

# ETHNICITY IN MANIPUR

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**Experience, Issues  
and Perspectives**

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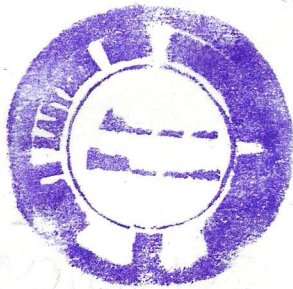
**Dr. LUCY ZEHOL**

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# ETHNICITY IN MANIPUR

Experiences, Issues and Perspectives



Dr. Lucy Zehol



*Regency Publications*

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# ETHNICITY IN MAHARAJA

Experiences, Issues and Perspectives



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*Dedicated to  
my  
Father*



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FOREWORD

I am happy to know that a book on *Ethnicity in Manipur: Experiences, Issues and Perspectives* by Dr. (Mrs.) Lucy Zehol is now being published.

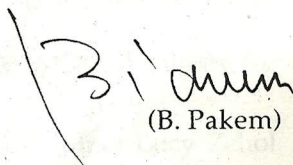
Ethnic situation in Manipur is undoubtedly the worst of its kind in the present decade. There is still no indication of the ethnic violence there coming to an end. In fact, the picture is becoming more and more complex, evading the comprehension of social and political analysts and control of the State.

The present book by Dr. (Mrs.) Lucy Zehol, lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, NEHU, is based on her Ph.D. work. The aim of this book, as it appears to me, is not to provide an answer to the ethnic problem but to involve the readers in certain experiences so that they too can participate in the process of understanding the ethnic situation there.

Dr. Zehol is a promising Naga scholar. That she has transcended her non-ethnic identity is evident from the way she has discussed the ethnic scenario in Manipur.

—Being based on a doctoral work, this book contains many tedious details but such details are often missing in many books dealing with such sensitive issues and areas. This book should perhaps be read by all those who are concerned with the ethnic violence in Manipur in particular and North-East India in general.

July 8, 1997

  
(B. Pakem)

## PREFACE

Manipur, located in the southern corner of the North-Eastern region has been in the news due to the prevailing ethnic situation. From the very beginning of the study, it appeared that the "identity" situation of the communities inhabiting Manipur is a complex question, which vexes the people there as much as it does to the social analysts.

This book is an outcome of my interest in Anthropological theory and Methodology. In a way, this book may be viewed with a heavy orientation towards methodology rather than ethnography. This however does not imply that ethnography has been completely lost sight of. In fact, I have profusely drawn from the ethnography of Manipur. The study for the most part is based on secondary data. However, due care is taken to include some primary data as well.

I am grateful to Prof. A.P. Sinha for his guidance and suggestions which went a long way in shaping this book.

I owe a special debt to Mom, Anne, Mathew, friends and everyone who had encouraged and constantly helped me in compiling this work.

I would fail in my duty if I were not to express my deep sense of gratitude to my husband Kevin (Kevekha) who extended his ready helping hand whenever I turned to him.

Above all, I remember with deep love and gratitude, my father, Joseph Thomas, who passed away while I was still engaged in research for this book. I imagine with pain in my heart the happiness it would have given him to see the publication of this book.

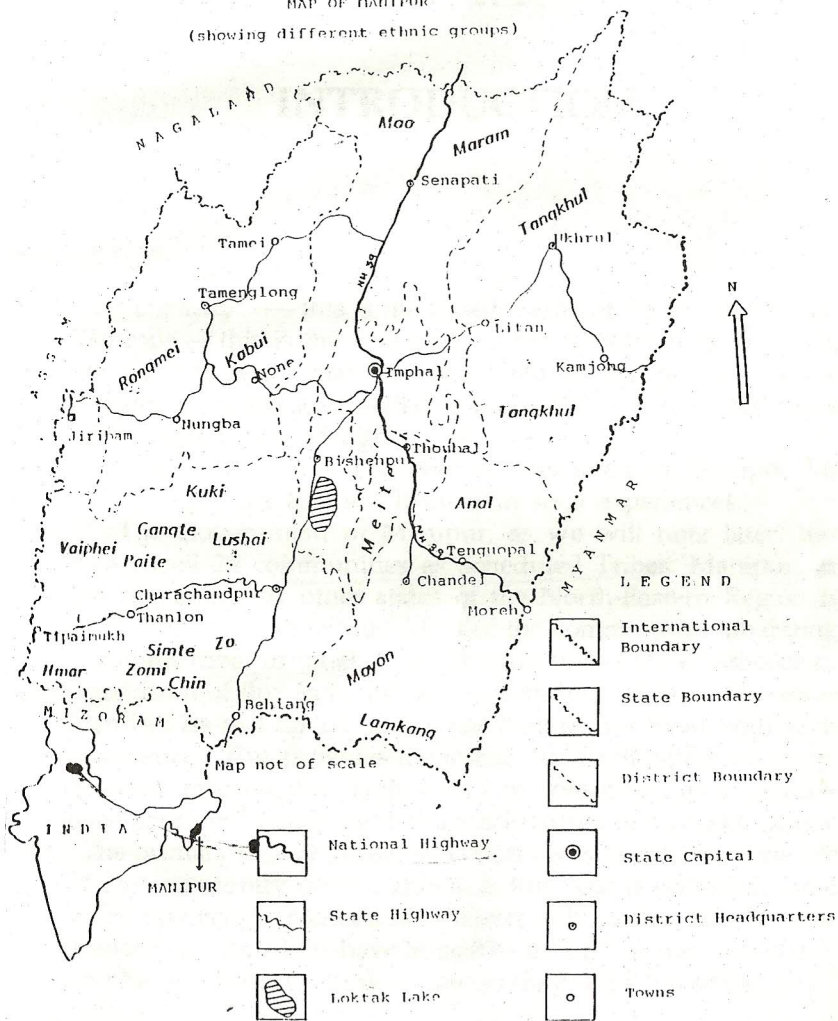
Finally, I should express my gratitude to God Almighty for His grace.

Dr. (Mrs.) Lucy Zehol

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MAP OF HARIPUR  
(showing different ethnic groups)



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## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION

### The Theme

*"Ethnicity"* — this is the broad theme of the present study. Manipur — this is the venue for empirical references. In spirit, the present study may be considered as the product of the refinement of 'home-knowledge' reorganized through reference of 'conceptual knowledge'.

*Home-knowledge* — The Author, has lived in Manipur for many long years and has lived with such experiences.

The Government of Manipur, as we will note later, has recognized 29 communities as Scheduled Tribes. Manipur, as the remaining six other states of the North-Eastern Region is multi-lingual, multi-ethnic. Most of the communities inhabiting Manipur, tribal or other, it appears are under the experience of some form of flux in regard to the definition of their respective identity. As mentioned above, the Author has lived with such experiences. This provides the initial clue for the present study. In many respects, the Author may be considered as a "participant observer" which by definition involves two consequences: "The primary task of participant observer is to enter into the life of the community being studied. If this task is achieved, there will be two consequences: his subjects will learn to take him for granted and thus to behave almost as though he were not there, and he will learn to think almost as they think." (Madge, 1953, 131).

*Conceptual Knowledge* — The Author, by professional training, is an Anthropologist.

One of the initial instructions in anthropology begins with the lesson that:

## 2 Ethnicity in Manipur

"Social anthropology may be defined as the investigation of the nature of human society by the systematic comparison of societies of diverse types, with particular attention to the simpler forms of primitive, savage or non-literate peoples . . . . The distribution of peoples on the face of the Earth in recent times and their racial and cultural similarities and differences are the result of an exceedingly complex multitude of events which began when mankind first appeared, perhaps a million years ago, the process has been one of migrations, minglings and interactions of people, of modifications of racial characteristics and of cultural changes and developments . . . . It is of course, not possible to draw any sharp dividing line between primitive and non primitive societies. Further, social anthropology cannot and does not entirely confine its attention to the primitive societies." (Radcliffe-Brown, 1958)

Frazer (1908) conceived of social anthropology as the sociological study of "primitive" forms of society, Malinowski (1926) defined the subject as "a branch of Sociology, as applied to primitive tribes." With all such definitions (Frazer, Malinowski) and clarifications (Radcliffe-Brown), the study of the tribes was considered as the mainstay of anthropology.

Anthropology in its scope included the description and comparison of different cultural groups of people. In the early years of the academic discipline, such cultural groups were referred to as races and tribes. The aim of social anthropology was defined as:

"to make use of knowledge about primitive societies to establish valid and significant generalization about social phenomena." (Radcliffe Brown, *op cit.*)

There appeared a sort of distribution of labour in the subject, with the name of "ethnography" used generally for purely descriptive accounts of a people or peoples, and "ethnology", which goes beyond ethnography, it seeks to provide a classification of peoples by comparing them with reference to their similarities and differences. Radcliffe Brown while referring to peoples, we find has used the description 'ethnic groups' thus:

"Peoples or ethnic groups resemble or differ from each other by racial characters, by language and by their mode of life

and mode of thought from the kind of dwellings they inhabit or the kind of clothes they wear to the kind of beliefs they hold. Ethnologists distinguish between the racial characteristics of a people and their cultural characteristics and between racial and cultural classifications." (Radcliffe Brown, *op cit.*).

Ethnographic and ethnological interests among the anthropologists yielded a library full volume of insightful literature, uninterrupted till the closing years of the 1960s. We can note there was a marked paradigm shift among the anthropologists with the publication by Fredrick Barth a collection of essays on Ethnic Groups and Boundaries (1969). The theoretical emphasis shifted from the evolution of tribal identity as a defining feature of social structure to the ethnic identity as an aspect of social organisation (cf. Jenkins, 1986). Cohen noted the change as one from the Western concern with uncivilized peoples of the colonies, to a more equitable interest in the heterogeneity of all societies, (Cohen, 1978). Jenkins in his essay on "Social Anthropological Models of Inter-ethnic relations" (*op cit.*) refers to this under the sub-heading 'from tribe to ethnic groups'.

The effort in the present study is to systematize and reorganize the "data" from Manipur by drawing from the conceptual perspective available with anthropology, and also the other relevant social science disciplines.

### The Scope, the Direction

The definition of the scope of a research exercise involves a set of definitions, those of:

- 1) Definition of the geographic and demographic coverage of the investigation.
- 2) Definition of the depth of the investigation.
- 3) Definition of the conceptual orientation and perspective for the investigation.

*Geographic-Demographic Coverage* — As mentioned in the outset, and as we can find from the title of the study, Manipur is the venue for empirical information.

For the present exercise, the scope has been extended to include two sets of experiences: those from the tribal as well as

the non-tribal sections of Manipur. The two experiences of how the Meiteis, the Bishnupriyas and the tribal population of Manipur were involved with defining their identity, these appeared to provide a good opportunity for comparative analysis. In view of this, the scope of the present study was extended to cover the two sections of population of Manipur, both the tribal as well as the non-tribal sections of population. Such an extended scope of the study we felt will provide a suitable opportunity for comparative analysis between two categories of population, the tribal and the non-tribal sections of population.

### **The Depth of Investigation**

Research is the product of 'facts', 'ideas' interface. In social research, this suggests attention to two questions:

- a) What questions to ask, i.e., what data to include for the study.
- b) How to order the data, i.e., what will be the analytical framework for ordering and interpreting the data.

In terms of the depth of investigation, studies could be (i) descriptive, (ii) analytical, or (iii) explanatory, or a variety of combination of these. A decision in relation to this have a direct bearing on the nature of issues relating to both data as well as the analytical framework that may form the scope of a study.

The different communities inhabiting Manipur are as much engaged with issues relating to projecting and organising their distinct ethnic identity as we can find for other parts of the country, even in other countries beyond India. Such situation in Manipur has involved the tribal section of the population as much as it has involved the non-tribal sections of the state. Between the different experiences in regard to this which can be found in Manipur, for the purpose of the present study we identified six experiences. A close analysis of facts in regard to these formed the source of data for the present study.

The following six experiences formed the 'sample' for the data:

- 1) The Government of Manipur, Directorate for Development of Tribals and Backward classes, has published a small folder containing some information relating to the scheduled tribes of Manipur. According to the folder, the Government of

Manipur recognizes 29 scheduled tribes, and these have been put into three categories. It mentions:

"According to the Constitution of India, there are 29 recognized tribes in Manipur . . . . All the tribes can be divided into Naga group of tribes, and Chin-Kuki-Mizo group of tribes with some smaller tribes *intermediate* between these groups as some transformation is in the process. Traditional chieftainship is not similar among all the tribes . . . . Among the Chin-Kuki-Mizo group of tribes, chieftainship is hereditary, but it is not always so among the Naga tribes. The tribesmen among the Chin-Kuki-Mizo group in Manipur (total 8 tribes) can converse with one another in respective dialects unlike the Naga group of tribes (total 6 tribes). Linguistic difference is much among the Naga than among the tribes of Chin-Kuki-Mizo group . . . . Intermediate between the two groups of Naga and Chin-Kuki-Mizo groups of tribes linguistically nearer to the latter than the former are numerically smaller tribes . . . . As such they are also known as Old Kuki in anthropological literature." (Government of Manipur, 1981)

According to the official list:

*The Naga Group of Tribes:* (i) Kabui (Rongmei and Puimei) (ii) Kacha Naga (Liangmei and Zemei), collectively known as Zeliangrong (iii) Mao (iv) Maram (v) Tangkhul and (vi) Maring.

*The Chin-Kuki-Mizo Group of Tribes:* (i) Gangte (ii) Hmar (iii) Lushai (Mizo) (iv) Thadou (Kuki) (v) Vaiphei (vi) Zou (vii) Paite (viii) Simte.

*The Intermediary Groups:* (i) Aimol (ii) Chiru (iii) Koireng (iv) Kom (collectively called Komrem) (v) Anal (vi) Chothe (vii) Lamkang (viii) Koirao/Thangal (ix) Purum (X) Monsang and (xi) Moyon.

*Non-Local Tribes:* (i) Angami (ii) Ralte (iii) Sema (iv) Sukte.

- 2) The other experience relates to the *Purum*. This name is well known among the Indian anthropologists, and to great extent among the classical structural anthropologists world round. In 1931, T.C. Das, a senior teacher from the Depart-

ment of Anthropology of the Calcutta University visited Manipur with the intention to conduct the annual exercise of field work essential for the post-graduate students in Anthropology. This team under the guidance of T.C. Das decided to conduct their field work among the Purum. This marked the beginning of the interest of T.C. Das about the Purum. He revisited the Purums a number of times in later years, for intention of a more comprehensive study of the Purums. In 1935, T.C. Das published his monograph on the Purums. We find from this monograph that the population of the Purums according to the Census of 1931 was about 300. Forty years later, according to the Census of 1971, the population of this tribe was given as 'not available'. The immediate question to flow from such an observation was to find an explanation to the rather sudden 'non-availability' of the Purums within a period of forty years. The probable explanations could be (a) the tribe had vanished, in more clear terms, became extinct within the last forty years, or (b) there were some error in the Census enumeration, either in 1931, or (c) within a period of forty years the Purums had adopted a new designation/identity for themselves.

- 3) There was a third experience, a very obvious observation for others otherwise, that relating to the *Zeliangrong*. In the history of the freedom struggle of India, we find a list of many prominent names who contributed to the struggle during the 20s and 30s of this century. There is one name from Manipur which needs to be added, the name of Rani Gaidinliu. In fact, her name should be put above many, in the list of the freedom fighters. Amongst all the freedom fighters in the country this far, she has remained in prison uninterrupted for the longest number of years, nearly forty years. She was imprisoned by the British in the early thirties and was able to get her release only in 1952, five years after the British had already left. Her release came only through the personal intervention of Nehru, who was informed about her still languishing in Jail. It appears that in the din and hubbub of the newly attained Independence, and all that followed, it got forgotten that Gaidinliu who was impris-

Gaidinliu

oned by the British in 1931 as the young girl who had revolted against the British administration was still behind bars. In fact, she got her release through the intervention of Nehru, who got a chance information about this female freedom fighter. She entered the jail as a youth and came out as one who had now come of age.

Rani Gaidinliu symbolizes the Zeliangrong movement. This movement combines in fact two streams of objectives. She was fighting for the cause of the Zeliangrong tribe, which the British considered as a 'liberation' movement. In essence, the movement is about the Zemei, the Liangmei and the Rongmei tribes of the Naga group engaged in efforts to forge, stabilize, and project a common Zeliangrong identity. By some twist of events, the British perceived this as a sedition and revolt against the British. The movement today, in essence is one in which the three numerically less tribal groups, the Zemeis, the Liangmeis and the Rongmeis are involved in redefining their identity in terms of a common identity of Zeliangrong.

- 4) *The Thadou Experience*: The Thadous are one of the Kuki group of tribes. In terms of number, the total population of the Thadous are highest between the 29 tribes inhabiting Manipur. The Thadous, in terms of their level of education, and through the new occupations, mainly white-collar, in which the Thadou have entered, this can be considered as one of the most 'progressive' tribes of Manipur. The Thadous, as such belong to the Kuki group of tribes. As of recent years, it is noted, the Thadous are involved deeply in defining their identity.

When the Bible was being translated into local tribal languages in Manipur, between the different Kuki group of tribes, the first translation was made in Thadou language. Somehow, the early Western Evangelists who were involved with the Bible Translation, they designated the Thadou version of the Bible as the Bible in Kuki. In course of time, due to a sequence of reasons, the other tribes of the Kuki group, especially the Gangtes, the Hmars resented to this. Such resentment has become more pronounced after the Gangtes and the Hmars, the late starters in education among

the Kuki group of tribes, have prepared their own language version of the Bible.

The controversy between the Kuki group of tribes, on account of this, comes through the designation which needs to be given to the Bible in the Thadou language. While the Thadous would like it to be referred to as the Kuki Bible of the Thadou Kuki Bible, the other tribes of the Kuki group would like the Bible to be referred to as the Thadou Bible rather than adding the Kuki appellation. They explain that any such name, such a Thadou Kuki gives the impression as if the Thadous are the main representative of the Kuki group of tribes.

- 5) Very similar to this is the *Bishnupriya* experience. Bishnupriya are a non-tribal community which concentrates in the Bishenpur district of Manipur. Beyond Manipur, the people of this community inhabit parts of the Cachar district of Assam and some parts of Agartala district of Tripura. The distribution of the Bishnupriyas to three states, Manipur, Assam and Tripura is due to some historical reasons, dating back to about two hundred years ago. Today we find that a sharp controversy had developed on the identity of the Bishnupriyas. Much of this controversy has its origin in happenings outside Manipur. What concerns our attention for the present study is how the controversy involved with the identity of the Bishnupriyas has shaped itself in Manipur.

The Bishnupriyas inhabiting the Cachar districts of Assam and those in Tripura prefer to be designated as the Bishnupriya-Manipuris. The Meiteis in Manipur strongly resents to this. According to them the Bishnupriyas should be referred to by the single word, Bishnupriya rather than suffixing 'Manipuri'. Any usage is likely to give the impression that the Bishnupriyas represents a section of Manipuri people, which in fact they do not. The Bishnupriyas inhabiting outside Manipur, in Assam and in Tripura, justify their use of the appellation 'Manipur' as they claim to be one of the original inhabitants of Manipur, and share many common cultural traits with the Meiteis.

In sharp contrast to this in Manipur, the Bishnupriyas inhabiting Manipur prefer to be identified as Manipuri Meiteis, rather than as Bishnupriyas. The Meiteis, however, are not agreeable to this. They would like to distinguish the Bishnupriya people rather than accept them as Manipuris.

The Bishnupriya-Manipuris and the Thadou-Kukis, analytically, represents many similarities, it is the second part in each of the two hyphenated names which introduce now issues of controversy. The history attached with each of the two names has brought in a sequence of factors and interpretations which have provided full stories of definition and redefinition of identities in each of the case. In each of the two cases, while the first part of the designation is the indigenous identity, the Bishnupriya or the Thadou, the second part of the designation is the name adopted (Nee, assigned) by the communities by the British. Factors like (a) in history, what implies the generic designation of Manipuris or Kukis (b) when was it introduced and with what understanding, and (c) over period of time, during the colonial period and after, how have these been defined and redefined, involved the full story with reference to each of the two experiences.

- 6) *The Meitei Experience*: The most popularly known and the most populace community inhabiting Manipur are referred to as the Manipuris. The people involved are locally known as the Meiteis. There is the general understanding that the Meiteis are Hindus. This interpretation has now become a subject of controversy as the Meiteis, this long known as to be Hindus, would like to be identified as Sanamahi, the name of indigenous religious faith. According to some analysts, this represents a process of religious revivalism. On a close look we find that a complex set of political and cultural issues are involved, most of which have emerged during the post-colonial period.

The six experiences (only briefly narrated above) gave sufficient indication of the complex nature of data that will need to be handled. As indicated earlier, in terms of depth of investigation, a study could be (i) descriptive; (ii) analytical; (iii) explanatory, or a combination of these. A review of

the available literature on the theme 'ethnicity' (a detailed presentation on this can be found in the next chapter) presented only one message "there is a need to formulate a comprehensive analytical framework on ethnicity". In view of all these, we decided that the present study can at best be an analytical exercise, attempting a comparative analysis of the different empirical situations as obtained in Manipur.

Social research as we know involves the contrast of 'facts' with 'ideas'. In the course of the investigation, more precisely, at the time of the preparation of the research design, the exposure to the available theoretical efforts on the subject (the review of literature) emphasized that the immediate need is of:

- a) Precise identification of the different elements that can be considered to be involved with the phenomena of ethnicity. In research methodology, such exercise is referred to as disaggregation of factors and variables.
- b) Attending to the theoretical issues in relation to such identified elements (factors/variables/processes). The conceptual issues relate to obtaining conceptual clarification, that of providing precise definitions.
- c) Attending to the methodological issues, precisely those relating to classification and systematization.

In view of such tasks which warranted first attention, it was felt that the present exercise in terms of its depth of investigation will have to remain a descriptive analytical account.

The study has been sub-titled as "Experiences, Issues and Perspectives". The first part of the exercise is to make a descriptive narration of each of the experiences. The second part, flowing from this is the formulation of an analytical question which helped to outline the dimensions and facets of each of the experiences. The study began with a simple description of, the six experiences selected for the present study.

The second part of the exercise involved finding relevant categorization and ordering for the observed facts. The conceptual clue from review of literature helped us in this regard. Through a process of deductive approximation we tried to organize the elements of process of ethnicity in terms of such broad category.

### The Direction

This refers to the orientation and the perspective with which the investigation will be persuaded and the results organized for the purpose of presentation.

A clear distinction can be made between 'orientation' and 'perspective'. Orientation for the most part refers to affiliation to a particular academic discipline (such as anthropology, sociology, social psychology, political science). Perspective of a study refers to the list of analytical concepts, variables and empirical indicators current with an academic discipline. (Refer Smelser, for detailed discussion on comparative differences between social science disciplines through their orientations and perspectives.)

The theme of 'ethnicity', we can find, has engaged attention in a number of academic disciplines. On the one hand, while such widespread involvement with the theme 'ethnicity' between academic disciplines has enriched the empirical as well as the theoretical repertory, on the other hand there prevail a deep sense of inadequacy. We may note:

- 1) 1975 Without detracting from the merit of these more recent works, it is apparent that a theoretical framework capable of informing comparative ethnic studies has not yet emerged (Despres).

1975 It is transparently evident from the work of several contributors that such an enquiry could not proceed without interrogating at least some of the conceptual apparatus attending the study of ethnic and racial phenomena. That, this was necessary should not come as a surprise to those who are familiar with the literature in the absence of an established and generally acceptable theoretical framework, it needs to be considered how observation will be ordered and interpreted (Despres).

- 2) 1989 Roy Burman while presenting a review article on "Ethnicity, Ethnic conflict and their Genesis" at one occasion could not withhold but express that "but still the question of building up an over-arching framework remains"
- 3) 1968 In the International Encyclopadia of Social Sciences, the entry on "Ethnic Groups" ends with the observation.

"With the growth of good communication and the spread of travel, ethnically and culturally diverse societies are likely, in short term, to increase in number rather than diminish. As the sociological study of society ceases to be solely a Western discipline, the need to find appropriate conceptual tools for analysing ethnic and cultural variation will undoubtedly become a major pre-occupation of the discipline." (Morris).

The just presented observations highlight attention to one common desiderata, 'formulate a framework' (with all that this notion of framework can mean). The present exercise in its orientation as well as perspective, has addressed itself to this desiderata. The present exercise can be taken as one of the exercise which takes one step towards the desiderata, the final work will expect many such exercises.

In view of such desiderata, the present exercise may be taken more as one with a heavier orientation towards methodology rather than ethnography. This does not imply however that ethnography has been completely lost sight of. In the present study as we will note from the contents to follow, in fact, we have heavily drawn from ethnography of Manipur.

At this point there is some initial classification which needs to be presented. This relate to issues emerging from the observations made by Despers:

"In the absence of an established and generally acceptable theoretical framework, it needs to be considered how observation will be ordered and interpreted." (*op cit.*)

To bring to more clear focus, the issue related to exercises involved with formulating the theoretically analytical framework. Despers (1975) reached to such a conclusion through the deliberations and presentations at the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences where nearly 200 papers devoted to the discussion of comparative ethnic studies.

The publication of Barth's investigations of the populations from North-West Province of Pakistan and the adjoining frontier areas of Afghanistan mark the turning point in the theoretical attention amongst the anthropologists towards the ethnic phenomena (Barth, 1956, 1959, 1964). In the period intervening

the publication by Barth and the IXth International Congress, that of nearly one decade 1964–1975, with all the academic presentations that emerged, the realisation which was widely shared related to the absence of a suitable framework.

Nearly a decade later, 1984, a conference was organised at St. Catherine College, Oxford, "to test whether there were point of convergence or continuity between theoretical points-stand which might be explored and exploited to the benefit of the subject as a whole". By 1989, Rex and Mason published their collection on works of "original theory, empirical research and text on the problem of racially mixed societies" under the title "Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations." The editors prefaced their presentation with the observation.

"On the face of it the development of a universally argued theory and an agreed paradigm for race and ethnic relations research seemed impossible."

They however included the clarification that:

"(Though) several disciplines were involved, but within the main ones, namely sociology and social anthropology, there seemed to be a number of competing if not warring schools. None the less it was thought worthwhile to try to bring together some of the major internationally known scholars to present their ideas to possible conceptualisation of the field in order to see whether what appeared at first to be irreconcilable conflict could in fact be replaced by a sense of complementarity."

Within this extended quotation what stands out for our attention is 'the search for a possible conceptualisation', the search for a comprehensive framework.

Such concerns which may have made their first appearance with the publications by Barth, 1956, have continued till date, initially formulated between 1956 (Barth) to 1975 (Despres), and then outlined the analytical ramifications 1975 (Despres) to 1989 (Rex and Mason). This suggests the direction for the present investigation. The present exercise is thus inclined heavily towards outlining and attending to issues of methodological and theoretical consequence, to the exercise of formulating an analytical framework. Such an exercise has been undertaken here

however by drawing heavily from the empirical experiences from Manipur.

### The Style

The substantive theme of the present exercise is 'ethnicity', with empirical reference to the experiences from Manipur. What in fact has drawn our attention, as mentioned earlier, are the efforts involving the different communities in defining and re-defining their respective identities. Such story of defining-redefining of identity by an ethnic group represents, in other words; the biography of the ethnic group. An analysis of such phenomena will involve thus in many ways relating the biography of the concerned ethnic group.

Scientific research, the exercise of formulating an analytical/conceptual framework, in terms of the full sequence of exercises involved refers to the biography of an intellectual exercise. Any scientific research in the social sciences is expected to be based on a well prepared schedule of exercises to be conducted. This is referred to as the research design. From the stage of formulation of problem, to the last stage of presentation of the results, the research guides through the methods and techniques, orientation and perspectives. At the end of the research exercise, when we sit down to prepare the final presentation, we recall our experiences, in terms of empirical observations and conceptual decisions that have appeared before us and relate them. We can refer to such recounting as the writing of biographical account of the research.

The style of presentation in the present exercise will be one of presenting the biography of our efforts comprising of two sets of biographies, distinct but intimately interdependent, obviously. We will recount the set of biography of the empirical observations, which we refer as the 'experiences', and concurrent to this we will recount the biography of method and techniques which have helped in formulating a conceptual-analytical framework, which we have designated as the *ethnicity syndrome*. To borrow from Merton (1957) we will recount 'the bearing of theory on empirical research' and 'the bearing of empirical research on theory'.

# **Ethnicity in Manipur**

Experience, Issues and Perspectives

*Dr. (Mrs.) Lucy Zehol*

The theme of the present book is "Ethnicity" with reference to the experiences from Manipur. Manipur, as the remaining six states of North-Eastern region of India, is multi-lingual and multi-ethnic. Most of the communities inhabiting Manipur, tribes or others, are in a state of flux as regards their identity.

The objective of this book is to systematize and reorganize the "data" from Manipur by drawing on conceptual perspectives available in Anthropology and also other relevant social science disciplines. A review of the available literature on "ethnicity" shows one thing — there is a need to formulate a comprehensive analytical framework on ethnicity. In view of all this, the book is an analytical exercise, attempting a comparative analysis of the different empirical situations as obtained in Manipur.

**Dr. (Mrs.) Lucy Zehol** took her degree and doctorate from North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. She is now a Lecturer in the Deptt. of Anthropology, NEHU, Shillong teaching Anthropological theories and Methodology to Post-graduate students and this book is an outcome of that interest.

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