

RAJENDRA KSHETRI

The Emergence of Meetei Nationalism



A Mittal Publication

This book traces the emergence of Meetei nationalism through a scientific and systematic study of two movements among the Meeteis. The study makes an attempt to : grasp the feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction among the Meeteis; analyze why after 56 years of Manipur's merger into Indian Union, some sections of people are still demanding to be separated from mainland India; examine the ongoing Meetei movement in the light of the past movements; emphasize that the seeds of "secessionism" now in vogue in the state were sown in the pre-merger days; and contend that Meetei movement can not be and should not be reduced to a mono-causal explanation.

Manipur is burning. In fact this "little paradise on earth" has been burning since the late seventies. Nobody bothers. This book explains, in no uncertain terms, not only what is happening in Manipur but, more importantly, why it is happening.

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A Study of Two Movements among the Meeteis

RAJENDRA KSHETRI

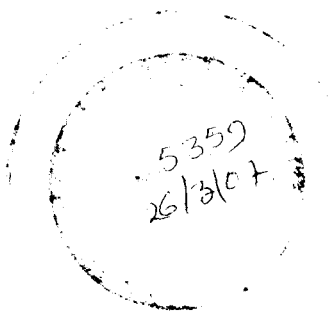


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1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Since the mid - 1960s an 'underground' movement has been going on in Manipur, a tiny state in the north-east region of India. Since then, the state is in turmoil. Manipur, often referred to as the "little paradise on earth", has ceased to be a Shangrilla and is in a deep crisis today. At a time when movement of various kinds are emerging in different parts of the country, especially in the north-east where most of them are secessionists in character, the study of social movements will not only be challenging and interesting but useful too. Needless to say, Manipur offers fertile ground for such a study. Unfortunately, movement in Manipur have not received as much attention of social scientists as they undoubtedly deserve. They are generally regarded as small-scale, local in character and therefore insignificant. An understanding of them is essential in order to grasp the feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction among the people. Moreover, such an exercise will hopefully throw light on other movement in the neighboring states of Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura.

Much has been said and written about the present insurgency, the social unrest and the young Meetei radicalism in Manipur. Till date, however, no systematic account is available, nor has any scientific study been conducted. What we are witnessing today in Manipur is linked with the rise of the Meeteis, the seeds of which was planted as early as 1949 in the Manipur Merger Agreement. Manipur entered the agreement full of hopes, aspiration and wishes. But nothing came out of the high expectations. Instead, Manipur was made a Part C state¹ and her people were meted out step-motherly treatment. Ever since then, Manipur remains a neglected

area and exists only as a geographical name to be found in the school text books. Such a state of affairs came as a shock to the people, especially the Meeteis, who take immense pride in their history and culture. This neglect is the immediate cause of many movements that have emerged in the Imphal valley in the post-independence period. Notable, perhaps the most significant among them is the emergence of 'underground' movements since the mid-sixties.

There have been many movements in Manipur in the past - both in the pre and the post-independence period. Many of the current movements have their historical roots in the pre-independence movements. As we shall discuss later, these linkages have generally been ignored in the literature. For instance, the "Nupi-Lan" (Women's War) of 1939-40 was launched on 12th December 1939 against the local Maharajah and the British imperial policy of exporting rice from Manipur which brought the estate on the verge of a severe famine. The movement showed women's power in Meetei society and their conscious involvement in socio-political movements. The Nupi-Lan occurred in the midst of Irawat's social reform movements against the despotic king and his oppression. Irawat's struggle forms the subject matter of the first movement in Chapter 3 and will therefore not be elaborated here. Suffice to say that Irawat used the "Nupi-Lan" as a platform to give a political orientation to his movements. Also, under his leadership the women became a politically conscious force to reckon with in Meetei society. Around the same time when Irawat was fighting to do away with all the oppressive practices of the Maharajah, Naoria Phullo, his great contemporary, started a religious movement known as Sanamah² movement. 'Sanamah' was the religion of the Meeteis from the ancient times till the advent of Hinduism in the early 18th century. Naoria Phullo attributed the ills of Manipur to Hinduism and therefore wanted to revive Sanamah.³ What distinguishes present movement from those in the past is its ideology, radicalism, its sustaining power and the kind of popular support it enjoys. Almost every movement in the past either failed to create an impact on the masses or was crushed midway by the repressive forces of the state. And yet, new and more radical movements continued to rise. Why is this so? It goes now without saying that people are dissatisfied with the ruling class of the country. There is a feeling of discontent, dissatisfaction and anger among the people. Against whom is this feeling directed? Some feel it is directed against the average Indian while other maintain it is basically against the Centre. It needs no telling that people are alienated. But why do

they feel that they have been treated badly, taken for granted and meted out a step-motherly treatment? And above all, why, after 56 years of its merger with India, these people - the only Hinduized Mongoloid Community in India - are demanding separation from the mainland India? Trying to seek an answer to these different but interrelated questions is not easy. Perhaps the present attempt cannot do full justice to the complexity of the task. Yet, a beginning must be made and this is an attempt, the first in-depth study nonetheless, in that direction.

During the last four decades we have witnessed the emergence and growth of present 'underground' movement in the Imphal valley. Demanding separation from the mainland country, the movement has challenged the authority of the Constitution of India and the boundaries of the existing states and has justified these demands in terms of the inherent rights of ethnic groups to self-determination. While the movement has been brushed aside by the establishment as nothing more than a "law and order" problem, most of the north-east pundits and 'Manipurlogists' explain them in terms of "economic backwardness", a manifestation of the "unemployment problem" caused by "years of neglect by the Centre", or just "an ethnic explosion".⁴ It has also been seen as a Sino-US plot to balkanise India.⁵ Others have attributed the movement to causal factors such as the "Crisis of identity", "bureaucratic corruption", "economic exploitation", "Influence of foreign power and ideology"⁶ Most of the reasons are rather simplistic, stereotyped and offer no new insights. The inherent oversimplified reductionism either to economism, separatism or revivalism, renders explanations of the present movement lopsided. This is not to imply that these factors are unimportant in the emergence of the movement. What is implied and being pointed out is that these explanations not only never went beyond these factors, but ignored even their interactions. The role of the socio-cultural and historical forces were never taken into account while analyzing the movement. It was never considered as to what role the superstructures play in the movement. Everything else was taken for granted and the take off point for any study is economic backwardness of the region. To see the present movement as solely an economic one is to mistake the form for the content. What is more, most of the explanations regarded the movement as ahistorical, as though it has sprung out of nowhere and all of a sudden. No attempt has been made to trace its origins. At the most, very few have attempted to trace it back to the mid-sixties when the Imphal valley witnessed the emergence of the first Meetei 'underground'

organisation, The United National Liberation Front (UNLF). These kind of attempts, which we shall term ad-hoc attempts, have given rise to some serious sweeping and misleading interpretations of the movement which so far have gone unnoticed, unquestioned and unchallenged. It has been argued, for instance, by Nibedon, Sarin, Sareen and Singh that the Meetei insurgency owes its origin to the Naga and the Mizo movements.⁷ To them and many others, Phizo and Laldenga were seen as the godfathers of 'insurgency' in the north-east. The Meetei movement was thus seen as an extension of a leaf taken out from the Naga and the Mizo 'insurgency' whose secessionist slogans "caught the imagination of some romantic (Meetei) youths."⁸ No systematic attempt of any kind was made to trace the origin of the secessionist movements in the region. Unlike most of the earlier works on the north-east movements, we have, in our study of the Meetei movement, taken into consideration the socio-cultural and historical forces along with the traditions. The emphasis is being given on history and cultural traditions. The historical context of social transformation in Meetei society is taken into account in our analysis of the movement. The role played by the non-economic forces are treated equally, if not with more importance. It is our contention that though an economic analysis is necessary as it gives us a basic understanding of the problem, but it is not sufficient if in addition to the economic factors, the tremendous role the superstructure plays is ignored, otherwise such 'understandings' necessarily become partial and incomplete.

Objective and Scope of the Study

Many changes have been taking place in Manipur since it became a part of India in 1949. This study, in a sense, is an attempt to explain if these changes are due to the movements or to see if these changes are responsible for the rise of the movements. The main objective of the present work is to understand the character of the movement from within thereby hoping to bring to notice the problems and uncertainties faced by the Meeteis. Why do they resort to revolutionary violence and why do they demand separation from mainland India? It is to highlight the vast gap that exists between Manipur and India. It is hoped that this can be brought out by our study of two movements among the Meeteis. Even this has its own limitations in that the study concerns itself primarily with the parent 'underground' organization - UNLF and its splintered groups - CONSOCOM and PLA/RPF. The study therefore does not include within its purview other powerful organizations like the People's

Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL) etc. It therefore naturally follows that whatever interpretation given and conjectures drawn in the book relates to UNLF, CONSOCOM and PLA only. While the CONSOCOM came to a dead end without really firing a single shot to mark the beginning of an armed revolution, the PLA has, over the years slowly but surely emerged as a strong force to be reckoned with. Today, the PLA, along with the parent organization UNLF, is one of the most powerful organizations in Manipur.

Sociology of Social Movements

It was with the emergence of the third world countries in the wake of independence and revolutionary movements that the study of the social movements phenomenon has gained worldwide currency. Many national and international events have increased our awareness of social movements in the last four decades or so.

Literature Reviewed

The sociology of social movements has become prominent only in recent years. In fact, there are not many systematic books written on the phenomenon called 'social movements' before the fifties.⁹ However from the fifties onwards, there was a sudden spurt of interest in the study of social movements among sociologists and social anthropologists throughout the world. Many books and articles have been written on it.¹⁰ Two schools of thought emerged from these works. One treats both the phenomenon of social movements and other forms of elementary collective behaviour such as crowds, panics, riots and hostile outbursts as generically the same. We see clear representation of this school in the writings of Turner and Killian and Smelser. The former deal with social movements as generically similar to crowds, movements of public opinion. In the same way, Smelser also deals with social movements as generically similar to panics, crazes, riots and hostile outbursts. However, it was felt that such a treatment was inadequate and insufficient for an understanding of social movements. It was in the early seventies that the emphasis began to change. The thrust of recent research is in the direction of contemporary social movements rather than on the less organized, elementary forms of collective behaviour. This new school, distinctly represented by Banks, Wilkinson and Gusfield, maintained that social movements are different from other forms of collective behaviour and should be so treated. Banks in fact emphasized the socially creative aspects of movements in order to differentiate them

from crowds, panics, and hostile outbursts. Heberle was of the opinion that social movements are always integrated by an ideology.

Social movements have been there in India both during and after the British period, but due to the lack of systematic studies, the sociology of social movements in the country did not develop. Before 1970s, social movement studies were rarely undertaken. There are, however, important exceptions such as A.R. Desai's study of Indian Nationalism and Stephen Fuch's study of messianic movements.¹¹ Some of the movements in the country even attracted foreign scholars.¹² It is only in recent years that we see an increasing interest in the study of social movements. The early seventies started attracting the much needed attention and enthusiasm of a number of social scientists to this field.¹³

As noted earlier, the 1970s attracted the attention of social scientists in the study of social movements. Sociological studies of social movements in India is very rare in comparison to those studies made by social anthropologists, historians and political scientists. Even the few available sociological studies of social movements are mostly confined to agrarian movements. The sociological studies of social movements since the seventies marked the decline of structural-functional method of analysis and gave birth to an increasing interest in the Marxist method of analysis.

In the literature, Rao explained social movements in terms of the relative deprivation and the reference group theories. He rejected the theories of strain and revitalization as explanations of social movements.¹⁴ Oommen viewed social movements as institutionalized collective action that is guided by ideology and supported by an organisational structure.¹⁵ To him, the tension in a movement is between mobilization and institutionalization. Oommen (1972) used the Weberian notion of rationalization in his study of social movements. For P.N. Mukherji, it was not collective mobilization as such but the objectives envisaged in social change which should define a social movement.¹⁶ Social movement is collective mobilization seeking change either through institutional or non-institutional means. Dipankar Gupta, in his study of Shiv Sena, followed a structural Marxist approach in the line of Althusser and Poulantzas.¹⁷ He emphasised the role of mode of production, class structure and class contradiction in explaining social movements and found the functionalist method inappropriate. Two theoretical methods are commonly used in most of the studies of social movements which centres around the agrarian movements, religious

and cultural movements and movements among the tribes: the Marxist approach and the historical structural approach. Marxists focus on the nature of the state, its class character and its social and economic policies, which impinge upon specific historical manifestations of movements and revolts in society.¹⁸ Gough considered class structure and contradictions in society to be the motive force in social movement. "Modes of production" and "system states" are the most commonly employed devices in Marxist studies of social movements. A commonly found criticism against the Marxist studies of social movements is directed against their constant use of "mode of production" as an analytical device failing thereby to take into account the social relations, cultural values and ties and kinship.¹⁹

Others have used the historical structural method of analysis without referring to the mode of production frame. These studies are mainly concerned with the genesis, growth and culmination of movements in a historical context. Here the focus is on the life cycle of the movement which begins with mobilization and terminates in institutionalised structures or organization.²⁰ The psychological deprivational factors are also dealt with in other studies. These studies are distinguished from the Marxist studies as their focus is on the socio-cultural and ideological forces rather than on the economic factors. The economic factors are not doubt taken into account but not given the primacy that it is given in the Marxist scheme of analysis.

Tribal movements have also been the subject of study for quite some time.²¹ The sub-nationalist among the North-east tribes have attracted a considerable amount of attention.²² These movements have been explained in terms of either economic disparities, identity consciousness or regional chauvinism and most of the studies are in the form of scattered articles and papers. Hardly any study has been taken up from a historical perspective.

Taking into account the current research on the study of social movements, two major approaches can be discerned. The nationalist elitist approach from above and the subaltern approach from below. For instance, in the study of peasant movements, the elitist approach perceived the peasantry as passive and assigned them the role of mere followers. The peasantry, as perceived by this approach, lacks socio-political consciousness, are organised only through leaders from non-peasant classes, and responds mechanically only through economic pressure. Dhanagare, for example, studied peasant movement through this notion of Indian peasantry and explained them

in terms of purely economic reasons. Peasants revolts, according to Dhanagare, occurred as a result of economic burden on the peasantry and they "have to have leaders from other (*non-peasant*) classes."²³

As a critique of this elitist approach the subaltern group of studies has established a new and radically interesting approach.²⁴ The concern of the subaltern approach is to question the elitist paradigm so commonly used in the study of peasant consciousness and it distinguishes itself by showing that sheer economic distress fails to explain peasant insurgency. This approach recognizes "the peasant as the maker of his own rebellion",²⁵ attributing thereby a certain consciousness to the peasantry. It opposes the notion of peasant uprisings as spontaneous, pre-political or pre-organizational entities lacking leadership potential. Central to the subaltern approach is the concept of peasant autonomy. The peasant revolts, according to Ranajit Guha, perhaps the chief proponent of the subaltern school, are autonomous in character and capable of providing leadership from below for the sustenance of the movement. Though there certainly are limits to peasant autonomy "what can not be denied is the peasant's own initiative and ability to sustain a movement."²⁶ The subaltern approach is rooted in structuralism and explains social movements from a dialectical-historical perspective. The approach of perceiving the objective conditions, that is the subjective consciousness of the peasants and tribals or any subaltern group manifests itself as insurgency.

Before we go on to introduce the two movements taken for the present study, we shall discuss here some of the conceptual problems in the study of social movements. This has assumed great importance as social science literature is now flooded with terms and concepts which are most widely used not only by social scientists but by laymen as well. The more widely they used, the vaguer their meaning has become. It goes without saying that they have now become the least precise and understood terms. The term "social movement" is a clear case in point. Banks aptly observed that "so loose and slipshod has the employment of these words become that they seem capable nowadays of application to any kind of group whatsoever."²⁷ For any kind of study on social movements, it is therefore essential to state precisely what exactly a social movement is. That is to say, some conceptual refinement is urgently needed. To begin with, we must have some fundamental idea of social movements. To have this fundamental idea, we need to ask some fundamental questions: What distinguishes social movements from other types of elementary

collective behaviour such as crowd, mob, panic, riot, outbursts etc.? How do we project the notion of social movement? To understand what a social movement is, we must be very clear about what a social movement is *not*. A right step in defining anything is differentiation. A social movement is not the same thing as a crowd or a mob or a panic or a riot. A 'crowd' is an "unorganized aggregate of people temporarily united in response to a common stimulus or situation in which the individuality of the participants is submerged."²⁸ A 'mob' is "a large and disorderly collection of people tending to acts of violence."²⁹ It may be regarded as a highly emotionalized and unstable form of the crowd. An 'outburst' is "a violent expression or demonstration of intense feeling," "a sudden or intense surge of activity of growth."³⁰ A 'panic' is "a sudden overpowering fight; a sudden terror often inspired by a trifling cause or a misapprehension of danger and accompanied by unreasoning or frantic efforts to secure safety."³¹ It is a state of alarm and confusion as when a crowd caught in danger gets out of control. "A 'riot' is an outbreak of temporary but violent mass disorder."³² It may be directed against a particular private individual as well as against public authorities, but it involves no intention to overthrow the government itself. We may say that they - crowd, mob, panic, etc. - are all single events, spontaneous, limited in terms as well as in targets and objective. They may take place in the course of a social movement but they themselves do not constitute a social movement. Riots are an index of social unrest and may therefore disrupt the society but they do not provide what is necessary to establish a new social order. What, then, constitutes a social movement?

'Social Movement' Defined

There is no clear cut consensus on the definition of the term "Social movement". Sociologists define social movements in various ways. The pioneer attempt to define a scientific concept of social movements was made by Lorenz Von Stein in *The History of Social Movements in France, 1789-1850*, first published in 1850.³³ Quite independently of Marx and Engels, Stein developed the concept of Proletariat and called the Proletariat movement as the 'social movement'. Werner Sombart shares Stein's conception of social movement. According to Sombart "the modern social movement is... a socialistic agitation", and "it is characterized . . . by the fact that it is a proletariat agitation, or . . . it is workingmen's movement."³⁴ Rudolf Heberle made a recent attempt to define the concept of social movement. "The main criterion of a social movement", according to

him,"... is that it aims to bring about fundamental changes in the order, especially in the basic institutions of property and labour relationships."³⁵ He rejects, an rightly so, Stein's exclusive identification of the concept with Proletarian movement. For him, "social movements are a specific kind of concerted action groups; they last longer and are more integrated than mobs, and crowds and yet are not organised like political clubs and associations."³⁶ For Heberle, the concept clearly has a wider applicability.

Even as Heberle rejected the exclusive identification of social movement with proletarian movement found in the capitalist countries, most of the discussion on social movement as a concept deals, by and large, exclusively with and in relation to, the advanced capitalist societies. Are social movements to be exclusively identified with the capitalist/industrial societies? If not, how should one look/define social movements in a backward/traditional society? It does not however mean to say that there should be one definition of 'Social movement' for the capitalist societies as distinct from that of the backward/traditional society. Obviously there can be no two distinctly different definitions of 'social movement' for different societies. As far as the concept of social movement is concerned, certain common denominators have to be found for both the societies. In other words, social movement should be defined in such a way that it pertains not only to the advanced capitalist/industrial societies but also the traditional/backward society or any given society as well. As will be seen later, any concerted effort on the part of section of society to bring changes in the existing systems may be termed as social movement. Conditions which give rise to social movements may vary from society to society but there can be no two opinions as to what constitutes a social movement.

In defining social movements, it is interesting to note that sociologists by and large are more or less in agreement with Heberle in "assuming that intention to change the pattern of human relations and social institutions is the essential characteristic of a social movement."³⁷ Wendell King distinguish social movements from other phenomena on the basis of the kind of goal to which they are committed. He says "unlike social institutions, their purpose is *change*, whether of relationships, norms or all of these . . . But *without some change in view there is no social movement*."³⁸ "A social movement according to Turner and Killian is a "a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote change in the society or groups of which it is a part."³⁹ Almost, if not exactly, in the same fashion, Gusfield defined

social movements as "socially shared demands for change in some aspect of the social order."⁴⁰ These definitions emphasize the part played by social movements in development of social change. Banks went a step further, declaring social movements as "social technologies" and states that they are "creators rather than creatures of social change."⁴¹ He stressed the "socially creative" aspects of movements in order to differentiate them from other forms of collective behaviour, and saw the latter as mere "social responses to situations of stress", and therefore not "socially constructive". Social movements on the other hand, are created and maintained by "those social innovators". Like Banks, Oommen also emphasized men's creativity by saying that "movements are neither mere accidents nor entirely the resultants of manipulations by leaders and demagogues but the consequence of conscious efforts of men to change systems. . . The continuous occurrence of movements implies that man is not imprisoned by present structures and no moratorium on his creativity can be imposed."⁴² In Wilkinson's view, who defined a social movement as "a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'utopian' community",⁴³ two basic elements, namely "a minimal degree of organisation" and a "commitment to change" are necessary for the existence of a social movement. It will, therefore, not be untrue to say that most definitions of social movements vary only in terminology and not in much in the contents. Hence, we can very safely conclude that whatever terminologies sociologists have used to define the social movements phenomena, at least two glaring basic features stand out in common: deliberate and conscious collective organisation; and an orientation towards change.

A word is in order here about the ideological aspect of movements. Some writers do not consider ideology as an essential feature of a social movement.⁴⁴ This is curious in more than one way because ideology has long been recognized as a significant dimension of social movements. A social movement according to Heberle "is always integrated by a set of constructive ideas, or an ideology".⁴⁵ According to Rush and Denisoff, "social movements are emergent realities, *suigeneris*, which evolve through a series of phases, climaxing as an organisation of ideology or a collective unity of meaning for social change and which can hold the attention of a community or segments of it."⁴⁶ For Banks a social movement has not one ideology but many.⁴⁷ Rao made it very clear when he says that ideology distinguishes "a movement from any

organized effort involving collective mobilization.”⁴⁸ He further maintained that in the absence of an ideology any organized collective effort becomes an individual and isolated event and not a movement. In fact, it is only when an organized collective effort is mobilized and sustained that it becomes a movement; and it is the ideology which sustains a movement. So, along with the two above mentioned basic elements, viz., collective organization and orientation towards change, ideology can be considered as an essential element in identifying a social movement.

A reference has to be made here in connection with a question raised by some students of social movements : What about those movements which resist or try to resist change and which seek to preserve the status quo? Vander Zander for example, asking the same question, maintained that the study of change-oriented movements only is not enough. He therefore, suggested, what he though would be, a more satisfactory definition of social movement. “A social movement”, according to him, “is a more or less persistent and organized effort on the part of a considerable number of members of a given society either to change a situation which they define as unsatisfactory *or to prevent change* in a situation which they define as satisfactory.”⁴⁹ True, social movements need not necessarily be always change-oriented and thereby promote change; they can also be stability-oriented and thereby resisting change. However, we are not concerned with such stability-oriented movements because such movements are always supported by those privileged few who want to maintain the status-quo, and because such movements, in the long run, form part of the establishment. Our concern and interest lies in those movements which are change-oriented and therefore linked to social change. A social movement if it is to aim for the betterment of the people, should be of the people, by the people, and for the people’. And it is the change-oriented movements which often can fulfil this aspect of social movements.

As noted earlier, it is evident that no clear consensus can be brought about in defining a social movement. Our aim here is not to reject one and accept some other. Needless to say, our concern is to search for certain common denominators.⁵⁰ Hence, drawing on some basic common elements of prior definitions, we shall define a social movement as *a deliberate conscious, organized collective action on the part of a section of society to bring change in the social order with an an ideology behind it*. The term ‘movement’ in social movement’ refers to the change-oriented aspect of the

movement. Our definition of social movement is certainly not novel, but its relevance and practicability lies in that it distinguishes social movements from other forms of collective behaviour.

Social movements do not spring from nowhere. They have their roots in the social structure and conditions of society. The emergence of social movements in a given society is a symptom of discontent, dissatisfaction and contradiction within the existing social order. Dissatisfaction and discontent arises when "individuals no longer consider the values and norms on which the order is based to be the best or only possible values and norms."⁵¹ Social movements arise when the individuals "develop the idea that they are only *in* but not really *of* the society."⁵² Economic causes of discontent like poverty, unemployment, economic backwardness of the region can also give rise to the emergence of movements as well. While there is no simple universally accepted theory which adequately explains the rise of social movements,⁵³ it is generally agreed that social movements arise out of certain conditions in the society. In the following pages we discuss some crucial elements of any social movement. These elements are ideology, organization, recruitment, development and change and movement classification.

Ideology

Ideology is a term upon which many meanings are given. Ideology, in fact, may imply different things to different people. Our concern here is not with discussing the full implications of the concepts of ideology,⁵⁴ but with stating its salient features and its relation to movement. The salient elements of ideology in its relation to movement includes values, ideas, beliefs, moral standards and perceptions of interest which may, in turn become transformed into meanings and purposes. Ideology guide participants' and leaders' action, and justify the purpose of the movement.

Organization

A social movement is not a movement until there is an organised structure to obtain its aims, objectives and goals. It manifests itself through the movement organization. In fact, "a social movement has not yet arisen until the affected group is actually organized to obtain collective goals."⁵⁵ The social movement organisation is therefore, an organized structural body which sets out the movement's aims and goals. The organization is basically meant to carry on and out the movement activities and therefore its survival is of crucial importance in the life of a movement.

It is a truism that the nature of movement organization is related to the nature of mobilization, leadership and the interaction between the leaders and the masses. It is through the process of mobilization that movements spring to life. In assessing the mobilization aspect of social movements, the emphasis should be on the interaction between the leaders and the masses and not on either the independent role of the leaders or that of the masses. Unfortunately, most sociologists tend to ignore this interaction between the leaders and the masses. Some stress the mobilization of elites thereby minimizing the mobilization of the masses.⁵⁶ It is true that masses do not devote their lives to social movements. And yet, as Marx and Wood pointed out, during exceptional period, large numbers of people are in some way involved in, and support social movements. A very good discussion of this interaction between the leaders and the masses is in Lenin's *What is to be Done?* Lenin viewed mobilization in terms of a smaller group of leaders consciously interacting with the masses to prepare them for revolution.⁵⁷ There is now a need for further research to focus more explicitly on the interaction between the movement leaders and the masses. The present study focuses more explicitly on this interaction. It focuses, for example, on how elites relate to the masses; how they enlist support from among the masses; what the elites ask of the masses in order to help the movement and so on.

Recruitment

Recruitment relates to actual enlisting of support by way of loose or rigid membership. It has obvious bearing on the growth or decline of a movement. However, the primary focus of the present study is on the issue of differential recruitment,⁵⁸ that is to say, why some people rather than others join a movement? Why do some movements attract a larger following and grow at a more rapid rate than others? Snow and Zurcher suggest that the question of 'why' people join social movements cannot be explained without an examination of the process of 'how' individuals come to align themselves with a particular movement. They further contend that the 'whys' or 'reasons' for joining movements arise out of the recruitment process itself.⁵⁹ So, if such is the importance of studying recruitment process in a movement, what, then are the sources of recruitment? Our study makes an attempt to explain why the present Manipur movement has attracted certain unemployed youths rather than youths at large.

Development and Change

Most of the sociological analysis of social movements is concerned only with the emergence of the movements. Very little attention has

been paid to the dynamics of movement development and decline. What happens to the movement after its emergence is a question very often overlooked by most students of social movements. We need to pay more attention on the ongoing dynamics of movement development. In other words, in developing a frame work for any kind of study of social movements, attention should be paid not only on analysing the emergence but also the subsequent development/decline of the movements. Any study of social movements has to grapple with the problems relating to social change. How are the social movements related to social change? And what is the impact of social movements on change? As Rao said, the social changes that result from a movement may be seen first in terms of the changes in the positions of the concerned section of the movement and secondly in terms of their impact on wider society.⁶⁰ Another way of seeing it is in terms of the responses of the establishment towards the movement activities. One central issue in the literature revolves round whether social movements should be viewed as causes of social change or as effects of social change. According to Marx and Wood there is no necessary incompatibility between seeing social movement as both cause and effect of change. At one point in time, they said, broad change can give rise to social movements, which may then help to generate additional specific changes.⁶¹ While it is true that there is no incompatibility between seeing social movement as cause and effect of change, a rather radical and upcoming view, as expressed by Banks and others, is to regard social movements as the creators of social change, and not as the creatures of change.⁶²

Movement Classification

The classification of social movements is another definitional problems that has to be noted, rather tackled, for it helps to classify the limits of one's study. There is no universally accepted criteria of classification of social movements. Sociologists classify social movements in different ways depending on their convenience and interest. Movements have been classified on the basis of the consequence of a movement, scale and spatial spread, ideology, goals, strategy, the quality of change.⁶³ Turner and Killian classify movements into value -oriented and participation-oriented movements.⁶⁴ Smelser's classification is of two fold: value-oriented and norm-oriented movements.⁶⁵ For Wilson it is 'transformative', 'redemptive', 'alienative'.⁶⁶ Gusfield typologises a movement as withdrawal, protest, reform and revolution.⁶⁷ We therefore have

different and varied criteria of movement classification. It is to be noted, however, that these classification are not mutually exclusive.

There is little use in seeking a rigid scheme of movement classification. For our study, we shall classify on the basis of the nature, scope and goal of the movement. Therefore depending on its scope, nature and goal we may simply classify a movement as revolutionary and reformatory. Here too, revolutionary movements can be of many types and sub-types.⁶⁸ It may also be seen as transformative or participation - oriented movement depending on what particular aspect the stress is given. Basing on the nature, scope and goal of the movement under study, stress is being given at the insurgency and ethnic aspect of the movement. Insurgent movement can further be categorised into secessionist, reactionary and revivalist.⁶⁹ It is the secessionist aspect of the movement that the thrust is given in the present study.

Two Movements Introduced

Within the given theoretical framework, two specific movements are being studied. The first movement or Irawat movement as it came to be known, occurred in the thirties which continued upto the early fifties (Chapter 3). The Irawat movement is being focussed as background to and plausibly a causative of the second movement - the present 'underground' movement - upon which lies the major thrust of the present study. Irawat's movement is taken out of many several past movements as it has certain significant relevance for the present ongoing movement. Firstly, Irawat was the first leader of modern Manipur who tried to arouse a socio-political and cultural consciousness among the Meeties. He was the first political leader who attempted to bring a process of "conscientization" among the people. The concept of Meetei nationalism which, was the hallmark behind the emergence of the present 'underground' movement in the 1960s, owes its origin to Irawat's movement. Secondly, the idea of establishing a classless society, which is one of the major objectives of the present movement was first mooted by Irawat in the latter part of his movement. Thirdly, the communist ideology of the later phase of the ongoing movement was first brought into the Manipur valley by none other than Irawat. Fourthly, we saw secessionism as a political concept operating for the first time since Manipur merged into Indian Union in the first movement. Irawat died without realizing his dreams and was soon forgotten. But the mid-sixties, more than a decade after his death, saw the resurrection of his ideas and views with regard to Manipur. Irawat's ideas and views on the Manipur

Merger Agreement of 1949 became the focal point of discussion among the educated, disillusioned youths of Manipur. The awakening of the Meeteis has been widely credited to have come along with the emergence of the second movement in the sixties. However, a discussion of the first movement shows us that the awakening has started since the days of Irawat. In short, a discussion of the first movement is a pre-requisite towards an understanding of the second movement. With the first movement serving as a background, the present ongoing movement is taken up for an indepth study in the light of the past. For the present movement, three aspects of the movement namely 'organisation', 'activities' and 'ideology' are considered for detail discussion (Chapter 4, 5 and 6).

On the basis of data for both the first and the second movements, it is argued in the present study that the seeds of the secessionist movements now undergoing in the north-east region were sown in the Manipur valley. It is also additionally argued that the concept of Pan Mongoloid movement, the idea of an independent Mongolian nation were sown too in Manipur. The present study is not merely a study of two movements among the Meeteis. Through the study of this two movements, it can be seen as a study of the emergence Meetei nationalism. Tracing back the origin of the present ongoing 'underground' Meetei movement to the late forties when Irawat launched the first secessionist movement in Manipur soon after the merger agreement, it is contended that the concepts of political secessionism, Pan Mongolianism and notion of identity crisis which have been enveloping Manipur today are not the brainchild of today's young 'insurgents'. The seeds were sown long ago in the period immediately after the lapse of the British Paramountcy. And the man who gave birth to these conceptual ideas was Hijam Irawat. To appreciate and understand the present Meetei problem, a dialogue between the present movement and the past movement is needed. It is in this sense that the argument is put forward in our study that the genesis of the present 'underground' movement should be traced back to the period immediately after independence. It is our contention that any explanation of the present movement sans an effort to trace its historical roots is and will remain inadequate and incomplete. Unless we analyse the movement in a historical setting, we will be groping in the dark.

A Note on the Methodology

A study of social movements cannot rely on documents and books alone and has to be supplemented with data from diverse other

sources, especially primary level information. Furthermore, given the contemporary nature of the movement, sufficient documentary sources are not available. Field-work in this region has its own problems, as we shall discuss later. Besides the few available reports and documents and the unpublished materials that are available with the movement leaders and activists, other important sources of data are the back numbers of journals published in the vernacular.

For the collection of data for the present study, I visited Manipur twice. First, in the month of September 1984, I undertook a trip to explore the 'environment' of the place, the attitudes of people and the respondents with the aim of starting primary data collection. I stayed in Imphal for six months and interviewed quite a few leaders/members of the movement. I also observed and analysed the 1984 Assembly election scene as the event marked the participation of the founder leader of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the electoral politics for the first time in the history of 'insurgency movement' in Manipur. Secondary data for both the movements were also collected during the first field trip. I undertook a second and final field trip in June 1985 to complete interviews of the movement activists. During the six months of stay during the second trip, I completed the data collection for both the first and the second movements under trying and risky circumstances. Given the sensitivity of the issue and the volatile situation in Manipur where anybody who asks question about almost anything, leave alone the movement, is suspect to be a terrorist, anti-national and where anybody can be arrested without a warrant under the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958 the circumstances under which the field investigation was conducted and the risks involved for the researcher to interview the movement participants cannot be overstated. I also interviewed some important state political leaders to get the establishment side of the story.

Any government's obvious response to any movement challenging its status-quo is to suppress the latter. We nevertheless took into account the establishment side of the story but did not incorporate it in our analysis as it is of peripheral importance to our main objective which is to understand the character of the movement from within. Thus the movement participants have become not only inevitable and unavoidable but the only reliable source of data for any effort towards understanding the movement. One, of course, may point out that a major weakness of choosing the movement participants as the major source of data is that the explanation offered of the movement will be too subjective. However, given the major

thrust of our study., it should be noted that the participants' views, opinions and expressions, howsoever subjective, are the most objective source of information for us. We have categorised the activists into three categories namely those who have been directly associated with the movement from the inception but are no longer associated now though still sympathetic to the cause, those who were involved but have withdrawn now and those who are very much in the movement. Through these categories, checks and counter checks are done.

The book is divided into three sections and has eight chapters in all. The first section consists of three chapters. Having introduced the problem and the two specific movements in the first chapter, we shall in the following pages, give a historical background of the region and the people, and political structure of the period under consideration in Chapter 2. The third chapter is devoted to a discussion of the first movement and its relevance relative to the second movement. The Second section which too carries three chapters examines the second movement of which three aspects namely organisation, activities and ideology have been considered for detailed analysis. The movement organisation is discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 describes the overall activities of the movement phase by phase. This is followed by an examination of the movement ideology in Chapter 6. In the third and final section, Chapter 7 summarises the findings and offer some conjecturisations and also identifies areas for further research. A newly added post script is given in chapter 8.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The new constitution of India came into force on 26th January 1950 and under it component parts of India were divided into three categories namely Part A states, Part B states and Part C states. Manipur along with nine others were placed under the last category Part C states were directly placed under the Centre.
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3. More on Naoria Phullo in Chapter 4 (Background).
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 12. See for instance, R.L. (jr.) Hardgrave, *The Dravidian Movement*, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1965.
 13. See for example, T.K. Oommen, *Charisma, stability and change: An Analysis of Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement in India*, New-Delhi, Thompson Press, 1972; T.K. Oommen, "Sociological Issues in the Analysis of Social Movements in India", *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 26(1), March 1977, pp. 14-37; Biplab Das Gupta, *The Naxalite Movement*, Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1974; Manoranjan Mohanty, *Revolutionary Violence : A Study of Maoist Movements in India*,

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15. T.K. Oommen, *op. cit.*, See also his *From Mobilization to Institutionalization*, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1985.
16. See P.N. Mukherji, *op. cit.*
17. See Dipankar Gupta, *Nativism in a Metropolis : The Shiva Sena in Bombay*, New-Delhi, Manohar, 1982.
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47. Banks, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
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49. James W. Vander Zander, *op. cit.*, p. 315 (emphasis added)
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51. Rudolf Heberle, *op. cit.*, pp. 454-55.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 458.
53. We can very broadly speak of the theories of relative deprivation, strain and revitalization which comes under the functionalist school of analysis and the Marxist theory which gives primacy to the economic factors as opposite to the former.
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