

GENDER RELATIONS AMONG THE TANGKHULS OF MANIPUR

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

(Abstract)

By

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in gender asymmetry based on biological differences has been a feature of the discipline of Anthropology since the theory of evolution. The concept of 'gender' though, arises lately in the discipline, is created in varying historical circumstances to the object of knowledge in differing ways. After popularizing the concept of 'sex roles' in the 1940's and 1950's, Parsons treated the distinction between male and female role as the difference of social functions (Parsons and Bales 1956).

In the early writings on kinship, Schnieder (1968) argued that kinship is far less rooted in biological essences. Schnieder's formulation could be read as suggesting that gender categories thought to be rooted in biology are also culturally, rather than biologically, constituted. In 1975, Rubin put forward her concept of 'sex/gender system.' She defines it as the process by which a biological category, female, is transformed into social and cultural category, woman. She argued that gender as a set of meanings and relationships is related to but not isomorphic with biological sex. Brown and Jordanova (1982), also, point out that biological differences do not provide a universal basis for social definitions. What cultures make of sex differences is almost infinitely variable, so that biology cannot be playing a determining role.

On the basis of this argument, anthropologists made a point that the category “man” and “woman” cannot be defined by their biology while simultaneously refining female/male physiology into a cross-cultural, social category. Harris (1993) defines gender as the term to denote the variable emic meanings associated with culturally defined sexual identities as against the etic sexual identity of human beings. As such, gender is a cultural division which in the words of Moore (1994) are fundamentally cultural construction. The cultural construction of gender takes socially specific norms where the distinction between what is male and what is female is used to structure other cultural contrasts. As such, ‘gender’ is a term used to encompass the social expectations associated with femininity and masculinity.

The concept of gender has also moved from the widely held definition of “woman”/ “man” as stable, ultimately connected to interpretations of biological sex to examination of such notions in which gender offers a set of symbols and meanings for interpretation. Butler (1990) argued that there are no fixed foundations of gender categories. Gender is performative, bringing identities into existence through action, rather than expressive of some pre-existing reality. Another common practice is the concept of sameness, or the notion of universal “woman”. However, images, attributes, activities and behavior of women and men, girls and boys are always culturally and historically specific.

In the early writings on gender, some anthropologists base their concept on universal asymmetry of gender (Rosaldo 1974:41, Ortner 1974). But today, a shift from the concept of gender as asymmetrical dichotomies to rethinking of the concept of “self” is established. In the words of Strathern (1981), gender constructs are linked to the concept of self, personhood and autonomy. Later in the 1990s, some writers (Benhabib 1992, Moore 1994) even argue that the notion of ‘sex’ or the nature of the biological make-up of men and women is likewise a social construction. For instance, a person’s capability for reproduction is considered as other worldly source and not a biological matter in some societies (Strathern 1992, Overing 1996).

The concept of gender relations like the concept of gender itself developed out of the taken for granted idea of hegemonic relations. In the early ethnographic writings women were missing in the analysis. So the question of gender relations does not come into the purview of the analysis. Ardener’s article entitled ‘Belief and the problem of women’ (1972) points out women as the ‘muted group’. Recognition of women as the unseen others brought in the concept of gender relations in the development of gender studies.

Many researchers tend to universalize domination of women. Well known volume of Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) focused on the premise that asymmetry between women and men was universal. This is also evident in the

writings of Ortner and Whitehead (1981) when they define gender as a form of social inequality, that they viewed the study of gender as 'inherently a study of relations of asymmetrical power and opportunity' (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:4). The Marxian argument of Meillassoux (1981) is one of the strongest assertions of the universal domination of women by men. Notions about universal male superiority and female inferiority establish the assumption of gender relations which is enacted through modes of exploitation and domination.

Though the approach of "universal asymmetry of gender relations" gained momentum, there are, of course, some ethnographers who question this approach. Reiter (1975) argues that such notions are imposition of the dichotomized world of the west on others. Other works like Stack (1974) and Weiner (1976) offered to give new interpretations paying close attention to the voices of women. Faithorn (1976) approaches gender relations analyzing individuals as persons. There are also some ethnographers who, unlike writers who take asymmetrical relations, approach gender as social relationship. They criticize the assumption of universal subordination of women and argued that gender is a social role which holds different value by men and women and in no way these differences imply superiority or inferiority (Leacock 1978, Bell 1983, Sack 1974).

The concept of gender relations based on subordination of women are considered as powerful myth about gender relations associated with both the rise of science (Jordanova 1980) and capitalism (Benhabib 1992) in the west. Cross-cultural ethnographic accounts shows that relations between the genders may well be subject to perspective, where women have a different view from men of their roles and participation within the social life of the community. As Rapport and Overing (2000:152) points out, if only by understanding both male and female (often complementary) perspectives that gender relations among another people can begin to be comprehended. Gender relation is a study of what it means to be female and feminine, and in relation to what it means to be male and masculine, that is, knowledge about the interrelations between women and men, girls and boys, of gender, and of the role of gender in structuring human societies, their histories, ideologies, economic systems and political structures.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Tangkhul tribe is patriarchal and follows the rule of male primogeniture. The husband is head (*akhava*) of the household and his wife is the *akhavaiva* (wife of the *akhava*) of the household. The present study attempts to understand gender relations within the cultural set up of the Tangkhuls from the perspective of gender socialization. In the words of Barnard and Spencer, "Socialization is the process through which people, and especially children, are made to take on the ideas and behavior appropriate to life in a particular

society” (1996:512). Gender values are thus acquired by socialization. Thus, the process of internalizing gender values is examined in the context of the Tangkhuls. It also attempts to examine the changing gender values in this tribe. Various agencies of socialization, like family, school, peer group, etc. conveys to the girl or the boy what the social norms or expectations for her or him are. The present study also attempts to assess how socialization process is responsible for change and continuity in gender relations through these agents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The separate treatment of gender as an important aspect of Indian societies began in the late 1960s and 1970s. Studies of Kinship, marriage, caste, and village structure, for example, have traditionally been carried out without rethinking received assumption regarding gender. However, Indian anthropological literature on gender in recent times takes different perspectives. Gender studies in India show that the patriarchal and patrilineal ideology (Madan 1992, Khare 1992, Dube 1997 & 2009, Major 2006) play a defining role in gender relations which manifests in practices like gender preference (Croll 2000, Singh 2001, Chandra 2008) where boys are favored over a girl child, division of labour (Sharma and Vanjani 1994), prostitution (Gangoli 2007, Rohini, Shankar and Apte 2008), inheritance pattern (Rao, 2008) and participation in the public domain (Visweswaran 1994). Such power differentials are sanction even by customary laws (Holden 2008) and

this result to gender violence (Visweswaran 2004) in India. The intersection of gender with caste, age and class are visible where the conditions of women of the poorer sections and lower caste of the society are even worse (Ramamurthy 1994). There also exists a third gender in India known as Hijras in the Indian society (Reddy 2005). In the north-eastern region, gender studies can be seen in two cultural systems. One system is the patrilineal set up where the descent is traced from men (Furer-Haimendorf 1933, Zehol 1998 & 2006, Aier 2008) and the other is the matrilineal system where descent is reckoned from the women's line (Nongbri 1996, Pakyntien 1999, Nongbri 2008, Mukhim 2009). Gender analysis of both matrilineal and patrilineal shows unequal power structure where men control women. However, matrilineal is advantageous for women (Mukhim 2009). Coming closer home, clues of gender relations on the Tangkhuls can be taken from the writings of Hodson (1911), Ruivah (1993), Ruivah and Lurstep (1996) and Shimray (2001) which shows that men have the upper hand in decision making and they exercise more rights and privileges as compared to women. In this light, it would be worthwhile to examine how gender values are reproduced through socialization process and examine how self image of gender is formed.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To study how gender values are internalized in Tangkhul community and to examine if gender values are changing in Tangkhul society
2. To assess the socialization process as factor responsible for both continuity and change in gender relations among the Tangkhuls.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is primarily based on field work. The fieldwork was carried out at Somdal village, located in the western side of Ukhrul district of Manipur. The village is 103 kms away from the state capital. It has 410 households with a total strength of 2249 population-1112 female and 1137 male. The village is divided into seven localities, inhabited by seven clans. However, residence is not based on clan or any other criteria. It is based on choice and convenience of the individual family subject to the availability of land and resources.

Household census of the village was collected initially before the main data collection began. Data were collected on the basis of interview schedules and observation. Interaction and actions of parents and children were observed. Besides case studies, key informants were also selected among knowledgeable persons in order to procure knowledge of the past and the customary laws and practices of the people. Language was not a problem. During the course of fieldwork, maintaining rapport with the people was not difficult as the researcher enjoyed the status of an insider. Villagers were generally busy with their work, so with tact and patience I had to wait for an opportune time to interview an individual. Secondary data related to the work were collected from various sources wherever necessary.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Internalization of Gender Values

The different transitions through which an individual passes during their life, at first sight, seem to be biologically fixed from childhood to adulthood and eventually to death. But the stages of human life course are social as well as biological in nature. They are influenced by biological differences and material circumstances of people's life in a given type of society.

Internalizing what it means to be a girl or a boy by infant is almost certainly unconscious. Before a child can accurately label himself or herself as *ngalanao* (girl) or *mayarnao* (boy), they receive a range of clues. For instance, adult men and women handle the infant boy/girl differently, systematic differences in dress and hairstyle and formulate visual clues for an infant in the learning process. This goes on till they are old enough to buy their own clothes or do their own hairstyle. Women who handle the small infant boy often say "*Mayarnaona machap paimanei*" meaning 'boys do not cry'. On the other hand if an infant girl cries, they console her by saying, "*Ishi ngalanaoli khipana da*" which means 'who makes our girl cry?' The society thus sanctions different values even through such words.

Toys, dresses and other materials which a young child possesses tend to emphasize between male or female attribute. For instance, a boy plays with

kari (toy vehicles made of wood or purchased from market), *sayur* (toy animals made of clay or wood) and girls are seen with *nganganao* (dolls) and *thangthang* (imaginary kitchenware which they make collections out of used bottles and other items). Practically, all children in fact possess and play with gender typed toys given to them by parents, relatives and well wishers. The response to such gender stereotyping also comes from the parents and elders where toys are categorically purchased for a boy child and a girl child. For instance, if a boy plays with kitchen toys or dolls, elders scolds him saying, “*Na ngalanaola?*” meaning ‘are you a girl?’ or if a girl rides *thingkari* (cycle made of wood), elders say, “*Ngalanaowui ot maningmana*” which means ‘it is not a girl’s plaything’. Even in their treatment towards children, they show gender stereotyping as girls are not allowed to play with boy’s toys and vice versa.

Once gender is “assigned,” the society expects individual to act as men and women. It is in the practices of everyday life that these expectations are fulfilled and reproduced. For instance, a boy of six years is expected to learn the role of running errands, assist older male, and fetch water. A girl of the same age is expected to learn household chores, learn the basic skill of weaving, and attend to younger children and so on. However, some isolated cases were taken where the children are composed of only one gender. In such cases, it is observed that boys shares the chores of girls’ duties and girls perform the duties of boys like running errands and even assists the father with light works. Generally, it is observed that parents assign duties and responsibilities to girls which require more time and patience. Their duties

like cleaning, washing, cooking keep them more occupied as compared to boys. In another instance, there is a popular saying, “*Mayarnaona khama khangakhai khangachana*”, which means that it is natural for boys to bear wounds, and which typically portray men as the one who engage themselves in risky ventures.

Individual come to terms with the new roles and physical changes as a boy or a girl adjust with new phases in their life cycle. In the process, gender values are reinforced by a person’s change of status and their new place in the society. For instance, the rite of passage among the Tangkhuls varies in different institutions. In their social institution, a boy is not considered an adult to represent the family until he is married. Among the girls, they are only given permanent status only when they become a wife. In their *khanrin* (village political institution), women are not allowed to be members. A boy is inducted into the membership of this institution when they are considered matured enough to participate in the decision making body, approximately by the age of 18. In economic life, they are counted as adult only when they attain the strength of an adult, that is by the age of 16 and this is applicable for both genders. In the religious life, baptism marks the membership but there is no specific age cut streamlined for such ceremonies.

Thus, socialization process results in a degree of uniformity among the members of a society as they come to share values and attributes. In order not

to deviate from the norms of gender values, an adolescent boy or girl among the Tangkhuls, is guided by parents and elders teaching rules of *ngalakhangakhot* (marriage) and *shokhala and vakhalat* (incest). Restrictions are also imposed on them which show marked differences. For instance, expectations of the norms do not permit an adolescent Tangkhul girl to move out from home after dark while permitting boys to go for *meisum* (fireside gathering).

Gender socialization, thus, begins virtually from birth. This process conditions a boy and a girl into two categories which function together in a culture. However, parents who believe they treat equally tend to produce different responses to boys and girls. Manifestation of such responses becomes obvious in their preference of a boy child over a girl child as men are considered as the upholder of the family's tradition.

Gender is not a fixed characteristic. It comes out in context of a particular encounter. Gender, as such, change with time and reproduce them through gender socialization. Among the Tangkhuls, social units like *shimkhur* (family), *theisa* (kinship), and *ngala khangakhot* (marriage), are highly gender institutionalized units where gender values are deeply embedded. Values in other institutions are interwoven with values in these institutions. Analysis of gender roles in the economic institution, for instance

is closely linked with gender roles in the family and vice versa. So, changing gender values are studied taking the aspects of the aforesaid institutions.

In the traditional *shimkhur* of the Tangkhuls, decision making in most cases in the overt and covert form shows men as the independent decision maker who represents the family in the social network. Women were not allowed to participate in decision making. In matters pertaining to their patrilineal system, women were not allowed to take their share except for the share she received at the time of her marriage. The Tangkhuls follow the rule of primogeniture. So, responsibilities rest on the *mayar kharara* (eldest son) to look after the welfare of the aged parents and unmarried siblings. Among the kin members, ties were strengthened by using proper terminologies by each gender and through exchange of goods, labour and help. The kin relations too show that children maintained close relationship with the *varei* (maternal uncle) where the ties were strengthened by frequent visits, love and care from the *varei*. In their *ngalakhangakhot* (marriage), strict rules of clan exogamy were maintained. Violation of which were met with expulsion from the village.

Comparing the traditional practices with the present ones, gender role is found to be closely related with the contribution which they make to their subsistence economy. For instance, individual's contribution to the family's economy through financial contribution and other means of livelihood shows

corresponding impact on their gender role. However, men are consulted in all matters. Even *shimluikat* (patriliny) witness a new trend where women also receives share in the form of immovable property. In kinship system, close kinship ties through day to day exchange and visits are now replaced by time to time exchange of material and immaterial tokens as many of the villagers are relocated in different places. Gender marked kinship terminologies too seem to have lost its importance today. In the past, younger siblings were never allowed to address the eldest brother and sister with their names. They were addressed as '*achon*' (elder sister) and '*amei*' (elder brother). But today, they either address them as *achon* + name or even with their name or petname. Stringent execution of marriage rule of exogamy like expulsion from the village has lost its practice even though such deviations are grimaced.

These evolving gender relations stress on themes of dependency or independence and gender roles within the family. Financial independence seems to be attainable by both genders. But the intersection of economy and gender however gives a different picture of gender socialization. For instance, more opportunities are open to boys in the status system among families of low income group and some sections of moderate income group while limiting girls as it become a matter of choice. Such intersection shows the interference of their patrilineal system. All these values are thus internalized by children through verbal and non-verbal clues from older members of the society.



II. Continuity and Change in Gender Relations

The agents of socialization are structured group or context within which significant process of socialization occurs. In the Tangkhul society, the family is the principle socializing agent of the child during infancy. The other influences include the *yarnao* (peers), *worshim* (schools), media, and *dharma* (religion). Continuity and changes of gender relations are visible through these agents.

Among the Tangkhuls, gender socialization takes place within the confines of a nuclear family. The *shimkhur* (family) consist of *ava* (father), *ava* (mother), *naongara* (children), grandparents - *ayi* (grandmother) and *awo* (grandfather), and unmarried siblings of the father - *ani* (aunts) and *avakato* (uncles). The most frequent faces in an infant life are the *ava*, *ani*, and *ayi*. As soon as the newly born infant is identified as a boy or a girl through anatomical characteristics, women of the family pamper the infant with gender stereotyped behavior. As the child learns to imitate gender roles, older siblings play with the younger ones and allocate roles of elders appropriate to one's gender. Play socialization disappears as children take more substantial role in family. The interference of *shimkhur-chinaongara* (family members) is observed in the child's role learning where older men, during this stage, teach young boys in performing their duties, while women take the growing girl child under their supervision. Grandparents teach gender appropriate behavior

and expectations of the society through folktales. Analyzing the stages of childhood and the changing nature of this agent, the mother is the most influential person in a child's life as her role in socialization process shows continuity right from birth till adolescent period.

Family as an agent is a continuation of the role played partly by the family and partly the role of *longshim* of the past. Traces of values imparted by these agents show that gender preference towards a boy child is something that has continued through these years. This is due to the patrilineal system which considers men as the upholder of the family's tradition. Continuity can also be located in implementation of rules where girls are not allowed to go out after sunset while permitting boys to go for *meisum*. The influence of patrilineality is also observed in opening avenues for the children. This is the point where one locates the changes as economy intersects with gender. In the past, though they long to have a son instead of daughters, marked differences were not visible in socialization process. However, with the introduction of new economic system like employment system and formal education, parents tend to favor boys among families with limited income. In their situation, they send their sons to private schools whereas girls are kept in low cost schools with lower level of education. In other cases, girls go for short term trainings whereas boys pursue further studies in higher education.

By the age of five, children start to venture beyond their courtyard to play with their neighbouring friends. Most children start attending school at

this age. This marks the beginning of their socialization outside the family domain. Different agents like education, religion, peer groups and media influence the child in the process of socialization.

In the past, *longshim* functions as the learning centre imparting social, educational, cultural and political values to boys while teaching were limited to social, educational and cultural values for girls. Changes are observed in this light as compared to the modern formal education system where boys and girls are given equal platform (The cumulative enrollment of students in three schools in Somdal village during the period 2004-2007 shows girl-boy enrolment in percentage at 48.7 and 51.3) for excellence. However, the intersection of economy, as discussed in the family, limits girls of the low income group. Continuity is located in the way of assigning status to an individual who are considered as learned. In the past, persons who were conversant with customary laws and who shows prowess in war or any other economic activities were respected. This ideal has now taken the form of educational qualification which is continuity. As such, formal education as an agent is a continuation of the *longshim*.

Gender is also embedded in the structure of religion. Among the Tangkhuls, the traditional religion at the village level is a complete portrayal of their patriarchy where women were not allowed to participate in religious rituals though men and women participate together in festivities. The role of

women is only visible in the family rite like *shimshar* (household genna) and other rituals which concern the family. Absence of women in rituals at the village level is indicative of their domain which is limited only within the domestic life. In the present structure of their church organization, there are certain demarcations on the basis of gender even though men and women participate equally in all religious ceremonies and in the church assembly (which is the decision making body). In the main religious body, they have pastors (only men), deacons and deaconess (12% women and 87% men), the choir (50%men and 50% women), the youth wings (chairs by men), women wings (which comprises only of married women) and the children department (comprising of all the children of the village). The present church organization as an agent is a continuation of the smaller unit of their old religion- the religious unit of family. Role replication of this agent shows changes in the structure and function which has expanded into a wider scale. For instance, the family earlier as agent of socialization is limited within the family domain. Church organization, on the other hand, today brings all members of the village under one single structure and give exposure outside the village through activities like conferences and camps.

The Tangkhuls use the term '*yarnao*' to designate a peer group, which is based on the age of individuals. The formation of such groups starts by the age of six years. In the past such groups manifest their solidarity through agriculture activities and festivities. An analysis on the changes shows that the structure of the peer group is now not necessarily based on age as there are

also group based on education and profession. Though there is now certain change in the structure the ideal of *yarnao* is still intact.

Media is totally a new agent which gives access to information beyond the village boundary. The only exposure in the past was through men who used to go for *khayao*. It is now replaced by media which opens doors for both genders. Media includes radio, television, newspaper and magazine. Impact on gender values are observed in their outlook beyond the boundary of their village life which is supplementary to education.

CONCLUSION

Socialization process shows that cultural construction of gender is manifested in the way the Tangkhul society socializes a child. According to the way they project *mayarnao kashok* (masculinity) through gender socialization, the society assigns more prominent values to men. For instance, terms such as *akhava* (head) and *shimluikat* (upholder of the family's tradition) are description of such values. Rituals such as *naoyan* and *naoming kaphok* depict gender favoritism towards a boy child which is a representation of importance given to men. Character describing boys as rough and daring is also another symbolism of such projection where men are considered to be more aggressive than women.

Values of femininity are found in girls' role imitation of a homemaker which shows that women are associated with the domestic ideology that identifies women particularly with the home. Women's values of caring (*sheba sakathei*) and understanding (*phapkata*) with the personality of patience (*khangkathei*) are the depiction of values assigned to women by culture. Gentle nature in speech and action of women associates feminine value in contrast to the aggressive way of men. Possessions of such values are termed as *ngalanao kashok* (feminine) in their society. For instance, girls playing with baby dolls show that they are socialize to the nurturing side of gender values. In their gender relations, a woman's status is always associated with men- as daughter of her father and as wife of her husband.

The Tangkhul society is at cross-road of traditional and modern culture. Gender is thus under the impact of both these factors. There have been certain changes in the structure of their culture where gender relations operate. This, in fact results to changes in their cultural practices. Change, as such, is a response provoked by modernity. These responses are created by new circumstances. For instance, subsistence economy could no longer sustain their livelihood with the growth of population. This in turn demands other sources of sustenance. The introduction of money, at the same time, replaces their exchange system. People become more and more dependent on monetary system. At this point, decision making shows more voices of women at the family level which however limit women to consult their husbands in all matters. In order to meet their needs parents prepare their

children by sending them to schools and colleges. But when choices are limited due to economic constraint, parents tend to favour boys. Thus the intersection of economy and gender and the responses of male preference to such circumstances are the interference of the traditional system of patriliney.

Gender relations take different forms and show its continuity through the years. Within this social relation of men and women, gender values too show continuity. For example, separate dormitories for boys and girls shows continuity today in the form of sitting arrangement in schools where the sexes are segregated after the third grade among the Tangkhuls. In the same way, the role of implementing rules to an adolescent by the *longshim* is taken over by the individual family. Some agents of socialization are new like media or the church organization which is however the continuation of some earlier agents like *khayao*, and family as a religious unit. Transmission of values through socialization process by different agents take different forms with new circumstances. Taking all this account, it becomes clear that socialization process is an important factor which influences gender relations.

According to the findings, it can thus be concluded that gender values have not experience drastic change. In spite of the continuity of gender values, there is no doubt, however, that the relations of men and women have changed over the years. These changes are responsible by the changing gender roles. Gradual changes in gender relations may however result to changes in their gender values.

It can be concluded that the existing culture of gender conditions gender socialization of children. Moreover, changes brought about by modernity like education and economic conditions may be associated with changes in their gender relations but do not necessarily lead to changes in their gender values. These values find their way through and continue to play its role through their culture. Here when we talk of values, it relates to the patriarchal ideologies. In order to marginalize the gap in their gender socialization, changes can only come from within the culture where platforms and privileges be equally given to both genders.

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**GENDER RELATIONS AMONG THE TANGKHULS OF MANIPUR
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY**

By

RV. KHANCHUILA

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Thesis Submitted

To

NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I, Rv.Khanchuila, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis titled “Gender Relations Among the Tangkhuls of Manipur: An Anthropological Study” is a bonafide study of my work and the contents of this thesis or a part thereof has not been submitted to any University / Institute for any other degree or award of any prize.

This has been submitted to North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology.

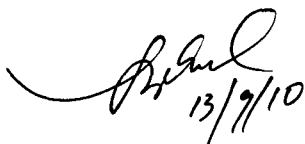


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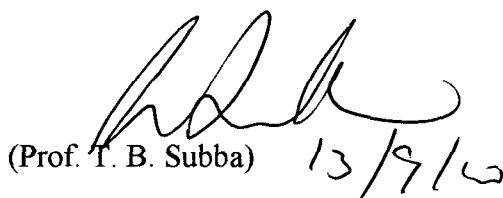


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Interest in gender asymmetry based on biological differences has been a feature of the discipline of Anthropology since the theory of evolution. The concept of 'gender' though, arises in the 1970's, is created in varying historical circumstances to the object of knowledge in differing ways. The empirical base was laid with the development of ethnography as early as the 1920's. Malinowski (1927) gave detailed descriptions of sexuality, marriage and divisions of labour and argued that emotional development flow from different kinship structure. Later, Mead (1935) reinforced the base of the concept of gender with the idea of fixed relationship between biological sex and gendered character.

After popularising the concept of 'sex roles' in the 1940's and 1950's, Parsons treated the distinction between male and female role as the difference of social functions (Parsons and Bales 1956). The concept was further renewed by Beauvoir (1949) when she formulated the idea that existence precedes essence; hence one is not born a woman, but becomes one. Her analysis focuses on the Hegelian concept of the Other. It is the (social) construction of Woman as the quintessential Other that Beauvoir identifies as fundamental to women's oppression. She further writes that it was nowhere more true than with sex in

which men stereotyped women and used it as an excuse to organize society into a patriarchy.

In the early writings on kinship, Schnieder (1968) argued that kinship is far less rooted in biological essences than usually claimed; rather, he contended that the shared biological substance, blood, was constituted by culture to account for and make kinship bonds. This formulation opened up the possibility for anthropologists to explore other areas (Yanagisako and Delancy 1995). Schnieder's formulation could be read as suggesting that gender categories thought to be rooted in biology are also culturally, rather than biologically, constituted that they were ideas framed in particular cultural context and as such far more flexible than anyone had previously thought.

In 1975, Rupin put forward her concept of 'sex/gender system.' She defines it as the process by which a biological category, female, is transformed into social and cultural category, woman. By pointing to a mechanism through which sex, which she understood as some sort of universal biological attribute of the person was transformed into gender, she identified a considerably more flexible and relative, as well as constructed quality. She argued that gender as a set of meanings and relationships is related to but not isomorphic with biological sex. Brown and Jordanova (1982) also point out that biological differences do not

provide a universal basis for social definitions. What cultures make of sex differences is almost infinitely variable, so that biology cannot be playing a determining role. Women and men are products of social relations; if we change the social relations we change the categories “women” and “man.”

On the basis of this argument, anthropologists made a point that the inevitable fact of biological difference between the sexes tells nothing about the general social significance of that difference. And that the category “woman” and “man” cannot be defined by their biology while simultaneously refining female/male physiology into a cross-cultural, social category. Harris (1993) defines gender as the term to denote the variable emic meanings associated with culturally defined sexual identities as against the etic sexual identity of human beings. As such, gender is a cultural division which in the words of Moore (1994) are fundamentally cultural construction.

The cultural construction of gender takes socially specific norms where the distinction between what is female and what is male is used to structure other cultural contrasts. For instance, the individual constructs herself or himself in relation to the cultural representations of what is male and what is female. As such, ‘gender’ is a term used to encompass the social expectations associated with femininity and masculinity.

The concept of gender has also moved from the widely held definition of “man”/ ”woman” as stable, ultimately connected to interpretations of biological sex to examination of such notions in which gender offers a set of symbols and meanings for interpretation. Butler (1990) argued that there are no fixed foundations of gender categories. Gender is performative, bringing identities into existence through action, rather than expressive of some pre-existing reality. Another common practice is the concept of sameness, or the notion of universal “woman.” However, images, attributes, activities and behaviour of men and women, girls and boys are always culturally and historically specific.

In the early writings on gender, some anthropologists based their definition on the concept of universal asymmetry of gender. Rosaldo (1974:41) writes that “universal asymmetries in the actual activities and cultural evaluations of men and women” are related to “a universal structural opposition between domestic and public spheres.” Likewise, Ortner (1974) put forward her formulation that ‘nature is to culture as female is to male’ where she tried to identify and locate the cultural valuations which make women appear ‘closer to nature’. However, a shift from the concept of gender as asymmetrical dichotomies to rethinking of the concept of “self” is established. In the words of Strathern (1981), gender constructs are linked to the concept of self, personhood and autonomy. Any

analysis of such concepts necessarily involves some consideration of choice, strategy, moral worth and social value as they relate to the actions of individual social actors.

Later in the 1990s, some writers (Benhabib 1992, Moore 1994) even argue that the notion of 'sex' or the nature of the biological make-up of men and women is likewise a social construction. So what is recognized as a physically distinct body is not so straightforward a matter as once thought. The biological 'given' may sometimes conflict with other people's idea about physical reality as some people in Amazonia have no concept of 'body'. A person's capability for reproduction is considered as other worldly source and not a biological matter (Strathern 1992, Overing 1996).

Some others (Croll 2000) argue that ethnographic studies which focus on reproductive or birth culture confirm that sex and gender cannot be distinguished. Likewise Young (2002) put forward her suggestion that a category of lived body has advantages over a category of gender for feminist and queer theories: (1) no nature-culture distinction is necessary but the body can be described as historically and socially specific; (2) it is not necessary to break out a gendered and "raced" part of identity with this category; (3) differences of sexual desire can be described without recourse to an "inner core" of identity or "sexual

orientation.” She goes on to argue, however, that it is important to retain gender as an analytical concept.

The concept of gender relations like the concept of gender itself developed out of the taken for granted idea of hegemonic relations. In the early ethnographic writings women were missing in the analysis. So the question of gender relations does not come into the purview of the analysis.

Ardener’s article entitled ‘Belief and the problem of women’ (1972) points out women as the ‘muted group’. Ardener based his theory on culture/nature dichotomies where culture attempts to control and transcend nature. Rosaldo (1974), on the other hand, takes ‘domestic’ versus ‘public’ model. Like them, Goodale (1980) popularize the concept of pollution where women are considered as polluting which placed them closer to nature. Recognition of women as the unseen others brought in the concept of gender relations in the development of gender studies.

Many writers of the 1970s and 1980s used Marxist models of power relations to interpret their findings, a western paradigm of power par excellence. Many researchers tend to universalise domination of women. Well known volume of Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) focus on the premise that asymmetry

between women and men was universal. Even though they acknowledged the existence of societies in which women achieved considerable social recognition, and power, they were more concerned with the fact that society in which women have publicly recognised power and authority surpassing that of men was not observed. This is also evident in the writings of Ortner and Whitehead (1981) when they defined gender as a form of social inequality, that they view the study of gender as ‘inherently a study of relations of asymmetrical power and opportunity’ (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:4).

The Marxian argument of Meillassoux (1981) was one of the strongest assertions of the universal domination of women by men. Meillassoux argues that it was the formation of the sexual division of labour itself that led to the socio-political subjugation of women, and thus made ‘the women (or slave) a servant of men’ (Meillassoux 1981:21). Notions about universal male superiority and female inferiority established the assumption of gender relations which is enacted through modes of exploitation and domination.

Though the approach of “universal asymmetry of gender relations” gained momentum during this period, there were, of course, some ethnographers who questioned this approach. Reiter (1975) argues that such notions are imposition of the dichotomised world of the west on others. Others like Stack (1974) and

Weiner (1976) offer new interpretations paying close attention to the voices of women. Faithorn (1976) approaches gender relations analysing individuals as persons.

There are also some ethnographers who, unlike writers who takes asymmetrical relations, approach gender as social relationship. They criticise the assumption of universal subordination of women and argued that gender is a social role which holds different value by women and men and in no way these differences imply superiority or inferiority (Leacock 1978, Bell 1983, Sack 1974).

The concept of gender relations based on subordination of women were considered as powerful myth about gender relations associated with both the rise of science (Jordanova 1980) and capitalism (Benhabib 1992) in the west. The work of Gillison on theories of power, and the place of gender relations within it, of the Gimi of Highland New Guinea (Gillison 1993) points out that gender relation differ substantially in different cultures.

Cross-cultural ethnographic accounts too show that the relations between the genders may well be subject to perspective, where women have a different view from men of their roles and participation within the social life of the

community. As Rapport and Overing (2000:152) point out, it only by understanding both male and female (often complementary) perspectives that gender relations among another people can begin to be comprehended. Connell (2002) distinguishes four dimensions of gender relations. The first dimension is power relations operating through institutions in the form of oppression of one group by another. The second dimension is production relations in which works are assigned on the basis of gender. The third dimension is emotional relations where charges of emotions – both positive and negative – are attached in the unconscious mind, to gender images. Symbolic relation is the fourth dimension which includes the rules for gender attribution in speech, writing, dress, makeup, gesture, photography and film, and in more forms of culture such as the built environment. Gender relation is a study of what it means to be female and, feminine, and in relation to what it means to be male and masculine, that is, knowledge about the interrelations between women and men, girls and boys, of gender, and of the role of gender in structuring human societies, their histories, ideologies, economic systems and political structures.

Statement of the Problem

The Tangkhul society is a patriarchal society. The *gahara* (husband) is the *akhava* (head) of the household and his wife is the *akhavaiva* (wife of *akhava*) of the household. The society thus follow the system of descent where sons uphold the tradition of the family and daughters are merged into the clan of her husband's clan as they get married. They follow the primogeniture in their patrilineal system. In this system, the eldest sons are given the lion's share of the family's property and responsibilities of the whole family rest on his shoulder.

The present study attempts to understand gender relations within the cultural set up of the Tangkhuls from the perspective of gender socialization. In the words of Barnard and Spencer, "Socialization is the process through which people, and especially children, are made to take on the ideas and behavior appropriate to life in a particular society" (1996: 512). In the words of Wharton (2005), "Gender socialization is the processes through which individuals take on gendered qualities and characteristics and acquire a sense of self" (2005: 31).

Gender relations are thus determined taking the perspective of gender socialization in the context of the Tangkhul culture. The process through which people learn how to be feminine and masculine and the society's messages about

what are appropriate behaviours for men and women get transmitted to its members are examined.

The parameters of internalizing gender values are taken into study and also examine if gender values are changing in the Tangkhul society. Various agencies of socialization, notably family, school, peer group, etc. were examined. These agencies conveyed to the girl / boy what the social norms or expectations for her / his behavior are. The present study also attempts to assess how socialization process is responsible for continuity and change in gender relations through these agents.

Review of Literature

Anthropological studies document a wide array of interpretations on the meanings of what it is to be a man and a woman. The separate treatment of gender as an important aspect of Indian societies began in the late 1960s and 1970s. Studies of Kinship, marriage, caste, and village structure, for example, have traditionally been carried out without rethinking received assumption regarding gender. However, Indian anthropological literature on gender in recent times takes different perspectives.

Gender studies in India show that patriarchal and patrilineal ideology play a defining role in gender relations. Madan explored on the ideology of householder among the Kashmiri pandits and described how the personhood of women are encompassed by that of men. He writes, “In fact, they(women) are defined in the ideology primarily as mothers and wives, and their identity is defined in relation to men...In non- ritual contexts women are the mistresses of the domestic scene (*gharavajin*, one having a home) and the bearers of the burden of the household (grhasthadarin)”(Madan 1992: 116).

Khare (1992) takes the aspect of the cultural aspect of kinship in northern India and concludes that the dominant patrilineal ideologies of the system align female principles to that of male.

Dube made a comparative study on the south and south-east Asian culture from the perspective of gender and explored different aspects of their culture. She explores gender relations in different societies from the perspective of Kinship. She discusses the patrilineal and matrilineal kinship system of south Asia. According to her, patrilineal system functions and works at the cost of women whereas authority is found to be diffuse and varied in matrilineal system (Dube 1997).

Determining gender imbalances in India, the patriarchal social order are considered as one root cause with its feature of male hegemony, male line of social descent and an in-built structured form of hierarchically arranged social inequality. Attributes like gender-inequality vs. Gender-equality, sacred vs. profane and continuity vs. discontinuity co-exist with each other and are not dichotomous in the Indian society (Haq 2007). Analyzing the impact of such ideology, Haq argues that committing *sati* by the wife after the death of her husband is one such manifestation in the old patriarchal social order which is now replaced by dowry death and suicide in the new social order due to religious as well as economic repressions.

The study on *Sati*, the burning of a Hindu widow on her husband's funeral pyre, by Major (2006) is another such studies which reveals a broad range of responses and attitudes, both Indian and foreign, on the concept and ritual of sati down the ages. Though it affects only a tiny minority of Hindu widows, it has remained close to the surface of social and political life and has played a disproportionately prominent role within Indian history and culture (Major 2006).

The above studies give a general picture of the Indian gender set up. The implication of these patrilineal and patriarchal ideologies seems to manifests



itself in certain practices of their culture. The study of Behera and Nanda among the Bhuiyans of Orissa shows that a male child is preferred. Women of this tribe are made to believe that the birth of a son is desirable- not only as the first child but in case of all children. Her own status in the family circle is exalted if she bears a son. Therefore, the birth of a female child is regarded as an unwelcome event in most of the bhuiyan families. The society gives open sanction- to these attitudes and the girl grows up accepting her inferior status (Behera and Nanda 1997:157- 158).

The works of Croll is one such example where she makes a comparative study in Asia on gender discrimination and development. Her research presented two powerful messages: The first is that children are gendered; the second is that practically and cognitively daughters are reasoned to be secondary and supplementary but rarely a substitute for sons (Croll 2000).

The work of Singh (2001) is also indicative of the gender dimension in value and preference of children. Studies on the reproductive experiences of the couples and the strategies adopted to achieve a given size and composition of children shows that high fertility and larger family size is often the result of son preferences whereas daughters are considered a liability for the family. This is evident from the inter-birth interval and the order of birth which shows that the

gap is shorter in cases of parents who long for sons and longer in cases of girls. Attempt is also made to study the self-perception of the status of women and also by other members of the family across different family composition which shows the influence of the patriarchal nature of the society.

Such status differential given to women is even sharper in their division of labour and gender roles in the family. In this regard, the work of Sharma and Vanjani (1994) is a notable example. They take the perspective of reproductive activities in terms of social relations of reproduction in a village of Rajasthan. The study shows that women are charged with upholding the family's status through their actions and this further embeds an inherently conservative bias in defining the parameters of what women may or may not do to ensure continuity of the social order. It also shows that women's role in reproduction is relegated to secondary status through the sexual division of labour in the family. Gender gap becomes even sharper among the poor as women are marginalized and insecure.

Another practice in the Indian cultural system which shows gender imbalances is the practice of prostitution. In the Indian context, prostitution is carried out mostly by women. According to the findings of Bhandhari (2010) on the history of prostitution in India, outright kidnapping, extreme poverty, misfortunes such as widowhood, social customs such as birth in such a

community or tribe which perpetuate prostitution amongst their unwed female-folks were some of the reasons compelling women to take to prostitution.

In order to take views on prostitution, Gangoli's (2007) studied on the key trends within Indian feminist analysis on prostitution, and is based on primary fieldwork around feminist organizations in India and on research conducted on prostitution in the states of Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal and Orissa. According to her findings, there are at least three ways in which Indian feminists have addressed the issue of prostitution - as silence, as hurt and violence and as potential choice and liberation. Firstly, 'mainstream' Indian feminists did not raise issues of sexuality, thereby relegating questions of prostitute rights to the margins. Secondly, she takes the radical feminist critiques of prostitution as violence and hurt, and legitimizes itself by drawing on the articulations of those sex workers and activists who draw on the experiences of hurt, anguish, violence and coercion that form a part of their lives. Finally, she considers prostitute rights organizations that seek to create an alternative to these analyses.

The above findings thus show that this profession is not chosen out of preference but out of necessity. Taking another perspective on prostitution other than profession which is associated with gender imbalances, Rohini, Shankar and Apte (2008) attempts to mitigate the negativity which has come to be associated

indelibly with any mention of sex work. They address the issue by taking various theoretical positions on sex work in order to appreciate the way feminist analysis on prostitution in India has evolved. They take in studies of historical forms, societal interactions and responses to the existing realities of sex work and cultural impacts of prostitution in language, cinema, theatre, media, etc.

Closer exploration on the practices of the Indian culture by various scholars also indicates the working of the gender system and the forces which underpinned such culture. Holden gave an insightful and innovative account on the intersections of religion and law, divorce customs and law, in Hindu societies which proves that divorce amongst Hindus is not only more widespread than is readily conceded by orthodox Hindus, but is actually sanctioned by law and society under certain circumstances (Holden 2008).

Like Holden, Chandra (2008) studies the case of Rukhmabai which reveals the inner workings of the legal system and laws surrounding marriage and divorce during the colonial period and the overlying ideologies that strengthened it. The study highlights the plight of women and the injustices of child marriage which always puts women to the disadvantaged position. This is thus indicative that legal system and laws itself carries the patriarchal nature of their cultural ideologies.

The patrilineal ideology of the society also has its impact on the lives of men and women through the imposition of laws of inheritance pattern. The study of Rao (2008) unfolds the lives of women among the Santals and their gender relations through the study of rights to land which give more advantages to men. The intersection of community identity with gender is also made evident through the study as the identity as adivasis has also been responsible for denying women rights to land in the context of the movement for political autonomy of Jharkhand.

Ramamurthy's (1994) study of rural Andhra Pradesh on patriarchy and the process of agricultural intensification demonstrate how class and gender intersects with agricultural intensification. In other words, it shows that any increase in output and earnings are enjoyed disproportionately by land owners at the cost of the landless, by larger landowners at the cost of the marginal, and by men at the cost of women.

There also exists a third gender in India known as *hijras* in the Indian societies. Their presence from the Hyderabad royal patronage to the contemporary neo-liberalism shows the complex milieu of identities and practices that underlie their identity and their differences. The portrait of the community of

hijras in Hyderabad suggests that they cannot be viewed simply through the lens of gender and sexual differences as they do not consider it that way. They cast themselves as embodiment of respect and morality; people beyond factional politics of men and women who have paid the necessary price to transform gender dominance into intergendered, auspicious and playful thirdness. Thus, Reddy sheds new light on the Indian society and the intricate negotiations of identity across various domains of everyday life (Reddy 2005).

Recent works on feminist ethnography can be seen in the works of Visweswaran (1994) who works on the women in southern India which addresses in the forms of autobiography, personal narrative, fable and fiction. In each essay, she takes up the specific ellipses of power differentials in her field research. She focuses on the notion that ethnographic accounts are constructed, and tell stories if not always the stories we expect as anthropologists. Her work shows how different narratives strategies may be authorized at specific moments in history. She deals with fiction of restoring lost voices, fictions of ethnography in the constitution of knowledge, power and authority in anthropological texts, and that we may consider fiction as ethnography. Collection concludes with a short study showing that fiction is indeed ethnography. The result is a series of contextualization of the politics of identity in the field, at "home," and within the lives of women who participated in the Indian nationalist movement.

In the north-eastern region, gender studies can be seen in two cultural systems. One system is the patrilineal set up where the descent is traced from men and the other is the matrilineal system where descent is reckoned from the women's line.

The division of gender is apparent in the Naga family life when Hodson writes, "The family structure is breached by the marriage of its members. The sons set up for themselves. The daughters are removed by the law of exogamy into another clan or group of consanguineous households. The severance of the women from her clan is not complete, as the duty of revenge, should she be hurt, is with her clan of origin (Hodson 1911: 71)." Writing on gender relations in other matters, Hodson points to "food taboos which are imposed on women but not on men, to the customs which separates the sexes at village gennas, and to the rigid demarcation of the economic functions of the sexes. Symbolic relations can be seen in their food habit where women smoke the pipes and the men utilize the nicotine (ibid 77)."

Horam gave a gender marked principle in their social life through his statement that it was necessary that the cult of the wife should be the cult of the husband; and the Naga women, on marrying into another household, necessarily

become attached to the cult of her husband's family. For this reason especially the females in the patriarchal family are not equal to the males, the sisters cannot rank with the brother. The advent of Christianity is considered as one important factor that brought changes in the traditional set up of their culture which ushered in modernization in the Naga society (Horam 1988).

In an attempt to analyze the status of women in Naga society, Zehol (1998) writes, "Naga society following the patrilineal and patriarchal system has norms and attitudes of patriarchy which affects, the status of women. Institutions and tradition are inspired by the belief in male dominance and female inferiority" (1998: 2). Gender studies on the patriarchal societies of north east shed new lights on the society's gender system.

Zehol attempts a bird eye view of gender relations when she examines the existing stereotyped images of women in the Naga society. According to her, men in their own societies do not treat women as their equal. She draws an imagery of gender socialization when she writes that a boy child, up to the age of thirteen or fourteen is allowed to lead a life of ease, fun and pleasure, while the girl child is trained to take up responsibilities of the household and play a little mother's role (Zehol 2006).

Aier explores the construction of gender through cultural ethos embodied in the folklore and oral tradition among the Nagas. She states that the Naga society is a patriarchal, patrilineal society wherein the structure of the relationship between the genders normally gets the legal sanction through institutions such as the customary laws. According to her findings, Naga women still continue to struggle against the male bias structure of the society and culture whereby they can neither inherit land nor are allowed to occupy seats of political importance and decision making despite the tremendous social and cultural change (Aier 2008).

Unlike the patrilineal system where the descent is traced from the male line, there also exist the matrilineal system of the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos where the descent is traced from women. In this system of matrilineality, the *khaddu* or the youngest daughter is the inheritor of the ancestral property. In this kind of cultural set up different writers have analyzed gender relations and have given hints on the power structure of genders in matrilineal society.

In the case of the Khasis, gender asymmetry is visible in different aspects of their lives. The system is closely tied with belief system which is premised on the ritual unity of the sibling group. In this system where the descent is traced from the women's line, gender seems to revolve around authority and residential

pattern. In their inheritance pattern, the youngest daughter though inherits the ancestral property is not free to deal with it as she pleases. While women uphold the tradition of the family, authority is concentrated in the hands of men as authority is shared between a mother's brother and father. This reduces her only as the custodian of the property as the control is vested in the hands of her male matrikin (Nongbri 1996). As such, women have no independent identity.

Pakytien (1999) writes that the role of the youngest daughter as the 'heiress' and the eldest maternal uncle as the 'authority' indicate complementary roles shared by both the sexes. Taking the parameters of 'extinct – family' and 'adoption' as the scale to measure gender preference, she concluded that these concepts are no longer held sacrosanct and there are many forces trying to make the male child equally important. Such forces, according to her, are not only exogenous but also endogenous.

In the matrilineal set up of the Khasis, gender asymmetry is thus based on the principle of male dominance unexpectedly. As the writings of Nongbri (2008) shows, even the language of the Khasis too gives picture of their asymmetrical gender relations. For instance, terms like *rangbah* is denotative of male dominance where 'rang' comes from *shynrang* meaning men and bah means to carry on the back. The sayings of the Khasis also categorize women and children

under the same category. Nongbri goes on to argue that gender ideologies of the Khasis define women as inferior to men where women have rights over children and property and men over politics. She blames the external forces like education and Christianity as powerful factors that have brought about hitch to the firm foundation of the matrilineal system.

It is clear from the above review that gender analysis of both matrilineal and patrilineal shows unequal power structure where men control women. However, gender gap is wider in the patrilineal society as compared to that of matrilineal system. As Mukhim points out, "Matrilineal is advantageous for women" (2009:203). Since women are the perpetuator of the lineage, there is no doubt that parents place greater value on daughters.

Coming closer home, the Tangkhuls, one of the major tribes of the Nagas, is a patriarchal society who follows the patrilineal system of descent. In their inheritance pattern, they follow the rule of male primogeniture. As such men head the family, the clan and the village. As head of each sub-unit, they represent their respective units. Women on the other hand are not entitled to the headship and cannot be representatives of such units. The inheritance pattern thus sanctions these rights only to men as descent is traced from men. The first son succeeds to the headship of the house. A woman either a wife or a daughter is not considered

in the matter of succession to the leadership. The real position of women in the family is, however, to become part of family of her husband (Ruivah 1993).

The status of sons and daughters in the Tangkhul family can also be taken from the popular saying '*Mayarnao matha-meilungna, kha shanao hiya kazing muiyana*' which means that man is the stone of the hearth, but woman is the cloud of the sky (Ruivah and Lurstep 1996:276).

In the patriarchal set up of the Tangkhul society, the constructions of feminine and masculine values are asymmetrical. As Shimray writes, women in the life of the Tangkhuls are always to be humble and submissive to men without reservation. Attributing this to the nature of their social set up, he states that the Tangkhuls, being a patriarchal society, women should be under the control of men (2001). A woman as such is only identified with men and has no independent status of her own. With the dependent status on men, the values thus assigned to women are not equivalent to what is being sanctioned to men of the society.

Though literatures available on the society are limited, one can draw conclusions through the writings the asymmetrical relations of women and men. But it should be noted that the available literature lacks proper analysis on gender though clues can be taken from the remarks mentioned above.

In the Indian context, there seem to be certain kind of uniformity in gender construction where patriarchy plays a defining role in their ideology as well as in everyday practice. This is even true of the north eastern region, where the patrilineal as well as the matrilineal system exist with patriarchal nature in gender relations. Though the available literatures on the Tangkhuls are few which lack gender analysis, the available literature shows dominance of men. In this light, it would be worthwhile to examine how gender values are reproduced through socialization process and examine how self image of gender is formed.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To study how gender values are internalized in Tangkhul society through socialization process and examine if gender values are changing in the Tangkhul society.
- To assess the socialization process as factor responsible for both continuity and change in gender relations among the Tangkhuls

SOURCES AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The present study is primarily based on field work. The fieldwork was carried out at Somdal village, located in the western side of Ukhrul district of Manipur. The village is 103 kms away from the state capital. It has 410 households with a total strength of 2249 population - 1112 female and 1137 male. The village is divided into seven localities, inhabited by seven clans. However, residence is not based on clan or any other criteria.

Maintaining rapport with the local people was not a problem as the researcher enjoys the status of an insider. The researcher is well-versed with the local dialect and their ways of life. So, there was no communication gap in the process of data collection. Since the topic itself calls for close examination of human relations in every aspect of their life, minute investigation was undertaken with or without the informants' knowledge. One advantage which the researcher has in the process of investigation is that the people consider the researcher as one of them. As such, the people do not have the inhibition to express their views and their secrets. However, proper care was taken in order to avoid the biasness of studying one's own culture as slight twist of the study can give a contorted picture of the society.

This is a qualitative research. As Bodgan and Taylor put it, “Qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior” (1975:4). In other words, it refers to social research based on field observations analyzed without statistics. This method allows us to see people as they are. The subject may or may not know that they are being observed for social research purposes. The present research is thus a matter of why parents prefer a boy/girl child and not a question of how many parents prefer a boy/girl child.

Primary data were collected with the help of household census, observation, interview schedules and case study methods. Interactions between parents and children, actions of parents and children were observed. The period of pregnancy and birth along with three age groups were taken among the children as it marks different levels of socialisation as follows:

- 0-5 years** :This is the stage where the children spent most of their time within the home environment.
- 6-12 years** :The children at this stage start to venture beyond their courtyard and begin to internalize gender values beyond their home environment.

12-18 years :This is the stage when they enter their adolescence stage and at the later stage most children move out from the village to pursue their career.

Key informants were also selected from knowledgeable persons in order to procure knowledge of their cultural practices and of the past. The following persons were selected as key informants.

1. Wungkathing Shimray (54, chief's brother)
2. Vareisui Muivah (60,village chairman)
3. Joseph Ruivah (59, pastor)
4. Khashim Ruivah (72, scholar)
5. Laphuila Phungshok (80, lady)
6. Rakangla Muivah (80, lady)
7. Worthingla Rungsung(46, chairperson-women society)
8. Harngaila Muivah (80, lady)
9. Masathei Shimray (84, lady)
10. Lungreila Ruivah (79, lady)
11. Harngaiva Shimray (83, lady)
12. Pangaila Khamrang (78, lady)
13. Lungrei Muivah (82, man)
14. Ranam Ruivah (81, man)

15. Chinaongai Ruivah (80, man)

16. Yarho Ruivah (79, man)

These people were selected on the basis of their knowledge which forms the crucial part of collecting data for the present study. The group of aged persons among the key informants other than leaders of certain institutions belong to the group who experience the old dormitory system (*longshim*) in the early post Christianity period and thus they have fair knowledge of the past traditional practices. Moreover through experience gained through their lives, these key informants could give the information necessary for the present study besides the informants who comes under the selected families. Case studies were also taken up in order to understand every detail of how their culture functions.

Three income groups were also charted out as high, moderate and low from within each clan to determine how gender values intersect at different levels of income groups. The three income groups were classified based on the income as follows.

Low Income Group : Below 1 lakh per annum

Moderate Income Group : 1 lakh – 2 lakh per annum

High Income Group : 2 lakh and above

This includes income in cash, agricultural products and handicrafts, converted into cash according to the standard rate of the village. The informants are chosen from these income groups as there are cases where gender intersects with economy.

Taking into consideration the criteria mentioned above 50 families were chosen for the present study as follows.

Table 1: Clan Representation in the Three Income Groups.

CLANS	LOW INCOME GROUP	MODERATE INCOME GROUP	HIGH INCOME GROUP
Ruivah	3	3	3
Muivah	6	4	4
Khamrang	3	3	2
Shimray	1	3	3
Rungsung	2	3	0
Shimrang	1	1	2
Phungshok	2	1	0
	18	18	14

Source: Fieldwork

Families of the seven clans are again chosen from different localities according to their income category as follows.

Table 2. Family Representation according to Localities and Income.

LOCALITIES	LOW INCOME GROUP	MODERATE INCOME GROUP	HIGH INCOME GROUP
Shimphungtang	1	1	1
Shijantang	2	3	3
Tangrei	4	3	3
Awungtang	2	2	1
Letyantang	3	4	2
Awortang	4	2	3
Kasomtang	2	3	1

Source: Fieldwork

The subjects were selected from each clan and from each locality as shown in the tables. They were selected considering the family who have children between the age group of 0-18 years. This was done as few selected families could be used as samples under different income groups, clans and location of residence.

Fifty families were thus studied with the total number of 358 informants which includes all family members of these families. Out of these informants, 187 are female whereas 171 are male. Gender composition in each income groups are shown below.

Table 3: Gender Composition in each Income Group.

Income groups	Female	Male
Low	66	64
Moderate	66	68
High	55	39
Total	187	171

Source: Fieldwork

Out of 358 informants, 193 informants fall under the age groups mentioned earlier. Table of informants under this category are shown asunder according to their age groups and income groups.

Table 4: Number of informants under different age groups and income groups.

Age groups	Low	Moderate	High	Total
0-5 years	26	18	13	57
6-12 years	31	31	13	75
13-18 years	20	21	20	61
	77	70	46	193

Source: Fieldwork

Besides these informants, 16 key informants were consulted as mentioned. So, including these key informants, a total of 372 informants were interviewed and observed for the study.

Secondary data related to the work were also collected from various sources wherever necessary. Library of the University as well as other universities like Gauhati University, Manipur University and private libraries of some individuals were consulted.

CHAPTER II

LAND AND PEOPLE

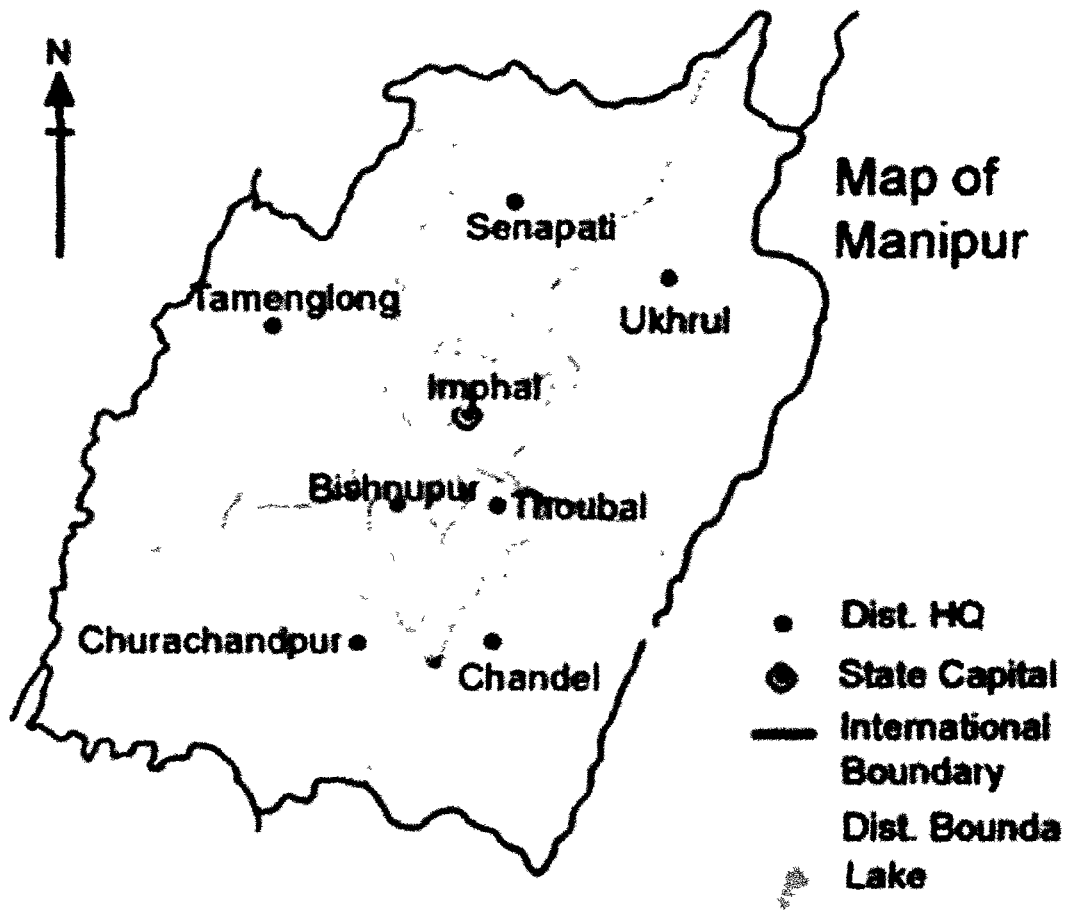
THE TANGKHULS

Location and Boundaries

Manipur, a state with an area of 22, 327 sq. Km located at the far end of north east India along the Indo-Myanmar border. Out of the total land mass, the Tangkhuls occupy an area of 4544 sq kms which constitute Ukhrul district. It lies at an altitude of 913m – 3114m and between 24 N – 25.41 N latitude and 94 E – 94.47 E longitude. It is one of the nine districts of the state which was elsewhere known as Manipur East district before the attainment of full fledged district in 1969. It is bounded by Myanmar in the east, Chandel District in the south, Imphal East and Senapati District in the west and Nagaland State in the north (www.ukhrul.nic.in).

Ukhrul is divided into four zones. They are *Raphei* –northern zone, *Zingsho Kamo*- eastern zone, *Kharao*-the western zone and *Aze kamo* – the southern zone. According to Luikham (2009), such divisions are based on their dialect. For administrative purpose under the government of Manipur, it is again divided into three constituencies, Viz., *Chingai*, *Phungyar* and *Ukhrul*. However it should be noted that these political sub-divisions do not follow the division of the Tangkhuls stated earlier (www.ukhrul.nic.in).

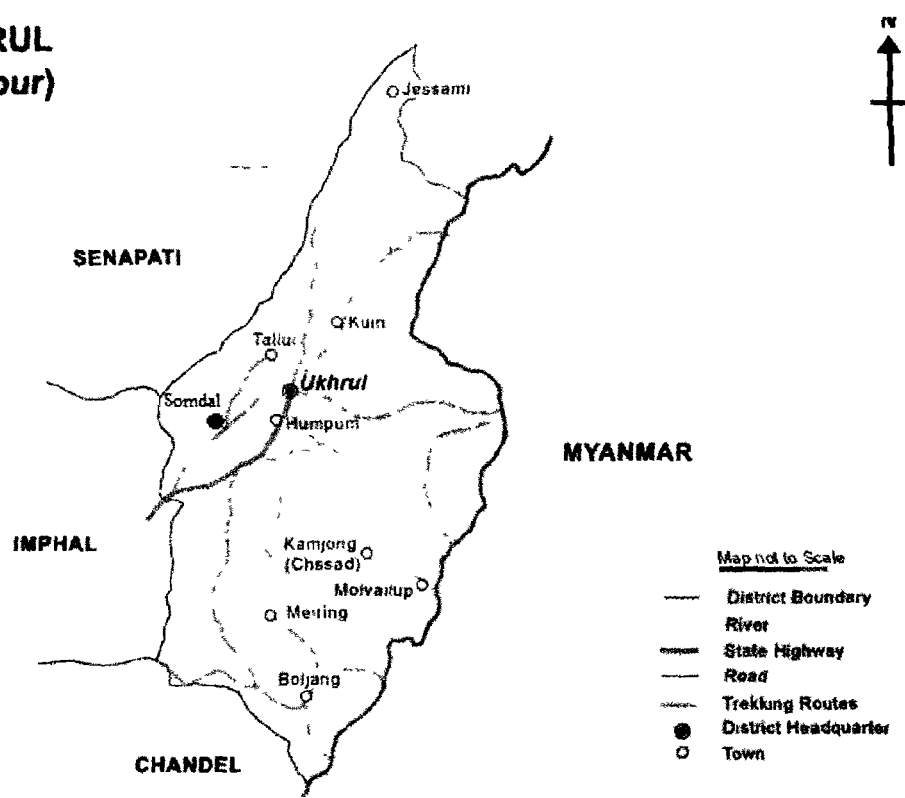
Map of Manipur



Source: www.mapofindia.com

Map of Ukhrul

UKHRUL (Manipur)



Source: www.mapofindia.com

Topography

The topography of this hill station varies from range to range. Out of the total geographical area of Ukhrul district, 63.45% is covered by forest, 2.13 % covers by agricultural land, 1.45 % by settlement, 32.65% by land with/without scrub and the remaining 0.9% by others (www.ukhrul.nic.in).

Vegetation

Vegetation of the district ranges from tropical rain forest to sub-alpine forest. Some are well wooded with thick forests; some are steep and rugged, while some others are plain and well drained by several rivers. The forest vegetation is mainly of pine (*ngatangthing*), mixed with oak (*shirimthing*), walnut (*shirangthing*), uningthou (*mafathing*), and mixed evergreen forest. (Ruivah 1993).

Fauna

Besides flora, different species of fauna enrich the forest habitat. Animals like bear (*singom*), deer (*chao*), wild boar (*ramhok*), stag (*sirao*), monkeys (*nayong*), and many other wild animals are found. Attractive birds of different varieties like Cuckoo (*koktui*), wild pigeon (*nasha*), bulbul (*ramok*), magpie (*meipak*) and many other varieties add to the lustre. Besides these, different varieties of bees (*khui*) add to the richness of the habitat.

Rivers, Peaks, Lake and Waterfall

Some eminent rivers are *Iril, Ihang, Thoubal, Chingjaroi, Chingai, Chamu, Maklang, Taret, Tuyungbi, Chatrik, Maku*, etc. The rivers in of this district are not navigable but are good for fishing (Ruivah 1993). The eminent peaks are *Khayangphung, Kaopu, Zingsui Khova, and Shiroy Kashong*. *Shiroy kashong* is well known for a special variety of lily known as *lilium Machliniae*. Besides peaks and rivers, the beautiful lake called *Kachouphung Magi* adds to the scenic beauty of this hill topography. The lake is situated not far from the international boundary (Luikham 2009).

Climate and Rainfall

The mainland of the Tangkhul experiences a cold winter and a mild summer. Temperature varies from 3 degrees celsius to 33 degree celsius. The climatic condition is however not the same in all places. The southern zone is comparatively warmer than the other zones. The district has the sub tropical monsoon type of climate and receives heavy rainfall during the period from June to October with scanty rainfall in winter. The average rainfall is between 1600 mm to 2100 mm (www.ukhrul.nic.in). Season may be classified into three categories, viz., the cold season (*sikachang*) from November to February, the hot season (*lumkachang*) from March to May, and the rainy season (*zingrot atam*) from June to October.

Roads

Ukhrul is the only town in the district. It is linked with the state capital by a district highway known as Ukhrul-Imphal road. It enters the district from the south western corner. The other road enters from Kohima via Phek-Jessami on the extreme north of the district. There is also another road from Tadubi, which enters into the middle of western side of the district via Phaibung-Hoomi and runs up to the district headquarter. Besides these, there are many detours which connect the Headquarter from various villages and from village to village.

The People

The Tangkhul Naga tribe is one of the major tribes of Manipur (Ruivah 1993: 17). The population according to the 2001 census is 109275 – 56,997 male and 52,278 female.

The Tangkhul belongs to the Mongoloid race. According to Sen (1992), the stature of the tribes of Manipur are generally medium to above medium stature, mesocephalic head, every prosopic broad flat round face, Broad high cheekbone, flat platyrrhine to leptorrhine nose, brownish-yellow skin, narrow Mongoloid oblique eyes with limbs and they are strong and sturdy (ibid 1992:20).

Language

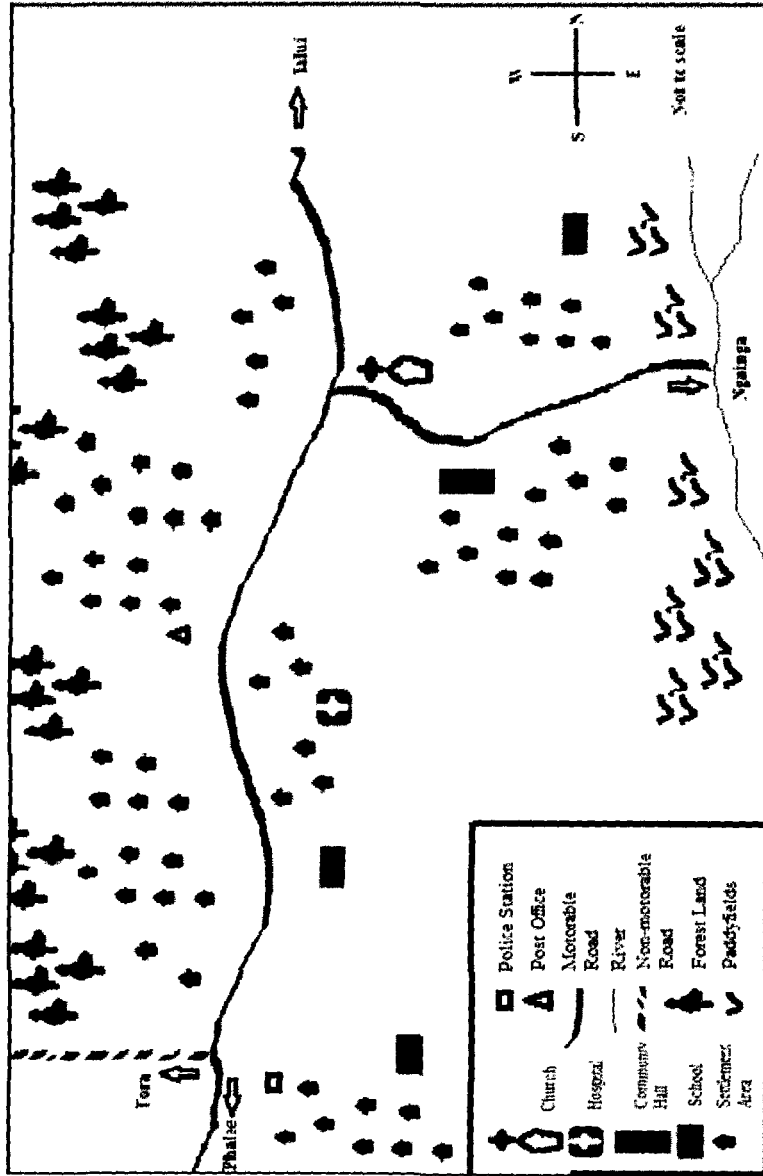
The Tangkhuls speak Tibeto-Burman language (Hodson 1911, Ruivah 1993). They have a rich variety of languages. As many as the Tangkhul villages, languages are spoken by the people. Each Tangkhul village has their own language. However, in most cases languages used by different villages under a particular region are to certain extent similar to one another. The variety, thus, varies from one region to another. At the backdrop of linguistic diversity, they use '*Tangkhul Tui*' as their medium of communication.

SOMDAL VILLAGE

Location and History

Somdal village is located on the western side of the district. It is 21 Kms. away from the district headquarter, Ukhrul and about 87 kms away from the state capital, Imphal. The village is divided into seven localities-'*tang*' viz., *Shimphungtang*, *Shijantang*, *Tangrei*, *Awungtang*, *Letyantang*, *Awortang*, and *Kasomtang*.

Notional Map of Somdal village



Source: Fieldwork

The number of households and the strength of population can be shown in a table as follows:

Table 5. Household numbers and population of each locality

Sl. No.	Localities	Household Nos.	Population
1.	Shimphungtang	45	248
2.	Shijantang	50	265
3.	Tangrei	91	469
4.	Awungtang	44	250
5.	Letyantang	60	299
6.	Awortang	55	377
7.	Kasomtang	65	341
	Total	410	2249

Source: Fieldwork

The village was known as *Shongran* – *shong* meaning route and *ran* means taking head. According to their account, it was named so as they laid trap on the enemy's routes whenever and wherever they waged wars against other villages. After the advent of Christianity, the village was divided into two blocks viz., the Christian block (the old settlement area) and the non- Christian block (kasom). Eventually, the village was renamed as *Somthar* which was registered as *Somdal* by the British.

The settlement of the village is located at the hill-slopes. They have their terraced paddy fields at the foothills whereas the uphill above the settlement areas are forest land where they practice jhum cultivation. There is a small stream at the foot-hill which runs to Thoubal River in the valley. There is also a cascading waterfall known as *Shongran Ragui*.

The village is connected to the district headquarters by two routes- via *Ngainga* and via *Talui - Hoomi* road. It is also link to the state capital through *Tampak Ngashan* road. Besides these, there are also many roads which connect the village to other neighbouring villages which however is not motorable.

The people

The people came to the present settlement from different directions. Some entered from Senapati district via Oinam. This group belongs to *Khamrang* clan of the village. Other groups came to the present settlement from the northern and central part of the district.

The village has 410 households with a total of 2249 population- 1112 male and 1137 female.

Like other Tangkhul villages, the people speak *Somdal tui* as their dialect which is akin to the dialect of the neighbouring villages like *Phadang*, *Ngainga*, *Maichon* and *Tora*.

Social life

Family: The family is the fundamental social unit of the community among the Tangkhuls. The father is known as the *akhava* (head) of the family and he represents the family in all affairs concerning the family. Authority lies with the head of the family. All matters concerning the family are consulted to him. Matters concerning the decision on any matters or property of the family are taken care of by the head of the family. Thus the structure of the family is patriarchal. His wife is known as the *akhavaiva* (wife of the *akhava*). The family

consist of father (*ava*), mother (*ava*), children (*naongara*), grandparents (*awo-ayi ngara*) and unmarried brothers (*avakato/avakharar*) and sisters (*ani*).

Nature of Descent and Inheritance

The nature of descent is patrilineal. Each generation is linked to the next in a genealogical succession through men. They follow the rule of primogeniture. In this chain of succession, the eldest son succeeds his father. He remains in the house throughout his life to serve as head and connecting link between his predecessor and successor. Thus, the lion's share of the ancestral property is always given to the eldest son. With this share comes responsibility. It is his duty to see to it that his brothers are settled properly and that he looks after the welfare of his sisters. It is also his responsibility to take care of his aged parents.

The property of the people usually consists of both movable and immovable possessions. Movable property consists of household properties like money, ornaments, musical instruments, utensils, agricultural implements, domestic animals and fowls, etc. On the other hand, immovable property includes land like house site, forest land, cultivable land which includes terraced field and jhum-lands, etc.

There are again ancestral properties which are handed down by the grandfather and acquired property – earned by self during his lifetime. A man can give all the movable property to whomever he chooses, but he cannot dispose of the immovable property without the knowledge of the clan members, whether it is self-acquired or ancestral property. There is, however, no hard and fast rule on the acquired immovable property. In consultation with the men of the *meiphung* (lineage) or *shangnao* (clan), a man can give this property to any of his children including his daughters. But this custom largely remains nominal as such properties are never handed down to daughters. If a man died without a male issue, then the property is handed down to his brother or his brother's son or to the nearest kin known as '*shimluikat*' meaning legally authorised person who inherits the property. But in no way can a woman claim her rights to inherit the immovable property.

Another aspect of patriliney is the ownership of immovable property. Any of this property is kept in the name of either the husband or sons and no such property are owned in the name of the wife or daughter, be it ancestral or acquired. Even if such properties are purchased with the money or means of the wife or daughter, the same cannot be retained with her name.

The nature of residence is patrilocal. After marriage, a woman, thus leaves the parents and resides in the house of the husband. On the other hand, younger brothers leave the house set up their families after marriage near the house of the elder brother. However there are variations even among the Tangkhuls regarding the residence pattern. Among the *rapheis* (northern side), parents leave the house with their unmarried children after the marriage of the eldest son. Likewise, on the marriage of the next son, they set up a new house with the unmarried children. This goes on till all children are married. After everything is done, they come back to the eldest son and retire from their duties and responsibilities (Horam 1977). Unlike this practice, other groups of Tangkhuls follow the system mentioned earlier where parents and unmarried siblings reside with the eldest son while younger brothers set up for themselves separately after marriage (Ruivah 1993). In this case, it becomes the responsibility of the eldest son to see to the welfare of his brothers and sisters whereas in the case of the former, it becomes the duty of the father till all his children are married off.

Clan: Coming to the wider social unit, they have *shangnao* - clan. The word comprises of two syllables – ‘*shang*’ meaning group and ‘*nao*’ meaning group children. ‘*shangnao*’ is thus an association of people, membership of which is determined by unilineal descent. In other words, it consists of all the descendants in the male line of common patrilineal ancestor.

The population comprises of seven clans. Among the seven clans, the *Ronra Shimray* clan heads the village as hereditary chief. The name of the seven clans and their household numbers are given as follows.

Table 6 – Household nos. of each clan

Sl. No.	Name of the clans	Household numbers
1.	Ruivah	121
2.	Muivah	113
3.	Khamrang	78
4.	Ronra Shimray	34
5.	Rungsung	31
6.	Shimrah	18
7.	Phungshok	15
	Total	410

Source : Fieldwork

The group is again sub- divided into a number of lineages known as ‘*Meiphung*’ meaning hearth. It consists of all the descendants in the male line of a

common patrilineal ancestor known to the members of the lineage. Thus the very simple biological family is part of *meiphung* and each *meiphung* is part of the bigger unit, a maximal unit, and the clan.

Kinship and Marriage: The smallest social unit, that is, the family, form the centre of kinship organisation. The paternal uncles and their descendants are known by the term '*ichichashi*'- '*ichicha*' means own and '*shi*' means group. It covers all agnatic relations on the father's side, covering any generation ascending or descending with whom genealogical relationship can be traced through a known ancestor. But as soon as the known genealogical generation fails to demonstrate its relationship with another, it is considered to be a kin group of distant degree and is indicated by the term '*theisa*'. Another group of recognised kin which falls outside the two categories is '*shangnao – ramnao*'- meaning clansmen – villagers, that is the ties brought about by the facts of being inhabitants of the same village.

Kinship is the determining factor of their relationship. Each individual is expected to behave in certain manner according to their relationship with the individual concerned. A well regulated behaviour pattern strengthens their relationship from time to time on all occasions of interpersonal relations.

Likewise, kinship terminologies are used to relate their ties. To relate one another, gender specific prefix are used.

<i>Avā</i>	: father
<i>Avākato</i>	: father's younger brother
<i>Avākharar</i>	: father's elder brother
<i>Avā + name</i>	: to all clan's men of the father's generation and maternal Aunt's husband
<i>Ava</i>	: mother
<i>Avakatui</i>	: mother's younger sister
<i>Avakharar</i>	: mother's elder sister
<i>Ava + name</i>	: to all clan's women of mother's generation and paternal Uncle's wife
<i>Amei</i>	: older brother
<i>Ikato</i>	: younger brother
<i>Apā</i>	: older women to younger men
<i>Achon</i>	: elder sister
<i>Izarva</i>	: older men to younger women
<i>Ikatuiva</i>	: older women to younger women
<i>Ani</i>	: aunty / mother in-law
<i>Awo</i>	: uncle / grandfather / father in-law
<i>Ayi</i>	: grandmother

Imuilava : sister in-law

Amak : brother in-law (among men)

In their kinship network, the clan is strictly exogamous. Marriage within the clan is taboo and it is forbidden by law of exogamy. The violation of this is known as '*shokhala*', which literally means upside-down. The mother's family line is regarded as the base and foundation of their marriage. Marriage between father's sister's son and mother's brother's daughter is considered to be the most preferred type. In the negative form of duty, a son should not indulge in sexual advances towards his father's sister's daughter because there is a clear – cut chain of wife giving and wife receiving line in their kinship structure. The violation of this practice is known as '*vakhalat*' ('*va*' means maternal uncle, '*khalat*' means coming back).

Monogamy is the standard form of marriage among the people. Polygamy is frowned by the society, and it is regarded as a reproach to peaceful existence of the family. Polyandry, on the other hand, is never mentioned in the lips of the people.

Divorce is a rare case but under serious case like adultery on either party, divorce is sanctioned. If the husband is responsible, his wife should remain in the

original house with all the properties along with the children. But if it originates from the wife's side, she should leave the house without any compensation. In case of divorce under unfortunate circumstance like barrenness, she may remain as a member of her husband's clan, or may return to her parental home.

There is no social discrimination in matter of remarriage. But this should be done only after the death of his wife or her husband. But the children are always affiliated to the kin group of the real father.

The Annual Social Activities of the Village

Throughout the four seasons of a year, the activities of the villagers centre on their cultivation works. As such, their annual social activities too are intertwined with their cultivation cycle since it is an agro- based society. Social activities mainly consist of festivals besides religious gatherings. There are two main festivals and these festivals are link with their cultivation cycle. The three festivals are discussed as follows:

Luirā: This festival falls in the month of February and March, that is, before they start their sowing and plantation. It is the seed sowing festival. In the past, it continues for more than ten days. The village priest known as *shimthui luithui khamiya* performed the ritual marking the beginning of sowing and plantation.

The post is hereditary and need not necessarily be the chief of the village. In Somdal village the priest- *shimthui luithui khamiya* is from the *Rungsung* clan whereas the chief is from the *Ronra Shimray* clan. It also involved many rites, taboos and *gennas*. For instance they are not to butcher animal or eat fresh meat or on certain days they are to abstain from work and the like.

In the present context, the festival is celebrated on the 15th of February by all the Nagas tribes of Manipur. The festival is now known as *Luingaini- Lui* from the Tangkhul word *luira*, *ngai* from the Zeliangrong word *Kanngai* and *Ni* from Mao. It is hosted at different district every year. Besides, each village organise their own programmes for such celebration. This festival marks the beginning of sowing. Games like Tug of War, wrestling and folksongs are indispensable item of the festival in the present times. Games like tug of war and race are taken up between men and women whereas, competitions of folksongs and folkdance are done locality wise. Among the Tangkhuls, there is a belief that the rope used for tug of war has to be pulled apart into two parts during such games for fertility of their crops. If this is not done so, it curbs the bounty of harvest for the whole year.

Another significant aspect of the festival is the association of flowers with the festival. In the Tangkhul area, this is the season when flowers of various fruits

like *mayangtheiwon* (peach), *theikhatheiwon* (plums), *saharwon* (cherries), *kapaiwon* (wild berries), etc sprout into full bloom. So, they use all kinds of flowers in decoration and also use flowers to adorn themselves as they hum their songs.

Mangkhap: This festival is celebrated after the completion of their paddy plantation. It falls in the month of July. One remarkable event of this festival is the lighting up of pinewoods in the front courtyard of their houses at night. This event signifies that they have passed from their busy days of hard gloomy work to more leisurely lighter period of the year. Song competition and games like football, volleyball, etc are some important events of the festival of today.

With the advent of Christianity, many festivals have lost their importance. Festivals like *Yarra phanit*, *Kashong kahao*, *Khaita or mawonzai*, *Tharshat*, *Chumphu*, etc., is no more celebrated in the present times. *Yarra* is a festival of the youth which was celebrated in the early part of April. *Kashong Kahao* was observed in the month of July that is, after the rice plantation where rituals were performed to protect the crops from pests. *Khaita/ Mawonzai* were observed after the weeding offering prayers to the god of wealth to protect their crops from hailstorms and other calamities. *Tharshat* was observed before the actual harvest began wishing bountiful harvest and prosperous life. *Chumphu* comes after the

harvest to mark the beginning of taking out newly harvested grains from the granary.

Many of the restrictions and rituals have lost their values. In the past, ceremonies and rituals were performed by certain section of the society consisting of only men. For in the past, women were strictly forbidden to enter the alter place. Today, there are no restrictions on the basis of gender or age in their social activities. Moreover, such strict and fast rules have lost its values. Restrictions were also imposed on certain days of the festivals. For instance, they were not to slaughter or eat fresh meat on certain days of *Laira*, whereas on certain days they were to abstain from work. They also observed *shimshar* (*Genna*) where no one was allowed to enter the village gate. It should, however be noted that such restrictions were not based on the basis of gender. Today, there are no such restrictions in observing their festivals.

Mass participation is one feature of their festival. With exception of the ceremonies and rituals of the past, performed by men, all the activities of the festivals are participated by the whole population.

The duration of the festivities too have been limited to shorter period with the changes of time. Festivals, which was celebrated for a month, are now limited only for three or four days.

Besides festivals there are certain social activities which are indispensable part of their social institution. Here mention may be made of *yarthot* and *meisum*:

Yarthot: The word *yarthot* is composed of two words – *yar* and *thot*. The word *yar* refers to persons of the same age group. The people form into labour groups on the basis of age gradings and perform their cultivation works in rotation. This system is known as *yarthot*. These labour groups composed of men and women; girls and boys and there are no sex segregation in forming these groups among adults. Even children (usually from the age of 10) form these groups and helped their parents during their holidays. However formation of such groups among children is mostly done on gender basis. This is done so because of the work nature differs and exchange of labour is difficult for them. This is an age old practice which has not changed till today.

The term '*yarthot*' should not be confused with the term '*yarnao*'. *Yarnao* is a group formed on the basis of age and continues to maintain their solidarity for a long period of time. The term *yarthot* denotes an activity which is performed by a

group of people. This group is formed temporarily with the object to perform agricultural activities. At times, *yarthot* is taken up by members of the *yarnao*. However in most cases, it does not necessarily confine to *yarnao*.

Meisum: *Meisum* is the time spends together by youths during their leisure time. The term '*meisum*' literally means fireside gathering as such gathering is done by the fireside. This is one important platform among the youths where they get to know and understand each other better. Among the youths, boys take the prerogative for *meisum*. In the past, boys visit the dormitories of girls usually at night as this is the only leisure time for them. This may be done in group as well as individually in some cases. During this moment, they would pick up gossips, discuss different issues and the boys use this time for courtship. In earlier days, it was practiced at the dormitory.

Meisum is continued even today with slight changes in their practices. After the dormitory system was defunct, boys now gather at a girl's house at night. Unlike the past practices, where boys, singly or in group, visit the girl's dormitory, boys today visit a girl's house where they usually gather in the kitchen and chat till late night.

Economy

Agricultural activities: Agriculture is the mainstay of their economy. The agriculture cycle begins with the beginning of the year. Right after the New Year's festival, men clear the forest for their *ahanglui* (jhum cultivation) using daos and axes. In the village, they follow a cycle of five years in an area of cultivation and all the villagers cultivate in such selected areas. So the work of clearing the forest is lighter in the subsequent years. When the trees and grasses are dry, men burn it off. Women then clear off the branches using *karphang* (hoes) and start tilling the land for cultivation using *yotpak* (spade). Soon after the *laira festival* which marks the beginning of their plantation, women start planting *mayangpai* (potato), *khamathei* (maize) and *linglonthei* (beans), cabbage (*kopi*), ginger (*hui*), chilly (*kasathei*), garlic (*janam*), cucumber (*karopthei*), mustard (*kayanghan*), etc., in their *ahanglui*.

As they finish their work in the forest areas, the people now move downwards to their terraced field which is located below their settlement area. Some are tilled manually by women whereas some are ploughed using bullock by men. This is known as *akanglui kahui* which literally means tilling of terraced field.

By the month of April, women start tilling small patch of land for sowing paddy while men fenced it off with bamboo or woods. Women also start weeding their jhum areas by this time.

Then, by the end of May, they start fishing in their *rayilui* (wet terraced fields) which retains water all through the year. This marks the beginning of their terraced cultivation. This kind of fishing is known as *lui kaphat* (literally means drying off water from the field) where women do the fishing using *kanda* (small rounded fishing implement made of bamboo) and men plough the fields using spade. During such fishing, relatives are invited and the fish are divided among everyone who comes for such fishing.

From then on, one sees women with their *sop* (carrying basket) at their back full of food and agricultural implements and men with their *yotpak* (spade) on their shoulder every weekday to and from the field in groups. Women clear the sides of their terraced fields while men till and plough the fields. Older women pull out the paddy saplings from the *mathului* (a patch of fenced plot where they sow paddy) and usually young boys carry these saplings to the fields. After the clearing and ploughing is done, women are seen in groups crooning and planting the paddy saplings while young girls distribute the saplings from the back. After they finish their plantation, men check all water paths of the fields and this ends the plantation period usually by the end of June.

Women and men including all children who can carry some amount of load on their back now shift their works towards their jhum areas. They now reap their crops in their forest area. They usually take two trips every day. If the weather is fine with no rain, they are assisted by their jeep service as the road is motorable only in good weather.

They enjoy a short period of relaxation as they celebrate the *Mangkhap* festival which marks the end of their plantation period. After the festival, women start their weeding in their paddy fields. They usually, do their weeding twice before the harvest. Men, on the other hand, clear all the sides of the fields using a long flat bamboo sharpened at both the sides known as *thingkhai*.

By the end of September, they reap their paddy. Women reap the paddy using *changkui* (sickle). Young girls collect the paddy stack to the place where men beat them off separating paddy from the haystack. In the present times, trucks carry the paddy and men do the loading. But in the past, they carry it manually which was a tiring work as they go uphill with the sack of paddy.

Fruits of various types are also found which includes plum (*heikhathei*), lemon (*chambra*), banana (*mothei*), pears (*naspati*), wild apple (*theithukthei*), etc.

Despite the technological development of modern times, their tools and implements are rather simple. Thus, other method of agriculture and cultivation are simple. People were not aware of the modern fertilizers in the past. They solely depend on mother nature to nurture their crops. But today, pesticides and fertilizers are also used for their agriculture.

Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry is closely associated with the life of the people. It is no surprise that the villagers relish meat as their main dish. It was also an indispensable item in performing rituals and for other purposes such as marriage, imposing fines, etc. Animals like pig (*hok*), cow (*simuk*), buffalo (*silui*), dog (*fa*), cat (*lami*), etc., are reared for agriculture practices, consumption, and commercial purposes. Jungle animals are relished as a priced food item and for this purpose; dogs are used as their companion in hunting expedition. Birds and fowls too are no exception. Chickens are reared which serves as a source of income today which hitherto was used for various rituals and ceremonies.

Both the gender have equal role to play in this activity. Tending live stocks like cows and buffaloes are considered to be men's domain whereas domestic live stocks like pigs, cats, dogs and chickens are attended by women. However, no

strict and fast rules are streamlined in regard to these duties. In the past, it was a matter of pride and wealth if a person possesses large number of live stocks.

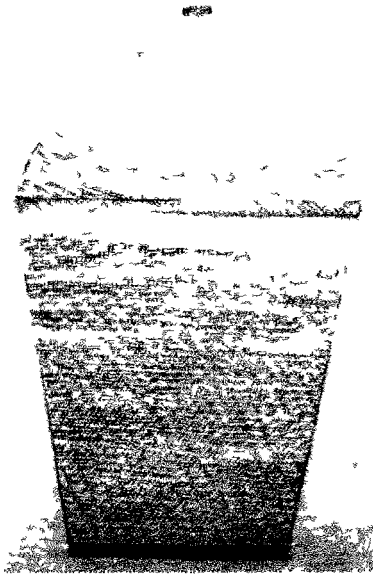
Handicraft

Handicraft, among the Tangkhuls, is known as *pangthem* – ‘*pang*’ meaning hand and ‘*them*’ meaning skill. It includes bamboo craft, woodcraft and stone works. These activities are considered as masculine trade. Bamboo products are widely used in every activities of their life. In their *chakshang* (kitchen), women use it as *machikhong* (a block cut out from the stem), *peirin* (flat spatula used for cooking), *luk* (basket for food storage), *yamkok* (flat and rounded blade for husking foodgrains) and *phungshar* (suspended rack over a fireplace used for drying food items). Not long ago, women use *tabu* (a rounded box) as their wardrobe. Even their weaving implements like *rathing* (weaving sticks) are bamboo products. While fishing, they use *shikhang* (fish basket) and *kanta* (flat fishing basket). In their agricultural activities, women use *sop* (carrying basket) to carry their food and implements. They use *thingkhai* (long flat bamboo stick sharpened at both ends) to cut small plants and shrubs.

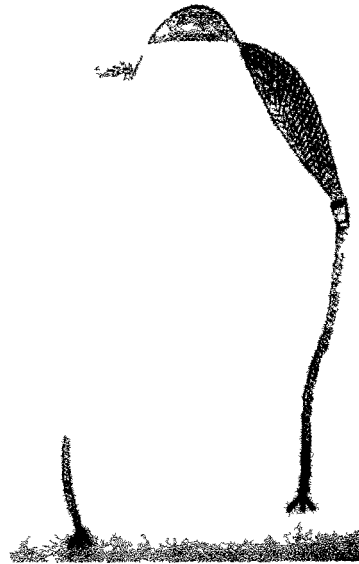
A widely used woodcraft includes furniture and utensil items. Products like *Pamkhong* (low stools), *jawki* (chair), table, and *shim thangthang* (utensils) like *kapei* (spoon), *naitilung* (mortar and pestle) are made out of wood. Weaving tools

like *rapam*, *kapem*, *ra khaluithing* are also made out of wood. Their tools and implements like *khainao* (knife), *khai* (dao), *yotpak* (spade), *karphang* (hoe) and *ngaha* (axe) have wooden handles.

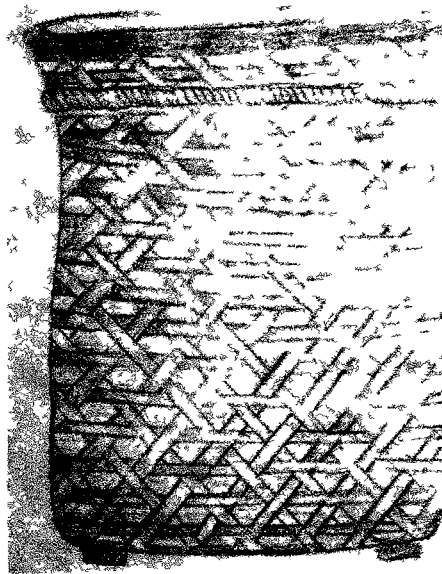
Pictures of Bamboo Products



1 *Tabu*-used as wardrobe



2. *Kasha*-belt for carrying load



3. *Shikhang*-fish basket

Source Fieldwork

Weaving

Among the small scale industries, weaving is one of the most important industries Weaving is considered as feminine trade Hodson writes,

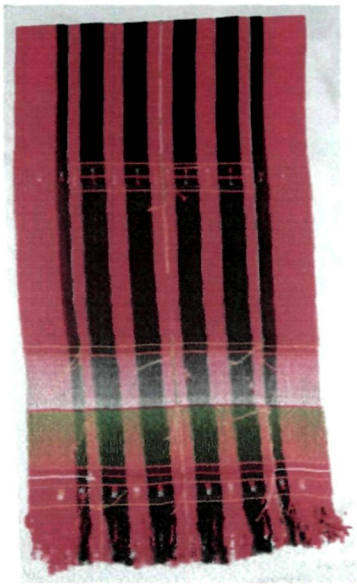
“Six Tangkhul villages, Ukhrul, Tolo, Naimu,* Sandang,* Tuinem, Phadang are specially engaged in the industry of cloth weaving” (Hodson 1974 45)

*(*The names of these villages may be read as Ngainga and Somdal today)*

Weaving continues to be associated with the women of this village. They weave *kachon*-shawl, *kashan*-lower garment, *paitu*-bag, necktie and other clothes. Side by side with agriculture activities and household chores, women find time to weave. Weaving is a time consuming work. The design woven into the clothe demands great patients and labour. A professional weaver takes almost a month to complete a shawl or lower garment.

Picture of Weaving products

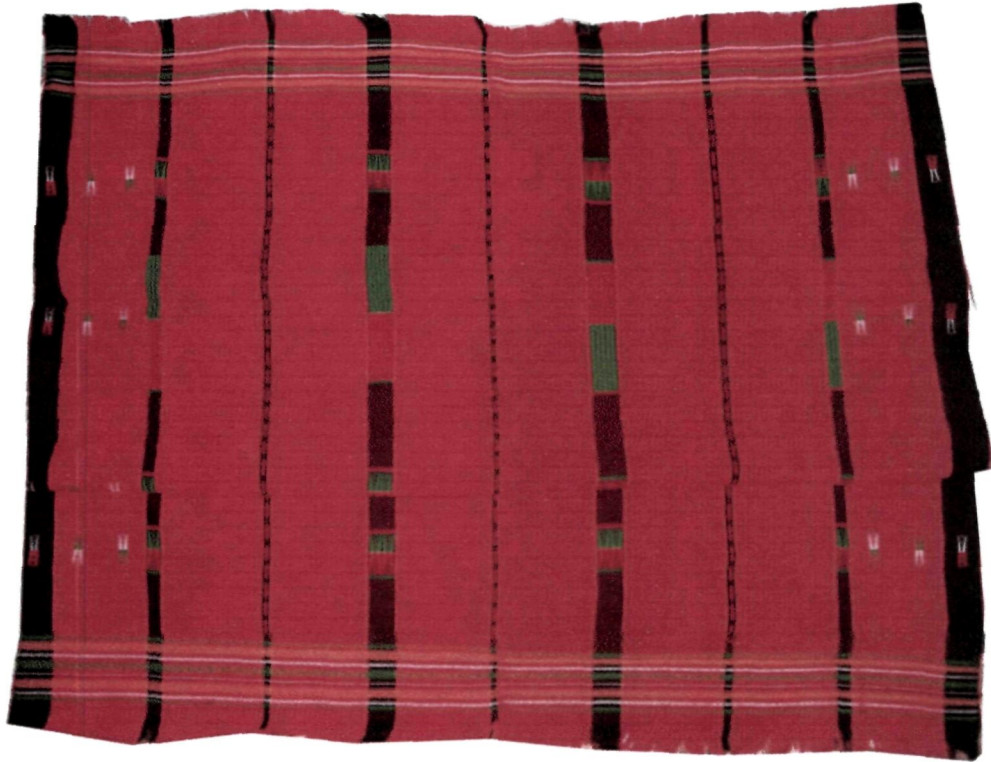
Pic. 4 *Chonkhom*-Women's shawl



Pic. 5 *Haora*-Men's shawl



Pic. 6 *Kashan* - Women's lower garment



Source: Fieldwork

Employment in Public and Private Sector

The introduction of modern education system giving rise to employment in public and private sector emerges as another important unit of their economy. Today, many people have been employed as teacher, bureaucrat, doctor, technician, engineer, clerk and in various capacities in different government sectors. Similarly, several people have taken up job in various private sectors like school,

corporate houses, and industry among others. However, employment in private sectors is mostly taken up by youths. In search of employment, many villagers have also been migrated to nearby urban areas like Ukhrul, Dimapur, Imphal, Kohima and other metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata.

Trade

Trade is another feature of their economy. In the past, goods were exchanged among the villages in the form of barter system. Different region of the district follow different trade according to the availability of commodities in their respective region. There are differences even in their agricultural practices. They produce different crops and food grains. These goods were bartered at certain places among different regions. Somdal village along with some other western villages like Tuinem, Phadang, Talui and Ngainga exchanged their products with the northern group at a place called *paosaitru*. With the introduction of monetary system, the practice of barter system has lost its importance.

Today, many villagers are engaged in trade within and outside the village. This aspect of economy is a new introduction and pick up its pace with the improvement of transport and communication. For example, the agricultural produces like potatoes, plums, cabbage, etc. from village are ferried and sold at Ukhrul, Imphal and elsewhere. There are also cases where the villages would

bring garments and other essentials like medicine, food grains, tobacco, etc and sell them in the village. There are nine shops in the village out of which 44.5 % are run by women whereas 55.5 % by men. These activities are though done in small volume.

Carpentry

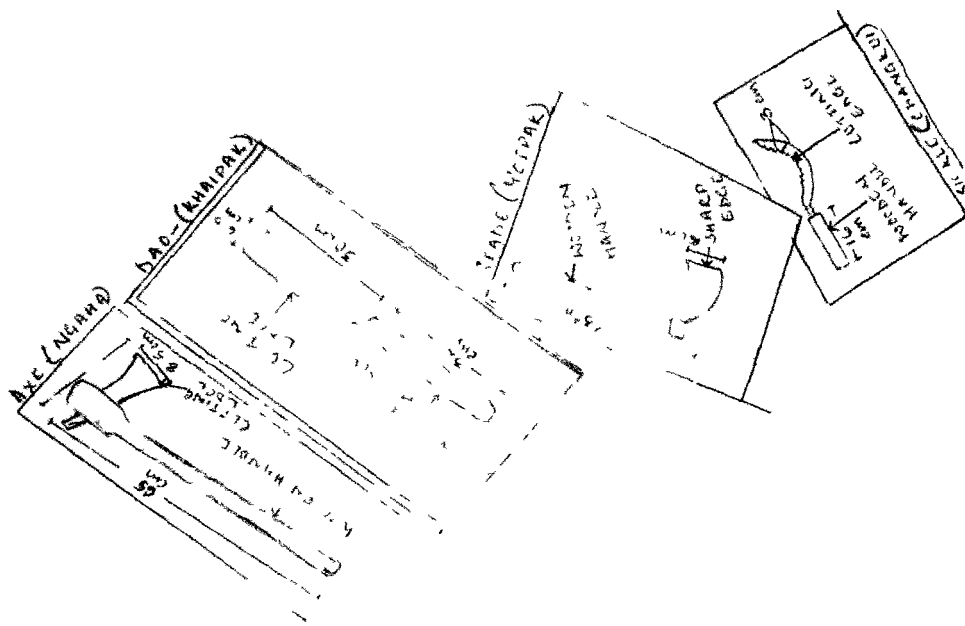
Carpentry is an occupation of men. This work includes building construction, manufacturing of chairs, tables, desk, closet, etc. Men folks of the society form different groups and take up this profession during their off season from agricultural activities. They take up this job mostly during dry seasons. From the economic point of view, this occupation is one of the most lucrative occupations of men in the present times as their income is very high as compared to other industry. But all the men folks of the society are not capable of this work as it requires skills.

Blacksmithy

The trade of *Mari kashem* (blacksmithy) is an age-old industry. Irons imported from the plains are mended by the local blacksmith (*mari kashemma*). Agriculture tools and implements as well as domestic tools and weapons are produced out of the raw materials. Before the advent of Christianity, that is, during the head hunting period, this industry manufactured weaponry like spears

(*kazei*), arrowheads (*malathing*), swords (*raikhai*), etc, apart from hunting and agriculture tools. Today, manufacture of weapons for warfare have stopped and manufacturing of hunting implements too have ceased in that matter with the introduction of machine guns. Today this industry mainly manufactures agricultural tools and implements like *yotpak* (spade), *ngaha* (axe), *khaipak* (dao), *karphang* (hoe), *khainao* (knife), etc

Picture 7. Agriculture tools and implements



Source: Fieldwork

This trade is considered as masculine trade as it is a strenuous job for women to carry it out. Only men of the society take up this trade. It is passed down to the younger generation of men from the older men.

All these varied economic activities are carried out by the people to meet their needs. These activities are carried out within the village as well as outside the village. For instance, agriculture practices, animal husbandry, handicraft, etc., are carried out in the village, whereas trade, employments in different undertakings are done within and outside the village. Likewise, their products are exported outside whereas some are imported from outside market too.

From the above description of gender-based economic activities, it is clear that women are assigned with light but time consuming work, whereas men take to strenuous duties. For instance, the agricultural activities like sowing, plantation, weeding, etc. are light but time consuming task. To perform these tasks, one has to bend and concentrate on the line and space of the paddy plantations. Likewise, the weeding is also done following the same pattern of working. On the other hand, forest clearing for jhum, spadework, etc. is a sort of task which requires more energy. Another example of such gender division in their economy is domestication of animals. For instance, livestock rearing like cows and buffaloes keep men busy outside the home domain, whereas tending to domestic animals

like pig and fowls keep women busy at home. Thus, the division of labour on the basis of gender is apparent in their economic life.

Men are mostly assigned with economic activities outside the home domain whereas women are associated more within the home domain. Division of labour is part of the larger gender system which manifests their gender relations through production relation.

Political organisation

The people follow monarchical form of government headed by the village chief called *awunga*. The chair of chieftainship is hereditary and his office is permanent. He summons and presides over the meetings of the *hangva* (village authority). Since he is the guardian of his subjects, the *awunga* sees to it that every household gets sufficient land to till and that every citizen gets protection and care. Besides the secular functions, he had religious functions too. Every festival and feast was inaugurated by him. However, he was assisted by the village priest- *sharwo* Known as *shimthui luithui khamiya*- on certain occasions. As such, he lived a pious life and had to maintain certain restrictions and taboos. In their political set up, the chief is assisted by the members of Village Authority called *hangva*. In the past, the members of this council were represented by the clan heads and elders who are well versed with the customary laws. The *hangva*

heads by *awunga*, constitute the decision making body of their political structure. They formulate policies of war, peace, economy, social activities, etc. This body was the highest court of justice.

In the past, there was an unwritten constitution. The foundations were based on the culture, tradition, usages, customs and conventions of the society. In all these, it had religious sanctions too. In case of any feuds where decisions cannot be taken, they take an oath, swearing in the name of god. This happened when the feuds within the clan could not be decided by the clan heads, was handed over to the village Authority. When this body could not reach any resolution about the case, an oath was taken where judgment were left at the hands of the supernatural to take his own course of actions. Thus the unwritten constitution was functioning effectively among the people since time immemorial.

There were constant wars among the villages since each village was an independent unit. These wars took place due to some genuine reasons like violation of inter-village laws, divorce of women without proper cause, taking of head by fraud, etc. Hutton (1930), Furer-Haimendorf (1933) and Mills (1935) refer to these wars as head hunting. It should be noted here that they did not hunt for heads but, the enemy's head were beheaded during wartime and other genuine causes which were brought home to testify their achievement. There were also

rules that women and children should not be harmed in such incidents. It was also forbidden for a man to touch a woman for certain period of time during these wars.

Women played an important role during wartime. This group of women is none other than the *phukreila* – women who married outside the village and with whom her natal village men were in dispute. The *phukreila* acted as the peacemaker during these periods where she tried to negotiate the warring groups to reach a peaceful agreement. As such, they were esteemed into high status and they played a vital role to bring peace among the villages.

The political situation changed with the advent of the British in the hill station. Inter village feuds was put to an end which obviously brought about peaceful co-existence. Practices like inter village feuds and war were thus put to a stop. With the advent of the British, conduct and powers of the *awunga* and *hangva* were thus checked by the British rulers. The changed situation open up ways for the villages to know each other better and make ways for free movements among them. Gradually, the British took control over the hills. Conflicts which cannot be solved at the village level were brought to the British for judgments.

After India attained her independence, this hill station was also merged with the Indian union. As time changes, the political structure too has taken a new shape according to the convenience of the people. For instance, the village chairman is in charge of the village government today. The origin of this form of government in the village can be traced back to the time of the early post Christianity period. Those days, when conversion took place, majority of the villagers became Christian. Thus, conflict arises between the non-Christians and the Christians. With the interference of the British, it was decided that the majority should stay in the village whereas the minority should settle separately. So, a new settlement area was established known as *Somdhar* (the present Kasomtang), two miles away from the original settlement area. The non-Christian community was governed by the village chief as it were whereas the Christian community selected a chairman for a term of five years. This goes on for some time and in due course of time, conversion took place among the non-Christians. Finally, the village administration of the two communities was amalgamated in the year 1982. To bring about a more democratic form of government, the seat of the administrative head or the chairman is elected from then on for a term of five years. However the chairman runs the government in consultation with the chief and has to take his consent in all prerogative moves and activities of the village.

The village chairman is elected by adult men members in the village assembly. The chair is not hereditary. He serves only for a period of five years. The chairman is assisted by the members of Village Authority and they are nominated on the basis of location. Two members from each locality are nominated in the village assembly to represent the locality. So there are 14 *hangva* with a chairman and a secretary. This body constitute the village authority today. The functions remain the same as that of the past. Today however, the *Tangkhul Long* (The Tangkhul Tribal Council) acts as the apex body of this tribe.

Women have no representation in the political body of the village. The village authorities led by the chief and chairman constitute only of men. Moreover, the Village Assembly too is represented only by men of the society. The overall representation of their political setup is strictly patriarchal. However, the role of women is visible in the way they influence in the decision making of the society. Men discuss political issues at home with their family members, and during such discussions, all adult members take parts in it and openly express their views irrespective of gender. It is observed that women do influence men through such discussions.

Religion

Missionaries and Anthropologists refer to the traditional religion of the people as 'Animism'. The Animists believe in the existence of a supreme god who is a benevolent spirit. Though they believed and worshiped the benevolent spirit, known as '*ameowa*', they acknowledged the existence of malevolent spirit (*chipee*) who is capable of causing harm to human beings. The constant fear of evil spirit turned their thoughts to superstitious beliefs, whereby, they try to propitiate those spirits by performing rites and sacrifices in order to ward off the suffering and bad luck. In this connection, they also performed certain divination like *harra khayang* (egg divination), *kapa khayang* (bamboo divination), *harkho khayang* (cock divination), etc. They also believed in omens and dreams.

At the apex of their religious organisation stands the *awunga*. He inaugurates all festivities, offered prayers and performed necessary rites and ceremonies along with the priest. The village priest is known as '*shimthui luithui khamiya*' in this village, and he performed all the necessary rites in every agricultural activity which concerned the whole community.

At the lower level, there are clan priest – who heads the clan, and the family priest – who heads the family. Thus they confine their religious duties within their own territories. For instance, when a *shar* (genna) is declared in a family,

the family priest performed the necessary rituals and when it is confined within the clan, the clan priest performs the same for the clan.

In all these units, the priests are men. In their absence, the rituals are performed by the eldest male member of the family. After the death of the priest, the eldest son assumed his roles and responsibilities. In case the priest has no son, then the baton is handed to the next kin.

The role of women was visible only at the family rituals. Rituals in festivals like *chumphu* were performed only by the *akhavaiva*. However such roles are confined within the domain of their family domain and they were not allowed to represent the family outside this domain. As such, there were no village priestesses and women could not execute such role.

With the expansion of the British rule over the north eastern territory of India, the missionaries too expanded their work. Rev. Nathan Brown came to Assam in the year 1836. Before long, there were many foreign missionary organisations working among the people of north east. In 1894 Rev. Pettigrew, the first foreign missionary, came to Imphal for the same purpose. But Major Maxwell, the then State Superintendent, banned his activities in Imphal valley in order to prevent any provocations from the orthodox Hindus. Thus, he proceeded towards Ukhrul

in the year 1896 and began his mission work among the Tangkhuls (Shimray 2001).

In order to convince the people that he had come for the service of the people, he established a school in 1896. But the response of the native people was very poor. He also set up a dispensary attached to his residence. Many people were cured by the application of modern scientific medicines, which could not be cured by the traditional practices. The people were convinced by this and thus, he earned the co-operation of the people gradually. However, it was not until 1901 that converts were made (ibid 2001).

Tracing the history of the village, the seed of Christianity was sown in 1909. The local missionary, Rs. Ruichumhao started the work. In the early years of Christianity, converts were allowed to drink rice beer and were allowed to follow some traditional practices as they fear that total elimination may lead to severe opposition from the local people. Gradually, the people started their conversion and the traditional practices in many aspects of their life were wiped out after they received revival of the Holy Spirit in 1923 (History: Somdal Baptist Church Centenary Publications 2009).

However in the early years of Christianity, there was no regular worship place. The people gather at different places as there was no church in those days. As they faced many difficulties, the members took resolution to construct the church building. The construction started in January, 1923 and was dedicated on May 7 the same year (ibid 2009).

Since the past religion was deeply rooted and well established for generations, the spread of new religion was not without opposition. There were severe opposition from some sections of the people which led to division of the village into two blocks – the non Christian block in a new settlement area and the Christian block in the old one. But despite much opposition from the non Christians, the spread of Christianity could not be arrested. Today cent percent of the people are Christian.

Under the umbrella of the church, there are different organizations like the Christian Youth Society, Women Society, etc which never existed in the past. Even as we look at the church functionaries, they have the pastor as the head aided by church deacons and deaconess. Moreover, they have the choir members and stewards represented by equal members of men and women. However it is to be noted that the chair of the pastor or the head of this institution is always occupied by men.

In the past, there was no written code of theological principles of religion. The principles were passed down through oral tradition. Today, the theology of Christianity is found in the form of Bible. So, the teachings are based on the ethics of this written code. Starting from the home to Sunday schools, the children are taught to follow the principles of their religion

Health

The village has a health centre that was established in 1954. The health centre, which initially functioned as dispensary, has been upgraded now as 50-bedded Community Health Centre. There are two doctors and four nurses in the hospital. The villagers go for check up to the hospital for general ailments like fever, flu, skin irritation, etc. But they are not admitted to the hospital as patients. So whenever there are emergencies, they call the doctors to their house for necessary examination and treatment. Urgent and critical cases are referred to the district headquarter or the state capital hospitals. In cases of delivery, a local midwife, who also have a degree in nursing assists in delivery. She uses modern medical facilities as well as ethno medicine. Cases of caesarean and complications are always admitted outside the village. Immunisations are given in the hospital during pregnancy as well as to children.

Education

Before the advent of Christianity, education was passed down through oral traditions. These include laws, ethics, customs, values, art, handicraft, etc. It also covers internalization of gender values. *longshim* (dormitories) functions as the education centre for imparting these traditional values. Gender difference was well marked during those days. Separate dormitories were set up for unmarried boys and girls unlike the co-educational schools and colleges of today.

Young boys were admitted at the age of 12 or 13, that is, after they attained puberty. For girls, however, no such formalities were observed. They joined the dormitory at a much younger age and could leave the dormitory only after their marriage.

The dormitories functioned as the training centre. Different kinds of works were imparted to the wards by elder members of the society. Boys learnt the art of using spears, spade, axes and other handicrafts, such as bamboo works, basketry, etc. On the other hand, women were taught to spin yarn, weave clothes, stitching, etc. Besides these manual works, oral traditions such as, folktales, songs and dances were passed down to the younger generations in this institutions. Norms and values of each gender were thus imparted and learnt

within this group. In this manner, they learnt to adapt themselves with their culture.

The dormitory system was not wiped out altogether with the advent of Christianity. It continued after the population converted to Christianity too but, instead of singing folksongs they sang Christian hymns and choruses and recited Bible verses.

The introduction of formal education in this hill district can be traced back to the times when the first British missionary, Rev. William Pettigrew, set foot into the land in 1896. A primary school was opened in that year where 30 students attended the institution. But the response of the people was very poor until the then superintendent major Maxwell, requested the village chiefs to send their children to school. He also warned them strictly to attend school regularly. So, it was out of fear and not the zeal to learn something from the institution.

The first school in the area was set up in 1905 at Phadang called Phadang L.P. School, an adjacent village of the field. The first patch of students (20 boys) from the village started attending school that year. Later in the 1919, a temporary school was set up in the village by the local missionary which was attended by students (boys) selected from different clans of the village. Gradually, schools

expanded and today, they have 3 schools – One Government High School (Somdal Ningkhalem High School), one Mission High School (Ruichumhao Memorial School) and one District Autonomous Council School (Kasom Lower Primary School).

In the early years when formal education was introduced, only boys were sent to school. The trend continued for quite some time which however was liberalised later on. Today, we see the enrolments of girls are at par with that of boys. We can refer this with the enrolment of students in the education institutions of the village.

Table 7. Enrolment of students in Ruichumhao Memorial School

RUICHUMHAO MEMORIAL SCHOOL			
YEAR	ENROLMENT OF GIRLS	ENROLMENT OF BOYS	TOTAL ENROLMENT
2004	73	90	163
2005	96	107	203
2006	92	98	190
2007	90	95	185
TOTAL ENROLMENT	351	390	

Source: Fieldwork

Table 8. Enrolment of students in Somdal Ningkhalem High School

SOMDAL NINGKHALEM HIGH SCHOOL			
YEAR	ENROLMENT OF GIRLS	ENROLMENT OF BOYS	TOTAL ENROLMENT
2004	76	80	156
2005	81	79	160
2006	68	70	138
2007	80	78	158
Total Enrolment	305	307	612

Source: Fieldwork

Table 9. Enrolment of students in Somdal Kasom Lower Primary School

SOMDAL KASOM LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL			
YEAR	ENROLMENT OF GIRLS	ENROLMENT OF BOYS	TOTAL ENROLMENT
2004	25	21	46
2005	22	23	45
2006	18	24	42
2007	25	20	45
Total enrolment	90	88	178

Source: Fieldwork

(The cumulative enrolment of students in three schools in Somdal village during the period 2004-2007 shows girl-boy enrolment in percentage at 48.7 and 51.3).

In every aspect of the Tangkhul society, there are hints attached to what constitute femininity and masculinity. With this chapter as the background of their cultural set up, the following chapter will analyse gender relations from various aspects of socialisation process.

CHAPTER III

INTERNALISATION OF GENDER VALUES

Every society has its own traditions, and perpetuates itself by passing its values and rules along to its younger generation. Some refer to this process as socialisation. Herskovits (1955) proposes “*Enculturation*” as alternative term. As these terms suggest, it is a process of inculcating as well as internalising the cultural values to an individual in order to create uniformity among the members of a society as they come to share values and attitudes. In addition to being told about gender, the child actively observes ‘significant’ others and draws conclusion about the rules governing gender.

The Tangkhul society, though controls by strict traditional customary laws, enjoys an affable social environment. Men and women, irrespective of age, work together and eat together without segregation among themselves. They mix freely in all social and festive activities like dancing, singing, etc. Yet, both genders are expected to maintain strict moral standard and decency. Since it embraces the philosophy of common good and idea that the welfare of one is for the whole group and ignorance of one will affect the interest and benefit of the entire group is strictly maintained.

However, the Tangkhul society being a patriarchal society always carries an aura of male dominance. Women are always expected to be submissive. To understand the internalisation of gender values, values within the structure of the Tangkhul family needs examination.

Family structure

The father is the head of the family. He represents the family in all matters. The family consists of father, mother, children, unmarried siblings and grandparents in case of the eldest son whereas younger brothers set up their own family after marriage. The family of the younger son, thus, consists of father, mother and children. Daughters, on the other hand, leave the house after marriage.

Family is the fundamental social unit among the Tangkhuls. A person's identity starts from home. His identity in the society is given through his family. For instance, he cannot be a member of the *meiphung* (lineage), *shangnao* (clan) or *ramnao* (villagers) if he is not a member of the family. They share a close relationship within the members of the family. A father sees to it that his family members are well protected. This relation binds the eldest son to look after the welfare of his aged parents and his siblings as he takes the responsibility. The

same reason is responsible for the brothers to look after the welfare of the married sisters and their children's welfare.

In a society where men are considered as the head of the family, the clan and the village, one usually observes power and authority differences between women and men. As the review in the first chapter shows, there exist gaps between women and men in exercising their authority. Men have authority over women.

Among the Tangkhuls, women and men have their own role to play in the family. The father is the authoritarian of the family while management of the family is associated with the mother. In the same way, other members of the family have their own role as daughters, sons, grandmother, grandfather, aunts and uncles. Gender roles, like any aspect of the society, have undergone many phases with the changing times.

Case 1: Mrs Shin is a school teacher in the government High School. Her husband and their children, three boys and a girl, depend on her financially. Likewise, she pays the electric bill, any local subscriptions, taxes and sees to it that the family has enough provisions. While she is busy with her school duties, he looks after their paddy fields and also sees to it that their potato and cabbage farms in the jhum areas are well tended.

When labour is needed in these fields, he tells his wife to hire labours. She would oblige to the demand but with a note of caution that the money be spent appropriately.

Her mother in-law, on the other hand, depended on her husband to buy all the basic commodities of the house. After the tenth grade, her husband did not allow his daughters, eldest two among five children, to continue their studies as he could no longer support them. She was very upset about it as the children were very discouraged. Their friends went ahead with further studies. Looking at them, she really wanted to send her daughters with them. But since she could not do anything about it, she consoled her daughters by saying that better things will come their way soon.

Case 2: An 80 year old, Athing, is still an early riser even at her age. When she was a young mother, she always made sure that all her heavy morning duties are done before the children wakes up. She would fetch water from the pond and would pound the paddy before any members were astir.

Though she loves her daughter in-law, she always complains about her morning timing. She would often wake her up before sunrise as she feels that she may not be able to finish her morning chores. Unlike their days, her daughter in-law would go to the rice mill instead of pounding the paddy at home. She would help the children with their studies while cooking and would fetch water after sunrise as the water tanks are now just a few steps

away from their house. Unlike the old days, Athing's daughter in-law would move out for work after all her children left for school.

The changing role is also true of men in the family. The grandfather witnesses his son taking up roles which he never performed during his time.

Case 3: Mr Angam, an 84 year old man, was among the first settlers in the present locality where he resides now. He owns a large plot of land. Later, when his younger brother Ayo settled down with his own family, Angam parted a plot of land to his brother. It is customary for the eldest son in the family to do so.

His wife was not happy about the large plot of land given to Ayo. She justified her disapproval saying they have three sons to consider. She complained that Angam was far too generous and being inconsiderate of her feelings and of the family's welfare. Angam was tired of her complaints and gave vent to his anger by slapping her on the face. Then he shouted at her saying it is his sole right and she does not have any say in the matter. His wife refused to cook and stayed in bed skipping three meals.

As he compares his role as the head and authority of the family in decision making with that of his son, Asing, he witness certain changes in this aspect.

Mr Asing and his wife had a serious discussion on various aspects concerning their son's marriage. Some of their meiphung elders press them that they should prepare the share of their yorla worth Rs 1000 each besides their mandatory share of meat. Mr. Asing felt that the wishes of their meiphung should be accordingly met. On the other hand, his wife opined that they will not be able to exceed the amount of yorlas' share beyond Rs 500 on each individual considering the number of 31 yorlas, which would amount to a lot of money.

After the closed door discussion, they discuss the matter during meal which was attended by all the family members. The family has a divided opinion on the issue with some suggesting that they should spend accordingly what is demanded citing he is the eldest son, while there were opinions that they should consider their financial position and make the decision. After serious debate, Asing fixed the rate at Rs 1000 for the immediate kin, Rs 800 for the immediate family kin of the groom's generation and Rs 500 for the distant yorlas like the groom's aunt which his wife gave in considering the pressure from the kin members.

Taking the consensus decision of the family, the Asing put up the proposal in the meiphung meeting and got their approval finally.

As the people adapt to the changing needs of the family, there have been certain changes too in the roles of gender. A woman who waits for the decision of the husband now shares her views. In the same way, a man shares the family issues with their wives. However, women are not expected to be assertive while expressing their views. They are expected to state their opinion as recommendation. Moreover, though women's participation is observed in decision making, she cannot take independent decision without consulting her husband. She consults him in every aspect of decision making and the final consent is always given by men.

Even in the financial matters, men and women shares responsibility which was not the case in the past.

Table 10. Financial Management of Women and Men

Category	Financial support by women	Financial support by men	Joint management by men and women
Low Income Group	-----	-----	100%
Moderate Income Group	31%	38%	31%
High Income Group	40%	50%	10%

Source: Fieldwork

Among the low Income Group, men and women jointly manage the financial matters of the family through labour wage, carpentry, weaving, handicraft, etc. The moderate income Groups are mostly employed in public and private sector. Among these families, women are seen almost at par with men in the financial status where 31% are managed by women, as against a slightly higher 38% managed by men, while 31% are jointly managed by both the genders. Among the High Income Groups, it shows a different picture where men managed 50% as against 40% by women. The remaining 10% are jointly managed by both genders.

Taking all the income groups, 22% are supported financially by women. 50% are jointly managed by men and women where they share the economic burden on equal basis. In the remaining case, 28% families depended on men for their sustenance.

Side by side with the changing gender roles, changes can be observed even in their domestic responsibilities and childcare.

Case 4. Mrs. Azing mostly earns her income through her handloom products. As women of the village sells their products at the district headquarter, she goes there every month to sell her handloom products.



During her absence, she entrusts her household duties with her daughter.

But since her daughter has not yet picked up the culinary skills of cooking, her husband would assist her in cooking while she performs other duties like cleaning, washing, babysitting, etc.

Case 5: Mrs. Ateola, an 84 year old woman, recalls her days when all her children were young and needed her care. She is a mother of six children. Besides, the duties of childcare, she had to take care of her mother-in-law who became blind very early. During those days, men go to the plains to earn money through wage labour. Whenever her husband was to leave for such trip, she would complain of all the pending works in the fields as she has to take care of everything alone besides her works at home.

Slight changes are observed in the domestic responsibilities. Today, men sometimes take up the duty of babysitting while his wife is engaged with her domestic chores. In some other cases men cook while the wife is not at home. In the past, women never leave the village. But today, situation demands her to leave the family for different reasons like business transaction, attending meetings, etc. which sometimes compels men to take up his wife's duties. Normal routine of the family however shows that women shoulder more responsibilities in their daily activities. Childcare is also considered as women's responsibility. A mother and the paternal grandmother always take the

responsibility of childcare. Though men's roles are observed in bringing up a child, childcare always rest on the shoulder of women. Men carry the baby on their back and visit their neighbours while women are responsible for changing their nappies, giving bath, changing clothes, etc.

There are differences in the age at marriage between women and men. Women usually get married earlier than men. In the past, women marry at the age of 18-20 while men at the age of 20-25. Today, both men and women marry at an older age. However, there are marked differences between women and men in regard to this. A woman is considered as a *larar* (spinster) when she reaches the age of 30 which is not the case with men. Certain ethos are attached to girls that they should find a groom at a marriageable age as it becomes difficult to find one when they pass that stage.

Analysing the structure of the Tangkhul family, the traditional idea that 'a woman's place is in the home' still holds true even in the present context. Though women are seen in different activities, outside their home domain, the home is still considered as her domain. Despite her works outside the house, she is still responsible for the roles and responsibilities at home.

In the light of this traditional setup gender learning takes place without any hindrance in the society. The social definition and subsequent self identification of a child as a boy or as a girl is significant for both the development of gender identity and learning of the way in which one's role performances is tailored to one's gender. Interactions between parents and children, actions of parents and children were taken into account. Following are discussions on gender learning at different stages of pregnancy and birth, childhood and adolescent period.

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH: Among the Tangkhuls, the concept of taking care of the child starts right from pregnancy. Certain restrictions are imposed on the pregnant women with the view to protect the child. There are certain beliefs among the people regarding the foods they eat and places they visit. The following are the food restrictions and prohibitions imposed on a pregnant woman.

- (a) A pregnant woman is forbidden to eat crab, as they belief that the baby dribbles all the time.
- (b) She is forbidden to kill snakes as they belief that the baby has the habit of stretching out their tongue.
- (c) There are prohibitions on certain food items like bitter things, prawn, papaya, etc. as they belief that it harms the fetus.

- (d) For fear of infliction by the malevolent spirit to the baby, a pregnant woman is not allowed to go out after dark.
- (e) She is not allowed to attend funeral services for fear of harm by the spirit of the dead person.
- (f) She should keep away from haunted places which they called '*ngalei kharar apam*'.

These are the restrictions and taboos imposed on the mother before the birth of a child but no such taboos are found imposing on the father. People strongly adhere to this belief and a pregnant woman always makes sure that her baby is safe from all kinds of harms.

During pregnancy, they also have a strong belief in dreams when it comes to gender prediction of the child. Wares, things and objects, associated with each gender, which are seen in dreams, are believed to be the revelation of the child's gender. For instance, if a pregnant woman dreams of any feminine object like weaving, baskets, kitchenware, ladies attires, etc., it is believed that a child would be a girl. In the same way, men's things like axe, spears, men's attire, etc., are considered to be indicative of a boy child. Not only do pregnant women predict this kind of dream but all the family members do share their dreams regarding this matter.

Alongside these predictions, parents and family members do have their wish regarding the gender of the baby. In the patrilineal society, where the descent is traced through men, parents give prior importance to boys. Necessary measures are taken to ensure an heir to succeed the father.

Case 6. Mr and Mrs. Ashang planned to have three children. The first child was born and it was a baby girl. They were happy that someone has come to help them in the house. Two years later, their second baby came and it was a daughter too. They were a little bit disappointed but, they thought that it was fine and they still have a bright expectation to get a son. Mrs. Ashang got pregnant again with her third child. This time they prayed and hoped that it should be a baby boy. The baby finally came, and to their disappointment, it was a girl again. But now they have three children as planned. A big question on who would be the descendant of the family as their children - the daughters, cannot carry the name of the family. So, the couple decided to go for the fourth child hoping for a son.

Case 7: Mr. and Mrs. Akhap have six daughters. After the fifth daughter, there was a long gap. So the couple lost all hope thinking that the wife will not conceive again. After 4 years, the wife got pregnant again. This brightened up their hope and they wait for the baby to come along. But to their dismay, it was a baby girl. That sealed all their hopes as she became

the last child. Though they never got what they want, they tried till the last chance longing to have a son.

*Case 8: Mr. Aho, a 76 years man, has three sons. The first son got married but became childless. The couple consulted doctors and tried every possible means. Desperately they even consulted the **khanong** (traditional medical practitioners). But this also did not yield any result. Then the youngest son got married. After few miscarriages, they also gave up hope on medical ground. After this, Mr. Aho solely depended on the second son. He advised him, time and again, to take every possible care in choosing a life partner as the family's descent was at stake. Finally, his son got married in 2008 to a girl with the consent of the parents. The first child came along and it fulfils the dreams of the whole family. They finally got a son.*

Such cases are very prevalent among the Tangkhuls. This is one aspect of their practices which is very obvious of their gender preferences and the value of each gender. So, the patrilineal nature of descent has its impact in the mindset of the people. However, the picture of male preference does not imply that girls are unwanted. They have a strong feeling that there is no homeliness without daughters. Parents and grandparents always have a sense of emptiness without a girl child. When they return from the field, girls are the one who serves them tea,

prepare warm water for their bath, keep the house tidy and serve their meal. Thus, they always pine for a daughter for reasons of their own.

Case 9: Mrs. Asa's husband, a government employee, worked in the district headquarters of Ukhul. They had a nuclear type of family. Her chores at home before the second child was light and manageable till the second child came along. As her second son came along, she started facing many problems in her domestic life as she was the sole caretaker of all the chores at home. During her days, keeping helpers was totally out of question as the people were not used to such practices. Moreover, as they were away from the village, they can least expect help from their relatives. Soon the third son came along and she felt that her house was a place of chaos with two elder sons playing and tumbling everything all around the house. At this point of time, the couple felt the need to have a daughter in the house who could lend a helping hand to the mother. Then the couple started to long for a daughter. The fourth son came followed by another son and so on till the sixth one. But soon after the birth of her sixth son, her husband was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Her husband passed away when the youngest child was only six months. Thus, it left her with no daughter. She brought up her sons as a single parent and she's the sole woman in the house.

Case 10: Mr. Ayo has six sons and a daughter, who is the youngest among the siblings. In his case, he and his wife never plan to have seven children. But since they were waiting for a daughter, they got six sons and a girl was born after the sixth one. After the daughter was born, they went ahead with their birth control as planned.

Case 11: Mrs. Ashim was a happy young mother with three children. She thought she had the right gender equation of children with two sons and a daughter. But her happiness was short lived as her daughter started to show symptoms of sickness every now and then. The couple tried every possible means to save the daughter's life. But, all their efforts failed to save the ailing child. Her little daughter passed away. After the demise of her daughter, Mrs. Ashim and her husband felt that their home is incomplete. They tried to console themselves with the presence of their sons. But whenever, she saw a girl child by the side of their mothers, she was deeply touched. By the time the second son started his school, she felt the pain even greater. After a long gap of seven years, she gave birth to a daughter. Her joys knew no bounds.

Even though parents show its primary preference for a son, there is always a longing for daughters in the family. It is suggestive that a girl is not an unwanted child in the family. However, if they are given fixed limit to opt for a

child, they will preferably choose son over a daughter. The reason is certainly attributed to the fact that daughters are not entitled to uphold the family's tradition. Thus, this necessity became the most cherished desire of parents which can be considered as the intervention of patrilineal ideology.

Analysing the reasons of their preferences, it is clear that parents and elders long for sons and daughters for different reasons. A boy child is preferred to uphold the tradition but a family is ever considered incomplete without a girl, which is regarded as a symbol of homeliness. Measuring the reasons for such preferences, it is evident that the people do not place equal values to a male child and a female child.

Keeping the above findings in mind, an examination on the practices of birth and childcare would throw more light on the gender setup of the Tangkhul society. As soon as the child is born, a hot water therapy is given to the baby by the midwife or by the grandmother. Relatives, friends and neighbours come with gifts in the form of chicken and clothes for the baby and the mother. It is believed that the mother feels relieved of her pain on the sixth day in case of a boy and fifth day in case of a girl.

After a week, a fat rooster is offered by the maternal uncle or grandfather of the baby (in case of a boy). The chicken is then cooked and distributed to all the relatives and neighbours to mark the “*naoyan*,” which literally means ‘seeing the baby’ for the first time. This ritual is symbolical of exposing the baby to outsiders. It is customary for parents and family members to keep the newly born infant away from visitors and outsiders as they believe that it is not safe for the baby to be shown to others besides the family members. This belief is associated with the fear of malevolent spirit which can disturb the wellbeing of the small infant. They also have strong fears of *mirai kakaza*, those who are believed to possess powers of inflicting harm, to the infant. With this ritual, the mother leaves her bed. The chicken distributed on this occasion is known as “*naoyansa*” meaning ‘baby seeing meat’. In this regard, killing of rooster symbolises that the baby grows up into a dutiful man to awaken all the people as a rooster does in the morning.

This ritual is very symbolical from gender perspective. In the first place, it is one way of declaring the arrival of the baby. This ritual is celebrated on the arrival of son, and in case of first born son, it is taken up with greater intensity. However, in case of a girl child, the ritual may even be given amiss. This appears as if such declarations are not significant for daughters. If at all this ritual is celebrated for a daughter, strict rule of gift in the form of rooster from the

maternal uncle is not necessarily maintained. Thus, the ritual stresses on the importance given to boys and is characteristic of their patrilineal system.

0 – 5 Years: During infancy, the baby spends much of the time with the mother and the paternal grandmother. In the first few weeks, the infant is given a hot water therapy known as '*nao khangalui*' as they believed that the child will not be able to work in the sun unless the treatment is taken up. Moreover, this practice is believed to be a therapeutic treatment to ensure growth and greater strength for the baby.

After this, the next thing that comes is the name giving ceremony of the child. It is believed that evil spirit can harm the baby if proper name is not given to the child at the early stage. This occasion is known as '*naoming kaphok*' – name giving ceremony. In the past, the priest took charge of this ceremony where a feast was given to the relatives, friends and neighbours. However, the ritual which was in practice earlier is now replaced by a ceremony in Church where the pastor/priest prays for the child. In other cases, a feast is given by the parents of the child by inviting the pastor to perform the ceremony at home. The name may be given by the parents or they may ask the elderly person of the family, friends and relatives to give a name of their choice. Generally, the name of the baby is

given to reflect certain significance of the family or the society. Few instances can be illustrated here as follows.

Phangreiwon - 'Phang' meaning branch, 'rei' meaning large and 'won' meaning flower, which signifies marital relation with the mother's clan as she is the daughter of the clan chief.

Sinmi - 'Sin' from the word 'lansin' meaning economy and 'mi' meaning give, signifying handing over of job from grandfather to his father.

Phungshimpam - 'Phung' meaning rule, 'shim' meaning sweet to denote sweet relationship and 'pam' meaning reside. In this context, the name signify that all the family members live together, stick together in all matters and rule the village under one umbrella (chief's brother's son).

In giving names to children, the suffix 'la', 'phy' or 'won' is added at the end of a girl's name to designate their gender. Boy's name, on the other hand, does not have these suffixes.

The celebration during this occasion is not common for all the people. But for the family of the village chief, *naoming kaphok* for the eldest son is an occasion of feast and celebration. This, however, is not applicable in case of a girl child even if she happens to be the eldest. This trend is also applicable for the

high income group who can afford such feast. In this context, the significance in their gender relations attributed to the eldest boys is its birthright as upholder of the family's tradition. The ritual as such is representation of their patrilineal and patriarchal system.

Before a child can accurately identify himself or herself as *ngalanao* (girl) or *mayarnaao* (boy), the child received a range of clues. For instance, adult men and women handle the infant boy/girl differently, system etic differences in dress and hairstyle and formulate visual clues for an infant in the learning process. Women who handle the small infant boy often say "*Mayarnaona machap paimanei*" meaning 'boys do not cry.' On the other hand, if an infant girl cries, they console her by saying, "*Ishi ngalanaoli khipana da*" which means 'who makes our girl cry?' These kind of consoling words carry a lot of meaning. The underlying connotation is that boys are nurtured to be emotionally strong whereas the way elders soothe the infant girl is significant of being protective of their women. The society thus sanctions different values even through such words.

There is also a difference in the way a hair dressing is done for a boy child and a girl child. A girl child keeps long hair, whereas boys are not allowed to do so. One can argue that this is a universal trend but maintaining different hairstyle was even prevalent in the past. Boys shave their hair on both the sides while

leaving a patch of hair from the front till the back of the head—the hairdo as such is called *Hao kuiret*. Girls had *samkok* — a straight cut along the eye-brows on the face. They keep the hair a little longer at the sides to cover the ear and long lock on the rear. However, when they attain a marriageable age, they let the front hair grow. As such a distinguishing mark is maintained among the girls to indicate their age. This way the child is given clues of their identity through differences in the way they do their hair. This is even true of the differences in the way they dress where small girls wear frock or tops along with long pant/pyjama or skirt for girls in the present times. A boy child is dressed in long pant, pyjamas, shirt, sweeter or any other masculine clothes but never adorn them with girls' clothes. This goes on till the children can pick their own choice of clothes and do their own hairstyle.

During this stage, the internalisation of gender values by a child can be illustrated through games they play imitating the role of their specific gender. Small girls are seen playing with dolls in their own imaginary kitchen. Small boys of this age group too play imitating the role of elders of their own gender. However they tend to take up roles of different nature. They are seen taking the role of shopkeeper, carpenter, miller, driver, etc. Sometimes they demarcate their status as father, mother, brother and sister according to their respective gender. In such cases, boys tend to order around imitating the role of their father and girls

are seen to complain about the careless nature of boys. The roles imitation by children is itself the roles which are gender marked among the adults of the society. It is thus evident that a Tangkhul girl learns to maintain and manage the home domain whereas a boy learns to take care of things outside the house.

Values of what is masculine or feminine in their emotions are also given clues through the language parents and elders use. Words like “*Mayarnaona machap paimanei*” meaning ‘boys do not cry’, “*Mayarnao chi mayarnao laka*” meaning boys are always boys, which indicates the value of men to be emotionally strong. On a contrary, the languages they use for girls like “*Sheba satheilo*” suggests that they should be hospitable or diligent; “*Ning kalo*” suggests ‘be charitable,’ which are characteristics of women’s values. These are also pointers to the common expectation of the society from girls to be understanding and caring. Even the parents and elders has the practice of mumbling these words as they handle the infant, who may not understand a thing about what they are speaking of. This way elders use languages giving hints of the values associated with femininity and masculinity.

Toys which a young child possesses tend to emphasize between male or female attribute. For instance, a boy plays with *kari* (toy vehicles made of wood or purchased from market), *sayur* (toy animals made of clay or wood) and girls

are seen with *nganganao* (dolls) and *thangthang* (toy kitchenware which they make collections out of used bottles and other items). Practically, all children in fact possess and play with gender typed toys given to them by parents, relatives and well wishers. The response to such gender stereotyping also comes from parents and elders where toys are categorically purchased for a boy child and a girl child. For instance, if a boy plays with kitchen toys or dolls, elders chide him saying, “*Na ngalanaola?*” meaning ‘are you a girl?’ or if a girl rides *thingkari* (cycle made of wood), elders say “*Ngalanaowui ot maningmana,*” meaning ‘it is not a girl’s plaything.’ Even in their treatment towards children, they show gender stereotyping as girls are not allowed to play with boy’s toys and vice versa.

Children at this stage spend much of their time at home. Mostly they spend their time with their grandparents whenever their parents are way to the fields. The circle of friends is thus formed among the neighbourhood children. Most children start attending their school at the age of five and thus spend longer period of the day in school. However, socialisation, at this stage, takes place mostly within the family. As the child learns to identify his/her gender they also pick up gender specific terms like ‘*shanao*’ (women), ‘*mayarnao*’ (men) and learn to identify others’ gender too. Some simple kinship terminologies like *ava* - mother, *ani* - aunts, *amei* - elder brother, *achon* - elder sister, etc. are taught to

them. The basic knowledge of who they are is thus inculcated into the young minds during this period.

6 – 12 Years: Given the label to a person as a boy or a girl based on their biological anatomy, the society imposes expectations on the individual to behave and act according to their gender and not to deviate from it. It is in the practices of everyday life that these expectations are fulfilled and reproduced. For instance, a boy of six years is expected to learn the role of running errands and fetch water. A girl of the same age is expected to learn household chores, attend to younger children and so on. However, some isolated cases were taken where the children are composed of only one gender. In such cases, it is observed that boys shares the chores of girls' duties and girls perform the duties of boys like running errands and even assists the father with light works.

Even if there are no hard and fast rules of streamlining the gender division of labour, there is always a line of demarcation. The narrative mentioned in the beginning of this chapter is one such example. Mrs. *Zingyinla* would not rely on her son to baby-sit the younger ones. She would also complain if the son would do the dishes saying that they are too clumsy and could break the kitchen wares. In the same way, girls are not allowed to do carpentries or chop firewood. So, the children do not have equal access to all kinds of works and this is simply based

on gender. Thus, children within this age category learn to play their role appropriate to their own gender and gender demarcation becomes apparent.

However, in some isolated cases, the nature of this division of labour varies according to the composition of gender in the family. For instance, there are families where all the children are either only boys or girls. In such context, the division of labour is shown in the following cases.

Case 12. Angamla, a widow, has three daughters. They are all between the age group 7-13. During their holidays, the girls would assist their mother with spade and fencing work in the field. They are also the ones to see to it that their chicken shed are intact and that they are responsible for minor repairing works at home like the knife handles, kitchen drainage and shelves. The younger girls would also run errands for the mother.

In fact all these are duties of boys in other families, but it is being performed by the mother and her daughters as they do not have men in the family. In another instance,

Case 13. Mr. And Mrs. Luingam have four sons without any daughter. In their case, their 12 year-old-son, Ngamshang, does the mopping and the

dishes in the absence of his mother. His elder brother assists in cooking while his younger brother sweeps the house and cleanse their rooms. They would also wash their own clothes.

The above case depicts how works are being performed in a family with different gender composition. In a family without any daughters, boys perform the duties of girls like mopping the floor, doing the dishes, washing their clothes and sweeping the floors. However, these are some exceptional cases which are not applicable to all families and to the conventional division of labour.

Generally, it is observed that parents assign duties and responsibilities to girls which require more time and patience. Their duties like cleaning, washing and cooking keep them more occupied as compared to boys.

Values of masculinity and femininity are manifested in different ways through socialization process. There is a popular saying, "*Mayarnaona khama khangakhai khangachana,*" which means that it is natural for boys to bear wounds, and which typically portray men as the one who engage themselves in risky ventures. This show in the way children behave and play. Boys tend to involve themselves in more risky activities which leave them with more wounds and bruises. Girls, on the other hand, tend to be more careful and tender. As it is

evident from the saying mentioned above, elders use this saying and encourage this value to boys which is not the case with girls. For instance, girls are not encouraged to ride the cycle meant for boys or climb trees. They would be told by parents and elders that they may get hurt or fall down from the tree.

In the process of imparting gender specific roles, the mother and other female members of the family take the growing girl child under their guidance whereas the father and other male members do the same for their boys. The mother and elder women of the family monitor young girls in the process of learning the role of what is considered the feminine trade. Elder men do the same for boys in imparting the masculine role. Therefore, the role imitation in the play session during their early years now become role learning as they reach this stage. Simultaneously, the children learn responsibility too. Children of this age group begin to take different responsibilities appropriate to their own gender and their age.

Gender segregation also takes place in this age group. As they become conscious of their own gender, they feel shy and uncomfortable to mix with the opposite gender and form groups within friends. Thus, an individual is socialised into the social life and they gradually learn to mix or adjust with their friends. Apart from socialisation within the family, the children now go beyond their

courtyard and spend their leisure hours with their friends. Their games are now concentrated within the circle of their own gender. Their games are discussed as follows:

Girls:

Saotheila (Throwing Knuckle Bones): It is a game where as many as twenty girls can participate in two groups. This game is played by using *Saothei*—a flat but round seed extracted from a creeper's plant called *Saorong* in local parlance.

Kotla (Five Stones): A game which is more or less similar to the game commonly known as five stones. Here, the girls gathered small pebbles and play the game in groups or in duo.

Boys:

Mahar Kapai: It is a traditional game of high-jump. The name originates from the words '*mahar*' – a kind of tall plant which is used in the game as poles and marking lines and '*kapai*' meaning jumping in Tangkhul language. In this game, the boys would compete among themselves to take the highest jump. Two poles would be erected oppositely with a distance of about two metres between them. The poles have branches at equal interval for placing a *mahar* or support a string used as a marking line of height for the jumper. The height would be raised

higher after each round and those participants who failed to jump over the line would be eliminated. The participant who could take the highest jump eventually becomes the winner.

Sao katak: This game involves a wooden made top where the lower end tapers to form a sharp edge. The upper end, on the other hand, tapers to form a small head where they tie a thin rope and pull it to make it spin. Group of boys spin their own Sao and let it hit others' Sao. This way, they exhibit their art of spinning.

The nature of the games played by girls and boys are different. Girls play games which are physically less demanding and more indoor type. Game like *Saotheila* is an outdoor game but this game is played within a limited yard. Whereas, *Kotla* is an indoor game where they have to sit and play inside the house or under a shady tree. On the other hand, boy's games are more stressful. It requires energy and is mainly of an outdoor nature. For instance, *Mahar Kapai* is a physically game in which they have to jump and control to balance their body simultaneously, which sometime may even cause them with serious injury. By nature, girls do not want to get dirty and want to play safe. On the contrary, boys who are scared to take challenges are ridiculed as *malung makazang* (coward) and *ngalakaphem* (sissy). All these games mentioned here are some traditional games played by boys and girls. These games give certain pictures of the gender

relations among the people – the values attached to boys as rough and daring, and girls as patient and tender.

Internalisation process through learning of one's place in the kinship network is another aspect which shows mark difference of a woman and man's place in their culture. Among the Tangkhuls, the whole social system revolves around the kinship organisation. A Tangkhul can never forget their origin whoever and wherever they may be. A person is identified by the village to which she or he belongs. As such all through his life cycle, his actions are bound by obligations and reciprocal relationship of the kinship organisation.

As the children reach this stage, they are taught by the family elders to understand as to where they belong in the kinship network. They are explained as to why they should refer people by different terminologies. The genealogy of the *shimkhur* (family), the *meiphung* (lineage) and the *shangnao* (clan) are revealed to them by the elders. For instance, a child is explained as to who he/she should call his/her elder mother's younger sister 'avakatui' - younger mother. The children thus, gradually understand why and how they are related to someone.

They are also taught about the patrilineal and patriarchal values of the society – the lineage traced from the male line and the family heads by men in the

society. They begin to understand the system of the culture where men continue to remain in the family and women becoming other family after marriage. The status of each individual in the family and in the wider social network is taught to them by elders. For instance, a girl before her marriage enjoys the status as a *naongalava* (daughter) in her natal home and after she gets married, she becomes a member of another family and enjoys the status as *apareiva/ava* (wife/mother). But, a man becomes *agahara* (husband) and *ava* (father), and carries the name of the family in their kinship network. This way the children learn to occupy their place in the gender network of the society too.

Oral traditions are passed down by family and elders through narratives. During this period, they have not reached the stage to understand the customs thoroughly. Gender specific qualities of what the society considers good or bad is narrated to them in the form of *awo-ayi khararchan* (folktales).

Khabe

Once there lived in a village, a widow and her only son, Khabe. The mother loved him so much as she was loved by him.

So much so that it became the talk of the village.

When Khabe was young and whenever the mother had to go to the fields, he would be kept under the care of either her neighbours or relatives.

On many occasions, the mother would return home halfway from the fields to be with her son.

Time passed by. Khabe had also come of age. Then a day came, his mother asked him to get married.

Thus, Khabe brought home a girl. And he began to live a married life. His mother also stayed with them.

But the happiness of the mother was short-lived. She began to suffer undue treatment in the hands of her daughter-in-law. This happened whenever the husband was away from the village.

Whenever Khabe was away from the village, the mother would be sent to the jhum all alone. For days and nights together, she would work in the field and hold the night there.

Then Khabe's wife would send unusual foodstuffs to the fields. She would pack zatkang (burnt rice), Theithukthei (wild apples as meat) and samra (water left behind from washed rice—as rice beer).

The mother could not muster the courage to complain to her son. So she would often quench her thirst and hunger by taking water from the nearby stream. This went on for quite some time.

In spite of all these, the mother never loses heart. She would tend the jhum diligently. But Khabe's wife was never satisfied, and often found ways to

chide her mother in-law. She would also scold the mother in-law to tend the fields properly.

So whenever the mother felt lonesome and sad, she would sing a song—

Khapeda naolikhi liu mavathe, lanwo,

Khi vanaoka yamthen kano, yamshot dei,

O Khabe!

English version:

(When Khabe was young,

I'd oft' returned home, halfway from the field.

Never had I shooed in the birds to the field,

It's always shooed away.

O Khabe!)

Early one morning, Khabe returned home from khayao (Naga labour trip).

He then told his wife that he would go to the fields and asked her to pack food for his mother. Then he was off to the fields.

As Khabe reached the hut in the fields, he called his mother to come to the hut and eat the food brought from home.

But the mother gently refuses to eat. She then asked her son to look what is beneath the tarong (a platform built alongside the hut).

Khabe found three holes dug into the ground. To his utter surprise, there were zatkang, samra and wild apples in each hole.

On seeing this, Khabe's anger knows no end.

Immediately, he escorted the mother home. When they reached the village, Khabe told her to enter the house alone.

So as soon as she walked into the kitchen, Khabe's wife began to insult her.

Then Khabe coughed and enter the kitchen pretending not to know anything of what was happening.

His wife then put up her pretence, and served him rice beer and meat.

Khabe told his wife to soak kashai (a rope used for carrying basket). The wife did it exactly as she was told.

After Khabe had done with his drinks, he asked his wife to bring him the kashai. Then as his wife brought it, he took the rope and thrashed her.

As we analyse the story, the wife is depicted as woman who defies the norms of an ideal *arihava* (daughter in-law). Here the husband acts as the disciplinarian by taking corrective measures. This kind of story shows the patriarchal nature which conveys its values through the theme of the story. It also depicts gender stereotyping where daughter in-laws are portrayed as bad. In another such commonly told folktale, the system of their patriarchy is portrayed. The story goes like this:

LIUYAKLA AND LIUKANPHA

Once there lived a man by the name Liukanpha. He married Liuyakla, after courting her for some years. His wife, a year after their marriage, bore him a son. They were so happy and took care of the child with all the love and affection as much as they cared for each other.

The couple lived a happy life and the villagers talked about them very profoundly.

One day, they had a serious quarrel. Liuyakla walked out of the house, leaving her husband and her child. Even after she was repeatedly persuaded to come home, she refused to return to her husband and son. So, Liukanpha had no choice, but to take care of the child by himself.

Liuyakla's love for her son knew no bound. So much so that she would sometime come and watch him play from distance. Occasionally, she would also eavesdrop to see how the father and son were doing at home. Everytime, the mother saw her son she would be filled with emotion.

Liukanpha knew about what Liuyakla had been upto. So, whenever he sensed her presence in the vicinity of the house, the father would pamper the child in all the way he could. Sometime he would keep meat on one end of the bed and fish on the other. He would then asked the child to run along from one end of the bed to the other, and endeared him with the delicacies.

The mother felt so happy to watch her son and the father. At the same time, she would also feel remorseful and envy to see them together in joy and happiness.

One day, on sensing the presence of Liuyakla around the house, Liukanpha tried to provoke her with a song. He sang,

“Oh inao samthiri, Liuyakla! Liuyakla! Maleishishilo!

(Oh my son has just started walking, Liuyakla does not love him).

On hearing the song, she could no longer hold her emotions. From the place where she was hiding, she replied singing,

“Oh khisa maleikashino, Liuyakla, Liuyakla maung khaloine!

(Oh why shouldn't I love my son! But Liuyakla is not coming back).

Liukanpha then picked up his spear and threw at the direction from where the song came. From that day on, she never came to see her son again.

The story depicts the rights of the father over the children. In the Tangkhul society, a mother can never claim her rights over her children whatever the circumstance may be. The child is always affiliated to the father's clan. The story depicts the love of a mother to her child. It portrays a helpless woman, who despite her love for the child has to give up all hopes of claiming the child.

A Girl and a Bear

Once there lived a family in yonder village. They have two children, a daughter and a son. Their daughter was the most beautiful girl in the village.

One day, as the daughter had come of age to get married, the father decided to look for a man. He then called upon all the prospective grooms to perform a feat to win his daughter's hand.

He declared that his daughter would be given to a man, who could kill a pig at one blow.

Many young men, even from the neighbouring villages, came and performed the task. But none could succeed in their attempt. One day, a handsome looking and young man turned up and accomplished the feat.

The father was so pleased with the man. As promised he married off his daughter to the man with much merrymaking in the village.

The next morning, the family and the villagers were ready to set off with the bride to the groom's village. But the man stopped them and insisted on taking the girl all by himself. He told them that his village was far away.

Then, the newly married couple set off from the village. After a long walk, the girl asked him if his village was still far way. 'No, it's very near now,'

he replied. Again, after a long walk and whenever the girl asked him about his village, he always gave the same answer.

It was already dark when the man told her that they have reached his home. He told the girl to close her eyes and open it only when she is asked to do so. He then turned into a bear and lifted her on his back, and climbed up a huge and a tall tree. On reaching the top, he turned into a human again and told her that she could now open her eyes. The girl was so tired that she slumped on the floor and dozed off.

When the girl woke up the next morning, she found herself to be on top of the tree and amidst a dense jungle. She was so taken aback and began to get worried.

Then, she asked her husband whether he had any family members around. He nodded, "Yes, but we live separately." He cut short the conversation and told her he is going out to collect food.

He slide down through a rope and reached the ground. Then he asked his wife to untie the end of the rope and drop it down to him. Whenever he leaves the treehouse he would always tell her do that. This went on everyday and she was asked never to leave the house.

His unusual habit made her more worried. Though she could not help but suffered it all alone.

One day the husband set off for the field and told her that he would return early before sunset. But he would come back only by nightfall. The day when he told her that he would come home late, he would return early. This unusual routine kept on repeating. And it made the girl so curious.

She then decided to find out what exactly is going on with her husband. She thought over it for many days and came up with a plan. One morning as her husband was about to leave for the field, she asked him to bring certain bark so that she could use it to make clothes.

Everyday, he would come home with a bundle of the bark without suspecting any foul play. But instead of making clothes, she secretly used it to make seiphengkhra (a rope made of bark). This went on for many days and the girl finally completed making a rope long enough to reach the ground.

One morning when her husband was about to leave for the field, she asked him about his work routine. He promptly replied that he would be home early. Then she understood that it meant he would be late again. That day she was determined to perform her plan.

In the afternoon, the girl dropped down the rope and slides it down carefully. She followed his track and finally saw him busy in the field. Stealthily she walked up and hid by the edge of the field to take a closer look at her husband. To her utter surprise and dismay, she found out that

her husband was but a bear. She saw him digging yam with his sharp claws. So much so was her shock that she immediately ran back to their treehouse.

On learning the truth about her husband she could not think anything else but to escape.

That night when her husband came home, she did not show any sign of worry and apprehension. She pretended to be at her normal self so as to avoid any suspicion.

From that night on she began to work out her escape plan. Everyday she would collect some figs, which her husband brought it from the jungle, and hid it in another basket. After some days she had enough figs to carry out her plan.

One day as soon as her husband left for the field, she collected her basket and took along with a handful of chilly powder and salt. She then dropped the rope and escaped from the treehouse.

She knew her husband would not give up easily, and had made her plan accordingly. Wherever she stopped by to take rest, she would place few figs and a pinch of salt and chilly powder on a slab of stone. She knew that her husband would surely be tempted to stop for the figs.

In the evening when he returned home, he saw a rope hanging from the treehouse. Immediately, he realised that his wife had escaped. Without

losing anytime, he followed her tracks through the jungle. It happened exactly as she had planned out. After every some distance, he found the figs and could not resist it. He wasted a good time enjoying the fruit. Thus, he failed to catch up with her.

By late in the evening, his wife had already reached her village. She narrated the whole story to her father.

Early in the next morning, her husband turned up at the house. By then, his father in-law had worked out a plan. He received him warmly and decided to slaughter a pig. He then asked his son in-law to come with him to the yangkhur (a workroom built adjacent to the house) and dragged out the healthiest pig.

As his son in-law dragged out the pig, he swung his haphang (a wooden handle of an axe) but missed an intended target. It nearly landed on the head of his son in-law. In the spurt of that moment, he let go off the pig from his hands. His father in-law was quick to apologise and told him it was accidental.

In a second attempt as the pig was pulled out by its hind legs, the girl's father made no mistake and hit him right on his forehead. The man then growled and turned into a bear, and fell down on the ground.

The girl's father butchered the bear into pieces and dried it in Phungshar (a suspended rack above the fireplace in the kitchen).

One evening as the girl was seated and cooking by the fire in the kitchen, warm oil from the bear's meat trickled down from Phungshar and smeared her hands.

Few days later, the girl woke up in the morning to find herself suffering from skin infection all over her body. When her parents found out her problem they decided to keep her off the house. She was taken away and left all alone in a room attached to a granary.

Her little brother could not bear the thought of his sister left all alone with nobody to care for her. So everyday he would pack some food and take it to his sister, and gave her company from time to time.

One day, as the boy was clearing the grasses beneath the floor of his sister room, he killed a snake. He then told her sister about it and left for home. After a while, the girl got curious and peeped through the bamboo floor to take a look at the dead snake. She saw a male snake slithering around the dead one. The sight was so unusual that it totally caught her whole attention. She was so keen to find out what would happen next.

After a little while the male snake quickly slithered away. She then closely watched the reptile movement, and saw him picked a leaf from nearby and returned to the dead one. The snake applied the leaf on the still body. To her utter surprise, the dead snake came to life.

The next day when her brother turned up with the food package, she immediately asked him to pluck some leaves from that tree. Her brother did so obediently.

She applied the juice from the leaf all over her body. Few days later, all her skin infection was completely gone.

Then, one early morning, she went to a nearby spring and took a bath. As she was getting ready to go, a young and handsome man passed by. He was so enamoured by her beauty that he immediately fell in love with the girl.

The young man proposed her to come and live with him. The girl was more than happy that she willingly accepted his offer.

Later, she found out that the young man was a prince from a neighbouring village. They got married and happily settled down. But all the while, she could not stop thinking of her little brother who had faithfully looked after her during her sickness.

So, one day, she invited him to her house.

After spending some days at his sister place, he decided to return to his village. But before leaving, he was asked to pick a buffalo of his choice from the herd as a token of love and gratitude.

Interestingly, he had been advised by his sister, who had learnt the secret of her husband cattle, to pick the leanest from the herd. He then asked exactly as he was told by her. This made the prince very surprised and was

prompted to ask his brother-in-law if he had made a right choice. To this, the boy replied affirmatively.

He took the buffalo and returned home happily.

Some years later, he had a large herd of buffaloes. He then realised why his sister had advised him to go for the leanest among the herd. He became the richest man in his village.

Through the folktale, grandparents narrate the consequences of marrying someone without the knowledge of a person's background. The story depicts how a father tried to find a groom for his daughter by ignoring the criteria as required in the customary marriage. Through the role of the brother, the story portrays the duties and responsibility of a brother towards his sister. The love and care of the brother is rewarded by his sister, which shows the reciprocal relationship of their kin ties.

Yet, in some other cases, parents and elders pick up characters of people and narrate them as examples which give lessons on gender values. Values imbibed through such characters are varied.

Case 14. Mrs. Atipnao is a 35-year-old widow. Her husband passed away when her third child was only three months. As her husband was the eldest

son in his family, her mother in-law stayed with them. She treated her as her own mother and in return, her mother in-law loved her as her own daughter. Despite the hardships and economic constraint, she made it sure that her mother in-law get what she wanted to wear and eat. On her death bed, her mother in-law called all her children and their families and said her last blessing. She breathed her last as Atipnao embraced her on her lap.

In a Tangkhul society, a daughter in-law is considered as *matik kacha arihava* (an ideal daughter in-law) if she treated her in-laws as her own parents and siblings. She is considered good if she took proper care of the parent in-laws and treated them with respect. Case 14 mentioned above is one such example of an ideal *arihava*.

Case 15: Mr. Asing, the eldest among four brothers, started taking responsibilities of the family when he was a young father of two children. His parents passed away seeing only two grandchildren. With three brothers and a sister to take care off besides his children, he struggled with life at an early age. At that point of time, he made a decision that he will invest on his brothers and sister so that he can count on them in difficult times. He guided and supported them with his limited resources. His

brother next to him settled down soon after and he allotted a plot of land next to his house and helped him with his construction work. The two younger brothers, after their studies settled down with a job and family. Though they did not stay in the village, he gave them their share of land adjacent to his house. He also married off her sister and also looks after her welfare. He would regularly invite them for a feast at his house during Christmas. This is taken up to reinforce their ties.

On the other hand, the authority of a man is associated with his status as the head of the family. One who can perform his duties and responsibilities of looking after his families is considered as a *mayar nao* (man). This, a man accomplish by using his authority and the right decision according to what the society sanctions. Case 15, is one such example of the quality of the eldest brother.

These are certain characters of some individuals in the village which became cornerstone for parents in teaching values to the children. A woman or a man who possesses such quality becomes an exemplary character which elders use in teaching the younger ones. Through such examples, gender typed values are fed to children.

By six years, children spent their time outside their courtyard. Their activities involve school time, tuition hour, extra-curricular activities like song practice, sports, etc and on Sundays, they attend Sunday school. Besides parental teachings, the children are now exposed to various factors that influence them in their process of internalising gender values. *Ngasotnao* (peer group), *lairik tamkhangarumbing* (classmate), *oja* (teacher) and *kharnaosan* (senior members) have their influence in moulding the child to his or her appropriate gender. For instance, boys and girls use the same toilet at home, whereas in schools, they use separate toilet as the teachers teach them that it is not proper for them to use the same toilet. The children also learn to mix with the opposite gender as well as with their same gender in the society which is not taught in the home environment. They also learn to tease with each other and gradually boys learn to woo girls which are never taught at home. They learn all these values as they mix around with their friends.

As the children become conscious of their own gender, they gradually learn the values of what it is to be a boy or a girl. They are able to understand the society's concept of what is considered good or bad to their gender.

13-18 YEARS: Individual come to terms with the new roles and physical changes as a boy or a girl adjust with new phases in their life cycle. By this stage,

a child enters a new phase in their life. They attain puberty and become totally conscious of their own gender. Many changes take place during this period. As they undergo a process of physical and mental changes, there is an awakening consciousness towards their gender role in the society. In the process, gender values are reinforced by a person's change of status and their new place in the society. For instance, the rite of passage among the Tangkhuls varies in different institutions. In their social institution, a boy is not considered an adult to represent the family until he is married. Among the girls, they are only given permanent status only when they become an *apareiva* (wife) of her husband. In her father's house, she is only her *Ava wui naongalava* (father's daughter). Her status is impermanent in her father's house. Only after her marriage does she establish her permanent status as the *apareiva* (wife) of her husband and mother of her children. So, in case of unmarried men and women, they have to remain under the care of the oldest brother's family without any established status.

In their political institution, women are not allowed to be members of the village political institution. A boy is inducted into the membership of this institution when they are considered matured enough to participate in the decision making body, approximately by the age of 18.

In economic life, they are counted as adult only when they attain the strength of an adult, that is by the age of 16 and this is applicable for both genders. Children below this age, for instance, do not enjoy the status of an adult even in their wage system and are not counted as an adult labour even in their labour exchange system.

In the religious life, baptism marks the membership but there is no specific age cut streamlined for such ceremonies. Usually, children get baptised by the age of 12 or 13 years. Only after baptism, they are allowed to participate in certain rituals of their religious activities like *prohowui phakachizat* (Lord's Supper), *chankhangazek* (Church assembly), etc. Besides these, they are given membership only after baptism.

Parents do keep the child under strict vigilance, constantly teaching them the 'dos and don'ts' of their moral values.

Case 16: Ms. Awon, a student of class ten, missed school for a day as she was not keeping well. So the next day, she visited her classmate Anot in the evening to borrow the learning materials which she missed. As the two friends met and talk, they lost track of time and it was already dark. She went home running but his father was already fuming with anger. She has

always been advised not to go out at night except for social activities like song practice, church services, etc.

The case study shows that girls are not allowed to go out at an unearthly hours. Strict surveillance imposed on the movement of girls is partly because of the stigma of the society where girls who loiter are considered as indisciplined. It is also from the security point of view that for girls it is not safe to move around at night. Boys of this age group are also advised not to go out at night, but, stringent rules are not imposed on them.

Case 17: Ashang, a 17-year-old college student, came home on holidays. It is always usual for him to join his friends for meisum and they always make the habit of sitting till midnight. Every morning her mother would come banging at his door trying to wake him up. As he got up and walked into the kitchen, he would see his father with a disapproving look on his face. It is a tradition for the family to take their meals together. His father never allows anyone to eat alone. Whenever he comes home late from meisum, he could seldom wake up in time. So everyone would wait for him every morning.

For a boy of 16 years and above category, it is a conventional practice to go for fireside gathering (*Meisum*) after dinner in the village. It is a tradition that the boys making a visit to girl's house and for parents it would be unbecoming to impose strict curfew on them at night. However, they are always advised to come back on time in order to avoid unnecessary interference in their daily routine.

Case 16 and 17 show differences in the way parents impose discipline among their children. This is one typical example of the role of parents in the process of gender socialisation which portrays reproduction of gender differences.

To emulate the role of a responsible father, boys are taught to take a firm and the right decision to effect upon the family. Indecisive characters of men are scorned by the society. Such values are even reinforced by women as they often use the words "*Mayarnaona tashing eina matuilu*" which means men should speak decisively. Likewise, girls are taught to learn the role of '*akhavaiva*' - wife of the *akhava* (head) of the household. The household management and culinary skills are taught to them so as to run the family smoothly when they are married. Apart from the knowledge handed down by elders they also learn through observation and experiences.

Thus, socialisation process results in a degree of uniformity among the members of a society as they come to share values and attributes. In order not to deviate from the norms of gender values, an adolescent boy or girl among the Tangkhuls, is guided by parents and elders teaching rules of kinship, *ngalakhangakhot* (marriage) and *shokhala and vakhalat* (incest).

Kinship System

The Tangkhuls have their kinship system which is an integral part of their social set up. As a Tangkhul is recognized by his village, so does a person cling to her / his kin group to which she/he belongs. They maintain a strong sense of solidarity among the kin members. There is an unspoken sense of competition among the kin groups which is evident in their social functions especially in marriage where they try to showcase the best in everything.

In their kinship system, the paternal uncles and their descendants are known as "*ichichashi*", "*ichicha*" means own, "*shi*" meaning group covering all agnatic relations on the father's side with whom the genealogical relationship can be traced through a known ancestor. Other relatives are referred to as "*theisa*", "*thei*" meaning seed, "*sa*" meaning flesh. This includes the maternal relatives and other relations related through marriage.

The functions of kinship among the Tangkhuls are varied. It is the duty of the clan that members of the kin group do not deviate from the norms of the society. For instance, misconduct of any members of the kin group is taken up in a meeting comprising of all adult male members of the society. Necessary measures and actions are decided during such meetings.

It is also the duty of the kin members to see to the welfare of one another. In case of any misfortune or difficult times, they extend their help to one another physically, emotionally and financially. And in times of joy and celebration, all members of the kin group are invited to join the merriment. To cite one example, all members of *theisa* and *ichichashi* extend their help in the form of presentations or in the form of emotional support. Another remarkable example is the responsibility towards their women. It is always the responsibility of men to see to it that their daughters/sisters are safe, secure and well taken care of.

With the sense of belonging to one's kin group, they maintain strict rules of addressing one another. Right from the time a child is born, he is taught to recognize her or his own group. Even if the child cannot recognize the people surrounding her/him, the family members always try telling him – “*Avawuili valo*” (Go to mommy), “*Hi nashavagato/nashawo dala*” (Here's your uncle), “*Amuilanangli ngahanlu*” (Talk to your cousin), etc. As the child grows up, she/he is also taught to address correctly to all *athei asa* (relatives). For instance,

the child is taught to differentiate between the paternal aunts as ‘*ani +name*’ and the maternal aunts as ‘*ava +name*’ like *anilung* or *avalung*. As they learn these terminologies, they are taught to respect elders too through their usage of kinship terminologies. The children are always taught never to address elders by their names without the proper prefix. For instance the prefix *amei/achon* (elder brother/ sister) or *ani/ awo* (aunt/ uncle) are terms of respect used to address elders. These way children are taught to differentiate between the male and female kin.

In order to maintain their kin relationship, the people have a well regulated pattern of behaviour. The practice of *chonlan* is one such practice which acknowledges their kin relations. This is a practice where shawls and lower garments are given as presents or gifts to the relatives on occasions like *shakaza* (wedding), *maran kasa* (merit feast), *kathi kasar* (death ceremony), *thisham* (death anniversary), *phanit* (festivals), etc. As a token of reciprocating their love, the other party slaughter a pig or cow or buffalo and sends them home with their share of meat. This practice has a very gender marked tradition.

Case 18: Mrs. Aning, got married outside the village. On the eve of her wedding, she gave shawls to all her brothers, father and uncles. In return, they send her away with presents from their side. On the day of her

marriage, she gave shawls to all her husband's family and to his paternal uncles as a symbol of respect and as a sign of her membership into the new family. Thus, they set up a family of their own and now they have four children, two boys and two girls.

The family reside in the district headquarter and both of them teach in a private school. From time to time, her brother would come from the village and stay with them when he visits the town for his work. During such visits, he used to bring fruits and vegetables for them. Sometimes, he would take the children out to the shop and buy goodies for them. He has the habit of telling them stories and entertains them with his jokes and comments which the children enjoy. So, her children always await their uncle's visit.

Recently, she goes to her parental home recently for the church centenary celebration. So, she brought a shawl as present for her brother as she feels that this kind of occasion comes once in a lifetime. The brother, on the other hand, slaughtered a pig and gave her the big thigh parts as her share which she proudly take home with her. She was happy not because of the meat that she received but because of the extension of love and ties that his brother extends through such token.

This is the kind of relationship which they maintain among the kin group in the present times through occasional *chonlan* and other presentations. As one receives presentation from his kin members, the person is expected to do the same and reciprocate such acknowledgement.

Besides maintaining a strong bond among the paternal kin, which is a feature of this patriarchal society, there exist a special kind of relationship between the children and the maternal uncle. This relationship developed through their mother who cared so much for her brother. The term '*varei*' is used for the maternal uncle. He plays an important role in the life of the sisters' children. It is his duty to see to it that his sisters and their children are well protected and taken care of properly. In the same way, the children are taught to respect him and that the satisfaction of the maternal uncle is considered as a greatest blessing.

It is observed that kinship tie is closer on the maternal side during the mother's lifetime. But this relationship last only for a generation as this is basically a personal bond. With the death of the mother this bond gradually declines. In this regard, there is a saying which goes-

“Ngalarava thotkhamanga, kha mayarawuiya mithot peida mashimanlui mana”.

This literally means that maternal kinship last only for a generation whereas, paternal kinship is a long lasting social bond. Hence whatever the relationship it may be, the maternal bond cannot surpass the paternal bond in this patriarchal society. A man who ignores his allegiance towards his paternal kinsmen is considered a socially ignorant person.

Kinship system, among the Tangkhuls is channelized at different times through different occasions. Rituals and ceremonies related to *kaphara* (birth), *ngala khangakhot* (marriage), *thisham* (death anniversaries), *kathi kasar* (death ceremony), *maran kasa* (merit feast), *phanit phanao* (festivities), etc are some important occasions where the members of the kin group show their kin relationship through immaterial and material help. With the change of beliefs, however, there is discontinuity in observing many ceremonies and rituals. Even if such ceremonies still exist, it is held with different belief and practices.

The occupational differences that have come about with the change of time are another factor which has affected the relationship in kinship system. There has been relocation of people due to nature of work and it has necessitated geographical distance among the kin members. This becomes difficult for one to

exchange visit and things like they do in the past. A case study dating back to the early Christian period may be referred here-

Case 19: Akang is a hardworking woman and mother of seven children. She has a huge responsibility including child care, housework and cultivation.

While she was busy with all these duties, her husband would frequently go for hunting expedition. Her husband was a good hunter and never came home without a catch. He would sometime bring home with two or three deer. Whenever he returned with big catch, he used to invite relatives to come over and collect their share. He was always able to generously share the meat to all the kin members besides the neighbours. With surplus meat, Akang used to have an abundance of dry meat. So whenever there is scarcity of items for curry, the neighbours and relatives would come over asking for a chunk of meat.

In return to their generosity, the others would willingly come and help them in their agricultural works and other activities.

Like the old lady, many elders today complain about the widening communication gap among the kin members. In the same manner, the closeness shares between the maternal uncle and his niece and nephews have now been

replaced by occasional visits in many cases. In the present times, therefore, the kin members not only face problem in extending food and material help regularly but also could not visit each other anytime they want. However, as case 9 shows, the ties are still very strong and they cover the physical distance with occasional meetings and sharing. In other words, the ties are not severed but continuity is maintained through other forms as time and situation demands.

Another aspect of their kinship system is in the usage of kinship terms. In the past, as it is observed among most elderly people, there was certain avoidance of names for certain people. Even in the present times, for instance, the elderly spouse would never address one another by their name. They do not address each other as *ipareiva* or *igahara* which respectively means my wife or my husband. They would rather address with the children's names as *Ashang shava* or *Ashangshavā*, which means *Ashang's* mother or father. Thus, the spouse maintains teknonymy while addressing each other.

Today, however, among the younger generations, spouse addresses each another by their names or by adding the prefix *amei*, meaning brother, to the name in case of wife addressing her husband as *ameishang*. On the husband's side, they call his wife by her name without any prefix. The prefix is usually added as a term of respect. Now the names are seldom avoided like before. In this

context, the term of respect is only added in addressing the husband and not vice versa.

Among the siblings, there were strict rules of using their kinship term. The younger ones were never allowed to address elders by their names. Likewise, older ones had to address them with proper prefix. For instance, the oldest kin of both genders were addressed as *achon* or *amei* without using their names. The others are addressed as *amei + name / achon + name*. The younger ones are addressed as

apa - sister to younger brother,

ikatuiva - older sister to younger sister,

izarra – brother to younger sister, and

ikato- brother to younger brother.

As we compare this with the present usage, some of them even address one another by their names. This might be one aspect of change brought about by the influence of others' culture. Even parents of younger generation do not seem to bother much about it now. In the past, it was a matter of disrespectful offence when younger siblings address the older ones by their name. This strict rule on using terminologies is no longer adhered to in present day.

Kinship system of the Tangkhuls shows certain symbolic relations of women and men. The saying that maternal ties last only for a lifetime and that of paternal ties as a permanent social bond is one standing example. In other words, it is symbolical of their patrilineal system where the relation shows different values for women and men. Likewise, the usage of kinship terminologies also shows unequal power relations in the present context where the husband addresses his wife by her name and the wife addresses with the prefix *amei* (brother) is indicative of their power relations.

Marriage: A study on kinship system of the Tangkhul has led to another aspect of their social institution. As one sees that kinship network starts from the family, which originates from the union of two people, it becomes inevitable to analyze their marriage system with their kinship system as discussed.

The institution of marriage is one of the means of social control through which members of the society behave within their approved social sanctions and refrain from being promiscuous. The rules of whom to marry and what is incest or taboo are imbibed from the teaching of parents and elders.

The Tangkhul society maintains strict rules of clan exogamy as they believe that they come from the same genealogical line. So the child is taught to refrain

from such incestuous act. Violation of such rules is known as '*shokhala*', which is literally translated as "upside down," meaning incest. Another taboo regarding marriage is prohibition of union between a man's son and his sister's daughter which is known as '*vakhalat*,' meaning returning to the maternal uncle. In the past, couples who violate these rules were punished with expulsion from the clan and from the village.

The Tangkhul society still adheres to the strict rules of clan exogamy. Not only do they believe that such unions bring curse on their lives and generation, but is also seen as a stigma. The society deems those who committed this taboo as social unfit and bar them from assuming any social position. Till today, it is found that such marriages are very rare. There are two cases reported in the village. With *shokhala* still viewed upon with ignominy by the society, parents always keep an eye on their children so as not to deviate from the norms of marriage.

On the other hand, there is a type of cousin's marriage which is widely favoured by the Tangkhul's marriage custom. They called this as *pam* marriage. A sister's son is allowed to marry her mother's brother's daughter that is the maternal uncle's daughter, which they consider as taking her aunt's place on the

part of the daughter. Such marriage was mostly favoured by parents and elders in the past and they usually arranged them.

One thing which is significant about the *pam* marriage in gender relations is the strong ties shared by brothers and sisters. A man always encouraged his daughters to take her *ani's* (aunt's seat), that is, to marry his sister's son. Likewise, a woman encouraged her son to marry her brother's daughter. This indicates his love and respect for his sister. This is also done in order to ease adjustment problem. If one looks this aspect from gender perspective, it is also indicative of respect that each gender held for the other.

This practice has become almost extinct from the society and it has become only a custom in name and not in practice. Today people marry their own choice with the consent of their parents. Parents do hardly interfere on the choice of their children if their choice is not a matter of *shokhala* or *vakhalat*. With the advent of modern education and economic system, the village community are now exposed to different places and professions. This led to intermarriages and changes were brought in into their marriage system. Such adaptation to the new system has led to the breakdown of such practices of marriage.

With these customs as the base of their choice of partners, parents always teach their children to keep away from intimate association with persons who cannot be their spouse. As soon as the children reach marriageable age, parents always try to teach these kinship laws of marriage to their children.

Marriage may be the outcome of youthful courtship followed by the approval of their parents. It may, however, be noted that ample freedom is given to the children regarding the choice of partners without much interference. In this regard, the parents interfere in the children's choice of friendship irrespective of gender. As such the children are warned to stay away from such friends.

Even as there is much socialisation amongst the boys and girls, parents would advise their children to maintain restraints in physical proximity between them. There is no parental objection in sharing company between the two genders. However, the children are always advised against from getting physical intimacy even in playful situation. There is a popular saying, which the elder would particularly warn the girls. It goes:

Meili ngareo akha ngator,

Mayarnaoli ngareo akha naovai,

(If you play with fire, you get scalded, if you play with men, you get conceived.)

At this stage, choosing life partner assumes an important affair. It is therefore observed that there is more or less a consensus over the pre-requisite or selection of partner. When a boy or a girl comes of age they look in their prospective life partner certain qualities which are widely acknowledged as consensus standards. In this context, the consensus standards may be defined by aspects like economy, equation in the family, personal qualities, biological antecedents, religion and education. However, there are differences in the criteria for a prospective groom or for a bride. In this regard, parents as well as children of this age group were interviewed.

The whole population of the village follows Christianity as their religion. They strongly believe that unity of a family is maintained only when they share the same faith/religion. So, when it comes to selection of partners, they this factor into consideration. The first question the parents put up when they learn about the children's affair with someone else is "Is he/she a Christian?" The same is true about the children too with the exception of few. So, this is one important factor in selection of partners. There are 14 cases of women marrying a non-Christian. But there is only one case of men taking in a non-Christian wife. It is a case of remarriage for both the spouses. Since, the wife is a Hindu from Meitei community, they eloped. But she became a Christian soon after the marriage.

Greater restriction is emphasised on men as they have to bring their wife into the family. All the parents stress on this aspect while teaching their children about choosing a life partner.

Genealogical factor, like religion is stressed by every parent in selection of life partner among the Tangkhuls. It is not only the mental and physical disability that count in this matter; that the factors like *mirai kakaza*, *khangayei* and hereditary diseases are points indispensable in determining the choice of bride or a groom. *Mirai kakaza*, according to the belief of the Tangkhuls, may be defined as sadistic possession of a person by the spirit of another person. *Khangayei* is a term used to refer to a transformed animal form by human being. In this regard, hereditary diseases like spastic, skin diseases, mentally unsound, kleptomania, tuberculosis etc. are taken into consideration. They have a saying in regard to this matter which goes “*Makathar katongava pheotapai serra kha asheeli pakahai kazatva mapheoluipei mana*”. It literally means that ‘one can wash off anything that is dirty but disease that is in the blood cannot be cleansed’.

In the backdrop of HIV/AIDS pandemic, another important factor in selection of life partner is the emphasis on the morality of a person. So far, more than 10 lives have been lost to substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in the village. This led them to stress on a person’s history as an important criteria in selecting a

partner. Certain personal qualities like alcoholism, drug abuse and behavioural conduct of a person are seriously taken into consideration. Irrespective of gender, the moral background and habits of a person are also taken into account. The questions like —“*Zamkhor/ari arai khamang/shikachin mi maning?*” (Is the person an alcoholic or a drug-abuser?), “*Acham aram katonga katha?*” (How is the person’s morality altogether?) These are some of the immediate questions in this matter.

Economic status of the family is also considered in the choice of partner by most parents. But this is not an important factor for most of the youths. In this case, people with a comparatively lesser income look for a prospective partner from economically stable family. And people from high income group would choose their partner from a family with equal economic status. However, this does not mean that there exists class system while selecting a life partner but simply denotes to ease adjustment problem for the partners. This is mostly applicable in case of choosing a son in-law by parents. The logic behind this is that parents want to send their daughter to an economically sound family so as to ease her economic burden. Because a girl, after her marriage becomes a permanent member of the husband and manages the economy of the family as *akhavaiva*.

Gender equation of the family too is one factor in the selection of partners. Here gender equation denotes the number of gender of the siblings. The numbers of brothers are considered in this matter. A family with numbers of son is considered a good family which is termed as "*chinao khamathashi*". And good numbers of brother in-laws are known as '*mak chinao khamatha*,' meaning good in-laws from the security point of view. Whatever misfortune, trouble, or need arises, brother in-laws lend a helping hand to each other. However, majority of the people do not give much importance to such criteria in the present context. In most cases, this factor crops up mainly from parents.

After considering the choice of partner by the parents, engagement proceeds with the proposal from the boy's family. A middle person, who is usually a woman known as the *ngala hangsang khamiva*, meets the girl's parents and asks for their daughter's hand in marriage. A female relative is usually entrusted with this task. If the proposal is acceptable to both the parties, then a date is fixed for the betrothal. In the past, omens were consulted before they fix the date to predict if the union of the couple is favourable. If the omen is positive they go ahead with the engagement, if not, the engagement was cancelled. However, such omens are no more consulted.

Engagement ceremony takes place at the girl's house. This ceremony is attended by members of the two families including both men and women besides all the senior members of the *meiphung*. Friends of the girl and the boy may also be invited on the occasion. But the formal meeting is conducted only by male members of the two families. Though women attend to such meeting, they are not entertained to participate in the discussion. On this occasion, the bride's family must know the properties of the groom, both movable and immovable. This is done for the security of the couple and especially for the daughter. In the past, a spade and a rupee was given to the bride's family as a token of for the couple to have a lasting and fruitful marriage. It may be mentioned here that the spade is an indispensable implement among this agrarian society and that the tool being made of metal has symbolic meaning, which refers to attributes like strong, lasting love and useful union, while the rupee signifies the precious union of the couple. Such formalities of presentations are no more practiced today. However, the tradition of '*chonlan*' (shawl presentation) is still prevalent. The bride gives shawl to the groom on the betrothal ceremony to signify respect, love and honour between the couple. The formal meeting is followed by a feast which is attended by all members invited on the occasion.

A pig slaughtered for the occasion is given to the groom's family. This is known as '*paiyansa*' meaning declaration meat. The meat is distributed to all the

relatives and *meiphung*. The groom's family, on the other hand, gives certain amount of money according to what they can afford which is usually used for expenses of the wedding like buying yarn and weaving cost.

Nowadays, as the wedding ceremony is held in Church, the date of the wedding is fixed in consultation with the Church leaders.

From then on, arrangements begin for the wedding. These include financial as well as material arrangement. *Kachon* (shawls) and *kashan* (lower garment) are prepared by both the families for the wedding. During this period, all women of the kin members extend their help in weaving. Men, on the other hand, prepare the fuel woods and start preparing for the feast.

On the eve of the ceremony, a send-off party is given by the bride's family to bid her farewell from her natal home. This is also attended by the groom's family. The bride's family invites people and they bear the expenses for such ceremony. The ceremony includes a formal meeting which is attended by all the invitees for the occasion. The bride presents shawls or lower garment-*kashan* to her family members and she receives blessing from the family and from the *varei* (maternal uncle). Relatives, friends and family bring their present which is known as *shimlam*.

This is followed by ceremony in the Church where an administrator declares their union in marriage. The groom then takes the bride home. As she enters her new home, the womenfolk of the family welcome her into the house. She, then, distributes shawls to the groom's family along with kitchen wares to all sister in-laws – *yorla* to mark her entrance into the family. This ceremony is followed by a feast which is usually attended by all the villagers and invitees from other places. However, all these are done according to the capacities of the family's economic standard.

There is also another type of marriage in the village. Such kind of marriage usually takes place in cases of remarriage on either side of the party. The pastor is invited in the house of the groom and he performs the necessary ceremony at home. Such ceremony is attended only by close relatives and clan members. Formalities of engagement are not necessarily imposed for such marriage and the wedding may take place within a short period of time.

Another type of marriage which is also very common among the people is the case of elopement. Such kind of marriage takes place for various reasons. Some case studies are asunder.

Case 20: Mr and Mrs Aleng had a long love relationship. Their efforts to get their parents' consent, however, yielded no result. The girl's family were totally against their relationship due to the poor economic conditions of the boy's family. For some years they tried their best to convince the girl's parents, but to no avail. The girl's family, on the other hand, had made arrangement to send her outside the village for further studies. On learning the plan, they finally eloped without the consent of the girl's parents.

Case 21: Mrs. Amung was merely 16 years when she got married. Her marriage happened out of compulsion. She was a tenth standard student when she got pregnant by her boyfriend. For three months, she did not inform her mother about her pregnancy, but the mother soon found out. Eventually, she came home with her boyfriend and confessed to her mother. That was when her mother insisted them to elope before the father finds out. And they did so without taking the consent of her father.

Such cases of marriage happen out of certain reasons. In some cases, it happens out of compulsion like pregnancy. In many cases, the spouse fall short of certain prerequisite mentioned earlier which led to opposition from parents on either side. In few rare cases, it is caused by breach of marriage laws like *shokhala* or *vakhalat*.

In case of couple who eloped, certain procedures are followed to declare their union by the families. Soon after the couple enter the house of the boy, family elders, especially menfolk goes to the girl's family with a *hok* (pig) or *silui* (ox) and *kachon* (shawls) (according to what they can afford) as a compensation for their daughter. The girl's father then acknowledge their marriage and enquire the boy's family about the son's share in their family's asset which includes house, forest land, paddy fields etc. This is done in order to ensure security for her daughter. This meeting is known as *Vahem*. Thereafter, the girl's family makes arrangement for presentations which is termed as *Shaksakhami*. Though women are allowed to participate in such meetings, they are not allowed to speak.

The Tangkhuls follow a system of patrilineal lineage. As such men of the family inherit both movable and immovable property. In this matter, the eldest son takes the lion's share and looks after the parents and unmarried siblings. Women are not entitled to any of the family assets. However, they may receive some part of movable properties like ornaments, dress or money as a token of love on her wedding. But, they can never claim over the rights of family's immovable property. In all these process, the eldest son is given a due attention as he is the sole upholder of family's legacy. This responsibility is even greater in case of the son of village headman as he is supposed to take charge of all the

responsibilities related to the welfare of the village. He should be well versed with all the customary rules and practices of the society. Moreover, he has to cope with the changing times.

Rules and customs of engagement, marriage ceremony or customs in case of couples who elope, and rule of heredity are taught to the children during this period. Here as we analyse the procedure of marriage, we see that the patriarchal and patrilineal (gender) values of the society is imparted to the young minds. For instance, the send-off party given to the bride is implicative of women impermanence in her natal home. In other words, the patrilineal continuity is apparent in this matter. The entrance of the bride to the threshold of the groom is again symbolic of her change of identity and status – from a daughter of her father to a wife of her husband. In case of couples who elope, meeting of two families composed of men signifies the patriarchal nature of the society. So the children internalise these values which acts as their manual to take their gender role in the future.

Gender division of labour in the family now becomes very distinct. There is also a degree of socialisation along same sex line between parent and children. Mother- daughter relationship is more intense than father-daughter relationship. Moreover, surveillance is more stringent on girls. As such, girls take up more

household chores within the vicinity of their home like weaving, cleaning, washing, etc. whereas boys run more family errands outside their home.

In the later stage of this period, the children move out from home to pursue their studies or to take up other profession. In order to classify the gender socialisation on how parents give freedom on the choice of the children's profession of the third age group (13 – 18 years), samples of fifteen families (five each from three income groups) are given in the table.

Table 11. Occupational Gender Status of Low Income Group

Sample Families	Clan	Income group	No. of Children*	Occupation of children**	
				Girls	Boys
Family 1	Khamrang	Low	2	Class x (Local/Govt)	Class xii (outside)
Family 2	Ruivah	Low	2	Low-cost vocational training(outside)	Class xi (outside)
Family 3	Muivah	Low	3	(i) Dropped studies after class x (iii) Class viii (local/Govt.)	(ii)Class x (Local/Govt.)
Family 4	Rungsung	Low	3	(i) Work as helper(outside) (ii)Helps the parents at home	(iii)Class vii (local/Govt.)
Family 5	Shimrang	Low	2	(ii)Stay with parents	(i)Part time job (outside)

Source: Fieldwork

Table 12. Occupational Gender Status of Moderate Income Group

Sample Family	Clan	Income group	No. of children	Occupation of children	
				Girls	Boys
Family 1	Ruivah	Moderate	3	(i) Short-term Training(outside) (iii)Class viii (Local/govt. school)	(ii)Class x (outside)
Family 2	Muivah	- do -	3	(ii)Class ix (local/govt.) (iii)Class viii (local/govt)	(i) Class xi (outside)
Family 3	Phungshok	- do -	2	(i)Class x (local govt)	(ii)class viii (local/private)
Family 4	Ronra Shimray	- do -	2	(i)Nursing (outside)	(ii)class xii (outside)
Family 5	Ruivah	- do -	2	(i)Part time job (outside)	(ii)Class x (outside)

Source: Fieldwork

Table 13. Occupational Gender Status of High Income Group

Sample Family	Clan	Income Group	No. of Children	Occupation/Status of children	
				Girls	Boys
Family 1	Muivah	High	2	(i)Class xii (outside)	(ii)Class xi(outside)
Family 2	Khamrang	- do -	3	(ii)Class xi (Outside) (iii)class ix (local/Private)	(i) BCA (outside)
Family 3	R.Shimray	- do -	2	(i) Class x (local/private)	(ii) Class viii (local/private)
Family 4	Shimrang	- do -	2	(ii) Class xi (outside)	(i)Profnl.Course (outside)
Family 5	Rungsung	- do -	2	(ii) Class xi (outside)	(i) Class xii (outside)

Source: Fieldwork

*Number of children in the table denotes only the number of children within the age group between 13–18 years in the family.

**In the occupation / status column:

i, ii, iii = children according to their age

Local = in the village

Outside = outside the village

Private = Private school (more expensive)

Govt = Government school (low - cost)

The tables show three different pictures of the three income groups. Among the low income group, parents have limited choice when it comes to the profession of the children. They either have to send the children outside the village to work somewhere for livelihood or they have to choose among the children to pursue their studies. In such situation, boys are always favoured.

Among the moderate income group, options are more and children enjoy better opportunities. However, when the number of children is large, it becomes a matter of choice of whom to send to private school and government sponsored school even if all the children get the opportunity to pursue their studies. It also becomes a matter of who are to be sent for professional course (long-term) and for short term vocational training. In the end, it is always boys who get the favour of parents.

For the high income group, parents do not have to choose among the children on who to send for further studies. Since they have the resources, ample freedom is given to the children to choose their career.

The above analysis is the discussion on the children of the three income groups. The picture may however change in the long run when they cross these age groups. For instance, equal choice and equal share given to the children during this period may be altered when they reach older stage of their life.

The above discussions are some of the significant observations of how gender values are internalised by children. In all the process, parental teachings influenced the young inquisitive minds of the children, supplemented by the conventional traditions of the society. Children also learn gender values through observation and imitation. Thus, gender values are inculcated in the young minds in overt and covert ways.

It is also observed that patriarchal values of the society play a vital role in imparting gender values to the younger generations. These values are indelibly infused in them and manifest it in their activities. Certain occasions like *naoyan* , *naoming kaphok*, boys courting girls and marriage ceremony are examples of such manifestations.

Gender socialisation, thus, begins virtually from birth. This process conditions a boy and a girl into two categories which function together in a

culture. However, parents who believe they treat equally tend to produce different responses to boys and girls.

However, socialisation is an ever progressing process in the evolution of any society. So, what one observes today may be the outcome of the changes that have come about from yesteryears and it may change over a period of time. Different agents contribute to the progress of socialisation which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN GENDER RELATIONS

The agents of socialisation are structured group or context within which significant process of socialisation occurs. In the Tangkhul society, the *shimkhur* (family) is the principle socialising agent of the child during infancy. The other influences include *yarnao* (peers), *lairikshim* (schools), media and *dharma* (religion). The continuity and changes of gender relations are thus made visible through these agents.

This chapter analyses different agents of gender socialisation as factors responsible for both continuity and change in gender relations. Internalisation of gender values through these agents are analysed to see what has changed and what is being continued. In the process of considering gender relations, the present agents are also outlined as to what agents played the same role in the past. For instance, the role of school was traced to the *longshim*, which functioned similarly in many ways in comparison with the former.

1. Socialisation within the family

The first impression of gender is imbibed into the infant's mind by the family members. Family, as agents of socialisation, inculcates the notion of what masculinity or femininity is to a child through verbal and non-verbal clues. Each members of the family play their own role as agents of gender socialisation.

Among the Tangkhuls, the *shimkhur* (family) consists of *ava* (father), *ava* (mother), *naongara* (children), grandparents — *ayi* (grandmother) and *awo* (grandfather), and unmarried siblings of the father; *ani* (aunts) and *avakato* (uncles).

The adult members of the family play a role in socialising the young ones so as to fit them into a system of their own gender. Each family member has their own role in socialising a child according to their gender and status in the family.

Ava (Father): The role of *ava* (father) in gender socialisation till the age of two is very limited because the young child is mostly taken care of by the paternal grandmother and mother, except for occasional babysitting when women are busy with other works. By the time the child starts to walk and talk, they then start accompanying their father during a visit to their neighbours. The role of the father becomes prominent by the age of six when the children normally begin to learn roles appropriate to their own gender. During this stage, a father teaches young boys in performing their duties and also assigned suitable roles. Moreover, the figure of *ava* in itself set an examples of how a man is expected to behave in and outside the house. For instance, a child learns from the behavioural conduct of a father about the values of what are expected of a man and how to behave towards woman. As he is the head and authority of the family, the decision in the family is taken with his consent. So he commands authority in the life of the children.

Ava (Mother): The concept of child-rearing for *ava* (mother) starts even before a child is born. According to their beliefs, a pregnant woman should restrain herself from visiting certain places which is considered as *ngalei kharar* (haunted place) and should stay indoor after sunset lest a malevolent spirit may possess her. She also refrains herself from eating certain food as mentioned in chapter III.

As soon as a child is born, things with which a mother associates with the baby have gender attributes in all aspect. A girl or boy child, for instance, is given gender typed clothes. They are given different pet names like *achonkharar* (to the eldest daughter), *lateophy* (to a daughter with small physiological features), *paishonao* (to a youngest daughter) etc. to a girl child and pet names like *ameikharar* (to the eldest son), *atao* (to younger son), etc. to a boy child. A mother also soothes the baby with different words. As the child starts to play, she gives them gender typed toys and treats them differently. For instance, a mother uses softer tone to a girl child as compared to a boy.

By the age of six, a mother teaches the child gender appropriate roles and expectations from them. A man, for instance, is expected to be decisive. She instils this value through the way she reprimands a boy "*Mayarnaona ning khani machipaimana,*" which literally means 'a man cannot have two minds.' This symbolically denotes that a man should be able to make firm decision. Likewise,

the mother would scold a girl child when she screams and shouts at others and teaches her with words like, “*Ngalanaona sakashi mangachamana,*” which literally means, ‘it is not suitable for a girl to be aggressive.’ This symbolically shows the value of soft spoken nature for women, which is usually expected of. The mother is also responsible for role assignment of the children at home.

For a girl child, she plays the fundamental role in imparting all activities, duties and responsibilities of a woman. A mother teaches a girl child from household chores and the skills of weaving to daily management of kitchen. According to their belief, the mother’s *acham aram kala kasa khava* (personality and behaviour) is said to have a great influence on her daughters. In this regard, they have a saying which goes,

“*Ngala hui akha avavali huire falu.*”

Literally, it says ‘if you woo a girl, know her mother first.’ The saying indicates that a man should know the mother well enough before asking for her daughter’s hand.

By the time a girl reaches her adolescent, a mother would monitor her behaviour and movements. Whenever their daughter is found disobedient, she also reports her husband for necessary actions. In other instance, she acts as the

mediator between the father and the children. This takes place when the children cannot discuss certain issues directly with the father. Then, the mother would convey the message to their father on behalf of the children.

The paternal grandparents - *awo* (grandfather) and *ayi* (grandmother) play an important role in the life of the growing child. During infancy, children spent most of their time with the *ayi*. The grandmother looks after the child from changing diapers to feeding and babysitting whenever the mother is away to work. Like the mother, she also follows gender specific treatment to a child. In the village, the grandmothers mostly look after two to three children and sometimes even more in a single day. These children are often her own grandchildren. There are instances when the neighbours also entrusted their children under her care. On the other hand, the role of *awo* becomes more relevant when a child attains the age of six or seven months. By this time, the grandfather would carry the child on their back. There is a saying among the Tangkhuls, which goes “*Awo ngarava naoli langmeida ara ngarali phungmeiya,*” which means the ‘grandfathers carry their grandchildren more than their own children.’ In this way, the grandfather expressed their love and affection to the grandchild. Like how a father treats a child, they would also take the child on their back and visit the neighbourhood. By the time the child grows

older, the grandparents assume an advisory role as they begin teaching the children through narration of folktales and customary laws and practices.

Older siblings, *achon* (elder sister), ***amei*** (elder brother), as an agent of socialisation, influence the *apanao* (a term used in addressing the girl's younger brother), *akatuiva* (a term used in addressing the girl's younger sister), *azarva* (a term used in addressing the boy's younger sister), *akato* (a term used in addressing the boy's younger brother) as they try to identify herself/himself with others. They are the first group of children with whom the child learns to socialise in a group. By three years, a child starts to play with older siblings. The child joins in their games like *thangthang* (toy games) in which the other older children allocate roles according to their gender. Boys take the role of an adult man whereas girls take the role of an adult woman. Not only do they take the role of different status, the children emulate the role as assigned according to their gender in the division of labour. Later, as they reach six or seven years, they start participating in gender role learning. By this time, the children play gender specific games in which the younger boys follow older boys and vice versa.

***Ani/Avagato* (Paternal Aunt and Uncle):** Like other members of the society, *ani/avagato* — aunts and uncles give gender stereo-typed treatment hinting them with verbal and non-verbal clues to help a child in identifying a place in the

society as a boy or a girl. The role of *ani*, like that of the mother and grandmother, is too, plays an influential in socialisation process of a child. Right from the birth of a child, she actively involves herself in childcare. In the case of two children or more, *ani* mostly takes care of the older ones when the mother is busy with the younger ones. The older children usually sleep with their *ani* as younger ones come along. In case of an uncle, young boys usually spend time with him and emulate his behaviour and roles. Beside childcare and role learning, they would shower children with toys and clothes which demarcate them to their own gender, and give direction of how a person should behave in the society as women and men.

The most frequent faces in an infant life are the *ava* (mother), *ani* (aunt), and *ayi* (grandmother). When a newly born is identified as a boy or a girl, women of the family endear the infant with gender stereotyped behaviour. As the child learns to imitate gender roles, older siblings play with the younger ones and allocate roles of elders appropriate to one's gender. However, play socialisation gradually disappears as children take to a more substantial role in the family. By the time a child reach this stage, the interference of *shimkhur-chinaongara* (family members) is observed in the child's role learning where older men teach young boys in performing their duties and women take the growing girl child

under their supervision. The grandparents also begin to impart gender appropriate behaviour and expectations of the society through folktales.

The roles of these individuals at different stages of childhood show that the mother is the most influential person in a child's life. Her role is continuous right from birth till they reach 18 years, the age limit taken for the present study.

On analysing the role of family as an agent, it is seen that the similar role was partly played by *longshim* in the past. As discussed in the previous chapter, young boys and girls spent their evening and night in the dormitories. Young boys and girls formed their peers within the circle of their dormitories. The elders of the dormitories taught certain behaviours and values to the young girls and boys appropriate to their own gender. The host of the dormitory used to keep the members under control and acted as the disciplinarian of the dormitory. For instance, the girls are not allowed to go out after sunset while boys were permitted to go for *meisum*. Now, this role has been taken over by individual family with the extinction of dormitory structure.

The role of each member delivers certain gender values in the child. These values are thus reproduced from one generation to the other through these agents of socialisation. The values imparted by these agents through socialisation

process shows continuity in their patriarchal practices. The authority of the father in the family is one such value. Even in the *ngalalong* (girls' dormitory), the *shimva or shim akhava* (head of the host family) acts as the custodian and disciplinarian among its members. Likewise, the role of the father in a family is authoritarian in nature as all activities and decisions of the family are undertaken with his consent. The power relations of women and men thus portray the patriarchal values of gender where men have authority over their women. Such values are also observed in allocation of gender specific roles where women are associated with the household domain and men with duties and responsibility outside their home domain. Even actions and speech carry such symbolic attributes. These attributes are observed in the way parents and elder behave towards a girl child and a boy child through their words and speeches as mentioned in the roles of the family members.

Continuity is also observed in their patrilineal values. Most visible clues of such continuity are manifested in gender preference in which boys were and are still preferred over a daughter. This tradition is made obvious even in the practices of *naoyan* which is observed till today. It is also obvious even in the matters like offering wider career choice to the children. In this regard, the reference can be taken from Table 11, 12 and 13. This is the point where one locates the changes as well as the intersections of economy with gender.

In the past, when the Tangkhuls were largely depended on their subsistence village economy, the economic factor did not intersect with gender. Parents or *longshim*, as an agent allows every member to choose their profession according to one's gender. The intersection of gender and economy is thus a new introduction opening equal platform regardless of gender where family as an agent reinforce gender values based on patriliney. In such context, however, the intersection shows that boys of low income group are favoured over daughters. In their case, they sent their sons to private schools whereas girls are kept in low-cost schools with lower standard of learning system. In other cases, girls go for short-term trainings whereas boys pursue higher studies. In contrary to this, the economy does not intersect with gender among the high income group and some sections of the moderate income groups. This kind of value which has differential bearings within the same society was not observed in the past. This is something that has changed in this agent of socialisation. This is therefore one aspect of change which family as an agent plays a role in socialising a child.

2. Socialisation outside the family

By the age of five, children start to venture beyond their courtyard to play with their neighbour friends. Most children also start attending school at this age. It

marks the beginning of their socialisation outside the family. At the stage there are different factors that act as agents in the process of socialisation.

(i).Educational Institutions: In the pre-Christianity period, knowledge was passed down through oral traditions. These include laws, ethics, customs, values, art, handicraft, etc. The internalisation process of gender values was also done in this manner. *Longshim* (dormitories) functions as the education centre for imparting these traditional values. The gender based difference was well marked during those days. There are separate dormitories demarcated for unmarried boys and girls unlike the present co-educational schools and colleges. In this village, there were eleven *longshim* – seven for girls and four for boys in different localities.

The boys were admitted to the dormitories as soon as they reach puberty. For which the eligible age is normally by 12 or 13 years. However, before they were taken in to the *longshim* as eligible members, they were given a probationary period. During this period, they were assigned pre-entry works after they receive a piece of meat called ‘*sashitsa*’. The boys were to collect firewood for the dormitory everyday for about three months. In this way, the boys were taught to be active and diligent. Young boys, whose works were found to be satisfactory, were then invited in the dormitory festivals known as “*longra phanit*”. To mark

their entrance as regular members of the dormitory, a piece of meat known as “*matemsa*” was distributed to the boys on the day of the festival. For girls, however, no such formalities were observed. They joined the dormitory at a much younger age and left the dormitory only after their marriage.

Longshim acts as a training centre. The different kinds of trades were imparted to the wards by elder members of the society. Boys learnt the art of using spears, spade, axes and handicrafts. On the other hand, women were taught to spin yarn, weave clothes, stitching, etc. Besides, the oral traditions such as folktales, songs and dances were passed down to the younger generations in the institution. Norms and values of each gender were thus imparted and learnt within this group. In this manner, they learnt to inculcate themselves with their culture.

The institution also creates platform for the members to gain excellence in learning. The competitions were held among the members of the same gender to prove their skills acquired in the institution. The festivals were also commonly held for the dormitories as well as for the youths to exhibit their talents and skills. Not only did they compete in aesthetic fields, but their competence and expertise in their labour and agricultural activities were also tested. The hunting trips were also organised for men to prove their prowess. Those persons with excellent skills were known as *khamarapva* (girl) or *khamarapa* (boys).

Even after the advent of Christianity, the dormitory system continued on for some years. However, the age-old practices witnessed some notable changes in the post- Christian era. The practices of singing folksongs were discontinued but replaced by Christian hymns, choruses and Biblical recitations.

In this traditional institution, we find that the values appropriate to each gender were taught to them by a senior member. Education imparted to boys was focussed mainly on political, social, economic and cultural values, while the girls were solely limited with social, cultural and economic values. Through the teachings of elders and interaction, they learnt what is expected of them as women and men. Thus, the values imparted to them in this institution were more gender marked as the dormitories accommodated only members of the same gender.

To make a comparative study of how the modern education system influence gender relations, a brief history of how it made inroads into the village and the present educational status of each gender is given asunder.

The introduction of formal education in Ukhrul can be traced back to the arrival of the first American missionary in 1896. A primary school was opened in

that year and a number of 30 students attended class. The response of the people was however very poor until the then superintendent Major Maxwell the village chiefs to send their children to the school requested. He also warned them strictly to attend the school regularly. So, the children then attended the schools, not with the zeal to learn, but out of fear.

The first school in the area was set up in 1905 at Phadang village. It was called Phadang L.P. School, located at an adjacent village of the field. The first batch of students numbering to 20 boys from the village went to the school that year. Later in the 1919, a temporary school was set up by the local missionary and only boys selected from different clans of the village attended the class. Gradually, the schools expanded and the village has presently three schools – a government-owned Somdal Ningkhalem High School, a community run Ruichumhao Memorial School and an autonomous district council funded Kasom Lower Primary School.

With the realisation of the importance of education, it has now become necessary for parents to send their children to schools and colleges. Even for those parents without proper education they ensure that their children attend educational institutions to have better prospect of life and prestige. Since education is highly correlated with status in the society, a new hierarchy was

introduced in the social setup where persons with high level of education are regarded.

The introduction of modern education also witness many new elements making inroads into the life of the people, with elemental changes in rules and laws concerning gender. For instance, in the pre-Christian era, the public forum was mainly for men. It was not permissible for women to make any public address. Likewise, even in the early years when formal education was introduced, only boys were given preference to learn and to attend schools.

Now, this barrier was broken and liberalisation is evident in the present education system. In this regard, the reference may be taken from the enrolment of students in the education institutions of the village as shown in table 7, 8 and 9 of Chapter Two in which the cumulative enrolment of students in three schools during the period 2004-2007 shows girl-boy enrolment in percentage at 48.7 and 51.3.

The enrolment of girls is now almost at par with boys. This is an indication of change that the biasness of parents towards the boy child has declined as compared to the past. Most parents send the children to school irrespective of gender.

However, gender differences in table 11, 12 and 13 show a wider gender gap. This is partly because it is the only private school with comparative higher fees and better learning system than the other two educational institutions. This is a clear indication of parents' preference towards a boy child.

In this context, the other indicator of change in socialization process is the facilitation of wider space for the child's socialisation. Unlike the days of dormitory where only young boys and girls of the same village mixed together, the children now get the chance to meet different people from other villages and other tribes. This offers a wider circle for familiarisation and acquaints themselves with other young people. By the time a child leaves the institution, she or he has a broader circle of friends as compared to the dormitory.

Taking all these accounts into consideration, it can be said that the changes in this institution is one of the most powerful influence which brought about changes in gender socialisation of children. The exposure to the outside world is brought about by the modern education system. It can be mentioned here that women were not allowed to venture outside the village for security reason in the past. Unlike those days, boys and girls now go out far and wide to pursue education.

In the light of *Longshim* when it functions in the past as the learning centre imparting different set of values to girls and boys, the changes are observed vis-a-vis the modern formal education system where they are both given equal platform. The other aspect of change is that membership to the past *Longshim* was mandatory. Anyone, who is qualified to be a member of the *Longshim*, was allowed to stay at home without attending the dormitory except for ill health. But in the present day educational institution, the choice of children to attend school or college largely depends on parents.

The purpose of attending such institutions remains more or less the same in both the cases. Like there are differences in the nature of membership, the traditional and modern institution has a marked difference in the choice of disciplines. For the members of the dormitory, it was mandatory to learn everything taught in the dormitories. For instance, a girl did not have a choice to learn only the skills of weaving and ignore the art of spinning yarn. Likewise, a boy could not only learn the trades which were of his interest. In the present context, the purposes are though the same and the choice of disciplines is largely optional.

Case 22: For a 13-year-old girl, Asing, the purpose of attending school is to pass her matriculation and pursue science stream. Her aim is to become a doctor. She is inspired by a local lady doctor who works in the state capital. In many occasions, the girl had seen the lady attending to the sick in the village whenever she came for Christmas. On the part of her parents, the purpose of sending her to school is simply to land her a white-collared job and make her economically independent in future. But at the same time, the parents are uncertain of her future education. There is a lingering question whether they will be able to continue to support her education and her four other siblings.

Case 23: Angam, a father of three children, is very happy for his daughter who is due to complete her engineering studies. In the first place, he just sent her to college to get her general degree. He never expects her to go that far in her pursuit. He was against his daughter's idea of pursuing engineering as his income was limited. But after much persuasion, he relented to his daughter's request. Today, he is a proud father.

Case 24: For Athing, a tenth standard student, the purpose of attending school is to get a university degree and find a stable job. His intention, after completing his studies, is to look out for greener pasture outside the village. For him, the village has a limited prospect to progress in life. He also cannot imagine life as a cultivator toiling in the sun and rain.

The above cases show that the purpose of education remains more or less the same, but a person can opt a discipline of his choice. The present educational institutions offer options to the students, which was not the case in the past. This type of preferential learning is also necessitated by economic conditions. With increasing population, the village economy is no longer self-sufficient thus compelling them to look out for other means of livelihood. Therefore, most parents invest every possible means in education of their children.

However, the intersection of economy, as discussed in the family, limits to the girls of the lower income group. The element of continuity is apparent in the way how a learned individual is accorded with high regards. In the past, persons who were conversant with customary laws, have prowess in physical combat or any other economic activities were highly respected. This traditional ideal has now taken the form of educational qualification and this can be seen as continuity.

(ii) Religion: Gender is also embedded in the structure of *dharma* (religion). Among the Tangkhuls, the traditional religion at the village level is a complete portrayal of their patriarchy where women were not allowed to hold any office or address a public. In this regard, they were equated with children. Women and children were not even allowed to enter sacrificial places and participate in rituals

and ceremonies of the village. It was only attended by adult men where the village chief holds the highest post assisted by the *sharwo* (priest), known as *shimthui luithui khamiya* and the *hangva* (clan representatives or clan heads).

However, their religion extends even at the family level where the head of the family act as the *sharwo* (priest) assisted by his wife, who could be considered as the priestess of the family. The role of women is visible in family rite like *shimshar* (household genna). In this context, family functioned as an independent sub-unit of their community religion. In certain occasions like *shimshar* (household genna), or in rituals like warding off evil spirits, women performed the rituals together with their husbands. For example, *chumphu phanit*, a festival marking the opening of their granary after the year's harvest, begins with the prohibition of disallowing men from sleeping in the house on a night before the ritual. Not only the men had to spend the night outside the village gate, their tools and weapons were also not allowed inside the house. The next day, as a ritualistic practice, men had to go for fishing and hunting.

Women, on the other hand, offered prayer to the *ameowa* (supreme being) before taking out the paddy from the granary. This was done to seek blessing for the stock to last entire year. On the day of the ritual, however, the women were to take the paddy enough for a single day. They also refrained from meeting any

member of the opposite sex while on their way to collect the paddy from the granary, as this was considered a bad omen during the ritual period. It may be mentioned that the granary in the Tangkhul villages was/is constructed a little further away from the dwelling house. In the same evening, a dinner is prepared with rice from the newly harvested paddy and complemented with items like meat or fish brought by men of the family from the day's expedition.

The festivity ends with the ceremony known as *zavar*. Women take out paddy from the granary and dry the paddy in the sun and pound them. While drying the paddy, they had to make sure that fowl and birds do not pick up a single grain as it was considered a bad omen. This ceremony was followed by *veishir*, closing of the village gate where men replace the old gate with a new one. This was done to secure the village from any enemy's threat.

This is one festival which is associated with the economy of the people and as such women's role in the family rites and ceremonies during the *chumphu* festival are fundamental. Women are thus associated with the economic management of the household. Women's role in such festival and genna were however limited within the domain of their household. The *akhavaiva* performs such ceremonies for the family and not further.

The first missionary Reverend William Pettigrew set foot on this hill district in 1895, and thus marked the beginning of their missionary work among the Tangkhuls. But, it was only in 1901 that the first batch of 12 converts was made out of his students. Tracing the history of Somdal, the advent of Christianity first took place when a local Rs. Ruichumhao first started the missionary work in the village. In the early years of Christianity, the restrictions were not strictly imposed on the converts. They were allowed to drink rice beers and follow some traditional practices fearing total elimination might lead to severe opposition from the local people. Gradually, more people started their conversion and the traditional practices were totally abandoned by 1923.

In the early years of Christianity, there was no regular worship place in the village. The converts gather at different places alternately. The Church was first constructed in January, 1923 and dedicated on the 7th of May the same year.

In the present structure of the Church organization, there are certain demarcations on the basis of gender even though men and women take equal participation in all religious ceremonies and in the Church assembly, which is the decision making body. The main religious body comprises pastors (only men occupy the chair till date), deacons and deaconess (12% women and 87% men), the choir (50% women and 50% men), the youth wings (led by men), women

wings (which comprises only married women) and the children department (comprising of all the children of the village).

The present Church organisation as an agent of socialisation is thus a continuation of the smaller unit of their traditional religion - the religious unit of family. Despite the changes, continuity can be located in the structure of these institutions.

In the past family priest is none other than the father. In similar way, the head of the present church organisations are men who are referred to as the pastor, assisted by associate pastor or assistant pastor, also a man. The other dignitaries namely the deacons and deaconess, assist the head of the institution as in the past religious unit of family, in which the priest of the family was assisted by his wife in performing the family rituals and ceremonies.

The Church institution and the traditional family as religious unit have representations of other members, which constitute the congregation of the institutions. In the traditional system, other members of the family form this congregation including both genders. Likewise, the present religious unit is represented by members of the church, the congregation of which is formed by

different societies like the children department, Christian youth society, women society, choir members, etc.

The structure and function of these institutions show certain changes with the present church organisation having a wider network. The religious unit of the family as an agent of socialisation is limited within the ambit of the family. It functioned independently from the bigger village religion, the structure and function was confined within the family members.

Unlike the traditional family unit, the function of the present Church organization encompasses all members of the village. It also extends its functions even outside the domain of their local Church. It also has affiliation to bigger and same faith organisation of the tribe like the Tangkhul Baptist Churches Association, which is again affiliated member of the state level organisation, Manipur Baptist Convention and so on. The Church organisation as an agent, thus, provides platform to the children in various activities even outside the village. It organises Bible camps, youth conferences, district level competitions, etc, and thereby rendering children with exposure beyond the village.

(iii) *Yarnao* (Peer Group): The Tangkhuls use the term '*yarnao*' to designate a peer group, which is based on the age of individuals. The formation of such

groups starts by the age of six years. In the past such groups manifest their solidarity through work and festivities. Social festivities of such groups show equal participation of both boys and girls. Such festivities were known as *yarra phanit*. Feasting and merry making were the theme of such festival.

In the past the festival of *yarra* falls in the month of April. Festivities were taken up only in the morning, evening and at night which include feasting and merry making. During the day they go about with their respective works. They make preparations of food before the festival and the best beer is given to the village chief and the clan heads on the eve of the festival. This was done as a form of taking permission from the chief and for the village chief to acknowledge such festivities. The festival last for ten days and sometimes goes on even for a month.

The structure of the peer group is now not necessarily based on age as there are also group based on education and profession. The traditional concept of *yarnao* based on age is slowly disappearing and such festivities are slowly vanishing. Today, such festivities take place only during vacations when they are free from their educational schedule. The nature of the present *yarnao* formation is based on different principles.

Case 25: Aphy, 30 years, had a group of friends in the village which they termed as yarnao. The group was formed within the circle of school friends. They formed this group when they were in the ninth standard among friends, who attend the same school, and who assists one another in school work and in other activities. Some members of the group were from the tenth standard. The group comprises five boys and seven girls.

Owing to different vocations, the members of the groups now reside at different places. The circle of friends now hardly meets. But the group would make a point to meet once in a while. They would either visit the village during Christmas or on some occasion and get together over a lunch or dinner.

Case 26: Thotyar, a group of teenagers, is formed out of their association through meisum. A group of boys initially formed this group one night at a girl's house who is also a member of the group. The group consists of both genders and they have 36 members. The name 'thotyar,' literally means peer or friends of a same generation. The activity of this group is not limited only among members of the group but it is a group which extends help through various activities. They organise cleaning drive from time to time and give their labour to the sick during agricultural activities. The group members also generate funds through wage labour and use the

money help one another in time of need. They organise feasts and gatherings whenever they come home during holidays.

Case 27: Ashangphy, a 15 year-old-girl, is a resident of Letyantang. She belongs to a group formed by 11 members comprising only girls from the same locality. This group is formed from the circle of childhood friends, who are normally from the same play group in the neighbourhood. The members of the group are not of the same age. There are also two sisters in this group as they were both in the same playgroup. They have a small amount of fund which they would use every Christmas for carol party.

Another form of *Yarnao* is found in the Church organisation which is like a grade system within their religious organisation. This system is found among the youth organisation where the grades are categorised as follows.

Table 14: Grades of the Christian Youth Society

Grade	Criteria
Learning Society	Right after baptism but who have not entered youth society
Junior Society	Those who have been newly inducted into the Youth Society
Intermediate Society	Upgrade into this group as they mature and as younger members join the junior group
Senior Society	Men continue to be member even after they get married; women on the other hand, remain in the group till they get married.

Source: Fieldwork

The function of these groups is to perform duties and activities according to the grade. For instance, these groups take turns in cleaning the Church and take part in song competitions during the festival. The grading here is though based on age, this kind of group division is not as effective as the other groups in facilitating gender socialisation. The association among the members are limited only within the activities mentioned above. Moreover, activities of these groups

are confined within the religious domain as these are sub-units of a Christian organisation.

Changes in the nature of socialisation and the corresponding change in gender relations can be observed in certain aspect of the peer group as agents. Traditional *yarnao* was confined within the circle of the village. Today, the formation of *yarnao* has no border as the children venture beyond the village to pursue education. *Yarnao* which emerged out of their association in the dormitories have been replaced by peers of schools, colleges, professions or through religious grade as mentioned above.

The nature of peer formation, though, appears to have changed as agents, the present form of peer groups are continuation of the traditional peer group. Primarily, this kind of friends circle emerged out of sharing certain common interest within certain age group. This group maintains solidarity through festivity and feasting in one form or the other. Though there has been certain change in the structure the traditional ideal of *yarnao* is still intact as one agent of socialisation. It is just that groups emerged in different forms according to the varying circumstances.

(iv) Media: Media is totally a new agent which gives access to unlimited information. In the Tangkhul village, the only media which the people has regular access is radio. This is followed by other forms of media like audio tape player, newspapers, television, magazines and film. However, the village has a limited access to newspaper and magazines due to poor transport and communication. Today, the village also has cellular phone connectivity. Of late, there are also few televisions with satellite assisted services, but its utility is very limited due to lack of electricity.

In the past the only channel of communication with the outside world was through village men, who travelled outside on business and *khayao*. Earlier, there was no free access even between the villages and there was hardly any contact with the outside world. People from different villages hardly made visit to one another. Even the barter system between villagers from different villages was held on the outskirts of the village. For instance, the village, under study for the present work, along with other neighbouring villages like Talui, Ngainga, Phadang, Tuinem and Khampha used to exchange goods with the villagers from the north at a particular place called '*paosaitru*.' This particular place is located at a small hilltop which is located in between villages of the north and the western side of the district. The villages of the *raphei* (north) used to bring bamboo products like *sop* (carrying basket), *luk* (storage basket), *kashai* (carrying rope),

etc whereas the *kharaos* (people of the west) used to barter them with their weaving products like *kachon* (shawl) and *kashan* (lower garment). Likewise, foodgrains were also exchanged through these barter systems. This barter system was however carried out only by men. This way, the people were exposed outside their village. The knowledge and information of the outside world were acquired through such gatherings.

The other type of contact with the Meitei is through *khayao*. During the off season from their agricultural activities, mostly between February and April, menfolks used to go for wage labour in the valley. This trip is known as *khayao* in the local dialect. The word '*kha*' means village and the '*yao*' means visit. It literally means visiting villages for wage labour. Though the exact period of introduction could not be ascertained, this probably dates back to the advent of British in this hill area. The main purpose of such trip was to earn money. So this kind of contact dates back to the introduction of monetary system unlike their age-old practice of barter system. Boys who had already attained the strength of a youth followed the elders during this trip. Women were not allowed to go for this trip from security point of view. With the money they earned, they purchased salt, clothes, and other commodities which were not available in the village.

In this way, the communication with the outside world was established through such trade relations and *khayao*. In other words, these activities opened up as the window to gain knowledge and information. As discussed, men acted as the means that brought such knowledge of the outside world. On analysing how communication was established with people outside the village through the lens of gender, it is clear that women had no direct access to the outside world and thus acquired knowledge and information from men in the village.

On analysing what has changed in their gender relations through media as an agent of socialization, it is seen that media has opened doors for both genders. Impact on gender relations are observed in their outlook beyond the boundary of their village life which is supplementary to education. Media helps in socialising them all alike irrespective of gender, which however it has to be noted that the people has limited access to media like newspaper and magazine.

Media as an agent is still more accessible only to men of the society even today. For instance, the most notable form of media with greater accessibility for the people is radio and newspaper. Men spent more time with these means of communication. The ratio of utilising their time for such activity by men and women is 10:1. This is due to the fact that men enjoy more leisurely hours than women. Unlike men, women on the other hand, hardly get time to sit and enjoy

reading or listening to radio due to their busy chores all through the year. Most information is thus collected through men. Thus continuity of the old practices can be observed even today.

Media as an agent is a new introduction. But it is noteworthy that even before the advent of this means of communication, there were also other means of communication which the Tangkhuls used. As such, barter system, trade relations and *khayao* can be accounted as such means of communication which is now partly replaced by modern media. Though these two means of communication differ completely in its true meaning and usage, the purpose served by these means of communication largely remains the same.

To sum up all the agents of socialisation, it can be stated that one form of agent is a continuation of some traditional setup. It is true that the nature of institution at which the agents operates take different forms. But since the present study focus on agents of gender socialisation, continuity of the present agents was traced to the role of the traditional agents which play similar roles in gender socialisation. For instance, the present Church institution need not necessarily be a continuation of the traditional family as religious unit in other cases. But determining the role of the past and present agents, it is done so in this context.

It is also apparent that there have been changes in gender relations due to the varied roles of these agents. For instance, *Longshim* as an educational centre imparts different gender values at separate dormitories to boys and girls which are now replaced by schools where education are being imparted on the same platform. Within this school institution, knowledge is imparted equally to everyone irrespective of gender. Opportunities are now open to all but the traditional practice of patrilineal system limits girls of some section of the society to pursue what they want due to economic constraint. Thus, the continuity of the past gender relations where women are restricted more than boys is evident again. So, one can always trace continuity of the past gender relations in one form or the other through these agents. The agents of socialisation thus impart gender values of what is masculine and what is feminine to a boy or a girl child through various means and reproduce gender values through socialisation process.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The different transitions through which an individual passes during their life, at first sight, seem to be biologically fixed from childhood to adulthood and eventually to death. But the stages of human life course are social as well as biological in nature. They are influenced by biological differences and material circumstances of people's life in a given type of society.

Exploration on gender is gaining salience across many fields, whether indebted to similar frameworks and theories or not. There are many ways to study gender relations and gender socialization is one cultural aspect among many. In the case of the Tangkhuls, every aspect of their culture carries gender ideologies and these ideologies are manifested in their daily activities.

In an attempt to find out how the Tangkhul culture constructs gender, approach has been made from the perspective of gender socialization. Internalization of gender values were studied from the perspective of how children learn through verbal and non-verbal clues at different stages of childhood. Changing gender values were determined through the structure and role of individuals in the social institution of family, kinship and marriage which are considered as important units of socialization. Continuity and change in

gender relations were determined through agents of socialization. The present thus explore the study of gender at three levels.

- (i) The child as individuals who internalise her or his identity and the role of parents and elders who imbibe gender values through socialisation process,
- (ii) Structure of the culture that shape gender relations in the process of socialisation.
- (iii) Structured groups as agents who reinforce gender relations through socialisation process.

The present study of gender also, investigates the problem at the empirical as well as at the cognitive level. In the process of investigating the real concept of how the Tangkhul culture constructs men and women, sometimes, it becomes difficult to know their perception as the informants tend to say one thing while practicing the opposite. For instance, when they say that equal preferences are given to boys and girls in choosing their career, girls tend to follow the narrower path. Investigating this at the cognitive level, the intersection of their economy tends to favour boys when choice becomes limited.

The method of study comes in handy as it allows the researcher to study them as they are. Since the interaction was taken up through open interviews, most of

the informants were not aware that they are under study for the purpose of this research work. As such, people's own verbal and non verbal behaviours were recorded in all possible means. Moreover, informants are not in the position to spell out the exact concept of their gender construction if they are asked to explain directly with words. As such, verbal as well as non-verbal clues were taken from children and elders were determined in order to get data of how the people construct gender. These were carefully analyzed along with the structure of the social and cultural set up of the Tangkhul society.

Among the Tangkhuls, gender is embedded in every aspect of their culture. As the present study on gender socialization shows, a child receive a range of clues even before a child can accurately label themselves as *ngalanao* (girl) or *mayarnao* (boy). For instance, adult men and women handle them differently, system differences in their dress and hairstyle and formulate visual clues for an infant in the learning process. Women who handle the small infant boy often say "*Mayarnao machap paimanei*" meaning 'boys do not cry.' On the other hand, if an infant girl cries, they console her by saying, "*Ishi ngalanaoli khipanada*" which means 'who makes our girl cry?' The society thus sanctions different values even through the way they handle the small child.

Toys, dresses and other materials which a young child possesses tend to emphasize between male or female attribute. For instance, a boy plays with *kari* (toy vehicles made of wood or purchased from market), *sayur* (toy animals made of clay or wood) and girls are seen with *nganganao* (dolls) and *thangthang* (imaginary kitchenware which they make collections out of used bottles and other items). Practically, all children in fact possess and play with gender typed toys given to them by parents, relatives and well wishers. The response to such gender stereotyping also comes from the parents and elders where toys are categorically purchased for a boy child and a girl child. For instance if a boy plays with kitchen toys or dolls, elders scolds him saying, '*Na ngalanaola?*' meaning 'Are you a girl?' or if a girl rides *thinkari* (cycle made out of wood), elders say "*Ngalanaowui ot maningmana*" which means 'it is not a girl's plaything'. Even in their treatment towards children, they show gender stereotyping as girls are not allowed to play with boy's toys and vice versa.

Different attributes assigned to each gender place different expectations to the individuals. It is apparent from the present study that the society expect individual to act as men and women; boys and girls. It is in the practices of everyday life that these expectations are fulfilled and reproduced. For instance, a boy of six years are expected to learn the role of running errands, help older male in repairing works, and fetch water. A girl of the same age is expected to learn

household chores, weaving, attend to younger children and so on. However, it is observed that parents impose duties and responsibilities to girls which require more time and patience. Their duties like washing, cleaning, cooking, etc keeps them more occupied as compared to boys. The reproduction of these expectations thus set boys and girls into two separate categories.

In the process, gender values are reinforced by a person's change of status and their new place in the society. Learning gender values differs at different stages of a person's life and it also varies between the two genders. For instance, the rite of passage among the Tangkhuls varies in different institutions. In their social institution, a boy is not considered an adult to represent the family until he is married. Among the girls, they are only given permanent status when they become a wife. In their political institution, women are not allowed to be members of the village political institution. A boy is inducted into the membership of this institution when they are considered matured enough to participate in the decision making body, approximately by the age of 18. In economic life, they are counted as adult only when they attain the strength of an adult, that is by the age of 16 and this is applicable for both genders. In the religious life, baptism marks the membership but there is no specific age cut streamlined for such ceremonies. Likewise, a man changes his status from a son to a husband or father who become a *shimva* (householder) and attain

membership in his *shangnao* (clan). A woman, on the other hand, change her status from a *naongalava* (daughter) to an *apareiva* (wife) or *ava* (mother) and establish permanent status in her husband's *shangnao*.

Thus, socialisation process results in a degree of uniformity among the members of a society as they come to share values and attributes. In order not to deviate from the norms of gender values, an adolescent boy or girl among the Tangkhuls, is guided by parents and elders teaching rules of *ngalakhangakhot* (marriage) and *shokhala and vakhalat* (incest). Restrictions are also imposed on them which show marked differences. For instance, expectations of the norms impose the Tangkhul adolescence to stay away from intimate relations with someone from the same clan or unmarriageable cousins as the relationship can lead to incestuous act.

In order to maintain decorum of youth, the customary practices also relegate different rules to boys and girls. For instance, a girl is not allowed to leave the house after dark while permitting boys to go for *meisum* (fireside gathering). This is one typical form of their patriarchy which believes in the principle of men as the negotiator of courtship or relationship. According to their customary practices, it is considered as deviation of norms for girls to go after men. It is always the initiative of boys to start a relationship.

Gender socialisation, thus, begins virtually from birth. This process conditions a boy and a girl into two categories which function together in a culture. The process of socialisation is bilateral; it is an interaction of what they learnt and what they are taught which includes verbal and non- verbal clues. On the part of parents and elders, they impart stereotyped values. Parents who believe they treat equally tend to produce different responses to boys and girls. Manifestation of such responses becomes obvious as the present study shows such stereotyped lessons in socialising children.

Socialisation process thus shows how the Tangkhul culture constructs masculinity and femininity. According to the way they project *mayarnao kashok* (masculinity) through gender socialization, the society assigns more prominent values to men. For instance, terms such as *akhava* (head), *Shang akhava* (Clan head), *Awunga* (village chief), and *shimluikat* (upholder of the family's tradition) are description of such values. All these terms describe that men alone are at the decision making body of their social life. Comparing these terms with the terminologies they use for women like *shim akhavaiva* (wife of the head of family), *shang akhavaiva* (wife of the clan's head) or *Achon kharar* (eldest sister) are terms which identifies them with their husband's identity. These terms are also associated with their power as owner of her husband's property where they

exercise their own rights but which however does not equalize her rights with that of men.

Rituals such as *naoyan* and *naoming kaphok* depict gender favoritism towards a boy child which is a symbolism of importance given to men as such rituals does not hold equal importance for a girl child. As discussed earlier, *Naoyan* which literally means 'baby seeing' is symbolical of declaration that the upholder has come. This is however not the case with a girl child which means that they do not glorify in getting a daughter as they do with their son. In the same way, *naoming kaphok* (naming ceremony) for a daughter does not come with feasting and merry making. Such festivities are endowed only to a son.

Character describing boys as rough and daring is also another symbolism of such projection where men are considered to be more aggressive than women. In the life of a Tangkhul, men are considered as the protector of their women and children. Men only go to war, venture out for trade, or go for hunting in the past. These trends have changed as we see women in the field of trade. But continuations of such values are still visible in other forms. For instance, a brother is still expected to protect the sisters and a father to protect the family from all kinds of harassment and dangers. With the end of their head- hunting practices or inter village feuds, men may not go to war physically but they are

always the ones to attend any kind of meeting in case of infringement into the rights of the family members. Even in their hunting exhibition, men are only allowed to hunt even today. And when they perform this kind of duties, they are expected to do it with courage. All these thus give the picture of the Tangkhul society where the masculine character of men surpasses that of the feminine character which projects women as the group being protected or being fed.

Values of femininity are found in girls' role imitation of a homemaker which shows that women are associated with the domestic ideology that identifies women particularly with the home. Women's values of caring (*sheba sakathei*) and understanding (*phapkata*) with the personality of patience (*khangkathei*) are the depiction of values assigned to women by culture. Gentle nature in speech and action of women associates feminine value in contrast to the aggressive way of men. Possessions of such values are termed as *ngalanao kashok* (feminine) in their society. For instance, girls playing with baby dolls show that they are socialize to the nurturing side of life. In the same way, girls playing in their imaginary kitchen depict their domain.

In their gender relations, a woman's status is always associated with men- as daughter of her father and as wife of her husband. A daughter is never identified officially with her mother's clan. Even in cases of divorced parents and

illegitimate cases children always takes the name of the father and is affiliated to the father's clan. After marriage, a woman leaves her father's identity and is again affiliated to her husband's family. This shows that the female principle is align to that of men.

Gender is not a fixed characteristic. It comes out in context of a particular encounter. Gender, as such, change with time and reproduce itself through gender socialization. What was considered as something that is totally masculine may be shared by women and vice versa. For instance, in the traditional *shimkhur* of the Tangkhuls, decision making in the overt and covert form shows men as the independent decision maker who represents the family in the social network. Women were not allowed to participate in decision making. Comparing the traditional practices with the present ones, gender role is found to be closely related with the contribution which they make to their subsistence economy. For instance, individual's contribution to the family's economy through financial contribution and other means of livelihood shows corresponding impact in gender roles. Gender roles in decision making also show slight changes. However, men are consulted in all matters.

This is also true of their patrilineal system where women were not allowed to take their share except for the share known as *shimlam* she received at the time of

her marriage. The Tangkhuls follow the rule of male primogeniture. So, responsibilities rest on the *mayar kharara* (eldest son) to look after the welfare of the aged parents and unmarried siblings. Responsibility of the eldest son is now shared by all the siblings, though he is primarily responsible for the welfare of the aged and unmarried siblings.

Changes of gender relations can also be seen in their kinship system where the ties were strengthened by using proper terminologies by each gender and through exchange of goods, labour and help. The traditional kin relations too show that children maintained close relationship with the *varei* (maternal uncle) where the ties were strengthened by frequent visits, love and care from the *varei*. In the present times, close kinship ties through day to day exchange and visits are now replaced by time to time exchange of material and immaterial tokens as many of the villagers are relocated in different places. Gender marked kinship terminologies too seem to have lost its importance today. In the past younger siblings were never allowed to address the eldest brother and sister with their names. They were addressed as '*achon*' (elder sister) and '*amei*' (elder brother). But, today they either address them as *achon* + name or even by their petname.

Stringent rules of exogamy like expulsion from the village have lost its practice even though such deviations are being grimaced. In their

ngalakhangakhot (marriage), strict rules of clan exogamy were maintained, violation of which were met with expulsion from the village.

These evolving gender relations stress on themes of dependency or independence and gender roles. The status of financial independence seems to be attainable by both genders. But the intersection of economy and gender however gives a different picture of gender socialisation. For instance, more opportunities are open to boys in the status system among families of low income group and some sections of moderate income group while limiting girls as it become a matter of choice. Such intersection shows the interference of their patrilineal system. All these values are thus internalized by children through verbal and non-verbal clues from older members of the society.

The exposure of the people to the outside world and the forces of modernity can be dated back to the advent of Christianity among the Tangkhuls. The village under study had celebrated their church centenary in the year 2009. But, one can say that the traditional process of socialization is still extant despite certain changes. Children in the metro city receive different kind of messages from different agents of socialization. In other words they are exposed to different factors of socialization of the modern technologies rather than their own traditional values. For instance, morning cartoons may present a child of four

years with different images of how a girl or a boy is supposed to behave than those received from a parent. But this is not the case with the village children under study. The process of internalizing gender values through verbal and non-verbal clues are still very traditional as compared to the children in other parts of towns and cities.

This does not however mean that the Tangkhuls still adhere to the traditional ways of gender socialization. With the introduction of education, they now have access to the outside world which has changed their world view and their way of life. Besides education, introduction of transport and communication supplement their access to modern culture. Even in their social institution, they have inter-marriage; extension of their ties beyond the village which can be another factor responsible for the influx of outside values. Correspondingly, introduction of modern economic system too is very much another aspect of change observed in the life of the Tangkhuls.

As such, one cannot ignore the fact that they are also influenced by modern culture. The modern dress they wear, the education that they seek, or the profession that they follow like trade, professional skills that they imbibe, etc. are nothing but indicative of the modern factors. Here, when we talk about modernity, it is in the context of gender socialization where the term modernity is

used in a limited sense. The people are still far from the socializing agents of the fast changing world. Thus, the new modern factors cannot permeate totally into their traditional value system. Taking all the aforesaid points together, one cannot ignore that both the traditional as well as the modern values coexist in their culture.

There have been certain changes in the structure of their culture where gender relations operate. This, in fact results to changes in their cultural practices. Change, as such, is a response provoked by modernity. These responses are created by new circumstances. For instance, traditional subsistence economy could no longer sustain their livelihood with the growth of population. This in turn demands other sources of sustenance. The introduction of money, at the same time, replaces their exchange system which introduces a status system of an individual as people become more and more dependent on monetary system. People started to count more on the contributions made by each individual in their economy. At this point, decision making shows more voices of women at the family level which however limit women to consult their husbands in all matters.

In the process of responding to the changing circumstances, certain changes have been brought about in their gender relations too. Women who never exercise

their rights in decision making at the family level today enjoy certain liberty to express their views though they are not allowed to be assertive. Likewise, a man who is dependent on his wife economically is more likely to discuss things over with his wife in certain aspect of decision making. This way, there have been certain changes in their practices which in turn brought about certain alterations in their gender relations.

Changes in their practices however, could not bring about change in their value system. As the study shows, the structure of their culture, the way the Tangkhuls organize various institutions, the language they use to describe femininity and masculinity, all points to the fact that gender values of the Tangkhuls are very much intact from external factors. Even the intersection of gender and economy in the present times and the responses of male preference to such circumstances are indicative of their age old gender values based on patriarchal ideology.

Changes that have taken place in their gender relations are responsible by various factors. Among these varied factors, agents of socialization play a defining role in bringing about changes as well as preserving the traditional values. Through these agents, gender relations take different forms and show its continuity. Within the social relation of men and women, gender values too show

continuity. The same agents of gender socialization do not play the same role in imparting values through these years. For example, separate dormitories for boys and girls shows continuity today in the form of sitting arrangement in schools where the sexes are segregated after the third grade among the Tangkhuls. In the same way, the role of implementing rules to an adolescent by the shimkhur (family) was shared by *longshim* and the family in the past. Some agents of socialization are new like media or the church organization which is however the continuation of some traditional agents like their *keithei* (market for their barter system) and family as religious unit. Transmission of values through socialization process by different agents take different forms with new circumstances. Gender values thus get transferred from one generation to the other through different forms of agents. This is due to the fact that the structured groups which impart these values have changed as they adjust with the changing times. The structure of the dormitory system of the past could not survive today as it becomes unsuitable in the modern times. Likewise, the earlier practice of *khayao* becomes irrelevant today with the introduction of many avenues.

According to the findings, it can thus be concluded that gender values have not experience drastic change. In spite of the continuity of gender values, there is no doubt, however, that the relations of men and women have changed over the

years. These changes are responsible by the changing gender roles. Gradual changes in gender relations may however result to changes in their gender values.

Taking all accounts together, it can be concluded that the existing culture of gender conditions gender socialization of children. Moreover, changes brought about by education and economic conditions may be associated with changes in their gender relations but do not necessarily lead to changes in their gender values. These values find their way through and continue to play its role through their culture. Here when we talk of values, it relates to the patriarchal ideologies.

In the course of the present study, it is apparent that gender socialization is one perspective which is an important approach to find out gender relations. As the study shows, gender relations starts right from how an infant take clues of what it is to be a girl or a boy. It starts right from the time of how a child internalizes the basic knowledge of gender, taking clues from their elders. Among the Tangkhuls it is found that a person's later adult life is always controlled by values which one internalizes during childhood. A person hardly change one's gender ideal which he or she learns during the early life whatever foreign values a person is being exposed to.

This study presents the picture of the Tangkhul culture through the lens of gender. This is one attempt to enhance knowledge of cultural studies in the academic world from the perspective of gender. Unlike women's studies which focus only on women or the earlier anthropological studies which were criticized for taken for granted approach of considering only men's voice as the representation of a culture, the present study analyze gender on the basis of relations which explores the connectivity between what it means to be a woman and what it is to be a man. In doing so, it includes the exploration of both differences as well as similarities between these two categories. Also unlike the approach of feminism which seeks only from women's perspective, the present study takes the perspective of relations between men and women.

The present research work can be of help even outside the academic worlds in their assessment for various programs and activities as it gives the picture of a culture through the lens of gender. In recent time the relevance of gender studies has surpassed the limits of academic interest. It has now emphasized its importance of applying critical gender analysis in all areas of social life and its impact on areas such as law, politics, science, education, art, commerce, psychology and health. Using the principles and methods of critical inquiry, gender studies lead to in-depth awareness of social life. It teaches skills in critical thinking, development of your own understandings and communication of your

ideas. Gender studies enables us to question how gender as a social and cultural construction shapes people's lives, their relationships, the workplace, institutional structures, public policy and the production of knowledge.

It has emerged and integrated as an indispensable aspect in the framework of social and economic process. Now, for instance, policy makers look at development programme through the lens of gender. In different sectors, social and economic policies are drafted and adopted with particular emphasis on gender issues. The assessment and evaluation of societal progress is also based on the mechanism of gender equity. Until recently, its relevance was rather ignored or overlooked, but with the change of time gender study has permeated the different levels of social and economic process.

GLOSSARY

Achon	:	Elder sister
Achon kharar	:	Eldest sister
Agahara	:	Husband
Ahanglui	:	Jhum field
Akhaishang	:	Thigh
Akhamei	:	Tail
Akhava	:	Head
Akhavaiva	:	Wife of akhava
Akui	:	Head
Akuisa	:	Head parts
Amei	:	Elder brother
Amei kharar	:	Eldest brother
Ameowa	:	Supreme being
Amak	:	Brother in-law
Amakei	:	Kidney
Amalung	:	Heart
Amathin	:	Liver
Ani	:	Aunt / mother in-law
Apā	:	Sister to younger brothers
Apareiva	:	Wife

Arangkung	:	End part of the back
Arihava	:	Daughter in-law
Ashilat	:	Gizzard
Athei asa	:	Relatives (both maternal and paternal)
Avā	:	Father
Ava	:	Mother
Avākato	:	Father's younger brother
Avakatui	:	Mother's younger sister
Avākharar	:	Father's elder brother
Avākharar	:	Mother's elder sister
Ava wui naongalava	:	Father's daughter
Awo	:	Uncle / grandfather / father in-law
Awo-ayi khararchan	:	Folktale
Awunga	:	Village chief.
Ayi	:	Grandmother
Chan khangazek	:	Assembly
Chakshang	:	Kitchen
Chinaongara	:	Siblings
Chipee	:	Malevolent spirit
Chonlan	:	This is a practice where shawls and lower garments are given as presents or gifts to the

		relatives on occasions like marriage, merit feast, funerals, death anniversary, festivals, etc.
Chonsrui	:	Eldest sister; usually refers to the wife of the village chief.
Chumphu	:	Festival marking the beginning of taking out newly harvested grains from the granary.
Dharma	:	Religion
Fathuikhalui	:	Remarriage on the part of women.
Gahara	:	husband
Hangva.	:	Village Authority.
Hao kuiret	:	Boys shave their hair at the sides leaving a patch of hair from the front till the back of the head which they call Hao kuiret.
Harra Khayang	:	Egg Divination
Harkho Khayang	:	Cock Divination
Hok	:	Pig
Ichichashi	:	Literally, it means own group which covers all agnatic relations on the father's side.
Ikato	:	My younger brother (men to younger men)
Ikatuiva	:	My younger sister (women to younger women)
Imuilava	:	My sister in-law

Izarva	:	My younger sister (men to younger women).
Kachon	:	Shawl
Kapa Khayang	:	Bamboo divination
Kapai	:	Jump
Kaphara	:	Birth
Kari	:	Motor vehicle (Toy vehicle in the context)
Karphang	:	Hoe
kashai	:	A rope used for carrying basket
Kashan	:	Lower garment
Kashong Kahao	:	Festival celebrated to protect the crops
Kathi kasar	:	Death ceremony
Keithei	:	Market
Kha	:	Village
Khainao	:	Knife
Khaipak	:	Dao
Khaita / Mawonzai	:	Festival offering prayers to the god of wealth to protect their crops from hailstorms and other calamities
Khamarapa	:	Skilled man
Khamarapva	:	Skilled woman

Khangayei	:	A term used to refer to a transformed animal form by human being
Khangkathei	:	Patient
Khanong	:	Traditional medical practitioner
khararnaosan	:	Senior members
khayao	:	Naga labour trip
Lairikshim	:	School.
lairik tamkhangarumbing	:	Classmate
Larar	:	<i>Spinster</i>
Longra Phanit	:	Dormitory festivals
Longshim	:	Dormitories
Luirā	:	Seed sowing festival
Luk	:	Storage basket
Mahar	:	A tall plant
Malung makazang	:	Coward
Mangkhap	:	Festival after the completion of their paddy plantation
Maran kasa	:	Merit feast
Mari kashem	:	Metallurgy

Matemsa	:	Meat distributed to the boys to mark their membership in the dormitory
Matik kacha arihava	:	An ideal daughter in-law
Mayar kharara	:	Eldest son
Mayarao	:	Boy / men
Mayarao kashok	:	Masculinity
Meiphung	:	Literally, it means hearth, but in the kinship system, it refers to the sub- group of a clan; a lineage formed by group of families who are believed to be descendant of one father
Meisum	:	Time spend together by youths during their leisure time by the fireside
Mirai kakaza	:	According to the belief of the Tangkhuls, it may be defined as sadistic possession of a person by the spirit of another person
Nao khangalui	:	Hot water therapy for an infant
Naongalava	:	Daughter
Naongara	:	Children
Naoming Kaphok	:	Name giving ceremony
Naoyan	:	Literally, it means 'seeing the baby'. It is a ritual of exposing the baby to outsider

Naoyansa	:	A ceremonial meat of the naoyan
Ngaha	:	Axe
Ngala kaphem	:	Sissy
Ngala khangakhot	:	Marriage
Ngalakhui khalui	:	Remarriage on the part of men
Ngalong	:	Girl's dormitory
Ngalanao	:	Girl
Ngalanao kashok	:	Feminine
Ngalei kharar apam	:	Haunted places
Nganganao	:	Dolls
Ngaralui	:	Terraced fields
Ngasotnao	:	Peer group/ friend
Oja	:	Teacher
Paisho	:	Youngest
Paitu	:	Bag
Paiyansa	:	Declaration meat
Pam	:	Literally means seat; marriageable cousins
Pangthem	:	Handicraft
Phanit	:	Festival
Phanit phanao	:	Festivities
Phapkata	:	Understanding

Phukreila	:	Women who marry outside the village and play a role in settling dispute between two warring groups
Prohowui phakachizat	:	Lord's Supper
Ramnao	:	Co- villagers
Rayífuli	:	Wet terraced fields
Samkok	:	A straight cut at the front till the eye-brows keeping a little longer at the sides to cover the ear and keep it long at the back (usually a woman's hair- cut before marriage)
Samra	:	Drained water from rice
<i>Saothei</i>	:	Flat but round seed extracted from a creeper's plant called Saorong in local parlance
Saorong	:	A creeper plant
Sashitsa	:	A piece of meat received as the symbol of entering the probationary period to the longshim
Sayur	:	Animals (toy animal in the context)

Seluthi	:	Small marbles made out of clay which they use for catapult
Shakaza	:	Wedding
Shaksakharni	:	A kind of bride presentation where women are presented with different items at the time of her marriage by her parents and kin members
Shanao	:	Women
Shang akhavaiva	:	Wife of the clan's head
Shang akhava	:	Clan head
Shangnao	:	Clan
Shar	:	Genna
Sharwo	:	Priest
Sheba sakathei	:	Caring
Shim akhavaiva	:	Wife of the householder
Shimlam	:	Presents and gifts to a bride
Shimluikat	:	Legally authorised person who inherits the property
Shimkhur	:	Family
Shimkhur chinaongara	:	Family members
Shimshar	:	Household genna

Shimthui luithui khamiya	:	Priest who performed the ritual marking the beginning of sowing and plantation
Shimva	:	Householder
Shitkasangrin	:	Religion
Shokhala	:	Literally, it means upside-down; refers to violation of clan exogamy
Silui	:	Mithun
Sop	:	Carrying basket
Tang	:	Locality/khel
Tangkhul Long	:	The Tangkhul Tribal council
Tarong	:	A platform built alongside the hut
Thangthang	:	Toy kitchenware
Tharshat	:	Festival for bountiful harvest and prosperous life
Theithukthei	:	Wild apples
Thingkari	:	Cycle made of wood
Thisham	:	Death Anniversary
Vahem	:	Ceremony of acknowledging the marriage of couples who elope
Vakhalat	:	A kind of incest which means coming back to the maternal uncle

Varei	:	Maternal uncle
Veishir	:	Ceremony of closing the village gate
Yarra	:	Festival of the youth
Yarthot	:	Labour groups on the basis of age gratings that perform cultivation works in rotation
Yorla	:	Married sisters and daughters
Yotpak	:	Spade
Zatkang	:	Burnt rice
Zavar	:	The last ceremony marking the end of chumphu

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