

**Hybridity: Modernization of Traditional Belief Systems as Seen Through
Select Writings in English from Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and
Manipur.**

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Submitted

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DECLARATION

Mizoram University

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I, Thangdingliani, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the content of this dissertation did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: An Overview of the Selected Texts

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Chapter 1: Introduction: An Overview of the Selected Texts

With the dawn of the twentieth century, the colonial powers in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur resulted in the destruction of many cultural and traditional belief systems of the Adi, Angami and Kuki tribes. Yet what is revealed is the hybridized society and modernized belief systems that continue to exist and function today in these regions. The attempt to highlight the changes that modernization has brought to the traditional belief systems, the outcome of hybridity and its manifestations in the society will be illustrated in the following chapters using literary works of Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* (2006), Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* (2014) and Keisham Priyokumar's "Waiting for the Rains" (2015).

Modernization is the process of adapting something to modern needs or habits. It refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. With the contact of the outside world, the world-view of the colonized countries expanded, opening their minds to other views. Modernization settled with the coming of the white men and with the intermixing of the culture with other cultures, it gave rise to the hybridization of cultures and traditions.

Hybridity commonly refers to the blending of elements from different cultures. It is the characteristic of a culture or a cultural form produced by the interaction of two (or possibly more) separate cultures or forms. Homi Bhabha's analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation'. Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, for which Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures

untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate. It is the 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important. The idea of hybridity also underlies other attempts to stress the mutuality of cultures in the colonial and post-colonial process in expressions of syncreticity, cultural synergy and transculturation.

Hybridity in terms of religion is important as religion, specifically religious conversion, is a widespread theme in colonial and postcolonial literature. Homi Bhabha's example of hybridity in "Signs Taken For Wonders," has also invoked the imposition of the Christian Bible in India where Bhabha notes that despite the fact that local Indians "under a tree, outside Delhi," readily accept the authority of the Missionary's Book, they could only understand the Christianity they are being exposed to through their own cultural filters. In terms of religious hybridity, the question is usually not whether or not someone converts to a foreign or imposed religious belief system, but how different belief systems interact with traditional and local cultural-religious frameworks. The goal therefore in invoking "religious hybridity," is not to pose people who practice a local religion as "pure," while those who may have converted might be seen as "hybrids" since religious traditions were heavily influenced by the encounter with British missionaries under colonialism where the colonized countries reflect a certain amount of "religious hybridity."

Many European cultures once had empires which involved colonizing weaker countries. The colonizers believing that their culture is superior to that of the colonized slowly imposed their culture on them for their own benefits. This often leads to the colonized people's fear of losing

one's identity. The term "Postcolonialism" refers broadly to the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, and human identity are represented in the modern era, after the colonized countries gained their independence. However, some critics use the term to refer to all culture and cultural products influenced by imperialism from the moment of colonization until the twenty-first century. Postcolonialism examines the effects of colonial rule on the cultural aspects of the colony and its treatment of women, language, literature, and humanity. It speaks about the human consequences of external control and economic exploitation of native people and their lands. It also questions and reinvents the manner in which a culture is being viewed, challenging the narratives expounded during the colonial era. Post-colonial literature describes a wide array of experiences set in the contexts of heterogeneous societies which themselves represent many different ethnic groups.

Nowadays, the aspects of post-colonialism can be found in the study of culture and identity of both the countries that were colonized and the former colonial powers, dealing with conflicts of identity and cultural belonging. Colonial powers came to foreign states and destroyed main parts of native tradition and culture; furthermore, they continuously replaced them with their own. Bhabha mentions, "It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity." The blending of an existing culture with that of the west was seen as a threat since the western culture had a huge impact on the smaller countries, slowly replacing the traditional with the modern. According to Victoria Lawson in "Making Development Geography," mainstream development discourse, which is based upon knowledge of colonialism and Orientalism,

concentrates upon modernization theory, wherein the modernization of an underdeveloped country should follow the path to modernization taken (and established) by the developed countries of the West. As such, modernization is characterized by free trade, open markets, capitalist economic systems, and democratic systems of governance, as the means by which a nation should modernize their country en route to becoming a developed country in the Western style. Mainstream development discourse concentrates upon the application of universal social and political, economic and cultural policies that would nationally establish such modernization. The Northeast like the other parts of India was also under the colonial rule and like all the other states experienced the western influence.

The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur have different traditions and customs. While there are a few similarities in their beliefs, customs and traditions, there also exists a stark difference in language and culture. The similarity that we can draw from these three states is that modernization of their unique cultures has led to varied degrees of westernization. According to the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, modernization means the process of starting to use the most recent methods, ideas, equipment, etc. so that something becomes or seems more modern. It refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. Modernization stresses not only the process of change but also the responses to that change. It also looks at internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and their adaptation to new technologies. It has also been accused of being Eurocentric since the modernization of a society requires the destruction of the indigenous culture and its replacement by a more Westernized one.

With the onset of modernization, there is a diverse reception of modernization. While some have seen modernization as a threat to losing one's identity, others have seen it as progress

where the state could grow in various ways, either economically or politically. In the context of Post-colonialism, modernization takes on the definition of influencing the formerly colonized country and its culture offsetting it with that of the west. It is often seen as a threat to the cultural and traditional values of a society and according to Hasnain and Gupta in *Globalization: Language, Culture and Media*, “In spite of the “cultural pollution”, which is said to have set in as a result of globalization, there has been a process of ‘nativization’ as well,” (Page 8) which means that the existing cultures are now influenced by the west and this is sometimes viewed as a form of colonization.

The north eastern part of India after its decolonization saw a gradual change in the society, where the beliefs and political systems are slowly modernized from their traditional system. As generations had lived under the power of colonial rulers, they had more or less adopted the Western culture and their own culture began to undergo change. The traditional belief systems as well as the hybridization of the traditional belief systems of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur will be studied using the selected three novels:

- 1) Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* (2006), the stories in the novel interconnect the three generations in a village, portraying the delightful blend of myths, history and the transitory phase between the traditional and modern ways of the lives of the tribe of Adis of Siang valley that spans Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet. The stories in between takes the reader through a fascinating ride over a period of time and tribal beliefs, from the legend of the origin of the tribe to modern times of development that throw their lives and customs into disarray. There are a host of memorable characters steeped in traditional tribal beliefs and living vulnerable lives influenced by spirits, shamans and unnatural events. It is a combination of legends and superstitions, which are intertwined with the

lives of the village folks. Hoxo who was found by Lutor at the outskirts of the village was considered to be fallen from the skies and was not questioned by any of the villagers which represent the superstitions. The novel brings out the beliefs of the indigenous people in the living spirit of nature. The tribes here believe in co-existence with the natural world along with the presence of spirits in their forests and rivers. It brings to light several facets of the Adi society, especially that of their culture and way of life. The book is divided into four parts constituting the phases of evolution and growth of the village, the lives and loves of the characters, and their passage through the various stages of life. The first few chapters introduce readers to this strange phenomenon as people get killed mysteriously inside thick, dense forests. The novel concentrates mainly on the myths, rituals, legends, and beliefs central to the lives of the Adi tribe. The constant tug of war between myth and reality in the lives of the Adis is portrayed and like the place that they live in, the people too are governed by countless myths and superstitions that touch each and every aspect of their lives. The book portrays the changing status of the Adis with one foot in their traditional beliefs and the other on the path of modernization, while the topic addressed is the tussle between tribalism and modernity, it is not blatant. It gives a contemporary interpretation of traditional folklore, one has to appreciate the sheer lyrical beauty of her prose as the book has been beautifully crafted and brilliantly edited while the topic addressed of the tussle between tribalism and modernity is not blatant, the pathos, the confusion, the fear and generally as to what the future will bring and these issues are all blended in the book. The second part begins with the setting up of an administrative unit by the British. A road is built and “civilization” enters. Two persons arrive from the outside world to know more about the village folks. They hear a

few stories of the village and its people, participate in village activities and a feast, and then depart. The third part covers the second generation of people, now adults. They have their loves and marriages where some are happy, others somewhat tragic where the relationships are strained and distant. This leads to the appearance of the third generation. They receive better education. Some go out into the world and achieve academic and professional distinction. They then return to the village. Social and economic development leads to construction of a satellite township where the elite congregate. The link with the traditional past is not broken and modernization sets in. The fourth part leads to the aging and passing away of most of the second generation. The third generation enters middle age. A fourth generation appears, in its infancy. All this culminates in the final story called 'On Stage'. The book is set in Pensam which is known as an in-between place and recounts the historical developments in the tribal area which opened up to the world in the 19th-20th centuries. The author exhibits amazing descriptive powers and paints a vivid image of the traditional lives of the Adis, portraying the traditional culture and beliefs as well as the changing times.

- 2) Similarly, in *When the River Sleeps* (2014), Easterine Kire transports her reader to the remote mountains of Nagaland in Northeastern India, a place alive with natural wonder and supernatural enchantment. As Vilie (the main character) treks through the forest on the trail of his dream, readers are also swept along with the powerful narrative and walk alongside him in a world where dreams act as premonitions, omens and taboos observed and where some women who are believed to be witches could curse a person to death. The book also portrays the beliefs in supernatural beings in the form of people that could transform into were-tigers and the spirits are every bit as real as men and women. Kire

invites us into the lives and hearts of the people of Nagaland- their rituals and beliefs, their reverence for the land, their close-knit communities, and the rhythms of a life lived in harmony with their natural surroundings. Though there seemed to be a fast growing modern area in the book, where the presence of guns and the Forest Department hints at modernization, some areas are still shrouded in the supernatural beliefs where the belief in supernatural beings, the observation of taboos, mysticism and myths were still present. The mention of foreigners and interactions with them through the form of trade or as neighbors also indicates the slow modernization of the people of Nagaland. The main focus of the novel though, is on the world contained within a village and the book refuses to give the limelight to the ill-effects of the ‘civilizing’ world even though traces of it are present.

- 3) The traditional beliefs and the changes in traditions can also be seen in the short story, “Waiting for the Rains” (2015), by Keisham Priyokumar which recounts the story of Chongnikim and her family. The setting of the story is not mentioned and the story starts with the introduction of Chongnikim who is seen sitting in the small courtyard overlooking a small grave in the backyard. She has visions of the past where she sees Lungjahao, her husband, with a big fish and him proudly commenting on the size of the fish and it is through her recalling of the past that the story progresses. Through her visions we learn that Lungjahao is already dead and it is her imagination or vision of him that converses with her and it is also seen that Chongnikim has two young sons. Then she recalls of times when Lungjahao was alive and they both were working in the fields, it is of happier times, which is a contrast to her current state. The sceneries are described in the story, yet there is no mention of the name of the village or where it is situated. Her

recall of the past shows us that Lungjahao was a bamboo cultivator who sells his bamboos to a foreigner named Moti. As her recollections of the past continues, we can see that Lungjahao, to make ends meet decides to fish as there was no rains coming and the bamboos they've collected so far could only be sold when the rains came as Moti came to collect the bamboos only when the rains came. The story then moves to the present where her father-in-law notifies her of his plans to move the family to a safer village, as the village was bound to be attacked by another village and though Chongnikim is reluctant, she finally understands and accepts that she needed to move to the neighboring village. The story then moves back to the past where Chongnikim recalls of the day Lungjahao went to fish and is missing, she recalls of her anxiety and fear when he does not come back that night and the next day, it is here that we see how Lungjahao dies, where his body is returned to her by the search party and from evidences of his death, he seemed to have been murdered. Then we are brought back to the present where Chongnikim is packing for her move to another village. The story seems to deal with the acceptance of loss and the road to change and ends with Chongnikim's first step towards the unknown village unwillingly. The short story contains the traditional beliefs where superstitions highly influenced the people while the existence of the modern times of development could be seen through the trading done between Lungjahao and Moti. The presence of other means of livelihood, apart from agriculture, also shows the modernization of the people and the moving of the village to a bigger one suggests the intermixing of tribes which could also be seen as a form of modernization.

In each of the texts selected, there is a representation of traditional culture and beliefs as well as modernization. The traditional belief systems of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur will be further studied using the following works:

- 1) *Myths of the North East Frontier of India* by Verrier Elwin will be used to study the myths and beliefs of the selected states. The book is a collection of stories based on the traditional myths and tales of the Northeast. It contains the north eastern mythology of how the world was created, of man and his history and the traditional beliefs and culture of the Northeast.
- 2) *Cultural Fiesta in the "Island of Peace" Arunachal Pradesh* by Guptajit Pathak and Raju Gogoi contains the number of festivals celebrated by the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. It highlights the cultural festivals of the state, giving information regarding the cultural heritage, traditions and beliefs of the state.
- 3) *Taboos, Myths and Legends* by Visakhonu Hibo and R.Chumbeno Nguillie is a collection of taboos, myths and legends of the different Naga tribes. It contains folktales and myths of the Nagas and gives information on the cultural, traditional lives and beliefs of the different tribes present in Nagaland.
- 4) *Naga Society: Culture, Education and Emerging Trends* by Benjongkumba studies the wide range of issues related to the identities of the Naga society as well as the traditional practices of land ownership among the Nagas. It also traces the customary laws, traditional values and practices of Nagaland.
- 5) *Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh: History and Culture* by Palash Chandra Coomer and Bibhash Dhar contains the history and culture of the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The traditional culture and beliefs of Arunachal Pradesh are highlighted which helps us in the

study of the traditions, culture and beliefs of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh before the modern era.

- 6) *The Angami Nagas: With some Notes on Neighbouring Tribes* by H.J Hutton examines the people, traditions, culture and beliefs of the Angami tribe of Nagaland along with their relationship with the neighboring state. The book forms the foundation for studies of Angami history, culture, and traditions. It is a remarkable work that gives the reader a glimpse into Angami village life prior to the radical changes that would occur as a result of British colonial administration, Christian mission, and Indian State rule.
- 7) *The Tribal Religious Traditions in North East India: An Introduction* by A.Wati Longchar examines the traditional religious beliefs of the tribes of Northeast India highlighting the rituals, taboos and superstitions.
- 8) *Tribal Religion and Rituals: Accounts of Superstitions, Sorcery and Spirits* by Mary D.Mahapatra studies the different religious beliefs and rituals of the northeastern part of India. The superstitions, beliefs in supernatural beings and elements as well as the taboos and fetish/totems are seen in the book.

The above mentioned works will assist in the study of the traditional cultural beliefs of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur in the pre-modern era. The changes in the traditional culture as well as the settling of modernization in the tribal culture will be examined incorporating the theoretical works mentioned below.

- 1) Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture* (1994) will be incorporated as it assembles several of Homi Bhabha's most significant essays where the theory of cultural hybridity is explained by Bhabha which will be the focus of this study. Bhabha in his essay argues that hybridity results from various forms of colonization, which lead to cultural collisions

and interchanges. In this way, his discussion of contact between cultures revises the narrative of progress or modernity, associated particularly with the Enlightenment. His argument can be extended to evaluate divergent movements within modernity and postmodernity and to revise the major models of both by revealing their stakes in colonial practices. Bhabha's work suggests that the process of making modernity and the past is continual and partial, and that political action can be effective if not total.

- 2) Edward Said's *Orientalism*, (2003) which deals with the study of the historical, cultural, and political views of the East that are held by the West will also be used to further the understanding of the western view of the east. The book criticizes the study of the Orient and its ideology made by the West that the Orient existed to be studied, and that this studying was done by Westerners who believed themselves to be superior to the "others". They were basically the opposite of the East and considered themselves to be active while the Orient was considered to be passive. The Orient existed to be ruled and dominated. Said points out the errors in the ways of these early Orientalists. He questions the claim that the Orient was biologically inferior to the European and thus required domination. Said therefore makes the claim for the Orient that it should be viewed for itself and its own cultures and societies and not viewed in the concept of Western perspective.
- 3) Furthermore, it will also integrate *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) by Said since the work recognizes and talks about culture as a dual paradigm. It demonstrates that the Western imperialism's most effective tools for dominating other cultures have been literary in nature as much as political and economic. He traces the themes of 19th- and 20th-century Western fiction and contemporary mass media as weapons of conquest and also brilliantly analyzes the rise of oppositional indigenous voices in the literatures of the

“colonies”. Edward Said thus makes the argument that dominant cultures of imperialistic powers are connected through strong ideological ties to their nation

- 4) B. P Singh’s *North-East India: Demography, Culture and Identity Crisis* (1987) will also be added as the work proposes to offer some facts and reflections on the aspects of an analysis of the economic, cultural and demographic factors which have acquired different nuances in the wake of the modernization taking place in the region since the 1950’s, which have a decisive say on the formulation of policies and the efficacy institutions of governance in Northeast India. It examines the origins of the traditional belief systems and the modernization of it along with the impact of demographic changes that could be seen. The related issues of culture such as the anguish, fear, loss of identity as well as the British colonial ruler’s exploitation of the Northeast were examined and closely criticized.
- 5) Similarly, Marshall Sahlins “On the anthropology of modernity, or, some triumphs of culture over despondency theory” (2005) will be used as it postulates the indigenization of modernity, the struggle of non-Western peoples to create their own cultural versions of modernity. The critical work discusses the Western dichotomy of tradition and change, custom and rationality and most notably its twentieth century version of tradition and development which destroyed the entrenched superstition by progressive reason. Sahlins argues that, almost all the cultures described as ‘traditional’ by anthropologists, were in fact neo-traditional, already changed by Western expansion. The critical work claims that one of the main academic consequences of the violence inflicted by the West was the ‘despondency theory’ which was the logical precursor to dependency theory, meaning that the colonizers had intentions of changing an existing tradition. To Sahlins,

despondency was another not terribly enlightening idea of the power of Western 'civilisation'.

- 6) Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1993) will be incorporated as the essay stresses that the issues of culture, identity and discourse are significant concerns for anyone struggling for liberation. Hall explicates two definitions of "cultural identity," the first is an essentialist identity, which emphasizes the similarities amongst a group of people. He argues that this definition can and does anti-colonial and anti-racist art and activism, but cannot help us comprehend the trauma of colonialism. The second definition emphasizes the similarities and the differences amongst an imagined cultural group and asserts that this definition is useful for understanding the trauma of colonialism because it emphasizes the historical and social contingency of identity. He claims that cultural identities are the points of identification, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture and far from being eternally fixed in some past, are subjected to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power.
- 7) Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood's *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* (1997), will be used to examine the changing traditional cultural beliefs as the theory examines the place and meaning of cultural hybridity in the context of growing global crisis and racism. The theory aims to shed some light on the essentially hybrid nature- the complexity and the flexibility of "culture" and identity, their potential openness as well as their closures. From the reality that postmodern personal identities are multicultural identities, it tries to define the limits of cultural hybridity.

The mentioned works above will aid in the study of the hybridization and modernization of the traditional beliefs of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur.

The first chapter gives an introduction to the aims and objectives of this study as well as a brief introduction on the Northeast region of India with partial reference to the three states that represent the primary selected texts. It briefly discusses Post colonialism and its critical function within the study.

The second chapter examines the traditional belief systems of the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, the Angami tribe of Nagaland and the Kuki of Manipur in the pre-modern era. It studies the religious systems, rituals, superstitions, myths, taboos and totems present in the traditions of the Adi tribe, the Angami tribe and the Kuki of Manipur using the selected texts *The Legends of Pensam* by Mamang Dai, *When the River Sleeps* by Easterine Kire and “Waiting for the Rains” by Keisham Priyokumar. The traditional belief systems is further examined using *Myths of the North East Frontier of India* by Verrier Elwin, *Cultural Fiesta in the “Island of Peace” Arunachal Pradesh* by Guptajit Pathak and Raju Gogoi, *Taboos, Myths and Legends* by Visakhonu Hibo and R.Chumbeno Ngullie, *Naga Society: Culture, Education and Emerging Trends* by Benjongkumba, *Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh: History and Culture* by Palash Chandra Coomer and Bibhash Dhar, *The Angami Nagas: With some Notes on Neighbouring Tribes* by H.J Hutton, *The Tribal Religious Traditions in North East India: An Introduction* by A.Wati Longchar and *Tribal Religion and Rituals: Accounts of Superstitions, Sorcery and Spirits* by Mary D.Mahapatra.

Chapter three examines and deals with the effects and consequences of modernization of the traditional cultural belief systems of the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, the Angami tribe of

Nagaland and the Kuki of Manipur. It studies the changes and hybridization of the tribes mentioned with that of the west and the effects and consequences of the modernization on their traditional cultural beliefs. The theoretical works of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, B. P Singh's *North-East India: Demography, Culture and Identity Crisis*, Marshall Sahlins "On the anthropology of modernity, or, some triumphs of culture over despondency theory," Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," and Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood's *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* are incorporated for a better understanding of the effects and consequences that modernization has on traditional cultural beliefs.

Chapter four will summarize the previous chapters and brings the study to a conclusion by highlighting the important points studied in the preceding chapters. Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridization is used to re-examine the present belief system of the Adi of Arunachal Pradesh, the Angami of Nagaland and the Kuki of Manipur. The chapter further comments on these hybrid cultures as post colonial communities that today continue to struggle in finding their balance between preserving traditional beliefs while embracing the forces of modernization.

Chapter 2: The Traditional Belief Systems.

The traditional belief systems of north east India like all other traditional belief systems of the world may be termed as pre-literate, as they do not have written scriptures. These belief systems originated from the human experiences like history, folklore, myth and way of life that come into one shape. Tribal beliefs in most of the cases are found in villages, beginning from the family, clan and society and are related to the existence, nature and worship of a deity or deities and divine involvement in the universe and human life. The belief systems can also involve causes, principles or activities believed in with careful devotion concerning points or matters of belief or conscience. It also relates to certain values and practices being transmitted by a spiritual leader. The distinctive characteristic of tribal beliefs is that it doesn't have a sacred scripture or scriptures as other belief systems do, as the ethos is contained in the people's hearts, minds, oral history and rituals. Religious belief tends to be collected and written down in literate societies but the belief systems in non-literate societies was largely passed on orally. Each and every tribe has its own distinctive cultural and religious beliefs. Their beliefs are related with their day to day activities. Moreover, these beliefs are associated with their festivals, rites of passage; birth, initiation, marriage, death, etc., agricultural activities, sickness, natural phenomena, spirits both malevolent and benevolent, gods and goddesses, magic and sorcery, sin and taboo and so on. Since the myths, taboos, superstitions and belief systems are passed on orally, it has been assumed that the narratives differ slightly when passed down from generation to generation.

The word *taboo* denotes prohibition, which could mean a forbidden activity, something that is not permitted, something that stands against social approval and also is disallowed by religious norms of a given society. It is not entirely religious and the non-religious taboo often act as the medium for transferring values, ethics and extends into all the aspects of human life

and acts as a restraining force for both physical actions and mental desires. Taboos were important and formed an integral part of the tribal society and were executed more at an individual level with religious overtones and may be defined as restrictions established to guard against supernaturally evil and dangerous things like plants, animals, objects and even the persons believed to have been possessed by evil spirits. Therefore, tabooed objects are not to be touched, seen, heard or tested as the violation of it would automatically invite the wrath or anger of the supernatural powers or the evil spirits. Myth is derived from the Greek word *mythos* which means “story”, and is known as a traditional story, one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. Myths are considered a sacred narrative because it holds religious or spiritual significance and also contribute to and express a culture's systems of thought and values. Human cultures' mythologies usually include creation myths, concerning the origins of the world, or how the world and humans came to exist. The myths are told on a variety of occasions, some are chanted during dances, social or religious ceremonies, funerals and festivals. Belief in supernatural influences, especially as leading to good or bad luck, or a practice based on such a belief is known as superstition. It is often used to refer to a religion not practiced by the majority of a given society regardless of whether the prevailing religion contains superstitions. It is also commonly applied to beliefs and practices surrounding luck, prophecy, and certain spiritual beings, particularly the belief that future events can be foretold by specific unrelated prior events. Taboos, myths and superstitions are deeply embedded in the beliefs of the tribal society of the north east in the pre-modern era and therefore can be regarded as part of their traditional customs, making it a part of their identity.

The chapter focuses on the traditional belief systems of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur using the selected texts of Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam*, Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* and "Waiting for the Rains," by Priyokumar and a few other reference books.

I

This section highlights the pre-colonial traditional belief systems of Arunachal Pradesh and in particular, the Adi tribe with reference to Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam*.

Every tribal group in Arunachal Pradesh has a story about their migration to the land. Oral history of the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh claim that the Monpas came from Bhutan and Tibet, the Sherdukpens claim that they are descendants of a local prince and a princess from the South. The Akas say that they migrated from Upper Assam. The Adis believe that they migrated from across the Himalayas. The Tagins are believed to have migrated from Penji, a village in Tibet. The Khamptis migrated to this region from Myanmar and moved to Arunachal sometime in the 18th century. The rich mythological heritage of Arunachal, transmitted orally from generation to generation, tells us about the origin of man and describes his relationship with the environment. While there are different myths among the tribes, they all speak of Man's relationship with nature and animals. Among the myths of origin, the Akas of West Kameng speak of their coming to earth from heaven on ladders. According to them, each race had a different ladder, the Ahoms and the Aka kings came on golden ladders, other Akas by silver ladders. The Monpas came by iron ladders, the Nyishis and the Adis came by bamboo ladders, and the Cacharis and Khowas came by grass ladders. The Mishmis, who inhabit the eastern corner of Arunachal, believe that

God penetrated the womb of the first woman and the child born of this union is the father of the first Idu Mishmi. The Mishmis trace the strength of their tribe to the only man and woman to survive devastating tempests and catastrophes. A similar legend traces the origin of the Mukhlom Tsangas to the seven primeval fathers of man who came from the only woman to survive the great snowstorm that once befell earth. Animals also figure in many of the early myths of origin. The Dirrang Monpas, for example, believe that they descended from a monkey and were transformed into human beings by a lama. Arunachal Pradesh has 20 major tribes and numerous sub-tribes living across the state and each of them have different dialects.

Different tribal groups have their own set of beliefs and notions about their religion. As the people of Arunachal Pradesh are segregated into three cultural groups, each group practices its own religion. Arunachal Pradesh's 80-odd tribes continue to cling to their ancestors' world view: human lives are governed by spirits, which can be malevolent or benevolent. The only person who can mediate with spirits is the *dandai*. Belief in the existence of supernatural powers is almost universal. Day-to-day unexplainable experiences have led the villagers into believing in other than the material visible world i.e. in the invisible spiritual world or supernatural power. Generally the people are found to establish a close relationship with the spiritual world either by controlling or overpowering the spirit by enchanting or practicing some techniques and channeling the power, for good or bad or by offering ritual or worship to propitiate the supernatural power for acquisition of the thing or object desired. Religious, social and supernatural beliefs are displayed in the festival. The main objective to celebrate this festival is to protect their village, animals and people from any natural disaster. The tribe offer prayers to the God of the Water and God of the Earth. Domestic fowls, animals and eggs are sacrificed and a few rites are also performed during the fest. The main objective of the festival is to appease the

gods so that famine could be avoided. The head priest performs rituals and prayers are offered to the spirit to bring peace, harmony and prosperity to the people.

The people of Arunachal Pradesh are generally god fearing and have their own set of beliefs and rituals followed on all occasions. They mainly worshipped the nature deities and animal sacrifices were practiced as offerings to their gods. The different tribes worshipped the Sun and Moon as the supreme god and they also worshipped the plants and animals by making totems. These totems are sacred and believed to have helped or protected their ancestors. The villagers gather in a designated field and build, using sticks of cane, totems representing household members, one for each family and they decorate them with feathers, leaves, beads and complete the dedication of the totem ceremony by breaking fresh eggs on the top of each pole of cane, measuring about one meter each. They showed reverence for these totemic objects by refraining from eating their fruits or flowers and the animals that were diseased or sick were nursed back to health before setting it free. The donyi-polo religion of the Apatanis, which worships the Sun and the Moon, uses a number of totem-like structures, some to ward off evil-like those situated at the entrance to houses, while some are used as fertility symbols. They may also represent venerated ancestors or they may indicate by symbols the number of male or female children in the family so that passers-by may identify at a glance the status of the family represented by the totems. The people also had a system where the ancestors or the spirits of the ancestors were worshipped. Superstitions and taboos also existed in Arunachal Pradesh where they believed that unless the spirit of the newly dead ancestor is worshipped, it continues to exist with them, often appearing in dreams. They worship nature and consider many of the forest patches as sacred groves. These sacred groves vary in size from a few trees to dense forests covering vast tracts of land and have been protected by the tribes through generations. Each

sacred grove is dedicated to local deities and nobody is permitted to cut plants or kill animals or any form of life. To protect these forests the ancestors of the tribes have made specific sets of rules and regulations enshrined in religious or cultural beliefs and superstitions, and all members of the community obey it.

The sightings and belief in the existence of ghosts and spirits as well as believing in dreams as a premonition were also common superstitions amongst the people of Arunachal Pradesh. They believed that a supernatural being or power communicates with the humans through dreams where the human soul ascends to the spirit realm and interact with them. These supernatural powers convey the impending dangers or bestow their blessings that are supposed to come in the near future. The interpretations of dreams are varied in nature and generally depend on the socio-religious belief system of the people. It is generally divided into positive and negative dreams where the positive dreams foretells happy and thriving moment of an individual as well as the family while a negative dream conveys warnings of impending dangers to the person or their family. For example, if one saw a hornbill in their dream, they believed that the person would achieve success in the coming days. Dreams of the setting sun was a sign that either one or both the parents will die in the near future, similarly, dreaming of rolling stones or the felling of trees meant the death of elder members in the family or society. If one dreamt of being surrounded by snakes, they were sure to fall ill and if one dreamt of fetching water in bamboo made water pipe after sowing crops in the field, they would have a good harvest. The anticipated trouble or danger however could be averted with the help of the shaman or priest who offers the required rituals or sacrifices to avert the impending dangers.

Plants, animals, lands or rivers with distinct features or structures were also properly demarcated with certain signs or symbols and the misuse of them were considered as a taboo.

For example, bamboos or trees with knotted structures are not to be used or cut down. Huge trees, stones, ponds, lakes, marshy lands and turbulent rivers are believed to be an abode of spirits, while snakes and some birds like owl, vulture and crow are dreaded as evil spirits and were neither killed nor consumed for fear of angering the spirits. While going for hunting or fishing, people often abstained from physical contact even with their own wives as they believed that physical contact prior to hunting could result in failure. A youth is tabooed to take the meat of the wild animal he killed for the first time on the grounds that he would lose his hunting keenness. The people attached utmost importance to the taboos related to eating and sharing of meat as certain specific portions of meat are not supposed to be shared by anyone such as the heart, head and the inside stomach of a killed animal. It was to be shared only amongst the members of the same clan. A taboo is an integral part of any ritual or sacrifice, without which the rituals are considered as incomplete. A husband is prohibited from killing any animal, bird, insect or snake and attending funeral ceremonies when his wife is at an advanced stage of pregnancy as it was believed to affect the unborn child in some ways. Women and children are restricted from attending funerals in the case of unnatural deaths. The people who take part in the burial process are to cleanse themselves before entering their houses on the grounds that they may bring in sorrow and misfortune. Men were restricted from doing the activities and affairs usually done by women and vice versa as they believed the spirits would bring misfortune to either of them. A woman is also tabooed during menstruation and childbirth. She is tabooed from having sexual relations with her husband during menstruation and it is only after the cleansing ceremony that she is allowed to mingle freely. If these taboos were not observed, it was believed that it would bring impurity and disgrace to the individual and the family as a whole. The priest who conducts rituals usually pronounces restrictions to be observed by all concerned and the

failure to observe or oblige to it could result in a tantamount relapse of the problem. The state of Arunachal Pradesh consists of different tribes and sub-tribes and each of them has their own dialect with their own set of belief system.

The Adi, is a major collective tribe living in the Himalayan hills of Arunachal Pradesh, and they are found in the temperate and sub-tropical regions within the districts of East Siang, Upper Siang, West Siang and Dibang Valley. The literal meaning of Adi is “hill” or “mountain top”. The Adis have two main divisions, (the Bogums and Bomis) and under each there are a number of sub-tribes. The Minyongs, Karkos, Shimongs, Bomdo, Janbos, Panggis, Palibos, Bogums, Padams, Milangs and so on from one group; while the Gallong and seven other groups constitute another group of Adis. The Adis by nature have a unique sense of history. The Adi tribe has a myth on the origin of man or the universe called *Keyum-Kero* (Emptiness), through which they trace the origin of the universe and of all the living things. It is as follows-

“In the beginning emptiness pervaded the universe; there was no light no matter and no sound. This state of emptiness was known as *Keyum-Kero*. Eventually a spontaneous process of evolution unfolded itself from this emptiness. A tiny, imperceptible patch of darkness gradually developed from *Keyum-Kero* and was called as *Yumkang*. After a long time, that imperceptible patch of darkness generated *Kasi* (Nothingness). *Kasi* was still as inappreciable as *Yumkang* as it had no form, no size and no existence. Then, *Kasi* brought forth *Siang*, which is yet another invisible tiny particle of mist and from *Siang*, developed wet dark particles resembling clouds, known as *Bomuk*. Out of *Bomuk*, the next evolutionary process was the coming out of an inky, tiny layer of cloud hovering in the space known as *Mukseng*. Out of *Mukseng*, came *Sedi* and *Melo* which were the first physical manifestations emerging from the incomprehensible *Keyum-Kero*. *Sedi*, a female being turned into the earth, while *Melo*, the male

became the sky. In order to continue the creative process, they married each other and began to produce various offspring in the world. At that time, *Sedi* was a dirt filled mass in a semi-liquid form. It was uninhabitable as there was no light, no air and no habitable land. In due course of time, it produced various objects. Her huge unending stream of mucous grew into rivers and lakes, her hair into grasses and trees, bodily fluid into huge masses of water and her breath became air which began to circulate on the earth's surface. *Sedi* and *Melo* came together from time to time begetting offsprings of various forms and natures. Their offsprings started ruling different spheres of life on the earth. Their first progenies were *Sepi Yokmo* and *Sepang Yokmo* who were gods of smithery (like ironsmiths, silversmiths, goldsmiths). *Dinom Yokmo* was born next. He was the originator of wild birds and animals. *Sengo Orne*, the god of light was also born of *Sedi* and *Melo*. Also out of the union of *Sedi* and *Melo* came *Yidum Bote*, *Doying Bote*, *Litung* and *Limang*. *Litung* and *Limang* married and they gave birth to *Pedong Nane*. *Pedong Nane* in turn married *Yidum Bote*, the God of wind. Together they gave birth to millions of offsprings who filled the earth. Their children were the spirits, human beings, snakes, frogs, monkeys and many other beings.”

According to the Adis, all existence is endowed with life and the evolution of what we consider inanimate, must have also come through the normal process of birth. The Adis do not have any historical records, but this was compensated by the oral traditions of the people in the form of legends, myths, folklores, proverbs and sayings etc. These oral traditions are reflected in *Abangs*, *Ponungs*, *Abes* etc. The oral religious literature of the Adis is mainly represented by rhapsodies known as *Abangs*, relating to the myth of creation, origin of social institutions and history of the people. The *Ponungs* are nothing but lengthy ballads, drawing their themes from *Abangs*, highlighting the origin of different things including the Adis race itself. The *Abes* may

be considered as the political literature of the people and the term is used to mean the introductory speeches given by the *Kebang*. An elderly person gifted with powers of good oratory is called the *Kebang Abu*, who traces the origin and migration of the people of the central zone of Arunachal from Uli, Usha and kumting in Tibet in a poetic language. There are dozens of myths currents among the Adis which talk about their origin and migration. All the Adis claim their origin form some race tribes settled a Killing in Bomo-janbo country. According to a popular version, “in the beginning there was only darkness, and out of the union of the sky(Melo) and the earth (Sedi) things were born. Pedong nane who descended from Sedi-Melo was married to Yidum Bole and out of their union was born Donyi, the first man”. Adi celebrate their prime festival, Solung, between in the first week of September every year for five days or more. It is a harvest festival performed after the sowing of seeds and transplantation, to seek for future bumper crops. Ponung songs and dances are performed during the festival. At the last day of Solung, throne and indigenous weaponry are displayed along the passage of the houses, a belief that they would protect people from evil spirits. The majority of Adi traditionally followed the animist Donyi-Polo religion, which involves the worship of the sun, the moon, and the ancestral god, the shaman, called *Miri*, which can also be a female. Other deities traditionally worshipped by the Adi include Kine Nane, Doying Bote, Gumin Soyin and Pedong Nane. Each deity is associated with certain tasks and act as protector and guardian of various topics related to nature which revolves around their daily life. This included the food crops, home, rain, etc.

This is the myth told by the Minyongs tribe (A section of the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh) about the first appearance of death in the land of the living. It goes this way.

“There was a man called Ninur Botte who made an earthen vessel. He invested a lot of time and energy in the process. In the end, he picked the product of his hand and with great appreciation

started to examine it. But unfortunately, he dropped it and the earthen vessels crashed into pieces falling on the ground. With great desperation and anger he tried to put it together, but to no avail. He shouted in desperation, ‘Why can’t I mend it? I invested so much time and energy to make it.’ Donyi-Polo (the Sun Moon God) looked at him and said, ‘You did well to make it, you did ill to break it.’ Ninur Botte asked ‘How was it that I did ill?’ Donyi-Polo said, ‘Because from today, humans will die.’ This is how death came into the land of the living. Had it been possible to put together what was broken, humans would have lived forever.” The myth expresses the perception in a series of imagery using symbols in the process. One is the acceptance of universality and inevitability of death. The other is the irreversibility of natural events. The two get connected in the imagery of broken pot. The story seems to indicate that one cannot go back to the original position once it has been passed. The original vessel cannot be remade again. The making of the vessel is the process of conception and birth. Vessel in itself is life and the breaking is death. So the vessel was, and is no more. The man was and is no more.

Most villages have a resident shaman known as a *miri*. In daily life, Adi distinguish between two different kinds of illness: natural and supernatural. By looking at set of leaves or the liver of a dead chicken a *miri* divines the nature of the illness. The *miri* can also see into the future, so she is consulted by the Adi people for information on the outcome of their hunts. On their hunts, the spirits must receive gifts of food and other earthly goods before a shot is taken. They believe the spirits can easily be offended, and must be placated with offerings and incantations to avoid disease and illness. In spring, the Adi hold the *Aran* festival. The village men disappear for several days into the jungle to hunt for game, placating the spirits before they start with offerings of *apong*, the millet beer, and prayers. On their return, food is prepared for them, while a huge gallows is built so a mithun can be sacrificed. The ceremony is brutal; the

animal is hauled up a slope by a rope fastened around its neck. To ensure that the spirits makes it a prosperous year, with a good harvest and lots of pigs, chickens and cattle, everyone in the village takes part. Nothing is wasted: all the flesh from the mithun is divided between the villagers. The Adi's sacrifice a pig by strangling it between two ropes, as an offering to the spirits when a house is built and this also acts as a gift to the house builders. When a house is made, they also make beer.

The *Legends of Pensam* by Mamang Dai, portrays the culture, superstitions and belief systems of the Adi tribe. The prologue of the book starts with the mention of a myth about the lady who competed with the gods to weave a tapestry. The book introduces the traditional belief systems of the Adi's in a short line:

“In these small clearings in the middle of the forest, people have premonitions. Women dream dreams. Babies are born who grow up unnaturally fast, like deer or lion cubs. Infant mortality is high. Old women still braid threads of vine and pray for safe passage.” (Page 10)

One of the main characters of the book, Hoxo, is said to have fallen from the sky and was found by Lutor, the chief of the Ida clan and this superstition was not questioned by the village people. The premonition of the death of Lutor, when he saw Biribik, the water serpent with ancient eyes and a head with horns and the small fish found in the pocket of Lutor when he died was also considered as the spirit manifestation also points to the beliefs of the tribe. An exiled or banished person could be provided with food by the family but there were tabooed foods that he could not consume during the exiled period. Rituals were performed by Shamans to cure the sick and the parents of Kepi were advised to perform a special ceremony in case the spirit of a snake had coiled around his body. Kepi was believed to have never recovered from that illness since

his father killed a snake, even though a serpent ritual was performed where they negotiated with the spirits, it was believed that the spirits had moved away. The owners of burnt houses were banished for fear of provoking the tiger spirit that causes fires and had to observe a certain period of taboo where no one could visit or eat with them. Pinyar, the widow's whose house burnt down recounts a myth about the race of supernatural beings called the miti-mili, who makes the mysterious yeast named si-ye. The si-ye is believed to have supernatural powers and was forbidden before a hunt or a journey since it made men hallucinate. Pinyar claims that some households sometimes forget to observe the rules leading to men dying in the forests and of how the si-ye was sprinkled on the eyelids of those who die an unnatural death to ensure that their spirits would not return on a restless search. Kamur who murdered his own daughter was believed to have been possessed by an evil spirit for his parents' and grandparents' failing to observe certain rites in the past and a priest was called to exorcise the bad spirits. The aubergine plant which grew to the size of a tree and avoided by the people since no one dared to cut it down nor could recall planting it was considered as the source of what started the strange actions of Kamur. The taboo on bloodlines where the person sees visions, visited by spirits and seized by bouts of madness was also attributed to the strange behavior of Kamur. The right or wrong kind of marriage or life, according to the Adis could be traced to something in the blood. The novel also reveals how the beliefs are closely related to certain dances, which tells folklores as well as myths. These dances are led by the miri, the shaman, who recites spiritual verses, which tells of the origin of humans:

“In the beginning, there was only Keyum. Nothingness. It was neither darkness nor light, nor had it any colour, shape or movement. Keyum is the remote past, way beyond the reach of our senses. It is the place of ancient things from where no answer is received. Out of this place of

great stillness, the first flicker of thought began to shine like a light in the soul of man. It became a shimmering trail, took shape and expanded and became the Pathway. Out of this nebulous zone, a spark was born that was the light of imagination. The spark grew into a shining stream that was the consciousness of man, and from this all the stories of the world and all its creatures came into being.” (Page 56)

The beliefs in spirits and their territories such as the territory of Dimitayang, a lonely spirit who stirs up the lake waters and clutches trespassing men in ice and the addressing of mountains and air they turned in every direction was done to appease the jealous spirits to ensure safe return with the promise:

“We will travel again to your beautiful land. Let us leave in peace now. Do not pine for us. Do not call us back. We will travel this way again bearing more gifts next time.” (Page 59)

The last man in line then faced backwards and swept off their footprints to thwart off any attempts of the spirit to follow them and dwell in their lands.

The superstitions, myths and taboos of the Adi tribe are embedded in the story which sweeps through some of the traditional belief systems. Similar beliefs of various indigenous tribes are seen in other parts of North-East India too.

II

The Nagas indigenous belief system is basically communal. In this belief system, the forces of nature are appeased and spirit-worshiping form an important part of religious rites. They believed in spirits both benevolent and malevolent and also in the existence of a Supreme Being who is called by different names by different tribes. They believe that god will punish the evildoer, liar etc as they dwell on earth and after death. They also believe that there are some gods who causes diseases, sicknesses and cause to death. Many ghosts were seen in the villages and the presence of ghosts is still seen from time to time in some villages. In every village, there is a traditional priest who performed all the religious rites and rituals. There are also fortune-tellers or traditional diviners who tell the sick people where to sacrifice cow, buffaloes, egg or hen along with some pieces of iron to offer to god to pacify the god who causes the sickness. It is their belief that god accept the sacrifices and release the man's life or relinquish the disease and sickness. There are many ways in which the diviners or soothsayers examined the sick or for any event to be held in the village or in other village. Some of the omen examinations are done from Eggs, grain of paddy (Kiithou), small piece of split bamboo, Lou (a kind of scented small plant), Miithou (embers), legs and intestine of strangled chicken etc.

They were highly superstitious and according to the omens they believed in, their work was carried out while observing taboos. Taboo acted as a strong force of social control in the past. In simple word, taboo can be understood as prohibition or abstention from doing certain activities. It is just a temporary halt of normal activities such as going to field, hunting, fishing or crossing the village gate, etc. Taboos are observed individually as well as collectively. Individual taboos are observed by families, whereas sometimes the members of a particular clan or the whole village observed taboos collectively. Individual taboos or family taboos are usually observed during pregnancy, child birth, child naming, piercing of ears and first hair cutting.

During such auspicious occasions, the family members are expected to perform certain rituals and offer sacrifices. They are not expected to go and work in the field. Moreover, visitors especially strangers are not allowed to enter the house. This is because they believed that visitors might bring diseases which may affect the entire village. They also did not allow people to come because visitors may also come in the guise of enemies targeting to kill the villagers. The community or village taboos mostly revolved around the agriculture operations such as selection of field sites, sowing and reaping, and also during festivals, deaths, raids, diseases and natural calamities. In such taboos, all the members of the village would observe total cessation of work except for the priest or priestess who performs the rituals. Animals such as pigs, mithun, fowls, etc., are sacrificed in order to appease the deities or gods. It is believed that breach of such taboos would invite diseases, death, natural calamities, crop failure, etc., in a particular family or even in the village. To make an appeasement with the evil and unpredictable spirit is practically the basic substance of their religion.

The worship of the tribes of Nagas involved two main elements- offerings or sacrifices and *genna* (taboo). The Nagas believe in the existence of a Supreme God and also in spiritism, that there are unseen beings, which can be termed as lesser spirits in order to distinguish from the Supreme Being who influences the lives of men. The Nagas paid great deal of attention to the lesser spirits while no attention or little is paid to the Supreme Being. Their concept of god is negative in character. The Nagas are not comforted by the spirits but rather filled with fears, by the thought that god's eyes may be upon them. Disaster waits around every corner and threatens even the most capable and intelligent. A wise man is one who seeks the help of the spirits which though unseen are clearly at work in all activities. Their belief focuses on dances, costumes, masks, rituals, traditions, and sacred artifacts- material objects. These practices are part of a

people's cultural identity and help them forge a sense of connection with their world. Apart from individual offering and sacrifices to god, the village as a whole also offered and sacrificed to god whenever there is any calamity or epidemic spread in the village. Indigenous religions transmit wisdom, cultural values, and history, not through formal education but through myths, storytelling, drama and art. They tend not to rely on silent meditation or individualized experiences but on ritual activities that bind people to the community. Many of these rituals mark important occasions, such as planting or gathering a harvest. Nagaland consists of different tribes where each tribe has their own dialect and beliefs. The main focus in the belief systems will be stressed on the Angami tribe, tracing it from the text, *When the River Sleeps* by Easterine Kire.

The Angami believed they emerged from *Kezakenoma* hole. The entire groups of the people who emigrate from Irrawaddy valley (Myanmar) to Makhel were known as NAGA. It was only after they dispersed from Makhel, that they were called by the name "Naga," after their progenitor (forefather). For example, Poumai Naga tribe is named after their progenitor name POU and Mao tribe after the name of MEO. Thus different name of the Naga tribes like Seema, Lotha, Angami, Ao, Tangkhul, Poumai Naga etc came to exist after they departed from Makhel. The different Naga tribes came for a meeting for a deliberation at Shajouba Village near the Makhel before their departure from Makhel. According to the legend of Poumai Naga, a man name POU (of the prominent leader of Naga) erected his walking stick on the ground after the meeting and left for home. But his walking stick sprouted and rooted inside the earth. The walking stick believed to have grown into a wild pear tree (Tyaobe) is still alive at Shajouba near Makhel. Whether it is sprouted from Pou's walking stick or not - the Pear tree is believed to be planted during the Nagas departure from Makhel. The wild Pear tree (Tyaobe) or departure tree planted during their departure meeting is considered as an important tree, which is revered by all the Nagas who

migrated from Makhel. The falling of any branches from the wild pear tree due to storm or wind signifies the bad omen. If any branches of that tree fall, the Makhelian who dispersed from the dispersal site observed a day, which is forbidden to work in the field. People were strictly restricted to break off even a small branch from that tree. It is believed to be a sacred tree for the Nagas. It is believed that anybody who cuts down any branches of that tree will die instantly and heavy rain and storm would come to the areas if the tree was harmed.

The Naga religion is centered on the daily lives of man and the spirit deities existed in terms of their own short-comings. Hence, the traditional religion made a Naga feel that the evil spirits are immoral, unstable and not to be trusted. In this way, anything that caused disorder was identified with a network of spirit forces that brought about a disturbance. If the taboos were not observed, the Naga believed that the malevolent spirits naturally brought about an 'extraordinary' death. Hence the need for *genna*, and rituals became paramount to strike a proper balance. Their religious world view therefore was not one of animals, vegetables and spirit kingdoms as to be seen through their stomachs and of great awe to the latter but considered themselves related to ancestors, evil spirits and godlings, and accordingly ordered animals in heirarchy as done in the secular world. The reality of spirit forces is such that the Naga sees himself as an aspect of these dynamic forces which makes for a symbolic relationship with the material world and life thereafter. It was also convenient to justify their inequalities in kinship ordering and personal statuses, or variations in different Naga segment. In regard to the status inequality, their oscillation seems to be the work of spirit forces. Hence a perpetual need for reconciliation and equilibrium was called for, that got carried over to the underworld too. This resolution came about with a perennial process of rites, sacrifices and the like.

The Angamis believed that death was an unfriendly act of *Terhuomia* and that it would happen at old age. Death was the end of everything and so it was deeply mourned by the family, relatives and friends. The body of the deceased among the Angamis was usually buried in the family or clan land with their ornaments, dress or the image or effigy of the dead made of wood. Certain *genna* (taboo) were associated with the death and burial of the deceased.

The burial ceremony among the Angamis depended on the nature of death. If death was unnatural such as persons killed in war, by wild animals, suicide, dying in childbirth- the body was buried outside the precincts of the village so as to avoid misfortune or bad luck to the entire village. In case of normal death, the dead body was cleaned by a person of the same sex as the dead and then the body was wrapped in his own (the dead) clothes to be buried in the country yard. Rituals of death were performed by observing taboos for five to ten days among the Angamis. Usually on the fourth day of the burial, the Angami family members come together and eat the cooked flesh of the cock marking the end of the long death ceremonies. They did not believe in life after death and the one aspect of life after death that worried them was the unnatural death of the young especially the headless ones. The Angami's believed that the headless ones would not get to the abode of *Kepenuopfu* and so, unnatural death was all the more lamented and mourned. The Angami's traditional path of faith was the belief in Animism (*Pfustana*) i.e. belief in spirits. Their God, *Kepenuopfu* was considered as the omnipresent creator and protector of the universe. The spirits were of two types: the benevolent spirits and the malevolent spirits who were responsible for guarding and protecting the human beings from natural calamities and all kinds of misfortunes. Both benevolent and malevolent spirits were worshipped and offered sacrifices. It was essential to offer the right kind of sacrifices at right times as to avoid annoyance of the benevolent spirit. It was feared that if the spirits were

annoyed, the villagers would not get protection from the spirits. It was also believed that the malevolent spirit was dangerous and would cause destruction to all human affairs. So, in order to avoid such distress, countless sacrifices were made. Usually, a priest who specialized in performing sacrifices conducted the rituals such as sacrificing the animals to seek favours of the spirits or to placate them.

The concept of *Gennas* (restrictions or taboos) associated to festivals, crops, diseases and seasonal changes were strictly observed by both the communities. Certain days of the year were set aside to observe such rituals wherein the communities restrained themselves from doing normal works in the field. The concept of *Kenyi* or *Kenyu* was observed to control the people from doing evil acts. It was said that disrespect to *Kenyi* or *Kenyu* would lead to unnatural death, diseases and can even lead one to deformities like dumbness and blindness. Some of the *Kenyi* or *Kenyu* were as follows: It is *Kenyi* or *Kenyu* to offend God, Spirits, to cut sacred trees, to give birth to illegitimate child and to insult orphans. To sow seeds before the observance of *Menyi* or *Penyie* also was *Kenyi* or *Kenyu*. Angami celebrate birth ceremony up to six days after the birth. They follow some *kena* (prohibition). During the pregnancy and delivery; they can't touch any sacred objects. They do not celebrate any ritual on female birth. A pregnant woman can't eat the flesh of animals. On the sixth day after the birth, they give a dinner and use *ju* (rice made liquor). The Angamis are called as *Tarhoma* (spirit) worshippers. *Kepenapuph* (a spirit who is responsible for the creation of the world) protects Angami's lives. *Rajteh* (god of death) produces the unusual causes of death. *Bhaveno* (god of prosperity) protects the property of the Angami. *Talepaphu* (a malevolent spirit) attacks the mind. Both *Tasukho* (male) and *Dajurabido* (female) both god and goddess protect their animals. *Metsem* protects the route of heaven. *Tekhuro* is the god of loin. *Athepe* is the goddess of welfare. *Kechikero*

protect the mountains. Every village has one *Kemobo* (priest). He decides the date of the festivals and decides keeps the records of the traditional rituals and customs. *Kemobo* is chosen from that family which is supposed to be the founder of that village. Usually the eldest person of that family is chosen *Kemobo*. *Gena* (worship) is done by flowers. Angami traditional religion called *tsana* and *nanyu* was characterized by belief in spirits.

Kepenuopfu was considered to be the creator and supreme being of all the living creatures. The word 'Kepenuopfu' literally means 'birth spirit' which was also considered as the ancestress of the entire human race. The Angamis also had deities as '*terhoma*' meaning spirits. The concept and notion of all the *terhoma* turns out to be evil in the minds of the people. But the qualities of some of them were definitely benevolent. *Kepenuopfu* was considered male being but the term '*pfu*' is feminine, which always carried a feminine sense.

The Angamis believed that *kepenuopfu* dwelt in the sky and when a person died his soul goes up to the sky to her. Some of the *terhoma* which the Angamis were aware of were like '*Rutzeh*' the evil one. He was believed to be the giver of sudden death. '*Maweno*' was the Angami goddess of fruitfulness. Physically, she was described to be very short with long hair that swept the ground behind her. She kept pebbles and paddy in her bag and when asked for gift she gives one and never two. These pebbles make the crops and cattle increase. Thus, those who saw *Maweno* were considered to be lucky. *Ayepi* was a fairy that lived in the house and brought prosperity. She was not seen by many but her tracks sometimes were seen like those made by little human footprints in the paddy store or on the dusty floor. *Telepfu* was another female spirit or *Terhoma* and she was a mischievous being. She carried people away but she did not kill them. She carried the people far away and makes them senseless, but allowed other people to find the person again. Other spirit or *Terhoma* like *Tsukho* and *Dzurawu* were two spirits that were

husband and wife. Another spirit *Metsimo* was a spirit who guarded the approach to paradise and *Tekhu-Rho* was the god of tigers. *Ruopfu* was considered as the ancestress of all the spirits. Many think that *kepenuopfu* was *Kechi-Kerho* who is also the spirit that inhabits stones. *Tem* was a ghost who could not kill man but threatened and frightened the cowards. The majority of *Terhoma* were unknown by name, unspecified, vague inhabitants of the invisible world. *Ruopfu* was also a female spirit which seemed to be the guardian angel. In some cases *Ruopfu* was seen as man's own soul.

One of the most important festivals of the Angami tribe is *Sekrenyi*. 'Sekrenyi' is the festival for purification and fertility which falls on the second day after the full moon of the month of 'keno' (February) or the month of 'kezi' (March). The ceremony was done to ensure good health for the whole of the community for the coming year. On the day of the *genna*, all the men folk goes to the village well to take bath and women were restricted from going and fetching water as they were considered to be unclean unlike men. After all the necessary rituals were done by men, women were then allowed to join in the festival. Every Angami festival begins with a ritual called *Kizhie* which is done by women and not by men. If in a family, there were no female then a young unmarried girl will be called from some other family to do the ritual for that family.

The Angamis have different religious ceremonies for birth of a child depending on the sex. The *genna* associated with women giving birth and other ceremonial rites pertaining to both mother and new born male or female infants takes about nine days to complete. But the birth ceremony of a boy child was different from a girl child. The birth ceremony was done according to the gender i.e., if it was a boy, then a cock was killed for sacrifice and if it was a girl then a hen was used. A plant called *Zhahe* or *Tsoheh* was also used for birth ceremonies. It was plucked by the mother where she adjures the baby to become strong and hard like the *zhahe* plant. But the *zhahe*

plant was plucked according to the gender again i.e., different type of *zhahe*. Religious taboo upon women in traditional Angami Naga society was a common thing. For instance, Angami women were taboo or *kenyu* to eat the animals which have nails. This was because there was a fear that the grain in the *chunuo* might deplete fast as women usually go and collect grains from the *chunuo*. Women were also forbidden to eat from broken earthen dishes while cooking, fearing that their rice would get over soon as women are the one who measured and took out rice to cook. There were a lot of taboos surrounding women and these traditional taboos were considered as protection for women from defilement.

Easterine Kire in her novel, *When the River Sleeps*, portrays the Angami tribe's beliefs in the forest and river spirits. Vilie, the protagonist of Kire's book, represents the true forest-man, aware of the reverence that every human being should have for Mother Nature and at the same time, knows the various dangers that lurk in the environment. In the novel she expounds upon inter-tribe relations, village laws, the intricacies of the spirit world and the life of a wanderer. The main character, Vilie, "A man whose soul is tied to the forest in a way that few understood," had seen the sleeping river in his dreams every month for two years, that it had become an obsession, finally comes to the decision to go in search of this mysterious river and to 'catch it' when it sleeps. He sets out on a quest to find the river of his dreams to procure from its heart a charmed stone that will give him untold powers:

"When the river is asleep, it is completely still. Yet the enchantment of those minutes or hours when it sleeps is so powerful, that it turns the stones in the middle of the river bed into a charm. If you can wrest a stone from the heart of the sleeping river and take it home, it will grant you whatever it is empowered to grant you." (Page 3)

The keeper of the fabled “heart stone”, a mystical stone that gives its owner a supreme understanding of the spirit world as well as success in hunting, prowess in war and cattle. The story brings to life the magic of the forest and the realm of the supernatural which is accepted as a significant part of Naga life. As Villie treks through the forest in his quest for the ‘heart-stone’, encountering various people, situations and places on the way, you become keenly aware of this ‘other’ power that is everywhere- in the mountains, the lakes and rivers, trees, birds, and wild animals - a power that can be transferred to chosen people. It also beautifully captures the close relationship and harmony that the Naga people traditionally have with the earth and their reverence of Ukepenuopfu - the birth-spirit, the creator of all.

“He tried to think of the rules of hospitality. If he took firewood or gathered herbs from the forest, he should acknowledge the owners. What was it his mother used to say when they had gathered herbs so many years ago? Terhuomia peziemu. Thanks be to the spirits. If he found an animal in his traps and brought it home, she would repeat that. Terhuomia pezie. It was her way of pronouncing a prayer of thanksgiving to the provider, to Ukepenuopfu.” (Page 80)

The novel expounds upon inter-tribe relations, village laws, the intricacies of the spirit world and the life of a wanderer. The antagonists in the story are a group of unethical hunters, while the narrative focuses upon the various beliefs of Villie’s community. The fluid intermingling of superstition, rationality and compassion is a hallmark of the book and weaves in myths, beliefs, communal rituals and the folk tradition of the tribals in such a way that one could get a vivid picture of their ways of lifewhere spirits share an equal space with the mortals and everyone lives in harmony with nature. There is a strong presence of supernatural element, occult and witchcraft. Mechuseno was killed by a mysterious fever that she contracted when she went to the forest to collect herbs along with two of her friends. When she climbed down the tree after

plucking a beautiful orchid, she could see a tall dark man following her but her two friends could not see anything and in that evening, she had the fever and soon died. Vilie was also superstitious, which could be seen when he was warding off an attack from a were-tiger with invocations of ancestral spirits, or, the powers of the spirits of the ancestors as tribal groups everywhere revere the spirits of their ancestors. On his journey from his outpost in a forest to the sleeping river on foot, he encounters both kind and ruthless villagers, men with tigers as their souls, a magical forest that is supposed to house evil spirits, women who can kill with their curse- take this instance of some women believed to have such magical powers that even if they point a finger at someone or something, that person or thing ends up getting cursed, a woman named Ate was accused of being a *Kirhupfumia* in the novel.

Beliefs in the supernatural and the existence of spirits in nature either good or bad is also seen in the Naga tribe, where they appease the spirits and observed taboos for luck.

III

The Kuki traditional belief system was monotheistic in nature. Before their conversion to Christianity, the Kuki tribes believed in the good and evil works of the spirits. They believed that spirits would reside in trees, rocks, mountains, streams etc. Like the Angami Nagas, the traditional Kuki religious beliefs and practices include the belief in the existence of Supreme God called *Chungmangpa* or *Chung Pathien*. The Kukis believed in the existence of a supernatural power, Spirits or Ghosts and for appeasing them they performed offerings and sacrifices when sick and when a new dwelling site is identified and for cultivation etc. The Kukis are however not idolaters, but rather they believed in a benevolent God who is the creator of

everything in this universe. They also believed in the existence of other gods who are said to be subordinates of the former. According to the traditional belief, *Chung-Pathien* (God of heaven) is considered to be the highest God. He was considered the creator of everything and a benevolent being. This Supreme Being would judge man's action both in the present world and also in the future. They also believed in other subordinate gods called *Noi-Pathien* or *Noi-Mangpa* (evil spirit) is considered to be the 'God of Earth', to whom offerings and sacrifices are made in order to escape from their evil designs and to be cured from sickness. They also believed in a host of benevolent and malevolent spirits and it is these malevolent spirits, in many cases, who demand rituals along with other formalities, like offerings and sacrifices. They practiced various religious rites and rituals to appease the evil spirits in order to secure good health and wealth.

The Kukis believed that certain places such as big trees, rocks, thick forests, riversides, and graveyards were the abode of demons and responded to them with great fear. Brackish springs were believed to be the abode of demons and were prohibited for cultivation. They observed different kinds of taboos in order to attain a good life in this world. Their lives were bound with the fear of superstitions. They believed that some of the people in the village were controlled by demonic powers. The child of a demonic person automatically became a demonic person. If a man who was clean from demonic power married a girl who was demonic, he would also become demonic within three years. But if the girl was free from this power and the boy had demonic power, the girl would become demonic as soon as she stepped her leg across the doorway. Not only the parents, but also their offspring shared the demonic nature and identity according to their superstitions. Superstition also worked prominently *Hongjar* is also regarded as the wife of the Supreme god by the Kukis. Their son *Chila* and his wife *Gumitoo* are also recognized by the Kukis as a vindictive God. *Ghumoishee* who is considered as the illegitimate

son of *Pathien* is never worshipped, but sacrifices are made to appease his wrath, as he is considered an evil spirit. The Kukis have a household god, called *Khamoungno*. The Kukis have priests among themselves called *Thiempu* and their counsels are always sought in case of any difficulty in religious matters. The Kuki tribes put more importance on *Huai* or demons inhabiting every stream, mountain and forest. Misfortune and illness are considered their evil action on the human being. As regards the virtues and vices in the social life of the Kukis, injuring the property of others, using violence, abusing parents, speaking profanely on religion, speaking disrespectfully to the aged, giving false evidence are considered acts of impiety whereas feeding the hungry, giving help to the poor, assisting travellers, giving shelter, worshipping god, obedience to parents and superiors, giving water to the thirsty, bestowing anything required by another to make an offering to the deity etc. are considered as virtuous deeds by the Kukis and were observed to appease the spirits. The Kukis have a custom of observing a sacrifice followed by a feast after the birth of a boy and three days after the birth of a girl. The mother will feed the child from her own mouth, exactly like a bird feeding their young. These feast and sacrifices are observed to ensure the health of the child so that no evil effects may befall the child.

Kuki Tribe of Manipur has distinct cultural trends which are reflected in the festivals they observe and the folklore, songs and music they play. As the society is largely agriculture-based the festivals of the land is accordingly agro-based. Among other festivals, some of the most important festivals are the *Lawm Se' Neh*, *Chavang Kut*, *Sa- Ai*, *Chiang - Ai*, *Hun*, *Chang le Han*, *Kang cap*. After burning the Jhum fields, they celebrate a feast called *Lo-en-dai* where three fowls are killed and eaten along with the rice beer. They observe a harvest festival called *Lam Kut*, when no sacrifice is performed, but drinking and dancing are carried on with full

enthusiasm. The Kuki society is co-related with a number of occasions and festivals depending on the time and season in order to promote the social solidarity. In the traditional days, the tribe experienced various types of festivals and occasions which were mainly celebrated according to the season and time. The nature of festive celebration too is different in which *Zu*, the traditional 'rice beer' finds an important place on all occasions. Festivals and celebrations were held in the traditional days in order to unite members of the society. The religious rites and rituals like *Kut*, *Hun*, and of festivals such as, *Lom-sielkai/kivah*, *kibotlbon-tol-kho*, *lam*, etc. were commonly celebrated in the traditional days. Annual festivals and feasts, thus, form an important feature in the social life of the Kuki tribes, and all these are performed with superstitious beliefs.

They believed that all animate or inanimate objects were influenced by spirits. These spirits were held responsible for the good or evil caused to individuals. To earn their (evil spirits) goodwill they appeased these spirits through the sacrifices of fowls, pigs, goats or any other animals which were deemed fit for the purpose. The Kukis however do not practice idol worship. They worship natural objects of strange alignment which they considered to be the dwelling places of spirits or demons. The traditional systems of worships of the Kukis comprise of the following:-

Shilah-Boulah: It refers to salt springs or spring areas. Usually salt spring waters were found in damp areas where wild animals congregated for the purpose of drinking water. The Kukis had a firm and unshakeable belief that such spots were the abodes of *thilha* (demons or evil spirits) who capture human souls and that could lead to the death of the person concerned. In this context, if a person was sick they used to go to such place and offer sacrifices of fowl or goat or pig. They considered that it was unlucky to jhum the land nearby, and if a man was going to cultivate land near such places, he must go to that place and offer a sacrifice, first, in order to appease the *thilha* before he cultivates that land.

Lithuh: Some deep ponds or pits which are unnatural and irregularly shaped are also regarded as the abode of serpents (*Gulpi*) or demons. If the necessity arises of using a pond for public purposes, the priest (*Thiempu*) will perform certain sacrifices at the spot and declare the water clean for public use.

Kolse leh Themko: Strange cliffs and caves are called *Kolse le Themkho* by the Kukis. They had a firm belief that such dreadful places were inhabited by a spirit demon called *Gamhoise* and such places were worshipped with a sacrifice of an animal, so that the demons will do no harm to mankind. According to their beliefs the demons of these places are more accessible than the demons of salt spring areas. They are of the view that demons of spring are cunning and treacherous whereas the demons of *Kolse* and *Themko* are quite gentle and generous to bless mankind from the bounty of their rich treasures. In Manipur, these kinds of cliffs and caves are found on the western sides of Kotlen Village in the Tamenglong district.

Songpilen: Rocks which were abnormally big in size were also worshipped. Sacrificial animals such as cock, dog, goat, etc. were offered to appease the demons by the *thiempu*.

Fetish forms of worships were also common among the Kukis before the advent of Christianity. Some of the fetish forms of worship were, *Salung*, *Changlung*, *Aiha, Ai* etc. They also practiced the worship of a house magic, called *Indoi* or *Indawi*. They also believed and practiced Ancestor worship called *Pu-Sha Houna* or *Pusha-Pasha* or *Pugao-Pagao* etc. The concept of *Chung-Pathien* is abstract and has no form or a permanent place or residence. The term “Chung-Pathien” signifies an honorific used addressing a male person with respect and veneration. There prevails a difference while conceptualizing *Chung-Pathien*, namely, the benevolent with also evil or bad power having the forces of destruction, and all other forms of evil activities. He is

supposed to live in the underworld and is called *Noimangpa*. He is believed to have been sent by *Chung-Pathien* from the heaven or the sky to dwell at *Kholmun* where all living being are found.

There are several incarnate evil entities in the beliefs of the Kukis namely:-

1. *Gamhoise*: It is the devil of the jungle and *Inmunse* is devil of the house, meaning 'a cursed placed' by a combination of the two words. Souls of the persons meeting unnatural death become this type of dangerous spirits. They are supposed to create trouble to the people according to their own will, at the place where such unnatural deaths occur. In other words, the place is haunted by the soul of the person.

2. *Joumi*: It is a dangerous male spirit. People may die out of shock and fear as it is considered to frighten people. It is active during night and its form is said to vary; though mostly seen as very tall. It is said that it usually stands at the same height of any tree nearby which it happens to appear. The *Joumi* is believed to be very fond of chicken and kills mostly cocks and hen by throttling the neck and sucking its blood.

3. *Kulsamnu*: It is considered to be a female spirit which is in-charge of keeping the souls of the individuals. After the death of a person the *Kulsamnu* takes away the soul and keeps it in a permanent resting place, known as *Van*.

4. *Chomnu*: is another female spirit, but it rarely causes trouble to mankind and therefore is considered to be a harmless spirit.

5. *Gamlahlen*: is another male spirit who causes disease or sickness to the people. It resides in the jungle and to appease it, effigy of a buffalo made of clay is offered along with *Zu* and cock along with un-boiled rice.

6. *Gamkao*: is considered to be an evil spirit residing in a particular place of a jungle which can cause serious illness to the people who meets such spirit.

7. *Kaomei*: is believed to be an evil spirit which flies at night like a fire-fly in a much bigger volume of fire-ball.

8. *Kaosie*: is considered as a greedy spirit and can possess a person and convert such person it possesses into a different personality, changing the voice, the behavior and strength. Such spirit can be released only when it is appeased with what it wants.

While the other entities are related to evil or malevolent, they are susceptible of being appeased or placated through performance of *Phuisap* where the priest called *Thiempu* officiates the ceremony among the Kukis. Rituals or ceremonies are the pivots round which some thoughts about supernatural rotate. Myths, lore or some incantations are there and these are woven mystic words which express gratitude and promises for the future, vis-a-vis prayer for protection, help and security against rainy days. It is chanted in their own language in a form of song which is known as *Phuisam* meaning that it is words of magic called *Doithu*. These are impregnated with magical potentialities and are believed to have tremendous impact on the spirit. From the above mentioned beliefs in spirits, we can see the world of supernatural reigns supreme among the Kukis.

Hills, forest and rivers are conceived as having some potentialities and the people have to interact with them all the time for their existence and perpetuations. The bounty of nature is reflected through these natural phenomena. As such, the veneration and respect for these are unquestionable as certain specific site, either fixed traditionally or finalized by the people, is conspicuous by their absence. It is done or finalized by the priest, *Thiempu*. His post is hereditary

and practically he has to hold his position by his capabilities and social image. Then there are elaborate rituals, sometimes with offerings and sacrifices, as there is no anthropomorphic form of the deity and only one God is present. The *Thiempu* has to do everything through the interpretation of the dreams which he gets during the night while sleeping. Through dreams and visions, he gets directions as to what he should do, when and with what materials or ingredients, what incantations are to be used are also indicated as his guidelines by the spirit who appears in dream to the priest. The priest is the only professional specialist in the trade in the Kuki society in the interpretation of dreams, visions, stars, omen etc. he is the individual who has to maintain communion in the form of sorcery or magic with the supernatural elements and the human beings. And some in the profession has acquired so much of knowledge that they can even counter any spell cast by evil witchcraft. Naturally, therefore, his position in the society is highly esteemed as the *Thiempu* who is the priest of whatever religious form of belief they attribute.

Therefore, some formalities are maintained by the priest on the following causes:

In the case of forest or spirits of the woods, locally called *Gamlah vei*, pig is sacrificed as an important item. Besides pig, a little *Kolbu- Kanpoh* (Pop-corn), *Chang-Kanpoh* (Pop-rice) and *Nakena* (a kind of leaf where one side of the leaf is white, while the other is green). The *Phelex* which is made of thin bamboo split, is normally used in building construction for fixing up the joints. This is also called *Nang* which is color with white, black and red colors and is quadrangular in shape. On top of it, another *Nang*, thinned further, constitutes the decorative part. Generally, all these ingredients are placed on a small cane-built platform which is normally used as a contraption for dining table, usually about six inches above the ground. It is known as *Ankong Lui Na*. This is called *Maicham*-the holy platform. All the above ingredients are spread

over the *Maicham* on which blood of the sacrificed animal is sprinkled. The meat of the sacrificed animal is also placed on it in the following manner:

- a). A small portion of the meat taken from the end of the mouth,
- b). Toes (the tips),
- c). Uppermost part of the ears, and
- d). End of the tail.

But, in the case of ceremonies associated with water-spirit living in the lake, stream or brook, known as *Tui Thilha*, a goat is sacrificed instead of a pig.

All the evil spirits required different kind of animals as sacrifices. There are village rituals and these sacrifices are performed during the spread of epidemic disease, like cholera, etc. which spread very fast and are of contagious nature. Apart from these festivities and elaborate rituals, there are familial worships or rituals which are done as per vows. It has been stated earlier that there is no specific date or place for performing the rituals associated with a particular spirit; meticulous directions are received by the *Thiempu* in dreams. As is the prime duty of a physician in any society, amongst the Kukis also it is the responsibility of the priest called as *Thiempu* to find out causation (Herskovite, 1955-221). Causation of disease and the nature of divination are to counter the evil spirit. Calamities/diseases/misfortunes are considered to be the handiwork of some evil spirits. The Kukis have a clear idea of the seasonal variations and the whole year been grouped into 12 months, which have great influence in the propitiation and ritual the activities. The Chieftainship of the tribe is held by the spiritual head, the *Thiempu* or the priest,

who had to brave all supernatural and spiritual confrontations through offerings, sacrifices and ceremonies.

“Waiting for the Rains,” is a short story written by Priyokumar, which reflects the old belief systems of the Kuki being replaced with that of Christianity. In the short story, we can see how people who belonged to the older generations believed in mysticism, where they are convinced that dreams are a way of predicting what is to come and the interpretation of dreams are important to them. The belief in the supernatural and mysticism could also be seen when Chongnikim has dreams about her husband Lungjahao. She sees the spiritual embodiment of her husband and the narration of the story included her dreams though the story portrays the existence of Christianity, it also reflected the traditional way of the Kuki’s social life where villages raided another. The traditional way of life with the onset of modernization is also seen in this short story.

The practice of worshipping animate and inanimate objects, the belief of spirits existing that could either bless or curse them, the superstitious beliefs and myths seem to have traces of similarities between the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur. Even though the languages used and the customs might differ, the hybridization and modernization of their culture and traditional beliefs has certain similarities to it.

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Chapter 3: Modernization- Effects and Consequences.

Postcolonialism is an academic discipline that analyzes, explains, and responds to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. It speaks about the human consequences of external control and economic exploitation of native people and their lands. Postcolonialism examines the effects of colonial rule on the cultural aspects of the colony and its treatment of women, language, literature, and humanity. It also questions and reinvents the manner in which a culture is being viewed, challenging the narratives expounded during the colonial era.

Perspectives play an important role in the study of post colonialism. Colonial actions have been defended on the basic assumptions that the colonized are savages in need of education and rehabilitation where the nation is unable to manage and run itself properly, thus needing the expertise of the colonizers. The western views of the colonized countries have been criticized by some scholars of the previously colonized countries as it is believed to be in defense or a way to justify their colonization. Gayatri Spivak in her essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” criticizes the intellectuals of the west’s “desire for subjectivity” and claims that “research” or “knowledge” have served as a prime justification for the conquests of other cultures and their colonization as part of the European colonial project. She claims the western scholars authoritatively presents produced knowledge about the other culture as objective. She criticizes the west for seeing colonization as power gaining. She refers to the colonized being seen as “the other,” and suggests that the oppressed speak for themselves. European influence could be seen all over the world in terms of language, culture, politics and even in religious beliefs. Edward Said’s “Orientalism,” talks about the academic interpretation of the east, where the west treats them as objects and suggests that the main problem started when the westerners had an artificial view on the orient. The representation of the orient as barbaric and the imaginative interpretation of them by the west was abhorred by Said and seen as a superior attitude sported by the colonizers

over the colonized. The colonization of the east by the west led to the crisis of identity and the emergence of dividing world into two- ours and theirs (orients) by the westerners. Post-colonial theory has a critique of western representation of race, ethnicity, culture and human identity and therefore includes the study of power relationships between previously colonized cultures and the colonizers.

The effects of colonization, where the total or partial erosion of culture of the colonized countries as well as the rising issues, such as racism where 'racial' groupings have generally been based on national or tribal identities (characterized by skin color and minor physical differences) as well as economic exploitations of the weaker subjects could be seen even after their decolonization. The categorization of the world into ranks such as the first world, second world and the third as well as stereotyping could also be seen during and after colonization. The total rejection of some elements among the colonized of everything western as a form of protest and reaction against the colonizers is also common, while the mediation of identity and subjectivity of the colonized are apparent. The emergence of societies with split loyalties as well as contradictions on the new vision of life which is mainly advanced and western with the introduction of industrialization and also the advancement of cultural life imitating the west can also be seen as the effects of colonization. It brought in the concept of modernization, where the west, for their convenience, influences the culture of the colonized countries with their own.

Modernization is described as a process that a nation goes through as it transitions from a traditional society to a modern one, it refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. Modernization theory maintains that traditional societies will develop as they adopt a more modern practice. The theory stresses not only the process of change but also the responses to that change. It also looks at internal dynamics while

referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies, culture or traditions. Many scholars, often people from formerly colonized countries and those from non-Western nations, have pointed out over the years that modernization theory fails to point out the way the West relied on colonization, slave labor, and theft of land and resources providing the wealth and material resources necessary for the pace and scale of development in the West. They have pointed out that Western modernization is based on the extreme exploitation of the lesser strong countries in the pretext of helping them develop, and that the toll of modernization on social relations is great, leading to widespread social alienation, a loss of community, and unhappiness.

Modernization theory has been criticized by scholars for failing to account for the unsustainability of the project, in an environmental sense, pointing out that pre-modern, traditional, and indigenous cultures typically had much more environmentally conscious and symbiotic relationships between people and the planet. Though in some areas, modernization has worked out well, leading to higher literacy as well as social development, there is a fear of the traditional culture disappearing and being replaced by the western cultures. Therefore, modernization has been criticized as a tool for erasing the cultural and traditional lives of the people, threatening their cultural identity by slowly replacing it with the western culture and in some cases, lead to the mixing of the western culture with that of their own. Homi K Bhabha calls this hybridity, which refers to the state of being at the border of two cultures, marked by a sense of “double consciousness” and “in-betweenness” in the migrant, giving way to liminality of identity. Hybridity therefore is a subversion of single, unified, purist notions of identity, in favour of multiple cultural positions. It is also an answer to the dangers of cultural binarisms of ‘us/them’ and the fundamentalist urge for purist cultural forms. The elements and

values of traditional life need not be completely erased in order to achieve a modern society even with the hybridization of the cultures, since traditional cultures are part and parcel of one's identity.

Modernization theory has been one of the major perspectives in the sociology of national development and underdevelopment since the 1950s. Primary attention has focused on ways in which past and present pre-modern societies become modern (i.e., Westernized) through processes of economic growth and change in social, political, and cultural structures. At its core modernization theory suggests that advanced industrial technology produces not only economic growth in developing societies but also other structural and cultural changes. The common characteristics that societies tend to develop as they become modern may differ from one version of modernization theory to another, but, in general, all assume that institutional structures and individual activities become more highly specialized, differentiated, and integrated into social, political, and economic forms characteristic of advanced Western societies. Although there are many versions of modernization theory, major implicit are that societies develop through a series of evolutionary stages; these stages are based on different degrees and patterns of social differentiation and reintegration of structural and cultural components that are functionally compatible for the maintenance of society, contemporary developing societies are at a pre-modern stage of evolution and they eventually will achieve economic growth and will take on the social, political, and economic features of the west. This modernization will result as complex Western technology is imported and traditional structural and cultural features incompatible with such development are overcome.

Modernization is a part of post-colonial studies since colonization brought the introduction of new culture to the already existing culture and traditions. The west aimed to

rehabilitate the colonized countries into a more advanced country by introducing their own culture. The replacement of their culture with that of another unknown culture did not sit well with some of the colonized people, though some saw it as an improvement and advancement. The fear of losing one's identity and culture to the colonizers existed amongst the colonized and was resisted as it was seen as a form of colonization even after the decolonization. With western influences present, there came a change in the culture and traditions. The gradual changes could be seen in culture, language and beliefs. Therefore, modernization involves not only changes in the institutional level but also fundamental changes at the personal level, a change in modes of thinking, beliefs. Several interacting transformations are thus called for, values and motivations must change and institutional arrangements must be reworked. As mentioned earlier we may say that modernization has two major aspects, first, there is a system of thought and values and secondly, a system of institutions through which an individual carries out his activities. The two systems together influence the behavior of an individual with respect to his self-system and his social system. All of these versions of modernization theory depict a gradual and more or less natural transition from "traditional" social structures to "modern" social structures characteristic of Western societies. More specifically, these theories tend to share to one degree or another the views that modern people, values, institutions, and societies are similar to those found in the West, that is, the direction of change tends to replicate that which had already occurred in Western societies and that tradition is opposite to and incompatible with modernity and these internal factors tend to involve social structures, cultural institutions, or personality types.

It is evident from changes in the attitudes, beliefs and behavior of the people that modernization involves more than just structural changes, creating serious changes in the social institution of religion, society and culture. At present, modernization, globalization and social

change are creating drastic changes in every sphere of life. These changes have both negative and positive impacts on the society. Coming to the north eastern part of India, which was once colonized, we can see several changes in their society, culture, traditions and beliefs which will be traced through the Adi tribe using *The Legends of Pensam* by Mamang Dai, the Angami tribe using *When the River Sleeps* by Easterine Kire and Manipur through the short story “Waiting for the Rains” by Keisham Priyokumar.

Before their colonization, the tribes from the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur lived in exclusion, with each tribe traditionally keeping to themselves. Though each of the tribes belonging to these states resides in the same area, there is a difference in their traditions, cultures, beliefs and languages. The tribes were divided into sub-tribes, where each sub-tribe had a language of their own. Intermingling of the tribes with unknown tribes was hardly present unless it was in the form of war, where one tribe raids or tries to conquer the other tribe for their gains. Inter-clan marriages were strictly prohibited even if the clan was friendly and hospitable to another, though inter-marriages between clans can happen in order to have friendly relations with other clans, it was rarely approved of. The only form of livelihood was through agriculture and hunting and before the coming of the white men; there was no monetary system present. The tribes had a hall where the older men and youngsters gather which acts as their system of education, the children are taught the way of life through the narration of tales by the older men. These tales contain their myths, values and rich culture portraying the way their ancestors have lived. The tribes had several festivals which act as their form of entertainment though there are some festivals which were based on religious beliefs. The belief systems of these tribes were on spiritualism, where the tribes believed in spirits (both good and bad). They observed omens, had totems, priests or shamans who act as the dispeller of evil spirits as well as

doctors, since all illness and diseases were linked with malicious spirits or spirits that they have offended. Superstitions were common and several taboos were observed to ward away malignant spirits or bad luck. The shamans performed different rituals and sacrifices or offerings were made using plants or animals according to the nature of the rituals needed or performed. Each of the tribes believed in a higher form of spirit or being and the belief in supernatural beings could be seen through their folklores.

With the coming of the white men, there came a change in the society, culture, tradition and beliefs of the tribes. Bhabha mentions that the terms of cultural engagement whether they are antagonistic or affiliative are produced performatively (*The Location of culture*, page 3). Better roads were made ensuring an easier road to go from one place to the other, intermingling of the tribes with another became common. The tribes were introduced to an educational system in the form of reading and writing, apart from agriculture, there was a new system of sustaining their livelihood in the form of trades and working for the foreigners. Villages were unified by the colonizers for better administration bringing about the intermixing of tribes. The act of war and headhunting was abolished and the white men introduced their own system of beliefs to the tribes. The old system of beliefs were slowly replaced with the white men's belief and with the onset of education and rise in literacy, the superstitious beliefs once observed, were slowly eradicated. The belief in spirits was eradicated, diseases and illnesses were cured using science and the tribes no longer practiced the form of sacrifices or rituals they once performed in order to cure any form of ailments. There came a more scientific way to explain most ailments and the beliefs in spirits that could harm them were soon replaced by it. Totems and taboos were no longer necessary as they followed the white men's religion. The colonizers introduced more of their culture to the tribes, bringing about a change in the culture of the tribes. Most clans came

out of their isolation to join another and intermarriages led to the mixing of the tribe with another. Though the colonizers and their introduction of their culture to the tribes were rejected by some, the hybridization of the tribe's culture with that of the colonizers was inevitable. Some tribes rejected the culture of the colonizers while some embraced it. Bhabha describes that, "The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (The Location of Culture, page 3). The hybridity of the culture was seen as modernization since the tribal people became educated, their belief in diseases or illnesses being caused by malicious spirits could now be cured, their way of living changed when the tribe no longer head hunted since it was now seen as an act of crime. The system of beliefs where they worshipped animate and inanimate objects was replaced by Christianity, Islam or Hinduism through their interactions with other foreigners. The introduction of a new culture or system was seen as a threat by some, while others embraced it as a way to enhance their lives with the coming of modernity. Though modernization settled amongst the tribes, the traditional culture still had a major role in the lives of the people as it was a form of identity and according to Bhabha, "The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification" (The Location of Culture, page 3). The fear of losing their traditional culture to that of the white men's culture initially resulted in the rejection of the white men and their ways by the tribes.

In the selected texts, the traditional system of the tribes as well as the onset of modernization could be seen. Though the characters in the texts cling to their traditional values, the inevitable changes that were to come is portrayed.

I

The introduction of British rule in Manipur and the arrival of Christian missionaries since 1894 had brought significant changes in the socio-cultural and political life of the Kukis. The adoption of new faith led to the inculcation of new cultural values and identity. However, much of the all traits of culture can still be traced in the life of the people. The Christian missionaries introduced evangelism, western education, modern medicine and consciousness of hygiene, etc. among the tribal communities and acted as a modernizing force in the cultural development. The Kukis had been living in these regions independently without any disturbance before the British came to the soil of India. But after the British colonized India and the adjoining countries, the missionaries took keen interests among the tribal living in the state of Manipur. It is a fact that the Kuki society had been experiencing lots of changes due to the advent of the British and the spread of Christianity and modern education, bringing about certain positive perceptions within the Kuki society. It also brought unfavorable and negative transformation which affected the Kuki society immensely. The treasure of their customary practices such as bride price, customary dues over dead body, etc. is on the verge of eradication. The traditional institutions of *In-pi* (chiefship), *Som* (bachelors dormitory), *Lorn* (labor company) and arranged marriages are now replaced part and partially by the Village Authority system and Youth clubs organization and love marriage. The values of folk dance, folk songs, clothes and designs and the various types of festivals are losing popularity and attention. With the introduction of modern education, the economic diversification has been taking place and consequently, the shift of working forces from agricultural to secondary and tertiary sectors of economy.

“Waiting for the Rains,” a short story by Priyokumar reflects the old belief systems and the culture and society of the Kuki tribe in Manipur. In the short story, we can see how people

who belonged to the older generations believed in mysticism, where they are convinced that dreams are a way of predicting what is to come and the interpretation of dreams are important to them. The belief in the supernatural could also be seen when Chongnikim has dreams about her husband Lungjahao who was murdered. Lungjahao was murdered by another tribe, hinting at the tribal ways of raiding and conquering other tribes. She sees the spiritual embodiment of her husband and her dreams become part of the narration of the story. The slow change that is to come is also subtly seen through the migration of the village to a bigger village called Leijangphai and the existence of trade with foreigners hints at the introduction of the tribe to others. The intermingling of the tribe with foreigners to trade and the moving of smaller villages to bigger ones hints at the changes that would come to the village. Premonitions through dreams and the spiritual embodiment or sightings of the dead are now considered as a figment of one's imagination. The beliefs in premonitions, dreams and spiritual sightings were common then, but as the society progresses; it is seen as a trivial issue. Compared to the pre-modern era, there is a decline in superstitious beliefs of the people. The sightings of supernatural beings, beliefs in supernatural beings and the observation of taboos is also scarce now since people now replaced it with a more scientific outlook. Though a few people in the tribe cling to their traditional beliefs, with modernization setting in, the Kukis have also adapted to the changes, their belief systems and traditional culture along with their society has gone through several changes as compared to the pre-modern era. Foreign religions has slowly replaced the traditional belief systems, though there are still a few who cling to the traditional belief systems, there are those who embrace the beliefs that have settled through colonization and through the intermingling of the Manipur people with foreigners or other tribes that have migrated to Manipur. The traditional belief system is now replaced by other religions such Christianity and Judaism.

The replacement of the traditional belief system with that of Christianity could be seen in the short story where the grave of Lungjahao is marked with a little cross. The belief in Christianity could also be seen when the story narrates, “They were singing prayers inside the church and it came to her ears. The picture of Jesus on the cross inside the church came up sharply. Swallowing her tears with difficulty, she inaudibly followed the prayers.... The tears and prayers helped Chongnikim conjure up a clear vision of Jesus on the cross.” (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 72). Conversion to Christianity after the coming of the British missionaries has brought about changes in family, marriage, social life, their life’s styles, food habits and health seeking behavior of the Kuki tribes in Manipur. The new religion opened the door to more advanced community and exposed them not only to the mainland India but also to the international community. Amongst the tribes, religion becomes all the more important for it is inter-woven in their entire social life and shapes most of their entire social behavior. Thus, we can see the changes in the social behavior encompassing the culture of the people. The Christian missionaries, apart from evangelism introduced western education and modern medicine to the tribal society. These acted as the forces of social change among the tribal people. Thus, the adoption of new religion led to the inculcation of new outlook, new cultural values, and eliminations of their traditional belief systems and embedded them to a new concept in their attitude. Before embracing Christianity, sacrificial, offerings, rites, and rituals were most dominantly practiced in the Kuki traditional society. People performed them as a means to cure a person from sickness. In olden days, an individual who was found unsound in health was considered inflicted with evil spirit like *Pa-vei*, *Gam-lang*, *Kho-lai-lang* etc (which are known as different types of *Kithoi* (sacrifices and rituals), were performed by the village Priest in order to cure the person from ailment. However, after the coming of Christianity, these beliefs and

practices were abandoned as they were considered pagan and evil in the light of Christian principles and practices. In spite of the ill reputation these old customs and traditions carry, they still do restrain individuals or groups from committing offences and crimes. However, the coming of Christianity and western education through the missionaries is considered to be the turning point where real and certain changes had taken place in the socio-political and religio-cultural sphere of the Kukis.

The establishment of educational and monetary systems could be seen through the narration when it mentions that, “Like a famous mathematician Lungjahao picked up a pebble and started scratching marks on a slab of stone. ‘Five hundred bamboos multiplied by 35 paise apiece will be..’ He tried hard to remember the remnants of the rules of multiplication and division which the pastor taught in the church when he was a boy and in the process left on space to calculate on the slab of stone” (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 74). With the spread of educational opportunities, numerous young people entered into the field of job market, leaving their ancestral villages. A significant number of people in Manipur have started residing in all the major urban centers exposing themselves to the experiences of wage employment and to the urban commercial practices and institutions. With the spread of modern education a new economic class emerged. The educated people became absorbed in government employment and thus engaged in non-agricultural activities which led to the leaving of their traditional agricultural and allied occupations and moving to urban and industrial areas for white collar jobs in public and private enterprises and business. The hints at exploitation could also be seen through the lines, “For the past many years Moti computed and they accepted. The calculation part had been all an act put on,” (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 74) “How much profit does he make at Jirighat out of the thirty five paise bamboo they sold? How much will

Lungjahao make if he sold the bamboos himself?” (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 75). The presence of the village being exposed to other places could also be seen when Lungjahao decides to go with Moti to Jirighat and he says, “To learn a little about the bamboo trade. May be I buy a few articles at Silchar” (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 74). Since changes are not generally sudden in an evolutionary scale, traditional practices linger on and are used by the people with suitable modifications. Mutual exchange of labor has been partially replaced by monetary use of wage-paid-labor one or by contract service. Whenever feasible, social obligations are met by monetary payments along with or in place of traditional sacrifices or presentations. Villagers have made a blend of both traditional and non-traditional means of social living in a situation of transition and forms of exchange have changed from barter to money and credit, and the types of such transactions covered not only production and consumption, but also traditional cultural practices. Monetary exchanges have no longer been localized as were in the earlier, but extent as a regular course beyond the village and involved not only people of different clans but also those outside the ethnic group. Desire for change and material progress resulted in the breakdown of traditional boundaries and familiarity with new socio-economic system. Thus the British colonization and the consequent modernization resulted in the emergence of cash economy and set in motion the process of modernization.

The society of the Manipur people slowly changed with modernization setting in. The most discernible are the changes in clothing patterns- use of skirts, sport-shirts, trousers, pants etc, by young men and girls and tailored blouses of varying lengths by young ladies have replaced the traditional wear. Traditional clothes are now worn on occasions or on traditional festivals and dances. The community now shares lands with other tribes who have migrated from different lands, resulting in different tribes settling in Manipur. Inter-tribe marriage became

common amongst the people and even though the state language is Manipuri, the people in Manipur speak different languages which points towards the state's modernization. In the traditional political setting of the Kuki tribe, the village chief was the only central figure thus reducing the village into a semi-independent community, maintaining its own internal order and internal administration. Traditionally, the entire population of the people can be classified as cultivators. Hunting and rearing of animals, etc. are practiced only as secondary occupations. Most of them practice shifting cultivation and only few of them are engaged in settled cultivation. Moreover, lack of cultural contact in the beginning rendered the institution of chiefship and the authority intact. With the advent of the British, the administrative system has also gone through several change, the administrative system before, existed in the form of monarchy the tribes in the pre-modern era was divided into two classes- the chief of the tribes and the commoners (or cultivators). The presence of the chieftain system of administration could also be seen in the story when Chongnikim's father-in-law says, "We have decided in the church to shift to Leijangphai for some time. The village chief had arrived from Leijangphai today. We go tomorrow itself" (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 78). The participation of the tribes in their political development where the authority of the chiefs have declined and replaced by democratically elected institutions. The British colonial rule and the principle of Christianity and later, that of Indian political influence also brought changes into the Kuki traditional political system. It is true to say that after their conversion to Christianity, the various traditional institutions like *Som* organization are no more practiced in its original form. In fact, the *Som* organizations are now changed into Youth Clubs organizations in every Kuki village. Another significant force of modernization is the urbanization of Imphal (the capital) and other urban centers for constant interaction among the people of the hills and the valley. Hygiene and

sanitation was practiced under the guidance of the white men and with modernization setting in, the people began to practice hygiene and sanitation, having proper toilets and following a more hygienic way of life. The houses which were once built with wood, bamboos and straws were now built using materials made from industries. The people moved out of the villages to settle in towns and cities, nuclear families are being set up and new occupations have been taken up, moving away from agricultural activities.

With modernization settling in, the people for economic gains started waging wars, raiding and pillaging the smaller villages which is reflected in the narration of the story, “People kill and murder one another whenever they find the chance to do so, not sparing even weak old men besides women and children. Villages are gutted in bloodthirsty vendetta. People irrespective of their tribes run away leaving their home and property to seek shelter in safer places. They have become refugees in their own land as a result of man made calamity” (Waiting for the Rains, *Sobbing*, page 76). The lines could also indicate the political unrest that has settled due to the change in the political structure of the state which shows the effects and consequences that modernization has on the society.

Modern education also had an impact in the sphere of marriage. Since most of the younger generations grew up with modern education, the influence of western ways of marriage system has affected the individuals. For example, bridal values, which has been given in the form of domesticated animals before, has been changed to cash payment. Presentations of gifts have given way to articles like sofa set, television, furniture and other household articles than traditional baskets, shawls etc. Thus, the old system of marriage by mutual agreement of the parents have been gradually changed to what we term as ‘love marriage’ in which the boy and the girl make their own choice and the parents simply approve and settle the match. However,

this change is not altogether owing to education or Christianity but also to inculcation of foreign ideas and practices.

Other modernizing forces generated by mass media and the application of science and technology to their style of life are also the product of modernization. Scientific and technological advancement have brought about changes in attitudes, beliefs, and even traditions. For instance, the introduction of radio set out common standard of speech and thus brings about uniformity in speech among the various clans within the society cutting across state boundaries. Thus, the tremendous stride made in the field of media communication is another important factor of social change especially among the rural population. The publication and circulation of newspapers and magazines in their language is an example of the impact of change in their society. The improvement of roads in rural area is a modern phenomenon since the existence of roads in the pre-modern era was scarcely known. With the construction of roads and development of transportation, the villagers have the opportunity to develop contact with the outside world, thereby changing their attitudes, economy and culture. At the very outset, the roads break the isolation of the tribal people. They have moved from the stage of oral communication, signs and symbols to modern written communication. The primitive system of communication and transportation were also replaced by jeeps, buses, post and eventually by telephones. Availability of books, newspapers, radios and telephones help in the expansion of communication systems. Villagers are now gradually losing their sentimental attachment of their land and villages; rural-urban migration takes place in large numbers in quest of a better life. However, the result of contact with the outside world has not always been positive, since it had negative impacts on the traditional setting of the tribal society of Manipur.

Social problems and social disorganizations which traumatized the Kuki society are poverty, unemployment, crime, gun-culture, drug abuse and alcoholism etc. The Kuki community rights from the very early days depend solely on agricultural products which could not comply with their day to day needs. Unemployment is one of the main problems faced by the Kuki community especially among the younger generations. Today, with the development of modern education a majority of the Kuki youths became well educated but on the contrary, job opportunities in governmental departments in the state of Manipur could not accommodate the educated youths which led to employ themselves on other path to earn their daily needs in the form of joining the insurgent groups and revolutionary organizations. The culture of drug abuse and alcoholism among the youths also became fashionable and today, most of the young people are found indulging in drinking local wine or foreign liquor and taking drugs.

The state now is divided into different classes, where the change in material culture was remarkable. As a result of breaking their isolation, the people of Manipur became part of the regional and national communication network and gradually, deformation of the superstructure society of the people began. The educated made mistaken assumption that anything western is higher and the accepted norm, and that anything tribal is uncultured, becoming pro-western in their outlook and attitude. Without critical analysis they interpreted the missionary work as 'civilized mission' which brought them into 'light' which has threatened family norms, social ethics and culture-religious meanings in the name of modernization. The impact brought about by modern education though has not proved to be an unmixed blessing in the society. Their outlook, attitude and personality as a whole, no doubt has been improved considerably at the same time the very traditional social fabrics has been threatened. The tribal ethics of simplicity and solidarity along with selfless community services has been eroded. The age old customs and

traditions have been tampered in the name of modernization and development. As a result, certain unwanted things, like disrespect for the aged and elderly, negligence of duty towards the community, and so on have increased among the younger generations. This sudden change in their mental outlook from the old ways of life to the new has resulted in a decline in the qualitative way of life and has produced an uncertainty of future for many. The effects that modernizations have on the tribes of the three states are similar in some areas.

II

The Legends of Pensam by Mamang Dai brings out the beliefs of the indigenous people in the living spirit of nature, the tribes here believe in co-existence with the natural world along with the presence of spirits in their forests and rivers. It brings to light several facets of the Adi society, especially that of their culture and way of life. The novel is divided into four parts constituting the phases of evolution and growth of the village, the lives and loves of the characters, and their passage through the various stages of life. The first few chapters introduce readers to this strange phenomenon as people get killed mysteriously inside thick, dense forests. The novel concentrates mainly on the myths, rituals, legends, and beliefs central to the lives of the Adi tribe. The constant tug of war between myth and reality in the lives of the Adis is portrayed like the place that they live in, where the people too are governed by countless myths and superstitions that touch each and every aspect of their lives. The novel portrays the changing status of the Adis with one side showing their traditional beliefs and the other on the path of modernization, while the topic addressed is the struggle between tribalism and modernity, it is not blatant. Dealing with three generations of people in a village in Arunachal Pradesh, *The*

Legends of Pensam, portrays the evolution and growth of the village through the attachment to the tribal beliefs and culture. The status of the tribe is visible right from the first generation of the villagers, living in a primitive era who sustains themselves mainly on hunting and agriculture, to the second and third generations who are educated and on the path of bringing in social and economic development to the village. Similar to almost all tribal culture, the Adis too have firm foothold on their myths and legends which seem to govern each and every aspect of their lives. Filled with traditional tribal beliefs, these villagers are greatly influenced by spirits, shamans, and unnatural events, whenever any unpleasant event takes place; the Adis consider it as the working of the spirits and rush to call a shaman to ward away the evil eye. The malign influence of the spirit is capable of causing every possible negative occurrence in the village - men get unnaturally killed in hunting expeditions, children suffer strange illnesses, houses are suddenly burnt to ashes, men kill their family unconsciously. The explanations for these incidents are all related to the spirit world and also attributed to certain essential rituals which had not been performed by people of this generation or the earlier one. Shamans are called to ward away the negative spirits and thereby, restore peace and order in the village. The villagers recall the tale of the fisherman who had a vision of Biribik, the water serpent, and dies immediately within a year. So, no one is surprised when Hoxo's father who had a similar vision was killed unexpectedly in a hunting expedition. These are naturally accepted by the people as stated by the author in the novel: "In these small clearings in the middle of the forest, people have premonitions. Women dream dreams. Babies are born who grow up unnaturally fast, like deer or lion cubs....Old women still braid threads of vine and pray for safe passage" (Page 10). The beliefs of the Adis in different kinds of spirits abound in the book. When Pinyar's hut suddenly caught fire, as per the beliefs of the tribe, she is banished to the outskirts of the village at the extreme edge of the forest.

The luckless owner, during the period of taboo, is not permitted to entertain any visitor who can “eat with her for fear of provoking the tiger spirit that causes fire and tempting it to follow them home” (Page 28). Pinyar’s son, Kamur, too falls prey to the evil eye of the spirit. When in a bout of unconscious frenzy, Kamur murders both his children cold-bloodedly; the act is again cloaked under the guise of the influence of evil spirits. Begging forgiveness, Kamur pleads innocence saying that “an evil spirit must have traded his soul for that terrible hour when he picked up the rusty dao and went hunting for his children and for his wife, whose loose hair appeared to have deflected the blow that would have finished her” (Page 31). However, analyzing the case further, the villagers come to a more scientifically accurate conclusion based on genetic influence and state that it is not only the result of evil spirit but also faulty blood line that caused Kamur’s sudden madness - “the right or wrong kind of marriage, the right or wrong kind of life, could always be traced to something in the blood....Some blood lines are almost taboo to mention....They see visions. They are visited by spirits” (Page 32). The novel gives an accurate picture of such beliefs of the Adis in the spirit world, sometimes bordering on certain scientific explanations. An analysis of the Adi myths and legends highlights that much of the tribe’s beliefs in the spirit world exists in conjunction with the world of nature.

Like all indigenous tribes, the Adis too have a great reverence for nature as Mamang Dai explains, “Like majority of tribes inhabiting the central belt of Arunachal, the Adis practice an animistic faith that is woven around forest ecology and co-existence with the natural world” (Author’s note). Believers of animistic faith, the people lived their lives amidst their daily negotiations with the forest and river spirits. The tribal lores in the novel are filled with stories of such spirits and armed with profound knowledge about their environment, the villagers are

immediately aware when their lives are affected due to the influence of certain malign spirits which may present themselves in the forms of trees or animals.

The narrative seen in the novel reflects a tribe which is on the border of modernization. The introduction of guns to the villages was one which points to modernization. Though medicines and doctors were present, the villagers still believed in performing rituals to cure illnesses and the belief in offending spirits was still present. Mona, one of the characters in the book represents the modern era. When Mona's daughter Adela was diagnosed with autism, her family history of illnesses was traced, while Togum's son Kepi, who was autistic, was believed to have suffered from it due to Togum killing a serpent. Kalen who suffered from malaria believed that eating a monkey's flesh would cure his sickness portraying that the belief in traditional cure for illnesses were still present. With the coming of the British, the changes began with roads being built and the British officials filtering in to the villages. Education was introduced with the children attending schools, the change in occupations from hunting and farming was changed to working for the British officials. Other tribesmen were brought by the British to villages as their bodyguards, implying that the British were partly responsible for the intermingling of different tribes with another. The British people were called "migluns" and even though the village people were curious and open to them being in the village, relations with them was prohibited which could be seen through Nenem's relationship with the British officer David. The British settling in their lands and marrying their tribeswoman was not approved by the tribe. Education was introduced where the tribe learnt the language of the British people, through this, the culture of the white men was introduced. The tribe's difficulty in embracing the new culture could be seen through the conversation between David and the big sahib when he

mentions: “Well, they’re strange here, these people. Yes, they won’t transplant easily, I dare say. Well, be careful.” (Page 106)

The novel also indicates the people’s reception to change as well as the advent and occupation of the Adi’s native land by the colonial forces: “Since the Abor expedition of 1912 after the Komsing incident, the whole of the Siang valley had been opened up for exploration and the numerous villages of the frontier hills had been brought under British administrative control. When gunfire set the villages ablaze, the elders had conceded defeat by waving tattered old newspapers. Some years before the war began, the British had set up permanent camp on the banks of the river at Pigo, having bargained with the villages of Duyang for land. . . . Now the whole area had become a free trade zone with land and river convoys, officers, traders and porters moving in all directions. The villagers saw the light of Pigo from their hilltops and were seized with a desire to learn new things, or at least to examine them and find out what it was all about. Everyone was flocking to this new destination which was now the recognized seat of power” (Page 90-91).

The last few chapters of the book portray the advent and influence of the new world in the lives of the villagers, “The texture and speed of change was visible in strange ways all across the lands. A visitor coming to the town for the first time would still see the green hills, the green bamboo and the green river flowing in all directions, but now there were young men on motorcycles roaring across the stones while young picnickers wearing fake fur and woollen caps waved at passers-by” (Page 188). The lines hint at the slow changes in the society where people were more industrialized, using modern forms of travelling as well as the introduction of science and technology. And these changes were met with both hesitation as well as hopes which are portrayed by Rakut when he said:

“Why should we be afraid of change? Change is a wonderful thing! It is a simple matter of rearrangement, a moment of great possibilities! Why should we be so afraid? We all want to be happy, but happiness eludes us as we keep thinking about it all the time. Sleepless nights. Sad bereft mornings. Then suddenly, for no reason, the blood hums and a feeling of elation carries us through another day! This is how it has always been. We have nothing to fear.” (Page 191)

The difficulties of an indigenous community to suddenly embrace changes are dealt with authentically. Much like other indigenous communities, the Adis too have a strong reverence towards nature and believe that the spirits of their ancestors exist in their natural surroundings. *The Legends of Pensam* documents an indigenous community’s cultural beliefs and lifestyle and authentically portrays the rich oral tradition of the Adis, their myths and legends. The novel most importantly traces the impact of modernization on such a section of people and records the clash of tradition and modernity under the influence of the new world scenario.

The story in the novel brims with various accidents which have been occurring in hunting expeditions. The arrival of firearms is mainly attributed as the reason for the loss of so many lives as well as the threat to the natural environment as it mentions that, “A tragedy was expected. Ever since the arrival of firearms into these hills, hunting had become a passion” (Page 10). Though the introduction of guns is a form of modernization, it brought about negative effects as stated by Pinyar, “Every year at least three men die in hunting accidents in our parts” (Page 28), therefore, the rise in numbers of grieving widows and mothers who share similar fates due to accidental deaths of their husbands and sons in hunting mishaps could be seen. The difficulties of an indigenous community to suddenly embrace changes are dealt with authentically by the author. The effort of the migluns (British) to build roads involving the labor

of the villagers is not well-accepted. The loss of able-bodied men in the village was casting a shadow of gloom and the destruction of the lands was also a point of conflict with the British.

With the onslaught of modernization, the traditional culture and beliefs were slowly replaced with that of the west. Educational institutions became a tool for introducing the western culture where the educated people saw their traditional culture as inferior to that of the west as they were taught that their way of life was “backwards” and they were “savages”. The colonizers introduced their own culture to the tribes for their convenience, discarding the importance of the traditions and cultures of the tribe as it was seen as uncivilized, which is reflected when the old headman said, “They think we are a village of horror, but it is not true! The leaves of the orange trees glisten. The hills are radiant with the light of the sun....These days many visitors are finding their way here and you can hear their voices asking the way, the curious migluns shielding their eyes and asking for help to enter the maze of stories that the miri remembers and restores to life..We are not a village of shame” (Page 55-56). The traditional and cultural values of the tribe saw a decline as they partially adopted the western culture which raises the issue of identity as traditions are a part of one’s identity. The younger generations misunderstanding that westernization of their tradition is the way to modernization began to slowly discard their culture embracing the western culture forgetting the importance of their traditional values which is reflected in the shaman’s words, “So that they will understand our dance and why it is important to remember” (Page 56) since tradition defines a person’s heritage.

The economic change in the society brought with it material culture where the people began to move away from their agricultural occupation to pursue other occupations such as working for the colonizers. The change in occupations led to the pursuing of western education and the decline in weaving and farming. Western education also led to the slow decline of their

traditional belief systems as there was a tendency among the newly educated people of the tribe to think that anything that was ‘western’ was ‘good and civilized’ which included their religious practice. The western education led to the devaluation of their own culture where the young people fail to remember the traditional stories, the songs and dances. The people of the tribe also replaced their traditional attire with that of the west, donning their traditional attire only on occasions. In terms of religious or non-religious activities, the festivals of the Adi tribe has also changed where the taboos observed on the days of festivals have become more lenient and relaxed. Nowadays, the shamans are hardly seen performing religious rituals. It is a sad reality that the more tribal people are adapting to modern ways of living the more their indigenous knowledge and skills are eroding day by day. This steady erosion is posing grave dilemma among the next generation and caused them to a standstill with semi-tribal and semi-modern characteristics.

III

Similar changes in the indigenous tribes of Nagaland from modernization are also seen. The Angami tribes, in particular, were known for their unique socio-cultural traditions and values. They were a close knit society. They depended on hard work, work culture, social justice, loyalty, honesty, courtesy and respect, cooperation, cohesiveness and had a sense of oneness and unity with an independent outlook. This indicated a society with strong value patterns though with the notions of modernization, these values are now slowly eradicating. Easterine Kire in her novel, *When the River Sleeps*, portrays the Angami tribe’s beliefs in the forest and river spirits. Vilie, the protagonist of Kire’s book, represents the true forest-man, aware of the reverence that

every human being should have for Mother Nature and at the same time, knows the various dangers that lurk in the environment. In the novel she expounds upon inter-tribe relations, village laws, the intricacies of the spirit world and the life of a wanderer. The main character, Vilie, “A man whose soul is tied to the forest in a way that few understood,” had seen the sleeping river in his dreams every month for two years, that it had become an obsession, finally comes to the decision to go in search of this mysterious river and to ‘catch it’ when it sleeps. He sets out on a quest to find the river of his dreams to procure from its heart a charmed stone that will give him untold powers:

“When the river is asleep, it is completely still. Yet the enchantment of those minutes or hours when it sleeps is so powerful, that it turns the stones in the middle of the river bed into a charm. If you can wrest a stone from the heart of the sleeping river and take it home, it will grant you whatever it is empowered to grant you.” (Page 3)

The keeper of the fabled “heart stone”, a mystical stone that gives its owner a supreme understanding of the spirit world as well as success in hunting, prowess in war and cattle. The story brings to life the magic of the forest and the realm of the supernatural which is accepted as a significant part of Naga life. As Vilie treks through the forest in his quest for the ‘heart-stone’, encountering various people, situations and places on the way, you become keenly aware of this ‘other’ power that is everywhere- in the mountains, the lakes and rivers, trees, birds, and wild animals - a power that can be transferred to chosen people. It also beautifully captures the close relationship and harmony that the Naga people traditionally have with the earth and their reverence of Ukepenuopfu - the birth-spirit, the creator of all.

“He tried to think of the rules of hospitality. If he took firewood or gathered herbs from the forest, he should acknowledge the owners. What was it his mother used to say when they had gathered herbs so many years ago? Terhuomia peziem. Thanks be to the spirits. If he found an animal in his traps and brought it home, she would repeat that. Terhuomia pezie. It was her way of pronouncing a prayer of thanksgiving to the provider, to Ukepenuopfu.” (Page 80)

The novel expounds upon inter-tribe relations, village laws, the intricacies of the spirit world and the life of a wanderer. The antagonists in the story are a group of unethical hunters, while the narrative focuses upon the various beliefs of Villie’s community. The fluid intermingling of superstition, rationality and compassion is a hallmark of the book and weaves in myths, beliefs, communal rituals and the folk tradition of the tribals in such a way that one could get a vivid picture of their ways of lifewhere spirits share an equal space with the mortals and everyone lives in harmony with nature. There is a strong presence of supernatural element, occult and witchcraft. Mechuseno was killed by a mysterious fever that she contracted when she went to the forest to collect herbs along with two of her friends. When she climbed down the tree after plucking a beautiful orchid, she could see a tall dark man following her but her two friends could not see anything and in that evening, she had the fever and soon died (Page 5). Villie was also superstitious, which could be seen when he was warding off an attack from a were-tiger with invocations of ancestral spirits, or, the powers of the spirits of the ancestors as tribal groups everywhere revere the spirits of their ancestors. On his journey from his outpost in a forest to the sleeping river on foot, he encounters both kind and ruthless villagers, men with tigers as their souls, a magical forest that is supposed to house evil spirits, women who can kill with their curse- take this instance of some women believed to have such magical powers that even if they point a finger at someone or something, that person or thing ends up getting cursed, a woman

named Ate was accused of being a Kirhupfümia in the novel. The Priests or shamans acted as healers and were contacted by the people for their knowledge and advice. Taboos were observed by the people, supernatural beings and elements were believed in while superstitions were common and the way of life was still simple.

When the River Sleeps also contains traces of modernization where civilization is on the brink and slowly moving towards modernization. Through the novel, we can see that inter-clan or tribe mingling was already common when Villie mentions “an obligatory detour to the nepali woodcutters who were his only neighbours.” (Page 11) The existence of trade when farming is the main source of livelihood shows how the people were on the road to modernity along with the existence of guns and the Forest Department which portrays the slow ecological consciousness of the people by preserving some wild animals as well as the forest. Education existed in the form of an institution, the mention of an Australian researcher shows that the white men had entered their lands. The presence of Christianity shows that some parts of the land was already modernized by the white men replacing their sacrificial beliefs, “A hundred years ago, the non-Christians customarily offered chicken sacrifices if anyone fell sick. They feared death so much that they would bring a chicken into the woods and proclaim, “Life for life” and release the chicken so that it cheeped all evening until it died or was eaten by a bigger animal. But no one did that now because the Christians taught that *Jisu* had been sacrificed for everyone’s sickness so nobody needed to offer chicken sacrifices again.” The migration of one village to the other or into towns and cities also shows how modernization has affected the tribes. The existence of roads and trade ensured the mingling of tribes with others. The judicial system which was handled by the chief in the past was now handled by village councils, which shows the slow change in the administrative system of the village. The social life of the villages seemed to have

changed from the olden times when the age group houses, which once served as a place for education was replaced by institutions which taught the children foreign languages and science. The slow and gradual change that the people are faced with was inevitable as certain changes were made and the lives of the people had changed socially, culturally and religiously. The changes that were made were either faced with resistance or acceptance. Ate when she was to leave her village to follow Villie said, "If I am going to start a new life, why should I take so much of the old life with me? It would only hinder me from beginning my new existence. It would only make me long for the old life again, and that would make me miserable. I must accept that my life here has ended, and I must focus on my new life if I want it to work." (Page 170) The line hints at the possibility of the people from one tribe migrating to another, to join other tribes which could result in the mixing of culture. Monetary system existed and the people traded with the others, the existence of occupations in the form of institutions seems to have existed.

The pre modern family system of the Nagas was that of a joint family whereas nuclear families are practiced even in villages today. Marriages were usually monogamous and fidelity to the spouse was considered a high virtue. The family was the most important institution of social education and social control. There used to be a deep respect for parents and elders which nowadays are hardly seen in the traditions. The impact of modernization is slowly but steadily eroding the centrality of villages as a social unit as large commercial towns are rapidly coming up in every region of Nagaland. This is bringing about drastic change in the values, lifestyle and social setup of the people.

The introduction of Western education and Christian faith brought about tremendous changes in the tribal way of life. This has also resulted in a drastic shift in the socio-cultural system. The

colonizers and the Christian missionaries taught the newly emergent leaders that they were 'backward' and should accept the colonial rule as beneficial for them. This is the argument which was carefully used for justifying colonial occupation. One of the main objectives of the missionaries was to train native workers and operate through them. Every new convert was under obligation to abandon his old faith and habits and to give up his tribal hair-cut and to adopt the European hair style. What was most crucial here was the change in their mental outlook and the western-educated group looked at Europeans as models and tended to become pro-western in outlook and attitude. The young Nagas who received western education felt and preached that their ancestors were 'headhunters', and made other young men ashamed of their past, their way of living, their tradition and culture. They also felt that the 'western' people and their so-called 'civilizing mission' had brought them into the 'light'.

The spread of Christianity in Naga communities has both positive and negative impacts on the society. Though modern education improves livelihood and health status, the traditional values are drowned out by them. These changes are observed in the belief system, mindset and attitudes of the people and in the present day and many young people hardly remember the traditional stories, the songs and dances. They do not understand the significance of the patterns on their tribal shawls, nor do they revere nature as once their ancestors did. Many dramatic transformations have been taking place in the society. In the present tribal society, this process of modernization is overwhelmed with Western ideas, images, and concepts. With this trend continuing, the external pressure to become modernized is so strong that it is replacing the treasures of their rich tradition where the level of modernity is measured in terms of materialism and power of wealth. The society which was once characterized by its communality, sense of justice, equality, integrity, honesty, and religiosity where one finds a sense of belonging because

all the important activities affecting individuals and the community are done together, keeping in mind the welfare of the village community as a whole. In a society where there is mutual trust, respect for eldest, obedience to parents, absence of juvenile delinquency, sharing of worldly goods, sacrifice in service, and a feeling of oneness and unity was slowly gone with the coming of modernization. This contact with the west brought many breaks in indigenous tribal practices. Old customs and traditions were rapidly forsaken or modified beyond recognition, and old beliefs which for ages had been firmly held were quietly dropped. The Christian population grew steadily, and the spirit of change invaded and pervaded every aspect of village life.

The presence of foreigners, whether European or Indian, influenced the behavior of the tribes of Nagaland. Opportunities to earn money in the services of Europeans made many tribes less industrious. Thus the tribes began migrating and communal life saw a drastic change. With the Westerners, came improved methods of travel and communication and development of commerce, village traders who were previously cut off from the plains and more distant villages by hostile neighbors, were able to journey in safety. Some trader's access of the marketplaces and contact with Europeans led to the introduction of the metallic currency of India as the medium of exchange, displacing the barter system. British control of the tribal areas also led to the introduction of manufactured goods into the region, replacing goods made by hand, such as earthen pots, wooden plate, etc. today the tribal ways of basket and mat weaving, wood carving, and other indigenous handicrafts and artistic works have almost been abandoned due to the availability of manufactured counterparts on the market at a cheaper rate than they could produce.

Conclusion:

In this regard, the spread of Christianity and modern education are considered to be the root cause for the social and economic changes of the Adi, Angami and Kuki tribe and thereof their modernization.

Bhabha explains that it is through the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling, we encounter the question of cultural difference. Colonization brought the introduction of new culture to the already existing culture and traditions. The replacement of their culture with that of another unknown culture did not sit well with some of the colonized people, though some saw it as an improvement and advancement in the form of modernization. The fear of losing one's identity and culture to the colonizers existed amongst the colonized. In Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur, stark changes in their culture, traditions and beliefs are observed. With the coming of the colonizers, the superstitious and cultural belief systems were slowly replaced by the western beliefs, though there are a few tribes who still followed the traditional belief systems. The majority of the tribe traditional belief system was replaced by the western beliefs. Since the intermixing of culture took place with the coming of foreigners, religion such as Christianity, Hinduism or Islam were introduced. The replacement of the practice happened as the people are introduced to more cultures and have adapted some of it to their own. There lies the perpetual clash between holding on to traditions and accepting the changes that have now invaded them which Bhabha terms as the process of hybridity.

Modernization impacts culture in different ways- positive effect such as knowledge of science & technology; negative effect such as feudalism; neutral effects such as languages and arts etc. Modernization is understood as the process by which a country moves from a traditional agrarian

society to having a more secular urbanized society and in the process it remolds the cultural system into a new mode. However, it is often linked with destruction as it is the profound change of human civilizations which includes not only the great change and transformation from traditional to modern politics, economy, society and culture, but also all human development and the rational protection of the natural environment at present even though some forests are cleared for habitations.

As new political consciousness dawned upon the people at the beginning of the 20th century, new political leaders began to question even the very basis of colonial domination. With the acceptance of democracy as a form of government and consequently, adult franchise, they began to negate colonial administration and question the rights and privileges of the traditional leaders who were dubbed as slaves of the colonial government. Though they were opposed to perceived ideals and principles of western institutions, it was through the acceptance of these ideals that they claimed their right to leaderships; therefore, lacking firm legitimacy in the society in which they lived and whatever legitimacy they claimed, tended to become 'alien' (without firm traditional roots) since "Difference, therefore, persists- in and alongside continuity" (Stuart Hall, Cultural Identity and Diaspora, page 227).

With the introduction of education, the tribes in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland began to look with disgust at their own culture through the glasses of their new masters who framed the syllabus and content of the teaching they received and since Bhabha had mentioned that "Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality, to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure" (The Location of Culture, page 247), the profound but devastating psychological effect the colonial rule and western education had on young men educated in their schools cannot be ignored. One contradictory situation in which the

new educated group was caught was that they were still bound by some traditional values and customs. This was explained by Bhabha as, “Each time the encounter with identity occurs at the point at which something exceeds the frame of the image, it eludes the eye, evacuates the self as sight of identity and autonomy and- most important- leaves a resistant trace, a strain of the subject, a sign of resistance. We are no longer confronted with an ontological problem of being but with the discursive strategy of the moment of interrogation, a moment in which the demand for identification becomes, primarily, a responsive to the other questions of signification and desire, culture and politics” (The Location of Culture, page 71). Their main problem was, therefore, the simultaneous adaptation of two mentally contradicting elements: one ‘traditional’ and the other ‘western’. In the process, they were neither western nor traditional but a hybrid of both identities.

The fear of losing their traditional values is now present amongst some of the people where they try to revive their traditions. Though western influences are present in their everyday lives, some traditional values are still intact. The adoption of new practices with their traditional practice leads to hybridization of culture, where some western practices are adapted to their cultures. It became imperative that if the society was to adapt to the fast changing world, they must forego part of their traditional beliefs and practices to meet the demands of the time. In the quest for modernity, the tribes were deluded into accepting westernization as modernization, allowing parts of their culture to become a thing of the past.

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Chapter 4: Conclusion

Modernization and the aspirations to modernity are probably the most overwhelming theme which has engaged the attention of sociologists, political scientists, economists and many others. Modernization can be understood as the process by which a country moves from a traditional agrarian society to having a more secular urbanized society and in the process it remolds the cultural system into a new mode. In recent years the term 'Modernization' has come to be used with starting frequency to characterize the urge for change. It is a continuous and open ended process. Many critics have pointed out psychological and moral hazards of modern life like alienation, feeling of rootlessness, loss of strong bonds and common values, hedonism, disenchantment of the world, and so on have all been cited as the impact of a social process/civilization that reaps the fruits of growing privatization, subjectivism, reductionism, as well as a loss of traditional values and worldviews. Some have suggested that the end result of modernization is the loss of a stable conception of humanity. Modernization and hybridity goes hand in hand as with the coming of modernization in the states of Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, we could see the tribes of the states adapting or mixing their cultures with that of the west.

The modernization phase of the tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur began with the advent of the British. The British established their rule in all parts of the country and in the process; vast areas of these states were opened up and brought under centralized administration. The British saw the people as primitive and were interested in 'civilizing' these people. They levied new rents for land and made new land settlements and the areas which were once relatively secluded experienced the entry of a new variety of people. Missionaries were sent to some of the areas in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur and

their traditional belief systems were replaced by Christianity. Schools were opened up and English was opted as the main language of instruction and western medical system slowly started to replace the traditional practices of cure. Styles of life and ways of behavior began changing which was noticeable in the dress patterns. Though many traditions continued to survive, the modernization of these three states began.

According to P.L Berger, religion has now arrived in the latter sphere. Hence, faith, which was originally an unquestionable given, has been shifted from the “strongly institutionalized” background of human social life to the “de-institutionalized” foreground (P.L Berger *The many altars of modernity. Toward a paradigm for religion in a pluralist age* 2014: 6) and has become a matter of choice. This does not necessarily lead to an abandonment of faith. However, religious convictions are no longer taken for granted, but rather require a conscious decision. This is reflected in the fact that existing options are also religious. Berger for many years had held the view that fewer and fewer people experienced their lives as being interwoven with religion. Now, however, he assumes that a secular discourse is permeating the religious discourse. This by no means results in religiosity being driven out of human consciousness. Rather, the consequence is an increase in complexity that can be described as “social hybridity,” which goes hand in hand with “hybrid sociality.”

Social and cultural tradition provides the purpose, meaning and rationale to the life of the people and plays a vital role in shaping the various institutions in a society. The social institutions, customs, beliefs and values blend together to form the whole social and cultural traditions of the people in a society. These traditions practiced by the tribes guide and determine the thinking, attitudes and beliefs of the people, which in turn regulate and monitor the people’s way of life in resonance with the approved social norms of human life. There are multiple origins

of values but our values owe a great deal to our culture and there exists a close link between values and culture. Values originate from culture tenets and help to shape and maintain the cultural structure of the society. On the other hand, culture conditions the various values developed by the individual. The present society is undergoing a period of transition where desires, behavioral patterns and social structures are altering. These changes have brought about fragmentation of values. So also the rapid changes and refinement of science and technology has generated a conflict between traditional and modern values among the young. Even the educated elites have difficulty in resolving the conflict between traditional and modern values. One should keep in mind that social and cultural traditions are not in conflict with modernity. But, misconceived notions of modernity along with rapid development of science and technology and subsequent industrialization have caused great threat and danger to our age old morals and values. In the changed social set up, definitions of the valuable values stand questioned.

The rapid changes in the social set up, blind imitation of the west, influences of mass communication and subsequently, leading to misconception of modernity has brought about deterioration of the worthwhile values. As a result of which the whole life system has been changed in the process of development due to diffusion, accumulation, adoption and assimilation of the western beliefs and culture. Every society has good as well as bad elements and no society or individual can be completely satisfied with their ways of life. But when the evil aspects overtake the good aspects of life the society breaks down. In the midst of rapid changes in the social scenario of the Adi, Angami and Kukis, there are many bad elements creeping in. To substantiate, it is worthy to mention a few- greed, crime, corruption, extortion, self-centeredness, exploitation, materialistic attitude, political corruption, alcoholism, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, rape, conflict, anxiety and depression, loss of the will to work, lack of trust and

respect, fatal diseases, decline in peace and harmony, environmental degradation, etc.,. There is a progressive erosion of values resulting in pollution of the public life. These are all signs of malfunctions in the society. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to rediscover some of the age old good values of the society which will be important in the functioning of a modern society. So also, it is important and necessary to replace or modify or reinterpret some of the old values and to assimilate new values for the developing society. If desirable value system based on rich cultural traditions are identified and promoted among the young modernized generation, it will not only reduce a number of ill factors in the society but will enhance efficiency and productivity in all sectors, industrial, agricultural, service sectors etc., and at the same time, preserve our cultural heritage.

Christianity was one of the factors attributing to the modernization of these areas and the neo-converts became a part of the western culture. The English language, western dress, mannerisms and medicines being the western culture flourished as they were considered as superior and advanced to that of the local culture and the people became detached from their traditional culture, beliefs and styles of living. There have been developments of superficial westernization in matters of dress, food, habits and other activities which have seriously challenged the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur's traditional way of life. In many places, the indigenous population resented the new regulations, new settlers and foreign culture in their areas as they saw it as a threat to their culture and they rebelled. The emergence of Christianity in these areas has both negative and positive effects.

If we study the process and the level of social change and its transformation which has taken place in the society of the Adi, Angami and Kukis since the time of British colonialism and Christianity, we can see that the old existed side by side with the new system even though the

latter has taken over almost totally. Social change may be understood as the significant alteration of social structure or the change in social values, institution, property relations, and economic pursuit, personal and role distributions. Social change may also refer to the modifications which occur in the life patterns of the people. The process of social change through modernization is adaptive and constitutes a process of socio-cultural and economic transformation in its very nature and tends to be accumulative, which then selectively promotes structural replacement and differentiation in society. The tribal societies reflected their pure traditional status till the occupation of their habitat by the British in the 19th century. As a measure to civilize the tribal people, the British government encouraged the Christian missionaries to start their gospel work among the tribes in the region. For the same purpose they introduced formal education in the areas for the first time. The society of the Adis, Angamis and Kukis experienced remarkable transformation and changes in the wake of the British rule and the spread of Christianity. With the introduction and development of modern education through the western missionaries, the Adi, Angami and Kuki have now opened their eyes in the developmental process in various fields. They occupy new professions and occupations in the government and the private sectors rather than confine to the traditional way of Jhum activities.

The Nagas have come a long way from their grandparents' culture to the present day lifestyle. There has been a paradigm shift with the onset of modernization and the affluence towards the Western culture; and the Nagas have adopted the ways of it. The inclusion of Western agents into Nagaland which began with British military conquest and American missionary intrusion has resulted in a significant influence and westernization of the Naga culture and worldview. Since their colonial contact with the west, the Naga traditional values are being replaced by Western values. The literal colonization of Nagas by the West has ended, but the process of

westernization is continuing with the help of modern media, technology and other trends of globalization. Like other traditional societies, the Nagas also possess a rich tradition and heritage. They have their own set of values and moral standards preset by the cultural paradigm. In the past few decades, immense modifications have crept into the Naga society. The introduction of Western education and Christian faith brought about tremendous changes in the Naga way of life and belief systems. This has also resulted in a drastic shift in the socio-cultural system. Modern education improves livelihood and health status. The spread of Christianity in Nagaland has both positive and negative impacts on the Naga society. The changes are observed in the belief system, mindset' and attitudes of the people. Naga society changed drastically and completely within the span of just one century. Today traditional Naga attires, dances, and other cultural symbols can be seen only during important occasions and cultural festivals.

Western education was formally introduced to the Naga through the establishment of Christian mission schools, and that even up to the present it still remains almost exclusively in missionaries' hands. The Nagas in the pre-modern era educated their children through the on-going process of life in their traditional customs and values. Through their traditional tales and myths, the elders teach the children the moral ethical modes of behaviors and social organization. Through certain religious rituals and practices, communal attainments of spiritual ideals are established. These spiritual ideal laid the foundation for the respect which the Nagas have for their political and social institutions, the respect and obedience which the children must show to their parents and elders, the strong oath and restraints from the perpetuation of evil within the society. Through cultural participation, children acquire the techniques of communication. By the time Christian missionaries had colonized the Nagas psyche through western education and religious doctrines, cultural values, belief system had been completely shattered. Indigenous

belief systems had become “taboo” that “civilized” people or whom the missionaries called “God's people” must not associate any longer if they wanted to get to heaven. To a large extent the introduction of Western education through the Christian mission schools marked the beginning of severe cultural deprecation. Since the prime agenda of the missionaries’ education was conversion, most of the educational approaches forced upon the Nagas never take into consideration the basic cultural values of the people, nor even consider the positive and strong human qualities of the people. Formal western education process continues to function as instruments for deculturalizing the Nagas so as to blend them more towards the European socio-cultural value system. Naga history was undermined and the indigenous traditional culture consequently began to lose its charms and its captivating appeal to the imagination of the Naga youth. These early educated people from the mission schools are the first group of people who drifted away not only from the traditional occupation like, agriculture but also are the first to contempt their own traditional culture. The missionaries make their best effort to avoid students from involving in communal ceremonies and other traditional and cultural activities as it was considered primitive. From the beginning of their enrolment in the schools the Naga students began to estrange from its own community. Instead of teaching the student the meaning and the values of Nagas customs, ideas and institutions the missionaries taught the student to avoid from all indigenous culture. The damages already done to the Naga culture by the missionaries has been reinforced by the influence of globalization. Under the influence of globalization many indigenous cultures are giving way to the dominance of western capitalist culture. Through the increasing advance in mass media associated with new information and communication technologies, people are trying to look more like the Americans or Europeans in their taste and behavior. Though the children’s minds are broadened through the acquisition of a globalized

knowledge, the imposed multiculture encourages them to drop their cultural identity. The Naga youth today have steadily become self-alienated and have lost touch with their indigenous roots as a result of global culture and the capitalist economy which severely toned down the existing indigenous social order. This is becoming a serious threat to the continuity of indigenous culture of the Nagas. After receiving western education, they are partly alienated from pure tribal tradition but never completely adopted into European culture. The Nagas are standing at the border, where they are steadily turning their backs on their indigenous culture and heading to the western culture. Their millennia-old way of life hangs in the balance. It might be easy to dismiss the Nagas plight as a price of progress, but apart from the tragedy of losing another culture in a world of flourishing cultural diversity, the fading of the Naga traditional culture is an early warning of a large-scale destruction of their culture.

While it is true that Christianity provides the Nagas with a religious identity, it is also the case that Christianity represents a strong culture of belief. It is the latter process that has often proved difficult when negotiating with pre-Christian traditional culture, which has some resonance with the Hornbill Festival. During the early years of American Baptist activity in the Naga Hills, missionaries often drew a clear distinction for converts between Christian and pre-Christian culture. For instance, dances, songs, and festivals that contradicted Christian teachings were discouraged and were often abandoned due to their supposedly 'demonic' association with custom and tradition. This evangelical, monotheistic zeal meant that only Jehovah was to be worshipped. Of course, dances and festivals were not abandoned as a whole; some of it were strictly policed and purified of their 'demonic' references. All practices which did not conform to the Christian faith, that is, the western norm of Christianity, were condemned as evil and thus abandoned. The Hornbill Festival is the hybridization of the modern with the traditional. Though

the churches are against the idea of the Hornbill festival it represents a national culture where all Nagas can come together and that it provides an opportunity for tourism; giving a platform to the young and talented Naga youth through art and music competition, opportunities to artisans and entrepreneurs to sell their products. Most of those gathered were “converted” the Hornbill is a return to the pre-Christian traditional culture to some extent as the event encourages a revitalization of culture, but cautioned against introducing elements that are ‘demonic.’ After the Festival the people all go back to their normal lives which includes going to church, so there aren’t any clash between the festival and one’s Christian identity and no one would go back and revert to their pre-Christian beliefs. The Festival educates the younger Nagas to appreciate their traditions and customs such as dance, clothes, ornaments, food, stories, or as how their ancestors once lived. The Festival is primarily for the younger generation as they are going through a sort of cultural amnesia and the Festival provides a forum where Naga culture becomes an educational tool. Villagers often remarked that participating in the Festival itself meant rehearsing with elders the specific dance steps and songs that they were unaware of and made them more familiar with tradition. The Festival is Nagaland-state- managed and delegates from each ‘tribal’ region are required to represent their ‘culture.’ Cultural troupes of performers are in fact invited by the Nagaland Government, which funds their travel, food, and accommodation. Even though the Naga people are in the state of being modernized, they have found a way to blend the modern with the traditional through their festival.

As with any society that comes into contact with a foreign culture, the spread of ideas, beliefs, and techniques is inevitable. In the case of the Arunachal Pradesh tribes, the entire initiative on the part of the British Government was to ‘develop’ and ‘modernize,’ so that the communities of the region would be in-step with the tidings of the rest. This intent on the part of colonialism was

accomplished, and the cultural effects on the region were vast. Many young tribals were to abandon the traditional roles of their communities and engage upon careers that would take them in a radically different direction. Cultures change and continuously evolve; one cannot ignore this fact, but the neo-liberal modal of 'modernization,' to which the Arunachal tribals are subjected, seems to be causing their cultures to evolve beyond themselves. In many areas of Arunachal Pradesh, people are earning vastly more money, working 'modern' jobs, and are mimicking the example of the new culture. Recent history has aptly demonstrated that 'modernization' and tradition are mutually exclusive forces; for a community to adapt to the ways of the modern world paradigm is to sell off many aspects of its home-grown culture. On the one hand you have long standing cultural tradition, simplicity, and a strong community and on the other you have advanced education, monetary prestige, and the promises of new technology. Overlaying this scale are the ever-present pressures of basic human need, desire, and the drive to advance. This led to the destruction of their culture and once folk-knowledge, traditions, and customs are gone they cannot be revitalized.

With the coming of the white men into their lands, several factors of change came into their lives. The British introduced Christianity and education leading to the conversion of some of the tribe people. The society went through changes in terms of their culture and traditions, festivals that were celebrated according to seasons or auspicious days were now centralized and celebrated on a fixed date. Christianity has become a major force; neo-traditional religions are emerging; tribes are changing their names and writing their new histories. However, modernization settled amongst the people of Arunachal Pradesh and there are changes in the traditional ways of living. Though the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are on the path to modernization, there has been a social awakening of sorts where the people reverted back to

embracing their traditional belief systems. Although the people of Arunachal are open to trading with the neighboring states, they protect their state from foreign settlers by implementing a need for a license to settle in their lands. Modern education exists along with several other factors of modernity; however, the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have blended the modern with the traditional by reverting back to the traditional belief systems. A few tribes are seen practicing Christianity while the majority of the tribes are practicing the traditional belief system.

The advent of Christianity into Manipur also marks the beginning of a new life and its introduction into the state has many effects of far reaching importance. The Kuki social system is based on nuclear system of family structure involving various kinds of social institutions. The legal inheritors stayed in the father's house while other sons build separate houses near the In-pi (main home). The Kukis follow a patriarchal system of family structure and composition. As such, the line of descent is drawn through the male line only and the children follow the clan name of the father. On the death of the father, authority over property is vested upon his sons. However, law of inheritance differs from tribe to tribe. The Old Kukis offer authority over properties to the youngest son while the New Kukis vested authority over property rights to the eldest son. However the other brothers also received certain amount of his father properties. The only difference is the legal inheritor obtain the lion share and others sons receives lesser amount of the father's properties. One of the most distinctive customary practice which is not found in other tribal society is to give a child's name taken from the last name of the grand-father which is not just a mere identification or expression to the addressee but also equally important to trace his genealogy. The structure of the Kuki family institution is based on *Tucha* and *Becha* (family comradeship) relationship. As such the *Tucha* and *Becha* received certain privileges and obligations at the time of the children's nuptials ceremonies. The kinship relationship does also

give the individual rights and obligations, privileges and formalities, and finally this link-up the members in a cohesive whole. The kinship relation of the Kukis does also assign the obligation of marriage ties between the mother's brother's children and the children. As a result, cross-cousin marriage formed an important tie amongst and between the children of brothers and sisters. One of the most important statuses of Kuki women in the traditional and contemporary generation is the bridal price. The bride price of various clans and tribes are not just a mere price like properties but it signifies the values, prestige and dignity of Kuki women for each and every clan possess different bridal value. Moreover, if the girl belongs to the family of the Chief, her bridal value is costly than that of ordinary girl by the fact that she is the daughter of the Chief. The-Kuki political institution is centered around Chiefship. And thus Chiefship system of village administration is the image and symbol of Kuki identity. It is considered as one of the core elements that brings closer ties between the chief and villagers, and between the affluent and the poor. The structure of Kuki village administration is composed of the Chief and his councilors. The Chief unfavorably nominate his assistance from amongst the villagers of different personalities like a person who is physically strong and well-versed in Kuki customs and traditions. However, with the British colonialism in the state of India and the adjoining region had brought a new situation in Manipur, when they introduced the Village Authority Act, in 1956. As a result, a new form of village administration, under an administrative head replaced the control of the Chief over his subjects. Certain rights and privileges, like paddy tax, *sa-leng/Sa-lu* (animal tax), *kho-tha* (free labor), etc. are no longer enjoyed officially by the Chief. The practice of "bachelors' dormitory" known as (*Som*) in the traditional village society was the main learning center for the youths in all state of affairs. A part from this, *Som* organization was also known to be the most important entertainment center where young bachelors create jocks

and learnt customary verses and narrate different types of folk stories from the elders. It was also the main source of military enlistment for war against neighboring hostile brought to a standstill. However, with the introduction of Christianity and development of modern education the traditional *Som* has been modified and transformed it into the modern form of Youth organization like Youth clubs, association and union. The *Lorn* (labor company), which is a conglomeration of young and aged, male and female, young boys and young girls are the main force of social solidarity and economic expansion for production. Festivals appeared to be the most important and essential part of their socio-economic life. A number of festivals and celebrations relating to agricultural activities such as *Kut*, *Lom-kivah*, *Pon-kap*, *Anthah*, *kung-kat*, *ki-bot* (festivals), perceived as a means of social cohesion, celebrated excitedly by members of the *Sam* and *Lorn* organizations. Festivals were accompanied by a number of fun and merrymaking in the form of dancing and singing in traditional tune. The customary practices of Long-man (dues over dead corpse) endears the love-bond between the Tucha and sunggao (mother's brother's children) relationship. The customary practice of taking the death price called *Long-manis* regarded as a strong feeling and love-bond relations between the *Tucha* and *sunggao*. The practice of *Hiem-kham*, *Salam-sat*, *tol-thieh*, (a penalty made by slaughtering animals by the defaulter) is the rules and laws that control or avoid the individuals and groups from criminal action. The main source of Kuki economy is based on Jhum and terrace forms of agriculture in which varieties of crops are cultivated. The striking force of production concerned in economic relation is *Lorn* (Labor Company), in which all the able-bodied individual members are employed in the agricultural as well as domestic activities. Generally three to five types of *Lom* are practised in the traditional days. The types of *Loms* are organized according to the stages of the individual categories. Apart from shifting cultivation, the Kukis were also engaged in

other sources of occupation such as hunting, trapping, fishing and basketry works to meet their basic needs. While the women folks are busy for cotton production apart from domestic works. With the introduction of western education and the democratic form of political system forced the Kukis to a new path of occupations and professions. As a result, Kukis are forced to pull out from the old way of Jhum activities and to turn to new vistas of economic relation in the governmental and private sectors. Religion forms the backbone of beliefs and practices in the Kuki social structure. The traditional religion of the Kukis is a blend of animistic as well as monotheistic in shape. According to the tradition *Chung-Pathien* (God of heaven) is considered to be the highest God. And other subordinate gods like *Noi Pathien* or *Noi-Mangpa*, (evil spirit or Satan) is considered to be the ‘God of Earth’, in which offerings and sacrifices are being made to him in order to escape from evils spirits, and to cure from sickness. The main component that adds the flavor of worship is the installation of *ln-doi* (household deity), and the Priest is the head in all religious affairs. Introduction of Christianity in the Kuki society has brought a new way of life and culture based on Christian principles, with the acceptance of new Christian festivals like Easter Sunday, Christmas and other occasions, over the traditional practices. This new faith also produced new attitudes, values and identity in the tribes. This fragmentation divides the Kuki society into various denominational or church groups where the Church organizations are further divided into their own tribes’ appellation. Thus, consciousness of identity becomes one of the core elements that fractured the unity of Kuki society in the contemporary situation. Despite the fact that the principle of Christianity is neither against nor contradicts the Kuki culture, many observations from outside considered them as against each other. In fact, any religious belief maintains human behavior. The Kuki religious beliefs known as ‘Sakho’ are considered to be part and parcel of an influential law of the Kuki ‘Culture.’

Christianity is considered as a vital force that has the capacity to bring both social solidarity and social disparity. With the introduction of modern education and acceptance of a new faith the Kuki world view is greatly broadened and their approach to life enhanced. As a necessary consequence, they begin to develop in all spheres of life and work. Consequently, social problems and social disorganizations traumatized the Kuki society into different dimensions; tribalism, clanism, unemployment, poverty, gun- culture, drug abuse and alcoholism are some of the main issues that disturb the contemporary Kuki society. The Kuki community right from the very early days depends solely on agricultural products which could not comply-with their day to day needs. Today, a majority of these people liv-ed with hand to mouth. Thus a sizeable number of people have sought employment in far off cities and shifted from rural to urban region becomes necessity to meet the daily needs. The main impact of rural-urban allotment lies on education, government services and economic/commercial growth and diversity in the urban areas. People move from village to towns and due to the availability of jobs in the governmental and private sector. The condition of educational institution and the system of education in the rural areas is very much neglected. It is also observed that many Kukis shifted to urban areas not necessarily for economic purposes or Governmental services, or education but the living style, in other words the life in towns and cities are much faster than village due to the availability of modern technological amenities such as; television programme, internet facilities, telephone, etc.

Through the church polity, education and literature Christianity has helped shape the new culture in the tribal society. It enabled the tribes to adjust to the situation that had been forced upon them without losing their sense of distinct identity. Through church polity, new structures of tribal identity were created through education and literature. Christianity provided the people with the skill necessary to function by themselves within the new order. The introduction of

common language through education by the missionary brought wider social relations involving different villagers living in the region. It also includes how the process of modernization and growth of education brought about consciousness in the mind of the people. Social change occurred in Manipur in an extended time frame since the beginning of the 18th century due to several factors. The social change was brought about in Manipur by the process of ideas and ideology in the form of religious changes, conversion into Hinduism, Christianity. Christianity has greatly contributed to the social change among the Kuki people of Manipur. Impact of Christianity brought social change to the society not only because of accepting and following the Christian doctrine and principle but also because of the activities of Christian missionaries. Like in other tribal regions of India, in the tribal areas of Manipur, western education was brought by the Christian missionaries. The missionaries made it a condition that if an individual has to worship God, he must be able to read. Therefore, the involvements of missionaries in educational programmes were to be viewed as supplementary to the primary task of communicating the spiritual message to the people. The advent of Christianity into Manipur marks the beginning of a new life and has brought civilization to the people who enthralled themselves with blood feuds between village and village. With the introduction of modern education by the Missionaries, the Kukis were brought from that stage to the present more civilized stage. It is true that most of the tribals were still poor, devoid of formal education and oppressed by fears which arise out of lack of modern knowledge and the Christian Missionaries worked upon this for more than a century. The Missionaries used persuasive power to win over the people gradually. In a short span of time, there were startling changes in different spheres of life. Christianity had brought about a radical social change by broadening their world view and cemented the traditionally hostile tribe groups speaking different languages into a broad group of related tribes. It brought a change in

their way of life. Forgetting their own cultural way of life they adopted the western culture of life. As happened in many societies, the coming of the British colonialist through missions has ruined the rich local cultures and tradition of the Kukis.

While there are many positive impacts of the western-cultured Christianity, it is not without problem whatsoever and this could be seen through political, social, economic and religious factors. Politically, it brought a wider nation-state political dimension which contributed to the erosion of traditional customary laws and norms. In the socio-cultural aspect, the spread of the gospel was accompanied by a certain unhealthy individualism that is insensitive to cultural principles expressed in social concern and justice. Though Christianity helped the tribals to cope with the process of modernization, it is at the same time, one of the factors responsible for the alienation of the Kukis from their culture. Moreover, the culture still has its roots in the customs and practices of marriage, inheritance and land ownership, yet with the process of modernization, a significant shift is taking place in the perception of tribal culture. The Western-cultured system of Christianity has wiped out the tribes way of life, erasing centuries of tradition, customs and wisdom. It has caused people to hold their own religion in contempt and look westwards to an alien culture. Modernity has brought in a new form of culture. People no longer sing traditional songs or dance since they are considered to be primitive and belong to an uncultured way of life. Economically, it is followed by westernization in almost all areas such as dress, food, technology, medical etc., which are not only new but also foreign. As such it has destroyed their spirit of self-dependence as it has to look always for support from the west or elsewhere to sustain their newfound culture in all respects and thus suffered from economic exploitation and deterioration. Whatever the colonialists failed to erase in the political, social and economic realm, the missionaries picked up and seemed to make sure that all that are

left of the culture are ruined through the newfound religion through their otherworldly theological perspectives. The missionaries' strong insistence on personal conversion unduly enhanced the value of humanity above creation. They perceived the salvation of human as the central theme of Christian mission and theology which undermined the land-centered tribal religion, culture and ethics. In this way the tribal Christians were slowly alienated from their soil-centered worldview through the introduction of evangelical theology. Acceptance of new faith was understood as rejection of the traditional festivals, songs, dances, sacrifices; the western norm of Christianity condemned it as evil and thus the tribes abandoned many valid traditional values. Thus the spirituality of the tribal people was gradually replaced by western oriented values that ruined the local cultures and traditions.

Mahatma Gandhi has said that, "No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive," thus even without the help of the white men, the changes in the culture and traditional lives was relevant in the lives of the Adi, Angami and Kuki people. With the modernization of other states and countries, it was a given that certain changes would also prevail in the traditional lives of the people. Roads were paved and the people who once lived exclusively were introduced to different people. Even before the coming of the white men into their areas, there were instances where different people from different tribes crossed paths. Through their interaction with different people from neighboring states, it was only natural that certain changes were made for different tribes to mingle. Globalization would also aid as a change in the traditional culture of the people as culture is ever changing to meet the needs of the people. The changing economic environment also ensures in cultural changes where the people need to interact with others for their trades and through this interaction, it is inevitable for a culture to change as they are exposed to different cultures. Though Christianity and the coming of the white men to their lands

is the sole vehicle of change in the traditional cultures of the Adi, Angami and Kuki tribes, we can assume that the modernization of these tribes is inevitable even without the coming of the white men.

Culture is not something static but is dynamic and rapidly changing. The culture of the Adi, Angami and Kuki society also witnessed a wind of change mainly due to outside influence therefore leading to their culture being in the process of flux and change. Modernization of the social, economic, political, cultural and traditional lives of the people have eroded most of the cultural traditional ways of living. Though there is a westernization of their cultural and traditional systems, the three states have found a balance, an “in-between” place where they are modernized yet they still practiced and inculcated their traditional way of living into their modern state.

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APPENDICES

NAME OF CANDIDATE :Thangdingliani

DEGREE :M.Phil.

DEPARTMENT :English

TITLE OF DISSERTATION :Hybridity: Modernization of
Traditional Belief Systems as
Seen Through Select Writings in
English from Arunachal Pradesh,
Nagaland and Manipur.

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COMMENCEMENT OF SECOND :4.9.2017
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APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL-

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2. SCHOOL BOARD : 26. 5. 2017
3. REGISTRATION NO. & DATE : MZU/M.Phil/365 of 26.5.2017
4. EXTENSION IF ANY : January 2018 – July 2018

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- I. Currently working on M.Phil dissertation titled “Hybridity: Modernization of Traditional Belief Systems as Seen Through Select Writings in English from Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur” under the supervision of Dr. Kristina Z. Zama, Department of English, Mizoram University.
- II. Attended an international seminar entitled “Indiginity: Expression and Experience” organised by the Department of English, Mizoram University under UGC-DRS-SAP I, on 25th and 26th February 2016.
- III. Attended and participated on a national symposium entitled “ Child Lore and Identity” organised by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and the Department of English, Mizoram University on 4th November, 2016.
- IV. Attended an international seminar titled, “Why Ecocriticism?” organised by FSLE-India and Sikkim Government College, Tadong on 21st- 23rd November, 2017.

The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur are known for their rich cultural heritage. Arunachal Pradesh the 24th state of the Indian Union, is bounded by Bhutan to the west, Myanmar to the east, China to the north and north-east and the plains of Assam to the south. Arunachal Pradesh is acknowledged to be one of the most splendid, variegated and multilingual tribal areas of the world. The entire region had remained isolated since 1873 when the British stopped free movement. After 1947, Arunachal became part of the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). Most of these communities are ethnically similar having derived from an original common stock but their geographical isolation from each other has brought amongst them certain distinctive characteristics in language, dress and customs. Manipur means the 'land of gems'. This north-eastern state was described as the land of gold or 'Suvarnabhu'. Manipur was a princely state under the British rule in 1891. A democratic form of government with Maharaja as the executive head was established in 1947, under the Manipur Constitution Act. This ruling family gave the Manipuri a long peaceful era in which they developed their arts and crafts. The state consists of six districts with the district Head Quarters at Imphal, Ukhrul, Tamenlong, Senapati, Chandel and Churachandpur. Manipur is a place where different waves of races and culture met through the ages, which ultimately mingled together. The territory is divided into two distinct zones- the valley and the surrounding hill areas. The Kukis and Nagas are the major tribe amassed in the hills of Manipur and smaller tribal communities and the valley (plains) mainly by the Meiteis, Manipuri Brahmins (Bamons) and Pangal (Manipuri Muslims). Naga and Kuki settlements are also found in the valley region, though less in numbers. The main population of the people of Manipur is known as 'Meitei'. As for Nagaland, the majority of the population is made up of the many Naga tribes including others like some Kukis, Kacharis, Garos, Mikris, Bengalis, and Assamese etc. in the plains. There are several views expressed by

scholars regarding the origin of the word Naga. Some believe that the word Naga has evolved from the Sanskrit word Nagna which means naked. It is so because the Nagas are proverbially known by the paucity of their clothes. Another view is that the word Naga originated from Naga meaning Snake or king of snakes. Mythologically, princess Ulupi was a Naga Kanya, that is daughter of the king of snakes. Ulupi's residence is generally identified in the south-west of Nagaland. Since this area was under the Naga raj, the people are known as Naga. Originally, the Nagas were not known by the names of the tribes as they are known now, but by the name of a group of villages. Gradually they have settled down to the tribe names as are found now, but still then the process of amalgamation or separation is still going on.

The dissertation interrogates the concept of hybridity, the process of modernization and its effects on traditional communities. This interrogation is done through the literary works of Mamang Dai whose *Legends of Pensam* focuses on the Adi of Arunachal Pradesh; Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* which focuses on the Angami of Nagaland and Keisham Priyokumar's story "Waiting for the Rains" which focuses on the Kuki of Manipur. Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity describes hybridity as a cultural identity that emerges in a contradictory and ambivalent space. He makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures untenable. The recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favor of the recognition of an empowering hybridity. Thus Bhabha's elaboration of this 'Third Space' envisages a new history. This history: "may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity." (Page 56) It is this new history of the three cultures of the Adi, Angami and Kuki that the dissertation seeks to study.

The dawn of the 19th century introduced these three mentioned cultures to modernization. Its effects resulted in diverse number of reactions; some viewing modernization as a threat to losing one's 'pure' cultural identity, while others see it as progressive and positively impacting them as people. Here, the concept of modernization is utilized to indicate a process, a transition, a change that these three cultures go through from a traditional pre-modern time to the present modern society.

Mamang Dai's *Legends of Pensam* highlights this transition by weaving into the story the superstitions and belief systems of the Adi tribe. The book introduces the traditional life of the Adi in a short line:

In these small clearings in the middle of the forest, people have premonitions. Women dream dreams. Babies are born who grow up unnaturally fast, like deer or lion cubs. Infant mortality is high. Old women still braid threads of vine and pray for safe passage.
(Page 10)

The stories in the novel interconnect three generations in a village, portraying the delightful blend of myth, history and the transitory phase between the traditional and modern ways of the lives of the Adi tribe. The *legends* of the origins of the Adi tribe, right up to their modern existence is elaborated by the author who comments on the inevitability of modernization and the necessary condition of hybridity that the Adi find themselves in, in the present context. Rakut comments:

Why should we be afraid of change? Change is a wonderful thing! It is a simple matter of rearrangement, a moment of great possibilities! Why should we be so afraid? We all want to be happy, but happiness eludes us as we keep thinking about it all the time. Sleepless

nights. Sad bereft mornings. Then suddenly, for no reason, the blood hums and a feeling of elation carries us through another day! This is how it has always been. We have nothing to fear. (Page 191)

The anxiety of transition and the effects of modernization further question the validity of certain traditional beliefs of the Adi. When Mona's daughter Adela was diagnosed with autism, her family history of illness was traced, while Togum's son Kepi's autism was blamed on his father's killing of a serpent.

Pensam known as "the in-between" place achieves full meaning in the closing chapter titled "On Stage" where Hoxo's community has transitioned into a modern society complete with modern educational system and exposure to multimedia.

In the case of Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* (2014), Kire like Mamang Dai also highlights the apprehensions surrounding forces of modernization and the eventual hybrid state that the Angami find themselves living with. The main character, Vilie, had seen the sleeping river in his dreams every month for two years. He finally comes to the decision to go in search of this mysterious river and to 'catch it' when it sleeps. He sets out on a quest to procure the 'heart stone' so as to gain the untold powers:

When the river is asleep, it is completely still. Yet the enchantment of those minutes or hours when it sleeps is so powerful, that it turns the stones in the middle of the river bed into a charm. If you can wrest a stone from the heart of the sleeping river and take it home, it will grant you whatever it is empowered to grant you. (Page 3)

Kire brings to life the magic of the forest and the realm of the supernatural which is accepted as a significant part of the traditional world view of the Angami. As Vilie treks through

the forest, he encounters various people, situations and places, such that the reader becomes keenly aware of the 'other' powers that pervades - in the mountains, the lakes and rivers, trees, birds, and wild animals. The traditional relationship that the Angami have with nature is reflected in their reverence of Ukepenuopfu - the birth-spirit, the creator of all.

If he found an animal in his traps and brought it home, she would repeat that. Terhuomia pezie. It was her way of pronouncing a prayer of thanksgiving to the provider, to Ukepenuopfu. (Page 80)

The Angami traditional world view is challenged by forces of modernization like the rifle, the existence of the Forest Department and the modern education of children in schools. Vilie's owning of a rifle and helping in the Forest Department is telling of the presence of poachers which is seen as contrary to Angami reverence of Nature. Poaching in itself reflects modern man's greed. Vilie, representative of the non-Christian, scathingly comments on this tension by saying:

A hundred years ago, the non-Christians customarily offered chicken sacrifices if anyone fell sick. They feared death so much that they would bring a chicken into the woods and proclaim, 'Life for life' and released the chicken so that it cheeped all evening until it died or was eaten by a bigger animal. But no one did that now because the Christians taught that *Jisu* had been sacrificed for everyone's sickness so nobody needed to offer chicken sacrifices again. (Page 54)

Kire therefore concludes that although Vilie's Angami community is a hybrid one, traditional beliefs, superstitions and taboos still persist and in some cases overrides Christian belief. In the post colonial existence of the Angami community, Vilie and his people represent

the perpetual nature of tradition and its practices and their desire to remain outside of modern influences while simultaneously unable to escape its impact.

In “Waiting for the Rains,” Keisham Priyokumar, like Dai and Kire also emphasizes the effects of modernization which he expresses through the violent murder of Lungjahao and the eventual moving of Chongnikim’s village arising out of the fear of outsiders. In Chongnikim’s recollection of the past we learn that Lungjahao is already dead. She recalls of the time when Lungjahao was alive and they both were working in the fields. Lungjahao was a bamboo cultivator who sold his bamboos to a foreigner named Moti. Priyokumar here comments on the clash that arises between traditional means of livelihood like farming, fishing and bamboo cultivation etc, in contrast to the modern trade system and its exploitative manipulations. Moti represents the inevitable coming of the man from the plains while through his relationship with Lungjahao, Priyokumar comments on the consequences that modernization brings. Chongnikim’s community is represented as a hybrid one that has to maneuver and balance both the traditional and the modern. The modern schooling is seen as incomplete and mismatched with the agricultural practice of cultivation resulting in the locals dropping out of their schools.

The dissertation therefore interrogates Mamang Dai, Easterine Kire and Keisham Priyokumar as writers who question hybridity in their respective cultures. The character of Hoxo, Vilie and Chongnikim underlines this very argument of modernization and its process while also re-looking at their respective hybrid communities from a post colonial standpoint. In the context of Post-colonialism, modernization takes on the definition of influencing the formerly colonized country and its culture offsetting it with that of the west. It is often seen as a threat to the cultural and traditional values of a society and according to Hasnain and Gupta in *Globalization: Language, Culture and Media*, “In spite of the “cultural pollution”, which is said to have set in as

a result of globalization, there has been a process of ‘nativization’ as well.” (Page 8) The aspects of post-colonialism can be found in the study of culture and identity of both the countries that were colonized and the former colonial powers, dealing with conflicts of identity and cultural belonging. Colonial powers came to foreign states and destroyed main parts of native tradition and culture; furthermore, they continuously replaced them with their own. Bhabha mentions, “It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity.” The blending of an existing culture with that of the west was seen as a threat since the western culture had a huge impact on the smaller countries, slowly replacing the traditional with the modern.

The first chapter “Introduction” gives an overview of the Northeast region of India while focusing on the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur. It situates the title of the dissertation “Hybridity: Modernization of Traditional Belief Systems as Seen Through Select Writings in English from Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur” and contextualizes the three selected texts between the argument of tradition and modernization. In each of the texts selected, there is a representation of traditional culture and beliefs as well as modernization. For example, in all the three texts, we can see traces of modernization of the society in terms of belief systems, society and culture. In “Waiting for the Rains” we can see the shift from the traditional belief in malevolent and benevolent spirits to the belief in the white men’s religion as Chongnikim’s village had a small church and Chongnikim herself is uttering the prayers taught by the British Missionaries.

The second chapter “The Traditional Belief Systems” presents the rituals, superstitions, myths and taboos of the Adi, Angami and Kuki. The Adi belief system distinguishes between two different kinds of illnesses: natural and supernatural. By looking at set of leaves or the liver of a dead chicken, a miri or shaman divines the nature of the illness. All existence is endowed with life and the evolution of what we consider inanimate, must have also come through the normal process of birth. In Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam*, Hoxo, one of the main characters is said to have fallen from the sky and was found by Lutor, the chief of the Ida clan and this superstition was not questioned by the village people. The premonition of the death of Lutor, when he saw Biribik, the water serpent with ancient eyes and a head with horns confirms to the superstitious Ida clan of their belief surrounding the curse of death on anyone who saw the water serpent. The owners of burnt houses were banished for fear of provoking the tiger spirit that causes fire and they had to observe a certain period of taboo where no one could visit or eat with them. Jealous spirits were appeased by the Adi whenever they would address a benevolent spirit:

We will travel again to your beautiful land. Let us leave in peace now. Do not pine for us. Do not call us back. We will travel this way again bearing more gifts next time. The last man in line then faced backwards and swept off their footprints to thwart off any attempts of the spirit to follow them and dwell in their lands. (Page 59)

In the case of the Angami Nagas, the forces of nature are appeased and spirit-worshipping formed an important part of religious rites. They believed in spirits both benevolent and malevolent and also in the existence of a Supreme Being. They believed in fortune-tellers and diviners who tell the sick people where to sacrifice cow, buffaloes, egg or hen with some pieces of iron to offer to god for pacification. *When the River Sleeps* by Easterine Kire expounds upon

inter-tribe relations, village laws, the intricacies of the spirit world and the life of a wanderer. The fluid intermingling of superstition, rationality and compassion is a hallmark of the book and weaves in myths, beliefs, communal rituals and the folk tradition of the tribals in such a way that one could get a vivid picture of their way of life where spirits share an equal space with the mortals and everyone lived in harmony with nature. Mechuseno was killed by a mysterious fever that she contracted when she went to the forest to collect herbs along with two of her friends. When she climbed down the tree after plucking a beautiful orchid, she could see a tall dark man following her but her two friends could not see anything and in that evening, she had the fever and soon died. Vilie was also superstitious, which could be seen when he was warding off an attack from a were-tiger with invocations of ancestral spirits. Beliefs in the supernatural and the existence of spirits in nature either good or bad are seen in the Naga tribe, where they appease the spirits and observed taboos for luck.

The belief system of the Kuki's was based on a monotheistic belief in a Supreme Being, though they also believed in the presence of other malevolent and benevolent spirits. The consciousness of nature and its bounty could also be seen in their traditional belief systems. Priyokumar's "Waiting for the Rains," reflects these belief systems. In the story, we see the older generation practicing mysticism, where they are convinced that dreams are a way of predicting what is to come while the interpretation of dreams are treated with utmost importance.

This chapter further details the traditional belief systems of the Adi, Angami and Kuki while offsetting it with the present hybrid belief systems.

Chapter three is titled "Modernization- Effects and Consequences" which examines and deals with the changes and resultant hybridization of the cultures mentioned. The change here

specifically refers to the present historicity of the three cultures. Bhabha describes that, “The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (The Location of Culture, page 3). Hybridization is the result of modernization. The traditional belief systems were replaced by outside religions which were more powerful and all pervasive. This new hybrid existence resulted in a new hybrid identity for the Adi, Angami and Kuki.

In Mamang Dai’s *Legends of Pensam* the Adi community faces a complex relationship with modernization and its consequences. The effort of the *migluns* (British) to build roads involving the labor of the villagers is not well-accepted. The resultant loss of lives of the young able-bodied men in the village cast a shadow of gloom, thus reflecting the onslaught of modernization and its inevitable influences. Schools introduced western education, their culture and religion. Adi children who attended these schools, began to see their culture as inferior, backward and identified their culture as savage. The complicated relationship between the *migluns* and the Adi is reflected in the headman’s comment:

They think we are a village of horror, but it is not true! The leaves of the orange trees glisten. The hills are radiant with the light of the sun....These days many visitors are finding their way here and you can hear their voices asking the way, the curious *migluns* shielding their eyes and asking for help to enter the maze of stories that the *miri* remembers and restores to life..We are not a village of shame”(Page 55-56).

Similarly, the introduction of Western education and Christian faith amongst the Angami tribe brought about tremendous changes in their way of life which has also resulted in a drastic

shift in the socio-cultural system. The colonizers and the Christian missionaries taught the newly emergent leaders that they were 'backward' and should accept the colonial rule as beneficial for them. The spread of Christianity in the Angami communities has both positive and negative impacts on the society. The introduction of Christianity came with education as it was needed to read and understand the scriptures. Though modern education improves livelihood and health status, the traditional values are drowned out by them. These changes are observed in the belief system, mindset and attitudes of the people and in the present day, many young people do not even remember the traditional stories, the songs and dances. The novel *When the River Sleeps* reflects some of the changes seen. For example, the judicial system which was handled by the chief in the past was now handled by village councils, which shows the slow change in the administrative system of the village. The gradual transition that the people are faced with was inevitable as certain changes were made and the lives of the people had changed socially, culturally and religiously. In the present tribal society, this process of modernization is overwhelmed with Western ideas, images, and concepts. With this trend continuing, the external pressure to become modernized is so strong that it is replacing the treasures of their rich tradition where the level of modernity is measured in terms of materialism and power of wealth. The society which was once characterized by its communality, sense of justice, equality, integrity, honesty, and religiosity where one finds a sense of belonging was in danger of disappearing.

The Kuki tribe of Manipur experienced similar effects and consequences of modernization. Traditionally, the entire population of the people can be classified as cultivators. Hunting and rearing of animals, etc. are practiced only as secondary occupations. With the advent of the British, the administrative system has also gone through several changes; the administrative system before, existed in the form of monarchy which began to decline after the advent of the

British. The presence of the chieftain system of administration could also be seen in the story when Chongnikim's father-in-law says, "We have decided in the church to shift to Leijangphai for some time. The village chief had arrived from Leijangphai today. We go tomorrow itself" (Page 78). Hygiene and sanitation was practiced under the guidance of the white men and with modernization setting in, the people began to practice hygiene and sanitation, having proper toilets and following a more hygienic way of life. The houses which were once built with wood, bamboos and straws were now built using materials made from industries. The people moved out of the villages to settle in towns and cities, nuclear families are being set up and new occupations have been taken up, moving away from agricultural activities. The educated people became absorbed in government employment and thus engaged in non-agricultural activities which led to the leaving of their traditional agricultural and allied occupations and moving to urban and industrial areas for white collar jobs in public and private enterprises and business. The replacement of the traditional belief system with that of Christianity could be seen in the short story where the grave of Lungjahao is marked with a little cross. The belief in Christianity could also be seen when the story narrates, "They were singing prayers inside the church and it came to her ears. The picture of Jesus on the cross inside the church came up sharply. Swallowing her tears with difficulty, she inaudibly followed the prayers.... The tears and prayers helped Chongnikim conjure up a clear vision of Jesus on the cross." (Page 72). Conversion to Christianity after the coming of the British missionaries has brought about changes in family, marriage, social life, their life's styles, food habits and health seeking behavior of some tribes in Manipur. The new religion opened the door to more advanced community and exposed them not only to the mainland India but also to the international community. Amongst the tribes, religion becomes all the more important for it is inter-woven in their entire social life and shapes most of

their entire social behavior. Thus, we can see the changes in the social behavior encompassing the culture of the people. The Christian missionaries, apart from evangelism introduced western education and modern medicine to the tribal society. These acted as the forces of social change among the tribal people. Thus, the adoption of new religion led to the inculcation of new outlook, new cultural values, and eliminations of their traditional belief systems and embedded them to a new concept in their attitude.

Chapter four brings the study to a conclusion by highlighting the important points studied in the preceding chapters. Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridization is used to re-examine the present belief system of the Adi of Arunachal Pradesh, the Angami of Nagaland and the Kuki of Manipur. Bhabha's analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses on their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities. He contends that the recognition of an ambivalent space (which he calls as the 'third space') of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate. It is this 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture and makes the notion of hybridity important. The chapter further comments on these hybrid cultures as post colonial communities that today continue to struggle in finding their balance between preserving traditional beliefs while embracing the forces of modernization.

Bhabha explains that it is through the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling that we encounter the question of cultural difference. Colonization brought the introduction of new cultures to already existing cultures and traditions. The replacement of the colonized culture with that of newer and alien belief systems did not sit well with the colonized. In the selected texts authored by Mamang Dai, Easterine Kire and Keisham

Priyokumar, the dissertation thus re-looks at cultures vulnerable to the effects of modernization while under pressure to accept their hybrid condition.

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