

PART – III

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CHAPTER VI

NATURE OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AND CHANGE

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Introduction

Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, and groups from one social position to another. The study of social mobility relates a present to a past social position. It thus forms part of the more general study of social selection, that is, of how people get distributed into different social positions. It is, however, hardly possible to study effectively the influence of social position except in the context of other influences that determine the individual's present social status.

Studies of intergenerational mobility compare the social positions of parent and offspring; studies of career mobility compare the social positions of the same individual at different times. Group mobility is concerned with changes in the social position of groups possessing a relatively homogeneous status (for example, castes, intellectuals, artisans) (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 1968: 429). Intragenerational mobility, typically refers to the vertical mobility experienced by an individual within his or her own lifetime, as through job promotions and other career advancements (Encyclopedia of the theoretical Sociology 2005: 807).

In the context of mobility studies, social position, or social status, signifies a certain rank with respect to the possession of goods (values) esteemed and desired by most members of a society. The changes in social position that interest the theory of social mobility are primarily variations in occupations, prestige, income, wealth, power, and social class. A high or low rank in one of these values is often associated with a roughly corresponding rank in most of the other values, and more especially a constellation of them, provides a measure of what in many societies is viewed as success in life (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 1968: 429).

While the traditional pre-British Indian society was stationary in character, it did not preclude the mobility, upward as well as downward, of individual castes in the

local hierarchy. The two most potent sources of mobility were the fluidity of the political system, especially at the lower levels, and the availability of marginal land which could be brought under the plow, itself the result of a static demographic situation (Srinivas 1968). It was the establishment of British rule over the Indian subcontinent that closed the door finally to families and bigger groups achieving mobility through resort to warfare. Until then, it was always possible, though not easy, for an official or soldier, or the head of a locally dominant caste, to acquire political power and become a chief or king (Majumdar 1963). Panikkar (1955: 8) has stated that opportunities for seizing political power were more likely to be available to the leaders of the dominant castes, and even tribes, than to others. Ever since the time of Mahapadma Nanda in the fifth century B.C., every known royal family has come from a non-Kshatriya caste. Even the upper levels of tribes, such as the Bhumij, Munda and Gond, established their claims to be Kshatriyas (Sinha 1962).

When a leader of a dominant caste or small chieftain graduated to the position of a raja or king, acquiring, in the process, the symbolic and other appurtenances of kshatriyahood, he in turn became a source of mobility for individuals and groups living in his domain. A necessary concomitant, if not precondition, of such graduation was Sanskritization, that is, the acceptance of the rites, beliefs, ideas and values of the great tradition of Hinduism as embodied in the sacred books (Baines 1912: 27). By virtue of his position as the head of the social order, the Hindu king had the responsibility to settle all disputes with regard to caste and the power also to raise or lower the ranks of castes as reward or punishment (Smith 1963).

While the sources of mobility lay in the political and economic systems, Sanskritization provided a traditional idiom for the expression of such mobility. This is not to say, however, that all cases of Sanskritization in traditional India were always preceded

by the possession of political or economic power, or even that Sanskritization always had a mobility aspect (Srinivas 1968: 189-191).

Burton Stein (1968) in his analysis of mobility processes in medieval South India has ignored the need which has always existed in the caste system to translate familial mobility to caste mobility. Otherwise mobility does not obtain public recognition. Whom will the sons and daughters of the mobile family marry? Marriage within the old caste group, the most natural solution, would be the negation of such mobility. Another solution would be hypergamy, by which the parent group continues to give its girls in marriage to the mobile family, while the girls born in the latter either marry into a higher caste or remain unmarried.

The new opportunities created by the British rule resulted in greater spatial mobility and increased economic disparity among members of the same local caste group. An important feature of social mobility in modern India is the manner in which the successful members of the backward castes worked consistently for improving the economic and social condition of their caste follows. This was due to a sense of identification with one's caste, and also to a realization that caste mobility was essential for individual or familial mobility (Singer and Cohn 1968: 196).

The traditional society in India, particularly the Hindu society, a person's status vis-à-vis his caste rank was determined by his birth in the caste and by its place in the ritual hierarchy, though other factors also, like economic and political power, added substantially to his esteem. But, according to Dumont (1970: 24), both status and power were separate in their functions in the caste system even in the early periods, and power was subordinate to status. Thus, a person having more power had inferior ritual and social status in the caste hierarchy if he belonged to a lower caste.

Contrary to the views mentioned above, there are some social historians, sociologists and social anthropologists (Srinivas 1966, 1968; Rowe 1968) who have argued that one or the other type of flexibility existed in the caste system even during the early periods. "Theoretically, there were only two obvious means of improving status. One was opting out of society and becoming an ascetic. The other was by ensuring rebirth in a higher social status (castes) in one's next life...." (Thapar 1974: 99). However, a limited horizontal mobility was permissible among the elites of the Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya in ancient India. In practice, people adopted occupations other than their caste callings, as mentioned earlier. Interdinning and, in exceptional cases, inter-caste marriages were also not unknown. "Downward mobility was easy enough. Upward mobility was far more difficult and not open to the individual. But the group mobility was possible through a period of time by changing habitations, geographical location, and occupation of the entire group" (Thapar 1974: 120-21).

There is evidence that people, with their enhanced status, tried to raise the rank of their caste in ritual hierarchy and, in certain cases, also succeeded in such endeavors. But, the two extreme poles of the hierarchy were said to be rigid, and mobility, both upward and downward, was possible only among the middle ranked castes (Bailey 1963). It, however, cannot be denied that the horizontal and downward vertical mobility was visible also among castes at both the extremes. Yet, the caste system, in principle, put checks even over a limited chance of upward mobility of the lowest castes who were resented against in their efforts by the superior economic and political power of the upper castes (Nandu Ram 1988: 2).

Members of the middle and lower level castes, through the adoption of reference group behavior, tried to achieve social mobility within the framework of caste ranking in a particular region. This was possible in terms of both the micro- and the

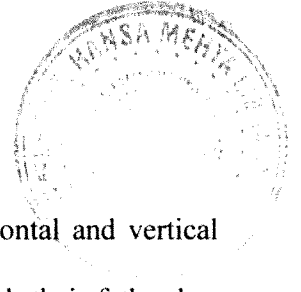
macro-level consensus, establishing, firstly, correlation between the caste rank and interaction, and between different contexts of ranking, and, secondly, consistency of rank criteria in historical as well as contemporary, and rural as well as urban perspectives. Various low castes sometimes achieved their claimed status, though such changes were resisted by the referent castes (Mandelbaum 1972). Mobility in the class hierarchy occurred in the form of improving one's socio-economic position: one claimed, and sometimes also succeeded in getting a claim accepted, for an enhancement of one's initial class position to the subsequently higher one. Thus, mobility which occurred in the class hierarchy was in some context mobility between lower, middle and upper classes found in each caste (Beteille 1966), and in some other context across the sub-castes (Atal 1968; Chhibber 1968) but within the caste system. However, the dominant pattern of social stratification in India has been that of caste. The hierarchies of caste and class have not functioned, so far, in parallel direction. It seems the class structure is inclusive of caste structure and vice versa. Consequently, mobility of a person in the class structure has not always led to his mobility in the caste structure. This has happened more in the case of the lower and particularly the lowest castes who have suffered a lot from numerous social and religious disabilities in the past (Ahmed and Ahmed 1964: 244).

After independence more systematic attempts have been made by the government to deal with the problems of Scheduled Castes. They have been provided with special rights and privileges and their interests are safeguarded through various provisions made in the constitution. These provisions have been made in the form of (1) protective measures, such as prohibition of discrimination, of forced labour, and of untouchability, (2) welfare measures, guaranteeing representation in various categories of public services, in State Assemblies, and in Parliament, and (3) developmental measures, providing grants-in-aid and other facilities for social and economic development. Several acts and

regulations to remove legal and social disabilities and to improve socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes were passed in several states in the first two decades after independence. The central government declared the practice of untouchability as illegal through the adoption of the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 (Nandu Ram 1988: 8-9).

These constitutional provisions, acts and regulations have been enacted with three broad manifest objectives: (1) to provide reservation to Scheduled Castes in education, employment, State Assemblies, and Parliament, (2) to give them protection from social injustices and from all forms of exploitation, and (3) to raise their overall standard and remove social disabilities from which they suffer. Besides, there is a latent objective, namely, improvement in their socio-economic conditions which could result in the transformation of the pattern of interaction between the scheduled and the non-Scheduled Castes from hierarchical to egalitarian (Ibid: 9). However, such safeguards do not guarantee fundamental improvement in their caste status. Moreover, “....no guidelines have been established for determining when this goal has been reached.... The benefits obviously build a vested interest in their own perpetuation (Dushkin 1972: 169).

No doubt, a certain amount of change and mobility has occurred among the Scheduled Castes over a span of time. Such change and mobility in religious, educational, economic and political spheres has been regarded as channels utilized by the Scheduled Castes to raise their status in caste hierarchy (Mahar 1960; Patwardhan 1968; Lynch 1969). Both upward and downward mobility of limited degree can be seen today among Scheduled Castes (Schermerharn 1978; Sharma 1973). Social mobility has both positive and negative consequences (Roy Burman 1970; Saberwal 1972; Parvathamma 1973; Bhatt 1974).



VI.1. Direction of Social Mobility

Generally, social mobility is analyzed in terms of horizontal and vertical directions. When there is mobility among sons in the same line in which their father has achieved, it is inter-generational horizontal mobility. If it occurs among those persons who shift from one position to another but similar in nature, it is intra-generational horizontal mobility. Similarly, social mobility takes place in the vertical direction when sons move to a position different from that acquired by their fathers, or when sons acquire a position different from the previously occupied by them. Vertical social mobility is of two types, upward and downward, depending upon whether it is higher or lower than that of father or of son himself.

Social mobility has been measured in various studies in the horizontal and vertical directions, though these studies differ in their methods of analysis and categorization. Ramsay (1965), has measured the direction of mobility in the forms of upward, downward, and stable (horizontal). Tumin and Collins (1959) have mentioned four types of mobile persons, which represent four directions of social mobility taking place among them: (i) high stationeries (high status of sons of high status fathers)-horizontal; (ii) upwardly mobiles (high status of sons of low status fathers); (iii) downwardly mobiles (low status of sons of high status fathers); and (iv) low stationeries (low status of sons of low status fathers)-horizontal. Thus, in their scheme the inter-generational horizontal mobility occurs at two stages: one, where fathers begin with whatever base but retire with low status even towards the end of their career, and their sons also start with some base and end with a status similar to that of their fathers; and two, where fathers have acquired high status and their sons also start from a relatively favorable vantage point and end with a status similar to that of their fathers. Though such a

scheme provides for more preciseness, it fails to suggest accuracy of both upward and downward mobility (Nandu Ram 1988: 64-65).

VI.1.a. Vertical Mobility: Upward Mobility & Downward Mobility

Vertical mobility means movement up or down the socioeconomic scale. Those who gain in property, income or status are said to be upwardly mobile, while those who move in the opposite direction are downwardly mobile (Giddens 2004: 300).

Downward social mobility does occur and is a complex process involving social and economic, cultural and motivational factors. Several sanskritizing castes have moved up in the caste hierarchy by discarding their 'polluting' callings without, however, a corresponding change in their economic and political position (Harper, 1968; Sharma, 1970). Indeed, when the lower castes imitate the cultural traits of upper castes, their economic position often declines owing to the abandonment of lucrative economic activities. When this lack of fit between a rising social (caste) position and a declining economic position persists for a period of years, their generalized status may decline below what it was when they started to emulate the upper castes. Downward economic mobility here is an unplanned consequence of planned upward mobility. Social decline may affect a lone individual or a social group as a whole (Sorokin, 1964). Mobility is not a symmetrical phenomenon (Miller, 1969). The patterns of mobility do not bear a definitive character. A nation can be high in one measure of mobility and low in another. The same may be found with an individual and/or a group (Sharma 2006: 210-211).

While the fact of upward caste mobility has been noted by many analysts, its consequences for those whose position has remained unchanged has not been adequately explored. The point is that upward mobility, if restricted to some caste groups only, accentuates structural cleavages and imbalances. This differential movement adversely affects those castes which remain static. Some castes which were inferior in past

may now move up to a higher position in the caste hierarchy. This is true not only of castes; but within the caste, different families and within the families different individuals are also differentially affected by such a group-specific upward mobility. Thus, without moving down or even without being affected by generalized decline, the relative position of groups, families and individuals might decline as a result of the upward mobility of other units of society. Such a consequential decline has been conspicuously neglected in sociological analysis and only upward mobility has engaged the attention of sociologists so far (Sharma 2006: 213).

At the outset it may be stated that a proper study of social mobility among the Scheduled Castes must have its bearing upon social structure of 'caste society', that is, division of Indian society into caste and class groupings. Changes in the non-Scheduled Castes' society would also have its repercussions on the structure of the Scheduled Castes. Therefore, a meaningful discussion would be possible if caste/class relations vis-à-vis Scheduled Castes are properly analyzed and all the 'ideological' points in the definitional and relational aspects of these two 'concepts', that is, caste and class, are discussed. Social mobility among the Scheduled Castes should, therefore, be examined in view of their structural position in the caste system (ibid: 230-231).

There are two patterns of social mobility among the Scheduled Castes: (i) the welfare measures have brought about mobility among some selected sections of the Scheduled Castes, adversely affecting hegemony of the dominant castes in the fields of education and employment; and (ii) social mobility among the Scheduled Castes is also directly a result of certain socio-cultural movements which in turn has created anti-upper castes attitudes and awareness about their own low position. It is not that these two patterns are quite independent of each other. Since the Scheduled Castes were also a highly differentiated lot before Independence, the differentiation could be reflected in

these broad patterns of social mobility among them. Certain sections of the Scheduled Castes have taken more advantages of the constitutional safeguards and welfare measures, hence they have more migration to urban centers, education and white collar employment. The others who perhaps due to their earlier weak position among the Scheduled Castes had to choose the path of 'sanskritization' for social mobility, and these created tensions without much benefit in concrete terms, though latently 'sanskritization' might have brought some benefits to the Scheduled Castes (Sharma 1980: 183).

The Scheduled Castes suffer today not only because of the imposed social and cultural disabilities but perhaps much more because of the imbalances created by the emergence of the structural differentiation within them due to the policies and plans undertaken ostensibly for their uplift and welfare. The differential benefits received by the scheduled caste are a major reason for these continuing inequalities. The two patterns of social mobility on the one hand accentuate class-like distinctions among the Scheduled Castes, and on the other the demands of equality in relation to the mobile sections of the caste Hindus are not met.

The institution of untouchability is not functioning in a wholesome way. Its pollution aspect is receded, but its reflection is seen quite effectively in economic and social relations. Untouchables have changed along with the changes in structural and cultural aspects of Indian society. The areas of untouchability and non-untouchability have become crystal clear in recent years. Like caste resilience, untouchability has more or less disappeared (Sharma 2006: 243-244). Patwardhan (1973: 186) observes that the overall perspective is that there is an increasing possibility for upward mobility for all the Harijans. She further states that there are two processes of mobility: (i) through corporate efforts; and (ii) by competing between castes and within caste (ibid: 188-89). She also notices intercaste variability in regard to social mobility, and "sacred and secular models

in different contexts.” Migration, education and white-collar jobs, particularly outside the village, have been the main source of social mobility among the Scheduled Castes. The gist of Patwardhan’s analysis is that social mobility among the Scheduled Castes has been immense and a multiplicity of factors have contributed to this particularly since independence (Sharma 2006: 247).

Any part of society can be viewed in at least three different ways. First, its structure, that is, at the relatively constant patterns of social interaction or of culture of which it is constituted. Second, its functional correlates, that is, at those particular forms of the other parts of society that fit together with it with a minimum social disorganization. And thirdly, its processes, that is, at those patterns of behavior by which the part is maintained in a relatively constant state or changed into some different structural state.

The processes of social stratification systems, that is, with the different patterned types of movement between one class position and a higher or lower one are to be dealt properly. These processes are functionally correlated with various structural parts and processes of society which needs to be investigated in order to see their bearing on the processes of social mobility (Barber 1957: 334).

In India the essential principle of the caste type of institutional norms, the strong disapproval of social mobility, has until recently been largely accepted among all social classes. Even the lowest classes, the so-called “outcastes”, have internalized these norms. The basic Hindu social belief of men being born radically unequal is supported both by universal social practice and the whole system of Hindu religious ideas. To the Hindu, consequently, social mobility is both impossible and immoral in this worldly life. One can only hope, short of escaping altogether from the wheel of life into Nirvana by means of special religious belief and practice, to work very slowly toward salvation by following the traditional social religious customs prescribed for one’s position. No such

near approximation to the caste type of norms and ideas has ever existed in any of the societies of the Christian West (ibid: 342-343).

This movement is to be conceived as a process occurring over time, with individuals (and their family units) moving from one role and social class position to another because of what they have done or what has happened to them in various kinds of social interaction, such as in their family or in their work organization, or during war or socio-economic expansion in their society. No one social element works alone to produce mobility. Because social mobility as a process of course takes place over time, and because the different parts of a society are closely interrelated with one another, the concrete processes of mobility are usually affected by several different interrelated social factors or conditions. Some of these factors include educational organizations, wealth, immigration, political influence, symbolic justification etc. (Barber 1957: 356-357).

Four important view points about mobility in caste structure could be ascertained. Firstly, Srinivas (1966) has emphasized the need for sanskritization and westernization as conceptual tools for understanding mobility in caste system. He holds that 'corporate mobility' still remains basic at the caste or jati level, as familial mobility does not obtain public recognition. Secondly, on the contrary, Stein Burton (1968) points out that the mobility of families and individuals was pronounced in medieval South India, and this should help to analyze and understand the present-day mobility in caste structure. Thirdly, Marriott (1968) thinks that caste could be understood within the frames of reference, such as the rural versus metropolitan and traditional varna versus modern national frames of reference for ranking. And fourthly, Lynch (1968) and Damle (1968) apply reference group theory to understand caste and individual mobilities in India.

These approaches to mobility are singularistic and do not encompass the totality of mobility taking place today in the caste system. Change within or between

castes does not necessarily constitute mobility within the caste system, unless one accepts mobility as the only significant kind of change in Indian society. A more meaningful form of mobility should entail changes in ritual hierarchy than the enhanced power position of a particular caste. These approaches to caste mobility are inadequate as none of them is singularly adequate enough to explain the entire gamut of mobility in the caste system. Sanskritization covers only socio-cultural aspects of change and confines to 'group mobility' of a caste. It does not take a note of individual frontiers of mobility and the motives and factors that underlie such mobility. Stein's analysis of mobility in medieval India adds a new dimension to the understanding of caste system, but it has undermined the strength of caste ethnocentrism or group solidarity based on caste allegiance. Marriott's approach is, in fact, 'confusing', and its application remains ununderstandable in terms of rural versus metropolitan caste categories. The analyses of Lynch and Damle are an addition to the analysis of caste mobility, but transforming a 'culture bound', adhoc concept of Sanskritization into a structural one, and explaining structural changes and their repercussions on caste mobility through the reference group theory, remain unclear (Sharma 2006: 196- 97)

Here it could be proposed that mobility in caste structure could be understood better by analyzing it at different levels namely, family, group and individual. These three levels of mobility encompass the entirety of mobility in the caste system. Mobility at the familial level could be better explained in terms of repercussions of structural reforms. Reference group theory helps in the analysis of mobility at the level of individual, and corporate mobility is better understandable by the concept of Sanskritization and other related concepts (Sharma2006: 196-197).

The three important levels at which mobility takes place in caste structure are:

VI.1.a.i *Mobility of a Minority of Families within a Caste*

Mobility at the level of family is inspired by differential privileges and positions that families and individuals enjoy in the village community. Families of the same caste, of other castes in the same village and of other villages and towns may operate as reference points for mobility at the family level. Mobility at the family level depends basically upon the attributes of the family concerned without necessarily being determined by the rank of a caste. All the families belonging to a caste do not possess a common set of attributes which may enable them equally to have mobility. Thus, the families within the same caste witness differential patterns of mobility without any change in caste structure.

Such mobility is, however, relatively absent among the lower and 'untouchable' castes. This is mainly due to their poor family background and low caste ranks. As a result of mobility in caste structure at the level of family, horizontal status distinctions have increased and some significant patterns in regard to dress, use of utensils, house type, hospitality, expenditure on marriages and food, etc. have emerged. Use of costly clothes, saris (in place of traditional dress), stainless steel utensils, furniture has become a status symbol for these families. Mobility at this level does not bear a corporate basis. The families which did not have resources to enhance their status enjoyed lower status within the same caste, such status polarizations refer to class-like horizontal distinctions (Majumdar, 1958). Status mobility of such a character cannot be termed as 'vertical mobility', because vertical mobility implies lessening of status distinctions. Vertical mobility brings about perceptible reduction in hierarchical distances as the lower takes the place of its immediate higher castes (Sharma 2006: 200).

It is seen that in all the four hundred households in the four districts 26 (11.81%) families from rural areas and 43 (23.88%) families from urban areas have improved economically as compared to the families of other respondents (Table VI. 1).

Table VI.1
Economically mobilized families

Districts	Economically mobilized families		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Bishnupur	12	0	12
Imphal East	0	04	4
Imphal West	11	14	25
Thoubal	03	25	28
Total	26	43	69

VI.1.a.ii Mobility of a Group or a Majority of Families of a Group

Mobility of a group or a majority of families of a caste is not essentially in contrast with mobility at the level of family. The same family may have mobility simultaneously at both the levels. The major distinction between the two levels is that the 'corporate' (group) interests are given priority at the caste level, whereas at the family level the interests of family concerned predominate. In the former, collective striving is involved, while in the latter individualistic-achievement is stressed for status upgrading. Another distinction is that mobility at the caste level generally operates with regard to socio-cultural customs or matters regarding pollution-purity while mobility at family level takes place in the socio-economic and political domains, and it is concerned with real power and influence in the village community.

There are certain castes which have tried to sanskritize their behavior patterns by discarding polluting and degrading callings and practices and by adopting occupations of the superior castes which guaranteed higher social status. Here mobility in caste structure is generally of a corporate nature. Efforts are collectively made to upgrade caste position, however, individuals try to upgrade their socio-cultural position within the

caste by discarding eating meat and drinking wine or by having regular bath, worship and the sacred thread. A reference about the concepts of Sanskritization and Dominant caste can be made as they are helpful in understanding of corporate mobility in caste structure in spite of their adhoc character. It has been pointed out that Sanskritization is a group process and it helps in understanding of group mobility. Sanskritization does not reduce 'neither economic inequalities' nor it challenges the dominant caste(s). Bailey (1960) points out that Sanskritization is a corporate activity and it is an attack on hierarchy, and therefore, it is a process towards 'general leveling of culture'. But the dominant castes are not so ignorant and unaware about movements of the sanskritizing castes. They take defensive mechanisms and maintain/create rather more status distinctions than what existed before through articulation of new status bases which are generally beyond the reach of the lower caste and class people. As such sanskritized castes hardly get higher recognition by the privileged caste groups. Sanskritization increases generally ineffective status distinctions within the same caste without attacking the caste structure as such. The sanskritizing castes generally cannot imitate the ways of twice-born dominant castes or other higher castes, as this is influenced by the rank of the dominant caste. The lower castes imitate the life-ways of the immediate higher castes and this pattern applies to all the sanskritizing castes. Thus, Sanskritization is applicable to the understanding of group mobility vis-à-vis caste structure particularly with reference to socio-cultural behavior patterns.

The group of families which have sanskritized their ways of life by adopting Hinduism is found to be more in Bishnupur (76%) and Thoubal (70%) districts. And in all the four districts the families who have sanskritized are 111 (50.45%) from rural and 52 (28.88%) from urban areas (Table VI.2).

Table VI. 2
Group of families mobilized through Sanskritization

Districts	Group of families mobilized through Sanskritization		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Bishnupur	76	0	76
Imphal East	02	02	4
Imphal West	12	01	13
Thoubal	21	49	70
Total	111	52	163

VI.1.a.iii. *Mobility of an Individual within a Family*

The mobility of an individual within family implies enhancement or degradation of status of an individual without necessarily affecting the social position of his family and caste to which he belongs. Mobility at the level of individual is more concerned with psychological processes, such as aspirations, ambitions, frustrations, etc. and therefore, it can be better explained by the theory of reference group behavior. Individual mobility is observable when we find that some individuals are esteemed high irrespective of their caste, class and family statuses. It is mobility in personal status of an individual which is a combination of his caste status and non-caste status. A particular member in a family is highly respected, whereas his real elder brother and cousins are not, sometimes including his own sons. The aspirations of individual members thus differ even when they belong to the same joint family. Education and Sanskritization are two main factors responsible for mobility at the individual level.

The author finds that in all the six villages of Rajasthan under study, the graduates and matriculates are respected more than other members of their families and their age groups irrespective of their caste and economic status. Similarly, vegetarian, teetotaler, regular worshiper and bath taker are esteemed more than the non-vegetarian and

non-believer in God and non-worshiper. Thus sanskritized individuals are rated higher than the non-sanskritized ones. The mode of orientation in the mobility at the individual level is essentially achievement-oriented, and therefore, such mobility is least corporate in character and action (Sharma 2006: 198-206).

From among the two hundred and twenty (220) rural and one hundred and eighty (180) urban respondents, the respondents who are found to be individually mobile as a result of their education and occupational position irrespective of the educational or economic condition of the other members in the family are 39 (17.72%) of them and 55 (30.55%) of them respectively (Table VI.3).

Table VI. 3
Individually mobile respondents within the family

Districts	Level of Mobility		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Bishnupur	20	0	20
Imphal East	2	10	12
Imphal West	13	18	31
Thoubal	4	27	31
Total	39	55	94

Mobility of few families by achieving improved economic status within a caste is more prevalent in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas. The group of families trying to upgrade their social status by adopting to the Hindu ways are observed more in districts like Bishnupur which is because of the influence of the nearby Hindu Meitei villages. Though educational or occupational mobility acquired by an individual does not necessarily mean mobility of the whole family but this act as an inspiration to the siblings and the society at large.

VI.1.b. Horizontal Mobility

Horizontal mobility involves moving from one social status to another of about equak rank. Other non-vertical forms of mobility have been discussed, most often in terms of movement across categories not typically defined as hierarchical, such as religion, political party affiliation, age, citizenship, and so forth (Schnore, 1961; Sorokin 1927).

Out of the total four hundred respondents 167 (41.75%) and 80 (44.44%) of them from rural and urban areas respectively have converted to different religions such as to Christianity, Sanamahism and Hinduism. But the change in their religion is not associated with any form of upward or downward mobilily in their socio-economic scale (Table VI. 4).

Table VI. 4
Horizontal mobility of the respondents

Districts	Rural	Urban
Bishnupur	97	0
Imphal East	15	8
Imphal West	25	02
Thoubal	30	70
Total	167	80

VI.2. The Processes of Social Mobility

Institutional norms, however important, are only one of the social factors affecting social mobility in a society. Indeed, a great variety of other social structures and social conditions interact with institutional norms to produce the concrete processes of social mobility. The processes of social mobility will be somewhat different in different societies and that they will be somewhat similar insofar as societies face similar functional problems and solve them with similar structural arrangements (Barber 1957: 356).

VI.2.a. *Family*

The family is of crucial importance for the processes of social mobility in all societies. The family comes first in the life history of the individual and sets the stage for what will happen to him later in the processes of social mobility. Both its socializing functions and its various structural forms have an important effect upon mobility in any society. In the modern world, the influence of the family on the child's aspirations for higher education has been especially important because such education is now a nearly indispensable prerequisite for social mobility. In extended-family societies, social mobility is likely to involve mobility for the entire group. The family uses its resources of influence, wealth, land, or work skills to raise itself in the class structure. When such arrangements did result in higher positions for sons and daughters, the children in turn used their new influence or wealth to rise up their parents and siblings (Barber 1957: 359-362).

A large majority of the respondents i.e. 274 (68.5%) belong to nuclear families and the remaining 126 (31.5%) respondents have extended families.

The shift from joint family to nuclear family is due to occupational reasons. The younger generation wants to be more mobile and want to move to more benefiting places above that it becomes easier to manage a nuclear family.

VI.2.b. *Geographical mobility*

Most social mobility occurs fairly slowly and in relatively small degree. The geographical scattering of the members of even small families of orientation is common in industrial societies because occupational opportunities frequently require geographical mobility (ibid: 364-365). In general, it seems likely that the more social mobility in a society, the more internal migration. Hindu caste society, which is localistic; the effective caste unit is concentrated in a local area within which the members work and

marry, and they do not migrate. Social mobility can occur without migration, but it is more likely to require migration than not. And the greater the degree of mobility, the more likely that migration will occur (ibid: 418).

Regarding the issue of geographical mobility it is found that in all the four districts 36 (16.36%) of the rural respondents and 40 (22.22%) of them from urban areas are temporarily shifted from village to town areas. Among them who are temporarily staying for study purpose are 10 (4.54%) rural and 14 (7.78%) urban; for Government services are 15 (6.81%) rural and 21(11.67%) urban; 2 (0.90%) rural and 1(0.56%) urban for private service; 3(1.37%) rural and 4 (2.22%) urban for business purpose; and 6 (2.27%) rural for other reasons. The respondents who have already completed their studies by temporarily staying in the town and have returned back to their respective places are 45 (20.4%) rural and 49 (27.2%) urban. These respondents are not presented in the table as they are not staying in the town during the time of data collection. But a majority of 139 (63.18%) rural and 91 (50.55%) urban respondents have not shifted anywhere for any purpose. (Table VI.5).

Table VI. 5
Respondents who have temporarily shifted to urban areas

The various reasons for temporary shifting	Rural (220)	%	Urban (180)	%	Total
Study purpose	10	4.54	14	7.78	24
Govt. Service	15	6.81	21	11.67	36
Private Service	02	0.90	01	0.56	3
Business Purpose	03	1.37	04	2.22	7
Other reasons	06	2.27	0	0	6
Total	36	16.36	40	22.22	76

The family members of the respondents who are temporarily shifting to urban areas for study purpose are 45 (20.45%) from rural and 33 (18.33%) from urban areas; for Government services are 44 (20%) rural and 44 (24.44%) urban; and 7 (3.18%) rural and 8 (47.22%) urban for business purpose (Table VI. 6).

Table VI. 6
Temporary shifting of respondents' Family members

The various reasons for temporary shifting	Rural (220)	%	Urban (180)	%	Total
Study purpose	45	20.45	33	18.33	78
Govt. Service	44	20	44	24.44	88
Private Service	0	0	0	0	0
Business Purpose	7	3.18	8	4.44	15
Total	96	43.63	85	47.22	181

According to 78 (35.46%) rural and 73 (40.56%) urban respondents from all the four districts, ten to thirty (10-30) families have shifted to town areas so far mostly after getting proper job and proper source of income. They have also shifted considering the better prospect and availability of their children's education. And 29 (13.19%) rural and 28 (15.56%) urban respondents asserted that thirty one to fifty (31-50) families must have moved to town areas for the above mentioned reasons while 113 (51.37%) rural and 79 (43.89%) urban respondents have the knowledge that some families from their areas have shifted to town areas but they couldn't specifically pronounce the number of the households shifted so far (Table VI. 7).

Regarding the matter of shifting to town areas, 114 (51.81%) respondents from rural area and 63 (35%) of them from urban area from all the four districts, have a similar opinion that they do not want to shift to town as they love to preserve their traditional culture with which they were brought up. They expressed that they are more accustomed to their village ways of life and can engage themselves in multiple economic

activities of agriculturing, animal rearing, brewing etc. which will not easily be possible in the town settlement. They also feel that the cost of living is high and would not be able to adjust in the congested town and thus, prefer to stay back in their respective villages and to contribute and cooperate to the development of their own villages. The respondents of Sekmai expressed that, Sekmai is very much like a town with all modern amenities available and not much far from Imphal also. They further stated that they are attached to their villages and feel comfortable living in their spacious area which towns cannot provide. They also have a feeling of facing adjustment problems in the city and above that the survival factor is much easier in their villages comparing to the costly living standards of the town. They expressed that they can easily earn their living by just involving in agriculture, fishing, animal rearing etc. And lastly but not the least, they have the desire to bring development to their own areas by contributing in their own ways. While 106 (48.19%) rural and 63 (35%) urban respondents preferred to shift to Imphal, capital city, provided they have the facilities like proper transport, communication, good education etc. (Table VI. 8).

Table VI. 7

Respondents’ knowledge about the number of families migrated to Imphal from their native village

Number of families migrated to Imphal from their native village	Rural (n=220)	%	Urban (n=180)	%	Total
10-30 families	78	35.46	73	40.56	151
31-50 families	29	13.19	28	15.56	57
No idea	113	51.37	79	43.89	192
Total	220	100	180	100	400

Table VI. 8

Respondents who wish to migrate to Imphal (Capital City)

Respondents who wish to migrate to town/city	Rural (n=220)	%	Urban (n=180)	%	Total
Yes	106	48.19	63	35	169
No	114	51.81	117	65	231
Total	220	100	180	100	400

Responding to the issue of improving economically and socially after shifting to town, the bulk of 95.5% (382) respondents from all the four districts, irrespective of all criteria, responded that their socio-economic status would improve if shifted to town but again shifting to town is not just enough. They have to plan and manage everything properly and a person's potential also plays an important role. According to them those whoever shifted are doing well economically and socially as majority of them have shifted after having proper source of income, a good government service or a business to rely on. Contradicting to the above opinion, a woman 0.25% from Imphal West (rural) expressed that those shifted to town are poor economically and are not treated well by Hindu Meiteis. And somewhat similarly to the woman's response 4.25% (17) of them responded that they would not develop much as they cannot get themselves involved in multiple economic activities like they do in villages.

All the hundred percent respondents expressed that those whoever has shifted are still continuing their bonds with their family and relatives. As a result, the question of feeling isolated in social and family gatherings does not arise with them so far.

Regarding the issue of mobilization by the upwardly mobile Scheduled Castes, 58 (26.37%) respondents from rural and 88 (48.89%) of them from urban area responded that almost all the mobilized Scheduled Castes especially their relatives as well as individuals with philanthropic attitudes render support in the form of cash, kind or

guidelines. They also help their fellowmen emotionally and financially when informed them about village functions, sports, youth clubs, etc. Among them a negligible number of two (2) of them from urban area have the opinion that the mobilized Scheduled Castes of earlier times have really worked for the upliftment of their fellowmen as compared to the younger generation who only cares and thinks for their own benefits. While 143 (65%) respondents from rural and 55 (30.56%) from urban expressed that the mobilized Scheduled Castes must be helping their relatives and near ones but they are not doing anything for the mobilization of the Scheduled Castes as a whole. 19 (8.63%) rural respondents and 37 (20.55%) of them from urban area had no knowledge of it (Table VI. 9).

Table VI. 9
Respondents' opinion regarding the mobilized SCs contribution for the upliftment of their fellowmen

Mobilized SCs contribution for the upliftment of their fellowmen	Rural (n=220)	%	Urban (n=180)	%	Total
Yes	58	26.37	88	48.89	146
No	143	65	55	30.56	198
No idea	19	8.63	37	20.55	56
Total	220	100	180	100	400

Geographical mobility among Scheduled Castes has been prevalent. This has been evident by Scheduled Caste families being shifted to the capital, Imphal after getting proper government occupations and sufficient income. The access to children's proper education, transport and communication, easy availability of daily requirements and above that the location of work place in town have been the main reasons of shifting. But many still preferred to commute everyday instead of shifting to Imphal due to their emotional attachment to their places while some are driven by the fear of not getting anything to do or a dilemma of not able to earn a livelihood after settling in town because

of poor education and poor skill. Their feeling of difficulty in adjusting into the living style and environs of the town are also evident from the talk.

No matter how far they have mobilized geographically or economically, their bonding with their other family members and with the fellowmen are kept intact by attending family gatherings and village functions. They all share a harmonious relationship regardless of their economic or educational disparity. Among the mobile ones some of them help and support their fellowmen in the village emotionally as well as financially.

VI.2.c. *Immigration*

Socio-economic expansion is obviously a most important factor producing changes in the opportunity- structure of a society and in the chances of social mobility. Expansion may result from a wide variety of conditions internal and external to a society.

Another factor that may change the opportunity-structure represented by the stratification system of a society is immigration. Immigration into a non-expanding society will reduce the social mobility opportunities for the members while immigration into an expanding society will have various social advantages and more favorable opportunity (Barber 1957: 413-417).

From all the four hundred respondents, 49 (12.25%) of them have shifted / migrated permanently either to urban or rural areas for their better economic benefits. Here, the respondents permanently shifting from rural to urban area are 2 (1.11%); urban to urban is nil; rural to rural are 44 (11%); and urban to rural are 3 (0.75%) (Table VI. 10).

20 (9.1%) out of 220 rural respondents and 34 (18.9%) out of 180 urban respondents have family members, either their own children or siblings who have temporarily migrated outside the state for better education and job prospects. And so far there are two cases of temporary migration to the other countries. One of them (0.56%) is

a brother of a middle aged respondent from Kakching (Thoubal urban) who has migrated to California (USA) after acquiring a proper service. And another one (0.46%) is a brother of a young aged man from Waroiching (Bishnupur rural) who is temporarily at France for training in navigation (Table VI. 11).

Table VI. 10
Respondents who have permanently shifted

Permanent shifting to rural and urban areas	Rural (220)	%	Urban (180)	%	Total
Rural to urban	0	0	2	1.11	02
Urban to urban	0	0	0	0	0
Rural to rural	44	20	0	0	44
Urban to rural	3	1.37	0	0	3
Total	47	21.36	2	1.11	49

Table VI. 11
Respondents whose family members have temporarily migrated outside the State / Country

Shifted for study purpose	Rural	%	Urban	%	Total
Migrated to other States	20	9.1	34	18.89	54
Migrated to other country	1	0.46	1	0.56	2

Permanent shifting from rural to rural area is high because anyone can shift in search of land for survival whereas permanent shifting to town areas need other important requirements like proper job or good economic condition to sustain in such areas.

VI.2.d. Occupational Mobility: Intergenerational Mobility

Intergenerational mobility refers to a change of social status from one generation to the next. The change is typically measured by comparing the son's occupation to his father's (Encyclopedia of the Theoretical Sociology 2005: 807).

Economically productive roles, involving varying amounts of specialized knowledge and executive responsibility, are important criteria of evaluation for systems of social stratification in all societies. The work organizations in which such roles are grouped and co-ordinated have an important bearing upon the processes of social mobility.

In Hindu India, for example, where, as Davis has shown, "there is considerable mobility up and down the social ladder despite the ideal of fixity", extended family tends to rise or fall as units. Of course, individual work achievement is only part of the concrete processes of mobility in modern society. Higher education is the indispensable prerequisite for achieving various professional roles. And so access to the processes of mobility into or within the professions depends upon access to education (Barber 1957: 366-373).

Out of the four hundred respondents, (44) respondents' occupational/economic mobility cannot be compared to their fathers because they are still continuing their education and not involved in any occupation or economic activity. The remaining (356) respondents' mobility is compared with their fathers. The respondents who are involved in occupation lower to their fathers are less that is 8 (3.63%) from rural and 5 (2.78%) from urban areas. The respondents in an equal occupational position with their fathers are 109 (49.5%) from rural and 60 (33.33%) from urban settings. And those who have been able to acquire an occupation higher than their fathers are 86 (39.1%) from rural and 88 (48.89%) from urban areas (Table VI.12).

Table VI. 12
Intergenerational mobility Occupational / economical mobility of the respondents as compared to their fathers

Districts	Level of Mobility						Total
	Lower		Equal		Higher		
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
Bishnupur	04	0	52	0	39	0	95
Imphal East	0	0	13	37	04	23	77
Imphal West	04	03	26	03	34	23	93
Thoubal	0	02	18	20	9	42	91
Total	8	5	109	60	86	88	356

A small number of 25 (6.25%) respondents from Waroiching (Bishnupur district) cannot utilize tractor due to the unfavourable rocky fields but they use fertilizers for their crops. While the remaining bulk of 375 (93.75%) respondents in all the four districts irrespective of rural and urban criteria employ oxen, tractor, power tiller, fertilizers etc. according to the requirement for better production. Majority of them hire tractor and power tiller for cultivation but so far only 3 (0.75%) of them own a tractor and only 2 (0.5%) of them have a power tiller each.

Those many respondents who adhere to Hinduism have not engaged themselves in the brewing business. This is strongly indicated by the absence of brewing in Thoubal district. But in contrast this is not the case in Bishnupur district. Here, inspite of majority of them being adopted to Hinduism (76%), the number of respondents practicing brewing is also noticeable (29%). They attach religious as well as commercial value to brewing and at the same time also accept the Hindu Meitei's notion of brewing to be a degrading occupation. The Scheduled Castes have started employing techniques like tractor, power tiller and fertilizers in agriculture for better production. But in the production of brewing, pottery and sericulture which are also some of the important sources of income, they are still depending on the traditional methods.

The number of respondents having higher occupational/economical position shows that there is some amount of intergenerational mobility in both rural and urban areas. Animal husbandry especially piggery and poultry are considered polluting by staunch Hindu followers. While rearing a cow or oxen is a matter of pride as only well off families can afford to do so. Such a feeling was very strong earlier where those Scheduled Castes who have adopted to Hinduism had to stop domestication of animals like pigs, hens, ducks etc. In the present situation such feeling is not manifested and it has become more of an individual's choice of economic activities.

VI.2.e. Educational Mobility: Intergenerational Mobility

Though education cannot be the sole criterion of social change and mobility, in certain situations it can contribute to the social awakening among people (may be a small section) who may be 'harbingers of social change' (Kamat 1982: 1327-44).

Education weighs heavily in determining which relatively full-time, functionally significant social roles a person will be able to fill. In short, education is primarily a mechanism, whereby social class positions are stabilized across the generations; only secondarily is it an important mechanism providing for social mobility. There is a large correlation between educational attainment and occupational achievement. And not only the amount but the quality of education is positively correlated with occupational achievement and opportunities for social mobility (Sharma 1999: 390-397).

Literacy among the Scheduled Castes is less than that in the general population even in the recent decades. So is the case of the increase in literacy among them. The extent of literacy, the rate of its increase, and the level of the educational achievement among them can be well imagined (Nandu Ram 1988: 50).

When the levels of education achieved by the respondents are compared against their fathers in all the four districts, it is found that only one the respondent has

lower education than his father. Whereas 70 (31.81%) from rural and 36 (20%) from urban areas have an equal qualification to their fathers and a good number of respondents that is 150 (68.19%) from rural areas and 143 (79.44%) from urban areas have a higher educational qualification than their fathers. And the remaining 65 (29.54%) rural (14.44%) urban respondents cannot be compared with their fathers as they being either students who have not completed their studies or too young to be compared (Table VI. 13).

Table VI.13
Intergenerational mobility
Educational mobility of the respondents as compared to their father

Districts	Level of Mobility						Total
	Lower		Equal		Higher		
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
Bishnupur	0	0	31	0	69	0	100
Imphal East	0	0	13	26	07	54	100
Imphal West	0	0	16	03	54	27	100
Thoubal	0	01	10	07	20	62	100
Total	0	1	70	36	150	143	400

The literacy rate of male members among the Scheduled Castes is leading ahead as compared to the female members in almost all the four districts. The illiterate male respondents in all the four districts are 42 (10.5%) and female respondents are 63 (15.75%). Among the literate male those who have studied upto primary level are 43 (10.75%); secondary level are 45 (11.25%); higher secondary level are 9 (2.25%); college education are 64 (16%); and still higher university education are 23 (5.75%). Among the literate females those who have studied upto primary level are 29 (7.25%); secondary level is 21 (5.25%); higher secondary are 9 (2.25%) and college education are 41 (10.25%) and still higher university education are 11 (2.75%). However, the female respondents could achieve the highest level in education by pursuing/pursued Ph.D in different disciplines as against male respondents in all the four districts (Table VI.14 & 15).

Table VI. 14
Education profile of the Female respondents

Education Profile	All four districts		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Illiterate	42	21	63
Primary	17	12	29
Secondary	11	10	21
Higher Secondary	3	6	9
College	15	26	41
University	4	7	11
Total	92	82	174

Table VI. 15
Education profile of the Male respondents

Education Profile	All four districts		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Illiterate	30	12	42
Primary	25	18	43
Secondary	26	19	45
Higher Secondary	6	3	9
College	35	29	64
University	6	17	23
Total	128	98	226

Educational facilities provided by the government like post-matric scholarship, reservation in government institutions etc. has benefited 186 (46.5%) respondents or their family members. But a larger number of 214 (53.5%) respondents have not been benefited by any of these educational facilities so far.

The higher educational level of the respondents when compared with their fathers shows that almost all of them have proper awareness of the importance of education in the modern society. Many of them have a strong desire of enrolling their

children in good English medium schools. Some of them have even sent their children/siblings to distant places outside the state solely for the purpose of acquiring sound education. The female members do not lag behind in acquiring education. A large majority of the respondents aspiring for English private schools clearly reflect the awareness of the importance of education in achieving upward mobility socially as well as economically.

VI.2.f. *Economic Mobility: Intragenerational Mobility*

Intragenerational mobility on the other hand, typically refers to the vertical mobility experienced by an individual within his or her own lifetime, as through job promotions and other career advancements (Encyclopedia of the Theoretical Sociology 2005: 807).

Wealth and social class position tend to be congruent with one another in the long run, because wealth is a most effective means of commanding the social resources necessary for social mobility. Wealth can be used directly to buy more highly evaluated roles. It can also be used indirectly to buy the education or environment that provides opportunities of access to more highly evaluated roles. Majority of people in any society use their wealth to maintain their social class position for themselves and their children, and sometimes to advance it. Most of the people know the consequences of the lack of education and other resources of the social environment; they know the advantages of superior facilities in these respects (Barber 1957: 374-375)

From all the four hundred respondents 54 rural and 57 urban respondents have experienced intragenerational upward mobility through advancement in occupation and in economic position. While 13 rural respondents and 4 respondents from urban areas have suffered downward mobility due to decline in the occupational or economical position. (Table VI. 16 & 17)

Table VI. 16
Intragenerational upward mobility of the respondents

Districts	Rural	Urban
Bishnupur	24	0
Imphal East	02	12
Imphal West	22	16
Thoubal	06	29
Total	54	57

Table VI. 17
Intragenerational downward mobility of the respondents

Districts	Rural	Urban
Bishnupur	06	0
Imphal East	02	03
Imphal West	03	0
Thoubal	02	01
Total	13	04

It is seen that economic activities like agriculture, brewing and animal husbandry are some of the main sources of income for almost all the Scheduled Castes. A huge majority of them involving in these economic activities show that all these activities play a crucial role in their lives whether or not they are involved in any other work organizations simultaneously.

From among the respondents of all the four districts seventy eight (19.5%) of them have sufficient income to maintain their families and a majority of three hundred and twenty two (80.5%) respondents find their income to be insufficient for their families to manage. Except for twenty five (6.25%) of them from all the four districts who are no more involved in agriculture, all the other (93.75%) respondents irrespective of urban and rural location are directly or indirectly practicing agriculture. Those who work at

government or private sector adjust their timings for their agriculturing work in the morning or in the evening according to their office schedule and convenience.

In all the four districts a large number of 274 (68.5%) respondents belong to the income category of less than 50,000 (LIG) annually while respondents numbering 124 (31%) of them hail from income category of 50,000 to 2 lakhs (MIG) and only a negligible number of 2 (0.5%) respondents get an household income above 2 lakhs (UIG) annually.

Among all the respondents, 109 (27.25%) of them are saving money starting from an amount of five hundred to two thousand (500-2000) a month in local self help group called "*marup*" or in a bank or in L.I.C. And the remaining 291 (72.75%) respondents have no savings in any form anywhere.

Except for a few of them who have managed to get a job majority are still engaged in agriculture and other unskilled economic activities. The reason may be because of lack of proper education to fetch a job or the lack of resources to start a business by themselves.

VI.2.g. Symbolic Justification

Many different social activities and physical possessions that are in some way the source, consequence, or correlate of a social class position come to be taken as symbolic indicators of that position. The symbolic indicators are not in themselves the criteria of evaluation; the functionally significant roles are the criteria.

It sometimes happens that an individual and his nuclear family are upwardly mobile in the sense of moving into more highly evaluated roles without immediately adopting all the kinds of physical possession that are usually associated with those roles. There may be a certain lag between the attainment of a social class position and the display of some of its symbolic indicators. In such a situation, there may take

place a process that we may call “symbolic justification”. Symbolic justification is a process in which the socially mobile individual or family acquires, consciously or unconsciously, the various symbolic accompaniments of their social class position.

In Hindu India, when a subcaste such as the Pasi is upwardly mobile, a process of social and religious symbolic justification is likely to intervene. A socially mobile subcaste tries to achieve a greater purity of diet than it had maintained formerly. It tries to keep its women secluded and its widow celibate. In short it seeks to realize a little more nearly to Hindu social and religious symbols most closely approximated by the Brahmans, who compose the highest social class (Barber 1957: 404-406).

In order to adopt Hinduism officially during the period of king Buddhachandra “*Panathokpa*”, a purification ceremony has been personally experienced by 8 (2%) of them from the districts of Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal. Though no one was entitled any position after the purification but they were considered higher than those of their counterparts who have not undergone the process. They were permitted to mingle with the Hindu Meiteis in social gatherings. These people after the purification have to follow the Hindu Meiteis’ way of life style. In matters of food habits they had to discard meat eating; avoid domestication of animals like piggery, poultry etc.; they had to quit drinking or brewing liquor; they had to start worshipping Hindu Gods and Goddesses with Hindu religious practices like taking bath before partaking of food, applying tilak (chandan) on the forehead etc.

In all the four districts a total majority of 163 (40.75%) respondents have sanskritized their ways of life by adopting to Hinduism while 8 (2%) of them have not actually sankritized but are flexible and adjusting according to the different situations. In occasions such as marriage ceremony, death ceremony and other social ceremonies they

hire Brahmin if Hindu Meiteis are invited as well as the Maiba (priest) for completing the required rituals.

The various imitations of the habits and life style of the Hindu Meitei by the Scheduled Castes are to achieve a status similar with the Hindu Meitei though some do it to adjust to the situation when Hindu Meiteis are invited. Except for those who are totally adapted to Hinduism in ritual as well as social sphere by hiring Brahmin etc. others still give utmost importance to their indigenous religion prior to imitating or following the Hindu ways in any occasion.

VI.2.h. *Political Influence*

Political influence, like other forms of social influence, often becomes a significant component in the processes of social mobility. Political influence can be achieved either directly or by successfully occupying a specialized political role, usually in the government itself, but occasionally in the organized structure of a political party and indirectly, by exchanging with those who are officials in the government or organized parties.

But political influence does not affect the processes of social mobility only through its control over political roles. Political influence affects the processes of mobility whenever it exerts some control over any of the various means of access to valued social roles (Barber 1957: 409-412).

Regarding the political influence of the Scheduled Caste politicians, 62 (15.5%) of the respondents feel that only those candidates who have been elected from their own constituency work for their upliftment more than other politicians. While 103 (25.7%) of them express that the scheduled caste politicians are working for them to some extent. Some of them further stated that their politicians cannot achieve much as the scheduled caste political representatives in the Assembly are very less. Quite differently

197 (49.25%) of the respondents share their opinion that not much has been done for the improvement of the Scheduled Castes collectively though the politicians must be working for the upliftment of their respective areas.

A majority of (249, 65.2%) respondents are of the opinion that the upwardly mobile Scheduled Castes and those in authority are somewhat biased and give more preferences to their relatives and to their near ones. They also feel that the more advanced and developed ones among them are getting the benefits in the name of the less developed and less aware people. But according to 37.5% of them the upward mobile Scheduled Castes do not monopolize the benefits.

The government policies are implemented to some extent according to 98 (24.5%) respondents from all the four districts. But according to the view of a large number of respondents i.e. 276 (69%) have the feeling that some of the corrupt government agents who have strong political influence are deliberately not implementing the policies due to some selfish motives.

VI.3. Participation in the High Profile Jobs/Bureaucracy/Politics

Education is one of the main factors responsible for mobility at the individual level. Almost all of them have mentioned that a person with high educational qualification is respected more than the other members of the same age groups without educational qualification, irrespective of their caste and economic status. Feeling inconvenient with the fellowmen due to achieved status is not found in this society which may be because of the strong bonding they have with their family.

None of them had any precise knowledge of the number of Scheduled Caste members in the high profile occupations. Some of the occupational position achieved by the respondents or by their family members is presented below (Table VI. 18).

Table VI. 18
Participation in the high profile occupation by the respondents and their family members

Districts/High profile Occupation	Doctors		Lecturers		Govt. Services		Business		Bureaucrat	
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U
Bishnupur	1	0	0	0	3	0	10	0	1	0
Imphal East	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	1
Imphal West	0	0	1	2	2	2	12	3	2	2
Thoubal	0	0	1	7	0	6	0	5	0	5
Total	1	1	2	9	6	8	22	12	3	8

They all expressed that those in high profile jobs enjoy the same status to Hindu Meiteis according to their positions. Their family members also receive the same amount of respect from Hindu Meiteis as well as from their fellowmen. And the situation of inconvenience due to highly achieved position is not applicable and is irrelevant here.

VI.4. Social Change

In every society, even in that of the isolated tribal groups in India, changes have been occurring in the social process. Tribal conflicts and the pains that arise in wresting food from hostile and inhospitable nature necessarily bring about social interaction. There is the inevitable problem of socialization of the new generation and the handing down of beliefs, skills, and techniques from one generation to the other. But these changes are so minor that when we look at them from the larger perspective of social life it looks as if society has remained static.

Social change may be provisionally defined as any significant alteration in the structure of society. To obtain intellectual leverage upon this difficult problem, however, it is necessary to understand that social structure has two primary components: cultural, or normative, and social, or rational. Historically, an adequate theory of change

was slow to develop because neither component in the problem was well understood. Much of what is called social change is really cultural change, and the nature of culture in its current technical sense was not appreciated until the beginning of this century. (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 266).

“Social change” may be defined as the process in which there is discernable significant alteration in the structure and functioning of a particular social system. The term “change” itself is wholly neutral. It only implies that there is some difference through time in the object to which it is applied. When we speak of social change we simply assert that there is some change in social behavior and in the social structure. When we refer to social change as a process, we introduce the idea of continuity. It implies that there is a continuous change taking place in a definite manner because of the operation of the forces present in the situation. In other words, in studying the process, we observe a series of transitions between one stage of being and another. But there is also the implication of direction. It may be forward or backward. It may lead to integration or to disintegration (Kuppuswammy 1972: 9).

VI.4.a. *Patterns of Change*

Maclver has shown that different aspects of society change in different forms, and this is why it is so difficult to generalize about the problem of social change unless we specify the actual aspect under study. He has described three patterns of change:

(i) Cumulative change: both with respect to knowledge in the empirical field and the application of this knowledge to the actual living conditions; in other words, in science and technology. We find that there is continuity as well as a direction in change which is cumulative in science and technology.

(ii) In some aspects there is a change in the upward direction but afterwards there is a reversal of direction. This mode of change for example, is characteristic of economic

phenomena and also of the phenomena of population. Cities grow but they also decline. The difference between the first and the second modes of change is obvious. While in the first there is almost a practical certainty that the change will be maintained in the same direction, in the second mode there is no such assurance. It may go down.

(iii) Third mode represented by Maclver is somewhat similar to the second, but there is no continuous increase for some time. It is more like a wave with its ups and downs. In nature as well as in society many phenomena follow this cyclical course.

Maclver acknowledges that the distinction of these three modes of change, while they are helpful, is not exhaustive. He assumes that all changes are measurable in quantitative units, but as we know many cultural changes are more qualitative and not amenable to measurement. With these limitations in the mind, we can make use of these patterns to understand some of the problems of social change.

In the recent decades the general problem of social change has been redefined as a series of special research problems. There is an increased emphasis on a factual and objective study of change. This approach owes much to the methodology developed by Max Weber who concentrated on a particular process of change, namely the protestant ethic, and the emergence of a new type of society, namely the capitalist society. Znaniecki (1939) professed that social development could be traced genetically or causally. He looked upon the "modification" in society, which could be explained solely in terms of potentialities inherent in the combining parts of the system, as something corresponding to the maturation process in the living organism. As these modifications arise due to some internal changes within the system they do not involve any causal problem. He stated that the principle of causation is applicable only to situations of "change" where there is evidence of variations traceable to external influence.

Functional-process approach conceives of social change as consisting of a sequence of problems. It converts the problem of social change into definite research questions on which truly comparative data could be gathered. It looks upon each phase of social change as a process functionally interrelated to other parts of the society. It takes up a limited field for investigation complete in itself but looks upon it as a product of the antecedent phase so that both the process and continuity are kept in view. This method has been found useful in the study of social change as well as social order.

The major types of social change studies are:

VI.4.b. *Acculturation Studies*

Social anthropologists have been interested in the change which takes place in a group when it comes in contact with other groups. These studies of small groups have been of immense value in understanding the changes which take place when that group is open to outside influence. These studies show the role of coercion and the characteristics of key personnel in social change.

It is noticed that some amount of imitation of the Hindu Meiteis by the Lois is always visible. In daily activities some of them started taking bath before entering the Kitchen like the Hindu Meiteis. Imitation of the Hindu Meitei costumes and their way of marriage, discarding of meat and wine in certain social functions etc. are all a result of contact with the Hindu Meiteis.

VI.4.c. *Studies in Demographic and Ecological Change*

Studies of population changes within the country are of immense value to understand the social process. The composition of population and its distribution in a given area are helpful factors. The study of internal migration offers fruitful insights into problems of social change. Who are the people who migrate from one part of the country to another? What are the problems of adjustment which they face? What are the

consequences of migration? These are problems of great interest in understanding social change.

It is seen that internal migration among the Lois and Yaithibis are prevalent. They shift to scarce places in search of lands where they can cultivate and make their livelihood. The percentage of rural to rural permanent shifting is more compared to rural to urban shifts or urban to urban shifts. In such change of habitation they face various adjustment problems. The Lois when shifting to a Hindu Meitei dominated area face difficulties as their lifestyle is different from them. But gradually the Lois adopt to the Hindu Meitei ways as that being the only option to mingle in the bigger society.

VI.4.d. *Urbanization Studies*

Much of contemporary social change is associated with the dominance of the urban social structure and the migration of the rural people to urban areas. The old cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi have now become very vast. New cities have sprung up on account of the steel mills and other industries or projects. The segregation of groups and functions within the city are also of great interest.

Though there are fewer respondents (1.11%) in the entire total sample who are actually shifting to urban, especially to the Imphal town, but a good number of them (45.25%) regularly visit or stay at Imphal town for different purposes. Some of them (42.2%) aspire to shift permanently to urban areas like Imphal town for a better and improved life.

VI.4.e. *Social Mobility and Dynamics of the Elite*

One of the outstanding changes that Indian society is facing is the change in the social structure due to social mobility. The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century saw tremendous changes in social stratification due to a large number of Hindus taking to western education with eagerness, and qualifying

themselves for the middle posts in the bureaucracy during the colonial period. In the first three or four decades of this century, tremendous changes took place in the South Indian states because of access to education by the lower caste groups, and the “non-Brahmin” movement. This upset the equilibrium between the advanced castes and the backward castes in that part of the country. Further, today we find that the elite is being recruited not only from the forward castes but also from the backward castes and classes in the cities, as well as the rural areas because of the spread of education on the one hand, and, even more important, the adult franchise giving the vast rural groups political power for the first time. Because of special education facilities and the reservation of jobs in the Government the Harijans and Girijans have come to occupy positions of prestige, wealth and power unheard of in the history of the country.

The various provisions given by the state government like educational facilities consist of post-matric scholarships, stipend for M.Phil/Ph.D., reservation in government institute, etc. The economic development schemes like animal rearing, assistance for opening small shops, aids to weavers, pisciculture etc., and other provisions like housing grant, construction of Scheduled Caste hostel have been an impetus for the Lois and Yaithibis in improving their socio-economic conditions. Though the percentage of respondents (6.25%) who have acquired job through reservation is less, but it acts as an inspiration for all who are aspiring to be mobile.

VI.4.f. Study of Institutional and Community Change

Side by side, great changes are taking place in institutions. Institutional change signifies the mode of alteration in the interrelation and interdependence of social roles. There are many studies of the family, and of economic, political and religious institutions. Since Independence vast programmes have been undertaken to bring about institutional changes in rural as well as in urban areas. These studies have shown how

economic innovation and expansion of communication networks have intensified social differentiation.

Somewhat similarly the Scheduled Castes in Manipur have been provided financial aids by the government for development activities. One of them is the funds allotted to the "All Manipur Loi Association" by the government once in every year to organise cultural programmes. This is mainly to preserve and enhance their culture on the one hand and to expand their communication and networking in all the Scheduled caste areas on the other.

VI.4.g. *Social Movements*

These are organized attempts to effect basic institutional changes by the people. Various studies have been made regarding religious movements, labour movements, social security campaigns etc. (Kuppuswamy 1972: 10-15).

It is clear that all societies are characterized both by continuity and change. Continuity is maintained by social controls, particularly by the methods used in child rearing and education which transmit the accumulated social heritage to the new generation. In every society, there are also conditions which make for social change. Most important are the growth in knowledge and occurrence of social contact and social conflict with other groups.

The growth of knowledge has not been continuous nor has it occurred at the same rate in all societies. At some periods of social history, there is rapid growth of knowledge, but at other times, it has been practically stagnant. Social conflict has probably played a very important part in human history from the earliest times. Conflicts within the society have led to the social stratification and changes in the social structure. These changes also occur when there are conflicts between societies. Students of Indian history

assert that many Kshatriya rulers did not belong to the old Hindu society, but were invaders who were Hinduized and were accorded the status of Kshatriya (Panniker, 1955).

In the Scheduled Caste communities of Manipur the incidence of caste conflict among the Scheduled Castes or between them and the higher castes, as seen in other parts of the country has been almost absent. But mention can be made of a Scheduled Caste movement against the Government in the year 1987 for recruiting non-Scheduled Caste in the Scheduled Caste reserved post. The ongoing disagreement between the Lois of Kakching and other Lois is also important to mention. The Loi identity of Kakching has not been accepted by Lois of other areas on the ground that they have been upgraded to the caste of Kshatriya during native rule. And thus, should not be benefited by reservation or any kind of Scheduled Caste provisions. Such organized attempts bring about some form of change in the society.

VI.5. Factors of Social Change

There is a problem of conflict between generations. While it is true that continuity in society is through the process of socialization, it must be remembered that on socialization is ever complete in the sense that the new generation exactly re-enacts the social life of their predecessors. Always, the younger generation is critical of the older generation leading to rejection of some aspects of social life and to innovation of some others (Altbach 1968).

The earlier theories of social change tended to emphasize a single factor in the causation of change. For example, Comte emphasized the development of mind, Spencer stressed the cosmic process of differentiation, and Marx, the mode of production, etc. But, the later theorists like Hobhouse, Tonybee, and Sorokin realized the complexity of social causation.

These earlier theories gave rise to two particular problems regarding the factors of social change. An attempt may be made to take up each factor by itself and find out the way in which it affects social change, realizing, however, that these factors are treated independently for the purpose of understanding and not because they can influence social change independent of the other factors (Kuppuswamy 1972: 37-40).

VI.5.a. *The Demographic Factor*

It is well known that changes in the size and the composition of the population are a very important factor leading to social change. Small societies seldom rise to positions of historical importance. It is the very large societies which not only exert their influence upon their neighboring states but even upon the course of history itself (ibid: 41).

It is very natural that the bigger society always tends to influence the smaller ones. The same has been visible in the Scheduled Caste society where a good number of (40.75%) respondents have been adopting to the Hindu ways of life. This shows the strong preponderance of the majority Hindu Meitei community on the minority Scheduled Caste community. The Hindu Meitei being socially and economically dominant exerts some amount of influence on the Scheduled Caste community leading to change in various matters of their life.

VI.5. b. *Technological Factor*

In a broad way we can say that technological developments have brought about many changes in attitudes, beliefs and even in traditions. There is no doubt that the modern factory, the railway carriage, the bus, the restaurant etc., have brought about changes with respect to caste and class behavior. People of various castes work side by side in the modern factory. The Brahmin cannot complain that his co-worker who comes into close contact with him is a Harijan. Similarly, any person who has the means to

purchase a railway ticket, or a bus ticket can come and sit next to you and you cannot complain that a man of lower caste or a man of lower class is your fellow traveler rubbing shoulders with you. Because of the introduction of technology in India, people of various castes are giving up their traditional occupations and are taking to work in the factories and in the offices. This has also meant the possibility of vertical mobility so that a person can now aspire to take up an occupation with higher status than what he could have thought in the pre-technological days (Kuppuswamy: 49-53).

In both the Loi and Yaithibi communities there have been various changes in the field of education and occupation which further leads to changes in social status due to technological developments. The distance earlier created by caste and religious issues have been bridged by the improvement in education and occupational sectors where all the communities are accessing education together and occupationally working side by side. In all the four hundred samples as many as 22.22% respondents from urban and 16.36% of them from rural areas commute almost everyday using road transport and even occupying a seat next to a Hindu Meitei. Many of them are staying in the Hindu Meitei dominated Imphal areas for study and other economic related purposes. Because of common workplace there is more intermingling between the Scheduled Castes and because of common schooling both the Scheduled Castes and the Hindu Meiteis alter their attitudes, prejudices, life style and even traditions.

VI.5.c. *The Economic Factor*

The economic life is the fundamental condition since the existence of man depends upon his ability to sustain himself. According to Marx (1867) the change of norms in the society introduces further changes throughout the fabric of the society. Unlike the technological theory of social change, the Marxian theory emphasizes not change in the material, but change in the basic norms governing economic relations among

the people. In the traditional village, there is hardly any scope for social mobility. A man cannot change his caste since it is fixed by birth; nor can he change his status by increasing his income or wealth since there is no scope for it in the village (Kuppuswamy 1972: 62). When society gets industrialized it becomes essentially urban. Here, a man's status depends upon what he is capable of doing and not to which family or caste he comes from. The class system becomes highly fluid so that with energy and ability it is possible for the lower class man to move up to the highest class. The mode of production is highly complex involving divisions of labor requiring highly trained specialists who are recruited according to the universalistic criteria and not particularistic criteria where entering into an occupation depends upon one's caste and kinship relations (ibid: 65-66).

The Scheduled Caste in the Manipuri society enjoys freedom in the choice of occupation. Even in the traditional villages the occupations they are engaged in are not caste based. Many of the respondents (73.25%) in the whole sample of four hundred have also expressed that unlike earlier times now an individual's occupational and economic status are given more weightage than one's caste. The change in attitude by the Hindu Meiteis toward Scheduled Caste is experienced mostly by those among them who have achieved an elevated status in socio-economic sphere.

As Manipuri society is not much industrialized it has not become essentially more urban. Even with limited industrialization, modernization and urbanization, the caste and class systems can be seen more fluid giving ample scope for the Lois and Yaithibis to climb up the ladder by achieving an elevated status in the society.

VI.5.d. *The Cultural Factor*

Max Weber's (1930) emphasis on ideas, ideals, and attitude towards work, savings and life are very important to bring about the unique phenomenon of economic

development in the Western Europe and America is of great value, but this does not mean that other factors like the economic, technological, demographic etc., are not important. Weber himself was quite cautious. Secondly, we cannot look upon this as a causal relationship implying that unless there is change in religion there cannot be change in economic development. Ogburn (1922) distinguished between the material and non-material aspects of culture. He believed that when changes occur in the material culture, they will stimulate changes in the non-material culture in the ways of utilizing these material changes. The changes in the non-material culture may be slow to respond to the changes in the material culture.

Among the Lois of Manipur employing country liquor in certain religious ceremonies is considered important but it is observed that such usage is reduced when members of other communities are present. The Lois of Andro uses a specially brewed wine called 'yai-yu' in various rituals which is expensive as it consumes more time in distilling. So, the people have replaced 'yai-yu' by simple wine except in very important rituals. Similarly in those Scheduled Caste families where Hindu Meiteis are invited, there is separate arrangement of food items and sometimes even complete absence of meat is observed in social gatherings. All these instances show that such gradual cultural change leads to an overall social change.

VI.5.e. Planning as a Factor in Social Change

One of the remarkable changes which Gandhi was able to bring about was regarding the attitudes towards Harijans. The contempt which the higher castes had towards these humble people was completely changed by Gandhi. He also changed the outlook of the Harijans and made them realize for the first time that they are equal to other citizens and that they too can aspire for the highest positions. These changes brought about by Gandhi were based on deliberate planning. Broadly, there are two aspect of social

change, namely, (a) changes in the social structure itself bringing about changes in the pattern of social relations, and (b) changes in the attitude and motivations or changes in the values themselves (Kuppuswamy 1972: 89).

Education is one of the most important means for bringing about social change is strongly felt by the Lois and Yaithibis in Manipur. One hundred and sixty four (74.55%) from the rural areas and one hundred and fifty one (83.9%) from the urban areas prefer private English schools for their children irrespective of the high expenses clearly shows the importance of education among them. Again the planning and struggle carried out by some of the Scheduled Caste politicians like late Kh. Chaoba has been an important contribution. He strove hard to introduce modern political value in the Scheduled caste communities. Along with his supporters he established "All Manipur Loi Association" to protect their rights and to enhance their identity. Since then, the organization has been consistently attempting to derive benefits for the development of the Scheduled Caste communities.

VI.5.f. Legislation as a Factor of Social Change

As an instrument of social change, law involves two interrelated processes. By means of new enactments there will be institutionalization of a new pattern of behavior manifesting new social values. When this new pattern is incorporated in the legal code, any deviance from this new pattern could be punished according to law. However, mere institutionalization by itself is not enough. In order that the law could become an active social force, there should be a correlated process, namely, the internalization of this new pattern of behavior in the individual. These two are closely related; if the institutionalization is successful it facilitates the internalization of the new value by bringing about a change in the attitudes and beliefs of the individual through social upbringing in the individual families. When the Constitution was drawn up, it not only

declared that according to Articles 14 and 15, the equality before law as a fundamental right, it also abolished untouchability by Article 17, and made this practice punishable according to law. Today, Harijan boys and girls are given full facilities for education up to the university level. The rules also provide for the reservation of jobs in the Government sectors. As a result of this, many Harijan men and women have now entered the highest professions of law, medicine, etc. (ibid: 108-110).

The Department for Development of Tribals and Scheduled Castes in Manipur is working in a three dimensional approach viz, (i) Protection of the Scheduled Caste people from atrocities through provisions of the PCR Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; (ii) Promotion of socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people through the implementation of various developmental programmes funded under (a) State Plan, (b) Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan/Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, (c) Special Development Programmes and (d) Centrally sponsored schemes; (iii) Preservation of rich cultural heritage of the Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe people through systematic preservation, documentation and allied research works (Annual Plan 2008-9).

Such Constitutional provisions have helped the Lois and Yaithibis in bringing about certain improvements in their lives. It is seen that 100% of the respondents have expressed that educational facilities provided by the government have accelerated the enrolment of the Scheduled Castes in various educational institutions. The government provisions play a crucial role in improving the conditions of the Scheduled Castes in Manipur. This is strongly agreed by the (50.90%) rural and (57.78%) urban respondents.

VI.6. Interrelationship between Mobility and Change

VI.6.a. *Family and Change*

Unlike earlier times where almost all the families were extended/joint type of families, now the situation has changed. The data shows that majority of the respondents belong to nuclear family and some of the reasons which can be related to this are the influence of modern education, improvement in financial and occupational conditions. The aspiration to advance in life results in changing of habitation according to convenience which led to breaking of joint families to nuclear ones. Although the family by and large retains the authority structure, one can find a lot of flexibility in terms of giving importance to women in decision making. The very attitude towards women has changed probably due to her economic contribution to the family resources. Though the elders are consulted in all important decisions of the family but the youngsters are not totally dependent on their parents for every small activity in the family, unlike before.

VI.6.b. *Geographical Mobility and Change*

The movement from villages to towns has given them the aspiration to achieve higher education and occupation. Those who have shifted temporarily for education have achieved good education with some of them getting into government and private services. Those who have permanently shifted to Imphal areas particularly are enjoying an equal socio-economic status with the Hindu Meiteis. Their outlook towards life has changed and they constantly strive for their siblings and other family members to follow their path of mobilization. Sometimes this has led to the migration of the whole family to different areas which create a situation whereby people of the same caste, religion or village tend to aggregate in different areas of the city. Thus, somehow, though they are living in the city they continue to live in the primary groups. But such migration

has not affected their rights and obligations towards their family members or relatives in their native villages.

Internal migration has also brought about change in the life of these people. This kind of shifting is mainly for survival need whereby these Scheduled Castes in search of land for cultivation or to build a house move to scarcely populated interior villages. This has succeeded them in sustaining their families and earning something for their livelihood. Those who have migrated like this does not either have residential land or agricultural land of their own. So they find a better solution by shifting to wild lands and scarcely populated areas where they can get a piece of land for themselves.

VI.6.c. Immigration and Change

The cases of migration to other nations are negligible. The family members and the locality look up to the one who have migrated and prospered in life which is possible only with the required qualification and adequate financial conditions. A certain amount of status enhancement is immediately attached to the person and his family members. The youngsters in the village consider them as role models and strive to follow their path.

VI.6.d. Occupational Mobility and Change

Modern education and exposure to city life as a result of temporary shifting has brought many changes in their choice of occupation. Those small numbers of respondents who have succeeded in achieving a government post or a private job has improved their standard of living as well as their aspirations for their children or siblings. As a result the younger generation is more inclined towards achieving a government post or a private job rather than sticking to their traditional callings of agriculture or brewing. But due to the limited employment opportunities most of them are still engaged in agriculture even after achieving a graduate degree. Many who have completed a level of

education like Graduation or Master's degree are a confused lot as they are not able to achieve neither a good government service nor are they willing to involve in agriculture as their main occupation.

VI.6.e. *Economic Mobility and Change*

Majority of the respondents belong to the lower income category (68.5%). The large numbers of respondents draw their main income from agriculture (93.75%) and brewing (23.25%). Those respondents (33.5%) who have bigger amount of land holdings have started hiring tractor/power tiller from those among them (1.25%) who have managed to own tractor/power tiller. Those who have improved by economic conditions, may be due to good education leading to good occupation or may be due to business activities or may be due to involving more than one occupational activity, undoubtedly changed their life style. They are observed to come closer to their Hindu Meitei counterparts in their outlook, attitudes, behaviour patterns, dress patterns etc.

VI.6.f. *Educational Mobility and Change*

The expansion of educational opportunities by providing schools, textbooks, stationary and other infrastructural facilities are very important. Parents, who are educated, want and motivate their children to pursue higher and better education. The majority of the parents admitting their children in English private schools show that they consider education as an important source of mobility which further helps them change their lifestyle. Though, the male percentage of literacy rate is higher than that of females in almost all the four districts, but the number of women pursuing Ph.D. is more as against that of the men. This shows that education is considered important irrespective of gender. Quite contrary to the earlier times, now women are aspiring for higher level of education as well as occupation in various sectors. Because of education their outlook toward life has been broadened. They are now aware that proper education will provide necessary

knowledge and efficiency in different occupational roles. The status enjoyed by some of them through education and occupational achievement has created an urge and motivate others to achieve upward social class mobility. This has also improved their relation with the Hindu Meiteis as interaction and intermingling with the Hindu Meitei colleagues in the work organization has also increased.

VI.6.g. Symbolic Justification and Change

There is constant interaction between the Lois and the Hindu Meiteis which is partly responsible for modification in different religious practices of the Lois. They have started hiring Brahmins when intermarriage with Hindu Meitei takes place. Those who have adapted to Hinduism have 'tulsi' (Basil) planted in their courtyard. It is also seen that indigenous and Sanamahi followers among them have also planted Basil plant in their courtyard though their various rites and ritual may not necessarily be associated with it. They have started discarding meat in their religious rituals or in any ceremony where Hindu Meiteis are invited. And when the guests are from both Hindu Meiteis and Lois they make separate arrangements for dining. Applying of 'tilak' (a peculiar mark on the forehead and nose applied by Hindu Meiteis) when attending a religious ceremony in Hindu Meiteis' place is also visible. A good influence of Hindu Meiteis marriage is noticed among the Lois which according to them is mainly visible among the financially sound Loi families or those who have close intermingling with Hindu Meiteis. All these changes in their practices can be a result of their intermingling with the Hindu Meiteis.

VI.6.h. Political Influence and Change

Sekmai, being a reserved Scheduled Castes constituency has been a home to important political leaders. They have struggled much for the development of the Scheduled Castes. The inhabitants of Sekmai and other nearby villages like Khurkhul and

Phayeng are considered to be more aware regarding various beneficiary schemes, facilities and benefits provided for Scheduled Castes, since the area is politically active. Some amount of preferential treatment to the respective constituency is always visible which is why when given an opportunity they wanted a political member or an informer from their respective areas rather than those belonging to other areas. The members of the Scheduled Caste political representatives elected from the reserved constituency are presented as below (Table VI.19).

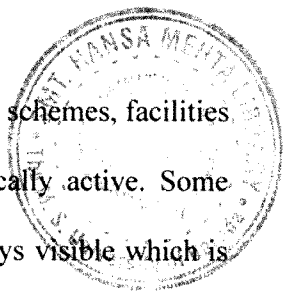


Table VI. 19
Past and present Scheduled Castes political representatives elected from reserved constituency

Sr. No.	Past	Present
1.	Shri Kh. Chaoba Singh	1. Shri H. Borojao Singh
2.	Shri Kh. Leirijao Singh	
3.	Shri Kh. Angangjao Singh	
4.	Shri N. Biren Singh	
5.	Shri Kh. Chandra Singh	

VI.7. Changing Pattern of Socio-Economic Condition

Improved socio-economic condition is experienced by 69 (17.33%) respondents from all the four districts. They expressed that due to their improved economic condition, they have experienced better standard of living, possession of assets which they could not afford to own before, and able to provide good education for their children. It has led to an increase in inter-mingling with Hindu Meiteis officially and socially. They also feel that, now Hindu Meiteis are liberal in their attitude towards them unlike earlier times. While a large majority of 82.66% (331) of them have not improved their socio-economic condition.

They expressed that some amount of change is visible in every sphere of their life due to different forces operating from within or outside society. In cultural and religious spheres there has been some amount of imitation of Hindu Meitei ways of life or some kind of adjustment made mostly in the matters of marriage as well as in other social gatherings. Changes are observed in fixing the marriage timings, food served during wedding meals and clothes wore in various social functions due to the intermingling of Scheduled Castes and Hindu Meiteis. Aspiration for better education and pursuit for a stable occupation instead of relying wholly on agriculture etc has been profoundly prevalent among the Scheduled Castes of Manipur. According to them exposure to modern times has to an extent led to adjustment and change of orthodox outlook among people from both sides. They further expressed that the main source of change and development is economic development and all the other changes achieved are relative changes. Some of them (Thoubal urban) added that, as the Scheduled Castes are approaching towards an upward mobility in socio-economic, education and occupational levels the strong hesitancy of the Hindu Meiteis toward making marriage alliance and relations with them have softened to an extent as compared to olden days.

Regarding the issue of change in the treatment by the Hindu Meiteis, they expressed that they cannot comment on any specific change in treatment towards them but in general, they have experienced a change in treatment whether they achieved high status or not. In their view this is because of the change in attitude among the Hindu Meiteis brought by modern education on one hand and educational and economical improvement among some of the Scheduled Castes on the other hand.

Those who have managed to get a government job or who have proper source of income have surely experienced upliftment in socio-economic position. Change is inevitable in any society. Certain change and imitation of the Hindu Meitei culture is

due to intermingling with them. Modern education has liberalized the thoughts of the Hindu Meitei and it has been a primary means for the improvement among the Scheduled Castes. To an extent the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes affect their relationship with the Hindu Meiteis.

VI.8. Changing Pattern of Culture

Culture, in social science is all that in human society which is socially rather than biologically transmitted, whereas the commonsense usage tends to point only to the arts. Culture is thus a general term for the symbolic and learned aspects of human society (Marshall 1994: 137).

Cultural change consists of alterations in the elements and the patterns of a culture. Many factors influence the occurrence and diffusion of innovations: changes in environmental conditions, migration of populations into new habitats, contacts with different cultures, growth in the size, internal complexity, and diversity of a social group, internal conflicts between disparate or disjunctive elements of a culture, and perception of relative deprivation of desired goals (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 66-67).

Among the Scheduled Castes studied, there have been various cases where the Lois and the Yaithibis have tried to improve their status by discarding certain practices and occupations attached to them which the Hindu Meitei consider as impure and degrading. Some of the Lois try to sanskritize their behavior patterns by discarding practices like brewing, animal rearing, etc. and by adopting occupations of the superior castes which guaranteed higher social status. Efforts are made to upgrade their socio-cultural position by abandoning eating of meat and drinking wine and by taking regular bath before cooking or worshipping. The above mentioned changing behaviour patterns are not applied to Yaithibis as they being adherent Hindu followers.

Sanskritization has been a major process of cultural change in Indian history, and it has occurred in every part of the Indian subcontinent. It may have been more active at some periods than at others, and some parts of India are more Sanskritized than others; but there is no doubt that the process has been universal (Srinivas 1966: 23). One of the functions of Sanskritization was to bridge the gap between secular and ritual rank. When a caste or section of a caste achieved secular power it usually also tried to acquire the traditional symbols of high status, namely the customs, ritual, ideas, beliefs, and life style of the locally highest castes. It also meant obtaining the services of a Brahmin priest at various rites de passage, performing Sanskritic calendrical festivals, visiting famous pilgrimage centers, and finally, attempting to obtain a better knowledge of the sacred literature (ibid: 28).

It has been pointed out that Sanskritization is a group process and it helps in understanding group mobility. Sanskritization neither reduces 'economic inequalities' nor it challenges the dominant castes. As Bailey (1960) points out sanskritization is a corporate activity and it is an attack on hierarchy, and therefore, it is a process towards 'general leveling of culture'. But the dominant castes are not so ignorant and unaware about the movements of the sanskritizing castes. They take defensive mechanisms and maintain/ create rather more status distinctions than what existed before through articulation of new status bases which are generally beyond the reach of the lower caste and class people. As such sanskritized castes hardly get any higher recognition by the privileged caste groups. The non- privileged sanskritizing castes do not possess material means and mechanisms to compete with the dominant caste groups. As such sanskritization increases generally ineffective status distinctions within the same caste without attacking the caste structure as such. Such intracaste distinctions are found in all the sanskritized castes. The privileged section do not constitute a homogeneous status

group, but they are generally superior to those who have not been privileged, and the former continue to be influential because of their bigger landholdings, higher education, and prestigious jobs, which are beyond the reach of the non-privileged sections of rural society. Therefore, we can firmly say that sanskritization does not reduce economic inequalities, but it may enhance cultural leveling (Sharma 2006: 202-203).

Westernization is a term used to characterize the changes brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule, and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels that is, technology, institutions, ideology, and values. Westernization results not only in the introduction of new institutions (for example, newspapers, elections, Christian missions) but also in fundamental changes in the old institutions. Thus while India had schools long before the arrival of the British, they were different from the British-introduced schools in that they had been restricted to upper-caste children, and transmitted mostly traditional knowledge (Srinivas 1966: 47-48).

Regarding the matter of imitating the ways and customs of Hindu Meiteis by the Scheduled Castes, an old man (0.25%) of Imphal west (urban) area asserted that they imitate Hindu Meitei only for their modernized way of living style. While 0.5% (2) of them responded that in their village (Sangaithel) fifty per cent of the villagers are Hindu followers and fifty per cent are Sanamahi cult followers and thus, no question of imitation by high or low exist. Another 17 (4.2%) of them expressed that the high status Scheduled Castes imitate the life style and customs of Hindu Meiteis but at the same time do not neglect their indigenous traditions. They further added that, the high status Scheduled Castes have more interaction with Hindu Meiteis which may be for social or official reasons. Their frequent exposure to town areas and modern ways of life has led to adjustments and adoption to the Hindu ways of life. According to 380 (95%) of them, irrespective of the urban and rural setting, whether they belong to the high or low status

they remain predominantly in their indigenous tradition. Adoption or conversion to Christianity / Hinduism is wholly an individual choice and not necessarily related to one's high or low status. Many of the high status Scheduled Castes may not adopt to Hinduism and many low status Scheduled Castes may adopt to Hinduism or even practice both according to the situation, for instance, like hiring of Brahmin at times of inter-marriage, usage of Hindu Meitei attire in marriage and in different other occasions, food items served or eaten, etc.

In Thoubal district a majority of 70% of them has been Hinduised since their forefather's time, 23% of them are Sanamahi followers and 7% are Christian converts irrespective of high or low status. In Thoubal Khunou many of them are adherent followers of Sanamahi cult. So, the issue of imitating Hindu customs by high status and sticking to indigenous culture by low status among them is not at all relevant.

In Imphal East except for those few (4%) who had adopted to Hinduism during earlier times, (16%) Sanamahi follower and (3%) who are converted to Christianity, the majority of (77%) of them have remained in their indigenous tradition except for some cultural changes.

Similarly in the Imphal West also majority are indigenous followers (73%). Hinduism is followed by 13% of them, while 10% Sanamahi believers and 4% Christian converts.

And in Bishnupur district also the question of adopting and imitating is an individual choice whether the person belongs to high or low status. Here, majority of them are already Hindu followers 76% while 16% of them are adherent followers of Sanamahi religion and 5% of them are Christians. The indigenous religion is followed by 3% of them.

In all the four districts 64 (16%) of them have heard the concept of Sanskritization, Hinduisation and Westernisation while 336 (84%) of them have not heard of these concepts.

From all the four districts, 6 (1.5%) of the respondents stated that, high status Scheduled Castes tend to imitate the values and customs of Hindu Meiteis. According to them this high status Scheduled Castes being in good occupational position, experience more exposure to modern lifestyle and frequently mingle with Hindu Meiteis in different occasions which resulted in more imitation of the Hindu Meiteis. While the large majority of respondents that is 394 (98.5%) of them explained that, adopting to the values of Hindu Meiteis is wholly an individual choice and not a matter of only high status or low status.

In Bishnupur district 5% of them are Christian converts and 16% are followers of Sanamahi cult so they follow their own religious practices. 3% of them are still following indigenous religion and all the remaining 76% respondents profess Hinduism but they still practice '*ashiman thaba*' (an indigenous ritual in remembrance of the deceased forefathers and foremothers) and use of '*yu*' (wine) in '*Epan-thaba*' (birth ceremony) and in funeral rites as practiced by the indigenous followers among Lois though not performed elaborately like them.

In the district of Imphal East, 3% have converted to Christianity and thus follow their own practices. 16% of them believe in Sanamahi Cult, 4% of them are Hindu followers. Except the above mentioned respondents all the other 77% of them have retained their indigenous religion. Some of them (mostly urban) accepted that to some extent the Scheduled Castes imitate Hindu culture in marriage costume, hiring of '*pala*' (a group of traditional singers in marriage ceremony) in marriage, shifting the timing of marriage ceremony from morning to evening by some etc.

In Imphal West district except for 4% of them who have converted to Christianity, 10% who considered Sanamahi religion as more important and the 13% of them who have adopted to Hindu Meitei customs, the remaining majority of 73% respondents considered their traditional religion as more important. Among the indigenous followers some of them (39) asserted that they practice indigenous religion but at times they also practice Hindu ways if intermarriage occurs or when the Hindu Meiteis are invited to their ceremonies. According to them, they have been noticing some changes in their marriages such as, use of '*poloi*' (marriage costume of the bride in Hindu Meitei marriage), '*pala*' (Hindu Meitei singers) and officiating by Brahmin in inter-marriage with Hindu Meitei or even marriage among Scheduled Castes themselves also, change in the way of speaking, living style etc. Some of them (9) supplemented that some Scheduled Castes in their area have started taking bath before praying and some women taking bath before cooking are also noticed. Applying of 'chandan' (tilak used by Hindu Meiteis) while attending ceremonies of Hindu Meitei family is also frequently seen. But at the same time they do not neglect their indigenous rituals and the existing changes do not mean a total adoption to Hindu Meitei customs but these are all ways of adjusting to situation as they live in a mixed settlement.

In Thoubal district 7% is converted to Christianity, 23% are Sanamahi cult followers and they regard it as the original Meitei tradition. According to them Hinduism is not their original religion and is a borrowed culture from outside. While the majority of 70% of them have been adherent followers of Hinduism since their forefather's time and thus, naturally all the rituals of birth, marriage, death etc are truly Hinduised in nature.

Regarding the matter of geographical mobility affecting cultural mobility, a majority of 257 (64.25%) from all the four districts irrespective of the criteria given, responded that some amount of assimilation or imitation is always visible as one has to

adapt and adjust according to the situation. They feel that it is always natural to imitate the ways of majority group by the minority while 114 (28.5%) of them feel that the culture will remain the same. It does not matter how much mobilized one may be geographically, their culture is maintained and practiced at home. And those from Imphal West (Sekmai urban) expressed that in Sekmai the occurrence of geographical mobility is less or rare as they mostly prefer to stay and commute from their area. And 29 (7.25%) of them had no knowledge of it.

Though the Lois and Yaithibis of Manipur have also been experiencing a change in their cultural pattern, many of them are still regarding their indigenous customs as more important. Their conversion to any religion is wholly an individual choice and is not in any ways related to high educated, high status Scheduled Castes adopting to Hindu Meitei ways or low educated low status Scheduled Castes remaining in their indigenous religion. No doubt, due to improvement in economic condition the Scheduled Castes have upgraded their style of living. Those who are in government services naturally come into contact with Hindu Meitei colleagues and such inter-mingling somehow influence this section of Scheduled Castes in different spheres of life. Those indigenous followers among Lois also practice Hindu Meitei ways mostly when inter-marriage takes place or when Hindu Meiteis are invited. But, nevertheless among indigenous followers their indigenous ritual is of utmost importance and is a prerequisite ritual whatever the occasion may be prior to any other ritual.

VI.9. Impact of Social Mobility and Change on Status of Woman

Status is a position based on prestige and life style. A status group is a community whose members share these characteristics to a similar degree. It is often useful to consider a society's status hierarchy independently from its class hierarchy based

on economic position. Status frequently derives from class position, but it may be achieved independently of economic standing (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 285).

The concept of status in its weak form, simply means the position which a person occupies in the social structure, such as teacher, priest. In its stronger meaning, it refers to a form of social stratification in which status groups or strata are ranked and organized by legal, political, and cultural criteria.

Status is expressed through and maintained by exclusionary practices such as marriage, conventions and customs, and common living arrangements. An aggregate of persons with a common status position form a status group which enjoys a common esteem and certain status monopolies over the resources of the group (Marshall 1998: 638-639).

The status of women in any society is the index of the standards of its social organization. The standard of a society rises and falls in correlation with the rise and fall in the status of women. Society is a web of social relationships of which those between male and female are the most intimate and stable. Hindu society has always remained dynamic. The status of women in it has consequently always changed. A study of this change of status will on the one hand show the Hindu women's fights for her rights and, on the other hand, the dynamic nature of Hindu social organization (Sharma 2004: 123).

The Gandhian era and the decades after independence have seen tremendous changes in the status and position of the women in Indian society. The Constitution has laid down as a fundamental right the equality of the sexes. Literary and historical research has now established beyond doubt that women held a position of equality with men during the Vedic period. The position of the Hindu women in the early Vedic times was very different from the lower status to which they were degraded after about 300 B.C. As Neera Desai puts it, "Ideologically was considered a completely

inferior species, inferior to the male, having no significance, no personality; socially she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right, suppressed and oppressed; she was further branded as basically lacking the ethical fibre. The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygamy, the purda, the property structure, early marriage, self-immolation of the widows (sati) or a state of permanent widowhood, all these contributed to the smothering of the free development of women.”

Through their efforts, the great social leaders of India of the nineteenth century were able to get much legislation passed which removed the obstacles in the way of the progress of women (Kuppuswamy 1972: 183). With the advent of Women’s education in India and the influence of the West, together with the efforts of social reformers of contemporary India, the low status of women has changed. They challenged the prescriptions of Hindu scriptures who gave them a lower status in social organization. The educated Indian women re-examined the principles of Hindu social organization (Sharma 2004: 125).

In the Scheduled Caste communities of Manipur, a mother or a grand mother leads the female members of the family. Women are treated as equal halves of their male counterparts. A Loi or a Yaithibi woman, like any other Meitei women is not only the mother of his children but also the helper of her husband in every field. Elder women are always respected and obeyed by the younger members of the family. Her opinion is always taken in any family matter. It is a fact that sons are considered as more important than the daughters. But the daughters are not neglected and even provided with immovable properties at the time of marriage by some of the rich fathers (Devi 2002: 29).

Despite Manipur being a patriarchal society women still play a significant role and enjoy higher status than her counterparts in other parts of India. Nevertheless, there are certain social restrictions deforming her social jurisdiction. In this regard,

Bhuyan observes “Manipur women have been enjoying a freedom which their sisters in India fail to attain. They were not confined to the four walls of their domestic life, they go out freely for purposes of petty trades mainly in the sale of products of their own hand. They weave fine durable textures where colours are ensembled in the most attractive manner”¹.

Almost all the women respondents are involved in diverse economic activities of brewing (23.25%), pottery (3.25%), sericulture/weaving (4.5%), Agricultural laborer (11%), cultivating (30%), small business (3.25%), private service (2.75%) and Government service (3.25%) (Table VI.20 & 21).

Women play a very crucial role in every Loi and Yaithibi family. The man of the family is still the decision maker but that does not lessen the position of the women in the family either. They are equally considered in any matter of the family and are equally responsible. They are the soul of the family as they help their husbands in the field, manage household chores and also add to the family income by brewing, weaving and doing other petty business. According to 8 (3.63%) rural and 14 (7.77%) urban respondents the contribution of the female member in the family is 30% to 40%; whereas 162 (73.64%) rural and 110 (61.11%) urban respondents express that female contributes 50% to the family income. And in the opinion of the 50 (22.72%) rural and 56 (31.11%) urban respondents female contributes more than 50% in the household economy (Table VI.22)

Being a patriarchal society, every family somehow shows inclination towards having male child but that does not lead to any kind of discrimination against female child as such. They feel the importance of both sexes and some of them even preferred female child more as they are more considerate and responsible at times.

Table VI. 20
Female respondents' chart

Districts							Total
	Young		Middle		Old		
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
Bishnupur	11	0	22	0	11	0	44
Imphal East	02	13	04	15	02	10	46
Imphal West	04	02	16	06	06	03	37
Thoubal	03	10	06	15	05	08	47
Total	20	25	48	36	24	21	174

Table VI. 21
Break-up of Female Workers

Category	Districts								Total
	Bishnupur		Imphal East		Imphal West		Thoubal		
	Rura l	Urban	Rur al	Urba n	Rura l	Urba n	Rura l	Urba n	
Brewing	29	0	05	30	20	09	0	0	93
Pottery	0	0	0	05	0	0	08	0	13
Sericulture/ Weaving	02	0	0	03	08	01	01	03	18
Agricultural Laborer	20	0	07	07	02	0	03	05	44
Cultivators	21	0	02	33	20	11	11	22	120
Small Business	06	0	0	01	02	01	0	03	13
Pvt. Sector	02	0	0	02	01	02	0	04	11
Govt. Service	02	0	01	0	03	04	0	03	13
Total	82	0	15	81	56	28	23	40	325

Table VI. 22
Respondents' opinion regarding Women's contribution to the household economy

Women's contribution to the household economy	Rural (n=220)	%	Urban (n=180)	%	Total
30% to 40%	08	3.63	14	7.77	22
50%	162	73.64	110	61.11	272
Above 50%	50	22.72	56	31.11	106
Total	220	100	180	100	400

In Imphal West district 0.75% (3) have preferences for girl child as they are more understanding and responsible than boys. While 35% (140) from all the four districts regardless of the differences preferred male child as they believed that male child will inherit and maintain their clan name. Further they can handle heavy responsibilities and are the ones to be relied in case of any emergency. Traditionally they are the ones to perform last rites and rituals of the parents and support them in their old age. But all these reasons do not mean that girls are not preferred or discriminated. The reason for male child preferences to female child is that, a male child even after marriage stays back with parents and takes care of them, while a girl child has to leave parents home after marriage to husband's home. And 64.25% (257) strongly considered both male and female children are equally important and equally preferred. This view is very strongly substantiated evidently by the sex ratios of Manipur as well as Scheduled Castes (Table VI.23).

Table VI. 23
Sex Ratio

Sex Ratio of Manipur	Sex Ratio of Scheduled Caste
978	1006

None of the four hundred respondents from all the four districts gave any positive response to the issue of discrimination of a girl child against a boy child.

All the four hundred respondents from all the four districts responded similarly that women are treated at par with men and are considered in decision making in the family. They are not restricted from following any kind of modern occupation and they participate equally in socio-economic, political and religious spheres. In case of no male issue the daughter shoulders the responsibility of the family.

VI.9.a. Rights of Women

The Scheduled Caste women in Manipur enjoy equal right to opportunity, they are not discriminated on the ground of sex in matters of public employment. Neither are they discriminated on the basis of their sex in the family. There is no restriction on the choice of occupation. They are not a victim of forced labour in any occupational centre though majority of them work as agricultural labour. They can profess any religion of their choice and at times also inherit the property of their parents when there is no male issue. At the time of marriage rich parents also gift the daughter with immovable property like land or farm which they can use or sell it according to their convenience. They have the right to approach courts when it is required.

VI.9.b. Social Laws

The major issues relevant to women and relating to social laws are: marriage, adoption, guardianship, and abortion (Ahuja 1993: 109). Regarding marriage the women in these communities have the freedom to select their life partner and marriage usually takes place between the age of 20 to 30. The gift and the appliances given to the bride by the parents are not fixed and it is wholly the choice of the parents and the bride. There is no system of child marriage or cross cousin marriage. Marriage type like polygamy is not prevalent and it is only in certain circumstances like early death of the husband, they opt for second marriage. Infact there is no restriction on widow remarriage but it is not much in practice which may be due to the fear of stigma attached to such

marriage. In the case of divorce as per the Constitutional Act she gets alimony and can take all the belongings given to her. But the case of divorce is very rare in these communities. They have the right to adopt or abort a child under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1972.

VI.9.c. Economic Laws

The issues pertaining to economic laws include: right to property or inheritance, equal wages, working conditions, maternity benefits, and job security. The right to property of a women refers to her right as a daughter, as a wife, as a widow, and as a mother. According to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, not only a daughter is given a right in her father's property equal to her brothers, but widow also gets a share in her deceased husband's property equal to her son's and daughters (Ahuja 1993: 110). The Scheduled Caste women who are working in Government sector (3.25%) are getting the benefits as per the Remuneration Act, 1976. And those who are working in other sectors are not victimized or discriminated on the basis of sex.

VI.9.d. Political Rights

The two important rights in the political field sanctioned to women by the Indian Constitution are: female enfranchisement and eligibility for the legislature. The Government of India Act, 1935 granted female enfranchisement on the basis of educational qualifications (Ahuja 1993: 111). The Loi and Yaithibi women are aware of their voting right and employ it according to their choice. In all the 174 female respondents 2 (1.15%) of them from Imphal West and Bishnupur districts have been members of Nagar Panchayat.

VI. 9.e. Consciouness of Rights

Though women in India have more rights than women of other countries, but the women in India are not conscious of all these rights. Similarly the women in Loi and Yaithibi communities are not properly aware of the rights with their legal meanings. To give them proper knowledge organized women' groups or voluntary organizations have to help women seeking protection through legal measures. The government should provide education and vocational training for women to enrich their knowledge regarding various important issues.

All the hundred per cent respondents of all the four districts irrespective of the differences bear the same opinion that women have been in a respectable position in the family and in the society at large since early times which to an extent is due to their strong contribution in the household income besides daily domestic chores. And further, due to social mobility the status of women and children has undergone much change. There has been an aspiration to achieve high education and high occupational position due to the impact of education. Their attitudes have been altered to an extent and their search for opportunity besides agriculture and other domestic chores have increased which can be attributed to their exposure to modernity as well. Women and children themselves as well as their parents have realized the importance of education and its benefits. Such changes are mostly visible in Kakching, Sekmai, Phayeng, etc while other Scheduled Caste villages are somewhat untouched by this exposure due to lack of proper or even basic infrastructure.

The upwardly mobile Scheduled Caste women are equally respected by the Hindu Meitei and by their own group according to their position. They agreed that, they are adopting to the new ways of life along with Hindu Meitei women as they all want to move ahead in life. And the reasons for such adoption are due to the impact of education,

modernization and influence of Hindu Meitei women as they are more advanced in different spheres of life. Since the women of these communities contribute to the economy and equally participate in the social processes, they are respected and their status in the family and the society at large is well placed.

There are no restrictions from the Hindu Meitei women on wearing of any modern dresses by the Scheduled Caste women.

CASE STUDY - 1

Chingakham Sheitamala Devi
Female, Age-24, Single
Undergraduate, Self-employed
Andro,
Imphal East District

Despite being a Scheduled Caste and an adherent follower of the rites and rituals of her indigenous religion, she is also a staunch follower of Sai Baba (Hindu cult). She believes that God is one and can be in any form. She practices both the rituals with equal importance though not adopted to Hindu religion truly. Her family has been a center of gossip for other residents in their village for deviating from their indigenous religion. But she did not pay much heed to those as no one has come forward to say so.

She feels that cultural diffusion is important for improvement and that knowingly or unknowingly many of them are experiencing it. She expressed that her village is already separated by hills from the mainland due to which people are still, strongly attached to their indigenous culture and is less affected by other external changes. But lately, people have started to imitate the ways of living style, marriage ceremonies, costumes, education etc which to her is a positive change. She says that because of her belief in Sai Baba, she has reduced eating meat and started taking bath before doing any religious work. So far none of her Hindu Meitei friends have ill-treated her. She feels that she would not find difficulty in getting married to a Hindu Meitei as she can adjust well.

The income she gets from brewing is used to invest in local self help group (marup) and for buying gold jewellery for herself. She does not have to contribute, as her father takes the responsibility of the family. She is actively involved in self-financing and income generating association called 'Financial Development Corporation', in which the members contribute fixed amount of money to be utilized for lending out to others for interest. She is also involved in crop plantation and silk rearing for supplying to the market. She believes in keeping herself occupied either in brewing work, field work, attending meetings and trainings for silk rearing or pottery work improves her financially, psychologically and physically as well.

CASE STUDY - 2

Kshetrimayum ongbi Pramodini Devi
Female, Age-50, Married
M.A, Ph.D. in History
Lecturer in Kakching Higher Secondary School
Kakching,
Thoubal District

Pramodini Devi is the eldest of all five sisters and she is married with two daughters. Her husband works in a local press. She has completed her schooling in Kakching and got an M.A and Ph.D. degree from Manipur University in 1988. She said that till she completed her studies she had no knowledge of the term scheduled caste or the facilities associated to it. Though she was much aware that she was called a 'Loi' by others outside her village but she did not give much thought to it. She came to know about it properly from 1991 when they started getting the facilities.

During her time girls were not much encouraged to involve in any other curriculum except the normal daily routine. There were countable number of M.As and she was the first female doctorate in Kakching. She used to think that doctor, teacher etc were the only job options for women. She did not even imagine that women can also join technical lines like engineering, scientist, pilots etc. She mentioned that her best friend had stood second position in the all Manipur board exam and had an utmost desire to become a scientist. But unfortunately due to lack of family support and her own lack of awareness resulted in suppressing her dream and ends up becoming a doctor. The situation in her time was such that, if any women talk about becoming an engineer or a scientist people will laugh at so it was almost next to impossible for a women.

And her own younger sister was a national kabadi player but no one in the family supported her as none had any knowledge of its value and scope. Her parents discouraged her, as a girl going out of home for such reason was not appreciated. But now, she strongly feels that it was a big blunder on her part not to support her sister. If she was least aware of its importance she would have helped her in her career as kabadi player. But now she is relieved to say that since lately, due to changing modern times and awareness, achievement of higher education and jobs among women have increased tremendously in Kakching. Unlike earlier times where women were reserved only in household works and agriculture, they are now moving forward.

She was scared of getting married outside her community because a girl marrying outside was a matter of mockery. People had a common notion that due to some deformity the girl could not find one from her own village and so forth. Quite contrastingly, since five to six years there has been a constant increase in intermarriage with the Hindu Meitei. Women have become members of literary associations like Sahitya Seva Samiti and writer's association in which she herself is a member. Women as councilors are elected and since 2003 women including herself, have enjoyed the privilege of being invited as special guest among village phamnaibas (administrators) in Lai Haraoba (God pleasing ceremony) in Kakching, which earlier was only a male's domain. And in 2000, first in the history of Manipur in 'Heikru Hitongba', a religious festival of boat racing, a woman was made to control the boat among all the men in the race which was earlier believed to be a ritually forbidden thing.

Now uneducated women are also involved in diverse occupations like tea-stall, small scale industry, piggery etc earning hundred to two hundred a day instead of earning fifty rupees from agricultural labour. But, even after all these improvements in education, social and political spheres she still could not find the answer to, why are the male agricultural workers paid eighty rupees a day and female fifty rupees, when both render the same period of time and labour?

VI.10. Conclusions

Some amount of intergenerational as well as intragenerational mobility is observed in these Scheduled Caste communities. The number of persons visiting Imphal (capital) regularly for the purpose of pursuing studies, for public and private services and for business are more in number than those who have actually shifted to the town areas. It is observed that incidence of permanent internal migration from rural to rural is higher than permanent rural to town migration. Temporary shifting to different places outside the state for the purpose of acquiring higher studies is also noticed. They know that shifting to the town area would enhance their socio-economic status but majority of them are not positive about shifting. They have a fear of not able to afford the lifestyle or to adjust to the environment. Many prefer to commute regularly as they find that the life in their village is more comfortable. Those who are uneducated can still survive in the village by engaging in various activities of fishing, animal husbandry, weaving etc which is not possible in the town. The main reasons for those shifted are because of a permanent post in the public or private sector or for good source of income and the availability of proper education for their children as well. Their shifting to other places or achievement of high position do not affect their bonding with their other relatives, back in the villages.

A good number of the respondents achieving higher educational qualification and occupational position as compared to their fathers indicate upward mobility. The literacy rate of the male is higher than female but contrastingly it is more number of female than male who have achieved Ph.D. degree. Education and good

occupational position are the most important means of achieving social status. Those among them who have succeeded in acquiring a high position are equally respected by the Hindu Meitei. Their achieved status does not create status incongruence between them and their fellowmen though it is very natural that they are respected and honored more than the others. In cultural and religious matters there has been some amount of imitation of Hindu Meitei ways or some form of adjustment by the Lois mostly in the matter of marriage and in other social gatherings also. The aspiration for better education and pursuit for a better occupation by the Scheduled Castes is the influence of the mobility which some of them have achieved so far. Through proper occupation many of them have achieved slightly better socio-economic status leading to certain improvement in their lifestyles. Modernization has to an extent led to adjustment and change of orthodox outlook among people from both the sides.

Some amount of economic mobility is observed among respondents who have succeeded in getting a government job or have managed to engage themselves in business and private services besides their agricultural activities. Though the number of literate members is quite high as compared to their fathers but due to lack of quality and the required amount of education many of them fail to get a job. This is the reason why many of them remain in the earlier agricultural occupation of their fathers. In many of the cases it is the children of the occupationally and economically mobile individuals who are able to achieve a sound educational and occupational positions or even higher to their parents.

As a consequence of the mobility they have achieved they experienced certain changes in their socio-economic condition leading to a better standard of lifestyle. Certain important forces such as technological development, economic enhancement as a result of constitutional provisions plays an important role in bringing some form of change

in the life of these people. It is also important to mention that the mobility and change experienced by some of them cannot be regarded as mobility of the whole community. Many of them have not experienced any form of mobility in certain aspects of their lives and are still struggling for survival.

Conversion or adoption to other religion is wholly an individual choice and has nothing to do with one's social or economic status. According to their different religious beliefs they differ in their practice and rituals. Some of them at different occasions also show flexibility by hiring a Brahman for the Hindu Meitei guest. The imitation of Hindu ways and culture by some of the Scheduled Castes is mainly in the matters of marriage, dressing pattern, living style etc. Experiencing cultural mobility due to geographical mobility is always a natural phenomena. But among the indigenous followers their indigenous ritual is of utmost importance and cannot be neglected whatever the occasion may be prior to any other ritual.

Unlike in any other Scheduled Caste societies in other parts of the country, the Loi and Yaithibi women enjoy high position in their society. They are equally heard in all family decisions. It is their crucial role as the equal contributors in the family's income which has empowered them. They are involved in varied activities of brewing, weaving, cultivation, pottery etc. It is for these reasons that though, the male child is preferred but the girl child is not discriminated either. Social mobility has brought many changes in the lives of the women, they have started aspiring for proper education and sound occupation beyond their daily household chores. Those who have achieved an upward mobility are equally respected by their fellow Hindu women. The impact of education and modernization as well as some influence of Hindu Meitei women has led to various changes in the attitude and behavior of these scheduled caste women.

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