



The Meetei Revivalist Movement: Navigating Identity And Cultural Transformation In 20th Century Manipur

Victoria Potshangbam^{1*}

^{1*} Assistant Professor, Department of History, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, India, victoria.potshangbam@gmail.com

Citation: Victoria Potshangbam, (2024), The Meetei Revivalist Movement: Navigating Identity And Cultural Transformation In 20th Century Manipur, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(5) 15273-15280
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i5.8828

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the process of shaping a distinctive socio-religious and cultural identity of the Meetei people expressed through the Meetei Revivalist Movement, or Sanamahism, in 20th-century Manipur. The study explores the effects of colonial modernity, particularly British "Indirect Rule" during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which introduced new ideas, institutions, and perspectives to the region. The study set the stage for this diverse ethnic group, and in particular, the emergence of various socio-religious and cultural identities among the Meetei community. The study examines the relationship between the Meetei Revivalist Movement and political and militant movements in both the valley and hills of Manipur. This study employs historical and cultural analysis to understand the formation and evolution of Meetei identity, drawing on primary sources such as historical records, writings, and narratives from socio-political movements. The finding of the study indicates that the assertion of Meetei identity is not simply a cultural revival but a very close relationship between the political-militant struggle for autonomy and recognition. Furthermore, the study emphasizes internal fissures within the Meetei Revivalist Movement in a more nuanced discussion that emphasizes identity formation and long-lasting implications of identity politics in Manipur.

Keywords: Mayek script, Meeteis, Revivalist, Sanamahism

1) Introduction

Manipur is considered the "Jewel of India" and a multicultural region rich in cultural heritage. In such a land, it occupies a very central position in the historical narration of this state; thereby playing an important role in forming socio-cultural practices and trends. "Tilli-Koktong", "Poirei-Lam," "Kangleipak" and "Mitei-Leipak" were the terms used by the community in earlier historic days. This region has always been a confluence of multiple ethnic groups and a rich heritage. Among them, the Meeteis with their own language, script, and indigenous beliefs have played a very important role. But colonial interventions, the introduction of Hinduism, introduced radical changes deep in their traditional practices (Constantine, 1981). The Meetei Revivalist Movement was an energetic response to these forces that gathered pace in the early 20th century, in attempts by the community to regain cultural pride and redefine it amidst currents in modernity and globalization (Singh, 2016).

Manipur, one of the northeast Indian states, is rich in diverse features of both valleys and hills. The valley region, especially the Imphal Valley, is a level and fertile plain that happens to be the cultural and economic center of the state. The rugged, heavily forested hill regions surrounding the valley are predominantly inhabited by various tribes, including the Nagas and Kukis (Grierson, 1903). For ages, the interaction between the valley and the hills has shaped Manipur's socio-economic and political dynamics. From the administrative and cultural center of the valley comes the ecological significance and ethnic diversity of the hills (Meetei, 2016). The history of Manipur can be defined as a complex game of tribes and ethnicity. Traditionally, there used to be seven groups amongst the main body settled within Manipur Valley-which include Ningthoujas, Angoms, Moirangs, etc. However, later the Ningthoujas became dominant. Pamheiba's period of rule in Manipur 1709–1748 AD marks the beginning of the spread of Vaishnavism within the Manipur region with resultant new forms of socio-religion. This meant that their indigenous animistic religion, Sanamahism, was replaced by Hindu customs and the Bengali script instead of the Meitei Mayek, thereby gradually eroding their cultural heritage (Singh, 2016).

The Meetei Revivalist Movement emerged as a socio-religious and cultural awakening to revive the 'pre-Hindu' Meetei beliefs and practices. Founded in the 1930s by Naoria Phullo in Cachar, it gave rise to the organization of Apokpa Marup, which was intended for the restoration of the ancient Meetei religion. The movement was gradually built up in Manipur with the establishment of Manipur State Meetei Marup on 14 May 1945 and subsequently the rise of different organizations advocating revivalist activities of Meetei customs (Kabui, 1991). At the core of the movement lies the worship of the deity Sanamahi, who is held dear as a house protector as well as the supreme deity of this revived faith called Sanamahi Laining. Despite the strong influence of Hinduism, the worship of Sanamahi was still intact, even among Meetei Brahmins and some of the tribes like Kabui, Tangkhul, and Kuki (Singh, 1988).

Contemporary revivalist literature emphasizes Sanamahi's primacy in the pre-Hindu faith, as supported by scholars such as Saroj Nalini Parratt. Although the movement is at times described as the Meetei Marup Movement, largely because of its original organizational inception, terms such as Sanamahism, Sanamahi Laining, and Sanamahists are more frequent in academia to refer to this lasting culture revival. This movement does not only attempt to repossess Meetei identity and cultures but also moves about the bigger socio-political platform where ethnicity and demands for greater political autonomy often walk hand-in-hand with the resurgence of culture (Meetei, 2004)

According to Sanamahists, or Meetei revivalists, the Meetei community was a victim of the dominant force of Hinduism that, they claimed, started from the imposing of Hinduism in the early 18th century, in Manipur under the Pamheiba's regime, also known as Garibniwaz, who reigned Manipur from 1690–1751 CE (Sanajaoba, 1991). This policy was influenced by a Bengali guru named Shanta Das Goshai and so the regime of Pamheiba actively sought to debase the ancient Meetei belief system, which involved destroying Meetei religious practices including burning sacred puyas (religious texts), destroying temples, exhuming royal graves, and cremating them (Sanajaoba, 1991).

Despite opposition from the likes of Lourembam Khongnangthaba, the state influence promoted an increasing Hinduisation with the later reign of Bhagyachandra, who started Vaishnavite Ras-Leela dance and furthered the assimilation of Bengali elements into Meetei culture. Many scholars agree that with Hinduism's dominance, religious patterns in Manipur shifted; however, the assertion that it completely erased Meetei traditions is disputed as shown in table 1. British records from the 19th and early 20th centuries, from the likes of William McCulloch and Hodson, indicate that the Meeteis, although formally professing Hinduism, continued to conduct most of their ancient rituals blended with Hindu customs. This synthesis of Meetei beliefs with Hinduism indicates that the process was not a complete eclipse of the old faith, but rather a gradual cultural and religious adaptation, retaining significant elements of the traditional Meetei worldview (Parratt, 1980).

Table 1: Historical Overview of Hinduism and Meetei Cultural Practices in Manipur

| Aspect | Historical Development and Cultural Impact | Key Events and Figures |
|--|--|---|
| Introduction of Hinduism | Hinduism, specifically the Vaishnavite faith, was introduced forcefully in the early 18th century during the reign of Pamheiba (Garibniwaz). | Pamheiba (Garibniwaz), influenced by Shanta Das Goshai, introduced the Ramandi cult. |
| Destruction of Meetei Religious Practices | Hindu under the influence of Bengali Brahmins, sought to eradicate Meetei religious beliefs and practices. Notable actions included the destruction of puyas (ancient Meetei texts) and temples of local deities. | Pamheiba ordered the burning of puyas, destruction of temples (Sanamahi, Panthoibi), and exhuming and cremating royal graves. |
| Opposition to Hinduism | A small faction of scholars, such as Lourembam Khongnangthaba, opposed the forced Hinduization of Meetei society, though such opposition was largely suppressed by the state. | Lourembam Khongnangthaba, a Meetei scholar, attempted to restrain Pamheiba from destroying old Meetei practices. |
| Development of Meetei Hindu Practices | The influence of Hinduism, especially Vaishnavism, became stronger under the reign of Bhagyachandra, who introduced the Ras-Leela dance. However, a synthesis of Meetei beliefs with Hinduism was created. | Bhagyachandra conceptualized the Ras-Leela devotional dance and promoted the worship of Vaishnavite deities. |
| British Observations on Meetei Practices | British administrators like McCulloch and Hodson noted that while the Meeteis formally followed Hinduism, they continued with pre-Hindu rituals and cultural practices, often modifying Hinduism to fit local customs. | McCulloch noted Meeteis' disregard for Hindu purity laws and their retention of earlier rituals in the mid-19th century. |

The revivalist movement in Manipur has led to a stronger assertion of the Meetei community's distinct identity, together with the general identity of Manipuris, comprising other groups that share their customs, including food, language, and dress. However, this movement has also created fissures among various ethnic communities with the Meeteis against hill tribes. As a consequence, tribal political and militant outfits like the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) and Kuki Liberation Army (KLA) came on the scene. The revivalist movement despite claims of shared ancestry between the Meeteis and hill populations has amplified ethnic identities reflected in the state holiday calendar (Table 4) dominated by holidays of Meetei Hindus and Sanamahists (Singh, 1998).

The revivalist movement has generated debates about its real nature. While some scholars contend that the movement only represents the continuous existence of cultural elements, others, like Malem Meetei, suggest that it involves the selective adoption of certain cultural practices to create an imagined community (Meetei, 2004). While such revivals have been associated with the more general political objective of self-rule for Manipur, not all revivalists see their efforts as part of a nationalist agenda. This distinction points to the two levels of tension in the interplay between cultural revivalism and political nationalism within the Manipur setting. The Meetei Revivalist Movement, with the creation of the Meetei Marup, accelerated the cause of the Meetei Independence or Insurgency Movements. The economic backwardness of Manipur and the formation of Nagaland in 1963 are the most often mentioned causes for accelerating the insurgent movements in the state. (Parratt, 2005).

Table 2: Groups and their contribution

| Group Name | Year of Formation | Key Focus/Contributions | Notable Action/Development |
|--|-------------------|---|--|
| United National Liberation Front (UNLF) | 1964 | Advocated for ethnic sovereignty and self-determination | Played a key role in initiating the insurgency |
| Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) | Late 1960s | Resistance against Indian authority and demand for autonomy | Strengthened the push for independence |
| Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) | 1978 | Focused on armed struggle for independence | Engaged in militant activities against Indian forces |
| Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) | 1977 | Promoted an independent Manipur and denounced external rule | Contributed to the insurgency alongside UNLF and PLA |
| Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) | Early 1980s | Leftist ideology, focused on independence and self-rule | Part of the growing network of insurgent groups |

Among such organizations were PREPAK and KCP, striving to claim ethnic autonomy, to gain resistance to domination by another culture as shown in table 2. One of the core features of this movement was rediscovering interest in the Meitei Mayek script; this became a symbol that represents the re-attainment of roots and culture. According to its advocates, this is the very storehouse of indigenous knowledge and historic identity. With educational reforms incorporating Meitei Mayek in schools and increased usage in publications, the movement brought a radical change in the public consciousness (Mangang, 2003). This achievement in reviving the script pointed out the powerful role language plays in creating unity and strength for marginalized communities, which further deepened the Meetei struggle for self-determination and cultural identity (Meetei, 2004).

Sanamahism is, in fact, the identity of the Meetei people, and this formed the very base for the revivalist movement. Rituals, festivals, and cosmic beliefs of the community were sought to be revived by the revivalists in order to give significance to it. Sanamahism, as a living tradition, promised much toward reconnection with their own heritage for the Meeteis. The movement was one which concentrated on preserving a great legacy in arts, literature, and folklore such as the Meetei traditional sports of *thang-ta* (a form of martial arts) and Meetei traditional music like *Khunung Ishei* (folk song), etc. These activities ensured that the cultural practices were passed from generation to generation, thereby not only strengthening the historical memory of the movement but also its importance in community unity (Meetei, 2016).

This Meetei Revivalist Movement is special because it reclaims pride in culture and gives a collective identity. The revival of Meitei Mayek, the revival of Sanamahism, and folk art celebration with traditional practices are just examples of this movement's influence. Moreover, it reflects awareness about the challenges brought by the present global scenario. As Manipur continues to evolve, the experiences of the Meetei Revivalist Movement truly resonate. This movement points out the role that culture plays in building resilience, unity, and inspiration. In merging tradition with modernity, the Meeteis have built a path that resonates through the

experiences of Indigenous peoples around the world, reminding us of the common struggles and victories in the fight for cultural preservation in the 21st century (Malemnganbi, 2022).

The study aims to examine the Meetei Revivalist Movement and how it influenced the cultural and socio-political transformation in Manipur during the 20th century. The paper considers the rise of the movement due to colonial and post-colonial influence, where it has become a means of regaining Meetei cultural identity. This recovery was evident in the rebirth of those traditions that flourished parallel to the 'colonial' modernity, which came with British "Indirect Rule." Furthermore, the study will discuss its impact on the political world, emphasizing connections the movement formed with insurgency movements and its attempts to revitalize indigenous traditions against all odds faced by the regional economy and politics. From these findings, this research on historical context and contemporary manipulation will enrich the debate about cultural revivalism, identity politics, and ethnic sovereignty throughout the Indian subcontinent (Lokendra, 1988).

2) Research Questions

- What were the key historical factors, including the impact of British indirect rule, that contributed to the emergence of the Meetei Revivalist Movement in 20th-century Manipur?
- How did the Meetei Revivalist Movement address the challenges of cultural erosion and identity transformation?
- How did the movement influence socio-political dynamics within the multi-ethnic context of Manipur?

3) Objectives

- To analyze the historical context and key factors, including the influence of British indirect rule, that led to the emergence of the Meetei Revivalist Movement in 20th-century Manipur.
- To analyze the strategies employed by the movement to combat cultural erosion and promote identity transformation.
- To evaluate the movement's influence on inter-ethnic relations and socio-political structures within Manipur.

4) Research Methodology

The research methodology of the study of the Meetei Revivalist Movement of 20th-century Manipur will be qualitative and historical with data sources drawn from the archives through various interviews and fieldwork. It would be a historical study to understand the socio-cultural transformation as well as the political implications of the movement. The study is based on ethnographic fieldwork of direct engagement with the Meetei community conducted through participant observation interviews and immersion into local cultural practices. All data were gathered from activities such as festivals, religious gatherings, and local ceremonies so that an understanding of how that movement of revival intersected and was woven into people's everyday lives could be produced. The qualitative approach is enhanced by discourse analysis of the texts about the Meetei Revivalist Movement: media portrayals, speeches by politicians, literature, and manifestos written by leaders of the movement. All these helped decipher how this movement described its vision concerning Meetei identity and culture and resistance.

5) Discussion

The Meetei Revivalist Movement constitutes a landmark chapter in the sociocultural and political history of Manipur. This collective movement came into being when pressures from British "Indirect Rule" made Manipur and its people face cultural loss, deprivation of their rights, and loss of freedom. During this period of colonial modernity, traditional hierarchies, practices, and identities were redefined, which led indirectly to later resistance and revivalist movements. This convergence of colonial administration and indigenous aspirations spurred both the retrieval of cultural heritage and the declaration of ethnic and political identity (Singh, 2016). The spread of standardized Western education and better communication and transport from all parts of British India promoted experience with modern ideas, to a significant degree among a small, educated aristocracy now concentrated in Imphal. The idea of associating with the larger community generated this sense of community as manifested in forming the Nikhil Hindu Manipuri Mahasabha (NHMM/NMM) in 1932. It promoted preservation of Meetei history, cultural traditions like *thang-ta* (a form of martial arts) and Meetei Mayek/Script. But this first statement of Meetei identity existed alongside an embracing of Hindu Vaishnavism as being part of Meetei heritage (Dev, 2013).

The British strategy of "Indirect Rule" transformed the entire political and cultural scenario in Manipur. By providing colonial authority under local rule, this strategy not only upset the traditional administration but provided the superimposition of Western structural administration as shown in Table 3. The changes affected the Meetei identity, where numerous times it was portrayed in tandem with the imposed "modern" colonial standards. New administrative systems, networking of trade, and acculturation of various cultural traditions

resulted in a duality of existence—a synchrony, where the native cultures were preserved yet altered (Parratt, 2005).

Table 3: Impact of Colonial Modernity on Meetei Identity during British "Indirect Rule"

| Colonial Policies | Impact on Meetei Society |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Introduction of Western Education | Shift from traditional knowledge systems; emphasis on modern education created socio-cultural stratification (Ningthouja, 2016) |
| Land Reforms and Economic Policies | Loss of communal land holdings; economic marginalization of indigenous communities. |
| Administrative Reorganization | Creation of new political entities, such as Nagaland, led to fragmentation of Meetei and tribal identities. |
| Cultural Influences | Decline in indigenous practices, increased Hindu cultural practices and also adoption of Western attire and customs among elites. |

At the core of this movement were the reclaimed Meetei Mayek, which symbolized the community's efforts to maintain knowledge and culture as indigenous. This reassertion of the Meetei script starting from the early 20th century was an attempt to uphold an ethnic identity which scholars like Benedict Anderson have talked about as elements contributing to the growth of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2020). The movement led to reforms in education where in 1979, the Manipur Official Language Act was passed, which made Meetei script accepted as an official script. (Manipur Gazette, 1979). The revivalists also attempted to supplant Hindu rituals—the perceived foreign elements—with Meetei Sanamahist practices (Sanatomba, 2003). The worship of Panthoibi replaced Durga Puja, and Cheiraoba was shifted to coincide with indigenous customs. Malem, in his book, claims that this movement was not necessarily about historical continuity but about inventing new traditions to represent the cultural identity of an imagined Meetei community (Meetei, 2004).

Despite these efforts, the revived emphasis on Meetei identity by the revivalist movement inadvertently amplified ethnic divisions in Manipur. While it sought to bind communities under a shared cultural heritage, the emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Meetei Hindus and Sanamahists became more prominent. Other communities within Manipur, such as Manipuri Pangans (Muslims), and tribal groups, often felt relegated from this narrative (Lokendra, 1998).

Table 4: Gazetted Holidays (other than National Holidays*) in Manipur, listed according to Religious/Ethnic community

| Sanamahists | Meetei Hindus | Christians/Native Tribes | Muslims |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Eemoinu Eeratpa. Sajibu-Nongmapanba/Cheiraoba. Shilhenba. Mera Chourel Houba. Mera Houchongba. Ningol Chakkouba. | Saraswati Puja. Sivaratri. Yaosang/Holi. Cheiraoba Baruni/Siva. Kang/Rath Yatra of Jagannath. Jhulon Loiba. Radha Ashtami. Tarpon Loiba. Durga Ashtami. Dusshera/Kwak Jatra. Diwali. Gobardhan Puja. Ningol Chakkouba. | Lui-Ngai-Ni. Kut. Christmas. | Milad-Ud-Nabi. Id-Ul-Fitr. Id-Ul-Zuha. |

In the above table, the state's general 'secular' holidays, such as Khongjom Day (which honors the martyrs of the 1891 Anglo-Manipuri War), Gambhir Singh's death anniversary, Patriot's Day, Heikru Hitongba, and Nupi Lal (the 'Women's War' of 1939), are not included. These holidays typically commemorate events significant to the valley's history, primarily concerning the Meeteis, whether they are Meetei Hindus or Sanamahists. Additionally, there are national holidays celebrated across India, like New Year's Day, Mahavir Jayanti, and Guru Nanak Jayanti. However, in recent decades, national holidays such as Republic Day and Independence Day, which mark India's liberation from British rule, have been observed as 'Black Day' by revolutionary groups in the state, despite government offices and institutions being closed. Consequently, the majority of holidays in Manipur are closely tied to the Meeteis of the Valley (Meetei, 2004).

Political aspirations were finally merged with sociocultural revival. Political events like Nagaland achieving statehood in 1963, and dissatisfaction with the economic backwardness of the state soon turned into political resistance. There began to appear, for instance, the UNLF, the United National Liberation Front in 1964, and the Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) during the late 1960s (Parratt, 2005).

Again, in 1978, the People's Liberation Army repeated the demand for Meetei self-determination. Other powerful groups such as the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) too emerged during the 1970s. During the early years of the 1990s, Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) also joined the battle. All these show the continued interest of the Meetei people in asserting their identity and political autonomy (Parratt, 2005).

Table 5: Insurgent Group and their Objectives

| Insurgent Group | Year of Formation | Primary Objective |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| United National Liberation Front (UNLF) | 1964 | Achieving independence for Manipur. |
| Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) | Late 1960s | Political autonomy and socio-economic reforms. |
| People's Liberation Army (PLA) | 1978 | Armed resistance against Indian governance. |
| People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) | 1977 | Cultural and political revival of Meetei identity. |
| Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) | 1994 | Social and educational reforms, along with political autonomy. |

The Sanamahi Movement encompasses various organizations, including the Manipur Cultural Association, Meetei National Front, Manipuri Cultural Research Association, MEELAL, and PANMYL (Pan Manipuri Youth League). This movement represents a blend of cultural revivalism and political ambition. Founded in 1969, PANMYL positions itself as a non-political entity focused on uniting Manipuris globally, including tribal groups and Muslims, to promote social, economic, cultural, and educational progress as shown in Table 5. While it does not explicitly oppose non-northeasterners—historically labeled "Mayang," a term that originally referred to people from the western regions but has since taken on a racial implication for those with "non-Mongoloid" features—the Meetei Marup's heritage underscores the importance of reviving the Manipuri script and language, showcasing a cultural revivalist focus. Nevertheless, this organization has adopted a more inclusive approach compared to more radical revivalists, as demonstrated by Dr. L. Chandramani, its leader, who later became the Speaker of the Manipur Assembly (Constantine, 1981).

Blurred lines were drawn between the cultural revivalist movements and emerging political organizations of Meetei people like RGM, UNLF, and PREPAK during the 1960s because political groups often used revivalist objectives to enhance anti-Central feelings. The overlap, however, did not mean collaboration as most revivalist groups avoided merging religio-cultural activities with political agendas, representing the subtle play of forces involved in Manipuri identity assertion (Ibochou, 2007).

The Meetei Revivalist Movement indicates the complexity of revival culture and its relevance to political aspiration. It was successful in appropriating some dimensions of Meetei identity and heritage at the price of further fragmentation of the multi-ethnic Manipur society. The two competing legacies of the movement, cultural empowerment, and political fragmentation, remain defining features of the state's socio-political order (Singh, 2022). According to Malem and Hobsbawm, a cultural revival does not even need to reflect political nationalism—the very lesson of this essay found in the case of Manipur (Meetei, 2004). The very way this course traced how regional identities are forged as an intricate play of intermixed colonial heritage, indigenous resilience, and modern aspirations.

6) Conclusion

The Meetei Revivalist Movement was a significant cultural and socio-political development in reshaping the Meetei community in 20th century Manipur. It investigates the movement's roots, strategies, challenges, and legacy to find answers for the formation of identity and revivalism in a colonial and post-colonial framework. This movement resulted from the response of people to the gradual decline of traditional practices, affected by colonialism, missionary work, and modernization. It extends beyond mere cultural response and addresses themes of resistance, adaptation, and a call for self-determination against systemic marginalization.

Contemporaneously, the Sanamahi Movement rejected Hinduism as a "foreign" imposition from the 18th century and instead promoted the revival of indigenous Sanamahi religious and cultural practices. The result of the movement was mass revival efforts, giving birth to hundreds of organizations working toward retrieving and preserving Meetei religio-cultural traditions. The process was also marked by debates within revivalist groups, not only on issues like what the state should be named—Meeteileipak or Kangleipak—but also about

which of the various versions of Meetei Mayek script was legitimate. This only shows how difficult and problematic it is to build an identity.

It is in this context that cultural revivalism and political militancy became a complex relationship within the latter half of the 20th century and furthered the layers of the identity struggle in Manipur. The rise of militant groups such as UNLF, PLA, KYKL, and PREPAK revealed a parallel and at times overlapping path with revivalist movements. Even though at times, these movements sometimes influenced the other's ideas, most of their goals were divergent in the sense that some groups explicitly tried to distinguish religio-cultural revivalism from political militancy. Nevertheless, blurred boundaries of these movements underscored the multifaceted nature of identity politics in the region.

The claim of exclusive identities was not confined to the Meeteis; it extended to other ethnic, tribal, and religious groups as well. The influence of modernity meant that different communities like Nagas, Kukis, and Manipuri Muslims felt the urge for individuality and became conscious of the existence of such unique identities which could only be promoted by their own organizations and associations. The emergence of militant groups within these communities signaled a shift towards more extreme forms of identity assertion, which were often anchored in historical grievances or a desire for greater autonomy and acknowledgment.

Finally, it must be stated that one of the most important contributions of this movement lies in the revival of cultural values such as Meetei identity, rediscovering festivals such as Lai Haraoba, the Meetei Mayek script, and Sanamahism. This revival has given a sense of pride to the Meetei people and has created a framework for cultural continuity, which has been crucial for the region's development. These elements have been incorporated into the public and educational spheres so that the legacy of the movement will be sustained by future generations. At the same time, it has been allowing cultural revivalism to blend with political assertion. There is growing resistance to cultural homogenization and centralization. In this way, cultural and political importance interplays with the multifaceted significance of the Meetei Revivalist Movement.

The findings of the Study hold broader implications for understanding identity politics and cultural revival movements not only in Northeast India but elsewhere. This is evident with the Meetei Revivalist Movement, where and how can the marginalized reclaim their agency and redefine their identity within changing socio-political landscapes. This brings a comparative setting when looking at similar other movements, like the Bengal Renaissance or tribal revivalist attempts, bringing out differences both in terms of obstacles faced and in approaches pursued, so the debate on cultural revivalism and resistance becomes well-balanced.

Future research in Northeast India's cultural revival movements will likely go forward with a comparative approach, as one observes the impact these movements have on identity politics in the region. How recent globalization and digital media impacts the direction of cultural revival remains another aspect to be explored in depth. For the Meetei community, what has endured has been the change the movement has had on education, political activism, and in the keeping of tradition—all fertile grounds for further scholarly exploration. Meetei Revivalist Movement provides one beautiful example of tenacity and adaptability of a people set on the project of rescuing their legacy and, above all, forming an identity. Its methods, impediments, and legacy lend very useful lessons in how deeply cultural heritage empowers to make a group conscious of itself and equips for resistance against annihilation. It is here that the history and cultural narration of the Manipuri society is deeply entrenched, given its maneuvering in the complexities of modernization and globalization. A grasp of its importance contributes both to enriching the study of Manipuri society as well as enriching the area of identity politics and cultural transformation within post-colonial societies.

References

1. Anderson, B. (2020). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. In *The New Social Theory Reader* (pp. 282-288). Routledge.
2. Bhattacharjee, J. B. (2013). Cachar under British rule in Northeast India.
3. Constantine, R. (1981). Manipur: Maid of the mountains. Lancers Publishers.
4. Dena, L. (1990). History of modern Manipur: 1826-1946. Orbit Publishers & Distributors.
5. Dev, B. J., & Lahiri, D. K. (2013). Manipur: Culture and politics.
6. Eller, J. D., & Coughlan, R. M. (2000). The poverty of primordialism: the demystification of ethnic attachments. *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 16(2), 161.
7. Gangmumei, K. (1991). History of Manipur, Pre-Colonial Period, Vol. I.
8. Grimwood, E. S. C. (1891). My three years in Manipur. (No Title).
9. Hazarika, B. B. (1987). Political life in Assam during the nineteenth century.
10. Hutchinson, J., & Smith, A. D. (Eds.). (2000). *Nationalism: Critical concepts in political science*. Taylor & Francis US.
11. Ibochou, K. (2007, April). Interview with the member of the Meetei Marup. (Personal communication, April 2007)
12. Indrakumar, Konthoujam (2016). Colonialism and Movement of Democracy in Manipur. In *Colonialism and Resistance*. Routledge India.
13. Jhalajit, R.K.(1965) A Short History of Manipur, Imphal.
14. Johnstone, J. (1896). My experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills. S. Low, Marston, limited.

15. Joykumar Singh, (1990) 'The First Women's Agitation-1904', Lal Dena, ed, History of Modern Manipur: 1826-1946, New Delhi.
16. Joykumar, N. (2022). REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN MANIPUR. AKANSHA PUBLISHING.
17. Kabui, G. (1991). A history of Manipur: Pre-colonial period. New Delhi.
18. Kirti Singh, M. (1988) Religion and Culture of Manipur, Delhi, Manas Publications.
19. Lokendra, N. (1998). The Unquiet Valley: Society, Economy, and Politics of Manipur (1891-1950). Mittal Publications.
20. Mackenzie, A. (1995). The north-east frontier of India. Mittal Publications.
21. Mangang, N. K. (2003). Revival of a closed account, a brief history of kanglei script and the Birth of phone (zero) in the world of arithmetic and astrology. Sanamahi Laining Amasung Punshiron Khupham (SalaiPunshipham), Lamshang, Imphal.
22. McCulloch, W. (1859). Account of the Valley of Munnipore and of the Hill Tribes: With a Comparative Vocabulary of the Munnipore and Other Languages (No. 27). Bengal Printing Company.
23. Meetei, N. M. (2004). Meetei 'resurgence' and nationalism (c. 1900-2000): A study of the role of the Meetei in the formation of 20th century Manipur (M.Phil. dissertation). Delhi University.
24. Meetei, Naorem Malemsanba (2016). Consolidation of British 'Indirect Rule' in Manipur. In Colonialism and Resistance. Routledge India.
25. Ningthouja, M. (2016). AFSPA and the Tortured Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Manipur. Cultural Ontology of the Self in Pain, 249-268.
26. Ningthoujam, Y. (2016). Social Exclusion of the Lois of Manipur: A Historical Study.
27. Orsini, F. (2009). The Hindi public sphere 1920-1940: Language and literature in the age of nationalism. Oxford University Press.
28. Parratt, J. (2005). Wounded Land: Politics and Identity in Modern Manipur. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
29. Parratt, S. N. (1974). The Religion of Manipur: Beliefs, rituals, and historical development. The Australian National University (Australia).
30. Parratt, S. N. (1980). The religion of Manipur: Beliefs, rituals, and historical development. The Australian National University.
31. R.K., Sanahal (1989), A Short History of Manipur, Imphal, Minerva Press
32. Roy, Jyotirmoy (1973), History of Manipur, Calcutta, Eastland Book House.
33. Saha, R. K. (1994). Valley society of Manipur: A cultural frontier of Indian civilization. Punthi-Pushtak Publications.
34. Sairem, N. (2002). Lainingthou Sanamahi amasung Sanamahi laining hinggat eehou. Puthiba Press.
35. Sanajaoba, N. (1991). Manipur Past and Present—The Ordeals and Heritage of a Civilisation. New Delhi: Mittal.
36. Sanatomba, S., ed, (2003). The Sanamahism: History of Sanamahi Religion and its Philosophy, Imphal, S.R. Institute of Manipur Studies.
37. Singh, K. G. (2016). The economic history of Manipur: Some explorations. African and Asian Studies.
38. Singh, K. M., & Singh, H. I. (1989). political movements in Manipur. New Delhi, 108.
39. Singh, Khuraijam Bijoykumar (2016). Religious Revivalism and Colonial Rule: Origin of the Sanamahi Movement. In Colonialism and Resistance. Routledge India.
40. Singh, N. J. (1992). Social Movements in Manipur, 1917-1951. Mittal Publications.
41. Thangjam, Homen (2016). Colonial Administration, Knowledge and Intervention: Colonial Project of Ethnicisation in Manipur. In Colonialism and Resistance. Routledge India.
42. Waikhom, R. (2006). Kanglei natki ariba masak (Aspect of ancient Kanglei culture). R.T. Publications.