

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL PUNISHMENT SYSTEM IN MANIPUR

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ABSTRACT

In Manipur, traditionally, punishment system was based on the customary laws and practices. Besides, kings had the authority for various offences to impose penalties and punishments as well. Some of the common features of the traditional punishment system include- (i) the punishment was supposed to be proportional to the gravity of the offence committed; (ii) the punishment was mainly aimed at restoring peace and harmony in the society, (iii) collective punishment of the offender and involving group was practiced rather than the individual concerned; (iv) various forms of punishments such as fines, compensation, restitution, public humiliation and banishment was common besides physical torture or death penalty. However, punishments were subject to negotiation, mediation and arbitration rather than the rigid and arbitrary. But in some sensational cases and cases involving national security like crime against the state there was least compromised. Sometimes, the severity of punishment was also changed on the wishes of the ruling monarchs. This traditional punishment system was however, gradually influenced and modified by the colonial rule of the British. Even than some of the system still allowed to apply which led to conflicts and contradictions. Here in this paper the writers are exploring and reviewing the traditional punishment system in the light of the modern system.

Key Words

1. *Chatlam Lutin*: Traditional customs and conventions, 2. *Loi*: Scheduled Caste people of Manipur, 3. *Raja*: King of Manipur, 4. *Phouba*: A kind of Punishment similar to exposure to sun, 5. *Singaipak*: Log or big piece of fire-wood, 6. *Lallup*: Free service to state, 7. *Ramanadi*: A Hindu sect, 8. *Bamon*: Manipuri Brahmin, 9. *Bebasthakari*: Chief functionary of *Brahma Sabha*, 10. *Khoongoinaba*: A severe form of punishment only given to the women;

Introduction:

Since ancient times, punishment system in Manipur changes with the growth and development of the society. However, over the centuries, there evolved a common forms of understanding that people need to observed in the form of dos and don'ts permitted by the collective wisdom of the society. In course of time these rules become in the form of social principles and code of conduct that people accepted and adopted which locally known as *Chatlam Lutin*.¹In ancient Manipur, the criminal justice was based on upbringing of the principles of *Chatlam Lutin* and any deviation from this was punishable. In general, the violation of social norms or the laws of the land is described as crime. These laws were also very simple and by modern standard, savage. And violation of social norms or laws is prevented either by one's own conscience or by the fear of punishment. Punishment involves pain or suffering produced by design and justified by some value that the sufferer is assumed to have violated.² Broadly speaking four theoretical explanations have been advanced as the basis upon which society acts in imposing penalty upon one who violates laws.³ They are retributive,

deterrent, preventive and reformatory forms of punishments. Traditional form of punishment inflicted for various offences in Manipur were numerous and varied in character. The following types of punishments were used against the law breakers since ancient times such as capital punishment, banishment, corporal punishment, imprisonment, fine, enslavement and specific punishment for soldiers, for Brahmins, women, and crimes against cattle.

Capital Punishment:

Under the traditional punishment system, capital punishment was the highest form of punishment awarded to an offender. But, there was no uniform mode of executing a death sentence. Moreover, for the same type of crime, the nature of punishment awarded also varied from ruler to ruler. Under the traditional system of punishment, treason or conspiracies against the king were awarded death penalty not only to the chief offender but also to all his followers.⁴ This was the common practise employed by early rulers of Manipur. However, during the reign of Jai Singh (1759-1798 A.D.) the punishment for treason was not the capital punishment but severe beating. Sometimes, the ruler adopted lenient attitude towards offenders and sent them to *Loi* and *Naga* Villages.⁵ Later, during the time of king Chandrakirti(1850-18886 A.D.), punishment for treason was very severe. During his reign, the offender was not only killed but the dead body was also cut into pieces and hung at different places.⁶ In some cases, the dead body was exposed in the sun and placed where people could easily see it.⁷ If the chief culprit belonged to the royal family, he was put in a basket and thrown into a river, and kept there until drowned.⁸ This kind of punishment was very common in Bhutan also.

Murder, the next offence from the point of view of the death sentence was also awarded with, except in the case of Brahmin and women.⁹ But, this mode of execution varied with the nature of the crime committed. If the murders have been done by beating, then the punishment was beating to death with clubs. Again if the murder was committed by cutting or stabbing, then, the head of the culprit was cut off.¹⁰ Sometimes, hanging was also mentioned as one of the means of execution. A murderer was also executed in the way in which he killed his victim. But, Colonel Johnston, when he was British Political Agent in Manipur (1877- 1886) succeeded in inducing the Raja to order all persons sentenced to death to be beheaded.¹¹ The nature of execution was simple. The victim was thrown on his back upon the ground, the back of his neck was placed on the trunk of a plantain tree and the head of the criminal was hacked off.¹² Since then, decapitation became the only form of capital punishment in Manipur. According to the temperament of the rulers, death sentence, were also awarded in other crimes as well. For instance, during the reign of king Paikhomba (1666-1697 AD), two persons were hanged at *Kangpokpi* for forcible entry into the King's harem at midnight.¹³ Even for theft and robbery, some rulers awarded capital punishment. In 1674, one man of the *Potsangbam* was sentenced to death for stealing the *Raja's* cloth (*Khamenchatpa*).¹⁴ Another man was also killed at *Mongshangei* for stealing paddy from the royal granary.¹⁵ Three persons were also arrested and later killed for stealing and burning a house.¹⁶ Thus, capital punishment was awarded for various offences in Manipur.

Punishment of Banishment:

Since early days, banishment was an important form of punishment in Manipur. Sending away of offenders to either *Loi* villages or far off places including the hill areas of Manipur was considered to be a punishment of banishment. Sometimes, transportation outside of Manipur was also awarded to some persons. There are many references of banishment in the royal chronicle. Some important villages where offenders were sent out in banishment includes *Pashari*, *Sugnu*, *Sagolmang*, *Haojaongban*, *Waikok*, *Yiharai*, *Kondong*, *Pallel*, *Shoichep Kameng*, *Leishangkhang* etc. Moreover, some nearby villages like *Thanga*, *Ithai*, *Samurou*, etc. were also used for the same purpose. Banishment was one of the most popular forms of punishment under

the traditional system of punishment. It was awarded for various offences ranging from rebellion to mere telling of a lie. Some instances of awarding banishment to different offenders are given below:

In 1655, *Nongthonba* was transported to *Yiharia Loi* for rebellion against the king.¹⁷ Sometimes the whole family members were also exiled. In 1779, *Shooraisheмба* was arrested with his wives and children and transported to *Sugnu* for making conspiracy against the king.¹⁸ In 1734 two persons namely, *Ngathem Sekompa* and *Sinmam Ngaikhompa* were transported to *Palel* for speaking lies before the king. They claimed that they could fly but they failed to prove it.¹⁹ Sometimes, thieves were also awarded banishment. In 1747, a goldsmith named *Yangumba* was transported for stealing gold.²⁰ While awarding banishment as punishment, even the members of the royal family and Brahmins were not spared. In 1747, *Garibniwaz's* son *Tolentomba* was transported to *Sugnu*.²¹ Likewise in 1882 also, Prince *Kotwal Koireng (Tikendrajit)* was banished at *Thanga* for murder.²² However in both the cases, the offenders were pardoned and accordingly both of them were called back soon. Brahmins were also awarded the same punishment. In 1854 two Brahmins quarreled at a public function, one was banished to *Leishangkhang* and the other at *Wakchinggai*. In another case, two Brahmins were transported to *Moirang* for beating a *Sanyasi*.²³ Sometimes, offenders were also sent to hill areas of Manipur. In 1793 *Jai Singh* exiled *Ibungshija Krishna Chandra* to *Khoubum* village situated in the present *Tamenglong* District of Manipur for plotting and waging war against the King.²⁴ In many cases banishment to a *Loi* village was a common form of punishment.

Corporal Punishments:

The corporal Punishments aim at inflicting physical pain upon the offender. The idea was to socially disgrace the offender and deter him from repeating crime and also to deter other potential offenders.²⁵ Among the corporal punishments which were prevalent in traditional society in early Manipur, flogging, *Phouba* and mutilation were the common form of punishments. Flogging as a punishment was prescribed for various minor offences like general quarrel, beating, assault, fraud indecent scoff to women, kidnapping, common thieves etc. In some cases the culprit were not only severely beaten but were also exposed in the sun. The execution of flogging as a punishment was done in presence of the common people specially in the market place or *Bazar*.²⁶ Flogging on a high platform in the *bazar* was the general practise.²⁷ The punishment of flogging was carried out either with a wooden cane or *Singaipak* and sometimes with *Yairi* on different parts of the body of the accused specially on the hips or on the soles of the offender with his face on the ground.²⁷ The number of lashes were also fixed according to the nature of crime committed. Sometimes as many as 500 (five hundred) lashes were administered.²⁹ Such kind of whipping occasionally proved fatal to the unfortunate recipient.

Another feature of corporal punishment which was prevalent in early Manipur was *Phouba* which literally means exposure of the culprits in the Sun for many days. This form of punishment was given for minor offences like assault, kidnapping, adultery, common theft etc. The period of *Phouba* also varied from case to case and sometimes it was given for as many as for 5 (five) days altogether. In 1877, one who indecently assaulted a woman was punished with *Phouba*. In the same year another five persons were also punished with the same penalty for five days at the *bazar* for kidnapping and assaulting a woman at *Kwakeithel*.³⁰ In 1884 also, one *Huidram* and other two persons were exposed in the *bazar* for committing theft. Among the corporal punishments, mutilation was the severest form of punishment inflicted upon the offenders. Early Manipuri rulers also employed such form of punishment under the doctrine of retribution. Mutilation is cutting of hands, legs, ears, nose, tongue, blinding etc. Generally, mutilation was awarded for stealing and robbery.³¹ Sometimes, blinding was also awarded for kidnapping and rape.³² Cutting of tongue was the general punishment for defamation case.³³ Sometimes minors were also inflicted upon the same punishment of mutilation. In 1694, a father and his six years old son were accused of stealing a piece of royal silk cloth called 'Phige'. The father was sentenced to death and the son's nose was cut off.³⁴ In 1714, *Chingthouпам*

Seran and *Natok* from *Aaheipa Aawang*, had their hands cut off for stealing money from the state exchequer.³⁵

Punishment of Imprisonment:

Imprisonment as a punishment was employed by early Manipur rulers as an important form of punishment. It was first introduced by King *Meidingu Naothingkhong* (663-763 A.D.) However, its popularity increases since the 18th century onwards. Prior to this, it existed only in name as it was evident from the references of the cases related with imprisonment in the royal chronicle. Generally, imprisonment was awarded in cases related with arms stealing, debt murder, gambling and religious offences etc. Sometimes, the offenders were punished without specifying the term of imprisonment. In such cases the prisoners had to rot in jail till death, unless he was liberated by a pardon. However, women were never confined to jail.³⁶ In the case of arms stealing, which was reckoned as a very serious offence, no period for imprisonment was mentioned.³⁷ There are many such references in the royal chronicle. Moreover, stealing of gun powder was also awarded with the same punishment. In 1876 two *Muhamadans* were put into jail for stealing gun powder.³⁸ Similarly, in the case of debt also, no time frame for imprisonment was given.³⁹ In such cases release of offenders followed only after the payment of the debt. Political offences also were also awarded imprisonment without any specific time period. But, in general, the term of imprisonment varied from one week to twelve years.⁴⁰ For the first time, imprisonment as a punishment was used against the religious offenders during the time of *Garibniwaz* (1709-1748 AD). In 1736 all the members of the royal family who were the followers of *Ramanadi* cult were not only deprived of their respective posts but were also put into prison.⁴¹ The non-attendance of state service prescribed under the *Lallup* System⁴² was also awarded imprisonment as a punishment. In 1880, one *Tokhellamba* and another, *Langjamba Atomacha* were put into jail for not attending *Lallup* works.⁴³ Sometimes, imprisonment was awarded even for gambling.⁴⁴

In the case of murder also, imprisonment was awarded to the offenders. In 1847, one *Laisangthem Kharoba* was awarded imprisonment for killing *Naorem Ngamba* by beating.⁴⁵ Surprisingly, for most of the murder cases related with the tribal of Manipur, punishment was awarded to the offenders. There are many references of such cases in the royal chronicle. In one of the sensational case, a *Choither Naga* caught a woman when she went to collect firewood in the jungle and proposed to marry her. But when she refused to his proposal, he killed her by piercing with his spear. The man was arrested and put into jail.⁴⁶ However, Brahmin and women were never imprisoned. If they were involved in cases like murder, the punishment awarded was banishment. Sometimes, they were excommunicated.⁴⁷

Imposition of Fine:

Under the tradition system of punishment, fining was the most common form of punishment in Manipur. However, sometimes it led to gross abuse as well.⁴⁸ This form of punishment was given to almost all the minor offences. The nature of fining in Manipur was done both in cash and kind. Sometimes, the fine was demanded in terms of slaves as well. In some cases, fining was awarded in groups and in some other cases, the whole residents of a particular village.⁴⁹ There was no hard and fast rule to regulate the mode of fining and the amount of fine to be imposed. According to Manipuri custom, wounding or killing of cattle was a serious crime. In cases relating with cattle, the amount of fines varied from fourteen *annas* to rupees one hundred. In every case, where a cow dies, the authorities have to be informed of the circumstances, and an enquiry took place. And fines were imposed to the individual to whom the cow belonged, or in doubtful cases, the whole village in which it is found.⁵⁰ This gave rise to a great deal of rascality, for anyone having a spite against another had only to smuggle a dead cow into his premises, or wound some of his cattle to involve him in trouble.⁵¹ Moreover, the members of the court that tried such cases also received a share (about 30 percent) of the fines inflicted.⁵² Fining in groups was a common phenomenon provided that the nature of case involved groups of people. In 1693 A.D., there was a fighting between the *Yaishkul Leikai* and

Tonlang Leikai. Unfortunately in this incident a man from *Heichanam* family was killed (accidentally) in the fight. As the matter reached the court all those who were involved in the fight were fined.⁵³ In 1670, one of the Raja's elephant was killed and eaten up by the villagers and were fined to give with 22 slaves, cows and horses to the Raja as compensation afterwards.⁵⁴ Cow-eating and cow-trading were strictly prohibited. Moreover, the keeping of pigs and hens in the residential area especially in the towns were forbidden. Accordingly, all those who kept pigs in the housing area were fined after Hinduisation of Manipur in the 18th century.⁵⁵ In religions matters also fining was a common punishment. Beating of monks and nuns was also fined. During the time of king *Garibniwaz*, all those who followed *Ramanadi* cult were fined.⁵⁶ During his rule religious persecution was there and the general penalty was fining. Moreover, after the abdication of *Garibniwaz* in favour of his son *Chit Sai*, he also followed religious persecution but in the reverse direction, thereby fining all those who followed the *Gouriya* way of life.⁵⁷ In short it was a revivalist movement.

Punishment of Enslavement:

Slavery was practised in Manipur since early time and it was employed as a form of punishment. However, the slavery that existed in Manipur was a mild form compared to the western concept.⁵⁸ The form of slavery which existed in Manipur may be divided into two classes -- firstly, any one could become a slave either temporarily or permanently of his own free will and secondly, somebody was made a slave forcibly against the will.⁵⁹ However, in both the cases, the nature of slavery was mild and there were no references of inhuman treatment of slaves in Manipur. They were generally treated as part of the family with whom they reside and did not hesitate to run away when they were ill-treated but such cases were very rare. For certain crimes, people were made slaves. In cases of theft, when the culprit was caught, but the goods could not be recovered in full, then the culprit and his family might be seized and could be sold until the claim for the stolen goods was recovered.⁶⁰ Sometimes, cow lifter and horse stealers who were forgiven of corporal punishments, were reduced to the position of slaves. If any person wanted to purchase they would be sold like chattels.⁶¹ But usually such criminals became slaves of the nobles who saved them from heavy punishments.⁶² In case of debt, when the claim for damages could not be realised, the same may happen to the offender. In many cases, a man in debt would confess his inability to pay and agree to serve his creditor until such time the debt can be paid. His services were credited in the form of interest on the original debt. Adultery was also another cause for becoming a slave. In such cases when the claims for damages inflicted upon the offender could not be realised he was forced to be a slave. Sometimes, in order to realise the amount required, the family members of the culprit were also sold as slaves. Those who were involved in incestuous love or illicit connection with near relatives were also forced to be slaves and sent to distant *Loi* Villages.⁶³ However, this age-old system of slavery came to an end with the British occupation of Manipur. In 1892, Major Maxwell, Superintendent of Manipur, abolished slavery system in Manipur by an order which states that "All persons in slavery will cease to be slaves in five years from 29th April, 1892 or at any previous date on repayment of the purchased money deducting one-fifth for each year's service commencing from that date".⁶⁴ With this, Major Maxwell, hoped that by offering advances for working on roads etc., many persons would be able to repurchase their liberty before the five years time.⁶⁵

Punishment for Soldiers:

During the early period, war was deemed the most honourable occupation. But, if the soldiers stealthily deserted the battlefield, heavy punishment was inflicted on them. In short, it was customary for every society to punish cowardly or treacherous soldiers under the law of the land. Michael Symes in his Embassy to Ava, described the treatment of such soldiers in Burma in the following words "In case of desertion or treachery, the innocent wife, children and parents of the guilty persons, were dragged to execution without the least remorse or pity; even cowardice subjected the family of the delinquent to capital punishment".⁶⁶ As in other societies, in Manipur also, cowardly soldiers were given heavy punishment. Of course, the nature of punishment, however, depended upon the temperament of the ruling monarch. Generally, it consisted of the

following punishments like *Phouba*, beating, banishment and imprisonment. However, in Manipur unlike in Burma, innocent family members of the cowardly soldiers were not assaulted. In 1790 A.D. Jai Singh, punished his soldiers who fled from the *Maomaria* disturbances in Assam.⁶⁷ While giving punishment in such cases, even the princes of the reigning monarch were not spared as it is evident from the fact that, Jai Singh, transported his son, *Pookramba* to Kiamgei.⁶⁸ Besides, those soldiers who left the arms and ammunitions in the expedition were also punished. In 1789, one *Sagol Semba* Chandra with other seven (7) men were transported to Loi and those who left the arms and ammunition in the expedition of *Saiton* were flogged in the *bazar* before the public.⁶⁹ Soldiers who sided with the enemy were also punished heavily. In 1866, *Thockau Havildar* major, *Laisram Khogendra*, the guard at *Oinamlong thana* and *Khawbum Thana*, who sided with the invaders were arrested and brought in. *Thockau* was hung up in a tree at *Khoorailakpan* and *Khogendra* was hung up at *Yoomnam Khoonaw*.⁷⁰ Further, those officers who returned from expedition without the Maharaja's order were also punished. In 1849, *Foukoisangba Major* and *Thia Subadar* were dismissed for returning from midway without the Maharaja's order.⁷¹

Punishment for Brahmins:

Brahmins who were migrated from the Indian mainland into Manipur form a part of local population by taking local wives. In course of time, they came to be known as '*Bamon*' or '*Meetei Bamon*' by corrupting the word 'Brahmin'. Up to the 17th century, the Brahmins were treated at par with the local population by awarding capital punishment for the crime that they had committed.⁷² In 1662 AD., four persons namely *Pamon Tangkura*, *Khomtram Maton*, *Khaitem Kongyampa* and *Heirangkhongcham Mahampa* were punished with death for crimes they had committed. However, since the beginning of the 18th century onwards, the rulers of Manipur became staunch supporters of Hinduism and, as a result special status was accorded to the Brahmins in Manipuri society. Accordingly, Brahmins were exempted from awarding capital punishment though, they were involved directly or indirectly in cases like murder.⁷³ The heaviest punishment awarded to Brahmin for such crimes was simple banishment.⁷⁴ Moreover, they were exempted from awarding punishments like imprisonment⁷⁵ and mutilation even though they were involved in heinous crimes like treason or murder. Sometimes, they were also awarded punishments like expulsion from Manipur, excommunication etc.⁷⁶ After Hinduisation, the rulers of Manipur, put the Brahmins on special footing much higher than the general population thereby giving due regard. As a matter effect, in 1738, a Brahmin woman was accidentally killed, even for this incident; the Raja Garibniwaz performed the ceremony of *Prayaschitha*. Moreover, in 1761, Raja Jai Singh, (1759-1798) abdicated the throne as a *Bramacheri* was killed by his servant at Tangkham.⁷⁷

The general punishment awarded to Brahmin for various offences was banishment. In 1791 *Kokpei* a Brahmin, who was found guilty of murdering a woman by stabbing was not executed but he was simply banished.⁷⁸ Even for beating, transportation was awarded. In 1782 A.D., two Brahmins were transported to *Moirang* for beating a *Sanyasi*.⁷⁹ A Brahmin of *Foorailakpa* family was banished to *Chairel* with his wife and Children for enticing the daughter of another Brahmin.⁸⁰ Moreover, in 1871 A.D. Another Brahmin was also sent to Cachar with his mother for setting fire on his own house after quarrelling with his wife.⁸¹ In 1865, *Bebasthakari* was banished to Heirok for having illicit relationship with a slave woman.⁸² Sometimes, collective punishments were also given to Brahmins. In 1847, the Brahmins of *Laisanglakpa* and the whole establishment of the *Govindajee*'s temple were dismissed when a fish bone was found in the rice cooked for *Govindajee*.⁸³

Punishment for Women:

Under the traditional system of punishment, women were not spared from awarding punishments for the crime they had committed. Generally, the attitude towards female criminals was lenient and they were inflicted lighter punishments. They were not given such punishments which were associated with physical

tortures. However, in the event of not answering freely before the court, the female criminals could also be tortured with thumb screws.⁸⁴ Generally, they were never put to death nor imprisoned, even for offences like murder. However, in early period, women were also awarded capital punishment along with their husbands. Sometimes, the whole family was convicted and sentenced to death along with their children. In 1655- 56, *Angom Ningthou* was killed with his wife and children along with his five associates for rebellion against the king.⁸⁵ Similarly in 1715-16, Raja *Garibniwas*'s brother and his wife tried to kill the Raja himself but they were detected in time. They were sentenced to death. Both the husband and wife were killed together.⁸⁶ Since, the 2nd half of the eighteenth century, there was no references of awarding capital punishment to women any more. Besides, women were never imprisoned, whatever the nature of crime committed it might be. The highest punishment awarded to women for committing a grave offence was "*Khoongoinaba*".⁸⁷ It was generally inflicted for offences like illicit connection, abortion, child stealing, murder etc. Under the traditional system of punishment, it was a severe punishment in the form of public humiliation. The mode of "*Khoongoinaba*" has been described by T.C. Hudson in the following words:⁸⁸

"As in the case of women, she was made thoroughly naked, only a small bit of cloth tied round her waist, she was shaved off her hairs, and her bare head and face were painted with lime, ink and turmeric colours, broom sticks were tied on her back with a drum, one man would pull her on the front by a piece of rope tied on her neck, and a large crowd would gather on her back beating the drum, at the same time her crime would be proclaimed to the public and thus she would walk through the several streets and bazars".

Dr. Dillon, the British Political Agent (1862-63) in Manipur tried his best to abolish this practice while he was in Manipur.⁸⁹ However, his efforts were not successful, and since the system was a deep rooted one. Another important punishment was '*Phowba*', which literally means exposure in the Sun. Under this punishment, the offender would be exposed to the Sun on a high platform in the *bazar* for many days after shaving the hairs. It was a common punishment for loose behaviour. During the reign of Raja *Chandrakirit* (1850-1886) prostitutes were punished by '*phowba*'.⁹⁰ Sometimes, female criminals were sent to distant *Loi Villages* like *Sagolmang*, *Pashari*, *Haojongban* etc.⁹¹ For illicit connection within the same clan, female offenders were sent to *Pashari*. For minor offences, sometimes, only the hair was shaved off. The males who were a party for the above offences, did not escape from punishment. They were also beaten severely and sometimes, they were also sent to distant *Loi Villages*. Regarding, adultery, the offending male who receives the wife of another man were condemned to pay a fixed sum of Rs. 50/- for all classes of the population besides, the fines to the court that tries such cases.⁹² For carrying off a women living under a man's protection, but not married, the expenses incurred by the man on account of the women should be paid by the party who takes the women.⁹³ Whoever, molesting the modesty of a woman was punished with exposure to the Sun in the presence of the public.⁹⁴

Punishment for Crimes against cattle:

Under the traditional system of crime and punishment, cattle - wounding or killing was a serious crime.⁹⁵ According to Manipuri code of law, different form of punishment were prescribed for crimes against animals. In cases relating with cows, heavy punishments were given. Even for stealing a cow, the accused was sentence to death.⁹⁶ Sometimes, the whole family members of the offenders were banished for stealing a cow.⁹⁷ In 1746-47, *Yumnam Tenba*'s slave was caught for killing a cow and for this, his ears were cut off and then he was transported to *Pashari*. In 1845-46, two Hill man of *Natum Hill* were arrested for stealing cattle, one of them was killed and the other was punished by cutting of his legs.⁹⁸ But in most of the cases, fining was the common form of punishment for cow related cases. Fines varied from 14 *annas* to Rs. 100/-⁹⁹ In 1869, cow killing was completely prohibited in Manipur. Before that, selling of cattle without the knowledge of the state authority were prohibited and offenders were punished. Issue of wrong passes for export of buffaloes outside Manipur was also condemned as a crime and the offenders were punished.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion:

From the above description we can conclude that in ancient times, Manipur followed the traditional system of punishment which was based on the principle of *Chatlam Lutin* and any deviation from this was punishable. Under the traditional system of punishment different type of punishment ranging from mere fining to capital punishment for various offences were awarded. Besides, the nature of execution of a punishment also depended upon the way how the accused dealt with his victims. It clearly shows that the concept of crime also can be interpreted from both legal and social values. With the difference in the concept of crime, the nature of punishment also differed from society to society and also from crime to crime according to the value system of the concerned society. However, the general principle of punishing the wrong doer remained the same throughout the ages.

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