

POLITICS

IN MANIPUR

(1972-2001)

DR. NG. NGALENGNAM

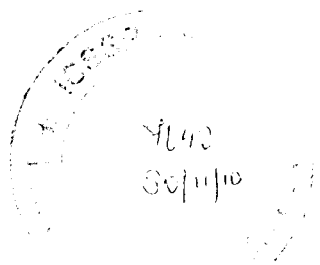
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Dr. Ng. Ngalengnam



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Chapter 1

Introduction

Land and the People

The Land: Manipur is one of the Eight Sister-States of the North East India. The beautiful Land comprises of a large area of hills and small valley in the middle inspired Mrs. St. Clair Grimwood, who described it as "A pretty place more beautiful than many show places of the world". Manipur has been aesthetically described by many as "a little paradise on earth", "the land of Gems", Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru bestowed upon Manipur the solemn sobriquet as "The Jewel of India". It is also described as "a flower of lofty heights". The natural beauty comprising its green hills, fresh water lakes, its stream, climatic condition etc. induces visitors to feel if she is the "Kashmir of India" and "Switzerland of India".¹ The game polo is said to have been originated from this small land.

In olden days Manipur was known by various names. In Rennel's Memoir and Maps of India it was called Meeklay. In the narrative of Symes and in their Maps, Manipur was called Cassey. To the Shans it was known as 'Kase' and to the Burmese as 'Kathe' a corruption of the same word. The Ahoms called it Makeli and the Kacharis Magli, while the old Assamese named Maglen.² Thus, we get different theories and beliefs as to how the state came to be known as Manipur. According to some writers, "there was much diamond ore in the land in ancient times, to

them “Mani” means diamond ore and “pur” means place. Thus, the land came to be known as Manipur”. One legend also goes that the country at one time was water logged; Lord Shiva and Uma known as Nongpok Ningthau and Panthoibi in Manipur were performing Ras Lila Dance, there the Snake god Ananda who came to see the dance lit up the whole country day and night with the help of his magic Mani(diamond). From this the land was named Manipur, the city of Gem. Later, the land is also known by various names as Kangleipak, Sanaleipak by Meiteis.

Thus, Manipur had been praised by different corners of peoples with beautiful names. However, the princely State was annexed by the British since the last part of the 19th Century (British defeated Manipuris in the Anglo-Manipuri war of 1891) and extended their rule till the middle part of the 20th Century (1947). Manipur regained her independent kingdom and merged to the Union of India in 1949. She finally attained the status of a full fledged state in 1972.

Geographical Location:- Our Country India, the Seventh largest Country in the world is often described as a ‘land of Contrast.’ This is because of the fact that she possesses one of the oldest Deccan plateau, youngest Himalayas, highest Himalayan Peak, lowest Ganga Delta, driest Thar Desert, wettest Chirrapunji region etc. Three major land forms constitute the topography of India. The Himalayas form the great mountain wall on the North in the South, there lies the old plateau of Peninsular India, in between the two, the Indus-Ganga-Bramaputra plain extends from the North Western border upto the North-eastern part of the Country. Manipur the ‘jewel of India’ is a part of it.

Geographically, Manipur is located in the extreme corner of the North-eastern part of India. ‘It lies in between

23.83° to 25.68° North latitude and 93.03° to 94.78° East longitudes.³ The Tropic of Cancer passes through the South of Manipur at a distance of about 38 kilometres from its Southern boundary. The land lies at the altitude ranges between 781 metres and 2020 metres the sea level. The capital Imphal is intersected by 25th parallel North latitude and 94° East longitude and 790 metres above the sea level.⁴ The rugged hilly and mountainous terrain state of Manipur occupied the twentieth position among the states of India in respect of size constituting less than one percent of the total land surface of the country. If we look at the geographical area of Manipur it has an area of 22,327 square kilometres.⁵ It occupied only 0.7 percent of the earth surface of India. The small oval-shaped central plain is known as Imphal Valley which covers only a small area of 1,843 square kilometres. In other words, the hills of Manipur covers more than nine-tenth of the total areas. Being a hilly region, Manipur is at an elevation varying from 800 to 3000 metres.

In respect of the territorial division, Manipur is isolated from the rest of India. Eventhough, it is strategically very important as the State is situated along the Indo-Myanmar Border. Manipur has a total borderline of about 854 kilometres. The whole border line can be broadly divided into two as, (i) the international boundary line with Myanmar for about 352 kilometres on the North-eastern part of the state extending to South-east Chandel District. (ii) the second one is the inter-state borders. They are, on the Western parts including Tamenglong District as bounded by Cachar District of Assam, while on the Northern parts of the state including Senapati and Ukhrul Districts are bounded by the Nagaland State and on the South particularly the Churachandpur District is bounded by the state of Mizoram. Further, it is also very interesting

to mention that the only 10% area lying at the centre of Manipur is surrounded by many beautiful and well decorated hills. It is not only good for visual but important in strategical point of view too.

Structurally Manipur belongs to the young fold mountains of the Himalayas which were uplifted from the bed of the ancient Tethys sea. The hills of Manipur belong to the Alpine system of new fold mountains. The Imphal valley represents a lacustrine plain-form due to the sitting up of lake.

According to its physical features, Manipur can be divided into two distinct regions; viz. (i) the Imphal valley region and (ii) the hill region.

The Central Plain. This plain is an oval-shaped depression located in the central part of Manipur. It is also known as the Imphal valley because the Imphal River runs through the middle of this valley from North to South. The North-South extend of this valley is about 60 km. while the East-west extend is about 30 kilometres. The average elevation of the valley is about 790 metres above the sea level. As the Imphal Valley was formed, due to filling up of the ancient lake, a portion of which is still found in the Southern part of the valley. This large, fresh-water lake is known as the Loktak. A number of rivers are found in Manipur, such as the Imphal river, the Thoubal river, the Iril river, the Nambol river, the Moirang river etc. but they are not navigable.

The Hills. The surrounding areas of the valley are the hills. The hill areas of the state are about 20,513 square kilometres. Thus about 90 percent of the land mass is occupied by the hills. The average elevation of the hill lies in between 1500 to 1800 metres above the sea level.

The hills of Manipur are southward extension of the

Naga Hills. They consist of a series of parallel ranges extending from the Naga hill up to the Southern part of Manipur. These ranges may be divided into two viz. (i) the Eastern hills, that lie in the east of the Imphal valley and (ii) the western hills that lie in the west of the Imphal valley. "The hills are higher in the North and gradually diminish in height towards the South. The valley also slope downward to the South.⁶ The Mapithel, the Chingai, the Mulai etc. are the important ranges of the Eastern hills with the average height of 1.500 metres. The important peak includes Khayangphung 2.833 metres, Shiroy 2.568 metres and Kachouphung 2.498 metres. The western hills consist of the Yangpujiliong, the Uningthau, the Kaobru, and the Khaupum etc. The important peaks are the Mount Iso (Tenipu) the highest peak of Manipur at the height of 2.994 metres, the Leikat 2.831 metres, The Kaubru 2.562 etc., The Barak, the largest river of Manipur which became the natural boundary between Manipur and Nagaland on the North and Manipur and Assam on the west. The Maklang, the Tuyungbi, the Chalou, the Chingai, the Thoubal, the Lokchao, the Taret, the Chakpi, and the Kunga are the important rivers in the hill.

RIVERS:

Almost all the important rivers of the State flow from North to South direction. The main rivers of Manipur are the Imphal River, the Irang River, the Iril River, the Thoubal River, the Barak, the Tuivai, and the Khuga etc. The Imphal River flows from Senapati district and flows through Imphal plain area for 130 kms. approximately and then enters into the hill region of the south through a gorge in the hills to fall in the Chindwin river of Burma. The Iril river also comes from north and meets Imphal river after 96 kms. of flow. The length of Thoubal river is about 88kms of south-

east direction. Barak starts from Mt. Japvo and flows towards southwest and finally joins to Meghna river of Bangladesh. Smaller rivers important rivers includes Chingai- Challou river, Chamu river, Tuyungbi, Makang, Makho etc. These rivers are mainly useful for irrigation purpose.

LAKES: There are many lakes in the State of Manipur. Loktak lake is the biggest of all and resembles a miniature sea. It is the largest fresh water lake in the North- East covering about 100 sq. kms in the rainy season and about 64 sq. kms. in dry season. Sendra is a hill ock of an island of Loktak lake, 48 kms. away from the capital towards south. There is a group of islands in the lake with the cluster of low hills. Many fishermen and their families live in small huts on the floating "Phumdis". We also find some smaller lakes in the state such as, Pumlun, Ikop and Waithou.

CLIMATE: Manipur has a Sub-Tropical Monsoon climate. It is hot and wet during summer months while the winter months are cold and dry. Manipur enjoy a healthy and comfortable climate in most of the places of both the hills and the valley. However, we find variation of climate on account of differences in elevation. We also get oppressive heat in summer at the Barak basin, Jiribam and lower foothills of western Manipur hills have a warmer climate then the central valley and its surrounding Imphal valley is warmer than the hills. However, many factors influence the climate of Manipur. They include topography and elevation, Cyclones originating from the Bay of Bengal and the South China etc. The year in Manipur is divided into four different seasons. They are, (i) the cold season which includes December, January and February, (ii) the hot-dry season, it includes March, April and May, (iii) the rainy season, i.e. June, July , August and September, (iv) the retreating monsoon season i.e. October and November.

The actual winter season in Manipur starts in December and lasts till the end of February. The temperature rarely drops below freezing point. The average temperature ranges between 12°C to 18°C in this season. In January, frost is seen on the roof of thatched houses. Morning fogs are very common in the valley areas. Such a fine weather is sometimes disturbed by western disturbances of the Mediterranean Sea, which cause light winter rain.

The beginning of March is characterized by a sudden increase in temperature and gusty wind. The average temperature varies between 18°C and 28°C. The difference of heating of the hills and valleys is responsible for the nature of the wind of the season. Sometimes, the temperature in Manipur raises upto 34°C. in May.

This is the longest season in Manipur, i.e. June to September. This is a season of high temperature and heavy rainfall. By this time, the South-west monsoons provide abundant rain throughout the state. Cloudiness and humidity make the weather oppressive. The average rainfall in the state is 200 cm. in a year. Tamenglong District received the heaviest rainfall of 400 cm. in a year, while central Imphal received 140 cm. and the Ukhrul District receives 180 cm.

This is a transitional period between the rainy season and the cold season. The South-west monsoon starts retreating and as a result rainfall decreases considerably. Skies became clear and moonlit nights of this season are charming.

Rainfall. Manipur enjoys a sufficient amount of rainfall every year. The average annual rainfall in the state is 200 cm. The Tamenglong District receives the highest amount of rainfall. Tamenglong, which is located in the Western hills, has an average annual rainfall of 400 cm.

while Imphal in the central valley has only 140 cm. The rainfall towards the eastern hills is higher and thus, Ukhrul has an average annual rainfall of 180 cm. The rainfall recorded in the year 1999 was 264.69 cm. in Churachandpur, while the lowest was 139.53 cm. in Thoubal.⁷ The rainfall varies from place to place on account of varying elevation of different places. The distribution of rainfall is higher in the hill than the valley. Manipur receives rain during the months of June, July, August, September and October. The maximum coming down of rain is from June to August. By this time, the South-western monsoon provides abundant rain throughout the state. Floods are very common in the Imphal Valley during this period while September and October gives moderate rain in the state. There is no threat of flood in the hills, yet landslides are very common at all places in the hills. Sometimes Thundershowers squalls also occur during the months of March, April and May. This is because of the interaction of dry westerly air and moist. Southerly air forms the Bay of Bengal. During the cold season December, January and February too get rain sometimes. Clear skies and fine weather is sometimes disturbed by the western disturbances blew from the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, occasionally it caused light winter rain in Manipur.

. The rainfall can be termed a favourable. People enjoy reasonably with the just manner of rainfall. Crops and natural vegetations grow favourably. Thus the rainfall in Manipur is neither too small and nor very high.

Soil. The soil of Manipur can be classified into six categories viz., alluvial soil, Red soil, Lateritic soils, Red soil, Ferruginous red Soil and Ferruginous gravelly soils. In other words, we can classify it into two as the residual and the transported soils. The residual soils are found in the hills. The residual soils are formed due to the decomposition of

parent rocks in the original place. Residual soils are of two types viz., red soils and laterite soils. Red soils covers most of the western and eastern hills and the laterite soils are confined to the western slopes of the western and eastern hills and the laterite soils are confined to the western slopes of the western hills. The qualities of soils in the hill areas are very poor. It is mainly due to the erosion and age long shifting cultivation. Thus, only virgin lands are productive in the hills.

The transported soils are confined to the Imphal valley and the Barak Basin. The soils which are brought down by rivers, glaciers, winds etc. from one part and deposited to low lying areas are transported soils. Thus, being a transported soil, the soil of the valley of Manipur is one of the most fertile soils in North-east India. The soil of the valley has a high quality and productive. "Though, there is a much quantity of potash and lime ingredient the soil of Manipur is generally in nitrogenous and phosphate contents."⁸

The Forest. The forest of Manipur covers an area of 15,154 square kilometres, which is 67, 67 percent of the total area of the state.⁹ Out of which, 50 percent of the area is tree forest, 20 percent is the bamboo forest and 28 percent of the area is the open forest. The jungle products of Manipur are very rich. In fact, the forest areas in the hills are gradually decreasing due to shifting cultivation or burning of forest over large areas and cutting of trees for firewood and timber.

The forest of Manipur can be broadly classified as follows:

(i) the sub-tropical deciduous forests, (ii) Sub-tropical evergreen forests, (iii) tropical moist semi evergreen forest.

(i) The Sub-Tropical Deciduous Forests. These forests

exist in and around the Imphal Valley, particularly in the hill slopes overlooking the valley. They have a denuded appearance because of excessive cutting of the trees to obtain timber and firewood. Various species of oak, teak and chestnut are found in these forests. Pine mixed with oak are found towards the South.

(ii) **Sub-Tropical Evergreen Forests.** The Sub-Tropical evergreen forests are found in the North-eastern part of the state at an elevation varying from 1,200 to 2,400 metres. The climate of the region favours the growth of soft coniferous trees like pine at its highest altitude and the lower altitude favours the growth of oak and chestnut. The total area of these forests is 1,300 square kilometres.

(iii) **Tropical Moist Deciduous forests.** These types of forests are found in the South-eastern parts of Manipur along the international boundary with Myanmar. The region is hot and moist. It favours the growth of trees such as teak, gurjan, teak, khi, arecanut etc. these forests cover about 510 square kilometres at the elevation of 900 metres.¹⁰

Tropical moist Semi-evergreen forests. These forests occupied the narrow belts along the Barak River with South-western part of Manipur. The high temperature and heavy rainfall of this region favours the growth of dense vegetation. Bamboo is the most important vegetation. More than 13 major species of bamboos are found in this forest. Moreover, cinnamon and cane are also found here in large quantity. It covers an area of about 510 square kilometres.

Further, the forest of Manipur can also be classified into two as natural forest and the artificial forest. Out of the total forest area of the state, 9 percent is the reserved status,

27.5 percent is the protected status, and the rest 63.5 percent is the unclassified status.¹¹

Extensive bamboo brokes is found in the West, North and the Southern parts of the state with an approximate area of 3268 square kilometres. To sum up, the main forest products are timber, round wood, bamboo, canes, turpentine and rexin, dalchini, gum fibres, oils, honey, wax and medicinal herbs. The main crop of the state is paddy, oilseeds, pulses, sugar-cane, cotton, fruits such as pear, pineapples, orange, litchis, papaya, guava, mango and a great variety of vegetables are also found in this state.

Fauna. The fauna of the state can be considered as very rich. Some of the rarest animals in the world are found in this state. Among them the most important one is the Brow-antlered deer, locally known as "**Sangai**". It is one of the rarest and most beautiful deer species in the world whose only home in the world is Keibul Lamjao Floating National Park in the state.¹² Among others, mention may be made of tiger, guar, pangolin the local name is "**saphu**", elephant, sambar, barking deer, wild dog, godwall pink headed duck, night heron, teal, cotton tail, langer falcon, Himalayas black bear, locally name "**Singom/Sawon,**" leaf monkey, leopard cat, slender loris, locally name is "**laodraobi,**" wild buffalo, great hornbill, leopard, gorel, hogdeer, wild pig, sloth bear, python, etc. are found in the hill forest of Manipur. Other smaller animals like rat, snake, lizard, vulture, eagle, jungle crow, duck etc. are found in both the hills and valley areas. Mithun which is Seme-domesticated animal is found in Ukhrul, Chandel and Churachandpur districts.

Though the state being very rich in fauna, most of the species are decreasing day by day and vanishing gradually. The decreasing rate of tiger population, the

extinction of the rare species of flora and fauna are mainly due to the increase of our population. With the increase of population, the rate of deforestation also increases. People cut trees for timber, firewood and the tribal nature of shifting cultivation etc. lead to the causes of deforestation. Unless we fail to preserve our forest the valuable fauna will definitely disappear in the near future. Further, all types of fishes, birds, and animals are declining in number due to hunting. Such an ecological imbalance became a global concern.

Energy and power. It is only in February 1970 that the state Electricity Department was formed. The Loktak hydro-electricity project was started in 1971 as the first project of hydro-electricity by the Central Ministry of power at the cost of Rs. 100 crores with a target to generate over 100 km. of power. The total installed capacity of this project is 105 MW. The power supply of the project is far below the total power consumption of the state. There are some micro-hydel projects as Mangshangkei (1500 KW) Keithel Manbi (600 KW) Leimakhong Stage III (1000 KW) etc are the few running project.

Industry. Industrially Manipur is listed as one of the backward states of India. This is because of the fact that the state is poor in mineral resources like oil, iron etc. and the bottle-neck problem in term of communication and transport system.

Large Scale Industry. There are some large scale industries in Manipur such as, spinning mill at Loitang Khunao, Khandsari Sugar factory at Khangabok and a cement factory at Hungdung. However, a number of small-scale industries are well developed in Manipur. They include industries such as carpentry, blacksmiths, pottery, cane and bamboo works, etc.

The Khansari Sugar Factory. This factory was established in the year 1973 at Khangabok village in the Thoubal District. It has a crush capacity of 60 tones of sugarcane per day. The factory is running smoothly with about 200 persons of its employees.

Spinning Mill. The spinning mill of 25.520 spindles has been functioning since March 1978. It produces about 800 bales of cotton yarn annually and employs nearly 800 persons.

Cement Factory. This factory was established in 1981 at Hundung in Ukhrul District. The lime stone, the raw material of this industry is obtained from nearby places. The factory has a total production of 150 tonnes per day.

Cottage Industry. Handloom Industries is the oldest industry in Manipur. The industry was practiced in Manipur from ancient times. Silkworm feed on the plants of castor and mulberry. These plants grow abundantly in the valley. Tasar industry has become an important source for the production of silk in the state. Oak tree grows extensively in the hills. Since 1972 about 25 to 100 crores of cocoons harvest annually. In 1991-92, the total production of silk yarn was 163000 kilograms.

In 1985 there were 1,270 registered small scale industrial units in the state. They include 962 rice mills, 102 oil mills, 118 saw mills, 46 flour mills, 14 dal mills, 7 motor works, 5 printing presses etc.

Transport and Communication. Prior to independence, transport and communication systems of Manipur were very bad. However, with the implementation of five year plans after independence there were rapid development in the transport and communication systems of Manipur. Inspire of these developments, many parts of the hill areas are still inaccessible.

Road. There is no railway line in the state. The rail link from Silchar to Imphal is under construction. The total length of roads in the state as on 31st March, 1985 was 4,324.54 kilometres of which 2532.4 kilometres were metalled. These included National Highways, State Highways, District Roads, Municipal Roads and Village Roads. The National Highway No. 39 and No. 53 passing through Mao and Jiribam respectively are the two important roads connecting Imphal with the rest of the country. The road from Imphal to Mao was constructed during the time of Maharaja Chandra Kirta Singh 1881.

Now, the 215 kilometres long National Highway 39 Imphal to Dimapur road connects the rail head in Nagaland crossing through Senapati, Kohima etc. Another important road is the 222 kilometres long New Cachar Road National Highway 53 connects Imphal with Silchar in Assam and the National Highway 150 connecting Jessami to Tipaimukh are the important lifelines of Manipur. Among the state highways the Tiddim road, Imphal Sugnu road, Imphal Ukhrul road, Imphal Tamenglong, Imphal Kangchup road, the newly constructing road under NEC from Mahadev via Tongou-Pfuzaro are important inter state roads of Manipur.

Airways. Air transport is another important mode of transport in Manipur. There is daily air service between Imphal to metro cities. Air India, Indigo, Kingfisher, Spice Jet etc. are some of the airlines operating in the state. Night landing facility is also available at Imphal Tulihal Airport.

Foreigners require inner line permit for entry into Manipur from Union Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi. There is no restriction for the Indian citizens visiting Manipur by way of Silchar through Cachar Imphal road ¹³

Urbanization. Growing urbanisation is a recent phenomenon in developing countries. The proportion of

the urban population in Manipur has decline from 27.52 percent in 1991 to 23.88 percent in 2001. The corresponding figures for all India are 25.72 and 27.78 respectively.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the state figures most lower than that of the national one.

Demographers recognised that the increase in urban population has been attributed both to natural growth and mobility from rural areas in search of employment opportunity, attraction of better living condition and availability of social services such as education, health, transport, entertainment etc. An in depth research is necessary to look into the declining figures during the last decade 1991-2001.

Though traditionally an agrarian and rural state, Manipur has registered a marked urban growth in the last three decades. There was only one town in 1961. However, by 1980, the total urban area of the state was 36.73 square kilometres. By 1980 there was a city and seven towns in the state. By 1991, the urban population of the state was 5, 05,645. ¹⁵ It may also be pointed out that the urban areas of Manipur are generally concentrated in the Valley District. Urban areas in the hill districts of Manipur are comparatively very small in terms of area and population. ¹⁶

Economy. Agriculture is the prime occupation of the people. It occupies a dominant place in the economy of the state. Rice is the main crop occupying 82 percent of the total agricultural area of the state. The modern irrigation system is not yet fully developed and depends mainly on seasonal monsoon rain. There are two methods of cultivation – Jhum and Shifting Cultivation. Rice, wheat, maize etc. are the main food crops while ginger, gram, chilli, cauliflower, cabbage, sugar-cane etc. are the main cash crops. Since agriculture has been the main economic source and occupation of the hill man too, their entire way of

living is also an agriculture oriented one. In addition to this, Manipur is little known to the other world in economy by her handloom. It is the biggest industry in the state. There are around 6000 small scale industrial units in the state. The small scale and cottage industries like weaving, pottery making, and carpentry works etc. are also found in the hills.

The land is limited in natural resources. Forest products like timbers, canes etc are found in some areas. One of the main in her economic field is the bottleneck nature of its geographical location. Lack of big industries, factories, geographical location, communication problems and lack of resources together make the standard of Manipur economy far behind the national level.

Administrative Set Up. The state of Manipur is divided into 9 (nine) districts and 34 (thirty four) sub-divisions. Out of which four districts are in the valley and five districts are in the hills. The following are the names of districts and their corresponding sub-divisions.

Sl.No	Districts	Sub-Divisions
1.	Imphal west	(i) Lamphel (ii) Lamsang (iii) Patsoi (iv) Wangoi
2.	Imphal east	(i) Porompat (ii) Keirao Bitra (iii) Sawombung (iv) Jiribam
3.	Thoubal	(i) Thoubal (ii) Kakching (iii) Lilong
4.	Bishnupur	(i) Bishnupur (ii) Moirang (iii) Nambol
5.	Senapati	(i) Mao-Maram (ii) Saikul (iii) Kangpokpi (iv) Paomata (v) Purul
6.	Chandel	(i) Chandel (ii) Tengnoupal (iii) Chakpikarong (iv) Machi

7. Ukhrul (i) Ukhrul (ii) Chingai (iii) Kasom
Khullen (iv) Kamjong Chassad
(v) Phungyar (iv) L.M. Block
8. Tamenglong (i) Tamenglong (ii) Tousem
(iii) Nungba (iv) Tamei
9. Churachandpur (i) Churachandpur (ii) Singhat
(iii) Parbung (Tipamuk)
(iv) Thanlon (v) Henglep

There are altogether 8 (eight) municipalities in the state which are headed by the municipality commissioners. They are (i) Imphal (ii) Thoubal (iii) Kakching (iv) Nambol (v) Bishnupur (vi) Moirang (vii) Churachandpur (viii) Jiribam. There are 4 Zilla Parishad and 166 Gram Panchayats in the state. At the moment 33 blocks are functioning and out of which 9 are C.D. Block in the valley areas and 24 are T.D.Blocks in the hill areas.

There are 6 (six) District Councils in Manipur. They are:

1. Manipur North Autonomous District Council -
Senapati
2. Manipur West Autonomous District Council -
Tamenglong
3. Manipur East Autonomous District Council -
Ukhrul
4. Manipur South Autonomous District Council -
Churachandpur
5. Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council -
Saikul
6. Tengnoupal Autonomous District Council -
Chandel

However, these councils cease to function since 19685 for their demand for the 6th Scheduled.

1.2 THE PEOPLE

Population. The population of the world is 6.6 billions (July 2001) today. India's population has more than double during the last 30 years and its exact figure is 1,027,015,247 of 2001 census. As regarding on the 1st March, 2001, the population of Manipur is 2388,634 consisting of 1207,338 males and 1,181,296 females.¹⁷ Manipur is the 23rd rank by its population in India. 21 percent of the total population is concentrated in Imphal West District, which is the thickest populated District. And only 4 percent of its population is recorded in Tamenglong.

The growth rate of Manipur from 1951 onward has been alarming as it is much above the national level. The growth rate of the state has increased from 29.29 percent in 1981-1991 to 30.02 percent in 1991-2001. On the contrary it has declined from 23.86 percent in 1981-1991 to 21.34 percent in 1991-2001 for all India figure. Further the rural growth rate of population for the last decade is 36.55 percent as against the growth of 12.81 percent for the urban area.¹⁸ The density of population in Manipur is 107 percent per sq.km. as against 324 for all India according to 2001 census. The density of population is much higher in the valley than in hill.

The sex ratio is defined as "the number of female per 1000 males". The sex ratio of Manipur according to 2001 census is 978, which is higher than the corresponding all India figure 927. The ratio in urban area is higher than that of rural area.

The People of Manipur. The tiny state of Manipur is inhabited by various colourful people with diverse

cultures. Historical originality of the people of Manipur is uncertain but they are predominantly Mongoloid, speaking the Tibeto Burman Languages. Manipur consist of different ethnic groups viz., the dominant group Meitei, the Naga tribe, the Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribe, the Pangal and some other Indian communities. The people of Manipur can be broadly classified under three main groups.

1. The Manipuri speaking people or the Meiteis.
2. The Naga tribes.
3. The Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes, a migratory tribe by nature. While the Nagas and the Meiteis are static.

In other words, we can classify the people of Manipur into two as the Hill people and the valley people. There are 33 officially recognised tribes in Manipur. Some percent of Manipuri Muslim as Meitei Pangal inhabits together with the Meiteis in different places in the valley. The other Indian such as the Bengali the Marwaris, the Punjabis, the Nepalis, the Biharis and many others as we so called *Mayang* inhabits at the Imphal centre for business purpose. Some of them are also found residing in the hill district Headquarters too. "Thus, Manipur is the land of a bewildering variety of people, kindred tribes and languages." ¹⁹ We can discuss about the major communities in brief.

(A) The Meiteis. The Manipuri as the Meitei rulers believed that Meiteis are the descendants of Arjun's visit to Manipur and his marriage with princess Chitragada of Manipur is well known and thereafter he left Manipur. Second time of Arjun's visit to Manipur was abstracted and defeated by his own son name Babhnuhan whose mother was Chitragada. Thus, the history traces out the

Royal lineage of Manipur from Arjuna. According to another legend, the people of Manipur, the Nagas, and the Meiteis are the descendants from a common ancestor. The Nagas are the descendants from the elder son and the Meiteis are the descendants from the younger son.

It is clear from the points stated above that the Meiteis/Manipuris are the dominant ethnic groups of Manipur. They live in the valley. Genetically they belong to the Mongoloid and speak a Tibeto-Burman language. Smaller percent of them belong to Aryan origin. They differ culturally from the hill people because of following Hindu culture, custom and religion. "According to T.C. Hudson, the name 'Meithei' has been derived from *mi* means man and *their* means separate.²⁰ Though their origins are defined in different ways it is believed that they are descendants of Tator colony immigrated from the North-East border of China, during the conflict of China and Tartar in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Originally the Manipur valley was inhabited by seven clans viz., Ningthouja or Mangan, Angom, Moirang, Luwang, Khuman, Khaba Nganba and Chenglei or Sarang Leishangthem. Ningthauja clans were also known as Meitei. All these seven clans were different communities with separate culture and territories of their own. These seven clans were often at war with one another. "When the Ningthouja or the Meitei established their authority over the rest clans, the word Meitei came to be used to mean all the seven clans.²¹

Meiteis are dominant group residing in the Imphal valley and scattered in the hills and also to Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Dacca etc.

They occupy more than 2/3 (two-third) of population

of the state. They are very industrious people. They dominate in education and in all fields of the state.

(B) **The Nagas.** The origin of the Nagas is in obscurity as there is no authentic historical record. It is much dependent on the stories, songs, legends, talk, etc. which are passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. "They belong to Chinese Tai and Tibeto-Burman and certain elements of Philipino Borneo blood."²² Physically the Nagas are predominantly Mongoloid. They are fair in complexion. The Naga people inhabit in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of the North eastern part of India and in Mayanmar.

The name Naga is a generic name for a group of tribes. "History uphold the existence of a people known as 'Naga' as early as the 13th century. The Ahom kings had political and commercial dealing with the Nagas. And even earlier reference to them was made by Ptolemy, the great geographer and historian in the 4th century A.D."²³ The Naga society is one of the oldest tribal societies in the world, which has been conveying notable set of customary practices, social, political and religious moorings.²⁴

There are various theories regarding the word and meaning of Naga. According to some theories, Naga means Snake in general and the Cobra in particular. Because they believed that Nagas worshiped the Snake god. But it is found to be wrong as Nagas were never Snake worshippers. There are many Indians who worship snake but they are not Nagas.

The second theory according to J.N. Hutton, the word Naga derived from the word "Nagna" meaning mountaineers, mountainous or inaccessible place. Another theory traces the word Nag to mean Naked Savages or just Naked means naked man. This was also found to be not

true since there were men who are non- Naga hill tribes in other parts of India as well. "Another theory forwarded by Peal the word Naga simply means people. According to him the term occurs in Burmanjis and that its correct form came from the root word "nag" or "nok" both words meaning people, in the language of some Eastern Naga tribes.

Though, there are different theories regarding the word Naga and hard to arrive at an acceptable conclusion, the fact remains that it denotes a particular group of tribes or people. Whatever the word may mean, the Nagas knew themselves as Nagas. Despite various anthropological and sociological researches about their origin, objective truth in this regard has not yet been established because of lack of authenticated documentary proof.

There are more than 40 Naga tribes, out of which 18 tribes are in Manipur. They are (i) the Tangkhul, (ii) the Rongmei, (iii) the Leingmei, (iv) the Mao, (v) the Paomei, (vi) the Maram, (vii) the Thangal, (viii) the Maring, (ix) the Anal, (x) the Mayon, (xi) the Chothe, (xii) the Lamkang, (xiii) the Zemei, (xiv) the Koireng, (xv) the Kharam, (xvi) the Tarao, (xvii) the Puimei and (xviii) the Monsang. We can see further details of some of the major tribes among the Nagas.

The Tangkhuls. The Tangkhuls are inhabited mainly in Ukhrul District. However, they are now scattered all over Manipur and also to a large number in the western part of Myanmar Border known as Somras. The population as per 2001 census is 1, 40,946 out of which 73,413 are male and 67,553 are female with the sex ratio of 920. The average rate of literacy is 68.96%.

According to some authors, Tangkhuls are closely related with the Angamis. Earlier they believed in animism

and followed their tribal religion. Now 100% of them have been converted to Christianity. The villages of the Tangkhul are situated mostly on the hill tops. They practise both terrace and jhum cultivation. Each village have their own Village Council (Hangva) with the coming of Christianity and due to modern education, the old way of life style has changed. It has now entered the forefront of modern political life of Manipur. Mr. Yangmaso shaiza (Ex-CM), Mr. Rishang Keishing MP and (ex-CM), Mr. R. Suisa, Mr. Z. Ramyo, Mr. Th. Muivah etc have played many major political role in Manipur. In fact, the Tangkhuls are the most educated and holding the highest number of post in both central and the state government departments.

Kabui. The Kabuis inhabits mainly in Tamenglong District. Smaller portion of them live in Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal, Churachandpur, Senapati etc. Their total population is 104500 approximately as per 2001 census. Kabui is the joint name of Rongmei and Puimei Naga tribes. It means man of South. Traditionally the male Kabui wear either half sleeved shirt with a dhoti while woman wear blouse and a skirt type of lower garment. They also practise jhum cultivation. Their clans are exogamous and practise monogamy. Their clans can be classified as Kamei, Gonmei, Gangmei, Longmei etc. The prominent leaders of the Kabuis are Mr. Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu. Even now some of them believe in their tribal religion whereas the majority of them are now converted to Christianity.

(C) The Kuki-Chin-Mizo. The Kukis are the most scattered tribes among the tribals of Manipur. They are regarded as wandering tribes. They are mostly migrated from Burma now Myanmar. They are heard for the first time in Manipur in between 1830 and 1840 AD.²⁵ As they began to pour into the hill tracts of Manipur in the year 1845, though it caused anxiety, Lieutenant Mc. Culoch

understood the fact that they were looking for land for cultivation and settlement. Therefore, he allotted them lands in different places, to where their presence would be useful to expand frontier.²⁶

The Thadau Kuki clans known in Manipur are, the Haokip, the Kipgen, the Changloi, the Hangsing the Khongsai Gange, the Mate, the Vaiphei, the Singait, the Dongel, the Simte etc. Most of them inhabit in Churachandpur District and some are in Kangpokpi area of Senapati District and in Chandel District. The peculiar thing of this tribe is the homogeneity of dialects, customs, traditions, behaviour and physical appearance among them. They can converse among themselves yet they belong to different tribes.

All those clans or tribes which inhabit on the Burma border are called Chins. The Lushai consisting two words 'Lu' and 'Shai'. Lu stands for head and Shai stands for shoot. Lushai thus, is said to be mean the characteristic of Mizo as head hunter.

The name Mizo is also hard to explain. Some says that the people living on the hills could be named Zomi or Mizo or people of cold region by valley people. In this 'Zo' means cold region and mi means man. "Some others say that the name Mizo derived from the word 'Zopui'. This is a name of a big town which they build. It appeared in the last part of 18th century.

Thus, there is diversity of community, culture, custom among the people of this tiny state Manipur. In spite of all the facts there is unity in diversity.

Religion.

(A) **Hinduism;** The people of Manipur comprises of different racial groups with different religions. About 2/

3 (two third) of the total population living in the valley belong to Hinduism and few of them are Islam. Thus, Hinduism is the dominant religion in the state. "It is usually practiced by the Meiteis. However, Hinduism was not practiced among the Meiteis in ancient time. "In the beginning, the Manipuris (the Meiteis) worshiped mostly nature such as the fire, the sun, the Soraren (the god of rain and thunder) etc. thus they had their own religion. They had their own deities which may be classified into three groups viz. (i) ancestral deities (ii) deities associated with a yak (clan) and (iii) household deities. 'The Hindu religion come in general during the reign of Garib Niwaz about 1750 AD.²⁷he present Hinduism in Manipur is more or less a synthesis of the old Meitei religion and the Brahminical Hinduism.

(B) Christianity; Among the hill tribes, Christianity is the predominant religion. About 90 percent of them are Christians at present. The origin of Christianity in this land can be traced back to the arrival of Rev. William Pettigrew in the year 1896. He came to Imphal for the first time from England after a short pause in Assam. When he was about to start his missionary works at Imphal with the permission of A.Partheaus the incharge of Political agent in Manipur during the absence of Maxwell, an objection was raised by the Maharaja of Manipur. He thought that Rev. Pettigrew was trying to impose the Government religion upon the people of Manipur, which was not acceptable to them. Thinking all the possible troubles in the religion, the political agent Maxwell served an ultimatum to leave Imphal. Further, other Khulakpas and chiefs of Mao areas also did not allowed him to enter. Thus, Pettigrew turned toward Ukhrul and started his missionary work in the Tangkhul Naga land in June 1896; Rev. Pettigrew came to Assam under the sponsorship of Arthington Missionary Society.

The Arthington Mission Society was not in a position to support William Pettigrew when he left Assam or withdrawn their support. He later got sponsorship from American Baptist Union. Thus, the seed of Christianity came to be sown at Ukhrul in Manipur for the first time.

(C) Islam; There are no original Muslim in Manipur. The first settlement of Muslim in Manipur took place in the year 1606. They were known as Khagemba. Most of them were from Bangladesh, Cachar, etc. They were known as Bengal. Pangal is a corrupted word. They married Manipuri women. There were no Mosques in Manipur till 19th century and did not have contact with their counterpart outside Manipur. However in the early part of the 20th century they sent some persons to North-east India for their religious training as Moulanis. The Islamic revivalism started in Manipur in 1920 when the Moulavis returned in Manipur.

Others. In addition to the above religions, Buddhism and Jainism are also little known in Manipur. And no particular original community is found to be practised these religions.

Language; Manipur is inhabited by different communities there are 29 tribes other than the Meiteis. The people of Manipur speak different Tibeto Burman languages. Many writers studied the linguistic traits of Manipur. Hudson studied the linguistic traits of some languages of Manipur along with some other Tibeto-Burman languages and find out the linguistic unity of these languages in 1828. The first serious attempt was made by Prof. Khan and Komrady in their work "Philology of Tibeto-Burman languages. The languages of Manipur, according to Grierson, came under Assam-Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burmese sub-family of the Tibeto-Chinese family. Languages of Northern Manipur formed a part of the Naga group of languages. Similarly, all the rest of the languages

are included in the Kuki-Chin group. The Zomi Liangmei, Kabui, etc. formed a link between the Naga and the Bodo languages and contributes Naga Bodo Sub-group of the group of languages. The Naga languages of North and North East Manipur such as Mao, Tangkhul, Maram, Maring formed a link between Naga and Kuki language and constitute Naga-Kuki sub-group of languages.

Manipuri dialect is the most important language of Manipur. Thus, Manipuri language is the official language of Manipur. It is the mother tongue of the Meiteis in Valley. It is an independent member of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family. One of four groups of the Sino-Tibetan speaking family. It is the lingua-franca of the state. During the British period in Manipur, it was the state language. Formal annexation of Manipuri war of 1891, and the subsequent grant of native statehood to it by Queen Victoria 1891-1947 did not affect the state language status of Manipuri as state language. The Manipuri language has a very ancient and rich heritage of literature consisting of fiction, allegory, philosophical problems, history including local history, astrology, chivalry, song, folk tales, legends, code of behaviour pattern war-craft, forestry, medical science agriculture treatise on the use of sword, spear etc. It has its own script with the advent of Hinduism in Manipur since 17th century. The original Manipuri script was gradually replaced by the Bengali script. Even at present, in spite of a renewed interest and its inclusion in the VIII Scheduled of the constitution of India, the Bengali script is popularly being used by the Manipuris.

The tribals did not have their own scripts; therefore they adopt the Roman Script for them. The 29 (twenty nine) officially recognised tribes speak their own languages. Some of the languages like the Tangkhul language, the Lushai language, the Hmar language, the Mizo language,

etc. are recognised by the state of Manipur and study upto college level. Among the tribal dialects the Tangkhul dialect is mostly used in Ukhrul District, the Mizo Hmar, Paite etc. dialects are spoken in Churachandpur District. Unlike the Kukis the different sub-tribes of Naga speak different dialects of their own. They are independent from one another in respect of dialects. When we brought it on the whole they are more closely related to the Tibetan than the Burman. On the contrary the Kuki Chin dialects are closer to Burmese than the Tibetan.

Literacy; With 68.87 percent consisting of 77.87 percent for male and 59.70 percent for female, the literacy rate of Manipur is higher than that of all India figure i.e. 65.38 percent, consisting of 75.85 percent for male and 54.16 percent for female. On the contrary the total number of illiteracy has continued to increase for 6, 13,840 in 1991 to 6, and 46,287 in 2001. There is a remarkable improvement in the female literacy rate in the state since India Independence. The female literacy rate in the state is higher than that of all India i.e. 59.70 percent and 54.16 percent respectively according to 2001 census.

Further, if we look at the literacy rate into district wise we get the Imphal west as the highest with 80.61 percent which is followed by Imphal east 76.38 percent, Churachandpur 74.67 percent, Bishnupur 71.59 percent, Ukhrul 68.96 percent, Thoubal 67.90 percent. The literacy rate and status of the remaining three hill districts viz. Tamenglong, Chandel and Senapati are lagging behind the national level.

Thus, the percentage of literacy of Manipur is very good in all respects. It is even higher than that of the national level for both males and females. The literacy rate is higher in the valley than that of the hills.

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POLITICS IN MANIPUR (1972-2001)

This book is a revised version of the thesis "Politics in Manipur from 1972-2001". It is purely based on original research work. The book highlights about the land and the people of Manipur followed by the Political Situation of Manipur during the period from 1947-1972. This book discusses mainly on the Political activities during the said periods- the growth of Political Parties in Manipur, Electoral Politics in Manipur from 1972-2001, covering the whole Legislative Assembly Elections and the Voting Behaviour, Formation of Government right from 1972-2001, Instability of Government, Defections, Political Development in the Hill Areas of Manipur which covers the traditional tribal polity, Local Self-Government, the Manipur Hill Areas Autonomous District Council Act. 1972, demand for Sixth Schedule, Tribal Insurgency, Naga National Movement etc. This book critically analyses and comments chapter wise. This book will be useful to researchers and for everyone who is interested in better understanding of the political history of the North-Eastern region of India.

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About The Author



Dr. Ng. Ngalengnam

was born at Tongou, a village in Ukhrul, District, Manipur.

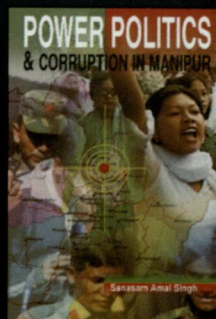
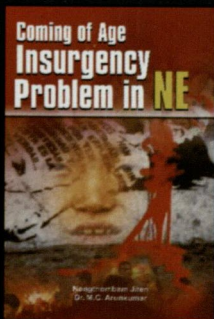
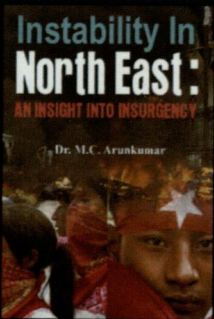
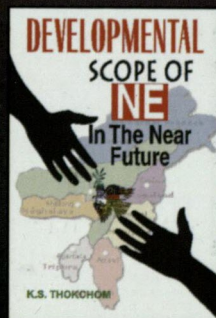
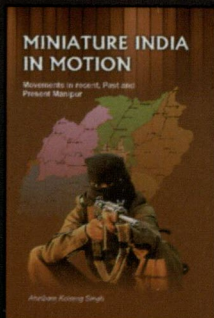
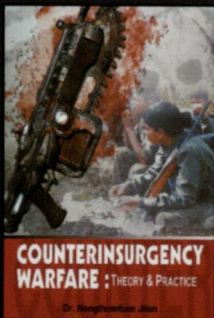
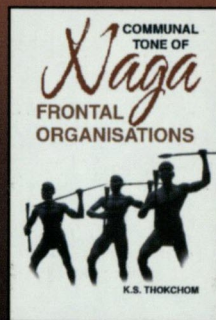
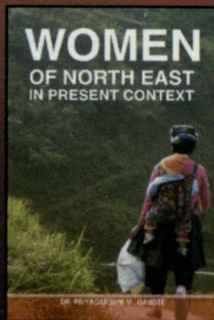
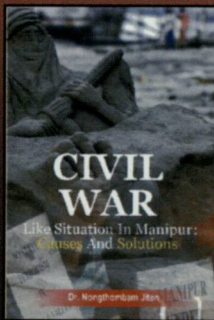
He completed his Master degree in Political Science from Manipur University, Imphal in 1995 and obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science from Manipur University, Imphal in 2006.

He started his career as a lecturer in 1997 at Pettigrew college, Government of Manipur and served there till 2009, Later on he joined the Indira Gandhi National Tribal university Regional Campus, Manipur as Assistant Professor.

He has participated in many seminars at both state and National levels and also contributed articles on Various newspapers and journals.

Dr. Ngalengnam was also a prominent student's leader during his college and university days. He is actively involved in N.G.O's and public life in different capacities apart from his academic activities.

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