

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384012883>

# APATANI Change and Continuity

Book · September 2024

CITATIONS

0

READS

46

1 author:



[Padi Hana](#)

Rajiv Gandhi University

5 PUBLICATIONS 2 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

# APATANI

## CHANGE AND CONTINUITY



Edited by  
**Dr. Padi Hana**  
**Ms. Nani Umie**  
**Dr. Kime Mamung**  
**Mr. Nending Ommo**

# **APATANI**

## **Change and Continuity**



# **APATANI**

## **Change and Continuity**

**Nending Ommo  
Dr. Padi Hana  
Dr. Kime Mamung  
Ms. Nani Umie**



**H. S. R. A PUBLICATIONS**



## **Apatani: Changes and Continuity**

ISBN: 978-93-5506-549-0

### **First Print, June 2023**

ISBN: 978-93-5506-549-0

1000 Copies

**₹500/-**

Copyright © Capital Complex Dree Festival Committee

### **PUBLISHED BY:**

HSRA Publications 2023

#02, Sri Annapoorneshwari Nilaya, 1<sup>st</sup> Main,

Byraveshwara Nagar, Laggere,

Bangalore – 560058

Ph- 7892793054

Sales Headquarters – Bangalore

### **ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

No part of this book maybe reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—graphic, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, taping Web distribution or any other without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, except for brief quotations in printed reviews.





## CONTENTS

1. Traditional Forest Knowledge for understanding Ziro Valley's Environmental Issues  
**Dr. Rubu Tani**
2. Functional Aspects of the Apatani Folksongs: An Overview  
**Landi Pussang Tama**
3. Gender representation in Apatani Folklore: with special reference to Folktales and a lullaby  
**Dr. Kime Mamung**
4. Divulging philosophy behind Donyi-Polo belief system of Apatani  
**Gyati Rana**
5. Tiike Byuniiñ : A Traditional Cupping Therapy of the Apatanis in Ziro Valley  
**Dani Obing and Duyu Nanya**
6. Correlation of traditional beliefs, spiritual connection, scientific relevance and medical science in context of Apatani Community of Ziro and beyond.  
**Dr. Duyu Meena Mudang**
7. Understanding the social organisations of Apatani villages in Ziro valley  
**Pura Suniya**
8. Indigenous practices during childbirth among Apatani community: Past and present state  
**Nending Sumpi and Nyumme Nomuk**
9. Myoko: Embracing Social and Cultural Change in the Apatani Community  
**Dr. Padi Hana**
10. Exploring Social Capital among the Apatanis of Ziro valley in Arunachal Pradesh  
**Padi Dindi**

11. Potentiality of Artificial Lakes as a Habitat for Migratory Birds with special reference to Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*) at Siikhe Lake, Ziro, Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh  
**Dani Obing and Ligang Aniya**
12. Social impact of tourism in Ziro valley  
**Mudang Onju**
13. Transition and Development of Educational Scenario at Ziro Valley: A Critical Study  
**Dr. Liza Mihin**
14. Celebrating the Birth of new Baby in Apatani  
**Nada Pugang**
15. An analysis of personal financial planning and financial Education among college and university students of Ziro valley.  
**Tallo Radha**
16. What's in a name? Contextualising naming patterns amongst the Apatani  
**Nani Umie**

### Contributors:

1. **Dr. Rubu Tani** is an Assistant Professor (History) at Government Model Degree College, Daporijo, Arunachal Pradesh.
2. **Mr. Landi Pussang Tama** is an Assistant Professor (History) at Government College Seppa, East Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh.
3. **Dr. Kime Mamung** is an Assistant Professor (English) at Government College Doimukh, Papumpare, Arunachal Pradesh.
4. **Mr. Gyati Rana** is a writer and an Apatani cultural activist based at Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh.
5. **Mr. Dani Obing** is a Research Scholar (Geography) at Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.
6. **Ms. Duyu Nanya** is a Research Scholar (Geography) at Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.
7. **Dr. Duyu Meena Mudang** is a Senior Medical Officer and Medical Officer In-charge AHWC, Lor Putung, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.
8. **Ms. Pura Suniya** is an Assistant Professor (Economics) at Saint Claret College, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.
9. **Ms. Nending Sumpi** is an Assistant Professor (Education) at Saint Claret College, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.
10. **Mr. Nyumme Nomuk** is the HoD and Assistant Professor (Education) at Saint Claret College, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.

11. **Dr. Padi Hana** is an Assistant Professor (Sociology) at Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.
12. **Ms. Padi Dindi** is a Field Officer, Wildlife Trust of India, Noida, 201301.
13. **Ms. Ligang Aniya** is a Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.
14. **Ms. Mudang Onju** is Research Scholar (Sociology) Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.
15. **Ms. Liza Mihin** is an Assistant Professor (Education) at Dera Natung Government College Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.
16. **Mr. Nada Pugang** is an Assistant Professor (Political Science) at Government College Yachuli, Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh.
17. **Ms. Tallo Radha** is an Assistant Professor (Commerce and Management) at Indira Gandhi TMS University, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.
18. **Ms. Nani Umie** is an Assistant Professor (Sociology) at Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh.
19. **Mr. Nending Ommo** is an Assistant Professor (English) at Dera Natung Government College Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

# **Traditional Forest Knowledge for understanding Ziro Valley's Environmental Issues**

Dr. Rubu Tani

## **Introduction**

Over the last century, there has been rampant material development worldwide, and the present day is a clearly visible manifestation of this. The advent of modernisation has certainly facilitated infrastructure development, but it has also hindered harmony between the natural world and humanity that has existed throughout history. Due to growing gap between traditional knowledge and modern semi-educated generation, the ingrained tribal beliefs of natural resources as exhaustible resources are now taken for granted, and in the name of development world is witnessing gradual but increasing environmental issues. As a consequence of these developments, the forest landscape, and other living resources are being depleted or destroyed rampantly while human demands and pressure are constantly growing and intensifying. In this background, we know from history that some of the earliest and most great civilizations like Sumer in Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley Civilization collapsed due to both ecological and manmade causes (Yojana 2013:3). The manmade factors led to increase in soil salinity due to extensive irrigation and deforestation, caused by the clearing of woodlands for agriculture and a growing urban population. Therefore, today attempts have been made by developed or developing countries alike to address these environmental questions and trying to preserve and conserve the forest as well as other natural resources, which are not easy despite having various scientific knowledge and resources in various countries of the world (Ramachandra Guha 2012: 9).

Different stakeholders have been trying to address this emerging burning environmental issue through various approaches. Therefore, the dimension of environmental issues in different parts of the globe is expanding at a remarkable pace in recent years to make us understand of how land, forest, water and wild animals have been playing an important role in maintaining our eco-system, but in Arunachal Pradesh, in contrast, the scholarly investigation

has till recently been woefully scant. The damaging effects are evident in forests, pastures, ecological, land, waters, and other natural resources which will require further exploration by scholars in the years to come. However, despite its scantiness, there are few exceptions, as some scholars have indirectly addressed the environmental issues while writing the social and cultural history of tribes which needs to be separated and deeply studied by scholars for early arrest of the issues. In this connection, mentioned can be made of the works done by scholars like Verrier Elwin, C.V.F. Haimendorf, J.N. Choudhary, Sachin Roy, M.L. Bose and many others who have narrated the significance of natural world in tribal society.

### **Objective and Methodology**

It is from this perspective that this paper has been developed to understand the current environmental issues in light of traditional ecological knowledge of the community. Using literary sources and field research, this study explores the brief environmental history of Ziro Valley. It has been rightly said that every society is shaped by their immediate environment and in this connection the valley's economy has traditionally been based on agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forests. Thus, we must examine these major themes in order to fully comprehend the current environmental issues. However, the present study will be unable to address all these major themes, therefore, I will concentrate on one of the most important aspects of this valley's environmental history, which is traditional forest management.

It is possible to write and understand the valley's environmental history through the lens of traditional knowledge of forest in Ziro valley. The Apatanis have access to a variety of plants and animals in the forests that surround their valley, and their forefathers passed on indigenous knowledge about saving and coexisting with these resources. Unfortunately, the forest's natural resources and native knowledge are disappearing due to human demands and urbanization pressures. In spite of several measures taken by the government to manage and conserve the forest, the situation still appears inadequate and poorly organized.

In the name of development, forests which were once untouched by human exploitation are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. The forest that was previously restricted and protected by the community is now connected by all the motor-able roads. There is now no evidence of the flora and fauna which once flourished in the surrounding forest. The changes in the surrounding forest of the valley pose a great environmental issue for the community, and if proper action is not taken now than in the future the ecological balance created through traditional knowledge will be threatened by various environmental crises.

### **Mythology**

Mythological, the association between Apatani and forests can be traced back to Abotani (forefather of Apatanis). According to oral narration, Abotani had a symbiotic relationship with the forest, exploiting it in every possible way without jeopardizing the ecological balance. In one of the mythical stories, it states that he had a relationship (married) with fern, leech, insects, fire, and many others, which allowed the Apatani people to benefit from ecology (Millo Tago 1992:19).

### **Relationship between the forest and the Apatani community**

In a very simple word, forest can be defined as a community or society of living beings, in which tree occupies central position. Range from big trees, small trees of different species, bushes, grasses, herbs, birds and animals- all members of this big family each dependent on the other (A.K. Agarwal 1986:4). But for the Apatanis, forest is not merely the assemblage of trees, shrubs and other vegetative bodies, but an embodiment of cultural tradition amongst their community.

The Apatanis have been living in Ziro valley for centuries and have accumulated valuable knowledge about their natural environment which enabled them to live in balance with their environment and adjust to natural resources for their livelihood. The traditional tales portray them as part of the forests, and forest is a sacred place where gods and goddesses dwell in harmony. Therefore, they saw it as their duty to nurture and protect it from unjustified demolition. Therefore, their indigenous

knowledge is enriched by reasonable and practical thinking patterns, and they have an innate tendency to conserve the greenery of the forest. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that Apatani and forests have a close relationship, as they depend largely on forest for their survival and livelihood.

The task of preserving forests is not an easy one, especially when the society has no written language of its own. They have, however, developed an indigenous system called oral tradition that transmits the knowledge from one generation to another. Therefore, these traditional knowledge practices are passed down by oral tradition, as well as through different religious and ritual practices, which proved to be beneficial for society as a whole.

The importance of the forest to the Apatanis' lives can be seen from their dependence on the forest for their house construction, as they used leaves, posts, bamboo walling, timber and canes for daily usage. Traditionally, their household utensils items were moulded from forest products and many of their food products were obtained from the forest, such as berries, nuts, honey, fruits, leaves, and all kinds of roots, etc. apart from this, they obtained the medicinal plants and herbs from the forest which were used for curing different types of diseases. Additionally, they collected timber, bamboo, cane, roots, leaves, fruits that contained medicinal properties, and bark from trees to barter with plainspeople.

Hence, in a layman perspective the community mainly depended on the forest for material purpose but when we analyse the world view of the elders and forefathers of the Apatanis, we can conclude that the forest did not only provide them with material items, but also satisfied their sentiments, and they coexisted with the forest mostly to maintain their culture, including a desire for prosperity and health.

### **Types and Ownership of the forest in the Apatani Society**

In the course of time and through constant experimentation, the Apatanis evolved the system in which the land is divided into different but well-defined sections. According to the indigenous land use model, land is mainly divided into three tiers, these being: individual, clan and community ownership. They range in size from very small to



fairly large and vary from one plot to another. However, it is interesting to note that there was a commonality in how the different clans and villages classified land uses according to their topography.

According to traditional customary norms, the forests of Apatani have been classified and regulated in a way that enhances their conservation. A six-zone system has been developed indigenously to facilitate efficient forest management to facilitate and sustain the demands of the population along with agriculture. For this reason, forest management has been regarded as an example of innovative ecological design by the Apatani people.

### **(I) Individual Bamboo Forest (*Bije*)**

Traditionally, these forests are inherited from generation to generation (passed down from father to sons) and owned privately by individuals who enclose them with bamboo fencing all around. Forests like this contain mixed trees like pine, bamboo, and other trees, most of which are used to collect timber and fuel wood for construction and household needs. Nevertheless, bamboo is predominant in this type of forest, since the Apatanis believe it is very important for survival and cannot imagine the plateau without it; accordingly, all households on the plateau diligently protect the bamboo garden. There was a strong cultural significance behind the planting of bamboo. As per oral tradition, *bije* (bamboo) was introduced during migration and was not indigenous to the valley. Among the uses of bamboo are house construction, fencing, food (bamboo shoots), firewood, and local crafts, etc. Therefore, keeping these private plots in good condition and protecting them is of the utmost importance. The plots are always enclosed with fences, sometimes with solid bamboo fences that are impossible to see through or over. In order to make sure the plots are kept guarded, there are gates that are locked and the plots are tended to by men.

### **(II). Individual Forest (*Sansung*)**

Similarly, this type of forest also belongs to a single individual, but unlike *Bije*, it is free from boundary walls. Instead, in *sansung* certain trees are used to mark boundaries and they largely planted the pine during the near end of winter session. The pine tree are mostly use for

boundary fencing construction in bamboo field; use it as protection against soil erosion in the bedside of river; use as a pipe in agriculture field to regulate the water intake and discharge in the farm field. In this type of forest, besides pine trees, other trees dominated like, *castanopsis*, which were used for extraction of timber, fuel wood and materials for ritual ceremony etc.

### **(III). Sub-clan Forest (*Uru Moreh*)**

This type of forest is owned by a group of families that descend from the same great grandparent. Therefore, in most cases, these types of forests are named after their great grandfather. The majority of these forest types are mixed forests. It is the right of the member of this sub-clan to harvest anything from the forest for their daily usage; however, an individual cannot monopolise everything without the permission of their fellow members. The *Uru Moreh* primarily provides the extraction of timber, bamboo, cane, fuel wood, and other household necessities. Additionally, this type of forest could be used for the collection of materials for ritual ceremonies, hunting, and rearing of *mithun* (*Bos Frontalies*).

### **(IV). Clan Forest (*Halu Moreh*)**

*Halu Moreh* are scattered across the surrounding hills of the valley, owned either by one clan or jointly by two or three clans of the village. It is forbidden for non-clan members to exploit the clan forest, and only clan members having exclusive access can hunt or gather cane, timber, firewood, and other forest products. The clan forests were one of the main sources of cane, which was used for various household purposes. The clan forest therefore provides the bulk of the materials needed for community and clan works. Thus, clan members are strictly responsible for managing forest resources on clan lands. There are many species of plants preserved in the clan forest that were used in socio-cultural functions and rituals, as well as ethno-medico-botanical importance. Therefore, all the members of the clan managed these forests and products were intended to be used only by clan members. Other members of different clan could not procure things from these forests except for community hunting and material for ritual ceremonies, such as cutting trees for *baboo* and *lapang*. The *Halu Moreh* are

primarily monocultures of pine, castanopsis dominant, and mixed forests where they rear their most valued animals *mithun*. These clans' lands extend to the farthest reaches of the Apatani territory. Traditionally, these forests were main hunting grounds for clan members with bows and arrow, trappings, etc., to substantiate the needs of protein from different wild meat for their families.

#### **(V). Village Forest (*Lemba Booth Moreh*)**

Traditionally, this type of forest were jointly owned, maintained, and managed by several clans of a particular village as a whole. The resources available in these forests were used by all members of the village irrespective of any particular clan. The village people can collect bet, medicinal plant (mixed vegetation forest), other edible shoots, trapping, etc. from village forest. These types of forest were especially used for the village hunting ground during the time of *myoko* ceremony, and used as the grazing ground where the villagers can keep their cattle, including the semi-domesticated *mithun*, normally kept in large forested areas (A.K. Thakur 1999: 393).

#### **(VI). Community Forest (*Supung Booth Moreh*)**

These types of forests were used for the collection of bet, medicinal plant and for hunting ground because these forest were far away from the villages which usually take half day foot march to reach the destination. Therefore, it was opened to everyone without any restriction.

#### **Importance of the forest in the Apatanis society**

Agricultural is undeniably the backbone of Apatani society, but we shouldn't forget that without forests, agriculture alone would not be able to satisfy society's needs. A great deal of materials, ranging from house construction to food, was obtained from the forest. In short, we can say agriculture and forest were complementary to one another. So, let us see the major things that were received by the tribe from the forest.

It is recorded in their oral tradition that many natural calamities struck their society, where their crops were damaged by hailstones, insects, and pests, and those times became known as *diime aniyang* (a period of hunger or crop failure). Thus, when their main food source, agriculture,

failed, they turned to forests to survive. Throughout the centuries, the forest has proven to be a saviour by providing fruits, roots, vegetables, and animals. From their oral narration, it is very interesting to learn that Apatani discovered a very special type of plants and roots known as *takhe*, *taabe*, and *bari* that were used during a time when food was scarce. They believe that by consuming these plants and roots they could survive without food for two to three days. Thus, it may be the reason why they settled in the middle of the valley surrounded by forest from all side, so they could access it from all sides whenever they needed it. In time, they also discovered that the hilly slopes of the forest provided fertile soil that was carried down by several streams which were used for agricultural production.

The Apatani build their houses with a lot of care, using materials such as timber, bamboo, cane, and even rice straws were used for house roofing few decade backs (S. Dutta Choudhury 1981:47). And, inside the house all the household materials were made out of forest product except the clay pot which was used for cooking. Meanwhile, they relied largely on the forest's animals and birds to maintain their nutrients intake. It is therefore common for people to hunt, and another interesting point is that animals and birds were all considered consumable as food, though there were certain taboos to be observed before and after hunting certain animals.

It is important to note that the Apatanis practised two different kinds of traditional hunting practices- group hunting, known as *kiiru*, and individual hunting (*daaling kani*). The group hunting mainly carried out in clan, village or community forest. In community hunting they mainly target to hunt down of deer, boar, monkeys, and bears, whose meat could be shared among the hunters' families. On contrary, individual hunting is a type of hunting where an individual visits his jungle on a regular basis and regularly places traps in order to catch prey. It has been seen many times that individual hunters hunt deer, wild cats, boars, mice, birds, and other animals. As a part of the hunting tradition, they follow a very interesting tradition where a hunter, when hunting a bird or animal for the first time, must abstain from eating the meat of the bird or animal he hunts and give it to the oldest member of his family instead. According to the belief, a person who offers this to an elder

will excel in hunting with the blessing of the elder. These traditional beliefs and practices help to maintain ecological processes and also contribute to the health of the environment of the valley.

Whenever it comes to the Apatanis' medicine herbs, the forest is their treasure house of sorts as far as they are concerned (Chandra Prakash Kala 2010:8). The forefathers of the Apatanis had a deep connection with nature, and a centuries-old tradition of herb medicine was born out of their intimate relationship with it. In addition to traditional medicine, the Apatani themselves developed indigenous medicine of varying kinds to treat various ailments. Their knowledge of the different plant species growing wild in their surroundings is extensive. There are two separate environments in which Apatani lives, works, and thinks: a supernatural environment and a vegetative environment. There is a broad base of knowledge regarding the plants with which they have a long-standing spiritual and physical connection. Traditionally, older generations possess much more intimate knowledge of plantations, the use of trees and herbs, and hunting trails through clan forests. Their environment is protected by different taboos and customs: for instance, hunting animals and harvesting forest products are strictly prohibited during major ritual ceremonies. They protect flora and fauna, such as *Castanopsis* and *Ficus* trees, cane, bamboo, one species of monkey and a species of fish *Leisa* which is believed to be sacred and is used in major ritual ceremonies (Mihin Dollo 2007:22).

A great deal of ritual is performed to fulfill socio-cultural obligations of the community and the forest played a significant role in the religious life of the Apatani tribe. The major rituals practised of Apatani would be incomplete without the involvement of forest. Forests provided most of the ritual's materials and even the final ritual's rites were mostly conducted in the forest. There were various trees and plants which were used only for religious purpose. Their rampant destruction without an offering was considered as sign of bad omen for the individual and even for the family members. Some of the major religious festival of Apatani like *Myoko* and *Murung* is ended only after offering an appeasement rite to forest god and goddesses. This appeasement ritual is called *Moreh Eya* that is a traditional ritual in which every male member of the family, sub-clan

20 | Apatani: Change and Continuity

and clan goes to the jungle and offers local beer, rice and fork meat to the spirit with the help of a priest and thanks the forest gods and goddesses for taking care of it (Mihin Kaning 2008:77). One unique traditional practise of Apatani during *Murung* festival is the erection of *baboo* and *lapang*(clan/community platform). This practice involves cutting down a tall, straight tree, clearing out its branches, and even peeling its bark off. Afterward, all male clan members drag it to the village, where it is erected after some rites and decorations. It is important to note that the trees for *baboo* and *lapang* can be selected from any jungle, regardless of clan or sub-clan. In order for *Myoko* festival to be begin and celebrated, a monkey must be hunted by the villager from the jungle called *Biiding Lanii*, so it would not be possible without finding a monkey in the jungle (M. Kaning 1993:11). The Apatani tribe would not be able to carry out all these unique rituals without the forest, as the forest is important to shaping their unique identity.

As one of the fascinating aspects of the Apatani and their forest, they safeguard and preserve various plants and trees by having sacred grooves known as *Rantee*, where logging of forests and human disturbance are prohibited. According to Apatani beliefs, forests harbor benevolent spirits that wreak havoc on society if disturbed. Their traditional tales depict the fact that they are the part of forest and it is their sacred place where the deities dwell in peaceful place (R.M. Sarkar 2011: 14). Therefore, maintaining the forest and offering to it will bring prosperity to communities and individuals. It was for this reason that Apatani did not disturb or destroy the forest; instead they offered offerings to forest spirits at the end of *Murung* rituals.

## **Conclusion**

Based on above discussion, it demonstrates how, in spite of lacking modern scientific knowledge, the Apatani community has been living in harmony with forests for ages and has developed traditional ecological knowledge for the sustainable management of natural resources. According to their popular belief, if they want to survive in this world then they must nurture forests and other natural resources. Therefore, the community manages its forests, agriculture, and water resources efficiently. No doubt they have been learning to adjust with the nature and

accordingly in process of time needful transformations have been made to adjust to major challenges presented by environment. However, the complex nature of modern development has eroding the age old traditional ecological knowledge for sustainable management of natural resource. Therefore, these centuries old indigenous ecological knowledge needs to be restudied, and make it to exist side by side with scientific thinking emerging generation that would provide fresh and unending possibilities for the field of emerging environmental issues in the valley. It is therefore possible for the current crises in the valley to be negated by examining the significance of the forest in Apatani society and how they developed and adopted indigenous knowledge that manages resources through traditional knowledge developed through informal experimentation over centuries.

### **Notes and Reference**

The oral data that, I have collected during the field study have been used in this paper along with other secondary sources. I am very much thankful to Shri Ngilyang Tarang and Shri Rubu Takii of Tajang village of Ziro valley for their valuable information that they shared about the traditional knowledge on forest. This paper could not have been complete without their valuable inputs and rich knowledge about forest management of the Apatani community.

1. Agarwal, A.K. *“Planning for the Development of Arunachal's Forest-An Approach, Forestry Development in North-East India”*, ed. Malabika Das Gupta et. al, Omsons Publication New Delhi, 1986, p. 4.
2. Dollo, Mihin. *“Traditional Farmers' Group Supporting Sustainable Farming”*, Leisa Magazine, March 2007, p. 22.
3. Dollo, Mihin. *“Environmentally Sustainable Traditional Natural Resource Management and Conservation in Ziro Valley”*, Arunachal Himalaya, India, p. 65.
4. Dutta Choudhury, S. *“Gazetter of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District”*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1981, p. 47.
5. Guha, Ramachandra. *“The Past and Future of Indian Forestry”* in Rights and Resource Initiative, *Deeper*

*Roots of Historical Injustice: Trends and Challenges in the Forest in India*, Washington, DC, 2012.

6. Kaning, Mihin. "A Glimpse of the Forest Land of the Apatanis and Possible Consequence", Central Dree Festival, Dree Souvenir, 1993.
7. Kaning, Mihin. "The Rising Culture of the Apatanis Tribe", Himalayan Publisher, Itanagar, 2008, pp. 62-65.
8. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Yojna*, ed. Rajesh K. Jha, Shyamala M. Iyer and Manogyan R. Pal, vol 57, June, New Delhi, 2013, p. 3
9. Prakash Kala, Chandra. *Ethnomedicinal botany of the Apatani in the Eastern Himalayan region of India*, Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine, Nov, 2010, p. 8
10. Sarkar, R. M. "Indigenous Knowledge in traditional Folk Panorama: Genesis, Development & Application", Serials Publication, New Delhi, 2011.
11. Tago, Millo. "Apatani and Forest" Central Dree Festival Celebration, Dree Souvenir, 1992.
12. Thakur, A.K. "Social Transition in Pre-Colonial Arunachal Pradesh: Servitude as a Prime Mover", *Indian History Congress*, 60<sup>th</sup> Session, Calicut University, Calicut, 1999.
13. Verma, Rajesh. "Environmental Problem and Environmentalism in Arunachal Pradesh." *Indian History Congress*, Vol. 76, 2015, pp. 572-580, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44156623>. Accessed on 26 May 2023.
14. Wangpan, Tanlong, (et.al.). "Tribal Agriculture: Tradition in Transition in Eastern Himalaya" *Current Science*, Vol. 112, No. 7 (10<sup>th</sup> April 2017), pp. 1327-1329, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24912674>. Accessed on 25 May 2023.



## Functional Aspects of the Apatani Folksongs: An Overview

Landi Pussang Tama

Folksong is a vital element of any living culture and is an unrecorded tradition of the society which maintains an informal social force regulating the society's social system. Folksongs, one of the important aspects of folklore also show a man's relation with nature and human behaviour at different stages of life. Thus, folksongs not only help in understanding the socio-cultural and religious life of the community, but also human psychology and the adjustment of an individual to his culturally constituted world. Folksongs are generally defined as songs which exist in the repertory of a folk group. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, folksongs are "primitive spontaneous music." But it does not mean that folksongs were not composed in the bygone and olden days. The process of production, revision, improvement, and corruption of folksong is continual. A folksong is interwoven with the aspirations, ethos, and pathos of a primitive community. Folksongs generally reflect the social heritage, the environment, and the folk life in a particular territory (Punia, 1993). It is usually created for entertainment, enjoyment or emotional outlet and can be easily sung, understood, and learnt on different social occasions by all the members of the folk group with no distinction of singer and listener. It is transmitted, circulated, and perpetuated spontaneously through oral tradition from person to person or from generation to generation (Punia, 1993). Folksongs play a significant role in fulfilling the ritual functions of various rites and ceremonies prevalent in the villages. It further serves the function of a communication channel for indigenous knowledge and belief (Punia, 1993).

The Apatanis like any other tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh have folksongs relating to different occasions which depict the community image in a cultural context. Arunachal Pradesh is a mountainous state in the Assam Himalayas which covers an area of 83,743 sq.km. It is situated on the extreme North-eastern tip of the union of India in the Trans-Himalayan region, between the latitude 26°28`N and 29°33`N and longitude 91°31`E and 97°30`E, bounded by the famous Mac-Mohan line on the eastern border and inner line in the foothills regions (Dubey, 1991).

The length of the international boundary is 1928 Km. It shares 157 Km with Bhutan, 1030 Kms is the Mac-Mohan line and 441 is the length of the Indo-Myanmar border. The length of the inner line or the political boundary with Assam and Nagaland is 618.5Km and 58.6 Km (approx.) respectively. The Republic of China is situated on its north, the state of Assam on the south, Myanmar on the east and the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan on the west (Dubey,1991).

Arunachal Pradesh has 25 districts, 56 sub-divisions, 112 circles, 33 towns, 61 blocks and 5589 villages. It accommodates a total population of 13,83727 out of which 7,13912 are male and 6,69815 female (Census of India, 2011) The state also known as the land of the rising sun is the house of 25 indigenous tribes and more than 65 sub-tribes. these large number of tribes inhabiting the state of Arunachal Pradesh from east to west are the Wanchos, Noctes, Tangsas, Singphos, Khamptis, Mishmis,(Taraon;Kaman and Idu), Adis, Membas, Khambas, Apatanis, Nyishis, Nahs, Tagins, Akas, Mijis, Puroiks, Sherdukpens and Monpas which constitute 63.66% of the total population of the state (Resarun,1999).

The Apatanis are considered among the most advanced of the Arunachal tribes, inhabiting the small Ziro valley in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. Lower Subansiri District lies approximately between 26°55' to 28°21' N latitude and 92°40' to 92°21'E longitude. It is bounded by Kra Daadi district in the north, the state of Assam and Papum Pare district in the south-west and Kamle district in the east. According to the census (2011), the population of the Apatani tribe is around 43,777 (Male- 21254, Female- 22,523). The economy is agriculture based and they are well known world over for their paddy-cum-pisci-culture. Apart from rice, they also produce maize, millet, fruits, and vegetables. Animal husbandry and handicraft making are other areas in which they take interest and are also a source of their income. The festive season of the Apatanis starts in January when the *Murung*, the festival of prosperity is celebrated. It is followed in March by *Myoko*, the festival of well-being and friendship. In July every year, the entire Ziro plateau becomes most vibrant. During this month *Dree*, the agriculture festival of the Apatanis is celebrated. The community worships several spirits who are thought responsible for various turns in their

life. Most of them follow the *Donyi-Polo* faith, that is, the worship of the sun (*Ayo-danyi*) and the Moon (*Atoh-piilo*). The Apatani family is patriarchal in nature and the descendants are traced patrilineally. Tribe endogamy and clan exogamy are the traditional marriage rules. Folksongs survive in a particular society only because they fulfil certain social functions. Likewise, the folksong of the Apatanis has its own specific role in the understanding of the community image and contributes to the socio-cultural and historical aspects of the tribe.

With all this concern, the present study is an attempt to understand the Apatani community through their folksongs. Further, the attempt is directed towards documentation of the rich oral tradition which is on the verge of being extinct due to the impact of modernization.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To document some selected folksongs of the Apatanis.
2. To understand the community image in folksongs.
3. To discuss the socio-cultural life of the people through folksongs.

### **Methodology**

The present study is based on an empirical survey with a collection of data. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Some of the primary data was collected from singers and performers by applying the 'direct interview method' and 'participant observation.' The data were collected from different performances to create a written text of folksongs. A camera and tape recorder were used for recording the session. Later the primary data collected was documented in Apatani language and analysed in English. An attempt has been made to pay special attention towards the words and the cultural meaning of the songs. Secondary data were collected from various books, articles, and journals. Library of Rajiv Gandhi University, the state central library, the state museum of Arunachal Pradesh and the district library of Ziro, Lower Subansiri district were used to gather the secondary data. Further songs were also collected from A.I.R (All India Radio)

Ziro and Itanagar. The area of study was Ziro Valley of Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Limitations of the study**

Folksongs of any culture or a community is a very vast area, encompassing several categories, which has a vast scope of research. Though, the present study of folksongs of the Apatanis is no doubt a new venture, yet it has its own limitations. The study does not cover all types of folksongs. The excluded folksongs could be taken up in future studies.

### **Oral literature of the Apatanis': A brief survey**

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

The Apatani oral traditions are divided into two categories: *miji* and *migung*. The chief distinction is performative: *miji* are recited in ritual performance, whereas *migung* are not. *Miji* are largely myths, including origin myths and stories about the mythic ancestor *Abo-Tani*, as well as healing chants; *migung* also include stories of *Abo-Tani* (when told outside ritual contexts), as well as few tales and stories about "historical" events, such as the coming of the British, village raids and migration (Blackburn, 2004). A tradition current among the Apatanis tells that their

ancestors came from a country to the north or north-east situated near two rivers known as *Supupad-Pudpumi*. These names may refer to two tributaries of the Subansiri, but neither the Apatanis nor anyone else is likely to identify this legendary country of origin. All the Apatanis agree, however, that at one stage in their migrations they crossed the Subansiri River from north to south and came to a place in *Sipi* valley called *Karr*, which lies beyond the *Pij Cholo*, a peak of 8,417 feet rising from the north bank of the *Kamla* River and visible from the hills surrounding the Apatani country (Blackburn, 2004). In addition, there are many such myths and legends which talk about the creation, migration and present-day settlement of the Apatanis which further helps us understand their oral history.

Folksongs, one of the important aspects of folklore also show a man's relation with nature and human behaviour at different stages. The oral Literature of the Apatanis in a nutshell gives an overview of their cultural and traditional set up. With its varied genres, the indigenous folk-culture and their social life are reflected in it.

### **Type of Folksongs**

The poetry of those unlettered and unsophisticated lie certain important clues to their philosophy of life. Even though folksongs are used simply for the pleasure of singing or listening, they also act as the medium for the expression of ideas or emotions held in common by a group. A community, whether agricultural or otherwise, expresses itself passionately and imaginatively through its folksongs. Therefore, the cultural traits of their rich folk heritage can be discerned mostly in their folksongs (Jadav, 1998).

As a matter of fact, in many places these songs are of great importance and sung at the functionally important junctures of various rituals ranging from harvest festivals to marriages, births and deaths; while in certain regions songs are used to infatuate and enrapture the hearts of lovers or to serve as a part of religious ceremonies and secular rites, or to depict past exploits of the heroes. Through them, the group also lighten the burden of communal labour. In most of the tribal groups, the songs are used as recitals of incantations to invoke blessings from supernatural powers, or for magical effects to cure illness (Jadav, 1998).

This paper tries to examine the vastness of folksong materials of the Apatanis. The songs are classified into different categories according to their functional value. Further, a few of the songs catalogued under various genres are briefly analysed. Accordingly, the following classification is adopted:

### 1). Songs of Festivals and Ceremonies

A number of ceremonies and festivals are celebrated by the people of Ziro valley, which are indeed very popular in the entire state. The festival associated with agriculture is the *Dree* which worships various deities for better crops and bumper yields. The singing and dancing of *Daminda* mark the celebration of the festival. Apatani damsels from different villages attired in beautiful traditional dresses sing and perform this most popular dance. As it is a community festival different troupes of women participate in this dance by representing their respective village. *Daminda* song is rather long and has its own cultural significance and myth associated with it. Though this song is usually sung and danced during the *dree* festival, these days it is also sung on different occasions with slight modification and also during the time of merry making and as a welcome song and dance for the VVIP's.

#### (i) **Daminda**<sup>1</sup>

Siilo bo alo so daminda,  
Ngunu bo patang si daminda  
Dree bo soma mi daminda,  
Sonio bo talyi la daminda  
Paye bo miima si daminda,  
Miinyo bo talyi la daminda.  
Siilo bo alo so daminda,  
Ngunu bo patang si daminda  
Kiidi bo riilyang ka daminda,  
Riilyang bo pasu si daminda  
Adu bo lyadii la daminda,  
Miido bo olo ka daminda  
Olo bo gyosi daminda,  
Hotu bo lyadii la daminda.

---

<sup>1</sup> . Sung by *Bamin Kano Yager* and group, on the occasion of Habyu *Dree* celebration, Ziro on 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2010.

Liichi bo karu si daminda,  
Kapu bo lyadii la daminda  
Korping bo taso si daminda,  
Korpu bo lyadii la daminda

Ane bo donii lu daminda,  
Nentu bo donii lu daminda  
Nentu bo siitii cho daminda,  
Tunyo bo siitii cho daminda  
Aba lu liibo lu daminda,  
Riingo lu liibo lu daminda,  
Riinyo lu siitii cho daminda  
Ponio bo siitii cho daminda,  
Lilu bo ligung ja daminda  
Kama bo dola du daminda  
Hapa bo pagung si daminda,  
Kama bo dola du daminda  
Ane bo yari mi daminda,  
Motu bo yari mi daminda  
Tubi tiicho du daminda,  
Mabing lu tiicho daminda  
Hibii lu tiicho du daminda

**Gist:** On this auspicious festival day, our troupe has come to perform the daminda dance. We are also here today to practice our traditional dree dance. Thus, we pray the dree deities to bless us, so that we can perform it well. Our troupe has come mirthfully for the dance, so there may be no disturbance and obstacles in our way. Let not mother earth hurt us like the needles as we shall be performing barefooted. Let there not be any kind of rope in the form of a trap for the leg, which will be an impediment to our dance. Let there not be any kind of accidents which will deter us from performing the dance gracefully.

Today, we have gathered here to learn the art of agriculture from our great mother *Anne Donii*<sup>2</sup> and the art of land farming or vegetable gardening from our great father *Aaba Liibo*<sup>3</sup>. So, from them, we will learn how to till the soil of

---

<sup>2</sup> . The first lady believed to have begun the cultivation of paddy in the Apatani plateau, according to a myth.

<sup>3</sup> . The first person believed to have begun the land farming system in Apatani plateau.

the field and the garden and how to weed out the weeds and grasses. Though we have learnt the art of making the field and garden ready for cultivation, we do not possess the art of sowing the seeds and more over there are no seeds like *Anne Donii* and *Aaba Liibo*, who too had to undergo such difficulties in procuring seeds of the paddy and other plants when they began to cultivate for the first time. So, like our ancestors, we pray to mother *Anne Yari*<sup>4</sup>, the owner of the great granary and the owner of all kinds of seeds to bless us with abundant seeds, so that we can practice and learn the art and techniques of procuring seeds and the art of sowing them in the fields and gardens for bumper yields.

**(ii) Mida Ayu (Song of marriage)<sup>5</sup>**

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

Hingku lori yari mi a-li ka mutu so, bugyang di butu so,  
Lyiku jaka bugyang mi, bugyang bulii talyi ke.  
Aayo jaka danyi ka mabo di mutu so, Danyi jaka yami mi  
Mabo di mutu so, mabo miillii talyi ke.  
Aato jaka pulo mi mabo mutu so, a-li miillii talyi ke,  
Pani Pachi tani ka, tani kii hiimii mi,  
Mabo mutu so a-li kulu talyi ke.

**Gist:** (The concept of the marriage ceremony as how it all began and how important it is in the Apatani society is reflected in this song). In this year, like the marriage of the

---

<sup>4</sup> . The first person believed to have supplied seeds of different plants to Anii Donii and Aaba Liibo.

<sup>5</sup> . Sung by Narang sala, dated: 6<sup>th</sup> September' 2010.



*Myodii Bulying*<sup>6</sup> to the god of the forest. And like the abundant fishes in the river, we the brothers and the sister-in-laws will bring that kind of blessings and will perform the rituals, like, as it was done for the first time by our ancestors with great pomp and gaiety. Like the first man and animal that came from a place called *Hiingku*, we shall be doing the marriage rituals in the same vein as it was done to *Lori-Yari*.<sup>7</sup> Beginning with the ritual of *Lyinku bugyang*<sup>8</sup> and *A-nku bugyang*<sup>9</sup>, like it was done for the girl *Biinyi*, we shall contribute to you things for your new life as a married couple. In a similar way as the ritual was also done for *Lori-Yari* for the first time, we shall try to keep up the tradition and perform the rituals. Like the first marriage ceremony of the girl called *Yami*, to which gods *Danyi*<sup>10</sup> and *Piilo*<sup>11</sup> are the witnesses, we shall follow the rituals as it was done for her. And also, in the way the girl *Tani-Hiimii* got married to the god *Aato-Mando* with lots of cattle, fowls and food grains as dowry with her, you shall also be given the same kind of gifts. (Further, it describes other mythical brides followed by blessings for the bride).

## 2. Lullabies and Children's Game Songs

Lullabies and children's game-songs are popular not only in the tribal world but, in many other cultures which reflects certain aspects of that community in reference to such songs. Lullaby is a soft gentle song to make a child go to sleep and is generally sung by the mother. Almost every society in the world has some or other form of lullaby to lull the child to sleep when they are feeling restless. The lullaby in Apatani is called *Liibang Nunii*. There are many other

---

<sup>6</sup> . A kind of rat. According to a myth it is believed that the first marriage ritual was performed on the marriage of the rat with the god of the forest.

<sup>7</sup> . Believed to be the first Apatani girl to be married away, which marked the beginning of the Mida or marriage ceremony.

<sup>8</sup> . The giving away of large pieces of bacon as gifts by the parents, brothers and relatives as a token of love, but can be said to be a kind of dowry paid to the bridegroom in kind.

<sup>9</sup> . The giving away of food grains to the bride and the bridegroom.

<sup>10</sup> . Refers to Sun Goddess.

<sup>11</sup> . Refers to Moon God.

lullabies but the one catalogued here for further analysis is the most popular among them which brings out the real cultural significance of how the girl and the boy child are seen when they grow up. This particular lullaby below clearly sets the difference between a girl child and a boy as they are viewed in society when they reach adulthood. And it's interesting to note that though the mother wishes both children to be healthy and strong but her desires differ in magnitude in accordance with the frame set by society. The songs are very fanciful and allegorical in their meaning which surpasses many a literary composition. Though, the songs have some metaphysical elements but it has its own cultural significance attached to it. The folksong below is full of allegory.

### **Liibang Nunii (lullaby)<sup>12</sup>**

#### **Male Child**

Orala oradu arola aladu ngika la obin mi  
Siro la piisa ka aying la niimi cho pintu la nipa cho  
Chilyu la tabyo ka arko la nipa cho marmo la nipa cho  
Liirii la piisa ka niiman la niipa cho choju la niipa cho  
Armyang talyi nii myanka la talyi nii ngika la opo mi ngika la  
obin mi Orala oradu.

Padu la tabiiyo ka kedu la ngarngung pa,  
Piisa la lenda ka yallo jirmii pa, armyang la talyi nii myanka  
la talyi la.  
Lali la gambii so khonkhung la riipi mi piinyo la niipa byo,  
Biida la yorlo so patii la liibe mi benyo miipa byo.  
Yordin lu harcha la biipo la giibi pa, yorko lu hariih la dilo  
giibo pa,  
Hiijo randa ka hiibung la potii pa, hiiba taro pa, dollyi la siichi  
mi ami la panii pa,  
Parsing la ropo mi miigang tiinii pa.  
Orala oradu armian la talyi nii myanka la talyi nii hiika ducho  
do.

**Gist:** By naming the child: 'O my child don't cry and go to sleep'. I, your mother will bring you up like the tall-strong pine tree which can withstand all weathers and still stay firm in its place. I shall bring you up like the beautiful bamboo

---

<sup>12</sup>. Sung by late Narang Odii. Courtesy: AIR, Itanagar, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

grooves. Like the pine tree called *Liirii*<sup>13</sup> I shall make you strong, beautiful and healthy, so I shall name you after such huge trees and beautiful bamboo gardens, so don't you cry my child. You shall grow so strong and courageous that you shall be able to hunt tigers and also be able to trap the eagles and kites. You will grow up to be so swift and active like the deer. The swiftness you shall possess will be similar to that of the wild cat. Then you shall have the strength to run up and down the hill and easily catch up with your hunt. So, I shall name you after them; now go to sleep, my child.

## 2.Children's Game Songs and Rhymes: A compilation

The Apatani children's songs are very few in number and usually, they are in the form of short rhymes, so they can also be called children's rhymes apart from game songs which would sound much more appropriate. These rhymes are usually in the form of four-to-five-line stanzas, which were used by children in the olden days to entertain themselves and to be merry with their friends. The interesting thing which characterises such songs is that most of them are sung for the sake of fun and mostly in groups, in the form of questions and answers, where a group poses a question and others reply wittily.

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

Anyanya ha no talyi na?  
Taru narang ka riri rijang mi  
Khonte talyi cho  
Pulo nako ka hibiyo byojang mi  
Tarte talyi cho...(katey talyi cho).

**Gist:** (These rhymes were usually sung and played by young girls to pass away time): The stairs in the field make the sound ting-ting. The bangle of Lalyang makes the sound byang-byang. The bamboo-sachet of the Hari village makes the

---

<sup>13</sup> . A very tall pine tree with very fine-straight leaves available in Apatani plateau.

sound chu-chu and the winnowing cane of Bula village makes the sound pyo-pyo.

O Anya! O Anya! Where are you heading to? Me! I am going to *Taru Narang*<sup>14</sup> to pluck the young leaves of the plant *Riri*. And, further going to *Pulo*<sup>15</sup>, to pluck the bitter young roots of the plant *Hiibiyo*.

### 3. Dirge or Funeral Song

Being mortal is the ultimate truth and the universal reality that every living being on the earth has to accept. The mysteries behind death remain unsolved. The 'cradle to grave' concept holds true for all those who come into this world. Dirge or funeral songs are songs which are filled with pain and sorrow over the death of a person. Every society has its songs related to birth, and in the same vein songs of death, which mark much poignancy or an atmosphere of sadness in the house of the dead. Like the Hindu or the Christian belief that the soul is immortal, the Apatanis believe in the same and the concept of hell and heaven is very much there too.

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

#### **Dirge (Siima khenii)**<sup>16</sup>

Nikun anii ka, tiirang dartu ho, tiirang darko ku,  
Niipa aba ka, liimang mantu ho, lima mando ku,  
Pinii siyo ka, doker tajin ka, ahin rupu pa,  
Tiirang dartu ho, darlyi byoke ah.  
Nungu lonu kiiche chepa mabyo ke,

---

14. A place in Hijja village of the Apatani plateau.

15. Another place in Hijja village, also known as Nada-Pulo.

16. The dirge or funeral song called in Apatani, the song here is sung for old people who die a natural death. Folksong Courtesy: *Lyantope-I, 2006*, published by Nani Tachang for Meder Nello service, Machang publication, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh. P: 125-30.

Ngunu labang kiiche chepa mabyo ke,  
Ngunu nanu Nunii nupa mabyo ke,  
Ngunu napin pyanii pyapa mabyo ke,  
Danyi pinii punii pupa siido nii,  
Piilo siyo lenii lempo siida nii,  
Danyi niirin rinii rindu danii mi,  
Piilo niyun yunii yundii danii mi,  
Ngunu miti mato chimpa mato cho,  
Ngunu mirin mato papa mato cho  
(Danyi piilo no, lyampii chantun no).

**Gist:** (As the dirge here is that of an elderly person's death, whether old woman or old man, thus the name of the dead is taken in the beginning).

The person who has died is due to their coming of age and they are not the first ones to do so, it's a natural phenomenon which has taken its course. It is only in the hands of God, who decides a person's life span. So, the death they have had is a natural one.

We the younger ones have no role in death, and neither we the elder ones. We the father and mother have no role to take in the death because we are oblivious of the mystery of death. It's only the gods' *danyi* and *piilo* who are the supreme controller of the world knows everything and is present everywhere. They, the omnipotent's are the ones who decide your stay on the earth and we all do not have any say in it, further we will never be able to know the mystery behind death. The place where you are going after your death because of your old age or due to some untoward incident which was not natural, may your journey be pleasant as you cross over hills, plains and wade through the water to reach your new world. As you are now with the gods *Danyi-Piilo*, we pray to you to be our guiding force and seek your guidance and blessings. Do bless our clan to be rich, strong and prosperous.

## **Analysis of the selected folksongs**

### **1. Songs of Festival and Ceremonies**

Beginning with the most popular folksong of the Apatanis, the '*Daminda*', which is the inaugural song of one of the

grandest agricultural festivals in the state and the biggest festival of the Apatanis 'Dree', is celebrated for four days in the month of July from 4-7. The very beginning words of the stanza or the song bring in the picture of a community festival, where the word *Patang*, meaning a group of people, who have come over to the field to dance on the auspicious occasion of the dree festival and to further learn the art of cultivation from the ancestors. Since agriculture is mostly synonymous with female folks, the performer of this dance and song are also women in groups, who represent different villages. In this particular song, the community image reflected is that of an agriculturist. The wanting to learn the art of cultivation is clearly echoed in this song, a tradition practiced from time immemorial, for which the Apatanis have been touted as among the most skilled agrarian community. As scripted earlier in the chapter, every festival and ceremony is associated with some or the other myth or tale, the *Dree* and its songs also talk about certain myths associated with it.

The history of *Dree* begins with the life and struggle of the *Anii Donii* and *Aaba Liibo* during the time of Abotani at *lipyo supung*. It is believed that dree was first performed by them. It began with the search for suitable land to grow food crops. After a long struggle, the fertile land was finally located at a place called *ijji myolyi murta myobya*, where the desired seed was to be sown. Preparation of land for sowing of seed was done by cutting down trees and clearing the bushes. Then they began to search for suitable crop seeds. They searched every animal, looking in their stomach for the seed in order to find their food habits. The wild boar's stomach was full of *sang-ke*. The rat had *sa-lyo* and other grasses. But it was in the stomach of a field rat known as *Diilyang Kubu* that they found traces of paddy seeds. With this began the search for the area where this rice was probably grown, with the help of a dog. The dog started barking at a tree; where in its branch a bunch of paddy was seen growing. Since it was the place known as *Diilyang ganda*, owned by a man called *Diilyang Tamang*, the dog was asked to bring stealthily some seeds from *Diilyang Tamang*, when the rice falls in the winter after maturity. Thus, the dog brought some seeds to the cavity located behind its ear. But to great dismay, the seeds turned out to be *Tago Enso* or wild rice which was unfit for food and hence, it was

discarded. The search for the rice seed started all over again and finally, it was found with *Anii Murtu Yaring* at a place called *Murtu Lemba*. Hence they obtained rice seeds from *Anii Murtu Yaring*, who gave them willingly. Then the seed was sown at the decided fertile land *ijji myolyi-murta myobia*. Since then, the rice is being cultivated by the descendants of the Abotani.

## **(II). Mida Ayu or Song of Marriage**

Marriage is one of the most important social activities in the Apatani society and Mida, is one of the most important parts of it. The marriage ceremony is incomplete until and unless the Mida ritual is performed. It is a non-seasonal socio-religious ceremony which is usually solemnised during the month of November to March. The Mida is generally performed in the interest of both the parents of the bride and bridegroom in order to invoke a healthy and prosperous life for the couple, with healthy children and profuse wealth. The marriage song reflects the practice as a whole in its lyric and also depicts the various mythical brides to whom the ceremony of Mida was solemnised for the first time. The song describes the practice of the ceremony beginning with the marriage of the *Bulying* or the Rat to the god of forest with which began the Mida ceremony. It also talks about the Mida ceremony performed for the first time for the brides *Lori-Yari*, *Biinyi*, *Danyi-Yami* and *Mando-Yalyo*. The marriage ceremony performed on them began with the offering of lots of ceremonial gifts in the form of bacon, meat, and rice grains to the couple. Besides these, all the ornaments and dress that were preserved by the bride's parents for her were given to the couple. This very tradition is shown in the form of the song, where the bride is assured by the parents, brothers, and relatives of all those requisite items for the ceremony. The Mida is a traditional gift exchange ceremony in response to the gifts given by the parents of the bridegroom. This reciprocation of gifts between the two parties has religious significance for the couple. The gifts exchanged between the two parties are more or less equal in value. But it is often the bride's parents and relatives who have to go on a spending spree as the Mida ceremony is much more expensive. It can be said to be a form of dowry in an indirect manner. If the Mida is

performed smoothly and successfully, it certainly increases the prestige of both parties in society.

As the song reflects many mythical places and names, thus the Mida ceremony is also attached to myths of its own. One such myth associated with it is the myth of *Panii Pachi Tari* (bride) and *Nyime Payang Radhe* (bridegroom). Although being married for many years they were childless. So, the groom's parents requested the bride's parents to arrange the Mida ceremony, so that they could have children and lead a life of prosperity and happiness. Accordingly, the parents of the bride solemnised the Mida ceremony by presenting gifts such as *A-nku-Bugyang* (rice grains), *Lyinku-Bugyang* (bacon), *Iiji-Bugyang* (*maji* or the traditional bell), *Tallo-Bugyang* (Tallo or brass plate), *Kichi-Bugyang* (ginger), *Murtu Chilyung*, *Munya Chilyung*, *Ahin Chilu*, *Rupu Chilyung* (oval shaped cake made of cooked rice), etc., as a symbol of their ceremonial gifts. After the Mida, the couple is believed to have begotten children.<sup>17</sup> The song echoes the blessings of the parents, brothers, and sisters-in-laws of the bride, so that she may have an abundance of everything.

## 2. Lullabies and Children's Game Songs or Rhymes

The lullaby which the Apatanis have is indeed full of concepts, which are kind of metaphysical in nature because a child is always a mother's greatest bliss. So, a mother thinks very highly well about her child and regards her child to be the best one in the entire world. This thought of extreme love and desire for the best for her child is echoed in the lullaby. The men folk in the Apatani society are seen as hard working, strong, brave and wealthy, so the mother wants her boy child to be one such who will stand straight, tall and strong like the *Si-ro-Piisa*<sup>18</sup>. The societal images which are used as a means to lull the child not to cry and to make him go to sleep in a way view the child to be a strong man when he grows up.

---

17 . Kani, T.1996. *The socio-religious ceremonies of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh*. Frontier publishers and Distributors, Itanagar.p-44.

18 . The first pine trees which were planted by the first people who migrated and came to the present Apatani valley. These trees are believed to be very tall, straight and strong.



The child when growing up into a man should be brave enough to go to the dwelling place of the tiger (*patii*) and hunt it down so that he can perform the *Ropi* ceremony which is performed for the brave and strong. And it should be able to climb the tallest tree and catch hold of the eagle living in its nest. Further, they should possess the quality of being very fast, to be able to catch the wild cat (*dollyi siichi*) by its tail and also to catch the wild cock (*parsing paro*) and pluck out its feathers. The interesting fact is that the picture of a grown-up man in the Apatani society is that of a man with perfection and no weakness. He should be a man of great oratory skills who should have a say in society's activity, a kind of role model to look upon. To take the case of the *Hijjo* (a kind of bamboo), which is very huge and strong and beautiful. The use of *Hijjo* as a simile is very clear to what it wants to mean when the mother uses it. An Apatani man is also seen as virtuous in nature, which shall never back an immoral person. He is the one who shall lead the family, clan and society to prosperity and peace. Such outlook of a man of the Apatani tribe is exquisitely described through the words of a mother in the lullaby.

### **Children's Game Songs or Rhymes**

All these game songs or rhymes basically talk about things which are very light in nature. The simplicity of thoughts in these rhymes makes it easy for everyone to understand, unlike the songs of ceremonies and rituals loaded with heavy jargon. The things found in nature are abundantly present in these rhymes. The words are indeed very simple and understandable; there is no room for confusion. Such songs being created only for fun and enjoyment do not have any particular purpose or meaning attached to them. It is only a way through which the children without many things for entertainment as we do have now, found a way to be happy and merry. A certain kind of action was also performed with such songs to make them livelier and to bring the feel of a game to these songs. Given a closer look at such songs, it basically talks about feminine aspects of the Apatani culture, the names, articles, and actions are all feminine in nature. Thus, these songs gave the singers, listeners, and the participants a way to escape from their daily busy life and to rejuvenate

themselves and to be merry at least for that particular moment.

### **3. Dirge or Funeral Songs**

The life after death is a common theory in many of the societies and the problem of that still remains unanswered. The dirge of the Apatanis too echoes the concept of the life after death and the Land of Death, as observed by both *Verrier Elwin* and *Christoph Von Haimendorf* in their monumental works. The Apatani dirge starts with the naming of the dead person and then telling them that his/her death was a natural one, for which none of us is to be blamed. It is the will of the almighty God which had given you the time till today. So, the concept of the life and death being in the hands of the unknowable that is the God is very much there in the Apatani culture. This dirge tries to pacify the departed one not to bother the living any more as the world they live now are pole apart. The funeral singers in a way are guiding the soul of the departed towards the new world so that it does not stray on its way and try to come back to the world of living.

### **Conclusion**

It can be summarized that the folksongs of the Apatanis reflect the community image, leading to a better understanding of their culture and social set up. It plays an important role in describing the socio-cultural life of the tribe, its customs, habits, attitudes, and institutions. Folksong is a medium through which the desires of the people can be communicated. But the weaning of the cultural belief system with the coming of new religions and the declining number of people practising the tradition has affected the socio-cultural realm, calling for a need to preserve it at the earliest and with great sincerity. Being a very vast area, a systematic approach is necessary for its study, as no much research has been done in this field.

### **References**

1. Blackburn, S. (2004). Memories of Migration: Notes on legends and beads in Arunachal Pradesh, India. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 25/26, 15-60.

2. Bose, N.K. 1971. *Tribal life of India*. National book trust, India.
3. Choudhury, Roy. P.C. 1976. *Folklore of Bihar*. National Book Trust, India, New Delhi.
4. Datta, Birendranath, Nabin Chandra Sharma, Prabin Chandra Das. 1994. *A handbook of Folklore material of north-east India*. Anundoram Bobooah Institute of Languages, Arts & Culture, Assam, Guwahati.
6. Das, Jogesh. 1972. *Folklore of Assam*. National Book Trust, India, New Delhi.
7. Deva, Indra. 1989. *Folk Culture and peasant society in India*. Rawat Publications, Jaipur.
8. Deva, Indra, 1956. *Modern social forces in Indian Folksongs*. Rawat Publications, Jaipur.
9. Elvin, Verrier. 1959. *A philosophy for NEFA*, Shillong.
10. Elvin, Verrier. 1970. *A New Book of Tribal Fiction*, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh.
11. Elvin, Verrier. 1968. *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India*, Research Publication, Shillong.
12. Haimendorf, C.V. 1962. *The Apatanis and their Neighbours*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
13. Haimendorf, C.V. 1980. *A Himalayan Tribe: Cattle to Cash*. Vikas Publications Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.
14. Kani, Takhe. 1993. *The Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh*. Frontier publishers and Distributor, Itanagar.
15. Kaning, Mihin. 2008. *The Rising culture of the Apatanis*. Himalayan Publishers, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.
16. Kiangte, Latnangliana. 1997. *Folktales of Mizoram*. United Publishers L.T.L publications and arts and culture Department, Aizwal, Mizoram, India.
17. Mibang, T and S.K Chaudhuri. (ed). 2004. *Folklore and oral literature from north east India*. New Delhi. Mittal Publications.
18. Mibang, T and P. T. Abraham. 2002. *Indian Folk-Tales of North-East*, Farsight Publishers and distributors, New Delhi.
19. Osik, N.N. 2001. *Myths, Legends and tales of Arunachal Pradesh (Vol-1)*. Directorate of Art and Culture, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

20. Pandey, B.B. (ed.) 2000. *Oral Literature of Arunachal Pradesh*.
21. Directorate of research ,Itanagar, Govt. Of Arunachal Pradesh.
22. Pandey, B.B. 1996. *Folksongs of Arunachal Pradesh (Adi)* Directorate of research, Itanagar, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh.
23. Punia, D, 1993. *Social Values in Folklore*. New Delhi and Jaipur. Rawat Publications.
24. Sarkar, Niranjana. 1974. *Dances of Arunachal Pradesh*. Directorate of research, Itanagar, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
25. Sen, Soumen. (ed). 1985. *Folklore in north east India*. New Delhi Omsons Publications.
26. *World Oral Literature Project, 2011*. Cambridge: Cambridge University

## Gender representation in Apatani Folklore: with special reference to Folktales and a lullaby

Kime Mamung

### INTRODUCTION:

The Apatanis are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and its total population is about 43,777 (As per Census 2011). The tribe basically known for their enterprising nature, fish cum paddy culture and beautiful plateau are an inhabitant of villages around Ziro, the district headquarter of Lower Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh. The word Apatani is combination of two words – “Apa and Tani”. Here “Apa” stands for respect and affection being prefixed to the tribe name originally known as “Tanii”, descendents of Abotani, the forefather. The place inhabited is popularly known as Apatani plateau. It is believed that till early 1950s all the Apatanis inhabiting this plateau were living in seven villages namely Hari, Bulla, Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, Bamin-Michi and Hong. According to oral literature the foundation of these villages dates back to the time when their ancestors first entered the plateau and eventually settled there. The native religion of the Apatanis are *Danyi-Piilo*, people worships sun and moon, considering sun as mother and moon as father.

The main objective behind writing this paper is to highlight those oral forms especially verbal art form of the Apatani oral tradition where gender role of traditional Apatani society gets reflected. This article is an attempt to study those oral forms where gender role construction and its stereotyping are inherently crafted in form of tales and lullaby. Sincere attempt has been made to understand the gender representation in Apatani society through oral tradition by analyzing the oral narratives and a lullaby for which select folktales and lullaby were considered for the study. For brief analysis of the society gleaned through the verbal art forms, the present article has been divided into three sections. On the basis of the discussions in these three sections the conclusion has been drawn to see conformity of the gender representation of women in the contemporary Apatani society in comparison to their representation in verbal art forms has been briefed.

## **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES:**

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

Folklore is representative element of every society and its importance to tribal life is immeasurable. Though its stories are of unknown authorship but its power and importance are well acknowledged since its existence. Through folklore and its study one can understand the various aspects of life, culture, tradition and customs of any society or community.

Folklore is believed to be as old as mankind. The term Folklore was coined by William Thoms in 1846. But the Folklore studies had begun much earlier than the coining of term by Thoms. Before this term came into existence, the scholarly work on folklore was carried out under such labels as

"Popular Antiquities "or "Popular Literature". According to Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones , "the word folklore denotes expressive forms, process and behaviours (1) that we customarily learn, teach and utilize or display during face to face interactions, and (2)that we judge to be traditional (a)because they are based on known precedents or models and (b)because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, thought, belief and feeling"(1995:1).Alan Dundes (1980) considers folklore as projective material and projection as inherent feature of folklore. He says, "For humans, projection provides protection. Folklore, although collectivized fantasy, does meet the psychological needs of individuals. Indeed, it is literally and figuratively custom-made for the purpose." (1980:61).

There exists many folktales, folksongs and myths in different society justifying why one is supposed to follow certain norms and rituals. For example, female members of the Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh are not allowed to climb *Lapang*- a religious platform because of the menstruation cycle experienced by females which they believe make their body unfit to climb that holy platform. Likewise, every society too has their share of folklore depicting their culture, tradition and heritage, both tangible and intangible.

Gender as a concept is a way in which maleness and femaleness are perceived, evaluated and stratified in a society. Gender Ideology is mainly realized in symbols and rituals, patterns of verbal expressions and gender based role assignments. Women are often perceived and structured differently in different society according to their beliefs, customs and tradition. In male dominant society women are always depicted in stereotypical roles according to the whims of society. Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* (2011) which was first published in 1949, famously wrote, "one is not born, but rather becomes, women", which implies that being men or women, their gendered roles and assignments in society are socially constructed and one is not born with those stereotyped roles. Thus, right from the time one is born he/she is decorated with the chains of dos and don'ts. According to Simon de Beauvoir in patriarchal society men are subject

and women an object playing his subordinate, he is the owner and she is being owned by him. Thus she says, "He is the subject; he is the absolute. She is the other" (2011: 6) According to her gender is socially constructed, she discusses the situation of women, their position and limited freedom she enjoys in patriarchal society.

Jyoti Prasad Saikia in his book *Gender: Themes and Issues* (2010) discusses the concepts of gender and gender studies. The idea of gender to layman is deeply connected to one's sex which is biologically determined at the time of birth and it is very difficult for one to understand its process of stereotyping which involves social expectations which results in gender role construction. Therefore, gender issue is intermixed with sex-role stereotyping in our society due to the interpretation of masculinity and femininity. It concerns the psychological, social, and cultural difference between males and females. From sociological understanding gender is a socially constructed concept based on these differences. So, gender refers to cultural and social explanation that turns sexual differences rather than biological distinction. Social scientists discussed masculinity and femininity in diverse ways. Among them, Fredric Engel, Karl Marx, Juliet Mitchell, Gerda Lerner, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, etc. are most eminent personalities, who contributed to the gender discourse. The term 'gender studies' are being used to mean the area of study relating to the question of women, patriarchy and the study of the marginal groups such as gay, lesbian, transgender and homosexuals which have widened the scope of the discipline-gender studies. This branch of study is an outcome of waves feminism and feminist movements, particularly second wave feminism (p-2,4,7,8).

When question for apt definition of gender arises, we realize that different scholars from different academic backgrounds have given its definition in their own ways. Gender is still used as a contrast term to 'sex'. Though 'sex' and 'gender' are interconnected, both convey two different meanings. Gender is socially constructed as opposed to that which is biologically given. From this point of view, 'gender' refers to personality traits and behavior in distinction from the body. Therefore, it is very clear that there is a clear distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'. In today's



world, the term 'gender' has popularly become to refer any social construction having to do with the male/female distinction, including those constructions that separate 'female' bodies from 'male' bodies (ibid.p-9).

### **THE ROLE OF GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY APATANI SOCIETY:**

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

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

but still there is mile to go to change the above-mentioned precedents which have been followed since ages.

### **WOMEN IN APATANI FOLKLORE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOLKTALES AND A LULLABY**

The Apatanis have rich oral tradition embellished with the finest mythical female characters. Each of them epitomizing and representing certain roles specific to female. It is believed that knowledge and wisdom has its origin from woman. Dolyang – *Chanjang* is the one who has pioneered priesthood. She is known as the sister of *Abotani* – the forefather of the Apatanis. Every form of knowledge and wisdom has originated from her and she is the symbol of wisdom, wit and compassion. She is considered as first priest of the Apatani society and it is believed that she herself decided to abandon the practice of priesthood as she felt really uncomfortable to climb *lapang* (religious altar) while menstruating. This decision of *Chanjang* shifted the responsibility of performing priesthood to her brother *Abotani* –the forefather of the Apatani tribe. It is also believed that her love for brother *Abotani* is one of the reasons to cause her abandon the priesthood. The folktale of *Chanjang* represents women as pioneer of wisdom and also as a compassionate sister capable of love and sacrifice. Many times, in practical life of Apatani women folk she is told to be brainy like *Chanjang* who is compassionate and is capable of sacrifice for the good of her near and dear ones.

Virtue is the name of *Dilyang Diibu*, the daughter of Sun and Moon, she is one of the most important and popular figures of Apatani oral literature. She is basically known for her virtuous and enterprising nature. In folktales, it is told that *Abotani*, the forefather of the Apatanis flourished and became the richest in the universe only after marrying virtuous *Dilyang Diibu*. She is considered as the harbinger of paddy, other crops and cattle to the Apatani plateau. It was during her marriage with *Abotani* that she brought all these which could elevate the social and economic status of *Abotani*. It was with the paddy seed she brought along with her which could actually enhance the paddy cultivation in entire Apatani Plateau. She was an accomplished lady who knew the art of cultivation, weaving and cooking. Girls from childhood are told to endow her character-virtuous, enterprising, hardworking and to develop skill of cultivation

as *Aanii Diibu*. The folktale of *Aanii Diibu* reflect the ways in which fortunes of the men are associated with women. In traditional Apatani society, fortune or misfortune of men are often associated with the nature and skill of women. It is believed that women with good heart and hardworking nature could elevate the social status and relations of her family whereas ill-natured and lazy women are only capable of bringing bad relations and downfall of a family.

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

The myth behind tattooing also narrates the reasons least known to outsiders. This myth discards the popular belief that women tattooed their face to look uniform and to make themselves unattractive. The myth hidden in the verses of *Ami Niido Biinyi* from *Yorda-Ayu* ( *Ayu* is a form of oral poetry) is considered to be the most authentic and acknowledged myth narrating the reasons for tattooing and nose piercing. This *Ayu* is especially held during *Murung* festival in the month of January. The myth of *Ami Niido Biinyii* is to be considered as the original source to understand the reasons behind the origin and practice of tattooing among the Apatanis. The myth goes like as here under:

One of the verses of *Yorda-Ayu* narrates the myth of "*Ami Niido Biinyi*". She was the most beautiful and expert in every field as expected to be known by an Apatani women. Though highly accomplished in everything, she has to wait for marriage proposal. Time passed by and no one came forward with marriage proposal to her. She grew older day by day and her wait for marriage proposal continued. She lost fertility and capacity to bear a child with her growing age. *Ami Niido Biinyii* had sleepless nights and could not bear the predicament anymore and one day decided to

ask God (*Popi*) to solve her problem. Accordingly, she asked God to tell her ways through which she could regain her lost youth and beauty once again. God told *Ami Niido Biinyi*, "In order to regain your youth and beauty and to bear a child, you must tattoo your face. You must wear *Yaping Hulo* (Nose Plugs), *Yaruhukho* (Ear Plugs) and *Rutting Yarang* (Flat brass rings) to have lot of poultry and cattle to support you". She followed God's advice and tattooed her face, put on nose plugs, ear plugs and *rutting yarang* and with this art of beautification she could regain her lost beauty and youthfulness. Her beauty enchanted *Miido JindoTajing* and he proposed to marry *Ami Niido Biinyi*. She accepted the proposal; they got married and lived happily ever. Their marriage resulted in the birth of *Khalos* (Supernatural beings). The birds and animals of the jungle were their poultry and cattle.

It may be noted that Apatanis are smaller in number compared to the rest of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Their strong urge to increase their population for self-preservation might have led them to tattoo their face, prick their ears and nose to become productive and fertile like *Ami Niido Biinyi*. Thus, big prominent tattoo, big ear plugs and nose plugs were encouraged amongst the women of Apatani society. The entire art of decorating through tattoos, ear and nose plugs worked as psychological tool to fight the unwanted and inhospitable calamities and environment and also to increase economy those days.

Thus, Apatanis tattooed their face, wore ear and nose plugs to fulfill their psychological and economical needs and to face the inhospitable environments surrounding them during those early days. It also stood as symbol of beauty and symbolized puberty leading to fertility. Before the advent of education and modernity in Apatani society, women without tattoo and nose plugs were looked down upon and were considered incomplete psychologically compelling them to get themselves tattooed.

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

Oralu...oradu...ngiikalu oho mi,  
Habung-sulung pa, sancha kiine talyi,  
Haro-khango pa, sancha kiine talyi,  
Oralu....oradu....

Ngiika lu opo mi Ngiika lu obing mi ,  
Yording harcha la Bipo lu tabi mi Giibii lu niipa cho .  
Yorko lu hari la Dilo lu tasang mi Giibii lu niipa cho .  
Parsing lu Ropo mi Miigang lu tiinii pa,  
Doli lu siichi mi Ami lu tiinii pa,  
Lali lu Gambii ho Khokhung lu miinii pa,  
Biida lu yorlo ho Patii lu lanii pa,  
Babo lu taper mi Porta lu pornii pa,  
Kuru lo bidu kane pa,Kiime lu bidu kane pa,  
Nago lu piiding mi Dila lu Dinii pa,  
Lapang lu jonii pa Sango lu konii pa,  
Armeyang lu talyi la Hago lu konii pa,  
Myanyo lu talyi la Barmii lu juma mi,  
Juding lu miinii pa Oho lu byama mi,  
byading lu miinii pa Armeyang lu talyi la, Myanyo lu talyi la...

Oralu....oradu.....  
Ngiika lu oka mi ....Ngiika lu onya mi Byatu lu liikang ho  
Jitii lu tiinii pa, papin lu panii pa, pare lu henii pa,  
Papi lu panii pa Byarang lu Liinyi ho  
Pari lu Rinii Pa Kuru Kane Pa Chinji/bidu Kane pa Diimi lu  
miinii pa  
Kiime Lu kane pa chodu lu /Dondo lu kane pa  
Ude siira pa, Arle giinii pa,  
lire lu Miinii pa Armeyang lu talyi la

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

The first two stanzas of lullaby exhibit extreme masculinity specially sung to a baby boy. Mother aspires him to grow bold, strong and healthy to do all mighty works as catching peacock (*parsing*), hunting eagle (*khonkhung*) and leopard(*patii*). She wishes him to raise his social status by contributing to social welfare and by building strong bond

with clan sisters and brothers and desires him to grow mightier than river *Kuru-Kiime*. The name of the places mentioned in the lullaby as '*Lali Gambi*' and '*Biida Yorlo*' are far off and high mountains where baby is supposed to hunt the wild beast and bird. Last two stanzas of lullaby are dedicated to a baby girl where she is expected to hold the responsibilities of the household chores. She is expected to be the best weaver who could weave to her family members (*Jitii lu tiinii pa*) and who could feed at the same time. Thus, it can be summarized that this lullaby depicts gender trait which uphold the patriarchal ideology where girls and women are expected to be best at holding household activities such as cooking, weaving, feeding and cleaning. She is expected to play the role of nurturer and comforter who could bring solace and peace to her family.

According to Dr. Radhe Yampi (2018) "This lullaby depicts that girls or women are expected to be good at household chores, procreation, weaving etc. while men are expected to be good at hunting, construction.... oratory, leadership, nurturer of downtrodden kiths and kins. These cultural expectations are gender roles that society ascribes to a man and woman. These gender roles are held ideal in Apatani society and largely determine how children are socialized differently based on their respective gender identities. The conditioning or internalization of gender roles in Apatani society can be seen in how they engage their children differently in different activities based on sex. From a very early age, Apatani girls would be engaged in domestic chores. Parents would always teach their girls to be a nurturer and cook and serve food to their brothers, weave them clothes, wash their clothes. They would be taught to be composed, enduring, quiet and meek in front of elders."

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

cleaning activities.

## **CONCLUSION:**

To conclude, the Apatani folklore is really a source to understand the process of stereotyping the role and position of women in society as the mind and body of the people concerned is projected in tales, riddles, proverbs, oral poetry, legends, epic, myth and narratives. Within limited space given, women are supposed to play the role of the creator; she should play the role of the harbingers of prosperity and happiness. Men's fortune and misfortune are measured with women's skill and nature. Women are expected to imbibe within her the quality of *Dolyang-Chanjang* and *Aanii Diilyang Diibu*, the knowledge and wisdom of former and the skill and delicacy of later. Facial decoration like tattooing was not simply done to enhance their physical charm. Indeed, there is a deeper meaning in it which led one to understand its utility in relation to women from economic and bodily point of view. Women tattooed their face, wore nose plugs and ear rings to enhance her fertility and to have abundance of cattle and poultries which could fend the need of her family. Thus, symbolically her body played a great role in controlling the economy of the family in traditional Apatani society. Lullaby which is normally sung by mother to comfort and lull her baby can be considered as a start point of gender role expectation in traditional Apatani society which exhibits the masculine traits attributed to male child and feminine traits considered for female child.

The role of women in the socio-cultural life of a community or tribe with a patriarchal form of social set – up are often judged within the context of patriarchal culture and its norms. Women's role in traditional Apatani society is decided in terms of male members of the family and assigned a role subordinate to their male counterpart. Though today the Apatani society is enriched by women IAS, Entrepreneurs, Doctors, professors and Engineers etc., it still has a long way to reach the state of economic and political liberation. It is heartening to see the position of women in folklore wherein it is reflected through many mythical figures to have enjoyed power and position but practical and real life women are still far from being that powerful and free. Education could better the life of women folk of the Apatani

society but still there are miles to go to achieve political and economic independence.

**References:**

1. Georges, Robert A. and Jones, Owen (1995). *Folkloristics: An Introduction*. Indiana University Press.
2. Dorson, Richard M (1972). *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*. The University of Chicago Press.
3. Saikia, Jyoti Prasad (2010). *Gender: Themes and Issues*. Naba Bharati Prakashan, Kolkata.
4. Beauvoir, S.D (2011). *The Second Sex*. Vintage, London.
5. Dundes, Alan (1980). *Interpreting Folklore*. Indiana University press.
6. Hall, Stuart (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage Publication, London.
7. Tado, Pura (2000). "Significance of Tattoo among the Apatanis". Dree Souvenir. 5th July. Print.
8. Kaning, Mihin (2008). *The Rising culture of the Apatanis*. Himalayan Publishers, Itanagar, Arumachal Pradesh.
9. Yampi, Radhe (2018). "A Crisp Retort on Gender Disparity in Apatani Society". AWAZ Souvenir. print.



## Divulging philosophy behind Donyi-Polo belief system of Apatani

Gyati Rana

### Introduction

Ziro Valley, the headquarter of Lower Subansiri District where the Apatanis are settled, is one of the most beautiful hill stations of Arunachal Pradesh and is located at about 1500 meters above mean sea level ensconced in the boson of pine clad mountains. It is inhabited by more than 50,000 gregarious and amiable Apatani people belonging to the Abotani tribe of the State. At the base of the uneven land dotted with a number of hillocks lie the luxuriant paddy fields. It is located at 27.63°N 93.83°E at an elevation of 1688 meters (5538 feet) to 2438 meters (8000 feet).



Apatanis are arguably one of the most advanced tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Their original name is "Tanii". "Apa" is a respectable word prefixed by its neighbouring tribes signifying their respect and regard for Apatanis' economic affluence and resourcefulness. The early anthropologists and other writers hired interpreters from the neighboring tribes and recorded the name of the tribe as Apatani and it is today well known all over the world by this name.

Like other tribes of the Tani group, Apatanis claim themselves as the descendants of legendary Abotani, the first human being born into this world. Mythology says that *Ungu Nguntii Anii*, the mother of creation gave birth to

Chañtu, the Mother Earth, who subsequently by cohabiting with *Aha Chare*

*Charuñ*, the God of Wisdom, procreated *Nikiñ Tani*, the forefather of human beings. *Nikiñ Tani* fathered *Neha Tani*, believed and considered as the father of various tribes of this world.

Apatani by nature are simple, hardworking and very fairly religious – both individually and as a community. They follow moral values enshrined in an oral compilation of ancient wisdom called “*Danyi-Shii lenda*”, and uphold *Danyi-Piilo* as their supreme spiritual authority with Sun and Moon as its physical manifestations.

They have no written scripture but have a vast oral tradition known as *Miji-Miguñ*. It deals with subjects encompassing philosophy, morals, concept of Gods, Spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, their relationships with body, spirits, nature etc. and various ritual systems.

Mythology says that oral tradition *Miji-Miguñ* is a transcendental knowledge and a corporal element, bearing meditative attributes of the universal spirit (Almighty God) herself.

In early aeon of creation, it was in the form of a huge stone called “*Piimii lani*”. This precious jewel of Almighty’s meditative attribute was brought into “*Piimii-Lembyañ*”; the human faculty of meditation by Goddess *Ami Rinii*. She handed it over to *Charuñ*; the God of wisdom. *Kolo-Charuñ* transformed it into signs and speeches and taught the knowledge to *Tabyii-Pechi*, *Jirii-Berii*, *Dotu Penji*, *Abotani* and *Ato Neha*, who are believed to be the galaxy of wise humans and established traditions responsible for handing over this transcendental knowledge orally to the next generation of human beings.

This article is based on such inherited oral literature collected through voice records and compiled by me during my more than a decade long cultural activism.

### **Basic Religious Concept and Out Look of Apatani**

The tribal religious concept that Apatani Tribe follows is innately monotheist though in its approach, perception and practice is polytheism. According to their oral tradition everything both animate and inanimate in this universe is the manifestation of *Ui*; the eternal directive force. To understand this concept, we need to go through the oral

literature on creations of the universe, earth, celestial bodies, spirits, vegetation, animal and human beings. It is also required to understand the relationship between human beings with other elements, spirits, habitat and fellow living beings, concept of birth, life and death.

The subject is as vast as the dimensional proportions of the universe itself, yet the author tried to show a glimpse of some philosophical concepts of *Danyi-piiloism/Donyipoloism* through this article.

## **Ui; The Greater Spirit**

### **1) Creation:**

The following opening verse in Apatani language is from the creation chapter of the oral tradition *Miji-Abañ* or *Gyuchi-Miji* of the Apatani. It speaks of the existence of a Greater Spirit *Ui*. What and who is *Ui*? You will find that *Ui*; conceptually, contextually and philosophically similar with the *Ish* of the Upanishad and *El* or *Al* of the Hebrew Old Testament. The following verse confirms that *Ui* is the Universal directive force of life and creation.

*“Kolyuñ Jimi dò, Kolyuñ Jima dò, Kolyuñ ji-rara, arragyagya Ui kontii du.*

*Kolyuñ donii mi Jima donii mi, Kolo donii mi Goma, donii mi, Ui jidu Hulu, gondu lyayu, hii gori giila*

*Kolyuñ Lodu ka dutu duri niiñ hii, Añchañ Lodu mi Dutii la, Kiidi Lodu mi dutu doh. Kolo Lobiñ ka bero beniñ hii*

*Añdo lobiñ mi beñtii la, Miido Lobiñ mi bero chado.*

*Ho, Ucher Hubyañ hò Taker huliñ, Ure Hubyañ ho Tarsi Huliñ, Jortu Hubyañ hò Danyi, Jorma Hubyañ hò piilo huliñ*

*Lyusi Hubyañ ho Yashi, Lyimu Hubyañ ho yamu....”*

### **Essence:**

“In the beginning epoch of *Kolyuñ*, there was complete emptiness, neither light nor darkness, and was in deep silence except for *Ui*, the eternal life force. The conscientiousness of *Ui* grew intensely and at one point of intensity, the creation started with defragmentation of *Ui*'s conscientiousness. It began with a loud bang and vibration called *Lodu* and *Lobiñ* respectively, and the Universe came

into existence with all its elements and celestial bodies. Then the Suns evolved from the bosom of *Jortu*, the Moons from the bosom of *Jorma*, *Yashi* (water) from the bosom of *Lyunsi*; and *Yamu* (fire) from the bosom of *Lyimu*; ... likewise every element and spirit was born out of different bosoms of *Ui*..."

## 2) Creation of Earth and the birth of living beings:

*Hiiikka kiiliñ hò,  
Ui Popi Kolyuñ Popipa, Ui Sarmiñ Kolyuñ Sarmiñ pa,  
Ui Pinii Kolyuñ Piniipa, Ui Siyo Kolyuñ Siyo pa, Duliñ la.  
Gyotu-radu, Mide-pyara dugyii pa hiila  
Kiiddi dola mi sannii ta'kiñ, Miido Dola mi  
chañko borkiñ ho ji'liñ.... .... Ho, Ngurii Annii  
Duliñ la Yorbii-Yasi ngumbu  
Ungu-nguntii Annii duliñ la Miyu-mima, achu-amyo  
mi ngumbu....*

### Essence:

"Next, *Ui* manifested as *Popi-Sarmiñ* and *Pinii-Siyo* to sustain their creation-human, animal and vegetation; they doughed this earth out of celestial dust and water. Thereafter, *Ui* manifested as *Ngurii-annii* and created the different geographical features of Earth and again manifested as *Ungu nguntii Annii* and gave birth to all living beings on this earth."

## 3) Elder Spirits/demigods:

...Ho,  
*Pyonii saber barpyo yattii, Ui Abañ pa Ui-Tadu, Uruñ abañ pa Uruñ Tagyañ. Pyonii abañ pa Pyoki-Taji, Unii abañ pa Uma-Pilya. Mikhii abañ pa Mikhii-Karu, Gyalañ abañ pa Gyalañ-Hole, Eyu abañ pa Turii-Tunker, Harnyañ abañ pa Gyiit-Pada, Myorii abañ pa Myoto-Radhe, Shii abañ pa Siitto-Radhe, Doji abañ pa Doji-Byoyi, Emper abañ pa parbo-Talo, Lyakuñ abañ pa Lyakuñ Byalo, Chutii abañ pa Chunii-Tiinii, Kharii abañ pa Kharii-Khape duliñ....."*

### Essence:

"...And before the birth of Humans, all first borns of benevolent spirits were born-eldest amongst *Ui*; *Ui-Tadu*, the eldest amongst *Pyonii*; *Pyoki-Taji*, the eldest amongst *Mikhii*; *Mikhii-Karu*, the eldest amongst *Eyu*; *Turii-Tunkër*, the eldest amongst *Myorii*; *Myoto Radhe*, the eldest amongst *Shii*; *Siitto*

Radhe... so on and so forth, the greater spirit manifested and was born as different genres of *Ui* and took charge of specific domains with specialized attributes and powers."

#### 4) Birth of First Human Being:

This verse is an excerpt from "Tani-Sabre", chapter of Oral Tradition: - "...Ngunuka aba-apa Abotani mi sabre bardu pa, *Ui hii chantu kochuñ ho hila abbu sokatii. Aha changi ka Changi Hila, Aha chapu ka Chapu hila, Aha chalyu ka chalyu hila. Hii Nimu-Tani adiñ pa sabre la, Tani sabre barder lama. Aha Charuñ-Chare ka Charuñ-Chare hila solii niiñ hii, Nikiñ-Tani mi here hendo pa, iijañ-hai mi hempa dopa, ngunuka aba-apa Abotani mi sabrë bartii...*" "...to create the human being, Abotani the forefather, the greater Spirit, manifested in different entities like *Aha changi, Aha Chapu, Aha Chalyu* etc. and dropped their semen into the genitals of *Chantu*, the mother Earth.

But all those born out of it were imperfect Tanis and were not in conformity with the likeness of the Almighty. Then God manifested himself as **Aha Charë Charuñ**, the god of wisdom and knowledge, and dropped his semen into the genitals of Mother Earth and consequently *Chantu* and *Nikiñ-Tani*, our fore father, was born with *Chare-Dore*, the power of discernment to distinguish light from darkness, right from wrong, with the element of consciousness, life, desire, will, insight, thought, prudence, intelligence, comprehension, understanding, wisdom, memory, etc...."

#### 5) The *Ui* and Two Suns, Jantër and Jampiñ Danyi:

The following verse of oral tradition mentions that in initial time there were two Suns, namely Janter-Danyi and Jampiñ-Danyi.

"...Kolyuñ Arrii Janter Danyi hii Pibo pelañ mi bempa la, Bio pelañ mi bempa la. Niishiñ khedu, niiji khedu rudu giido pa. Hiimi Aha gyole, gyole gyopu e'pa lo, Janter jarkhu mi gyopu pa pulin ku...."

*Kolyuñ Jampiñ Danyi, Kolyuñ Karpiñ, Karpiñ Piilo, Chantii-Dotii mi byobu la, Kiiddi-Miido mi byobu la. Niishiñ tumu mi, Niiji tumu mi, Biinyi tumu mi biia tumu mi, Miyu tumu mi murpyo giido pa...*"

#### Essence:

"...In primordial *kolyuñ* there were two suns around

earth *Janter-Danyi* and *Jampiñ-Danyi* both rose from different directions. *Janter-Danyi* was more powerful that nothing could survive under their rays; it burned up everything on this earth. When *Ui* saw this, he decided to destroy *Janter-Danyi* and sent *Aha Gyole-Gyopu*, a primeval meteorite and let him shoot down *Janter-Danyi* of *Kolyuñ*. Later the dead body of *Janter-Danyi* was transformed into various asteroids. And *Jampiñ-Danyi* existed since then who sustained the *Ui*'s creation, vegetation, animals and humans on this earth. ....” Thus, the Primal Sun and Moon, *Jampiñ-Danyi* and *Karpiñ-Piilo*, of *Kolyuñ* have been sustaining and nourishing the Earth and its life, vegetation, animal and human beings. It is known in spoken language as *Danyi piilo/Donyi-polo*.

### **6) The Sentinel Guardians- Sun and Moon (Danyi-piilo):**

The following hymn of *Danyi* Ritual is a salutation to the Greater Spirit. It reveals that *Donyi-polo* is the manifestation of the Eternal and Universal Greater spirits and is at the top echelon amongst the different genres of *Ui*. “...*Danyi-Piilo nó Charuñ loma ka hulu pakhu, kanku loma ka siibi bhikhu, Kolyuñ Annii ka nutii nuri, Koló annii ka hatii hanyo, iiji kua ka gartii danyi, murta kua ka liitii piilo, iiji duiñ ka dupiñ danyi, Gambii ta'tii bò, Murta liitii ka liipiñ piilo, ganda ta'robò, Jampiñ danyi, Karpiñ piilo...*”

It means “.... O *Danyi-Piilo*! Thou are the remnant of knowledge with *Charuñ*, the god of knowledge and wisdom, after bestowing knowledge and wisdom to every living being. And remnants of matters remaining with *Kanku*, the creator of this Universe. Thou art the caring eyes and compassionate heart of Goddess of time *Kolyuñ* and *Koló*. Thou art the Mighty Sun whose domain is *Ilji*, Great Moon of *Murta* - omni conscience, omnipotent and omnipresent. Thou art the manifestation of caring and sustaining, protective and guiding attributes of the greater spirit, compassionate and loving Sun and Moon...”

Thus, *Donyi-Polo* is the manifestation of *Ui* and is the same god as described in other Indian and oriental religious scriptures. Therefore, it is beheld as manifestation of *Ui* as the sentinel guardian of the creation, and this thought of school is christened as “*Donyi-poloism*”.

Hence, the entire universe is born out of *Ui*, the eternal directive and creative force of life, and every matter

and element of the creation around us is manifestation of the Greater spirit itself. It is the source of everything as well. Nothing is hidden from it. The logic behind not having an idol, image or designated prayer center in tribal communities like in Mandir, Masjid and Church etc. is that you cannot confine the universe into a small place.

## **Birth and Life**

### **Concept of Birth and relation with Ui the greater spirit:**

Apatani believe that greater spirit *Ui* manifested as twin Creator Goddesses, *Pinii-Yapyañ* and *Siyo-Taane*, and created us at their platform called *Ziker-La'pañ* and *Zire-la'pañ*. While creating us, they implanted the seeds of various faculties viz. knowledge, speech, physical strength etc. called *Tapyu*, *Tabyo*, *Are-Amyo*. Thereafter, we were placed before a bunch of threads called "*Soyú*" with different numbers of knots denoting a year of our life to choose one from them by yourself. It is believed that one who chooses with more knots lives a longer life. Next, we were placed before the various elements and matters to be chosen from for our means of death.

Besides this, it is believed that beginning from our birth till death they continue creating us according to our thoughts and actions. Hence it is said thus: "*Pinii henchi henko puchi pudu, hembu henko pubi pudu*", meaning the creator creates you according to your thoughts and attitudes. Next, we are handed over to *Ayo Danyi* for a blessing called "*Laa*". Here *Ayo Danyi* sacrifices the celestial Mithun called "*Murta-Tapu*" and its meat is placed before us as her blessing called *Laa*. This *Laa* also is of two types: the benevolent and positive one is called "*denki laa*" and malevolent and negative one is called *Dema Laa*. The soft, fatty meat turns out to be a positive and good blessing (*Denki Laa*) like material richness (*mingo-laa*), physical strength (*Ta'mo-laa*), sacred knowledge (*Miji-Migun Laa*) etc. And all the tendons, bones, skin etc as negative blessings (*Dema Laa*) denote misfortunes, scarcity, ignorance, weakness etc.

All these blessings are arranged at her abode as foods for self-service. She does serve her blessing, but we ourselves choose her blessing (*Laa*) according to our attitudes from the different types of meat displayed at her palace.

Thereafter, we are sent to the care of terrestrial God, *Shu-Myoro, Myorii shii*. It is evident from modern history that in the early epoch of human evolution, during nomadic life, we lived in caves and below big banyan trees. We were then closer to *Shu-Myoro* and *Myorii-shii*, as it is believed that these terrestrial Gods live under big trees, caves etc. Afterward, when our forefathers started their settled life, Almighty God manifested as *Chañtuñ Byore* and began residing with us in our dwelling house to protect and sustain us.

This shows the quantum of love the greater spirits have for us. Almighty sees that during our lifespan we all come out of our homes for our physical requirements. The greater spirits unflinchingly care for us so that we do not stray into the domain of other spirits. So, to protect us from physical injuries it resides in our body as "*Giinii-Pilya*", the spirit within energizing and vitalising our body.

### **Death and Afterlife**

Death in spoken Apatani language is "*siiniiñ*", which literally means end of life, but in ethical terms expressed euphemistically it is called "*Tiirañ darniiñ*", which means transformation. Oral tradition reveals that death is not the end of everything; the eternal creation is continuous and death is also a part of it. The process of creation continues till the soul, a fragment of greater Spirits *Ui* called *Yalo* resides in the physical body keeping us alive. When the soul leaves the body, the transformation begins with the *Yalo* becoming *Ui* and the physical body transforms and defragments into different elements.

The concept of afterlife in the philosophy of *Donyipoloism*, unlike in other Indian and oriental schools of philosophy, does not have a clear concept of rebirth. However, when we eat the meat of wild animal and if perchance our stomach aches, our elders attribute such indigestion to the ancestor's soul having been embodied in the wild animal.

There is no such concept of sin (paap) or Heaven and Hell where souls are rewarded or condemned. But we accept and believe in the commission of good and bad deeds by humans in different degrees and intensities.

Apatanis strongly believe in this principle to which my



mother used to refer often: “..Takku ali lyio Takku, Tanyi ali lyio Tanyi. Hela bomi hela heli du. Bila bomi bila bili du...”. Its essence is, **“As you sow, so shall you reap”**. This principle prevails not only in this world (*Neha*), but also in other spiritual realms. The other two realms are *Neli*, the realm below, where the soul of the person goes who dies a natural death. And *Talü*, another realm above, where the soul of premature and unnatural deaths go.

The life in *Neli* and *Talii* does not depend on our good or bad deeds; every deed and action are accounted for in each realm itself. So, going to a different realm solely depends on the kind of predestined death one chooses during creation/birth. Unlike the concept of heaven or hell, these two realms are just a mirror image of our earth. These are not the places where one goes to suffer as a punishment or enjoy as a reward, but just to continue to lead the same life as one had back on earth (*Neha*).

If you were a good, moral person and led an upright and prosperous life on earth (*Neha*), you will continue to lead the same life in *Neli/Talii*. And if you were a bad, immoral person and led a life full of transgressions and guilt, then you will not have relief even in *Neli/Talii*.

### **3) Life and its Philosophy**

Therefore, we the descendants of Abotani, especially Apatani, believe that everyone must aim at leading a good, moral life on this earth using our discriminative power bestowed upon us, and with a discriminative approach guided by conscience. It is evident from the customary law which addresses conscience more than prescription of penalty. Therefore, they strive to live a good moral life so that they do not have to continue a miserable life again in *Neli* or *Talii*.

Thus, the motivation to behave in an ethical manner does not come from the idea of heaven and hell. It is collective wisdom gained through experience of a discriminative approach to life and its problems by forefathers and elders. Such knowledge is compiled as *Nitiñ-Hormiñ*; it is preserved and transmitted orally and guides our behavior.

These tribes, especially Apatani, are very close-knit societies and have strong community ties. So, their moralities originate from considerations of human welfare known as

**Danyi-shii lenda**-an upright way of living guided by living experiences earned through life of our forefathers. Not from divine declarations. These tribes advocate a kind of '**Communitarian ethics**' which revolves around human welfare as the highest value. And any action that threatens this is considered as 'bad' in the society. It is an own reflection on living a harmonious and cooperative life in a human society which led to the creation of this ethics.

Another important and unique principle that makes the philosophy of Donyi-poloism is the philosophy of '**Sibling Relationship**' with nature. As per their cosmology **Ungu-Nguntii Annii** gave birth to all living beings including plants. Human beings are at the highest level of creation but **many animals are also held to be the descendants of Abo Tani, the first human being**. So, we all are siblings. As a result, human beings do not get a superior position in the world order. On the contrary, they are at par with all other creations in the world and therefore they are not just expected to love and respect the creations around them but have also been entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of them.

### **Threats and Problems**

This most ancient and living faith, tradition, customs and practices are, however, diminishing day by day due to modernization and dispersal of the community due to their adoption of various professions. Some of the main factors are as mentioned below:

1. Introduction of the modern education system that has made obsolete the traditional system of percolation of oral tradition. No association of economic activities in learning local language, and indigenous cultural literature has discouraged our people learning their own language and cultural knowledge.
2. Over and above this, non-incorporation of the lessons on indigenous knowledge, traditional, moral, cultural values in the modern CBSE education system have made Apatani true to the popular saying amongst the elders "*Palo Miji mi Malo Miguñ mi, Dodiñ miji mi, Dolo miguñ mi golla siido. Popi nitiñ tinchiñ kuma, Sarmiñ Hormiñ khechiñ kuma. Miji hatii bari haro lakuma*", It means, though

it has produced brilliant professionals but they as a people are culturally weak devoid of knowledge of one's own faith, cultural ethos and values, making them weak in self confidence on the subject matter. Consequently, people get attracted towards materialism and have become vulnerable to apostasy.

3. The absence of oral tradition in written form has confined it only to the *Nyibus* (Shamans). Making it beyond the reach of the common people, resulting in their ignorance and weakness in knowledge of *miji-miguñ*. And lack of self confidence in the subject matter of their own faith and culture.
4. The onslaught of alien faiths and cultures projecting themselves as epitome of modernity with huge resources -both financially, intellectually and technologically, trained and skilled manpower and well-prepared strategy, covertly and overtly.
5. "*Nyibu duto la, Giitu-Giira ajañ-aler du. Giitu giira ajañ aler tola Nyibu duko dho.*" It means the relationship between *Nyibu* and common believers is reciprocal. Due to *Nyibus'* activities the believers' spiritual and physical health is well maintained. The *Nyibus* are sustained by the growth of physically and spiritually healthy believers." Lack of understanding of these subtle relations by both the parties has led the society to become vulnerable to be led to apostasy.

True to the popular sayings, 'history repeats itself' similar to the yonder days, when *Tubo, Lyabo, Myotii, Pilya, Dingyañ* and *Shii*, the malevolent spirits conspired to eliminate Abo Tani from this world. Similarly, the Apatani indigenous faith and culture is being attacked covertly and overtly by various elements and alien religious organizations to wipe it out from this world.

## **The Meder Nello Movement to Preserve, Protect and Promote Indigenous Belief System**

Upholding the values taught in this old adage; "*Popi Nitiñ lenda mi sanii lyipu kiine ma, sarmiñ hormiñ lembo mi kusu lyiru kiine ma*" which means, one should never discard and dampen the ways, wisdom and knowledge of our ancestor *Popi-Sarmiñ*," many sensible Apatani elders, brothers and sisters worked at various levels, individually and under the banner of various NGOs etc. viz. Late Mihin Kaning, Late Nani Tachang, founder Meder Nello, Late Tage Dibo, Miss Tasso Santi, Hage Riku, Hage Tado, Kago Siira, Hage Nenka and many other faithful brothers and sisters guided by Late Padi Yubbey, Hage Kojin IAS, Shri Lod Kojin, Tasso Grayu, etc. and inspired by legendary late Talum Rukbo, realized that it would be an act of wisdom to mend our own house in conformity with the dynamic and modern Society than to stay with outsider friends whose house is well built. They realized the diminishing applicability of traditional ways of dissemination and assimilation of oral tradition, the threat of modernization and onslaught of alien faith and requirement of a common platform to preserve and promote own faith and culture.

In conformity with the old proverb, 'Nothing is permanent except change,' 22 years back, they conceptualized and established the Meder Nello to revitalize their age-old faith, culture and tradition. They organized prayers by offering rice powder with faith and truthfulness without any sacrifices based on our existing oral tradition, with the objective to do research on our faith system and to reform it while pursuing preservation, protection and promotion.

Now, the Apatani community has 13 numbers of Meder Nello, 10 Nos. at Ziro and two in the Capital region, one being at Banderdewa where regular prayers are organized every Sunday. Besides this, Meder Nello members organize prayer services at the residence of devotees known as '*Riikuñ Nello*' on own their requests.

Regarding documentation of oral tradition, so far, they have compiled "*Pyakuñ-pere*," and "*Siigyiiñ-Myoiñ*" hymns and chanting, and "*Garyu-Niiniñ*" prayer song has been compiled and is being used in the prayer centers. Many dedicated devotees like late Mihin Kaning, Takhe Kani, Late Kago Siira, Sri Hage Tado, yours truly Gyati Rana

and very recently Sri Danyi Tasser have been documenting hymns and mythologies in their personal capacity with the help of NGOs and well-wishers. They are confronted with financial constraints and shortage of manpower to get satisfactory progress in documentation. The Nyibus (Shamans) who are the repository of oral tradition are very cooperative and forthcoming and are ready to disseminate their knowledge; we hope that with the blessing of *Danyi-Piilo* it will be overcome all the problems and would be able to document our elder's wisdoms and save and promote our culture and identity.

### **Note/Acknowledgement**

*This article is based on the revelation, inference of oral tradition by the renowned Shamans of Hari Village in Ziro Valley, Shri Gyati Tajo, Sri Gyati Taming and Sri Hage Halyang recorded through voice recorder. However, the translation and some deductions are the Author's.*

1. Taloh, A. K. (2010). *The Philosophy of Donyi-Polo*. Indus Publishing Company
2. Singh, S. (2019). Exploring the Indigenous Faith System of Donyi-Polo: An Ethnographic Study of Adi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Modern Education*, 4(2), 274-283
3. Rana, G. (2014). *Abotani's Struggle for Survival*. Ziro: Dani Kunia Foundation.
4. Rana, G. (2015). Chronological brief descriptive events of Myoko. *Popiriscopes*, pp. 12-17.

## **Tiike Byuniiñ: A Traditional Cupping Therapy of the Apatanis in Ziro Valley**

Dani Obing and Duyu Nanya

### **INTRODUCTION**

"Indigenous and tribal people" is a common denominator for an approximate of 370 million people inhabiting in more than 70 countries worldwide. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and tribal people have their own cultures, traditions, religion, languages, customs and institutions, which distinguish them from other section of the societies in which they live. As such, these populations are identified through their ways of living life which are indigenous in nature and evolved with their due association with their natural surroundings. The traditional methods of healing diseases have been in practice since time immemorial. In earlier times as the tribal people didn't know the actual reason behind the diseases borne by the sufferers, they started their own locally induced ways to heal the various diseases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as the sum total of knowledge, skill and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences, indigenous to different theories whether explicable or not used on maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis and improvement of treatment of physical and mental illness. Traditional healing practices refer to the methods and techniques that have been used for centuries by different cultures to treat and prevent illness and disease. These practices vary widely depending on the culture, religion, geographic region and beliefs of the people who use them.

Traditional healers were the individuals who had expertise in dealing with such practices often using possessions such as plant roots, animal bones, voodoo dolls etc to perform their tasks. It is an acknowledged fact that it is only through taking notes and gaining inputs of the traditional medicines that later on all forms of modern medicines were developed.

## **CUPPING THERAPY**

Cupping therapy is an element of traditional medicine whose practice has been expressed in many ancient cultures including in Egyptian, Arabic, Jewish, Mexican and Asian societies (Dinallo, 2019). In Egypt and Arabian countries this practice is called as 'Al-Hijamah.' Cupping therapy is an ancient traditional and complementary medicine practice (Aboushanab and AlSanad, 2018). Cupping is performed by applying cups to selected skin points and creating a sub atmospheric pressure, either by heat or by suction form of alternative therapy that involves placing cups on the skin to create a suction effect (Mehta and Dhapte, 2014). The basic underlying principle of the cupping therapy is that it aids in removing harmful substances and toxins from the body to support healing process. It is known to stimulate the lymphatic system, helping to remove toxins and improve immunity. By increasing circulation and encouraging detoxification, cupping can promote a state of deep relaxation and wellbeing (Rusnak, 2023). This suction effect during the therapy is believed to improve blood flow, relieve muscle tension, and promote relaxation. The cups used in the process can be made of various materials, including plastics, glass, ceramics, bamboo, earthenware, horns and bones of various animals etc. As per a report dated to 400 BC by Herodotus, a Greek Historian, it mentions prescriptions of wet and dry cupping therapy for treatment of headaches, lack of appetite, mal digestion, fainting and others. Aboushanab and AlSanad in their work 'Cupping Therapy: An Overview from a Modern Medicine Perspective' categorized cupping therapy into four (4) and seven (7) methods on the basis of its 'technical' and 'cup' types, respectively (Table. 1)

**TABLE 1 : CUPPING THERAPY**

On the basis of Technical types	On the basis of Cup types
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dry Cupping</li><li>2. Flash Cupping</li><li>3. Wet Cupping</li><li>4. Massage Cupping</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Plastic Cupping sets</li><li>2. Glass Cupping sets</li><li>3. Rubber Cupping sets</li><li>4. Metal Cupping sets</li><li>5. Silicone Cupping sets</li><li>6. Ceramic Cupping sets</li><li>7. Bamboo Cupping sets</li></ol>

The cupping therapy adopted in its various form is a household phenomenon for the indigenous societies. Recent studies have shown that the cupping techniques or styles performed across the world resembled the geographic locations and features they were evolved in, most of the times using the region's locally available resources. In the easternmost corner of India, the Apatani tribe residing in the central region of Arunachal Pradesh are one among those societies practising the wet cupping therapy to heal various ailments. In adherence to the materials used, Apatani community of Ziro valley owing to its ageless association with the Bamboo plant evolved to use bamboo tubes for their cupping therapy sessions which is known as **“Tiike Byuniñ or Taake Byuniñ.”**

### **Tiike/Taake Byuniñ**

**“Tiike Byuniñ or Taake Byuniñ”** is a traditional bloodletting cupping therapy to remove germs or disease-causing impure blood using bamboo tubes to cure various aches and diseases from the body. In Apatani dialect **“Tiike”** or **“Taake”** means germs or toxins which may cause illness or diseases and **“Byuniñ”** means suction through mouth. So, it is believed that in this therapy the therapist sucks out germs or impure blood using bamboo tubes (**Tiike Byurii**) that cause diseases or pain in the said body part. The Therapists are known as **“Tiike Nyibu”** and are believed to be supernaturally blessed with the talent to heal people through this therapy. **Bamboo Tubes**, Sharp items like **Needle, Thorns** or **Blade** to let out Blood and **Wooden Bowl** are used to store water to clean the bloods from bamboo tubes. It is believed to heal various illness, aches and pains



such as headache, Back pain, Nasal Blockades and Pain, Joint Pains in Knees, Elbows, Shoulders, Ankles etc.



Figure.1. An Apatani woman during a **Tiike Byuniin** session  
Source: Apatani Culture and Tradition (Official facebook page)

The process of this therapy begins with the assessment of the current health issue of the sufferer to determine if bloodletting using cupping therapy is appropriate for them. The therapist then disinfects the affected area of the skin and sterilizes the cupping instruments and any other necessary equipment. The bamboo tube is thereafter placed on the skin and left for a period of 4 to 5 minutes. The next step includes puncturing or scarification of the skin using needle, thorn or blade followed by suction and bloodletting by the **Tiike Nyibu**. The **Tiike Nyibu** then creates suction inside the tubes which allows drawing a small amount of blood to the surface of the skin. The bamboo tube is placed back again on the skin using the same procedure described above for 4 to 5 minutes. After that the bamboo tube is removed from the skin after which the therapist will apply a sterile dressing to the site of the bloodletting, using tobacco leaves and may provide instructions for self-care at home.

**Tiike Byuniin** was considered as an odd job in the Apatani community and goods such as paddy grains, salt, chickens and sometimes monetary assistance was the means of exchange for the service provided by the **Tiike Nyibus**. At present there exist only an insignificant number of

therapists who still perform such cupping therapy but uses plastic containers for suction as it seemed more convenient today.



Fig 2.: Use of plastic containers for bloodletting therapy in Hija village, Ziro  
Source: Photo captured by the author during the survey (May, 2023)

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- To analyse the awareness level of the practice of **Tiike Byuniñ** in the present context among the Apatanis.
- To understand the know-how level of **Tiike Nyibus/therapists**.
- To urge re-research and proper documentation of **Tiike Byuniñ**.

### **DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY**

For the present research study both primary and secondary data have been considered.

- The primary data has been collected during the field survey through oral interviews and also through Google forms.
- Information from secondary sources is very much essential for framing the theoretical background of the study area. Therefore, the secondary data has been collected from various official sources such as

the Census Report of India, the District Statistical Handbook of Lower Subansiri district, Books, Research Journals, articles, documents etc.

To pursue the first objective of this study a total of 120 sample size have been taken into account of which the age group ranging from 15 years to 60 years and above has been surveyed. The following ages have been categorised into 4 groups to study the present consciousness status of the Apatani population towards the practice of **Tiike Byuniiñ**.

To fulfill the second objective a total of 10 individuals who had gone through this therapy were identified and interviewed to analyze their perception and examine its effectiveness in healing their ailments.

### **STUDY AREA**

The study has been undertaken in Ziro Valley of Lower Subansiri District in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, India. It is located at 27°30' N to 27°38' N latitude and 93°45' E to 93°55' E longitude situated at an altitude of 1688 metres to 2438 metres above mean sea level inhabited mainly by the Apatani tribe dwelling in 7 different villages viz. Hari, Bulla, Hong, Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage and Bamin-Michi. The Apatanis are one among the major tribes in Arunachal Pradesh with a total population of 43, 777 as per India Census, 2011.

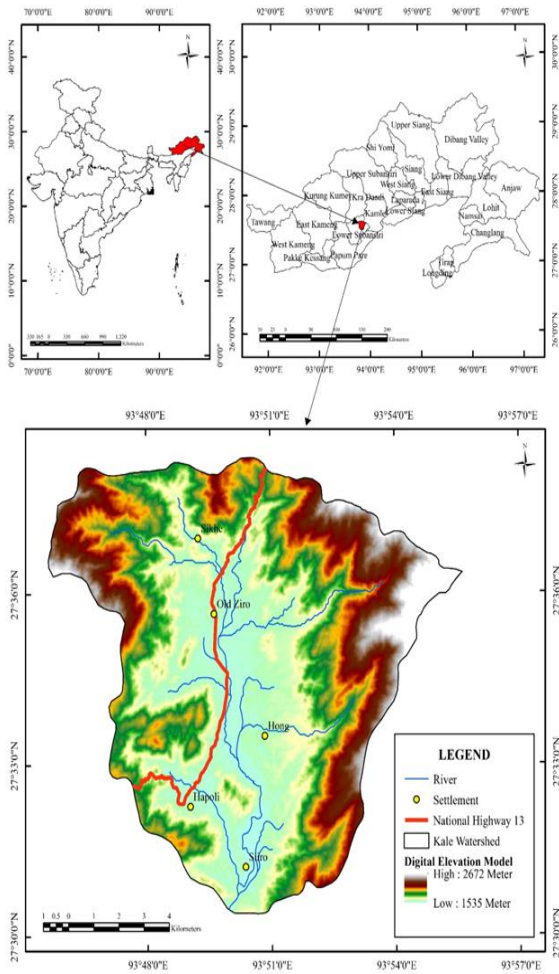


Figure.3. Location Map of Study area

Source: Downloaded from <https://bhuvan.nrsc.gov.in> and Generated Using ArcGIS 10.3 software

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

As per the findings of the survey (Table.2) conducted to study the consciousness and awareness of the age-old practice of **Tiike Byuniñ** among the various age groups of Apatani population it was found that the information about this practice was passed down throughout the generations mostly by oral mode.

TABLE 2: SURVEY RESULT					
SOURCE	AGE GROUP				TOTAL
	15-30	31-45	45-60	60 and above	120
<b>Never Heard</b>	27	18	0	0	45
<b>Orally</b>	2	10	27	4	43
<b>Social Media</b>	1	2	0	0	3
<b>Witnessed</b>	0	0	3	26	29
<b>Total</b>	30	30	30	30	120

The large section of individual in the Apatani community who has never heard of this practise comes under the age range from 15 to 45 years which reflects a generational gap about one's societal knowledge. In addition, the absence of a proper documentation of such practises in the future will lead to oblivion of know about of such significant phenomena that existed in the Apatani Society.

TABLE 3 : SURVEY RESULT						
SL. NO.	RESPONDENTS (MALE/FEMALE)	AGE (Years)	AILING BODY PART	MEANS OF EXCHANGE	SIDE EFFECTS	RESULTS
1.	F	75-80	Nose and Eye	Paddy Grains, Chicken	NO	Healed
2.	F	60-65	Knee	Monetary	NO	Momentary Relief
3.	M	60-65	Knee	Monetary	NO	Healed
4.	F	60-65	Knee	Monetary	NO	Healed
5.	F	75-80	Nose	Monetary	NO	Healed
6.	F	60-65	Back Bone Pain	Monetary	NO	Did not heal
7.	F	60-65	Ankle	Paddy Grains, Monetary	NO	Healed
8.	F	60-65	Face Cheek	Monetary	NO	Healed
9.	F	60-65	Nose	Paddy Grains, Monetary	NO	Healed
10.	F	60-65	Nasal Blockade	Paddy Grains	NO	Healed

The survey provides an evidence of the relevancy for the practice of *Tiike Byuniiñ* approximately till the period of late 1960s as almost all the interviewed individuals who had undergone this process in their lifetime is now past 60 years of age (Table 3). Joint pain, cramps in body parts and nasal blockade were the major ailments for which *Tiike Byuniiñ* was sought after by the people at that time. The absence of a proper health care system and the notion that this practice came with no side effects became a pull factor for the people to seek its continuation in the long run. As per the outlook of the past sufferers most of the ailing for which they had taken the service of this cupping therapy was healed. These positive outcomes also reflect the degree of expertise the therapists, *Tiike Nyibus* had in their art especially at a time when men could only depend on nature and his instincts for further course of actions. However, in a case of a knee pain for a female lady the therapy could provide only a momentary relief and did not fully heal the pain, while for another case of a back bone pain no healing did happen. As such it was assumed that this bloodletting therapy is not a panacea for all the health issues and its inability to cure some ailments could suggest a person's underlying chronic disease which needs to be examined and treated through proper medications only.

## CONCLUSION

Today the advent of modern allopathy has put the age old sustainable health care therapies practised by the tribals on the verge of extinction. The Apatanis are also one among the many tribal societies of the world who are practicing traditional healing therapies with their own limited traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). "***Tiike Byuniiñ***" has been one such traditional method which have been practiced by the Apatanis to cure various ailments and illness. However, after the introduction of modern medicine and increasing accessibility to health care providers the actual traditional form of this therapy which was done using Bamboo tubes have been discontinued and pushed to periphery.

According to a study done by Dinallo (2019), the different forms of cupping therapy as a household remedy is recently gaining scientific interest within mainstream medicine. It is an acknowledged fact that the

contemporary health care therapies practised around the world have been inspired by many primitive knowledge and techniques. As such the tribal medical practises can categorically act as an alternative solution to modern allopathy to some extent which is plagued with numerous side effects. The only limitation as claimed by Ernst and Singh (2009) in their book 'Trick or Treatment: The undeniable facts about alternative medicine' about cupping therapy is that the practice lacked "evidence" even though it has the potential as an alternative treatment. The Ministry of AYUSH, a ministry of the Government of India, as the nodal agency responsible for developing education, research and propagation of traditional medicine systems in India should study, promote recognition and carry out its proper documentation. An execution of profound research on **Tiike Byuniñ** for its feasibility and efficacy can able this practice to be incorporated into mainstream homeopathy.

Apart from the relief it provides, the cupping therapy is said to carry the potential to enhance the quality of one's life and can help form a synergistic relationship between the conventional and complementary healing therapies (Mehta and Dhapte, 2015).

## REFERENCES

1. Aboushanab, T. S., & AlSanad, S. (2018). Cupping therapy: an overview from a modern medicine perspective. *Journal of acupuncture and meridian studies*, 11(3), 83-87.
2. Bath, N., & Yampi, R. (2004). Definition of an Apatani village. *Tribal villages in Arunachal Pradesh: Changing Human Interface*. Abhijeet Publications, Delhi.
3. Census of India. (2011). *District wise Scheduled Tribe Population*. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.
4. Dinallo, A. (2019). A reflection on cupping therapy and historical medical dominance. *International Journal of Complementary & Alternative Medicine*. 2019;12(2):66-68 DOI: 10.15406/ijcam.2019.12.00450
5. District Statistical Officer. (2014). *District Statistical Hand Book of Lower Subansiri District*. District Statistical Office, Lower Subansiri Distict, Ziro.

6. International Labour Organisation . Who are the Indigenous peoples? Website URL: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/WCMS\\_503321/](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/WCMS_503321/)
7. Mehta, P., & Dhapte, V. (2015). Cupping therapy: A prudent remedy for a plethora of medical ailments. *Journal of traditional and complementary medicine*, 5(3), 127-134.
8. Rusnak, C. (2023). Cupping therapy explained: What it is and how it can help you. AcuMedGroup Wellness Center. <https://acumedgroup.com/2023/06/08/cupping-therapy-explained-what-it-is-and-how-it-can-help-you/>
9. Singh, S., & Ernst, E. (2008). *Trick or treatment: The undeniable facts about alternative medicine*. WW Norton & Company.
10. World Health Organisation (2013). Traditional Medicine. Website URL: [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/)



## **Correlation of traditional beliefs, spiritual connection, scientific relevance and medical science in context of Apatani Community of Ziro and beyond.**

Dr. Duyu Meena Mudang

### **INTRODUCTION**

The correlation between traditional beliefs, spiritual connection, scientific relevance, and medical science can vary depending on cultural, individual, and contextual factors. It's important to note that this is a complex and multifaceted topic, and generalization may not apply universally. However, here's some insights on the subject matter.

- 1. Traditional Beliefs:** Traditional beliefs encompass a wide range of cultural, religious, and indigenous practices that have been passed down through generations. These beliefs often involve explanations about the nature of the world, health, and illness. Traditional medicine systems, such as Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Native American healing practices, are based on these beliefs. The correlation between traditional beliefs and medical science can vary. In some cases, traditional practices may align with scientific understanding and be recognized for their efficacy and safety. In other cases, traditional beliefs may be based on cultural or historical factors and may not have scientific validation.
- 2. Spiritual Connection:** Spirituality often involves seeking meaning, purpose, and connection with something greater than oneself. It can include religious practices, meditation, mindfulness, and other contemplative activities. While spirituality is a subjective and personal experience, which definitely has a correlation between spiritual wellbeing and better health outcomes. Spiritual practices can promote stress reduction, psychological well-being, and a positive outlook, which can indirectly impact physical health. Medical science generally recognizes the potential benefits of spirituality in

supporting patients' overall well-being, although the specific mechanisms and scientific validation are still areas of ongoing research.

- 3. Scientific Relevance:** Scientific relevance refers to the application of the scientific method to understand and explain phenomena. Medical science, as a branch of scientific inquiry, relies on rigorous experimentation, evidence-based approaches, and peer-reviewed research to develop diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive interventions. The scientific method aims to ensure objectivity, reproducibility, and reliability. Scientific relevance in medical science involves testing hypotheses, conducting controlled clinical trials, analysing data, and subjecting findings to peer review. This process helps distinguish between interventions that have been scientifically validated and those that lack evidence.

While traditional beliefs and spirituality may not always align directly with the scientific method, scientific research can investigate the efficacy, safety, and mechanisms of action of traditional practices. Some traditional treatments, such as herbal remedies or certain mind-body practices, have been the subject of scientific inquiry and have shown positive outcomes. In these cases, the scientific relevance lies in exploring the underlying biological mechanisms, identifying active compounds, and establishing evidence-based guidelines for their use.

It's important to approach the integration of traditional beliefs, spiritual practices, and medical science with an open and evidence-based mindset. In some cases, there may be complementary aspects where traditional practices and spiritual connections can enhance well-being alongside medical interventions. However, it is crucial to prioritize patient safety and rely on validated scientific evidence when making decisions about healthcare. It is recommended to consult with healthcare professionals who can provide informed guidance based on the best available evidence.

## **Omens: Generational Beliefs**

Beliefs about good and bad omens have been passed down through generations in various cultures and societies. These beliefs are often rooted in superstitions and folklore, and they can vary significantly across different regions and communities. Here are some examples of common beliefs about good and bad omens:

### **Good Omens:**

1. **Seeing a rainbow:** In many cultures, a rainbow is considered a positive sign and a symbol of good luck and blessings.
2. **Seeing fish in dreams:** Seeing fish in dream is often seen as a good omen, symbolizing joy, happiness and wealth.
3. **Seeing a shooting star:** Spotting a shooting star and making a wish is believed to bring luck and grant your desires.

### **Bad Omens:**

1. **Breaking a mirror:** It is often associated with bad luck in many cultures.
2. **Crossing paths by a black cat:** In some cultures, encountering a black cat is considered unlucky, especially if it crosses your path.
3. **Hearing an owl hooting:** Owls are sometimes associated with death or impending misfortune in certain cultures.

It's important to note that these beliefs vary widely across cultures and individuals, and not everyone subscribes to them. They are more of a cultural and traditional significance rather than based on scientific evidence.

### **It's scientific relevance:**

Beliefs about good and bad omens are primarily based on cultural traditions, folklore, and superstitions rather than scientific evidence. From a scientific perspective, omens and superstitions are considered to be irrational beliefs or practices that do not have a causal relationship with events or outcomes.

Scientifically, omens or superstitions cannot be proven to have any real influence on events or outcomes. They are often attributed to confirmation bias, where people selectively remember and emphasize instances that support their beliefs while ignoring contradictory evidence. In other cases, they may stem from psychological factors such as the need for control, pattern-seeking behaviour, or the desire to find meaning in random events.

While science cannot prove or disprove the existence of supernatural forces or the validity of superstitions, it operates on empirical evidence, logical reasoning, and the scientific method. Scientific explanations focus on observable phenomena, testable hypotheses, and reproducible results. Beliefs in omens and superstitions generally fall outside the realm of scientific investigation.

It's important to approach beliefs about omens and superstitions with critical thinking and a scientific mind-set. While they may hold cultural or personal significance, their scientific relevance is limited.

**Some examples of scientific relevance of age-old beliefs & practices in context of Apatani and beyond:  
ALYIÑ HO LÄHIÑ CHÉKIÑMA BWSOKÉ/BIISOKÉ**

Beliefs such as not to cut nails at night, which were prevalent in the absence of electricity. It can be understood from a practical and safety perspective rather than a scientific one. In the olden days, when artificial lighting was limited or non-existent, performing tasks like cutting nails in low light conditions could be risky and increase the likelihood of accidents or injuries.

1. **Low visibility:** Cutting nails requires precision and attention to avoid accidentally cutting the skin or causing injury. In the absence of proper lighting at night, visibility is significantly reduced, making it more challenging to perform tasks accurately. Cutting nails during daylight or in well-lit conditions minimizes the risk of accidental injury.
2. **Increased risk of accidents:** Inadequate lighting increases the chances of accidental slips and cuts. With limited visibility, it becomes difficult to assess the positioning of the nail clippers or scissors properly,

increasing the potential for accidents. Trimming nails in well-lit conditions reduces the risk of injury.

It's important to note that these practical considerations might have contributed to the development of such beliefs in the absence of electricity and artificial lighting. While they may have had practical value in those times, these beliefs have been carried forward as traditions or superstitions even when modern lighting has made them less relevant from a safety standpoint.

### **UYI AÑYONW/AÑYONII:**

The practice of isolating or concealing houses after performing traditional rituals for curing the sick. It can have some scientific relevance, although it may vary depending on the specific ritual and cultural context. Here are a few potential scientific explanations for this practice:

1. **Quarantine:** Isolating or concealing the house after a healing ritual can be seen as a form of quarantine. Quarantine is a well-established scientific practice used to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. By isolating the house, it limits the contact between the sick individual and others, reducing the chances of transmitting the disease to others in the community.
2. **Psychological benefits:** In addition to the physical aspects, the practice may also have psychological benefits. When someone is sick, they may require a calm and peaceful environment to aid in their recovery. By concealing the house and limiting external interactions, it helps create a quieter and more serene environment, which can have a positive impact on the sick person's well-being.
3. **Reducing exposure to pathogens:** The act of isolating or concealing the house may also help minimize exposure to potential pathogens. By limiting the entry of people into the house, it reduces the risk of introducing new infectious agents that could potentially hinder the healing process or cause further illness.

It's important to note that while these scientific explanations can provide some rationale behind the

practice, it is crucial to also consider the cultural and traditional significance of such rituals. Practices like concealing houses after healing rituals may have evolved over time to include a combination of practical considerations and cultural beliefs, and their effectiveness as a cure would require scientific investigation on a case-by-case basis

### **KWDI TÒMANW/KIIDI TÒMANII:**

The practice of avoiding contact with soil, refraining from going to fields, or stopping gardening after performing healing rituals. It may have some scientific relevance in minimizing the extent of disease contamination or limiting infection. Here are a few potential scientific explanations for this practice:

1. **Microbial contamination:** Soil and outdoor environments can harbor various microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, and parasites. Some of these microorganisms may be harmful and can cause diseases or infections. By avoiding contact with soil or outdoor areas, there is a reduced risk of exposure to potentially pathogenic microorganisms, which can help minimize the spread of diseases.
2. **Protection against soil-transmitted diseases:** Certain diseases are known to be transmitted through contact with contaminated soil, such as soil transmitted helminth infections. These infections are caused by parasitic worms that are commonly found in soil. By avoiding contact with soil or gardening areas, there is a decreased likelihood of exposure to these parasites, reducing the risk of infection.
3. **Prevention of wound contamination:** Gardening or working in fields often involves handling tools or coming into contact with sharp objects, which can lead to cuts, scratches, or wounds. Open wounds provide an entry point for microorganisms and increase the risk of infection. By refraining from gardening or going to fields after performing healing rituals, there is a reduced chance of sustaining wounds and subsequent microbial contamination.

While these scientific explanations suggest potential benefits of avoiding soil or outdoor activities after healing rituals, it's important to note that the effectiveness of these practices may vary depending on the specific disease or cultural context. It is advisable to also consider recommendations from modern medical and public health authorities to ensure comprehensive protection against infectious diseases.

### **APIÑ BUBIENW/BUBIENII:**

The practice of offering food to a mother after childbirth from relatives, friends or neighbours. It can have scientific relevance in promoting postpartum healing. Here are a few potential scientific explanations for this practice:

1. **Nutritional support:** Giving birth is a physically demanding process that can deplete a mother's energy and nutrient stores. Providing nourishing food to the mother after childbirth helps replenish essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that are necessary for her recovery. Adequate nutrition supports tissue healing, hormonal balance, and overall postpartum health.
2. **Restoring energy levels:** The process of labor and delivery can be physically exhausting, leading to fatigue. Offering food to the mother helps restore her energy levels and combat the fatigue associated with childbirth. Consuming a balanced meal can provide the necessary energy to support the recovery process and adjust to the demands of caring for a newborn.
3. **Promoting milk production:** After childbirth, a mother's body undergoes hormonal changes that trigger the production of breast milk. Adequate nutrition plays a crucial role in supporting lactation. Offering food to the mother helps ensure she has the necessary nutrients to produce an adequate milk supply, which is important for the baby's nourishment and growth.
4. **Psychological well-being:** The act of offering food to a mother after childbirth is often accompanied by emotional support and care from family and loved ones. This support can have positive psychological effects, such as reducing stress and promoting a

sense of well-being, which are beneficial for the mother's overall recovery and adjustment to motherhood.

While the scientific explanations mentioned above provide a rationale for offering food to a mother after childbirth, it's important to note that cultural and social factors also play a significant role in this practice. Different cultures have their own specific traditions and beliefs surrounding postpartum care, and the practice of offering food is often deeply rooted in these traditions.

### **SWMA/SIIMA KĀTÉ HELA ALIE ALLA HARSUNW/HARSUNII**

The practice of washing hands and feet after attending a funeral. It can have both cultural and scientific relevance. Here are a few potential reasons behind this practice:

1. **Cultural and spiritual significance:** In many cultures and religions, funerals are considered significant events associated with mourning and paying respects to the deceased. Washing hands and feet after attending a funeral may be part of cultural or religious customs, rituals, or purification practices that symbolize cleansing or letting go of negative energy associated with death.
2. **Hygiene and cleanliness:** Funerals often involve close contact with the deceased and other individuals who may be grieving. Washing hands and feet after attending a funeral is a hygienic practice that helps remove dirt, bacteria, and potential contaminants that may have been encountered during the funeral rituals or interactions with others. It can contribute to personal cleanliness and reduce the risk of spreading germs or infections.
3. **Psychological comfort:** Participating in funeral ceremonies and grieving can be emotionally challenging. Engaging in a ritualized act of washing hands and feet after attending a funeral may provide a sense of comfort and closure, allowing individuals to physically and symbolically cleanse themselves and transition from the mourning process.



From a scientific perspective, hand washing is universally recognized as a fundamental hygiene practice that helps prevent the transmission of pathogens and reduce the risk of infections. While specific scientific studies may not directly address the practice of washing hands and feet after a funeral, the general principles of hygiene and cleanliness support the idea that washing hands and feet can contribute to personal well-being and reduce the spread of potential contaminants.

It's important to note that the specific customs and practices related to funerals and mourning can vary widely across cultures and religions. The scientific relevance of these practices should be understood within the context of cultural beliefs, traditions, and individual comfort.

### **APIÑ PWCHOWNW/PIICHOWNII**

The practice of throwing some food particles before consumption to avoid bad spirits. It is primarily rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs rather than scientific evidence. This practice is often associated with the belief that certain types of spirits or entities may be attracted to food, and by offering a small portion, they will be satisfied, thereby preventing them from affecting the person consuming the meal.

It's important to note that from a scientific perspective, the existence of supernatural entities or their interaction with food particles is not supported by empirical evidence. However, it's worth acknowledging that cultural beliefs and practices play a significant role in shaping people's experiences and perceptions.

In some cases, the act of throwing food particles before consumption may have practical significance or historical origins that have been adapted into symbolic or superstitious rituals. For example, for Apatanese or in certain cultures, the act of throwing food particles may have initially served a practical purpose, such as feeding animals or warding off pests. Over time, it could have evolved into a symbolic gesture associated with spiritual beliefs.

While the scientific relevance of throwing food particles to avoid bad spirits is limited, it is important to respect cultural practices and beliefs. These practices often hold personal and communal significance and can

contribute to a sense of tradition, identity, and cultural cohesion.

### **PAAKA TURLA ASSE BILALA ÑYÒNWŃ/ÑYÒNIŃ**

The practice of cleaning and keeping aside separate utensils in the name of a sick person. It can have some practical relevance in terms of maintaining hygiene and preventing the spread of illness which serves as sanitizing. Here are a few potential reasons behind this practice:

1. **Preventing cross-contamination:** When someone is sick, their utensils may come into contact with pathogens such as bacteria or viruses. By cleaning and keeping aside separate utensils for the sick person, it helps prevent cross-contamination to other individuals using shared utensils. This practice reduces the risk of spreading infectious agents and potentially transmitting the illness to others.
2. **Hygiene and sanitation:** Cleaning and sanitizing utensils specifically for the sick person can help maintain proper hygiene and sanitation. Thoroughly washing, sterilizing, or using separate utensils for the sick person can reduce the presence of pathogens on the utensils, minimizing the chance of re-infection or the spread of illness within the household or community.
3. **Psychological comfort:** The act of keeping separate utensils for the sick person may also provide psychological comfort for both the sick person and others in the household. It symbolizes care and consideration for the individual's well-being, creating a sense of cleanliness and providing reassurance that efforts are being made to prevent the further spread of illness.

While the scientific relevance of this practice lies primarily in the practical aspects of hygiene and preventing the transmission of pathogens, it's important to note that individual cultural and traditional beliefs can also influence the specific customs and rituals surrounding illness and caregiving. These practices may vary across different cultures and communities, reflecting their unique values, customs, and understanding of illness prevention.

## **RÒPIENW/RÒPIENII**

The belief in performing rituals after hunting animals like tigers or leopards to ward off their revengeful spirits. It is rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs rather than scientific evidence. It is based on the idea that animals hold a special place in the spiritual realm and that by performing rituals, humans can appease or show respect to the spirits of these animals. Moreover, it's significant and relevant in terms of not developing deep rooted sense of guilt and regret that may lead to mental and psychological disturbances like depression, anxiety etc.

It's important to note that from a scientific perspective, the belief in animals' spirits seeking revenge or being ancestors is not supported by empirical evidence. The concept of spirits seeking revenge or animals being ancestors is more associated with cultural mythology, folklore, and spiritual beliefs rather than scientific understanding.

However, cultural practices and rituals can have social and psychological significance for individuals and communities. They may serve as a way to connect with nature, express gratitude, or maintain a harmonious relationship with the environment. These rituals often carry deep cultural and traditional value and are passed down through generations.

It's essential to approach these beliefs and practices with respect and understanding, recognizing their cultural context and their significance in shaping beliefs, values, and relationships between humans and the natural world.

## **ALYIÑ KAMO HO GYUMADU BWSOKÉ/BIISOKÉ**

The belief in not making loud noises at night to avoid inviting evil spirits. It is rooted in cultural and superstitious beliefs rather than scientific evidence. This belief is based on the notion that loud noises or disturbances can attract negative or supernatural entities, leading to misfortune or disturbances.

From a scientific perspective, there is no empirical evidence to support the existence of evil spirits or their direct correlation with loud noises. However, it's important to recognize that cultural and superstitious beliefs often play a significant role in shaping people's behaviors and practices.

There might be practical considerations that have been associated with this belief over time. For example, loud

noises at night can disturb others who are trying to sleep or may be related to safety concerns in some contexts. In certain cultures, there may be cultural norms or traditions that emphasize the importance of maintaining peace and tranquility during night-time hours.

While the scientific relevance of not making loud noises at night to avoid evil spirits is limited, it is important to respect cultural practices and beliefs. These practices often hold personal and communal significance and can contribute to a sense of tradition, social cohesion, and respect for others' well-being.

### **UYI AHA KÒDWKÉ/KÒDIIKÉ**

The belief in not keeping any object near the pillow while sleeping to avoid nightmares, sleep apnoea, or bad dreams. It is primarily based on cultural and superstitious beliefs rather than scientific evidence. This belief suggests that objects near the pillow can interfere with sleep quality, cause disturbances, or attract negative or supernatural influences.

From a scientific perspective, there is no direct causal relationship between keeping objects near the pillow and experiencing nightmares, sleep apnoea, or bad dreams. Nightmares and sleep apnoea are complex phenomena influenced by various factors such as stress, sleep disorders, medical conditions, and sleep environment. Bad dreams can be influenced by emotional states, thoughts, and experiences.

However, it's important to acknowledge that personal sleep preferences and comfort play a role in sleep quality. Keeping objects near the pillow may create discomfort or contribute to a restless sleep if they cause physical discomfort, noise, or other distractions.

It's also worth noting that cultural beliefs and superstitious practices can have psychological effects on individuals. If someone strongly believes that objects near the pillow will result in negative dreams or disturbances, this belief may create a placebo effect where they experience these effects due to the power of suggestion and expectation.

Ultimately, the scientific relevance of not keeping objects near the pillow to avoid nightmares or sleep disturbances is limited. Personal comfort, sleep hygiene

practices, and creating a conducive sleep environment based on individual preferences and scientific recommendations are more important factors in promoting restful sleep.

### **MWCHIE MWHO KENDWKÉ/MIICHIE MIHO KENDIIKÉ**

The belief that husbands should avoid certain chores like killing certain insects or animals, or not burning certain metals during a pregnancy to prevent the unborn baby from having birthmarks or to cause an abortion or stillbirth. It is based on cultural and superstitious beliefs rather than scientific evidence. This belief suggests that these actions may have a direct impact on the physical appearance or well-being of the unborn child.

From a scientific perspective, birthmarks are generally not influenced by external factors such as killing insects or animals or burning metals during pregnancy. Birthmarks are typically caused by genetic factors, abnormal blood vessel development, or pigmentation irregularities in the skin, and they often appear before or shortly after birth.

It is important to understand that cultural beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy and childbirth can vary widely across different cultures and communities. These beliefs are deeply rooted in traditions, folklore, and societal norms. While they may not have a scientific basis, they often hold significant cultural and emotional value.

Abortion, stillbirth and pregnancy outcomes are complex matters influenced by various factors, including maternal health, prenatal care, genetics, environmental factors, and more. So, it may not have a direct impact on the physiological processes related to pregnancy or the prevention of abortion or birthmarks etc.

It's important to prioritize evidence-based medical care, prenatal check-ups, and following the advice of healthcare professionals to ensure the health and wellbeing of both the pregnant person and the unborn child. Pregnancy-related decisions should be based on sound medical advice, individual circumstances, and personal beliefs.

While cultural practices and beliefs surrounding pregnancy are significant, it's crucial to distinguish between personal beliefs and scientifically supported approaches to

reproductive health and pregnancy outcomes. Each person or community may have their own cultural beliefs and practices related to pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing, and these practices should be respected within their cultural context.

It's crucial to approach these beliefs with respect and understanding, recognizing their cultural context and their significance in shaping beliefs, traditions, and relationships within a community. It is always recommended to rely on evidence-based medical advice and prenatal care for the health and wellbeing of both the mother and the unborn child.

### **MYO-KUÑ, CHANDW METW/CHANDII METII, DREE, YAPUÑ**

1. **Cultural and spiritual significance:** In many agricultural societies, farming practices are intertwined with religious or spiritual beliefs. Performing rituals to deities is seen as a way to seek blessings, protection, and abundance for the crops. It serves as a cultural expression of gratitude and reverence for the land and the forces believed to influence agricultural outcomes.
2. **Pest management:** Pest control is a crucial aspect of successful agriculture. The belief in performing rituals to deities for a pest-free harvest may have practical implications as well. For example, certain rituals may involve offering prayers or making offerings to specific deities associated with protecting crops from pests. While the direct scientific impact of such rituals on pest control may be limited, they may contribute to a sense of community involvement and responsibility for crop protection.
3. **Rest and rejuvenation for the body:** Refraining from field activities during the peak of the sapling season can be seen as a way to provide rest and rejuvenation for farmers' bodies. Agriculture can be physically demanding, and taking breaks during critical stages of crop growth allows farmers to recuperate and prevent exhaustion or injuries. This practice may also coincide with natural cycles, such as periods of heavy rainfall or extreme heat, when it may be less conducive to work in the fields.

While these practices have cultural and traditional significance, it is important to note that modern agricultural practices and scientific advancements have provided alternative methods for pest control and efficient farming. Integrating traditional beliefs and practices with evidence-based agricultural techniques can be a way to preserve cultural heritage while benefiting from scientific knowledge. Ultimately, the scientific relevance of these practices lies in their impact on community cohesion, well-being, and sustainability, rather than in direct cause-and-effect relationships between rituals and agricultural outcomes.

### **SU-MYORO GYUNWÑ/GYUNIĨ**

Traditional beliefs and practices to appease nature for protection against epidemic diseases or natural calamities. It varies across different cultures and regions. While these practices may not have scientific evidence supporting their effectiveness, they often reflect the cultural values and beliefs of the communities that practice them. Few examples are:

1. **Rituals and Offerings:** Many traditional cultures perform rituals and offer prayers to natural elements, deities, or spirits believed to control nature. These rituals may involve offerings of food or other symbolic items to appease these entities and seek protection from epidemics or natural disasters. These practices aim to maintain harmony with the natural world.
2. **Sacred Sites:** Certain locations are considered sacred and believed to possess protective powers. People may visit these sites to seek blessings and protection against diseases and calamities. These sites could be mountains, rivers, or specific natural formations that hold spiritual significance.
3. **Amulets and Talismans:** Wearing or carrying amulets or talismans is a common practice in many cultures. These objects, often made of specific stones, threads, herbs, or metals, are believed to provide protection against diseases and disasters. The belief is that these items possess inherent spiritual or magical properties.
4. **Healing Practices:** Traditional healing practices, such as herbal medicine, acupuncture, or spiritual healing, are often employed to treat diseases and

promote overall well-being. These practices are rooted in cultural beliefs and may involve the use of specific plants, rituals, or techniques to restore balance and harmony within the body and with nature.

- 5. Observance of Taboos:** Cultural taboos and restrictions may be observed during times of epidemic or natural calamities. These could include avoiding specific foods, refraining from certain activities, or following strict hygiene practices. Taboos are believed to help ward off negative energies or forces that may contribute to the spread of diseases or intensify natural disasters.
- 6. Community Cooperation:** In many traditional societies, community solidarity plays a crucial role in dealing with epidemics and natural calamities. Communities may come together to organize collective rituals, prayers, or ceremonies aimed at seeking protection and supporting each other during challenging times.

It is important to note that while these traditional beliefs and practices may offer a sense of comfort and community cohesion, they should not be considered as substitutes for scientific methods of disease prevention or disaster preparedness. In the face of epidemics or natural calamities, it is crucial to follow evidence-based guidelines provided by healthcare authorities and disaster management organizations.

### **ALIE TARIÑ, ALÀ TARIÑ, BIYAÑ**

Tying threads around the wrists, waist, and hips of a new born baby. It is a practice that is believed to be associated with cultural or religious beliefs. It is often done as a protective measure to ward off evil spirits or bring good luck to the child. It's important to note that specific customs and beliefs can vary widely across different cultures and communities.

In some cultures, the threads may be made of specific materials or colours, and they may be tied in a specific pattern or style. The purpose is often to create a physical barrier against negative energies or to symbolize protection and blessings for the baby.



It's essential to understand that these practices are rooted in cultural traditions and beliefs, and their effectiveness in warding off evil or bringing good luck is subjective and based on personal or cultural beliefs.

It's always important to respect and understand different cultural practices, even if they may seem unfamiliar or unusual to us.

### **TARKŌ NENWŪ/NENIŪ**

The application of an ash/charcoal from a burnt branch or stem wood of a specific sacred tree around the umbilical cord of a new born baby, is a specific cultural belief or tradition.

The logic behind this practice is rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs rather than scientific reasoning. It is believed that the ash/charcoal from the burnt stem possesses protective or purifying properties that can ward off bad omens or evil spirits from the house or the new born baby. The specific tree or type of stem chosen for the burning may hold cultural significance or be associated with certain symbolic attributes.

While this practice may not have a scientific basis, it carries cultural and symbolic meaning for the community or individuals who engage in it. It is important to respect and understand different cultural traditions, even if they do not align with scientific explanations or rationale. Cultural practices often serve to reinforce social bonds, transmit values and beliefs, and provide individuals with a sense of identity and belonging within their community.

In some traditional beliefs and practices, the use of sacred plants and rituals is believed to possess healing properties. Painting charcoal of sacred plant branches around the umbilical cord may be a specific method employed for addressing abdominal pain and other related issues. However, it's crucial to recognize that the efficacy of this practice has not been scientifically validated.

Additionally, it's important to exercise caution when applying charcoal or any substances to the skin, especially around sensitive areas like the umbilical cord. Charcoal can potentially cause skin irritation or other adverse reactions, and it's advisable to seek medical advice before attempting such practices.

It's worth mentioning that modern medicine and healthcare practices are based on scientific research and clinical trials. If you or someone you know is experiencing abdominal pain or any other health condition, it is strongly recommended to consult a qualified healthcare professional who can provide evidence-based diagnosis and treatment options. They will be able to offer appropriate medical advice tailored to your specific situation.

### **DOLIE-SÀRIÑ HO TĒRŌ DWNWŃ/DIINIÑ**

The belief that eating spicy food can help cure viral or unknown origin fevers by increasing mucoid secretion. It is primarily based on anecdotal evidence and cultural practices, rather than scientific research. While spicy foods can cause an increase in mucoid secretion and nasal congestion, this does not necessarily translate to a direct cure for fevers or viral illnesses.

Fevers are often a symptom of an underlying infection or inflammation in the body, and their resolution depends on addressing the underlying cause. Viral illnesses, in particular, are generally self-limiting and require supportive care, rest, hydration, and sometimes specific antiviral treatments if available.

Spicy foods, such as chili peppers or spices like cayenne pepper, can cause temporary effects such as sweating, increased heart rate, and mucus production. The capsaicin compound found in spicy foods can stimulate the body's heat receptors and trigger these responses. Some people may feel a temporary relief of symptoms like nasal congestion due to increased mucus production. However, the effects are short-term and not directly related to curing the underlying illness.

It's important to note that individual responses to spicy foods may vary, and some people may find that consuming spicy foods exacerbates their symptoms or discomfort. It's always recommended to listen to your body and consume foods that are tolerable and appropriate for your overall health condition.

When it comes to managing fevers or viral illnesses, it's best to rely on evidence based medical practices and follow the guidance of healthcare professionals. These may include rest, proper hydration, over-the-counter fever

reducers if necessary, and seeking medical attention if symptoms worsen or persist.

## **CONCLUSION:**

To summarise traditional and customary practices and beliefs that either has spiritual connection or psychological impact or scientific relevance, Indeed, there are numerous beliefs and practices across different cultures that may have scientific relevance, psychological correlation, or spiritual connections like:

Rituals and ceremonial practices often provide psychological comfort, a sense of structure, and a feeling of connection to something greater than oneself. These practices can create a sense of belonging, reduce anxiety, and offer solace during challenging times. The psychological benefits of rituals and ceremonies can contribute to overall well-being and a sense of meaning in life.

Also, beliefs and practices that are deeply ingrained in cultural traditions can have a placebo effect on individuals. Placebos are interventions that may have no direct therapeutic effect but can produce a positive response due to the power of belief and expectation. Cultural rituals and practices that hold significance and meaning for individuals may activate the placebo response and have psychological benefits.

It's important to understand that cultural practices and beliefs evolve over time, and what might have been relevant in the past may not necessarily hold the same significance or practicality in modern times. However, these cultural beliefs and practices can still hold symbolic or sentimental value for some individuals or communities, even if they no longer have a direct practical relevance.

Therefore, it is important to approach these practices and beliefs with respect, understanding their cultural context, while also considering scientific evidence and individual well-being. Balancing tradition, spirituality, psychology, and scientific knowledge can lead to a holistic perspective that respects diverse perspectives and promotes overall health and well-being.

## References

1. Bożek, A., Nowak, P. F., & Blukacz, M. (2020). The Relationship Between Spirituality, Health-Related Behavior, and Psychological Well-Being. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 552187. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01997>
2. Campbell, Joseph. (1959). *Traditional beliefs - The Masks of God*. Viking Press.
3. Fadiman A (1997) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
4. Koenig, H. G. (2009). Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/070674370905400502>
5. Nair, L., & Adetayo, O. A. (2019). Cultural Competence and Ethnic Diversity in Healthcare. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Global Open*, 7(5). <https://doi.org/10.1097/GOX.0000000000002219>
6. Ratini, Melinda (2022). *Holistic health - Holistic health approaches*. <https://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/what-is-holistic-medicine>
7. Von Fürer-Haimendorf, Christopher. (1962) *The Apas and Their Neighbors*. Routledge & K. Paul.

## Understanding the social organisations of Apatani villages in Ziro valley

Pura Suniya

### Introduction

The Apatanis are one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh having a total rural population of 29,546 (males:14963 and females:14583). They are a well settled community living under the jurisdiction of the administrative Circle of Old Ziro and Ziro Sardar of Lower Subansiri district. There are 239 inhabited villages under Ziro (Sardar) and Old Ziro Circle as per the 2011 census.

The tribe is habituated of living in a compact community life since time immemorial. The Apatani people claim themselves as descendants of *Abotani* and are believed to have migrated from '*Wplyo Supung*' to '*Mwdo Supung*' crossing various mountain barriers and hurdles of deep valleys. The '*Wplyo Supung*' is believed to be the earliest place of human civilization but no proper description has been made about the geographical location of their habitation in *Wpyo Supung*. The term '*Wpyo*' refers to the first stage of human evolution and the term '*Supung*' means a domain of people. The *Mwdo Supung* is presumed to be referring to present Mëdog County of Southern Tibet where branches of *Abotani* descendants are still flourishing. According to the oral history '*Rego renwng*' (phase of Migration), the ancestors of Apatanis again migrated from *Mwdo Supung* to present Apatani Plateau via the river basin of Kurung and Kumey and then ascended to the present valley through various migration routes.

### Objectives

1. To study the social organization of the Villages of the Apatani community.
2. To examine how the various traditional institutions are shared by different clans of the tribe.

### Methodology

The study is based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data regarding the number of villages

and population was collected from the latest census record, i.e., 2011 Census. To collect the primary data, an interview method was used. It was collected using the FGD method.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. Ziro (*Tanw Supung*)**

Ziro valley, the dwelling place of Apatanis is geographically part of the intermountain plateau located in the eastern region of Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh. The extensive undulating plain under the great sky's dome is surrounded by high ridges of blue mountains, *Twpang Pingo* in the east and *Naring Pingo* in the west. The entire habitation area is called *Tanw Supung*. According to the source of oral history, Apatanis had encountered great difficulties with the force of nature and its environment during the early period of their settlement in the present valley. The early settlers had sacrificed their wealth like mithuns (*Bos frontalis*) for their survival which is quoted in Apatani language as "*Riku lamping kulyang limbw, Swbo sanda mi khalyang limbw*" which means "our ancestors paid the price for developing the valley with their wealth of mithuns". The shamanic versions like *Myoyung-Swging* (*beginning of settlement*) expressed that a lot of crocodiles from the valley were annihilated with the help of *Mlyamlya* (*kind of Tibetan brass plate*) and crocodiles' ponds were converted into ponds of frogs and tadpoles.

The Ziro valley is demographically and geographically divided into two major regions. The first region is the group of villages settled in the western belt, consisting of Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, and Bamin-Michi village and is called '*Hwwchi*'. And the second region is known as '*Hwwtw*' which consists of the villages of the eastern belt namely, *Hangu* (Hong), Hari, and Bulla (Kalung, Reru and Tajang).

### **2. Division of Apatani community (*Takung Puutung*)**

The land and the people of Apatani community are aligned into three major sections called '*Takung Puutung*'. Each section involves alignment of both land and people of Apatani community into three patrilineal groups namely: (i) *Twni-Dwbo*, (ii) *Nwchi-Nwtw* and (iii) *Hari-Bwla*, each of them is considered as one '*Takung Puutung*'. Literally, '*Takung Puutung*' means 'peach those blooms together'. The *Myoko*

Yugyang is symbolised by the peach tree and celebration of Myoko festival is observed together by each *Takung Puutung* during the full-blown blooming period of the peach tree. Thus, the term '*Takung Puutung*' means the territorial limit of the group of villages jointly hosting and celebrating the Myoko festival in a year. The territorial extent of *Twni-Dwbo Takung Puutung* consists of Hija, Dutta, Mudang Tage and Bamin Michi villages. The territorial extent of *Nwchi-Nwtw Takung Puutung* covers Hong village only, and that of *Hari-Bwla Takung Puutung* consists of Hari, Tailyang Kalung, Reru and Tajang villages.

### 3. Village (Lemba)

**Traditional village:** There are permanent village systems existing in the Apatani plateau since time immemorial. Each village has a well-defined territory and household population. The household population of villages in Apatani plateau was traditionally counted on the basis of the number of *Uun Yo* (*piece of meat distributed to every household during the Murung festival*), distributed to each house of the villages during the year. The old and traditional large villages of the Apatanis are Hong, Hari, Bulla (Tailyang, Kalung, Reru, and Tajang), Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage and Bamin-Michi. During the early settlement, whole Apatanis lived together at 'Bwrw'. Over the course of time, settlements scattered to the present form. The people of Hija took settlement under the *Puume-Puutw* (*name of the hills in the backside of Hija Village*) and Dutta people settled under *Puuchi-puutw* (*name of a place in Dutta village*), Mudang-Tage took settlement under the *Dilang-Pengu* (*name of a place in Mudang Tage village*), Bamin-Michi took settlement under *Jalyang-srv* (*name of a place in Bamin Michi village*), Hong (*Nwchi Nwtw*) took settlement under the *Lampvr-Swkhe* (*name of a place in Hong village*). Hari took settlement under the *Rantw-Pige* (*name of a place in Hari village*), Talyang-Kalung settled under the *Ranchi-Rantw* (*name of a place in Tailyang Kalung village*), Reru took settlement under the *Taakhu-Swdi* (*name of a place in Reru village*), and Tajang settled under the *Diitw-Laatz* (*name of a place in Tajang village*). Thus, different patrilineal groups settled together under the feet of respective 'Suu Myoro' centuries ago.

#### 4. Clan (*Haalu*)

Name of the village	Name of the clans
Hija	Pura, Dani, Haj, Miri, Puna, Kago, Lyalyang, Taru, Taro, Taku, Pemu, Dimper, Pwlo, Nada, Miri, Hidu, Pyagang, Dora, Kime, Dusu, Miso.
Dutta	Chiging, Hinyo, Akang Koj, Ayo Koj, Dui (Koj), Myobya, Yachang.
Mudang-Tage	Tadu, Nami Tage, Lwpa Tage, Buru, Lyagi, Mudang, Ligang.
Bamin-Michi	Michi, Duley, Pai, Tanyang, Dilang, Tamo, Racho, Tilling, Roto, Hano, Dusu.
Hong	Hibu, Kani, Tinyo, Tabin, Kago, Talo, Budi, Punyo, Yechang, Tahu, Tapi, Padu, Naru, Bulyu, Takhe, Neha, Tilling, Nami, Bullo, Mudang, Penji.
Hari	Tasso, Gyati, Mudo, Hage, Dusu, Dogin, Tadu, Landi, Narang, Nending.
Tailyang-Kalung	Lod, Mom, Kure, Rabi, Tailyang, Nako, Subu.
Reru	Nani, Khoda, Duyu, Padi, Habung, Nengker, Kuru.
Tajang	Rubu, Milo, Radhe, Ngilyang, Mihin, Bamer, Tage, Miso, Tabyu.

Clan (*Haalu*) is a patrilineal group which forms the unit of village organization. People of the same clan prefer to settle in the same village. Generally, those belonging to the same clan share the blood of ritually sacrificed pigs and it is restricted within the clan members only. Also, people are not allowed to marry within the clan. The clan members are called 'Nww-paabo'. Traditionally, each clan has common platforms like *La'pang*, *Babo*, *Yugyang* etc. The numbers of clans in the traditional villages of Apatani plateau at present are listed below:

The clans are further divided into sub clans called '*Tulu*' in the Apatani community.



## 5. Group of family (*Uru*)

There are two types of family (*Uru*) in the clan and the sub clan viz. '*Buut Uru*' (greater family) and '*Pimbu Uru*' (individual family). In the *Buut Uru*, two or three *Abba Kwping* are joined together. Generally, *Buut Uru* shares the bride price amongst members and takes common responsibility in the times of any controversy pertaining to the married sister. '*Abba Kwping*' is another order of family lineage in the Apatani community below the *Buut Uru*. It is a close family lineage having a system of sharing *Soh*, *Swkko*, *ading* and *ami* within third to fourth generations. '*Soh*' means jaw, a part of meat from a sacrificial pig. '*Swkko*' means part of the meat of anus portion of the cattle ritually sacrificed. '*Ading*' means the head of a sacrificed animal which is given to the eldest of *Abba Kwping*. Lastly, '*Pimbu Uru*' is a single family consisting of father, mother, and offspring. *Pimbu Uru* is the smallest unit of village organization.

## 6. Community platform (*La'pang*)

Community platforms in the villages are known as '*La'pang*', which is considered as a sacred place. The *La'pang* is also used as a platform for any political or social gathering of the villagers. The damaged *La'pang* is replaced during the Myoko festival by respective clan members. The recently recorded village-wise data of all the clans, sub clans and families having '*La'pang*' are described below:

Sl. No	Name of the Village	Name of the clans, sub-clans and families having <i>La'pang</i>
1.	Hija	<i>Nending, Narang, Ningko, Dani, Puna, Haj, Kago, Taru, Taro-Taku, Nada, Hiidu, Pyagang, Kime and Dusu.</i>
	(i) Nenchanglya	<i>Kago, Taku and Dani</i>
	(ii) Kilya	<i>Kago</i>
	(iii) Kudung-Barang	<i>Taku</i>
2.	Dutta	<i>Chiging, Ayo Koj, and Akang Koj.</i>
	(i) Nenchanglya	<i>Ayo Koj and Myobyra</i>

3.	Mudang-Tage	<i>Tadu, Dohu, Nami, Mipya, Narang, Nako, Bwrw, and Para.</i>
4.	Bamin Michi	<i>Michi Ayo, Duley, Diilang, Michi Akang (Pai-Tanyang), Tanyang, Tamo, Tilling, and Hano-Racho.</i>
5.	Hangu (Hong)	<b>Nwchi:</b> <i>Neha, Takhe, Twnyo, Talyang (Hibu), Taker (Hibu), Kani (Hibu), Pwnyo, Naru.</i> <b>Nwfw:</b> <i>Padu, Tapi, Kago, Narang. Tilling, Nami, Talo, Mudang, Bulu, Duku, Lyolyo, Kardo (Ura).and Siro.</i>
6.	Hari	<i>Gyati Akang, Gyati Ayo, Dokang (Mwdo), Tasso Akang, Tasso Ayo, Hage (Myolyi), Hage (Myoby), Nending, Doging, Narang(Samo), Dusu (Myolyi), Dusu (Myoby), Landi-Tadu, Dingkhu, and Hage Dolyang uru.</i>
7.	Tailyang Kalung	<i>Kalung, Tailyang (Narang, Nako, Subu), Lod, and Mom-Kure.</i>
8.	Reru	<i>Nani (Akang), Khoda (Ura), Nani (ayo), Duyu-Khoda (Ago &amp; Lwpa), Tupe (Duyu), Padi-Habung, Kuru and Nengker.</i>
9.	Tajang	<i>Tabyu, Tayang, Tage, Radhe, Mihin, Ngilyang, Milo and Rubu</i>
	Lempia	<i>Tage, Mihin, Ngilyang, Milo, and Rubu</i>

## 7. Babo

'Babo' is a decorated wooden pole erected vertically during the Myoko festival symbolising the clan and village. It has no significant usage, but used just for playing

by swinging in the air with cane rope tied on top of the Babo during Myoko.

### 8. Common ritual hut (Naago)

'Naago' is a small hut constructed near the *La'pang* by one or more clans together during the Myoko festival. It is the place where rituals like **ro'pinw** (*ritual performed when any big animal belonging to the cat family is killed, when humans are killed in wars and also during unnatural death of a person, which may occur due to accidents, etc*), **swki ninwng** (*ritual performed inside the Naago by some villagers during the Myoko festival*), etc are performed. The names of 'Naago' available under group of clans in traditional villages at present times are listed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Name of the Naago
1.	Hija	<i>Nending, Puna, Taru, Nada, Kime.</i>
2.	Dutta	<i>Chiging</i>
3.	Mudang Tage	<i>Tadu Naago</i>
4.	Bamin Michi	<i>Michi Naago, Bamin Naago</i>
5.	Hangu (Hong)	<i>Nwchi Naago, Neha Naago, Nami Naago.</i>
6.	Hari	<i>Gyati nako Naago, Tasso Naago.</i>
7.	Tailyang Kalung	<i>Kalung Naago</i>
8.	Reru	<i>Nani Naago, Tupe Naago (Duyu)</i>
9.	Tajang	<i>Tabyu Naago, Tajang Naago.</i>

## 9. Clan's common altar (Yugyang)

'Myoko Yugyang' is a common ritual place of clans in villages. The peach tree is planted in the Yugyang. The married members of the clan who are sacrificing pigs during the Myoko festival have to bring their pigs to Yugyang. It is the centre of clan identity. The clans and the sub clans of villages having 'Myoko Yugyang' are listed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the village	Name of the clans and sub-clans having Myoko Yugyang
1.	Hija	<i>Pura (Pwbya tulu), Pura (Lalyang tulu), Danyi Gyutt Haalu, Danyi Gyuchi Haalu, Puna, Haj, Miri, Lyalyang, Kago Myolyi, Kago Myobya, Taru, Taro, Akang Taku, Ayo Taku, Dmpvr-Pwlo (Dimper-Piilo), Miri-Hidu, Nada, Kime (Tayi tulu), Kime (Ekha tulu), Kime (Dusu-Miso) and Pyagang.</i>
2.	Dutta	<i>Chiging, Hinyo, Ayo Koj, Akang Koj, and Yachang.</i>
3.	Mudang Tage	<i>Tadu, Nami Tage, Mipyra Tage, Lwpa Tage, Buru, Lyagi, Mudang, Mwdan gyuchi, and Ligang.</i>
4.	Bamin Michi	<b>(i) Bamin:</b> <i>Tanyang, Tamo, Tilling, Hano, and Racho.</i> <b>(ii) Michi:</b> <i>Michi, Dusu-Tanyang and Duley</i>
5.	Hangu (Hong) village	<i>Neha, Takhe, Takhe gyuchi, Hibu, Tabin-Tinyo, Pwri, Punyo myolyi, Punyo Myobya, Tahu, Punyo gyuchi, Yechang, Naru, Padu, Tapi Myolyi, Tapi Myobya, Tini (Twni), Bulyu, Kago, Talo Lokang, Talo Loyo, Budi, Nami-Penji, Tilling Gyuchi, Tilling Gyutw, Bullo-Mudang, and Bullo Gyuchi.</i>
6.	Hari	<i>Gyati, Gyati Myolyi, Mudo, Tasso Chiging tulu, Tasso Chiging tulu (Gyuchi), Tasso Mipyra tulu -1, Tasso Mipyra tulu -2, Nending, Landi, Dusu Myolyi, Dusu Myobya, Narang, Dogin, Hage:Tai Gyati (Dingkhu), Ekha tulu</i>

		<i>Myolyi (Swgang Sangkhang), Ekha tulu (Myobyia) Laku tulu-Tamang Tarang and Laku tulu (Aji uru).</i>
7.	Tailyang Kalung	<i>Lod, Kalung, Tailyang, (Tailyang, Subu, Nako Narang), and Mom-kure-Rabi.</i>
8.	Reru	<i>Nani Akang, Nani Ayo, Nani Gyuchi, Khoda Gyuchi, Khoda Gyutw, Duyu Akang, Duyu Ayo, Padi, Habung Akang, Habung Ayo, Nengker and Kuru.</i>
9.	Tajang	<i>Tabyu-Miso, Tage, Radhe, Mihin Ago Uru, Mihin Ura Uru, Bamer Uru, Milo Che tulu, Milo Halyang tulu, Ngilyang, Rubu Yugyang-I and Rubu Yugyang-II.</i>

## 10. Community Well (*Sukung*)

'*Sukung*' is a community drinking water well in the villages. *Sukung* is dug in the peripheral area of the village where spring water is available. The well is owned and maintained by one or more than one clan. There are many *Sukung* in each traditional village. Nowadays, due to availability of PHE water supply, many *Sukung* remain without maintenance.

## 11. Burial ground (*Byukhwng*)

Most of the traditional villages have designated burial grounds (*Byukhwng*) for common usage. Each burial ground is owned by one or more clans of the village. Name of the community burial ground of all the villages are listed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the burial ground	Clans sharing the burial ground
1.	<i>Nendu-ninchang</i>	Pura, Danyi, Puna and Haj clans of Hija village
2.	<i>Lyaayingpu</i>	Nada, Dimper, Pulo, Hidu, Miri, Pyagang, Kime, Dusu and Miso clans of Hija village
3.	<i>Kiilya Byukhwng</i>	Taro, Taku, Taru, Kago and Lyalyang clans of Hija village

4.	<i>Papp Byukhwng</i>	Clans of Dutta village
5.	<i>Pechi Putu Byukhwng</i>	Clans of Mudang Tage village
6.	<i>Hwra' Swko Byukhwng (near Bamin Rantw)</i>	Clans of Bamin Village
7.	<i>Bwrw Byukhwng</i>	New burial ground owned by Hibu and Punyo clans of Hong village
8.	<i>Gandih ali Byukhwng</i>	Tasso, Gyati and Mwdo clans of Hari village
9.	<i>Sww Danyi Tuko</i>	Hage (Tai Gyati Ayo Uru) of Hari village
10.	<i>Dogwngnanw</i>	Duyu and Khoda clans of Reru village
11.	<i>Porw putu</i>	Padi, Habung, Kuru and Nengker clans of Reru village
12.	<i>Kalungrantw Byukhwng</i>	Talyang-Kalung of Kalung village
13.	<i>Pwi Putu Byukhwng</i>	Burial ground of Tajang village

## 12. Clan's sacred grove (*Pamung agyang*)

'*Pamung Agyang*' is a place of community altars nearby the village, comprising a variety of sacred groves. During the Myoko festival, on the tenth day, clan members clean the areas around the *Pamung agyang* and on the 11<sup>th</sup> day, *Agyang Penwng* ceremony is performed. Members of the clan come to *Pamung Agyang* with one or two bamboo or wooden stems having fresh leaves on the upper end and erect it at the altar (wooden stem is of *Castanopsis*, commonly called chinquapin or chinkapin). These sacred groves of *Pamung Agyang* are preserved strictly for centuries. The use of *Pamung agyang* directly or indirectly conserved rich biodiversity around the traditional villages since time immemorial.

## 13. Extended villages of Apatani tribe

At present times, establishment of Government agencies and infrastructural development like roads, electricity and water supply etc., have provided ample

scope of expanding human habitation and creation of new villages. The villages in Apatani plateau are also moving with rapid changes and so many new villages have been created with rapid growth of population. As per the records of Directorate of Census Operations, almost all Apatani villages fall under the administrative jurisdiction of Sub District; Ziro (sardar) and Ziro-I Circle of Lower Subansiri District. There are 144 villages under 01695: Ziro (sardar) and 95 villages under 01696: Old Ziro Circle.

The decadal change in population of the Ziro (Sardar) and Old Ziro Circle by residence, 2001-2011 is shown below:

**Table. 1. Percentage decadal variation 2001-2011 in rural-urban population.**

Tehsils	Population						Percentage decadal variation 2001-2011		
	2001			2011			Total	Rural	Urban
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban			
Ziro (Sardar)	11623	4239	12384	22747	9941	12806	36.8	134.5	3.4
Old Ziro	8080	8080	0	19605	19605	0	142.6	142.6	0

Source: Census 2011, District Census Handbook, Lower Subansiri.

Although many new villages have been created in various places in the Apatani plateau under Ziro (Sardar) and Old Ziro administrative circles, the people of these villages do not have platforms like *La'pang*, *Naago*, *Yugyang* and *Pamung Agyang* separately. They prefer to continue their membership of *La'pang*, *Babo*, *Yugyang* and *Pamung agyang* etc. under the traditional villages.

**Table. 2 : Number of villages unde Ziro (sardar) and Ziro-I Circle as per 2011 Census.**

<b>Sub District :01695 Ziro (sardar)</b>					
Sl. No	Village code	Name of village	Sl. No	Village code	Name of village
1	264592	Tarin	41	264632	Boi
2	264593	Kijang	42	264633	Tukung
3	264594	Tiiba	43	264634	Lodder
4	264595	Tarin Agya	44	264635	Tadu
5	264596	Bamin Michi Tawtibe	45	264636	Lodder I
6	264597	Tawtibe	46	264637	Yo Daboi
7	264598	Bamin Michitarin	47	264638	Sitti Adin
8	264599	Taring (Hong)	48	264639	Sibe (Hong)
9	264600	Byapin	49	264640	Talee
10	264601	Diko-Pita	50	264641	Sugyu Pabu
11	264602	Haley	51	264642	Talle Valley
12	264603	Lodderkonti	52	264643	Taro More
13	264604	Gyahi	53	264644	Padi Aku
14	264605	Hula Puta	54	264645	Zamra
15	264606	Dusa	55	264646	Hong - I
16	264607	Lower Dilo	56	264647	Dolu Poba
17	264608	Siting Boh	57	264648	Lentha Pabu



18	26460 9	Sichobo	58	26464 9	Nara Pabu
19	26461 0	Kontii	59	26465 0	Khemeliyan g
20	26461 1	Siro	60	26465 1	Digen
21	26461 2	Belongbo	61	26465 2	Tayuko
22	26461 3	Cholo Agya	62	26465 3	Hakap
23	26461 4	Hakhe-Tari	63	26465 4	Makung
24	26461 5	Tarutahe	64	26465 5	Hong - II
25	26461 6	Piri More	65	26465 6	Sangepo
26	26461 7	Piri More	66	26465 7	Pusa Yoda
27	26461 8	Niri	67	26465 8	Sihing
28	26461 9	Manipolyang	68	26465 9	Namiligo
29	26462 0	Taru	69	26466 0	Ukobije
30	26462 1	Bhu	70	26466 1	Rantii
31	26462 2	Layo	71	26466 2	Bakhani
32	26462 3	Kiidii - Myolyong	72	26466 3	Khahu
33	26462 4	Tiba	73	26466 4	Siikhebu
34	26462 5	Nenchangly a	74	26466 5	Hong - III
35	26462 6	Rabii	75	26466 6	Pokheakam g
36	26462 7	Tayuga	76	26466 7	Yolyo
37	26462 8	Saliyoga	77	26466 8	Taho
38	26462 9	Dilopolyang	78	26466 9	Tero Ago

39	26463 0	Dilo Yao	79	26467 0	Siri Dipii
40	26463 1	Paking Pabu	80	26467 1	Taru Kelyang

Sl.No	Village code	Name of village	Sl.No	Village code	Name of village
81	26467 2	Rubu	123	26471 4	Bamin Michi Dukru
82	26467 3	Poralya	124	26471 5	Akhoebyo
83	26467 4	Silyo	125	26471 6	Sibe
84	26467 5	Ukopo	126	26471 7	Parii
85	26467 6	Ukopo	127	26471 8	Yahibo Hagya
86	26467 7	Parpii	128	26471 9	Byachi
87	26467 8	Pepungko	129	26472 0	Porbuhidy
88	26467 9	Katapu	130	26472 1	Yadi
89	26468 0	Pokhe Ayo	131	26472 2	Siringpakh o
90	26468 1	Nanu	132	26472 3	Salang
91	26468 2	Gyalang - Agyang	133	26472 4	Siigya
92	26468 3	Khachi	134	26472 5	Amung
93	26468 4	Hanoko	135	26472 6	Pange
94	26468 5	Pai Achang	136	26472 7	Sisang
95	26468 6	Biiree (Hong)	137	26472 8	Moko
96	26468 7	Duku	138	26472 9	Myoliku

97	26468 8	Akang Dukru	139	26473 0	Kalo
98	26468 9	Gano	140	26473 1	Nyibo
99	26469 0	Bokan	141	26473 2	To Myobia
100	26469 1	Miding Passu	142	26473 3	Byore
101	26469 2	Bokan II	143	26473 4	Gyabu
102	26469 3	Khogyo	144	26473 5	Pakhang Toku
103	26469 4	Katunyatu	Number of villages under <b>01696- Old Ziro</b>		
104	26469 5	Mudang Tage - I			
105	26469 6	Mudang Tage - II	1	26473 6	Megya
106	26469 7	Paro Lyapo	2	26473 7	Lenting Layu
107	26469 8	Liagi Tage	3	26473 8	Sarang
108	26469 9	Bree	4	26473 9	Bolya
109	26470 0	Michi	5	26474 0	Hari - I
110	26470 1	Tiibeko	6	26474 1	Shi
111	26470 2	Tabung Byarang	7	26474 2	Kululemp
112	26470 3	Tariko	8	26474 3	Puduwan
113	26470 4	Pobii	9	26474 4	Siigang Nentin
114	26470 5	Kiidi	10	26474 5	Dinkhu
115	26470 6	Sirii Pabu	11	26474 6	Rantii Ali
116	26470 7	Bamin	12	26474 7	Myolyang
117	26470 8	Byoni	13	26474 8	Hari - II

118	26470 9	Sibiyaro	14	26474 9	Gyati
119	26471 0	Kochipakre	15	26475 0	Tasso
120	26471 1	Kaliang Siigang	16	26475 1	Yashibo
121	26471 2	Dapopigyan g	17	26475 2	Gandi Ali
122	26471 3	Abulyangi	18	26475 3	Byara

Sl.No	Village code	Name of village	Sl.No	Village code	Name of village
19	26475 4	Siyapiro	61	26478 9	Tachar (10/11 K.M.)
20	26475 5	Kalong	62	26479 0	Sallo (16 K.M.)
21	26475 6	Dib	63	26479 1	Tipnis (20 K.M.)
22	26475 7	Siya Piro	64	26479 2	Palaguda (22 K.M.)
23	26475 8	Bubu	65	26479 3	Old Ziro - I
24	26475 9	Saro	66	26479 4	Dilang
25	26476 0	Kato	67	26479 5	Old Ziro - II
26	26476 1	Riku Lanche	68	26479 6	Old Ziro - III
27	26476 2	Lajibogya	69	26479 7	Keiliya
28	26476 3	Pangi	70	26479 8	Nenchalya
29	26476 4	Reru - I	71	26479 9	Hija - I
30	26476 5	Salaya	72	26480 0	Shibu
31	26476 6	Gyachi	73	26480 1	Yasibu
32	26476 7	Yashibo	74	26480 2	Kardo

33	26476 8	Myobya Hagya	75	26480 3	Saro
34	26476 9	Reru - II	76	26480 4	Myochi
35	26477 0	Chabo	77	26480 5	Diley
36	26477 1	Siikhe	78	26480 6	Hija - II
37	26477 2	Tadubho	79	26480 7	Sabulapan g
38	26477 3	Takhu Sidhi	80	26480 8	Tobyoy
39	26477 4	Subuago	81	26480 9	Khangalya
40	26477 5	Tajang	82	26481 0	Parbu
41	26477 6	Tajang I Nami	83	26481 1	Lyako
42	26477 7	Tajang II Nako	84	26481 2	Hija - III
43	26477 8	Byabia	85	26481 3	Lengo
44	26477 9	Lempia	86	26481 4	Dura
45	26478 0	Lempia Ayo	87	26481 5	Myodipu
46	26478 1	Lempia Akang	88	26481 6	Myoli
47	26478 2	Dirrii	89	26481 7	Tanyo
48	26478 3	Jama	90	26481 8	Dutta
49	26478 4	Rilingyollo	91	26481 9	Nehaboo
50	26478 5	Myolyang (Pinegrove )	92	26482 0	Paph
51	26478 6	Lalye	93	26482 1	Pyuth
52	26478 7	Kiile Pakho	94	26482 2	Pyuchi

53	26478 8	Yanjo	95	26482 3	Supyu
----	------------	-------	----	------------	-------

Source: Census 2011, District Census Handbook, Lower Subansiri.

### Conclusion

The traditional villages of the Apatanis are well organised with various traditional institutions, which are well managed by the respective clan members. Also, due to growing population and modernization, the number of extended villages has been increasing. These extended villages, although situated at a distance from the traditional villages, the residents of the village are still connected to their clans through various rituals which they have to perform together with their own clan members.

### References:

1. Kani, T. (1993). *The Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh*. Mrs Takhe Omang
2. Von Fürer-Haimendorf, C. (1955). *Himalayan Barbary*. John Murray, London.
3. Kani, T. (1994). *Charung hulu: Ritual text of Apatanis, Arunachal Pradesh*. Frontier Publisher & Distributor for and behalf of Institute for Preservation of Art, Culture & Literature.
4. (n.d.). *India—Census of India 2011—Arunachal Pradesh—Series 13—Part XII A - District Census Handbook, Lower Subansiri*. Retrieved May 26, 2023, from <https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/178>.

## **Indigenous practices during childbirth among Apatani community: Past and present state**

Ms. Nending Sumpi  
Mr. Nyumme Nomuk

### **Introduction**

The Apatani, one of the significant ethnic gatherings in the eastern Himalayas, has fostered a distinct civilization in light of systematic land-use rehearses and an abundance of traditional biological information on regular assets the executives and conservation have obtained through hundreds of years of informal experimentation. The tribe is noted for their beautiful traditional town boards known as bulya and their bright culture, including celebrations, complex handloom examples, and sticks. Bamboo creates lively traditional town gatherings. This has made Ziro Valley a simple illustration of a living social landscape where man and nature have coexisted in a condition of interdependence notwithstanding changing times, with antiquated practices and otherworldly conviction frameworks fostering such coexistence. The present study focuses on the childbirth practices by the Apatani Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. As we all know, how critical the situation can be for a family, especially for the mother who is supposed to give birth to a baby. It is a joyous moment for everyone when the child is born healthy along with the health of mother. The feast or the birthday party of the newly born baby is called as 'Niipo Apin' (acc. to the dictionary of the Apatani Language). (The further discussion on 'Niipo Apin' celebration has been done at the later part of this study). In the past, many records are mentioned about not having proper knowledge about the safe delivery of a child, like any other tribal community. Cases are also found not maintaining the birth spacing. Birth spacing refers to how soon after a prior pregnancy a woman becomes pregnant or gives birth again. There are health risks associated both with pregnancies placed closely together and those placed far apart, but the majority of health risks are associated with births that occur too close together. The WHO recommends 24 months between pregnancies. A shorter interval may be appropriate if the pregnancy ended in abortion or

118 | Apatani: Change and Continuity

miscarriage, typically 6 months. If the mother has had a prior C-section, it is advisable to wait before giving birth again due to the risk of uterine rupture in the mother during childbirth, with recommendations of a minimum inter-delivery interval ranging from a year to three years.

### **Historical Background**

There are no written records of the history of the Apatani tribes, however one of their oral accounts speaks of their migration from the extreme north of Subansiri and Siang areas following the rivers of Kurung and Kumey. Presently, they are living in the Ziro valley in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh in India. Their language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family along with infusion from the Tibeto-Burman. The Apatani people are one of the few remaining followers of animistic religions - they worship plants, animals and the forests, and ritual sacrifices are their way of celebrating and worshipping nature.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To identify the age-old childbirth practices of Apatani Tribe
2. To highlight the celebration of 'Niipo Apin' feast

### **Significance of the Study**

Child birth is a natural process and it's a beautiful part of the creation. Before the advancement of science and technology, the child birth used to take place through a local procedure. The Apatani Tribe also has its traditional rituals and practices of pre-natal, natal and post-natal procedures. The present study focuses on the importance of traditional rituals and practices of child birth in the Apatani Tribe, which needs to be realised time and again how the ancient practices were helping in the child birth. After the advancement of science and technology, especially in relation to the medical facilities, we can see a drastic change. However, every procedure has its pros and cons, we need to understand the beauty of ancient practices which got evolved from time to time. The study is also focusing on the modifications in the practices and also, during the post-natal period, what are the several practices that the Apatani Tribe performs, which are still being followed by the local denizen of Ziro Valley. It is important to



understand the historical back ground of the practices that we do today for the successful delivery of the child and other customs in relation to that.

### **Area of Study**

The colourful tribe of the Apatanis, dwell in the picturesque valley (named Apatani or Ziro Valley), which comes under the jurisdiction of Lower Subansiri district of present Arunachal Pradesh. The Apatanis were recorded as *Onka Miri, Anka Miris, Aukas, Apatanang, Tanang* etc. (Naku, Hage, 2006: Beliefs and practices of Apatanis). The town of Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh, is found 1572 metres above ocean level in the eastern region of the incomparable Himalayas and is home to the Apatani tribe. The Apatanis are one of the earliest tribes in these nations, having gotten comfortable in the rich green and comfortable gold valleys of the lower Srinabsari district. An Eastern Himalayan ethnic tribe with a 30-generation history.

### **Methodology**

The present study is a descriptive study by collecting data from secondary sources such as research articles, internet articles, published books, etc. The unstructured interview was also conducted to a few elderly Apatani women for collecting relevant information for the present study.

### **Discussions**

As mentioned earlier, the childbirth process is a very crucial moment for a family, especially for the child to be born and the mother herself. It is very important to pay attention to each and every activity in order to have a safe and healthy delivery of a baby. Every tribe has its own practices and rituals that are performed before and after the birth of a baby. Likewise, the process of child birth can be categorized under three phases, i.e., prenatal phase, natal phase and post-natal phase.

1. The beliefs and practices during the pre-natal phase are:
  - a. Parents should avoid funeral of unnatural death of a person. It prevents strabismus types in a child's eye.

- b. The would-be father should avoid hunting, cutting, etc.
  - c. When conception is confirmed, a ritual is performed to ward off the bad spirit and invite the positive spirit for the good health of the to-be-mother and baby. This ritual is performed to appease the spirit and particularly this ritual is known as *Aago Pilya*.
  - d. After that ritual *Aago Pilya*, the would-be-parents have to be very careful about their activities and social responsibilities.
2. Practices during the natal phase: During the labour pain family invites priest to perform rituals for the successful delivery of a baby and one elderly and experienced woman is also called to help the pregnant mother in her process of delivery. The delivery process is taken very seriously and it is given a closer look for the safety of both the mother and the child.
  3. Beliefs and practices during the post-natal phase:
    - a. As a descendant of Abotani, the Apatanis have certain kinds of rituals that need to be performed immediately after the birth of a baby i.e, the naming of a baby. The ancestors believe that if the baby is not named immediately after the birth the spirit of the ancestors will take back the new born child. So, the parents and family members have to get ready with the names. Once the baby is born the parents and family have to name the baby according to the gender and if the baby cries after the naming of his/her name then the name has to be changed to suit his/her personality.
    - b. On the same day of the child's birth *Niipo Apin* (Baby's birthday party) has to be conducted before 12 midnight on that day. During the feast, one male person is appointed to prepare non-veg for the whole occasion and the rest of the male are prevented because they believe that if they enter into the program, they will lose the ability and skill of hunting in their own personal life.

- c. The mother is advised to avoid eating spicy food items, as it may affect the child's health of a child through breastfeeding.

### **Niipo Apin ceremony**

*Niipo Apin* is observed before 12 midnight. For instance, if a child is born at 10:00 pm the feast is to be served immediately before midnight. Women folk pack the rice and meat in *Liiha* (local baskets) and these food items are offered to the newly mother.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Day:** On the third day after the child is born, child's maternal grandparents specially grandmother visit the new born child where she has to perform traditional rituals of (Thipyra Sornii), it is performed by offering (Thipyra) yellow thread with two beads of local ornament. Beads need to be kept in even number it can be 2, 4 or 6 in numbers. In Apatani culture, yellow thread has got a special significant in itself because it connects with Donyi- Polo, the sun god. On this day maternal grandmother has to offer these items i.e., Thipyra, Maji (Local Bell) and Liiha (Basket). Liiha (Basket) need to be filled with rice and different varieties of meat where eatable items are to be eaten by the parents of the new born baby.

**5<sup>th</sup> Day:** Blessings from maternal grandmother as well as paternal grandmother, they offer rice and different varieties of meat items and food. (5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> day is same).

**7<sup>th</sup> Day:** On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of baby is born, it's a day where paternal grandmother's relatives visit the new born baby to shower the blessing and good luck and also to offer gifts.

**9<sup>th</sup> Day:** On the 9<sup>th</sup> day, maternal grandmother once again visits the new born baby and offer some gifts like plate, etc

**10<sup>th</sup> Day:** This day is specially known as a Hiinyo Nii on this day all the utensil's lids are kept open. The Apatanis believe that if the lid is kept closed, the child will face suffocation which will trouble him/her in breathing. After the 10<sup>th</sup> day of child birth, parents are free to do any sorts activities.

## Conclusion

The normal delivery of a child was common in the tribal society. After the delivery, the mother of that child was and still advised to stay confine at home for at least 10 days and she is not allowed to touch the soil because she has to protect the new born baby from evil spirit and in those days, baby was also not touched by other people in order to protect and prevent the baby from ill effects. After the emerging of more medical facilities, these days women are reluctant in giving normal delivery. Not only in Apatani Tribe, but as a general note. The life expectancy is also increasing because of more advancement in medical facilities and awareness. Though, the normal delivery is said to be healthier, however, C-section delivery can help in avoiding many complexities. Even though the benefits of vaginal delivery overlook the risks, there are some situations where c-section delivery is the only viable option. These high-risk pregnancy scenarios include -

- Cases where the mother's age is over 35 years or a geriatric pregnancy
- Expecting mother is a heavy drinker and smoker
- Mother is carrying twins or triplets
- Mother has previously had a Fewer c-section delivery
- Expecting mother has preeclampsia, blood clotting issues, diabetes
- The foetus is under-developed or in distress.

In general, the people of Apatani Tribe are well sensitized in relation to education, health, environment etc. Improvisation in the family planning and lower rate of HIV infected persons in the district, are the living example for that. Though the traditional practices for childbirth is not very common these days, however, proper procedure are being adopted in order to decrease the risk factors during the delivery of a child. The practice of birth spacing was not very familiar in the past, because of which many cases like miscarriage, deformity in child, death of mother after giving birth etc. used to occur. Nowadays, proper birth spacing is maintained, it is helping the mother as well as the child to grow healthier.

## References

1. Naku, H. (2006). Beliefs and Practices of Apatanis-Study in Continuity and Change, unpublished Ph. D (Doctoral dissertation, thesis submitted to Rajiv Gandhi University).
2. Mukhopadhyay, E. (1992). Arunachal: The Changing Profile of a Closed Culture. *Social Scientist*, 68-74.
3. Selvan, K. M., Veeraswami, G. G., Habib, B., & Lyngdoh, S. (2013). Losing threatened and rare wildlife to hunting in Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Current Science*, 104(11), 1492-1495.
4. Von Fürer-Haimendorf, C. (1950). The aboriginal tribes of India: the historical background and their position in present-day India. *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 98(4832), 997-1011.
5. Winikoff, B. (1987). The effects of birth spacing on child and maternal health. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 25, 219-238.

## **Myoko: Embracing Social and Cultural Change in the Apatani Community**

Dr. Padi Hana

### **Introduction:**

The Apatani community is an indigenous community residing in the Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh. The Myoko celebration holds great importance for the Apatani people. It is a vibrant festival that blends religious, cultural, and social elements, showcasing the community's unique traditions. The Apatani community of the Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh celebrates the lengthy festival known as Myoko. A community's identity and ideals are vividly reflected in its cultural festivities. They offer a venue for upholding customs, promoting social harmony, and appreciating the beauty of cultural diversity. One of the key components of the Apatani community's socioreligious festival is Myoko. The celebration is designed to strengthen the bond between humans and deities (Kaning, 2008, 169). Myoko is a holiday celebrated by the community, the village, and the clan. Three groups—Hari-Bulla, Niichi-Niit, and Hangu village—celebrate Myoko Day in a cyclical pattern each year.

Myoko is a social institution. The every aspects and parts of the Myoko ritual and ceremony has a procedures which is generally accepted and followed by the community. Myoko celebration is sanctified and sacred. Myoko festival has got several distinct components for socio-religious activities. The basic structure of Myoko celebration remains the same in today's time but there are few traditional practices that are modified by the community bodies and changes occur at the individual level. This paper shall be looking at the social and cultural changes taking place at the general and family level during the time of celebration.

There should be a proper distinction between cultural and social change to understand the changing aspects in the society. There is common understanding among the layman about the meaning of cultural and social change and they used it interchangeably in their social situation.

Paul Landi in 1935 understood the differentiation in a comprehensive way about the cultural change confined strictly to changes in the man-made tools, mores, and folkways. Social change describe about the changes in group composition (age, sex, mobility, etc.) and changes in the interaction patterns (conflict, co-operation, domination, subordination, etc.) that characterize inter- and intra-group relations.

The forces of improved technology and modern education together created a vast change in the traditional structure and their practices. The development of consciousness among the people of the need to attain a more progressive and stable society through the contact of modernization, it also made them conscious of the modification in their culture practice, identity, and tradition and culture which they acclaimed to be of continuing significance (Singh, 1986).

Its significance in contemporary society appears to be dwindling as the majority of these roles once performed by traditional social institutions have been assumed by growing government, business, and educational engagement (Hutter, 2007). Appadurai in his book explicitly discuss about the impact of globalization across the cultural and social structure that leads to cultural disjuncture, which refers to the disconnection between cultural practices, values, and meanings that occurs as a result of global flows of people, ideas, and commodities. The significant aspect of cultural disjuncture that, does not necessarily imply the disappearance of local cultures but rather the emergence of new hybrid forms, as local cultures interact with global forces.

### **Methodology:**

It is an ethnographic and empirical study in which the author had used the method of investigation, unstructured interview, and open ended questions to the resource person having precise knowledge about the Myoko celebration. Visiting the Myoko sacred and ritual sites was done to get the information about the physical structure of the ritual.

The author become one of those participants members and observed the clan members performing the ceremonial activities from the beginning. Involvement with the group during the ceremonial process benefit to gather

the first hand information which was later used for the writing of the ethnographic notes.

Secondary data like journals, local souvenir, media recording from the local channels and books written on Myoko were consulted for understanding and validation. The study and investigation was particularly based and focused from Bulla village.

### **Background of Myoko celebration:**

The religion of the Apatani is moulded from the mythological and historical circumstances. According to the traditions of Apatani culture the origin of Myoko can be traced back from the legendary figure and mythical forefather name *Abotani*. It is believed that Apatani tribe descended from *Abotani*, who was acknowledged to be a kind of demi God having the power to transform into any creatures and got three eyes that could see from any side and power full spikes. *Abotani* was married to daughter (*Kissun Yassun*) of *Siiki*. Being son-in-law *siiki* taught the art of survival techniques to *Abotani*. The relationship grew more tense when *Abotani* learned about the *siiki* loved for blood during their hunting when *siiki* transformed himself into dog and licked the blood from *Abotani* wound and the alertness given from his wife the very own daughter of *siiki*. *Siiki* attempted to kill *Abotani* in many instances but he got escaped by his intelligence and tricks. *Siiki* was dropped from the mountain gorge named *Dolo* and *Hako* by *Abotani* intentionally. There are many epochs of episodes where *Abotani* had conflicted with different verities of spirit and developed enmity with them during his survival period. Therefore, the eternal guide – *Popi*, *Doilyang-Changyang* the powerful lady Shaman and *Abotani* sister console him to host a celebration where every spirit of benevolent and malevolent that could be invited and create an atmosphere of cordial and friendly relationship between both spiritual and living being in the world together. Accordingly, *Abotani* called all the spiritual deities of both malevolent and benevolent for the Myoko celebration. In this way Myoko was conducted among the deities for the first time this period is understood as the epoch of *Uie*. The period Human being started celebrating Myoko was the era of *Ilpyo*. *Ilpyo* is first human settlement or civilization period of *Abotani* descendent. It is believed that *Dihu* and *Raru* son



of *Thokun Tho* of *Ilpyo* celebrated the *Myoko* for the first time by humans.

### **The Apatani Community and Myoko Celebration**

***Biiding Lala:*** In early days the clan members venture into forest to capture a particular monkey species that is ceremonially important. *Biiding* is crucial customary activities without it the *Myoko* festival may not be initiated. The hunting of the ceremonial monkey was performed by using bow and arrow in the early days. In the present condition the clan members are using guns and bullets to hunt the ceremonial monkey.

***Lapang-Babo:*** *Lapang* is a wooden platform made by flat elongated wooden pieces placed in the midst of the clan village. Mainly, *lapang* is prepared for several days and brought from the forest by all the clan male members. Today, it is prepared from the saw mill and picked by the truck. It is placed for formality away from the village so that the *lapang* is dragged from the dropping point.

### **Preparation of Myoko wine**

There are different types of local brewed wine and rice beer is prepared for the *Myoko* festival. The villagers prepared their festival wine from the accumulated rice and millets indigenously grown at their kitchen garden and paddy field. The wine is stored in vessel called 'Ya-khang' of different volume and size.

The Apatani modern family have abandoned the traditional vessel and resources to make local wine. The wine are prepared from the rice and millets supplied by cooperative society and shops found available in the market. Instead of *Ya-khang* plastic container are commonly used among the *Myoko* host. There was a time where all the industrial made liquor was provided to the guest which was later banned by the community bodies to promote traditional winery system and maintain uniformity during the celebration.

### **Ayu – A Oral Contest**

Every knowledgeable individuals could display their oral expertise during the time of *Myoko* celebration. There is friendly *Ayu* contest among the individuals to showcase their talent and constructive prose narrated by any

knowledgeable person out of ritualist context, in a prose identical or closer to day-to-day speech.

Due to modernization and modifications in the customary practices in the Apatani community. The new generation are facing different and various types of interacting people, the social and physical environment is diverse from the earlier time. The way of learning has changed from personal interaction to digital platform. Therefore, acquiring of traditional knowledge has diminished over the years and more adapted towards modern western music and Bollywood entertainment.

Nowadays, in Myoko festival, the host and guest indulge to Bollywood and western music as an amusement. There is frequent use of karaoke system in every households during the Myoko season. The *Ayun* competition among the people is lost and perplexed. There will be a rare case to see some of the older generation still in tune with the tradition. More or less the Ayu as a form of social interaction and tradition is slithering away from the Myoko festival.

### **The Customary Gift:**

Ceremonial and heredity friends (*Bunw Ajing*) is instituted in Apatani society. The value of ceremonial friends is held high and sacred. The customary rules guide the generation to maintain the friendly relationship and solemnized the event by giving away the gift, comprise of wine and rice beer, pig bacon, *tapyo* (local salt), *Kaji* (variety of Apatani dish consisting of an admixture of rice, meat chilly powder and salt). Ceremonial gifts are given on account of providing food items so that other family members or neighbours could taste it. A bacon size of 3 to 4 foot length and 5 inch breadth were given to ceremonial friends but today cash amount has replaced as considered to be more affordable, effortless and convenient way of doing it.

The age old sanctified status of ceremonial friends from different villages of Apatani have started to loosen its influence due to other factors such as the lack of no male lineage in that particular family, conversion to Christianity and a consent from both the sides to abandon the practices.

During the ceremonial gift juncture, the host attempt to offer different types of biscuits, soft drinks and other items

spread across the tables for the guests coming from different villages. Basically, Ayu was enjoyed during the occasion, with the changing time people have started using music system and microphone singing different languages of their choice to entertain the moment.

Because of busy schedule and office work ceremonial friend or *Bunw Aging's* family refer their house maid or younger children to attain the *Aging Gyonw* ceremonial occasion. This is a contemporary social situation producing a social vacuum between the original Myoko ceremonial friends. The instances of change is transformative. The social information and ideas sharing are limited.

### **Gender Equality and Empowerment:**

The Myoko celebration in the Apatani community challenges traditional gender roles and promotes gender equality. Unlike in some societies where female rites of passage may reinforce patriarchal norms, the Myoko celebration empowers female. In recent time, the female guest from different villages have started visiting the Myoko host house and contribute their presence as a part of the celebration. Women participation gives a platform to learn and get education about their age old tradition and culture. It also aspire the importance of the their voices in shaping the community's future.

### **Environmental Stewardship:**

The Apatani people have long been known for their sustainable agricultural practices and their deep respect for the environment. The Myoko celebration engaged with the devotion of offerings and prayer to the forest deities and spirits for protection and fodder. Celebration highlights the commitment of the community to environmental stewardship. It coincides with the traditional agricultural festival, where rituals and ceremonies are conducted to honor the land, ensure bountiful harvests, and reinforce the community's strong bond with nature.

The growing population of Apatani especially male child directly or indirectly hamper the growth of *Kra* trees in the forest. It is a ritualistic tread for every male members of a Myoko host to manage by cutting about 4 to 5 foot tall *Kra* plant which has to be put into *Myoko Pamu agyang* (altar).

The requirement number of *Kra* plants also varies from clan to clan. Some clans have 5-9 *Myoko Pamu agyang*/altar, that may require more plants to be cut down. Therefore, looking into the current issue and rationally thinking for the future cause and sustainable development some of the clans have decided to reduce the number of *Kra* plants for putting into *Myoko* altar.

### **Udeh twla:**

In early days the clan priest was available and accessible to perform the *Udeh twla* ceremony. Every household could finished it early on time. In the present time due to lack of priest in the clan and in the village, the ritualistic performance gets delay thereby the days of *Myoko* celebration get extended. Some of the family are hiring the priest from the other villages to perform the ritual. Majority of the *Myoko* host have started to take help from the *Meder Nello* to perform the *Udeh Twla* ceremony. The way of performing by the *Meder Nello* is simple and fast and cost effective.

### **Social organization:**

Elders use to organized and initiate the everyday events of the *Myoko* celebration. In today's time every clans have their youth wings to manage and look after the ceremonial activities. The responsibility of the youths is extended to cover the entire celebration period.

### **Conclusion**

The *Myoko* celebration represents a harmonious blend of preservation and adaptation. While the core elements of the celebration have remained intact for generations, the Apatani community has also embraced certain modifications to reflect changing times. This fluidity is a testament to their ability to honor their roots while responding to evolving social dynamics.

It is emphasises that integrating traditional values and practises with new ones rather than completely rejecting them is what modernization actually entails. The investigation reflect that Apatani society has changed in terms of values and beliefs. It is to verify that modern values that emphasise individualism, reason, and equality are challenging old values. This value change is influenced

by a number of factors, including education, urbanisation, and exposure to Western norms.

The Myoko celebration also reflects the interplay between tradition and modernity. While the Apatani community continues to cherish their customs, they have also embraced aspects of modern life. The celebration provides an opportunity for younger generations to explore their cultural heritage while adapting to the changing world around them. This balance between tradition and modernity is essential for the community's resilience and continued relevance.

The Myoko celebration in the Apatani community serves as a platform for cultural exchange. People from different backgrounds are welcomed to witness and participate in the festivities, fostering understanding and appreciation for the Apatani culture. This celebration strengthens the community's collective identity while opening doors to dialogue and collaboration with the wider world.

## References

1. Apadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. London: University of Minnesota Press.
2. Bida, H. (2018). *Ritual and Belief system of the Apatanis*. Popriscope . Naharlagu, Arunachal Prdaesh, India: Popi Sarmin Society.
3. Gajurel, Yakang B. (2015). *Traditional Use And Conservation Of Some Selected Plants Used In Festivals And Rituals In Apatani Plateau Of Arunachal Pradesh, India . International Journal Of Conservation Science, 189-200.*
4. Hana, P. (2019). *Understanding the Impact of urbanization in Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh: A Sociological Study*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis), Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh
5. Kaning, M. (2008). *The Rising Culture Of The Apatanis Tribe*. Itanagar: Himalayan Publisher.
6. Landis, P. H. (1935). *Social Change and Social Interaction as Factors in Culture Change. American Journal of Sociology, 52-58.*
7. Rana, G. (2014). *Abotani's Struggle for Survival*. Ziro: Dani Kunia Foundation.

8. Rana, G. (2015). Chronological brief descriptive events of Myoko. *Popiriscop*, pp. 12-17.
9. Singh, Y. (1986). *Modernization of Indian Traditions*. New Delhi: Rawat.

## **Glossary**

1. *Ayu*: Traditional chants performed by males in context of verbal competition or antiphonal singing; oral tradition in song form.
2. *lipyo Supung*: The dwelling place of abotani
3. *Kaji*: variety of Apatani dish consisting of an admixture of rice, meat chili powder and salt, usually taken with rice beer.
4. *Kiira*: An oak tree
5. *Meder Nello*: A place for veneration Donyi-Polo deities.
6. *Myoko*: A socio-religious festival of Apatani form in cyclic pattern.
7. *Pamu agyang*: A ritualistic altar
8. *Tapyo*: a traditional form of salty substance obtained by filtering water through the ashes of certain plants, used as delicacy.
9. *Udeh Twla*: A ritualistic act perform by individual family for closing the Myoko celebration.
10. *Yah-khang*: A vessel use for storing wine.

## Exploring Social Capital among the Apatani's of Ziro valley

Padi Dindi

### Introduction:

Social capital as a concept is defined as assets acquiring from networks of social relations that can be mobilized for individual or collective goals (Daniere and Luong, 2012:8). The concept of social capital was first introduced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his work "The forms of capital" (1986) where he discussed about three forms of capital namely, economic, culture and social capital which sought to understand the concept of capital in the everyday social lives beyond the Marxist's material perception about the capital. The Bourdieusian understanding of role of social capital was mainly discussed with the prosperity in the economic capital of an individual's social life by the networks of his social relations. Unlike Bourdieu's popular understanding of social capital linked to access to economic resources through the social networks, majority of literature about social capital emphasizes on the structural functional aspect of it through trust, shared norms and values, reciprocity of networks and collective action of individuals or group to enhance the capacity of the resources.

In the mid of 1990s, the concept of social capital was widely popularised with the impending growth of community-oriented approach in the field of sustainable development studies. James Coleman discussed how social capital consists of aspect of social structure and facilitates actions of actors within the structure (Coleman, 1988:98). It has elements of goals and end relationship to it which can be only achieved by collective resource utilizable characteristics of actors. In this, he also seeks social capital as a source of resource embankment. For him social capital instills embedded social values of certain aspects of social structure and network relationships into more productive and human like attributes. Coleman emphasises on the theory that social interaction between community generates stable social capital. The stock of social capital enhances by regular everyday activities facilitating the grounds for trust and reciprocity define in social behaviour

to make collective decision for prosperity and access to resources.

According to Robert Putnam's definition, "social capital is a features of social life networks, norms, and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives". The norms and reciprocal networks that make collective action possible are themselves contingent on an existing foundation of social trust and solidarity (Putnam, 1993 & 1995). Ostrom argues that, "social capital is the shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules, and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity" (Ostrom, 1999:176). Through these discussions of social capital, therefore provided the understanding of social capital as a relevant asset for the social fabric of the society based on an accumulation of social, psychological, cultural, institutional and cognitive assets that helps in increase the amount of mutually cooperative behaviour among the community members.

### **The Apatanis of Ziro Valley**

The Apatanis are a very close knitted tribal community who inhabits in the Ziro valley of Lower Subansiri district in the central western part of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribe is patriarchal in its social structure and subdivided into various clans. The Apatani valley consists of seven villages namely, Hong, Bulla, Hari, Dutta, Hija, Bamin- Michi and Mudang-Tage. The Ziro valley/ Apatani Valley have a distinct civilization with systematic land use practices and rich traditional ecological knowledge of natural resources management and cultural conservation acquired from their forefathers since the establishment of the Apatani settlements in the valley. Culturally, Apatani hold their belief system in the indigenous religion Donyi-Poloism which is worshipping and embracing the sun and the moon as the divine almighty. The vibrant traditions and customs of the Apatanis and their belief in indigenous faith of Donyi-Poloism harbors robust spiritual values of sacredness of nature ensures the mutually dependent co-existence of nature and culture among environment and human being thus, nurturing the prosperous development of the community life. The traditional Apatani society are known as sedentary agriculture practitioners with the engagement of series of



agricultural cycle rituals and festivals throughout the year. The major festivals of the Apatanis like Myoko and Dree festival are celebrated for the prosperous initiation and harvest of agriculture cycle thus retaining the socio-cultural norms of the symbiotic nature-culture values among the Apatanis to lead a sustainable way of living and efficient use of natural resources in the valley.

### **Perspective on relevance of social capital through mutual trust, act of reciprocity and collective solidarity of social networks among the Apatanis**

Like many other tribal societies, the social fabric of the Apatani society operates on the community-based institutions like Buliyang (village council) the role of which is to investigate the socio-political disputes among the villagers to maintain peace and harmony in the valley. However, the law and governance of such social institutions is not coded in nature but the traditional knowledge acquired by the community members acknowledges the existence of the such village councils and many other social institutions of the Apatani society in the realms of the customary laws. These aspects of mutual trust and collective solidarity reflects the existence of high values of the social capital acquired among the Apatanis. This approach of social capital thus functions as a bonding mechanism which adds to the integration of social structure of the society.

The practice of Patan system in the agriculture labour management practice among the Apatani tribe showcases the elements of social capital through the phenomenon of reciprocity. The Patan is a community-based organization of group of labour gang led by female community member mostly which is anchors the shared work distribution and exchange of labours in the agriculture practices. The structure of this group represents symbolic of exchanges between both human and supernatural beings. Sometimes the owner of the field pays a nominal amount for the exchange of labour however in most of the times the Patan group voluntarily worked in rotation in each other's paddy field. The association of the patan groups are maintained at the core social values of networks of goodwill, participatory act, reciprocity nature and prosperity of community agriculture livelihood. This further narrates the relevance of the community social networks to ensure

efficient work on agricultural land for prosperous harvest. The Patan labour management groups take turns to help one another with agricultural chores thus depicting the cooperation and bonding of community members in the pursuit of same shared goals for good agricultural production, thus enmeshing the role of social capital in the everyday activity of Apatani society.

Although distributed in 7 different villages in the Ziro valley, the Apatani community are known for maintaining strong social cohesiveness among each other across their villages since time immemorial. The tradition of “Biini Ajiin” custom during Myoko festival associates the sense of impending value to the rendered social capital of social networks, shared value and reciprocity. Myoko is a traditional ceremony celebrated to welcome the ancestors to perform this festival, for the welfare of the humankind. The spirit behind this festival is to uphold the sense of togetherness and friendship between the villages. This festival is considered to be a grand event for Apatani community wherein all the 7 villages take turns in celebrating it every year. “Ajiin” which means friend in Apatani linguistic, Biini Ajiin is a sanctioned form of friendship relationship with individuals outside the village which has been formed since their forefather's generation. During the Myoko, the host village invites their “Biini Ajiin” for Myoko celebration and to reclaim the friendship of their earlier generation by providing gift of “Hulyi aso” (Dried pork meat) and “Tapyo” (traditional salt churned form specific plant) to their Ajiin for the sustenance of their relationships and vice-versa. The role of ritualised friendship of Biini Ajiin is very significant to understand the settlement of Apatani civilization as it was believed that at conflicting times of ones family his Biini Ajiin would help and negotiate on his behalf. This form of action eventually led to minimise inter village conflicts among the Apatani community. It is also believed these forms of friendship were initiated under an ancestral oath. The befalling of Biini Ajiin relationship is feared with the curse of lineage vanishment or dishonour to the ancestral oath (Hilaly, 2018). Thus, the aspect of social networks, reciprocity, mutual trust, collective action and social solidarity of Biini Ajiin rituals still plays significant position among the Apatani society despite the changing times of modern social institutions or different religious beliefs.

## Conclusion

In the Apatani society the traditional knowledge system and the indigenous way of life still persists. The social fabric of the Apatani society is knitted in prevailing indigenous knowledge and traditional rituals and ceremonies. The interaction between the community members and natural resources has built various different cultural value and belief system which can be understood as Social capital as discussed by Robert Putnam and James Coleman's understanding of norms and resources such as trust, reciprocity and association with social networks and social structures nurtured by community knowledge. It enables participants to act together more effectively through collective action and sense of voluntary participation shared by the people. Likewise, Apatani society's way of administering its nature in the form of sedentary agriculture or sacred bamboo pines or irrigation management and cultural resources like Buliyang institutions or festival rituals like Myoko implies the shared value of indigenous knowledge and traditional customs. These socio-cultural elements of the Apatani society have identified to be products of traditional knowledge about the Apatani civilization which managed to create and maintain the symbiotic relationship between the nature and cultural landscape of Ziro valley along with efficient cooperation from social networks and social actors as a practice to sustainable growth of the Apatani community. It is to notice that each of these traditions of traditional ecological knowledge, reciprocal exchange of mutual trust and collective action was able to sustain because of the integration of the traditional cultural values of the Apatani in their everyday activities through generation to generation. However, with the changing times of new modern society, multi-verse belief system and infinite opportunities available in the world to explore it is imperative to have the new learn about the the nitty-gritty of the social traditions of the Apatani society and how it plays a significant role is identifying Apatani tribe and Ziro valley as a distinguished settlement.

## References

1. Bamin, Y., & Gajurel, P. R. (2015). Traditional use and conservation of some selected plants used in festivals and rituals in apatani plateau of Arunachal Pradesh, India. *International Journal of Conservation Science*. Vol. 6. (2) Pp. 189-200.
2. Ballet, J., Sirven, N & Requier-Desjardins, M. (2007). Social capital and natural resource management: A critical perspective. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, Vol. 16. Pp. 355-374.
3. Blackburn, S. (2003). Colonial Contact in the "Hidden Land": Oral Histories among the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh. *Indian Economic and social History Review*. Vol. 40 (3) pp. 335-365.
4. Blackburn, S. (2008). *Himalayan Tribal Tales: Oral Tradition and Culture in the Apatani Valley*. Leiden: Brill.
5. Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The forms of capital*. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. Pp. 241-258. Westport, CT: Greenwood
6. Catherine, R. B., & Salmen, L. (2000). *Understanding social capital- Agricultural Extension in Mali: Trust and Cohesion*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
7. Coleman, J. 1988. Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(Suppl.), S95-S120.
8. Dasgupta, P., & Serageldin, I. (1999). (Eds.), *Social capital- A multifaceted perspective*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
9. Danieri, A., & Luong, Hy. V. (2012). *The dynamics of social capital and civic engagement in Asia*. New York: Routledge.
10. Dollo, M. (2009). Traditional Irrigation System: A Case of Apatani Tribe in Arunachal Himalaya, North East India. *Mountain Forum Bulletin January 2009*. Pp. 9-11.
11. Farooqi, P. (2017). A symbiosis between nature and culture: A case study of Apatani Cultural Landscape, India. *Journal of World Heritage Studies*. ISSN 2189-4728.

12. Furer-Haimendorf, C.V. (1962). *The Apatanis and their Neighbours: A Primitive Civilization of the Eastern Himalaya*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
13. Hilaly, S. (2018). Culture of friendship among the apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh. *Space and culture, India*. Vol. 6 (1) Pp. 38-50.
14. slam, M. R. (2013). Indigenous knowledge as social capital. *The International Journal of Social Science*. Vol. 10. Pp. 65-79.
15. Kani, T. (1996). *Socio-Religious Ceremonies of the Apatani*, Frontier Publisher, Itanagar.
16. Kani, T. (2012). *Cultural Heritage of Hong Village of the Apatani Valley*. Itanagar: Hong Welfare Association Capital Complex.
17. Kaning, M. (2008). *The Rising Culture of the Apatanis Tribe*, Arunachal Pradesh, Himalayan
18. Publisher, Itanagar.
19. Magni. G. (2016). Indigenous Knowledge and Implications for Sustainable Development Agenda: Background paper for the Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO.
20. strom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons- The Evolution of Institution for collective action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
21. strom, E. (1999). *Social capital: A fad or fundamental concept?* In P. Dasgupta & I. Serageldin. (Eds.), *Social capital- A multifaceted perspective*. Washington DC: The World Bank. Pp. 172-214.
22. Portes, Alejandro (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24: 1-24.
23. Putnam, R. (1993). The prosperous community: social capital and public life. *The American Prospect*. vol. 4. Pp. 35-42.
24. Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 6 (1) pp. 65-78.
25. Rai, S. C. (2005). Apatani paddy-cum-fish cultivation: An indigenous hill farming of North East India. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*. Vol. 4 (1) pp. 65-71.
26. Salahat, A.A. (2020). The Role of Social Capital (Tribe or Civil Society Organizations) in Achieving

- Sustainable Development in the City of Amman. *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol. 11, No.28. ISSN 2222-1735.
27. Iisainen, M. (2000). Two concepts of social capital: Bourdieu vs Putnam. Paper presented at the International society for Third Sector Research Fourth International Conference, *The Third Sector: For What and For Whom?* Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.
  28. Seema, M. (2016). Buliang- the traditional institution of Apatani tribes and the impact of modernization; A study of a tribal village in Arunachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 3 (4) pp. 904-915.
  29. Serageldin, I., & Grootaret, C. (2000). Defining Social Capital: An Integrative View, 40-58, in *Social Capital. A Multifaceted Perspective*, (Eds.) Partha Dasgupta and Serageldin. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.
  30. Srivastava, R., Singh, R., Mukherjee, T. K., & Apatani community. (2010). Indigenous biodiversity of Apatani Plateau: Learning on biocultural knowledge of Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh for sustainable livelihoods. *Indian Journal of Traditional knowledge*. Vol. 9 (3) pp. 432-442.
  31. Tzanakis, M. (2013). Social capital in Bourdieu's, Coleman's and Putnam's theory; empirical evidence and emergent measurement issues. *Educate Journal*. Vol. 13 (2) pp. 2-23.
  32. Wangpan, T., Taka, T., TAngjang, S., & Arunachalam, A. (2015). Sustainability of indigenous farming practices: A case study among Apatani, Nocte and Wancho tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India. *International Journal on Agricultural Sciences*. Vol. 6 (1) pp. 103108.
  33. Yarang, P. (2017). Agriculture labour management system in Apatani/ Apa Tanii. *International Journal of Management Studies*. Vol. 4. P. 46-50.
  34. Yani, P., & Sharma, A. (2018). Prioritization strategies for the resources of traditional paddy cum-fish culture in Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, India. *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Science*. Vol. 7 (5) pp. 1112-1124. 4

**Potentiality of Artificial Lakes as a Habitat for Migratory Birds with special reference to Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*) in Siikhe Lake, Ziro, Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh**

Dani Obing and Ligang Aniya

**INTRODUCTION**

A lake is defined as an enclosed body of water that is surrounded by land (Mitra et al. 2014). An artificial lake, also known as a man-made or human-made lake, is a body of water that has been planned and purposefully excavated by the people, typically for a specific purpose such as irrigation, recreational activities, or as a reservoir for water (Zhou et al., 2021). Siikhe Lake is the first artificial lake in Arunachal Pradesh, situated in Ziro Valley, 2.5 km away from Old Ziro town. It is a Water Conservation Project Scheme initiated by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh for recharging groundwater that commenced in 2019. The lake's water conservation activity is aligned with the National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC), the State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC), and the National Water Mission (NWM) (Department of Water Resource, 2019). It has been providing, livelihood, recreational, eco-tourism, fisheries, irrigation, and domestic water supply services, and is spread over an area of 75,160 sq meters. Additionally, the project is aligned with the 'Catch the Rain' scheme under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan launched by the Government of India. The reservoir holds a capacity of 1,20,000 cubic meters and has created an irrigation potential of 50 hectares spread over a catchment area of 8.50 square kilometers (Department of Water Resource, 2019 ). Apart from water conservation, the lake has become a haven for migratory birds. The Mandarin duck (*Aix galericulata*) is one such migratory bird that has been sighted in Siikhe Lake in recent years. It is a perching duck species native to the East Palearctic (Ng, C.S et al., 2022). It is a medium-sized duck species at 41–49 cm long with a 65–75 cm wingspan weighing 430–690 grams. The Mandarin Duck is listed as '**Least Concern**' on the IUCN Red List. The global population is estimated at around **65,000** (BirdLife International, 2018). The duck rarely visits India and has been sighted only in the north-eastern parts of the

142 | Apatani: Change and Continuity

region. It was first recorded in 1902 in the Dibru River in the Rongagora area of Tinsukia, Assam (Baker, 1902). Recently, this migratory bird was sighted in Manipur's Loktak Lake in 2013 (Kasambe and Singh, 2014) and in Saatvoini Beel in Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam's Baksa district in 2014 (Das et al., 2015). Very recently, in 2021, it was spotted in Maguri-Motapung Beel in Assam's Tinsukia and Loktak Lake in Manipur in 2023. In Arunachal Pradesh, it was first sighted in Siikhe Lake, Ziro, and then in Dirang in the same year (Bachung, 2021). Over the years, different species of migratory ducks and geese have been spotted in the Siikhe Lake of Ziro by frequent bird watchers.

## **STUDY AREA**

The study area is located in the intermontane valley of Ziro in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. Geographically, it is located between 27° 30' N and 27° 38' N latitude and 93° 45' E to 93° 55' E longitude, covering an area of about 147.44 km<sup>2</sup>, and is drained by the Kille river which runs longitudinally in the north-south direction. Numerous streams and gullies from east to west join it and drain the area. The area has altitudes ranging from 1494 to 2622m above mean sea level.

The study area is mainly inhabited by *Apatanis*, one of the major ethnic tribal groups of Arunachal Pradesh. As per the 2011 Census, the entire region has a total population of 42,352 of which 21,346 are male and 21,006 are female. The region has a total urban population of 12,806 and 29,546 rural populations and a total working population of 11,237 (38.03%) of which 7549 (25.55%) are main workers and 3688 (12.48%) are marginal workers (2011 Census).

Climatically, the study area falls within the heavy rain zone. The onset of the monsoon occurs in March/April and continues until September. The annual rainfall in the area ranges from 2240-2910 mm with maximum precipitation occurring in June and July. During summer, the minimum and maximum temperatures remain at 6.3°C and 28.10°C respectively. Whereas, in winter it is 1.0°C and 18.4°C respectively. Due to its climatic condition, the area is characterized by cold, humid, subtropical to temperate types of climate with relative humidity remaining constant between 70-80% (Patnaik 2017).



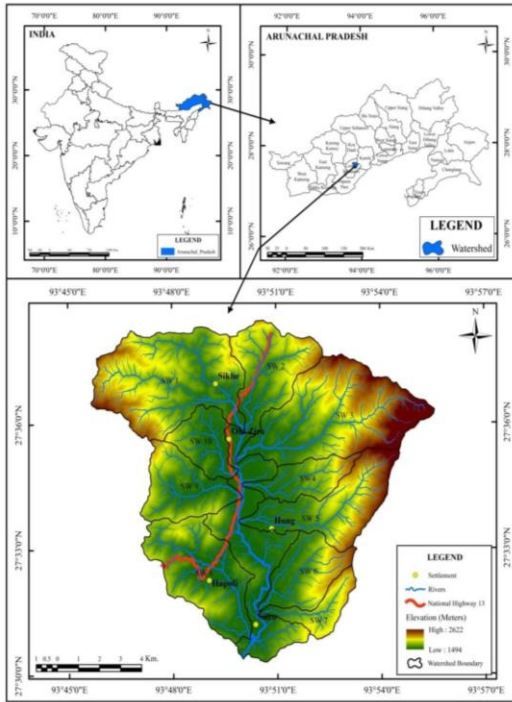


Fig. 1: Location Map of Study Area

Source: Downloaded from <https://bhuvan.nrsc.gov.in> and Generated Using ArcGIS 10.3 software



Fig. 2: Siikhe Lake, Ziro

Source: Google Earth

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF MANDARIN DUCK

The native range of Mandarin duck species spans from southeastern Russia through eastern China and into North Korea, South Korea, and Japan. These ducks breed in China, Japan, and Siberia. The Asian populations are migratory, overwintering in southern China and Japan. Non-native populations live in several different regions. Humans have introduced duck populations in various parts of Europe, and some regions of North America. Primary non-native populations include birds in Britain, Germany, and the western United States (BirdLife International, 2018).

It is a migratory bird in India that is rarely sighted only in some states of North-East India.



Fig. 3 : Geographical distribution of Mandarin Duck  
Source : eBird.org

## DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

For the present study, various regular Bird Watchers and members of various Environmental NGOs of Ziro particularly Ziro Birding Club and Arunachal Birding Club were interviewed and their perspectives and observations towards Siikhe Lake and Mandarin duck were recorded. Secondary data were collected through various sources from the Lower Subansiri Forest Division Office, the Water Resource Department, Media Articles, published articles, and books by Bird Watchers of Ziro. Data related to the migratory duck species in the region as of 2023 is given the Table 1.

**Table 1. Migratory ducks and geese species of the study area**

Sl.No.	DUCKS/ GEESE SPECIES	
	Common Name	Scientific Name
1.	Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>
2.	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
3.	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
4.	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
5.	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>
6.	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
7.	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
8.	Rudy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
9.	Greylag goose	<i>Anser Anser</i>
10.	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
11.	Red Crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>
12.	Eastern Spot Billed Duck	<i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>
13.	Bar Headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
14.	Greater Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
15.	Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>
16.	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>
17.	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>

Source: Pictorial book of Birds of Ziro

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As per regular Bird Watchers of Ziro, in Siikhe Lake alone a total of 17 different types of Migratory Duck Species have been sighted. In Ziro Mandarin Duck has been spotted only in the Siikhe Lake area although there are other small rivulets, wet rice fields, and streams. Mandarin Duck is a species of waterfowl from the family **Anatidae** and order **Anseriformes** which are highly adapted for an aquatic existence at water surfaces. These birds seek waterbodies such as wetlands, lakes, and marshes as their habitat. Therefore, Siikhe Lake which is spread over an area of 75,160 sq metres forms a large waterbody attracting these avian visitors. The bird has been spotted consecutively three times since 2021, first in February 2021, second in March 2022, and third in January 2023 by regular bird watchers of Ziro. In the first and second sightings, only one single male duck was spotted. However, recently in 2023, 1 male duck and 3 female ducks were sighted.

Year and month of sighting		Number of birds	
Year	Month	Male	Female
2021	February	1	-
2022	March	1	-
2023	January	1	3

Table 2. List of sighting records of mandarin ducks in Siikhe Lake  
Source: Ziro Birding Club

Although artificial, the lake is geographically one among very few lakes in the entire Arunachal stretch at an altitude above 1500 meters, becoming an ideal site for these species to find a stopover site in their migratory journey. The lake offers a pollution-free habitat of waterbody with subtropical vegetation and favorable climatic conditions in the region for these ducks and other migratory birds. Before the construction of Siikhe Lake, there were no large water bodies in the form of lakes or reservoirs in Ziro. With its commencement, migratory birds can be seen finding the lake as a habitat to rest in their journey. The location of the lake situated away from the disturbances of the township, surrounded by pineclad vegetation can be considered one of the factors making it habitable for the Mandarin Duck. The management community of the lake keeps the lake protected from hunting and poaching keeping the migratory birds safe during their visit which keeps the birds visiting again without any fear.



Fig. 4 : A Male Mandarin Duck spotted in Siikhe Lake on February, 2021  
Source: Punyo Chada



Fig. 5 : A Male Mandarin Duck spotted in Siikhe Lake on March, 2022  
Source: Koj Mama



*Fig. 6 : Figures showing 1 Male and 3 Female Mandarin Ducks spotted in Siikhe Lake on January, 2023  
Source: Nada Karbing*

## **CONCLUSION**

The Lake was primarily developed as a water reservoir in Ziro which holds a capacity of 1,20,000 cubic meters creating an irrigation potential of 50 hectares. Today it also serves in various other capacities including eco-tourism and recreation, fish-rearing, and recharging groundwater tables to help green the forest cover. The lake has further shown the potential in becoming a habitat for many Migratory Birds including Mandarin ducks in recent years. The sightings of Mandarin Duck for three consecutive years from 2021 to 2023 indicate the potentiality of Siikhe Lake as a habitat for these migratory birds. This helps us to understand the ecological health of the area and further enriches the biodiversity of the region.

## **REFERENCE**

1. Arunachal Pradesh Birding Club, (2022). Pictorial book of birds of Ziro. Frontech Print Ziro.
2. Baker, E.C.S. (1902). Occurrence of the Mandarin Duck in India. Journal of Bombay Natural History Society 14: 626–627.

3. Bachung, D.(2021). Website URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88637479>.
4. BirdLife International (2018). "Aix galericulata". *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. **2018**:e.T22680107A131911544. doi:10.2305/IUCN.UK.2018-2.RLTS.T22680107A131911544.en. Retrieved 19 November 2021.
5. Das, B., Nath, A., Talukdar, K., Lahkar, D., Swargiary, G., Boro, B. K., and Ghosh, S. (2015). The sighting of Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* (Linnaeus)(Aves: Anseriformes: Anatidae) after a gap of 112 years in Assam, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, *7*(10), 7710-7011.
6. Joken, E. (2021, April 28): A lake of opportunities. *The Arunachal Times* <https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2021/04/28/157002/>
7. Kasambe, R. and Birjit Singh, R.K. (2013): Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* at Loktak Lake, Manipur. *Indian Birds*.
8. Mitra, A., Fazli, P., Zaman, S., Pramanick, P., and Mitra, A. (2014). Lakes and their origin. *DOI*, *10*(2.1), 2865-0880.
9. Ng, C. S., Lai, C. K., Ke, H. M., Lee, H. H., Chen, C. F., Tang, P. C., and Tsai, I. J. (2022). Genome assembly and evolutionary analysis of the mandarin duck *Aix galericulata* reveal strong genome conservation among ducks. *Genome Biology and Evolution*, *14*(6), evac083.
10. Patnaik, S. K. (2017). Landholding, land ownership, and customary law governing land fragmentation in Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh. *Neo Geographia*, **4**(2): 1-12.
11. Zhou, Z., Jing, S., Gong, Y., and Zhao, H. (2021). Classification and Identification of Artificial Lakes Based on National Geographic-Conditions Data. *ISPRS Annals of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*, *4*, 187-192.

## Social impact of tourism in Ziro valley

Mudang Onju

### Introduction

More and more parts of the world are entering the tourism sector, as travelling has become more accessible and affordable (Urry, 2002). World Tourism Organisation, 2022 defines tourism as the social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that necessitates the movement of people from their everyday environment to different places or countries for personal or professional purposes. As stated by WTO, 2022 tourism has emerged as one of the businesses with the highest growth rates and a key industry for countries looking to strengthen their economies. Education tourism, seaside tourism, medical tourism, rural tourism, tribal tourism, culinary or food tourism, religious or pilgrimage tourism, sports tourism, and ecotourism are a few of the subcategories of tourism. Today tourism industry seeks differentiation via innovation. Though it provides unique, relaxing, and adventurous experiences to the tourists contributing to the region's economy, the development of this sector poses a threat to the local socio-cultural and environmental system of the society if planned poorly (Nayomi and Gnanapala, 2015; Jackson, 2008).

Numerous research has been conducted on tourism and its impacts worldwide (Gjerald, 2005, Gnanapala and Sandaruwani, 2016; Jaafar et al., 2015; Li, 2002; Shahzadal, 2016). And some studies have also been followed in Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh (Choudhury et al., 2016; Mize et al., 2016; Patowary, and Borgohain, 2017; Tagiya, 2015) however, only a few have focussed on the social impacts of tourism. Thus, this study deals with the sociocultural, socio-economic, and physical impact of tourism by critically reviewing the example from the literature available.

### **Tourism in Northeast India: A Study of Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh**

Northeast India in respect of tourism is one of the most potential regions of our country. Blessed with nature, Northeast India comprises a vast and varied landscape that includes hills, plateaux, and plains. With massive rivers, green



mountains, flood plains, jungles, and snowy peaks, it offers some amazing beauty making it all the more attractive. Northeast comprising eight states; Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim as well as parts of northern West Bengal that include districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Koch Bihar is an amalgamation of diverse culture, not only in terms of different human culture but also flora and fauna, animal species, indigenous knowledge and many more.

Tourism as a growing sector in India's Northeast started in the year the 1930s in Assam with Kaziranga as a tourist attraction that provided tourists with an elephant ride. It was later declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1950 by the British government. In the late 1930s Shillong (the then administrative headquarter of Assam province), and the famous Kamakhya temple of Guwahati was also significant tourist destination marking the beginning of tourism in northeast India (Bhattacharya, 2008). Since then from a few hundred, the North Eastern states have received around 1.19 crore domestic and 1.04 lakh overseas visitors in 2022 (Swarajya, 2023).

Arunachal Pradesh, one of the eight states of the Northeast is among the major tourism hotspots. According to the Forest Survey of India, 2011 it is home to diverse animal and plant species with a geography which is covered with more than 80 percent of its total area covered under forest. With a population density of only 17 people per sq. km (Census, 2011) the state remains an attraction for tourists who want adventure, and to explore nature at its best. Arunachal Pradesh has a huge tourism potential with various tourist destinations ranging from Pilgrim Tourism like Malinithan, Parshuram Kund, Heritage sites like Itafort, Tawang Monastery, Golden Pagoda, Buddha statue, Bhismaknagar, Wildlife resource and natural beauty like Talley Valley of Ziro, Namdapha national park, Ganga lake, Sela pass, and last but not the least which is cultural beauty and its diversity. Comparing the data from the last three years one can see there is a rise in the number of tourists in Arunachal Pradesh, that is, from 43832 in 2020 to 213340 in 2022. This is probably because of the Covid19 pandemic which occurred by the end of 2019 that restricted entry of outsiders into the State from the latter part of 2019 to 2020. However, in the year 2019 till the month of November

around 563464 tourists visited Arunachal Pradesh of which 555639 were domestic tourists and 7825 were foreign tourists, and 520089 tourists in 2018 with 512436 domestic tourists and 7653 foreign tourists (Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, 2022). So there seems to be a decline in the number of tourists. However, slowly but surely the number is on the rise.

Ziro Valley, which is the focus of this study, is a clan-based society, home to the apatani tribe located in the Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh. The valley has its significance for its natural beauty, hilly topographies, endemic species, medicinal plants, etc. It is popularly known for its systematic land use practice and sustainable use of limited resources. Unique traditional paddy-cum-fish farming of the Apatani Tribes is well known where fish is produced in the same field using the same resources to produce paddy. Thus, time-efficient farming is witnessed in the Ziro Valley. In terms of tourism, ecotourism or sustainable tourism is promoted in the region to conserve natural resources and preserve Apatani culture. Dolo Mando, Hakhe Tari, Kile Pakho, Shiva Linga, Tarin Fish Farm, and Talley Valley are some of the popular spots to visit in Ziro. Other key highlights of the Valley are the region's festivals like Dree, Murung, Myoko and now Ziro Festival of Music popularly known as ZFM. As per the report, every year more than 10,000 tourists visit Ziro Valley to witness its natural and unique cultural beauty (Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh).

### **Tourism and Its Impact**

To understand the social impact of Tourism in Ziro Valley, various examples from existing literature are drawn. Social impact of tourism can be broadly categorized into two, that is, socio-culture and socio-economic (Crandall, 1994). The socio-cultural impact includes a strong we-feeling among the community and its identity, a stronger sense of connection to the environment, and greater social capital as a result of an increase in visitors (Ramos et al., 2016). It also includes a change in the traditional value systems, behaviours of individuals, social relationships, collective lifestyles, moral conduct, artistic expressions, traditional rites, and organisational structures of host communities (Hall and Page, 2006). In addition, some examples of socio-economic impact among the local community are economic

independence, labour force-displacement, changes in work, property prices and ownership, political and economic institutions, and enhanced quality of living. It also involves improving social services (Deery et al., 2005), transportation, and recreational facilities (Marzuki, 2011), as well as building more tourist-oriented services (Marzuki, 2011), all of which may be profitable to the region.

On one hand, the host communities gets advantages from the tourism sector, on the other hand, it can be influenced negatively (Spanou, 2007).

## **Positive Impacts**

### **1) Promotes Cultural values**

One of the impacts of tourism is it promotes positive changes in cultural values and a sense of cultural identity. According to Tylor (1871), culture is “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society”. As there is a growing trend in the number of tourists that seeks genuine indigenous cultural experiences, respect for their customs and tradition rises. These demands of the tourists help the local community to preserve their traditional knowledge, arts, crafts, and their cultural identity as tourists are more into authentic historical and cultural experiences (Marzuki, 2011).

A case study of Musi, a riverside that is the main source of people's income in Palembang, Indonesia shows that cultural heritage tourism has a huge potential in the preservation and conservation of urban heritage. Old architectural buildings located along the Musi River, such as Kampung Arab, Kampung Kapiten, Chinese Temple Ulu, Sekanak Region, and Kampung Al Munawar stand tall to this date because of cultural heritage tourism in the area (Lusetyowati, 2015). Unlike the people of Palembang, Apatani of Ziro Valley preserve and conserve their tangible and intangible cultural heritage such as *Tai Lampii* (rock cave), *Yapung Yapar* (sacred stone), *Rantii Piisa* like *Puming Pubyang*, *Yalyo Yabo*, *Soki Soli*, *Manu Mado* (pine trees), *Myamy Talo* (disc-shaped brass plate), *Dora Kulu* (banana groves) not merely for tourist attraction but as traditional customs and spiritual belief systems that serve as a tribute to their ancestors.

## **2) Encourages Community solidarity**

The intervention of tourism promotes community to help develop a strong sense of we-feeling among them as it increases social contact during the tourism season (Ramos et al., 2016). As Hunizker (1961, cited in Shahzalal, 2016) points out it is the understanding between hosts and guests that reduces misconception and build friendly relationships. Thus to build that friendship it becomes equally important on the side of the hosts to create and maintain a sense of solidarity among themselves.

In Veneto, Mexico, tourism has helped in preserving the language of the region as there is a sense of pride among locals and identity attached to their culture by promoting language to tourists (Castillo-Villar & Merlo-Simoni, 2022). Unlike Veneto, Ziro Valley has not witnessed any promotion of its local language due to tourism. In fact, over the years, the apatani language is constantly being affected as a result of modernization, westernization, etc.

The case study by Singla (2014) is another example that shows the impact of tourism as a source of community solidarity. In the study, it is seen that the social contact among the people of Jaipur has increased over time to increase the flow of tourists in the region. In Ziro, however, the social fabric among the Apatanis has always been closely knitted. One such example is the age-old tradition of *Bunii Ajin*, a ceremonial friendship with tribesmen of other villages that are considered sacred to this date. However, it is not necessarily the impact of tourism, like Jaipur.

## **3) Source of Livelihood**

It is well known that the development of tourism has a positive impact on the source of income for the local community. When on the one hand tourists are ready to spend their money, it creates a source of economic gain for the locals. Direct employment (tour guide, accommodation provider, etc.), as well as indirect employment (entrepreneurs) opportunity, improves due to tourism (Murray, 2009, cited in Gnanapala & Sandaruwani, 2016). This is true for the people of Ziro Valley since tourism as a field of economic benefit has been recognized. Many homestays, cafes, resorts, and hotels that provide food and lodging, are built these days to cater to the needs of the tourists. Young entrepreneurs, local small businesses, or

sessional businesses are also on the rise among the Apatanis, which can be seen during the Dree festival, ZFM, etc. Tourism enhances the overall standard of living for the locals. This is because as the industry provides employment opportunities there are a sense of job-related satisfaction, which helps them to access modern facilities in the form of goods and services (Deery et al., 2005).

One such country is Aruba, a country that belongs to the Kingdom of Netherlands. It is known for its pleasant climate all year long. The tourism sector in Aruba contributes to about 27.64% GDP of the country's total economy and 29.91% of employment. Maldives is another country that depends greatly on tourism for its economic development contributing 38.92% in GDP and 15.74% in employment (Mariano, 2022). With economic benefits, tourism provides a way for infrastructure development. With that, transportation and communication facilities also increase (Milman and Pizam, 1988)

### **Negative impact**

There are four broad areas in which the negative social impacts of the tourism sector can be categorized, that is, the local communities or host's way of life, cultural clashes, physical impact, and ethical issues (Jaafar et al., 2017).

#### **1) *The way of life of the local community***

One of the effects tourism has on the local community is its quality of life. It is perceived that tourism creates privacy issues. Time spent with family during the tourism season, change in routine activity, a sense of insecurity, etc. are affected (Gjerald, 2005). In a traditional society where agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the local community, it is radically influenced by tourism activity (Jordon, 1980). As economic expansions take over which affects the interpersonal relationship within the community, contestation for economic benefits becomes competitive, and the attitude among the locals is distorted. In Ziro it is during the events like Music festival that the tourist flow is at its peak. Many youths or their parents as stall or camp owners at times are engaged in assisting the needs of the tourists. Even when not as stall owners but also as consumers of the event, the day-to-day activities of the Apatanis are altered during this season.

## 2) Cultural Clashes

According to Sharpley (1994), a society's values, norms, and way of life represent the true nature of culture. Clashes between two cultures take place when there are differences in culture, lifestyles, languages, religion, levels of prosperity, and values between tourists and the local community (Marzuki, 2011). This causes resentment either among the locals or the tourists. In the city of Shenzhen, South China conflicts between tourists and the local community are often witnessed (Gjerald, 2005). KwaZulu-Natal, one of South Africa's provinces known for its scenic beauty, and natural landscape has turned into an area where criminal activity is one of the biggest threats in hindering tourism growth (Linda and Nzama, 2020). Crime not only discourages tourists from visiting a destination but also creates negative word-of-mouth which is spread easily when tourists leave the area.

Additionally, sometimes these encounters between locals and tourists results in acculturation, a process of adjustment and adaption (Ebin et al., 2001). As Pandey et al. (1995) studies the impact of tourism in Pokhara-Ghandruk a Nepali community which shows a changing trend among the youths pattern. For example, more preference for Western clothing rather than traditional attire, raising alcohol consumption, organizing dinner parties, etc. Likewise, change in the lifestyles of the youths of Ziro Valley is also observed, ranging from western outfits, hair colour, joining discos and night bars, and more preference for modern outfits. The local *Tanii Abi* (traditional skirt) and *Tarii* (tops) can only be seen worn on certain occasions that too with some modification. For such changes, Pandey et al. (1995) points out that factor such as modernization, westernization, and influence from cinemas are also responsible, but it is mainly tourism that influences these social changes (Pandey et al., 1995). Today with easy access to the internet and social media also play a major role due to which Instagram influencers, K-pop idols, etc. can influence youths in many ways. Whatsoever, ultimately it is the local culture that is affected by changes in local habits, behaviours, and traditional values (Gjerald, 2005).

### **3) Physical impact**

Another major impact that the tourism sector has is on its natural resources and physical infrastructures. Tourism directly or indirectly puts pressure on the existing natural resources which leads to environmental degradation. Places that are popularly known for tourism are often seen to have increased concrete structures, and automatically there is a rise in property cost. Thus overcrowding, noise, the issue of littering, and traffic congestion are some other physical impacts of tourism that cause resentment in the destination area (Marzuki, 2011; Sharma et al., 2008). Thus, we can say tourism spurs urbanization (Mckean, 1976).

Over the years Ziro Valley has also seen some major changes in its physical setting as a product of urbanization (Hana, 2019). Construction of roads can be seen but these roads are constructed over the paddy fields which is the main source of livelihood for Apatanis. Airlines are connected however the landing ground for the purpose has used up large agricultural land (Hana, 2019). Seeh Lake, and Siikhe Lake, two artificial lakes of Ziro Valley which is a delight in the eyes of tourists as well as locals is an example of how the land that was once used for agricultural purpose is now commercialized. On one hand, there is increasing infrastructural development in the region but on the other hand, it has damaged the natural landscape. Ziro Valley, once known for its natural beauty is now under constant construction and deforestation, losing its flora and fauna. Along with tourism, other factors are also responsible for such change which needs more insight.

Mussoorie, is another example, a place well-known for its mountainous tourist destination in India that has been negatively impacted in its physical environment due to tourism. Traffic congestion, an issue with solid waste management, air pollution, unavailability of proper infrastructure, and water scarcity are prevalent, especially during tourist visits (Sundriyal et al., 2018).

### **4) Ethical issues**

Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between tourism and crime rate (Recher & Rubil 2020; Phori, 2018; Nkama, 2015). Tourism-oriented prostitution, public alcoholism, an increase in the crime rate, and use of substance abuse; are some of the ethical issues

that rise with the growth of the tourism industry (Marzuki, 2011; Sharma et al., 2008).

A few examples of such influences are in the north of Hong Kong, South China a city named Shenzhen, which has economically benefitted from tourism has also witnessed a rise in prostitution and crime rate (Ming Pao Daily 20 October 2000, cited in Le, 2002). One of the reasons is disproportionate economic gains among the members as not every individual has an equal opportunity to obtain benefits from the tourist (Gjerald, 2005). In Ziro Valley substance abuse among youths is on the rise. Prostitution which was uncommon is slowly coming under highlight. Public alcoholism is a much-known phenomenon these days. But solely blaming the tourism industry needs proper investigation.

### **5) Commercialization or Commodification of Culture**

Adding a fifth point to this category is the commercialization or commodification of culture. Tourism often leads to the commodification of cultures. Arts, crafts, performances, and rituals that were once created for local consumption are now exploited as it shifts toward the tourism market (Cohen, 1988). 'The Tourist' a book published in 1976 by Dean MacCannell discusses the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and issues of commodification of authentic cultures. He suggests the concept of 'staged authenticity' in his study, an explanation of how authentic events and cultural forms are converted into artificial ones to make them more attractive in the eyes of tourists.

A case study on Balinese dance performances by Barker et al.'s (2006) reflects a loss of authenticity due to the commodification of traditional rituals. In an attempt to make the dance form more attractive among tourists, the traditional Balinese dance which carries social, political, and religious value for its people is shortened which is more acceptable among the tourists. Traditional Tibetan funeral in China is another increasing event known as a tourist attraction. Without any cultural knowledge of the ritual, Tibetan funeral is seen as an exotic custom leading to conflicts between the local community and tourists (Hinch and Li, 1994). Thus, commercialization or commodification of culture not only deteriorates the original authentic culture



of the locals but also has the potential to cause resentment between hosts and guests.

Unlike Balinese dance performances and traditional Tibetan funeral of China, Ziro Valley has not witnessed such commodification of their traditional rituals. But artifacts like key chains dolls in the form of traditional apatani men wearing *Piiding* (hair knot at the front) or women wearing *Tanii Abi-Tarii* (traditional skirt and top), holding *Yagii* (bamboo basket) are commonly observed these days. Though this encourages the creative mind of the society, an extreme form of commercial relationship between locals and tourists reduces the authentic traditional form of hospitality, arts, culture, and crafts into a mere commercial transaction (Cohen, 1988).

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, the social impact of tourism in Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh is discussed through the existing literature from around the world. The review of this literature suggests that the tourism industry, on the one hand, has a positive socioeconomic impact on society, as it increases employment opportunities, individual income, and the distribution of benefits, development, and government revenue. This is also true for Ziro Valley, tourism has to some extent increased the employment opportunity for the Apatanis with new constructions of cafes, homestays, hotels, etc., contributing to higher living standards for its people. Community solidarity, building tolerance towards different cultures, and skill development are some other positive impacts of tourism in the Valley. However, tourism also has negative impacts that cannot be ignored. As Smith (1989) points out, the traditional way of living is altered due to tourism development. Similar is the case for Apatanis in Ziro Valley where certain lands that were used for agriculture or other indigenous purpose are now gradually turned into tourist attractions, for example, Seeh Lake, and Siikhe Lake. Though there seems to be development in infrastructure such as roads, shopping malls, and airlines connectivity, etc., noise pollution, littering, and overall pressure on the environment is an areas of major concern. Moreover, there are other factors along with tourism that bring these social changes which require an in-depth study.

Furthermore, the social impact of tourism as mentioned in the existing literature for other cities and countries may not be prominent in the case of Ziro Valley as the Valley promotes ecotourism. But it is to be considered that societies with development of tourism industry, is obvious to witness social, economic and cultural changes. There are some studies on how tourism has immense pressure on the environment, as well as on the cultural landscape of the local people. Therefore, various stakeholders, administrative and executive officials need to be careful while planning tourism-related policies for the region. Lastly, local people, as suggested by Besculide et al. (2006) should be involved in broad-based education and awareness campaigns which can be a step towards understanding the industry in general and will support them to get benefits from this sector. Thus, it is crucial to remember that what may seem to be a benefit for one group, might be a cost to another in a society.

## REFERENCES

1. Barker, T., Putra, D., & Wiranatha, A. (2006). Authenticity and commodification of Balinese dance performances. *Cultural tourism in a changing world*, 215.
2. Besculides, A., Lee, M. E., & McCormick, P. J. (2002). Residents' perceptions of the cultural benefits of tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 29(2), 303-319.
3. Bhattacharya, P. (2008). Tourism development in Northeast India: Changing recreational demand, developmental challenges and issues associated with sustainability. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 32(1), 143-161.
4. Castillo-Villar, F. R., & Merlo-Simoni, G. (2022). Locals' perspectives on the role of tourism in the preservation of a diaspora language: The case of Veneto in Mexico. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 20(4), 516-529.
5. Census of India (2011). *Arunachal Pradesh Population*.  
[https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/187/download/398/DH\\_2011\\_1208\\_PART\\_B\\_DCHB\\_UPPER\\_SIANG.pdf](https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/187/download/398/DH_2011_1208_PART_B_DCHB_UPPER_SIANG.pdf)

6. Choudhury, S., Pant, R. M., Chatterjee, S., & Nanding, A. (2016). Destination Branding of Ziro Through Potentiality of Bio-tourism. *Bioprospecting of Indigenous Bioresources of North-East India*, 329-337.
7. Cohen, E. (1984). The sociology of tourism: approaches, issues, and findings. *Annual review of sociology*, 10(1), 373-392.
8. Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 15(3), 371-386.
9. Crandall, L. (1987). The social impact of tourism on developing regions and its measurement. *The social impact of tourism on developing regions and its measurement.*, 373-383.
10. Deery, M., Jago, L., & Fredline, L. (2005). A framework for the development of social and socioeconomic indicators for sustainable tourism in communities. *Tourism Review International*, 9(1), 69-77.
11. Department of Tourism (2022), Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Unpublished work.
12. Ebin, V. J., Sneed, C. D., Morisky, D. E., Rotheram-Borus, M. J., Magnusson, A. M., & Malotte, C. K. (2001). Acculturation and interrelationships between problem and health-promoting behaviors among Latino adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 28(1), 62-72.
13. Forest Survey of India, State of Forest Report (2011), Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India, New Delhi.
14. Gjerald, O. (2005). Sociocultural impacts of tourism: A case study from Norway. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 3(1), 36-58.
15. Gnanapala, W. A., & Sandaruwani, J. A. R. C. (2016). Socio-economic impacts of tourism development and their implications on local communities. *International journal of economics and business administration*, 2(5), 59-67.
16. Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. (2014). *The geography of tourism and recreation: Environment, place and space*. Routledge.
17. Hana, P. (2019). Environmental change due to Urbanization in Ziro Valley. *International Journal of*

- Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, 7(05), 427-434.
18. Hinch, T. D., & Li, Y. (1994). Developing cultural tourism in China: Opportunities and challenges. In *Reducing the Barriers to International Tourism* (pp. 80-87). The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Hong Kong.
  19. Jaafar, M., Rasoolimanesh, S. M., & Ismail, S. (2017). Perceived sociocultural impacts of tourism and community participation: A case study of Langkawi Island. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(2), 123-134.
  20. Jackson, L. A. (2008). Residents' perceptions of the impacts of special event tourism. *Journal of Place Management and development*.
  21. Jordan, J. W. (1980). The summer people and the natives some effects of tourism in a Vermont vacation village. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 7(1), 34-55.
  22. Li, Y. (2002). The impact of tourism in China on local communities. *Asian Studies Review*, 26(4), 471-486.
  23. Linda, N., & Nzama, A. T. (2020). Tourism crime, safety and security issues: The case of a local South African municipality. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 9(3), 372-381.
  24. Lusetyowati, T. (2015). Preservation and conservation through cultural heritage tourism. Case study: Musi Riverside Palembang. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 184, 401-406.
  25. MacCannell, D. (1976). *The tourist. A new theory of the leisure class*. New York: Schocken Books.
  26. Mariano, K. (2022, May 25). Top 10 countries that rely on tourism the most. *Travel Daily*. <https://www.traveldailymedia.com/countries-that-rely-on-tourism-the-most/>
  27. Marzuki, A. (2011). Resident attitudes towards impacts from tourism development in Langkawi Islands, Malaysia. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 12(T&H), 25-34.
  28. McKean, P. F. (1976). Tourism, culture change, and culture conservation in Bali. *Changing identities in modern Southeast Asia*, 237-248.

29. Milman, A., & Pizam, A. (1988). Social impacts of tourism on central Florida. *Annals of tourism research*, 15(2), 191-204.
30. Mize, T., Kanwal, K. S., Rangini, N., Yama, L., Patuk, O., & Lodhi, M. S. The Current Development of Ecotourism in Ziro Valley and its significance in Arunachal Pradesh, India.
31. Nayomi, G., & Gnanapala, W. A. (2015). Socio-economic impacts on local community through tourism development with special reference to Heritage Kandalama. *Tourism, Leisure and Global Change*, 2(1), 57-73.
32. Nkama, I. (2015). Lessons for South Africa: How Zambia prevented xenophobia. *City Press*.
33. Pandey, R. N., Chettri, P., Kunwar, R. R., & Ghimire, G. (1995). Case study on the effects of tourism on culture and the environment: Nepal; Chitwan-Sauraha and Pokhara-Ghandruk. *RACAP Ser. Cult. Tourism Asia*, 4, 66.
34. Patowary, B., & Borgohain, P. (2016). Role of Ngos in Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case Study of Ngunu Ziro of Arunachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 6(1), 59-69.
35. Patowary, B., & Borgohain, P. (2017). Community participation in sustainable tourism development in ziro valley of Arunachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 7(6), 193-203.
36. Phori, M. M. (2018). *Analysis of the perceptions of crime against tourists in Florida road, Durban* (Doctoral dissertation).
37. Ramos, H., Stoddart, M. C., & Chafe, D. (2016). Assessing the tangible and intangible benefits of tourism: Perceptions of economic, social, and cultural impacts in Labrador's Battle Harbour Historic District. *Island Studies Journal*, 11(1).
38. Recher, V., & Rubil, I. (2020). More tourism, more crime: Evidence from Croatia. *Social Indicators Research*, 147, 651-675.
39. Shahzalal, M. (2016). Positive and negative impacts of tourism on culture: A critical review of examples from the contemporary literature. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports*, 20, 30-35.

## Transition and Development of Educational Scenario at Ziro Valley: A Critical Study

Liza Mihin

### Introduction

India's 'Land of Dawn Lit Mountain' Arunachal Pradesh was a hidden and isolated land from the ancient and medieval period till the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century from the rest of the country. It is a land of snow-capped high mountains, deep gorges, green valleys, and plateaus with turbulent mighty rivers. This land is rich in flora and fauna with rare orchids. This land is inhabited by various tribal people. The state population is divided into 26 primary tribes and further into a number of sub-tribes belonging to indomongoloid racial stock. The Apatani or Tanw one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are living at Ziro, the headquarters of the Lower Subansiri district. The total population is around 60,000. Half of the population is scattered throughout the territory of Arunachal Pradesh and other states to earn their livelihood. In the case of the origin of the Apatani tribe, there are no literacy sources or evidence found anywhere. However, there are certain myths, traditional folktales, and priestly versions that are somewhat different from village to village. *According to the belief of the Apatanis the original place of the Apatanis was 'iipyolembyan' (probably Mongolia).* (Mihin Kainng 2015)

The Apatanis believe in Donyipiilo, the sun, and the moon as their deities. They also believe in various divide spirits that exist in the earth and the universe. They perform various rites and rituals to free themselves from various ailments. Thus, people believe in God and do good work in society. The Apatanis are industries by nature and are well known for the systematic and scientific method of their agriculture work, their wet paddy cum fish cultivation system, and agriculture system are extensive even without the use of any farm animals or machines. In the early time, they never depend upon others for food and clothes. They produced sufficient food crops. This tribe has a distinct civilization with systematic land use practices and rich traditional ecological knowledge of natural resources management and conservation, acquired over the

centuries through informal experimentation. This has made Ziro Valley a good example of a living culture landscaped where man and environment have harmoniously existed together in a state of interdependence even through changing times, such co-existence being nature by the traditional customs and spiritual belief system.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the transition of the education system among Apatani in Ziro Valley.
2. To study the present developmental scenario of educational institutions in Ziro Valley.

### **Methodology:**

This research paper is a form of descriptive study in analysing the transition and development of the education scenario among the Apatani tribe in Ziro valley in Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Mode of Data Collection:**

The present study is mainly based on collected from secondary sources such as published books, journals, Government reports, articles, and newspapers, websites to facilitate this study.

### **Universe of the study:**

The universe of the study is the Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Objective:1 The Transition of the Education system among Apatani in Ziro Valley.**

In the early time in the Apatani Valley, the formal system of education was completely absent and unknown to the people, only the home and social institutions were the sources of learning in informal ways through experiences and transmission. They could go to the forest for hunting animals and birds. They also depend on the forest for firewood, and timber, to review the demarcation boundary, and for ceremonial purposes. While doing so all these activities, they would normally take their children along with them so that it may enable the children to learn art and nature. The parents and children go to agriculture fields, kitchen gardens, rivers for fishing, house construction, and

others so that children were involved in these works and learn the methods and art of works. Besides Naturalism, the imparted education was also there on the preparation of art and craft. Father, who was an expert in art and crafts, taught their children about the preparation of various arts and crafts with different designs. They make various types of crafts like *Barju*, *Yagii*, *Yadin*, *Yoh Pater*, *Elyo Hubyu*, *Lecha*, *Leera*, and *Byopa*. They make handicrafts for themselves and exchange the crafts for other food crops. Mother also taught their female child about the weaving of clothes and putting different designs known as *Ami-Agung* in Apatani and different traditional dresses like *Bilan- Abi*, *Nijji- Abi*, *Kente Tarii*, *Aser- Tarii*, *Jilya*, *Tongo Pulye*, and *Pyamin Pulye*. They also learn the preparation of wine, food, and other eatable items at home. Therefore, there is a saying in Apatani '' *Anii Kagii Pami Sonyo*, *Aba Kagii Riibii Sonyo*'' that means like father like son and like mother like daughter (Kaning, 2015, p. 180). It connotes that a male child learns knowledge and ideas from his father and he is as intelligent as his father. The female child learns knowledge and ability from her mother she will be an expert like her mother. Moreover, the male child also learns spiritual education from their father or priest. That is called *Miji-Migung*. The children took a keen interest to learn *Miji- Migung* because it is concerned with Gods, Satan, and the creation of the universe and living on the earth. The children took a keen interest in *Miji- Migung*, especially in **Murung** and **Myoko** festivals. During the occasion of the festivals, the people compete with one another in *Miji- Migung* which was popularly known as *Ayu*.

But all these indigenous systems of education gradually change along with the change with time and the introduction of the modern education system in the Apatani valley. The actual opening era of education came in the state after India became Independent in 1947. The process of development was slow but steady because of many unfavorable factors like inaccessibility, lack of interest in administration, illiteracy, ignorance of the local people, lack of communication, and lack of many other factors.

For the time, the Government had opened one primary school at Dutta Papii in the year 1948-49. Mr. Prabhat Sakia was posted as a teacher in the school, who mobilized learners from villages and taught them modern



education. unfortunately, the newly started school was gutted by fire on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1949. It was reopened in 1950. In 1950 another primary school. In 1951 another primary school was opened at old Ziro. In 1953 four more schools were opened in **Hong, Hari, and Hija** villages. Each school was also attached by an Apatani youth to assist them in mobilizing the children from the village and to teach them properly. Later on, a need was raised to impart higher education to those students who passed the primary standard. Therefore, one common middle standard school was opened at **Sululya** by closing down the Ziro primary school, which was opened in 1951. The students who had passed from **Hong, Hari, Bula, and Hija** Schools were admitted to **Sululya** middle school. The students who passed the middle standard were sent to high secondary school, **Doimukh** for matriculation. As the number of students increased more and more, one school having higher standards required. Thus, the government established one higher secondary school at ziro in 1964. Henceforth, the middle-standard passed students were not sent to **Doimukh**. They were admitted to the higher secondary school located within the ziro valley. Students were disciplined, punctual, regular, honest, and sound behavior except for a few students.

### **Objective: 2 Present developmental scenario of educational institutions in Ziro Valley**

Now, there is a mushroom growth of government and private schools in the Apatani Valley. The present literacy rate of Ziro City is **85.52%** higher than the state average of **65.38%**. Male literacy is around 89.81% while the female literacy rate is **81.26%**. There are more than 37 numbers of private schools registered, one university, one private Degree college St. Clarat College, ziro, and one B.Ed college M.T.M B.Ed College Ziro (NCTC recognized), and 44 numbers of government schools presently providing education in the valley with 01 Kendriya Vidyalyaya Ziro.

**Table: 1 List of Private Educational Institutions in Ziro-I**

Private Educational Institutions in Ziro-I	
1.	School Nime Ashram, Co-education, high secondary (old Ziro), Ziro-I
2.	Frontier School Co-education, High secondary, (Hapoli) Ziro-I
3.	ABYSS Institute of Science Co- education Higher Secondary (Hapoli) Ziro-I
4.	Hill Queen Education institution, secondary, Higher secondary Ziro-I (Hapoli)
5.	Don Bosco School, Co-education Secondary (Hapoli) , Ziro-I
6.	Padi Lailang Memorial School, Co- education secondary, (Hapoli) Ziro-I
7.	Blue Pine Residential English School, secondary (Hapoli), Ziro-I
8.	Ziro Valley School, Co- education, secondary, Lempia, Ziro- I
9.	VKV school Dobi Co- education, secondary, Dobi, (Hapoli) Ziro-I
10.	Love Dale Resl. School Co-education, secondary, (Hapoli), Ziro-I
11.	Midland Education Centre Co- education, secondary, Dutta, Ziro-I
12.	School, Elite Education Co- Education, secondary (Hapoli), Ziro-I
13.	Woodland, school Hapoli co-education, secondary, Ziro-I
14.	Bumber Kids World co-education, Upper Primary (Hijja) Ziro-I
15.	Arunachal Public School co-education, Upper Primary (Hapoli) Ziro-I
16.	Green Valley Resdl School co-education, Upper Primary (Hapoli) Ziro-I
17.	High Land School, Ziro co-education, Upper Primary, old Ziro, Ziro-I
18.	Himi Miji Mission school, old Ziro, co-education, upper Primary, old Ziro, Ziro-I
19.	School, Little Angle, Co-education, Upper Primary Hapoli, Ziro-I

20.	Abotani Vidya Niketan, Co-education, Upper primary Old Ziro, Ziro-I
21.	Sky Lark Residential School, Co- education, Upper Primary, (Hapoli), Ziro-I
22.	Dolphin Public School, co-education, Upper Primary, (Hapoli), Ziro-I
23.	Love shore school Hapoli, co-education, Upper Primary (Hapoli), Ziro-I
24.	National Public School, Hapoli Co- education, Upper Primary (Hapoli), Ziro-I
25.	Unya Academy School, Bula Co- education, Upper Primary (Bulla), Ziro-I
26.	Vidya Bhawan School Co- education, Upper Primary Ziro, Ziro-I
27.	Kidzee School, Ziro Co- education, Primary (Hapoli). Ziro-I
28.	Royal Blue Fine Academy Co- education, Primary (Nenchalyang), Ziro-I
29.	Punyo Tamer Memorial school, Hong co- education, Primary (Hong), Ziro-I
30.	Kids Quest School, Ziro-I
31.	Hao-Polyang, Academic, Ziro-I
32.	Puna Rinyo Foundation School, Ziro-I
33.	Midland Academy of Integrated Studies, Ziro-I
34.	St. Xavier School, Ziro-I
35.	Christian English School, Ziro-I
36.	A.T Public School, Ziro-I
37.	Little High Dream school, Ziro-I

Sources: [www.studyapt.com](http://www.studyapt.com)

**Table:2 List of Government School and Kendra Vidhyala School in Ziro-I**

1.	Government Higher Secondary School Ziro
2.	Government Higher Secondary School Hija
3.	Government Secondary School Hapoli
4.	Government Gandhi Secondary School Hapoli
5.	Government Secondary School Hill-Top
6.	Government Secondary School Tajang
7.	Government Secondary School Hari.
8.	Government Middle School Pari Ami
9.	Government Middle School Sibey
10.	Government Middle School Bulla

11.	Government Middle School Duyu
12.	Government Middle School Bubu Ago
13.	Government Middle School Bolya
14.	Government Middle School Old Ziro
15.	Government Middle School, Kudung Barang
16.	Government Primary School Kardo
17.	Government School, Duku-II
18.	Government Primary School SSB gate
19.	Government Primary School Pai gate
20.	Government Primary School Polang Subu
21.	Government School Lal. BDR. Shastri
22.	Government School, Nani
23.	Government School, Kuru Nenkar
24.	Government School Pine Groove
25.	Government School, Paking Halyang
26.	Government Primary School Hari
27.	Government Primary School, Lempia Ayo
28.	Government School, Lod subu
29.	Government Primary School Pato
30.	Government Primary School Reru
31.	Government Primary School Sikhe
32.	Government Primary School Dinkhu
33.	Government Primary School Subu-II
34.	Government Primary School Miya, old ziro
35.	Government Primary School Ziro-III
36.	Government Primary School Buggyang subu
37.	Government Primary School, Dutta-II
38.	Government Primary School Jama putu
39.	Government Primary School, Pakerchi
40.	Government primary School, Tadu Pengu
41.	Government Primary School, Taru-kago
42.	Community School, Kudung Barang
43.	Community School Miya
44.	Community school old Ziro
45.	Kendriya Vidyalaya Ziro

Sources: [www.StudyApt.com](http://www.StudyApt.com) and [UDISE.govt.in](http://UDISE.govt.in)

**Table:3 List of University Level Institution/Private Degree College/Professional Colleges in Ziro-I**

Sl. No.	University Institution	Level	Private Degree Colleges/Professional Colleges
1.	Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology and Medical Sciences, Ziro		St. Claret College, Ziro, Lower Subansiri Distt.
2.			M.T.M B. Ed. College, Ziro.

*Sources: Basic Information on Higher and Technical Education Published by Directorate of Higher and Technical Education (201-19)*

### **Conclusion**

Although the number of students is increasing along with the increasing number of schools yet the quality of the government-run school has to improve in infrastructure and in qualitative achievement. However, privately run schools and colleges maintain high standards, in private schools, sufficient infrastructure facilities are provided.

The state of Arunachal Pradesh still requires a lot of planning and budgeting for the rapid development of education so as to cope with the mainstream of India. The policy maker of education should give more emphasis on quality education along with quantity improvement. To achieve success, the remedial will be in the form of financial assistance to poor parents, supplying free meals, uniforms, and scholarships, reducing the dependency on children for domestic and agricultural work, educating the parents and guardians, imposing penalties on those parents who do not send their children to schools, appointing trained efficient and dedicated teacher and improving school curriculum by adopting the excellent and attractive method of teaching, etc. it is also noted many youths of the Aratani's have forgotten their own culture, tradition, practices, and customs. Hence, it is left to society to re-think and act for the smooth and sound transition of real education towards the golden line. Last but not the least, I feel that purposeful research and may further affect all round progress and development in order to grow literacy and development in the field of education in Ziro valley in Apatani plateau in Arunachal Pradesh.

## References

1. Begi Joram (2007), *Education in Arunachal Pradesh since 1947 constraints, opportunities Initiatives and Needs*, A Mittal Publication, New Delhi (India)
2. *Basic Information on Higher & Technical Education Arunachal Pradesh (2018-19)*, published by Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, Department of Education Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.
3. Kani, T (1993), '*Advancing Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh*', Published by Purbadesh Mudan, Rehabari, Guwahati, Assam.
4. Kaning Mihin (2015), '*The Rising Culture of the Apatanis*' second edition 2015 Published by M/S Himalaya Publisher and Distributers, Itanagar Arunachal Pradesh. Page; 132-143.
5. Varrier Elwin (1957), *A Philosophy for NEFA*
6. [www.StudyApt.com](http://www.StudyApt.com) and [UDISE.govt.in](http://UDISE.govt.in) Directorate of School Education, Arunachal Pradesh
7. [www.studyapt.com](http://www.studyapt.com) (search private schools in Ziro Arunachal Pradesh).

## Celebrating the Birth of new Baby in Apatani

Nada Pugang

The essence of Celebrating or welcoming a new baby to the family is a norm everywhere in the world, but how it is celebrated is unique to tribe, society, and the place where one belongs. The customs that are associated with ceremonies are also different throughout the world.

In the world of Tanw society as well, the birth of a new baby is celebrated with much fanfare coupled with customs that are connected with the celebration, which are socio-religious in nature. Here, in this small write up we shall try to understand the Nwpwh Apiñ Ceremony as celebrated by the Apatani

In the Traditional Tanw family, before the expecting mother goes to labor, the Nyibu (Priest) is summoned to perform a special prayer called “Agoh Pilya”<sup>19</sup> to see if there is any need for rituals to be performed. And after the baby is given birth successfully “Ura Chantuñ”<sup>20</sup> is performed for the wellbeing of the mother and the new born baby. The priest usually offers sacrifice to the benevolent god and goddess with a Chicken and Eggs as the case may be.

In the olden days when the medical facility was not there then an expert midwife (who was called Khwnw Pinw) is called to help the expecting mother give birth safely. When the baby is born safely, as per the tradition, the baby is given a name in consultation with the parent of the baby. Though, there are no strict rules for naming the new-born baby, usually the Ancestors name is given, but the practice is plural in nature. As per the tradition midwife is offered with a Bacon (Soyu) as a gratitude from the family for the help she has rendered for the safe birth of the baby.

After the birth of the baby, for the next nine days the mother is prohibited from doing any work that includes the household chores, so in this taboo period all the household chores are taken care of by the husband or any

---

<sup>19</sup> A prayer that is performed to invoke the benevolent gods and goddess for blessing and guidance from external omens.

<sup>20</sup> A prayer that is performed to invoke the benevolent gods and goddess that dwells with family for blessing and guidance.

other family members. Meantime the husband is also debarred from performing any outdoor physical activities, especially those relating to artistic skills, as it was believed in the olden days that the shape that is created by the husband may be replicated into the child's body as deformative, it is called as "Mwhonwh" in Apatani, hence the custom was to prohibit such skill work during this period

### **Preparation of Nwpwh Apiñ Ceremony:**

If the mother and the baby is in good health, then the family plans for the Nwpwh Apiñ (a ceremonial party to welcome a new born baby). The expecting parents of the new baby usually keep a sizable amount of "Yo Aso"<sup>21</sup> (Pork Bacon) for the Nwpwh Apiñ day. In the olden days the Nwpwh Apiñ Celebration was a modest affair, where the immediate neighbours, usually the female elders, were called to be part of the happy moments.

Apart from the Bacon that is kept in ready position, the family members prepares Yormw<sup>22</sup> of different combinations, like ngwi (fish), Hikhu/ Hyi (Bamboo shoot), Tanyi (Corn), Yorkhoñ (wild pepper), Peron (Bean), Pilah-Ponwh Teroh and so forth. A day before the Nwpwh Apiñ celebration the preparation of meat is done, where the meat preferably beef meat is cooked, two pieces of meat each for the new baby as well as for the mother is first reserved and kept aside. Bacon too is cut into small pieces approximately the size of 4 inch (length and breadth), from here as well a piece each for the new baby as well as for the mother is kept as the first receiver of the gift.

Other than the preparation of eateries the family members make a list of the probable guests for the Nwpwh Apiñ ceremony, in the olden days only the immediate neighbours of the same clan were usually invited. But in the present practice, all the relatives, including neighbours are invited.

### **Twpya<sup>23</sup> Ceremony**

Apart from the Nwpwh Apiñ ceremony, another important practice that is solemnized is the custom of

---

<sup>21</sup> It is a seasoned pork skin devoid of any bones.

<sup>22</sup> Dried chilli powder

<sup>23</sup> it is cotton thread of brown colour



"Twpya " ceremony. The maternal and paternal uncles' families, come with Twpya tanoh (thread) adorn with riteh<sup>24</sup>, which can be performed on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or the 9<sup>th</sup> day from the date of birth of the child. As stated, on the designated day the clan members of the maternal and paternal uncles would come to bless the baby with Twpya, which is considered as sacred thread by the Apatani community.

It is custom for Ayo (maternal grandparent of the child) to give Hwjan Maji (Tibetan Bell) and Hwjan Lwha (Ceremonial basket made of Cane) which was expected to be made by Adah (who are married to a single man or woman in a lifetime), and finally a pork of size approximately 4 inch in breadth and 24 inch in length is cooked and taken with the other material as mentioned above on the third day, preferably early morning.

As per the tradition, again on the 9<sup>th</sup> day, Ayo (maternal grandmother of the Child), pays visits for the second time, this time as a gift, cooked rice and meat is taken along with her.

### **Change and Continuity:**

With time Social and customary practice are undergoing inevitable transformation due to internal and external factors, many changes can be attributed to the introduction of Modern facilities like the advent of modern education, the rise of medical facilities, inroad of foreign religions and the related practices, influence of other cultures and also with the rise of economic prosperity.

With the rise of awareness through education and the extension of health facilities the need for indigenous Shaman and midwifery is vanishing, in their place the modern medical practitioners are taking over, in the same time foreign religion also to some extent has led to the sidelining of the indigenous Shaman.

Though traditionally the Nwpwh Apiñ ceremony used to be localized affairs with few elders or neighbours as an invitee, has now turned into an extravagant event with invitees running into hundreds and thousands. In recent time, feminist movement of Apatani the AWAZ (Apatani Women Association Ziro) has sought to limit the number of

---

<sup>24</sup> ornamental beads which has a local value

guest and also the eateries that is offered in the celebration with a view to make the ceremony more original and economical so that every section of the society can organise the Nwpwh Apiñ ceremony without any hiccups. Moreover, the community organisation of the different villages of the Tanw country has also come up with the Dituñ - Potuñ (rules) for organising the Nwpwh Apiñ ceremony in order to limit and make the celebration more original.

Though the changes can be seen in the way the celebration is conducted or organised but the essence of conducting Nwpwh Apiñ is still very much relevant to the Tanw Society, which can be well gauged from the enthusiasm with which it is celebrated, where ever the Tanw people's lives. Another important reason why this is relevant is because of the Twpya ceremony where the family lineage is endorsed. Hence, it can be safely concluded that the Nwpwh Apiñ ceremony is still relevant.

## **An analysis of personal financial planning and financial Education among college and university students of Ziro**

Tallo Radha

### **Introduction**

Financial literacy and financial education are often used and vice versa. The ability to control your personal finances is becoming increasingly important in today's world. People need to organize a long-term business for retirement and children's education. In addition, you should choose a short-term reserve and borrow large amounts of money such as vacation loans, house down payments, and car down payments. We also need to control treatment and life protection needs. Financial literacy is emotional, personal, social, economic and labour success. Knowledge of financial issues makes a difference. People respond and make simple choices on most occasions that are vital indeed for the collection of wealth. Financial literacy is the capacity of understanding, analysing, translating and utilizing money-related things for existence. The requirements for financial education are expanding from time to time due to its importance in financial choice making. Ziro may be a youthful valley, so it is imperative to study in the event that the more youthful era, particularly students who have long-standing time working, have the essential financial knowledge.

### **Objective of the study:**

- To measure the financial literacy among college and university students in Ziro Valley
- To determine the ways through which students expect to learn or improve their financial knowledge.
- To examine how a student's knowledge influences his/her opinions and decisions on personal financial issues.

## Literature Review

**Capuano, A., & Ramsay, I. (2011)**<sup>25</sup> did a project in Australia on Financial Literacy. According to them, financially literate consumers can have more investment funds, they can effectively oversee obligations, they can be practical with respect to their future objectives, they can be more fiscally certain, can be more dynamic in money-related markets, they can select more carefully monetary items that are appropriate to their needs, they can arrange their funds, budget and know how to be monetarily productive. They have also expressed that, in a way, fiscally proficient individuals advantage the budgetary framework and economy as well. They can offer assistance in accomplishing the target for money related incorporation within the economy. Fiscally proficient individuals can be able to get money-related arrangements surrounded by any government.

**Zakaria, R. et al. Al (2012)**<sup>26</sup> attempted to find the factors that influence the financial situation or financial well-being of Malaysians. This study was conducted in the Klang Valley region of Malaysia. Data was collected using the urban household survey method and analyzed using a structural equation model. This study found that positive financial behaviour is the most important factor in good financial health. Also, financial behaviour is closely related to good financial knowledge or financial literacy. The paper shows that respondents' financial well-being is related to their financial literacy.

Altaf N. (2014)<sup>27</sup> did a study on financial knowledge of students studying at Central Kashmir University. The sample size was 100 students from various master's programs. Primary data were collected using a structured

---

<sup>25</sup> Capuano, A., & Ramsay, I. (2011). What causes suboptimal financial behaviour? An exploration of financial literacy, social influences and behavioural economics.

<sup>26</sup> Zakaria, R. H., Jaafar, N. I. M., & Marican, S. (2012). Financial behavior and financial position: A structural equation modelling approach. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 12(10), 1396-1402.

<sup>27</sup> Altaf, N. (2014). Measuring the level of financial literacy among management graduates. *Abhinav National Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*, 3(6).

questionnaire designed as a balanced 5-point Likert scale. Financial literacy was assessed in four parts. The first part measures perceptions of definitions and theories, the second part measures respondents' ability to manage their personal finances, the third part measures the limits of financial literacy, and the fourth part measures financial literacy. Some measure how respondents find ways to improve their financial literacy. Analysis methods are used to analyze data. The results show that students do not have a satisfactory level of financial literacy.

**Yevgeny et al. (2016)**<sup>28</sup> evaluated the effects of two components of financial literacy - financial knowledge and financial decision-making behaviour - among Israelis. The Study enrolled 501 Israelis by email from a database of people registered on the iPanel online survey site. After accounting for the numerous demographic and behavioural variables and their implications, the findings reveal that the behaviours of looking for financial information and monitoring household costs are positively connected with retirement literacy. Financial literacy about retirement savings grows with an individual's proclivity to painstakingly review bills and monthly account statements, and it has been discovered that financial competence and higher degrees of retirement literacy are unrelated, with a significant difference between the two.

**Ajay Singh and Rahul Sharma (2016)**<sup>29</sup> studied financial literacy and its impact on: Investors for effective financial planning for the future. Survey Respondents 150 MCD A school teacher in Delhi area. Data was examined using descriptive statistics, ranks. Order and chi-square tests to test the influence of financial literacy and investment attributes actions. Research shows that perception has an

---

<sup>28</sup> Yevgeny Mugeran Adi Meir, Yevgeny Mugeran, Orly Sad (2016), A study on financial literacy and retirement planning: Evidence from Israel, *Israel Economic Review* ,14(1), 75-95.

<sup>29</sup> Ajay Singh Dr. Rahul Sharma (2016), Financial Literacy & its impact on Investment Behaviour for Effective Financial Planning , *International Journal of Research in Finance and Marketing* 6(8), 50-63.

impact. Financial investment products according to level of knowledge, level of interest, and level plays a very important role in making investment decisions about Certain Financial Instruments.

After reviewing the national and international literature, it is obvious that many researchers have attempted to explore financial literacy using diverse combinations of elements that influence it. It is clear to us that there are few studies in North-east India, and even fewer that have taken into account students, particularly at the college and university levels.

### **Research Methodology**

Participants in this study were college & university students, 18-35 years of age, recruited as a convenience sample from Indira Gandhi TMS University and St. Claret College of Ziro Valley. One thousand twenty-four students were invited to complete surveys with 452 students responding for an overall response rate of 43%. Out of 1,024 students invited, 478 total students completed the survey with 452 usable entries, giving a 43% response/completion rate.

The survey is used in a pilot study to refine the instrument. The key aspects of the present research to be studied were identified by pre-testing the instrument (Pilot Study) with 75 respondents. The questionnaire so drafted was circulated among some research experts and research scholars for a critical review with regard to the format, sequence, wording, and the likes. Based on the results of the pilot survey, necessary changes were incorporated and the final questionnaire was prepared. The validity and clarity of the survey are further evaluated by two individuals who are knowledgeable in personal finance. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. The responses from each participant are used to calculate the mean percentage of correct scores for each question, section, and the entire survey. Students with scores higher than the sample median are classified as those with relatively more knowledge. Students with scores equal to or below the median are classified as students with relatively less knowledge. The independent variables used in the logistic regression are variables such as academic discipline, class rank, gender and age. To determine the impact of financial literacy possessed by the participants on their opinions,

students are asked to rank personal finance issues using five categories: very important, somewhat important, not sure, somewhat unimportant, and very unimportant. They are also asked to make decisions on the related financial issues.

### Simple Percentage

In a research, various methods are used for analysis. The data observed will be converted into percentage for easy understanding. Simple percentage analysis refers to a special kind of ratio. With the help of absolute figures, it will be difficult to interpret any meaning from the collected data, but when the figures are represented as percentages, it becomes easy to find the relative difference between two or more attributes.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{No. of Respondents}}{\text{Total Number of Respondents}} \times 100$$

### Analysing and Results:

Description of the Sample out of 1,024 students invited, 778 total students completed the survey with 450 usable entries. The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1. Forty-two percent of the participants (n=190) identified themselves as male. Fifty-nine percent of the participants (n=267) identified themselves as female. A majority of participants, 80%, (n=362) were between the ages of 18 and 22. Other age ranges and participant percentages were: 16% (n=75) between 23 and 29. For academic rankings 61% (n=137) indicated they were first-year freshmen and 31% (n=140) were seniors. Other rankings were 17% (n=80) sophomores, 15% (n=70) were juniors, and 4% (n=20) were master's students.

Family income was relatively high with 40% (n=179) of the participants reporting Rs. 80,000 or more. Twenty-five percent (n=112) reported a family income of Rs. 50,000-Rs. 79,999. Only 8% (n=38) of participants indicated an annual family income of less than Rs.35,000 and 10% of Rs. 35,000-Rs.49,999, making my sample largely from affluent families. College expenses were handled fully by 21% (n=142) of the participants while 68% (n=308) had college paid fully by parents.

Education level of parents was also relatively high with 34% (n=156) of fathers earning a bachelor's degree and

37% (n=167) of mothers. Twenty-three percent (n=103) of fathers and 11% (n=62) of mothers received an advanced degree. Only 3% (n=11) of fathers and 2% (n=10) of mothers had completed less than high school with 30% (n=141) of fathers and 29% (n=134) of mothers completing high school or equivalent.

**Table-1. Demographic Variables of the Respondents**

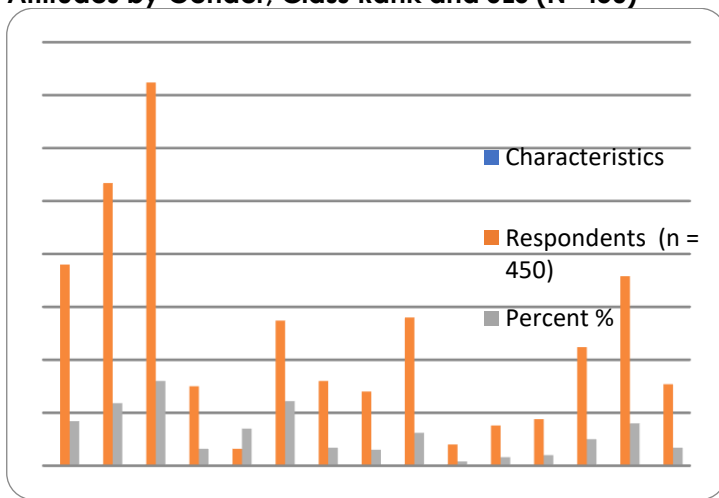
	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Respondents (n = 450)</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	190	42
	female	267	59
<b>Age</b>	18-22	362	80
	23-29	75	16
	30-39	16	35
<b>Academic Ranking</b>	First-year freshmen	137	61
	Sophomore	80	17
	Junior	70	15
	Senior	140	31
	Masters	20	4
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>	<\$35,000	38	8
	\$35,000- \$49,999	44	10
	\$50,000- \$79,999	112	25
	>\$80,000	179	40
	Don't Know	77	17
<b>College Education Paid</b>	Self	142	21
	Parents	308	68
<b>Level of Schooling (Father)</b>	Less than High School	11	3
	High School or Equivalent	141	30
	Bachelor	156	34
	Advanced Degree	103	23
	Other	15	3



<b>Level of Schooling (Mother)</b>	Less than High School	10	2
	High School or Equivalent	134	29
	Bachelor	167	37
	Advanced Degree	62	11
	Other	9	2

Source: Compiled from Questionnaire.

**Fig.1 Differences in Financial Knowledge and Financial Attitudes by Gender, Class Rank and SES (N=450)**



Source: Compiled by self.

Figure 1 shows that no disparities in financial knowledge were discovered between males and females. There were differences in financial understanding between class ranks. From first-year undergraduates to master's students, financial awareness gradually improves. There were no differences in financial knowledge between SES levels. In contrast, no differences in financial views were detected between males and females. There were differences in the level of financial views between social ranks. From first-year undergraduates to master's students,

financial attitude gradually improves. There were no differences in financial attitudes between SES groups.

## **Discussion**

Financial knowledge between men and women is at the same level as per the study. These results are not surprising considering that my subjects received similar financial education in the school system regardless of gender. There was a difference in the level of financial awareness between classes. From freshmen to undergraduates, financial awareness has gradually developed. This means that children acquire financial knowledge as they grow up, which may involve trial-and-error learning or life experiences. Older students may want to learn more because they have to make more financial decisions as they get older.

If the student's parents' family income is \$35,000 or \$80,000, SES does not affect financial knowledge. This is surprising as students seem to be buying more. Wealthy families will have more experience with money. Of course, students can. Families with little money have to learn frugality. This suggests that students' attitudes may change as they gain more financial knowledge. Again, this may be due to education or trial and error through life experiences; this would be a good topic for future research. No differences were found in level of financial attitude between SES levels. This finding suggests that no matter what the students' parents' household income was, financial attitudes were not affected. This is surprising because students living in households with higher incomes could have the attitude that money comes easily and they can have whatever they want; on the other hand, they may have learned that to have money one needs to budget, save, and invest. The same can be true for students from families with few children. Money; they would have had to learn to use their money sparingly.

## **Conclusion**

The study involved 1024 students from Indira Gandhi TMS University and St. Claret College to explore students' knowledge of personal finance. The results show that college students need to improve their knowledge of personal finance. We also found that less informed

participants were more likely to hold incorrect opinions and make poor decisions in the areas of general knowledge, savings, borrowing, and investing. The predictive power of personal financial knowledge demonstrates the importance of improving college students' knowledge. Without proper knowledge, you are more likely to make mistakes in the real world. Our conclusion is that students don't know much about personal finance. Incompetence will limit your ability to make informed financial decisions. Taken together with research data from the past 30 years, our findings demonstrate that our education system is systematically lacking in education about personal finance. When people can't manage their finances, it becomes a problem for society. We need to solve this complex problem.

## References

1. Aggarwal, Y.P. (2008). *Statistics of Education.*( 2nd Edition) Delhi: Sterling. CPFA – NISM Handbook (2009).
2. Fogue, R. E., & Garman, E. T. (1988). *Personal Finance.* Houghton Mifflin.
3. Gitman Lawrence J. and Michael D. Johenk. *Fundamentals of Investing, Fourth Edition,* Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1990.
4. Hallman, G.V., & Rosenbloom, J.S. (1987). *Personal Financial Planning (4th ed.)*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company
5. Kapoor, J. R., Dlabay, L. R., & Hughes, R. J. (2009). *Personal finance.* Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
6. Capuano, A., & Ramsay, I. (2011). What causes suboptimal financial behaviour? An exploration of financial literacy, social influences and behavioural economics.
7. Zakaria, R. H., Jaafar, N. I. M., & Marican, S. (2012). Financial behavior and financial position: A structural equation modelling approach. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 12(10), 1396-1402.
8. Altaf, N. (2014). Measuring the level of financial literacy among management graduates. *Abhinav National Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*,3(6).
9. Yevgeny Mugerma Adi Meir, Yevgeny Mugerma, Orly Sad (2016), A study on

10. Financial literacy and retirement planning: Evidence from Israel, *Israel Economic Review*, 14(1), 75-95.
11. Ajay Singh Dr. Rahul Sharma (2016), Financial Literacy & its impact on Investment Behaviour for Effective Financial Planning, *International Journal of Research in Finance and Marketing* 6(8), 50-63.

# What's in a name? Contextualising naming patterns amongst the Apatani

Nani Umie

## Introduction

It is widely accepted that, in all societies, personal naming practices and culture are intertwined. Given that culture is not static, but dynamic and ever-changing, personal names have undergone a major transformation due to socio-cultural and political factors. As societies diversify, the naming patterns can be examined in the context of cultural identifications and acculturation strategies used by individuals exposed to other cultures. Much as names are considered personal choices yet the names chosen are a reflection of the consequent cultural amalgamation. A review of the literature shows that researchers have tended to be more concerned with the outcomes of having particular names, rather than the process through which these names are chosen. Thus, the process through which these names are chosen is an important aspect to be examined especially in the light of society and culture that is in transition. It is in this light and context that the paper seeks to examine the predictors of baby-naming choices. After all, a name is not just a name, it is an expression of who we are and an important reflection of how we define ourselves. As such, it may be considered an extension of the individual and the society and culture to which one belongs.

## Context

The Apatani narratives begin north of the Himalayas and recount an ancient migration path defined by a series of locations. Migration is traced through a succession of halting locations, each of which symbolizes the occurrence of a significant event: the performance of an important rite, a natural calamity, or the surmounting of a challenge, according to Apatani traditions (Blackburn, 2003, p. 26-27-28). The tribe is predominantly divided into seven major villages. Further, these villages are categorized into three groups. *Hong* as constituting one group, *Hari* and *Bulla* as another, and *Hija*, *Dutta* and *Bamin-Michi* as the third group. This grouping is seen to serve as a regulation of certain ritual

188 | Apatani: Change and Continuity

privileges and obligations such as the celebration cycle of Myoko festival. There are a number of legends concerning the settlement in its current location.

According to oral legends, the present division of Apatani villages into three clusters of closely allied settlements was traced to the waves of migration to the valley. But as with all oral traditions, there are variations in tracing such history. Despite the oral contradictions, Haimendorf (1980) noted the uniformity in the configuration and settlement pattern in every village. Apatani society and culture are also seen as having developed in response to the environment and physical limits (Haimendorf, 1962; Blackburn, 2008). For instance, the limited space dictates the size of the houses and settlement patterns.

Apatanis emerge in recorded documents in the early nineteenth century only after the British acquired control of Assam (Blackburn 2008). It was only in 1890 that H.M. Crowe made a visit to the Apatani territory followed by Lieutenant McCabe. But it was only by 1897 that the established Apatani ways of life came to be disrupted. Government authority came to be exercised in the valley and education was introduced in 1949 with the establishment of the first school at Dutta Papi, Ziro was established (Yampi, 2009). By the latter half of the 1950s and early 60s, government schools were established in each of the seven villages (Blackburn, 2018).

Once contact with other cultures was established and settlement of outsiders began coupled with the introduction of education, the forces of change began to quicken. An important change regarding '*tiipe*' or tattooing of face, which was coveted and served as a source of pride and identity traditionally began to be seen as 'backward' and 'outdated'. Consequently, the practice was abolished in the 1970s by the Apatani Youth Association (AYA). Sen et.al. (2023) in their study on the tattooing practice are of the view that the stigma attached to *tiipe*<sup>30</sup> (also see Tado 2000) and the acculturation with new cultures and the desire to modernize its self-identity as a tribe led to a change in perspective.

---

<sup>30</sup> Tiipe - Tattoo. Apatani women have a long line tattooed from the forehead to the nose tip, and five smaller straight lines on the chin; Apatani men have a small T-shaped tattoo on their chins.

Thus, exposure to new economic, political, and social structures, cultures, and ideas inevitably resulted in significant changes in the cultural fabric of the tribe. The author as such is interested in analyzing an aspect of change which is reflected in the shifts and continuity in the naming pattern of children. Naming practices and patterns reflect cultural variables such as kinship, gender relations and differences in taste and personal preferences. Parents strive to individualize their children through naming, yet they also use it as a way to establish their children's place in their culture. Thus, naming a child stems from giving the child an identity. Names, as markers of identity can illuminate the motivational factors that relate to the processes of acculturation and identity formation.

### **Methods and Procedures**

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. The data in this study is derived from secondary sources such as community groups on social media sites and electoral rolls. Through an extensive scouring of names, the researcher gathered first names and their popularity in the different decades. Besides, first-hand information was also collected from key informants on Apatani naming practices which have been reviewed to support the secondary data.

### **A name is not just a name**

In traditional practice, the Apatani naming system is very different from that of the other Tanii groups. For the Galo, for instance, a name must be derived from the last syllable of the father's name. Names do not have meanings in and of themselves. Because of this, they are able to not only trace their ancestry back to Abo Tani, whom they regard as their first man on Earth, but they can also recall and remember the names of their ancestors from Abo Tani to the current generation (Doye 2020). Amongst the Apatani, there is no such established norm but similar to the Galos, most names do not bear any meaning as such. Ancestor names are often bestowed on newborn babies. Often, rhyming pairs of names are chosen for siblings, for example, Loder - Byai (male names), and Puming - Pubyang (female names). One would find that parents often give

single names but ones that rhyme for siblings such as Onya, Munya, Yanya.

Some common traditional names male names are Bida, Chada, Chatung, Kojing, Lajie, Lento, Pussang, Ribya, Ranka, Siira, Tabyo, Taki, Tagia, Tatung, Tara and female traditional names such as Ankha, Kanya, Mamung, Pabo, Sumpi, Yaja, Kunya, Sunya, Onya, so on and so forth. A mere glance at the naming pattern over the decades reflects cultural influences. For instance, along with common traditional names, Hindu and Christian names are also prevalent. Although, a core difference between the two is those parents that have given their children Christian names are generally converts to Christianity although not necessarily. On the other hand, those naming their children with Hindu names are not converts in that sense as many families practising the old traditional faith have Hindu names for their offspring without any sense of religious affiliation.

A survey of names on social media platforms and the electoral roll throws up a slew of non-traditional names. So, one would find names such as Mala, Rakhi, Asha, Rita, Maya, Pinky, Monju (Manju), Mina, Sima, and Aruna in abundance amongst the female population and similarly male names such as Vijay, Rakesh, Omit (Amit). The list is not exhaustive. But it is discernible that such names seem to be more common for females. Christian/English names are also common and often used in conjunction with the traditional name. For example, (Surname) Jonathan Tayung. The preferences for mainstream names may be seen as a reflection of strong acculturation to the mainstream. For instance, names such as Rita, Rakhi, Maya, Asha are seen more predominantly amongst individuals born in the 1960s and 70s. Meanwhile, names such as Mala, Sima, Rakesh, Omit, Monju, and Pinky are more common among those born in the 1980s and 1990s. These changes in the naming pattern are indicative of the socio-cultural and political changes taking place in the Apatani society during the specific historical period.

In the last decade or so, an interesting trend is being observed in Apatani society as parents are returning to the practice of naming children with existing traditional names or coming up with new names which are inherently Apatani in origin and meaning. In fact, a range of new names has come up as each parent attempts to name their child with



a unique word which is reflective of the Apatani lifeworld. Names such as Emma (dream), Elli (part of marriage ceremony), Hela (Smart/ Understanding), Reela (Sun rays), Byolin (to shine forth), Enjan (Dewdrop), Pyamin (a fringe cotton shawl worn on ritual or important occasions), Senyi (Rhododendron flower), Sayli (a place in Hari village) are just some examples to illustrate the adoption of names steeped in Apatani tradition and culture. These names are derived from everyday life (eg. Reela, Enjan etc), items (Pyamin, Senyi) and places (Sayli) of relevance in Apatani culture. Often names are also derived from Apatani oral traditions known as *Miji-Migung*<sup>31</sup> and also other genres such as *biisi*<sup>32</sup> (songs). Thus, this aspect of reaching back into the cultural treasure trove may be understood as a reflection of the rising consciousness and countering of what is deemed to be a dilution of culture in the face of change. And a section of the population consciously makes baby naming choices as a marker of cultural identity and display of ethnic pride.

To transgress briefly from the topic at hand, a trend seemed to have emerged in the 1980s with the educational boom and children being introduced to other languages such as English and Hindi. Also, financially able parents sent their children to other districts and other states to be educated in boarding schools, which were mostly mission schools- both Christian and Hindu mission schools. A consequence of this was that many children unlearned or failed to learn their mother tongue and took to speaking exclusively in other languages which was encouraged and promoted in the schooling system. On the other hand, parents also took to speaking in Hindi with the children. A more detrimental effect of this was that many children often took a kind of pride in not being able to speak in their mother tongue which was equated to being 'backward' and speaking in Hindi or English was seen as being 'modern'. Additionally, parents were often not too worried or casual in their approach to this development. Greater access to education, the coming up of cinemas and Bollywood and the introduction of colour television, settlement of non-tribals

---

<sup>31</sup> *Miji-Migung* : *Miji* and *Migung*, the two formal primary oral genres, both contain historical information and cover the mythic and legendary past, geographical and genealogical.

<sup>32</sup> *Biisi* : Female traditional song or chant

in the town all contributed to the changes in the culture. When people of different cultures interact, a degree of linguistic and/or cultural adaptation is expected (Yntiso, 2010). This aspect of historical context is important as it is reflected in the naming pattern prevalent during the period. Thus, if one examines the prevalence of non-apatani names, especially Hindu names, it is during the 1980s that it gained popularity. So, such names help position the child in a mainstream cultural context. This changing pattern has thus had to change with socio-cultural, economic, educational and political influences prevailing at each time. In other words, names reflect values, traditions, and events in people's lives. Names are therefore meaningful words containing historical context.

Scholars have noted that names and naming practices are closely connected to cultural values and beliefs (e.g., M. T. Chauke, 2015; Nguane & Thabethe, 2013; Su & Telles, 2007). Thus, names are simply not names but are used as a means of signalling cultural group membership, displaying ethnic pride and intergenerational cultural transmission. It is an expression of who we are and an important part of how we define ourselves. An extension of the individual and the society and culture to which one belongs. Unlike some other markers of group membership such as physical markers, names are cultural products that result from a purposive act (Sue & Telles, 2007). According to Zittoun (2004), names can serve a variety of important symbolic purposes, such as representing social and cultural information as well as parental aspirations for their children's future. The names that parents choose for their children represent both their personal aspirations for them to become keepers of culture and tradition as well as what they want others to perceive in their names (such as ethnic or religious affiliation). In reality, the transition to parenting is a period when parents (or soon-to-be parents) reflect on their own "identity-roots" and choose whether and how to pass those identities on to their children (Zittoun, 2004, p. 143).

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of the article seeks to demonstrate how the present reclaiming of indigenous names may be seen as a means for Apatanis to redefine and reassert their identities

as well as their pride in their culture. Ultimately, this article makes a strong argument that personal naming, in any society, is not detached from the socio-cultural environment. Rather, personal naming and culture are inextricably linked to socio-cultural and political conditions at any historical moment. This can be seen in the change from name conventions that were heavily influenced by communal norms to ones that are steeped in the process of acculturation and forces of the dominant culture. It is, therefore, concluded that shifts in people's consciousness lead to fundamental shifts in personal naming practices.

## References

1. Blackburn, S. (2003). Memories of migration: Noptes on Legends and Beads in Arunachal Pradesh, India. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 25 (26), pp.15-60.  
[https://www.soas.ac.uk/tribaltransitions/publication\\_s/file32489.pdf](https://www.soas.ac.uk/tribaltransitions/publication_s/file32489.pdf) Accessed on September 11, 2017.
2. \_\_\_\_\_. (2008). *Himalayan Tribal Tales: Oral Tradition and Culture in the Apatani Valley*. Leiden. The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV.
3. Haimendorf, C.V.F. (1980). *A Himalayan Tribe: From cattle to cash*. Vikash Publishing House, Ghaziabad.
4. Haimendorf, C.V.F. (1962). *The Apatanis and their neighbourhood*. London. Oxford University Press.
5. Doye, E. (2020, April 27). Understanding naming patterns and Kin terms of the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Ensemble*, 2(1), 102–110.  
<https://doi.org/10.37948/ensemble-2020-0201-a010>
6. Kim, Jinhee & Lee, Kyunghwa. (2011). "What's Your Name?": Names, Naming Practices, and Contextualized Selves of Young Korean American Children. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*. 25. 211-227.  
10.1080/02568543.2011.579854.
7. M. T. Chauke (2015) Personal Names and Naming Practices among the Vatsonga, *The Anthropologist*, 19:1, 303-312, DOI: 10.1080/09720073.2015.11891664
8. Ngubane, & Thabethe. (2013). Shifts and continuities in Zulu personal naming practices : original research. *Literator: Journal of Literary Criticism, Comparative Linguistics and Literary Studies*, Vol. 34(No.1).

9. Sen, Tania & Mallick, Sambit & Kipgen, Ngamjahao. (2023). Prohibition on tradition, tattooing, and the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 51, 54-61. 10.1016/j.ajss.2022.07.002.
10. Sue, C. A., & Telles, E. E. (2007). Assimilation and gender in naming. *American Journal of Sociology*, 112, 1383–1415. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/511801>.
11. Tado, Pura (2000). Significance of Tattoo among the Apatanis (*Tiipe pako niing*), *Silver Jubilee Dree souvenir*.
12. Yntiso Gebre (2010) Cultural contact and change in naming practices among the Aari of southwest Ethiopia, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 22:2, 183-194, DOI: 10.1080/13696815.2010.506387
13. Zittoun, T. (2004). Symbolic competencies for developmental transitions: The case of the choice of first names. *Culture & Psychology*, 10, 131–161.