

The Three Questions: Tests of Conformity (A Study on Meitei Political Culture)

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KEYWORDS Merger Issue. Political Status of Manipur. Manipuri Identity. Colonialism. Nation-building

ABSTRACT The political culture of Manipur is at a crossroad. Two opposite poles of conformists and deviants are operating in the culture. Because of these poles, the people are divided over various issues. The present paper examines the political stands of the Meiteis to three major issues: Merger of Manipur into India, Political status of Manipur, and Identity Issues. The Meitei is the dominant group in Manipur. The inconsistency of the people in their views and stand over the issues is obviously observed. This inconsistency is mainly due to the incomplete socialization of the people and it is the indication of the failure of the two poles.

I

In the Meitei political culture, the frequently asked questions that divide the individuals into different camps are related with the Manipur's merger into India, political status of present Manipur and the concept of Manipuri identity. To answer these questions, individuals have to consider the conflicting values, ideologies and social information, generated in the social system, on these questions and issues. These questions divide the individuals into categories ranging from one extreme form of conformity to another extreme form of deviance. While answering these questions, the individuals consider politically the position of Manipur and her people in the present historical bloc. Individuals' perception of state of the State is the foundation of their evaluations of these questions and related issues. The answers reveal a mix bag of varieties in opinion, views, attitudes and value orientation of the individuals.

These are the most prominent questions in the people's epistemology and in locating the people's response to the conflict between the conformists and deviants. The questions and issues thereof are discussed, now and then, by elites in different forums, symposia and debates. The intellectuals examine these issues in different paradigms and theoretical frameworks. The drawn conclusions are rationalized or irrationalized in the larger political culture. No consensus view can be evolved out of these intellectual exercises because the conflict is deep rooted in the culture. As the debate goes on, a deviant subculture in the culture grows up and becomes incorrigible active deviant.

Today, different camps focus on the state of Manipur and her relation with India go strengthen their argument and to influence public opinion. They explain the negative growth rate and disintegration of various institutions in the state differently. The anti-establishment or Deviants explain the worsening situation as a direct result of India's colonial rule. Manipur is considered as India's adjacent colony and the state is kept as its captive market. With it, they explain the socio-political evils, negative socio-economic growth, rise of unemployment, etc. The conformists counteract this deviant view. Among these conformists, a section agrees that there is negative growth in the state as well as regional imbalance in Indian system. But, to them, the worsening situation is because of misadministration and centre's insensibility towards Indian periphery. In short, their view is that Manipur is not a colony, but a neglected zone. In between these quite opposite views, there are a number of alternative explanations.

While trying to emphasize their arguments, both the conformists and deviants also open the pages of history. The most often referred historical event, in the current conflict-situation, is the Merger Agreement of 1949. The King of Manipur, Bodhachandra, and Indian representatives signed together the Agreement on 21 September 1949. And, under the pro-visions of the Agreement, Manipur became an integral part of India officially since 15 October 1949. But, debate over the necessity and legality of the Agreement still lingers in the Meitei psyche. The debate opens a number of issues, including legality of the Agreement and the socio-political impact of the 'Merger' (the deviants prefer to use **Annexation**).

This historical event is not a matter of past. Various political actions are directly or indirectly linked with individuals' evaluation of this event.

Another area of conflict is the concept of Manipuri identity. The identity is complicatedly linked with various political ideologies and ambitions. With a concept of Manipuri identity, the individuals of various groups generate various social issues and draw several political conclusions. There are, however, marked differences among the individuals over the question, Who are the Manipuris. Among the Meiteis, the ethnonyme Manipuri is ambivalently used; though a section of population prefer to change the ethnonyme, they do not find best alternative to it. There is strong opposition to any move for changing the ethnonyme. And there are groups who prefer Manipuri identity over any other name. Hence, an overt conflict is observable in the politics of identity and hence in the larger political culture.

MERGER ISSUE

The merger of princely states into Indian Dominion was the greatest challenge to the Indian leaders who dreamt of a democratic republic of Indian Union. By overcoming specific historical circumstances of these princely states, the Indian Union was shaped and the hectic political exercises that had been undertaken in the brief period since 1947 came to an end by 1950. It was in 1950 when India adopted its Constitution. The merger of princely states was no longer a challenge to the new state of India after the adoption of its own democratic constitution. To India, Merger was then a closed chapter.

Along with many princely states, Indian dominion and newly created Pakistan, the state of Manipur was about to regain its independence on 15 August 1947. But, as a part of a big political game-plan, Manipur, like any other princely states, signed the two important agreements before the stipulated date of independence. The agreements were Instrument of Accession and Standstill Agreement. Manipur signed these agreements on 11 August 1947. By the terms of these agreements, the Independence of Manipur on 15 August 1947 was without the authority of defense, military, external affairs, currency, communication; and above all, the relationship between British India and Manipur

would remain same unchanged in the Indian Dominion-Manipur relationship. Manipur was under the Indirect rule of British Colonialism prior to 15 August 1947. The state of Manipur had an office of Dewan in lieu of the Political Agent as had it in British period.

The state of Manipur adopted its constitution in 1947 and under the provisions of the constitution, election was held in 1948. But, on a visit to Shillong, the King of Manipur who had been kept in his Red Land residence, Shillong and all the communications between the King and Manipur were totally cut off. He was pressured to sign the Merger Agreement. 'Thus, having no alternative, Maharaja signed the instrument of merger agreement on the 21st September, 1949' (Naorem, 2002: 193). There were mixed responses of the people at that time.

Probably, Manipur is only the state in India where the Merger Agreement of 1949 is still remained as unresolved political agenda in the body politic. Since 15 October 1949 when the merger of this state is officially enforced, the political parties, interest groups, and student bodies raise the merger question now and then. Many historians consider that not only that the agreement was a historical landmark; it also evokes a strong feeling of betrayal in mind of some individuals. Simultaneously, it also gave a dream of prosperous Manipur without Kingship to some other individuals. These opposing views of the Merger Agreement grow up day by day without any visible compromise. Hence, the issue remains as it was in 1949.

One may notice that the Merger Agreement that was signed by Manipur had two or three articles more than those of other Princely States. The important article, important in the future political sphere of the state and her people, is the Article VIII that read as:

'(i) The Government of India hereby guarantees either the continuance in service of the permanent members of the Public Services of Manipur on conditions which will be not less advantageous than those on which they were serving before the date on which the administration of Manipur is made over to the Government of India or the payment of reasonable compensation;

(ii) The Government of India further guarantees the continuance of pensions and leave salaries sanctioned by His Highness the Maharaja to servants of the State who have retired

or proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement, before the date on which the Administration of Manipur is made over to the Government of India;

(iii) The Government of India undertakes to make suitable provisions for the employment of Manipuris in the various branches of Public Services, and in every way encourage Manipuris to join them. They also undertake to preserve various laws, customs and conventions prevailing in the State pertaining to the Social, economic and religious life of the people' (Naorem, 2002: 241-244).

The Merger Agreement was signed by Mr Vapal Pangunni Menon, Advisor to the Government of India in the Ministry of States, and Sri Prakasa, Governor of Assam on behalf of Government of India, and His Highness Maharaja Bodhachandra of Manipur, 'on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors.'

There were agitations in Manipur, prior to the Agreement. A faction of Manipur State Congress, popularly known as **Tompok Faction**, wanted to form a new state called Purbalchal consisting of Manipur, Tripura, Cachar District and Lushai Hills of Assam and then, Purbalchal be merged into India. Socialist Party in Manipur wanted Manipur to become a district of Assam first and then, being a part of Assam, it should be a part and parcel of India. Even socialists wanted referendum (or self-determination of the people) to this effect. Another faction of Manipur State Congress, however, moved to merger Manipur as a single and undivided state into India. It was Praja Shanti Sabha that opposed the move of merger (Karam, 1989; Naorem, 2002; Phanjoubam, 2003). There were individual voices that favoured or opposed the move of merger.

Officially, the Merger of Manipur of 21 September 1949 was enforced and Manipur became a Part C state of India on 15 October 1949. 'The Maharaja Of Manipur...in his message to the people of State *inter alia* said: This day, 15th October 1949, sounds full notes for a new era. I am confident that it will be the sincere and constant endeavour of India Government to look to the best interests of the people of Manipur' (Rajkumar, 1988: 175). The ministry, formed under the Election of 1948 was dissolved. Without much overt people's resistance and any opposition from elected government of Manipur, the Manipur administration was taken over by the Indian Central Government. Since the date of its merger, Manipur witnesses a series of

'protest', 'denial' or 're-interpretation' of this historical fact. The people's psyche was disturbed with new political inputs.

There is larger number of population that take 'merger of Manipur' was historical necessity. To them, the event was historical but irrelevant one today. There is, on other hand, a section of population that do not subscribe this view. They prefer to use 'annexation' rather than the term, 'Merger' and the agreement was 'null and void' vis-à-vis the Manipur State Constitution Act of 1947. Currently, several adjectives are given to the event; new vocabularies are becoming popular. Some of them are 'eclipse day', 'gloomy day', 'Indian Annexation'. These vocabularies play a vital role in shaping social attitudes, values, and world-view.

The issue of Merger Agreement is becoming a focal challenge to both deviants and conformists. The generated ideas on this issue are not of academic interest only. These ideas are linked with ideological state apparatuses base of which is the ideology of Indian nationalism, as well as with the active deviant whose major premise is Manipur is an Indian colony. The intellectual debates are filtered down to the masses and the masses are equally divided into various categories. Now the issue is beyond the limit of true and false. It is well internalized to become a part of collective unconsciousness.

For the present study, 1274 persons are asked 'What is your opinion on Manipur's Merger Agreement?' Five possible answers are given to them; they are:

- a. It was a manifestation of Indian Colonialism;
- b. Its provisions should be implemented;
- c. The issue is irrelevant today;
- d. It was unavoidable in the political circumstances of that period;
- e. Merger into India is still a historical and political necessity.

Evaluation of this historical event is value-added one. The answers are structured and they cover all the possible answers which are associated with different political ideas, ideologies and values. These answers show that the individuals occupy different locus standi while answering the question. The distribution of individuals are shown in table 1.

The table clearly reveals that the merger agreement of 1949 is judged today by 33.44 percent of individuals as 'manifestation of Indian

colonialism'. But, by about 20 percent of them have just opposite view that merger of Manipur 'is still' a historical necessity. Again, 17.43 percent say that the Merger Issue is irrelevant today. Again, as the percentage figure of each answer is crossing 5 percentage, each category in the body politic and body psyche is strong and each of them is a factor. The political culture is in a dilemma. This situation clearly suggest that the agreement and merger of Manipur into India are still not fully internalized as one of the essential political inputs to the Manipur's political system. The Meitei is still ambivalent to India and her political development. This is simply an example of the failure in nation-building of India; the ideology of Indian nationalism is not yet materialized. On the other hand, the deviants are also not fully capable of socializing the individuals.

Table 1: The distribution of individuals

<i>Answer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
a. It was a manifestation of Indian colonialism	426	33.44
b. Its provisions should be implemented	166	13.03
c. The issue is irrelevant today	222	17.43
d. It was unavoidable in the political circumstances of that period	210	16.48
e. Merger into India is still a historical and political necessity	250	19.62

STATUS QUESTION

The modern history of Manipur started with the period of colonialism. Many historians categorize the modern period after the reign of King Bhagyachandra (1759-1762; 1763-1798). After a brief period of chaos that followed the death of King Bhagyachandra, Manipur suffered a great defeat in the hands of Burma who expanded their sphere of influence westward upto the eastern bank of Brahmaputra. The Burmese expansion brought out a great change in the internal and external affairs of medieval kingdoms of the region. Manipur was ruled by the Burmese in an indirect colonial frame through their puppet Meitei kings for seven years, 1819-1826.

The Chahi Taret Khundakpa, seven-year devastation, was a turning point in the history of Manipur. The sudden decrease in population,

caused by exodus to Assam and neighbouring states, as well as by the genocidal attempt of the Burmese brought an unstable equilibrium in the society. Even after the days of Burmese occupation, the society could not regain its equilibrium for a quite long period. The disequilibrium in the demographic and social systems affected the personality pattern of this people. The Meiteis took a course of absolute devotion to the God and other devotional experiments. In a direct or indirect way, these changes also brought out the change in political outlooks, worldviews, in short, the political culture. "The summing of the two (demographic disequilibrium and loss of Kabow Valley on 9 January) developed a state of indifferent attitude in the Meitei mind to their surroundings. It posed a constraint to the political decision process of the 19th century".

The dark seven years, however, destroyed the myth of divine kingship of Nongda Lairel Pakhangba and his descendants. The kings, who were once projected as descendants of the Creator, fled away for their lives and had to beg 'mercy' for 'outside' force. The illusion of 'Lai Ningthou' (God-like King) was unveiled. The outside force, the British, after driving out Burmese from the region, started their move their step in a colonial gameplan. Manipur was ruled through their indirect rule policy, through the office of Political Agency. Their hands were not made visible. Hence, many historians do not think that after Burma, British rushed to Manipur as an indirect colonial ruler. The indirect, yet invisible, rule became obvious by 1891 when the Anglo-Manipur war was broke out. After Manipur lost its sovereignty fully to the British, British ruled Manipur directly from 1891 to 1907. When their chosen king, Churanchand was considered able to handle internal affairs of Manipur, the British ruled Manipur indirectly from 1907. Churachand was minor when he was chosen by the British and was sent for schooling at Mayo College, Ajmer. On 15 May 1907, the state administration was made over to him.

Manipur, after the lapse of British paramountcy entered the present course of chaos, conflict and cultural crisis in the political system. The period of 1947-1949 was one of the controversial zone in the history of Manipur. The political status of the state was interpreted by historians, social scientists, lawyers in various opposite ways. Some of major views are:

1. Manipur attained sovereignty on 15 August

- 1947;
2. Manipur became part and parcel of India after she signed Instrument of Accession and Stand Still Agreement in 1947;
 3. Manipur was not a sovereign state on 15 August 1947 because India took the position of British India just four days before the state was supposed to attain her Independence;
 4. Sovereign Manipur entered into Merger Agreement as the people wished in 1949;
 5. Sovereignty was snatched away as King Boddhachandra was forced to sign the Merger Agreement in 1949;
 6. The King was not competent authority to sign the Agreement because he was Constitutional Monarch.

Moreover, Mr Guha was made Manipur's representative to Constituent Assembly (Hindusthan). In preparation to overcoming India's challenge of 'unification' of princely states, on 1 July and 2 July 1947, Manipur signed two agreements with the Governor of Assam, in Imphal. The agreement of 1 July 1947 had three important points that read as:

"1. It was agreed that the State should forthwith declare that it joins the Constituent Assembly (Hindusthan) and that Mr Guha should be accepted forthwith as the representative of the State as it is not practicable to have a separate representative for the State. Advisers appointed by His Highness in council representing both the Hill and Valley areas should assist Mr Guha.

"10. It was agreed that it is desirable that an Interim Council be formed without delay, and that the members should be appointed under the new *Administration Rules* and should comprise the present PMSD, as Chief Minister, the two senior Manipuri Members of existing Darbar, the present Muslim Member, two Members of the public to be elected by the same system as was used for the elections to the Constitution-Making Committee, and one Hill representative to be nominated under the new rules.

"11. It was agreed that the new Constitution be inaugurated within a period of one year."

The Agreement of 2 July 1947 also has an important area to be noted:

"(c) That the introduction of Constitutional Government shall be expedited and that His Highness in Council shall submit proposals in this regard as early as possible to His Excellency the Agent to the Union Government for his advice."

Thus, Manipur was made part and parcel of Indian Dominion when the British left the subcontinent.

Because of these intellectual controversies, the present political status of Manipur is another important question in the body politic. The individuals with different evaluative yardsticks look into this question. Some say that Manipur is now a state of India through a long process of political development from Part C through Territorial Council, Territorial Assembly. It is like any other units in India, now.

On the other hand, the people of Manipur hear another voice saying Manipur is India's colony and India keeps Manipur as her captive market. The colonial meaning given to the present political status of Manipur is gaining wider space day by day. Out of the conflict between these opposite views, other alternative views are developed, and start spreading over wider space gradually.

The political status of the state, whatever one perceives, is deeply rooted in the sentiment, emotion and value orientation of the individuals. The 'real' position is, sometimes, less important than the 'perceived' status because the individuals' actions are directed, in many cases, by the imagined state and the perceived status. Though individuals are different over the question of political status of Manipur, they equally, we can say, love their 'imagined' motherland. The internalization or enculturation of this image of 'status' of one's motherland is a complex process; and the cultural value of the 'motherland' and her present condition is molded in one's mind in a similar complex process.

The perception of political status of Manipur or the political position of the state in the existing power relation is directly linked with an individual's emotion and sentiment. The emotionally charged masses agitated for about two decades to demand statehood of this historically evolved state of Manipur. The strong sentiment and emotional outburst of the people could be observed during a series of agitations over the language issue, too. The Manipuris demanded to include Manipuri language in the Scheduled VIII to Indian Constitution since early days of 1950s. These outbursts were the responses to the external challenges to the Meitei political dream and Manipuri's long political aspirations. These challenges were construed on the basis of

the perceived 'condition' of their state.

In the political culture, the people's perceived status of their motherland is not one and same; it may be (a) a colony; (b) an inferior state; (c) a dependant state; (d) a state of India as equal as others, etc. These images of their motherland/state in their mind are the moving force to direct the people's action.

To those who take their motherland is ruled by foreign hands and their puppets, the militant and secessionist course of action is the solution to their agony. And those who think nothing is qualitatively wrong with Manipur's position in India, will never violently negate the existing structure of power sharing.

Because of existence of two polarized subgroups in the Meitei political culture, the evaluation of other pole and their attitude to it is becoming more complex and serious. The deviant camp is 'misguided' people to the conformists; the latter is 'spoiled children of colonialism' to the former. These poles are developing their own political attitudes, ideology and values. These differences are expressed in the evaluation of social objects, too.

The informants, 1274 in number, are asked with the question: 'What do you think of Manipur's present status in India?' Five answers are given out of which they should tick one; these answers are framed so that they would cover all the probable ranges of answers. The answers are:

- a. Manipur is full-fledged state like any other in India;
- b. Manipur is inferior to bigger states in all respects;
- c. Manipur is able to solve its own problems;
- d. Manipur has to depend on the central government to solve its problems;
- e. Manipur is a captive market of India.

The individuals who feel their state is a dependant state is more in number and they constitute about 40.74 percent. But, one would notice that those who think Manipur as India's captive market, are least in number. They are only 12.09 percent but high percentage to consider to be a political factor in the existing political conflict. The percentage distribution of the answers is given in the table 2.

About 17.89 percent are of the view that Manipur is full-fledged state like any other in India. If the dependant status and captive market status are considered together, the percentage crosses 50 and is alarming.

This distribution clearly suggests that the majority of the Meitei individuals perceived Manipur as a dependant state; the Manipur has to depend on the central government for every problem it faces. This political situation, as taken by the majority, is the source of political anomie in which the individuals feel helplessness, powerlessness and meaninglessness in the national framework. The sense of anomie is the root cause of various deviant political actions and is the fuel to the ever-growing deviant subculture.

Just opposite to this image of dependant state, is the one that holds 'Manipur is full-fledged state like any other in India'. These views examine the political situation of Manipur by locating it in similar situation of larger political system of India. Manipur's problems are not unique because such problems are universal in India. This view is held by 17.89 percent. The size is large but very less in comparison with the opposite views.

Table 2: The percentage distribution of the answers

	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
a.	Manipur is full-fledged state like any other in India	228	17.89
b.	Manipur is inferior to bigger states in all respects	209	16.41
c.	Manipur is able to solve its own problems	164	12.87
d.	Manipur has to depend on the central government to solve its problems	519	40.74
e.	Manipur is a captive market of India	154	12.09

IDENTITY QUESTION

The Manipuri identity is becoming centre of various political debates. In various political activities, this question of identity is raised. The identity is sometimes considered as a mere hinduized name of the Meitei identity. The Meitei adopted Hinduism as their religion at the early part of 18th century. The name of the state was changed to Manipur and hence the people of the state became known as the Manipuri. But, western authors and some modern Manipuri historians, including Gangmumei Kamei, used the Manipuri as synonym of the Meiteis. Following this line of thinking, some individuals still today consider the Manipuri as another ethnonym of the Meiteis.

There is another view that the Manipuri

identity is larger than the ethnic identities. This identity is an umbrella identity that encompasses all the ethnic groups, which are or were associated in evolving the state of Manipur. To them, the Meitei is also a unit in the Manipuri identity.

This level of debate is mainly focused on (a) Manipuri language as mother tongue; (b) Hindu origin of the term, Manipuri; (c) past common historical experiences of the people in the state. This level is well manifested in dealing with ethnic questions in Manipur and Bishnupriya Issue in Assam and Tripura. The high tension of the nomenclature is observed in these issues.

There are other identity issues vis-à-vis the Manipuri identity. These issues address beyond the linguistic or ethnic question of the identity. They add certain political ambitions and historical realities. There are three main views that consider the Manipuri as (a) a unit in Indian national identity; (b) a unit of evolving a common identity of 'northeast India'; (c) a unit of pan southeast Asian identity. These views are, however, a projection of a collective ambition, goal of an ideology.

The utopian concept of Indian identity has a romantic impact on a number of the Meiteis. To them, the often used phrase, 'First Indian, then Manipuri' is a political gospel. This spirit of identifying oneself moves them to consider 'Manipuri is secondary to national identity'. There is no question of identity crisis of the Manipuris until Indian national identity is not threatened.

A number of individuals try to locate Manipuri identity in the regional identity of so-called Northeast India, by narrowing down the scale, for one or another reason. This new concept of regional identity, though originated from colonial period, is qualitatively different from the National identity as there is a base of difference from mainland India and uniqueness of the region. Looking beyond the limit of ethnic boundaries, these individuals locate Manipuris as people of the state in the regionalism and regionality of the northeast India. It is qualitatively negation to the ideology of Indian nationalism.

Still there are individuals who consider the historical experiences of Manipur in the ancient southeast Asian international politics. To them, Manipuris are one of the ancient peoples who had been born out of the constant social inter-course of various ethnic groups of southeast Asia. The Manipuris are, to them, just an extension of

Southeast Asians. They identify themselves not in terms of their present political context; rather in terms of past realities and future strive.

Considering these qualitative range of Manipuri Identity, we find five possible answers to the question, 'What is your concept of Manipuri Identity?'. The possible answers are:

- a. Manipuri identity is a part and parcel of India's cultural pluralism;
- b. Manipuri identity is a unit in the emerging North East Indian identity;
- c. Manipuri identity is the composite identity of all ethnic groups in Manipur;
- d. There is no Manipuri identity as such only Meitei Identity, Tangkhul Identity, Hmar identity, etc.
- e. Manipur identity is basically an extension of the South East Asian Culture.

When asked to tick an answer, the 1274 informants give their answers. The answers are the reflection of one's political ideology and are the base of one's political action. The identity is closely linked with the ideological framework of the individuals as well as of political parties, including interest groups. This is one of the sensitive issues in the political culture of the Meitei. The identity crisis as such is, at one plane of analysis, crisis in the culture due to multiple of identities asserted and differences in the cultural conditioning of each identity. For example, the individuals who are Indian first are not engaging in the political activities, associated with political alienation. Political alienation and anomie are the grounds for those whose identities are defined in other contexts. This dimension of identity and politics is one of the important areas in the political system of the Manipuris.

The distribution of the individuals over the range of possible answers is shown in the table 3.

From the table 3, it is clearly seen that the majority perceives the Manipuri identity as the composite identity of all the ethnic groups in Manipur. They command about 40.27 percent. To 16.64 percent of the same, the Manipuri identity is located as a unit of Indian identity. Those who perceived Manipuri identity as an extension of Southeast Asian culture, is least in number. They constitute only 11.22 percent. There are a larger number of individuals (14.99%) who deny the Manipuri identity. To them, Manipur is a geographical entity; there is no such identity as Manipuri Identity.

From the above facts, the majority Meiteis

Table 3: The distribution of the individuals over the range of possible answers

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
a. Manipuri identity is a part and parcel of India's cultural pluralism	212	16.64
b. Manipuri identity is a unit in the emerging North Eastern Indian Identity	215	16.88
c. Manipuri identity is the composite identity of all ethnic groups in Manipur	513	40.27
d. There is no Manipuri identity as such only Meitei identity, Tangkhul identity, Hmar identity, <i>etcetera</i>	191	14.99
e. Manipur identity is basically an extension of the South East Asian culture	143	11.22

believes that Manipuri identity is a composite identity and it covers all the ethnic groups of Manipur. As mentioned earlier, that means, the boundary of identity is still demarcated by the common historical experiences and public sentiments. The Manipuri identity is a part of social heritage. No new addition with ideology of new historical bloc is made. The Manipuri identity with new nationalist ideology is felt by moderate percentage of individuals. The new politics of identity is not fully in practice; but the perception of their own identity based on a political vision is well reflected in their distribution.

II

The three questions have a logical relation. The evaluation of the historical event, Merger Agreement of 1949, has a reflection of one's judgment of present political status of Manipur in India and his concept of Manipuri identity. The qualitative relationship of the answers to each question shows his political stand and environment that shape his attitudes, views and ideology. The relationship between the answers, one gives, also shows the impact of socialization process of subcultures: conformist and deviant.

An individual may say Merger of Manipur into India is still politically and historically necessary. Logically speaking, his judgment of political status in post-merger period will be one of the conformist variants. His concept of Manipuri identity is supposed to be an extension of the ideology of Indian nationalism. Opposite to this

view, an individual who thinks Merger Agreement was a manifestation of Indian colonialism, will consider the present political status of the State as captive market or alike. His concept of Manipuri identity will also reflect a negation to Indian national identity.

As there are other possibilities of answering the questions, various combinations of particular answers to the three questions are also possible. The combinations of the individual answers show the general pattern of the political culture and the level of growth of subcultures in the Meitei political culture.

In the above discussions of each question, we have seen that 33.44 percent of the individuals are of the opinion that the Merger Agreement was a manifestation of Indian colonialism. But, only 12.09 percent think present Manipur is India's captive market. The figure is lower than the former. Again, the percentage of individuals who consider Manipur as India's dependant state is 40.74 and is higher than 33.44 percent of individuals who considers the dimension of Indian colonialism while evaluating the Merger Agreement. This shows there a factor of discontent in Indian system; the factor is independent of one's view on the Merger Agreement. To some individuals, the Merger Agreement is not related with Manipur's dependant status in India; this is a new phenomenon of political relations developed in post-Independence India. These gaps are the indications of the general discontent individuals. These individuals, though discontent in the present system, do not have a well-defined direction and alternative goal(s).

The above discussion also reveals that the percentage of individuals who are of the view that Merger Issue is meaningless is 17.43. And that of the individuals who says that Merger of Manipur in India is still politically and historically necessary is 19.62. These percentages are high to be a force in the society. There are also 17.89 percent of individuals who make points on the political status of Manipur in India as Manipur is as equal as other states in India. The gap is not much to be highlighted. Again, we see that the 'First Indian' category of Identity Question has about 16.64 percent. These combinations show least fluctuation among them. The stability of distribution cannot explain the performance of nation building because the numbers in the distribution is comparatively less than the deviant or deviant-prone ones. The nation and its political symbols cannot charm the majority.

This is evident from these facts that there is a core of well directed and committed conformists. But, these individuals are lesser than the deviants. It is because of the slow or no process of nation building in the society. Nation building cannot play a wider scope of political socialization in the society. The deviants who are committed and well directed are lesser than these core conformists. Majority is, therefore, the discontent individuals who are not having a coherent political vision.

The conflict between the conformist and the deviant subcultures, however, cannot divide the individuals into two clear-cut categories on the basis of ideology. The people are divided over the individual questions and particular issues. The evaluations are made on the basis of the information, they have; political attitudes, sentiments, knowledge, values of the individuals cannot be

encultured by both the conformists and deviants. This is because of poor performances of national agents on one hand, and imperfect deviant socialization, on the other.

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