

Administration of Justice in Arunachal Pradesh:
A Study of the *Gaon Bura* as a Village Authority of the Apatanis

THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT FOR AWARD OF DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Thesis entitled **Administration of Justice in Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of the Gaon Bura as a Village Authority of the Apatanis** submitted by Mr. Kago Gambo, bearing the PhD Enrollment No. RGU/RS-400/2012 in fulfillment for award of PhD degree, in the Department of Political Science, Rajiv Gandhi University, is an original work carried out by him during the academic session 2012-2016 under my supervision. This work has not been previously submitted anywhere in any universities for obtaining degrees. This work may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that my Thesis entitled **Administration of Justice in Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of the *Gaon Bura* as a Village Authority of the Apatanis** submitted to the Department of Political Science, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh (Itanagar), Arunachal Pradesh in fulfillment for award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is an original research work carry out by me under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Nani Bath, Department of Political Science, Rajiv Gandhi University and has not been submitted to any universities or academic institutions.

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Acknowledgement

First of all I shall confess that it would be difficult in this limited space to acknowledge each and every cooperative individual by names all who contributed in this PhD course research study. I begin my heartiest thanks and gratitude to the interview respondents on *Buliang* topic which forms Chapter II of the thesis. Especial mention may be made of Punyo Tama (*Bulyang*), Tapi Takha (*Bulyang*), Takhe Kani, Tapi Ranko (*Bulyang*) and his late son (Tapi Dibo), Habung Pilya Ribya (*Bulyang*), Lyagi Tapa (*Bulyang*), Hage Tarung (APCS Officer) and Narang (Hong) Kula. Second, I express similar thanks and gratitude to cooperative and helpful respondents on *Gaon Bura/Buri* topic, which forms the theme of this research study, for sharing their valuable knowledge, experience and ideas. Note-worthy amongst them are: Nani Sambyo (District Statistical Officer), Top Babu (Office Superintendent), Ngwlyang Talyang (*Head Gaon Bura*), Khoda Pombo (HGB), Kago Nabing (HGB), Bullo Tani (HGB) and Late Mudang Bwker (retired Katoki) and Habung Payeng (retired Information Commissioner).

Third, I shall collectively express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all those 220 sampled respondents (including many non-Apatanis) of the Interview schedule-cum-questionnaire for their sincere responses; otherwise this study would have remained incomplete. Still then, more worth-mentioning amongst them are Budhi Habung (Districts and Sessions Judge), Tage Habung (SP), Hibu Dolley (IFS), Hibu Tamang (IPS), Kago Ape (Assistant Registrar), Tillng Dolley, (ex-ZPM), Bamin Hinda (Class I Government Officer), R. N. Koeley (Assistant Director of Research), (Tongam Rina (Journalist), many Apatani and some non-Apatani lawyers & many Apatani and non-Apatani administrative and police officers/personnel. Such gratitude is also expressed to computer teachers Deepak.a and Deepak.b, Software expert Raju (Itanagar) and Research-related authors (Internet).

Fourth, my maternal cousin Shri Tapi Chobing deserves an especial appreciation and gratitude for his service as my sincere Research Assistant at a crucial period when I was physically unfit. I express my deepest sense of gratitude to paternal cousin Takhe Kani for sharing his valuable study materials and personal traditional knowledge. Equally I thank with gratitude to my traditional relation Millo Richo for extending his crucial yet timely helping hands in the time of need hospitably. I heartily thank the staff of erstwhile First Class Judicial Magistrate Office, Ziro for liberally permitting me to access their office files and its noting. I

express my equal gratitude to Duyu Taley and other officials of the Directorate of State Gazetteer-cum-Editor Office, Chimpu (Itanagar) for their kind permission to liberally access their departmental library books and archives. I am extremely grateful to Mr. Bullo Tani (HGB) of Hong village and Ngwlyang Talyang (HGB) of Bulla (Tajang) village for sharing their preserved old case settlement copies for use in this research.

Fifth, my college colleagues who deserve compulsory mention for their own kinds of contribution in form of guidance or others are Dr. D. K Padhi, Dr. J .K. Patnaik, Dr. B. L. Behera and Dr. A. I. Singh (all College Associate Professors) & Sri C. K. Singh, Dr. S. K. Sharma, Dr. P. C. Panda and Dr. R. B. Tripathy (all Retired College teachers). Next, I have an especial gratitude for Prof. Pura Tado (RGU), Shri Tomar Ete (Retired College Principal) and Dr. Millorai Modi (a sitting College Principal) for their respective contribution in the form of guidance or others. Sixth, I am deeply indebted to my whole family especially to *Anga Monya* (Daughter) and other kiths and kin especially Nannu (Niece), Dumi (Sister) and Merry (cousin sister) for their assistance and certain sacrifice made in favor of me. I shall mention unfailingly the humble but crucial contribution of Miss (Kago) Sukurmoni (my domestic helper) who took all care of my daily routine domestic needs. I extend my thanks and gratitude to all PhD Course Work faculty members for their own contribution in this venture.

Next, I am most grateful to UGC, NERO, Guwahati for kindly granting me Study Leave under UGC Teachers' Fellowship under UGC-New Delhi Faculty Development Program & Officers and staff of Rajiv Gandhi University (Doimukh) and Directorate of Higher & Technical Education, Itanagar for their assistance in obtaining the study leave. Finally, I extend my deepest sense of gratitude to Prof. Nani Bath (my PhD Supervisor) for heartily adjusting me a seat from his depleting PhD (seat) quota and even greater for his efficient guidance and supervision.

Love/warm regards to all.

Sd/-

KAGO GAMBO

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Abbreviations

AAGBWA	-	All Arunachal <i>Gaon Bura</i> Welfare Association
AC	-	Assistant Commissioner
ACLS	-	Apatani Cultural and Literary Society
ADC	-	Additional Deputy Commissioner
ADM	-	Additional District Magistrate
AFR	-	Assam Frontier Regulation
AHGB	-	Assistant Head <i>Gaon Bura</i>
ALC	-	Auxiliary Load Carrier/Agency Labor Corpse
ALSU	-	Arunachal Law Students Union
APO	-	Assistant Political Officer
ASM	-	Anchal Samiti Member
AYA	-	Apatani Youth Association
CJM	-	Chief Judicial Magistrate
CM	-	Chief Minister
CO	-	Circle Officer
CPC	-	Civil Procedure Code
CrPC	-	Criminal Procedure Code
CvF	-	Christoph von Furer
DC	-	Deputy Commissioner
EAC	-	Extra Assistant Commissioner
GB	-	<i>Gaon Bura</i>
GPM	-	Gram Panchayat Member
HGB	-	Head <i>Gaon Bura</i>
IAS	-	Indian Administrative Service

IPACL	-	Institute of Preservation of Art, Culture and Literature (Itanagar)
IPC	-	Indian Penal Code
LPC	-	Land Possession Certificate
LRI	-	Law Research Institute
MLA	-	Member of Legislative Assembly
NEF	-	North East Frontier
NEFA	-	North East Frontier Agency
NEFT	-	North East Frontier Tracts
PI	-	Political Interpreter
PLC		
<i>(Pili Cee)</i>	-	Public Load Carrier
PO	-	Political Officer
PRI	-	Panchayati Raj Institute
PSU	-	Public Sector Units
SI	-	Sub-Inspector (Police)
SP	-	Superintendent of Police
SSI	-	Small Scale Industries
TA/DA	-	Travelling Allowance/Dearness Allowance
VIP	-	Very Important Person
WRC	-	Wet Rice Cultivation
ZPM	-	Zilla Parishad Member

Chapter-I

Introduction

The present study is an understanding of the role of *Gaon Buras* as village authorities, appointed under Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. The village authorities, having quasi-judicial powers, were meant for administration of justice in the areas inhabited by tribal communities in the then North East Frontier Tracts (now Arunachal Pradesh). It was an institutional intervention by the British government, as it thought that the tribal communities may not be in the position to comprehend the complexities of modern judicial system and laws. Moreover, the British government was least interested to extend its administrative jurisdiction (though having political control) because such extension was not economically rewarding for the colonial rulers.

The Government of independent India continued with the system introduced during British period. Post-independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister, did not intend to interfere in the affairs of the tribal communities. The government followed the policy of 'minimum interference' in the line of Panchsheel, five principles for tribal development, envisaged by Nehru and Verrier Elwin. Till today, the institution of *Gaon Bura* is in operation, very effectively in some areas.

The territory, which forms the present Arunachal Pradesh, was not under any formal system of governance till a Notification was issued in 1914 by the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department. It stipulated that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 would extend to the hills inhabited or frequented by the frontier tribes. The hill areas were separated from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur District of Assam, and as a result the North East Frontier Tracts were created. These Tracts were under the administrative and political control of the then Governor of Assam.

The British India administration did not intend to disturb the customary laws, traditions, customs, usages, conventions and social practices of the people of these Tracts. This was probably a reason that the existing traditional forms of village administration, which were carried through Village Councils, were allowed to be functioned without much interference. Every village/tribal group has its own type of village council with almost similar functions though with

different nomenclatures. Such village councils are known as *Kebang* amongst the Adis; *Buliang* amongst the Apa Tanis; *Gindung*, *Bang Nyele*, *Nyelee* or *Nyagam Aabhu* amongst the Nyishis; *Mokchup* amongst the Khamtis and *Mangmajom* amongst the Monpas.

With the consolidation of its position in Assam and extension of its administrative jurisdiction in the hill areas, the British Administration in India, however, felt the necessity of certain interference in the ways of administration of justice prevalent among the tribal communities. Their intention was to regulate and control heinous crimes like murder, rape and slavery; crime against the state was never to be tolerated. Hence, in 1914, three sets of rules for administration of justice were issued under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874. They were (1) Rules for Administration of Justice in Central and Eastern Section, (2) Rules for Administration of Justice in Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and (3) Rules for Administration of Justice in Western Section. In 1937, the Rules were modified and issued under the Government of India Act, 1935, in the following forms: (1) Rules for Administration of Justice in Sadiya Frontier Tract, (2) Rules for Administration of Justice in Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, and (3) Rules for administration of Justice in Balipara Frontier Tract. These sets of Rules were consolidated into one set of Rules under Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945.

As per the provisions of Sub Rule (1) of Rule 5 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation No. 1 of 1945) and the corresponding clauses of earlier Rules for Administration of Justice, Village Authorities were constituted. The village authorities were constituted to maintain peace and harmony; law and order under their jurisdiction. Henceforth, the village authorities came to be empowered to try both the civil and criminal cases within its jurisdiction according to customary laws and social practices of the village/tribal group concerned.

Though the detailed guidelines or operational nuances have not been spelt out in the 1945 Regulation, but for practical purposes, the village authorities have been working within the broad framework/parameters of the same in administration of justice and other spheres. Regarding appointment of the village authority, it is not specified in details in the 1945 Regulation. but under Section 5 of the above Regulation, power of appointment has been entrusted to Deputy Commissioner (erstwhile Political Officer) to constitute the same (village authority) with such persons as he consider to be members of a village authority, for such village or villages as he may

specify, and may modify or cancel any such order of appointment, and may dismiss any person so appointed. For all practical purposes, the village authorities so constituted under the 1945 Regulation were christened *Gaon Buras*, which mean village elders in Assamese.

The *Gaon Buras* so constituted under the 1945 Regulation as Village Authorities act like a bridge between the public and the law enforcing agencies. As the representatives of the District Administration they are required to come forward to assist the Administration and Police when ever situation arises. The *Gaon Buras* are responsible for all the law and order related duties in the village. They owe their position and importance to the Government and are bound by government instructions issued from time to time. The *Gaon Buras* are to make the people obey the orders of the Government. The *Gaon Buras* remain in the office so long as they enjoy the confidence of its appointing authority or of the people.

Even after India's independence, the Government of India followed the policy that of the British and allowed the 1945 Regulation to prevail in the territory. The *Gaon Buras* remained the backbone of the district administration during NEFA days. They brought people closer to the administration and vice-versa, thereby facilitating the growth of the administration.

The Apa Tani community resides in the Ziro valley, the district headquarters of Lower Subansiri of Arunachal Pradesh. Legend has it that the forefathers of the present Apatanis had migrated to their present place from the Tang Sang-Pho valley in Tibet, through various routes. The Apa Tanis used to govern themselves traditionally through the Council of Elders, called *Buliang*. According to mythological literature the institution of *Buliang* exists since the very origin of society. *Buliangs* basically are the representatives of the clans, who in their plurality constitute a kind of village government. Generally, the *Buliangs* are the men of character and ability, wealth and status or high social standing. They are usually proficient in customs, traditions, customary laws and oratorical skill. One of the major functions of *Buliang* is politico-judicial in nature; besides socio-religious ones. It is the *Buliang* who uphold peace, harmony and social solidarity, expressing the collective will of the community. They might allow minor disputes to run its course, but ultimately it is they who restore the communal harmony.

After the appointment of Village Authorities (*Gaon Buras*) around 1945, the judicial and administrative functions hitherto performed by the *Buliang* have been taken over by the

former. Now, the role of the *Buliangs* is confined only to ceremonial/ritualistic functions. It is reported that first batch of *Gaon Buras* were appointed during 1944-45 by Dr. Haimendorf, who was the Special Officer of the then Subansiri Division. Currently, there are about 9,814 *Gaon Buras* (including *Head Gaon Buras*) and 186 *Gaon Buris* (female *Gaon Buras*) in the state. Lower Subansiri district has 186 *Head Gaon Buras* (HGBs), 469 *Gaon Buras* (GBs) and 66 *Gaon Buris*. In Ziro circle of the district, there are about 87 *Head Gaon Buras*, 164 *Gaon Buras* and 22 *Gaon Buris*, who are all Apa Tanis.

Statement of problem

The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 was introduced to ensure that a vast majority of disputes and cases, both civil and criminals were adjudicated in accordance with the prevailing codes of the tribal communities. The Regulation empowered the village authorities to handle the social, cultural and legal affairs at the village level with great degree of freedom. But the Regulation does not clearly specify the structure of village authorities. The 1945 Regulation divides offences into two categories- heinous and non-heinous. The crimes of non-heinous nature, such as Theft, including theft in a building; Mischief not being mischief by fire or any explosive substance; Simple hurt; Criminal trespass or house trespass; and Assault or using criminal force were allowed to be tried by the village authorities. They were also allowed to perform the police duty of apprehending culprits or suspected ones within their respective village jurisdiction.

Even with the introduction of modern participatory political institutions, the institution of *Gaon Bura* continues to function as effective instrument in management of village affairs alongside the modern institutions. The authority and respect this institution commanded have, however, decreased to a great extent because of combined factors like spread of western education, introduction of statutory Panchayat Raj system, urbanization, party and electoral politics, etc. It has lost its earlier traditional respect and command it had over the people. One of the main causes for the erosion of the efficacy of this institution is the selection and appointment of the *Gaon Buras* on political considerations. Whereas, traditionally *Gaon Buras* were selected and appointed on the basis of personal influence, wealth and status, the knowledge of customary laws and social practices, oratorical skill and experience in the system, the later mode of appointment has been tainted by political interference. There has been interference from the

elected Panchayati Raj members and political party leaders in the justice delivery system, leading to the degeneration of *Gaon Bura* system. Besides, acceptance of the more convenient substantive laws based on IPC and CrPC and increasing tendency of the people to give or drag all cases to courts above village authority are also responsible for the decay. It is also often found that, people with political and monetary clouts appeal to the higher courts against the decisions of *Gaon Buras*, the traditional village legal authority.

The *Gaon Buras* are important functionaries at the village level because simple, practical, immediate, inexpensive, fair, informal, accountable, accessible and approachable justice is possible without legal technicalities and official formalities. Above all, the real strength of this tribal institution is that, in the matters of judgment pronouncement, it is the public opinion that largely counts. Since the institution is decaying fast, its relevance and scope necessitate a revisit.

Objectives of the Study

- (i) to analyze the structure, functions, powers and position of the institution of *Gaon Bura*;
- (ii) to understand the interplay between the institution of *Gaon Bura* and modern statutory institutions;
- (iii) to investigate into people's perception and attitude towards the continuance of *Gaon Bura* system as an effective justice delivery institution;
- (iv) to understand the factors responsible for degeneration of the institution of *Gaon Bura*; and
- (v) to examine the scope and relevance of the institution of the *Gaon Bura*.

Hypotheses

The study is based on the following hypothetical premises:

- (i) there is declining trend in the powers and position of the institution of *Gaon Bura*;
- (ii) the structure and functions of the institution of *Gaon Bura* have undergone

- tremendous changes because of external interventions;
- (iii) the people's perception and attitude towards the continuance of *Gaon Bura* system as a justice delivery institution is discouraging;
 - (iv) there has been gradual degeneration of the institution of *Gaon Bura* because of variety of reasons; and
 - (iv) the institution of the *Gaon Bura* will have its own relevance if timely corrective steps are taken to revitalize it.

Methodology

The area (universe) of the study is the Ziro Valley of Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh, inhabited exclusively by the Apatanis. The relevant data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. In-depth and informal interviews and interactions and participant observation were the main tools and techniques employed in this study.

For the study, we interviewed the traditional leaders, including the priests, members of the village councils, the village elders; the *Gaon Buras*, the *Katokis* (Political Interpreters) and the Administrators (both former and present); Lawyers, Police Officers/Personnel, Journalists, Social Workers and PhD Scholars; Political Leaders, Members of Panchayats; and randomly selected Villagers. A total of 220 respondents proportionately distributed amongst all categories of the samples/respondents were selected in objective manner through random sampling method for administering the questionnaire-cum-interview schedules. Out of the total respondents, 23 *Head Gaon Buras*, 22 *Gaon Buras* and 11 *Gaon Buris* have been interviewed, selecting proportionately from every Apatani village.

Important primary data (collected through the informal interviews and interactions) were recorded in Voice Recorder; which is being preserved for record and future reference. Besides, the extensive field notes were maintained by the scholar as supplements. The secondary data were collected from all the available relevant official documents/records and both published and unpublished works were utilized whenever necessary. The documentary data were

collected from the local Newspaper Offices, Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Ziro, Lower Subansiri district and its erstwhile First Class Judicial Magistrate Office; the Department of Law and Judicial, Itanagar; the Commissioner (District/General Administration) Office, Itanagar; Guwahati High Court Itanagar Permanent Bench, Naharlagun; Law Research Institute (LRI), Gauhati High Court, Guwahati & State Central Library, Itanagar; District Library, Ziro; Directorate of Culture and Research, Itanagar and Library of Dera Natung Govt. College, Itanagar. A major part of the official documentary data were collected by accessing the official files of erstwhile First Class Judicial Magistrate Office under Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Lower Subansiri district, Ziro. Also secondary data in the form of booklets, journals, pamphlets and others especially for chapter-I were collected from Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Itanagar, State Gazetteer Office, Itanagar, District Statistical Office, Ziro and Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Itanagar.

Review of Literature

Democracy in NEFA by Verrier Elwin (1965), which is based on secondary source, gives a descriptive account of most of the tribal councils in Arunachal Pradesh. The book briefly describes the structure and functions of the Village Council system of the Apatanis but no mention is made about the *Gaon Bura* system.

Two works of Haimendorf: *The Apatanis and their Neighbors* (1962) and *A Himalayan Tribe- From Cattle to Cash* (1980) are one of the significant anthropological studies on Apatani Tribe. These studies understand the role and composition of *Buliang* as an institution to ensure peace in Apatani society. However, it appears that he misunderstood the structure of *Buliang*. He divides *Buliang* into three categories: *Ajang* (young), *Yapa* (youth) and *Akha* (old) *Buliangs*. *Buliang* is one though it may be represented by people of different ages. There may be *Ajang Buliangs* representing a lineage after the death of their fathers. Generally, a clan is represented by more than one *Buliangs* and in strict sense of term they are not the representatives of the clan but the representatives of respective lineages.

Tribal Village Councils of Arunachal Pradesh, edited by Pandey, et.al. (1999) is the study of various tribal councils. The authors of the book are mostly the indigenous tribal writing their own system. But the tribal administrative and political systems are not studied

separately. In this study, more emphasis is on the changes brought about in the village councils because of introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions.

In his book, *Dynamics of Tribal Local Polity and Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh* (1991), Sanjay Dubey while highlighting the different types of the traditional village councils of almost all the tribes in the state gives a slight reference to the institution of *Gaon Bura* and its declining trend.

The Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh (1993) by Takhe Kani gives an original account of the institution of *Buliang* of the Apatanis. It also makes a brief reference to the institution of *Gaon Bura*, saying that it has relegated the traditional village council into background.

Political Transition among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh: A Case Study of the Apatanis (2001) which is an unpublished Ph.D. Thesis by Pura Tado makes an empirical study in detail about the *Buliang* system in almost all its aspects. However, the focus of the study is on the impact of the Panchayati governing bodies on the traditional village council system (the *Buliang* system) of the Apatanis and makes brief reference about the *Gaon Bura* system.

A Guideline for Appointment of Gaon Bura (2001) which was issued by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh deals about mode of appointment and selection, qualification/disqualification, powers and responsibilities and remuneration of *Gaon Bura* and Head *Gaon Bura*.

Report of the Committee on Justice Delivery System Prevalent in Traditional Method of the Institution of Gaon Bura (2007) lays down a number of recommendations to revitalize the institution of *Gaon Bura* in the state as a whole. It identifies the village council with village authority (the *Gaon Bura*).

The *Nikung Dapo*(2010) (The Customary Laws of the Apatanis) by *Nikung Dapo* Committee, Ziro and published by Apatani Cultural and Literary Society (ACLS), Ziro, is compilation of the customary laws of the Apatanis in modified form in the form of a booklet. As per the recommendation of the Committee, a village authority shall consist of the following

members: (i) *Gaon Bura*-5 members, (ii) *Buliangs*-3 members, (iii) Women representatives-2 members and (iv) Legal Expert/Educated persons of concerned village-1 member.

Organization of the Study

The present study is organized into five chapters as mentioned below:

Chapter I: Introduces the study and gives a profile of Lower Subansiri district and Arunachal Pradesh in general and Apatanis of Ziro valley in particular as setting/universe of the study.

Chapter II (The *Buliang* – a traditional institution): Analyses the origin, types, organization, structure, leadership pattern, role/functions (politico-judicial & socio-religious), characteristic features and decline of the institution of *Buliang*.

Chapter III (*Gaon Buras: Background and Workings*): Objectively deals with the background and workings of the traditional statutory, legal and executive village authority-the *Gaon Buras/Buris* – with reference to the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945.

Chapter IV (*Gaon Bura: Relevance and Scope*): Deals about the actual role, nature, working, status, powers/position, functions, decline/degeneration of the Village Authority over the years and its people's perception, relevance, scope and necessary revitalization through analysis, discussion and interpretation of the Results (Data) obtained through the field survey.

Chapter V (Conclusion): Presents and summarizes the findings, suggestions and conclusion.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH – A PROFILE

To study the administrative justice system of a group/an area it presupposes an understanding of the political and socio-economic milieu of the area under study. Therefore, a profile of Arunachal Pradesh, District of Lower Subansiri and its headquarters Ziro; where the Apatani community are the permanent inhabitants; shall be briefly analyzed here-in as setting of the study.

Arunachal Pradesh, the first Indian soil to greet the rising Sun is the proud 24th state of the Union Republic of India which attained Union Territory status on 20th January 1972. At the same time its present nomenclature of Arunachal Pradesh too was changed from then known as North East Frontier Agency (NEFA in short). The then Arunachal Pradesh comprised of five districts of Kameng, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Subansiri; named after all its bigger rivers. The total number of districts has risen to twenty one (as on 10-07-2014). Arunachal Pradesh acquired a fresh political identity when the status of full-fledged statehood was conferred on 20th February, 1987.

Location

Arunachal Pradesh is situated in the extreme North Eastern part of India approximately between 26°30' and 29°30' North latitude and 91°30' and 97°30' East longitude. It is a beautiful mountainous territory with high hills and valleys. Arunachal Pradesh has a long international boundary. It borders with Bhutan for 160 kilometers to the west, with China for long 1,080 kilometers to the north and northeast with the McMohan line somehow defining the international boundary and with Myanmar for 440 kilometers to the east.

Arunachal Pradesh is the largest state area-wise in the north-east region, even larger than Assam which is the most populous state. It stretches from snowy mountains in the north to the plains of the Brahmaputra valley of Assam in the south. Area of the state is 83,743 square kilometers; which accounts for 2.73 per cent of the total area of India. In the state, there are 27 Census towns as per provisional 2011 Census of India and 3863 inhabited villages according to 2001 Census.

Population

Culturally, there are over 20 major tribes and a large number of sub-tribes inhabiting in Arunachal Pradesh speaking about seventy dialects; all belonging to Indo-Mongoloid racial stock.

According to provisional Census 2011 of India, the total population of Arunachal Pradesh is 1382611 persons; which consists of 720232 males and 662379 females. Its density of population is 17 persons per square kilometer. Decennial growth rate of the population (2001-2011)

is 25.92 per cent. The literate population (excluding 0-6 year age group) is 789943 persons; of which, 454532 are males and 335411 are females.

According to the 2001 Census of India, the total, rural population in Arunachal Pradesh is 870087 persons and urban population is 227881. The total scheduled tribe population is 705158 persons. The total numbers of workers are 482902 persons including 279300 cultivators.

As per the provisional 2011 Census, the sex ratio of Arunachal Pradesh is 920 Females per 1000 Males. Table 1.1 shows the Sex Ratio detail of the state from 1961 to 2011.

Table: 1.1 The Sex Ratio of Arunachal Pradesh 1961-2011

Year	Sex Ratio
1961	894
1971	861
1981	862
1991	859
2001	901
2011	920

Source: Arunachal Pradesh at a Glance 2011, p.3, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar-791113.

Economy and land ownership

Agriculture is the mainstay of the people. The economy of the people is directly influenced by its topography. The slash and burn type of shifting cultivation, popularly called Jhum, is widely practiced in the state. Traditionally the permanent cultivation is done by the tribes like Apatani, Khamti and Singpho, etc.

The ownership of land or land holding pattern varies from tribe to tribe. Generally, the three categories of land ownership patterns exist in the state: land owned by individuals, land owned by clans and land owned by villages.

(i) Industry: Modern industry practically did not exist in Arunachal Pradesh. Because of the initiatives of the central and state Governments, as on March 31, 2010, there are 1305 numbers of village enterprise and SSI (Small Scale Industry) units registered permanently (functioning) and 16 Medium enterprise Industries in the state. And the total, numbers of employment in these industries is 20273 persons and investment made during 2008-10 in the same is Rs.215084905.

(ii) Occupations and trade: Traditionally the people have cottage industries. They now pursue many vocations including industry, business and contracts to make their living. Above all, a large chunk of people earn their livelihood by taking up Government services as their vocations.

In the olden days, Arunachal Pradesh had trade link with Tibet, China and erstwhile Burma but this border trade has died out gradually and now the main trade link is with the plains of Assam and rest of the country. The original traditional ornaments and jewelries preserved and cherished by the people were bartered from those countries.

(iii) Forest and minerals: Arunachal Pradesh has total forest area of 68,847 square kilometers consisting of 82.21% of area of the state as per Satellite Survey of December, 1988 to February, 1999. As on 31/03/2011, the total notified forest area in the state is 51540 square kilometers; which covers about 61.5% of the total geographical area of Arunachal Pradesh. The total forest revenue earned by the state government during the 2010-11 financial year period is rupees 1087.87 lakhs.

Arunachal Pradesh is home to numerous plant and animal forms. The important forest types found are Tropical evergreen, Semi evergreen, Deciduous, Pine, Temperate, Alpine and Grassland etc. The state is the richest bio-geographical province in eastern Himalayan zone and is considered as one of the 12 mega diversity Hot Spots in the world. It has 20% species of country's fauna, 4500 species of flowering plants, 400 species of pteridophytes, 23 species of conifers, 35 species of bamboos, 20 species of canes, 52 Rhododendron species & more than 500 species of orchids.¹

The important mineral deposits in the state are Dolomite, Graphite, coal, quartzite, limestone, crude oil, Natural gas, Yellow Ochre, Marble, etc.

However, in the development of forestry sector the state has to strike a balance between two seemingly conflicting goals, one to increase their contributions to socio-economic development, and second, to maintain ecological & environmental security.

(iv) Textile, Handloom and Handicrafts: Textile, handloom and handicrafts have also great potential in the state. As on 31/03/2011, the Department of Textile and Handicraft, Government of Arunachal Pradesh runs 27 numbers of craft centers, 61 numbers of weaving units, 31 numbers of sericulture demonstration centers, 6 numbers of handloom development centre and quality dyeing units, 18 numbers of emporiums and 6 numbers of show rooms-cum-sale counters.² The annual sale proceeds and annual production value from these industrial units is impressive one. Besides, there is a progressive private cottage industry of handloom, textile and handicraft (including weaving, knitting and necklace-making) amongst the women in the state.

Education

Education made a humble beginning in Arunachal Pradesh not long in the past. At the time of India's independence, there were officially three primary schools only. When the first Census was conducted in 1961, the literacy rate of the state was recorded at 7.23%; which has increased to 66.95 per cent in 2011 (provisional Census 2011).

Now Arunachal Pradesh has 3172 number of different categories of schools including 118 numbers of Higher Secondary Schools. The total enrollment in all these schools is 419811 (up to academic session 2011-12).³ These schools include a school for the physically challenged/differently able, the Sangey Laden Sports Academy at Chimpu (Itanagar), Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendra Vidyalayas, Vivekanda Kendra Vidyalayas and those run by various organizations such as R. K .Mission and Donyi Polo Mission. Table 1.2 shows the literacy rate of Arunachal Pradesh in comparison with all India since 1951.

Table: 1.2 Literacy Rate of Arunachal Pradesh in comparison with all India since 1951

Sl. No	Year	Arunachal Pradesh (in percentage)	All India (in percentage)
1	1951	---	18.33
2	1961	7.23	28.30
3	1971	11.29	34.45
4	1981	25.54	43.53
5	1991	41.59	52.23
6	2001	54.74	65.38
7	2011	66.95	74.04

Source: Basic Information on Higher & Technical Education in Arunachal Pradesh 2011-12, Directorate of Higher & Technical Education, Govt. of A.P., Itanagar.

In the field of higher education, Arunachal Pradesh is making a rapid stride; notably in the decade last. The history of higher education in the state began with the opening of Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat on the 4th July, 1964 with total enrolment of 42 students. Now, there are 31 numbers of higher educational institutions including 16 degree colleges. (See Table 1.3)

Table: 1.3 Number and Type of Institutions of Higher and Technical Education in Arunachal Pradesh as on 31st December, 2011

Sl. No.	Type of Institution	Number
1	University	01
2	Deemed University	01
3	National Institute of Technology	01
4	Degree College	16
5	Professional/Technical College	10
6	Polytechnic College	02
TOTAL		31

Source: Basic Information on Higher & Technical Education in Arunachal Pradesh 2011-12, Directorate of Higher & Technical Education, Govt. of A.P., Itanagar.

In the absence of sufficient number of institutions of higher education in our own state, deserving Arunachalee candidates are nominated and sponsored to institutes in other states by the state government every year for pursuing courses of studies in medical, engineering, agricultural, veterinary, forestry and various other fields of studies by giving stipend, book grant and scholarship. Such programs of studies have benefited many over the years.

Political Evolution

According to the provisional 2011 Census, there are 16 Districts, 29 Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters, 10 Sub-Divisional Officer Headquarters, 28 Extra Assistant Commissioner Headquarters, 110 Circles, 27 Census Towns and 99 Community Development/Integrated Rural Development Blocks in Arunachal Pradesh. There are 3863 inhabited Villages, 204953 occupied residential houses and 215574 Households in the state as per 2001 Census.⁴

Arunachal Pradesh was once an un-administered land; neither ruled by Ahom kings nor reigned by British regime. It attained its full-fledged statehood status through different stages of political and administrative development.

The erstwhile North East Frontier Tract/North East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh) was part of the greater Assam State until January 21, 1972 although administratively it had a separate entity. A formal pattern of administration of the area, which has come to be known as Arunachal Pradesh, started with the promulgation of Notification in 1914 by the then Government of India's Foreign and Political Department. The Notification prescribed that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 would extend to the hills inhabited or frequented by the frontier tribesmen. With the extension of the Regulation of 1880 the hill areas were separated from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of the greater Assam and made into separate area called "North East Frontier Tract" came into being. This tract might be considered as the nucleus of the territorial and jurisdictional pattern of present Arunachal Pradesh.

This Frontier Tract was under the administrative and political control of the then Governor/Chief Commissioner of Assam till 1937. It was administered by Governor of Assam under section 92 of the Government of India Act, 1935 through the Political Officers and the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur; acting in his discretion independently of his cabinet from 1937 to 1947. Since 1947, the area was administered by the Governor of Assam on the advice of his cabinet and as per his discretion till 25th January 1950 as per India (Provisional Constitution) Order of 15th August, 1947.

When the Indian Constitution came into force on 26th January 1950, this area was administered by the Governor of Assam as agent of the President of India and in his discretion as per provisions of Paragraph 18 of the sixth schedule of the Constitution.

As per section 31(a) of the North-East Frontier Areas (Administration) Regulation, 1954, the area under the North East Frontier Tract (NEFT) was renamed as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). Boundaries of the existing administrative units too were reorganized and the six Frontier Divisions were created. Out of the six, the Tuensang Frontier Division was separated from NEFA in 1957 and was transferred to the newly constituted administrative unit then

called Naga Hills-Tuensang Area (now Nagaland). As per North-East Frontier Agency (Administration) Regulation, 1965, the remaining five Divisions were renamed as Districts.

The NEFT/NEFA was administered under the charge of Ministry of External Affairs of India till 1965. It was administered under the charge of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India from 1965 to 1967.

Meanwhile, in the year 1962 China invaded India; after which NEFA came to limelight and the Government of India came to realize its strategic importance. Since that year the Government of India changed its administrative policy towards NEFA and decided to pay especial and continuous attention towards the overall development of the same (now Arunachal Pradesh).

Popular participation is involved in the administration of Arunachal Pradesh since the enforcement of the Panchayati Raj in 1969. The Panchayati Raj was introduced by enacting the NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation, 1967; which was recommended by Daying Ering Committee. The newly introduced Panchayati Raj was a four-tier one, namely; Gram Panchayat at village level, Anchal Samiti at block level, Zila Parishad at district level and indirectly-elected Agency Council at the apex-the Agency/territory level.

The Agency Council was changed as Pradesh Council in 1972. It became the provisional Legislative Assembly of Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh in 1975; out of which a provisional Council of Ministers was constituted. The first ever general election to the Union Territory Legislature was held in February, 1977. Subsequently, Arunachal Pradesh which was Union Territory since 20th January, 1972, was elevated to the status of a full-fledged state on 20th February, 1987. At present there is a sixty-member Legislative Assembly in Arunachal Pradesh which represents the 1382611 population.

LOWER SUBANSIRI DISTRICT – A PROFILE

Location

The Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh is located approximately between Longitude 92°40' E and 94°21' E and Latitude 26°55' N and 28°21' N. It is bounded on the North by Kurung Kumey district and a portion of Upper Subansiri district, on the South by Papum

Pare district and State of Assam, on the East by West Siang district and some part of Upper Subansiri district and on the west by Kurung Kumey and Papum Pare districts.

Lower Subansiri has an approximate area of 3460 square kilometer with 226 villages as on 31st March, 2010. The headquarters of the district is Ziro; which is situated in the beautiful Apatani valley. Some of the important rivers which traverse through the area are Ranganadi, Khru (Kuru), Kamla (Kiime), Panior (Panyu), Pange, Kiile, etc. Some of the places of tourist interest in it are Ziro, Talley Valley, Ranganadi Hydro Electrical Project at Yazali, etc. The highest peak in the same is Talley Valley which is about 10,000 feet in height from mean sea level. The Apatani valley in the district, where the headquarters Ziro is located, is very fertile land, though comparatively it is much smaller in area than those of neighboring tribes.

Population

According to the provisional 2011 Census, Lower Subansiri has the total population of 82839; of which 41935 are males and 40904 are females. The total child population (0-6 years of age group) of the district is 9991 out of which 5074 are males and 4917 are females. Total literate population in the same is 55602 persons of which 30374 constitute the males and 25228 comprise the females. Total population of the district is 5.99 per cent of total population of Arunachal Pradesh. The literacy rate of the district has increased to 67.12 per cent in 2011 from 48.40 per cent in 2001.⁵

As per the 2001 census the sex ratio of Lower Subansiri is 960 females per 1000 males. It has low density of population of 16 persons per square kilometer.

The district is covered by three Community Development (CD) blocks namely; Ziro-I, Ziro-II and Tamen-Raga. Ziro-I CD block is the most literate one and has the highest sex ratio of 1053 Females per 1000 Males according to 2001 census.

Indigenous Populace: Apatani and Nyishi are the indigenous tribes of Lower Subansiri and like other Abo-Tani tribes they claim to be the descendents of legendary ancestor *Abo-Tani*. They believe to have migrated to their present places from Tibet area. They follow *Donyi-Polo* religion; however they practice animism. They are of the belief that misfortune or suffering is inflicted by certain malevolent spirits. Therefore, various offerings including sacrifice are made to

appease the malevolent spirits. Of late Christianity has been embraced by many especially the younger generations.

Traditionally Apatanis and Nyishis maintain sound trade, commercial, economic and political relations either individually or in group. Such relationship is called as *Gyotu Ajing* or *Baro-Manyang*; which is tied by exchange of ornaments or *Mithuns*. Such betrothed friends help their counterpart by providing shelter and moral and material supports during social and political crises of an individual.⁶

The Nyishis

The Nyishis are the most populous tribe in Lower Subansiri. According to Nyishi mythology, *Dodum*, *Dol* and *Dopum*; considered as the forefathers of the three clan-groups of Nyishis respectively; are believed to be the descendents of *Abo Tani*

The Nyishis have the long-sized traditional houses consisting of several hearths in which joint family stays. Their houses are widely located by the hill-sides in the form of small scattered villages. Polygamy is widely practiced amongst the Nyishis and traditionally *Mithun* is an indispensable component of the bride price for marriage.⁷

Traditionally the Nyishis observe a number of ceremonies and rituals. *Nyokum* is their famous festival celebrated in February every year. During *Nyokum* the priests pray to the Supreme Being for days for obtaining divine blessings. The *Rikam-Pada* is the most popular song as well as dance of the Nyishis.

Basketry is a popular handicraft among the Nyishi man folks. The woman counterparts too are skilled in weaving. The Nyishis have consumption-based rural economy. The *Jhum* (Slash and burn type of shifting cultivation) is their widely practiced form of cultivation. They are skilled in rearing *Mithuns*, cows, pigs, goats and fowls, etc. Traditionally they like hunting; which is another source of livelihood for them.⁸

Nyishis have *Gingdung* (Intermediaries) system of traditional village council; which is invoked and constituted as and when situation demands. The members of *Gindung* are called *Nyats*; who are influential men in the villages. They have sound traditional legal knowledge and are skilled in handling and settling disputes. Settlement of cases is done through the application

of traditional and customary laws. Fines are the common form of compensations for various offences. However, most of the *Nyats* have been recognized and appointed by the Government as *Gaon Bura*; who usually take a leading role in settlement of disputes.⁹

Economy

Agriculture is the mainstay of indigenous people of the district. They have consumption-based rural economy. Their main traditional sources of livelihood are agriculture, forestry, rearing of livestock and fowls, cultivation of vegetables, fruits and tubers. Rice, maize, millet and potato may be considered as their staple food. Jhum cultivation (Slash and burn type of shifting cultivation) is widely practiced in Nyishi areas. The permanent cultivation in the form of wet rice cultivation (WRC) is practiced especially in the Apatani valley. A profile of the economy is provided here-under:

(i) Production: The climate and soil of Lower Subansiri is conducive for cultivation of paddy, maize, millet, wheat, potato, chilly, ginger, pulses, sugarcane and horticultural and vegetable crops. The main agricultural produce of the district are rice, maize, millet, potato, vegetables, wheat and cabbage, etc. The main horticultural produces are apple, pears, peach, orange, pine-apple and plum, etc. besides production of fish and bamboo shoot and its various products.

(ii) Food Habits: Traditionally the tribal in the district sustain themselves through many other sources of food. Such traditional sources of food include livestock and fowls; edible wild vegetables, fruits and tubers; edible insects/flyes, e.g., cricket and grasshopper; certain small edible creatures, e.g., local prawn, shrimp and silkworm; bamboo shoot and its varieties of products; various eatable wild tree crops; certain edible creepers and so on besides medicinal plants, hunting and fishing.

(iii) Forestry: Lower Subansiri area has a treasure of numerous varieties of trees and plants including cane, creepers and dyes besides rich fauna. Forest supplies the people necessary materials for construction of houses, making furniture and household items, repairing of fences, fuel woods, etc. in addition to various kinds of foods. Many varieties of bamboos are abundant in the area. A great prospect exists for the forest and bamboo-based industry in the district.

(iv) Flora and fauna: The flora in Lower Subansiri area is of (a) Tropical, (b) Sub-tropical, (c) Temperate and (d) Alpine types. Important forest species in the area are Hollock, Jululi, Bahra, Amari, Sam, Champa, Bluepine, Simuli, Dhuna, Bola, Halipolia, Makrisal, etc. Important fauna are leopard, large Indian civet, spotted linsang, sambar, barking deer, Indian bison, etc. Important birds found are babblers, bulbul, hornbill, pigeons, wood-duck, some pheasant birds, etc.¹⁰

(v) Industry: The people in the district have traditional cottage industries. Spinning, weaving, carpet making, dyeing using indigenous dyes, bamboo and cane works, making of local head gears, etc. are part of their traditional industry. Such industry has economic, commercial and identity value. It is an emphasis of the Government and the intellectuals all through to revive and revitalize the traditional industries. An effort towards this direction was made by the Government long back when the first Cottage Industry Training-cum-Production Centre (now renamed as Craft Centre) was established at Ziro in 1953. Besides teaching weaving, spinning, knitting, carpentry, cane and bamboo works and pottery; black smithy, bell metal works, sawing, tailoring, soap making, etc. are trained in the Craft Centre.¹¹

Education

Education in Lower Subansiri district made a humble beginning after the independence of India only. Its scenario has been changing rapidly from a Lower Primary school established in 1949 at Ziro as the first school. As on 31-03-2009, the government of Arunachal Pradesh maintains 142 educational institutions which include 72 Inter-Village, 56 Middle, 9 Secondary and 4 Higher Secondary schools in Lower Subansiri in addition to a recently-established degree college at Yachuli. (See Table 1.4)

Table: 1.4 Number of Government of Arunachal Pradesh maintained Educational Institutions by Type in Lower Subansiri as on 31st March, 2009

(Unit in No.)

Sl. No.	Type of Institution	Total Institutions
1	Pre-Primary School	00
2	Inter Village School	72
3	Middle School	56
4	Secondary School	09
5	Higher Secondary School	04
7	College	01
8	Total	142

Source: District Statistical Hand Book of Lower Subansiri District 2009-2010, p.13, Office of District Statistical Officer, Lower Subansiri District, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.

Non-governmental organizations/agencies are also making a significant contribution in the field of education and run 32 educational institutions. They include 3 Pre-Primary, 12 Primary, 9 Middle and 7 Secondary schools besides a recent degree college called Saint Claret College at Salalya, old Ziro. (See Table 1.5)

Table: 1.5 Number of Non-Government of Arunachal Pradesh run Educational Institutions by Type in Lower Subansiri as on 31st March, 2009

(Unit in No.)

Sl. No.	Type of Institution	Total Institutions
1	Pre-Primary School	3
2	Primary School	12
3	Middle School	9
4	Secondary School	7
5	Higher Secondary School	Nil
6	College	1
7	Total	32

Source: *District Statistical Hand Book of Lower Subansiri District 2009-2010, p.14, Office of District Statistical Officer, Lower Subansiri District, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.*

Administrative Background

The area which covered the present Lower Subansiri district became a part of Lakhimpur Frontier Tract of the North East Frontier Tract under the Notification issued in 1914 by Government of India. By another public Notification of March, 1919 the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract along with the administrative unit called the Western Section was renamed as the Balipara Frontier Tract.

In 1946, the “Subansiri Area” was carved out from the Balipara Frontier Tract; with North Lakhimpur as its headquarters. The Subansiri Area was renamed as the Subansiri Frontier Division in 1954 and Ziro was made its permanent headquarters. The Subansiri Frontier Division was under the Ministry of External Affairs of India and its overall in-charge was Political Officer.

On September 1, 1965, the Frontier Division was renamed as the Subansiri district, the Political Officer was re-designated as Deputy Commissioner, Additional Political Officer as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Political Officer (I) as Assistant Commissioner, Assistant Political Officer (II) as Extra Assistant Commissioner and Base Superintendent as Circle Officer respectively and the Minister of Home Affairs, Government of India took over the administrative charge of NEFA.

On 13th May, 1980, Subansiri district was bifurcated into Lower and Upper Subansiri districts under section 4 of the Arunachal Pradesh (Re-organization of Districts) Act No. 3 of 1980. Out of Lower Subansiri Papumpare district was created on September 22, 1992. By a Notification of the Govt. vide No.DAD-30/98 dated 16th April, 2001. Kurung Kumey district was formed by division of the remaining Lower Subansiri district. Again, one more district called Kra Daadi was carved out from Kurung Kumey district. Hence, the erstwhile Subansiri district has become five, in the process, namely, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, Papumpare, Kurung Kumey and Kra Daadi districts.

Administrative set-up

The Deputy Commissioner is vested with the executive magisterial power as District Magistrate (DM) and maintains law and order in the district; who is assisted by his supporting administrative officers and officials, village authorities (the *Gaon Buras*) and the police force. The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 authorizes the village authority to settle all civil matters and certain criminal matters within its jurisdiction. However, for all matters, being vested with judicial power, the Deputy Commissioner as Session Judge and other administrative officers as Judicial Magistrates have over-all jurisdiction under the supervision of the Guwahati High Court. The Guwahati High Court holds the appellate and the revision authority.

The Deputy Commissioner looks after the overall developmental activities of the district with the co-operation of all other departments, the panchayati representatives, the *Gaon Bura* and the people in general. A single line administration is practiced for maintaining cohesion amongst various development departments with the administration for the speedy development of the area.

The whole district of Lower Subansiri is divided into three Sub-Divisions, namely, Ziro, Raga and Yachuli. The Ziro Sub-Division comprises of the two circles, namely, Ziro

and Old Ziro. The Raga Subdivision consists of the three circles, namely, Raga, Kamporijo and Dollungmukh. The Yachuli Sub-Division has the three circles, namely, Yachuli, Pistana and Yazali.

Besides, the district is covered by the three Community Development (CD) blocks, namely, Ziro-I, Ziro-II and Tamen-Raga. The Ziro-I Community Development block is almost co-terminus with the Apatani valley. It comprises of two administrative circles namely; Ziro and Old Ziro circles.

The Ziro Sub-Division is directly under the charge of Deputy Commissioner whereas Additional Deputy Commissioner is the in-charge of the Yachuli Sub-Division and the Raga Sub-Division. Circle Officer is the in-charge of all the Circles. Table 1.6 below shows the detail administrative set up of Lower Subansiri.

Table: 1.6 Administrative set-up of Lower Subansiri in 2009-2010

District	Sub-divisions	Circles	Year of opening	Administrative heads
1	2	3	4	5
LOWER SUBANSIRI	ZIRO	1. Ziro	1952	Deputy Commissioner
		2. Old Ziro	2009	Circle Officer
	YACHULI	1. Yachuli	1993	Addl. Deputy Commissioner
		2. Pistana	1994	Circle Officer
		3. Yazali	2008	Circle Officer
	RAGA	1. Raga	1951	Addl. Deputy Commissioner
		2. Dollungmukh	1994	Circle Officer
		3. Kamporijo	1999	Circle Officer

Source: *District Statistical Hand Book of Lower Subansiri District, p.1, 2009-2010, Office of District Statistical Officer, Lower Subansiri District, Ziro-791120 (Arunachal Pradesh).*

The Apatanis

Apatanis are the natives of the valley in and around Ziro-the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. It lies at an altitude of about 1,524 meters and at about the Longitude 93°48'E to 93°52'E and the Latitude 27°32'N to 27°37'N. Its approximate arable land area is 32 sq. km. lying between the valleys of *Kuru* (Khru) and *Kwme* (Kamla) on the North and *Panyu* (Panior) on the South. The Ziro valley is easily approachable by road from the state capital Itanagar by a three-four hours motor journey.

The Apatani valley is fringed by the green hills and the principal rivers which traverse in the same are Swkhe, Kwle and Pange, etc. Some of the places of interest in it are Siro (Swro), Pange, Talley valley, Shiva linga at Kardo forest, Pine groove at Old Ziro area, Tarring fish farms, the green paddy fields in the valley, Dillo Polyang-Mani Polyang area, M/s Nanakoo Orchid Farm (located at half a kilometer from Hapoli on Hapoli-Talley valley road), District Industries Centre, District museum, etc. The beautiful Talley valley is situated at an altitude of 2438 meters to the 32 kilometers north-east of Ziro. It is covered with dense forests marked by giant silvery fir trees.

Origin and Migration

Abo-Tani group of tribes constitute a major chunk of populace in Arunachal Pradesh. The Apatanis, Nyishis, Sulungs or Puroiks, Tagins, Adis, Galos and Mishmis comprise the *Abo-Tani* tribes. These Abo-Tani tribes believe themselves to be aborigines of the land (Arunachal Pradesh).

As other *Abo-Tani* tribes, the Apatanis trace their descent from their mythical ancestor, *Abo-Tani*. According to myths of the Apatanis, *Abo-Tani* had many wives. He had many offsprings in different forms. The first son in human form was given birth to by one of his wives called *Danyi Gartw Tamang*. Name of the first human son was *Ato Neha* from whom the Apatanis believe to have descended.¹²

The Apatanis originally lived in seven large compact villages, namely; Hari, Hangu (Hong), Hwja (Hija), Bwla (Bulla), Bamin-Michi, Mwdang Tage (Mudang Tage) and Dutta. In due course of time the numbers of village has increased to more than thirty. Legend has it that the forefathers of the present Apatanis had migrated to their present place from the *Tang-Tsangpo* valley

in Tibet, through various routes. In the meantime, they were settled at Talley Valley for some generations in the remote past before coming to the present place of habitat.

Population

According to a rough estimate total population of the Apatanis is around 26000. However, more Apatanis stay outside their valley all over the state pursuing better vocations.¹³ The Apatani society is sub-divided into number of clans residing in different clan sectors. However, all of the Apatanis have the consciousness of common ethnic identity. Their language which actually is a dialect, comes under the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan family according to study carried out by Linguistic Survey of India.

Education

The Apatanis are one of the most literate groups in Arunachal Pradesh. In proportion to their population the Apatani tribe has a high percentage of government officers and officials under the state government.

Ziro-I C.D. Block of Lower Subansiri consists of the Ziro Circle and the Old Ziro Circle. It is almost co-terminus with the Apatani dwelling area. The local inhabitants of the Ziro-I C.D. Block are mostly Apatanis. To have a rough idea of the educational facilities available to the Apatanis, different types of educational institution existing in the Ziro-I C. D. Block as on 31-03-2010 are shown in Table 1.7.

Table: 1.7 Number of Educational Institutions by Type in Ziro-I C. D. Block as on 31-03-2010

(Unit in No.)

Sl. No.	Type of Educational Institution	Total Institutions
1	Pre-Primary School (Attached to Primary School)	21
2	Inter Village School	0
3	Middle School	20
4	Secondary School	3
5	Higher Secondary School	2
6	College	1
7	Adult Education Centre	-
8	Central School	0
9	Private School	NA
	Total:	47

Source: Block Level Statistics of Lower Subansiri District 2009-2010, p.27, Office of District Statistical Officer, Lower Subansiri District, Ziro-791120 (Arunachal Pradesh).

Festivals and religion

Festivals, ceremonies and rituals are part and parcel in the life of the Apatani community. *Dree, Myoko, Murung* and *Yapung* are their major festivals; which are basically celebrated to ensure: bumper harvest and prosperity and well being of all humankind and their livestock. Bumper harvest is expected by seeking protection from the agricultural deities to their crops/grains from all sorts of negative elements like pests, hailstones and storm, etc. An interesting comment maintains that there is no single instance of violence in any *Myoko* period although alcoholic drinks flow during the same like water.

Most of the Apatanis are loyal followers of the *Danyi-Pwlo* faith; who pray to and invoke their God-Moon (*Ato Pwlo*) and Goddess-Sun (*Ayo Danyi*). Traditionally, they believe that a misfortune or a suffering is caused by certain malevolent spirits. The malevolent spirits are tried to be appeased and warded off by making various forms of offerings/sacrifices. Of late many of the Apatanis have adopted Christianity especially the younger generations; which is generally attributed to missionary activities.

Marriage

The Apatanis have a patriarchal form of society. Their marriage is based on the rule of clan-exogamy and traditionally tribe/class-endogamy. However, because of education and modernity the belief now is different among the younger generations and intellectuals. Monogamy as the societal norm is usual practice. The Apatani society is liberal towards sex life. Marriage is usually arranged either at the instance of the young couple themselves or by way of negotiation. In the traditional past, a marriage was fixed up by reading omen through chicken liver.

Economy, property rights and food habits

Unlike most of the tribes in the state, the Apatanis have a stable agrarian economy, producing mainly paddy. They are permanent type of both wet and dry manual cultivators. Their paddy fields are well developed and well irrigated by harnessing the various streams of the valley.

The Apatanis are famous in paddy-cum-fish culture. Under the initiative of the Government, they have included fish in their age old terraced wet rice cultivation; cultivating fish along with paddy in the same plot. This gives them a nutritious food and income supplement. The project which was started on experimental basis around 1966 turned out to be a big success. Apatanis have started commercial production of fish since the eighties.¹⁴ Also they obtain fish naturally occurring in the rivers and streams; some of which are considered sacred and have cultural value.

Animal husbandry is another popular occupation of some of the Apatanis. They are skilled in rearing *Mithuns* (*Bos Frontalis*) besides cows, pigs, goats, fowls and other

cattle. *Mithun*, the cultural animal of Arunachal Pradesh is reared in semi-wild condition. Once it enjoyed the privilege of the status of state animal.

A variety of bamboo is specific to Apatani valley; which is beautiful, straight and durable. Bamboo shoot of this variety is relished by all. A variety of pine tree is a plenty in the Apatani valley. These bamboos and pine trees in the valley are highly useful and have helped in augmenting economy of the people. "From the pine tree, the Apatanis use it for multifarious activities like..... Roofing of the house is also made use of by splitting the timber into fine thin layer sheet called *SANTHA*".¹⁵ Before the Supreme Court ban on non-forest timber operation, many Apatanis became rich through pine tree-timber business.

The specialties/delicacies of the Apatanis are such as what are locally called *Pike* and *Pila* (spicy dishes), *Hulyi yoh* (meat of preserved/dried bacon), *pengu pwta yoh* (meat of a special variety of regional wild bird), *ngwlyang* (a special variety of regional fish), etc. A black salt called *Tapyo* in Apatani is an indispensable item when alcoholic beverage is served in any important occasion.

Weaving, knitting and necklace making have become a successful industry amongst Apatani women. Their male counterparts too are skilled in various kinds of crafts and other handiworks. Some of the Apatanis have business acumen too. In-fact many have made their marks in business endeavors.

Unlike in other areas, the Apatanis could maintain the beautiful green forests in their surrounding mountains owing to the fact that they do not undertake slash and burn shifting cultivation. Normally nuclear families are prevalent in Apatani society. The inheritance of immovable ancestral property to a daughter is usually not sanctioned by customary law. However, there is a changing view current amongst the intellectuals in this regard. The eldest son gets the largest share of ancestral property.

The land ownership patterns of the Apatanis can be classified into three categories: 1.Land owned by individuals, 2.Clan-land and 3.Common Village-land.

Land ownership pattern of an individual Apatani on the basis of use is of following types:
i. *Balu* (Kitchen garden), ii. *Aji* (Wet rice field), iii. *Yorlu* (Kitchen garden located away from the

village), iv. *Bije* (Bamboo garden usually located near the village, v. *Saadi* (Plot of woodland located away from the village mainly growing pine trees) and vi. *Morey* (A large plot of woodland located farther away than a *Saadi*).

An offence related to violation of property rights is viewed very seriously by the Apatanis. A habitual thief in the traditional society was sure to meet with miserable ends, in-fact death. Slavery amongst them is non-existent now. Granaries of the people are situated at the outskirts of the villages for the fear of catching fire.

Traditional social practices

The *Patang* (Agricultural labor gang) system of Apatanis is highly beneficial one. To do agricultural works, they do not hire laborers from within or outside the Apatani valley. They form themselves a group of six to ten members of contemporary age group. Such group of persons was called “*Patang*”. The members of *Patang* make a reciprocal help to one another turn-wise in the agricultural works.

The traditional *Babo* game (a sort of aerial and daredevil acrobatics) among them is an interesting sport. “A remarkable game of acrobatics held at the time of the Mloko (*Myoko*) is renowned as *babo-bodu*. The game is performed on strong cane ropes attached to the top of poles, sometimes nearly 30 meters high and tightly tied to stakes at some distance in the ground. By pulling one of these ropes so as to make the pole swing, persons get themselves flung high up into the air where they perform thrilling acrobatic feats. This sport”¹⁶

Yelu Lisunwng of Apatani society is a surprising method of humiliating an enemy; the practice which is un-heard of anywhere. According to this, whoever squanders more property of his own, is supposed to humiliate the enemy challenger. This is a peculiar method of vindicating oneself when his honor is slighted by destructing one’s own properties. It is usually indulged by wealthy men of prominent social status and position; out of high personal ego. However, *Yelu Lisunwng* is banned now. It was banned by the rigorous movement of the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) in 1970’s.

Leg of certain serious offenders is kept locked under the hole of a heavy and hard wooden block. Such captive can be released after satisfactory negotiation only. Such captivity is called *Twpwer Parnwng* which is no more practiced now.

A traditional practice called *Mabo Lanwng* is done when a brother-in-law tortures somebody's sister. In this practice, the brother-in-law in question is captured and dragged to usually father-in-law's house and physically assaulted in an interesting way till satisfactory negotiation is obtained from the boy's side and promise never to repeat the act of torture to the sister is ensured. It has also become very less common now.

A kind of ceremonially betrothed friendship amongst the Apatanis called *Bwnwng-Ajing* was very helpful in early times in getting moral and material supports at the time of economic or political crisis as well as to conduct the cultural and religious ceremonies. Mihin Kaning writes, "*Biinii Ajing (Bwnwng Ajing)* was very helpful in early times. As and when fire accident occurs in a village; the respective *Biinii Ajings (Bwnwng Ajings)* rush to the village and help them with full heart. They collect cane, bamboos and thatches from any sources and build the house within a day or two".¹⁷

Even though the Apatanis have become part of the modern-day ways of life, their traditional culture and customs still retain their significance.

Political life

From the time immemorial the Apatanis have a democratic system of running their society through the institution of village council called *Buliang*. The *Buliang* administers justice and maintains corporate life in their valley. Peace in the valley is strengthened by *Dapo* (Peace Treaty). Though the office of a *Buliang* is normally hereditary, the persons of integrity, ability, wealth and status and social reputation are installed as members from respective clans. Sessions of the *Buliang* take place in a sacred public platform called *Lappang*.

The Administration appointed village authority to be called *Gaon Bura* under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 as amended from time to time. As a result, two similar entities of *Gaon Bura* and *Buliang* have come to exist. The functions of *Buliang* in judicial, political and economic fronts have been severely diluted; after the advent of

the similar institutions like Panchayati Raj and *Gaon Bura-Katoki*. Al-though, its position in socio-religious spheres continues to remain the same as before.

The 1945 Regulation provides for the appointment of Village Authorities (*Gaon Buras*) with judicial, (ordinary duties of) police, administrative and developmental responsibilities as representatives of the district administration. Responsibilities of the *Gaon Buras* are similar to role of *Buliang*. However, the institution of *Gaon Bura* is also visibly declining because of several factors.

In the recent past, Apatani Cultural and Literary Society (ACLS), Ziro, through its sincere and sustained efforts compiled, modified and documented the *Nikung Dapo* (Apatani Customary Law) to get formal recognition from Government after codification but the same is pending for the codification till now. Besides, slight change to the traditional structure vis-à-vis justice delivery system of the Apatanis was placed on record as proposal amongst the Apatani people by making a two-tier structure i.e. at the village level and at the pan-Apatani level. The judges in both the levels were to be derived from Advocate, Intellectual, Woman, *Gaon Bura* and *Buliang*. This modified or changed traditional body could not function successfully due to certain unavoidable reasons. In that context, Tanw *Supung Dukung* filled the vacuum as Apex/Appellate body in the matters of dispensation of justice for entire Apatani community to which ACLs and *Supung Buliang* Council have affiliated themselves. Meanwhile, the institution of *Gaon Bura/Buri* and the *Supung Buliang* Council both are functioning at lower levels in their own respective ways.

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Chapter-II

Buliang – a traditional institution

Introduction

Traditionally, the Apatanis organized themselves- legally and politically, through an institution called *Buliang*. It regulated the social, political and even economic and religious life of the Apatanis. *Buliang*, the representatives of clans or villages used to serve as a mechanism through which administration of justice was carried. The *Gaon Buras* appointed under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation (Regulation 1), 1945, have taken over most of the functions of the *Buliangs*.

Therefore, the scholar has thought it pertinent to present a brief idea about the *Buliang* so as to understand the role and relevance of the *Gaon Buras* and its interface with the traditional institution.

The houses of a clan in the Apatani society are constructed in same quarter of a village. Such clan-village is called *Hahlu* meaning a sub-village. This was beneficial in a tribal society in the olden days during socio-religious festivals, community works, raids or inter-family feuds. Such localization of families of kiths and kin in same place reflects the kinship consciousness and has got socio-economic advantage. For instance, it helps to form an inter-lineage labor gang called *Patang*¹.

Some big villages of the Apatanis have two divisions with its own nomenclature. Thus, Hangu (Hong) village consists of two sections namely *Nwchi* and *Nwtw*, Hwja (Hija) village of *Dwre* and *Hwja* and Bwla (Bulla) village of Reru, Tajang and Talyang-Kalung. Any original Apatani village is a clear and compact unit. Each village has many clans and sub-clans.

Formerly, no outside authority controlled the Apatani society and thus the same was politically independent. Under their only controlling-authority called *Buliang* all Apatani villages ensured their right on own land, forest or rivers in and around their valley. The *Buliang* maintains peace and tranquility in the society. A *Buliang* is usually proficient in customs, traditions and customary laws and has personal standing in the society. Due to a long

practice in the public sphere the *Buliangs* have acquired oratory skills, leadership quality and have influence on members of the society. Membership of the *Buliang* is inheritable and permanent.

The term *Buliang* altogether refers to two roles. One, it refers to an individual who primarily acts as a representative of own clan/clan group/village/village group in the council. Other, it refers to the village council comprising of all the individual *Buliangs*.

The *Buliang* acts more as an arbiter rather than a judge. They intervene in a dispute only when appealed to do so. However, when a dispute becomes an issue of public concern the *Buliang* takes up and makes a sincere attempt to resolve the issue in the interest of the village welfare. The *Buliang* allows ample scope to sort out private disputes without outside interference; but once the public peace is disturbed, they intervene and effectively deal with the perpetrators; initially by mediation or use of force if necessary. Other villagers also support them in this endeavour to guard the peace and harmony of the society.

Origin of the *Buliang*

Every village/tribal group in Arunachal Pradesh had an indigenous system of governance and justice delivery system. This was done through what we usually call traditional village councils. The village and the village councils happened to be the basis of political units till the introduction of the Panchayat Raj in 1969 in Arunachal Pradesh (then called the North Eastern Frontier Agency or NEFA in short). These village councils of the tribes/villages had different nomenclatures but with similar functions. Such village councils are known as *Buliang* amongst the Apatanis; *Kebang* amongst the Adis; *Nyelee* amongst the Nyishis; *Mokchup* amongst the Khamptis and *Mangmajom* amongst the Monpas, and so on.

Politically the Apatanis never had any central authority in the form of a king or chieftain.² Democratic political institution, a village council called *Buliang*³; which regulated the Apatani society from the earliest time exists till today. The Apatanis were pretty aware of the fact that the self-sufficient flow of their economy and the whole pattern of peace and prosperous living could be established only if reign of peace, order and integrity among the people was ensured. Therefore to administer and govern the Apatani society, they organized a council of wise elders called *Buliang*.

The *Buliang* is as old as the society itself. Oral traditions have it that once in the society widespread violence prevailed in the absence of any controlling authority. To bring an end to such chaotic situation the *Buliang* was evolved in due course of time. A myth regarding origin of the *Buliang* runs as follows: ⁴

There were quarrels among all the inhabitant of the universe. There were feuds between the sky and the earth; between the rocks and the plants; and among human beings. Thus, everybody was at one another's throat and complete chaos prevailed in the universe. Everyone was fed up with the situation that prevailed. Hence, a few persons were asked to volunteer to settle the feuds among different disputants of the universe. The persons who volunteered to arbitrate the disputes thus became *Buliangs*. Their decisions were accepted as just and equitable by the disputants. Since then *Buliangs* were accepted as arbitrators of disputes and their services were availed of for settling disputes to establish peace in the society.

Another version as narrated by some priests goes: ⁵

The *Buliang* comes from *Wpyo Lembyang* and *Mwdo Lembyang*. *Wpyo Lembyang* and *Mwdo Lembyang* were the two mythical places where the Apatanis lived before migration to their present place. The original place of the Apatanis was *Wpyo Lembyang*. At *Wpyo Lembyang* there was a *Buliang* called *Wpyo Buliang*. From *Wpyo Lembyang* the Apatanis migrated to *Mwdo Lembyang*. At *Mwdo Lembyang* too, there existed a *Buliang* called *Mwdo Buliang*. The *Buliangs* mediated the disputes at *Wpyo Lembyang* and *Mwdo Lembyang*. In similar line, the *Buliang* came into being at *Supung Lembyang*, i.e., at their present valley.

However, rather than terming *Wpyo Lembyang*, *Mwdo Lembyang* and *Supung Lembyang* as in the paragraph cited above; *Wpyo Supung*, *Mwdo Supung* and *Swlo/Anw Supung* respectively would be more appropriate. ⁶

Regarding origin of the *Buliang*, Takhe Kani maintains: ⁷

It is said that once the society was turned into a serious disorder due to war and hostility among the people in absence of law and order. As they engaged in war, hostility and settlement that year . . . a famine ensued in the following year. So, *Wpyo Popi*, the supreme adviser of mankind, advised the people to maintain peace and harmony . . . In

accordance with the advice of *Wpyo Popi*, the society created council of wise elders called *Buliang* to administer order and justice among the people. In this way, the *Buliang* came up; which survives till today.

One more version of it goes: ⁸

Kwdi Chey and *Mwdo Radhey* stole *Mithuns* from *Sangho* and *Hagho*. It was the first ever theft committed in the society. They were caught by the owner of the *Mithuns*, and both of them were put in *Twpwer* (legs were put across in the holes of a heavy and hard wooden log). The people of *Kwdi Chey* and *Mwdo Radhey* were enraged by the act of the owner of the *Mithuns*. Then both the parties became hostile to one another. The dispute disturbed the peace of the civil society. Then, it became the concern of the society as a whole. The members of the society decided to select the best orator from every clan as their representatives. The selected group of people was given authority to decide the case. The group made first ever stting of the first *Buliang* to decide on the first case. It was called *Khatu-Khetu*. From that day onwards they work as members of the council and were given the name *Buliang*.

Types of *Buliang*

The types and meaning of *Buliang* have been misinterpreted by many scholars, having understood in its limited meaning. Takhe Kani⁹ says that the term *Buliang* is a generic in nature, and division of it into various types is factually wrong. However, different *Buliangs* have been entrusted with diverse responsibilities. They are *Neha Buliang*, *Kwdi Buliang*, *Kwmer Buliang* and *Mwdo Buliang*. As per ordinary and narrow concept the *Neha Buliang* equates the *Buliang*. Actually the term *Buliang* is substituted for *Neha Buliang*, in common parlance. He writes,

There are various kinds of *Buliang*, such as *Neha Buliang*, *Kwdi Buliang*, *Kwmer Buliang*, *Mwdo Buliang* and the priest. The *Neha Buliang* looks after the political, judicial and socio-religious affairs. The *Kwdi Buliang* digs grave, disposes off dead body and assists the priest in religious ceremonies. The *Kwmer Buliang* castrates pigs..... The duty of the *Mwdo Buliang* is performance of religious ceremonies when natural calamities like draught, famine and epidemic occur in the village. The priest, who is the highest authority of the religious administration, mediates between men and Gods.

The *Buliang* served the society without making distinction amongst the people on any basis. The *Buliang* is actually generic term for traditional public servants of the Apatani society and *Kwdi Buliang*, *Mwdo Buliang* and *Kwmer Buliang* are honorable terms for *Mwra*, *Mitu Ato* (*Mwdo Buliang*) and *Kwmer* respectively (as called in common parlance). The *Buliangs* are not only well-versed in the customary laws and the traditional social practices but also in the past events and its concomitant effects on the society.

The council of Apatani *Buliang* meets and discusses formally or informally before taking action on a matter, of course, not in the manner of hearing or trial as is done in a regular court of law. The sessions of a large gathering of the *Buliangs* usually take place on a sacred sitting community platform called *Lappang*; installed at the centre of clan-village. Alternatively the same is conducted in the house of a *Buliang*, in one of the common relative's houses of the disputants or in one of the disputants' uncle's or brother's house.

Whenever necessary, a party to the dispute needing settlement approaches a few *Buliangs* and after that these *Buliangs* send the message to all the *Buliangs* of the village through *Miha Pillo*¹⁰; to gather at particular place indicating date and time of the proposed meeting. In the settlement, after minutely hearing the allegation and counter-allegation from both the parties to a dispute, the *Buliangs* who are skilled in handling the cases; settle the dispute referring to the case laws and customary practices of the society and justice is imparted to both the complainant and dependant.

Organization

The post of *Buliang* being an ancestral property, after retirement or death of the father one of his sons is nominated to this post; to one who is inclined towards community services and competent in the customary laws and traditional social practices. But, in general the eldest son is nominated. However, there is no restriction on nomination of the younger sons to this post; because, the decision of nomination depends upon the willingness of the father and the competency of his son. Hence, even the youngest son can hold this post. If the father has no male child the man closest to him in lineage; who is capable is nominated to the post.¹¹

Traditionally a post of *Buliang* is held by male only. The reasons cited behind this is that: i) Women's talk around may spoil the case being settled or pervade the matter under

consideration, ii) women cannot go to the war front for negotiation in case of armed conflicts, iii) the women have the poor ability to keep secrets and iv) the women cannot step on to the *Lappang* because of certain religious reason.¹²

Hence it was taboo for a woman to be a *Buliang* in the olden days, however, these days there are some cases of a widow of a *Buliang* staying as *Buliang*¹³ till her son is old enough to be a *Buliang* himself. These woman *Buliangs* play some limited role in favor of the *Buliang*. They wear good dress in important occasions of the *Buliang* and mainly contribute and serve¹⁴ rice beer called 'O' and Apatani black salt called *Tapyo*. But, traditionally and usually when a *Buliang* died, the closest male adult relative in lineage held the post till his minor son comes of age to be a *Buliang* himself.

It might be opined that appointment of the *Buliang* is undemocratic as it is inherited and bequeathed along male line only. Neither the *Buliang* is truly a representative body. The number of *Buliangs* varies from clan to clan and village to village. The Reru village has the highest count of twenty three *Buliangs*; which is not proportionate. As the post is purely inherited, the number of *Buliang/s* might decrease rather than increasing in some clan/s if proliferation of male child is not continued in the same. It is admitted that some clans are now even extinct. Over and above some *Buliangs* have relinquished their post on genuine grounds; which invariably have not been replaced. Let us say, sometimes the *Buliangs* have relinquished the post when misfortune comes to their family frequently.

Table 2.1 No. of *Nwchi-Nwtw*, *Reru-Tajang*, *Dwre-Hwja Buliangs* at present

Village/Village Group	No. of <i>Buliang</i>
<i>Nwchi</i>	11
<i>Nwtw</i>	16
Reru	23
Tajang	20
<i>Dwre</i>	10
Hwija	14
Total	94

Source: *Nwchi-Nwtw*, *Reru-Tajang*, *Dwre-Hwja Buliang* Bye-Laws and Constitutions, 2011-14.

Table 2.2 No. of *Talyang-Hao* and *Dwbo Buliangs*

Village Group	No. of <i>Buliang</i>
<i>Talyang-Hao</i>	29
<i>Dwbo</i>	31
Total	60

Source: *Talyang-Hao* and *Dibo (Dwbo) Buliang* Bye-Laws and Constitutions, 2012-15.

Structure

Haimendorf writes that three types of *Buliangs* exist: (a) *Akha Buliang* who are old in age, are principal leaders of the village, (b) *Yapa Buliang* who are middle-aged conducts the day to day affairs of the village and keep *Akha Buliang* informed and (c) *Ajang Buliang*, who are of young age and act as the messengers and assistants to *Yapa Buliang*.¹⁵

Similarly, Ursula Graham Bower categorizes¹⁶ that (a) *Ajang Buliang* act as assistants and messengers, (b) *Yapa Buliang* function as the executive and (c) *Akha Buliang* are responsible for taking the final decisions. Dr. Elwin quotes Prof. Haimendorf in his book, *Democracy in NEFA*.¹⁷

Such categorization into three types and its description or interpretation is contested by some indigenous authors. The field works and my interview with many *Buliangs*¹⁸ suggest that such three types of *Buliangs* did not exist. Pura Tado opines:¹⁹

There is nothing like *Akha Buliang*, *Yapa Buliang* or *Ajang Buliang* as mentioned by Prof. Haimendorf, Bower and Dr. Elwin et al. The interpreters for easy understanding of the officials might have added the prefix *Akha* (old), *Yapa* (youth) and *Ajang* (young) with *Buliang*. They might have translated *Buliang* into *Akha Buliang*, *Miha Pillo* into *Yapa Buliang* and *Giitu-Giira* (knowledgeable persons) who helped *Buliang* in arbitration of disputes into *Ajang Buliang*.

Takhe Kani maintains:²⁰

Some scholars like C.V.F. Haimendorf and Verrier Elwin classified the *Buliang* of the Apatanis as *Akha*, *Yapa* and *Ajang Buliangs* The *Buliang* is only one kind-either he may be newly integrated or an original *Buliang* because he (one) is recognized as a permanent *Buliang* of the society and he participates in the conduct of the village ceremonies and shares the ceremonial gifts of *Murung* and *Myoko* ceremonies.

According to Kani, Haimendorf might have termed original *Buliangs* who inherited their posts from the remote past as *Akha Buliang* while new *Buliangs* inducted and integrated²¹ after *Supung Chambyo* in 1940s might have been called as *Ajang Buliang* and the *Yapa Buliang* was the *Miha Buliang* or middle-aged village elders who were well-conversant in the customary laws and assisted the *Buliang* during the crisis in village affairs.

Some active and cooperative middle-aged men in the village were sought assistance, in settling disputes and, generally as messenger or guide by the *Buliangs* themselves during crisis in village affairs. They were called *Miha Pillo* or *Miha Buliang*²² and were well-conversant in the customary laws and the traditional social practices. The crisis in village affairs here refers to ones like Bamin-Hangu *Chambyo*; which took place in 1940-1941 about three years before Haimendorf came as Special officer in the then Subansiri area in 1944 and Hari-Hangu *Chambyo*; that took place in 1944-1945, etc. These two *Chambyos* were recorded in *The Himalayan Barbary*, the old version of *The Himalayan Adventure*, both the books by Haimendorf. The Bamin-Hangu *Chambyo* is also known as *Tapo Chapyo*. This *Chambyo* occurred over dispute of a land presently called *Duku/Abulya*. In that land there was abundant growth of a wild grass called *Tapo* which the people used to collect for roofing purpose in the earlier days. The Hari-Hangu *Chambyo* took place over a case related to the quarrel between Late (Mr.) Takhe Tamo and a (now Late) Hari man of Tasso clan over captivity of two women of a neighbouring tribe, named Dipu & Yapa, who were guest of the Hari man in Hari *Myoko* festival by Takhe Tamo.²³

The *Miha Pillos* were selected by the *Buliangs* themselves usually from the younger generations. The *Miha Pillos* selected so far are very small in number. While selecting a *Miha Pillo*, that clan which had got no or less representation in the *Buliang system* was given preference. Such preference was given so that these *Miha Pillos* also acted primarily as representatives of such an under-represented or unrepresented clans²⁴.

Without giving the final decision on the categorization or its description or interpretation on the structure of the *Buliang*, as a matter of fact, concept of the *Buliang* and its structure of these Apatani authors are more convincing than those of others like Haimendorf. However the fact remains that as an institution with politico-judicial function in settling disputes and socio-religious functions in *Myoko*, *Murung* and *Subu* festivals the *Buliang* is one only.

Leadership pattern

Some *Buliangs* are the most influential and respectable persons in the village. The appointment of a *Buliang* is normally based on hereditary privileges but the *Buliang* is a flexible institution in which personality and talent have the ample scope to play themselves in the

deliberations and leadership system. Some middle-aged and charismatic *Buliangs*; who have more than usual wealth or a particular strength of character or of social reputation sway the public opinion in most sessions and its deliberations. As because, many of the old-aged *Buliangs* no longer take active part in the day-to-day administration of the village although the same are consulted in all important matters.

However, the decisions are taken based on consensus after sufficient debate and deliberation in the council. Otherwise also, all *Buliangs* are endowed with equal function, position and privilege by the unwritten law of the land. Even the most prominent *Buliang* cannot act as a chief and give blank order to his colleagues. Hence the leadership pattern in the institution of *Buliang* is collective.

FUNCTIONS

Maintaining smooth external relations besides maintaining internal peace, stability, harmony and tranquility and looking after the developments, the *Buliang* also physically go to war front for negotiation and settlement of the disputes. It plays effective role in mediating on or dealing with issues arising out of the inter-tribe conflicts. The role and functions of the *Buliang* can be categorized into (a) Politico-Judicial and (b) Socio-Religious²⁵.

I. Politico-Judicial functions

When an internal armed hostility occurs between two villages in the Apatani society, the young and energetic *Buliangs* visit the battle field for investigation and make their best effort to stop the same. When the *Buliang* arrived at war field, the warriors stopped the fightings and distanced themselves from them for the fear of injuring any member of the *Buliang*. Actually if any warrior injures any member of the *Buliang* accidentally or otherwise the *Buliang* as a whole would turn against the guilty party. The *Buliang* arrive at war field with distinctive dress donning rain-shield called *Yetw* for recognition. Subsequently the elderly *Buliangs* negotiate between the warring parties. Let us say, if the people of Hangu and Hari villages draw battle line between themselves, let us say, for example, owing to certain land dispute, the *Buliangs* of rest of the villages negotiate between the two hostile villages.

During such negotiation, a rigorous debate and deliberation ensues amongst the *Buliangs* and the decision arrived at is announced to the contending villages to discontinue the war. After the verdict is announced, the *Buliang* impose fine to either of the parties or to both of the same, if found guilty. With this fine the *Buliang* enact and organize *Dapo*-a formal peace treaty demonstration in the warring villages, to restore peace and order. As part of the *Dapo* a domestic animal either a cow or a *Mithun* is sacrificed at the *Dapo* alter called *Dapo Pogyang*.

During external war or hostility, the *Buliangs* discuss and deliberate amongst themselves rigorously to arrive at an appropriate decision, either to retaliate with the arms or negotiate peacefully with the hostile party. After that the people act according to the sanction of the *Buliang*. If the decision favors peaceful negotiation, the young and energetic *Buliangs* go to the aggrieved party and undertake peaceful negotiations. However, inter-tribe war or hostility was very rare to the Apatani valley. After settlement is reached in the negotiation as mentioned above, a *Dapo* is enacted and organized sacrificing a cow or a *Mithun* at the *Dapo* alter. The significance of this sacrifice is that it stands as a testimony to the treaty of settlement and agreement and fundamentally no one or party can violate the same. If someone or a party violates, a fine amounting to double the value of the sacrificed animal is imposed on the recalcitrant violator.

In the Apatani tradition, the habitual thieves or the murderers met with a miserable end, in-fact death. However, the murderers or the habitual thieves were awarded capital punishment and executed only after the sanction of the *Buliangs* representing all the villages. There is a good example to be cited.²⁶ In 1945, Chiging Duyu of Dutta village was executed in Hangu village for his habitual stealing of cattle after sanction of the *Buliangs* representing all villages barring Dutta, his own village and its neighboring Mwdang-Tage village.

Chiging Duyu was notorious for his involvement in unlawful cattle deals. He stole *Mithuns* and cows, slaughtered them in the jungle and used to sell the meats of the Nyishi cattle to the Apatani villagers and Apatani cattle to the people of other Apatani villages. Thereby he caused dissension among the people of the two tribes - Nyishis and Apatanis, and amongst the Apatanis themselves. One day he was caught red-handed while selling a cow stolen from Hibu

Tari of Hangu village. Subsequently, as a consequence of his cattle-stealing habit, he was killed after debate and deliberation were undertaken by the *Buliang*.

Roads, bridges, religious grounds and altars, animal pasture lands, grave yards, public platforms (*Lappang*), wells, channels and dams, etc. are considered as purely public properties. If someone destroys any of these properties, either with motivated intention or inadvertently, the *Buliangs* and other village elders deliberate amongst themselves and impose a fine on him. The fine is however imposed in commensurate with the degree of offence. Normally a cow is imposed as fine for such offence. The fine animal is then sacrificed at the *Dapo* alter. This can be considered as a developmental activity of the *Buliang*. In such activity the general public also supports the *Buliang*. The similar punishment is also awarded for the theft of public property.

Yet, suppose a case is submitted against the interest of community as a whole, the *Buliangs* of all villages suppress it immediately after deliberations by demonstrating a '*Dapo Sonwng*' (*Dapo* demonstration) against the rebel and *Dapo* is enacted giving a sort of binding notice to the perpetrator besides imposing a heavy fine on him.

A pre-arranged and ceremonial war known as *Gyambo* takes place; which culminates at times from a dispute between two villages or clans over hunting, trapping or grazing grounds or boundary of other land property. In such war the supporters of both of the parties line up and undertake fight armed with spears, bows and arrows on the specified day and time. But it is to be noted that the man whose dispute is the cause of the fight is not allowed to take part in the same. However, such fight is governed by various rules and conventions with an intention of minimum damage to either side. Still then, sometimes a casualty occurs during the combat in the form of injury or death. When so ever such serious incident takes place, the *Gyambo* is usually called off.

A *Gyambo* was organized between Dutta and Bulla villages in 1947.²⁷ This dispute involved the whole Apatani community and the same stood divided into two politically hostile groups. Reru-Tajang i.e. a part of Bwla village, *Nwchi-Nwtw* i.e. Hangu village and *Dwre-Hwja* i.e. Hija village constituted one group while the other being Dutta, Bamin-Michi and

Talyang-Hao group of villages, i.e. Hari and Talyang-Kalung (-the other part of Bulla village). Such case of dispute involving the entire Apatani community is known as ‘*Supung Chambyo*’.

This *Supung Chambyo* can be termed also as a political crisis in the affairs of the *Buliang*. Takhe Kani narrates:²⁸

It was very dangerous for the early Apatanis when the *Buliang* became divided and disunited allied with favoritism. For instance, in 1947, Tajang and Dutta villages were hostile to each other due to a *Mithun* dispute between Koj Nwchi of Dutta village and Radhe Talang of Tajang village. It was due to this dispute that the *Buliang* got disunited and narrowed down to own ceremonial alliance. And this hostility was known as *Supung Chambyo*. In fact it was very lucky that Col. R. N. Betts, the Political Officer for then Subansiri area; who was exploring the Apatani valley that time; suppressed the hostility with the help of his soldiers and Political Interpreters.

The *Buliang* intervenes and settles such dispute thereby restoring peace and order in the society. However, in this *Supung Chambyo* the *Buliang* made a sincere effort to settle the hostility as usual, in the initial stage. Ultimately it was Col. Betts who suppressed the same (*Gyambo*) with the help of the Political Interpreters-the *Katokis* and his soldiers.

Reru-Tajang *Gyambo*, also known as Reru-Tajang *Chambyo* was the last one observed by the people of the Apatani community. It had broken out over the naming of Lempya Primary School, then being upgraded to a Middle School. Precisely this *Chambyo* was school-naming dispute between the residents of two villages of Reru and Tajang. Unfortunately the dispute turned violent and a life of one Ngwlyang Grayu of Tajang village was lost in the process. Meanwhile the people of Reru village gave up and the fight ended on 22nd February, 1972. Ultimately the school was named as Government Middle School, Tajang. In this *Chambyo* both the *Buliangs* and the *Gaon Buras* tried best to stop the same and find an amicable solution although they could not meet with much success.

The *Buliangs*, being the representatives of their own clan/clan group/village/village group as the case may be; lacks centralized coercive authority to enforce binding decisions upon the larger disputes of the individual or group. A larger dispute here refers to what we may call a social dichotomy in the society. The *Buliang* does not have the absolute

power, for arbitration to or suppression of such disputes. A dispute or case is taken up by the *Buliangs* of the concerned clan or village and is disposed off accordingly. If the concerned *Buliangs* fail to settle the same then the case is handed over to the *Buliangs* of whole village or all the villages called *Supung Buliang* as the case may be for negotiation and settlement. If the highest authority the *Supung Buliang* also fails to settle it, having no other alternative left, the disputing parties often adopted a wealth-destruction challenge and competition known as '*Lisunwng*' in the earlier days as the last resort. However in some instances, without referring a dispute to the *Buliang*, *Lisunwng* was started and indulged in between the disputing/feuding parties as in the *Yelu*²⁹ of Punyo Tamer verses Bullo Lampung³⁰ and Bullo *Logo* versus Bullo *Lora*³¹. However the *Buliang* intervened and settled such *Yelu Lisunwng* (in which the dispute was not referred to the *Buliang*) at later stage as done in the Punyo Tamer versus Bullo Lampung *Yelu*.

However, *Dapo* meaning Pact or formal Peace Treaty is somewhat remedy to this shortcoming (of lack of the centralized coercive authority) and helps in controlling a larger dispute to some extent. Presumably no person, group, clan, clan group, village or village group ever breached such *Dapo*.

Some cases of *Lisunwng* (in Hangu village), i.e. property-destruction challenging competition are those of (i) Punyo Tamer versus Bullo Lampung: a famous one in which the *Buliang* successfully intervened and effected settlement, (ii) Tapi Napa versus Punyo Talang, (iii) Bullo Logo versus Bullo Lora³² in which the case was taken ultimately to the district administration's court for settlement, (iv) Punyo Pilya versus Kago Hanya and (v) Narang Tari versus Kago Nabing; the cause of which was *Mithun* dispute and (vi) Tapi Tana versus Kago Kago, a recent one in which the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) intervened and prevented the *Lisunwng* from escalating.³³

It is the *Buliang* who effects a settlement to the cases of *Lisunwng*. A fair idea of procedure of *Lisunwng* and useful role of the *Buliang* in the same can be taken from the *Lisunwng* case of Late Punyo Tamer versus Late Bullo Lampung which occurred in 1919/1920. It is narrated briefly as follows:³⁴

Punyo Tamer was one of the richest and the most influential men of his time in Haangu village. A young man of a neighboring tribe was a freed slave of Punyo Tamer living in the same locality. Another person from a neighboring tribe had come and started living in the house of that young man as his guest. Now that person staying as a guest had one year earlier cooperated actively and participated in the seizure of a *Mithun* belonging to Bullo Lampung and offended him greatly. Bullo Lampung was another rich, influential and prominent man of Hangu village. For full one year that person lived as a guest in the house of that young man unaware of any danger in store for him as repercussion of his participation in the capture of a *Mithun* of a prominent man. Then one day he was proceeding towards a nearby jungle to cut firewood. While he was on his way Bullo Lampung captured him and kept him as hostage in his house for one night. Punyo Tamer felt greatly hurt and considered it as an insult to himself the reason only being that he who was living as a guest in his former slave's house was captured. Punyo Tamer offered five *Mithuns* as ransom to release him. But Lampung did not agree to the offer of the ransom and maintained that killing of that person would only satisfy him. Next morning he and some of his clansmen dragged the person in question to the public execution place on the bank of a stream and mercilessly killed him.

Punyo Tamer, feeling enraged over the actions of Bullo Lampung, seized two cows of Lampung and slaughtered both the cows very near his house in order to start *Yelu Lisunwng*. Lampung was apparently not keen on taking the challenge of *Lisunwng* with the rich and influential Punyo Tamer and ignored Tamer's action. But Punyo Tamer being grieved over the insult to him and his house and anxious to preserve his prestige was out for a fight and continued his challenge to Lampung. He made another move by killing three of his own *Mithun*-cows in front of Lampung's house and smashed one Tibetan bell, one bronze plate and one sword. In that situation Lampung replied by killing four of his own big *Mithuns* in front of Tamer's house. Next Tamer killed ten *Mithuns* and Lampung responded by killing twenty. The following day Tamer slaughtered thirty *Mithuns*, and Lampung without relenting a bit gathered sixty *Mithuns*³⁵ and slaughtered them in one day. Thereupon Tamer sent a request to all his relatives and gathered eighty *Mithuns* (sixty his own and the rest twenty those of relatives) and was just about to slaughter them when the *Buliang* stepped in and persuaded him to kill only sixty, so as to just match Lampung's last bid. A settlement was effected by the *Buliang* on the basis that the *Yelu Lisunwng* ended without a declared winner, and Lampung was urged and made to agree to pay a fine of one *Mithun*-cow to Tamer for killing a guest staying in the house of one of Tamer's dependants.

This *Yelu* which had occurred twenty five years before 1944 was narrated by Punyo Tamer himself to Dr. Haimendorf in that year, who happened to visit the Apatani valley at

that time, while he was Special Officer of the then Subansiri Division. However the story of this *Yelu* is known to many village elders.

Causes of *Lisunwng* can be many: land dispute, paddy field dispute, matrimonial dispute, *Mithun* dispute, theft case, an insult and individual or group clashes, etc. Matrimonial dispute or *Mithun* dispute is a frequent factor of *Yelu*.

Some causes of *Lisunwng* are cited as below:

1. In between Padi Lalyang and Habung Chatung. The *Mithun* dispute (*Subu Cheya Swning*) was the reported cause of the *Yelu/Lisunwng*; which degenerated into *Chambyo*. A *Chambyo* can be defined as a rioting in which the lethal weapons such as *Dankho-Panyi* (pointed poles and sticks), *Apw-Wdang* (bow-arrows and spears), *Nyettu-Ilyo* (knives and *Daos*-universal cutting implements), etc. are used. In the *Chambyo* which precipitated from Padi Lalyang-Habung Chatung *Yelu*³⁶; reportedly the unfortunate violence that ensued started at around 8 am and lasted up to 4 pm,

2. Millo Chatung versus Lod Aka: the reported cause of which was paddy field (called *Kokhii Aji* by name) dispute. This controversy was taken to the district administration's court for settlement,

3. Ngwlyang Yapa versus Rubu Pilya: the reported cause of which was the controversy related to ceremonial gift of *head* of domestic animal sacrificed in rituals and ceremonies (*Ading Ami Dwgo Paka Yelu*)³⁷ &

4. Millo Tajang versus Duyu Aka: the reported cause of which was related to certain *Mithun* dispute.³⁸

The animals sacrificed at a *Lisunwng* are not always those of the competitors.³⁹ It is customary for the kinsmen, both maternal and paternal, to show their group solidarity by lending or donating the animal required, even when there is little chance of early repayment. It is therefore understandable that sooner or later the competitors' kinsmen persuade the *Buliang* to intervene and prevent too great a destruction of property. Yet there remains the idea that the more wealth a man can destroy the higher his social prestige rises. The very fact of the support given by numerous kinsmen is proof of his having larger family lineage, importance

and influence in a large social group. But since the pursuance of a *Lisunwng* to its logical conclusion might spell the economic ruin of a whole group of families, the *Buliang* usually intervenes in favor of a compromise.

The property-destruction competition/race (*Lisunwng*) may go on until both the parties are nearly ruined, but in theory the man who can continue longer with his destruction of property wins thereby resulting in the loss of his opponent's entire property (movable and immovable) possession. But as per acknowledged, no concrete example of a *Lisunwng* was carried on as far as the utter defeat of one of the competitors; usually the *Buliang* intervened and negotiated a settlement which spared both the parties the humiliation of defeat.⁴⁰ In *Lisunwng*, the properties of not only the feuding parties are lost, but also of their relatives as they donate at least a *Mithun* or a valuable article. It goes without saying that one who had a larger number of relatives generally won the case on account of their large donations for slaughtering or destruction as the case may be.

Lisunwng is looked upon by many as more of a war of one-upmanship arising out of ego clash. It basically takes place out of a serious dispute involving two individuals of clashing ego; who generally hail from wealthy, influential and prominent family and social background. Such occurrence in the former days prevailed only among the rich. The poor always tried to mince his words in controversies and disputes against the rich in order to avoid and preempt such unwanted competition. This was like the highest court for individual Apatanis to settle a score with an adversary.⁴¹ However, sometimes a poor individual was compelled to take the challenge when a rich man of high ego was adamant on indulging in *Lisunwng* against him; although the poor individual did not have such interest or ego problem; unless his kiths and kin backed him up. Kiths and kins backed up to show solidarity and sympathy although some individuals instigated for personal reason the best known to them.

Many educated Apatanis came up after advent of administration of the Government of India in their valley. The Apatani Youth Association (AYA) comprising of such educated people initiated the ban on this social evil of destructive acts of the Apatanis considering the *Lisunwng* practice as the most reckless and silly destruction of individual wealths. Actually, in the earlier days the AYA played an invaluable role for the social and educational development of the society. Besides *Yelu Lisunw*, tattoo practice amongst the

Apatani women was abolished and narrow roads, lanes and paths in the Apatani valley were widened by the AYA.

Dispute between two clans or clan-groups are generally solved by the village-level *Buliangs*. Let us say, if Bullo and Takhe clans of Hangu village undergo a dispute, let us say, for example, over a land right, the *Buliangs* of Hangu village try to settle the dispute. If they fail to settle the same, the *Buliangs* of Hangu village appeal to its counterparts in all other villages for taking over the job of finding an amicable solution to the dispute.

The *Buliang* did not interfere in disputes between individuals or families. In an individual or family dispute between blood relations, for example, between brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, nieces; or between brother and sister, nephew and niece, etc.; their common relatives as their common maternal uncles (or their descendants if the maternal uncles are no more alive) act as *Gondu*-the middlemen-cum-mediator and arbitrate the same (dispute) and settle. In an individual or family dispute between non-blood relations; the kiths and kin of the disputing parties as their respective maternal or paternal uncles (or sometimes their respective maternal uncles from grand mother's side) and/or their respective brothers or cousins come under common platform and act as the *Gondu* negotiate and settle the same. When the normal *Gondu* fails to settle a dispute one of the parties may appeal to the *Buliang* of the village for intervention and then the *Buliang* takes up the same to end up the quarrel. In this case, the appellant is bound to honor the decision of the *Buliang*.

Yet the *Buliangs* in their individual capacity can voluntarily participate in settlement of individual or family dispute-the cases which are un-appealed; when their own relative/s is/are involved in the same. Hence, the individual and family disputes are generally solved with the help and intervention of kiths and kin. It would not be out of place to mention that role of the *Buliang* is also exactly as *Gondu*.

Sometimes a rare situation may come up when an individual, family, group or clan found guilty of an offence is not ready to accept decision of the *Buliang*. In such situation the *Buliang* after another round of deliberation may organize a *Dapo Sonwng*-a formal demonstration against the guilty person or party besides imposing a fine in the form of a cow or *Mithun* and this animal is sacrificed in the *Dapo* altar and *Dapo* is concluded and a dispute is put

to a logical conclusion. Through *Dapo*, the person or party is compelled to come to terms with the decision of the *Buliang* and to the terms stipulated by the same. Moreover it is a binding notice to the guilty person or party to not to violate the *Dapo*. If the person or party violate the same then a fine double the value of the sacrificed animal is imposed once again by the *Buliang* on the recalcitrant violator. Since the individual violator cannot face the brunt of the *Buliang* he finally accepts its decision.

After settlement of any individual or family dispute, it is mandatory on both the parties (accused as well as aggrieved) to arrange an amicable party called *Gondu Punwng*. On this occasion, they offer 'O' (rice beer) along with a piece of bacon called 'Dimbung' each to all who attend and adjudicate the dispute. It is believed that if they do not offer such party, unfortunate incidents (disputes) happen again in future. The party offered is symbol of reconciliation after the dispute and this occasion stands as a sort of testimony to the fact that the dispute has already been resolved.⁴²

However in earlier days the *Buliang* was not immune to lure of gratification and bribe. A dishonest *Buliang* argued in favor of the one who gave him a handsome bribe. Of course his argument was not much effective because settlement of a case depended on verdict as a whole pronounced by majority of members within the *Buliang*.

The *Buliang* enjoyed immense honor and reverence in the earlier days. During investigation and negotiation in a case, if any hostile person assaults or abuses any *Buliang* then all the *Buliangs* turn against him and his village and a heavy fine is imposed on the guilty man as it is considered a serious offence when such abuse or assault is inflicted on a *Buliang* on duty. Indeed no one can assault or abuse the *Buliangs* and revolt against them at public place, when on duty or on ceremonial occasion. An Apatani proverb states, "*Dulu Subu Mi Kota Pika Ma, Byai Subu Mi Bilo Hika Ma*" which means that no one can assault or abuse the ceremonial-community festive processional of *Murung* and *Subu* festivals and the public servants like *Buliang*, Kwmer (Castrator of pigs), etc. One has to pay heavy penalty for assault on a *Buliang*.⁴³

Though the *Buliang* lacks proper centralized authority with limited coercive power over the larger dispute of individual or group it effectively checks criminal and anti-social activities and prevents disorder in the society. In fact, the *Buliang* maintains corporate life in the

Apatani society and the collective will of the same is upheld by them; enjoying social and supernatural sanctions.

II. Socio-Religious function

During *Myoko*

Myoko is one of the oldest socio-religious festivals of the Apatanis. It is as old as origin of the mankind. According to folklore this festival originated from the time of Abotani, the earliest (mythical) forefather of the Apatanis. *Myoko* celebration brings unity and integrity among the people as this celebration is a kind of renewal of social relationships amongst the agnatic cognative relatives.

The Apatani community is divided into three ritual group units. *Myoko* is celebrated on turn basis amongst these group units. Each ritual group unit is called *Takung Putu*. These three *Takung Putus* are mentioned as follows:

1. *Twini-Dwbo*; also known as *Hwchi Gambw* or *Dwbo Gambw* comprising of Hija (Hwja), Dutta, Mwdang(Mudang)-Tage and Bamin-Michi villages,

2. *Talyang Hao Nyi*; also known as *Hwtw Gambw* comprising of Hari, Talyang-Kalung and Reru-Tajang villages &

3. *Nwchi-Nwtw* which stands for Hangu village-the largest one in Apatani valley-alone constitutes one such ritual group unit.

One of these groups celebrates the *Myoko* in a particular year and the other two groups join the festivity of the host group; the following year the second group celebrates the *Myoko* and followed by the third group. *Myoko* is held by each group only once in three years. But a system of rotation assures that there is celebration every year of the *Myoko* in the valley. According to this system, *Nwchi-Nwtw* celebrates the *Myoko* of this year and is followed by *Hwtw Gambw* villages and then *Hwchi Gambw* villages and *Nwchi-Nwtw* begins a new cycle. The celebration of *Myoko* on turn basis is unalterable among these ritual-group units.

Apart from the preparation for celebration, this festival is celebrated by performing an inaugural ritual called *Samma Pinwng* at clan *Myoko* alter called *Myoko Lyugyang*

by clan *Myoko* priest called *Myoko Nyibu* on 20th March every year. This date of inaugural ritual was fixed by the society through the initiation of the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) in 1970s. Earlier to this the celebration was started on the basis of flowering of peach tree called *Takung Sanw*, which is ritually associated with the *Myoko* and this tree is in-fact used as *Myoko Lyugyang*. Flowering of this plant indicated that it was time for celebrating *Myoko*.

Participation of the *Buliang* in *Myoko* celebration is indispensable and is more or less characterized by socio-religious traits. After *Samma Pinwng* ritual, the *Buliangs* of the *Myoko*-celebrating village hold a meeting and discuss about the organization of *Khwbo Amang*. If in host village (of *Myoko*) there is no disturbance of social taboo called *Pobu Hwro* they invite the *Buliangs* of guest villages for performance of *Khwbo Amang* and this invitation of *Khwbo Amang* to the *Myoko*-celebrating village is called *Jilo Madu*⁴⁴.

Khwbo Amang invitation is given to ceremonially-allied villages only. For example, in the *Myoko* of *Nwchi-Nwtw*, *Khwbo Amang* invitation is given to its own ceremonially-allied villages of *Reru-Tajang* and *Hwja* villages only.

Many male members irrespective of age accompany the *Buliangs* in *Khwbo Amang*. Precisely, some of the interested men, youths and children accompany the *Buliangs* in *Khwbo Amang* and is headed by *Khwbo Amang* priest called *Byai Mibya* or *Khwbo Amang Nyibu*. *Byai Mibya* usually happens to be a *Buliang* and *Khwbo Amang* headed by *Byai Mibya* arrives in the *Myoko*-celebrating village on the specified evening (generally next to the *Samma Pinwng* evening) in the form of procession. This ritual process or procession is called *Byai Byalo Sonwng*, *Khwbo Amang Sonwng* or *Khwbo Amang*; which can be called a community festive-processional ritual demonstration. It is believed that this ritual procession brings life, peace and prosperity to the host people. The *Buliangs* of the village/s where currently *Myoko* is celebrated reciprocate and perform this *Khwbo Amang* in their own turn which comes in next two years; in the *Myoko* of *Dwre-Hwja* and *Reru-Tajang* in the case of *Nwchi-Nwtw*.

To *Khwbo Amang*, the host village pompously welcomes and entertains them with gracious foods and drink in *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* both. Host village accommodates and conducts them usually in the house of a *Buliang* each (as *Rwtcha Nello* and as *Rwlo Nello* respectively) after examining an omen from egg or chicken liver. The omen is read to know

whether accommodation and conduct of the *Khwbo Amang* in house of the particular *Buliang* either as *Rwtcha Nello* or as *Rwlo Nello* will bring life, peace and prosperity or affect adversely to the house owner and other villagers.

Khwbo Amang is usually accommodated and conducted twice, i.e., once in evening at the *Rwtcha Nello* and second time in morning of the next day at the *Rwlo Nello*. The first house where *Khwbo Amang* is accommodated and conducted in evening is called *Rwtcha Nello* and the second/other house where the same is done similarly in the next day morning is known as *Rwlo Nello*.

In the case of *Myoko* of *Nwchi-Nwtw* total number of houses of *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* taken together can vary from two to four. There can be total of two *Rwtcha Nellos* and two *Rwlo Nellos* in maximum and one *Rwtcha Nello* and one *Rwlo Nello* in minimum. It depends upon certain situation. For instance, when no request comes for hosting either as *Rwtcha Nello* or as *Rwlo Nello* (which usually comes from the commoners) there would be one each only of the same. In that case, for example in *Myoko* of *Nwchi-Nwtw*, the *Buliang* house hosting in evening as *Rwtcha Nello* for the *Khwbo Amang* of *Reru-Tajang* at *Nwchi* would become in morning of the next day as *Rwlo Nello* for the *Khwbo Amang* of *Dwre-Hwja* and similarly the *Buliang* house hosting in evening as *Rwtcha Nello* for the *Khwbo Amang* of *Dwre-Hwja* at *Nwtw* would become in morning of the next day as *Rwlo Nello* for the *Khwbo Amang* of the *Reru-Tajang*. For simplification, it is shown in a diagrammatic form as under:

1. *Rwtcha Nello* for *Dwre-Hwja* at *Nwchi* -> *Rwlo Nello* for *Reru-Tajang*.
2. *Rwtcha Nello* for *Reru-Tajang* at *Nwtw* -> *Rwlo Nello* for *Dwre-Hwja*.

More than one request may sometimes come from amongst the commoners or from the *Buliangs* or from both of them for the purpose of *Gyensi Byanwng* for hosting either as *Rwtcha Nello* or as *Rwlo Nello* after examining the omen. Such situation leads to the increase in the total number of *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* taken together to more than two. When claimant for *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* both taken together is more than two the pattern of inter-change of *Rwtcha Nello* into *Rwlo Nello* would be different.

Actually, sometimes when a family whose members are afflicted with illnesses one after another or an ailing member in the family does not respond to traditional prayers nor is able to be healed by modern medicines or when misfortune comes one after

another to the family, the family (generally belonging to commoners but entitled to the *Buliangs* also) requests the *Buliang* of the village to give them a chance to host either as *Rwtcha Nello* or as *Rwlo Nello*.⁴⁵

This family which is hosting *Khwbo Amang* offers rice beer called 'O', rice meal called *Aping* and spares one number of bacon for roasting either in the front hearth or in the rear hearth of the House whether *Rwtcha Nello* or *Rwlo Nello*. This bacon is cut into number of pieces and the same is distributed amongst the guest *Buliangs* and their companions and all others of the host village; present in the House. This ritual is known as *Gensi Byanwng*. And the bacon roasted is called *Gyensi*. However, on this occasion the *Buliangs* in the village arrange and slaughter a cow and cook and serve its meat to the *Khwbo Amang* as well as to the host villagers present in the House (whether *Rwtcha Nello* or *Rwlo Nello*) as general meat supply for the occasion. For this general supply of meat the practice in the olden days was that the same used to be collected some pieces each from all the *Buliang* houses in the village.

Owners of both of the *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* have to perform *Metw Tamu* at front entrance⁴⁶ of the House by sacrificing a fowl and four numbers of eggs before arrival of *Khwbo Amang*. This ritual is performed in order that *Metw Tamu*⁴⁷ protects the House from evil spirits entering the same while *Khwbo Amang* enters into it.

Participation of number of the members in *Khwbo AAmang* is not fixed. In the earlier days this ritual participation was full and hearty with the interested participation of more number of guest and host members both. But on the whole such interest and participation is much lesser now a days.

A *Buliang* who is well-conversant in verses of the sacred lores called *Jilo Ayu* and *Lankwr Karnwng* heads *Khwbo Amang* as priest-the *Nyibu* and this *Nyibu* is known as *Byai Mibya*, *Byai Mibya Gwnw*, *Byai Mibyanw* or *Khwbo Amang Nyibu*.⁴⁸

The people believe that *Byai Mibya* who heads a *Khwbo Amang* may be deprived of his life if he does not complete recital of *Jilo Gyonwng* or *Lankwr Karnwng* or if the God does not wish him to be *Byai Mibya*. So, many people fear to become *Byai Mibya* although they may be competent. Therefore, before becoming *Byai Mibya*, one carefully examines the omen from egg or chicken liver with the help of a priest and some village elders to know if he becomes the same it will bring life, peace and prosperity to him, his family and his village or not.

Members of *Khwbo Amang* recite verses of the sacred lore called *Jilo Gyonwng/Byai Byalo Ayu* since their departure from own village till they reach near *Rwtcha Nello* at host village. Some verses (Hangu version) of *Jilo Gyonwng* are as follows: ⁴⁹

<p><i>I. Byai bo patang hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Byalo bo pabing hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Ami Dumi bo tadu hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Barmwee mwte bo talyi hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>II. Swlying bo alying hwh so</i></p> <p><i>Ngunu (Byai) bo patang hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Dwmah bo yalang hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Hamah bo yangko hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Anwee bo lampwer hwh ka</i></p> <p><i>Kwdi bo pubung hwh so</i></p> <p><i>Aba bo swkhwe hwh ka</i></p> <p><i>Mwdo bo hambung hwh so</i></p> <p><i>Chansang bo laru hwh so</i></p> <p><i>Dosang bo langu hwh so</i></p> <p><i>Jilo bo peji hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Seri bo bwlyi hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Yayu bo takho hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Khori bo bwlyi hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>III. Lyannwee bo jilo hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Sedu bo gwchi hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Bwtwee bo jilo hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Twtwee bo jilo hwh mi</i></p>	<p><i>Botwee bo ayung hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Swli bo ayung hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Byai bo patang hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Byalo bo pabing hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Pantwee bo ayung hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Jobwee bo ayung hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Yumbo bo lyato hwh pe</i></p> <p><i>IV. Nyibo bo hime hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Gonchu bo pugo hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Gwchi bo nanw hwh pa</i></p> <p><i>Gompw bo taago hwh mi</i></p> <p><i>Gwchi bo nanw hwh pa</i></p> <p><i>V. Ngwlyang bo hulu hwh pa</i></p> <p><i>Pumu bo jalyi hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Takwr bo hwping hwh pa</i></p> <p><i>Jirwh bo jalyi hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>VI. Botwee bo kahe hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Dodu bo dobyo hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Swli bo kahe hwh si</i></p> <p><i>Ngego bo dobyo hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Nwh twki bo dwmah hwh cho</i></p> <p><i>Pabo lwme bo dwmah hwh cho.</i></p>
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At the same time *Byai Mibya* recites similar verses comprehensively in priestly language. A part of the full text of the *Jiloh Gyonwng* means that any evil spirit must not follow *Khwbo Amang* in their ‘to and fro’ journey between their home village and *Myoko*-celebrating village and make them suffer any untoward illness or injury. However, essence of the same is that peace, progress, life and prosperity might be bestowed upon the people of host village and to the *Khwbo Amang* party themselves too. An assistant called *Byai Mih* accompany *Byai Mibya* during *Khwbo Amang*. He assists and carries the gift items of *Byai Mibya* received during *Khwbo Amang*. The assistant also decides intermittently to recite some verses of *Jilo Gyonwng* along with *Byai Mibya*.

When *Khwbo Amang* enters *Rwtcha Nello*, *Byai Mibya* shifts to verses of another sacred lore called *Lankwr Karnwng* for life, peace, progress and prosperity of the House and its occupant family as well as for other villagers. Some verses (Hangu version) of *Lankwr Karnwng* as chanted in *Rwtcha Nello* are as follows:⁵⁰

In Apatani	English version
I. <i>Lengo bo kutu si</i>	I. Compound of the house
<i>Alung bo lyadw la</i>	Do not shock up,
<i>Byatu bo pamung si</i>	Stair of the house
<i>Ahi bo lyadw la</i>	Do not scare up and
<i>Byale bo yebyo si</i>	Sides of the stair
<i>Ale bo lyadw la</i>	Do not frighten up!
II. <i>Chabu bo nyetu pa</i>	II. Camp of mythical
<i>Haku bo suru pa</i>	Father of the <i>Buliang-Chabu</i> and
<i>Amyang bo talyi la</i>	His brother- <i>Haku</i>
	Shall we wish!
III. <i>Delyang Lappang ka</i>	III. Wealthy house of
<i>Raje pohing pa</i>	Rich ancestor- <i>Delyang</i> (mythical)
<i>Amyang talyi la</i>	Shall we wish!

IV. *Lanji pinsang kane pa*

Laro rolang kane pa

Chabu bo nello pa

Haku bo nello pa

Ngunu byai patang si

Nello pogi talyi la

IV. Grand palace of *Chabu* and *Haku*;

Where the first guest *Buliangs* camped

Shall we wish, accommodate and halt!

V. *Dodu bo lyato pe*

Joju bo nelo si

V. Keep open arm

The House prosperous:

The wholesome foods and drinks

To offer!

VI. *Lankwr yemwr ka*

Lankwr karko ho

Lampa yapa ka

Lampa paako ho

Dwnw Lankwr mi

Kalyang talyi la

Tupe lampa mi

Palyang talyi la

Dolo Lankwr mi

Kalyang talyi la

Swbo lampa mi

Palyang talyi la

VI. Like *Yemer* and *Yapa* (mythical)

Showering blessing upon the first

Hosting household;

To the children as well as

To the Cattle and the fowls

Shall 'we' bless to this *Rwtcha Nello!*

VII. *Karming sie mi*

Jirwh dopa

Yarming sukung mi

VII. Like, from the *Karming Sie* (mythical spring)

And *Yarming Sukung* (mythical well)

The foods and drinks in plenty

Roto dopa

Flow out!

VIII. *Ngo byai ditu mi*

Tulyang talyi la

Byalo swbya mi

Chalyang talyi la

VIII. For the welfare, wellbeing,

Peace, progress and prosperity;

Of the host family and villagers

Shall “I” commit and conclude!

At *Rwtcha Nello* a folklore-narration competition in the form of question and answer called *Khwbo Ayu* takes place almost for the whole night⁵¹ between the *Buliangs* and other villagers of host village and those *Buliangs* and their companions who have arrived from the guest village. The children learn *Khwbo Ayu* on this occasion thereby learning about customs and traditions of the society.⁵² Moreover the children may also undertake *Khwbo Ayu* competition amongst themselves.

At *Rwtcha Nello*, at 10-11 pm in the evening, a hearty meal is provided to the *Khwbo Amang* along with ‘*O*’ (rice beer) and meats including bacon meat called *Hulyi Aso Yoh*. Besides, indigenous Apatani black salt called *Tapyo* is served to members of the same to be taken along with ‘*O*’.

On this occasion, wives of the *Buliangs* and understanding and generous neighbours of the *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* both bring ‘*O*’ and *Tapyo* and offer the same to the members of *Khwbo Amang* and other people of the host village also present in the House whether *Rwtcha Nello* or *Rwlo Nello*.⁵³

From *Rwtcha Nello*, a *Khwbo Amang* friend/partner called *Khwbo Ajing* (which applies to children also) invite his guest friend again called *Khwbo Ajing* to his house and carry on *Khwbo Ayu* wholeheartedly between themselves. Subsequently, at about the time when *Khwbo Amang* is to go for visiting all the *Buliang* houses in the village for collecting *Alo-Tapyo* (common salt and indigenous black salt), a guest *Khwbo Ajing* take leave of his host *Khwbo Ajing* and goes to the *Rwtcha Nello* and join in the visitation of the *Buliang* houses. As, at about 5 in the early morning, *Khwbo Amang* takes leave of *Rwtcha Nello* and visits all the *Buliang* houses in the village⁵⁴ and collect *Alo* and *Tapyo* and after that they next go to *Rwlo Nello*. A

host *Khwbo Ajing* may present a piece of *Yaalang* or a bacon or at-least a piece of it along with *Yaalang* to his counterpart as gift.⁵⁵

While collecting *Alo-Tapyo* (as mentioned above) also the members of *Khwbo Amang* recite some verses of *Khwbo Ayu* and during that time they are offered 'O' along with *Alo* and *Tapyo*. At *Rwlo Nello* also *Byai Mibya* chants verses of *Lankwr Karnwng* briefly. Some interested members from both of the guest and host sides go for another round⁵⁶ of *Khwbo Ayu* in *Rwlo Nello*.

At *Rwtcha Nello* a bacon each at its *Ago Imih* (Front Hearth) and *Ura Imih* (Rear Hearth) respectively are roasted, cut into number of pieces for all members present from the guest and host sides and the same are served to them at the time of provision of meal at about 10-11 pm.⁵⁷ A similar process is adopted in the morning at *Rwlo Nello*.

These bacons are arranged by the *Buliang* in the village. However, mostly owner of *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* respectively spares one each of this bacon to be roasted either in Front Hearth or in Rear Hearth of his House.

Besides these two or four bacons as the case may be (for the two Hearths of *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* both); another bacon each in favor of *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* respectively is arranged by the *Buliang* of the village and are gifted to *Byai Mibya*. These particular two bacons are called *Jilo Panyi* or *Byai Panyi* or *Byai Pwlo*.

This means the *Buliang* in the village has to arrange upto a total number of six bacons in maximum unless the individual *Buliang/s* or commoner/s hosting either as *Rwtcha Nello* or as *Rwlo Nello* spare one number each (of this bacon⁵⁸) for roasting as *Gyensi* in any one Hearth of either *Rwtcha Nello* or *Rwlo Nello* or both as the case may be referred earlier.

After visit and collection of *Alo-Tapyo* from all *Buliang* houses in the village; while *Khwbo Amang* is entering *Rwlo Nello*; one selected man standing at the entrance door of the House gives two pieces of cooked meat⁵⁹ each called *Yoh Apwr/Yoh Aming* to all members of *Khwbo Amang* entering the same.

In the traditional days, in *Lappang* also, after taking leave of *Rwlo Nello* some interested members of *Khwbo Amang* and their host friends engaged among themselves further

in *Khwbo Ayu* competition till around 12 noon. This *Ayu* undertaken on *Lappang* is known as *Sango Ayu*. However other members of *Khwbo Amang* including *Byai Mibya* leave for own village straightaway if they are not interested to stay further. *Byai Mibya* again recites relevant verses of *Jilo Gyonwng* on the way back to own village. After 12 noon those lingering interested members of the *Khwbo Amang* leave for own village with the apprehension that the *Tapwr Lwning*⁶⁰ ceremony may start and overtake them. But now a days interest in *Sango Ayu* has become limited and entire *Khwbo Amang* generally after taking leave of *Rwlo Nello* straight away depart to own village. Back to own village *Khwbo Amang* gather at house of their *Byai Mibya* and enjoy 'O' along with *Tapyo*. The 'O' and *Tapyo* are arranged in advance and provided by *Byai Mibya* from himself.

Children also make friendship with one another during *Khwbo Amang* night and friend acquired in the same is called *Khwbo Ajing*. A host child *Khwbo Ajing* presents a vessel of 'O' along with a piece of *Yaalang* to his guest *Khwbo Ajing* and the same is invariably reciprocated when own such turn comes. Like adult *Khwbo Ajings*, a guest child *Khwbo Ajing* may present even a bacon or atleast a piece of it along with *Yaalang* and vessel of 'O' to his counterpart.⁶¹

A *Khwbo Ajing* is also called as *Ayo Ajing*-which means 'Night Friend' as the same takes place during *Khwbo Amang* night. After prolonged relationship as *Khwbo Ajing* subsequently they may convert themselves into *Bwnwng Ajings*-also called *Alo Ajings* (Day Friends) or *Pwnyang Ajings*; which is a permanent ceremonial-friendship tie practiced traditionally amongst the Apatanis. A *Bwnwng Ajing* helps his counterpart in all emergencies like fire accident and others. All *Khwbo Ajings* or *Bwnwng Ajings* are inheritable and it is a taboo to make the first break of this relationship. It is traditionally believed that one who makes the first break incurs misfortune in the form of premature death or other to himself or his family.

On the occasion of *Khwbo Amang* the guest *Buliangs* carry a cane pouch each called *Buliang Pyakha* or *Buing Pyakha*⁶² which gives a *Buliang* identity and in which whatever meats and other food items such as *Alo* and *Tapyo*, etc. received as gift are carried home.⁶³

Byai Mibya gets the largest number of gift items amongst members of *Khwbo Amang*. He gets the following items as gift from both of the *Rwtcha Nello* and the *Rwlo Nello*

and others: *Alo*, *Tapyo*, *Yaalang*, *Dwping* (mixture of two numbers each of cooked skin meat and clear meat; both called *Apwr/Aming yoh*; wrapped in a sacred wild leaf called *Nwji Yenw*), a vessel of 'O', a small piece of roasted bacon each from the *Rwtcha Nello* and the *Rwlo Nello*, *Takhwee* (a squirrel) & *JiloPanyi* (*Byai Panyi/Byai Pwlo*) each from *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello*. After return from *Khwbo Amang*, a part of the total gifts received by the *Byai Mibya* and the gifts carried back home in *Buliang Pyakha* by *Byai Mih* is divided to *Byai Mih* by *Byai Mibya* as per his own wish. Out of the two numbers of bacon received as *Jilo Panyi*, the one which is of lesser quality is gifted to *Byai Mih* by *Byai Mibya*.

For certain purpose, again the *Buliangs* as a whole in the Apatani valley are divided into two ceremonial groups as follows: 1. The *Nwchi-Nwtw*, *Reru-Tajang* and *Dwre-Hwja Buliangs* comprising of the *Buliangs* of *Hangu*, *Reru*, *Tajang* and *Hwja* villages; which is otherwise known as the *Twini-Aso Buliangs* or *Hwtw-Aso Buliangs* and 2. The *Talyang-Hao* and *Dwbo Buliangs* comprising of the *Buliangs* of *Hari*, *Talyang-Kalung*, *Dutta*, *Mwdang-Tage* and *Bamin-Michi* villages; which is called as the *Dwbo-Aso Buliangs* or *Hwchi-Aso Buliangs*.

But it may be noted that such division of the Apatani villages does not affect the social consequence of the society.

The *Buliangs* of *Dwbo-Aso* cannot demonstrate *Khwbo Amang* in *Nwchi-Nwtw*, *Reru-Tajang* or *Hwja* as the case may be and vice-versa. For instance, in *Myoko* of *Talyang Hao Nyi* comprising of *Reru*, *Tajang*, *Talyang-Kalung* and *Hari* villages; *Nwchi-Nwtw* and *Dwre-Hwja Buliangs* will demonstrate *Khwbo Amang* at *Reru-Tajang* and the *Dwbo-Aso Buliangs* demonstrate at *Hari* and *Talyang-Kalung*.

In *Myoko* of the *Hwchi* group of villages *Khwbo Amang* of *Talyang-Kalung* and *Hari* demonstrates the same at *Dutta*, *Bamin-Michi* and *Mwdang-Tage* and *Khwbo Amang* of *Nwchi-Nwtw* and *Reru-Tajang* demonstrates at *Hwja*. In *Myoko* of *Nwchi-Nwtw*, the *Khibo Amangs* of *Reru-Tajang* and *Dwre-Hwja* is demonstrated at *Hangu* but no *Khwbo Amang* of the *Dwbo-Aso Buliangs* can demonstrate in the same, the reason simply being that *Hangu* is not a part of the *Dwbo-Aso Buliangs*.

Normally *Byai Mibya* should be a *Buliang* but alternatively he can either be a formal *Nyibu* or be any adult villager one who is well-conversant with the verses of *Jilo Ayu* and

Lankwr Karnwng, if the interested and competent *Buliang* is not available for the job. *Byai Mibya*⁶⁴ holds a *Mwyo Pley*⁶⁵ in his right hand as part of his priestly attire.

However, at the time of or immediately after *Samma Pinwng* in the Myoko-celebrating village, if *Pobbu* (which means misfortune in the form of natural or unnatural death of member of a clan) occurs in a clan, then performance of *Samma Pinwng* of that unfortunate clan is deferred for a few days (However, remaining clans continue with performances of *Samma Pinwng* and other rituals and festive processes/activities).

However *Khwbo Amang* is not invited in the whole village that year because of the *Pobbu* as mentioned above. In this situation, members of the *Buliang* go and inform of the same to the *Buliangs* of the ceremonially-allied villages telling them that invitation of *Khwbo Amang* cannot be given⁶⁶ when taboo related to it has to be observed by all residents; called *Anyo* and in that case *Myoko/Khwbo Amang* gifts are sent to the *Buliangs* of ceremonially-allied villages, i.e. *Dwreh-Hwja* and Reru-Tajang from the distance if it is Myoko of *Nwchi-Nwtw*; which is called *Alo-Tapyo Chitu Binwng* or *Atu Nwng* or *Battu Binwng*. This gift called *Alo-Tapyo Chitu Binwng* is given in cash now at the fixed rate of Rs. 1000 (Rupees One Thousand) only each to the collective *Buliangs* of *Dwreh-Hwja* and Reru-Tajang respectively.⁶⁷ For instance, if *Pobbu* occurs in Hangu *Myoko* two *Buliangs* each from *Nwchi* and *Nwtw* divisions respectively will go and inform of the same accordingly to the *Buyiangs* of all ceremonially-allied villages. Of the four *Buliangs* two (one *Nwchi Buliang* and one *Nwtw Buliang*) would go to Hwja and other two (again one *Buliang* from *Nwchi* and one *Buliang* from *Nwtw*) would go to Reru-Tajang and inform accordingly and deliver the gifts too.

When no *Pobbu* occurs *Jilo Madu* is done with free mind. As mentioned earlier, in case of *Nwchi-Nwtw* one *Buliang* each of *Nwchi* and *Nwtw* respectively totalling to two would go and inform the *Buliang* of *Dwre-Hwja* and similar composition of the *Buliang* would go and inform to the *Buliang* of the Reru-Tajang wholeheartedly inviting for *Khwbo Amang*. Sometimes *Khwbo Amang* and *Samma Pinwng* may be conducted on the same evening after a discussion and consensus amongst the *Buliangs*, *Myoko Lyugyang Atos* (all care takers of clan *Myoko* alters) and *Myoko Lyugyang Nyibus* (all priests of clan *Myoko* alters). However, *Khwbo Amang* is normally invited on the next evening of the *Samma Pinwng* evening.

Similarly if *Pobbu* occurs either in Hwja or in Reru-Tajang *Khwbo Amang* does not arrive from both of the villages to the *Nwchi-Nwtw* so that taboo connected to the *Pobbu* is observed in their village; called *Anyo*. That situation would come to be known by the people some way or the other. However, *Buliang* members from the unfortunate village come and inform of the same in time. In that situation, *Khwbo/Myoko Amang* gifts for the *Buliangs* of those villages are gifted from the distance that year; called *Atu Nwng* or *Battu Binwng* or *Alo-Tapyo Chitu Binwng* again at the fixed rate of Rs. 1000 (Rupees One Thousand) only again. However, presentation of the said gifts to those *Buliangs* may be deferred for a few days till observation of the taboo is completed.

Hence, *Khwbo Amang* was not invited in a Hangu *Myoko* (2013) because of an unnatural death of Late (Mr.) Taru Akha of Hwja village. Also, *Khwbo Amang* of Reru-Tajang was not invited considering the fact that Hwja, Reru-Tajang and Hangu belong to same and one ceremonially-allied group.

Unlike in former days, in the current situation when March 20th every year is the fixed date for inaugural ceremony/*Samma Pinwng* if *Pobbu* occurs in any clan it is difficult to postpone the same. In this situation the practice is that when *Pobbu* occurs in a clan *Samma Pinwng* of the unfortunate clan is deferred for a few days.

However, when *Pobbu* occurs in any ceremonially-allied village of Myoko-celebrating village *Khwbo Amang* is not invited at all that year as mentioned earlier but all other festive processes or activities (including *Samma Pinwng*) are continued unhampered, to be participated by the people of all Apatani villages without any kind of discrimination.

During *Subu* and *Murung*

As in the case with *Myoko* festival of the Apatanis, *Murung* and *Subu* festivals cannot take place without involvement of the *Buliang*. *Subu* is a ceremonial festival performed by individual but joined in festivities by whole members of clan and other relatives. During *Subu*, collection of firewood for the purpose is followed by invitation and entertainment of the *Buliangs* with food, wine and meat. The belief⁶⁸ is that if the *Buliangs* are made happy, the Gods and Goddesses bless the performer⁶⁹ of the ceremony.

The *Buliangs* of *Subu* solemnizing clan or sub-clan groups are invited to house of the performer. They are entertained with ‘*O*’ (rice beer) along with some small pieces of *Tapyo* (Apatani black salt) and rice meal called *Aping* besides gifting *Tai Dilang* (a piece of raw meat) and *Heyih* (a small stomach of sacrificed *Mithun*) and a bacon called *yoh aso*. Also the *Buliangs* are given Rupees one hundred as *Buliang Amang* (*Buliang* gift). Earlier this *Amang* was paid in kind, i.e. a pig skin, a puppy or dried salt (dried salt or salt itself was held very precious in the olden days because of its scarce availability which actually had to be procured on foot through barter system from the plains of Assam). The *Buliangs* maintain this *Amang* as fund⁷⁰. These offers (called *Amang* in general) are known as ‘*Subu Buliang Amang/Subu Buliang Mwho Nwng*’.

The *Buliangs* are given special importance during a public ceremonial festival called *Murung* performed by individual but again joined in festivities by all the members of the clan/Relatives/village/s or ceremonially-allied villages depending upon the type of *Murung*. *Murung* is basically of two types which are *Rontw Murung* and *Ronswe Murung*. *Rontw Murung* again is of three types, viz., *Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung*, *Yappu-Yaalang Pinwng Rontw Murung* and *Takung Putu Rontw Murung*. *Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung* and *Yappu-Yaalang Pinwng Rontw Murung* are larger types of *Rontw Murungs*; ones which are more elaborate in terms of animal sacrifice. In both of these *Rontw Murungs* meat of sacrificed animals (*Mithuns* and cows) are distributed to all households of entire Apatani community. *Takung Putu Rontw Murung* is smaller type of *Rontw Murung*; one in which the meat of sacrificed animals is distributed in the households of *Takung Putu*⁷¹ village/s only. In all of these three *Rontw Murungs* mentioned above ceremonial gift is given to the *Buliangs* and the same is called either *Murung Buliang Amang* or *Murung Buliang Mwho Nwng*.

Ronswe Murung is a ceremonial rite performed by individual. During *Ronswe Murung*, let us say in case of Hangu (Hong) village, two *Buliangs* each of clan of this *Murung*-solemnizing individual go to ceremonially-allied villages, i.e. *Dwre-Hwja* and Reru-Tajang and present a medium-size dog each called *Aki* as gift for the each *Buliang* (as body) of that ceremonially-allied village. This gift presented is known as *Aki Amang*. In addition to this gift, the two *Buliangs* present one head (along with its neck) of a domestic boar as gift to a *Buliang* each of *Dwre-Hwja* and Reru-Tajang. This gift presented is known as *Chagia*. It is presented to

the *Buliang* as mentioned above who host and feast these two guest *Buliangs* with food and drink. In reciprocation, the collective *Buliangs* of host village present five numbers each of *Sankho Atu* (small sticks of roasted meat) as gift to the two *Buliangs* in addition to one piece each of bacon meat-called *Dimbung*. These items presented as reciprocal gift is known as *Bunyi Gaku*.

During *Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung*; all the *Buliangs* of ceremonially-allied villages are given a *Buro* each, i.e. a highly valued regional bird called *Pengu* or a squirrel called *Takhwee* or a type of flying squirrel called *Swchi*. On the other hand, a piece of meat each called *yaalang* of sacrificed animals is distributed to all households (including *Buliangs*) of the entire Apatani community. Again *Buro* is gifted in cash now as per the fixed rate although original *Buro* would be preferred by the *Buliangs* given the choice.

During *Yappu-Yaalang Pinwng Rontw Murung*, all the *Buliangs* of own ceremonially-allied villages only are gifted a *Buliang Sankho* each. A *Buliang Sankho* consists of two-three fingers breadth bacon. On the other hand, to each of all households including *Buliangs* of the entire Apatani community is gifted a piece of *Yaalang* each of the sacrificed *Mithuns* along with a piece of bacon each only called *Yappu*. *Yappu-Yaalang Pinwng Rontw Murung* is affordable to limited individuals only. This *Rontw Murung* is considered to be the most expensive and prestigious one and the same is generally performed by those individuals who are intent on increasing their social prestige.

During *Takung Putu Rontw Murung*, *Buro* is gifted only to the *Buliangs* of own *Takung Putu* village/s. Also a piece of *Yaalang* each of sacrificed animals is distributed only to all the households (including *Buliangs*) of the *Takung Putu* village/s. However, at a later time, *Gatu Gata* is given only to all the *Buliangs* of own ceremonially-allied villages. The meaning of *Gatu Gata* is explained subsequently in the relevant page/place.

Basic types of *Murung*

- I. *Rontw Murung*
- II. *Ronswe Murung*

Types of *Rontw Murung*

1. *Takung Putu Rontw Murung*
2. *Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung*
3. *Yappu-Yaalang Pinwng Rontw Murung*

Table 2.3
Gifts in larger *Rontw Murungs* and its rate⁷²

<i>Murung</i>	Reciever	Gift	Rate
<i>Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung</i>	All <i>Buliangs</i> [*]	<i>Buro (Pengu)</i> each	Rs. 20
	All households ^{**}	<i>Unw Yoh (Yaalang)</i>	Not fixed
<i>Yappu-Yaalang Pinwng Rontw Murung</i>	All <i>Buliangs</i> [*]	<i>Buliang Sankho</i>	Not fixed
	All households ^{**}	<i>Unw Yoh (Yappu-Yaalang)</i>	Not fixed

^{*}Of ceremonially-allied villages only (of the *Murung*-performer's village).

^{**}Including all *Buliangs* of the Apatani valley.

Explanation⁷³ of the terms in the Table 1 above:

- (i) *Buro*= the gift (consisting of a *Pengu*) presented to the *Buliangs* of ceremonially-allied villages only in *Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung*.
- (ii) *Buliang Sankho* = the gift (consisting of two-three fingers breadth bacon) presented to the *Buliangs* of ceremonially-allied villages only in *yappu-Yaalang Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung*.
- (iii) *Pengu* = a highly-valued regional bird.
- (iv) *Yaalang*= a piece of raw meat of sacrificed *Mithuns*.
- (v) *Yappu-Yaalang*= the combination of a piece of raw meat of sacrificed *Mithuns* and a piece of bacon.

The *NWCHI(NIICHI)-NWTW(NIITII)*, *RERU-TAJANG*, *DWRE(DIIRE)-HWJA(HIJA)* *BULIANGs* Bye-laws and Constitution having uniform application to the *Buliangs* of these villages to be effective from 2011 have fixed the rate of *Aki Amang* and *Gatu Gata* as noted⁷⁴ (along with the explanation of the technical terms) below:

I. *Aki Amang* – gifted in *Ronswe Murung*:

a) Rs. 500 (Rupees five hundred) only in place of ‘one medium size *Aki*’. *Aki* means dog.

b) *Chagia*-Rs. 200 (Rupees two hundred) only in place of ‘*Alyi Ading Puhe Lango Gwta Dopa*’. *Chagia* refers to gift presented to the host *Buliang* who feasts with food and drink to the two guest *Buliangs* bringing *Aki Amang* on behalf of *Ronswe Murung*-solemnizing clan/individual. ‘*Alyi Ading Puhe Lango Gwta Dopa*’ means one head of domestic boar along with its full neck.

c) *Bunyi Gaku*- Rs. 50 (Rupees fifty) only each for the two guest *Buliangs* as mentioned above in place of ‘*Sankho Atu Khongo Saeh & Dimbung Posa*’.

Bunyi Gaku refers to gift presented to the two guest *Buliangs* as mentioned above by the collective *Buliangs* of a ceremonially-allied village as reciprocal gesture for bringing *Aki Amang* on behalf of *Ronswe Murung*-solemnizing individual/clan. ‘*Sankho Atu Khongo Saeh*’ means five numbers each of small sticks of roasted meat. ‘*Dimbung Posa*’ means one piece each of bacon.

II. *Gatu Gata* - given in *Takung Putu Rontw Murung*:

Gatu Gata is gifted in *Takung Putu Rontw Murung* to the *Buliangs* of own ceremonially-allied villages only from the distance in view of the fact that their *Buros* along with the meat of sacrificed animals cannot be presented (at the time) when the *Buros* to the *Buliangs* and the meat of sacrificed *Mithuns* to all households including *Buliangs* of own *Takung Putu* village/s only are presented.

a) *Buro*: Rs. 20 (Rupees twenty) each for all the *Buliangs* of a ceremonially-allied village only in place of *Pengu*. *Pengu* means a highly-valued regional bird and *Buro* refers

to gift carried and brought by the two guest *Buliangs* from the *Takung Putu Murung*-solemnizing clan/individual in favor of all the *Buliangs* of the ceremonially-allied village/s only. Let us say the two guest *Buliangs* are coming from Hangu (Hong) village to ceremonially-allied village of Reru-Tajang (Bulla). The two *Buliangs* would carry and bring either total of forty three numbers of *Pengu* or $(43 \times 20) = \text{Rs. } 860$ (Rupees eight hundred sixty) only as *Buros* for all the forty three *Buliangs* in that village.

b) *Chagia*: Rs. 300 (Rupees three hundred) only in place of ‘*Alyi Ading Puhe Lango Gwta Dopa*’ + ‘*Subu Potw Kone Amingpa*’ + ‘*Dimbung Posa*’.

Chagia refers to gift presented to a *Buliang* in a ceremonially-allied village who hosts and feasts the two guest *Buliangs* bringing the *Buros* as mentioned above on behalf of the *Takung Putu Murung*-solemnizing individual/clan with food and drink. ‘*Alyi Ading Puhe Lango Gwta Dopa*’ means one head of domestic boar along with its full neck, ‘*Subu Potw Kone Amingpa*’ means the cooked meat of a diaphragm of sacrificed *Mithun* and ‘*Dimbung Posa*’ means a piece of bacon each (all brought by the two guest *Buliangs* mentioned above for the hosting *Buliang* house).

c) *Buro Gaku*: Rs. 100 (Rupees one hundred) only each, i.e. the total of $100 \times 2 = \text{Rs. } 200$ (Rupees two hundred) only for the two guest *Buliangs* in place of ‘*Buro Lyango Saeh*’ & ‘*Dimbung Posa*’. ‘*Buro Gaku*’ means the gift presented to both of the said two guest *Buliangs* as reciprocal gesture for the kind job they carry out as described above. ‘*Buro Lyango Saeh*’ means five numbers each of *Pengu*. ‘*Dimbung Posa*’ means a piece of bacon each.

Table 2.4

Gifts (*Aki Amang*) in *Ronswe Murung* and its rate

Gift	Reciever	Item	Rate
<i>Aki/Aki Amang</i>	All <i>Buliangs</i> [*] collectively	A medium-size dog	Rs. 500
<i>Chagia</i>	A <i>Buliang</i> ^{**}	<i>Alyi Ading Puhe Lango giita</i>	Rs. 200

		<i>Dopa</i>	
<i>Bunyi Gaku</i>	Two <i>Buliangs</i> ***	<i>Sankho Atu Khongo Saeh + Dimbung Posa</i>	Rs. 100 (50 x 2)

*Of a ceremonially-allied village (of the *Ronswe Murung*-solemnizing individual's village).

**Hosting and feasting the two guest *Buliangs*.

***Who carry and present *Aki Amang* on behalf of individual/clan solemnizing *Ronswe Murung*.

Table 2.5
Gifts (*Gatu Gata*) in *Takung Putu Rontw Murung* and its rate

Gift	Reciever	Item	Rate
<i>Buro</i>	All <i>Buliangs</i> *	<i>Pengu</i> **	Rs. 20 each
<i>Chagia</i>	A <i>Buliang</i> ***	<i>Alyi Ading Puhe Lango Gwta Dopa + Subu Potw Kone Aming Pa + Dimbung Posa</i>	R. 300
<i>Buro gaku</i>	Two guest <i>Buliangs</i> ****	<i>Buro Lyango Saeh + Dimbung Posa</i>	Rs. 200 (100 x 2)

*Of a ceremonially-allied village/s (of the *Takung Putu Murung* performer's village/clan/individual).

** A highly-valued regional bird.

***Hosting and feasting the two guest *Buliangs*.

****Who carry and present *Buros* on behalf of individual/clan/village solemnizing *Takung Putu Rontw Murung*. However the Bye-laws and Constitution of *NWCHI-NWTW*, *RERU-TAJANG*, *DWRE-HWJA Buliangs* have opined that the same shape and size of *Yoh Aso* (bacon) for *Jilo Panyi/Byai Panyi* of *Byai Mibya* is continued since time immemorial and cannot be fixed. And hence that it shall remain as usual. *Jilo Panyi* refers to a bacon each given by *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* respectively to *Byai Mibya*.

III. Social Functions

Yet another belief is that offering hearty feast to the *Buliang* equates offering feast to the God. Therefore, when a person or family suffers from incurable ailments, members of a family suffer from illness one after other or misfortunes come one after another; the *Buliangs*⁷⁵ (and sometimes some selected village elders also) of own village are invited and ritual supper is offered to them. This rite is known as *Gensi* or *Gensi Byanwng*⁷⁶. It is held that the person or family is successful at times in getting the wished result.

It is a general traditional belief that if the *Buliang* bless or curse any of the families or any one then the consequence is commensurate with that.⁷⁷ The literal meaning of the term *Gyensi* refers to bacon meat which is wanted by some people from someone and thus they have grievance and as a result which may have harmful repercussion. And the actual meaning of *Byanwng* is roasting. Hence *Gyensi Byanwng* literally would mean roasting of *Gyensi* meat (bacon meat).

A *Khwbo Amang* possibly may have either curse or blessing for the *Rwtcha Nello* or for the *Rwlo Nello* or for the other host villagers. Whatever may be their feeling; *Gyensi Byanwng* is observed nicely and sincerely and wholesome foods and drinks including bacon meat and drink are offered to everybody of the same as described earlier. In the process, both of the *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* and other host villagers earn the good will of the *Khwbo Amang* and get their blessing.

Characteristic Features

- i. The members composing the *Buliang* generally are the accepted leaders of the village/s.
- ii. The jurisdiction of the *Buliang* is limited to the Apatani valley and its people only.
- iii. The *Buliang* draws their authority from the people since the remote ancient past and acts like sovereign body.
- iv. The *Buliang* is governed by the customary laws and traditional social practices of the society; which are yet to be codified.
- v. Traditionally, the women do not participate in the sessions of the *Buliangs*. Hence the council is a male-dominated institution.
- vi. The *Buliang* is backed by social as well as religious sanctions.
- vii. In the functioning of the *Buliang*, sacrifices are commonly offered to avoid supernatural dangers and to obtain divine blessing as well as to bring peace and goodwill between the disputants.
- viii. The *Buliang* as a council takes up only two types of cases: one the issue of public concern and other the appellate cases.
- ix. Decisions in the *Buliang* are arrived at through a general consensus/unanimity.

- x. The major functions of the *Buliang* have been of politico-judicial nature and managing the socio-religious affairs in *Myoko*, *Murung* and *Subu* festivals.
- xi. The *Buliang* does not have the coercive centralized authority to effectively enforce upon a larger dispute.
- xii. *Lisunwng* was more often than not undertaken by the disputants as last resort (in the traditional society) when the *Buliang* failed to settle a larger dispute. The *Lisunwng* is a practice unique to the Apatani society.
- xiii. The origin of the *Buliang* is derived through mythology.
- xiv. *Gondu Punwng* practice is a compulsory and concluding part of any dispute settlement.
- xv. Basically the membership of the *Buliang* is hereditary and the same is bequeathed along male line only.
- xvi. The members of *Buliang* basically act as the representatives of own clan/clan group/village/village group. Although, ultimately they are collectively responsible to the community as a whole.
- xvii. Now a day the *Buliang* is limited to socio-religious functions; which would continue to stay and as relevant as ever.
- xviii. The sessions of the *Buliang* take place in *Lappang* a sacred community sitting platform; and the woman cannot step on to the same; which is also a unique matter.
- xix. A habitual thief or a murderer was given capital punishment by the *Buliang* in the traditional past.
- xx. The community interest is uppermost for the *Buliang*.
- xxi. The man of age, wisdom, oratory, intelligence, wealth and status, character, social reputation or knowledge on tribal history and customs generally dominates the council's proceedings and has a vital role in resolving the conflicts in society.

Decline of the *Buliang*

Indeed, the *Buliang* is a declining institution now in regard to its judicial, administrative and political functions. To-day, most of the cases are settled (till 2013) by the

mediators, the experienced *Gaon Buras* or the Magistrates with the cooperation of Political Interpreters (*Katokis*)⁷⁸ and courts at other levels including the Supreme Court.

Especially now a days, the *Buliangs* have certain serious limitations which are indeed a difficult impediment in the functionality of the same. The appointment of the *Buliang* is not democratic as the members are not elected directly but is based on hereditary system. Hence merit takes a back seat. The decision of the *Buliang* is likely to be colored by parochial family, kinship and clan consideration. The written or permanent code for dispensation of justice does not exist. Hence infringement on basic and natural right is possible. The authority of the *Buliang* depends upon the status determinants like wealth, personal caliber, etc. In-fact, a man of high social standing is a more effective player than a poor *Buliang*. Also, a kind of gender discrimination exists because it is bequeathed along male line only.

Authority of *Buliang* is greatly eroded by advent of education, administration, and acceptance of the more convenient modern laws based on IPC & CrPC. Growing numbers of lawyers and their advocacy and heterogeneous population with varied cultural moorings have led to decline of common traditional law and norms of trial by the *Buliang*. Sizable portion of the Apatani population are engaged in government services, PSU (Public Sector Units), and other commercial activities which requires long absence from the native place. Thus even many *Buliangs* are posted outside because of which social participation and their knowledge on customary law is very less.

The jurisdiction of the *Buliang* is limited and its social acceptance too is the same. The *Nikung Dapo* (The Customary Laws) has not been codified yet. Therefore government has not yet recognized it formally. The institutions of the *Gaon Buras* and the P.I.s (*Katokis*) have also eroded the authority of *Buliang*. Polarization of the people along party lines in politics also has adversely affected the impartial outlook of the *Buliang*. Indian polity particularly Panchayati Raj too has encroached on the authority of *Buliang*. Easy availability of alternative dispute redressal agencies has also diminished the importance of the *Buliang*. Growing consumerism amongst the people as well has contributed in causing its decline.

Concluding Remark

Although the *Buliang* has declined in politico-judicial function its socio-religious importance will, always remain and, be as relevant as ever because *Myoko*, *Murung* and *Subu* festivals are indispensable part of Apatani culture and without role or involvement of the *Buliang* these festivals cannot be celebrated. Moreover, there is a general feeling amongst the people that the valuable customary laws, the traditional social practices, the customary ways of adjudication of dispute and the *Buliang* system should be preserved; partly which reflects the people's emotional bonding with the traditional institution. A step towards this direction was made in 2011 when the association under the banner of *Nwchi-Nwtw*, *Reru-Tajang*, *Dwre-Hwja Buliangs*; *Ziro* was formed amongst the *Buliangs* of this group of villages and its Bye-Laws and Constitution were adopted with definite Resolution with its aims and objective. Resolution No.3 of the association's Bye-Laws and Constitution for 2011 – 14 states: "The house has resolved to restore the age-old Apatani judicial system and judicial and customary power in near future".⁷⁹ Similarly, the other group of *Buliangs* of the Apatani society, i.e. *Dwbo-Aso Buliangs* formed an association under the banner of the *Talyang- Hao* and *Dwbo Buliang* in 2012 and with similar Bye – Laws and Constitutions for 2012-15 with the same Resolution with its aims and objective. Some other important resolutions adopted by these associations for welfare of Apatani society in general is that the *Buliangs* would take the responsibility to resolve dispute if it arises in connection with the halting of *Penw* party (the ceremonial community festive processional party of *Murung* festivals) at the *Lappang* of any clan of the village.

Another such resolution is that it will initiate research on origin and evolution of the *Buliang*. Besides, an aim and objective of the two *Buliang* associations is to preserve the traditional system of social custom, art, culture and literature of Apatani society. These two *Buliang* associations have, of late, tied up themselves into one and only called the *Supung Buliang* Council as common and supreme (*Buliang*) body for the whole Apatani community. The Council's Resolution with similar aims and objective was also adopted and successfully printed recently for distribution to members. However, a pertinent question that arises is that whether future generations would be competent enough to recite/chant the sacred verses called *Jilo Ayu* and *Lankwr Karnwng* correctly to ensure peace, progress, life, prosperity, success and happiness of the community considering the fact that the priestly knowledge is a fast dying institution.

Notes and References

1. In farming profession of the Apatanis *Patang* constitutes the manpower force. It is an organized form of friendship or social cohesive, where the members help each other in agricultural works and in the time of need according to the principle of reciprocation. The group consists of about six to ten members generally mix of the boys and the girls of contemporary age.
2. Kani, T (1993), *Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh*, Purbadesh Mudran, Rehabari, Guwahati - 8.
3. The word *Buliang* is a generic and honorable term. The castrator of pig is called Kwmer *Buliang*, the grave digger is called *Kwdi Buliang* and the priest who negotiates with Gods of the environment and weather is called *Mwdo Buliang*.
4. Tado, P (2001), *Political Transition amongst the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh: A Case Study of the Apatanis*, Unpublished PhD thesis, erstwhile Arunachal University, Doimukh (Itanagar).
5. Kaning, M (2008), *Rising Culture of the Apatanis Tribe [Arunachal Pradesh]*, Himalayan Publisher, Itanagar.
6. Kani, T, Interviewed on 03-08-2013, Itanagar.
7. Kani, T (1995), "*Buliang*: the traditional village council of the Apatanis", Unpublished research article, Itanagar.
8. Tari, N (2002), *Buliang*, M. Phil Dissertation, erstwhile Arunachal University, Doimukh (Itanagar).
9. Kani, T (1995), op. cit.
10. The *Miha Pillos* are those who had been taken assistance and company in the public sphere by the *Buliangs* themselves for their active and cooperative nature.
11. Kani, T (1993), *Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh*, Ziro.
12. Kani, T, Interviewed on 06-08-2013, Itanagar.
13. For instance, Smti Tilling (Penji) Tara Opyung, a widow of a *Buliang* plays such role because her son is underaged and Shri Nami Tadi's mother played the similar role during her son's childhood days.
14. Such acitivity is called *Dwmo Wreh* in Apatani terminology.
15. Haimendorf, C.V.F (1962), *Apa Tanis and Their Neighbours: A Primitive Civilisation of the Eastern Himalayas*, London, pp. 67-68.
16. In *Hidden Land* (1953), John Murray, 50, Albemarle St., London.
17. Elwin, Verrier (1988), *Democracy in NEFA*, Director of Research, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.
18. Like Pilyia Rwbya, H & Takha, T, and Others Interviewd during August, 2013 to December, 2013, Ziro.
19. Tado, P (2001), Op cit.
20. Kani, T (1993), Op cit, p.140.
21. The *Buliang* was realigned during hostility amongst the Apatanis which occurred in 1947 on account of *Mithun* ('Bos Frontal is' being its scientific name) dispute between Radhe Talang of Bwla (Tajang) village and Koj Nwchi of Dutta village. This historical event is known as *Supung Chambyo* the some more detail of which is given under Politico-Judicial functions of this chapter. In this *Chambyo*, that time *Dwbo-Aso Buliangs* of Reru-Tajang villages were successfully persuaded to join and integrate with the *Hwtw-Aso Buliangs* subsequent to the insult

inflicted by Chiging Nyime of Dutta village to the *Buliangs* of Reru and Tajang villages through his offensive remark. As a result the number of *Buliangs* increased in Reru-Tajang villages. At present the Reru village has the highest proportion of *twenty three Buliangs*; however which are all inherited.

22. The *Miha Pillos* were otherwise called *Miha Buliangs* especially in Hangu village. Like *Buliang* the *Miha Pillos/Miha Buliangs* also acted primarily as the representatives of their own clan/clan group/village/village group; of-course ultimately being responsible to the whole Apatani society. *Miha Pillos* have also been standing since the time immemorial as commonly admitted and are inheritable posts in villages like Bwla and Hwja. However, except a few they did not become *Buliang*. For instance, the father of Mr. Habung Pilya Rwbya, a *Buliang* of Bwla village was a *Miha Pillo* and Sri Ninding Rwdo of Hwja village [refer Tado, P (2001), Op cit] is a *Miha Pillo (Buliang)*. In case of Hangu village, they were appointed from time to time from different persons and were neither inheritable nor any of them ever become a *Buliang*, according to Ranko, T, Tama, P, Kani, T and Marpu, N who were interviewed during August, 2013 to March, 2014 at Itanagar/Ziro.
23. Kani, T, Interviewed on 29-08-2013, Itanagar.
24. Gyati, A (2012), *Democratic Decentralisation in a Frontier Tribe The Apatanis*, pp.39-40 and Rwbya Pilya, H, Interviewed on 11-08-2013, Old Ziro.
25. Gyati, A (2012), Op cit, p.42.
26. For details see Haimendorf, C.V.F (1962), Op cit, pp. 102-105.
27. For details see Bower, Ursula Graham (1953), *Hidden Land*, London, Re-published by Kani, T (2011), Itanagar, pp. 116-125.
28. Kani, T (1995), Op cit.
29. *Lisunwng* and *Yelu* are terms interchangeably used.
30. Elaborated later.
31. Elaborated later.
32. Bullo Clan of Hangu village consists of the two phratries (*Urus*) of Bullo Logo and Bullo Lora.
33. Ranko, T and Lt. Dibo, T, Interviewed on 12-08-2013, Itanagar.
34. Haimendorf, C.V.F (1962), Op cit, pp. 111-112.
35. Cost of one *Mithun* is up-to Rupees seventy thousands at the current market price.
36. In general *Yelu*, called as *Lisunwng*, *Mithun*-slaughtering competition takes place often accompanied by destruction of valuable ornaments like *Maji* (Tibetan bell), *Tallo* (brass plate), etc. A *Yelu* has other meaning too. Any major dispute per se is termed as *Yelu* in Apatani. A *Yelu* may or may not involve the physical fights. Once it starts involving the physical violence the same is termed *Chambyo*. A *Yelu* is of two types on the basis of involvement of the participators: i) *Pimbu Yelu* (personal *Yelu*), ii) *Butw Yelu* (communal *Yelu*). The Reru-Tajang *Chambyo* is an example of *Butw Yelu*. The rest of the *Yelus* mentioned are instances of *Pimbu Yelu*.
37. In Apatani society the *head* of a sacrificed animal; like cow, *Mithun* or pig is ceremonially gifted to an eldest male member in lineage of a man's paternal family. And such *head* is usually kept gifting to same person so long he is alive. After his death only such *head* can be given to the next eldest man alive in the lineage as described above. If gift of such *head* is shifted to another man when the original taker is alive then traditionally it is viewed very seriously. Not only the *head* of sacrificed domestic cattle but also the *head* of wild animals got in hunting is to be gifted in the same manner.

38. A *Mithun* dispute often takes place in Apatani society due to the problem of identification. As an identity sign a cut mark is put on the ears of the *Mithun* so that it helps the owner in easily identifying own *Mithun*. A *Mithun* is identified by its color as well. A color of a *Mithun* is such as *Yata*, *Yabing*, *Tau*, *Yau*, *Tabing*, *Tata*, *Tabyo*, *Yamyo*, etc. in Apatani. But sometimes it happens that the color and the identity cut mark of a *Mithun* is similar between two *Mithuns* and as a result two owners claim same *Mithun* thereby starting a controversy; which at times snowball into *Lisunwng*; involving an undesirable holocaust of valuable properties.
39. Haimendorf, C.V.F (1946), *An Ethnographic Notes on Subansiri Area*, Hyderabad-Deccan, reproduced/republished by Kani, T (2009), Antique book series 1: *THE TRIBES OF SUBANSIRI REGION IN 1940s (An Ethnographic Notes on Subansiri Area)*, pp. 80-81, Institute for Preservation of Art, Culture and Literature (IPACL), Itanagar.
40. Haimendorf, C.V.F (1946), *Ibid*, p.79.
41. Kani, T (1995), *Op cit*.
42. Kani, T, Interviewed on 23-08-2013, Itanagar.
43. Kani, T (1993), *Op cit*.
44. In common man language *Jilo Madu* is known as *Khwbo Amang Gyonwng*.
45. However the *Rwtcha Nello* or the *Rwlo Nello* is decided only by examining the omen as referred earlier.
46. In an Apatani house, there is a front entrance and a back entrance.
47. *Metw Tamu* is a God who is called as security guard of a house by common people.
48. *Byai Mibya* attires a ceremonial dress like that of a *Myoko* priest.
49. Lt. Dibo, T, Interviewed on 30-08-2013, Itanagar.
50. *Ibid*.
51. However, the invited party members generally go to sleep although usually late in the night in the same house, i.e., *Rwtcha Nello*. However many prefer to go to their own respective friends' houses in the host village and sleep the remaining night.
52. Tado, P (2001), *Op cit*.
53. In return for providing 'O' and *Tapyo*, these women are given two pieces each of cooked meat called *Aper/Aming Yoh* in *Rwtcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* both.
54. Atleast in all the *Buliang* houses located along the road side.
55. Which is invariably reciprocated in own turn by the guest *Khwbo Ajings*.
56. Those interested menfolk who usually participate in the *Khwbo Ayu* competition in every *Myoko* know in advance their probable and usual *Khwbo Ayu* partners.
57. If preferred which is taken along with rice beer and the host members are not provided the meal.
58. Bacon meat is held very precious in Apatani society.
59. Apart from it, a plateful of this meat is given to members of *Khwbo Amang* when the meal is provided in *Rwlo Nello* as in *Rwtcha Nello*. The meal provided on any of such occasions, in Apatani technical term, is called *Plu-Sla*. Two pieces each of *Yoh Apwr/Aming* received at the time of entering *Rwlo Nello* is eaten along with 'O' drink. At *Rwlo Nello* if other members of *Khwbo Amang* prefer not to eat the meal provided, *Byai Mibya* and *Byai Mih* compulsorily eat the same. A recent development is that most of the members of *Khwbo Amang* generally prefer not to eat the meal presuming or pretending they have already eaten the same either at *Rwtcha Nello* or at their respective *Khwbo Ajings*' houses.

60. *Tapwr Lwning* ceremony is ceremony in *Myoko* when the villagers give a round of their village in the form of procession holding a wild fern each in all of their hands.
61. The counterpart invariably reciprocates this also when his own turn comes in their village's *Myoko*.
62. An association called *Nwchi-Nwtw*, Reru-Tajang, *Dwre-Hwja Buliang*, Ziro was formed amongst the *Buliangs* of this group of villages in 2011 with its own Bye-Laws and Constitution and a resolution was adopted. The resolution states that every *Buliang* shall have '*BULIANG PYAKHA*' as identity of the *Buliang* and that the same shall be used or carried compulsorily while participating in *KHWBO AMANG* in the *Myoko* festival ceremony.
63. The meats and other food items given in such occasion are usually carried home but some prefer to gift it to their own friends in the host village without carrying it home, as narrated by Lt. Dibo, T on 14.09.2013, Itangar.
64. On the other hand, in the *Murung* ceremonial processions also a *Nyibu* heads the same; when also a *Nyibu* holds in his right hand a *Mwyo Pley* consisting of *Twseh Yeso* (a variety of cane) piece as the handle but inserted into it with a feather of hornbill called *Pesuh* and sandwiched there by many feathers of a cock.
65. A tuft of eagle/hornbill/*Pamu* and cock plumes mixed; with handle-base of cane; used by a priest during ritual chanting and incantation. Eagle is called *Khonkhung* and hornbill is called *Pesuh* in Apatani and *Pamu* is a type of regional bird which kidnaps and eats the small chicks in the village by its habit.
66. It is taboo for the people from other villages to come to the *Myoko*-celebrating clan/village where such misfortune has occurred.
67. Tama, P, and Others in Interview during August, 2013 to December, 2013, Ziro.
68. Kaning, M (2008), Op cit.
69. Which include own brothers, cousins and clan brothers: Tama, P, Kula, N, Takha, T, and Others in Interview during August, 2013 to March, 2014, Ziro.
70. Tado, P (2001), Op cit & Lt. Dibo, T & Tama, P, Kula, N and Rwbya Pilya, H, and Others in Interview during August, 2013 to March, 2014, Itanagar/Ziro.
71. The Apatani community is divided into three ritual group units. *Myoko* festival is celebrated on turn basis amongst these group units. Each ritual group unit is called *Takung Putu*. These three *Takung Putus* are mentioned as follows: 1. *Twni-Dwbo*; also known as *Hwchi Gambw* or *Dwbo Gambw* comprising of Hwja, Dutta, Mwdang-Tage and Bamin-Michi villages, 2. *Talyang Hao Nyi*; also known as *Hwtw Gambw* comprising of Hari, Talyang-Kalung and Reru-Tajang villages and 3. *Nwchi-Nwtw* which stands for Hangu village (the largest one in Apatani valley) alone constitutes one such ritual group unit.
72. Takha, T, Tama, P, Kula, N and Rwbya Pilya, H, and Others in Interview during August, 2013 to March, 2014, Ziro.
73. These technical terms were explained by Takha, T, Kula, N, Tama, P, Rwbya Pilya, H and Others in Interview during August, 2013 to March, 2014, Ziro.
74. The technical terms were explained by Takha, T, Kula, N, Tama, P, Rwbya Pilya, H and Others in Interview during August, 2013 to march, 2014.
75. The *Gensi Byanwng* can also be observed by inviting people other than *Buliangs*; the purpose being the same.
76. *Gensi Byanwng* is observed by the barren couples also to beget offspring.

77. Kani, T, Interviewed on 17-09-2013, Itanagar.
78. Kaning, M, Op cit.
79. The source is *Nwchi-Nwtw Reru-Tajang Dwre-Hwja Buliangs* Bye-laws and Constitutions for 2011-14.

Chapter-III

Gaon Buras: Background and Workings

Every society at large needs a specialized mechanism for social control and regulation. When the people (of now Arunachal Pradesh) were not under any formal law they governed themselves with the help of the customs, customary laws, traditions and their common sense. They maintained peace by devising their own methods of policing and tried to deliver justice to the wronged person according to their best of knowledge, understanding and judgment of the situational complexities. The tribesmen regulated themselves by their own special codes of behavior of customs which were simple yet sufficient for their needs. The institutions such as *Kebang* dispensed with any or every kinds of civil or criminal cases of any order or seriousness by applying the society's customary laws which prescribed punishments for various offences.

The history is replete with stories of fierce resistance to the early British Administration's attempt to subvert the tribal ingenuous and indigenous systems, across the country including Arunachal Pradesh. During the British India rule, the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh like others looked to the rulers with suspicion and jealously guarded their freedom. Under the circumstances as this, the British rulers felt it unfeasible to bring the tribal territory under regular judicial system. In-fact, to avoid discontentment uprising, mutiny and confrontation the British avoided outright interference in the affairs of the tribal areas. Such areas were declared "excluded areas" where the administration was left to the tribal people themselves to be conducted through their simple codes of Customary Law.

The Ahom rulers of Assam somewhat maintained peace with their neighboring tribal people particularly through the system of **posa**. Their only concern had been to contain them within their hills. Under their phase of the distant control and 'non-intervention' policy, the tribal territories were part of the administrative province, which then existed as the Eastern Frontier of Bengal. After dominions of the Ahoms were inducted within the British Indian Empire, the then Arunachal territory too was integrated as part of Assam. Since their early advent in the territory, the British administration continued with the *posa* system, invented and introduced by the Ahom rulers, so as to claim for a kind of suzerainty over the hill-tribes country. However, the administration later on realized the inappropriateness of the policy of non-intervention by considering the unstable socio-political and economic conditions in the hills and

inordinate claims derived by its people from the *posa*. Therefore, a modified yet effective policy to maintain close relations with the hills people was felt essential to maintain the peace, towards securing their economic interests basically to successfully continue their viable tea garden cultivations (in the foothill plains) and, to ensure general security of the British Indian Empire.

Administrative and constitutional background

Hence, the (now) Arunachal Pradesh areas were put under the purview of the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 on 25th September, 1914 which gave formal system of governance to the territory for the first time. This happened when a particular Notification was issued by the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of (British) India. Through the enforcement of the 1880 Regulation, the hill areas were separated from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur District of Assam and the (same) territories were renamed as the North East Frontier Tracts. These new administrative category NEF Tracts started running under the administrative and political control of the then Governor of Assam. With the consolidation of its position in Assam and the extension of its administrative jurisdiction in the hill areas, the British India Administration decided to undertake certain interference in the ways of administration of justice prevalent among the tribal communities. Their intention was to regulate and control heinous crimes like murder, rape and slavery; crime against the state was never to be tolerated. The British authorities were very strict with regard to (abolition of) the slavery and blood-revenge and any offences against the security of the State. In-fact, they put down with heavy hands any uprising or disloyalty or sedition. Besides all this, the British India administration somewhat admired the traditional and customary laws and the social customs, usages, practices and conventions of the people of the North East Frontier Tracts and wanted to consolidate, amend and preserve them.

Hence, in 1914, three sets of Rules for administration of justice were issued under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874. They were (1) Rules for Administration of Justice in Central and Eastern Section, (2) Rules for Administration of Justice in Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and (3) Rules for Administration of Justice in Western Section. In 1937, the Rules were modified and issued under the Government of India Act, 1935, in the following forms: (1) Rules for Administration of Justice in Sadiya Frontier Tract, (2) Rules for Administration of Justice in Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, and (3) Rules for administration of Justice in Balipara Frontier Tract.

These sets of Rules were consolidated into one set of Rules under Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. The above Rules and Regulations issued in 1914, 1937, and 1945 by the British India Government furnished the constitutional basis for administration of justice in the territories, now included in Arunachal Pradesh.

Responsibility and functions of Village Authority

The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945) entrusted the responsibilities to maintain law and order and administration of justice upon the (statutory) Village Authorities. Henceforth, a vast majority of disputes and cases (both civil and criminal) came to be adjudicated by the village authorities (under their respective jurisdiction) in accordance with the prevailing codes of the tribal communities. The AFR, 1945 divides the offences into two categories- heinous and non-heinous. The offences of non-heinous nature, such as Theft, including theft in a building; Mischief not being mischief by fire or any explosive substance; Simple hurt; Criminal trespass or house trespass; and Assault or using criminal force were entitled to be tried by the village authorities. The village authorities could try and dispose the cases under Civil Justice without limit of values provided the disputants involved in the cases were indigenous inhabitants. They were also allowed to perform the police duty of apprehending culprits or suspected ones within their respective village jurisdiction. The cases of heinous crimes/offences were referred to the administrative (judicial) courts (above them in hierarchy) of the district administration although the culprits were not absolved from the payment of compensation.

It is thus found that the AFR, 1945, which provided for adjudication of long list of cases by the village authorities (which can be termed as converted form/identity of the traditional village councils/chiefs) formally recognized the age old functions of the village councils/chiefs and the customary laws, regulation and order. In other words, the centuries old judicial system/practice in the territories was given recognition through the 1945 Regulation. This Regulation form was only a slight deviation from the existing traditional adjudication system; only being that murder and other heinous crimes like rape were withdrawn from the same.

Appointment

Even after India's independence, the Government of India followed the policy of that of the British (and allowed the 1945 Regulation to prevail in the territory). The Village Authorities were constituted as per the provisions of Sub Rule (1) of Rule 5 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945(Regulation No. 1 of 1945) and the corresponding clauses of earlier Rules for Administration of Justice. Though the detailed guidelines or operational nuances have not been spelt out in the 1945 Regulation, but for practical purposes, the village authorities have been working within the broad framework/parameters of the same in administration of justice and other spheres. Regarding appointment of the village authority, it is not specified in details in the 1945 Regulation but under Section 5 of the above Regulation, the power of appointment has been entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner (erstwhile Political Officer) to constitute the same (village authority) with such persons as he consider to be members of a village authority, for such village or villages as he may specify, and may modify or cancel any such order of appointment, and may dismiss any person so appointed. For all practical purposes, the village authorities so constituted were christened *Gaon Bura*. The term "*Gaon*" means village and "*Bura*" means old man in Assamese. These twin-words in totality implied and meant 'Village Authority'.

Powers of different offices

The AFR, 1945 under Rule 3 provided that Criminal and Civil Justice shall be administered by the Political Officers, Assistant Political Officers and the village authorities (by the village authorities on non-heinous crimes only under Criminal Justice); whose positions subsequently had been taken over by DCs, ADCs and (same) Village Authorities/the *Gaon Buras*. These powers of administration are vested vide section 15 and 36 of Regulation I of 1945 as amended by Regulation 7 of 1965. Appeals in both the cases from the Court of Village Authorities could go to the Courts of Assistant Political Officer, Political Officer, Guwahati High Court, Governor (as administrative head of the entire territory), Supreme Court up-to President of India in the order of hierarchy. The Deputy Commissioner was invested with the powers of a District and Sessions Judge and the Assistant Commissioner with those of a magistrate of the First or the Second Class. So the Deputy Commissioner tried cases triable by Sessions Court, while the other magistrates tried other cases according to their respective powers. In sum, the

machinery of the administration of justice in districts of Arunachal Pradesh till 2013 was a two-tier structure, wherein the executive and the judiciary had been rolled into one; the upper tier being formed by the Deputy Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner (subsequently replaced by ADC) and the lower tier similarly formed by the village authority.

According to the AFR, 1945, the maintenance of the law and order and administration of justice in the districts were largely the responsibility of the DCs (Deputy Commissioners) as the Head in the districts. The district authorities (DCs) were also the judicial heads of the Districts as Session and District Judge. To elaborate further, in the later period, the Regulation, 1945 and the Criminal Procedure Act, 1974 [which brought CrPC into force in 1974 (in the areas)] entrusted the responsibility of Criminal and Civil Justice administration upon the DC, ADC (Additional Deputy Commissioner), EAC (Extra Assistant Commissioner) and the Village Authorities (as the lowest tier). The DC as DM (District Magistrate) and the ADC as ADM (Additional District Magistrate) exercised equal powers of Session Judge. The EAC was vested with powers not exceeding those of a First Class magistrate (as defined in the Code of Criminal Procedure). Actually, with effect from 1 April 1974, Chapters, VIII, X and XI of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 was brought into force in Arunachal Pradesh together with its provisions of Sections 2-5, 20-23, Chapter V and Section 373 (in the administration of justice) besides making the principles of the Indian Evidence Act applicable.¹

Powers under different Chapters

Next, the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1 of 1945 is the basic procedural law containing the provisions relating to the investigation, the jurisdiction of the police, the trial of the civil and the criminal proceedings and the general principles of evidence and limitation and the competent courts to try such cases. The Chapter II of the Regulation 1 of 1945 contains provisions relating to the police jurisdiction. The Section 7 of the same provides that the Deputy Commissioners shall have the control over all the police stations. The Section 6(1) of Regulation 1 of 1945 provides that the ordinary duties of the police in respect of crimes shall be discharged by the village authorities. Under their (power) jurisdiction, the village authorities are to maintain peace and order within their jurisdiction but they shall not be deemed to be police officer for purposes of section 25 and 26 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 or Section 162 of the CrPC. The village authorities are to watch and report on any vagrant

or any bad or suspicious character found within their jurisdiction and may apprehend any such person if they have reasonable ground for suspecting that he is committing or he is about to commit an offence and shall handover any person so apprehended to the Deputy Commissioner. The Section 5 of the Regulation provides that, on the commission of any offence, the inhabitants of such village, where the incident had taken place shall, if possible apprehend the offender and inform the authorities, and if he is not apprehended, the village authority shall proceed to the village to inquire into it.²

The Section 9 of the AFR, 1945 provides that the village authorities shall be responsible to report to the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner about all crimes and serious accidents occurring in their jurisdiction and to arrest and deliver the offender as soon as possible may be within the period of 24 hours of such arrest. It is given in the Regulation that the village authorities can arrest offenders and can impose fine up-to Rs. 50/- (Rs. 500/- as per 2005 Amendment) for any offence; and may also award payment in restitution or compensation to the extent of injury sustained. A unique provision in the system under the 1945 Regulation is that no pleader is to appear in any case before the village authority. A general observation is made from the Chapter II of the Regulation 1 of 1945 relating to Police, that the village authorities are vested with the powers of preliminary investigation; apprehending of the culprits; and making spot inquiries and reporting to the authorities. The Regulation is silent about the functions of the regular police, leaving it open presumably to be guided by the spirit of CrPC and Indian Evidence Act, etc. The jurisdiction of Police in respect of investigation and the powers of Police (Chapter IV); the arrest of persons (Chapter V); the security for keeping peace and good behavior (Chapter VIII); the maintenance of public order and tranquility (Chapter X); the preventive action of Police in cognizable offences (Chapter XI); and the information to Police and their investigation (Chapter XII) are laid down in the Regulation.³ It may be repeated that only certain specific provisions of the CrPC were made applicable to Arunachal Pradesh which remained valid till 2013.

Actual role of the *Gaon Buras*

The *Gaon Buras* act like a bridge between the public and the law enforcing agencies. As the representatives of the District Administration they are required to come forward to assist the Administration and Police whenever situation arises. The *Gaon Buras* are

responsible for all the law and order related duties in the village. They owe their position and importance to the Government and are bound by the government instructions issued from time to time. The *Gaon Buras* are to make the people obey the orders of the Government. They remain in the office so long as they enjoy the confidence of its appointing authority or of the people. As a result, the *Gaon Buras* functioned as the backbone of district administration during the NEFA (North East Frontier Agency) days. They brought the people closer to the administration and vice-versa, thereby facilitating the growth of the administration. The people held the *Gaon Buras* in great importance (in the earlier days) for they are directly under the administration. In sum, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are to assist, help and share with the District administration/Government in the maintenance of law and order and justice as well as in development activities.

Appointment of the Apatani *Gaon Buras*

In 1944-45, Dr. C. V. F. Haimendorf, who extensively explored the newly created district, the Subansiri Division, appointed some *Kotokis* from the inhabitants. His exploration of this district was followed by the wife-husband team, Mrs. U. G. Bower and Col. C. N. Betts when Col. Betts was posted as the Political Officer (PO) there. He appointed some *Gaon Buras* from amongst the Nyishis and the Apatanis to assist in his administration. These *Gaon Bura* appointees received lump-sum payment from the government for their services rendered both to the government and the society. After Betts, R. G. Menzies was the first Indian Political Officer posted to the district. He served this district during 1948-1955. In 1949, a section of Apatani villagers attacked Kure administrative outpost to drive the government men out of the Apatani valley. But the government forces retaliated against them, resulting in the loss of few lives of Apatani attackers on the spot. Moreover, the government burnt down Hari and Kalung villages. As a result, the Apatanis were made to build the government roads and buildings and to potter without payment as the additional punishment. At that time many influential Apatanis were appointed as *Gaon Buras* to guide the people in carrying out the above tasks.⁴

Advent of the administration in the Subansiri Division has been found to be a blessing in disguise. The modern life of the Nyishi and Apatani societies, as we can say, began in 1950 on account of the establishment of Indian administration in their district. Since then, social, political and economic conditions of these societies have seen favorable changes. Onwards 1950,

many *Gaon Buras* and *Kotokis* (Political Interpreters or PIs) as well were appointed (by the administration) every year at incremental rate from every Apatani villages which continued till recently. This was done initially to assist the traditional *Buliang* and the government in the maintenance of peace and in executing all-round developmental activities. Thereby, the headache of the *Buliang* due to the mounting burden of the village affairs was somehow mitigated since the *Gaon Buras* and PIs considerably shared the responsibility/yoke of assisting the administration.⁵ Currently, there are about 9,814 *Gaon Buras* (including Head *Gaon Buras*) and 186 *Gaon Buris* (female *Gaon Buras*) in the state. Lower Subansiri district has 183 HGBs, 471 GBs and 66 *Gaon Buris*. In Ziro circle of the district, there are about 87 HGBs, 164 GBs and 22 *Gaon Buris*, who are all Apatanis.

Katokis

The *Katokis* (an older institution than the *Gaon Buras*) were employed by the District Administration for maintaining cordial relations between the villagers and the Administration. Duties of the *Katokis* were basically to translate the language of the villagers in Assamese or Hindi to the administrative, judicial and other non-local government officers besides acting as facilitators in case deliberations and settlements of the *Gaon Buras*. Those *Katokis* enjoyed considerable importance in the early administration days. Those Apa Tanis who had learnt Assamese – and in some case also Hindi – were appointed as *Katokis* who provided a link between the tribesmen and the officials few of whom understood any tribal tongue. Besides acting as interpreters the *Kotokis* assumed the role of mediators between the litigants. The Deputy Commissioners/Assistant Commissioners often deputed the *Katokis* to help/assist the *Gaon Buras* with advice and guidance in their deliberations or settlements. Besides above matters, the *Gaon Bura(s)* and *Katoki(s)* assisted the government to implement any of its decisions and the government officials to smoothly perform their duties (at local levels). In due course of time, the *Gaon Bura(s)* and *Katoki(s)* emerged as dominant leaders of their respective societies and enjoyed a considerable amount of influence and position.

Change in structure of the *Gaon Buras*

The AFR, 1945 does not specify the structure of the village authorities. In due course of time, the *Gaon Buras* were promoted to the position of Head *Gaon Buras* and Assistant

Head *Gaon Buras* on the merit-cum-seniority basis though these posts did not initially exist. The post of *Gaon Buris* was also created in the recent past (around 1995) and the ladies have been appointed to this position across the state. However, the post of Assistant Head *Gaon Buras* was abolished later. It was widely admitted in the field survey that the post of Head *Gaon Buris* too should be created now and the appointments made. In the Apatani society at present, each clan has at least a few *Gaon Buras* (a few in small clans only) and each village has more than one *Head Gaon Buras*.

Advent of Police institution

Prior to 1972, Arunachal Pradesh had no civil police and it was Assam Rifles which helped the administration in the maintenance of law and order and justice. The set up of police establishment/institution in 1972 subsequently posed a serious challenge to the authority of the *Gaon Buras*. Initially, Police had no work, no case and the entire Arunachal Pradesh had five districts with no Police force. Gradually, a system was built up after establishment of the police department and its stations; Police had been getting increasing number of complaints and case registrations. Although, it had limited jurisdiction because it cannot operate beyond 5 kilometers radius from a police station and beyond 500 yards on both sides of the road (according to the 1945 Regulation).⁶

Since 1974, Disputes are widely settled according to the customary laws or according to the Indian Civil Code. The former are not registered by the police, but there is no clear procedure determining the manner of deciding a case, and the police sometimes took up the cases already decided according to the customary laws. Actually, the heinous and many other non-heinous offences were put under the jurisdiction of the IPC in 1974; since then the impact of the new laws and the police institution and its machinery had started exerting tremendous affects on the authority of village authorities. In all, 17,715 cases were registered in Arunachal Pradesh from January, 1975 to 30th June 1991 and out of that 811 cases were registered from outside Police jurisdiction. It was found that out of every three cases registered one was from outside the jurisdiction of Police. It clearly indicated the impact of policing on the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, People started reporting to Police increasingly but the judicial system was still to pick up speed. The 4420 cases were pending trial out of the cases sent to Courts from 01-01-1981 to 30-06-1991. Thus, Justice delivered had been slow and remained delayed. Prosecution

system had not been satisfactory during those days as there were hardly any lawyers and prosecutors in the state.⁷

Separation of Judiciary

Since the judiciary and the executive powers and its functions were rolled into one in the same hands of the executives headed by the Deputy Commissioner (in the districts) till 2013, the overall framework and spirit of all India pattern of judicial system was being felt besides given some other considerations like ensuring Independence of the judiciary. Hence, an strong movement spear-headed by the Arunachal Law Students Union (ALSU) had been undertaken for many years ultimately which met with success and the phase-wise separation of the judiciary was started by the state government precisely in 2013 by appointing and posting two District and Sessions judges (at Eastern Division, Yupia and Western Division, Tezu respectively) which have been effectively functioning since then. Besides, other (junior) judicial officers have also been appointed and posted in almost all districts and are functioning since then effectively. The separation of Judiciary has, however, created a new kind of situation now in the state.

Powers taken over from the *Buliangs*

Prior to the *Gaon Buras*, the *Buliang* alone settled any type of disputes of individuals or groups or any inter-village issues, of course, as and when appealed to or when it became a public issue. After their appointment the *Gaon Buras* settled the cases of the individuals or groups or villages by acting as an agent of the judicial and district administration of the government. Sometimes, cases were settled by them with the help of *Katokis* and settlements/verdicts were reported to the magistrates for records and reference. However, till recent past, participation of the traditional *Buliangs* in the settlement of the cases was also not inactive though they do not put on the government-issued red coats. The magistrates also honored the decisions/verdicts of the *Buliang*. Cases unable to be resolved by the *Buliangs*, the *Gaon Buras* or any other kinds of panchayats were sent to the magistrates for settlement and the punishment was awarded in accordance with the provisions of IPC/CPC/CrPC against the guilty. In such settlement too, if the magistrates so desired, the services of the *Buliang*, *Gaon Buras* and *Katokis* were solicited for narration of the applicability of the tribal laws and/or for acting as

witnesses. If tribal laws were not applicable, the magistrates solved the cases in accordance with the provisions of IPC, CPC or CrPC.⁸

The *Gaon Buras* as Village Authorities in other tribes have been appointed generally from amongst the members of the traditional Village councils but it was not necessarily in case of the Apatanis since inception to date. Mostly non-*Buliangs* have been appointed as the *Gaon Buras*. Generally, the *Buliangs* were men of character and ability, wealth and status or high social standing. They were usually proficient in customs, traditions, customary laws and oratorical skill. Similar criteria had been applied in the appointment of *Gaon Buras*. Only little exception being that later on (in the intervening period) the rich Apatani men who donated a *Mithun*, a cow or a goat especially on the occasion of Dree festival was appointed by district administration as *Gaon Bura/Head Gaon Bura*. For those tribes/areas with no established village councils, the *Gaon Buras* were appointed afresh. Significantly, the women are also appointed as female Village Authorities called *Gaon Buris* now a days.

Regularisation of cooperation of the *Gaon Buras* and the *Buliangs*

In order to regularize the cooperation of the *Buliangs* and the *Gaon Buras* in the running of the villages, the government revived parts of the Assam Frontier Regulation 1945, Para 5 and established Village Councils by an order of the Deputy Commissioner dated 21 July, 1977. The members of such councils were appointed by the Deputy Commissioner from among the *Gaon Buras* and the *Buliangs*, and in each council there was to be a chairman, a secretary and an assistant secretary. The duties of the officers of such a council consisted in the reporting of all crimes, violent deaths and serious accidents occurring within their jurisdiction. The council had jurisdiction over all cases of a civil nature like cases of Theft, including theft in a building, Mischief (not by fire or explosives), simple hurt, criminal trespass, house trespass and assault, etc.⁹

The duties of the Village Councils, specified in the Order of the 21 July, 1977, confirmed and in some way duplicated the general duties of the *Gaon Buras* to “assist the Government in maintaining law and order, to apprehend offenders, to report to the nearest administrative centre any crime, movement of suspects and undesirable persons, to assist the Government in development work, and to look after the general interest of the public; and to

cooperate with other *Gaon Buras*". The composition of the various village councils was by no means even, and that in case of some villages the number of *Gaon Buras* greatly exceeded that of *Buliangs* while in others these two categories were more equally matched.¹⁰

An attempt was made to reconstitute this Village Council in 1981 basically on the ground that many of the members had expired. But this was not successful because of politicization of the issue in general and political clash between the *Gaon Buras* and the *Buliangs* in particular; and ultimately the scheme had to be abandoned. Due to the politicization of the matter the *Gaon Buras* asserted that they had already such power, in other words, it was assumed that their normal power (under the AFR, 1945) was to exercise the duties of the proposed village council and presuming that without being assigned the duties of the village council also they could get their honorarium and so forth besides thinking that they have many other works to be done like construction of gate and *pandal* e.g. during visits of the dignitaries and had to present themselves in the national days like Independence and Republic days. Moreover, the *Gaon Buras* thought that the *Buliangs* are getting gifts during socio-religious festivals like *Myoko* and *Murung* for almost free. (This research scholar feels that this scheme of Village Council was otherwise a very good idea which should have been materialized and implemented). Since then it has not been revived except that the Apatani Cultural and Literary Society (ACLS) had proposed and initiated similar Village Council called Village Authority; which too is not functioning now. However, *Tanw Supung Dukung* has been constituted and installed recently as Apex Council/Appellate Court for the entire Apatani community in dispensation of the justice.

Comparison of the institutions of *Gaon Buras* and *Buliangs*

It is observed that the appointment, powers and functions of the *Buliang* and the *Gaon Buras* as Village Authorities can be slightly differentiated. The precursors of the *Gaon Buras*, the *Buliangs* are in-heritable positions. They take up issues/cases of public importance or else appellate cases only. It is not exactly the case with the *Gaon Buras*. Moreover, the *Buliang* is a product of the society whose origin is obscure. On the other hand, the *Gaon Buras* have been appointed by the Government as per the provision of 1945 Regulation (occasionally amended). They owe allegiance for their existence to the Government; particularly to the District Administration and are provided with red blanket coats as official insignia to be put on at formal occasions as official dress. Besides, the *Gaon Buras* are paid a monthly honorarium which has

been enhanced from time to time. Currently, an honorarium @ Rs. 600/- (Rupees Six Hundred) only to *Head Gaon Buras* and R. 500/- (Rupees Five Hundred) only to *Gaon Buras/Buris* per month are paid with effect from 1st April, 2013 as per the latest relevant Government Order.¹¹

The Regulation provides for the appointment of the Village Authorities with judicial, (ordinary duties of) police, developmental and administrative responsibilities. These powers and functions of the *Gaon Buras* are similar to the role played by the *Buliang*. After the appointment of Village Authorities i.e. the *Gaon Bura* around 1945, the judicial and administrative functions hitherto performed by the *Buliang* have been taken over by the former. To put it differently, because of the overlapping powers and functions of the *Gaon Bura*, to those of the *Buliangs*, the judicial and administrative functions of the *Buliang* declined. Now, the role of the *Buliangs* is confined only to ceremonial/ritualistic functions. However, in the absence of an official definition of the respective powers and functions of the *Buliang*, the *Gaon Buras* and the Panchayat members, the disputes are usually discussed in gatherings attended by all these dignitaries and the aim is to achieve consensus without putting any proposal to vote.

As traditionally done in the case of dispute settlements by *Buliang* or any other panchayats, after the settlement of any type of dispute, both the parties (accused as well as aggrieved) have to arrange an amicable party known as '*Gondu Punwng*'. On this occasion, they offer rice beer with a piece of bacon to all who attendees and adjudicate the dispute. It is believed that if they do not offer such gratification, unfortunate incidents (disputes) will happen again in future. This occasion also stands as a sort of witness to the fact that the dispute has already been resolved and settled.¹²

The character and influence of the village authorities vary from tribe to tribe, but there are hardly any variations in their basic approach. Unlike in the present days, the members of the Village Authorities were accepted leaders of the community and hence, were effective in the implementation of their decisions. The decisions were taken in the most democratic manner, with unanimity reached after great deal of discussions and hearing wherein everybody could take part in the open proceedings. The penalty was pronounced in the presence of everybody and its implementation was visible to all. Everybody in the community was encouraged to attend the meeting to express his views and opinions freely and frankly.

Furthermore, the village authorities are often confused with the tribal/village councils which are not correct. The *Kebang/Buliang* or *Mel* .i.e. the tribal village councils are not the same as “Village Authorities”. The former institution exists in the tribal societies from times immemorial and derive their sanction from customs, practices etc. whereas the village authorities are bodies appointed by the Deputy Commissioners in exercise of powers under section 5 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1 of 1945. The concept of village authorities first came in the ‘Rules of Administration of Justice of Sadiya, Balipara & Lakhimpur Frontier Tracts’ respectively which were issued under the Scheduled Districts Act 1874. (From these Rules) it appears that, in those days in the areas where the British did not really have an active political control; to make the presence of British Administration or Government felt in those territories such authorities were constituted. Obviously such institutions were not the tribal councils or village councils as existed in these areas from time un-memorial. It is therefore clear that the tribal village council which owes their origin and existence to the traditions and customs of the tribes are not the creation of any statute; such institutions were independent of the statutory institution of the Village Authorities. The traditional tribal councils are different from the statutory Village Authorities in their legal jurisdiction also. The matters of civil nature can be settled by the Village Authorities in the traditional manner and are competent to try all suits without limit of value. Though the Village Authorities have unlimited powers in the matter of disposal of civil cases, the law provides that they decide only such case where both the parties are indigenous tribals. While the Village Authorities enjoy limited powers in civil (limited in this, to certain extent only) and criminal matters, the traditional tribal councils enjoy unlimited powers both in civil and criminal matters.

Lastly, as acknowledged at all hands, the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* (as in the case of *Buliangs*) has declined and degenerated over the years due to various factors combined.

CASE STUDIES¹³

The cases have been settled over the years at local levels under participation of the *Gaon Buras*, kiths and kin/relatives, *Buliangs*, panchayat representatives (present or former) and other village elders [based on the records (1984 to 2010) procured]. As there is no formal system of keeping records of the cases decided by the village authorities, I had to collect

them from the private sources. On widespread search for case settlement copies in the Apatani valley it was found that the same were either not available or hard to come by. To my utter disappointment it was discovered that not even a single *Gaon Bura* case settlement copy was preserved in the erstwhile Judicial Office under the Office of Deputy Commissioner, Ziro. The importance of statistics can hardly be over emphasized and there should be some system of consolidating the figures (of the cases) decided by the village authority/council. However, only a little more than 25 numbers of case settlement copies could be obtained from Hangu and Bulla villages. On the basis of these copies the following analysis is made:

Case I: *Sri Bullo Byoko S/o Late Bullo Kacha versus Sri Bullo Lampung S/o Late Bullo Tako, two cousins over Nami Lwgo bamboo garden-cum-pine plantation and Gano bamboo garden-cum-pine plantation*

To this, case settlement was effected amicably on 23-08-1992 (23rd August, 1992) by sitting *Mel* (local council deliberation) consisting of 12 members (six each as equal representatives of both the disputants) including Sri Narang Bida, GB and Sri Bullo Tangu, GPM; on the basis that *Nami Lwgo* bamboo garden-cum-pine plantation was to be divided between the disputants into two equal parts, one each for Sri Bullo Byoko and Sri Bullo Lampung & *Gano* bamboo garden-cum-pine plantation was to be given for sole ownership to Sri Bullo Byoko; considering the genuine rights of the claimant. It was also decided by the *Mel* that if any of the disputants raise the dispute again then a fine of one *Mithun* or its equivalent (at that time) Rs. 7000/- will be imposed to such violator.

Case II: *Sri Kago (Narang) Gambo S/o Sri Kago (Narang) Bakhang v/s Sri Hibu Tago S/o Hibu Yombing (Pilya) over a Moto vehicle accident case*

A *Mel* was conducted amongst the *Gaon Buras* and some prominent villagers on 25th May, 1994 amicably and the following decisions had been arrived at and the case compromised as detailed below:

On scrutiny, the *Mel* consisting of 20 members mostly the *Gaon Buras* found that there had been a slight collision in between Sri Hibu Tago (riding a K.B. 100 M/Cycle) and Sri Tamo Tani (riding a Bajaj Scooter) in which Sri Narang Tadw, brother of Sri Kago (Narang) Gambo had sustained a minor knee injury for which Sri Gambo had destroyed the said Motor

Cycle. Secondly, in lieu of the destroyed motor cycle Sri Hibu Tago had damaged the bamboo groove and partly damaged the paddy field of Sri Gambo and the Bajaj scooter of Sri Gambo had also been snatched.

On merit of the case the *Mel* consisting of 10 *Gaon Buras*, 1 ASM and 9 villagers decided and agreed upon that:

(a) The destroyed motor cycle should be got repaired by Hibu Tago himself whatever the cost might be.

(b) The snatched scooter should be returned to Kago Gambo.

(c) No compensation should be demanded for the damaged bamboo garden and the paddy field, as Kago (Hong) Gambo had destroyed the motor cycle. However, the paddy field would be mended by the middle men.

(d) The Judicial case or police case whatever had been lodged pertaining to the above case should be withdrawn by both the parties as the matter has been compromised and amicably settled for avoiding future complications and further loss likely to be suffered by both the parties.

And any responsibility causing to the injury of the knee of Sri Narang Tadv would be borne by Sri Hibu Tago.

Case III: *Sri (now late) Twnyo Tai v/s Sri Twnyo Hadu over a plot of land at Hapoli*

It was decided by the *Mel* consisting of 11 members mostly *GBs* on 16-03-1991 which was agreed upon by all concerned that Sri Hadu should pay Rs. 7000/- to Sri Tai and would have unencumbered ownership right over the disputed land and the said amount was paid by Sri Hadu immediately. It was also decided that if Tai makes a claim on the land again then necessary action would be initiated by the *Mel* members. The settlement was reported to DC Office, Ziro and its copy handed over to be preserved for record and as testimony to the settlement.

Case IV: *Sri (now late) Mudang Grayu v/s Sri (now late) Mudang Yaming over a plot of pine tree garden*

The *Mel* (which sat on 31st January, 1990) consisting of 7 members mostly *GBs* and clan brothers effected a settlement to the dispute on the basis that 10 (Ten) nos. of pine trees would be given to Sri Yaming by Sri Grayu and Sri Grayu would then onwards have unencumbered ownership right of the disputed plot. The settlement was reported to the DC Office, Ziro and its copy handed over to be preserved for record and as testimony to the settlement. Also it was decided that if any party violate the terms of the settlement then a serious action would be initiated against the violator as per the wish of the *Mel* members.

Case V: *Accused party consisting of Sri Punyo Chada (Driver, PWD), Sri Punyo Genda, Sri Punyo Gore (Driver, D. C. Office), Sri Punyo Apa and Miss Punyo Mina all of SIRO village v/s Sri Bullo Tama*

In the instant case an attack was made upon Sri Bullo Tama by the accused party in connection with a fire accident at Swro. The mediators locally called GONDU consisting of 6 members including 2 *Gaon Buras*, an ASM and a GPM effected the settlement on the basis that the accused party would not repeat such attack to Tama in the future and original fencing site would be the permanent boundary between the land of Sri Tama and those of the accused party. Also it was decided that the accused party would dig trenches between the two lands as boundary line at the original boundary site and that Sri Tama would withdraw his written police complaint against the accused. As also it was decided that if the accused party violate the terms of the settlement then the GONDU would view it seriously and could initiate any decision against them.

Case VI: *Sri Takhe Taki v/s Sri Mudang Yepu over the killing of a cow*

The *Mel* consisting of all the cow owners sixteen in numbers (many of them *Gaon Buras*) of Bullo and Takhe clans and Sri Narang Marpu, *Head Gaon Bura* after due deliberation held Sri Mudang Yepu guilty of killing the cow of Sri Takhe Taki and decided that Rs. 7000/- should be paid to Sri Taki by Sri Yepu as compensation, which was agreed upon by all concerned.

Case VII: Sri Bullo Tani S/o Late Bullo Tamo v/s Sri (now late) Narang Tida S/o Late Narang Lampung – a Mida (marriage) dispute

Upon the *Mida* dispute between Sri Bullo Tani and Sri (now late) Narang Tida, the *Mel* consisting of the members (some of them *Gaon Buras*) of Bullo and Narang clans decided and agreed upon on 19th October, 2001 after deliberation to maintain peaceful atmosphere within the two disputing families for the times to come. In this connection it was decided that

(i) Total amount of Rs. 7000/- (Rupees seven thousands) only which was to be collected from Sri Bullo Tani, Rs. 4000/- (Rupees four thousands) only was delivered and it was recollected from Sri Narang Tida Rs. 3000/- (Rupees three thousands) only for *Danw* and *Dapo* (Items of *Mida*) respectively has to be fixed deposited at a Bank in favor of Miss Narang Moni, the youngest daughter of late Narang Hinda. Moreover, it was decided that no relative from either side has the right to withdraw the said amount except Miss Narang Moni as and when required.

(ii) No any controversial/un-parliamentary word should be used regarding the *Mida* dispute in future on any occasion such as *Myoko* (a socio-religious festival), *Murung* (an important ceremonial festival solemnized by individuals), etc. If anybody found using such a word against the said dispute shall be imposed one *Mithun* as fine by the mediator (*Gondu*).

(iii) Being father-in-law, Sri Narang Tida should look after/help Smti Narang Yama W/o Late Narang Hinda and her three daughters in every respect viz., health, education of her daughters and help in every walk of their lives, right from maintenance of house and any other domestic problem.

(iv) Smti Narang Yama should maintain respect as father-in-law to Sri Narang Tida throughout her life and she should consult in case of any kind of problem to him without neglecting her part of duties.

(v) For the sake of affording her three daughters, Smti Narang Yama may establish/do any kind of needful activities, in that case Shri Narang Tida should not feel

misbehaved or miss-feel her dear and near ones, failing which appropriate action shall be taken by Bullo clan after verifying the authenticity.

Case VIII: *Mr. X of Hari Village v/s his father-in-law Mr Y of Hong Village- extra marital affairs case*

Mr. X was decidedly made to promise before the *Gondu (Mel/Mediators)* constituted on behalf of both the parties in front of witnesses that

- (i) *Mel* day (06-12-1996) onwards he will not have any extra-marital affairs with any girl specially to Mrs. Z and that if he happens to be found guilty of the same then he shall be liable for a drastic action to be initiated against him.
- (ii) As guarantee a security of a Tibetan bell (*Maji*) as “*Khina Nanw Pana Nanw*” along with the sum of Rs. 2000/- (Rupees two thousands) only in place of a Tibetan sword (*Chiri Ilyo*) as “*Subu Lampo Pare Nanw Pa, Miti Lampo Pare Nanw Pa*” would be given by him (Mr X) to Bullo clan particularly to his father-in-law, Mr. Y immediately.
- (iii) He (Mr. X) would agree upon two more other terms with immediate effect which shall not be laid down here for the purpose of brevity.

The responsibility and security of the implementation of the terms vis-à-vis Mr. X was borne by two of his maternal uncles.

Case IX: *Mrs. X v/s Mr. Y – a marital dispute case*

On the decision of the *Mel* on 20th June, 1990 Mr. Y was made to promise in the presence of witnesses

- (i) To look after the needs of his wife, Mrs. X and her son child throughout his life. The condition was placed by the *Mel* that if Mr. Y failed to look after their needs in his life time then he would have to pay the penalty of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees fifty thousands) only for their maintenance.
- (ii) That in case of his divorce with Mrs.X would be held responsible and as a result he would forfeit his right to claim Master X, the child of Mrs. X as his son.

Case X: *Late Kago Richo S/o late Kago Ulung v/s Sri Narang Marpu S/o late Narang Kago over a land boundary*

On 12th January, 1997 Bullo Nyanw (Relatives from grandmother's side-some of them who were either *Gaon Bura/HGaon Bura* or Panchayat Members) of Late Kago Ulung and Sri Narang Marpu as the *Gondu* sat a *Mel* in the presence of witnesses decided and demarcated the boundary between the lands of Late Rwocho (paddy field) and Sri Marpu (bamboo garden) as the correct one.

A term was stipulated that if Sri Marpu violated the decided boundary in the times to come then *Gondu* would finalize the boundary initially shown by Sri Richo as penalty and if Sri Richo does the same either then the boundary initially claimed by Sri Marpu would be finalized as penalty again. And further that the recalcitrant violator would be imposed a fine of Rs. 50,000/- by Bullo Nyanw as the *Gondu*.

Case XI: *Nami clan (descendents of late Nani Tagyang) v/s Kago clan (descendents of late Kago Pussang) of Hong village over a forest boundary*

The boundary-disputed forest area was inspected by the *Gondu* and the *Mel* was held on 3rd July, 1999 led by four *Head Gaon Buras*, viz., Sri Kago Nabin, Sri Bullo Tani, Sri Narang Marpu and Sri Takhe Hinda and the entire boundaries ranging from entrance to exit including specification of public forest route was decided and the case amicably settled. The agreement was signed by Sri Nami Hinda on behalf of the Nami clan and Sri Kago Nipa on behalf of the Kago clan.

Case XII: *Sri Bullo Tama v/s Sri Kago Tajang over a land boundary*

Mediators many of them *Gaon Bura* settled amicably on 17th May, 1998 when land (at Duku) boundary dispute arose between Sri Bullo Tama S/o Sri Bullo Richo and Sri Kago Tajang S/o Sri Kago Pilya as mentioned above. Here, contention of Sri Tajang was upheld as the right one by the mediators.

Case XIII: Sri Narang Tarang v/s Mudang Anu Abang – a dispute

Dispute arose between Sri Narang Tarang S/o Late Narang Akha and Mudang Anu Abang (Mudang brothers) which was settled amicably on 21st June, 2001 by *Mel* consisting of 4 *Head Gaon Buras*, 1 *Gaon Bura* and some ex-panchayat members. As per the settlement Sri Narang Tarang was restricted from entering in Tahoo Salw (Pine tree garden at Tahoo) which belonged to Mudang Anu Abang and Mudang Anu Abang was urged to pay Rs. 1000/- as expenses for repairing the fence of bamboo garden of Sri Narang Tarang.

Case XIV: Sri Radhe Tangu v/s Sri Joram Duri – a Mithun dispute

In this case reportedly (as per record) Sri Joram Duri S/o Sri Joram Tadw of village Jara sold a *Mithun* of Sri Radhe Tangu to some other without his knowledge. In accordance with the decision (taken on 3rd April, 1997) of the mediators consisting of some Nyishi and Apatani *Head Gaon Buras/Gaon Bura* along with others including an ASM an amount of Rs. 9000/- (Rupees nine thousands) only was paid by Sri Duri to Sri Tangu as compensation for the mithun sold.

Case XV: Sri Tage Tamin v/s Rubu Tak – ladder carrying away dispute

Intentionally or unintentionally Sri Tage Tamin, father of Sri Tage Dibo took away the house ladder (Aabya) of Sri Rubu Tak his son-in-law on 2nd July, 1984 during night time. To this effect a meeting was held during 6th July to 7th July, 1984. In the meeting Sri Tamin stated the following grievances and other reasons behind this action:

- (i) There should be no any bad behavior in the midst of his relatives particularly brothers, sisters and children in their life time.
- (ii) His wives, brothers, sisters and children must be pure in words and deeds and speak very kindly to each other.
- (iii) He and his 1st wife (Smti Misso Yalyo) should get equal treatment from their children (language as in original record).
- (iv) He should not be disturbed by anybody without proper reason and vice-versa.

- (v) He is not intending to neglect his sons and daughters viz. (i) Sri Tage Mobin, (ii) Miss Tage Yapa, (iii) Miss Tage Dumi, (iv) Sri Tage Dibo and (v) Miss Tage Yami and vice-versa.
- (vi) His children must have strong love and regards for the elder members of the family viz. (i) Mr. Tage Tajung, (ii) Miss Tage Bunyi, (iii) Miss Tage Tane and (iv) Miss Tage Kupu and vice-versa.
- (vii) Offer of PAYING-LYIYO (LIVER-FAT) from his sisters on the occasion of any puja (religious ceremony) performed should be gladly accepted by his son Sri Tage Dibo.
- (viii) His son Sri Tage Dibo should take all the responsibilities in the event of difficulties of his relatives and for the betterment of their lives.
- (ix) Any quarrel or dispute should not arise amongst the relatives in his life time or after death which may relate to him.

Aforesaid circumstances were unanimously accepted by his son Sri Tage Dibo on behalf of his brothers and sisters, and also unanimously agreed to by all the members present in the meeting.

At length Sri Tamin gave back the steps (Aabya) to his son-in-law Sri Rubu Tak and the same was gladly accepted in the sight of witnesses consisting of around 10 members some of whom were *Gaon Buras*.

Case XVI: Sri Nani Maling son of late Nani Kago v/s Nani Doilyang – a boundary trespass dispute

As per the settlement document (undated) Sri Nani Maling S/o of late Nani Kago confessed himself in front of the (traditional) jury that as realized he actually trespassed to the boundary of Sri Nani Doilyang's *Yasibo Salw* (name of the pine grove) and illegally felled some number of pine trees (there) of Sri Nani Doilyang by crossing over from his own boundary in the said disputed locality. On the settlement day he thereby surrendered the entire trees felled by him illegally to real owner Sri Nani Doilyang in presence of witnesses consisting of four men declaring that the all agreed statements were declared by his own will with sound mind.

Meanwhile Sri Nani Maling received back the sawing see-saw which was seized by Sri Nani Doilyang owner of the land from where the trees were felled illegally.

Case XVII: *Mihin Swra v/s his wife's brothers – a marital dispute*

As per the settlement in this case Sri Mihin Sira promised vis-à-vis family problems in presence of the witnesses on 27th April, 1986 that he will no more create the alleged family problems and as a guarantee and security towards this a precious Apatani traditional Sword (*Chiri*) shall be given to the brothers of his wife for satisfaction. With the condition that if he breaches the promised condition then he would forfeit the sword in favor of the wife's brothers and if he keeps his words by not creating any family problem in future then the wife's brothers would return the sword as gesture of satisfaction and appreciation.

Case XVIII: *Sri Radhe Tamang v/s Sri Ngwlyang Pussang – a land encroachment dispute*

A *Mel* consisting of 18 members (*Gaon Buras* and others) settled the land (at Lempia village) encroachment dispute which arose between Sri Radhe Tamang s/o Late Radhe Tapa and Sri Ngwlyang Pussang s/o Late Ngwlyang Tanw on 16th May, 1999 amicably. The decided boundary was specified and demarcated by the local jury according to which (a) 26'' from Sri Ngwlyang Tassang's land side from the original boundary and (b) 18'' from Sri Radhe Tamang's side from the original boundary totaling to 44'' gaping space in between Sri Tassang's and Sri Tamang's lands was to be kept permanently.

Case XIX: *Sri Habung Buda v/s Duyu Kojing – a misunderstanding*

A misunderstanding arose in between Sri Habung Buda, HGB and father-in-law of late Duyu Rambya and Sri Duyu Kojing, *Gaon Bura* and elder brother of late Duyu Rambya in respect of future career of Master Duyu Tayu son of late Duyu Rambya again.

A controversy arose relating to a male cow which was purchased by Sri Duyu Kojing, *Gaon Bura* from late Duyu Rambya before the expiry of late Rambya.

In that situation, a meeting in the form of *Mel* was conducted in the residence of Sri Habung Buda, *Head Gaon Bura* on 6th January, 1996 and an amicable settlement was

arrived at with the unanimous decision of respective disputing parties' Duyu & Habung brothers, uncles and elders as laid down as follows:

(i) The said cow was to be donated to Master Duyu Tayu s/o late Duyu Rambya by Sri Duyu Kojing on the same day (6th January, 1996) as treatment to Sri Tayu as his own son (of Sri Kojing).

(ii) However, the said cow was sold out by Master Duyu Tayu s/o late Rambya to Sri Duyu Doilyang s/o Sri Duyu Kojing, *Gaon Bura* on the same day (6th January, 1996) again for Rs. 1500/ (Rupees one thousand five hundred) only which was decided and agreed upon by all concerned in the meeting.

Those who attended and decided in the meeting included *Head Gaon Bura*, *Gaon Bura* and Ex-ASM.

Case XX: Sri (now late) Ngwlyang Tarang v/s Smti Ngwlyang Yami – a family dispute

The following agreement had been made in between late Ngwlyang Tarang and Smti Ngwlyang Yami, the father and the mother respectively of Sri Ngwlyang Gambo and Sri Ngwlyang Chatung on 28th January, 1994:

- (i) Late Tarang would never say any un-parliamentary words like 'entangling with other persons' (*Ipyo*) and 'thief' (*Dwpyo*) to his wife Smti Yami from that day onwards up to their death,
- (ii) On that day Sri Tarang would keep a universal cutting sword (*Ilyo*) for *Ahe nanw* (meaning 'as security and guarantee') or *Langu lampo pare nanw* (meaning 'as weapon for cutting his neck in case of breach of the agreement') in the hands of his father-in-law, Sri Millo Guro, as security against the violation of the agreement No. (i) above,
- (iii) It was agreed that the parent-in-law would impose a sum of Rs. 20,000/- (Rupees twenty thousands) only also to Sri Ngwlyang Tarang, if he violates the agreement No. (i),

- (iv) Two sons Sri Ngwlyang Gambo and Sri Ngwlyang Chatung would take the full responsibility of seeing to it that any quarrel does not take place between Sri (now late) Tarang and Smti Yami based on the agreement made that day,
- (v) Smti Yami would stay either with Sri Gambo or with Sri Chatung till the normalization of the crude relation between Sri Tarang and her wife Yami & that (vi) late Tarang would keep his gun in the hands of Sri Gambo, who is one of his two sons.

The settlement was duly agreed to by late Tarang, Sri Gambo and Sri Chatung under the witnesses of Sri Ngwlyang Talyang and Sri Tage Nibo in the presence of (5) five brothers-in-law.

Case XXI: Sri Rubu Tayu v/s Smti Tage Yayi – a marital family dispute

A *Mel* was held on 14th December, 1985 in which Sri Rubu Tayu promised to his wife, Smti Tage Yayi that he would never commit such a mistake to her without a valid reason. As security and guarantee against not keeping the promise, one universal cutting sword (*Ilyo*) was given and kept with Smti Yayi's relatives who were party to the *Mel* presumably for cutting his (Sri Tayu's) hands in case of breach of the promise.

Similarly, If Smti Yayi treated or behaved badly with Sri Tayu's relatives and members of family in future then necessary action could be taken by the members of the *Mel*. And if Sri Tayu treated or behaved badly with Yayi's relatives in future then the 12 members who participated in the *Mel* including *Gaon Buras* would take necessary action again.

The 12 members of the *Mel* were supposed to take necessary action if any of the husband and wife, viz., Sri Tayu and Smti Yayi violated the terms of settlement as laid down in the settlement copy.

Case XXII: Sri Millo Chatung v/s Tage Twini Tulu – a forest boundary dispute

On 02-05-2005 a *Mel* consisting of mostly H*Gaon Buras* and *Gaon Buras* along with some *Buliang* and public leaders deliberated and decided in which Sri Millo Chatung s/o Late Millo Habung was made to realize his mistake and apologize; and promise (in written form) in front of the local jury that he would never repeat such wrong claim in the future

declaring that that day (02-05-2005) onwards he would never claim the Dapyo *Morey* (*Dapyo* forest) the claim which ranged from “Iya Sagyang” (a boundary area) up to “Sayo Yasang Arang” (a boundary area again). The dispute was between Sri Millo Chatung and Tage Twni Tulu (Tage Twni clan).

Case XXIII: *Ms. X v/s family of Mr. Y– a marital dispute*

A *Mel* was held on 13th July, 1992 in which an agreement was reached under the witnesses-cum-*Mel* members consisting of 7 in numbers including some *Gaon Buras* in which:

(i). Ms. X hailing from Chulk bazaar of Darjeeling, West Bengal promised that she would not come back as second wife to Mr. Y residing at Banderdewa (Arunachal Pradesh).

(ii) Ms. X further declared in front of the brothers of Mr. Y that on 13th July, 1992 onwards she stood divorced from illicit marriage to Mr. Y.

Case XXIV: *Ngilyang Sambyo v/s his elder brother – a case of misbehavior*

On 3rd February, 2003 a *Mel* was held as a result of which Sri Ngwlyang Sambyo S/o Ngwlyang Tayu did thereby apologized to his elder brother in written that he (Sambyo) would never repeat any misbehavior in future as de did.

Also it was decided and declared that if he (Sambyo) defaulted then a penalty of Rs. 10,000 only would be imposed.

It is found in the study that the local cases/disputes may be settled with or without participation of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* but the manner and verdict of the settlement are more or less similar.

In some of the case settlements, the terms which are either imposed/laid down particularly related to brothers-in-law seem very harsh when *Dao/Chiri* (universal cutting sword/traditional Apatani sword) are deposited as security and guarantee against the breach of promise in the terms of settlement with the presumption that those weapons are meant for cutting the hands or necks of the recalcitrant violators. This issue may be discussed amongst the stake

holders. However, it is found from the experience that such harsh terms are theoretical and remains hardly implemented.

In addition to the above role, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* act as witness or Jury members in Sale Deed agreement, money lending agreement and participate or at-least attend almost all meetings and agreements like will making agreement, land distribution or demarcation finalization agreement, etc. in the villages. Besides, they usually are involved (by stakeholders) as a party in the *Supung* (pan-Apatani) and other *Dapos* (Public agreement/notice or Pact).

Notes and References:

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2. Das (Director), J. N. (1986), *A Study of Administration of Justice Among The Tribes And Races in North Eastern Region (Excluding Nagaland and Meghalaya) PART ONE*, Law Research Institute (LRI), Gauhati High Court, Guwahati.
3. Ibid.
4. Kani, T (1995), “*Buliang: the traditional village council of the Apatanis*”, Unpublished article, Itanagar.
5. Ibid.
6. Singh (Editor), Karnal (1993), *Customary Laws of Arunachal Pradesh Tribal Laws and Modern Legal System*, Himalayan Publishers, Patna.
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8. Kani, T (1995), Op cit.
9. Furer-Haimendorf, Christoph von (1980), *A Himalayan Tribe From Cattle to Cash*, Vikash Publishing House Pvt Ltd, Ghaziabad, U.P. (India).
10. Ibid.
11. *Order No. DAD – 46/2004 Dtd. Itanagar, the 2nd April, 2013* issued by Chief Secretary, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.
12. See Kaning, M (2008), *Rising Culture of the Apatanis Tribe [Arunachal Pradesh]*.
13. Case studies on the basis of the preserved written old case settlement record copies obtained from the private sources.

Chapter IV

Gaon Bura: Relevance and Scope

In order to understand the relevance, scope and peoples' perception, an interview Schedule with questions on different aspects of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* was administered to the respondents. Although the number of the Apatani villages has increased to more than thirty, originally they were seven only namely, Hari, Bwla (Bulla), Hangu (Hong), Hwja (Hija), Bamin-Michi, Mwdang Tage (Mudang Tage) and Dutta. Hence, samples were selected considering the old division of villages.

Fifty six numbers of respondents were selected from among the *Gaon Buras* (22), *Gaon Buri* (11) and *Head Gaon Bura* (23). Table 3.1 relates to the GBs, *G/Buris* and HGBs sampled respondents.

Table 3.1 Village-wise distribution of the sampled GBs, *G/Buris* and *HGBs* respondents

Sl. Nos.	Villages	Respondent Categories		
		<i>Gaon Buras</i>	<i>Gaon Buris</i>	<i>Head Gaon Buras</i>
1	Hari	3	1	4
2	Bwla	3	1	5
3	Hangu	5	4	9
4	Hwja	3	2	2
5	Bamin-Michi	3	2	1
6	Mwdang Tage	4	0	1
7	Dutta	1	1	1
Total		22	11	23

Source: Field Survey

Thus, we can see that the 22 *Gaon Buras*, 11 *Gaon Buris* and 23 *Head Gaon Buras* in total were sampled at a ratio as respondents from all the seven villages which are distributed village-wise and presented under table 3.1 above. It may be noted that Mwdang Tage village has no *Gaon Buri* and hence there was none to sample.

Table 3.2 hereunder pertains to the category of sampled respondents consisting of the *Buliangs*/Priests, Panchayat members/Political leaders and the randomly but a proportionately selected villagers.

Table 3.2 Village-wise Distribution of the sampled *Buliangs*/Priests, Panchayat members/Political leaders and Villagers respondents

Sl. Nos.	Villages	Respondent Categories					
		<i>Buliangs</i> / Priests		Panchayat representatives/ Political leaders		Villagers	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
1	Hari	3	0	2	1	2	1
2	Bwla	5	0	4	2	3	3
3	Hong	5	0	8	2	10	5
4	Hwja	3	0	3	1	3	1
5	Bamin-Michi	1	0	2	2	2	1
6	Mwdang Tage	3	0	2	1	2	1
7	Dutta	2	0	1	3	2	1
Total		22	0	22	12	24	13
(M+F)		22		34		37	

Source: Field Survey

A larger category of sampled respondents consisting of the *Buliangs*/Priests, Panchayat members/Political leaders and a randomly but proportionately-selected villagers sampled from all the seven villages are distributed village-wise and presented under Table 3.2 above. Thus, we can see from the table that the respondents sampled are 22 *Buliangs*/Priests [all Males¹ (with the *Buliang* majority)], 34 Panchayat members/Political leaders [Male 22 and Female 12 (with the Panchayat member majority in both the genders)] & 37 villagers (Male 24 and Female 13) in total. Meanwhile, Hangu village being the largest one in the whole tribe, a more number of various categories respondents were sampled. The two particular categories of the sampled respondents consisting of the *Buliangs* and the Priests and the Panchayat members and the Political leaders respectively have been clubbed together in the same each partly for similarity in their background and partly for the convenience. Meanwhile it was found in my field survey that an individual often holds multiple positions. For example, Mr. Punyo Nyikang of Hangu village is a HGB-cum-*Buliang* -cum-Priest. In this case, he is put under HGB respondent category and if someone is a *Gaon Bura*-cum-Priest he is put under GB respondent category and similarly did so.

Apart from the above, other categories of the respondents sampled are felt unsuitable and unnecessary to be distributed village-wise (and presented in Table). However, they are distributed sex-wise and presented under Table 3.3 hereunder showing the frequency numbers and its percentage out of the total of 220 respondents.

¹All males because, there hardly exists any female *Buliang* /Priest in the whole tribe till today

Table 3.3: Sex-wise distribution of sampled other categories respondents

Sl. Nos.	Respondent Categories	Nos.		Total	Percent
		M	F		
1	Administrative officer	18	4	22	10.00
2	Other government employee	15	2	17	7.73
3	Police officer/personnel	8	4	12	5.45
4	Lawyer	7	1	8	3.63
5	Others	8	4	12	5.45
Total		56	15	71	32.27

Source: Field Survey

The respondents constituting other categories who were sampled for the interview are: 22 Administrative officers (Male 18 and Female 4), 17 Other government employees (Male 15 and Female 2), 12 Police officers/Personnel (Male 8 and Female 4), 8 Lawyers (Male 7 and Female 1) & 12 Others (Male 8 and 4 Female) which totals to 71 (Male 56 and Female 15). All these respondents are mostly Apatanis staying at Apatani/Ziro valley and the State capital, Itanagar. But a care was taken that the respondents sampled did have a fair knowledge and ideas related to the subject under study and were able to provide relevant data and information for which pre-hand enquiries were made amongst the Apatani people staying at Ziro and Itanagar and by using cross respondents reference method. The particular respondent category 'Others' consists of the journalists, post-graduate students, PhD scholars, social workers and businessmen, etc.

The Level of Awareness: The *Gaon Buras/Buris*

To check their relevant awareness level a set of following six questions were asked to the *Gaon Buras/Gaon Buris/Head Gaon Buras* only in Part-II of the Interview Schedule whose responses are tabulated below:

Q.1. Do you read newspaper?

Table 4.1 Its Responses

Sl. Nos.	Categories	Yes		No		Total	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	<i>Gaon Bura</i>	1	4.5	21	95.5	22	100
2	<i>Gaon Buri</i>	0	0	11	100	11	100
3	<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	0	0	23	100	23	100

Source: Field Survey

Thus, it is seen from Table 4.1 above that only 1(4.5 %) of the 22 GBs in total sampled read newspaper and none of the 11(100%) *G/Buris* and the 23 (100%) Head GBs in total sampled did read the same. This may be because of their illiteracy and lack of education amongst them.

Q.2. Do you listen to radio/watch television?

Table 4.2 Its Responses

Sl. Nos.	Categories	Yes		No		Total	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	<i>Gaon Bura</i>	12	54.5	10	45.5	22	100
2	<i>Gaon Buri</i>	4	36.4	7	63.6	11	100
3	<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	13	56.5	10	43.5	23	100

Source: Field Survey

It is seen from Table 4.2 above that 12(54.5%) GBs only out of 22, 4(36.4%) *G/Buris* only out of 11 and 13(56.5%) HGBs only out of 23 listen to radio or watch television. Rest 10(45.5%) GBs, 7(63.6%) *G/Buris* and 10(43.5%) HGBs out of the total of them do not

either listen to radio or watch television. Even this reflects their extent of illiteracy and education.

Q.3. Do you participate in political activities?

Table 4.3 Its Responses

Sl. Nos.	Categories	Yes		No		Total	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	<i>Gaon Bura</i>	14	63.6	8	36.4	22	100
2	<i>Gaon Buri</i>	9	81.8	2	18.2	11	100
3	<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	16	69.6	7	30.4	23	100

Source: Field Survey

It is seen from Table 4.3 above that 14(63.6%) GBs, 9(81.8%) *G/Buris* and 16(69.6%) HGBs respondents in total out of the total sampled participate in political activities. However, rest 8(36.4%) GBs, 2(18.2%) *G/Buris* and 7(30.4%) HGBs answered that they do not participate in political activities.

Q.4. Are you a member of any political party?

Table 4.4 Its Responses

Sl. Nos.	Categories	Yes		No		No Answer		Total	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	<i>Gaon Bura</i>	12	54.55	9	40.91	1	4.54	22	100
2	<i>Gaon Buri</i>	7	63.64	3	27.27	1	9.09	11	100
3	<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	12	52.2	10	43.5	1	4.3	23	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.4 above indicates that 12(54.55%) GBs, 7(63.64 %) *G/Buris* and 12(52.2%) HGBs respondents in total out of the total sampled are a member of one or other political party which further confirms their participation in political activities. Here, it is to be noted that these functionaries are not entitled under the law to participate in political activities. However, the rest, 9(40.91%) GBs, 3(27.27%) *G/Buris* and 10(43.5%) HGBs sampled answered that they are not a member of any political party.

Q.5. Do you have any knowledge about IPC/Cr.PC/CPC?

Table 4.5 Its Responses

Sl. Nos.	Categories	Yes		No		Total	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1.	<i>Gaon Bura</i>	2	9.10	20	90.9	22	100
2.	<i>Gaon Buri</i>	0	0	11	100	11	100
3.	<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	4	17.40	19	82.6	23	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.5 above reflects that only 2(9.1 %) GBs only, no (0%) *G/Buris* and 4(17.4%) HGBs only out of the total sampled do have some knowledge about IPC, CrPC or CPC. Rest 20(90.9%) GBs, all 11(100%) *G/Buris* and 19(82.6%) HGBs just do not have any knowledge about the same. This also shows that these respondents are illiterate and uneducated.

Q.6. Are you aware of the provisions of Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945?

Table 4.6 Its Responses

Sl. Nos.	Categories	Yes		No		Total	
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	<i>Gaon Bura</i>	1	4.55	21	95.45	22	100
2	<i>Gaon Buri</i>	0	0	11	100	11	100
3	<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	1	4.35	22	95.65	23	100

Source: Field Survey

Similarly, as presented in Table 4.6 above, only 1(4.55%) GBs, none (0%) of the *G/Buris* and 1(4.35%) HGBs only out of the total sampled are aware of the provisions of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. Rest 21(95.45%) GBs, all 11(100%) *G/Buris* and 22(95.65%) HGBs respondents are just not aware of the same. This confirms and indicates their illiteracy and lack of education and awareness/knowledge about their power, functions and responsibility laid down under the law respectively.

Power/Position/Functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

To understand, primarily the power, position and functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* at present in the first question and, basically its factors/reasons of degeneration and decline in the subsequent ones, a set of following consecutive 10 (ten) questions were asked all with similar objectives, to the total respondents of 220 of various categories. Each and all responses to the ten questions respectively are tabulated consecutively in the following pages. The first question goes thus:

Q. What are the major function(s) of *Gaon Buras/Buris* at present?

- (i) Settlement of disputes
- (ii) Organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions

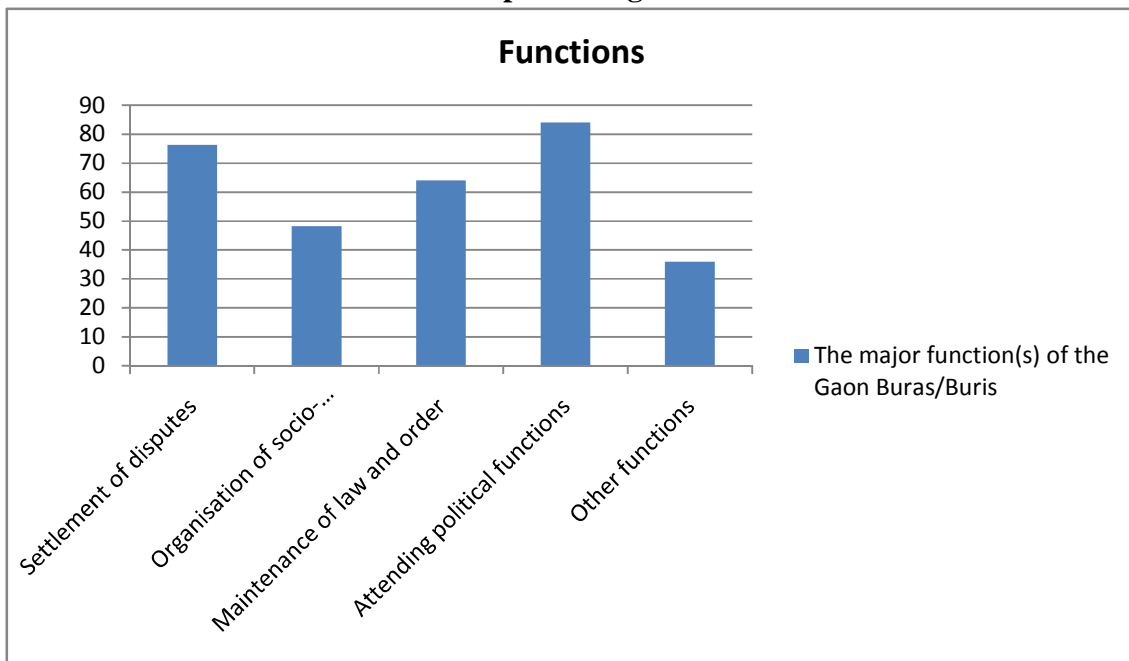
- (iii) Maintenance of law and order
- (iv) Attending political functions
- (v) Any other, specify.

Table 5.1 Responses to the question: What are the major function(s) of Gaon Buras/Buris at present?

i.	Settlement of disputes	168(76.36%)
ii.	Organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions	106(48.18%)
iii.	Maintenance of law and order	141(64.09%)
iv.	Attending political functions	185(84.09%)
v.	Other functions	79 (35.91%)

Source: Field Survey

Chart I representing Table 5.1



Thus it is seen from Table 5.1 as represented in Chart I above that: i) Settlement of disputes is named by 168 respondents out of 220 in total constituting 76.36 percent

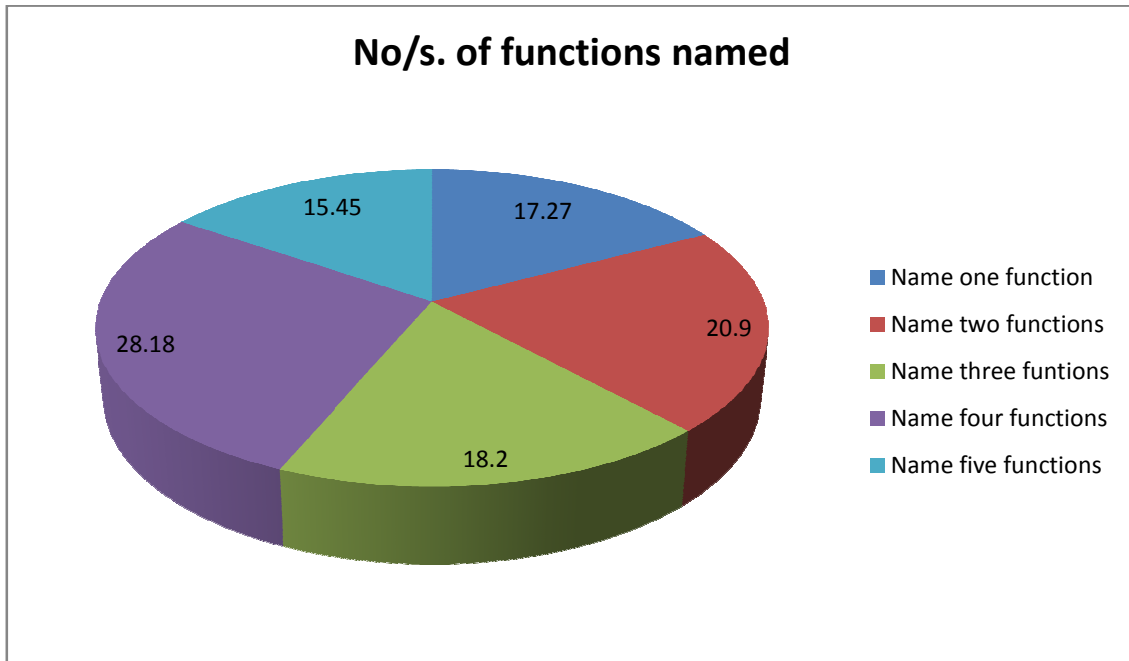
of the total, ii) Organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions by 106 constituting 48.18 percent, iii) Maintenance of law and order by 141 constituting 64.09 percent, iv) Attending political functions by the huge majority of 185 respondents constituting 84.09 percent and (v) Still more function/s by 79 constituting 35.91 percent; as one or more functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* at present. It is noted that attending political functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* which is named by the vast majority of the respondents is not a function of proper perspective, and one which is not entitled under the governing law, viz., the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. Besides, other function/s named by the respondents are those of insignificant ones like constructing VIP welcome gate and acting as the VIPs' ready audience in their speeches, which supports the above fact.

Table 5.2 Number/s of functions named by the respondents

i.	Name one function	38 (17.27%)
ii.	Name two functions	46 (20.9%)
iii.	Name three functions	40 (18.2%)
iv.	Name four functions	62 (28.18%)
v.	Name five functions	34 (15.45%)
Total		220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 1 representing Table 5.2



Thus it is seen from Table 5.2 as represented in Pie Diagram 1 above that 38(17.27%) respondents out of total of 220 named one function only, 46(20.9%) two, 40(18.2%) three, 62(28.18%) four and rest 34(15.45%) respondents named five functions.

Meanwhile, it is sincerely admitted by many respondents that settlement of dispute & maintenance of law and order by the *Gaon Buras/Buris* is very rare and fading and that their role in socio-religious/ceremonial functions during *Subu*, *Murung* and *Myoko* and other ceremonial occasions/festivals is also played to a very limited extent. Many respondents opine that the first three functions namely settlement of disputes, organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions & maintenance of law and order should actually and mainly be the proper functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* instead of any other function/s emphasising that the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be impartial and non political in discharging their responsibilities or duties.

Summary of other functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

Other functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* mentioned by 35.91 percent respondents are precisely summarised hereunder.

The *Gaon Buras/Buris* stand (with their Red coat dress including medals) as team to welcome and bid good bye to the Chief Guests and other VIPs/dignitaries when they visit any place in Apatani valley for meetings and discussions on development matters, etc. making the occasions very colourful and attractive. In these occasions, they act as ready audience of the dignitaries' speeches and in absence of them the VIPs and dignitaries would miss greatly. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* construct welcome gate and decorate the grounds and stages before hand in favour of such VIP functions besides during Dree festivals, national and state days²

The district administration is assisted by the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to conduct public meetings, government functions and to do VIP visit arrangements. They associate themselves with development programs, projects, schemes and activities of the government whenever required. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* certify genuineness of the candidates for the Land Possession Certificates (LPC) and act as witnesses and give statements in Police cases. Very often, a *Gaon Bura/Buri/HGB* shoulders the responsibility to bail out a fellow villager in police cases³. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* assist the polling teams during Panchayat, Assembly and Parliamentary elections in various ways⁴. Besides, they act as messenger of the government in their respective villages.

Mainly to investigate and understand whether any change(s) has taken place in the functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris* the following question (second in the series) as given hereunder was asked to the respondents.

Q. Do you find any change in the functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If Yes, identify the major changes.

²by carrying spade, cane and bamboo besides preparing the items like *sopu* and *somi* (decorative items shaved from bamboo) required for such decorations.

³stated by Bukwr, M and Marpu, N

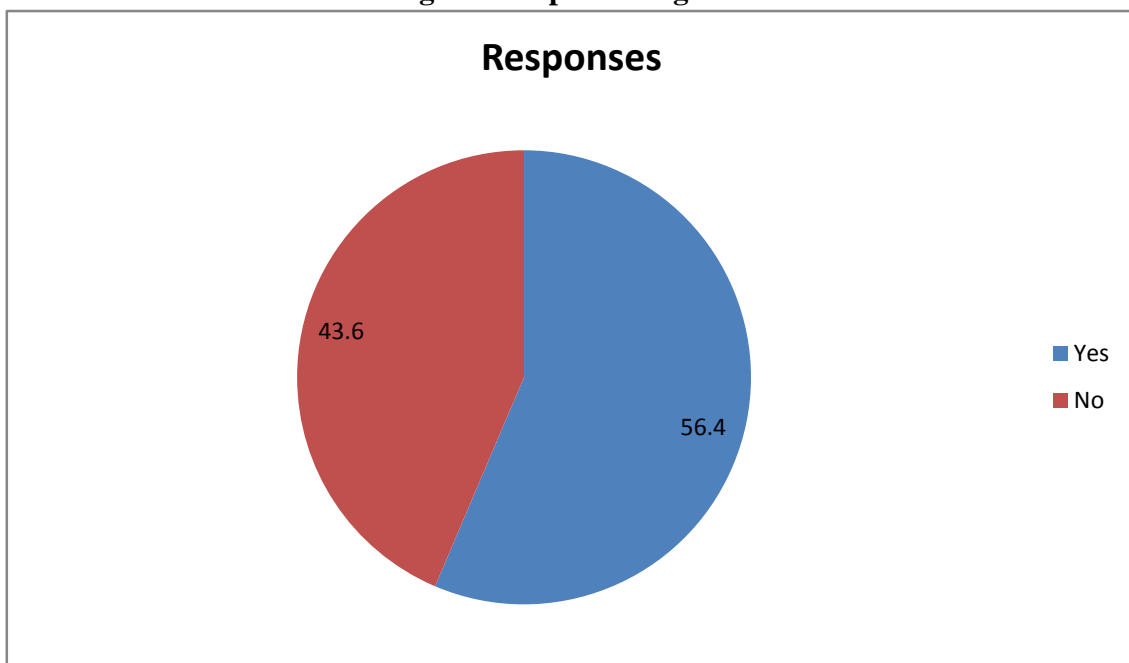
⁴e.g. by helping them to identify the genuine and bogus voters, to construct the polling stations and its booths and to find a suitable lodging place besides sharing the headache of maintaining security and safety of the men and materials

Table 5.3 Responses to the question: Do you find any change in the functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

Yes	124 (56.4%)
No	96 (43.6%)
Total	220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 2 representing Table 5.3



Thus it is seen from Table 5.3 as represented in Pie Diagram 2 that 124 respondents (56.4%) out of the total of 220 has answered 'Yes' and 96 (43.6%) 'No'. Hence, it is understood that change in the functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has really taken place.

Summary of the major changes in the functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris* identified

Those who answered 'Yes' has identified various changes which are clearly summarised hereunder.

Functions of the *Gaon Buras* have gradually dwindled on all fronts because of many reasons.

I. Changes due to Politics and introduction of PRIs

Power and functions are being diluted and institutions weakened due to interference by the public representatives and political parties. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* now have been dwindling in functions of (i) settlement of disputes, (ii) organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions and (iii) maintenance of law and order which began since the introduction of Panchayat Raj in 1969 and Assembly election in 70s. Those who are appointed on the basis of political connection bear allegiance to a particular political party/leader thus becoming biased in their decisions creating disunity and ineffectiveness in the role and functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* as a whole. Prior to 1960's developmental functions of the Panchayati Raj members were attended by the *Gaon Buras* and being appointed by the government they were given the responsibilities at all kinds of developmental activities including law & order maintenance and settlement of any kind of dispute under the supervision of District administration.

II. Changes due to alternative dispute settlement means

The *Gaon Buras* were more effective in their functions in the former days and commanded more influence, importance, respect and authority. All types of disputes including *yelu*⁵ were effectively settled by the *Gaon Buras* in those days; or, at-least they assisted the District Administration effectively to settle disputes and maintain law and order. If directly brought to them, very often the local cases were invariably sent/referred back by the district administration to the *Gaon Buras* level; or, at-least they were consulted for opinions on them. Now, due to establishment of regular Police, Administration outreach and modern judiciary system role of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has been gradually diminished. Criminal cases which were earlier solved by the *Gaon Buras* are now completely taken over by the (regular) Judiciary and Police. Most of the disputes and cases now are taken to the police and regular judiciary to be dealt through IPC, CrPC and CPC never sending/referring them back to the *Gaon Buras* level for arbitration through customary laws. Ultimately, functions of the *Gaon Buras* have dwindled with intervention of the formal courts and Police and advocacy of the proliferating lawyers.

⁵*Yelu* is a major dispute in which own property destruction challenging competition takes place. It remains abolished now due to efforts of Apatani Youth Association in late 60s and in 70s.

III. Changes in social functions

In the earlier times, the *Gaon Buras* rendered active social services, even by spending from their own pockets and that also without honorarium. They constructed welcome gate and did other decoration works during Dree festivals and VIP/dignitary visits for meetings or any other purpose and contributed eggs, local wine, cucumber, bamboo, cane, physical labour, *jikhw tarw* (traditional jacket as gift to the visiting VIPs/dignitaries) and even cash at times in favour of them showing a great hospitality which is no more practiced now. Moreover, they helped out the government and AYA (Apatani Youth Association) to widen the roads and lanes in the Apatani valley and to open source of water supply for Hapoli (Ziro) township and other places.

The age-old role, power, functions and authority of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* today remains curtailed due to the existing system and its set up, built up over the times, which they themselves have comprised with by not updating themselves on it. In a nutshell, there is no any specific power invested to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* now; in-fact their power and functions remain indirectly seized. However, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* now are more organised through their associations at village, community, districts and state levels.

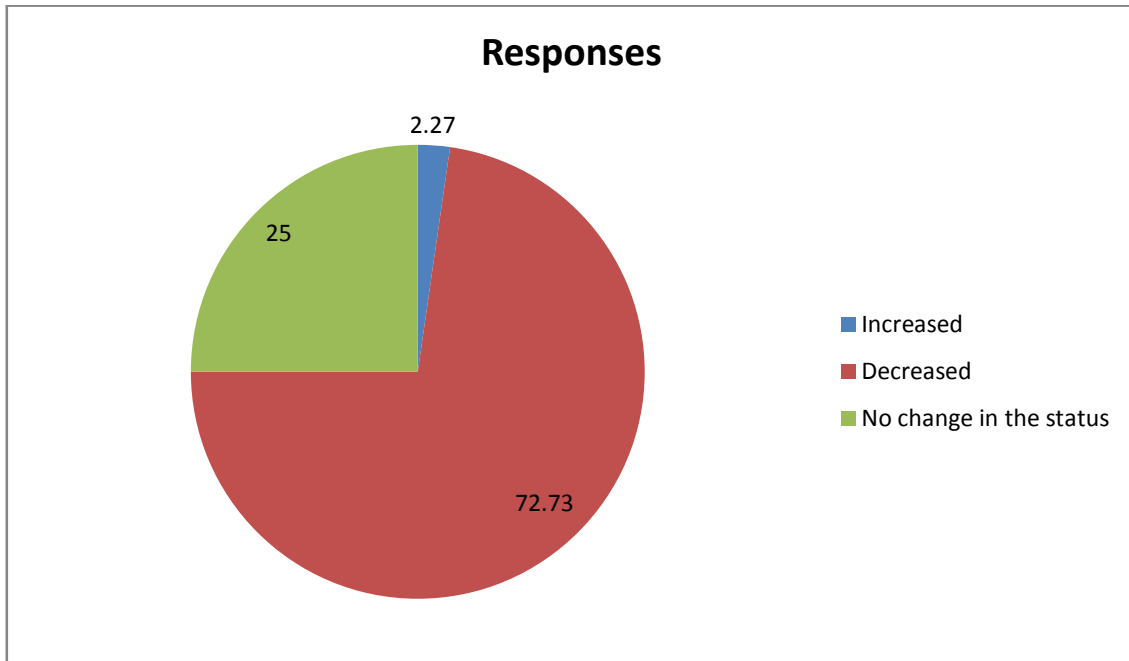
Basically to investigate and identify if any change in their power/position has occurred, the respondents were asked the following question (third in the series) as given hereunder.

Q. Whether the power/position of *Gaon Buras/Buris* has: (i) Increased, (ii) Decreased, (iii) No change in the status or (iv) Any other (specify)?

Table 5.4 Responses to the question: Whether the power/position of *Gaon Buras/Buris* has: (i) Increased, (ii) Decreased, (iii) No change in the status or (iv) Any other (specify)?

i.	Increased	5 (2.27%)
ii.	Decreased	160(72.73%)
iii.	No change in the status	55 (25%)
Total		220 (100%)

Pie Diagram 3 representing Table 5.4



As clearly reflected by Table 5.4 and Pie Diagram 3 above, 5(2.27%) of the total of 220 respondents have opined that the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has increased, 160(72.73%) that it has decreased & the rest 55(25%) that there is no change in the status. As admitted by a huge majority of 72.73 per cent of the total sampled respondents it is quite clear that the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has decreased.

Mainly to study and understand the reasons for decrease in the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* the following question (fourth in the series) as given hereunder was asked to the respondents.

Q. If the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has decreased, please specify the reason(s)?

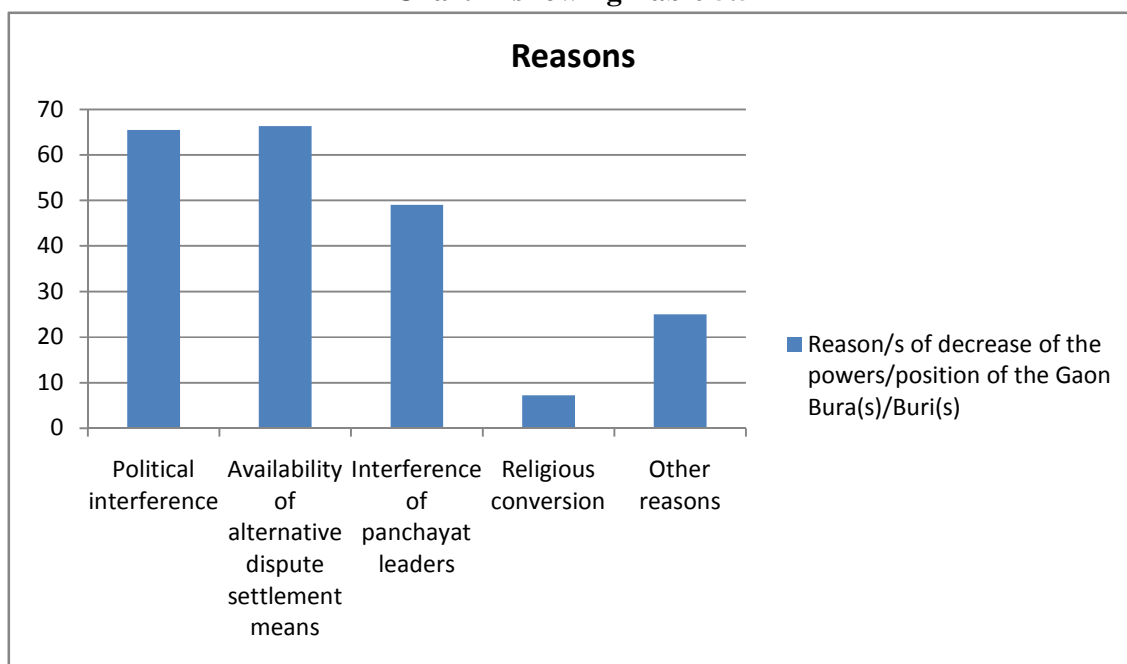
- (i) Political interference
- (ii) Availability of alternative dispute settlement means
- (iii) Interference of panchayat leaders
- (iv) Religious conversion
- (v) Any other, specify.

Table 5.5 If the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has decreased, please specify the reason(s)?

i.	Political interference	144 (65.45%)
ii.	Availability of alternative dispute settlement means	146 (66.36%)
iii.	Interference of panchayat leaders	108 (49.09%)
iv.	Religious conversion	16 (7.27%)
v.	Other reasons	55 (25%)

Source: Field Survey

Chart II showing Table 5.5



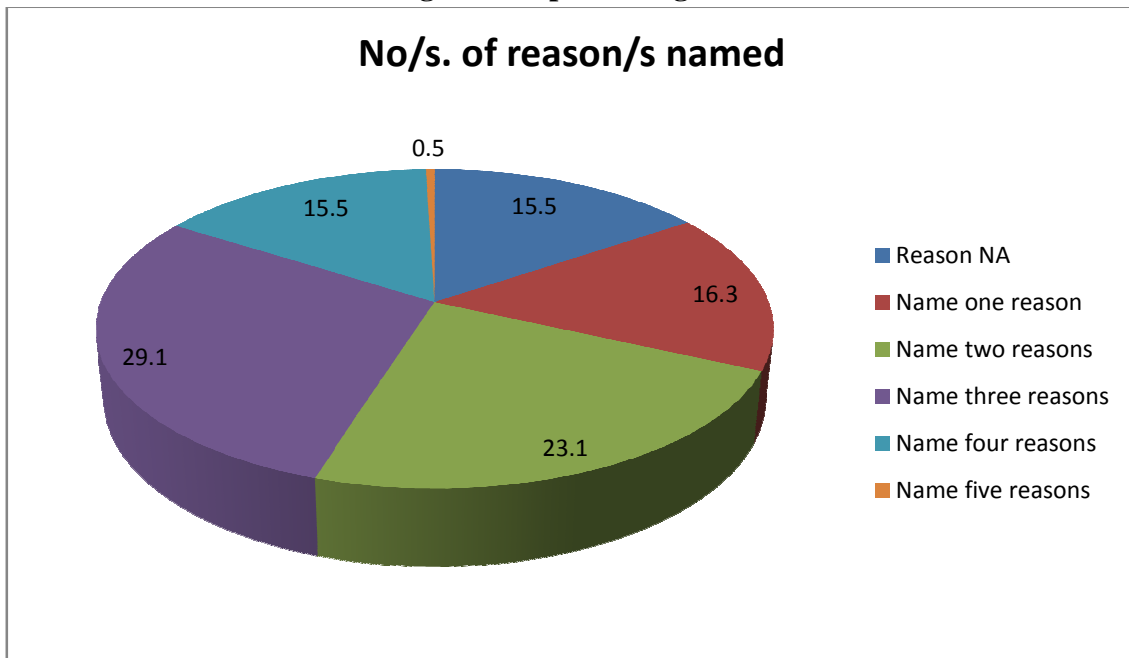
Thus we can see from Table 5.5 as represented in Chart II that 144(65.45%) respondents out of the total of 220 have specified as ‘Political interference’, 146(66.36%) as ‘Availability of alternative dispute settlement means’, 108(49.09%) as ‘Interference of panchayat leaders’, 16(7.27%) as ‘Religious conversion’ & 55(25%) as ‘Other reasons’ as one or more reason for decrease in the power and position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Hence, the respondents

confirm their responses given in the previous question in the current question justifying themselves by providing reasons for the decrease in the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

Table 5.6 No/s. of reason/s named by the respondents

i.	Reason NA	34 (15.5%)
ii.	Name one reason	36 (16.3%)
iii.	Name two reasons	51 (23.1%)
iv.	Name three reasons	64 (29.1%)
v.	Name four reasons	34 (15.5%)
vi.	Name five reasons	1 (0.5%)
Total		220 (100%)

Pie Diagram 4 representing Table 5.6



Thus, we can see from Table 5.6 as represented in Pie Diagram 4 that 36(16.3%) respondents out of the total of 220 have specified one reason, 51(23.1%) two reasons,

64(29.1) three reasons, 34(15.5%) four reasons, 1(0.5%) five reasons & the rest 34(15.5%) NA (Not Applicable) for decrease in the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

Summary of other reason/s for decrease in the power/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

Due to presence of a large number of unfit and deadwood *Gaon Buras* and disproportionate and excessive strength the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and their institution has become insignificant and ineffective. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* are a disunited and divided lot; the situation which hampers their decisions and functioning. Due to illiteracy the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are ignorant about their role, powers and responsibilities authorised to them under the law; thereby not asserting themselves on them. Since, young people now are more well-versed and qualified accompanied by rise in literacy rate amongst the common men they tend to give less respect or compliance to the aged and illiterate *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Another reason is modernisation, western influence and education amongst the people in general and the younger generations in particular.

To a certain extent the present situation is due to the *Gaon Buras*' own weakness. Many *Gaon Buris/Buris* do not maintain self respect and dignity which does not augur well for their respect and dignity. Due to change in character the *Gaon Buras/Buris* these days are interested only in honorarium and wish to carry out less and insignificant functions only. Most *Gaon Buras/Buris* remain satisfied to act only as evidence/witness at the most in any case settlements. The *Gaon Buras* and *Head Gaon Buras* often indulge themselves in favouritism, nepotism and other corruptions which have a damaging effect on their reputation, image and dignity. Making the matter worse, half-backed educated people have looked down upon, belittled and criticised the *Gaon Buras/Buris* arbitrarily and unrestrained, undermining them greatly.

Customary Law has become like toothless tiger – the present day *Gaon Buras/Buris* are not well conversant with the customary laws and hence the people doubt their efficiency and integrity in dispute/case deliberations and decisions. More often than not, persons with money power and political clout remain egoistic and adamant to take or drag the cases to other (regular) courts often with an insulting/humiliating attitude. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* often earn enmity for strong but honest judicial role due to litigants misunderstanding. Under such circumstances they become discouraged and demoralised to be really sincere and honest in their

role and duties. A regular messenger for emergency situations and various other purposes is a necessity to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* which they do not have.

Last but not the least, no strict and effective guidelines adopted by the government to revitalize and strengthen the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* to protect, encourage, enthuse and motivate them to exercise their role, power, position and functions; which is aggravated by the *Gaon Buras/Buri's* indifference to execute the same. Not amending the 1945 Regulation in due time too is a responsible reason amongst all factors for decrease in power and position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

Especially to investigate and understand the factors counted in selection of a *Gaon Bura/Buri* the following question (fifth in the series) as given hereunder was asked to the respondents.

Q. What factors are/is counted in selection of a *Gaon Bura/Buri*?

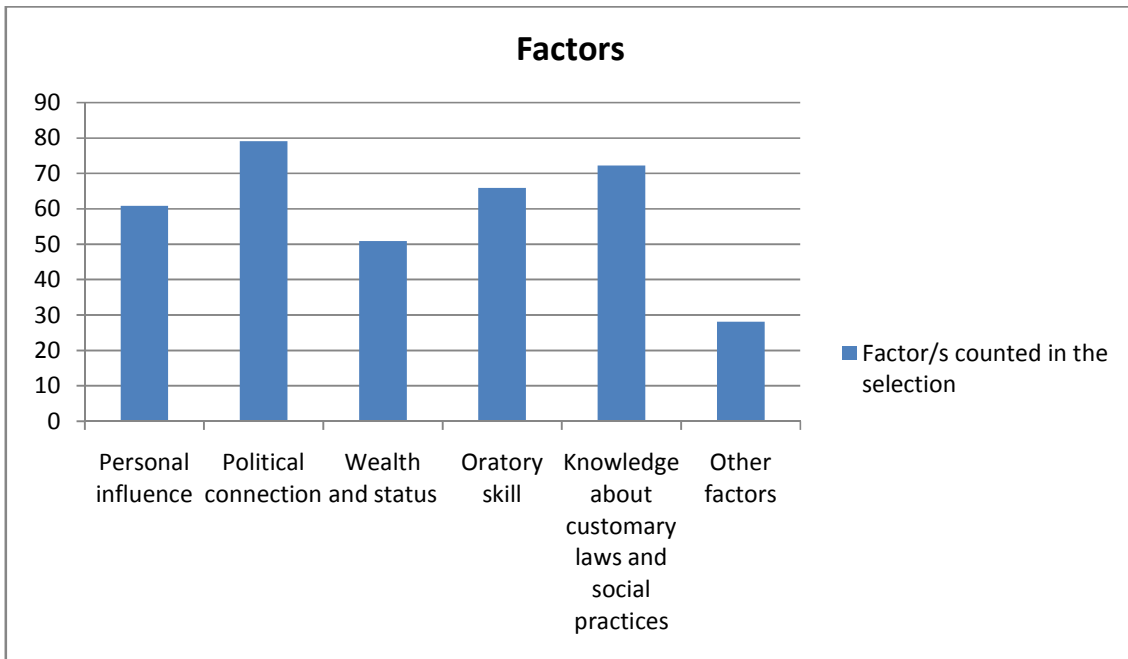
- (i) Personal influence
- (ii) Political connection
- (iii) Wealth and status
- (iv) Oratory skill
- (v) Knowledge about customary laws and social practices
- (vi) Any other.

Table 5.7 What factors are/is counted in selection of a *Gaon Bura/Buri*?

i.	Personal influence	134 (60.91%)
ii.	Political connection	174 79.09%)
iii.	Wealth and status	112 (50.91%)
iv.	Oratory skill	145 (65.91%)
v.	Knowledge about customary laws and social practices	159 (72.27%)
vi.	Others	62 (28.18%)

Source: Field Survey

Chart III showing Table 5.7



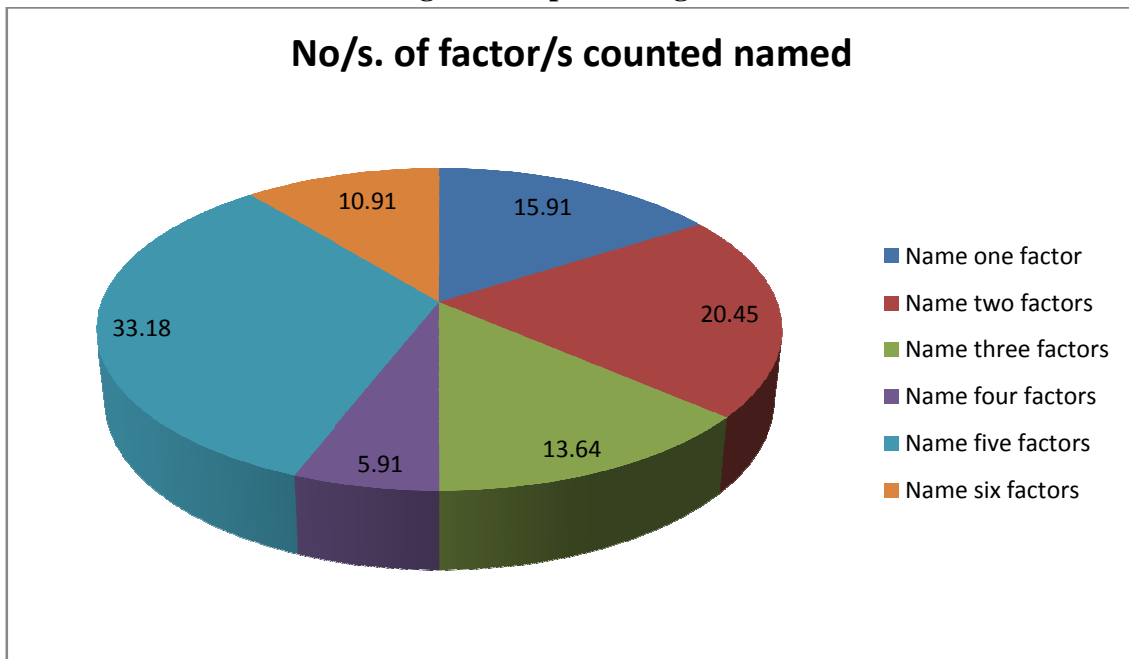
Thus, it is seen from table 5.7 as reflected in Chart III above that personal influence is named by 134 (60.91%) respondents out of the total of 220, political connection by 174 (79.09%), wealth and status by 112 (50.91%), oratory skill by 145 (65.91%), knowledge about customary laws and social practices by 159 (72.27%) & one more or this one only by 62 (28.18%) as factor/s counted in selection of a *Gaon Bura/Buri*. As pointed out by 79.09 percent of the total respondents political connection is counted as most important factor in selection of a *Gaon Bura/Buri* and similarly, personal influence is almost equally counted in the same as opined by 60.91 percent of the total respondents.

Table 5.8 Nos. of factor/s counted named, its frequency and percent

i.	Name one factor	35 (15.91%)
ii.	Name two factors	45 (20.45%)
iii.	Name three factors	30 (13.64%)
iv.	Name four factors	13 (5.91%)
v.	Name five factors	73 (33.18%)
vi.	Name six factors	24 (10.91%)
Total		220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 5 representing Table 5.8



Thus we can see from Table 5.8 as represented in Pie Diagram V above that 35(15.91%) respondents out of total of 220 have named only one factor, 45(20.45%) two factors,

30(13.64%) three, 13(5.91%)four, 73(33.18%) five & the rest 24(10.91%) have named six factors.

Summary of other factor/s counted in selection of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

Other factor/s counted in selection of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* specified by 62 (28.18%) respondents are clearly summarised hereunder.

Persons having (i) knowledge about customary laws and social practices, (ii) oratory skill & (iii) wealth and status in this order were counted in the earlier days before advent of (political) party politics with the inception of State Assembly and its elections. As per the guidelines of *Gaon Bura* appointment generally recommended for practice is that the influential person with character & integrity be selected in an open meeting of the village people in the presence of an Administrative officer; to be recommended to DC for formal appointment⁶. Hence, the criteria followed in the former days as mentioned above sufficiently meet the requirements of this guideline. Besides the aforementioned five factors counted, persons interested in developmental and social activities are given a priority for selection.

Next, persons having one or more of these qualities like honesty, integrity, character, dedication, sincerity, intelligence, wisdom, prominence, smartness, activeness, common sense and self respect and dignity are selected. The community, village or clan also select/nominate a person of good reputation to be a *Gaon Bura/Buri*. A clan based representation and inheritance of the position also is allowed for selection. Education qualification is also considered as one of the criteria now a days besides keeping a lower and upper age bar. Moreover, unemployed elderly youth and those who are free enough now in life to become a *Gaon Bura/Buri* are also appointed. In an intervening period, ones who donated a *Mithun*, cow or goat during Dree festival were appointed earlier. Even, a person is selected simply to fill a vacancy without following any criteria⁷.

More particularly to understand whether the respondents are satisfied with the mode of selection of *Gaon Buras/Buris* the following question (sixth in the series) as given hereunder was asked to them.

Q. Are you satisfied with the mode of selection of *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

⁶According to Kojeen, H., sitting Commissioner (DA & GA), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar.

⁷Generally, in case of a very small clan

(i) Yes

(ii) No.

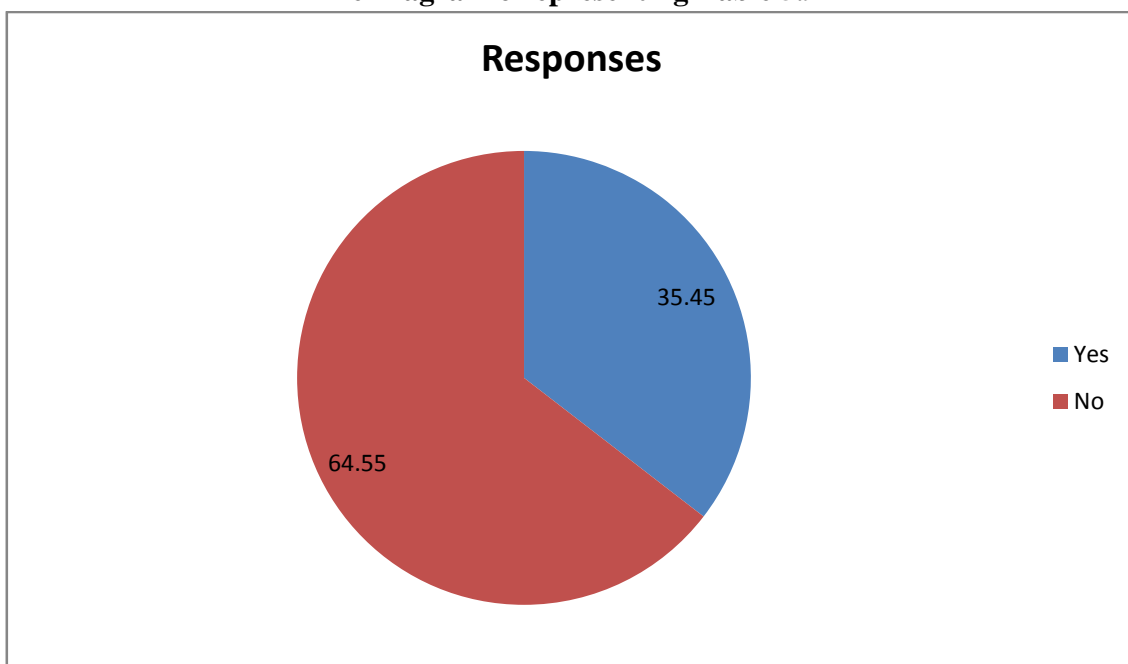
If No, please give reasons.

Table 5.9 Responses to the question: Are you satisfied with the mode of selection of *Gaon Buras/Buris*

i. Yes	78 (35.45%)
ii. No	142 (64.55%)
Total	220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 6 representing Table 5.9



As seen from Table 5.9 as represented in Pie Diagram 6 above, it is found that 78(35.45%) of the respondents out of total of 220 state that they are satisfied with the mode of selection of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* & the majority of 142(64.55%) respondents responded that they are not satisfied with the same.

Summary of reasons specified in 'No' responses

In the earlier days, especially before the advent of (political) party politics, mostly competent persons who were really interested in social services and development-oriented activities and having knowledge on the customary laws and social practices, oratory skill, wealth and status and other such qualities were selected and appointed as *Gaon Buras*. In-fact, the villagers were very competitive to offer themselves for the appointments, ready to render social and development-oriented services and contributions. But now a days, mostly active election supporters are selected for appointment at the behest of the political leaders like local MLA by overlooking the merits; DC almost remaining a rubber stamp.

This appointment is used by political leaders as vote bank and to fulfil their commitment made before election which is hindering the smooth selection process because of which the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are not delivering impartial services. And, his near and dear ones (even two brothers simultaneously) are selected and get appointed too by the local MLA. Disproportionate and excessive GBs/HGBs appointments have already been done; even appointing some directly as HGB. In-fact, selection and appointment made on the basis of political connection and personal influence has created a problem in the role and functioning of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. On the whole, political selection which needs to be discarded has led to the degeneration of the GB institution and has unhealthy effects in the society.

Moreover, the respondents are not satisfied with the mode of selection giving many other reasons which are mentioned hereunder. As required by times and circumstances, education, say matriculation, should be considered as one of the criteria in the appointments. Before selection the Bio-data of a candidate should be carefully examined and even competent newly-retired government employees may be considered for the selection. Viva-voice test, on knowledge about customary laws and social practices, oratory skill and other necessary qualities/merits, should be conducted for the appointment in future by making the selection process transparent and widely publicised.

Hence, present system of *Gaon Bura/Buri* selection with the interference or influence of the politicians without considering the merits of the candidate made simply on their recommendation and pressure is devoid of prescribed government rules and guidelines framed. The commanding persons of wealth and status those who have oratory skill, knowledge about customary laws and social practices and integrity and character should ideally be considered for

free and fair appointment to be done purely by Administration particularly through an independent and competent Board constituted for this so that the appointees are dependable and reliable to the villagers and the society as a whole.

Particularly to investigate and understand the opinions and attitude/perception of the respondents whether the ladies appointed as *Gaon Buris* are able to perform their duties efficiently the following question (seventh in the series) as given hereunder was asked to them.

Q. Recently some ladies have been appointed as *Gaon Buris*. Are these *Gaon Buris* able to perform their duties efficiently?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

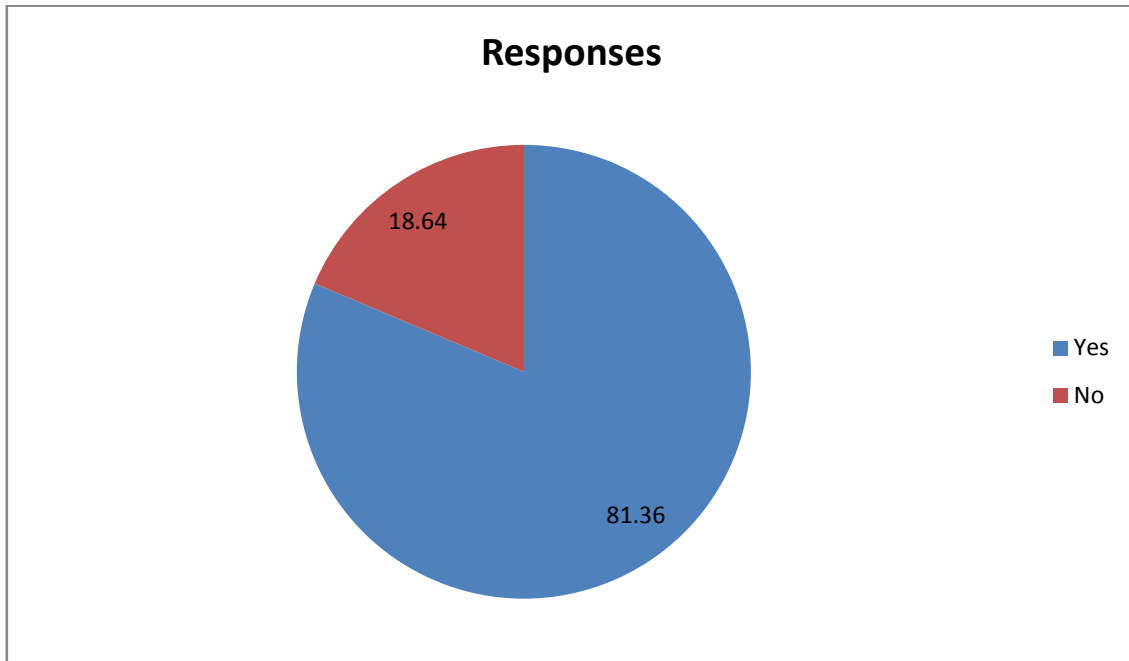
If No, please give reasons.

Table5.10 Responses to the question: Recently some ladies have been appointed as *Gaon Buris*. Are these *Gaon Buris* able to perform their duties efficiently?

Yes	179 (81.36%)
No	41 (18.64%)
Total	220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 7 representing Table 5.10



Thus, it is seen from Table 5.10 as depicted in Pie Diagram 7 above that 179(81.36%) respondents out of total of 220 have answered ‘Yes’ to the above questions and the rest 41(18.64%) have responded ‘No’ to the same. Hence, contrary to a section of popular opinion including that of this research scholar, the huge majority of 81.36 percent of the total respondents have answered ‘Yes’ to the question. Even then, this scholar regards this majority result as somewhat biased and considers it to be an unfounded degree of faith on the ladies particularly *Gaon Buris* due to leaning nature of the people towards them (to be read in the current day of women reservation and empowerment and advocacy for gender equality) than the *Goan Buris*’ actual ability to perform their duties efficiently. This opinion is hereby held, also due to the fact that the duties of *Gaon Buris* are of insignificant types only as admitted by a large section of the respondents.

The ‘No’ responses opinions summarised

Opinions expressed by 41(18.64%) respondents in their ‘No’ responses to the question: “Recently some ladies have been appointed as *Gaon Buris*. Are these *Gaon Buris* able to perform their duties efficiently?” are conclusively summarised hereunder.

The *Gaon Buris* are not treated as able to perform their duties efficiently because of various reasons. The *Gaon Bura/Buri* institution is a almost defunct one because most *Gaon Buri(s)*, like *Gaon Bura(s)*, being illiterate are not properly aware of their duties except a few of them. They have become the same lame ducks like the *Gaon Buras* (mainly because their institution is politicised and functions dwindling). The *Gaon Buris* being recent appointees have insignificant functions like those of the *Gaon Buras*. The duties of the *Gaon Buras* and *Gaon Buris* are greatly motivated by political considerations thereby affecting their role and functions. Our being a patriarchal society still now the *Gaon Buris* live under male pre-dominance and hence they tend to become rubber stamps of their husbands or the *Gaon Buras* and very often they seem to be lost amongst them and have less involvement in the social decisions. She being a housewife who has several household and other domestic works to attend upon does not do justice with her role as *Gaon Buris*. Over and above, the *Gaon Buris* lack courage to shoulder the responsibilities. On the other hand and conversely, more *Gaon Buri* representation is required.

However, we can take a more balanced view by stating that the *Gaon Buris* have their limitation and cannot perform as much as the *Gaon Buras*. Apart from this, in some cases they are performing well in the discharge of their bona-fide functions, but no so in some cases of inefficient *Gaon Buris*. On the other hand, after introduction of female representative as *Gaon Buris* the women now are vociferously voicing for their rights in the society and government.

To establish the fact further as contributed by all the previous questions towards it, the respondents were enquired whether they thought that introduction of panchayat raj institution has undermined the status/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in the form of the following question (eight in the series) as given hereunder.

Q. Do you think that introduction of panchayati raj institution has undermined the status/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If Yes, please give reasons.

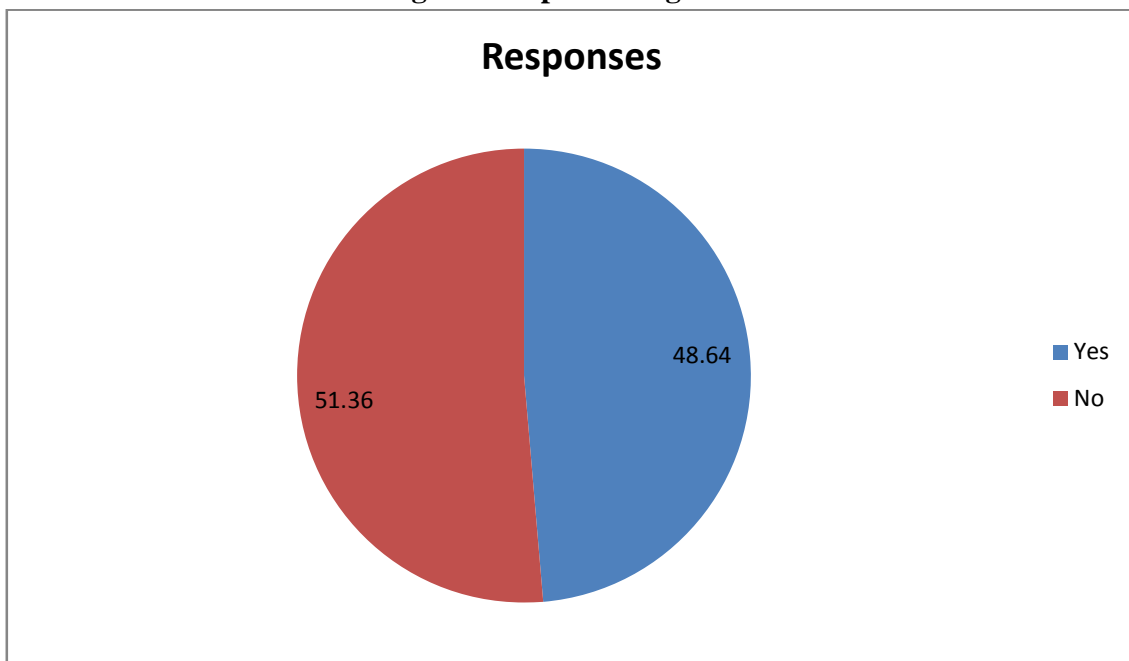
The Panchayats and the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

Table 5.11 Responses to the question: Do you think that introduction of panchayati raj institution has undermined the status/position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

Yes	107(48.64%)
No	113(51.36%)
Total	220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 8 representing Table 5.11



Thus, it is seen from Table 5.11 as represented in Pie Diagram 8 above that 107(48.64%) respondents out of the total of 220 have answered 'Yes' to the above question and the rest 113(51.36%) have stated 'No' to the same. Thus we can see that almost half of the total respondents believes that introduction of panchayat raj institution has undermined the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* which can be given a due place. Now let us understand properly why the same is so as admitted by these respondents.

Summary of opinions expressed in the 'Yes' responses

I. Developmental and educational factor

Although the power and functions are divided between them, effectiveness of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* has been greatly undermined because of political influence, interference and non-cooperation of the PRIs members and other political leaders like local MLA. The PRIs members are holders of political, developmental and financial powers and act as agents of the rural developments. They take charge of the rural developmental projects, schemes and activities and its funds. The PRIs representatives are younger, literate, smart, active, energetic, modern (in thought or ideas) and are aware about the current affairs of their own locality/village. They have the advantage of their multi-linguistic natured personality compared to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* which comes handy in skilful handling of official works and in understanding the present office procedures, rules, regulations, the laws and the system as a whole.

Hence, they are able to keep a close touch and have better connection with the local MLA, Deputy Commissioner and other district officers and easily come to know, about the various developmental projects and schemes and its funds and, about its pursuance, getting sanctioned and executed. Over and above, selection of the beneficiaries for various rural development programs and its schemes rest on the PRIs members who are popularly elected by the villagers of own locality.

They being illiterate with other limitations the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are unable to match and compete with the PRIs representatives in the village affairs/system in the current set up/circumstance. Because of all of the factors mentioned above, the PRIs members have an impact on the administration, government departments, young generation and villagers and obtain more importance and influence from them thus receiving more advantages and privileges compared to the *Gaon Buras* and *Buris*.

As a result, directly or indirectly; officially or unofficially they influence or pressurise the villagers in one way or other in their affairs. They very often interfere in resolution of the family, clan, village and even inter-tribes disputes and problems. In-fact, the panchayat leaders are acting parallel to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in all of their functions including dispute settlement and law and order maintenance. Ultimately, the importance, status, power and

position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has been shared and reduced by the domineering PRIs representatives.

II. Judicial factor

In the earlier days before the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institution in the state the institution of the *Gaon Bura* was very effective in helping out the administration to deal with social problems. It is natural so, because the *Gaon Buras* were selected on the basis of their social influence and skill in customary laws, social practices and oratory. On the other hand, the PRIs members are selected or elected on party basis and they usually come to their position on the basis of their financial strength/resources contrary to the traditional bases of fitness and skill which were applied to the earlier *Gaon Buras*.

Apart from Court of Law, Panchayat leaders also interfere in or settle many of the disputes and law and order problem in the society encroaching upon the *Gaon Buras/Buris'* age-old functions. In-fact, the PRI members have been overtaking the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* in any activities which acts as another source of power for them. Today, it seems like the power and functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* have been seized due to introduction of the PRIs and Legislative Assembly. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* act mostly as witnesses in cases and give some encouragement at certain times to the people. Actually, elected/selected panchayat leaders feel they are the real representatives of their village for all purposes including law and order maintenance and deciding of disputes. And the *Gaon Buras/Buris* do not resist on this; thereby not asserting themselves on their power, functions and responsibilities.

Most of the PRI members are not aware of their defined role and tend to take over all functions out of misunderstanding and hence, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* have become ceremonial ones getting dominated and encroached upon by them. Since they are the people's democratically elected representatives they rely more on them than to the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Nyay Panchayat Act of the country has also vested some judiciary power to the PRIs members. This is the scenario today, partly because there is no proper demarcation of power and functions between the two institutions.

The respondents were also asked which out of the Panchayat Members and the *Gaon Buras/Buris* they thought was better suited for the development of their village through the following question (ninth in the series) as given hereunder.

Q. Which, according to you, is better suited for the development of your village?

(i) Panchayat Members

(ii) *Gaon Buras/Buris*

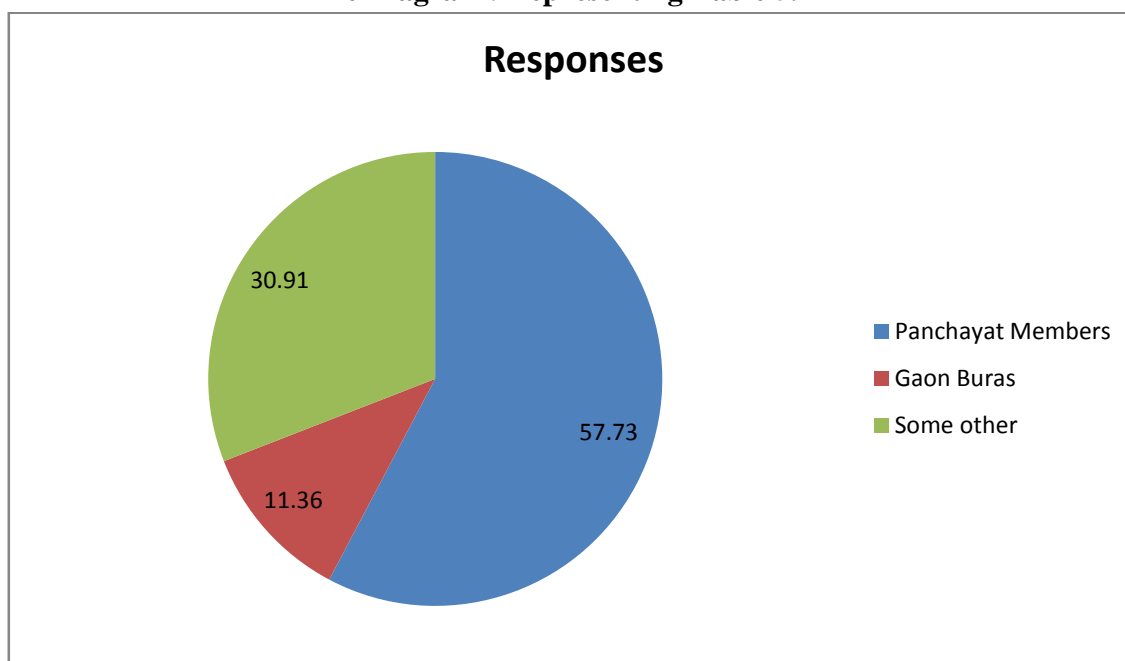
(iii) Any other?

Table 5.12 Responses to the question: Which, according to you, is better suited for the development of your village?

i.	Panchayat Members	127 (57.73%)
ii.	<i>Gaon Buras/Buris</i>	25 (11.36%)
iii.	Any other	68 (30.91%)
Total		220 (100%)

Source: Field survey

Pie Diagram 9 representing Table 5.12



Thus we can see from Table 5.12 as represented in Pie Diagram 9 that 127(57.73%) respondents out of total of 220 have answered 'Panchayat Members' as better suited for development of their village and 25(11.36%) have opined the '*Gaon Buras/Buris* as better suited ones and the rest 68(30.91%) have answered differently most of them who feel either that both of them are equally suited or that it depends upon the individual incumbents, not upon the institution or its collective members. It would be worthwhile to mention here that although initially it was not felt necessary, a third option namely 'Any other' had to be incorporated in course of the field survey.

Many responses attached explanations/reservations with their statements namely 'Panchayats are better suited for their village development' which are put hereunder. Panchayat is better suited for development of the villages if they take the *Gaon Buras/Buris* into confidence in their functioning and function properly under the law as per Government guidelines and the Panchayat Act. If they function without misusing developmental funds the Panchayat is better suited because they are active, intelligent, smart, young and educated and the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are mostly illiterate.

On the other hand those respondents who answered the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are better suited for their village development opined that the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are better because of their honesty, character and experience and that they would utilize developmental schemes and its funds more honestly.

The third option responses summarised

Explanations attached by 68(30.91%) respondents in their responses who adopted third option to the above questions are summarised hereunder. A majority percentage of these respondents believe that both the functionaries are equally suited for their village development; some adding that both the position holders just need to be united and work in cooperation and coordination. Some opine that both the institutions are equally needed in democratic country like India to maintain check and balance, provided they understand each other's defined role. Many out of the majority percentage of respondents mentioned above believe that both the functionaries are equally suited in the sense that it depends upon the individual incumbents concerned. They believe that it depends upon individual incumbents' character not upon the institution or its collective members.

Some went to the extent of stating that the persons with requisite qualities for both the roles as the panchayat members and the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may be appointed combining and converting the two institutions into one. Another similar view held by some respondents is that both the functionaries are equally suited for their village development in their own respective way [(in certain cases it is the panchayats and in certain others, the *Gaon Buras/Buris*] and interdependent in many cases. Another view point which cannot be discarded altogether is that both the functionaries are equally necessary owing to the fact that the panchayat members are good for pursuing or pushing through in the offices before the sanctions of the funds and any others and the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, being more honest, would be better at its implementation stage - when the sanctions are already done after its successful pursuance.

Some opine that both the position holders have their own power and functions and hence that it is not necessary /possible to choose who is more suited for the village development. A village lady Yamyang, Narang says, ‘‘I cannot choose between them because both the institutions need to act in cooperation and coordination with one another. Only regret however is that ZPMs⁸ and Anchal Chairpersons⁹ are always domineering and undemocratic’’. However, this research scholar had to occasionally clarify that the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are also vested with developmental power and functions under the 1945 Regulation which legally stands till now adding that before advent of the Panchayat Raj Institution it was the *Gaon Buras* who were solely shouldering the developmental responsibilities along with the government administration.

People’s Perception and *Gaon Buras/Buris*

To investigate the degree of faith the common people have on the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, to understand their necessity to the common people, thereby understanding their worthiness or otherwise particularly as effective justice delivery mechanism at local levels, the following question (tenth in the series) as given hereunder was asked to the respondents.

⁸Zilla Parishad Members

⁹Chairpersons of Anchal Samity Members

Q. What, according to you, is degree of faith the common people have on the *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

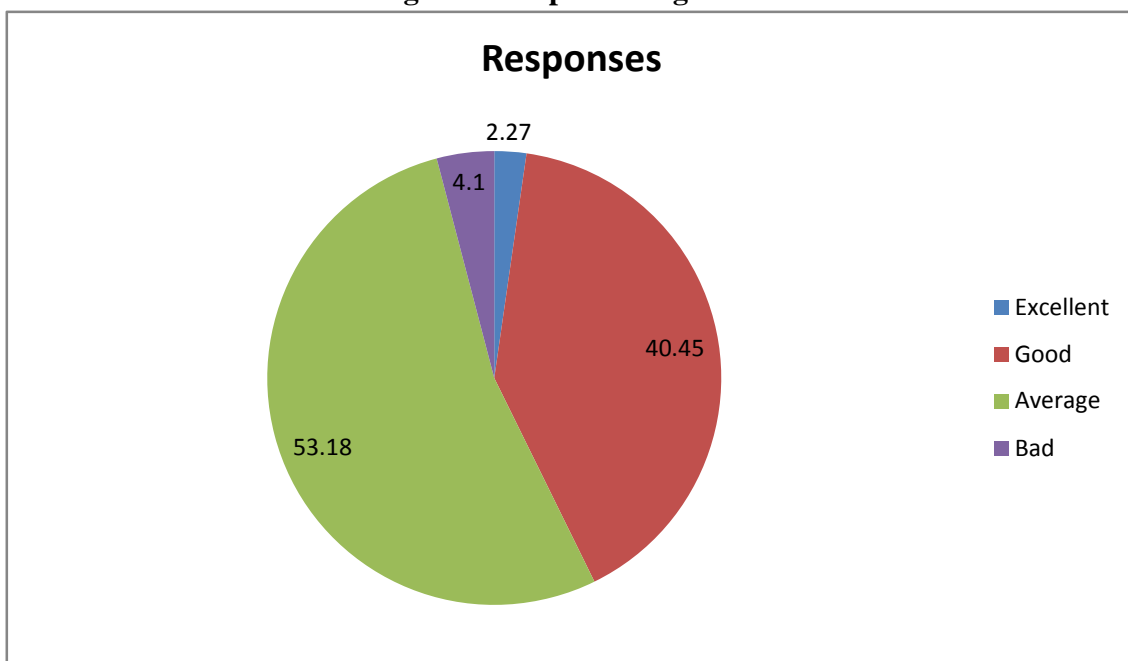
- (i) Excellent
- (ii) Good
- (iii) Average
- (iv) Bad.

Table 5.13 Responses to the question: What, according to you, is degree of faith the common people have on the *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

i.	Excellent	5 (2.27%)
ii.	Good	89 (40.45%)
iii.	Average	117 (53.18%)
iv.	Bad	9 (4.1%)
Total		220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 10 representing Table 5.13



Thus, we can see from Table 5.13 as represented in Pie Diagram 10 above that 5(2.27%) respondents out of the total of 220 have answered 'Excellent', 89(40.45%) have answered 'Good', more than 50 percent 117(53.18%) of the total respectively have answered 'Average' which reflects, a very low degree of faith the common people generally have on the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and, their (though not necessarily its institution itself) unworthiness/needlessness at the present for the people & worse still, 9(4.1%) have answered 'Bad' to the question, i.e. 'What, according to you, is degree of faith the common people have on the *Gaon Buras/Buris*?'

Scope, Relevance and the People's Perception and the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*

To investigate the people's perception and attitude on relevance and scope of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* the following question as given hereunder was asked to the respondents.

Q. How relevant is the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* today?

- i. Extremely relevant
- ii. Not so relevant
- iii. Should be discarded
- iv. No idea.

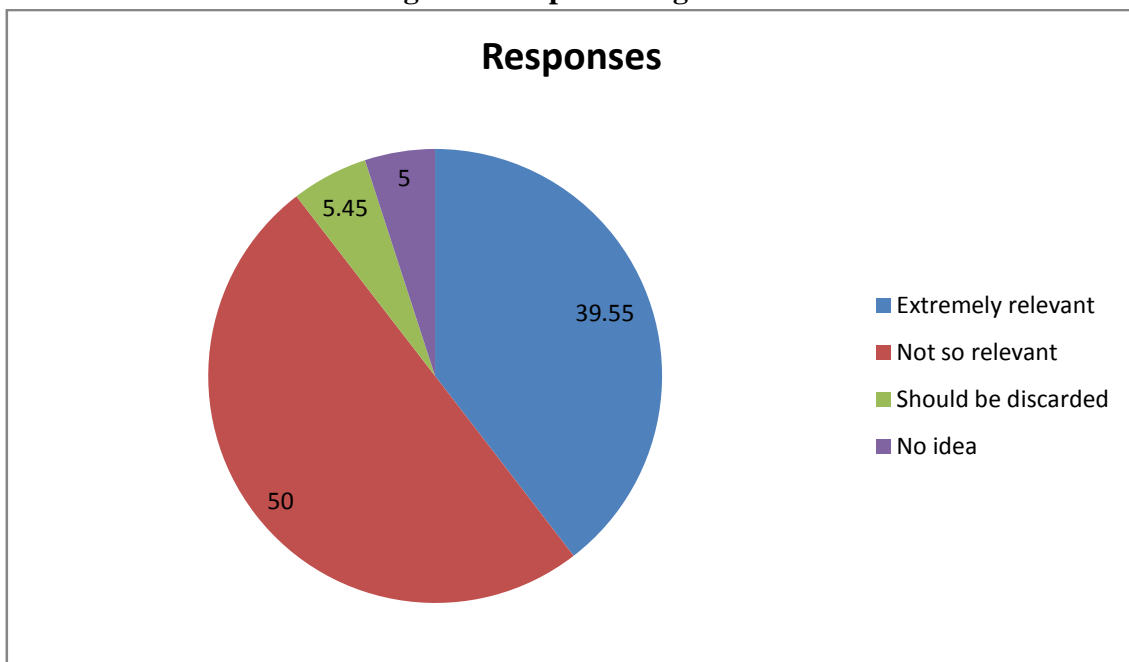
If extremely relevant, please specify.

Table 5.14 Responses to the question: How relevant is the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* today?

i.	Extremely relevant	87 (39.55%)
ii.	Not so relevant	110 (50%)
iii.	Should be discarded	12 (5.45%)
iv.	No idea	11 (5%)
Total		220 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 11 representing Table 5.14



Thus it is seen from Table 5.14 as represented in Pie Diagram 11 above that 87 (39.55%) respondents feel that the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* is extremely relevant, 110 (50%) opines it is not so relevant today which once again reflects unworthiness/needlessness of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* (though not necessarily the institution itself) in the opinion of the common people, 12 (5.45%) hold that the same should be discarded because role of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

in the society now is that of insignificant ones and the rest 11 (5%) respondents just do not have any idea on this. Out of the thirty nine plus percent (87) respondents, a converge able view has emerged upon analysis that the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* would be extremely relevant if revitalized and strengthened by conferring it with full opportunity and scope to play itself (by tangibly investing it with judicial power and its functions). A large majority constituting 50 percent of the total respondents have a very low faith by believing that the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* is not so relevant in view of extension of IPC, CrPC and CPC to the village jurisdiction especially in the wake of separation of the judiciary from the executive; this unfavourable situation compounded by the ineffectiveness and weakening of the institution already caused by numerous factors.

Although, the 50 percent of the total respondents feel bit differently, the converge able views have been availed of, from the 87 respondents answering 'Extremely' relevant to the above-mentioned question in particular and the responses of the total of 220 respondents to all questions in general, which are conclusively summarised hereunder. Large scale appointments have been made on the basis of political affiliations/connections instead of the social standing and merits of the persons concerned, the power and functions being diluted, the institution weakened and the quality dwindled due to interference by the public representatives and political parties and by way of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*'s self-destruction and so. Party politics and among other factors, it is observed that community, village and clan levels disputes have undermined the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* thus adversely affecting the decision makings and functioning of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*; allowing individuals to opt for other (formal) Courts.

If all needful necessary steps are taken timely to revitalize their institution we can safely hope that the *Gaon Buras/Buris* would improve, progress and continue to proceed to maintain peace, tranquillity and communal harmony within the clans, villages and community as was maintained by their forefathers. A crucial step to revitalize would be that the AFR, 1945¹⁰ with ineffective, inadequate and redundant provisions be amended suitably in due time as per the Government Notification after appointment of Judicial Officers in the state & High Court's

¹⁰A pre-Independence law with obsolete provisions for now, like 'the Village Authority (*Gaon Buras*) can impose a fine up-to Rs. 50/- (Rupees fifty) only [Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred) only at the latest since 2005 Amendment to the 1945 Regulation] to an offender' which obviously is totally in adequate one for the present times.

Order & direction in this regards so as to suit the present requirements. If we sincerely go by the opinions (which gives adequate justifications) of the thirty nine plus percent (87) respondents, the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* would be extremely relevant one¹¹ for the times to come.

Since they are appointed from amongst the permanent residents of their villages the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are fully acquainted with, the residents and, the facts and circumstances of the village. Hence, all disputes, offences and crimes (civil and criminal both) at local level except heinous ones like murder and rape can be effectively settled by them without needing interference from the regularly judiciary unless appealed or referred. Hence, continuation should be made to allow and invest the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to settle all petty criminal matters and civil disputes of their respective clans/villages/areas/inter-villages/inter-tribes. They are effective in dealing, with the inter-tribes issues and disputes usually with lesser cost and delay; and, even with the government and the non-tribal and other outsiders.

The *Gaon Buras/Buris* are most suitable to settle the local disputes having socio-traditional bearing including *Mithun*, land and forest and its boundary disputes, etc. Because, Police, Judges and the practicing lawyers generally are not accurate in their assessment in such cases because of which they often get delayed for decision, nor they go to the field/spot to properly investigate thus becoming inefficient. The *Gaon Buras* are usually efficient in these cases because being local old men themselves they have proper knowledge and ideas not only on the cases but also on the related but efficacious customary laws and are able to decide and dispose of quickly, effectively and appropriately. Since, because the old and aged/elderly *Gaon Buras* know the owners of the land, forests, rivers and its topography and boundary properly. In-fact, certain long drawn cases often come back to the court of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

Moreover, the forum of *Gaon Buras/Buris* is simple, practical, informal, fair, inexpensive, speedy, accessible and accountable justice delivery mechanism available at the doorstep of the poor and other common people without legal technicalities and official formalities unlike regular judiciary. Above all, the real strength of this tribal institution is that, in the matters of judgment pronouncement, it is the public opinion that largely counts. Besides all these, some *Gaon Buras/Buris* having requisite qualities can be engaged as detective/intelligence/spying agents and Police informers to assist the law-enforcement agencies.

¹¹if revitalized and strengthened by the law (and system) by amending its governing Regulation and confer it with full opportunity and scope to play itself protected from political and other interferences by tangibly investing it with proper and effective judicial power and its functions.

Moreover, the *GAON BURIs* represent women interests on various aspects especially to deal with women-related problems and issues somewhat akin to Women Police and the State Women Welfare Commission. The valuable services of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* can be availed of by all stakeholders including *Buliang*, District administration, Police, Judiciary and Villagers to settle any disputes, problem or issue thereby maintaining effective law and order & peace and harmony in local areas/regions.

Moreover, in certain situation, it is the *Gaon Buras/Buris* only who have to be and are looked for especially by the outsiders including tourists and research scholars. They can act as pressure/vigilant group against misuse of the government developmental schemes and its funds and other corruptions or against any other noticeable misdoings in their respective jurisdictions. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* assist the polling teams in various ways during Parliamentary, Assembly and Panchayat elections as agents of the district administration. Whether maintenance of law and order or performing any other programs of works they would give sincere assistance to the government and the public alike; would be useful to all stakeholders in carrying out any developmental, awareness and information provision campaigns, programs and activities including relief and rescue operations in any disaster.

The *Gaon Buras/Buris* are reservoir of valuable knowledge of the customary laws and social traditions, customs and practices which requires preservation and hence are like a medium through which we can preserve these for and transmit to the posterity. Being amongst the eldest ones in Village seen as fatherly figures the *Gaon Buras/Buris* who are most revered symbolise truth and integrity and are an asset to pass on the cultural and social heritage to the next generation. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* would continue to be relevant for their role as village elders in organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions e.g. in *Myoko* and other sacred ceremonial festivals like *Dree* and *Murung* as well.

Central government is increasingly giving emphasis on all-round developments of this border and strategic state. More so, Government of India is actively considering ambitious program of Acting East through the North-East towards meeting the economic and other developmental needs of the country in general and the North-East in particular. Hence, the institution of *Gaon Buras* will always remain relevant in ever-expanding welfare and developmental activities of the State. They would continue to be useful to

welcome/receive/see off and give other hospitalities to the VIPs/Dignitaries¹² & to construct welcome gates and prepare other decorations on official and other public occasions/functions as already mentioned making it colourful and attractive¹³ besides serving as ready audience to the speeches¹⁴ of the VIPs and other dignitaries. Besides, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* act as messenger of any information or notice issued from the government/administration side.

On the other hand, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* still maintain some of their power and functions which Government and other stakeholders also value. The Panchayat members are mostly interested in developmental activities and monetary matters and are least bothered about maintenance of law and order & crime control, prevention and detection; it is the *Gaon Buras/Buris* who assist and help the administration in the above works till now. Additionally, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are necessary as government representatives/agents at the local/village level and can act as bridge between the government and the villagers; in-fact amongst all stakeholders.

A conclusion¹⁵ is made that the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* would improve and proceed to be truly relevant with a great scope¹⁶ if the same is revitalized and strengthened by taking the various needful necessary steps. However, it was found in the field survey that giving either entirely new or additional assignment/s to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* would not be appropriate at the present because most of them are illiterate¹⁷.

To confirm the decrease in powers, position and status of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* finally the following question as given hereunder was asked to the respondents.

¹²(who come as Chief Guests and Dignitaries to Apatani valley for meetings, discussion on development matters and other purposes)

¹³The *Gaon Buras/Buris* all don Red coat with Medal (which is their official insignia) in such occasions and functions making it colorful and attractive.

¹⁴And that, at absence of them the other people would not come forward to do them and in that case the VIPs/dignitaries would miss it greatly.

¹⁵On the basis of responses of 220 total respondents to all questions in general and converge able responses of the 87 respondents out of them (who viewed the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* as extremely relevant one) in particular.

¹⁶Hence, meagre honorarium paid to each *Gaon Buras/Buris* besides meeting their minimal additional expenses is worth affording by the state.

¹⁷this consideration in-fact was an important part of investigation of this study.

Q. General feeling is that the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* has degenerated to a great extent. What are the reasons you attribute for the same? Please specify.

Variety of responses received to this question are conclusively summarised hereunder.

I. Political factors

Lesser numbers of *Gaon Buras* and *Head Gaon Buras* functioned in the earlier times most of whom were meritorious/commanding ones but the scenario is totally different by now. Excessive and disproportionate numbers of the *Head/Gaon Buras/Buris* mostly were politically-appointed and majority of them are either unfits or deadwoods. Selection and appointment of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* is done politically on pick and choose basis without considering the merit of the candidates concerned. Politically appointed *Head/Gaon Buras/Buris* remain divided party-wise thereby not delivering impartial services. As such their institution is inefficient and ineffective in all its due functions. Local MLA widely recommends for political appointment to buttress his vote bank; which is usually abetted by successive weak Deputy Commissioners.

II. Stakeholders

The people in general and half-backed western education-influenced younger generations in particular today look down upon the *Gaon Buras/Buris* for they seem to them to be only attending the festivals, national and statehood days and VIP programs, functions and meetings¹⁸. Similarly, the *Gaon Buris* seem to them to be doing only equally or more insignificant duties¹⁹. In a way, the general public has unjustified low faith upon the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and criticise them unhindered and arbitrarily. Since 1970s after its inception in 1969, the panchayat representatives have encroached/interfered in almost all functions of the *Gaon Buras* including dispute settlements. The Panchayati representatives are more relied upon now for they seem to the general people to be democratically elected representatives and educationally and economically more qualified than most of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. However,

¹⁸always donning their red coats with medals in these occasions.

¹⁹like serving foods and drinks in such occasions and functions.

most of the panchayati representatives are corrupt, interested mainly to siphon off the developmental funds.

No remuneration, incentive, perk or facility is given to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* for doing good social works except meagre honorarium each and no financial resource granted for their effective functioning which otherwise could have encouraged and motivated them. Due to modernisation, education and resultant awareness of Constitutional Law the people today look down upon and belittle the customary laws, *Gaon Buras/Buris* and their decisions. Additionally, the moneyed and egoistic litigants always have an adamant tendency to give and drag cases to other (formal) courts. Gradual but rapid spread of Christian religion in the state and resultant change in attitude and belief of the people is another such factor.

III. Limitations of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

The illiterate *Gaon Buras/Buris* are ignorant about their roles laid down particularly under the relevant law and if some are aware of it they do not assert themselves on their power and its functions. Lack of communication skills in Hindi and English act as another handicap and the old and aged *Gaon Buras* are not able to play active role because of physical and in some cases mental limitations. The ideas and thoughts of a half of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are seem to be old, obsolete and even incompatible to, and at no par with, the present modern generations²⁰.

Many *Gaon Buras/Buris* are greatly individualistic and give preference to own work and business instead of, for social welfare. Some *Gaon Buras* admit that they earn personal enmity for neutral but strong judicial decisions and hence that they have become indifferent to their responsibilities. Due to disunity caused largely by party politics, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* often insult each other and one another. Some *Gaon Buras/Head Gaon Buras* hold multiple positions²¹ and are unable to do justice to his all of its roles/responsibilities for want of time. Majority of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are financially and economically very poor and their meagre honoraria do not meet their daily needs of life. Owing to this or that, the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, like some of the former *katokis*, often indulge in favouritism, nepotism and other corruptions. Most

²⁰E.g. some respondents feel that the *Gaon Buras* indulge in obsolete way of arbitration and deliberation during case settlements by speaking very lengthy often punctuated by partiality.

²¹For instance, many hold three positions of *Gaon Bura /Head Gaon Bura, Buliang* and Priest at the same time.

of them have drinking habit and very often they make improper and undignified use of their Red coats with medal.²² Moreover, there is a need for strong leadership amongst the *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

IV. Alternative dispute settlement means

The people now rely, and repose their faith more, on mainstream judiciary than in the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* and the customary laws²³. Advent of 'alternative dispute settlement means' mainly represented by the formal judicial courts and procedures, the police department and proliferating practicing lawyers has especially led to the decline of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Law Court is established now even at district *Headquarters* after separation of Judiciary and there is sufficient availability of legal experts everywhere in the society. As a result all cases have been converted into (regular) court cases, for they cannot be referred/sent back for arbitration and compromise at the *Gaon Buras/Buris* level.

The powers conferred upon the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and enjoyed by them during the NEFA period has been greatly eroded by now. In-fact, introduction and effective intervention of the formal judiciary (particularly district administrative courts) in general and the separation of Judiciary in 2013 and establishment of proper Criminal Justice System²⁴ and new Law Courts in the districts (and in the state) in particular has given almost a final blow to the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Mainly because, case decisions and verdicts of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are not empowered with due (proper) legal recognition by making it not being entitled for upholding as valid appeal/refer judicial cases²⁵ in other/higher courts under new State Judiciary set up.²⁶

Another disability of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* is that they have power under the law to detain but none to guard the detente besides common satisfaction amongst the litigants for

²²which does not augur well for their dignity and respect.

²³It is un-codified and un-documented till date.

²⁴the three wings of Criminal Justice System are: i) separation of Judiciary by setting up of Districts and Session Courts at Itanagar/Tezu up-to Itanagr Permanent Bench of Guwahati High Court at Naharlagun; ii) Police jurisdiction throughout the state & iii) setting up of Central jail each at Itanagar and Tezu. The institution of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* has no statutory power as vested with the above institutions.

²⁵since all cases have to come (through proper laid down procedure) as totally fresh ones under the new judicial set up established in the state after separation of the judiciary from the executive.

²⁶the (inadequate and opsolete for now) power and functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* now remaining merely laid down under the 1945 Regulation (not tangibly/robustly/adequately conferring and investing the same upon the village authorities).

police, jail and other regular punishments. Alongside the advent and active intervention of modern judicial system and its effective policing, increased rate of conscious clan-base settlement of cases in which kits and kin participate is also seen now a days. To settle *Yelu* in which their role was needed is abolished from the society now. The people including *Gaon Buras/Buris* have a tendency of migration to towns and no impetus is given to cultural and social heritage of the society. Urbanisation, economic and social changes and educational and scientific developments of the society has worked to decline the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. District administration and the government in turn have not taken any effective step/adopted any effective guideline so far to reactivate and revitalize it.

In the entire gamut of things under discussion, ‘political parties, elections, political leaders and their politics and politicking’ is main factor to vitiate the institution, given a further blow by advent of ‘alternative dispute settlement means’ as ones described in the preceding section. However, all factors fully combined ultimately have resulted in varying degree in causing decline/degeneration of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*²⁷.

Some respondents feel that under such backdrop the State should now assign a new but different power, functions and responsibilities to the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Yet, some do not agree that the general feeling is as afore-stated in the question saying that the people now also endorse the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* as relevant, necessary and well-performing in all fronts and that they continue to give importance, regard and respect to the village authorities.

In the backdrop of degeneration and decline of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* as admitted at all hands, the respondents were asked whether they felt the necessity of revitalization of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* or not exactly through the following question as given hereunder.

Q. Do you feel the necessity of revitalization of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

If Yes, what steps needed to be taken to revitalize the same?

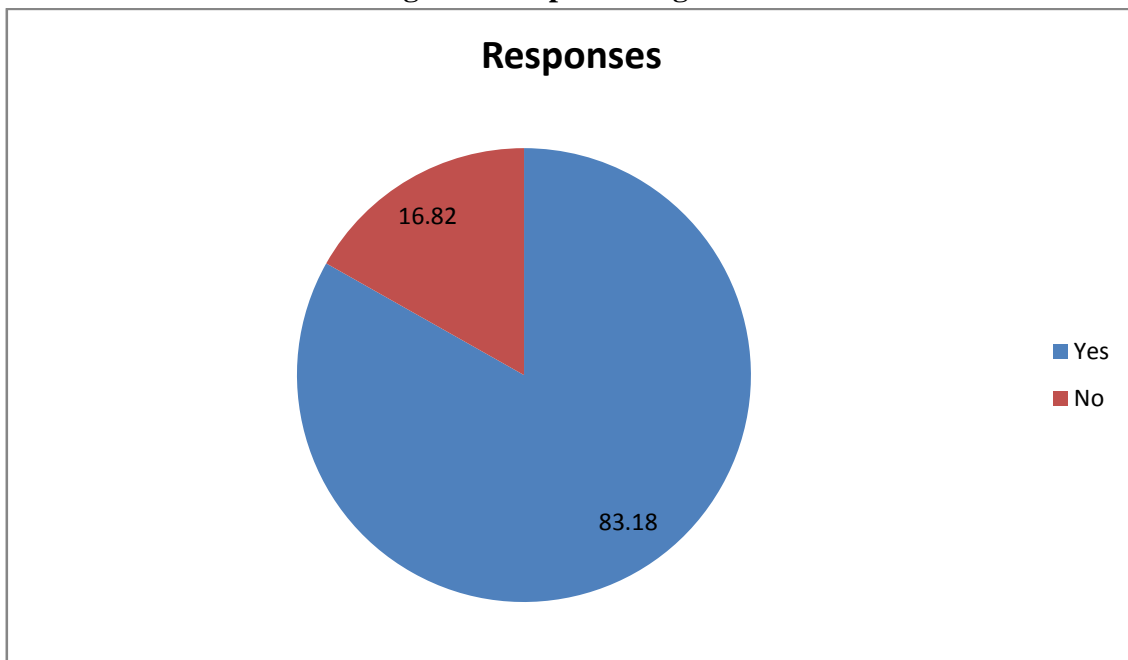
²⁷making the people today to have a low degree of opinion/faith on their role and services as effective justice delivery institution; and their power, functions and position reduced now to nominal and ceremonial ones.

Table 5.15 Responses to the question: Do you feel the necessity of revitalization of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*?

i.	Yes	183 (83.18%)
ii.	No	37 (16.82%)
Total		220 (100%)

Sorce: Field Survey

Pie Diagram 12 representing Table 5.15



Thus, it is seen from Table 5.15 as represented in Pie Diagram 12 above that 183(83.18%) respondents out of the total of 220 have answered ‘Yes’ to the question and the rest 37(16.82%) have answered ‘No’ to the same.

Since, the huge majority of 83.18 percent of the total respondents feel the necessity of revitalization of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* it clearly indicates (though indirectly) that the institution would be extremely relevant with a great scope provided the same is revitalized and strengthened.

Numerous steps needed to be taken²⁸ to revitalize the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* are analyzed and concluded by summarising hereunder.

I. Appointments and Merits of the candidates

Random selection through political patronage is often seen in appointment of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* which needs to be discarded²⁹. Appropriate Guideline and eligibility criteria for their appointment should be introduced besides delinking it totally from politics. Selection/appointment should be done purely on merit basis in free and fair manner by checking eligibility of the candidates. Moreover, the *Gaon Bura/Buri* number should be downsized by skipping appointments and applying other suitable methods to maintain an appropriate and proportionate³⁰ ratio.

Qualities such as social-mindedness and conversance in the customs, traditions, customary laws, social practices and oratory skill and quality should be given a top priority. Experience, skill, ability and impartiality in arbitration, deliberation and disposal of the local cases should be counted as one of the most important merits for selection as *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Educational qualification, say matriculation as minimum, should be made compulsory for a candidate, taking a care that a *Gaon Bura/Buri* is able to do at-least a minimum of simple drafting.³¹ Education and literacy would help the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to attend and pursue the official works relating to their functioning and for translation/interpretation jobs. Most importantly, at-least one or two *Head Gaon Buras* in each village should have a writing competency besides efficiency to pursue their official works on behalf of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Intellectual calibre and genuine interest in social and development services and activities should be considered as an edge in case of tie in the merits of the candidates. Multi-lingual (including English and dialect³²) fluency, public speech skill and its quality and knowledge about the common laws like CrPC/CPC/IPC may be considered as another such edge.

²⁸suggested by 83.18 percent of the total respondents.

²⁹by giving special encouragements to the meritorious persons (to be given by all stakeholders) to make them interested to become a *Gaon Bura/Buri*. Because, these individuals generally remain averse to getting the appointment simply because they do not like to chase after political leaders primarily represented by local MLA to please them by blindly supporting them in getting election thereby becoming their yes man/woman subsequently also.

³⁰to population of the concerned clan/village or village division.

³¹e.g. writing a simple complaint letter.

³²of the neighbouring Nyishi tribe.

Once appointed a person holds the power of *Gaon Bura/Buri/Head Gaon Buras* till his/her last breathe creating a problem for the institution. Hence, say lower age limit of 30 years, upper of 50 and retirement age of 70 should be prescribed. The inactive and old-aged, deadwood and similar other unfit, even habitual non-performing *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be retired by formulating a suitable guideline and modality; of-course this retirement should be effected only by granting full and permanent family pension including old age social security assistance. Some respondents have suggested for 5 years or so tenure system for the *Gaon Buras/Buris* which might be duly considered, debated and deliberated amongst the stakeholders.

Head Gaon Buris (female Village Authority) also should be appointed now onwards for effectiveness and representation³³. *Head Gaon Buras/Buris* should be selected on merit-cum-sincerity basis; should not be appointed directly. An emphasis should be given that appointment of any category of the village authority is done when direct IAS' are in Deputy Commissioner's chair position so that s/he effectively deals with the political pressures unless a case for appointment is an exceptional one. Meritorious newly-retired government employees may also make an efficient *Gaon Buras/Buris*. A care may be taken that persons holding multiples positions are avoided for appointment unless the same is done, under exceptional case or, for exceptional merit. However, Interview-cum-clan-cum-village (as community) selection normally is considered as the best one.

To realise the above objective of appointment, an independent and competent board by designation (let us say consisting of DC, SP, ZPM and like) should be constituted to conduct viva-voce interview to test the candidates transparently on all of the above-mentioned merits.

II. Education, awareness and training

The *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be educated about their roles, power, functions and responsibility through proper induction training³⁴ and at regular intervals subsequently. Moreover, awareness and motivational programs (campaigns) of similar nature may be organised at a regular interval amongst the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, the youths and the villagers with an especial emphasis to imbibe the awareness about importance of the *Gaon Bura/Buri* institution and the

³³ It may be noted that comparatively a big Mwdang Tage village has no *Gaon Buri*.

³⁴ to be given immediately after appointments.

customary laws and social practices amongst the young generations. Because, the present and future unemployed educated youths can be fruitfully organised as the *Gaon Buras/Buris*³⁵ on the basis of their good reputation, character, antecedents and other necessary traits.

The experts should give training to the judicial and the police officers about the customary laws (after codification and till then after its documentation) besides conducting interaction amongst all concerned functionaries including the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and other stakeholders. Motivational training to imbibe the self-respect and self-dignity amongst the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may also be given by a prominent but competent expert. Additionally, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may be taken to legal awareness and exposure Tours annually to other civilised and suitable places to broaden their knowledge and outlooks on justice delivery practices and its system. Additionally, protection to their power, functions³⁶ and institution as a whole should be given by the competent authorities.

III. Dispute settlements

Role of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in local disputes/cases would be extremely useful as they are quite well abreast of the local needs and problems. Even, there is a Supreme Court direction for settling the local disputes through mediations and arbitrations. The institution should be activated by entitling and providing full powers and authority to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* besides giving protection to the authorised powers and its functions in order that they effectively settle cases and disputes of non-heinous nature and other local problems. To make the things proper, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be bestowed with tangible, robust and autonomous status of powers necessarily by amending the AFR, 1945³⁷ to suit the present requirements besides suitably modifying the newly arranged/introduced judicial set up in the state (thereby complying with Order and direction of Itanagar Permanent Bench Guwahati High Court in this regard)³⁸. In

³⁵which would ameliorate the pangs of increasing number of unemployment amongst the educated youths besides somehow utilizing their talents from getting wasted.

³⁶let us say, the administration should give protection to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* from any encroachment (or undermining) to their powers and functions by any agency, corner or group.

³⁷Which has become an obsolete law with many outdated provisions e.g. a fine of Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred) only [which was Rs. 50/- (Rupees fifty) only till 2005 amendment] can be imposed to an offender which cannot be treated as adequate one at all today.

³⁸The amendment should make the powers of *Gaon Buras/Buris* modified ones and fully functional and operational besides making the cases decided by them duly recognisable as appeal/refer judicial cases in the higher courts if they come to them (only) after due certification by the *Gaon Buras/Buris*; thus

this amendment, among others, their functioning powers/charter of duties needs to be amended and redefined³⁹ besides clearly incorporating a provision for appeal to the higher level courts⁴⁰ against their decisions. Thus, after the amendment, all local cases of non-heinous nature would be tried and settled first only at *Gaon Buras/Buris* court and (only) after their due certification the same would be eligible and recognised at the higher courts as appeal or referred ones⁴¹.

Cases having socio-traditional bearing including *Mithun*, forest and other land and its boundary disputes are necessary to be settled at the *Gaon Bura/Buri* level court only, unless appealed against it. Such cases can be appropriately, effectively and quickly settled and disposed off by the *Gaon Buras/Buris* because they usually know the real owners and how to settle them too whereas in formal courts such cases mostly get delayed and keep pending. However, the olden justice delivery system should be made more presentable by taking some necessary steps e.g. by modifying the customary laws and other social practices or so to make it more suitable to the present requirements besides discarding political interference in the system.

Some of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may be declared as special police officers to perform some police duties especially in the interior areas and in certain special situations. The police on its part should not directly come to the villages to apprehend/arrest an accused without consulting the *Gaon Buras/Buris*; unless the accused is declared offender by the court of law. On the other hand, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should continue effectively to help the institutions of Criminal Justice System by assisting the courts and the police in crime investigation and should also improve themselves as first judge and police in their respective areas. However, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are the first to respond and settle (or at-least suggest in) any major or minor case in their respective localities till now.

devolving adequate, robust and autonomous powers to them. In the new arrangement, the local cases coming directly to the higher courts would not be accepted by them and will be sent back to the court of *Gaon Buras/Buris* instead. In this arrangement, the *Gaon Bura/Buri* court will act as lowest court in the state's newly introduced, integrated judiciary with Supreme Court at the apex in the country. Meanwhile, if requested the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should mandatorily issue the certificate for appeal/refer.

³⁹it would enable the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to know their roles precisely and confine the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, the panchayats, the formal judiciary and the district administrative officers all to their respective jurisdictions.

⁴⁰including higher level *Gaon Bura/Buri* court/courts.

⁴¹Hence, the local cases would not be accepted if directly brought to the higher courts and the same would be accepted there, only if those come in the form of refer or appeal.

IV. Facilities

Honorarium of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be enhanced from time to time and paid monthly and regularly so as, to make the *Gaon Buris/Buris* feel themselves as an inseparable part of the government and, to enable them to afford to function, and play their role, effectively. Some kind of financial power like taxation and penalty should be vested upon them and their verdicts/decisions be made legally binding and enforceable through the courts and the police like those of formal courts besides making fixed annual grants for use in their functioning. On the other hand, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* funds should be carefully maintained to meet any emergency situation successfully.

Besides, giving them better remuneration and other incentives for the good performance, their personal profile/records should be carefully maintained by the officers of the concerned department. There should be a committee⁴² to enforce the *Gaon Bura/Buri* Council's decisions, and a branch officer either an EAC (Extra Assistant Commissioner) or a CO (Circle Officer) should be deputed to assist the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in their functioning and its affairs. Moreover, the functioning powers of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and *Head Gaon Buras/Buris* should be clearly demarcated so that there is no confusion and duplicity in their roles (in functioning). However, meeting of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be called at-least once a month and their attendance taken to assess their performances for which a suitable modality and its format may be devised. Higher authority should take care that concerned DC and SP too cooperate and protect the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in the exercise of their power and functions in every way possible.

As demanded by the *Gaon Buras/Buris* from time to time⁴³ certain other facilities are equally necessary for them. Free electricity facility should be given to them because case settlements generally take place in the late evening and TA/DA should be entitled and granted to them during long distance duties for conference and other meetings. Free LL phone should be provided at-least to each *Head Gaon Bura* for quick communication to the police in case of serious crimes/incidents and other emergencies. Their Red coats should be replaced timely and torch light and rainproof shoe may also be needed. Climate-appropriate dresses⁴⁴ should be provided now and replaced timely too besides provision of conveyance (vehicle) for transportation purposes.

⁴²consisting of competent *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

⁴³through their associations

⁴⁴At present their only dress is red blanket coat which is suitable to wear in winter season only.

Next, salaried regular secretarial staff is an urgent and important necessity. Some intelligent, active and smart preferably an educated informer-cum-messenger of young age is needed for them to carry and deliver any information, notice or message especially relating to any emergency case/situation within due time. Over and above, a separate departmental office should be constructed and established for the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and some officers recruited and posted to the department to assist Deputy Commissioner to control, regulate, mobilize and assist the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in their duties and functioning.

V. Other points

A tendency of the villagers including the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to migrate to urban areas should be curtailed. Strict action should be taken against the *Gaon Buras/Buris* who fail in their duties/responsibility or misuse their position. In this context, it is especially seen during elections that some *Gaon Buras/Buris* indulge in active politics thereby getting their integrity doubted and complaints have been made in this regard. For any serious lapse, fault or corruption suitable necessary action must be initiated by the competent authority in consultation with the local villagers as and when necessary⁴⁵. On the other hand, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may be encouraged to act as vigilance/pressure group for various suitable purposes. They should also be encouraged to maintain unity and integrity; beside it, occasional consultation should be made and advice taken by new, inexperienced and younger *Gaon Buras/Buris* from the elderly and the old-aged *Gaon Buras/Buris*⁴⁶ as and when needed to share their experience and wisdom. Furthermore, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* institution should function as per the requirements of the changing modernized society understanding the current situation of their respective locality/village/area.

District administration on its part should, rely more on the *Gaon Buras/Buris* by taking their services more and, call for regular meeting and interaction at a regular interval both towards effectively, maintaining law and order and, settling disputes in the villages and to carry out any government policy or program. Aside this, genuine grievances and problems of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* gathered on the basis of their experience at ground level should be properly

⁴⁵However, a relevant Government guideline exists as regards this but it should be improvised and sincerely implemented.

⁴⁶who may, no more be physically and/or even mentally active to participate in their functioning.

heard and remedy given⁴⁷. Over and above, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* themselves should be assertive on their roles, responsibility and functions to revitalize and strengthen their institution by effectively using their associations at various levels for general welfare of the society.

⁴⁷by the competent authority.

Chapter V

Conclusion

In the absence of any formal law the people of the territory, now Arunachal Pradesh, governed themselves since time immemorial with the help of customs, customary laws, traditions and their common sense. They devised their own traditional methods of policing and quick justice was delivered to the wronged person as per the best of their knowledge and understanding of the situational complexities and judgment. In the process of delivery of justice, very often, 'guidance' of supernatural powers is sought and invoked.

The territory (Arunachal Pradesh) remained a mere geographical entity not being administered by any outside authority including British India till 1914. In this year a Notification was issued by the Government of India which identified the territory as an administrative unit. It was to be administered by the Governor of Assam, exclusive of the legislative control, either as special responsibility or in his discretion, till the areas attained the status of a Union Territory in 1972.

Even with the constitution of India coming into force, he governed these areas as the agent of the President as provided for by paragraph 18 of the Sixth Schedule. Under the Government of India Act, 1915-19, the Governor administered these areas as 'backward tracts' wherein he had a special responsibility to protect the interests of the backward classes. By the Government of India Act, 1935, he was vested with such powers to be exercised in his discretion, and the areas were classified as 'excluded areas'. It can, therefore, be said that the Rules and Regulations issued in 1914, 1937, and 1945 by the British India Government furnished the constitutional basis for administration of justice in the territories, now included in Arunachal Pradesh.

The centuries old judicial system/practice in the territories was given recognition through the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. This Regulation under Rule 3 provided that Criminal and Civil Justice shall be administered in the districts by the Political Officers (POs), Assistant Political Officers (APOs) and village authorities whose position has now been taken over by DCs (Deputy Commissioners), ADCs (Additional Deputy Commissioners) and village authorities consisting of the *Gaon Bura(s)*.

These powers of administration are vested vide section 15 and 36 of Regulation I of 1945 as amended by Regulation 7 of 1965. Appeals in both the cases from the Court of Village Authority could go to the Courts of Assistant Political Officer, Political Officer, Guwahati High Court, Governor (as administrative head of the territory), Supreme Court up-to President of India in order of hierarchy. Deputy Commissioner was invested with the powers of a District and Sessions Judge and the Assistant Commissioner with those of a magistrate of the First or the Second Class. So the Deputy Commissioner tried cases triable by Sessions Court, while the magistrates tried other cases according to their powers. In sum, the machinery of administration of justice in districts of Arunachal Pradesh till 2013 was a two-tier structure, wherein the executive and the judiciary have been rolled into one; the upper tier being formed by the Deputy Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner (subsequently replaced by ADC) and the lower tier formed by the village authority.

Like other tribal communities, the Apatanis used to govern themselves traditionally through the Council of Elders, called *Buliang*. According to mythological literature the institution of *Buliang* exists since the very origin of society. *Buliangs* basically are the representatives of the clans, who in their plurality constitute a kind of village government. Generally, the *Buliangs* are the men of character and ability, wealth and status or high social standing. They are usually proficient in customs, traditions, customary laws and oratorical skill. One of the major functions of *Buliang* is politico-judicial in nature; besides socio-religious ones. It is the *Buliang* who uphold peace, harmony and social solidarity, expressing the collective will of the community. They might allow minor disputes to run its course, but ultimately it is they who restore the communal harmony.

After the appointment of Village Authorities (the *Gaon Bura/s*) around 1945, the judicial and administrative functions hitherto performed by the *Buliang* have been taken over by the former. Now, the role of the *Buliangs* is mostly confined to ceremonial/ritualistic functions which are still relevant for the society. It is reported that first batch of *Gaon Buras* were appointed during 1944-45 by Dr. Haimendorf, who was the Special Officer of the then Subansiri Division. Currently, there are about 9,814 *Gaon Buras* (including Head *Gaon Buras* and 186 *Gaon Buris* (female *Gaon Buras*) in the state. Lower Subansiri district has 183 HGBs,

471 GBs and 66 *Gaon Buris*. In Ziro circle of the district, there are about 87 HGBs, 164 GBs and 22 *Gaon Buris*, who are all Apatani.

The *Gaon Buras* so constituted under the 1945 Regulation as Village Authorities act like a bridge between the public and the law enforcing agencies. As the representatives of the District Administration they are required to come forward to assist the Administration and Police whenever situation arises. The *Gaon Buras* are responsible for all the law and order related duties in the village. They owe their position and importance to the Government and are bound by government instructions issued from time to time. The *Gaon Buras* are to make the people obey the orders of the Government. They remain in the office so long as they enjoy the confidence of its appointing authority or of the people. The *Gaon Buras* remained the backbone of the district administration during NEFA days. They brought people closer to the administration and vice-versa, thereby facilitating the growth of the administration.

The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 was introduced to ensure that a vast majority of disputes and cases, both civil and criminal were adjudicated in accordance with the prevailing codes of the tribal communities. The Regulation empowered the village authorities to handle the social, cultural and legal affairs at the village level with great degree of freedom. But the Regulation does not clearly specify the structure of the village authorities. The *Gaon Buras* were promoted to the office of Head *Gaon Buras* and Assistant Head *Gaon Buras* on merit-cum-seniority basis although initially these posts did not exist. However, the post of Assistant Head *Gaon Buras* was abolished later.

Another milestone in the administration of justice is the appointment of female Village Authority called *Gaon Buris* under the amended 1945 Regulation. This has infused certain democratic elements in the institution of *Gaon Bura*. The *Gaon Buras* as Village Authorities have been appointed generally from amongst the members of the traditional Village councils in other tribes but it was not necessarily in the case of the Apatanis since inception to date. Mostly non-*Buliangs* have been appointed as the *Gaon Bura*.

The 1945 Regulation divides offences into two categories- heinous and non-heinous. The crimes of non-heinous nature, such as Theft, including theft in a building; Mischief not being mischief by fire or any explosive substance; Simple hurt; Criminal trespass or house

trespass; and Assault or using criminal force were allowed to be tried by the village authorities. The heinous offences were tried by the Assistant Political Officer and the Political Officer, according to their respective powers. The British authorities were strict with regard to the abolition of slavery and blood-revenge and any offences against the security of the State. They put down with heavy hand any uprising or disloyalty or sedition. The Village Authorities were also allowed to perform the police duty of apprehending culprits or suspected ones within their respective village jurisdiction. A unique provision of the 1945 Regulation is that no pleader is to appear in any case before village authority and written records of the proceeding of the trial are not required to be kept. Though the Village Authorities have unlimited powers in the matter of disposal of civil cases, the law provides that they decide only such disputes where both the parties are indigenous tribal.

The *Gaon Buras/Buris* were constituted as Village Authorities under the 1945 Regulation, so that they settle disputes thereby maintaining peace, tranquility and harmony in their respective jurisdictions besides maintaining law and order. They are also vested with developmental and (ordinary duties of) police powers/responsibilities and functions. The powers/responsibilities and functions entitled and entrusted to them have been geared towards developments and social justice and changes besides towards administrative and political advancement. With the increasing need for, developments and, transaction of government businesses in local areas in the State, their roles became increasingly significant which acted as catalyst for development, dispute settlements and law and order maintenance. For any dispute the villagers came to the *Gaon Buras* for settlement as the latter was directly under District Administration. They were needed for forwarding of the villagers' appeals and petitions to the government for, arrest of the offenders and, other redresses/remedies.

Apart from the *Gaon Buras*, Political Interpreters (*Katokis*) have also been employed by the District Administration for maintaining cordial relations between the villagers and the Administration. Duties of the *Katokis* are basically to translate the language of the villagers in Assamese or Hindi to the administrative, judicial and other non-local government officers besides acting as facilitator in case settlement by the *Gaon Buras*. The *Katokis* played important roles in the administration of justice by assisting the members of the village authorities with advice and guidance. The Deputy Commissioners/Assistant Commissioners often deputed

them to help the village authorities in their deliberations. Besides above matters, the *Gaon Buras* and *Katokis* assisted the government to implement any of its decisions and the government officials to smoothly perform their duties at local levels. In due course of time, the *Gaon Buras* and *Katokis* emerged as dominant leaders of their respective societies and enjoyed a considerable amount of influence and position.

Even with the introduction of modern participatory political institutions, the institution of *Gaon Bura* continues to function as an effective instrument in management of village affairs alongside the modern institutions. The *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* which is inclusive of the Head *Gaon Buras* have been useful limbs of any Government program, policy, project or scheme in rural Arunachal Pradesh. They continue to assist the law enforcement agencies in crime control, detection and prevention besides in maintenance of law and order. The PRIs representatives are interested mainly in developmental activities and money matters and are least bothered about this. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* compulsorily attend and assist the district administration on national and state occasions like Independence, Republic and Statehood days and during any VIP/Dignitary visits in the villages. Now also, they settle many of the civil disputes and petty criminal matters at the local levels. However, disputes are usually discussed in the gatherings and attendance of the best informed *Buliangs*, *Gaon Buras*, panchayat members, kiths and kin and other village elders (all usually known for their knowledge and skill) who examine the facts and circumstances and decide a case by forming a body or a 'council' of elders and the aim is to achieve consensus without putting any proposal to the vote. All these dignitaries apart from the official *Gaon Buras* can be christened as un-official *Gaon Buras* for their role.

The idea of 'judgment' in the legal sense is absent in the traditional methods of adjudication of justice. These elders as mentioned above are normally experts on the customary laws who are called to a meeting to settle disputes, constitute what may be said to be a body of arbitrators and not judges. Their function is to weigh the gravity of the commissions of the offence i.e. to find out the value of the damage and to work out a formula to repair it. This formula is however not compulsive. The disputants have the right to option, accepting or rejecting the formula, though in actual practice the decision is generally accepted for two reasons: One, the mediators/arbitrators try their best to hit on a formula that is acceptable to both;

again it is not difficult as the deliberations are always in the presence of the disputants, who freely express their reaction. Other, it is expedient to avoid the good will of the society and consequent inconvenience (negative force). However, the participation of the *Gaon Buras* in any deliberations/decisions is considered necessary or suitable to authenticate the same, even today; which is a good practice.

The *Kebang/Buliang* .i.e. the traditional/tribal village councils are not the same as “Village Authorities” which are always confused with by the people. The former institution exists in the tribal societies from time immemorial which are not created by any statute and derive their sanction from customs, practices etc. whereas the village authorities are statutory bodies appointed by the Deputy Commissioners in exercise of powers under Sub Rule (1) of Section 5 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation I of 1945) and the corresponding clauses of earlier Rules for Administration of Justice.

The authority and respect this institution commanded have, however, decreased to a great extent because of combined factors like spread of urbanization, western education, elitist attitude and improvement in financial and economic conditions amongst the people, introduction of statutory Panchayati Raj system, party and electoral politics, etc. It has lost its earlier traditional respect and command it had over the people. Earlier *Gaon Buras* who were lesser in number were more meritorious and were influential and acceptable to the community. One of the main causes for the erosion of the efficacy of this institution is the selection and appointment of the *Gaon Buras* on political considerations. Whereas, traditionally *Gaon Buras* were selected and appointed on the basis of personal influence, wealth and status, the knowledge of customary laws and social practices, oratorical skill and experience in the system, the later mode of appointment has been tainted by political interference. There has been interference of the elected Panchayati Raj members and political party leaders in the justice delivery system, leading to the degeneration of the *Gaon Bura* system. Besides, acceptance of the more convenient substantive laws based on IPC, CPC and CrPC and increasing tendency of the people to take or drag all cases to courts above village authority are also responsible for the decay. It is also often found that, people with political and monetary clouts appeal to the higher courts against the decisions of the *Gaon Buras*, the traditional village legal authority. Since the institution is decaying fast, its relevance and scope necessitate a revisit.

FINDINGS

The study reflects low level of education and lack of exposure of the sampled *Gaon Buras*. They also lack clarity on their powers, responsibilities, functions and role besides, their political affiliations and activities. It shows that huge majority of the sampled *Gaon Buras/Buris* and Head *Gaon Buras* do not read the newspaper and more than half of the position holders do not either listen to radio or watch television. The study further shows that large majority of the sampled *Gaon Buras/Buris* and Head *Gaon Buras* participate in political activities and are members of one or other political party. As per the study about 91 percent of the *Gaon Buras*, all *Gaon Buris* and about 83 percent Head *Gaon Buras* sampled do not have any knowledge about IPC, CrPC or CPC. Interestingly, about 96 percent *Gaon Buras*, all *Gaon Buris* and 22 out of 23 Head *Gaon Buras*, sampled are just not aware of the provisions of Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945.

The study finds that the functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris* have gradually decreased on all fronts, as responded by the opinions of 72.73 per cent of the sampled respondents. Among the respondents, 56.4 % sampled respondents has viewed that many changes have taken place on the functions of the *Gaon Buras*. The study shows that, huge majority of 84.09 percent sampled (consisting of various categories of) respondents believe 'attending political functions' as a major function undertaken at present by the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945, village authorities are not mandated to participate in political activities. The study also finds, that settlement of disputes (although mentioned by 76.36 % sampled respondents) and maintenance of law and order (although mentioned by 64.09 % of the respondents) as other major functions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are very rare and fading and, that their role in socio-religious/ceremonial functions during *Myoko* and other sacred ceremonial festivals or occasions like *Murung*, *Subu* and *Dree* (although mentioned by 48.18 percent of the respondents) as another major function of the same) is also played to a very limited extent. In addition to above functions, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* perform insignificant ones like constructing VIP welcome gates, and acting as ready audiences, in favour of the VIPs functions and, to their speeches respectively according to 35.91 % sampled respondents.

Introduction of the Panchayati Raj in the State has posed a serious challenge to the importance and authority of the *Gaon Buras*. Prior to advent of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in 1969 and formation of responsible government in 1978, the *Gaon Buras* were given the responsibilities of all kinds of developmental activities under the supervision of District administration and other government departments. All disputes including *yelu* were effectively settled by them; or their assistance was sought by the district administrative courts to do the same. If directly brought to them, very often the local cases were invariably sent/referred back by the district administrative courts to the *Gaon Buras* level for, arbitration through the customary laws and, compromise for its settlement.

The advent and effective intervention of regular Police and modern (formal) judiciary system accompanying the establishment of administration wide across the State has diminished the role and functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. With the set up of the police departments in 1972, a system was gradually built up and the police have been receiving increasing number of complaints and case registrations although it is found that the justice delivered is slow and delayed.

Criminal cases which were mostly solved earlier by the *Gaon Buras* have completely been taken over by the (regular) Judiciary, the proliferating practicing lawyers, Police and their interventions who deal through IPC, CrPC and CPC never sending/referring them back to the *Gaon Buras* level. Besides the lawyers, the police and the judicial (administrative) magistrates were found to be very interested to deal with the increasing number of the cases because they get graft and bribery as additional income and importance; they even meddle in the justice delivery system by playing selfish politics. Apart from these, the study finds that major reasons for decrease in the powers and position of *Gaon Buras/Buris* are 'Political interference' as opined by 65.45 % respondents, 'Availability of alternative dispute settlement means' according to 66.36 % respondents and 'Interference of PRIs leaders' as per opinions of the 49.09 % sampled respondents. The *Gaon Buras* rendered active social services without honorarium by contributing eggs, local wines, cucumbers, bamboos, canes, physical labours, *jikhw tarws*, etc. during VIP/dignitary visits (and during Dree and other festivals/occasions) showing a great hospitality to them besides constructing welcome gate and doing other decoration works during the same. More importantly, they helped out the government and the Apatani Youth Association

(AYA) to widen the roads and lanes in the Apatani valley and to open the source of water supply for their district headquarters town and other places.

Besides the above-mentioned reasons of the decrease in the power and position of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, some other important factors are mentioned below. Large scale appointments of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* have been made on the basis of political connections and personal influences instead of the social standing and merits of the persons concerned. This has dwindled and diluted their powers and functions and its quality and has weakened, defiled and belittled the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* as a whole; aggravated by way of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*'s self-weaknesses. Excessive and disproportionate *Gaon Buras/Buris* numbers - mostly unfit ones appointed on political considerations and disunity, dissension and division prevalent amongst them have hampered the effectiveness, functioning and decisions of the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Besides, the illiterate *Gaon Buras/Buris* are generally ignorant about their powers, functions and responsibilities and if aware of it they do not assert/update themselves on it. Neither the government nor other stakeholders in general are interested to encourage, strengthen and protect the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in the exercise of their powers and functions aggravated by their own apathy to do them. More often than not, the persons with money power and political clout remain egoistic and adamant to take or drag their local cases to other (regular) courts often with an insulting/humiliating attitude.

Due to urbanisation, modernisation, education and resultant awareness of Constitutional Law the people today look down upon and belittle the customary laws, the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* and their decisions. Since young people now are well-versed and educationally qualified accompanied by rise in literacy rate amongst the common men they tend to give less respect or compliance to the aged and illiterate *Gaon Buras/Buris*. These half-backed western education-influenced younger generations have belittled and undermined the *Gaon Buras/Buris* by criticising them in arbitrary/unrestrained manner for they seem to them to be undertaking only insignificant functions. Lack of communication skills in Hindi and English act as another handicap and the old-aged *Gaon Buras* are not able to play active role because of physical and in some cases mental limitations. Many *Gaon Buris/Buris* do not maintain self respect and dignity. A majority of the *Gaon Buras* have the drinking habit and many of them very often make improper and undignified use of their Red coats with medal. Most of the Head /*Gaon*

Buras/Buris are interested mainly, in honorarium these days and, to carry out less and insignificant functions only and their decisions and deliberations have been often coloured by partialities. Moreover, there is lack of strong leadership amongst the *Gaon Buras/Buris*; neither any incentive is given to them for doing better social works. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* lack any regular messenger required, to handle emergency/urgent situations and, for various other purposes.

According to long-prevailing Government guidelines of the *Gaon Bura* appointment generally recommended for practice, the influential person with character and integrity is selected in an open meeting of the village people in presence of an Administrative officer which is recommended to DC (Deputy Commissioner) for formal appointment. Besides statesmanship and integrity and character the persons having (i) knowledge about customary laws and social practices, (ii) oratory skill & (iii) wealth and status in this order were counted for appointment in the earlier days sufficiently fulfilling the requirements of the above guidelines. Besides counting the above factors, the persons interested in developmental and social activities were considered for the selection during those days. The villagers, in-fact, were very competitive to offer themselves for the *Gaon Bura* appointments during those days, ready to give social and development-oriented services and contributions. During an intervening period in the 70s those who donated a *Mithun*, a cow, or a goat for sacrifice/slaughter during Dree festival were offered the post of *Gaon Bura* which even was not a bad practice; because it shows their interest for social service or contribution. Alternatively, the community, village or clan also selected/nominated a person of good reputation to be a *Gaon Bura/Buri*. But a different instance found these days is that the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are nominated to the positions simply, as inheritance and, as representation (to own clan). Hence, the study finds sadly that ‘political connection’ and ‘personal influence’ carries the greatest weight in the appointments of *Gaon Buras/Buris* which is a cause of great dissatisfaction to the people.

The *Gaon Buris* are not able to perform their duties efficiently as opined by about 19 per cent sampled respondents since they have limitations in the sense that they cannot perform as much as the *Gaon Buras* due to certain compelling reasons, for example, they remain overburdened with domestic chores. Some of them are performing very well in the discharge of their limited bona-fide functions allotted; not so, in the case of some inefficient *Gaon Buris*.

Next, the study finds that the acts of Panchayat Raj Institution representatives have been undermining the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* as opined by about 50 per cent sampled respondents. Before the advent of PRIs, the institution of *Gaon Bura* was very effective in helping out the government administration to deal with all kinds of social and developmental problems/issues. Such effectiveness is no more seen because of interference of the PRI members and incumbent local MLA. Officially or unofficially; directly or indirectly the PRIs members pressurise or influence the villagers in one way or other in all of their affairs including resolution of the individual, family, clan and village level disputes.

On the other hand, as opined by about 30 per cent sampled respondents it is found that the Panchayat members and the *Gaon Buras/Buris* both are equally suited for development of the villages in their own respective ways - in certain cases it is the Panchayat members and in certain others, the *Gaon Buras/Buris*.

Then, based on belief of around 50 percent of the sampled respondents the study finds that the common people have very low degree of faith on the *Gaon Buras/Buris* (though not on their institution) at present which reflects their feeling of unworthiness of these functionaries to them.

The people rely and repose their faith more on mainstream judiciary now than on the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* and un-codified (undocumented to a great extent) customary laws. Advent of 'alternative dispute settlement means' mainly represented by the formal judicial courts and procedures, the police department and the proliferating lawyers basically has led to decline in the importance and role of the institution. Law Court is established now even at district headquarters after the separation of Judiciary in 2013 and there is sufficient availability of legal experts everywhere in the society. All cases brought in formal courts cannot be referred/sent back for, arbitration and, compromise at the *Gaon Buras/Buris* level. In-fact, effective intervention of the formal judiciary (especially district administrative courts up-to 2013) especially after separation of Judiciary, by establishing proper Criminal Justice System and new Law Courts in the districts (and at the State level), have given almost a final blow to the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. The people these days have more satisfaction for the police, jail and other regular punishments and the *Gaon Buras/Buris* lack such machineries, for example, themselves cannot guard an offender detained under their (ordinary duties of) police power.

Besides, the community, village and clan levels disputes have undermined the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* thus adversely affecting their decision making and functioning allowing the individuals to opt for other (formal) courts for all such reasons.

In nutshell, urbanisation, economic, social, political, educational and scientific and technological changes, developments and advancement in the society besides legal, judicial and police ones have declined the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* beyond recognition. It is ultimately realised that the ‘political parties, elections, political leaders and their politics and politicking’ is the primary factor to vitiate the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*, given a further blow by advent of the ‘alternative dispute settlement means’ as mentioned above. Today, the Apatani people especially the young generations are not interested to become a *Gaon Bura/Buri* because of the diminutive importance they get.

SUGGESTIONS

The institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* needing revitalization (according to the opinions of about 84 percent of sampled respondents) to ensure its relevance and scope are highlighted below as the humble policy recommendation. In-fact, this view held by the respondents confirms that the institution would be really relevant of-course if revitalized.

Although the people generally have low opinions on relevance of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* today besides having low degree of faith (held by about 50 percent sampled respondents) on its members (though not on the institution), it would be extremely relevant (as culled from converge able views of about 40 percent sampled respondents) if revitalized by conferring it full opportunity, scope, autonomy and protection to play itself [by tangibly investing it full, autonomous and recognised judicial and (ordinary duties of) police powers and its functions/charter of duties] besides administrative one.

Since the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are appointed from amongst the permanent residents of the villages they are fully acquainted with the needs, circumstances, problems and cases of the villages and its residents. Hence, all disputes, offences and crimes (civil or criminal both) at local levels except heinous ones like murder and rape can be appropriately/efficiently settled by the *Gaon Buras/Buris* without needing intervention from regular judiciary. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* are most suited to settle the local disputes having socio-traditional bearing including

Mithun and land, forest and its boundary disputes. They are usually efficient in deciding such disputes because, being local, wo/men and, old wo/men themselves they know, let us say, for example, the real owners of the mithuns and lands, forests, rivers and its topography and boundary properly. Police, the lawyers and Judges do not go to the field/spot to investigate such cases and do not have proper idea on them due to which these functionaries generally are inaccurate, inefficient and delayed in their judgements, decisions and settlements.

Besides their other functions, the *GAON BURIS* are most suited to deal with women-related cases, problems and issues in line of the State women police and the State Women Welfare Commission functionaries/members. Meritorious *Gaon Buras/Buris* can be engaged as detective and intelligence agents and as Police informers to assist the law-enforcement agencies. They can act as vigilant/pressure group against, misuse of the government/public developmental schemes and its funds and, other corruptions, or against any other noticeable misdoings, in their respective jurisdictions. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* are reservoir of valuable knowledge of the customary laws and the social practices and relevant traditions, customs and rituals. Hence, they are like a medium through which we can preserve these for, and transmit to, the posterity thereby giving impetus to the cultural and social heritage of the society. Being the village elders, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* can continue to play knowledgeable, efficient and valuable role in organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions, for example, during *Myoko* and other sacred ceremonial festivals like *Murung* and *Dree*. They would usefully continue to assist the polling teams in various ways during Parliamentary, Assembly and Panchayat elections. Next, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* would be needed for taking assistance by Government agencies to carry out any developmental, awareness and information provision campaigns, programs and its activities and in protection of wild life and relief and rescue operations during disasters/calamities.

The central government is increasingly giving emphasis on all-round developments of this border and strategic state. More so, Government of India is actively considering ambitious policy and program of Acting (earlier Looking) East through the North-East towards meeting the socio-economic and other developmental needs of the country in general and the North-East in particular. In this context also, the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* as agent of the government will always remain relevant and viable in ever-expanding welfare and developmental activities of the State. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* would always be needed for various

purposes, for example, as VIPs/Dignitaries visit arrangers and hospitality givers in such occasion by constructing welcome gate and doing other decoration works or like. Besides, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are needed to act as messenger of any information, notice or message issued from the government's/the district administration's side. They act as testimony to or witness of the land/property acquisition (Sale Deed) undertaken amongst the private parties and between a private party and the government. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* participate, and act as witness in, the sale deed, the money lending and borrowing agreement, the property and other will-making, the land distribution agreement, the land demarcation finalization/agreement, etc. in their villages.

In the traditional justice delivery system the accused remains an honorable member of the society and victim is compensated and restituted whereas in the modern justice system there is delay, more cost involved and the accused is not reformed in time. In the customary case settlements the compensation and/or restitution is paid directly to the victims. In the settlement of cases at village authority level, everybody in the villages knows others. The truths are easily exposed. *Nikung Dapo* was the guiding principles on the basis of which all kinds of litigation in Apatani society were resolved. We have witnessed a paradigm shift in the role of the customary authority with advent of modern polity, yet the modern laws is no substitute for *Nikung Dapo* in many respects, e.g., what laws says about catching of *Pwding* (Hair Knot) of an elder brother by a younger one while in a physical tussle? We find an answer in *Nikung Dapo*. Lastly, the biggest of the advantages is that the forum of *Gaon Buras/Buris* is simple, practical, informal, fair, inexpensive, speedy, accessible, convenient and accountable justice delivery mechanism available at the doorstep of the poor and other common people without legal technicalities and official formalities. Above all, the real strength of this tribal institution is that, in the matters of judgment pronouncement, it is the public opinion that largely counts.

To revitalize the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* certain important steps are needed to be taken (which were carefully gathered during the study) timely, for example, as laid down hereunder.

First and foremost, random selection through political patronage in appointments of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* needs to be discarded by divorcing the appointments totally from the politics. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* including Head *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be selected and appointed purely on merit basis in free, fair and transparent manner besides downsizing their existing numbers. Genuine interest in social and development services and its

activities and conversance in the customs, traditions, customary laws, social practices and oratory skill and quality of the candidates for the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be given a top priority in the selection/appointment. Experience, skill, ability and impartiality in arbitration, deliberation and disposal of the local cases should be counted as other important merits in the same. Intellectual calibre and knowledge about the common laws, namely, CrPC, CPC and IPC may be considered as their additional merits besides prescribing minimum educational qualification for the appointment. Minimum and maximum age limits for the same (appointment) besides the retirement age of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be fixed.

The inactive and old-aged, deadwood and similar other unfit, those who have become convict or lost moral turpitude and even habitual non-performing *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be compulsorily retired by formulating a suitable modality. Nor a *Gaon Bura/Buri* should be primary member of any political party and should not have moved out of the village and lives in some other place. Besides all this, in case of disputes referred to other panchayats for arbitration let us say by kiths and kin, the participation of at-least one *Gaon Bura* or *Buri* should be made compulsory to authenticate the deliberation and decision in the same to upkeep their importance.

Head *Gaon Buris*/female Village Authority also need to be appointed now onwards for the representation and effectiveness of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Meritorious unemployed educated youths may be organised as the *Gaon Buras/Buris* on the basis of their good reputation, character, antecedents and other necessary traits; which would ameliorate their pangs of unemployment besides somehow utilizing their talents from getting wasted. We can say, for the appointment of *Gaon Buras/Buris*, interview-cum-clan-cum-village (as community) selection normally may be considered as the best one. Over and above, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be educated about their role, powers, functions and responsibilities through proper induction and other trainings.

But, crucial step towards the revitalization [to duly and effectively activate the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* and make it extremely relevant and effective] would be through immediate amendment of the governing Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 with ineffective, inadequate and redundant provisions like, ‘a fine of Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred) only [which was Rs. 50/- (Rupees fifty) only till 2005 amendment] can be imposed to an offender’ which cannot be treated as adequate/sufficient, today and would not act as deterrent

to the criminals and rich people. Through this amendment, the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be entitled/invested/authorised with proper, adequate, effective, full, robust, recognised, redefined, delineated, operational, autonomous and protected functioning [judicial, (ordinary duties of) police and administrative] powers and its charter of duties thus suitably modifying the newly introduced judicial set up arranged in the state. This in turn would duly be in compliance with the Itanagar Permanent Bench Guwahati High Court's Order & direction in this regard & Government Notification after appointment of recent Judicial Officers in the State all done so as to suit the present/changing requirements. Besides, the olden justice delivery system should be made more presentable for now, for example, by modifying/reforming and modernising the customary laws and other social practices including those related to ceremonies and rituals.

Honorarium of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be enhanced from time to time and paid monthly and regularly. Some kind of financial power like taxation and penalty should be vested upon them. Besides giving them reward and other incentives for their better performance, their personal profile and performance records should be carefully maintained by concerned departmental officer. There should be a committee consisting of competent *Gaon Buras/Buris*] to enforce the *Gaon Buras/Buris*) Council's decisions, and a branch officer either an Extra Assistant Commissioner (EAC) or a Circle Officer (CO) to assist the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in their functioning and its affairs. Some of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may be declared as special police officers to perform certain police duties especially in the interior areas and in certain special situations. Next, meeting of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be called at-least once in six months, their attendance taken and performance in the every six months period assessed for which a suitable modality and its format may be devised.

Certain other facilities too are equally necessary for the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Free electricity and drinking water facilities, proper accommodation and TA/DA during long distance duties, one free Land Line phone at-least to each Head *Gaon Bura*, timely replacement of their Red coats and issue of two sets of climate-appropriate dresses should be provided or ensured to them. Besides, salaried regular secretarial staff is necessary for the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and some intelligent, young, active, smart and preferably educated informers-cum-messengers are needed to them. The government with the help of the villagers should construct a permanent, well-electrified building each for holding *Gaon Bura/Buri* council sessions in each village or its section. Non-maintenance of written record for future reference, amongst the *Gaon Buras/Buris*

creates some problem. Today is the day of records and therefore very few people believe or rely upon or obey a decision or verdict without a record. On the other hand, if any serious lapse, fault or corruption is committed in discharging their responsibilities/duties, if established, appropriate action must be taken against any *Gaon Bura/Buri*. The peer and the public review system at regular interval may be experimented upon purportedly to keep them on track and encourage them to perform better. Taking any alcohol drink, prior to, during and immediately after the deliberations in the *Mel* (Council sitting) should be prohibited. No government contract or supply work should be allowed to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to be undertaken.

On the other hand, the ideological perceptions of the Apatanis have changed tremendously because of urbanization, westernization and education. Due to the effect of new and progressive ideas the reverence to the customary laws is declining, which is adversely affecting the applicability and efficacy of the customary laws and the people are looking for more rational laws based on laws of natural justice and equity and hence they approach the magistrate's court, the police and other regular courts for settlement of their cases. Hence, the necessity of modification, modernization and reformation and its documentation and codification in favor of uniform code of customary law arises. At-least a customary law-guidebook is needed now for the purpose of trial by village authorities, offences may be defined according to the customary concepts and the punishments 'i.e. fine and compensation' laid down as per the scales prevailing among the tribes.

Moreover, the *Gaon Bura/Buri* system of traditional adjudication of justice through the customary laws has certain clear limitations. During elections when there is rift in villages on party lines, the village panchayats, the *Buliang(s)* and the *Gaon Buras/Buris* feel helpless. Only sight of the police gives the people some kind of solace. Now-a-days a common man feels that under these grave situations the police are the only remedy. In case of theft formerly it was easy to apprehend the culprit and recover the stolen articles. But now due to better means of transportation and communication and introduction of money based trade, it becomes very easy to dispose off the stolen items out of the region. Thus neither the thief can be apprehended nor the stolen goods recovered without the help of state-wide/nation-wide agencies. Therefore people within their heart believe in referring the theft cases to the police.

Coercive police power is more satisfying for the litigants. Many people are not satisfied with the compensation and restitution system but with the jail, physical and other

similar punishments. The Christian missionaries have been successful in planting a firm footing in Arunachal Pradesh. A large section of tribal population has embraced Christianity resulting in a tremendous social transformation. This section of population no longer believes in the customary laws and practices. In other words, the people in general feel more satisfaction with the state-based punishment rather than the compensation- and restitution-based traditional punishment. It would not be out of place to also mention here that the *Gaon Buras* now a day are too busy in development works, personal business and contracts and playing politics as because they earn money, position and status by doing so. Therefore they have developed a tendency to avoid their police and judicial roles which are time-taking and unrewarding.

The institutions which administer customary laws do not have any coercive powers. The offenders obey the verdict because of their dependence on the society, public opinion and for fear of loss of material benefits and social esteem. As it is evident from the trends of social change the dependence of the individuals on the society is diminishing. In case the offender is unscrupulous, stubborn and treacherous, he may neither bother about self-esteem nor public opinion. Thus under such circumstances these institutions may find it difficult to book the offender and punish him. The accused may try to use muscle or money power. Under these circumstances the aggrieved party feels totally disappointed. In fact the society in Arunachal Pradesh has out-grown the provisions of customary laws. The customary laws are almost silent regarding crimes against the viz.; smuggling, economic crimes, corruption, waging war against the State, disruptive activities etc.

Kidnapping of a girl for the purpose of marriage is an accepted norm in some tribe (including Apatani till very recently) but is vehemently opposed by others and Indian Civil Law. Likewise, of late women in the State have started demanding more social and political rights. The right to property, succession etc. being demanded by the women has necessitated modifications in the customary laws in more rational and internationally accepted laws. Now the trend is that the people report cases of rape to the Police because they are not satisfied with the customary way of justice in which a rapist is fined (or may be made to marry). This trend is obvious to be done and justified too. Apart from all this, the village authority cannot impose the penalty of imprisonment, nor does it apply the scale of fines laid down by the IPC.

Relevant to the context, following suggestions are made:

- (i) The customs which are in the spirit of “Law of natural justice, human right & dignity, and equity should be selected and a uniform code of Arunachal Pradesh be prepared through consensus”.
- (ii) All other customary laws which violate the above spirit may be termed as irrational and irrelevant.
- (iii) After these, the customary laws and courts should continue along with the formal courts established after separation of the judiciary.

In sum, Government formally recognized (1945) the customary laws followed by and large in Arunachal Tribal society since the ancient time; established the administrative courts system and the regular police institution department (1972); and inducted certain part of CrPC (1974) which was followed by inception of institution of the proliferating lawyers (and their advocacy). Then, the government further modified its policy and introduced full-fledged application of IPC, CrPC and CrPC laws (2013) which began to be enforced across the State. Put differently, the journey trajectory of the judiciary system in the State is the transition from the traditional village councils system to formal acceptance of the customary laws (1945); to introduction and its implementation of CrPC (1974) through the administrative courts system and its Police machinery; and ultimately almost all cases are now taken to the formal courts (2013 onwards) at various levels and its many forms including Supreme Court and Lok Adalat.

Next, this study’s one major realization is that the selfish (party and) electoral politics in the core has vitiated the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. The emergence of party politics in the state, where village is a part of it had weakened the sanctity, sensibility and dominance of the institution in the administration of justice. More importantly, the study is optimistic enough on the relevance and scope of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* if revitalized which can provide decentralized, efficient and effective, justice delivery services and, judicial self governance in rural Arunachal. Hence, the meager honoraria each paid to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* besides minimum other provisions are worth-affording by the State. Actually no system can be perfect with relation to time and varied circumstances whether it is customary or modern. If it were so, the scope of improvement will not be there. The traditional system of adjudication of justice (through the statutory and age-old *Gaon Buras* has sufficient relevance and scope for the benefit of the society and other stakeholders.

Hence, Arunachal Pradesh being a backward tribal area the traditional system of justice based on customs and customary laws should be continued alongside the Civil Courts and the Formal Laws like IPC, CPC and CrPC. In the traditional justice delivery system the accused remains an honorable member of the society and the victim is compensated; whereas in the modern system, justice is delayed; costly and the accused is not reformed in time. In-fact, the tribal system of justice supplements the Indian Penal Code system by awarding compensation to the aggrieved family, even in cases where the culprit was tried and imprisoned by DC/AC/ADC from the view point, it is not double punishment but it is supplementary to the verdict of DC/AC/ADC. As regards the procedure followed by the village authorities it seems generally satisfactory. Information to the parties is always given. No person is tried unheard. The trial is in open Darbar. Witnesses are examined. Records of examination are not required by the Rules to be kept, and they are not kept. But the judgment is written and a copy given to the accused. Besides for adjudication of justice, the *Gaon Bura/Buri* system would remain ever relevant and viable as catalyst of all-round developments through the functionaries remaining loyal and useful agents of the three-tier governments in the country. To do the long-pending revitalization by amending the 1945 Regulation, simply political will of the State government backed up by the public sentiment and support is wanting. Over and above, the study finds that giving either new or additional assignment/s to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* would not be appropriate at present because most of them are illiterate.

Meanwhile, all Apatani individuals, groups or organisations including the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, the *Supung Buliang* Council, the Apatani Cultural and Literary Society (ACLS) and the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) are affiliated to their Apex Council named *Tanw Supung Dukung*. It may continue to act as the Apex Council/Appellate Court to hear and settle, appeal/refer cases and, the cases having pan-Apatani connotation including inter-villages/tribes disputes. However, this point would vary in case of other tribes. Till amendment of the Regulation of 1945, the *Gaon Buras/Buris* across the State of Arunachal Pradesh may continue to function according to their best of understanding, common sense and wisdom discharging their responsibilities expected of, under the constitutional Regulation and, by the society at large by avoiding selfish politics, dissension or like.

**ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: A STUDY OF THE
GAON BURA AS A VILLAGE AUTHORITY OF THE APATANIS**

In fulfillment for award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted to Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh (Itanagar), Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: A STUDY OF THE GAON BURA AS A VILLAGE AUTHORITY OF THE APATANIS

Abstract

Introduction

Every society at large needs a specialized mechanism for social control and regulation. When the people (of now Arunachal Pradesh) were not under law (formal) they governed themselves with the help of the customs, customary laws, traditions and their common sense. They maintained peace through their own methods of policing and tried to deliver justice to the wronged person according to their best of knowledge, understanding and judgment of the situational complexities. Like other tribes the Apatanis governed themselves traditionally through council of wise elders called *Buliang*. The *Buliang* dispensed with any or every kinds of civil or criminal cases of any order or seriousness by applying the customary laws which prescribed punishments for various offences. With the appointment of the *Gaon Buras* the political-judicial and administrative functions hitherto performed by the *Buliang* have been taken over by the former. Now, the role and functions of the *Buliang* is limited to performance of socio-religious (ritualistic) functions during socio-religious ceremonial festivals like *Myoko* and *Murung* only.

The territory, which forms the present Arunachal Pradesh was not under any formal system of governance till a Notification was issued in 1914 by the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department. It stipulated that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 would extend to the hills inhabited or frequented by the frontier tribes. With the extension of the Regulation, the hill areas were separated from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur District of Assam, and as a result the North East Frontier Tracts were created. These Tracts, which evolved to become the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1954 and then Union Territory (with changed nomenclature Arunachal Pradesh) in 1972, were under the administrative and political control of the then Governor of Assam. On 20 February, 1987 Arunachal Pradesh attained the

status of full-fledged statehood vide Fifty-fifth Constitutional Amendment Act, 1986 making its people proud.

The British India administration did not intend to disturb the customary laws, traditions, customs, usages, conventions and social practices of the people of these Tracts. This was probably a reason that the existing traditional forms of village administration, which were carried through Village Councils, were allowed to function without much interference. With the consolidation of its position in Assam and the extension of its administrative jurisdiction in the hill areas, the British India Administration decidedly undertook certain interference in the ways of administration of justice prevalent among the tribal communities. Their intention was to regulate and control heinous crimes like murder, rape and slavery; crime against the state was never to be tolerated. Besides such reasons, the British India administration somewhat admired the traditional and customary laws and the social customs, usages, practices and conventions of the people of the North East Frontier Tracts and wanted to consolidate, amend and preserve them.

Hence, by consolidating and combining the earlier two set of Rules and Regulations (Administration of Justice) issued in 1914 (under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874) and 1937 (under the Government of India Act, 1935) into one, namely, the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945. These set of three Rules and Regulations issued in 1914, 1937, and 1945 by the British India Government furnished the constitutional basis for administration of justice in the territories, now included in Arunachal Pradesh.

As per the provisions of Sub Rule (1) of Rule 5 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945(Regulation No. 1 of 1945) and the corresponding clauses of earlier Rules for Administration of Justice, Village Authorities were constituted. For all practical purposes the Village Authorities so constituted were christened *Gaon Buras*. The village authorities were constituted to maintain peace and harmony; law and order under their jurisdiction. Henceforth, the village authorities came to be empowered to try both the civil and criminal cases within its jurisdiction according to customary laws and social practices of the village/tribal group concerned.

The *Gaon Burahs* so constituted under the 1945 Regulation as Village Authorities act like a bridge between the public and the law enforcing agencies. As the representatives of the District Administration they are required to come forward to assist the Administration and Police whenever situation arises. They owe their position and importance to the Government and are bound by government instructions issued from time to time. The *Gaon Buras* are to make the people obey the orders of the Government. They remain in the office so long as they enjoy the confidence of its appointing authority or of the people. The *Gaon Buras* remained a backbone of district administration during NEFA days. They brought people closer to the administration and vice-versa, thereby facilitating the growth of the administration. For any dispute the villagers came to the Gaon Buras for settlement for they were directly under the administration.

Even after India's independence, the Government of India followed the policy of that of the British (and allowed the 1945 Regulation to prevail in the territory). The Apatani community resides in the Ziro valley, the district headquarters of Lower Subansiri of Arunachal Pradesh. It is reported that first batch of *Gaon Buras* were appointed during 1944-45 by Dr. Haimendorf, who was the Special Officer of the then Subansiri Division. Currently, in Ziro circle of the district, there are about 87 HGBs, 164 GBs and 22 *Gaon Buris*, who are all Apatanis.

The Research Problem

The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945) was introduced to ensure that a vast majority of disputes and cases, both civil and criminal were adjudicated in accordance with the prevailing codes of the tribal communities. The AFR, 1945 divides the offences into two categories- heinous and non-heinous. The offences of non-heinous nature, such as Theft, including theft in a building; Mischief not being mischief by fire or any explosive substance; Simple hurt; Criminal trespass or house trespass; and Assault or using criminal force were entitled to be tried by the village authorities. The village authorities could try and dispose the cases under Civil Justice without limit of values provided the disputants involved in the cases were indigenous inhabitants. They were also allowed to perform the police duty of apprehending culprits or suspected ones within their respective village jurisdiction. The cases of heinous crimes/offences were referred to the administrative (judicial) courts (above them in hierarchy) of the district administration headed by Political Officer (later re-designated Deputy Commissioner) although the culprits were not absolved from the payment of compensation.

Even with the introduction of modern participatory political institutions, the institution of *Gaon Bura* continues to function as an effective instrument in management of village affairs alongside the modern institutions. The *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* which is inclusive of the Head *Gaon Bura(s)* have been useful limbs of any Government program, policy, project or scheme in rural Arunachal Pradesh. They continue to assist the law enforcement agencies in crime control, detection and prevention besides in maintenance of law and order. The PRIs representatives are interested mainly in developmental activities and money matters and are least bothered about this. The *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* compulsorily attend and assist the district administration on national and state occasions like Independence, Republic and Statehood days and during any VIP/Dignitary visits in the villages. The participation of the *Gaon Buras* in any deliberations/decisions was considered necessary or suitable to authenticate the same, even today; which is a good practice. Now also, they settle many of the civil disputes and petty criminal matters at the local levels. However, disputes are usually discussed in the gatherings and attendance of the best informed *Buliang(s)*, *Gaon Bura(s)*, panchayat members, kiths and kin and other village elders (all usually known for their knowledge and skill) who examine the facts and circumstances and decide a case by forming a body or a ‘council’ of elders and the aim is to achieve consensus without putting any proposal to the vote. All these dignitaries apart from the official *Gaon Bura(s)* can be christened as un-official *Gaon Bura(s)* for their role.

The powers/responsibilities and functions entrusted to the *Gaon Buras* have been geared towards developments and social justice and changes besides towards administrative and political advancement. With the increasing need for, developments and, transaction of government businesses in local areas in the State, their roles became increasingly significant which acted as catalyst for development, dispute settlements and law and order maintenance. For any dispute the villagers came to the *Gaon Buras* for settlement as the latter was directly under District Administration. They were needed for forwarding of the villagers’ appeals and petitions to the government for, arrest of the offenders and, other redresses/remedies.

Apart from the *Gaon Buras*, Political Interpreters (*Katokis*) have also been employed by the District Administration for maintaining cordial relations between the villagers and the Administration. Duties of the *Katokis* are basically to translate the language of the villagers in Assamese or Hindi to the administrative, judicial and other non-local government officers

besides acting as facilitator in case settlement by the *Gaon Buras*. The *Katokis* played important roles in the administration of justice by assisting the members of the village authorities with advice and guidance. The Deputy Commissioners/Assistant Commissioners often deputed them to help the village authorities in their deliberations. Besides above matters, the *Gaon Buras* and *Katoki(s)* assisted the government to implement any of its decisions and the government officials to smoothly perform their duties at local levels. In due course of time, the *Gaon Buras* and *Katoki(s)* emerged as dominant leaders of their respective societies and enjoyed a considerable amount of influence and position.

The authority and respect this institution commanded have, however, decreased to a great extent because of combined factors like spread of urbanization, western education, elitist attitude and improvement in financial and economic conditions amongst the people, introduction of statutory Panchayati Raj system, party and electoral politics, etc. It has lost its earlier traditional respect and command it had over the people. Earlier *Gaon Bura(s)* who were lesser in number were more meritorious and were influential and acceptable to the community. One of the main causes for the erosion of the efficacy of this institution is the selection and appointment of the *Gaon Bura(s)* on political considerations. Whereas, traditionally *Gaon Bura(s)* were selected and appointed on the basis of personal influence, wealth and status, the knowledge of customary laws and social practices, oratorical skill and experience in the system, the later mode of appointment has been tainted by political interference. There has been interference of the elected Panchayati Raj members and political party leaders in the justice delivery system, leading to the degeneration of the *Gaon Bura* system. Besides, acceptance of the more convenient substantive laws based on IPC, CPC and CrPC and increasing tendency of the people to take or drag all cases to courts above village authority are also responsible for the decay. It is also often found that, people with political and monetary clouts appeal to the higher courts against the decisions of the *Gaon Buras*, the traditional village legal authority. Since the institution is decaying fast, its relevance and scope necessitate a revisit.

Since, such a vast time-tested and age-old statutory institution with state-wide memberships (*Gaon Buras/Buris* and *Head Gaon Buras*) which incurs a large share of financial resources out of the state's exchequer is decaying fast making the people in general to have a very

low faith/opinion on its effectiveness as justice delivery institution, its scope and relevance necessitate a revisit.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of the study are: to analyze the structure, functions, powers and position of the institution of *gaon bura*; to understand the interplay between the institution of *gaon bura* and modern statutory institutions; to investigate into people's perception and attitude towards the continuance of *gaon bura* system as an effective justice delivery institution; to understand the factors responsible for degeneration of the institution of *gaon bura*; and to examine the scope and relevance of the institution of the *gaon bura*.

Hypotheses

The study will be based on the following hypothetical premises that there is declining trend in the powers and position of the institution of *Gaon Burah*; the structure and functions of the institution of *Gaon Burah* have undergone tremendous changes because of external interventions; the people's perception and attitude towards the continuance of *Gaon Burah* system as a justice delivery institution is discouraging; there has been gradual degeneration of the institution of *Gaon Burah* because of variety of reasons; and the institution of *Gaon Burah* will have its own relevance if timely corrective steps are taken to revitalize it.

Methodology

The area (universe) of the study is the Ziro Valley of Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh, inhabited exclusively by the Apatanis. The relevant data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. In-depth and informal interviews and interactions and participant observation were the main tools and techniques employed in this study.

For the study, we interviewed the traditional leaders, including the priests, members of the village councils, the village elders; the *Gaon Buras*, the *Katokis* (Political Interpreters) and the Administrators (both former and present); Lawyers, Police Officers/Personnel, Journalists, Social Workers and PhD Scholars; Political Leaders, Members of Panchayats; and randomly selected Villagers. A total of 220 respondents proportionately distributed amongst all categories of the samples/respondents were selected in objective manner through random sampling method

for administering the questionnaire-cum-interview schedules. Out of the total respondents, 23 *Head Gaon Buras*, 22 *Gaon Buras* and 11 *Gaon Buris* have been interviewed, selecting proportionately from every Apatani village.

Important primary data (collected through the informal interviews and interactions) were recorded in Voice Recorder; which is being preserved for record and future reference. Besides, the extensive field notes were maintained by the scholar as supplements. The secondary data were collected from all the available relevant official documents/records and both published and unpublished works were utilized whenever necessary. The documentary data were collected from the local Newspaper Offices, Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Ziro, Lower Subansiri district and its erstwhile First Class Judicial Magistrate Office; the Department of Law and Judicial, Itanagar; the Commissioner (District & General Administration) Office, Itanagar; Guwahati High Court Itanagar Permanent Bench, Naharlagun; Law Research Institute (LRI), Gauhati High Court, Guwahati & State Central Library, Itanagar; District Library, Ziro; Directorate of Culture and Research, Itanagar and Library of Dera Natung Govt. College, Itanagar. A major part of the official documentary data were collected by accessing the official files of erstwhile Judicial First Class Magistrate Office under Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Lower Subansiri district, Ziro. Also secondary data in the form of booklets, journals, pamphlets and others especially for chapter-I were collected from Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Itanagar, State Gazetteer Office, Itanagar, District Statistical Office, Ziro and Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Itanagar.

Organization of the Study

The present study is organized into five chapters as mentioned below:

Chapter I: Introduces the study and gives a profile of Lower Subansiri district and Arunachal Pradesh in general and Apa Tanws of Ziro valley in particular as setting/universe of the study.

Chapter II (The *Buliang* – a traditional institution): Analyses the origin, types, organization, structure, leadership pattern, role/functions (politico-judicial & socio-religious), characteristic features and decline of the institution of *Buliang*.

Chapter III (*Gaon Buras: The Background and Workings*): Objectively deals with the background and workings of the traditional statutory, legal and executive village authority- the *Gaon Buras/Buris* – with reference to the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945.

Chapter IV (*Gaon Bura: Relevance and Scope*): Deals about the actual role, nature, working, status, powers/position, functions, decline/degeneration of the Village Authority over the years and its people’s perception, relevance, scope and necessary revitalization through analysis, discussion and interpretation of the Results (Data) obtained through the field survey.

Chapter V (*Conclusion*): Presents and summarizes the findings, suggestions and conclusion.

Major Findings

The *Kebang/Buliang* .i.e. the traditional/tribal village councils are not the same as “Village Authorities” which are always confused with by the people. The former institution exists in the tribal societies from time immemorial which are not created by any statute and derive their sanction from customs, practices etc. whereas the village authorities are statutory bodies appointed by the Deputy Commissioners in exercise of powers under Sub Rule (1) of Section 5 of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation I of 1945) and the corresponding clauses of earlier Rules for Administration of Justice.

The study reflects low level of education and lack of exposure of the sampled *Gaon Buras*. They also lack clarity on their powers, responsibilities, functions and role besides, their political affiliations and activities. The study further shows that large majority of the sampled *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* and Head *Gaon Bura(s)* participate in political activities and are members of one or other political party which are not their functions of proper perspective under the law. Interestingly, about 96 percent *Gaon Bura(s)*, all *Gaon Buri(s)* and 22 out of 23 Head *Gaon Bura(s)*, sampled are just not aware of the provisions of Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945; which is governing Law in regard to their powers, functions and responsibilities.

The study finds that the functions of *Gaon Buras/Buri(s)* have gradually decreased on all fronts, as responded by the opinions of 72.73 per cent of the sampled respondents. Among the respondents, 56.4 % sampled respondents has viewed that many changes have taken place on the functions of the *Gaon Buras*. The study shows that, huge majority of 84.09 percent sampled (consisting of various categories of) respondents believe 'attending political functions' as a major function undertaken at present by the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*. Under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945, village authorities are not mandated to participate in political activities. The study also finds, that settlement of disputes (although mentioned by 76.36 % sampled respondents) and maintenance of law and order (although mentioned by 64.09 % of the respondents) as other major functions of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* are very rare and fading and, that their role in socio-religious/ceremonial functions during *Myoko* and other sacred ceremonial festivals or occasions like *Murung*, *Subu* and *Dree* (although mentioned by 48.18 percent of the respondents) as another major function of the same) is also played to a very limited extent. In addition to above functions, the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* perform insignificant ones like constructing VIP welcome gates, and acting as ready audiences, in favour of the VIPs functions and, to their speeches respectively according to 35.91 % sampled respondents.

Introduction of the Panchayati Raj in the State has posed a serious challenge to the importance and authority of the *Gaon Bura(s)*. Prior to advent of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in 1969 and formation of responsible government in 1978, the *Gaon Bura(s)* were given the responsibilities at all kinds of developmental activities under the supervision of District administration and other government departments. This has been completely usurped by the Panchayati members to themselves. All disputes including *yelu* were effectively settled by them; or their assistance was sought by the district administrative courts to do the same. If directly brought to them, very often the local cases were invariably sent/referred back by the district administrative courts to the *Gaon Bura(s)* level for, arbitration through the customary laws and, compromise for its settlement. The advent and effective intervention of regular Police and modern (formal) judiciary system accompanying the establishment of administration wide across the State has diminished the role and functions of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. With the set up of the police departments in 1972, a system was gradually built up and the police have been receiving increasing number of complaints and case registrations although it is found that the justice delivered is slow and delayed. Criminal cases which were mostly solved earlier by the *Gaon*

Bura(s) have completely been taken over by the (regular) Judiciary, the proliferating practicing lawyers, Police and their interventions who deal through IPC, CrPC and CPC never sending/referring them back to the *Gaon Bura(s)* level. Besides the lawyers, the police and the judicial (administrative) magistrates were found to be very interested to deal with the increasing number of the cases because they get graft and bribery as additional income and importance; they even meddle in the justice delivery system by playing selfish politics.

Apart from these, the study finds that major reasons for decrease in the powers and position of *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* are 'Political interference' as opined by 65.45 % respondents, 'Availability of alternative dispute settlement means' according to 66.36 % respondents and 'Interference of PRIs leaders' as per opinions of the 49.09 % sampled respondents. The *Gaon Bura(s)* rendered active social services without honorarium by contributing eggs, local wines, cucumbers, bamboos, canes, physical labours, *jikhw tarw(s)*, etc. during VIP/dignitary visits (and during *Dree* and other festivals/occasions) showing a great hospitality to them besides constructing welcome gate and doing other decoration works during the same. More importantly, they helped out the government and the Apa Tanw Youth Association (AYA) to widen the roads and lanes in the Apatani valley and to open the source of water supply for their district headquarters town and other places. Such social services and activities are no more practiced and seen.

SUGGESTIONS

Although the people generally have low opinions on relevance of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* today besides having low degree of faith, it would be extremely relevant if revitalized by conferring it with adequate opportunity, scope, autonomy and protection to play as genuine village authorities.

Since the *Gaon Buras/Buris* are appointed from amongst the permanent residents of the villages who are fully acquainted with the needs, circumstances, problems and cases of the villages and its residents. Hence, all disputes, offences and crimes (civil or criminal both) at local levels except heinous ones like murder and rape can be appropriately/efficiently settled by the *Gaon Buras/Buris* without needing intervention from regular judiciary.

The *Gaon Buras/Buris* are most suited to settle the local disputes having socio-traditional bearings including land, forest and its boundary disputes. It would not be possible for the police, lawyers and Judges to understand the social intricacies involved in many cases.

Besides their other functions, the *Gaon Buris* are most suited to deal with women-related cases, problems and issues in line of the State women police and the State Women Welfare Commission functionaries/members. Meritorious *Gaon Buras/Buris* can be engaged as detective and intelligence agents and as Police informers to assist the law-enforcement agencies. They can act as vigilant/pressure group against, misuse of the government/public developmental schemes and its funds and, other corruptions, or against any other noticeable misdoings, in their respective jurisdictions.

In the traditional justice delivery system the accused remains an honorable member of the society and victim is compensated and restituted whereas in the modern justice system there is delay, more cost involved and the accused is not reformed in time. In the customary case settlements the compensation and/or restitution is paid directly to the victims. In the settlement of cases at village authority level, everybody in the villages knows others.

The biggest of the advantages is that the forum of *Gaon Buras/Buris* is simple, practical, informal, fair, inexpensive, speedy, accessible, convenient and accountable justice delivery mechanism available at the doorstep of the poor and other common people without legal technicalities and official formalities. Above all, the real strength of this tribal institution is that, in the matters of judgment pronouncement, it is the public opinion that largely counts.

In order to revitalize the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* certain important steps are needed to be taken timely, for example, as laid down hereunder.

First, selection through political patronage in appointments of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* needs to be discarded by divorcing the appointments totally from the politics. The *Gaon Buras/Buris* including Head *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be selected and appointed purely on merit basis in free, fair and transparent manner besides downsizing their existing numbers. Intellectual calibre and knowledge about the common laws, namely, CrPC, CPC and IPC may be considered as their additional merits besides prescribing minimum educational qualification for the appointment. Minimum and maximum age limits for the same (appointment) besides the retirement age of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be fixed.

There is a need of appointment of more *Gaon Buris* to make the body more representative and ensure democratic governance in the system.

The inactive and old-aged, deadwood and similar other unfit, those who have become convict or lost moral turpitude and even habitual non-performing *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be compulsorily retired by formulating a suitable modality. Nor a *Gaon Bura/Buri* should be primary member of any political party and should not have moved out of the village and lives in some other place.

Head *Gaon Buris*/female Village Authority also need to be appointed now onwards for the representation and effectiveness of the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Meritorious unemployed educated youths may be organised as the *Gaon Buras/Buris* on the basis of their good reputation, character, antecedents and other necessary traits; which would ameliorate their pangs of unemployment besides somehow utilizing their talents from getting wasted.

A crucial step towards the revitalization would be through immediate amendment of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 with ineffective, inadequate and redundant provisions like, 'a fine of Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred) only [which was Rs. 50/- (Rupees fifty) only till 2005 amendment] can be imposed to an offender' which cannot be treated as adequate/sufficient, today and would not act as deterrent to the criminals and rich people. Through this amendment, the institution of *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be entitled/invested/authorised with proper, adequate, effective, full, robust, recognised, redefined, delineated, operational, autonomous and protected functioning [judicial, (ordinary duties of) police and administrative] powers and its charter of duties thus suitably modifying the newly introduced judicial set up arranged in the state.

Honorarium of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be enhanced from time to time and paid monthly and regularly. There should be a committee consisting of competent *Gaon Buras/Buris*] to enforce the *Gaon Buras/Buris*) Council's decisions, and a branch officer either an Extra Assistant Commissioner (EAC) or a Circle Officer (CO) to assist the *Gaon Buras/Buris* in their functioning and its affairs. Some of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* may be declared as special police officers to perform certain police duties especially in the interior areas and in certain special situations. The meeting of the *Gaon Buras/Buris* should be called at-least once in six months, their attendance taken and performance in the every six months period assessed for which a suitable modality and its format may be devised.

Certain other facilities too are equally necessary for the *Gaon Buras/Buris*. Free electricity and drinking water facilities, proper accommodation and TA/DA during long distance duties, one free Land Line phone at-least to each Head *Gaon Bura*, timely replacement of their Red coats and issue of two sets of climate-appropriate dresses should be provided or ensured to them.

Besides, salaried regular secretarial staff is necessary for the *Gaon Buras/Buris* and some intelligent, young, active, smart and preferably educated informers-cum-messengers are needed to them. The government with the help of the villagers should construct a permanent, well-electrified building each for holding *Gaon Bura/Buri* council sessions in each village or its section. Non-maintenance of written record for future reference, amongst the *Gaon Buras/Buris* creates some problem.

It may look non-issue but consumption of any alcohol drink, prior to, during and immediately after the deliberations in the *Mel* (Council sitting) should be prohibited. No government contract or supply work should be allowed to the *Gaon Buras/Buris* to be undertaken.

The *Tanw Supung Dukung* may continue to act as the Apex Council/Appellate Court to hear and settle, appeal/refer cases and, the cases having pan-Apatani connotation including inter-villages/tribes disputes. All Apatani individuals, groups or organisations including the *Gaon Buras/Buris*, the *Supung Buliang* Council, the Apatani Cultural and Literary Society (ACLS) and the Apatani Youth Association (AYA) are affiliated to their Apex Council.

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Glossary

A

- Abo – Tani* - Legendary mythical ancestor of the Apatanis, Adis, Nyishis, Tagins, etc
- Abulya* - Name of a place at Ziro
- Adi* - A single largest tribe in Arunachal Pradesh
- Ahe Nanw* - Security given as guarantee in dispute settlement
- Ajang* - Young in age
- Ajang Buliang* - Young-aged *Buliang*
- Aji* - Paddy field
- Ajing* - Friend
- Akha* - Old
- Akha Buliang* - Old-aged *Buliang*
- Aki Amang* - A kind of gift given by the *Buliangs* on behalf of the *Ronsweh Murung* solemnizing individual
- Alo* - Day; Salt
- Alyi Ading Puhe Lango Gwta Dopa* - A head of sacrificed pig along with its neck
- Amangs* - Gifts received by the *Buliangs* in *Murung*, *Myoko* and *Subu* festivals
- Anw* - Mother
- Aping* - Rice meal
- Apw-Wdang* - A kind of weapon (Arrow-and-spear)
- Ato Neha* - A mythical ancestor (son of Legendary *Abo-Tani*) of the Apatanis
- Ato Pwlo* - Grandfather Moon
- Ayo Danyi* - Grandmother Sun

B

- Babo* - A symbolic wooden mast
- Babo-Bodu* - An acrobatic sport played on wooden mast during *Myoko* festival
- Balu* - Kitchen garden
- Bang Nyele* - Traditional village council of the Nyishis
- Baro-Manyang* - Traditionally-betrothed Nyishi ceremonial friend of the Apatanis and vice-versa
- Bije* - Bamboo plantation field/garden
- Buchi Butw Imping* - Successful dispute settlement by the social-minded public figure
- Buliang* - Traditional village council of the Apatanis
- Buliang Pyakha* - A cane pouch carried by the *Buliangs* during *Khwbo Amang* demonstration/procession night as identity and as bag for carrying the gifts received back home
- Buliang Sankho* - A gift given to the *Buliangs* of a ceremonially-allied villages during *Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung*
- Bunyi Gaku* - A kind of gift gifted to the *Buliang*
- Buro Lyango Saeh* - A type of gift (*Pengu*/a kind of precious regional bird) gifted to the *Buliang*
- Butw Yelu* - Public dispute/quarrel
- Bwnwng Ajing* - A ceremonially-betrothed traditional friend of an Apatani family
- Byai Mibya* - Priest who heads and leads the *Khwbo Amang* demonstration/procession party during *Myoko* festival
- Byai Mih* - An Assistant who accompany *Byai Mibya*

C

- Chagia* - Gift given to a *Buliang* who hosts and feasts the two guest *Buliangs* who bring the gifts for the *Buliang* of a ceremonially-allied villages
- Chambyo* - Public dispute/quarrel involving violence
- Chiri* - Traditional Tibetan sword of the Apatanis

D

- Dankho – Panyi* - Pointed pole and stick
- Danw Dapo* - An item of *Mida* (marriage) ceremony gift
- Danyi Gartw Tamang* - A mythical ancestral mother of the Apatanis
- Dao* - Universal cutting implement
- Dapo* - Pact or Peace/Public agreement/notice
- Dapo Pogyang* - Ritual structure/place of *Dapo*
- Dapo Sonwng* - Demonstration/organization of *Dapo*
- Dimbung Posa* - A piece of bacon meat each
- Dodum* - A mythical ancestor of the Nyshis
- Dol* - Another mythical ancestor of the Nyshis
- Donyi – Polo* - Sun-Moon (Goddess-God/Religion of the *Abo-Tani* group of tribes including the Apatanis)
- Dopum* - Another mythical ancestor of the Nyshis
- Dree* - A socio-religious festival of the Apatanis officially celebrated every year on 4th and 5th July every year
- Dukung* - Gathering/sitting
- Dwbo* - A group division of the whole Apatani villages
- Dwbo –Aso* - Party members of the group division of the whole Apatani villages
- Dwbo – Gambw* - Another name of *Dwbo-Aso* group division of the

	whole Apatani villages
<i>Dwmo – Wreh</i>	- Preparation and service of food and drinks in public sphere
<i>Dwping – Luping</i>	- Successful settlement of disputes/quarrels
<i>Dwpyo</i>	- Theft
<i>Dwre – Hwja</i>	- Two sections of Hwja village
G	
<i>Gambra</i>	- Apatani name for <i>Gaon Bura</i>
<i>Gano</i>	- A name of place in Apatani valley
<i>Gaon Bura</i>	- Male village elder (village authority)
<i>Gaon Buri</i>	- Female village elder (village authority)
<i>Gatu – Gata</i>	- <i>Buliang</i> gift items in <i>Takung Putu Rontw Murung</i> festival
<i>Genjy</i>	- Underwear shirt
<i>Gindung</i>	- Intermediary type of Nyishi village council
<i>Gondu</i>	- Mediator/arbitrator
<i>Gondu Punwng</i>	- Dispute settlement party
<i>Gwta Dopa</i>	- Intact
<i>Gwtu – Gwra</i>	- A public servant persons in Apatani society
<i>Gyambo</i>	- A ceremonial Apatani war
<i>Gyensi – Byanwng</i>	- Roasting of <i>gyensi</i> (grievance) meat offered
<i>Gyotu</i>	- A traditional ceremonial friend in Nyishi-Apatani relation
H	
<i>Hahlu</i>	- Clan/sub-clan
<i>Head Gaon Bura</i>	- Head male village elder (village authority)
<i>Hulyi Yoh</i>	- Bacon meat

- Hwchi – Aso* - Party member of *Hwchi* group division of the whole Apatani villages
- Hwnyang* - A form of fine/compensation called *Hwnyang* (Shame) in dispute settlements
- Hwtw Gambw* - Another group division of the whole Apatani villages
- I**
- Ipyo* - Adultery/illegal sex
- J**
- Jhum* - Shifting cultivation
- Jikhew Tarw* - A kind of traditional jacket with ‘eyes’ design
- Jilo Ayu* - A sacred lore chanted during *Khwbo Amang* Procession/demonstration
- Jilo Madu* - Invitation announcement for *Khwbo Amang* procession/demonstration
- Jilo Panyi* - A gift item (a bacon) for *Byai Mibya* (*Khwbo Amang* priest)
- Jugali* - Assistant to mason
- K**
- Kalung* - A section of Bwla (Bulla) village
- Katoki* - Political Interpreter
- Kebang* - Traditional village council of the Adis
- Khatu – Khetu* - The first ever sitting of the first ever group of *Buliang* (according to mythology regarding origin of the *Buliang*)
- Khwbo Ajing* - *Khwbo Amang* friend
- Khwbo Amang* - Ritual procession demonstration/organization in *Myoko* festival

<i>Khwbo Amang Gyonwng</i>	- Invitation for <i>Khwbo Amang</i> procession/demonstration
<i>Khwbo Ayu</i>	- <i>Khwbo Amang</i> song (tracing the myths and legends of the Apatani society) competition
<i>Kokhwee Aji</i>	- A name of ancestral paddy field
<i>Kolo Supung</i>	- A mythical settlement place of the Apatanis
<i>Kuru</i>	- A name of mythical place in Nyishi-Apatani area
<i>Kwdi Buliang</i>	- A traditional public servant also called <i>Mra</i> (grave Digger/disposer of dead bodies)
<i>Kwdi Chey</i>	- A mythical man who once stole a <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Kwmeh</i>	- A name of mythical place in Nyishi Apatani area
<i>Kwmwer</i>	- Traditional public servant (Castrator of pig)
<i>Kwmwer Buliang</i>	- - do -
L	
<i>Lango Lampo Pare Nanw pa</i>	- Security as guarantee (implement to cut neck and hunch) provided in dispute settlements
<i>Lankwer Karnwng</i>	- A sacred lore/hymn chanted by <i>Khwbo Amang</i> priest
<i>Lappang</i>	- Open public platform
<i>Lembyang</i>	- Big public place/road
<i>Logo</i>	- A phrarty (<i>uru</i>) of Bullo clan
<i>Lora</i>	- Another phartry (<i>urus</i>) of Bullo clan
<i>Lisunwng</i>	- A major dispute in which wealth destruction challenging competition takes place
<i>Lyngyang</i>	- Route
M	
<i>Mabo Lanwng</i>	- Dragging and torture of brother-in-law who tortures sister in order to effect negotiation
<i>Maji</i>	- Tibetan prayer bell possessed traditionally by the

	Apatanis as ornaments/jewelry
<i>Mangmajom</i>	- Traditional village council of Monpa tribe
<i>Mel</i>	- Dispute settlement council/ its sitting
<i>Metw Tamu</i>	- A God who is considered as security guard of a house by the Apatanis
<i>Mida</i>	- Marriage ceremony in which gifts are given to the boy's side by the girl's side
<i>Miha Buliang</i>	- Middle-aged <i>Buliang</i>
<i>Miha Padda</i>	- Honest/straightforward middle-aged man as public servant
<i>Miha Pillos</i>	- Guide/assistant of <i>Buliang</i>
<i>Mithuns</i>	- Cultural animal in Arunachal Pradesh
<i>Mitu</i>	- Public servant who organizes socio-religious ceremony in ritual festival called <i>Yapung</i>
<i>Mokchup</i>	- Traditional village council of Khampti tribe
<i>Morey</i>	- Forest
<i>Murung</i>	- Ceremonial public festival organized by individual
<i>Mwdo</i>	- Space (sky)
<i>Mwdo Buliang</i>	- A kind of mythical <i>Buliang</i>
<i>Mwdo Supung</i>	- A mythical habitat of the Apatanis before their migration to their present habitats
<i>Mwra</i>	- Public servant also called <i>Kwdi Buliang</i>
<i>Myoko</i>	- Sacred socio-religious festival of a long duration celebrated every year in March
<i>Myoko Lyugyang Ato</i>	- <i>Myoko</i> clan alter caretaker/owner
N	
<i>Namasker</i>	- A form of Hindi salutation

- Nami Lwgo* - A name of forest belonging to Nami clan of Hangu village
- Neha Buliang* - Another name for Apatani traditional village council commonly called *Buliang*
- Ngwlyang* - A kind of slippery cultural, tasty and costly fish
- Nikung Dapo* - Apatani customary law
- Nwchi* - A division of Hong village
- Nwh Paboh* - Public in the society
- Nwging Paboh* - A public servant
- Nwtw* - A division of Hong village
- Nyagam Aabhu* - Nyishi village council elder
- Nyanw* - Relatives from mother/grandmother side
- Nyats* - Nyishi village councilor
- Nyelee* - Nyishi village council
- Nyettu* - Knife
- Nyokum* - Biggest public festival of the Nyishis celebrated every year in February
- O**
- 'O' - Rice beer
- P**
- Panyu* - A place in Nyishi area (an olden Apatani route to the plains)
- Patang* - Agricultural and other labor gangs on reciprocal relationship and help in agricultural works or times of need
- Pengu* - A kind of costly regional bird
- Pengu Pwta Yoh* - Meat of *Pengu* bird

- Pike* - A delicacy/specialty (spicy food) of the Apatanis
- Pila* - Another delicacy/specialty (spicy food) of the Apatanis
- Plo – Sla* - Food and drink refreshment given after dispute settlements or other occasions
- Pobbu* - Social taboo (in case of unnatural death) to be observed by the villagers
- Popi* - Supreme advisor of mankind
- Pwding* - Hair knot of Apatani traditional man
- Pwnyang Ajing* - A ceremonial traditional Apatani friend/relation
- Pyakha* - Cane pouch
- R**
- Rikam –Pada* - A mega dance of the Nyishis
- Ronswe Murung* - A ceremonial ritual festival
- Rontw Murung* - A major *Murung* festival
- Rwlo Nello* - A house where *Khwbo Amang* is hosted and conducted in the morning next to *Khwbo Amang* procession/demonstration night
- Rwtcha Nello* - A house where *Khwbo Amang* procession/demonstration is hosted and conducted in the *Khwbo Amang* procession/demonstration evening/night
- S**
- Saadi* - Pine tree garden
- Samma Pinwng* - Inaugural ritual ceremony of *Myoko* festival
- Sangho* - Means public (and successful) life
- Sango Ayu* - *Khwbo Amang* song competition undertaken at day time at *Lappang*

<i>Sankho Atu Khongo Saeh</i>	- Small stick of roasted beef each
<i>Sanw</i>	- Tree
<i>Subu</i>	- Apatani name for <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Subu Cheya Swning</i>	- <i>Mithun</i> dispute
<i>Subu Lampo Pare Nanw Pa</i>	- Weapon to cut neck/hunch of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Subu Potw Kone Aming Pa</i>	- Cooked meat of whole diaphragm of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Supung</i>	- Whole Apatani people/place
<i>Supung Buliang</i>	- Mythical <i>Buliang</i> which existed at mythical place <i>Supung</i>
<i>Supung Buliang Council</i>	- Pan-Apatanin <i>Buliang/Buliang</i> council for the whole Apatani community
<i>Supung Chambyo</i>	- Pan-Apatani dispute
<i>Supung Pinwng</i>	- Large type of <i>Murung</i> festival
<i>Supung Pinwng Rontw Murung</i>	- - do -
<i>Swagang</i>	- Stream
<i>Swchi</i>	- A wild animal
<i>Swling</i>	- Channel
T	
<i>Tabing</i>	- A color of the skin of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Tai Dilang</i>	- A piece of raw clear meat given in <i>Murung</i> festival
<i>Takhwee</i>	- Squirrel
<i>Takung Putu Rontw Murung</i>	- A kind of larger <i>Murung</i> celebrated for one village/group of villages only
<i>Tallo</i>	- Brass-plate as jewelry
<i>Talyang Hao</i>	- A section of Bwla village
<i>Talyang Hao Nyi</i>	- Another name for combination of Hari-Bwla villages group

<i>Tang – Tsangpho</i>	- A mythical place in Tibet area from where the Apatanis migrated
<i>Tanw Supung Dukung</i>	- Apex council/Appellate court of the Apatanis
<i>Tapyo</i>	- Indigenous Apatani black salt
<i>Taper Lwning</i>	- Ritual ceremony in which villagers give a round of their village holding wild fern each in all of their hands
<i>Tata</i>	- A color of skin of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Taw</i>	- A color of skin of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Twse Yeso</i>	- A high quality variety of cane
<i>Twlying</i>	- A name of clan
<i>Twni – Aso</i>	- Party member villages of a group division of the whole Apatani villages
<i>Twni – Dwbo</i>	- A group/section of the Apatani community
<i>Twper Parnwng</i>	- Capture of somebody's leg in a hole of hard and heavy wooden log during captivity for negotiation or as punishment
<i>Twper</i>	- Wild fern used in <i>Taper Lwning</i> ritual ceremony
U	
<i>Unw Yoh (Yaalang)</i>	- Meat distributed in <i>Murung</i> festival
<i>Urus</i>	- Phrarties
W	
<i>Wpyo</i>	- Mythical Apatani community
<i>Wpyo – Supung</i>	- A mythical Apatani habitat
Y	
<i>Yaalang</i>	- A piece of red, raw clear meat of <i>Mithun</i> /cow
<i>Yabing</i>	- A color of the skin of <i>Mithun</i>

<i>Yamyo</i>	-	A color of the skin of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Yapa</i>	-	A mythical Apatani woman
<i>Yapa Buliang</i>	-	Middle-aged <i>Buliang</i>
<i>Yappu – Yaalang</i>	-	Combination of a piece of bacon meat and a piece of raw, red clear <i>Mithun</i> meat
<i>Yapung</i>	-	Sky
<i>Yasibo Salw</i>	-	A name of pine garden
<i>Yata</i>	-	A color of skin of <i>Mithun</i>
<i>Yelu</i>	-	A major dispute
<i>Yelu Lisunwng</i>	-	Wealth destruction challenging competition
<i>Yetw</i>	-	Rain shield
<i>Yorlu</i>	-	Distant agricultural garden

Appendix-1:
Interview Schedule

Part-I

Respondent's Name :

1.1 Sex :

1.2 Age :

1.3 Religion :

1.4 Caste/Tribe :

1.5 Place of Birth :

1.6 Education :

1.7 Marital Status :

1.8 Occupation/Profession :

Part-II Awareness
(Only for the Gaon Buras/Buris)

2.1. Do you read newspaper?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

2.2. Do you listen to radio/watch television?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

2.3. Do you participate in political activities?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

2.4. Are you a member of any political party?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

(iii) No answer

2.5. Do you have any knowledge about IPC/ Cr.PC?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

2.6. Are you aware of the provisions of Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

Part-III Power/Position/Functions of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*

3.1 What are the major function(s) of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* at present?

(i) Settlement of disputes

(ii) Organisation of socio-religious/ceremonial functions

(iii) Maintenance of law and order

(iv) Attending political functions

(v) Any other, specify.

3.2. Do you find any change in the functions of *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If yes, identify the major changes?

3.3 Whether the power/position of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* has:

(i) Increased

(ii) Decreased

(iii) No change in the status

(iv) Any other, specify.

3.4 If the power/position of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* has decreased, please specify the reason(s)?

(i) Political interference

(ii) Availability of alternative dispute settlement means

(iii) Interference of panchayat leaders

(iv) Religious conversion

(v) Any other, specify.

3.5 What factors are/is counted in selection of a *Gaon Bura/Buri*?

(i) Personal influence

(ii) Political connection

(iii) Wealth and status

(iv) Oratory skill

(v) Knowledge about customary laws and social practices.

(vi) Any other, please specify.

3.6 Are you satisfied with the mode of selection of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If no,

Please give reasons.

3.7 Recently some ladies have been appointed as *Gaon Buri(s)*. Are these *Gaon Buri(s)* able to perform their duties efficiently?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If no,

Please give reasons.

Part-IV The Panchayats and the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*

4.1 Do you think that introduction of panchayati raj institution has undermined the

status/position of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If Yes,

Please give reasons.

4.2 Which, according to you, is better suited for the development of your village?

(i) The Panchayat Members

(ii) The *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*?

Part-V The People's Perception and the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*

5.1 What, according to you, is degree of faith the common people have on *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*?

(i) Excellent

(ii) Good

(iii) Average

(iv) Bad

Part-VI Scope and Relevance The People's Perception and the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*

6.1 How relevant is the institution of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* today?

(i) Extremely relevant

(ii) Not so relevant

(iii) Should be discarded

(iv) No idea

If extremely relevant,

Please specify.

6.2 General feeling is that the institution of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)* has degenerated to a great extent?

What are the reasons you attribute for the same?

Please specify.

6.3 Do you feel the necessity of revitalization of the institution of the *Gaon Bura(s)/Buri(s)*?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If Yes,

What steps needed to be taken to revitalize the institution?

Appendix-2:

THE ASSAM FRONTIER (ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE) REGULATION, 1945 (Regulation 1 of 1945)

Preamble

A regulation to consolidate and amend the law governing the administration of justice in the Frontier Tracts of Assam.

Whereas it is expedient to consolidate and amend the law governing the administration of justice in the Balipara, Lakhimpur, Sadiya and Tirap Frontier Tracts of Assam.

Now, therefore, the Governor of Assam, in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (2) of Section 92 of the Government of India Act, 1935 is pleased to make the following Regulation:-

CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL

Short title, extent, commencement and repeal

1. (a) This Regulation may be called the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945.

.

(b) It extends to the whole of the Balipara, Lakhimpur, Sadiya and Tirap Frontier Tracts.

(c) It shall come into force on such date as the (Administrator) may be Notification in the (Arunachal Pradesh) Gazette and from such date the rules for the administration of justice in the Balipara Frontier Tract, the rules for the administration of justice in Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the rules for the administration of Justice in the Sadiya Frontier Tract published with Notification Nos. 2350(f)-AP, 2530(d)-AP and 2530(e) AP respectively dated the 26th March, 1937 shall be deemed to be repealed.

2. In this Regulation except where the contrary definitions appears from the context : [*Administrator* means the Administrator of the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh appointed by the President under Article 239 of the Constitution] ‘heinous offence’ means and includes any of the following namely:

Murder, culpable homicide, causing grievous hurt, rape, kidnapping or abducting in order to subject to slavery, disposing or buying of persons as slaves, habitual dealing in slaves, dacoity, robbery, rioting, house-breaking, theft of cattle, mischief by fire or any explosive substances, any offence punishable under Chapter VI or Chapter XII of the Indian Penal Code, any offence punishable under Arms Act, and any attempt to commit or abetment of any of the aforesaid offences.

“*Pleader*” includes a mukhtar of any professional agent.

[“*Deputy Commissioner*” includes an “*Addl. Deputy Commissioner*”]

“*The Tracts* means the Balipara, Lakhimpur, Sadiya and Tirap Frontier Tracts.”

3.(1) The administration of the Tract is vested in the [*Administrator*] and of each Tract in the [*Deputy Commissioner*], the [*Assistant Commissioner*] and the village authorities thereof or such other Officer or Officers as the [*Administrator*] see fit from time to time to appoint in that behalf, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained.

(2) (*The Deputy Commissioner*) the (*Assistant Commissioner*) of the District shall be appointed by the [*Administrator*] acting in his discretion.

4. The Deputy Commissioner may subject to the provisions of this Regulation define the jurisdiction of any [*Assistant Commissioner*] and may transfer any case, civil or criminal, from one [*Assistant Commissioner*] to another or from an [*Assistant Commissioner*] to himself. [*Jurisdiction of Assistant Commissioner*]

5.(1) The [*Deputy Commissioner*] shall appoint such persons as he considers to be the members of a village authority for such village or villages as he may specify and may modify or cancel any such order of appointment and may dismiss any person so appointed..

(2) In any area for which no village authority has been constituted under the provisions of sub-section (1), the powers and functions of village authority as provided by this Regulation, shall be exercisable and performed by the [*Deputy Commissioner*] or by any [*Assistant Commissioner*] authorized by him in this behalf.

CHAPTER II – POLICE

6. (1) **Public duties of village authorities:** The ordinary duties of police in respect of crime shall be discharged by the village authorities. They shall maintain peace and order within their jurisdiction.

(2) The village authorities shall not be deemed to be police office for purposes of Section 25 and section 26 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 or the section 162 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (since 1974 repealed by Act II of 1974).

(3) The village authorities shall watch and report on any vagrant or any bad or suspicious character found within their jurisdiction and may apprehend any such person if they have reasonable grounds for

suspecting that the has committed or is about to commit an offence and shall hand over any person so apprehended to the [Deputy Commissioner] or an [Assistant Commissioner].

7. **[Control of police]:** Every Civil Police station shall be under the control of the [Deputy Commissioner] but its administration with regard to the pay, allowances, clothing, transfer and discipline or the staff shall be vested in the Superintendent of Police of the district which furnished the staff or such other police officer as the Government may appoint in this behalf, provided that transfer shall be made in consultation with the [Deputy Commissioner].

8. **[Occurrence of heinous offence]:** On the commission of any heinous offence within their jurisdiction the inhabitants of the village shall at once, if possible apprehend the offender and in any case shall at once inform the village authority who if the offender has not been apprehended, shall proceed without delay to the place where the offence was committed and enquire into it.

9. **Reports by village authority:** It shall be the duty of the village authorities to report to the [Deputy Commissioner] [Assistant Commissioner] as soon as possible all crimes, violent deaths, and serious accidents occurring within their jurisdiction, and all occurrences whether within or beyond their jurisdiction, which may come to their knowledge and which are likely to affect the public peace: and to arrest and deliver up offenders as soon as may be [within a period of twenty four hours of such arrest excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest] to the court having jurisdiction to try them.

10. **Pursuit and arrest of offenders:** A village authority may pursue beyond their jurisdiction any offender or vagrant or bad or suspicious character whom they consider it necessary to apprehend under the provisions of sub-section (3) of Section 6. They shall not, however, ordinarily arrest the offender or such person without informing the village authority within whose jurisdiction he is found and inviting their assistance but may do so if there is a reasonable apprehension that he may otherwise escape.

11. **Procedure when arrest is impossible:** When a village authority is unable to arrest an offender; they may apply to the [Deputy Commissioner] or an [Assistant Commissioner] or any officer empowered to make arrests, for assistance.

12. ***Aid to village authorities:*** (1) All inhabitants of the Tracts are bound to aid the village authority when required to do so for the maintenance of order of apprehending offenders and are liable to fine for failing to give such assistance.

(2) Such fine if imposed by the village authority shall not exceed Rs.500/- and if imposed by the [Deputy Commissioner] or an [Assistant Commissioner] shall not exceed Rs.2000/-.

(3) An appeal shall lie from an order passed under Section (2) by a village authority to the [Assistant Commissioner] and from an order passed under sub-section (2) by an [Assistant Commissioner] to the [Deputy Commissioner].

(4) If it appears that the community is to blame and that particular offenders cannot be discovered, a fine not exceeding Rs.5,000/- may be imposed upon the community by the [Deputy Commissioner].

(5) Any fine imposed under sub-section (2) or sub-section (4) shall be recovered by distraint of the property of the person or persons on whom it is imposed.

13. ***Punishment of members of a village authority:*** Without prejudice to any punishment to which he may be liable under any other law, a member of a village authority shall, for any misconduct in the exercise of his functions under this Chapter, be punishable with fine which may extend to Rs.1000/- or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months on conviction by the [Deputy Commissioner] or an [Assistant Commissioner]. An appeal shall lie from an order of [Assistant Commissioner] under this Section to the [Deputy Commissioner].

14. ***Revision:*** The Administrator may at any time call for the proceedings in any matter under Section 12 or Section 13 and may modify or set aside an order of a village authority passed under sub-section (2) of Section 12 or an original or appellate passed by the [Deputy Commissioner] or an [Assistant Commissioner] under either of those sections.

CHAPTER III – CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

15. ***Administration:*** Criminal justice shall be administered by the [Deputy Commissioner] the [Assistant Commissioner] and the village authorities.

16. ***Appointment of Additional Deputy Commissioner:*** The [Administrator] may appoint an [Additional Deputy Commissioner] for the trial of particular cases when he thinks fit, and may direct that such

[Additional Deputy Commissioner] shall for the purpose, exercise all or any of the powers of the [Deputy Commissioner].

17. **Powers of Deputy Commissioner:** The [Deputy Commissioner] shall be competent to pass any sentence warranted by law.

18. **Powers of Assistant Commissioner:** **The** [Assistant Commissioner] shall exercise any powers not exceeding those of a Magistrate of the 1st Class as defined in the Criminal Procedure Code, with which they may be invested by the [Administrator].

19. **Jurisdiction of village authorities:** The village authorities may try any case involving any of the under mentioned offences in which the person or persons accused is or are resident within their jurisdiction:

Theft including theft in a building, Mischief not being mischief by fire or any explosive substance, Simple hurt, Criminal trespass or house trespass, Assault or using criminal force.

20. **Powers of village authorities:** A village authority may impose a fine not exceeding Rs3000/- for any offence which they are competent to try, and may also award payment in restitution or compensation to the extent of the injury sustained; such fines and payments may be enforced by distraint of the property of the offender.

21. **Compensation:** The Deputy Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner may order compensation to be paid to any person in a criminal case out of the proceeds of fines imposed in the case.

22. **Disposal of cases by village authorities and powers to compel attendance:** The village authorities shall decide all cases in open Darbar in the presence of at least three independent witnesses and of the complainant and the accused. They are empowered to order the attendance of all the foregoing and of the witnesses to be examined in the case and to impose a fine not exceeding Rs.200/- on any person failing to attend when so ordered.

23. **Procedure by village authorities after sentence:** If any person on whom a fine has been imposed by a village authority fails to deposit the amount at once, or within such further time as the village authority may allow, the village authority shall send him to an [Assistant Commissioner] to be dealt with in such manner as he may deem fit, unless the accused person gives notice of his intention to appeal against the decision.

24. **Appeals from village authorities:** Any party aggrieved by a decision of a village authority may appeal within thirty days to the [Assistant Commissioner] who on receipt of such appeal shall try the case de novo.

25. **Appeals from Assistant Commissioner:** An appeal shall lie from an original decision of an [Assistant Commissioner] to the [Deputy Commissioner].

26. **Appeal to the High Court:** An appeal shall lie to the [High Court] against sentences of three years imprisonment and upward and sentences of death or transportation. In other cases there shall be no right of appeal, but the [High Court] may entertain an appeal [by special leave].

27. **Limitation for appeals:** (1) All appeals under section 25 or 26 must be presented within thirty days from the date of the order appealed against excluding the time taken in procuring a copy of the order. Provided that an appeal from a sentence of death shall be preferred within seven days from the date of the sentence, excluding the time taken in procuring a copy of the order. (2) The [Deputy Commissioner] shall not after passing a sentence of death, inform the person sentenced of the provisions of sub-section (1).

28. **Power of revision:** The [High Court] or [Deputy Commissioner] may call for the proceedings of any officer subordinate to [it] and reduce, enhance or cancel any sentence passed or remand the case for retrial but no offence shall be punished by a sentence exceeding that warranted by law.

29. **Transfer of cases:** The [High Court] may for any reason which [it] considers proper transfer any original case, pending or under trial before any Court to any other Court competent to try it, which is governed by this Regulation.

30. (1) **Confirmation of Sentence:** All sentences of death, transportation, or imprisonment for seven years or more shall be subject to confirmation by the [High Court] and the proceedings of all cases in which any such sentence has been passed shall be submitted to the [High Court] forthwith.

(2) In any case submitted under sub-section (1), the [High Court] –

(a) *may confirm the sentence or pass any other sentence warranted by law;*

or

(b) *may annul the conviction and the convict accused of any other offence of which the [Deputy Commissioner] might have convicted him; or*

(c) *may order a new trial on the same or an amended charged; or*

(d) may acquit the accused person; provided that no order of confirmation shall be made until the period allowed for preferring an appeal has expired or if an appeal is presented within such period until such appeal is disposed of.

31. (1) **Sentence of death:** When a sentence of death passed by the Deputy Commissioner is confirmed by the High Court the Deputy Commissioner shall on receiving the order of confirmation, cause such order to be carried into effect by issuing a warrant in the form given in item No.XXXV of Schedule V of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 and taking such steps as may be necessary. (2) The Deputy Commissioner shall fix the time and place of execution and the time fixed shall not be less than 21 or more than 28 days from the date of issue of warrant.

32. **Criminal Procedure Code (V of 1898):** The High Court, the Deputy Commissioner/ the Assistant Commissioner shall be guided in regard to procedure by the principles of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 so far as they are applicable to the circumstances of the district and consistent with the provisions of this Regulation. The chief exceptions are:-

a) Verbal orders or notice only shall be requisite in any case except when the regular police are employed or when the person concerned is not a resident of or in the district at the time but orders of summons shall in every case be for a fixed day and the order shall be made known to the person concerned or to some adult member of his family and failing this shall be openly proclaimed at the place where he is, or was last known to be, in sufficient time to allow him if he sees fit, to appear.

(b) The proceedings of the village authorities need not be recorded in writing, nor shall it be necessary that examinations before the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner be signed by the parties examined but the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner may require the village authority to report their proceedings in any way which appears suitable.

(c) There shall be no preliminary enquiries by regular or village police unless the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner sees fit to direct one.

(d) Recognizance to appear shall not be taken unless it appears necessary to the Deputy Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner.

(e) Proceeding before the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner shall be recorded in English only.

33. Omitted.

34(1) ***Suspension and remission:*** The President may either upon or without conditions, suspend the execution of or remit any sentence of death and the Administrator may in like manner suspend the execution of or remit any sentence. (2) If any sentence has been suspended or remitted upon conditions and in the opinion of the President or the Administrator as the case may be these conditions have not been fulfilled the President or the Administrator may cancel the suspension or remission and thereupon the person whose sentence has been suspended or remitted may if at large be arrested by any police without warrant and remanded to undergo the unexpired portion of his sentence or made to undergo the punishment.

35. ***Commutation:*** The President may commute any sentence of death and the Administrator may commute any one of the following sentences for any other mentioned after it: death (imprisonment for life), confiscation of property, rigorous imprisonment, whipping, simple imprisonment or fine.

CHAPTER IV

CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

36. ***Administration:*** Civil Justice shall be administered by the Deputy Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner and the village authorities.

37. ***Powers of Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner:*** The Deputy Commissioner may try suits of any value. The Assistant Commissioner may try suits not exceeding Rs.50000/- in value.

38(1). The Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner shall in every case in which both parties are indigenous to the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh endeavour to persuade them to submit to arbitration by a panchayat.

(2) If the parties agree each party shall nominate an equal number of members of the panchayat and the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner shall either choose, or direct the panchayat to choose a further person as umpire.

(3) The names and addresses of the members of the panchayat and umpire and a statement of the matter in dispute shall be recorded and the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner shall direct the village authority or some other person to assemble the panchayat and witnesses within such time as he may specify and also fix a date on which the decision of the panchayat shall be announced before him.

(4) The umpire shall have no vote as a member of the panchayat but shall enter on and decide the matter in dispute if the panchayat or a majority of its members are unable to agree on their decision before the date fixed under sub-section (3).

(5) On the date fixed for the announcement of the decision, the umpire and the parties shall appear before the Court which directed the arbitration and the Court shall record the decision together with any order which it considers reasonable for the payment or apportionment of the costs of the panchayat's proceedings.

(6) The decision so recorded shall be enforceable as if it was a decision of the Court recording it and shall be final.

39 (1). **Arbitration in other cases:** In cases in which neither or only one of the parties is indigenous to the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh, the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner may with the consent of both parties order that the case be referred to arbitration by a panchayat and the provisions of sub-section (2) to (5) inclusive of section 38 shall then apply except that the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner shall give the parties an opportunity to object the decision.

(2) Any such objection must be made within ten days of the day on which the decision of the panchayat or umpire is recorded and if made, shall be considered by the Deputy Commissioner whose decision shall be final.

(3) If no such objection is made the provisions of sub-section (6) of Section 38 shall apply.

40. **Powers of authorities :** The village authorities shall try all suits without limit of value in which both the parties are indigenous to the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh and live within their jurisdiction and which are not submitted to arbitration under the provisions of section 38. All other suits which are not submitted to arbitration under the provisions of section 39 shall be tried by the Deputy Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner.

41. **Powers to enforce attendance:** The village authorities shall have power to order the attendance of the parties and of witnesses and to fine up to a limit of Rs.500/- persons failing to attend when ordered to do so.

42. **Unfounded and vexatious suits:** The village authorities shall have power to award costs, as well as compensation not exceeding Rs.5000/- in any case to defendants for unfounded or vexatious suits brought against them.

43. The village authorities may appoint one or more assessors to assist them in coming to a decision and when they do so shall record but shall not be bound by the opinion of the assessor or assessors.

44. (1) **Hearing of cases:** All suits tried by the village authorities shall be decided in open Darbar in the presence of the parties and at least three independent witnesses.

(2) The Deputy Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner may direct a village authority to report their proceedings in any case or class of cases in any way which may appear to him to be suitable. Save as required by such direction, no record of any proceedings shall be maintained.

(3) After hearing both parties and their witnesses, if any the village authority shall forthwith pronounce a decision.

45. (1) Unless any party having a right of appeal against a decision of a village authority gives notice, when such decision is pronounced, of his intention to appeal against it, the village authority shall carry out the decision forthwith, and for such purpose may proceed by distraint of any property belonging to any person liable to pay any sum under the decision, unless such person furnish security to the satisfaction of the village authority.

(2) If notice of intention to appeal is given, the village authority shall send the parties and witnesses to the Deputy Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner forthwith, and one of the members of the village authority or one of the independent witnesses shall accompany them.

46. (1). **Appeals from village authorities:** Any person aggrieved by a decision of a village authority may appeal to the Assistant Commissioner in suits not exceeding Rs.500/- in value and to the Deputy Commissioner in suits exceeding that value.

(2) If such an appeal is filed, a record shall be made of the matter in dispute and of the decision of the village authority.

(3) The appellate court shall, if necessary, examine the parties, and, if the decision appears to be just, shall affirm and enforce the decision as its own. If the appellate court sees grounds to doubt the justice of the decision, it shall try the case de novo or refer to a panchayat; in any case so referred, the provisions of section 38 shall apply as if the parties had agreed to submit to arbitration.

47. **Appeals from Assistant Commissioner:** An appeal shall lie to the Deputy Commissioner from any decision original or appellate of an Assistant Commissioner.

48. **Appeals from Deputy Commissioner:** An appeal shall lie to the High Court from an original decision of the Deputy Commissioner if the value of the suit is not less than Rs.500/- or if the suit involves a question of trial of rights or customs or of the right to, or possession of, immovable property.

49. **Presentation of appeals:** An appeal which lies to the Deputy Commissioner or High Court may be presented to the Assistant Commissioner who shall, if it is in order and presented in due time, endorse upon it the date of receipt and transmit it with the records of the case to the Deputy Commissioner.

50. **Powers of revision:** The High Court may, on application or otherwise call for the proceedings of any original case or appeal decided by the Deputy Commissioner and not appealable under this Regulation and may pass such orders as it may deem fit.

51. **Limitation and other conditions:** Every petition of appeal under section 47 or section 48 and every application under section 50 shall be accompanied by a copy of the order against which the appeal or application is made, and shall be filed within thirty days of the date of such order, excluding the time taken in procuring a copy of the order.

52. **Act IX of 1908:** The High Court, the Court of Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner shall be guided by the spirit, but shall not be bound by the letter of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 and shall follow subject to any express provisions of these rules, the principles of the Indian Limitation Act, 1908, in disputes between persons who are not indigenous to the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh.

53.(1) **Execution of decrees:** If any decree is modified or amended as a result of an appeal or of an order under section 50 the decree as so modified or amended shall for the purposes of execution be deemed to be the decree of the original Court.

(2) Decree against persons resident beyond the jurisdiction of the Court, if satisfaction cannot be obtained within the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh shall be transferred for execution to a Court having jurisdiction.

54. **Exemption from execution:** Houses, necessary clothings, cooking utensils or implements whereby the owner or his family subsists shall not be attached, sold or transferred in execution of a decree, unless the house or other thing so exempted is the actual subject matter of the suit. Land may be sold or temporarily transferred where custom admits of individual rights in it being recognized.

55. ***Imprisonment for debt***: No person shall be imprisoned for debt, except when the Deputy Commissioner is satisfied that he has made a fraudulent disposition or concealment of property. In such case the debtor may be detained for a period not exceeding six months.

56.(1) ***Representation***: No pleader shall be allowed to appear in any case before the village authorities.

(2) No pleader shall be allowed to appear in the Court of the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner except with the Deputy Commissioner's permission. Such permission shall not be refused if the defendant at the time the cause of action arose resided beyond the jurisdiction of the Court in an area where the appearance of pleader is not restricted.

(3) The High Court may by special leave permit any pleader to appear in any case before it.

CHAPTER V – EVIDENCE

57. ***Oaths***: In criminal cases before the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner oaths shall be administered to all witnesses when the accused is charged with murder, but not in other cases unless either party so require or the Court so determines.

(2) In civil suits before the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner oaths shall not be administered to parties or witnesses unless either party so requires, or the Court so determines.

(3) When an oath is administered it shall be in the manner which the Court considers most binding on the conscience of the person making it.

58. ***False Evidence***: Any person who gives false evidence in any criminal case or civil suit, whether as a party or a witness, and whether after an oath has been administered to him or otherwise, shall be deemed to have given false evidence within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

59. ***Guidance with regard to Evidence Act I of 1872***: The Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner shall in all criminal cases and civil suits be guided by the general principles of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

[Source – The Arunachal Pradesh Code Vol.1.]

**Following are the amendments /substitutions made in
the present Act as per respective Amending/Substituting
Acts/Orders wherever they occur:**

1. “Administrator” substituted for the word “Governor” means the “Governor of Assam” by (AP) ALO (2) of 1972.
2. “Arunachal Pradesh” substituted for “Assam” by the NEFA (Reorgn.) (AP) ALO 1974.
3. Definition of “Administrator” inserted by the NEFA (Reorgn.) (AP) ALO, 1972.
4. “Deputy Commissioner” substituted for “Political Officer” by NEFA (Admn) Regulation 1965.
5. “Addl. Deputy Commissioner” substituted for “Addl. Political Officer” by NEFA (Admn) Regulation 1965.
6. “Assistant Commissioner” substituted for “Assistant Political Officer” by NEFA (Admn) Regulation, 1965.
7. “High Court” substituted for “Governor” by ALO 1950.
8. “By Special Leave” substituted for “at his discretion” by ALO 1950.
9. “It” substituted for “him” by ALO 1950.
10. “Imprisonment for Life” substituted for “transportation for life” by Act 26 of 1955.
11. “District” substituted for “Tracts” by NEFA (Admn) Regulation 1965.
12. “Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh” substituted for “NEFA” by NEA (Reorgn.) (AP) ALO 1972.
13. “It” substituted for “he” by ALO 1950.
14. Amendments brought about by the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Amendment) Act, 2005 (ACT NO.1 of 2005):-

Source – The Arunachal Pradesh Code Vol.1.

Typed by naba Jyoti Dutta

Appendix-3:

ZIRO CIRCLE

(List of the Apatani Gaon Buras, Gaon Buris and Head Gaon Buras)

Sl. No.	Names of HGB/GB/Buri	Father/Husband	HGB/GB/Buri	Village	I Card Nos.
1.	Tamo Chobing	Late Tamo Dolo	HGB	Bamim	208
2.	Tilling Grayu	Late Tilling Tajung	HGB	Bamin	209
3.	Racho Tana	Late Racho Kacho	GB	Bamin	212
4.	Tamo Nibo	Late Tamo Talo	GB	Bamin	213
5.	Tilling Apo	Late Tilling Mibi	GB	Bamin	214
6.	Tilling Morth	Late Tilling Hinda	GB	Bamin	712
7.	Michi Taker	Late Michi Tani	HGB	Michi	215
8.	Dulley Tajo	Late Dulley Kacho	GB	Michi	216
9.	Dulley Talo	Late Dulley Bakhang	GB	Michi	670
10.	Michi Habung	Late Michi Sambyo	GB	Michi	217
11.	Michi Ampu (F)	W/o Shri Michi Tari	G/Buri	Michi	671
12.	Michi Yapiang (F)	Late Michi Tagur	GBuri	Michi	269
13.	Mudang Pai	Late Mudang Tamo	HGB	Mudang Tage	190
14.	Mudang Pilya	Late Mudang Tamer	HGB	Mudang Tage	191
15.	Tage Tajang	Late Tage Tade	HGB	Mudang Tage	192
16.	Buru Butang	Late Buru Kojing	GB	Mudang Tage	193
17.	Buru Tanyo	Late Shri Buru Tayo	GB	Mudang Tage	194
18.	Leegang Taji	Late Leegang Tamo	GB	Mudang Tage	672

19.	Late Liaga Niting	Late Liagi Magang	GB	Mudang Tage	195
20.	Mudang Buker	Late Mudang Donyi	GB	Mudang Tage	199
21.	Mudang Pumbo	Late Mudang Taming	GB	Mudang Tage	
23.	Mudang Tani	Late Mudang Tabin	GB	Mudang Tage	198
22.	Mudang Tabing	Late Mudang Ribya	GB	Mudang Tage	197
24.	Tadu Kojin	Late Tadu Bida	GB	Mudang Tage	200
25.	Tage Dolo	Late Tage Khoda	GB	Mudang Tage	
26.	Tage Nibo	Late Tage Koji	GB	Mudang Tage	201
27.	Tage Pai	Late Tage Tassang	GB	Mudang Tage	202
28.	Tage Ranka	Late Tage Kano	GB	Mudang Tage	203
29.	Tage Tabin	Late Tage Rika	GB	Mudang Tage	204
30.	Tage Taki	Late Tage Tallo	GB	Mudang Tage	206
31.	Tage Talang	Late Tage Tabing	GB	Mudang Tage	207
32.	Koj Buda	Late Koj Khoda	HGB	Dutta	180
33.	Koj Hassang	Late Koj Riku	HGB	Dutta	181
34.	Chiging Ranka	Late Chiging Bakhang	GB	Dutta	182
35.	Chiging Talo	Late Chiging Talo	GB	Dutta	183
36.	Hinio Dailyang	Late Hinio Tana	GB	Dutta	184
37.	Koj Guro	Late Koj Dolyang	GB	Dutta	186
38.	Koj Ranka	Late Koj Tana	GB	Dutta	673
39.	Koj Taker	Late Koj Doley	GB	Dutta	187
40.	Mobyta Tatung	Late Mobyta Tadu	GB	Dutta	188

41.	Chiging Yase (F)	Chiging Tayo	GBuri	Dutta	713
42.	Smti Koj Oche (F)	Shri Koj Bida	GBuri	Dutta	482
43.	Smti koj tari	late koj ganya	GB	Nenchalya (Dutta)	674
44.	Dani Kena	Late Dani Radhe	HGB	Hija	144
45.	Dani Taming	Late Dan Kochi	HGB	Hija	129
46.	Kago Tapa	Late Kago Tamin	HGB	Hija	130
47.	Kime Epa	Late Kime Tallang	HGB	Hija	132
48.	Kime Randa	Late Kime Tapu	HGB	Hija	133
49.	Kime Tara	Late Kime Tagyung	HGB	Hija	157
50.	Kime Tayung	Late Kime Tabhi	HGB	Hija	134
51.	Nada Kena	Late Nada Pillang	HGB	Hija	160
52.	Nada Tadi	Late Nada Chobin	HGB	Hija	135
53.	Nending Chatung	Late Nending Tagyung	HGB	Hija	137
54.	Pura Bhakhang	Late Pura Chilyang	HGB	Hija	138
55.	Pura Hinda	Late Pura Junja	HGB	Hija	139
56.	Taku Koyang	Late Taku Pugang	HGB	Hija	141
57.	Taru Murte	Late Taru Kojing	HGB	Hija	142
58.	Dani Kani	Late Dani Tamo	GB	Hija	143
59.	Dani Randa	Late Dani Tayo	GB	Hija	145
60.	Dani Tabyo	Late Dani Buda	GB	Hija	147
61.	Dani Taki	Late Dani Ribya	GB	Hija	148

62.	Dani Yakang	Late Dani Tagyung	GB	Hija	149
63.	Haj Chatung	Late Haj Tamer	GB	Hija	150
64.	Haj Tam	Late Haj Pilya	GB	Hija	151
65.	Kago Tado	Late Kago Dulle	GB	Hija	152
66.	Kago Tayang	Late Kago Tamang	GB	Hija	153
67.	Kime Chatung	Late Kime Buda	GB	Hija	154
68.	Kime Jarbo	Late Kime Tabii	GB	Hija	155
69.	Kime Nipa	Late Kime Buda	GB	Hija	156
70.	Nada Donyi	Late Nada Akho	GB	Hija	158
71.	Nada Tagur	Late Nada Radhe	GB	Hija	161
72.	Nada Tamer	Late Nada Tatung	GB	Hija	162
73.	Nenko Tamo	Late Nenko Pali	GB	Hija	163
74.	Pulo Tade	Late Pulo Tido	GB	Hija	164
75.	Puna Gyati	Late Puna Miido	GB	Hija	165
76.	Pura Nikang	Late Pura Koyang	GB	Hija	166
77.	Pura Rido	Late Pura Halley	GB	Hija	167
78.	Pura Sira	Late Pura Delyang	GB	Hija	168
79.	Pura Soka	Late Pura Buda	GB	Hija	169
80.	Pura Tagyung	Late Pura Karu	GB	Hija	171
81.	Pura Talley	Late Pura Doilyang	GB	Hija	675
82.	Pyagang Tayo	Late Pyagang Karu	GB	Hija	173
83.	Taku Donyi	Late Taku RIKU	GB	Hija	174

84.	Taku Lampung	Late Taku Tarang	GB	Hija	176
85.	Taku Taker	Late Taku Gyati	GB	Hija	
86.	Taku Taming	Late Taku Sira	GB	Hija	178
87.	Taro Mikhi	Late Taro Ekha	GB	Hija	179
88.	Puna Rilung (F)	Shri Puna Tai	GBuri	Hija	349
89.	Puna Yaming (F)	Shri Puna Niting	GBuri	Kudung Barang (Hija)	676
90.	Bamer Tayo	Late Bamer Butang	HGB	Tajang	95
91.	Milo Chatung	Late Milo Habung	HGB	Tajang	96
92.	Milo Chailyang	Late Milo Ruja	HGB	Tajang	97
93.	Milo Koyang	Late Milo Tabin	HGB	Tajang	98
94.	Milo Tagyang	Late Milo Mali	HGB	Tajang	99
95.	Ngilyang Jarbo	Late Ngilyang Tap	HGB	Tajang	116
96.	Ngilyang Talyang	Late Ngilyang Jile	HGB	Tajang	100
97.	Ngilyang Tarang	Late Ngilyang Dibo	HGB	Tajang	101
98.	Radhe Rambo	Late Radhe Tapa	HGB	Tajang	102
99.	Radhe Tasser	Late Radhe Sira	HGB	Tajang	103
100.	Rubu Tangu	Late Rubu Kacho	HGB	Tajang	104
101.	Tage Horming	Late Tage Bida	HGB	Tajang	105
102.	Tage Khokhung	Late Tage Tai	HGB	Tajang	126
103.	Tage Nibo	Late Tage Kechi	HGB	Tajang	106
104.	Mihin Kuru	Late Mihin Tasser	GB	Tajang	107

105.	Mihin Pugang	Late Mihin Mali	GB	Tajang	109
				(Pine Groove)	
106.	Mihin Rambo	Late Mihin Kuru	GB	Tajang	677
107.	Mihin Talang	Late Mihin Laling	GB	Tajang	475
108.	Mihin Talaing	Late Mihin Tagang	GB	Tajang	108
109.	Milo Nyime	Late Mihin Ruja	GB	Tajang	113
110.	Milo Hinda	Late Milo Lai	GB	Tajang	110
111.	Milo Kacho	Late Milo Pugang	GB	Tajang	111
112.	Milo Tabing	Late Milo Yakang	GB	Tajang	112
113.	Misso Rambo	Late Misso Radhe	GB	Tajang	114
114.	Misso Tamang	Late Misso Dibo	GB	Tajang	115
115.	Ngilying Doilying	Late Ngilying Tamer	GB	Tajang	
116.	Ngilying Khoda	Late Ngilying Ngilying	GB	Tajang	
117.	Ngilying Tayu	Late Ngilying Ruja	GB	Tajang	119
118.	Radhe Habung	Late Radhe Kojing	GB	Tajang	120
119.	Radhe Tamang	Late Radhe Tapa	GB	Tajang	121
120.	Radhe Tayu	Late Radhe Doilyang	GB	Tajang	122
121.	Rubu Pussang	Late Rubu Tamer	GB	Tajang	123
122.	Tage Doilyang	Late Tage Chailyang	GB	Tajang	124
123.	Tage Habung	Late Tage Hassang	GB	Tajang	125
124.	Tage Tade	Late Tage Khokhung	GB	Tajang	127
125.	Tage Tagru	Late Tage Sha	GB	Tajang	128

126.	Millo Yaja (F)	Late Millo Lailyang	GBuri	Tajang	687
127.	Radhe Puming (F)	Shri Radhe Tapa	GBuri	Tajang	481
128.	Rubu Bune (F)	Rubu Laliang	GBuri	Tajang	678
129.	Habung Buda	Late Habung Byai	HGB	Reru	58
130.	Habung Koyang	Late Habung Milo	HGB	Reru	59
131.	Khoda Doley	Late Khoda Jarjo	HGB	Reru	60
132.	Nani Bida	Late Nani Sha	HGB	Reru	61
133.	Nani Diibo	Late Nani Tahu	HGB	Reru	62
134.	Nani Kechi	Late Nani Riku	HGB	Reru	63
135.	Nani Pilya	Late Nani Tagio	HGB	Reru	64
136.	Nani Tabin	Late Nani Kago	HGB	Reru	65
137.	Nani Tatu	Late Nani Kago	HGB	Reru	67
138.	Duyu Bath	Late Duyu Khambo	GB	Reru	68
139.	Duyu Doley	Late Duyu Lampung	GB	Reru	69
140.	Duyu Kojin	Late Duyu Habung	GB	Reru	70
141.	Duyu Ruja	Late Duyu Kago	GB	Reru	71
142.	Duyu Sira	Late Duyu Hale	GB	Reru	72
143.	Duyu Tatung	Late Duyu Chailyang	GB	Reru	74
144.	Habung Kojing	Late Habung Doley	GB	Reru	75
145.	Habung Pilya	Late Habung Kojing	GB	Reru	76
146.	Habung Tako	Late Habung Tayo	GB	Reru	77
147.	Habung Tallo	Late Habung Guro	GB	Reru	78

148.	Khoda Chatung	Late Khoda Taje	GB	Reru	80
149.	Khoda Pumbo	Late Khoda Tayu	GB	Reru	81
150.	Khoda Tallang	Late Khoda Bida	GB	Reru	82
151.	Kuru Kano	Late Kuru Nipa	GB	Reru	84
152.	Kuru Tana	Late Kuru Hanya	GB	Reru	688
153.	Kuru Tayo	Late Kuru Tabing	GB	Reru	85
154.	Nani Doley	Late Nani Sha	GB	Reru	86
155.	Nani Pugang	Late Nani Magyang	GB	Reru	89
156.	Nani Pussang	Late Nani Pullo	GB	Reru	90
157.	Nani Taker	Late Nani Grayu	GB	Reru	92
158.	Padi Mali	Late Padi Delyang	GB	Reru	93
159.	Nani Pubyang	Late Nani Millo	GBuri	Reru	94
160.	Nani Omang (F)	Late Nani Pussang	GBuri	Nani Akang (Reru)	686
161.	Nani Yallo (F)	Nani Tabio	GBuri	Nani Ayo (Reru)	679
162.	Kalung Ganku	Late Kalung Dibo	HGB	Kalung	43
163.	Kalung Pugang	Late Kalung Kime	HGB	Kalung	44
164.	Lod Doilang	Late Lod Tai	HGB	Kalung	45
165.	Subu Sala	Late Subu Lali	HGB	Kalung	46
166.	Tailyang Khoda	Late Tailyang Buker	HGB	Kalung	47
167.	Tailyang Tago	Late Tailyang Buda	HGB	Kalung	48
168.	Lod Ekha	Late Lod Tatu	GB	Kalung	49

169	Lod Tago	Late Lod Sira	GB	Kalung	50
170	Nako Jille	Late Nako Pada	GB	Kalung	51
171	Nako Sira	Late Nako Murchi	GB	Kalung	52
172	Subu Bakhang	Late Subu Jille	GB	Kalung	53
173	Subu Hinda	Late Subu Byai	GB	Kalung	54
174	Tailyang abing	Late Tailyang Nibo	GB	Kalung	56
176	Dusu Taming	Late Dusu Kano	HGB	Hari	1
177	Gyati Chatung	Late Gyati Gyati	HGB	Hari	2
178	Gyati Tayung	Late Gyati Tamer	HGB	Hari	3
179	Hage Bath	Late Hage Ngilying	HGB	Hari	4
180	Hage Buda	Late Hage Tapa	HGB	Hari	21
181	Hage Chatung	Late Hage Takha	HGB	Hari	5
182	Hage Dibo	Late Hage Ganku	HGB	Hari	6
183	Hage Gyati	Late Hage Kano	HGB	Hari	24
184	Hage Hanya-I	Late Hage Tatung	HGB	Hari	7
185	Hage Hanya-Ii	Late Hage Tadu	HGB	Hari	8
186	Hage Kano	Late Hage Gyati	HGB	Hari	9
187	Hage Riku	Late Hage Doilyang	HGB	Hari	10
188	Hage Sira	Late Hage Malli	HGB	Hari	29
189	Hage Tagia	Late Hage Mubi	HGB	Hari	11
190	Hage Taley	Late Hage Tapa	HGB	Hari	12
191	Narang Sala	Late Narang Bida	HGB	Hari	36

192	Nending Bida	Late Nending Taming	HGB	Hari	37
193	Tasso Dole	Late Tasso Ranka	HGB	Hari	40
194	Tasso Hailyang	Late Tasso Pusang	HGB	Hari	14
195	Tasso Rambo	Late Tasso Uku	HGB	Hari	15
196	Tasso Tarang	Late Tasso Lampung	HGB	Hari	16
197	Dogin Kago	Late Dogin Kano	GB	Hari	17
198	Dusu Tajang	Late Dusu Akha	GB	Hari	18
199	Dusu Tarang	Late Dusu Lali	GB	Hari	19
200	Gyati Taming	Late Gyati Guth	GB	Hari	20
201	Hage Chobing	Late Hage Gyati	GB	Hari	22
202	Hage Grayu	Late Hage Tatu	GB	Hari	23
203	Hage Hiba	Late Hage Tagang	GB	Hari	25
204	Hage Hinda	Late Hage Nipa	GB	Hari	26
205	Hage Pugang	Late Hage Bida	GB	Hari	28
206	Hage Tade	Late Hage Jarbo	GB	Hari	30
207	Hage Tai	Late Hage Murte	GB	Hari	31
208	Hage Talang	Late Hage Tacho	GB	Hari	32
209	Hage Tallo	Late Hage Kano	GB	Hari	33
210	Hage Tangu	Late Hage Tadu	GB	Hari	34
211	Hage Tapa	Late Hage Butang	GB	Hari	35
212	Nending Tarang	Late Nending Lali	GB	Hari	38
213	Tadu Nambo	Late Tadu Pusang	GB	Hari	39

214	Tasso Tangu	Late Tasso Bida	GB	Hari	680
215.	Tasso Tapa	Late Tasso Mope	GB	Hari	41
216	Hage Ali	Late Hage Taka	GB	Hari	480
219	Hage Manu	Late Hage Grayu	GB	Hari	42
218	Bullo Chada	Late Bullo Takung	HGB	Hong	220
219.	Bullo Lali	Late Bullo Tassang	HGB	Hong	221
220	Bullo Tani	Late Bullo Tamo	HGB	Hong	222
221	Hibu Dampyo	Late Hibu Tako	HGB	Hong	223
222	Kago Navin	Late Kago Tabi	HGB	Hong	224
223	Kago Tath	Late Kago Ekha	HGB	Hong	225
224	Narang Murpu	Late Kago Narang	HGB	Hong	227
225	Punyo Nikam	Late Punyo Takha	HGB	Hong	228
226	Punyo Tamin	Late Punyo Palyo	HGB	Hong	229
227	Takhe Hinda	Late Takhe Nana	HGB	Hong	230
228	Takhe Pulo	Late Takhe Tupe	HGB	Hong	231
229	Tapi Tale	Late Tapi Kacho	HGB	Hong	232
230	Tapi Tana	Late Tapi Tamo	HGB	Hong	233
231	Tilling Apio	Late Tillintg Kojing	HGB	Hong	234
232	Tilling Tayu	Late Tilling Nana	HGB	Hong	235
233	Budi Nido	Late Budi Lento	HGB	Hong	236
234	Budi Kunya	Late Budi Chatung	GB	Hong	
235	Bullo Miri	Late Bullo Tanw	GB	Hong	237

236	Bullo Tagur	Late Bullo Tapu	GB	Hong	238
237	Hibu Dukhung	Late Hibu Sai	GB	Hong	239
238	Hibu Lento	Late Hibu Tamu	GB	Hong	240
239	Hibu Nyanyi	Late Hibu Bida	GB	Hong	
240	Hibu Tabin	Late Hibu Lali	GB	Hong	241
241	Hibu Tabyo	Late Hibu Tarang	GB	Hong	242
242	Hibu Talo	Late Hibu Taping	GB	Hong	243
243	Hibu Tani	Late Hibu Kena	GB	Hong	244
244	Hibu Yaje-II	Late Hibu Tanyo	GB	Hong	245
245	Hibu Bukhe	Late Kago Loder	GB	Hong	246
246	Kago Khoda	Late Kago Rure	GB	Hong	246
247	Kago Nana	Late Kago Doley	GB	Hong	248
248	Kago Palyo	Late Kago Taki	GB	Hong	249
249	Kago Ranchi	Late Kago Guro	GB	Hong	250
250	Kago Tapu	Late Kago Tarang	GB	Hong	251
251	Mudang Taku	Late Mudang Pullo	GB	Hong	252
252	Narang Tagur	Late Narang Tari	GB	Hong	253
253	Narang Taming	Late Narang Karu	GB	Hong	254
254	Punyo Taje	Late Punyo Dole	GB	Hong	255
255	Punyo Tapu	Late Punyo Hasang	GB	Hong	379
256	Punyo Yasa	Late Punyo Junja	GB	Hong	256
257	Tabin Tarang	Late Tabin Dodung	GB	Hong	257

258	Takhe Tida	Late Takhe Lampung	GB	Hong	259
259	Takhe Tajo-II	Late Takhe Tabo	GB	Hong	261
261	Tapi Buttung	Late Tapi Tacho	GB	Hong	263
262	Tapi Talang	Late Tapi Tama	GB	Hong	264
263	Tapi Yalla	Late Tapi Tagio	GB	Hong	265
264	Tilling Duri	Late Tilling Mobing	GB	Hong	
265	Tilling Tako	Late Tilling Talu	GB	Hong	267
266	Bullo Rija (F)	Shri Bullo Hakhe	GBuri	Hong	683
267	Bulyu Piira (F)	Late Bulyu Dith	GBuri	Hong	268
268	Hibu Yaja (F)	Late Hibu Appa	GBuri	Hong	268
269	Hibu Yama (F)	Shri Hibu Tamo	GBuri	Hong	684
270	Hibu Yasing (F)	Late Hibu Nyipa	GBuri	Hong	685
271.	Narang Yamyang (F)	Shri Narang Tam	GBuri	Hong	486
272.	Punyo Yaje (F)	Shri Punyo Nyalye	GBuri	Hong	640
273.	Tapi Byako (F)	Late Tapi Uma	GBuri	Hong	641

Appendix-4:

Select personal Interviews

1. Mr. Kago Nabing, HGB, Swro (Ziro), October, 2013

Buliang (Village council/authority), *Gwtu-Gwra* (Village developmental leaders/activists) and *Nwging Paboh* (Priests/Persons with priestly knowledge) decided and settled disputes and cases in the days of yore before advent of the GB and *Katoki* (Political Interpreter) institutions. The *Katoki* institution came into being prior to the GB appointments. The early ApaTani *Katokis* were Duyu Kano, Talyang Taka, Dusu (Hari) Kano, Kago Tajo, Koj Murtwee and Mwdang Bwker. Most of the *Katokis* have expired by now. Twnyo Bida was the earliest *Katoki* and Takhe Tani was only later one appointed from Hong village. The earliest *Gaon Buras* in Hong village were like Penji (Twlying) Takha, Kago (Swmyo) Tamo, Tapi (Myobyia) Tamang, Punyo Lampung, Punyo Bwtang, Takhe Tagyung, Hibu Sai, Takhe Baming and Bullo Epo.

In those days there was no HGB. By and by, the GBs having oratorical skill and quality, knowledgeable in the customary laws and usages and those interested to assist the administration in developmental and social works were promoted to and appointed as HGB. It would not be out of place to mention here that many of the early GBs were not devoid of corruption because they accepted bribes and indulged themselves in favoritism and nepotism.

Initially I came to learn from some knowledgeable GBs from other villages that the GBs have developmental power and responsibility and that the government has advised the GBs to take initiative and lead in developmental programs. And the GBs (and the people in general) from other villages were impressed with my oratorical quality and skill and interest in developmental activities and social works that they suggested the government to appoint me as GB. Rabwee *Swgang* (Rabwee stream) was adopted and utilized as source of water supply for Hapoli (Ziro) township under my initiative and indication when I was a GB. This stream was selected and indicated for the source of water supply for the township since the same was lying unutilized and its selection did not disturb the irrigation sources in any of the Apatani villages. Similar developmental activity was undertaken by me in favor of Hong village, for example, in proper canalization of Jabyo *Swling* (Jabyo irrigation canal). All such developmental assistances impressed the government much and subsequently I was promoted to and appointed as HGB.

To acquire the community/clan lands for developmental purposes the government used to obtain consent and signature of the GBs. The institution of GB is degenerated but the meritorious GBs command enough importance, respect and authority even now because petty offences and disputes in the villages are

still decided and settled by participation of the GBs. However, the GBs should be insisted not to be lazy and indifferent so that the institution is revitalized. I participated in so many case/dispute settlements/resolutions. In our earlier days, the cases were mostly given to the GBs and largely sent back by the magistrates to the GBs level for settlement. Since all GBs were illiterate and there was no office secretary to record in written, no written record of the GB case settlements exists. Actually the cases and its settlements were reported to the judicial magistrates and the magistrates recorded them and kept the records for reference and taking cognizance.

In the later days, many aspired to become the GB and HGB because of importance and respect a GB or a HGB commanded besides getting honorarium and as a result there arose proliferation of GBs and HGBs leading to the denigration of the institution. Moreover, importance of the GBs is less these days because the cases are mostly brought before the government judicial magistrates for settlement. Since the magistrates' courts settled cases through application of Indian Civil Code which have been found more convenient and satisfactory by the litigants and the accused both, they started giving and dragging the cases to these courts for procedural advantage and like. Unfit GBs can be removed by the people through a kind of impeachment.

Now also the society can give the cases to the GBs but I do not understand why they are giving the cases to other courts. Fine, compensation and restitution were insisted upon from the persons held guilty of the offences but in case of non-compliance they were arrested and put inside the police lock up. In case of theft, twice the value of the stolen article was charged from the culprit in customary way of justice. Traditionally, drastic actions were taken against the habitual thieves.

2. Tilling Duri, HGB, Hong (Ziro), January, 2014

In the presence of all GBs, HGBs and *Gaon Buris* and entire Apatani advocates, we were advised by Honorable Chief Justice, Guwahati High Court that Illicit sexual relations, theft cases, *Mithums (Bos frontalis)* and land disputes all except murder case (which were supposed to be solved and settled by the formal courts) should be settled by the GBs.

The GB institution is not really declined in true sense of the term. For any dispute, the people especially the elitist, moneyed and young ones file the cases through practicing advocates which in turn has caused the decrease of the cases for the GBs. The cases are not much brought before the GBs court now a day especially because of proliferation of the practicing advocates since the clients are not interested to give the cases to the GBs court. They (especially the moneyed ones) feel more convenient, easy, dignified and simple to hire a practicing advocate and settle the cases in other courts. In the earlier

times, the GBs commanded more importance although occasionally they took bribe. The GBs/HGBs were appointed by the administration on the recommendation of the villagers only. Now, even the most unfit persons are appointed by the local MLAs and other political leaders. Even two-three GBs are appointed from same household/family. Let us say, two real brothers both are appointed as GB and father-in-law and daughter-in-law both are appointed as *Gaon Bura* and *Gaon Buri* respectively. Even a person of unsound mind, a pauper or a person with serious disability is appointed. Local MLAs like Padi Richo and Nani Ribya had a big role in the appointments.

I am a *Mihapillo* also. *Mihapillos* work with the *Buliang*. A *Mihapillo* sits with the *Buliang* in all its sessions. A *Mihapillo* is like a *Jugali* (assistant to mason) of *Mistry* (mason). The institution of *Mihapillo* also like that of the *Buliang* originated with the society. A *Mihapillo* is also called as *pillo*. Late Takhe Talu (elder brother of Late Takhe Taku) who was a *Mihapillo* was replaced by incumbent *Mihapillo*, Mr. Takhe Napa when Mr. Talu expired some years ago. The father of Mr. Habung Pilya Ribya was a *Mihapillo*. *Mihapillos* assist the *Buliang* during *Khwbo Amang*-night occasion in its all works. During *Murung* festivals traditionally a *Pengu* (a highly valued and delicious regional bird) each was gifted as *Amang* to the *Buliang* including *Mihapillos*. Instead of *Pengu*, Rs. 10/- (Rupees ten) only in cash is given now.⁴⁸ In Hong village a *Mihapillo* does not subsequently become a *Buliang*. He can be changed or replaced. But in other villages like Bwla and Hwja they become *Buliang* permanently in due course of time. A *Mihapillo* is like an assistant to the *Buliang* in its all affairs/activities which includes participation in case deliberations and settlements.

A *Miha Buliang* is a *Buliang* proper itself. A middle-aged *Buliang* is called a *Miha Buliang*. There is a *Buliang* house for *Nwchi* (*Nwchi* Zilla Parishad segment). *Nwtwee* which includes Hibu, Punyo and Takhe clans does not have a *Buliang* house. The *Bulyang* maintains a sound fund. The *Buliang* cut a cow for meat supply on the *Khwbo Amang* occasion. Moreover, they gift a *Takhwee* (squirrel), a *Yoh Aso* (a piece of full length bacon) to the *Khwbo Amang Nyibu* (*Khwbo Amang* priest). *Rwcha Nello* and *Rwlo Nello* owners supply *Yaalang* (raw red meats) to the *Khwbo Amang* team besides 'O' (rice beer), etc. *Rwcha Nello* not necessarily automatically becomes *Rwlo Nello*. Traditionally, by consulting omen only a *Rwcha Nello* or *Rwlo Nello* is hosted by the interested families, for which a request has to be made in advance to the *Buliang*. However such interests are very less now. If no such invitation/request comes

⁴⁸ However, this research scholar feels that Rs. 10/- (Rupees ten) only is too meager an amount because a *Pengu* cost around Rs. 500/- (Rupees five hundred) only at the current market price.

from any family the *Khwbo Amang* is conducted in a *Buliang* house each as *Rwcha Nello* and *Rwlllo Nello*⁴⁹ respectively.

The *Gaon Buris* were first appointed in Adi areas which was followed in Apatani valley. The *Gaon Buris* are appointed in favor of the village women giving a fair representation to the rural woman folks in the GB institution and so that the *Gaon Buris* could be utilized in solving the problems and issues affecting the women better. However everything about the *Gaon Buras* and the *Gaon Buris* in respect of duties, responsibilities and powers and functions are same. Honorarium to the GBs of all categories till date is given either half-yearly or annually not monthly. Nabam Tuki, the CM assured us free electricity but the government has increased the rate of electricity bill and always insisting us for early and timely payments of the same.

Before becoming a GB also I participated in so many dispute settlements. One important reason why the villagers wished to become a GB was that when the cases subsequently came to the judicial magistrates' courts the *Gaon Buras* only were given due importance and non-*Gaon Buras* were simply asked to go out of the magistrate's chamber. A GB was given precedence in protocol in a magistrate court or office. Hence, because of sentiment also many aspired and became the GBs.

3. Mr. Narang Kula, Hong (Ziro), January, 2014

Before 1945 there was no *Gaon Bura* but only the *Buliangs* (Village council/authority). The *Buliang* (including *Kwmwr Buliang*, the pig castigators as public servants and an institution)-*Gora* (the organizers of socio-religious festivals), *Gwttu-Gwra* (the village developmental leaders) and *Nwging-Paboh* (the priests) all originated with origin of the society. The Apatani people and all of the above institutions migrated from *Wpyo Supung* -> *Mwdo Supung* -> *Supung-Supung* and finally to *Ngunu Supung* (the present place of habitat). The *Buliang's* role was like that of UNO (United Nations Organization). Meanwhile, a *Mihapillo* who is an assistant of the *Buliang* is also called *Miha Padda*.

In the earlier times, a prominent villager, a man of intelligence or a man of wealth and status were appointed as representatives of the district administration called *Gaon Buras* (GBs) to guide the villagers and to act as liaison agents between the villagers and the administration. Actually it is *Gaon Bura* (GB) but the Apatanis mispronounced it *Gambra*. The institution of *Katokis* (PIs) came prior to that of the GBs. Dusu Tayu was an early *Katoki*. British India administration was invited to the Apatani valley by the

⁴⁹ It is the responsibility of the *Buliang* of the concerned village to decide and arrange *Rwcha Nello* and *Rwlllo Nello* both.

Apatani people themselves, although otherwise also, they would have come (on their own). Actually, while a major *Yelu* (a major dispute) took place when the entire Apatani community was aligned into two parties (being reduced to own ceremonial alliance and allied with favoritism) and ranged against one another, a neutral third party was needed to resolve such dispute. The government administration was felt necessary to settle (along with the *Buliang*) a large dispute like *Gyambo* (mass duel) and *Yelu* (own property destruction challenge competition).

To elaborate further, British India Government's intention to come, explore and administer (at least to exercise political control) coincided with the Apatanis wish; for the Apatanis needed a neutral third party to resolve their larger disputes, for example, when the entire community was divided into two groups as mentioned above and was ranged against one another, e.g. during *Supung Chambyo* (pan-Apatani dispute), some of the major *Yelu* and inter-tribes disputes when the *Buliang* at times failed to settle. Because, during those times raids and counter-raids between the Apatani and neighboring tribes were not a rare occurrence. Really with arrival of the government administration the rule of law has been established.

During the British India administration (subsequently inherited by own India government) the *Katokis* wielded considerable importance and authority and very often they extracted bribes from the people under one pretext or other by threatening that one who does not comply with would be arrested and put behind the bar. In such situation, the Apatani people were actually much afraid of the administration with machineries. In the process many Apatani parted with their precious valuables like Tibetan bells, brass plates, etc.

Later on, the cases had been increasingly taken up by the DC, ADC, AC, EAC and CO & the police. Because, the GBs have been remaining ignorant and indifferent to assert themselves and insist on their powers and responsibilities. Now they are only saluting 'Jai Hind!' to the VIPs and dignitaries. So long they are getting honorarium they do not bother too. Actually, Padi Rwcho and Nani Rwbya are indirectly almost monopolizing appointment of the GBs. As regards less numbers of cases brought before the GBs, it might be mentioned that sometimes a son or brother staying in same household happens to be a practicing advocate and file a case and do the entire necessary works. Else, the people just contact a practicing advocate and get an FIR drafted and deliver it to the Thana (Police station). However, representatives of the All Apatani *Gaon Buras* Welfare Association (AAGBWA) recently approached the DC to take steps to stop the practice of giving the cases to the judicial magistrates and the police and send back all cases coming to them to the GBs level for trial and settlement.

4. Ngwlyang Talyang, HGB/*Buliang*, Tajang (Ziro), March, 2014

Early GBs in Bwla village were like Millo Payang, Nani Sala, Padi Lalyang, etc. At present only Rubu Rambo is staying as *Katoki* in the Apatani valley. A *Katoki* draws a monthly salary bigger than that of a peon. Former *Katokis* were like (i) Hage Akha, (ii) Koj Murtw (expired before retirement), (iii) *Mwdang Bwker*, now GB, (iv) Habung Sala, became priest later on and (v) Nada Koyang, etc. Habung Sala and Nada Koyang were once suspended for dereliction of duty during a parliamentary election. Subsequently, Nada Koyang was eventually terminated and Nani Dwbo (who was peon before becoming *katok*)i was reinstalled and he stayed in the post till retirement. After re-installment he retired after 3 or 4 years only. The former GBs in Bwla village were like

- (i) Ngwlyang Yapa,
- (ii) Millo Lalyang,
- (iii) Radhe Swra,
- (iv) Rubu Pilya and
- (v) Millo Payang. These 5(five) GBs stayed as GBs when I was still not a GB (HGB). In Tajang, Radhe Swra stayed as HGB for Nami and Millo Payang (replacing Millo Pusang) for Nako. In Supung (the entire Apatani community), there was one HGB only in each village in the earlier time. The GBs are staff of the Governor and the DC. Nani Sala and Padi Lalyang also stayed as GB/HGB when I was still not a GB (HGB). N.B.: Ngwlyang Talyang was directly appointed as HGB.

I was simply a *Buliang* when ‘Village Council’ was once constituted by the then DC (around 1976) which was discontinued because of political clashes amongst some of the stakeholders of the Apatani community. Now also I am a *Buliang* besides a HGB. The *Buliang* means the council of wise elders who mediate and settle disputes amongst the mankind; also with certain socio-religious roles in *Subu*, *Murung* and *Myoko* ceremonial festivals and hence for all of these functions entitled for the gifts called *Amangs*. Besides the *Buliang*, there are many other institutions like the *Miha*, the *Sango-Hago*, the *Gwttu-Gwra* and the *Nwging Paboh* all which originated from the mythical land *Wpyo Supung*. Migration route of all the above-mentioned institutions can be depicted chronologically as here-under; *Wpyo Supung* -> *Kolo Supung* -> *Mwdo Supung* -> *Anw/Ngunu/Swlo Supung* (the present place of habitat of the Apatani community); all mythical lands except the last one.

The GBs are like and considered as the *Mihas*. The *Gwttu-Gwra* is also called *Gora* (the priests who organize socio-religious agricultural festivals to ward off pests, hailstorms, etc.). The *Nwging-Paboh* is equivalent of the *Nwh Paboh* which refers to the common public. The *Sango-Hago* means the prominent public figures which mediate and settle disputes through their oratorical skills and are

considered as the eldest amongst these institutions. It was possible that all the *Sango-Hago* and the *Gwttu-Gwra* people might involve themselves in a common dispute and conflict and a deadlock might arise and hence the necessity of a neutral third party mediator and settler. As a result, the council with nomenclature *Buliang* was organized in the mythical society called *Wpyo Supung* all done acting upon the advice of *Wpyo Popi*, the supreme advisor of the mankind.

If a father does not give proper property-will making before his death, his two sons/two daughters/a son-daughter duo/so very often undergo property disputes. As a result the kits and kin those who are neutral members intervene to decide and settle such disputes. At times, when compensation is unable to be paid by either of the two brothers/sisters/so as the case may be for settlement of the dispute, the kits and kin from maternal or paternal side or from both the sides combined who decides the dispute bear the cost of compensation/restitution themselves and amicably settlement is effected and normal relation is established again between the disputants and amongst all the relatives. The following pieces of advice are given by the deciders of a dispute vis-à-vis encroachment cases in their effort to effect successful settlements:

- i) By encroachment no one becomes rich; instead it brings life-threatening bad luck. Hence, be prepared to spare a few inches of land as compromise to effect the settlement of dispute.
- ii) If you encroach, your relative may compromise or tolerate but others would not, if the same thing is done to them; they may take strong action.

It was the British who started the GB and *Katoki* appointments. Nada Chobing, Takhe Tagyung and Nani Sala were among the first GBs. Genda *Saab* was BDO-Block Development Officer (now called ADC) who assisted Laling-Yelu (Husband-wife Haimendorf duo) as an administrator in Apatani valley. Genda *Saab Soh Dara La Male Banw Pa Pati. Soh Dara La, Swpai Atang Mi Male Babi Nwpa Mara Pacha Lyiho*. Mara means Daporijo area. This is said so in Apatani, because in Daporijo area the killings was done once upon a time by the local tribesmen Tagins to the members and soldiers belonging to the government party and the Apatani were simply made to go to that area as ALC (Auxiliary Load Carriers) called as PLC (*Pili Cee* in Apatani pronunciation) in the government punitive expedition. I was directly appointed as HGB. Being impressed with my interest in social services particularly in case settlement-arbitration in the village the educated and elite men of Tajang village staying in State capital, Itanagar collectively decided and got me appointed directly as HGB.

I befriended with many senior and experienced GBs of the earlier times and earned knowledge on the customary laws and the customary ways of arbitration and case settlement. Those GBs utilized me as

Dak runner (messenger/postman) and later impressed with my competency for the job they informally recommended my name for appointment as GB (directly as HGB). Exactly I learnt the GB qualities as mentioned above from those GBs. Each incumbent MLA appointed a large number of GBs each because the DC usually got subdued to their pressure. Even both the two sons of same father have been appointed as GB. There is widespread disunity amongst the GBs even within a same clan. This has adversely affected the justice delivery system. DCs and lawyers like Supreme Court and High Court judges have given an especial emphasis informing and urging us that the GBs have so many powers and responsibilities under the 1945 Regulation and that the GBs should really exercise it. Rather we should say some DCs almost cried about the importance of GBs institution and the customary laws and settlement.

Half-backed educated Apatani individuals (those who have no real education about the importance or so of the GBs) have undermined the importance and respect of the GBs. Now also, the people largely approach the GBs for dispute settlement informing us it is instead the GBs who have to settle local cases except murder cases; not the other (higher) courts. The GBs Association like All Tajang GBs Association has passed resolution that those who do not take the local cases to the GBs level court (except murder case) would be imposed fines. In this regard, a series of three meetings were conducted by all the Apatani GBs in Abotani club (a public hall) and it was decided by the GBs in favor of the resolution. It is informed to the DC that even murderer has to be apprehended by the GBs and would be handed over next day to the DC court.

On behalf of all the GBs some prominent GBs approached then DC requesting him and SP to send back the cases (brought above the GBs court directly) to the GBs court. The DC assured the GBs positively. Also, very often the cases brought to the other courts like judicial magistrate court above the GB court are appealed to the higher courts like High Court. However, some of the GBs have withdrawn 3-4 cases brought directly to the judicial magistrate court to the customary GB court. Even my own land case was withdrawn from the judicial magistrate court by myself. The DC often acclaims the GBs saying the GBs are very intelligent and wise in words and in customary case settlement and that it is because of illiteracy only the GBs are not performing to the expected level.

Earlier, it was Gyati Buda (before his promotion) who guided the GBs and did their most of the drafting. To strengthen and revitalize the GB institution certain educational qualification, let us say class X or XII passed qualification, may be prescribed as one criterion besides others for appointment. One educated GB should be appointed at-least one in each village; let us say one each for Dwre and Hwja respectively and one each for Nwchi and Nwtw respectively. A fit and retired Govt. service employee

may also be appointed. The GB institution is ineffective because being illiterate the GBs are unable to read the 1945 Regulation and its amended version and as also they are unable to read any of the office files noting. Talyang-Hao nyi means Hari and Kalung. Twnw-Dwbo means Hari, Dwbo and Kalung. *Gaon Buris* were first appointed in Adi areas. After that it was appointed in Apatani valley too. *Gaon Buris* are appointed to deal with women-related cases so that women do not hesitate to tell or say everything frankly – even secrets which cannot be expressed before the males.

It was then CM Gegong Apang who started paying honorarium. All incumbent MLAs should be stopped from recommending and pressurizing the DC for the GB appointments. Different from earlier, now the incumbent MLAs look for death vacancies and then they pressurize the DC to appoint their personal candidates to fill those vacancies. Lastly, *the GBs* will be necessary for the times to come.

5. Khoda Pombo, HGB, Bwla (Ziro), March, 2014

We are told the GBs have lots of powers and functions. But, because of our illiteracy only we do not really know them and exercise it properly. Before inception of the GBs institution, it was the *Buliang* which played all the roles of the GBs. Besides the *Buliang*, the *Buliang-Miha* or just called *Miha/Mihapillo/pillo*, the *Sango-Hago* and the *Gora* institutions survive. The *Buliang Miha/the Miha* cooperate and assist the *Buliang* in all the works of *Buliang* including settlement of disputes and law and order maintenance in the society. Many *Miha pillo* subsequently became *Buliang* in Bulla village. Even Padi Lalyang was a *Mihapillo* before becoming a *Buliang*, the then GB. Nani Babing, also a *Miha pillo* became a *Buliang*.

The function of the *Buliang* is to *DwpingLuping*, those of the *Sango-Hago* is to *Sango-Saping-Hago-Haping* and *Buchi-Butw Imping*; and that of the *Gora* is to organize *Dree* and *Yalung* (socio-religious agricultural and ceremonial festivals observed to ensure bumper harvest by warding off negative elements like pests, hailstorm, etc). All these functions presented in local terms combined roughly means to lead a prominent public life by settling disputes and cases and maintaining law and order. The *Buliang-Gora*, i.e., the *Buliang* and the *Gora* are entitled to enjoy ceremonial gifts called *Amangs* and so respectively. All of the above-mentioned institutions did originate along with the society.

Akin to institution of the *Miha*, the *Gaon Buras* have been appointed and organized by the government. The first GBs were like Padi Lalyang, Nani Sala, Gyati Tadu and Punyo Tamer, etc. By and by the GBs started taking most of the cases and disputes for settlement; the *Buliang* remaining indifferent to it. And the people accepted this new arrangement especially because the GBs were directly under the government administration. In a way, the GBs dominated the *Buliang*. However by now, the educated

Buliangs are gaining consciousness about their age-old importance and roles. While the *Buliang* became, almost obsolete in judicial roles/functions in the absence of *Gyambo* (a public dispute in which mass duel takes place), *Chambyo* (another public dispute involving violence) and *Yelu's* (public disputes of smaller scale but not of lesser consequence) and, indifferent to the active and dominating GBs' roles and functions; the GBs started playing the leading role to settle all disputes including inter-tribes ones.

Some persons have been directly appointed as HGBs perhaps politically. Direct appointment of the Head GBs may be said to have done because of external interference: *which I may cite in the thesis.* – This research scholar.

In the olden days, the GBs were not paid honorarium. Instead, whenever the dignitaries/VIPs visited, the GBs had to make contribution in kind particularly in the form of eggs, chicken, local beer, etc besides hospitality. Even, the GBs had to contribute goat in *Dree* festival. The first honorarium paid annually was Rs. 130/- (one hundred thirty) only which was subsequently raised to Rs. 250/- only and then to Rs. 500/- only (in between it was reduced from Rs. 500/- only to Rs. 400/- only). After one year, it was Rs. 500/- only again. At present, it is Rs. 600/- only for the HGBs and Rs. 500/- only for the GBs. In the olden days, the VIPs/dignitaries visited Reru village the most often; now in different Apatani villages.

In every VIP/dignitary visits they ask a GB (called *Miha*) to speak and after that a *Buliang* was proposed to speak. In such speech, a GB used to request the concerned Minister/Officer/may be Governor to look after development of the infrastructure well in Apatani valley considering the department under which s/he was. For example, a road and transport minister/officer was requested in such speech to look after improvement of road communication and transportation well and if agriculture minister or officer visits similar request was made for all-round agricultural development in the Apatani valley so that the people had prosperous and flourishing agricultural economy. In the earlier days, the cases were invariably sent back by the district administration to the GBs court for settlement and this was done in order that the magistrates and officers could concentrate on their other official duties. Still now, the minor cases are largely settled at the village level in which the GBs largely participate.

In dispute between the close relatives, the GBs or any arbitrators ask both the parties to not to believe in dispute because material losses may occur to both the parties in greater magnitude and to believe in compromise and amicable settlement on the 'forgive and forget principle' basis. Hence, through the oratory or arbitration skill also the cases are largely settled. Meanwhile, many of the GBs in the former times were after grafts. Inter-tribes (Nyishi-Apatani) disputes are also largely settled through inter-tribes customary GBs court especially to avoid delay and cost. Once, a few persons from neighboring tribe (Nyishi) trespassed into Hong forest area and killed many wild animals with their guns.

In this case the Hong GBs seized the man along with his gun and fined him. Similarly, in the Hwja-Dutta-Tajang forest a Nyishi man was seized along with his gun for killing many wild animals but the man pleaded for one-time excuse assuring he would never repeat such act. However, he was fined and let go. A *Katoki* used to conduct the *Mel* as facilitator, moderator, arbitrator and umpire. In case of failure to settle (in the *Mel*), the cases were referred to appropriate authority, viz., CO (Judicial), EAC (Judicial), ADC (Judicial), AC (Judicial) or DC.

Before appointment of the *Gaon Buri's*, upon consultation the women expressed great interest to become the same. Decline of the GBs institution is mainly because of proliferation of the practicing advocates and arrival of the political leaders. Actually, the litigants started taking new supports of the advocates and the political/public leaders. In the olden days, the GBs enjoyed more importance and status. To assert ourselves, the GBs in Bwla village had once prevented the police from making sudden arrest of an alleged offender; saying not to undermine the powers and responsibility of the GBs so that the offender could be produced before the magistrate if the case was not amicably and effectively settled at the GB level itself.

Without taking interview (which should be done) of the arbitration ability, the knowledge about the customary laws and the like the people are appointed as the GBs through politicians whether death vacancy exists or not which has led to an excess number. Interview should be taken on integrity, social mindedness and arbitration skill in *Mel* like situation, etc. Sometimes, the disputes are settled very often through the mediation and arbitration of the kits and kin so that the disputes are not aggravated by interference of other parties. In the former days, very often the judicial magistrates entrusted the case investigation and settlement to the *Katokis*. The *Katokis* liked the increasing numbers of the cases given to him because they could get more number of bribes or gratifications as supplements to their monthly salary.

In the earlier days, the GBs contributed eggs, wines and even cash when the VIPs visited. During *Dree*, the GBs and Panchayat members did active social works for the successful conduct of the festival; even contributed cash. It was Padi Richo who initiated to stop any contribution in cash or kind to be made and any physical work to be done by the GBs in any occasion except constructing welcome gate and doing similar decorative works. In the earlier *Dree* festival celebrations those who donated a *Mithuns*, a cow or a goat for slaughter were offered the post of GB or else gun license was issued. Many were interested to give such donation to become GB because the GB commanded importance and status; in fact, the people were very competitive in giving such contribution or donation. In such situation, the poor

men were generally not interested to become a GB. In nutshell, the people were interested to become a GB to stay as a prominent man.

To revitalize the GB institution, the GBs had requested DC and SP not to directly arrest an offender but to confer full powers and responsibilities to the GBs and the cases to be sent back to the GB court for trial and decision; an offender to be brought to the district administration's court as and when necessary only for further necessary action including jail punishment. In the olden days compensations/restitutions were paid in the form of Tibetan bells, bronze plates, etc. depending upon the magnitude and gravity of the offence including murder. Some of the cases I settled are:

Case 1: Adultery allegation case involving the two brothers Lt. Dusu Horming and his own younger brother Dusu Takha in which Horming accused Takha of committing adultery with his wife.

Decision: One *Mithuns* to be paid by Takha to Horming as *Hwnyang* (paid as compensation after committing a shameful act).

Case 2: Duyu Taling s/o Duyu Dwbo v/s a Nyishi party in which Taling accidentally killed a Nyishi youth with his motor cycle. Four of us went to the Nyishi village and settled the case. This case was very tough to be settled and was settled after marathon and herculean deliberations and negotiations held by four arbitrators from Taling's side two of them – one self and the other a HGB (Habung Buda).

Decision (terms of the settlement):

1. A concrete memorial to be built at the burial site of the dead &
2. Two *Mithunss* to be sacrificed; one to be eaten by *Nyanw* (maternal uncles of the dead) and other to be eaten by the paternal uncles.

Case 3: A *Mithuns* of Tage Talley was accidentally killed by a Nyishi man.

Decision: A *Mithuns* to be given as restitution by the Nyishi man.

Case 4: A *Mithuns* of Habung Kojing was accidentally killed by a Nyishi man.

Decision: A *Mithuns* to be paid as restitution by the Nyishi man.

Case 5: Duyu Pilya (Apa) killed the *Mithuns* of Millo Taping intentionally because the *Mithuns* intruded into his bamboo garden and undertook some destruction to the bamboos.

Decision: A *Mithuns* to be paid as restitution by Mr. Pilya.

6. Mwdang Pai, HGB/Priest, Bwrw (Ziro), January, 2014

In the olden days, there were very less numbers of GBs. In Hong village the pioneering GBs were like Kago Tamo, Penji (Twlying) Takha, Takhe Tagyung, Punyo Lampung and Hibu Sai. In other villages they were like Gyati Tadu, etc. Formerly more cases were brought to the GBs for settlement. Besides, a bottle of rice beer and an egg each were formerly contributed by the GBs during VIP visits. Besides, traditional cloths like *Jikhew Tarw* were gifted to the dignitaries by the GBs. Earlier, even if the cases were directly brought before the judicial magistrates they used to call the GBs for consultation and opinion. In the former days, the *Katokis* were feared because they were directly under the government administration. Those who were indulging in excesses during case settlements could be somehow frightened by the *Katokis* and make them ease out. Basically, the *Katoki's* role was that of an umpire in the case settlement deliberation.

Some of the cases settled under my participation as GB/HGB were:

Case 1: Settlement of a public *Yelu* (dispute).

Case 2: House destruction case.

Case 3: When Mr. Koj Tara was seized and captured, I got him release through payment of Rs. 12,000/- only to the in-laws.

We do not understand either English or Hindi language. Mainly due to this, we do not know much about the powers and responsibilities of the GBs/HGBs. Also, probably because of favoritism and nepotism indulged in by many GBs the people are giving the cases to regular courts other than the GB court for settlement. At times, one or both of the parties to a case/dispute are adamant and do not relent and listen to us. In such situation, feeling fed up and thinking nothing do we gain, we GBs give up a case without completing the settlement. The *Katokis* too have minimum role in case settlement now a day and the cases are given (through the practicing advocates) to the police and the judicial magistrates. The people rely on and fear more to the advocates, the police and the magistrates. The police and the magistrates work in tandem. The practicing advocates, the police and the magistrates are interested to deal with the cases because they get the extra-earning opportunity. Now a day, as GBs we stay almost only to construct welcome gate during VIP/dignitary visits and to wish them 'Jai Hind'! However, the GBs do not take up the cases because the litigants do not bring to them.

Many GBs are worse as regards merit. As HGBs one who is meritorious lead, care, guide and advice the GBs. In case settlements deliberation, a HGB has to take special care that he speaks very well and carefully after attentive listening to all previous speakers. However, the VIPs/dignitaries enjoy when the GBs participate to welcome them by constructing welcome gate and doing other decorations for them in the festival/function grounds. The government too should on their part strongly confer the powers, functions and responsibilities to the GBs and give them training on them. In reality, the police and the GBs should work in tandem and coordination. The free electricity has been demanded by the GBs from time to time because the case settlements take place at late evening time and other facilities like TA and DA also have been demanded.

Meanwhile, Nani Sambyo was a leading spirit behind the successful publication of *Nikung Dapo* by ACLS. The ACLS's proposal of village authority would be excellent but it has not been functioning. Matter is still the cases are reported to the police and the judicial magistrates wherein the decisions are given on the basis of regular laws (IPC, CPC and CrPC).

The institution of *GB* is still necessary for the following reasons:

- i. to settle petty disputes in the villages,
- ii. to construct welcome gate and to do similar other decorative works during VIP/dignitary visits. Other than the GBs, the villagers would not come forward for such work,
- iii. Some intelligent, sober and careful GBs can act as detective and spy on behalf of the law enforcing agencies &
- iv. Whether the litigants win or lose the cases in formal courts it is uneconomical and an expensive affair.

The *Buliang* would also be always relevant for socio-religious importance during *Subu* and *Murung* (for accepting the ceremonial gifts called *Amangs*) & *Myoko* (for performing the ceremonial procession called *Byai Byalo*).

7. Hage Riku, HGB, Hari (Ziro), January, 2014

1. As GB/HGB, I participated in settlement of Kago Kago v/s Tapi Tana *Yelu*. This *Yelu* was dispute over a portion of pine groove.

2. Also I participated amongst the GBs in settlement of *Yelu* of Dani Oho clan v/s Pura clan. The terms of settlement were reported to the judicial magistrate and the magistrate was asked to issue a copy

each of the settlement copy to the disputant parties. In this *Yelu, Lisu* (own property-destruction competition) did not occur - before that did occur the GBs of Hwja requested the pan-Apatani GBs to intervene. This dispute occurred, when the father died without legal heir (son), his daughter claimed the house site for herself which was vehemently objected to by her paternal uncle. It would be worth-mentioning here that an ancestral house site cannot be inherited to a girl child according to the Apatani customary laws. Hence, in this case it was decided in favor of Pura party.

3. Paddy field dispute *Yelu* of Tasso clan v/s Gyati Nako clan of Hari village was settled by us, the Hari GBs. A *Mithuns* and a cow each was already slaughtered as a challenge by both of the parties and both of them were ready to make further moves. At that situation we Hari GBs (excluding Gyati Nako and Tasso GBs) decided to intervene from proceeding further. Before the actual intervention we agreed upon a promise that if any GB/s shows favoritism or nepotism to any party then all the remaining GBs would ask the district administration to terminate the wrong GB/s. As a first step, both of the party's *Yelu Sogyangs* (Two strong wooden post erected in cross as *Sogyang* where-in the *Mithunss* and cows are tied before their slaughter. Religiously if the *Sogyang* is destructed it render a *Yelu* indulger helpless from proceeding further) were destructed. After that, we Hari GBs inspected and investigated in the disputed boundary of the paddy fields. When it was found that Gyati Nako party had encroached we finalized a correct demarcation upholding the claim of Tasso clan.

It must be mentioned that if mediators leave a dispute unfinished then dispute degenerate and snowball. Such degeneration directly or indirectly often affects entire Apatani community. It was decided amongst the pan-Apatani GBs that a dispute should be settled by the village level GBs at the first instance. As appeal only the pan-Apatani GBs should be finally invoked. Now, there is no more *Yelu Lisunw* because of the GBs effort made in the earlier times. The existing cases at present are mostly reported either to the police or to a judicial magistrate's court. In these cases even, the GBs are sometimes called for participation in the settlement; as also, the same are at times referred to the GBs' court. Moreover, in the appeal cases, the verdict already given by the GBs' on these are sometimes consulted. On the other hand, when the kits and kin and other relatives very often settle the cases we the GBs need not have any case.

The GBs have demanded free electricity from the government because the local case settlements take place in the evening times which sometimes continue till late night. Some other demands of the GBs is that the GBs at times have to go to Nyishi areas and even to the state capital, Itanagar for case settlement, conference or other works. In such travels TA/DA like that of a government employee may be provided by the Government. In case of serious crimes in the society the HGBs or the GBs have to inform

immediately to the police. Hence, one free LL phone facility may be provided at least to each HGB only. In the meantime this facility was provided but was discontinued. Mr. Hibu Marang has been acting as our informal secretarial staff for doing the drafting, recording, auditing and other works. We have asked the government to give salary to him but it has not materialized yet. We have tried to engage more boys besides Marang but unsuccessful.

The climate-appropriate dresses have been another demand. VIPs and other leaders are coming now and then to Apatani valley which we always welcome and receive. Moreover, most of the GBs like to salute 'jai hind!' to the VIPs. We also demand bus to attend meetings and cases on nominal fares. Particularly the demand is introduction of two to-and fro buses from Hapoli (Ziro) to old Ziro so that the red-coat wearing GBs on the way could be picked up. The DC had assured us for introduction initially of at-least one bus. The matter is that DC frequently changes and this demand has not been met so far. Many excuses are made when enquired in the DC office; even loss of the particular file was reported. This happens mainly because of our illiteracy and for the same reason we face many other such eventualities.

We GBs are ready to accept all cases to settle except murder one but younger generation especially are always giving the cases to the practicing advocates (to be settled through a suitable formal court). The practicing advocates are much interested to collect cases mainly as their income source. The GBs have requested the police which come to the villages and directly arrest an alleged offender that they should first ask the GBs who is right and who is wrong? We have told them that we will not allow an accused to be arrested directly from the village as was done earlier except murder case. We have requested both the DC and the SP in a written petition. The DC particularly had consented to our request. This petition was submitted many years back. However, still now, some prefer to give the cases to the GBs only for settlement. Meanwhile, since the GBs are illiterate they may not accept the new assignment of functions in addition to existing ones. Nor they would understand to perform them because of the same reason. Neither the government is contemplating.

Assault and murder cases are effectively dealt with by the police, that also of-course by taking bribe. But, *Mithuns* and forest dispute type cases can be more effectively and properly settled by the GBs' court only. When such cases are settled by other courts an offender is simply put into jail without providing compensation or restitution to the affected. The younger generation does not give much respect to the GBs. Still then, after committing a crime/offence they mostly approach us for their case settlements. As regards ACLS proposed village authority, if the members stayed at village then it would have been appropriate; hence, there is certain difficulty.

In the former days, the eligible and fit persons were selected by the DCs but later on there has been political appointments and those appointees involved themselves in active politics. Let us admit, lesser numbers of GBs are appointed now on but, again if incompetent individuals are appointed through the politicians as vote bank then the same will be the scenario. Interview should be taken on traditional laws and other aspects while appointing the individuals as a GB/HGB. Unlike the politically-appointed GBs, ones selected by the villagers themselves are mostly done to those who are competent. We have enquired to the younger generation (those who are literate and educated) to become GBs but they laugh at the idea but we have told them that one day they would not be able to become a GB because very few only from every clan will be appointed and that also only to who are educated and competent.

8. Late Mwdang Bukwr, Ex-GB/Katoki/P.I., Mwdang Tage (Ziro), January, 2014

Dusu Tayu, Hage Akha and Talyang Taka were amongst the first Apatani *Katoki*'s. Nyishi *Katoki*'s like Taba Tath and Pai Tapu, etc. (who came from their areas and stayed at Ziro, being headquarters) were precursor to and guided the Apatani *Katoki*'s. Subsequent Apatani *Katokis* were Lod Dolyang, Koj Murtw and Mwdang Bukwr (myself). At present, it is Rubu Rambo only.

Initially a peon I retired as *Katoki* (grade-I). As *Katoki* I went to Nyishi areas several times for case settlements. I participated in settlement of Kago Nabing v/s Narang Tari *Yelu*. Narang Tari had slaughtered more *Mithunss* which remained un-equalized by Nabing for quite about 2-3 years. The people objected to this by demanding that number of *Mithunss* should be equalized by Nabing immediately. When Tamo Riba arrived as CO at Ziro, the matter was reported to him. Ultimately, all *Mithunss* to be equalized were repaid by Nabing to Tari under CO, Tamo Riba and my *Katokiship*. Meanwhile, Lt. (Mr.) Kago (Talang) Puha was jailed in connection to this *Yelu* whom I bailed out. This was the first case/*Yelu* I settled. In this *Yelu*, Koj Murtw somewhat favored Narang Tari. As per tradition, *Gondu punwng* (amicable settlement party) was finally arranged.

Next one, Budhi Kunya v/s Talo Tanyo's case was settled under my *Katokiship*. This was an adultery allegation case. In this case it was decided that a *Mithuns* should be given (to be slaughtered as meat) to Tanyo by Kunya. The earlier *Katoki*'s and GBs performed without the police force and its help have invariably been taken in dealing with the cases since its establishment only. However, the *Katoki*'s play the lead role in dealing with the cases being predominant over the GBs and under a free hand given by the magistrates. Under such freedom, interestingly, they often accepted bribes and gratifications as largely alleged by the people. I was an unmarried young boy during Bullo Logo v/s Bullo Lora *Yelu*. The *Katoki*'s particularly Dusu Tayu participated in settlement of the Bullo Logo v/s Bullo Lora *Yelu*. No police department existed at that time and bribery and gratification as alleged were offered to the *Katokis*

by both of the parties. However, the GBs also sincerely participated to settle that *Yelu*. In Hibu (a clan) v/s Twlying (a clan) *Yelu*, the *Katokis* like Hage Akha participated and settled it. AYA also settled some *Yelus*, for instance in, one involving Kago (a clan), Nada (a clan) and Koj (a clan). Narang Loma and Narang Bath v/s Bullo Habung case was also settled under my active participation in which Hong GBs actively participated and decided the case. Those GBs also showed the correct demarcation of the disputed pine-grove boundary.

As a rule, the cases were settled on the general unanimity principle after which the same were reported to the concerned judicial magistrate for recording. In case of complete disagreement the same was reported accordingly to it. The cases unable to be settled at *Katoki*-GBs level were referred to the magistrate court. In such cases we informed the magistrate who were how much right and wrong. *Mels* (case arbitrations session) were held in the premise (in front of) of the DC Office, Ziro – whether Nyishi or Apatani ones. I settled many Nyishi cases too. I handed over all the case settlement copies to Top *Babu*, then dealing Assistant before my retirement.

The Nyishi cases were tried best to be settled in their areas itself. In case of failure, the same were referred to the Office of the DC, Ziro for re-adjudication. Very often I stayed in the Nyishi areas for over a week or two in connection to cases. Even, I stayed for two continuous weeks in a *Mithuns* case at Dodu. A woman put under stockade case at Rachi Tagia was also settled and she was set free. I settled a Nyishi case of attempt to murder even. In Nyishi cases where the parties did not accept the terms of settlement were finally informed to attend the magistrate court at Ziro for re-adjudication. Besides, many Apatani and Nyishi cases of petty nature were settled under my sincere participation.

Now, there is no fresh GBs appointment taking place. The GBs are like a symbol and will always be useful. Let us say, during VIPs/dignitaries arrival presence of the red-coat wearing GBs make the occasion very colorful and attractive. In absence of the GBs on such occasions the VIPs will miss their presence. The deadwood GBs do not play any of their roles. In the earlier days, some GBs were engaged for confidential matters-related duties - as intelligence, detective and spying agents. They provided intelligence reports to the DC. May be some *GBs* are engaged in such job now also. Most probably, the intelligent, careful and sober *GBs* were engaged for such intelligence duties; they reported all what the villagers were saying and discussing.

Now, almost all cases have become the (regular) court cases. The cases are rarely given, referred or sent back to the GB court. The half-backed educated people (who are in majority now) prefer mainly to give the cases to the police and the magistrates. However, both the GBs and the DC had agreed upon that all the customary law cases need to be settled by the GBs only. The GBs have requested the SP not to

allow any police party to come to the villages and directly arrest an alleged offender because it is eye sore to them. And that the police should first consult the Head GB or alternatively ASM (Anchal Samiti Member) at-least, before making such arrest. In certain major disputes when the GBs failed to settle, especially at paddy fields bunds breaking stage, the cases were handed over to the *Buliang* (the traditional village council). Because, when the *Buliang* intervened the tradition-oriented disputant parties somehow eased out often amending for amicable settlement. They can act as well-comer and receiver to the VIPs/Dignitaries on their arrival and to see off on their departure. The GBs would be also relevant to announce the social service programs in own village, its date and time.

9. *Nani Sambyo, DSO, Ziro (January 22, 2015)

**Mr. Nani Sambyo, District Statistical Officer, Ziro (Lower Subansiri) was a leading spirit behind: (i) Preparation of Nikung Dapo (The Apatani Customary Law) and (ii) Constitution of new Village Authority which is yet to be approved by the government.*

Buliangs should have been appointed as Village Authority but many *Buliang* are unfit to be appointed as the same (*GB*). Even some *Buliangs* are minor. Moreover, a *Buliang* is an inheritable post with compulsory socio-religious function. Hence, many non-*Buliang* have been appointed as GBs. In the earlier times, there was a competitive element in the *GB* appointment. The persons having quality and genuine interest only were appointed by DC largely on the basis of *Katoki's* (P.I.) recommendation. In the former days, the GBs' number was lesser and they were appointed seeing their personal quality only. Influential and respect and obedience commanding persons, may be because of wealth and status, oratorical skill or like were appointed as GBs by the government administration during the British and the earlier days (after India's independence).

Formerly, the cases were settled by the GBs-*Katoki's* team only which were actually taken over from the *Buliang* since 1945 onwards. The *Katoki's* (PIs) guided and supervised in the case settlement arbitrations, taking care that no violence occurred in the *Mel*. And the concerned decision/verdict was reported to the CO (Judicial). Subsequently, the case verdict Order used to be passed by the CO and copies sent and distributed to the parties. *Katoki* acted as umpire in the case arbitrations; reporting the case which could not be settled on a particular day to the concerned magistrate for taking cognizance. Police establishment came to Ziro in 1974. At that time (around 1974) there was one SI (Police Sub-Inspector) and some constables and all of them were deputed from the Assam Police. Before that, the Assam Rifles were used by DC as the police force. Formerly, no honorarium was paid to any GB. It was self-less service. However, honorarium is always relevant. Salary is paid to a government employee and honorarium is paid to those who are willing to serve the people/society for welfare purposes – the service

or contribution given is voluntary one. The GBs are government agent; not government employee. They are supposed to render services voluntarily to the government and people.

The cases are reported mostly to the police now-a-day. The DC and the police have been requested to send back the cases to the GB level court. The police and the magistrates are willingly accepting the cases because they need some extra earning opportunity. Because of proud and adamant nature the litigants are giving the cases to the other (formal) courts. Provided the fees are paid the practicing advocates are willingly to do all kinds of legal works in favor of the litigants and to bail out the accused under the police/judicial custody.

The 10 out of every 100 GBs are in-illegible/incompetent ones. Many GBs roam around drunk. The GBs have been seriously politicized which is a cause for concern. Red coats are official insignia but some GBs are using it in improper/undignified way, for instance, they wear it very dirty or they do not wear it where and when needed. In a way, the GBs should respect themselves to earn respect. There exists now, too large a number of GBs. DC has very often been instructed by the higher authority to not to give fresh appointments. Politicians are mainly behind the excess appointments – they give pressure to the DC. The politicians get the villagers appointed as GBs in a large number to enrich their vote bank. The villagers are interested to become a GB because one gets honorarium. Of and on, the GBs get umbrella, torch light, *Genjy* (white under-wear half-sleeve shirt) and even cash, etc. Also, two-three free electricity points have been assured by the government to them. Ministers, at the times of their visits, hand out a cash amount to be divided amongst the GBs present on those occasions. At one time, free of cost LL phone facility was provided to each HGB. Some of our own people in the society belittle and undermine the GBs which happen to be another cause of decline of the GB institution.

Arrival of the Panchayat institution has also adversely affected the importance and role of the *Buliang* and the GBs as well in both of the developmental and judicial spheres. The Panchayat representatives usurped to themselves all the development-related schemes and activities and its funds. Also, they started involving themselves in the dispute resolution mechanism thus intruding upon domain of the GBs and the *Buliangs* although the judicial matters are not under their purview. By now of course, somehow they have realized. Actually, in the earlier times, the Panchayat representatives were under the impression that both of the developmental and judicial activities were under their purview itself.

To revitalize GB institution, size of the GBs should be kept small. Therefore, the government should skip the appointments and reduce the number of GBs. If necessary, limited appointment may be continued on merit-cum-need basis. Mostly, literate or educated people have been appointed as GBs in some other districts. Certain educational qualification (say, class x pass) should be prescribed as one of

the criteria. Interview should be conducted. GB institution cannot be discontinued so long the 1945 Regulation prevails. GB Appointment Order covers the powers and responsibilities of the GBs. The GBs may report the outside persons spying in their areas to the government administration, if discovered. Developmental activities are undertaken properly or improperly/satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily the GBs can report to the government for necessary action/step. The GBs can persuade and pressurize the Panchayat representatives for bringing developmental scheme or for proper utilization of the government developmental funds.

The GBs as the government agents have to assist the government administration in settling law and order problem and in successfully doing any other work. It is up to the DC to assign them in any work. The GBs can be engaged as spy also in their respective villages when law and order problem occurs there. At present also, the GBs are probably utilized as detective. Let us say, the Department of Power asks the GBs to, watch out on the people doing the illegal tapping of electricity and, report the same. The GBs are legally endowed with wide powers and responsibilities but matter is that they are defunct in performing them. If the literate and educated persons are appointed as GBs they may understand their roles and assert themselves. Recent formation of the GB Association at various levels is a right step towards this direction. In future, may be, there will be all educated *GBs*. However, if non-*Buliang* only are appointed as Village Authority/Village Council (GBs) for dealing with Customary Law then the *Buliang* may have some problem. Therefore, the *Buliang* and the non *Buliang* should be in the ratio of 60:40 in a Village Authority.

Under extra-ordinary power, DC may add certain details vis-à-vis certain inadequate provisions of the 1945 Regulation. Likewise, 'Village Council' consists of the *Buliang* and the non- *Buliang* (*Miha's*) which were constituted in 1976 was reconstituted in 1981 but had to be abandoned due to political wrangling/clash amongst some of the Apatani stakeholders. Under the ACLS's initiative similar body named Village Authority and a sacred document namely *Nikung Dapo* (Customary Law and Penalty) was constituted and adopted respectively which are pending for the government's approval and codification respectively; pending because of the reasons best known to them.

Effectiveness of the ACLS in its endeavors depends to a great extent upon the activeness of its President and General Secretary. At present (2014), Er. Tapi Tai is very active as General Secretary of the ACLS and is carrying on the ACLS's activities very well. *Nikung Dapo* (The Apatani Customary Law and Penalty) is serving as guide and reference. The People have been instructed through GBs to follow and use it heartily. *Nikung Dapo* was prepared under active involvement of the *GBs*, the *Buliangs* and the village elders of entire Apatani community. Outcome of the combined effort only has been brought into

Nikung Dapo in compiled and written form. *Nikung Dapo* is proper, legitimate and fully valid document and has full locus standi. However, the Village Authority under ACLS (2008/2010) is only a proposal; not yet put into legal effect. *Nikung Dapo* in the compiled and written form was materialized after twelve years of efforts. *Nikung Dapo* is put as proposal before the government for codification. It has not yet been approved by the government because of their own weakness. In more a dilly-dallying tactics the government has sought the case of Mizoram for reference.

10. *Top Babu, Hapoli (Ziro), March, 2014

**Head Assistant, Office of the erstwhile First Class Judicial Magistrate, Ziro. He has a great exposure to and knowledge in the GB field and has been posted at Ziro since 1995 as Dealing Assistant to deal with the GB affairs.*

The *Gaon Buras* as Village Authority have been appointed under the Assam Frontier (Administration of justice) Regulation 1 of 1945. The *Katokis*-GBs teams were backbone of the district administration in the former days. The GBs were small in number and most of them were meritorious and commanded influence, respect and authority. The *Katokis'* (Political Interpreters) basic duty was to translate the villagers say through local dialects into Assamese or Hindi before the administrative and other government officers and employees. However, he acted as umpire in case settlement arbitrations and used to do the interventions as and when needed facilitating towards amicable settlements. In those days, the best administration existed in which the GBs-*Katokis* teams were largely drawn on merit basis from the pool of active locally-appointed ALC (Additional Labor Corpse) – Load carriers. But after inception of the police and the active intervention of the administrative judicial magistrates the GB institution as Village Authority has by and by become almost defunct in judicial, administrative, ordinary duties of the police and developmental functions granted under the law) and such decline applies to the *Katokis'* roles too. Now, the *Katokis* come to the office to put attendance signature and draw the monthly salaries only.

The district administrative officers consisting of CO (Circle Officer), EAC (Extra Assistant Commissioner), AC (Assistant Commissioner), ADC (Additional Deputy Commissioner) and DC (Deputy Commissioner) all have been executive officers; the post of AC remaining abolished now. More importantly, all of them used to be judicial magistrates too till separation of the judiciary. The CO was Second Class judicial magistrate and EAC and others were First Class ones. The DC (as District Magistrate) down to CO all of them have now executive functions only and act as executive magistrates only to maintain law and order along with doing normal administrative and executive duties. The Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM)-cum-Civil Judge has already been posted to Ziro and other district

headquarters - an outcome of separation of the judiciary. Above Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Civil Judge there is District Sessions Judge. Entire judicial records including the existent GB case settlement recorded copies was dispatched to the Court of the District Sessions Judge, Yupia (Mr. Budi Habung being current incumbent) at some times earlier.

Factors of decline:

With inception of the police establishment, the active intervention of the administrative judicial magistrates and recent separation of the judiciary the GBs by and by are left with negligible judicial work to attend upon. This happens mainly because instead of complaining to the GBs the people prefer to do it to the police. The government has not ceased them but the police in due process have automatically usurped entire judicial and ordinary duties of police powers (of the GBs) to themselves resulting into an altered justice delivery mechanism. The police has jurisdiction over 20 km radius from the police station and the GBs too have own jurisdiction in the villages (both of the jurisdictions entitled under the 1945 Regulation). The Apatani villages are compact ones all situated in close proximity to the only police station and the district headquarters town. And the police under the pretext of 20 km radius rule (law) have practically usurped the powers of the GBs by exercising themselves. Actually the GBs must assert themselves with the 'I am the authority in the village' kind attitude. The GBs have power to detain but no body to guard in such detention. The police have jail system and other machinery which is held effective and satisfactory one to the aggrieved. The police arrest the accused directly from the villages and detaining them in the jail but no GB comes forward to object it. Instead they greet them with Jai Hind! (A local form of Hindustani salute) which does not fit their dignity.

For all of this the government is responsible indirectly to a great extent (*It may be cited as external intervention*); their internal policy may be. The judicial procedure till separation of the judiciary was such: if a case was reported to a judicial magistrate the same was automatically endorsed to the OC (Officer-in-Charge), PS (Police Station) for registration and investigation and for submission of its completed investigation report to the concerned judicial magistrate. If case was established, then charge sheet was framed and if not the same was dismissed immediately. Geographical topography in Arunachal Pradesh including Apatani valley is peculiar one making it difficult to serve summons connected to cases. When a staff comes to serve summon very often it happens that receiver had gone to Itanagar for certain works. In that case it becomes difficult to locate the sector/colony in Itanagar where s/he is staying. At times the public also give undue cooperation to the accused in cheating the summon servers.

Now, the GBs are indulging themselves in active politics toeing the lines of the political leaders only particularly the local MLA which in-fact is the most distressing factor. On the other hand, our

societies including the GBs themselves do not know the responsibilities, powers and functions of the GBs properly; granted under the 1945 Regulation. Most often it happens that the fit, honest and competent persons do not like politics and opportunistic activities and hence they do not easily come forward for appointment as GB. Erstwhile Political Officer, DC is the appointing authority of the GBs. Direct IAS officers are generally upright but the nominated ones (usually nominated under political backing) most often subdue to the pressure of the local MLA in GB appointment. Either directly or indirectly it has made exercise of the powers and functions of the GBs the diminished and diluted ones. The *Katokis* and the GBs who got appointed through the so-called political leaders give undue cooperation to them in return. In nutshell, there is vote-bank consideration in the GB appointment system.

The GBs care to complaint non-reception of salt, umbrella and similar other items which is never within their dignity, position or status. Giving such gifts was practiced during British India days in the territory now which forms Arunachal Pradesh which was actually done to bring good will in establishing and maintaining cordial relations with the tribesmen; put it differently to open up their mind and attitude. Now also the GBs have such expectation and ask for the small-small gifts which should not continue. Actually, it reflects that some things introduced by the British authority are for good and some others are for bad. Pathetically, the GBs believe in extending 'Jai Hind' which is the local form of Hindustani greeting to the VIPs and dignitaries. To amend the 1945 Regulation is an oft repeated mention but has not materialized so far.

Towards revitalization:

In some of the Adi areas educated persons have been appointed as GB in a great number but the matter is different in Apatani and Nyishi societies; whether Lower Subansiri, Kurung Kumey or any other Nyishi inhabited districts. Fit and a little bit of educated persons should be appointed as GBs besides downsizing its numbers. However, some meritorious GBs are staying in both of the Apatani and Nyishi societies at the present time also. The GBs should be fully allowed to exercise their powers freely under the 1945 Regulation after its suitable amendment. If a complaint is made to them or if they intend to arrest an accused/offender the police should first inform, discuss with and consult the Village Authority (the GBs); of-course allowing the final say to the s vis-à-vis all non-heinous offences.

The GBs may identify impediments in their all-round functioning under the law and such bottlenecks should be highlighted to the government for taking remedial steps through discussion over the government table. The public also needs to cooperate and support the GBs whole-heartedly under the ground-reality conditions/situations. The powers and functions of the Village Authority (the GB) and the police should be first segregated under the law so that there is no confusion and duplicity in both of the

institutions' functioning. The *Katokis* and the GBs should not canvass to the political leaders; instead they must be canvassed by such so-called leaders by exercising their powers and authority themselves and independently. The GBs instead must be approached and conveyed '*Namaskar*' greetings as a mark of respect to their dignity as Village Authority. DC invites the GBs in all important occasion like Independence Day. Even this is not necessary because the GBs are certificate holders as constitutional Village Authority. Independence Day should be celebrated on voluntary basis not by issuing compelling form of invitation (to the GBs). Instead the GBs themselves can invite any dignitary in such important occasion.

Meanwhile, many cases routed through the police had been disposed off although more were pending for disposal. Reason for such pending was that starting from the CO up-to the DC all handled a large number of cases besides attending upon so many other official duties and works; very often by holding and handling many branches. Hence, the recent separation of the judiciary is relevant one.

Relevance and scope:

However, the GBs occasionally settle some petty offences at their respective villages till now. The records of such isolated settlements are confined within the villages; are not submitted to and available with the government judicial office. Actually, local customary settlement of cases sometimes called customary law is still greatly promotable because it has lots of benefits. E.g., the cost involved is very low and delay is largely less.

The GBs can act as left hand-right hand of the government and can cooperate and assist as and when any legal role is assigned to them by the government and its departments or agencies. I cannot say for sure but some GBs might have been engaged as police informer or intelligence/spying agent now also as used to be done in the earlier times. However, unless the 1945 Regulation is amended and education is considered as one of the criteria for appointment any new role cannot be assigned to the GBs.

11. EAC, erstwhile Office of the Judicial Magistrate First Class, Ziro (Hapoli), March, 2014

There is no channel but one could become GB, then P.I. (*Katoki*) and ultimately up-to P.A. (Personal Assistant). Any type of case, say of value up-to Rs. 20,000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousands) only except murder one was referred back to the GBs level for settlement through the prevailing customary law in the earlier days. Even in murder case the GBs were asked to act as informer. Now a day all cases have been converted into (regular) court cases (some are given by advocates and rest by others) to be dealt through IPC, CPC and CrPC; they are not referred back for arbitration or compromise at the GB level at all now a day. This means the powers and functions of the GBs have been narrowed down in judiciary

matters. However, their (as agents of the government) developmental roles are intact, be it in developmental matters or in any work assigned to them by the government. All the same apply to the P.I.s.

12. Late Hibu Dampyo, Hong (Ziro), March, 2014

The GBs settled dispute once upon a time between Bamin and Michi over *Dolo-Mando* (a twin-mountain tract in Apatani valley) in which it was decided that *Dolo* belonged to Bamin and *Mando* to Michi. Forest land dispute between Dwre and Hwja was also amicably settled on the basis that Putw belonged to Dwre and Pumeh to Hwja. Besides, so many other disputes were settled by us.

13. Narang Bida, Ex-GB, Hong (Ziro), January, 2014

From Hong, upon the request made to us I and Talo Tanyo (as GBs) said to the district administration that to broaden roads, lanes and passages the administration should take an active initiative. That would be proper to be followed, supported and assisted by the GBs to make the venture fruitful. As, if the GBs take that initiative the villagers may misunderstand and protest. Impressed by our interest towards developmental and social activities we were appointed as GB by the district administration. In the earlier times, there was one Head GB only in Hong, namely Lt. (Mr.) Takhe Tani; the first one in the village. Many cases were settled at the village level itself by some of we active GBs and the decision was reported to the district judicial administration. It was followed by issue of settlement copy directly by the judicial branch to the parties and the GBs who settled the dispute. Most of the cases were settled by the GBs at the participation of other village elders. Those GBs who could speak some Assamese or Hindi were given more importance by the judicial officers and were always talked to and discussed with. The EAC often consulted some of us (GBs) about fitness of the prospective GBs. In their political contest, Gyati Taka and Padi Yubbey appointed so many GBs each. Similarly, Padi Richo and Nani Ribya did so later on. In between, Kuru Hasang also appointed many GBs and HGBs.

14. Besides, many other notable respondents like Takhe Hinda (HGB), Tapi Sulu, Bullo Tani (HGB), Narang Marpu (HGB) and Narang Kula of Hong, Ziro were interviewed mainly on the *Gaon Bura*.

15. Personal Interviews (on the *Buliang*):

(i) Tapi Takha, *Buliang, Hong, Ziro, Former General Secretary, NNDHRT Buliang Association, January, 2013,*

(ii) Punyo Tama, *Buliang, Hong, Ziro, October, 2012,*

(iii) Takhe Kani, Itanagar, October, 2013,

(iv) Habung Pilya Ribya, *Buliang*, Old Ziro, January, 2013,

(v) Gyati Tamo, *Buliang*, Hari (Ziro), January, 2014,

(vi) Tapi Ranko, *Buliang*, Itanagar, May, 2013 &

(vii) Late Tapi Dwbo, September, 2013.

Appendix 5:

Bye Laws of SUPUNG BULIANG COUNCIL

ZIRO, Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh

**OFFICE OF THE SUPUNG BULIANG COUNCIL: ZIRO, LOWER SUBANSIRI DISTRICT
(AP)**

INTRODUCTION:

The word *Buliang* is an inherited prestigious post of an individual member of Apatani which represents a lineage or a clan since time immemorial. These *Buliangs* safeguarded and preserved the justice of Apatani society. But for a last few decades the *Buliang* had been in defunct position due to intervention of the government administrative. But still today some social activities are under the shoulder of the *Buliang*. Hence to revive and regain the earlier glorious activities a convention of Ist *Supung Buliang* was held on 7th March 2012 at Government T.P.D. Middle School under the chairmanship of Shri Mudang Laling. In which the following Bye-Laws were unanimously passed by the house present.

PART-I

(GENERAL)

Article – I: **NAME AND NATURE**

- (a) Name: There should be a village Council in Apatani Community of Ziro and shall be known as “**SUPUNG BULIANG COUNCIL**” (in short **SBC**).
- (b) Nature: The council shall be purely a socio-cultural, welfare, justice, Charitable and non-political organization in nature.
- (c) EMBLEM: The *Buliang Pyakha, Takhw* and *muyuh pwley* shall be the Emblem of Supung *Buliang* Council, Ziro.

Article – 2: **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

1. The basic objectives of the Council are to promote unity, integrity, feeling of fraternity, mutual co-operation and to give equal justice amongst the members in particular and Apatani society as a whole in general.
2. To preserve the traditional system of socio-religious and customs, and to disseminate the cultural heritage of Apatani comprising of ritual hymns, folk-lore and other similar activities.

3. To take up such other activities so as to create and promote social harmony and peaceful atmosphere, and also to take up such preventive measures and steps from occurrence of any social practices or rituals that has become socially irrelevant, or any other activities by any group or community that may be detrimental to the existence of healthy, peaceful and harmonious society.

Article – 3 **Definition & Meanings**

- (a) “Supung” means Community consisting of all Apatani villages.
 (b) “*Buliang*” means a body of Council
 (c) “Board” means the Advisory Board of the Council.
 (d) “Bye-Laws” means rules and regulations of Supung Bulyang Council, Ziro.

Article – 4: **STRUCTURE**

1. **General Body:** That all the *Buliang* of Tailyang-Hao & Dwbo (THD) and Nwchi-Nwtw, Reru-Tajang & Dwre-Hwja shall be the general body of Supung *Buliang* Council

2. **Executive Body:** The Executive Body shall be consist of the following port-folios:-

(a) <i>Chairman</i>	:	1
(b) <i>Vice Chairman</i>	:	1
(c) <i>Gen. secretary</i>	:	1
(d) <i>Asstt. Gen. Secy.</i>	:	1
(e) <i>Treasure</i>	:	1
(f) <i>Asstt. Treasure</i>	:	1
(g) <i>Chief Auditor</i>	:	1
(h) <i>Co-Auditors</i>	:	3
(i) <i>Chief Editor</i>	:	1
(j) <i>Asstt. Editor</i>	:	1
(k) <i>Legal Advisor</i>	:	1
(l) <i>Joint Secretaries</i>	:	1
(i) Hong : (i) Nwchi	:	1
(ii) Nwtii	:	1
(ii) Hari : (i) Hage	:	1
(ii) Pato	:	1
(iii) Tailyang-Kalung	:	1
(iv) Tajang (i) Nami	:	1
(ii) Nako	:	1

(v)	Reru	(i) Panyu Ayo	:	1
		(ii) Panyu Akang	:	1
(vi)	Dwre		:	1
(vii)	Hwja		:	1
(viii)	Dutta		:	1
(ix)	Tadu-Tage		:	1
(x)	Bamin-Michi		:	1

- 3. Advisory Board:** It shall consist of senior & experienced *Buliang* members selected from each villages of Apatani.

Article – 5:- Power and Function.

1) General Body:

- a) General Body member shall be empowered to elect executive body member and advisory board member.
- b) General body member shall be empowered to amend and constitute rules and regulations of SBC Ziro.
- c) Any individual general body member is empowered to move any amendment of the Bye Laws during annual conferences.

2). Executive Body:

1. Chairman:

- (a) The Chairman shall be the nominal head of the Supung *Buliang* Council, Ziro.
- (b) He shall preside over the meeting of the SBC, Ziro.
- (c) He shall exercise such other powers as may be delegated to him by the Executive Body.
- (d) He may advise any executive members to initiate work other than the work allotted to him.
- (e) He shall have the right to seek advice of any or all members of the advisory board on any issue. He is empowered to delegate his power and functions to the Vice Chairman to carry out the activities in his absent.

2. Vice Chairmen:

(a) He shall assist the Chairman as and when necessary arises.

(b) Whenever vacancy of Chairman arises due to transfer/resignation/termination or death, he shall act as Chairman till the new Chairman is elected/selected.

3. The General Secretary: (Executive Power)

(a) He shall be the Executive head of the council.

(b) He shall initiate and organize necessary steps to carry out the programmes and activities of *Supung Buliang* Council. He has the power to advise the executive members to activate the routine works and also to supervise the works of other executive members.

(d) In any urgency/emergency, in which the opinion of the secretary or action is required then he shall initiate such action, but shall have to report to the Executive Body in its next meeting for approval and confirmation.

Financial power:

He is empowered to sanction/ draw upto ceiling level of Rs 10,000/-(Rupees Ten Thousand) only from Treasure without seeking consent from Chairman or Other Executive members at the time of emergency requirement.

4.Asst. Gen. Secretary:

(a) He shall assist the General Secretary in all respect.

(b) Whenever vacancy of General Secretary arises due to transfer/resignation/termination or death, he shall act as General Secretary till the General Secretary is Elected/selected.

4. Convenor: He shall have the power to convene meeting of the council any time at any suitable venue, whenever Chairman/ Gen. Secretary or any of the cabinet member feels necessary.

5. Treasure:

i) He shall be empowered to deal all financial matters of the Council, and shall maintain cash book etc.

ii) He is empowered to spend any amount of money for the betterment of SBC Ziro, after obtaining proper approval from Chairman/Secretary/Executive Body as per given capacity of financial power to respective body.

6. Asst. Treasure:

- a) He shall assist the Treasure in all respects and shall act as treasure in his absence.
- b) Whenever vacancy of Treasure arises due to transfer/resignation/termination or death, he shall act as Treasure till the Treasure is elected/selected.

6. Chief Auditor:

- a) He shall conduct audit meeting at least once in a year.
- b) He is empowered to reject/accept any cash memo or related financial document of SBC Ziro at the time of audit meeting.
- c) He is empowered to nominate any of his three Co-Auditor to act as Chief Auditor in his absent.

7. Co-Auditor:

- a) They shall assist the chief Auditor at the time of audit meeting.
- b) Any one of the Co Auditor whom the Chief Auditor has nominated shall act as a Chief Auditor in his absent.

8. Chief Editor:

- a) He shall have the power to do all the editorial works of the Council.
- b) He is empowered to nominate his assistant to act as Chief Editor in his absent.

9. Asst. Editor: He shall assist the chief Editor in all respects and shall act as Chief Editor in his absence.

10. Legal Advisor: He shall have the power to aid and advise the Executive members in respects of legal matters.

11. Joint Secretaries:

- a) They shall co-operate and co-ordinate the executive body in their respective Jurisdiction while discharging the works of the Council.
- b) Joint Secretaries are empowered to act as General Secretary in their respective jurisdiction.
- c) The Joint Secretaries are empowered to mobilize the *Buliang* members for active participation in the activities of SBC Ziro in their respective jurisdiction. If the report of Joint Secretaries in respect of irregular *Buliang* members are satisfied by SBC Ziro, then the SBC Shall initiate action against the default members as per bye-laws.

12. Advisory Board: They are empowered to aid and advise the executive body as and When required in regard to SBC Ziro.

Article-6 FUNDS OF THE SUPUNG BULIANG COUNCIL

The *Supung Buliang* Council shall have the operating fund to carry out the Bulang Activities:

1. The Council shall have the fund in the form of savings account held at SBI/Rural Bank, Ziro. Such account shall be operated under the joint signatures of the General Secretary and the Treasure.
2. **Sources of Fund:**
 - i) The Fund of the SBC Ziro Shall be raised by collecting/Contributing from Sub Committee of SBC Ziro Viz-THD and NNRTDH.
 - ii) Accepting grant in aid from Government or any other NGOs, Public Leader, Panchayat Leaders and well wisher of the Apatani societies.
 - iii) Accepting grant in aid from Government or any other sources.
3. **Utility of Fund:**
 - i) Fund shall be utilized for the Development / Uplifment and other activities of the SBC Ziro.
 - ii) There shall a fund which it raised through annual contributive, donation and any other reliable sources.
 - iii) It shall be deposited to the saving bank account jointly operated by Secretary and Treasure in any Nationalized/recognized bank at Ziro branch with cheque facility.
 - iv) The treasure can keep a sum of Rs 2000/=(Rupees Two Thousand) only in his possession for emergency purposed.
 - v) All the sanction shall be made as per approved in the cabinet (Executive body) meeting which is to be reported in the general body meeting.
 - vi) The account of the society shall be audited once in a years. The audit report shall be presented in the general body meeting.
4. **Loan Provision :**
 - i) There shall be loan provision at the rate of 3% interest per month through cheque only.
 - ii) The fund once loan out from the Council will be charged 3% interest even through borrower return the money before expiry of one month period. He/She must return the principal amount with interest in cash within twelve month.

- iii) If borrows fail to return the money in the stipulated times, his/her security will be immediately seize and shall be auctioned without giving further notice.
- iv) The minimum range of loan amount shall be Rs 10,000/= (ten Thousand) only.

PART-II

RESOLUTION / BYE-LAWS

Article – 7: Audit and Custody of Audit documents

During the Annual audit, the following records shall be carefully checked:-

- i) Subscription books & Records (Register) of Subscription books.
- ii) Cash Book.
- iii) Pass Book of the bank Account.
- iv) All the expenditure Vouchers (Auditors shall record their finding in the subscription books, Cash book & Vouchers.

Article – 8 General Body Meeting & Amendment

The Chairman of the Executive Body shall summon general body meeting once in a year to give report of achievement and failures of SBC in preceding year and to prepare annual action plan for coming years.

- a) Any resolution to carry out the provisions of the Bye-Laws may be passed if the Quorum of the meeting is met. The quorum for such meeting shall be at least one-third of the general body members of SBC Ziro.
- b) The amendment of the Bye-law/any articles shall be move in the General Body meeting by two-third majority of members present and voting.

Article 9: TENURE AND CONFERENCE:

- (a) The Chairman/secretary may convene a special meeting at any time and place if he/she feels necessary.
- (b) Any business which is necessary for the society to perform, it may be placed before the house for final approval in the house.
- (c) The selected/elected office bearers shall hold the office for three years.

- (d) The General conference of the Council shall be conducted before expiry of the tenure at any place within Ziro.

Article 10: RESOLUTIONS:

- (a) “THE SUPUNG BULYANG” has unanimously resolved to initiate research on “**Origin and Evolution**” of *Buliang* as early as possible and it shall be bring out in written form for future generation to come.
- (b) The house has resolve to restore the old Apatani judicial system and customary law .
- (c) **Membership:-** That there shall be no provision to expand/ include new member out of existing *Buliang* Members, except adjustment/replacement of existing member, in case he is unable to participate in the activities of Supung *Buliang* Council due to old age/illness or died without any legal heir. When such a situation arises, then it shall be replaced after fully consented by him or consultation with his close brethren and officially approved by the Chairman in consultation with Executive body of Supung *Buliang* Council.
- (d) **Action:** in the event any member/members who commit gross violation/act against the interest of the *Supung Buliang* Council shall be served show caused notice to the member/members. If he is not replied reasonably/satisfactorily, then the Council is fully authorized to initiate any disciplinary actions/may seize hi membership from the *Buliang* council as per decision taken by house present (general body).
- (e) **Impeachment:** the Chairman of the Council may may be impeached on the following grounds-
- i) if the chairman may grossly misuses his power there by violating the basic objectives of the Council and indangering the very existence of the Council or is involved in embezzlement of the fund of the Council.
 - ii) The impeachment of the Chairman may be moved by a notice signed by at least one-third members of the council addressed to the Vice-Chairman who will carry out the impeachment process within 2 (Two) weeks times after receipt of the notice. The impeachment motion will pass if not less than two-third of the members sign in favour of the ‘motion’ and only then the Chairman shall cease to hold office.
 - iii) The impeachment of the General secretary may be moved by a noticed signed by at least one-third members of the Council addressed to the Chairman who will carry out the impeachment process within 2 (two) weeks times after receipt of the notice. The impeachment motion will pass if not less than two-third of the member sign in favour of the ‘motion’ and only than the General Secretary shall cease to hold office.

Article – 11: RATES FOR AMANGS AND GATA’S:

- (i) There shall be uniform rates for *Buro (Pengu)*/Rs 20/- for whole supung in Murung ceremony.
- (ii) *Gatu-Gata, Aki Amang* and *Amang lanw* during *Subu* and *Murung* ceremony shall remain as it is in respective villages.

Article – 12: Duties/Obligation

- (i) The settlement of any traditional dispute e.g. movable and immovable property, traditional relation like marriage, divorce, adultery etc.
- (ii) The settlement of Pudu yal-lu i.e. any kind of interruption/blockage arising between any neighbours'/communities/Tribes in connection with any passage/road/Footpath and violation of Dapo of that area Pudu.
- (iii) The case of Theft, trespass, challenge of properties, bribery, smuggling, drugs, psychotropic substances, use of explosives, chemical and electricity in river/water are banned and discouraged and the violater shall be penalized by the SBC.
- (iv) The SBC discourages the case of accidental where the victims party damage the accused residence/land/garden and bury the dead body over the accused's lot of land. The SBC encourage the law to take it own course.
- (v) (a) Complaint fee Rs 1000/-
- (vi) (b) Withdraw fee Rs 5000/-
- (c) Any written complaint shall be entertained/accepted by the SBC on payment of Application fee.
- (d) Re-complaint after once withdrew from the same party to the same case shall not be entertain by the SBC, But the complaint of the opposite party should be entertained by SBC, provided it is for the first time.
- (e) The case amongst parties within the same jurisdiction shall be tackle by the Join Secretary of that Jurisdiction. If the join Secretary fails to take up the case or the Party/parties does not agree with judgments, appeal can be made to the higher Authority.
- (f) Even after lodging the complaint, If the both the parties agreed to settled the Dispute on the basis of mutual understanding, that shall be allowed by SBC. When settlement if done by both the parties along with the witness come to the SBC office. Thereafter the

SBC shall give the final approval of the case and keep the original settlement copies with the SBC. The settlement shall be presumed to be made by the SBC banner.

- (g) In the case of any dispute which is communal in nature in Apatani community shall intervene without waiting for complaint from the parties in irrespective of any Complain fee for the purpose of peaceful procedure in the settlement of the case.

Penalty imposition:

Action, procedure and processes of any case proceeding shall be followed and based on the NIKUNG DAPO (The Customary laws of the Apatani).

Welfare Activities:

1. If any member of the Supung *Buliang* Council is affected by any natural calamities, such as flood, fire accident etc., all the members shall participate on the site and donate a lumpsum amount to the affected member.
2. When any member of the Supung *Buliang* Council expired, then all the member of SBC shall attend to pay the last respect to the deceased along with one squirrel (takhii) representing SBC donating a lumpsum amount to the bereaved family

Article – 13 EXECUTIVE BODY FOR SESSION 2015-2018

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Chairman | : Shri takhe Ribya |
| 2. Vice-Chairman | : Shri Mudang Chalo |
| 3. General Secretary | : Shri Tailyang Sambyo |
| 4. Asstt Gen. Secy | : Shri Kime Jarbo Tatung |
| 5. Convenor | : Shri Tanyang Chilyang |
| 6. Treasurer | : Shri kime Pugang |
| 7. Asstt Treasurer | : Shri Gyati That |
| 8. Chief Auditor | : Shri Nani Sambyo Tabyo |
| 9. Co-Auditor | : |
| | i) Shri Tamo Tatung |
| | ii) Shri Koj Nibo Takur |
| | iii) Shri Radhe Tani |
| 10. Chief Editor | : Shri Liagi Tapa |
| 11. Asstt Editor | : Shri Kalung Bakhang |
| 12. Legal Advisor | : Adv. Tage Taji Tana |

Joint Secretaries:

- i) *Hong*
 - a) Niichi : Shri Punyo Nikang Tangu
 - b) Niitii : Shri Mudang Tanii Kani
- ii) *Hari*
 - a) Pato : Shri Gyati Kunya Tagang
 - b) Hage : Shri Hage Talu Taka
- iii) *Talyang Kalung* : Shri Subu Bakhang Tai
- iv) *Tajang*
 - a) Nami : Shri Mihin Chilyang Abing
 - b) Nako : Shri Ngl Chilyang Tani
- v) *Reru*
 - a) Panyu Ayo : Shri Habung Ribya
 - b) Panyu Akang : Shri Duyu Diibo Tacho
- vi) *Diire* : Shri Nada Richo Raju
- vii) *Hija* : Shri Taro Kani
- viii) *Dutta* : Shri Koj Aka Kancha
- ix) *Tadu Tage* : Shri Mudang Mali Tama
- x) *Bamin Michi* : Shri Dulley Tam Laji

13. Advisory Board :

- Chief Advisor : Shri Tapi Takha
- i) *Hong*
 - : Shri Takhe Gumbo
 - : Shri Punyo Tama
 - : Shri Kago Lampung
- ii) *Hari*
 - : Shri Hage Dibo
 - : Shri Hage Yubey
 - : Shri Gyati Tamo
- iii) *Tailyang* : Shri Lod Akha
- iv) *Reru*
 - : Shri Duyu Salla
 - : Shri Habung Kojing
 - : Shri Nani Takha
- v) *Tajang*
 - : Shri Tage Tapa
 - : Shri Ngilyang Yapa Tamang

- vi) Hija : Shri Pura Tayang
: Shri Nada Tadii
: Shri Kago Takha
- vii) Dutta : Shri Chiging Khoda
- viii) Tadu Tage : Shri Tage Tade
- ix) Bamin Michi : Shri Dilang Tabing

14. Bulyang Member :

A. NIITH (NWTW)

Sl. No. Name

- 1 Shri Tapi Jorang Takha
- 2 “ Tapi Hagio Ranko
- 3 “ Tapi Tamang Duri
- 4 “ Tapi Nyakang tayu
- 5 “ Kago Ekha Lampung
- 6 “ Kago Tamo Tide
- 7 “ Kago Laling Jarbo
- 8 “ Narang Taho Pombo
- 9 “ Narang Hasang Bida
- 10 “ Tilling Taming Targu
- 11 “ Tilling Maka Gambo
- 12 “ Tilling (Penji) Tara Lure
- 13 “ Nami Kojing Tadi
- 14 “ Mudang Gyayu Bakhang
- 15 “ Mudang Tani Kani

16 “ Bullo Miri Rido

B. NIICHI (NWCHI)

17 Shri Punyo1 Nyikang Tangu

18 “ Punyo Taka Tama

19 “ Hibu Siiri Tayu

20 “ Hibu Talang Tacho

21 “ Hibu Tanyo Yaje

22 “ Hibu Taka Ado

23 “ Tabing Tasang Tigang

24 “Takhe Bakhang Ribya

25 “ Takhe Chatung Tak

26 “ Takhe Pilya Uma

27 “ Niya (Takhe) Bida Gumbo

C. RERU

28 Shri Nenker Kechi Tagu

29 “Kuru Tallo Delyang

30 “Kuru Hassang Rommol

31 “ Lt. Kuru Hanya Tamo

32 Shri Padi Lalyang Tagia

33 “Padi Rambo Tamer

34 “Padi Agang Hailyang

- 35 “Habung Pilya Ribya
36 “Habung Dolley Kojing
37 “Habung Taker Taka
38 “Duyu Tana Tade
39 “Duyu Dibo Tacho
40 “Duyu Hanya Salla
41 “Duyu Akha Tagia
42 “Duyu Bida Rika
43 “Khoda Taje Chatung
44 “Khoda Bagang Tabyo
45 Shri Nani Halley Tade
46 “Nani Tagia Tatung
47 “Nani Tallo Takha
48 “Nani Gyayu Taker
49 “Nani Sala Sambyo (Tabio)
50 “Nani Tadu Nyikang

D. TAJANG

- 51 Shri Misso Halley
52 “Tage Sah Targu
53 “Tage Sah Bida
54 “Tage Doging Tapa
55 “Radhe Tapa Tani

- 56 “Radhe Tana Hinda
- 57 Lt. Radhe Mali Koyang
- 58 Shri Radhe Tapa Tamang
59. “Mihin Chalyang Pussang
- 60 “Mihin Kuru Chatung
- 61 “Mihin Butang Tayo
- 62 “Millo Chatung Tagia
- 63 “Millo Kacho Pussang
- 64 “Millo Pyaro Tath
- 65 “Millo Tana Bkhang
- 66 “Ng Jiiley Talyang
- 67 “Ng Yapa Tamang
- 68 “Ng Chilyang Tani
- 69 “Rubu Tabing Chatung
- 70 “Rubu Halley Tama
- E. DIIRE (DWRE)**
- 71 Shri Kime Tapu Randa
- 72 “ Kime Talu Tam
- 73 “ Kime Hanya Punganag
- 74 “ Kime Jarbo Tatung
- 75 “ Pyangang Tayo Yachang
- 76 “ Nada Pilang Kena

- 77 “Nada Richo Raju
78 “Nada Chobing Tadii
79 “Nada Tana Kippey
80 “Nada Delyang Tabyo

F. HIJA (HWJA)

- 81 Shri Kago Tago Takha
82 “Taru Nyipa Kani
83 “Taku Tara Delyang
84 “Taku Tarang Khoda
85 “Dani Khoda Tago
86 “Dani Taming Talley
87 Lt. Dani Tana Tayang
88 Lt. Haj Kacho Dodung
89 Shri Haj Halyang Karlo
90 “Puna Ado Gyati
91 “Junja Hinda
92 “Pura Tako Tayang
93 “Pura Buda Soka
94 “Pura Halyang Tagu

G. TALYANG KALUNG

- 95 Shri Talyang Tamo Sambyo
96 “Talyang Hinda Tabyo

- 97 “ Subu Buker Tani
- 98 “ Shri Subu Bakhang Tai
- 99 “ Kalung Grayu Bakhang
- 100 “ Kalung Bakhang Tajang
- 101 “ Tailyang Tari Bai
- 102 “ Nako Riku
- 103 “ Talyang Tatu Tassang
- 104 “ Mom Rambo Tani
- 105 “ Lod Akha
- 106
- H. HAO BULYANG**
- 106 Shri Hage Pombo Gumbo
- 107 “ Hage Ganku Dibo
- 108 “ Hage Onku Yubey
- 109 “ Hage Tangu Lento
- 110 “ Hage Talu Taka
- 111 “ Hage Tacha Rino
- 112 “ Hage Tajung Apa
- 113 “ Hage Pussang Mobing
114. “ Hage Siira Tana
- 115 “ Hage Alang Tana
- 116 “ Hage Delyang Laji
- 117 “ Landi Tai Taming

- 118 “ Dosing Ropo Pullo
119 “ Hage Lalyang Tatung
120 “ Dusu Halyang Tasser
121 “ Hage Chatung Taki
122 “ Hage Tabing Tadu

I. PATO

- 123 Shri Tasso Tadu Jarjo
124 “ Tasso Tai Tade
125 “ Mudo Tamo Nyikang
126 “ Gyati Richo That
127 “ Gyati Kunya Tagang
128 “ Gyati Pada Tamo

J. DUTTA

- 129 Shri Koj Nibo Takur
130 “ Koj Hinda Tada
131 “ Koj Aka Lalyang
132 “ Koj Talu Tasso
133 “ Hinyo kani
134 “ Yachang Pilya Yap
135 “ Chiging Khoda
136 “ Chiging Gyut
137 Late Myobya Tara Dichi

K. **TADU – TAGE**

- 138 Shri Tadu Tallo Sambyo
- 139 Lt. Tadu Rika
- 140 Shri Liagi Tapa
- 141 “ Tage Tade
- 142 “ Mudang Mali Tama
- 143 “ Tage Tangu Sala
- 144 “ Tage Apa Tare
- 145 “ Tage Pumbo Nyime
- 146 “ Buru Tanyo
- 147 “Mudang Chalo
- 148 “ Tage Tanyo Miilo
- 149 “ Tage Taji

L. **BAMIN – MICHI**

- 150 “ Tamo Tago Rika
- 151 “ Tamo Tamo Tatung
- 152 “ Hano Sala
- 153 “ Tanyang Chalyang
- 154 “ Racho Tatu Richo
- 155 “ Tilling Gyayu Tanyo
- 156 “ Dilang Tabing
- 157 “ Michi Randa Kobing

EXECUTIVE BODY FOR SESSION 2012-2015.

1. Chairman :Shri Mudang Laling
2. Vice-Chairman :Shri Takhe Ribya
3. General Secretary :Shri Millo Chatung
4. Asstt. Gen. Secretary :Shri Tailyang Sambyo
5. Treasurer :Shri Kime Pugang
6. Asstt. Treasurer :Shri Mudang Chalo
7. Chief Auditor :Shri Landi Taming
8. Co-Auditor :-i) Shri Tapi Duri
ii)Shri Koj Nibo Tagur
iii)Shri Dilang Tabing
9. Chief Editor : Shri Liagi Tapa
10. Asstt. Editor :Shri Rubu Chatung
11. Legal Advisor :Adv. Tage Tana
12. Joint Secretary:
 - i) Hong a) Niichi (Nwchi) : Shri Takhe Chatung Tak
b)Niitii (Nwtw) : Shri Mudang Tani Kani
 - ii) Hari a) Pato : Shri Gyati Richo That
b)Hage : Shri Hage Talu Taka
 - iii) Talyang kalung : Shri Subu Bakhang Tai
 - iv) Tajang a) Nami : Shri Mihin Chilyang Abing
b)Nako : Shri Ngl Chilyang Tani
 - v) Reru a) Panyu Ayo : Shri Habung Taker Taka
b) Panyu Akang : Shri Duyu Diibo Tacho
 - vi) Diire (Dwre) : Shri Kime Talu Tasso

- vii) Hija : Shri Taku Tarang Khoda
- viii) Dutta : Shri Koj Akha Kancha.
- ix) Tadu Tage : Shri Tadu Talo Sambyo
- x) Bamin Michi : Shri Tamo Tamo Tatung.

13. Advisory Board:-

- i) Hong : Shri Tapi Takha.
: Shri Kago That.
: Shri Punyo Nikang.
- ii) Hari : Shri Hage Dibo
: Shri Hage Pombo.
: Shri Gyati Tamo.
- iii) Tailyang Kalung : Shri Lod Akha.
- iv) Reru : Shri Nani Sambyo.
: Shri Habung Ribya.
: Shri Nani Takha.
- v) Tajang : Shri Tage Tapa
- vi) Hija : Shri Pura Hinda.
: Shri Nada Tadii
: Shri Kago Takha.
- vii) Dutta : Shri Koj Tasso.

viii) Tadu Tage

: Shri Koj Tasso

ix) Bamin Michi

: Shri Tamo Tago
