

## KUKI TRIBE MIGRATION AND LIVELIHOOD

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### ABSTRACT

Tribal migration has its ancient and historical roots, in which the modern time tribal migration for wage is widely spreading. Tribes are compelled to migrate from their original settings due to the destruction of ancestors' occupation and way of life. The shifting social structure and problems faced, such as family disruption, violence, crime and political disturbances in the area, are other key variables to affect tribes; migration to other locations aside from the effects of policy and demographic pressures. The migration and livelihood of Kuki tribe can only determine the lifestyle and difficulties faced by them in nature. They have moved away from their traditional domestic roles. This group of people & history is veiled in myths and legends. This tribe has attracted more on their local knowledge, way of living, their occupation, sustainable and physical environment. The methodology used is secondary data and the sources of this study are tribal journals, magazines, compiled and consolidated information from these sources. So, the main aim is to understand the attempts of Kuki people continue to earn their livelihood by practicing traditional professions, sale of minor forest produce, grazing of livestock, sale of agricultural and household implements, dispensation of herbal medicines and rendition of folk art. To provide equal opportunities to the disadvantage section of the society and access the development process.

**Keywords:** Kuki Tribe, Social Structure, Migration, Livelihood, Sustainable.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Several tribes originally from North-Eastern India, including Manipur, Mizoram, and Assam, as well as from Burma, Bangladesh's Sylhet region, and the Chittagong hill tracts, make up the ethnic group known as the Kukis. The Mizo Hills, a mountainous area in Mizoram, India's southeast, is thought to be the home of the Kuki people. The Kukis are related to the Chin people of Myanmar and the Mizo people of Mizoram. They are referred to as the Zo people. Kukis have historically been perceived as being forest lovers and totally reliant on nature to provide for their livelihood. As a result, when access to the forest was restricted, their way of life was severely impacted, and their ability to accumulate assets was severely constrained as the tribes prefer to remain a part of their community and to work together. Paddy farming was the main primary source of income for Kuki tribes, followed by banana and jhum farming. When it comes to Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation, a significant change has been observed. Their main sources of income include the production of common crops including jhum, paddy, mango, rubber, mango production, firewood collecting, livestock rearing, and bamboo farming. These social ties, which assist individuals in becoming social beings, forge linkages between individuals and build a feeling of community, which encourages constructive social interaction. Social networks are particularly important for migrants because it is through these networks that they can overcome the early difficulties of relocating to a foreign nation. Two groups of Kuki migrants have been identified: "pioneer" migrants and "follower" migrants. Follower migrants reaped the benefits of kinship and ethnic networks, whereas pioneer Kuki migrants had few connections and relied only on "weak ties." The study concluded that social networks had a significant role in Kuki migration, despite a few push variables at the place of origin and pull factors at the place of destination. Social networking sites offer the migrants all the assistance they need to help them adjust to a foreign environment as they struggle to do so. There is a strong relationship between social networks and migration patterns since migrants frequently settle in areas with active social networks. When relocating, migrants continuously want to minimise their dangers, therefore they take familiar places into consideration of individuals or groups who could be their supporters. As a result, before deciding on a potential area as their preferred choice, migrants carefully weigh its benefits and drawbacks.

### NEED OF THE STUDY

- This study is mainly required to change the pattern of livelihood among the Kukis,

- The role and importance of social networks in the migration process.
- The primary reason for the study's necessity is to alter the Kukis' mode of subsistence and to assess the effects of the tribe's shifting level of life.
- To comprehend the relationship between tribes shifting patterns of livelihood and their monthly income.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

- Hosea, T. (2015) origin migration and settlement of the Chiru tribe. One of Manipur's native tribes, the Chiru, has its own culture, custom, history, legends, songs, dialects, religion, beliefs migrating status, livelihood aspects. They have primarily mongoloid features and speak a language from the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family called Chin-Kuki. With other related tribes like the Hmar, Kom, Purum, Aimol, Koirang, and so on. The central claim is that ethnic identification and division are the most prominent concerns facing modern-day tribal affairs in northeast India. Understanding the history, oral tradition, and oral literature of owning a tribe is essential because it duplicates the wellbeing of the people.
- Kipgen, T., & Panda, B. (2019) the study reveals that the function and significance of social networks in the migration process are discussed. It investigates how social networks among Kuki migrant's form. The study examines the value of social networks for immigrants and shows how these networks aid immigrants in adjusting to their new social surroundings. Two groups of Kuki migrants have been identified: "pioneer" migrants and "follower" migrants. The study decisively demonstrated the importance of social networks in the Kuki migration to Delhi, even though there were several push factors at the place of origin and pull factors at the point of destination. The migrants have organised themselves into ethnic clusters, which has proven to be a survival tactic in a novel social environment. Social networks have aided migrants in other ways as well.
- Mahato, A. (2020) the study aims to comprehend the shifting patterns of livelihood among Kuki tribes and to assess the living standards of Kuki tribes while considering these patterns. The article also aims to comprehend the relationship between respondents' shifting patterns of livelihood and their monthly income. Prior to and during analysis based on primary data and purposeful random sampling, the study's goals are discussed. The study investigated how changing respondents' livelihood patterns affected their monthly income and general standard of living. In contrast to jhum cultivation, the regression analysis revealed that rubber cultivation and livestock raising were the most common sources of subsistence.
- Guite, S., Sharma, H. I., & Thoudam, L. (2022) this study used the Simpson index to analyse the livelihood diversifications among the Thadou-Kuki tribes of Manipur using multiple regression to identify the factors that influence livelihood diversification. Which shows that most households vary their livelihoods only modestly and primarily to meet their basic needs rather than accumulate wealth. The findings of the multiple regressions indicate that the village's distance from the market, the number of agricultural households, the number of non-farm households, and wetland.
- Kipgen, S. (2022) the study opined to solve the crucial challenges for urban development to diversify livelihoods. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to pinpoint the variables that influence urban households in the North Shewa Zone's livelihood diversification techniques. Both primary and secondary data gathering approaches were used to get the data.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The paper used is the secondary in resource which draws conclusion about various aspects of immigrant social networks, including the significance of ethnic ties, immigrant residential patterns, the formation of ethnic clusters, issues relating to their security, livelihood habits, cultivation, occupation for living, the mutual support, assistance, and cooperation that immigrant communities share.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To identify the attempts of Kuki people continue to earn their livelihood by practicing traditional professions, sale of minor forest produce, grazing of livestock, sale of agricultural and household implements, dispensation of herbal medicines and rendition of folk art.
- To understand the livestock rearing which is a significant role in the Kuki tribal people's life.
- To classify and describe the association and different methods implemented by the Kuki people to live their livelihood in a healthy manner.

- To understand the difficulties faced by the people through various commerce and trade which the tribes cannot exchange the means from place to place.
- To know the different cultivations used by the people in crop growing process as a source of income as well as production for their development of the whole tribal life.
- To signify the main role in increasing their overall income which is by the rubber cultivation by the Kuki people.
- To understand the reason behind the migration of the people from forest living areas to the urban places due to lack of essential products, cost of living and services required.

#### **PROBLEMS AND CAUSES FACED BY THE KUKI PEOPLE**

- The distinctive trait of the tribal people's traditional forestry methods has persisted for the majority of those who live in remote and distant locations even after the advent of the money economy. Despite having easy access to contemporary cooking gas like LPG, most villagers have continued to burn firewood that they have gathered from the forest.
- The local population has very little need for a village home to be repaired or expanded. Their reliance on wood and wood products has decreased as a result of exposure to imported completed goods like plastic chairs, tables, stools, and other furniture.
- In addition to being a favourite past activity, protecting crops required the use of traps to capture wild animals. However, due to a few factors, the dependence on wild animal meat has significantly decreased in modern Kuki society.
- Despite the availability of such natural herbs, dependence on them has lessened to the point where many newer generations have forgotten about it and are unable to recognise it. When an elderly person in the village passes away, traditional knowledge of how to treat illnesses and identify medicinal plants also disappears.
- Additionally, the situation on this front has changed as a result of the widespread availability of contemporary hospitals and the simplicity of access to primary health centres. The village tribal economy was not significantly impacted by the state's political shift from colonial to postcolonial or post-independent at the time.
- As farming became the main source of income for most Kuki tribesmen. As people in many Kuki areas of the north eastern states have been diversifying to more established forms of agriculture and other livelihoods practises, Jhumming is now steadily disappearing. It might be argued that cash crop plantations and horticulture offer an alternative to shifting farming.
- However, despite their willingness, the Kuki growers found it challenging to put their good actions into practise due to a lack of finance. Despite this, some areas of the hills saw the small-scale cultivation of horticulture and cash crops. These fruits were primarily exported by boat to the immediate adjacent areas due to limited road links. The second half of the 20th century saw a growth in the commercialization of Kuki agriculture and other goods. The need for money or currency inevitably grew as the barter system began to disappear. A Kuki household changed from producing agricultural products for the family's needs to producing agricultural products for markets.
- People are thought to always leave low-opportunity places high opportunity regions. Rapid urbanisation, modes of transportation, communication, and city centre facilities have pushed people to shift from rural to urban areas in quest of better living and employment conditions.
- The number of Kuki migrants expanded as economic liberalisation opened new opportunities and professional paths, particularly in the service industry. Social networks frequently play a significant role for these migrants and influence the direction and pattern of Kuki travel. The development of a safety net for them has been boosted by social media, and it is because of these platforms that migrants have established strong social bonds and survived and thrived overseas while also serving as role models for potential migrants back home.
- Destruction of cottage industries: The old tribal industries and craft production are dying because they cannot compete with the sophisticated and high-quality commodities produced in the Imphal valley and the influx of foreign goods. Apart from the large amount of labour required to complete the work, the two causes

for this are a lack of capital and an unprofitable form of production. All of those conventional knowledge and abilities have also been lost due to this new altering environment.

- Another reason for the people to migrate in the Kuki can be lack of good, driveable roads. The network of roads connecting the district and subdivisional centres has generally improved, but buses and other vehicles cannot travel to the far-flung tribal communities. Most of the trails and roads are muddy and vulnerable to mudslides and landslides during the rainy season. As a result, it became extremely challenging for the residents of the rural areas to transport their agricultural goods for marketing. We can see poverty looming huge in nearly every nook and cranny of the state due to the appalling quality of the roads, the resulting isolation, and the undereducation that results from it.
- In this so-called ethnic cleansing conflict, the Kukis who had lived in the interior of the hills suffered the most. The Kukis were forced to leave their communities as a result of the attack, which resulted in horrific carnage and the loss of many valuable lives. Such a fallen state claim that their life was seriously threatened.

#### **CURRENT STATUS OF THE KUKI TRIBE**

Kukis are used for both local and commercial usage. It is grown in practically every Kuki community since it is a reliable source of revenue. Other locally produced goods sold in the regional trade centre's include lemons, oranges, guavas, papayas, bananas, charcoal, etc. It might be noted that cash crop and horticulture plantations offer an alternative to shifting farming. Local people conduct business and dispose of their local and forest products, such as honey hide, bamboo, cane, and lumber, in these centres. The main modes of transportation on state highways and in the districts are buses and trucks. Considering the dependence on the usage of fuel wood, local peasants use relatively little timber. The local population has very little need for a village home to be repaired or expanded. Their reliance on wood and wood products has decreased as a result of exposure to imported completed goods like plastic chairs, tables, stools, and other furniture. However, due to superior timber quality, the sale of timber has grown into a thriving industry for many families. The post-independence periods' policies naturally led to an increase in trade volume as a result of better transportation and communication infrastructure. Christianity's growth, advancements in education, the foundation of democratic government and its administration, the emergence of new work opportunities, and the expansion of their worldview all contributed to a general improvement in their standard of living. The Kukis integrated themselves into the State's larger economic structure. As a result of their efforts to advance civilization, their socioeconomic existence underwent fundamental modifications. Because of the ubiquitous fear psychosis and a feeling of insecurity, even small settlements found it difficult to flourish in the hills. It had been challenging, but they had to go and as they looked to their brothers and sisters, who lived in big villages, little towns, grouping centres, etc. for protection and assistance. These sizable towns and villages gradually began to develop into important centres of commerce and trade. In hills, a brand-new type of urbanisation has developed.

The situation regarding medical difficulties has changed as a result of the widespread availability of modern hospitals and the ease of access to primary health centres. Every Kuki household has access to plenty of bamboo and cane in the forest, which provides their basic needs. Following native processing techniques, the division pieces of cane and bamboo were used to create mats and baskets of various shapes and designs that were only utilised for daily needs. Another significant duty-required chore for families that raised cows, buffaloes, and other domestic animals is gathering fodder from the forest. Village women have also gathered a variety of vegetables for domestic use, including banana stems and bamboo shoots. Additionally, several kinds of fruits and edible mushrooms were gathered for both domestic and commercial use. Nature is gracious enough to offer a variety of resources that are abundantly need for their survival. The primary fuel used for cooking is wood, with the average yearly usage per Kuki household being between 50 and 60 quintals.

#### **Jhumming**

Like any other tribal civilization, the Kukis have a long history of shifting farming techniques or "slash-and-burn" systems. Even if it is deteriorating, it is still present. A traditional farming method is still being used in some capacity despite the various changes that have occurred in the area. As people in many Kuki districts of the northeastern states diversify into more established kinds of agriculture and other subsistence practises, jhumming is currently steadily disappearing. Instead of being backward, the Kuki growers in the interior of the hills still rely on this type of shifting farming since they have no other viable options for a living. The jhumming

culture must still be tackled since it is a necessary evil. Jhumming on damaged forestland produces very little. According to research, the Kukis need to discover more advantageous economic alternatives to their long-standing habit. The tribes are now viewed as the forest's biggest enemies. Due to the absence of options from the government, this assumption is incorrect.

### **Terrace Agriculture**

The Kukis used the terrace method of wet-rice production in the post-independence era on the slopes of the hills where it is not extremely steep. They have less difficulties than jhum cultivation, even though the initial labour necessary to make the terrace field suitable for cultivation was labour-intensive, particularly in those rocky soil locations. Although this form of farming occasionally required rain, spring and stream water are typically diverted for such uses. The double-cropping strategy, which is widely used in the valley, cannot be successfully used in mountainous areas. One of the staple foods for the Kukis is still maize. On dense and degraded forest land that makes up a sizable amount of their agricultural territory, it is grown in the field. They also raise a variety of edible crops in their jhum farms.

And more presently the astounding rubber cultivation practised by the Kuki tribes in Tripura gains one point. The Kuki tribes used a large-scale technique of shifting farming. Large portions of the Kuki tribes are now engaged in rubber and lemon production. However, paddy farming maintained its appeal among Kuki tribes while failing to draw in a significant number of farmers from other fields. When it comes to secondary sources of income, the collection of firewood has fallen out of favour significantly and has mostly been replaced by the raising of livestock (Poultry, Piggery, etc.). Livestock raising was not practised as the main source of subsistence; instead, banana cultivation was used as an income generator. It is abundantly obvious that the Kuki tribes' shifting paddy cultivation livelihood patterns have significantly raised their level of living.

### **RUBBER CULTIVATION:**

Due to the favourable agro-climate and environmentally friendly surroundings, rubber planting has become increasingly popular among the Kuki people. The Kuki tribal community land has been selected by the rubber board as a Potential State for rubber cultivation. The Kuki indigenous people also sample the scope of the rubber plantation from a productivity standpoint. But the level of production is not at its peak. The fact that the rubber manufactured here is organic, however, makes it special. Even though rubber is grown on a larger scale in Karbi Anglong, the price fluctuations have left the growers vulnerable to losing their means of support. Once more, they are the victims of middlemen and wholesalers' exploitation. Farmers are experiencing loss or very little profit in the production of rubber due to factors including a lack of knowledge about the market value proposition of various processed rubber products and a lack of group cohesion. They continue to cling to it because the soil in this area is perfect for growing rubber.

However, there is a lot of room to completely alter the situation. In addition, factors needed to increase production include a strong post-harvest management system, a strong value chain management system, a strong infrastructure for processing, a good marketing policy that favours cultivators, etc. Rubber cultivation may end up being the industry with the highest potential for revenue generation. Once these amenities are available, more and more growers from this region will begin doing the rubber cultivation and thus that would even boost up the economy of the Kuki tribal community people's life.

## **IV. DISCUSSION**

The majority of the Kukis who left the state of Manipur during the post-independence era moved to the North-East, specifically to the towns of Guwahati and Shillong, primarily for educational reasons. A significant number of Kukis, mostly young people, began moving from Manipur to Delhi in pursuit of employment only during the liberalisation phase (particularly from 2000 onwards). The number of Kuki migrants who selected Delhi as their city of study and afterwards as their place of employment has been rising. To support themselves while studying for numerous competitive exams, many students in Delhi started working part-time jobs. As moving to a new location comes with dangers and difficulties related to finding housing, a career, and learning the language, culture, amongst others it becomes more difficult for the migrants to tackle the initial problems and issues at an alien place ever since they had to make their own independent decisions and set priorities, rules without any help or assistance. After settling down, pioneer migrants are a valuable source of assistance for potential migrants since they frequently share information about job prospects and offer all necessary



assistance with travel, lodging, and employment. Although there were a few isolated cases of early Kuki migrants coming from low-income families, in general, early migrants came from wealthier families who could afford to send their children to study in a costly and distant location. Due to their distinctive race, culture, language, and eating habits, Kuki migrants encountered challenges and hardships and had a very difficult time in another unknown land. But what distinguishes them from others is their willingness and resolve to continue forward without assistance from any network, which demonstrates their tenacity and capacity to cope with challenging circumstances. The most significant social links among Kuki migrants are found to be kinship ties, which also serve as a major determinant of their selected destination. Therefore, it is important to look at how kinship dynamics influenced their migration process. After the initial wave of Kuki migrants arrived in Delhi, the family network for them only began to develop. They were the most driven people. Siblings and other relatives of migrants began to migrate when social networks began to take shape in order to seek job or further their education. residing with cousins and siblings together is a common in every locality, which helps to upcome and overcome the financial constraints as well as safeguard security concerns. Along with helping the immigrants shed their feelings of seclusion, boredom, and homesickness, this also fosters interpersonal bonds, mutual support, and teamwork. The importance of family bonds among Kuki migrants can be seen in the numerous occasions where younger siblings accompany their older siblings to pursue higher education, study for various competitive examinations, and receive their ongoing mentoring to advance their careers. In the past, the Kuki lived in small communities in the woodlands, each with a chief as its ruler. The youngest son of the chief received the property that belonged to his father, while the other sons of the chief were given women from the community and sent off to found their own communities. The Kuki get the supplies for their houses and crafts from the bamboo forests where they dwell in solitary. They start planting rice after burning the woods to cleanse the land. In addition to hunting wild animals, they also raise dogs, pigs, buffalo, goats, and chickens. The developing structures of livelihood among the Kuki tribes and to assess the Kuki tribes' standard of living considering these shifting patterns. It also aims to comprehend the relationship between respondents' shifting patterns of livelihood and their monthly income. It is explored how altering the respondents' patterns of subsistence led to a considerable rise in both their monthly income and the Kuki tribes' overall standard of living. The livestock raising and rubber farming have become more common sources of income than shifting agriculture.

## V. SUGGESTIONS

To provide the necessities and development tactics to the Kuki tribal people so that they don't migrate and also live their life in their own richness filed ancestral land and forest, by not harming their resources and exploiting their self-empowerment.

- To value their occupational demands and listen to them in urban areas because of lack of awareness and proper information they are not valued around.
- The daily profit and earning of the Kuki people and workers in their wages can be increased because of which they are not able to live a proper living life in their surroundings.
- By developing the small-scale enterprises and teaching them various innovative business ideas so that they can earn in their local land with a profitable amount without even migrating within their required and needed resources.
- The agricultural price in products and the support price can be increased because the products are eco-friendly and prepared by their own using the sources in nature in their land and native forest.
- Organizing training programmes at small village levels on various governmental schemes which can help them earn more for a suitable life without even migrating to the urban areas and by not letting down rural, village tribal life of every individual in the community.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Several government measures supported the Kuki tribes' shifting patterns of subsistence. To encourage the Jhumia families to engage in the production of rubber or lemons, large quantities of land have been granted to them. For this reason, there are currently no Jhumia tribes in existence. As a result of Kuki tribes' historically higher levels of reading and education than those of other ethnic groups, the younger generation did not favour those traditional means of subsistence. These modifications have been made to better their standard of living as

well as to address their basic requirements. The Kuki tribes' culture and traditions, which were passed down from their ancestors, were transformed as well, so it was not only a matter of going from poor production to high productivity. And the migration situation among the Kuki can be only solved by providing them certain necessities which they are not aware. A remarkable insight on the living habits of the Kuki tribes has been made, meanwhile. For instance, even though the living standards of the Kuki tribes have significantly improved, more than half of Kuki households have maintained their traditional (Kuccha) home style. Respondents were aware of this fact during the conversation. Only raising livestock and growing rubber had a major impact on Kuki respondents' monthly income.

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