

Towards the understanding of surnames and naming patterns in Meitei society

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ABSTRACT: Meiteis are the major ethnic group in Manipur, a North East Indian state. Surnames came into existence before king Loiyumpa (1074-1122 AD). Surname is part of a personal name that is passed from either or both parents to their offspring. Surnames in Meitei society are derived from father's name. Meiteis have 7 clans and each clan has several surnames. In the 14th century A.D during the reign of King Kiyamba, Brahmins from the mainland of India started to come and settled in Manipur. They have been given different surnames except the seven clans. Again, during the reign of King Khagemba, in the 16th century, Muslims from Bengal started to settle at Manipur, known as Pangal [paŋəl]. These people are now known by the name Meitei pangal. They also have been given with different surnames except the seven clans. This paper is an attempt to provide some insights of surnames and naming patterns in Meitei society and their importance in the society.

Keywords - Bamon, clan, Meitei, Pangal, surname.

Date of Submission: 24-10-2017

Date of acceptance: 04-11-2017

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Meitei or Meetei belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. Meiteis are the major ethnic group in Manipur, a North East Indian state. The word Meiteilon is a compound word i.e *meitei* + *lon* where *meitei* is the name of the people while *lon* means 'language'. It is also known as Manipuri spoken by approximately 1.2 million people primarily in the Imphal (capital) valley. Manipuri is the official language of the state. According to the census 2011 data the total population of the state is 2570390. Although, a large number of Meiteis are found in Myanmar, Bangladesh and in the neighbouring states of India like in Assam and Tripura. This paper is an attempt to provide some insight of surnames and naming patterns in Meitei community and the changes in the present scenario. Here, data are collected from primary sources and secondary sources such as hand written ancient manuscripts like Loiyumpa silyel [loiyumpa silyel], Cheitharol Kumpapa [cəitharol kumpapa] and Chainarol [cainərol]. It is an attempt to study when and how the Meitei surnames came into existence and the vital role played by surnames in the society.

II. CLANS OF MEITEI

2. Clans of Meitei

It is not clear when the surname system started to exist in Meitei society. But, it is recorded that king Nongda Lairal Pakhangba (33-154 AD) initiated the documentation of different bloodlines settled at different places by writing a puya i.e. a manuscript called 'Yumkhaipalol' [1]. The word Yumkhaipalol means *yum* 'house/family', *khaipa* 'to differentiat', *lol* 'systematic description'. The puya 'Loiyumpa Silyel' is a constitutional text written during the reign of king Loiyumpa (1074-1122 AD) in which different surnames are assigned with different duties under the state [2]. Here, Loiyumpa silyen means *loiyumpa* 'name of king Loiyumpa', *sil* 'duty' and *yel* 'division'. Thus, it is clear that surnames came into existence before king Loiyumpa. Surname is part of a personal name that is passed from either or both parents to their offspring. One of the important functions is to show the identity of a person by their respective surnames. As Meitei is a patriarchal society, it often has surnames derived from father's name. It is worth mentioning here, that, the Meiteis comprise of seven clans also known as *Yek/Salai*, each clan comprises of various surnames also known as *Sagei* /*Yumnak* or family of the respective clans. The word 'Sagei' is derived from *Sa-khai* which means 'body-branches'. This term refers to exclusively blood lineage under a particular ancestor belonging to a surname under the clan or the direct line of descent which is also known as *phukainaba*, literally meaning 'to break the earthen pot used for cooking food', i.e. in Meitei's custom, if a death occurs in a family, then all the

family members including the close relatives are considered impure and prohibited from performing any ritual till the 10th or 13th day of the demise. Similarly, if a child is born then the family and the close relative i.e. consanguine are impure till the 10th or 12th day from the day of the birth. To every close relatives or the blood line message of *yummang pao* (yum-mang pao= house-impure news) for birth or death is informed to all *phukainaba* groups. Thus, even though similar surnames under one clan does not count as same blood line if the *pu-kok* (grand ancestor-head or starting point) are different. For instance, Uripok Heibimakhongtaba Laisram is different from other Laisram groups though they are under the Khuman clan.

There are 716 different surnames or *yumnak* (household and their profession or habits) under seven clans of Meiteis. The seven clans along with their etymology and the number of surnames under the respective clans are given below;

Table 1: The clan names and numbers of surnames (Tomba Meetei, 1993)

	Clan name	Number of surnames under the clan	Etymology
1	Mangang [məŋaŋ]/Ningthouja [niŋthəuja]	219	mə - third pronominal prefix ŋaŋ - 'reddish' > məŋaŋ, denoting the time of early sun rise or the light. niŋthəu- 'king', ca- 'progeny' > niŋthəuja, denoting the descendants of kings.
2	Luwang [luwaŋ]	77	lu- 'clear', waŋ - 'high' > luwaŋ, denoting the noon.
3	Khuman [khumən]	167	khu - 'narrow/cover', mən/ məm 'dark' > khuman, denoting night.
4	Angom [əŋom]	89	ə - Attributive marker, ŋom - 'pink' > əŋom, denoting the mildness of the radiance of sunshine in the early morning.
5	Moirang [moiraŋ]	90	moi- '?', laŋ- 'colourful' > moiraŋ, denoting the time of colourful evening before sunset.
6	Khangamba [khaŋambə]	34	kha- 'downward', ŋambə- 'to shine' > khaŋambə, denoting the time when the earth gets light before sunrise (dawn).
7	Sarang- leisangthem/Chenglei [səraŋ-ləi-saŋ-them]/ceŋ- ləi]	40	salai- 'propagate', ləi- 'to have/exist', saŋthem - 'elongated' > səraŋləisəŋthem, denoting the time when the shadows are elongated in the late afternoon. ceŋ - 'life', ləi- 'to have/exist' > ceŋləi, denoting long life.

The above **Table 1** shows that the clan names are derived after the different time periods of a day. McCulloch [3], mentions that Khuman appears to have been the most powerful of the seven clans for a time. Originally each one of these clans occupied a particular area or kingdom and came from different directions. They were engaged in frequent wars among themselves. But by degrees the Meiteis, originally the Ningthouja or Mangang subdued the whole, and the name Meitei became applicable to all.

2.1 Surname under different clans

Each of the clans has various surnames, an illustrative list of surname are given in the book entitled 'The Meiteis' by Hodson [4]. Manipur state Kala Academy published "Sagei-Salairon", many local scholars namely [5], [6] studied on Yek-Salai. It is to be noted that Hodson's list of surnames ends with -om suffix instead of -am in most of the surnames, which is incorrect. As the surnames ending with -om are few in numbers, such as, Saikhom, Angom, Waikhom, Yenkhom, Samom, Amom, Huidrom, Atom, Maimom, Ngangom etc. In this paper only few selected common surnames are mentioned in the following **Table 2**.

Table 2: Some of the surnames against the clans in which they belong to.

Sl.	Yek Salai/Clans	Surnames
1	Mangang	Keithellakpam*, Konsam*, Khamnam, Ngangom*, Ngangom <i>Yumdabam</i> , Ngairangbam, Chanambam, Chirom, Tensubam, Tayenjam, Thangjam*, Nahakpam*, Naorem, Ningthoujam, Paonam, Pebam. Phairenbam*, Mutum, Yengkhom, Yumnam, Loitam*, Lukram, Waikhom*, Sanasam, Sairem Hamom, Hodam, Akhom, Aheibam*, Irengbam, Irom, Ongtham, Usam*, Urikkhinbam*, etc.

2	Luwang	Khumukcham, Ngangom*, Ngangbam*, Chongtham*, Toijam, Takhelmayum, Thangjam <i>Soyam</i> , Thiyam, Thounaojam, Nambam, Nahakpam*, Pungkronjam, Pheiroijam, Phairenjam, Mayengbam, Meisnam, Yangkokpam, Yumlembam*, Laisom, Loukham, Wahengbam, Waikhom*, Salam, Senlam, Hijam, Heikham, Asangbam, Arambam Ichom, Uripam, Usam*, etc.
3	Khuman	Karam, Kangjam, Khulem, Ngangbam*, Ngaseppam*, Chandam, Chintham, Taorem, Tonjam, Thaodem, Thangjam*, Nepram, Nambam*, Puyam, Pukhrabam, Phanjem, Yambem, Yanglem, Laishram, Laishram <i>Ningthoukabam</i> , Langgam, Wareppam, Wayenbam*, Sapam*, Sougajiam, Haobam, Hawaibam, Akham, Ahongbam, Ingudam*, Entham, Oinam, etc.
4	Angom	Koijam, Kharibam, Khoibam*, Ngaseppam, Ngathem*, Chakpram, Chingsubam, Telem*, Telheibam, Ningombam, Nandeibam, Potsangbam, Phuritsabam, Mangsidam, Yumlembam, Laisangbam, Longjam, Wangkhem*, Watham, Soram*, Seram*, Senjam <i>Laibaktabam</i> , Hidam Huirem, Angom, Achom*, Ikudam, Ongnam, Usam*, etc.
5	Moirang	Kiyam*, Kumabam, Khamnam*, Khomdram, Ngangkham, Ngasam, Chongtham, Tongleibam, , Thangjam*, Thokchom, Narengbam, Namujam, Puthem*, Polem, Mangkhom, Moirangthem, Yaikhom, Yurembam, Lisam, Leitam*, Wayenbam, Wakambam, Sankhom, Soibam, Achom, Amom*, Usam*, Okram, etc.
6	Chenglei/Sarang-leisangthem	Kalenjam, Konsam*, Khoirom, Khoisnam*, Ngathem*, Chanam*, Chongtham, Tongbram, Tourangbam, Thangjam*, Naosabam, Naosekpa, Potsangbam, Phidam, Meina, Yanggoijam, Leisangthem, Lousigam, Wairokpa, Warembam, Sarangthem, Soraisam, Haorokcham, Heibam, Ayeckpa*, Ingudam*, etc.
7	Kha-nganba	Kolheibam, Khuraijam, khumujam, Chengleijam, Chakpa- Phiyam, Tekcham, Thongam, Nandeibam, Phijam*, Meihoubam, Morimayum, Leihaorongbam, Langgonjam, Wangbajam, Wanggonjam, Sanjibam, Samchetsabam, Haobijam, Hengakpa, Aheibam*, Ingudam, etc.

The asterisk (*) marked against some of the surnames in the above **Table 2** indicates that the surname belongs to one or more clans also. This shows that there is no restriction for surname to be in a particular clan. But, it is to be noted that a family cannot change its clan despite of a change in its surname. Changes in surnames were done with the permission of the king in earlier period. Each Sagei/surname (*phukainaba*) has its own Yumdaba puya or written document on blood lineage. So, the clan of a particular surname can be determined by referring to their Yumdaba puya.

One interesting observation found in some surnames is that an extra marker is added to the surname to differentiate themselves from other similar surnames, for instance Ngangom is a surname under Mangang clan. But, within Ngangom itself Ngangom *Yumdabam*, can be identified from the rest of other Ngangoms in the Mangang clan by the word *Yumdabam*. Likewise, Thangjam *Soyam* (Luwang clan), Laishram *Ningthoukabam* (khuman clan), Senjam *Laibaktabam* (Angom clan), etc. are identified by the markers *Soyam*, *Ningthoukabam*, *Laibaktabam* respectively.

Another observation is the naming of a particular locality by taking after a particular surname. This may be due to the majority of the settlements belonging to the particular surname in that locality. Some of the examples are illustrated as follows.

Table 3: The names of localities or places named after a particular surname.

<u>Name of Locality/place</u>	<u>Literal meaning</u>
Laishram Leikai	'the locality of Laishram'
Khuraijam Leirak	'the lane of Khuraijam'
Lairikyengbam Leikai	'the locality of Lairikyengbam'
Ngairangbam	'the name of a village named after the surname'
Khundrakpa	..
Sanjenbam	..

The endings of surnames are marked with suffix -em, -am and -om which are commonly found in almost all of the surnames. From the historical point of view, these suffixes indicate the place of the people who are assigned to a particular duty or obligation to the king. It is mentioned in "Loiyumpa Silyel" i.e. The

Ancient Constitution of Manipur that the king Loiyumpa (1074 A.D to 1122A.D) issued a royal proclamation called Loiyumpa Silyel which is about the allocation and distribution of specific duties to the various family groups or surnames and individuals living in his kingdom as his subjects. For example, The weavers of different surnames were assigned the duty of making different phi 'cloths' such as the Thingkuchams weave the Mungphi, the Ningthouchams weave the chilphi, the Lairellakpams weave the Laiphi etc. The surname-wise duty to look after the deities such as, Sorensangpam take care of the god Sorarel, Sarangthem and the Leisangthem take care of the goddess Lammapi, Moirangthem and Puthems take care of the god Puthiba etc. The following **Table 4** shows some of the surnames and their literal meaning/Etymology.

Table 4: Some of the surnames and their respective literal meaning along with possible etymology.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Literal meaning/Etymology</u>
Konsam [konsəm]	'jewellery makers; kon- 'metal', -sa 'to make', -məphəm 'place' > konsəm'
Kumabam [kumabəm]	'caretaker of the god of Season; kumabə- 'god of season', -məphəm 'place' > kumabəm'
Keithellakpam [kəithellakpəm]	'caretaker of the market; kəithel- 'market', -lakpə 'to take care' , - məphəm 'place' > kəithellakpəm'
Sansenbam [sənsenbəm]	'caretaker of cattle; sən- 'cow/cattle', -senbə 'to take care' , - məphəm 'place' > sənsenbəm'
Səgolsem [səgolsem]	'caretaker of horses of the king; səgol- 'horse', -senbə 'to take care' , - məphəm 'place' > səgolsem'
Səugaijam [səugaijəm]	'the experts who handles traps; səu- 'a kind of trap' , - kai 'to remove', - məphəm 'place' > səugaijəm'
Lisam [lisəm]	'king's craftsman for articles made of cane; li- 'cane', sa- 'to make', - məphəm 'place' > lisəm'
Lamabam [ləmabəm]	'the guards the king's estate; ləm- 'land/estate', -ɲak, 'to guard', - məphəm 'place' > ləmabəm'
Lairikyengbam [lairikyɛŋbəm]	'experts who handles documents and related fields; lairik- 'book/document', yeŋbə- 'see/study' , - məphəm 'place' > lairikyeŋbəm'
Mairenbam [mairenbəm]	'pumpkin farmers; mairən- 'pumpkin', -thabəm, 'the place of firming' > mairən bəm'
Maibam [maibəm]	'the physicians/medicine makers; maibə- 'physician', - məphəm 'place' > maibəm'
Potsangbam [potsəŋbəm]	'caretaker of king's properties/valuables; pot- 'thing', - səŋbə 'to take care' , - məphəm 'place' > potsəŋbəm'

In earlier days, surname was not given to the Meitei king's bloodline. Nowadays, they are known by the title such as Ningthemcha Mayum 'bloodline of the king' or Rajkumar/Rajkumari 'prince/princess' shortens as RK; whereas, direct descendent or king's family as Maharajkumar/Maharajkumari shortens as MK which are considered now as a surname. [6] states that after king Pamheiba/Garibniwaj (1709-1748 AD), some surnames/yumnak came into existence for the king's bloodline namely, Katwanmayum 'family of kətwan, a position in the king's court', Kartamayum 'family/bloodline of Karta, king Bhagyachandra', Narsingmayum

‘family/bloodline of king Narasingh’, Pachahanbam ‘family of Pachahanba, a position in king’s court’, Mantrimayum ‘family of mantri/minister’, Yaiskullakpam ‘family of Yaiskullakpa, a position in king’s court’, Lourungpurelmayum ‘family of Lourung purel, head of department of revenue’, Senapatimayum ‘family of Senapati, military commander’, Samusenba Hanjaba mayum ‘family of Samusenba hanjaba, a position related to management of king’s elephants’ and Urungpurel mayum, ‘family of Urung purel, Head of department of forest’. Thus, surnames were also given based on their official status.

III. EMERGENCE OF NEW SURNAMES

3. Emergence of New Surnames

It is interesting to note that in the fourteenth century A.D during the reign of King Kiyamba, Brahmins from the mainland started to come and settle in Manipur. Most of them married with the woman folks of Manipur. They are known as bamon. They have been given different surnames except the seven clans. The bamons are assigned with the duties to look after the deities to perform rituals, knowledge related with Vaishnavism or Hinduism. Some bamons are known for their skill in cooking, and have taken it up as a profession. In any of the the auspicious ceremonies or grand feast the bamon known as ‘aegya’ serve the food. The term ‘aegya’ is an Indo-Aryan loanword which means ‘at your service’, but, how the word is applied in this context is unknown. Some of the bamon surnames are given in the **Table 5** below:

Table 5: Some Bamon surnames with their literal meanings.

<u>Surnames</u>	<u>Literal meaning/Etymology</u>
Kakchingtabam	‘inhabitants of ‘Kakching’, a place’
Kongbrailatpam	‘worshiper of the deity at ‘Kongba’, a place’
Gurumayam	‘family of king’s ‘Guru’ or the mentor’
Takhelchangbam	‘those who had visited to ‘Takhel (Tripura)’
Phurailatpam	‘worshiper of goddess Lakshmi (phulai > phurai ‘goddess of wealth’, latpəm ‘place of worship’)
Leihaothabam	‘grower of Leihao ‘champa’, a flower’
Hajarimayum	‘family of Hajari ‘a position at the king’s court’
Samulailatpam	‘worshiper of god Ganesh (samu- ‘elephant’, lai- ‘god’, latpəm ‘place of worship’)
Bishnulatpam	‘worshiper of god Vishnu (Vishnu > Bishnu, latpəm ‘place of worship’)
Sijagurumayum	‘family of Queen’s ‘Guru’ or mentor’
Hanjabam	‘family of Hanjaba, a position in the king’s court’

In 1878 AD during the reign of king Chandrakirti, a documentation on the Bamons known as ‘Bamon Meihoubaron’, the chronicle of Bamon settlement has taken place [6].

Again, during the reign of King Khagemba , in the sixteenth century, Muslims from Bengal started to settle at Manipur, they are known as Pangal [paŋəɭ]. The word Bengal was mispronounced as paŋkəl > paŋgəl > paŋəɭ. Phonologically, progressive assimilation has taken place due to the presence of velar nasal /ŋ/, thus the voiceless stop /k/ changes to /g/. Later on the voiced alveolar stop /g/ is deleted and pronounced as paŋəɭ. These people are known by the name Meitei pangal. They have been given different surnames except the seven clans. There are 63 surnames of the Meitei pangal. Some of them are listed in the following **Table 6**.

Table 6 Some surnames of Meitei pangals with their literal meaning/etymology.

<u>Surnames</u>	<u>Literal meaning/etymology</u>
Khudeibam	‘family of craftsman (khutheibam > khudeibam, khut ‘hand’, heibam ‘skilled family’)
Phundreimayum	‘family of phundrei craftsman (phundrei ‘some kind of lathe’, mayum ‘family’)
Makakmayum	‘family of Mogul origin (mogul > makak, mayum ‘family’)
Pukhrimayum	‘those who settle near the Pukhri, the big pond (Pukhuri, an Indo-Arian term for pond > pukhri)’
Khullakpam	‘family of Khullakpa, Caretaker of a locality (khul ‘village’, lakpə ‘to take care/control’, -əm ‘place/family’)
Korimayum	‘family of copper craftsman (kori ‘copper’, mayum ‘family’)
Sangom Sumbam	‘family of milk supplier (sangom ‘milk’, sumbam ‘place of milking’)

Dolaipabam	‘family of palanquin keeper (dola, an Indo-Arian term for palanquin > dolai, pabam ‘keeper/carrier’)
Thongkhongmayum	‘family who settle near the bridge (Thongkhong ‘near the foot of the bridge’, mayum ‘family’)
Kalammayum	‘family of Kalam, a Muslim surname’

Some of the surnames given to the Meitei pangal are same as that of some surname of Meitei, but, this does not mean that they are in the Meitei clans. The followings are some examples, Yumkhaibam, Ayekpam, Yumkham, Lairikyengbam, Aribam, Maibam, etc. [7].

IV. ANCIENT NAMING PATTERNS

4.0 Ancient naming patterns The personal names of Meiteis in the early periods seem to be derived from some incidents, or of habitual characters, etc. The pattern is similar for both male and female. The names of kings, queens and some personalities found in the Cheitharol Kumpapa, the court chronicle of Meitei kings and also manuscript like Chainarol are illustrated in the following **Table 7**.

Table 7 Ancient names with their literal meanings.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Literal meanings</u>
Khagemba [khagembə]	“the conqueror of ‘khaki’; khaki- ‘a Chinese kingdom’, -ṅəmbə ‘the one who subdues’ > khagembə”
Nonginphaba [noŋinphabə]	“the one who captures Nongin, a bird’; noŋin ‘a bird’, phabə ‘to capture’ > noŋinphabə”
Tangkhuṅgambi [taŋkhuṅgəmbi]	“the conqueror of Tangkhul tribe; taŋkhuṅ ‘Tangkhul tribe’, ṅəmbi ‘the one who subdues’ > taŋkhuṅgəmbi”
Chaningkhombi [cəniŋkhombi]	“the one who defeated and captures Chaning tribe; cəniŋ ‘Chaning tribe’, khombi ‘the one who subdues and captures’ > cəniŋkhombi”
Khubomba [khubombə]	“the one who reconciles all the Khuman clan; (khumən ‘Khuman clan’ > khu, khombə ‘to reconcile’ > bombə) > khubombə”
Telheiba [telhəibə]	“the expert in archeries; tel ‘bow and arrow’, həibə ‘the expert’ > telhəibə”
Punsiba [punsibə]	“man of long life; punsi + bə > punsibə ‘to live long’ ”
Selhongba [selhoŋbə]	“abundance of precious metal/money; sel ‘precious metal/money’, hoŋbə ‘abundance’ > selhoŋbə”

Tracing back to the history, in the Cheitharon Kumpapa or Cheitharon Kumbaba, which claims to record events from the founding of the ruling dynasty in 33 CE. This dynasty continued until the abolition of the monarchy after the merger of the state with India in 1949 [8]. It has been mentioned that Cheithaba i.e chei means ‘a stick’, thapa or thaba ‘to place, put down’; in short, it means placing stick to aid counting. It is one of the methods of dating the period of time, the years. Interestingly, in the cheithaba system of dating introduced by king Kyampa (Sak.1389-1430/1467-1508 CE) considered that accurate dating may be possible by naming each year after an individual, to whom the name cheithapa was given. It became part of a calendar and the years bore the cheithapa persons’ names. Only male candidates are honoured for cheithapa but not Women. The mode of naming some of the cheithaba as mentioned in cheitharon Kumpapa are as follows:

- I. Chanampa Sara
- II. Laishrapa Maitek
- III. Loitongpa Kyang
- IV. Konsapa Lamma
- V. Nongthonpa Sanong
- VI. Nanteipa Lokhon

The pattern reflects the surnames in shortened form and instead of the endings with am-em, in this case, -pa denotes particularization to the very person, or indicating piba “the male heirs of a particular surname”. Thus, the pattern of naming in the ancient period was Surname + Name.

Earlier, Meitei people named themselves by their native term such as, Puranthaba, Selhongba, Tabunglanthabi, Thawa, Moramba, Tolen, Puremba, Khamba, etc. One of the common form of naming is based on the age-wise order of siblings, such as, Ibohal (eldest son), Iboyaima (second son), Ibotomba (youngest son) for men and for women as Ibechaobi (elder daughter), Ibecha (youngest daughter). Names may also be given based on their complexion such as Angou (white or fair) for male and Angoubi for female, Amubi (blackish)

both for male and female. If a person is well-built with dark complexion then Amujao is preferably named for a male candidate while one with reddish-brown hair is named as Kokngang or a man gets his name as Manglem because he has survived from a life threatening illness or similar incident. The coinage of women names with the names of flower is very common such as Kaboklei, Tharosang (Greenish Water-lily), Liehao (Champa), Thambal (lotus), Leibaklei etc. Again, a lady with broad face gets her name as Maipakpi or a lady with a rounded face like the moon as Thagoi. Thus, it shows the metaphorical expression in naming of a person.

V. NAMING PATTERN OF MEITEI WITH THE ADVENT OF HINDUISM

5. Naming pattern of Meitei with the advent of Hinduism

The advent of Hinduism in the early part of the eighteenth century has left its mark in ritual, ceremonial elaboration and purification. Outward manifestation of religious devoutness, changes in terms of personal naming. Then, Loanwords or borrowing from Indo-Aryan started with a stamp of distinctiveness, a sense of superiority to the existing culture all around them by acquiring a higher religious knowledge. With the conversion to Hinduism, the Aryan culture became diffused in the Meitei culture. The way of naming system changes to the pattern of Surname + name + Title. The surnames remain as it was as before but, most of the names takes that of hindus such as; Leisangthem Indrajit Singh, Laishram Kartik Singh, Gurumayum Chandradev Sharma, Kakchingtabam Budhachandra Sharma, Thoudam Chitralekha Devi, Sapam Indumati Devi, Ahanthem Lakshmi Devi, Hidangmayum Chitra Devi, Samurailatpam Bino Devi, etc. The title Singh and Devi becomes a standard for common Meitei. But, it merely serves the purpose for gender marker. The male Meitei Brahmins commonly known as Bamon use the title Sharma at the end of their name while the females use the same title Devi at the end of their name as similar to that of Meitei female. Still the use of native names in the above pattern is also followed; e.g. Amom Ibotomba Singh, Leihaothabam Tomba Sharma, Laishram Khumanleima Devi, Laimayum Thambal Devi, etc. The arrival of Hinduism also brought with it the tradition of horoscopes. It has become a ritual to consult the astrologer, who is known as 'Panji' in the Meitei community, before naming a child. It is the "Panji" who suggests the initial sound of the child's maiden name.

5.1 Impact of the Revivalist

From the religious point of view, the Meiteis can be divided into the Hindus and The Meitei/Meetei marup hence forth the Meitei marup. The Meitei marup also known as *Sanamahi cult/Pakhangba laining* are revivalists. The revivalist began to appear in 1930s and they are doing their best to revive the old religion, script, and other ceremonies of the Meiteis. Since 1958, there have been subsequent debates to implement the indigenous script, and ultimately, Manipur government has recognised the 27 scripts as standard Meitei / Meetei mayek or script by a gazette notification in the year 1980. Eventually, Meitei mayek was introduced right from primary school to higher secondary level. Thus, people started to embrace their own identity. Nowadays, especially the younger generation prefer to use their own native names metaphor to the nature, strength, names of ancestral gods and goddesses etc. For example:

Male name

Lanngamba 'the mighty warrior'
Korou 'sun'
Atiya 'sky'
Chinglen 'mountain like'
Wangnguba 'high vision/Philosopher'

Female name

Laija 'water'
Thaja 'moon'
Lanchenbi 'goddess of wealth'
Khumanleima 'Lady of the Khuman clan'
Lingthoingambi 'The brave (female)'

The revivalist or Meitei marup tried their best to use Meitei/Meetei for men and Leima for married woman and Chanu for maiden in place of Singh or Devi respectively. Some of them prefer to use their clan name with or without the suffixation of -cha, e.g, Laishram Tomba Khumancha, Ningthoujam Khamba Mangang or Ningthoujam Khamba Mangangcha etc.

VI. GENDER TERMS IN NAMING SYSTEM

6. Gender terms in naming system

Issues relating with identification of gender terms is one of the important factor. In Manipuri society, most of the personal names distinguish their gender of the name -bearer i.e male are distinguish from female by the last name, such as Leima/Chanu for female (Chanu is used for unmarried female) and for those who don't embrace Hinduism whereas, Devi is used for those who opted for Hinduism. Similarly, for male, the term like Singh or Meitei is commonly used. Shri and Shrimati/Kumari are used respectively to address a male and female (married/unmarried) person's name for the followers of Hindu faith whereas Ikai khumnajaraba and Ikai khumnajarabi respectively for revivalists. It is taboo to use the name of a dead person without putting the word 'Leikhidraba' or 'Swargya' means one that is no more.

VII. MODERN PATTERN OF NAMING

7. Modern pattern of Naming

In the present scenario, the variation in religion is least reflected with naming. A person's name may be one's own choice irrespective of native or foreign terms. For instance: Asem korounganba singh may or may not be Meitei marup. Nevertheless, the modern trends for Manipuri's naming may be listed as follows, citing the names of eight Football players from Manipur who have joined as the Indian football team in the recent Fifa U-17 World Cup- 2007, hosted in India. They are a) Amarjit Kiyam, b) Borish Thangjam, c) Jackson Thounaojam, d) Dheeraj Moirangthem, e) Nongdamba Naorem, f) Ningthoinganba Meitei, g) Suresh wangjam and h) Md Shah Jahan (Source: The Telegraph, 4/10/2017). From the above data it shows that some people prefer to put Surname after their names. The identities of Meiteis are shown by the very surname itself. On the other hand, if surnames are dropped than it loses the ethnic identities such as Amarjit Singh, Dheeraj Singh, Jackson Singh, Suresh Singh or Borish Singh. Meiteis being a stock of the Tibeto-Burman family, they resemble more to Southeast Asian people. Thus, the title Singh added to ethnonym creates confusion to the mainlanders and foreigners, as it is similar with the Surname of Sikh men of Punjab or other Indo-aryan groups. On the other hand, some people tried to use the initial letter of name followed by surname or the ethnonym Meitei/meetei such as N. Meetei or N. Naorem, which is again difficult to understand what the initial letter stands for. In the present scenario, the trend changes to the pattern of Name + surname or Name + Title. But, one of all the commonest patterns which are explicit in showing the identity of personal name or the ethnic group in a Meitei society is Surname + Name + (Title).

Similarly, if Meitei pangal do not put their surname, it's difficult to believe that they are from Manipur. The modern naming style of Meitei pangal shows similarities with Muslim style of naming such as using Md. Or Mohammed as the initial followed by the names such as Md. Ayub khan, commonly for men, and, for women the name followed by Begum is quite common e.g. Rashida Begum. Here, it is worth to be mentioned that many Meitei pangal also take usual Meitei names e.g. Iboton, Itomba, Amuthoi, etc. in addition to usual Muslim names. So, Meitei naming terms to Meitei pangal's name identify themselves as Meitei pangal or Meitei Muslim from other Muslims.

It is mentioned earlier that in Meitei society Sharma is used to make a distinction of Bamon from non Bamon. Following the same trend Bamons have also begun to write names without their surnames irrespective of the sex i.e. name + Sharma; for instance, Robindro Sharma, Baldev Sharma, Priya Sharma, Joyshree Sharma, etc. But, Bamons also take Meitei terms for their names, such as Tomba, Angouba, Ibohal, etc. This establishes their identity as Meitei Brahmin despite the use of the term Sharma.

VIII. CONCLUSION

8. Conclusion

The vital roles played by surnames are discussed in the paper. It also discusses when and how the surname came into existence in the Meitei society. Surname is part of a personal name and it shows the identity of a person. The Meiteis comprise of seven clans, each having various surnames. The importance of knowing the surname also reflects the culture of the ethnonym. Marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited. Every Meiteis need to know their own clan and their great ancestor known as *Pu-Kok* literal meaning is 'Grand-Head'. The Meiteis are ancestor worshipper. It is reflected in the naming of clans based on different time period of a day, according to the timing of the birth of their great ancestor. Thus, it implies the remembrance of their ancestors in terms of time period of a day. This paper observes the various pattern of naming across the time period. Since time immemorial, the pattern of coining surnames relating with a particular duty or obligation to the king is shown by the endings of surname i.e. -em, -am, -om respectively. It also discusses the emergence of new surnames for Brahmins and Muslims in the society, further, the changes that came with the advent of Hinduism and the impact of the Revivalist leading to two different patterns of naming especially the titles. The modern pattern of naming shows the positive attitude towards the use of surnames after the personal name. Nevertheless, using ones surname shows the identity, place and ethnonym of Meiteis, Bamon and Meitei pangal. This paper will definitely serve a vital role in illustrating the history and culture associated with the very surnames of Meiteis.

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IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Abdillah Uin Medan The Correlation Of Workmotivation, Innovative Attitude, Self-Concept, Andorganization Climate With The Islamic Education Teachers'professionalism Inelementary Schools In Binjai." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) , vol. 22, no. 11, 2017, pp. 35-43.