



Colonial Classification and the Meetei Demand for Scheduled Tribe Status: A Re-evaluation

Dr. Konthoujam Indrakumar Singh*

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Dhanamanjuri University, Manipur

indra.kon1980@gmail.com

Chabungbam Madhumita Devi

Research Scholar (ICSSR Ph.D. Doctoral Fellow) Department of Political Science, Dhanamanjuri

University, Manipur

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20605755>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 18-05-2026

Published: 10-06-2026

Keywords:

*Colonial Classification,
Identity Politics, Meetei,
Scheduled Tribe, Tribe*

ABSTRACT

The politics surrounding the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status demand for the Meetei in India is significantly shaped by the colonial ethnographic classifications. The paper situates the Meetei ST status demand within a broader framework of historically contingent identity formation rather than an entirely discontinuous demand. It demonstrates how colonial constructions of “tribe” have been reinterpreted and mobilised in post-colonial times. In addition, the paper critically analyses how the standards set by Government of India in order to create criteria for ST recognition continue to rely on the same ethnographic discourse which was used during colonial times still persist today. Such frameworks tends to force communities to negotiate and present their identity just to fit within the rigid bureaucratic categories. However, the Meetei case illustrates how political assertions rooted in language, religion, and cultural revival intersect with archival claims to articulate a historically grounded demand for recognition as Scheduled Tribe of India. This study shows that the interaction between colonial archives, post-colonial state frameworks, and indigenous assertion plays an important role in understanding such similar demands in contemporary India.



Introduction

This research paper centres upon the Meetei, a specific ethnic group in Manipur Northeast India. It highlights how the discourse concerning the demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Status by the Meetei focused on colonial ethnographies, census reports and administrative reports. The current identity of the people included under the British census survey were built upon the narratives and records of its officials, administrators and ethnographers, and therefore it might be futile if any attempts were not made to understand the identity of the enumerated people without acknowledging its colonial origins, when it forms a basic premise in the politics of ST status demand. In addition, the criteria for specification of a community as ST of India considers the definitions of tribal communities adopted in the 1931 Census (Beteille, 1986). According to the Lokur Committee (1965), the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950 was based on the list of formerly listed “backward tribes” as on the Government of India Act, 1935. It becomes crucial to delve into the knowledge production surrounding the relationship with colonial records and archival sources to comprehend the contemporary significance of the Meetei ST status demand.

The demand for the inclusion of the Meetei community in the ST list of India has been spearheading by STDCM (Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur) since the later part of 2012 (STDCM, n.d.). On the other hand, the main opposition to the demand comes from the communities that are formerly enlisted as ST in Manipur (namely, the Naga and the Kuki tribes). The demand revolved around the polemics of Meetei being a tribe, Meetei being integrated to the larger society, Meetei being an advanced community and so on. These narratives has time and again been reproduced throughout the course of the circulated scholarly writings, newspaper articles and discussions on public platforms. Moving along the case of Meetei being a tribe, the proponent and forerunner of the demand, for instance, STDCM move along the path set by the British administrative records. The categorisation of the communities significantly influenced their identity formation. In this process, their social and political identities were shaped over time and across different contexts, ultimately moulding the post-colonial aspirations and claims. In essence, it serves as an official records of the Meetei.

The classifications served the administrative priorities of the colonial state and had become the documentary archive, where the later generations uses the situated texts to interpret identity questions. This paper attempts to critically analyse the shaping of Meetei identity through colonial classification while arguing that embedded structuring of colonial situation in a post-colonial discursive framework underpins the ongoing political claims for ST recognition in Manipur. This study contextualises the



categorisation of tribes and its evolving nature, while also providing a critical framework in evaluating the political demands like the Meetei claim for ST status in a region often shaped by politics of indigeneity.

Research Objectives

- To analyse the interplay of ethnographic categorisation of colonial administrative and census in identity formation of the Meetei community
- To study the relationship between colonial categorisation and the contemporary discourse on the demand of ST status by the Meetei community
- To study how post-colonial constitutional and bureaucratic framework have embedded colonial practices
- To study the relevance of colonial narratives in re-evaluating the question of identity and indigenous consciousness in Manipur

Research Methodology

From a methodological perspective, the study adopts a qualitative historical analytical approach based on archival and textual analysis of secondary sources. The study also draws insights from colonial census reports, administrative records, gazetteers, ethnographic writings, and post-independence constitutional and administrative documents related to the ST recognition as well as to trace the administrative historical evolution of Meetei identity. These sources are critically examined to understand how colonial epistemic construction continues to influence the debates of ST recognition in India.

Findings and Discussions

Tracing Identity through Colonial records

During the British colonial period, the census operations served multiple purposes beyond simple population count. These operations serve the purpose of collecting comprehensive demographic information regarding the individuals residing within the territories under the British administration. The people of Manipur including the Meetei community were also ascribed distinct identity by the colonial officials. The systematisation and classification of these categories was made for the purpose of administration, which aimed to create a comprehensive social map. It was instrumental in shaping and reinforcing certain social identities within the colonial framework. The concept of categorisation that



developed during the British era continues to endure in India, but in the state of Manipur, the Meetei had been delisted from the tag of “Hill Tribe” after the community had enlisted in the aforementioned category for four consecutive decennial censuses of India spanning from 1891 to 1931, marking a significant shift in their administrative status. The Meetei, who were once identified as “Hill Tribe” in the colonial discourse, was not reaffirmed with the tribal tag in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Parts C States) Order, 1951.

According to Dr. R. Brown, the former Political Agent of Manipur, the Manipur valley was once submerged under water, as the land became suitable for farming, surrounding hill tribes started to settle in the valley permanently and over the due cross of time these native tribes merged together, eventually forming what came to be known as Munnipories (Brown, 1869). Thus, one conjecture that can be drawn is that the Meetei people originated from the surrounding hill tribes. The British Government of India, based on their ethnography, classified Meetei as a “hill tribe” belonging to the former Assam Province (Meerwarth, 1919). The British Government of India, in its Administrative Report for the year 1868-1869, by the then Political Agent of Manipur, grouped Meetei as a “primitive hill tribe” of the erstwhile Assam (Brown, 1869).

From prehistoric times until the present day, the Tibeto-Burman language has served as the predominant dialect and mode of communication for the Meetei people. The languages spoken by these tribes remain in their original form (Hodson, 1908). This is in stark contrast to being of Aryan descent or speakers of Indo-Aryan languages, as opined in some scholarly writings. According to the “Imperial Gazetteer of India Provincial Series Eastern Bengal and Assam” (1909), the Manipuri-speaking people were included under the sub-heading ‘The Indo-Chinese Tribe’ along with the other Indo-Chinese tribes. This official source depicts that Manipuri (the native language spoken by the Meetei) was spoken by its principal tribe, which is grouped together with other tribes. The inference that can be drawn here is that Meetei are the tribes referred to in this document.

In the “General Report on the Census of 1891”, *Kathe* (Manipuri) was documented as a Class III Forest Tribe with a population of 84,540 (Baines, 1893). “Ethnography (Caste and Tribe)” by Athelstane Baines (1912) comprises a descriptive survey of the re-emergence of castes and tribes as recorded in the 1901 Census, there, in Appendix B Caste Index, Caste Meithei was included in Group “Hill Tribe” in Manipur Locality. During the initial census conducted in India, the tribals were categorised as ‘Forest Tribes’ and were classified under the designation of “Agricultural and Pastoral Castes”. In the “1921 Census Report of India”, these tribal groups were referred to as “Hill and Forest Tribes”. In the 1931 Census, they were



grouped under the “Primitive Tribes”. In “Census of India”, 1931, Vol. I- India, Part I- Report, in Chapter X- Language Subsidiary Table III titled as Number of persons speaking tribal language compared with the strength of tribe Meithei or Manipuri enter as number 22 under Tribe and Language column and reckoned at 330,545 (Hutton,1933). Historically, the Meetei identity was situated within tribal frameworks in British official and administrative records. In concurrence with prevailing literature, the claim of the Meetei community for inclusion in the ST list of India can reasonably be seen as historically grounded and logical continuation of earlier colonial administrative recognition, rather than an entirely discontinuous demand.

Colonial ethnographic records hold significance through their influence in forming foundational understanding of the Meetei and providing an important resource for the discourse of its identity, along with political demands for the recognition of ST by the Government of India. Meetei identity is therefore understood to be an evolving construct which has been created through the historical use of colonial epistemologies, and that has undergone continuous change since independence, when the category of “tribes” was also undergoing iterative change. This demonstrates that while the criteria used to define Meetei identity and “tribe” were inconsistent, it also indicates that these categories were created through the application and interpretation of official information. The later exclusion can be seen as the result of redefinition and not a sudden transformation of the community.

Colonial Skepticism and the Limits of Meetei Kshatriya Narrative

In 1835, R.B. Pemberton’s “*Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*” provided an account of the whole of North-East India. Its significance is to gather data on prominent families and their cultural practices. It was also during this time that the British administrators began to believe that anthropological knowledge could be used to control and govern India. As a result, the British Government of India appointed W.W. Hunter as Director General of Statistics in 1869, he was given the authority to prepare and publish several gazetteers and statistical records on India and its people, which were largely shaped by the political and economic interests of the British Raj (Thakur, 2020). The census operations introduced by the colonial state help in creating a detailed social map of the country by reshaping and redefining various pan-Indian identities such as caste, tribe, and other social categories within the framework of the census system (Samarendra, 2011).

On the origin of the Meetei identity, there are two schools of thought. One view holds that the Meetei descended from the surrounding hill tribes, while the other suggests that the Meetei had Hindu ancestry influenced by Hinduism. The assertion of Meetei having Hindu origins was posited by some Meetei elites



in earlier times. In contrast, this claim of Hindu ancestry was contested by British administrators who conducted extensive studies on the ethnography, ethnology, and anthropology of the Meetei community. In the “General Report on the Census of India 1891”, it is reported that the majority of the population in Manipur was Mongoloid, both in their appearance and in cultural practices, while the Brahmanic influences remained largely confined to the royal court and its close associates. This suggested that the perceived Aryan connection emerged mainly from the ruling family and certain sections of the valley who embraces Hinduism.

The claims of Hindu origins of the Meetei were time and again been denied by British administrators, ethnographers, and anthropologists who had documented their views in written format. For instance Dr. Brown speculated that Meetei were an amalgamation of the neighbouring tribes, namely the *Khuman*, *Luwang*, *Moirang*, and *Meithei* (Meetei), hailing from different directions after they began to interact and engage in a fierce contest for dominance (Brown, 1873). With time, the Meithei conquered all the tribes, and the Meithei name was adopted by all (Brown, 1873). The present day Meetei people are the descendants of the various tribes synthesized into a cohesive identity which blended in to the principal tribe and an ethnic group Meetei. R.B. Pemberton (1835), in “*Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India*”, rejected the “Hindoo” (Hindu) origin claimed by the *Muneepoorees*. While Meeteis have indeed adopted Hinduism since the 18th century, they do not adhere to the caste system prevalent in mainland India. The names of the rulers preceding Garib Niwaj (King Pamheiba) clearly indicate the indigenous and archaic dialect of the Meetei people. The name Manipur came into use after his reign, also.

In the “Gazetteer of Manipur”, it was stated that the people of Manipur were believed to trace their ancestry back to the four tribes who had historically lived in the Manipur valley in the not-so-distant past (Dun, 1886). It was also observed that there appeared to be a lack of visible racial difference between the Hindu inhabitants of the plains and those residing in the hills, what made the distinction between them was the religious beliefs. The settlement of Brahmanas in Manipur can be traced back to the fifteenth century during the reign of King Kiyamba, most of them belonged to the Gauda Brahmana category, and the form of Hinduism adopted in Manipur was the Gaudiya Vaisnavism of Bengal (Thokchom, 2011). According to Yendrembam Munan, “These 'foreigners' (Meeramcha) and their descendents who came during and after King Kiyamba's reign were made Brahmanas only during [*sic*] King Pamheiba's (Gariba Niwaj) reign (1709-1748) and there was no Brahmanas before his reign in Manipur” (n.d., as cited in Thokchom, 2011). Therefore, the claim that Hinduism had a longstanding presence in the region appears difficult to sustain. Although certain elements of Hinduism may have existed in isolated forms prior to



the reign of Garib Niwaj, it was mainly during his rule in eighteenth century that the Hinduism became more prevalent in Manipur.

The process of Hinduisation or Sanskritisation, through which tribes underwent transformation, is commonly referred to by anthropologists as the “religious/cultural movement” (Xaxa, 1999a). In the case of Meetei community, there has been no strict compartmentalised partition in terms of a hierarchical caste structure, thus conforming to a single stratum with seven principalities (known as *Salai Taret* or seven clans). The process reflects an intricate process of cultural interchange and syncretism in which tribes engage with and assimilated some elements of Hinduism into their own belief system, signifying that tribes possess the ability to assimilate new cultural customs while preserving elements of their unique tribal identity.

Breaking the link: Indigenous Assertions and Colonial Stereotypes

The modalities for deciding a community’s claims for inclusion in the ST list include acknowledgment by the concerned State Government/ Union Territory administration, along with recent Ethnographic Report and Socio-economic Survey Report. Ethnography was considered as an important prerequisite for determining a group of people as an ST. For the enlistment to ST status the findings of the submitted reports went into evaluation in the Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) by comparing it with the existing sources dating back to colonial era ethnographies and census report (Townsend, 2013). To vet the proposals, the RGI also uses the criteria of recognising a community as an ST established by the Lokur Committee in 1965 which includes-Primitives traits, geographical isolation, distinctive culture, economic backwardness, and shyness of contact with the outside world, this often forces the community to conform to stereotypes of primitiveness of the tribe constructed by the Colonial ethnographers to fulfil the criteria for recognizing a community as ST. It also further exposes how identity and classification can be manipulated within the bureaucratic frameworks of the Indian government.

The descriptive account of surveys conducted by colonial officials among the tribes in Northeast India was written in an ethnographic style, and sometimes, in their writings, the tribes were recorded as primitive, barbarous, savage, and engaged in head-hunting (Thakur, 2020). The establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the publication of “The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal”, which commenced in 1832, further institutionalised the colonial claims. From this standpoint, references were continued to be drawn from those studies on communities that were labelled as tribe. These descriptions, which were part of the colonial construct, continue to be utilized in present times. Consequently, leading to the propagation of the misconception that the Northeastern part of India is naturally backward and



regressive. Similar stereotypes regarding the tribes tend to be due to lack of adequate knowledge and understanding, and act as a hindrance to recognising a community as an ST in India.

While analysing the indigenous trajectory set in the Meetei ST status demand movement, dichotomous contexts were drawn by interested writers. Birajit (2023) asserted that Meiteis' tribal way of life in the ancient time had been evolved and ceased to be tribe; their society, which was once a tribal society, emerged as a civilization continuing up to the present. This perspective is based on the context that a tribal society is a primitive and uncivilised. Indian sociologists like Beteille (1989) prefer understanding tribes through a historical lens rather than an evolutionary one. The historical approach focuses on the specific cultural, social, and political contexts in which tribes emerged and continue to exist, rather than viewing them as transitional stage in societal evolution, and what unites them as tribes is their shared position outside of Hindu civilisation (Beteille, 1986). When a tribe is treated as a certain stage of a society, it fails to address its undue historical legacies, its indigenous traits and is constantly reviving the stereotypical colonial narratives and the dominant cultural standards.

Shimray (2024) also argues that the Meetei masses, though recorded as a 'Tribe' in several historical documents failed to be a 'Tribe' as Hinduism has changed the culture of the Meetei community and is now an advanced society. The premise of the argument is that the community has surpassed its tribal traits. However, Xaxa (1999a) agreed that a tribal society indeed undergoes acculturation over a period of time due to modernisation and with the contact with the larger society, but asserted that "Hinduisation alone cannot account for the transformation of tribe into caste" (Xaxa, 1999a). Beteille (1986) argued that the emergence of prominent tribal dynasty does not inevitably lead to a drastic transformation in the way of life of the entire tribe, and certain segments might adopt Hindu practices, while others may largely maintain their traditional way of life.

As discussed earlier, in the post-independence period, the Indian government used British classifications as a basis for recognizing and allocating ST status to certain communities in India. The integration of tribal communities into the caste system of mainstream Indian society has shifted in post-colonial India; it emphasises a return to tribal roots and the reaffirmation of tribal identities (Arora, 2007). The Meetei community reclaimed its identity as a tribe within the socio-political structure of modern India, drawing on historical and indigenous roots. Tripura (2023) argued that it is a necessity for researchers to align with the methods that understands and explain with indigenous ways of being when conducting research with tribal studies. In alignment with this scholarly interpretations, indigenous way of being act as a coherent system that integrates the unique cultural, spiritual, and social practices that define those



communities. Therefore, these aspects are inseparable from the politico-economic realities that shape and reinforce their identity.

For an indigenous community, the process of recovering history is essential for its survival as well as for maintaining indigenous identity. This identity relies on common customs, traditions, languages, rituals, and the strong connections the indigenous people have to their ancestral lands. Among the tribes, the idea of being indigenous has become deeply internalised and now serves as a significant marker of identity, reflecting a sense of self-worth, dignity, and pride rather than being associated with an inferior social status (Xaxa, 1999b).

It is evident that the Meetei community asserts their distinct cultural practices as a form of resistance against perceived threats from migration, modernisation, and the encroachment of other cultural influences. For the Meetei, the revival of traditional religion such as *Sanamahism* and indigenous scripts (Meetei Mayek), is central to establishing a clear cultural identity. This cultural assertion reinforces the community's collective identity while distinguishing it from neighbouring groups. These practices become part of the political argument for ST status, embracing cultural uniqueness as a basis for legal recognition rather than merely showcasing themselves to fit the official criteria. Today, the label 'tribe' is no longer seen through the old lens of backwardness; it embodies multiple layers of meaning, including claims of territorial rights, aspirations of autonomy, shared political consciousness, and a distinct collective identity. The indigeneity of Meetei to the state of Manipur cannot be denied, and its identity can be constitutionally protected within the Indian Union through the ST status. According to this perspective, political struggles for recognition and governance are tied to preserving the community's cultural heritage.

Conclusion: Historical Contingency of Identity and Its Relevance to Meetei ST claims

The colonial ethnographic surveys carried out during British administration in Manipur were not just instrument of authority, it becomes a significant foundational framework that continue to construct the identity claims in Manipur. The reliance on the colonial ethnographic records in the discourse of the Meetei demand for ST status reflects not merely an uncritical acceptance of these sources but as an engagement with historical documentation as a means for articulating claims of identity, continuity, and the right to recognition. In doing so, one among several lenses through which claims of identity and recognition is provided. The use of these records in the contemporary political debates should therefore be understood as an engagement with historical archival knowledge, and what's important is the



consideration alongside with the indigenous narratives, cultural practices, demographic changes, and evolving socio-political contexts of the community.

In post-colonial India, identity is considerably more fluid; even if one were to define an identity today, it can be understood to be ever changing, and evolving. Several factors contribute to this understanding such as the interaction of archival knowledge, political aspirations, and indigenous assertions. The Meetei demand for ST status reflects this reality. It becomes not solely about affirmative actions or tangible gains, it represents an effort of reclaiming their identity, dignity, and historical belonging. This suggested an important trend in the Indian Identity Politics, communities will increasingly mediate through engagements with both colonial archives alongside evolving socio-political realities. With many communities referencing colonial records and documents to establish the legitimacy of their claims of ST status, it is anticipated that future use of provisions in these documents will continue to play a role in similar demands in India. The Meetei case in India offers a crucial insights into the future trajectory of Identity Politics, particularly in how colonial legacies continue to influence the existing constitutional and social frameworks.

To recapitulate, the border aspect of Identity Politics in Northeast India, which often revolves around demands for recognition and protection of indigenous rights, this scholarship ensures that these communities can reclaim their narratives, protect their traditions, and influence policies that affect their lives. This paper calls for striking the correct balance of the archival sources as historically situated texts that contributed to the early construction and documentation of social categories in Manipur, and the reproduction of the “tribal” identity in the Meetei context is not just a legal or administrative claim, but as a historically grounded political project. For a meaningful evaluation of the demand of ST status by the Meetei community, moving beyond static notions of “tribe” and acknowledging the dynamic interplay between history, post-colonial knowledge production, and the community’s own political agency in asserting identity and recognition.

Acknowledgements

The authors sincerely thank the Department of Political Science, Dhanamanjuri University and G.P Women’s College for providing the necessary academic support and research environment. We are especially grateful to all the individuals and scholars whose insights and suggestions contributed significantly to the completion of this study. We also acknowledge the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) for the support received during the research process.

**Reference**

- Arora, V. (2007). Assertive Identities, Indigeneity, and the Politics of Recognition as a Tribe: The Bhutias, the Lepchas and the Limbus of Sikkim, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 56, No. 2, 195-220.
- Baines, A. (1893). *General Report on the Census of India 1891*, London: Eyre and Spottiswood.
- Baines, A. (1912). *Ethnography (Caste and Tribes)*, Strassburg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trubner.
- Bêteille, A. (1986). The concept of tribe with special reference to India, *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 27, 296-318. doi: 10.1017/ S000397560000463X.
- Birajit, A. (2023, October 23). Misinterpretation of Meitei as a tribe in the name of indigenous people. *The Sangai Express*, p.4.
- Brown, R. (1869). *Annual Report of the Munnipore Political Agency for 1868-1869*, Calcutta: The Government of India, Foreign Department.
- Brown, R. (1873). *Statistical Account of the Native State of Manipur and The Hill territory under its Rule*, India: Forward Books.
- Constitution of India. (1950). *The Constitution of India*. Government of India.
- Dun, E. W. (1886), *Gazetteer of Manipur*, Delhi: Manas Publications.
- Government of India (1909). *The Imperial Gazetteer of India Provincial Series Eastern Bengal and Assam*, Calcutta: Government of India.
- Hodson, T.C. (1908). *The Meitheis*, London: David Nutt.
- Hutton, J.H. (1933). *Census India, 1931*, Vol. I- India, Part I- Report, Delhi: Manager of Publication.
- Lokur Committee Report. (1965). *The report of the advisory committee on the revision of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*. Department of Security, Government of India.
- Meerwarth, A.M. (1919). *Ethnographical Gallery, Guide book Number 2- The Andamanese, Nicobarese and Hill Tribes of Assam*, Calcutta: The Government of India.



- Middleton, T. (2013). Scheduling tribes: A view from inside India's ethnographic state, *Focaal*, (65), 13-22. doi:10.3167/fcl.2013.650102.
- Ministry of Law. (1951). *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Parts C States) Order, 1951* [Notification S.R.O. 1427 A]. *The Gazette of India: Extraordinary, Part II-Section 3*, 143A. Government of India Press.
- Pemberton, R.B. (1835). *Report on Eastern Frontier of India*, Calcutta: The Government of India.
- Samarendra, P. (2011). Census in Colonial India and the Birth of Caste, *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 46, No. 33 (August 13-19), 51-58.
- Shimray, N. (2024, January 6). Follow transparent, credible and scientific processes for Meitei community ST demand else Any other path will spell doom for the future of Manipur. *The Sangai Express*, p.4.
- STDCM (n.d.). *Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur*. <https://www.stdcm.org>
- Thakur, A. K. (2020). Historical Reconstruction of the Past of Northeast India: An Assessment of Colonial Writings in M.C. Behera, (Ed.), *Tribal Studies in India: Perspectives of History, Archaeology and Culture*, Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- The Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908). *Volume 1: Descriptive*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Thokchom, J. (2011), Migration and Settlement of the Brahmana as in Manipur, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol.72, Part-1, 468–475. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44146740>
- Tripura, B. (2023). Decolonizing ethnography and Tribes in India: Toward an alternative methodology, *Frontiers in Political Science*, 5:1047276. doi: 10.3389/fpos.2023.1047276.
- Xaxa, V. (1999a). Transformation of Tribes in India: Terms of Discourse, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 24 (Jun. 12-18), 1519-1524.
- Xaxa, V. (1999b). Tribes as indigenous people of India, *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 34, No. 51 (Dec. 18-24), 3589–3595. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4408738>
- ¹ The study focuses on the Meitei community, one of the major ethnic groups of Northeast India, historically associated with the native state of Manipur, and often classified within the broader



Mongoloid racial category in colonial ethnographic literature. The term Meitei is also used instead of Meetei in various academic writings, but this writer opt to use the term Meetei to bring in unison with the term as recognized by the Government of Manipur in the *Manipur Gazette* (1980).

- ¹ The term “Scheduled Tribe” is employed in a political and administrative sense to designate certain communities as “tribes” through presidential notification. Exercising the powers conferred under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, the President of India issued the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 for Part A and Part B states, followed by a corresponding order in 1951 for Part C states. Oftentimes, the term “Tribe” is used synonymously with “indigenous people” or “Adivasis” in many scholarly works. Nevertheless, not every tribe in India is enlisted as Scheduled Tribe.
- ¹ The population included in the census operations conducted by the British Crown for administration purposes.
- ¹ In the British historical archives the term Munnipories/Manipuris is used appositely to mean the Meithei or Meetei (Refer *Annual Report of the Munnipore Political Agency for 1868-69* by R Brown and *Ethnographical Gallery, Guide book Number 2- The Andamanese, Nicobarese and Hill Tribes of Assam 1919* by A.M Meerwarth).
- ¹ Commonly used by the British Ethnographers which is synonymous with Manipuri/Meetei/Meithei.