The Lived Reality of Koms (Komrem) in Manipur: An Emerging Political Perspective

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This paper attempts to situate the socio political context of Manipur state as viewed from the experience of Koms (Komrem) in Manipur. Northeast region in general and Manipur state in particular is described by cultural diversity. It is duly classified in the emerging literature as multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-tribe. The ethnic social structure and polity is intrinsically shaped by the ecological context of the region falling within a larger part of the South East Asia. The state building processes in such context has had a unique impact on the embedded social reality often not seen in other parts of the country. Among other things, ethnic identity politics usually defined within the theoretical constructs of self determination has emerged as a prominent state generated socio political process producing shared and contested boundaries of social interaction. In such a context, historiography, theorization and political ideology, in particular, find convergence largely within the domain of colonial constructs and western concept of state politics fanned by dominant ethnic groups: Meitei, Nagas and Kukis. This paper positions a political perspective of co-existence and mutual respect based on the experience of Koms (Komrem); a case for a lived perspective.

Keywords: Identity, Kom, Komrem, Manipur.

Introduction

The "spirit of northeast"[1] in general and Manipur in particular within the Indian nation-state contexts represents a unique lived experience. This lived experience is described by a celebration of multiple realities, a co-existence[2] within the ecological and geopolitical setting of the region. Going by the pre-state (precisely the pre-colonial) context the intrinsic relationship between cultures, polities and economies is defined by the contiguous range of hills and the four main valleys; Brahmaputra, Imphal, Surma and the Mekong of the region. The lived experience of the people in the region over time and period has been constantly confronted with various external state structures and political ideologies (Scott, 2009). However, lived reality of the region presents a unique context where culture and political structures have been defined over a period of time and space within the

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larger understanding of the economy and livelihood of the people. In fact, lived experience of the people is operationalised under their larger worldview: a worldview intrinsically connected to the past, the present world and the heavenly world. This actually becomes the defining structure of the both the political and the cultural.

However, the geopolitical nature of the region has changed drastically with the coming of the nation-state concept in the region. In fact, it is known in history that British traders came to this region in the 1760s and by 1890s they had captured this region. The nation-state construct had been planted in this time and place. This historical event has become the defining factor of culture and politics as well as change and transformation in the present context. The present socio-political and the economic analysis of the region; people, culture, economies and politics cannot be understood without understanding the colonial construct of the state and its attributes such as identity, ethnicity and nationality. In fact, the state binary constructs such as state-nonstate, civil domain-community domain, ethnic-civil etc. were injected into this region in an attempt to reorganise the cultures and polities within the colonial political domain. Therefore, in the present context, one can observe that lived reality is overwhelmed by the colonial concepts which have their roots in the West Phalian constructs of the 1640s. The emergence of the states[3] in the region basically defined by the political nature generated in the nation-state building processes in the 1940s has also become imperative categories to be understood in the larger political theories, ideologies and processes that shaped Europe. In the present context the lived reality is constantly shaped by the change and transformation along 'from tribe to ethnicity', 'ethnicity to nationality' within the political ideologies of self determination, indigenity, sovereignty and territoriality. This process is multidimensional and dynamic, requiring problematisation at various levels and drawing connections from particular to universal. It arises as a consequence of multi-cultural or multi-people lived realities which are closely related to the social structure and larger socio-political environment overpowered by the larger western political ideologies. Besides, there are also various situations leading to identity and ethnicity which generates dynamic interactions of specific socio-ethnic structures located in a particular geopolitical milieu of state,[4] districts, nations and frontier region, and also in the broader context of hegemonic capitalist globalisation. This, as argued by Burman (Burman in Bhadra, 2007: 11) has had profound impact on the struggle of world democratic forces.

Taking the complex context within the assumption of the intricate linkage between knowledge, ethnic and politics, it is important to situate the context at the process in totality, its history and historicity objectively. In fact, one has to move beyond mainstream constructs of 'northeast' culturally and politically giving space to the lived narratives of the people and the ecological characteristics. This distinction or the difference marks the specific ethnic context which is in constant dynamic process of interaction with external environment; social, economic and political circumstances. This dynamic process is expressed in varied forms of culture drawing an understanding within a framework of boundary definition, extension and resilience (Barth, 1970). There is a tension in the process of self identification (Jenkins, 1997) and change processes.

Received Theoretical Frameworks

As an observation commonly emerging in the region identity and culture is usually viewed from the perspective of ethnicity. Ethnicity is a cultural construct, which is related to the lived process of marginalised groups, or people who have been displaced from their territory. However, in the primordial school of thought, this element is very often considered as the basic "givens". This understanding has very often confined the conceptualisation along exclusivist approach within primordial school of thought (Geertz, 1973), as also seen in ethnonalism processes anchored along the colonial constructs in the region. Often lived experience is forcefully viewed within this theoretical framework. It is also known that the conceptual discussion of this concept has gone through various regions, histories and contexts. In fact, one can find a huge repository of knowledge around this concept. Therefore, it becomes all the more important to be critical about the constructs and concepts. As one goes through the literature, it is observed that Fredrik Barth's (1969) conceptualisation of ethnicity as boundary within the permeability or the ecological perspective makes a paradigmative shift. In fact, today, one usually looks at ethnicity in terms of pre and post Barth. The post Barth concept of ethnicity focuses on the boundary of social interaction and life processes. Therefore, ethnicity is more of a product of interaction, rather than reflecting essential qualities inherent to human groups. However, the post Barth understanding has further moved to the understanding of ethnicity that includes ethnicity and politics. Some of the works along this theme can be read in Glazer and Moynihan (1970), Phadnis (1989), Doshi (1990), and Cohen (1996). Here, there is shift from "culture as given" to "permeability of boundary", "ethnic identity as idiosyncratic characteristic" to "ethnicity as political processes", a circumstantial product and/or instrument. Keeping in mind these formulations, one is able to understand that theorisation on identity and culture can broadly be considered at two premises: a positivist premise and a constructivist premise. This trend of theorisation can be located in the shift of paradigm in defining "indigenous" people in the global context as clearly indicated in a shift from ILO 107 to ILO 169. In fact, the United Nations' Human Rights for Indigenous Peoples has also taken note of this premise. Although, constructivist premise has been critiqued in the northeast to a certain degree as middle class bias and anti-state that needs to be confronted to bring solution to the region, one should realise the relative space given to the lived experience and the theorisation from ground reality.

State Context and Processes in Manipur: Emerging Theorisation

The socio-political context and process of Manipur state represents a critical unit of location for understanding the northeastern region. The present state Manipur is built around the political center of the erstwhile Meitei Monarchy. It was captured by the British Empire in 1891 and became a part of the Union since 1947. However, the merger agreement was finally concluded in 1949. Therefore, the present state is defined by the intricate and complex cultural, economic and political reality forming a larger part of the contiguous hill area in the region. The context is greatly defined by the historical events leading to the Yandaboo Treaty, 1826 and state building process of state. As specific to the hill areas, the state is connected historically to the so called the Naga area tribal

region historicity and politics since the colonial times. Today, the Nagalim movement extends to the hill areas of Manipur. This movement in the hill areas has become a foundation for the emergence of other tribe and ethnic based movements in the hill region. In short, at this time, the state is confronted by various movements which are strongly supported and defended by the Armed Groups and the concept of identity and culture is taken to the realm of the politics. In fact, the debates emerging in this context indicates a trend of theoretisation closely resembles the West Phalian (1648) understanding of nation, state, territory and sovereignty. The relationship that exists between state politics, its territorial space and population distribution,[5] defines power and positions, and shape identities of various societies, people and communities.

The state context consists of more than thirty recognised Scheduled Tribes, Meiteis and the Panghans (Manipuri Muslims) at one level which further are ascribed into various ethnic conglomerates as a response to the nation-state building process. Scholars who are within certain ideologies or scholars who are outside of the lived reality refer to the people of the state majorly into three groups; Meiteis (including Panghans as the valley based ethnic group), Nagas and Kukis (hill based). However, confining the understanding oneself only within this construct indicates a suppression of the lived experience of the region. As for instance, the state process to lock the hill areas in two ethnic groups; Kuki or Naga is out-rightly colonial in perspective. Over a period, histories have been written and propagated within the historiograhical confines (exclusive in nature) of the Meiteis, Nagas and the Kukis which have created huge disjunction between cultures and people. In fact, the present context is very different from the pre-colonial era where basically the hill regions were described by village polities. The movement from village units or the chieftaincy units to ethnicity and nationalism, therefore, is a phenomenon of a recent history. The villages existed within certain cultural political structure which can be described through the concept of "segmented society" (Evas-Pritchard and Fortes, 1940). However, the reality is not as simple as that of the segmented social structure. Social structure is complex and dynamic which in the works of Edmund Leach in the 1950s described in terms of 'identity oscillation' within the political system of the highlanders. Besides, one can also see similar of relationship structures between the tribes and the valley feudal structures as referred to in Scott (2010). In particular, the foothill villages have a long history of contact and co-existence with the plain culture under the Meitei Kings.[6]

In the present context, the hill area, have been designated into five hill districts (six revenue units, if Sadar hill areas is taken into consideration). Each of these districts have been demarcated based on the primary domain of one particular tribe, a standard method of state identification, categorisation and administration. However, considering the diversities in terms of the tribe villages, polities and chieftaincy system, singular politico-administrative categorisation hardly permits a common consensual socio-political platform for negotiation.

It is important to state that the British policy for ethnic resettlement in the state vis-a-vis tribes in the region injected exclusive tribe ethnic identity. The theoretical premise of such ethnic reorganisation is based on the British policies of 1840s. In general, the British in their attempt to penetrate this region to move towards Burman to monopolise

trade and commerce, the resistance of tribes were handled through a theoretical construct: "people of the north origin" and "the south origin": the Nagas and the Kukis. This is usually referred to as the "divide and rule" policy of the British administration. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this construct has become a defining structure particularly in the hill region which constantly penetrates through the lived reality. In fact, most of the ethnic clashes in the hill region are generated based on this construct. It is also noted that the issue of land ownership and the customary rights played defining feature for social interaction and provides explanation to conflicts. With the emergence of the state territorial boundary, the ethnic boundary was forced to reorganise. In such context, migration, refugee and displacement became an issue confronted at the level of the lived reality. In such a line of thinking, it is attributed that the British administrative agents were the first who made attempts to classify the collective identities in Manipur within linguistic criteria[7] and a politico-administrative frame.[8] Today these exogenous categorisations determines considerably the forces of identity and ethnicity process. They are being tested at the consciousness level of the people in the present social and political environment. These processes of categorisations have often misperceived and subverted the articulations of a perspective "from within" the community, and are at times operationally coercive, as is seen in case of "Old Kuki" (Shakespear, 1909, 1912). People rarely identify themselves by such categorisations and in fact it has become detrimental to preservation and creation of cultural and political space for numerically fewer tribes.

However, it should be also admitted that while there was colonial generated oppression among the people on the one hand, it also has some merits when it comes to building nation-state framework. In particular, the hill tribes consider the coming of Christianity and its attributes such as education and modernity augmented their culture, political and economic reality. In fact, the concept of mass education and modernity which in many ways is a reaction to the ills of the pre-modern context has opened up a space for change and transformation of a kind which otherwise would be impossible to think of. In particular, this historical process in that era brought in massive change and transformation where many small tribes felt they were re-enforced. Political consciousness and cross village and tribe inter and intra processes were facilitated by this changes.

The events leading to the emergence of community consciousness and political assertions which today are often defined within the principle of self determination, both within and outside the state, is a socio-political phenomenon of negotiation between "culturally indigenous tribes".[9] In such a sense, identity and culture has also been understood from an instrumentalist approach. The articulation comes from definite experience of common shared culture and history which according to Burman (Burman in Kabui, 1985) are processes of "infra-nationalism" and "proto-nationalism" referring to twin processes of "spontaneous internal self identification" and "self identification inspired by educated leaders of the community". In these processes boundary of common shared culture is defined and intensified by territory and language. They are defined as "nationalities" (B.K. Roy Burman).[10] "Nationalities" as argued by Burman is understood as having a common or shared cultural identity but not necessarily implicating a demand for an independent sovereign State. They are perceived and also referred to as being "ethnically marginalized" (Oommen, 1997). But one thing is obvious, embedded

culturo-political elements forming the core of distinct entities, spread across territorial boundaries explicitly indicates that modern state and nation is not co-terminus in the context of northeast. Therefore formulation of collective identity has to be situated in the context of state and multiple collective identities.

A Khurpui (Kom/rem) Narrative
As an attempt to understand the dynamic and intricate connection between state, geopolitical, global structures and the lived experience, a case of Koms (also called Komrem in an ethnic communitarian sense) brought in here as a unit of analysis. Lived experience here would refer to the historical, cultural and political experiences of the people at the village, tribe and community levels. In fact, there has been always a tendency of the scholars, writers, historians, colonist and administrators to categorise people based on their political perspective within the nation-state context. In such a trend of writing, a view from a lived experience indicates the ground reality. It is opined that the complex reality actually when viewed from a specific context reveals the foundational structure and processes. The cultural and historical experience of Koms is very much shaped by a geopolitical context of a kind. The community consciousness in a state context basically generated in the wake of the colonial encounters. As known in history, Koms (Komrem) who had suffered a history of migration and displacement generated by the state structures particularly in the ethnic re-settlement policy still play a major role in defining their reality. The narratives emerging from their lived experience since the precolonial era situates their worldview closely connected to the valley and the foothill geopolitical centres. However, the historical events of the 1840s brought in all lots of tensions in the community. In fact, accounts given by Tepa Karong who led the British labour Corps to Europe in the First World War indicates the critical historical phase of the community. In fact, such a circumstance and the subsequent emergence of community leaders created a circumstance that led to initial conceptualisation of community consciousness as response to the nation-state building processes.

However, the actual processes of consciousness organisation around the ethnic and community lines came proactively since 1927, the first formation of the Kom Union in the present Sadar Hills district. However, the actual institutionalisation of the consciousness came in 1950s around the community nomenclature called Komrem consisting of the six kindred ethnic groups constitutionally categorised as Aimol, Kom, Kharam, Chiru, Purum and Koireng (also listed in Kom, 1990)[11] in Manipur. However, as a response to the emerging socio-political context of the state, the Komrem social organisation has given birth to other kindred tribe specific independent social organisations in the recent times. Such a trend of institutionalisation process within the Komrem community can be observed at both the religious and tribe levels. Nevertheless, the base of the community as society is still shared across the lived experience of the people. As one goes through the traditional cultural historical experiences; songs and narratives, one can easily observe the shared boundaries among them. In fact, they usually called themselves as U-le-nai (brothers and sisters). They are linked to the imagined common culture, ethnic origin and historical experiences through a narrative called a Khurpui Narrative commonly known among them. The narrative is sung as:

Kan Hong sok e kanhong sok e
Khurpui ja kanhong sok e
Kantak rong inkholei err o eja.
Kanhong sok e Kanhong sok e
Khurpui ja Kanhong sok e
Kanthe pon nin kholei er ro eja.
Kanhong sok e Kanhong sok e
Khurpui ja Kanhong sok e
Kan Kom luin kho lei erro eja.
Kanhong sok e Kanhong sok e
Khurpui ja Kanhong sok e
Kan lengse in kholei erro eja

Translation

We emerged from the great cave; from the netherworld, beneath the surface of the earth
We emerged from the great cave; our origin, birth and a freedom day
With our might we established village
We emerged from
We emerged from the great cave
Our shawl (ponthe) became protector of our village; national flag planted on the village
We emerged from
We emerged from the great cave
Our Kom turban adorned our village
We emerged from
We came from the great cave
Our girdle girded our village

(as retold by elders of the Ichum Keirap village, Manipur, August 2010 with translation by the author)

The stated Khurpui narrative actually defines the core of this community. The contemporary community name Komrem is intrinsically linked to their worldview imagined in this narrative. "Kom" etymologically is rooted in the Khurpui narrative. The Khurpui worldview is constructed within a holistic view of "the world below", "the world they came to live in" and "the world they live in the life after". "*Kom*" basically is a *Meitei* word, a derivative of "*Khurpui*", a Kom terminology of the origin theory. "*Rem*" as in "Komrem" refers to "people", a people with Khurpui history. Therefore, Komrems (Koms) identify as *Khurmi*'s. However, the ethnonym, *"Komrem"* is conceptualised in the colonial context and formerly institutionalised and became part of the lived consciousness in the 1950s. Today this khurpui history has found space in the lived experience of the people both as self ascription and ascription by the others.

The defining feature of this lived reality implicitly and explicitly is premised on the frame of harmony, co-existence and mutual interactions[12] within the state-community sphere.

However, one can also observe that the emerging trend of institutionalisation process of Komrem is constantly shaped by the major ethnicisation processes based on the Kukis and Nagas. In today's context, one realises that changes taking place at the institutional or organisational level in the community cannot be understood in isolation. It is intrinsically connected within the larger political processes. The larger structure that defines the game influenced the lived experience of the people. This lived reality indicates that there is an intrinsic connection between religious process, institutionalisation (organisational), cultural and political at both the micro and macro contexts. In fact, what is being experienced in the wake of the western enlightenment where political institutions and theorisation of state and people along "social contract" and the decline of religion from the political realm in the 1600s (of Europe) have similarity of theorisation emerging from this location. However, the difference is that religion definitely has become a stronger structure that reorganises the social structure and institutions generating a kind of social tensions at the lived experiences. This tensions actually highlights the nature of the social structure at the ground level definitely indicates boundaries of convergence and divergence: shared and contested boundaries.

However, one can see the reality negotiating a space which often is not understood from a mainstream perspective. In fact, such lived experience should inform the state building processes in the present context. State definitely is not a finished product, it is still being negotiated within the empirical theoretical premise emerging from the lived experience.[12]

As observed in Manipur, Koms (Komrem) lived experience, as indigenous[13] tribes, occupies an important geopolitical standpoint in the socio-political and economic context of the state of Manipur. In fact, in the emerging circumstance of ethnic processes along national and homeland territory such as Nagalim and Zalengam, Koms reality highlights the unique discourse of ethnicity, nationality and territoriality defined very much by the pre-state worldview and lived experience. Politically and ethnically speaking they are not Kukis nor Nagas: but a third lived reality that goes beyond the colonial binary constructs strengthened and propagated by ethno-exclusivist ideologies and armed groups. In a way, it is also negotiating with the understanding of state, territory, culture and identity within the political category of tribe. This premise can be stated as "being within the state" position. They play the politics very closely defined by category of "tribe"; tribes and Manipur. It is bounded on perspective defined by a political unit of the villages and tribes: customary rights to land, ownership and polity. Whether these negotiations have been included in the present context is still a matter that has to be observed. Nevertheless, being within the context of an active socio-political processes, they stand as tribes of Manipur resilient even in the time when larger cultural political identity process becomes not only a mere pro-active self identification but forceful categorisation, or co-option by the larger identity politics. There is, as observed by Burman (Kabui, 1985 and Kamkhenthang, 1988), the political processes of such communities has been also described in the Edmund Leach in 1954. In particular, "Komrem" positions a "neutral

stance" vis-a-vis Kuki-Naga clash since 1989. Therefore, the community has always demonstrated a cultural and political ability to negotiate in relation to the politics of its immediate larger ethnic group within the paradigm of "coexistence" and "peaceful living".[14]

Conclusion

The context of northeast and Manipur in particular, presents a unique picture very similar to multicultural contexts and the emergence of the state processes during the period of renaissance. This circumstance opens up a space for a pragmatic knowledge building engagement for understanding state and society. As seen even in the earliest discussions of state and society in the Greek civilisations and later in the European context, the northeast context also highlights projects of the state and knowledge enterprise. In fact, such kind of social contexts had confronted society and individuals and motivated newer theorisation towards change and transformation. Knowledge building processes had emerged in such a context. The Greeks for instance hold on to knowledge building as a means to evolve a positive change and transformation vis-à-vis challenges confronting the problems of society and state. In fact, knowledge enterprise is closely linked to building a better world; a discovery of the linkage between knowledge, ethic and politics (power). The lived reality of the tribes in general and Koms in particular, initiates a knowledge enterprise towards a progressive understanding of society and state in the present context. Culture, religion, politics and governance are related, therefore, identity and culture where the principle of coexistence reveals itself as the determining law of both state and community in which ethnic life worlds (Biswas, 2006), inter and intra community relationships and rational socio-legal governance structure of the state must be premised. This formulation furthers the importance of understanding co-existence as an organic trajectory of the peaceful existence and relationships of all collective identities. Existence and co-existence of every collective identity requires mutual understanding and respect of spatial needs, human security and social development of entwined communities within the socio-legal democratic set up. All are equally important as units of society. It is an issue of grave concern that the status of "invisibility" of culturally indigenous tribes who are numerically fewer in number, are often "notionally non-existent" within the realm of the consciousness of both state and dominant ethnic groups. A democratic system that facilitates, provides and promote a responsive public space for a respectful articulation of voices of the "invisibles" within the public sphere is imperative. The author firmly opines and envisions that the argument articulated in this paper will find a critical space in the emerging political and reality discourse of the northeastern region.

Notes

1. This concept is taken from a national seminar, "Purvottari: Spirit of Northeast", 2009.
2 . Based on Andre Betteile contextualisation of "tribe" from a historical approach in the context of India. Virginious Xaxa, a renowned sociologist on tribal issue, prefers the concept "indigenous" for "tribe". This formulation perceives tribe/indigenous within a historical framework of space and time and stresses the co-existence of different social formations (Chaudhury and Patniak. ed., 2008).

3. The eight northeastern states are Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim. This region is rightly described as "gateway" to Southeast Asian Countries.

4. The State has a proud history from the earliest times and came under the British Rule as a Princely State after the defeat in the Anglo-Manipuri War of 1891. After 1947, the Princely State was merged to the Indian Union on October 15, 1949 and became a full-fledged State of India on the 21st January, 1972. It has an area of 22327sq.km with population of 22, 93,896 and is bounded by States of Nagaland in the north, Assam in the West, Mizoram in the South, and Myanmar in the east (http://manipur.nic.in/ataglance.htm, official website).

5. Power and development is centered and confined in and around 10% of the plain area, having 60% of the population, basically of one ethnic group. The rest of the area referred to as "hill area", inhabited by numerous ethnic groups categorised as Scheduled Tribes (40%) are politically and economically at a disadvantaged position. The population unit of analysis undermines the cultural and territorial units. In an ethnic context, "distinctiveness of culture" takes precedence over "size" and "status" in ethnic group identification (Phadnis, 1989). Therefore there is a need for a "policy of representation", welfare and development work on cultural and territorial unit criteria. Recognition of tribal governance system as accepted within the Sixth Scheduled frame could be a possible way out for the "hill area".

6. The interaction between the Meitei monarchy and the ethnic groups/tribes of the hills has been one of co-existence on mutual support in defense and economy.

7. "Linguistic categorisation" does not capture the magnitude and depth of history and consciousness of identity of people. A history of a common shared culture, territory and language are very essential aspects of consideration for identity formation and categorisation.

8. "Politico-administrative categorisation" refers to "Scheduled Tribe" - a category for administrative and policy purposes as recognised in the Constitution. This categorisation has an inherent tension in the interface between State and ethnic community systems.

9. The author is consciously using, "culturally indigenous tribes" to refer to the tribes of Manipur who have a long history of a common shared culture, language and territorial closeness to theState.

10. The author interviewed personally B.K. Roy Burman on 9 December 2008, on the occasion of *Sameeksha*, an annual Social Work Students' Academic Conference at TISS, Mumbai.

11. After 1990s there been noticeable realignment and resurgence of Komrem Community in Manipur. Though politically and ethnically there is greater leaning towards Nagas (political identity), they consider themselves to be a "culturally indigenous tribes" of Manipur. The community is united under the KRBCA. However, each tribe has also an independent space culturally and politically. The educated leaders of the community have found some cultural affinity with Hrangkhawl, Darlong, Chakachep and Bete of Assam and Tripura (http://www.manipuronline.com/Profiles/December2002/komrem24_1.htm, dated 03.02.2009).

12. Phadnis, 1989 and Burman in Bhadra, 2007 states that harmony or conviviality frame is significant characteristic feature of ethnicity process in the northeast as well as in South Asian region.

13. Social Scientist in India are in agreement that chronological base for definition of the term, "indigenous" doesn't capture the reality of the northeast. It is preferred to define in terms of normative sense, although vague, to situate the concept in the context. In fact there is hardly any oral history of ethnic groups which supports "autochthones" base. In 1993 social scientists at Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla defined the indigenous as, "We feel, the word 'indigenous' should be used not in chronological sense but in thenormative sense to cover people who feel rooted in their surroundings, entertain a custodial sense about their territory and resources, are bound together primarily through moral bindings and entertain a sense of reciprocity and mutuality reinforced by egalitarian ethos." (Lecture by Burman on "Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in World System Perspective", Delhi University, 2001).

14. The author was present at the meeting of all the Komrem villages authority meeting held at Game Village, Imphal in 1995 in which the Komrem Community took "co-existence stance" with regard to the then ethnic clash.

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