

**ROLE AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN: A STUDY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOLKLORE OF THE
APATANIS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**A thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

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Registration No. TZ167067 of 2016



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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the thesis titled, “**Role and Representation of Women: A study with special reference to Folklore of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh**” submitted by me to Tezpur University in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Cultural Studies under School of Humanities and Social Sciences, is my own and it has not been submitted to any university including Tezpur University for any degree or diploma. Other work/publication referred and cited in this research work has been appropriately acknowledged in the thesis.

Date: 19-08-2022

Place: Tezpur



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(सर्वोत्तम विश्वविद्यालयके लिए कुलाध्यक्ष पुरस्कार, 2016 और भारतके 100 श्रेष्ठ उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानोंमें पंचम स्थान प्राप्त विश्वविद्यालय)
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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Role and Representation of Women: A Study with special reference to Folklore of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh**” submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tezpur University in part fulfilment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Studies is a record of research work carried out by Ms Kime Mamung under my supervision and guidance.

All help received by her from various sources have been duly acknowledged.

No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for award of any other degree.

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Date: 19-08-2022

Place: Tezpur



(Ms. Kime Mamung)

Dedication

I dedicate this work of mine to my beloved daughter and son, Miss Tasso Zeelang and Master Tasso Meder for enduring and bearing all high and low hours throughout my research work. Their innocent concern that their mother is preparing for some important examination could every time boost my confidence whenever I felt low and giving up. I also dedicate this work of mine to my beloved father Late Kime Buga for his tremendous faith in me for everything I have taken up in my life. He would have definitely felt proud to see me submitting this thesis had he lived till present time.



(Ms. Kime Mamung)

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ABSTRACT

Apatanis are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh with patrilocality, patrilineality and patriarchal social setup. In male dominant society women are always depicted and interpreted in stereotypical roles according to the whims and convenience of society where men is the centre of social system, where he is the head conferred with power of decision making, where difference between men and women can be aptly understood with what Simon de Beauvoir says in her book, *The Second Sex*, “He is the subject; he is the absolute. She is the other” (2011, 6). The Apatani Patriarchal society has the concept of women’s subordinate status in the society which is very convincingly reflected in folklore. In traditional Apatani society, a woman has no inheritance rights and does not hold any share in her father’s and husband’s property. Traditionally, Women do not take part in political activities: Warfare and village council namely ‘*Buliyang*’. The space for women in traditional Apatani society is limited. Therefore, Women are heavily dependent on men for political and ritualistic services.

The present study “**Role and Representation of Women: A Study with special reference to folklore of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh**” is an attempt to situate the role and status of women in traditional Apatani society by considering folklore as the parameter for study; thereby basically understanding the ways women have been represented in Folklore. This work is researcher’s sincere effort which focuses on how women are represented, projected and presented in folklore of the Apatanis and aims to study the various images and roles of women represented in folklore of the Apatanis, based on hypothesis that folklore represents the roles of women in traditional society. Almost every aspects of Apatani folklore have been taken for study by different research scholars but no research on women considering folklore as parameters has been done so far. Dearth of authentic research on this specific field have actually inspired researcher to focus on studying, understanding and analysing the stereotypical role of the Apatani women in the society and how they are represented in folklore. Considering Folklore as a medium, relevant aspects of oral tradition and social folk customs specific to women has been considered for examining and analysing the role of Apatani women, construction of gender role and to situate the position of women in society. In folklore of the Apatanis, women have been represented as harbinger of happiness and prosperity, she is represented as mother, as an object of beauty and skill and she is seen playing role only

subordinate to their male counterpart. In oral tradition of the Apatanis, the role of women is presented in either highly idealized or in demeaned ways. Thus, the focal point of present work is to study and analyse the representation of women in particular and the oral literature and social folk customs of the Apatanis in general where women's position and role gets reflected.

The main idea behind the study undertaken is to unearth the projected stereotypical roles of women in Apatani Folklore. Roles of women are represented in various oral forms and in social folk customs where women could be seen playing the highly stereotyped roles assigned by patriarchal society. An intensive and extensive study on folklore in relation to representation of women has helped in understanding process of gender role stereotyping, gender construction, identity construction and the role of women in traditional Apatani society. Therefore, this research work presents the in-depth study on how women are represented and depicted in folklore.

The study includes two broad sectors of folklore and folklife studies: Oral tradition and Social folk customs. The area of the study is limited to the Ziro of Lower subansiri district and the research universe consists of the seven villages of Apatani plateau namely Bamin-Michi, Bulla, Diibo, Dutta, Hari, Hija and Hong respectively.

The objective of my study is to present comprehensive and detailed picture of the traditional life and representation of the Apatani women with special reference to the folklore of the Apatanis. It also aims to understand and analyse women's participation in the folklore, construction of gender role and the position of women in traditional Apatani society. In focusing on aim and objectives of the study undertaken, the study has, by employing theoretical perspectives has explored the tribe's folklore and folklife especially Oral tradition and Social folk customs. Through this study, I have put my best effort to bring forth the representation of women in Apatani folklore which was never been tried by any scholar in past.

I have used Mixed Method which includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches of empirical survey with data collection. Majority of data were collected from field as this research work is primarily based on field work and data collection. Some of the data were also collected through deskwork. Besides field work and data collection, in order to conceptualize my research study and justify the research topic, I have surveyed folklore and folklife of the Apatanis adopting Dorsonian model of folklore studies, I have also

included gender theories pertaining to my research work and the basic theoretical foundation of work is derived from a host of feminist writers.

This research work is divided into five chapters. Chapter I, which is an introductory chapter, gives detailed information regarding the title of the thesis, its aim and objectives, methodologies considered for the present study, literature review, theoretical grounding and the limitations of the present study. Chapter II provides detailed ethnographic information on Apatani as one of the major tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, their religion and belief system, Socio-economic life, migration and origin, this chapter also presents detailed information on Apatani folklore and women in Apatani folklore. Chapter III establishes one of the main arguments of the present study that folklore represents the role and position of women in the society. In this chapter, I have established my argument with reference to Oral tradition of the Apatanis and therefore all aspects of oral tradition has been taken for study. Chapter IV again establishes one of my key arguments that folklore represents the role and position of women in society. In this chapter, I have established my argument with reference to the Social folk customs of the Apatanis and therefore all rites and rituals which come under the purview of social folk custom have been taken for study. Special attempt has been made to understand women's participation in customary practices; her liberty and limitations have been discussed in detailed. Finally, Chapter V is basically the findings of the research work undertaken. This chapter is conclusion that summarizes the findings of this thesis.

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study:

The role and status of women is much discussed throughout the world and women are often seen, perceived, depicted, interpreted and structured differently in different society according to their belief, custom and tradition. For instance, in the Buddhist stories the attitude towards women is often severe where women are often depicted as deceitful creature. According to Gulla Palobhana Jataka, women are always capable of driving the most faithful souls to sin. Asatamanta Jataka opines women to be lustful, vile and degraded. And ask why any sensible person should allow himself to be tossed by passion for them (Elwin, 1970, p-9). But image of women as creator and mother is common to every society, culture and tradition. Being creator and mother they have always shouldered huge responsibility and at the same time their presence are felt everywhere and in every aspect of life. Literature is no exception and in particular the folklore of the Apatanis is embellished with the finest of legendary female figures each of which represents role specific to women and which are highly stereotyped. Most of the time folklore is instrumental in representing stereotyped gendered role and Apatani folklore is no exception where there is cultural hero who is considered as forefather of the Apatanis: the great *Abotani*, who is considered as the first human being and the forefather of the Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Numerous female figures appears in Apatani oral tradition each attributed with certain special trait and skill but none stands equal in position and status as that of great *Abotani*, the first human and the father of entire Tani tribes inhabiting the central Arunachal Pradesh. Blackburn (2008) in *Himalayan Tribal Tales* describes the trait and character of Abotani as, “Abotani is clever, amoral and sexually ambitious....In fact, Abotani belongs to that handful of ‘classical’ tricksters from north America and Africa who are cultural heroes because they bring fire or agriculture or set up a fundamental social institution. Abotani is the source of everything valuable in central Arunachal Pradesh, from mithuns and rice to beads and bells. In addition, for most tribe in the region he negotiates the alliance with the spirit world that results in the establishment of a major festival. More than trickster and cultural hero, Abotani is also the first human and the father of the Tani people, the collective term for the tribes of central Arunachal Pradesh. No other trickster in world literature appears to

have an equivalent cultural role.....none matches the cultural role of Abotani among the Apatanis and their neighbours. In folktale, he is an entertaining trickster. In ritual texts, he is a culture hero. As the first ancestor, his geneology is an idiom of cultural identity” (p -226, 227). Thus, such is the significance of *Abotani* to Apatani life and culture. Oral tradition of Apatanis does not witness any male or female who enjoys equal stand as *Abotani*. Though formation of universe and life is attributed to many female deities but none of the particular deities or spirits is acknowledged as grandmother or foremother.

The role of any person, male or female in society is decided by kind of image she or he carries and these images are represented by various elements in society. Representation connects meaning and language to culture. Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things (Hall, 1997, 15). Hall states three approaches to representation i.e the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist which have the most significant impact on cultural studies. In the reflective approach, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exist in the world. In case of intentional approach it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. The third approach recognizes the public, social character of language. It acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Things don't mean rather meaning is constructed using representational system-concepts and signs. Hence it is called the constructivist or constructionist approach to meaning in language. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational system to construct meaning (Hall, 1997, 24-25). In society which is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal in nature, there always exists roles highly gendered and stereotyped which again are represented through certain norms of the society, stereotyped roles displayed by characters of the narratives and ritual texts which convinces one to adhere to what is been taught and displayed.

Folklore is representative element of every society and its importance to tribal life is immeasurable. Though its stories are of unknown authorship but its power and importance are accepted, acknowledged and has been transmitted orally since time

immemorial because it is believed to be based on known precedents of traditional society. Everything is not learnt from classroom and through print or other media. Practices such as storytelling and listening, playing games etc. these are rather learnt informally and directly from each other and with time and repetition, some examples of human expression become pervasive and commonplace. These repetitions are conceived as traditions and traditional and are individually or collectively identified as folklore. Folklore denotes those art, skill, recipe, performances, ritual, ceremonies, custom and tradition in society which has been passed down to generation through collective memory and oral transmission in absence of written record (Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones, 1995, 1). Alan Dundes considers folklore as projective material and projection as inherent feature of folklore. Every form of social expectation is projected in folklore which convinces one who owns that particular folklore. He says, “For humans, projection provides protection. Folklore, although collectivized fantasy, does meet the psychological needs of individuals. Indeed it is literally and figuratively custom-made for the purpose.” (1980:61).

The main idea behind the study undertaken is to unearth the projected stereotyped roles of women in Apatani Folklore. Women has always been projected as mother, as wife, as daughter, as an ideal sister and as home maker. Roles of women are represented in various oral forms where she could be seen playing that highly stereotyped roles assigned by patriarchal society. It also projects society and its people, their culture, custom and tradition.

1.2 Statement of the problem:

Apatanis are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh with patrilocal, patrilineal and patriarchal social setup. In male dominant society women are always depicted and interpreted in stereotypical roles according to the whims and convenience of society where men is the centre of social system, where he is the head conferred with power of decision making, where difference between men and women can be aptly understood with what Simon de Beauvoir says in her book, *The Second Sex*, “He is the subject; he is the absolute. She is the other” (2011, 6). The Apatani Patriarchal society has the concept of women’s subordinate status in the society which is very convincingly reflected in folklore. In traditional Apatani society, a woman has no inheritance rights and does not hold any share in her father’s and husband’s property. In case if husband dies, she play

the role of a custodian where she has to take care of the properties till her son inherits it and if she is without male child then the property is inherited by the closest male member of her husband. She is basically engaged to household activities and cultivation. She is expected to fulfil household activities without complain as these are considered as 'women's job and duty'. Traditionally, Women do not take part in political activities: Warfare and village council namely '*Buliyang*'. The space for women in traditional Apatani society is limited. Therefore, Women are heavily dependent on men for political and ritualistic services. Though male dominated Apatani society provides very limited space to its womenfolk, she plays great role in the economic activities of the society. Both dry and wet cultivation are under her responsibility which are the backbone of traditional economy of Apatani society. The emergence of market could provide new platform for earning by selling the product of both dry and wet cultivation. Door to door selling of vegetables is a common sight in Apatani plateau which is one of the major sources of earning bread.

In Apatani Society certain mannerisms are very specific to females. Girls are taught dos and don'ts from early childhood. For example, Girls are taught not to laugh aloud as loud voice is considered against feminine manner. She is taught not to eat big pieces of meat. Spreading legs around the hearth are not advisable. Moving around till late evening and drinking alcohol is considered inappropriate. Women are expected and advised not to interfere the discussion when it is going on between the male members. These are few commonly believed and accepted precedents for female members of the society in day to day life of the Apatanis. Emergence of education and technology could better the life of female folk of the society but still there is mile to go to change the above mentioned precedents which have been followed since ages.

The present study "**Role and Representation of Women: A study with special reference to Folklore of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh**" is an attempt to situate the role of women in traditional Apatani society under the parameter of folklore. This work is researcher's sincere effort which focuses on how women are projected, presented and represented in folklore of the Apatanis.

Almost every aspects of Apatani folklore has been taken for study by different research scholars but no research on representation and role of women considering folklore as parameter has been done so far. Dearth of authentic research on this specific field

actually inspired researcher to focus on studying, understanding and analyzing the stereotypical role of the Apatani women in the society and how they are represented in folklore. Considering Folklore as a medium, every aspects of folklore specific to women has been considered for examining and analyzing the role of Apatani women, construction of gender role and to situate the position of women in society. In Apatani folklore, women have been represented as harbinger of happiness and prosperity, she is represented as mother, as an object of beauty and skill and she is seen playing role only subordinate to their male counterpart. In oral tradition of the Apatanis, the role of women is presented in either highly idealized or in degraded ways. Thus, the focal point of present work is to study and analyze the representation of women in particular and the oral literature and social folk customs of the Apatanis in general where women's status and role gets reflected.

1.3 Defining Folklore and Folk:

Folklore is believed to be as old as mankind. Folkloristics, folklore studies and folklife research are terms used to denote the study of folklore as a discipline in an educational institution. The term Folklore was first coined by William Thoms in 1846. But the Folklore studies had begun much earlier than the coining of term by Thoms. Before this term came into existence, the scholarly work on folklore was carried out under such labels as "*Popular Antiquities*" or "*Popular Literature*". Thoms realized the need of a single label to designate this important area of study replacing those cumbersome and even slightly misleading terms and therefore suggested the term Folklore in letter in the *Athaeneum* (August 22, 1846) which meant the lore of the people. The works of Grimm brothers, particularly of J. Grimm, whose "*Household Tales*" appeared in 1812, and was recognized by Thoms himself and which is very often used as evidence by western folklorists in tracing the growth and development of folklore studies, scholarly collections of folklore materials were made both in the West and in Asia, particularly India- *Kathasaritsagar*, *Panchtantra* are of being much older works than many folklore collections made in the west, which includes Grimmes collection as well.

Different folklorists have given different definition for folklore. Folklorist Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones in *Folkloristics :An Introduction* (1995) writes that "the word folklore denotes expressive forms, process and behaviours (1) that we customarily learn, teach and utilize or display during face to face interactions, and (2) that

we judge to be traditional (a)because they are based on known precedents or models and (b)because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, thought, belief and feeling”(1995:1).According to Theodor H. Caster , “Folklore is the part of people’s culture which is preserved ,consciously or unconsciously in beliefs and practices, customs and observations of general currency; in myths, legends and tales of common acceptance; and in arts and crafts which express the temper and genius of a group rather than of an individual”. Thus, folklore denotes expressive forms, process, and behaviours. Alan Dundes (1980) considers folklore as projective material and projection as inherent feature of folklore. He says, “For humans, projection provides protection. Folklore, although collectivized fantasy, does meet the psychological needs of individuals. Indeed it is literally and figuratively custom-made for the purpose.” (1980, 61). There exists many folktales, folksongs and myths in different society justifying why one is supposed to follow certain norms and rituals. For example, female members of the Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh are not allowed to climb *Lapang*- a religious platform because of the menstruation cycle experienced by females which they believe make their body unfit to climb that holy platform. Likewise, every society too has their share of folklore depicting their culture, tradition and heritage, both tangible and intangible.

Richard M. Dorson has outlined four broad sectors of folklore and folklife studies. These are:

- 1) Oral literature
- 2) Material Culture or physical folklore
- 3) Social folk customs and
- 4) Performing Folk Arts

Oral Literature:

Oral literature called verbal art or expressive literature are “*Spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterances*”. Oral narrative is one big sub-division of this group. For example, myth, fairy tale, romantic tale or novella, religious tale, folktale, legend, animal tale, anecdote, joke, numskull tale etc are the major forms of oral narrative genre. Another major sub -division is Oral poetry or folk poetry. Proverbs and riddles are also an important part of oral literature. Besides, chants, prayers, laments, cries etc fall under Oral literature.

Material Culture or Physical Folklore:

According to Dorson , “*material culture responds to techniques, skills, recipes and formulas transmitted across the generations and subject to the same forces of conservative tradition and individual variation as verbal art. This aspect of folklore is visible rather than aural*” (1972, 2). How people in tradition oriented society build their houses, make their clothes, prepare their food, farm and fish, fashion their tools and implements and design their furniture and utensils come under this section of folklore. Folk art and crafts are objects of material culture.

Social folk Custom:

Another important area of folklore is the field of social customs. According to Dorson, in this category of folklore emphasis is on group interaction rather than an individual skills and performances. One of the most important social folk custom are the ‘*rites the passage*’ connected with birth, initiation, marriage, death, and similar rites. Social customs and ritualistic observances are studied in social folk customs. There are thousands of rituals and customs in India practiced by people for rain, bumper harvest and for warding off natural calamities such as floods, famine etc.

Performing Folk Art:

According to Dorsonian classification, performing folk arts is the fourth sector of folklore. It constitutes traditional music, dance and drama. According to this school all items of folklore when delivered are performed. Folk instrument, dance costumes and scenario props are important ingredients of this sector. Performance in this context strictly mean conscious presentation of these arts- dance, drama, folk music etc, by individuals or groups who carry these art forms from one generation to another. Traditional music is one of the most important area of this sector. According to Dorson it is “*passed on by ear and performed by memory rather than by the written or printed musical score*” (1972, 363). Traditional musical instruments are equally important and its impact is so strong that many kind of folk music are known by the name of the instrument associated with particular music.

Folk drama is another important field in the field of performing folk art sector. Conventional symbolic objects- masks, Costumes, a special area for playing are part of

this sector. Special characteristics of folk dramas are performance, audience relationship and mode of transmission.

Concept of Folk:

Who are the folk? Which class of society constitutes folk? Is folklore genres confined to particular group or class of people? These are pertinent question to understand folklore study and its theory. Alan Dundes (1934-2005) in his book *Essays in Folkloristics* has discussed and explained the meaning of Folk – who are the folk and who constitute this group. Nineteenth century Folklorists considered folk to be a group of people who constituted lower class, in contrast to the upper class or elite of that society. Overly narrow nineteenth century definition of Folk states: “Folk as an old fashion segment living on the margins of civilization were and for that matter still is equated to the concept of peasant. The folk were understood to be the illiterate in a literate society. The association of folk with rural is similarly defined. Rural is implicitly compared with urban. The folk were rural because they could be contrasted with city – dwellers” (Dundes 1978, 2). Dundes illustrate the nineteenth century view of folk and Folklore by citing several passage from articulate spokesman, Andrew lang. Lang’s Essay “*The Method of Folklore*” which appeared in his “*Custom and Myth*” published in 1884 is a representative statement, “properly speaking, folklore is only concerned with the legends, customs, beliefs of the folk, of the people, of the classes which have least been altered by education, which have shared least in progress” (1884, 11). In Lang’s statement we find the folk being defined in terms of uneducated, rural and rustic. In contrast with Lang and other nineteenth century folklorists, Dundes has defined folk in the following way. “The term ‘Folk’ can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is – it could be a common occupation, language or religion- but what is important is that a group formed for whatsoever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own. In theory a group must consist of at least two persons, but generally most groups consist of many individuals. A member of the group may not know all other members, but he will probably know the common core of traditions belonging to the group, tradition which help the group to have a sense of group identity” (1965, 2). In this book he redefined the narrow nineteenth century definition of folk as illiterate peasant and with this definition of folk by Dundes a group could be as large as nation or as small as a family. In addition

to nation and family there are many other forms of folk. Geographical cultural divisions such as region, state, city, or village may constitute folk groups.

With emergence of new group or folk, new folklore is created. Thus scope of folklore is ever increasing and widening. Dundes states that with industrialization world is witnessing new folklore. E.g., the folklore of surfers, motorcyclists and computer programmers.

Folklore is an integral part of human life. Folklorists like Alan Dundes, Robert A. Georges and Richard Dorson has tremendously contributed in the field of folkloristic enriching the scope of folklore and folklife studies. Dundes's concept of '*folk*' has wider and more flexible meaning. It has enabled the students of folkloristic as well as Layman to understand the notion or concept of '*folk*'. Dorsonian classification of folklore studies has become internationally acclaimed format for studying folklore and folklife.

The knowledge generated in folklore in general and in folk literature in particular is the result of experience of not one individual but of the community or the society at large. We may call it the wisdom of the people or the learning of the community. This is achieved when acceptance of a particular knowledge system, be it herbal medicine tradition, myth chanting, agrarian calendar reckoning through proverbs etc is gained by the community. Thus it has been asserted that folklore is the pulse of the people.

1.4 Theoretical Perspectives:

Along with folkore theory, I have also employed concept of gender, feminism and patriarchy in work undertaken which I believe will actually help me understanding and finally situating the role of women in traditional Apatani society through understanding the way she is been represented in folklore.

Concept of Gender:

Gender as a concept is a way in which maleness and femaleness are perceived, evaluated and stratified in a society. Gender Ideology is mainly realized in symbols and rituals, patterns of verbal expressions and gender based role assignments. Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* (2011) which was first published in 1949 famously wrote, "One is not born, but rather becomes, women", which implies that being men or women, their gendered roles and assignments in society are socially constructed and one is not

born with those stereotyped roles. Thus, right from the time one is born he/she is decorated with the chains of dos and don'ts. In male dominated society, women enjoy limited space and freedom. She is subjected to play highly gendered role of being women, for instance, kitchen is her rightful place where she is engaged in cooking and cleaning. Cooking, cleaning, feeding and birthing of babies etc are her domain whereas major decisions are always taken by her male counterparts. Thus, Simon de Beauvoir rightfully records, "He is the subject; he is the absolute. She is the other" (2011, 6). According to her, gender is socially constructed and there exist many mode of stereotyping this role which involves social system in the name of culture, tradition, religion, moral values and duties which are aptly manifested in many religious tales, folktale, folksong, folk narratives etc.

The gender issue is intermixed with sex-role stereotyping in our society due to the interpretation of masculinity and femininity. It concerns the psychological, social, and cultural difference between males and females. From sociological understanding gender is socially constructed concept based on these differences. So, gender refers to cultural and social explanation that turns sexual differences rather than biological distinction. Social scientists discussed masculinity and femininity in diverse ways. Among them, Fredric Engel, Karl Marx, Juliet Mitchel, Gerda Lerner, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, etc are most eminent personalities, who contributed to the gender discourse (J.P.Saikia, 2010)

The term 'gender theory' is an outcome of waves feminism and feminist movements, particularly second wave feminism. The most important factor behind this movement was rooted in women's fight against exploitation, discrimination and her subordinate status in society. When question for apt definition of gender arises, we realize that different scholars from different academic persuasions have given its definition in their own ways. Gender is still used as a contrast term to 'sex'. Though 'sex' and 'gender' are interconnected, both convey two different meanings. Gender is socially constructed as opposed to that which is biologically given. From this point of view, 'gender' is referred to personality traits and behaviour in distinction from the body. Therefore, it is very clear that there is a clear distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'. In today's world, the term 'gender' has popularly became to refer any social construction having to do with the male/female distinction, including those constructions that separate 'female' bodies from

'male' bodies. According to Joan Scott (1988) in his work "*Gender and Politics of History*", "gender is the social organization of sexual difference. But this does not mean that gender reflects or implements fixed and natural physical differences between women and men, rather gender are the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences." Therefore, it can be said that whether the differences between men and women are socially or biologically governed is less significant than the way society is organized around these differences. From this perspective 'gender' is considered as a set of social practices which impacts on the life of both men and women in our society(ibid,2,4,8,9)

Modern sociologist, Anthony Giddens also separates both gender and sex. He has mentioned that while sex refers to physical differences of the body, gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. Drawing a very clear distinction between sex and gender from sociological point of view, it can be considered that gender is socially constructed concept and it could be said that primarily 'sex' is referred to anatomical distinction between men and women at birth. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* argues that facts of biology cannot explain the universe of distinction that came, over the course of history and convention, to block women's access to equal participation in all human endeavours. Therefore, gender refers to cultural and social interpretations that turn sexual difference into more than biological distinction from sociological approach.

According to S.M. Channa (2006), "Gender theory is considered as more comprehensive feminism; one that includes man, women, and child. Gender theory investigates the social organization of sexual difference, constructed and or inherent. Bringing to bear the male condition thus leads to the linkage of gender and feminism". It is attributed aspect which focus around the human concept of sex, a biological physical division which extends to a broad social construction, shaping, informing, limiting ways of being, both feminism and masculine. The sex category both male and female becomes a gendered through use of gender markers. Every aspects of human interaction and human beings are gendered. According to Channa gender theory is the progression of feminism. Position of women had been the reason behind feminism likewise gender theory wants to understand the role, implications, impacts and potential of male/female interaction.

Marxist theory of gender:

According to this theory, idea of masculinity and femininity are neither normative nor do they exist as categorical imperatives. The roles of male and female cannot be considered as functional. They exist as aspects of social and economic system. In this context, they reflect social dominance. According to Marxist, human beings make their own lives and they do this through two material processes which are always interlinked. These are: production and reproduction. Production consists of all those activities done by members of society for getting their fundamental needs: food, shelter and clothing. On other hand, reproduction comprises a specific activity which brings children and raises them to confront with the existing society as other members need. This theory includes institution of marriage and religion within the ambit of understanding gender.

Queer Theory of Gender:

This theory is one of the most important of gender theories which deals the study about lesbian, transgender and gay academic work in the areas of cultural studies and literature. Queer theory was emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s. A Queer means homosexual man and it indicate homosexuality.

Feminism:

The word 'feminism' originated from the French word *feminisme* in the nineteenth century. The apparent pattern of rise and fall of feminism over time has led the 'wave' analogy. The wave analogy developed with the resurrection of feminism in the 1960s. The earlier period dating from least the mid to late nineteenth century up until about the 1920s, became 'first wave' feminism. In turn, the resurgent feminist analyses and activism dating from the 1960s became 'second wave' feminism and the period from 1990s onwards became 'third wave' feminism.

The first wave feminism was mainly concern about the rights of women especially women's achievement of equality with men. The issue of vote, seen as the key to placing the equality of women on the legislative agenda, united almost all feminists into a single campaign. While the first wave feminism struggled for vote, the struggle of the second wave feminism was the liberation of women from the oppressive patriarchal society. The third wave feminism has numerous definitions, but perhaps is best described

in the most general terms as the feminism of a younger generation of women who acknowledges the legacy of second wave feminism. Third wave feminists have broadened their goals, focusing not only on women related issues but broader ideas like queer theory and abolishing gender role expectations and stereotypes.

Patriarchy:

When one talks of issues related to gender there comes patriarchy which according to Patricia Walby is indispensable for analysis of gender inequality, thus, 'patriarchy' is an ideology which convince society to believe women as inferior and subordinate to her male counterpart and thus, women must submit herself under male dominance and must be rule by men(1990,1,19,20). Patriarchy played an eminent role behind the rise of feminism. The word patriarchy from literary point of view meant the rule of father. This word is used to denote 'male dominated family'. Different scholars define this term from their perspectives. Patriarchy is viewed as the base of women's oppression and the phenomena cannot be understood without others. According to Gerda Lerner (1986) patriarchy means the manifestation and institutionalization of the male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. Men always hold power in all important institutions of society and that women is deprived of access to such power. Kate Millet, a radical feminist in *Sexual Politics* (1970), referred to 'patriarchy' as a central concept in her work. According to her, patriarchal societies were one wherein, if examined closed, men held positions of power in virtually all decision-making spheres. Sylvia Walby (1990) in her book *Theorising Patriarchy*, defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit. This system is concerned with the particular ideology that men are superior to women, that women are and should be controlled by men and that women are part of men's property. In this regard, certain examples might be taken from some South Asian languages such as Swami, Pati, Malik and Shauhar which mean 'lord' or 'owner'.(J.P.Saikia,2010, 11, 12, 13). Generally dictionary definition of patriarchy indicates the dominance of elder males over junior males as well as females in the family, tribe or nation, allied with the considering of descent in the male line.

Influence of patriarchy is not the same everywhere as its nature is different in different in classes in the same society, or in different societies and in different periods in history, though broad principles remain the same –which is men’s control. Again the nature of control may differ. Some of the common examples of patriarchy are highlighted by J.P.Saikia (2010) in *Gender: Themes and Issues* are as follows:

1. Discrimination against girls in distribution of property.
2. Preference to a male child by parents to continue family lineage.
3. Burden of household work on women and girls.
4. Male control over women’s body, labour, property and sexuality.
5. Lack of educational opportunities and other exposure to girls.
6. Domestic violence against women.

As patriarchy and its influence is not same everywhere and in every society, it can be found that tribal women enjoys better personal liberty when it comes to marriage, divorce and other personal choices as making friends, moving around, eating and drinking. Zenab Banu (2001) in *Tribal Women Empowerment and Gender Issues* points out that Bhil women of Kotra is not required to be chaste as her qualification for marriage. Pre- marital sex is common and it do not much inflict any social stigma on women and if people discover this kind of sexual relationship, it does not disqualify her for marriage. At worse she may get lesser bride price and will not be looked with much disfavour. In spite of all these liberty, the tribal women remained always poor compare to her male counterpart because she does not inherit any property in cash or land. Customary law only allow male heir to inherit ancestral and landed property. Birth of daughter of daughter does not bring joy as much as birth of son brings to parents, family members in particular and society in general. *Ramla* of south Rajasthan looks down the birth of the daughter and the brass plate- *thali* is rung only on birth of a son (Zenab Banu,2010, 141, 142).

Thus the gender relations in tribal societies are guided and governed by customary law which allows men to inherit property and rights of decision making whereas much of the household burden are taken care by females in traditional societies. They act as full time agricultural labour, full time maid available for everyone and most important economy of household is taken care by her but she is not even consulted when it comes on big

decision making related to big issues like purchasing of land and solving disputes etc. Thus, the plight of tribal women is miserable and pitiable.

1.5 Review of Literature:

Relevant books for the present study have been reviewed focusing on the aim and objectives considered and methods employed in present research work. Each book mentioned in review section has been individually reviewed with the aim to draw relevant information required for fulfilment of present research work. The following books have been reviewed for the research work undertaken:

Verrier Elvin's *A Philosophy for NEFA (1957)*, is of enormous value because it is one of its kind which describes country's least known parts – Its culture, religion, socio-economic, condition of the tribal people. This book imparts love and affection for the tribal folk – their culture, tradition, religion and ways of life. In-depth study on Apatani culture and tradition cannot be found in this book but it gives valuable source on Apatanis ways of social life. Though meagre information is given, book proved to be great help to researcher.

Numbers of books penned by local native writers like Takhe Kani, Mihin Kanning, Radhe Yampi, Gyati Rana, PhD thesis of Dr. Hage Naku and few articles by local research scholars have helped me in understanding traditional life of Apatanis, their belief and practices, customary law, rites and rituals. Thus, good numbers of books has been written on Apatani life, social system, festivals, and rituals and on various religious aspects but not a single book has been published on women and women related issues so far which could have considered for literature review for the present work.

In *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India (1958)*, Dr. Verrier Elwin has given three hundred and eighty stories from different tribal societies. He has taken some stories from Apatani society, except the origin story and rest are basically children stories. He writes about Apatani people's meticulous division of land and the system of irrigation. He also writes that Apatanis though tattooed, they are good looking people. He considers Apatanis women as wonderful weaver and Apatanis as unique tribal community among other tribal communities. This book gives an overall view on Apatani life and culture which helped researcher in understanding the view of early writers as Dr. Elwin when the people of the plateau were still least known and contacted by outsiders.

Takhe Kani's *The Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh (1993)*, describes many features of Apatani as a tribe and their ways and mode of living. Many important things about Apatanis are unveiled in this book. Author has discussed with vivid details the role and importance of *Nyibu* (priest) in Apatani social system focusing on *Nyibu's* role in administering of justice to its people. The writer of the book being Apatani himself has describe in detail the various elements which mark the contrast between Apatani with outsider through highlighting social practices, ritual and tradition of the Apatanis.

Takhe Kani's, *The Socio-Religious Ceremonies of the Apatanis (1996)*, basically describes important social and religious ceremonies of the Apatani people. In this book he focuses on such thing as why particular ceremony is important to society. This book plays the role of valuable source on Apatanis culture and tradition which has documented various religious festivals, ceremonies and rituals associated with these festivals and ceremonies. This book proved helpful for researcher in understanding rituals associated with festivals and ceremonies.

Dr C.V.F. Haimendorf's book *The Apatanis and their Neighbour (1962)* gives interesting account of Apatani as a tribe and in this particular book he mentions Apatanis as an enterprising tribal community. He highlighted the importance of religion and religious specialist as *Nyibu* (priest) in everyday life the Apatanis and it was sir Haimendorf who made Apatanis familiar with the rest of the world.

Niranjan Sarkar in *Dances of Arunachal Pradesh (1974)* throw light on Apatani dance pattern, it's origin, costume, festival and ropi ceremony etc. Though, the book is not directly related the topic undertaken for study but it truly proved fruitful in understanding underlying theme beneath those dance pattern and ceremonies.

Mihin Kaning in his book *The Rising Culture of the Apatanis (2008)* gives valuable information on the origin of Apatani people and their culture, traditional agricultural system, village and clan system, social division, traditional village council, dress, handicrafts, traditional hunting and trapping system, death rituals, games and sports, dance and music, ornaments and its origin, rites and ritual system, customary laws and system, slavery system and author also talks about reformation in faith system and impact of modern education in Apatanis traditional practices. In short, this book proved brief handbook for researcher which contains every essential details in brief and a sort of

short note on every aspects of Apatani life and culture proved truly helpful researcher in understanding different aspects of Apatani life, tradition and culture.

Thus, one can see and realize that good numbers of books has been written on Apatani life, social system, festivals, rituals and on various religious aspects but not a single book has been published on women and women related issues so far which could have considered for literature review by researcher. Only few articles have come up by local researcher which has been considered for review.

Dr. Radhe Yampi in her article “*A Crisp Retort on Gender Disparity in Apatani society*” (2018) writes that Apatani women had been poor since time immemorial as she is debarred from inheriting any properties in term of land and cash. She highlights how women are marginalized in different sphere of life starting from family to religion. She specifically mentions the absence of She-heroes and says Apatani oral tradition has only man to be considered as hero in the form of *Abotani*. Dr. Yampi also highlights how gender role expectations that Apatani society has of men and women which is well manifested in Apatani lullaby called *Liibang Anii*. In this lullaby female baby is lulled by mother to imbibe in her the skill of the skillful weaver who could weave her family clothes and she is also taught to be a great cook whereas baby boy is lulled by mother where she tells him to be bold and brave to climb highest mountain and to swim mightiest river. This article has been first of its kind where existing gender disparity in Apatani society has been discussed in manifold.

Dani Yamang in her article “*Customary Rights of Tribal Women with reference to property rights among the Apatanis*” (2018) writes that Apatani women in case of property inheritance, they are not allowed to inherit immoveable properties like land which is one of the reasons behind Apatani women being landless. The customary law of Apatani society does not allow women to inherit property even if she is the only issue of her parents, instead, in such situation the property would go to the nearest male kin in descending line. As per customary laws the women herself does not have inheritance right over her father’s or husband’s property. In case of divorce, she would neither have claim in the share of her husband’s property nor would demand any alimony or compensation as such. Though positive changes could be seen with education, transportation and communication facilities, interaction with outsiders and policies implemented by the government, the mind-set of the society are changing towards

women and property rights. These days self-acquired properties are given to daughters also but ancestral properties are still not allowed to inherit by the daughters.

Besides reviewing books written by renowned anthropologist and local native writers, researcher has also reviewed following books for theoretical grounding of the research work, to draw theoretical perspectives and for conceptualizing the present work undertaken:

Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones in *Folkloristics: An Introduction* (1995), gives detail account of what the word folklore could mean and define folklore as, “the word folklore denotes expressive forms, process and behaviours (1) that we customarily learn, teach and utilize or display during face to face interactions, and (2) that we judge to be traditional (a) because they are based on known precedents or models and (b) because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, thought, belief and feeling”.

Alan Dundes in *Interpreting Folklore* (1980) considers folklore as projective material and projection as inherent feature of folklore. He says, “For humans, projection provides protection. Folklore, although collectivized fantasy, does meet the psychological needs of individuals. Indeed it is literally and figuratively custom-made for the purpose.” He considers projection as an inherent feature of folklore.

Alan Dundes in *Essays in Folkloristics* (1978) has discussed in detail the concept of ‘folk’ and has given the much flexible definition for it, discarding the narrow nineteenth century concept of folk where the folk were understood to be a group of people who constituted the lower stratum, “vulgus in populo”-in contrast to the upper stratum or elite of that society (1978:2). Thus folk was understood as uncivilized group in the civilized society. Dundes in oppose to this narrow concept of folk has given much flexible definition for it and according to him any group sharing at least one common interest or factor can be considered as folk .

Richard. M. Dorson in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (1972) has given internationally acclaimed folklore theory by classifying four broad sector of folklore and folklife studies: 1. Oral literature, 2. Material culture or Physical folklore, 3. Social folk custom and 4. Performing folk art. Oral literature, also called verbal art or expressive literature is comprising of spoken, sung and voiced form of traditional utterances that

show repetitive patterns. Folk narrative is one of the large sub division of oral tradition. Another major subdivision is folksong or folk poetry. Material culture which is also called physical folklore is second sector of folklore which comprises techniques, skill, recipes and formulas transmitted across the generations. How men and women in tradition-oriented societies build their homes, make their clothes, prepare their food, farm and fish, fashion their tools etc. are studied under material culture. Social folk custom is the third broad sector of folklore study given by Dorson and under this sector emphasis is on group interaction rather than an individual skills and performance. One of the most important social folk custom are the '*rites the passage*' connected with birth, initiation, marriage, death and similar rites. The fourth broad sector of folklore study is Performing folk Art under which traditional music, dance and drama are studied.

Stuart Blackburn in *Himalayan Tribal Tales* (2008) has discussed in much detail the features of Apatani Oral Tradition. He has included in the Introduction of the book the Apatani mannerism; ways in which Apatanis talks, gesture and their outlook towards life. In this book Blackburn writes about influence of oral tradition especially *Miji* to Apatani life and culture and opines that, "...Apatani ritual texts dominates local oral tradition to such an extent that folktales are not recognized as a genre and their telling has little status" (p-21). As a research scholar what I could find out of reviewing this book is Blackburn's crisp and detailed observation of *Miji* and *Migung* and his collection of stories of which few of them were not recorded before by any folklorist with such detailed description. Apatani oral tradition can be broadly classified into two groups- *Miji* and *Migung*. Blackburn points out basic difference between this two oral genre by considering *Miji* more prestigious than *Migung*. Informal prose storytelling is known as *migung* and is less prestigious than the ritual chanting of *miji*. One major difference between these two terms is that a few stories are told only as *migung* and few only as *miji*. Local and recent histories, personal anecdotes and one particular folktale are told only in prose which is in form of *migung*, whereas some origin myths, as well as some episodes, are told within the labyrinth of ritual texts which are in form of *miji*. The association of *miji* with the spirit world and ritual speech is central to understanding Apatani oral tradition. Chanting ritual texts, as *miji*, is the dominant form of storytelling: it is heard more frequently, more publicly and has higher status than *migung*.

Stuart Hall in *Representation* (1997) points out the importance of 'representation' and its role in studying society as how things, objects or person are represented. He defines

representation as “Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people”. According to Hall, representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture.

Simon de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (2011), first published in 1949, talks about how womanhood is socially constructed and how she is burdened with that socially constructed roles. Beauvoir gives detail account of how this gendered society construct womanhood since childhood convincing her of lower strata and limited capacity. She points out in the book that economic independence will led women to her personal independence. Women are always viewed as other, as subordinate and as inferior in patriarchal society.

Marry Evans in *Gender and Social Theory* (2003) offer an account of the relationship between social theory and gender which both asks why gender matters to social theory and how sociological theory addresses the meaning and experience of gender? She further considers the way the issue of gender might disturb some of the traditional assumptions of social theory. Evans’s approach is interdisciplinary, offering an understanding of sociology that resists confinement within a narrow disciplinary canon and the received tradition of classical theory. Further, she argues that what was assumed to be solid in social life (e.g. economy) has ‘turned to air’ and lost theoretical space to culture. Thus, all categories of difference are socially constructed and infused with relations of power and so is the role of women which is stereotyped according to the feasibility of social system wherein she lives as subordinate and given lower status as to her male counterpart.

Sylvia Walby in *TheorizingPatriarchy* (1990) argues that patriarchy is the root cause of women’s sufferings and exploitation. She defines patriarchy as system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit. Walby’s approach towards patriarchy approves that this ‘term’ is a set of ideology created to convince that men is superior to women thereby allowing women to be controlled by men and considers women as part of men’s property. In this book, author gives comprehensive overview of the variety of ways of explaining women’s subordination in contemporary society and also substantiate her argument regarding recent changes in gender relation. According to

Sylvia Walby, concept of patriarchy is indispensable for analysis of gender inequality and that patriarchy can take different form with changing time, place and situation.

Jyoti Prasad Saikia's *Gender: Themes and Issues* (2010), is one such book which discuss relevant themes and issues related to gender and gender study. Author of the book opines that gender issue is intermixed with sex-role stereotyping in our societies due to the interpretation of masculinity and femininity. It concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. Making a clear distinction between sex and gender from sociological understanding, it is considered that gender is socially constructed concept. So, gender refers to cultural and social explanation that turns sexual difference rather than biological distinction from society. The theoretical interpretation has been aptly comprehended by selected issues of gender which is elaborated by multiple case studies undertaken. In one of his case studies where he particularly cites the plight of twenty five year old post-graduate girl who finds marriage as best option available to her for achieving social security.

1.6 Aim and objectives of the study:

This study is an attempt to study and understand the role of Apatani women in traditional Apatani society with reference to folklore and folklife of the Apatanis. The objective of my study is to present comprehensive and detailed picture of the traditional life and representation of the Apatani women with special reference to the folklore of the Apatanis. It also aims to understand and analyse women's participation in the folklore, construction of gender role and the position of women in traditional Apatani society. The society being patrilocal, partilineal and patriarchal, women has been playing subordinate and stereotyped role since time immemorial. Thus, attempt has been made to unearth how women are projected in folklore and how it validates these stereotypical roles of women in traditional Apatani society. The following objectives have been set for the present study:

- 1) To understand the role and representation of women in the folklore of the Apatanis.
- 2) To present comprehensive and detailed picture of the traditional life and role of the Apatani women with special reference to the folklore of the Apatanis.

- 3) To understand women's participation in the customary practices of the Apatanis through analysing the role and representation of women in folklore.
- 4) To understand the position/status of women in traditional Apatani society through analysing the role and representation of women in folklore.

1.7 Methodology:

The present study is based on Mixed Method which includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches of empirical survey with collection of data. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Most of the primary data was collected from the field work: majority of data was collected from chief priests of the Apatani villages by applying 'direct interview method' and 'participant observation'. The interviews from the feminist perspectives were also held keeping in view the aims and objectives of the present study. For the secondary source of data various books, articles and journals were referred.

The study on present area will be based primarily on data collection and survey. The cultural specific oral narratives of Apatani community will constitute primary source material. And for the collection of data; elderly persons, distinguished and established researcher, known priests were called personally for interview and intensive discussion. Interview were conducted into three phases – from March 20th 2017 to March 25th 2017, second phase of field works for data collection was carried out by researcher from June 29th 2017 to July 5th 2017 and third which was final phase was conducted from 9th January 2019 to 15th January 2019. The interviews were scheduled according to the lunar calendar of the Apatanis which were considered for certain rituals and festivities by tribe. These field works covered the villages in Apatani plateau located in Lower Subansiri District Arunachal Pradesh. The villages taken for field works are **Hari, Hija, Hong, Bulla, Dutta and Mudang-Tage**.

Besides field work and data collection, the present work is based on folklore and feminist approaches as the aim of the research work undertaken is to situate the role of women in Apatani society through the medium of folklore, thus host of feminist writers, folklorists and their theories were considered along with gender theory.

1.8 Area of Study:

The Apatanis are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and its total population is about 43,777 (As per Census 2011) living peacefully in the Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh. The place inhabited is popularly known as Apatani plateau. It firmly rests in the heart of Lower Subansiri with picturesque hillocks and mountains. Traditionally, till 1953 all the Apatanis inhabiting this plateau were living in seven villages (Hari, Bulla, Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, Bamin-Michi and Hong).Whose foundation according to oral literature dates back to the time of their ancestors when they first enter the plateau and eventually settled there. The present study is based on data collected from these villages as they share the same oral tradition with little variation.

1.9 Limitations of the study:

This research work has its limitations. Dawn of modernization and education, besides taking Apatani society to new arena of enlightenment, it has also taken its toll on tribe. People have drifted away from native religion and many could hardly speak their mother tongue. Many Apatanis embraced Christianity giving up their native religion. People who lived and experienced the true traditional practices and belief have left for their heavenly abode. Youngsters are much under the influence of Bollywood and Hollywood. In such circumstances, it was really difficult and strenuous while collecting data. Apart from few priests, there were hardly any commoners who could narrate any tale or songs. But sincere efforts were made on my part by visiting the renowned priests of the Apatani plateau while carrying out my data collection procedure. Few senior citizens could become my informants by giving whatever valuable information they remember on oral tradition and social folk customs.

While surveying and collecting data, I had experience that narration of any folk genre varies from village to village and from priest to priest. Therefore, focusing on my aim and objectives, the intensive study was made only on the selected folk genres relevant to the topic of the proposed research work. Focus was made on women oriented folk genres. Within this limited source and information, my research work was materialized with all existing traditional ways, information shared by my informants and some customary beliefs and practices which were preserved in form books by few local writers of the Apatani plateau. Thus, present study is undoubtedly challenging and interesting but it has its own limitations and it has covered only two sectors of folklore and folklife

studies: Oral tradition and Social Folk customs of the Apatanis. Dorson's classification and models for studying folkore has been primarily adopted to materialize my research topic.

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CHAPTER-II

THE APATANIS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

2.1 Introduction:

Arunachal Pradesh, the land of rising sun is the home of twenty six major tribes. It is an ethnic state inhabited by colourful tribal communities of diverse culture, religion and lifestyle. It is the largest state in the entire Northeast India that covers an area of 83,743 Sq. Km., which is roughly 2.55% of the total area of India, and lies between the latitude 26° 30' N and the longitudes 91°30' E and 97°30' E with evergreen forests covering almost 82 per cent of the state (Naku, 2006,14). The average rainfall is reported to have above 3000 mm per year and climate varies from sub-tropical in the south to Alpine in the north. The beautiful state is home of more than 500 varieties of orchids and it forms a complex hill system of Shivalik and Himalayan origin and is criss-crossed by numerous rivers and streams. Arunachal Pradesh shares a total of 1630 km of international boundary with neighbouring countries; 1030 Km with China, 160 Km with Bhutan and 440 Km with Myanmar. The Mc Mohan line defines the international boundary between India and China. The state has a common border with Nagaland in the east and south-east and Assam in the south (Pandey & Tripathy, 1997).

The Apatanis are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and its total population is about 43,777 (As per Census 2011) living peacefully in the Ziro. They belong to Tibeto-mongoloid race, speaking an unwritten Tibeto-Burman language and are sedentary agriculturalist, who do not practice slash and burn agriculture and only rarely hunt. In past they were variously named as *Onka-Miris*, *Ankas*, *Apatanangs*, *Tananangs* etc by early visitors of the valley (T.Kani,1993, 8).C.V.F. Haimendorf in *The Apatanis and their Neighbours* (1962) addressed the people of the plateau as 'Apatanis' and since then, the tribe is popularly known as Apatanis. Literally, the word Apatani contains two words – “*Apa* and *Tani*”. According to local meaning “*Apa*” means showing of affection while “*Tani*” stands for human race and thus Apatani is an affectionate name for descendents of *Abotani* called *Tanii* today. The place inhabited is popularly known as Apatani plateau. It firmly rests in the heart of Lower Subansiri with picturesque hillocks and

mountains. Traditionally, till 1953 all the Apatanis inhabiting this plateau were living in seven villages (Hari, Bulla, Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, Bamin-Michi and Hong). Whose foundation according to oral literature dates back to the time of their ancestors when they first enter the plateau and eventually settled there.

The Apatanis are expert in handicrafts. They make various kinds of baskets, vessels and other household items. Weaving is specially considered as women's work and Apatani women are expert in weaving traditional dresses of variety of colours with different pattern. These craft works are being encouraged by District handloom (textile) and Handicraft Industry which has paved a way for unemployed youths of the plateau to support their sustenance. All ethnic dresses both worn by male and female are weaved by women only and till date male weavers in Apatani society were not witnessed. Each pattern and design is associated with certain ceremony and it is worn accordingly. These dresses are-*Supun Tarii, Bilan Abi, Niji Abi, Kente Abi, Bitu Abi, Piisa Lenda, Aser Abi, Chinyu Abi, Pyamin Pulye, Kente Pulye, Tongo Pulye, Misa Pulye, Jilan Pulye, Abyo, Jibo, Jigjiro, Jikhe Tarii, Jilya* etc. Some dresses are considered sacred and these are not considered for daily use. These dresses are *Supung Tarii* of female and *Jigjiro, Jiland, Abyo, Jibo,* and *Jikhe Tarii* of male members. These dresses are supposed to be worn during certain ritual ceremonies and thus it not to be used in daily life and if it is used misfortune will fall on that person and his/her relatives. There is myth on weaver that if the weaver invokes the God of knowledge and power *Jilo-Lyayu* with bacon meat, smoked squirrel and a pot of pure rice beer as offering which is to be kept on attic of the house then she acquires the knowledge of weaving those sacred designs and patterns with greater spontaneity, clarity and beauty.

The economies of the Apatanis are dependent on agriculture. They practice permanent wet rice cultivation with well developed indigenous irrigation system since time immemorial and this is what they are best known for. Along with permanent wet rice cultivation they are also engaged to dry fields cultivation for growing vegetables, maize, millet, tobaccos, chillies and various other crops. Wet fields are called *Aji* and Dry fields are variously named as *Lyapyo, Yorlu* and *Balu*. The tribe basically popular for paddy-cum- fish culture has started pisciculture under the community development programme in the Apatani plateau during second five year plan in 1957-58. Following this programme in the same year four to five numbers of fish ponds were constructed by the

Department of Fisheries with common carp as only fish seed. During sixth five year plan the Government of India introduced a new scheme IRDP to assist and boost the income of the villagers under which the beneficiaries constructed fish ponds. There is one Government fish seed farm in Apatani plateau known as High Altitude fish seed Farm located in Tarin, established during 1980-85 which was financed by North Eastern Council (NEC). Rearing of fish along with paddy is what called paddy-cum-fish culture and it was implemented on experimental basis during 1965-66 in few selected paddy fields. The programme was a huge success and today every farmer releases fish seeds in the paddy fields just after the transplantation of rice seedlings from nursery bed in the months of April and May and harvests in the month of June to September. The process of rearing fish could provide financial assistance to needy and it also supply ample for the locals to feed on.

Economy of the Apatanis is also dependent on domestication of animals and fowls. Hunting and fishing also contributes the growth of economy. Poultry farming is prevalent in present context and many have taken poultry farming as profession as poultries could yield good profit. Moreover, now a days people of the plateau have also started practicing Horticulture gardening which begun in 1952-53 under the proficient and technical supervision of the District Agriculture officer through which they grow Apples, Pears, Plums, Kiwi, Cardamoms and Potatoes etc.

In traditional Apatani society; people have assigned much importance to animal rearing and Mithun played highly important role in traditional pattern of economy. Dr. Yampi (2009, 72-73) opines that Mithun have always been supreme sacrificial animals required for slaughter at many ritual occasions. In olden days, Mithuns were the recognized currency in all transactions to do with land. Apatanis have always been self sufficient regarding food grains and vegetables but for supply of animals like cow and other raw materials they relied on trade and barter with Nyishis, Tagins, Galos, Membas, Khambas and with the non-tribals of plains of Assam. According to Haimendorf (1944-45) there were no other tribe in the Subansiri region which has developed barter and trade to a high degree as the Apatanis.

After the advent of education, modernity and coming of administration into Apatani plateau wide changes could be found on the economy. It has widened the scope and

people are engaged to other sources of income as Government servant, putting hands in business, and contracts etc apart from being engaged to agriculture.

2.2 People and Religion:

The Apatanis are segmented into exogamous, patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal clans. During ancient time both men and women had a tattoo on their face. A horizontal line was marked across the under lip and straight line was drawn downward from it to the point of the chin. The women were marked from the lower lip to the base of the under lip. But face tattooing is no more in practice. It has been given up completely with the coming of education and administration into the Apatani plateau. In the ancient time male wore *Ahu* and *Yari*, which were one of the most distinctive features. '*Ahu*' is a kind of tail made of strips of fine cane bent into the shape of horse collar with an elongated end. These strips of cane were fastened round the waist like a belt. The elongated tail of the end hangs down behind and is plaited loosely. It is usually dyed in red colour. Men folk of Apatani society in olden days used it to add beauty and velour in their personality. In the present time, it is almost extinct from the sight. And to cover the genital, they wore *Yari*, the loin cloth, made up of cloth with breadth of 4 inches and the length of about six feet. They fastened *Yari* around the waist which covers the genital. They did not keep their hair untidy. In fact they kept long hair and made a knot in front of forehead called *Piiding* and brass skewer called *Khotu* was passed through it. According to Stuart Blackburn(2008), " This skewered hair knot, which boys began to wear from about the age of 10, is an Apatani marker of masculinity; although men of the neighbouring tribes twist their hair in a similar arrangement, one can easily spot the difference"(*Himalayan Tribal Tales*, p-23). Between knee and calf muscle, they put a band made up of fine strips called *Ali Tarin*. It was worn only by male members of the society. Apart from these accessories, men also carried with them *Elyo* (Sword). Apatani men during ancient days took special care to keep up their appearance and to carry them in a way which makes them look chivalrous and full of velour.

Danyi-Piilo (Sun-Moon):

The people of the plateau believe in *Danyi-Piilo* (Sun-Moon), the Sun and the Moon as their protector. The Sun and the Moon is worshipped in many culture but one specific

feature which marks the difference between other and Apatani ways of worship is that here in Apatani belief system Sun is identified as female and moon as male. Thus, *Aayo* is prefixed before *Danyi*(sun) which mean grandmother and *Aato* is prefixed before *Piilo*(moon) which mean grandfather, so the sun and the moon in Apatani is addressed as *Aayo Danyi* and *Aato Piilo*. Keeping faith in *Danyi-Piilo* is an age old custom of the Apatanis. The term *Danyi-Piilo* carries and connotes much wider meaning than people tend to perceive and understand. According to Mibang (1999), it is used to refer to almighty God. It is also used to denote natural objects, the sun and moon. It has further been used to represent the traditional belief systems of the people. The movement which began in Siang district could stimulate the entire Tani tribe towards preservation of indigenous faith and Apatani's strive to preserve their traditional faith resulted in new form of worship with the building of place of worship known as *Meder-Nello*. According to Bath (2004), *Danyi-Piilism* has physical and metaphysical aspects. The physical aspects of its talks about the natural objects; the sun and the moon, the giver of the light and heat. The metaphysical aspects of it represent the religious belief of Apatanis. As per their belief *Danyi-Piilo* is a single entity, the Supreme Being, omnipresent, omnipotent and infallible who delivers the ultimate judgement.

Apart from *Danyi-Piilo* there are various other spirits who are addressed through priests and are appeased through sacrifice. Stuart Blackburn (2008) in *Himalayan Tribal Tales* points out that there is sheer number of spirits, 150 or more, of which only dozens are regularly addressed in ritual (p-11). They usually perform various rites and rituals to cure themselves from various diseases and afflictions. The rites and rituals can be classified into four categories '*Chiching Uie*, *Gyunyang Uie*, *Tugyu Uie* and *Tiigo Uie*, of which '*Chiching Uie*' is a ritual usually performed to heal the patient. '*Gyunyang Uie*' is very complicated rites performed to the cure hereditary or very complex diseases and sufferings. '*Tugyu Uie*' is normally performed to praise spirits and '*Tiigo Uie*' is a great rite which includes lengthy and tedious ceremony as '*Subu*' and '*Murung*' rites performed in the month of December and January. These ritual ceremonies are part of *Donyi-Polo* (Sun-Moon) belief system which in Apatani is called *Danyi-Piilo* religion.

Danyi-Piilo movement and establishment of *Meder-Nello* (place of worship) is a recent phenomenon and is a new concept as such. Apatanis never had worship house or place of worship before the advent of this movement like other religions as church of Christians,

mosque of Muslims and temple of Hindus. Before this movement image of *Danyi-Piilo* could not be seen in any Apatani household and there is not any place sanctioned for keeping any image or idol in their houses as they believe in the power of omnipresence of *Danyi-Piilo*. Thus, people are advised to fear the omnipresence power of Sun and the Moon before indulging in sinful activities and malpractice.

The Donyi-Polo movement began in 1968 with the efforts of few tribal leaders which gradually got recognized and also gathered the high level political support. It was in 1979, the State Legislative Assembly passed the Freedom of Indigenous Faith Act. This movement is an outcome of an urge to preserve ethnic culture from powerful religions such as Christianity and Hinduism. The underlying principle behind this movement was to preserve and promote its own religion in a new setup. This movement is similar to other reformation or revitalization movements in which it combined tradition with elements borrowed from forces which are more influential, powerful and popular. According to Stuart Blackburn (2008), “*Donyi-Polo* (‘Sun-Moon’) is an important figure in the mythology and rituals of the Tani tribes. Centred on this traditional symbol, the movement has been developed into a formal ‘religion’ called ‘*Donyi-Polo-ism*’. Oral myths have been smoothed into a coherent cosmology, with *Donyi-Polo* reigning like a creator-god. Permanent worship halls have been built, where congregations pray to Sun-Moon, whose image is painted on the wall. Brass lamps and sprinkled water are used, while printed pamphlets (in Romanised local languages) of prayers and moral precepts guide the faithful during weekly meetings. All these elements are borrowed from Christianity or Hinduism and are without precedent in local tribal belief and practice” (*Himalayan Tribal Tales*, p-48). In Apatani Plateau section of people are much influenced by Hindu organizations, such as Vikekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Vishva Hindu Parishad and Ramakrishna Mission etc. Thus great deal of influence could be seen amongst people of the plateau resulting in conversion. Not just these Christian missionaries also show equal influence amongst the locals and nearly thirty percent of the total Apatani population are now a Christian converts.

Danyi-Piilo movement which actually began in Siang region of the Arunachal Pradesh soon gained momentum and gained support among the tribes under Tani belt - Adi, Apatani, Galo, Nyishi and Tagin tribes. The first *Meder-Nello* in Apatani plateau was built in Hari village. It was started being constructed in the year 2000 and completed in

the year 2003 was inaugurated on 28th March 2004. The word ‘*Meder*’ means to purify or purification and ‘*Nello*’ means a household site. This term was coined by Kago Siira of Hija village, one of the seven villages in Apatani plateau. There is a booklet of prayer songs and hymns called *Lyambo Pe* published by Hari *Meder-Nello* society to promote indigenous religion. Every Sunday the followers of Danyi-Piilo religion gather at *Meder-Nello* for offering regular service and prayers. At the outset names of the sick and weary people are registered and congregation gathered for prayers pray together for their cure and recovery. At the end offering of rice powder which is called *supung* is to be performed by sick person and the other who wish to do so. Rice powder is voluntarily arranged by the member followers of *Danyi-Piilo* turn-wise on weekly basis. A black thread called *Tiipy*a is use to tie on hands for protection and security; this practice of tying thread is not a part in traditional Apatani ritual. The source of income for running this institution is from donation and from practice called *Tani Enko* an annual offering of Rs.100 as remuneration given in the name of *Meder-Nello* for its religious service. Though the new form of religion is gaining popularity but many locals are dissatisfied and critical towards its mode of worship as it is a mixture of traditional Apatani faith, Hindu and Christian elements. Sprinkling of water on head from ritual gourds, tying of black thread on wrist, ringing of bells, uses of candles and incense sticks are characteristics features of *Danyi-Piiloism* mode of worship which has drawn many criticism from some group of Apatanis. The concept of *Danyi-Piiloism* and coming up of worship house as *Meder-Nello* has gained much popularity accompanied by criticism but majority has accepted it as it is the only way to preserve indigenous faith with certain modification. In present time it has emerged has one of the major religions of the state and 31st December is declared a state holiday and named as *Donyi-Polo Day*.

2.3 The Land:

The Apatani Plateau is located at an altitude of 5754 Ft. and its latitude 27°32’ N to 27°37’ N and longitude 93°48’ E to 93°52’ E respectively. The plateau is said to have an area of about 1015 Sq.Km. approximately. The half of the population is scattered throughout the territory of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Apatanis are well-known for Paddy-cum Pisci-Culture. They produce local rice called – *Mipy*a, *Pyaping*, *Pyareh*, *Empu Aemo*, *Elang Aemo*, *Pyanyi* etc. Fishes are common in the season. There are also various local products like – Maize, Millets, fruits

and vegetables. The land is fertile, plain and it has hilly ranges around it. Therefore the land is basically known as Apatani Plateau. The plateau falls within the heavy rain zone. The monsoon starts from the month of April and continues till the month of September. The heavy rainfall is observed during the month of June and July. The average annual rainfall is counted to be 200 cm. The plain and fertile plateau of Apatanis is surrounded by many hills and ranges. All the hills and ranges are also connected to some of the mythological aspects of the Apatani society. These hills are important and also their names are taken by the priest during prayer incantation. The name of the hills and ranges of Apatani plateau are – *Dinchi Dinkho, Tagi Taja, Pantii Lantii, Dolo Mando, Siigya Putu, Sala Mado, Naring Bida, Pai Tajer, Pai Amu, Gyachi Gyatii, Lyube Siigya, pelo Abya, Tabyo Putu, Chogo Saro, Laru Putu* etc. These ranges are thickly forested areas and many types of trees, canes, bamboos, bushes and other wild plants are found. Trees are of many types. These are – *Santi, Kiira, Sangkhe, Salyo, Tiibe, Tara, Tiijo, Dolo, Riihing, semo, piita, Pecha, Baching, Diirang Sankhang, Rume, Saro, Samper, Tabe, Tasse, Yorkhung* etc. Some trees are believed to be owned by evil spirits and they are *Sanjha, Saro, Sari and Tamyo*. People are barred from touching these trees because it harms when they touch it. Other trees like *Sankhe, Salyo* and *Tiibe* are good for building houses and furniture. *Piisa* the blue fine trees scientifically known as *Pinus Wallichiana* is one of the sacred trees of Apatani plateau. It is used as firewood during Murung rites. It has great spiritual values denoting health and wealth. The other sacred trees are *Piita* (*Prunus spp*), *Pecha* (*Pyrus*), *Semo* (*Prunus Nepalensis*) and *Kiira* (*Castanopsis spp*).

The most important and phenomenal thing of Apatani plateau is *Bije* (Bamboo), it is the only type of bamboo found in India. It is believed that this bamboo is gifted to mankind by Goddess *Hintii Anii* from her bone. Thus the importance of bamboo is tremendous to Apatani people and they relate extinction of bamboo to the extinction of mankind. Forest actually plays very important role in Apatanis life. That may be the reason why people fear wanton destruction of the forest. They believe that the God of forest *Pulung Hiiro* will curse them which may lead to complete extinction of forest item in future. Therefore Apatanis offer fist to God *Pulung Hiiro* every year after Murung and Myoko festival. This act of appeasing God is known as *Morey Aeha* and this act ensures the healthy growth of flora and fauna.

People of the plateau are deeply connected to their land and they perform rites and rituals and festivals for the better growth of flora and fauna and for mankind. Like every other tribal communities of the world Apatanis too are deeply rooted to their lands and forests. Even today Apatanis worships nature and they see life in the growth of flora and fauna.

2.4 Festivals of the Apatanis:

Festivals are an integral part of human existence and the Festival of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh are an essential part of their socio-cultural life. The festivals are celebrated with ritualistic gaiety to thank spirits and deities for bumper harvest, prosperity and for the welfare of the community and an individual.

The dates of the festival are generally fixed as per the traditional Lunar Calendar based on the agricultural operation. However actual date of executing the rituals is fixed by observing omen either in the egg or chicken liver. Most of the festivals are celebrated on community basis. Accordingly, all the necessary arrangements for the celebration are done with the cooperation and contribution from the community.

During these Festivals alter is created depicting various spirits and deities in the specific place of the celebration with wood, bamboo and cane. Sacrifice of the animals and the fowls form an essential part of the Festival. The services of the priest are invariably important and necessary for performing ritual of the festival. The Festival of the Apatanis can be classified into three categories:-

1. Agricultural
2. Religio- Agricultural
3. Religious

Dree is purely agricultural festival celebrated in the month of July for the Bumper harvest of the crops. This festival is celebrated every year for superior harvest, prosperity and for community welfare. It is believed that *Dree* is a malevolent deity which takes the form of a pest and eats away the rice crops and other agricultural plants like maize, millet and cucumber leading people to undergo poverty and starvation. Thus *Dree* is celebrated to ward off these pests and to prevent themselves from poverty and starvation.

The origin of *Dree* is related with the origin of crops and its cultivation. The myth behind celebration of this festival reveals that Apatanis observes related rites and celebrates the festival for healthy crops and bumper harvest.

It is believed by the Apatanis that deities namely *Hintii*, *Hirii* and *Rintii* have created all kinds and types of crops. Hage Naku (2006) in *Beliefs and Practices of Apatanis- A Study in Continuity and Change* records that the crops created by *Hintii* and *Hirii* deities are considered edible at any situation under any kind of religious taboos which includes crops like rice, maize, millet and ginger etc. whereas crops created by *Rintii* deity are considered unfit to be eaten after observing certain rite and rituals. These crops include pumpkin, beans, all type of cereals and esculent roots. It is believed that if these forbidden crops are consumed during the stipulated time of taboo observation then tumours will come out from various parts of body and misfortune may take place with the near and dear ones. After the end of taboo period all type of crops can be consumed without restriction (p-213). Usually these taboos are observed by the women folk and men are free from such beliefs.

Abotani the forefather and an ancestor of the Apatanis consulted the deities of agriculture *Aba Liibo* and *Anii Donii* when crops were all infected with pests which caused crops to decay and die out. The deities of agriculture advised *Abotani* to shift his field to another place called *Liiha Pohtang*. After shifting of field he could get good crops and good harvest for sometime but it did not last and again crops were infected with numerous pests and once again crops decayed and died out. *Abotani* once again consulted the deities and asked for solution to his problem and accordingly he was advised to perform *Dree* rituals. It is believed that *Dree* deity is malevolent by nature and therefore she is after the destruction of agricultural fields which meant the complete eradication of animals including humans that are dependent on it. To prevent the massive devastation and destruction of crops and to prevent future destruction and for propitiation and appeasement, *Abotani* performed *Dree* rites and ever since the festival is celebrated with ritualistic gaiety and pomp.

The Religio-Agricultural Festivals are *Myoko* and *Mida*. The word 'Mida' is a generic term that is associated with matrimony of the Apatanis. The marriage ceremony (*Mabo Enchi*) is also termed as *Mida*, where the groom takes oath with presentation of Tibetan sword to bride's parent so that their daughter would become his legal wife. As such,

Mida is not exactly the wedding ceremony as generally understood rather it is socio-religious ceremony for exchange of gifts such as mithun, bacon, ornament and other articles between bride and bridegroom for welfare of couple (T.Kani, 1992,58). This ceremony is generally performed for healthy and prosperous life of the married couple and to add value to status symbol.

Myoko is one of the most important festivals of the Apatanis having socio-religious importance which is celebrated in the month of March. Every individual householder participates which is followed by series of rituals to be performed and observed. According to priest Hage Tapa of Hari village, the celebration of *Myoko* festival coincide the flowering of the Assemese palm tree (*Takung*) and therefore it cannot be celebrated before the flowering of the palm tree.

This festival is a triennial in nature as it is celebrated in rotational basis by three group of villages turn wise every year. Each group is consisting of many villages. The following table shows the distribution of villages under each group:

Table-1: List of Myoko Groups

Sl.No	Name of group	Village composition of the group
1	Talyang-Hao	Hari, Talyang-Kalung, Tajang, Reru
2	Tiin-Diibo	Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, Bamin-Michi and Hong
3	Niichi-Niitii	Hong village alone

Source: Field survey

During olden days, *Myoko* was jointly celebrated by entire Apatani people at the mythical place called *Ipyo Lembyang*. But with passing time and changing situation accompanied by increasing population and variation of migration to the present place of settlement has led the Apatanis to divide amongst themselves into three groups.

There are two myths narrating the origin of *Myoko* celebration. First myth is closely associated with the *Abotani* (ancestor of the Apatanis) narrating his life cycle. The sacred lore reveals that spirits *Chankangrima* and *Dokasima* gave birth to numbers of *Tanis* (different avatars or forms of Abotani) such as *Nikin Tani*, *Nigi Tani*, *Niipii Tani*, *Nitu*

Tani, Nima Tani, Uyi Tani, Ato Haring and Neha Tani. These *Tanis* are considered as the crude form of man or in other words half men. It is believed that the last form of *Tani* that is the *Neha Tani* was born as first perfect human being. It was *Ato Haring* who is responsible for the birth of *Neha Tani* along with Tiger (*Lyubo Siinyo*), Leopard (*Garbo Taker*), Snake (*Bulyang Khandu*) and an Eagle (*Bulyang Duyu*). Thus, even today all animals belonging to cat family are considered as siblings by the Apatanis as all including humans are born from *Ato Haring*. The last form of *Tani* was powerful enough to control and rule the entire universe including the spirits and deities through his power of “*Ludu pimii Koga Mimi*” (eyes on backside of head to see and sharp heels at back of ankle respectively). Therefore, *Hassang Bulung Mikkhi* the powerful spirit deprived *Abotani* of all his magical and supernatural powers and transformed him to an ordinary man without former powers. As soon as he becomes ordinary man, all spirits and deities avenged him as a result of his earlier deeds leading him to live miserable life. There was no ways to escape the wrath and conspiracy of the deities and spirits.

To bring the situation under control *Abotani* was advised by *Ekung Popi* (supreme advisor of mankind) and *Dolyang Chanjang* (*Abotani*'s sister) to celebrate *Myoko* and to perform necessary rites. He was suggested to invite the spirits and deities comprised of *Siiki, Dogi, Kirii-Kilo Chinii* and *Buropucha* for a community feast to turn their enmity into a friendship. Apart from the spirits and deities, friends, kins, relative of *Abotani* had been invited to the celebration. To appease numbers of spirits and deities individually, numbers of fowls and animals were sacrificed and offered but these offerings were turned down since they expected only domesticated ones. Therefore *Abotani* sacrificed and offered domestic fowls and animals which were castrated.

It is believed that after celebration of *Myoko* and performing necessary rites, *Abotani* had peaceful and prosperous life with sound health. The menace of famine, epidemic and natural calamities also had ended with the celebration. He assured all the deities and spirits that *Myoko* celebration will continue and will be carried forward by his decedent every year when palm tree starts flowering.

There is another myth narrating the reason behind the continuous celebration of *Myoko*. It is believed that the *Myoko* celebration stopped after demise of great *Abotani* leading people to suffer from epidemic, famine, drought and social confusion among the Apatanis. The prosperity and progress of Apatanis declined and people suffered

miserably. These sufferings compelled Apatanis to perform numerous rituals and rites to appease deities and spirits but their suffering continued and it could not be healed. Finally sufferings could be stopped only with the invocation and appeasement of *Myoko* deity with the celebration and by performing necessary rituals and rites. Two persons namely *Ato Dihu* and *Ato Rahu* sons of *Iipyo Tacho* came forward to resume *Myoko* celebration with *Bungu Liidi* and *Bhuhe Liisi* appointed as priest to carry out required rites and rituals. They were priest of high spiritual knowledge who could appease spirits and deities but their efforts could not yield any result inspite of performing all rituals and rites. The priests tried to appease the deities and spirits with grasshopper, stem of ladies finger and millet as offerings but these were rejected and the situation worsen with time. It was with omen through which priests discovered that monkey (Siibii Biiding), castrated domestic fowls and pigs are required to offer and no substitution could be considered for the purpose of sacrifice. It is believed that after observing the rituals with desired sacrificial offerings; every misery ended leading society towards peaceful and prosperous life. Since then *Myoko* is celebrated every year with ritualistic gaiety by every Apatani of the concerned group. Thus Apatanis celebrate *Myoko* to prevent epidemic, famine, drought, social unrest and to enhance prosperity, friendship and to bring political and social integrity.

The religious Festival comprises of *Murung and Subu-Tanii*. These two festivals are celebrated on December – January month. *Murung* is celebrated in the month of the January. The following are the beliefs and faiths associated with *Murung* Festival and its celebration:

- i. When the bride-groom remain childless.
- ii. When bride-groom does not have male offspring.
- iii. When the child is born mentally or physically handicapped.
- iv. When domestic fowl and animals suffer from sudden abnormal disorders.
- v. When bees carve out a hive around the dwelling house or granary.
- vi. When snakes or other wild reptiles enter the house or granary.
- vii. When Mushrooms grows in the hearth or in the dice of pigsty.

- viii. When the person is sick for long period of time and cannot be cured with other ceremony or medical treatment.
- ix. When one dreams of growing of banana tree or Mushrooms at the home or granary sites.
- x. When there is a sudden deformation in the crops, plants and trees of the garden , fields and groves.
- xi. XI. When the mithuns, oxes and pig has grown too old.

The grading of the *Murung* rituals is basically made in accordance with Numbers of Mithuns and cattle being sacrificed. C.V.F Haimendrof has described three grading of *Murung* rites which are *Ronser*, *Takung-putu* and *Rontii* or *Gyambo-pido*. But we have more elaborate grading of *Murung* according to the elaboration of meat distribution to public and number of Mithuns and cattle sacrificed.

Rontii Murung: *Rontii Murung* is characterized by sacrificed of more than five in Number including Mithuns and cows but never above eight. This *murung* is further classified into many grades, depending upon the distribution of sacrificed meats: *Yapuyallang*, *khessar – khenii* , *gapyung* , *allo-akhenii*, *alo-patanii*, *siinikhenii* , *burro khenii*.

Takung Putu Murung: In this category of *Murung* the Sacrifice of Mithuns and Cows are two to five in numbers. The distribution of ceremonial sacrificed meat is distributed amongst the same *Myoko* groups. The formalities and procedures of the celebration of this *Murung* are same as that of *Rontii Murung*.

Ronser Murung: *Ronser Murung* is the simplest form of *Murung* with the sacrifice of only one cow in the front of the corridor of the house, *changopachanii murung* is the another form of *Ronser Murung* where a half grown Mithun is sacrificed.

The origin of *Rontii* and *RonserMurungis* traced from the same mythology but the ritual performance and rites have some similarities as well as differences:

- i. Both the *Murungs* are performed in the month of January.
- ii. Usually *Ronser Murung* is performed on health ground and *Rontii Murung* for earning name and fame.

- iii. *Rontii Murung* is placed in highest status owing to numbers of animals sacrificed and financial involvements. However, both possess the same spiritual value.
- iv. *Rontii Murung* is performed by the rich people and *Ronser Murung* by the poor people owing to less financial involvements.
- v. The ceremonial performance is conducted at *lapang (Sacred platform)* if Mithun is sacrificed. But in case of cow sacrifice, the ritual incantation had to be performed in rear corridor of house.
- vi. The meat distribution of sacrificed animals is given to all independent house holders of all Apatani villages. Solemnizer can distribute additional meat, Sugar, salt, beacon piece or meat mixed with bone according to the capacity of solemnizer in order to enhance social status and value addition for life after death.
- vii. In case of *TakungPutu Murung* the distribution of meat are confined to same Myoko group.
- viii. Meat distribution in *Ronser Murung* is confined to solemniser's own village only.
- ix. The alter structure of both are same but the size of *Ronser Murung* sacrificial alter is smaller owing to the less number of animal sacrifice.
- x. The procedure of preparations of both *Murung* rituals ceremonies is same and identical.
- xi. The ceremonial procession of *Rontii Murung* involves the beating of sacred plate (*Tallo*), brandishing of sword and fertility comic dance drama (*Taku-Tamu*). In *Ronser Murung* it is done in lesser scale.
- xii. The contribution from the people to aid the celebration in cash and kind are important factor in both form of *Murungs*.
- xiii. In both *Murung* rituals the *ude tinning rites* is performed where all the spirits and deities are appeased for prosperity and redress of sufferings.

xiv. The mythology related to the origin of both the *Murung* is same and *Ronser Murung* is believed to be emerged first and *Rontii Murung* were opted later.

On the appointed day the priest in full ceremonial dress at about two to three in the morning starts prayer incantation in the house of the solemnizer. This prayer incantation is called *Rontii Meniing* and spirits are appeased by offering chick for not disturbing the rite at *lapang* (Sacred Platform). Priest after *Rontii Meniing* leads to *lapang* for incantation known as *subu-hinning*. The ceremonial sacred version of incantation and its sequence slightly varies amongst the priest but significance, belief, and faith remain same and intact among the priests of the Apatani plateau.

After the completion of sacred incantation of verse at *lapang*, the sacrificial animals are brought near the *sikha* (Alter) for sacrifice. The priest prior to the slaying of animals recites a small sacred verse called *Siilulunii*. Thereafter, bride of the solemnizer smears rice flour and rice bear to the forehead of animals. It is also ensured that axes (Weapons for Sacrifice) are also smeared with sacred rice bear and flour. The family members of the solemnizer are not allowed to come out of the house while slaughtering the animals. They are restricted so that their souls are not captured by the evil spirit along with souls of sacrificed animals in the sub-terrain land of dead. It is believed that animals selected for sacrifice should be killed in one blow and coming out of noise of animal after hammering indicates bad omen and also signify that the ceremony might not have been successful enough. Therefore, soon after the blow of axe on the neck of animal, the young strong youths pounce upon it and drag it down. In this way all the sacrificial animals are slaughtered in *Murung* rituals.

Mythology behind the Origin of Murung:

There are two popular mythologies regarding the origin of *Murung*. The first mythology narrates the story of *SiidoTakau* and *NyandoTanyang*, a husband and a wife. The couple had been suffering from various diseases due to the spell of evil spirits and deities. Moreover they remained childless despite after long period of marriage neither could they gain any prosperity. Therefore, numbers of *Gyuniang rites* and rituals were performed to get redressed from the suffering but their condition remained same. Therefore, they sought an advice from the supreme adviser of mankind *Pinsang Gyutt* and both were suggested by him to perform *Ronser Murung*. As soon as this ritual was

solemnized they got cured from all suffering and prospered in their life. Hence *SiidoTakau* and *NyandoTanyangare* regarded to be the first to perform *Ronser Murung*.

The another mythology reveals that *Ipyo Taho* of *Ipyo Supung* (Version of world before Abotani) had eight sons named *Mipu*, *Hape* , *Sande* , *Sama* , *Nibo*,*Jarbo*, *Dihu*, and *Rahu*.

Hape, the first son of *IpyoTaho* is considered to be the first to perform *Rontii Murung* . The priest differ over the reason for performing *Rontii Murung* by *Hape*. Few contends that, *Hape* was enormously wealthy having a large numbers of Mithuns and cows at his disposal. Since they had grown old he decided to sacrifice few of them to appease the spirits and mankind to enhance his status in society and to add value attribution (*Ikhang*) for life after death. It is believed that with *Hape* the tradition of *Rontii Murung* began.

Another view is that *Hape* performed *Rontii Murung* as fertility rite since he was childless. It is believed that after performing this rite he had number of children and his prosperity reached the peak.

Murung in present day Apatani Society is still performed. But with advancement in the field of medical science less people are opting for *Murung*. These days only few people are performing the rituals of *Murung* so to add value in social status. Huge financial involvement and lengthy preparation demanding more than month's time are two major factors which discourage common Apatani people to opt for this festival. Moreover, the festival is taking the shape of status symbol thus few people perform the *Murung* ritual to enhance their social status.

Subii Tanii is almost same as *Murung* but it involves lesser finance and lesser manpower and thus status of *Murung* is much higher in compare to *Subu Tanii*.

2.5 Migration and Origin of the Apatanis:

Apatanis trace their migration and origin through oral tradition and therefore, till date concrete literary source or evidence is not available regarding the origin and migration of the Apatanis. Oral traditions are loaded with myths which describes the creation, procreation and setting up of the world. Therefore, till today Apatanis are largely

dependent on oral tradition as a source of knowledge to trace their origin and migration which again varies from village to village.

Migration:

The Apatanis who considers themselves as descendents of *Abotani* believes “*Iipyo lembyang*” to be their original place. The exact location is not known as there is no written record but most probably it is located somewhere in Mongolia. From there they further migrated to a place called *Miido Lembyang* probably somewhere in Tibet. They further migrated to *Nyime Lembyang*, probably border area of present Arunachal and China. They crossed snowy High Mountain called *Nyime Pemu* which could be Himalayan ranges. Afterwards they reached to a river called *Kuru Rego – Kiime Rego* which is actually located in Kurung-Kumey district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is believed that they stayed there for many generations and from the bank of Kuru- Kiime River they further splitted themselves into three groups. The account of crossing river Kuru-Kiime is beautifully narrated by one Hage Tapa for Stuart Blackburn (2008) in his book *Himalayan Tribal Tales*, “The route led the ancestors to the Kuru-Kime River whose deep current make a loud sound like gurgling water. It was full of harmful insects, and the current was so powerful that people couldn’t cross. They settled on the bank, where they lived for the next 20 generations. Finally, a small boy, named Nibo Ruchi, who was a skilled swimmer, used a boat and helped everyone to cross (p-115). The group which splitted into three different groups were known as *Talyang Hao*, *Tiin- Diibo* and *Niichi-Niitii*. They opted for three different directions and finally met again at place called *Biirii*. From *Biirii* they settled down at the *Supung Lembyang* which is present Apatani Plateau, the head quarter of Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh. The people of *Tiin-Diibo* group comprising of Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage and Bamin-Michi village, are said to have crossed the *Kuru-Kiime* river between present *Mint Lat*, then stayed for sometime in *Tapang Talley*, an area east to present Apatani plateau and finally migrated to the present villages viz. Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage and Bamin-Michi. The People of *Tailyang Hao* group comprising of Hari, Bulla and Kalung villages are believed to have migrated via *pepu sala*, an area north to the Apatani plateau and believed to have reached in the present place through that route. The people of *Niichi-Niitii* cluster comprising Hong village claims to have come via *Nari anko*, North-East of the plateau. They are supposed to have crossed Kamala river near Gocham village of Raga circle.

The migration story comes to an end with the ancestors settling in *Supung Lembyang*, the present day Apatani plateau. But reaching their final destination was not an end to their problems as one last battle was awaiting them in the form of dangerous reptile. Oral tradition of Apatanis narrates an account of the plateau being swamp and sheltering dangerous and huge reptile which was like Crocodile and called as *Buru* by Apatanis. People were terrified and omen was considered to confirm whether they are to stay in the plateau or look for other place of settlement. The omen did not favour any further move and Apatanis continued their stay in the plateau. The mythical animal *Buru* was believed to be killed by two brass plates of which one was male and other female which are known as *Myamya* in Apatani. These two *Myamya* fought the battle against *Buru* and in the course of battle female *Myamya* died while male *Myamya* successfully chopped off the head of *Bura*, thereby relieving people from the fear of deadly mythical animal *Bura*. One of the *Myamya* is still there with Lod Tagyang of Kalung village which is believed to have come back after killing *Buru*. The swamp was drained after dead of dangerous reptile which was later transformed into paddy fields and its fertile soil could sustain Apatani life and living.

Another version of migration story claims the ancestors to have defeated a powerful tribe called *Ziro* when they first entered the plateau. The present day *Ziro* was once inhabited by this notorious tribe whose cunning leader was man named *Kholing yombing*. This tribe was turned out of the plateau by ancestors of the Apatani tribe. According to Yampi(2009), “Apatanis often use to say that the present day Akas and Mijis of East and West Kameng districts of Arunachal Pradesh are believed to be descendents of the *Ziro*”(Religious Specialist of the Apatanis:Aspects of their Nature, Structure and Change,p-29).

The Legendary accounts of Apatanis in relation to their place of origin and migration do not coincide but most of the accounts given by people, however, that they started their journey from *Ipyo Lembyang*.

Origin Myth:

Apatanis do have an origin story like rest of the tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh and of the world. But they do not have a single, accepted text as how and when world began. The entire account of 'origin' of universe is described in the course of the story. Entire progression of the world starts with the idea of 'formlessness'; the formlessness leading to formation of huge, giant world. Blackburn (2008), aptly points out that, "Apatanis do not speak of creator god or a figure who fashioned the world ex-nihilo. Instead, and like other tribes in the Tani group, Apatanis refer to a procreative 'formlessness' from which the world emerged. This inchoate state is known as *kolyung-kolo* (also *kami-kamo*). *Kolyung-kolo* is the source and the reference point for explanation of origin. Above all, it represents an ambiguity before the cosmos emerged, before spirits and humans appeared, and before they separated (*Himalayan Tribal Tales*, p-108).

It is believed by Apatanis that world or the entire universe has evolved out of nothingness which is called *kolyung-kolo* or *kami-kamo* in Apatani. Millions and Millions years back the earth and the sky was one and there was nothing to be called – earth and sky. It was all one and barren. It is believed that during those days there was nothing to be called universe because no trace of life and vegetation could be seen at that point of time. Mr. Kime Epa, the priest from Hija village narrates that world or the universe has been evolved from *Jiji Anii* whose parts of body were transformed to earth and different vegetation available on the earth. He further adds that life was possible on earth only because *Jiji Anii* who on her own accord transformed herself to earth and different vegetation available on earth. Mr Epa's view regarding origin of universe has many similarities with the origin story in Elwin's *Myths of the north-east Frontier of India*(1958).According to Elwin, "At first kujum-chantu, the earth, was like a human being; she had a head, and arms and legs, an enormous fat belly, the original human beings lived on the surface of her belly. One day it occurred to Kujum – chantu that if she ever got up and walked about, everyone would fall off and be killed, so she herself died of her own accord. Her head became the snow covered mountains; the bones of her back turned into smaller hills, her chest was the valley where the Apatanis live. From her neck came the north country of the Tagins. Her buttocks turned into the Assam plain for just as the buttocks are full of fat, Assam has rich soil. Kujum – chantus eyes became the sun and moon. From her mouth was form kujum – popi, who send the sun and moon to shine in the sky" (1958, 8). Origin myth of the Apatanis varies from village to village.

In the entire narratives common thing is the participation of women in the process of creation. Be it *Jiji Anii* or *Kolyung Chantung* both are equally responsible for the creation of universe. Every features of the universe is an outcome of their contribution made in the process of creation.

The separation of earth and sky was again done by two female deities, “*Ami-Pipi Pipiri* and *Ami-Nalo Nalora*”. These two deities are considered as *Pinii* (goddess of life) by Apatani people because it is not possible to imagine life without earth and sky to make life flourish. According to Mudang Pai, a priest from Dutta village, the deities together decided to put heavier element down and lighter one upward, thus forming earth (*Chantung, Changi-Charae*) with heavier element and sky (*Miido Yapung*) with lighter one. Together they said ‘*Ayi Yami Kiidi Pasa*’. *Haju yami miido pasa*, meaning, “let’s take heavier one for earth, lighter for sky” this way earth and sky got separated by the hands of two female deities. *Ami-Pipi Pipiri* considered herself for the task of formation of the sky and *Ami-Nalo Nalora* considered herself for the formation of the earth. They used their hands in the separation and mending process and their act of separating the earth and sky is known as “*Tiirang Darnii*” in Apatani. This way formerly one unit and which was formless got separated into two separate entity - the earth and sky, thus leading the formation of universe. After ‘*Tiirang Darnii*’ process, the universe was blessed with water by the union of goddess called “*Dotu Tama*” with air known as *Alyi* in Apatani. It is said that Goddess *Dotu Tama* was not married to *Alyi* (Air). They fell in love with each other and as a result of their union water were born who is known as *Yasi Anii* in Apatani society as she is the bringer of water on earth. Among all types of vegetation and elements, the first and the only thing to be found on earth was rock. Earth was surrounded by rocks before the existence of life and other vegetation. So rocks are considered as the oldest element on earth among Apatanis. Other elements and lives like human, plants, trees, animals, water, air etc. came into existence afterwards.

2.6 Oral Tradition of the Apatanis:

The Apatani Oral Tradition can be classified into two groups- *Miji* and *Migung*. It is the highest form of knowledge in traditional Apatani society and the basic difference between them is performance: *Miji* is recited in ritual performance, whereas *Migung* are not. *Miji* constitute myths which includes origin myth and other myths narrating the

formative stages of *Abotani* and other healing chants in verse. *Migung* basically includes folk narratives about historical events, numb skull tales, riddles, proverbs, jokes, fables, allegory and folk tales of Abotani when it is told outside ritualistic context and in ordinary prosaic language. According to Gyati Rana (2018), *Migung* is basically stories in prose form whereas *Miji* is into the form of verses. *Ayu* is a fine example of *Miji* which is a ballad sung during an auspicious occasion of various festivals between two person in conversational manner asking and answering each other on themes related to myths, mythology, traditions, cultural values, ethos, moralities etc of different eons. *Ayu* is broadly divided into two categories as *Gyuchi Ayu* which means elder sacred ballad and *Gyut Ayu* which means younger sacred ballad. *Gyuchi Ayu* or elder sacred ballad describes innumerable themes encompassing the initial creation of universe, starts, earth, formation of various geographical features on earth, birth and evolution of spirits and demi-gods, vegetation, animals and birds, hominids, humans etc. On the other hand, *Gyut Ayu* or the younger sacred ballad describes the events that have happened in the mythical places at different stages of human evolution. This category of *Ayu* basically narrates the birth of *Nikin Tani* one of our fore fathers, their progression in various faculties, and migration from mythical place *Upyo Lembyany* to *Mudo Lembyang* than to the *Supung lembyang* which is believed to be the present place of the settlement. It is believed that knowledge of *Miji-Migung* could be gained only if God *Jilo-Lyayu* blesses and transmit this knowledge directly to person concerned. Only few elders and priests of the Apatani society posses the knowledge of *Miji-Migung*. Stuart Blackburns (2008) in his book *Himalayan Tribal Tales* gives three basic difference between *Miji* and *Migung*:

1. The first is texture: stories told in ordinary speech are *migung*; but when those same stories are chanted in ritual speech, usually as episode within longer ritual texts, they are *miji*.
2. The second criterion is context and intent: *miji* are chanted during rituals in order to contact spirits, whereas *migung* are told outside these occasions and without any desire to influence spirits.
3. The third difference is teller: *migung* may be old by any senior man, but *miji* are chanted almost exclusively by priests. In short, most stories are told either as *miji*

(in ritual speech, in a ritual context, by priests, to invoke spirits) or as *migung* (in ordinary prose, anytime, by anyone, not addressed to spirits).

It is interesting to note that *biisi* - folk songs, popular songs and dances are not classed in either group of *Miji* or *Migung*. The songs and dances have its independent existence in Apatani tradition. The Oral literature of the Apatanis can be classified into the following genre:

- (a) *Miji* (Oral tradition carried out/performed within ritual)
- (b) *Migung* (Oral tradition outside ritual context)
- (c) *Nitin-Horming* (Proverbs)
- (d) (*Biisi/Rayo* (Folksong)
- (e) *Hiilhiiley* (Folkdance)

Certain music and dance forms like *Hiirii*, *Ropi* and blowing of *Talo* (Gong) are specific to certain rituals and it is performed only during that specific period and at the time when rituals are observed. *Hiirii* dance is specifically performed during the *Murung* and *Myoko* festivals by group of young boys. According to Mihin Kanning, during the *Murung* ceremony, the group of young boys visits house to house of the clan members of the person performing *Murung* ceremony. One leader is selected among the group based on his skill on singing *Hiirii* song to lead the group and others are supposed to follow him (2008, 99). This particular dance is performed only by male members and females during this ceremony are busy arranging and serving food and wine to the visitors. The participants of *Hiirii* dance by performing this particular dance offer blessings to the host and in return they are treated with best wine and meat by the host of the ceremony.

Another dance form which is situation specific is *Ropi* which is performed only when some wild animals such as Tiger, Leopard or enemies in war are killed. Apatanis believes that these animals have strong soul capable of revenge after being killed. Thus, one who kills the animal does not enter his house directly; instead he goes to the *Siiker Lapang* (ritual platform) of the village. The priest is called to perform some ritual and thereafter the date for *Ropi* is fixed. On fixed date, it is performed with weapons and war dress along with chanting of the priest to vanish the spirit of an animal so that it does not

come back in earthly world of humans. All the participants make a long procession round the village with loud voice, “ho, ho”, this particular activity is known as *Gyori Nii*. When procession reaches the destination where part of killed animal is buried, they start *Ropi* with weapons which will trap the spirit of killed animal. It is believed that once the spirit is trapped it never comes back and the person hunted down that animal is safe. Participation of women cannot be seen in this particular dance form because it is exclusively considers as an act of male.

Ropi is associated with the ritual of burying enemies killed in raids or in war against the outsider. A man from Bula village namely Talyang Nipa was treacherously kept captive while visiting Pemir to buy a pig. He escaped from the captive and revenged the betrayal by killing a woman of Pemir village. He cut off her right hand and brought it to his village as a sign of triumph and accordingly *Ropi* was arranged to celebrate his escape and victory over enemy.

In war and raids when opponents are killed; hands, eyes and tongues are preferred organs of body to be taken back as a sign of victory and as trophies. The hands when brought are kept at the *Nago*(sacred hut) until the *Ropi* is performed. During the performance the hands brought is burnt and the remains of it are buried near the sacred hut *Nago*. According to Haimondrof , The human trophies of eyes and tongue are placed below the stone near *Nago* (sacred hut) to make the soul of slain ineffective for taking revenge towards the slainer. In addition, at a *Ropi* rite, animals and fowls are also sacrificed to appease the spirits and deities (*Uyi-Kassang* and *Neha Kassang*) related with war. The fowl is killed with the axe oiled with the wax of bacon in front of sacred hut (1995, p-136).

Ropi is not confined only with killing of an animals and enemies but it is also performed over the execution of a criminal member of Apatani tribe. Chiging Duyu, a patrician of Dutta was convicted for stealing cattle's of Apatanis and then selling it to neighbouring tribes. He was executed in *Nami Lapang* of Hong village. On the occasion the entire body was burnt, though one hand was taken to another village whose men were involved in execution. Nine days later *Ropi* rite was performed in front of *Nago* (sacred hut) where execution had actually taken place. The villagers and the delegates from other villages participated in the ritual ceremony with a war dance wearing shield and weapons. A Mithun brought with public contribution was sacrificed. (ibid.p-145). Thus,

Ropi is more than a just to be called as war dance as it involves lot of rituals to be observed.

Daminda and *Piri* dance are performed at the time of *Dree* festival which is an agricultural festival of the Apatanis. This festival is celebrated every year on fifth in the month of July for bumper harvest and prosperity. This two dance forms are particularly perform by women folk of the Apatani society. *Pakhu Itu* and *Takutam* are dances specially perform for entertainment.

Apatani tribe is known for their hard working and enterprising nature. During olden days the people of the tribe hardly get any leisure time to spent dancing and singing resulting in less output in the field of folksong and dance. It is reported by many informants during field work that they did not get time to engage themselves in pleasure of music and dance as their work at home and field could never be completed even though they starts working as early as 3.00 am in the morning and worked till five in the evening. They could sit and relax only sometimes after long day work in the field under moon light playing *Elu* (flute made of straw) and *Gangu* (musical instrument made of bamboo). Mihin Kanning says, “Though the Apatanis do not have rich music and dances like other community yet there are certain traditional music and dances, which are very much original and existed from time immemorial. The music and dances can be categorized into two group i.e the ritual music and dances and the entertainment music and dances” (2008, 99). The Apatanis are constantly on move without sparing a single minute sitting idle. Stuart Blackburn (2008) in *Himalayan Tribal Tales* observes the life of Apatanis and says, “The enclosed valley fosters social activity, and people are constantly on the move. On winter morning, before the fog has lifted, Apatanis are out in the paddy fields, tilling the soil and building bunds; later, when the sun has burned off the cold, they repair railings, gather firewood, weave shawls and crochet hats. Almost too busy to bother with storytelling, I thought....I realize that this was the first sign that storytelling is not a pastime in the Apatani valley” (p-1, 14).

2.7 Women in Folklore of the Apatanis:

Today the status of women has turned to be every one's centre of attraction and attention. Study of women in folklore is one of the ways to understand the role and status of women. Feminization of culture is much discussed topic throughout the world. The scope is wide as well as sensitive. It is interesting to trace the role of women dates back from the time of origin in Apatani folklore to present days. It is worthy to note that during those days women occupied very important place in society. They took part in the act of performing rites and rituals and in the process of creation. *Dolyang Chanjang*, the first human to perform priesthood was woman who believed to have performed various rituals and rites. Not one or two but several women figures out in the process of creation and this definitely signifies that she acquired respectable place in society. One of the most important points to be noted in Apatani origin story is that it is women who on her own accord decided to die for the survival of mankind and it is again women who worked hard to separate earth and sky to accommodate other vegetation, human and animals. In Apatani society from ages till date women is looked at as mother and protector. They start working from morning 3 A.M to 5 P.M every day. During olden days they use to spin cotton till midnight and hardly had four hours sleep. Though society is patriarchal the role of women in running household is heavier. She cooks; she does extra things like weaving, cleaning, fetching firewood from the forest etc and works in the field. The hearth of the house is wholly under the control of mother in Apatani society. She is creator in true sense. In the origin story *Ami-Pipi Pipiri* and *Ami-Nalo Nalora* is the one who worked day and night to separate earth and sky. *Kolyung Chantung* is the one who sacrificed herself for the Sake of life and vegetation on earth. Thus from the very beginning onwards women started working for wellbeing of the mankind.

The image of women is clearly depicted in the origin story and so she carries the parallel image in Apatani society; an image of mother, creator and giver by doing selfless sacrifice. Narratives are the best way to look how people perceive women to be. What are the qualities which makes one an ideal women. From origin story one will learn that women in Apatani society are no seductress to degrade any men. She is no temptress to lead any sensible person to the door of sin. Instead she is saviour and a compassionate being with love in her heart and wisdom in her head.

Prosperity and prosperous life is deeply connected to women in Apatani society. This is evident from *Diilyang Diibu* story which tells how *Abotani* becomes richest man of the world by marrying virtuous character *Diibu*. *Abotani* was a poor man before marrying *Diilyang Diibu* and it was she who brought him paddy and every food along with fame. She was homely and virtuous women and knows the art of cultivation. Even today in Apatani society success of man is always related to the nature of women. If a man is successful then his success is credited to women. So relationship between women and wealth is deep. Even today Apatani people believes that true women is one who knows the art of running her hearth successfully and who holds her family successfully.

Diilyang Diibu's tale also reflects other side of the traditional Apatani men. It was she who brought success, happiness and prosperity in *Abotani's* life but in return she was only awarded with ingratitude and betrayal. This also shows the trait of polygamy in Apatani society. *Abotani's* marriage and love for *Tiinii Rungya* also reflects his greed for wealth and success. He marries *Tiinii Runya* because he thought she will bring more prosperity and happiness. His greed led him to downfall and he suffered poverty afterwards. On the other hand *Tiinii Rungya* represents venomous side of women. She enticed *Abotani* knowing his marital status and with false promises. In the story of *Abotani* and *Diilyang Diibu*, characters of the two chief female figure can be rightly called as 'vice' represented by *Tiinii Rungya* and 'virtue' represented by *Diilyang Diibu*. Tribal folk narratives are usually endowed with realistic features. Its characters be it Gods, Goddesses or human being are not idealized and most of the times they act according to their whims and caprice. For instance, *Abotani* is a legendary figure but he is not free of follies and vices though he was best and most intelligent. Even *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* could not forget and forgive *Abotani's* act of betrayal and left him and his house taking back everything brought during her arrival reducing *Abotani* to a poor man again. They are legendary figures of Apatani literature but they cannot be considered as figures with golden heart. They have their share of error and charm which compels one to love them, to adore them. *Tiinii Rungya* very convincingly exemplifies destructive force and she is an epitome of jealousy. The characters of the folk – narratives have a great impact upon its people and they actually use their names in their daily life to attribute their character and features to a person referring to.

Of course one cannot deny the fact that Bollywood has greater impact upon people these days but folk – narrative which is one of the biggest sub-genre of oral tradition has got its own distinct charm. During ancient times, when there was no television, movies and books to read they entertained themselves with folk lore which includes – folktale, folksongs and folkdance. It charmed and influenced its listener. *Diilyang Diibu* is an ideal woman of Apatani folk – narrative and every Apatani man wishes to have virtuous wife like *Diibu* who will bring prosperity and happiness in his life. Pretentious woman are always compared to *Tiinii Rungya*.

Connection between wisdom and woman is again one of the chief features of Apatani folk-narratives. It is evident from the story of *Dolyang – chanjang* that knowledge had its origin from woman. This story also throws some light on the fact that women occupied special position in society during those days. She had every – right to make choices and decisions. That may be the reason why *chanjang* chose to perform only rites and rituals needed to cure the suffering people from their ailments and left rest to be performed by the male members of the Apatani society.

No one forced her to leave those rites and rituals. At the same time no male members of the society ever tried to snatch her priesthood and no one ever tried to stop her from doing any particular rites and rituals. In fact *Chanjang* herself decided not to perform complicated and dreaded rituals and kept it for men of the society. It was only gradual evolution of men in the field of priesthood. Hage Tapa asserts that it was only ego of the men which compelled him to embrace priesthood. According to Tapa male members of the Apatani society realized that if a girl can perform priesthood then why men cannot and why he should stay aloof from such task. Thus, they gradually learnt the art of priestly knowledge and Chants from *Dolyang Chanjang*. Tasso Tapa, one of the informants stated that *Chanjang* is not the only priestness of her time but there was another priestess known as *Byulyang Byuchang*, she is also known as *Kelang Nyibu* and she performed inferior rites. Thus, male members of Apatani society in the field of priesthood only flourished gradually and with passing time women became busy raising baby, working on field and running households. It can be stated that women of the Apatani society was absorbed so much in holding her family and hearth that unconsciously she drifted far away from the field of priesthood and it was gradually taken over by the male members of the society.

Decisive nature of women is an age old phenomena in Apatani society. From the story of *Chanjang* one can draw sources which reveal the fact that women truly had liberty in decision making. It is clear that she had her share of freedom from the beginning and no trace of discrimination can be seen. Women in the later part of her life was absorbed in running household and left ground for male members of the society. Whatever discriminations, present society witnesses are not founded by man. For instance, *Chanjang* herself decided not to use 'Lapang' and 'Nago' because she felt uncomfortable to use it in the presence of male members of the society. It might be *Chanjang's* love for brother which compelled her to decide not to step in 'Lapang'. Moreover, she felt hesitate because of biological difference between men and women. Menstrual cycle actually played havoc in the life of women. It affected her career and decision making. *Chanjang* felt uncomfortable and hesitant only because of menstrual cycle and this bodily difference proved to be advantage for male members of the society.

Apatani society has evolved with passing time and its outlook towards life has become more liberal and tolerant. The society has liberal outlook towards women remarriage and this trait can be traced even during the time of *Dolyang Changjang*. She married *Doti Birii Tabii*, the priest and *Yartabu, Yantii Poro* are sons born to them. She got married for the second time with *Donyi Birii Tabii* and gave birth to *Mudo Zilo* and *Uie Lonii*. These accounts of remarriage from Apatani oral tradition could be seen as reflection of women's liberty on her marital life.

Children's Stories:

In every society, something is there in the store for children. In Apatani society, the story of *Biinyi* and *Biine* constitutes children's story with interesting plot construction, characters and dialogues. It is evident from the story of *Biinyi* and *Biine* that imagination and element of supernaturalism ruled even in the folk narratives. Character of *Hailyang Mikhii* is a wonderful creation with every features endowed to bring feeling of horror even in the mind of mature reader. Incidents are all convincing and beautifully narrated. The story of *Biinyii* and *Biine* also reflect creativity of Apatani folk – narratives.

Love, conspiracy and Jealousy are three chief themes of the *Biinyi – Biine* story. They are sisters, *Biinyi* is elder and *Biine* is younger. They love each other, falls in love with different persons at different point of time, gets separated and again meets new

adventure. In short this series of stories can be best termed as “fortunes and misfortunes of *Biinyi* and *Biine*”. The theme of escape is again one of the most important themes along with love, conspiracy and Jealousy.

The story is loaded with supernatural incidents - stick insect speaking and working, using magical word to make tree fall in their respective sides, human form of the snake, *Hailyang Mikhii*'s act of transforming himself to a thread ball, *Biinyi*'s return in the form of bird etc. the narrative is full of life and creativity. *Biine*'s jealousy to her sister further led the story to a new height. Though she tells herself she cannot tolerate loneliness anymore. The listener can easily make out that she is inwardly jealous of *Biinyi*. Otherwise there is no point in conspiring and killing one's own sister mercilessly pushing into the well. This also tells that folk – narrative has its own grandeur and ways to depict and portray jealousy between woman. The theme of jealousy is beautifully portrayed through the episode of *Biine*'s killing her sister *Biinyi*.

Legendary Female Figures in Apatani Folk-Narratives:

Dolyang Chanjang, *Diilyang Diibu*, *Tiinii Rungya* and *Biinyi Biine* are the most celebrated legendary figures of Apatani folk narrative. They are the representative figures of oral literature of Apatani society and their place is next to *Abotani*. Their charm is endless and generally they are recognized as most important mythological figures of Apatani oral tradition. Folktales are one of the most important components of folklore. One can say that all human societies have their own folktales. And an analysis of folktales reveals the conceptual machinery of values, beliefs and social control mechanism of the society in which the tales are grounded (Mibang, T. and S.K.Choudhuri, 2004, 155). Folktales are artistic and highly stylized narratives. The characters, allegories and symbols all full of meanings. A careful analysis reveals important elements or spots of culture and opens the symbolic world of culture. In this way an interpreter can approach the world of the listener. The story of *Biinyi* and *Biine* can be interpreted as a moral allegory. Outwardly it is story meant for children with horrible monster and interesting incidents but it has another meaning underneath which shows victory of good over bad. The story has two meaning – surface meaning and inner meaning and it can be interpreted into two levels so it is allegory.

Biinyi-Biine story can be termed as moral allegory as it preaches moral to be good and true. It is didactic in nature and during ancient times children were taught to be wise and good only through telling stories. They learnt ways of life mostly through narratives; not only these narratives reveals social, cultural and religious identities of the tribe. It is such an aspect of culture which explains people's socio-cultural systems, beliefs, values and customs and traditions. Like any other tribal society, the Apatanis have a rich folk narrative in the field of oral tradition.

When we try to see the role and position of women in the folklore of the Apatanis through different women figures, it is interesting to note that Apatanis obviously have forefather or ancestor in the name of great *Abotani* but it is disheartening not to find a single woman to be called grandmother of the humanity or humankind. Instead we get to see various women figuring out in the journey of *Abotani* to accompany him in his pursuit of achieving the human form and life and in creating different life and species on earth. He figures out as absolute and women folk as subordinate who supports him in different field of his journey.

2.8 Gender Bias in Traditional Apatani Society:

The Apatani society has the concept of women's subordinate status in the society as reflected in folklore. In traditional Apatani society, a woman has no inheritance rights and does not hold any share in her father's property and she does not inherit her husband's property as well. In case if husband dies, she play the role of a custodian where she has to take care of the properties till her son inherits it and if she is without male child then the property is inherited by the closest male member of the clan. She is basically engaged to household activities and cultivation. She is expected to fulfill household activities without complain. Traditionally, Women do not take part in political activities: warfare and village council namely '*Buliyang*'. The space for women in traditional Apatani society is limited. Therefore, Women are heavily dependent on men for political and ritualistic services. Though male dominated Apatani society provides very limited space to its womenfolk, she plays great role in the economic activities of the society. Both dry and wet cultivation are under her responsibility which are the backbone of traditional Apatani society. The emergence of market could provide new platform for earning by selling the product of both dry and wet cultivation. Door to door selling of

vegetables is a common sight in Apatani plateau which is one of the major sources of earning bread.

In Apatani Society, certain mannerisms are very specific to females. Girls are taught dos and don'ts from childhood onwards. For example, Girls are taught not to laugh aloud as loud voice is considered against feminine manner. She is taught not to eat big pieces of meat. Spreading legs around the hearth are not advisable. Moving around till late evening and drinking alcohol is considered inappropriate. Women are expected and advised not to interfere the discussion when it is going on between the male members. These are few commonly believed and accepted precedents for female members of the society in day to day life of the Apatanis. Emergence of education and technology could only better the life of female folk of the society up to certain extent but still there exist these stereotyped gender role expectations and the above mentioned precedents which have been followed since ages.

Apatani society being patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal in nature, there exist deep rooted gender biases. There are many fields where women's entry are bared and considered inauspicious and which are exclusively called men's domain. It is known, accepted and believed that origin of priestly knowledge is from *Dolyang-Chanjang* who is a female and the first in the field of priesthood. Though knowledge and wisdom has its origin from female but the domain of *Miji-Migung* or the priestly knowledge is considered as exclusively as men's domain and participation of womenfolk is not encouraged. In entire Apatani plateau there is only one female priestess namely Nending Dimi of Hari village. She believes that she is blessed by *Ato Charung* since childhood and very confident about knowledge she posses. She started performing rituals publically with the ritual called *Assang Mikkhii* for one Hage Mope of Hari village. In the said ritual she was supposed to be accompanied by the chief priest Late Tasso Hale who was supposed to actually officiate *Assang Mikkhii* ritual. But chief priest Late Tasso Hale turned down to officiate that ritual as soon as he gets to know of Mrs Nending Diming's presence as subordinate priest. He left the house of Hage Mope saying he cannot endure to be assisted by a female in the domain of priesthood. Hage Mope then requested Mrs Nending Diming to perform the ritual under her supervision which she accepted and performed and subsequently proved very successful even without the chief priest. Ever since she performed the ritual for Hage Mope, she was respected in society and later

chief priest Tasso Hale also appreciated her and regretted his remark made on her. In the year 2006, she brought out a favourable omen for Mr. Tasso Kaya for a ritual called *Chimbo-Siilii* to be performed at *Lapang* (ritual platform) and here comes the real problem as she could not performed the ritual for being a woman and could indulge in some domestic rites and could attend this ceremony only as an assistant priest. Women are not allowed to climb the sacred ritual platform *Lapang* because of her menstruation; as it is believed that menstruation makes women's body unfit and unholy to carry out sacred rituals.

It is interesting to note that even if women possess the thorough knowledge of *Miji-Migung* and becomes priest, she is restricted from performing rituals at *Lapang* (sacred platform) as it is strongly believed that a woman cannot climb *Lapang* and cannot perform any ritual at *Nago* (sacred hut) as these sacred places are symbol of male power and male dominance over religion and customary law in traditional Apatani society. Because the strength or pride of man lies in these sacred places which are prohibited to women due to their menstrual cycle which is believed to be the source of pollution, misfortune and disturbance. There is a belief that if a woman climbs *Lapang* for ritual performance it brings misfortune to brothers of that lady *Nyibu* (priest). It is because of these norms that women restrict themselves from certain rituals. For example, she cannot do *Subu Hiniing* at *Lapang* and *Siki Niniing* (ritual performed inside *Nago*). These kinds of restrictions were made by the *Dolyang Chanjang* herself the first female *Nyibu* (priest). Women are restricted from performing *Ropi*- a war dance performed as part of ritual to commemorate the killing of enemies, Tigers and Leopards. As it involves war, hunting of animals like Tiger, Leopard, killing of enemies, accidental death etc. the performance of which are the acts of male people (Yampi, 2009, *Religious Specialists of the Apatanis: Aspects of their Nature, Structure and Change*). The feminine voices are considered unfit to chant the verses addressed to spirits and deities. It is further claimed by many priests that spirits and deities of purity may not like the regular menstrual cycle of women and she could think of stepping into the domain of priestly life only after menopause.

There are women who could point out errors while chanting by male members and many have agreed that women do possess equal knowledge of *Miji-Migung* as male members. One of the informants, Mr. Mudang Pai, a renowned priest from Dutta village while

visited by researcher on his residence early morning at *Biirii* informed that although *Dolyang Chanjang* the sister of *Abotani* was the first to perform priesthood during the mythical ages; the time when men, monsters, spirits, beasts, gods and demi-gods lived together. But in present time and in present context no female priests could be seen except Mrs. Nending Diming. He says even if a woman becomes priests she cannot perform certain rites and rituals which involves the usage of *Lapang* (religious platform) and *Nago* (Sacred hut). Though there are different perception regarding female priest or priestess but overall view is that even if women becomes priestess she would not be able to perform certain rituals which are of higher order. Some considers this profession odd for women as female voices is counted unfit for ritual chanting. It is because of such bias and discrimination that priestess could not be found in Apatani plateau. Women who were proficient in this field also could never showcase and materialized it because of such discrimination and fear of losing near and dear ones has also its role in limiting her exploration in the field of priesthood. Till date in entire Apatani plateau no priestess could be found and seen except Mrs. Nending Diming in traditional Apatani society. However, few priestesses can be seen performing minor rites and rituals in *Meder-Nello*, the prayer house of the *Danyi-Piilo* believers. Mrs. Koj Aka, wife of Koj Bida is one such priestess from *Meder- Nello*, she carry out minor rituals and conducts prayer chanting in Meder-Nello. Thus, scope for women's growth outside hearth and home is very limited and she is burdened with social norms and restriction which controls her overall growth and movements.

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CHAPTER-III

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN FOLKLORE: ORAL LITERATURE OF THE APATANIS

3.1 Oral Literature:

Oral Literature which is also called 'verbal art' and 'folk literature' is that branch of folklore which is expressive in nature and under this rubric fall spoken, sung and voiced forms of traditional utterances that show repetitive patterns. Thus, oral literature or verbal art or expressive literature are "*Spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterances*". Oral narrative is one big sub-division of this group. For example, myth, fairy tale, romantic tale or novella, religious tale, folktale, legend, animal tale, anecdote, joke, numskull tale etc are the major forms of oral narrative genre. Another major sub-division is Oral poetry or folk poetry. Proverbs and riddles are also an important part of oral literature. Besides, chants, prayers, laments, cries etc fall under Oral literature (Dorson, 1972, 2). Punia Deep (1993) in *Social values in Folklore* define oral literature as "It is a better projection of the innermost recesses of the socio-cultural life of a society reflected in its ethos which is the important content of the culture dealing with qualities that pervade the whole culture. In other words, it is a system of values (p-17, 18)". Thus, oral literature includes and study only oral parts of folklore which is an outcome of spontaneous outburst of communities innermost and collective feelings which are preserved through memory and transmitted orally.

This part of the study will focus primarily on the oral literature or verbal art of the Apatani with the aim to understand and situate gender role depiction in oral literature wherein gender stereotyping is inherently crafted.

3.2 Folksong (*Biisi*):

Folksongs are one of the most known parts of folklore which are believed to be the product of culture and tradition leading to an outcome of spontaneous overflow of the innermost feelings which comes out from the depth of the unconscious mind of a community which posses aesthetic power and also power to reflect community image. This unrecorded part of tradition is a vital element of any living culture which maintains

an informal social force regulating the presence of society's social system by containing in it the theme, idea, motif and form specific to particular culture and tradition. Punia Deep (1993) in *Social Values in Folklore* writes that "The process of production, revision, improvement and corruption of folksong is continual. A folksong is interwoven with the aspirations, ethos and pathos of a primitive community....Folksongs generally reflect the social heritage, the environment and the folk life in a particular territory. It is usually created for entertainment, enjoyment or emotional outlet and can be easily sung, understood and learnt on different social occasions by all the members of the folk group with no distinction of singer and listener. It 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 channel for indigenous knowledge and belief (p-12, 13, 16, 17).

The Apatanis composed songs which are all situations specific and are part of some ritual and ceremony, therefore, they do not have any individual singer or poet or poetess to attributes as composer, lyricist and singer of all existing *Biisi* (Folksong). In contrast, Lalthakim Hmar claims the Hmar tribe of Assam to be fond of singing and expert in composing and particularly talks about one female poetess *Pi Chawngmuok* whose song composing talent was so great that the male counterparts were afraid that she would exhaust all possible topics for composition leaving little scope for the future generation to compose. So she was burned alive with a gong (L. Hmar, 2013, p-23). But Apatanis do not have any individual composer, singer and poet or poetess to be credited for composing and singing these folksongs like some of the tribal communities as Hmar of Assam have it. Apatani folksongs are all part of oral tradition which has emerged out of rituals and ceremonies which are sung behind the backdrop of certain rituals or situation specifically attached to it. *Daminda* and *Hiirii Khanii*, are folksongs which exhibit certain celebration specific to certain ceremony and rituals and also reflects image of traditional Apatani society. These two songs are accompanied by dance performance lead by big group. Apatanis do have love song which is popularly known as *Mu-Sa Biisi* and which do not adhere to any ceremony or ritual. With the advent of modernism, education and technology, many individual singers, composers and lyricist have come up with modern songs in different genres which are largely influenced by Bollywood and Hollywood. Popi Sarmin Society, a registered NGO of the Apatani plateau has released

two volumes of books entitled as *Piimii Lanii* so far which is an anthology of modern Apatani songs by different composers, singers and lyricists. Social media too are loaded with many modern songs and videos these days which are an outcome of influential Hindi and English songs. Youngsters are more attracted to modern Hindi and English songs and they hardly show any interest in folksongs which are apparently losing its charm in present day.

Folklore as the 'lore' of the people contains people's story, idea and ideologies that rule their life and belief system. Folklore can be a true medium to understand certain ideologies of the society as it is represented by it in various forms i.e. songs, tales, proverbs, sayings, poetries etc. Thus, Folksong, a big sub-division of folklore exhibits multiple face of its society: community image, its social set-up and belief system. The way women are portrayed and represented in Apatani folksong could be truly relevant source to trace the role of women in traditional Apatani society ; in past and in present context.

3.2.1 Lullaby (*Liibang Ani/Inga Myanii*):

A lullaby is a gentle, soft and lovely song usually sung by mother to her child to comfort and soothe. It is sung to lull and put child to a deep and sweet sleep. According to Birendranath Datta (1994) in *A Handbook of Folklore Material of North-East India*, "Babies in all societies are lulled to sleep and young children comforted with the help of lullabies and nursery rhymes" (p-86).

Gender role expectations that Apatani society aspires from its male and female members is well manifested in Apatani lullaby called *Liibang Ani* or *Inga Myanii*, where mother sings to her child the standard traits specifically attributed to male and female. This lullaby can be rightly considered as the start point of gender role stereotyping in Apatani society where mother lulls her baby with separate role attributing to male and female baby:

Oralu...oradu...ngiikalu oho mi,
Habung-sulung pa, sancha kiine talyi,
Haro-khango pa, sancha kiine talyi,
Oralu....oradu.... (Mihin Kanning, 2008, 114)

Translation:

Oralu...Oradu...my baby,
Will let grow my baby grow in freshness,
Will let my baby grow bold and brave,
Oralu...Oradu. (Translator: Researcher)

Ngiika lu opo mi Ngiika lu obing mi ,
Yording harcha la Bipo lu tabi mi Giibii lu niipa cho .
Yorko lu hari la Dilo lu tasang mi Giibii lu niipa cho .
Parsing lu Ropo mi Miigang lu tiinii pa, (Radhe Yampi, 2018, 15)

Translation:

My opo, My Obing,
Will let him grow brave to hold babo,
Will let him grow fierce and furious,
Be mighty to catch Parsing Ropo (Translator: Researcher)

Doli lu siichi mi Ami lu tiinii pa,
Lali lu Gambii ho Khokhung lu miinii pa,
Biida lu yorlo ho Patii lu lanii pa,
Babo lu taper mi Porla lu pornii pa,
Kuru lo bidu kane pa, Kiime lu bidu kane pa,
Nago lu piiding mi Dila lu Dinii pa,
Lapang lu jonii pa Sango lu konii pa,
Armeyang lu talyi la Hago lu konii pa,
Myanyo lu talyi la Barmii lu juma mi,
Juding lu miinii pa Oho lu byama mi,
byading lu miinii pa Armeyang lu talyi la, Myanyo lu talyi la... (ibid: 15)

Translation:

Will let him grow bold and brave,
To catch eagle and to hunt tigers,
In high mountains Lali Gambii, in Biida yorlo,
Be brave enough to hold babo,
Will let him be mighty like river kuru and kiime,
Be strong to lift *Lapang*,
Be the one to solve disputes,
Will mane him to build an empire,
What I said be true... (Translator: Researcher)

Oralu....oradu.....

Ngiika lu oka miNgiika lu onya mi Byatu lu liikang ho
Jitii lu tiinii pa, papin lu panii pa, pare lu henii pa,
Papi lu panii pa Byarang lu Liinyi ho
Pari lu Rinii Pa Kuru Kane Pa
Chinji/bidu Kane pa Diimi lu miinii pa
Kiime Lu kane pa chodu lu /Dondo lu kane pa
Ude siira pa, Arle giinii pa,
Iire lu Miinii pa Armeyang lu talyi la (ibid: 15, 115)

Translation:

Oralu...Oradu....
My Oka, My Onya
Be a weaver, be a knitter,
Be a harbinger of love,
Be the one to quench thirst and hunger,
Be rice husker,
Be the owner of house and hearth. (Translator: Researcher)

Oralu.....oradu...ngiikalu oho mi,
Habung-sulung pa sancha kiine talyi,
Jojolu-mmilyo pa duke nENCHI la,

Oralu...oradu.....

Translation:

Oralu...Oradu...my baby,
Will let you grow in freshness,
Will let you grow healthy and wealthy,
Oralu...Oradu... (Translator: Researcher)

The first two stanzas of lullaby exhibit extreme masculinity specially sung to a baby boy. Mother aspires him to grow bold, strong and healthy to do all mighty works as catching peacock (*parsing*), hunting eagle (*khonkhung*) and leopard (*patii*). She wishes him to raise his social status by contributing to social welfare and by building strong bond with clan sisters and brothers and desires him to grow mightier than river *Kuru-Kiime*. The name of the places mentioned in the lullaby as '*Lali Gambi*' and '*Biida Yorlo*' are far off and high mountains where baby is supposed to hunt the wild beast and bird. Last two stanzas of lullaby are dedicated to a baby girl where she is expected to hold the responsibilities of the household chores. She is expected to be the best weaver who could weave to her family members (*Jitii lu tiinii pa*) and who could feed at the same time. Thus, it can be summarized that this lullaby depicts gender trait which uphold the patriarchal ideology where girls and women are expected to be best at holding household activities such as cooking, weaving, feeding and cleaning. She is expected to play the role of nurturer and comforter who could bring solace and peace to her family. The names as *Opo* and *Obing* are pet name usually for male child and *Oka* and *Onya* are for female child.

Dr. Radhe Yampi (2018) in her article "*A Crisp Retort on Gender Disparity in Apatani Society*" writes "This lullaby depicts that girls or women are expected to be good at household chores, procreation, weaving etc. while men are expected to be good at hunting, construction...oratory, leadership, nurturer of downtrodden kiths and kins. These cultural expectations are gender roles that society ascribes to a man and woman. These gender roles are held ideal in Apatani society and largely determine how children are socialized differently based on their respective gender identities. The conditioning or internalization of gender roles in Apatani society can be seen in how they engage their children differently in different activities based on sex. From a very early age, Apatani girls would be engaged in domestic chores. Parents would always teach their girls to be a

nurturer and cook and serve food to their brothers, weave them clothes, wash their clothes. They would be taught to be composed, enduring, quiet and meek in front of elders.”

It is evident from this lullaby that gender disparity in Apatani society starts from home where one is told their respective roles and responsibilities from early infancy. The content of lullaby reflects gender traits clearly indicating ‘feminine work’ and ‘musculine valour’ thereby clearly demarcating women’s work and men’s work. In traditional Apatani society, sister is always expected to cook and clean for her brother including other family members whereas brother in presence of her sister or other female members of the family would never engage himself in cooking and cleaning activities.

Lullaby which is normally sung by mother to comfort and lull her baby can be considered as a start point of gender role expectation in traditional Apatani society which exhibits the masculine traits attributed to male child and feminine traits considered for female child. Gender role expectation which society aspires from its male and female members can be best understood from this lullaby.

3.2.2 *Hiirii*:

Hiirii is a folksong usually sang in group only by male members of the Apatani society during Murung festival held in the month of January. This song is accompanied by dance performance which is performed in the house of the host. One skilled and expert in singing *Hiirii* is selected among the group of young male and rest are supposed to follow their leader in chorus. It is believed that this song was created by *Ato Hape* and *Ato Mipu* during the days of great *Abotani* as an invocation to Myoko festival spirit *Gyuth Gyaro*. The content of this song is blessing which performers of the song offers to the family members of the host and in return they are treated with best meat and rice beer. When performers are not properly welcomed with good rice beer and meat, the content of the song changes to complaint and dissatisfaction instead of praise and blessings. This song is narrative in nature and the entire song goes beyond hundred lines. Researcher has considered few lines especially first and initial portion which suffice and fit the requirement of the present study. The group of young men enters house with singing loud in chorus:

Ho.... ho... ho...
Siinyang jaka anyang jaso,
Benyi jaka anyii jasi,
Yasang doging gendo byomi,
Yanii myoyung biido byomi,
Yasso dogin gendo byomi,
Khanchi dogin gendo byomi,
Kharo myoyung biido byomi,
Benyii jaka anyii jami,
Santu pana tapa lading,
Siili pana tapa lading, (Mihin Kanning, 2008, 100)

Translation:

Ho...ho...ho...
This evening, at this moment, at this hour,
We the flocks of birds;
Bless you both for being chosen to perform Murung,
This grand feast will enhance your status,
It will also multiply your *Yasang* (trees), *Yanii* (leaves) and *Yasso* (cane),
We have come from far-off villages,
Hearing of your *Khanchi* (wine vessel) and *Kharo* (big and fat wine vessel)
We bless you both husband and wife,
We bless you on this auspicious occasion,
We have come to sing and dance at your place,
On this auspicious moment of Murung feast,
We have come from far off villages,
Hearing of your grand Murung feast,
Expecting best hospitality with best rice beer and meat,
This evening, at this moment, at this hour,
We, the *Gyape pabing* have come to sing and dance,
We will dance, we will laugh, we will rejoice. (Translator: Researcher)

Here *Gyape pabing* means the group of performer performing *Hiirii* at the house of host hosting Murung festival and feast. At the outset, the group of performer which comprises

of young men wishes the host couple for performing grand feast of Murung and tells them how happy and delighted they are and assures them that the group will laugh, dance and sing their best. They tell host couples that they have come from far off villages hearing of their grand feast, big-fat wine vessels and hospitality.

*Ngunu jaka patang jasi,
Gyapo sire pabin jasi,
Solii adding soha lana,
Ngarlii adding ngara lana.
Byatu jao soha lana,
Byatu jahii along lyao,
Byarang jao soha lana,
Byarang jahii alung lyao, (ibid: 100)*

Translation:

We the 'Gyapo siire' group,
We are the group of young bears, the *Gyapo sire*
Would move together in rhythm,
Would laugh and play,
At your doorstep, at porch and at corridor (Translator: Researcher)

*Lyego jao soha lana,
Lyego jahii alung lyao,
Pargo jao soha lana,
Pargo jahii along lyao,
Mirii jao soha lana,
Mirii jahii along lyao,
Chanchu jao soha lana,
Chanchu jahii along lyao,
Piirii jao soha lana,
Piirii jahii along lyao, (ibid: 100, 101)
..... (Here name of the host is taken by the singer)*

Translation:

We will joyfully cross the door,
But door should not get scared by our haughty moves,
We will joyfully reach the fireplace,
But hearth should not get scared by our high-pitched voice,
We will further move near cooking stove,
But cooking stove should not get scared of our footsteps and its sound,
.....Here name of the host is taken by the singers (Translator: Researcher)

The singers makes a statement that they are coming inside the house joyfully, therefore, parts of the house like doorstep, porch, door, corridor, ceiling, fireplace and cooking stove are asked not to get scared of and shocked with their loud and robust song and performance.

*Aba ja Kiilyin japa,
Tii hiirii miichang siike,
Apa ja kiilo japa,
Himo koda dachang siike,
Benyii ja anyii jami,
Riichi liimi giibi talyi,
Myoso pana hogo jaso,
Khemyo lami babi talyi,
Kipu liimin giibi talyi,
Migo pana hogo jaso,
Kiyung lami babi talyii. (ibid: 101)*

Translation:

Hiirii was begun by our great ancestors;
Aba Kiilyin and *Apa Kiilo*,
We the *Hiirii* group are only following the trend set by,
Our great ancestors *Aba Kiilyin* and *Apa Kiilo*,
To you couples; the host of this great, grand feast,
We bless you to have lot of children,
May Dogs and Cats be in abundance in your house. (Translator: Researcher)

Here the *Hiirii* group blesses the host couple to have lots of children along with plenty of pets which include cats and dogs. The presence of pets signifies happiness and abundance of food grain in Apatani society in general and household in particular. Thus, the group of *Hiirii* singer and performer blesses them to have abundance of pets in their household along with huge numbers of children. Therefore, they bless them to have *Liimi* (blessing associated with child birth), *Kipu* (dog) and *Kiyung* (cat).

This song is particularly sung and performed only by male members of the Apatani society and the content of the song is blessing. The entire song is characterized by *Hiirii* group singing and performing *Hiirii* song whose content exhibits the entry of the singers via various parts of house such as through doorstep, porch, door, corridor and finally reaches the hearth of the house. The huge group of young men demands food which include meat and rice beer and in return, they bless the host couple to attain the zenith of prosperity with lot of children, abundance of pets, poultries and cattle as dog, cat, hen, cock, cow and mithun. In traditional Apatani society, one having all these pets, cattle and poultries along with bamboo grove and agricultural fields were considered rich and prosperous. Thus, the *Hiirii* group specifically blesses the host couple to attain the stage of life where they will have all these symbols of prosperity and happiness.

Hiirii song is characterized by young men singing and dancing for hours with little break for refreshment which include best of rice beer with beef, pork, egg and bacon meat. The entire song talks of group of young men coming to house of host with addressing each part of house, they sing and dance, demands food, meat and beer and finally blesses the host couple and takes leave. During entire performance of *Hiirii*, the women of the host house including the other women from clan members which include young girls and middle aged women constantly serves the group. The main role of the female members of the host family and clan members during *Hiirii* performance is to serve the group and other male members present with best beer and meat with utmost care and respect.

3.2.3 *Daminda*:

Daminda is another long narrative song accompanied by dance performance which is only performed by female members of the Apatani society. This song is sung during *Dree*, the agricultural festival held in fifth of July every year by large group of females dressed in traditional attire which is accompanied by dance performance yet again by

large group of women from all seven villages of the Apatani plateau. This particular song is associated with women and no men were seen singing this song till date. *Daminda* is long narrative song which narrates the significant myth associated with *Dree*, its related deities and art of cultivation. It shows slight variation depending on individual singer and also to which of the seven villages she belongs makes a difference as there is little variation in tone, accent and usage of words amongst Apatani villages. Following lines of the lyric are generally sung by every *Daminda* singer to mark the celebration of Dree festival on 5th July:

*Siilo bo alo so daminda,
Dree bo alo so daminda
Dree bo soma mi daminda,
Sonyo bo talyi la daminda
Paye bo miima si daminda.*

Translation:

Today on the day of Daminda,
On the day of Dree with Daminda,
We will practice till we achieve perfection in Daminda,
Lets we all do Daminda. (Translation: Researcher)

*Ngunu bo mundo si daminda,
Ditii-Latii mundo si daminda,
Ngunu bo mundo si daminda,
Siilang-Siiker mundo si daminda,
Ngunu bo mundo si daminda,
Dilang-Pengu mundo si daminda,
Puchi-Putii mundo si daminda.
Ngunu bo mundo si daminda,
Jalyang sire mundo si daminda.
Ngunu bo mundo si daminda,
Lantii-Kartii mundo si daminda.
Ngunu bo mundo si daminda. (Mihin Kaning, 2008,125)*

Translation:

In these verses, the word ‘*Mundo*’ means group of young damsel who have come from different villages as mentioned in song, they have come dressed in beautiful Apatani traditional attire.

We the damsels from *Delyung dulyang* has come for Daminda,
We from *Siro Bolin* has come for Daminda,
We from *Rantii-Pige, Takhu-Siidi, Ranchi-Rantii,*
We the damsels from *Ditii-Latii, Siilang-Siiker* and *Dilang-Pengu,*
From *Puchi-Putii, Jalyang Sere* and *Lantii-Kartii*
We the damsels from entire Apatani plateau
Have come this day to offer Daminda !!! (Translation: Researcher)

In above lines of song, different names of places which are believed to be mythical are mentioned from where the girls have come in festival ground to sing and perform Daminda.

Siilo boa lo so daminda,
Ngunu bo patan si daminda
Kiidi bo riilyang ka daminda,
Riilyang bo pasu si daminda
Liichi bo karu si daminda,
Kapu bo lyadii la daminda
Korping bo taso si daminda,
Korpu bo lyadii la daminda,
Ane bo donii lu daminda,
Nentu bo donii lu daminda
Nentu bo siitii cho daminda,
Tunyo bo siitii cho daminda.
Aba lu liibo lu daminda,
Riingo lu liibo lu daminda,
Riinyo lu siitii cho daminda
Ponio bo siitii cho daminda,

Lilu bo ligun ja daminda
Kama bo dola du daminda
Hapa bo pagun si daminda,
Kama bo dola du daminda
Ane bo yari mi daminda,
Murtu bo yari mi daminda
Tubi bo tiicho du daminda,
Mabing lu tiicho du daminda
Hibii lu tiicho du daminda (L. P.Tamang, L.P.Monya, 2017, 31)

Translation:

In Apatani, ‘*patan* or *patang*’ signify group or gang of young men and women.

On this auspicious day, we are up to perform Daminda,
We pray, bless us!
May we overpower obstacles and hurdles which come our way,
May there be no disturbance while carrying out Daminda,
May our foot not be hurt,
May mother earth protect us from thorns and sharp pebbles,
May there be no rope to entangle our legs,
May none of us face any accident,
Today, we are here for purpose,
To learn art of agricultural cultivation,
From *Ane Donii* and *Aba Liibo*; the first farmers.
We will learn art of tilling soil,
We will learn art of weeding out weeds and grasses,
We will learn the art of sowing seeds, preparation of nursery beds,
With the grace of *Ane Donii* and *Aba Liibo*. (Translation: Researcher)

Ane Donii and *Aba Liibo* is believed to be first to learn and begun the art of agricultural cultivation.

Ane lu yari lu daminda,
Murtu lu yari lu daminda,

*Pyapin lu khugyin mi daminda,
Khulin bo biitola daminda,
Pyare bo tiipiya mi daminda,
Tiiko bo biito la daminda.
Tullin bo biidola daminda
Lil obo tiicho du daminda,
Liniyo bo tiicho du daminda
Hapa bo tiicho du daminda,
Paniyo bo tiicho du daminda
Mitu lu liiban si daminda,
Tachan bo hibu si daminda
Sarti bo liiban so daminda,
Tiyo bo hibu si daminda
Nigin bo akha si daminda,
Dulin bo biido la daminda.
Pabo bo akha si daminda,
Dulin bo biidola daminda,
Tashu bo byotu mi daminda,
Byonio bo giitola daminda,
Tashey bo naru mi daminda,
Koniyo bo giito la daminda
Tachan bo dime mi daminda,
Mempa bo bitii cho daminda.*

*Ngunu bo patan si daminda,
Dree bo soma mi damindas
Soniyo bo tiibyoo la daminda,
Landin bo socha la daminda
Dimin bo masu ke daminda,
Solun bo masu ke daminda
Hinii sokhun masu ke daminda
Ngunu bo patan si daminda,
Siire relin lyiku ke daminda (ibid:32, 33)*

Translation:

‘*Pyapin*’ and ‘*Pyare*’ are names of paddy plant. It is believed that even after tilling of soil and preparing nursery bed for sowing seeds, *Ane Donii* and *Aba Liibo* had to wait and toil hard to get quality seeds which they could sow to their nursery bed, it was only with the grace of *Ane Yari*, who gave them seeds for their fields that they could actually start their process of farming. *Ane Yari* is the owner of great granary with seeds of different variety of plants which include different kinds of paddy, millet, maize, chilies, lettuce, ginger etc.

Let’s perform Daminda for *Ane Yari*,
Let’s pray her for best *Pyapin* and *Pyare*,
Bless us with best seeds for abundant yields,
We will win your heart with our Daminda,
We will win your trust with our hard work,
Our tilled soil and ready nursery beds
Will surely compel you to supply us best seeds;
For bumper harvest and abundant yield,
So we pray you and performing Daminda in your honour,
We will sow these seeds the way our ancestors sowed,
Will let it grow into healthy saplings,
We will plant the saplings the way our ancestors planted,
We will kill the pests; *Tachan*, *Tashu*, *Tiyo* and *Tashey*,
We will protect our crops and its delicate joints ;
From destruction led by these pests.
Let’s summon the priest to perform *Dree* rites,
To protect our crops from devastating *Tachan*, *Tashu*, *Tiyo* and *Tashey*,
Let *Dree* rites be performed to kill these pests.
Our *Dree* priest in priestly attire will surely kill;

These invading pestilent ensuring best crops and bumper harvest.

We have sung and danced our heart out,
We moved upward, we moved downward,

With best intention and contention,
Our group have sung and danced,
Without hurting and injuring anyone,
We have prayed for well being of humanity,
We have learnt the art of farming,
To fed humanity with health and happiness,
Now we take leave mirthfully,
Now we take leave with future anticipation;
For best health, happiness and bumper harvest. (Translation: Researcher)

This song Daminda is a long narrative song narrating a tale where females of different villages come together to sing daminda and perform it out to learn art of farming: tilling of soil, preparation of nursery bed, sowing seeds and transplanted of sapling. For bumper harvest and to protect crops from the attack of pests, the Daminda group or *Patang* request priest to perform Dree rites to ensure best crops which will bring best crops and harvest for humanity.

Women are supposed and expected to know the art of farming in traditional Apatani society. In her maiden days she tills and works in her father's or brother's field and after marriage she till and farm her husband's field. Both wet and dry farming are to be taken care by women besides looking after other households chores as cooking, cleaning, knitting and weaving etc. During ancient times, women's capacity to work was the mandate and criteria for marriage in Apatani society. In traditional Apatani society, a woman has no inheritance rights and does not hold any share in her father's property and she does not inherit her husband's property as well. In case if husband dies, she play the role of a custodian where she has to take care of the properties till her son inherits it and if she is without male child then the property is inherited by the closest male member of the clan. She is basically engaged to household activities and cultivation. She is expected to fulfill household activities without complain. Though, none of the landed properties are inherited by women but every inch of land starting from home to granary are under her care and both wet and dry cultivation are carried out by women. Thus, Dree festival and its rites play significant role in the life of Apatani women as economy of the society are mostly agriculture based.

3.2.4 *Papin-Pame Biisi* (Papin-Pame song):

Papin-pame Biisi is basically a love song of the Apatanis which narrates love affairs of twin Brothers Loder and Byai with twin sisters Puming and Pubyang of Papin-Pame village. The two brothers were on the way to the neighbouring village to attend *builyang* – a village council meeting with other council men from their village. The group of men halted for refreshment at Puming’s and Pubyang’s house at Papin-Pame village and while other men left for village council meeting after refreshment; Loder and Byai stayed back, fully enchanted and mesmerized by the unparalleled beauty and grace of the sisters. The two men totally forgot their wives, babies, home and village and adopted Puming and Pubyang’s village and house as theirs and lived with two beauty in Papin-Pame village for several years; Loder with Puming and Byai with Pubyang.

This song is of a great length accompanied by multiple themes and motifs and grandeur in narration. The song not only narrates the love affairs of Loder, Byai, Puming and Pubyang but also highlights how weaving *Aami-Aagun* (eye-mouth design) plays role in deciding women’s perfection and role as wife and as sister and men’s pride in wearing the shawl with eye-mouth design on it. Thus, the song also highlights Apatani notion of perfect women. In this song, multiple divorce of hero Loder and Byai exposes the male dominance and power of patriarchal Apatani society over women. Dumi and Yami, the sisters of Loder and Byai feels pity for their brothers as they fail to get fit wife who could elevate their social status and weave them shawls which they can wear on meeting of *builyany-* village council. In song, it is told that Dumi and Yami looked for inspiration and best designs for years in forests and finally could find only one feather of peacock from which it was difficult to copy a design. Finally, they visited the place of *Ato Charun-* the god of knowledge and collected whatever they show there and weaved beautiful shawl with *Aami-agung* (eye-mouth) design on it.

The entire Papin-pame song goes beyond hundred lines, of which researcher have taken only lines relevant for the present study:

Ayii-ayii du cho-cho du ayii-ayii du
miido tilyin ka lyinkuñ cho uyi he ka nyime he cho
loder anii si duliñ biitii nii byai aba si dulin biitii nii

*oder ganda si senyi ganda cho aayi ganda si sapi ganda cho
sango salin ka salin barmii mi mihi lake le hago haliñ ka
halin barmii mi mihi lake le oder pingan so tiili mado ta
ayi pingan so tiilo mado ta beppo mado ta
dotu nii nii mi mihi lake le penji nii nii mi mihi lake le
biilyi bubi mi mihi lake le bita bube mi mihi lake le
oder pingan so tiili mado ya beppo mado ya ayi pingan so
tiilo mado ya yopo mado ya ayii-ayii du
ganda tata ka biinii aru mi mihi lake le siigan tata ka
siibo roro mi mihi lake le oder pingan so tiili mado ya
aayi pingan so tiilo mado ya beppo mado ya
ayii-ayi du cho-cho du ayii-ayii du
siiro dogi mi mihi lake le sango sambyii mi mihi lake le
abi pikhan mi tarii ngokhan mi lagii nii da ku cho-cho ayii-ayii du
diilyi gechi mi mihi lake le diige gema mi mihi lake le
abi ratta ya chipi datta ya tarii ratta ya chopo dota ya cho-cho du ayii-ayii du
lakko tarii pa lappi lima do cho-cho du ai-ayii du ayii-ayii du
supu yonii ka yoyi sansan mi mihi lake le ayii-ayii du
oder pingan so tili mado ya beppo mado ya aayi pingan so
tiilo mado ya yopo mado ya ayii-ayii
nii supun yunii ka ami yunii ka yuyi sansan lu
oder jittii mi jike kele lo aayi jiro mi hekke kele lo
sango pulye pa luru pada la hago pulye pa kopii pulu la
oder tingan so tiili mado ta beppo mado ta aayi tingan so
tillo mado ta lyoppo mado ta ayii-ayii du
supun goppii so huppa tala lo kenya papu ka kenda piila la
hugii tola lo dabi dayi ke ayii-ayii du (N.Rija, M.K.Shome & S.S. John, 2016,
*Analysis of 'Papin-Pame Biisi'- A Love Ballad of the Apatanis, Arunachal
Pradesh, 10, 11)**

Translation:

Ayii-ayii oh ayii-ayii...
Father *Miido Tilyang* and mother *Nyime Yaye*;
Proud parents of *Loder* and *Byai*,

In the village of *Senyi-Sapi Ganda*,
 They were looking for brides for *Oder* and *Aayi*.
Salin Barmii and *Halin Barmii* were their first brides;
 But they knew not how to dress up,
 So, both were forsaken.
Dotu Nii and *Penji Nii* were their next brides,
 They were followed by *Biilyi Bubi* and *Bita Bube*,
 But they were not perfect enough to be their wives;
 For they know not the art of weaving.
 Then they married *Biinii Aru* and *Siibo Roro*,
 They were followed by *Siiro Dogi* and *Sango Sambyii*,
 These girls were left as they didn't know;
 The art of weaving and art of dressing,
 They married again to *Diilyi Gechi* and *Diige Gema*,
 But they didn't even wore their blouse and skirt properly,
 Then they married *Supun Yonii* and *Yoyi Sansun*,
 They weaved clothes and shawls;
 For husbands *Loder* and *Byai*,
 But it didn't fit well,
 Thus, they threw the clothes;
 And asked bird *Kenyi papu*,
 To take the clothes away and fly far away. (Translator: Researcher)

In the outset of the Papin-Pame song, it is told that in the village Senyi-Sepi Ganda, the parents of heroes Loder and Byai, Father Miido Tilying and mother Nyime Yaye are looking for their sons bride. Apatanis have special liking for addressing person with his/her nickname. Thus, in this song, hero Loder is addressed as 'Oder' and Byai as 'Aayi'. The entire song talks about their quest for perfect wife; they married Salin Barmii, Halin Barmii, Dotu Nii, Penji Nii, Biilyi Bubi, Bita Bube, Biinii Aru, Siibo Roro, Siiro Dogii, sango Sambyii, Diilyi Gechi and Diige Gema but the brothers could not continue their marriage with any one of them as some of them did not know the art of weaving and some lacked art of proper dressing and grooming. Their quest finally comes to an end with their marriage with Supun Yonii and Yoyi Sansan; Loder with Supun yonii and Byai with Yoyi Sansan, but both brothers were hardly satisfied and happy as

their wives could not weave upto their expectation. Whatever their wives weaved for them could not fit them well and dejected brothers threw those clothes away and invite bird *Kenyi papu* to take those clothes away.

Dumi and Yami, the sisters of Loder and Byai could not endure the plight of their brothers as none of their wives proved upto their expectation, so they decided to weave for their brothers; shawls with best *Aami-Aagung* (eye-mouth) design on it. In the song, it is said that they ventured over different forests for years to look for pattern and designs they could copy and weave for their brothers and which their brothers could proudly wear while on *Builyang*. The void which was supposed to be filled by their sister-in-laws was to be filled by them by weaving best shawl with best design and thereby performing role of responsible and dutiful sisters to brothers. The sisters, Dumi and Yami sets out in the search of best *Aami-Aagung* design (eye-mouth) amidst forest, animals, rivers and mountains:

*Ami Dumi ka dumi tadu lo Ami Yami ka yami yalo lo
ngunu ate lu sango innan la piidin chuchu la dassu da ku ya
bulyan tatan pa lyanyu puchu ma lyanyan tamañ pa nyago balye hema
ka dalyi ke ayii-ayii du cho-cho du
pudu ilyo mi lalin lala la pudu yahii mi lalin lala la
lyodu ilyo mi lalin lala la pabu pake mi paka techo du
ayii-ayii du cho-cho du ayii-ayii du
nukun anii ka dintii dikhun mi lalin lala la yuyi piichan pa
nukun anii ka kotii kolo mi lalin lala la yumo sampya pa
mobu gachi mi lalin lala la paye garo mi lalin slala la
ayii-ayii du cho-cho du ayii-ayii dus
ami dumi ka dumi tadu lu ayii-ayii du
ngunu ate pa sango pulye mi hago pulye mi jitii talyi la (ibid:7,8)*

Translaton:

Ami Dumi and Ami Yami cried,
Oh my, my dear brothers,
You two, the most eligible and influential of all,
How much you two longed and had been longing,

To attend *Builyang* in far off villages,
 With pride in your hair knot,
 With best shawl hanging through your shoulder,
 Oh how much you two wish to be part of the *Builyang*.
 Now, it's time to take out our sword and axe,
 To cut those hard woods,
 To prepare our weaving sticks,
 With our sword and axe,
 We will prepare butter smooth sticks,
 To weave best clothes and shawls,
 With best design and pattern on it,
 For our dear brothers; Oder and Aayi.
 We will collect all old pots and potteries,
 From the oldest mother *Nukun Anii*,
 We will dye and colour our threads in those pots;
 The old pots of wisdom and knowledge,
 Ami Dumi and Ami Yami,
 We will weave best clothes and shawls,
 The shawl of pride and prestige,
 We will weave a shawl, a way to growth and grandeur,
 For our dear brother. (Translator: Researcher)

Sisters Dumi and Yami sympathized their brothers as they highly desired and longed to join the *Builyang* – village council meeting which is to be held in far off village. In the village council meeting only influential and respected men with status takes part. Therefore, heroes Loder and Byai too wanted to join the meeting as they were counted among the influential and respected men but their wives could not weave for them shawls which could have elevated their status. Therefore, sisters Dumi and Yami decided to weave for their brothers best shawls with best designs on it and swear not to let down their brothers desire to attend *builyang* in far off village. They took out their axes and swords to cut down woods for looms and weaving sticks and collected old pots and potteries from oldest granny *Nukun Anii* which they probably used it for colouring and dying their threads. With all those they planed to weave “*ngunu ate pa sango pulye mi*

hago pulye mi jitii talyi la”, which means ‘we will weave a shawl, a way to growth and grandeur for our dear brothers’.

It is said that they spent several years in finding perfect design which is called *Aami-Agung* (eye-mouth) in Apatani. On their way in finding perfect designs, they were disturbed by many forces such as weather and animals. In the song, mention as been made of squirrel and birds:

Yompin takhii si soi biida la lobu biido ta soku biido ta
Hachan piita si socha biida la lone biido ta solya biido ta
Piidu piikhu mi lyanya soru si rokka toke le nyango soru si
Rokka toke le piile kontii do soye kontii do robii donii du (ibid: 9)

Translation:

Squirrel *Yompin takhii* had teased, danced and dropped our weaving sticks,
Bird *Hachan piita* too disturbed us by flying and landing over weaving threads,
And suddenly we show bird *Piidu piikhu* with beautiful feathers;
Of which we could only catch a feather. (Translator: Researcher)

When sisters started weaving, they were disturbed by squirrel (*yompin takhii*) and bird (*hachan piita*). The threads were tangled by bird and squirrel dropped their weaving sticks which caused them disturbance and distraction. Suddenly they show a bird with long and beautiful feathers which had beautiful designs on it. This bird was *Piidu piikhu*, they tried to catch hold of it but could get only one feather. Probably the bird mentioned in song is peacock which has beautiful patterns and designs on its feather. The sisters tried to copy the designs from the single feather which they have caught from peacock but they find it difficult to copy those patterns on feather and cried:

Papi loma ta katin lama ta pari lama ta katin lama ta
Misi riidii pa dabii da ku ta meela riicho pa dabii da ku ta
Riibii achan so ato charun ka lahin pinchu mi jolin biido la
Papi nantii cho katin nantii cho riioh achan so ayii-ayii du
Ato charun ka lanker pinta mi jolin biido la pari nantii cho katin nantii cho ayii-ayii du

Jitii toke le tiike toke le jiro toke le hekke toke le
Oder pingan so tiili doku ta beppo doku ta
Aayi pingan so tiilo doku ta lyopo doku ta ayii-ayii du
Ami Dumi ka dumi tadu lu Ami Yami ka yami yalo ka
Bulyang lytii ka tiikke chanii si butii jiro ka hekke janii mi
Miido Loder lu Miido Byai lu giika doyu ke (ibid: 9)

Translation:

It is difficult to understand and copy those designs,
 Our eyes are filled with tears and our heart aching,
 With teary eyes and with aching heart;
 We prayed *Ato Charun*- the god of knowledge and wisdom,
 We have placed our pots of offerings to the attics and railings,
 With the blessings of *Ato Charun*;
 We sisters, *Ami Dumi* and *Ami Yami*;
 We have weaved the shawls of pride and status,
 For dear brothers *Oder* and *Aayi*,
 We have weaved the shawls with best design;
 And this will elevate our brothers to the *Builyang*. (Translator: Researcher)

After much hard work and efforts, *Dumi* and *Yami* could get just one feather of the bird *pikhu Piidu* (probably peacock) but it was truly difficult for them to copy those designs which make them weep out of feeling of pain as they were unable to weave shawls for their brothers. Two of them then approached *Ato Charun*- the god of wisdom and knowledge for blessing which will lead them to understand proper *Aami-Aagung*. They placed pot of rice beer over attic and railing as offering asking for blessing and guidance. The act of offering rice beer is being practiced by *Apatanis* since time immemorial to appease spirits, deities and even to priest as an act of reverence towards them. *Ami Dumi* and *Ami Yami* after being blessed by *Ato Charun* could able to weave their dream shawls for their brothers *Loder* and *Byai* who are lovingly addressed as ‘*Oder*’ and ‘*Aayi*’ in this song. The brothers finally begin their journey to attend *Builyang* in far away village with these shawls. It was with these beautiful shawls that they landed on *Papin-Pame* village where they fell for two sisters *Puming* and *Pubyang*. The *Builyang* group stops for while in *Papin-pame* village at *Puming* and *Pubyang*’s house for refreshment and while all other *builyang* members proceeded for their

destination, Loder and Byai stayed back, mesmerized and love sicked:

Oder-Aayi nyi Umi nello mi oder nello pa armyan biido cho myangka biido cho

Aayi nello pa Ubyan nello mi armyan biido cho myangka biido cho cho lu cho du aya-aya ha (ibid: 4)

Translation:

Oder and Aayi have named Umi's house to be Oder's and Ubyan's to be Aayi's, Ubyang's house became Aayi's as Umi's became Oder's, Oh...oh...oh... (Translator: Researcher)

Love stricken Loder and Byai forsaking their families and village started living with two beautiful sisters Puming and Pubyang who are addressed as 'Umi' and 'Ubyang' in song. The two brothers have finally adopted the house and village of Puming and Pubyang as their house and their village. They have spent several years in Papin-Pame village living with their lady love and doing everything that husband does for wife. They were overtly mesmerized with the grace and beauty of Puming and Pubyang. In course of living with their lady love, they have completely forgotten their wives and babies back home.

One day, after long years of their settlement to Papin-Pame village, Loder and Byai suddenly thought to visit their ancestral forest *Landre Morey* (name of the ancestral forest). In their ancestral forest, they show two young men setting traps for animals which immensely anger them as that were their forest. They shouted at two young men and asked who they were and how dare they set traps in their forest? The two young men said that the forest belongs to them and their names are Miido Chada and Miido Chama and that they are sons of Miido Loder and Miido Byai; Chama is son of Loder from his wife Supun Yonii and Chada is son of Byai from his wife Yoyi Sansan. This revelation by young men Chada and Chama shooked Loder and Byai to the depth of their heart and soul and they could hardly face their sons out of embarrassment as both have completely given up and forgot their responsibilities of being husband and of being father for so many years in pursuit of their love affairs. They decided to go back to their ancestral village where their wives Supun Yonii and Yoyi Sansan were living a life like that of widows and their sons Chada and Chama were living like fatherless orphans. The father-son encounter in Landre morey (forest) is described beautifully in Papin-Pame song:

*Oder-Aayi nyim kane pa kaye lo toku la landre morey so
 Morey incha tola lo huka nyibo kachi na mito kao na
 Oder-Aayi nyika dachi pyako so pyadonii du
 Dala heko so heya donii du hiika kele lo
 Ngo miido loder ka ayii aba loder ka Chada cho du do
 Miido Byai ka aba byai ka Chama cho du du
 hiika kele lo cho lu cho du ayii ho landre morey so
 Morey ho dala du oder-aayi nyi tubo jinga pa ngaiko yu ke
 Lyabo jinga pa ngaiko yu ke*

Translation:

In Landre morey, they were there in size of Oder and Aayi,
 Oder and Aayi, angry and aggressive;
 Asked, ‘Who are these stranger boys?’
 Stepping foot and setting traps in land of Oder and Aayi?
 Iam Chada, son of my father Miido Loder! , answered he.
 Iam Chama, son of my father Miido Byai! , answered he.
 In Landre morey, dumbstrucked and shocked stood Oder and Aayi,
 This revelation stricked them like thunder, like lightening.

The encounter of Loder and Byai with their sons Chada and Chama in the forest *Landre Morey* could make them realize that they have left behind their wives and sons to toil and suffer in the village for many years while they were blissfully living with Puming and Pubyang in Papin-Pame village. In Landre morey, when they first show and met two young men laying traps to catch animals, Loder and Byai were furious at them as it was unauthorized to lay traps in other’s forest. They asked those boys angrily who they were and how they dared to lay traps in their forest? Then the two boys who were equal to Loder and Byai in size and height answered that they were sons of Miido Loder and Miido Byai and their names were Miido Chada and Miido Chama and that Landre morey belongs to them. This revelation by Chada and Chama stricked Loder and Byai like lightening and thunder and they realized their misdeeds and mistakes which was responsible for the suffering of their wives and children. They decided to go back to their native village and asked Puming and Pubyang to let them go back to their wives and children who were living like widows and orphans. The sisters who were deeply in love

with Loder and Byai cried and begged not to leave them but the brothers did not listen to Puming and Pubyang as they were truly ashamed of themselves after meeting their sons chada and Chama. Finally, Loder and Byai proceeded for their village but they encountered really bad weather with lot of mist and fogs on the way which made them unable to see paths and consequently they returned back to Puming and Pubyang in Papin-Pame village. They blamed Puming and Pubyang for not letting them go wholeheartedly which caused bad weather. However, they proceeded again from Papin-Pame village taking back with them a pair of Mithuns namely *Papin Miri* and *Pame Mitan* as gift from Puming and Pubyang. This time also they could not proceed further because of the bad weather accompanied by thick fog and mist which compelled them to return back to Puming and Pubyang. After failing twice to proceed further, the brothers asked for the ornaments of their lady love Puming and Pubyang as gifts and blessings. The sisters gave their lovers *hutu gakhe* and *uyang kobyang*, a type of traditional bangles made of brass which is valued very high in Apatani culture and society and also squirted milk from their breasts on the palms of Loder and Byai as a mark of their love. Finally, Loder and Byai headed for their village without any obstacle on the way. When they reached their village, they were looked down upon by the villagers and none accepted their offer of Mithuns which they brought with them from Puming and Pubyang. As those mithuns were given to them as a part of their separation and many believed that those mithuns were sign of their infidelity, thus no one accepted them. Having refused by everyone to keep those pair of Mithuns, Loder and Byai performed *Supung*, a ritual performed by smearing rice powder on the head of the sacrificial animals and later slaughtering it. They performed *supung* with sands instead of rice powder; slaughtered the Mithuns and then returned back to their wives and children.

The entire Papin-Pame song depicts role of heroes Loder and Byai in choosing perfect brides for themselves wherein they divorced many women for one or other reasons. This song is loaded with multiple motifs: motif of love, weaving eye-mouth design, perfection, infidelity and most important motif of male power over decision making in walks of life. Heroes of this song leaves many women as some did not know the art of grooming, some could not carry out properly their blouse and skirts and some did not know the art of weaving. They decides everything in terms of their idea of perfection and idea of ideal woman and ends up living with two beautiful sisters Puming and Pubyang in Papin-Pame village for many years and in the end they returns back to their native

village leaving behind their lady love as they felt bad for their wives and children. The heroes, at different point of their life leave behind one woman for another according to what suits their idea of ideal and perfect. Amidst entire chaos of relationship and emotions, women remain only as a part of their choice; the devotion and commitment of their wives could not stop them from living with two beautiful women and again the beauty and charm of Puming and Pubyang could not stop them from returning back to their wives and children. The decisions of the heroes stand whereas their wives and lady love plays as part of their choice and decision making.

3.3 Tattoo Myth (*Tiipe Panii*): Usage and Relevance:

Myth is an integral part of oral tradition and it act as source of knowledge for individual, community with oral culture in absence of any written record. Its existence is as old as the existence of mankind and is a form of sacred truth narrating human, superhuman, divine power and god performing miraculous acts. In contrast to verse narratives, myths are form of prose narratives which are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. Thus myths are true source of sacred tradition and primordial revelation and it is the most revered and acknowledged form of religious, historical and sociological knowledge and its route to any community with oral tradition. Lalita Handoo (1988) in *Folk and Myth: An Introduction*, writes, “Myth explain the why and how of natural and unnatural phenomenon, of gods and divine beings, their world, life and behaviour, etc.....Myth narrates the realities that religious tradition explain by way of treatises, sacred figures or icons and rituals. It is both an explanation and a charter.”(p-74, 76).Hence, importance of myth is immeasurable and every community and society over the globe is dependent on its myth to get justifiable answer to understand its culture and tradition

Tattooing among the Apatanis is believed to be as old as their existence. Women, with one straight line which runs straight from forehead and end at tip of their nose. Five vertical lines on chin with one horizontal line below lower lip joining all these five lines with two big nose plugs symbolized beauty and fertility. The process of facial decoration also marked the arrival of puberty.

Tattooing in Apatanis had been a matter of discussion and social media is full of such discussion now a day. This art of facial decoration attracted many queries and curiosity.

Not only foreign scholars but also Indian scholars and students are showing keen interest in knowing, how and why Apatanis, especially womenfolk tattooed their face?

There are specific beliefs related to the Apatanis's art of tattooing and there exist these myths which explain and justify the art of tattooing. The myths behind art of tattooing narrate the origin of face tattoo bringing forth the reasons which caused Apatanis embracing and practicing the art of tattooing. One important thing to be noted is that Apatanis only tattooed their faces and no such tattoos were ever done on rest of the body part.

It is popularly believed that the art of tattooing was started practicing so that the Apatani women look unattractive and uniform. It was done to protect themselves from getting abducted and raped by the neighbouring tribesmen. Later on tattoos symbolized Puberty and advent of adolescence and became symbol of beauty.

Tattooing of face was an accepted and acknowledged form of beautification in Apatani society. They tattooed their face and pierced their nose to look beautiful, attractive and to gain opposite sex's attention. Tattoo and nose piercing was considered as the highest form of art and beauty in olden days and it act as an instrument in drawing opposite sex's attention. It also symbolized that a men or women has attained the marriageable age. It used to be a moment of immense pleasure to witness this traditional and ceremonial procession which takes place in the month of January called *pan* with newly tattooed faced. The facial decoration of the women was completed with two big nose plugs on both side of the nose known as *Yapping Hulo*. These *Yaping Hulo* were made of Piece of cane which was brought from the jungle. A piece of dried cane was cut for these *Yaping Hulo*. Both ends of the cane were smoothen by burning the ends and rubbing it against hard and smooth surface so that they are smooth and even. This process also ensured the sterility of the material and prevented any form of infection to nose.

This art of beautification was not only confined to women. Apatani male decorated their face with a tattoo in the middle of their chin in the shape of an English Alphabet "T". They also pierced their ear lobes and big pieces of hollowed bamboo called *Yaru Hukho* (Ear Plugs) were worn to attach ear rings.

Piercing of ears was an integral part of beautification among the Apatani females. Hollow bamboo pieces called *Yaru Hukho* was worn which is used for putting on ear

rings. Above the ear holes two to three extra piercing were made on each ear where smaller size of *Yaru Hukho* were worn. These smaller piercings are known as *Ruttings* and used for wearing *Rutting Yarang* which are flat rings made of brass. The diameter of *Rutting Yarang* is about three to four inches. Usually they wore two to three numbers of *Rutting Yarang* on each ear.

Dark and prominent face tattoo called *Tiipe* in Apatani, big *Yapping Hulo* (nose plugs) and *YaruHukho* (ear plug) and *Rutting Yarang* (smaller piercing on ear) were done to enhance the beauty of Apatani women. Likewise big, deep and prominent tattoo on the chin with a good, huge *Piiding* (knot of hair on forehead) were preferred by the men folk of the time to enhance their physical beauty. There was a competition among young Apatani women of that time to have a prominent *Tiipe* (Tattoo), bigger *Yaping Hulo* (nose plugs), bigger *Yaru Hukho* (ear plugs) with ear rings and *Rutting Yarang*.

Tattooing was done by pricking the skin with the help of a tightly tied bunch of thorn known as *Lobyu Tiire*. This particular thorn is also known as *Tiipe Tiire* among the Apatanis. They prefer morning hour for tattoo art to carry out. When blood oozes out of the pricked skin, a solution made by mixing black soot from the pots with boiled rice water (*Chinyu and Pila Ala*) was applied. Warm oil from pig tallow or bacon (*Hulyi*) was applied slowly on the tattoo after letting the solution to dry in the evening. This application of pig tallow or bacon goes on for few days about a week and tattoo appeared gradually with healing of wound. The art of tattooing was done only by the ladies among the Apatanis.

The Apatanis apart from being known as the most industrious and hardworking tribe are primarily known for their facial decoration. However, there has been no valid answer given so far as why and how these arts of tattooing originated. When asked by the outsiders, students and research scholars, Why the Apatanis, especially the womenfolk tattooed their faces which instead of enhancing beauty have spoiled their original looks? Reply and reason given and heard was that, Apatani womenfolk were tattooed in order to distort their beauty and to look uniform which worked as barrier and safety measures by preventing them from being getting abducted by males of neighbouring tribes.

Basically there are three very popular myths behind face tattoo and practice related to tattooing:

3.3.1 Ghost Myth:

It is believed by some of the Apatani elders that practice of tattooing and nose plugs were done to mislead the ghosts of the enemies. During ancient days there use to be **Chambyo** (War) within the Apatani villages and also with the neighbouring tribes. Many get killed during war and it was believed that ghosts of those who were killed during war use to disturb and haunt the villagers, especially women folk. It was during those days the priests of the Apatanis advised womenfolk to tattoo their face and to put on nose plugs to create confusion in identification as everyone will look alike in tattoos and nose plugs. This is one of the myths which suppose that tattooing of face might have started this way.

3.3.2 Safety Myth:

Another myth behind the face tattoo and nose plugs put forth the view that this practice has started to make Apatani women look uniform and unattractive. Once they were considered to be the most beautiful women and were constantly being abducted by the neighboring tribesmen. They were also frequently rapped by the notorious invading tribes and to put an end to this practice the tattooing along with nose plugs was considered for the safety of their women.

3.3.3 Myth of *Ami Niido Biinyi*:

The myth hidden in the verses of *Ami Niido Biinyi* from *Yorda-Ayu* is considered to be the most authentic and acknowledged reason for tattooing and nose plugs. *Yorda-Ayu* is a form of *Miji-Migung* dated back to *Ipyo-Lemba* (the place which is believed to original homeland of Apatanis) and *Miido-Lemba* (place and time when humans were not yet separated from spirits). This *Ayu* is especially held during *Murung* festival in the month of January. The myth of *Ami Niido Biinyi* is considered as the original source to understand the reasons behind the origin and practice of tattooing among the Apatanis.

One of the verses of *Yorda-Ayu* narrates the myth of *Ami Niido Biinyi*. She was the most beautiful and expert in every field as expected to be known by an Apatani women. Though highly accomplished in everything, she has to wait for marriage proposal. Time

passed by but no one came forward with marriage proposal to her. She grew older day by day and her wait for marriage proposal continued. She lost fertility and capacity to bear a child with her growing age. *Ami Niido Biinyii* had sleepless nights and could not bear the predicament anymore and one day decided to ask God (*Popi*) to solve her problem. Accordingly she asked God to tell her ways through which she could regain her lost youth and beauty once again. God told *Ami Niido Biinyi*, “In order to regain your youth and beauty and to bear a child, you must tattoo your face. You must wear *Yaping Hulo* (Nose Plugs), *Yaruhukho* (Ear Plugs) and *Rutting Yarang* (Flat brass rings) to have lot of poultry and cattle to support you”. She followed God's advice and tattooed her face, put on nose plugs, ear plugs and *rutting yarang* and with this art of beautification she could regain her lost beauty and youthfulness.

Following verses of *Yorda-Ayu* narrates the process of tattooing of *Ami Niido Biinyi* and its result which she experience afterwards. In these verses; the act of tattooing has been beautifully narrated. First four lines explains how with the help of *bije* (bamboo) one has practiced a design to get the exact shape of *tiipe* (tattoos). Sliced and smoothen bamboos were put to nose and chin in order to get the exact shape and size. Remaining eight lines narrates how beautiful and enchanting she looked after getting tattooed, nose plugs and ear plugs. An aging spinster could regain her lost charm and beauty with the help of *tiipe*, *yapping hullo* and *yaruhukho* and she could entice young and handsome *Jindo Tajing*.

Kui Kuli mi Bije Senyo La,
Kui Kupe mi Tiipe Lenyo La,
Kui Kuting mi Ruting Hugila,
Kuji Pu mi byigo kuji pa,
Kussang Pu mi Pingang Kussang Pa,
Popi Popa mi Dimang Dimpa Pa,
Byundo Tabyung mi Nyinding Pa,
Radotiira mi Mapapa Hempo La,
Talu Myopu mi Pyunyo La,
Talo Myokha mi Khenyo La,
Mudo Amyo Poro Ho,
Jindo Tajing mi Pamung Murii do, Hetea Terii Do.

Translation:

Here 'Bije' means bamboo in Apatani which was used in process of tattooing for best design and perfection.

Bamboo will be our guide,
Which will led our art to perfection,
Smoothen and soft, it will glide over your nose,
Over your lower lip for best tattoo,
We will practice before original task,
For this will led you to the zenith of perfect beauty.
Listen to Popi-Papa's words of wisdom;
In the world of Mudo you will achieve all you have aspired,
Lo! She is there with tattoo, nose plugs and ear plugs;
Fainted Jindo Tajing at her beauty;
Unmatched and unparallel was her beauty. (Translator: Researcher)

Her beauty enchanted *Miido JindoTajing* and he proposed to marry *Ami Niido Biinyi*. She accepted the proposal; they got married and lived happily ever. Their marriage resulted in the birth of *Khalos* (Supernatural beings). The birds and animals of the jungle were their poultry and cattle.

When *Pinsang Gyut*, one among the *khalos* was born, he saw some design on the pine tree. He wanted these designs to be with him forever and copied it from the pine tree. Thus he is attributed for male form of tattooing and it became part of Apatani culture.

However, these two very popular myths, i.e., myth-1 and 2 behind face tattoo are considered to be concocted theory by the priest and hence it should be discarded. Tattooing is as old as the existence of the Apatanis. Thus, myth -1 does not give definite reason for tattooing. The art of tattooing existed even before those wars and local fights. It is opined these days that the Myth-2 might have created by the first generation Apatani learners during their early schooldays. They might have started the story of Apatani women being most beautiful women and getting abducted by the neighbouring tribesmen while facing questions on tattooing face by the teachers and the students from the other

communities. This could have taken place due to language barrier at that time as they could hardly speak any other language then Apatani. The most interesting part of this development is that it was believed and the tale continued.

Through this myth we get to know that tattooing was adopted by *Ami Niido Biinyi* in order to restore her youth, beauty and fertility. She could regain her lost charm, beauty and youthfulness with the help of tattoo, ear plugs and nose plugs and became mother of all the *Khalos*.

The Apatanis are smaller in number compared to the rest of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Their strong urge to increase their population for self-preservation might have led them to tattoo their face, prick their ears and nose to become productive and fertile like *Ami Niido Biinyi*. Thus, big prominent tattoo, big ear plugs and nose plugs were encouraged amongst the women of Apatani society. The entire art of decorating through tattoos, ear and nose plugs worked as psychological tool to fight the unwanted and inhospitable calamities and environment and also to increase economy those days. Thus, Apatanis tattooed their face, wore ear and nose plugs to fulfil their psychological and economical needs and to face the inhospitable environments surrounding them during those early days. It also stood as symbol of beauty and symbolized puberty. P. Tado (2018) in his article “*Significance of Tattoo Among the Apatanis*” writes that, The Apatanis being small in number compared to other communities surrounding them even today must have been very less in number in ancient time. Their strong urge to increase their population for self preservation must have made them copy the tattooing of *Ami Niido Biinyi* to be fertile as her. In order to support the increased population and their needs, one needs more livestock indeed. To achieve this goal, wearing of big nose plugs and ear plugs was encouraged amongst the ladies of Apatanis. And it had logic as household economy in Apatani community is managed by the ladies (P-6). Thus understanding its utility to Apatani society in general and women in particular, usage of tattoos seems truly relevant to that specific phase of time.

In traditional Apatani society, women tattooed their face, wore nose plugs and ear rings to enhance her fertility and to have abundance of cattle and poultries which could fend the need of her family. Thus, symbolically her body played a great role in controlling the economy of the family in traditional Apatani society.

The practice of tattooing was prevalent till early 70s and people took pride in it. With the advent of modernity and coming of education and administration to Apatani plateau, the practice of tattooing have been given up completely by the people. Along with tattooing, culture of wearing ear plugs, nose plugs and *rutting yarang* has also disappeared. With passing time people's perception of beauty has also changed and this art of tattooing is no longer preferred and thus it is vanishing as only few senior citizens with tattoo on their face are to be seen.

3.3 Folktales:

Folktales are one of the integral parts of oral tradition which according to many folklorist are meant solely for amusement. An analysis of folktales reveals the conceptual machinery of values, beliefs and social control mechanism of the society in which the tales are grounded (Mibang, T and S.K. Choudhuri, 2004:155). The characters, allegories and symbols are all full of meanings. A careful analysis reveals important elements or spots of culture and opens the symbolic world of culture. In this way an interpreter can approach the world of the listener. According to Linda Degh (1972), the folktale embodies the highly polished, artistic story genres that have a relatively consistent, finished form. Their origin, goals and themes, on other hand, are diverse. Like novels and short stories, their sophisticated counterparts, folktales are told primarily for entertainment although they may have secondary purposes. They are believed to be fictitious, and are cited as lies by storytellers and commentators, who mean that tales are the creation of human phantasy (60). In Apatani oral tradition, there is no specific term for folktale though there are many stories which are told and listened under the ambit of *Miji-Migung*: when stories are told under ritual context, it is called *miji* and when it is told outside ritual context then it is called *migung*. Apatanis do have 'legends' in their folklore which defy the standard criteria and definition of legend, for they believe it to be true though there is no proof or any record in written script. According to Blackburn (2008), "Both *miji* and *migung* include elements locally recognized as fantasy, from extraordinary animals to mysterious mountains, yet both categories are thought to describe true events" (20). Tales are considered to be fictive largely created to express escape from the reality whereas legend faces the facts and reality. The tale-hero rises above the events he stimulates, the man in the legend remains helpless before the events he encounters. The folktale hero is blindly guided by advice and tasks, the man in the

legend acts according to his own initiative and satisfies his hunger for acquiring knowledge about the unknown (Degh, ibid:73). Folktales are considered to be fantasy whereas legends are considered as part of recent past, part of lived human past but in Apatani oral tradition, everything comes down to present generation from remote past, from the time when humans were not fully separated with spirits and demons, their legend is great *Abotani*, the cultural hero and a father of mankind who is called first human being and who gave birth to every form of life by marrying woman, fire, leach, water etc. All these accounts are considered to be true and Apatanis adhere to it with utmost sincerity and respect.

Storytelling is basically done by the females of the Apatani society but it is not done in public sphere and publicly. In contrast, it happens within home, hearth and bed, it becomes her domain as she indulges herself in telling stories; mother to children, sister to sister and sister to brothers. Many a times, amongst Apatanis, stories are not simply told for amusement but to impart in listener the cultural and moral values. The significant motifs of Apatani folktales are portrayal of women as creator of universe, as bringer of food and crops, women as tradition bearer and perfect homemaker, relations between girl and her sister-in-law, supernatural episodes, transformation of human and animals into other objects, women as pioneer of knowledge and wisdom, women as jealous, lustful and stupid, women as submissive, meek and enduring. Proper understanding and analysis of these tales can lead us to understanding and situating the role of Apatani women with reference to prevailing folk beliefs attached to each tale.

3.4.1 *Ayo Diilyang Diibu and Tiinii Rungya:*

Ayo Diilyang Diibu who is also addressed as *Diilyang Diibu* or simply as *Diibu* is considered as the bringer of crops like paddy (*emo*), maize (*tanyii*), millet (*sarse*), ginger (*taki*), peach (*takung*), cucumber (*taku*), hill onion (*talley*), green vegetables (*hamang*), pumpkin (*tapey*) and all other edible crops found in Apatani land. The motif of women as harbinger of wealth and prosperity can be understood with this tale. In Apatani '*Ayo*' means grandmother and it is said in Apatani, "*Ayo Diilyang Diibu, Diilyang ganda hokii Taku, Tanyi, Tapey, Sarse, Aeli mi myogii la Abotani ko aatii*" which means that mother *Diilyang Diibu* came to *Abotani* as wife with paddy crops, maize, millet, cucumber, pumpkin etc. She is the bringer of wealth and prosperity to Apatani country and it was

her hardworking, supportive and virtuous nature which roused Abotani to the height of success. According to Hage Tapa, a priest and *miji* expert from Hari village, it was not easy for Abotani to marry virtuous and graceful Diilyang Diibu, he acquired her hand for marriage by skillfully plotting an incident which made her pregnant.

One fine day, Abotani was sitting under the shadow of a big pine tree thinking deeply over crops and harvesting. He was wondering over one thing that everyone works hard in their respective fields for good harvest but only few gets really good harvest though equal labour and energy is put for bumper harvest. It was then he suddenly realized that it is because of certain virtuous women who work in the field selflessly to harvest bumper crops. So Abotani desires to marry to marry Ayo Diilyang Diibu who was the most beautiful, virtuous and hardworking in the world. She was very popular and everyone wanted to marry her and even the richest of the universe considered themselves to marry Ayo Diilyang Diibu. Thus, it was not at all easy for Abotani to convince Ayo Diilyang Diibu and her parents *Ayo-Danyi* (mother sun) and *Ato-Piilo* (father moon). Abotani though the most intelligent and clever of all was the poorest at that time and his poverty was the big obstacle in marrying Diilyang Diibu.

To pursue her for marriage, Abotani arranged the best clothes from *Ami-Tariih-Biinyii* (the weaver Goddess) and set out on his heavenly journey to the abode of *Ayo-Danyii* (mother Sun) and *Ato-Piilo* (father Moon) to ask the hand of *Diilyang Diibu* as his bride. His marriage proposal was turned down by *Danyii-Piilo* and he returned alone dejected and distressed. Being the most intelligent man on earth, he did not remain depressed for long and soon regained his usual self. He was determined to marry Diilyang Diibu and to realize his dream, he proposed a plan with the help of birds called *Ari-Tachi-Pu* and *Aroh-Taroh-Pu* and two insects *Takheh* (louse) and *Aki-Takheh* (bug) and a *Takhii* (squirrel) named *Arohtaba*. He guided them about his plan and asked them to act according to his command.

One day, the squirrel informed Abotani that Diilyang Diibu was busy weaving at the corridor (*uko*) of her house. *Abotani* then summoned the birds and send the birds along with his semen to the house of *Diilyang Diibu*. The birds sitting on the edge of the roof dropped the semen which fell on her forehead and when she looked up another drop of semen was dropped down by other birds which fell underneath her private parts. She rubbed off semen from her forehead by both her hands and at that moment louse and bug

swiftly disturbed her private parts which made her to rub her private parts causing semen to enter her uterus. This way *Abotani* successfully impregnated *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* and she could not realize the activity of *Abotani*.

After four months, *Diilyang Diibu* complained of the sickness and abdominal pain which cause tension to her parents *Danyii* and *Piilo*. The best of the priests were called by *Danyii-Piilo* to inquire about her ailment and to overview the spiritual omen and to perform the necessary rites. All the ritual spirits denied of any unpleasant omen with their daughter. At last, God of knowledge *Miido Popi* was consulted for further treatment and investigation. God *Miido Popi* declared *Diilyang Diibu* pregnant and the child in her womb as part and product of *Neha Tani* (earthly being). An inquiry was conducted in the world of *Neha* (earth) and *Abotani* happily claimed the child to be his and readily accepted *Diilyang Diibu*. This way *Abotani* succeeded in marrying virtuous *Diilyang Diibu* and with her qualities and good nature, she made agricultural production grow tremendously. *Abotani* was really happy with *Diilyang Diibu*, they prospered and he became the richest man in the world of *Neha* (earth) and they were blessed with sons namely: *Punu Tarin*, *Siuro Tatii*, *Kharing*, *Khattii*, *Niichi* and *Nicha*.

Abotani often use to go to the jungle for hunting and in his course of going jungle, he met one jungle beauty namely *Tiinii Rungya*, she was daughter of a wild Boar. *Abotani* was greatly attracted by her unique beauty and charm and fell in love with her. She enticed *Abotani* with her cunning and envious nature and told him that she is more capable and intelligent than *Diilyang Diibu* and she would complete every work within one third of the time taken by *Diilyang Diibu*. She said to *Abotani*:

*“Diilyang Diibu ka loliyang heap miiniing mi lo-ngo hepa miitodo,
lo-ngo hepa miiniing mi loye pa miitodo,
loye paka miiniing mi konchi roye pa miito do,
konchi roye paka miiniing mi sadha hepa miito do;
Ngiimi palii ralyang he la, kele rangohe kito pe”*

Translation:

*Diilyang Diibu’s ten days task will be my five days task,
Her five days task will be my one day task,
I will take just one morning to complete the job in which Diibu takes a day,*

I will complete tasks just in a gasp in which Diibu takes one morning,
Therefore, what I need is ten baskets of saw and five baskets of spade.
(Translator: Researcher)

Tiinii Rungya charmed Abotani with her false promises to make him more prosperous, happy and rich. He deserts Diilyang Diibu and sons to marry the jungle beauty. Diilyang Diibu felt distressed and betrayed so she left Abotani's house taking back every seeds brought by her. With her departure; happiness and prosperity once enjoyed by Abotani is lost. Tiinii Rungya bore him sons namely *Tiini Tiissa*, *Ranii Rasang*, *Ralyo*, *Rabo*, *Milyo* and *Nibo*. They were all bears and destroyed kitchen garden and farms in search of yams and arums. Being a daughter of jungle boar, she did not know the art of cultivation, instead damaged all the agricultural equipments and ruined all fortune gathered by Diibu's hard work. Consequently, Abotani once again was forced to live life of poverty but his fortune and prospects kept on changing with time and a kind of adventures he met.

Virtue is the name of *Diilyang Diibu*, the daughter of Sun and Moon, she is one of the most important and popular figures of Apatani oral literature. She is basically known for her virtuous and enterprising nature. In folktales, it is told that Abotani, the forefather of the Apatanis flourished and became the richest in the universe only after marrying virtuous *Diilyang Diibu*. She is considered as the harbinger of paddy, other crops and cattle to the Apatani plateau. It was during her marriage with Abotani that she brought all these which could elevate the social and economic status of Abotani. It was with the paddy seed she brought along with her which could actually enhance the paddy cultivation in entire Apatani Plateau. She was an accomplished lady who knew the art of cultivation, weaving and cooking. Girls from childhood are told to endow her character-virtuous, enterprising, hardworking and to develop skill of cultivation as *Ayo Diibu*. The folktale of *Ayo Diibu* reflects the ways in which fortunes of the men are associated with women. In traditional Apatani society, fortune or misfortune of men are often associated with the nature and skill of women. It is believed that women with good heart and hardworking nature could elevate the social status and relations of her family whereas ill natured and lazy women are only capable of bringing bad relations and downfall of a family

Vices in women can be well explained by citing the example of *Tiinii Rungya*, the jungle beauty who could entice *Abotani* with her enchanting beauty and by pretending to know the art of cultivation. It is believed that she was the daughter of boar and did not know the art of weaving, cultivation and cooking and consequently *Abotani* had to experience poverty as a result of marrying someone lazy and ignorant as *Tiinii Rungya*. She was destructive and jealous. The folktale narrating the love of *Abotani* and *Tiinii Rungya* also exposes the trait of polygamy in Apatani society. She is an example of destruction and pretentious nature and consequently became the best example for Apatani women to avoid those traits.

3.4.2 Dolyang Chanjang:

Dolyang Chanjang is the daughter of mother earth so she is called *Changi charae-charae Atu*. She was born out of *Kiidii Papu* (earth's egg). In Apatani oral tradition, she is basically recognized as *Tani Barmii* (*Abotani*'s sister). Dolyang Chanjang and *Abotani* both are believed to have born out of mother earth's womb. The tale exhibit the motif of women as compassionate, sacrificing and as bringer of knowledge and wisdom. According to Tasso Tapa, a renowned priest and a miji expert from Hari village, Dolyang Chanjang herself chose to render her service to *Abotani* because she considered him as her brother, so she is called *Tanii Barmii*. She is the first to practice priesthood during *Ui supung* days, the time when humans and spirits lived together, the time when they could see and speak each other. Dolyang Chanjang basically started practicing priesthood to heal diseases, illness, afflicted and suffering patients only. It is believed that she herself decided not to go for complicated rites and rituals and asserted male members should go for such rites and rituals as *Subu*, *Murung* and *Myoko* where one is supposed to use and climb *Lapang* (religious platform for ritual and public meeting). In traditional Apatani society, *Lapang* are symbol of masculinity and patriarch as it is meant for male members of the concerned clan so women are debarred from climbing *Lapang* as it is considered inauspicious if women climb. According to Hage Siira, a gaon bura, Dolyang Chanjang chose not to go for such rites because of the physical difference and considers menstrual cycle experience by womenfolk as one of the main reason for this decision. He also claims that it was her own decision and no one forced her for it. She thought it will look bad to bleed on *Lapang* in the presence of male members of the

clan which will include brother and father. So she let male member to perform all the necessary rites which involves the use of *Lapang*.

During those days, Dolyang Chanjang was highly respected and in return to her service rendered to general public in healing and curing diseases, she was awarded with costly items like *Maji* (Tibetan bell) and *Talo* (Tibetan plate). Presenting her these costly gift items was a continuous process and suddenly one day she decided to stop this trend because paying for her service with such expensive items was not possible every time for everyone. Thus, she declared not to present her such expensive items anymore and said, “*Kiiming Talo, Sha Chiri mi Jomii jola jokha ladii makey*” which means that it will not be possible for everyone to give her costly *Maji* and *Talo* every time, instead she will be happy if she is offered a basketful of rice or paddy with little rice beer. With this demand of Dolyang Chanjang, a trend of offering basketful rice along with pot of rice beer to priest every year after harvesting begin which is known as *Tani Enko* – trend of gift presentation in traditional Apatani society. This custom of offering is still practiced among Apatanis and particular type of basket is used for custom to be carried out and the basket used for this purpose is designed in special and specific ways and it is known as *Pachu-Yagii* – a basket used to present rice as gift. According to folktales of Dolyang Chanjang, she was the protector of Abotani so she is the protector of humankind. She helped Abotani in times of distress, protected him from malevolent spirits and rendered him her help whenever he needed.

It is believed that knowledge and wisdom has its origin from woman. *Dolyang – Chanjang* is the one who has pioneered priesthood. She is known as the sister of *Abotani* –the forefather of the Apatanis. Every form of knowledge and wisdom has originated from her and she is the symbol of wisdom, wit and compassion. She is considered as first priest of the Apatani society and it is believed that she herself decided to abandon the practice of priesthood as she felt really uncomfortable to climb *lapang* (religious altar) while menstruating. This decision of *Chanjang* shifted the responsibility of performing priesthood to her brother *Abotani* –the forefather of the Apatani tribe. It is also believed that her love for brother *Abotani* is one of the reasons to cause her abandon the priesthood. The folktale of *Chanjang* represents women as pioneer of wisdom and also as a compassionate sister capable of love and sacrifice. Many times in practical life of

Apatani women folk she is told to be brainy like *Chanjang* who is compassionate and is capable of sacrifice for the good of her near and dear ones.

3.4.3: *Ami Dori*:

The folktale of *Ami Dori* is derived from *Yorda-Ayu* which is a part of *miji* (ritual chanting) which is hardly told in isolation. Usually *Yorda-Ayu* is chanted during Murung festival in the month of January.

Ami Dori was passive, submissive and beautiful girl living with her parents, brother and sister-in-law. She was not just beautiful but was virtuous and kind who loved everyone and was equally loved by everyone. She was perfect in everything and because of these qualities she was considered to be the sister of the ancestral spirit called *Iipyo ui*. Her perfection was the cause of her suffering and misfortune as her sister-in-law secretly grew jealous of her beauty and popularity and started defaming her character with alleged sexual relationship with two men namely *Biilyi Tado* and *Biime Taha*. Her sister-in-law's allegation on *Ami Dori* was believed by her brother and consequently her brother also started speaking ill of his sister. When her own brother started pointing finger at her chastity and character, parents also started blaming her in the line of her sister-in-law and brother and believed what they say of *Ami dori*. When her own family spoke ill of her and her character, every other people started blaming *Ami Dori* for act which she has never committed. Following lines from *Yorda-Ayu* narrates how *Ami Dori* was persecuted by her own family members:

*Ami Dori bomi,
Mida sarma rampa, Mitan sarpyo lyimi,
Mida sarma rampa, Baro sarpyo lyimi,
Mida sarma rampa, Nyahii sarpyo lyimi.*

Translation:

Here is the tale of *Ami Dori*,
Before others could dare blame her, she was blamed by her own blood.
Before others could dare defame her, she was defamed by her brother.
Before others could dare defame her, she was defamed by her sister-in-law.
(Translator: Researcher)

Once she was praised and liked by everyone but now everyone despised her for fault which she has not committed. This made *Ami Dori* very sad and she felt terrible as her own family; father, mother and brother stood against her believing the lie fabricated by her sister-in-law. She thought when her own family is no longer her own than what is the point of staying together under one roof. So she decided to leave her parental home and left for forest to stay there. In forest, she adopted peach tree (*takung sanii*) as her mother and the *sangko* tree as her father. But coming and living into the forest also could not bring her solace and she constantly remembers how she was disgraced and how she was despised by everyone including her own family members. *Ami Dori* could not endure the pain and she speaks to spirit *Kolyung Pinii* and swear she did not have sex with that two men and tells the spirit that since her childhood she is been kind to everyone and never hurt anyone and never indulged in wrong, immoral activities.

After giving her testimony to spirit *Kolyung Pinii*, she tied a cane rope to peach tree and hung herself. *Ami Dori* died hanging herself on that peach tree which was adopted by her as mother. After her death, one of her *Aaku* (maternal uncle) reaches her parental home and claims that *Ami Dori* was too good to commit such sinful act and speaking ill of her as inappropriate. He condemned them for insulting and disgracing *Ami Dori* which took her life. He further condemned them for believing those evil words which their daughter-in-law and other said about *Ami Dori*. His inquiry unearth the facts that the men *Biilyi Tado* and *Biime Taha* were actually snakes who could transformed themselves to human forms. It came to light with *Aaku's* further inquiry that poor *Ami Dori* only played with them and did nothing wrong and immoral.

Immensely saddened her maternal uncle addresses and speaks to the spirit of *Ami Dori* and tells her that he knows she is innocent and pure; that her character is clean and blameless. He tells the spirit that they will conduct her funeral by burying her and she must show the world that she was innocent and was always abide by morals of the society. They buried her dead body and next morning visited the grave where everyone was surprised to see a sapling growing out of her grave. On second morning, it had grown to a mini tree and on third day, a full-grown tree stood over her grave with multiple branches hanging with costly beads. These beads were red, white, green, yellow and blue all dangling over the branches. *Ami Dori* proved the world that she was pious and innocent by taking her life and getting back has tree which bore costly beads of all

colours. This tree were later called *Dori sanii* (Dori tree) or *Tassang sanii* (Necklace tree) as it bore all types of beads used for making necklace in Apatani society. The tree had *domin, doku, rite, sampyu, santer, sampo, ahing paming, ami tassang, tado tassang* and *lebu*.

The tree over her grave proved her innocence and everyone regretted for blaming and disgracing Ami Dori for false accusation which was created by her sister-in-law and family. She had to die to prove herself and to bring out the truth before world. Such is the tale of Ami Dori depicting women to be submissive and mute; where woman is compelled to die to bring out the truth and where one woman is proved false by another woman. The motif of ill mental and cruel sister-in-law is chiefly shown in this story. Besides, one very important motif is the transformation of Ami Dori's dead body to an extra-ordinary tree laden with costly beads. Stuart Blackburn (2008) in *Himalayan Tribal Tales: Oral Tradition and Culture in the Apatani Valley*, calls the story of Ami Dori as *The Magic tree* and opines extraordinary trees as a popular motif in oral stories throughout the world and considers a bead or necklace bearing tree as rare which is one of the chief motifs of the Ami Dori tale (p-91).

3.4.4 Kokii Yamu:

In Apatani oral tradition, there is another story of suffering meted out by a young girl with the hand of her family. Her name was *Kokii Yamu* who was deserted by her brother namely *Tupii Talyang* and sister-in-law namely *Tupii Yager*. Her parents died when she was only eight or nine years of age and she was kept like a servant by her brother and sister-in-law to work in the fields. She lived in a small *Piinyi* (hut) in a field called *Kokii* which was far away from village. There she worked alone day and night and was very sad. Her real name was *Tupii Yamu* but she is basically known as *Kokii Yamii* because she stayed confined to *Kokii* field for very long time working whole day, whole night and throughout the years from her childhood till she grow up to be a young beautiful woman.

She remained confined to that hut until one day she was noticed by a young man named *Neha Tayu* who was on his way to Bula village from Hong village. He was greatly attracted by her unparalleled beauty and instantly fell in love with *Kokii Yamu* and proposes to marry her which she accepts heartily as he too was a handsome looking man.

That same day they got married and went to Hong village and lived together. Although *Neha Tayu* was poor man without field of his own and with small house, they were very happy together and could raise three children. They lived real poverty stricken life where both husband and wife had to work as daily wage laborers in others field. One day when *Neha Tayu* was out for *morey* (jungle), *Koku Yamu* thinks of visiting her brother and sister-in-law as that same day her brother was hosting *Murung* feast. She expects to get something on that big and auspicious day and leaves home promising her children to bring back home meat for them.

When she reaches her brother's house, she saw eight mithuns tied up at *Lapang* (religious platform) for sacrifice. Finding her as one of the visitors, her sister-in-law immediately calls her and asked her to pick a louse from her hair. *Kokii Yami* was surprised to see her sister-in-law's attitude towards her and asked her how she could demand so as they were celebrating *Murung* that day. Her sister-in-law scolded her for being lazy and unhelpful. *Kokii Yamu* took a deep sigh and searched for lice; she removed as much as she could find and afterwards, her sister-in-law put on to ceremonial dress and went out carry out the ritual of smearing rice powder to those tied Mithuns meant for sacrifice. But before leaving for ritual ceremony she made sure her lice were all taken out by checking it and she found one which made her really very angry and cursed *Kokii Yamii* with bitterest words. After finishing her part of ritual, sister-in-law comes back and insults *Kokii Yamu* by calling her lazy and evil. She even snatched back the handful of rice she had given her. Thus she leaves her brother's house empty stomach and empty handed.

Kokii Yamu after leaving her brother's house goes to visit one of her cousin's house where she explains how she was treated at her brother's grand *Murung* feast. She was hungry so asked for little rice which was heartily served by her cousin. Those were days when edibles were not available so she was very happy with that little rice given to her by her cousin. As soon as she took one morsel, she remembers her crying children whom she consoled with her promise to bring back home some meat from their maternal uncle's feast. As there was no meat, so she took handful of rice which she put it to bamboo tube and left for home. She was sad and her mind was filled with self pity. All her way she was thinking of her miserable life, poverty and her crying children. Suddenly she saw a snake that she killed with a stick, cut off its head and buried it and

took the body back home where she had nothing to feed her starving children. As soon as she reaches the house, her children asked what she brought from uncle's house and where the meat was, to which she answers that one bad man on the way had snatched the meat from her and run off. She takes out the snake and tells children not to worry as she will be boiling it for them to eat. She lit the fire and put on the pot with snake to cook and went to porch to weave. While weaving, an old woman asked her to give little firewood to which Kokii Yamu tells her to go inside and take the firewood on her own and she kept on weaving. When she realized that old woman is going inside her house more than once to get firewood she grew restless and herself goes inside to check what the matter is. She was speechless and surprised to see large heap of expensive *Lebu* beads lying all over the hearth. It was everywhere and then she realized that old woman must be collecting these *lebus*. She checks the pot which was empty and then she realized that snake had turned into beads and spilled out of pot. She collects all the beads in a basket and hides it away.

When her husband *Neha Tayu* returns home from *morey* (jungle) with a hunted *Siire* (wild boar) with him, she was overjoyed and tells everything happened to her husband to which Neha Tayu tells her that spirits must have moved by their suffering and sent that snake which has converted into an expensive *lebu* beads. After few days later, one big Mithun appears which was without owner and every other men, rich and poor tries to own that Mithun by calling him and by luring him with *Aalo* (salt) and *yatang* (rice powder). Rich men in their expensive attire offered rice powder and salt in majestic brass plates but Mithun did not touch them and did not move near them. When poor Neha Tayu offered rice powder from old and cracked bamboo tube to Mithun; it was accepted and to everyone's surprise Mithuns walked along with Neha Tayu. This Mithun was a spirit Mithun which was sent by spirits. Kokii Yamu and Neha Tayu performed and consulted omen and decides to return the Mithun back to spirit and let the Mithun go from where he originated. After returning the spirit Mithun to spirit; both lived happy and prosperous life forever.

Here in this folktale, Kokii Yamu suffers and endures misfortune and misconduct at the hand of her brother and sister-in-law all her life until her life changes with her marriage with a young handsome man and snake turning into an expensive *lebu* beads and coming of spirit Mithun which brings fortune to her husband and their life changes all together

thereafter. Stuart Blackburn compares the story of Kokii Yamu with Cinderella story and calls the story of Kokii Yamu as an Apatani telling of an international folktale and put it to the cluster of international tales called ‘the innocent persecuted heroine’. According to him, the Apatani tale bears more than a casual resemblance to the world’s best known folktale. Although Kokii Yamu was not maltreated by her stepmother but that role is amply filled by her sister-in-law. The second resemblance is the derivation of the heroine’s name after the field (*kokii*) as in case of Cinderella; the cinders (or *aschen*) in Europe. Thirdly, Kokii Yamu is kept as a servant, until her true beauty is recognized by the hero who marries her (ibid, 222).

This particular tale glorifies women’s passivity and her submissive nature and carries close similarities to what Simone De Beauvoir had opined on some international folktales and portrayal of its heroines. Kokii Yamu instead of fighting for justice waits until she is rescued by hero Neha Tayu. According to Simone De Beauvoir (2011) in *The Second Sex*, tales like Cinderella, Snow-white and Sleeping Beauty, still encourages the young girl to expect fortune and happiness from some Prince Charming rather than to attempt by herself their difficult and uncertain conquest (p-158).

3.4.5 Biinyii-Biine:

The story of two sisters namely *Biinyi* and *Biine* is loaded with motif of supernatural where man eater transformed himself to thread ball, where man transforms to snake and again as man and where insects speaks. Supernatural transformation of human into objects and into other being is the chief motif of the tale. The sisters are personification of good and evil where elder sister *Biinyi* always does good and younger sister *Biine* is shown as cunning, evil and as someone who always plots for fulfillment of her desires. This story was narrated by Tasso Hailyang during researcher’s field work. He narrated that once there lived in Apatani plateau two sisters namely *Bunyii* and *Biine*. One day a monstrous cannibal known as *Halyang Mikhii* (Men eater) came to their village. Unfortunately the house of the sisters was chosen by monster and he roar making chaotic noises and asks them to open the door for him. Both the sisters were horrified and tried to save their dear life by making an excuses and pretended to be busy. They told *Halyang Mikhii* that they are busy feeding *Lyipo Tagya* (name of the pig) and getting bushes for *Subu* (Mithun). *Halyang Mikhii* kept on shouting and wanted two sisters to open the door for him. This time, again *Biinyi* and *Biine* did not open the door pretending to be busy

feeding their fowls. Tired of roaring outside repeatedly, he transformed himself to a seller lady and asked sisters to open the doors for her as she is carrying best of gingers to sell. And she said, “*Biinyi-Biine Nyi Taki Kepyung Bagii Doke Aarko Pyako Tope Kelyung*”, meaning; Dear Biinyi-Biine I am carrying the best of gingers please open the door. At this time also he failed to make both the sisters open the door for him. Angrily, he transformed himself into the thread ball and got into the house through the hole beneath the fire place.

Once inside the house, the thread ball transformed back to *Halyang Mikhii* and carried away two sisters on his shoulder. He took them to his place and put both *Biinyi* and *Biine* into a big pot, lit a fire to cook and eat them. He was very happy to get such a nice young girl for his meal and wanted to eat them at earliest. Now to save themselves and to escape death, clever *Biinyi* made bubbling sound of water convincing monster that they are ready to be eaten and enjoyed. *Halyang Mikhii* fully convinced and left the house to fetch a plate from his barn (grainery). Meanwhile, both *Biinyi* and *Biine* came out of the hot pot and put *Halyang Mikhii's* baby into the pot and ran for their dear life. After having returned from the barn he realizes that his baby is being cooked in the pot and he bitterly wept in grief and anger. To revenge *Biinyi* and *Biine* he chased them carrying his *Elyo* (Sword) for several days but he could not catch them. After running for several days both sister was exhausted and tired. They climbed the tree to rest and hide themselves from *Halyang Mikhii*.

Unfortunately he found them out and to catch hold of them he uses some magical words to make tree fall by his side. He wishes tree to fall downside the mountain. *Biinyi* prayed too to make tree fall on the opposite direction and wished for upside. At last the tree fall upside the mountain and both sisters happily flees towards their village. On the way they saw *Alyo Konso* (Stick insect) working in the farm. They run towards her and asked her to help them out and inform that they are being chased by *Halyang Mikhii*. After listening to their sorry tale, the stick insect happily consented to render her help to them. She hides *Biinyi* and *Biine* under the earth. She dug out a large hole for their hiding place and put them under the hole and covered them up with soil. *Halyang miikhii* reached her farm land and inquire stick insect their whereabouts but insect firmly refused any knowledge regarding *Biinyii* and *Biine*. She told monster that she did not see anyone passing by. *Halyang miikhii* returns dejected and distressed and stick insect calls out

Biinyi and Biine when they are out of danger. Sisters thanked stick insect and continued their journey.

After a few miles they found one peach tree full of big and luscious fruits. The tree was owned by a snake so it is known as *Tabu Takung Sanii* (snakes peach tree) they climbed up the tree to pluck the fruits and to quench their hunger. Suddenly a voice came from behind - who are you stealing the snakes peach fruit? It was the voice of the snake's mother. After few conversations she tells both the sister that one who eat the fruits have to marry her son. She further tells that the ripe one is to be eaten by one who would become his son's bride. But in her absence Biine eats all the ripe peaches. After sometimes mother snake returns and enquires to find out the one who ate ripe peaches. Biine tells mother snake that whole of the ripe peaches were taken by Biinyi. She lied in fear of marrying the snake. Thus by accident the innocent Biinyi was chosen to be Tabu's (snake) wife and she married snake's son and they lived a happy life.

Biinyi's husband had a secret he lived in human form as a handsome man during day time and shed his skin on a bamboo rack built at the entrance of porch called *Pamang*. During night time he turns back to snake form and use to sleep with Biinyi rounding his tail on her body. Both Tabu and Biinyi were happy and loved each other very much. Their happy life made Biine uncomfortable and seeing their happiness she grew jealous of them as she was left all alone. So she decides to get rid of Biinyi and goes to her place to trap her according to her plan.

After having reached her place she ask Biinyi to go together to fetch water from the nearly well. At the well they looked at each other's image in the water and Biine asked sister Biinyi to allow her to wear her dress for a while. Biine says that she always wanted to try her beautiful dress so she pleads to let her wear it for a while. Biinyi took off her clothes and gave Biine to wear it. Afterwards Biine asked for necklace and then for bangles. Biinyi gave all her belonging to Biine including earning called *yaru lachang*. In Biinyi's dress and ornaments she looked exactly like her. Then Biine requested her sister to look at her image in the well and as Biinyi bent to look at her image in the well, Biine pushed her into the well from behind.

After getting rid of Biinyi, she took her place at home and prepares meal for her snake husband. When the husband returns from the forest in the evening, she stepped forward

to serve him meal, a voice came- do not touch my rice pot chirri...chirri..., it was Biinyi who had came in the form of bird. After sometime when Biine moved to take out meat from pot, a voice came to them again – do not touch my meat chirri...chirri... this voice disturbed her a lot but she did not say anything for the fear of losing her fake identity.

Days passed by, Biine lived happily with the snake husband, but he grew a little suspicious. Though her appearance was exactly like Biinyi but the changes in her activities let him to doubt his wife. One day snake shed his skin on the *pamang* (rack on porch) and went to the forest. Biine took his skin and burnt it, as she wanted her husband to be in human form forever. Her husband, who was in the forest also burnt and transformed back into his original snake form and he became snake forever and could never transform back into human form.

In Apatani society, the story of Biinyi and Biine constitutes children's story with interesting plot, characters and dialogues. It is evident from the story of Biinyi and Biine that imagination and element of supernaturalism ruled even in the folktales. Character of Hailyang Mikhii is a wonderful creation with every features endowed to bring feeling of horror even in the mind of mature reader. Incidents are all convincing and beautifully narrated. The story of Biinyi and Biine also reflect creativity of Apatani folk – narratives.

Love, conspiracy and Jealousy are three chief motifs of the Biinyi – Biine story. They are sisters, Biinyi is elder and Biine is younger. They love each other, fall in love with same persons at different point of time, get separated and again meet new adventure. In short this series of stories can be best termed as “fortunes and misfortunes of Biinyi and Biine”. The story is loaded with supernatural incidents - stick insect speaking and working, using magical word to make tree fall in their respective sides, human form of the snake, Hailyang Mikhii's act of transforming himself to a thread ball, Biinyi's return in the form of bird etc. the narrative is full of life and creativity. Biine's jealousy to her sister further led the story to a new height. Though she tells herself she cannot tolerate loneliness anymore. The listener can easily make out that she is inwardly jealous of Biinyi. Otherwise there is no point in conspiring and killing one's own sister mercilessly pushing into the well. This also tells that folk – narrative has its own grandeur and ways to depict and portray jealousy between woman. The theme of jealousy is beautifully portrayed through the episode of Biine's killing her sister Biinyi. . The story of Biinyi

and Biine can be interpreted as a moral allegory. Outwardly it is story meant for children with horrible monster and interesting incidents but it has another meaning underneath which shows victory of good over bad.

Biinyi-Biine story can be termed as moral allegory as it preaches moral to be good and true. It is didactic in nature and during ancient times children were taught to be wise and good only through telling stories. They learnt ways of life mostly through narratives; not only these narratives reveals social, cultural and religious identities of the tribe. It is such an aspect of culture which explains people's socio-cultural systems, beliefs, values and customs and traditions. Like any other tribal society, the Apatanis have a rich folk narrative in the field of oral tradition.

3.4.6 *Tabu Yapi:*

Stupidity of a person in Apatani traditional society is well explained with the character of *Tabu Yapi*, the most stupid woman ever appears in Apatani oral tradition. The folktale of *Tabu Yapi* and her stupid acts has also been collected by Stuart Blackburn and he titled her tale as *A Stupid Wife: Tabu Yapi* (ibid, 105). The story of stupid *Tabu yapi* plays an important role in Apatani society and it is a part of everyday conversation wherein person tells another person not be stupid and foolish like *Tabu Yapi*. In many situation when children commits silly mistakes and behave inappropriate and lazy, then parents scolds them and tell them to stop behaving like *Tabu Yapi*. The folktale of *Tabu yapi* is in episodes and each episode is linked with one of her stupid deeds.

This folktale was narrated by Kime Oniya, a woman of fifty seven years old from Hija village. She is researcher's mother and all her childhood days till she grew up to young lady, she had been listening to this story of *Tabu Yapi*. Many a times she had to endure the pain of comparison made between herself and *Tabu yapi* for being lazy. This woman named *Tabu Yapi* was wife of *Talo Dolyang* who was a hardworking man unlike his wife. Once her husband killed *Siire* (wild boar) in the forest and when he reached home with that hunted wild boar, *Tabu Yabi* went around all her neighbours and enquires whether their pigs are doing fine or it is missing as her husband seems to have killed one. There is another episode where her husband says that he will buy and bring home some cottons so she could weave herself a set of new skirt and blouse. The moment her husband goes out, she takes off her blouse and skirt and dispose it by burning it and

herself sat inside *Yagii* (bamboo made basket) to hide her naked body and waits for her husband to bring home cottons so that she weaves herself new skirt and blouse. When one of her neighbours came and asked her what she is doing inside basket and she tells cheerfully that she is waiting for her husband who will be bringing cottons for her to weave new blouse and skirt and that she has burnt her old blouse and skirt as don't need it anymore. There is another incident where her husband tells her to pluck some *Paachu koyu hamang* (local vegetable) for meal and thick headed Tabu Yapi instead of plucking vegetables plucks out *Paachu koyu*, anus of chicken which is also called *Paachu koyu* in Apatani and cooks it for meal. *Paachu* means chicken and *koyu* means anus in Apatani. It is also a name of vegetable in Apatani which Tabu Yapi's husband tells her to pluck for meal but she actually extracts anus of chicken.

In this chapter, we get to know the role of women and her traditional value in Apatani society through oral tradition. Gender role depiction which is inherently crafted in lullaby, folksong and folktales help in exploring the potential role of women as creator, harbinger of prosperity and happiness and it also reflects the basic duties earmarked to women. Lullaby portrays the role of women as weaver, as cultivator, as cook and as care taker of her home and hearth while the role of male is depicted as hunter who could climb the highest mountain and as a mighty swimmer who could cross the mighty *kuru-kiime* river. Folksongs also help in understanding the gender role in Apatani society. *Hiirii* song for instance is an example where group of young men calls themselves as *Gyapo Siire* (group of bear) and flocks of birds which aptly shows the kind of position and freedom they enjoys in society. They sing and dance, they demand and eat and finally blesses the couple and takes leave. On other side *Daminda* song depicts women as cultivator of land. In entire song, women sing and dance to learn the art of cultivation, pray for bumper harvest and invites priest to perform necessary *Dree* rites to ensure healthy crops. *Papin-Pame* song with multiple motifs exposes patriarchal influence over major decision making at different stage of life. The song also exposes the association of standard traits to women folk like techniques of weaving and art of grooming oneself as essential criteria for being considered as accomplished and ideal for marriage. Multiple divorce and infidelity of the heroes *Loder* and *Byai* definitely reflects the patriarchal influence and values of the traditional Apatani society. The quest of sisters *Dumi* and *Yami* for weaving perfect eye-mouth (*Aami-Agung*) confirms how important it is for women to know the art of weaving with perfection accompanied by perfect designs.

The role of women as perfect homemaker is aptly depicted in the story of *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* who brings with her all the seeds and elevates the status of *Abotani* by making him richest in universe with her hard work. *Diilyang Diibu's* tale also reflects other side of the men. It was she who brought success, happiness and prosperity in *Abotani's* life but in return she was only awarded ingratitude and betrayal. This also shows the trait of polygamy in *Apatani* society. *Abotani's* marriage and love for *Tiinii Rungya* also reflects his greed for wealth and success. He marries *Tiinii Runya* because he thought she will bring more prosperity and happiness. His greed led him to downfall and he suffered poverty afterwards. In other word, *Abotani's* desire for more wealth, status and happiness is a personification of every man's desire for same in patriarchal *Apatani* society. On the other hand *Tiinii Rungya* represents venomous side of women. She enticed *Abotani* knowing his marital status and with false promises. In the folktale of *Abotani* and *Diilyang Diibu*, characters of the two chief female figure can be rightly called as 'vice' represented by *Tiinii Rungya* and 'virtue' represented by *Diilyang Diibu*. Though present day *Apatani* society does not have full fledged priestess but we get to know from this section of folklife study that it was *Dolyang Chanjang* who begins the priesthood to heal the disease and ailments of her people. But she gave up this profession of priesthood because of the physical difference between male and female. Tattooing of face, piercing of nose and ears also had a purpose more important than simply to look beautiful and it would be inappropriate to say *Apatani* women adopted this art to enhance their beauty. The myth of *Ami-Niido-biinyii* narrates the reason behind adopting this art form by *Apatani* women; it says that *Apatani* women tattooed her face, wore earplugs and nose plugs to become fertile, to have lots of children, to have lots of poultries and cattle to feed her family. So it would not be wrong to say that the body of women played an important role in controlling economy of her family in particular and society in general. Thus, it was women who brought food and prosperity in *Apatani* society, it was women again who brought knowledge and wisdom, poultries and cattle. This indicates that women during those days occupied important roles as homemaker and the wealth and wellbeing of her counterpart were heavily dependent on her capacity and hard work.

Apart from tales where women are depicted as harbinger of food and prosperity, knowledge and wisdom. In some of the tales women are also depicted as passive sufferer who endures pain without being rebellious. The folktales of *Ami Dori* and *Kokii Yamu* depict women as a passive sufferer who suffers at the hand of their respective family

members, especially from their brothers and sister-in-laws. *Kokii Yamu* is abandoned to the far off fields only to work for her brother and sister-in-law whereas *Ami Dori* is defamed by her sister-in-law and brother which led to her suicide. She suffered because she was too beautiful and perfect and had to die to prove her innocence and righteousness. *Kokii Yamu* on other hand lives happily ever after she was rescued and married by hero *Neha Tayu* and her fortune also changes after supernatural transformation of snake to costly *lebu* beads. Both wait for good to happen with them without fighting for their rights and without asserting their righteousness.

The oral tradition of the Apatanis have female work or task oriented songs and narratives where women are portrayed playing different roles which is specifically defined as ideal and non-ideal for *Tanii-Nyimii* (Apatani women). Few deceitful women like *Tiinii Rungya* and *Biine* can be seen personifying vice, evil, greed and lustfulness but researcher could not find any female figure that is highly rebellious or fought any battle against misdeeds, maltreatment and injustice. Most of the females that feature in Apatani oral tradition are compassionate, sacrificing and enduring. In oral tradition, it can be clearly seen that women though enjoyed and occupied important roles and position in society but her place is always subordinate to her counterpart. Her action is always determined by consequences which might befall to her family and counterpart, so she always act on terms of bringing only good to her family and her counterpart irrespective of her choices and desires. Thus, it can be concluded saying that Apatani women in traditional society enjoyed very important role to play but she is always under the norms and influence of patriarchal society and she does everything as per the standard norms of dos and donts exist which are set by society. Thus, she had been always overburdened with her duty as a homemaker and as a bread earner by working tirelessly in the fields throughout the year irrespective of weather alongside fulfilling different social responsibilities in everyday life.

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CHAPTER-IV

ROLE OF WOMEN WITH REFERENCE TO SOCIAL FOLK CUSTOMS OF THE APATANIS

4.1 Social Folk Customs:

Social Folk Custom is one of the most important and broad sector of folklore and folklife studies. This section of study mainly focuses on the community observances of the people rather than the individual skills and performance. According to Dorson (1972) in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, “Here the emphasis is on group interaction rather than on individual skills and performances” (p-3). Jawaharlal Handoo (2000) in *Theoretical Essays in Indian Folklore* writes “Investigations in this area are more centred around the family and community observances of the people living in the villages, tribal belts and even the industrial areas of the Indian cities. Of particular importance are the rites de passage connected with birth, initiation, marriage, death and similar rites” (p-17). Therefore, this area of study generally refers to the different social customs and ritualistic observances observed and performed during the time of birth, puberty, marriage and death by the family in particular and community in general which comes under one umbrella term called rites de passage. The rituals and customs associated with festivals, indigenous worship, agricultural and forest activities are included under the ambit of this sector of folklore study. There are numerous customs and ritualistic practices being observed by community for the sake of rain, healthy crops, bumper harvest, warding off the disease causing spirits and elements from the village and for warding off natural calamities such as floods, famines, etc constitute social folk customs practiced by community or tribe. These customs are deeply rooted in folk belief system which is an outcome of community process and participation. This area of folklore and folklife study provides detailed picture and information on folk customary practices and people’s relationship with it. Thus, society of any community can be seen and understand rightfully with the study and analysis of their social folk customs.

In this section of folklore and folklife study, researcher have made an attempt to understand and situate the role of women in traditional Apatani society with reference to social folk customs of the Apatanis by analyzing the potential role of women by understanding women’s participation in customary practices of the Apatanis.

4.2 Rites of Passage:

A *rite of passage* is a ritualistic event basically connected with person's birth, initiation, marriage, death and similar rites and thereby marking ones transitional phase from birth to death. These social custom and ritualistic observances are performed at the time of birth, puberty, marriage and death by the family members involving huge participation of other clan/village members. The Apatanis have highly systematized and elaborate set of rituals especially connected to birth rites which begin as soon as woman conceives child. There are numerous set of rituals connected to marriage and death as well but there isn't any rituals related to puberty as such being observed by Apatanis. During ancient periods, tattooing was done which marked puberty and adolescence among both male and female members but there are no specific rites and rituals as such which are performed in relation to puberty.

4.2.1 *Iinga Bunii and Niipo Aping (Birth Rites):*

The Apatanis performs elaborate set of rituals in relation to child birth. Child birth is always taken as blessing and therefore it is welcomed with rituals and feasting. Birth rituals starts as soon as woman conceives. The first rite which is performed is called *Ago Pilya*. This rite is especially carried out for the wellbeing of both pregnant mother and baby in her womb. This rite ensures healthy baby, safe delivery and also reveals gender of an unborn baby. This rite is performed preferably by clan priest (*Nyibu*) of the community which involves sacrifice of chicken. After chanting hymns and sacrificing the sacrificial Chicken, the Chicken liver is extracted carefully with great care to avoid any kind of damage. The chicken liver is examined by learned and experienced elderly person from the community who possess the spiritual knowledge of reading and understanding chicken liver by seeing the quality and texture of the liver. Nature of child delivery as whether it will be smooth or tough can be known by seeing the chicken liver.

Apatanis believes in dreams and dreams during pregnancy are counted very important as it signify or foretell the impending situation and also some has significant relation with the gender determination of an unborn baby. *Chantung* is performed when pregnant mother undergoes series of bad dreams as meeting dead person, bleeding, participating in ceremonies endowed with traditional attires etc. If pregnant mother or anyone close to her sees knives (*Nyatu*), Tibetan swords (*Chiri*), bow and arrows (*Appu-Alyii*) and traditional bags (*Lecha-Lera*) then it is expected to welcome male child and if it is

utensils, rice grains, *Pinta-Liiha* (traditional bucket and basket curved out of gourd), traditional umbrella (*Yattii*), beads (*Tassang*) and bamboo basket (*Yagii*) etc then it is expected to welcome female baby. Another way of sex determination is done by observing foetal movements. If the foetal movement is dominant towards left side then baby boy is expected and if movement is dominant towards right side then baby is expected to be female. The most trusted source of sex determination is done by verifying chicken liver or by seeing egg omen which are performed by priest.

Traditionally, child is delivered at home in presence of elderly and experienced women from neighbourhood and close relatives but presence of expecting mother's mother is not considered auspicious and children and male members are not allowed as there is belief that their presence might cause delay in child delivery. Priest is immediately summoned to perform a ritual known as '*Ago Pilya*' which is usually performed for safe birthing of the child, safety of mother and for giving her strength to the expecting mother. Usually a hen is sacrificed for the safety of mother and child. When there is a problem in the process of delivering the baby then another set of ritual called *Chepa du* is performed to appease malevolent spirit *Igii*. It is believed that this malevolent spirit is the chief source of hindrance, therefore, a pair of poultry bird: male and female each is sacrificed and offered to malevolent spirit *Igii* to ward off the obstacles. The process of child delivery in traditional Apatani society takes place in home either in the corner of house or in traditional toilet (*Nekang*) where a rope is tightly tied to two horizontal poles which are hold by expecting mother during the process of delivery in a kneeling position. When baby is born, the umbilical cord is cut by an experienced woman whose hands are considered to be safe and hygienic; Apatanis calls such women with safe hand as *Ala Amin nii*. During ancient times, sharpen bamboos known as *Yabing* were used for cutting umbilical cord but with the advent of modernism, commercial blades were replaced by the common people of the Apatani plateau in birthing process. There is a specific way of cutting umbilical cord, the naval cord is tied into four different knots with a clean white thread and the cut is made on the second knot and as soon as cord is cut, an ash of local medicinal plant called *Tarko* is applied on cut to prevent any kind of infection. Along with the application of locally powdered medicine (ash of *Tarko* stick), few drops of locally brewed rice beer *O-Ala* is given to the new born baby in order to prevent infection in the tongue. After cutting of umbilical cord, the placenta and naval cord is disposed off beneath the rest room. Apatanis believes that if it is disposed of carelessly to

jungles or if it is buried then the normal growth of the child will be hindered and may face abnormalities in growth. Two wooden or bamboo sticks are placed in stairs intersecting each- other, dried leaves are placed in the middle of the intersecting point to prevent the entry of evil spirit into the house. Placing of these sticks in crossed position also impart the message to outsiders that the house is under quarantine for specific reasons, thereby hinting that persons who have attended funerals and who were a part of other unholy activities such as hunting, unnatural occurrences as accidental death, suicide and contagious illness were not to enter house. This belief is observed strictly for full ten days from the day child is born and it is known as *Pussung du*. During these days of quarantine, the newborn is given regular bath from the time of birth. During olden days, a specific pot made of clay were used for bathing baby which is known as *Nure Puchang* and a mug which is made out of long gourd called *Nure Yaju*. Now a days, different varieties of bucket, mug and tubs are used in place of traditional pot an mug. Some prefer plastic items, some aluminum and some prefers metallic utensils made of bronze and silver etc.

Parents name the baby as soon as baby is born to prevent the evil spirits from naming their newborn. It is generally believed in traditional Apatani society that if there is delay in naming of baby, then evil spirits name the babies which cause ill health and misfortune by affecting mental and physical health of the child. Therefore, there is a tradition of naming baby as soon as they are born though Apatanis does not follow any specific naming pattern and there is no specific ritual performed related to the name of a baby. Usually, newborn are named by the elderly member of the family or by parents themselves and mostly they prefer naming the child according to their choice. Sometimes, child is named after their dead grandfather, grandmother, close uncle and aunts but most of the time babies are named by parents where names are randomly decided according to their likes and choice.

The third day after the birth of child marks the starts of the tradition called '*Aping babidu*' and *Tiipya Khenii* by close relatives, friends and neighbours. Close maternal relations such as mother and sister-in-law of woman who give birth visits with best meat, bacon and local wine besides they bring expensive Tibetan bell and plate as gift for baby. Usually, Tibetan bells are given to male babies and plates to female. The tradition of giving *Tiipya*- a necklace made of black and yellow thread with two or three pieces of white traditional beads are of tremendous importance; it is blessing given to newborn.

Gifted of expensive items like *Maji* (Tibetan bell) and *Tallo* (Tibetan plate) are compulsory for the first born child in the family whereas it is not compulsory to repeat the gifting process with the later born child; It depends on the willingness and economic condition of the relative to carry out the process for later born child.

There are certain restrictions from the day child are born which is to be followed by both mother and father of new born. The mother of the child is given complete rest for ten days and she is not allowed to carry out any household activities as cooking and cleaning. There are certain taboos attached to this period of restrictions for both mother and father of the new born starting from the day mother conceives:

1. It is believed that if mother does any household chores especially cooking and serving to herself then child might have habit of stealing. Therefore, during this period other female members of the family such as sister-in-law or sister of lactating mother carry out the household chores.
2. The father of expected child should not carry out any hunting and repairing activities as there is belief that it might cause black spot over the body of expecting child and it might also led to improper growth and obstacles during child delivery.
3. Weaving should be avoided by expecting mother as it will lead to unusual patterns over body of expected child once he/she is born. Also father should avoid killing insects, rodents, reptiles etc as it might imbibe the character or nature of these animals in baby after birth.
4. Parent of expecting child should not kill Snakes, if it is not observed then the movement of child's tongue will be that of Snake.
5. Parent of expecting child should not attend funerals as it will cause eye defect and expecting baby might born with squint eye.
6. The father of expecting baby is advised to avoid butchering and slaughtering till baby is born and taboo period gets over. He should also avoid Pig rearing as there is belief if these activities are not avoided then baby might born with defective lips as cleft lips.

7. Plastic items, metals and iron rods should not be heated or burned in the hearth of the house as it will cause ugly red marks and spots over the body of expecting child.
8. The washed clothes of the baby is not dried outside as Apatanis believes that in every piece and in every part of cloths do exist baby's soul which might catch the eye of evil spirits causing harm to baby.
9. Expecting parents should not drink water from unknown ponds, well, lakes and rivers as it would harm the health of the child.
10. The utensils used for bathing or cleaning baby should not be used for any other activities because it is considered inappropriate by the Apatanis.

These restrictions are followed meticulously till the child is born and taboo period gets over. The ninth day after birth of a baby begins the end of restrictions and taboos attached with those restrictions. On ninth day, hair cutting of baby takes place which is known as *denge renii* and lids of every utensils and containers are kept open as there is a belief that if these are kept closed then child might experience respiratory related issues in future. This tradition of lifting of lid is known as *Hiinyo Du*. The tenth day marks total ending of all restrictions related to child birth rites and wooden or bamboo poles tied intersecting each other on stairs are removed. From eleventh day both parent and newborn are allowed to move out and they can participate in social activities.

The birthday feast which is called *Niipo Aping* is an important ceremony observed by parents of new born which is traditionally hoisted in the same day or next day of birth. It is immediately done to symbolize that the newborn child is a part of human world which will fail evil spirits from claiming child to be theirs. The birthday feast can be delayed in case baby is sick and a priest continues to appease relevant spirits for recovery of the health of baby. These days with advent of education and modernity, this feast is arranged according to the feasibility of time and availability of resources by parents as huge numbers of people are invited. The *Niipo Aping* have as many as 400 to 500 guests as all distant relatives are also invited. The celebration and conduction of this ceremony is mandatory for every child.

4.2.2 Marriage System:

Marriage is seen as sacred institution by the Apatanis which involves elaborate set of rites and rituals. Generally, three types of marriage systems are prevalent in Apatani society:

1. Arranged Marriage
2. Love Marriage
3. Force Marriage or Marriage by capture

Monogamy is the general practice of the Apatanis but polygamy is also prevalent though it is lesser in numbers. Earlier, the child marriage system was prevalent but it has totally vanished with education and law coming into the Apatani plateau. The marriage between two socially stratified endogamous stratification known as *Gyuth* and *Gyuchi*, patrician and plebeian are strictly prohibited from early time. The violators of the prohibition are restricted from entering holy alter known as *Myoko Yugiang* during *Myoko* ceremony. The exogamous marriages are also not welcomed in society and it is highly criticized. Polyandry is totally absent and is not seen amongst Apatanis. The marriage among consanguineous and close kinsmen and kinswomen are prohibited till the passing of fifth to sixth generation.

The first important event for the marriage proposal is called *Pahing Kodu* which is initiated by the groom's family. This ritual is carried out to see the feasibility of match between bride and groom with the help of chicken liver. The priest would hold the chick and chant appropriate hymns in the name of would be bride and sacrifice the chick in order to extract its liver. Priest along with elderly experts examines the different signs of chicken liver and if it speaks the future well being of the proposed couple, then the *pahing* (liver) is taken to the parents of the would be bride's house. The chicken liver is taken and shown to girl's family by a third person who is a close relative or friend of the boy and that person is called *Gyuntang*.

The similar procedure of seeing omen through chicken liver is carried out by girl's family if they agree the marriage proposal bring to them by *Gyuntang*. Marriage is consented if omen speaks of their welfare and prosperity. However, now a day, the consent of both

girl and boy are taken before finalization of marriage and *Pahing Kodu* rite has become lesser practiced as most of the couples opt for court marriage and church marriage etc.

The next ceremony followed is called *Mabo Inchi do*. *Mabo* means son-in-law and *inchi do* means coming to parents-in-law. This ceremony is conducted by girl's parents to mark social reorganization of the boy as their son-in-law. The party comprises of boy, his father and *Gyantang* (the third person) would go to the house of girl's parents on the scheduled date early in the morning. The groom's party is received at the house of bride's parents by the close relatives of the bride. Usually all the kinsmen of the girl are invited to this ceremony. After arrival, the first thing is the offering of traditionally brewed pure rice beer called *O Aala* to the groom by bride's mother. This offering is made only with *Yaju* (traditional mug curved out of gourd) and not with other utensil. The rice beer which is particularly prepared for this ritual is believed to be sacred and meant to be consumed by the groom. The process of offering *O Aala* (pure rice beer) is of great importance as this is counted as blessing given to groom for gaining strength and power of being blessed with healthy children. Traditional Apatani shawl namely *Pyaming pulye/ Mabo pulye* is also given to groom during this ceremony by bride's mother. Apart from gifting shawl and offering rice beer, the groom's party is treated in grandiose manner with best meat, rice and beer. In return, the groom brings with him a typical traditional sword known as *Ilyo Chirri* which is given to father of the bride. At present, cash is also given in lieu of sword as it is very difficult to find good one and it is highly expensive. *Mabo Inchi* ceremony is a gateway to social reorganization of marriage.

The next ceremony after *Mabo Inchi* is known as *Ari Paniing* which is a part of *Mabo Inchi* and carried out inclusively during performing this ritual. Although the meaning of *Ari* is price/cost and *paniing* means giving but this is not a system of bride price which is prevalent amongst the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Instead, this is an exchange of gifts/goods in the form of rice and bacon meat in lieu of number of mithuns given to girl's father by groom. The groom collects the paddy equivalent to the cost of Mithuns given to bride's father and therefore this is a ceremonial reciprocal exchange of gifts. At present, culture of giving cash in place of Mithuns by the groom are also practiced and in return he is given equal amount of paddy or more in the form of grain during the harvesting period where bridegroom collects paddy from his father-in-law's paddy field with his close relatives which is called *Riitu Piniing*. Apart from *Riitu Piniing* there is *Eli*

Baniing ceremony, in which the bridegroom is given paddy grain right from the granary of his father-in-law. In this ceremony, all the female members of bride's clan carry basket of grain from their granary and walks in long procession to groom's granary to accumulate it there. In *Rutii Piniing*, the bridegroom, his family members, close relatives and friends directly collects paddy from the fields of his in-laws whereas in *Eli Bani* ceremony the grains are carried in traditional basket from their respective granaries by close relatives of bride, her friends and other female members of her clan. Both *Eli Baniing* and *Riitu Piniing* are performed in the time of harvest, in the month of October as freshly harvested grains are taken to groom's granary. The girl's parent can also opt for *Mida Miiniing* ceremony which is simpler than formerly mentioned two and it is performed in the month of January and March. *Mida* is of two types: *Dachi mida* and *Datii Mida*. *Dachi Mida* is simpler and involves lesser expenditure whereas *Datii Mida* involves huge expenditure. The bride's parents fix the date and on appointed day, the groom accompanied by his relatives, clan members and friends arrives at his father-in-law's place. The *Mida* parties are offered food which is consists of rice, meat, *pikey-pila* (traditional hot edible) and rice beer. Both parties discusses the future of bride and bridegroom and blesses them abundantly with their words of wisdom, advises and good wishes. Both parties sit face to face and the mediators initiate the conversations prior to giving and receiving gifts. The gifts are in the form of *Yoh Aso* (bacon meat), ornaments such as *Maji* (Tibetan bell), *Tallo* (Gong), a pair of bottle gourd ladle, a pair of an oval shaped rice cake, a small sacred basket filled with undusted rice along with *Taki Yagii* (Traditional Apatani basket), where live ginger plant is planted on the top of the basket filled with paddy grain which is to be carried by bride to her husband's granary and some cash. The priest performing ritual on that day is specially given a dried squirrel and bacon meat. The mediators of the day whom Apatanis called *Gyuntang* are also given bacon meat. Each member of *Mida* party gets a piece of bacon meat, rice beer and beef as gift. After receiving gifts, the groom and *Mida* party returns home without looking back towards the bride's house as it is counted inauspicious and bridegroom is refrained from visiting any of his in-law's houses including his father-in-law and bride's brother. It is believed that if it is violated than all the blessings given will turn futile. Therefore, restrictions and taboos attached to this ceremony are meticulously observed by Apatanis.

As these marriage ceremonies demands lots of energy, time and money; some parents of girl with limited resources prefers to take little amount of money as Rs 7000 or lesser

amount in place of Mithuns from groom during the time of *Mabo Inchi*. This is called *Diipa nii* under which conducting *Riitu piniing*, *Eli baniing* or *Miida miiniing* is not mandatory. But if parents or close relatives of girl accepts *Ari paniing* which includes big mother Mithun or cash amount equivalent to that Mithun than conducting *Mida*, *Riitu* or *Eli* becomes obligatory and Mandatory. *Ari Paniing* is discussed during the time of *Mabo Inchi* and thus it becomes almost clear for both parties: bride and bridegrooms that whether there will be any one of the ceremonies to be performed or not in future. In exceptional situations, such as married couple failing to bear child, the parents of girl offer to conduct either *Mida*, *Riitu* or *Eli* even after not taking and accepting *Ari Paniing* during *Mabo Inchi*. *Ari Paniing* have three basic divisions and each part has specific role and share attached to it in giving and taking of gifts:

1. *Diirang*: This part and share of *Ari Paniing* is hold by girl's parent. Here the bridegroom gives his father-in-law a mother Mithun called *Sii Anii*. In return, he collects paddy from his father-in law's paddy field equivalent to the cost of mother Mithun.
2. *Lache*: The second part and share of *Ari paniing* called *Lache* is held by one of the close brothers of girl's father. Here bridegroom offers medium sized Mithun to girl's paternal uncle and in return he collects paddy from his paddy field.
3. *Ari Mechu*: The third part and share is held by two close persons from girl's side. Here the bridegroom gives a cow or equivalent amount of money to each and he collects the paddy from their fields in return.

The entire paddy brought is kept in groom's granary. A priest is called to perform a small religious rite known as "*Nesu Payi*" and spirits associated with granary are appeased with offering of seven eggs, a chicken and a big full grown hen. The bride sprinkles rice powder along with rice beer over the offerings and the blood of sacrificed chicken and hen are smeared on floor and in the entrance of the granary. This is done with the belief that it will prevent the stored grains from decaying and it is also believed that it prevents the stored grain from wasteful use.

4.2.3. Divorce System:

Marriage is a social affair in Apatani and so is divorce as it demands the involvement of entire clan members of both parties: husband and wife. Divorce in Apatani society is socially approved but it is not encouraged. Extra marital affairs, sterility of husband or

wife, misunderstandings and fights are most common reasons leading to marital separations. In Apatani, divorce is called *Miige Tater siinii*, here *Miige* means traditionally used bamboo pincers and *Tater siinii* means breaking up. The breaking of pincers is socially and ritually considered bad in Apatani society as it is used in the house for picking fire wood, coal and dirt from the hearth. Thus, *Miige* is considered sacred by Apatanis and it is not to be broken into pieces under any circumstances. According to Mihin Kaning, 2008, in *The Rising Culture of the Apatanis*, in early days, when there was intolerant and uncompromised quarrelling between husband and wife, either of them would take the *Miige* and would break them from the middle into two pieces. The one who breaks it would keep one piece and another piece was given to his/her partner. The breaking of *Miige* (pincer) by husband or wife symbolized divorce in early days in traditional Apatani society (25). The wife can divorce her husband and vice-versa. In such cases where wife initiates divorce; she is not given compensation called *Chi Binii*. When husband initiate divorce without valid reasons, he has to pay *Chi Binii* according to which husband has to pay one full grown big Mithun or four Mithun calves which is counted equal to one full grown Mithun to his wife as compensation followed by ten cows to her parents. *Chi Binii* is also called *Ensu Ari*. After separation, she is not entitled to claim any of husband's property irrespective of the facts as whether divorce was initiated by her or husband. The children are kept under the custody of husband and wife can get custody of her children only if they are minor and dependent on breastfeeding.

When husband indulge in the act of polygamy and oppresses wife beyond toleration, in such circumstance; she pursue her parents and brothers for interference. When such situation arises, then the kinsmen of woman abducts husband and confine him within the house of his in-laws till amicable solution is sorted out. The tradition of abducting son-in-law is known as *Mabo Lanii* in Apatani. Generally, he is released as soon as he accepts his misdeeds, repents wrong doings and swears in front of his in-laws not to indulge in such activities again. But he is awarded with severest punishment of physical torture in case of his adamant attitude and refusal to budge from his objectionable habits. During olden days, when the husband divorced his wife without valid reasons, then the clan-members abducted the husband and detained him for several days by putting wooden log on his legs. This process of putting wooden log in Apatani is known as *Taper Nii* and it is considered as most dreadful of all punishment which was earmarked especially for murderers and thieves. As this is the severest form of punishment,

Builyang (traditional village council) are called by clan members to solve and decide the dispute. The *Builyang* are called on appointed date fixed by clan members preferably by woman's parents and clan members. The mediators from both the parties also join the *Builyang* on appointed day to put forth their case and grievances. After careful analysis of dispute by considering all the points and views expressed by the mediators and other experts in such cases, the *Builyang* and mediators decides the case based on facts as per traditional customary law. After case gets solved, husband has to sacrifice one Mithun to feast his in-laws, mediators, members of *Builyang* and the clan members who were part of their dispute hearing and solving. The Mithun particularly sacrificed for this purpose is called *Kaji-Subu*.

In case of person indulging in polygamy, the ancestral properties called *Alo Khu* in Apatanis goes to the children of first wife, it can be inherited by children of second wife only if when first wife is without male child. However, newly acquired properties are shared between children of both first and second wife.

Though divorce is socially approved but this practice is not encouraged and divorcees are often looked down upon in traditional Apatani society. Once a person is divorced from their respective spouse they are considered as *Liige* which mean that person is sinned and is a sinner spiritually and ritually. Therefore, no one takes holy fire from their hearth especially during *Myoko* and *Murung* ceremonies.

Apatani approves widow remarriage but if she is survived by children then she is expected to remain in her death husband's house to look after the children and properties which later will be inherited by her sons. But she can still opt for remarriage and if she does marry then her children will stay back with her death husband's parents and relatives and consequently she loses her rights and custody of children from her previous marriage.

4.2.4. Death Rites:

It is believed that Apatanis were immortals and death as phenomena was not known to them in the past, it is evident from the death myth prevalent in Apatani plateau that spirit *Ditu Popi* established a norm according to which no one was subjected to death. He dispatched two of his messengers *Bupo Ruku* (monkey) and *Ami Piinii* (Porcupine) to inform all humans that they are free from death and remain immortal but his messengers

mistakenly informs the opposite that everyone has to die one day. The first person to die was *Nigi Tallo* and spirit *Ditu Popi* was extremely angry and saddened to learn of his demise and penalized both his messengers to death. The second person to die was *Prokhan*. It is believed that death started taking place after the death of *Nigi Tallo* and *Prokhan* and gradually death became an inseparable part of human's life cycle.

There is another set of belief prevalent amongst Apatanis that death is decided for each person before they were actually born. The spirits *Aato Pini* and *Aayo Tane* decides for each one regarding their birth to this world, gender, manners of death etc much before the conceiving of a child.

Apatanis categorized death into six groups:

- (a) *Yanu Siinii*: A death caused due to old age and ailments that are regarded as natural are categorized under this section.
- (b) *Tallii Siinii*: A death of male person caused by an accident or murder and which is regarded to be unnatural is called *Tallii Siinii*.
- (c) *Liibung Siinii*: A death of female person caused by an accident or murder and which is regarded as unnatural is called *Liibung Siinii*.
- (d) *Siijer Siinii*: A death caused by suicide especially by hanging oneself is called *Siijer Siinii*.
- (e) *Hiiki Siinii*: This form of death is considered to be the most dreadful among Apatanis. The death of pregnant mother before delivery and during delivery of her child, stillborn and death of newborn before completion of taboo period of ten days are counted as *Hiiki Siinii*. The soul of such death hovers around as a dread ghost called *Ligi*. It is believed that misfortunes and sufferings follow the close relatives of death if rituals related to such form of death are not properly followed.
- (f) *Siirung Siinii*: When death of a person is confirmed with dead body missing or without finding dead body, the family members and the close relatives construct an effigy of the missing dead body and dress it up the way dead person use to do when he/she was alive and funeral rites are performed assuming the effigy to be the real dead person. This type of death is called *Siirung Siinii* in Apatani.

All the different categories of death are subjected to different form of funeral ceremonies, rites, structure of grave and taboos. Among the Apatanis, burying of death body is adopted as a form of disposing the dead. When a person dies, male person of the family

shouts aloud to appraise the neighbours and relatives about the occurrence of death in the house. The act of shouting by male member of the family during such situation is called *Magu Nii* in Apatani. The message of death is conveyed to relatives within the village and to neighbouring villages which enable them in attending the funeral rites. All the liabilities of the dead should be claimed before the disposal of dead body along with relevant proof, document and evidence. The claim of liabilities after funeral is not considered as per customary law of the Apatani.

The dress of dead body is changed immediately after death and they are dressed in new dress. The body is covered with traditional Apatani shawl *Zeelang* and *Pyaming*. An elderly woman well versed in dirge is asked to sing funeral song which is called *Siima Khenii* in Apatani. The funeral song sing during funeral is of enormous importance as it narrates the good deeds of the dead person which helps him reach properly without getting lost on the way to *Neli Myoko*- the land of dead which is believed to be located beneath the earth. It is believed that all who dies natural death goes to *Neli Myoko*- the land of dead which is believed to be the replica of living world. But it is said that if the soul of dead is not properly led through singing *Siima Khenii* (dirge) then soul might lost its way to land of dead and they might return to the earthly world of living. Thus, an elderly lady well versed in dirge sings funeral song which counts his/her good deeds during his earthly life and also led the soul by telling him/her which way to go and which path to take. It is believed that one who sings funeral song play the role of guide to the soul of dead and in doing so her own soul called *Yallo* in Apatani moves along with the soul of dead. Therefore, if she sings incorrect then she herself may get lost along with the soul of dead and will never be able to return to human world as her soul will be captured by the dead soul eventually causing her death in the living world, so she must return to human world before disposal of dead body. Therefore, only those elderly women sing funeral song those who are well versed. Dirges are sung only by womenfolk and men singing funeral songs are rare and exceptional sight to be seen in traditional Apatani society.

The priest performs a small rite called *Dokkho Gyamu* by offering a cock/dog which enables soul of dead to live bold and courageous life in the land of dead. All the relatives and friends gather in front of corpse to mourn his/her death by presenting various items as clothes, traditional shawl, edibles like tobacco, rice beer etc which are believed to be taken along by departed soul in his/her journey to the land of death. Some of them also

brings the costly Tibetan sword, bell and plate for dead person and takes it back after the disposal of dead body as it is believed that only *Yallo* (soul) of those items are taken by soul of dead. But items like clothes and edibles are buried along with dead body and the items which are buried with dead body are called *Siigii Nanii* in Apatani which mean 'along with death', these items buried with death are believed to be use by dead person in his/her afterworld life; in *Neli Myoko*.

In case of death of an old man, uncle of the dead man, mostly maternal uncle, demands *Siigo Aari* which mean death price from the family members of dead person. Such demands are made in case of the dead of male members only and death price are not asked in case of females and children. The *Siigo Aari* (death price) could be machete, an ornament, piece of land or a dress of a dead man. In rare and exceptional cases, sometimes death price is asked in case of the death of an old woman also.

The burial place is dug at the place as desired by the dead before her/his death. The community owned burial ground is also owned by every village of Apatani plateau. However, it is the prerogative of the deceased family to bury the dead body at community burial ground or at individual owned bamboo grove or in kitchen garden. Apatanis burry dead body outside the village complex and they usually avoid burying dead within or in and around dwelling places. The task of digging grave is initially started by *Miira* (clan based traditionally acknowledged bounded labour) and later joined by other relatives of dead. The grave is dug three feet wide, five feet long and four feet deep as traditionally prescribed and followed since time immemorial.

On the day of the funeral, either Mithun or Cow is brought as per the financial status of the family member of the dead to the courtyard of the house and is sacrificed after religious incantation by the priest. It is believed that the soul of the sacrificed animal will be taken by dead person to the land of dead. The sacrificing of animal during funerals is called *Siima Palii Nii* in Apatani. Each part of sacrificed animal is distributed among the relatives of dead. The degree of elaboration of the funeral rites or animal sacrificed depends upon the age, social status of the dead and his/her family. In case of death of an infant, neither more people are involved nor are more resources spent as infants are not considered as full-fledged member of the society. As Apatanis are patrilineal, funeral rites of male are more elaborate than those of female.

Apatanis bury dead bodies before sunset as they believe that soul of dead must depart to the land of death- *Neli Myoko* before sunset. When procession comprises of men and women reaches the burial place, *Miira* takes out the dead body with the help of close relatives of the dead and put the body in such a way to make face of the dead facing towards west which ensures departing of soul to *Neli Myoko* which is believed to be beneath the earth with the sun set. After putting dead body inside the grave, all his belongings which were used by him/her during his/her lifetime and presentations brought to dead body in the form of edibles and clothing during funerals are put in the grave alongside dead body so that the soul of dead may use them in the land of death. Inside the grave, the dead body, cloths and other belongings are properly covered with bamboos and mat which ensures that the dead body along with all his/her belongings are not spoiled by soil and its dirt. A Large numbers of split bamboos are fixed in an arc shape, all around the grave to protect the grave from animals. The horns of sacrificed animals are placed above the grave in a vertical wooden or bamboo poles. In case of the dead of man of status and power, a multi storey square tower is build of bamboo shavers called *Jompoo* and *Somee* in Apatani and his type of structure built over grave is called *Dui Soja*. Along with the structure, the departed soul is bid adieu by blowing of a *Tapyu* (local whistle) so that knowledge and wealth possessed by dead may remain back in tacked with his family members. The grave of priest is given different type of structure known as *Rinyi Gyadu*. In this form of grave structure, five to six bamboos are kept in slighting position on the side of a grave and each bamboo is fixed with long chain of fine strips of bamboo along with bamboo shaves at the tip of bamboo poles.

In case of natural death known as *Yanu Siinii* in Apatani, the family members of dead observe three days taboos by quarantining within the house. Every necessary requirement like firewood and water are managed and supplied to family members by their neighbours when required. On the third day after death, purification ceremony called *Darpa Hiipa Nii* is performed where soul of dead is appeased not to harm the family members and blessing is also sought from the soul of dead for future prosperity and peaceful life.

The dead body of unnatural death by accident or murder is usually first touched by *Miira* (clan based traditionally acknowledged bounded labour) and later other relatives and family members of the dead joins in holding and positioning of dead body. This type of unnatural death of male is known as *Talii Siinii* and female is known as *Liibung Siinii*.

Such death is considered dreadful and inauspicious by Apatanis and to see and locate the dead bodies of unnatural death as first sight is treated as unfortunate and the people are abide by such strict taboos. To perform funeral of such death, a piece of article or handful of soil from the spot of death is required to complete the death rite. The priest chants incantation with the object brought from the spot or with the soil and ask the deceased person's spirit to avenge his death. The death body is kept in sitting position unlike that of natural death where dead body is kept in lying position and some food grains and meats are kept on the front roof of the house for dead person. This act of keeping grain and meat on front roof is known as *Enter Pinii*. It is believed by Apatanis that those who dies unnatural deaths cannot eat food at home and therefore, he/she who met with an unnatural death are served food on the top of the front roof of the house.

A priest performs *Talii Gonti / Liibung Gonti* (accidental incantation) with the articles collected from the place of death. The priest dresses up in traditional war dress with *Jilya* (traditional Apatani shawl), *Lecha* (shield worn during war), *Abyo* and *Chiri* (Tibetan sword). In this rite, the male relatives of the deceased wearing wardress with weapons take round of village with loud noise of hue and cry. This type of funeral procession is called *Talii Ropi*. This is performed to ensure that the soul of dead may not disturb the living family members and only avenge those who are responsible for his/her death. The kinsmen bring a dog and sacrifice it near the stair of the house and rush inside the house to join *Talii Ropi* (funeral dance). It is believed that the sacrificed dog lead the soul to the land of dead designated for such nature of death which is known as *Talii Myoko* which is believed to be located above the sky. The singing of dirge (*Siima Khenii*) is common phenomena for both natural and unnatural death as it is believed to be leading the departed soul to the land of dead which goes through various places and routes. *Siima Khenii* is usually performed by woman and the one performing this narrates the good deeds and merits of a dead person and also shows the way towards *Talii Myoko*, the celestial land designated for such type of death.

On next day, a Mithun or Cow is sacrificed for the soul of the dead person after chanting of accidental incantation by the priest. The meats of such sacrificial animals are usually consumed by an old men and women of the village. In case if nobody wants to eat the sacrificial meat, it is buried or disposed in the forest. The male members who have participated in *Talii Ropi* are given food and bacon meat at *Lapang* (sacred religious platform) and offering of bacon meat in such occasion is called *Marin pinii*, it is given

along with rice. It is believed that consumption of *Marin Pinii* makes the spirit of dead powerful and competent enough to reach *Talii Myoko*, the celestial land of death.

The grave is initially dug by *Miira* and other relatives join him later. The dead body is carried to the grave followed by a long funeral procession, which is known as *Byum*. The dead body is positioned in such way in the grave which ensures the face of dead facing towards east. This is done so that the soul of dead takes his/her path towards *Talii Myoko* which is believed to be located above the sky with the sunrise. It is believed that with the rising of sun, the soul of dead also rise for *Talii Myoko* as in normal death where face of death faces towards east, so that the soul of dead takes the path of *Neli Myoko* with sunset which is believed to be located deep underneath the surface of earth. In grave, all requisite items like dresses, ornaments and edibles are kept by the side of dead body with a belief that the soul of dead may use them in the land of dead. The dead body and all his/her belongings are protected with slit bamboos and mat which does not allow soil to touch these items along with body while filling soil in the grave. The *Miira* chants incantation for the prosperity of the family members by taking out little pieces of cloth before filling the grave with the soil and thereafter, the grave is filled in with soil carefully. A bamboo pole is fixed above the grave with a sacrificed big cock on its tip. The sacrificed cock is called as *Talii Sori* and two long thread namely *Pyaming*, a thread made with the combination of deep yellow colour and navy blue threads, of which one is hung down from the neck of cock and the other is tied on finger of the dead body inside the grave which according to Apatanis helps the soul of dead to locate the route to *Talii Myoko*. It is believed that the soul of dead person departs to land of unnatural dead through these threads.

After burial of dead, the family members and *Miira* strictly observes ten days of home quarantine taboo which is known as *Aanyo du* in Apatani. During these ten days quarantine taboo, the family members are not allowed to touch utensils and the preparation of food is done by others. The relatives and neighbours supply the requirements of firewood during these days. The clan members including entire villagers observe taboo for three days. The taboo is followed strictly by the family members, clan members including entire villagers to avoid such unfortunate occurrence as accidental death and death by murder in future. During taboo period, everyone within the village is restricted from working on fields, kitchen gardens and fetching firewood from the forest. On tenth day which is the last day of quarantine, the family members of dead observes

purification rite called *Darpa Hiipa Nii*. A priest is summoned to perform this rite and while performing this rite, soul of dead is directed not to come back in human world in any form. It is believed that this rite also prevents similar reoccurrence of such incidents within the family and in village as a whole. The priest during purification rite moves out of the house of dead in midnight after day long incantation to drive away all the misfortunes and malevolent spirits and dumps it in nearby river or stream. The person who happens to see or come across such ceremony by chance is regarded to be very unfortunate. Hence, the villagers restrict their movements in late night on this particular day of purification rite. After performing such dreadful rite, priest along with his assistants wanders in dense forest for three nights so that others may not come in their contact as they are supposed to stay away from people around for their safety. In addition to purification rite, the benevolent spirits like *Chantung* (welfare spirit) and *Pilya* (Savior spirit) are also appeased at the house of deceased for the wellbeing of departed soul in the land of death and also for the wellbeing of surviving family members.

A death by suicide is called *Sijer Siinii*, it is considered shameful and disgraceful in the Apatani society. Apatanis believe that a person commits suicide or attempt to commit suicide because of the evil spirit which enters the body of a victim and makes him/her taking such dreadful step as suicide. Though the suicidal death is considered as unnatural death, but the disposal of dead body is same as that of natural death. The soul of dead goes to the land of dead designated for unnatural death called *Talii Myoko*, a celestial land of dead especially meant for souls of unnatural death. The funeral rite of *Talii Gontii* which is performed for death by accident and murder is not performed in case of suicidal death but the period of ten days has to be strictly maintained as in case of *Talii Siinii*. The taboo period for clan members and rest of the villagers are three days and for family members of dead person is ten days home quarantine. It is followed strictly as Apatanis believe that if one does not follow these taboo periods properly then same unfortunate incident may occur to him/her or to their family members.

The death caused by child birth related issues, death of an infant before *Niipo Aaping* (birthday feast) and before completion of confinement period of ten days and a case of stillborn child is called *Hiiki Siinii*. Miscarriage of a child with all the organs of body properly developed is considered unfortunate and fearsome by the parents and by village as a whole. Hence, all form of death related to child birth issues like miscarriage, stillborn and death of pregnant mother with baby in her womb is treated with dread

religious taboos in Apatani society. The disposal of the dead body of stillborn child is quite different from the other categories of burial. The body of stillborn is buried in midnight after properly decorating the child like a living child. If it is buried without decoration, the soul of child would never leave the human world and may harm the surviving family members. The funeral procession comprises of father of the stillborn, priest and *Miira* and secretly disposes the dead body in late night without the knowledge of anyone at some secret place which could not be traced by others. If anyone happens to come across such procession, then the particular person is regarded unfortunate and it is feared that he/she might face the similar fate in future. The prescribed taboo for home quarantine remain same as in case of unnatural death; ten days for family members and three days for clan members and rest of the villagers. During these taboo days, all are prohibited from entering the house of deceased except old women and men who are allowed to visit for donating rice, meat, rice beer and firewood which will required during taboo period by surviving family members. In case of death of an infant before the arrangement of *Niipo Aping* (birthday feast) or within the period of *linga Aaniyo*, within ten days of delivery confinement, such type of death is usually considered as unnatural. On the last day, the same priest who performed the funeral rite of an infant performs purification rite *Darpa Hiipa* to purify the house and to prevent the evil spirits from entering the house.

When death of a person is confirmed without finding the dead body, the family members of the dead mourns over an effigy of dead which is built with a particular leaves of a plant called *Tamu Tari* (fern) in the shape of human body. The effigy is dressed up the way dead person use to dress when alive and is buried in the same manner as done in case of *Talii Siinii* (unnatural death by accident or murder). The effigy constructed is called *Byume* and such death is called *Siirung Nii* in Apatani. During olden days, often people use to die in the forests or rivers while they were out for collecting fire woods, hunting, travelling on foot to neighbouring tribe's village and while out for tracing the whereabouts of their Mithuns. The family members of missing person along with other clan members use to do search operation for days and weeks when they does not return home from their work. Finally, when family members including other relatives and clan members become sure about the death of the missing person without actually finding out the dead body, the effigy is constructed and funeral rites are performed for the dead soul.

The Apatanis believe that *Yallo* (soul) of natural death goes to *Neli Myoko* (land of dead), which is believed to be situated under the earth. The soul further dies at *Neli Myoko* and goes to another world of dead called *Nikung Neli*, where the soul had to die again and finally they become animals like lion, tiger, leopard, boar and deer etc. The concept of rebirth after death is totally absent among Apatanis.

Neli Myoko is regarded to be the exact replica of Apatani villages. There, the *yallo* (soul) first meets the guardian spirits *Neli Kiri* and *Chango Subu* on his/her arrival. These guardian spirits enquire and investigate about the relative value attributed to various meritorious deeds which are known as *Ikhang*. The soul with many *Ikhang* (good deeds and achievements) to their credits is received with great honour and a soul with less acquired *Ikhang* is believed to be ashamed to speak to the dead ancestors living in *Neli Myoko*. The *Ikhang* for man is consist of killing of tiger, leopard, eagle, boar etc, killing of enemies, purchase of slaves, mithuns, rice fields, ornaments etc, celebration of *Murung*, *Subu* and *Mida* ceremony etc. A woman who has remarkable achievement in the economic field earns *Ikhang*. The life in *Neli Myoko* is believed to be similar to the living world of human where souls work, cultivate and meet with death again to depart to another world. This land of dead is believed to be very pleasant and departed souls jointly share it with various spirits. A man who was wealthy during his human life attains the same status in the land of dead. If a married woman dies, she automatically gets united with her husband of her human life and vice-versa. Those who have died unmarried, they can find spouses in *Neli Myoko* and even beget a children.

The soul of dead who dies unnatural death by accident and murder departs to *Talii Myoko*, a celestial land of death. The *Yallo* (soul) cultivates food grains the way human does in earthly world and two varieties of wild *Oring* and *Tagi Tamo* are cultivated for consumption. The unique and dense cloud formation in the sky is regarded as the field of *Talii Myiko*. The souls residing in this world again meets with death and their souls further departs for another world called *Chanjang Ganda*. They again die there also and soul departs for one more land of dead known as *Assang Chahi*. It is said that the concept of death is absent in *Assang Chahi* and soul remain immortal.

The celestial land of dead for women who dies unnatural death by accident and murder is called *Liibung Myoko* which is believed to be situated near *Talii Myoko*. The souls of this land also die and depart to another world of dead called *Popi Ganda*. The souls are

subjected to death in this world also and they take the form of an animal after their dead in *Popi Ganda*.

Women play an important role in fulfilling the customary role in connection with death. An elderly lady of the clan performs *Siima Khenii*, a funeral cry which led the soul of dead to his/her designated land of dead. The funeral cry or dirge is to be performed by elderly expert women only which is of utmost importance.

4.3 Religious Beliefs and Customs:

The tribal belief system and its practices are variously classified and termed as Animism, Bongaism, Naturalism, Totemism, Taboo, Magic, Ancestor worship, Polytheism etc. E.B Tylor (1913) in *Primitive Culture* says that among the sacred beliefs, the faith in spirits is the most common with all the tribal and thus called Animism (p-10). This belief is universal among the religion of the tribals. For them, all spots and places are holy as they are the seat of spirits. Animals, plants, trees, ponds, rivers, stones, hills or mountains are all considered as abodes of spirits. The whole neighbouring areas, whether village or forest in which tribal live is full of spirits. D.N. Majumdar (1950) in his book *Affairs of a Tribe* opines animistic beliefs of the tribal as their belief in malevolent spirits and powers which influence the destiny of men. Discarding the idea of animism as only form of tribal religion, he opines that the tribal religion in India stands on the theory of Bongaism; a power that pervades all space and indefinite and impersonal to start with (p-278). Worship of nature is another form of belief which is prevalent among various tribal groups where Sun, Moon and Earth are considered as the creator of supreme power. This is known as Naturalism and this form of belief is prevalent among the Santhals, Mundas, Hos, Malers and Birhor tribe of Bihar who identify the sun as *Sing Bonga*, the supreme god. The Santhal, Bondos, Juangs, Saoras and Kondos of Orissa have Naturalism in their belief system. In North East India, Garos, Kacharis and some tribes of Arunachal Pradesh worships Sun and Moon and considers them as the supreme god. Totemism is another form of belief among tribal. Apart from nature as whole, the tribal people have cognate themselves with the animals and plants in the form of Totems; a belief system which binds mysterious relations of humans with some plants beside animals. The Hos, Mundas and Oraon have totemistic clans. The Santhal and the Kharia have clans named after plants, animals and over some material objects. Tribes like Bhils and Gond from Madhya Pradesh and the Minas and Bhilalas from Rajasthan have religious regards for

totemic plant and animals. These tribes believe in the protective power of the totemic plants and animals which according to their belief system have been protecting the ancestors of their clans since time immemorial. The different belief systems prevailing amongst different tribe make it evident that they practice Polytheism; the divine powers have been identified with a group of powerful force and deities which control and influence the happenings in the community. Most of the tribals have a cluster of spirits and super beings and identification of different powers with different deities is made accordingly. Some deities are held responsible for their village, general health, rain, grain etc. Different spirits have different jurisdictions and abodes; there are spirit who protect family and kinsmen, some protects property, some protect hills and forest, there are spirits residing in the stream and rivers, the spirit of tree, the sun god, the moon god, the earth gods and goddess and there are different methods of appeasement worshipping theses spirits which show an attachment to Polytheism. Different names, different forms and various responsibilities have been attributed to these spirits. In fact, all the social and cultural activities of a tribal community revolve round the different spirits and the supernatural power is de-centralized among different spirits according to their scope and power.

In tribal belief system, the existence of super human or supernatural power is almost universal. Experience of certain unusual occurrences as sudden death and unexplainable disease have led tribal folk into believing in other than visible world; the invisible world of spirits and supernatural power. They have established a close relationship between themselves and the spiritual powers by adjusting themselves in two ways, first by controlling the spirit by enchanting incantations, thereby canalizing the power between human and spirit and second by appeasing the spirits with offerings and sacrifices to propitiate the spiritual power for acquisition of the desired things, objects and for fulfillment of wish.

The nature of Apatani traditional belief system is partly animism; it is partly in the sense that animism is usually understood as the animation of natural phenomena: sky-spirits, water-spirit and so on. Apatanis do not attribute life to inanimate objects except Sun and Moon. According to Blackburn (2008) in *Himalayan Tribal Tales: Oral tradition and culture in the Apatani valley*, “Apatani spirits (*wi*), however, are rarely personifications of nature. Exceptions exist (Sun-Moon, for example), and a few spirits are loosely associated with locations (a field, a mountain); but the great majority are linked to

conditions (disease, infertility), events (fire, lost animal), desired outcomes (protection, mental strength) or a combination of these. Similarly, Apatanis do not attribute many anthropomorphic qualities to spirits; instead, they are impersonal” (p-11). The tribesmen believe in the existence of certain spirits in some specific places as in forest, groves and fields etc, but they rarely personify any natural object as done in animistic belief system. Animism is often believed to make the spiritual visible but it is invisible to humans and only its power; both benevolent and malevolent are known to Apatanis and it has large numbers of impersonal, invisible spirits and few abstract ideas. Polytheism is an important feature of Apatani belief system as tribe believes in existence of clusters of spirits; each of those spirits are associated with certain trait and they are identified and categorized according to their power, role and influence. They have as many as 150 numbers of spirits and about two dozen of them are regularly addressed in the ritual incantations.

The Apatani faith and belief system is deeply rooted in numbers of benevolent and malevolent spirits. These spirits are believed to influence every aspect of life and nature. Therefore, Apatanis considers them to be omnipotent. The pattern of hierarchy in relation to the position and power of spirits are totally absent as each spirit has definite and specific roles and functions attached with it. It is believed that no individual spirit has absolute controlling power over entire universe. However, few ritual ceremonies are considered higher in rank owing to huge financial involvement in it, such as *Subu* and *Murung*.

The tribe believes in existence of four types of spirits; completely protective or benevolent spirits, completely evil or malevolent spirit, spirits benevolent in nature but often causing illness and sufferings when they are not pleased and ancestral spirits:

1. ***Gyuniang Uyi***: The spirits of this category comprises of both benevolent and malevolent nature. It is believed that displeasure of the malevolent spirits causes illness, misfortune, death and disaster. There are hundreds of malevolent spirits such as *Danyi*, *Tamu*, *Yullo*, *Chantung* etc. These spirits directly affect the human life and nature. It is generally believed that the home dwelling benevolent spirits always protect the members of the house from malevolent spirits. The person gets sick when the benevolent spirits are unable to resist the malevolent spirits. Many

a time benevolent spirits of this category also causes illness when they are not pleased with the offerings and sacrifices made to them.

2. ***Yallu Uyi***: These spirits are considered to be completely malevolent and displeasure of these spirits brings war, hostilities, allegations and accusation among the clan members, friends, neighbours etc. The malevolent spirits of this category are *Yallu, Yachu, Lisu Nii, Giiri, Sotu, Metii* etc. The *Yalu Uyi* spirits are believed to be dreadful and therefore, elders always advice and refrain the young children from eating sacrificial meat and eggs of *Yalu Uyi* rituals. The malevolent spirits of this category are appeased and propitiated when there is hostility, accusation and allegation, confrontation etc between the village, friends, clan members etc. The taboos of such rituals are strictly followed and it is believed that non compliance of taboos causes lot of sufferings and miseries.
3. ***Tiigo Uyi***: The spirits of this category are believed to be completely benevolent who brings prosperity, peace and good health. The ritual ceremonies like *Subu, Murung* and *Myoko* etc are performed to appease *Tiigo Uyi*. These rituals are performed to have material prosperity and curing of prolong illness. In such ritual ceremonies, the contribution and support from kinsmen both in cash and kinds are highly solicited. The performing of these rituals elevates the social status of the performer as it involves heavy expenditure. *Murung* is regarded as the most expensive *Tiigo Uyi* ritual and second most expensive *Tiigo uyi* ritual is *Subu Taniing*.
4. ***AyoAasi (Ancestral Worship)***: Ancestral worship finds an important place in the religious belief of the Apatanis. They believe that man's power is limited and therefore they are access to only limited areas of human world. It is through ancestral worship, they can acquire comprehensive power to be in communication with the spiritual world of dead. Vidyarthi (1964) in *The Maler* considers ancestral worship as an important aspect of the tribal religion. Since the tribal firmly believe in the idea that spirits of the dead ancestors have power to decide their destiny, they are very cautious in performing the ritual and observe all the ceremonies carefully. It is believed that the newly dead person joins their dead ancestors and therefore, if dead ancestors are not worshipped, they appear in dreams and disturbs family members.

The Apatanis have strong faith in their ancestral spirits. They believe that souls are immortal and that their ancestral spirits interfere in every activity of human world, for which the ancestral worship is performed very carefully in all socio-religious ceremonies. The spirits of ancestors are propitiated and appeased annually, periodically and any time when situation arises to appease them with the help of an egg omen verification carried out by priest.

Ancestral spirits are called *Ayo Aasi* by Apatanis and they are believed to be of benevolent nature. These spirits are propitiated during *Murung*, *Subu Taniing* and *Myoko* rituals. The ancestral spirits are appeased as per need and requirement shown through egg omen verification. The general symptom for propitiation of *Ayo Aasi* are the unusual damage of dresses or clothes by pests, rats etc, damage of food grains stored in granary by rats, physical weakness and tiredness of a person and meeting dead persons in dreams are taken as signal for appeasement of ancestral spirits as it is believed that these symptoms are clear signs that ancestral spirits are in need of offerings from his living relatives. There is no alter for appeasement of this spirits and sacrifices are given in the corner of the house and in granary. Most of the time hens are sacrificed along with traditional rice beer and eggs as offering but big animals like cow and mithuns are also sacrificed in the name of ancestral spirits. Ancestral spirits who have died unnatural death are believed to be malevolent in nature and they are called *Rosang*. They are periodically propitiated during the *Murung*, *Subu Taniing* and *Myoko* festivals. The sacrifice and offerings are carried out when a person is affected by this spirit. In case of male *Ronsang* spirit, one fowl is sacrificed and one *Elyo* (sword or machete), *Yoh-Aso* (bacon) and traditional male dresses are offered to particular *Ronsang* spirit. In case of woman *Ronsang*, one fowl and a complete set of traditional dress and ornaments are offered.

There is ancestral spirit associated with granary called *Nesu Ayo Aasi* and this spirit is generally regarded to be benevolent. *Nesu Ayo Aasi* ritual is performed during harvesting when grains are brought into the granaries. It is performed for the safety of grains, especially from being destroyed by pests and rodents. The ritual is carried out at the granary site with the sacrificial offerings of one hen, one chick and seven eggs along with rice beer and rice powder which are offered to the ancestors by sprinkling it over the granary.

The tribe had numerous forms of worship which includes offerings of rice powder, rice beer and animal sacrifices. In all ritual services, the womenfolk, who normally take active participation in non religious activities, remain behind the scene as they are not allowed for open participation in religious and sacramental matters of the tribe. As this are considered as a domain for men, women are refrain from being active and only remain in the backdrop of all ritual services and facilitates the basic requirements as food, rice beer and other necessary items to the male members participating in the religious activities.

1.3.1 Traditional Holy Dreads:

Taboo, which is considered as 'holy dread' is an important aspect of tribal belief system. Vidyarthi and Rai, (1976), in *The Tribal culture*, considered taboo to be an objectified fear of the demoniac power thought to be concealed in the tabooed object (p-242-243). Majumdar (1961), in *Races and culture of India*, take the religious side of taboo as safe guard ritual operations to protect religious persons and places of worship and prevent irreligious from spreading (p-357-362). The tribal believed that when a taboo is violated, it may result in disaster. Touching a plough and roofing a house are taboo for the Kharia women. The Gonds of Madhya Pradesh do not touch menstruating women as it may destroy a good harvest, on the other hand, the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills do not permit their women even to enter the dairy area. In fact, the religious beliefs, forms of taboos and the tribal faith have been reinforced by taboos.

Taboo is another sacred belief that has become a superstition for the tribe. Apatanis do believes in superstitions as it is an integral part of their belief system. Superstition is a term for belief in supernatural happenings and consequent causality. Dr. Radhe Yampi, (2018) in her article *Fear Mongering in Apatani Religion* says that often Apatanis are reluctant to talk about their religious aspects out of ritual context and unwilling to go to ritual sites, touch altars, attend certain rituals, enquire about issues related to deities or rituals, hymns etc. Even some elders concernedly suggests the young fellows to not attend certain rituals and enquire about distant pasts but there is no justified reasons other than their concern driven by fear (p-7). The tribe's adherence to compliance of taboo is because of their belief in invisible supernatural powers which might cause harm if it is not followed properly as there is general belief that 'the wrath of spirits cause sufferings and misfortune'. In many occasions, the Apatanis restrain their physical behaviours,

performs rituals and sacrifices to ward off future undesirable events that the present event can cause or repeat the undesirable occurrences which might have taken place. Appeasements of spirits through offerings of food items, dress, machete and an ornament including animal sacrifices are often seen and prevalent among the Apatanis but there is no mention of human sacrifice in the past. As there are good numbers of superstition prevailing among the tribe, many kinds of physical behaviours are considered inappropriate in relation to specific time, place and situation. There are numerous taboos adhered by Apatanis and those are:

It is considered inappropriate to shout or speak aloud in wilderness as the tribe firmly believes that evil spirits will take the soul of that person leading him to mental disorder and even death. The act of taking away of soul by evil spirits is called *Larun Du* in Apatani. Therefore, when a person starts feeling unwell and sick after returning from forest, a *Nyibu* (priest) is summoned immediately to perform necessary rites and ritual.

Infant babies are not supposed to be taken to river bank; they should not be taken out of house after sunset for evening walks and they should not be allowed to cry aloud during midnights as evil spirits might see them, hear their voice and consequently, the soul of babies will be taken away by evil spirits, causing ill health to babies and even death. Apatani mothers consoles her baby with real loud voice, believing that it will fail evil spirits from hearing the cry of her baby.

A pregnant mother and her spouse should not attend funerals, they must not burn plastic items in their hearth, for it might cause baby born with squint eyes and rashes and dark spot over body.

A healthy and plump baby should never be described as heavy as it will make evil spirits cause harm to baby out of jealousy.

The banyan trees should not be cut, religious alters should not be destroyed, it will led to consecutive death of the family members of the one who have committed the blasphemy by not complying to restrictions adhered to taboos.

One should not go near religious altar or touch the altar as it cause rashes in skin, mouth and even conjunctivitis. Such inflictions caused by religious altar are called *Agyan miidan Nii*.

Married women after participating in *Alyi Lalo Nii* ceremony in Myoko festival, they are restricted from eating cereals, pulses and any fried items for almost a month. If these taboos are not followed, misfortunes and miseries will befall her family and relatives.

Besides, there are some traditional belief which regulates the mindset and behaviour of the tribesmen. They consider certain sights as dreadful and signalling some mishaps. Though these sets of belief are devoid of any logical and justified relatedness, the tribe firmly believes and relies on this set of belief;

Heavy rain accompanied by thundering and lightning indicates impending mishaps; therefore people avoid outdoor activities as going to jungle during such days. Tribe believes this to be nature's signal indicating death of a person.

Appearance of snakes in dreams is taken seriously, the snakes in dreams are considered to be the souls of dead ancestors. They appear in dreams when they desire for offerings and sacrifices. It is believed that sufferings will befall if the soul of ancestors is not appeased. Therefore, priest is summoned and necessary rituals are performed in the name of particular ancestor who they believed to have seen in the dream in form of the snake.

Seeing oneself or someone bleeding in dream is considered dreadful as tribe believed that person's soul is getting hurt by evil spirits. Thus, necessary ritual is performed failing which person may get sick and may even die.

Seeing oneself or someone donned in traditional attire is considered as dreadful signal as person donned in traditional attire may very soon suffer of ill health. Therefore, necessary ritual is performed to ward off the impending unwanted occurrence with the help of a priest.

Apatanis believed that person with weak soul called *Yalo bolyo* can be easily attacked by evil spirits. They periodically perform *Lyapin-Chantung* ritual for enhancement of strength for such person with weak soul as they continually suffers of weakness and ill health. In addition to this ritual, certain relevant ritualistic divination and sacrifices are also performed in order to appease the evil spirits which, they believe, have been displeased unknowingly. The sacrifice of domestic fowls including offering of edibles like rice beer and sometimes rice powder are done to pacify evil spirits and to ensure future security.

4.3.2. Women in Religious Rituals:

In traditional form of worship and ritualistic observances, it is mainly the male priest and his assistants who carry out the work. Absent of female priest within the tribe is noted by researcher. However, there was single female priest in the entire Apatani plateau which has been discussed in chapter two of this thesis. There is some female priest coming up within the ambit of *Danyi-Piilo* religion, who performs prayers at Meder-Nello, the house of worship for the believers of Donyi-Poloism. One of the popular female priests of this sect is Mrs Koj Aka from Dutta village; she performs prayers in Medre-Nello and also performs house warming rituals.

The occupations of castrating pigs, which is important in society but considered ritually impure were carried out by women in the past. Woman who performed that occupation was called *Kiimer*. The woman who were assigned to perform castration of pigs were not allowed to fetch water from the wells directly and other people nearby well used to fetch them water from the well. They were not supposed to move around those houses where important rituals or rites were being performed. They were not even allowed to enter anyone's dwelling place during Myoko and Murung ceremonies; she used to call out the owner of the house to talk or to ask for something. People avoided eating in her house as they were considered ritually impure. The selection of *Kiimer* were usually made among the women from *Gyuchi* clan (descendents of *Aato Kojin*), this clan had inferior status in Apatani society in the past. Once a woman is selected as *Kiimer* at her consent, she has to follow the ritual norms and principal laid for practitioner of such profession. The children and husband of such woman are treated as ordinary person, though they are looked down but they are not restricted from entering any household during ritual ceremonies. Only woman who act as *Kiimer* are tabooed from entering the household. The house for such woman is built at the outskirts of the village by the villagers. Though she enjoys lowly status in society, she is treated with respect and nobody misbehaves or scolds her as it is believed that if *Kiimer* gets hurt emotionally, her grief might bring misfortune and suffering to the person who have hurt her sentiments. Therefore, she is treated with respect and remunerated with meat and rice beer from every household during Myoko festival. Also at the time of castration of pigs, she is given four to five mugs of rice and meat.

The work of *kiimer* is very important for the society as castrating of domestic boar is necessary as uncastrated pigs creates lot of nuisance and disturbances in the pigsty. Moreover, only castrated pigs are sacrificed at the altar of Myoko, Murung and other ritual practices. It is strongly believed that if pigs without castration are sacrificed, the deities will not be pleased owing to its bad smell from testicles. Therefore, people prefer to sacrifice female pigs during such important ritual ceremonies but in absence or when female pigs are not available, under such circumstances, castrated male pigs are sacrificed. Bamboo blades called *Bimbu nuni* and *Pasu Buyun* (needle made of bamboo) were used for castrating pigs and *Epo* (yeast) were used as antibiotics for such purpose.

In present time, this occupational specialization has disappeared with the emergence of veterinary hospitals in Apatani plateau. Eligible women for this profession are also denying holding this post as it lowers her status in society.

4.4. Agricultural Customs:

In early days, Apatanis were agriculturist; they were totally dependent on agricultural produce for food. They cultivated sufficient food grains like *Emo/Embing* (paddy), *Tanyi* (maize) and *Sarse* (millets) including numerous *Hamang* (vegetables). They even bartered surplus agricultural produces for other necessary items with neighbouring tribes and even within the Apatani villages.

The tribe were believed to be prosperous and self sufficient before the plateau were hit by crop epidemic called *Diime Anyang* in Apatani which mean era of starvation. This dreadful era is narrated by senior citizens in form of tales, but exact time of epidemic is not known. During the period of starvation, some rich people who had surplus food grain in their barns took advantage of the adverse situation by buying properties such as ornaments, Tibetan bells and swords, Brass plates etc and lands in lieu of some food grains. Some people who did not have any landed properties sold themselves as slaves for few mugs of food grain. The rich man who owned those slaves were called *Miti* (master) and the slaves were called *Miira*. It is believed that the poor wandered around empty stomach for food and they even ate wild leaves to quench their hunger. This period of starvation is considered as one of the reasons for existing social differences in traditional Apatani society. The concept of master and slave were believed to be totally absent in traditional Apatani society before *Diime Anyang*. The poor became poorer and

the rich became more prosperous with more land and properties they have accumulated, thereby creating huge gap between propertied and non propertied dweller in society.

Apatanis took pride in owning a land and working on it. Therefore, they have never hired any labour from outside or inside the village to work on their fields. They considered working on fields as privilege because only those who owned agricultural fields could have the pleasure of working on fields and it was also a source of entertainment; they sang in paddy fields, almost and every time, they met their prospective life partners on their ways to fields or while working on fields. Thus, everyone enjoyed working in agricultural fields. The tribe keeps their fields very clean, no wild grass or weeds are allowed to grow in fields even after completion of harvesting of the crops.

Agricultural works are mostly carried out by young girls and women of the tribe, however, young boys and men also engage themselves in task during sowing of paddy saplings and during harvesting. They mostly form a group within their friend circle from the same village and of the same age group called *Patang*, it is the most unique and significant institution for organising a reciprocal assistance in agricultural work based on mutual consent of the members involved in group. The group can be of as large as twenty members and it can be of smaller number as well, they perform reciprocal help and assistance to each other turn -wise till the completion agricultural work. The members of *Patang* use to work together throughout the cultivating season and they remain together as group for years unless a serious quarrel takes place among the members or voluntarily opting out of group due to some differences. Most of the time *Patang* comprises of only female or male, but during harvesting of crops, they form a group comprises of both male and female. Many a times, working companions becomes lover and get married when they grow up to adults. The group gets ample time while working on fields for discussion on different issues, they indulge in fun and frolic activities by singing *biisi* (songs), *Ayu* (verse recitation) and *Miji* (sacred knowledge) competition during the day long working in the field. In course of time, the group significantly builds up strong emotional bonding for each other that last long even after the *Patang* ceases to exist when all members splits from group owing to other responsibilities as an adults.

There are three types of *Patang* based on the time schedule of work and nature of work: *Konchi Patang* (morning group), *Alo Patang* (day time group) and *Yassang Patang*

(firewood group). *Konchi Patang* which is an early morning group works from 4.am to 7am every morning. The members of this group are not given any meal as they work for only few hours. Thus, they eat their meal at their respective home after getting back from work. *Alo Patang* which mean day time group, works from 9.am to 5.pm, eating lunch or midday meal in the field at the expense of the owner where the group works on that particular day. They work hard and their toiling is eased with rice beer served to them by owner of the field. Usually, *Konchi Patang* works seasonally, i.e. from February to July every year but *Alo Patang* works throughout the year. The hiring of *Patang* by rich Apatani men is the only source for obtaining labour force required for the cultivation of their large numbers of fields in traditional Apatani society. The group make themselves available for hire once their work on their respective fields is done. They are paid in cash in return for their labour. Another group called *Yassang Patang* jointly works to collect fire wood from *Morey* (forest) and from *Bije* (bamboo groves) turn wise till all the members of the group gets their share of work done. Rice, meat and wine has to be prepared by the member whose turn falls on the day for collection of firewood.

The Apatanis have four type of agricultural land and they are *Aji* (paddy fields), *Lyapyo* (dry fields for production of millets), *Yorlu* (vegetable garden located in the outskirts of village) and *Balu* (Kitchen garden nearby dwelling place). There are several spirits who are appeased and propitiated for the healthy growth of the crops sowed to these agricultural lands. *Mettii* spirit is appeased and the alter of this spirit is constructed in the front corridor of the house and it is beautifully decorated with bamboo shaves, fern leaves, a piece of broken earthen pot and few number of knitted bamboo basket called *kilye*. A half grown hen is sacrificed after chanting of incantation. It is believed that the entry of famine and epidemic are restricted when *Mettii* spirit is appeased. *Tamu* spirit protects livestock including crops and health of the person from the malevolent spirits of famine, epidemic and shower strength and good health to the person performing ritual to appease *Tamu* spirit. It is believed that this spirit also kills the insects which are underground and causes harm to crops. The alter of this spirit is constructed in the front, besides the stair of the house and is well decorated with bamboo shaves called *Somme* and also as *Jompu*, *Byodung* and *Chukha*-a basket and hat made of bamboo, a branches of sacred *Kiira* tree leaves which is wrapped with knitted bamboo piece called *Tamu kilye*. The priest sacrifices and offers hens and eggs along with chanting of hymns. Sometimes, animals like dogs are also sacrificed, but such sacrifices are offered only

when omen permits to do so. Alongside these spirits, *Danyi-Piilo* (Sun-Moon) is also appeased for overall growth and wellbeing of all living things which includes healthy growth of paddy and other crops. The last agricultural rite of the year called *Yapung* is observed during the month of September. In this month, the crops become mature and therefore, spirits and deities of environment are appeased and propitiated to protect the crops from hailstones and heavy rains.

4.5. Hunting, Fruits and Vegetable Foraging:

Hunting and trapping is one of the earliest occupations of the Apatanis. It is one of ways for getting food besides agricultural products. Hunting is organised in two forms, one is community or collective hunting and other one is individual hunting. Collective or community hunting is carried out during Myoko festival to hunt Monkey as it is deemed necessary and without Monkey, Myoko rituals cannot be solemnised. Thus, all physically capable men from the clan go to the forest with their bows and arrows to shoot Monkey. When they successfully hunt Monkey, the different body part is distributed among the different clan of the village which could be kept for fulfilling the rituals during Myoko festival.

Individual hunting is carried out by an individual Apatani man for purpose of consumption, as hobby fulfilment and to earn trophy in society. They hunt wild animals like Deer, Leopard, Jungle fowl, Tiger, Barbet, Hornbill, vulture, Monkey, Bear, Porcupine, Pangolin, woodpecker etc in the forest. In early days, they even bartered the meat of wild animals for food grains and other necessary items. The hunters used poisonous substances which were taken out of wild plants called *Imyo* on the arrowhead. The hunters could shoot and kill dangerous animals with *Imyo* on their arrowhead. The horn, skull and skin of killed animals are kept in house of the hunter as trophy which marks his valour and courage and popularly called as *Ekhang* in Apatani. The *Ekhang* enhances person's social status and dignity. Therefore, larger the number of horn and skulls in his house, his social status and dignity used to be greater. When a person hunts animals like Tiger and Leopard, he earns more reputation in society, he earns greater *Ekhang*. After killing of Tiger or Leopard, the hunter of the animal along with other male members of the clan and village performs *Ropi Sonii*, it is believed that the soul of these animals are very strong and dangerous which keep ability to revenge on one who have killed them. Mihin Kanning (2008), in *The Rising Culture of the Apatanis* writes that

Lions, Tigers and Leopards as sons of *Lyumbo siinyo* and *Garbo Taker* who are elder brothers of *Abotani* (p-91). Therefore, Apatanis addresses these animals with prefixing *Abang* before their names, such as *Abang Patii*, here *Abang* means elder brother and *patii* means Tiger. Therefore, the soul of these animals are considered to be extra ordinarily powerful which can revenge upon its killer anytime. Thus, *Ropi Sonii* is performed to ward off such occurrence in future. A part of the killed animal is buried nearby *Nago* (sacred hut) and a big stone is put in the hole where the part of animal is kept which is followed by priest's ritual incantation to permanently block the soul of the animal from entering the human world. This ritual is especially performed by the male members only and females are not allowed to participate. They stay in the backdrop busy preparing meal and rice beer for the male members participating in *Ropi Sonii*. Hunting and trapping is totally considered to be domain of male in traditional Apatani society. Women are not seen or encouraged to go out for hunting in deep forest. Instead, they stay home preparing food for the male counterpart who has gone for hunting in the forest.

Besides hunting, vegetable and fruit foraging from deep forests are considered male's domain. They indulge in foraging of fruits and vegetables while they are out for hunting or fire wood collection in the deep forest and in bamboo groves. Vegetables like *Hiika* (fern), *Pato* (bitter wild leaves), *Hunyur* (thorny leaves), *Hiiby hamang* (bitter plant) and *Raru Hamang* (wild edible leaves) are some of the vegetables which are collected from forest by the Apatanis. Wild fruits like *Pecha* (wild Apple), *Bili Ahi* (sweet -sour wild berry), *Semo Ahi* (small blackish sweet fruit), *Joju* and *Baching* are some of the wild fruits collected from deep forest. These fruits and vegetables are especially collected by male members of the society as womenfolk are always busy in their respective paddy fields and vegetable gardens, the vegetable and fruits foraging from forests are done by male members only. Womenfolk going to wilderness are considered inappropriate; therefore, their movements to wilderness are refrained.

4.6. Folk Medicine:

Apatani plateau is a home to many herbs which are locally used in traditional Apatani society to cure many diseases during ancient times. Though there is no written record as such on traditional healing through herbs but people firmly believes that these herbs are used for curing diseases and this knowledge has been transmitted only orally from

generations. Dorson's (1972) classification on forms of traditional healings is aptly relatable to Apatani ways of curing diseases and ailments. He records two varieties and two branches of folk medicine, "... (1) natural folk medicine and (2) magico-religious folk medicine. The first of these represents one of man's earliest reactions to his natural environment, and involves the seeking of cures for his ills in the herbs, plants, minerals, and animal substances of nature...The second branch of folk medicine is the magico-religious variety, sometimes called "occult" folk medicine, which attempts to use charms, holy words, and holy actions to cure disease" (p-192). These two forms of healing are prevalent among Apatanis of which, the latter may require *Nyibu's* (priest) interference with his sacred incantations and spells, but the former form of healing is basically domestic, household remedy which is popularly practiced by the tribe. The form of natural folk medicine is generally carried out of womenfolk, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters and wives apply to their loved one in traditional Apatani society. The tribe, since pre-scientific era, have been employing the form of natural folk medicine treatment till date; besides, they have also adopted scientific medicine with changing time. The magico-religious form of healing is also adopted by many indigenous people, especially by elderly persons. However, this form of treatment is gradually fading with education coming to Apatani plateau; at the same time many have embraced Christianity which further lowered its popularity. With demise of senior citizens, priestly knowledge is also fading and number of priest in the villages has also become visibly low in present time. But still many people opt for this form of healing procedure along with modern scientific mode of treatment.

The following are list of herbs and vegetables with curative quality and which are used by Apatani people as medicine in curing diseases:

1. **Siya-Hamang** (*Houttunyniacordata*): This herb is popularly eaten as vegetable and as salad which is also use as medicine in curing indigestion and insommania. It is found in bunds of paddy fields, dry fields and also in forests and grooves.
2. **Taki** (*Ginger*): It is traditionally used as cure for cough related issues and also as taste buds. Ginger play very important role in Apatani society as it is mandatorily used in many rituals. It is usually grown in kitchen gardens and dry fields.

3. **Pato-Hamang** (*Clerodendrumcolebrookiamin*): This bitter taste wild vegetable is eaten to cure high pressure. People these days have started growing this wild plant in their kitchen gardens realizing its benefits and utility.
4. **Ngilyang-Hiiko-Hamang** (*Centella Asiatica*): This creeper which is found in paddy fields are eaten in form of vegetable and also as salad which is bitter in taste. It is used in curing indigestion, constipation and urinary problems.
5. **Yorkhung** (*Zanthoxylumarmatum*): This seed like fruit is found in wild forests which are used for treating common cold and cough, fever and stomach disorder.
6. **Riiko** (*Gynostemmapectaen*): *Riiko* is one of the most trusted herbs used for treating all stomach related problems including fever and cough. It is found in wild forests and Apatanis keep this herb in form of powder by drying it and grinding it into powder.
7. **Santero** (*Litssea Cubeb*): This seed like fruits are found in wild forests which are used during cough and cold. This fruits are specially used by Apatanis to combat insommania.
8. **Salliyo** (*Magnoliacea*): This is a wild fruit with bright red seed inside found in wild forests. It works as an appetizer and Apatanis eat this seeds with meat and rice. This seeds are grinded and are kept for long.
9. **Yabing** (*Cephallostachiumcapitum*): This is a kind of bamboo found in forest and are used for treating blood dysentery. The *Yabing* is cut into small pieces which are kept dipped in water for hours preferably overnight and its water are drank to cure dysentery and other water born diseases.
10. **Hikkhu** (*Fermented bamboo shoot*): *Hikkhu* is fermented bamboo shoot locally used in cooking. Apart from being eaten as delicacy, it is also use in treating bee stungs and it is believed that it immediately subsides swelling and pain.
11. **Riri** (*Piper Attenuatum*): This climber plant which is usually found in kitchen garden is used as an antiseptic in case of snake bite. It is smashed and is applied in affected areas.
12. **Kiile-Tolyo** (*Aocruscalamus*): This semi- aquatic plant is found near streams and it is used in treating swollen and dislocated joints and also cuts and wounds.
13. **O-Khui** (*Oxalis Corniculata*): This is a small plant usually available in the kitchen garden. It tastes sour and used in treating scabies by applying its paste to the affected areas.

14. **Hailyang-Tami** (*Ageratum Conyzoides L*): This small plant is found in kitchen garden which is used to stop bleeding from cuts and wounds. Its paste is directly applied to the affected areas.
15. **Saati** (*Sticky pine gum*): This sticky pungent pine gums are derived from huge trunks of blue Pine trees which is only found in Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh. This pine tree gum is used in treating tooth ache, swelling, joint pain, crack heels and also used in making fire in Apatani Hearth as its oil catches fire very quickly and burns consistently.
16. **Tamo-Ahee** (*Rhus Chinesis mill*): This is a medium sized greenish yellow fruit found in bamboo grooves and forests. This fruit is used for treating blood dysentery.
17. **Sarse** (*Millet*): Millet is popularly used by Apatanis to ferment it into beer along with rice. This fermented beer is believed to cure headache and fever when taken with chillies.
18. **Tapio** (*Apatani salt*): This traditional salt is prepared with various herbs and believed to prevent occurring of Goiter when taken.
19. **Taming-Ahee** (*Mohnia napaulensis*): This is a wild berries which is blackish in colour and are found in bamboo grooves and wild forest. The fruit and its juice are used in treating itching and scabies.
20. **Tarko**: *Tarko* is derived from thorny plant found in deep forest and is valued very high in Apatani society. It is believed that this sacred plant has power to ward off the evil spirits. Thus, Apatanis lights it up the way incense sticks and fan its smoke all over the house especially during child birth. It is also helpful in curing stomach ache by encircling the naval with the ash of *Tarko* and also applied into wounds to prevent infection.
21. **Ennge** (*Colocasia esculent var*): It is a type of yam or arum, the moist root of this plant is used in case of cut and also in bee sting. The womenfolk plant it in kitchen garden and also in vegetable gardens situated in outskirts of village.
22. **Talley/ leppi** (*Chlorophylumarundiaceum*): This onion like taste plant is eaten to improve tongue taste especially during cough, cold and fever. Mostly, it is eaten raw with and without chillies. It is grown in mostly in *Yorlu* (vegetable garden outside village) and also in *Balu* (kitchen garden).

23. **Miiji:** It is a small tree found in forest and bamboo groves. This plant is used for removing corn from the body. A part of stem is burnt and its ashes are directly applied to the affected area.
24. **O Pona** (Fermented rice beer): Pure and undiluted fermented rice beer is used by tribe in treating bee sting as well as for cutting the poison inflicted to a person by shooting an arrow. Concentrated beer is taken out and it is directly applied to an affected area. It is believed that it minimize the pain and allow minimize the efficacy of poison in the wound.

Apatanis also used some of the animals and its parts for medicinal purposes. They believed to have in those parts some curative ability to cure their ailments. For instance, *Tabu Ading* (snake head) are smoked and dried over the fire. The dried snake head is kept in powdered form and are taken to cure dysentery. *Pesu Hulyi* (Hornbill fat) is used for curing dryness and itchy skin. The fat is directly applied to the affected area to get instantly relived from dryness and itchiness. *Tayu* (bees) are used to cure fever, the bees are dried over the fire and grinded to powder which are preserved for future. The dried powder is mixed in plain water or in plain rice for consumption. *Tangu Aala* (honey) is also used for curative purposes. It is used for treating mouth infection such as plaque. *Papu* (egg) is used to treat burn injuries. The egg white along with its yolk is directly applied to the affected area.

There are various herbs which were used as vegetables as well as medicine in ancient days but the efficiency of these herbs are hardly acknowledged and people are more comfortable with modern mode of treatments these days. Not just herbs but there are many animals whose parts and products were used in ancient days as cure for various ailments; for example, Horn bill fat were used to cure itching and honey were used in treating throat infection and plaque. But dearth of written record and proper research has outdated its uses and people are opting for scientific and modern way of treatment in present time. Yami (2018) records, “There is no any written document regarding the traditional knowledge on the verities of herbs that was used as vegetables and medicine by our grand and forefather’s time. These are passed through oral transmission from one generation to other generation. The indigenous knowledge of landscape, the spirit which inhabits is lost as they are no longer transmitted. Even the dependencies on the herbs for

both edible and medicine has been reduced due to many dependencies on the market in terms of food and medicine”(Disease and Healing among the Apatanis,p-27).

Traditional healing system is part of Apatani oral tradition and before advent of modernity into Apatani plateau, people used this indigenous knowledge system to protect and cure themselves from various ailments.

Besides using herbs and animal products as remedy for curing diseases and ailments, the Apatanis also practices magico-religious treatment for curing disease and other forms of sufferings as sudden and unexpected misfortunes. *Nyibu*, a priest and a religious specialist of the Apatanis is called to perform *Uwi*, a form of magico-religious treatment upon the suffering patient. *Nyibu* using his sacred knowledge and power examine and diagnoses the ailment and performs necessary rite and rituals which is followed by animal sacrifices as per requirement of the ritual. Sufferings and illness are believed to be caused by the wrath of spirits, mostly by evil spirits but sometimes, it is also caused by provocation of benevolent spirits. Therefore, appeasement is done by *Nyibu* to ward off the unwanted occurrence and diseases. His advice and prescriptions are never questioned and challenged by any of the tribesmen; instead, the tribe totally adhere to his power and knowledge. The tribe, especially senior citizens still believes ardently in *nyibu* and his prescribed rituals. Thus, many along with scientific medication also opt mandatorily for magico-religious forms of healing. However, younger generation no longer believe in superstition and they mostly opt for doctor and his/her prescriptions of medicine instead of seeking help from *Nyibu*.

4.7. Festivals:

Festivals are integral part of human life and every human existence in societies round the world is marked by celebration of numerous festivals. According to Dorson (1972) human society, “most, if not all, of the societies of the world periodically set aside portions of time for celebration. These are moments of special significance to the group or community....It may include actions prescribed by law or by the rules of some organisation, although not all festival behaviour is so prescribed” (p-159-160). Apatanis, like other societies of the world, periodically set aside to celebrate festivals of various colour and hue. Men and women, both young and old whole heartedly participate in festivals which are hoisted by community and by individual as well. Details on festivals

of the Apatanis are discussed in chapter two of this thesis wherein detailed picture of various festivals and its category has been discussed in detailed.

Dree is an agricultural festival which is celebrated annually by entire Apatanis in unison for bumper harvest and prosperity whereas festivals like *Murung* and *Subu Tanii* are hoisted by individual member of the clan only if omen permits him to conduct the festival which is followed by series of rites and rituals. *Myoko* is triennial festival hoisted by every individual of the particular village whose turn comes for celebration. Though this festival is hoisted by an individual member, it is celebrated for the greater cause of pan Apatani issues, i.e. for welfare of its people. The preparation of this festival involves great monetary expenditure as well it demands lot of energy. The festival goes for multiple days and during all these days of celebration, guest from different villages of different age visit each household randomly in group. They are served *O*, *Yoh Kaji* and *Aping* with honour till they deny having more. Therefore, it can be rightly pointed out that Apatanis celebrates two type of festivals- individual and community hoisted festivals. In either category or types of festival, participation is not just limited to genetic or kinship group but whole community irrespective of gender and age does participate and enjoy. During all these festivals, there is much drinking, eating, dancing and singing and they engage in performing *Hiirii*, *Damin*, *Ayu*, *Miji* and *Migung* etc . Traditional rice beer (*O*), meat (*Yoh*), egg (*Pappu*), chillies flakes (*Yormii*), *Pikey-pilla* (aromatic hot chutney) and rice (*Aping*) are served in abundance. The tribe prepare well in advance all the necessary items required for festival such as collection of firewood, meat and preparation of rice beer. Every hearth of the house burn logs of firewood till midnight during festivals entertaining the guest with rice beer, meat, eggs and chillies.

During all these festivals, women and young girls from the village are all busy cooking and serving. Rice beers are prepared in huge quantity well in advance so that it ripe at the time of celebration. Other necessary items like ginger, chilli powder, bacon meat and rice are all kept ready in advance. Women's calibre as homemaker is judge during this festivals through her ways of treating and welcoming guests at home. Her management skills also get showcased during such occasion in traditional Apatani society. Lazy woman or girl never gets appreciated in such occasion owing to her poor management as homemaker. Therefore, every girl, right from childhood is taught to be physically active in handling household chores.

The detailed discussion in this chapter with reference to social folk customs of the Apatanis in relation to women's participation in religious and customary practices marks it clear that Apatani women in traditional society enjoyed very limited space and her role mostly remained confined as homemaker and caretaker of her family and hearth. In every major social and religious sector, her role remained confined to serving and hoisting to guest and family. She cannot be a part of *Bulyang*-traditional village council and she cannot climb *Lapang*-sacred religious platform even if she possesses the knowledge of *miji-migung* because of social disapproval. All major decisions and bargains related to marriage are taken by elderly male members and during such sessions women members of the family remain in the backdrop of the occasion and they are expected to keep quiet when elderly male members are involved in discussion and decision making. Thus we find in traditional Apatani society, a woman enjoyed limited space in sphere of religious matter. It can also be stated that Apatani traditional customs restricted women's participation in religious practices. There is no religious ceremony that gave women and girls exposure to the society at large.

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CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

The life of tribal communities is marked by folktales, folksongs, folkdances and folk customs which are integral parts of folklore. It plays important role in describing different aspects of tribal life and culture. Aspects of tribal culture can be understood through the medium of folk narratives, folk tales, folk songs, folk dances, proverbs, legends, riddles, myths, superstitions, fables, folk religions and customs etc. that explains the socio-cultural behaviour, beliefs, customs and tradition of the people. Dearth of written record is hampering the growth of folklore in Apatani plateau and people are gradually drifting away from its importance. It played crucial role in moulding men's outlooks towards life in olden days and it was the source of entertainment, at the same time it served the purpose of educating children and general public. Folk narrative is an integral part of folklore and it is unwritten and unrecorded part of tribal society that passes through generation only orally and it is so because of the absence of script in the society.

Gender as a concept is a way in which maleness and femaleness are perceived, evaluated and stratified in a society. Gender Ideology is mainly realized in symbols and rituals, patterns of verbal expressions and gender based role assignments. Thus, "Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do.....something we perform"(Eckert and Ginet 2003,10) Gender representation in folk lore is vital stand point for present study as female oriented genres available in the tribe has been studied and analysed with special reference to it. A different women character of the narrative represents different aspects of tribal life, manners and behaviour of the time. The researcher's attempt is to locate the role and status of women in the traditional Apatani society through understanding and analyzing the stereotyped role of female legends of the folk narratives in the patriarchal Apatani society and her role in folk customs. Folklore is representative elements of every society and its importance to tribal life is immeasurable and Apatanis being one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh possess rich culture and tradition.

In the twenty first century women has reached the place better and safer, which could be rightly called her own. The participation of women can be seen in every field-education;

politics, nation building and she occupy high official post in the field of administration. Particularly in Apatani society, the presence of women can be seen in every field. With passing time, the perception regarding the role of women in Apatani society is changing. During olden days, her involvement towards social life was limited and narrower than the present time. Today women are not only confining to giving birth and raising babies but her outlook towards life has grown broader and brighter. Twenty first century women have become more ambitious and sure about herself and her place in society. Women in general and Apatani women in particular have become fiercely protective and working hard not to let her identity submerged under the height of patriarchy. Instead, women now a day work hard to curve identity of her own. She wants herself to be known for what she is and the way she is. Thus, women have become more aware and she can guard her identity all by herself.

Attitude towards women is also changing from every sphere of society. Girl child is also provided equal facilities in the field of education and parents put their best effort to provide best of the education to a girl child. Apart from all these facilities, women being part of the patriarchal society are still facing some of the restriction even today. For instance, it is not considered safe for a woman to go out alone during late night hours, she is not appreciated for wearing revealing cloths, she is expected to be a good homemaker etc. Thus, it can be stated that women are definitely living a better life in present day Apatani society but still she is not totally free from social expectations and she is still expected to carry out the highly stereotyped gender role which are prevalent in society since time immemorial. Hence, it reflects the outlook of present time society which is believed to have undergone change with education and technology. The traditional Apatani society still endorses some of the highly patriarchal outlook and ideologies which still instil in her the sense of insecurity in the present society. This also signifies the biological differences between men and women; men as stronger and women as physically weaker being who are not capable of protecting herself from the danger roam in the street of society. Apart from that it is to be noted that she does not have any share in ancestral paternal property even if the parent is devoid of any male child. In such case the entire property of father without male child is automatically inherited by paternal uncles.

“ ‘Representation’ is the ability of texts to draw upon features of the world and present them to the viewers, not simply as reflections, but more so, as constructions .Hence, the

image do not portray reality in an unbiased way with 100% accuracy, but rather ,present ‘versions of reality’ influenced by culture and people’s habitual thoughts and actions. As a result, representations are influenced by culture and in much the same way, have the capacity to shape culture and mould society’s attitudes, values, perceptions and behaviours. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture.(Hall 2003,15). Stuart Hall asserts objects and people do not have the constant meaning ,but the meanings are influenced by humans in the context of their culture, as they have the capacity to make things mean or signify something .According to Hall, ”Things don’t mean, we construct meaning, using representational systems-concepts and signs”,(Hall 2003,25).Thus, there is bias in representing women as inferior and man as superior in Apatani society where identity of women is reduced to that of a home maker and as subordinate to her husband and husband/father as head of the family. This proves that ‘representation’ is a human idea; it may be adopted by some or even discarded by others.

In Apatani folklore and folklife studies with reference to Oral literature, we find that women are represented in two major folklore genres- in folktales and in folksongs which also includes procreation or origin story. All tales or folktales and folksongs originate from a culture and it is that culture which decides the content and form of tales. Therefore, it can be rightly said that tales reflect the temper and attitude of a culture. Focusing on the representation of women in many of the tribe’s tales, it is found that young, beautiful, skilful and unmarried maiden like *Ami Dori* had to take her life to prove her purity and innocence. *Kokii Yamu* had to get married in order to get rid of her poverty and change her fortune one fine day. *Ami Niido Biinyi* had to regain her youthfulness to enchant and to marry a young man by tattooing her face, putting nose plugs and ear plugs. She does it to make herself youthful, fertile and productive. Stupidity in woman is bullied through the tale of *Tabu Yapi*, a stupid wife, who does not care about future and subsequent consequences which could occur out of her stupid activity.

Apatanis has wonderful origin story like rest of the tribal communities of the Arunachal Pradesh. They believe that the world or the universe has evolved out of nothingness. It is stated by Kime Epa, one of the informants that millions and millions years ago the earth and the sky were one. It was separated by two Goddesses namely “*Ami-Pipi Pipiri* and *Ami-Nala Nalora*”. They worked jointly day and night to create space for mankind and

for other vegetation. Participation of women in the process of creation throws light on the point which symbolizes women as giver and saviour. She is giver not only of life but also of knowledge and prosperity. These stereotyped role of women as creator, saviour, sacrificing being and harbinger of prosperity are aptly represented in the tales of *Diilyang Diibu*, *Dolyang Chanjang*, *Ami Pipiri* and *Ami Nalora*. They are considered as the legendary role model for every woman and even today; they are highly venerated in Apatani society.

Oral tradition of the Apatani is a rich gallery of mythical and legendary figures. *Dolyang Chanjang*, *Diilyang Diibu*, *Tiinii Rungya*, *Biinyii* and *Biine* are the most interesting female characters representing different aspects of Apatani culture and tradition. *Dolyang Chanjang* is the pioneer in the field of priesthood and she is also known as *Tani Barmii* for she considered herself to be *Abotani's* sister. *Chanjang* is the very epitome of knowledge and wisdom. On the other hand *Diilyang Diibu* is the most graceful of all the female characters found in Apatani folk narratives. She is the bringer of crops and food in Apatani plateau. With her hardworking and supportive nature, she roused *Abotani* to the height of fame and became ideal woman in the eyes of male members of the society. Wealth and prosperity is deeply connected to *Diilyang Diibu*. The story of *Diibu* presents one aspects of Apatani society; the image of women as bringer of prosperity and happiness; if men becomes successful his success is credited to women and if he faces failure and misfortune then she will be credited again for causing misfortune. *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* is loved by listener of all the ages for her virtuous and homely qualities, she could cook and weave and knew the art of cultivation. In traditional Apatani society every girl is expected to know the art of cultivation as paddy field is entirely under the care by the womenfolk of the society. She works round the clock for entire twelve months. Thus, economy of the traditional Apatani society is dependent on the hands of the women. In spite of shouldering such huge responsibilities, her contribution towards family, towards society as individual is hardly acknowledged. Women are expected to be like this and if she is working day and night, it is not to be taken as something exceptional but as discharging her duty as wife, as mother, as daughter- in- law, as sister and as daughter. *Tiinii Rungya* represents the vice; the destructive side of women and every pretentious and jealous woman is compared with *Tiinii Rungya*. She is destructive and jealous figure of the Apatani folk narrative, who did not know the art of cultivation and who could bring downfall to *Abotani*. Narratives of two sisters, *Biinyi* and *Biine*

constitutes children's story. Mostly the stories of *Biinyi* and *Biine* are didactic, it is meant to instruct and teach and it is a moral allegory which can be interpreted in two levels – the surface and inner meaning. They are representatives of vice and virtue and their stories might have been used in olden days to instil moral values in children. In surface, it is children's story with wonderful plot and supernatural characters. Inwardly it preaches moral to be good and true to self and to others. The story basically narrates the victory of good over bad.

It can be summarized that the folklore of the Apatanis are rich and varied. The narratives have many female legends whose contribution is tremendously important and vast starting from creation of life to settlement of human race. One important finding to be noted is that the Apatani society has *Abotani* as forefather but none of the female considered for study has been credited the position of foremother or sole grandmother. Many women with different qualities appear in different narratives but none share the status equal as *Abotani* the forefather of Apatanis. Indeed they are all presented as subordinate to *Abotani* who helps him building the space to accommodate humankind. Different female legends appear at different stages of his life helping him achieving what is important for human survival and existence. For example, it was *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* who helped him raise his wealth by bringing paddy seed along with her. She knew the art of cultivation, brought poultries and cattle and was a skilled weaver. *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* with her qualities could really raise the wealth and status of *Abotani*. Every girl in traditional Apatani society is expected to follow the path of *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* and expected to be like her who could take care of her family's welfare along with other engagements as cooking, poultry rearing, pig rearing, dry and wet cultivation, weaving, attending social gatherings and functions etc. One of the informants shared during field work that during ancient times, it was not the beauty of girl but her capacity and ability to work was considered attractive and thus girl with hardworking nature was considered and opted for marriage. Productivity as trait is chief character which is represented in female oriented narratives of the Apatanis. For instance the myth behind face tattoo reveals how important it is for women to be productive; an ideal woman is expected to have many children, poultries and cattle. *Ami Niido Biinyi* tattooed her face, pierced her nose and ears to enhance her fertility and regain her lost youth.

Bias in gender representation can be seen in tribe's folksongs wherein women are aspired and expected to be calm, compassionate, sacrificing and to be an active homemaker.

Lullaby like *Liibang Ani* or *Inga Myanii* well manifest the gender role expectations of the society. Gender role depiction is inherently crafted in lullaby and folksong. Lullaby portrays the role of women as weaver, as cultivator, as cook and as care taker of her home and hearth while the role of male is depicted as hunter who could climb the highest mountain and as a mighty swimmer who could cross the mighty *kuru-kiime* river. Folksongs also help in understanding the gender role in Apatani society. *Hiirii* song for instance is an example where group of young men calls themselves as *Gyapo Siire* (group of bear) and flocks of birds which aptly shows the kind of position and freedom they enjoys in society. They sing and dance, they demand and eat and finally blesses the couple and takes leave. On other side *Daminda* song depicts women as cultivator of land. In entire song, women sing and dance to learn the art of cultivation, pray for bumper harvest and invites priest to perform necessary *Dree* rites to ensure healthy crops. *Papin-Pame* song with multiple motifs exposes patriarchal influence over major decision making at different stage of life. The song also exposes the association of standard traits to women folk like techniques of weaving and art of grooming oneself as essential criteria for being considered as accomplished and ideal for marriage. Multiple divorce and infidelity of the heroes *Loder* and *Byai* definitely reflects the patriarchal influence and values of the traditional Apatani society. The quest of sisters *Dumi* and *Yami* for weaving perfect eye-mouth (*Aami-Agung*) confirms how important it is for women to know the art of weaving with perfection accompanied by perfect designs.

There are certain rites and rituals which cannot be performed by the women of the Apatani society; especially those rituals which involves the use of *Lapang* (sacred platform). This discrimination can be looked at from the feministic point of view but the myths about the origin of priesthood tells different tale. The myth tells that it was not the male dominant or patriarchal society of the Apatanis but women herself decided not to climb the *lapang* because she felt uncomfortable to do so. Menstruation is one important factor which forbids women from climbing *Lapang* and from performing other high graded rituals and rites. It was believed that the occurrence of monthly periods have made women unfit and unholy for the sacred rituals. Therefore, women herself decided not to climb *Lapang* and not to perform any rituals as well according to oral tradition of the Apatanis. This particular point proves that women of the Apatani society had enjoyed certain liberty of making decisions and choices. Re-marriage is allowed to widow as well as to women who is divorcee and certain rites such as crying over funeral, bidding

farewell to dead, this particular act performed during funeral in Apatani called *Siima khening* is only performed by elderly women of the tribe. The profession of *Kiimer*, one who castrate pigs and boar are taken up by women only. The jobs of castration of boars were of utmost importance as non-castrated pig or boars are not sacrificed while performing any ritual. Apart from above mention ritualistic services, womenfolk are not seen performing rituals in public domain. Her services are restricted and remain within her home and hearth.

From all the sources collected and studied, it has come to light that womenfolk of the Apatani tribe had been working more in compare to their male counterpart. The women had been leading these highly stereotyped lives since time immemorial which is beautifully represented and justified by legends such as *Diilyang Diibu*, *Dolyang Chanjang*, *Ami pipiri* and *Ami Nalora*. Women are represented in these folk narratives as saviours who are capable of sacrifice and creation of lives. They are also portrayed as a bread earner through her labour and skill. Mrs.Yami (pseudo name) shared how she alone had raised her five children after demise of her husband by selling local rice beer, being an uneducated woman; this was the only occupation she could opt to earn bread for her children. Apatani society witnessed many single parents especially mothers engaging in job as selling vegetables, meat, rice beer ,firewood ,working in paddy field as paid labour to support her family. Looking at her contribution, it can be observed and said that the economy of the Apatani society has enhanced its growth with the contribution made by women and it would have definitely suffered without her support. This shows they definitely deserve more and better for the contribution she have rendered in every sphere of the society. She is yet to get properly acknowledged and recognized for the contribution she has made to support and uplift the family in particular and to the society in general.

APPENDIX I – List of Photographs

Fig: 1: *Pinta* (Traditional Sacred Pot used during Rituals)



Fig: 2: *Nyibu* (Priest)



Fig: 3: *Yoh Aso* (Beacon meat ;It is used in marriage ceremonies, birth feast and other rituals such as *Myoko*, *Murung* and *Subu Tanii* ect)



Fig: 4: *Yoh Piniing* (Meat slicing /cutting during rituals)



Fig: 5: Traditional Apatani women attending *Niipo Aping* (Birth feast)



Fig: 6: Traditional Apatani woman with Tattoo and Nose Plugs



Fig: 7: Traditional Rice beer (*O*) preparation



Fig: 8: Women of Tasso Clan performing *Myoko Supung* during *Myoko* festival



Fig: 9: *Nago* (sacred hut) of Tasso Clan



Fig: 10: *Myoko Nyibu* (Myoko Priest) performing ritual called *Myoko Ui alo*



Fig: 11: *Danyi and Yullo Agyang* (religious Altar)



Fig: 12: *Kharung Agyang* (Altar of *Kharung* Spirit)



Fig: 13: *Myoko Yassang* (Firewood for *Myoko* ceremony)



Fig: 14: *Taper Lüiniing* ceremony during Myoko Festival



Fig: 15: *Danyi-Piilo* worship pattern at Apatani home



Fig: 16: Shri Tasso Taker, *Danyi-Piilo* Priest (*Danyi-Piilo Nyibu*)



Fig: 17: *Sampo Tassang* (*Sampo* beads)



Fig: 18: *Tado Tassang* (*Tado* beads)



Fig: 19: *Kobyang* (Traditional Bangles)



Fig: 20: *Jeeh Tassang* (*Jeeh* beads)



Fig: 21: *Lebu Tassang* (*Lebu* beads)



Fig: 22: *Santer* and *Sambyu Tassang* (*Santer* and *Sampyu* beads)



Fig: 23: *Bimpu Tassang* (*Bimpu* beads)



Fig: 24: *Giiming Tassang* (*Giiming* beads)



Fig: 25: *Maji* (Tibetan bell)



Fig: 26: *Tallo* (Tibetan Plate)



Fig: 27: Piisa Lenda Abyii (Piisa Lenda Skirt)



Fig: 28: Jee Piisa Lenda Abyii (Black Piisa Lenda Skirt)



Fig: 29: *Bilang Abyii* (*Bilang Skirt*)



Fig: 30: *Supung Tarii* (Top)



Fig: 31: *Pyaming Pulye* (Pyaming Shawl)



Fig: 32: Zeelang Pulye (Zeelang Shawl)



Fig: 33: Pulu Zeelang Pulye (White Zeelang Shawl)



Fig: 34: *Jilya Pulye* (*Jilya Shawl*)



Fig: 35: *Jikhe Tarii* (*Jikhe Coat*)



Fig: 36: Apatani Women in face tattoo, nose plugs and beads



Fig: 37: *Subu Arii* (Horns of Mithun)



APPENDIX II- List of Informants

SL.No	NAME	AGE	SEX	PLACE	OCCUPATION
1	Kime Epa	60	M	Hija Village	Gaon Bura and <i>Miji</i> expert
2	Mudang Pai	65	M	Mudang-Tage Village	Priest
3	Tasso Tapa	70	M	Hari Village	<i>Miji</i> expert
4	Tasso Hailyang	80	M	Hari Village	Gaon Bura and <i>Miji</i> expert
5	Tasso Taker	49	M	Hari Village	Gaon Bura and Priest
6	Kime Onya	58	F	Hija Village	Housewife
7	Kime Moniya	49	F	Hija Village	Business woman
8	Koj Aka	46	F	Dutta Village	Gaon Buri and Priestess
9	Dani Tasser	52	M	Hija Village	Govt. Officer
10	Hage Tapa	80	M	Hari Village	Chief Priest
11	Hage Taney	58	F	Hari Village	Govt. Employee
12	Gyati Rana	55	M	Hari Village	Govt. Employee and a cultural activist
13	Duyu Otung	60	F	Bulla Village	Business woman
14	Tilling Alo	61	F	Hong Village	Housewife
15	Duyu Chatung	55	M	Bulla Village	Contingency Staff
16	Hage Naku	47	M	Hari Village	Govt. Officer
17	Michi Biine	74	F	Bamin-Michi Village	Housewife
18	Tage Habung	63	M	Mudang-Tage Village	Retired Govt Employee
19	Nani Santii	59	F	Bulla Village	Vegetable Seller
20	Tasso Doley	70	M	Hari Village	Priest
21	Kago Tado	55	F	Hija Village	Housewife
22	Takhe Napa	85	M	Hong Village	Priest
23	Millo Dumi	60	F	Bulla Village	Housewife
24	Hibu Yamyang	56	F	Hong (Siuro) Village	Farmer

APPENDIX III

Author's publication

1. Mamung, Kime. *“Aspects of Facial Tattoos of the Apatani women of Arunachal Pradesh”*. Langlit: An International Peer- Reviewed Open Access Journal. Volume- 6: Issue- 3. March, 2020. (ISSN.2349-5189).
2. Mamung, Kime. *“Situating the Role of Women Through Oral Literatue of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh”* in *“Women in Indian Literature and Society: Different Scopes of Study”*. Deptt of Hindi Cotton University. Page No: 97-100. Volume I: Part I. March 2020. (ISBN: 978-93-5406-249-0).

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**ROLE AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN: A STUDY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOLKLORE OF THE
APATANIS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**A thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

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CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

The life of tribal communities is marked by folktales, folksongs, folkdances and folk customs which are integral parts of folklore. It plays important role in describing different aspects of tribal life and culture. Aspects of tribal culture can be understood through the medium of folk narratives, folk tales, folk songs, folk dances, proverbs, legends, riddles, myths, superstitions, fables, folk religions and customs etc. that explains the socio-cultural behaviour, beliefs, customs and tradition of the people. Dearth of written record is hampering the growth of folklore in Apatani plateau and people are gradually drifting away from its importance. It played crucial role in moulding men's outlooks towards life in olden days and it was the source of entertainment, at the same time it served the purpose of educating children and general public. Folk narrative is an integral part of folklore and it is unwritten and unrecorded part of tribal society that passes through generation only orally and it is so because of the absence of script in the society.

Gender as a concept is a way in which maleness and femaleness are perceived, evaluated and stratified in a society. Gender Ideology is mainly realized in symbols and rituals, patterns of verbal expressions and gender based role assignments. Thus, "Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do.....something we perform"(Eckert and Ginet 2003,10) Gender representation in folk lore is vital stand point for present study as female oriented genres available in the tribe has been studied and analysed with special reference to it. A different women character of the narrative represents different aspects of tribal life, manners and behaviour of the time. The researcher's attempt is to locate the role and status of women in the traditional Apatani society through understanding and analyzing the stereotyped role of female legends of the folk narratives in the patriarchal Apatani society and her role in folk customs. Folklore is representative elements of every society and its importance to tribal life is immeasurable and Apatanis being one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh possess rich culture and tradition.

In the twenty first century women has reached the place better and safer, which could be rightly called her own. The participation of women can be seen in every field-education;

politics, nation building and she occupy high official post in the field of administration. Particularly in Apatani society, the presence of women can be seen in every field. With passing time, the perception regarding the role of women in Apatani society is changing. During olden days, her involvement towards social life was limited and narrower than the present time. Today women are not only confining to giving birth and raising babies but her outlook towards life has grown broader and brighter. Twenty first century women have become more ambitious and sure about herself and her place in society. Women in general and Apatani women in particular have become fiercely protective and working hard not to let her identity submerged under the height of patriarchy. Instead, women now a day work hard to curve identity of her own. She wants herself to be known for what she is and the way she is. Thus, women have become more aware and she can guard her identity all by herself.

Attitude towards women is also changing from every sphere of society. Girl child is also provided equal facilities in the field of education and parents put their best effort to provide best of the education to a girl child. Apart from all these facilities, women being part of the patriarchal society are still facing some of the restriction even today. For instance, it is not considered safe for a woman to go out alone during late night hours, she is not appreciated for wearing revealing cloths, she is expected to be a good homemaker etc. Thus, it can be stated that women are definitely living a better life in present day Apatani society but still she is not totally free from social expectations and she is still expected to carry out the highly stereotyped gender role which are prevalent in society since time immemorial. Hence, it reflects the outlook of present time society which is believed to have undergone change with education and technology. The traditional Apatani society still endorses some of the highly patriarchal outlook and ideologies which still instil in her the sense of insecurity in the present society. This also signifies the biological differences between men and women; men as stronger and women as physically weaker being who are not capable of protecting herself from the danger roam in the street of society. Apart from that it is to be noted that she does not have any share in ancestral paternal property even if the parent is devoid of any male child. In such case the entire property of father without male child is automatically inherited by paternal uncles.

“ ‘Representation’ is the ability of texts to draw upon features of the world and present them to the viewers, not simply as reflections, but more so, as constructions .Hence, the

image do not portray reality in an unbiased way with 100% accuracy, but rather ,present ‘versions of reality’ influenced by culture and people’s habitual thoughts and actions. As a result, representations are influenced by culture and in much the same way, have the capacity to shape culture and mould society’s attitudes, values, perceptions and behaviours. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture.(Hall 2003,15). Stuart Hall asserts objects and people do not have the constant meaning ,but the meanings are influenced by humans in the context of their culture, as they have the capacity to make things mean or signify something .According to Hall, ”Things don’t mean, we construct meaning, using representational systems-concepts and signs”,(Hall 2003,25).Thus, there is bias in representing women as inferior and man as superior in Apatani society where identity of women is reduced to that of a home maker and as subordinate to her husband and husband/father as head of the family. This proves that ‘representation’ is a human idea; it may be adopted by some or even discarded by others.

In Apatani folklore and folklife studies with reference to Oral literature, we find that women are represented in two major folklore genres- in folktales and in folksongs which also includes procreation or origin story. All tales or folktales and folksongs originate from a culture and it is that culture which decides the content and form of tales. Therefore, it can be rightly said that tales reflect the temper and attitude of a culture. Focusing on the representation of women in many of the tribe’s tales, it is found that young, beautiful, skilful and unmarried maiden like *Ami Dori* had to take her life to prove her purity and innocence. *Kokii Yamu* had to get married in order to get rid of her poverty and change her fortune one fine day. *Ami Niido Biinyi* had to regain her youthfulness to enchant and to marry a young man by tattooing her face, putting nose plugs and ear plugs. She does it to make herself youthful, fertile and productive. Stupidity in woman is bullied through the tale of *Tabu Yapi*, a stupid wife, who does not care about future and subsequent consequences which could occur out of her stupid activity.

Apatanis has wonderful origin story like rest of the tribal communities of the Arunachal Pradesh. They believe that the world or the universe has evolved out of nothingness. It is stated by Kime Epa, one of the informants that millions and millions years ago the earth and the sky were one. It was separated by two Goddesses namely “*Ami-Pipi Pipiri* and *Ami-Nala Nalora*”. They worked jointly day and night to create space for mankind and

for other vegetation. Participation of women in the process of creation throws light on the point which symbolizes women as giver and saviour. She is giver not only of life but also of knowledge and prosperity. These stereotyped role of women as creator, saviour, sacrificing being and harbinger of prosperity are aptly represented in the tales of *Diilyang Diibu*, *Dolyang Chanjang*, *Ami Pipiri* and *Ami Nalora*. They are considered as the legendary role model for every woman and even today; they are highly venerated in Apatani society.

Oral tradition of the Apatani is a rich gallery of mythical and legendary figures. *Dolyang Chanjang*, *Diilyang Diibu*, *Tiinii Rungya*, *Biinyii* and *Biine* are the most interesting female characters representing different aspects of Apatani culture and tradition. *Dolyang Chanjang* is the pioneer in the field of priesthood and she is also known as *Tani Barmii* for she considered herself to be *Abotani's* sister. *Chanjang* is the very epitome of knowledge and wisdom. On the other hand *Diilyang Diibu* is the most graceful of all the female characters found in Apatani folk narratives. She is the bringer of crops and food in Apatani plateau. With her hardworking and supportive nature, she roused *Abotani* to the height of fame and became ideal woman in the eyes of male members of the society. Wealth and prosperity is deeply connected to *Diilyang Diibu*. The story of *Diibu* presents one aspects of Apatani society; the image of women as bringer of prosperity and happiness; if men becomes successful his success is credited to women and if he faces failure and misfortune then she will be credited again for causing misfortune. *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* is loved by listener of all the ages for her virtuous and homely qualities, she could cook and weave and knew the art of cultivation. In traditional Apatani society every girl is expected to know the art of cultivation as paddy field is entirely under the care by the womenfolk of the society. She works round the clock for entire twelve months. Thus, economy of the traditional Apatani society is dependent on the hands of the women. In spite of shouldering such huge responsibilities, her contribution towards family, towards society as individual is hardly acknowledged. Women are expected to be like this and if she is working day and night, it is not to be taken as something exceptional but as discharging her duty as wife, as mother, as daughter- in- law, as sister and as daughter. *Tiinii Rungya* represents the vice; the destructive side of women and every pretentious and jealous woman is compared with *Tiinii Rungya*. She is destructive and jealous figure of the Apatani folk narrative, who did not know the art of cultivation and who could bring downfall to *Abotani*. Narratives of two sisters, *Biinyi* and *Biine*

constitutes children's story. Mostly the stories of *Biinyi* and *Biine* are didactic, it is meant to instruct and teach and it is a moral allegory which can be interpreted in two levels – the surface and inner meaning. They are representatives of vice and virtue and their stories might have been used in olden days to instil moral values in children. In surface, it is children's story with wonderful plot and supernatural characters. Inwardly it preaches moral to be good and true to self and to others. The story basically narrates the victory of good over bad.

It can be summarized that the folklore of the Apatanis are rich and varied. The narratives have many female legends whose contribution is tremendously important and vast starting from creation of life to settlement of human race. One important finding to be noted is that the Apatani society has *Abotani* as forefather but none of the female considered for study has been credited the position of foremother or sole grandmother. Many women with different qualities appear in different narratives but none share the status equal as *Abotani* the forefather of Apatanis. Indeed they are all presented as subordinate to *Abotani* who helps him building the space to accommodate humankind. Different female legends appear at different stages of his life helping him achieving what is important for human survival and existence. For example, it was *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* who helped him raise his wealth by bringing paddy seed along with her. She knew the art of cultivation, brought poultries and cattle and was a skilled weaver. *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* with her qualities could really raise the wealth and status of *Abotani*. Every girl in traditional Apatani society is expected to follow the path of *Ayo Diilyang Diibu* and expected to be like her who could take care of her family's welfare along with other engagements as cooking, poultry rearing, pig rearing, dry and wet cultivation, weaving, attending social gatherings and functions etc. One of the informants shared during field work that during ancient times, it was not the beauty of girl but her capacity and ability to work was considered attractive and thus girl with hardworking nature was considered and opted for marriage. Productivity as trait is chief character which is represented in female oriented narratives of the Apatanis. For instance the myth behind face tattoo reveals how important it is for women to be productive; an ideal woman is expected to have many children, poultries and cattle. *Ami Niido Biinyi* tattooed her face, pierced her nose and ears to enhance her fertility and regain her lost youth.

Bias in gender representation can be seen in tribe's folksongs wherein women are aspired and expected to be calm, compassionate, sacrificing and to be an active homemaker.

Lullaby like *Liibang Ani* or *Inga Myanii* well manifest the gender role expectations of the society. Gender role depiction is inherently crafted in lullaby and folksong. Lullaby portrays the role of women as weaver, as cultivator, as cook and as care taker of her home and hearth while the role of male is depicted as hunter who could climb the highest mountain and as a mighty swimmer who could cross the mighty *kuru-kiime* river. Folksongs also help in understanding the gender role in Apatani society. *Hiirii* song for instance is an example where group of young men calls themselves as *Gyapo Siire* (group of bear) and flocks of birds which aptly shows the kind of position and freedom they enjoys in society. They sing and dance, they demand and eat and finally blesses the couple and takes leave. On other side *Daminda* song depicts women as cultivator of land. In entire song, women sing and dance to learn the art of cultivation, pray for bumper harvest and invites priest to perform necessary *Dree* rites to ensure healthy crops. *Papin-Pame* song with multiple motifs exposes patriarchal influence over major decision making at different stage of life. The song also exposes the association of standard traits to women folk like techniques of weaving and art of grooming oneself as essential criteria for being considered as accomplished and ideal for marriage. Multiple divorce and infidelity of the heroes *Loder* and *Byai* definitely reflects the patriarchal influence and values of the traditional Apatani society. The quest of sisters *Dumi* and *Yami* for weaving perfect eye-mouth (*Aami-Agung*) confirms how important it is for women to know the art of weaving with perfection accompanied by perfect designs.

There are certain rites and rituals which cannot be performed by the women of the Apatani society; especially those rituals which involves the use of *Lapang* (sacred platform). This discrimination can be looked at from the feministic point of view but the myths about the origin of priesthood tells different tale. The myth tells that it was not the male dominant or patriarchal society of the Apatanis but women herself decided not to climb the *lapang* because she felt uncomfortable to do so. Menstruation is one important factor which forbids women from climbing *Lapang* and from performing other high graded rituals and rites. It was believed that the occurrence of monthly periods have made women unfit and unholy for the sacred rituals. Therefore, women herself decided not to climb *Lapang* and not to perform any rituals as well according to oral tradition of the Apatanis. This particular point proves that women of the Apatani society had enjoyed certain liberty of making decisions and choices. Re-marriage is allowed to widow as well as to women who is divorcee and certain rites such as crying over funeral, bidding

farewell to dead, this particular act performed during funeral in Apatani called *Siima kheniing* is only performed by elderly women of the tribe. The profession of *Kiimer*, one who castrate pigs and boar are taken up by women only. The jobs of castration of boars were of utmost importance as non-castrated pig or boars are not sacrificed while performing any ritual. Apart from above mention ritualistic services, womenfolk are not seen performing rituals in public domain. Her services are restricted and remain within her home and hearth.

From all the sources collected and studied, it has come to light that womenfolk of the Apatani tribe had been working more in compare to their male counterpart. The women had been leading these highly stereotyped lives since time immemorial which is beautifully represented and justified by legends such as *Diilyang Diibu*, *Dolyang Chanjang*, *Ami pipiri* and *Ami Nalora*. Women are represented in these folk narratives as saviours who are capable of sacrifice and creation of lives. They are also portrayed as a bread earner through her labour and skill. Mrs.Yami (pseudo name) shared how she alone had raised her five children after demise of her husband by selling local rice beer, being an uneducated woman; this was the only occupation she could opt to earn bread for her children. Apatani society witnessed many single parents especially mothers engaging in job as selling vegetables, meat, rice beer ,firewood ,working in paddy field as paid labour to support her family. Looking at her contribution, it can be observed and said that the economy of the Apatani society has enhanced its growth with the contribution made by women and it would have definitely suffered without her support. This shows they definitely deserve more and better for the contribution she have rendered in every sphere of the society. She is yet to get properly acknowledged and recognized for the contribution she has made to support and uplift the family in particular and to the society in general.