CHAPTER - II
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DEVELOPMENT OF LEXICOGRAPHICAL WORKS IN MANIPUR

The history of dictionary making in Manipur was made by the Britishers. The major attempt of their dictionaries is to give corresponding meanings from source language to target language. It would not be wrong to consider them as word-book or glossary.

What with the language problem, the British rulers faced extremely serious difficulties in establishing their direct contact with Manipuris. There was a prerequisite for establishing rapport with the rule. The native system of administration and its official records were in the native language. For efficient administration, therefore, it became imperative for the bureaucrats both British and Indian to gain proficiency in the native language. As a matter of fact, they published dictionaries, grammars and prepared vocabularies of different subjects along with their meanings. The Britishers thus took pains to learn the Manipuri language, since they realised that without the knowledge of Manipuri it would be difficult for them to rule the state smoothly. The same is the case the missionaries faced in the providence of God for the opening of mission work among the hills surrounding the valley.

In my search for dictionaries, I began with the collections in the Library of Manipur University, the Central Library, the Archival Library, the Manipur Archives, and the Library of Manipur Legislative Assembly.
The year 1837 A.D. is a landmark in the history of Manipuri Lexicography. Publication of the first dictionary involving Manipuri set forth George Gordon, the first Political Agent of Manipur, published "A dictionary in English, Bengali and Manipuri". In 1857, William Pettigrew published his dictionary with the same title. These dictionaries were produced at a time when the British colonial power in India was consolidating its territorial gains and was busy in redrawing the political map after each military conquest. By this time they had already established their rule in Bengal which they used as a base for expansion of their empire in the North-East.

These concise volumes contain an essential vocabulary of English, Bengali and Manipuri words, were certainly among the earliest efforts of its kind. These dictionaries facilitated the learning of Bengali and Manipuri languages through a careful selection of words for the benefit of those who were already familiar with the wide range of richness of English.

In these dictionaries, English is the source language and Bengali and Manipuri are the target languages. These dictionaries have given grammatical information, to some extent. In the appendices of these dictionaries, there have been added (i) signs of the zodiac, (ii) the names of planets, (iii) the various months, (iv) days of the week, (v) division of day, (vi) division of time, (vii) the numerals, (viii) the measure of quantities, and (ix) punctuation marks.

There stretched a long gap of almost ten decades during which no effort was made to compile any dictionary involving Manipuri. After a century, in 1957, Dwijamani Dev Sarma compiled a bilingual dictionary "The Anglo-Manipuri Dictionary". He was the first Indian to compile such a Manipuri involving dictionary.
In this interval of a century, some works were taken up by the Britishers and the Indians, though not dictionaries, contained glossaries and short lists of Manipuri words of varied areas, along with the English equivalents. For instance, M.C. Culloch’s “The Valley of Manipur”, published in 1857, is mainly a book dealing with the life style of Manipuri people. But it also contains a comparative list of Manipuri words and other dialects like Undro (Andro), Sengmai (Sekmai), Chairel, Meeyang, Koupoee, Poorem, Songboo, Quorireng (Koireng), Khongnagge, Phundung, Tukaimee, Murum, Murring (Maring), Anal, Nafan, Kooki (Kuki), Burmese and Shan. This list forms a part of the chapter 5 of the book. The author mentions that the words of comparative vocabulary given here are the same as those contained in the appendix to the J.T. Steward’s “Account of the Tribes in the Northern Cachar” in *The Transactions of The Asiatic Society*.

In 1908, the monograph “The Meitheis” was published by J.C. Hudson. The book devotes 25 pages to archaic Manipuri words translating into Modern Manipuri and English. In the section (v) of this book contains some other words on Manipuri, Tibetan, Burmese, Bodo, Ao Naga, Kaehin, Thado, Lushei, Rangkhol, Khami and their English equivalents.

In 1912, William Pettigrew published “Manipuri (Meitei) Grammar with illustrative sentences”. In this Grammar Book all the Manipuri words and sentences has given English equivalents.

Tarakechand, an Indian Anthropologist published the monograph “The Purum (a tribe of Manipur)” in 1945. In proper sense, this book is not a dictionary. But the author has given a list of Manipuri words with their English equivalents, in the appendix of this book.
The year 1957 is one of the most important milestone in the history of the compilation of Manipuri Dictionaries. Dwijamani Dev Sarma, a Manipuri, was the first Indian lexicographer who compiled “The Anglo-Manipuri Dictionary” in this year. In this dictionary English is the source language and Manipuri the target one. It has given some grammatical information and pronunciation of the source language. The dictionary has 802 pages and 23,000 head entries approximately.

In 1960, Nameirakpam Dinachandra Singh compiled “Khunung Longi Artha” (a dictionary of archaic words). It is the first Manipuri monolingual dictionary. This dictionary consists of 143 pages and 2,145 head entries. The definitions of archaic words of Manipuri have been rendered into modern Manipuri.

In 1962, there were three dictionaries published in Manipur - one trilingual and two bilingual. The trilingual dictionary “Hindi, Manipuri and English Dictionary” was compiled by Dwijamani Dev Sarma. It has given word meanings. The provided grammatical information is poor. It has 803 pages and 25,600 head entries approximately. The entry words have been given in Hindi along with their equivalents in Manipuri and English.

The bilingual dictionary produced in the year was “Friends' English to Manipuri Dictionary” compiled by R.K. Shitaljit. The number of pages in the dictionary is 1,060 and the number of head entries is 35,000 approximately. In this dictionary, English is the source and Manipuri is the target language. The dictionary has given grammatical information and pronunciation of the entry words. This is the largest bilingual dictionary involving Manipuri ever produced.
Another bilingual dictionary of the year 1962 was “Hindi Manipuri Sabdakosh” compiled by Shri Radhamohan Sharma and Narayan Sharma. The dictionary contains 695 pages and 23,500 head entries approximately. In this dictionary Hindi is the source and Manipuri the target language. This dictionary provides only grammatical information and the meanings of the source language in Manipuri.

In 1963, L. Narayan Sharma compiled “Manipuri Hindi Shabakosh” (Manipuri Longei). The source language is Manipuri and Hindi the target one. It is the first and largest Manipuri involving dictionary keeping Manipuri as source. It has 797 pages and 11,000 head entries approximately.

D.M. Dev Sarma compiled and edited “A Dictionary of English Idioms and Phrases” in the year 1963. It is a bilingual dictionary of idioms and phrases. In this dictionary English is source language and Manipuri the target. It contains about 3,300 English Idioms and Phrases and has 210 pages.

In 1964, N. Khelchandra Singh compiled “Manipuri to Manipuri and English Dictionary”. It has 657 pages and the total number of words entered is 19,700 approximately. This is also a dictionary with Manipuri as source language. The dictionary has given grammatical information and the rules of spelling system of Manipuri.

In 1965, “Standard Pocket Dictionary (Anglo-Manipuri-Hindi)” was compiled by N.S. and B.S. This dictionary has 520 pages and 11,000 head entries approximately. Here, English is source language and Manipuri and Hindi are the target languages. This dictionary has given grammatical information to some extent.
Ch. Pishak Singh compiled "A Manual of Anglo-Manipuri Dictionary of Idioms" in the year 1965. In this dictionary some French and Latin Idioms are also provided. The number of pages is 238 and the total number of idioms is 1,600.

In 1966, R.K. Shitaljit again compiled a dictionary entitled "Friends' Pocket Dictionary". This dictionary has 1,018 pages and 20,500 head entries approximately. In this dictionary English is the source language and Manipuri the target language. It provides the grammatical information of the source language. The pronunciation of the source language is also given in a casual manner.

In 1973, Shitaljit compiled "Beginners' Word-Book". This Word-Book deals with two languages. Manipuri is the source language and English the target. It has about 2,000 entries in Manipuri under different headings:

a) Parts of the Body.
b) Human Beings.
c) Human Relationship.
d) Students' Requisites.
e) Household Articles.
f) Dress.
g) Pronouns.
h) Interrogative Pronouns.
i) Adjectives.
j) Animals.
k) Parts of Animal Body.
l) Food.
m) Birds.
n) Flowers.
o) Professionals.
p) Tools.
q) Weapons.
r) Kings etc.,
s) Ornaments,
t) Conveyances etc.,
u) Natural Objects.
v) House and Parts.
w) Minerals.
x) Solar System.
y) Reptiles and Insects.
z) Seasons.

aa) Directions.
ab) Days.
ac) English Months.
ad) Time.
ae) Parts of Life-Time.
af) Trees.
ag) Disease.
ah) Numbers.
ai) Ordinal Numerals.
aj) Spices.

ak) Military Words.
al) Some Verbs.
am) Verbs with past forms,
an) Adverbs and
ao) Prepositions.
This word book has 92 pages. Some information on pronunciation of English terms are given.

In 1977 "Hindi to Manipuri Dictionary" was compiled by Jadumani Singh. It has 20 pages and 6,500 entry words. In this dictionary Hindi is the source language and Manipuri the target language.

In 1978, "Ariba Manipuri Longei" (Dictionary of Manipuri Archaic words) was compiled by N. Khelechandra Singh. It has 247 pages and 6,900 archaic Manipuri words approximately, along with their modern Manipuri equivalents.

In 1980, "Literary Termshingi Manipuri Glossary" (Manipuri Glossary of Literary Terms) was compiled by Mani Mairenbam. In this glossary, English is the source and Manipuri the target language. It has 167 pages and contains 165 English literary terms.

In 1980, on the suggestion of Manipur Legislative Assembly, a committee on official language was formed on 8th April. The committee was assigned two specific tasks namely: a) Preparation of Manipuri equivalents of legal and administrative terms of English; and b) Preparation of scientific and technical terms of English. These two projects undertaken by the committee are known as MEPLA and MESAT respectively. The committee submitted and published its first report on Manipuri official language, on 4th October, 1980. The second report was submitted on 28th September, 1982 under the leadership of Shri Y. Yaima Singh, the Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly.
The first report has 82 pages and 1,706 terms of English. The second report consists of 51 pages and 1,053 terms in English. Both reports have given Manipuri equivalents. It is mentioned that all the terms have been taken from the glossaries of Parliamentary Legal and Administrative terms, published by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.

In 1983, “A Dictionary in English, Bengali and Manipuri” was published by Krishan Murari Mittal. In this Dictionary, English in the source language and Bengali and Manipuri are the target languages. It has about 14,000 head entries and 341 pages. No compiler's name is mentioned in the dictionary since this dictionary is not different from Gordon's, 1837.

In 1983, L. Jnanendra Singh compiled “Manipuris Glossary of Political Terms” (Matamgi Chatnabi Rajniti Wahei Watasing Neina-lairik). It has about 500 political terms in English along with the explanation in Manipuri. The glossary has only 226 pages. It is a subject dictionary for Political Science students and teachers both.

In 1984, “A Dictionary of Geography” (Anglo-Manipuri) was compiled by Leishangthem Ajit Singh. He has collected about 900 geographical terms in English and explained in Manipuri. The dictionary has 148 pages only. It is also a subject dictionary for geography students and teachers etc.

Again in 1984, a trilingual “Hindi-English-Manipuris Word Book” was compiled by N. Ibo Singh. In this word book Hindi is a source and English and Manipuri are the target languages. It has about 2775 head words under different 40 (forty) headings. The word book covers 115 pages. The pronunciation of the English words has been given in Bengali script.
In 1985, "Dictionary of Trilingual Proverbs" (Manipuri, Hindi and English) was compiled by Khangembam Tomchou. It has 90 pages only and the number of proverbs given in the dictionary is 300.

In 1987, H. Mani Singh compiled two dictionaries namely "Concise Anglo-Manipuri Dictionary" and "Students' Anglo Manipuri Dictionary". These are similar in all respect but the former has 1,252 pages and 25,000 head entries approximately and the later has 2,001 pages with 32,000 entry words approximately. In both dictionaries English is the source language and Manipuri the target language.

"Students' English Word-Book" was compiled by O. Khelchandra Singh in the year 1987. It is an Anglo-Manipuri Word-Book. In this word book Manipuri is the source language and English the target one. It contains about 1,000 entry words under different headings:

a) Parts of Human Body.
b) Relative.
c) Vegetable.
d) Fruit.
e) Corns.
f) Food.
g) Animals.
h) Birds.
i) Reptiles.
j) Insects.
k) Flowers.
l) Tree.
m) Spices and other.
n) House hold Articles.
o) Dress.
p) Bedding.
q) Books.
r) Time.
s) Days of Months.
t) The Earth.
u) The Sky.
v) Religion.
w) Minerals.
x) Disease.
y) Money.
z) Colour, and
aa) Musical Instruments.

The information on English pronunciation is transcribed in Bengali script.

This book has 53 pages only.

In 1989, Sanabam Raghumani Mangang compiled "Anglo-Meetei Legal Dictionary". It has 129 pages and provided 462 legal terms in English. In this dictionary the legal terms are explained in Manipuri. It is a subject dictionary for legal professionals and administrative purposes.

Narayan Sharma compiled "Students' Favourite Pocket Dictionary (Hindi-Manipuri)" in the year 1989. In this dictionary, Hindi is the source language and Manipuri the target one. It has 518 pages and 21,000 entry words approximately.
In 1991, Manipur State Archives, Directorate of Arts and Culture, Government of Manipur, published "A Vocabulary Manipuri to English Dictionary" which was compiled by L.O. Clarke, the then Political Agent of Manipur, in 1924 during his period of administration. It is the first dictionary compiled by Britishers dealing with Manipuri as source language. It attempts to give English equivalents as near as possible for each Manipuri head entry. The dictionary has 47 pages only and 2,900 entry words approximately.

In 1994, Shree Phurailatpam Gokulchandra Sharma compiled "Official Technical Terms". It deals with three languages - English, Hindi and Manipuri. In this book English is the source language and Hindi and Manipuri are the target languages. It has only 17 pages and contains 359 terms.

In 1996, Shoubam Shyamkishor compiled "Ariba Meitei/Meetei Longi Lon-Kei". It has 288 pages and 7,550 Archaic Manipuri words along with their Modern Manipuri equivalents. It is the third Archaic Dictionary of Manipuri language published so far.

In 1999, "Model Word Book" was compiled by T. Kesho Singh. It deals with two languages — Manipuri as source and English as target language. The book has 46 pages. The pronunciation of English words are given in Bengali script. It has 849 head entries under different 23 headings as:

a) Parts of body
b) Animals
c) Species
d) Fruits
e) Vegetables
f) Foods

g) Dresses

h) House Hold Articles

i) Insects

j) Fishes

k) Months, Dates, Seasons and Directions

l) Diseases

m) Flowers

n) Sky

o) Relatives

p) Medicines

q) Subjects

r) Minerals

s) Colours

t) Religions

u) Professions

v) Geographical terms

From the above account it is clear that only three dictionaries were compiled by the Britishers. Out of these three dictionaries two were published in the 19th century. Most of the Manipuri involving dictionaries have been published in the 20th century, particularly after the fifties.

It also reveals that, the Britishers paid little interest in the development of Manipuri Lexicography which was minimally essential for running the administration and missionary works. The lexicographical work in Manipur has been largely taken up in the post independence period. The number of dictionaries
published so far including glossaries is 33. Out of which 22 are bilingual
dictionaries involving Manipuri in different combinations: Manipuri, English and
Hindi, 8 are trilingual dictionaries involving English, Hindi, Bengali and Manipuri
in different combinations, and lastly the numbers of monolingual dictionary of
Manipuri is only three.

These three monolingual dictionaries of Manipuri are intended for learning
archaic Manipuri. Thus, we see that no effort has been made to make Manipuri
monolingual dictionary for learning modern Manipuri.