

Kingdom Formation, Legitimacy and Cultural Change: A Comparative Study of the Malla Kingdom of Bishnupur, the Gajapati Kingdom of Orissa and the Meitei Kingdom of Manipur (15th to 18th Century)

Abstract of the Thesis -

The study of the past so far carried out by the historians in pre-colonial Indian subcontinent, has provided additional emphasis on the mighty empires, monarchies and their cultures. By and large, the provincial or the minor territories have got less consideration from the researchers. Nevertheless, without possessing a proper historical investigation on the antiquity of the smaller realms, the history of bigger kingdom formation procedure cannot be accomplished. The main approach of our research, is likewise associated with the formation of the three pre-colonial kingdoms of Eastern and North-Eastern India namely the Malla Kingdom of Bishnupur (16th to 18th century), the Gajapati Kingdom of Orissa (15th to 16th century), and the Meitei Kingdom of Manipur (17th to 18th century). These three dominions are taken into account for some similar reasons. They have been found to conduct a comparable identical political evolution and cultural fabrication of the religion Vaishnavism in the pre-colonial period in Indian subcontinent. The religion Vaishnavism since the 15th century, has been implemented in those three places as a means of legitimization procedure, and has operated as a catalyst of cultural alteration in these three kingdoms. The kings of these three dynasties was observed to go through a similar political advancement from chieftdom to kingdom, and starting from subsistence economy to surplus producing economy that supported their polity.

These domains then in a similar pattern assembled wealth, augmented the agricultural production and advanced the trading activities. Owing to the financial sustainability, these realms could follow the progression of legitimization method, through the means of distinguishable surplus distributions. They were also found to adopt several similar techniques to legitimize the formation and consolidation of their kingdoms. They have followed the process of divine connection of kingship, redistribution of surplus and embraced the Indo-Aryan rituals to accomplish the legitimacy. Along with addressing the history of these three realms, it appears that the historic advances, cultural attainments, and social effect of these kingdoms became a noteworthy part for consideration in the medieval Indian history. Consequently, a comprehensive exertion is anticipated to understand the whole development of these realms from the 15th

century to the 18th century. The thesis has also demonstrated how these three small realms turned themselves into well identified powerful kingdoms in medieval India. The thesis work has revealed how through the construction of temples, lakes, canals and various benevolent activities, they won the heart of the masses and continued to rule for centuries. The thesis has likewise shown, how through the effects of these approaches, the contemporary society of Bishnupur, Orissa and Manipur in various fields is still profited. The cultural reception and diffusion led to the amalgamation of one diversified culture in those regions causing in a wholehearted alteration which influenced the whole society of Eastern and North-Eastern India.