



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE MEITEI PANGAL

***DR. MD. NAZIR AHAMAD**

**Assistant Professor, Department of History Pravabati College, Mayang Imphal, Imphal West, Pin 795132*

INTRODUCTION

Society is a group comprises of men, women and children that has been established patterns of co-operation by means of which its members are able to survive and reproduce. It is a social way of living costum etc. of a civilized community; systems where by people live together in organized communities. The functions of the society are many divided into five areas of established group producer, called institution by sociology. The society provides for the foot, shelter and clothing of its members through economy. The family functions are to insure the care and feeding of children. Knowledge and learning in a society are acquired through education. Political institution is the means of maintaining order and protecting the society from enemies. Lastly, man's place in the universe is interpreted by religion.¹ A group of the people that lives in the certain place, shares a common culture, and has its own social institution is called society. In a society social institutions include the family, education, religion, politics, and economy. A society changes when one or more of its institutions are altered. This institutional changes may be positive (beneficial) or negative (harmful), depending on how they affect the members. Changes may be brought about by forces within the society (internal change) or by influences outside the society (external change).²

The Meitei social structure was based on clan system which is known as *Yek* system. As the Meiteis are the composite group of different *Sagei* or *Yumnak* (lineages) they belonged to seven *Yeks* namely (1) *Ningthouja*, (2) *Angom*, (3) *Khuman*, (4) *Khaba Nganba*, (5) *Moirang*, (6) *Sarang Leishangthem* and (7) *Luwang*. The *Yek* structure was formulated under patrilineal system because Meitei society was patrilineal society. *Yek* rules were observed and followed strictly in the Meitei society. The marriage relation between the member of same *Yek* and *Yumnak* or *Sageis* was prohibited. The said rules were imposed upon on the social members of the Meiteis. According to Th. Maniratan Singh Pakhangba was the founder of the *Yek* system of which each of his seven sons was given with its seven *Yeks*.³ On the basis of the Puyas (ancient Manipuri text), myth and legends, many scholars attempted to explore the origin of the Meitei *Yek* system. However, a concrete picture of the subject cannot bring to light. T.C. Hudson considered the seven clans of Meiteis are not only the social unit but

also political unit which forms the Meitei confederation. The Meitei society was constituted under the seven *Yeks* in which a large number of *Yumnaks* (lineages) allotted to each *Yek*.⁴ In course of time there was continue growth and expansion of lineages on account of growth of population, socio, cultural, economic activities and certain event continuous intermission of people from outside Manipur in the successive waves of migration led to the increase of population in the Manipur society. Many of the immigarnts absorbed into different *Yumnaks* of the Meiteis in ancient time.

It is stated that before the introduction of Yek system seven Yumnaks-(1) Laiyaibi, (2) Lapubi, (3) Mangwaibi, (4) Tuwaimu, (5) Sachibi, (6) Thererongpamant, (7) Layarnwere existed. Then new Yumnaks came into existence and Latham, Langlem, Langleppam, Langkam, Langkolcham, Leikhram, Soipam, Seltham, Sanoucham, Satokpam, Sarangthem, Senpam were of pre-Pakangba period.⁵LeithakLeikharol, the ancient Manipuri text mentioned the Yumnaks as – Langmaithem, Hitam, Luwangcham, Wangkhem, Ningompam, Laitoncham, Kasom, Keisam, Nungsang, Khongnang, Lumpu, Karom, Arong, Angom, Thokchom, Soibam, Leiajam, Situbam, Sarangthem, Leisangthem, Moirangthem, Konthoujam, Loktombam, Khumukcham, Atom, Khoitom, Mantom, Khuyonthem, Mayanglambam, Laishram, Kangabam, Aheibam, Konsuba, Chirom, Khakokpam, Ningthoujam, Lourembam, Chanam, Mongbijam, Haokhamand Sharom.⁶

Loiyomba Sinyel mentioned many *Yumnaks* which assigned with certain social economic, religion and political functions. Some of the *Yumnaks* which are found from this text are –

1. *Nganukappam*
2. *Thingkusham*
3. *Lairenlakpham*
4. *Kasom*
5. *Tiyam*
6. *Chakpalakpam*
7. *Kongpacham*
8. *Thongakpam*
9. *Khumallambam*
10. *Haokhom*
11. *Laikhrampam*
12. *Solchiram*
13. *Whahengbam*
14. *Kabacham*
15. *Aouchom*
16. *Chingngakhalpam*
17. *Thongpam*
18. *Kongbam*
19. *Thoudam*
20. *Thinpam*
21. *Taipangcham*

22. *Yumlempam*
23. *Okthiyampam*
24. *Khirisumbam*
25. *Yumnaksangbam*
26. *Koisnam*
27. *Singkhangbam*
28. *Chingkhwapam*
29. *Wangpacham*
30. *Thanghangsapam*
31. *Ahongsamgbam*
32. *Naotam*
33. *Langsangbam*
34. *Yiroibam*
35. *Khumenthem*
36. *Khumukcham Yipusangbam*
37. *Usiyampam*
38. *Hakwalthem*
39. *Atom*
40. *Heirom*
41. *Irom*
42. *Soiyam*
43. *Hidam*
44. *Soirensangbam*
45. *Ningombam'*
46. *Sarangthem*
47. *Leishangthem*
48. *Sorokhaibam*
49. *Potsangbam*
50. *Moirangpukhrambam*
51. *Puroichan*
52. *Hottalkokpam*
53. *Konthoujam*
54. *Asangbam*
55. *Arambam*
56. *Yenkhom*
57. *Luwangsangbam*
58. *Senam*
59. *Moirangthem*
60. *Pathem*
61. *Mangsatabam*
62. *Langmaithem*
63. *Ngarangyalpam*

64. *Nakalbam*
65. *Khuraichom*
66. *Mayanglambam*
67. *Ningthijam*
68. *Puklambam*
69. *Longjam*
70. *Chenglei*
71. *Kangucham*
72. *Tekcham*
73. *Langmaiymathing*
74. *Thoipicham*
75. *Aseibam*
76. *Lirongcham*
77. *Arupam*
78. *Lourepam*
79. *Ronsapam*
80. *Aheipam*
81. *Hisapa*
82. *Moichambam*
83. *Loukham*
84. *Maimuwam*
85. *Tiyam*
86. *Nahakpam*
87. *Khunthoubam*
88. *Meihoubam*
89. *Pheiroijam*
90. *Naokalsangbam*
91. *Tokpam*
92. *Thangsabam*
93. *Tourem*
94. *Naoroipam*
95. *Wangkhem*
96. *Nagithem*
97. *Lankolcham*
98. *Langthem*
99. *Lankambam*
100. *Laitoncham*
101. *Singkhanpam*
102. *Tokpam*
103. *Haomukpam*
104. *Satokpam*
105. *Khoirisumbam*

106. *Khoiriyangbam*
107. *Lairencham*
108. *Lisham*
109. *Leisawanbam*
110. *Yelwam*
111. *Khugolthem*
112. *Okrambam*
113. *Maipawamcha*
114. *Pongkhaichambam*
115. *Akuwanapam*
116. *Maipam*
117. *Aphrakpam*
118. *Walleppam*
119. *Ngangom*
120. *Yelkokpam*
121. *Loichayanbam*
122. *Atram*
123. *Punggraicham*
124. *Ayangpam*
125. *Hairelpam*
126. *Walkhongthem*
127. *Akham*
128. *Siyatpamsam*
129. *Hayingthem*
130. *Khaitthem*
131. *Halnoibam*
132. *Luwangcham*
133. *Amukcham*
134. *Surembam*
135. *Narumbam*
136. *Khumurong*
137. *Luchambam*
138. *Mongsangpam*
139. *Wanglembam*
140. *Kabrambam*
141. *Seram*
142. *Suthantham*
143. *Thongkaicham*
144. *Soukrapam*
145. *Keiyungbam*
146. *Khoimaicham*
147. *Ngaseppam*

148. *Nampucham*
149. *Asem*
150. *Paobam*
151. *Phandem*
152. *Laishram*
153. *Haobicham*
154. *Kumpom*
155. *Naokhongcham*
156. *Latham*
157. *Khuraicham*
158. *Yumleppam*
159. *Nangam*
160. *Heirangkhongjam*
161. *Mutum*
162. *Thingnam*
163. *Chingkangbam*
164. *Khuribam*
165. *Laisom*
166. *Thongam*
167. *Chantam*
168. *Nongpokpam*
169. *Waikhom*
170. *Pukhrambam*
171. *Singkham*
172. *Soraisam*
173. *Haisinam*
174. *Thiyam*
175. *Akoicham*
176. *Hicham*
177. *Solam*
178. *Khamman*
179. *Hidam*
180. *Laisangbam*
181. *Senrapam*
182. *Nomram*
183. *Punamyang*
184. *Kokpam*
185. *Phuritsapam*
186. *Putalcham*
187. *Sangtolcham*
188. *Naorem*
189. *Lairellakpam*

190. Nongchelpam

191. Kyam etc.⁷

According to O. Ranjit Singh, Meitei lineages (*Yumnaks*) might appear in the Meitei Society since very early times. The Meitei lineages which contained in the *LoyumbaSinyen* are found incomplete. A detailed account of the traditional *Yumnak* is obtained in the *Khagemba Yumlep*.⁸ There are around four hundred and thirty two *Yumnaks*. Out of these 432 *Yumnaks* found in the *Khagemba Yumlep*, one hundred sixteen (116) are for *Ningthoucha*, forty seven (47) for *Angom*, thirty one (31) for *Chenglei*, sixteen (16) for *Ngangba*, fifty seven (57) for *Luwang*, one hundred and one (101) for *Khuman* and sixty four (64) for *Moirang*. Each of the four hundred and thirty two (432) *Yumnaks* has a background of its own. The four hundred and thirty two (432) lineages were named based on the occupation, name of the progenitor, place of settlement, physical feature, post held, deity worshipped by the progenitor, etc. *Mayanglambam* is derived from the post held. The post held by the progenitor was *Lambu* of *Mayang*, *Khamlangpa Sangpam* was given for looking after the deity *Khamlangpa*, *Khoirom* is the one who introduced the art using *Phi-Aphaiba* in weaving, *Leiyusunpam* prepared the local liquor '*Leigu*', *Ayekpam* is a painter and so on.⁹

Regarding the social life of the *Meitei Pangal*, it is significant to note that the family life and social organization of the immigrants Muslims of Manipur were greatly influenced by Meitei family institutions and social organizations. In past, people migrated from the east as well as from the west settled in Manipur. The immigrants were absorbed to Meitei society either by accommodating in the traditional *Yumnaks* or by introducing new *Yumnaks*.¹⁰ The Indo-Aryan Brahmin migrating groups and Muslims of Manipur commonly known as *Meitei Pangals* married Manipuri women and established new *Yumnaks* which are not inlisted in the *Meitei Yeks*. It is stated that "individuals or groups of individual Muslims, including those involved in the 1606 events, were sought to be identified, in years/decades that followed the 1606 settlement, on the basis of inter alia, either individual skills or place of origin or the name (S) of the place (S) when they settled etc. and the descendants of those individuals or groups of individuals came to be known by that identification. This identification is known as *Sagei* in Manipuri which denotes "Kin", "relative", "genus" *Sagei* also means *Yumnak* meaning "household". Therefore *Sagei* carries the meaning of relative, kin, household etc. A *Sagei*, therefore, is a cognate group because of their consanguineous relationship. It may be noted that nomenclature of Muslim *Sageis* bore the imprint of how it came to be Christianed in different ways on the basis of, as mentioned above, either individual skills or place of origin or the name (S) of the place (S) where they settled etc. *Pangals* followed patrilineal descent system and were patrilocal¹¹ like the Meiteies. From this a conclusion may be drawn that Meitei Pangal society was based on a *Sagei* based set-up. However, there is no nation of Mythical organization of the *Sagai*.

Acknowledgment to Md. Nazir Ahamad, *The Muslims in Manipur: A Study in Their History and Culture*, unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Manipur University, 2013.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. New standard Encyclopedia, Vol. Twelve, Standard Education Corporation, Chicago, p.152.
2. Ibid, p.522.
3. Th. Maniratan Singh, *Meitei Puwari*, Matangi Khongthang, Vol.25, Imphal, 1977, p.16.
4. T.C. Hodson, *The Meiteis*, Delhi 1989, p.85.

5. L. Nityai Singh (Ed), NingthouKangparolPonglenPuya Meihoupa, Imphal, 1982, p.9.
6. Y. Bheigyasingh(Ed), LeithakLeikharol, Imphal, 1987, p.113.
7. Kh. Chandrasekhar (Ed), LoyumbaSinyen, Imphal, 1973, Pp.17-25.
8. Oinam Ranjit Singh, Influence of Meitei Culture on the Muslim in Manipur, Journal of North East India Council for Social Science Research, Vol. 31, No.2, Silong October 2007, p.68.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Mohd Shakin Ahamd, Eassays in Soceiology Muslim in Manipur, New Delhi, 2011, p.84.