

TRIBES AND CASTES OF MANIPUR



Sipra Sen

The present Volume attempts to provide a brief description of the State of Manipur, its districts and also brief ethnological accounts of different tribes and castes of Manipur. This book also covers almost all bibliographical works on Manipur including its tribes and castes.

The introductory chapter describes the main aspects of Geography, Agriculture, Forest, Geology, Historical and Political Administration, Village and Tribal Council, Anthropological and Sociological aspects of the *Aimol, Anal, Chiru, Chothe, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Maram, Mao, Maring, Moyon, Paite, Tangkhul, Thadou, Meithei, Loi, Bishnupriya, Pangan* etc. and also many other tribes and castes of Manipur. The book also gives first comprehensive descriptive notes on many other aspects of Manipur and its people.

It is a multi-disciplinary *Bibliographical* work which enlists 2585 upto date references on Manipur, its tribes and castes. The book fills an important gap which existed in the absence of an independent bibliography on the state of Manipur. This covers almost all comprehensive inventory research source materials from Monographs, Articles, Dissertations, Reports, Proceedings etc. of Pre- and Post-Independence period from the year 1803 to 1988.

It is hoped this exhaustive bibliography will definitely assist the scholars to locate the available documents on different aspects of Manipur, its tribes and castes relating to their Anthropology, Sociology, Politics, Religion, Linguistics Economics, Psychology etc. The Addendum brings this bibliography absolutely upto date, while the Author Index makes consultation easy.

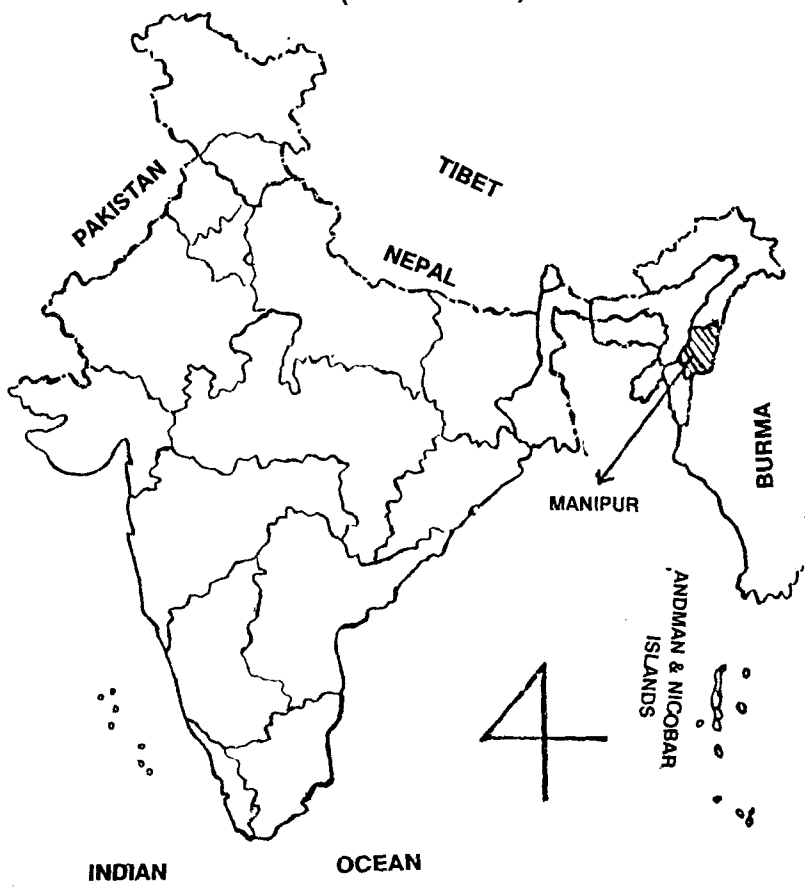
In the third chapter, it brings Appendix portion with Glossary of Words, Short Notes etc. which are also much helpful. Several detailed maps, photographs, a couple of sketches and tables provide other attractive features of the book. Such a valuable reference tool can also be used as a general guide book by all. This will be a proud possession of academic, public and private Libraries and will facilitate the task of researchers, social workers, policy makers and of course the general readers who may be interested in the study of Manipur and its tribes and castes.

Rs. 395

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ISBN 81-7099-310-5

**MAP OF INDIA
POSITION OF MANIPUR
(No to the Scale)**



TRIBES AND CASTES OF MANIPUR

(Description and Select Bibliography)

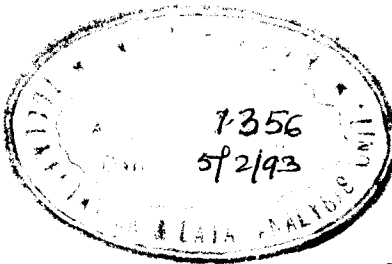
SIPRA SEN

MITTAL PUBLICATIONS

NEW DELHI --110 059 (INDIA)

306.0 8954170 16

SEN



001356

First Edition, 1992

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ISBN 81- 7099-310-5

Published by K. M. Rai Mittal for Mittal Publications, A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi - 110059

Laser typeset by Am Laser Typesetting System, New Delhi - 110016

Printed in India by New Gian Offset Press, New Delhi - 110035

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1

Introduction

Land and People of Manipur

Manipur is a fertile field to study Anthropology and Sociology for its colourful Naga, Kuki, Mizo Hill-tribes and the Meiteis, Bishnupriya Manipuris, Brahmins, Pangan Muslims etc. of Plain-castes people. Manipuri dances are of world - wide fame as well as their folklore, cultural tradition, myths and legends are very rich.

Though the people of Manipur are patriarchal still the freedom enjoyed by their women in the plains of Manipur in socio-economic life is remarkable. In old days Manipur was known by different names. These are *Mecklay*, *Cassy*, *Kase*, *Kathe*, *Makeli*, *Magli*, *Moglan*, *Manphur*, *Manlur*, *Manyur* etc. The actual name "*Manipur*" is believed to have originated mythologically. It is said that *Vasuki* (the snake-god) was in the soil of this area and threw out its shining diamond ('Mani') from head and hence, the name of this land is *Manipur* i.e. full of jewels. Some believed that the name *Manipur* is rooted in *Mahabharata*. It is said that the name is from 'Mani' (jewel) which was formerly in the possession of *Rajas* of Manipur ages ago.

Geography

This state is situated approximately between 23.83° and 25.68° North Latitude and between 93.03° and 94.78° East Longitude. This is a small State with an area of 8628 square miles of which, the hills occupying the valley at the centre over approximately 7806 square

miles. Manipur is situated in the eastern most part of India. This State is almost square in shape. It is bounded by Cachar and North Cachar Districts of Assam on the West, Kohima and Phek Districts of Nagaland on the North, Aizawl District of Mizoram on the South-West and its Eastern part is sharing the international border with the neighbouring nation Burma. Manipur is almost isolated, far from Delhi. Geo-politically it is very much sensitive State as Burma surrounds its maximum part in its eastern border. The National Highway No. 39, the Indo-Burma Road runs towards Burma through Morreh, the extreme eastern border-town of Chandel district of Manipur. Another National Highway No. 53, Cachar Road, runs towards Silchar (Assam). State Highways, District and inter-village roads are there but, some are in poor condition due to rough surface condition and inadequate number of bridges. The climate of the valley is pleasantly temperate. The north, north - eastern, north - western and the western hilly areas are somehow colder and moist. But, the Moreh area is much hotter like Upper Burma. The average annual rainfall in the State is approximately 202 cm; it is about 140 cm. in the Valley and about 395 cm. in the north - western hills of Manipur.

Mountains

Physically the State may be divided into two distinct regions. These are: Plain Central Valley and the surrounding Hill areas. About 10 per cent of the land is flat plain. The Plain Central Valley is almost oval in shape, covering an area of 1,920 sq. km. and situated at about 750 metres above the sea level. It is about 36 miles from north to south and about 20 miles from east to west.

The hill ranges have a general north to south trend, connecting spurs and ridges run from west to east between them. The ranges are Naga Hills to the north, the Manipur Hills along the eastern Burma border, the Lushai and Chin Hills to the south. The hills are highest in the north which attain at 8,427 feet (2,569 metres) in Siruhi Kashong (Siruhi Peak). In the west the mountains are broken due to the valley of the Surma river (which is a tributary of Barak river). The average elevation of the mountain lies in between 5,000 to 6,000 feet above the sea level.

There are six important mountain peaks in Manipur. Mt. Koch is the highest peak in the State, situated in the Ukhrul District near Burma-Manipur border. It is with 9,843 feet high. Mt. Easo is the next with 9,824 feet high, situated in Mao Sub Division of Senapati District; Mt. Chingsui is 9,048 feet high, situated in Ukhrul District; Mt. Kawabs is 8,755 feet

high Mt. Kubru is 8,655 feet high situated in Tamenglong District; and, Mt. Sirai is 8,427 feet high situated in Ukhrul District.

Rivers

Most of the principal rivers of the State of Manipur are flowing from north to south direction. This happens due to the height of hills. It is already stated earlier that the hills are higher in the north and lower in the south. The important rivers are the Imphal, the Irang, the Iril, the Thoubal, the Barak, the Tuivai, the Khunga. The Imphal river arises in the northern hills of the State, flows through the capital Imphal. It is flowing for about 130 kilometres in the plain and then enters the hilly region through a gorge towards southern direction to fall in the Chindwin river of Burma, a tributary of the Irrawady river. The Iril river, which is about 96 kilometres in length, meets the Imphal river at about ten kilometres to the south of the capital Imphal in the Central Valley. The Thoubal river, which is about 88 kilometres in length, falls to the Imphal river at about sixteen kilometres further south. The Barak river rises at Mt. Japvo and flows south and thereafter runs towards west to join the Meghna river of Bangladesh. Jiri and Makra rivers are flowing in the western part of the State through narrow valley of Jiribam Sub Division of Imphal District. There are some more rivers like Makho, Chamu, Tuyungbi, Maklang etc. Due to rocky terrain and less water in rivers it is almost difficult to use them for proper navigation, specially in dry summer. All these rivers and streams are fed by abundant rainfall.

Lakes

Most of the streams of the central valley fall into the Imphal river which enters Burma through a gorge in the hills. The Manipur Valley is actually a gift of this gorge. The biggest lakes are found in the lowest portions of the southern half of the central valley. Logtak lake is the biggest one. In the rainy season, it covers about 100 square kilometres and in the dry season, about 64 square kilometres. There is a group of very small islands in the lake with the cluster of low hills. There are some villagers living on these islands whose occupation is fishing. Plenty of fishes are available in Logtak lake. Pumlen, Ikop and Waithou are the small lakes of this State.

Communication

There is no railway line in the State. It is likely to have a rail-link

during the 7th Five Year plan; 49 km. long Silchar-Jiribam link line being constructed at a cost of Rs. 31 crore is due to be completed by December 1989. Two National Highways no. 39 and no. 53 run through Manipur. National Highway no. 39 passes through Imphal to Mao and through Mao to Dimapur *via* Kohima (Nagaland). Imphal is connected with Silchar (Assam) by National Highway No. 53. (269 kms).

During the time of Maharaja ChandraKirti Singh the construction work of Imphal to Mao road was finished in January 1881, under the supervision of Lt. Raban. This was done on the advice of J. Johnstone. The Imphal-Mao road is now called D. M. Road (Dimapur-Manipur Road). This highway further extends from Imphal to Moreh with a name Indo-Burma Road. This road runs towards Tamu, the Burmese counterpart to Moreh (India). There are also State High-ways, District Roads, Inter-village roads and Municipal Roads. Now, most of the villages have their jeepable narrow roads. But the surface condition of roads in Manipur, specially in the hills, is below the mark due to poor surface structure, lack of bridges, topography etc. It requires some more width and thickly constructed roads for heavy vehicles with goods and proper drainage system.

Imphal is connected with all the District Headquarters of Manipur with State Highways. New Cachar Road, Old Cachar Road, Tidim Road, Mayang Imphal Road, I. T. Road, Ukhrul Road etc. are the main channels of surface communication in Manipur. In earlier days when there was no Imphal-Mao Road people used to travel through Old Cachar Road which was the only way to connect Manipur with other parts of India. Now also this road is kept open to travel Manipur from Silchar (Assam). There is the total mileage 4324.4 kms of roads till 1985 inside the State. Jiribam is connected with Silchar (Assam) by Old Cachar Road as well as New Cachar Road. Indian Airlines connects Imphal, the State Capital, with other parts of the country. There is no more air route beyond Imphal in the State. However, Vayudoot service inside the State has already been started to make better communication system. In fact, Manipur has less communication with the mainstream of Indian life due to geographic isolation, lack of proper communication, fluctuating temperature, humidity, dense forests etc.

Foreigners require Inner Line Permit for entry into Manipur from Union Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi. Indians, who want to visit Manipur via Nagaland requires Inner Line Permit for travelling through Nagaland from S.D.O. (Civil), Dimapur, Nagaland. But, there is much possibility to withdraw this Inner Line Permit system by the Government

soon for Indians.

Inner Line

In 1873, a traffic regulation was made for Nagaland by the British Government (*Bengal East Regulation-I, Section-V*) between the hill areas and the low plains lands of the State by introducing an Inner Line Permit. According to this Regulation no outsider could go without an official pass beyond Dimapur. For that, any one who wants to visit Manipur *via* Nagaland requires Inner Line Permit. There is no restriction for the Indian citizens visiting Manipur by way of Silchar (Assam) through Cachar Road.

Flora

The hills of Manipur are covered with dense evergreen forests. Several varieties of flora are available in Manipur. The vegetation is luxuriant. The vegetation of Jiribam and flat Central Valley is much like the vegetation in Moreh area. Most of the flora resemble with that of Assam. Some of the vegetation of north-eastern region is similar to that of Bhutan and some plants of south-eastern region are like those of Upper Burma. Rhododendron, cotton, cane, bamboo, cactus, wild flowering plant, famous orchids, lotus, water lilies etc. grow here. Rice, cotton, maize, wheat, millet, mustard, potato, *til*, *Matikalai dal*, etc. are grown in the plains. Pineapple, jack fruit, sugarcane, mango, orange, banana, plantains, peas, apples, guava, chillies, cabbages, pumpkin, sweet potato, potato, betal leaves are also grown in abundance. Tobacco is also cultivated as common garden crop. *Carthoammus tinctorius* was once widely cultivated to dye the cloths and yarns.

Agriculture

The soil of the valley is more fertile than the soil of hill areas. Wet rice cultivation is practised in the valley with wooden plough yoked to a pair of bullock or to a single buffalo. Agriculture depends mainly on rain water. Irrigation of rainwater is, however, poor. More abundant better irrigation facilities are needed. Ploughing work is started in May and June. There are two methods of cultivation in the valley. *Punghul* is one method in which moistened seeds with shoots are cast in the wet ground and allowed to grow to their full stature without transplanting the

seedling. The another method is by transplanting the seedling. For the first method, they first moisten their seeds with water and keep in a covered basket till it shoots. Thereafter, they cast these wet seeds. For second method, the seeds are sown in a prepared small plot of land. After few days, they carefully and gently pull up the seedling with roots by hand and then transplant them by hand in the wet field where these grow to their full stature.

Tobacco is cultivated in gardens. The seedlings are raised in August-September which are transplanted to grow in their garden in November. They collect tobacco leaves in February to March. Thereafter, they are dried for future use.

Terrace cultivation is practised on the hill slopes. These are irrigated by artificial channels. Hoe and sickle are used here by the cultivators. On the hill tops, people depend mainly on horticulture. Shifting (*jhum*) cultivation is practised in the hilly areas. They select a virgin or near-virgin forest land, cut down the trees and burn them. Thereafter, they grow their crops. The burnt ashes serve as fertilizer. After a year or so, they leave that *jhum* site for a considerable period so as to allow to grow new jungle on them. They select another forest land and repeat the same process. As this process is not much gainful for future, the Government is trying to bring more and more areas under permanent terrace cultivation.

Forests

The jungle products of Manipur are rich. These are timber, sal, bamboo and cane, thatch, dye-tree, bee-wax, perfume etc. Forest trees in the interior hill areas are gradually decreasing due to shifting cultivation or burning of forests over large areas, also construction of houses and firewood. In 1980-82, the forests covered an area of 13,572 sq. km. of the State which was 15,090 sq. km. in 1972-75 (Table-I). Thus, the forest area has gone down in Manipur. The large scale deforestation will result in soil erosion at an alarmingly accelerated level which may lead to floods during monsoon. A big area of the plain, adjoining Logtak lake is covered by a wide stretch of grass jungle.

Fauna

Tiger is found in hilly areas. Leopard, bear and wolf are also found in the hill-forest. Mithun (*Bos frontalis*) which is semi-domesticated

Table - I
Forest Areas

State	Forest area in sq. km.		Change of forest area in sq. km. (+) Increased (-) Decreased
	1972-75	1980-82	
Assam	21,055	19,796	(-) 1,259
Manipur	15,090	13,572	(-) 1,518
Meghalaya	14,390	12,458	(-) 1,932
Nagaland	8,154	8,095	(-) 59
Tripura	6,330	5,138	(-) 1,192
Arunachal Pradesh	51,438	58,104	(+) 666
Mizoram	13,860	11,971	(-) 1,889

Source: *Himalaya: Man and Nature*, VIII(11), April 1985.

animal is found in the north western part of the State. Elephant, barking deer, spotted deer, sambar and Manipur Shanghal deer (*cervus eldi*), goral (Manipuri *Sabeng*), monkey, jackal, wild pig, wild dog, wild cat, rat, snake, lizard, toad, vulture, eagle, jungle crow, bulbul, maina, wild goose, duck etc. are also found here. The number of the animals and birds is declining due to cruelty of hunters. Keibul lamjao, National Game Sanctuary of the State is situated near Logtak Project, 39 km. south of Imphal. Varieties of fish are to be found in Logtak lake and also in most of the rivers.

Climate

Sub-tropical monsoon climate of Manipur is warm to hot in summer and cool to cold in winter. The monsoon starts here from May to June and continues up to August and sometimes till first half of September. Heavy rain occurs in June-July. The average rainfall in the State is 2077.7 millimetre till 1984. The climate of the valley is quite pleasant, in summer warm and temperate and cool in winter; the hills are colder and somewhat wetter. During winter, the days are generally bright and sunny.

Geology

Iron, copper, limestone, sand-stone, slate, lignite, granite, methane

gas etc. are the mineral wealth of Manipur. Inferior quality of coal, limestone, cromite are available in the north eastern hills. Iron is found in the valley with alluvium under 2 to 5 feet of the surface soil. Cromite, base-metal, nickel are available in Manipur Central Valley. Copper is being obtained from the hills bordering the Kubo Valley of Burma. The Geological Survey of India (North Eastern Region) have recently carried out investigations in some areas of Manipur with a view to explore the possibility of finding more mineral wealth.

Energy and Power

The State Electricity Department was formed in Manipur only in February 1970. The Logtak, the first Hydro-Electric Project was started in 1971 by the Central Ministry of Irrigation and Power at a cost of over Rs. 100 crore to generate over 100 kw. of power. This project was transferred to the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation on 1st January 1977. It was commissioned in May 1983, but after few months it had to be stopped due to the failure of a tunnel. On 6th August 1984, it was recommissioned. This Logtak project uses the inter-basin transfer of water from Logtak lake to Leimatak river by flowing 58.8 cusecs of water. This Logtak project may, however, disturb in future the geological balance of this State. The installed capacity of this project is 105 MW. The total installed capacity of power in Manipur is 24,270 Kwh in 1984-85. The total consumption of power in 1984-85 was 407.45 lakh Kwh. Kohima (Nagaland) Electricity Division provides electricity power to *Mao* and Jessami of Manipur. Electricity power is also obtained from Assam State Electricity Board. The Logtak power can not reach the hill districts of Manipur adequately. It is, however, expected that Logtak power will reach all the important towns and villages of the State by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan after improving and completing the sub-transmission projects.

The first Manipur (State) Electricity Board was formed during the rule of Maharaja Churachand Singh in 1929-30 as a result of an agreement executed between the then political agent (British I.C.S. Officer), four members of Manipur Durbar and two members from the public. In 1939 the first hydro-power house was installed at Leimakhong, about 14 Kms. from Imphal with two hydel sets of 100 KW and 56 KW for electrification of Imphal town and its suburbs.

At present there are micro-hydel projects at Mungshangkhang (1500 KW), Lokshao (400 KW), Keithel Mambu (600 KW), Leima-

khong stage III (1000 KW), and Hooning (1000 KW). More micro-hydel projects are expected to be started soon. Logtak down stream major hydel project, lower Barak major hydel project, Commairang major hydel project and Analok major hydel scheme are expected to start work soon.

Industry

Manipur is far behind in heavy industry in comparison to other States. Due to lack of electricity heavy industries could not be set up here. Horticulture is now progressing much in Manipur. Industries like rice mill, oil mill, saw mill, hand made paper, printing etc. are already established. Metal working industry is carried out in small scale. Blacksmith, goldsmith, bell-metal workers carry their manufacturing work in their workshops. Sugar industry has already been started in Manipur Central Valley. Carpentry, tailoring, doll-making, bee-keeping, pottery, cane and bamboo work are some of the industries of Manipur. Some are making safety matches, soaps, limes from lime stone etc. Manipur exports rice, indigo, orchids and turmeric.

Manipur is, however, very much popular for her artistic handloom products in the world. Loin loom and hand loom are among their artistic traditional crafts which are the favourite of each and every woman both from the Hills as well as the plains of Manipur. It is the oldest cottage industry of the State. They weave Meithei *phanek*, scarves, napkins, dhoti, silk and cotton saree, bed sheet, bed cover, shawl (Manipuri *chadar*), cushion cover, *Lashingphee*, Blankets, mosquito nets etc. They are skilled also in embroidery needle work. Generally they prefer yellow and white colour in the valley and other deep bright coloured clothes in the hills are the favourites of ladies of Manipur.

Bamboo and cane products demonstrate the artistic outlook of the menfolk of Manipur who made them. Flower basket, *Murrah*, *Longups*, Waste paper basket, Long *Kharai*, *Loo*, Hat, *Chengbol*, *Likhairuks Chham*, *Leephan*, *Kapol* etc. are their beautiful products made by bamboo and cane, Paper-mache products are *Phirook*, *Isingsokpie*, *Khamba* and *Thoibi Jagoi*, *Radha Krishna* dolls, garlands and other decorative articles. Ivory flower, gilted ornaments and jewelries are eye catching work.

Manipuri earthen pots are now becoming famous. Women folk are making in their traditional way. The *Kharung* (Liquor pots), *Chengphu* (rice pots), *Khujai* (waterpots), *Uyan* (vegetable cooking pot), *Hidakphu*

(smoking pot) etc. without using a potter's wheel.

Currency of Manipur

In Manipur, during the reign of *Maharajas*, there was their own currency. Bell - metal small sized irregular round figured coins were used by the people of Manipur. In one side of their coin a word "Sri" was inserted in *Meithei* language. The value of this coin in 1873 was 428 to one British or Burmese rupee. Goods and money was purchased with this coin. They had to procure metals from Burma to make coins.

Prehistoric Archaeology

The archaeological remains of this region are very scanty. Manipur is almost unknown to the Archaeological world till 1935 when some exploration was made haphazardly by W. Yumjao Singh, an archaeologist and some rectangular bronze coins with *Sanskrit* inscription in Devanagari script (dated 107 A.D.) were found. J. H. Hutton had reported a megalithic tank at Mao area in 1952. However, systematic archaeological work started from 1967 by O. Kumar Singh. The antiquities are Palaeolithic and Neolithic stone tools. In 1969, near Khangkhui Khullen village, 11 kms. south east of Ukhrul town, a prehistoric cave made of lime stone was discovered. Hand-made potsherds are found in Phunam Maring village which is about 22 kms. far from Imphal. Metal tools are found near Khurai Lamlong Bazar on the left bank of the Imphal river. But, all these has not yet been properly dated. On typological point of view and associated finds, it is well understood that these belongs to the prehistoric period.

Administration (Historical and Political)

The period before 8th century A.D., we may consider as *Puranic* Age of history. There is rich literature on Puranic Age of Manipur. It is, however, difficult to prove the actual happenings of the stories of the Puranic Age, yet these legends and stories are much important in religious and social life.

We know from *Mahabharata* that Arjuna, the 3rd Pandava, visited Manipur and he married Chitrangada the princess at Manipur in *gandharva* way and thereafter he left Manipur. Second time, when Arjuna visited Manipur he got obstruction and was defeated by his own

son Babhrubahan whose mother was Chitrangada. Thus, the *Puranas* trace out the Royal lineage of Manipur from Arjuna. There is, however, much controversy whether this Manipur which was mentioned in *Mahabharata* of 4th century B.C. is the present Manipur State.

According to Capt. R. B. Pemberton (1835), Garib Niwaz ascended the throne of Manipur in 1714 A.D. But, it was mentioned in *Bijoy Panchali* that he succeeded the throne in 1709 A.D. after the death of his father Charai Rongba alias Pitambar Singh. In his reign the territorial expansion of Manipur was made. He was assassinated in 1749 A.D. on the bank of the Chindwin (Ningthi) river of Burma.

Garib Niwaz's immediate successors were weak. The Burmese attacked Manipur in 1755-56, 1757 and 1758-59. In 1759 A.D., Jai Singh, a grandson of Garib Niwaz ascended the throne. He knew that due to use of fire-arms by Burma, which were supplied to them by the French and the British, they won. Thus, in 1762 A.D. a first treaty was made between Jai Singh and the British to protect Manipur from the Burmese invaders. Rajeshwar Singh, an Ahom King, helped him much. In 1798, Jai Singh left for Nabadwip for good after placing his second son Rabinchandra alias Labanya Chandra in the throne of Manipur.

The Burmese invaded Manipur in 1819 and Marjit, the 6th son of Jai Singh, the reigning king of Manipur fled to Cachar. From 1819 to 1825, the Burmese attacked Manipur and destroyed it. Gambhir Singh, the youngest son of Jai Singh sought help from the British and he obtained help and thereafter, he expelled the Burmese from Manipur and also from the Kubo Valley. Thus, the first Burmese War ended with the British victory and a "Treaty of Yandabo" was made on February 24th, 1826, with the Burmese. In this treaty, the British desired to keep Manipur as an independent country and the Burmese agreed to that.

Gambhir Singh, the king of Manipur, desired to annex Cachar Kingdom with Manipur when Govinda Chandra, the protected ruler of Cachar was assassinated in April, 1830. But, this was opposed by Capt. Jenkin and Lt. Pemberton whereas Capt. Grant and Lord William Bentinck favoured for annexation. A hilly tract in the eastern part of Cachar was given to Manipur, but, the plains were annexed on August 14th, 1832 to form a district. Finally, the British signed an "Anglo-Manipur treaty" of eight clauses with Gambhir Singh in 1833.

Nar Singh ruled Manipur soon after the death of Gambhir Singh in 1834 on behalf of prince Chandra Kirti who was then only two years old. The British Political Agent was first appointed in Manipur in 1835. Nar Singh formally ascended the throne as Maharaja in 1844.

Debendra Singh, brother of Nar Singh, captured the power soon after the death of Nar Singh in 1850. Though Nar Singh did not belong to the direct royal line, still his descendants bear the title of Rajkumar. After three months' reign, Debendra Singh fled to Cachar as Chandra Kirti Singh, the only son of earlier Maharaja Gambhir Singh came back for seeking restoration to throne of Manipur.

Chandra Kirti Singh ascended the throne in 1850 and became very friendly with James Johnstone, the then Political Agent of British Government in Manipur whose role was that of an Ambassador. Sir Stuart Bailey, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, ceremonially conferred on 20th February 1880, the Star of India on Maharaja Chandra Kirti Singh and gave him the badge of K.C.S.I. at a ceremony Darbar of Manipur. British Queen appointed him as Knight Commander of Star of India in September 1885.

Chandra Kirti Singh had eight wives and ten sons. Before his death he made a 'will' regarding distribution of duties of his kingdom on his sons as follows:

Son(s) of the First (Chief) Queen:

1st Son = Maharaja ; 2nd Son = In-charge of horses;
3rd Son = In-charge of elephants; 4th Son = In-charge of 'doolies'.

Son(s) of the Second Queen:

1st Son = Jubaraj ; 2nd Son = No duty.

Son of the Third Queen:

1st Son = *Senapati*.

Son of the Fourth Queen:

1st Son = Chief of the Army Staff.

Son of the Fifth Queen:

1st Son = Officer in charge of Roads.

The seventh and the eighth Queen had no son and he allotted no duty for his minor son from the sixth Queen.

Surachandra, first son of Chandra Kirti Singh, ascended the throne as Maharaja in 1886 who reigned till 1890. He was forced to relinquish his throne. Mr. Grimwood, the Political Agent, did not help him as he was displeased with this Hindu orthodox Maharaja. After that, Jubaraj Kulachandra proclaimed himself as the Maharaja of Manipur. During

his reign, on 24th March 1891 Manipur War broke out with the British Government of India. This war was due to the thoughtless British Diplomatic policy and inefficiency and also due to petty domestic dissensions within the relatives of the Royal family of Manipur. The British Government of India had undue grudge and were swayed by motivated politics against the brave, efficient, clever, intelligent and influential Senapati Tikendrajit alias Koirang (literally Tiger Hunter). The hot-headed action by the over-zealous Chief Commissioner of Assam caused trouble in Manipur as four important British officers in Manipur lost their lives in the hands of Manipuris. The British Government of India soon occupied Manipur and avenged their murders by putting Senapati Bir Tikendrajit to gallows on August, 1891 at the Polo Ground of Imphal. He left behind his only son Chaoba and eight wives. The British Indian Government brought three charges against Bir Tikendrajit. They also put to death the 74 years old ambitious minister Thangal General of Manipur on the same day and same place and sentenced Jubaraj Kulachandra along with his brother Officer-in-charge Angou Sna to Andaman Island for life. It was declared that, this Thangal General was one of the 34th National mutineers of Chittagong (1857) who escaped and took service in Manipur. There-after, Manipur-Maharaja lost his full control over the administration of Manipur with effect from August 1891.

On 18th September 1891, the British India Government selected six years old Churachand Singh, the great grandson of Maharaja Nar Singh and son of Chowbiyaima as Maharaja of Manipur, in 1892, they imposed a fixed annual tribute payment of Rs.50,000 to British India Government from 21st August 1891 and a fine of Rs. 2,50,000 for unprovoked attack and killing of four British Officers in 1891 as already stated. The British India Government decided to declare Manipur as a native State rather than to annex it to British India under their political bondage. They made a rule that the Chiefship of Manipur and the title as well as eleven guns salute will be made on hereditary basis and the succession will be from the direct line with the approval by the British Government of India. Maharaja Churachand Singh was coronated formally on 29th September 1892. He got afterwards the title K.C.S.I. from British India Government due to his meritorious work.

In the early part of 1930, there was a civil movement in Manipur. In 1939, there was again Gandhian type of civil disobedience movement in Manipur to usher in a democratic form of Government by establishing Manipur Legislative Assembly with elected representa-

tives. At that time, Manipur was still a native State of British India Government and the people of Manipur were directly under the Maharaja who was under the British. During Second World War, Maharaja Churachand Singh supported the British India Government's War activities in 1941 to show his loyalty to British.

In September 1941, Maharaja Churachand Singh left for Nabadwip by giving his throne to Bodhachandra Singh, his eldest son. Maharaja Churachand Singh died finally in November 1941 in Nabadwip. Imphal became a target for bombing on 10th and 16th May 1942, during Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh's reign in Manipur. Second World War have already began and there were air raids by the Japanese Army to enter India. On 8th March 1944, The Azad Hind Fouz (I.N.A.) led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, launched fierce attack on the central front of Imphal plateau to cut the road link and railway communication to Dimapur (Nagaland) in order to defeat the Allied powers. Azad Hind Fouz kept in their possession about 1500 sq. miles of Manipur for more than five months before retreating. During these difficult times, Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh was in Manipur and was faithful to British India Government. For this, the British were very much pleased with him for his loyalty and support to them.

India, however, became free from the British on 15th August 1947 and the British paramountcy over all the Native States also came to an end. Thus Manipur became an independent kingdom. Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh got back his full freedom and his full control over the entire administration of Manipur after 56 years' bondage under the British India Government (21st August 1891-1947) which was partly seized since the time of *Maharaja Churachand Singh*.

In the last week of November 1947 at the pressure of the leftist group of Manipur State Congress, a Government was formed by the elected representatives under the Prime Ministership of Shri M. K. Priyobrata Singh, youngest brother of Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh. On 15th October 1949, Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh, on the strong demand of the people of Manipur, signed an agreement with the Government of India in Shillong to make Manipur as a constituent part of Indian Union. Thereafter, India started all its normal political activities in Manipur from 26th January 1950. New Constitution of India converted this Native State into a Part-C State within India under the administration of President of India who carried its administration through a Chief Commissioner appointed by him. An Advisory Council of five members assisted the Chief Commissioner. Names of these Advisors had been

recommended by the thirty elected members as a result of the First General Election in Manipur which were held in 1952. These advisors, however, had no power on administration but, they could recommend different administrative matters to the higher authority. Prior to this, the post of Dominion Agent which was created during Independent Manipur Kingdom (later called as Political Agent of British India Government) had been abolished. In 1952, the Constitution of India allotted one seat to Manipur Valley and one seat to Manipur Hills in Lok Sabha and one seat jointly with Tripura in the Rajya Sabha who have had the right to make laws through the Parliament.

Government of India granted a pension of Rs. 3 lakhs to *Maharaja* Bodhachandra Singh, and allowed him to retain his personal properties. He retained his full power only on social and religious fields. He died in December 1955. But, the pension and privileges continued to be enjoyed by his successor, Maharaja Okendrajit Singh till 1972.

Under the Reorganisation of States Act of 1956, the President of India constituted Manipur Territorial Council on 15th August 1957, which assisted the Chief Commissioner of Manipur in the discharge of his administrative and constitutional functions. It had 30 elected and 2 nominated members. In 1962, Third General Elections were held in Manipur smoothly though the people were not satisfied and wanted some change on the pattern of Government in Manipur. In 1965, the Constitution of India under 7th Amendment Act, converted Manipur into a Union Territory. At this, as per 14th Amendment of the Constitution and Union Territory Act, 1963, a Territorial Legislative Assembly was set up with 30 elected members and a council of 3 Cabinet Ministers. The administration, however, continued by the President of India as usual through a Chief Commissioner whom he appointed as already stated. The Chief Minister was also invested with limited financial powers, by the President. The other Ministers were appointed by him on the advice of the Chief Minister.

Manipur was a single District Territory with 10 Sub-Divisions. It was reorganised on 14th November 1969, for the convenience of administration, into five Districts: Manipur Central District (H.Q. Imphal), Manipur East District (H.Q. Ukhrul), Manipur West District (H.Q. Tamenlong), Manipur North District (H.Q. Karong) and Manipur South District (H.Q. Churachandpur). The post of a Lt. Governor was created by abolishing the Chief Commissioner's post to upgrade the status of administration. At that time, Manipur had eight towns and 1,866 villages.

After Fourth General Elections of 1967, the people of Manipur strongly voiced their demand for raising the status of Manipur to State hood. From 1968 onwards there was great unrest among the people of Manipur who clamoured for the fulfillment of their demand till 3rd September 1970 when the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi announced in the Lok Sabha about granting the status of Statehood to Manipur. From 21st January 1972, Manipur became a full-fledged State of India and headed by a Governor. Autonomous District Councils had also been granted to the Hill people of Hill Districts of Manipur for their special nature of problems.

In 1971, Manipur was reorganised under North-Eastern State Reorganisation Act, 1971 with one more District i.e. Tengnoupal (H.Q.

Table-II*
Districts

Sl. No	District & H.Qs.	Area in sq. km.	Population per Sq. Km.	Density
Valley				
1.	IMPHAL (H.Q. Imphal)	1,708**	5,56,146	—
2.	THOUBAL (H.Q. Thoubal)		2,31,781	—
3.	BISHNUPUR (H.Q. Bishnupur)	530	1,41,150	266
Hills				
4.	SENAPATI (H.Q. Senapati)	3,271	1,55,421	48
5.	CHURACHANDPUR (H.Q. Churachandpur)	4,570	1,34,776	29
6.	UKHRUL (H.Q. Ukhrul)	4,544	82,946	18
7.	TAMENGLONG (H.Q. Tamenglong)	4,391	62,289	14
8.	CHANDEL (H.Q. Chandel)	3,313**	56,444	17

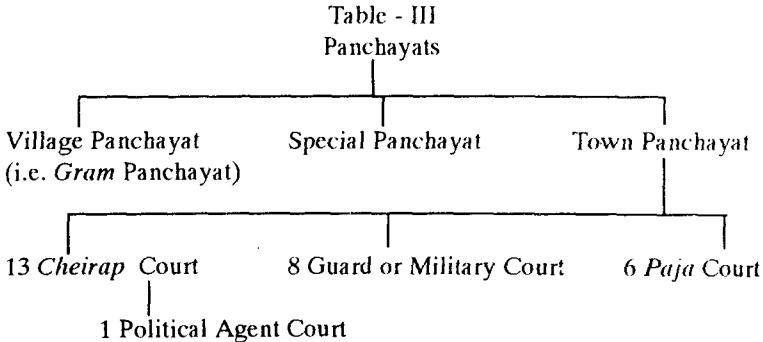
* Population Census 1981. ** Provisional figure

Chandel) with a little change of earlier five Districts. The H.Q. of Manipur North District was shifted to Senapati town and those were now a total 25 Sub-Divisions in Manipur. In 1983, Manipur Central District was bifurcated into Imphal District, Thoubal District and Bishnupur District and the other Districts were renamed. (Table-II).

Panchayat and Court

There used to be three types of Panchayats and three types of Courts (Table-III). King or Maharaja's Court was the highest court within the State. Maharaja was the Supreme Judge who could change any decision of Panchayats and Cheirap Court. Only very serious cases were sent to Maharaja's Court.

In rural areas there was a Village Panchayat for each Village Circle. They tried only minor civil cases like assault, trespass, adultery, theft etc. Members of the Village Panchayat were entitled to get rent free 2.5 acres of paddy land during their service period. This Village Panchayat is now called *Gram Panchayat*. A Special Panchayat was there at Lilong. It tried only the cases which in-between the Muslim and the



Manipuris. Town Panchayat was there at *Imphal*. This tried civil and criminal cases. Members of this Town Panchayat received not less than 6.5 acres of rent free paddy land. This Town Panchayat is now called District Council.

The Court, Cheirap, was their High Court. Thirteen elder men selected by *Maharaja* as its members where Jubaraj (immediate younger brother of *Maharaja*) or in his absence, the eldest son of *Maharaja*, and a Chief called *Dola Raja*, were among those who constituted the Cheirap

(Court). When Manipur came under the British control the power of this Cheirap Court was curtailed which could try, at that time, only the civil suits with prior information to British Political Agent's Court. Political and murder cases were tried, at that time, by British Political Agent's Court. They tried the cases of the British and the Hill People of Manipur. The Political Agent could give punishment for more than 7 years' imprisonment and death sentence with the approval of the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

The Guard or Military Court tried the cases of soldiers. Eight senior elderly Army Officers were selected by the *Maharaja* as its member including the *Senapati* (immediate younger brother of *Jubaraj*) who was the Commander of the army. The Paja Court used to try cases pertaining to females such as wife beating, adultery etc. Six elder male members from any class had to be selected by *Maharaja* as its members.

At present, the Laws, used for the Hill Areas are the Hill Regulating Act 1947 and the Village Authority Act 1956. These two laws have never been changed so far. Only Munsiff Courts are available in the Hill Districts. All Judicial Courts are available in the Plain Districts. They have now their own Imphal Bench High Court in Guwahati (Assam). They have Judicial and Additional Judicial Commissioners as well as Additional District Judges and Chief Judges and Additional Sessions Judges in Imphal, Manipur.

Darbar

During the reign of *Maharaja* Churachand Singh, a regular "*Darbar*" was constituted for the convenience of administration under the Presidentship of the *Maharaja* and Vice-Presidentship of an English I.C.S. officer, along with six Manipuri members. In 1916, the English I.C.S. officer became its President and Vice-Presidentship was abolished. *Maharaja* had, however, his supervisory control over such *Darbar*. In due course of time, the administration of this Native State was changed to the control of this *Darbar*. The Hill tribes of Manipur were administered on behalf of *Maharaja* by the President of the *Darbar* with the help of two extra Assistant Commissioners.

District Council

Under Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971, District Councils were established in six Districts in the Hill areas of Manipur.

Each District Council consists of 16 elected members and 4 nominated officials. The District Council is responsible for most of the disputes of the tribals to settle regarding: (a) Executive (i.e. private disputes between two persons and public disputes for the whole tribal village); (b) Administrative (i.e. market, water supply, footpath, finance etc.) and, (c) Judicial (i.e. murder, theft, divorce etc.).

Legislation gave power to this District Council to look after all the developmental activities of the tribal population of Manipur. They selected Gaon-Bura (village Headman) and an Assistant Gaon-Bura for each Khel (i.e. a social unit of a clan in a part of a village). This Gaon-Bura have some power and prestige in his village. They acted as a Liaison Officer of his area between the Government through District Council and the villagers. There is a *Head* Gaon-Bura for the entire village.

Among some tribes the *Gaon-Bura* has two sets of functions, viz. one is secular and village defence and the other one is religious and ceremonial. A *Gaon-Bura* is responsible for peace and prosperity of his village. His presence is necessary when their priest is performing the religious function and he usually presides over all the festivals of the village. The *genna* (literally something prohibited or taboo, *puja*, prayer, ceremony) is observed which he is asked to perform. The date of *genna* is fixed by their village priests mostly during their agricultural operation. Most of the tribes has their particular set of village *genna* and dates its performances differ tribewise and villagewise. *Genna* is also observed by each individual *Khel* (i.e. a social unit of a clan in a part of a village) for their family affairs.

District Councils settle, all the civil and criminal disputes of their area as per customary laws of the land under tribal court. The leadership of *Gaon-Bura* generally goes to those who can entertain the maximum number of villagers in a feast. The Thado chieftainship is marked by a despotic ruler, the Mao are following the democratic District Council, the Kabui are semi-republican gerontocracy, the Tangkhul have limited chieftainship. It seems that, the Naga chieftainship was more liberal than that of the Kuki-Chin group.

Police

During the reign of *Maharaja* Churachand Singh, the need of a rural police force was felt in Manipur and a chowkidar system was introduced after the year 1898. A single chowkidar was responsible

for hundred houses of a village. During the tenure of their service every Chowkidar was to get Rs. 2 per month in cash and 1.25 acres of rent-free land and 12 pots of paddy from the members of the houses which he guarded. They were appointed by the Political Agent. Indian Penal Code was introduced in Manipur by the Britishers soon after the incident of 1904 in which the houses of three British officers were set fire in Imphal.

The present day civil police consists of Head Constable under Sub-Inspectors of different Police Stations and three are also Police Officers of several ranks. There was a total of 46 Police Stations and 87 Police Out-Posts in Manipur up to 1984-85.

Literacy

The total literate population of Manipur is 5,87,618 persons (Census 1981) of which 3,84,231 are males and 2,03,387 are females. The percentage of literacy to total population is 41.35 percent (Table-IV) of which 53.29 percent are males and 29.06 percent are females. In 1971 the literate population was only 3,53,090 person (2,49,383 males and 1,03,707 females) and their percentage was 32.9. Manipuri people are being encouraged day by day to attend schools, colleges and universities as well as to go abroad for higher education.

Two Political Agents, Capt. Gordon and W. F. Nuthal took initiative to start schools in 1855 and 1872 respectively in Manipur. Before that, there was no school in Manipur. But, it could not continue. The first Primary regular school started at Mao in 1893 and a regular Primary School was started at Moirangkhom (Imphal) in 1899 for girls. In 1901-1902, there were 17 Primary Schools and one Middle English School.

Maharaja Churachand Singh and his half-brother *Rajkumar* Dijendra Singh got their education in Mayo College, Ajmer during August 1895 to July, 1901. *Rajkumar* Bodhachandra Singh, eldest son of *Maharaja Churachand Singh*, got his higher education from England in 1922. *Priya Brata Singh* and *Lokendra Singh*, two other sons of *Maharaja Churachand*, went to Allahabad and Calcutta respectively for higher education.

There were 144 Primary Schools, 6 Middle English Schools and 5 High Schools in 1939 in Manipur. Only 5 percent of the total population was literate in 1941. Now, 41.35 percent population is literate; 53.29 percent are males and 29.06 percent are females (Census 1981). In 1971, the literate population was only 32.9 percent of which 46.0 percent were

Table - IV
Literacy

Districts (before reorganisation)	Literate Population			Percentage of Literate to Total Population 1981		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Manipur North	48,226	33,106	15,120	31.03	41.08	20.20
Manipur West	22,662	14,647	8,015	36.38	46.44	26.06
Manipur South	60,452	37,029	23,423	44.85	52.99	36.09
Tengnoupal	19,321	12,459	6,862	34.23	42.71	25.16
Manipur Central	4, 02,124	2, 64,450	1,37,674	43.28	56.68	29.77
Manipur (M)	1, 01,074	59,308	41,766	64.53	74.77	54.03
Manipur East	34,833	22,540	12,293	41.99	52.09	30.99
Total	5, 87,618	3, 84,231	2,03,387	41.35	53.29	29.06

Source: Census 1981 (Provisional figures); *Statistical Handbook of Manipur 1985*.

males and 19.5 percent were females (Census 1971)

In 1946, a College was first established in Imphal by Maharani Dhanamanjuri Devi, queen of Maharaja Churachand. Maharaja Churachand was interested in spreading literacy in Manipur. It is, however, a great tragedy that due to non-availability of competent and qualified lawyer in Manipur to defend him, Senapati Bir Tikendrajit, son of the third queen of Maharaja Surachandra, was sent to the gallows in 1891.

Language

Different tribes of this region speak in their respective tribal dialects. According to Grierson their dialects have been classified into two groups: (a) the Naga Group of Tangkhul, Maram, Kabui, Kacha Naga and Thangal and, (b) the Kuki-Chin Group of other remaining tribes of Manipur.

Manipuri (*Meithei*) is their common lingo. In this language some Bengali, Hindi and English words have also entered. Bengali scripts are being used in this language. Manipuri vocabulary is limited as the Manipuri language is seems to have not much developed. About 60 per cent of the population of Manipur speaks Manipuri. English and Meithei are official languages of the State.

Old written documents in Manipuri scripts on copper plates of 8th century A.D. were found. It is believed that, their first book was written in 10th century A.D. by hand in Manipuri language of Bengali scripts. The oldest two books in Manipuri language are: *Poireiton Khunthok* and *Numit Kappa*. The period from 1709 to 1819 is considered as *Silver Age* of Manipuri literature as several Manipuri books were written during that time.

Due to contact with Britishers, Manipuri Literature was modernised after the year 1819. The Christian Missionaries were the first to translate their Bible into different tribal languages of Manipur. A *History of Manipur* was, perhaps, the first modern printed Manipuri book in 1891 from Calcutta.

Population

The total population of Manipur is 14,20,953 of which 7,21,006 are male and 6,99,947 are females (Census 1981). The density of population is 64 person per sq. km. (Table-V).

The tribal population mainly resides in Hill Districts and few of them also live in the Valley. The Naga tribes of Manipur mainly reside in the North and the Kuki-Chins in the South of the Manipur State. The Scheduled Caste people with a group of Manipuri Brahmins mostly reside in the three districts of the valley. There are 29 tribes, 7 castes which constitute the population. The total Scheduled Tribe population is 3,87,977 and their percentage is 27.3 of the total population. The total Scheduled Caste population is 17,753 and their percentage is 12 to the total population (1981 Census). The following are the major tribes of Manipur viz. Thadou, Tangkhul, Kabui, Mao, Paite, Hmar, Kacha Naga, Vaiphei, Zou Maring, Any Mizo (Lushai tribe), Anal Kom, Maram etc. (Table-VI). The following are the major castes of Manipur viz. Meithei, Meithei Brahmins, Bishnupriya and Pangan (Muslim).

Ethnologically the tribes of Manipur may be classified into Naga tribes and Kuki-Chin tribes. The Naga tribes have their close ethnical and cultural relations with the people of Nagaland and Kuki-Chin tribes with the Chins of Burma and the Mizos of the Mizoram. These Naga and Kuki-Chin tribes have their relatives, residing in Cachar (Assam) and in Upper Burma.

Working Population

The percentage of working population to total population is 43.20

Table - V
Population

District Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Scheduled	Others	Total
Valley:				
Imphal	16, 153	17,996	5,21,997	5,56,146
Thoubal	780	2,250	2,28,751	2,31,781
Bishnupur	213	3,895	1,37,042	1,41,150
Hills:				
Tamenglong	7	29,259	33,023	62,289
Senapati	271	1,05,655	49,495	1,55,421
Churachandpur	109	1,16,254	18,413	1,34,776
Ukhrol	33	74,238	8,675	82,946
Chandel	187	38,430	17,827	56,444

Source: Census 1981.

Table - VI
Main Tribes

Districts (before reorganisation)	Head Quarters	Main Tribes
Manipur Central	Imphal	Thadou, Kabui, Hmar
Manipur East	Ukhrol	Tangkhul, Thadou, Paite
Manipur North	Senapati	Mao, Thadou, Maram
Manipur South	Churachandpur	Hmar, Paite, Thadou
Manipur West	Tamenglong	Kabui, Kacha Naga, Thadou
Tengnoupal	Chandel	Lamgang, Maring, Thadou

percent (Census 1981). The available total cropped area is 2,25,000 hectares in 1982-83 (Directorate of Agriculture, Manipur). It is said earlier that they practised terrace and wet cultivation on hill slopes by making artificial channels and shifting (*Jhum*) cultivation on the hills as well as wet cultivation with wooden plough and bullocks or buffalo in the plains. The *Jhum* cultivation is wasteful as it destroys the forest, erodes the soil, diminishes fertility and yields less productions.

Their menfolk also engage themselves during off-season in sub-

sidary occupations of blacksmithy, bamboo and cane work and also other handicrafts for their own requirements. Female workers are much interested for their domestic weaving and embroidery work than agricultural work in the field. Manipuri textile presents a wide range of colours and designs produced on looms. They are fond of pure colours such as yellow, white and brown. The textile weaving seems to have become a sacred duty of compulsion among the ladies of Manipuri society.

Slavery

The system of slavery (*Lallup*, an obligatory service) was first introduced in the reign of *Khagemba* in the beginning of the 17th century and it has little changed since then. The *lallup* system is based on the assumption that it is the duty of every male member between the age group of 17 years to 60 years to work without any remuneration for *Maharaja* for ten days in every forty days. There was a separate department to see the regular attendance of each *lallup* workers. Due to permanent illness or disability, a *lallup* worker under 60 years was excused from *lallup*ship. An individual could provide his substitute to escape from his turn of duty or he could pay 12 *annas* to the Government (i.e. Administration of *Maharaja*) to be exempted for *lallup* work for forty days. There was a *lakpa* who had to prescribe duties to each *lallup* which work was to be performed. There was no *lallup* work for women. This *lallup* system created very often unfortunate events and misunderstanding between *Lakpa* and *lallups*. On 29th September 1892, this slavery (*lallup*) system was abolished by *Maharaja* Churachand Singh. Instead of this *lallup* system, he introduced an annual tax system of Rs. 2 per house.

Physical Features of the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes

The tribes of Manipur belong to Tibeto-Burmese Group of Indo-Mongoloid people. They are generally of medium to above medium stature, mesocephalic to brachycephalic head, euryprosopic broad flat round face, broad high cheek bones, flat platyrrhine to leptorrhine nose, brownish yellow skin, narrow Mongoloid oblique eyes with black eye colour, wide chest and well developed limbs. They are strong and sturdy. The Naga tribes of Manipur has all the affinities with the *Naga* tribes of Nagaland and have some affinities with the tribes of South East Asian countries. The Kuki-Chin tribes of Manipur has similarities with the

Lushai tribes of Mizoram and also with the tribes of Burma. In Manipur, a hillman or a tribal is known as “*Hao*”.

It is strange, the Meithei Hindus and the Muslim Pangan men have almost no beards and moustaches. It is an uncommon feature of them. And small moustaches and rudimentary beards are occasionally seen among the gents of the hill people of Manipur.

The women of Manipur are generally medium to short statured. They have leiotrichy hair, fair skin colour, brown eyes and rosy cheeks. Few of them have brownish-black hair.

Migration

It is believed that, the *Naga* tribes of Manipur had come to their present places in Manipur from Manchuria, Indonesia and Philippines at different waves in different ways through Burma. The *Naga* groups are also inhabited in some parts of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and also in Burma. The *Kuki-Chin* tribes migrated to Manipur from the Chin Hills of Burma. They also inhabited some parts of Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam and Upper Burma.

House Patterns

Naga village houses are large and sometimes very large. Many houses are built high above the ground on long piece of wooden pillars and there is always a sitting platform at the back side of the room. *Kuki-Chin* village-houses are generally built with bamboo walls, bamboo floors and thatched roofs. They are usually constructed on the top of the hills and also on ridges. The roofs of Manipuri (*Meithei*) dwelling houses are thatched with grass. Their houses generally face eastward; in that direction they have an open *varandah*. Bamboo, *Ikra* and wood are used for pillars and framework of their house. The walls are either plastered over with mud and cow dung or cement and sand. Now, most of the people of Manipur prefer to construct modern building houses.

Morung

The *morung* (dormitory) are there for the young unmarried boys. Some of them also have separate dormitory for the unmarried girls. The *morungs* are usually decorated with the trophies of war and games and wooden representations of animals. *Morung* acts as a guard-house

and recreation club and the centre of education, discipline, art and ceremonial function. Young folk are trained here in various arts and crafts, dances and music, morality and discipline. The Rongmei boys-dormitory is called "*Khangchu*" and that of girls "*Luchu*", the Tangkhul call it "*Longka*" and the Hmar call it "*Buonzawl*". The morung system, wherever it exists is now gradually fading away due to education, spread of Christianity and acculturation.

Religion

The tribes of Manipur believe in Supreme God, spirits of ancestors and the evil spirits in and around the village. The Naga Group call the supreme God as "*Ragung*" and the Kuki-Chin Groups as "*Pathian*". They believed that a good person after death goes to heaven but the bad ones are punished by God to get their rebirth in the lower position of life.

Some of the Naga Groups are 'animist' which (religion) spread sometimes before 1927. Christianity was first introduced in Manipur in 1894 at Ukhrul by Rev. Pettigrew; since then, Christianity has more attracted the tribal people of Manipur than 'animism'. The American Baptist Mission, the North East India General Mission, the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Mission, the Seventh Day Adventist, Independent Church of India are spreading Christianity among the tribals of Manipur.

A copper plate inscription of the 8th century A.D. was discovered in 1935, in which it is mentioned the names of God *Shiva*, *Ganesh*, *Vishwakarma* and *Hari* as well as Goddess *Devi*. It is unknown when *Vaishnavism* entered into Manipur. Perhaps it spread in Manipur in 15th century and earned its popularity during the time of Garib Niwaz (whose earlier name was Pamheiba), in the early part of 18th century, when Ramanandi Vaishnavism was introduced through Shantidas Adhikari (Goswami).

In the late 18th century, *Maharaja Bhagyachandra* and his subjects began to worship *Radhakrishna*. "*Gauriya*" Vaishnavism of Nabadwip (Bengal) spread in the Valley of Manipur which came by way of Sylhet (Bangladesh) and this got much popularity during the time of *Maharaja Jai Singh* which was introduced through Ramnarayan Shiromani, grandfather of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Bishnupriya Manipuri (*Mayang*) got their name from God "*Vishnu*" (i.e. lovers of *Vishnu* is called *Bishnupriya*) and in the line of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's faith. The *Maiba* (i.e. *Meithei* Priest) and the *Maibi* (*Meithei*

Priestess) now form an integral part of the *Meithei* Brahmins and the *Vaishnavas* of Manipuri Hindus.

Genna

It is taboo or prohibition, puja, prayer and ceremony. There are several *gennas*. These are: tribal common *genna*, village common *genna*, crop common *genna*, *Khel* (clan) *genna*, individual household family *genna*, individual *genna* and food *genna*. The date of *genna* is usually fixed by their village priest during their agricultural operation or other ceremony. During *genna* period they have to observe some restriction on food and drink also prohibited to do some of their work.

Marriage

They are patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Marriages are by (1) negotiation and, (2) elopment or rarely, by (3) service. Marriages are considered "legal" soon after the formal ceremony. There are generally endogamy; clan exogamy is their fundamental rule for marriage. But, clan endogamy among some tribes also has been noticed. Payment of

Table - VII
Religions of Manipur and the Percentage of their Followers

Sl.No.	Religion	Population	Percentage to total Population
1.	Hindus	8,53,180	60.04
2.	Muslims	99,327	6.99
3.	Christians	4,21,702	29.68
4.	Sikhs	992	0.07
5.	Jains	975	0.07
6.	Buddhists	473	0.03
7.	Other Religions and Persuations	35,490	2.50
8.	Religion not stated	8,814	0.62
Total		14,20,953	100.00

Source: Census 1981; *Statistical Handbook of Manipur 1985*.

bride-price is there. Monogamy is normally practised by them except some rich person of the Lamgang and the Anal. They may follow polygamy and have up to three wives who share his company in rotation. The Meithei are polygamous. Marriages are generally settled by their guardians but, very often understanding is reached in between a boy and a girl before the formal consent of their guardians.

Now, some inter-tribal marriages are found to take place among the people of Manipur by ignoring their customary rules. Polyandry is never allowed. Marriage between parallel first cousins is strictly prohibited. Cross-cousin marriage is a popular choice among them. The Mao can marry within his own clan. Kuki-Chin marriage is a simple system.

In negotiation of marriage proposal either boy's parent or their agent starts negotiation with the girl's parent. This may continue for a year or years in case of the Kabuis. The Maos and the Tangkhuls settle their negotiations within a short time. The Anal, Aimol, Chiru, Chothe and Puimei may marry by service. The groom has to live, before his marriage, in bride's house for three years like a son of his would-be father-in-law to attend various duties of that house. But, this system is now almost on the verge of abolition.

Bride-price is to be paid by the groom's father to the bride's father. Bride-price in the form of materials such as hoes, daos, spears, buffaloes, ear-rings, strings of beads, vessels, clothes, rice-bear *zu*, cash payment etc. may vary. The price of a Thadou girl is the highest for marriage. The price of a Chiru girl is only a gong to be given to marry which is considered lowest price. After marriage, the groom arrange a formal feast where he invites all the members of the bride's family and his friends as well as relatives.

Remarriage of widow is allowed. But widows with children dislike to marry again.

Divorce

Divorce is allowed both in the Hills and the Valley. It is very simple and it does not require to go to the Court etc. If divorce is desired by a wife, she is to refund the bride-price to her husband. But if it is sought by a husband for the reason other than barrenness, adultery, sickness due to incurable diseases, he has to pay some fine to the village elders as well as to his wife. This used to be settled after mutual discussion between the parties concerned. But this custom varies from tribe to tribe or caste to caste.

Position of Women

Women in the Valley and the Hills in Manipur enjoy the fullest possible liberty as compared to women in any other part of India. One may call Manipur as “women’s world.” They play an important role in most of their working life, viz. buying and selling in the market, weaving and spinning at home along with other household work. They are industrious and perform most of the work. One may say that the Khasi and the Garo ladies also enjoy the fullest liberty like the Manipuri ladies but it is, perhaps, not wholly true because, the Khasis and the Garos generally sell their saleable items not completely by the ladies alone; they take the help of their malefolks to run their business along with her.

The married women of Manipur have almost no-right on the property of their father. All the movable and immovable property of deceased father is inherited only by the sons and unmarried daughters. The widows also do not get any property of their husbands except their own cash and ornaments. Clothes, weaving apparatus which are given to her by her father but not by her husband, can be taken back whenever she desires to live alone and not with her parents or wants to remarry. The share of the property which belongs to an unmarried sister usually goes to her brother after her death.

Due to polygamy in the valley of Manipur, women do not always enjoy happy and peaceful domestic life. Because of that, it perhaps made the ladies of Manipur to become self-supporting, independent worker in the market and run their business to earn money.

Birth Rite

They consider more children for their better living. The mother generally observes *genna* after the birth of her child, six days for male baby and five days for female. It, however, varies in different tribes and castes. The Christians do not follow this *genna*.

Dress

The educated young men and women have almost rejected the dress of their ancestors. They prefer the European dress. They are using knitted woollen jackets, trousers, shirts, coats, Naga chadars, tie and shoes. Their women are using all kinds of modern dresses of skirts, mini, midi, maxi, mekhala chadar, sari etc. and with high heel shoes. They

are using woollen blankets. The people of Manipur are now changing rapidly due to spread of education and Christianity.

The usual working dress of a *Naga* male at home, inside a *Naga* village, is a small piece of cloth around his waist to thigh and keeps bare the other part of his body. In their ceremonial occasion, they put a head-gear decorated with hornbill feathers and muscular calves on both of his legs with special thread or cane. A piece of cotton cloth is used to cover the waist to thigh by *Naga* male of Manipur. The upper part of their body is usually bare but, some are using their traditional shawls which they hang from their shoulder up to the knee. Their females are using undergarment, lower garment (*phanek* or *Mekhala*), tunic covering on their upper part of their body and a *Naga* shawl wrapped around their dress. In the past, they were fond of ornaments made of shells (*cowrie*), ivory, carnelian beads and feathers.

The dresses of the male folk of the Kuki-Chin group in their village is very simple: One tunic like shirt, a loin cloth or Manipuri 'dhoti' or napkin and a shawl. Their females are using petticoat, a tunic like blouse, skirt, ear-ring and bead-necklaces.

The people of Manipur Valley, before the spread of modern education for long past, were cultured and well dressed. Traditionally, a Meithei man wears a dhoti and a shirt and, occasionally a chadar. A sort of pugree (head-gear) is usually used by the gents. This turban (head-gear) is now used only on ceremonial occasions. Their women wear a fanek, covering the lower body. It is designed with horizontal stripes. For upper part of their body, they wear a blouse and in-na-phi, a chadar round their body.

Tattooing was there among the Hill tribes to decorate their body. In old days, the men folk used to crop their hair in a round or circular shape and women kept their hair long, tied up neatly. But, now the men folk cut their hair in different styles and the ladies of the Hill area now cut (some of them) their hair in different fashions. Bishnupriya ladies do not like to cut their hair. Generally, the ladies of the different caste groups in the valley do not cut their hair after the age of 8 to 10 years.

Games and Sports

They like all types of modern and indigenous games and sports. Polo and hockey are popular sports. It is said that, Polo game originated first in *Manipur* which has been played since 1606. Manipuri Polo, however, follows somewhat different rules in comparison to Interna-

tional Polo. *Mukna*, a free-style wrestling is another sport of Manipur. People of Manipur are efficient hunters. Spear, bow, sword, arrow, dao and rifles are used to kill the animals.

They are good fishermen with fishing nets, fishing baskets, traps, spears etc. There is plenty of fish in most of the rivers and the lakes of Manipur. Boat races are also their game. The *Meithei*s are efficient bee-hunters. They catch hold of a bee and bind a thread round it. The bee thereafter flies with that thinnest thread and guides them to its beehive. The *Meithei*s then extract the honey from beehives.

Weapons

Their main weapons are spears, bows and arrows, '*daos*', helmet of dyed cane and cane made shields and even country made rifles. It is said that they have been using fire-arms from the beginning of the 17th century. They have, perhaps, learnt to make gun-powder from the Chinese who invaded Manipur at the time of Khagemba in 1627 A.D. They ornamented their spears and *daos* with goat's hair dyed in red colour. They are using *daos* for all multi-purpose work.

Festivals

Several festivals are there among the Hill tribes. Most of these are related to particular season or stage of agricultural operation. At that time they observe their particular set of *genna*. During their festivals, dances and music are assigned prominent part along with rice-beer or *Zu* which is widely consumed by them.

In the Valley, the festivals are mainly connected with *Vaishnavism*. Their festivals are *Dolyatra*, *Rathyatra*, *Jhulan*, *Janmashtami*, *Durga Puja*, *Diwali*, *Govardhan Puja*, *Ras Purnima* etc. *Chairaoba* (the new-year festival) is celebrated by the *Meithei*s in April. Their *Rathyatra* festival is celebrated in a style different from that of Puri festival. They observe *Dolyatra* for six continuous days.

Dances

Manipur has given birth to the indigenous Manipuri dances of *Meithei* people. Manipur is best represented in the field of art and culture by the Manipuri style of dance in the Valley and also in Hill areas. Manipuri dances have already gained much popularity in India and

abroad. Manipuri dances can be divided into two types, viz. classical and folk. *Rasa Nritya* is a classical one and it is of gentle form (*lashya*). Folk dances are mostly of forceful form (*tandava*). The dance dramas are interpreted by a male narrator. *Thabal chongba*, *Laiharaoba*, *Khamba Thoibi*, *Kortal Cholom*, *Maibee Jagoi*, *Pung Cholom* (*Mridanga* dance) dances are popular in the Valley. Rongmei Naga dance Mao Naga dance, Thangal Surung dance, Anal Naga dance, Lengmei Naga dance, Kuki Bamboo dance, Lushai Kholam dance, Tarao's Trao dance etc. are practised in the Hill areas of Manipur.

Food and Drink

Rice is the Staple food both in the Hills and the Valley. The Hill people prefer husked-rice which becomes light reddish colour after boiling. They take rice with meat, vegetables along with salt and chillies and sometimes with dried fish. They like chillies very much and huge quantity is consumed by all young and also the old people of Hill areas. The Nagas consume all kind of animals viz. rat, dog, cat, snake, monkey, tiger, bear, elephant, mithun (*Bos frontalis*), spider, bat, awl, crab, beef, pork, chicken, mutton etc. They do not bother whether the animal was dead from disease or slaughtered which they consume. The Valley people take rice with dried fish, vegetables. They very much like to consume plantain-trees, salt and chillies. They also take fresh fish but not much. They generally do not eat meat. Both Hill and Valley people do not eat much fruits. They, however, like pineapples to eat as it grows in abundance in Manipur. The Kamei (a clan of Kabui) cannot eat wild pigeon and the Maram can not eat pork as these are taboo for them.

Rice-bear *Zu* is a favourite and important drink among the Hill people. Besides *Zu*, they drink tea and milk in the Valley and tea with or without milk in the Hills. In the past, the Hill people dislike to drink milk as they thought milk is unclean fluid (i.e. cow's 'pus') and unfit to drink. But, the present generation have changed their earlier opinion and some of them now favour much to drink milk and milk made items. Most of them, both in the Hills and in the Valley chew betel leaf with betel-nut and lime.

Health

The Hill and the Valley people of Manipur are healthy. Manipur is comparatively salubrious place. A fairly common disease among the

people of the Valley is the formation of stone in the kidney and also in the gall-bladder. It is, perhaps, due to faulty food habits. Pneumonia, cholera, small-pox, skin diseases, respiratory diseases, tuberculosis, intestinal diseases and dysentery, round worm etc. are common diseases in the Hills and the Valley. Leprosy is also seen among them. Water scarcity is there in the Hills. In 1985, there were 52 Hospitals and 371 Dispensaries in Manipur. There is State Social Welfare Board to look after the welfare of women and the children of the State.

Death

The rate of birth and death in the rural area in 1980 was 31.6 and 6.4 person respectively as per 1000 and in urban area 24.1 and 4.6 person respectively. In some villages there is indigenous medicine men. Magic-cure of illness is also found among the Hill people as well as in the Valley.

The Hill people and the Muslims bury their dead. They bury inside their village when the death is natural. When the death is abnormal due to violent war, drowning or suicide they bury them outside the village. The Christians are using coffin to keep the dead body to bury. Among some tribes the articles which were used by the deceased are also kept along with the dead in the grave.

In the Valley, Hinduised Meithei dead body is to burn in the cremation ground. Among them *Shradha* ceremony is performed generally after 30 days or 11 days of the death of a person. This 30 days or 11 days period is called 'Asuj' (impure) time of the family members of the deceased. In the Hills, after the death and before burial, generally a feast with rice and beef is to be given by the family members of the deceased to those who come to see the dead person. A *genna* is observed by some tribes for ten days after the death. During the *genna* period the family members abstain from certain foods and also do not work in their agricultural fields.