

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF PANGAL COMMUNITY IN MANIPUR DURING THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

Md. Chingiz Khan*

Abstract

The Pangal (local name for Muslims in Manipur) community is one of the indigenous communities among the different communities in the state such as Meiteis (local community), tribes like Nagas and some sections of Kukis which had been settling since times immemorial. This Pangal community got assimilated and intermixed with the local community since the seventeenth century which has been maintained till now. In this context, an attempt has been made to critically examine and explore the socio-cultural practices of Pangal community in Manipur since the 17th century onwards.

Keywords: Meiteis, Pangals, clan system, education, belief system, games and sports, dress and art and architecture

Introduction

The origin of the Pangal community in Manipur is clouded by considerable controversy. It is basically ascribed to two points in time: one group of scholars claim that they started their settlements in Manipur before the 17th century and another group of scholars who disputed the first assumption argued that they came from Sylhet, now in Bangladesh in 1606 AD and settled in Manipur. It is officially confirmed from the primary sources, such as *Nongsamei Puya*¹, *Pangal Thorakpa*² and *Yaddasht Kursi-Nama*³ that they began to settle in 1606 AD in the state during the reign of king Khagemba (1597-1652 AD)

* Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

after being presented royal ladies, servants and land for livelihood. Moreover, the clan system (*sagei* in Manipuri language) one of the social engineering agents was being offered among the Pangals of Manipur. The socio-cultural practices of Pangal community in any society were developed due to the call for diverse cultural ethos and situations in which Islam had to adopt and situate based on the way from the West Asian to the multi-pluralistic parts of the world. It means that Islamic practices were modified in the course of adapting to new environments. In this context, Muslim groups in South-East Asia exhibit various features of existing or what could be broadly called Hindu civilization (Moazzam, 1981: 15). Likewise in India, many non-Islamic elements drawn from the local environment by the Muslims got incorporated in their social lives when they converted to Islam. This research paper examines the social organization and cultural practices of Pangal in Manipur since the seventeenth century onwards. It also explores the role that the regional context played in shaping certain Islamic practices.

Social Organization

The settlement of Pangal community in Manipur began from the 17th century though there were claims of their presence prior to this period (Khan, 2014: 1-11; Khan, 2016: 31-53). Muslims in Manipur were organized into clans (*sagei*). According to Kullachandra Sharma and Badaruddin, by 1630 AD, Muslim society had come to have two larger groups namely *khunja* (village folk) and *khutheiba* (skilled groups) on the basis of their occupations (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 3). The *khunja* group served as soldiers of the kingdom whereas *khutheiba* were engaged in works to generate goods and commodities for the kingdom. Their status was very high in the society during this period (ibid: 3). Both *khunja* and *khutheiba* attended *lallup* or a compulsory service rendered by the state to every man who was above 16 years for a period of 10 days in a 40-day cycle.⁴

Around 1688 AD, some Muslims came to Manipur who, according to Sharma and Badaruddin, were known as *Mughal* or *Moghal* or *Mangkan* or *Mangan*. There was an institution known as *Mangal Khutsam Shang* or *Mangalshang* for “Mangans”. The *Cheitharon Kumpapa* (the royal chronicle of Manipur) mentions *Mangkanshang* in 1680, which was a department for Muslim community (Singh, 2001: 2; Singh and Singh, 2005: 35; Singh and Khan, 1973: 1). Other sources noted the establishment of *Mangal Shangtong* in 1697 AD (Singh, 1985: 47). This *Mangal Shang* was designated as *Mangal*

Khutsam Shang in the 17th century by King Khagemba (Singh and Khan, 1973: 104); Singh, 1985: 49). The *Mangkan Shang* (house/department) was assigned a responsible role in the socio-economic tasks of the kingdom. It is through this *Mangkanshang*, under the *lallup* system, various services were provided to persons who were posted at different wings to discharge their duties (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 4).

By 1688 AD, due to an increase in their population, the Muslims were now not limited to two groups only, but expanded to four groups, namely *khunja*, *khunja lanmi*, *khutheiba* and *ingkholsangba* (ibid: 5-6). There were further divisions of *khunja* as *lanmi* (soldiers) and *maulvi* (theological scholar). *Maulvis* were treated with great regard in the society of Manipuri Muslims (Ahmed, 2011: 87). Some scholars suggested that the term *maulvi* here meant persons who were more intimate, as a result of their individual efforts, with their religion and were placed with respect in the highest category of society (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 4, 51, 53). They were considered to be pious people. The *khunja lanmi* along with *lallup* (military organization) exercised military enterprises and supervised not only *Mangan Shang* but also other departments, namely, *loishang*, *keirung* (granaries), *yarekshang* (the night quarters of those on duty for the king in the palace) (ibid: 8). Subsequently, the next group was *khutheiba* who served *lallup* by attending *Manganshang* and from there, they were sent to *pangal phundreishang* (those Muslims who worked in the department related to the production of *phundrei*-carpenter works), and *pangal phisa shang* (those Muslims working in the house where the royal clothes were woven). Over and above, it can be said that those Muslims who belonged to the *khutheiba* category also became *lanmi* (soldiers) during the difficult times. The *ingkholsangba* looked after homestead. *Ingkholsangba* was positioned in the fourth division who used to pay tribute once in a year and did not serve *lallup* (Ahmed 2011: 87-88).

By 1688 AD, there was an elaborate and broader social stratification of the Muslims of Manipur compared to the 1630s. The possible basis of such classification was individual occupation (*sipham*) and not kinship (*eegi mari*) (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 8). Shakil argues that the above-mentioned fourfold classification of *Pangals* (Muslims) was dictated by individual occupation which had nothing to do with kinship or clan. Those individuals from different clans may belong to any one of the four categories. Hence, individuals encompassed in these categories were trawled from different *sageis* (Ahmed 2011: 88).

Clan System (*Sagei*)

The clan system, unknown in the Islamic world, acted as an agent in the formation of Pangal community in Manipur during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Why were clans assigned by the king of Manipur, Khagemba, to the Muslims coming from Sylhet? The answers need to be located and structured within the strand of traditions and customs of local community. First of all, *sagei* was the family title given by Khagemba to the Manipuri Muslims, which later got transformed into lineage groups or clans with the rise of population after 1606 AD on the basis of their place of origin, occupation, place of settlement, skills, etc. (Rafayattullah, 1997: 16-28; Singh and Khan, 1973: 34-37, 169-170). The importance of clan in the consolidation of Muslim community was that it was used as a determinant factor of identification of a person which is still being maintained in the Pangal society. As a social institution, it helped them forge social unity in Manipur like the clans of the Meiteis. The social structure of the Meitei community, therefore, influenced the social structure of the Muslims in Manipur.

A *sagei* can be closed-knit. It contained many families (*yumnak*) of the same clan which was further subdivided into *singlup* or sub-clans. In a *sagei*, there were normally *phurups*, *singlups*, *kangbu* or *khut* groups based on lineage, social and customary considerations (Irene, 2010: 51; Ahmed, 2011: 93-96).⁵ There was no hierarchical differentiation within the *sagei* based upon either economy or occupation (Singh, 1998: 195). The Muslim clans were around 59-nine and they were invariably exogamous (Singh and Khan, 1973: 169-170; Rafayattullah, 1997: 12-30). Though permitted in Islam, endogamy became obsolete (Singh, 1994: 29-30). The Muslims, however, did not adopt the prefix or suffix of the *sagei's* like the Meiteis to their names and used generally the Muslim surnames like Shah, Khan, Sayyid, Sheikh, etc., without social hierarchical divisions. The social hierarchical divisions like Sayyids, Sheikhs and Mughals found in the Muslim society elsewhere in India were not found in Manipuri Muslims.

How the formation of clan took place is also important to investigate. It has been earlier mentioned that the formation of clan was based on occupations, skills, place of origins, etc. (Singh and Khan, 1973: 33-139, 169-170). Muhammad Sani, the commander-in-chief of the Muslim forces in 1606 AD, was given two Meitei girls by Khagemba, namely, Nongthombam Maitek and Chakpram Melei as his wives, two servants, five *paris* of fertile land (1 *pari* = 2

and half acres) and he resided in the area of Paka (Paka Leikai), nowadays called Yaishkul Leikai in Moirangkhom, Imphal and his clan was named Khullakpam (head or the commander of the community) (Ibid: 34; Singh, 1985: 16). Nooriya Sheikh, a potter, made a pot by using the technique of pottery wheel and presented it to the king Khagemba. Being appreciated by the king, he got one Meitei girl, namely, Peti, and his clan came to be known as Chaphusabam (*chaphu*=pot; *saba*=to make) (Singh and Khan, 1973: 34). Sheikh Juned, proficient in paper-making and the third brother of Muhammad Sani, introduced the art of paper-making in Manipur from bamboo and his clan came to be known as Cheshaba Sagei (*che*=paper; *saba*=to make) (Ibid: 169; Sharma, 1988: 19). Muslims coming from Makak, a place in Sylhet District in Bangladesh, were known as Makakmayum which had a further division into two groups, namely Makakmayum Angouba and Makakmayum Amuba based on fair and dark complexions (Rafayatullah, 1997: 22; Singh, 1985: viii, ix, x, xiii). In a similar manner, Mayangmayum group was divided into two groups Mayangmayum Ariba and Mayangmayum Anouba (new and old, the former migrated in Chandrakirti's reign, the latter in Gambhir Singh's reign) (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 118-120; Singh, 1985: xi). Bogimayum clan was originated from the fact that Purnot captured an *urok* and gifted it to Khagemba in 1630. For this reason, it was called Bogimayum clan by the king Khagemba (Singh, 1985: x, xiv; Singh and Khan, 1973: 169). Sajoubam clan was originally linked to Shah Kusum who was the younger brother of Muhammad Sani, the leader of the Muslim forces in 1606. It was called as Sajoubam *sagei* by the king Khagemba in 1623, *sajouba* meaning 'well-proportioned body' (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 81-84; Singh, 1985: xiii). Kundan Khan, Zama Khan, Sheikh Jali, Muhammad and Niamatullah made a beautiful palanquin having *sekpín*⁶ with seven lotus leaves made of ivory in its tip, and presented it to the king. For this, Satpam Chanu Tombi was given to Sheikh Jali, Salam Noibi to Muhammad, Thokchom Chaobi to Jama Khan, Thokchom Kiyambi to Kundankhan, Wangkheirakpam Koingambi to Niamatullah along with some piece of land for their sustenance and livelihood (Singh and Khan, 1973: 36) and their clan was known as Dolaipabam Sagei (*dolai* being palanquin). When the five milkmen named Gwala Man Singh, Umran Sheikh, Kulak Khan, Suniya, Uleiya and Manthi offered some eatables like *ghee* made from frozen milk to Khagemba, the king, after seeing their gifts, gave a woman to each of them (Singh, 1985: 18). Their clan was known as Sanggomsumbam (*sanggomsumba* means milkmen). The Moinam clan originated from

a *myna* bird which was caught by Ibrahim Miya, one of the soldiers in the battle of 1606 AD under Muhammad Sani, and was offered to Khagemba (Sharma and Badaruddin, 1991: 95-96). Puton Khan, Min Khan, Lukman Khan, Tollen Khan and Salim Khan came from Gujarat to Manipur during the reign of king Paikhomba (1666-1697 AD), who guarded thatch in the *ingkhhol* (homestead) of the king of Manipur and their clan was known as Eepham clan (Singh and Khan, 1973: 170; Singh, 1985: viii, xi, xii).

Detailed historical analysis of different clans and their descendants is beyond the scope of the present study. Some of the Muslim clans were the same as the Meiteis like Yangkhubam and Oinammayum (Singh and Khan, 1973: 170). It does not mean that such Meitei *yumnaks* were not called so after being taken from Muslims *sageis* (clans). Consequently, the clan system (unknown in the Islamic world) played an important role in the formation and expansion of the Pangal community in Manipur since the 17th century onwards.

Social and Cultural Practices

The socio-cultural practices of the Muslims of Manipur relate to language (Manipuri), marriage, dress (*phanek*, *khudei*,⁷ *khwangnum*⁸), belief system, food habits, arts and aesthetics like the construction of houses, recreations, games and sports (*mukna*, *mukna kangjei*-wrestling, *yubi lakpi* (snatching of coconut),⁹ *sagol kangjei*-polo/hockey). Some of the practices can still be found. An important aspect of our study is the relationship between the Pangals and Meiteis during the concerned period.

The Muslims of Manipur started using the local language 'Manipuri' as their own which was evident from the fact that many books were translated into Manipuri language from Bengali since the reign of Khunjaoba (Shah, 2008: 163-174). They started changing their food habits, dresses and the way they lived based on the Manipuri styles after they got settled in the Manipuri society since the seventeenth century. Local traditions were fused into Muslim's lifestyles.

The Marriage System

The marriage (*luhongba*) tradition prevalent among the Manipuri Muslims was influenced by the local marriage system based on exogamy (Irene, 2010: 66-74). They followed the practice of not

marrying either a close relative or a clan member although they did not constitute prohibited categories. The only peculiar thing was that the cross-cousins' marriage is not a widespread phenomenon among the Pangal community of Manipur.¹⁰ However, they stressed on solemnizing marriage in the Muslim way by performing *nikah* after consulting and bringing an agreement of both the parties. A major purpose of marriage was procreation and *nikah* was the only way to ensure the legitimacy of the children produced by Muslim parents (Chaki-Sirkar 1984: 58, 65, 204; Irene 2010: 68; Padmadas and Nair 2002: 113-119).

A traditional marriage was usually preformed in one of the four forms, namely, *hainaba* (engagement), *chenba* (elopement) (Ali, 1979: 29),¹¹ *chenba phaba* (capture), *loukhatpa* (Chaki-Sirkar, 1984: 75)¹² (recognition of elopement), in this order. Marriage was a civil contract and not a religious sacrament. There could be no marriage without consent. It could be dissolved with the consent of both the parties or by law (Singh and Khan, 1973: 104). Marriage without consent was considered void and a marriage with consent under compulsion was also invalid (Irene, 2010: 68). Islamic law or *sharia* was always used in marriage ceremony of Manipuri Muslims though there were local elements in the way they performed like *sagei kwa yenba*,¹³ *kwa khaiba*,¹⁴ *panuka puba* (Rahman, 2005: 462-63; Khullakpam, 1997: 200-211; Ahmed, 2011: 96-104; Khan, 1972: 34-36)¹⁵ etc. The tradition of payment of bride money (*mahr*) by the groom was present (Irene, 2010: 80-81). This tradition was not present in the Manipuri society in general. At the time of marriage, they performed some traditional dances such as *thabal chongba*,¹⁶ *maibi jagoi*,¹⁷ and *khullang esei* (Arambam, 1998: 5).¹⁸ Some scholars claim that the Muslims not only used the traditional music but they also introduced *ghazals*, *kasida*, *masnawi* written in Urdu, which were sung during the wedding.¹⁹ There was no ceiling on the *awonpot* (dowry) and parents gave the bride with what was deemed essential to start a happy married life (Irene, 2010: 73). According to Salam Irene, a charming and meaningful custom prevalent among the Manipuri Muslims was the presentation of a copy of the *Qur'an* by the father to the bride on her wedding day which was a symbolic gesture of great appreciation (Ibid: 73). They also performed *Wari-Leeba* (story-telling) (Datta, 1986: 15, 43-44)²⁰ drawn from the local community.

Cross-Cultural Language Learning

The Pangals started learning the Manipuri language since the days of king Khunjaoba (1652-1666 AD) and used it as their mother tongue (Rahman and Kayamuddin, 1986: 34). For instance, *Khullang Eshai* (folk song) was sung by the Muslims from the succeeding period (ibid: 34). Cross-cultural linguistic interactions took place in Manipur in such a way that some Urdu, Arabic and Persian words were introduced in Manipur like *hokum, dukan, khabar, amil, wakil, rumal, dalali, darbar, diwan, sarkar, gulab, sabun, haq, sabi, sanam, qalam, dalil, sahar, bazar* and many others (Naorem, 2005: 459; Arambam, 1998: 4).²¹ Further, some words were used by the Muslims in their society since their settlement in the late eighteenth and early twentieth century in Manipur which got derived from Urdu words.²²

Apart from these, in some cases, the Pangals used words slightly different from Meiteis like *lapkang* for *leikang* (soot), *ipunga* for *ipuwa* (younger brother), *mayem* for *mayum* (house), *kanthra* for *kantha* (quilt) (Irene, 2010: 161). Such linguistic borrowings enriched the Manipuri language. The title Garib Niwaz was regarded as given by a Muslim to king Pamheiba (Khan, 1972: 27). The *Cheitharon Kumpapa* stated that possibly the title of Garib Niwaj (Goripniwaj) was given by his Indian settlers but why an Arabic or Persian name was used is puzzling on account of the fact that no one exactly mentioned the name of the Muslim saint who gave the title to Pamheiba (Parratt, 2005: 137). Probably, he might have become a popular saint and was very close to the king Pamheiba (Khan, 1972: 27). T. C. Hodson mentions that “the title Shahi used by the successors and sons of Gariba Niwaz has been suggested to me due to a temporary predominance of Muhammadans influence in Manipur” (Hodson, 1999: 75). Shobana L. Chelliah explained that Persian names were used in the first half of the eighteenth century. An example is Pamheiba, popularly known as Garib Niwaz, who ruled from 1709 to 1748 AD. His name is taken from Urdu gharib ‘poor’ and nawaz ‘benefactor’, which means ‘Benefactor of the Poor’, and it was a title given to Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti. The Persian title Shah, ‘leader’, is found in the names of three kings who ruled for short periods directly after Pamheiba. They are Ajit Shah, Bharat Shah and Gaur Shah. The use of Persian and Urdu names suggests Muslim influence in much of eastern India in the 18th century. The eastern borders of the Mughal Empire extended well into Assam, and Muslims were appointed by governors in Dacca-ruled areas of the Cachar hills and Sylhet (Chelliah 2005: 169-216). Thereupon, these interactions

helped in the way of creating a community in Manipur through exchange and borrowing of ideas and traditions since the early days.

Religion

The belief system of Pangal community was also shaped by the local community which could be witnessed in certain beliefs and superstitions, such as *bhut* (ghost), *lairen* (a form of python), *heloi* (fairy),²³ *maiba* (traditional doctor in the ministrations of bodily disability like puncturing of dog, *nazar* or *mihu*).

There is a debate among the scholars over the nature of Islam practiced by the Manipuri Muslims. Some scholars argue that they strictly adhered to the basic tenets of Islam. Others claim that they had no mosques and they were for the most part ignorant of the religion they professed (Brown, 1975: 15). B. C. Allen argued that there was no masonry mosque in the state and foreign Muslims in Imphal had a *maulvi* of their own (Allen, 1980: 65) which indicated that some mosques made of woods and bamboo existed in Manipur. Several mosques existed before the Seven-Year Devastation known as *Chahi Taret Khuntakpa* (1819-1826) (Rafayattullah, 1997: 35) namely, Mukame Musalla Mosque known as Muhammad Sani Lainingshang, southern side of Moirangkhom Mongba Hanba; Changamdabi Kangla Ukok; Ningthounai Yairipok; Irong Cheshaba Leikai; Mayang Imphal; Kairang Khumidok; Sangai Yumpham; Keirou; Haoreibi Awang Leikai; Lilong Khunou; Haoreibi Makha Leikai and Porompat called as 'Verandah Mosques' or 'Sangoi Laisang'. The existence of mosques indicates a certain degree of religiosity and participation in congregational prayers (ibid: 35; Khullakpam. 1997: 225-226).

There is a tradition that Muslim ritual practices and rites had been taught initially by the three Sayyids, namely, Sayyid Ambia (the younger brother of Sayyid Auriya who was the religious teacher of the Nawab of Taraf, Muhammad Najiri), Sayyid Abdullah, Sayyid Kalka Hussain who came from Sylhet in 1609 AD (Singh and Khan, 1973: 76-86). During this time, Sayyid Kalka Hussain brought the *Qur'an* to Manipur. When they were asked by the king Khagemba why they came to Manipur, they responded that they came for the purpose of praying to God at a place called Nongmaijing Hill (Imphal East District). Later on, as advised by the king to settle in Manipur, they accepted the proposals of the king who presented the local ladies to marry each of the three Sayyids (Rafayattullah, 1997: 26).

All the Muslims in Manipur belonged to the Sunni sect (Dun,

1992: 16; Khullakpam, 1997: 216). It seems that despite following the fundamentals of Islam, they also believed in the local community's belief system because of the influence of Meitei women on the Muslim men. This is because of the fact that they had not come to Manipur along with their wives but as soldiers. Marriage with local women created strong possibilities of syncretism. It is important to recall what Irfan Habib has argued about religion.²⁴ In the process of their settlement, they adopted and assimilated much of Manipuri's culture, married Meitei women, adopted Manipuri as their mother tongue and lived side by side in harmony with Meiteis. In fact, Salam Irene emphasized that the degree of assimilation and enculturation was extremely high.

The Condition of Muslim Women

There is a scarcity of information about the condition of Muslim women in Manipur during the 17th and 18th (and even 19th) centuries. If it is true that the first Muslim settlers were given Meitei ladies to marry (Irene, 2010: 79), it may be argued that they retained their independence. The *nikah* was performed and the rules and regulations for performing *nikah* based on the Hanafi school of Jurisprudence were followed. Shireen Moosvi in her book, *People, Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, has described certain conditions imposed on the husband as part of the marriage contract, such as monogamy in the context of Gujarat (Moosvi, 2008: 275-287). None of these conditions were present in Manipur. According to R. Constantine, "the Muslims in the land came from outside, found wives among the local women folk and settled down. The Maharajah did not treat them as aliens" (Constantine 1981: 46).

Women played a significant role in the family and community by carrying out economic tasks such as cultivation and weaving. The Manipur Muslim society was a male-dominated one and a gender bias prevailed which may have been reinforced by the Sharia which does not give equal status to women. The wife being under the supervision of her husband had to consult him before making any decision as husband was the head of the family (Irene, 2010: 76). In the social life of the Manipuri Muslim women, they were at a disadvantage because of rigid patriarchy, restriction on movement, early marriage and misuse of personal laws particularly with reference to divorce,²⁵ adoption and guardianship of children, maintenance and inheritance. According to Irene, such factors negatively affected the social empowerment of Muslim women in Manipur (Irene 2010:

76). The women ran the house on her husband's earnings and contributed to the family kitty through her own economic activities. Apart from these socio-cultural activities of Muslims in Manipur, the system of polygamy was rare among the Muslims in Manipur probably because of financial reasons (Irene, 2014: 19-21).

Dress

The dress code of Muslim women in Manipur was more or less similar to the dress code of local women during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was due to the influence and marriage of Meitei women to the Muslim men since the beginning of their settlement in different parts of Manipur. Almost all the Muslim women wore a dress called *phanek*,²⁶ with a short *kurta* over it, the whole (not the lower part of the *phanek*) covered with the *innaphi* (a shawl made of cotton or silk or a combination) (Irene, 2010: 100). The basic difference of dress between the Muslim and the Meitei women was that the Meitei women usually wear a short blouse (up to the waist), but the Muslim women wear a short *kurta* above the *phanek*. Further, the older Muslim women wore *kurta* upto the knees. In this context, T.C. Hodson stated the basic difference between the Muslim and Meitei women in wearing of *phanek* that:

The Panggan women wear faneks, which they fasten under the right breast, while the Meithei women fasten this garment under the left breast. The colors of the faneks of the Panggan women differ from those used by Manipuris, as for instance, the green used by a Meithei will be darker, less glaring than the shade of green allowable too the Panggan (Hodson, 1999: 18).

Two kinds of *phanek* were being worn by the Manipuri Muslim women like the Meitei women, namely, *phanek mayek/ maeik naibi*²⁷ and *muga phanek* (made of silk). The Meitei community used short sleeve (*furit* in Manipuri language) since the time of Maharaj Bhagyachandra. Such system was being adopted by the Muslims and maintained by them in the form of *kurta* or *kuda* till now (Sharma, 2009: 5). Use of *nasika* through nose and use of fashionable and decorated dress made of gold reflects the custom of the Muslim community. Likewise, they practiced decoration of the head during the marriage ceremony which got started by the Maharaj Bhagyachandra.

In the early period, the *phanek* was held up securely by the Muslim women at the waist by using a cloth called *khwangnum*. Nowadays, petticoats have replaced the *khwangnum*. Salwar Kameez is a recently

developed dress among the Muslim community in Manipur due to the long evolutionary process of Islamization. There is no clear evidence that Muslim women in Manipur wore anything other than *phanek*. Likewise, use of *burqa* and *nekaf* during the 17th and 18th centuries by the Muslim women is not attested (ibid: 16-20). It can mean that no difference between the Muslim women and the Meitei women existed over the issue of dress during this period.

The Muslim men wore the Meitei *khudei* (known as the popular name *feijom* among the Muslim community in Manipur which is still prevalent) and were usually seen in this dress, topped either by a shirt or vest. Nonetheless, the popularity of wearing *kurta/pyjama*, *sherwani* by the Muslims irrespective of youths and seniors in Manipur, like their counterparts in the world, is accelerating day by day during the festive ceremonies (Irene 2010: 101).

Games and Sports

Pangals participated not only in the local games but also introduced games and sports in Manipur. During the reign of king Khagemba, there were two Muslim wrestlers, Akun Shah and Kanba Shah, who were attached to the king's palace (Singh and Khan, 1972: 33). The tradition of wrestling was carried on by their successors who came to be known as *mansham sagei* (wrestling clan). The existence of institutions like the *pangal loishang* (Muslim department), *shinglup/singlup*, *keirup*,²⁸ and *leirup*, encouraged and facilitated sport among the Pangals. Two games such as '*likkon*²⁹ *shannaba*' and '*kang*³⁰ *shannaba* (*shannaba* means to play)' were played by the Meiteis, but Pangal (Muslims) women did not play *kang*. Many Muslims kept a *kang* in their homes for playing. They also played *shagol-kangjei* (polo) (Parratt 2005: 28; Nathan 1936: 155-156)³¹ *mukna*, *mukna-kangjei* (wrestling), *khong kangjei* (a kind of the game of hockey), *yubi-lakpi* (snatching of coconut) and were split into two groups '*khunthak* and *khunkha*' and '*ahallup* and *naharup*'.³² It would seem that these divisions were based on locality because when there was a competition organized between the *panas*, the Muslims were included in the *pana* (division) of the Meiteis, which was adjacent to their settlement. Special dresses were worn for different sports (Irene 2010: 162).

Art and Architecture

The Pangal community in Manipur followed the local community's style of constructing houses facing east. Notwithstanding the fact

that in their houses, no place is reserved for worship of female deity as the Muslims have no such deity. They maintained their own distinct identity by following the commandment of Islam. They also followed the Meitei tradition of selecting the site of the foundation of a house by making division of nine equal sub-plots in the whole plot of land (homestead-*ingkhoh*), namely, *Langja Yumpham* (vulture), *Phiral Yumpham* (flag), *Meikhu Yumpham* (smoke), *Samu Yumpham* (elephant), *Sangai Yumpham* (royal site), *Nongsa Yumpham* (lion), *Lolla Yumpham* (ass), *Tampha Yumpham* (diamond) and *Lamhwei Yumpham* (fox) (Irene, 2012: 110). No building was built in the sub-plots assigned to vulture, flag or smoke (Arambam, 1998: 5-6).

Relationship between the Pangals and Meiteis

Before mapping out the relationship between the Pangals and the Meitei communities during the 17th and 18th centuries, it is important to take into account the emergence of Vaishnavism in Manipur as a full-fledged state religion. During the reign of king Charairongba (1697-1709 AD), around 1704, *nimandi*, a corrupt Manipuri word for the *nimbarka* school of faith, was conventionally started by a Brahmin called Krishnacharya who came from Shweta Ganga, Puri (Orissa), with an emphasis on the worship of Radha-Krishna whose descendants are now known by the family name of *guruaribam* (family of old guru) (Singh 1992: 133). It is stated in the *Cheitharon Kumpapa* that “Ningthem (the king), Charairongba and all those who were to accept the name of a Hindu *lai* (divinity) fasted. They (those who fasted with the king) were made to accept the Hindu *lai* on that day” (Parratt, 2005: 113). After his conversion, the king was deeply involved in a spree of building temples dedicated to Lord Krishna and others. Notwithstanding, he did not commence any calculative effort for the extermination of the indigenous local deity called *sanamahi* and proceeded to take care of the traditional deities and *laiphams* (places of worship). With the accession of Pamheiba in 1709, there was a far-reaching transformation in the socio-cultural and religious milieus of the region particularly the relationship between the Muslims and the Meiteis in the public sphere after the Vaishnavite Hinduism was made a state religion of Manipur. In 1717 AD, Guru Gopal Das, another Brahmin, inaugurated Gauriya Vaishnavism which worships Lord Krishna as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu (ibid: 124). In 1720, Guru Gopal Das left Manipur as the ruler was increasingly coming under the influence of another Brahmin called Shanti Das Gosai from Sylhet. Gopal Das was drawn towards

the Ramanandi cult which worshiped Lord Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Sairem 1991: 109-126). This marked the beginning of the influence of Vaishnavite Hinduism in Manipur.

Vaishnavite Hinduism was patronized in Manipur (Kamei, 1991: 251-52) by the king Pamheiba and Guru Shanti Das played a crucial role. Many were forcibly converted (Parratt 1980: 145) under the 'infamous' order of the king who severely punished those who refused conversion. T.C. Hodson stated that "religious dissent was treated with the same ruthless severity as meted out to the political opponents and wholesale banishment and execution drove the people into acceptance of the tenets of Hinduism" (Hodson 1999: 95). Many temples were constructed like the Mahabali temple (Singh and Singh 2005: 66). In 1732, on the instigation of Guru Shanti Das, he burnt more than 120 *puya* (Bhattacharjee 2012: 105)³³ as a part of Hinduisation (Srinivas 1995: 6).³⁴ The burning of *puyas* was carried out despite stiff opposition. This historic event had been described in the *Cheitharon Kumpapa* as '*Puyas mei thaba*' (burning of *Puyas*) that marked a turning point in the socio-cultural life of the people though there was stiff opposition over this issue. However, all this opposition proved to be futile because of the political structure that provided absolute power to the monarch. The Hinduisation campaign of Shanti Das Gosai and Pamheiba was intense and thorough. The successful attempt to spread the philosophy and religious practices of Hinduism had produced a far-reaching impact on the social life of the common people. With the conversion to Hinduism, all the Meiteis were declared as Kshatriyas with ruling elites as *rajkumar* and the Brahmins formed a separate caste group outside the social fold of the *yeks* (clans). Thus, royal proselytism transformed the social system of *yeks* into the Kshatriya *varna* of the Hindus. The social system of *yeks* i.e., *Angom, Mangang, Luvang, Khuman, Moirang, Khanganba, Sarang-Leisangthem* was also identified with the seven *gotras* of Hindus viz., *Shandillya, Kaeshyap, Madhugalya, Goutam-Bharadwaj, Atreya-Angiras, Bharadwaj* and *Vashishta*, respectively (Singh, 1987: 213-214). Efforts were made to transform the whole society according to the Hindu way of life. The practice of vegetarianism was encouraged. The practice of keeping animals such as pigs and hens in the household area was forbidden, considering them unclean as a part of the application of the concept of *mangba-sengba* (generating ideas of impure and pure of Hinduism) (Parratt, 2005: 140). Fines were imposed on violators of the rule (Ibid: 138, 153). In 1732, seven *sageis* (family groups) of *keiroi* (servants of king) who ate beef were beaten up and their punishment was made a public display (Ibid: 129). People

were asked to wear Vaishnavite marks and the sacred thread called *lukun* (ibid: 136). Pamheiba organised Vaishnavite ceremonies after identifying their traditional festivals with Hindu festivals. Many changes occurred after the Vaishnavite Hinduism was established as a state religion which was witnessed in banning of singing in vernacular language (ibid: 168) cremation rites, performing *sati* and pilgrimage to Ganges (ibid: 132, 141, 143, 158).

The above discussion shows that the main objective of king Pamheiba and his spiritual tutor Shanti Das was to establish a *varna/jati* Hindu way of life among the communities particularly Pangals and Meiteis of Manipur. They even extended this new conceptual outlook to the political system of the state. It started with the renaming of the land as 'Manipur' from 'Kangleipak' which was proposed by Shanti Das and accepted by his royal patron. He identified Manipur with a place named in the *Mahabharata* ruled by Babruvahana, son of the great Pandava hero Arjuna who married a Manipur prince, Chitrangada (Singh 1972: 50). For legitimacy, ruling families were described as the descendents of *suryavamsa* to which Arjuna belonged to. In 1724, the title of Maharaja (Parratt 2005: 132) was given to the king who was also called 'Manipureswar' (Singh 1972: 50). Similarly, the queen was renamed Gomti Devi. Such Hinduized policies were in full swing during the reign of Maharaj Bhagyachandra in the Manipuri society.

The new religion had an impact on the relationship between the Pangals and the Meiteis. Vaishnavite Hinduism began to develop a distance between the two communities. The concepts of impure and pure (*mangba-sengba*) threatened the harmony between the two communities that had been there since the days of Khagemba (Parratt 1980: 172). The concept was applied not only to the Muslims but also the Hill people; however, it has been arguable that Manipuri Muslims were treated in the same way by the orthodox Meiteis who professed Hinduism. Earlier, tradition of adoption of Muslims by the Meiteis was there³⁵ and their doors were open to the Meitei houses although some restrictions in the case of marriage between the Meitei and Muslim communities were there (Singh 1978: 62-63). Social distancing led to the stopping of Muslim migration in Manipur. For example, only one Muslim migrated during the reign of Pamheiba. Thus, their relations were cordial in the past, but started breaking down after the coming of Hinduism in Manipur in the early part of the 18th century. This was evident from the fact that they were not allowed to enter the houses of Meiteis and caste system was formed among the Meiteis along with the emergence of the

concept of impure and pure (*mangba sengba*). Such concept of pure and impure prevalent in the Vaishnavite Meiteis played a significant role in the social stratification of not only Hilly people but also the Muslims (Kamei 2014: 175-176; Parratt 2005: 140-141; Constantine 1981: 45-46).³⁶ Further, inter-community marriage was very rare and there were many instances of the punishment of people for eating beef as late as 1747 AD (Kamei 1991: 258-259).

There was stratification of Muslim society in Manipur with the rise of population since their settlement in the beginning of 17th century. The socio-cultural and religious practices of Muslims such as the clan system, marriage, dress, beliefs (religion), language, food habits, arts and aesthetics like construction of houses, recreations, games and sports of the Manipuri Muslim were drawn from the local community and indicated a high level of assimilation and acculturation. These practices show that the Pangals in Manipur deeply and firmly developed and established their customs in conformity with the local community- Meitei community and were viewed as integral part of Manipur at the socio-cultural level. They imbibed much of the socio-cultural practices of Meitei community. In the context of the formation of Islamic societies in Southeast Asia, the historian, Ira M. Lapidus, mentions that Islam has maintained a distinct identity in the socio-cultural and religious practices despite the existence of local customs and traditions. He further opines that “for most Southeast Asian villages, Islam was an element of a more complex social and religious identity and not the exclusive symbol of personal and collective life” (Lapidus 1988: 488). Its relevance to this is that as in Southeast Asia, despite the existence of many local elements and activities in the socio-cultural and religious practices of Muslims in Manipur, they adjudged the local community’s environment by absorbing these practices in their Islamic way. However, it does not mean that they were fully assimilated and integrated into the Meitei society. They maintained a distinct ‘identity’ of their own though they borrowed many concepts, thoughts and ideologies for shaping and reshaping the policies and practices of their own. Why they adopted such practices is because of the fact that due to the absence of Muslim women when they came, they married local women. Accordingly, such practices could be witnessed in Pangals’ way of life, and till now these practices are more or less practically continued by the Pangals. Hence, it can be substantially argued that though the Pangals in Manipur adhered to the basic teachings of Islam, they also adopted the local Manipuri. Little Traditions of tribes and Great Traditions of Islam and Hinduism were adopted as their own.

Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Najaf Haider immensely for his great inputs, timely guidance and thoughtful comments for the improvement of the paper. I am grateful to Prof. Yogesh Sharma from JNU who gave me great inputs and treasured suggestions for the improvement of this research paper. It is not possible to mention all those persons with whom I shared my thoughts regarding this thematic topic but I express my thanks to all those who gave some great inputs for the improvement of the paper.

Funding

I have not received any funding for the research, authorship and publication of this research piece.

Conflict of Interest

This paper has no conflict of interest.

Notes

1. *Nongsamei Puya* (a local source) is said to have been written during the reign of king Khagemba (1597-1652 AD), though some historians claim this work to be of nineteenth century. Originally a Bengali by birth, Lairikyengbam Dhananjoy Singh, one of the most talented, courageous and shrewd generals of Khagemba, popularly known as *Nongsamei* in the history of Manipur, participated in the battle of Toubul (Bishnupur district) between the combined Cachari and Muslim and Manipuri forces in 1606 AD and saved the life of Khagemba when the Muslim forces particularly Munon Khan tried to kill him by spear, due to which he was called *nongsa* (lion-like man) by king Khagemba. As far as the authorship and the exact year of its composition are concerned, there is a controversy. Such *Puya* covered the periods from king Khagemba (1597-1652 AD) to king Chingthangkomba (1759-1798 AD). It communicated the arrival of the Muslims, the course of the war, the settlement of the Muslims, large scale migration, offering of Meitei women to the notable Muslim men and funding of land grants by king Khagemba, the clan system on the basis of professions, occupations, skills, origins, place of settlement, political and administrative roles, economic and technological contributions brought by Muslims in Manipur widely during the 17th and 18th centuries. This *puya* was edited in modern Manipuri language.
2. *Pangal Thorakpa* (Muslims' Immigration) described the reign of various kings. The exact authorship and the year of writing this text is yet to be established. This *Puya* specifically describes the various facets of the Manipuri Muslims of how the war had come into being between the joint Cachari and Muslim forces and the Manipuri king Khagemba in 1606 AD, its mode of conduct, the Muslim

settlers, the migration of the Muslims, different names of the clan system, social divisions of *Pangal* and reigning period of several kings from Khagemba (1597-1652 AD) to Bhagyachandra (1759-62, 1763-98 AD). The text was not edited into modern Manipuri language but an introduction was given by RK Sanahal Singh.

3. The lone surviving Persian text, *Yaddasht Kursi-Nama*, was originally composed by Muhammad Sani, the commander-in-chief of the Muslim forces in 1606 and completed by Rafayattullah in 1893. But the exact year and date in which this text was written by Muhammad Sani remain controversial. It discusses his descendants very briefly and gives information on the battle of Toubul (Bishnupur District) that took place between the joint Cachari and Muslim and Manipuri forces in 1606 A.D., introduction of paddy transplantation in Manipur by the Muslims, the migration issue and conversion of the local community to Islam. It describes the other religious communities staying in Manipur like Andro, Meiteis, Khangabok and Heirok, different *qazis* in different periods of king of Manipur, the number of Muslims who fought for the territorial integrity of Manipur in the Khongjom War of 1891 against the British, the number of mosques that existed before the Seven Years Devastation (*Chahi Taret Khuntakpa*) (1819-1826 AD) and the clan system. This text is significant for the study of the settlement of Pangal community in Manipur during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
4. It refers to the various groups which had been formed chiefly to defend the land. No able-bodied male was exempt. However, it also included the general internal service to the land in the way of works with regard to roads, bridges and transport, communications, collection of tribute payment (*loi*), care of water supply, drainage, sanitation, forests products, building of granaries, etc. For details, see in Parratt, Saroj Nalini Arambam. *The Court Chronicle of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, vol. 1, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 29.
5. Here, many terms are used associated with *sagei phurup* means a group consisting primarily of *sagei* members and neighbors in the *leikai* (a geographical area arranged with houses forming parts of its physical, social and cultural components) and it is not compact but each member helps the other. Then, *singlup* is defined as a closely-knit group of the members of a *sagei* belonging to a distinct area of kin group and in various occasions such as feast or marriage, all members of *singlup* are grouped together in mutual assistance, and are fed with their family members and relatives coming from distant areas. The last one *kangbu* or *khut* denotes a group based on the lineage of primary kinship whose members are so compact and stand for a particular interest and are highly distinctive and different from the above two sub-divisions of *sagei*.
6. The word *sekpín* means layered white umbrella, cut from either cloth or paper in simple or intricate patterns and attached to a tall post.
7. It means men's loincloth. It started its usage since the early period of Meitei society.
8. It also means type of cloth used by Manipuri's women regardless of religion which got tied in their waists.
9. This is one of the indigenous sports of Manipur. Many *pannas* (divisions) can join as much as they can. Coconut is thrown in which one of the players catches it and tries to take it which is against the restraint of the other players to the goal post when a person is seated. This person is called *Ningthou* (king) to whom the coconut is dedicated. The player who can do this is rewarded.

- Every player tries to do this. This game was in existence in the Manipuri society since the early period. For details, see in Singh, L. Iboongahal. *Introduction to Manipur*, Imphal: Students Store, 1987, pp. 232-233.
10. The marriage system of Muslim community in Manipur is contradictory to the marriage system of South India as it was heavily influenced by the Meitei community marriage system. Moreover, cross-cousin marriage among the same clan was considered as taboo which is prevalent and maintained not only by the Muslim community but the Meitei community also. For details, see in Chaki-Sirkar, M. *Feminism in a Traditional Society: Women of the Manipur Valley*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Lt., 1984, pp. 58, 65, 204; Irene, Salam. *The Muslims of Manipur*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2010, p. 68; Padmadas, Sabu Sethu Pillai and Nair, P. Sadasivan. 'Consanguineous unions and their effect on reproductive outcomes. The case of India,' *Genus*, 58 (2), 2002: 113-119.
 11. The term *nupi chenba* means elopement in Manipuri and this practice, prevalent in Meitei society, was adopted by Muslim couples anxious to wed. This had led Quazi Hamid Ali to conclude that the marriage system of the Manipuri Muslims is a combination of Islamic and Manipuri customs. The process of elopement was that the man took the woman to a friend's house and spent the night there. In the morning, the father of the intending groom together with his male relatives went to the woman's residence and made a proposal for marriage. If it was acceptable, the *nikah* was performed on the second night after the elopement either at the residence of the bride or groom. If a negative response was received, the marriage was deferred till an agreement was reached. For details, see in Ali, Quazi Hamid. *The Manipuri Muslim*, Silchar: Published by the Author, 1979, p. 29.
 12. The term *loukhatpa* means recognition of elopement. It is a tradition of local community which influences the Muslim community exhaustively. The process of how it functions and regulates in the local community's society is well explained in Chaki-Sirkar's work, *Feminism in a Traditional Society: Women of the Manipur Valley*, p. 75.
 13. *sagei kwa yenba*, one of the traditional functions before the marriage ceremony of the Manipuri Muslims is the distribution of green betel-nuts and leaves to each of the *sagei* relatives of the girl staying in that locality which is executed on a certain day by the groom's father. The father of the boy engages a person for this purpose and sends him along with betel-nuts and leaves for distribution of the *sagei* to the relatives of the girl. The information about the agreement between the girl's and boy's parents towards engagement of the girl is communicated in this medium.
 14. *kwa khaiba* (cutting of betel-nuts into four equal pieces) is also one of the conventions before the marriage ceremony which was followed after the *sagei kwa yenba* on a date and agreed to between the parents of the boy and the girl. It is usually done for formal declaration of the agreement between the boy's and girl's parents towards engagement of the girl.
 15. *panuka puba*, a compound word of *pan* and *kwa* (betel leaves and nuts), is performed after *kwa khaiba* on a date and fixed for it, which is compeer of the *heijapot* (*heijing pot*) *puba* of the Meiteis. In this case, friends and relatives of both sides are also invited. The parents of the boy arrange betel-leaves and nuts in pieces (in packet known as *putla*), sweetmeats and fruits of any kind of the season in large amount and bring to the house of the girl, which are

- distributed to the invited guests. Such function is performed in the afternoon. Otherwise, the boy's father would have to pay a fair amount of money to the bride. After this function, the date of marriage is fixed. These three traditional functions were transmitted and performed from generation to generation in the Manipuri Muslims society since the early period they were borrowed from the local community. There was no written document of these three practices prevalent in the Manipuri Muslim society but they were orally transmitted. Now, with the passage of time, such practices were left. For details, see in Rahman, A. 'The Meitei-Pangal', Noarem, Sanajaoba ed. *Manipur, Past and Present*, vol. 4, New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005, pp. 462-463; Khullapam, Kheiruddin *Turko-Afghangee Chada Naoda*, Imphal: Circles, 1997, pp. 200-211; Ahmed, Mohd. Shakil. *Essays in Sociology: Muslims in Manipur*, New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2011, pp. 96-104; Khan, MA Janab. *Manipuri Muslim*, Imphal, 1972, p. 34-36.
16. It was a form of Manipuri's folk dance, meaning 'dancing in the moonlight' and is usually correlated with the festival of *Yaoshang* (Holi) in Manipur. Despite having inclusive in such festival during the medieval period by the Muslims, they do not practice it as usual because of evolving the path of Islamization in the Manipuri Muslims society in the early period of the nineteenth century.
 17. It was a form of dance performed by *maibi* (religious functionary-female) related to *Lai Harouba* (local community's religious rituals).
 18. It is a type of Manipuri's folk music sung by both Muslim and Meitei communities (male and female) without having any written script and declaimed by the Muslim ladies in duet. Historically, such folk music of Meiteis was started by the Muslim community from the reign of Paikhomba (1666-1697 AD). It symbolizes the switch of corny emotions between a boy and a girl through high literary verses in the form of natural tunes without any musical accompaniment. It is devised only through vocal jottings and strikingly classical words of the singers. There was no basic classical rule to sing this folk music. For details, see in Arambam, Samarendra ed. *Manipur and Meitei Pangal*, Imphal: P. S. Printing, 1998, p. 5.
 19. Urdu *ghazal* and *qawwali* became popular among the Manipuri Muslims from the reign of Maharaj Churachand (1891-1941). This was sung in the past. A day before the marriage, the friends of the bride and the groom gathered at night to sing the Manipuri folk-songs (*khunung eshei*), along with Urdu *ghazal* and *qawali*, as a form of entertainment. The Muslim folks had orally transmitted these songs through generations to generations. However, after the Second World War, Manipuri Muslims started giving up such elaborate marriage traditions, according to A. Rahman who said during the function of release of his co-edited book, *Pangalgi Khunung Eshei*.
 20. It was in existence in the Manipuri society after the advent of Muslims in Manipur. The concept of borrowing was introduced by an Assamese Brahman namely Jiu Ram Sharma in Manipur during the reign of Maharaj Bhagyachandra. He began to narrate for the first time the Basam Skanda of Shri Mat Bhagwata, Ramayana and Mahabharata stories in 1776 AD. It influenced the Muslims since the twentieth century as pointed out by Md Abdur Rahman. The process is somehow and somewhat different from the Meitei in the sense that Muslims usually did this in connection to cultural activities while the local community, generally speaking, acted it with regard to the purely religious activity. How it was performed along with its processes by the Muslims and the local community

- is at great length discussed in Datta, Birendranath ed. *Historical and Cultural Relations between Manipur, Assam and Bengal*, Imphal: Manipur Sahitya Parishad, 1986, pp. 15, 43-44.
21. Some Turkish words were also introduced such as *coolie*. Further, some words were a combination of Urdu and Meitei words for instance, *Dadash + Ahal = Dahal* (elder brother), *Bahin + Ahal = Beihal* (elder sister) and *Hanum + Hanba =* derivation from *Hinam* and *Hanba* (returning of married woman along with her husband to her parents' residence from her husband after three or five or seven days of marriage). Other words were independently coined like *Ithou* (grandmother spoken by the Muslims)/*Ibok* (grandmother spoken by the Meiteis) used either for paternal or maternal. *Ichamba* (used by the Meiteis) = *Ichamanba* or *Ichagumba* (used by the Pangals for 'like son' addressed to a son of a distant brother in the same *Sagei* or clan). Still, such customs had been maintained by the Muslim community in Manipur. For details, see in Arambam ed. *Manipur and Meitei Pangal*, p. 4.
 22. For examples, *Hella* = a word coined from 'Hai Allah' (Oh Allah); *Bei* = a word derived from 'Bahin' (sister); *Chora* = a word deviated from 'Chidiyan' (small birds) which was used by the Muslims in place of 'Sendang' (used and pronounced by the Meiteis); *Gaya* = a word deviated from 'Goiyen' (a woman's female friend).
 23. The term *heloi* means fairy considered as the most powerful among the female spirits who cause disease. Women may get sick in their sexual organs and men become insane from the attacks of *heloi*. It happens usually during the month of March and April during the period of *Yaoshang* (holy), the spring festival.
 24. Irfan Habib talks of different defining paradigms of religion. First of all, he talks of two different senses of religion extracted from the Oxford English Dictionary (*OED*): (1) 'action or conduct indicating a belief in, reverence for, and desire to please a divine ruling power; the exercise or practice of rites or observances implying this' and (2) 'Recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, reverence and worship; the general mental and moral attitude resulting from this belief, with reference to its effect upon the individual or the community; personal or general acceptance of this feeling as a standard of spiritual or practical life.' In this context, he argues the enlarged definition of 'religion'-it would include practically all forms of 'superstition' which the *OED*, s.v. defines as 'unreasoning awe or fear of something unknown, mysterious or imaginary, especially in connection with religion' or 'an irrational religious belief or practice; a tenet, scruple, habit, etc., found on fear or ignorance'. Moreover, he says 'superstition' can do anything for any religion. For details, see in Habib, Irfan ed. *Religion in Indian History with an Introduction*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2012, pp. xi-xii.
 25. The practice of divorce among the Muslim community in Manipur during this period was quite common. It is very difficult to say whether they used the Islamic provision of *talaq*.
 26. *Phanek* means here an ankle-length striped ladies' skirt with an elaborately embroidered border worn as round the waist. It got started its usage since the early days in the Manipuri society. It was indigenously woven and worn by Meitei ladies.
 27. It is a kind of sarong like-skirt which is the traditional formal attire of Meitei women. It was adopted by the Muslims since the establishment of their

- settlement in Manipur. Its materials are woven on loom in fine cotton or silk into a thick and smooth texture with their stripes in various colors. The borders were embroidered with extremely fine design.
28. It was an organization set-up in the villages of Manipur with the purpose of ringing and killing tiger as soon as they make their appearance since the early period. Such system was abolished in 1910-1924 AD.
 29. *Likkon/ likkol* was a popular game in Manipur played by young girls with young boys during the festival periods.
 30. The term *kang* means indoor game with seven people on each side which was played in Manipur in and around the twelfth century. For details of how it was played, see in Parratt, *The Court Chronicle of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, vol. 1, p. 31.
 31. It means polo here. "Legend has it that Manipur's deity king Kangba invented the game in the 14th century BC, and that in 33 AD., deity king Nongda Pakhangba organized the first polo match. The story goes that the gods celebrated the establishment of the Meitei kingdom with a fierce game of Sagol Kangjei, with teams of seven men, following rules created by none less than Marjing, the God of Polo." It is quoted from the Sunday Magazine of *The Hindu* newspaper, January 6, 2019. There is no historical proof of how the game of Polo was originated since the pre-reign of Pakhangba of Manipur around 14th century BC. This is purely a myth. No historian has claimed so far regarding this matter. During the reign of king Khagemba (1597-1652 AD), the game of Polo was introduced in 1606 AD after the arrival of Muslims from East Bengal particularly from Sylhet (now in Bangladesh). This is clearly mentioned in *The Cheitharon Kumpapa* translated by Saroj Nalini Arambam Parratt. It may be noted that this chronicle is the only chronicle that was written chronologically as far as the history of Manipur is concerned. Before the Khagemba's reign, the game of Polo was in existence in the northern parts of India. It is historically proved that Qutubuddin Aibek died himself by playing polo (*chaugan* in Persian language) in 1210. Though, actually, many contestations and debates have been going on till now whether the game polo was being introduced by the Muslims coming from Sylhet (now in Bangladesh), it is firmly believed that this type of game was being begun in Manipur after the coming of Muslims in 1606 AD. For details, see in Parratt's work, *The Court Chronicle of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, vol. 1, p. 28; Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi- A History of the Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa During the Reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan*, tr. M. I. Borah, vol. 2, Gauhati, 1936, pp. 155-56.
 32. *Aahanlup* and *Naharup* are the institutes which got established in the fifteenth century. According to Saroj Nalini Arambam Parratt, these are the later developments and assimilation of the *Lanlups/ Lallups* (military organization) referred to Loiyumba's reign. These are two of the four *pannas* (divisions) the other being the *Khabam* and *Laiapham*. All the people were grouped into four divisions for administrative purposes, and each group had an equal number of courtiers and officials.
 33. The term, *puyas/puwari*, a Manipuri word, meaning stories of the forefather, explains the traditional knowledge of recording the past or the written records handed down from generation to generation, which was brought out by *Pandits* (locally known as *maichous*) who were the royal scribes in the *loishang* (institution of scribes). Though myths, legends, folklore, genealogies are all inextricably mixed up, these *puyas* can be considered as the treasure of the

- traditional Manipuri historiography. It is dealt in details in Bhattacharjee, J. B. (ed.) *Historians and Historiography of Northeast India*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2012.
34. It is the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, tribal or other groups, changes its custom, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently 'twice born' caste. For details, see in Srinivas, M. N. *Social Change in Modern India*, Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995.
 35. It is explained in the *Nongsamei Puya* that the son of Muhammad Sani, the general of Muslim forces, was adopted by Lairikyengbam Dhananjoy Singh, popularly known as *Nongsamei*, the commander of Meitei forces after the war. It means that there was a free society in Manipur kingdom irrespective of caste, creed and religion during the seventeenth century when the Muslims came to it. It is fully admitted in *Nongsamei Puya*.
 36. The notion of impure-pure (*mangba-sengba*) was started in the Manipuri society during the early period of the eighteenth century. This orthodox concept of Vaishnavite Hinduism was practically adopted in the Manipuri society. How such concept could impinge the harmonious society since the settlement of Muslim community in the beginning of seventeenth century is witnessed from the fact that those utensils, eatable things sold in the bazaar, etc. which were touched by the Muslims and Hill peoples were considered as unpolluted things. In this context, Gangmumei Kamei in his recently published book said that 'conversion into Hinduism brought orthodoxy and sharp caste distinctions between the Hindu Meiteis and other religious communities.' Further, Constantine opined that 'at one time, according to one of the administration reports of the 1880s, there was a royal decree prohibiting Muslims from building houses in Hindu villages. They had to organize their helmets. In time, this decree was allowed to fall into disuse. Too many a Muslim and even Meitei Hindu, it would be news now to be told that such a law was in force at one time. One may recall the memorandum submitted by the Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha in 1939. Nothing much is conveyed by pointing out that Meitei Hindus treats the Muslims as their political peers.' This concept was in thriving in twentieth century with the emergence of consciousness of being Meitei and Muslims in the Manipuri society. For details, see in Kamei, Gangmumei. *A History of Modern Manipur: A Study of Feudalism, Colonialism and Democracy, (1826-2000)*, 3 vols., New Delhi: Akansha Publication House, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 175-176; Parratt, *The Court Chronicle of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, vol. 1, pp. 140-141; Constantine, *Maid of the Mountains*, pp. 45-46.

References

- Ahmed, Mohd. Shakil. *Essays in Sociology: Muslims in Manipur*, New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2011.
- Allen, B.C. *Gazetteer of Manipur and Naga Hills*, New Delhi: Gian Publication, 1980.
- Ali, Quazi Hamid. *The Manipuri Muslim*, Silchar: Published by the Author, 1979.
- Arambam, Samarendra (Ed.) *Manipur and Meitei Pangal*, Imphal: P.S. Printing, 1998.

- Bhattacharjee, J. B. (Ed.) *Historians and Historiography of Northeast India*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2012.
- Brown, Robert. *A Statistical Account of Manipur*, New Delhi: K. M. Mittal Publication, 1975.
- Chaki-Sirkar, M. *Feminism in a Traditional Society: Women of th Manipur Valley*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Lt., 1984.
- Chelliah, Shobana L. 'Asserting Nationhood through Personal Name Choice: The Case of the Meitei of Northeast India,' *Anthropological Linguistics*, vol. 47, no. 2 (summer, 2005), pp. 169-216.
- Constantine, R. *Maid of the Mountains*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1981.
- Datta, Birendranath (Ed.) *Historical and Cultural Relations between Manipur, Assam and Bengal*, Imphal: Manipur Sahitya Parishad, 1986.
- Dun, E. W. *Gazetteer of Manipur*, New Delhi: Manas Publication, 1992.
- Habib, Irfan (Ed.). *Religion in Indian History with an Introduction*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2012.
- Hodson, T.C. *The Meitheis*, New Delhi: Low Price Publication, 1999, (Reprinted).
- Hossain, K. "In Search of Equality: Marriage Related Laws for Muslim Women in Bangladesh". *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 5 (1), 2003: pp 96-113.
- Irene, Salam. "Social life of the Muslims of Manipur". In Madhu Rajput (Ed.) *Social and Cultural Stratification in North East India*, New Delhi: Manak Publication Pvt. Ltd., 2012.
- _____. *The Muslims of Manipur*, New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2010.
- _____. *The Women of Manipur: An Alternative Perspective*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2014.
- Kamei, Gangmumei. *History of Manipur: Pre-Colonial Period*, vol. 1, New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1991.
- _____. *A History of Modern Manipur: A Study of Feudalism, Colonialism and Democracy, (1826-2000)*, 3 vols., New Delhi: Akansha Publication House, 2014.
- Khan, Md. Chingiz. "The Origin of Manipuri Muslims", *Indian History Congress*, JNU, December 2014 (Unpublished).
- _____. "Settlement and Migration of Muslims in Northeast India with special reference to Manipur", *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, Kolkata: Institute of Historical Studies, Vol. LVI, Nos. 1& 2, 2016, pp. 31-53.
- Khan, MA Janab. *Manipuri Muslim*, Imphal, 1972.
- Khullakpam, Abdul Hakim Shah. *The Manipur Governance to the Meetei-Pangal (Manipuri Muslim)*, Imphal: Pearl Publication, 2008.
- Lapidus, Ira M. *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Moazzam, Anwar. "Islamic Culture/Muslim Cultures: An Attempt at Understanding Relationship between Uniformity and Variety". In Imtiaz Ahmed (Ed.) *Ritual and Religions among Muslims in India*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1981.

- Moosvi, Shireen. *People, Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Nathan, Mirza. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi- A History of the Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa During the Reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan*, tr. M. I. Borah, vol. 2, Gauhati: Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, 1936.
- Padmadas, Sabu Sethu Pillai and Nair, P. Sadasivan. "Consanguineous unions and their effect on reproductive outcomes. The case of India," *Genus*, 58 (2), 2002, pp. 113-119.
- Parratt, Saroj Nalini Arambam. *Religion of Manipur: Beliefs, Rituals and Historical Development*, Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1980, p. 145.
- . *The Court Chronicle of the Kings of Manipur: The Cheitharon Kumpapa*, vol. 1, London: Routledge, 2005.
- Rafayattullah. *Yaddasht Kursi-Nama*, Lahore, 1929, tr. Maulana Muhammad Jalaluddin, et. al., Imphal: Circles, 1997.
- Rahman, Abdur and Kayamuddin. *Pangalgi Khunung Eshei*, Imphal: Liberty Publishing Association, 1986.
- Rahman, A. "The Meitei-Pangal". In Sanajaoba (Ed.) *Manipur: Past and Present*, vol. 4, New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005.
- Sairem, Nilabir. "The Revivalist Movement of Sanamahism". In Sanajaoba (Ed.) *Manipur: Past and Present*, vol. 2, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1991.
- Sharma, Kullachandra and Badaruddin. *Meitei Pangal Hourakpham*, Imphal: Chingtam Press, 1991.
- Sharma, B. Kullachandra. *Typology and Technology of Meitei Writing Materials*, Imphal, 1988.
- . "1891gi Mamangda Oiramba Pangalgi Fibam", In Rashid Ali (Ed.), *Pambei*, Imphal: Writers Union Manipur, 2009.
- Shah, Md. Latif. "Pangal, Manipuri Muslim", *People of India: Manipur*. In K.S. Singh (Ed.), Kolkata: Seagul Book, 1998.
- Singh, N. Devendra. *Identities of Migrated People in Manipur*, Manipur University: Centre for Manipur Studies, 1994.
- Singh, L. Iboongohal. *Introduction to Manipur*, Imphal: Students Store, 1987, pp. 232-233.
- Singh, R.K. Jhalajit. *A Short History of Manipur: Pre-Colonial Period*, Imphal: J. M. Printing Works, 1992.
- Singh, L. Iboongohal and Singh, N. Khelchandra ed. *Cheitharol Kumbaba*, Imphal: Manipur Sahitya Parishad, 2005.
- Singh, O. Bhogeshwar and Khan, MA Janab (Eds). *Nongsamei Puya*, Imphal: Manipur Stationery and Printing Industries, 1973.
- Singh, R.K. Sanahal. *Pangal Thorakpa*, Imphal: Liberty Publication Association, 1985.
- Singh, O. Bhogeshwar ed. *Sanamahi Laikan (Story of Sanamahi)*, Imphal: Tamra Publications, 1972.

Singh, K.B. "Social Stratification and Mobility in Manipur", *Northeast India: A Sociological Study*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1978.

Srinivas, M. N. *Social Change in Modern India*, Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995.