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## Origin and Settlement Pattern of Rongmei Ethnic Villages in Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency of Manipur State

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### Abstract

*There are as many as 31 villages of Rongmei Ethnic group in Imphal West District of Manipur. Imphal West is a district in Manipur valley and the capital city of the state with 7(seven) Rongmei Villages fall under Imphal Municipal Cor-poration Ward No. 1; and the other 1 (one) in Imphal Municipal Cor-poration Ward No. 25 in the Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency to Manipur State.*

*There is a long history of their Origin and Settlement prior to British rule in Manipur and India. Thus, these villages had established strong affinity with the Kings of Manipur when the province was still a Princely state.*

*The present work is carried out to study the history of their origin, settlement pattern and their electoral participation within their jurisdiction up to their modern days. The researcher interviewed imminent persons, public leaders, scholars and village elders. All bias is removed as far as possible. Both primary and secondary data are used.*

*These people have been playing an important role in which they are living and their contribution towards the society and their surrounding communities at large in their social and political affairs. Their status-quo must be examined and the needs be attended to. To the very nature of their ethnic character that might violate and trespass their peaceful existence could be an important index in Ethnic Studies.*

**Key Words: Origin, Settlement Pattern, Rongmei, Tribe, Municipal Corporation, Election.**

### Introduction

Manipur is one of the north-eastern states of India which is located between 23.83°N and 25.68°N latitude and 93.03°E and 94.78°E longitude. According to the *Cheitharol Kumbaba, the Royal Chronicle of Manipur*, it was once a princely state from 33 AD which marked the coronation of the King Meidingu Pakhangba(Pakhangba). After Pakhangba, a series of kings ruled over the kingdom of Manipur up to the reign of the king M. Kulachandra in 1891 AD. From 1892 onwards Manipur became a princely state under the political control of Government of British India. This British paramony continued till 1947 in which India got independence. Thus, the state merged with the Indian Union on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 under the then king Maharaja Bodhchandra. It had been a Union Territory from 1956 and later became a full-fledged state of India on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972.

At present, the area of the state recorded according to the 2011 census is 22,327 sq. Km. The Valley comprise of 2,238sq.km. which is 10% of the total area and that of the Hills comprise of 20,089sq.km. which is 90% of the total area of the state. There are 9(nine) districts in the states in which the four Valley Districts are : Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal. The other five Hill Districts are Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul. Recently, there are another

7 (seven) new districts to which the number of districts in the state now goes up to 16 districts. The state is bounded by the states of Nagaland in the north; Mizoram in the south, Assam in the west and the east is bounded by upper Myanmar.

It has a population of 28,55,794 as per 2011 census of India occupying 0.24% of the total population of India. Out of which the Valley districts population is 16,33,672 and that of the Hills districts population is 12,22,122. Manipur is a habitat of several ethnic groups which are placed under scheduled tribe list of India. It is often described as the mini India due to its composite features of its people, land and culture having long standing history of its existence. There are two major groups of people in Manipur- the valley people and the hill people. The valley people comprise of Meitei, Meitei Pangal and Scheduled tribes who have dwelt in the land from the pre-historic time. The hill people are the Naga tribes. The Kuki tribes also include among the hill people of the state. Now there are 37 recognized scheduled tribes besides General, Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Classes in Manipur. There are 12 Assembly sectors in Imphal west district with a population of 5, 17,992. Out of this there are 26,460 persons in Thangmeiband assembly.

### **Significance of the study**

As per in the Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950,- (a) in PART X.- Manipur at Sl. No. 8(eight) Kabui is one of the main recognized indigenous tribe of Manipur. The so called Kabui constitute the two cognate tribes i.e. Inpui and Rongmei. Now these two cognate people are called and known separately as the Rongmei tribe and the Inpui tribe as per the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2011, (No. 2 of 2012) dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Thence, the tribe nomenclature given to the Rongmei has no prejudice. The Rongmei mostly live in Tamenglong district. They also live in the districts of Bishnupur, Churachandpur, Imphal-East, Imphal-West, Senapati and Thoubal in Manipur. It is the most widespread indigenous tribe of Manipur who are found living permanently in all parts of the North East India. They also live in the Imphal Municipal Cor-poration areas and play crucial role in all fronts. This tribe by the very nature of its ethnicity had a long oral tradition and rich folklores about their origin and settlement in the places they lived and are living have been pass down from their ancestors with no spite. These evidences are found in their folk songs, legends, ritual practices, custom, tradition and culture.

Imphal West District has 12 assembly sectors to the house of Manipur Legislative Assembly having 60 members. Thangmeiband is one of the constituencies. There are as many as 31 Rongmei villages in Imphal-West district out of which 8(eight) villages are found living in the Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency of Imphal-West District, Manipur. There is a long standing story of their origin and settlement in the present Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency from the times of Ancient kings of Manipur, during British period and up to the present days. Keeping these views in mind the present study is undertaken.

### **Objective of the Study:**

To study the Origin and Settlement Pattern of Rongmei Ethnic Villages in Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency of Manipur State.

### **Methodology & Tools Employed:**

The study is carried out through descriptive survey method. The study used interview schedule and questionnaires. The data are collected from both primary and secondary sources.

## **ORIGIN OF THE RONGMEI TRIBE: LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNT**

### **1. Makhel, the original abode of Zeliangrong and other Naga tribes:**

The oral tradition in the Rongmei legends, folk songs, folk tales, traditional rites and ritual practices and the evolved culture from times immemorial believed that the Rongmei people came out from the mythical cave known as *Mahou-Taobei*<sup>(1)</sup>. The first man who came out of the cave was known as *Pokrei(Puakrei/Dirannang)* and the woman was *Dichalu*. They were the ancestors of the Rongmei people. *Mahou-Taobei* is located in a place with, "a deep gorge between two hills at about ten kilometres north of the Liangmei village of Oklong in Northern Manipur (Senapati District). The gorge is dry in winter and there is water during the rainy season. There is a stone slab called Chatuki. It is very deep and dark and the stars are seen dimly<sup>(2)</sup>. This deep gorge which might have resembled a 'squeezed-old-land' is considered to be known as *Ramting-Kabin* in Liangmai word in *Makhel*. From *Makhel*, the various Naga tribes such as Mao, Poumai, Maram, Thangal, Tangkhul and the Zeliangrong Naga( Zeme, Liangmai & Rongmei) dispersed to their various present habitats.<sup>(3)</sup> To this regards, T.C. Hodson remarked, " At Maikel is to be seen a stone, now erect, which marks the place from which the common ancestors emerged from the earth". Maikel (*Makhel*) is regarded as the centre from which migration took place.<sup>(4)</sup> The Angamis, Lothas, Semas and Chakhesang have the tradition of originating and migrating from the village of *Khezakenoma* to the east of *Makhel* and north of Tungjoy; a tradition also links up the Angamis to *Makhel*. From *Ramting-Kabin* the Zeliangrong kindered tribe went southward and settled at Chawang Phungning also known as *Guang-Phungning*. These group of people further moved to *Makuilongdi* (meaning 'big round mountain') where it marked the beginning of the Zeliangrong Culture.<sup>(5)</sup> According to the Rongmei oral tradition, the nearest kindered tribes namely Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei including Inpuimei dispersed from *Makuilongdi* to different directions: Zeme to the far west up to Assam;

the Rongmei also called Maruangmei/ mRuangmei to the south till Lushai Hills in Mizoram and the Liangmai in the north and in an around the Koubrou mountains.

## **2. Zeliangrong Settlement in the Koubrou Mountains from Makuilongdi :**

Chaitiu, the youngest brother of Nguiba , left Makuilongdi during the life time of his brother and established a village named Lungphou in the Koubrou Mountains. Chaitiu's descendents spread out in several villages in the region and upto the Nongmaijing hills in Central Manipur Valley. Later on, nine villages of the Liangmai survived and they were known to the Meitei as Koireng(not to be confused with later Koirengs who also settled many centuries later in the Koubrou-Leimaton hills). They came into clashes with the Kings of Manipur in the historical periods as recorded in the Royal Chronicle of Manipur.<sup>(6)</sup> Chaitiu was the king of Koubrou and his youngest son Manglebou was kept at home by his mother to look after the domesticated animals. In doing so Manglebou saw three piglets and later he saw a python coming up from the lake swallowed one of the piglets. He took the advice of his mother to protect the piglets from python by spreading the raw sliced turmeric around the sty. The very place where the pig gave birth to piglets is known as *Gakboulong*(*Gakbou= sty, long= Place*) and to the Meitei they called it Oknaopokpi(Oknao=Piglet, Pokpi=Birth). The Meitei after their adoption of Vaishnavism called Oknaopokpi as Yaingangpokpi (Yaingang-Turmeric, Pokpi- birth). He searched a long way to find the sty where it is believed to be the present Mahadev hill and the lake is also believed to be the present valley of Manipur. Manglembou settled at Oknaopokpi, again he shifted to Khalong at Nongmaijing hills and again lived at Shellong Village during which the Manipur Valley was a big lake and the Zeliangrong called it as Tung(to mean big lake).<sup>(7)</sup> The Shellong village thus mentioned is found out to be recorded during the reign of Meidingu Konthouba(568-658 A.D) as Shelloi-Langmai and the Haokap Chingsang Khunpham Ngangcheng in the Cheitharol Kumbaba must be that Lungphou village in Koubrou hills.<sup>(8)</sup>

## **3. History of origin of Rongmei tribe in the realm of Manipur history:<sup>(9)</sup>**

According to the historical text in Manipuri named Poireiton Khunthokpa, refers to the adventures of one coloniser from the East named Poireiton in Manipur. He visited many Shan villages in Kabaw Valley of Burma and the Eastern and the Southern hills and Valley of Manipur. He came in search of fruits of immortality. This historical work refers to a number of tribes like Tangkhul, Anal and Kabui (Zeliangrong). According to Pakhangba Nongkaron, another historical text, Poireiton was a contemporary of the Meitei King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba against whom Poireiton fought for the throne of the Kangla . Poireiton was defeated and gave his sister Laisana in marriage to Pakhangba and settled down as a chief of Lamdeng Village.

Then Pakhangba fought and succeeded in the conquest of the Kangla and he became the king of the Ningthouja dynasty of the Meiteis. In his struggle, he defeated Poireiton. He also fought against the the Khaba tribe(or a clan later as) who once controlled the Kangla. Pakhangba was defeated by the Khabas and fled to Moirang. Later, he came back and defeated the Khaba tribe. The Khabas were scattered. Some fled to the Tangkhuls, some surrendered to Pakhangba. According to another historical text called "Chakpa Khunta Khunthoklon", one Khaba Chief named Lamlekshang Khaba fled from the Valley and went to the village of Nungngang and became a Nungngang Kabui. The authenticity of this text is accepted by many distinguished scholars. So, Khaba Lamlekshang, a refugee from Imphal valley during the reign of Pakhangba (33- 154 A.D.) went to the Rongmei village called Nungngang(Longraang) in Tamenglong district in the first century of the Christian era. It was the first reference to Kabui tribe (Rongmei) in the history of Manipur. According to this reference Nungngang village existed in the first century. The settlement history of Nungngang (Longraang) proves the historicity of this village. There are traditions at Nungngang that the Meitei goddess of Ireima whose temple was located the village of Hiyangthang, now converted to Kamakhya Devi by the Hinduised Meitei king was originally a goddess from Nungngang( Bungtelunei or Kadilunei). Tamenglong village or Inrianglong (Rongmei Village) was also already in existence. Kabui tribe lived at Nungngang village in the first century. The term "Kabui" was a Meitei name for the Rongmei section of the Zeliangrong. It is clear that the Meitei knew the Zeliangrong country and the route through it. Lamlekshang knew the inaccessibility of Nungngang Village, surrounded by three rivers, Leimatak, Ijei and the Irang river of Tamenglong.

## **ORIGIN AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF RONGMEI ETHNIC VILLAGES IN THANGMEIBAND ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY OF MANIPUR STATE**

The origin of the Rongmei Ethnic Villages in the Manipur valley came long after their settlement in their ancestral land particularly from Tamenglong district in different period of historical times. There are eight (8) Rongmei villages at present within the Assembly Constituency of Thangmeiband in Imphal West District, Manipur. They immigrated from Tamenglong under such conditions that they at a point of time extend helps to the kings of Manipur through which both the Meitei and the Rongmei began to evolve as good neighbour and live together from many centuries. The eight villages are : Namthanlong (Muchi Khul), Dimdailong, Tharon, Langol Tarung (Tarung), Neikanlong, Guigailong, Lungdaijang and Majorkhul.

### **1. Namthanlong Village : Origin and Settlement Pattern.<sup>(10)</sup>**

The people immigrated from different villages of Tamenglong District during the reign of Maharaja Khagemba in 1597-1652 A.D. The village was formerly called Muchi-Khun, which means the ' colony of tanners' (Cobblers). It is one of the oldest

villages situated in Imphal city. Before the reign of Maharaja Sir Chandrakirti Singh in 1827, Namthanlong village was allotted to settle in the present premises of G.M. Hall, Indira Park, Old Manipur Legislative Assembly, Public Library and Imphal Talkies. In those days the village was known as Ragailong and its first Khullakpa and Khunbu of this village were Pou Golmeidun Palmei and Pouh. Angou Kamei respectively. Pou Golmeidun Palmei was also conferred with the title ‘ Sanglakpa’, and there were other men who were given the title ‘Hidang’ and ‘ Hanjaba’ from the Royal family. During the reign of Maharaja Sir Chandrakirti Singh(1850-1886 A.D.), Pouh. Mikhu, Pou Takhing and Pou Chingamba were sent to Kanpur (UP) for leather work trainings. In this period the village became so famous in leather works and thus the people of Manipur, Assam and Kabaw came to purchase. After a period of 33 peaceful settlement the Maharaja ordered to shift the village to Kabow Leikai which belongs to MBC compound and Adimjati High School at present. After two years of settlement the Maharaja once again ordered to shift to a new place where the present Namthanlong is standing in the year 1862. The first Khullakpa and Khunbu of this newly established village were Pou Mikhu Gangmei and Pou Takhing Gangmei. As there leather works became famous the village came to be popularly known as ‘Muchi’ instead of Namthanlong which is original after their profession in leather tanning. Muchi is not the real name to be called.

**2. Dimdaijang Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern.<sup>(11)</sup>**

The Dimdaijang village which lies adjacent to the east of Namthanlong village is of the later origin. The like-minded group of people planned together and established the village in the year 1968. The people formerly followed the traditional ways of faith, worship, rites and rituals but the waves of Christianity made them converted to Christianity from the year the 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1974. The first Nhampou(Khunpu) was Pouh. Khunlangam Kamsuan, the first Nhamgaekpouc(Khullakpa) was Pouh. and the first Peicpouc(Thoubei) was Pouh. Gulap Pamei. The present Nhampou (Khunpu) is Pouh. Poujaenglung Gangmei, the Nhamgaekpouc (Khullakpa) is Pouh. Kudimlung Panmei. These people have been immigrated together from Puangringlong, Makhum, Chinikon and Langthabal respectively.<sup>(12)</sup>

As the Namthanlong and Dimdaijang villages are very close and adjacent to each other the present scenario in their population distribution is shown together on the table given below:

Name of the village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population Below 18yr.			Grand total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Total
Namthanlong	190	286	388	674	59	63	122	384	492	876
Dimdailong					39	41	80			
					98	104	202			

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

There are 190 houses in these villages. The total population is 876 in which 384 are males and 492 are females. There are 286 adults male and 388 adult females. 98 boys are under the age of 18 years and 104 boys altogether 202 are found to be below 18 years.

**3. Tharon Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern<sup>(13)</sup>**

From the study, it is found that during King Meidingu Lamgramba(Lamkyamba) ( 1512-1523 A.D.) he visited to Tharon Village of Tamenglong and met two prominent villagers called Haomuba (by local name Tingyuhaeng) and Haotomba(Called Pighaeng). The king met them at the village and they acted as king’s guide during his tour in the village. Having satisfied with their service the king asked them to be in his service. But they, instead of accepting his offer, challenged the king. So, the king overpowered them and brought to the capital (Konung) of his kingdom. Accordingly, the king put them in his service. According to the traditional oral narration, Haomuba was even promoted to the office of Chingsang Lakpa. During their long period of stay in the Palace the news of ailing father of Haomuba called Hamajung who suffered from cancer came and he pleaded before the king to attend his father. But the King ordered his father to come for treatment by the royal physicians. He was cured and pleaded to go back but the king allowed to settle at a place of their choice for their homestead. So, they chose Cheiraoching Hill range at the place and gave the name ‘Tharon’ that resembled Tharon of Tamenglong where now lies the memorial statues of Manipur Martyrs. The king granted some plain portion for their agricultural practices. They made two water holes/ponds. The first pond was located near the present Sinam Leikai Community hall, Thangmeiband and the other was at the main roadside of Neikanlong village. In course of time many came migrating from the old Tharon and settled here. With the increase in population the village is shifted further away to present State Capitol Complex but the Assam Rifles Shooting Range forced the village to move southward in the present settlement site. The village is bounded by the Wall of Assembly Complex on the east; top of Cheiraoching range on the north, outlet pipeline of PHED on the west and Yumnam Leikai on the south. The friendly relationship between the people of Tharon and the Kings of Manipur continued till the reign of Maharaja Bodhchandra(1941-1955) and he visited Tharon village on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec.1946 (*Cheitharol Kumbaba P. 502*)<sup>14</sup>. This account is affirmed by the office of the Uttra Sanglen, Sana Konung, Imphal

and a record relating to that was handed over to the Village Authority of Tharon by the Maiba Hanba, Sana Konung, Imphal Manipur.

The present population scenario of the Tharon village is depicted below on the table:

Name of Village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population under 18 yrs.			Grand Total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.
Tharon	95	153	177	330	54	49	103	207	226	473

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

From the above table we have found out that there are 95 households having a total population of 473 in which 207 are males and 226 are females. 153 adult males are above the age of 18 years and that of women who have exercised their voting right are 177. The growing up children who are below the age of 18 years is found out to be 54 males and 49 females respectively.

#### 4. Langol Tarung (Tarung) Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern<sup>(15)</sup>

The oral tradition according to the village elders said that Tarung was once settled at the present site of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Farm situated on the lofty part of the Langol Hill range where Tarung Lairembi is worshipped. The foremost leaders and the founder of the Tarung Village were Pouh. Miumei Kamei followed by Pouh. Dilemmang Panmei. They were from Duilon Village (Wairangba) of Tamenglong District. The existence of Tarung village is also supported and authenticated by the conquest of King Meidingu Khagemba in 1608 A.D.<sup>(16)</sup>(Cheitharol Kumbaba., p. 51) Further, consent of agreement to the settlement of Rongmei tribe at Langol Hills could be found out from the reign of King Garibniwaz (1700-1748) as per the oral tradition of the village. During his reign the king recruited large number of tribal warriors for his famous Burma Campaign. According to an unpublished text, Ningthourol Kumpaba, it was in 1735 A.D. that the Kabui (Rongmei) who returned from the King's Expedition to Burma were allowed to settle by the king at the Langol Hills and Chingmeirong hills.<sup>(17)</sup>

The village elders narrated that during the reign of Maharaja Bhagyachandra (Chingthangkomba) (1763- 1798) he took shelter at Wairangba (Duilon) village in Tamenglong village during Ava invasion. Again, when the Manipur kingdom was under Seven Years Devastation from 1819-1826 A.D., the king fled from the palace and took shelter at Wairangba (Duilon Village) in Tamenglong District where they got helps to chase away the invading Ava (Burma) forces. As a result, Wairangba villagers were given freedom of choice to settle at the previously settled site of Tarung people. Thus, Langol Tarung village people are also descended from Duilon (Wairangba) village of Tamenglong District. Tarung villagers were given the full authority to serve the three important deities of the whole Langol Hill Range such as Thongak Lairembi in Western part of the Hill; Langol Ningthou located at the central part of the Hill, and Tarung Lairembi at Tarung Phumgong (Tarung Khunman). The priesthood of these three prominent deities were fully taken care of by the ancestors of Tarung Village priests since many centuries. Some of the forefathers of later generations who had served as priesthood are: Maipakpa Kabui and was succeeded by Khumeisong Naga were the priests of Thongak Lairembi; the priest of Langol Ningthou were Lily Naga and K. Salukhoi of Tarung, and the priests of Tarung Lairembi in the later period were found to be Mr. Sengoi Naga and Kabui Tarung Tomba of Tarung village. The insistence of Charoibam Maiba (Prophet) and Tonu Maibi (Prophetess) of Meitei community came and helped Tarung Priest of Thongak Lairembi Mr. Khumeisong Naga in 1942 and persuaded him to allow them in serving the deity and the intervention of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War paved the way to conditionally abandoned and taken over the service of priesthood from the hands of Tarung priests by the Meitei in 1947.<sup>(18)</sup>

One of the intimate friend of Maharaja Bodhchandra was Kabui Tarung Tomba (Khiandinang Panmei) who was truly a descendant from Wairangba village. He requested on invitation to the King Maharaja Bodhchandra to visit the village and grant a good wish for the prosperity and good harvest of the village in the year 1949.<sup>(19)</sup>

At present, the village is bounded by the Cheiraoching hill top on the east; the Lamphelpat on the west, the Thangmeiband Sinam Leikai on the north and the Guigailong village on the south. Summary on the population of the Langol Tarung village can be seen from the table given below:

Name of Village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population under 18 yrs.			Grand Total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.
Langol Tarung	192	303	395	698	104	108	212	407	503	910

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

From the above table we have seen that Langol Tarung village has 192 households with a total population of 910 persons out of which 407 are males and 503 are females. There are 303 males and 395 females who have the right to franchise. Again the number of children below the age of 18 years is found out to be 212 comprising 104 boys and 108 girls.

**5. Major Khul Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern<sup>(20)</sup>**

The people of Majorkhul village who are living in the heart of Imphal city are believed to be the descendants of Awangkhum (Luangchum) village of Tamenglong district. They have started coming in the Manipur valley with the British conquest of Manipur in 1891 AD. This village was previously known as Phousu Khun (Village of Rice Pounders). The problem of the Phousukhun, the rice pounders was immense. They were dispersed; some settled at a small locality named as Menjor Khun (the present Majorkhul) after Menjor Shamu Luwang Ningthou. During that time they lived in the as Colony of rice pounder within the big compound of Luwang Ningthou Menjor Shamu, the place where the present GM Hall is constructed up to the Old Assembly Complex and the present Bir Tikendrajit Park Road.

The present population distribution of the Majorkhul village can be studied from the table given below:

Name of Village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population under 18 yrs.			Grand Total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.
Majorkhul	147	199	252	451	56	63	119	262	308	570

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

From the table above, Majorkhul village with 147 households has a total population of 570 persons having 262 males and 308 females. The male who have crossed the age of 18 years are found out to be 199 and that of females are 252. Children below the age of 18 years are found out to be 56 boys and 63 girls.

**6. Neikanlong Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern<sup>(21)</sup>**

The Neikanlong village was established in the year 1970 A.D. The three families who settled first at Neikanlong were Pouh. K.G. Gailalung (Retd.SDC) of Kalong village; Pouh. P.G. Dimthaorei (Retd. SDC0 of Sempaeng village and Pouh Daniel Gangmei of Dailong village. They bought a piece of one acre of land from Pouh. Makusing Phaomei of Namthanlong (Muchikhul) and started making their homestead. In the later years, Pouh. Gaidun Kamei of Sempaeng village and Pouh. Dimthaochung Malangmei of Saengji village came to settle at Neikanlong. The village kept on expanding and more families were added which gave and evolved to the present status in the region. The present day population scenario is depicted on the table given below:

Name of Village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population under 18 yrs.			Grand Total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.
Neikanlong	65	148	203	351	49	49	98	197	252	449

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

From the table, it is found out that Neikanlong village has 65 households with a population of 449. Adult population comprising 148 males and 203 females have been enrolled in the electoral roll. The population of children below the age of 18 years are 49 boys and 49 girls.

**7. Guigailong Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern<sup>(22)</sup>**

Guigailong village was established in the year 1980 A.D. They formerly lived at Ramgailong Laimanai Village and shifted to the present Guigailong Village. They bought a piece of land measuring two(2) acres from one Mr. Khongbantaba Yaima of Thangmeiband Sinam Leikai. They moved into the area and established their homestead with the first four families namely ; Pouh. Gainingpou Rongmei, Pouh. Angampou Panmei, Pouh. Katutna Riamei and Pouh. Sakulung Gangmei. The village was smoothly run under the secretarial post of Mr. Katutna Riamei from 1980- 1990. There was the need of village Chairman to which Mr. Gainingpou Rongmei was made to be the Chairman from 1990-1994 till his appointment to be the religious leader (Church Pastor) of the Village. In the subsequent years the village underwent changes in all spheres of activities and village administration with the increase in the number of houses who came to settle in the village one after another. At present, the village is administered under the Chairmanship of Pouh. Gainingpou Rongmei and the other sub-organized unit like Youth Club, Women Society and Baptist Church are functioning in the village.

The population of the village can be examined from the table given below:

Name of Village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population under 18 yrs.			Grand Total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.
Guigailong	47	76	96	172	29	42	71	105	138	243

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

From the given table, it can be concluded that Guigailong village has 47 houses with a total population of 243 persons. There are adults with 76 males and 96 females and that of children below the age of 18<sup>th</sup> years are 71 that comprise of 29 boys and 42 girls respectively.

### 8. Lungdaijang Village: Origin and Settlement Pattern<sup>(23)</sup>

The Lungdaijang Village came into being from the year 1965 A.D. The people of this village were from Puangringlong village of Tamenglong. The first Nhamngaekpouc ( Khullakpa) was Pouh. Kahuamdai Gangmei. It is a small village with 26 households but existed with all dignified traditions and culture to which they belong. At present, the Nhamngaekpouc (Khullakpa) is Pouh. Kalunggai Gangmei the younger brother of the first Khullakpa. Their population index could be seen from the table given as under:

Name of Village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population under 18 yrs.			Grand Total		
		Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.
Lungdaijang	26	36	48	84	18	16	34	54	64	118

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

There are 26 houses in Lungdaijang village. Their population is only 118 in which there are 54 males and 64 females. Adult population has 36 males and 48 females. The children who are under the age of 18 years are 34 persons in which 18 are males and 16 are females.

The Rongmei villages namely Namthanlong Village(formerly called Muchi-Khun); Tharon Village, Langol Tarung Village and Major Khul Village in the Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency have been possessing the unwavering foundation and the right to live from the very long time as stated before. The Dimdaijang village(1968) which is adjacent to the Namthanlong village; the Neikanlong village(1970) which borders Langol Tarung village on the north, the Guigailong village(1980)which lies on the southern border of Langol Tarung and the Lungdaijang village (1965) established comparatively later than those formerly mentioned villages. To this effect, there is nothing to be underestimated as to how a particular village is more prominent than the other. This is because of the ingredients that they share in all these villages and they are very connected to each other through inter-marriages and kinship.

The population distribution of these people of Rongmei ethnic villages can be seen as depicted in the table below:

Sl.no.	Name of the village	Number of Houses	Adult Population			Population Below 18yr.			Grand total		
			Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Total
1.	Namthanlong	190	286	388	674	59	63	122	384	492	876
2.	Dimdailong					39	41	80			
3.	Tharon	95	153	177	330	54	49	103	207	226	473
4.	Langol Tarung	192	303	395	698	104	108	212	407	503	910
5.	Majorkhul	147	199	252	451	56	63	119	262	308	560
6.	Neikanlong	65	148	203	351	49	49	98	197	252	449
7.	Guigailong	47	76	96	172	29	42	71	105	138	243
8.	Lungdaijang	26	36	48	84	18	16	34	54	64	118
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>762</b>	<b>1201</b>	<b>1559</b>	<b>2760</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>1616</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>3629</b>

Source: 2017 Electoral Roll, Govt. of Manipur & Field Survey.

From the table above it is found out that there are 8 villages in which there are altogether 762 households. The total population is 3629 out of which 1616 are males and that of females are 1983. The children who are below 18 years are found out

to be 839 comprising 408 boys and 431 girls. With this chunk of concrete population, it has been playing an important role in the society in an around in which they are living.

### ***Electoral Participation of the People***

Manipur state has a House of Assembly with 60 members. Imphal West District has 12 MLA in which Thangmeiband Assembly is included. Population of Imphal West District is 5, 17,992 in which Thangmeiband Assembly comprises 26,460. Out of this 26,460 people the population of Rongmei Ethnic group numbers 3629 constituting 14% of the Constituency population in which 2760 persons have enrolled in the state electoral roll. With the increase in population, the Rongmei people living in this assembly constituency have been playing an important role in electoral affairs. People have participated in all the political affairs to fostering and uplifting the villages in all spheres of life. Looking at the need of the people the government also took up various fair deals in electoral process which have been paving the right ways and rights to develop in the region they are living. The government has given quota seat reservation to the election of Imphal Municipal Council and this resulted to have at present, two (2) Councillors and one (1) Ward Development Member who are all elected through the election. Shri. G.Gaidon Rongmei from Langol Tarung Village is the present Councillor of Imphal Municipal Council Ward N0.1 and Shri. Hounilung Panmei of Langol Tarung is also the Ward Development Member of Imphal Municipal Council Ward No.1. Meanwhile, Smt. Sujata Kamei of Majorkhul is the Councillor of Ward No. 25 of the Imphal Municipal Council. The mentioned important public leaders are from the Rongmei ethnic tribe of Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency.

Further, the Rongmei people of this region have been participating in holding the general election to the Manipur Legislative Assembly. . The renowned person Prof.Gangmumei Kamei former Minister and the inhabitant of Majorkhul village had once contested the general election in the Thangmeiband Constituency though he had not been elected and left to the second runner up. Interestingly, these people have been playing in the electoral games as a deciding factor to win in the elections. As a result, people (Meitei) who belong to the unreserved category of people used to run after these people to be in their political folds.

Preservation of their status-quo; empowering their solidarity, and the very nature ethnicity need to be understood and taken care of. Their settlement and their intermingling in the society at large has been the important ingredient to the society and to the Imphal West district in particular and to the state of Manipur in general. The would be pressure from the dominant community who inhabit around the Rongmei villages with the feelings to disintegrate and create chaos amongst this weaker section of the society should be checked and let not happened. Rather, their long standing and their established facts of inhabiting in the region must be respected, preserved and given every privilege to strengthen and sustain their existence in the places where they are living in unity. The situation of imbalances in the geo-political affairs with exaggerate divisive attitudes by the dominant community would cause irreparable downfall to this ethnic group.

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- <sup>4</sup> Hodson, T.C., “ *The Naga Tribes of Manipur*”,p. 13.
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- <sup>6</sup> Gangmumei K., op.cit., pp. 46 – 47.
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<sup>22</sup> An Interview with informant Mr. Gainingpou Rongmei., Chairman, Guigailong Village Authority, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. July, 2017.

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