Chapter 8
CULTURAL CHANGE

Culture is all that one finds in a human society, which is socially rather than biologically transmitted. It is the symbolic and learned aspect of human society, including language, customs and conventions by which human behaviour can be distinguished from that of other primates. E.B. Tylor defines culture as "sum total of ideas, beliefs, values, material cultural equipments and non-material aspects which man acquires as a member of society" (Marshall 1994:137). Culture and human society are inseparable. Culture is an outcome of society and society is able to survive and perpetuate itself because of culture. Culture enhances man's adaptability to nature. It is manifested in the technological, aesthetic and spiritual achievements of humankind. It gives meaning to relationships of human beings. Therefore, culture undergoes the processes of social change in many forms and at various levels. The Loi culture in Koutruk and Leimaram is being analysed here in terms of changes in religious beliefs, rites and rituals, festivals, ceremonies, food, clothes, houses and language. Traditionally the Loi have followed the ancient Meitei religion and culture even after the Meitei adopted Hinduism and as such the Loi were excluded and marginalised from the main cultural stream. However, among Lois there have been going on the processes of cultural change like sanskritization since India's pre-Independence times and modernization specially after Independence. By now, the Loi have gone through significant changes in various components of their traditional, indegenous culture. The various patterns of their cultural change are being discussed here.

Religion

Religion is a set of beliefs, symbols and practices developed around the concept of sacred. Religion is partly responsible for the growth of the states as it unites the believers into a socio-religious community. From the historical time, Lois are the worshippers of the traditional Meitei gods like the Imung Lais (household deities), Lamlais (deities belived to exist in the wild land), Umang Lais (forest deities) and Apokpa (clan god). That is why they were outcasted by Garibniwaza, the king of Manipur who adopted Hinduism for his state in 18th century. The Loi villagers in Koutruk and Leimaram are the worshipers of various gods and goddesses and perform various religious practices. Their religious faith has significantly differentiated, now.

They are now divided into three religious groups; namely, (i) Sanamahi, (ii) Hinduism and (iii) Christianity. The following table shows the religious distribution of the Loi families in these two villages:

Table 8.1
Religious Distribution of the Families in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Religion	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
Sanamahi	35 (39.77)	66 (16.02)	101 (20.2)
Hindu	52 (59.10)	344 (83.49)	396 (79.2)
Christian	1 (1.13)	2 (0.49)	3 (0.6)
Total (%)	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that of the families, four fifths (79.2%) are the followers of Hinduism, followed by those of the Sanamahi religion (20.2%). There is a small fraction (0.6%) of Christian families. Sanamahi is the oldest religion of Manipur.

In Koutruk, three fifths (59.10%) of the families are Hindu, two fifths (39.77%) are the followers of Sanamahi religion and only one family is found to be the follower of Christianity. In Leimaram, over four fifths (83.49%) of the families are the followers of Hinduism, 16.02% are Sanamahi and a very few (0.49%) families are Christian.

Thus, in the two villages, the Hindu Loi forms the major religious group, representing four fifths of the total number of the families. These people are now changing their religion in the way of the Hindu Meitei. A few of these families have adopted the Christian faith. The changes show both the diversification of faith and the majoritarian following of Hinduism. In each of their religious segments, there are functionaries which are approached by the followers of a particular religious segment to obtain religious services. The segments are introduced in the following discussion:

Religious Functionaries in the two Villages

There are some people who have sound knowledge of performing rites and rituals of the ceremonies and festivals, who are called religious functionaries. They have acquired this knowledge through learning. The following two tables one each, show the religious functionaries in the two villages:

Table 8.2
Distribution of the Families into the Types of the Religious Functionaries Invited for Ritual Performance in Koutruk
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Religious Functionaries	Koutruk (%)												Grand Total (%)			
	Birth				Marriage				Death							
	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total
Brahmin Priest	—	1	—	1 (1.14)	—	52 (100)	—	52 (59.09)	—	15 (28.85)	—	15 (17.05)	—	52 (100)	—	52 (59.09)
Maiba (Meitei Priest)	35 (100)	51 (100)	1 (100)	87 (98.86)	35 (100)	—	1 (100)	36 (40.91)	35 (100)	37 (71.15)	1 (100)	73 (82.95)	35 (100)	—	1 (100)	36 (40.91)
Pastor	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total (%)	35 (100)	52 (100)	1 (100)	88 (100)	35 (100)	52 (100)	1 (100)	88 (100)	35 (100)	52 (100)	1 (100)	88 (100)	35 (100)	52 (100)	1 (100)	88 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the villagers during January – March 2010

The data show that the families which follow the Sanamahi religion and the Christianity in Koutruk performed all the ritual ceremonies with the help of the Maiba (Meitei's traditional priests) who have sound knowledge of ritual functions, acquired through learning, while the Hindu families seek the help of both the Brahmin and the Maiba to perform religious ceremonies. Thus, the rites and rituals related to marriage ceremony in the Hindu families are performed by the Brahmins while in case of the ritual performance related to birth of a child, there is only one family which seeks services of the Brahmin and all of the rest take the help of the Maiba. Further, in case of the ritual performance in death ceremonies, over a one-fourth (28.85%) of the families invited a Brahmin and near about two thirds (71.15%) invited the Meitei priest.

Similarly, Leimaram has also the followers of the three religions who take service of the functionaries from the three religious. The following table shows the religious functionaries in Leimaram:

Table 8.3
Distribution of the Families into the Types of Religious Functionaries Performing Rituals in Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Religious Functionaries	Leimaram (%)												Grand Total (%)			
	Birth				Marriage				Death							
	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total	Sanamahi	Hindu	Christian	Total
Brahmin Priest	—	281 (81.69)	1 (50.0)	282 (68.45)	—	344 (100)	1 (50.0)	345 (83.74)	—	344 (100)	1 (50.0)	345 (83.74)	—	281 (81.69)	1 (50.0)	282 (68.45)
Maiba (Meitei Priest)	66 (100)	63 (18.31)	—	129 (31.31)	66 (100)	—	—	66 (16.02)	66 (100)	—	—	66 (16.02)	66 (100)	63 (18.31)	—	129 (31.31)
Pastor	—	—	1 (50.0)	1 (0.24)	—	—	1 (50.00	1 (0.24)	—	—	1 (50.0)	1 (0.24)	—	—	1 (50.0)	1 (0.24)
Total (%)	66 (100)	344 (100)	2 (100)	412 (100)	66 (100)	344 (100)	2 (100)	412 (100)	66 (100)	344 (100)	2 (100)	412 (100)	66 (100)	344 (100)	2 (100)	412 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the villagers during January – March 2010

The table indicates that in Leimaram, all the rituals related to birth, marriage and death ceremonies of the Sanamahi families are performed by the Maiba (Meitei priest) while the Hindu families invited both the Brahmin and the Meitei priest. The Hindu families performed all the rituals related to marriage and death with the help of a Brahmin while in the case of a birth ceremony, over four fifths (81.67%) of the families sought help of a Brahmin and near about one fifth (18.31%) invited the Maiba.

Interestingly, a half of the Christian families also invite a Brahmin priest to perform the rituals related to birth, death and marriage and the other half got performed the rituals by the Pastor because one of the two families has the householder male engaged as the Pastor of the Church.

Thus, Lois who traditionally got performed various rituals by the Meitei Maiba (Meitei priest) are seeking the service of a Brahmin priest for ritual performance in the way of the Hinduized Meitei.

Now, the Hinduized Lois are worshipping the various Hindu gods and goddesses and their faith is further deepening into the Hindu deiteis. The following table shows the number of families which worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses along with their traditional deities in the two villages:

Table 8.4
Distribution of the Families Worshiping Hindu Gods and Goddesses in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Worshipping of Hindu Gods & Goddesses	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
Yes	37 (71.15)	254 (73.84)	291 (73.49)
No	15 (28.85)	90 (26.16)	105 (26.51)
Total (%)	52 (100)	344 (100)	396 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The table indicates that about three fourths (73.49%) of the Hindu families in the two villages worshipped Hindu gods and goddess and the remaining 26.51% did not worship.

Of the 52 families in Koutruk, near about three fourths (71.15%) worship Hindu gods and goddesses and in Leimaram, nearly three fourths (73.84%) of the families worship Hindu gods and goddesses.

Thus, although four fifths of the families in the two villages are the followers of Hinduism, only three fourths (73.49%) of these families worship the Hindu gods and goddesses. Because this families, though they followed Hinduism, continued to worshipped only the traditional gods and goddessess.

The villagers mainly worship six Hindu gods and goddesses; namely, Laxmi, Hanuman, Mahadev, Radha-Krishna, Durga and Saraswati. The distribution of the families into the gods and goddesses they worshipped is given in the following table:

Table 8.5
Distribution of the Families by the Hindu Gods and Goddesses They Worship in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Name of the God and Goddess Worshiped	Koutruk (%) N=37	Leimaram (%) N=254	Total (%) N=291
Laxmi	31 (83.78)	197 (77.56)	228 (78.35)
Hanuman	6 (16.22)	85 (33.46)	91 (31.27)
Mahadev	27 (72.97)	97 (38.19)	124 (42.61)
Radha-Krishna	14 (37.84)	30 (11.81)	44 (15.12)
Durga	9 (24.32)	11 (4.33)	20 (6.87)
Saraswati	8 (21.62)	4 (1.57)	12 (4.12)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that over three fourths (78.35%) of the families in the two villages worship the Goddess Laxmi, over two fifths (42.61%) worship Mahadev, near about one third (31.27%) worship Hanuman, 15.12% worship Radha-Krishna, 6.87% worship Durga and a small fraction (4.12%) worship the Goddess Saraswati.

In Koutruk, over four fifths (83.78%) of the families worship the Goddess Laxmi, near about two thirds (72.97%) worship Mahadev, over one third (37.84%) worship Radha-Krishna, one fourth (24.32%) worship the Goddess Durga, over one fifth (21.62%) the Goddess Saraswati and 16.22% worship Hanuman.

In Leimaram, over three fourths (77.56%) of the families worship the Goddess Laxmi, near about two fifths (38.19%) worship Mahadev, one third worship Hanuman, over one tenth (11.81%) worship Radha-Krishna, 4.33% worship the Goddess Durga and 1.57% worship the Goddess Saraswati.

Thus, most of the villagers worship the Goddess Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth), followed by Mahadev. In Leimaram, there is a Mahadev temple at the place Waroi-Ching, who is known as Waroi-Ching Mahadev. The villagers worship

(Mahadev) during the festival of Cheiraoba. The people of both the two villages worshipped these gods and goddesses in their houses or in the temples.

The villagers visit various gods and goddesses in their geographical region. The following table shows various temples which the people of Koutruk and Leimaram have visited:

Table 8.6
Distribution of the Families in Koutruk and Leimaram into the Temples They have Visited
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Name of Temples	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%0
Govindaji	32 (36.36)	225 (54.61)	257 (51.4)
Mahabali	38 (43.18)	291 (70.63)	329 (65.8)
Devi Mandir	26 (29.55)	313 (75.97%)	339 (67.8)
Kali Mandir	1 (1.14)	95 (23.06)	96 (19.2)
ISKON	10 (11.36)	188 (45.63)	198 (39.6)
Bijoy Govinda	2 (2.27)	211 (51.21)	213 (42.6)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The table indicates that two thirds (67.8%) of the families each have visited temples like the Devi Mandir and Mahabali Thakur Mandir, half of the families have visited the Govindaji temple, two fifths of the families, each, have visited the Bijoy Govinda temple and the ISKON Mandir and nearly one fifth (19.2%) of the families have visited the Kali Mandir.

In Koutruk, over two fifths (43.18%) of the families have visited the Mahabali Thakur temple, over one thirds (36.36%) have visited the Govindaji temple, 29.55% have visited the Devi mandir, over one tenth (11.36%) have visited the ISKON Mandir, 2.27% have visited the Bijoy Govinda temple and one family has visited the Kali Mandir. In Leimaram, three fourths of the families have visited the Devi mandir, over two thirds (70.63%) have visited the Mahabali Thakur Mandir, over half (54.61%) have visited the Govindaji temple, half of the families have visited the Bijoy Govinda temple, over two fifths (45.63%) have visited the ISKON Mandir and near about one fourth (23.06%) have visited the Kali Mandir.

Thus, most of the families of Koutruk and Leimaram have visited the Hindu temples of Manipur. Among these, the Devi Mandir of Hiyangthang and the temples of Mahabali Thakur and Govindaji are the most visited temples. The children from Leimaram participate even as Radha (Lord Krishna's beloved) and Gopi (a women

folk lover of Krishna) in the dance of the Ras Lila performed in the honour of Lord Krishna.

Festivals

'Manipur is a land of festivities, merriments and mirths all the year round. A year in Manipur presents a cycle of festivals and there is hardly a month passing without a festival or two. To the Manipuris, festivals are the symbols of their cultural, social and religious aspirations which, besides removing the monotony of life by providing physical diversions, mental recreation and emotional out let, help them lead a fullfilled life. The villagers of Koutruk and Leimaram celebrate a number of festivals. The following table shows various festivals performed in the two villages:

Table 8.7
Festivals Celebrated in the Families of Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Festival	Koutruk (%) N=88	Leimaram (%) N=412	Total (%) N=500
New Year	4 (4.55)	8 (1.94)	12 (2.4)
Yaoshang	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Lai-Haraoba	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Cheiraoba	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Durga Puja	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Diwali	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Ningol Chakouba	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that the villagers celebrated various festivals such as New Year, Yaoshang (Holi), Lai-Haraoba, Diwali, and Cheiraoba. All the villagers in Kourtuk and Leimaram celebrate Yaoshang, Lai-Haraoba, Cheiraoba, Durga Puja and Diwali. A very few (4.55%) of the families (1.94%) celebrate New Year eve, too. These fastivals are introduced here.

New Year

The first day in the month of January is the day of the circumcision of Jesus. It is the eighth day of his birth, when Jesus was given the name (Luke 2:21). Since then, first January has been the first day of the year, except the period of the Middle Ages when several other days were the first (http://en.wikipedia.org). The people in the two villages also celebrated this festival. Among the Lois, mainly by the young people celebrate the day as the mark of coming of a new year. They arrange dinners for friends and even go on a picnic. Thus, there is seen the influence of western culture among the Lois, though it is very limited.

Yaoshang

Yaoshang, the premier festival of Manipur, is celebrated for five days, commencing from the full moon day of Phalguna (February/March). The Thabal Chongba - a kind of Manipuri folk dance where boys and girls hold hands and sing and dance in a circle is particularly associated with this festival. Boys and girls and old women collect cash donations from house to house and spend these on a number of parties and feasts. Indeed, Yaosang to Manipur is what Durga Puja is to Bengal, Diwali to North India and Bihu to Assam. The boys and girls in Koutruk and Leimaram also go from house to house to collect donations. In Leimaram, the collection is done after the night fall while in Koutruk it is done in the evening, after burning a small hut.

Cheiraoba

Cheiraoba festival is the celebration of the Manipuri New Year festival. This festival is a sacred festival of Manipur when everyone welcomes the New Year grandly. It is celebrated in the month of Shajibu (April-May) in the honour of household deity, Sanamahi. Traditionally, the festival is celebrated on the first day of Sajibu.

However, after the influence of Hinduism in the two villages, this festival is celebrated on the first day of Sajibu by the Sanamahi followers while the Hindus celebrated it on an auspicious day of Sajibu, generally 14th April. The villagers clean their houses and worship household deities and offer them fresh vegetables, rice, fruits, betel nuts and betel leaf. Then, they prepare meal with these items and share with family members and, sometimes, with neighbours. Relatives visit one each other and exchange gifts. In the evening, children as well as young girls and boys, climb the nearest hills to worship the Lord Mahadev.

Lai-Haraoba

Lai-Haraoba is the most important ceremony in which the forest deities are worshipped by all the villagers as a symbol of the creative. This festival is associated with philosophical and spiritual ideas of integrity, fraternity and universality. The Lai-Haraoba of the Loi communities is called the Chakpa Lai-Haraoba which does not fall in the same month. The month of Lai-Haraoba of one community is different from that of another.

As the people of Koutruk celebrate Lai-Haraoba in the month of Phairen (February-March) and those of Leimaram celebrate in the month of Lamta (March-

April). The main God of the Lai-Haraoba in Koutruk is Lord Koubru and that in Leimaram, it is Lord Loyalakpa and His wife Nungthel Leima. The Koutruk villagers celebrate Lai-Haraoba for five to ten days on an alternate year while the villagers of Leimaram celebrate it on an alternate year for twelve to fifteen days.

The main programmes of Lai-Haraoba are Laiphi setpa (the Gods are wearing clothes), Lai-Ikouba (calling the soul of the Gods to come out of water), Lai Loukhatpa (taking the soul of the Gods from water), Higaba (the Gods proceed towards the shrine). Thereafter, Lai-Haraoba is started. In the morning of Lai-Haraoba, Pena, a traditional musical instrument of Manipur, is played to awaken the Gods and Goddesses and in the evening dance programmes are performed where most of the villagers, children as well as old, participate. On the last day of Haraoba, a song *Wakol La Thaba Ishei* is sung and a Tangkhul saba (imitating a Tangkhul Naga male) and a Nurabi saba (imitating a Tangkhul Naga girl) perform their acts. After that Ongri Hangkel Chongba (a song of controlling mind) is performed and closing song *Hiyanglou* is sung. Thus, the festival expresses the close social and cultural relationship between the tribals and other peoples of Manipur.

Some of the changes have been observed in the celebration of the Lai Haraoba because of the influence of Hinduism. For example, it was the tradition of the Lois to offer *Yu* (country liquor) and pork and chicken to the forest deities during the Haraoba. However, now-a-days, it has been replaced by water, fish, vegetables and fruits because the high caste Hindu Meiteis restricts the liquor and non-vegetable offerings. Thus, they are changing their custom in the mainstream line of the Hinduized Meitei.

Durga Puja

Durga Puja is a festival celebrated in the honour of the Goddess Durga. The festival signifies that there is always victory of the good spirits over the dreadful demon (bad evil). Though it is basically a Bengali festival, villagers in Koutruk and Leimaram also celebrate it because of the influence of Hinduism. However, those families who are the followers of Sanamahi religion worship goddess *Panthoibi* who is one of the forest deities of the Meiteis. They do not creat a separate Puja Mandop (house structure) like the Meities do. They simply worship the Goddess Durga or Panthoibi on the third day of the worship called *Bor- Khurumba Numit*, while the Meitei celebrated it by organizing Puja Mandop (structures for worship), towardship the Goddess Durga or Panthoibi for five days.

Diwali

Known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali is the most popular and pan-Indian Hindu festival. The myth behind the Diwali celebration is the victory of Lord Rama over the demon Ravan and the return of Rama to Ayodhya with brother Lakshman and wife Sita. Although the festival symbolizes different things to different communities and regions in India, what is common to all is the theme of victory, of good over evil. It also stands for the renewal of life as it announces the approaching of winter and the beginning of the sowing season.

As part of their culture, the Loi also celebrate this festival. They clean their houses and decorate it with lights on the day of Diwali. At night the Hindu families worshipped the Goddess Laxmi, offered sweets and fruits. While the other religious groups simply light the houses with candles or disco lights. Children play with fire-crackers.

Ningol Chakouba

It is a remarkable traditional social festival of all the inhabitants of Manipur. Celebrated on the second day of the new moon in the Manipuri month of Hiyangei (November), it is also an important festival of the Loi. The married women even at distant places visit their parental house along with their children and enjoy sumptuous feasts. It is a family rejoicing fastival that revives familial affection. No change is observed in the celebration of the festival.

Food Patterns

Rice is the staple meal for all the people of Manipur. This is due to their agricultural production. They took two meals in a day. The villagers in Koutruk and Leimaram take rice with plenty of vegetables available such as, spinach, cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, edible oils and so on which are available in their villages. They, sometimes, consume rice with meat like pork, chicken, fish and duck. Meat is taken at least once in a week. Dried fish is another item of their daily diet.

However, the people of the two villages do not include beef in their food items. Because most of them are now Hindu who considered cow as sacred animal and prohibit beef. They also take the beverages such as tea and liquor known as *Yu*. The habit of taking morning tea and breakfast has developed among the educated and the employed. The villagers consume tea in the morning and at the evening. Tea stalls are visited more frequent by the people of Leimaram than those of Koutruk as there is

only one hotel in Koutruk while Leimaram has 14 hotels. The villagers offer tea to the guests or visitors who visit their houses. Also, the habit of liquor consumption is visible among the villagers mainly during the festivals and on the birth and marriage ceremonies.

The villagers take five non-vegetarian food items; namely, fish, mutton, chicken, pork and duck. Non-vegetable food pattern is generally influenced by religious beliefs. Yet, age is also important factor affecting it. Even the religious prescriptious vary in terms of gender of the followers. The following two tables show the types of non-vegetarian food taken by the villagers by age-group and gender in Koutruk and Leimaram:

Table 8.8
Distribution of the Villagers into the Non-Vegetable Food Items by Their Age Group and Gender in Koutruk
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of Food	Age Group and Gender												Grand Total (%)		
	0-14		Total	15-35		Total	36-60		Total	60+		Total			
	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	Total
Fish	41 (43.62)	53 (56.38)	94 (100)	96 (49.48)	98 (50.52)	194 (100)	51 (46.36)	59 (53.64)	110 (100)	10 (43.48)	13 (56.52)	23 (100)	198 (47.03)	223 (52.97)	421 (100)
Mutton	--	2 (100)	2 (100)	12 (75)	4 (25)	16 (100)	4 (80)	1 (20)	5 (100)	1 (100)	--	1 (100)	17 (70.83)	7 (29.67)	24 (100)
Chicken	33 (4125)	47 (58.75)	80 (100)	95 (49.74)	96 (50.26)	191 (100)	51 (52.58)	46 (47.42)	97 (100)	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5)	8 (100)	186 (49.47)	190 (50.53)	376 (100)
Pork	37 (43.02)	49 (56.98)	86 (100)	95 (50.26)	94 (49.74)	189 (100)	50 (56.18)	39 (43.82)	89 (100)	9 (90)	1 (10)	10 (100)	191 (51.07)	183 (48.93)	374 (100)
Duck	39 (43.82)	50 (56.18)	89 (100)	94 (49.22)	97 (50.78)	191 (100)	51 (53.68)	44 (46.32)	95 (100)	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5)	8 (100)	191 (49.87)	192 (50.13)	383 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The table shows that among the non-vegetarian items, fish is the commonly consumed in the village irrespective of age and gender, followed by duck and, then, by chicken and pork. There are rare people who consume mutton in the village because the price of mutton is very high and animals for mutton are not generally reared by the villagers. Generally, meat is consumed by children and the males and females below the age 60. Thus, the members whose age group is 60+ generally avoid meat consumption.

Similarly, the villagers in Leimaram have also the same six non-vegetarian food items. The pattern of non-vegetarian food consumption by age and gender in Leimaram is shown in the following table:

Table 8.9

Distribution of the Villagers into the Non-Vegetarian Food Items by Their Age Group and Gender in Leimaram

(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of Food	Age Group and Gender (%)												Grand Total (%)		
	0-14		Total	15-35		Total	36-60			60+		Total			
	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female		Male	Female	Total
Fish	218 (47.19)	244 (52.81)	462 (100)	331 (48.18)	356 (51.82)	687 (100)	248 (49.21)	256 (50.79)	504 (100)	46 (48.42)	49 (51.58)	95 (100)	843 (48.23)	905 (51.77)	1748 (100)
Mutton	–	–	–	57 (87.69)	8 (12.31)	65 (100)	64 (100)	–	64 (100)	–	–	–	121 (93.80)	8 (6.20)	129 (100)
Chicken	261 (48.79)	274 (51.21)	535 (100)	376 (48.58)	398 (51.12)	774 (100)	276 (80.70)	66 (19.30)	342 (100)	22 (100)	–	22 (100)	935 (55.89)	738 (44.11)	1673 (100)
Pork	261 (48.79)	274 (51.21)	535 (100)	376 (48.70)	396 (51.30)	772 (100)	276 (80.70)	66 (19.30)	342 (100)	22 (100)	–	22 (100)	935 (55.95)	736 (44.05)	1671 (100)
Duck	262 (49.06)	272 (50.94)	534 (100)	376 (48.58)	398 (51.12)	774 (100)	276 (80.70)	66 (19.30)	342 (100)	22 (100)	–	22 (100)	936 (55.98)	736 (44.02)	1672 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the villages during January – March 2010

The data show that the villagers take various kinds of non-vegetarian food items such as chicken, pork, duck and, sometimes, mutton. Fish is consumed by all the members of a family irrespective of age and sex but other types of non-vegetarian food items are consumed by the children, young people and middle aged persons. However, the persons who consume mutton are very rare in the village. The members whose age group is 60+ generally avoid meat consumption because of the new faith in Hinduism. The percentage of non-vegetarians shows the trend of decline comes down from fish towards other non-vegetarian items.

The food pattern indicates that the villagers consume various types of vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods. Historically, the Lois had been the tribals or the outcast from the Meitei society because of their religious beliefs and food habits. Traditionally, they consumed meat like pork and beverage like *Yu*. Among the non-vegetable food items, fish is commonly eatten by the villagers as the state has a rich variety of fish production whereas meats like chicken, pork, mutton and duck are generally taken by the children and the males of the middle age group. As compared with Koutruk, Leimaram has less number of female members who consume non-vegetarian items. Also, the aged avoid non-vegetarian food specially chicken, mutton, duck and pork in view of increasing religiosity with their age.

Besides, the Lois had a tradition of liquor consumption which continues till date. There are habits, occasions and ways of liquor consumption in the villages. The following table presents the patterns of alcohol consumption among the males by age in the two villages:

Table 8.10
Liquor Consumption among the Males in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Age Group	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
15-35	47 (48.45)	147 (42.49)	194 (43.79)
36-60	44 (45.36)	182 (52.60)	226 (51.02)
60+	6 (6.19)	17 (4.91)	23 (5.19)
Total (%)	97 (100)	346 (100)	443 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The table finds that half of the male consumers of liquor in the two villages are in the age group of 36-60, two fifths in 15-35 and a very few (5.19%) in 60+.

In Koutruk, of the 97 villagers consuming liquor, nearly half (48.45%) are in the age group of 15-35, over two fifths (45.36%) in 36-60 and a very few (6.19%) in the age group of 60+. In Leimaram, over a half (52.60%) of the villagers who consumed liquor are in the age group of 35-60, two fifths in the age group of 15-35 and a very few (4.91%) in the age group of 60+.

Thus, the largest age-group of the male liquor consumers is 36-60, followed by that of 15-35. Hence, the males liquor consumption age-group is 15-60. However, the villagers differ in frequency of their liquor consumption. To find out the frequency of their liquor consumption, the following table is given:

Table 8.11
Frequency of the Male Liquor Consumption in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Pattern of Liquor Consumption	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Grand total (%)
Frequently Consumed	24 (24.74)	25 (7.22)	49 (11.06)
Occasionally Consumed	73 (75.26)	321 (92.73)	394 (88.94)
Total (%)	97 (100)	346 (100)	443 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that most (88.94%) of the villagers consumed it occasionally and the remaining (11.06%) consumed it frequently. In Koutruk, three fourths (75.26%) of the villagers consumed liquor occasionally and one forth (24.74%) consumed frequently whereas, in Leimaram, 92.73% consumed it occasionally and only 7.22% consumed it frequently.

Traditionally the Loi consumed liquor as a custom; however, the custom of liquor consumption is on decline in the villages because they realize that liquor is injurious for health, family and society. They now consumed it only on special occasions of birth, marriage and death ceremonies. Compared to Koutruk, Leimaram has quite few consuming frequently as its people are more educated and they have more contacts with the outside world.

Dress

From the type of dresses the villagers wear one can find out external impact on their community. The following table shows the types of dress the villagers wear in Koutruk and Leimaram:

Table 8.12
Distribution of the Villagers into the Types of Dress Used in Koutruk and Leimaram (Percentage in Parentheses)

Dress	Koutruk (%)			Leimaram (%)		
	Male	Female	Children	Male	female	Children
Traditional	—	84 (97.67)	—	1 (0.27)	395 (97.05)	1 (0.27)
Modern	75 (100)	-	84 (100)	370 (99.73)	—	394 (99.73)
Modern as well as traditional	—	2 (2.33)	—	—	12 (2.95)	—
Total (%)	75 (100)	86 (100)	84 (100)	371 (100)	407 (100)	395 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The table shows that broadly two types of dresses are used by the villagers; viz., traditional and modern. Traditional dress consists of *dhoti*, *kurta*, *khudei* (a kind of loin cloth for man) for male, and *phanek*, *blouse*, *phi-mtek* (a type of chader or cloth sheet) etc. for females while the modern dress consists of pant, shirt, jacket, coat, tie for males and sari, salwar, frock, skirt, jeans, etc. for females. All the males and children in both the villages use modern dresses while a small fraction (2.84%) of the families' females use the traditional as well as modern dress and most (97.16%) of the families females wear traditional dress.

In Koutruk, most (97.67%) of the families female adults wear traditional dresses like *phanek*, blouse and *phi-mtek* and only a very few (2.33%) families females wear the modern (sari and blouse) as well as the traditional dress. In Leimaram, 97.05% female adults wear traditional dress and 2.95% female adults wear the modern as well as traditional dress.

However, during the ceremonies the male, female and children in the villages wear traditional dresses as a custom of the Manipuri society. The low percentage of female adults for the modern dress is perhaps due to their low exposure to outside world through jobs. Besides, the married women put a white sandal paste mark,

chandan, on the forehead and nose every day after taking bath and before entering the kitchen while the males put it during the ceremonies and sometimes generally, during the festivals.

Most interestingly, the followers of Sanamahi religion have adopted the mark, simply, to decorate the face. However, this practice of using *chandan* was introduced during the reign of King Jai Singh or Bhagyachandra (1749-1798 A.D.) for the *Gauriya* followers (converted Hindus following the Vaishnavite Cult) who had to mark their face with a paste made from the sandal wood believed to be imported from Brindavan. The aged males wear sacred thread on the line of the Hindu Meitei and Brahmins (Singh 2002:93). Thus, the traditonal beliefs are continuing under the modern material cultural grab.

House Type

House is the indicator of socio- economic condition and its change in a particular family or community. The housing conditions of both the villages are not the same. They differ in terms of the types of houses. The types of the houses in the two villages are shown in the following table:

Table 8.13
Distribution of the Families into the Types of House in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of House		Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
R C C Pacca	R C C		9 (2.18)	9 (1.8)
Pacca	Brick wall with tin roof	1 (1.14)	16 (3.88)	17 (3.4)
Semi-pacca	Mud plastered bamboo wall, cement plastered floor with tin roof	12 (13.64)	100 (24.27)	112 (22.4)
Kachcha	Mud plastered bamboo wall with tin roof	53 (60.23)	266 (64.56)	319 (63.8)
Kachcha (Traditional)	Mud plastered wall with thatched roof	22 (25.0)	21 (5.10)	43 (8.6)
Total (%)		88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that the villagers have five types of houses; namely, (i) RCC pacca house, (ii) the pacca house of brick wall with tin roof and (iii) the semi-pacca house of mud plastered wall, cemented floor and tin roof (iv) the kachcha house of mud plastered bamboo wall and tin roof and (v) traditional kachcha house of mud plastered wall and thatched roof. Of the 500 hundred families in the two villages, over three fifths (63.8%) live in kachcha houses of mud plastered bamboo wall and tin

roof, near about one fourth (22.4%) in the semi-pacca houses of mud plastered bamboo wall, cemented floor and tin roof, 8.6% live in traditional kachcha houses of mud plastered wall and thatched roof, 1.8% in RCC pacca houses, and 3.4% in the pacca houses of brick wall and tin roof.

In Koutruk, three fifths of the families (60.23%) live in the houses of mud plastered bamboo wall and tin roof and one fourth in mud plastered wall and thatched roof of traditional kachcha houses, 13.64% in semi-pacca house of mud plastered bamboo wall, cemented floor and tin roof and a very few (1.14%) in the houses of brick wall and tin roof of semi-pacca.

In Leimaram, near about two thirds (64.56%) of the families live in the houses of mud plastered bamboo wall and tin roof of kutcha, around one fourth (24.27%) in the houses of mud plastered bamboo wall, cemented floor and tin roof of semi-pacca, 5.10% in the houses of mud plastered wall and thatched roof of kutcha, 3.88% in the houses of brick wall and tin roof of pacca house and 2.18% in the pacca RCC houses.

Thus, their housing pattern is undergoing a process of change determined by the level of their economic development. The traditional type of Loi houses are made up of mud plastered wood or bamboo wall and a thatched roof. But now, most of the families live in Kachcha houses made of mud plastered bamboo wall with tin roof. However, in Leimaram, some families are living in pacca (RCC) and pacca houses.

Size of House

The size of the house also matters in determining socio-economic status of a family. The following table therefore presents the different sizes of house in the two villages:

Table 8.14
Distribution of the Families into the Number of Rooms in the Houses in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Size of House (No. of Rooms)	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
Only 1	2 (2.27)	1 (0.24)	3 (0.6)
2-3	49 (55.68)	188 (45.63)	237 (47.4)
4-5	27 (30.68)	172 (41.75)	199 (39.8)
6-7	9 (10.23)	29 (7.04)	38 (7.6)
8-9	1 (1.34)	22 (5.340)	23 (4.6)
Total (%)	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The table reveals that families in the two villages are living in the houses comprising 1 to 9 rooms. Of the families, 47.4% are living in 2-3 rooms, two fifths in 4-5 rooms, 7.6% are in 6-7 rooms and 4.6% in 8-9 rooms. Very few (0.6%) families have only one room for living.

In Koutruk, over a half (55.68%) of the families are living in 2-3 rooms, near about one third (30.68%) in 4-5 rooms, one tenth in 6-7 rooms, 2.27% and 1.34% of the families, each, are living in 8-9 rooms. In Leimaram, 45.63% of the families have 2-3 living rooms, 41.75% have 4-5 rooms, 7.04% have 6-7 rooms, 5.34% have 8-9 rooms and a very few (0.24%) families have only one living room.

Thus, the families having either only one room or 8-9 rooms in their houses are less in both the villages and generally, the houses have 2-7 rooms. Most of them are concentrated in the houses having 2 to 5 rooms and the house type of 2-3 is the largest one. Compared to Leimaram, the families having 2-3 rooms are more in Koutruk whereas the families having 4-5 rooms are more in Leimaram. It signifies that these villagers have sufficient size of houses to live in as they have mostly nuclear families. The house size is seen to be corresponding both their family type and the subsistence economic condition.

Drawing Room

Apart from the house size, a separate guest or drawing room also indicates the status a family in the Loi villages. The following table therefore gives the distribution of families in both the villages by a separate guest room:

Table 8.15
Families having a Guest Room in Their Houses in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Guest Room	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
Yes	17 (19.32)	123 (29.85)	140 (28)
No	71 (80.68)	289 (70.15)	360 (72)
Total (%)	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that only one fifth of the families (19.32%) from Koutruk and over one fourth (29.85%) from Lemaram have separate guest rooms in their houses. In all, over one fourth (28%) of the houses have separate guest room.

There is a tradition of Manipuri society as well as among the Lois to receive a guest in the front part of the house which is known as varandah (*mangol*). It is also a

place for family discussion. So, traditionally there is no need to keep separate guest room in the house. However, nowadays, some of them keep a separate room to receive the guests. It displays a change in their house pattern.

Further, furniture and gadgets in a guest room contribute to the status of that family. In the families having separate guest room, six items are found; namely, table, chair, television, sofa, cupboard and refrigerator. To find what items the families have in their guest rooms, the following table is given:

Table 8.16
Items in the Guest Room among the Families in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in parentheses)

Item in Guest Room	Koutruk (%) N=17	Leimaram (%) N=123	Total (%) N=140
Table	13 (76.47)	93 (75.61)	106 (75.71)
Chair	7 (41.18)	69 (56.1)	78 (55.71)
Television	12 (70.59)	113 (91.87)	125 (89.27)
Sofa	10 (58.82)	54 (43.90)	64 (45.71)
Cupboard	11 (64.71)	40 (32.52)	64 (36.43)
Refrigerator	1 (5.88)	14 (11.38)	15 (10.71)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The table shows that of the 140 families of the two villages which have separate guest rooms, most (89.27%) of them have television sets in their guest rooms, three fourths have tables, over a half (55.71%) have chairs, 45.71% have sofas, 36.43% have cupboard and one fifths have refrigerator.

In Koutruk, over three fourths (76.47%) of the families have table in their guest room, 70.59% have television, near about two thirds (64.71%) have cupboard, near about three fifths (58.82%) have sofa, over two fifths (41.18%) have chairs and one family has refrigerator. In Leimaram, most (91.87%) of the families have television sets in their guest room, three fourths have tables, near about three fifths (56.1%) have chairs, over two fifths (43.90%) have sofa, nearly one third (32.52%) have cupboard and over one tenth (11.38%) have refrigerator in their guest rooms. Those families which possess refrigerator in their houses are economically well-to-do families in the villages.

Kitchen Items

The guest room equipments and furniture indicates the changing life style of the villagers incorporating urban cultural elements. Besides the guest room, kitchen

items also add to the status of a family and reflect change. The following table shows the kitchen items in the houses of the two villages:

Table 8.17
Distribution of Families into the Kitchen Items in the Houses of Kourtuk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Item in Kitchen	Koutruk (%) N=88	Leimaram (%) N=412	Total (%) N=500
Earthen Chulaw	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Gas stove	33 (37.5)	238 (57.77)	271 (54.2)
Utensils	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Water Filter	4 (4.55)	19 (4.61)	23 (4.6)
Big water bucket	33 (37.5)	238 (57.77)	271 (54.2)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The table reveals that of the 500 hundred families in the two villages, all the families have earthen chulahs (indinenous stove) and utensils in their kitchens, over a half (54.2%) of the families, each, have a gas stove and a big bucket for storing water in their houses and a very few (4.6%) have filter in their kitchens.

In Koutruk, all the families have the chulla and utensils in the kitchen, 37.5% of the families have, each, a gas stove and a big bucket and only four families have a water filter in their kitchens. In Leimaram, all the families have a chula and utensils, and near about three fifths (57.77%) have, each, a gas stove and a water bucket.

Thus, the villagers are using both the modern as well as traditional (earthen chullah) means of cooking.

Latrine

Besides the items, sanitary condition of a house makes differences of status among the families. There are four types of latrine the families used in the two villages; namely, pacca latrine, semi-pacca latrine, kachcha latrine and open defecation. The following table shows the types of latrine used in the villages:

Table 8.18
Distribution of Families into the Type of Latrines used in the Houses of Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of Latrine	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
Pacca	12(13.64)	99 (24.03)	111 (22.2)
Semi – pacca	26(29.55)	197 (47.82)	223 (44.6)
Kachcha	46(52.27)	116 (28.15)	162 (32.4)
Open defecation	4(4.54)	-	4 (0.8)
Total (%)	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The data show that over two fifths (44.6%) of the families in the two villages use semi-pacca type of latrines, about one third (32.4%) use kachcha latrines, over one fifth (22.2%) use pacca latrines and a very few (0.8%) go for open defecation.

In Koutruk, over a half (52.27%) of the families use kachcha latrines, 29.55% use semi-pacca latrines, over one tenth use pacca latrine and a very few families (4.54%) go for open defecation. In Leimaram, near about half of the families (47.82%) use semi-pacca latrines, over one fourth (28.15%) use kachcha latrines and one fourth (24.03%) use pacca latrines. There is no family in Leimaram, going for open defecation. Thus, the sanitation condition of Leimaram is better than that of Koutruk, perhaps due to better educational and employment status of the former.

Thus, the sanitary conditions in the villages are improving on the pattern of urban living and educational and economic levels are closely associated with the improved sanitation in their houses. Moreover, bathing place is also important component of sanitary conditions in a house.

Bathroom

In the two villages, three places are used for bath; viz., bathroom, pond or river and public water tap. The following table shows the places where the people of the villages take bath:

Table 8.19
Distribution of the Families into the Places of Bath in the Houses of Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Place of Bath	Koutruk (%)		Leimaram (%)		Grand total (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bathroom	6 (6.82)	6 (6.82)	57 (13.83)	57 (13.83)	63 (12.6)	63 (12.6)
Pond or River	45 (51.13)	42 (47.73)	330 (80.10)	330 (80.10)	375 (75.0)	372 (74.4)
Public water tap	37 (42.05)	40 (45.45)	25 (6.07)	25 (6.07)	62 (12.4)	65 (13.0)
Total (%)	88 (100)	88 (100)	412 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)	500 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The table indicates that the people of the two villages take bath in three different places; viz., bathroom, pond or river and public tap. River or pond is used by the most. Only over a one-tenth has bathrooms in their houses. All of the rest take bath in public view.

In Koutruk, over a half (51.13%) of the male members take their bath in pond or river, over two fifths (42.05%) take bath at public view and a very few (6.82%) in the bathroom. Near about half (47.73%) of the female members take bath in pond or river, over two fifths (45.45%) at public view and a very few (6.82%) in the bathroom. In Leimaram, four fifths of the families have bath in pond or river, 13.83% in the bathrooms and a very few (6.07%) in public view.

Thus, most of the villagers in the two villages use free water of pond and river for taking bath and use of bathroom is less common among the villagers. Yet, a clean pattern of change from bathing in public view to that in private bathrooms is visible.

Along with the house and sanitary conditions, the household items or gadgets also indicate the socio-economic status of a family.

Household Gadgets

In the families of the two villages, there are found nine household items such as; (i) wooden almirah, (ii) sofa, (iii) table, (iv) chair, (v) inverter, (vi) refrigerator, (vii) solar lamp, (viii) iron almirah and (ix) washing machine. The following table shows the household items in the families of the two villages:

Table 8.20
Distribution of the Families into the Household Items in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Household Item	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total (%)
Wooden almirah	88 (100)	412 (100)	500 (100)
Sofa	18 (20.45)	202 (49.03)	220 (40)
Table	76 (86.36)	405 (98.30)	481 (96.2)
Chair	65 (73.86)	404 (98.06)	469 (93.8)
Inverter	14 (15.91)	58 (14.08)	72 (14.4)
Refrigerator	7 (7.95)	49 (11.89)	56 (11.2)
Solar lamp	7 (7.95)	16 (3.88)	23 (4.6)
Iron almirah	7 (7.95)	200 (48.54)	207 (41.4)
Washing machine	3 (3.41)	11 (2.67)	14 (2.8)

Source: Field Data Collected from the Villages during January – March 2010

The data indicate that nine household items are found in the two villages; namely, (i) wooden almirah (ii) sofa set, (iii) table (iv) chairs (v) inverter and battery (vi) refrigerator (vii) solar lamp (viii) iron almirah and (ix) washing machine. All the families have wooden almirah, 96.2% of families have tables, 93.8% have chairs, two fifths of families, each, have sofa set and iron almirah, 14.4% have inverter, one tenth have refrigerator, 4.6% have solar lamp and a very few (2.8%) have washing machine.

In Koutruk, all the families have wooden almirah in their houses, more than four fifths (86.36%) of the families have tables, nearly three fourths (73.86%) have chairs, one fifth have sofa set, 15.91% have inverter and battery, 7.95% each possess household items like refrigerator, solar lamp and iron almirah and a very few (3.41%) families have washing machine in their houses. In Leimaram, all the families have wooden almirah, most (98.30% and 98.06%) of the families each have tables and chairs, nearly half (49.03%) of the families have sofa set and iron almirah, 14.08% have inverter, one tenth have refrigerator and a very few (3.88% and 2.67%) have, each, a solar lamp and a washing machine in their houses.

Thus, more families in Leimaram than in Koutruk have table, chair sofa, iron almirah and refrigerator in their houses. The presence of these items demonstrates the changing landscape of their houses.

Transport Vehicles

Beside the assets, the villagers have vehicles for their private transportation. The following table shows the number of families having vehicles in Koutruk and Leimaram:

Table 8.21
Distribution of the Families into the Types of Vehicles They Posses in Koutruk and Leimaram
(Percentage in Parentheses)

Type of Vehicle	Koutruk (%)	Leimaram (%)	Total
Bus	—	2 (1.75)	2 (1.48)
Tata Truck	—	1 (0.88)	1 (0.74)
Car	—	4 (3.51)	4 (2.96)
Van	—	5 (4.39)	5 (3.70)
Auto rickshaw	—	2 (1.75)	2 (1.48)
Tata Magic	—	2 (1.75)	2 (1.48)
Two wheeler	21 (100)	93 (81.58)	114 (84.44)
Tata magic as well as two wheeler	—	2 (1.75)	2 (1.48)
Van as well as two wheeler	—	3 (2.63)	3 (2.22)
Total (%)	21 (100)	114 (100)	135 (100)

Source: Field Data Collected from Villages during January – March 2010

The data show seven types of vehicles; namely, heavy, light, three wheeler and two wheeler vehicles are found in Leimaram whereas the families in Koutruk have only two wheeler vehicle.

In Leimaram, over a four fifths (81.58) of the families have two wheelers, 4.39% have van, 3.51% have car, 2.63% each have van and two wheeler, 1.75% each have bus, auto-rickshaw, Tata Magic and Tata Magic as well as two wheeler and a very few (0.88%) have Tata Truck.

Thus, more than four fifths (83.70%) of the families in both the villages have two wheelers. There are also a very few (0.88%) families in Leimaram which own Tata truck which indicates that some of the families in Leimaram are economically well off. They use the vehicles for priate transportation as well as for the service of public.

Thus, the transport vehicle scenario indicates that the villagers are fast changing in their matterial culture.

Summary

1. Most (79.2%) of the families in the two villages are the followers of Hinduism, one fifth are the Sanamahi followers and a small fraction (0.6%) belongs to Christianity. Compared to Koutruk there are more families in Leimaram (83.49%) which are the followers of Hindu religion because the villages is surrounded by Meitei villages and it is only one Scheduled Caste village in the entire Bishnupur district.

After the voluntary acceptance of Hinduism, the rites and rituals related to birth, marriage and death ceremonies of the Hinduised families are performed by Brahmins while that of the Sanamahi are still performed by *Maibas* (Meitei priest) and *Maibis* (Meitei priestess). Moreover, to get a wider acceptance among the Meiteis and to live in harmony with them, they invite the Meiteis in their religious ceremonies and functions and therefore Brahmin cooks, along with their traditional caste cooks, are also engaged to prepare meal.

2. The Loi's worship patterns in the villages are largely getting sanskritized on the line of the Meitei. Traditionally the Loi have been the worshippers of the traditional Meitei gods- the Imung Lais (household deities), Lamlais (deities believed to exist in the wild land), Umang Lais (forest deities) and Apokpa (clan god). However, at present, the worshipping of Hindu gods and goddesses such as Laxmi, Mahadev, Hanuman, Radha- Krishna, Durga Sarashwati has been observed among the

villagers because of their conversion to Hinduism. They mainly (50.8%) worship the Goddess Laxmi-the Goddess of wealth.

Besides, they also celebrate a number of festivals which include traditional as well as Hindu festivals such as New Year, Yaoshang, Lai-Haraoba, Cheiraoba, Durga puja, Diwali, Ningol Chakouba etc. and sometimes they go to the Hindu temples for worshipping. With the influence of Hinduism, changes in celebration of traditional festivals have been also observed among them. For example, earlier, *Yu* and meat were offered to the village deity during the Lai-Haraoba. However, it has been now replaced by water and fish. Also, Cheiraoba was celebrated on the first day of *Sajibu* (March – April), but now the followers of Hindu religion celebrate it on an auspicious day of *Sajibu*.

3. Salience of sanskritic food and drink patterns is perceptible in the Loi villages. Traditionally the Lois consumed various kinds of meat and vegetables along with rice. They were outcasted from the Meitei society because of their continuity with the indigenous religion and food habits. Even now, they generally consume fish, irrespective of the young and the old, as the state has a rich source of fish.

However, meats like chicken, pork, duck and mutton are generally consumed by children and male members up to the middle age group (upto 60). The aged persons try to avoid meat as they consider themselves old and should be oriented towards the god. Compared to Koutruk, there is less number of female members in Leimaram who consumed non-vegetarian items because they are more ritual-oriented than the female members of Koutruk.

Under the custom of their society, the Loi produced liquor and consumed it. They also offered it to the gods and goddesses during the festival and ceremonies. However, as a result of modern education they have realized the negative effect of liquor consumption over health as well as to the society. Therefore, most of them are trying to avoid the habit of liquor consumption. Of the total male members in the two villages, 36.28% consume liquor. Among the villagers who consumed liquor, most (48.45%) of them are the age group of 15-35 years in Koutruk and 36-60 years in Leimaram (52.60%). Most (88.94%) of them consume it occasionally on birth, death and marriage while over one tenth consume it frequently. However, female members in the two villages are not consuming liquor at all because they are more oriented toward religion.

4. Impact of modernization on the pattern of dress is clearly observed among the villagers. Children and male members of the two villages prefer to wear modern dresses while only a small fraction (2.33% from Koutruk and 2.95% from Leimaram) of female members wear modern dresses because a very few of females of the villages are engaged in paid jobs.

The female members in the two villages use *chandan tilak* (forehead mark) daily after bathing and before entering a kitchen. However, male members use it during the ceremonies because they have to go outside the house for earning money and they have no time to use it or it is not convenient to use *tilak* while going outside the house. Thus, traditional beliefs in mind are continuing under the modern material culture.

5. Housing pattern of the villagers is seen in the process of change determined by the level of their economic development. The traditional type of Loi houses are made up of wood, bamboo, mud plastered wall and a thatched roof. Nowadays, houses are seen differentiated into five types. Majority (63.8%) of the families in the two villages are living in the kachcha type of houses made of mud plastered bamboo wall and tin roof. There are also a few (2.18%) families in Leimaram which live in RCC pacca houses.

Most (47.4%) of the families live in a house of 3-4 rooms and a very few (4.6%) live in a house of 8-9 rooms. There is also a small fraction (0.6%) of single member living in one room. This goes along the nucleation of their family.

Traditionally the Lois did not keep extra room for receiving guest in their houses. However, 28% of the families in the villages are keeping a guest room in their house. They keep television, table, chair, sofa, cupboard and refrigerator in the guest room. Majority (89.27%) of families in the two villages keep television in the guest room while a small fraction (10.71%) keep refrigerator also in the guest room.

Traditionally the Lois used earthen chullah/ stove for cooking. However, it was found from the study that there are earthen chulah along with gas stove in the families. Thus, 37.5% of the families in Koutruk and 57.77% of the families in Leimaram have gas stove. There are also a very few families from Koutruk (4.55%) and Leimaram (4.61%) which keep water filter in their kitchens. It all indicates that they are changing their life styles.

6. Sanitary conditions among the Loi villagers are in the transition from traditional to modern practices. Near about a half (47.82%) of the families in

Leimaram use semi-pacca type of latrine while over half (52.27%) of families from Koutruk use kachcha latrine. There are a very few (4.54%) families in Koutruk which goes for open defecation in the paddy fields or on the hills while none go for this in Leimaram. Also, one fourth (24.03%) of the families in Leimaram and a small fraction (13.64%) from Koutruk use pacca latrine which is a sign of modernity.

7. Most (74.4%) of families in the two villages used free water of pond and river for taking bath, only over one tenth (12.6%) has bathrooms and all of the rest take bath in public view. Thus, there is observed a clean pattern of change from bathing in the public view to that in private bathrooms.

8. One fifth of the families from Koutruk and over one fourth (27.67%) from Leimaram have vehicles for transportation. Thus, the villagers are fast changing in their material culture.

Briefly, most of the villagers are Hindu by their religion. They worship the Hindu gods and goddesses along with the household deities as well as celebrate a number of Hindu festivals. Despite their continued steadfastness in traditional (indigenous) beliefs and practices, they have now gone towards accepting much of the customs and traditions of the Hindu (Meitei) with a view to get wider acceptability from the neighbouring Meitei villages and to live in harmony with them. Thus, after their voluntary acceptance of Hinduism, mainly in the post-Independence period, the interaction between the Loi and the Meitei has increased. The service of Brahmins is also availed by the Lois in their ritual ceremonies whereas, earlier, it was performed only by the *Maiba* (Meitei priest) and *Maibis* (Meitei priestess). In the ceremonies the Meitei are also invitees and therefore Brahmin cooks, along with their caste cooks, are engaged to prepare meal. There is also influence of Christianity among the scheduled castes and some families in the two villages have adopted Christianity as their religion, although their number is very small. Changes are also observed in the food habits, mode of dresses and celebration of certain festivals. Most of the aged persons are trying to avoid meat consumption. Tradition of liquor consumption has been reduced and, now, they are consuming liquor occasionally during the birth, death and marriage ceremonies. As a result of urban contact through education and employment or otherwise, the standard and style of living of these people has been changing towards that of the higher (Meitei) caste communities. Change in material culture is huge as compared with the change in non-material culture. However, change is significant in both the cultural aspects, dominating over the continuity of tradition.

All these changes in their cultural life are the result of their constant interaction with the other castes, communities and religious groups, giving rise to sanskritization or Christianization and modernization. Nevertheless, culture also includes education, health and communication, the discussion of which needs larger space in the context of the two villages. Therefore, the succeeding chapter deals with changes in education, health and communication in the two villages.