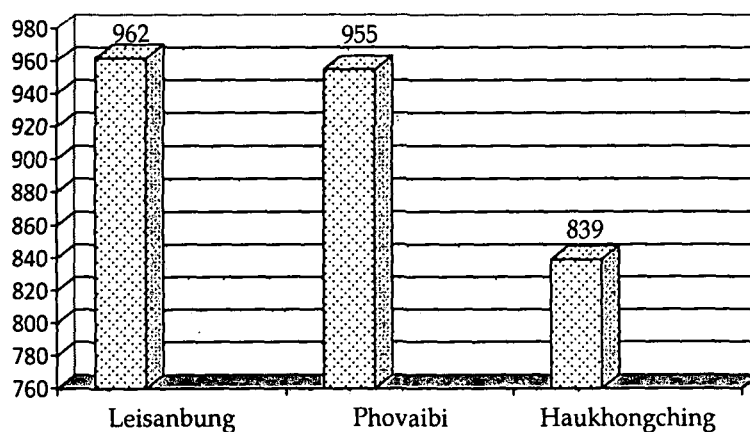
The size of a family does not say much about the status of women but the sex ratio is one of the most important indicators of women's status and the probable future population. Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males. Among the various social groups in the country, interestingly, the scheduled tribe population in general has a high sex ratio in comparison to the general population of the country. This can be because of male child preference and high dowry among the general population. Even technological developments go against women. Pre-natal sex determination, though banned by the law,

often leads to 'sex specific abortion'. Analysis on sex ratio data indicates that the Vaiphei population is not influenced by the national trend and it is high in most of their villages.

**Figure 6.3: Sex ratio of the Study Villages in area of Concentration**



**Figure 6.4: Sex ratio of the Study Villages in area of Dispersion**



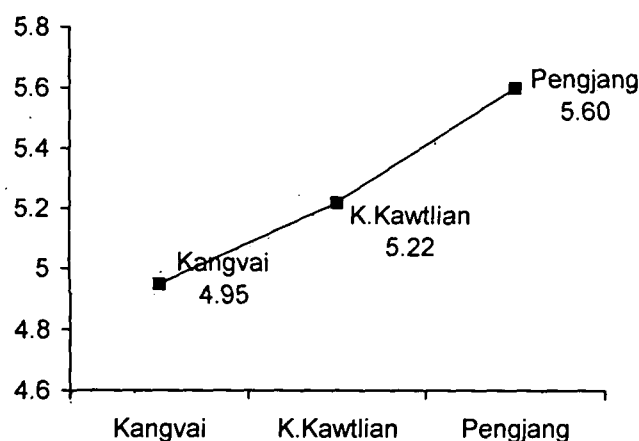
The sex ratio of Manipur state as a whole is recorded as 978 females per thousand males, whereas in Churachandpur district; it is 993 females per thousand males. This could be associated with various factors like high natural sex ratio and the transition of their society to modernity with the introduction of educational, administrative and legal system. However, for the Vaiphei, the most important reason for the high sex ratio or balanced population and reasonably high status of women may be attributed to the impact of Christianity with its acquaintances. The sample villages of the Vaiphei in the area of Concentration show a fairly high sex ratio as 982, 865 and 955 females per thousand males in Kangvai, K.Kawtlia, and Pengiang respectively. Taking the three sample villages

together in area of Concentration, the sex ratio is found to be 934 females per thousand males. The sample villages in the area of Dispersion also show a fairly high sex ratio as 962, 955 and 839 females per thousand males in Leisanbung, Phovaibi and Haukhongching respectively. The low rate of sex ratio in K.Kawtlia and Haukhongching can be associated with natural low birth rate and high mortality rate of female child due to poor health care. In fact, it seemed relatively low when presented in per thousand male, but it should be noted that the total population of the village K.Kawtlia is only 261 persons and the real figure shows a fairly even numbers of male and female, i.e. 121/140. The fairly high sex ratio in the Vaiphei community may be because of the fact that the female in this tribal society are not neglected despite a gender bias and the social cultural values protect their interest.

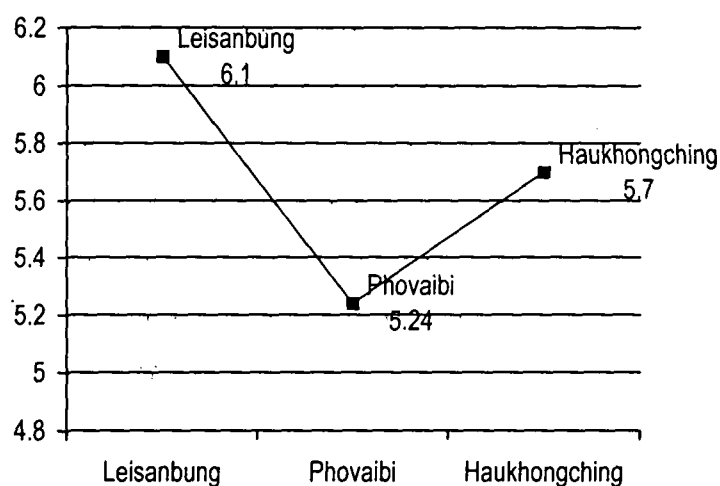
#### **6.5: Family type and Size**

The concept of joint family life appears to be non-existent in the Vaiphei community from time immemorial. A newly married couple after having performed all the rites and rituals starts its own home after few months of marriage. Therefore, it is observed that 98.2 per cent of the sample four villages live in nuclear families indicating that nuclear family is the usual norm for the Vaiphei. A very low percentage of families i.e. 1.79 per cent lived in extended family. The size of the Family in the study villages in the area of Concentration are presented in the following diagram whose average size is calculated as 5.26 persons per family. Household comprises of members of the family who share a common hearth. The following figures represent the family size of the study villages for both the area of Concentration and the area of Dispersion. In this study, household composition had been categorized into three groups, such as, small, medium and big with 1-3 members, 4-6 members and 7 and above members respectively. In the study villages for both the area of Concentration and the area of Dispersion, the biggest household comprised of 13 members while the smallest is comprised of only one individual member.

**Figure 6.5: Family Size of the Sample Villages in Area of Concentration**



**Figure 6.6: Family Size of the Sample Villages in Area of Dispersion**



The following tables show the percentage distribution of the size of the family in the study villages. Small families in the study villages in the area of Concentration, which comprises of 1-3 members are recorded to be 19 households and accounts for 7.76 per cent only of the total number of households. Medium size family (4-6 members) was found to be the highest both in terms of the number of households as well as in percentage i.e. 150 households accounting for 61.22 per cent of the total number of households. 76 households are categorized as big size family with 7 and above members, which accounts for 31.02 per cent of the total households from the three sample villages. It is interesting to note that the study villages in the area of Dispersion show a much higher percentage of small families,

i.e. 16.46 percent against 7.76 percent in the area of Concentration. However, the medium size family in the area of Dispersion accounts for only 51.9 percent.

**Table 6.7: Distribution of the Household size of the Study Villages in Area of Concentration**

Size of Family	No. of Household	Percentage
Small	19	7.76
Medium	150	61.22
Big	76	31.02
Total	245	100.00

**Table 6.8: Distribution of the Household size of the Study villages in Area of Dispersion**

Size of Family	No. of Household	Percentage
Small	13	16.46
Medium	41	51.90
Big	25	31.64
Total	79	100.00

The percentages of big size families in both the area of Concentration and area of Dispersion records 31.02 percent and 31.64 percent respectively. As far as household size is concern, Vaiphei society is dominated by medium size i.e. 4-6 members. In the study villages from both the area of Concentration and Dispersion, the medium household size accounts for 56.56 percent of the total households in the study villages.

### **6.6: Occupational structure**

The study of the socio-economic change of a society remains incomplete without analysis of the occupational composition of a population of a particular society. The occupation of an individual refers to his or her trade, type of work or profession by which he or she earns a living. The occupational structure of a society is the product of a number of intimately related factors. Of course, the nature and variety of physical resource base of particular geographical area lays down the basic foundation in the form of good land for

agriculture, plantation, mining etc. In traditional Vaiphei economy, most of the occupations of a household requires cooperation of all the members of the household and are found to be mutually complementary and of joint nature; in the sense that similarly patterned assignments are to be carried out by joint physical participation of all members as in cultivation of land or construction of houses. Whatever the nature of economic activity a person engaged himself in, other members of the household help him one way or the other in completing the task. Agriculture remained at subsistence level and there is not much diversification of occupations in Vaiphei society. The state itself is essentially an agrarian state and the population is mostly rural in character.

**Table 6.9: Occupational Structure of the Study Villages in Area of Concentration**

Village »	Kangvai			K.Kawtlian			Pengjang			Total	%
	Male	Female	%	Male	Female	%	Male	Female	%		
Cultivator	120	56	58.86	47	30	57.04	51	21	45.57	325	54.90
Daily Wage Earner	23	14	12.37	19	18	27.41	14	15	18.35	103	17.40
Salaried-Govt.	38	8	15.38	10	2	8.89	20	3	14.56	81	13.68
Salaried-Private	17	14	10.37	2	1	2.22	10	12	13.92	56	9.46
Bussiness	2	7	3.01	3	3	4.44	5	7	7.60	27	4.56
Total	299		100.0	135		100.0	158		100.0	592	100.0

The Vaiphei have a very simple economy based on simple type of cultivation supplemented by hunting and gathering. Cultivation of crops is the dominant economic activity since time immemorial, though people living in and around the developing urban areas now takes up various other occupations. People living in rural areas like the Vaiphei, still continue agriculture as the main stay of life; which forms the basis of their economy. Within the constraints imposed by the geographical factors, the agricultural pursuit of the people still indicated a rising trend which shows the traditional agricultural based economy is still the mainstay of the tribe.

It is observed that there is not much diversification of occupation in the Vaiphei society but the above table depicts a diversification to some extent in the study villages in the area of Concentration. It should be noted here that economically inactive members of the household are excluded in the calculation of the occupational structure of the study villages. Out of the total main workers of the state, about 69 per cent are engaged in the agricultural sector alone. In the study villages, the proportion of cultivators to the total working population accounts for 54.90 percent followed by the daily wage earners that constitute 17.40 per cent of the working population. Whereas the study villages in the area of Dispersion records 63.52 percent as cultivators and 24.18 percent as daily wage earners. Mention may be made here that the daily wage earners also marginally involved in agricultural activities, because their works differ from season to season. This shows the agrarian economy of the state as well as the Vaiphei people. Therefore, a good agricultural year always shows a positive growth of State Domestic Product.<sup>4</sup>

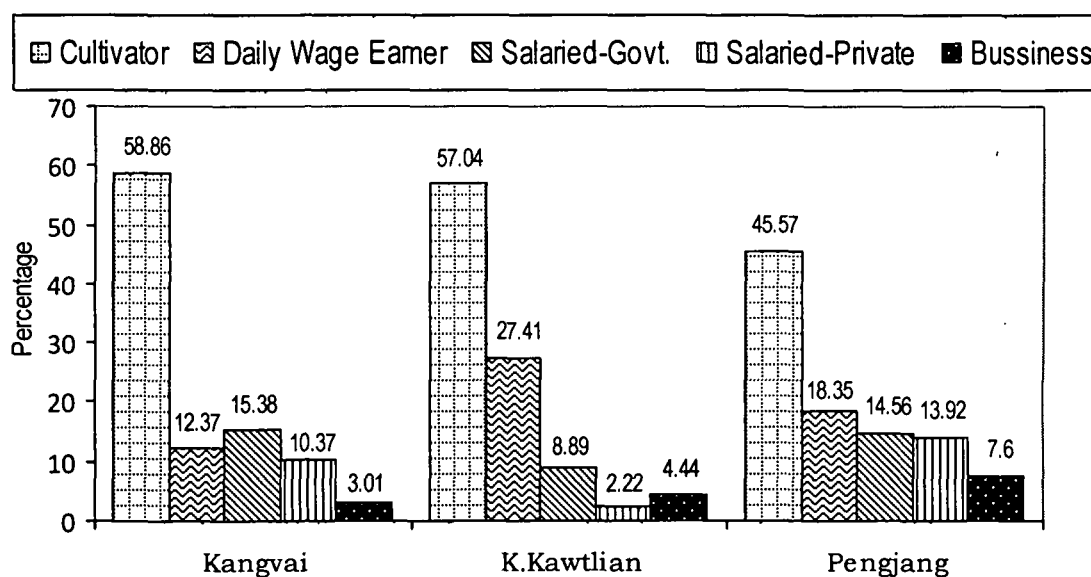
**Table 6.10: Occupational Structure of the Study Villages in Area of Dispersion**

Village »	Leisanbung			Phovaibi			Haukhongching			Total	%
	Male	Female	%	Male	Female	%	Male	Female	%		
Cultivator	40	30	64.81	19	13	50.00	27	26	73.61	155	63.52
Daily Wage Earner	17	13	27.78	11	7	28.12	5	6	15.28	59	24.18
Salaried-Govt.	2	1	2.78	4	2	9.38	1	-	1.39	10	4.10
Salaried-Private	1	-	0.93	1	-	1.56	1	-	1.39	3	1.23
Bussiness	2	2	3.70	3	4	10.94	4	2	8.33	17	6.97
Total	108		100.0	64		100.0	72		100.0	244	100.0

The proportions of persons who are in government service in the area of Concentration are about 13.68 per cent, which is quite high as compared to those in the area of Dispersion i.e. 4.10 percent of the total working population. Private Service holders accounts for 9.46 per cent and 1.23 percent of the total working population in the area of Concentration and in the area of Dispersion respectively. Private Service category, here,

mostly includes Mission workers like Pastors, evangelists, Clerks etc. and private school teachers who had monthly salary. About 4.56 per cent of the working population has been grouped as population engaged in business occupation category in the area of Concentration and 6.97 in the area of Dispersion. This category includes small variety shop owners including pan-shop owners, NGO workers and small traders. If we take the occupation structures of male and female separately, it is observed that there is a significant difference in all the categories, especially, the number of persons employed in the Government jobs. The number of male Government employed at the time of survey is 68 persons accounting for 83.95 per cent of the total Government employees while only 13 females are employed in Government undertakings which accounts for only 16.05 per cent of this occupation in the area of Concentration.

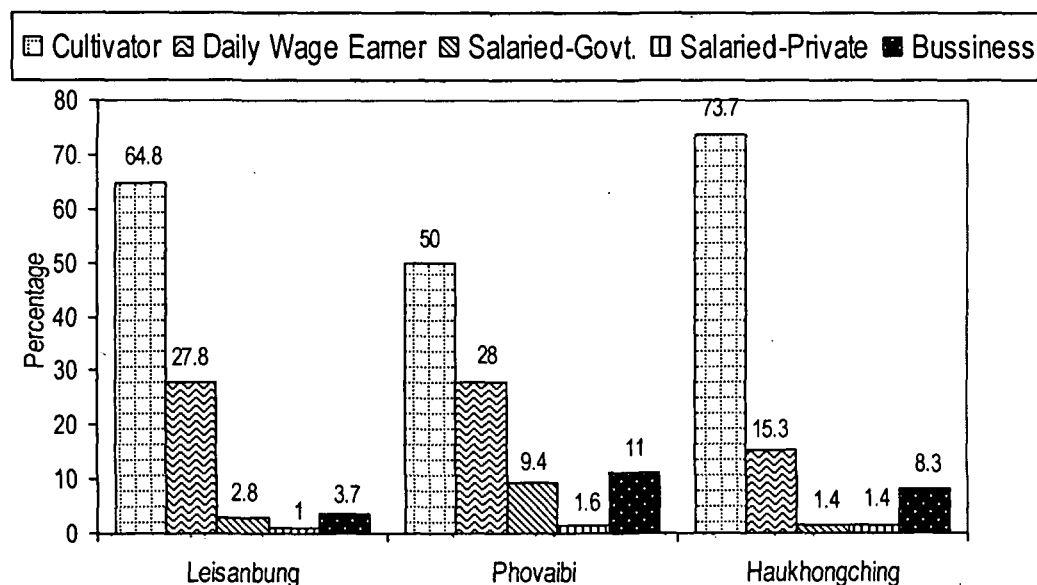
**Figure 6.7: Occupational Structure in the area of Concentration**



There has been a steady increase in the number of households and along with it the population size of their villages, whereas the productivity of arable land gradually lost its productivity. In course of the developing constraints of ecological changes, technological skill of the people needs to be changed to adapt itself to the changing situations. Poor

infrastructural development and lack of commercial contacts to provide opportunities for other occupations have forced the villagers to follow traditional technique of cultivation for decades. The situation of all the study villages in the area of Concentration are also similar to that of any tribal area of the district except that it has been progressively brought within the socio-cultural economic orbit of Churachandpur town because of the growing exogenous forces. The impacts of the agents of change in their society, mainly advent of Christianity with education and cultural contact, can be visualized in their occupational structure. Modern occupational pattern and other enterprises covering the present day economy of the Vaiphei could be visualized from a perusal of the data presented in the above tables (Table No.6.9 & 6.10). Though the above tables are limited only to six Vaiphei villages, the selection of these villages is made in such a way that it can be assumed to represent the whole Vaiphei community in Manipur.

**Figure 6.8: Occupational Structure in the area of Dispersion**



The people of the studied villages, as observed earlier, are basically an agriculture community. Cultivation is the mainstay of the general population of the Vaiphei tribe in Manipur. Except for felling of trees for jhum cultivation and ploughing the wet field, which

is done by men, agriculture is otherwise, a joint venture of both the sexes in the Vaiphei society. Right from the beginning of sowing or transplanting up to harvesting, the wife provides a helping hand besides her usual household duties. The number of people holding white-collar jobs is rather low especially in the area of Dispersion. Naturally, the percentage of household engaged in cultivation would decrease with the increase in their annual family income. Therefore, it is felt necessary to take positive steps, by way of diversifying the occupational structures, in order to uplift their economic status.

### **6.7: Dependency ratio**

Dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons in a population who are not economically active for every hundred economically active persons of that population. This ratio is useful in economic studies and is often used to measure the impact of age composition on livelihood activities of the population. The dependency ratio is generally governed by the age structure of the populace.<sup>5</sup> The size of economically active population depends upon a variety of demographic, social and economic factors. Apart from these factors, the potentiality to work is generally governed by the age of a person. The bulk of working force is supplied by the age group of 15-59, who are also termed as economically active population.<sup>6</sup> The dependency ratio is, therefore, calculated by dividing the number of children below the age of 15 years plus old people who are 60 years and above by the number of economically active persons and multiplying it by hundred. Accordingly, dependency ratio can be divided further into two categories such as; young dependency ratio and old dependency ratio.

$$\text{Dependency ratio} = \frac{\text{Young aged below 15} + \text{Old aged 60 years and above}}{\text{Persons aged 15-59 years}} \times 100$$

It is observed that the dependency ratio of the study villages in the area of Concentration is found to be 45.63 percent which is much lower than the total dependency ratio of Manipur rural population which is above 60. However, the dependency ratio for the

area of Dispersion i.e. 70.2 percent; is comparably higher than that of the area of Concentration and the state as a whole. The young dependency ratio and that of the old dependency ratio of the study villages in the area of Concentration are calculated as 33.91 percent and 11.72 percent respectively. The study villages in the area of Dispersion show a very high degree dependency ratio for the young and very low for the old, being 64.15 percent and 6.04 percent respectively. However, it should be bear in mind that in the presently studied Vaiphei population, children below 15 years contribute their share in agricultural pursuit and old aged persons above 60 years also still continued their respective activities as far as they are capable. The above age limit of the old population to continue work in the Vaiphei community solely depends on the health condition of the person concerned. Hence, the above observed dependency ratio will not be accurate enough for assessing economic status of the Vaiphei.

#### **6.8: Literacy Level**

According to UNO, literacy is defined as the ability of a person to read and write with understanding a short simple statement in his or her everyday life. It can be formal or informal. The criterion is that children of the age 6 years and below are not taken into consideration for the calculation of literacy rate. Education interacts and is interdependent with the process of social change in a society. Social structures, policies and goals exerts their influence on the education sector, as on other sectors, while the education sector influences economic and social development by inducing change in technology through the systematic application of scientific and other knowledge, in skill and in values and attitude to provide the necessary incentives for increasing productive efficiency.

The net change in growth is the result of the modern education, assisted by changes in values and attitudes. Since education is essentially a process of qualitative change through the development of the innate capacity of an individual. The desired social and economic

changes are the objectives of planned educational system. Thus, any socio-economic and cultural changes and progress are the result of the goal-oriented educational system. While it is agreed upon by the scholars that education is one of the important factors of social change, so its impact on the progress of a society is inevitable.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 6.11: Literacy Level of the Study Villages in Area of Concentration**

Village	Illiterate			Primary			High school			10+2			Graduate & Above			Total
	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	
Kangvai	7	16	3.92	109	144	43.17	123	91	36.52	38	32	11.94	17	9	4.44	586
K.Kawtlian	11	16	11.84	49	53	44.74	48	28	33.33	14	9	10.09	0	0	-	228
Pengjang	12	10	7.07	40	63	33.12	60	48	34.73	33	19	16.72	18	8	8.36	311
Total	72		6.40	458		40.71	398		35.38	145		12.89	52		4.62	1,125

The literacy level or the educational attainment of the sample villages in the area of Concentration has been presented in the above Table No.6.11. The literacy level of the Vaiphei; though restricted to only three villages in area of Concentration is presented here, which can be taken as a generalized account of the Vaiphei in the area of Concentration. The total literate person in the sample villages at the time of enumeration recorded 1,053 persons which constitute 93.6 per cent of the total population, excluding the age-group 0-5. On further classification of the literates into various categories shows a clearer picture of the level of their educational attainment. Primary level of education during enumeration is recorded as 458 persons, i.e. 40.71 per cent. Primary level of education here includes persons who studied up to class-V. The persons who study till class-X but failed to complete Class-X standard are categorized under High school. There are 398 persons in this category and this forms 35.38 per cent of their total population. The number of persons in higher education i.e. 10+2 level is 145 which constitutes 12.89 per cent. In the category of University education i.e. graduate and above, there are 52 persons that accounts for 4.62 per cent only. So, it is observed that the literacy level of the Vaiphei in the area of Concentration

is desirable even though higher education and professional level of education still needs an improvement. Thus, it is recorded that out of the total population of 1,125 persons in the three study villages in the area of Concentration, who are above 6 years of age, 72 persons are illiterate, and accounts for only 6.4 per cent.

**Table 6.12: Literacy Level of the Study Villages in Area of Dispersion**

Village	Illiterate			Primary			High school			10+2			Graduate & Above			Total
	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	
Leisanbung	8	29	21.89	32	45	45.56	31	13	26.04	5	1	3.55	5	0	2.96	169
Phovaibi	10	12	23.65	25	17	45.16	8	15	24.73	3	1	4.30	2	0	2.15	93
Haukhongching	19	20	39.80	24	15	39.80	9	6	15.30	3	0	3.06	2	0	2.04	98
	98		27.22	158		43.89	82		22.78	13		3.61	9		2.50	360

The study villages in the area of Dispersion have a much lower literacy rate than in the area of Concentration. The total literate person in the three sample villages at the time of enumeration recorded 262 persons which constitute 72.78 per cent of the total population, excluding the age-group 0-5; against 93.6 percent in the study villages in the area of Concentration. Out of the total literates, primary level of education is the highest and accounts for 43.89 percent. Matriculation and university level of education together constitutes only 6.11 percent of the total population who are above six years of age. It has been observed among the study villagers, especially those who are doing white collar jobs, that they have understood the importance of formal education. At present they are determined to give the best possible education they could effort to their children. Mention may be made here that although the literacy rate is high yet in terms of persons having professional educational level in different fields, they still presents a dismaying picture.

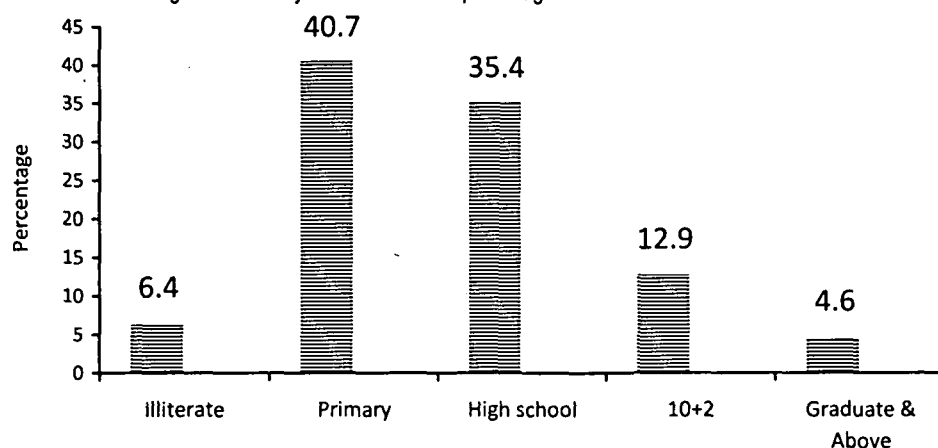
There is a slight variation in the literacy rates of male and female population. The female literacy rate in the area of Concentration is 92.31 per cent, while that of the male literacy rate is 94.82 per cent. The difference between male and female literacy in the area of

Dispersion is much more noticeable where the male literacy is 80.12 percent and that of the female literacy is 64.94 percent. The lower percentage of female literacy may be attributed to the society's set up coupled with the economic burden of the family. Vaiphei society being a patriarchal one, preference would be generally given to the males in almost all respects. However, with the advent of Christianity into their society, the negative attitude towards female has gradually changed and the education of a girl is no more considered against the norm. That is why, the female literacy rate in Vaiphei society, though lower than their male counterpart, is higher than the state's female literacy rates. The following tables shows the percentage of students in both the area of Concentration and area of Dispersion

**Table 6.13: Percentage of Students in the Area of Concentration**

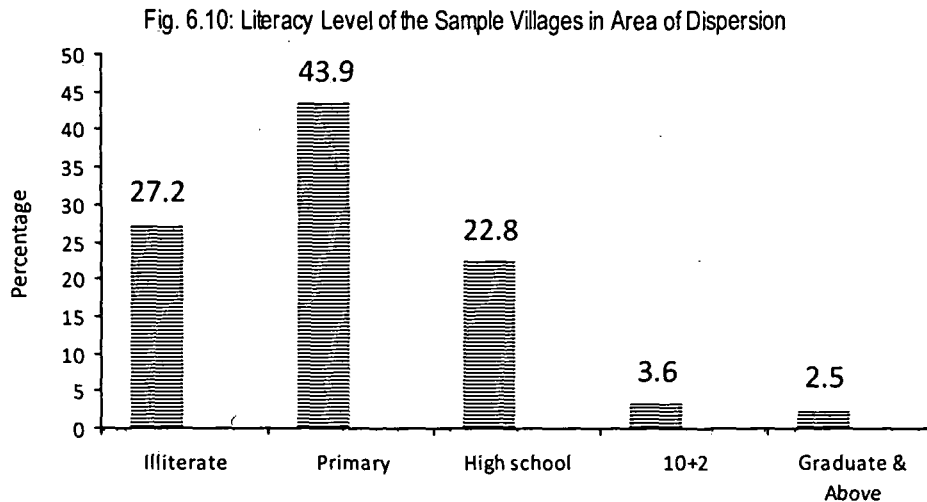
Village »	Kangvai			K.Kawtlia			Pengjang			Total
Student	M	F	% to the total Population	M	F	% to the total Population	M	F	% to the total Population	
	92	97		37	30		60	54		370
Total	189		28.90	67		24.67	114		32.39	29.20

**Fig. 6.9: Literacy Level of the Sample Villages in Area of Concentration**



**Table 6.14: Percentage of Students in the Area of Dispersion**

Village »	Leisanbung			Phovaibi			Haukhongching			Total
Student	M	F	% to the total Population	M	F	% to the total Population	M	F	% to the total Population	
	22	23		21	18		20	13		117
Total	45		21.84	39		29.77	33		28.95	25.94



There are two high schools in Kangvai, one is Government high school and the other is owned and maintained privately. Pengjiang village also has another private high school. The two villages i.e. Kangvai and Pengjiang, which have school in their own villages has more number of school going children than the other villages without school. Nevertheless, schools facilities can also be availed from the other villages which are at a distance of about two-five kilometers.

### 6.9: Marriage

Marriage is an important phase of life since marital union influences the role, position and other associated facts of life of an individual. It is both an economic necessity and a bio-social prerequisite for survival. Through it, an individual acquires a whole new set of relatives and works out new forms of interaction that changes their individual life according to the duties and norms of their society. The area that has changed, in marriage in Vaiphei society, more than any other is that of selection of partners. The traditional mode of selection of partners by their parents or the 'preferred mother's brother's daughter marriage' are diminishing and love based marriage has become the norm.

Today, under the new environment; the marital union of the present generation becomes a personal affair rather than that of a family and society. The young people no

longer prefer arranged marriage or allow their elders to choose their partners but often find themselves involved in informal relationships with members of their opposite sex. The phenomenon of increase in freedom in the selection of partner is due to the advent of Christianity and growth in the literacy rates. Selection of marriage partners, now, in Vaiphei society is generally influenced by various other factors apart from love, such as family type, religion, education, economic condition and of course physical appearance. Many young Vaiphei are settling down as husband and wife on the basis of their love for each other and mutual understanding.

**Table 6.15: Type of Marriages in Area of Concentration**

Village	Arranged	%	Eloped	%	Christian	%	Total
Kangvai	11	5.79	132	69.47	47	24.74	190
K.Kawtlian	03	4.69	43	67.19	18	28.12	64
Pengjang	0	—	73	83.91	14	16.09	87
TOTAL	14	4.10	248	72.73	79	23.17	341

**Table 6.16: Type of Marriages in Area of Dispersion**

Village	Arranged	%	Eloped	%	Christian	%	Total
Leisanbung	3	7.50	31	77.50	6	15.00	40
Phovaibi	10	35.71	15	53.57	3	10.71	28
Haukhongching	3	12.50	18	75.00	3	12.50	24
TOTAL	16	17.39	64	69.57	12	13.04	92

The above tables show the type of marriages in Vaiphei villages under studied in their area of Concentration and Dispersion. It is unfortunate to note that out of the total 341 marriage couples in the three villages of area of Concentration, 248 couples married in elopement type or system, accounting for 72.73 per cent. The number of Holy Christian marriage, which is the ideal Christian marriage, depicts a sorry figure considering their Christian background and the level of their literacy. Only 79 couples married in Holy

matrimony and they account for 23.13 per cent of the total marriages in the study villages. Arranged marriage, though diminishing, can still be observed in their society, but only accounts for 4.1 per cent. The type of marriages in the area of Dispersion shows a slightly different picture. The percentage of Christian married records a low 13.04 percent while Arranged married records as high as 17.39 percent. Elopement accounts for 69.57 percent of the total marriage in the area of Dispersion. However, mentioned should be made here that these arranged marriages are not without the consent of the couples and it should not be confused with forced type of marriage in the past. Therefore, all the above types of marriages can be taken as love marriage. The situation regarding the type of marriage system is more or less same in all the Vaiphei villages. That is why, though marriage system have changed, in Christian perspective, the type of marriages did not changed a lot deal from the traditional one. Even after repeated encouragement and request for Holy marriage by the Church organisations, the young generation still goes for elopement, which is not accepted by the Church. The low percentage of Christian marriage is found out to be because of the expensiveness or the amount of fund involve in this type of marriage.

So far as the changes in Vaiphei community is concerned, the villagers have also given much stress on education. During the time of survey in the field, most of the villagers told that cultural contact and communication are more or less social processes which will come automatically in their society through time. But the advent of Christianity, according to them, is the most important factor for the changes in their society, because along with it comes education. To apply the agents of change properly, education is still highly essential. All the Vaiphei are now Christian and majority of the respondents in the study villages preferred education as the first foremost criterion for development of their society. They agreed that after having proper education they can eradicate social evils from their society. Almost all the respondents in the study villages do not want their children to follow the

traditional occupation of their society. In fact, they want their children to have a quality education in cities and towns; which, they believed, will develop not only their society but also will lift the economic condition of their family.

It is to be noted in conclusion that the process of changing Vaiphei society, as observed in the field, cannot be strictly regarded as development in the truest sense of the term. However, the agents of change like cultural contact and advent of Christianity, gradually changed the attitude of the Vaiphei in all aspects of life including economy, health, education etc. which are regarded as the development of the tribe. The reason is that this change in attitude in their changing society will ultimately lead to the socio-economic development of their society.

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<sup>1</sup> Chandna, R.C. *A Geography of Population*, pp.178.

<sup>2</sup> Bogue, D.J. *Principles of Demography*, New Delhi.

<sup>3</sup> Census of India, 1971. pp-169

<sup>4</sup> Md. Bahar-Ud-Din Shah *Manipur: Jhum and Eco-Degradation*, pp. 42.

<sup>5</sup> Chandna, R.C. *Op cit*, pp.211-212.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* pp.216.

<sup>7</sup> Biswas, N. B. *Education in Northeast India*. Pp. 18

## CHAPTER-VII

### Summary and Conclusion

To assess the ongoing processes of social change among the Vaiphei, it would be worthwhile to recapitulate the summary and findings of the preceding chapters. The wave of change intruded into the territory of the Vaiphei since the advent of Christianity in the year 1910, and the missionaries used education as their main tool to spread the gospel. The wave of social change does not spare even the most interior areas of the world and the present study on the Vaiphei is a live example. The process of transformation from traditional society to present modern society is influenced by various factors but the affects there of are never uniform. These factors work in one way in one place and in the other ways in other places resulting in a good deal of diversities, which are far from being uniform. 'Change' as is understood in the present study is a shift from traditional mode of sustenance, religion and other socio-cultural aspects of life. In the illiterate society, the process of change begins in the ideas to make the people conscious of their rights motivate them to work for a genuine human existence. The process of social change in a given community is to be understood in the given cultural and ecological background. As change is a dynamic process by itself, it stipulates the total human activity in the various aspects of human socio-cultural life to continue but in a new metamorphosed manner.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to understand and analyse the changing social pattern of the Vaiphei society in Manipur, from their traditional institution to the present day. The aspects of change studied here is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative change includes changes in the tools and artifacts; modes of socialization, in their language (writing) and in their moral concepts. The quantitative changes are the changes in population, educational and recreational organizations and occupational structure. The nature, origin and the process of migration of the Vaiphei in the

historical past has been discussed. The present patterns of distribution of the tribe have also been analysed, and their area of Concentration and area of Dispersion in the region have been identified. As a result of which, the nature of their relationship and some of the problems of adjustment that the Vaiphei are facing has also been discussed.

The year 1891 forms a significant landmark in the history of the hill tribes of Mainipur, for in that year the English had come to the state and established their political domination. During the next sixty years till 1947, which marks the end of the British colonial rule in India, far-reaching changes had been introduced into the tribal society transforming from its traditional character to a modern civilized society. The present study examined the process and the level of social change and transformation of the Vaiphei community to the new situation from the old, which had developed slowly with the pace of colonial administration and in particular, with the introduction of Christianity in the year 1910. The study also draws a clear and precise picture of the Vaiphei traditional social structure as it existed during the pre-Christian era.

This study also examined as to what factors and forces brought about the change among the Vaiphei people in its historical and geographical perspectives. Several factors influenced the social change among the Vaiphei. The British colonial rule in the state was instrumental in introducing new ideas among the inhabitants. Soon the Christian teachings appeared in the field. These were responsible for the abolition of feuds and some of the notorious customs like head-hunting. The role of education which was first introduced by the missionaries, as a means of spreading Christianity, was not less significant in the process of social transformation of the Vaiphei society. The present study is not intended to give a theoretical analysis of social change on either of the community or its social evolution: rather, it is an attempt to examine the extent of social change visible in the Vaiphei community through the process of change.

The major summaries derived from the preceding chapters in the present study are described as follows:

Manipur is a small state in the periphery of North Eastern Region covering an area of 22,372 Square Kilometres which constitutes only 0.7 percent of the total land surface of India, with a population of 23,88,634 (2001 census). It is an isolated hill-grit state stretching between Longitudes 93.03°E and 94.78°E and Latitudes 23.80°N and 25.68°N; bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the west by North Cachar hills and Cachar districts of Assam, on the east by Myanmar and on the southwest by Mizoram. According to the surface configuration of Manipur, the state can be broadly divided into two main regions, viz., the Valley Region and the Hilly Region. The Valley Region is roughly an oval-shaped running about 60 kilometers from North to South and about 32 kilometers from East to West. The hilly region of Manipur which encircle the central valley occupies an area of about 20,571 square kilometers. It has an elevation of about 900 meters to 3000 meters above the mean sea level. They are the off shoots of the mighty Himalayas and constitute the central part of the Indo-Myanmar Mountain system.

Manipur, though small in size, is unique in respect of its ethnic composition, for the unnaturally situated, oval shaped valley that constitutes approximately 10% of the State is populated mainly by the core community-the Meiteis and whereas the hilly regions that are administratively divided into five districts have poly-ethnic populations comprising twenty-nine recognized Scheduled Tribes and some other tribal communities who are still seeking for the official recognition of their ethnic names. In spite of the distribution and concentration of the tribes in specific areas, the question of alienation and alignment is the major problem in Manipur.

District Churachandpur, the area of Concentration of the study tribe is located in the Southern part of Manipur between the Manipur river in the East and the Barak river in the

West; covering an area of 4,570 Square Kilometres. It lies within the latitudes of 24°N to 24°40'N and the longitudes 93°E to 94°E. The whole of Churachandpur district is hilly and is covered with rough and uneven terrain that has a narrow scope for rapid economic development. Due to the economic disadvantage, the region is thinly inhabited by several tribal groups whose main occupation is *Jhum* agriculture, which depends solely on the vagaries of the Monsoon.

*The physiographic location of Churachandpur district is of worth consideration when it comes to climate. It is in the South-West corner of the state, which is the foremost zone of Manipur in the paths of South-West Monsoon winds. During the summer months, the districts are under the influence of south-west monsoon and during winter months, they are under the influence of north-east monsoon. It receives a relatively abundant rainfall, well distributed over the region; although it is slightly lesser towards the East. The rainfall data showed that the rainy season is spread over 125 days in a year on an average record. Being on the leeward side of the monsoon, the eastern side recorded lesser amount of rainfall than the western part of the district.*

Being a hilly region, the temperature in Churachandpur district varies from place to place and this variation is mostly according to altitude. As a general rule, the temperature decreases at a rate of 1.6°F at every ascend of 300 feet altitude. It is under the influence of the out-blowing North-East monsoon winds for about half of the year and the in-blowing South-west monsoon wind for the rest that exhibits a strong seasonal rhythm in its climatic pattern. Churachandpur district is drained by many rivers and streams, of which the most important ones are the Barak, the Manipur river, the Khuga, the Leimatak and the Tuivai. The river system that originate and flows through the district are grouped into eastward flowing to the Chindwin river in Myanmar and westward flowing to the Barak river. The district, except the low lying areas in and around the district headquarters, is covered with

forest of different varieties; mostly of tropical moist evergreen forest types. The hilly terrain nature, the rainfall and other climatic conditions prevailing in the district are conducive to a large and rich range of dense forest and bountiful natural vegetation.

Churachandpur district assumes an isolated entity not only in its geographical settings but also in peopling by virtue of the land. The aerial difference of the district in case of population is such that there are only very few areas of attraction and about 85 percent of the region fall under an area of isolation. These small pockets are thickly populated while large areas are not at all inhabited. It will also, perhaps, be worthwhile to state that there are only three towns in the whole district and even among these three, two of them can barely be called as town. The main ethnic groups such as the Zou, the Paite, the Thadou, the Vaiphei, the Hmar, etc. were in the surrounding hills. The high growth rate of population and relatively slow growth in the economy is proving detrimental to the overall development of the district. Of these the share of rural population is as high as 81.12 percent of the total population in 1991. Considering the ratio between area and population of the district, it can be called as a low population density area with only 50, which is much lower than the state's i.e. 107 persons per square kilometres.

The physical setting of the region had a large impact upon the migration and settlement pattern of the Vaiphei in the state. One can visualise that the physical environment of the region allowed only particular type of economic development as the technology used by the Vaiphei was quite primitive in nature. The Vaiphei perhaps found that this area were suitable for their way of life and ideal for settlement. They must have been practising primitive *jhum* cultivation, prior to their entry into the state. And when they entered the region, they opted for hilly and forested tracts of the region that offered them scope to practice *jhumming* which was the only way they knew to produce food grains. There is another reason for the Vaiphei to settle in the hilly and forested regions, that is, due

to the fact that these areas of the region were less settled as compared to the valley regions. Had they possessed the technology of settled agriculture, they might have settled in the valley regions or even advanced up to Brahmaputra valley. Being settled in the negative region, it was not possible for them to modify the environment according to their needs, but to adjust to the natural physical environment.

Two different views on the meaning and origin of the word 'Vaiphei' have been discussed. The first view is based on the 'Khaw-Vaiphei Theory'. This is widely accepted by the Vaiphei in Manipur and their cognate tribe-*Suantak* in Myanmar. It is believed that the name 'Vaiphei' is derived from the name of the village 'Khaw-Vaiphei'; '*Khaw*' means village; '*Vai*' means breadth and '*Phei*' means plain: which means the village was at length and breadth and vast. The people, who lived in that village for a pretty long enough time, and moved out last of all, came to be identified as the Vaiphei people.

Another view is the 'Liankhama Sailo Village Incident Theory'. Liankhama Sailo is said to be the chief of that village during 1850 to 1875. The Suantak people who lived together with other groups in the village had failed to take revenge on a hatred *Pawi* (a particular group of people) killer, due to the implications of their custom called *chemsen bawi*; where a killer can escaped punishment by becoming slave of the chief for his whole life. The Suantak people have no more desired to live in that village side by side with their enemy. So, they migrated from that village en masse; which is expressed in Duhlian dialect (Mizo) as '*an vaiin an phei tawh*' meaning they all left in body or exodus. People started calling them '*Vaipheih*' and thence, wherever these people lived, they came to be known as Vaiphei.

Every Vaiphei understands and accepts that '*Khul*' is his ancient home from where their ancestor originated. Though they have no physical proof of their claim, the Khul tradition is substantiated by their folksongs or songs of brave called *Hanla*. Even though

there exists different views on the name as well as its exact location still controversial, it is believed and accepted that it is somewhere in southern China; and Khul is a place revered among them and were proud to be originated from it.

The sequential order of their migration from Khul is 'Khaw-Sinlung', Kale valley, Chindwin valley, Chin Hills and Mizoram-Manipur. This process of migration is due to the inter-tribal feuds, in search of a better land for cultivation, the need for shelter and peaceful settlement. Further, they had to face famine (*mautam*) at a regular interval of 50 years and consequently they had to change their place of habitation. Apart from all these, nomadism was prevalent among the Vaiphei and this migratory spirit scattered them. All these compelled the Vaiphei people to scatter resulting in dispersion over different areas.

The Vaiphei were one of those tribes who were the first to enter Mizoram. In course of their migration, they settled in a number of villages; some of which still bears the original names, which the Vaiphei people have given. Some of those who stayed back were ultimately absorbed or assimilated to the Mizo society, losing their dialect and distinctiveness. Want of jhumming land and other territorial possessions cause the tribal to be always at war against each other leading the weaker tribes to migrate to neighbouring areas to Manipur, Cachar and other places.

In Manipur, the Vaiphei are found scattering in more than 180 odd rural villages, excluding those who settled in towns and the state capital, Imphal. The distributional pattern of the Vaiphei population in the districts of Manipur is also very uneven. They are found in all the districts of the state. However, their main concentration is in Churachandpur district, where 69.64 percent of them live. A large chunk of Vaiphei people inhabits Manipur North district, i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district that accounts for about 22.14 percent of their total population of the state.

In the present study, Manipur South district i.e. Churachandpur district has been identified as the area of the Vaiphei concentration, as it had a substantially high proportion of the total Vaiphei population in the state. Manipur North i.e. Sadar Hills area of Senapati district, Tamenglong district, Ukhrul district and Chandel district are identified as the Dispersal areas of the Vaiphei distribution as these together constitute about 28.13 percent of the Vaiphei population in Manipur.

It is found that the pattern of migration and settlement of the Vaiphei was influenced by the physical environment of the region. This migration and settlement pattern, in turn, had significant impact on the pattern of the present distribution of the Vaiphei in the state. The present pattern of distribution of the Vaiphei is responsible for the problems of adjustments they are facing in the areas of their occupation. It is observed that the problems of adjustments have been different from one region to another. The main problem of adjustment they are facing is the social problem that is due to the social compositions of the areas of their habitat.

The Vaiphei society has been patriarchal and a male dominated one since time immemorial. Each clan has a chief or head called '*Upa*', who is of the main head branch of the original stock and to whom great respect is shown by all his clans living in different villages. Their social organization is based in a system of community obligation which exists under the term '*tawmngaina*' meaning selfless service to others. Every citizen is expected or rather bound to contribute his or her good will towards the society.

In Vaiphei society, family is the nucleus and it is through families that societies present themselves biologically and culturally. The family has patrilineal continuity, each generation being linked to the next in a genealogical succession through males. The position of father in the family carries the highest authority and his decisions are regarded as final in all matter. The practice of child-naming has been given great importance by the indigenous

Vaiphei society. An interesting thing about child-naming was that a name is given to a child with great significance attached to the name apart from the last syllable of their Grand parents' name.

The status of women, traditionally, was lower than their men counterparts in Vaiphei society, though they enjoyed a good deal of respect. Apart from their overall responsibility in the household chores, they had a busy life, helping their men folks in almost all walks of life. They are under the complete control of their husbands or fathers. There are, generally, four types of marriages in Vaiphei society. It is interesting to note that 'matrilateral cross-cousin' (mother's-brother's-daughter) marriage system is prevalent among the Vaiphei. This system is not only encouraged but almost obligatory in the past. Monogamy is the most common and the general form of marriage, although there are some exception cases among the well-to-do, who practiced polygamy. Divorce or separation is a rare phenomenon in Vaiphei society. Marriage is considered a sacred bond of union sanctioned by God.

Every Vaiphei village is entirely an independent entity with a well demarcated village land, which is administered by a chief also called '*Hausa*' or '*Khawpa*'. The words of the chief carried weight and were obeyed respectfully and promptly. The chief appoints council of elders and advisers called '*Inpi siamang*' from economically well-to-do families who are also experts in traditional customs and rules, and socially in the upper ladder. Besides the *Inpi-Siamang* (elders and Councillors) and the *Pachawng* (tax-collector), the *Hausa* appoints the following officials: *Thiampu* (Priest), *Tangsam* (Village Crier), *Thiksekpu* (Blacksmith), and the *Val-Upa* (Youth Commanders).

One of the most important and significant social life in Vaiphei society was the practice of bachelor's dormitory called '*Sawm*'. Traditionally, social control was a village-wide affair and its chief instrument was the institution of *Sawm*, which occupies a central position in the village organisation and administration. All unmarried young men above

fifteen years of age sleep together at night until they got married. Those young men could respond at any moment's notice to any emergency, such as fire, surprise attack, etc.

War and head hunting was not only common but also the order of the olden times in Vaiphei society. The method of making war was very simple: to raid the enemy's village and carry off as many captives and as much loot as possible. They placed great values on heads because of two reasons. The first reason is each head meant an additional slave for the soul at '*Mithi-khua*', meaning village of the dead. The second reason is simple-able to take the enemy's head showed their physical power, if not the power of their clan or village.

Agriculture i.e. *jhumming* played the most important role in the economy of the Vaiphei. It was, and continues to be, the mainstay of their economy subordinated by handicraft, weaving, pottery, domestication of animals and trade. The food habit of the Vaiphei was simple, but formed an integral part of their social living. Cooked rice is the staple food of the Vaiphei people. They eat it with curry usually with chilies mixed with a local soda known as *Changal* (salty ash water, drained through wood ash). Rice beer called '*Zu*' was the most specialized and the chief beverage of the Vaiphei. It was very common and used in every occasion. No important functions or ceremonies can be done without *zu*.

There were major confluent factors that affected the changes in the socio-economic conditions of the Vaiphei. The agents of change can be broadly grouped into Cultural contact and Christian Missions. With the advent of the British colonial rule in Manipur, the tribal life of Manipur underwent a process of change. The colonial administration marks the beginning of a new historical period which is the dawn of modernized way of life for the tribals. They began to move away from their traditional way; from ignorance, superstitions and isolation to a brighter and better way of life. In fact, the Britishers restructured the traditional economy into colonial lines, introduced new policies and made efforts to exploit the native natural resources to meet their own imperial interest.

Prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries in the tribal areas of Manipur, the people live in their pristine traditional life, unaffected by the wind of change. Therefore, the history of the Christian movement can only be understood as an integral part of a larger process of political, social, economic, cultural and religious change among the tribal people. The response to Christian missionaries contributed to the beginning of socio-economic change in the tribal areas of Manipur. The role of Christian Missions in social change cannot be denied as they were the one introducing modern education apart from the new faith. More than any other elements like the British administration and political force, education and Christianity played a more effective role in transforming the tribal society. Conversion and activities of missionaries had by far one of the most significant impacts on the Hill tribes. While the missionaries realised the importance of propagating Christianity among the tribals, its introduction was seen as a necessity for upliftment.

Education, which is the art of reading and writing, was introduced in the tribal areas of Manipur by the Christian missionaries. The pioneering effort to develop the tribals had started with the introduction of education and health services as part of their missionary activities in the interior part of the hill areas of the state. In Churachandpur district, the first primary school was started in 1912 in Senvon. Due to numerous problems like ignorance, poverty, communications, traditional beliefs and rituals etc. education could not spread fast and it took many decades to produce a 1 percent literacy population among the tribals in general and the Vaiphei in particular. There has been a great deal of accomplishment in the field of education in Manipur since 1950. The total number of literates was 65,895 persons in 1951, including that of the Valley. The literacy rate of the state has gone up from 11.4 percent in 1951 to 68.87 percent in 2001.

The status and position of women have considerably increased with the advent of Christianity. The introduction of formal education laid the foundation of change among the

Vaiphei, especially to the so called 'weaker-sex'. Today, the change that can be observed in the socio-economic, religious and political life of the Vaiphei people may be largely attributed to the spread of modern education through Christian missionaries. In spite of their inherent weaker position, in recent years, the hidden hands of Vaiphei women can be seen in any field and have great influence over men folk.

In the traditional Vaiphei society, the choice of marriage was governed by the cultural norms intrinsically connected with and attached to the agriculture work and bravery. A very important change in marriage system of the Vaiphei in the post-Christianity is abolition of *Kawnglaw*-marriage which is a type of marriage in which a boy served a girl's family for her hand in marriage. With the advent of Christianity and education, the usual practice of marriage arrangements by parents is gradually disappearing and the girls' and boys' consents are becoming deciding factors. Cross-cousin marriage (*Neinu*); which was very obligatory, also gradually diminished. Marriages, forced by their parents in order to have a family relation or marriage against the wish of the girl's parents are dying away. In place of all these, love marriage within the tribe or even outside becomes common, but not as a rule.

The dormitory called *Sawm* has been the most important institution which served as socializing agent in the traditional Vaiphei community life. The prohibition of head-hunting, with the ushering-in of Christianity in the villages, has led to the erosion of this important social and cultural institution of the Vaiphei. Church activities in the form of youth fellowship meetings have come up and the activities of the youths also changed. One of the most important factors that paved the way for the extinction of *Sawm* was the introduction of formal education along with youth activities in the church. With the abolition of *Sawm* where men folk assemble regularly, they could now give more attention to more productive activities such as education and domestic affairs.

In the traditional Vaiphei society, *Zu* was considered as one of the unavoidable items which was consumed, if not daily, in all the important feast, festivals and ceremonies. Moreover, serving *Zu* to the village chief and his council of elders was a must while dealing with all cases between the aggrieved villagers. With the coming of Christianity, the missionaries took step for social reformation in the Vaiphei society by prohibiting consumption of *Zu* as it was very closely linked with the animistic sacrifices and uncongenial to Christian principle. The steps taken by the missionaries and the churches, thus, resulted in the gradual reduction of *Zu* consumption and total cessation of *Zu* as a common drink on all occasions. With the gradual decline in the consumption of *Zu* as a common drink which engrossed the agricultural surplus products in *Zu* brewing, a considerable amount of rice has now turned into regular food for the family, thus improving the economic condition of the society.

With the advent of the new religion, festival and dances gradually lost its significance and popularity among the new converts. Today, Christmas festival, although of recent origin in Vaiphei society, has gained dominant position over the traditional festivals in celebration and observance. The gradual declined and disappearance of festivals and animal sacrifices promoted to the economic growth of the Vaiphei. The reason was that these festivals lasted for several days with *Zu* and meats abundantly, which consumed a large portion of all the earnings of the people and sucked their material possessions.

Before the advent of Christianity, there prevailed total illiteracy in the Vaiphei society. Not only that, they had no written language of their own. It was the first two Christian of Churachandpur District, Mr. Thangkai and Mr. Lungpau, with the help of the pioneer missionary W.R. Roberts, who initiated to alleviate Vaiphei language into written form. Thus, the traditional oral practices of Vaiphei language got its written form in the hands of missionaries which ultimately paved the way for further progress in the Vaiphei society.

Education was the most important by-product of Christianity. The missionaries devised systems to reduce their language to writing by using roman script in 1911 and subsequently translated a hymn and the Gospel of John. Primary schools were started in the villages by the Christian missions and Sunday school was organized to widen and dispense knowledge of the scriptures and literacy among the people. Formal education of the Vaiphei in reality and practice as we see today has its beginning since the advent of Christianity with the arrival of Watkin R. Roberts, a Welsh missionary, in 1910.

Vaiphei society in general was practically unacquainted with hygienic ways of living before the introduction of education in 1910. With the introduction of formal education, the educated young man and women became flexible to retain the enduring elements of materials and non-material culture and to eliminate that which becomes old. As such, attention was paid to the prevailing unhygienic conditions of the Vaiphei way of living. Today, houses are provided with attached sanitary latrines and bathrooms. The house pattern underwent changes as compared to their traditional patterns with no ventilation, which was stuffy with dark room without separate kitchen, dining room and hardly for bedroom. The presence of fowls in the veranda and the pigs and cows under the floor gives the house an unwholesome smell. The residential houses are now constructed in different patterns- 'L'-shape, 'U'-shape, 'T'-shape and so on.

In the pre-Christian period, to heal the sick, the common practice was by offering bloody sacrifices to the evil spirits by the village *Thiampu* (priest). The health conditions of the people were poor. However, after converting to Christianity, the missionaries and the evangelists taught the people about cleanliness in their day-to-day life. Care of sickness, simple hygiene and first-aid are included in their education curriculum. They learnt better ways of life. Today, a mother's chewing food for their babies and unhygienic mouth-to-mouth feeding is replaced by special cooking for babies and spoon-feeding.

Vaiphei economy during the absolute regime of the politics of village chieftainships was not remarkable. It was simply to meet the bare necessities of the people's daily needs. Jhumming continues to be the main occupation of the Vaiphei, but it gradually lost its traditional importance as a means of basic subsistence in the society. In spite of the emotional and sentimental attachment to the village land, people look for non-agricultural jobs and commercial openings offered by the various programs of developmental planning under the state government, thus leading to rural-urban migration. Desire for change and material progress results in the breakdown of traditional boundaries with new socio-economic system. With the spread of educational opportunities, more and more young people are entering into the field of job market, leaving their ancestral villages.

The advent of Christianity and education was an epoch making event in the socio-cultural lives of the Vaiphei of Manipur, for it brought about a sea-change in their life style and world view. Those who got the light of education under the guidance of the Christian missionaries spread political consciousness among the general mass. Christianity brought them deliverance from ignorance of mistaken beliefs and practices. It transforms their cosmology and their scale of values.

Land and land-based activities acted as the economic base of the traditional society, till the time land resources could meet the subsistence of the increasing number of households with traditional technology. Along with emerging crisis of shifting cultivation, there has also been a gradual rise of a unifying political order from the days of British power to the present day. Expanding administration, communication, western education, religion and other exogenous factors started producing their impact on the people. Both the endogenous and exogenous factors providing for push and pull forces of occupational changes has helped the people in organizing an economic order appropriate to their technical capacity, and in affecting such a change, their innovative and motivational faculties have

been able not only to diversify the uses of land but also to go beyond for a shift towards non agricultural occupation hitherto unknown to the traditional society. There has, thus, been a change in the number of occupations a household can now pursue for its livelihood. Each of the households has, thus, developed different economic interests for its survival and economic stability by diversifying the risks and uncertainties that are inherent in a period of transition.

### **Observations and Conclusion**

An important development that followed the British rule was the gradual weakening of the position and the powers of the traditional leaders under the chiefs. The chiefs and their counselors were effectively used against their own people for holding and administering the hill territory as they collaborated with the colonial authorities. The power and position of the chiefs have diminished with the creation of Church leadership at various levels. Eventually, the traditional leaders were slowly and gradually pushed out of their traditional status until their traditional powers were crushed and chief-ship was legally abolished with the introduction of Manipur Village Authority Act of 1956. Despite the abolition of the chief-ship, the chiefs in the Vaiphei areas continued to exercise their powers and functions in the autonomous village administration as usual. Although legally dethroned, the institution of chief-ship which took deep roots in the society and still accepted as legitimate in the eyes of a large section of the people, and in fact, they continued to function as ex-officio Chairman in the Village Council, interpreting and administering traditional laws and customs. Hence, complete abolition of chief-ship is not possible because of its value as a symbol of established authority and its ritual function as judge in such matters like local dispute over land, marriage, divorce, dispute, etc. Side by side with apparent change in the administrative structure, we find an interesting systematic interaction of traditional chief and modern administration in the Vaiphei village till today.

The early Christian missionaries with their zeal to spread the gospel, labeled the tribal customs as pagan and sinful. The same accusation was bestowed upon cultural dances, folksongs and folklores. Moreover, consciously or unconsciously, the missionaries suggested that their way of life was better and superior. Hence, the socio-cultural background of the native population was not taken into consideration. They were forced to feel inferior and substandard. The community centred life-the joys of sharing, have been relegated to the bottom due to the phenomenal change in which individualism have become the top priority. Many Christians have become the victims to the allurements of the world. They are finding it difficult to maintain the Christian standard of life with all its implications and expectations.

Prior to the advent of Christianity and modern way of life, people obeyed what the village chief or council decided in matters of discipline and justice. Today, no one give much heeds to any authority and everything is interpreted on a convenient hypothesis. Consequently, parental controls over the children have diminished over the years. The parents who are often illiterate seem to give undue respect to their growing youths. The children who go to schools and colleges often take over their uneducated parents. And so, the children grow up to be arrogant, unyielding and often become social misfits.

The gradual decline in discipline and the absence of morality amongst the youths in tribal society foreshadows dim future. There was a conspicuous presence of high morality among the early generations in spite of their uncivilized way of life. They did not go through a school or college, but as such they maintain a good standard of morality in the bachelor's dormitory- '*Sawm*', where the tribal philosophy *tawmngaina*-selfless service to community, was inculcated. Excessive emulation of the western way of life without dignity of labour and morality leads the youths of today towards a facade of hollow future. Abolition of the system of *Sawm* and embracing Christianity as a religion without caring a true Christian life

can safely be regarded as the reasons for the declined in morality and discipline among the Vaiphei youths.

The advent of Christianity did not change the life of Vaiphei as a whole overnight. Instead, Christianity had been existing side by side with the animistic belief for about four decades. Eventually, the morbid fears or phobia that grew out of their animistic belief causing them to perform many ritualistic offerings, especially, demon worship associated with *zu* drinking have gradually disappeared. The practices of offering food and other of propitiate the spirit of the death and the costly feasts for securing a right place in their life-after-death were totally given up. Christianity has brought faith and hope and has shown the way to overcome fears of demons and superstitions. This led to the gradual disappearance of the traditional village priests.

On the whole, the impact of Christianity on the religious, social and cultural life of the Vaiphei has been remarkable. The community have come out of their ignorance and uncivilized life, aiming to move forward with the modern values. However, it may be noted here that there is one problem, which has divided the Vaiphei for a long long time. This is the division of the Vaiphei people into different Church denominations. This dividend indirectly affects the development of the Vaiphei in general, as they are a divided lot. If the Vaiphei were united as one consolidated front in Church, they would have been more development in all spheres. Recently, there is a movement by some thinking leaders to unite all the Vaiphei into one mainline Church organization. Though this movement is not cent percent successful, majority of the tribe is now under one umbrella. It may be suggested that this movement should be reorganized and encouraged once more to include members of other organizations. Such a movement to unify all the Vaiphei is crucially significant to have a common consensus and to cope up with the ever changing environment.

In the end, it is desirable to mention that this study has its obvious shortcomings and its own limitations mainly due to paucity of materials and vastness of the area under investigation or study. The changes as a result of cultural contact with the British and the Christian missionaries along with education that have been indicated in this study may not be all the major reasons responsible for the changing Vaiphei society. Further studies could be taken up in this respect to ascertain the factors and magnitude of this changing society. It may also be suggested that to clearly understand the present pattern of distribution as well as the area of Concentration and Dispersion of the tribe, such data as pertaining to the tribe's distribution at smaller levels like Blocks or even villages would have given a clearer picture. It is hoped that this study will provide basic materials for a future in-depth study towards Vaiphei society in Manipur. Nevertheless, there is enough scope for improvement upon the present work and this requires further research and detail field study covering every nook and corner of the Vaiphei settlements in the state.

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#### INTERVIEW

- With Rev. Haukham, former Chairman of Vaiphei Christian Association, March 2008
- With Pu, L.Thanglet, Former Secretary, Vaiphei National Organisation and retired Assistant Inspector of School, Govt. of Manipur. March 2008.
- With (L) Rev.Khupkhawthang, former Chairman of Vaiphei Christian Association and eminent Church Leader, March 2008.

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### **Educational Qualification:**

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 Passed M.A./MSc. (Geography) in 62.00% (NEHU, 2000. 5<sup>th</sup> Position)  
 Passed B.A. (Geography Hons.) in 52.80% (NEHU, 1998)  
 Passed HSSLC Examination in 54.80% (COHSEM, 1993)  
 Passed HSLC Examination in 50.00% (BSEM, 1991)

### **Other Qualification:**

- Qualified U.G.C. Sponsored National Eligibility Test (NET) in June, 2002.
- Field Co-ordinator in the Project National Family Health Survey-3, Mizoram, 2006.

### **Seminar/ Workshops Attended:**

- @ International Conference on 'Environment, Locational Decisions and Regional Planning'  
5-9 March, 2002
- @ Workshop on 'Research Methodology and GIS Application in Scientific Research' 28-30  
November, 2002.
- @ XXIV Institute of Indian Geographers' Meet and International Conference on 'Mountain,  
Environment and Natural Hazards Management' 27-29 March, 2003.
- @ Workshop on 'Recent Techniques in Geography-with special reference to use of Remote  
Sensing, GIS and GPS and NDC NRSA User Meet' 17-19 March, 2004.

### **Extra-curricular activity:**

Represented N.E.H.U. Volleyball Team in 'East Zone Inter-University Volleyball  
Tournament' held at Ranchi, 1995.

## Appendix

## QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN FIELD SURVEY

**Family Background:**

1. Name of the Respondent \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of Village or Locality \_\_\_\_\_ Dist. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_
4. Total members of household: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
5. Property status: (a) Owned (b) Rented (c) Quarters
6. House type: (a) Semi permanent (b) Assam type (c) RCC.
7. Total household income (from all sources) per year: Rs \_\_\_\_\_
8. Agricultural land owned by the household (in hectares or in acres) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Educational background of the family:
  - a) Illiterate: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Primary School: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) High School : \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Matriculate: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Graduate & Above: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
10. Occupation of the family:
  - a) Cultivators: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Landless Labourer: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Daily Wage Earners: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Salaried Govt: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Salaried Private: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) Business: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) Unemployed: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
  - i) Others: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

**Traditional:**

11. How long have you been living continuously here in this village? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Before you moved here, where did you live? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What are the sources that people depend for food and other basic needs to survive in Olden days? Where do they get them? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you have Division of labour in your society? Yes/No

15. What role do men and women play in agriculture?
- a) Decision of crops to grow: Men/women/both? (b) Ploughing: Men/women/ both?  
 c) Preparing the field: Men / women/ both? (d) Sowing: Men / women/ both?  
 e) Transplanting: Men /women/ both? (f) Weeding: Men /women/ both?  
 g) Harvesting: Men / women/ both? (h) Threshing: Men/women/ both?  
 i) Carrying to the go down: Men/women/both?

16. What type of work does men and women do in the house? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What changes have occurred in these tasks from the time of your parents/  
 grandparents? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Was your parental occupation different from yours? Yes/No

19. Why have you changed from your parental occupation?

- a) Education (b) Better income (c) Prestige (e) Any others.

20. Do you meet your family requirements by yourself or depend on others? \_\_\_\_\_

21. What was the medium of exchange in your society in the past? \_\_\_\_\_

**Property:**

22. Do you have land ownership system in your society? Yes/No

(a) If yes what are the types? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) How do they own? (i) Acquired (ii) inherited (iii) Bought (iv) Others

23. What are the types of agricultural land in your society? \_\_\_\_\_

24. What are the ways and rules of inheritance of properties in your society?

**Marriage:**

25. What are the types of marriage in your society? \_\_\_\_\_

26. What type/ system of marriage is most preferred and why? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Is there bride price or dowry system in your society? Yes / No. If yes, what is the range? \_\_\_\_\_

**Factors of change:**

28. What is the most important factor of change in your society? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Do you follow the same traditional method of agriculture? Yes/No. If No,

(a) What are the things that have added? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) What is the result towards yield of your production? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you produce agricultural goods and others only for household consumption? If No, then why? Where do you send them?

31. Did your society get the benefits from the Government and NGOs? Yes/No. If yes, in what types and in what way? \_\_\_\_\_

32. Do you agree that education brings changes in your society especially in field of Economy? Yes/No

(a) If yes how and in what way does it bring changes? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) If No, then give your comments. \_\_\_\_\_

(c) What is the reason sending your children to schools and colleges? \_\_\_\_\_

(d) Do you want children to follow traditional occupation of your society? Yes/No  
If no, where do you want them to be and why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Nature of change:**

33. What is the source of your food? Food Gathering or Agriculture?

If it is agriculture, what type of agriculture does your society practice? Settled or Temporary? \_\_\_\_\_

34. Do you work only on your field/land? Yes/No. If No. Do you get anything in cash or in kind, if you give your labour to others? Yes/No.

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

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