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VOLUME XXII

MANIPUR

PART VI

VILLAGE SURVEY MONOGRAPH

6. LONGA KOIRENG

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1961 CENSUS PUBLICATIONS, MANIPUR

(All the Census Publications of this Territory will bear Volume No. XXII)

Part I	General Report including Subsidiary Tables.	
Part II	General Population Tables Economic Tables Cultural and Migration Tables	In one volume
Part III	Household Economic Tables	In one volume
Part IV	Housing Report and Tables	
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Part VIII-B	Administration Report on Tabulation	
Part XI	Census Atlas Volume	

STATE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION

1. District Census Handbook

REVISED LIST OF VILLAGES SELECTED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

	Name of Village	*Name of Sub-Division*
1.	Ithing	Bishenpur
2.	Keisamthong	Imphal West
3.	Khousabung	Churachandpur
4.	Konpui	–do–
5.	Liwachangning	Tengnoupal.
6.	Longa Koireng*	Mao and Sadar Hills
7.	Minuthong	Imphal West
8.	Ningel	Thoubal
9.	Oinam Sawombung	Imphal West
10.	Pherzawl	Churachandpur
11.	Phunan Sambum	Tengnoupal
12.	Sekmai	Imphal West
13.	Thangjing Chiru	Mao and Sadar Hills
14.	Thingkangphai.	Churachandpur
15.	Toupokpi	Tengnoupal

* Present Volume (No. 6 of the series).

FOREWORD

Apart from laying the foundations of demography in this subcontinent, a hundred years of the Indian Census has also produced elaborate and scholarly accounts of the variegated phenomena of Indian life—sometimes with no statistics attached, but usually with just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to their conclusions. In a country, largely illiterate, where statistical or numerical comprehension of even such a simple thing as age was liable to be inaccurate, an understanding of the social structure was essential. It was more necessary to attain a broad understanding of what was happening around oneself than to wrap oneself up in 'statistical ingenuity' or 'mathematical manipulation'. This explains why the Indian Census came to be interested in 'many by-paths' and 'nearly every branch of scholarship, from anthropology and sociology to geography and religion'.

In the last few decades the Census has increasingly turned its efforts to the presentation of village statistics. This suits the temper of the times as well as our political and economic structure. For even as we have a great deal of centralization on the one hand and decentralization on the other, my colleagues thought it would be a welcome continuation of the Census tradition to try to invest the dry bones of village statistics with flesh-and-blood accounts of social structure and social change. It was accordingly decided to select a few villages in every State for special study, where personal observation would be brought to bear on the interpretation of statistics to find out how much of a village was static and yet changing and how fast the winds of change were blowing and from where.

Randomness of selection was, therefore, eschewed. There was no intention to build up a picture for the whole State in quantitative terms on the basis of villages selected statistically at random. The selection was avowedly purposive : the object being as much to find out what was happening and how fast to those villages which had fewer reasons to choose change and more to remain lodged in the past as to discover how the more 'normal' types of villages were changing. They were to be primarily type studies which, by virtue of their number and distribution, would also give the reader a 'feel' of what was going on and some kind of a map of the country.

A brief account of the tests of selection will help to explain. A minimum of thirty-five villages was to be chosen with great care to represent adequately geographical, occupational and even ethnic diversity. Of this minimum of thirty-five, the distribution was to be as follows :—

(a) At least eight villages were to be so selected that each of them would contain one dominant community with one predominating occupation e.g. fishermen, forest workers, jhum cultivators, potters, weavers, salt-makers, quarry workers etc. A village should have a minimum population of 400 the optimum being between 500-700.

(b) At least seven villages were to be of numerically prominent Scheduled Tribes of the State. Each village could represent a particular tribe. The minimum population should be 400, the optimum being between 500 and 700.

(c) The third group of villages should each be of fair size, of an old and settled character and contain variegated occupations and be, if possible, multiethnic in composition. By fair size was meant a population of 500-700 persons or more. The village should mainly depend on agriculture and be sufficiently away from

the major sources of modern communication such as the district administrative head quarters and business centres. It should be roughly a day's journey from the above places. The villages were to be selected with an eye to variation in terms of size, proximity to city and other means of modern communication, nearness to hills, jungles and major rivers. Thus there was to be a regional distribution throughout the State of this category of villages. If, however, a particular district contained significant ecological variations within its area, more than one village in the district might be selected to study the special adjustments to them.

It is a unique feature of these village surveys that they rapidly outgrew their original terms of reference, as my collegues warmed up to their work. This proved for them an absorbing voyage of discovery and their infectious enthusiasm compelled me to enlarge the inquiry's scope again and again. It was just as well cautiously to feel one's way about at first and then venture further afield, and although it accounts to some extent for a certain uneveness in the quality and coverage of the monographs, it served to compensate the purely honorary and extra-mural rigours of the task. For, the Survey, along with its many ancillaries like the survey of fairs and festivals of small and rural industry and others, was an extra, over and above the crushing load of the 1961 Census.

It might be of interest to recount briefly the stages by which the Survey englared its scope. At the first Census Conference in September, 1959, the Survey set itself the task of what might be called a record *in situ* of material traits, like settlement patterns of the village; house types; diet; dress; ornaments and footwear; furniture and storing vessels; commom means of transport of goods and passengers; domestication of animals and birds; markets attended; worship of deities; festivals and fairs. There were to be recordings, of course, of cultural and social traits and occupational mobility. This was followed up in March 1960 by two specimen schedules, one for each household, the other for the village as a whole, which, apart from spelling out the mode of inquiry suggested in the September 1959 Conference, introduced groups of questions aimed at sensing changes in attitude and behaviour in such fields as marriage, inheritance, movable and immovable property, industry indebtedness, education, community life and collective activity, social disabilities, forums of appeal over disputes, village leadership, and organisation of cultural life. It was now plainly the intention to provide adequate statistical support to empirical 'feel' to approach quantitative change through statistical quantities. It has been difficult to give thought to the importance of 'just enough statistics to give empirical underpinning to conclusions' at a time when my colleagues were straining themselves to the utmost for the success of the main Census Operations, but once the Census count itself was left behind in March, 1961, a series of three regional Seminars in Trivandrum (May 1961), Darjeeling and Srinagar (June 1961) restored their attention to this field and the importance of tracing social change through a number of well-divised statistical tables was once again recognised. This itself presupposed a fresh survey of villages already done; but it was worth the trouble in view of the possibilities that a close analysis of statistics offered, and also because the 'consanguinity' schedule remained to be canvassed. By November 1961, however, more was expected of these surveys than ever before. There was dissatisfaction on the one hand with too many general statements and a growing desire on the other to draw conclusions from statistics, to regard social and economic data as interrelated processes and finally to examine the social and economic processes set in motion throuoh land reforms and other laws, legislative and administrative measures, technological and reforms change, Finally, a study camp was organised in the last week of December 1961

when the whole field was carefully gone through over again and a programme worked out closely knitting the various aims of the Survey together. The Social Studies Section of the Census Commissioner rendered assistance to State Superintendents by way of scrutiny and technical comment on the frame of Survey and presentation of results.

This gradual unfolding of the aims of the Survey prevented my colleagues from adopting as many villages as they had originally intended to. But I believe that what may have been lost in quantity has been more than made up for in quality. This is, perhaps, for the first time that such a Survey has been conducted in any country, and that purely as a labour of love. It has succeeded in attaining what it set out to achieve : to construct a map of village India's social structure. One hopes that the volumes of this Survey will help to retain for the Indian Census its title to 'the most fruitful single source of information about the country'. Apart from other features, it will perhaps be conceded that the survey has set up a new Census standard in pictorial and graphic documentation. The schedules finally adopted for this monograph have been printed in the monograph on Ithing village.

ASOK MITRA,

Registrar General, India.

NEW DELHI :

July 30, 1964.

PREFACE

The monographs on the selected villages of Manipur which constitute a 'by work' of the 1961 Census Operations, are a part of the attempt at what may be described as documentational mapping of some of the less developed villages of India. In selecting the villages of Manipur, the criteria laid down by the Registrar General have been generally followed and care also was taken to see that the major tribes inhabiting the hill areas are represented in the present series of survey. It is rather unfortunate that on account of the unhappy law and order situation in the Sub-divisions of Tamenglong and Ukhrul and the Mao-Maram area, it was not possible to include any village from these three places. This does not, however, detract from the broadly representative character of the villages under survey.

Some of the villages selected for the present survey are situated in the interior hill areas, with very poor communication facilities. The field work in some cases, therefore, involved strenuous marches from the headquarters of a Sub-division. Language difficulty was also one of the factors that stood in the way of smooth eliciting of information in the case of some of the interior tribal villages. The credit for the commendable field work on which the present series of survey are based should go to the two Investigators Sarvashri S. Achouba Singh and Q. M. Qutabuddin.

The present monograph and the others in the series are the result of a 'labour of love' as the Registrar General aptly put it and if they are of any use to those who are engaged in the number ONE task of raising the level of living in village India, those of us who applied ourselves to the preparation of these monographs with some assiduousness will have the lasting satisfaction that ours has not been a case of 'love's labour's lost'.

I am grateful to Shri A. Mitra, I.C.S., Registrar General and *ex-officio* Census Commissioner of India for his unfailing advice and guidance. I am also grateful to Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General (Social Studies) in the office of the Registrar General for valuable suggestions he made in the preparation of this monograph. On Dr. K. B. Singh, who was associated with the work at the later stage, has fallen the burden of preparing the draft of this monograph and of verifying the information and statistics already collected by personal visits to the spot and I am much obliged to him for the keen interest he has taken in the task entrusted to him.

Acknowledgements should also go to Sarvashri Tinglang Koireng, Sorvum Koireng and Bungir Koireng, among others, for giving us valuable information during the course of investigation.

R. K. BIRENDRA SINGH

IMPHAL,

September 14, 1971.

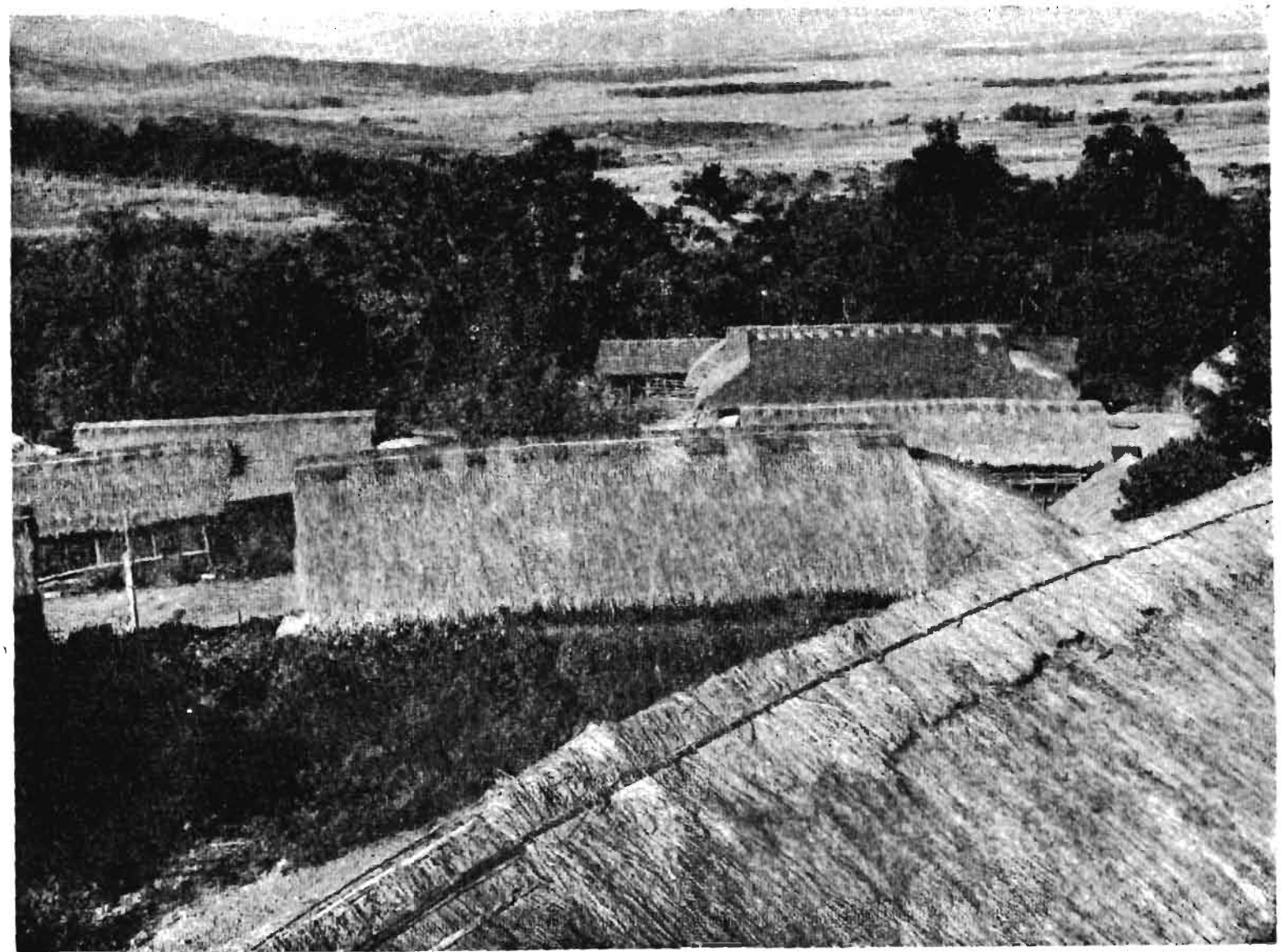
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A partial view of the village

CHAPTER I

THE VILLAGE

Introduction

Forest and hilly areas occupy roughly nine-tenths of the total area of Manipur. The hilly areas form a circular tract around the sma'l central valley of Manipur. From time immemorial the hilly regions of Manipur have been the home of a number of ethnically diverse communities who are known to the outside world as belonging either to the Naga or the Kuki group. As the history and tradition of these communities show, some of them have settled at a particular area or areas for several centuries while others have a tradition of migrating from place to place in the past, though cases of migration is reported to be negligible nowadays.

In numerical strength, all the tribal communities living in the hilly regions of Manipur are not similar. Some like the Kabui or the Tangkhul have a population of over twenty or forty thousand, and there are also a number of tribals like Chothe, Purum, Chiru, Moyon, Monsang, etc., the population of each of whom is less than two thousand persons according to the Census of 1961. The Koirengs are also one of those numerically small and less known tribal communities of Manipur. The population of the Koireng tribe according to the Census of 1961 is 531 persons consisting of 254 males and 277 females. At the time of survey the population of Longa Koirent village stands at 144 persons and they represent about 27·1 per cent of the total population of the Koireng tribe.

Longa Koireng is a small hilly village situated close to the western boundary of the valley of Manipur. The village is located on a hill-slope. The distance of the village from Imphal is about 20 kms., and it comes under the administrtative jurisdiction of the Mao & Sadar Hills Sub-division. The area of the village or of the residential sites is not available. The village is bounded on the east by paddy fields of the valley, on the north by Thangjing Chiru village, on the west by Lokchao village and on the south by Sajirok and Keithelmanbi villages. The village is located a little about the foot of the hill and one does not feel any considerable strain in climbing the hill and entering into the village. Besides, the village is not an isolated one because the neighbouring villages are situated within a distance of about a kilometre or so from the village.

Communication

The village is connected with Imphal, the administrative headquarters of Manipur, by a branch of the New Cachar Road. This branch road known as Maklang road bifurcates from the parent road from near Patsoi village—some 7 Kilometres to the west of Imphal. This road, though not metalled, is laid with boulders and is motorable throughout the year—though not right upto the village. The road leading upto the village branches off into two smaller roads at a distance of about one Kilometre from the village. One branch goes to Thangjing Chiru village while the other brahch which goes upto Longa Koireng village by passing through Heibirok stream is not bouldered. Though it is motorable right upto the interior of the village during the dry season, it is not so during the rainy season. The cattle and the bullock-carts also do considerable damage to the road during the rainy season. Besides, Heibirok stream which flows along the eastern fringe of the residential areas becomes swollen during the monsoon and the road leading to the village is often flooded much to the inconvenience of the villagers. The path from the foothill to the settlement areas, though short, is far from convenient particularly during the rainy season.

However, to the great convenience not only of the inhabitants of this village but also of those of other nearby villages, a regular daily bus service has been introduced recently between Imphal and Sangaithel village which is situated to the north-east of this village at a distance of about one kilometre. As a result of the existence of a daily bus service, from nearby this village, the villagers can now go to Imphal in the morning for buying and selling things and return home in the evening on the same day, let alone the comfort and time saved.

Flora and Fauna

The village, being situated in a hilly region, is not poor in flora. From a distance the village looks like a thick forest full of tall and leafy trees. Popular species of trees like mango, *tairen* (Cedrella toona), *heining* (spondius mangifera), *heikha-malhei* (prunus spp.), *yongchak* (parkai roxburghii), *khok* (albizzia stipulata), bamboo, and plantain-trees are found within the village. The village is also endowed with a rich growth of the long grass locally known as "ee" (imperata cylindrica) which is widely used throughout Manipur for thatching purposes. The inhabitants derive regular income, though small, from the sale of this grass. Besides, the forest provides, free of cost, timber required for building purposes, and fuel which is a daily requirement for cooking.

Besides domestic animals, wild animals are found in nearby forests. Jackal, deer, boar, and tiger visit the village occasionally, but so far no report of casualty has been received during recent years.

Size of Village and Number of Households

The area figures of this village are not available in detail. The population of Longa Koireng according to the Census of 1961 was 157 persons consisting of 70 males and 87 females. The number of households and the population as recorded at the time of survey which had been conducted after the general census enumeration, are given below .

Community	*No. of Households*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*
Koireng	36	144	63	81

It will be seen from the above that the population that obtained at the time of survey is lower than that of the Census of 1961. This slight fall in the population of the village is due to the fact that two households have migrated to other nearby localities in search of better opportunities after the general census enumeration but before the survey. The village is a single-community village inhabited by the Koirengs only—one of the Scheduled tribes of Manipur.

Residential Pattern

The habitations are clustered at one place rather than scattered all over the area. This is because the number of households is not large enough to occupy space or area wider than the existing residential area. As regards the location of the houses, there is no systematic pattern ; mention may, however, be made of the fact that a large number of the residential houses are found to have been built facing the south-east. The only logical explanation that many villagers offer for this phenomenon is that they get maximum amount of sunshine during the winter and minimum amount of sunshine during the summer. Besides, the houses are not clustered on the basis of the clan, and no household constructs any enclosure or fence around the house. In the absence of a fence or enclosure the space between two houses serves as the foot-path of the villagers. Hence all the open spaces between the houses are used as foot-paths and there is no well defined lane as such within the residential area.

Source of water

The villagers do not face any difficulty regarding water-supply. Though the source of water is not found within the residential area of the village, it is not far away from the settlement area. There are two small streams which are the sources of water for all the villagers. One is Heibirok which flows along the north-eastern side of the village and the other is Thangjirok which lies on the southern side. It is, therefore, a matter of individual choice for the villagers to take water from either of the sources. During the rainy days, the water is muddier than in other seasons, but the villagers do not use any device for purifying the water. The water from both the sources is used for all purposes—drinking, washing, bathing, cooking, etc.

Burial Ground

The customary practice among the Koireng tribe regarding the disposal of the dead is to bury the dead body. They have no tradition of cremating their dead bodies. There is one burial ground which is common for all the ihhabitants irrespective of their clans. The burial ground is situated near the entrance of the village in the north-eastern direction.

Market

There is no market within the village. The villagers have to go to other places in order to purchase things required for domestic purposes and personal use. The nearest market is situated at Sangaithel which is the neighbouring village situated along the road leading to Imphal. This is not a big market-place. Only four or five or sometimes, a little more persons from Sangaithel or nearby places come to the market-place for selling things. This market-place lacks scope for expansion as a result of the introduction of a daily bus-service recently between Sangaithel and Imphal. Nowadays, the inhabitants of Longa Koireng enjoy the bus-ride, and whenever necessary they go to Imphal for selling and buying things, and small market-places through which they pass on their way to Imphal have become less important to-day. The market-places that lie along the route to Imphal area Maklang Bazar (about 4 miles) and Khamnam Bazar about 9 miles).

Village Settlement

It is reported that the village was situated at first on top of the hill farther up from the site where the village is at present located. The exact period of shifting the village site from the top of the hill to the present place is not known though it is reported that the present site has been used for settlement for about forty years or more. It is also reported that the present locality is not the original home of the inhabitants. The villagers claim to have migrated from the Moirang area (about 30 miles towards the south-west of Imphal) by the end of the nineteenth century.

Reason for Selection

The present village is a single-community village inhabited by the Koirengs—one of the Scheduled tribes of Manipur. The Koirengs are considered by anthropologists and early British administrators to be an old Kuki sub-tribe. At the time of survey the inhabitants eschewed such questions regarding they affinity to either the Naga or the Kuki group. They desire that they should be recognised by their individual tribal name rather than being classified under either the Naga or the Kuki group. Leaving aside the ethnological aspects, the present study makes an attempt to analyse the socio-economic life of a simple tribal community when it is gradually influenced by urban ways of life and when it takes up plough cultivation in addition to hoe cultivation.



Women bathing at the Heibirok stream



Village headman and his wife

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR MATERIAL EQUIPMENT

It has been stated earlier that Longa Koireng is a single community village inhabited by the Koirengs—one of the Scheduled tribes of Manipur. Sufficient data relating to the population of this village are not available from the Censuses held earlier than the 1951 Census. Data from the Censuses of 1951 and 1961 are available though they are not exhaustive for the purpose of this monograph. According to the 1951 Census, this village had 35 households with a population of 173 persons consisting of 82 males and 91 females. But according to the Census of 1961 there were 38 households with a population of 157 persons consisting of 70 males and 87 females. The decennial variation shows a rise in the number of households but a fall in population from 1951 to 1961. The circumstances leading to this slight fall in population in the village from 1951 to 1961 are not known. It may be seen that in both the Censuses the number of males is less than that of the females, and the proportions between the two sexes in both the Censuses are such that there is an indication of higher growth rate of female population. In the Census of 1951, the male population represents 47.4 per cent of the total population and the females represent 52.6 per cent. But in the Census of 1961 the percentages represented by the male and female populations are 44.6 and 55.4 respectively. Keeping these details in view, the figures relating to the survey may be examined. According to the survey, there were 36 households with a population of 144 persons consisting of 63 males and 81 females. The percentages represented by the male and female populations are 43.7 and 56.3 respectively. Thus, since the Census of 1951 for which data relating to the village are available the general population structure shows female predominance over the male population.

All the 36 surveyed households are found to belong to different clans into which the inhabitants of the village are divided. The distribution of the clans with reference to the housenolds are and population in eacn clan is shown in a tabular form below :

Name of Clan	No. of Households	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
Songthu	16	29	35
Yeite	7	13	20
Wanbe	6	12	15
Leisel	3	5	5
Tente	2	2	4
Toltung	1	1	2
Rongsokhel	1	1	..

Out of the seven clans found in this village, Songthu clan has the largest number of households and population strength. There are 16 households under this clan representing about 44.4 per cent of the total number of households, and the population under this clan represents 44.4 per cent of the total population. Seven households under Yeite clan which comes second in its household strength, represent about 19.4 per cent of the total only. Households under Wanbe, Leisel and Tente clans represent one-sixth, one-twelfth and one-eighteenth of the total respectively. Toltung and Rongsoknel clans are represented only by one household each, though the number of households under each clan differs, no clan dominates any other clan on the basis of population. Families of different clans live together as good neighbours and they help one another in times of difficulty and in the pursuit of various social activities.

Houses

With regard to the distribution of house-holds by the type of structure of the dwellings, a uniform structure is found. That is to say, all the 36 households have thatched roofs, and 34 households have mud-straw plastered walls while the remaining 2 households have walls of wooden planks. The plinth areas of all the houses are rectangular in shape. In spite of the fact that the inhabitants of this village come in regular contact with the urban people by going almost daily to Imphal for different purposes, and have seen urban habitant, they have not brought much change to their dwelling house. Apparently the house of a rich person does not differ much from that of a poor man. The houses resemble one another considerably in shape and the materials used. No house is built in a style different from another on the basis of clan or economic status. The sizes of the floor areas differ from house to house though the average floor-area is approximately 20′ × 30′. All the houses are built over earthen plinths of about one foot high at the minimum. The maximum height of the plinth is about two feet. Since the village is located very close to the foot of the hill, it is not difficult to collect earth from the nearby fields for use in making the plinth. As regards other materials required for the construction of a house, the villagers collect the required materials from the nearby forests. If any requisite material is not available in the village, it is purchased from outside. Either wood or bamboo or both from the skeleton of a house. Wall may be of wooden planks but a large majority of the houses have walls plastered with a mixture of mud, cows dung and straw cut into short lengths. The roofs are thatched with a type of long grass locally known as "ee" (imperata cylindrica). What is most important

in every residential house is to have a wooden or bamboo pillar called *Capikung* in the rear-middle of the house. This pillar is regarded as the seat of *Sanamahi* the domestic god of the Meities. The acceptance of the Meitei god *Sanamahi* as the domestic deity is found among a number of tribal communities who inhabit close to the Meitei settlement areas.

Every house has got a verandah in the front. The verandah occupies about one-fourth or one-fifth of the floor-area. And the interior of the house looks like a big room owing to the absence of partitioning walls. Every house has a front door of about 4′ × 6′ in size and some houses have back-doors too of a similar size. Most of the houses do not have a sufficient number of windows. At least one window is found either in front or on a side of the house. In the absence of sufficient number of windows, most of the houses are not properly and fully ventilated. The size of a window is about 2½′ × 2′. There is no separate room or hut for cooking the daily meal. Cooking of the daily meal is done inside the residential house at a rear corner. No separate bath or latrine is built. As for latrine, any secluded place serves the purpose and besides, the pigs do the "scavanging" by eating human excreta. Those households having cattle built cattle-sheds at any convenient place near the dwelling house. The materials used for residential houses are similarly used for building cattle-sheds.

Since the slope of the hill on which the village is located faces the east, most of the houses get enough sun-light, if not inside the house. All the residential houses have either four or two sloping roofs.

Houses are built by either unskilled or skilled labourers. Within the village there is no skilled house-builder. Skilled labourers are available from any nereby Manipuri Village. The engagement of Manipuri house-builders is partly responsible for the outward resemblance between a Koireng house and a Maitei house. A poor household seldom engages the service of skilled labourers. Very often the house of a poor man is built by friends and relatives who are not particular about monetary gain. In actual practice, they are entertained with rice-bear and other eatable things the house-hold can offer. Cases are not lacking where well-to-do families engaged skilled Manipuri house-builders who are paid in cash. Though there is no standardised rate charged by the house-builders, the approximate labour-charge in building athatched house is Rs. 400 and this rate too is determined by mutual agreement and bargaining.

In the absence of well-partitioned rooms privacy in the true sense of the term does not exist. As regards hygienic condition, the village does not have any scheme worth the name. The smell of cattle-dung fills the air though it is not too strong and repulsive. In spite of the lack of sanitary conditions, the village enjoys sufficient sun-shine, cool breeze and enough rainfall which drains away the dirt.

The local names of the different parts of a house and their English equivalents are given below :

Local Name	*English Equivalent*
Kichou	Pillar
Bang	Wall
Inkot	Door
Thongnaó (Manipuri word)	Window
Sapkam	Eaves
Inchung	Roof
Sungkum	Verandah
Inkil	Kitchen
Yalmun	Bed (room)

Dress

The dress of both the sexes is simple and unsophisticated. There traditional costume also is simple in design and workmanship. Nowadays, most of the villagers are found wearing the clothes sold in the market at Imphal, and it is hard to distinguish them from other tribal communities from their dress alone. Both men and women normally wear two pieces of clothes—one as an upper garment and the other as a lower garment. The mode of wearing the clothes does not outwardly differ from that of other communities of Manipur. The lower garment of the menfolk is a loin-cloth called *deer* and its female counterpart is called *ponveil* which is worn either around the waist or over the breasts. Shirt, blouse, vests, *chaddar*, blanket, etc. comprise the upper garments of the villagers. Tailored clothes like shirt and blouse are purchased from Imphal. During the hot season or while remaining at home, the use of upper garment is often neglected by the menfolk in particular. Women too are seen without upper garment, but in their case they weare the cloth (*ponveil*) over the breasts. They do not have separate names for shirt and blouse. The collective name for both is *somkul*. Shirt and blouse are often mill-made cloths while lower garments like *deer* and *ponveil* are woven at the hand-looms. The *deer* is worn more or less in the dhoti-style and the size of the cloth is about 8′ × 2½′, which covers upto the knees of the wearer. The size of *ponveil* is about 6′ × 4′. Nowadays, mill-made blankets of either cotton or cheap wool are available abundantly in Imphal, and the villagers purchase such clothes for their personal use. Use of urban dress like pants, and coats is more or less restricted to young men though sometimes elderly men are also seen wearing these clothes.



A traditional house



Two village belles in their traditional dress

Ornaments

Wearing of ornaments is the main fency of the womenfolk. Men do not wear ornaments. Since most of the households cannot afford gold ornaments, cheap "imitations" which are readily available in the market are commonly used by the villagers. The main ornament of the people is called *nongthrai*. This is a necklace of round beads of cheap stones and the price is around two hundred rupees.

Furniture

Use of modern furniture is not unknown to the people, but most of the households do not possess these articles. Some households possess wooden chairs and tables but these are of crude shape and finish, and there is no doubt that these are not made by professional carpenters. There are nine households possessing chairs and ten households possessing tables. Only one household is found possessing a big mirror. However, all the households possess small mirrors, stools and mats.

Cooking Utensils

Earthen, brass or aluminium utensils are used for cooking the daily meal. Aluminium pots are becoming the choice of the people nowadays for the reason that such utensils are not only cheap and durable but also save time and labour because food is cooked quicker in them than in other types of utensils. For serving the cooked food, dishes and cups made of aluminium or brass are used. Earthenwares are used mainly for storing water and foodgrains.

Food and Drink

Rice-beer is the favourite drink of the inhabitants of the village. Nowadays, the villagers are accustomed to taking tea, if not frequently. Tea-drinking is a recent habit and the villagers were not particular about this popular beverage some fifteen or twenty years ago. The people are non-vegetarians and among the varieties of meat, they relish pork and chicken. Among the varieties of vegetables, potato, arum, sweet-potato, plantain and cabbage are the popular ones.

Rice is the staple diet of the people and vegetables and meat are taken with rice. The fat of pig is used as a cooking medium. But nowadays as a result of the influence of the Meities, the villagers have shown liking for mustard oil too which is widely used by the Meiteis. In the absence of any oil the villagers eat boiled vegetables and meat and put salt for taste. They take meal twice daily—one in the morning and the other in the evening. The preparations of the meals are practically the same. During the cultivating seasons, workers in the fields take one more meal in the after-noon in addition to the usual two meals. Due to the introduction of a regular bus service, it has become no problem to get consumption goods from the market at Imphal. Varieties of fish and vegetables which are not easily available in the village or nearby, can now be purchased from the market, and as a result, a gradual change in their food-habit is discernible.

Birth Custom

The stoppage of mensturation for about three months and the subsequent symptoms of morning sickness, nausea and vomitting are considered to be signs of pregnancy. During the long period of pregnancy, no special ceremony is performed on behalf of the pregnant woman or the child in the womb. There is no dietary restriction so far as the pregnant woman is concerned. She is free to eat fish, meat, plantain, potato and other usual fruits and vegetables commonly taken by the villagers. But she is expected to avoid stale and rotten food which may affect her health. She is free to do her usual works at home. These works include cooking, pounding paddy, sweeping, washing, looking after domestic animals, bringing water from the stream, etc. But when the stage of pregnancy has advanced it is physically inconvenient to perform all such domestic works. The pregnant woman is also advised to do less work until the child is delivered.

The birth of the child takes place inside the house on the bed or on the floor by spreading a mat and clothes over it. At the time of delivery she normally takes a supine position. There is no trained midwife within the village or the neighbouring areas. Therefore, only elderly female relatives or friends assist her at the time of delivery. It is not important whether such female relatives or friends should belong to this or that clan. Child-delivery is an affair of the womenfolk, and the men and children of the household generally keep away from the scene.

The cutting of the navel-cord is done by any woman who knows the job by holding a sharp piece of bamboo. The baby is washed with lukewarm water by an elderly woman and it is placed by the side of its mother. The after-birth is wrapped up with "*leihoura*" (green leaves of a plant resembling "(*canna indica*)" and the bundle is kept inside a "*tumba*" (dry rind of gourd). The "*tumba*" is hung up at a corner of the eaves with a thin split of bamboo. No money is given to those women who help the delivery of the child. But by way of gratitude they are served with "*yu*" (rice-beer) and eatables.

Naituoi Ceremony

After the birth of the child the mother and the child are required to stay inside the house. In the morning of the following day the mother will come out of the house by holding the child in one arm and a lighted fire-wood in the other hand. Until the mother comes out of the house in this manner, the father of the child is prevented from doing any hard work like cultivating the field, etc. and no outsider also should enter the house where the child is born. In order to herald the birth of a child, a branch of *thounam* plant (*cassia*) is hung on the wall of the house. The household will sacrifice at least one hen and one pig, and the meat is cooked and served to friends and relatives. On this day, the baby's hair is cut completely and placed on a *leipung khanga* (*solanum turvum*), and its ear-lobes are also pierced with a needle by any person who knows the job. After the birth of a child, the

diet of the mother is restricted to plain rice without any vegetable or meat preparation for about one week. Drinking rice-beer liberally by the young mother is considered useful and envigorating.

Weaning

There is no specific period for the weaning of the child. Normally the child is encouraged to take solid food when it attains one year or so, but breast feeding is continued till about the third year of the child. In case a second child is born within the second year of the first child, weaning of the first child is encouraged.

Marriage Custom

The inhabitants of this village resort to marriage by engagement and marriage by elopement. The frequency of either marriage by engagement or marriage by elopement is not known. But from our informants we learn that marriage by elopement is frequently resorted to by the villagers probably for the reason that this is individually preferred and it does not involve expenditure normally associated with marriage by engagement.

Marriage by Engagement

The basic formalities and procedures observed by the villagers are as follows. The family of the boy should always approach the family of the girl and initiate the proposal. It is considered awkward on the part of the family of a girl to take a proposal of marriage directly to the family of a boy. So far as the proposal is concerned, the parents of the boy being accompanied by a few elderly friends or relatives go to the house of the girl whom they have chosen, and make their proposal to the parents of the girl. It is customarily enjoined that the maternal uncle of the boy should be included as a member of the party from the boy's side. The party will also take enough quantity of rice-beer which is meant for serving all the persons present at the girl's house. Once the proposal has been accepted, the boy's party goes generally three times to the girl's house carrying with them rice-beer every time.

When the final words have been given by the parents of the girl, preparations are made for the marriage ceremoney. Giving of bride-price by the boy's family is an old custom which is still observed by the villagers. The bride-price normally includes one "*sembung*" (gong) and forty rupees in cash. But if the girl is found to possess a traditional necklace known as "*nongthrai*" an amount of sixty rupees is given instead of forty rupees. Giving of bride-price which is known as *mankat,* is the binding part of the marriage. The marriage is observed in the form of dancing, eating and drinking.

On the day of marriage, the bride and her party come to the house of the boy in the evening. On this day, two functions have to be performed to solemnise the marriage. First, at least one pig is to be sacrificed and cooked and two *kharungs* (big earthen jars) of rice-beer are to be prepared. These are to be served particularly to the elders present. Second, the bride is expected to perform a dance with the younger brothers and sisters of the groom.

Most of the time the members of both the parties spend in gossiping, eating, singing, etc. In this manner, they spend the night and continue till the next day. On the next day, the young couple, being accompanied by their respective parties, go to the bride's house. The members of the boy's party are entertained with rice-beer at the house of the girl where no special ceremony is held. After taking rest for a while, the boy and his party return home. The girl stays at her parental house for a number of days before she returns to her husband's house. Usually she stays 30 days at her parental house before coming back to her husband's.

Marriage by Elopement

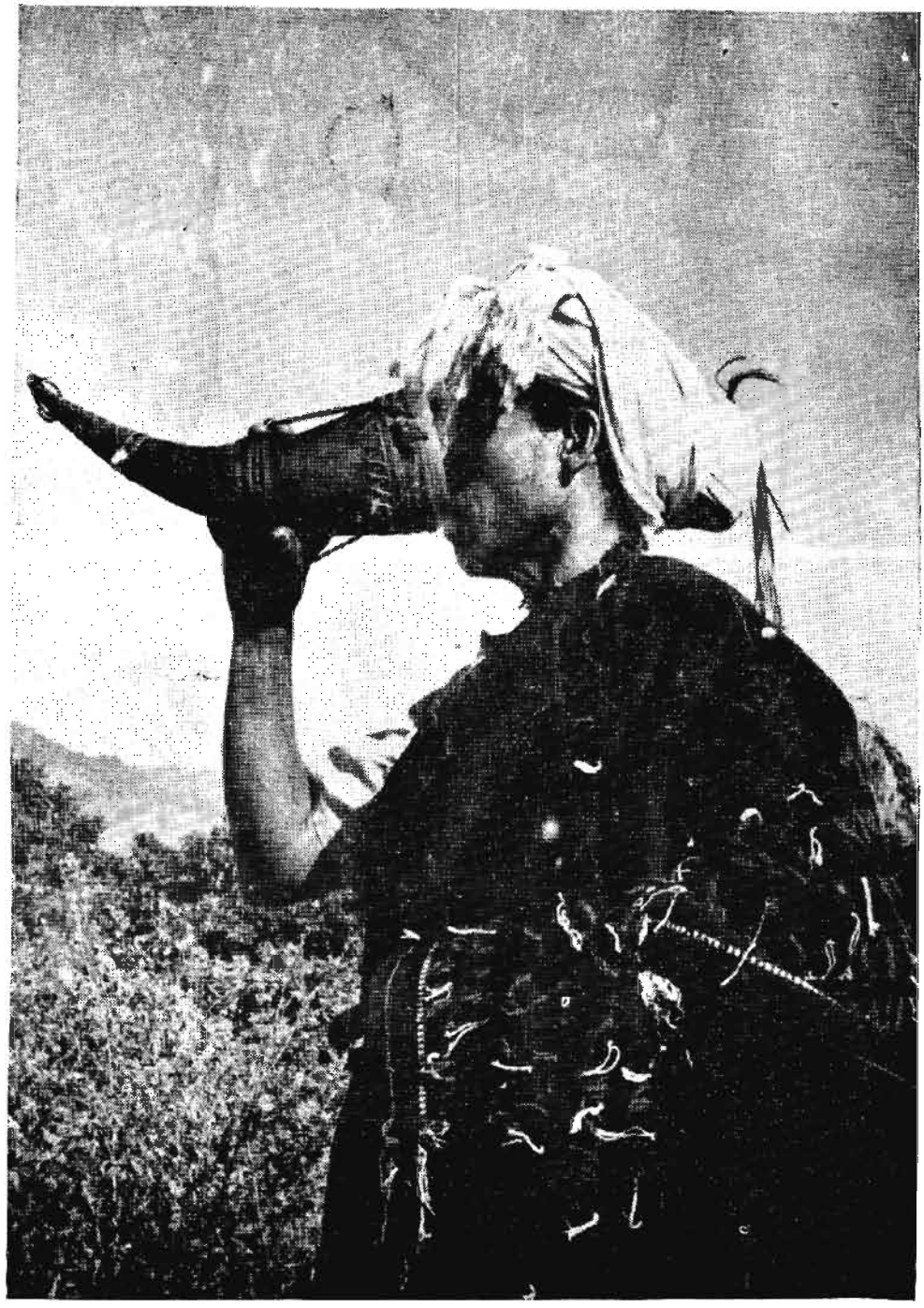
Elopement is also a recognised form of procuring a bride practised by the people of this village. When a girl elopes with a boy, they are for all practical purposes recognised as husband and wife and both live as such. Elopement is genrally followed by what is known as "*Loukhatpa*" which may be regarded as the solemnising part of the marriage. "*Loukhatpa*" is a Manipuri word and it literally means "to pick up", and it customarily refers to the practice of formal announcement by the parents of the girl that they have forgiven their daughter and have recognised the young couple as husband and wife. Another significance of this ceremony is to bring the two families into closer times, and in this function, which is held at the bride's house, the parents of the boy and the girl meet. At least one hen is sacrificed by the village priest known as *Thiempu* and it is offered to their god *Pathel*, and the girl's family has to keep at least a *kharung* of rice-beer so that all the members present may drink as much quantity they like. If the parents of the girl are rich and well-to-do, eating and drinking will be observed in a grand manner. Here the function is completed and the girl comes back with the boy and his party. The parents of the girl will offer gifts according to their capacity and these may include clothes, utensils, baskets and such sundry articles for household use. If a marriage is brought about through elopement payment of "*mankat*" is not compulsory.

Selection of a bride may be from within the village or from outside. When the parents of a boy have decided to find a wife for their son, the girl who is customarily preferred first is the daughter of the boy's mother's brother. If no such girl is available, then they will look out for girls from other families. The cross-cousin marriage prevalent in this village is assymetrical, that is, a man can marry his mother's brother's daughter only and not his father's sister's daughter.

Child marriage is not practised by the inhabitants of this village, and there is no tradition also regarding the prevalence of this practice in the past.



A group of children



Drinking from the horn

Marriages are held when both the boys and the girls are in their late teens or early twenties. Details with regards to age at marriage are furnished in Chapter IV. Divorce is permissible under the existing custom of the people.

Manwai

It is a post-marital function in which the parents of the bride will arrange a feast on behalf of their daughter after some months of the marriage. Since there is no specific period during which the said feast is to be arranged, the same is offered on any day convenient to the parents of the girl. On the day of the feast, at least a meat preparation is essential. As a general practice a dog is killed for the purpose in addition to other items like pork, chicken, etc. depending upon the means of the parents of the girl. On this occasion, all close friends and relatives are also invited.

Death Custom

A dying person is allowed to breathe his last inside the house. When death has taken place the dead body is bathed with warm water by an elderly man. After the bath, new clothes are worn and it is placed near the *chapi-kung* pillar—the seat of domestic god *Sanamahi.* Meanwhile preparation for the burial of the corpse is in progress. The *ningon-mawa,* i.e. the husbands of daughters of the deceased go to the burial ground and dig a grave while others wrap up the corpse with a thick cloth. The corpse is carried to the grave by two or three persons led by the *ningon-mawa* or by a close male relative of the deceased and buried in a lying position by all present there. A wooden plank is kept inside the grave and the dead body is placed on the plank face upward and head northward. The family of the deceased offers pork and rice-beer to all present for coming to mourn the dead.

After the death of a person, the household observes death-pollution for one day usually. On the next day, purification rite is performed by the *Theimpu* or the village priest. In this rite, which is a simple one, one dog is sacrifid to *Pathel* and a jar of rice-beer is also prepared. Purification of the household is performed by the priest by touching the bodies of the inmates of the house with leaves of a kind of plant locally known as *kandaram-mana* or *napisingbi.* Eating and drinking form the concluding part of this purificatory rite.

Manglathaba

It is a ceremony generally observed by the Koirengs: Every household offers a feast to friends and relatives in the month of *Lamda* (February-March)—the last month of the Manipuri calendar, if a death took place in the household in the previous year. The feast, which consists of eating and drinking , may be on a large or a small scale depending upon the financial position of the household concerned. The main purpose of this function is that the village priest will offer prayer to the god by sacrificing at least a fowl so that the soul of the deceased may rest in peace and be free from hunger and pain.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMY

Life in the hilly regions of Manipur appears to be enjoyable but it is actually hard and tedious. Living in the less advantageous area, the people living in the hills have to contend themselves with lesser amount of amenities compared to that of the people living in the plain area. The pace of development of the hilly areas of Manipur is comparatively slower than that we find in the valley. Many of the simple civic amenities like pucca road, tap-water, electricity, medical facilities etc. which are provided in the valley on a wider scale are considerably limited in the hilly regions of Manipur. This situation of "lagging behind" in a number of ways has its repurcussion upon the economic life of the people living in the hills. Another major factor found in the hills which poses as a glaring contrast from that of the plain is that, plough cultivation with a pair of bullocks is not possible in the hills where only hoe-cultivation is practised. This naturally hampers, apart from other drawbacks, the work quantitatively.

It is needless to say that agriculture is the mainstay of the people of the village, and rearing of domestic animals like pigs and fowls constitutes the subsidiary occupation of almost all the households in the village.

Livelihood Classes

Before making an analysis of the data obtained at the time of survey, it will be pertinent to have a brief comparison between the Censuses of 1951 and 1961 so far as the livelihood classes of the inhabitants of this village are concerned. In the Census of 1951, the livelihood classes of the people were classified into eight categories, and this village returned figures for the following two categories only :—

Categories	Males	Females
1	2	3
1. Cultivation of land wholly or mainly owned and their dependants	58	72
2. Cultivation of land wholly or mainly unowned and their dependents	15	11

Though there has been some change in the classification of livelihood classes in the Census of 1961 and comparison with that of the previous Census of 1951 cannot be fully made, we give below the details of livelihood classes of the population in this village as recorded in the Census of 1961.

Out of the nine industrial categories adopted in the 1961 Census, figures for the following two categories only are available :—

1. As Cultivators ; 37 males and 52 females.

2. In Other Services ; 4 males.

Thus, from an analysis of the village population according to 1961 Census, it is found that out of 157 persons consisting of 70 males and 87 females, 93 persons (41 males and 52 females) are workers and 64 persons (29 males and 35 females) are non-workers forming 59.2 per cent and 40.8 per cent respectively. However, no figures are available to show the working and non-working population under different age-groups.

At the time of survey for the purpose of the present study, further enquiries have been made as regards different aspects of economic life of all the households. It has been found that cultivation of food crops is the principal occupation of almost all the households. The livelihood classes of the inhabitants are not found to be considerably different from that of the 1961 Census. The following table shows the number of workers and non-workers under different broad age-groups.

TABLE 1

Showing workers and non-workers under broad age-groups

Age-Groups	Population			Workers		Non-workers	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
All ages . .	144	63	81	36	34	27	47
0—14 . .	55	25	30	2	..	23	30
15—34 . .	48	23	25	19	20	4	5
35—59 . .	35	14	21	14	14	..	7
60 & over .	6	1	5	1	..	..	5

It will be seen from the above table that 70 persons or about 48.6% of the total population are workers engaged in different types of occupations. The largest number of workers is found under the age-group 15-34 years for both the sexes, representing 55.7% of the working population. The second position i. e. 40.0% is enjoyed by workers under the age group 35-59 years. The economic participation of

persons under the age-group 0—14 years is practically insignificant for the obvious reason that under this age-group infants and children are grouped. Naturally the percentage of workers under this age-group is the lowest—the percentage being approximately 2.8. The number of male and female workers under the age-group 35—59 years are the same, whereas under the first and last age-groups, not a single female has been found as a worker. Besides, 20 per cent of the females under the age-group 15—34 years and 33.3 per cent of the females under the age-group 35—59 years are non-workers. As regards non-working population under the age-groups 35—59 years and 60 years and over, not a single male is found as a non-worker, whereas in all the four broad age-groups females are found as non-workers. The overall picture of workers and non-workers shows that the number of male workers is higher than the number of female workers while the number of male non-workers is less than that of female non-workers.

An analysis of the working population with reference to the types of occupations shows that most of the workers, both males and females, are engaged in cultivation. There are 60 persons consisting of 28 males and 32 females who are engaged in cultivation and they represent about 85.7% of the total number of workers. There are only 4 persons including a female are found engaged in Other Services. The following table shows the distribution of male and female workers under different broad age-groups with reference to the types of occupations in which they are found to be engaged.

TABLE 2

Workers by Sex, Age-groups and Occupations

Age-groups	Population			Cultivation		Agricultural Labour		Other Service	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
All ages	144	63	81	28	32	3	1	5	1
0—14	55	25	30	..	..	2	..	..	..
15—34	48	23	25	16	19	1	1	2	..
35—59	35	14	21	11	13	..	..	3	1
60 & Over	6	1	5	1	..	..	..	..	..

Agriculture

All the households are found to possess cultivating rights within the boundary of the village and actually they are found to cultivate food crops like paddy, potato, sweet-potato, arum, pumpkin, etc. It is reported that the quantity of produce in the hill is not large enough to meet heavy external demand. It is observed that cultivation in the plain area which is situated close to the village is given prime importance for the reason that the production from the field in the plain area is greater in quantity than that of hill area. Out of the 36 households surveyed, 25 households are found to possess agricultural lands of varying sizes in the plain area but close to the village. Out of the remaining 11 households, 8 households are found cultivating in the plain area as tenant farmers. Hence, only 3 households do not cultivate in the plain area though they cultivate in the hill. The distribution of the households with reference to the sizes of agricultural lands situated in the plain area is shown in the following table.

TABLE 3

Distribution of households with reference to size of the agricultural lands

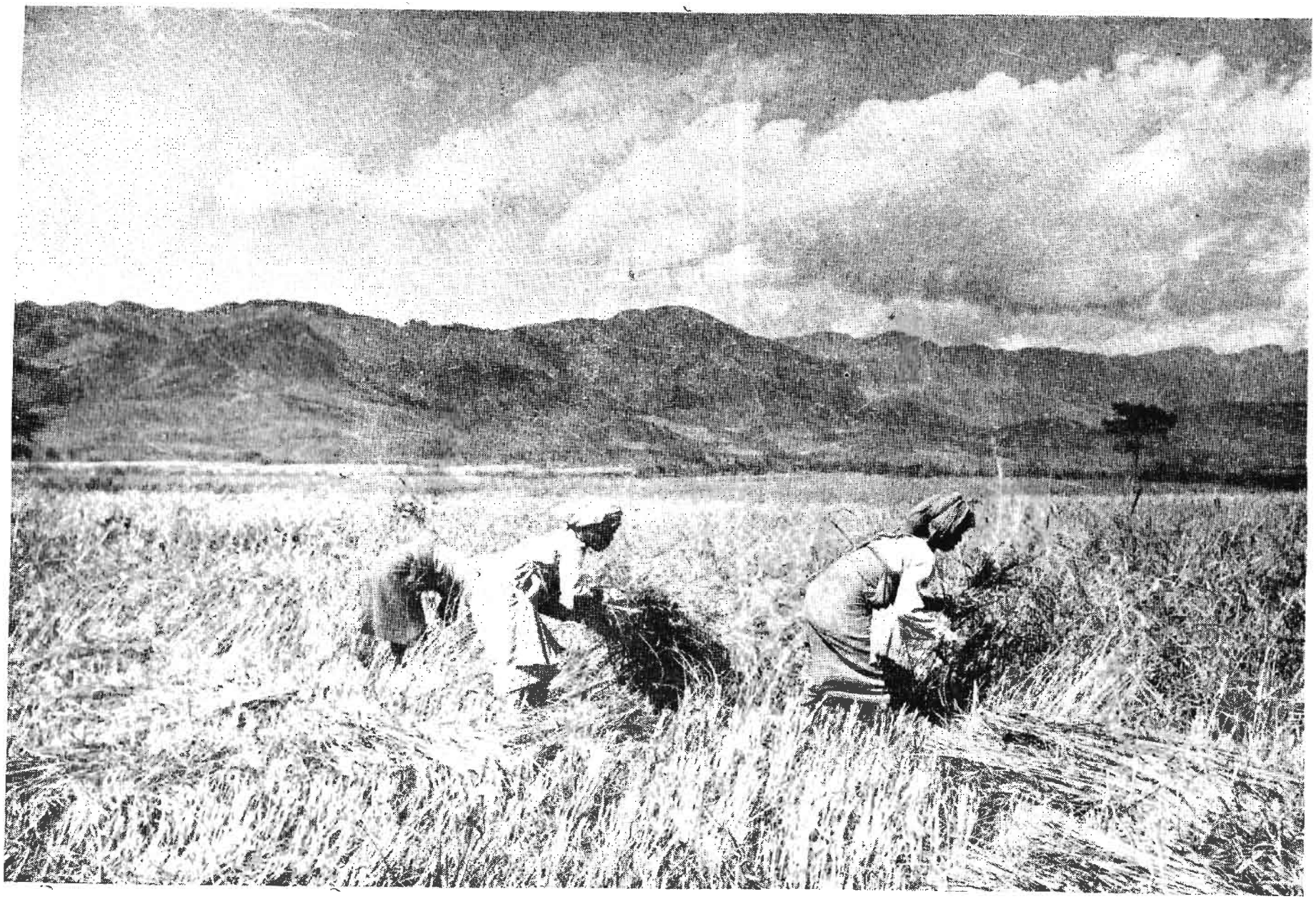
Land in acres (plain area)	No. of Households possessing
1	2
Less than 1	Nil
1—2.9	8
3—4.9	..
5—6.9	4
7—9.9	5
10 and over	8

The above figures do not include figures of agricultural land in the hill on which all the households have cultivating rights. The size of the per capita agricultural land in the hill is usually small depending among other things, on the number of persons and the cultivating capacity of the household concerned.

In the hills shifting cultivation is practised and the main instruments used are the hoe for tilling the soil and the *dao* and the axe for cutting the trees and plants and clearing the jungle. In the plain area, the method of cultivation does not differ from that of the Hindu Manipuris. They resort to ploughing the field by using cattle preferably buffaloes though there is no customary restriction to the use of bullocks. Tilling of the land starts from about the month of February during which early showers have started, and in the months of June and July when heavy rainfall has already begun, repeated ploughing of the soil is done and soon after that sowing of paddy seeds and transplanting of the seedlings are performed. As the winter sets in, the paddy becomes ripe and it is harvested as soon as possible. For cutting the paddy stalks sickles having curved edge are used, and the paddy stalks are left in the field in heaps for about one or two days. On any sunny day, thrashing of the the stalks with pronged flails in order to separate the grains of paddy from the stalks is done. In order to avoid wastage of grains, a wide bamboo mat is spread over the field and the dry stalks are kept on the mat at the time of thrashing. The crop is either packed inside gunny bags or poured into big baskets, and these are carried by cattle upto the barn of the cultivator.



A woman with her basket



The harvest by the womanfolk

The fertility of the soil in the plain area is reported to be of the second rate and yield of paddy per acre is around 9 to 10 quintals. Besides the cultivation of paddy, other vegetables are also grown. The growing of vegetables is a year-round activity in the sense that several varieties of vegetables are grown in rotation so that these may be available seasonally throughout the year.

Allied with the cultivation of food crops, another source of income is derived from the sale of thatching grass (imperata cylindrica) which grows abundantly in the village. Since thatching grass is still very popular throughout the poorer section of the population of Manipur, there is no dearth of customers for this grass. Purchasers from the nearby localities who deal in this type of grass come to the village in bullock carts and the grass is purchased in terms of bundles for the purpose of resale in other localities. Normally, the annual income of a household from the sale of this grass is reported to be around 50 rupees at the minimum and 80 to 100 rupees at the maximum.

There are two other types of activities which do not actually augment the income of the household but save a lot of petty expenses. These are weaving and rearing of domestic animals. It is a well known fact that a cloth purchased from the market is costlier than one woven at home. Since almost all the households are found to possess loin-looms, they are capable of weaving varieties of cloths required for domestic use in particular. All the households are engaged in weaving for at least some time in a year if not throughout the year. Womenfolk do not have any special training in this craft but they learn it from their mother and elder sisters through apprenticeship, and the main products are loin-cloths for females, blankets and shawls. These are all cotton cloths and both handspun and mill-made yarns are used. Most of these clothes are meant for domestic use.

Livestock

It is needless to lay much emphasis upon the importance of domestic animals in an agricultural economy. Agriculture being yet unmechanised, the cultivation of land in the wider sense of the term is unthinkable without using bullocks or buffaloes. Hence, domestic animals, particularly cattle, play an important role in the economy of our villages, and this village is not an exception. The following table shows the position of livestock in the village at the time of survey.

TABLE 4

Showing the distribution of livestock

Items of Livestock	No. of Households possessing	No. of animals
1	2	3
Buffaloes	23	106
Goats/sheep	4	10
Pigs	26	151
Fowls	30	426

The number of fowls is more than that of any domestic animals reared in this village. The number of households owning them is also the highest. Pigs come second—a remote second, in number. The percentages of fowls, pigs, buffaloes and goats/sheep are 61·5, 21·8, 15·3 and 1·4 respectively of the total number of domestic animals—the total being 693. Excepting goats/sheep, other domestic animals are fairly sizeable numerically.

Fishing

Fishing is not the occupation of any household inthis village. It is due to the fact that fish is not abundantly available either within or nearby the village.

Village Industry

Apart from weaving at the loin-looms by the housewives during their spare time, there is no industry worth mentioning within the village. It has further come to our notice that the majority of the households have enough idea as to what industry would be lucrative for the households concerned. Out of 36 households 31 households or 86·1 per cent have given their choice of industry which according to them will be beneficial for the village as a whole. 18 households or 50 per cent of the total are of the opinion that carpentry will be a lucrative industry. 8 households or 22·2 per cent of the total prefer farming while 5 households desire to take up weaving. Out of these 5 households one household considers tailoring while another household considers tailoring and carpentry to be potentially lucrative industries if introduced in the village.

Aspirations

When asked "What kind of work would you like your son to do ?" 32 households or 88·8 per cent have given a common answer, that is, all of them would like to have their sons to be in the Government service while one household wants the sons to become lawyers. The remaining three households have no definite answer to give.

Income and Expenditure

An accurate assessment of income of all the households is not possible for the reason that all the households do not maintain accounts showing their income and expenditure. Besides, there is always a tendency among the villagers to overestimate their expenses and underestimate their income. However, a rough estimate can be made in order to find out the income of the households by taking into consideration the size of agricultural land cultivated and the quantity of produce received by each household, wages or salaries received, and income derived from the sale of agricultural produce, domestic animals, etc. if any. Accordingly the incomes of the households have been calculated and grouped under broad

income-brackets and the distribution of the households under these income-brackets has been shown in the following table.

TABLE 5

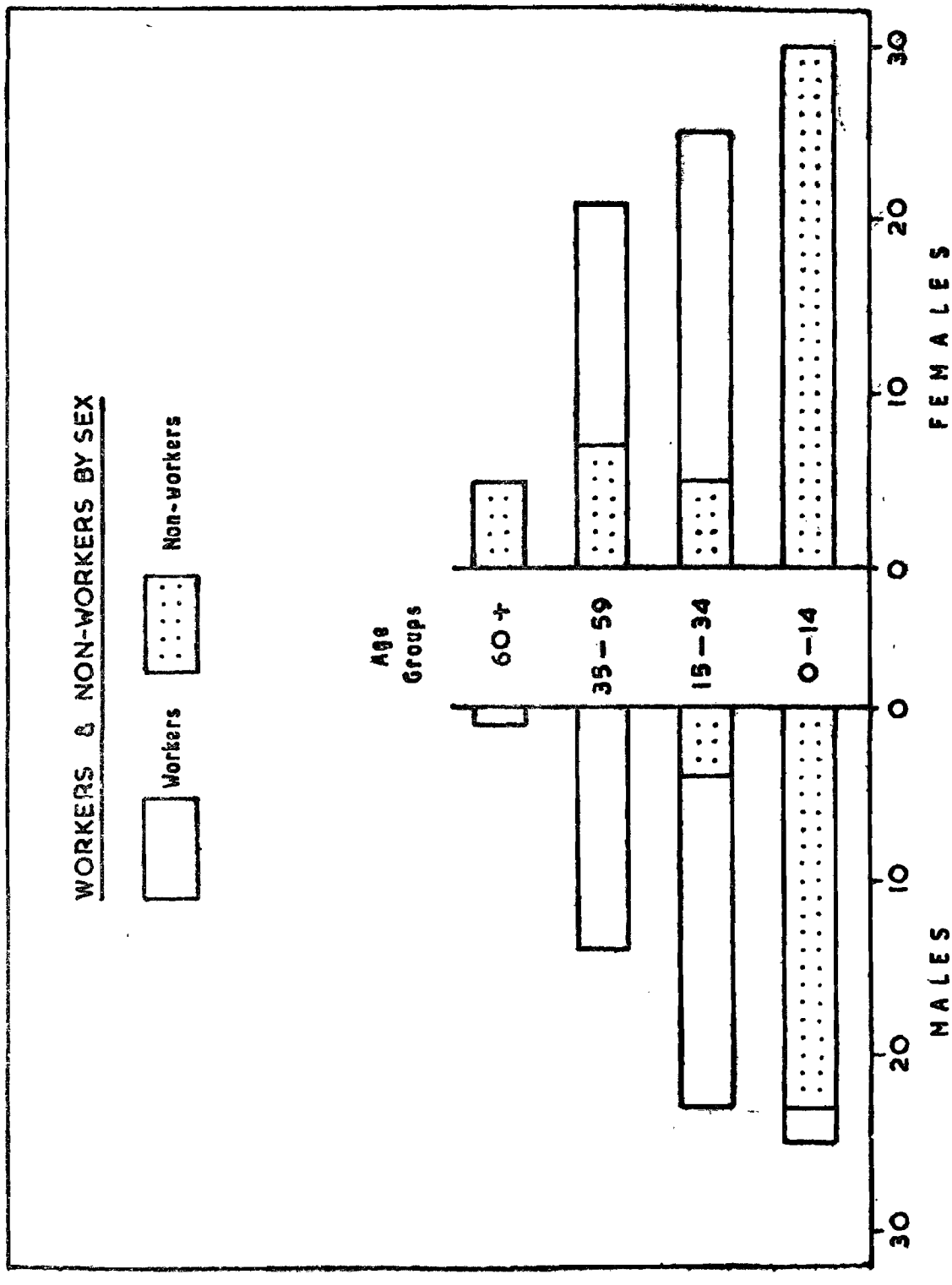
Income of the Households

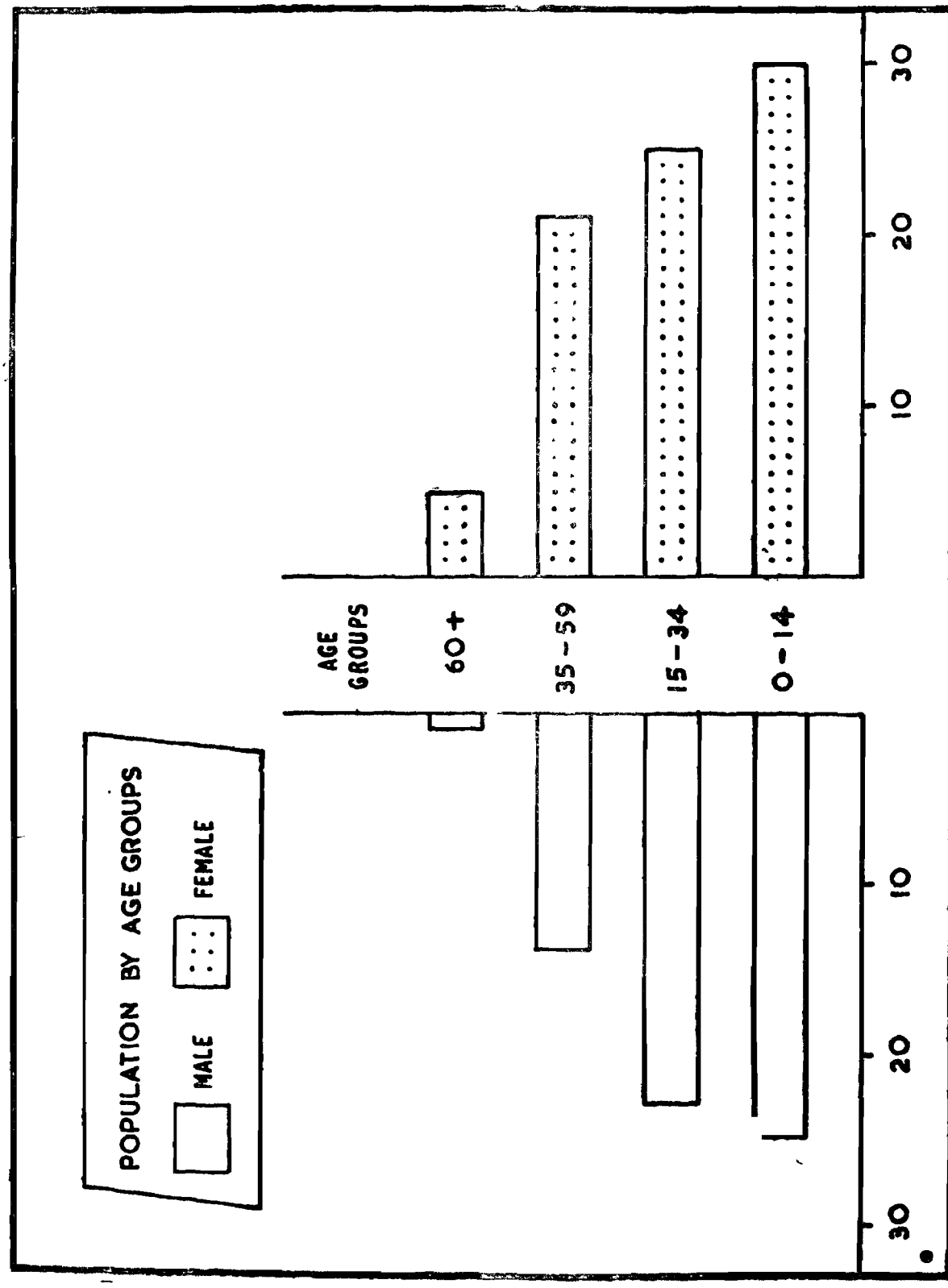
Income	No. of Households
1	2
Below Rs. 1000	4
Rs. 1001—2000	9
Rs. 2001—3000	12
Rs. 3001—4000	6
Above Rs. 4000	5

The items of expenditure are too many to describe. Besides, it is not possible to give a detailed picture of expenditure for each household. All the households are found to incur daily or regularly expenses on consumption goods like salt, kerosene oil, mustard oil, fish, etc., as well as on bus fare whenever they go to the town. The households are also found to incur expenses periodically on agricultural implements, utensils, household tools, clothes, books for children, etc., and some well-to-do households are found to buy bicycles also.

Indebtedness

Lending or borrowing of money from friends, neighbours and relatives usually occurs in village life. At the time of survey, the incidence of indebtedness is not found to be high considering the amount of money borrowed. However, borrowing of small sums of money, say ten or twenty rupees from friends and neighbours normally takes place and such borrowed amounts are paid off as soon as possible. Excepting such cases of borrowing of petty sums, no household was reported to be in debt of a sizeable amount of money.


WORKERS & NON-WORKERS BY SEX
Workers
Non-workers
Age Groups
60 +
35 — 59
15 — 34
0 — 14
0
10
20
30
MALES
FEMALES


POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS
MALE
FEMALE
AGE GROUPS
60+
35-59
15-34
0-14
30
20
10
10
20
30

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

Age and Sex Distribution

No reliable figures relating to the number of households and population of the village are available prior to the Census of 1951. The population of the village, according to the Census of 1951 is 173 persons consisting of 82 males and 91 females while the number of households is 35. In the Census of 1961, there are 38 households while the population stands at 157 persons consisting of 70 males and 87 females. The above figures reveal that during the inter-censal period the village has recorded a fall in population of both the sexes. At the time of survey which was conducted in 1962, there were 36 households with a population of 63 males and 81 females. The fall in the number of households and population is due to the migration of 2 households to other localities before the survey but after the enumeration of 1961 Census.

The number of females is higher than the number of males. There are 1285 females to every 1000 males, and this feature conforms to the general sex-ratio of Manipur where the number of females is more than the number of males. The disparity of the sexes in this village is mainly due to the fact that the number of females born is more than the number of males born. In all the age-groups except those of 10—14 years, 20—24 years, 30—34 years and 50—54 years, the number of females is higher than the number of males. In the age-groups 20—24 years and 50—54 years, the number of males is equal to the number of females while in the age-groups 10—14 years and 30—34 years the male population is higher than that of the females. In the age-groups 15—19 years and 55—59 years the female population is double the male population. In the age-groups 45—49 years and 60 years and over, the female population is four to five times the male population. The distribution of males and females in various age-groups is shown in the following table :—

TABLE 6

Showing Population by Sex and Age

Age-group	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
All ages	144	63	81
0—4	20	9	11
5—9	20	8	12
10—14	15	8	7
15—19	9	3	6
20—24	12	6	6
25—29	15	7	8
30—34 . . .	12	7	5
35—39	9	4	5
40—44	7	3	4
45—49	5	1	4
50—54	8	4	4
55—59	6	2	4
60 & over	6	1	5

From the above table it will be seen that 55 persons in the age-group 0-14 years from 38·2 per cent of the entire population. The highest position in population is shared by age-groups 0-4 years and 5-9 years while the second position too is shared by age-groups 10—14 years and 25—29 years. If we group those who have attained the age of 20 years under adult population, the village has 80 adults consisting of 35 males and 45 females representing 43·8 and 56·2 per cent respectively of the adult population. The number of male population shows a gradual fall from the lower age-groups to the higher age-groups whereas the adult female population is found to have been more or less uniformly distributed in all the higher age-groups.

Marital Status

The following table shows the civil conditions of all the persons under different age-groups :—

TABLE 7

Age and Marital Status

Age-groups	Total Population			Never Married		Married		Widowed		Divorced/Separated	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
All ages	144	63	81	34	34	25	25	1	15	3	7
0—4	20	9	11	9	11	..	..	..	..	..	..
5—9	20	8	12	8	12	..	..	..	..	..	..
10—14	15	8	7	8	7	..	..	..	..	..	..
15—19	9	3	6	3	3	..	3	..	..	..	..
20—24	12	6	6	1	..	5	5	..	..	..	1
25—29	15	7	8	3	..	3	5	..	..	1	3
30—34	12	7	5	1	1	5	2	..	..	1	2
35—39	9	4	5	..	..	3	3	..	1	1	1
40—44	7	3	4	..	..	3	1	..	3	..	..
45—49	5	1	4	..	..	1	2	..	2	..	..
50—54	8	4	4	1	..	3	3	..	1	..	..
55—59	6	2	4	..	..	2	1	..	3	..	..
60 & Over	6	1	5	..	..	..	..	1	5	..	..

It will be seen from the above table that out of 144 persons, 68 persons or 47·2 per cent are unmarried, 50 persons or 34·7 per cent are married, 16 persons or 11·1 per cent are widowed, and 10 persons or 7·0 per cent are divorced or separated. A large majority of unmarried boys and girls is found upto the age of 34 years and 19 years respectively. As for married persons, from the age-group of 20-24 years, married boys are found while married girls are found from the age-group of 15-19 years. No married persons are found at the age of 60 years and above. Another feature of marital status of the population is that the number of married males is equal to the number of married females. This means that there is no case of polygamy. Similarly, the number of never married males is equal to the number of never married females. It may however be noted that the number of widows is extremely high compared to the number of widowers, and most of the widows have passed the marriageable age.

The following table shows the marital status of the population in each clan :—

TABLE 8

Age and Marital Status by Clan

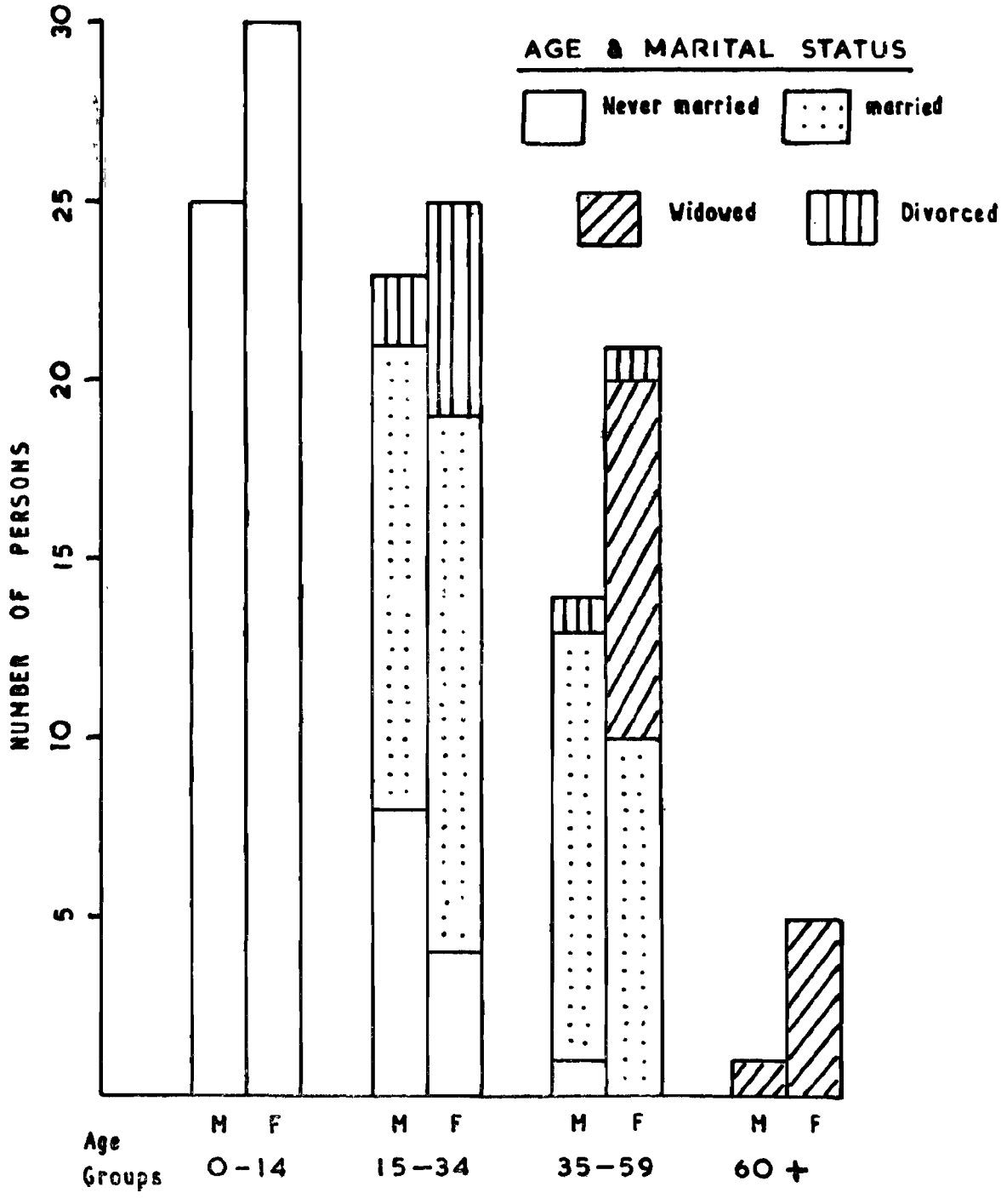
Name of Clan	Age-group	Total Population			Never Married		Married		Widowed		Divorced/Separated	
		P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Rongsokhel	All ages	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	0—4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE 8—(*contd.*)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Rongsokhel (*concld.*)	20—24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	25—29	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	30—34	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	35—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40—44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	45—49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	50—54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	55—59	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	60 & Over	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.
Tente . . .	All ages	6	2	4	2	1	..	..	..	2	..	1
	0—4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	20—24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	25—29	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	30—34	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
	35—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40—44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	45—49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	50—54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	55—59	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
	60 & Over	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
Leisel . . .	All ages	10	5	5	2	2	2	2	1	..	..	1
	0—4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	3	1	2	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
	20—24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	25—29	2	1	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
	30—34	2	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
	35—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40—44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	45—49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	50—54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	55—59	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	60 & Over	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..

TABLE 8—(*contd.*)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Songthu . . .	All ages	64	29	35	16	10	13	13	..	8	..	4
	0—4	8	4	4	4	4	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	6	4	2	4	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	8	5	3	5	3	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	6	3	3	3	1	..	2	..	..	..	..
	20—24	5	3	2	..	..	3	1	..	..	..	1
	25—29	6	1	5	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	2
	30—34	2	1	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
	35—39	5	2	3	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	1
	40—44	6	3	3	..	..	3	1	..	2	..	..
	45—49	2	..	2	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..
	50—54	3	2	1	..	..	2	1	..	..	..	..
	55—59	3	1	2	..	..	1	1	..	1	..	..
	60 & Over	4	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..
Wanbe . . .	All ages	27	12	15	6	9	4	4	..	2	2	..
	0—4	5	3	2	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	4	2	2	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	4	1	3	1	3	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	20—24	2	1	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
	25—29	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..
	30—34	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	35—39	4	2	2	..	..	1	1	..	1	1	..
	40—44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	45—49	3	1	2	..	..	1	1	..	1	..	..
	50—54	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
	55—59	1	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
	60 & over	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Toitung . . .	All ages	3	1	2	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	..
	0—4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	20—24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	25—29	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
	30—34	1	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..


AGE & MARITAL STATUS
Never married
married
Widowed
Divorced
NUMBER OF PERSONS
30
25
20
15
10
5
M F
M F
M F
M F
Age Groups
0-14
15-34
35-59
60 +

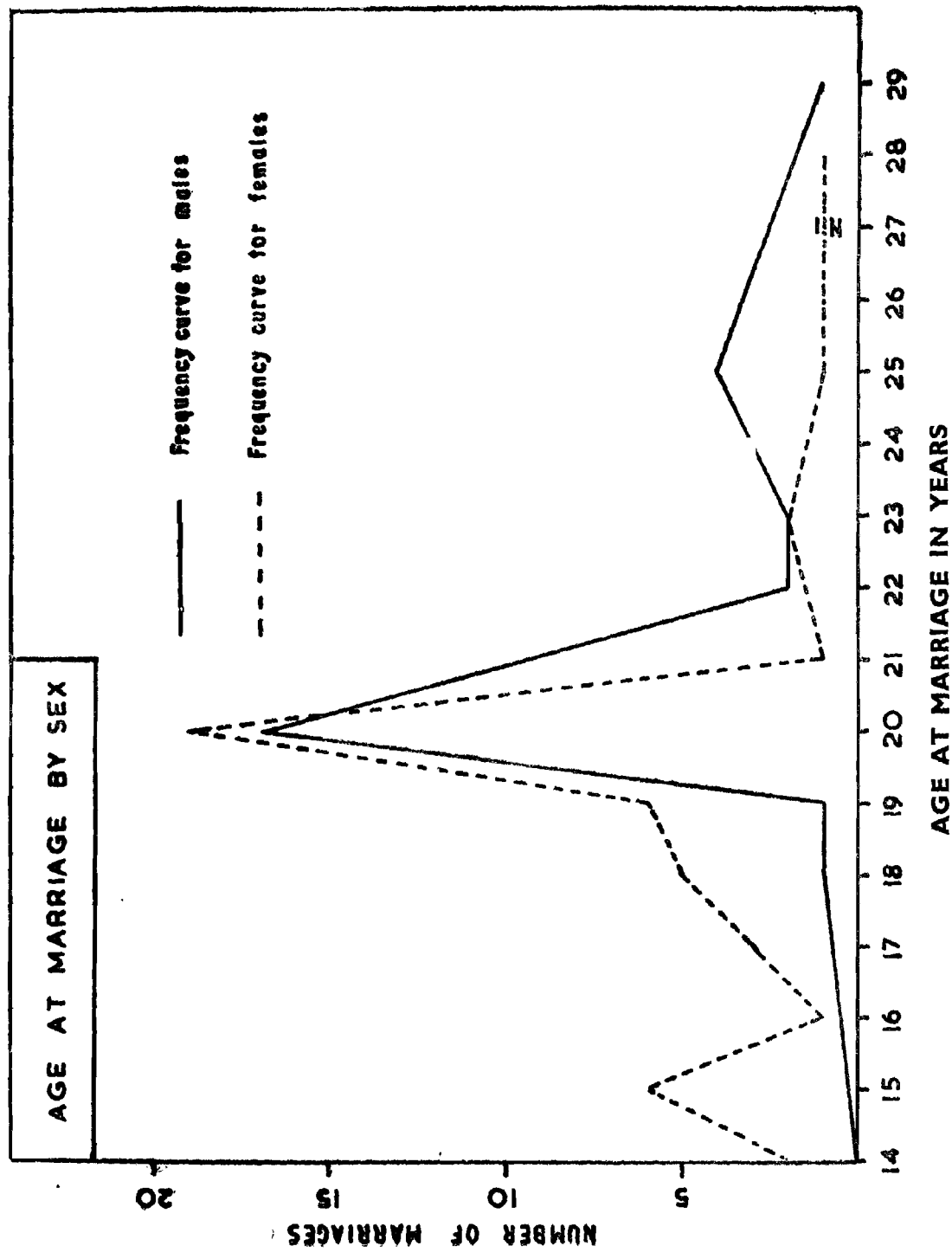

AGE AT MARRIAGE BY SEX
Frequency curve for males
Frequency curve for females
NUMBER OF MARRIAGES
5
10
15
20
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
AGE AT MARRIAGE IN YEARS

TABLE 8—(*Concluded*)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Toltung (*Contd.*)	35—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40—44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	45—49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	50—54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	55—59	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	60 & over	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Yeite . . .	All ages	33	13	20	7	11	5	5	..	3	1	1
	0—4	7	2	5	2	5	..	..	..	..	..	..
	5—9	5	..	5	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..
	10—14	2	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	15—19	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	20—24	5	2	3	1	..	1	3	..	..	..	..
	25—29	3	2	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
	30—34	5	4	1	1	..	2	1	..	..	1	..
	35—39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	40—44	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
	45—49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	50—54	4	2	2	1	..	1	1	..	1	..	..
	55—59	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
	60 & over	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Age at Marriage

Child-marriage is not practised by the inhabitants of the village. The following table shows the data relating to age at marriage of all the ever-married persons in the village.

TABLE 9

Showing age at Marriage

Age (in years)	Number of Ever-Married persons		
	Males	Females	Total
1	2	3	4
14	..	2	2
15	..	6	6
16	..	1	1
17	..	3	3
18	1	5	6
19	1	6	7
20	17	19	36
21 . .	..	1	1
22	2	..	2
23	2	2	4
24	..	..	..
25	4	1	5
26	..	1	1
27	..	..	..
28	..	1	1
29	1	..	1
TOTAL . . .	29	47	76

It will be seen from the above table that out of 76 ever-married persons the number of ever-married males is lower than the number of ever married females. The ever-married males represent about 38 per cent of ever-married persons while the ever-married females represent about 62 per cent of all the ever-married persons. It may further be noted that marriage of girls

takes place much earlier than that of the boys. Marriage of girls takes place from the age of 14 years. Though marriage of boys takes place beginning from the age of 18 years, more than 58 per cent of the marriages of the boys take place at the age of 20 years. Similarly over 40 per cent of the marriages of the girls take place at that age, *i.e.* 20 years. As for the boys, there is no marriage at the age of 21, 26 and 28 years. No girls are married at the age of 22 years and after 28 years.

Size of Households

As stated earlier, there are 36 households with a population of 144 persons. Hence, the average size of the households is 4.

The distribution of the households with reference to the number of members in each household in all the clans of the village is shown in the following table.

TABLE 10

Size of Households By Clan

Name of Clan	Single Member			2—3 Members			4—6 Members			7—9 Members			10 Members & above		
	HH	M	F	HH	M	F	HH	M	F	HH	M	F	HH	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Leisel	..	..	..	2	2	3	1	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Rongsokhel	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Songthu	2	..	2	6	6	7	4	10	8	4	13	18	..	..	..
Tente	..	..	..	2	2	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Toltung	..	..	..	1	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wanbe	2	1	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	3	10	13	..	..	..
Yeite	1	1	..	1	1	1	4	6	12	..	..	..	1	5	7

It may be observed from the above table that as many as 13 households forming about 36·1 per cent of the total numbes of households have 2-3 members each, 9 households representing 25 per cent of the total have 4-6 members each, 7 households or about 19·4 per cent have 7-9 members each, and 6 households which form about 16·6 per cent of the total have one member each. Only one household from Yeite clan actually consists of 12 persons.

Types of families

It is seen from the table No. 10 given above that all the households are not families owing to the fact that there are some single-member households. With the exception of single-member households, the distribution of the households with reference to the types of families under each clan is furnisned below.

TABLE 11

Types of families under each clan

Name of Clan	Types of Families living in the Households			Non-family households
	Simple	Intermediate	Joint	
1	2	3	4	5
Leisel	2	1	..	..
Rongsokhel	..	..	..	1
Songthu	6	8	..	2
Tente	..	2	..	..
Toltung	1	..	..	..
Wanbe	2	..	2	2
Yeite	2	3	1	1
TOTAL	13 (36.1%)	14 (39.0%)	3 (8.3%)	6 (16.6%)

There are 13 households representing 36·1 per cent of the total which come under the Simple type of family. 39 per cent or 14 households come under the Intermediate type, while another 3 households or 8·3 per cent are Joint families. Only 6 households representing 16·6 per cent of the total do not come under one or the other of the three types of families mentioned above. These households belong to the non-family type because all of them are single-member households.

Intra-family and Communal Relationship

The family of the Koirengs is patrilineal and patrilocal. The father acts as the moral guardian of his family. Traditionally the relationship between the members of the family is cordial. Children grow up under the supervision of their elders and they are obedient to their parents and superiors. The segregation of the sexes is not given much attention to while the children

are quite young. Children, when they grow up and are able to work, accompany their elders whenever called for in the cultivation of food crops. Brothers and sisters are intimate while they are young, but as they grow older, brothers are less attached to their sisters. Sisters are usually intimate with one another while close intimacy gradually disappears among brothers after they get married and have their own families. But in the place of intimacy, respect for one another develops. Mothers and daughters are usually intimate with one another. The inter-personal relationship between a woman and her senior male in-laws particularly her father-in-law and husband's elder brother is of distance and respect. Traditionally, the position of a wife is considered inferior to that of her husband. Yet, the relationship between a husband and a wife is normally characterised by love and dependance.

For the maintenance of peace and order within the village, the inhabitants are found to have the age-old traditional organisation consisting of a headman known as the *kulak* and a few other subordinate elders knows as the *Luplak*, the *Yupal* and the *Potsang*. In most cases these traditional office-bearers act jointly and their decisions are respected and regarded as final. They are the guardians of customary practices and religious functions. They are responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the village. The customary payment to the headman is still practised. For example, the flesh of the middle portion of a hunted animal is usually given to him. It is reported that there is no reluctance relating to question of such customary payment.

Inheritances

The eldest son has got the customary right over the property of his deceased father. But every often love and compassion play the upper hand and all other sons also received their shares. Normally daughters do not get any share of the property.

General Awarencss of the people

Though the village is not totally cut off from urban influences, most of the inhabitants of the village are not well informed for the common daily happenings concerning Manipur. At the time of survey, no household was found possessing a radio-set. Reading of Manipuri newspapers by a few literate persons of the village is not a daily affairs. However, the males who are more mobile than the females, are found to be more informative than the females.

Family Planning

Some important informations have been collected in order to ascertain the attitude of the people towards family planning. From these informations it has come to our notice that males and females of this village take different attitude towards limiting the size of their families. It may however be noted that there is no family planning clinic within or nearby the village and no concrete steps have so far been taken up towards this aspect. The following tables throw some light upon the attitudes of the inhabitants towards family planning.

TABLE 12

Information and Attitude Towards Family Planning with Reference to the Number of sons and Daughters in the Households

Community	Number aware of family planning centres	Number wanting more children					Number wanting no more children				
		Have more than 3 sons	Have 1-3 sons	Have no sons	Have no daughters	Have no children	Have more than 3 sons	Have 1-3 sons	Have no sons	Have no daughters	Have no children
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Koireng . ..	..	3	2	2	2	2	8	4	4	15	

TABLE 13

Attitude Towards Family Planning with Reference to the Age of the Heads of the Households

Community	Number wanting more children, the ages of the heads of households being					Number wanting no more children, the ages of the heads of households being				
	Above 50 years	41-50 years	31-40 years	21-30 years	20 or less years	Above 50 years	41-50 years	31-40 years	21-30 years	20 or less years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Koireng . . .	2	1	1	5	..	7	5	9	4	2

TABLE 14

Attitude Towards Family Planning with Reference to Age of the Child-Bearing Women

Community	Number wanting more children, the age of the child-bearing woman being							Number wanting no more children, the age of the child-bearing woman being						
	Above 40 years	36-40 years	31-35 years	26-30 years	21-25 years	16-20 years	Less than 16 years	Above 40 years	36-40 years	31-35 years	26-30 years	21-25 years	16-20 years	Less than 16 years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Koireng .	3	1	..	..	4	1	..	9	6	1	2	..	1	..

TABLE 15

Attitude Towards Family Planning with Reference to the Duration of Marriage

Community	Number wanting more children, the duration of marriage being					Number wanting more no children, the duration of marriage being				
	Over 20 years	16-19 years	11-15 years	6-10 years	5 years or Less	Over 20 years	16-19 years	11-15 years	6-10 years	5 years or less
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Koireng . . .	3	1	..	2	3	11	6	2	1	2

It may be assumed from the four tables given above that the over-all attitude of the people of the village is not to have any more children than what they are having. With reference to the age of the heads of the households, out of 9 persons who want to have more children 5 or over 50 per cent are from 21 to 30 years of age. In the same age-group, there are only 4 persons out of 27 persons who do not want to have any more children. 9 persons between 21 and 40 years of age from one-third of those disliking to have any more children. Regarding the attitude of child-bearing women with reference to their age, 6 persons out of 9 or two-thirds of the child-bearing women wanting more children are between 16 and 40 years of age. The number of child-bearing women wanting no more children increases along with the increase in their ages. Again, with reference to the duration of marriage, 6 persons, *i.e.*, more than 50 per cent of those wanting to have more children have marital duration of less than ten years. 2 persons or one-third of those desiring to have children have been married for over 20 years. 11 persons out of 2 2 *i.e.* 50 per cent of those who do not want to have children have been married for over 20 years. The number of persons who do not want to have any more children increases along with the increase in the duration of marriage.

Literacy

The inhabitants of this village have not made any substantial progress in the field of education. The absence of any high school in and around the village is the direct cause of educational backwardness of the people of this village. According to the 1961 Census, 28 males and 13 females have been recorded as literate persons.

There are two schools near the entrance leading to the residential area of the village. One is a primary school called Sangaithel L. P. School which is run by the Government and the school has been in existance since the year 1946. There are two male teachers both from the village. The second school is a Government aided middle school named Nongchup Haram M. E. School. This school was established in the year 1961. There are 5 teachers in this school, and one of the teachers is from this village. At the time of survey, the number of students in the primary school is 36 males and 15 females, whereas 67 boys and 13 girls are found in the Middle School. The number of students given above includes boys and girls from the neighbouring villages also. By the side of the above mentioned two schools, there stands the Teachers' Quarter



Two Koirengs, Mark the difference in hair styles-old and new



Koireng musician p'aying on Sarangdar

which has been built recently with financial assistance from the Government. At the time of survey none has passed the high school examination.

Club

The village has one club named Longa Koireng Cultural Club. At the time of survey this club has no building of its own. It is reported that the club has been in existance since 1966. The main activities of this club is to organise games and sports and other forms of cultural activities in which boys and girls can participate. In the year 1969, this club organised a sports competition in which boys and girls from all Koireng villages were invited. Many Koireng boys and girls are reported to have participated in this sports competition.

Neighbourhood

The Chirus and the Manipuris are the close neighbours of the inhabitants of this village. They maintain friendly relation with their neighbours.

Leisure and Recreation

There is hardly any significant recreational activity worth mentioning. Leaving aside the children who are found to romp here and there most of the time and for whom no specific duties or works have been assigned, most of the working men and women are found engaged in different activities. The only popular form of leisure or recreation of most of the men and women is to while away the time in sleep or gossip. The menfolk usually leave their houses for places of their work from the morning, and many of them return home late in the evening. The womenfolk are also found to be either going to the town for buying and selling things or remaining at home doing household works. The womenfolk, if they remain at home, find ample time for rest. During the day time young boys are often found in groups playing here and there within the village. Their favourite place for play is the wide ground of the school situated near the entrance of the village.

Religion

There is no Christian household in the village. All the households are found to worship and propitiate the ancestral god *Pathel* who is regarded as the supreme deity of the Koirengs. There is neither image nor shrine for the tribal deities. One interesting aspect concerning Manipuri (Meitie) influence upon the villagers is that they are found to accept Sanamahi, who is the domestic god of the Manipuris, as their domestic god as well. The house-pillar known as *chapkung* is regarded as the seat of Sanamani. This pillar is located near the middle of the interior of the house. Heads of animals, if any, are hung on this pillar.

Festivals

The inhabitants of this village celebrate three important festivals in a year and these are Bedal, Kangrai-Mindai, and Cham-Er-Ser. The villagers who are found to accept ancestral faith consider the celebration of these festivals as an essential feature of their custom and tradition.

Bedal.—This festival which is mote or less a religious observance is held for one day in the Manipuri month of Lamda (March-April) at the house of the Yupal who is one of the traditional office-bearers of the village. The main purpose of this festival is to offer food in the name of the deceased persons of the village. Rice, vegetables and pulses are collected from all the households by the young men of the village and the articles are brought to the house of the Yupal. These articles are cooked and some quantity of the food is taken to the main entrance of the village where the Yupal offers prayer to *Pathel*, the supreme god of the Koirengs. After the prayer is over, the cooked food is distributed to all. The day is observed as a *genna* (*aser* in Koireng) or "non-working day". Violation of the *aser* by an individual is considered an act of disrespect for one's own custom and such an individual is usually fined with a pot of rice-beer which is taken to the house of the Yupal.

Kangrai-Mindai.—There is no fixed period for the celebration of this festival. Normally this festival is celebrated during the Manipuri month of Sajibu (April-May) or Kalen (May-June). If the festival could not be celebrated during either of the months, the celebration is postponed for one year till the month of Sajibu or Kalen of the following year. The significance of this festival is to bring good rainfall and good harvest during the year. The celebration of this festival which lasts for at least three days is performed in the following manner.

In the morning of the first day, every householder will bring a piece of stick or straw or any such article from his field and put the same at the village entrance. The headman (Kulak) of the village will sacrifice a pig and allow the blood of the sacrificed animal to fall on all the pieces of sticks or straws brought from the fields. This act symbolises purification of the fields. On the second day, boys and girls will go out in search of a long cane wire. If the cane-wire is not available, any long rope will be a good substitute. The said rope or cane is placed straight on the ground in some open place within the village. The headman will utter invocatory words over the middle portion of the rope. After this a tug-of-war between different clans begins. While the contest is going on, groups of the villagers will sing and beat the drums. At the sign of winning by a party, a man from the crowd will rush forward and cut the rope with a *dao*. This person is secretly appointed by the headman to perform the cutting. One half of the rope is kept in the house of the headman and the other half in the house of the Luplak, On the third day song and dance performances known as *Mei-umla* and *Mei-umlam* are performed by the members of the contesting parties of the previous day. Each party is led by a chief female singer.

Cham-Er-Ser.—This festival is celebrated in the Manipuri month of Mera (October-November) and it lasts for three days. On the first day of the festival, the headman and other village elders will go to the entrance of the village and sing in a group. They will also make a fire by burning sticks. While the elders are absent, the *pakhangs* or the youths of the village will collect burning sticks from door to door. The youths will remain at some distance from their elders. A sham fight between the elders and the youths takes place by throwing the burning sticks. The elders will hold shields to protect themselves. It is reported that the burning sticks sometimes happen to fall on the roof of the house but no fire takes place. After the exchange of burning sticks is over, the elders will return home. The headman will spread rice-flour thickly over the middle of village entrance and it is left overnight in order to examine any foot-print on it. It is reported that a foot-print is often found which is believed to belong to an evil spirt. Unlike human foot-print, the position of the heel is said to be the front side, and hence, according to the position of the foot-print, the headman examines whether evil spirit has entered the village or walked out of the village. It is a good sign if the spirit has walked out of the village. The following day is observed in gay abandon involving group eating and drinking. On the third day, long bamboo poles are erected at the houses of the headman and the Luplak. One of the main items of the festival is the carrying of an elderly male on a litter by a group of able-bodied persons. Men, women and children walk behind the litter which is carried along the narrow foot-paths of the village. The persons who are eligible for riding the litter are the *Pibas, i.e.*, clanheads including the headman of the village. They get their chance by turn year after year and the decisions of the village elders in this matter are final.





Scenes from Cham-Er-Ser Festival



