

**Inter-Culture Dynamics of North-Eastern Tribe Living in South India  
A case study of Zeliangrong Tribe in Chennai**

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**Abstract**

*The study will examine the various module of dispersion, the process and steps to measure this dynamics and the effects on individuals and groups. In the last several decades the Northeast peoples migrated in a large number to metropolitan cities like Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, etc. while some travel overseas. In India many of the northeast people have facing prejudices, sexual harassment and racism while in their homeland several violent conflicts continue. Specifically, the researcher will focus on ethnic groups (Tribal of Manipur) living within the city of Chennai. The tribal of Manipur are one of the major indigenous group from North East India. For the period of time they become gradually emerge in the live world of host communities. The inter-cultural dynamic among the Manipur tribe living in Chennai has a larger significance to reckon within the last two decades. It experiences has become an epitome of inter-culture dynamics process taking place in India. This study will inspire to observe the phenomena that take place during the process of inter-cultural relation, in how much stress they experience and how well they adapt psychologically and socio-culturally. The implication for public policy and personal orientations toward inter-culture dynamics are proposed. Unity and integration require substantial negotiation and the concept and findings of the study can provide some guidance for the movement of the North East People.*

**Keywords:** *Migration, push and pull factor, inter-culture, problems and challenges.*



***A brief account of the Zeliangrong Community Living in Chennai***

The Zeliangrong People living in Chennai are one of the major tribal communities from Manipur. The Zeliangrong individuals have a long history and have acquired a rich social legacy. They have an incredible love and solid connection to their genealogical country. Traditionally Zeliangrong people are homogeneous groups and have a strong feeling of oneness. In Chennai, the Zeliangrong people form a social forum for upward mobility and to protect their identity. Here, the name of the committee is given “Zeliangrong Welfare Committee Chennai” (ZWCC).

**Introduction**

The Zeliangrong People are one of the major indigenous Mongoloid networks living in the tri-intersection of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland numbering around 4.5 lakhs as indicated by 2011 registration. With the arrival of the British, the Zeliangrong land had been arbitrarily trifurcated into the present States of Assam, Manipur and later Nagaland.

The account of the birthplace of the Zeliangrong Nagas depends on two primary premises. One is basically fanciful and it depicts the extraordinary cause of humanity. The other aspect describes in detail the actual movements of the Zeliangrong people to their present habitat through the ages. Before continuing further note that each indigenous network is a storehouse of a particular group of information that has developed over a significant stretch of time. The information

amassed through ages and put away in fantasies, legends, stories, adages, tunes, convictions, customs, functions, workmanship and create and passed on from age to age have decided and improved the course of lives of these people groups. It is in this setting the history and source of the Zeliangrong individuals must be comprehended and examined.

At last, there are individuals who experience group and individual disarray and tension. They are characterized by loss of cultural identity and non-participation in the larger society. They may feel alienation, marginality, and loss of personal identity. This mode of acculturation refers to marginalization as a group, or individuals (Berry & Kim 1988). In this mode, individuals do not keep in cultural and psychological contact with either their traditional culture or the dominant culture. This implies that marginalized people may find it difficult to receive support from their own group during the process of acculturation. In this regard, Berry refers to marginalization as subtractive acculturation, while integration may be referred to as additive acculturation. However, he indicated that there are times, situations, and contexts when assimilation and separation, and not integration, are viable and preferable modes of acculturation.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Acculturation among the Zeliangrong people living in Chennai has become large social mobility to reckon within the last several decades. It has become an epitome of the acculturation process took place in India. In the spirit of acculturation, the Zeliangrong people's living in Chennai not only transforms culture but also works towards the improvisation of socio-economic conditions and it also helps to increase the capacity to achieve a holistic education.

It is very important to find out the process of acculturation taken place in various communities and to assess its impact on the changes in societies. Though the term acculturation is very vast, there are few empirical studies to assess its roles and importance for carrying out the outcomes of the social contact between the Zeliangrong peoples and the host community. An empirical assessment will help in

upgrading the community development initiatives undertaken by the researcher focusing on the acculturation process and regular activities of the Zeliangrong people living in Chennai.

### **Objectives**

1. To find out the acculturation process among the Zeliangrong community living in Chennai.
2. To study the changing lifestyle of the Zeliangrong community after living in Chennai.

Operational definition of the concept used in the title of the study

### **Acculturation**

Definition: Acculturation refers to changes that take place as a result of continuous first-hand contact between individuals of different culture origins.

### **Zeliangrong**

The concept 'Zeliangrong community living in Chennai' refers to the people belong to Zeliangrong community who is living in Chennai from Manipur. After long years of living in Chennai they form a social forum so call 'Zeliangrong Welfare Committee Chennai' (ZWCC). Where the Zeliangrong people can come together and share the needs and problems of its people.

### **Area of the Study**

For the purpose of the study, only the registered members of Zeliangrong welfare Committee, Chennai (ZWCC) constituted the study area.

### **Universe & Sample size**

As the universe is not in one particular place convenience sampling techniques were used in the present study with a view to exploring a new research setting.

The universe of the study comprises 726 Zeliangrong peoples living in Chennai according to the record of Zeliangrong Welfare Committee, Chennai (ZWCC).

Beyond that, numbers of Zeliangrong people are also living without enrol their name to ZWCC. At the time of data collection only 115 registered members of Zeliangrong Welfare Committee, Chennai (ZWCC) are selected for the respondent. So for the purpose of the study the sample size constitutes 115 respondents.

## **Methods, Sources and Tools of Data Collection**

Data are collected through Primary and Secondary Sources. Primary data are gathered through the following methods:

1. **Interview Scheduled:** This method facilitated easy to flow of thoughts and enabled the respondents to understand the questions better by interacting face to face with explaining a pertinent to the question asked.
2. **Secondary Sources:** The secondary data have been collected from relevant sources such as records available at the ZWCC office, Books, Journals, Newspaper.

## **Scope and Limitation**

**Scope:** The findings and conclusion of the study are confined only to the Zeliangrong community living in Chennai through the Zeliangrong Welfare Committee, Chennai (ZWCC) and so they may not be generalizable to other areas. But they may be of immense use to those who are interested in the effective study on the acculturation among the various communities in their respective areas.

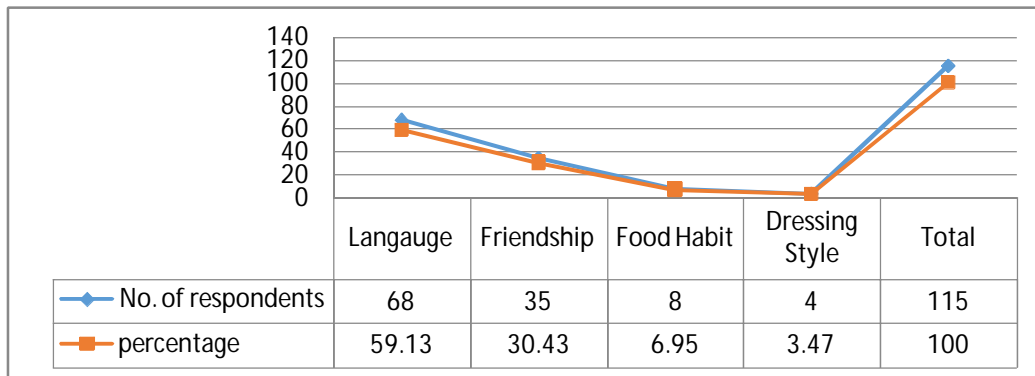
**Limitation:** The Zeliangrong peoples (respondents) could not be met in one place for the purpose of administering the tool of data collection i.e. interview scheduled. Because Zeliangrong people are not living in vicinity but they spread over the city in different places. So, on different occasions, respondents have to be met and the necessary primary data have been collected. Out of 726 Zeliangrong peoples, 115 have been met on the whole for the purpose of data collection.

## **Data Analysis and Interpretations**

### **Acculturation process among the Zeliangrong community living in Chennai**

#### **Figure: 1**

**Graph showing as how the respondents adapt the typical culture to live in Chennai**

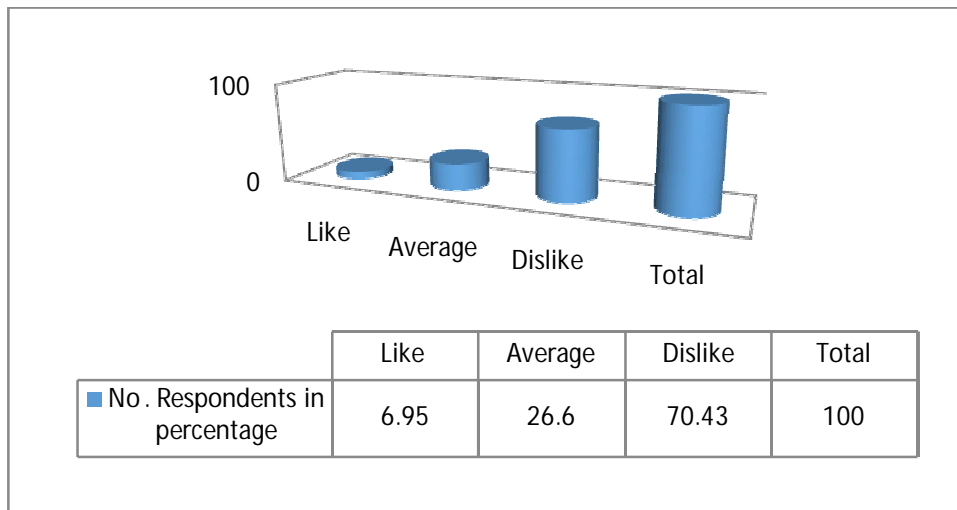


First of all fifty nine per cent of the respondents are learning the typical language to adapt the culture of the host community. Language plays a great role to make people closer with others community, so the respondents (59.13%) give priority to learn the typical language. Some of the respondents (30.43%) are making friendship with the typical people for easy to adapt their culture, 6.95 per cent of the respondents are trying to practise the food habit of the typical people in order to live free from the usual habit of their own food habit, 3.47 per cent of the respondents are copying the dressing style in order to make closer with the host community. These entire practises are stated by the respondents.

Inference drawn from the above Graph shows that majority of the respondents are learning first the typical language in order to acquire the culture of the host community to live in Chennai.

**Figure: 2**

**Graph showing the opinion of the respondents about the inter-caste married**



Among 115 respondents only 6.95 per cent of them stated ‘like’, about twenty seven per cent of them stated ‘average’ and 70.43 per cent of them stated ‘dislike’.

The inference drawn from the Graph is that majority of the respondents are dislike about the inter-caste married with the typical people.

**Table 3**

**Table showing the opinion about the acculturation process taken place within the Zeliangrong community and the host community stated by the respondents**

Sl. No	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Separation	59	51.30
2	Integration	10	8.69
3	Marginalization	34	29.56
4	Assimilation	12	10.43
Total		115	100

The following opinion about the acculturation process taken place within the Zeliangrong community and the host community stated by respondents-‘Separation’ (51.30%) followed by ‘Integration’ (8.68%), ‘Marginalisation’ (29.56%) and ‘Assimilation’ (10.43%).

Finally, from the above Table it can be determines that majority of the respondents are opines the opinion that separation is the most factor taken place within the Zeliangrong community and the host the community.

**Change lifestyle of the Zeliangrong community after living in Chennai**

**Table: 4**

**Table showing whether ‘yes’ or ‘no’ the respondents follow their own traditional lifestyle even after living in Chennai**

Sl. No	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	98	85.21
2	No	17	14.78
Total		115	100

Eighty five per cent of the respondents are stated that they are still following their own traditional lifestyle even after living in Chennai but the remaining about fifteen per cent of the respondents are not follow their own traditional lifestyle after living in Chennai.

The Table interpreted that majority of the respondents are still following their own traditional lifestyle even after living in Chennai.

**Table: 5**

**Table showing the consequences of cultural adoption by the respondents**

Sl. No	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Separation	28	24.35
2	Loss identity	43	37.39
3	Contentious	20	17.39
4	New ways of life	24	20.86
Total		115	100

Inference drawn from the Table is that more numbers of the respondents are opines that loss of identity is the consequences of the culture adaptation by the respondents.

**Table:6**

**Table showing the outcomes of the acculturation after living together with the host community as stated by respondents**

Sl. No	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Migration	14	12.17

2	Assimilation	45	39.13
3	Status change	51	44.34
4	Married	5	4.34
Total		115	100

The understanding derived from the Table shows that 12.17 per cent of the respondents believed that migration is one of the outcomes of the acculturation after living together with the host community as stated by respondents, ‘assimilation’ is stated by 39.13 per cent of the respondents, ‘status change’ is drawn out by 44.34 per cent of the respondents and ‘married’ is also stated by 4.34 per cent of the respondents.

According to the Table more numbers of the respondents stated, change status is one of the outcomes of the acculturation after living together with the host community.

**Summary Findings and Conclusion**

**The acculturation process among the Zeliangrong community living in Chennai**

- ❖ Majority of the respondents are learning first the typical language in order to acquire the culture of the host community to live in Chennai.
- ❖ Majority of the respondents are dislike about the inter-caste married with the typical people.
- ❖ Majority of the respondents are not like to practise cross-culture system with the host community.
- ❖ Majority of the respondents are opines the opinion that separation is the most factor taken place within the Zeliangrong community and the host the community.

**Change lifestyle of the Zeliangrong community after living in Chennai.**

- Majority of the respondents are still following their own traditional lifestyle even after living in Chennai.
- More numbers of the respondents are opines that loss of identity is the consequences of the culture adaptation by the respondents.
- Majority of the respondents are preferred to wear western style of dressing.

- Majority of the respondents are preferred English languages to communicate with the typical people.
- Majority of the respondents reported that the typical people treated the Zeliangrong peoples very well.
- Majority of the respondents stated they sustained good relationship between their family and the respondents after living in Chennai.
- More numbers of the respondents stated, change status is one of the outcomes of the acculturation after living together with the host community.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to examine the acculturation of Zeliangrong Community living in Chennai. The study identified various factors that were associated with acculturation- socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Inadequate job is one of the main reasons why the respondents left their hometown. The study reveals that the Zeliangrong people living in Chennai are the descendants of the same ancestor. Traditionally, the Zeliangrong people have a long history and have inherited a rich cultural heritage. The Zeliangrong Welfare Committee Chennai was formed where the Zeliangrong people can come together and share the needs and problems of its people.

The study discloses that the items from the Socio-cultural Adaptation by the Respondents: Making friends, Getting used to the pace of life, Going to social events/gatherings/functions, dealing with someone who is unpleasant /aggressive, getting used to the local food/finding food you enjoy, following rules and regulations, dealing with people in authority, Adapting to local accommodation, communicating with people of a different ethnic group, dealing with unsatisfactory service, finding your way around, living away from family members overseas/independently from your parents, coping with academic work, accepting /understanding the local political system, understanding cultural differences and being able to see two sides of an intercultural issue.

The study intends to understand the relationships between cross-cultural adaptation, acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization) and social support (local friend support, non-local friend support and family support), among this Zeliangrong People Living in Chennai. The findings showed that cross-cultural adaptation may relate to social support and integration positively, but it may relate to marginalization and separation negatively; and social support did significantly predict cross-cultural adaptation rather than acculturation strategies. Accordingly, it is suggested that the government and social organization should encourage the people's cross-cultural adaptation through enhancing their social support networks with their local and non-local friends and the family.

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