

**TRIBALS IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT**  
MYRIAD PERSPECTIVES FROM NORTHEAST INDIA

2018

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# TRIBALS IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

MYRIAD PERSPECTIVES FROM NORTHEAST INDIA

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**CLARETIAN**  **PUBLICATIONS**

Bangalore - 560 055, India

2018

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*Published by:*

Center for Publications  
Saint Claret College, Ziro

*In collaboration with*

Claretian Publications

28/12, 18th Cross Road

Malleswaram West Post

Bangalore - 560 055, India

Tel: 91-80-23002277 / 78 / 79 / 80

E-mail: [info@claretianpublications.org](mailto:info@claretianpublications.org)

Web: [www.claretianpublications.org](http://www.claretianpublications.org)

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Veliyannoor, P. V., Ramya, T., Sohkhlet, B., & Mendoz, A. (Editors)

*Tribals in the Contemporary Context: Myriad Perspectives From Northeast India*

Price: Rs.300.00 (\$20.00)

ISBN 978-81-89851-12-5

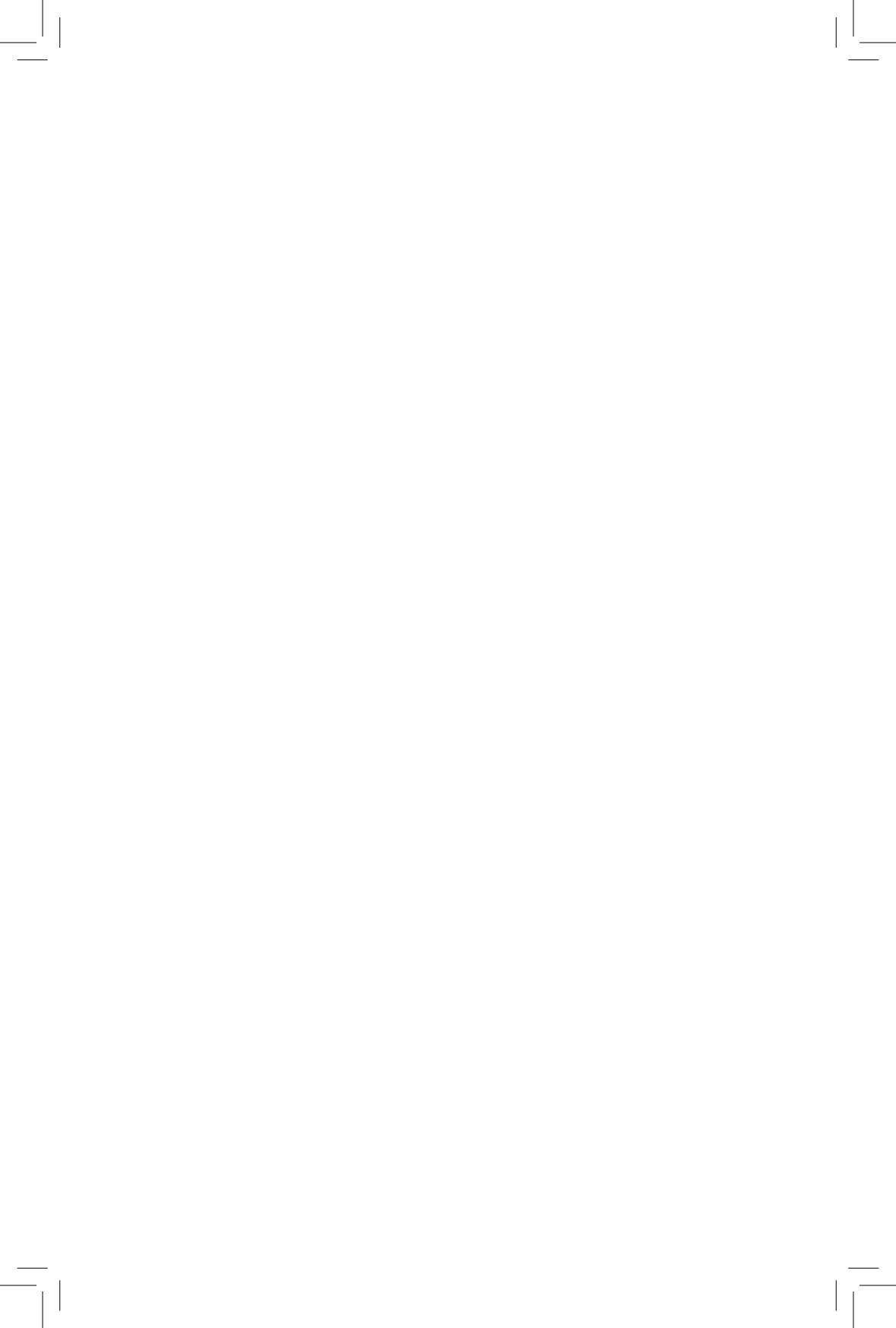
1. Anthropology    2. Tribal Studies    3. Northeast India

Printed in India

First Edition

## **Dedication**

To those nameless, fearless tribal men and women of the past  
whose hallowed memory lingers in the rich and noble  
cultural traditions that nourish the tribal roots and destiny



## PRESENTATION

The present book *Tribals in the Contemporary Context: Myriad Perspectives from Northeast India* is the fruit of the select deliberations at the National Seminar on the same theme organized by the Department of Anthropology under the School of Human and Environmental Sciences of Saint Claret College, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh, in April 2016.

The theme of the Seminar was inspired by the fact that is so intriguing today, viz., the dynamics of modernization, which has brought in very many changes in the lifestyle of the tribal society, and how these changes have affected the tribal life and culture, both positively and negatively. The Seminar delved on various themes that showcased the changes in different tribal societies and the outcome of these changes. As a result of modernization, several ideas and concepts that were not native to tribal life have found a way into the tribal system. Some of these ideas and concepts have been adapted according to the tribal ethos, and others have introduced new elements in the systems and practices of the tribes.

There were 39 papers presented at the Seminar. Of them, 18 have been selected for publication in this book, applying various parameters. These papers will provide an interested reader with food for thought as to the tribal life and culture as they undergo metamorphosis under the impact of modernization. The papers cover a wide gamut of tribal life and experience ranging from religious beliefs, cultural praxis, politics and governance,

economy, status of women, healthcare and many more. One can gain insights on how the tribes have arrived at the present context and what impact the current forces will have on their future. I hope this book will also inspire young as well as seasoned researchers to further explore the changing ambience of tribal life for the benefit of all.

I commend Dr. (Fr.) Paulson Veliyannoor, CMF, the Chief Editor of this volume, and his fellow editors, for their committed and sustained efforts to select and edit the articles and finally realize the book in its present shape. We are grateful to the Claretian Publications, Bengaluru, for their technical assistance in its publication. For Saint Claret College, Ziro, which has been publishing an international, peer-reviewed journal, *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences*, since 2014, this current book becomes yet another milestone in its history of publication at the service of higher education. With joy and pride, I present this work for the public.

Saint Claret College, Ziro  
April 20, 2018

**Dr. (Fr.) Allwyn Mendoz, CMF**  
Principal



## FOREWORD

The contemporary world is a modernized, globalized world that is gradually erasing its many internal boundaries that differentiate between nations, peoples, cultures, economies, and philosophies. The world, we say, is becoming a global village. This phenomenon has its extraordinary benefits! But it has its challenges and dangers. The loss of boundaries of a culture or people can create perceived and real loss of traditions and cherished ways of life, thereby triggering an identity crisis. Sometimes it may lead to a total rejection of the new; other times it may lead to uncritical acceptance of the influx of the new and the unfamiliar; and more often than not, it can lead to a sense of orphaned displacement – not belonging neither here nor there.

Such phenomena can hit hard close-knit tribal communities who have been hitherto living in relative obscurity and isolation, closer to nature and to themselves, with their own unique traditions and life patterns. Northeast India has been such a tribal belt in the Indian peninsula. But no human community can remain unaffected by the Copernican revolution that is unfolding in the world today. The tribal world of Northeast India has, thus, been affected by the world around and there is no going back.

In such a scenario, the ideal task for human communities is to facilitate a healthy osmosis - preserve what is true, good, and beautiful in one's own traditional culture and to absorb what is true, good, and beautiful that beckons from without. But this

is no easy task, and in a complex world, it cannot be achieved by isolated entities. What is required is a concerted effort by all stakeholders – the tribal community itself, the academic world, the political system, religious leaders, the wider public, national and multinational players – to research the realities and discern how best a community can be helped towards integral and holistic development.

But where does one start? I must say we must start where the National Seminar on *Tribals in the Contemporary Context* held at Saint Claret College, Ziro, the select papers of which form the content of this book, started. We must start at identifying the current realities, anxieties, concerns, and stories of successes - the myriad perspectives from Northeast India; knowing the current situation is the first step towards intervening effectively. And once we assess, where do we go? I would suggest that we follow the roadmap of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations. The international community has identified the areas where we need to intervene to ensure development that is sustainable. And what we need for the tribal world of the Northeast is a development that is sustainable and long lasting. The 18 articles in this little book from young researchers from Northeast India can provide us enough insights to learn what to address and where to begin.

Nothing succeeds like success. But for success to happen and to become a habit, passionate and committed hard work is *sine qua non*. This book is the result of a story of habitual passion, commitment, and hard work of a community of higher education in the remote foothills of the Himalayas – Saint Claret College, Ziro. I have been fortunate to visit this institute of higher education and witness in person the tremendous results the undergraduate school has achieved in its short history of 15 years. Founded in 2003 in a remote forest land with no good road or electricity or stable water connection, the institution has come a

long way, thanks to the synergic efforts of Claretian missionaries of Northeast India, the dedicated faculty, enthusiastic students, and the supportive tribal folk of Ziro as well as the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Though confronted by many challenges – geographical, logistical, and resource-wise – SCCZ has organized several regional and national seminars, conferences, and workshops for the benefit of the budding scholars of the Northeast. It brings out an annual journal of good scholarship, which has, to this day, never failed to carry articles from regional, national, and international scholars in every issue. The Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi (ICSSR) and its North Eastern Regional Centre, located at Shillong (ICSSR-NERC) have recognized the potential of SCCZ and has been supporting several of its academic ventures. It is no wonder that SCCZ became the first ever institute of higher education (HEI) in the State to receive accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with “A” Grade in the very first cycle. In fact, as of 2018, it is the only private HEI in Arunachal to have received accreditation.

I wish the academic community of Saint Claret College, Ziro, continuous growth and success in its pursuit at the service of higher education and the tribal people. I am sure this little book that captures the fruits of research into the many angst, hopes, fears, and dreams of the Northeast tribal world will become a catalyst for wider interest of academicians and policy makers for contributing towards a greater and functional integration between tradition and modernity in that world.

Shillong  
March 20, 2018

**C. Joshua Thomas**  
Deputy Director  
ICSSR-NERC



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*General Introduction*  
TRIBALS IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT  
OF NORTH EAST INDIA

Paulson Veliyannoor

North East India (NEI), which consists of seven sister states and one brother state, is a delightful marvel, being a region of rich geographical and anthropological diversities. The human diversity is manifest in both biological and cultural spheres. Such complexity is reflected in the complex, heterogeneous tribal and non-tribal populations living in their given environmental settings. The range of complex differences has its social, political, economic, bio-physical, and religious relevance. The tribal communities of NEI constitute about 56.1% of the total tribal population of India (Census of India, 2011). In order to promote the welfare of tribal people, “scheduled areas” were formulated by the Indian Constitution. There are also reservations provided for educational and employment opportunities in the public sector. The Indian Constitution has envisaged bringing about development and progress among the tribal communities in the areas of economy, education, health, nutrition and the like, for further assimilation of these groups into the mainstream Indian society.

However, despite these endeavours, accomplishments have been limited and less than optimal—the tribal citizens continue to face challenges related to survival and well-being. In the areas of education, economy, health, nutrition, and sanitation, the statistics on tribal development in Northeast India lag way behind that of the rest of general and tribal populations elsewhere in the country. The advent of modernization, with its accompanying

scientific, technological, communication, and socio-economic revolutions, has indelibly affected the tribal life and culture. The situation is made more complex with the influence of factors such as land alienation, involuntary migration, resettlement, influx of non-tribals, and other related socio-economic realities. However, modernization has been not without its many advantages and benefits either. Hence, there is an urgent need to identify, understand, and address the contemporary issues related to the well-being of the tribal population of NEI from diverse areas of concern and influence, for the purpose of policy making, intervention, cultural preservation and adaptation.

It is with this end in view that the Department of Anthropology under the School of Human and Environmental Sciences of Saint Claret College, Ziro, organized a two-day National Seminar on April 9-10, 2016. A generalized theme was adopted for the Seminar to provide for diverse perspectives: *Tribals in the Contemporary Context: Myriad Perspectives from Northeast India*. The theme was divided into four major thrust areas (which were only indicative and not exhaustive) to open up an inter-disciplinary platform for scholars, researchers, and policy makers to delve in the contemporary issues hinging on the tribal people of North East India. The major thrust areas were: tribal governance, socio-cultural issues, bio-physical and bio-cultural issues, and other tribal related issues.

The Seminar generated great interest and support. It was part-funded by the *Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya* (IGRMS), Bhopal; *Indian Council of Social Science Research* (ICSSR), Delhi; and *Indian Council of Social Science Research – North East Regional Center* (ICSSR-NERC), Shillong. The Organizing Committee had received nearly 100 abstracts from which through scrutiny, only 40 were admitted to the Seminar. The final count of presentations was 39, including the four keynote presentations of the plenary sessions. The two-day

long seminar was attended by around 186 participants. The Seminar was formally inaugurated by Marnya Ete, IAS, the then Commissioner (Education), Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Being a seminar in tribal anthropology, no classroom discussions would do justice – hence, the Seminar also included an anthropological tour to Hong village, which was hosting the month-long *Myoko* festival, one of the three major traditional festivals of the Apatani tribe and a unique festival that celebrates the generations-deep social bond among families across clans and villages.

The present book is the fruit of the deliberations of the above-mentioned National Seminar. Not all papers presented at the Seminar have been selected for this book. Applying certain parameters and wanting the selection to be representative of the various thematic concentrations, the editorial board identified 18 of them, which form the content of this book. We must confess that not all papers are of the highest research rigor or methodological perfection, but they are the definitive fruits of the labour of passionate and young researchers, several of them being research scholars just learning the tricks of the trade, but with no shortage of commitment to analysing and understanding the tribal life and culture. Majority of the authors come from the tribal world of the Northeast, and the research they have engaged in is part of their attempt at self-awareness as individuals and tribal communities in transition. Hence, we invite you to be generous in your critical appreciation, forgiving the limitations of research you might find in some places, but exploring the insightful findings each paper presents, holding the best of intentions for the tribal welfare of the Northeast. We will consider our purpose fulfilled if this book helps you develop a greater interest and appreciation for the challenges the tribals face in Northeast India and a desire to do streamlined research into the areas that compel you, contributing to the fundus of scientific knowledge and

influencing optimal socio-politico-ecological interventions for the benefit of the tribal communities.

I do not intend to summarize each paper that forms the chapters of this book. My intention in the following paragraphs is only to introduce certain themes touched upon by the articles, which have been placed sequentially, though any specifically labelled clustering has been deliberately avoided.

The first chapter is the keynote address delivered by Dr. Batem Pertin at the first plenary session at the Seminar. With his vast experience as the Director of the Department of Research under Government of Arunachal Pradesh, he provides a panoramic view of the various cultural zones and the socio-cultural heritage of the State, which are being threatened by many factors. “Revitalization is the only means to preserve the traditional heritage and revive it,” he concludes. But one of the many reasons that threaten the preservation as well as positive enhancement is the lack of proper textual translation to and from the tribal languages, opines Josekutty Thomas. An interesting and valid insight, indeed.

The next two chapters sample some of the heritage traditions: Landi Tama & Landi Monia discuss the community images that emerge from the *Apatani* folklores while Tanong Tapak documents the hunting traditions of the *Adis* that are gradually taking a hit.

The next five chapters deal with the political-administrative systems among the tribals and their changing faces as well as the role of women and youth organizations in such systems. Neelam Rupa and Samsom Mossang discuss the traditional village councils of the *Tangsa* community, while Millo Seema analyses how the Panchayati Raj system has been instrumental in ensuring that the voice of the tribal villages is heard at higher political levels. Elonbeni Ngullie discusses the role of *Lotha* women in the *Naga* society and Eva Dupak does the same with regards the

political involvement of women from the *Adi* community. Badari Nonglait does a review of the role played by youth and student organizations in West Khasi hills in Meghalaya in asserting tribal rights and autonomy.

Traditional medicine has taken a backseat with the entry of the modern medicine. Hibu Dindie discusses the shamanist practices among *Apatanis* and how they have declined over the years; Dani Yama identifies the reason for the same in the influx of modern medicine. Both the traditional and the modern healing systems have much to contribute and an optimal solution would be taking the best from both systems. Melody Rengma and Sarthak Sengupta provide us with an analysis of the effect of reproductive health care services on infant mortality among select tribes of Assam.

Economy and Commerce are twin agents of modernization; they are the recipients of the effects of modernization as well. Biri Amji presents a case study of how commercialization of agricultural produces has affected Leporiang Circle in Arunachal Pradesh. Ravi Mihi et al. give a similar analysis of the impact of commercial orange cultivation on *Idu Mishmi* community. Yab Camder et al. document the contemporary trading and economic scenario of the *Nyishi* tribe. Dakarupaya Rymbai takes us to Meghalaya and provides us with a glimpse of the reality and potential of tourism in Khasi and Jaintia Hills to make a difference in the lives of the tribes of those hills.

No one lives as an island. Not even tribals in the remote northeast. We are all interdependent entities, members of a large human community. The life of the world and the nation affects everyone, far and near. There is no denying that the tribal life of Northeast India has been deeply affected, for better or worse, by the globalization and modernization amplified by the revolutions in information technology, and their resultant socio-

economic-politico-religious ramifications that have been taking the world by storm. It is up to every responsible social agent to ensure that the negative consequences are prevented and positive impacts are enhanced. Given the role played by various business establishments in the modernization, Sohum Krishna makes a case for the ethical responsibility of such establishments to fulfil their corporate social responsibility (CSR) towards the tribals.

The final chapter is the text of the inaugural keynote address delivered by Dr. (Fr.) Jose K., SVD, a socio-cultural anthropologist and founding director of *Sanskriti - North Eastern Institute of Cultural Reserch*, Guwahati. He invites us to celebrate the pluri-cultural identities involving tribals and non-tribals, envisioning a desirable future where everyone feels at home as members of one family. A dream worth working for.

As you see, 11 of the 18 papers deal with the tribal life and culture within Arunachal Pradesh. This is natural, given that the Seminar was held at Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh (the name means “the land of dawn-lit mountains”) is the north-easternmost state in Northeast India, the largest in geographical area but the least in density of population, given its forest coverage. Arunachal is a completely tribal state with many major and minor tribes (you will read more about the details in the following chapters) with a rich, varied, and complex cultural reality. Given its remoteness, the problems affecting the tribals of Arunachal are representative of the problems of tribals elsewhere in the Northeast, in varying degrees, and require serious attention from the stakeholders of society.

The venue of the Seminar was Saint Claret College (SCCZ) at Ziro, the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district, established by Claretian missionaries of Northeast India, at the invitation of the Apatani tribals together with the district administration. Founded as only the second undergraduate school under private

management in the entire State, SCCZ has become one of the premier institutes of higher education. The College has been accredited with “A” Grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the autonomous accreditation body of the University Grants Commission (UGC). In 2014, SCCZ began the publication of a peer reviewed journal, *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* (ISSN: 2349-400X), the first of its kind from an undergraduate school in Arunachal. Over the years, SCCZ has taken significant and creative steps to respond to the higher educational needs of the State as well as the preservation of tribal culture and identity.

The publication of this book becomes another significant contribution by SCCZ to the world of academia as well as to the wider society of Northeast India. The editors remain grateful to the authors who contributed their papers, the Claretian Publications who generously consented to assist with the publication, Dr. C. Joshua Thomas, Deputy Director of Indian Council of Social Science Research - North Eastern Regional Center (ICSSR-NERC), who happily penned the Foreword, as well as to everyone who collaborated in realizing this dream. We hope that this little book may become a humble means to generate greater interest among social scientists and policy makers in the wellbeing of the tribal population of India.





## ARUNACHAL PRADESH: A UNIQUE CULTURAL ZONE OF NORTH EAST INDIA<sup>1</sup>

Batem Pertin<sup>2</sup>

North East India has over 220 ethnic groups and equal number of dialects. The hill states in the region like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland are predominantly inhabited by tribal people with a degree of diversity even within the tribal groups. The region's population results from ancient and continuous flow of migration from Tibet, Indo-Gangetic Plains, the Himalayas, present Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The ethnic people of North-East India have their own distinctive culture, custom, tradition, history, migration, languages, and heritage. Even climatic conditions of entire North-East India are distinctively salubrious, influencing the formation of the unique cultural tapestry of the ethnic people.

If we look at the tribes of North-East India in the contemporary context, there are indeed myriad of perspectives to be looked upon. As this seminar deals with various perspectives to be presented by well-informed scholars, I refrain from touching upon every aspect of the North-East tribes, but shall focus on a select few. Being a student cultural anthropology and have served the state as research officer in the Directorate of Research, I would like to focus on the state of Arunachal Pradesh which houses diverse ethnic groups or tribes. Our state itself is a representation of cultural and ecological diversity in the context of this seminar.

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<sup>1</sup> *This paper is the text of the keynote address delivered at the first Plenary Session of the National Seminar.*

<sup>2</sup> *Director, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar. E-Mail: batempertin@gmail.com*

Arunachal Pradesh is an enchanting land of wild and beautiful nature, of happy, friendly people with a glorious heritage beckoning explorers, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and nature lovers simultaneously, to get to know it more closely. The people of this rich and colourful land are of many faiths and speak different languages. Here live some 25 major tribal groups who are racially Indo-Mongoloid with distinct and varied culture, language, dress, custom, religion, and so on (Dutta, 1992). The prominent tribes inhabiting this region are *Nyishi*, *Apatani*, *Tagin*, *Adi*, *Galo*, *Monpa*, *Sherdukpen*, *Aka*, *Sajolang* (Miji), *Bugun*, *Memba*, *Khamba*, *Mishmi*, *Khamti*, *Singpho*, *Nocte*, *Tangsa*, and *Wancho*. These tribes contribute to the great human association of the state and form integrated groups, but independent of each other and live their lives separately, making the settlement pattern of Arunachal Pradesh a unique cultural landscape.

### Cultural Zones

The large number of tribes of the state have a rich socio-cultural heritage. All the tribes are patriarchal and follow patrilineal norm of descent. Primogeniture is the fundamental law of inheritance. They follow endogamy and observe the rule of clan exogamy. Polygamy is socially sanctioned. The socio-administrative structure of the tribes as evolved over centuries include highly developed forms of democratic government, right down to the level of villages (Elwin, 1965). One of the best known of the self-governing institutions is the *Kebang* of the Adis (Roy, 1960). Similar institutions exist among the tribes with different names such as *Tsorgen* of the Monpas, *Jung* of the Sherdukpens, *Mele* of the Akas, *Buliang* of the Apatanis, *Nyele* of the Nyishis, *Abbala* of the Idu Mishmis, *Mokchup* of the Khamtis, *Wangchu-Wangsa* of the Wanchos, and so on for maintenance of law and order in the society and undertaking welfare and other activities for strengthening respective cultural ingredients.

From the cultural heritage point of view, we may conveniently divide the state into following three cultural zones: (a) Buddhist Cultural Zone, (b) Cultural Zone of Natural Religion, and (c) Cultural Zone of the Eastern Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Buddhist Cultural Zone**

In the first cultural zone of the state, we may include the Buddhist tribes such as Monpa and Sherdukpen groups of Tawang and West Kameng districts, Khamba and Memba of Upper Siang and West Siang districts, and Khamtis and Singphos of Lohit and Namsai districts.

The people of this zone make beautiful masks which are not seen in other parts of the state. They also periodically stage pantomimes and mask dances. Beautiful carpets, painted wooden vessels, paper making, and silver articles are the speciality of the Monpas.

### **Cultural Zone of Natural Religion**

The cultural zone from East Kameng district in the west to Lohit district in the east comprises the tribes such as Nyishi, Apatani, Tagin, Adi, Galo, and Mishmis. These people are expert workers in cane and bamboo. The Apatanis, Nyishis, and Adis make beautiful articles out of these materials, which depict eloquently their skills and handicrafts. The weaving skills of women folk ensure unique designs and colour combinations in their clothing. The shawls and jackets of the Apatanis, the *Galeh* and *Galuk* (skirt & shirt), shoulder-back of the Adis, and the Mishmi coats and shawl are symbolic of their superb weaving talents and aesthetic sense.

### **Cultural Zone of the Eastern Arunachal Pradesh**

The third zone is formed by the south-eastern part of the

state, comprising the Noctes, Tangsas, and Wanchos. They are famous for their wood-carving. The Wanchos, however, weave beautiful bags and loin clothes. Ivory works, boar's tusk, beads of agate, and other stones as well as glass and brass are fascination of the people of this zone to articulate their delicate artistic skills.

### **Socio-Cultural Heritage of Arunachal Pradesh**

The rich socio-cultural heritage of this vast area can be broadly categorised under two groups: material and non-material.

#### **Material Group**

In the material group of socio-cultural heritage, we may include the old relics, handicrafts, religious, and artistic pursuits. There are large number of historical and archaeological sites discovered and explored in the area such as Itafort, Malinithan temples, Bhismaknagar, Vijaynagar stupa, Naksaparbat, World War II cemetery, and some are yet to be explored (Tada & Ghosh, 2008). Malinithan temple site at the foothills of Lower Siang district is an important place of great sanctity, associated with the legends of Lord Krishna. Malinithan is indeed a historical monument to great synthesis of culture that took place in India through the ages, and a link that connected Arunachal Pradesh to the mainstream Indian culture. Ruins of a place at Bhismaknagar in Lower Dibang Valley district, Naksaparbat ruins in the foothills of East Kameng district, Itafort in Itanagar of Papum Pare district, and Bhalukpong in West Kameng district bear testimony to the rich heritage of the state. The age-old monastery at Tawang, one of the biggest monasteries in South-East Asia, many Gompas of Tawang, West Kameng, Upper Siang, and West Siang districts and Viharas in Lohit district are living institutions bearing testimony to the prevailing Buddhist culture in the state.

### *Handicrafts as Determinant of Material Culture*

The next item of material group is handicrafts. The people of Arunachal Pradesh excel in the production of useful and eye-catching handicrafts. Their nimble fingers weave excellent designs on the textiles and carpets and multicoloured masks created for the dancers. The intricately executed woodcrafts, cane and fibre works, and handlooms bear eloquent testimony to the fine artistic temperament and poetic imagination of these hardworking tribesmen of this eastern Himalayan state.

The tribal women of Arunachal Pradesh are expert in the art of weaving (Elwin, 1959). They are very particular about colours and have beautiful sense of colour combination. The weaving designs are basically geometrical, varying from a formal arrangement of lines and bands to elaborate patterns of diamonds and lozenges. The designs are sometimes enhanced by internal repetition and other decorations. A few of the remarkable products are Sherdukpen shawls, Apatani jackets and scarves, Adi shirts, jackets, and bags, Mishmi shawls, blouse, and jackets, and Wancho bags and loin clothes.

Carpet making is the speciality of the Monpa girls. They weave colourful carpets with dragon, geometric, and floral designs. The choice of colours and colour combination represent the identity of the tribes and their unique aesthetic perception.

### *Traditional Wood-Carving as Form of Material Culture*

Wood carving is a tradition with some of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The Monpas, Khamtis, and Wanchos occupy significant place in this art. The Monpa wood carver makes beautiful cups, dishes, fruits-bowls, and magnificent masks for ceremonial dances and pantomimes. The Membas and Khambas also carve wooden masks. The Khamtis make beautiful religious images, figurines of dancers, toys, and other objects.

Very beautiful wood carving is done by the Wanchos. This art of the Wanchos was earlier associated mainly with headhunting and hence, human head dominated everything that they made. But nowadays varieties of other objects are included. They carve beautiful tobacco pipes, drinking mugs, human figures, and so on.

### *Basketry: Another Parameter of Material Culture*

Cane and bamboo handicrafts of Arunachal are of a very high standard. Most of the domestic requirements are made of canes and bamboos. Hats of different sizes and shapes, various kinds of baskets, cane vessels, a wide variety of cane belts, woven and plain, elaborately woven brassieres of cane and fibre, bamboo mugs with carving, a variety of ornaments and necklaces are some of the products that deserve special mention. The techno-typology of the baskets have definite correlation to the topography of the state and functions of the people.

### *Adornment of the People as Part of Material Culture*

Ornament making is another craft widely practiced in Arunachal Pradesh. Most of the ornaments are made of beads, as all the tribes are fond of various coloured beads. While some people just had strings of beads round their neck, others such as Noctes and the Wanchos weave them into very attractive patterns. The Wancho girls particularly are experts in plated beadwork. The designs and colour combination are superb. Silvery ornaments are a specialty of the Idu Mishmis. They make fillets, necklaces, lockets, and beautiful earrings.

Paper making, smithy work, carpentry, pottery, and ivory work are other crafts practiced by the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Pottery is the occupation of the womenfolk. The Noctes, Wanchos, Nyishis, and Apatanis practiced this industry. Similarly, the people also make various kinds of hunting and

fishing implements. The wide varieties of these implements include spears, bows and arrows, daos, crossbows, traps, and fishing nets.

Under religious and artistic pursuits, mention may be made of scroll painting and making of religious prayer flags. Scroll painting is almost a whole-time engagement of the Monpa and Memba artists. The Khamti women make beautiful prayer flags and scroll.

### **Non-Material Group**

In the non-material group of cultural heritage, we may mention the festivals, dances, songs, and myths.

#### *Festivals: Kaleidoscope of Cultural Heritage*

Being basically agriculturists in occupation, the people of Arunachal Pradesh have their own festivals, songs, and dances by which legacy of rich tradition has been preserved and cultural continuity maintained in the state (Sarkar, 1974). Some of these festivals have attained regional characters of the various festivals celebrated throughout the year. The mention may be made of the *Losar* festival of the Monpas, *Nyokum* of the Nyishis, *Dree* of the Apatanis, *Solung* of the Adis, *Mopin* of the Galos, *Reh* and *Tamladu* of the Mishmis, *Sangken* of the Khamtis, *Moh-Mol* of the Tangsas, *Chalo-Loku* of the Noctes, and *Oriah* of the Wanchos. These festivals are in one way or other connected with some traditions. Some festivals are celebrated to mark the new year, some to start the new crop, some to celebrate the harvest, and so on. Most of the festivals are celebrated accompanied with folk dances performed either by menfolk alone or by men and women together. The dances performed by the people are varied and many. Some of these dances have by now gained popularity throughout the state. Likewise, the folk literature of the people, comprising folk songs, tales, myths, proverbs, and sayings are

also extensively rich and varied. Almost all the tribes have myths and legends connected with various phenomena such as origin of the universe, creation of animals, the various activities, and so on.

Those who are destined to be born as tribals here are the most fortunate ones on this earth - as they are always in close proximity to nature. Their lives, characters, attitudes, culture, society, music, art, customs, traditions, religious faiths, house patterns, food habit, social fabrics, and economic pursuits are all dependent upon the nature.

### *Traditional Self-Governing Institutes*

There is a traditional village council in every village irrespective of the tribe, for rural self-administration termed differently by the tribes (Elwin, 1965). These are still vibrant institutions in socio-cultural life of the people. The traditional institutions regulate day-to-day activities of the community in maintenance of peace and tranquillity around village periphery. These are the pillars of the society as all socio-cultural and socio-religious activities arbitrate around village council. In Arunachal Pradesh, tribal way of life is thus unique, simple, and custom bound. Truthfulness is the fundamental spirit. They are of amicable cheerful disposition and fond of happy-go-lucky freedom, but diligent. Thereby, their economy is also nature based; their economic status is determined from the possession of the number of mithuns, pigs, cows, and poultries they rear. Their social systems are framed on the simple norms to the extent of the indigenous traditions and human faculty. Since they lead a way of life which is natural, original, and spontaneous, this may be termed as 'Natural Culture.'

### *Nature-Culture Relations*

Their music is imbibed with the echo of nature i.e., imitation of the chirping sounds of birds, winds, waterfalls, and murmuring sound of brown leaves. It produces natural melodious tune,



creating relationship with nature in its real and basic elements. The customs and traditions are directly linked with the natural habitat and environment (Shapiro, 1956). The social norms are mostly identical which make them realistic to follow natural way of life. Their social custom and traditions are the golden thread for maintaining the faith in the Almighty and is pure and genuine. Animism is the basic feature of religious faith except some for some Buddhist tribes. Their rituals require the worship of mountains, rivers, lakes, trees, and other natural phenomena because they presume the existence of spirit in every object, whatever nature presents before them to see. These are the holy hearts and pure minds where the objects of the nature are deemed fit for worship.

### **Conclusion**

The socio-cultural heritage of the people of Arunachal Pradesh is traditional. The heritage will continue to prosper if the people do not discard them. In the face of rapid development and globalization, much of the rich heritage may disappear but it is for the people to preserve this rich heritage and also to take steps for augmenting some of the material groups through adopting modern techniques to depict their originality. Where necessary, revival movement may also be taken up. In the face of modernization and changed situations, the traditional crafts and arts may have to struggle for survival. In the process of human progress, change is unavoidable. George Peter Murdock (1965) indicates that “the net effect of the various process of cultural change is to adapt the collective habits of human societies progressively over time to the changing conditions of existence” (p. 128). But with proper guidance, revival and continuation of the best advantages may be possible. The arts are bound to lose in utility as the pattern of life changes. Some of them will be

threatened on account of their technical deficiencies and others, by misuse of the articles produced.

Revitalization is the only means to preserve the traditional heritage and revive it, and it is possible in two ways – one is to find them a new place in the new pattern of life and secondly to expand the field of appreciation and use. The non-material group of the cultural heritage also needs more careful treatment for preservation and revitalization. For balanced growth of a society, cultural development is essential along with material progress. The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, stressed that modernization and progress must go hand in hand with preservation of traditional way of life of the tribal people (Pertin, 2003). The traditional culture of the people of Arunachal Pradesh has a rich past. Neglect of any part of traditional culture may seriously cause harm. The society has a tremendous task for preservation, and revitalization of the heritage is possible. To conceptualize the cultural genesis of the people, one has to dine with them, move with them, share their happy or sad moments, and walk with them. One should look at the tribals through tribal eyes. Therein lies unity in diversity.

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## THE ROLE OF TEXTUAL TRANSLATION IN TRIBAL LANGUAGES

Josekutty Thomas<sup>1</sup>

Tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh in their written format are in infancy when compared to most of the major languages of India and some of the tribal languages of Northeast India. Shortage of authors in these tribal languages has made them languish in their dormant stage. Dialectical differences have also made it difficult for these languages to bring out literature and generate wider readership. It is in this context that I pose the following questions: What are the solutions to these problems? Can we just ignore these difficulties and allow these languages to succumb to a natural death under the influence of other well-developed languages? The impact of languages such as Hindi, English, and in some areas Assamese, is overwhelming. It is a sad fact that the children's use of these languages in the schools, markets, and even in their homes, has minimised the significance of tribal dialects and languages. The issue is much larger than just asking them not to patronise languages like Hindi. How do we bring out literature in tribal languages and attract wider readership? How do we find authors who can write in the tribal languages? One plausible solution to this problem is translation, which is considered an art of creative writing. It has been recognised as a valid way of enhancing a language and as an excellent means of improving one's language.

This paper examines the issues and challenges of translation of various literary works into unwritten tribal languages. It shows

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how translation can help in the development of new concepts and ideas in tribal languages. The essay also examines the problems faced by translators when they translate a literary work into a tribal language. Keeping these objectives in mind, the paper is divided into three sections: The first section highlights the contributions that the textual translation accomplishes in the tribal languages. Coining of new words, compounding of new terms and phrases, translation of metaphorical expressions, new spelling scheme, etc., are some of the ways tribal languages are enriched. The second section discusses the effects of translation on the development of tribal languages, followed by the final section which looks at the issues that require special attention in the process of textual translation and the concerns to be addressed while publishing the text. It is hoped that this essay will encourage potential linguists to enrich tribal languages through translation.

### **Translation Enriches Tribal Languages**

Today translation has been recognised as a valid means for enhancing a language. According to Duff, “translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning: accuracy, clarity and flexibility” (Duff, 1989, p. 7). He strongly supports the view that translation is an excellent means of improving one’s language because it invites hypothesising, speculation, and discussion (Duff, 1989). Literary translation demands a lot of creativity on the part of the translator. It calls for complete involvement with the original story - its characters, experiences, and feelings. Even after realising these, it is equally challenging to re-create it in a foreign language. Translation can also be a technique to introduce new words or to explore obscure nuances between terms. However, the process of translation contributes towards the enrichment of tribal languages in many ways.

## Coinage of New Words

The translator has to coin new words to express the concepts that are alien to the target language and society. He or she has to take into consideration a lot of cultural and religious aspects of the people. By way of an example, in the translation of the Gospels into Nyishi, one of the tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh, the translator has coined a new word for the animal “camel” since Nyishi language does not have a word for camel. The word used in the translation is *semel* (Francis, 2006, p. 144). The translator, T. J. Francis,<sup>2</sup> says that in his first attempt the word *pagangbu se* meaning ‘crooked cow’ was used. But it brought about laughter among the hearers. So, the translator decided to coin a new word. He says most animals in Nyishi begin with the word *se* like *sebe*, *sebin*, *seche*, etc. “So, I used *se* and the ending of the English word ‘camel’ that is ‘*mel*’ and coined ‘*Semel*’ and now all understand it as camel” (Francis, interview notes, November 10, 2015). The new coined words also should express the cultural ethos of the people. So, a deeper research into the language is necessary to coin a word that can be understood by the people.

## Coinage of New Terms by Compounding Two Words from a Tribal Language

During the process of translation, in order to make an exact equal term or to come closer to the original term, the translator may need to coin new terms, which may be alien to the tribal worldview. The translator should consider the expressive possibilities of the target language, as it is not always possible to attain the exact equivalence. Accordingly, the translator has to take two or more words that are familiar to the people and

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<sup>2</sup> T.J. Francis is a pioneering catholic priest who has been serving in Arunachal Pradesh for long and has translated the four gospels into Nyishi tribal language and published as Tugung Pui (2000). He has also translated some parts of the Bible into the tribal languages of Rongmei Naga and Wancho.

create a new term to express the equivalent meaning of the original. He or she should evaluate all possible versions to see which term fully captures all the implications of the original. With an initial explanation of the term and its continuous usage, the term becomes part of the ordinary conversation and the language. Thus, for example, in *Tugung Pui*, the word “rule” is translated in Mt 2:22 as *Rige angenam*. The word *rige* means “to make someone do something” and *angenam* means “to lead.” It is a new word coined to express the idea of ruling or governing.

### **Coinage of New Terms by Compounding Words from a Tribal Language and Words from Other Languages**

In order to get an equivalent in the target language one may need to use words that are coined with the help of words borrowed from other languages. In the case of languages of Arunachal Pradesh, one may borrow words from Hindi, Assamese, or English, and join them with certain words from the respective tribal language to get appropriate words. Thus, for example, Nyishi language has borrowed the Hindi words *nyiam* for “law” and *likh* for “writing.”

It is necessary at times for the translator to take certain words from languages that are used in close proximity to the people for whom the translation is undertaken. Due to the interaction between the people especially those who live near the border and the business class, the common words expressed in foreign languages become part of the lingua franca of the people. This is evident from the fact that the tribal people of Arunachal living close to Assam use a number of Assamese words in their conversations. Use of Hindi over the years has increased in Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, the people are quite familiar with the Hindi words and it is only natural for the translator to use the help of such words in the translation.

### Use of Words from Other Languages in the Translated Text

The translator may use words that are taken from languages other than the tribal language or from a tribal language, which is very close to the target language during the translation to express correctly the meaning of the words. In the case of languages of Arunachal Pradesh, the translator may use words from Assamese and Hindi, two languages that are familiar to the people or English that is learned at school. Some of the words such as *mondol, raja, sipai, probhu, soitan, norok, angur, niyam, likh, school, book, pencil*, etc. may not have equivalents in the tribal languages. These are quite common words used in the ordinary conversations of the people. By making them part of a written text, the translator is introducing them officially to the tribal lexicon.

The use of these words in the conversation of the people become a necessity as the people are getting educated and expect vocabulary to express newly acquired knowledge which are foreign to their way of living and thinking. The translator may also use, if he or she is proficient, a word from another language, which is very close to the target language. For example, when one translates a text into a language belonging to the *Tani Family*,<sup>3</sup> one can always take words from one language and use in other language.

### Contribution of Metaphorical Expressions and Sayings

The metaphorical expressions and sayings of a particular group are formed out of their religious, cultural, political, social, commercial, or business background. It is not easy to translate these into a language, which is completely different in its outlook

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<sup>3</sup> *Tani Family consists of the tribes of Nyishi, Adi, Apatani, Tagin, Galo, Mising, and Na. There are a number of common elements among these groups. Their belief is that they are the progenies of a common ancestor Abotani. In his book, A Grammar of Nyishi Language, Abraham speaks about "a high degree of mutual intelligibility" that is found among these languages (2005, p. 12).*



and approach (Thunman, 2002). It is tough to translate such expressions, as they are “imagery drawn from cultures separated not only by geographical distance but also by distance of time” (Nichols, 1996, p. 289). The religious, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds of the people vary and so is the understanding of various concepts. But the translation of some of these expressions adds value to the text.

Idioms, proverbs, and metaphors are specific problems of localised situations. A translator has to be thorough with the localised situations in the text translated. In such a context, the translator may have to adjust a word or a phrase as a fitting substitute for the given word or phrase in the original. Through the translation of the Bible into various languages of the world, the many sayings of Jesus, which are world famous, have become part of the sayings of many languages and literature (Harlow, 1937). For example “Why do you observe the splinter in your brother’s eye and never notice the log in your own?” (Lk 6:41) or “Blind leading the blind” (Mt 15:14). Some of these expressions are typical of the Semitic thinking. Through the translation, it becomes part of the thinking pattern of the people for whom the text is translated.

### **Exchange of Ideas and Concepts**

Exchange of ideas is one of the biggest contributions of translations. The language into which the translation is done gains much from the language in which the original text is written. Language is not a distinct entity. It is connected with the tradition and culture of the people. A language expresses the culture of the people. So, a great deal of new ideas, both spiritual and secular, is exchanged through the translation. Translation introduces new concepts and ideas of a culture to another culture. These exchanges of ideas, in turn, enrich the language and the culture.

## **A New Spelling Scheme**

One of the biggest contributions of translations in an unwritten tribal language is the taking of the oral language to a written level. The courageous step of an individual can inspire many. The translated text at times may be the first written text in a tribal language. It gives a new impetus to the aspiring tribal writers that similar books can be written in their own language. It also makes them understand that a well-written book is acceptable to the people. The use of these texts in the homes, churches, schools, and other public places makes the people realise that an oral language can be made into a written one with some effort.

The spelling scheme in the book should be easy to read and understand. The translators' expertise, proficiency in the target language, preparation and research in other translated works can help make an orthography that is easy to comprehend and decipher for the ordinary masses. It is better to use Roman Script while translating texts into the languages of Arunachal Pradesh since Roman Script is quite familiar to the educated people of the State.

## **The Impact of Translation on the Tribal Language and Culture**

Every good translation makes a great impact on a language. The translation of texts in a tribal language creates new waves in the language especially if the language has very little or no written works. The continuous translations and their use by the masses affect the culture and thinking pattern of the readers. In this section, we shall examine the effect that translations have on the tribal language and culture.

## **Language Transition: From Oral to Written**

The translation and publication of books into a tribal language

can take the tribal language to a new height. The language will move from its oral status to a written one. A complete book with a new orthography and all elements of language could help the language to take on a new status. The tribal language gets recorded for the use of the posterity through a written book. The people who are not part of that community but would like to learn the language will know the sayings and special usages of the language. Through the written format, the tribal language will go beyond the boundaries of a particular community.

### **Unification of Many Dialects into a Single Accepted Language**

Dialectical squabbles are a major problem in the unification of a language. When the entire group decides to write in a particular dialect, the problem of dialects almost comes to an end. The use of books will make one to continue to write in the language that one is familiar with in the already written book. This will bring about a unification of language at least in the written format. The Nyishi translation of the Gospels published in 2000 has used the Nyishi spoken in Kra Daadi and Kurung Kumey districts. The books, which were written after this translation, especially for the use in the churches in the Nyishi areas, with a few exceptions, follow the same spelling scheme.

It is always good to use a dialect, which is less adulterated with the influence of other languages. The areas of Arunachal, which are close to the State of Assam, will have the influence of Assamese. Many original words are forgotten and are substituted with Assamese or Hindi words. Even the pronunciation pattern of people living in areas contiguous with Assam is different from that of the people of the upper regions. So, it is always good to use the language of the upper regions in writing, as they will have more sounds and more original words.

By following a steady format in the future writings, the tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh can definitely bring about abundance of literature and stand at par with any officially recognised language of India. For all practical purposes, dialectical differences need to be kept away in the written format in order to unify the written language. This will bring about great changes to the written language and literature.

### **Translation: An Enduring Effect on the Language and Culture**

Any translation in the unwritten tribal language is an effort on the part of the translator and his or her team to take the language to its written form. It is also an attempt at keeping alive the enduring images of tribal culture and worldview. Several expressions in the text will last as they have entered into the written form. They can be handed down to the future generations without losing any of their nuances at the time of transmission. Oral traditions are vague and, at times, lose their essence in the process of transmission to the next generation. By integrating many of the social, cultural, traditional, and anthropological aspects of tribal way of life in the written text, we can keep alive the language and cultural markers of the tribal traditions. So, this is a way of preserving the language and culture of the people as any book is a compendium of tribal words and phrases.

The fact that the translator has to dwell extensively upon the tribal culture is evident from the fact that he or she has to use many words and phrases that are very much part of the tribal religious and cultural expressions as there can never be a one-to-one exact translation. However, an equally careful analysis would show that a translation could be made identically appropriate in their content and meaning (Das, 2012). According to Dolet, a French humanist, “the translator must fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author, although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities” (as cited in Das, 2012, p. 38). Languages are

culture-specific (Thornborrow, 2005). Hence, it is not possible to re-create the same culture into a foreign language. A good translator can reproduce a “reflection” of the original. For this purpose, the translator should have a good understanding of the original text.

### **A Platform for Dialogue between Two Cultures**

Literature is the outcome of a specific culture. Culture is closely connected with the language. So, when we transfer one culture to another language, it creates various problems at different levels (Das, 2012). The environment in which every society lives may be different. The names of flora, fauna, geographical features, etc. may not find equivalent terms in the target language. Hence, they must be retained with proper explanations. The names of food-items, clothes, housing, transport, etc. also may not find exact equivalents. In the same way, social and cultural customs, ideas, relationships, etc. may not find verbal descriptions. Similarly, many non-verbal communications may not find proper equivalents in other languages. Nor can proper names and nicknames be translated. The problems of translations are greater when the cultures of the original text and target language are significantly different. Hence, certain expressions may look odd in the target language. But this is exactly the contribution of translation. It creates a platform for dialogue between two cultures. The readers of the target language can learn much from the source language and its culture.

### **New Social and Religious Ideas**

Translation of a text brings in many new social and religious ideas to the tribal way of thinking and living. The translation of the Bible and other Christian literature has brought in the Christian concepts of resurrection, after life in heaven, the idea of hell, the virgin birth, etc. into the tribal mind. Monotheism is

another big transition brought about by translation of Christian texts. Most of the tribal people believe in the existence of various spirits. Prayers and sacrifices are offered to appease the various spirits. Basically, many tribal religions do not have the concept of praying only to one God who is all-powerful but to numerous gods or spirits.

The reading of a text with such ideas will make the people question such words, phrases, and expressions and provoke them into discussing them. This will tickle their mind and intellect, and make them come in contact with such ideas, which are alien to the tribal way of thinking. However, introduction of such ideas may lead to conflict or integration with the native ideas and may have lasting impact on the society for better or worse, a discussion of which is not within the scope of this paper.

### **Community and Language Consciousness**

Writing a book in a language where nothing has been written contributes much by raising the community consciousness of the people. This is what is seen in the translation of religious texts like the Bible. Being the first of its kind in the religious literature, people accept the translation of Bible, prayer books, and hymnbooks whole-heartedly in almost all the churches. It has gone beyond dialectical differences.

As the people begin to read the text in the churches and in their homes, they realise the need to teach their children the basics of their language in a multilingual State such as Arunachal Pradesh. Educational institutions such as Ane Moriam School, Sangram in Kurung Kumey district, has introduced Nyishi language as a compulsory subject in lower classes (Lawrence, interview notes, August 4, 2015). Toku Tayu Stephen at the beginning of his book *Nyishi Grammatical Sketch and Dictionary* acknowledges the contribution of the translator of *Tugung Pui*,

the translation of the Gospels in Nyishi, and considers him one of his inspiration. He also mentions two of the other works of the translator of *Tugung Pui* (Stephen, 2010). All these show that the initial book, *Tugung Pui*, has made an impact on the people and have raised awareness about the need to write and to preserve the language.

### **Issues that Need Special Attention in the Textual Translations**

A good translation must produce the same or at least similar effects on the target readers as the original text. In the name of fidelity, a translator should not deprive the reader of enjoying the text. Translation is a creative art. A text is the fruit of the imagination of the writer in his or her thinking context. A translator has to be very creative as he or she is recreating the original context for a completely different set of people. There is nothing known as an absolute translation. So, there is always room for improvement for the translator. In this section, we shall deal with various issues that a translator needs to take care when translating a written work to a tribal language.

#### **Consistency in Spellings**

The consistency in the spelling scheme is a matter of concern while translating. The text should not have words having different spellings. When a word has a significant function in a given culture, it is difficult to translate. Sometimes, the use of some meaningless words also causes problems. The use of homonyms and polysemic words create a big problem for the translator. The same is the problem when he or she translates slangs, abstract terms, derogatory words, colloquial words, and words which carry extra sentiments and emotions. To find the absolute equivalent of such words in another language is almost an impossible task

(Müller, 2007). In such a situation, the translator should look for the feeling of the speaker along with the meaning of the word.

In tonal languages where the same words are used with different tones to express divergent meanings, it is good to use different spellings for the words. Once it is consistently placed, the reader will slowly come to know the meaning of the word with the spelling itself. Inconsistency in spelling schemes can create confusion in the minds of the reader. It may also, at times, change the meaning of the whole word or the sentence itself. So, it is safer that the same person does all the writing and typing of the text, or, in case others contribute to writing and/or typing, to do thorough proof reading of the matter with these precautions in mind.

### **Use of Different Words in the Target Language for a Word from the Source Language**

The translator has to be careful as not to use different words in the target language as he or she translates the same word from the source language. This could happen when one translates polysemic words from the source language. The context needs to be taken into consideration while translating. Sometimes, one may ignore the words with the intention that these words may not be necessary to render the content of the translating text. Robert Frost once said: “Poetry is that which is lost in translation” (Das, 2012, p. 46). It is comparatively easy to translate into one’s mother tongue from other languages; but it is more difficult to translate the story from mother tongue or from a language that one has learned in infancy to any other language that he or she has picked up later in life. The translator must have excellent command over both the languages. The translator must also get into the thinking of the author and be very careful while translating.



### **Use of the Same Word in the Target Language for Different Words from the Source Language**

The use of one word in the target language for two different words but having similar meanings could be another defect of the translation. It is not always easy to find appropriate words. The translator should consider the expressive possibilities of the target language and if not always possible to attain the exact equivalence, discover words in the target language that will convey the meanings close to the words in the source language.

For example, it is quite difficult to find separate words for “adultery” and “fornication” in many tribal languages. Adultery is the voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband (Wehmeier, 2000). Fornication is a consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other (Wehmeier, 2000). If there are no separate words in a tribal language for these two realities, the nuanced differences in meaning of these words are lost in the translation.

A translator usually acquires the role of a creator but cannot take the place of the author (Das, 2012). A translator is expected to be invisible and yet he or she needs to become creative. Certain specific expressions are culture-specific. Each language represents a separate reality. Genuine translation involves analysis of the meaning of the source text and the context in which it is written. Sometimes, the expressions of the deepest experiences of a person are also challenging to translate. To translate some of these and to get them integrated into a tribal language and culture of the people is not an easy task. In such a situation, the translator must have adequate knowledge of not only both the languages, but also of both cultures.

## **Errors in Translation of Words and Meanings**

A translator may use words that are close to the original in the text so that the intended meaning is retained but these words really do not convey the literal meaning of the source words. For example, wheat plant is not found in Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, the translator may use an equal substitute in the translation process. In order to make the concept simpler, the plant that could be used to substitute wheat is “paddy,” which is found in abundance in the region and is the staple food of the people.

Paddy is not wheat but both are cereals. There is a close proximity between the two as these are commonly used by people for food. It is interesting to note that the flora found in the Bible is not translated accurately in some English translations of the Bible, as they are not found in many other parts of the world. So, they have made the adjustments (Trever, 1959).

It would be better if the translator uses a word from other languages rather than replacing it with something that is not the exact and does not convey the full meaning of the word. Sometimes even the substitute may not really make much sense to the target group, as the context of the translated text is not familiar to them. Coining a new word, explaining the meaning of the original expression, preserving the original term intact with explanations, or using footnotes are the techniques that translators generally resort to.

Today, schools in Arunachal Pradesh are all English medium schools following the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) pattern of education. Hence, English and Hindi are taught at a very basic level in the schools. The generation using the textbooks in these languages will be proficient in them. Taking these aspects into consideration, the translator could use original words that are quite familiar to the educated youth.

### **Inconsistency in Change of Spelling of the Proper Names**

Proper names of the individuals and places are very specific. It is not easy to translate them. There are some translators who try to change the spellings of the proper names especially when they are written in the Roman script. They try to make them according to the newly formed alphabet. This could create problems to the young people, who learn these proper names spelt in English in their educational institutions. It also will create confusion in their minds, as these are newly formed words. Slowly this may lead to a kind of dislike to the language and translation. So, it would be better for the translator to keep the spelling of the proper names as written in the original text.

### **Proof Reading**

Translation is a tedious process. It is all the more difficult when it is done in the unwritten tribal languages that do not have enough words and phrases to explain the ideas that are contained in well-developed languages. The thoughts, feelings, and reflections of an author are “translated” in the book. A translator has to find appropriate equivalents for someone’s thought process. Once this tedious work is done, it is important to do a thorough proofreading by two or more individuals who are able to give constructive criticisms to the text. It will be better if the readers are from distant places and speak different dialects of the same language. It will not be a bad idea if the author can read the entire text to some individuals who are well versed in the language. Though time consuming, since people are not familiar with the written language, this way of proofreading will only enhance the translated text.

### **Conclusion**

Translation is not an ivory tower activity. It is the fruit of the interaction between the translator, the societies, the culture and

way of life of the communities (Simeoni, 2005). Translation plays major role in today's life in information technology, interaction, cultural and economic activities, and all other important aspects of a person's life as we are living in a global village (St-Pierre, 2005).

Preservation of indigenous languages is a must. Language development will help in improving the quality of education and overall growth of a tribe. Development of a language and especially a tribal language is an enormous task. It must begin from the basics such as formation of letters or characters, grammar formation, reaching a consensus within the community on the choice of common language, etc. One of the major problems that one finds in the development of a tribal language is the paucity of books and the scarcity of authors to write in the said language. As discussed above, translation is the best means available to solve this problem. Translations of various books from other comparatively developed languages into tribal languages can be a great help in the development of the tribal language. This is a tedious task and demands hard work and good understanding of tribal language and culture. Translation is an art that is learned and perfected through doing the work. The difficulties discussed above and the possible solutions given could be of help to the translators in translating text into tribal languages.

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## COMMUNITY IMAGE IN FOLKSONGS: A CASE STUDY OF THE APATANIS

Landi Pussang Tama<sup>1</sup> & Landi Pussang Monia<sup>2</sup>

Every folk community has a rich oral tradition that speaks volumes about their culture. Oral traditions such as folktales, folkdances, folksongs, legends, superstitions, proverbs, and myths reflect the collective community image through individual and group behaviour. Folksong is an important component of folklore which, when analysed, helps in understanding the lifestyle of a community. In other words, folksongs reflect community image and thereby explain the dynamic of the life of the people.

Folksong is considered an unrecorded tradition of a society, which maintains an informal social force regulating the social system. Folksongs, one of the important aspects of folklore, also show human relation with nature and human behaviour at different stages of life. Thus, folksongs help in understanding not only the socio-cultural and religious life of the community, but also human psychology and the adjustment of an individual to his or her culturally constituted world. Folksongs are generally defined as songs which exist in the repertory of a folk group. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, folksongs are “primitive spontaneous music.” However, this does not mean that folksongs were not composed in the bygone and olden days. The process of production, revision, improvement, and corruption of folksong is continual. A folksong is interwoven with the aspirations,

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ethos, and pathos of a primitive community. Folksongs generally reflect the social heritage, the environment, and the folk life in a particular territory (Punia, 1993). It is usually created for entertainment, enjoyment, or emotional outlet; and can be easily sung, understood, and learned by all the members of the folk group with no distinction of singer or listener. Folksong tradition is transmitted, circulated, and perpetuated spontaneously through oral tradition from person to person or from generation to generation. Folksongs play a significant role in fulfilling the ritual functions of various rites and ceremonies prevalent in the villages. It further serves the function of a communication for indigenous knowledge and belief (Punia, 1993).

The Apatanis, like any other tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh, have folksongs related to different occasions, which depict the community image in their cultural context. Arunachal Pradesh is a mountainous state in the Assam Himalayas, and covers an area of 83,743 sq.km. It is situated on the extreme north-eastern tip of the union of India in the Trans-Himalayan region, between the latitude 26°28'N and longitude 91°31'E, bounded by the famous Mac-Mohan line on the eastern border and inner line in the foothills region (Dubey, 1991). The length of the international boundary is 1,928km. The Republic of China is situated on its north, the state of Assam on its south, the Myanmar on the east, and the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan on the west.

Arunachal Pradesh has 22 districts, 38 sub-divisions, 149 circles, 17 towns, 61 blocks, and 3,482 villages. It accommodates a total population of 13, 83,727, out of which 7,13,912 are male and 6,69,815 are female (Census of India, 2011). The state, also known as the land of the rising sun, is the home to 25 indigenous tribes and more than 65 sub-tribes. The major tribes inhabiting the state are the *Wanchos*, *Noctes*, *Tangsas*, *Singphos*, *Khamtis*, *Mishmis*, (*Taraon*, *Kaman*, and *Idu*), *Adis*, *Membas*, *Khambas*,

*Apatanis, Nyishis, Galos, Nahs, Tagins, Akas, Buguns, Sajolangs (Mijis), Puroiks, Sherdukpens, and Monpas*, constituting 63.66% of the total population of the state (*Resarun, 1999*).

The Apatanis are considered among the most advanced of the Arunachal tribes, inhabiting Ziro valley in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. Lower Subansiri district lies approximately between 26°55' to 28°21'N latitude and 92°40' to 92°21'E longitude. It is bound by Kra Daadi district on the north, the state of Assam and Papum Pare district in the south-west, and Kamle district in the east. The Nyishis and the Apatanis are the two major tribes inhabiting the district. The economy of the Apatanis is agriculture based and they are well-known for their paddy-cum-pisciculture cultivation. Apart from rice, they produce maize, millet, fruits, and vegetables. Animal husbandry and handicraft making are the other areas in which they take interest as their additional sources of income. The festive seasons of the Apatanis start in January when *Murung*, the festival of prosperity, is celebrated. This is followed in March by *Myoko*, the festival of well-being and friendship. Each year in the month of July, the Apatanis get more vibrant with *Dree*, the festival of appeasing a number of spirits for good harvesting and agricultural cycle. Most of the Apatanis follow the *Donyi-Polo* faith - the worship of sun (*Ayo-danyi*) and the moon (*Atoh-piilo*). Their families are patriarchal in nature. Endogamy and exogamy are the traditional marriage rules.

Folksongs survive in a particular society as they fulfil certain social functions. Likewise, the folksongs of the Apatanis have their own specific role in understanding the community image and in contributing to the socio-cultural and historical aspects of the tribe.

With these concerns, this paper is an attempt to understand the Apatanis through their folksongs. Further, the attempt is also



directed towards documentation of the rich oral tradition of the Apatani people, a tradition that is on the verge of extinction due to the impact of modernization.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the present study are: (a) to document some selected folksongs of the Apatanis, (b) to understand the community image in folksongs, and (c) to discuss the socio-cultural life of the people through folksongs.

### **Method**

The present study is based on empirical data collected from the field, primarily through convenient ethnographic techniques. Primary data were collected from singers and performers applying direct interview method and participant observation. Data were collected from different performances for creating a written text of folksongs. Camera and tape recorder were also used as audio-visual tools. Secondary data were gathered from books, magazines, and journals. Library of Rajiv Gandhi University, State Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru State Museum, Itanagar, and District Library, Ziro were accessed to gather the secondary data. Folksongs were also collected from All India Radio (AIR), Ziro and Itanagar. Various kinds of folksongs collected were interpreted through informal interview with the help of some folksingers, elderly persons, and priests. The area of the study was Ziro Valley of Lower Subansiri district, the traditional locale of the Apatanis.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The present study focuses on community image reflected in selected folksongs of the Apatanis. The study of folksongs of any community is a very vast area, encompassing several categories, which has a vast scope of research. Though the present study of

community image in folksongs of the Apatanis is no doubt a new venture, it does not cover all types of folksongs. The excluded folksongs could be taken up in future studies.

### Oral Literature of the Apatanis: A Brief Survey

Oral literature is a broad term which includes ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, musical genres, folktales, creation tales, songs, myths, spells, legends, proverbs, riddles, tongue-twisters, word games, recitation, life histories, and historical narratives. Most simply, oral literature refers to any form of literature which is transmitted orally or delivered by words of mouth. The *Canadian Encyclopaedia* suggests that “the term oral literature is sometimes used interchangeably with folklore, though it usually has a broader focus.” The expression is self-contradictory: literature, strictly speaking, is that which is written down. However, the term here is used to emphasize the imaginative creativity and conventional structures that mark oral discourse too. Oral literature shares with written literature, the use of heightened language in various genres (narrative, lyric, epic, etc.), but it is set apart by being actualized only in performance and by the fact that the performer can (and sometimes is obliged to) improvise so that oral text constitutes an event (*World Oral Literature Project*, 2011).

The oral tradition of the Apatanis can be divided into two categories: *miji* and *migung*. The chief distinction is the performance: *miji* are recited in ritual performance, whereas *migung* are not. *Miji* are largely myths, including origin myths and stories about the mythic ancestor *Abo-Tani*, as well as healing chants. *Migung* includes stories of *Abo-Tani* (when told outside ritual contexts) as well as a few tales and stories on historical events such as the coming of the British, village raids, and migration (Blackburn, 2004). For instance, a tradition current among the Apatanis tells that their ancestors came from

a country of the north or north-east situated near the two rivers known as *Supupad-Pudpumi*. These names might refer to two tributaries of the Subansiri river.

The Apatanis agree, however, that at one stage of their migration, they crossed the Subansiri river from north to south and came to a place in *Sipi* valley called *Karr*, which lies beyond the *Pij Cholo*, a peak of 8,417 feet rising from the north bank of the Kamlariver, which is visible from the hills surrounding the Apatani valley. Though local traditions speak of the immigration of the tribe's ancestors from a northern direction, these memories can only be related to the last stages of population movement which might have changed its course more than once (Blackburn, 2004). In addition, however, there are more legends and myths that talk about the creation, migration, and the present day settlement of the Apatanis which further helps us understand their oral history.

Songs and dances go hand in hand. In other words, they are interdependent. Though there are songs which are sung in occasions minus the dance, yet most of the dances are always accompanied to have their own varied songs which are often associated with an occasion. These folksongs and dances mark mirth, happiness, and merry-making in the life of tribal people. However, there always lies an inner meaning in them which, when explored, properly gives an inside view into the life of the tribals.

Folksongs are generally defined as songs which exist in the repertory of a folk group. It is interwoven with the aspirations, ethos, and pathos of a primitive community. Folksong is a vital element of any living culture and is considered to be an unrecorded tradition of the society's system. Folksong, one of the important aspects of the folklore, also shows human's relation with nature and human behaviour at different stages.

Proverbs are regarded as quintessence of accumulated wisdom or experience of any civilized society. Proverbs and sayings of pre-literate societies are also considered to be social codes and conducts which are widely acknowledged by everyone and everywhere. According to the folklore of the Apatanis, classical proverbs originated from the time of *Kolyang Papi* and *Kolo Sarmin*, (literally, the pioneer wise men) who were born out of the golden wombs of the Goddesses -*Kami Pinii* and *Komo Siyo*. These proverbs have been orally handed down through many generations since then till today.

The oral literature of the Apatanis in a nutshell gives an overview of their cultural and traditional set up. With its varied genres, the indigenous folkculture and their social life are reflected in it.

### **Types of Folksongs**

Singing of any kind is universal in human society. It is a manifestation of finer aspects of human life. Often, poems and songs give a clearer insight into a person's soul than do the lengthy discussions. In the poetry of the unlettered and unsophisticated lie important clues to people's philosophy of life. Though folksongs are used mainly for the pleasure of singing or listening, they also act as a medium for the expression of ideas or emotions held in common by a group. A community, whether agricultural or otherwise, expresses itself passionately and imaginatively through its folksongs.

As a matter of fact, songs are of great importance and sung at the functionally important junctures of various rituals ranging from harvest festivals to marriages, births, and deaths; while in certain regions songs are used to infatuate and enrapture the hearts of lovers or to serve as a part of religious ceremonies and secular rites, or to depict past exploits of the heroes. In most

of the tribal groups, songs are used as recital of incantation to invoke blessings from the supernatural powers, or for magical effects to cure illness. Being present in all the human societies, music has unfolded in diverse forms. When language was not much developed in the earlier stages of human society, people relied upon vocal tunes to communicate with supernatural powers to supplicate for prosperity and protection from evils. With the gradual emergence of the trend of singing worded songs, this powerful medium became more effective, to exploit its non-ritualistic aspects and to express different human feelings, apart from its tantric use to obtain some tangible results.

This paper examines the vastness of folksong materials of the Apatanis. The songs are classified into different categories according to their functional value. Few of the folksongs catalogued under various genres are briefly analysed in the later part of the paper. Accordingly, the following classification is adopted:

## 1. Songs of Ceremonies

### *Mida Ayu (Song of Marriage)*

*Siinyang kii anyang so, Myodii kii bulying mi,  
Bulying miina pa yasi lyanka mi, lyanka jaka yali mi,  
Yali di kunang la, nyahii dodu dokula,  
Baro ngego dokula, hingku kii hiimii mi,  
Pyali di mitu so, hinku jaka hiinii mi,  
Yali di kutu so, hingku jaka lori ka lori di yari mi,  
Lyiku ka bugyang mi, bugyang mutu so,  
A-nku jaka a-li ka mutu so, kichi kii a-li ka,  
Jarku ka a-li ka, a-li jaka litu so,  
Hingku hardu lapang so, biinyi jaka hukung ja,  
Kungkung doku so, a-nku bugyang mi, lyiku di bugyang mi,  
Bugyang kii butu so, bugyang bulii talyi la.*

*Hingku lori yari mi a-li ka mutu so, bugyang di butu so,  
Lyiku jaka bugyang mi, bugyang bulii talyi ke.  
Aayo jaka danyi ka mabo di mutu so, danyi jaka yami mi  
Mabo di mutu so, mabo miilii talyi ke.  
Aato jaka pulo mi mabo mutu so, a-li miilii talyi ke,  
Mabo mutu so a-li kuku talyi ke.....  
(nyahii dodu liito ah, baro ngego talyi ke.)*

**Gist:** [The concept of marriage ceremony as how it all began and how important it is in the Apatani society is reflected in this song.] In this year, like the marriage of the *Myodi Bulying* to the God of the forest. And like the abundant fishes in the river, we, the brother and sisters-in-law will bring the kind of blessings and perform the rituals, like, as it was done for the first time by our ancestors with great pomp and gaiety. Like the first man and animal that came from a place called *Hiingku*, we shall be doing the marriage rituals in the same vein as it was done to *Lori-Yari*. Beginning with the ritual of *Lyinkubugyang* and *A-nkubugyang*, like it was done for the girl *Biinyi*, we shall contribute to you things for your new life as a married couple. Like the first marriage ceremony was done for the girl named *Yami*, to which gods *Danyiand Piilo* are the witnesses, we shall follow the rituals as it was done for her. And also in the way the girl *Tani-Hiimii* got married to the god *Aato-Mando* with lots of cattle, fowls, and food grains as dowry with her, you shall be given same kind of gifts. [Further it describes about other mythical brides followed by the blessings for the bride.]

## 2. Children Game Songs or Rhymes

The Apatani children's songs are few in number and usually they are in the form of short rhymes. As such, those songs may also be called rhymes apart from the game songs which might sound more appropriate. These rhymes are usually in the form of four to five line stanzas, which were used by children in the olden

days to entertain themselves and to merry with their friends. The interesting fact that characterizes such songs is that, most of them are sung for the sake of fun and mostly in groups, in the form of questions and answers, where a group poses a question and the others reply wittily. Unfortunately, such songs - which served as a means of passing time for the Apatani children - are long gone.

### Children's game-songs: A Compilation

*Lantii bating ting-ting*  
*Lalyang kobyang byang-byang*  
*Hari yachu chu-chu*  
*Bula yapyo pyo-pyo.*

*Anya- anya ha no talyi na?*  
*Taru narang ka riri rijang mi*  
*Khonte talyi cho*  
*Pulo nako ka hibiyo byojang mi*  
*Tarte talyi cho... (Katey talyi cho).*

**Gist:** [These rhymes were usually sung and played by young girls to pass away time]: The stairs in the field makes the sound ting-ting. The bangle of *Lalyang* makes the sound *byang-byang*. The bamboo-sachet of the Hari village makes the sound *chu-chu* and the winnowing cane of Bula village makes the sound *pyo-pyo*.

O Anya! O Anya! Where are you heading to? Me! I am going to Taru Narang to pluck the young leaves of the plant *Riri*. And, further going to *Pulo*, to pluck the bitter young roots of the plant *Hiibiyo*. [This is further followed by a small stanza which describes the admiration of various craftsmanship by the children at play.]

### 3. Dirge or Funeral Song

Being mortal is the difficult truth and universal reality which every living being on the earth has to accept. The mysteries behind

death remain unsolved. The cradle-to-grave concept holds true for all those who come into this world. Dirges are funeral songs which are filled with pain and sorrow over the death of a person. Every society has its own songs related to birth, and in the same vein, songs of death mark much poignancy or an atmosphere of sadness in the house of the death. Like the Hindu or the Christian belief that soul is immortal, the Apatanis believe in the same and the concepts of hell and heaven are very much present too.

The last rite attended by family members and relatives for the death is surrounded with good words for the departed. The priest chants the last incantations and the funeral songs are sung by a group of women who are specialised in such mourning. Unnatural deaths such as accidents necessitate a few changes in the lyrics though the overall theme remains the same. The concept of life after death is resounded in most of the funeral songs.

### **Dirge** (*Siimakhenii*)

*Nikun anii ka, tiirang dartu ho, tiirang darko ku,  
Niipa aba ka, liimang mantu ho, lima mando ku,  
Pinii siyo ka, doker tajin ka, ahin rupu pa,  
Tiirang dartu ho, darlyi byoke ah.  
Ngunu lonu kiiche chepa mabyo ke,  
Ngunu labang kiiche chepa mabyo ke,  
Ngunu nanu nunii nupa mabyo ke,  
Ngunu napin pyanii pyapa mabyo ke,  
Danyi pinii punii pupa siido nii,  
Piilo siyo lenii lempo siida nii,  
Danyi niirin rinii rindu danii mi,  
Piilo niyun yunii yundii danii mi,  
Ngunu miti mato chimpa mato cho,  
Ngunu mirin mato papa mato cho...  
(Danyi piilo no, lyampii chantu no.)*



**Gist:** [As the Dirge, here is that of an elderly person's death, the name of the death is taken in the beginning]. The person who died due to old age and who are not the first one to do so, it's the natural phenomenon which has taken its course. It is God who decides that person's life. Therefore, the death they have had is a natural one. We, the younger ones has no role in the death, neither we, the elder ones. We, the father and mother, have no role to take in the death because we are oblivious of the mystery death. It's only the gods *danyi* and *piilo* who are the supreme controllers of the world who know everything and are present everywhere. They, the omnipotent are the ones who decide your stay on the earth and we all do not have any say in it; further we will never be able to know the mystery behind death.

This funeral song is very long and is followed by the expression of journey of the deceased's soul to the place after death which includes the heaven and the hell. It also expresses the guidance of the journey of such soul by benevolent gods and goddesses who show the way to the new world. Apatani funeral songs also appeal that the deceased should not regret leaving this human world for it may have serious repercussions on the life of the living, as the dead will be remembering the living all the time. The song further prays to the supreme guide and protector by the relatives of the deceased so that they stay healthy and happy and strong and also that their soul would not be taken away by the deceased as the ones who are alive still do not belong to the world of the dead.

There are different kinds of funeral songs for different situations such as accidents, suicide, sickness, etc. Through these songs, there is a revelation of the glimpse of the folk psychology with its superb imagery and sensitiveness.

## Analysis of the Selected Folksongs

### ***Mida* Ayu or the Song of Marriage**

Marriage is one of the most important social activities in the Apatani society. *Mida* is one of the most important parts of marriage. Marriage ceremony is incomplete unless *Mida* ritual is performed. It is a non-seasonal socio-religious ceremony and is usually solemnized during the months from November to March. *Mida* is generally performed at the interest and convenience of both the parents of the bride and the groom. The basic intent of *Mida* is to invoke a healthy and prosperous life for the couple, with healthy children, and profuse wealth. Marriage songs reflect the whole practice in its lyrics and depict the various mythical brides to whom the ceremony of *Mida* is solemnized for the first time. The song describes the practice of the ceremony beginning with the marriage of the *Bulying* (the rat) to the god of forest with which the *Mida* ceremony begin. It also talks about the first *Mida* ceremony performed for the brides *Lori-Yari*, *Biinyi*, *Danyi-Yami*, and *Mando-Yalyo*. The marriage rituals performed on them begins with the offering of ceremonial gifts in the form of bacon, meat, and rice grains to the couple. Besides, the ornaments and dress - preserved by the bride's parents for their daughter - are also given to the couple. This very tradition, which is expressed in the form of song, reflects the assurance of the bride's parents, brothers, and relatives of all the requisite items for the ceremony. *Mida* is a traditional gift-exchange ceremony in response to the gifts given by the parents of the bridegroom. The gifts exchanged between the two parties are more or less equal in value. However, often the bride's parents and relatives spend a lot as the *Mida* ceremony is very expensive. In other words, *Mida* may be considered as a form of *dowry* in an indirect manner. It is believed that when *Mida* is performed smoothly and successfully, the prestige of both the parties in the society would increase.

As the song reflects many mythical places and names, the *Mida* ceremony is also attached to myths of its own. There are instances where a couple are unable to beget any child; the groom's parents may request the bride's parents to arrange a *Mida* ceremony. This is done with a hope that, as a result of the ceremony, the couple will be able to have children and lead a life of prosperity and happiness.

The societal images reflected in the song talks of the importance attached with marriage, where not only do the two people in the matrimony solemnize the ceremony, but the whole of the society rejoices with them and pledge their support. It is an occasion where the relatives show their solidarity and make their kinship relations better. Apart from *Mida* being a ceremony performed for the welfare and prosperous life of couples, it is a way through which the couple gets their social sanction as husband and wife. They also get recognized by relatives and friends and have necessary platform to make people aware of their existence in the society.

### **Game-Songs or Rhymes**

Game songs or rhymes basically talks about things which are very light in the nature. Such songs, having been created only for fun and enjoyment, do not have any particular purpose or meaning attached to it. It's only a way through which children find a way to be happy and make merry. Certain actions are also associated with such songs to make them lively and to bring the feel of a game into these songs. Given a closer look, those songs basically talk about feminine aspects of the Apatani culture: the names, articles, and actions are all feminine in nature. Thus, the songs give the singers, listeners, and the participants a way to escape from their daily busy life and to rejuvenate themselves and celebrate at least for some moments.

### **Dirge or Funeral Song**

Dirge of the Apatanis echoes the concept of life after death and the Land of Death (as observed by Verrier Elwin (1959, 1968, 1970) and Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1962, 1980)). The Apatani dirge starts with the naming of the dead person and then narrating the nature of death, for which none is to be blamed. It is the will of the almighty who had given one's life time till that day. Thus, the concept of life and death, being in the hands of the unknowable (God), is seen in the Apatani culture. The Apatanis' dirge tries to pacify the departed one but not to bother the living any more as the world they live now is a different one. The funeral singers guide the soul of the departed towards the new world so that it may not stray on its way and to prevent it from coming back to the world of the living.

### **Conclusion**

It can be summarized that, the folksongs of the Apatanis reflect the community image, leading to a better understanding of their culture and social set up. It plays an important role in describing the socio-cultural life of the people, their customs, habits, attitudes, and institutions. Folksongs are the medium through which the desires of the people can be communicated. The weaning of the cultural belief system, with the coming of new religions and the declining number of people practicing the tradition, has however, affected the socio-cultural realm of the Apatanis. There is a need to preserve this tradition at the earliest and with great sincerity. Being a vast area of study where no much research has been done, further systematic and rigorous research into this area is necessary.

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## BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN TRADITIONAL HUNTING AMONG THE *ADIS* OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Tanong Tapak<sup>1</sup>

Traditions are preserved and propagated through continuous practice. Most of the tribal communities preserve their socio-cultural traditions within the framework of their socio-economic activity. Hunting traditions of the *Adi* tribe of Arunachal Pradesh in India are one group of such traditional social practices, which are still being practiced with enthusiasm. The *Adi* myths, legends, and folktales reveal the significance of hunting and throw light on the strong belief system that points to a strong sense of community-ecology justice system among the people. According to the *Adi* mythology, the origin of paddy is attributed to hunting practices. Another myth tells that paddy was a gift offered by *Kine Nane* (the deity of prosperity) to the people of *Engo Takar* (the mythological society of *Adis*). Therefore, *Adi* myths cast light on the socio-economic condition of the early community as well as how hunting practices played a vital role in their society. For the *Adis*, hunting is not merely killing of animals for food; it is a social tradition where people assemble and celebrate together. It is a social activity that is handed down from generation to generation through continuous practice. Hunting festival provides a new consciousness among the individual and fosters group cohesiveness within the community. It preserves the cultural identity of the group intact. It also provides an opportunity to free oneself from tensions, a catharsis. Thus, hunting practices of the *Adis* is an integral part and parcel of their social life.

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The practice of hunting is a brave man's job, which is on par with his social dignity. In earlier days, expert hunters were a privileged class in the community and enjoyed special status. An expert hunter is known as *Migam*. Common people of the society have great fear for the gifted expert hunters because of the belief that the latter possess extraordinary powers to cause harm to anyone. The skulls of animals are kept in the hunters' house as trophies for his life time. After the death of an expert hunter, his graveyard would be decorated with such trophies in an artificially made platform. Hunting also provides thrill, adventure, entertainment, and chance to showcase one's bravery. Hunting is carried out with great honour and sincerity. In Adi society, hunting is socio-religious in nature. During the preparation of hunting weapons (such as bows, arrows, trapping devices, etc.), women and children refrain themselves from touching and crossing the weapons and other related materials. Passing of comments or mocking is strictly prohibited during the preparation and during their way to jungle. Visits by guests are considered bad omen during such times, though it is believed that if such visits appear in dream, hunters might expect a big game. In community hunting, people who see an inauspicious dream are not welcome to participate in the expedition. Likewise, a person who attended funeral rites or carried a dead body shall not join the hunting expedition. The use of abusive words, loud talking, and scolding are never encouraged during the hunting expedition.

The Adis, one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, are mainly concentrated in Siang, East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, and Lohit districts. They are divided into number of sub-groups such as *Padam*, *Minyong*, *Shimong*, *Pasi*, *Panggi*, *Ashing*, *Karko*, *Bori*, *Tangam*, and *Milang*. Of these, Minyong and Padam represent the largest sub-groups. The Adis claim themselves to be the descendants of *Abo Tani*

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(the legendary ancestor of Tani clans-Adi, Apatani, Nyishi, Galo, and Tagin). They are believed to have migrated from Tibet during seventh to ninth centuries CE (Danggen, 2007). Linguistically, they belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family, and ethnically to the mongoloid stock. They speak a language of Tibeto-Burman family, with minor dialectical variation of no great difference among various sub-groups. Like many of the mongoloid tribes, the Adis are optimistic and cheerful, strong in spirit, freedom loving, independent, and self-respecting and self-reliant, hospitable, energetic, and courageous. They are agriculturists, peace-loving, and God-fearing people (Nyori, 1993). The area in which Adis inhabit today is hilly and rugged, gifted with abundance of forest coverage, rivers, and natural springs with cascading waterfalls. For this reason, they have been struggling with nature for their survival, and out of these struggle emerged their way of life. The traditional practices and way of life of the Adis have gradually become intertwined with the nature. Natural resources such as trees, animals, rivers, lakes, springs, and streams serve not only as economic assets but also as embodiment of their beliefs and practices.

Hunting as an economic activity has been practiced by the people since ages. Hunting was one of the earliest occupations of the Adis, before taking up agriculture as their permanent means of livelihood. However, even with their settlement as an agricultural community, hunting still remains as a necessary component of their social life. With the passage of time and in the progress of domestication of animals, hunting gradually changed from a means of livelihood to a form of entertainment and pastime. This paper focuses on various fundamental questions related to ritual observances, practices of taboo on various occasions of hunting, human-nature relationship, concept of traditional conservation towards environment, and the changes being witnessed in traditional hunting practices of the Adis.



### **Significance & Objectives of the Study**

The present study is an attempt to understand the traditional hunting practices of the Adis. As the practice reflects not only economic objectives but is also characterized by diverse oral narratives, taboos, beliefs, and practices, the understanding of which becomes a vital necessity in order to realize the cultural essence of the people comprehensively. Hunting as an activity embodies a matrix of core cultural elements, the discontinuance of which may lead to a fractured culture for generations to come. The importance of traditional moral codes in guiding a community's contemporary hunting practices and the inseparability and interdependence of epistemological, practical, and ethical dimensions of traditional ecological knowledge are some of the important aspects of consideration in this regard.

The present study was designed in view of the following objectives: (a) to examine the various taboos and ritual practices associated with traditional hunting, (b) to explore the socio-cultural significance of traditional hunting of the Adis, and (c) to understand the changing trends of traditional hunting practices in Adi society.

### **Methodology**

The approach used in the study was essentially ethnographic in nature. Various anthropological methods and techniques were employed to collect data. Techniques such as participant observation and interview were used. The study was conducted in Riga village under Boleng circle in the Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. This village is considered to be one of the largest villages in the entire Siang district. It has the largest forest area coverage, of which 80% area, has been earmarked for hunting.

## Traditional Hunting Practices

The hunting practice owes its origin to the community of *Engo Takar*. The people are guided by strong moral and spiritual values during hunting. Those values further make up the community's worldview. The values manifested in traditional moral codes assist the people in their moral judgments about right and wrong and ceremonial practices in different occasions. Hunting and fishing as means of food are equivalent to the role of domestication of animals, gathering of wild fruits and roots in agriculture. Hunting is being practiced in many ways, such as, group hunting, community hunting, individual hunting, and hunting in order to eliminate vermin. As hunting is important for livelihood, the Adis start practising it from early childhood. The elders teach youngsters on the use of various weapons and traps, and the latter always are eager to accompany hunting parties whenever opportunities arise. The Adis use simple but effective weapons made out of materials available in nature. The most widely used implements are bow and arrow whereas *dao* (a sword-like instrument) is a tool as well as a weapon. Domesticated dogs are constant companions of the Adis in their hunting expedition. These hounds are called *Kimen*, the master of a hound is given a separate piece of meat of the hunted animal for its services. The methods and techniques, its types, season of expedition, people participation, area coverage, rituals and purpose are all different in various types of hunting practices. Broadly speaking, on the basis of people's participation, hunting practices of the Adis can be divided into three major types, namely, *Afbi-Gebi* (individual hunting), *Geta Bomta* (group hunting), and *Kiruk* (community hunting).

Normally, hunting is practiced during winter seasons, roughly starting from the month of November till the onset of spring. The nature and purpose of various types of hunting are different. In individual hunting, the hunter lay traps in the

forest and check them on a regular basis. He may also go for an animal such as deer, bear, or wild boar individually, after tracing their footprints. In group hunting, different types of traps and techniques are used for killing and trapping the animals. In community hunting, those practices are not allowed and people keep themselves under restriction. In community hunting, every household has the obligation to send at least one representative. Whereas group hunting is self-motivated expedition, the main purpose of community hunting is ritualistic social participation where all the hunting norms are performed. In individual and group hunting, norms, rituals, rites, and hunting taboos are voluntarily observed except when preparing the traps and snares. The animals killed in group hunting are only meant for the participants but in the community hunting the animals killed are shared by the entire villagers. Some of the popular methods and techniques of traditional hunting practices are:

1. *Kare tonam*: In this technique of hunting, a small platform is constructed on the tree or on the ground, where animals (especially deer) come to eat the fallen fruits. The hunter waits on the platform for the arrival of the animal. Here, the hunter should be attentive, alert, and careful because the animal may arrive at any time. Hunters also study the types of animals and guess the time of arrival of such animals. When the animal is spotted, they shoot and kill the animal.
2. *Burung yapnam*: In this technique, rats are caught by suffocating the rat-holes with fire smoke.
3. *Begong gonam*: Here, a group of people encircles monkeys and kills them.
4. *Pettang nyotnam*: Here, birds are killed with bows and arrows during night hours when they are asleep. For this purpose, people use lighted bamboo shaft.

5. *Dumpe penam*: This is another unique way of killing animals (usually deer). Sounds of animals are imitated by using leaves of plants or bamboo shafts to trap them.

These methods are simple and practical. It is also very effective for catching rodents and birds as well as big animals such as deers and monkeys. The techniques are used both by individual hunters as well as group hunters.

### **Rituals Associated with Hunting**

The hunting rituals of the people are closely associated with their traditional belief system deeply rooted in their culture since time immemorial. According to Schutz and Lavenda (2013),

Ritual is a repetitive social practice composed of a sequence of symbolic activities in the form of dances, songs, speeches, gestures or manipulation of object, adhering to a culturally defined ritual scheme, and closely connected to a specific set of ideas that are often encoded in myth. (p. 145)

Thus, a ritual is a series of social practices, which carry cultural characteristics and performed - with specific purposes either to propitiate or to give ablation - as a tradition to recall the past and to make its present. It has a sequential ordering of acts, utterances and events, or it is a series of action used in a religious or some other ceremony. The Adis of Arunachal Pradesh perform certain rites and restrictions, to which hunters adhere before going out for hunting expedition. Some of the important observations performed by the community are as follows:

- He or they should not meet or sleep with women in the previous night. On the other hand, having physical contact with women in dream is considered as a good omen.
- Before going out for hunting, if the hunter sees inauspicious dreams he must not participate in hunting. The Adis believe dreams as a reflection of the real life situation.

- Hunting weapons are always kept away from women and children. Besides, exchange of bad words, anger, and quarrel as well as indulgence in laughter and loud noise are highly restricted.
- Washing of cloth, grinding of grains, sewing and weaving of cloth by housewives and daughters during the time of hunting are prohibited.

The hunting rituals of Adis include acts of propitiation and adoration. There is a philosophy behind the offerings that are made to various malevolent and benevolent spirits. The Adis have many rites and rituals, which are being practiced in various occasions such as festivals, healing of ailments, natural calamities, child birth, seasonal changes, house construction, etc. Most of the hunting rituals are associated with community hunting. Group and individual hunting also have the obligation of perform rituals before or after hunting. Practicing rituals is considered an obligation towards the hunting spirits. The rituals associated with hunting are shown below:

*Table 1: Rituals Associated with Hunting*

1.	Before Hunting	<i>Emmo Monam, Ityit, Bomlik-Gatlik, Gadar Genam, Pobang Taknam, Mebuk Afnam, Hine Mone</i>
2.	During Hunting	<i>Kohon, Ityit, Togok</i>
3.	After Hunting	<i>Laklam, Bango Penam</i>

*Emo Monam* is associated with community hunting. It is led by two or more persons assigned by the village elders during *Emo-kebang* (meeting in the dormitory). The persons responsible for *Emo Monam* should be free from any kind of pollution. It is said, that a man whose wife is pregnant or in menstruation is never to be assigned for the purpose. Further, those who mingle

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with people involved in incestuous relationships and those who attended funeral rites are not invited for the purpose. On the appointed day, *Emo* (aconite) is made into a paste, mixed with local herbs, and smeared on their arrows with *Mane* (local plant). During this day a priest is invited to the dormitory for deciphering where to begin the hunting and foreseeing its success or failure. At the same time, the priest foretells and warns the hunters of all possible impending dangers.

In the ritual of *Ityit*, all participants assemble in the community hall and after discussing the hunting strategy, the rite is performed by an older member of *Merom*. This rite is done in order to ward off all the impurities among the participants, thus seeking for good omen for the day. It is done with incantation and all the participants are requested to walk out of the same door to proceed to the jungle.

The rites of *Bomlik Gatlik* and *Pobang Taknam* are performed in the *dumbang* (hunting camp). The camp is cleaned up and all the big trees are decorated with *po-bang* (shaven bamboo sticks woven crosswise). An artificial circular fence is prepared with bows and guns placed inside. Thereafter a fowl (red rooster) is sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the bows and guns. This rite is performed to shake off all impurities from the hunters and seek blessings from the hunting spirits.

*Hine Mone* rite is performed in order to propitiate the hunting spirits, god of the jungle as well as god of waters. Here rice, eggs, ginger paste, and *apong* (local drink) are offered to the deities with a hope of something in return, animals and fishes to the hunter. This rite is performed for both individual and community hunting.

In the rite of *Mebuk Afnam*, performed in the *dumbang*, a half burnt pressured bamboo is hung vertically above the ground where expert hunters show their skills through striking arrows

at the bamboo target. This shows the beginning of the hunting expedition.

After a full day hunting, if the *Merom* (hunting group) did not succeed in getting any game, *Gadar Gekunam* is performed. This is performed to please the hunting spirits and gods of forest. In this rite, another leader is assigned to lead the hunting. This is done due to the belief that the earlier leader might have had bad fortune, and replacing him with a new one would effect a better outcome.

*Kohon* is performed either on the way as the hunting expedition continues, or in the deep jungle where hunting is finally carried out. An egg or a fowl is sacrificed in order to propitiate the hunting spirits. This is done after successive failures of hunting by the *merom* (hunting groups).

*Laklam panam* is performed in the outskirts of the village by the hunter who begs for big game during the hunting expedition. Six small posts are erected up to a height of 10-15 cm and in between the posts, the foot marks of animals are smeared on ground in different directions. Then ginger is placed and arrow is shot at the post. This is done with a belief that the spirits of the killed animals which are believed to follow the hunter and his party would be puzzled at this point to find the right way and direction in which party would proceed.

The rite of *Bango Penam* takes place inside a community hall or a hunters' house. This is done in order to propitiate the spirits of the animals. The *Bango Penam* is incanted and propitiated differently for different animals. As such, the *Bango* for tiger will be different from that of deer or other animals.

## Taboos Associated with Hunting

### Killing of Tiger and Related Taboos

Adi folks say that the soul of a tiger is equal to the soul of a human being. The Adis believe that a priest manifests himself as tiger in one's dream. It is also believed that if a person kills a tiger, he will become poor or his animals will die off. However, when a tiger mauls cattle or tries to sneak into the village, people do not hesitate to kill them. Accidentally or under compulsion a person kills a tiger, he must perform a ritual to propitiate the animal's spirit and ask forgiveness. He also sacrifices a pig in the dormitory and performs a dance popularly known as *Tapu* in defence against the animal spirit. Besides, he is prohibited from eating chillies, corn, fruits, etc. He is not allowed to visit his house and stay in the dormitory for 10-15 days, during which he will have to live by himself. The villagers will contribute rice and other foodstuff during his whole stay in the dormitory. Thus, taboos are strictly observed after killing of tiger in order to avoid any unseen and unwelcome consequences.

### Accident and Taboo

During the hunting expedition, if a dog or a *mithun* (*Bos frontalis*) or a man is injured or killed accidentally, the *Meroms* call off the expedition. The accused person is debarred from entering the village. He is to stay in the forest at least for a fortnight or a month. Everybody in the village avoids him and his family. The food is supplied by his family members, but the suppliers do not meet him personally or talk to him. Rather, they keep the food at a point or station agreed upon in advance. Besides, during the hunting expedition, if an animal mauls a person, that person is immediately given first aid (whatever available) and brought back to the village. In such cases, women play a leading role. On reaching the house, the victim is covered with *Gape*



*Gaseng* (traditional skirt) and guarded with a *Sumpa* (a sharp-edged weaving material). It is believed that if any wounded parts are not covered with skirts, the hair of the animal would often be found, which would indicate that the victim is in grave danger.

### Oral Narratives on Hunting

Oral narratives in hunting are not uncommon. Since, from the day of pasting and smearing of arrows to rituals after a big game, narration and invocation are performed at every step. In community hunting before leaving for jungle, a ritual of invocation is performed at the entrance of dormitory to ward off all evil spirits. On reaching the hunting station, the resting place is cleared up and all big trees are propitiated. Amongst the team, the oldest member called as *Merom Mijing* performs the ritual. One of the informants narrates:

*Hiiging tuhin e migmi lema eka, mongko rodok e apuk rangka mapeka, highi tuhin e tuhin liyir em giyir dakku, mongko rodong e rodong litam em gita dakkku, gite papum em pubi layi kone pao em pubi layi ka.* (We, the owners of the jungle, have come; do not play tricks upon us. We are stepping upon the untouched stones and un-cleared forests, do not let bad omen fall upon us and drive all the animals towards us.)

While performing the narration, he follows some sequential activities. First, by throwing one *Tapi* (a variety of reed, used in the expedition) forward, which is meant for the *Gamyng uyu* (hunting spirits) and then, backwards, to chase away the bad luck towards the village. After this, the remaining *Tapis* are used to form a gate-like structure through which all the participants move out for the hunting expedition.

Hunting is carried out by the able bodied members including young boys with dogs while those who are unable to accompany the hunting stay back in the *dumbang*. Older men called *Dumbang*

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*Mijing* or Merom *Mijing* do the maintenance of the *dumbang* and offer propitiation known as *Hine-mone* in the *dumbang*. This is done by offering millet beer, ginger, and rice to the guardian of the sacred grooves. As a well-wisher, and for the safety of the hunting troops, he will narrate:

*Nyobo ke anne agi bulum, pangkong ke abu e olo bulum, gite hipu em korlen dakem, konne bokdo em duklen dakem gite hipu em ara momai ka.....gamyng gamyng hilo kem ara momai ka.*" (The son of *Nyobo* [Riga], the son of *Merom* [hunting groups] has walked out to hunt in your forest, do not let them come back empty handed, guide them to find out the game in your jungle.)

When an individual kills a wild dog that has eaten his mithun, he restrains himself from carrying the dead body of the dog to the village. Instead, it is hung high on a pillar constructed for such purpose and he informs the villagers about his success in hunting. In the same evening, he performs the rites by sacrificing a red rooster and cutting three steps on the *Tapi* brought by him followed by offering millet beer and ginger paste in the alter of his dormitory. Here the hunter narrates

*Ngok doying gattung em kerbe nam legape pe, nom ngo uma dar em rayan hitung ku, dellok rong em nokom agi yeter pe yesi lankuka*" (your action has been avenged by me, it would not have happened if you had restrained yourself from killing my sacred animal, from now onwards choose your own way of life, so shall I do.)

The *Bango Penam* is incanted and propitiated differently for different animals; for example, the *Bango* for Tiger will be different from that of Deer.

## **Bango for Tiger**

*Lemuk nite, taya migom e...  
Lemuk nite no ngom ebur jebur em burbom mapeka,  
Taya migom no ngom ekar jeyar em karbom mapeka,  
Ngo milo mibo la lemuk kibo em kile bisi manam komoko,  
Nymne mibo la paro relax em paksi manam komoko,  
Ngom tapum nyeneah me gyatung pitgo em indi pulung moma milo,  
Tayop neneah me gomong datko iner golo moma milo,  
Ngo myiboh kile em bisi maye paro relax em paksi maye...  
Nyobo gumin e humi gumin e pangkong hoyin e ,  
Abu hoyin e kebang em babom dula mibo kile em binam komoko,  
Paro relax em paknam komoko,  
Lehi rumne muhum titi em geke mapeka,  
Tyaya yorne Ara monyo em Oka mapeka,  
Nyobo gumin odung kilung em kibi dakku namoko,  
Magu holong em hobi dakku namoko,  
Nune ebang em pabang bidak kunamoko,  
Oaken ebang em pabang bidak kunamoko...*

[Translation:

*Oh, the Lord of the malevolent, the King of destruction  
Do not curse me for my job  
I never had the intention of killing your pets nor did I initiate  
the killing.  
Had they not attacked my animal and killed them the result  
would have been different.  
The decision had been passed by the people's council on whose  
counsel I act.  
Don't ever try to harm or curse me for I am at the service of my  
Humbung Hiram (people of Riga) to save our domestic animals  
Here, I offer you meat and wine, enjoy them and go back to your  
home; lead your own way of life without harming our animals.  
The ladder for your journey has been laid for you.]*

## **Bango for Deer**

Here, the hunter is calling back the lost hunting spirits of his family, clan, and the village.

*Nyobo ke betung e ketung elo,  
Yayi ke godum nunyu lo,  
Mamo ke gokong e nonyo lo,  
Pado e neri e retit tumelo,  
Nyobo ke param ramyi e rammang elo,  
Pado e neri e retit tumelo,  
Eyieh hongko lo homing eke milo,  
Ome yingko lo yimin geke milo,  
Narmi e leti holo babi langku yeka,  
Nalong e lakpong holo yegap langku ka,  
Nok mime em kom, ome em kom aoh em kom ngok ekum  
holohabo langkui ka,  
Oding e leying e yebi tunamoko,  
Makang e lepong e pobi tunamoko,  
Kekong e nami e bobi nakomoko...*

[Translation:

*If you have gone to the place where father was buried  
If you have gone to the place where mother was buried  
If you were blown away by the wind and covered  
under the bamboo leaves  
Come back to me along with your wife, sons, and daughters  
Here I have prepared ginger paste and apong for you.  
Come back and enjoy the special food offered to you.]*

The philosophy behind hunting rituals is to recall the past and to make it present by means of dramatic representation. During the rituals, offering is made to various deities and spirits. For example, *Gumin Soyin* (protector and guardian of Adi house) and *Gamyng uyu* (hunting spirits) are propitiated before leaving for expedition; and *Sikom Tanom*, *Hikimoyi*, and *Asi among* spirits

are propitiated at the jungle; and the spirits of killed animals of high mountains are propitiated in the outskirts of the village, dormitory, or at the hunter's house. Thus, rituals associated with traditional hunting practices are the continuation of tradition of the ancient past. Rituals performed during the course of hunting cast light on the various socio-religious and economic aspects of the people.

### **Hunting and Its Implications**

Hunting is a traditional practice with various social obligations on the one hand and negative cultural and environment implications on the other. For the Adis, hunting is a serious social activity that has been handed down to generations through continuous practice. Therefore, a close examination is essential to unearth the socio-economic and environmental impact of hunting. Environment and society are closely related and interdependent. The various socio-economic activities that evolved during various stages of development of human society are based on nature and environment. The natural abode consisting of hills, forests, rivers, fresh air, and soil on the one hand, and traditional way of living, economy, rites, rituals, dance, music, traditional beliefs, and practices of healthcare on the other, manifest the biotic relationship between environment and society. The celebrations of various festivals, ritual performances, folklores, and belief systems are the manifestation of culture in people's day-to-day life. The Adis consider nature to be secret and mysterious. The violation of mutual relationship and co-existence with nature has never been approved by them. However, with the gradual increase of population and its ever increasing socio-economic requirements, the Adis have started disobeying the interrelationship of society and environment. In recent times, the increasing socio-economic activities such as agriculture (shifting cultivation), hunting and fishing, excessive lumbering and collection of raw materials for

house construction and similar infractions are posing threat to the environment.

The Adis believe in many malevolent and benevolent spirits. They attribute every good deed to the benevolent whereas every disease and suffering is caused by the malevolent spirits. For the Adis, there are two ways to get rid of such sufferings. One is through propitiation to the spirits causing the suffering and the other is to drive it away by hunting (*Killi Menam* - performed to drive out epidemics). Another form of hunting which is known as *Eruk Erak Kiiruk* is carried out to drive out the spirits that cause damage to crops leading to decay and infertility of the soil. The various rituals and hunting practices and related belief system can never be overlooked. Studies on socio-economic significance of hunting reveal that trading of various animal parts by the Adis with their neighbouring villages is not a new concept. The Adis use to exchange the various parts of animals such as bone and skin of deer, tiger, bear, etc., for salt to *Bori* people. This barter system of exchange of salt and animal bones and skin was once quite popular among the people. In recent times, those who require fresh meat either engaged an expert hunter by providing cartridges or purchase it from the hunter by cash payment. Rituals associated with house construction, marriages, and festivals (*unying/Aran*) require huge quantity of meat. This requirement could not be met with sacrificing domesticated animals alone. Thus, hunting became the only means through which enough meat is procured. Some parts of animals such as bile of bear are used as folk medicines for curing stomach problems such as diarrhoea and dysentery. Skins of animals such as bear, deer, and tiger are used in decoration of costumes such as bags and head gear. Bones are used in massaging and joining of fractures bones. The teeth of tiger are of high social value as it is believed that the malevolent spirits are afraid of such teeth.

Traditional hunting practices had hardly any impact on the environment in the past because of limited number of people with limited requirements. Moreover, the weapons used by the hunter were traditional bows and arrows and other devices that were made of locally available materials such a bamboo, cane, etc. But with the march of time, the nature and purpose of hunting have been changed from traditional social practice to an individualistic, commercially oriented activity and sports for entertainment, where traditional norms are frequently violated. These changes have accelerated the range and pace of killing. The use of modern sophisticated weapons has reduced the quantity of wildlife available. The use of cables and nylons in trapping devices has also led to the increase in trapping and killing larger number of wildlife species. The number of wild animals is depleting along with depleting of forest cover. The areas which were under forest cover are gradually brought under cultivation. With increase in population, areas which were left untouched by the forefathers have become orchards, farms, and bamboo gardens. These changes largely affect the habitat of wild animals that are forced to migrate elsewhere. There are several other natural causes that led to depletion of wild life but hunting has accelerated the pace of depletion and extinction.

### **Conclusion**

The traditional practices of the Adis are undergoing a gradual change. The socio-cultural institutions, social practices, and traditional artefacts and symbols which constitute the heritage of the people change with time and space. The celebration of festivals and ritual performances were obligatory on the part of each household wherein people assembled together for celebration. Interpersonal relations were maintained and group solidarity was reinforced. But the celebration of festivals, rituals, observance of taboos, and similar social practices are considered expensive in the

present. Today, people hardly practice their traditional faith and beliefs. The hunting festivals were once celebrated with sincerity and seriousness. The main purpose of hunting was to gather fresh meat for social participation. Small-sized animals were given to elderly people and non-participating older men and widows were also given a proportionate share. But this has changed in recent times. The meat is now only consumed by the participants. Hunting festival itself is now losing its significance. People are more inclined towards individual and small-group hunting. The traditional bows and arrows as well as other indigenous trapping devices which are efficient and eco-friendly are no more preferred. Today, the devices used are mostly destructive and eco-unfriendly in nature. Earlier hunting grounds were clearly demarcated and the expeditions were carried out seasonally for a limited period in a year. So, the natural cycle of recuperation and regeneration of wild life was not disturbed. However, with exposure to the outsiders, the method and purpose of the old age practices have suffered. This change has been affecting the rich biodiversity and ecology on the one hand, and on the other, the engineering skills of preparation of various traps of the society are gradually fading away. Today individualist man considers community hunting as an uneconomic and meaningless exercise and wastage of time. Despite its various socio-cultural implications, people consider this form of hunting as unproductive. Moreover, hunters are now inclined towards individual hunting for his personal benefits. This declining interest directly affects other social functions of the people. The use of gun is common among the youth and it has become popular in the society that nobody wants to carry out expedition without possessing a gun. Hunting is now days carried out for commercial purposes. The marketing scope of wild meat has encouraged individual hunters in large numbers. It has also affected the actual purpose of hunting and led to wild



life depletion. The freedom of hunting in the forest with guns and other modern sophisticated weapons provides scope for commercial hunting. The practice of commercial hunting which is taking momentum in the area should be checked at the earliest. Though people are now aware of prohibition promulgated by the village committee, they still carry out illegal hunting secretly and get away with it.

These changes have affected the natural cycle of recuperation and the purpose of hunting practices among people. However, a complete ban of this traditional practice would not be acceptable to this tradition-bound society. Hence, steps should be undertaken which are ecologically sound, economically feasible, and culturally acceptable. The first step should be encouragement of indigenous system for the conservation of wildlife. For example, the prohibition for the collection of forest products including felling of trees from *Notti*, *Dumbang*, and *Monying* should be in place. The belief systems associated with hunting such as killing of tigers that involve a strict taboo should be preserved. The prohibition of eating several wild meats such as crow, tiger, fox, eagle, sparrow, etc. needs to be preserved. The village council should take necessary steps to check this trend. The village council should frame a law to prohibit the collection of any forest product from the hunting areas. Besides, the observance of taboos that directly or indirectly help conservation of animals should be encouraged. For example, people who attended funeral rites do not participate in the hunting expedition. The conservation of wildlife through various Wildlife Protection Acts such as the National Forest Policy, that provide special legal protections should be enacted and implemented to safeguard the wildlife by taking due consideration of the needs and dynamics of the local community. There needs to be a more nuanced education and awareness among the people and the civil authorities as to how

*Tanong Tapak*

to preserve traditional practices will factoring in the needs and demands of changing space and time.

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## TRADITIONAL VILLAGE COUNCILS OF THE TANGSA COMMUNITY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MOSSANG SUB-TRIBE

Neelam Rupa<sup>1</sup> & Samsom Mossang<sup>2</sup>

Human being is a social animal and the sooner one understands this, the better one will be able to live with others in community. A community, though formed on the basis of mutual interests, tends to experience disputes; and it becomes important to address such issues responsibly and have a smooth functioning of the community. Hence, since antiquity, the role of a village council or a similar mechanism at the level of the village has been imperative for the survival and functioning of a village.

The tribal organisation of justice reflects the existing traditional codes of a tribal community. In fact, the indigenous tribal legal system is based on the customary laws and usages of the tribal society. However, the concept of law in its legalistic form was completely unknown to such societies in the past.

Hartland (1924) observed that “primitive law is in truth the totality of custom of tribes” (p. 5). Arunachal Pradesh, “the land of rising sun,” is located in the north-easternmost part of India. Arunachal Pradesh is the homeland of many tribals and has a population of 13,83,727 (Census of India, 2011). Under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, there are 26 communities listed as Scheduled Tribes (ST) in this part of the country. The

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Mossang is one of the sub-tribes of the Tangsa community. There is much literature on almost all the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh; however, very little research has been done on the Tangsas, especially the Mossangs. This study on the village council of the Tangsas in general and of the Mossangs in particular has been taken up to redress this paucity to certain extent as well as to encourage more research into their tribal, social life. This paper briefly describes the traditional village council system of the Tangsas of Changlang district, with special reference to the Mossangs of Nampong village.

### **Objectives & Method**

The present study on traditional village council of the Tangsa Community, with special reference to the Mossangs, is done in view of the following objectives: (a) To explore the system of self-governance through the traditional village council of the Mossang community of Changlang district, and (b) To explore and document the concept of self-governing system among the Mossangs.

The present study is exclusively based on field study. Knowledgeable persons (key informants) of the tribe were interviewed and the information so gathered is analysed. Hence, the source of data is primary, using personal interview method. The study was carried out in Nampong village of Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **The Tangsas**

Sharma (2010) states that “the tribal people in India are associated with respective territories. They manage all their affairs as members of a virtual ‘village Republic’ in accordance with their customs and traditions” (p. 13). The Tangsas, one of the major tribes, inhabit the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh along the Indo-Burmese border and parts of Tinsukia

District of Assam, in north-east India. Literally, the meaning of the word Tangsa is “children of the hill.” *tang* meaning “hill” and *sa* meaning “children.” They are concentrated mainly in the valleys of the Tirap and Namchik rivers, extending from the Patkai range in the south to the border of Assam in the north.

The total population of Tangsas, according to the 2011 census, is 1,47,961. The Tangsa community consists of mainly four sub-tribes: *Lungchangs*, *Mukloms*, *Tikhaks*, and *Pansas*. The *Pansas* are further divided into *Mossangs*, *Kimsings*, *Juglis / Yuglis*, *Rongrang*s, and a few others, according to their dialectical variations and social customs. Each sub-tribe has a number of exogamous clans. They follow patriarchal system of society and live in joint families. “The Tangsa tribe used to have a limited Chieftaincy system of Village Council. The head of the Council is selected from a particular class after taking into consideration his wealth and intelligence” (Swain, 2006, p. 36).

The Mossangs constitute the highest among the Tangsas in terms of numbers (about 40% of the total Tangsa population) and are distributed all over Changlang district.

### **Kha-Pho-Rung: The Traditional Village Council System**

There is no known date of origin for the Mossang village council *Kha-pho-rung*. *Kha* means “case,” *pho* means “decision,” and *rung* means “assembly.” The Mossangs do not have any idea as to how and when the village council originated nor do they have any myth relating to its origin. However, it is believed that *Kha-pho-rung* came into existence with the beginning of society.

### **Structure of the *Kha-pho-rung***

The Mossang *Kha-pho-rung*, the council of elders, consists of a leader known as *Ngowa* and a few members known as *Tetwas* or *Phongwas* chosen by the villagers. The leader is selected from

a particular clan, consideration being given to his wealth and intelligence, while the members represent various clans. Another particular trait that is taken into consideration while choosing them is that the leader and the members should have good oratory skills. The *Kha-pho-rung* is very powerful and the verdict of the *Ngowa* is considered to be final.

There is no educational bar for selection of the council members but sex, status, and experience in social affairs as well as knowledge in the traditional custom are the main criteria to become a member of the village council.

The *Kha-pho-rung* assembles at the house of the *Ngowa*, as there is no particular place for designated this purpose. The place for such sitting is called *Rung*. The *Kha-pho-rung* adjudicates all disputes and ensure the maintenance of law and order in the village as per traditional customary rules.

### **Jurisdiction**

The jurisdiction of the village council is confined to the village. Generally, one particular village council cannot go to settle disputes of other villages unless the same is initiated by the host council to settle their disputes. In case of inter-village dispute, the village councils of both the villages will get together jointly in a convenient place to settle the dispute. They also invite council members from the nearby villages as mediators to settle the dispute. Inter-tribal disputes are settled mutually between the two tribes through mediators of both the tribes.

There is no fixed time or session for holding a village council. The village council sits as and when required. And the council's decision on any dispute or crime is considered significant, final, and respected by all. Thus, the council of the *Tangsas* is democratic in nature.

### Cases under Kha-Pho-Rung

*Agau-kha* (Theft), *Krey* (non-payment of bride-price), *Gha-rei-kha* (encroachment on others land), *Mik-tai-kha* (murder), and *Aa-kacham* (seduction) are some of the offences tried by the council. The offences were also given terms according to the seriousness of the crimes. *Mra* is the term for less offensive ones and *kha* is for the serious ones. Disputes arising out of the *Krey* (bride-price) continue for generations. A dispute could be *ke-mra / ke-kha* (intra-village) or *ke-nei-ke-mra / ke-nei-ke-kha* (inter-village). Intra-village disputes are settled by the council of elders of the particular village, whereas inter-village disputes lead to frequent raids and head hunting. In order to prevent such a situation, the *Kha-pho-rung* of both the villages hold a joint *rung* to reach an amicable position.

### Penalties for Certain Cases

In case of *Agau-kha* (theft), generally *Achang* (fine) is not imposed but the *Agau* (thief) has to return the stolen articles or items to the owner. However, *Achang* of cash is sometimes imposed. An *Agau* is seen more of as a stupid person than a criminal by the Mossangs.

In case of *Aa-kacham* (seduction) of a married woman, *Achang* is imposed both in cash and kind. The accused is to give a buffalo to the *Kha-pho-rung*. No fine is imposed upon the woman, but if the husband wishes, he has the liberty to leave her.

In case of seduction of an unmarried girl, and if a girl becomes pregnant, the accused is to marry the girl. In case of denial of his crime and refusal to marry the girl, then the accused has to pay *Achang* in cash to the girl's parents. In case of elopement, the boy has to give a cow and a buffalo to the girl's parents or their equivalent in cash.

In case of *Gah-rei-kha* (encroachment of others' property), the *Ngowa* and the *Tetwas* or *Phongwas*, visit and examine the disputed land. Demarcation of the land with stones or by planting trees to mark the border is done later. The encroacher gives an *Achang* of one pig. In case of dispute over property among brothers, the *kha-pho-rung* decides the share but usually the eldest brother gets the biggest share.

Mossangs consider *Mik-tai-kha* (murder) to be a serious crime. The murderer has to pay a heavy *Achang* to the victim's family. The murderer along with his entire family has to leave the village in order to escape revenge. In case of accidental murder, like hunting accident, the man has to inform the *Ngowa* and leave the village. The murderer's family has to give two cows to the victim's family. This is the beginning of negotiation which prevents retaliation. A week after, two buffaloes and two bronze plates should be given as a compensation for the *head* of the murdered person, two *dao* (swords) for *hands*, 1,000 rupees for the *heart*, one long chain of beads hanging down to the navel for *intestines* and two spears for the *legs*. All compensatory items are to be sent through the older relatives of the family of the murderer. The murdered family should never visit the murderer's family. Similarly, the murderer's family cannot go to their original village where the incident took place.

A person who cannot pay *Achang* is kept as a *Winsa* (servant) of the village. The *Ngowa* engages such person as his personal *Winsa* on payment of the fine. Sometimes, such offenders are made *Winsa* of the person against whom the offence is committed. A *Winsa* can marry and settle in that village, but in this case, the head of the family remained a *Winsa* for the rest of his life. If a daughter is born to the *Winsa*, *Krey* obtained at the time of marriage of the daughter would belong to the master.



After a case is settled and accepted by both the parties, *Khatong* (sitting fee) is paid to the *Kha-pho-rung*.

### **Scheme of Punishment**

Corporal punishment is not imposed by the *Kha-pho-rung*. *Achang*, in cash or kind or both, is the only punishment imposed on an offender and it varies according to the seriousness of the offence. The verdict is given in presence of all and the *Achang* is imposed. If a guilty person is unable to pay, the *Achang* is kept in the custody of the *Ngowa*. He or she is also taken out on bail by his or her friends and relatives on assurance of the payment of the *Achang* within a stipulated period fixed by the council.

### **Role of Oath (*Aa-Katam*) and Ordeals (*Katam-Katong*)**

In case the *Kha-pho-rung* is unable to give the verdict, then the accused and the petitioner in question are to take *Aa-katam* (Oath) in the name of the spirits or deities, who they believe to be the witnesses of the crime. It is believed that, if the person lies under the oath, then he or she will meet with an unforeseen danger or if the person is being truthful, no harm would come to him or her.

The Mossangs also practise the act of *Katam-katong* (ordeals) to be faced by the accused in question. It is taken as the last option to deal with a tricky case when the *Kha-pho-rung* is unable to give a verdict. The accused is asked to touch fire, earth, red hot burning charcoal, fang of a tiger, a stone of thunderbolt, or drink the blood of a black hen or rooster. It is believed that an offender will die shortly due to accidents caused by the thing they touch. The idea is to instil fear of death in the mind of the offender and in order to avoid death (would accept their crime and punishment).

### **Women and Council**

Women are considered the other half of humankind. However, all the members of the village council are male. Women cannot be a member of the council because of the belief that they cannot take the position of men in decision making. Women are, however, busy with their household chores and cannot spare time for outside world. Therefore, the womenfolk do not have the privilege to take part in the process of decision making. They may witness the council session if necessary or if they involve in the case.

### **Council vs. Panchayat Raj**

The traditional village council among the Mossangs continues to regulate the social, cultural, and legal affairs of the village. However, in certain cases, this traditional tribal judicial system fails to satisfactorily address certain serious crimes, particularly death. As a result, it ultimately necessitates the intervention of modern system of justice as a last resort. In line with this, the government promulgated the Regulation of 1947 to bring uniformity in the system of justice.

For smooth functioning of the democratic and self-governing tribal institutions, the Panchayat Raj system of local self-government has been introduced under regulation 3 of NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967. The regulation envisages for every district a three-tier system self-governing bodies, namely *Gram Panchayat* at the village level, *Anchal Samiti* at the block level and *Zilla Parishad* at the district level. Swain (2006) observed that “the Panchayat Raj System functions as the rural local government in India, ensuring grass-roots democracy and decentralized planning. It develops power to the villages and thereby linking the people from village to the state” (p. 36). The self-governing bodies have been accordingly empowered to plan

and accomplish small developmental plans and to implement various welfare schemes.

This system also includes women for participation in decision making of the village and after the enactment of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Act 1997, one-third seats at different levels of Panchayat bodies are reserved for women. This led to the revolutionary change in the pattern of leadership.

### **Recent Changes**

The role of traditional village council among the Tangsas in general and the Mossangs in particular has not undergone major changes in terms of its constitution and functioning. However, under the influence of the new forms of administration, minor changes have taken place in the last few years. After the introduction of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation Act of 1945, the power for settlement of case by the traditional village council such as murder has been restricted. The council is, however, empowered for trial of cases such as theft, simple hurts, house trespass, assault, encroachment of land, dispute over land and property, non-payment of bride price, deduction of girl, elopement, adultery, divorce, and similar disputes.

Despite of its importance as well as limitations, at present, people are privileged to approach before the court of law for settlement of cases when the same is not satisfactorily settled through the village council.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the assessment of the nature and current functioning of the traditional village council, as a concluding observation, we propose the following suggestions for its effective functioning:

- The traditional village council of the Mossangs is found to be an informal institution; this system could be made

more formal and structured for systematic and efficient functioning.

- The council proceedings, decisions, and fines imposed to an accused by the village council should be recorded in writing for future record rather than trusting the memory of the council members.
- Fine imposed by the council on an accused should be recorded with amount and quantity with approximate present value, if it is in kind. If a similar crime is committed in future, the records on the current judgement can serve as a reference point and precedent.
- Educated and literate persons acquainted with the customary laws, modern judicial process, and not those with high status on account of their money and material resources must be included in the village council for better negotiation between the government regulation and customary laws as well as for the purpose of informed judgement.
- The structural patterns, body, and the functioning of the council should be systematically studied and documented. This will help in the transferring of knowledge on traditional governing body to the coming generations of the tribe.

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- The author wishes to thank Komoli Mossang, Chairperson, R. K. Mossang Memorial Society, for her significant contribution to the study as a key informant and collaborator.*

**PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM:  
AN INSTRUMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE  
IN ZIRO VALLEY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**Millo Seema<sup>1</sup>**

Arunachal Pradesh, the land of the rising sun, is a tribal-dominated land situated in the northeastern part of India. The geographical area of Arunachal Pradesh is 83,743 sq.km., having a total population of 13,83,727 persons. It is the homeland of 26 major tribes and 110 sub-tribes and minor tribes. In order to govern the villages as well as to generate a corporate life in the tribal villages, most of the tribes had developed their own indigenous self-governing institutions at their respective village levels. Traditional village councils in Arunachal Pradesh have been working as indigenous self-governing institutions and are responsible for maintaining law and order, peace and harmony as well as to look after the welfare and developmental activities of the villages. In other words, village councils are the traditional socio-political organizations of tribal societies of Arunachal Pradesh. The village councils are informal in nature, free from complicated procedures and formalities. The decisions in the village councils are taken not on the basis of formal vote but through general unanimity. Therefore, traditional village councils are governed by old traditions and customary laws. Thus, village councils are the expression of local governance.

Ziro valley, the land of the Apatanis, is the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district. It is situated in the central-western part

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of Arunachal Pradesh, between 26°55'-28°21'N and 92°40'-94°21'E; at an altitude of 1,564 metres above the mean sea level. The valley is surrounded by rings of mountains whose foothills are dotted with well-tended and weeping blue pine groves. Prior to the introduction of the modern system of governance and administration, the traditional political institution of the people – the Council of *Buliangs* - was the only forum for decision making and regulation in the society. The *Buliang* of Ziro valley works as a form of village government. The *Buliangs* are the custodian of customary laws and the guardian of ritual ceremonies. Some important festivals like the *Myoko* cannot be performed without the involvement of *Buliangs*. Whereas, in the case of conflicts between the *Buliangs* and the public, in the administration of village, there is another kind of *Buliang* known as *Miha pillo* who acts as a mediator of *Buliang* and the public.

However, society and politics in Arunachal Pradesh are undergoing through a process of social modernisation and political development. The development of roads and means of communication helps the people to link across different villages. Education system provided by the government broadens the knowledge of the people in every aspect. Along with these changes, the tribal people have become more conscious of their life styles. A broader sense of unity has evolved among the educated not only within their tribe but also with other tribes of the state as well as of the country. Introduction of *Panchayati Raj* in 1969 has been the most important political event since independence. The introduction of Panchayati Raj system and the subsequent political changes have brought traditional political and social institutions to the grass-roots level, face to face encounter with modern governmental institutions and democratic procedures. These factors also contribute to the change in the village communities. Therefore, a study on Panchayati Raj institution as a socio-political agency for village administration is crucial in this regard.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- I. To examine the working and impact of Panchayati Raj institution as a modern local governance, in the context of Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh.
- II. To understand people's perception towards the modern local governance.

## **Method**

In the light of the objectives of the study, a systematic research design was drawn. It is a descriptive study where both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were collected using questionnaire and interview. For the convenience of the study, questionnaire-cum-interview schedule was designed using English language as a medium. The various elements of the questionnaire are translated into local dialect at the time of interaction with the respondents. Village-to-village visit was carried out by visiting all the villages of Ziro valley.

Secondary data were collected from various sources such as books, journals, magazines, websites, government published documents, and other unpublished materials.

## **Evolution of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh**

The British extended their administration to the tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh but without any political development of the people. Moreover, they were more inclined towards a policy of isolation in tribal areas. The same policy was adopted by the government of India. Subsequently, Jawaharlal Nehru's (the then Prime minister of India) government followed Verrier Elwin's idea of retaining the identity of the tribes and also the British policy of isolation. The policy adopted by him was also referred

as “Go Slow Policy.” The policy was based on five principles for tribal development. The principles were:

1. People should develop along the lines of own genius and government should avoid imposing anything on them.
2. Tribal rights in land and forest must be respected.
3. Government should train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development, but it should be guided by minimum interference from the outsider but for the technical expert personnel.
4. The government interference in the administration of tribal areas should be limited without over-administration and without overwhelming them with a multiclicity of schemes.
5. The government would not consider the results evolved by statistics or the amount of money spent, rather it would judge the results by the quality of human character that is evolved (Bose, 1997).

The urgent need for the rapid socio-economic development of the tribes was, however, felt in the aftermath of Chinese aggression in 1962. The government of India realized that India’s defeat in the war was due to lack of proper administration. Thereafter, a necessity was felt for urgent development of the area, and the Nehru-Elwin’s “Go Slow Policy” was reconsidered. Consequently, the people of Assam also criticized the tribal policy followed in the administration of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA; presently, Arunachal Pradesh) because of the fear that the Chinese troops might descend on Assam valley. The popular agitations led by the people of Assam and the tribal people of the area against the “Go Slow Policy” in North East Frontier Agency compelled the government of India to take initiatives on the urgent need of development in the life of the tribal people. After the Chinese aggression in 1962, the government of India changed



its policy of isolation towards North East Frontier Agency and undertook various developmental measures for the tribal areas (Bath, 2015). As such, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Daying Ering to establish local self-governance or to recommend democratic decentralization in the North East Frontier Agency. Thus, Chinese attack became a turning point in the process of political development of the NEFA.

### **The Daying Ering Committee**

After the setback of Chinese aggression, the government of India intended to introduce modern democratic institution for the administration of North East Frontier Agency. Modern governmental institutions were sought to be introduced so that the territory could come closer to the mainstream of political life in the country and to organize the people to take lively interest in developmental activities. As the first step towards realizing these objectives, a four-member committee, popularly known as Daying Ering Committee, was appointed by the Governor of Assam in the year 1964 to consider the expansion and development of modern local self-government in North East Frontier Agency (Talukdar, 1987). Based on the recommendations, the committee was to examine the scope and pattern of authority and functions exercised by the indigenous tribal institutions at the village level and above. It was to find out how far the existing systems were adequate and how best they could be modified or enlarged to introduce democratic working in the fields of judiciary, local development, and administration. The committee was also required to give due consideration to the stages of advancement of the tribal people. Finally, the committee was requested to frame proposals regarding (a) the type of democratic bodies suitable at the village level and above, (b) the nature and extend of jurisdiction of these bodies, and (c) taking into consideration the varying stages of development

of different tribal groups in which the recommendation of the committee could be implemented (*Notification*, 1964).

The committee took extensive tours of Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed people of various shades of public opinion, met officials at various levels, and finally submitted its report on January 1965 with certain politically and administratively significant recommendations. The most important recommendation of the committee was its suggestion to set up a four-tier and organically linked popular bodies in NEFA. At the village level, there should be a village council, to be elected or selected as per their customary laws. The existing tribal councils should be recognized and given formal authority by the administration in all areas. The judicial, development, and general functions should be vested with village councils. Above the village level, the *Anchal Samiti* should be constituted at the block level. There should be subdivisional officers as ex-officio Chairman of the Anchal Samitis in their respective jurisdictions. At the district level, over the Anchal Samitis, there should be *Zilla Parishads* replacing the existing District Development Committee as Deputy Commissioner as its chairman. The committee also suggested the creation of Agency Council at the state level. It recommended that Agency Council should consist of 20 members, each district represented by four members. It works as an advisory body to the Governor in the administration and development of NEFA (Tado, 2001).

However, apart from suggesting a four-tier, the committee made some miscellaneous recommendations keeping in view the future development of NEFA. The most important concern of the committee was to find out democratic traditions among the tribal communities and to suggest a suitable way for democratization of the existing indigenous tribal institutions. Therefore, the Daying Ering Committee reflects the political, social, and economic development of North East Frontier Agency. On the whole, the recommendation of Daying Ering Committee may be considered

the foundation for the socio-economic and political development of the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Introduction of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh**

In order to establish the Panchayati Raj system of local self-governance, the President of India enacted the North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation in 1967 on the basis of the Daying Ering Committee recommendations and in accordance with the exercise of the powers conferred under Article 240 of the Constitution of India, read with sub-paragraph (2) of the paragraph 18 under the VI schedule of the Constitution. However, the regulation was not to be implemented in Seppa sub-division, the Eastern part of the Kameng district, and Miao-Vijayanagar areas of Tirap district because of their remoteness and backwardness (Swain, 2008). The introduction of NEFA Panchayati Raj Regulation created opportunities for the people to take part in developmental administration. It envisaged a four-tier system of local administration: *Gram Panchayat* at village level, *Anchal Samiti* at block level, *Zilla Parishad* at district level, and Agency Council at territorial level.

### **Gram Panchayat**

The North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation of 1967 accorded the status of Gram Panchayat to the village authorities constituted under the Assam Frontier (Administrative of Justice) Regulation 1945. The Gram Panchayat was constituted only to serve as the Electoral College to elect members of Anchal Samiti. The regulations did not provide for a separate Gram Panchayat in 1967. The existing traditional village authority constituted under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945 was accepted as the Gram Panchayat (D. Ering Report, 1965). As such the existing traditional village councils were to be regarded as the Gram Panchayats.

### **Anchal Samiti**

The regulation provides the constitution of Anchal Samiti at block level. The Governor was also empowered to amalgamate two or more blocks into a single block for composition of Anchal Samiti. Anchal Samiti is the intermediary body in the Panchayat system. Its jurisdiction extends over the area of a community development block. Significantly, the Anchal Samiti is envisaged as a modern democratic institution with sizeable powers, funds, and functions in planning and implementing developmental schemes (*D. Ering Report, 1965*). As such, an Anchal Samiti should play a vital role in developmental administration.

### **Zilla Parishad**

The regulation authorized the Governor of Assam to constitute a Zilla Parishad for each district. The regulation envisages the Zilla Parishad with the power to act as supervisory and advisory body over the Gram Panchayats and Anchal Samitis located within the district. Further, it is the supreme body in finalizing the plans and programmes of the district. More specific functions of Zilla Parishad were to make recommendations to the Governor with regards the output of the budget estimate of the Anchal Samitis, the coordination and consolidation plan proposed by the Anchal Samitis and drawing up of the district plan, and to review the working of the Anchal Samiti from time to time (*D. Ering Report, 1965*).

### **Agency Council**

At the territorial level, the regulation provides for an Agency Council for the entire area of NEFA. Agency Council was an advisory body of the Governor. The Council is to be constituted by the Governor through notification. It consists of the Governor, the members of the Parliament representing the NEFA, the vice-presidents of all the Zilla Parishads to be elected by its members

from amongst themselves in the prescribed manner, and the advisor to the Governor, ex-officio. The Governor presides over the meetings of the Council and consults it in regard to the matters of administrations of NEFA; the Five-Year Plan, and the annual plan proposals; and proposals for undertaking legislation with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the state list in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. Precisely, the Agency Council is developed in the line of a legislature for NEFA. However, the Agency Council was renamed as the Pradesh Council in 1972, which was developed as the provisional legislative assembly on 15 August 1975 (*D. Ering Report*, 1965).

The North-East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967 came into effect on 2 October 1968. Under this regulation, the Panchayat bodies were constituted in 1969. The NEFA administration defended the objectives of the regulation in the following words:

For the all-round progress of the villages a people's movement has to be organised and should be strengthened and vitalised by providing a truly democratic institutional base. The Panchayat Raj alone can provide such a base and can help in creating a real live and dynamic movement which would transform the country-side in NEFA. It is essential that a process has to start by which efforts of the common people are united with those of the Government agencies for improvement of the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities living in different corners of NEFA and also to integrate these communities into the larger national life. (NEFA, 1968, p. 4)

Significantly, the introduction of Panchayati Raj preceded the universal adult franchise. Although the first general election in India was held in 1952, the franchise rights were not extended to the people of Arunachal for long. The voting rights were not extended till 1977 by the special provision of the Representation

of People's Act, 1951 by the Constitution (Removal of Difficulties) Orders VII and VIII withheld from NEFA the right to representation of Assam and central legislatures. This is probably due to the fact that "Administrative policies of Arunachal Pradesh was long been determined by the anthropological view that election is alien to tribal culture" (Chaube, 1999, p. 191). The Bordoloi sub-committee was also not in favour of extending franchise right to the people of NEFA because according to the committee, the level of political consciousness among the tribal was not enough. However, the North-East Frontier (Administration) Supplementary Regulation, 1971, introduced the electoral system in the village authorities. Subsequently a number of changes were made in the second Panchayat election in 1972. For the first time, adult franchise was introduced for the Panchayat bodies (Chaube, 1999).

The Panchayati Raj system of Arunachal Pradesh was required to revise its provision in conformity with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution in 1992 was brought into force by a notification to enact the comprehensive law on the subject to bring in conformity with the newly amended provision under the Constitution and the task was required to be completed before 24 April 1994. Accordingly, the state Government had promulgated an ordinance on April 18, 1994. However, the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Ordinance, 1994 could not become an Act as it did not provide for reservation of seats for scheduled castes. The 1994 Ordinance passed by the State Legislative Assembly was reserved by the Governor for the assent of the President of India. The same ordinance was returned to the state Government in September 1996 with the following suggestions: (i) constitution of Gram Sabha as per Article 247 (c) of the Constitution; (ii) reservation of seats for scheduled caste as per Article 243(d) of the Constitution; and (iii) direct elections to Panchayat as per the

Article 243 (c) of the Constitution. By taking into consideration the suggestions made by the President of India, the State Legislative Assembly passed the new Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Bill in 1997, but without including the suggestion made for the provision of reservation of seats for the scheduled castes. The state Government maintained that Arunachal Pradesh is hundred per cent tribal state and no indigenous scheduled caste population inhabits in the state. However, the Government of India introduced the Constitutional Amendment (86th Amendment Bill, 1999) in the Parliament. It sought exemption of the state from the requirement of reservation for the scheduled caste. The relevant clause of the Amendment Bill read: “Nothing in Article 243(d), relating to reservation of seats for scheduled castes, shall apply to the state of Arunachal Pradesh” (Danggen, 2012, p. 165). The Parliament passed the bill in the year 2000 in the form of 83rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997 was formally notified on 30 April 2001.

Thus, Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 was introduced to revitalize the Panchayati Raj system and to bring better developmental activities in Arunachal Pradesh. The Act provided for uniformity of Panchayati Raj systems, constitution of Gram Sabha, reservation of one-third seats for women, reservation of seats for scheduled tribes, direct elections to Panchayat, a fixed tenure of five years for every Panchayat body, and constitution of state election commission and state finance commission.

### **Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997**

Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 extends to the whole of Arunachal Pradesh, provides for the constitution of three-tier Panchayat Raj based on the all India pattern-panchayats at the village, intermediate, and district levels. The

Act also envisages the provision for *Gram Sabha* in each Gram Panchayat area. The Act defines that Gram Sabha is a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Gram Sabha.

Generally, the Gram Sabha exercises the following functions:

- Providing assistance for the implementation of developmental schemes pertaining to the village.
- To help in identification of beneficiaries for the implementation of developmental schemes in the villages.
- Such other matters as may be prescribed from time to time (*Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Manual, 2002*).

### **Gram Panchayat at Village Level**

The Act provided that a village or group of villages having a population not less than three hundred is to have a Gram Panchayat or to be considered as Panchayat area. However, the Deputy Commissioner can declare any area as Panchayat area having even less than three hundred populations as a special case. The Gram Panchayat shall be constituted by direct election with the system of secret ballot. The term of the Gram Panchayats shall be for five years from the date of notification by the Deputy Commissioner (*Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Manual, 2002*). Precisely, a Gram Panchayat exercises the developmental activities such as development of agriculture, improvement of animal husbandry, providing drinking water, and such other functions as may be assigned from time to time. Every Gram Panchayat, at its first meeting having the prescribed quorum, shall elect one of its members to be the chairperson who convenes the meeting of the Gram Sabha and also presides over its meeting. He exercises administrative supervision and control over the work of the members of Gram Panchayat. The reservation of seats for



women in the Gram Panchayat should not be less than 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election.

### **Anchal Samiti at Block Level**

An Anchal Samiti is constituted by the government for the Anchal block. However, the government may include or exclude any village or part of a village within the limits of an Anchal block or amalgamate two or more Anchal blocks into a single block, after consultation with an Anchal Samiti or Samitis. The area included under municipality, town committee, or cantonment shall be exempted from the Anchal block. No less than one third of the total numbers of seats to be filled by direct election in every Anchal Samiti shall be reserved for women. The term of the office of the members of Anchal Samiti shall be 5 years. The Act also made provision for chairperson in each Anchal Samiti. Generally, Anchal Samiti performs such functions and works as may be entrusted by the Zilla Parishad or the state government from time to time (Danggen, 2012).

### **Zilla Parishad at District Level**

Zilla Parishad is the apex body of the Panchayati Raj system at the district level. It is a supervisory and advisory body for the Gram Panchayats and the Anchal Samitis, falling within its jurisdiction. In every Zilla Parishad, not less than one third of its total number of seats to be filled by direct election shall be reserved for women. Such reserved seats may be allotted by rotation by the Deputy Commissioner to different Zilla Parishad constituencies in the prescribed manner. There shall be a chairperson selected by the elected members from among themselves. Both the chairperson and Zilla Parishad will hold the office for a period of 5 years. The Zilla Parishad performs the functions of supervision, coordination, and integration of the developmental schemes at Anchal Samiti and district levels. It

prepares the plan for the development of the district. The Zilla Parishad is to be constituted by the notification of the government (*Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Manual, 2002*). As such the Zilla Parishad is the supreme body in finalizing the plans and programmes of the district.

### **Working of Panchayati Raj**

Panchayati Raj institution has been the first modern political institution in Arunachal Pradesh. The democratic political process was started in North East Frontier Agency in 1969 when Panchayati Raj was introduced. The NEFA Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967, was envisaged with the following objectives:

The Panchayat in NEFA will be the prime agency for rural development. It will be the prime agency for rural development. It will provide a sound basis for economic and political growth. Secondly, it will provide workable medium through which the rural people would be able to express themselves on various problems of the area and also to evolve an integrated community approach for solutions of problems that concern the entire Agency. The Panchayats will, therefore be, not only a decentralized form of administration, it would be much more than that. (NEFA, 1968, p.4)

Thus, Panchayati Raj institution has been working to ensure socio-economic and political development at grassroots level. It has brought several changes in the administrative scenario of Arunachal Pradesh. The indigenous tribal people got the opportunity to exercise their franchise for the first time in the Panchayat election for electing their representative to Panchayat bodies. This institution provides reservation of one-third seats for women at different levels of Panchayat bodies. The Panchayat leaders take active role in implementing developmental projects and schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA), Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), etc. Therefore, in rebuilding the village society, Panchayati Raj has been working for development of living standard and the social pattern of rural area to a great extent through promotion and development of agriculture, undertaking poverty alleviation programmes, educational schemes, promoting better sanitation, public health and family welfare, women and child development, and such other functions as may be assigned from time to time.

### **Impact of Panchayati Raj**

Introduction of Panchayati Raj institution became the first modern political body in Arunachal Pradesh. The indigenous tribal people got the opportunity to exercise their franchise for the first time in Panchayat election and for electing their representatives to Panchayat bodies. Therefore, Panchayati Raj institution as the grass-root unit of local self-government has been considered as an instrument of socio-economic transformation in rural areas. The growth in the Panchayati Raj system in Arunachal Pradesh led to the development of village communities. Major social changes have been taking place as a result of functional Panchayati Raj system. It strengthens the corporative life among the village communities and enhanced rural sanitation and health through implementation of schemes. Further, primary education as well as adult education is an important responsibility of the Panchayati Raj institution.

In Arunachal Pradesh particularly, after the enactment of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1997, thirty-three per cent of seats at different levels of Panchayat bodies are reserved for women, which enhanced the participation level of women in politics. As such, with the introduction of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh, the democratic political process started

due to which the life styles of the indigenous tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh changed to a large extent. Therefore, Panchayati Raj system has played an important role in providing a solid foundation for designing the political process in Arunachal Pradesh and modernizing the tribal societies as a whole.

Panchayati Raj, as the first modern popular political institution has made a profound impact on the traditional political administration of the tribal people. Highlighting the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the traditional political life of the Union Territory, Col. K.A.A. Raja, the then Chief Commissioner of Arunachal Pradesh, observed:

So far, each tribe and community thought and worked for itself. The outlook was tribal in the sense that it did not rise above the tribe. The association of the people in administration was linked to that horizon, for policies were formulated at the Agency level and implementation only as cut out for each community or locality or smallest administrative unit, was the field of popular participation. The channels of association were the Gao Burahs and interpreters and as the names suggest they were local links not joined into a chain. The Agency was one single unit at the level of the administration only. And that Administration was physically and psychologically distant from the people. A higher level of association only could foster a larger and wider consciousness. This came with the Panchayati Raj. It introduced a graded series by which village leadership could mount up through Anchal and district to the Agency level, of association in policy making and planning. At the top the local leadership had to view the entire territory as one, though it was directly concerned with its own district. The indirect election promoting leaders from the lowest and smallest to the highest level trained them to get over their limitations of localised interest and develop at least a district perspective. In the Agency Council each district had to

take cognisance of the others and so think in terms of the Agency as a whole. It is at this stage that it will be noticed that tribes and communities are receiving less and less mention and district are coming into prominence in planning and deliberations and with it the realisation of the Agency as an integrated unit and not a mere package of assorted communities. (Raja, 1975, p.10)

The introduction of Panchayati Raj has given a new orientation to politics in Arunachal Pradesh. It has changed the political outlook of the local leaders and broadened the political horizon of the people. The participation level in the decision making process by both men and women have increased. The local people are getting opportunities to exercise their franchise at the fullest. It also succeeds in creating a set of state level leadership through the various Panchayat bodies. These changes in the political outlook of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are accompanied by similar changes in their traditional political institution, because prior to the introduction of modern political institutions, the traditional village councils were actively performing the functions of administrative, judicial, and development. With the passage of time and circumstances however, the powers and functions of traditional village councils were diminished, as such educated youths and literate people are not much in favour of the prevailing traditional methods in the settlement of disputes and other activities. However, the traditional village councils still hold their identities in the villages and they have been working for the betterment of local people even today.

### **Conclusion**

It is rightly said that Panchayati Raj as a modern political institution has been actively working as an instrument for rural development and democratic decentralization. Initially, there was lack of political awareness and mass participation in decision

making process among the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. Gradually, the people of Arunachal Pradesh came in contact with a uniform political structure, and the democratic practices and ideas were inculcated even to those people who are otherwise confined by the age-old traditional social systems and hierarchical politics.

Nevertheless, there are important concerns as far as meaningful working of Panchayati Raj system is counted. Basically, Panchayat elections are fought on party lines which led to the creation of political rivalries among the clans and the communities; proper devolution of power is not given to the Panchayats for discharging their duties towards the administration of the rural areas; it is yet to overcome bureaucratic hurdles; the political leaders of the high order have been controlling the financial powers; and the women representations are often restricted to 33 per cent seats.

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## ROLE OF LOTHAN WOMEN IN THE TRADITIONAL NAGA SOCIETY: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

M. Elonbeni Ngullie<sup>1</sup>

In traditional tribal societies, there are different systems of inheritance, descent, family structure, restriction of selecting of spouse, and similar family-related roles and practices. Traditionally, women cook, fetch water, collect firewood, and do household chores. Lotha women manage the majority of the domestic affairs. Besides their farming activities, they do weaving and spinning, pottery making, dyeing of clothes, rice beer making, maintaining kitchen garden, and rearing of domestic animals. Even in this present century, the Lotha women continue to multitask in the domestic sphere, whereas the menfolk while away their time in unproductive pursuits (Mills, 1922).

It is expected for the Lotha women to know the art of weaving. They cultivate and produce cotton and they are assigned to weave cloths for the whole family. The young Lotha girl must learn from her mother the art of weaving, which is considered to be the most important part of their responsibility. The occupational status of the Lotha Naga women in the past was not stable, the patriarchal family system possibly did not provide equal status to women; often they were regarded as inferior to men. Besides, due to constant war and head-hunting, the womenfolk were excluded from the activities associated with men and thereby, Lotha women suffered curtailment of their rights and privileges.

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Women were considered incapable of taking up responsibilities outside the family and, hence, were confined to home and hearth.

However, at present, occupational changes have been taking place in the life of Lotha women as the result of the process of urbanization that has enabled girls to get exposed to education, information, and employment opportunities. The advent of Christianity has also been a major factor in bringing about change and modernization among various tribes of Nagaland (Ghosh, 1982).

Sociologists of the nineteen sixties to eighties considered urban growth an important phenomenon that could influence all sections of society. Villages open to continuous urban influence have been the subject of study to understand the nature of change of social order. Traditionally, tribal societies were characterized by simple pattern of living, less division of labour, absence of mobility, and prevalence of homogenous social order. With the advent of industrial-urban order, due to new economic organization and changing mode of production, there has been a revolutionary change in the tradition-bound tribal social order. The tribal societies which came into contact with such value system do exhibit a new way of social life and culture.

Indian sociological inquiries of urban growth took into cognizance of several new implications. Many focused on the role of rural migration to the cities, role of small towns in social transition and increased rural network, changing urban social stratification, and formation of secondary group association in urban surroundings. Until recently, the status of women in tribal society was not stable; the patriarchal system possibly did not provide equal status to women (Elwin, 1997). However, after independence of the country, major changes appeared in case of women also. Society's given role for men and women began to change in the latter half of the 20th century. The rapid progress

of urban growth and inclusion of women in the work force gave a new meaning and direction to its prevailing concepts such as gender inequality.

A good number of studies have been conducted by many scholars to examine the impact of urban growth on village life (Ahuja, 1993; Ao, 1972; Asoso, 1974; Béteille, 1965; Hutton, 1921; Mills, 1922; Mozhui, 2004; Murry, 2003; Tungoe 1977; Venuh, 1933; Zehol, 1998). These studies are especially concerned about explaining the result of urban growth on rural society, changing role of women with references and relation to their family, socio-economic, and occupational status. A society cannot remain unchanged and the status of women has also been changing to a large extent, and often as a result of urban growth.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the present study were: (a) To document the traditional customary practices of Lotha Naga women, and (b) to examine the factors responsible for effecting change from tradition to modernity. The specific hypothetical assumptions for the present study are that women in Lotha Naga Society are gradually coming into their own due to the urban impact and that the urban growth increases opportunities in education and occupation, which generally brings about change in role and status.

### **Method**

#### **The Field**

Wokha town, the major place of Lotha inhabitant was selected and it constituted the universe of the present study.

#### **The Sample**

450 respondents were selected from Wokha town for the

initial survey, based on which, around 10% households of Lotha families of Wokha town were found engaged in non-traditional occupations. The sampling design was therefore purposive and random sampling. Since the study was concerned with the changing profile of women's occupation, one earning woman member from each household of the identified sample from Wokha town was selected to the final list of participants.

### **Data Collection**

The major techniques of data collection were: (a) Interview schedules of both structured and unstructured natures, and (b) Field observation.

### **Traditional Occupation of Lotha Women**

#### **Agriculture**

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Lotha people. They are entirely dependent on agriculture since there is no other means of avenue for their livelihood. They live in villages and they cultivate the land. Both *shifting* and *wet* types of cultivation are practiced by the Lotha people, though *Jhum* cultivation has also been widely practiced. Once the field is burned, it is the duty of the women to clean and sow the seeds, following a special ritual of keeping oneself pure by abstaining from unclean food and avoid hosting strangers and guests from outside the village, in spite of their known hospitality. Women also have to ensure that supplementary crops are sown in the field as well. Women's work accountability is measured not only by the main crops but by the supplementary crops found in the field.

The Lothas do form several self-help groups, in the form of women's group, couple's group, adult group, *khel* group, and all group members work together, taking turns to assist in the fields of all members till the weeding stage. However, it is the women who take the lead right from the selection of seeds till its sowing.

## **Weaving and Spinning**

Professionally, Lotha women have been engaged in weaving and spinning since earliest times. They cultivate cotton not only for their own requirement but with a surplus even to be given to their neighbouring tribal villages. They spin thread out of cotton and weave variety of cloths. When the husband and the family members wear exceptionally beautifully shawls, it is the pride of the women and their work becomes the talk of the village or tribe. Lotha women's prestige is high only when she knows variety of weaving patterns (Kikon, 1993).

The Lotha women barter their cloths to their neighbouring tribes and villages during winter and autumn seasons when they are free from their agriculture work. They grow cotton along with paddy, and the cotton thus collected is seeded by indigenously built tiny machines. Men's contribution to this work was minimal. It is the women who are all behind the cotton to clothing (Murry, 2003).

## **Necklace-making and Dyeing of Clothes**

In addition to various agricultural works, the Lotha women also do some allied beneficial works. In ancient times, Lotha womenfolk were well-known for their skill in making necklace extracted out of wild bananas and berry seeds (Elwin, 1997) and these were used by both men and women and are also bartered for other articles with their neighbouring villagers. The Lotha womenfolk dye their cloths out of herbal plants which give permanent colours and never fade.

## **Maintaining Kitchen Garden**

Another notable feature of the Lotha women is the kitchen garden they maintain. A properly maintained kitchen garden is always a source of fresh and healthy food. Every family has a

kitchen garden attached to their house; some would even have additional gardens apart from their home garden. Kitchen garden support domestic consumption as well as turn in good profit. A well-maintained kitchen garden is a matter of pride for Lotha women.

### **Firewood**

The homes of the Lothas are mostly found in the hilly terrace of high attitude. Hence, their homes are always cold almost throughout the year. Consequently, they use firewood excessively for cooking, lighting, and heating the house. This necessitates having a good stock of firewood. Every family has its own plot of land kept reserved for fuel purposes. In winter, men fell trees or trim down the branches for firewood. Women transport all the firewood to home. A woman returning home from field work should not be coming home without firewood in her basket. However, man would home casually with a *dao* (long knife) at his back and spear on his shoulder.

### **Rice Beer Making**

Drinking *zautsu* is an integral part of traditional Naga life. *Zautsu* is a common rice beer prepared and consumed in the form of staple drink usually taken after meals. It is mainly drunk by adult males. It is the task of the women in the house to prepare *zautsu* but are not expected to consume it. Thus, rice beer making becomes another traditional task of a Lotha woman.

### **Changing Social Status of Lotha Women**

A woman has her unique standing in the Lotha society. She can be consulted specially for traditional songs, folklores, tales, arts, and culture. She actively participates in festivals and religious affairs. But because of sex differences, a woman was restricted in some activities of the villages. These are: (a) Women

cannot be a member of village council, and (b) Women cannot become the religious head of her family, clan, or the village. She is debarred from performing religious rites and sacrifices. Lotha society considers women as equal partners to men, but the word 'equal' could not be considered as equal with man in practice (Tungoe, 1977). The status of Lotha women in succession and inheritance stands nowhere near her male counterparts. For all practical purposes women do not get any share as inheritance from her father's lines, except for her personal possession such as dress, ornaments received at the time of her marriage which is considered as her personal property over which she exercised her full control. However, dowry is non-existent among the Lothas. The status of Lotha women is stable and secured. In the traditional political and administrative activities of the Lotha system, the status of women is overshadowed by the male counterparts. Women do not participate in the administration of the village whoever she might be. They are not entitled to membership in the village council and hence have no say in the village council decision making process. However, as Balzac rightly says "behind every successful man there is a woman," the role of women in motivating and shaping the personality of her husband is undeniably greater than men. This has implications for the role they are permitted to play in social and religious institutions, as well as in village politics.

Traditionally, there have been many restrictions imposed on women, especially with regards to their participation in community work, ceremonies, festivals rituals, games and sports, hunting, fishing, and other similar activities engaged in by men. However, with the passage of time, establishment of educational institutions, and the impact of modernization, many changes have taken place in various avenues of life of women and the society at large (Mills, 1922). The introduction of modern education has aroused women's self-consciousness and awareness of the need for their own emancipation and liberation.

The status of Lotha women has progressed from that of a reserved insider to an active participant in the affairs of the society. Now women actively participate in the affairs of their family and the community. The process of urbanization has enabled girls to get exposed to education, information, and employment opportunities. Christianity has also been a major factor to bring about change and modernization among various tribes of Nagaland (Thong, 1997).

### **Results & Discussion**

Table 1: *Age Group of the Respondents*

Sl. No.	Age-group	Number	Percentage
1.	25-30	130	28.9%
2.	31-35	102	22.66%
3.	36-40	123	27.33%
4.	41 and above	95	21.11%
Total		450	100%

Majority of the respondents came from the age group of 25-30, making up 28.9% of the entire sample. They were closely followed by those in the age group of 36-40 (27.33%). The highest age in the sample was 68 and the lowest was 25.

Table 2: *Traditional Occupation*

Sl. No	Traditional Occupations	Number	Percentage
1.	Cultivation	387	86%
2.	Taking care of household activities	15	7%
3.	Weaving and making of earthen pots	48	10%
Total		450	100%

Table 2 shows that out of 450 respondents studied from Wokha town of Nagaland, majority of them (86%) were engaged in cultivation as a traditional occupation; only 7% confined themselves to household activities alone, whereas 10% were into weaving and pot making.

Table 3: *Level of Satisfaction with Traditional Occupation*

No	Opinion of the respondents	Number	Percentage
1.	Satisfied	27	6%
2.	Dissatisfied	423	94%
Total		450	100

Here it is observed that nearly the entire sample of respondents – to the tune of 94% - felt dissatisfied with their traditional occupations, with only 6% indicating that they were satisfied with the same. Clearly, traditional occupations are no more favoured.

Table 4: *Occupational Mobility among the Lotha family*

Generations	Cultivation	Business	Government Service	NGOs	Private Institutions	Any Other	Total
Grand father	443 (98.44%)	7 (1.55%)	-	-	-	-	450 (100%)
Father	122 (27.11%)	39 (8.66%)	289 (64.22%)	-	-	-	450 (100%)
Self	-	35 (7.55%)	267 (59.33%)	52 (11.55%)	96 (21.33%)	-	450 (100%)

Table 4 presents the generational changes indicative of occupational mobility. 98.44% of the participants indicated that their grandfathers had engaged in traditional cultivation, whereas the 64.22% observed that their fathers were into government service. Among the participants themselves, a whopping 93.21% are employed in government service, non-governmental organizations, or private institutions, indicating



greater occupational mobility and a move away from traditional occupation.

Table 5: *Perceived Social Status of Lotha Women*

Sl. No	Perception	Number	Percentage
1	Equal	233	51%
2	Lower	27	6%
3	Higher	190	42%
Total		450	100%

It is interesting to note that in the modern times, the status of women has significantly changed: a combined 93% of the respondents perceive the status of women to be equal or higher than men. This is a major departure from the perceived status of women in traditional times.

The findings indicate that, due to urbanization and modernization, Lotha women are now getting employed in important managerial, administrative, clerical, executive, and professional avenues which have impacted their self-image and status in the society. Education is the main indicator for the development of women's status in a society. It has helped women to break free from the confines of her household and to engage in any type of occupation based on one's own competencies and abilities. We can derive the idea that earlier the Nagas acquired status in society through headhunting and feasts of merit; but now they acquire status mostly through education, government jobs, and new sources of earning, and both male and female are contending with each other by means of their capabilities. The present generation (respondents) is different on many social indicators from the former two generations. The occupational avenues are much widened. In such situation, upward mobility is flexible and faster. Education, new occupational values,

urban contact, industrialization, improved communication and transportation, etc. have brought tremendous change.

In the early days, cultivation dominated the people's occupation and their sources of livelihood and was a natural choice of vocation. For the former generations, there was no scope for alternatives to get engaged for earning, unlike in the present modern society. Weaving and spinning were the only significant industries for the Lotha women, other than their farming and other domestic responsibilities. Due to lack of education and opportunities, women remained locked up with inferiority feelings and lived as domestic and agricultural labourers, with little scope of realizing their capabilities. However, the scenario has changed due to urbanization. Urbanization is an important force of social change and the Lotha society is gradually transforming itself into an urbanized society, with significant consequences for the status of its womenfolk.

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## WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH: WITH REFERENCE TO THE *ADIS* OF EAST SIANG DISTRICT

Eva Dupak<sup>1</sup>

The *Adis* constitute one of the major tribes of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. They were known as 'Abor' in the past but now have discarded the appellation and its usage is now obsolete. They basically reside in East Siang<sup>2</sup>, West Siang, Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh. *Minyong, Padam, Pasi, Millang, Panggi, Komkar, Shimong, Karko, Ashing, Tangam, Bori, Bokar, Ramo, and Pailibo* are the various ethnic subgroups of the tribe. Efforts are being made by the apex body of the community, the *Adi Baane Kebang*, to do away with the subgroup culture. The *Adi* society is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal.

The traditional political organization of the *Adi* is the village council known as *Kebang*. It is a highly organized and powerful self-governing body exercising effective control and authority over the people. The *Kebang* functions as village government expressing the will and power of the members of the society. The *Adi* women enjoy a secondary position in so far as their participation in *Kebang* is concerned. Although there is no restriction on *Adi* women taking part in *Kebang*, they are not encouraged to participate in its deliberations. However, they

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<sup>2</sup> East Siang district here refers to the undivided East Siang and includes the administrative circles of Boleng, Riga, Pangin, Kebang, and Rebo-Perging of Siang district which was formally declared the 21st district of Arunachal Pradesh on 27 November 2015.

have the same freedom of speech as enjoyed by men if they are involved in a case under consideration of the *Kebang*. Practically, their participation in the *Kebang* is very limited.

However, the trend has changed, and with the introduction of modern political system, *Adi* women enjoy equal voting rights and political rights along with their male counterparts, guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. Despite these, the representation of women in national and state politics is very negligible. Even after a span of twenty-eight years of statehood, there has been no representation of women from East Siang as well as the State as a whole in the Lok Sabha.

In the Rajya Sabha, late Omem Moyong Deori (1984-1990) was the lone woman Member of Parliament from the state till date. Since then, no woman was elected or nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Deori was honoured with the Padmashree Award in 1994. She was the first woman Congress party leader when the Indian National Congress party entered into North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), now Arunachal Pradesh. She was the first vice president of Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) in 1980 and later became the president till 1991. She was also the first woman from North Eastern region to be nominated as member of the Congress Working Committee on 16 May 1992 and the first woman from the North East to become the Vice-Chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Govt. of India in 1995.

After the creation of Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh in 1972 and provision of a Legislative Assembly in 1975, the first general elections was held in 1978. Sibokai Singpho was the first nominated lady member of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 1978 during the period of being a Union Territory. But P. K. Thungon Ministry collapsed due to the defection of Janata Party. People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) led by Tomo

Riba formed the government by rechristening the party as United People's Party of Arunachal (UPPA) in 1979, but after 47 days this government too collapsed due to re-defection. After the imposition of President's Rule for two months, in the mid-term Assembly Elections of 1980, Nyari Welly became the first elected woman Member of Legislative Assembly from the United People's Party of Arunachal Pradesh (Archives, CEO).

From the Third Legislative Assembly of 1985-1986 to Provisional Legislative Assembly of 1987-89, there were only two women representatives, Nyari Welly and Komoli Mossang, out of the total strength of 33 MLAs of which 30 were elected and 3 were nominated during the period of Union Territory (1972-87). Even after attainment of Statehood, the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly has been very poor. Election to the First State Assembly was held on 27 February 1990. In the Fourth Legislative Assembly from 1990 to 1995, out of the total strength of 60-member Legislative Assembly, there were only two women representatives, namely, Omem Moyong Deori and Komoli Mossang. Komoli Mossang was the first to be inducted as woman minister as well as cabinet minister of Arunachal Pradesh.

In the Fifth Legislative Assembly of 1995-1998, there was a lone woman legislator - Yadap Apang, the only *Adi* woman MLA from East Siang District to represent Pasighat (West) Constituency from INC Party till date, although she belonged to a different constituency (Archives, CEO). During the Sixth Legislative Assembly, Mekap Dolo of Bameng constituency was elected. Nyani Natung was also elected from Pakke-Kesang constituency during the third bye-election held on 20 September 2001. Yari Dulom was elected from Daporijo constituency in the fourth bye-election held on 12 December 2002.

In the Seventh Legislative Assembly election held in 2004, none of the five female candidates who were in the fray was elected. The Eighth Legislative Assembly election held on 13 October 2009 saw nine female candidates contesting the election, the highest number till date. However, only two were elected, Nang Sati Mein, an independent candidate from Namsai constituency, and Karya Bagang of All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) from Chayangtajo constituency (Archives, CEO). In the election to the Ninth Legislative Assembly held in 2014, six female candidates were in the fray but only two of them were elected.

Therefore, in the present political set-up of the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly, the presence of women legislators is very negligible though the total number of women voters is at par with men. There are only two women representatives, Karya Bagang from Chayangtajo constituency and Gum Tayeng from Dambuk constituency. Till date, the total number of women legislators altogether is only eleven. This is not surprising since tradition has deprived women from political decision-making. Although a large number of women in Arunachal Pradesh particularly East Siang District is seen participating in mass meetings, processions, and political activities, they are ignored from contesting parliamentary as well as the state assembly elections.

Polls for municipalities and panchayats were conducted simultaneously on 16 May 2013 in Arunachal Pradesh. The municipal elections were held for the first time in Papum Pare and East Siang Districts, i.e., Itanagar and Pasighat respectively. Itanagar Municipal Council comprised thirty wards with ten wards reserved for women, whereas Pasighat Municipality comprised twelve wards of which four were reserved for women. Oson Aje, Omem Darang, Osi Yosung Boring, and Ponung Lego became the first female Councillors from Pasighat (Archives, PMC).

In the Panchayat election of 2003, there were four female Zilla Parishad Members (ZPMs) out of 11 ZPMs, 49 Anchal Samiti Members (ASMs) out of 144 ASMs, and 207 Gram Panchayat Members (GPMs) out of 561 GPMs in East Siang district. In 2008, the total number of female ZPMs was four out of 13 ZPMs, 51 ASMs out of 156 ASMs, and 217 GPMs out of 578 GPMs. During the panchayat election of East Siang District held in 2013, the total number of female Zilla Parishad Members remain four out of 16. At the Anchal Samiti level, out of 161 ASMs, more than 50 candidates were female and the total number of GPMs was 637, out of which more than 200 were females (Archives, Directorate of Panchayati Raj). Therefore, we find that the number of female representatives has remained almost the same. Even in the institutions of traditional village councils, there are only 17 numbers of Gaon Buris out of 478 in the district (Archives, DC).

Besides their involvement in the political development of Arunachal Pradesh, *Adi* women's active role in uplifting the socio-economic condition of women in particular and the society in general is commendable. *Adi Baane Kebang* is the apex body of the *Adi* community. The Women Wing of *Adi Baane Kebang* has been in the forefront in initiating pioneering social activities and movements such as their active drive against social evils like sale of drugs and Indian made foreign liquor (IMFL). They are playing an important role in checking the unchecked rise of alcoholism and drug abuse. Due to their efforts, wine shops in East Siang District, particularly the District Headquarters Pasighat, were shut down during the festive season such as the New Year for a couple of weeks during the last two years. As a result of which, there were no reports of deaths due to reckless driving or violation of law and order (Dry Days, 2015, p. 1).

A local Non-Governmental Organization, Women Against Social Evils (WASE), fighting against drug abuse, illegal



sale of IMFL, inter-state drug peddling, child abuse, and human trafficking in East Siang and its peripheral areas is also commendable (WASE Seeks, 2016, p. 1). Women play a pivotal role in both these organizations to eradicate social evils in the society. They conduct regular search operations with the help of the local police and administration in order to check the illegal sale of liquor and narcotics. Their efforts have curbed the illegal sale of liquor and resulted in seizure of large quantities of narcotics as well as many drug peddlers by the police, thereby protecting the innocent teens, youth, and women. They also organize public awareness campaigns and cleanliness drives in order to help villages embrace positive change as well as popularize their mission and activities and to mobilize various forces to fight against social evils. They have also submitted memoranda to the state government seeking governmental help in fighting against social evils and provision of adequate vehicles at police stations for patrolling purposes to effectively deal with criminals and anti-social elements, tackling of inter-state drug peddling, etc.

In spite of numerically and politically significant participation of women in voting and social organizations, women representatives in the elected bodies of East Siang district as well as Arunachal Pradesh are very few and are outnumbered by men. This is partly because the political parties are dominated by male leadership who are reluctant to field women candidates. Moreover, women workers of various political parties just remain leaders of their respective women wing. They usually carry out their programmes on the basis of policies and decisions taken by male leaders of their parties. Therefore, there is an urgent need for change in the patriarchal mind-set in the decision-making bodies. The other obstacles to free and fair political participation of women are marginalization due to economic disempowerment, patriarchy, and criminalized politics at all levels. A sincere effort is necessary to remove these constraints and have checks and balances in place

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so that women's full participation in all decision-making bodies and processes as well as in political development of Arunachal Pradesh can be achieved, to the benefits of the entire society.

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## YOUTH AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS IN WEST KHASI HILLS: THEIR INTERACTION WITH THE TRIBAL SOCIETY

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West Khasi Hills, a region located in the central part of the state of Meghalaya, consists of two districts – the West Khasi Hills District and the South West Khasi Hills District. This region is inhabited mostly by the Khasi tribal communities and a few Garo tribal communities. Though the literacy rate is more than 65 percent, agriculture is still the main occupation of the people. The region got its own district in 1976 but it lacks developmental activities compared to the East Khasi Hills. Besides the traditional institutions such as the traditional chiefs and the *durbar shmong* (village community), the youth and student organizations have been playing an active role in the life of the tribal communities of the region. Different disciplines give different meanings to the term youth; for instance, on the one hand young people are considered ‘youth’ on the basis of age, quality of mind which includes vigour, ventures, freshness, enthusiasm, optimism, and joyfulness, and is a transitional period between a dependent childhood and self-dependent adulthood (Pramod, 1992). On the other hand, there are societies where age is not the basis for defining youth, for example, Nongkynrih (2009) is of the view that in Northeast India, the generational principles are taken into account in defining youth. People who are playing an effective role in the society are placed according to the generational principle. By knowing the term youth, one knows the generation of a person and his/her place in the society. The Khasi Jaintia

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society addresses the youth as *Samla* or *Khynraw*, the semi-Naga address them as *Lothimi*, the Mizos as *Tleirawl*, the Paitei as *Taulai*, and the Adi as *Yoming*. Upadhyia (1995) is of the opinion that youth everywhere are in the state of restlessness howsoever glamorous and glittering the social fabric might be. They are also in a stage of high physical energy and enthusiasm which need an outlet. They generally do not trust their past laurels and are more concerned of their future than their present and hence revolt against the government in certain laws for fear of their uncertain future.

The term 'student' refers to a young person who attends educational institution. The Oxford English Dictionary (1961) defines student as "a person who is undergoing a course of study and instruction at a university or other place of higher education or technical training" (p. 1178). A student is characterised by youthful idealism, educational qualifications, unbounded energy, freedom from job and family responsibility, and acute political awareness (Subas, 1987). Students, because of the educational background, are capable of significantly influencing the community.

The West Khasi Hills Youth, known as *Samla*, are young, physically and mentally fit individuals who are energetic, enthusiastic, and capable of shouldering responsibility. They include both students and those who do not attend any school. There are many youth and student organisations that have existed in the region such as the Western Youth Welfare Organisation established in 1989, the West Khasi Students' Union which was formed in 2005; but the Federation of the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo People (FKJGP) and the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) have played a pivotal role in the social and political life of the people. These organisations also attracted the youth and the students to the various issues of the region. The under development of the region and the influence of the youth organizations such as the

FKJGP and the student organisation KSU from the state capital, have drawn the youth and the students to work for a change in the society and influence the tribals of the region to be a part of the political life of the state.

Some research works have been carried out on the activities of the youth and student organisations in Meghalaya. Malngiang (1994) examines the role of the various students' organisations prevalent in the state of Meghalaya. In this book, the author has made an attempt to understand the organisations and the working of the various student organisations and examine the problems of political participation and political recruitment of the student leaders. Kumar & Nongkynrih (1995) in their research article, "Khasi Students Union: A Preliminary Enquiry" highlight the nature of student organization with a special reference to the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) and the functioning of the Union within the political context of the state. Malngiang (2002) in his article "Students and Youth Organizations in Meghalaya" gives some insights into the Federation of Khasi-Jaintia and Garo people, basically as a social organisation. He has made an attempt to analyse the role of such associations from the political perspective and observe that they acted as powerful pressure groups in the state politics of Meghalaya. Nongkhaw (2010) in her book, *The Politics of Pressure Groups: A Study of Students and Youth Organizations in Meghalaya*, brings out the roles of the students and youth organisations as pressure groups in Meghalaya. The study includes the KSU, *Jaintia* Student Union, and *Garo* Student Union as the student organisations and the FKJGP as the youth organisation. She focuses on the influences of these organisations in the decision making process of the Government of Meghalaya and examine the similarities and the differences in the perception of these organizations about various issues affecting the state and the people. She argues that the supporting structure of the different organisations is based

on the community or ethnicity of the organisations in many issues and demands raised by them that championed the interest of the ethnic community. Further, she argues that the youth and student organisations succeed as pressure groups when the government relents on the pressure politics of these organisations on various issues.

In the light of the above brief literature review, I will critically analyse the role of these organizations, particularly the FKJGP and the KSU, and how they motivate and interact with the tribes, particularly of West Khasi Hills region, to influence the government of the state to achieve their aims and objectives.

### **Method**

The study is descriptive and analytical. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included the constitutions of various organisations, memoranda submitted from time to time by the students and youth organisations, Legislative Assembly Debates and other Government Reports. Structured questionnaires were sent to fifty respondents by using a simple random sampling of the two administrative headquarters in the region, *Nongstoin* and *Mawkyrwat*, to elicit their views and opinions. The secondary sources included books, journals, periodicals, newspaper reports, and other written resources.

### **Results**

The study revealed that: (a) the youth and the student organizations motivated the tribal people on various issues and demands; (b) there were similarities and differences in their perception on various issues; and (c) the government responded to certain demands.

## **Discussion**

### **Role of Youth and Student Organizations in Tribal Societies**

The FKJGP, set up in the year 1994, consists of the members from both the Khasi and the Garo communities; the Jaintia community is not present in this region. Its main aims and objectives are to unite the indigenous tribes of the state for common socio-economic growth, to protect the cultural customs and traditions, and to create political awareness in the people. The KSU, set up in the region in 1997, represents the students of the Khasi community only. Its objectives are to foster unity among the students in the region, to promote education, to fight against unemployment and population influx, to protect the indigenous rights, customs, and traditions, and to bring peace and unity among the tribes. Both these organisations are ethnic and therefore, most of the issues raised by them are of ethnic nature.

The major issues raised by the youth and the student organizations of the region are on the developmental activities in the region such as improvement in the infrastructure of the governmental offices, improvement of the roads, uranium mining project, hydropower project, control of the population influx in the region, protection of the tribal community who are living in the interstate border area, upgradation of schools and colleges to a higher level, etc.

The Cabinet of the state decided to allow the Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) to mine uranium at the place popularly known as *Domiasiat*, a village in the region. The KSU opposed the decision of the Cabinet and any form of extraction of uranium from this area. It organised public rallies and meetings in different parts of the region to mobilise public opinion to support them on the following issues: firstly, if

uranium mining is allowed, then the people will lose their land or will be displaced if they lease their land to the UCIL; secondly, influx of the non-tribal population will be high; and lastly, there will be health and environmental hazard to the people and the area in and around the mining site due to exposure to radiation (Sirnate, 2009). The state government faced a protest from the student organization and the people of the area where the masses attended the anti-uranium mining campaign, and the female land owners also came forward to demolish a foundation stone which identified the land that was entrusted to the UCI Lerection by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (an institution created under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution to take care of the land of the tribal community in the state). Violent methods of agitation were also adopted by the student organisation such as strike, office picketing, bandh, and road blockade to get the support of the people not only from the region but from other parts of the state (The Meghalaya Times, 2009: 1, 10). The FKJGP at beginning remained silent and neutral on this issue but later it supported the student organisation on the matter. The UCIL also proposed developmental activities in and around the area such as the construction of the *Wahkaji-Mawthabab* road and improvement of the health centre in and around the mining site. Pre-project development plan confused the local people who were divided in their opinion. Some agreed with it and some others vehemently opposed it. Many local organizations emerged which countered the views of the KSU and the FKJGP but the land in this region is so dear to the tribal people that it represents their identity. Any act from any institution which alienates the people from their lands will be criticised by the society.

Another main issue in the region is the control of the population influx. The tribal communities of the region do not tolerate the non-tribals coming into the region. There is a fear that the indigenous communities such as the Khasi and the



Garo will be swamped by the non-tribals if the latter's influx is not controlled. As the region is blessed with abundance of coal reserves, there is an influx of immigrants, leading to non-tribal cluster in and around the coal belt area of the region. The FKJGP and the KSU conducted eviction drive from time to time and even took a drastic step of issuing a quit notice to the non-tribals in these area. To prevent the inflow of the population to the region, the FKJGP along with the KSU demanded from the state government to implement the Inner Line Permit (ILP) that had been imposed by the British Government in 1873. Though the demands had been made a long time ago, the two-month long agitation of 2013 led by the KSU and the FKJGP for the implementation of the ILP has led to a total of 115 registered cases, arrest of 76 pro-ILP activists including the detention of three members of the youth and student organizations under the Meghalaya Preventive Detention Act and an estimate loss of over Rupees 31 crore of public property (The Shillong Times, 2013:1) in the state. Thirteen different youth and student organizations in the region worked together under one umbrella for the implementation of the ILP. The Government, in response to their demands, suggested certain measures such as the opening up of entry-exit check gates in many parts of the state, adoption of Meghalaya Regulation of Landlords and Verification of Tenant Bill. The youth and the student organisations were asked to give suggestions, but the members of the KSU tore the Bill into pieces and the FKJGP also supported the action of the student bodies in this matter as they considered ILP as the only main solution to preserve the indigenous tribes in the region. The village headmen or *Ki Rangbah Shnong* also participated in the meeting organised by the youth and student organisations to discuss a mechanism for controlling the influx in the region (The Shillong Times, 2012: 1, 7). There were also debates from many intellectuals of the society over this issue and the imposition of "three tiers system

of ID” was suggested. Again, the FKGJP and the KSU worked together with the *Sirdar* (a customary head under a traditional chief of an *Elaka*) of the *Hima Raid Mynsaw* most of the times when the Khasi, who are settled in Langpih (a village located on the interstate border of Meghalaya and Assam), faced problem from the non-Khasi people in the village. The youth and student organisations also demanded from the Meghalaya Government to keep the police outpost in the village so that the Khasi living in the area would be protected.

To tap the available resources and solve the problem of power shortage, the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance Government had signed a deal in 2007 with two private companies, namely, the Jaiprakash Power Venture and the Athena Power Project Limited for the construction of the Kynshi Hydel Power project which was to generate more than 100 megawatt of energy. The *Syiem* of *Hima Nongstoin* (traditional chief) had also issued a No Objection Certificate to the two private companies to implement the project. The KSU opposed the government for not calling the tender through a proper channel and for entrusting the project to private companies which are not from the state of Meghalaya. The FKJGP and the KSU anticipated that this project would help in generating employment opportunity to the educated youth of the region but were disappointed when the government allotted the project to private companies. The fear of land acquisition and displacement of the people due to the project led the land owners of the area to come together under one banner known as *Synjuk ki Trai Khyndew Warsan Lyngdoh and Mawpon Area* to oppose the construction of the dam. After the pressure of the KSU and the people of the area the new government, known as the Meghalaya Progressive Alliance, scrapped the deal in 2008. This action of the government was accepted by all with the belief that in the near future the deal would be reopened by inviting new tenders. The KSU along with the tribals of the area have influenced the

government in this issue for not allowing the private companies to carry on with the project.

On the conflict of the opening up of the CR & D Bloc at *Mawthadraishan* in the region on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001, the Meghalaya Parliamentary Forum Government had decided to shift the Bloc headquarters to Kynshi from the previous decision to have it at *Nongshillong*. The people of the nearby area of *Nongshillong* opposed the new decision and worked along with the KSU whereby many public meetings and rallies were held at *Nongshillong, Markasa* to mobilise public opinion for not allowing the government to shift the bloc headquarters from *Nongshillong* to Kynshi since *Nongshillong* was more convenient to the people in the area (U Nongsain Hima, 2001: 1, 7). Strikes through office picketing were used to pressurize the government on this issue. It also organized a meeting to lobby the leaders of different political parties from *Pariong* constituency over the issue of headquarters of the CR & D *Mawthadraishan* Bloc.

Another issue was when the Military outfit, popularly known as the *Achick National Volunteers' Council* or the ANVC which belongs to the Garo community, tried to infiltrate the region and demanded a portion of this region to be a part of the greater Garo land (Marak, 2007). The FKJGP took up strong resistance against the military outfit and called for a bandh on the 16 April 2002 to oppose any kind of demand for settlement. This led to strong criticisms from the militant group against the FKJGP for being the youth organisation of the Garo community but not supporting the Garo people on the issue.

The KSU and the FKJGP also work together to bring development to the region by pressurising the Government to open up government schools and colleges and to upgrade different training courses in the Industrial Training Institute in the region to help the people of the region. Awards are given

to the meritorious students of the region from time to time to encourage them in their studies. Upgradation of health centres in many parts of the region is one of the common issues of the youth and student organisations. To create employment opportunities for the educated youth of the region, there is an indirect pressure from the members of the youth and student organisations to give preference to the people who are residing in the region for any of the government and non-government services. In order to reach to the masses, they also organise other activities like free medical camps where many people are benefitted. Construction and repair of roads is another major demand of both the youth and the student organisations. Strikes and black flags demonstrations are being adopted by the FKJGP and the KSU to demand for the repair and construction of proper roads. The people at one time came out of the villages to repair the roads on their own. In 2013 state assembly election, the villagers of *Maweit* (a village in the region) had unanimously withdrawn from casting their votes to express their grievances to the government over the ill-fated condition of the roads.

To bring economic development in the region and to generate employment for the people, the FKJGP has appealed to the tourism department of the government for the beautification of the tourist spots around *Nongkhnnum* River Island of West Khasi Hills and other tourist spots in the region. It also demanded the government to set up an agricultural research laboratory centre in the region to help the farmers of the region.

From the interviews conducted with the tribal people of the region, different opinions are gathered about the FKJGP and the KSU. Some consider the youth and student organisations as necessary mechanisms for helping the student community in developmental activities and welfare of the region, while others are of the view that these organisations are only helping the welfare of their own community. They also act as an agent to raise

the voice of the masses. Many people support the issues raised by them as they are needed for the protection and development of the community. People also support the nonviolent methods of agitation, adopted by these organizations, as they create political awareness to the various policies of the government but they do not willingly support the violent methods as they affect their daily activities. Further, some are of the opinion that if they do not achieve the demands by nonviolent means, violent means are needed. The people also agree that the FKJGP and the KSU will not achieve any of their demands without the support of the masses in the region.

There are similarities and differences in the opinions of both the KSU and the FKJGP on various issues though both of them have similar objectives of representing the communities of the region. On the developmental issues in the region both these organizations work together in all aspects. On the uranium mining issue, there is a dissimilarity in their views. While the KSU opposed any form of Uranium extraction from the region, the FKJGP remained neutral initially but later agreed to join the anti-uranium campaigning with the KSU. On the proposed *Kynshi hydel power* deal both the KSU and the FKJGP agreed with the scrapping of the deal by the Government. The youth and student organisations also work together on the control of influx of population as a common objective. The KSU and the FKJGP also differed in their views on the issue of opening up of the Bloc headquarters; the KSU stood with the first decision on the *Mawthadraishan* Bloc headquarters while the FKJGP asked for a unanimous agreement of all the people of the region in this regard.

### **Government Policies on the Demands of Youth and Student Organizations**

The youth and student organizations, on certain issues,

have successfully influenced the decision making process of the Government due to the community-based structure of their organizations. In the case of Uranium mining, though the state cabinet (under the Congress led Meghalaya United Alliance government) expressed that they approved the pre-project development activities of the UCIL on 422 square hectares of land in the mining sites of the West Khasi Hills, actual uranium mining has not taken place as long as the people of the region are opposed to it (The Shillong Times, 2009: 1, 7). Though KSU continues to oppose any developmental work by the UCIL such as the construction of the *Wahkaji-Mawthabab* road, some local organizations are of the opinion that there is a need for construction and repair of roads in the region. The Government did not agree with the implementation of the Inner Line Permit, to control illegal immigrants, but is trying to adopt other regulatory mechanisms which have not been implemented yet. On the demand for security of the people, a police outpost was opened at *Langrin* and for the protection of the people who are residing at *Langpih*, the state Government put up a police camp due to the sensitivity of the area (The Shillong Times, 2013: 1, 7). The government have responded to the demands of the KSU and the FKJGP for better infrastructure in the region such as the improvement of education in the region through the upgradation of some government secondary schools to higher secondary schools, improvement of the Industrial Training Institutes, upgradation of the health centres. However, these are being done at a very slow pace. Regarding the construction and repair of roads, not much has been done by the government except for the agreement to construct the National Highway 44. The FKJGP and the KSU work along with the regional parties such as the Hill State People's Democratic Party and the *Khun Hynniewtrep* National Awakening Movement on many issues though they deny any political involvement with any political party.

## **Conclusion**

The FKJGP and the KSU which represent the youth and student organisations emerged as pressure groups in the region; they have influenced the decision making process of the State Government on many issues demanded by them. It is interesting to note that the student organisations in the region raised very few academic or campus-related issues. They have not raised the scholarship problem of the students nor have they worked intensely on the issues relating to the admission of tribal students in the national educational institutions established in the state. They are more inclined to community-based issues. On the other hand, the FKJGP has raised academic issues such as seat reservation for the tribals of the state who are pursuing MPhil or PhD degree in the North Eastern Hills University (NEHU). Further, the KSU does have women's wings but the FKJGP has excluded women from their organisation despite the fact that the region's economic power is being held by females as females inherit ancestral property. In the past decade, any activities done by these groups are openly criticised by the people in the region. However, the presence of the KSU and the FKJGP in the region has actively made the tribal people aware of their political rights and opened their eyes to the policies of the government. They have also encouraged and taught the youth and the students of the region to participate in the political activities of the state.

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**SHAMANISM AMONG APATANIS:  
ART, PRACTICES, BELIEFS, AND ITS  
REFLECTION ON SOCIETY**

**Hibu Dindie<sup>1</sup>**

The Apatanis (*New World*, 2012) are one of the many palaeo-mongoloid tribesmen who inhabit the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in its northeastern frontiers. The tribe's traditional homeland is Ziro, headquarters of Lower Subansiri district. Ziro is essentially a broad valley of about 32 square kilometres, nestled in the central zone of the eastern Himalayas. The area falls under the tropical zone, and is characterised by wet, tropical, evergreen forests at the lower elevations, and sub montane and alpine vegetation at the higher elevations. A small river *Kley* irrigates the valley running across it diagonally. The Nyishi and the Hill Miri (Nyishi) tribes are the neighbours of the Apatanis.

The valley is divided into eight villages grouped into three clusters. Each of them attributes their existence to three mythical forefathers or ancestors. The *Diibo* cluster includes the villages of Hiija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage and Bamin-Michi, and calls their ancestor *Aba Dabo Tasso Dabo*. The second cluster consists of the villages of Hari, Tajang, and Biila consisting of the Kalung and Reru segments, and calls their ancestor *Aba Tayu Bado Tayu*. The third group consists of a single village *Hango* also called Hong, and calls their ancestor *Aba Niichi Aba Niitii* or *Aba Hiipa Pabing Hiipa*.

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In his book, *The Apatanis and Their Neighbours*, Haimendorf (1962) observes that each of these villages has exclusive rights over the land and resources that fall under their village jurisdiction. These are backed by ancestral claims and hence hereditary rights over the same. Within each of these boundaries are included the common village land, homesteads and individual plots of rice fields, kitchen gardens, bamboo and pine groves. There also occur common meadows, clan and community forests. Land can be bought and sold to any villager within or outside it, but the habituated areas within the villages are never sold to anyone except among the same village inhabitants.

Land formed the basis of Apatani existence and prosperity. The pressures of a big population on a limited resource have led the people to devise many ways to derive the maximum out of a limited land. The system of wet rice cultivation backed by an extensive network of irrigation dams and channels, along with crop management, horticulture, forestry, and animal husbandry among some of them. Land still is a source of pride among the tribesmen. Many disputes, legal battles, and bad blood still occur over its possession and disposal.

The *Ipyo Lembo Rego Reru* or oral migration myths, mention of an original homeland called *Kolyung Kolo* supposedly very far north from the present habitat, across the international border. The myths also narrate the movements and routes undertaken by the ancestors as they followed the courses of the Subansiri from its headwaters. The tribe took a north-southerly route following the tributaries of Subansiri: the *Kuru* and *Kiimey* rivers, which are the present-day *Kurung* and *Kumey* rivers. The origin and reason for the migration in the absence of evidence can at best be only speculated about.

The people of *Yangte* speak of a place landmarked by a stone, beside which the ancient Apatanis were said to have held high jump

competitions en route their migration. In his book *The history of Arunachal Pradesh*, Pandey (1997) mentions the archaeological excavation at *Parsi Parlo* that yielded a few potsherds from stratified deposits with affinities to Chinese and South East Asian pottery. Both these places and others mentioned in the myths are along the routes of the Subansiri and its tributaries, in the present day Kurung Kumey, Kra Daadi, Upper Subansiri, and Lower Subansiri districts of the State. These in many ways attest to the authenticity of the myths and tales of migration.

The family forms the basic unit of the Apatani society, which comprises a couple, their unmarried offspring, and other dependents. Many families are bound together in a network of kinship called the *Halu* or a clan. Membership to it is determined by consanguinity or affinity. Male members hereditarily inherit the membership of their clan. Females retain their natal clan identity till she gets married, after which she becomes the member of the clan she marries into. The society is patrilocal, patriarchal, and the descent is traced patrilineally. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family or clan after their father or elders. He is entitled to all ancestral land and wealth; newly acquired wealth are distributed among the other sons. The females get none of the share in land and property. She, however, inherits the ancient beads and ornaments, which are passed down from mothers to their daughters.

The tribe is divided into two moieties-the *Gyuth* and the *Gyuchi*. The Apatanis practice clan exogamy, moiety and tribe endogamy. Monogamy is the respected form of marriage though polygamy also occurs. Arranged marriage by the means of omen and divination called *Mihi Pabin Konii* was the norm earlier. Marriage based on love or mutual consent is the norm now. Much deviation from the norms of moiety and tribe endogamy does occur. Such unions bring subtle forms of *ostracization* in certain ritual observations. Reprisal or reactions to them are

however individual family or clan specific. Young people are allowed much more freedom to experience and experiment than their mainland Indian counterparts. The rules against clan incest are, however, rigidly adhered to, and any such union is much tabooed and despised. A gendered division of labour exists. The men are expected to feed, fend, and fight for his family, clan, and community, and look after the external affairs and influences. The women are expected to look after the home and hearth, and attend to the domestic chores of raising a family and tending to the fields and gardens. She has much say in the family affairs, as also in the family income, wealth, and its disposal.

The advent of contact and communication with the outside world has brought about many visible changes in the ways and lives of the people. The tribe is one of the most educated among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Both boys and girls are given equal access to education and opportunities. Many professionals, bureaucrats, traders, entrepreneurs, and artists exist in the tribe (Haimendorf, 1990). The nature of jobs and the places of their posting have scattered the tribesmen away from their homeland, across the state, the nation, and beyond. The means of sustenance have moved away from the fields and forests to the now preferred mode of white-collared government jobs, businesses, and other allied or ancillary services. Many traditional systems and institutes such as the *Buliang* or village council have been taken over by government administrative and judiciary systems. Abominable practices like slavery, capital punishments, raiding, and taking hostages have been abolished by the same.

The Apatanis still retain most of their tangible culture, in their dresses, art, artefacts, and utilitarian goods maintained in their original essence. The patterns of weaving and ornaments have been preserved, though modified versions of the same also do exist. Folk performances in the manner of dances such as *Daminda*, *Pakhu Itu*, and *Ropi Sonii*, a war dance after killing

a big feline, are performed. Ballads and songs are still sung in the form of *Biisi*, *Ayu*, and *Hiirii Khaniin* (Kaning, 2010). The Apatani tradition of tattooing the face - *Tiipey Paniin*- and cane nose plugging - *Yaping Hullo* - of the womenfolk have been outlawed and discontinued. The Apatani homeland is being geared for recognition from the UNESCO as a world heritage site, as a unique cultural landscape based on a sound and unique use of its eco-system.

The tribe while still maintaining its many rituals, customs and traditions, have also shed many appendages of culture traits and practices. Individual village level festivity such as the *Dree* has been given a common cultural identity. It is celebrated on the same day and the same venue, observed by the same rituals, wherever the Apatanis may reside. Despite these, many individual differences in faith, belief, ideology, clan, accent and intonation of the same language, as also certain ritual observation of the ceremonies occur among the various clusters and villages.

The Apatanis, from their birth till death, remain surrounded by rituals that define the rites of life in marriage, birth, death, or other ceremony. These are all grouped into four categories of rituals. The *Chichin Uie* is the ritual of healing; the *Gyunyan Uie* includes dealing with or cure from malevolent forces. The *Tugyu Uie* is to seek favours and blessings from divinities, and the *Tiigo Uie* includes the ceremonies of *Myoko*, *Murung*, and *Subu*. All rituals and ceremonies fall within any one of them (Kaning, 2008). Various ceremonies and rituals exclusive to each accompany the same. Whether a simple healing or an elaborate procedure such as the *Mida* (marriage) or *Niipo Apin* feasts for the newborn, requires much manpower, time, and energy. As such, individual members or families would be rendered helpless if they are to do them all by themselves.

The clan as such forms an extensive network of a physical and moral support system. All clansmen trace their genealogy to a common ancestor whose name they collectively bear as the clan identity. The clan members are thus considered blood relatives, and are bound to each other by obligatory rights, duties, and responsibilities. Each member, irrespective of his social standing or status, has his own share of tasks and duties towards the clan and its members. All male members of a clan have equal share in ancestral clan land and forests. All decisions regarding internal or external disputes and socio-political issues are collectively taken in conjunction with the members and elders of the clan. The kinsmen prove their solidarity with their fellow kinsmen by providing support of goods, cash, and physical labour in rituals, celebrations, death or distress. All help and support are provided with the mutual understanding that it will be reciprocated in the same manner when the occasion arises. Group cohesion and bonhomie define the strength and influence of the clan, and has much bearing on the socio-political and economic discourses.

In addition to this network of kinsmen formed of blood or matrimony, systems of ritual friends and relatives, sealed by pacts or oaths of friendship occur. These are the *Biinii Ajing*, *Subu Piinyan*, and *Lyidu Piinyan* among the Apatanis, and *Manyang* with the neighbouring Nyishi tribe. Such relatives and friends are not related by blood, but nevertheless bound by the same obligatory rights, duties, and responsibilities as the kinsmen in ceremonies and distress. This was a mechanism to maintain peace and harmony within and outside the tribe, to check the frequent raids and wars. It was instituted to provide a network of solidarity in times of war or stress, to lend aid and support during calamities, and to provide shelter and food during trading expeditions (Kaning, 2008). These were reciprocated as and when their turn arrived. These are handed down from generation to generation, and are never severed, with the belief that doing so

would attract the wrath of the ancestors in curses and calamities. Every year during *Myoko*, such relations and friendships are renewed and recognised, with lavish entertainment of gifts and feasts. Any Apatani family, friend, or well-wisher may convey their gesture of goodwill by contributing in cash, goods, or in-person attendance in the ceremonies or aid the people struck by disaster or calamity. These are expected to be reciprocated, but are not obligatory in nature.

The frame of the Apatani society is formed of its people organized into networks of kin and clan, and the various orders and rites bind them together. Ceremonies in a family, betrothal of two individuals, ritual in a clan or village are thus the quintessential threads that bind the society and its members to one another. Amidst the hectic schedule and workload of such occasions, scattered kinsmen are brought back to their villages and homeland. The members are re-introduced to each other, and a setting as such provides ample scope for group discussions and deliberations. Decisions to codify or modify the existing laws, bye laws, and codes and conventions of the rituals and customs that singularly affect the whole tribe are unanimously taken by such gatherings.

The Apatanis innately believe that there are forces surrounding their life and universe which have much bearing on them. They believe that human grit and determination alone cannot determine his fate, fortune, or luck. That there are forces which, though unseen and unheard, have much say in human lives, in determining their fate, health, fortune, and luck. They also play a huge role in controlling the elements of nature and their effects on the human existence. These forces are collectively termed as *Uie*, which is a generic term to denote the various gods, goddesses, semi-divinities as also the malevolent forces such as ghosts and demons. All living forms and natural features of extraordinary grandeur and form are said to have a soul or *Yalo* within them.



Both the *Uie* and *Yalo* are invisible agents much like the air that surrounds us. The latter live within the body and leave it after its death or disuse.

The *Uie* have extraordinary power and strength. They can bless a family or individual with the best of everything, or harm the same with unfound grief and distress if they be pleased or displeased. Human existence is thus, a constant gamut of luck and chance and much dependent on the favour or disfavour from the cosmic forces. These supernatural forces surround every nook and corner of the human existence. They reside in the cosmos, the underworld, within and outside the villages, and in the vicinity of houses. Though the supernatural and the human world coincide, and their effects felt on human lives, their realms are much apart. As and when their effects are discerned, contacts need to be made with them. A Shaman called the *Nyibu* is employed to communicate and channel human needs and grievances to the *Uie* and also to mediate between the two.

Ember, Ember, and Peregrine (2012) states that the word *Shaman* may have come from a language that was spoken in Eastern Siberia. The Shaman is usually a part-time male specialist who has a fairly high status in his community and is often involved in healing. More generally, the Shaman deals with the spirit world to try and get their help or keep them from causing harm. The Apatani or *Tanii Nyibu* is most often a male, though a case of a female *Nyibu* did exist. He is the cultural and ritual specialist of the tribe, and is well versed in the oral narratives; that harbour the tribe's myths, legends, and history. He is the bridge to the cosmos, as well as a performance specialist and custodian of the tribe's traditions. He is the all-in-one medicine man, healer, consultant, spiritual guide, and presides in all rites, rituals, and ceremonies. He is much revered and his influence once extended to all spheres of tribesmen's lives and activities.

According to Apatani legends, the first Shaman in the earth was a female named *Dolyang Chanjang*, also called *Dolyang Chanjang Tani Barmii*, or *Dolyang Chanjang* the sister of *Abotani* or *Tani* (*Abotani* is considered the first human being from whom all other humans and races on earth descended and the ancestor of the Apatanis and all other *Tani* tribes such as the Nyishi, Adi, Galo, Tagin, Mishing, and their sub-tribes). *Dolyang Chanjang* was so much envied by the two other male shamans *Ato Dodu* and *Achi Penji*. She was forced to acquit her arts and vocation after falling prey to their scheme played in connivance with harangued divinities and demonic beings for saving her brother *Abotani* from his certain death. She relegated her knowledge, trade, and craft to the males, to continue human tryst with the cosmos, as and when their intervention was deemed necessary. The ritual methods and performances as practiced by the *Nyibus* are said to be those practiced and taught by the three ancient *Nyibus*. These are handed down from generation to generation through oral means and hands on training.

The *Nyibu* is as much a common man in the manner he slogs, rests, and earns for sustenance. He is subjected to the same laws, taboos, duties, and responsibilities as they apply to his kinsmen, fellow villagers, and tribesmen. He is distinguished by the knowledge he possesses of the ancient, the spiritual and the role he plays in social and religious ceremonies. Anyone can choose to become a *Nyibu* irrespective of his clan, moiety, or social standing. Prodigy shamans display deft skills such as a sharp memory, a good ear and taste for the ritual texts and chants. Such persons if they so wish, attach themselves as apprentices to senior shamans called the *Nyibu Buhru*, who is proficient and expert in all of the ritual arts and ceremonies. In course of time, with sufficient training and experience he establishes himself independently and takes on the roles and responsibilities of the *Nyibu*. He may in turn train juniors and apprentices, and they to their juniors, and so on.

A *Nyibu* of any moiety, village or clan can attend to the rituals of healing and cure for any client, provided he knows the genealogy and subtle variations of ritual chants of various clans and villages. This rule does not apply to the *Tiigo* ceremonies, which adhere to the moiety boundaries in rituals and ceremonies. A *Gyuth Nyibu* may perform such rituals only for a *Gyuth* client or clan, and a *Gyuchi Nyibu* only for a *Gyuchi* client or clan. Only a *Nyibu Buhru* of the respective clans and moieties could perform these ceremonies. His modes of interacting with the supernatural include prayers, divinations seeking omens and answers, and manipulation for assistance in good or evil. All shamanistic rituals, duties, and performances are conducted in the archaic language called *Miji Agung* or *Miji Migung*. This language is believed to be the language of the gods and the ancients. All ritual and folk texts and narratives that comprise the oral traditions of the tribe are formed of this. Various methods are employed to please, persuade, appease, or manipulate the supernatural to achieve the desired ends.

Divination employing chants and prayers incanted over local poultry eggs and sacrificed animal liver are employed. These are of three types- the first is a method called *Yalang Binii*, where a local poultry egg is placed in a small bamboo container the *Yalang Piuro* tied to a string, and held by the thumb. The second is called *Papu Pinii* where local eggs are boiled and sliced into half using a human or *Siya* bovine hair. The last and the most trusted of the three is called *Pahin Koniin*, where sacrificed chicken and pig liver are examined for signs and messages. The auto swinging of the *Yalang Piuro*, the lines, colours, shades, and various formations of the egg yolk and animal liver are examined and interpreted as symbols and messages from the *Uie*. The cause and agents of distress are identified this way. Appropriate procedures and sacrifices follow to coax the agents, to release their hold or retain their blessings upon the client. The last form of divination

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is the only method employed in the *Tiigo* rituals and ceremonies of betrothal.

The focal point of all shamanistic procedures and performances are the altars or *Uie Agyang*. These are likened to and treated in the manner of the supernatural forces themselves. All chants, ceremonies, and sacrifices are directed to it. These are abstract forms of art, built of thin slices of bamboo; twisted, braided, coiled, and plaited into different symbolic designs. The leaves of the *Kiira*, scientifically known as *Castanopsis Spp*, considered holy by the tribe are intertwined along with these. An array of tussled bamboo shavings, along with the feathers and shells, of the poultry and eggs used in the rituals decorate the altars. These altars are dug into the ground, and erected in the vicinities of the houses and ceremonial places, within and outside the villages. Or, these are hung and erected in the exterior and interior walls and corners of the houses.

Rice powder, rice wine, and blood of animals sacrificed are smeared over these. These are the overt performances which symbolise the entertaining and offering of food, drink, and animal wealth to the divinities who come to aid or bless the client. The animals sacrificed are poultry, dog, pig, cow and, mithun locally called *Subu*, in that sequence and order of hierarchy in the rituals. The animal for the sacrifice and the number of it, is dependent on the demands and form of the rituals. The wealth and status of an Apatani in the olden days were measured by the animal wealth he possessed. Cattle, especially the mithun, were used as a means of exchange in all barter and trade transactions, within and outside the tribe. The animal wealth given up in the rituals signified the length a client was willing to go to please the forces and obtain their favour and help.

The *Nyibu* attends to the sick and the ailing, and performs all the rites of birth, marriage, death, and disposal. He knows the

means and methods to locate people, or the cattle lost or dead in the jungles. He can call back departed souls as in *Yallo Bonii*, back to their living bodies. The ordeals of truth called *Dinsu Nii* could be presided over only by the *Nyibu Buhru*. The accused had to undergo a trial by hot water, where a hot stone had to be retrieved from a bamboo tube with scalding hot water boiling inside it to prove the truth and his or her innocence. A form of sorcery called *Lakhun Du* was also performed in the olden times by some *Nyibus* who were heavily bribed to kill or harm someone accused of adultery or treachery. These rituals were much feared; for they entailed the vendetta and wrath of the malevolent forces in case of a failure. The *Nyibus* feared for their life, lineage, and reputation, and so rarely performed them.

The *Nyibu* for all his duties and services were paid in rice grains measured by a bamboo basket in the old days. These are now replaced by cash of a few hundred rupees, along with his share of the drinks and the meat of the animals sacrificed in the ceremony. He is entitled to the shoulder or forearm of the cattle slaughtered, termed *Alii*. He is also paid a share of pork bacon termed the *Bulii*. The *Nyibu*, his assistants, and all friends and relatives who come to help and assist in the ceremonies are lavishly entertained with choices of food and drinks. The *Nyibu* can neither demand nor complain about the amount of payment or the modes of entertainment. The amount of the fee, and the scale and manner of the feasts are solely dependent on the means and generosity of the clients. In addition to these, the *Nyibus* are publicly acknowledged, and rewarded for their services to the community, with citations and some cash, on public occasions such as *Dree* and *Myoko*. The *Danyi Piilo* and *Meder Nello* foundations, as also the conglomerate of traditional practitioners called the All Arunachal Pradesh Shaman and Priest Welfare Society (AAPISPWS) also reward them with cash and citations.

The Apatani beliefs in the cosmos, the existence of life and its purpose, and the events that shape their world, find their explanations in the myths and narratives. The tribe lacks a traditional form of writing, and hence all art and its forms are transmitted orally, and handed down to generations. The *Miji-Agung* or language is very different in form, structure, and meaning from the Apatani lingua franca. It is neither much understood nor practiced in everyday usage or conversation, except among the shamans and the few intellectuals. The practice and perseverance needed to acquire a taste and skill for it is a long tedious process, which is adding to its erosion from the general memory. The *Nyibu* dispenses all his roles and duties in this language. He is therefore, become the receptacle of the tribe's texts and history, as also the custodian of the tribe's traditions.

The wave of acculturation sweeping across this tribal state has had its most impact on the faith and belief of the natives. Contact and communication with global ideas and culture, has changed the philosophies and worldview of the natives. The institution of shamanism is revered by the traditionalists and people nostalgic about the past. They are also chided by those wanting to change into a society of modern means and values, or by those espousing puritanical ways of faith and belief. The duties of the *Nyibu* for healing the sick and the ailing, have been taken over by medicines and doctors of formal healthcare systems. His duties have now narrowed down to conducting the rituals and ceremonies, in birth, death, marriage, or festivities. At the same time many people undergoing medical treatment still consult the *Nyibu* for rituals of healing. Any untoward incident and unfound grief or sorrow, is considered because of being under supernatural gaze, wrath, or curse. The *Nyibu* is still consulted to mediate with the supernatural, to derive omens and messages, and bring cure and help from them, though the degree of such is much lesser than before.

The current situation of the tribe is of a tribal society at the crossroads, straddled between a nostalgic reminiscence of the past and worry for the future. The present is a conundrum of confusion and celebration mired in various political, social, and economic events and changes which act upon the tribal cultural elements and patterns.

The state of Arunachal Pradesh has, for more than a century, been connected with the global influences and traditions. First came the administration, then healthcare, education, commerce, transport, various infrastructure, and now the digital and media technologies. The features of industrialisation and mechanisation of economic outputs that characterise most such contacts across the world are of much less impact, though. The changes in life style, customs, traditions, faith, ideology, ethics, mores, and codes of behaviour are the overt manifestations of these contacts, which have created much change and impact on the tribal psyche. Food habits, attire, art, architecture, language, religion, and traditional organisations have been the most affected. Religious missionaries, education, and government intervention have been the most active agents of these changes.

The changing milieu has had a multi-faceted effect on the tribal societies. It has brought health, longevity, wealth, nourishment, education, and opportunity to many impoverished, sick, uneducated, and deprived tribal villagers. Services and opportunities have brought many different tribes, as well as non-locals, into contact with each other and their cultures, in the different towns and administrative centres. The various tribes have crossed into and live within other tribal boundaries and territories. This scenario till some decades ago was unimaginable in the State where the various tribes have their own non-demarcated territories. These were mutually understood and regarded, and any other tribe or person intruding or setting up their homes in such territories would have wrought serious

clashes and wars. The individual existence of the tribes, old feuds and various inter-tribal animosities, are blurring with inter-tribal matrimony and efforts aimed at a peaceful and harmonious co-existence in a changed social setting. At the same time, group cohesion, solidarity, pride, and collective labouring for common good are disintegrating within the various tribes themselves.

The single most deciding factor of a tribal identity, which is its language, is being replaced by a pidgin form of Hindi and Assamese. These are used in everyday conversation by the various tribes, within and outside their families, as also to converse among themselves and with the non-locals. The rate at which these languages are replacing the native tongue, many tribal languages are poised to be forgotten or lost. English is another language used in education and official transactions. The knowledge or proficiency of it is another form of elitism, in a much status and education-conscious tribal society. Mainstream Indian, Hollywood and Far eastern culture and entertainment industries shape many of the thoughts and art forms prevalent today.

The same agents and influence thought to develop and modernise the tribes by changing the tribal ideas, values, and traits are now being derided by many sections of the society as the agents of erosion. In the initial stages of the contact, occurred much economic, educational, employment, and infrastructural boom, along with political, social, religious, and attitudinal changes. A period of restive lull and rejoicing in the fruits and promises of development followed it.

Gradually, the initial euphoria brought about by promises of equal treatment, welfare, development, and a national pride, has begun to fizzle out on those who had taken to them most eagerly. A sense of mismatched identity, in a nation of vastly different races and cultures, began to dawn on the people. The practices and ideologies espoused by majority in the nation, are



very different from the tribal worldview and cultural ethos. The values and doctrines championed by the various world religions had initially helped conjoin various tribes, seal their internal rifts, and to do away with many social ills. The initial takers to these are also, now divided by the various segments and rifts, within these faiths and practices. The doctrine and philosophies promulgated by these faiths, have put the believers and non-believers at odds against each other. Many kinsmen, relatives, and neighbours have drifted apart, over non-observance and noncompliance in the duties, responsibilities, and ceremonies of other kin, clansmen, or the community.

Many former rituals and ceremonies are being abandoned for lack of believers or the conductors of these rituals. Many other ceremonies are being moulded, their rituals amalgamated into, or incorporated with new traits and elements. Along with the tangible heritages, many intangible heritages manifest in the folk arts, songs, dances, and sacred performances are gradually being forgotten. The language shift is rendering many oral traditions that encompass the myths, legends, histories, art, and religion of the tribes into disuse and distaste. Skills that defined a tribal life in traditions such as weaving, basketry, hunting, trapping, agriculture, or forestry are being relegated as the duties of the villagers, who are the people still living in the villages, in the high hills, and the deep forests.

Riveted by the many changes and distortion in tribal traditions and identities, a wave of reformist revivalism is sweeping across the state. The Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh or better known by the acronym IFCSAP is an umbrella organisation of the cultural movements taking place in the state. Many individual and tribe-based movements seek to maintain the tribal heritage and identity, by espousing pride and practice of the native culture and language. Many concerted efforts have been made in the various tribes to devise scripts and grammar

for their languages and dialects. Many works of researching, documenting, and reviving traditional ways and modes of living, as also resurrecting dying arts and traditions have been initiated under its rubrics.

The traditional shamans, priests, and tribe elders as such, have once again come to be regarded and respected for their knowledge of the tribal pasts, arts, and trades. The oral traditions and narratives are being recognised as the anchors of the tribal ways of life. Those proficient in them are respected for being living receptacles of tribal knowledge and traditions. The *Nyibu* as such, has begun to be revered for his art, once considered an appendage of the superstitious past, and predicted to die out in a modern society. The rites and ceremonies are again being carried out, with more gusto post the period of cultural lull. The traditional essence has been maintained but many modern means and forms have been added to the original rituals. The *Tiigo* ceremonies of *Myoko*, *Murung*, *Subu* and the ceremonies of betrothal as in *Mida*, are now more actively conducted and participated in by the people.

High demand exists for the *Nyibus* to preside over various rites and rituals though very few shamans or candidates exist for the same in reality. A big vacuum exists in the institution of *Nyibu*, whose number has declined due to death by old age and non-practice by those who chose to be relieved of their duties and the traditional faith. Many clan-specific rituals and ceremonies are being abandoned because no shamans exist to preside over them. There are not many volunteers who would like to learn or take up this sacred vocation. It requires much patience and perseverance to obtain the knowledge and skills required for the art. Even more time and energy is needed to dispense its duties and responsibilities. Yet it pays way little to the interested involved in surviving or sustaining the self or the family, in a super competitive world.

Under the rubrics of the IFCSAP foundation, many traditional faith and religious practices have been institutionalised, into formal forms of religion. The *Donyi-Polo* or Sun-Moon faith is for the Tani group of tribes, the *Intaya* for the Mishmi group, and the *Rang Frah* for the Nocte, Wancho, Tangsa group of tribes. Much of the folk practices and essence has been retained in these new religions, and also many more elements of other traditions and faith been incorporated into them.

Places of worship, as in the *Gangiing* of the Adis, the *Nyeder Namlo* of the Nyishis, and *Meder Nello* of the Apatanis have been established. Committees exist to run the affairs of the *Meder Nello* and the *Danyi-Piilo* (the Sun and the Moon in Apatani) movement. There are prayer meets held in these *Meder Nello*s, and a shaman known as the *Danyi-Piilo Meder Nello* or *Meder Nello Nyibu*, leads the believers in the worship and rituals of the *Danyi-Piilo* faith. These shamans or *Danyi-Piilo Nyibu* like the traditional *Nyibu*, can be of any age and gender, and belong to any moiety or clan. They also perform rituals of healing and cure, in addition to being the preachers and messengers of the new faith. They can perform for any client, clan or moiety; and dispenses all their duties and ceremonies in the archaic language *Miji Agung*. They, by the virtue of their command over the *Miji* language, have much knowledge of the history, art, culture and traditions of the tribe. They have been chosen and trained by the establishers of the *Meder Nello* movement. Many of them are still teens or young adults, and most of them are shamans-in-training.

The *Danyi Piilo Nyibu* like the traditional *Nyibu* is revered and respected as the guidepost of the tribe's faith and belief. Their role and duties coincide in the spheres of having a common cultural goal- to heal, to guide, and to maintain the traditions encompassed in ritual and folk performances. Both dispense their duties in the *Miji* language, and both master and train in the ritual chants and ceremonies. The difference

exists in the means and methods used by the *Nyibus*. The older *Nyibus* rely on knowledge and traditions, handed down orally from generation-to-generation. The newer order of *Nyibus* are taught prayers, chants, and ceremonies according to the doctrines and philosophies of the *Danyi-Piilo* by the means of books, pamphlets, and recordings of the rituals, songs and other compositions. The *Nyibu* traditionally employs the means of prayers, chants, divination, and animal sacrifice, to persuade, please, or manipulate the supernatural to achieve the desired end. The *Danyi-Piilo Nyibus* seek to do away with bloodletting and high cost of the rituals. They employ rice powder, water, incense sticks, and the holy *Tiipya* thread, to worship the *Danyi* (Sun) and *Piilo* (Moon) deities. Their worship includes praying and singing to the accompaniment of music (Tachang, 2006).

The institutionalisation of the tribal beliefs and practices, as envisioned by its proponents, has been to reform and revive the tribal customs and traditions. The features deemed unnecessary or unsuited to the modern values such as animal sacrifice, extravagant costs, and alcohol use in the rituals and feasts are sought to be reformed or replaced by alternate means and methods. The *Danyi PiiloNyibus* are ordained to take over the roles and responsibilities of the *Nyibus* as the latter dwindle with age and time.

The knowledge, expertise, and wisdom of the *Nyibu* remain far superior and in-depth than the *Danyi-Piilo Nyibus*, which the latter acknowledge. The older *Nyibus* still attend to the birth, death, and marriage rites. They lead the tribe and clans in their rituals and ceremonies, and attend to the sick, distressed, and the possessed. Their methods seek to achieve optimistic ends, as in seeking favour, fortune, or fertility from the gods and goddesses. Their art also involves dealing with the malevolent forces, wrath, and human envy. The *Danyi-Piilo Nyibu* for now concentrates on the optimistic and spiritual side of the traditional beliefs, by

championing the philosophies behind the worship of the Sun High Goddess and Moon High God.

The changes, in the form, means, and methods of the *Nyibu* or the institution of shamanism, have been in response to the changing mores and values of a society brought about by material change in the culture. The society's reactions or reprisals to the changes in rituals, ceremonies, and duties of the *Nyibu* as the *Danyi Piilo Nyibu* take over his duties and ceremonies of the tribe, can be ascertained only when the switch over actually occurs.

### Conclusion

The Apatani cosmology and worldview are based on an innate belief in supernatural forces that play much role in human life and the physical world that surrounds them. This belief is constituted by its legion of many gods, goddesses, semi-divinities, and demonic forces, collectively termed the *Uie*. The *Nyibu* is the bridge between human and the supernatural world, by virtue of the sacred knowledge and methods he possesses, which are dispensed in the *Miji Agung*, an archaic shamanistic language. The *Nyibu* for a while was dismissed as a reminder of the superstitious ways of practice and belief, in the initial euphoric phase wrought by change brought of contact with the outside world. After a period of restive social and cultural lull, the recent times have seen revival and celebration of tribal identities and heritage. The generation of Apatanis, who first took to jubilation over these changes, are the ones now worried about the endangered identity and existence of the tribe. The generation born of them, who reap much benefit of education and opportunities, are also the ones who have been the most shielded, and hence ignorant of their own roots and traditions. In the panic and urgency of the moment to propagate the tribal ways and customs among the younger generation, the people have taken to the former rites and rituals more fervently than they did in the past few decades. The role of the *Nyibu* is

being revised, and his importance rising as the cultural, ritual, and historical specialist of the tribe. The ceremonies retain their essence but many changes and adaptations have been made to them. Many traits and elements have been replaced by modern means and cash, to accommodate the values and behaviour of the current society economically, politically, and culturally on the move. Many means and celebrations involved in these are also subtle ways of conveying the social standing of the performer in a neo-tribal society, where wealth and status decide a person's standing, less their moiety or former legacies. The *Nyibus* are, however, on the decline, due to age, death, and non-practice, and the younger generation are not inclined to take up the art. The *Danyi Piilo Nyibus* or neo-shamans of the now formally institutionalised traditional religious practices are being ordained to pick up the roles and duties of the traditional *Nyibu*.

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## MODERNIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL HEALING SYSTEM OF THE APATANIS

Dani Yama<sup>1</sup>

The state of Arunachal Pradesh is home to various indigenous tribes and sub tribes. There are about 25 major ethnic groups in the state. *Apatani* is one of the major tribes, who inhabits the Ziro valley, the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district which is located at an altitude of 5,754 ft above sea level. The Apatanis are settled in seven villages, namely *Hari*, *Bulla*, *Hija*, *Hong*, *Dutta*, *Mudang-Tage*, and *Bamin-Michi*. They were variously named as *Onka Miri*, *Anka*, *Apatang* and *Tanang* by early visitors of the valley. Apatanis, however, prefer to call themselves *Tanii* and trace their origin from legendary ancestor, *Abotani* (Kani, 1993, 8). Generally, they are regarded as one of the advanced tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in terms of progress made in different aspects of life.

The main objective of this paper is to focus on the impact of modernization on traditional healing system of the Apatanis. Some of the works related to *modernization and its impact on indigenous practices* were carried out and reported in several doctoral theses such as *Belief and Practices of the Apatanis: Study in Continuity and Change* (Naku, 2005) and *Gorra: Socio-Religious Institution of the Apatanis* (Habung, 2010). These works, though informative, provide limited elaborations on the impact of modernization on traditional healing practices of the tribes. Therefore, it is necessary to relook and readdress this issue

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to provide a window into the domain of cultural history and its role in helping unearth history. This paper therefore, primarily attempts to address the issue of traditional healing and how modernisation has its impact on it. Analysis of data was based on both primary and secondary sources. Interviewing with the Apatani people selected from different Apatani villages served as the basic research method. The researcher herself, being a native of the tribe, employed efforts (experience and observation) in validating the information so as to confirm the reliability of the data.

### **Traditional Healing System of the Apatanis**

History of health care system among the Apatanis is as old as evolution of the Apatanis themselves. Being an animist group, the Apatanis maintain their primitive system of health care at the standard and level of relevance to their social setup. This traditional system of healing was conceived with a philosophy of sympathy and evolved out of necessity, motivated by feeling of kindness towards fellow being through providing relief in times of sickness and suffering. Due to limited knowledge, diseases, suffering and misfortunes were attributed to wrath of spirits (Tada, 2000). Hence, traditional healing system among the Apatanis is influenced by their religious belief where spirits and deities are responsible for all ailments. Their holistic idea of what medicine means is integrally linked to their religious system. Spiritual and emotional issues are frequently mentioned in addition to mental and physical health, the emphasis being often on families, individuals, as well the communities. The traditional healing system among the Apatanis can be defined as *an art of belief and practices used by the people through various rituals and rites for wellbeing of humanity*. It provides psychological comfort through rituals when sickness lasts for long (though modern medicines are also being now used). The system also



includes taboos and various herbal remedies. In other words, the healing process may be defined as *a logical transformation from sickness to wellness and the transformation of self to meaningful aspects of the environment*. For centuries, the Apatanis remained relatively secluded and kept alive traditional knowledge in terms of innovations and practices and resources due to historical, political, and geographical reasons. As the natural resources of their environment continued to be appropriated, dependence on nature, plants, and animals to keep themselves disease-free and for the treatment of their health issues continues. The system of modern medicines was totally unknown to them even during the initial years after the independence.

Since all kinds of illness are accounted to the displeasure of the spirits, the key figure in the material world is the *Nyibu* (priest), a knowledgeable man who has the art of chanting skills to present the causes of sickness and suffering to the spirits based on oral tradition known as *Miji-Migung*. There are two categories of priests, the head priest *Bur Nyibu*, and the assistant priest *Buho* or *Barii nii*. However, the assistant priest is not a healer and since his selection is not on a regular basis, eligible elderly person of the community may take his place. The assistant's duty is to follow the hymns of the head priest during the ritualistic hymns especially in the rites of *Myole* and *Kharung*. The Apatani priest acts as a medicine man in addition to the annual cyclical rituals performed for the communities' wellbeing and prosperity. He plays a crucial role as the medicine man and reliever of spirit when a person falls sick. At the outset, the priest sets to identify the ailment and the spirit associated with the disease. A process of divination either through an examination of the chicken liver or eggs seek to identify the spirit responsible for a disease. This exercise also helps in determining the animal which the spirit seeks for propitiation. The healing process begins with a series of rituals undertaken to please the irked-spirit where not only the

individual and the family participate, but the entire community as well. Healing through propitiation of spirits or driving them out through complex ritual performance is a more dominant form of healing prevalent among the Apatanis. To detect the spirit responsible for any particular ailment and the nature of sacrifices to be offered, the priest (*Nyibu*) examines egg and chicken liver by chanting and reciting hymns on them. After chanting, he boils an egg and cuts it with hair into two equal halves where number and size of dark circle balls or a ring in the yolk identified in an egg signifies the cause of ailment and the kind of animal for sacrifice and offering. In case of chicken liver, the chicken's neck is slit and the liver is taken out and read by the experts. The lines, pores and spots on the liver signify the cause of the ailment and what kind of animals to be sacrificed. These two ways of examining are called *Papu Pika nii* and *Paying Kokanii* respectively.

Some observable practices of healing are achieved by propitiating spirits through various rituals and rites. Such rituals are initiated by the person when they are suffering from a particular ailment. They seek interaction of priests for performing rites such as *Kharunng or Tamu*, *Danyi*, *Ude-Uie*, *Myole*, *Neli-Kirii*, *Mujer*, *Pilya*, and *Yullo*. Such rites are called *Gyuniyang or Chiching-Uie*. *Gyuniyang Uies* are believed to be the treatment for common ailments. When a person does not get well through *Gyuniyang Uie* and the sickness lasts for a long, *Tiigo-ue*, an alternate way of healing is performed. This includes *Subu*, *Murung*, and *Myoko*, which are connected with happiness and prosperity. *Subu* and *Murung* are performed by individuals when sickness lasts for long even after the propitiation of above mentioned spirits where as *Myoko* is performed by the community for the wellbeing of humanity. *Tiigo* rite is a lengthy process. It takes almost two months including preparation time from examination of omen till the end of ritual (Kanning, 2008).

Depending on whether the spirit has taken over the household or physical space outside it, an appropriate ritual is performed. The sacred paraphernalia used by the priest during the rituals adds to the efficacy of the treatment. After every ritual taboo, the priest enforces specified number of days wherein restrictions are imposed on activities of the body and livelihood. This ensures that the spirit propitiated does not haunt humans and also marks the culmination of the sacred cycle. In case of community rituals, the taboos are prescribed for the entire community.

The traditional healing system not only involves having faith and practices through rituals and rites, but also requires practices of physical healing practices enabled by the use of varieties of herbs and animal products. Traditional practices provide an avenue through which individual and communities can ground their identities using traditional knowledge, belief, and action. Since the very beginning, the people have been interacting with their natural surroundings; they seek aid from the medicinal properties of herbs, plants and organ of the animal collected from the forest to keep themselves healthy. These experiences and traditional knowledge are verbally passed on to the generations and are still in practice in today among the tribals, along with the use of the modern system of medicines. Some of the plants, herbs, and wild fruits used for the minor ailments are as follows (Assung, 2010):

1. *Haliyang Thami or Borba (Ageratum conyzoids)* – a small herb used in case of cuts to stop bleeding.
2. *Riiko (Gynostemma pedata ern)*– A kind of creeper, dried over the fire and ground into powder and mixed with water to cure stomach pain and fever.
3. *Ngiliyang Hiiko Hamang (Centelle Asiatic Linn)*- Its leaf is used in case of urinary problems, and stomach ache. Leaf is boiled and consumed.

4. *Tahmo Abie (Arhus Calams)* – A wild fruit used in case of dysentery. It is prepared by grinding it with salt and consumed as juice.
5. *Siiti Byako (Solanum Xanthrocarpusm Linn)*– A fruit slightly burnt in fire and chewed in case of toothache.
6. *Hiibyo Hamang (Sonchus Brachyotus)*- Its roots are cut into pieces and smoked over fire with water in bamboo tube called *pilla sudu* and consumed in case of stomach ache. It also can be consumed raw.
7. *Kiiley Tolyo (Acours Calamas)*– A small plant, its roots is grounded and applied in case of fracture.
8. *Hiiro Hamang (Solanum Nigru)*– A vegetable used in case of stomach ache.
9. *Tarko*– A thorny plant which is burned and the ash produced is used and applied in case of toothache and used by the people in the house of new born child.
10. *Pilla*– A liquid prepared from ash after burning the dried herbs. It is used in case of allergy.
11. *Bije Pata (Bamboo)* – A small stick made up of bamboo split. In case of bone fracture, a small bamboo split stick is tied with small piece of cloth to the fracture area till it heals. This particular process is called *Reko Dedu*.

One of the animal products used for minor ailments is the head of snake particularly cobra, called *Borta Tabu* in local language. It is dried over the fire, ground and mixed with plain rice and small amount of chilli powder to cure dysentery. The fat or oil of hornbill's uropygial gland or the preen gland called *Pesu Hulyi* which located dorsally at the base of the tail is used as medicine to cure itching. In case of major cut, people used to burn the cloth and ash is applied in cut.

### **Factors of Transition**

Today, however, spiritual or faith healing practice among the Apatanis is less appreciated because of the decline of the institution of priesthood among them. The use of plants and animals in the healing process is declining very fast (Bagang, 2009). Traditionally, priests were considered to be the store house of knowledge in the Apatani society. Hence, the losing of institution of priesthood is loss of many valuable elements of culture, customs, and customary laws. On the other hand, the developmental initiatives are in full swing which lead to change in the traditional beliefs and practices. The development of science and technology produced many sophisticated gadgets to use in any field, especially in the field of medicine or health care system. These collectively made an impact on the traditional healing system of the Apatanis. Other factors such as education, religious conversion, and new economic opportunities have impact on the traditional healing system of the Apatanis.

The present Apatani society can be described as one in transition. The modernization and influence of outside culture has brought tremendous changes in the society. Though contact with the world outside has been there in some form or the other, the nature and degree of contact and the consequent impact has changed dramatically in the post-Independence period. Since the beginning of 1960s, the Apatanis have come under the scope of state-sponsored development. These changes in socio-culture are clearly noticeable in their traditional belief system, economics, dress, food-habits, and other cultural practices. The various factors responsible for the transition are discussed under the following points.

#### **Impact of Modern Education System**

Education is the foremost factor to have changed the

indigenous knowledge system. The present generation of Apatanis is more educated than the former ones. They leave the village to educate themselves in the different institutions in the city or outside the State. Many of them, especially those brought up in the hostels, are unable to speak their own language and prefer to converse in Hindi or English. They do not subscribe to the “blind faith” of the indigenous system and herbal medicine.

The modern education system was started in the Apatani valley just after the Indian Independence. The first lower primary school was established in the year 1949 at Dutta Papii. Before the introduction of school in Apatani valley, home was the only centre of learning for the people, where they were taught the traditional way of art and craft, as well as the folklores and tales of the community. With the establishment of an administrative centre, the government initiated a few lower primary schools at Hari (Byara), Hong (Hanoko), Biila (Lazibogya), and Hija (Diirelyang) in 1953. The medium of instruction was Hindi; Assamese language was introduced as the medium till 1972. After passing out from these primary schools located at villages, pupils had to go to distant places for higher studies. Unlike today's generation, the parents were not keen on giving modern education to their children. Hence, they were not permitted to go to school and education was considered the work of lazy people. According to them, physical work was the only means of livelihood. In spite of the negative attitude of parents towards education, children persuaded them and got admission in the schools located in Ziro or outside the State, in Assam (Landi, 2013).

Today, Ziro has become an education hub. Till the eighties of 20<sup>th</sup> century the educational institutions were purely run by the government. However, in the eighties, a private initiative started running the educational institutions in the Ziro valley. In a short

period of time, the Apatani valley was flooded with educational institutions which were run by both governmental and private enterprises.

Rapid growth of modern educational institution produced educated youth among the Apatanis who initiated measures to bring many changes in the socio-cultural practices of the Apatanis. In 1967, the Apatani students studying at Jawaharlal Nehru College (JNC), Pasighat [Lod Kojing, Gyati Challa, Rubu Koyang, Khoda Pussang, Tailyang Koyang and others] exchanged their views of having a centrally organized festival whereby the entire community could participate as one (Kojee, 2003). The Apatanis had many rituals and ceremonies which could be performed individually and collectively at village level. The festival for entire community was present at local levels. Those educated youth, therefore, decided to move the *Dree* ritual centrally to 5<sup>th</sup> July and 6<sup>th</sup> July. These dates were, therefore, fixed for the celebration of the Dree. Presently, Dree celebration starts from the 1<sup>st</sup> July in a modified form. In this way, the educated group accelerated changes in the society.

Due to the impact of modern education system, the younger generation generally does not take much interest in learning *Miji-Migung* or oral sacred literature associated with the institution of priesthood. Earlier, male children used to take interest in learning *Miji-Migung*; they used to go to the elders in group to learn *Miji-Migung*. At present, they are engaged in schooling and higher education due to which they do not get time to participate in many socio-religious functions. In order to learn *Miji-Migung*, one has to participate in socio-religious life of the society. Besides, the parents also have come to value modern education more than the traditional knowledge. As a result, the priestly institution as well as practice of traditional healing system has shown a drastic decline among the Apatanis.

## **Impact of New Religious Institutions**

The Apatanis of Ziro Valley had limited interaction with outsiders due to geographical, historical, and political reasons. The colonization of the tribe came late compared to the other foothill tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The first contact with the British administration started with armed expedition against the tribe for kidnapping and murder of the British subjects at the foothill. When the expedition reached the Apatani Valley, both the British officials under the leadership of Robert Blair McCabe along with his political interpreter and eminent Apatanis of Hari Village negotiated in the outskirts of Hong Village called Biirii on 15 February 1897 for the release of the captives. The British were satisfied with the agreement of the Apatanis in the negotiation. The Apatanis were not punished but got their captives released. After 1897, the tribe did not create further troubles to the colonial administration and further contact with the British did not arise. It remained unexplored by the administrators until the work of Haimendorf in 1944-45. However, with the introduction of modern education in the valley, things have changed. The traditional outlook of the people changed, which resulted the influence of new organized religions among the people. The ways of impact of various organized and new religions on traditional healing system of the Apatanis are discussed under following points (Naku, 2014).

### ***Christianity and its Impact***

Among the new religious institutions, Christianity is one the major factors that has an impact on traditional healing system. It has been an important factor of cultural change not only among the Apatanis but also for other indigenous people of the state. The reach of Christianity to the people was as a consequence of British colonization of India. However, it should be clarified that long before the English East India Company was to acquire



the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys and the hill periphery in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic congregations and the English baptists of Serampore 1793 (Rikam, 2005) were engaged in ministering and evangelizing the people of the Northeast India area. And by charter act of 1813, the Christian missionaries were formally permitted to preach the Gospel in the area and embolden the expansion of missionary activities (Syiemlieh, 2011). Consequently, the first impact of proselytization in the indigenous areas was felt by the Khasi hills. In March 1813, K.C. Pal evangelized many of the Khasi refugees who had been converted to Christianity in order to escape inter-tribe feuds (Rikam, 2005).

The spread of Christianity among the indigenous community of Arunachal Pradesh began with the foundation of mission centres and schools along the borders with the opening of a Baptist mission centre with schooling facilities at Tezpur in 1943. The process gained momentum after the foundation of a mission school at Harmutty (Assam) near Doimukh in 1977. It was from the seventies of 20<sup>th</sup> century, many of the Apatanis also started sending their children to mission schools in Assam as well as to Shillong, realizing the importance of education. The students who studied in missionary schools or colleges came under the influence of Christianity. The first Apatani to be converted to Christianity was Habung Tago, a retired Subedar of Assam Rifles. He is said to be baptized in 1952 at Siajuli. In the 1960s, there were only two missionary institutions in North Lakhimpur: Don Bosco School, Sabhoti, run by the Catholic Church and John Firth Christian English High School run by a Baptist Mission. Late Gyati Taka, a former minister in the government of Arunachal Pradesh, was the first Apatani to avail of the opportunity to study at Don Bosco. Later in 1963, many of the Apatani youth such as Tage Tatung, Tage Joseph Moda, and Roto Tajo joined Don Bosco School. They received baptism

on 1 June 1963. But the real beginning of Christian missionary activity among the Apatanis started only in 1984, when the first Baptist church in the valley, Town Baptist Church, was established at Pai Gate. Thereafter, there was rapid growth of Christianity among the Apatanis. Today, many of the Apatanis have been converted into Christianity and many new churches have also been established (Habung, 2010).

No doubt, Christianity has functioned as force for the modernizing indigenous society. At same time, it has impacted on religious practices of the Apatanis. The indigenous institutions of the Apatanis, their religious rites and rituals, especially traditional healing practices, have been adversely affected. It has not only converted Apatanis to Christianity, but was also instrumental in the giving up of their traditional practices. Even the alters constructed at their homes were destroyed and burned. The converted Christians have stopped seeking services from the traditional healing practitioners; they do not participate in any religious activity or consume any sacrificed meat. One of the important reasons for conversion itself was illnesses incurable with traditional practices. When the sick person could not recover her or his health even after performing rituals of traditional healing system several times, he or she looked at Christianity as an alternative and embraced the modern medicine that was associated more with the Christian education. Therefore, traditional healing practices of Apatanis have declined under the impact of new ideas and ethical values.

### *Impact of Hinduism*

The indigenous communities across the country have been influenced by the traditions of other communities around them. The Hindus, being the largest community in the country, also influenced the neighbouring communities since pre-colonial period. But the extent of the influence varied from one society

to the other. Nevertheless, the nature and extent of Hindu influence on the Arunachal Pradesh is quite different. The state of Arunachal Pradesh had been outside of the ambit of cultural influence from the mainstream in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. However, the foothill areas had some sort of relation with the plain people of Assam. Consequently, the influence of Hinduism is quite evident. Even during the initial years after Independence, the government of India had maintained a careful watch in order to restrict all kinds of religious activities other than the practice of tribal religion.

The influence of Hinduism on the Apatanis started at both official and unofficial levels. Particularly, after the event of 1962, the government of India intensified the construction of road communication across the state. For this purpose, the task force of Border Road Organization established its headquarters at Pine Groove, 4 km away from Ziro town. People belonging to this organization constructed temples and celebrated Hindu festivals such as Viswakarma puja, Kali Puja, Holi, and Deepawali. People were attracted and thus, marked the beginning of Hindu influence on the Apatanis. Today, there are many active Hindu organizations working among the Apatanis. These organizations include Arunachal Vikas Parishad, Arun Jyoti, Rashtriya Seva Sangh, Ramakrishna Mission and Vivekananda Mission. They are operating in the Apatani valley in the name of promoting and preserving indigenous culture and religion. However, Hinduism is also no less alien a religion, because their way of worshiping gods and goddess is quite different from the nature of worship of the indigenous people. Nor are their activities really encouraging the promotion and preservation of indigenous culture. Because of their activities, many among the younger generation and educated elites, particularly whose educational background belongs to Hindu Mission schools such as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda Missions, are getting more attracted towards Hinduism. Some

Apatanis like Hibu Rita and Hage Tadu have been converted as *Gayatri* priests who pray with Sanskritised Hindi and *Gayatri Mantra*. This adversely affected the cultural ethos and practices of the Apatanis. As a result, some people have stopped practicing traditional ways of healing preferring instead, to do *pujas* as per Hindu traditions.

### *Influence of Nepali Priests*

Apart from the impact of Christianity and Hinduism, Apatanis are also influenced by the Nepali priests. Nepali priests in Ziro valley are popular for curing the dreaded disease, jaundice. There are some Nepali priests at Hill Top, Hapoli, and Suluya (Old Ziro), who are very popular for curing jaundice. They not only cure jaundice, but also many psychological diseases, and infertility. The technique applied by these priests in curing jaundice has been found very convincing and effective by the Apatanis. These priests are not consulted openly, though. Yet, the fact that they are popularly being consulted and influence the treatment preferences of the locals, has negatively affected the traditional healing system of the Apatanis.

### *Emergence of Meder Nello Movement*

*Donyi-poloism* is a popular religious movement among *Tani* tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, basically started as a resistance to the influence of Christianity. It attempted to institutionalize the traditional faith by creating temple-like structures to counter other widespread religious conversion of tribal people. It was initiated among the Adis under the leadership of Talom Rukbo who is often regarded as father of Donyi-Polo movement; and in due course of time it became accepted as dominant model not only by the Tani tribe who believes themselves as descendant of Abotani but by the other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh like *Idu-Mishmi* and *Tangsas*. The Apatanis like other *Tani* tribes

have made some efforts to institutionalize their traditional faith to protect their people from conversion to alien religion or by bringing their traditional faith and belief into consolidated form called Danyi-Poloism.

Talom Rukbo's philosophy of *Donyi-Poloism* started propagating *Donyi Poloism* as revived form of their traditional religion since they also believe themselves to be believers of sun and moon and descendants of legendary figure *Abotani*. Some intellectuals like Hage Kojing, Mihin Kanning, Gyati Rana, Nani Tachang, Nani Kojing and others were closely associated with the Donyi-Polo organization. These people were instrumental in influencing the infant Donyi-Polo cults in the mind of the people. The Apatani literary and cultural society have published articles relevant to traditional culture, practices, and folklores. This new religion among the Apatanis started in the year 1973 in relation to the preservation of culture and identity. Later, this movement started in each Apatani village in which *Gaon Buras* (village elders) and educated Apatani youths decided to have common ground for indigenous believers.

Gradually, the movement got momentum in the nineties. It was in the year 1998 the first mass gathering (*Riikung Nello*) was organized at Tajang village at the residence of Rubu Tamin. Gradually *Meder Nello*, a temple-like structure for professing Danyi Piilo was created. The very meaning of *Meder* is pure or purity and *Nello* means site. These words were coined by Kago Siira of Hija village. The first Meder Nello was built at Hari village in the year 2003 and started functioning in 2004 (Yampi, 2012).

Though *Donyi-Poloism* started in relation to the preservation of culture identity with certain reformation by avoiding sacrifices, the originality seems to be disappearing. As such, *Donyi-Poloism* has directly or indirectly impacted the traditional healing system

of the Apatanis. Firstly, in place of original chanting, they have created a hymns and prayer book '*Lyambo pe*' and all the believers recite them together after the style of organized religions. They also avoid sacrifice of animals and in place of that they offer rice powder and rice beer. Secondly, they use incense sticks, candles, oil, ringing of bell like Hindus do, whereas in Apatani tradition, such acts of burning incense stick is not allowed while performing any rites. Thirdly, they have particular fixed days for prayer on Sunday like that of Christianity. Fourthly, they do not construct any alter, whereas in most of the Apatani rites there is a wide spread use of alters. Instead, they erect a white flag bearing a picture of sun, at the entrance of every house. Fifthly, they do not sacrifice animals; they simply offer rice powder and local beer to the images. Hence, *Meder Nello Movement* has, directly or indirectly impact the traditional healing system of the Apatanis.

### **Impact of Other Developments**

Apart from the above-mentioned factors that have impacted traditional healing systems, there are some general factors contributing to the decline of the traditional healing system of the Apatanis.

### ***Impact of Modern Medicine***

Before the introduction of modern medical facilities or allopathic medicine in Ziro Valley, priests (*Nyibu*) were the only consultant for the healing of any disease. The modern medical facilities came into being among the Apatanis only in 1952 with the establishment of eight-bedded hospital at Suluya (old Ziro) which was later shifted to Hapoli, and became the present District Hospital, on 25 February 1967, upgraded to eighty-bed hospital with greater physical and human resources. Besides the allopathic system of medicine, ayurvedic and homeopathic health systems were also introduced as alternative health care

systems, often integrated with the allopathic health care system. Now, almost in every village of the Apatani valley, there is at least one community health centre and dispensary. Altogether, there are six community health centres and one District General Hospital in the Apatani Valley. Hence, the people no longer remain exclusively dependant on the healing rituals of *Nyibu* for simple diseases; they rather prefer to go for modern hospitals for treatment. For example, for minor cuts, earlier people used herbal medicine called *Borba Tahmi* by simply smashing and applying it to stop bleeding, but now they prefer to use medicated first aid strips. In case of headache, people used to take rice beer along with chillies or simply take rice beer and rice in the leaf of a maize and just blow a wind through their mouth and throw away that rice beer and rice outside the house. This particular traditional way of healing is called *Appu Ali Pupa nii*. But now it is practiced by very few people only. There is an abundance of pharmacies and clinics in Ziro that makes it convenient for people to resort to modern medicine easily.

### *Development in Transportation and Economy*

The development of transportation and communication is an important factor that impacted the traditional healing system of Apatanis. People began to be more economy-conscious. Nowadays, youth travel outside the State in search of higher education and specialization purposes as well as in search of jobs in government and private sectors and settle nearby their working places in different parts of the country. Some of them have totally stopped practicing their own traditional ways of healing systems.

### **Conclusion**

The discourse on modernization and its impact on traditional healing system of the Apatani reveals that the advent of modernity among them has not only brought socio-economic, religious,

and political developments, but has also transformed the field of traditional religious medicinal and healing practices. The indigenous knowledge of the landscape, the spirits which inhabit it as well as the knowledge of medicinal plants is lost as they are no longer transmitted or preserved. The language of the chants and terminologies used for the herbs are no longer understood by the younger generation who are uprooted from their native spaces. Today, traditional system of healing and their link to an underlying culture and worldview are challenged and strained. Only very few people practice the traditional way of healing among the Apatanis. Hence, modernization has negatively impacted the traditional healing systems of the Apatanis.

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## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE SERVICES ON INFANT MORTALITY AMONG KARBIS AND RENGMAS OF ASSAM

Melody Seb Rengma<sup>1</sup> & Sarthak Sengupta<sup>2</sup>

Reproductive health is a crucial part of general health and a central feature of human development. It is a reflection of health during childhood, crucial during adolescence and adulthood, sets the stage for health beyond the reproductive years for both women and men, and affects the health of the next generation. The health of the new born is largely related to mother's health and nutritional status and also her access to health care. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2005), estimates that 55% of women do not have access to sufficient antenatal care. Modern contraception is often unavailable in certain parts of the world. Further, about 222 million women worldwide have an unmet need for modern contraception, and the lack of access to modern contraception is highest among the most disadvantaged populations. Lack of access to contraception is a main cause of unintended pregnancy associated with poorer reproductive outcomes. Mortorell and Ho (1984) opine that the high prevalence of infant mortality in developing countries is due to poor socio-economic conditions and least access to medical facilities. Infant deaths can be minimised through improving women's access to quality health care (including a skilled birth attendant) before, during pregnancy, and in & after child birth.

Infant mortality may be defined as the death of a child before attaining one year of age. It is computed as *the number of deaths*

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*of children below or equal to one year of age per 1000 live births.* Mortality is a demographic index which is significant in assessing the general health status of population. Though the association between health and mortality might not be so direct, yet high levels of mortality suggests poor health. Infant mortality rate (IMR) per thousand in India was 43 in 2012 and 54 in 2013 (Statistical Handbook, 2014). A number of causes akin to low socio-economic condition, inadequate poor medical facilities, cultural factors, and poor diet of expectant mothers are found to be some of the potent factors liable for high prenatal and infant deaths.

It is an established fact that good number of bio-social factors is responsible for prenatal and infant mortality. Human reproduction is greatly influenced by several bio-social determinants such as age at menarche, adolescent sterility, large inter-birth spacing due to prolonged breast feeding and others, education of mother, occupation of mother, maternal age at conception, birth order, maternal health and nutritional status, embryonic wastage, pre-reproductive mortality, etc. There are chances to overcome the shortcomings by taking both preventive measures (such as clean and safe delivery) and by proficient measures together with encouraging supplementary nutrition, prolonged breastfeeding of the infants, immunization, simple treatment for dehydration and other infections, prevention of accidents, fostering continuity of support and helping mothers to avoid becoming pregnant once again too quickly without any healthy spacing and also to avoid giving birth to more children than the family can afford (Arora, 1980). Therefore, the present study is an attempt to assess women's access to medical facilities particularly with regard to tetanus toxoids, iron or folic acid supplements, and bio-social factors such as education of the mother, age at menarche, age at marriage, age at first child birth, and its impact on reproductive wastage and infant mortality

among the *Karbis* and *Rengma Nagas* women of Karbi Anglong district, Assam.

Karbi Anglong district is situated in Assam between 25°33' N to 26°35' N latitude and 92°10' to 93°50' E longitude with a total geographical area of 10,434 sq. km. According to 2011 census, the district has a total population of 965,280 of which male and female populations are 493,482 and 471,798 respectively. The district is broadly divided into two physiographic units, viz., hills and plains. However, 85% of the district is covered by hills. Moist semi-evergreen forest, Moist-mixed deciduous forest, riverine type, and miscellaneous type with scattered, pure or mixed patches of bamboos are the forest types of the district.

The Karbis are the indigenous and numerically dominant tribal group of the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The term “Karbi” is derived from the word “*Thekar Kibi*” meaning offering of household deities before eating or drinking either in private or in social occasion. Rengma Nagas are the inhabitants of Rengma Hills and belong to the minority tribal group of Karbi Anglong. They are one of the Naga sub-groups found in Nagaland and some part of Karbi Anglong, Assam. The Rengmas inhabit Karbi Anglong district known as Western Rengma. They are considered a predominant endogamous community and are notified as scheduled tribe in the hill areas of Assam. The Rengmas of Assam are sometimes referred to as “*Njang Teriipunyu*” which means the ‘Cane Paths Rengma’ and it is conjectured that their ancestors migrated from Nagaland to the Rengma Hills of Assam. There are very few written historical records on the Rengmas. If local traditions are adhered to, it is believed that the Rengmas and the Lothas were once part of a single tribe. Both the Karbis and Rengmas belong to the Mongoloid stock and are classified under Tibeto-Burman speaker group (Bordoloi & Thakur, 1988).

The concept of health in Karbi is called “*Ok-pran*” (meaning a state of well-being). If someone states that “*Ne-ok-pranmesen*,” then he or she is well or free from illness; and if someone states that “*Ne-ok-pranheno*,” then he or she is not well. Among the Rengmas, the concept of health is called *Thyiime*. If someone states that “*Athyiigwa ma*,” then he or she is a well or free from illness; and if someone states that “*Athyiigwamn ma*,” then he or she is not well. Occasional headache, body pain, minor injury, etc. are not considered serious by them.

### Method

The study was carried out in four villages, viz., *Sangtilangso* and *London* village inhabited by the Karbis, and *Akhoiputa-Jongpha* and *Lolashonyu* villages inhabited by the Rengma Nagas under *Nilip* block, *Chokihola* in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The villages are situated within a radius of approximately 80-120 km from the township of Diphu, the district headquarters of Karbi Anglong. Data collected were based on household survey and interview method from 108 Karbi and 82 Rengma married women aged 15 to 49 years and those women whose husbands are alive and have at least one child. The selection of the sample was based on the concentration and homogeneity of the Karbi and Rengma Naga population. The data were collected during the period from May 2014 to November 2015. Designed fertility schedule was used to obtain information on fertility performances, whereas, data on demographic variables were collected through in-depth interview. Data on women’s access to reproductive health care services were collected with the help of the interview schedule and on the basis of accessibility with regard to tetanus toxoid; iron or folic acid tablet, and safe delivery, etc. Mothers were interviewed on the details of their reproductive histories as well as on the number of offspring (living or dead), abortion, and still birth, including the sex and the age of living

and dead children, and the use of medical facilities, particularly. Apart from this information, data on age at menarche, age at menopause, age at conception, birth order were also incorporated in the study. In case of difficulty of estimation of age of mothers, local events that took place were compared with official records and an approximate age was estimated. Necessary approvals were taken from the local community leaders, village headmen, and other relevant authorities before the commencement of the study. The knowledge of Karbi and Rengma language enabled the first author to have an intimate interaction with the people under study.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Reproductive Health Care Services and Infant Mortality**

Access to reproductive health care services and its impact on infant mortality are depicted in Table 1. The number of mothers who had never visited the doctors from both the populations is relatively higher. The incidence of infant mortality was found to be the highest among the Karbi women who not at all visit the doctors (6.93% mothers losing infants), low among the mothers who do visit, but are irregular in medical check-up (6.75% mothers), still lower for mothers who visit at least in an emergency (4.21%). The lowest was found among mothers who visit the doctors on a regular basis (3.12%). In the case of Rengma women, the trends are similar: highest incidence of infant mortality is found among mothers who either visit only in emergency or never visited at all (9.23% and 5.45% of mothers respectively) and the lowest among mothers who visit the doctors regularly (2.77%). Both the populations show the least percentage of infant mortality among the mothers who visit the doctors when called for (regular).

Table 1: Access to reproductive health care services and its impact on infant mortality

Medical visit of the mothers during pregnancy	Number of Mothers		Live birth		Infant death	
	Karbi	Rengma	Karbi	Rengma	Karbi	Rengma
Visited doctors when called for (Regular)	15 (13.88)	9 (10.97)	64 (19.16)	36 (14.34)	2 (3.12)	1 (2.77)
Irregular	22 (20.3)	16 (19.51)	74 (22.15)	55 (21.91)	5 (6.75)	3 (5.45)
In emergency	30 (27.77)	23 (20.04)	95 (28.44)	65 (25.89)	4 (4.21)	6 (9.23)
Not at all	41 (37.96)	34 (41.46)	101 (30.23)	95 (37.84)	7 (6.93)	5 (5.26)
Total	108 (100.00)	82 (100.00)	334 (100.00)	251 (100.00)	18 (5.38)	15 (5.97)

\*Figures within parentheses indicate percentage.

The total percentage of infant mortality shows a slightly higher incidence among the Rengmas (5.97%) than that of Karbi women (5.38%). Relatively lower incidence of infant death is found among the Karbis (6.93%) and Rengma Nagas (5.26%) women who not at all visit doctors compared to that of Kaibartas (60.86%) and Kayasthas (16.67%) who also refrain from visiting doctors (Baruah, 2008).

Health is equally important for both the mother and the child. Studies conducted by Punhari and Mahajan (1989), reveals that women who avail antenatal, natal, and postnatal services have fewer undernourished children. According to ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) recommendation, it is essential for pregnant women to take a required amount of calcium, protein, iron, and folic acid. A minimum of three visits to doctor is also considered as must (Park, 2000). The incidence of infant mortality among the two populations shows higher incidence among the category of women who never visit hospital

and those who visit only in an emergency or are irregular, but lower incidence is found among the mothers who regularly visit medical centres. This shows that access to reproductive health service has a positive effect on pre-natal wastage and their infants' health.

### Educational Level and Infant Mortality

Educational level and its impact on infant mortality among the Karbi and Rengma women are shown in Table 2. Most of the Karbi and Rengma women under study were illiterate. It was found that the number of live births decreases with the rise in educational level. The incidence of infant mortality among the Karbi women is found to be higher at the illiterate level (6.87% of Karbi women having infant death events) and the lowest is found among the mothers whose educational level is at secondary level (2.85%). Whereas among the Rengma women the highest incidence of infant mortality is found among the mothers in the category of primary level (9.09%) and the lowest incidence among the women who belong to the secondary level of education (3.57%).

Table 2: *Educational level and its impact on infant mortality*

Educational Level	Number of Mothers		Live Birth		Infant Death	
	Karbi	Rengma	Karbi	Rengma	Karbi	Rengma
Illiterate	54 (50.00)	39 (47.56)	131 (39.22)	99 (39.44)	9 (6.87)	5 (5.05)
Primary (I-V)	31 (28.70)	19 (23.1)	113 (33.83)	66 (26.29)	5 (4.42)	6 (9.09)
Upper primary (VI-X)	15 (13.88)	18 (21.95)	55 (16.46)	58 (23.10)	3 (5.45)	3 (5.17)
Secondary (HSLC and above)	8 (7.40)	6 (7.31)	35 (10.47)	28 (11.15)	1 (2.85)	1 (3.57)
Total	108 (100.00)	82 (100.00)	334 (100.00)	251 (100.00)	18 (5.38)	15 (5.97)

\*Figures within parentheses indicate percentage.



A similar trend is noted in a study by Patir and Sengupta (2015) among *Tengaponiya Deori*, who also exhibit higher incidence of infant death among mothers in the category of illiterate (4.76%) while lower incidence is found among the women who belong to secondary level of education (1.29%). According to Gogoi (2014), the Ahom population also exhibits higher incidence of infant death among the mothers in the category of illiterate level (8.63%), whereas it gradually decreases among the mothers who attain secondary level of education (3.23%). Therefore, it may be assumed that education of the mother significantly influences the possibility of prenatal and infant death rates. Maternal education is considered to be one of the most essential requirements to maintain child health as well as reproductive health of the mother.

**Age at Menarche, Prenatal Wastage, and Infant Mortality:**

Table 3: *Impact of age at menarche on prenatal and infant mortality*

	<i>Population/ community</i>	<i>10yrs</i>	<i>11yrs</i>	<i>12yrs</i>	<i>13yrs</i>	<i>14yrs</i>	<i>15yrs</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of mothers	Karbi	2	4	34	40	19	9	108
	Rengma	0	7	20	40	13	2	82
Mean conception	Karbi	4	9	83	164	83	38	381
	Rengma	2.00	2.25	2.44	4.1	4.36	4.22	3.52
Mean Live Birth	Karbi	4	34	71	126	59	6	296
	Rengma	2.00	4.85	3.55	3.15	4.53	3.00	3.60
Spontaneous & Induced abortion	Karbi	4	6	71	136	80	37	334
	Rengma	2.00	1.5	2.08	3.4	4.21	4.11	3.09
Still birth	Karbi	0	25	63	106	52	5	251
	Rengma	0	3.57	3.15	2.62	4.00	2.5	3.06
Spontaneous & Induced abortion	Karbi	0	3	9	20	2	0	34
	Rengma	0	(33.33)	(12.04)	(12.19)	(2.40)		(8.92)
Still birth	Karbi	0	6	5	18	5	1	35
	Rengma	0	(17.64)	(7.04)	(14.28)	(8.47)	(16.66)	(11.82)
Infant mortality	Karbi	0	3	3	2	2	0	10
	Rengma	0	(8.82)	(4.22)	(1.58)	(3.38)		(3.37)
Infant mortality	Karbi	1	2	4	7	3	1	18
	Rengma	(25.00)	(33.33)	(5.63)	(5.14)	(3.75)	(2.70)	(5.38)
Infant mortality	Karbi	0	2	4	6	3	0	15
	Rengma	(8.00)	(6.34)	(5.66)	(5.76)			(5.97)

\*Figures within parentheses indicate percentage.

Age at menarche and its impact on prenatal wastage and infant mortality is detailed in Table 3. The result shows that only few Karbi women attain menarche at the age of 10 years. Very few women are recorded in both the population groups whose first menstruations occurred at the age of 15 years. The age cohort of 13 shows the highest concentration of mothers, which decreases at the age of 15 years among the Karbi women and 11 years among the Rengma women. Number of live birth is markedly low among the Karbi women who menstruated first at the age of 10 years. On the other hand, in case of Rengma women, fewer live births are found among the mothers who first menstruated as early as 11 years. Both the population groups show gradual increase in menarche age recorded at 12, 13, and 14 years of age, but also show a decline among the women who experienced it at the age of 15 years. In case of spontaneous and induced abortion, higher incidence is found in both the populations and among the mothers who menstruated for the first time at the age of 11 years (Karbi = 33.33% and Rengma = 17.64%). With regard to infant mortality, the highest incidence is found among the mothers who attained menarche at the age of 11 years (Karbi = 33.33% and Rengma = 8.00%) and the incidence decreases among the Karbi mothers who attained their menarche at the age of 14 years (2.70%).

#### **Age at Marriage, Prenatal Wastage, and Infant Mortality:**

The age at marriage and its impact on prenatal wastage and infant mortality is depicted in Table 4. Among the Karbis, the number of women who got married below 18 years of age is relatively higher than the number of women who married as late as 27 years and above, which is the least frequent. Among the Rengmas, the number of women who married between 18-20 years is higher than the number of women who married as late

as 27 years and above. It is apparent that the number of live birth decreases with the rise in marital age among the Karbis whereas it shows a decreasing trend in the case of Rengma women who married below 18 years, which increases at 18-20 years, and again decreases with the rise in age at marriage. The case of spontaneous and induced abortion is found to be relatively higher among the Karbi women who got married in between 21-23 years of age (12.24%), and the lowest percentage among the women who married at a slightly higher age of 24-26 years (2.70%). However, not a single case was found that the women who got married as late as 27 years. On the other hand, the highest incidence of spontaneous and induced abortion is found among the Rengma women who married below 18 years of age (21.12%) and the lowest incidence among those who got married around 21-23 years (6.45%). Both the populations are showing high incidence of still birth among the mothers who married very early, i.e., below 18 years (Karbis = 5.03% and Rengmas = 7.04%). No incidence of still birth is found among the Karbis who married around 21-23 years and as late as 27 years. In case of the Rengmas, there is no record of still birth among those women whose age at marriage was around 24-26 years. With regard to infant mortality, the Karbi women show the highest incidence among women whose age at married was low (below 18 years = 6.61%) and the lowest percentage is recorded among those who got married at 21-23 years (2.32%). However, it sharply increases in women who married at the age of 24-26 years (5.71%). The percentage of infant mortality among the Rengma women is found to be higher among the mothers who married when they were below 18 years (7.84%) of age. The rate gradually decreases as age at marriage increases.

Table 4: *Impact of age at marriage on prenatal and infant mortality*

	Population / community	Below 18 yrs	18-20 yrs	21-23 yrs	24-26 yrs	27yrs & above	Total
Numbers of mothers	Karbi	37	31	20	13	7	108
	Rengma	19	28	16	13	6	82
Mean conception	Karbi	159 4.29	106 3.41	49 2.45	37 2.84	30 4.28	381 3.52
	Rengma	71 3.73	89 3.17	62 3.87	48 3.69	28 4.66	296 3.60
Mean Live birth	Karbi	136 3.67	90 2.90	43 2.15	35 2.69	30 4.28	334 3.09
	Rengma	51 2.68	79 2.82	56 3.5	43 3.30	24 4.00	251 3.06
Spontaneous and induced abortion	Karbi	15 (9.43)	12 (11.32)	6 (12.24)	1 (2.70)	0	34 (8.92)
	Rengma	15 (21.12)	8 (8.98)	4 (6.45)	5 (10.41)	3 (10.71)	35 (11.82)
Still birth	Karbi	8 (5.03)	4 (3.77)	0	1 (2.70)	0	13 (3.41)
	Rengma	5 (7.04)	2 (2.24)	2 (3.22)	0	1 (3.57)	10 (3.37)
Infant death	Karbi	9 (6.61)	5 (5.55)	2 (4.65)	2 (5.71)	0	18 (5.38)
	Rengma	4 (7.84)	5 (6.32)	3 (5.35)	3 (6.97)	0	15 (5.97)

\*Figures within parentheses indicate percentage.

It is a well-known fact that child birth at immature age or at late age of the mother is unsafe for both the mother and the child. Incidences of abortion, still birth, and infant mortality among the women who married at a relatively young age (below 18 years) are found relatively higher in the present sample. Early marriage leads to high rates of conception, a period where the risk of fertility is more. Children born from very young mothers are at a higher risk of being severely under-nourished as well (Rajaratnam & Hallad, 2000).

### **Age at First Child Birth, Prenatal Wastage, and Infant Mortality**

Mother's age at first child birth and its impact on prenatal and infant mortality is shown in Table 5. It is seen that in both populations, the women whose children were below 18 years, have the highest incidence of spontaneous and induced abortion. (Karbis = 10.34% & Rengmas = 15.94%) and the lowest percentage is found among women with the first child birth at 24-26 years of age (Karbis = 6.06% & Rengmas = 8.57%). Among the Karbi population, the highest incidence of still birth is found among the women who experienced motherhood for the first time as late as 27 years (5.26%) and the lowest percentage is recorded in mothers of age group of 20-23 years (1.44%). However, the reverse trend is seen among the Rengma population where the highest percentage is found among the women who became mother before 18 years (9.34%) of their age. The incidence of infant death in both the population is found to be higher among the mothers who belong to the age group of 18-20 years (Karbis = 7.20% & Rengmas = 8.69%), whereas the lowest percentage is found among the Karbi women who became mother for the first time as late as 27 years (3.03%). In case of Rengma women no incidence of infant death is recorded in mothers of the age group 27 years and above.

Table 5: Impact of age at first child birth on prenatal and infant mortality

Population	Below 18 yrs	18-20 yrs	21-23 yrs	24-26 yrs	27y rs & above	Total	
Number of mothers	Karbi	30	38	19	10	11	108
	Rengma	17	28	16	11	10	82
Mean conception	Karbi	116 3.86	125 3.28	69 3.63	33 3.3	38 3.45	381 3.52
	Rengma	69 4.05	102 3.64	60 3.75	35 3.18	30 3.00	296 3.60
Mean Live birth	Karbi	99 3.3	111 2.92	61 3.21	30 3.00	33 3.00	334 3.09
	Rengma	55 3.23	92 3.28	50 3.12	31 2.81	24 2.4	251 3.06
Spontaneous and Induce abortion	Karbi	12 (10.34)	10 (8.00)	7 (10.14)	2 (6.06)	3 (7.89)	34 (8.92)
	Rengma	11 (15.94)	9 (8.82)	8 (13.33)	3 (8.57)	4 (13.33)	35 (11.82)
Still birth	Karbi	5 (4.31)	4 (3.2)	1 (1.44)	1 (3.03)	2 (5.26)	13 (3.41)
	Rengma	3 (4.34)	4 (3.92)	2 (3.33)	1 (2.85)	0	10 (3.37)
Infant death	Karbi	6 (6.06)	8 (7.20)	2 (3.27)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.03)	18 (5.38)
	Rengma	4 (7.27)	8 (8.69)	2 (4.00)	1 (3.22)	0	15 (5.97)

\*Figures within parentheses indicate percentage.

### Spontaneous & Induced Abortion and Infant Death

The overall incidence of spontaneous and induced abortion and infant death was found to be higher among the Rengma women than that of Karbi women. In the case of stillbirth, there is a slightly higher incidence among the Karbis than that of Rengma women.

### Conclusion

Due to the small sample size in the present study, no definitive and far reaching conclusion can be drawn. The Rengmas, being

the minority group, are deprived of opportunities in every sphere of life, be it political or social areas, compared to the Karbis. However, the study does throw up certain trends, confirming the results of earlier researches with similar populations. The major conclusion is that both the Karbis and the Rengmas are at risk for women's health. Lack of medical facilities is one of the major problems faced by them leading to increased incidence of prenatal and infant mortality. Education of the mother, mother's age at marriage, their age at first child birth, and the age at menarche may not always have a linear or direct influence on maternal health and related risk factors; however, these variables do have an impact, leading to high incidence of infant mortality. Access to medical facilities, economic development, nutritional transition, improved socio-economic status, and female education, are likely to lower the incidence of mortality. We hope that the present study may help encourage further in-depth and ongoing research into these topics as well as similar at-risk populations elsewhere, besides encouraging the governmental and non-governmental agencies to tailor their mother and child healthcare intervention programmes to be more effective as well as supplement the same with interventions in related social variables impacting the mother and child health.

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## COMMERCIALIZATION OF AGRICULTURE PRODUCES IN LEPORIANG CIRCLE, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Biri Amji <sup>1</sup>

Arunachal Pradesh has a rural base of economy as over 70% of population still live in about 5,589 villages. Their main occupation is agriculture and they depend on this activity for their livelihood. *Jhum* cultivation or shifting cultivation or slash-and-burn method of cultivation was the earliest form of agriculture and it is still in practice. The people of Leporiang circle too practice *Jhum* cultivation for their livelihood. In the early days, people were engaged in agricultural cultivation for daily consumption and they even practiced traditional barter system. In recent times, a great transition has been observed in the use of agricultural produces in the tribal society of the state, especially Leporiang circle. There has been an enormous shift from subsistence to commercial use of agricultural produces. Such transition has been taking place at different times in response to different stimuli or situations. Developments in infrastructure, transportation, and communication facilities have facilitated the scope of commercialization of rural agricultural products and the rural market. The recent implementation of Trans-Arunachal Highway (TAH) project in the state contributed in the evolution of the concept of commercialization among the tribal people in Leporiang circle.

The changing phase from household consumption concept to commercial concept has contributed enormously to the

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transformation of the lives of tribal women in Leporiang circle. It has enriched the lives of tribal women both socially and economically and helped them contribute significantly to the rural livelihood in the study area. Women of the study area are playing a dominant role in augmenting the socio-economic lives of their families. Many of them are engaged in commercial cultivation of the agricultural produces, and thus, are able to contribute to the livelihood of their families. However, such a development increases the environmental pressures and disturbs the ecological balance as large area of forest covers are cleared for cultivation. As the concept of cultivation has transformed from household consumption to commercial cultivation, people are increasing their cultivable area year by year. This trend automatically encourages many environmental issues which are not sustainable and increases the risks for various species, including human lives.

However, there is a noticeable impact of commercialization of agricultural produces on the social and economic lives of the tribal people in the study area. The present research examines this impact, especially by the tribal women of the area.

### **Method**

Although the study is field-based in nature, the data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. To collect primary data, various tools were used—personal interview, telephonic survey, schedules, informal discussion, and observation, whereas secondary data were collected from journals, thesis, dissertations, and other unpublished literature. Besides, internet has been extensively used as a source while collecting secondary information. For the present study, convenience sampling under non-probability sampling technique was used. The study was carried out in Leporiang circle of Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh. Altogether, the sample size of the

study was 25 women who represented the universe. The main objectives of the study were to study the role of tribal women in augmenting rural livelihood and to analyze the impact of commercialization of agricultural produces on environment and social lives.

### **Status of Agricultural Produces in Leporiang Circle**

Leporiang is located in Papum Pare district around 100km from Itanagar, the state capital. It is a place of natural beauty, with an abundance of forest covers, both flora and fauna, and is suitable for practice of agricultural activities. As per the study, it is found that farmers cultivate different types of agricultural produces such as paddy, maize, vegetables, roots, fruits, and local spices. Earlier, these produces were cultivated for immediate consumption, but today they are being cultivated primarily for commercial purpose. A very important finding noticed during the field survey is that in the earlier days, local people used to collect wild vegetables, fruits, and spices that were available in the forest for consumption purposes alone, but today they resort to cultivating such wild fruits and vegetables for commercial purposes as well as for self-consumption. Some of these items are: *sangcher*, *poto*, *oyik*, *hunyir*, *marsang*, *bugluk*, *lakchang*, and *pakuk*. Some are even cultivated by clearing the particular area where those items were previously available naturally. The agricultural produces cultivated, as found in the study, are presented in Table A.

Table A: *Agricultural Produces of Leporiang*

Vegetables	Spices	Roots	Fruits
Oyik	Marsang	Sweet potato	Pineapple
Riar	Ginger	Ingi (Colocasia)	Guava
Papuk	Tallap	Rangik	Orange
Poto	Sangchar	Kallang	Lemon
Hurio	Pehak	Nyinke	Sugarcane
Guyang	Biad	Nyingte	Bugluk
Guria leaves	Hunyir	Tapioca	Lakchang Pakung
Pene	Sangnetayir		
Hure	Ingdaktayir		
Kasibiyayam	Hikung		
Pumpkin	Hiyup (Bamboo shoot)		
Squash	Hitak		
Cucumber			

Undeniably, Leporiang circle is very rich in forest resources and agricultural produces. Local vegetables, spices, fruits, and plant roots which have been intimately attached to the dietary dishes of various communities of this state came to be sold at various local markets due to penetration of market system. Varieties of vegetables such as *oyik*, *riar*, *papuk*, *poto*, *hurio*, *guyang*, *guria*, *pene*, *hure*, *kasibiyayam*, pumpkin, squash, and cucumber, are cultivated; wide range of fruits such as pineapple, guava, orange, lemon, sugarcane, *bugluk*, and *lakchang pakung* are found and cultivated, some of the fruits were wild fruits but today they are cultivated. Varieties of spices which are of high demand such as *marsang*, *ginger*, *tallap*, *sangchar*, *pehak*, *hunyir*, *sangnetayir*, *ingdaktayir* and bamboo shoot, etc. are also cultivated in large scale. Roots such as sweet potato, colocasia, tapioca and

*inging* are found which are of very high value. These resources are used for domestic consumption fulfilling physical, cultural, and agricultural requirements of the indigenous population of the state and most importantly for commercial purposes at present. The growing urbanization and market economy have contributed to the present state of affairs.

### **Transition in the Usage of Agricultural Produces from Subsistence to Commerce**

Since the past few years, a great transition has been observed in the use of agricultural produces in the tribal society of the state. There has been an immense shift from subsistence level of consumption to commercial use of these resources. The various agricultural products are used or consumed commercially due to the intervention of developmental activities of state and central governments. The implementation of Trans-Arunachal Highway project in the state contributed tremendously in commercialization of agricultural produces. Moreover, commercialization of these resources is also because of growing awareness of market economy and its system among local tribes of the state. The price system of the monetary economy has reached to the doorsteps of tribal villages. The value of the various agricultural produces is measured in terms of money. Because of the urbanization and rapid rise in urban population along with sharp market demands, vegetables such as *oyik*, *riar*, *papuk*, *hunyir*, *poto*, *hurio*, *tallap*, *kasibyayam*, *sangchar*, squash, pumpkin, ginger, cucumber, and chilly, which were used for domestic consumption; spices such as *ingdaktayir*, *sangnetayir*, *hunyir*, *tallap*, *sangchar*, *hiyup* and *hikung* (bamboo shoots) are sold in local markets with various ranges of prices in accordance with size and quality, as presented in Table B.

Table B: *Economic value of agricultural produces*

Category	Resources	Value (in Indian Rupee)
Vegetables	Oyik, Riar, Hure, Hurio, Pena, Poto, Hurio, Guyang, Guria leaves, Pena, Hure, etc.	Rs 20/- per bundle
	Kasibayam,	Rs 100/- per kg
	Pumpkin,	Rs 50/- per piece
	Papuk	Rs 20/- per piece
	Ginger	Rs 100/-per kg
	Squash, Cucumber	Rs 50/- per kg
Spices	Marsang	Rs 20/- per bundle
	Tallap	Rs 20/- per bundle
	Hunyir	Rs 20 /- per bundle
	Biad	Rs 20/- per bundle
	Sangnetayir (condiments)	Rs 30/- per bundle
	Sangchar	Rs 300/- per kg
	Pehak	Rs 50/- per pkt
	Ingdaktayir (local chilly)	Rs 7/-per piece
	Ginger	Rs 100/- per kg
	Hikung	Rs 20 to 100/- per pkt, bottle
	Hiyup	Rs 50/- to 200/- per pkt
	Hitak	Rs 50/- to Rs 300/- per pkt
Roots	Guria (Sweet potato)	Rs 50/- per kg
	Ingi (Colocasia)	Rs 50/- per kg
	Rangik	Rs 200/- per kg
	Kallang	Rs 100/- per kg
	Nyinke	Rs 200/- per kg
	Nyingte	Rs 200/- per kg
	Tapioca	
Fruits	Pineapple	Rs 50/- per piece
	Guava	Rs 40/- per kg
	Orange	Rs 70/- per kg
	Lemon	Rs 80/- per kg

Category	Resources	Value (in Indian Rupee)
	Sugarcane	Rs 20/- per piece
	Bugluk	Rs 40/- per kg
	Lakchang Pakung	Rs 30/- per kg

The growing urbanization and market economy have contributed to the commercialization of agricultural produces at present. People today are aware of the importance and benefits of commercial activities, and hence, cultivate in large scale those crops and vegetables which have greater commercial value. Many fruits and vegetables which were once wild produces are now cultivated and grown by the local farmers for commercial purpose. Some of these are *hure*, *hunyir*, *marsang*, *sangnetayir*, *sangchar*, *bugluk* and *lakchang pakukung*. The present local markets thrive with all these agricultural products and are of high commercial value and interestingly, these local products are being bought by various other tribes of the state. Some of the items are so expensive that ordinary folk are unable to purchase those items. But it is a great boon for the rural farmers, especially women, and contributes to the development of the rural economy (Hoon, 1997).

### Causes of Transition

There are numerous reasons for the transition in the use of agricultural and forest resources and its products from subsistence to commercial level (Fernandes & Viegas, 1988). The developmental policies drastically altered the relationship of tribal people with natural environment and its resources. Following are the prominent causes that have led to increased commercial interest in agriculture in Arunachal Pradesh.

**Developmental Activities:** It is utmost requirement of any nation or a state to take forward the developmental activities for its citizens. It has been observed that the central and state

governments have launched different developmental activities in Arunachal Pradesh during the last ten years or so to bring the tribal people to societal mainstream. The expansion of administrative centre such as creation of new districts, divisions, circles, and construction of roads, the recent being the Trans-Arunachal Highway, bridges, other infrastructure, in remote areas of the state has brought the rural society and its resources to the limelight. Implementation of centrally sponsored schemes for rural development, construction of dams, railway line, highways, and roads has enhanced the exploitation of agricultural resources thereby altering the tribal life.

*Penetration of Market Economy:* The traditional barter system has been replaced by modern market economy in the tribal society. The developmental activities brought every activity of the market economy in the value-based or tradition-based economy of the tribal society. Every resource is measured in terms of money in market economy. The forest resources and many agricultural resources that were considered gifts of nature and were under the community ownership have become saleable property and a source of income for select individuals. It has also been observed that the market economy has changed. Not only has the economic system changed but also the social system of the tribal society has undergone some changes. The feeling of community or collective responsibility and system of exchange in social activities has been slowly disappearing in tribal society. The bondage of relationship through social attitude and value system has greatly been affected by the market system through demand and supply dissemination.

*Change of Life Style:* Many changes have been observed in the life style of the tribal people in Arunachal Pradesh in recent times. These changes may be attributed to the impact of the developmental activities, penetration of monetary system, and the practices of the people of mainstream economy. The



consumption pattern, standard of living, and other way of life have changed due to the advancement of science and technology and modernity. The people are more interested in purchasing items from market than to cultivate or gather them from forests. The changes have been observed in socio-economic and political life of the tribal people.

*Increasing Flow of Monetary Resources:* There has been substantial increase in the flow of monetary resources in the tribal society. The flow of monetary resources may be due to government job, developmental activities, business activity, local politics and windfall gains like compensation, etc. The developmental activities and the market system have brought classification in the tribal society into rich and poor or haves and have nots. The rich people who can manipulate resources become richer and the poor people remain poor. However, these rich people become the source of income and livelihood for poor people in terms of purchase of their commodity and services (Kaye, 2015).

### **Role of Tribal Women in Rural Livelihood**

Women have played pivotal roles in almost every aspect of our society from time immemorial. They have made important contributions in creating access to human, natural, financial, physical and social capital for making their livelihood sustainable (Akubue, 2001). The tribal women of Leporiang circle are playing a crucial role in enhancing the livelihood of their families and as a whole, contributing to the rural livelihood. Farmers cultivate different types of agricultural products such as paddy, maize, vegetables, roots, fruits, and local spices. All phases of agricultural activities from sowing seed to harvesting and processing of crops are intimately done by rural women. Women are participating in both farming and non-farming activities directly or indirectly with men. The agricultural farming and activities are dominated

by the women who dedicatedly spare their time for both domestic activities and farming.

They cultivate in the *Jhum* land or in the area nearby their houses. But the cultivation of *Jhum* land is commercially more successful than the cultivation done in the nearby areas. Earlier, the cultivation was totally for household consumption and for fulfilling the domestic needs. Today, the concept of household consumption has changed to a commercial concept. Women of almost every household are engaged in agricultural activities. The study area is conducive for cultivation of agricultural crops and there is mass production of agricultural crops in the area. Women farmers from this area are found in almost all the major markets of the capital complex, such as Naharlagun, Nirjuli, and Doimukh. Some of the farmers sell their products directly in the urban markets and some farmers engage themselves in wholesale supply of the produce. In either case, women farmers are engaged, as most of their male counterparts are not engaged in any economic activities. Livelihood of many families rely on the earnings of the women members and their income acts as a catalyst for the survival of their families. It has been found that growing economic power of women has necessitated significant improvement in women's participation in household decision making, family planning, health and nutrition, and children education especially girls' education.

Owing to intensive commercialization of agricultural products, it has created a great opportunity for the women folks in income generation, and economic standings of many indigenous tribal families are on the rise in the state. The commercialization of a wide range of vegetables, fruits, roots, and spices at flourishing prices has immensely helped the economic condition of the people. These resources are found to have sold at profitable prices in the local urban market of various district circles and sub-divisional headquarters. Many of them have pucca

residence to live in, motor vehicles of their own to drive, children pursuing studies at private schools within and outside the state, sound accumulated saving in banks and better recognition in society. They are in receipt of even better medical facilities and amenities of life.

There is noticeable impact of commercialization of agricultural products on the economic life of the tribal people in the state. There are increased avenues for earning and self-employment especially among the women folk and thereby it has enhanced the income of the household. The penetration of the market economy has brought changes in the ownership system of the resources and paved way for marketability of these resources. As such, the penetration of market economy due to the intervention of state sponsored developmental activities has created ample opportunities for commercial activities in relation to the agricultural produces, thereby increasing the employment and earning capacity of the indigenous tribal people. As such, the various modern amenities like health care facility, education and other facilities are within the reach of tribal people. However, there are also challenges from social and cultural fronts.

### **Impact of Commercialization of Agricultural Produce in Social Life**

There is inverse relationship between economic and social life of the people. The economically inclined society emphasizes skill whereas socially inclined society prizes value and attitude (Falconer & Arnold, 1989). The economic condition of a person plays an important role in determining social and value system of a person. Due to the introduction of market economy, every piece of assets or resources and even activities become saleable property and are measured in terms of money in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, people become economic minded, which measures every resource and activity in term of monetary

value. There is also an adverse effect on social value system and relationship. The traditional or culture-based economy gives more importance to relationship, attitude, and character of the individual or an institution whereas the market economy relies more on benefit, profitability, and performances.

It was found that the commercialization concept of agricultural produce is leading to many social issues. The tradition of sharing and caring among the neighbours has reduced. Today, people are more self-focused. Whatever produce they have they sell it off for money as it is the source of income for them. Some products are not available even in the local market of the study area so, it hampers those people who are not engaged in producing agricultural products. They are deprived of the availability of agricultural produce. Some male members of the family responded that many a time it happened that they did not get to consume local vegetables as all products were taken off from the field to the urban markets for sale. Hence, the upcoming of rapid commercialization of forest and agricultural resources under market economy has posed great challenges to the tribal society of the state.

### **Impact of Commercialization of Agricultural Resources on Environment**

Poor people mostly living in rural areas, inside forest or at forest margins are highly dependent on natural resources particularly forest for their livelihood (Kanth, 1997). The conservation of forest resources is of great importance for every country in the world today and it is a global issue for discussion. Commercialization of agricultural produce and forest resources in the present economy has contributed negatively to the environment. The local people are increasing their area of cultivation year by year by clearing the forest and cultivating various vegetables and fruits for commercial purpose. This will lead to deforestation which

may cause serious environmental problems. Depletion of forest resources is of great concern for sustainable development as it has the ability to impact negatively the needs of future generations. On the other hand, precious animals and plants species such as wild cat, deer, tiger, bear, cane, bamboo, variety of timber trees, etc., are marketed illegally leading to even extinction of some endangered and rare flora and fauna.

Rapid commercialization of these resources leads to loss of the natural habitat of different species and ecosystem throughout the state. Due to huge exploitation of forest resources in the state, rapid rises in temperature, decrease in rainfall and frequent cases of soil erosion have been evident in recent times. Hence, there is growing need to create awareness among the local populace on sustainability of forest resources, so that present as well future generations equally take benefits of valuable and precious forest resources. Some of its negative impacts are as follows:

### **Depletion of Forest Resources**

The massive exploitation of forest resources due to construction of roads, highways, dams, and bridges lead to the exhaustion of these resources. Moreover, the regular supply of logs, bamboo, shoots, cane, vegetable, etc. to the market add fuel to the issue. As a result, there is possibility of depletion of forest resources and the indigenous common people will not even get these resources for their domestic use or consumption.

### **Soil Erosion and Land Slides**

The problem of soil erosion and landslides during the rainy season in the state of Arunachal Pradesh may be attributed to the impact of commercial interest on land. The excessive cutting down of trees and clearance of forest areas for agricultural purpose leads to various environmental problems, such as soil erosion and

landslides which may hamper the normal lives of people for a long- run.

### **Danger to the Biodiversity Resources**

The massive exploitation of forest covered areas for agricultural activities and jhum cultivation and commercialization of forest resources result in the loss of natural habitat and ecosystem, which leads to the destruction of biodiversity in the state or region. There will be a loss of endangered species of flora and fauna and other microorganisms that are needed for sustenance of biodiversity resources.

### **Global Warming**

The massive exploitation of forest and its resources leads to the rising of temperature of the earth. The constant use of the forest and its resources without sustainability leads to the reduction of this resource and thereby reducing the amount of oxygen and rainfall that ultimately affect human life.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The present study shows that there has been an immense shift from subsistence level of consumption to commercial use of agricultural and forester sources. The growing urbanization and market economy has attributed to the commercialization of agricultural produces at present. The tribal women of Leporiang circle are playing a crucial role in enhancing the livelihood of their families and as a whole contributing in the rural livelihood. The developmental policies have drastically altered the relationship of tribal people with natural environment and its resources. Owing to intensive commercialization of agricultural produces, economic standings of many indigenous tribal families are on the rise in the state. Commercialization concept of agricultural

produce gave birth to many social issues and has contributed negatively to the environment.

In recent times, a great transition has been observed in the use of agricultural produces in the tribal society of the state, especially Leporiang circle. There has been an enormous shift from subsistence to commercial use of agricultural produces. Development in infrastructure, transportation and communication facilities have facilitated the scope of commercialization of rural agricultural produces and the rural market. The recent implementation of Trans-Arunachal Highway (TAH) project in the state contributed to the evolution of commercialization concept among the tribal people in Leporiang circle. Owing to intensive commercialization of agricultural produces, it has created a great opportunity for the women folks in income generation and economic standings of many indigenous tribal families are on rise in the state especially in the study area.

The women of almost every household are engaged in agricultural activities. The study area is found to be suitable for cultivation of agricultural crops and there is mass production of agricultural crops in the area. The women farmers from this area are found in almost all the major markets of the capital complex, such as Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Doimukh. Thus, the growing commercial interests in these natural or forest assets among the tribal people have provided economic opportunities, but at some significant environmental and social cost. Due to the introduction of market economy, every piece of asset or resource and even activity becomes saleable property and is measured in term of money in the state. There is also an adverse affect on social value system and relationship.

Commercialization of agricultural produces and forest resources in the present economy has contributed negatively to the environment. Rapid commercialization of these resources has

led to loss of natural habitat of different species and ecosystem throughout the state. Due to huge exploitation of forest resources in the state, rapid rise in temperature, decrease in rainfall and frequent cases of soil erosion have been evident in recent times. Hence, such changes in socio-economic life patterns have become a mixed bag, with benefits on one side and challenges on the other.

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**IMPACT OF COMMERCIAL ORANGE CULTIVATION ON IDU  
COMMUNITY: A CASE OF KORONU CIRCLE IN LOWER DIBANG  
VALLEY DISTRICT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**Ravi Mihu,<sup>1</sup> Philip Mody,<sup>2</sup> & Taba Biroy<sup>3</sup>**

The varied agro-climatic zone of India ensures availability of all varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables. It ranks second in fruits and vegetables production in the world, after China. According to the National Horticulture database published by the National Horticulture Board, during 2012-13, India produced 81.285 million metric tonnes of fruits and 162.19 million metric tonnes of vegetables. The area under cultivation of fruits stood at 6.98 million hectares whereas vegetables were cultivated at 9.21 million hectares. India produced 10089.7 ('000 metric tonnes) tonnes of citrus production. The state-wise comparison of citrus in India reveals that Andhra Pradesh stood at the first position. Its production is 3800.6 ('000 metric tonnes) tonnes which is 37.67 percent of country share of citrus production. Based on the available database, Arunachal Pradesh stood at the eleventh position in India in terms of citrus production. The National Horticulture Board (2012-13) indicates that Arunachal Pradesh produced 176 ('000 metric tonnes) tonnes of citrus production which is 1.75 percent share of the country's total production.

Citrus industry in India is the third largest fruit industry of the country after mango and banana. Orange (*Citrus reticulata Blanco*)

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is the most common among citrus fruits in India and occupies nearly 40 percent of the total area under citrus cultivation. Orange has earned the fame of transnational delicacy having been in strong demand around the year and throughout the world. The strong demand for oranges at both national and international levels has been attributed to the appreciation of its nutritional importance and being a rich source of vitamin C (ascorbic acid). Orange also provides significant amounts of antioxidants, such as beta-carotene, and flavonoid compounds.

Arunachal Pradesh, the largest state in the North-eastern Hilly Region of India, is located between 26° 35' northern latitude and 91° 35' to 97° 27' east longitude with elevation range 250 to 7090 meters above sea level. Arunachal Pradesh has a vast potential for the development of horticulture products. The climate and the terrain provide immense scope for growing a wide variety of tropical, sub-tropical, and temperate fruits, vegetables, spices, and other cash crops such as medicinal, aromatic plants, and ornamental flowers. Owing to its enormous land resources, favourable agro-climatic conditions, hard-working farmers, and constant efforts by the Department of Horticulture through implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes, there is immense scope for further growth and development of horticulture products in Arunachal Pradesh. As a matter of fact, horticulture is the backbone and future of rural economy. It generates income and employment opportunities as well as improves the living standard of the people.

However, much more yet remains to be done in order to develop the full potential for development of horticulture sector in Arunachal Pradesh. There is immense scope for growth of horticulture product in the state as well as in the study area. Hence, there is a huge opportunity for farmers, entrepreneurs, and traders to take up horticulture as source of self-employment and income generation. The Lower Dibang Valley district has

been bestowed with rich agro-climatic condition with abundant cultivable land which helps the farmers in making profits in spite of having limited inputs. After West Siang and Upper Subansiri districts, Lower Dibang Valley district has created a record of 1,200 metric tonnes of orange production from the area of 1,045 hectares during the year 2005-06 (oneindia, 2007). The Kapang and Balek villages under Dambuk and Roing circles respectively are leading in terms of orange production. However, large scale cultivation of orange is concentrated mainly in these selected circles. Koronu circle, therefore, was purposively selected for the purpose of this study.

In Koronu circle, oranges are produced every year in a huge quantity. However, due to excess production and lack of proper marketing system, oranges are sold at a very low price to the middlemen (pre-harvest contractor), and other consumers. During the production season, oranges are sold for Rs. 2 at market and Rs. 1 at the garden (oneindia, 2007), owing to a healthy upsurge of demand in the neighbouring region and states.

This paper investigates the economic impact of commercialization of orange on Idu-Mishmi community of Koronu circle. The four basic research questions addressed here are:

1. Does orange cultivation contribute to the economy development on Idu community of Koronu circle?
2. Is orange cultivation helpful in generating employment opportunities for the people of the study area?
3. What is the average income earned by the people in a year through cultivation of oranges?
4. How many people are engaged in orange cultivation?

## **Objectives**

Following are the main objectives of the paper:

1. To study area coverage and production of orange cultivation among Idu-Mishmi tribe.
2. To analyse the impact of orange cultivation on some economic variables of gross income, saving, acquisition of consumer durable goods, and employment generation.
3. To analyse the annual average income earned by orange cultivators.

## **Research Methodology**

The study was purely based on field survey. Personal interview, internet social networking, telephonic contacts, and observation method were also used during the field study. Structured schedules, digital camera, telephone, and social media were used for collection of field data.

During the course of field survey, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Various tools used for collection of primary data include personal interview, telephonic survey, schedules, informal discussion, observation, etc. Whereas, secondary data were collected through intensive review of magazines, newspapers, journals, theses, dissertations, and other unpublished information. Besides, internet sources were also used.

For the present study, stratified random sampling under probability sampling technique was used. The study was carried out in Koronu circle (one of the seven circles under Lower Dibang Valley district). 102 prominent orange growers were taken as a unit of the study where observation and interview were done.

Statistical software such as MS Excel and SPSS were used to analyse field data. Bar diagrams, frequency distributions, pie chart were used for presentation of the findings.

## **Results & Discussion**

### **Area Under Orange Cultivation**

During 2012-15, Koronu circle accounted for 447 hectares of area under orange cultivation. Growth of area under orange cultivation in the Koronu circle is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Area under Orange Cultivation in the Koronu Circle*

Year	Area (in Hectare)
2012-13	142
2013-14	150
2014-15	155
<i>Average Per Person</i>	4.3*

*Compiled from Field Data, 2015.*

*\*Note: (142+150+155)/102 (total sample) = 4.3*

As depicted in the Table, the areas under orange cultivation has increased from 142 hectares in 2012-13 to 155 hectares in 2014-15. The average area holding of every single grower for orange cultivation in Koronu circle is 4.3 hectares.

### **Production Under Orange Cultivation**

Area under orange cultivation in the study area has increased over the years. Consequently, production has also increased. Production of oranges fluctuates from year to year depending on the weather condition and the area chosen for the cultivation of orange. Table 2 shows the production of orange in the study area during 2012-15.

Table 2: *Production of Orange in the Study Area*

Year	Production (in 000' units)
2012-13	1,440
2013-14	2,821
2014-15	4,605

It is evident from the Table 2 that there has been a continuous increase in the production of orange in the study area. During the study period (2012-13 to 2014-15), orange production at Koronu circle was 8,866 thousand units. Thus, orange cultivation in Koronu circle of Lower Dibang Valley district offers significant commercial scope for the cultivators.

### **Gross Income of Orange Cultivator from Idu-Mishmi Tribe**

Gross income is the total income computed in accordance with the provision of the act before making any deduction under sections 80C to 80U. According to the section 10(1) of the Income Tax Act of 1961, agriculture income is fully exempted from taxation. Moreover, central government cannot levy any tax on such income because agriculture is a state subject. The income from sales of oranges which falls under agriculture income is fully exempted from tax. The gross income of orange cultivators of the study area is shown in Table 3. The people of the Lower Dibang Valley district, especially of Koronu circle, have started commercialization of orange satisfactorily. Cultivators earn handsome income from cultivation of orange.

Table 3: *Gross Income of Cultivators in the Study Area*

Year	Income ( In 000' Rs)
2012-13	1181
2013-14	3033
2014-15	6010

As shown in Table 3, the income of the cultivators has been increasing year after year. Production and prices of orange in Koronu circle are on the rise, and result in improved income for the cultivators. During the period of study (2012-13 to 2014-15), it was observed that the gross income generated from orange cultivation is 11,224 thousand rupees. The data show that the income has doubled every year, and this has had a significant economic impact on the Idu-Mishmi community as a whole. Despite many bottlenecks such as low price, lack of marketing, poor transportation, and inadequate support from government, the production of orange is increasing over the years and cultivators earn handsome income through this means of subsistence.

### **Economic Impact of Orange Cultivation**

Orange cultivation occupies prominent status in Koronu area. It has become a main source of income and employment opportunities for the people. Income through orange cultivation has a positive impact on economic growth and development of the people of Lower Dibang Valley. The commercial orange cultivation has improved their income and has led to improved standard of living as well as improvement in the educational status of the people. The economic impact of orange cultivation was analysed on the basis of economic variables which are shown below in Table 4, referring to three years of growth i.e., 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Table 4: Investment of Income Earned from Orange Over Various Economic Variables

Sl. No.	Economic Variables	Amount (in %)
1.	Consumer Durables	31
2.	Capital Goods	02
3.	Saving	00
4.	Health & Sanitation	08
5.	Education	23
6.	Maintenance of Orange Field	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

Table 4 and Fig. 1 show that the Idu-Mishmis invest most of their income in maintenance of orange field which account for 36% of the total investment. Likewise, they also invest 31%, 23%, 8%, 2% on consumer durable goods, education, health & sanitation, and capital goods, respectively. However, savings in terms of bank deposits and other forms of savings are not observed during this field survey conducted on 102 participants.

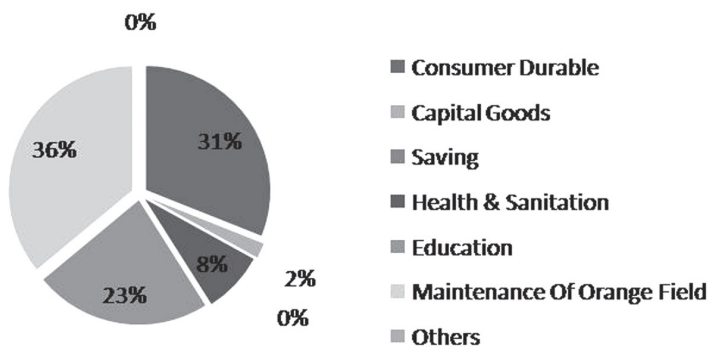


Fig. 1: Pie chart showing investment of income through orange cultivation over various necessities.



## **Conclusion**

Commercial orange cultivation plays an important role in improving the economic status of Idu-Mishmis of Koronu circle. Due to commercial orange cultivation, cultivators earn handsome income which has tremendous impact on their education level as well as standard of living. Orange cultivation also facilitates acquisition of consumer durable goods, capital goods (construction of building), and health and sanitation as well. Hence, the growth and development of rural economy greatly depends on agriculture and horticulture sectors, specifically commercial orange cultivation. Production of oranges in Koronu circle has a huge potential despite of numbers of problems and challenges being faced by the cultivators. Problems and challenges faced by cultivators include marketing problems, procurement of desirable sapling, diseases, pest, insect, and animal attack, high cost of cultivation, water problems, climatic problems, tools and kits, chemicals, insecticides, pesticides, labour management problems, low price of product, lack of warehousing and cold storage facilities, processing unit, etc. Moreover, lack of scientific cultivation and awareness on sophisticated technology and tools also contributes to the same. Therefore, proper attention needs to be paid in order to overcome the problems and challenges faced by the orange cultivators.

The present study shows that major thrust should be given on development of production, dissemination of sophisticated technology and tools, assured input supply, and marketing support. As far as marketing of orange is concerned, it has mostly been under the monopoly traders and the whole market is controlled by some intermediaries (pre-harvest contractors) who exploit the prices of orange by purchasing them at lower price and selling at a higher price. Thus, the gap between prices received by the cultivators and those paid by the ultimate consumer is quite vast. If the authority concerned can address

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these problems and provide remedies, the orange cultivation can become one of the major factors in the economic and human development of Koronu Circle as well as similar places conducive for the cultivation.

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## THE CONTEMPORARY TRADING AND ECONOMY OF THE NYISHI TRIBE: A PERSPECTIVE FROM ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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The term *trading* simply means *exchanging one item for another*. Trade is the main source of development in any region. It makes accessible some goods and services which are not produced and available in a given region. In fact, trading is an essential component of human civilization. The *Nyishis* – one of the aboriginal and major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh - have been involved in trading, locally known as *Pudung Rongnaam*. The *Nyishis*' involvement in trade relation with the Tibetans/ Chinese has been documented to have been in existence from very early times. However, the economy of the *Nyishi* people has kept changing rapidly through the passage of time.

The term *Nyishi* has been derived from the words *Nyi* (meaning *a human being*) and *Shi* (denoting *a civilized*). Therefore, *Nyishi* means a civilized human being. Arunachal Pradesh, the land of the rising sun, is the homeland of 26 major tribes and more than 200 sub-tribes. The *Nyishi* people spread across six districts of Arunachal Pradesh viz., Papum Pare, parts of Lower Subansiri, Kurung Kumey, East Kameng, parts of Upper Subansiri, and the recently created district Kra Dadi; as well as also in the Sonitpur

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and North Lakhimpur districts of Assam. The *Nyishis* believe that Tok Chohi and his wife BaloYaniyo along with their son-in-law Nincgh Yai were the first people who had started *Pudung Rongnaam* with *Nyeme* (Tibet/China). Hence, the *Pudung Rongnaam* is also called *Nyeme Pudung*. During *Nyeme Pudung* and in their course of journey to Tibet/China, the *Nyishi* people seem to have faced lots of hurdles. There are various descriptions on the struggle of the *Nyishis* during their journey to Tibet/China, most of which are reflected through folk tales. Some of the famous folks include *Aachi Aachiya Rupche (Dimum Ren)*, *Aach Yashi*, and *Hadu Daachar*.

This paper is an attempt to study the contemporary economy of the *Nyishi* tribe. Further, it endeavours to provide the economic perspectives, especially, their trading relation with Tibetans (*Nyeme Pudung Rongnaam*) during pre-historical periods of Arunachal Pradesh.

Many researches as well as general studies on the *Nyishis* have been conducted over the years. However, there is no study pertaining to contemporary economy of the *Nyishis* and their trade relations with the Tibetans/Chinese. Hina (2013) made an attempt to examine the impacts of developments and modernization on the *Nyishi* society. The *Nyishis* had a good trade relation with the people of other neighbouring countries. This is called *Pudung Runnam*. The trade relation they had with the Tibetans and Bhutanese is called *Nyeme Nyapak*. The trading/marketing with people belonging to *Nyeme Nyapak* is called *Nyeme Pudung Runnam* and that with the people of the plain is called as *Ryangko Pudung Runnam*.

### **Objectives & Method**

This research was undertaken with three objectives in place: (a) to briefly document an overview on contemporary economy

of the *Nyishis*, (b) to provide a few cases in point of trade relation between the *Nyishis* and the Tibetans from an economic perspective, and (c) to identify the pre-historical trade items of the *Nyishis* and Tibetans/Chinese.

The study was carried out in Tarasso circle, Sangduopota (Beser Nello) circle, and Itanagar of Papum Pare district, Arunachal Pradesh. Snowball sampling under non-probability sampling technique was used. Ten renowned and knowledgeable persons of *Nyishi* tribe were interviewed. Data were also obtained from books and research papers, internet, through contacts over social network, and telephone. Structured schedules, digital camera, telephone, and internet search were the tools used for collecting field data.

### Contemporary Economy of Nyishi Tribe

The *Nyishi* people are nature friendly. In ancient days, their lives were mostly dependent on nature through hunting and fishing. Nature has also endowed them with abundant quantity of edible items. *Tachee*, *Tasse*, *Hussey*, *Tabbee* (three kind of flour), *Kullung Kupak* (wild banana), *Enging* (tuber), *Gurya* (sweet potato), etc., are some of the food items drawn from nature. *Nyishis* are agriculturists. *Jhum* cultivation—also known as slash and burn cultivation—is common among them. They practice terrace and shifting cultivation as well. Some of their major agricultural crops include *Aam* (paddy), *Tamee* (finger millet), *Tupu* (maize), *Tanic* (corn), *Taya* (barley), *Enging* (tuber), *Tappeh* (pumpkin), *Yamdik* (chilly), *Takee* (ginger), *Mekung* (cucumber), and *Mebia* (kind of cucumber).

Their richness is measured on how many *Tasang* (beads) like *Taduk*, *Dugli*, *Chungree*, *Sangmee*, *Maji* (kind of bell), and *Taalu* (brass plate) they have, and most importantly, how many *Sabbeh* (mithun) they have. *Sabbeh* was functioning as the main

medium of exchange (like money in modern days) in the *Nyishi* community. This revealed the changing trend in the economy of the *Nyishi* tribe. In other words, there have been changes and improvements specially when studied from the pre-historical economic perspective of the tribe. In olden days, the *Nyishi* were totally dependent on nature, which normally happened through hunting and fishing. In modern days, the *Nyishi* people depend on land, labour, and capital which are the main factors of modern economy. They also give importance to agriculture, business, jobs, education, knowledge, etc.

Development is a continuous process and multi-dimensional. It involves reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system. The traditional economy of the *Nyishis* has evolved through their customs and practices. Change is an essential ingredient of any developmental process. Similarly, the traditional economy system of the *Nyishis* has – across times - undergone substantial changes. The extent of such changes can be perceived by looking at the present scenario of occupation distribution in comparison to their traditional background and historical evidences. Table 1 presents the changing economic scenario of the *Nyishis*.

Table1: *Some Parameters of Nyishis' Wealthiness*

<i>No.</i>	<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Old</i>	<i>Modern</i>
1.	Wealth	Number of <i>Sabbeh</i> (mithun)	Number of vehicles
		Number of <i>Tasang</i> (beads)	Number of <i>Tasang</i> (beads) Bank balance
2.	Shelter	<i>Naam</i> (huts)	Buildings, flats, etc.
3.	Wine/ Alcohol	<i>Opo-Pone</i> (made of rice), <i>Poling</i> (made of millet & rice)	Beer, whisky (red label, Blue label, etc.), Rum, Brandy, vodka, red wine, black wine, etc.

No.	Parameters	Old	Modern
4.	Food	<i>Aam</i> (paddy), <i>Toppu</i> (maize), <i>Tachee</i> , <i>Tassey</i> , <i>Hussey</i> (kind of food), <i>Enging</i> (long tuber), <i>Gurya</i> (sweet potato), <i>Tame</i> (finger millet), etc.	<i>Aam</i> (paddy), <i>Toppu</i> (maize), noodles, tea, coffee, bread & butter and modern foods.
5.	Cloths	<i>Pud Ejeh</i> (kinds of cloths), <i>Higing</i> , etc.	Branded jeans, shirts, inner wears, jackets, blazers, belts, goggles, watches, shoes, etc.

Source: *Field Study*, 2015.

Development process of the *Nyishis* has been mainly oriented towards mainstream India. However, the process has mostly failed to maintain the idea of sustainability of good traditional knowledge.

### Trade Relation between the Nyishis and the Tibetans

The *Nyishis* have strong conviction that they originated from *Donyi Naamchang*, a place somewhere in Tibet. Prior to their leaving Tibet, they used to make ornaments such as *Tasang*, *Maji*, and *Taalu*, and were experts in making *Rour-uryuk* (special swords) and weapons such as *Nangkio* (spear) and *Murto* (iron spike fixed at arrow head). Information drawn from the interviews revealed that the cause of migration of the *Nyishis* from *Donyi-Naamchang* in Tibet to their present land is believed to be connected to some significant forces or circumstances, of which the present generation has no clear idea of. Nevertheless, some of the possible reasons of migration that they presume to have been are war, some natural disaster, plague, or scarcity of resources.

Having left *Donyi-Naamchang*, the *Nyishis* became wanderers and started living in the forest. They probably might have lost their techniques, arts, and skills, or had no resources like

iron and copper to continue making needed instruments. As a consequence, they had to resort to procuring *Tasang*, *Tallu*, and *Maji* from Tibet/China in those olden days through *Nyeme Pudung* (trading with Tibet/China). Tok Chohi, his wife Balo Yaniyo and their son-in-law Nincgh Yayi are believed to be the first three people who have started *Nyeme Pudung* after leaving *Donyi-Naamchang*. In the process of *Nyeme Pudung*, they had to travel a week via densely covered forest area to reach the *Nyeme* (Tibet/China), the place for marketing. They had lots of wild animals' skins, testes, teeth, claws, and other parts which were of high demand for medicine, as well as cloth materials in Tibet/China. In this way a mutually beneficial trading between the *Nyishi* tribe and the Tibetan/Chinese counterparts began.

There appears to be many untoward incidents that happened to the *Nyishis* during *Nyeme Pudung*. As a result of the difficulties and struggles, the process of trading (*Nyeme Pudung*) seems to have degenerated and been discontinued. *Aachi Aachiya Rupche* (*Dimum Ren*), *Aach Yashi*, *Hadu Dachaar*, etc. are some of the folktales of the *Nyishi* community giving some reflections on the discontinuation of *Nyeme Pudung Rongnaam*. In addition, there are other possible factors for this discontinuation. One of the major factors was perhaps the emergence of *Maane Pudung Rongnaam* (trading activities with Assam and other parts of India) which was much easier to engage in, in comparison to *Nyeme Pudung Rongnaam*. However, *Maane Pudung*—is of recent origin: it began between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The *Maane Pudung* basically denotes trading activities, maintained with the mainland India, especially the South.

### Trade Items Exchanged between the *Nyishis* and the Tibetans

Trading between the *Nyishis* and the Tibetan communities was merchandized on barter system, i.e., exchange of goods for other goods. The present study reveals that the *Nyishi* people exported wild animal skins, testes, teeth, claw, etc. (which



had some essential medicinal value) to the Tibetans/Chinese counterpart. Some of the well-known items the *Nyishi* people exported are as follows:

In exchange of *Sudum Aping*, *Sebi Aping*, *Seram Aping*, *Pate Aping*, *Hogiya Aping*, *Sukung Aping*, *Pud Ejeh*, etc., they brought *Mapu Aalu*, *Ruar Auryu*, *Shaya Ejeh*, various kinds of *Tasang*, such as *Sangte*, *Sangter*, *Sangmi*, and *Sangu*, *Maji*, *Talu*, and *Yuder* (iron) from the Tibetans.

Table 2: *Items Traded (Export) to Tibetans*

Sl. No.	Name of Items	
	Local Name	In English
1.	<i>Sudom Aping</i>	Deer Skin
2.	<i>Sebi Aping</i>	Monkey Skin
3.	<i>Seram Aping</i>	Otter Skin
4.	<i>Pate Aping</i>	Tiger Skin
5.	<i>Hogiya Aping</i>	Leopard Skin
6.	<i>Sukung Aping</i>	Kind of Squirrel
7.	<i>Pud Ejeh</i>	Kind of cloths worn by <i>Nyishis</i>

Source: *Field Study*, 2015.

Table 3: *Items Traded (Import) from Tibetans*

Sl. No.	Name of Items	
	Local Name	In English
1.	<i>Mapu Aalu</i>	Kind of salt
2.	<i>Ruar Auryu</i>	Special sword of <i>Nyishi</i>
3.	<i>Shaya Ejeh</i>	Kind of cloth
4.	<i>Sangte Tasang</i>	Kinds of beads
5.	<i>Sangter Tasang</i>	Kinds of beads
6.	<i>Maji</i>	Kinds of bell
7.	<i>Talu</i>	Kinds of brass plate
8.	<i>Yuder</i>	Iron

Source: *Field Study*, 2015.

Further, it was also found that the *Nyeme Pudung Rongnaam* was tough and difficult for *Nyishis* as they had to travel long distances through the hills and terrains covered by dense forests, rivers, and lakes. Interestingly, folk tales available today reveal the tough stories of the times of *Nyeme Pudung Rongnaam*. They explain why only a few people of the *Nyishi* community performed *Nyeme Pudung*. In fact, those people were regarded and well recognized in the society and history of the *Nyishis* as legends.

### Conclusion

Economic development experienced in the past emphasized the need for strengthening the traditional management system. There is an urgent need of rethinking on the consequences of economic transition that has taken place in the *Nyishi* tribe so that a holistic strategy could be formulated for sustainable development. Despite adopting new and modern technologies for development, this tribe should also adopt the line of their genius without abandoning their cultural practices. It would be more fruitful through adopting the appropriate scientific and technological inputs to enhance the economy based on a traditional production system. The system however, should also have the elements of sustainability rather than blind imitation of new measures of development containing possibilities of uncertainty and risks.

In the ancient days, though the *Nyishis* and the Tibetans were actively engaged in trading practice, locally called as *Nyeme Pudung Rongnaam*, the history of such trade has remained obscure. This is mainly because of the absence of written records. Oral history remains as the only source of information to reconstruct the past context of the *Nyishi* economy. Oral histories, despite providing depth, texture, flavour, nuance, colour, and variety to draw the picturesque past and help in analysis, are also ridden with

embellishments and contradictions, which impacts its validity. However, the information so available informs us that the trade relation had to take place amidst various predicaments. It took many days for traders to travel through the difficult and hilly terrain, encountering many difficulties.

The trading activities between the *Nyishis* and the Tibetans were gradually discontinued as the *Nyishis* started to consider Assam or mainland India as better and far easier trading possibilities. This trading practice is locally known as *Mane Pudung Rongnaam*. In the context of the rapid modernization and globalization, the *Nyishi* community needs to adapt its trading and economic possibilities without endangering matters related to their identity and culture.

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## TOURISM INDUSTRY IN KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Dakarupaya Olivia Rymbai<sup>1</sup>

Meghalaya is one of the smallest states in India, having a geographical area of 22,429 sq. kms. The state has over 100 tourist spots, almost half of which are located in the East Khasi Hills district. The state is surrounded in the east and the north by the state of Assam and in the west and the south by Bangladesh. Because of her natural assets, ethnic diversity, and the societal ethos, tourism holds high potential in the state. Hence the tourism sector in Meghalaya can create an opportunity for development of an entrepreneurial society and also jobs at all levels, both in urban and rural areas. Tourism in Meghalaya would be a great asset to the people of the state. It can become the main source of livelihood of the people of the state if investments are made for its development. Meghalaya is blessed with natural beauty and hence, huge investments are not required to make tourism as one of the main sources of income of the state. The inflow of tourists can help in the development of the economy and the livelihood of the citizens of the state.

There have been several studies on tourism in Meghalaya from different perspectives. Das (2012-13) in his research article “Tourism Industry in North-East Indian States: Prospects and Problems” explains that tourism has the greatest potential for generating income and employment opportunities in North-East India because of the blending of flora and fauna and the

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exceptionally rich bio-diversity. De and Devi (2011) in their article “Valuing Recreational and Conservational Benefits of a Natural Tourist Site: Case of Cherrapunjee” examine the impact of various social, economic, and location factors on the visiting decision of the tourists to Cherrapunjee and the recreational benefits enjoyed by the visitors from the natural beauty of the sites, which is estimated by using both the revealed and stated willingness to pay. Saha (2015) in his research article “Tourism Sector in the North-Eastern States: Challenges and Opportunities” describes North-East as the ideal tourist destination because of its diverse culture, language, art, music, clothing, festivals, religion, and wildlife. He further analyses and shares the insight that the wildlife sanctuaries at various places of North- East India can attract the tourists from all over the world. Tea tourism and golf tourism of North-East also have the potential to attract tourists, as discussed in his article. He describes India as the treasure house of various economic resources due to its rich cultural and ethnic heritage which can easily make it a favoured tourist-spot.

In the light of the above literature review, this paper tries to critically analyse the tourism potentialities of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the problems and challenges faced by this tourism industry in realizing them.

### **Method**

The study is based on qualitative and analytical method applied on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were collected from government documents and the interviews of twenty respondents who visited the state. The secondary sources included books, articles, journals, and online sources.

### **Results**

This study revealed that there were significant tourism

potentialities existing in the Khasi and Jaintia hills, but many of these possibilities remain untapped. Many challenges exist in the tourism sectors that need immediate attention and rectification.

## Discussion

### Potential of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills

The Khasi and Jaintia Hills are rich in *cultural and rural tourism*. Villagers in rural areas are still holding on to their ancient customs, usages, and traditions. This can provide a tremendous opportunity for tourists to be exposed to the culture and tradition of the State. Fairs and festivals resplendent with traditional ritual forms of the various tribes that have been passed on through generations are unique in their socio-cultural content. Thus, the State has immense potential for cultural tourism. The increasingly stressful urban settings provide an opportunity to urban dwellers with a recreational space amidst rural landscapes with natural and cultural diversity. Rural tourism can also form the base for eco-tourism, heritage tourism, or simply recreational tourism. Training the local youth in the field of folklore for reciting legends, myths, and folktales during important events would help in promoting this product.

Khasi and Jaintia Hills also have potential in the field of *sports and adventure tourism*. Mountaineering and trekking at *Dawki* (Jaintia Hills); river rafting, angling, water sports in the lakes and rivers like *Umiam*; and aero sports like paragliding, hang gliding, and zip lining in *Mawkdok* are the ingredients that can make the State an attractive destination for adventure sports both at the national and international levels.

These two locales are also rich in the field of *medicine and health tourism* as well. They have a strong base of traditional medicine utilizing different types of locally available medicinal plants and herbs. The hot springs at Jakrem near Mawsynram

are believed to have curative and medicinal properties. Thus, the potential of traditional medicine can be fully exploited for the growth of health tourism.

*Caving tourism* would be a great sport which could attract many tourists in the state and eventually it could generate many employment opportunities, boosting the economic development of the State. About 520 caves have been explored and mapped including the longest and deepest cave in the sub continent: *Krem Liat Prah* (length of 22,203 m) is the longest cave and *Synrang Pangi* is the deepest cave, both located in Jaintia Hills. Cavers from the UK, Germany, Austria, Ireland, and the US have been visiting Meghalaya for exploring these caves. Yet these caves have not been developed or promoted adequately to become major tourist destinations.

The beautiful monoliths present in the State are also a major attraction for domestic as well as international tourists. Monoliths exist throughout the length and breadth of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. However, the biggest collection of monoliths or Megalithic stones in one single area is to be found north of the *Nartiang* market in Jaintia Hills. These consist of *Menhirs* (upright stones) *Moo Shynrang* and *Dolmens* (flat stones in the horizontal position) locally known as *Moo Kynthai*. Within the perimeter of this Megalithic collection stands the tallest *Menhir* erected by *U Mar Phalyngki*, a trusted lieutenant of the Jaintia King to commemorate his victory in battle. Other monoliths were erected by *U Mar Phalyngki*, *U Luh Lyngskor Lamare* and various clans of *Nartiang* village between 1500 and 1835 C. E.

## **Challenges**

Roads are the only means of transportation and communication within the State but their pitiable condition is a big hindrance in the improvement of tourism industry since many of these tourist

spots are not well connected. The hilly terrain and slow pace of development have hindered the construction and maintenance of good quality all-weather roads, and according to Murayama, Inoue, and Hazarika (2004) the best roads in the state remain those built by the British during the pre-Independence times.

The inhospitable nature of the people may perhaps be another challenge. There is a need for changing the mindset of the local people about the tourists. It is not safe for the tourists to wander by themselves as the local people treat the foreigners as influx in the State. Instead, the local people should welcome the tourists and treat them with generosity and kindness and understand that they are the source of income to the state (Roy & Das, 2010).

Lodging and accommodation is another concern for developing tourism. Home stays are mostly private houses providing accommodation to tourists with bed and breakfast, and most of them are located only in the capital Shillong. Hence provision of more affordable accommodation to tourists in and around the tourist sites with basic amenities, would help in bridging the gap in the shortage of accommodation in the State during the tourist season.

Tourism in the North-Eastern states in general, has suffered on account of years of insurgency and as a result, the concern for security of foreigners has become a sensitive issue. Some foreign countries periodically issue advisories against travelling in North-East India. During the insurgent years, Meghalaya was not affected to a large extent. However, since it is a landlocked area, the consequences were also felt here. In recent years conflicts have arisen between Garo militants and Indian security forces. Nonetheless, if proper tour guide and security equipment from the government are assured, insurgency would not be a challenge to the development of tourism in Meghalaya.



In interviews conducted with a few foreigners, the latter observed that Meghalaya is a clean and beautiful place with friendly natives. However, the fact that the tourist spots are not so easily accessible, makes the journey to such places time consuming and taxing. Bad roads and traffic jams are a major setback, for tourists would not like to spend their time idling in a vehicle. The lack of accurate maps is another challenge for locating places if one does not know someone who has a good understanding and knowledge of the areas.

Hence, tourism is still not the driver for employment generation as it should be and tourism-related services which are employment intensive could not be met optimally as of now. It is time for a wakeup call to develop tourism especially sports and adventure tourism which are still in its infant stage. A major policy thrust is required to enable entrepreneurs to acquire equipment, materials, training, and capacity building to promote these activities in the State. Meghalaya has the potential to be the top ranking adventure destination in India, provided it gets adequate attention from the government as well as the private sector. This sector has tremendous potential in economic terms for the State, with a high employability factor.

### **Policy Level**

At the policy level various documents indicate that the state government has an intention to develop the tourism potential of the State. For a start, the government is committed to exploring the state's tourism potential in water sports, wildlife, trekking, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism in its Eleventh Plan (2007-2012). In the draft Tourism Policy (2002), the intent is to promote the sector through public-private partnerships, and several incentives have been extended to encourage private entities to develop infrastructure and tourism-related assets. The *North East Region-Vision 2020*, document of the Government of

India prepared by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) for the development of the North East region gives special emphasis to tourism. The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and regional bodies like the North Eastern Council (NEC) have the mandate to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development in the North Eastern Region and as such they can also play an important role in developing tourism in Meghalaya. While both domestic and international tourism has been steadily rising in the country because of the government policy, the North-East and Meghalaya have barely benefitted from this trend. Since 2000, the State has been receiving only one-tenth of the number of visitors to Assam, which is the leading recipient of tourists in the region.

### **Critical Analysis**

Meghalaya has many advantages in the tourism sector over its north-eastern neighbours because visitors do not need travel permits as they do in some other states, and the security situation has improved substantially. However, in recent years, though the tourism industry has gained momentum, many tourist spots of the state are still out of bounds even for domestic tourists, primarily perhaps the reason being that there are very few takers who are concerned in developing tourism as an industry. We do have young entrepreneurs like the Backpack group in *Sobra* and the *Ialong* tourism development society in Jaintia Hills who have initiated eco-tourism start-up in their respective areas but these groups fail to be effective due to lack of financial backup. It is therefore, the need of the hour to create more of such groups and to provide financial aid to them by the government.

Lack of exposure and untapped areas still remain a hindrance in development of tourism industry. Though the longest and the deepest caves in the subcontinent are situated in Jaintia Hills besides many more beautiful caves, they have not yet been

productive targets for tourism promotion by the governmental departments concerned. For instance, *Krem Lydoh* situated in *Lumshnong* of Jaintia Hills remains unknown even to the villagers. Within this cave lies a beautiful stream with varieties of fishes and one can go fishing within. Besides being geologically important, many of these caves in Jaintia Hills are rich in biodiversity, teeming with fish and salamanders, which have adapted to the cave environment. The caves are also home to three bat species: the Long Winged Bat, Dobson's Long Tongued Fruit Bat, and the Kashmir Cave Bat. The bats have been reduced to an alarmingly few in number and this has deeply affected the ecological balance as bats help control pests in Jaintia Hills. As caves are adjacent to huge reserves of coal and limestone, rampant coal mining activities are also a severe threat to various life forms inside the caves. Unscientific mining of coal is a hazard to the existence of these caves and their fragile ecosystems. Further, increased flooding of caves and mining may be partly responsible for this as water gets accumulated in the excavated pits and seeps into the caves and higher water levels inside the caves erode sediments which damage the beauty and health of the caves. It is therefore important to maintain, exploit, and sustain such caves for the benefits of the people and the State. Many of these caves however have not been developed or promoted adequately to become major tourist destinations.

Apart from *Mawphlang*, Jaintia Hills also has big and beautiful sacred grooves such as the one in *Ialong (Raliang)*, but such grooves need to be promoted. Apart from botanists and other researchers, few tourists visit these sacred grooves because of the lack of accommodation, transportation, and tour guide. *Amlarem* located in Jaintia Hills is well known for the pitcher plant, a famous medicinal plant but due to many inadequacies, the place remains unexplored. Thus, if such spots could be developed, then it would have the potential to attract botanists and florists

from across the country as well as from other countries. *Syndai* in Jaintia Hills has got a good collection of art sculptures, living root bridge and stone bridge on the India-Bangladesh border, and a bathing place of the erstwhile Queen, but such places attract very few tourists.

*Lyrnai* in Jaintia Hills is one cultural village with a distinct and unique pottery tradition commonly known for its “*Khiew Ranei*” in Khasi and “*Kchu Lyrnai*” in Pnar, used for baking ‘*Putharo*’ and ‘*Pumaloi*’ which are popular indigenous breads. But the road to this culturally ancient village was never developed and few people know about the existence of such a place. As such, this village is still inaccessible by road and people still have to walk for a few hours to reach the village. Thus there is a need on the part of the government to have a better vision to develop such places which could boost the state economy and generate employment.

Maintenance of many places in Jaintia hills still needs to be taken seriously. *Khim Moo Sniang* is the locality in *Jowai*, the headquarters of Jaintia Hills. It derives its name from an embedded rock in the shape of a pig. The literal translation from ‘*Moo*’ is stone and ‘*Sniang*’ refers to ‘pig’, a stone deity venerated by the Jaintia for its protective power. This stone which is in the shape of a pig has never been maintained, or popularized and exploited; it remains unknown to many. In recent years we witness that the rock has lost its original shape due to rain and other natural forces. This locality which is at the heart of *Jowai* could have attracted many tourists if it was developed into a tourist spot.

The beautiful *Nongkhnum* Island, located in the West Khasi Hills district is the biggest river island in Meghalaya and the second biggest in Asia. It is 14 kilometers away from *Nongstoin* but people cannot not reach this place because of the pitiable

condition of the roads and lack of accommodation in and around the area. The *Mawlynnong* village located near the India-Bangladesh border is known for its cleanliness and the travel magazine *Discover India* declared the village as the cleanest in Asia in 2003, and the cleanest in India in 2005. Dawki, which is located at about 96 km from Shillong, is the gateway to Bangladesh. It offers a scenic view of some of the tallest mountain ranges in Meghalaya and the Bangladesh border land. Though these places have better road facilities and accommodations, they have not generated much tourist windfall for the lack of publicity and promotion.

### **Conclusion**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Towards the end of the twentieth century it became a major source of income, employment generation and a very important contributor to government revenues. The international tourist arrivals in India have grown from a mere 25 million to 940 million in 2010. Meghalaya, on the other hand also has the potentiality to link tourism to activities and programmes of regional associations like, SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and BIMST-EC (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). Meghalaya can be a strong contender in holding international events in cultural, adventure, and heritage tourism. Such projection in the minds of the organizers and state will, in fact, internationalize the tourism industry in Meghalaya and, in turn, create employment and elevate the economy. Air routes linking the region can promote the need for a regionally developed tourism circuit for the north-east. IT network is a critical need in the current times. In order to promote tourism and have an effective utilization plan for the tourism infrastructure, a recommendation of special effort to promote package tours is one of the needs of the hour. Proper

banking facilities and credit cards system in the tourist spot area will also help serve the purpose as well.

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## EMPOWERING CSR PRACTICES FOR TRIBAL INDIA

Sohum Krishna<sup>1</sup>

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity; it is an act of justice”

[*Nelson Mandela*]

Under the Companies Act 2013, which was passed by both Houses of the Parliament and received the nod of the President on 29 August 2013, any company having a net worth of rupees 500 crore or more, or a turnover of rupees 1,000 crore or more, or a net profit of rupees five crore or more, have to spend at least 2% of their last three years’ average net profit on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. This order is specified in Schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013, and may be amended from time to time (Sahu & Mohanty, 2015).

This brief paper emerges out of an ongoing research conducted by the Centre for Social Fiction and Design, to formulate a proposal for companies that would help them in developing more efficient CSR initiatives in tribal and rural areas. Tribals constitute about 8 % of the total population of India and the Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) constitutes about 4 % of the total scheduled tribal population of India. The paper also looks into the CSR initiatives taken by various companies. Its main objective is to understand CSR activities undertaken by the companies for tribal groups in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, and Manipur. The impact of CSR activities is highlighted.

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## **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the continuing commitment by business to contribute to socio-economic development of the underprivileged, while improving the quality of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large.

It emerged as a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their businesses, operations, and interactions with their stakeholders. The companies use CSR as a means for creating balance of economic, environmental, and social imperatives. Further, CSR is also used to address the expectations and social aspirations of shareholders and stakeholders. In the context of this research, CSR is described as a wide range of voluntary activities by companies in the social and environmental sectors. CSR is seen as an umbrella concept which includes all the elements of business-society relations such as business ethics, corporate citizenship, corporate governance, sustainability, and stakeholder theory. It reflects how business responsibilities are understood within wider responsibilities in regional, national, and international business systems.

CSR strategies bring dual benefits to the business and community. It is a win-win situation. Although CSR is a strategic business management concept, it talks about charity, sponsorship, and philanthropy. A good CSR initiative not only makes valuable contribution to poverty reduction but also directly enhances the reputation of companies and strengthen their brands.

To understand and design a good CSR plan, it is important to understand the following points clearly (CII, 2013):

1. CSR Approach is holistic and integrated with the core business strategy for addressing social and environmental impacts of business.



2. CSR Action-Plan needs to address the well-being of all stakeholders and not just company shareholders.
3. Philanthropic activities are only a part of CSR, which otherwise contributes a much larger set of activities entailing strategic business benefits.

CSR practices however, had been in existence in India for long, in manifold forms, but it was the Companies Act of 2013 that re-furbished and re-launched the idea of CSR. Its bold mandate is promoting transparency, disclosure, and greater impact on development and community building. Under the Companies Act 2013, any company having a net worth of rupees 500 crore or more or a turnover of rupees 1,000 crore or more or a net profit of rupees five crore or more, those companies have to spend at least 2% of last three years' average net profits on CSR activities as specified in Schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013, and as amended from time to time. Following are the areas where CSR promotes investments:

1. Eradication of extreme hunger and poverty
2. Gender equity & women empowerment
3. Promotion of education
4. Reducing child mortality & improving maternal health.
5. Combating HIV/aids, malaria, and other diseases.
6. Environmental sustainability
7. Social business projects
8. Employment enhancing vocational skills
9. Contribution to Prime Minister's relief fund and other such state/central funds.
10. And such other matters as may be prescribed.

## Objectives & Scope of the Study

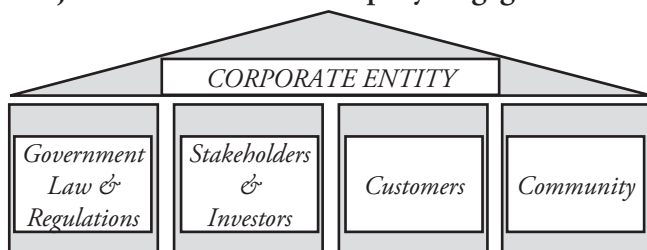
The objectives of this paper are:

1. To understand the lifestyles of tribal groups and their unique requirements to be addressed by livelihood programmes and CSR Initiatives.
2. To identify the CSR activities for the tribals already implemented by a few leading companies.
3. To assess the training programmes implemented for livelihood options and other initiatives taken by companies for primitive tribal groups.
4. To propose the framework of programs custom made for each tribal group.

The ongoing CSR programs are being carried out for tribal groups in the states of our focus (i.e., Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, and Manipur). The Center for Social Fiction and Design has extensively reviewed the ground report by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in those areas and the problems faced by them.

The scope of this paper also covers the major target areas where the focus of CSR initiatives is required. It is hoped that the findings will help development agencies to design more efficient CSR initiatives which would result in an optimal and balanced socio-economic development of the country.

### Major Benefits for the Company Engaged in CSR



*Figure 1: Pillars of Corporate Companies*

Any corporate entity needs four major pillars to keep itself in the market and perform at its maximum efficiency.

1. **Government, Law, and Regulations:** The Government plays an important role in defining the market and corporates do need a market-friendly government that designs policies, laws, and regulations keeping in mind the welfare of its citizens as well as complying with rational economic reasoning (Ayyar, 2009).
2. **Stakeholders and Investors:** The stakeholders and investors are the second most important pillar as they do provide the capital for the corporate entity to grow as well as guide the management towards optimum performance in order to gain revenue and profits (Aguilar, 2014).
3. **Customers:** All businesses need to have a source of revenue to continue their operation without fail and thus customers are also considered the King. Corporate entities need customers as the third pillar to support their existence (Claver, 2017).
4. **Community:** *Communities provide licence to operate.* Companies have started realising that license to operate is no longer given by government alone but communities that are impacted by the operations. A viable CSR programme that meets the aspirations of the communities gets them not only the license to operate but also a good relationship with the community that helps them garner its trust and preclude any trust-deficit, and also helps them maintain the license (Sundar, 2013).

*Attracting and retaining employees.* Our interaction with the human resource teams of various CSR implementing companies suggests that companies are able to attract, retain, and motivate their employees with their CSR commitments.

*Communities as suppliers.* Companies maintaining a good relationship with the community gets good support from the community members. Often, a good CSR in the field of enhancing livelihood simplifies its material procurement procedure as the company itself becomes a market for the community.

*Enhancing community reputation.* The time tested benefits of generating goodwill, creating a positive image and branding benefits continue to exist for companies that offer effective CSR programmes. This allows companies to position themselves as responsible corporate citizens.

## **How a Good CSR Strategy Can Benefit the Tribals**

### **Addressing the Needs and Requirements of Tribals in the Northeast**

#### ***Restoring Dignity and Human Rights***

Inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Fundamental Human Rights, in the dignity and the worth of the human person and in equal rights of men and women, have determined to promote social progress and better standards of living in larger freedom. The tribals of Northeast India have suffered on these counts, due to internal and external factors. Many parts of the Northeast has been plagued by divisionist forces, militants, and external threats. To fight back armed revolutionaries, the Central Government in 1958 imposed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Assam and Manipur and, the fall outs of these have plagued peaceful development of the region.

The NGOs and the CSR programs can come in handy in these situations. The victims caught in the conflict need

counselling, treatment, and rehabilitation; and CSR would be of great benefit for them to receive the same and return to the society and be productive at the service of their own families and society at large. Human Rights awareness camps should be brought under the CSR radar and used as a medium to educate all stakeholders on human values and human dignity that is the right of every citizen. The private corporate houses may act as neutral entities in the conflict and invest in designing ways and means to rehabilitate alienated members providing them job opportunities. Sustainable and organic tourism may be promoted by CSR investment and bridge the geographical differences. Building a stronger community in the long run would also fuel the growth rate for corporates as well as for the communities.

### *Resolving Distress Caused by Construction of Dams*

At present at least two dozen dams among many proposed for the north-eastern Indian States are in advanced stages of planning or clearance. Some of these projects are genuinely worrisome for the people, as they fear that these dams will permanently flood vast areas of indigenous livelihoods and means of subsistence. Dams in neighbouring countries also have a negative impact on these states of India. For example, the Kaptai Dam built in the Chittagong hills tracts of Bangladesh has affected the Hajong and the Chakma communities at large which forced them to migrate to India, further fuelling the conflict between refugees and local communities.

NGOs that lack resources to conduct proper study, survey, and intervene should be aided by CSR programs. Companies involved in construction of dams should use their CSR funds in conducting independent research awareness and designing programs that would directly address and resolve the concerns of the people affected by such projects. Awareness camps may be arranged as CSR projects that empower the tribals in such

a way that they have a dignified share in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the plans and programs for national and regional development that may directly affect their lives.

### *Education*

India has recognised the right to education as a fundamental right through the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution. The government schools are tough to be operated and be successful in remote areas, due to various factors. The lack of educational facilities force students to migrate to far away metropolitan cities where they are often at risk. Besides, majority of the youth from far flung northeastern states are financially and logistically handicapped to move to larger cities in other states for the purposes of education.

Education is one of the core areas identified for the CSR projects of corporates. Given the need for education in the northeast, the corporates must give priority to adopting CSR projects targeting the education sector. Besides providing various infrastructural and logistical support for the NGOs running educational institutions, they can develop programs to provide training to teachers and students in various skills and methods that would enhance the teaching-learning programs. They can also create support systems and educational and vocational counselling for students to attend higher education in other cities as well as secure jobs.

### *Health*

Our survey has sadly recorded the poor health facilities or the lack of them for non-urban population. Patients have to travel far distances to receive even basic treatment and are often totally deprived of advanced medical facilities. Due to this lack of healthcare system, majority of childbirths take place at home

in the absence of trained nurses, contributing to an abnormally high infant mortality rate. There are hardly adequate medical help available for major diseases such as HIV-AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoeal diseases, and others.

The corporates, through their CSR, can provide for community-based health services. They can also support research and development of traditional and indigenous health care systems, facilitating a two-way knowledge: that the modern medicine inform and supplement traditional healing systems and the modern medicine can also learn from the wisdom of traditional medicine known only to its practitioners. Through effective CSRs, employment and training of local health workers can be enhanced, and mother and child health can be secured (Shankar, Chadwik, Ghafoor, & Khan, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

Corporates willing to benefit from the major population of India residing in the northeastern states should start investing in those communities. CSR policies should be designed keeping in mind the culture and practices of the communities. They should further aim towards improving the living standards of the marginalised and indigenous population residing in the region without making them feel insecure and threatened. In this new age of innovation and out-of-the-box solutions, the corporates should also work towards bringing peace, checking illegal arms supply, and empowering the vernacular youth. They should also invest in creating social awareness campaigns in schools and universities of metropolitan cities of the nation to end the feeling of insecurity amongst the students from northeastern states. The corporates stand to gain through such interventions – they will be able to recruit young minds at home in their self and well integrated into the mainstream of the nation, thereby mutually

benefiting the corporates as well as tribal communities, and the nation at large.

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## CELEBRATING THE PLURI-CULTURAL IDENTITIES, ENVISIONING A DESIRABLE FUTURE<sup>1</sup>

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Recent debates on world civilizations continuously remind us that our cultures are under pressure from modern and post-modern trends. In our journey onward we realize that the traditions are invaluable, but changes are inevitable too. The path to a better future may not always be through a throw-back to the ways of old. Therefore, there is urgency today for creative and critical thinking, to break new grounds, and take humanity forward. We come across a number of hurdles in embarking desirable changes in the society. Though traditionalists often tend to grow over-defensive and their sense of insecurity leads them to take rigid stands, the ever inviting need to integrate the old and the new is crucial. Fast changing India would do well in celebrating this magnificent civilization with innumerable identities and stupendous resources on many counts. In this timely task we, as individuals and more so as forward-looking communities, have a great role to play.

The willingness to contemplate a new way of being, drawing from various cultural assets, is the need of the time. We are aware of the tremendous forces at work, which will try to suppress our small yet decisive initiatives but we have no other option than to build upon the collective cultural assets which will equip us to build upon the synergy. This debate is also necessitated by

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<sup>1</sup> *This paper is the text of the keynote address delivered at the inaugural function of the National Seminar.*

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an increasingly globalized socio-cultural, economic, and political scenario that has been impacting young people in their homes, in their religious beliefs, and in the realm of awareness of their cultural roots/community identities –often displacing them in the hazy shores of uncertainties. It is here one is reminded to be socially responsible, take ecology and technology into consideration, embrace life giving dimensions of culture, and move on being aware of even the aggressive and contentious issues, negotiating between real and imagined enemies. I place on record my appreciation to the tenacity and commitment of Saint Claret College, Ziro, in applying their imagination and conceptualizing this timely national seminar.

### **Pluri-Cultural Identities**

We, as a nation, accommodate various peoples and culture, each with its own beauty and agility. People of each category need room to live, grow, and flourish. Though all of us live in the larger geographical arena of India, we have also specificities to accept, accommodate, and cherish. We cannot forget that under the overarching ‘Indian-ness’ resulting from cultural convergence, there always have been varying degrees of linguistic, ethnic, geographical, religious, and cultural variations over historical periods of time. Therefore, we need to move on not merely forgetting the past, but rooted in the life-enhancing thoughts and ideas of the past and envisioning a new and more creative future for us and for the posterity. Otherwise, we may end up merely mourning our failures, and in that process we may miss out major possibilities of the future. No doubt, the secular and pluralistic fabric of the nation needs to be strengthened not by merely living in the glorious past but by engaging with creative ideas of positive change and inclusive progress for all.

India is one of the best known multi-cultural nations across the globe which has 1.21 billion population (Census 2011). This

is one of the best known multi-cultural and multi-lingual nations on our planet demonstrating a vibrant capacity for innovation, competition, and embracing success. True, we have also much diversity when we dwell on dissimilarities, while we cannot forget that these diversities themselves should become our vast resource on which we can build the edifice of this nation. It is also important for us to remember that diversities can often overwhelm us with some possible challenges. Yes, we need to face them and move on imbibing the wisdom of ages – social and cultural, political and economic, and religious too. These challenges should not put us out; but our tenacity to hold on to the greater possibility of doing creative tasks should enliven us to move forward cherishing the air, water, forest, and other elements in the nature as hospitality of our mother earth, and in response we need to engage in hard work and appreciate people of all walks of life for the betterment of a new society and the ever protecting magnanimity of God-head.

India is an immensely diverse country with many distinct pursuits, vastly disparate convictions, widely divergent customs, and a veritable feast of viewpoints. The issues of plurality and of choice are immensely relevant to the understanding and analysis of the idea of Indian identity (Sen, 2005). However, in India it is never a vision based on any particular religion or culture that should get the primary focus but our great civilizational ethos which is handed down from time immemorial. Certainly it is a pluralistic vision of India that will hold sway for any futuristic and desirable society. Strong and valiant voices should amalgamate salient philanthropy side by side with the vibrant local governments, empowering the pluri-cultural identities on real time basis (Parekh, 2010).

However, one may immediately ask as to how we shall celebrate the vast diversity of our civilization taking adequate cognizance also of the diversity that attempts to tear us apart.

Can a dose of vigour and enthusiasm provide us the adequate steam for the forward leap of this gigantic nation with all its twists and turns? This is a vital concern for administrators and bureaucrats, academicians and social workers, and of course the commoner too. This is the context which has given me reflections on this very pertinent theme of this essay – *Celebrating plural-cultural identities*, and I choose to call it a challenge and an opportunity side by side. If at all we visualize a vital future which is for the larger benefit of a greater number, it has to be visualized today with futuristic possibilities. I certainly believe this new wave of interest in our age-old civilization should become a lively discourse, primarily because this opens up avenues for recapturing the intellectual and historical heritage of a nation. Secondly, it tickles our nostalgic collective memory and triggers our imagination for a more vibrant futuristic vision of a desirable society. As this Seminar focuses on one particular segment of India's population – the tribals – I dwell on this focus at some length.

### **The Tribal Conglomerations in Perspective**

India is home to large number of indigenous people whom we often call tribals. Though they are a vast population of about 10.2 crores (1.02 million), the second largest tribal fraternity in the world, they often live in relative deprivation and penury; most importantly they have been increasingly subjugated by state agencies, landlords, and money lenders, and even seemingly by development-oriented agencies. It is also observed empirically that that their traditional culture and religion have been undergoing sporadic changes. However, in some quarters we time and again observe tendencies which deliberately ignore the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic realities – by trumpeting “One nation, one culture, one religion,” and “tribals are Hindus,

adivasis are *vanvasis*” (=the indigenous are forest dwellers), and the like.

Since we do not live alone in a closed up situation we have to progressively learn soft skills to negotiate between various situations. In this sense, we can expect every encounter with a new cultural setting to expose us to frightening uncertainties, unprepared negotiations, unwanted conflicts, belittling destabilization, with special reference to land and resource. And of course, we cannot exclude a positive possibility of hybridity, new vistas and cross-fertilization, therefore, a new beginning too.

It is empirically observed that tribal communities take decisions based on their deep rooted ecological awareness. In fact, they have traditional wisdom which drives them to observe their own peculiar ways of doing things. In that sense, we can say that their decisions most often place a higher premium on long term sustainability based on extensive systems of ecological knowledge (Mander, 1992; Padel, 1998). These deep-seated and ecologically inspired practices are often faced with threats of competition as a basic principle of modern economic and social organization. Therefore, it is fitting for us to agree that when we count success stories merely in terms of the economic parameters, we make a big mistake. Anyone who understands the tribal communities in their various categories would undoubtedly observe that tribal ways of perceiving the development projects, their ways of involving in their execution, planning, division of labour, and monitoring all these are very different from other segments of people.

### **What Role can Culture Play in Building Trust and Understanding?**

Among other ordinarily understood vistas of life, “culture” more tenaciously refers to the inner refinement of human being

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– both of the head and the heart. Therefore, there is an ardent urgency to get not only the concepts clear from early stages of human formation, but the practical, lived experiences would also be called for. This should be imbibed in a graded manner, each according to his/her capability to incorporate together with a formal training at home, in school, in institutions of higher learning, and even thereafter. The challenge is to celebrate diversities and enhance identities. Since multi-lingualism and cultural pluralism are the essence of Indian society, we have no other option than learn to live in trust and fellowship in pluri-cultural situations. Anthropologists and social scientists of bygone years have done their part reasonably well; now it is for us to chart out a new destiny – challenging, but ever desirable. In this context one may ask what our original academic contributions in the present decade are. Or do we blindly hang on to Gurdon, Hutton, Mills, Elwin, etc., who were true stalwarts and pathfinders of their day?

We know cultures separate people more sharply than political boundaries. But we need to discover the uniting elements in each of the individual cultures, more importantly than what divides and separates us. Then we enrich each other even while holding on to our individual identities. In North East India, while we analyse growth and movements of people during the past 25 years, we see that two contradictory forces have been simultaneously at work: broadly we may name them as *life-enhancing forces* and *negative or destructive forces*. The life-enhancing forces are the democratic institutions, ecological concerns, and cultural awakening. Of course, all these did not take place at a single stroke. They became a true force through the consistent efforts of people who dared to dream big; they were built painstakingly as a large edifice by the valiant men and women who decisively upheld pluri-cultural identities as a collective wisdom of ages. The negative and destructive forces are: insurgency, terrorism,

and corruption. These are deadliest poisons which eat into the very fabric of community cohesion and fraternal solidarity. Here we have only two vital options to uphold. One - while we interact with cultures other than our own, we may feel overwhelmed by the variety and heterogeneity. This scenario may compel us to make ourselves cultural fundamentalists. Or, we may learn to appreciate diversity and profit from the pluralism that confronts us. What option shall we appropriate? The choice is essentially decisive. Yet, it is certainly ours.

Today increasingly a new awareness needs to be constructed and fostered among the people of different religions, cultures, and ideologies that everyone is ultimately children of one and only God, therefore, related to one another as members of one human family. Tribal and non-tribal fraternities have many things to learn from each other. For example, tribal communities may teach their neighbours that they are proven sustainable resource managers for generations. The invitation to contribute towards the common welfare, realization of the common vision – fullness of life, loving service, and human rights and value-added life - will become a reality when larger numbers of people work with determination and imagination for a much more liveable world. And certainly, no country can grow into a robust civilization without persons who are not concertedly building minds and hearts both for professional acumen and above all with a veritable search for upholding values and ethics. This will inspire changes and make a positive difference in the entire gamut of the country.

### **Daring Responses**

In this context we cannot overemphasize the fact that we must watch out on pessimism which is lurking in many ordinary minds. When one is confronted with challenging situations, there is a very strong possibility of embracing pessimistic attitude, thinking that nothing can be done, or, what good can come out

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of my small initiatives, and why should I try when there is a very big possibility of meeting with failure. Yes, overcoming the seemingly larger challenges is not seen as something usual and ordinary. And why should they be so? Celebrating the communities' strengths is definitely recognizing the possibility of living and working together in spite of differences. These are times when we may need to partake in the shared vision, build up synergy, and chart out often the unusual and rough paths planning for the future, accepting emerging inclusive religious ideologies, engaging in consistent hard work, and above all, believing in miracles.

### **Learning from Tradition and Wisdom of Ages**

India can boast of ever expanding diversity – cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and political. We might wonder how we have survived as a nation with such heterogeneous elements. The answer lies in this very heterogeneity and diversity. Time and again it has been proved that any coercive method of homogenization under the popular banner of “national integration” or “assimilation of cultures” has given rise to agitation and revolt. Our existence and survival have not been in accordance with the “one nation-state” theory but has been engraved in diversity and multiplicity. However, recent events based on a narrow culture-based interpretation of nationalism, lack of clarity on the organizations' and even government's stand on intolerance amid growing fundamentalism, and increasing politicization of education have been identified among the key challenges facing India today.

This is the time we need to realize the rightful role of social science research. Social science research has to be revamped for a better and effective understanding of our nation and formulation of policies because it is very important to know the traditional social environment to chart out our destiny, sailing through



smooth transition. Learning from the major concerns of society and suggesting measures for their amelioration are only possible when rigorous social science research is put in place. Today we come to know that in the institutions of higher learning, theories which are taught often do not amply explain the social realities. That is the time we are invited yet again to fall back to our enduring wisdom of the ages that gently remind us to learn from traditions while creatively open ourselves to the possibilities of a brighter future.

When we look back to the various programmes of the government, it becomes amply clear that so far social scientists have been largely ignored in evolving policies and social management. It is of great concern with far reaching consequences. Why, because political parties which have majority in the state or at the centre may take decisions which are based merely on the party interests while neglecting the larger impact it will create for the welfare of the people at large. So today we need society/local specific social science research to find out reasons for widening of inequality and lack of tolerance towards various ideologies though they all have something positive to contribute towards the welfare of the people at large.

Today one is more than aware that strategy for planned development is possible only through broad based and shared vision, foresight, and data-based research.

### **Scenario from North East India**

North East India is India's least known and often least understood regions. It still evokes the colonialist image of 'exotic' and the 'primal' partly because of the hangover from colonial writers who were political agents and administrators with anthropologist garb. Today many of the tribal communities are searching for their roots as evidenced by the passionate movement

to build-up language identity of *Kok-Barak* in Tripura, *Sanamahi* as element of religio-cultural unity among *Meiteis* (Manipur), *Seng-Khasi* and its deep rooted ethnic aspirations in Meghalaya, and *Donyi-Poloism* and its various socio-religious implications in Arunachal. These are a few of the many simmering identity assertion movements which rightly need a space of debate and consideration in terms of community identity and empowerment. Here we cannot emphasize enough on the need for the indigenous scholars who have a great responsibility to unravel the actual scenario amidst the context of overarching modernization and globalization.

In any case, the land and the people of North East India should hold fast to the dictum of cultural pluralism with special reference to the tribal communities who really are part of the great national culture. Understanding this region of India can only be done in its bits and pieces. But it should somehow be done with great devotion and commitment. For this, we need to dispassionately learn the context both in times of calm and turbulence, listen to the heart beats of the people. As cultural integration and development aspirations are major points of departure for any forward-moving community in any geographical part of the world, a comprehensive understanding of this region with special reference to ethnic conflicts, insurgency, and poor governance buttressed with escalating corruption, and scores of disturbing trends need to be addressed. Let us not be content with a minimum awareness of this vast region of ours which has wonderful people who are often deprived of the much valued natural resources waiting to be harnessed for the benefit of people who are often poverty-stricken (Jose, 2012).

The tribal situation of the north eastern region of India is different from those prevailing in other parts of the country due to its unique geo-political and historical background. As the area is surrounded by international boundaries, the tribal people have

shared ethnic and cultural affinities with the tribesmen across the frontiers. As the British followed a policy of keeping the people separate and given the difficult topography of the area, the whole of North East India is still not completely integrated with the rest of India. This failure has been amplified due to the development paradigm adopted by the government of India, which are not responsive to the needs and features of the tribal people and land. The values the tribals hold dear need to be understood, especially the indigenous knowledge systems which are not merely for the material progress of the people, but are collective endeavours to make life meaningful taking each one of the members as equals.

### **Challenges of Tribal Communities in North East India**

While planning is done for a specific community, one has to take into account the indigenous ethos of the people considering the diversity and complexity within the local communities. This is to say that while program for resource development and its utilization is done, it should account for the socio-cultural mores of the people under consideration; otherwise, the best of the intentions may bring in very little or even adverse impact for a prolonged period of time. It is important to note that communities are far from homogenous and any program or scheme initiated in North East India should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the diverse peoples taking adequate care with regard to their present state of overall development perspectives in the region. Resource utilization among the people depends on the availability of the resource; yet new resources can often be introduced and adapted within the ecological and cultural parameters of the land and the people. This will call for endurance and innovative methods by the economic planners and the indigenous people.

Underdevelopment is a herculean challenge one needs to address most specially among the tribal areas of the country. There is no point in simply making hyped jargons such as “Make

in India”; what is essential is that we seek to understand and analyse the dangers that lie ahead in the field of environmental degradation – massive mining, hazardous factories that grow day by day without creating any meaningful avenue for the ordinary tribal fraternity. Aspirations of youth need attention because there is an overwhelming under-performance in job placement. Every day escalating corruption is in the news – which skyrockets the number of *crorepatis* (millionaires) amassing national wealth into their personal assets/bank balances. The real concern is that of leadership that creates large social spaces for oneself and for one’s close kith and kins. Do they understand the grim situation— one-fifth of the nation lives in semi-starvation? Are the basic issues affecting the country their prime concern, or are they more interested in watching if anyone indulges in eating beef or not, or if we stand while singing national anthem, should the *Bhagavad Gita* be declared the holy book of India, or if one is willing to say *Bharat Mata Ki Jai* (Long live, Mother India)?

When Arunachal Pradesh made that long Journey from NEFA (1954) to Statehood (20 February 1987) it was not very clear that this land would take more time than expected to become “the land of the rising sun.” Even today the challenges are many; however, possibilities and vision for a vibrant society are also open. One needs to heed to the emerging religious identities side by side with the development aspirations of the people: people have moved from the state of cattle to a state of cash, one crore to thousands of crores. The pristine oral traditions will have to be re-read under the new events and global trends. Outsiders-insiders syndrome might spark a border skirmish or two – demographic changes will challenge the internal cohesion and oneness of the people. We may need to understand that the money spent should enhance quality of human character. Growth pangs in the communities over a period of time should turn into a sense of well-being. Though it is important to become adequately aware

of our history, it is more essential for us to envision our near future with planning our distant possibilities as well.

Years rolled by, generations have passed by, much leadership were formed, people celebrated community festivals with much gusto; and performed community dances as an item of identity marker a number of times. The ancestors made many valiant hunting expeditions, engaged in fish-cum-paddy cultivation in vast expanse of land in the case of the *Apatani* tribe, and cleared steep mountains to nurture *jhum* fields for everyday sustenance. Now what are we up to? We have a golden duty to take our society onward. Don't merely mourn the present tragic scenario or envy the glorious past. Remember: Those who work very hard are successful and prosperous because, we have abundance of land and plenty of natural resources to count on. Maybe we can pursue a bit of Ethno-Botany to sort out and document health enhancing herbs which our ancestors cherished and nourished in their days. We may recall the mystery elements in the sacred groves where our forefathers felt the Sacred and planted sacred cultural symbols in upholding the customary institutions. Our youth have the ability to cherish inter-cultural, community-centred living, and openness to face new challenges. We need to build upon both human resources and environmental strengths. Why not emphasize the aspect of celebrating the positive goodness of people, pluri-cultural identities which is our strength on various counts?

### **National Scenario vis-à-vis Regional Concerns**

As we realize that there are a large number of people in India coming under the category of the 'young.' We need to be aware of their concerns, their values, aspirations, and challenges they face on a daily basis. Of course, they have a lot to say and do; but they also need guidance and accompaniment to undertake their arduous journey forward. Here, I am reminded of a TED

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Talk, the main content of which was that, “we decide what gets attention to, which in turn shapes our culture,” How true it is in the case of the young people of the nation! Developing critical thinking is one of the most precious (often rare) aspects of education and we decisively have to promote it today among the youth. Human development, environmental up-gradation, improving the quality of life, and recognizing the aspirations of the younger generation are all major concerns in North East India.

If these have to take place we need to make better use of the resources – both human and material – available at our disposal. Then we cannot allow the funds for our multifaceted engagements to be drained off (e.g., in some cases even up to 90% grant-in-aid from Central Government are under-utilized and siphoned off). We need to voice our concerns intelligently, certainly with more reasons and much less with emotion. We need to address issues of escalating un-employment, unattended refugee issues, and herculean land alienation. In some sense, protective discrimination keeps the tribal in the lower strata of Indian population. This is to say that in the name of 8.6 per cent of the population of the country huge chunk of resources are set apart – how much of it is put into optimum use? It is here we urgently need to create a synergy between stakeholders, NGOs, and Government.

We need to celebrate the luminaries of our day. Promoting the indigenous talents in various fields especially in leadership, research, indigenous medicines, technology and management, artists of various categories, socially committed media are some of the major ones one can immediately think of. Identifying enthusiastic visionaries with revolutionizing ideas, enhancing sense of mutual belonging, re-envisaging the social dimension of private property, a sense of equality, honesty, dignity of labour; love of parents for children; and respect of children for elders

etc also cannot be forgotten by any means. Does modernization mean only proliferation of market economy? We praise the great work done by Verrier Elwin (1964/1988, 1999); but what are we up to: are we willing to apply our minds to analyse the currents and undercurrents that are at work in our society? Creative imagination and hard work, not merely passive dreams, will bring our aspirations to fruition. Finally, we shall promise to uphold a peaceful, pluralistic, egalitarian, moral, and nationalistic vision for our land or else we shall fail to see a vibrant future. We shall uphold the dictum of healthy competition while upholding the idea of globalization. We value our traditions but remain open to an adequate dose of creativity and modernity, spirit of co-existence rather than sectarian ideologies and fanaticism; inclusive growth and productive employment. If we do not join hands (force), we fail. Change in the world is more towards fast food culture: comfort and less hard work. This will not take us far.

*Sanskriti: North Eastern Institute of Cultural Research* at Guwahati is also an agent of change in a small measure. In the past 12 years we have created platform for scholars both young and not-so-young to engage in debates that are vital for the very existence of our nation as a united whole and North East India in particular. The books we have brought out based on national seminars, the small monographs, and newsletters may instil optimism and academic temper in scholars of today who have the enthusiasm to take arduous paths for charting out their destiny. Other works by institutes of similar nature, universities, colleges, and various individual scholars too certainly contribute to the pluri-cultural context of the nation.

### **Pathways for a Desirable Future**

Our tomorrows will be built on daring imaginations. Young people of today need to take responsibility for the plans we make for tomorrow. We need to be decisively aware that the fuel of

enthusiasm that took us so far will be by far not sufficient to sail through the ever soaring competition in any conceivable arena of life and work. Therefore, we have no other option than to embrace the idea of more original researches, leading to better quality publications, and faster and greater dissemination of information that will ultimately matter.

Today globalization has been a tangible phenomenon wherein there is a consistent and rapid deterioration of ecological and social health. This has happened because of the mammoth structural changes in the urban areas without adequate strategies for the rest of the rural conglomeration. The future seems to be grim for large number of people who face the brunt of inequalities, displacement, and other forms of exploitation (Shrivastava & Kothari, 2012). Here we may be rightly reminded of McKinsey Research Foundation (2013) that studied companies across Asia and reiterated that those that globalized with a clear focus and purpose thrived well. For this, we need people with global perspectives, i.e., people with right motivation, clarity of thought, and performance; otherwise, we choose to embrace devastating failure rather than become pioneers and pathfinders of today for a more desirable future.

We cannot forget that we have the great duty of eliminating poverty of the masses which is intolerably high at about 40 per cent. Yet, the largest and unused heap of food stocks in the world is within India! It was estimated to be 62 million tons in 2001. Then, what about the enormous illiterate population of our country? In 21<sup>st</sup> century when we are passionately engaging with fast-paced supercomputers and nanotechnology, we are sadly reminded of the hungry millions who are deprived of daily meal for their sustenance. How do we respond to these anomalies amidst scientific advancement and craze for plenty? Undoubtedly, individualism and corruption eat into the very fabric of our social life. It is estimated that at least up to 16.6 per



cent of the black money is generated through fraudulent means. Certainly, we need to recheck and bring in a qualitative change in character role and influence of people who are placed high in the social ladder. It is often true that people are angry at the levels of corruption, but anger is not enough to turn their miseries into alternative vision and constructive future. We need to focus more on broader national agenda to turn a challenge to an opportunity. Surely we need to preserve the steam long enough to churn out ideas for the more desired and vibrant India for ourselves and for the posterity (Varma, 2004).

Unless each of us commits oneself to embracing a peaceful, pluralistic, egalitarian, moral, and nationalistic vision we shall only fail to reap the fruits of a reasonably meaningful present and obviously a vibrant future. We should emphasize the need to promote humanitarian values in families, schools, and work places, rather than harp on the identity based on religions and castes and other categories. We certainly have to make a commitment to healthy competition and reconcile with the idea of globalization at every stage of our involvement, without which none of our dreams will soar high enough to make a difference. Perhaps, we need some valiant activists who will not sacrifice the wealth of intellectual pursuits side by side. Of course, both of these – activism and intellectual acumen – are in plenty while a desirable combination is often lacking to say the least.

Today we also need to see that the traditions are enlivened with adequate dose of modernity where the spirit of co-existence takes priority over the narrow sectarian ideologies and fanaticism. For this, we need to promote, in a decisive way, educational research in humanities and social sciences. Look at the contemporary research output in many of our universities and other established research institutions in the North East! They might have contributed their share in the yester years, but are they relevant in making any significant contribution of contemporary relevance today? India

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is passing through some very difficult times wherein we observe day to day elements of fanaticism being tacitly allowed to creep in and grow. These elements breed in sectarianism and venom of violence and discord day by day. Do we not come across invitations to debates on banning cow slaughter and other issues while never taking a deep look at the human rights violations of annihilating human beings in the name of religion and its sectarian ideologies, political affiliations, and other categories?

Finally it is important for us as a nation to celebrate the luminaries who made the seemingly impossible often possible. They also upheld social responsibility, net-working with other academic institutions of excellence, undertaking documentation of tribal welfare activities within the state and elsewhere. There are those who contributed to women empowerment which has positively impacted families and society as a whole. There are those who took keen interest in environment management of the community and protection of natural resources while adhering to contemporary knowledge of customary practices/laws. There are a few of them, a very few original researches, publications, and dissemination of information, upholding a progressive pluralistic vision of India, promoting vibrant local government who will seek people's proactive participation while working hand in hand with select NGOs who have proven record of trust. We shall nurture a creative imagination in the young to form them into visionary leaders. Those who work very hard will reap the fruits of success. It's time to break loose of pessimism and guard against short term political agendas that violate the social fabric. Let us trust in our ability to do more and commit ourselves to embracing a peaceful, pluralistic, egalitarian, moral, and nationalistic vision. We shall then truly celebrate not only our individual identities, but group and national identities for a more cohesive, prosperous tomorrow.

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## VENUE OF THE SEMINAR

### SAINT CLARET COLLEGE, ZIRO

The National Seminar on *Tribals in the Contemporary Context: Myriad Perspectives from Northeast India* was held on April 9-10, 2016 at Saint Claret College, Ziro (SCCZ), Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh, the north-easternmost state of the Indian Union.

**Saint Claret College** was established at Ziro in 2003 as a result of a synergic confluence of the sustained efforts of the people and leaders of Ziro Valley and the commitment of Claretian Missionaries of the Catholic Church. The College is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and is permanently affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh. In December 2016, SCCZ was accredited with Grade “A” by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), thereby becoming the first private college in Arunachal to be so accredited and the first ever institute of higher education in the State to be graded “A” in the first cycle of accreditation. The College was declared the Best National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit of the State twice – in 2010 and 2014. At the Republic Day function of 2015, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh declared a Commendation Certificate to SCCZ for its excellence in higher education and its service to the tribal society.

With its mission “*to mould intellectually competent, professionally skilled, spiritually evolved, morally upright, socially responsive, and culturally tolerant citizens, through Claretine holistic education, for advancing a civilization of love,*” SCCZ offers a variety of academic and allied courses. Under General B. A. stream, it offers Majors

in Anthropology, Economics, Education, English, History, Geography, and Political Science. Under professional courses SCCZ offers B. Com and B. A. Mass Communication. Besides these, the College offers short and long-term certificate courses aimed at providing a range of soft skills for its students, Claretines. In 2014, SCCZ began the publication of an international, peer reviewed journal, *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* (ISSN: 2349-400X). The College has held a series of regional and national workshops, seminars, and conferences aimed specifically at contributing to the fundus of knowledge on tribal life and culture as well as skilling the academicians and researchers from the tribal societies. For more information, visit: [www.sccz.edu.in](http://www.sccz.edu.in)

## INTERVIEWS:

### **An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences (ISSN: 2349-400X)**

*InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* (ISSN: 2349-400X) is a peer-reviewed international journal of Saint Claret College, Ziro (India), devoted to providing a receptacle for reflection, critique, and dialogue for ideas in social sciences that are interdisciplinary in character. Founded in 2014, the journal brings out one issue every July. Publication of this journal is partly supported by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Delhi, through a generous grant.

The Journal welcomes scholarly and original manuscripts that explore interdisciplinary ideas in social sciences. The Journal invites original and previously unpublished empirical, theoretical, clinical, and historical articles, short notes, review articles, and book and film reviews that facilitate constructive reflection, critique, and dialogue at the service of contributing to knowledge that graduates to wisdom. The Journal is international in scope and every submission will be subject to blind review by peers. Interested scholars may request the Executive Editor, via e-mail ([interviews.scc@gmail.com](mailto:interviews.scc@gmail.com)), for a copy of the Instructions for Authors, Ethics Code, and the Style Checklist.

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## SNAPSHOTS FROM THE NATIONAL SEMINAR



*Saint Claret College, Ziro: the venue of the National Seminar 2016.*



Claretines offer traditional tribal welcome to the chief guest, Shri. Marnya Ete, the then Commissioner of Education, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, at the inaugural ceremony of the Seminar.





A view of the keenly attentive participants at the Seminar.



Session in Progress: Audience at paper presentation sessions.



Award of certificates of presentation to the participants by Dr. P. Sankara Rao, Assistant Keeper, IGRMS, Bhopal, the chief guest of the valedictory function.



The researchers who presented papers at the National Seminar, along with the dignitaries.

## ABOUT THE EDITORS



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