

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

A literature survey of the concerned subject matter, to place the present study in its proper relationship to the current state of the subject, has been undertaken. The review proved helpful in providing sufficient background information regarding the study with what has been done and what more needs to be done, thus bridging the research gap.

For referring the relevant books the investigator made use of certain well established libraries in the country. To know the roots of the subject, first the main libraries in Manipur state were used viz. Department of Tribal Welfare and Backward Classes library, Imphal; State Central Library, Imphal; Manipur University Library, Canchipur, Manipur. The library of the Asiatic Society, Kolkatta, where mainly old manuscripts are kept was also quite helpful, National Library for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Trimurti Library in New Delhi was also visited for collecting and utilizing the reference material. Library of the Centre for Social Studies, Surat; Smt. Hansa Mehta Library, the Departmental and Gift Book Collection Libraries of the Department of Sociology and Women Studies and Research Centre of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda were also consulted for getting into the depth of the related subject matter. In addition to all the above, through internet surfing loads of information has been collected.

II. 1. International Studies

To study the nature of socio-cultural changes and the factors responsible for it, the understanding of the historical background is a must since the question of identity and integration has crept into the minds of the people. Haralambos and Heald also felt that the relationship between religion, social stratification and social change, particularly with reference to the development of new forms of religion, has led to considerable research (1980: 467).

While discussing religion, its functional aspect towards society could not be disregarded. And the significant work of Emile Durkheim, "*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*" ((1912) 1954) has established an interrelationship between society and religion. Here, Durkheim analyzed religion through a detailed study of Australian totemism, which he took to be the most primitive religion in existence. Durkheim pointed out that all human societies are divided into the opposing domains of 'sacred' and 'profane'. The domain of sacred consisted of things set aside and forbidden. The domain of the profane consisted of things not so regarded and belonging to the ordinary level.

Durkheim has also presented the most influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist perspective. He emphasized the importance of collective worship. The social group comes together in religious rituals infused with drama and reverence. Durkheim's views on religion are more relevant to small non-literate societies, where there is a close integration of culture and social institutions, where work, leisure, education and family life tends to merge and where members share a common belief and value system (Haralombas & Heald 1980:455&457).

In India which abounds with innumerable tribal societies, various scholars have studied the religious aspects of these cultures. The pioneers were mostly European travelers, missionaries, natural historians and humanistic scholars. These were mainly interested in recording ethnic beliefs and rituals (Troisi 1979: 8-9).

"*Notes and Queries on Anthropology*" (1951), deals with the sociology of the non-literate people. This book is also a handy aide-memoire to the trained anthropologist and to stimulate accurate observation and the recording of the information thus obtained by anyone in contact with people and culture hitherto imperfectly described. No people or culture has been exhaustively described which help any observer to find

some relevant information in any field. The book mainly deals with the physical anthropology, social anthropology, material culture and field antiquities.

Weber in his book "*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*" (1930) studied the religious beliefs that promoted the spirit of capitalism among the believers. After establishing the existence of correlation between the religious spirit and capitalist spirit in the modern western capitalist society, he attempted to bring out the particular religious ethos that promoted spirit of capitalism. He found an intellectual or spiritual affinity between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

In the book, "*The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*" (1958) Weber asserted that Hinduism lacked an ethic conducive for the development of capitalism, though there existed in the Indian society the social and cultural conditions, which should have given rise to modern rational capitalism. According to Weber, the religious feelings and motivation produced by Hinduism do not focus on controlling or shaping the material reality as a veil hiding the true concerns to which humankind should be oriented. Rigidity in the caste system, ascendancy of the Brahmin priesthood, strong belief in the religious dogmas such as Karma philosophy proved a barrier in the development of a capitalist society in India.

The nineteenth century scholar Edward B. Tylor's "*Primitive Culture*" (1871, 1958) made an effort for an intellectual approach to the understanding of ritual behavior. Tylor observed that the world of human beliefs is passing through three stages i.e. Magic, Religion and Science. Such practices were identified by Tylor as being magico-religious practices and he attributed the reasons for these magico-religious practices to the fact that man's intellect needed some form of explanation to understand the phenomena like sleep, death, fate, etc .which led to the creation of animism as termed by Tylor. Tylor emphasized magic and magical practices as the basis through which ritual worship

evolved because according to him there was a distinct difference between the stage of magic and that of religion. Magical practices according to Tylor formed the first cohesive institutional basis for the emergence of societies. In these magical practices or what Frazer (1922) called 'Pseudo Science', primitive man was developing systems of explanations through which both, individually and group wise they could come to terms with the various unknown realities that they had to live with.

Sir James Frazer in his work "*The Golden Bough*" (1922) developed ideas which are similar to Tylor's, wrote about magic and primitive superstition. He argued that from a dependence on magic, one would turn to religion and then eventually to scientific thinking. Frazer also stressed the role of religious specialists such as magicians and priests in dealing with the world of the supernatural. Besides this significant work on magic, religion and the primitive society Frazer also wrote extensively on the "*Totemism and Exogamy*" (1910); "*Folklores in the Old Testament*" (1918) dealing with tribal religion and marriages practices and ritual practices.

Evans-Pritchard's study of the Azande tribe of Africa gave a different perception of ritual behavior and the concept of sacred in the book "*Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*" (1937). According to Pritchard, the concept of ritual as well as the clear distinction between sacred and profane are vague and how a community perceive and explain the meaning of the practice of an activity which may be labeled as a ritual by others.

In his work "*Nuer Religion*" (1956), Evans-Pritchard presented how the religion of the Nuers is different from their African counterparts as the conception of ghosts is altogether subordinate. According to them whatever happens in the world is determined by spirits and the spirits can be influenced by different types of prayers and sacrifices. Pritchard terms the Nuer religion as pneumatic and theistic.

Rituals have also been seen from a psychoanalytic point by Freud in his book *"Totem and Taboo"* (1913) where he articulately presented the Psychoanalytic theory on rituals and discussed the primeval manifestations of the oedipal myth. According to him the origin of totemism, incest taboo, exogamy and the Oedipus complex signified the existence of a primal horde, the leader of which was the oldest male, who assumed exclusive sexual rights over all females in the group. Frustrated the sons killed and ate their fathers. Selecting a totem animal as a symbolic father substitute, they declared that it must be protected during the year and consumed only on ritual occasions. These ritual totem meals thus reenacted their original deed and reinforced their self-imposed incest prohibitions. Freud concluded that all cultures originated from this sacrificial meal.

In *"Totemism"* (1963) Levi-Strauss showed that animals and natural objects are chosen as symbols of clans or families because they are useful as linguistic and classificatory devices to conceptualize and organize social relationship and groups. Levi-Strauss also discussed the different aspects of totems as practiced by the tribes of central Brazil with special reference to Bororo and the Aranda.

In another work of Levi-Strauss *"Savage Mind"* (1962), he systematically demonstrated that primitives have a logical, although concrete, mode of thought. He demonstrates in his book how each culture has its own system of concepts and categories derived from experience and imposed by the surrounding natural world. He pointed out through the order in the naming of plants and animals, concepts of space and time, myths and rituals, how primitive societies do engage in a high level of abstract reasoning different from but not necessarily inferior to that evolved in cultivated systematic thought.

In the book *"Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America"* (1939) Kroeber presented almost everything about the tribal people. He mapped out culture areas

and has the concept a greater historical depth by introducing the theories of cultural climax and cultural intensity. He felt that culture would not be wholly understood by even the most complete summation of the observable elements, because every culture contained other elements that could not be caught by trait-list.

Greetz's "*The Religion of Java*" (1960), is a rare combination of analysis and speculation. This work is the first comprehensive study ever made of Javanese religion as a whole. In this book the author tries to emphasize variation and conflict in belief as well as similarity and harmony. The author reveals the nature of Javanese religious beliefs by focusing on the practices of one typical community, Modjokuto, a small town in East Central Java.

Benedict in the book "*Patterns of Culture*" (1934) highlighted the point that all the basic institutions that are a part of the culture tend to mirror the overall pattern for that culture. She emphasized that cultures must be taken as whole each one integrated on its own principles, each with its own configuration. She also stresses that a culture is organized around a basic theme, and all that of the various elements of that culture fit together. Another study of hers is "*The Concept of Guardian Spirits in North America*" (1923) where she has studied the North American society and culture in terms of pattern rather than social contents.

Redfield and Singer wrote an article "*Cultural Role of Cities*" (1954) in which the concept of "*Primary or Orthogenetic Civilization*" as the product of interaction of Great and little tradition was first spelt out.

Robert Redfield developed his propositions of great tradition which according to him are the intellectual influences that come from outside the village and little tradition, those coming from the local areas. In his works like "*The Little Community*" (1955) and "*Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to*

Civilization" (1956) Redfield emphasized that culture content together with its historical sources and level of development. He also introduced the term cultural specialists for such organized groups of people who mediate between the great and the little traditions.

In the book "*Seven Theories of Religion*", Pals (1996) considered seven of the more important theories of religion that have been put forward since the idea of a scientific approach to religion first caught the imagination of serious scholars. Besides the theoretical discussions the text as a whole traced a broadly chronological and intellectual progression.

Bowie's work "*The Anthropology of Religion-An Introduction*" (2000) aimed to introduce the central theoretical ideas in the anthropology of religion and to illustrate them with specific case studies. Links were also made between the works of nineteenth and twentieth century scholars.

The anthropological study of religion by Annemarie De Wall Malefijt "*Religion and Culture: An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion*" (1968) attempted to give a broad treatment of the subject. It gave an elaborate definition of the topic tracing the history of the study of religion from Herodotus to the present, the manifestations of religion and also dealt with the religious functions and religious change.

A. van Gennep's "*Rites of Passage*" (1960) classified religion in theory and techniques. In theory dynamism and animism technique (magico-religious) pointed out that the techniques and theory are inseparable. He also said that the theory without the practice (or techniques) becomes metaphysics but the techniques, on the basis of different theories become science.

W. Robertson Smith, in his book "*The Religion of Semites*" (1894) concluded that ancient religions consisted primarily of institutions and practices, that is, of

rites and ceremonies, and that myths, that is, beliefs and creeds, were an outgrowth of these.

Monica Wilson in the book *“Religion and the Transformation of Society-A Study in social Change in Africa”* (1971) observed that in the Christian tradition the stress changes from survival to quality of life. The Nyakyusa Christian converts, though unsophisticated villagers feel there is life in Christianity. And one radical change as African turn to Christianity is the seeking for union with God, rather than separation from that which is powerful and dangerous. She also observed that those professing Christianity still continue to link all misfortune even physical evil such as an earthquake or drought with sin.

II. 2. National Studies

Regarding religion, society, customs, status of women, and changes in the tribal societies of India, various prominent studies have been done for the various groups of tribes of the country. In the *“The Scheduled Tribes”*(2001) series, Singh presented a brief descriptive anthropological profile of all communities of India; dealt with the impact of change and the development processes on these communities; and highlighted the linkages that bring them together. This study covered the whole country bringing within its ambit parts that had either not been ethnographically surveyed earlier, or the survey had been done in a perfunctory manner.

Rituals such a possession can be a vehicle by which to contest identities, to create space for one’s self; often done by women in conservative societies, also to create a contra-narrative to oppose the hegemony of a dominant group like the Pallars, described by Kapadia in the book *“Siva and her Sisters: Gender, Caste, and Class in Rural South India”* (1996).

In "*The Scheduled Tribes*" (1963) Ghurye brought out the ethnographic studies specially of the tribes of northern, western and central India have left the least doubt that some of the tribes are Hinduized to the extent that they have been assimilated with the different castes at different levels in the caste system and its effect on the aborigines.

D.N. Majumdar's "*Races and Cultures of India*" (1973), dealt with the races and cultures of India and the elements of culture which are lived by the majority of the people, the tribes and the less advanced castes. These groups of people constitute the backbone of Indian life and labor today and provide the threshold of Indian culture.

In "*Santal-A Tribe in Search of a Great Tradition*" (1956), Orans Martin emphasized that how a tribe has been looking towards the great traditional elements of high Hinduism, which has pulled the tribe towards emulating the caste pattern.

An intensive macro scale study both in time and space which became the decisive boundary maker in the modern trend in Sociology of Religion in India is Srinivas' classic "*Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*" (1952). He connected various social groups like the family, the state, the village with certain deities specific to each, and mentions the public ceremonials associated with them in the nature of festivals. The contextual references make clear how some of the practices get related to Sanskritic sources and get modified in that direction. He called this a process of sankritization of rituals and behavior which when adopted by a lower group becomes the medium through which the impure connections are given up and the pure ones as defined in the scriptures or by priests adopted. It is hoped that such a process of purification may ultimately lead to the removal of the stigma associated with the impure, and the group gain some upward mobility. Here the social functions of religions are analyzed in terms of two sets of solidarities-vertical (i.e. local) and horizontal along caste lines. Srinivas also observed that

the festivals of the village deities include a village – dance, collective hunt and a dinner for the entire village. The collective dinner in which the village participates is called ‘Urome’ (village harmony).

“*The Aborigines-So Called-And Their Future*” (1943) is the book in which Ghurye refuted the theory of isolation of tribal groups and advocated the assimilation of the tribes into larger community.

Makhan Jha had explored the various aspects of Ollar living, starting with their population and distribution in the book “*Readings in Tribal Culture*” (1983). Economic organization of the Ollar has also been discussed in relation to their occupation, land revenue system, means of production and weekly markets. Social structure in terms of family, lineage groups, clan, etc. has also been examined. The life cycle of the Ollar from conception to death is described and also their religious beliefs and practices.

The Jatapus of the Eastern Ghats of India, numbering about 125,000, who lived in complete isolation during the period of Naxalite disturbance in Andhra Pradesh i.e.1967-71, are in transition. R.N. Pareek (1977) has faithfully portrayed the changes in ancient tribal cultures in his book “*Tribal Culture in Flux (The Jatapus in Eastern Ghats)*” with a kaleidoscopic depiction of the Jatapus’ social, material, political and religious institutions; community, clan, totemism and family groups; property, house and household goods; personal habits and daily routine, cosmetics, clothes, ornaments and jewelleryes, customs relating to birth, death, sex, romance, marriage and divorce; hunting, dancing and pastimes; fauna, flora, food and agriculture, market, trade and economy; gods, spirits, ancestor worship, festivals, prayers priests, shrines and the supernatural.

Murthy studied the Koyas’ society and religion in his book “*Religion and Society-A Study of Koyas*” (1991). Koyas religion is based on the belief of super-natural beings which they believe either assist or harm the human beings. There are various

mechanisms of social control which keeps the group intact. Murthy has thrown light on the social and ritual structure and the function of religion to the people. He has investigated the interrelationship between the social structure, institutions and religion. Also brings out the impact of little tradition on the great tradition and vice-versa. The author adopted not only the major social anthropological methods- the functional approach but also paid attention following R.K. Merton to the dysfunction of religion. Their religious outlook is markedly based on their faith in spirits-ancestral and supernatural and also in the association of natural objects with human life.

The frequent contact of the tribes with the other groups has brought about many differences in various aspects of the tribal life. To cope up with the changing scenario they have to adapt with the situation. And this process of adaptation which has been followed by the Totos to cope with the changed socio-economic and demographic situation has been clearly depicted by Majumdar in the book "*The Totos*" (1998). Majumdar has also studied the Totos society in detail from a sociological perspective from the life cycle of the Toto tribe to their family structure, their folk literature to folk tales.

Sinha, B. B. studied the tribal society of Chotanagpur (Bihar) between 1858 and 1935 at a micro-level in the book "*Society in Tribal India*" (1982). This tribal society was not cut off from the mainstream of Indian social and religious life as many other tribal societies were and still are in this sub-continent, but it was the society that has been influenced by Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Sinha described at great length the impact of the caste system of the Hindus on the tribes as well as the consequences of western education introduced by the erstwhile alien rulers and missionaries. He also shows how Islam played its part in changing the tribal of the Chotanagpur having come into contact with the Hindus, Muslims, and Christians have changed not only their outlook on life but also their habits.

According to Goswami the tribes are being integrated with Hinduism or Christianity depending upon the dominant religion of the area. In his article, "*The Tribes of Assam*" (1972), he remarked that the tribes of the plains and the foothills for centuries have been drawn into the Hindu myths and stories which helped them to identify themselves with Indian tradition. Christianity is more popular amongst the hill tribe than in the plain. As regard to religion the tribal follow their age old practices but a large number of hill tribes practice Christianity and the tribes of the valley associate themselves with Hinduism.

Xaxa, Virginuis (2004) in the article "*Women and Gender in the Study of Tribes in India*" affirmed that the value system governing larger Indian society has been in the process of change. With this there has been a shift in the image of tribal women who are thus invariably portrayed as enjoying a better social status than their counterparts in the larger Indian society. The unprecedented change in respect of culture, modes of making a living and social differentiation changed the women's status and gender relations in the tribal society.

Vidyarthi and Rai, in the book "*The Tribal Culture of India*" (1985) present the history of Indian Anthropology besides the description about the socio-political, economic and religious life and the cultural changes that are taking place among the tribal.

Ramakant Prasad, in his book "*Tribes-A Study in Cultural Ecology and Tribal Dynamics*" (1988) dealt with the marginal tribe of Bihar which has little population living in different ecological settings. This tribe represents variations within a culture due to various ecological settings. It depicts the total way of the tribe name 'Pahariya'. The book further illustrates how a small tribe exists with its socio-ecological conditions and the

problems they are facing today. It does with the problem and prospects of the tribe and gives an outline for development and protection of such marginal tribe in Indian continent.

Troisi in his book "*Tribal Religion: Religious Beliefs and Practices among the Santals*" (1979) studied the Santal religion as manifested in its beliefs and practices. It has been examined how the beliefs and practices contribute to the maintenance of Santal society and the manner in which religion interacts with other institutions in the Santal social structure. The author studied how the Santal institutions have interacted with the wider regional culture. Religion and magic are both used in their attempt to cope with the mysterious supernatural world. Distinctive feature is the intimate relationship between the Santals and their spirits which is manifold in the rites and festivals of the agricultural cycle and in the individual's life cycle. In spite of their constant interaction with Hinduism and Christianity, because of Santal religion which has powerful force the Santal's religious and social identities have remained intact. This study provides valuable insights into the religious norms shared by Santals over a wide geographic spread. As a result this empirical study is likely to become part of that 'systematic comparison' of religion of diverse types and society which Radcliffe Brown believed would make it possible to establish a general theory of the nature of religions and their role in social development.

John V. Ferreira's "*Totemism In India*" (1965) aimed at the re-appraisal of totemism in India a) in the light of the new material-ethnographic and other that has become available since 1933; b.) in the light of the new orientations that have arisen in Vienna and elsewhere; c.) and in the light of relatively new interest like acculturation and the dynamics of culture change. He also considered its psychological roots and re-affirmed its sociological significance without Durkheimian exaggeration and of taking a more moderate stand towards its diffusionist aspect.

In Bodding's *"The Santals and the Disease: Studies in Santals Medicines and connected Folklore"* (1925, 1927, 1940) the beginning of an attempt to correlate religious beliefs and rituals to social life has been given in detail. These volumes deal mainly with the Santal folklore and medicines.

In W. H. R. Rivers' *"Medicine, Magic and Religion"* (1924), an attempt has been made to interpret with the real knowledge and sympathetic insight the thoughts and ideas that find expression in Primitive Medicine. It is a revelation of the human mind and of the fundamental principles underlying the social practices and religious beliefs of the less sophisticated members of the human family. W.H.R. Rivers also studied the Toda, which is a polyandrous tribe of the Nilgiri hills of Tamil Nadu. In this study *"The Toda"* (1906), he found that the Todas have been influenced by the western civilization.

"Tribe, Caste and Folk Culture" (1998) by Chitraseñ Pasayat is an exploration of the culture and tradition which are significant aspects of a society but largely ignored. It focuses on many important aspects of the folk culture and oral traditions of Orissa. Besides, relating the revivalism of folk culture to the emerging local socio-economic aspirations of the elite and the persistence of folk traditions, the author has also tried to establish the distinctiveness of Sambalpuri folk-culture through tribe-caste interactions over centuries. Further, the author argues that the recent upsurge in sub-nationalistic movement by the elite in promoting Sambalpuri language, literature, rituals, dances and festivals is basically a reaction to the alleged culturocide by the dominant groups in Orissa.

There are apparent cultural differences and the locational practices in the life styles of the Indian tribes but historically there is a basic unity in thought and philosophy among these people, born and brought up in the environment of diversity through the length and breadth of the country. Every custom is but a part of a whole and

neither the whole nor the parts can be justly appraised unless their functions, interdependence and organic relations are made clear, recorded faithfully, synthesized, intelligently surveyed and explained. The nature of man, the nature of spiritual beings, the nature of phenomena and natural processes, as viewed and understood by the tribes are of deepest interest and are faithfully presented by Das, S. T. in his book *"Life Style of Indian Tribes (Locational Practice) Vol. I"* (1987).

Pula Muni-Lakra's book *"Tribal India-Communities, Customs and Culture"* (2000) aims to present the richness of tribal family and community life in as many communities as possible. The book gives insights of the customs, culture and domestic life of a few tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Madhya Pradesh as well as anthropological accounts of the most primitive of the Andamanese tribal, the Ongs and the Jarawas. The thread of similarity that runs through the spiritual and mystical beliefs, the animistic, pantheistic fabric of the social order among most tribal communities has also been stated clearly.

Mahapatra in her study *"Tribal Religion and Rituals (Accounts of Superstition, Sorcery and Spirits)"* (2001) gave a clear insight that from the very beginning of human existence, there existed a symbiotic relationship between man and the elemental forces around him. Thunder and lightning, fire and water, wind and rainstorm, forest and flowing and rivers all inspired him with awe, reverence and an inherent respect for the natural and primeval force that he had not even begun to comprehend. Early man then marked places of power; spots which he believed were endowed with supernatural or even supranatural powers which in turn made the worship per more enhanced in his coping powers. A living and creative symbiosis with nature is what characterizes much of tribal religion in India. It is the over powering proximity to nature that has been the source of strength of most of these tribal people.

Channa in *"The Descent of the Pandavas"* (2005) has shown how a small mountain community is using a possession ritual to assert their identity, not only within the local society but also in the context of the national arena.

In A.P. Sinha's *"Religious Life in Tribal India (A Case Study of Dudh Kharia)"* (1989) the concept of sacred complex given by late Prof. L.P. Vidhyarthi has been used to know the nature of transformations in the religious life of the 'Dudh Kharia', a tribal community of Ranchi district. It makes a comparative study of nature and extent of transformation which have taken place in the religious life (in terms of sacred complex i.e. sacred centers, sacred performances and sacred specialists) of Hinduism and Christianity. Among the Dudh Kharia, it makes a comparative study of the religious life of the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Dudh Kharia.

Bhagwat Bhandari's *"Tribal Marriage and Sex Relations"* (1989) deals with the customary law of marital and sexual behavior of Bhils and Garasia tribes with a critical view whether its codification is possible. This study discloses the openness of the tribal society in which virginity is no virtue and marriage is at will, payment of bride price is core of family law. Most of the Garasias do not perform any marriage ceremony, which he compared with the common law of marriage in the West. He also observed that the uniform Penal Law of India dealing with marriage is in direct conflict with the tribal customs and suggested some modifications.

Major C.H. Buck stated in his study of the *"Faiths, Fairs and Festivals of India"* (1977) that the religion of the primitive tribes was the most uncomfortable one, impregnated with the fear of innumerable evil spirits. It is a fact that no knowledge of any omnipotent and beneficent deity, nor do they believe in friendly and cheerful demon by means of offering and sacrifices. It is also remarkable that nearly all of their beliefs are

still to be found in one shape or another, among the lower class Hindus or Sudras and a great many among the rustic population.

Ajit K. Singh depicted the various elements of tribal festivals and the changes they have undergone today in his book "*Tribal Festivals of Bihar—A Functional Analysis*" (1982). He also stressed the functional role that the observances of festivals play among the tribal. Tribal festivals have hitherto been described in passing by anthropologists while writing about tribes and tribal customs. Religion is inextricably woven together with culture and more so in primitive communities living in the lap of nature. Acculturation and the proximity of other ethnic groups bring inevitable changes in ceremonial and rituals, in fairs and festivals, religious and social practices.

Verrier Elwin has the modest and restricted purpose of making available English version of nearly four hundred tales in the book "*Myths of the North-East Frontier*" (1958). Elwin presented the various tales of the tribal regarding heaven and earth from creation to natural calamities; man and his history, including the daily life of man, domestic and luxury life, discoveries, fear of diseases and death; religion; the world of animals, etc. Many of which are of exceptional and some are of unique interest, and all of which throw a great deal of light on the thought and poetic imagination of tribes about whom little has hitherto been written. It has been perfectly portrayed in all tribal areas; there is a great divergence of ideas, especially in the realm of folklore, mythology and religion: stories and the names of Gods and heroes vary from place to place.

The book edited by Sujata Miri "*Religion and Society of the North East India*" (1980) shows how one religion relates to another and the philosophical issues involved in the plurality of religions co-existing. The North-East India presents problems of a most fascinating character. Apart from the presence in this area of the so-called world religions-Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism- there is also a plurality of the tribal

religions. The problem of how one religion relates to another and the philosophical issues involved in the plurality of religions co-existing is the subject matter of this volume and the main theme of the book.

Raghuvir Singha has very rightly put in his book "*Religion and Culture of North-Eastern India*" (1977) that the religion in the North-Eastern cultural region is different from what it is in other parts of tribal India. Except for the Buddhist tribes, who follow the great Buddhist tradition, though they interpreted it in their own way. Each tribe here has its own distinct religion which they have maintained over ages. They have some elements of religion in common, such as naturism or animism propelling a belief in the hierarchy of functional Gods, deities and spirits, reigning over them in a kind of kingdom and in a soul-substance hovering round their life. The author has also drawn wide reference from some comparable religions of some other important living in the same north-eastern cultural region.

Gurudas Das' "*Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in Transition*" (1995) presents a critical analysis of the processes of transition of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. This has been studied by analyzing the emergence of private property and the existence of social stratification among the tribes in the historical past. The internal dynamics of the tribal societies prior to their integration with the national 'mainstream' was too weak to bring any substantial and sustained change within them. The author explains how the external forces have played the pivotal role in modernizing the traditional tribal socio-economic formation in Arunachal Pradesh. Not only in religious field but also in the socio-economic aspects.

The Adis, a tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has been studied by Dawar. Dawar's book "*Cultural Identity of Tribes of North-East India (Movement for Cultural Identity among the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh)*" (2003) is the revised version of the

Project entitled '*Movements for Cultural Identity among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh since 1950's: A Case study of the Adis*'. In this book the author has dealt with the discourse of integration of NEFA with the Indian nationalist 'mainstream'. Another aspect of the movement for cultural identity among the Adis has been the movement for religious identity. The Adis intellectuals in their writing have constructed the belief system, religious ethics and philosophy of this religion based on tribal traditions, which has been called by them "Donyi Poloism".

Dubey in the article "*Education, Social Change and Political Consciousness among the Tribes of the North-East India*" (1972) asserted that even among the tribes of the North East India, apart from education, improvement in the modes of transport and communication, land reform, modern political movements, Christianity and democratic experiments, etc. may be regarded as the equally important agents as well as index of change.

Roy and Rizvi's "*Tribal Customary Law of North-East India*" (1990) is a beginning towards the inventory of the tribal customary laws of some of the major tribes of North-East India by adopting the holistic approach in understanding the entire matrix of the tribal society revolving on the axis of the oral traditions and to envisage the trend of law within a marked territory inhabited by the communities at different scales of development.

In the article "*Gender and the Khasi Family Structure*" (2005), the inheritance rules, reproductive ideology and gender roles, structural tension, and social change among the matrilineal Khasis of Meghalaya has been discussed by Tiplut Nongbri. In the matrilineal society which favor women regarding the right to inherit the property where sons are considered only in rare cases (when there is no daughter in the family), the ideas and norms regarding kinship and gender roles are not so in fact. The youngest

daughter's position in the religious domain is similar to her position in the economic domain. Women are regarded as trustees of family rites and traditions as well. The Khasi say 'the woman holds the religion'. But they have to seek assistance of their male matrilien to actually perform the rituals. Priesthood is a male vocation among the Khasi.

Surajit Sinha has written a series of articles. In one of the articles, "*Sociology of Religion: A Trend Report*" (1974) he dealt with the process of Hinduization of the Bhumij within the framework of the tribe caste/peasant continuum. In these papers the process of regional universalization and synthesis of culture within the social frame of indigenous states and pressure for social mobility, and the role of mediating specialists and cultural performances have been highlighted.

Rama Shanker Srivastava in his book "*Comparative Religion*" (1974) showed the history and philosophy of religion, as well as the comparison with one another and how each religion is interrelated to the other and that the main end of every religion is salvation. The comparative and critical study of religion manifests the possibility of their unification.

The edited book "*Aspects of Religion in Indian Society*" (1961) by Vidyanthi, presents the varied beliefs and practices among the different societies of India. In this book the changing channels of cultural transmission in the country, the meaning and nature of religion, cults, festivals, hierarchy of deities, influence of an alien culture among the natives and the changes in the cycles of festival in different societies has been presented.

Gellner's "*The Anthropology of Buddhism and Hinduism*" (2001) illustrates the manner in which religion is now viewed as apart of the larger historical, social and political processes that shape the lives of the individuals and create and recreate identities, relationships and inform hierarchies and shape goals.

Gopal Bhardwaj in his study of the "*Socio-Political Movements among the Tribes of India*" (1977) observes that the tribes have been undergoing a variety of socio-political changes, particularly for the last 150-200 years. A large number of these changes have been initiated by external factors. Unprecedented economic administrative, legal, religious and political forces have successively infiltrated into the tribal areas, with a diversity of purpose and motives, and started influencing tribal life directly or indirectly.

Shashi's "*The Tribal World In Transition*" (1995) highlighted the changing attitudes of the tribal developments, rituals, rites and the tribal identity, historical perspectives of some tribes of ancient India. This book is a critical analysis of the assimilation process/approach. The problems of exploitation by vested and greedy interest groups still remain and education has been seen as a key catalyst of growth and social and political awareness among the tribal people.

Hasnain has studied the various aspects of the tribal of India as a whole in his book "*Tribal India today*" (1983). Here, he has dealt with their origin and historical perspectives; major social institution under which he studied about marriage, family and kinship, economic organization, political organization, religion-the wonder world, art and youth dormitory; about their problems, administration, welfare and development.

Dr. B.B. Kumar studied the Indian tribal societies at a macro level in his book "*The Tribal Societies of India: A Macro Perception*" (1998). Here he analyzed the tribal societies from every aspect. Most relevantly the tribes and languages of Manipur have been studied. Besides, he also comprehended that the Mizos, Thadou and other Kuki-Chin tribes have great reluctance in taking the names of their parents and their own names.

A very scanty work has been done into the socio-economic life of the tribes in Orissa, which is the home of 62 Scheduled tribes. From the historical perspective, the discussion range from mutual interactions of non-tribal and tribal culture, absorption of

gods and goddesses from the tribal fold to Hindu pantheon to the abandoned ritual of human sacrifices has been very clearly brought out in B.C. Roy's edited book "*Tribal of Orissa-The Changing Socio-Economic Profile*" (1989).

Shastree's (1996) "*Religious Converts in India*" examines whether the conversion of the backward classes into Buddhism has brought about any significant change in their position. It has intensified the status aspirations of the Neo-Buddhists, but in reality they have not succeeded to the desired extent. The author also studied the religious beliefs, practices and the political attitudes of the people. On the whole she finds that the Neo-Buddhists have landed up in a situation of ambiguity and frustration and this has led to the rise of the militant movement, 'Dalit Panther', and the literary movement 'Dalit Sahitya'.

Mandelbaum adequately summarized the reports on the process of Indianization of Christianity in the book "*Society in India: Change and Continuity*" (1970). It comprises the rationalizations to the dominant varnājati milieu.

Rowena Robinson examined the process of conversion, continuity and change in a Goan Catholic Community. The study analyzes the patterns of persistence and transformation that can be discussed in the socio-religious practices of present day Catholics in relation to the wider Hindu society within which they are located and from which they emerged through conversion four centuries ago in the book "*Conversion, Continuity and Change-Lived Christianity in Southern Goa*" (1998).

"*Tribal and Christian Missionaries*" (1994), is the book in which Shyamlal (1994) has presented a composite picture of the genesis and development of Christian movement in Banswara 1914-1989. Socio-cultural transformation among the tribal converts of Banswara, inter-denominational interactions among the Roman Catholics and

Protestants Charitable and welfare work of Christian Missionaries and the significant recent trends of change visible among the Banswara Christians.

"Tribal Cultures and Change" by Mann, R. S. (1989) in general throws open the tribal cultural heritage in terms of status quo as well as change. Culture, as dealt herewith, includes sociological, ideological and technological components. The accountability, in terms of barriers and stimulants to change, of traditional cultural heritage of certain tribes vis-à-vis intended programmes of change and development.

Christianity has been one of the important factors of culture change among the tribes of Chotanagpur too. K.N. Sahay in his article *"Christianity and Cultural Process Among the Oraon of Ranchi"* (1961) has dealt with and tried to bring out certain important features of the working of Christianity in two Oraon villages with a view to understand inductively certain general principles of acculturation relating to Christianity in tribal areas which led to the complete transformation of the entire religious set up of the village. The aspects of religion has changed even though a majority of them still believed in their old custom but the elaborate rituals as before are not observed.

"Tribal Transformation In India: Religion, Rituals and Festivals, Vol.-V" edited by Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (1992) has 19 papers, including case studies highlights how the tribal epitomizes the plurality of religious faiths in the Indian sub-continent. This volume has focused on the Hindu tribes and the Christianized tribes- in the midst of their age-old primitive practices, magic, witchcraft, superstition and even ritual murders called the 'Meria Sarcifices' with intricate accounts of their colorful festivals, the author also shows how tribal have often used certain rituals to combat diseases.

P.C. Jain, in the book *"Christianity, Ideology and Social Change among Tribal"* (1995), studied about the social changes observed among the tribal resulting from forces of ideology, Christianity and Bhagatism. The tribal who lived in isolation in hills

and forests from the mainline civilization of the plains did not have any encounter with the ideology of caste in non-tribal groups. Historically the first interaction of the tribal with the Hindu castes and Christian took place when the latter came into contact of tribal hinterland. This brought the tribal face to face with an alien ideology of Hinduism and Christianity. Among the tribal of South Rajasthan, the author argues that those who have embraced Bhagatism-a native reform cult drawing heavily from Hinduism and Christianity tend to become more progressive and forward looking. It is this group which has largely benefited from development programmes. The native Bhils, on the other hand, who continue to practice primordialism, are deprived of the benefits of tribal development programmes.

Origin of the Baptist Church and its spread to all parts of the world has been studied in "*History of the American Baptist Mission in North-East India (1836-1950)*" by Milton S. Sangma (1987). Its development in America resulting in the formation of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in 1814, which subsequently sponsored the Baptist Mission in the North-East India has been presented in a detailed way. It also deals with the advent of the Baptist Mission to the Brahmaputra Valley and the gradual extension of their activities to Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh from 1836-1950 when the management of the whole Mission was handed over to the local Christians.

Bani Prasanna Misra's article "*The spread of Christianity in the North-east India: An Exchange Theory of Conversion*" (1980) aimed at understanding the phenomenon for mass conversion to Christianity that has taken place (since 1836) in most of the hilly regions of North-East India.

Dr. O.L. Snaitang's "*Christianity and Social Change in North-East India: A Study of the Role of Christianity in Social Change Among the Khasi Jaintia Hill Tribes*

of Meghalaya” (1993) study investigates the Christian role in social change among the Khasi-Jaintia people of Meghalaya from 1841 to the present. Christianity played a significant acculturative role in helping them maintain their distinctive identity while at the same time preparing them to function effectively within the new order introduced by British administration. He demonstrates that Christianity greatly strengthened in a sense created a Khasi-Jaintia identity through its educational work, ideology, evangelism and Church structures, while much of the old was destroyed in the process. The author argued that the process remained fundamentally indigenous because it built upon the one element in the traditional Khasi-Jaintia culture that was common to all sections of the people- the social code known as ‘tipkur tipkha’.

V.C. Kanito Sema gave a critical assessment of a mutual adoption between the tribal religions of North-East India and Christianity in his article “*A Critical Assessment of Christian Acculturation of the North-East India*” (1980). He also studied how the tribal religion is becoming a waning religion today against the glaring eyes of an organized religion.

M. Satyanarayana analyzed the various developmental programmes on tribal societies of Erumad village in Madras state in his book “*Tribal Development in India*” (1990). This included the changes resulted in social, cultural and economic aspects. He also gave a clear insight about the recent changes in the tribal way of life due to the Constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Tribes.

II. 3. Regional Studies

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the state, the communities inhabiting in the state, the coming of Christianity and the impact it has brought to the particular society by native and the national scholars. Few relevant studies on the society has been reviewed and presented here.

"The History of Manipur (An Early Period)" (1986) by Singh, gave a detailed information of Manipur. In this book a clear glimpse of the state starting from its geological; population; the chronicle; migration of races to the Imphal valley; the political history; religion, the merry making festival of the sylvan deities; how the state got the name 'Manipur', its language, scripts, the family titles, their origin and clans of the various inhabitants have been described.

"The Rising of Manipur (Including Other North Eastern States)" (2000) an edited book by M. Horam examined some of the social values, economic conditions and feelings of the hill (tribal) people of the state of Manipur, their aspirations, intense love for traditional values and their longings and frustration. It also conveyed their age-old wants and needs which have often been expressed (their thoughts, desire) but which have become meaningless cries in the wilderness. In this book many articles dealing with the problems and development of the tribal people have been presented.

Singh E. Nilakanta in his edited work *"Fragments of Manipuri Culture"* (1993) remarked that the indigenous tribal religion of Manipur has experienced the impact of some non-tribal religions and is manifested in various phases of culture and civilization.

G.K. Ghosh and Shukla Ghosh's *"Women of Manipur"* (1997) presented the different communities inhabiting the state, Manipur; its women and their varied roles in the society. They have dealt with the vital role the women of Manipur played in the revolutions against the British colony, their position in the patriarchal society and also the various occupations the women are handling and the concerned issues of health.

Sen in *"Tribes and Caste of Manipur"* (1992) provided a brief description of the state, Manipur, its districts. The ethnological accounts of different tribes and caste inhabiting the state have been presented that helps to get a brief knowledge about the state.

Tarakchandra Das studied the old Kuki group of tribes during 1931-36 in "*The Purums: An Old Kuki Tribe of Manipur*" (1945). The social organizations of the Purums have been studied according to the genealogical method. The laws of succession, descent and inheritance were also investigated with the help of genealogies. Division of property both movable and unmovable among sons was found out by first plotting out categorically the different types of property and how they have been inherited on the death of their respective father. The life-cycle processes of an individual, the religious rites were also investigated. The art of pleasure such as music and dancing were also studied in detail.

Bimal J. Dev and Dilip Kumar Lahiri in their book, "*Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*" (1983) highlighted the impact of modernity on the traditional Lushai social order and particularly the developments which led to the politicization of the Lushai society. It also reveals that customs played a decisive role in safeguarding social norms and institutions and promoting their sanctity as inherited wisdom of cultural identity. Despite this impact of modernity customs die hard and are considered to be distinctive part of Lushai social heritage.

Detail information about the Thadou tribe has been given by Shaw in his book "*Notes on Thadou Kuki*" (1929). In this book Shaw dealt with the anthropological aspects, origin and genealogy, rites and beliefs, social customs, folk tales, language, etc.

Gangte, T.S. in his study "*The Kukis of Manipur-A Historical Analysis*" (1993) examined the social life, economic, political and religion which is a manifestation of the social structure based on cultural heritage. Gangte has presented the Kuki society with the detailed information providing the historical background, their origin besides the social- economic- political and religious aspects.

Lhungdim Humhkopao in his dissertation "*Religion and the Kuki Society*" (1989) explored the belief system and the practices of the Kuki society. It was an attempt to find the relationship between Kuki society and religion. The belief system, rites and rituals of the traditional religion were discussed followed by an examination of the role of religion in maintaining the social order and society.

Lal Dena in his article "*Social and Political Institutions of the Hmar*" (1990) gave a brief account of the Hmar tribe who dwells mostly in the south district i.e. Churachandpur district of Manipur. Dr. Kamkhenthang in his paper '*A Note on the Religious Belief of the Northern Chin (Zemi)*' (1984), gave detailed information of the religious and magical belief of the tribes like Zou, Paite (Tedim-Chin) and Hmar.

Dr. Kamkhenthang has also studied the Indongta or household council which was a unique feature of the Paite community life in "*The Paite: A Transborder tribe of India and Burma*". The study revealed that though analogous institutions are found among some of the neighboring tribes of Lushai-Kuki group, the Paites feel that it flourishes in its full form only among them. According to the author the knowledge of the working of the Indongta institution was a pre-requisite to the understanding of the structure of the Paite society.

Kim Vaiphei dealt with a historical perspective with special reference to the Kukis in the "*The Coming of Christianity in Manipur*" (1995). The main aspects she had undertaken for her study were-the beginning of Christian Era in Manipur, the Kuki War of Independence to the formation of Kuki Baptist Convention and the Kuki Church in today's context.

So far as Manipur is concerned, regardless of the Meitei Hindu dominance in the state, the tribal are converted to Christianity. Sahay was of the opinion that besides the Hindus, the Christian Missionaries are also responsible for bringing a definite change

in the self image and identity of the tribal which has been highlighted in his book "*A Theoretical Model for the Study of Christianization Process among the Tribal of Chotanagpur*" (1992).

From Ansari's study, "*Manipur: Tribal Demography and Socio-Economic Development*" (1991) we can know the great changes brought about by conversion to Christianity in the social life of the tribal people and the ongoing system of self-governance.

In "*Manipur Tribal Scene Studies in Society and Change*" (1985) Rajat Kanti Das examined the relationship of the tribes with the Meities, importance of the principles of the social organization, highlighting how kinship, marriage and other ritual ties have gone a long way in shaping the structure of tribal societies. Besides, he has also dealt with the processes of historical growth and cultural dynamics to identify the trends of social change in Manipur and showed how it was influencing the lives of the tribal.

B. Pakem's "*Nationality, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity in North-East India*" (1990) is volume of proceedings of the seminar conducted by the North-East India council for Social Science Research for two days, held during December 5-6, 1986. The proceedings have indicated that these three issues of nationality, ethnicity, and cultural identity have assumed a multidimensional importance in view of the urgent need for economic, social, cultural and political development of North-East India. According to the author regional economic development can be sustained on rational policy forms and strategies for the achievement of the goal of overall development of nationalities conscious of their distinct identities. There is no simple mechanical solution to the problems of national integration for peace, prosperity, and development. The issues of national formations should be viewed in proper perspective and the questions of nationality, ethnicity and cultural identity should be scientifically analyzed.

B.K. Ahluwalia and Shashi Ahluwalia's "*Social Change in Manipur*" (1984) captured the subtle nuances of the state, and brought through crisp narratives, a clear picture of the state, its culture and its people. With economic development, changes are bound to take place in social and cultural fields. The work also depicts the socio-cultural transformation of the state in recent years.

II. 4. Justification of the Study

The available literature on the Kuki tribes and their religion mainly dealt with their religious aspects such as beliefs, rituals, rites, etc. in relation to socio-economic and political life. It also had briefly referred to the coming of Christianity and its effect on the Kuki society from a historical perspective. But in this thesis, an effort has been made to study the present status of the religion and society of the Kuki tribes in three main districts of Manipur where they inhabit predominantly, with an in-depth analysis of the indigenous Kuki religion as a backdrop. Here, an attempt has been made to clearly show how Kuki's indigenous religion has completely transformed to a most modern/alien religion i.e. Christianity. An honest effort has been made to understand how the culture and religion change each other, in the process of growth. This is possible by studying on a small scale with reference to Christian acculturation of Kuki tribes and their religion.

In addition to the above, the researcher has made to a considerable extent, a comparison between Kukis, Meities as well as non-Manipuris. This study also dwelve to see how the democratic decentralization has accelerated the acculturation process between the Kukis, caste Hindu Meities and the non-Manipuris, which was not attempted by any known scholar before.

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