

CULTURAL MAPPING OF TRIBAL HANDICRAFTS:

EVALUATION AND STATUS SURVEY

AS AN OPTION FOR LIVELIHOOD OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES
IN THE STATES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH, MEGHALAYA AND SIKKIM



Arpita Basu

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ARUNACHAL PRADESH, MEGHALAYA AND SIKKIM**

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SURVEY - ARUNACHAL PRADESH, MEGHALAYA, SIKKIM

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Of course, I include the standard disclaimer that any errors that remain are my own.

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PREFACE

India is one of the world's unique nations, with a culture deeply rooted in the pluralistic ethos of age-old history, providing creative expression, values-sustenance, and belief patterns to thousands of communities that comprise contemporary Indian society. India is also well-represented on the world's cultural map. Culture's role is not only to encourage self-expression and exploration in individuals and communities, but also to foster creativity as a social force. Cultural activities also provide a source of income for a sizable portion of the population and contribute to the nation's GDP. Furthermore, culture plays a role in enlightenment. Culture is increasingly recognised as being at the heart of all developmental activities, rather than a "fringe" activity for the leisured or privileged classes. Culture is what gives a society a sense of direction and togetherness, as well as a sense of value and excellence. Economic growth is not solely dependent on programmes and projects for manufacturing goods and services. It loses meaning and relevance when society abandons or fails to care adequately for its heritage and way of life, which are the essential determinants of culture. Culture is thus integral to all development, and it is felt that we must pay adequate attention to this sector rather than dismiss it as a marginal issue.

The present researcher has worked on the topic ***Cultural Mapping of Tribal Handicrafts: Evaluation and Status Survey as an Option for Livelihood of Tribal Communities in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim*** under Tagore National Fellowship/Scholarship For The Batch Year 2017-18 during the period 2019-21 to comprehend the tribal handicrafts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim in its totality as well as evaluation and status survey of tribal handicrafts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim in particular to find out how far is it an option for livelihood of tribal communities in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim.

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Tribal handicrafts are items made by hand, with easily available simple tools, eco-friendly and easy-to-work raw material and artistic and/or traditional in nature as well as utilitarian and decorative. Tribal people were not fully aware of the potentialities of their handicrafts.

In order to overcome the problems of unemployment, poverty and migration, the diversification of economy from subsistence to commercialized production of farm and non-farm products has been recognized among the most important alternative options and a necessary policy. Tribals depend upon non-farm handicraft sector activities because of availability of raw material and skilled family manpower. Problems in promoting non-farm handicraft activities are due to lack of knowledge, proper marketing facility, finance, raw material problem, proper communication, competition from organized sector, lack of time, technology, common facility and training. However, these tribal handicrafts are popular in the international markets due to distinct style and uniqueness and contributed significantly to the employment and foreign exchequer of the country. Despite of a high demand, only a fraction of this opportunity is being utilized. Therefore, a concerted effort has to be made to harness the demand potential of handicrafts both in domestic & international markets.

Tribal people need special attention that can be observed from their low social, economic and participatory indicators. These indicators underline the importance of the need of livelihood generating activities based on locally available resources so that gainful employment opportunities could be created at the doorstep of the tribal people. There is a growing need for awakening and planning for recognition of handicrafts as a potential sector of Indian economy for optimum utilization of natural resources through human force for creation of self-employment and natural wealth.

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This project aims to analyze the status position of craftspersons in the present scenario. The study aims to provide suggestions towards ways and means of sustaining the strength and rising to opportunities and removing the weakness may be converting them to strength and coping with the threats. The hope is that marrying technology with this endeavour in an age of data analytics will help make most of north-east Indian tribal handicrafts accessible and boost their longevity. The project has attempted to bridge the gap between the past and the present while also laying the groundwork for future growth. Within this conceptual framework, the preservation of our cultural heritage through the institutions of the Anthropological Survey of India, Museums, Archives, Akademies, Public Libraries, and a slew of schemes has provided continuity to our tangible and intangible cultural traditions. It is worth noting that, in the aftermath of economic globalisation and its challenges, we have cautiously sought to create an environment conducive to the preservation of our cultural heritage. We have been acutely aware that it is not the role of the state to guide culture, as culture is all around us, behind us, and ahead of us. However, we must build the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the availability of various cultural goods and services to people on the one hand, and create the necessary environment for increased demand for such goods and services on the other through education, awareness, and other innovative programmes. Such an approach would not only help to sustain and grow the arts and culture, but it would also significantly improve people's physical well-being and enable them to live a meaningful and valued existence.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Tribal peoples constitute 8.6 percent of India's total population, about 104 million people according to the 2011 census (84 million according to the 2001 Census and 68 million people according to the 1991 census). These indigenous people constitute the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. In the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland, upward of 90 percent of the population is tribal. However, in the remaining north-east states of Assam, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura, tribal peoples form between 20 and 30 percent of the population. Number of tribal peoples in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim are 0.9 million, 2.5 million and 0.2 million respectively. The tribals are the children of nature and their lifestyle is conditioned by the eco-system. India due to its diverse ecosystems has a wide variety of tribal population. The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 28 States and 9 Union Territories by the Central Government of India under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution with certain tribes being notified in more than one State and the number of individual ethnic groups, etc. notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705. Article 342 provides for specification of tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which are deemed to be for the purposes of the Constitution the Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory. In pursuance of these provisions, the list of Scheduled Tribes are notified for each State or Union Territory and are valid only within the jurisdiction of that State or Union Territory and not outside. There are 16 main tribes in Arunachal Pradesh. No. of main tribes including sub-tribes in Meghalaya and Sikkim are 17 and 4 respectively.

The list of Scheduled Tribes is State/UT specific and a community declared as a Scheduled Tribe in a State need not be so in another State. The inclusion of a community as a Scheduled Tribe

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is an ongoing process. The essential characteristics of these communities are: Primitive Traits, Geographical isolation, distinct culture, shy of contact with community at large, economically backward. Tribal communities live, in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas. Tribal groups are at different stages of social, economic and educational development. While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life, at the other end of the spectrum, there are certain Scheduled Tribes, 75 in number known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), who are characterised by pre-agriculture level of technology, stagnant or declining population, extremely low literacy, subsistence level of economy.

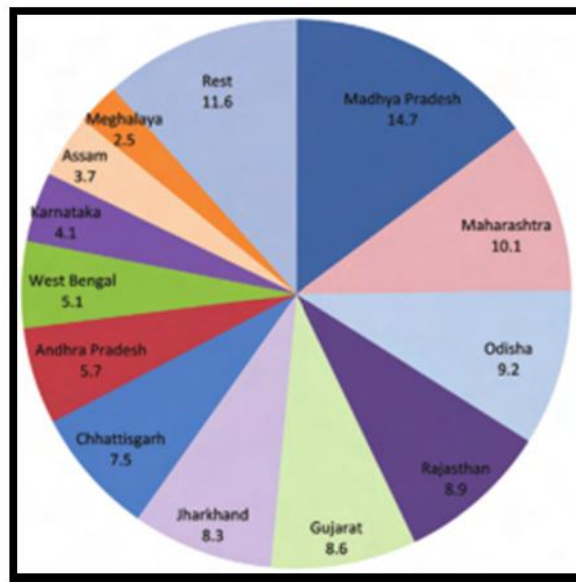


Figure 1. Distribution of Scheduled Tribe Population by States – 2011 (in %) Source: Presentation Scheduled Tribes in India, Census 2011 by Registrar General of India, May 2013

The tribal population has shown a growth rate in the period 2001-2011. The fact that tribals need special attention is borne out by their low social, economic and participatory indicators. Whether it is maternal and child mortality, size of agricultural holdings or access to drinking water and electricity, tribal communities lag far behind the general population.

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Handloom and handicrafts form a valuable cultural trait of a society from the beginning of the civilization. The cultural pattern of a society is reflected through the quality crafts and craftsmanship of the people. The term handloom and handicrafts include those products of a specific community which are produced manually with their indigenous technology. The handicrafts of a society often become the chief means of livelihood. It also fulfils their daily requirements and provides employment to the members of the households of the society. So handlooms and handicrafts play a magnificent role in the socio-economic development of a society.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the livelihood options for the major tribal handicrafts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim.

I. Understand the Problems of Tribal Handicrafts and Identify the Gap between the Policy and Actual Implementation of the Policy

- Status Survey of tribal handicraft industry at West Kameng, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, West Siang and East Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh, East Khasi Hills District, South West Khasi Hills District, Ri Bhoi District, West Jaintia Hills District and South West Garo Hills District in Meghalaya, at Zero Point, Gangtok, Vishal Gaon, Deorali, Rhenock in East Sikkim, at Namchi, Pathing village, Yangang in South Sikkim and at Khechuperi Thingling Third Yuksum, Tashiding, at Kongri Labdang, Yuksum in West Sikkim and targeted the tribal artisans in the textile and carpet weaving, *rari* blanket weaving, wood carving, *Thangka* painting, cane and bamboo handicraft enterprises, mask making, jewellery making and engravings to identify the gap

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- Assess the livelihood options for tribal handicrafts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim
- Identify the constraints and potentials faced by the tribal handicraft industry

II. Ways and Means to Address the Problem and Strategies for development of Tribal Handicrafts

1. Carry out a survey on Cultural Topography to bring out the “Soul of the country”
2. Evaluate the number of artisans in different crafts
3. Study the employment and wage structure of handicraft artisans
4. Carry out social and economic mapping of handicraft workers

Although the government of India conducts census every year but the census data is not enough to make specific and targeted policies for the millions of tribal handicraft artisans in the country. Hence, the need arises to initiate a completely separate study for the tribal artisans involved in the handicraft sector.

Scope of Work. The scope of work of the study is as follows:

- To study the existing status of the handicrafts of the major tribes like Nyishi, Adi, Monpa, Garo, Khasi, Jaintias, Lepcha, Bhutia Nepalese and Sherpa in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim and targeted the tribal artisans in the textile and carpet weaving, *rari* blanket weaving, wood carving, *Thangka* painting, cane and bamboo handicraft enterprises, mask making, jewellery making and engravings to identify the gap.

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- To evaluate the number of people in the community involved in the activity by sectors of production, location and specific and major craft groups and bringing out their economic status
- To classify artisans by religion, social status, gender, physical infirmity and age group
- To study the source of the raw materials and the extent of sustainability (future) of the handicrafts based on these resources
- To assess the extent of dependence in terms of livelihood of the artisans on this sector and any other livelihood options of the community
- To assess the willingness/initiative of the community to promote the handicraft sector as livelihood option
- To assess the extent of handicraft sector as a livelihood option and further interventions/support required
- To assess the support provided by the local NGOs/Government programmes/financial institutions to the artisans
- To evaluate and collect details in the sector of the artisans who have formed cooperative societies/federation and having knowledge of cooperative movement and its benefits
- To assess the impact of infrastructure and institutional development in terms of improvement of the living standards of the tribal households
- To study the mode of product sale, any middle-men involved
- To assess contribution of handicraft sector to the family income, average wage rate in crafts, annual household income from crafts, other sources, all sources and per capita income in different crafts

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Approach and Methodology

The Approach. The overall approach will be in conducting micro and macro level socio-economic evaluation studies and preparation of analytical study reports. The emphasis is on:

- Development of an effective work plan for execution of the assignment
- Efficient and effective process for collection of necessary and relevant information based on both desk research and field studies
- Innovative approaches and smooth co-ordination to achieve the desired results
- Using specialist resources and information to be gathered for the study to reach an authentic assessment of status of the Tribal handicraft sector in the proposed states

While fabricating analytical framework to bring effectiveness of the study following are the key components of the analytical frame work for this study

Socio-demographic characters. These characters in terms of family composition, sex ratio, marital status, occupational pattern, literacy rate will be studied to find out spare spread of tribal population in the remote villages with and without communication facilities to reveal the necessary changes by the executing agencies.

Income structure. Income structures will be examined in terms of activity wise composition of family income. Family income will be estimated from farms business and non-farm business like income from handicrafts, income from hand loans, wage income, income from service.

Infrastructure and Institutional development. These two aspects will be studied to assess their impact in terms of improvement of the living standards of the tribal households. Infrastructure facilities like road communication, drinking water, sanitation, type of dwelling units, and

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institutional facilities in terms of market outlets, training procurement of raw materials. These facilities will demonstrate the living condition of tribal households.

The whole methodology and approach is adopted keeping in view the tribal households involvement in producing tribal handicrafts of different varieties covering in the light of the objectives envisaged for the study.

Methodology

i. ***Desk Research.*** Desk Research for collection of secondary data and other related information on the following aspects:

- ✓ General review of the tribal handicrafts of the main tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim
- ✓ Study of published official documents and related reports with reference to mentioned states
- ✓ Study of role played by the state and the other support organizations

ii. ***Case Study.*** Primary data has been collected from Zero Point, Gangtok, Vishal Gaon, Deorali, Rhenock in East Sikkim, Namchi and Pathing village, Yangang in South Sikkim and Khechuperi Thingling Third Yuksum, Tashiding, at Kongri Labdang, Yuksum in West Sikkim; West Kameng, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, West Siang and East Siang district in Arunachal Pradesh; East Khasi Hills District, South West Khasi Hills District, Ri Bhoi District, West Jaintia Hills District and South West Garo Hills District in Meghalaya

iii. ***Collection of Data.*** The primary data has been collected with in-depth interactions with the Department of Tribal affairs and Culture of State Governments, NEHHDC of the identified states to understand and collect all the relevant secondary information on the tribes, their handicrafts and their current status. Information has been sought on the current Government

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support (policy level and financial) provided to these skilled artisans and craftsmen and the future relevant programmes. The tribal areas has been visited to interact with the local craftsmen through structured Focus Group Discussions (FGD's). The issues on which these discussions deliberated include:

- Number of people in the community involved in the activity
- Level of dependence (in terms of livelihood) on the handicraft and other livelihood options of the community
- Source of raw material and extent of sustainability (future) of the sector based on the raw material
- Mode of product sale, any middle-men involvement
- Willingness/initiative of the community to promote the handicraft sector as livelihood option
- Existing and future Government /institutional support required

The secondary data also has been collected from the websites of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation (NEHHDC), Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Directorate of Research Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

iv. **Field Visit** :A detailed survey has been undertaken at Handicrafts and Handloom Gallery / Craft Gallery - Museum under Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok, Head Office, Sikkim, Handicraft and Handloom Sales Emporium, Tribes India at Gangtok, Government Institute of Cottage Industry at zero point under Directorate of

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Handicrafts and Handloom, Handicraft Shop at Vishal Gaon, Museum at Namgyal Institute of Tibetology at Deorali, Sikkim Khadi Village Industries Board at Deorali, Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Government of Sikkim, Rhenock Branch Training Centre of Handloom and Multicrafts at Rhenock in East Sikkim. Studies on carpet weaving, handloom and woodcarving also have been undertaken at Sikkim Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd. at Namchi. An extensive study of *rari* blanket weaving and the status survey of the artisans in the Pathing village of Yangang in South Sikkim has been undertaken. Studies on carpet and wood carving at Yangang in South Sikkim have also been conducted. Survey on carpet weaving and wood carving also has been undertaken at Directorate of Handicraft and Handloom, Government of Sikkim, Tashiding Training Branch Centre, West Sikkim. Another important survey has been conducted at Khechuperi Bamboo House at Khechuperi Thingling Third Yuksum Tashiding Constituency in West Sikkim to study the indigenous tribal handicraft like local organic bamboo handicraft products for preserving tribal identity as well as to reduce use of plastic. Status survey of artisans preparing *rari* blanket weaving at Kongri Labdang in Yuksom, West Sikkim has also been conducted. Researcher was also in planning to visit Tynnai village in South West Khasi Hills District, Thadlaskien, Jowai in West Jaintia Hills, Handloom Cooperative at Diwon in Ri-Bhoi district along with all the handicrafts centres and museums in East Khasi Hills District. But due to Covid-19 pandemic situation the researcher has to depend on the local informants and authorities to collect information through online meeting. In case of Arunachal Pradesh the principal objective of the field trip was comprehensive understanding of different major groups of tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh, their land and culture and to interview the craftsmen engaged in different arts and crafts for collecting necessary information and data. For this purpose, the researcher has visited the Crafts Emporium in Bomdila for status study of tribal handicrafts in

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Arunachal Pradesh. From Crafts Emporium, Bomdila a lot of information about the initiatives and projects taken by the Government of India and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh for development of arts and crafts and as well as of artisans along with the loopholes of these initiatives has been collected. At the District Museum, Bomdila study has been done on the collection of textiles, costumes, ornaments and ethnological objects to get a glimpse of tribal culture of north-east India. At Twang, the Crafts Centre and the Office of the Assistant Director, Textile and Handicrafts have been visited to collect information on the role of the Craft Centres in arts and crafts industries of Arunachal Pradesh and their contribution in craftsmen's livelihood. Last but not the least, at the District Industries Centre, Tawang under Government of Arunachal Pradesh the interaction with the Deputy Director of Industries was complemented by the survey of the artisans, which was really an eye-opener to understand the economics of handicrafts at Arunachal Pradesh.

v. ***Museum Visit.*** For comprehensive study of the topic a multi-dimensional approach to the problem, which is historical, aesthetic, functional, technical and socio-economic has been taken. A search of tribal handicrafts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim displayed and stored in Jawaharlal Nehru State Museum, Itanagar and other district museums at Tawang, Bomdila, Seppa, Ziro, Daporijo, Aalo, Pasighat, Tezu, Changlang and Khonsa, Meghalaya State Museum (Williamson Sangma Museum) Shillong, Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures, Shillong, Zonal Anthropological Museum, Anthropological Survey of India, Mawblei, Shillong, Arunachal State Museum in the Cantonment Area, Shillong, Anthropological Museum, Department of Anthropology, Guwahati, Cottage Industries Museum Assam, National Museum, New Delhi, National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, New Delhi, Tribal Museum New Delhi

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and Museum of Directorate of Handicrafts & Handlooms (DHH), Gangtok has been undertaken both online and offline.

Through fieldwork to search as much materials as available at different places for which a thorough search, observation and data noting in the complex format of documentation has been done.

The data collected through the in-depth interactions both with the Government sector and the local tribal community has been analyzed to

- ❖ gauge the extent of sustainability of the tribal handicraft
- ❖ assess whether handicraft clusters based on them can be set-up and the necessary interventions / initiatives required to be undertaken by the different stakeholders for the development of tribal handicrafts in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim
- ❖ prepare an Artisan Repository for providing grant-in-aid under cultural schemes and undertaking certain policy level interventions to sustain the traditional tribal handicrafts for betterment

Coverage and Sample Frame

The total sample size of artisans covered during the study is 48 in Sikkim. The total sample size of artisans covered during the study is 86 in Arunachal Pradesh. Focused group discussion also has been organised in all the districts with the local artisans as well as other stake holders.

The detailed break up of sample coverage is given in the below Table:

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Table 1

Coverage and Sample Frame

State	Districts	Interviews of Artisans	Focus Group Discussion
Sikkim	East	24	2
	South	8	2
	West	16	2
	Total	48	6
Meghalaya	East Khasi Hills	Online Data Collection from informants/authorities due to Covid- 19 Pandemic Situation.	
	South West Khasi Hills		
	Ri Bhoi		
	West Jaintia Hills		
	South West Garo Hills		
Arunachal Pradesh	Tawang	15	2
	West Kameng	10	2
	Papum Pare	15	3
	Lower Subansiri	10	2
	Upper Subansiri	10	2
	West Siang	12	2
	East Siang	14	2
	Total	86	15
Grand Total		134	21

CHAPTER 2

People and Handicrafts in Sikkim

This part briefly brings out the tribal population concentration in Sikkim and selected districts highlighting the various types of tribes inhabiting in those districts, handicrafts, their main and subsidiary occupations etc.

With an area of 7,096 sq. km., which is about 0.22 percent of the total area of the country, area wise ranking 28th among the states of India, Sikkim is one of the hilly states of north-east India. It is located in the Eastern Himalayas between the 27°4'46" North latitude and 28°7'48" North latitude and 88°58' East longitude and 88°55'25" East longitude. From north to south its area extends for 114 km and from east to west 64 km. The State holds a strategic position because of its international boundaries with Tibetan plateau of the People's Republic of China in the North, Bhutan and Chumbi Valley of the People's Republic of China in the East and Nepal in the west. In the south, it has a boundary with the Darjeeling district of the state of West Bengal.

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Figure 2 Map of Sikkim
Source: Maps of India

According to the 2011 census, Sikkim had a total population of 6, 10,577 constituting 0.05 percent of the total population of India, population wise ranking 29th among the states of India. The State is connected with other parts of the country by the National High Way 10, formerly NH 31(A) that runs along the eastern bank of the river Tista, through Siliguri, a commercial city in the Darjeeling district. Gangtok, the state’s capital, is connected by roads with different nearby places like Kalimpong, Darjeeling as well as its districts and sub-divisional headquarters. The State is

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thus, totally dependent on the road communication as there is no rail link. Siliguri (114 km) and New Jalpaiguri (125 km) of West Bengal are the State's nearest railheads. Sikkim did not have any operational airport for a long time because of its rough terrain. However, in September 2018, Pakyong Airport, the state's first airport, located at a distance of 30 km from Gangtok, became operational after a four-year delay. But due to the unpredictable weather in Pakyong which results in very low visibility, hampering flight operations the airport has become non-operational for an indefinite period. Under this situation Bagdogra airport in Darjeeling district of West Bengal at the distance of 124 km from Gangtok is catering to the state and the nearest airhead. The state is furthermore connected to Tibet by the mountain pass of Nathu La. The economy is mainly agrarian, despite most of the land being unfit for cultivation owing to the precipitous and rocky slopes.

Sikkim state has four districts which are named according to their regional location and they are the:

1. North District
2. West District
3. South District
4. East District

The district is further divided into smaller administrative division as subdivisions i.e. North district has two sub-divisions viz. (1) Chungthang subdivision and (2) Mangan subdivision. West district has four sub-divisions viz. (1) Gyalshing subdivision (2) Soreng subdivision. (3) Dentam subdivision and (4) Yuksum subdivision. In South district also there are two sub-divisions viz. (1) Namchi sub-division and (2) Ravong subdivision. But East district has got three sub-divisions viz. (1) Gangtok subdivision (2) Pakyong sub-division and (3) Rongli sub-division. Among these four

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districts West District, South District and East district have been chosen as the study area. The sub-division is again further divided into smallest administrative divisions as Block Administrative Centre.

Highlights of the districts within Study area

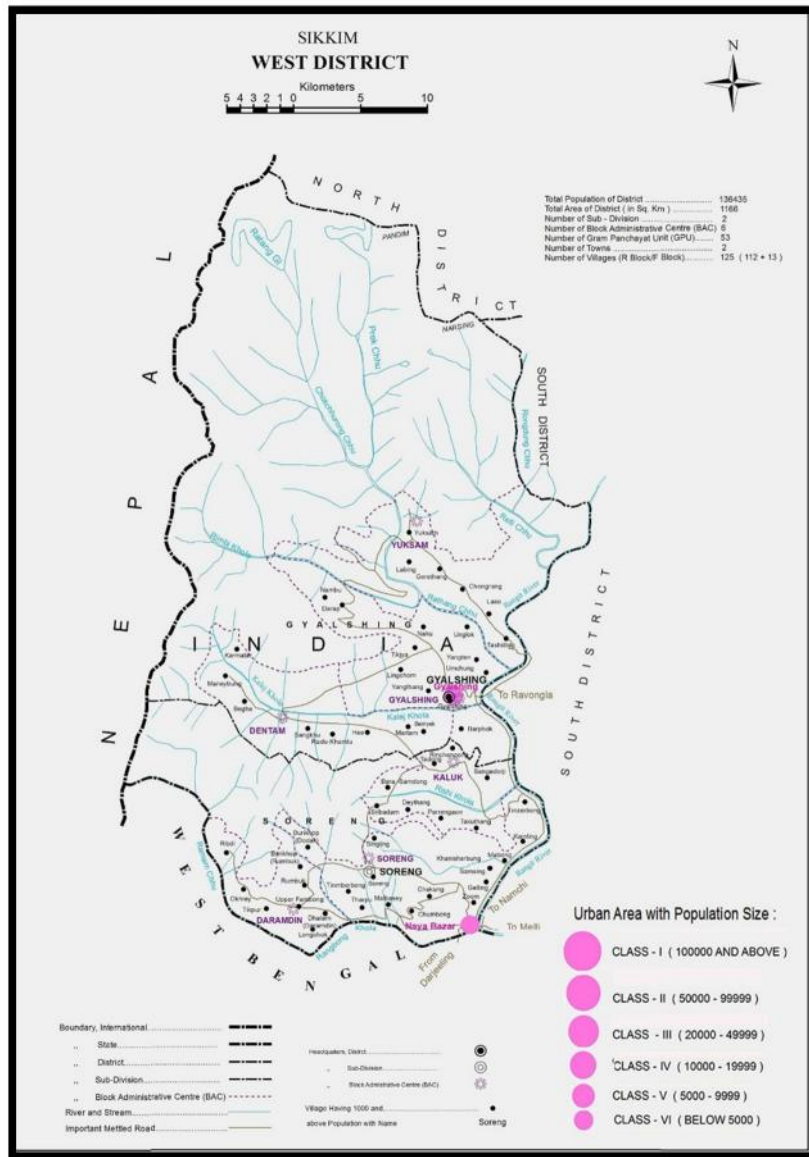


Figure 3 Map of West District of Sikkim

Source: Census of India 2011, Sikkim, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook North, West, South and East Districts, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Sikkim

West District. West district is the second largest (1,166 sq. km.) in area but in term of

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population it is the third highest (136,435) with 77.39 percent of literacy rate at the fourth rank in the district level during 2011 census. Gyalshing also known as Geyzing is the headquarter of West Sikkim. Simple and religious people and agricultural society is the identity of West Sikkim and it is known as fastest growing industrial area. Important places are Pelling, Yuksum, Uttarey Dentam, Hee Bermiok and Soreng. Tashiding, Rinchenpong and Sombaria are important towns. Here, economy is mainly agrarian, despite most of the land being unfit for cultivation owing to the precipitous and rocky slopes. The predominant communities are the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese.

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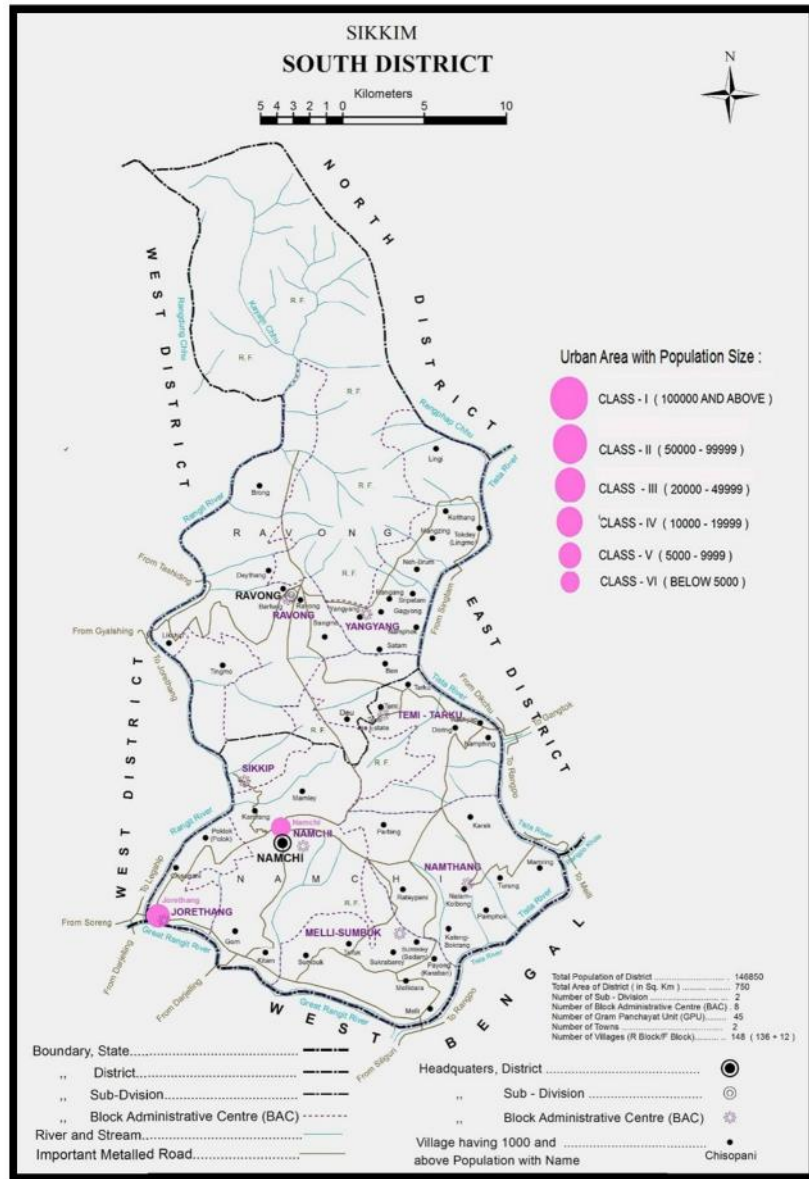


Figure 4 Map of South District of Sikkim

Source: Census of India 2011, Sikkim, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook North, West, South and East Districts, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Sikkim

South District. South district is the least (750 sq. km.) in area but in term of population and literacy rate is positioned the second highest with (146,850) and (81.42) percent in the district level during 2011 census. South district also recorded the second highest proportion of scheduled caste (6,053) and third highest in Scheduled Tribes (41,392) population in this census. Namchi or

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Namtse (meaning Sky High) is the head quarter of South Sikkim. Simple and religious people, some of the oldest monasteries are the identity of South Sikkim and it is known as fastest growing industrial area. Other important places are Ravangla, Tendong Hills, Mainam Hill, Borong and Jorethang. Namchi has been identified as the land of orchids and other variety of flowers. The predominant communities are the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese.

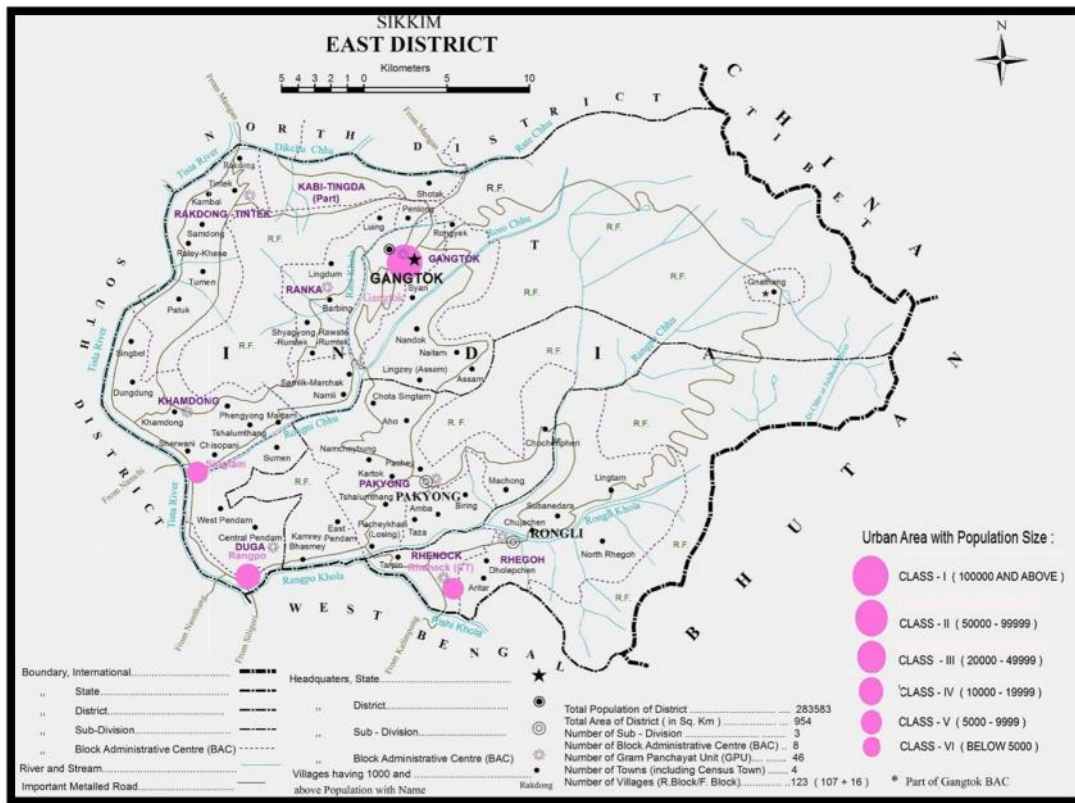


Figure 5 Map of East District of Sikkim

Source: Census of India 2011, Sikkim, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook North, West, South and East Districts, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Sikkim

East District. East district is the third highest (954 sq. km.) in area but in term of population and literacy rate has reflected the highest positioned with (283,583) and (83.85) percent in the district level during 2011 census. From handicrafts to handlooms to jewellery and lots more, the city has its own unique touch, which captivates the attention of every visitor. M. G. Marg situated at the heart of Gangtok is the first town in the country to be declared as litter and spit free town.

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As the head quarter of East district, Gangtok has all the head offices. The district is a land of diverse culture and tradition; people in East District are constituted by Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha communities. The Lepchas stated to be aborigines comprise of 10 percent of the population, followed by 12 percent of Bhutias and 70 percent of the population by Nepalese. The schedule tribes comprise of Lepchas, Bhutias, Limboos and Tamangs whereas the schedule castes comprises of Kami, Damai, Lohar, Sarki and Majhi etc. Nepali is the predominant language in the region. The three major statutory towns and one census town of the state including the capital town Gangtok fall in this district. Rhenock revenue block (village) which is treated as census town for the second time in 2011 Census. East district also recorded the highest proportion both in scheduled caste (15,305) and Scheduled Tribes (78,436) population in 2011 census. The Nathula pass (14450 ft) is situated on the border of India and China was also known as Silk Route between the silk traders from Tibet and Sikkim. The trade route was closed in 1962 and reopened in the year 2006 also falls in this district. As per the religious groupings, Hindus are 60 percent of the population, followed by 30 percent of the population by the Buddhist, 8 percent Christians and 2 percent by others.

People of Sikkim

Sikkim is a multi-ethnic state. Broadly, the population can be divided into tribal and non-tribal groups. Bhutia (including Chumbipa, Dophapa, Dukpa, Kagatey, Sherpa, Tibetan, Tromopa, and Yolmo), Lepcha, Limboo and Tamang are categorized as Scheduled Tribes. The Lepchas are the original inhabitants of the state. Compared to other ethnic groups, the Lepchas still maintain many of their traditional ways. The Bhutias comprise, the Sikkimese Bhutia and Bhutia from Bhutan and Tibet. The Sherpas are a marginal ethnic group in the state. Over 70 percent population consist of Nepalese. They are dominant ethnic group in the state. Schedule tribe

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population of Sikkim is 206,306, which is 33.8 per cent of total population of Sikkim and 0.2 per cent of total population of India according to census 2011. Tribal population of Sikkim in West district, South District and East District is 42 per cent, 28 per cent and 28 per cent of total population of the state respectively (Census 2011).

Highlights of the Communities under Study Area

Bhutias. The Bhutia community is one of the Scheduled tribe category in Indian Constitution. Bhutias, they called themselves — Lhopo or —Lhorees which means — the dwellers of the southward and one of the earliest inhabitant of The Greater Sikkim. They originally migrated from different places of Tibet. The Bhutias live in Sikkim, Darjeeling, Nepal and surrounding areas. The Bhutia word is derived from Nepalese language which means original habitat of Tibet since 13th Century. Their traditional legal system called —Dzumsa means the meeting place of the people. Pipon, the village headman heads the Dzumsa and fully protected by the state government by deeming a status of panchayat ward and the Pipon, a status of panchayat head. In Northern Sikkim, Bhutias are known as the Lachenpas or Lachungpas, meaning inhabitants of Lachen (big pass) or Lachung (small pass). According to Risley¹, the Bhutias of Sikkim may be grouped under three categories. Firstly, the six families descended directly from Khye Bhumsa. They are Yul-Thenpa, Lingzerpa, Zhantarpa or Sangdarpa, Tshogyu Tarpa, Nyungyepa and Tshepa. The last four families (clans) are also called Tungdu-Rusi or ‘the four families of a 1,000 collections’. The second category includes those who migrated after the exodus of Khye Bhums. They are called Khampas or Bebtsen Gye by virtue of having founded eight families (clans) namely Gansapa, Namchangopa, Chungiopa, Ethenpa, Phenchungpa, Phempunadik, Namnakpa and Nachingpa. The third category is comprised of those who migrated at various times since the establishment of the Bhutia rule in Sikkim. They are called Rui- Chhung or the little families with

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eight important branches, the Chumbipa (immigrants from Kham in Tibet and Ha in Bhutan and settled near Chumbi Valley), and Lopen Lhundub (migrated from Ha and Paro in Bhutan and settled in Lachen and Lachung valleys). Each of these families or clans is further subdivided into several sub-families. In 1978 Bhutia community has been recognized as one of the Scheduled Tribes of Sikkim. The 1978 Order included eight other Bhutias namely Tromopa, Dophapa, Sherpa, Yolmo, Kagatey, Drukpa, Tibetans and Chumbipa within the definition of the term Bhutia. The language they speak is Sikkimese in Sikkim combination of Tibetan and Dzongkha. The majority of the Sikkimese Bhutias are the followers of Lamaist Buddhism but sympathizer of Christianity is also rising in recent past. Bodhisattva is their chief deity followed by guardian deities, including local deities, family deities, village deities and also mount Kanchenjunga. Monastery or Gumpa is their place of worship and the Bhutia lama (spiritual leader) performs all customary rituals. Monasteries and monks play a dominant role in the socio-cultural life of the Bhutias. Most Bhutia families have a male member joining the monastery as a monk.

Their main concentration is in the North district, especially in Lachen and Lachung villages but, of late, they are numerically the largest among the tribes of Sikkim in the East district, especially in Gangtok. Losar festival marks the start of the Tibetan New Year which is celebrated in the first week of February. They celebrate it by fire dance in the evening. Another main festival celebrated by them is Losoong, usually celebrated as the end of the Tibetan year i.e. in December. In Sikkim they celebrate it by their traditional *chan* dance with dance forms depict narrativized tales from the life of Padmasambhava or Guru Ugyen. The traditional outfit of women are *bakhu/kho* (a loose cloak type garment fastened at the neck on one side and near the waist with a silk/cotton belt) without sleeve with a silken full sleeve blouse known as *teygo*, loose gown fastened tight near the waist with a belt along with a jacket known as *kushen*, cap known as

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shambo. Married woman used to wear a loose sheet of multi- coloured woollen cloth with exotic geometric designs tied like apron around the waist is known as *pangden*. Men used to wear *bakhu/kho*, along sleeve coat with *yenthatsé* (shirt), *jya jya* (waistcoat), *kerá* (cloth belt) and *shambo* (cap) with loose trouser. Embroidered leather boots or foot wears known as *shabcha* are worn by both men and women.



Figure 6 Bhutias

Traditionally, Bhutias are assertive and industrious people. The young generation Bhutias are well educated, well informed and are conscious of their rights and privileges both as a

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Sikkimese and as a citizen of a democratic country. Mostly aristocrats Bhutias are called as *Kazis*, after similar land lord titles in neighbouring regions, especially in modern day Bangladesh. The Bhutias were mostly the traders and herdsman earlier but a sizable number were also engaged in cultivation. Though they were agriculturists, Bhutia men are excellent craftsmen while women are expert carpet weavers. Bhutias depends on agriculture, dairy farming and pastoralism. They are mostly employed in the sector of Government, field of Agriculture and in the area of Business. They are often employed in government and commerce in the district of Darjeeling.

Lepchas. The Lepcha people themselves do not have any tradition of migration, and hence they conclude that they are aboriginal to the region, currently falling under the state of Sikkim, Darjeeling District of West Bengal, eastern Nepal and the south-western parts of Bhutan. They may have originated in Myanmar, Tibet or Mongolia but the Lepcha people themselves firmly believe that they did not migrate to the current location from anywhere and are indigenous to the region. Some anthropologists suggest they emigrated directly from Tibet to the north, or from Eastern Mongolia, Japan or Korea etc. but the Lepcha people did not believe in this. The Lepchas have their own language, called Lepcha, they also speak Tibeto-Burman language and write in Róng or Lepcha script, which is derived from the Tibetan script. Mostly they are Buddhist brought by the Bhutias from the north, also they have today adopted Christianity. Large number of Lepchas are Christians in the Hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. Men's dress is the *dumpráa* multicoloured, hand-woven cloth pinned at one shoulder and held in place by a waistband with white shirt and trousers. Their cap is called *thyáktuk* which is flat and round with black velvet sides and a multicoloured top topped by a knot. Traditional dress for women are cone-shaped hat, ankle-length *dumdem* which is made up of smooth cotton or silk with contrasting long-sleeved blouse.



Figure 7 Lepchas

Nepalese. The Sikkimese Nepalese are born and brought up in Sikkim and, thus, are Sikkimese in the same way as the Bhutias and the Lepchas. Nepali is not a complete homogenous group like that of the Lepchas. It is a conglomeration of different and distinct tribes and communities which can be broadly classified under two basic groups: Mongoloids and Aryans. Nepali is just an umbrella term under which various tribes and communities find a homogeneous representation. The following groups are generally included as Nepali such as Bahun (Brahmin), Thakuri, Chhetri, Newar, Rai, Gurung, Tamang, Limboo, Mangar, Jogi, Bhujel, Thami, Yolmo, Dewan, Mukhia, Sunar, Sarki, Kami and Damai. Except those who belonged to Aryan stock and

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basically Hindus by religion like Bahun, Chhetri, Thakuri, Kami, Sarki and Damai who represent north Indian physical features, rest of the Nepali sub-cultural groups have their own languages or dialects, traditions, cultures, heroes and habits, religion and belong to Mongoloid racial stock. The Nepalese appeared on the Sikkim scene much after the Lepchas and Bhutias. They migrated in large numbers and soon became the dominant community. The Nepalese now constitute more than 70 percent of the total population. The Nepali settlers introduced the terraced system of cultivation. Cardamom was an important cash crop introduced by the Nepalese. Except for the Tamangs who are Buddhists, the Nepalese are orthodox Hindus with the usual cast system. The Nepali language is spoken and understood all over the state. This language is similar to Hindi and uses the *devangri* script.



Figure 8 Nepalese

The traditional male Nepali dress consists of long double breast garment flowing below the waist and a trouser known as *daura suruwal*. The female dress consists of a double breasted garment with strings to tie on both the sides at four places, which is shorter than the *daura* and is

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known as *chow bandi choli*. They also wear a shawl known as *majetro*. The khukri which has become a synonym to the Nepali (Gurkha) culture, is a very sharp edged, angled, heavy weapon carried in a wooden or leather scabbard known as *daab*. The Nepalese are spread throughout the state. Their style of living is comparatively much economical. Their dresses and diets are simple. They are good farmers and businessmen. Also, they are ahead in education which enables them to get jobs in the Government. The blanket weaving is done by Nepalese women.

Sherpas. According to Grierson, 1909 Sherpa belongs to the Bhotia group of Tibeto Himalayan branch of Tibeto-Burman language family.ⁱⁱ Sherpas are distributed in the high hill slopes of West, South and East Districts. They speak in Sherpa and use Tibetan script. The Sherpa language is a dialect of Tibetan, thus it is a part of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Sherpa has no writing system, but many Sherpa are literate in Tibetan, Nepali, Hindi or English. Rice and Maize are their staple food as they were traditionally agriculturists.



Figure 9 Sherpas

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They are divided into two endogamous groups – Sherpas and Yukpas, the former enjoying higher status than the latter. Other than tourism, the most important industry for the Sherpa is farming. All farming is done using animals and hand implements, and plowing is accomplished with a single-bladed plow pulled by oxen. The great majority of the Sherpa follow the Tibetan Buddhist religion, which is an offshoot of the Mahayana branch of Buddhism. Since the Sherpa are Buddhists and generally do not eat meat; livestock is not used for consumption, but for dairy products. Many herdsman have large amounts of extra butter and trade it for food and various commodities. Trade is another important source of income for the Sherpa. They are skilled in woodcraft and perform folk dance and song, including the *yongdoshiba*, a folk dance with singing in the bride's home during a marriage.

Highlights of Handicraft in Study Area

Tribal arts and handicrafts have been the very breath of Indian Civilization vis-a-vis Sikkim too. Significantly, Sikkim is also known for its tribal handicrafts, paintings, motifs, carpet, traditional tribal shoes, dresses, ornaments, weaving, and so on. The tribal handicrafts in Sikkim had has enormous cultural significance. And many of the Bhutia and Lepcha as well as Nepalese are engaged in traditional handicrafts production of Sikkim. Lepcha handloom, cane & bamboo product are famous for their artistic design. Bhutias are good in weaving carpet, craftsmanship, intricate paintings of Buddhist *Thangkas*, etc. Nepalese are good in craftsmanship. After field survey, it was found that handloom, blanket and carpet weaving, *Thangka* painting, wooden mask making, wood carving, bamboo and cane craft are indigenous product of Sikkim.

Handloom Weaving. The handloom tradition in Sikkim is very old and Lepcha women play a predominant role in handloom weaving, they begin to learn the art from a very young age and gain exceptional craftsmanship in weaving intricately colourful fabrics from cotton yarn. In

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this craft Lepcha *duree* is woven and that range from 30 inches to 36 inches. This *duree* is made from cotton and woollen yarn. The yarn is dyed and dried for at least a week before being put on loom for weaving. For weaving the yarn is sent for winding in wooden frames according to the specified length and breadth requirement. The wound cotton yarn is then fitted in the vertical frame loom and weaving begins. The handloom products range from plain to intricate patterns. The mostly used colours are white, red, black, yellow and green. From the woven fabric variety of items, such as Lepcha traditional dresses, shoulder bags cushion cover, napkins and table mats, purses, the cloth for *gho* (male *bokhu*) and *kira* (a rectangular female dress) etc. are made from the cotton yarn. Woollen yarn is also used in handloom weaving for producing items like shawls, mufflers and hand woven jackets etc. In ancient times, the Lepchas of Sikkim were said to use yarn spun out of stinging nettle (*sisnu*) plant to weave clothes. Today cotton and woollen yarn are used together with vegetable dyes and synthetic colours. Lepcha weaves or *thara* is woven in vertical looms with a back strap. Such looms are of small width. Traditional design with different colours are used to make *tharas* which are used for making bedspreads, bags, belts, curtains, cushion covers, table mats, tray cloths etc. apart from their traditional dress. In fact, weaving was not only an art but also a craft in the sense that it was also a profession for men and women of Lingthem. But by 1937, this craft had also begun to disappear. As Gorer (1937) expressed that “until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their clothes, but now-a-days only a couple of women bother to weave, people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes”ⁱⁱⁱ. Weaving clothes, mat and basket making continues everyday but more for domestic consumption than for commercial purposes. Apart from the apparent discontinuity, there are certain differences between weaving earlier and now. For instance, earlier the threads were not easily available, but now-a-days ready-made threads of varying thickness are readily available for weaving. Secondly,

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the threads used to be dyed indigenously and only a couple of colour combinations was possible then. But, now threads of every possible colour and shade are available. Therefore, attractive colour combination and designs can be made today.



Figure 10 Handloom Weaving

Carpet Weaving. Traditionally, carpet (locally known as *den*) weaving is a symbol of cultural expression in the state of Sikkim. Besides, Carpet is very important export oriented handicraft industry in Sikkim. Carpet making is an oldest occupation among the people of Sikkim

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especially tribal women. It is not very clear exactly when the carpet weaving began in Sikkim but an earnest and serious step towards this direction had been taken in early 1920s, when the Chogyal Tashi Namgya encouraged the craft and created a palace workshop for carpet weaving known as *namkhang* which literally means woollen products manufacturing centre. The real boost to the carpet industries in Sikkim however, was given in 1957 when, with the inspiration of Late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Chogyal Pandup Thondup Namgyal established the present Government Institute of Cottage Industries with the objective to preserve and promote the traditional arts and crafts of Sikkim among which the carpet weaving is the major trade.



Figure 11 Carpet Weaving

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Though it is a traditional activity, very few families follow it as a part of family tradition. Like other oriental carpets, Sikkimese carpets are also hand knotted and woven in fixed vertical looms which are kept standing with the support of a wall. This art requires a high degree of concentration. The colours, design and pattern shows the influence of Buddhist culture and art form. Carpet designs are normally of mythical birds, flowers like the lotus, snow lions, eight Buddhist lucky signs etc. They weave lovely colourful carpet with dragon, geometric and floral designs. The *tanga* is actually a medallion or a coin and is popularly used in carpets, wood carving, paintings etc. While the original coin is said to have some words inscribed in the middle, the designs in carpets have no inscriptions. Though originally they weaved carpet for domestic use, it has now become commercial items of handicraft product. Carpet can be made through different methods like braiding, hand tying weaving. The carpet weaving is done by Bhutia women. The time taken in making these carpets varies according to the size of the carpets, the designs and the ability of the weaver. The fabric is composed of warp, weft and pile. The warp is the set of cotton threads arranged vertically in parallel lines between the two ends of the loom around which the knots are tied. The function of the weft, which also consists of cotton threads, is to hold the knots in parallel line and strengthen the fabric of the carpet. The advantage of using cotton warp and weft is that the finished carpet will be firm and strong and less flexible. The pile is the visible surface of the carpet and is made entirely of wool. For carpet weaving, first of all the *taan* is made from cotton yarn according to the size. Then the weaving process begins according to the design, which is drawn on graph paper. While the weaving process goes on wooden hammers called *flag* are used to beat the woven wool into place. After the weaving is over, levelling is done with a levelling scissor to make the carpet thinner. Finally, the scissoring is done and the carpets are ready, which are used for covering sofas, beds, walls, chairs, etc. The materials for weaving carpets

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are mainly the cotton threads (available in local market) and wools (used to come from Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan states). Indeed, raw materials by virtue of practice, hand spun sheep woollen yarns specially brought from across the borders was used. But at present, cotton as also woollen yarns is regularly procured by the traders in Gangtok and far off places like from Haryana , Punjab and Rajasthan states.



Figure12 Carpet Making Process

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The carpets are of with various exquisite and intricate designs, motifs and colours which are typical of Sikkimese type and made of various sizes like 3 ft. x 6 ft, 2 ft. x 5 ft., 2ft. x 2 ft , etc. and for larger size according to specific orders from buyers/clients. The price ranges vary according to size and quality of the particular carpet. Requirement of raw materials for a carpet of standard size i.e. 3 ft. X 6 ft. size is approximately 6 kg. of woollen yarns and 2 kg. cotton yarn. The tools used in making the carpet are few and simple. Carpets of different sizes for covering walls, chairs, sofas, beds or diwans are made and marketed through the Sikkim Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation.

Table 2

Price of Some Carpets (Depending on Quality) according to Size

Carpet Size	Price
3 ft. by 6 ft.	7000
2 ft. by 8 ft.	5500
2 ft. by 5 ft.	4000
2 ft. by 2 ft.	2000
18 inches by 4 ft.	2500
18 inches by 18 inches	1000

Source: Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Govt. of Sikkim, Gangtok

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Table 3

Tools used for Carpet Making and their Functions

<i>Tools' name in Bhutia language</i>	English term	Function
<i>Den-thak-thi</i>	Loom	Upon which the main carpet is woven
<i>Bha-shey</i>	Garden brush	To roll raw wool for spinning
<i>Phang</i>	Spindle	For spinning yarn
<i>Sok</i>	Axis rod	Holds the warp and functions as its main support
<i>Pen-shing</i>	Spools	Pushes weft threads across warp
<i>Tam</i>	Shed-sticks	Eases way for spools to pass through warp and also separates warp threads
<i>Ne-shing</i>	Heddle rod	Attached by leashes of cord to each warp thread. Its function is to keep the warp tight.
<i>Chak-tap</i>	Comb beater in	To press weft thread firmly down
<i>Gyak- shu</i>	Gauge rod	Around which the woollen pile is knotted
<i>Thowa</i>	Wooden hammer	After each row of knotting the gauge rod and knots are beaten down against the previous rows of knot with <i>thowa</i> .
<i>Shyap</i>	Wooden pieces	Help to adjust the length of warp
<i>Jhem-chey</i>	Scissor	For out lining the unwanted threads
<i>Do</i>	Do	For contouring and shearing finished carpet
<i>Dhi</i>	Knife	For cutting knots woven around the gauge- rod after hammering

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<i>Charkha</i>	Wheel	For reeling and plying yarns
<i>Dom</i>	Box	For keeping rolled yarns for weaving
<i>Den-thi</i>	Seat	For weavers to sit

Source: Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Govt. of Sikkim, Gangtok and Tashiding

Rari Blanket Weaving. The *rari*, a hardy woollen rug and blanket, is used in South and West Districts of Sikkim. A long established source of income, it is based on the extraordinary skill of the Gurung weavers who very probably brought about the first recorded trade transactions from Nepal – namely, the export of woollen blankets to India in the third century AD. An essential part of every home, it is put to many uses, though its specific, ritually prescribed use is limited to periods of birth and mourning. It is an important part of the dowry. *Rari* weaving has its roots in antiquity and it is the best known of all woollen woven items. Used to sit or sleep on or as a rug, the small, fringed sleeping-mat (*burkasan*) is about 2 ft by 5 ft in size; larger *raris* are made up from two or more panels joined at the selvedge.



Figure 13 Rari Blanket Weaving

Traditionally, it is the women who prepare the yarn and weave the *rari* in their leisure hours, when their agricultural and household duties are done; the men do the final finishing and felting, or help with the warping or the heavy wool embroidery which is applied after weaving. It is the man's job to sell *raris* that are woven for sale. The *rari* is priced much lower than the Tibetan woollen carpets and there is a huge demand for them in the winter months. The weaving is therefore timed for the summer and the selling in the chilly months of winter. The *rari* not only serves the purpose of pallet but is also used for a number of other purposes. A high quality *rari* can be converted into a warm overcoat (*bakkhu*) or into warm vests, scarves, and bags. *Rari* weavers have made modifications in sizes and patterns to capture changing requirements and are also weaving small-sized pieces with coloured designs on them. The traditional *rari*, however, is still a valuable trade item even today at village markets as well as in the big towns.



Figure 14 Finished Products: Cap, Blanket

The local *baruwarl* sheep is the main and most sought after source of raw material for *rari* weaving, though other varieties of local wool are also used. The fleece of the *baruwarl* is short and rather hard. Garments are woven mainly from the soft wool of the first and second shearing, and *raris* from later shearing. The different shades of the *baruwal* fleece – ranging from white, to beige and brown, and black – are used by the weavers in patterning. Tapestry-type patterned blankets are also sometimes dyed with ochre, obtained from walnut shell, and light red from madder. The main varieties of *baruwala* wool include *Garve* wool that is obtained from a lamb whose wool has never been sheared – this wool is obtained as a first crop and is therefore very soft, fine, and of high quality. *Chharve* wool is a variety that is obtained as a second or third crop of the *baruwala* and is less soft and of medium quality. *Torbe* wool is the third variety of the *baruwala*, which is obtained as a third or fourth crop. It is usually rough and of low quality. *Garve* and *Chharve* wool are not normally used while weaving the *rari* as they are used in making outer clothing like coats and other items. The rough *torbe* wool is the preferred variety. The colours of

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the wool range from white to black, and grey, and shades in between; the black wool is the most expensive. Wool is also obtained from different varieties of locally available sheep: the wool of the *chyangra* is used. Two grades of wool are obtained from the *chyangra*. The portion of the wool, about an inch long, near the skin of the animal is of a high quality used in weaving mufflers and shawls. It is very soft, of high quality, and very expensive. The end portion of the wool is rough and is used in the making of the *rari*. Wool obtained from local *kage* ram is also used though, it is not the first choice of the weaver. A *rari* made only of the wool of the *kage* is very rough and even a slight jerk or rub causes the wool to shred off the *rari*.



Figure 15 Sheep from which the wool is obtained

The wool is carefully sheared using a *chupi* (knife); as a large quantity of wool is required. The *rari* maker often needs to go to other villages to full the requirement of wool. The quality of wool thus collected is therefore of different grades. The wool is then washed, dried, matted, and

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heaped together in a big entangled mass. It is then shredded into soft fluffy fur. This is done with a special instrument that is shaped like a large wooden bow linked with a fine skin rope (*dhanu*). The spinning wheel or *charkha* made of wood is used in preparing yarn out of raw wool or cotton by rotating the spindle; it is then wound on the pin of the wheel. The yarn (*tan*) is then stretched in parallel positions on the loom on which the actual weaving is done. The main components of the loom are similar across the board, but some Gurung weavers use cross-sticks rather than the coil-rod warp separator and the warp is laid without the warp lock-stick. When the weaving is completed, it is taken off the loom; the un-woven warp threads (5–8 inches long) at the end or between the panels are looped around each other to form a secure border with warp fringes when the circular warp is cut. The cloth panels are then ready for finishing, joining or tailoring; however, there is still some work to be done on the *raris* before they undergo their more unusual finishing/felting process. The *burkasans* used for sleeping, are usually woven full width and need no joining; where they have fringes all the way round, these are added at this stage. Woollen, two-ply yarn strands (6-8 inches long) are knotted into both the selvage sides with lark's head knots. Larger *raris* are joined at the selvage to form a complete pattern. Before the stitching a lot of pulling and stretching often has to be done so that the pattern will actually meet. For the highly valued double blanket/rug, two single *raris* of the same size but with different patterns are placed one on top of the other and joined by knotting the fringes through both layers of selvages. The two blankets will adhere completely during the felting process, giving the impression of a single piece of weaving and concealing how this rug with two completely different sides are woven.

Wood Carving. Wood carving is an ancient art form of both the Lepchas and the Bhutias of Sikkim. Traditionally, only the Buddhists Bhutias and Lepchas used to practise wood carving. The main raw material used in this craft is wood. The wood of *Cedrela toona* Roxb, (*tooni*),

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Juglans regia Linn (*okhar*) and *Michelia champaca* Linn (*chap*) are normally used for wood carving. For wood carving, a piece of wood is cut into the desired shape at first. After seasoning process, very fine chisels and tools are used to curve out the designs. The carved pieces are then assembled together and get ready for a coat of paint or polish. *Chokse* (folding table), *bagschok* (centre table), almirah, sofa-sets, drawers or *bhodin*, table lamp, *cheosum* or altars, wall decorations, screen partition, eight Buddhists lucky signs, wooden ceilings, doors, lintels, pipes, masks, tables, bowl, toys, doors, window frames, sculptures and other decorative items in typical traditional designs like dragons, birds, phoenix etc. are major wood carved products of Sikkim.

Choktse are foldable tables which are around 2 feet in height and has some beautiful designs carved all around the sides. But these tables are now made in different designs and dimensions. Being decorative impressive and eye-catching with intricate designs and exquisite pattern, wood carvings can be seen in several monasteries and old buildings too. The people from Nepali communities are also being trained by the Government Institute of Cottage Industry in wood carving. Traditionally men normally do woodcarving. While, women do not take part in such wood carving/woodcraft as it is very difficult to use and handle the heavy implements/tools in producing the same.



Figure 16 Wood Carving: Parts of Choktse or Folding Table

Wooden Mask Making. Mask making is another ancient craft in Sikkim. One of the most important items of Buddhists' traditional culture that has special socio-religious significance is the wooden mask of various types being used during their religious dances by the Lamas. The masks are carved out of the tough light wood of *Abies spectabilis* (D. Don) Mirb, mostly found in the high altitude areas of Sikkim. Prior to carving, the wood has to be seasoned. The wood piece is cut

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horizontally according to the size of the masks to be made. Thereafter, curved knife is used to bring to shape the concave and convex portions. Number of chisels and tools are put to use for days to finish. The surface of the mask is smoothened by using sand paper, synthetic painting follows thereafter. They are beautifully painted and varnished and are provided with yak tail wig. At present, synthetic colour paints have replaced the traditional stone colours and vegetable dyes, which had been so costly. Each mask has a specific meaning and a story with certain religious connotation associated with it. Traditionally the mask dances are staged by the Lamas or monks in the Gonpas or Monasteries. There are different types of mask normally made by Bhutias and Lepchas like mask of Kanchenjunga, mask of Garura, mask of Mahakal, etc. But now, many of the Bhutias and Lepchas and the other people including the tourists also used to purchase to keep such beautiful masks in their domestic houses for internal decoration. Face masks in wood of different gods, goddesses and animals are made and worn by people during festivals, religious ceremonies and dances. Wooden masks may depict serene, partly angry or animal expressions. Nowadays they are also used as wall hangings. The mask is normally prepared by men and not by women.

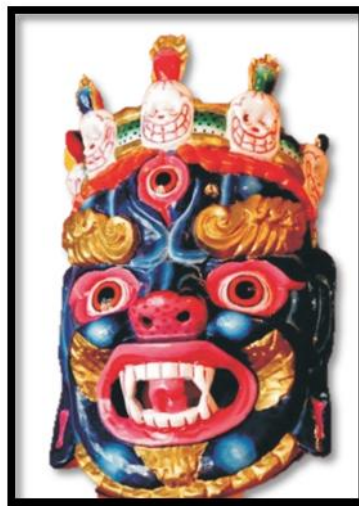


Figure 17 Wooden Mask

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Cane and Bamboo Craft. The cane and bamboo-craft is also an important handicraft in Sikkim. Initially these natural fibres were used to make products of daily use. Every tribe and community makes materials of aesthetic yet functional use, their skills evolved over centuries of usage. Bamboo and cane craft are deep rooted in traditional culture of all three ethnic group of Sikkim. It is the traditional handicrafts of Bhutias, Lepchas and Nepalese of Sikkim. Cane and bamboo pieces are first of all split by using simple tools like *khukri* or knife to make thin strips. Thereafter the strips are sized as per requirement and are then intricately woven and modified and improved upon as per the graphical design. Products ranging from household implements to construction of dwelling houses to weaving accessories to musical instruments are made in bamboo. There are varieties of attractive user friendly and eco-friendly cane and bamboo-craft products like, Lepcha hats, fruit and vegetable baskets, bamboo flower sticks, beer mugs, stands, hair clips, tea-trays, carry bags, containers, tea strainers, spoons, flower vases, *piras*, mats, hats and tumblers. Besides basket- weaving, bamboo is used chiefly in the construction of houses and fencing. Cane and Bamboo forms an integral part in the lives of the people of Sikkim. Bamboo is used in many ways to make several articles and generally people use it in many ways to make those things which are required in their day to day lives. Cane and bamboo is also used for religious rituals like for hoisting prayer flags, household furniture items like *moorahs* or small stoops, decorative items like flowers, pen and utility items like pen stands, picture frames, baskets and dustbins. Bamboos are giant woody grasses and over 1200 species of bamboo are known to exist throughout the world, with sizes ranging from miniatures to giants stems of over 200 feet. In Sikkim bamboo grows in abundance. Bamboos are among the fastest growing plants on the planet and are an integral part of the cultural, social and economic tradition of Sikkim. But the cane is

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grown only in limited areas, thereby bulk of it comes from neighbouring Siliguri or other parts of the north-east.



Figure 18 Eco-friendly Bamboo Tray

Lepchas weave strong and regular mats out of the barks of bamboo and various reeds, which they employ for the variety of purposes. This craft work was ideally supposed to be the men's work but even females did it. The females were in fact better weavers of mats. While weaving of baskets was however done mostly by males and during leisure hours particularly in the rainy days. Women normally do weaving big basket by using bamboo strips out of the barks of bamboo and not make any cane and bamboo-craft, while only men make bamboo- craft. Traditionally, there is a notion among Bhutia- Lepcha that if any woman make bamboo-craft then she will not get any peace and prosperity in life.



Figure 19 **Bamboo Mug in making at Khechuperi Bamboo House at Khechuperi Thingling Third Yuksum, Tashiding**

Thangka Painting. *Thangkas* are the religious scrolls found hung in monasteries and houses of Buddhists. *Thangka* Painting depicts different incarnations of Buddha. It has an excellent tradition in Sikkim. Such paintings are considered very auspicious and is supposed to drive away evil spirits. Traditionally, only the religious artisans, Bhutias and Lepchas were allowed to make *Thangka* painting. Because, these paintings are made by referring to religious texts, it is necessary to know the Tibetan language. These are not mere pieces of decoration for the artist, but a powerful aid to tantric mediation. In fact, traditional handicrafts of Bhutias and Lepchas were mainly didactic and for religious purpose and not commercialized. But now craftsmanship is being more

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and more commercialized and so is the handicraft. When the earlier handicrafts had only cultural and religious significance, the present day handicrafts are also often taken for decorative purposes too.



Figure 20 Thangka Painting

Thangka is a painting of divinities or group of divinities on silk clothes which depicts different incarnations and life of Lord Buddha, Goddess Doma (Tara), Guru Padmasambhav or God Chana Dorji or any Tibetan saint, wheel of life (one of the purest Buddhists emblems) or some other deity, surrounded by deities of lesser significance etc. On the wall of the monastery, there are *Thangka* Painting as well as there are different kinds of paintings on black canvas (if on silk then costly, if on other clothes then not costly) which are associated with either monastery or non-monastery form. For *Thangka* painting, first of all a rough piece of cotton is stretched on a frame and it is made smooth by sizing it with a mixture of chalk and glue. After it is dried and

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polished, painting is drawn on this cloth. Stone colour, vegetable dyes and two primary colours such as red and yellow are used in plenty while making a painting. Costly stone colours and vegetable dyes are mainly used for making such paintings. The two primary colours i.e. red and yellow of these paintings show the difference between the fire and life, between mortal and immortal. The orange colour symbolizes knowledge of the highest form of spirituality, the blue colour suggests depth, purity and infinity, and green represents the vegetable aspects. The paintings are bordered with rich silk and brocade with heavily engraved silver knobs at either ends at the lower half of the *Thangka*. In addition to occupying important place in monasteries or in a home the *Thangka* paintings are also required during special occasions such as birth, death, decoration purpose, house-warming etc. The *Thangka* works of master craftsmen sell for thousands of rupees abroad. They work in seclusion in remote villages. But now Nepalese also are creating such paintings of art. Men mainly make *Thangka* paintings, and women generally do not do such paintings. Because such paintings are entirely associated with their religious text in Tibetan language, which are taught to Lamas only. But two Buddhist nuns have done it in Rumtek monastery. At present women do *Thangka* mounting and framing on brocade. Lachey Doma Sherpa belongs to Bhutia community as per census of India of Bhojagiri area of East Sikkim and nearer to Gangtok has the specialization to do such mounting. A *Thangka* serves as an ostensible symbol of the deity worshipped by the devotee, and it provides focal points for meditation. The central figure in a *Thangka* is always a Buddha or any other deity or bodhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism. Other figures depicted around the main deity have their mystical significance. *Thangkas* in Sikkim have a religious and spiritual significance and is regarded as a sacred object.

CHAPTER 3

People and Handicrafts in Meghalaya

This part briefly brings out the tribal population concentration in Meghalaya and selected districts highlighting the various types of tribes inhabiting in those districts, handicrafts, their main and subsidiary occupations etc.

Meghalaya—alaya (“abode”) and megha (“of the clouds”)—occupies a mountainous plateau of great scenic beauty. Meghalaya is located in the north-eastern part of the country. Movement for the creation of a separate Hill State was started in 1960 and after 12 years of struggle, the State of Meghalaya was born. Meghalaya the 21st State of the Indian Union was carved out of the erstwhile State of Assam on the 2nd April, 1970 as an autonomous State, created under the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act 1969, consisting of the former Garo Hills district and United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Assam. Meghalaya became a full-fledged state in the midnight of January 20-21, 1972 in accordance with the provisions contained in the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971, with a Legislative Assembly of its own.^{iv} It also marked the triumph of peaceful democratic negotiations, mutual understanding and victory over violence and intrigue. The State of Meghalaya is situated on the north-east of India. It extends for about 300 kilometres in length and about 100 kilometres in breadth. It is bounded on the north by Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong districts, on the east by Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills districts, all of Assam, and on the south and west by Bangladesh. Meghalaya has about 443 Kms. of international border with Bangladesh. It is essentially a hilly state which lies between 20.1° N and 26.5° N latitude and 85.49 °E and 92.52 °E longitude. The Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, which form the central and eastern part of Meghalaya, is an imposing plateau with rolling grasslands, hills and river valleys. The southern face of the plateau is marked by deep gorges and abrupt slopes,

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at the foot of which, a narrow strip of plain land runs along the international border with Bangladesh. Meghalaya covers an area of approximately 22,430 square kilometres which is about 0.68 percent of the total area of the country, with a length to breadth ratio of about 3:1 and area wise ranking 28th among the states of India.^{vi}



Figure 21 Map of Meghalaya

Source: Maps of India

As per data from Census 2011 as published by Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner and Planning Commission of India the population of Meghalaya is 29,66,889^{vii} constituting 0.25 percent of the total population of India, population wise ranking 23rd among the states of India^{viii}. The road density of the State is only 47.8 Km/ 100 sq. km against the national average of 170. Even amongst the north-east states, Meghalaya's road density is on the lower side of the spectrum. Several challenges faced by the State due to severe geographical disadvantage.

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The State is landlocked, far away from well-developed markets, has hilly terrain with very severe slopes on the southern side and experiences heavy torrential rainfall. Two projects of broad gauge line have been taken up for capital connectivity of Meghalaya. New broad gauge line from Tetelia to Byrnihat in Meghalaya was sanctioned in 2006-07. Some organisations are stating that railway connectivity may lead to influx of outsiders and this has led to some local resistance to this project. The issue has been taken up for early resolution. The target date for completion has not been fixed yet. A new broad gauge line from Byrnihat to Shillong was sanctioned in 2010-11, but the target date for completion has not been fixed yet. Meghalaya is predominantly an agrarian economy. Agriculture and allied activities engage nearly two-thirds of the total workforce in Meghalaya. Key industries of Meghalaya are agriculture and food processing, floriculture, horticulture, mining, cement, tourism, hydroelectric power, handlooms, handicrafts and sericulture.

Meghalaya currently has 11 districts. **Khasi Hills Division.** 1. East Khasi Hills (Shillong) 2. West Khasi Hills (Nongstoin) 3. South West Khasi Hills (Mawkyrwat) 4. Ri Bhoi (Nongpoh). **Jaintia Hills Division.** 5. West Jaintia Hills (Jowai) 6. East Jaintia Hills (Khliehriat). **Garo Hills Division.** 7. East Garo Hills (Williamnagar) 8. West Garo Hills (Tura) 9. North Garo Hills (Resubelpara) 10. South West Garo Hills (Ampati) 11. South Garo Hills (Baghmara)

Table 4

List of District, Headquarter and Block Name of Meghalaya

Sl. No.	District Name	Sl. No.	Block Name
1	East Khasi Hills District	1	Myllem C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Shillong	2	Mawphlang C & RD Block
		3	Mawsynram C & RD Block
		4	Shella Bholaganj C & RD Block

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		5	Pynursla C & RD Block
		6	Khatarshnong Laitkroh C & RD Block
		7	Mawkynrew C & RD Block
		8	Mawryngkneng C & RD Block
		9	Sohiong C & RD Block
		10	Mawpat C & RD Block
		11	Mawlai C & RD Block
2	West Khasi Hills District	12	Mairang C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Nongstoin	13	Mawthadraishan C & RD Block
		14	Nongstoin C & RD Block
		15	Mawshynrut C & RD Block
3	South West Khasi Hills District	16	Mawkyrwat C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Mawkyrwat	17	Ranikor C & RD Block
4	Ri Bhoi District	18	Umsning C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Nongpoh	19	Umling C & RD Block
		20	Jirang C & RD Block
		21	Bhoirybong C & RD Block
5	West Jaintia Hills District	22	Thadlaskein C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Jowai	23	Laskein C & RD Block
		24	Amlarem C & RD Block
6	East Jaintia Hills District	25	Khliehriat C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Khliehriat	26	Saipung C & RD Block
7	East Garo Hills District	27	Dambo Rongjeng C & RD Block

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	Headquarter: Williamnagar	28	Songsak C & RD Block
		29	Samanda C & RD Block
8	West Garo Hills District	30	Rongram C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Tura	31	Dadengiri C & RD Block
		32	Selsella C & RD Block
		33	Tikrikilla C & RD Block
		34	Gambegre C & RD Block
		35	Dalu C & RD Block
		36	Demdema C & RD
9	North Garo Hills District	37	Resubelpara C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Resubelpara	38	Kharkutta C & RD Block
		39	Bajengdoba C & RD Block
10	South West Garo Hills District	40	Betasing C&RD Block
	Headquarter: Ampati	41	Zikzak C & RD Block
		42	Damalgre C & RD Block
11	South Garo Hills District	43	Baghmara C & RD Block
	Headquarter: Baghmara	44	Gasuapara C & RD Block
		45	Ronggara C & RD Block
		46	Chokpot C& RD Block

Source: <http://meghalaya.gov.in/megportal/stateprofile>

Among these 11 districts East Khasi Hills District, South West Khasi Hills District, Ri Bhoi District, West Jaintia Hills District and South West Garo Hills District have been chosen as the study area.

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Highlights of the districts within Study area

The Khasi Hills District was divided into two districts, viz. the East Khasi Hills District and the West Khasi Hills District on October 28, 1976. On June 4, 1992, East Khasi Hills District was further divided into two administrative districts of East Khasi Hills District and Ri Bhoi District.

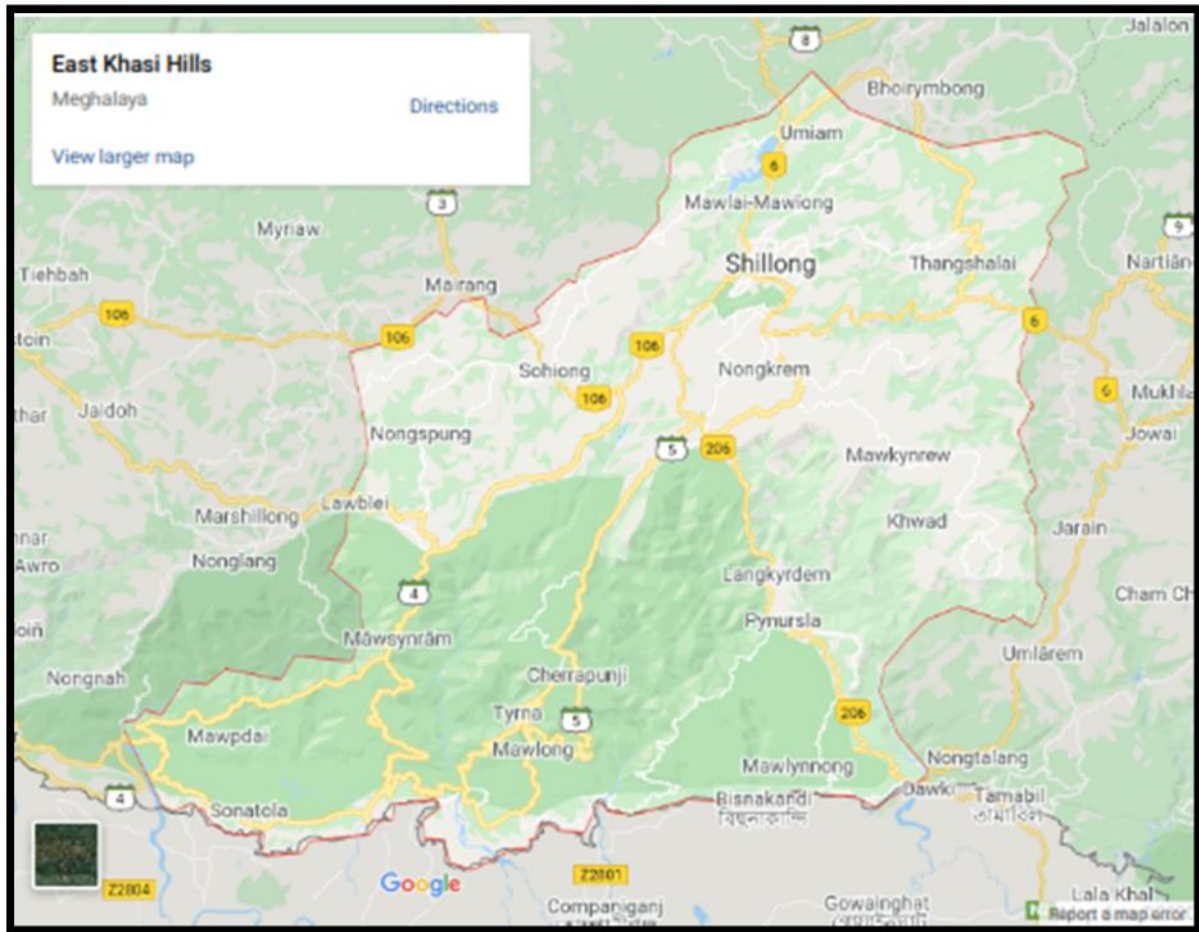


Figure 22 Google Map of East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya
Source: <https://eastkhasihills.gov.in/map-of-district>

East Khasi Hills District. Shillong is the district headquarter of East Khasi Hills District. The district consists of eleven Community and Rural Development blocks at present. According to 2011 census, the district encompasses a geographical area of 2,748 sq km and has a population

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of 8,24,059. The total Literacy rate is 84.70 percent, of which Male literacy rate is 85.26 percent and Female literacy rate is 84.15 percent. Literacy rate is the percentage of literates to population aged 7 years and above. The major religions in the district are Christian (65.79 percent) and Hindu (17.55 percent) of the total population respectively. Main source of income in the district is from the agriculture sector. Shillong is the district headquarter of East Khasi Hills District. Other important towns are Sohra (Cherrapunji), Lawsohtun, Madanrting, Mawlai, Nongmysong, Nongthymmai, Pynthorumkhrah and Shillong Cantonment. The Khasi, Jaintia, Bhoi, War collectively known as the Hynniewtrep people predominantly inhabit the district of East Khasi Hills, also known to be one of the earliest ethnic group of settlers in the Indian sub-continent, belonging to the Proto Austroloid Monkhmer race.

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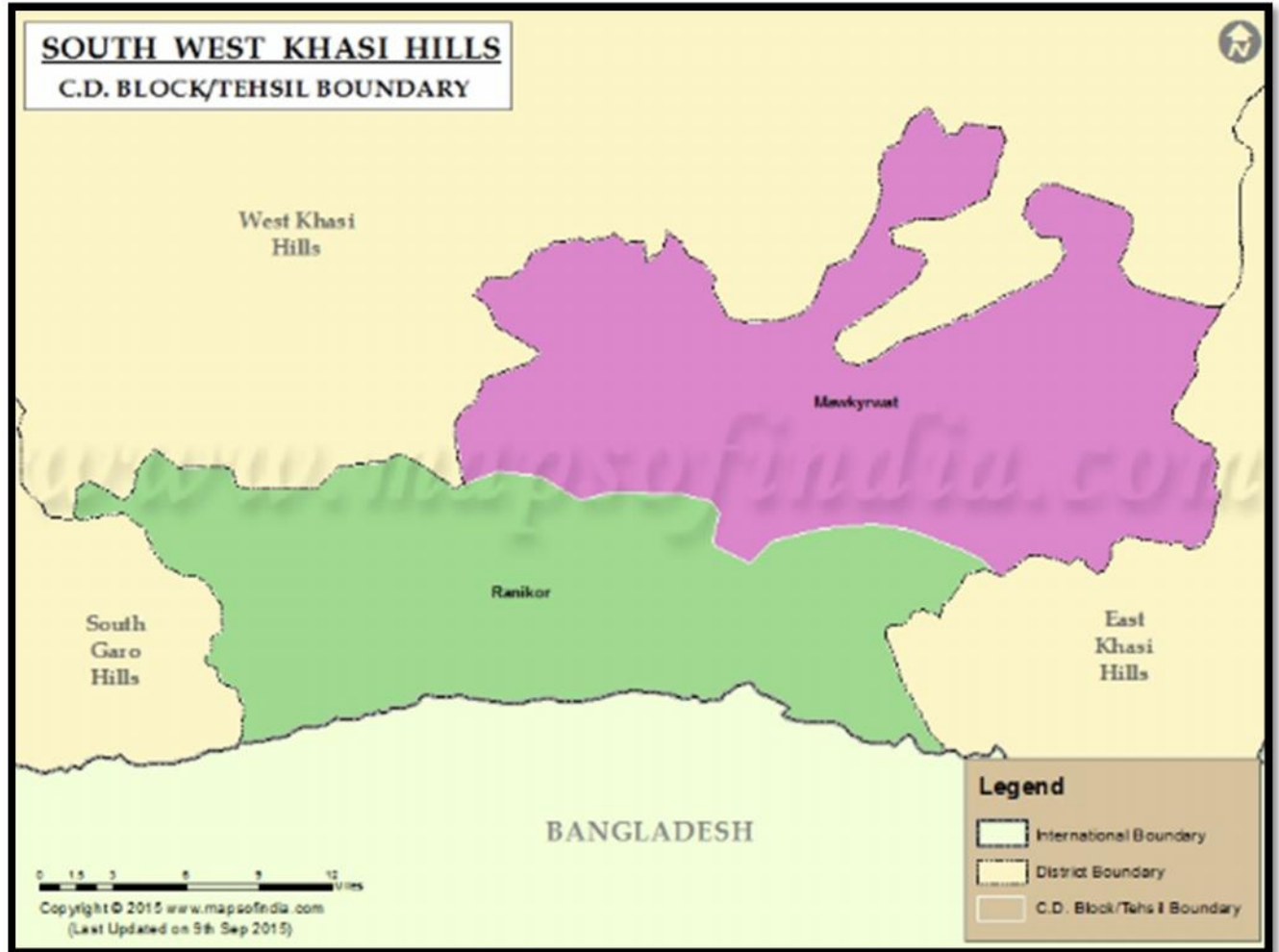


Figure 23 Map of South West Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya

Source: Maps of India

South West Khasi Hills District. West Khasi Hills District was carved out of the state of Meghalaya in the year 1976 on the 28 day of October which in fact is the largest of all the eleven districts in the state of Meghalaya and since its existence, it has been bifurcated into two Civil Sub-divisions and a new district in South West Khasi Hills. Mawkyrwat Civil Sub-Division was notified as a fully-fledged Civil Sub Division with effect from June 26, 1982 under Government Notification No. HPL.539/81/51, dated 22nd June 1982. For public convenience and better administration Mawkyrwat Civil Sub-Division of West Khasi Hills District with minor

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modifications, has been upgraded, into a fully-fledged District and named as South West Khasi Hills District with headquarters at Mawkyrwat. The South West Khasi Hills district was carved out of the West Khasi Hills district on August 3, 2012.^{ix} The district occupies an area of 1,341 sq km. According to the Census 2011 population of the district is 1,10,152 and the literacy rate is 76.84 percent. The Khasis are now mostly Christians. But before that, they believed in a Supreme Being, The Creator – U Blei Nongthaw and under Him, there were several deities of water and of mountains and also of other natural objects. The Khasi people predominantly inhabit the districts of South West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, also known to be one of the earliest ethnic group of settlers in the Indian sub-continent, belonging to the Proto Austroloid Monkhmer race. The district headquarters is located at Mawkyrwat. Besides Mawkyrwat, Ranikor is another community and rural development block.

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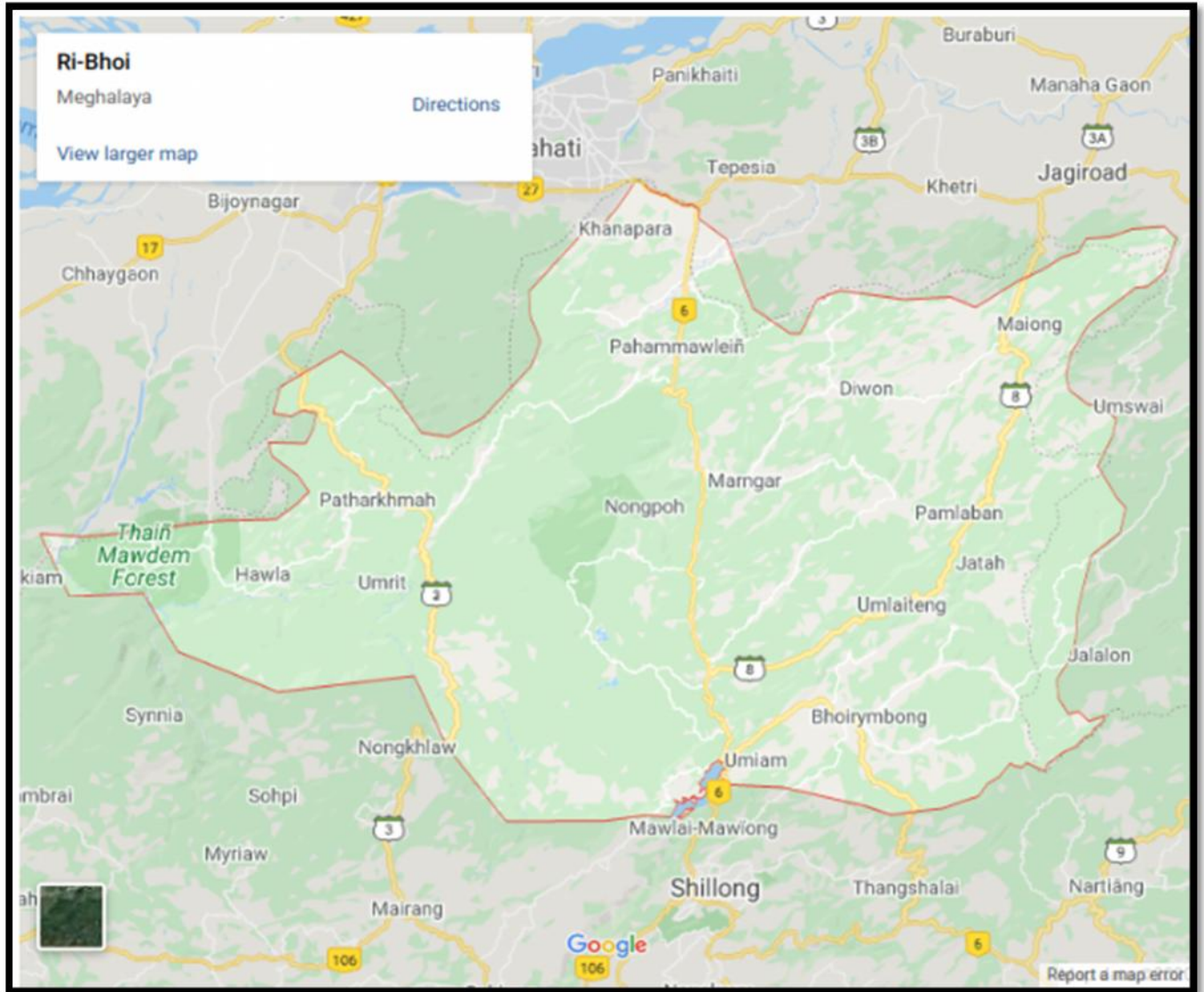


Figure 24 Google Map of Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya

Source: <https://ribhoi.gov.in/map-of-district/#>

Ri-Bhoi District. Ri Bhoi District is one of the Districts of Meghalaya which came into existence and assumed the hierarchical status of the District on the June 4, 1992 by upgrading the former Civil Sub-Division. The District was carved out from the erstwhile East Khasi Hills District. It geographically comprises parts of the Khasi kingdoms viz. parts of Myllem Syiemship, Khyrim Syiemship, Nongspung Syiemship, Nongkhaw Syiemship, whole of Nongpoh Sirdarship

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(erstwhile Nongpoh Syiemship), Myrdon Sirdarship and the erstwhile Nongwah Syiemship. Presently, Nongwah Syiemship is one of the missing Khasi States that calls for restoration both administratively and territorially. The district occupies an area of 2448 sq.km excluding the geographical areas under the erstwhile Nongwah Syiemship and other places which fall under the 'Areas of Differences' between Assam and Meghalaya. It has a population of 258,840 and the literacy rate is 75.67 percent as of 2011 Census. The Bhois of Ri Bhoi District are the Sub – group of the main Khasi Tribe. The majority of the Bhois speak the Bhoi dialect, although they use the Khasi dialect as a major subject in their schools. In Ri Bhoi District, there are other groups of tribes viz. Garos, who speak the Tibeto – Burman groups of language, whereas the Karbis, Marngars, Mikirs, Bodos and Lalungs use Assamese as their Lingua Franca. Some speak and write Khasi too. The Bhois follow the matrilineal system. As per official census 2011 and population data 2020 of Ri Bhoi district, Christian are majority in Ri Bhoi state. Christian constitutes 84.42 per cent of Ri Bhoi population. Hindu are minority in Ri Bhoi state forming 11.96 percent of total population. In 2006 the Ministry of Panchayati Raj named Ri Bhoi one of the country's 250 most backward districts (out of a total of 640). It is one of the three districts in Meghalaya currently receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF)^x. Agriculture is the main economic activity engaging more than 90 percent of the total workforce in interior villages. However, a diversification of economic activities has been observed in villages having better road connectivity. For example, in Nongpoh town being the district headquarters, many people are engaged in trade and services. Nongpoh is the District headquarter. Besides Nongpoh, Umroi is a Census Town city in district of Ri Bhoi.

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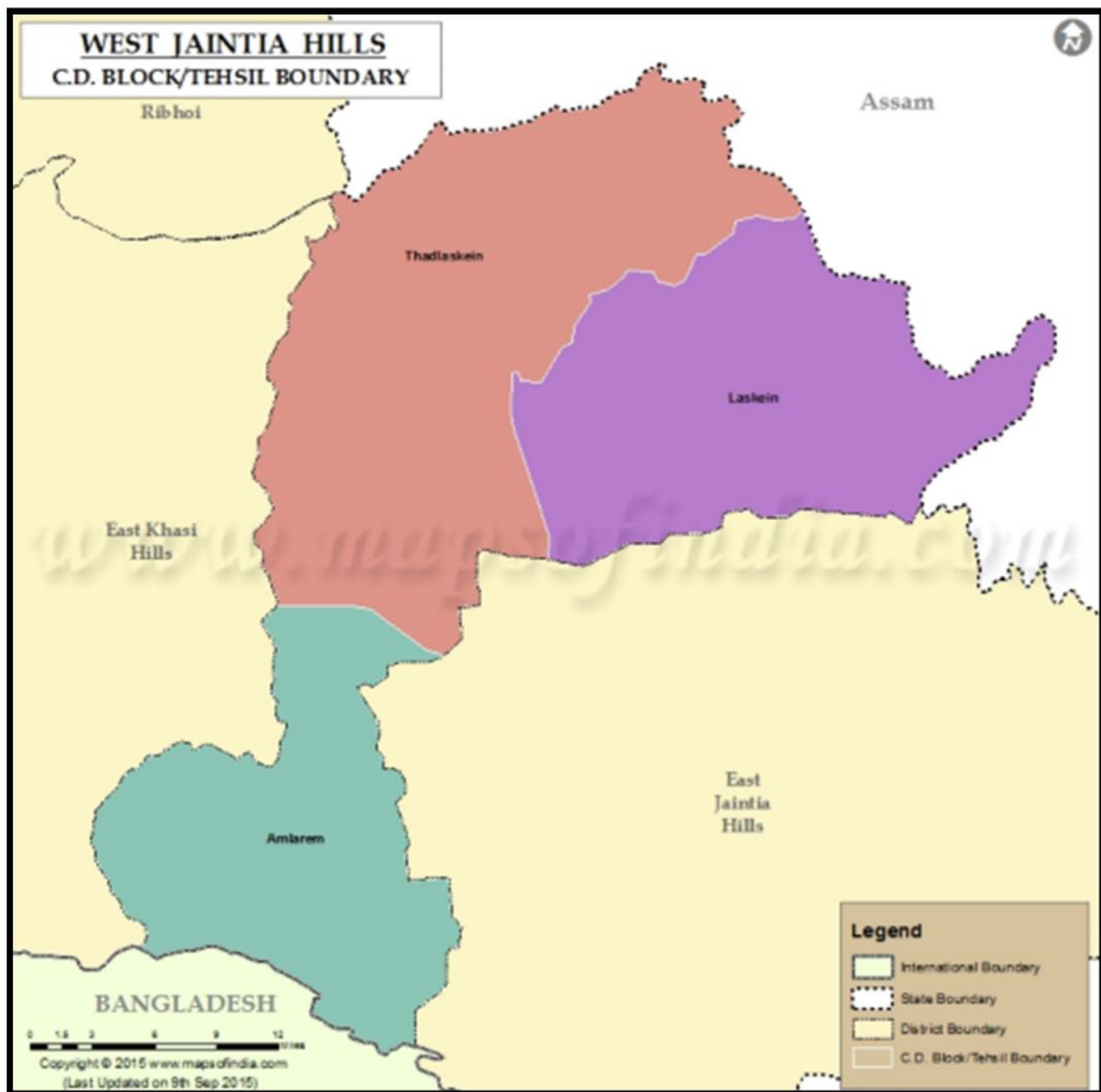


Figure 25 Map of West Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya

Source: Maps of India

West Jaintia Hills District. The united district (Jaintia Hills District) was created on February 22, 1972. The district was the part of the Meghalaya subtropical forests Eco region. With

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the bifurcation of the erstwhile Jaintia Hills District into East and West Jaintia Hills Districts, West Jaintia Hills District came into existence on July 31, 2012. The total area of the district is 1693 Sq. kms. The district has a total population of 2,70,352 and the literacy rate is 63.23 percent as of 2011 Census. West Jaintia Hills District is the home of one of the major tribes of Meghalaya popularly known as the Jaintias or the Pnars and other sub-tribes like the Wars, the Bhois and the Biates. Like the Khasis, the Jaintias are believed to be remnants of the first Mongolian overflow into India. They established themselves in their present homeland in the remote past and owing primarily to their geographical isolation they succeeded in maintaining their independence until the consolidation of the British administration in this part of India. Jaintias are a matrilineal society. The main language widely used by the inhabitants of this district is the Pnar Language which is different from the Khasi language of the East and West Khasi Hills Districts. There is no written script for this language and Khasi is used for educative purposes. English is the only medium of instruction used in some schools. Other schools use the vernacular dialect in Roman letter (*Khasi Cherra* dialect) and English as the medium of instruction. However for high school section, English is adopted as the medium of instruction and Khasi dialect is studied as a vernacular subject. A few local learned people are trying to devise the alphabets for the Pnar language. Other dialects include Khyrniam in the western part of district, War speaking to the southern part of the district and Biate, spoken by approximately 20,000 members. Besides English, Hindi, Nepali, Bengali, Assamese are spoken by the outsiders for communication. The original tribal religion of the Jaintias is known as Niamtre. The Jaintia tribals believe that their religion is God-given (not founded by man) and comes to this world by God's decree. The British paramountcy during the seventeenth century brought about the winds of change in many aspects of the Jaintia society, a good percentage of the people started embracing Christianity as their religion. Apart from

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Christians, there are other religious groups in the district like the Unitarians, the Hindus, and the Muslims etc. Although the mainstay of the district is agriculture. Jaintia people are famous for their weaving skills and creating cane mats, stools and baskets. They are also famous for weaving of carpet and silk and the making of musical instruments, jewellery and pineapple fiber articles. They also weave cloth. Jaintia people are famous for their pottery skills. They make special kinds of earthen containers (*maloi*) to store food items and others, earthen tea pots (*tipot khyndew heh*) for storing the prepared tea for serving purpose or simply for storing water, earthen mugs (*mok um*) for drinking water. Being Headquarter Jowai is the host of all the heads of important governmental offices and establishments, educational institutions, hospitals, banking institutions, etc. The district comprises of one Civil Sub-Division viz. Amlarem Civil Sub-Division and three Community and Rural Development Blocks viz. Amlarem C & RD Block, Laskein C & RD Block and Thadlaskein C & RD Block.

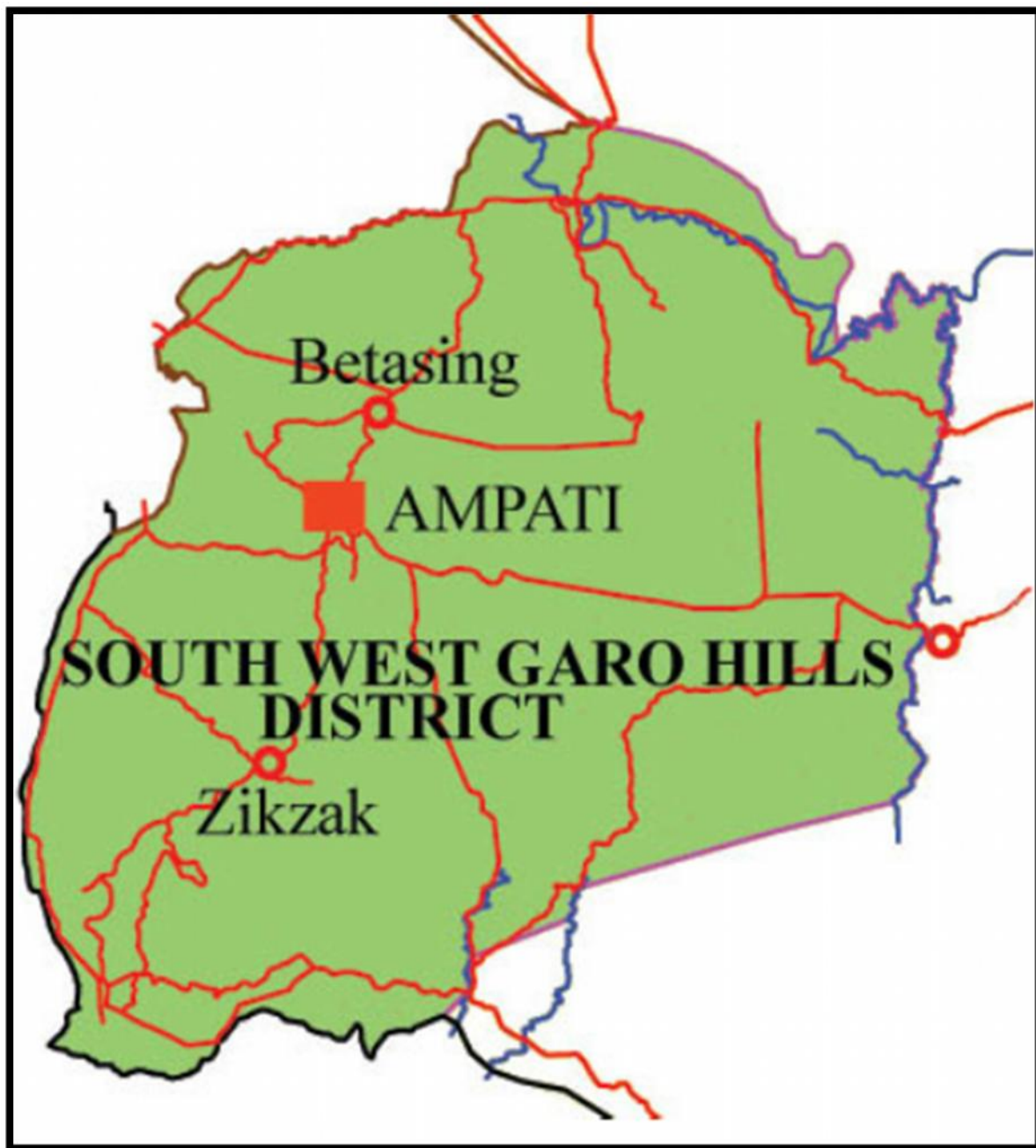


Figure 26 Map of South West Garo Hills District, Meghalaya

Source: The Official Web Portal of Government of Meghalaya

<http://meghalaya.gov.in/megportal/districtmap/11>

South West Garo Hills District. The Ampati Civil Sub-Division is upgraded to a full-fledged district as South West Garo Hills, on August 7, 2012. The South West Garo Hills is curved

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out of present West Garo Hills. The district comprises all the villages falling under the two Community and Rural Development Blocks, viz. Betasing and Zikzak Community and Rural Development Blocks, including 33 villages under Mukdangra Gram Sevak (GS) Circle and Garobadha Gram Sevak Circle of Selsella Community & Rural Development Block, 24 villages under Okkapara Songma Gram Sevak Circle and Chengkuregre Gram Sevak Circle of Gambeggre Community & Rural Development Block, 13 villages under Jarangkona Gram Sevak Circle of Dalu Community & Rural Development Block and Anggalgre village of Rongkhongre Gram Sevak Circle of Rongram Community & Rural Development Block. South West Garo Hills is a small district of just 822 sq kms with only 1,72,495 people as per Census 2011. The literacy rate of the District is 56.7 percent as per 2011 Census^{xi}. Predominant tribes are the Garos, the Koches and the Hajongs. The Garos are one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. The Garo language belongs to the Bodo branch of the Bodo-Naga-Kachin family of the Sino-Tibetan phylum. As the Garo language is not traditionally written down, customs, traditions, and beliefs are handed down orally. It is also believed that the written language was lost in its transit to the present Garo Hills.

However, the modern official language in schools and government offices is English and the modern generation is more inclined towards English. Their traditional religious system, Songsarek, is generally described as animist, but from the latter part of the 19th century American Baptist, and later Catholic missionaries opened schools and hospitals in the Garo Hills. Most Garos are now Christians, with the majority belonging to the Garo Baptist Convention, smaller numbers of Roman Catholics, and also some Seventh-day Adventists and Anglicans. Traditionally their religion was a mixture of Pantheism and Hinduism. The Koch dialect is of Tibeto-Burman origin (Gait 1924). The influence of both Bengali and Assamese language is reflected in their dialect.

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Though the Hajong nowadays speak the jharua dialect of Assamese or the Mymensingh dialect of East Bengal it is very likely they belong to the same branch as the Bodos, Koches and Rabhas. There are two broad sections among the Hajongs, namely the Khatal and the Hajong. The Khatal claim to be Vaishnavitie, though they still worship Kali and Kamakhya, the two Hindu deities of the Sakta sect. Agriculture is the mainstay of South West Garo Hills. Ampati is the headquarter of the South West Garo Hills. Other important towns are Betasing and Zikzak.

People of Meghalaya

Tribal people make up the majority of Meghalaya’s population. The Khasis are the largest group, followed by the Garos then the Jaintias. Other groups include the Hajongs, the Biates, the Koches, Kuki, Tiwa (Lalung), Karbi, Rabha and Nepali etc. The total population of Meghalaya is 29.67 lakh. The total scheduled tribe population of Meghalaya is 25.56 lakh. 86.1 percent of the total population of Meghalaya is scheduled tribe which is again 2.4 percent of total scheduled tribe population of India according to Census 2011.

Table 5

Population of Scheduled Castes and Tribes by District, 2011

District	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Others	Total
Jaintia Hills	1317	376099	17708	395124
East Khasi Hills	5642	661158	159122	825922
Ri Bhoi	590	230081	28169	258840
West Khasi Hills	168	375097	8196	383461
East Garo Hills	509	305180	12228	317917
West Garo Hills	8810	474009	160472	643291

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South Garo Hills	319	134237	7778	142334
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Source: Census Office, Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India

Three dominant tribes, Khasis, Garos and Jaintias inhabit Meghalaya with each tribe contrastingly distinct from the other yet a harmonious milieu. The Garos inhabit the western area, the central area by the Khasis and the eastern area by the Jaintias. Meghalaya's main ethnic communities, each having its own distinctive customs and cultural traditions are the Khasis (of Mon-Khmer ancestry), the Garos (of Tibeto-Burman origin) and the Jaintias said to be from South East Asia. The common trait binding all three communities is its matrilineal system in which the family lineage is taken from the mother's side. The people of Meghalaya are known to be hospitable, cheerful and friendly.

Highlights of the Communities under Study Area

Khasis. The Khasi people predominantly inhabit the districts of Meghalaya, also known to be one of the earliest ethnic group of settlers in the Indian sub-continent, belonging to the Proto Austroloid Monkhmer race. The Khasi people is the state's largest community, with around 48% of the population of Meghalaya. They had migrated from the Southeast Asia to the hills of north-east India. Khasis residing in Jaintia hills are now better known as Jaintias. They are also called Pnars. The Khasis occupying the northern lowlands and foothills are generally called Bhois as that area is often called Ri Bhoi. People in the east are known as the Pnar, and they call their land as Rilum Jaintia. Those who live in the southern tracts are termed Wars or Ri War, because of its mountainous regions and soil fertility. Again among the Wars, those living in the Khasi Hills are called War-Khasis and those in the Jaintia Hills, War-Pnars or War-Jaintias. The west has a number of regional names: Maram, Rimen, Khatsawphra, Mawiang, Lyngam. In the Khasi Hills the Lyngngams live in the north-western part. In the Jaintia Hills we have Khyrswangs, Labangs,

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Nangphylluts, Nangtungs in the north-eastern part and in the east. A Khasi who inhabits the central area is known as Khyntiam. But all of them claim to have descended from the *Ki Hynñiewtrep* and are now known by the generic name of Khasi-Pnars or simply Khasis. They have the same traditions, customs and usage with a little variation owing to geographical divisions. The Khasi people do not have sub-tribes, a confusion that sometimes arises from the expression Khyntiam, u Pnar, u Bhoi, u War. This term is mainly based on the geographical location of Khasi inhabits. Under the Constitution of India, the Khasis have been granted the status of Scheduled Tribe. The Khasi-Pnars according to the 2011 Census of India, over 1.41 million Khasi lived in Meghalaya in the districts of East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, South West Khasi Hills, Ri Bhoi, West Jaintia Hills and East Jaintia Hills. It is generally considered by many Khasi sociologists that the Khasi Tribe consist of seven sub-tribes, hence the title ‘Children of the Seven Huts’: Khyntiam, Pnar, Bhoi, War, Maram, Lyngngam and Diko. The Khyntiam (or Nongphlang) inhabit the uplands of the East Khasi Hills District; the Pnar or Synteng live in the uplands of the Jaintia Hills. The Bhoi live in the lower hills to the north and north-east of the Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills towards the Brahmaputra valley, a vast area now under Ri Bhoi District. The War, usually divided into War-Jaintia and War-Khyntiam in the south of the Khasi Hills, live on the steep southern slopes leading to Bangladesh. The Maram inhabit the uplands of the central parts of West Khasi Hills Districts. The Lyngngam people inhabit the western parts of the West Khasi Hills. The last sub-group completing the “seven huts”, are the Diko, an extinct group who once inhabited the lowlands of the West Khasi Hills.

Khasi mythology traces the tribe’s original abode to *Ki Hynñiewtrep* (“The Seven Huts”).^{xii} According to the Khasi mythology, *U Blei Trai Kynrad* (God, the Lord Master) had originally distributed the human race into 16 heavenly families (*Khadhynriew Trep*).^{xiii} However, seven out

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of these 16 families are stuck on earth while the other 9 are stuck in heaven. According to the myth, a heavenly ladder resting on the sacred Lum Sohpetbneng Peak (located in the present-day Ri-Bhoi district) enabled people to go freely and frequently to heaven whenever they pleased until one day they were tricked into cutting a divine tree which was situated at Lum Diengiei Peak (also in present-day Ri Bhoi district), a grave error which prevented them access to the heavens forever. This myth is often seen as a metaphor of how nature and trees, in particular, are the manifestation of the divine on Earth and destroying nature and trees means severing our ties with the Divine. Like the Japanese, the Khasis use the rooster as a symbol because they believe that it was he who aroused God and also humbly paved and cleared the path for God to create the Universe at the beginning of time. The rooster is the symbol of morning marking a new beginning and a new sunrise.

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Figure 27 Khasis

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They have a number of clans such as Lyngdoh, Diengdoh, Marbaniang, Shiemliah, Lapang and Songkali. They are divided into several matrilineal clans such as Mawlong, Khongweer and Symley. Descent is traced through the mother, but the father plays an important role in the material and mental life of the family. While, writing on the Khasi and the Jaintia people, David Roy observed, 'a man is the defender of the woman, but the woman is the keeper of his trust'. No better description of Meghalayan matrilineal society could perhaps be possible. In the Khasi society, the woman looks after home and hearth, the man finds the means to support the family, and the maternal uncle settles all social and religious matters. Earlier in the conservative Jaintia non-Christian families, however, the father only visits the family in the night and is not responsible for the maintenance of the family.

Khasis follow a matrilineal system of inheritance. The youngest daughter or *Ka Khadduh* inherits the ancestral property and daughters are given preference in the division of property while males can own only self-acquired property. If *Ka Khadduh* dies without any daughter surviving her, her next elder sister inherits the ancestral property, and after her, the youngest daughter of that sister. Failing all daughters and their female issues, the property goes back to the mother's sister, mother's sister's daughter and so on. The *Ka Khadduh*'s property is actually the ancestral property and so if she wants to dispose it off, she must obtain consent and approval of the uncles and brothers. Among the War-Khasis, however property passes to the children, male or female, in equal shares but among the War-Jaintias, only the female children get the inheritance Even Christians are known to pass down their ancestral property through the female line. Khasi women enjoy a high social status and play a significant role in socio-economic matters and household management.

The Khasis have distinct costumes and jewellery. However, with the change of time as in

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the rest of the country, the males have adopted the western code of dress leaving the females to continue the tradition of ethnic sartorial elegance. The traditional Khasi male dress is “Jymphong” or a longish sleeveless coat without collar, fastened by thongs in front. Now, the Khasis have adopted the western dress. On ceremonial occasions, they appear in “Jymphong” and dhoti with an ornamental waist-band. The Khasi traditional female dress is called the Jainsem or Dhara, which is rather elaborate with several pieces of cloth, giving the body a cylindrical shape and flows loose to the ankles. The upper part of her body is clad in a blouse. Over these, she ties both ends of a checkered cotton cloth on one shoulder, thus improvising an apron. On formal occasions, worn over the “Jympien” is a long piece of Assam muga silk called “Ka Jainsem Dhara” consists of a single piece of material which hangs loose below the knees after being knotted or pinned at the shoulders. The “Tapmohkhlieh” or head-shawl is either worn by knotting both ends behind the neck or is arranged in a stylish manner as done with a shawl. On ceremonial occasions, they wear a crown of silver or gold on the head. A spike or peak is fixed to the back of the crown, corresponding to the feathers worn by the menfolk. The jewellery of the Khasis is the pendant is called “Kynjri Ksiar”, being made of 24 carat gold. The Khasis wear a string of thick red coral beads round their neck called ‘Paila during festive occasions.

The main crops produced by the Khasi people are betel leaf, areca nut, oranges, local Khasi rice and vegetables. The staple food of Khasis is rice. They also take fish and meat. Like the other tribes in the north-east, the Khasis also ferment rice-beer, and make spirit out of rice or millets by distillation. Use of rice-beer is a must for every ceremonial and religious occasion.

Khasi clans are exogamous. Marriage within a clan is a taboo. Rings or betel-nut bags are exchanged between the bride and the bridegroom to complete the union. In the Christian families, however, marriage is purely a civil contract. The Khasis are monogamous. Their social

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organisation does not favour other forms of marriage; therefore, deviation from this norm is quite rare. Young men and women are permitted considerable freedom in the choice of mates. Potential marriage partners are likely to have been acquainted before betrothal. Once a man has selected his desired spouse, he reports his choice to his parents. They then secure the services of a mediator to make the arrangements with the woman's family (provided that the man's clan agree with his choice). The parents of the woman ascertain her wishes and if she agrees to the arrangement her parents check to make certain that the man to be wed is not a member of their clan. If this is satisfactory then a wedding date is set. The type of marriage is the determining factor in the marital residence. In short, post marital residence for a married man when an heiress (known as *Ka Khadduh*) is involved must be matrilocal (that is, in his mother-in-law's house), while post-marital residence when a non-heiress is involved is neolocal. Generally, Khasi men prefer to marry a non-heiress because it will allow them to form independent family units somewhat immune to pressures from the wife's kin. Traditionally (though nowadays rule is not absolutely true), a Khasi man returns to his *Jing-Kur* (maternal home) upon the death of his spouse (if she is a *Khadduh* and they both have no children). These practices are the result of rules governing inheritance and property ownership. These rules are themselves related to the structure of the Khasi Kur (clan system).

Divorce with causes ranging from incompatibility to lack of offspring is easily obtainable. This ceremony traditionally consists of the husband handing the wife 5 cowries or paisa which the wife then hands back to her husband along with 5 of her own. The husband then throws these away or gives them to a village elder who throws them away. Present-day Khasis divorce through the Indian legal system.

The Khasis are now mostly Christians. Traditionally, the Khasis believe that their religion is God given and is based on the belief of one supreme God, the creator U Blei Nongthaw and

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under Him, there were several deities of water and of mountains and also of other natural objects. A Khasi is a deeply religious person, who has an intense love of life. He believes that life is God's greatest gift and he has to account for it again in the hereafter. Before the arrival of Christian missionaries, the majority of the Khasi people practised an indigenous tribal religion.^{xiv} Though around 85 percent of the Khasi populace have embraced Christianity, a substantial minority of the Khasi people still follow and practice their age old indigenous religion, which is known as Ka Niam Khasi or Niam tre. The main Christian denominations followed by the Khasis include Catholicism, Anglicanism, Presbyterianism (largest Christian denomination among the Khasis), and others. There are also a small number of Khasis, as a result of inter-community marriages, who are Muslims. There are also followers of Khasi Unitarianism as founded by Hajom Kissor Sing Lyngdoh Nongbri.

The Khasi are generally people of short stature. The Khasis are the only people in India who speak a Mon-Khmer language. Their mother tongue is Khasi. Their language, Khasi, is categorised as the northernmost Austroasiatic language. Primarily an oral language, they had no script of their own, they used the Bengali script until the arrival of the Welsh missionaries. Particularly significant in this regard was a Welsh evangelist, Thomas Jones, who had transcribed the Khasi language into the Roman Script. Many words in the Khasi language have been borrowed from Indo-Aryan languages such as Assamese, Bengali and Nepali. Records and their present culture, features and language strongly show that they also have a strong Tibeto-Himalayan-Burman influence.

The Khasis are particularly fond of songs praising the nature like lakes, waterfalls, hills etc. and also expressing love for their land. They use different types of musical instruments like drums, *duitaras* and instruments similar to guitars, flutes, pipes and cymbals.

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The Khasis are famous for weaving cane mat, stools and baskets. They make a special kind of cane mat called 'Tlieng', which guarantees a good utility of around 20-30 years. Khasis also weave cloth. The Khasis have also been involved in extracting iron ore and then manufacture domestic knives, utensils and even guns and other warfare weapons using it.

Many Khasi have taken up professions in civil services and in industries besides agriculture. Western Music and musical instruments are becoming popular among them.

Dance is central to the culture of Khasi life, and a part of the rites of passage. Dances are performed in Shnong (village), a Raid (group of villages), and a Hima (conglomeration of Raids). Some festivals includes Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem, Ka Pom-Blang Nongkrem, Ka-Shad Shyngwiang-Thangiap, Ka-Shad-Kynjoh Khaskain, Ka Bam Khana Shnong, Umsan Nongkharai, and Shad Beh Sier.^{xv} Music is integral to Khasi life - every festival and ceremony from birth to death is enriched with music and dance. One of the basic forms of Khasi music is the *phawar*, which is more of a chant; than a song, and are often composed on the spot, impromptu, to suit the occasion. Other forms of song include ballads & verses on the past, the exploits of legendary heroes, laments for martyrs. Khasi musical instruments (Ksing Shynrang, Ksing Kynthei) are also interesting because they support the song and the dance.

Garos. The Garos are an indigenous Tibeto-Burman ethnic group from the Indian subcontinent, notably found in Meghalaya who call themselves *a'chik Mande* or simply *a'chik* or *Mande*. In the Garo language *a'chik* means hills and *mande* means man. Hence, *a'chik Mande* means the hill-people. The name Garo is given to them and used by non-Garos. They are the second-largest tribe in Meghalaya after the Khasi and comprise about a third of the local population. The Garos are one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. The Garos constitute the majority in the East Garo Hills district, West Garo Hill District, North Garo Hill

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District, South Garo Hill District and South-west Garo Hill District.



Figure 28 Garos

Legend has it that the Garos originally inhabited a province of Tibet named Torua and left

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Tibet for some reason in the distant past under the leadership of the legendary Jappa-Jalimpa and Sukpa-Bongepa. They wandered in the Brahmaputra valley at the site of present day Jogighopa in Assam and moved up the Assam valley for centuries in search of a permanent home. In the process, they survived the ordeals of wars and persecutions at the kings ruling the valley. They then branched out into a number of sub-tribes, and the main body under the legendary leader, Along Noga, occupied Nokrek, the highest peak in Garo Hills. *A'Chik* is the general title used for the various groups of people after the division of the race. The title is used to denote different groups such as the Ambeng, Atong, Akawe (or Awe), Matchi, Chibok, Chisak Megam or Lyngngam, Ruga, Gara-Ganching who inhabit the greater portion of the present Garo Hills.

The Garos have a matrilineal society where children adopt their mother clan. The simplest pattern of Garo family consists of the husband, wife and children. The family increases with the marriage of the heiress, generally the youngest daughter. She is called *nokna* and her husband *nokrom*. The bulk of family property is bequeathed upon the heiress and other sisters receive fragments but are entitled to use plots of land for cultivation and other purposes. The other daughters go away with their husbands after their marriage to form a new and independent family. This aspect of family structure remains the same even in urban areas. A childbirth in Garos is not only celebrated by family but by the whole clan.

Garo inheritance is through the mother. All children, as soon as they are born, belong to their mother's *ma'chong*. The Garo tribe is divided into five exogamous divisions called Chatchis (sometimes rendered as Katchis). The earlier practice of Chatchi exogamy is to a large extent still strictly observed. The majority of Garos still hold that a member of a particular Chatchi should not marry a member of the same Chatchi. Property passes from mother to daughter. Although the sons belong to the mother's *ma'chong*, they cannot inherit any portion of the maternal property. Males

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cannot in theory hold any property other than that acquired through their own exertions. Even this will pass on to their children through their children's mother after they marry. Among the Garos any of the daughters, even the eldest, if there are many, may be chosen as the *nokna*, or heiress, having proved her fitness to occupy this privileged position by her dutifulness to her parents. If the *nokna* is unmarried, as she often is, since selection generally takes place before she get married, the father will try to get a young man from his own lineage, commonly the son of his own sister, as the husband of the heiress. In case there are no daughters, the family can adopt any other girl, usually one having the closest blood relationship to the adoptive mother, first preference being given to one of the non-heir daughters (a'gate) of the woman's sisters, who are among the closest female relations a woman can have. Although men may have no property to pass on, they have an important say in deciding to whom it should pass. Traditionally, social and customary laws of Garo give women the authority to control over the family and its members. Under this law, a woman in the family has the power to decide and act on the main issues like decisions and advices over family matters. Overall, she is provided higher status within the society.

The Garos traditionally follow their own religion known as Songsarek, which has roots in agriculture. They also have a belief system with an underlying principle of fear and dread of the supernatural powers, which led many scholars and researchers to wrongly think that the Garos are animists. In earlier works on the Garos, the term Animism was applied to the tribal faiths. This was perhaps oversimplification of a complex subject. It is true that much of Garo religious practices relate to Nature. The Songsarek belief is presided over by the Godhead known as Dakgipa Rugipa Stugipa Pantugipa or Tataru Rabuga Stura Pantura. They attribute the creation of the world to the Godhead, Tataru Rabuga. Saljong is another deity which is more intimately concerned with human affairs. He is basically a sun god, the source of all gifts to mankind. Saljong is honoured

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with the Wangala celebrations. Another benign deity is Chorabudi, the protector of crops. The first fruits of the fields are offered to him. He is also honoured with a pig sacrifice whenever sacrifices are offered to Tatara Rabuga. Living so close to Nature, the early Garo people had the world around them with a multitude of spirits called mite, some of them good and some of them capable of harming human beings for any lapses they might commit. Appropriate sacrifices are offered to them as occasions demand. In all religious ceremonies, sacrifices were essential for the propitiation of the spirits. They had to be invoked for births, marriages, deaths, illness, besides for the good crops and welfare of the community and for protection from destructions and dangers. Like the Hindus, the Garos used to show reverence to the ancestors by offering food to the departed souls and by erection of memorial stones. Like other religions, the Songsarek religion ascribes to every human being the possession of a spirit that remains with him throughout his lifetime and leaves the body at death. There appears to be a belief in reincarnation, people being reborn into a lower or higher form of life according to their conduct in their lifetime. The greatest blessing a Garo looks forward to is to be reborn as a human being in his or her original ma'chong or family unit. The Garos believe in one supreme Creator, Rabuga, who is the sustainer and commander of the world. The other spirits are the representatives of the supreme Creator. The spirits connected to the Garo's agricultural life, are appeased by sacrifices but never worshipped. The headman is an integral part of the village and acts as religious head. Garo religion is monotheistic with a highly ritualistic polytheistic form of worship. The Garos believe in creation of heaven and earth. God is believed to have created all living beings on earth and completed his work within eight days and on the ninth day He rested.

Garo people generally follow Christianity as their religion, both Roman Catholic as well as Presbyterian. Christian work inside Garo Hills having started about 1878 with the American

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Baptists who had, however, started their work among Garos in Goalpara since 1867. The Roman Catholics began their work in the plains areas first around 1931 -32, following it up with the establishment of a base at Tura (1933); since then it has extended to other parts of the Garo Hills. Between 1961 and 1971 the number of people returned as Songsarek underwent a decline and it would appear that their decrease has largely been due to the advance of Christianity. It can indeed be stated that the vast majority of Garos profess only these two beliefs either Songsarek or Christianity.

The broad divisions of Garo society, the chatchis, are traditionally exogamous. Although the restrictions are probably weakening, particularly among urban Garos, still we can say that the overwhelming majority of Garos still observe them. Even in sophisticated society the harsher restrictions in regard to marriage within the same ma'chong are still observed. A man who belongs to the Sangma Chatchi will look for a bride among the other Chatchis like the Marak or the Momin and vice-versa. The initiative towards marriage is usually taken by the bride's family, even by the girl herself. When the girl is the heiress, the father, with an eye to the property she will inherit, may get his own sister's son, his own nephew, as her prospective bridegroom. Among the Songsareks or non-Christians, the practice of bridegroom capture, particularly in rural areas, still goes on. A girl may express her interest in a young man and ask her male kinsmen to get him for her. This may involve an arduous chase, especially if the boy is not interested because, perhaps, he still cherishes the freedom of bachelor life, and the matter may not end with his capture and his being brought to her house. In the circumstances, the captured bridegroom will try to escape but generally after a few such attempts, he becomes reconciled to the idea of settling down. In spite of the comparative freedom enjoyed by young people in Garo society, the standard of morality is generally high and even those who may have been guilty of youthful indiscretions settle down to

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a stable married life.

A Garo village is a well-knit unit, the population consisting of one domiciled ma'chong or lineage of a Chatchi or clan which has proprietary rights over the entire land of the village or a king, as it is called. We must assume matrimonial relations with other clans with which marriage ties are permissible. In the case of the principal family, the *nokma* manages his wife's property and allots plots to different families for cultivation, besides carrying out other duties. Girls generally stay in their own village; their husbands, if not cross-cousins, may be from other villages. Some degree of relationship may, therefore, be said to exist between most households in the village and the principal clan. The people are industrious, and both men and women participate in the normal duties in the fields and in the home. Some tasks, naturally, belong to the males, like jungle-clearing, house building and all other work demanding greater physical labour, though basketry is also largely man's work. Planting of most crops, ginning of cotton as well as weaving, cooking and making of rice-beer, are usually done by women.

Historically, the Garos did not own land - whatever land they hold in possession, they do so without any ownership documents and the land belonged to the tribe as a collective property, cultivated under a cooperative system. Theoretically, land is owned by the *nokma*, and new sections are distributed among the households each year.

Contact with people from outside has greatly modified the dress of the Garos. Both men and women prefer dark clothes, either black or dark blue, and men may wear shorts instead of the traditional loin-cloth. Turbans are generally worn by both sexes. On festive occasions all the family heir-looms including the fine clothes and ornaments for men and girls are taken out. The traditional Garo female dress is a piece of cloth around the waist and a blouse or vest. Males and females both wear bangles and earrings. The common ornaments used by the Garos are strings of beads and

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earrings worn both by men and women. The latter ornaments are considered to be very essential as they serve as guarantees of the safe journey of the soul to the other world, being offered to the spirit Nawang should he try to prevent the soul from going to the land of the dead.

Among the hill Garos, all subsistence is based on *jhum* cultivation. Dry rice is the primary crop, and millet is also important. In addition, bananas, papaya, maize, manioc, taro, squash, large-pod beans, sorrel, gourds, and many other vegetables are grown to supplement the diet. Important cash crops are cotton, chili peppers, and ginger. Wet rice has been grown more recently in some of the low areas, and this has changed the land tenure system to one of individual ownership, a situation which has had profound implications for the social structure.

The Garos prefer simple food. They generally avoid spicy food, and usually with rice they take boiled meat and vegetables. They boil this curry quite plainly, adding a kind of alkaline kalchi vegetable 'salt' to it just as it comes to the boil. It has been suggested that this practice accounts for the comparatively low incidence of gastric ailments in these hills. In areas where rice is in short supply, or during lean years, millet usually forms part of their staple food. The chief meals of the Garos consist of rice with onions, capsicum and salt thrice a day. Practically all types of animal foods are taken. Millet is also greatly used in the preparation of rice-beer which the average Songsarek family uses. The liquor is not distilled. The drink has a low alcohol content and constitutes the staple beverage of the Garos.

The Garo household utensils are simple and limited. They consist mainly of cooking pots, large earthen vessels for brewing liquor, the pestle and the mortar with which paddy is husked. They also use bamboo baskets of different shapes and sizes.

The Garos have their own weapons. One of the principal weapons is two-edged sword called Milam made of one piece of iron from hilt to point. There is a cross-bar between the hilt

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and the blade where attached a bunch of cow's tail-hair. Other types of weapons are shields, spear, bows and arrows, axes, daggers etc.

There are no organized games as such among the Garos. Games are generally played occasionally. Jumping contests and other competitions are indulged as tests of strength. The young males, members of the Nokpantes or Bachelors' Dormitories, may organize themselves into groups and engage in such contests as the wa'pong sika, the Garo version of the tug-of-war. Again, the villages may turnout in strength to take part in communal fishing.

For Garos, festivals sustain their cultural heritage. They were often dedicated to religious events, nature and seasons as well as community events such as stages of *jhum* cultivation. The common and regular festivities are those connected with agricultural operations. The main festivals of Garos are Den Bilsia, Wangala, Rongchu gala, Mi Amua, Mangona, Grengdik BaA, Jamang Sia, Ja Megapa, Sa Sat Ra Chaka, Ajeaor Ahaoea, Dore Rata Dance, Chambil Mesara, Do'Kru Sua, Saram Cha'A, A Se Mania or Tata Festivals and Ceremonies of the Attongs

Garo people don't have their official scripts for writing, but they use English as a medium for communication and expression purposes. They have their own different versions of dialects depending on the locations they speak with each other. The most common dialects of Garo include A'beng, A'chik, Matchi, Chibok, Chisak, Gara Ganching etc. Their language belongs to the Bodo branch of the Bodo-Naga-Kachin family of Sino Tibetan phylum.

Jaintias. Different scholars have different opinions regarding the term 'Jaintia'. As of today, the term refers to the indigenous people living in the land known as Jaintia Hills of the state of Meghalaya. Jaintias are believed to be remnants of the first Mongolian overflow into India. They established themselves in their present homeland in the remote past and owing primarily to their geographical isolation they succeeded in maintaining their independence until the

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consolidation of the British administration in this part of India. They are believed to be of Indo-Mongoloid race although speaking a distinct Austroic language belonging to the Mon-Khmer group. They belong to Hynniewtrep sect whose kingdom was the oldest and most widely spread around Jaintia Hills. The Jaintias were supposed to be migrated to the present habitat from South-East Asia, most probably from Mongolia via West Asia. They appeared to have been one of the earliest waves of migrants to north-east India leading a more or less settled way of life (Pakem, 1977). Some are of opinion that they are named after their principal goddess Joyanti. Devi Joyanti is an incarnation of Hindu goddess Durga. Jaintias also introduce themselves as Pnar. With regard to the social origin of the Jaintia people there is an indigenous theory according to which they belonged to a common race, which occupied a large area of Northern India, Burma, Indo-China and parts of South China in the Neolithic period.

The indigenous religion of the Jaintias is known as Niam-tre (Kyndiah 2000:49) which means 'Original Religion'. The Jaintias believe that their religion is a god gifted religion. The Jaintias have a very clear conception about the Supreme God or the God Almighty. They refer to him as U Blai Wa Booh Wa Thoo or simply as U Tre-Kirot (Lamare 2005:59). The Jaintias visualise the Supreme God as a male figure. God's abode is known among the Jaintia as Soorkep or Heaven (Shullai 2000:62). According to the religious belief of the Jaintias that God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. The Jaintias' indigenous religion is a need based religion as it is integrated as part of the socio-cultural life of the people. Although the Jaintias are more influenced by Hinduism. They have a superstition that the Jam is an evil spirit bringing riches to its owner and disease or death to its enemies or victims. It is worth mentioned that prior to the coming of the British to the Jaintia Hills, all the Jaintias followed the Niam-tre religion. Some of the Jaintias were converted to Hinduism in the long past under the patronage of the Jaintia King.

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They were found only in one village, Nartiang (Chakrabarty, 1996). Before the British came, the Jaintias had only one religion resembling Hinduism in which the Cow was highly esteemed. But this was contrary to the Khasi belief where cows or bullocks were used as sacrificial animals and also as food. Though pantheist in belief the Jaintias are much influenced by Hinduism. Their main deity is goddess Jayanti, an incarnation of Hindu goddess Durga. They worship their traditional gods and goddesses along with the Hindu gods and goddesses. But it is an exception that they don't have any specific temple or place of worship. They believe that their deities exist in nature and they offer their prayer in open air. They also believe in the eternal existence of a creator with whom the human being had a direct link at an initial stage. But when they started to be driven by selfish motives, they could not see God with their eyes as He disappeared. Thus the human being became busy with their families and worldly affairs so much that they started forgetting God gradually as the relationship weakens. So God advised them to follow a few moral sayings to live in the world in a modest way. The directives of God were: (a) earn honestly (Kamai ya ka haq), (b) know the people, understand God (Thipbru Thipblai) and (c) know both the lineages of your parents (Thipkur-Thipkhar). Jaintias also believe that God had sent some gods and goddesses on earth to control the indisciplined human being. They keep them in their control by imposing illness and diseases. Jaintias also worship those gods and goddesses in order to mitigate their rage. They have their own conception of sins and piety, heaven and hell, crime and punishment. However, many of them have embraced Christianity. During the British rule over the Hills (March 15, 1835 -August 15, 1947) and 52 years latter only about 30 percent of the Jaintias were converted to Christian faith whereas 70 percent remained in their traditional faith (Shullai 2000:59). The Jaintias also believed in the spirit of the deceased ancestor (Chattopadhyaya, 1988).



Figure 29 Jaintias

In the society the family is the core of social organization. The social and organizational system in this matrilineal society, however, does not ignore man. The actual management of the property is in the hands of the daughter's eldest maternal uncle (Masan) or brothers. He is the head of the clan and represents the same in any village matters. But marital and other institutional affairs are based on the matrilineal system. Matriarchy in its true sense does not exist in the society. In spite of the female ownership of property the woman's elder brother is the actual head of the

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household and when the husband, after the initial matrilineal residence, establishes independent house, he is the undisputed lord of the family. In the case where there is no female child, the mother is succeeded by her son. Thus the system is called matriarchal only by courtesy. Nowadays there has been tremendous change in the way of life of the Jaintia people and it is not uncommon case for a man to live together with his wife and children in separate houses and the house is solely run by the father of the house and not by the uncles. Matriliney in Jaintia Hills does not mean that the female are more supreme than the males but it is that tracing of descent is done through a female side. The father no doubt is the head and occupies an honoured position in a family.

In Jaintia society inheritance is customarily from the female line. The ancestral property passes from the mother to the youngest daughter (Bareh 2001: 315). Women are very lucky in this way, because they are treated with equal rights but the head of the family is always the father. The Jaintias refuse to accept that their societies are truly matriarchal. Though descent is reckoned through the female line, yet man is the head of a family among them. Hence, the society is not truly matriarchal but is matrilineal (Passah, 1998). They are matrilineal and matrilineal people. The earnings of the male members go to their mothers' family. The youngest daughter is locally known as Ka Khianduh or Ka Yangyung. According to the custom, the youngest daughter is the custodian of the ancestral property and has the obligation to take care and look after the family members in case of any financial or health problems. The youngest daughter who inherits the property has the obligation, that she must look after the family idols and bear all its Puja offerings out of her own pocket, if the youngest daughter changes her religion she loses her position 'Go to Top' in the family and is succeeded by her next youngest sister as in the case of death. Majority of the ceremonies such as naming, wedding rites and rituals are held in the ancestral house. Other sisters also share the property but the youngest one shares more because of her responsibility to the

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family. She had to look after her parents, children and brothers (in case where Night Visit System exists). In case where Night Visit System did not exist, brothers were found to stay away from their sister. It was not the responsibility of the youngest daughter to take the burden of her married elder sisters. They had to stay separately after marriage with their children and husband where Night Visit System did not exist but in case of existence of Night Visit System, they used to stay only with children. Where women were not the youngest daughters; stayed separately with their husbands and child/children or only with child/children. The youngest daughter has no full authority over the family properties and cannot sell or dispose any part of them without discussing with the family members (Lamare 2005:19). The ancestral property can be sold with the knowledge and consent of the maternal uncles and brothers (Chattopadhyaya, 1988). The girl child of the family is adored and mollycoddled, in terms of education, health and liberty, by every member of the family. If the family has no successor, the nearest relative inherits the property (Bareh 2001: 316). Ancestral property cannot be alienated without the concurrence of all the possible heirs of the whole family. When the family successors are extinct the system of Rap Yung similar to the system of adoption where a girl so adopted will act as the youngest daughter of the family and she succeeds to the ancestral properties. In the past, when the family becomes totally extinct the ancestral property becomes the properties of the Syiem or the King but such cases are rare as the Jaintias try to find out a successor for the same (Pakem 1990: 82). There is a saying that the Jaintia man is a man without a property as he has no right over ancestral properties as long as female heirs are there. However he can have self-acquired properties called Yutran. Such property will pass on to who so ever the owner is willing to give or *pynkam* before the time of his death. If a man dies and leaves behind acquired property, his heiress will be his mother, if alive, excluding wife, sons and daughters. In case of a married man, if his wife undertakes not to remarry then she

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will get half of the Yutran (Pakem 1990: 83; Bareh 2001: 316) which at her death will descend to her youngest daughter. The Yutran thus acquired will become in the next generation, an ancestral property of either the mother's or the wife's family (*Ibid*).

By nature, Jaintia women are very energetic and hard working. Most of the women are engaged in various occupations such as business, cultivation, labour work and in Government and semi-government jobs. They play two-fold roles in the society, (i) to earn and (ii) to look after the various household works. The Jaintia women however, did not taking part in Politics. Gassah (1988) mentioned that traditionally, a Jaintia woman in the society was more confined to household duties, though at the same time she had a large number of economic, social and religious duties to perform, but in political matters a woman did not have any place and she was not allowed to participate in political decision-making process. The effect of matrilineal system among the Jaintias, was more concerned in economic affairs than Political (Chattopadhyaya, 1988:35). Women of the society occupied a distinctly higher status with certain restrictions, especially in political affairs.

The Jaintias follow a strict exogamous system of marriage. Marriage between members of the same family or clan is considered taboo. Marriage with a paternal uncle or aunt is also prohibited and this type of marriage is known as I Lai Paruit (Lamare 2005:20). However, marrying a maternal uncle's daughter is allowed (*Ibid*). Besides, marriage between persons who belong to the Kynsai-Pongrai or different clans and also between similar age groups or generation known as Ratap-Rabiang is best preferred by the Jaintias (*Ibid*). In the present day, the custom of family negotiations for marriage has been replaced by the individual choice exercised between couples. There was the 'night-visit' marriage system, which was disappearing. A Jaintia house belongs to a woman and after marriage she stays in her house to be visited by her husband only at

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night time and this practice continues to remain so long the marriage bond exists. This system is called, "Visit Marriage". The children therefore hardly see their father. The mother has total control of her sons so much so that they belong to her even after their marriage (Basaiawmoit, 1987). A husband, however, reported to live with his own mother/sister even after marriage. The marriage bond between husband and wife among the Jaintias was loose. If a girl stayed with a man and conceived, they were socially recognized as wife and husband so long they continued that tie. This relationship might be broken by two means: (a) by mutual consent of the two married partners without going through any formal procedure and (b) they might divorce formally in the presence of a priest. After that one might remarry if he or she desired to do so. Child marriage was not prevalent among them. The various reasons for women marrying more than once were (i) widowhood, (ii) divorce/separation.

Yapyllait or divorce is common on the ground of barrenness, adultery and misunderstanding between the couple. The reasons for divorce or separation were (a) the husband was drunkard, (b) no child from previous husband/s, (c) no female child from previous husband/s, (d) women fallen in love with another person, (e) husband not helping financially. Widow-remarriage is allowed, but traditionally, it is compulsory to finish the ritual relating to death ceremony of the husband (Simon 1996: 35). According to the Jaintia customary law, for a divorce to be effective, there must be the consent of both the parties. In case one of the parties does not agree, a divorce becomes effective only when the other party pays a certain amount of compensation called Thnem (*Ibid*). Another traditional symbolic act of divorce was known as Khet-Pathi (Khet means tear and Pathi means bettle leaf) and this is done by tearing away the bettle- leaf into two pieces (*Ibid*). In any case, divorce should never take place during pregnancy. After divorce, the children belong to the mother and any of the parties concerned may remarry but

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to those belonging to other families (*Ibid*).

The people of the district live a simple life. Rice is the main food of the people. The Jaintias consume a variety of traditional food items ranging from different types of rice preparations, meat items (fresh and dry meat) fish (fresh, dried and roasted fish), caterpillars, curries, salads, chutneys, wild vegetables, especially bulbous plants and esculent roots, collected from forests like mushroom, tyrki, bamboo shoot, wild ferns, noop, etc. and cultivated vegetables, leafy vegetables available in the markets, herbs, shrubs and beverages. Some of the popular traditional food items prepare from the local rice for consuming as snacks along with tea are Tpu sain, Tpu sla, Tpu langdong, Ja Julia, Tpu phniang, Tpu shken, Tpu saru, Khoo Mukruit, Rasi, Khoner, Hando, Tpu iala and Tpu niaw hali. Pork is their favourite dish. The famous rice dish Jadoh is prepared from pig head. Jadoh is served with Dokhlieh (local spices). They eat different types of meat like mutton, chicken, deer, fowls etc. They also like mutton, chicken, milk and milk products. Beef is taken in the Christian families. In Nartiang among the Hindus and the Niamtres, in Mihmyntdu among the Niamtres and in Jowai among the Niamtres (except a few), beef eating was strictly prohibited. The Jaintia people were very fond of taking dry fish. Jantias are famous for preparing Tunktoh and Tungrymbai prepared from fermented beans and pickled bamboo shoot is also relished (Simon 1996:31). As regards spices, those commonly used while cooking, are ginger, garlic, onion, chillies, hot chillies, yayur or the *Zantoxylum alatum*, murit or the black pepper, bay leaf, turmeric, black and white sesames. The Jaintias are very fond of preparing curries with black sesame. They cook their food like the Bengalees. It is also worth mentioning that the Jaintias are famous for producing high-quality turmeric. It was seldom to find among the Jaintia population who did not partake Kwai (areca catusa), which was reported to help them in keeping their body warm. It was taken with betel leaf, dressed with lime and raw areca nut. They consume it after meals. It acts as a mouth

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freshener. They also offer them to their guests and friends who visit their homes or when they meet them outside their homes. During winter season, they preferred to take Kwai with a little piece of ginger also. Kwai has a special social importance. There are also varieties of tit or mushroom consumed by the Jaintias. Almost all types of fruits are found here. The Jaintias, specially the women folk were very fond of taking various citrus fruits. Homemade beer is used in all social functions like birth, death and any other festivals. Beer usually prepared from rice or millet. Sadhiar or the rice beer and Kiad or local alcohol are the two popular local beverages of the Jaintias.

Dresses of the people include ryndia stem, thoh saru, ryndia khyrwang, ryndia saru, sapjat, kein shrooh/kyrshah, ryndia tlem etc. for the ladies and iuslein pyniein, iuspong, sula, patoi, dhara etc. for men. The dress of the various Jaintia tribes is very similar to that worn by the Khasi people. The traditional costumes of the Jaintia male are white iuspong or turban, iuslien or a loincloth or dhoti, sula poh or a long sleeved shirt which is white in colour and a patoi or a sleeveless coat. As regards the female costumes, they consist of iusem muka or a golden brown material woven specially from silkworms with red border and is worn under the left arm across the chest, and the end is pinned on the right shoulder, sula mukmor or a long sleeved velvet blouse which is usually red or maroon in colour and the thokhyrwang or a cloth stripped wrapper worn from the waist down. It is made of wool and has a design of black and white or maroon and white stripes (Laloo (?): 7-9). The ornaments worn by female, especially during formal occasion or during traditional dances, are the paila or a necklace made of gold and red corals, kynjri ksiar or a gold necklace, ksiar or gold earrings, khadu ksiar or gold bangles, sahkti ksiar or finger rings and Lasubon or a bunch of flowers fastened to the khyllong or the bun at the back of the head. The ornaments that are worn by males are the kynjri tabah or silver chain, ksiar or gold earrings and sahkti ksiar or

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finger rings (*Ibid*). During Lahu dance the women wear Pangsngiat (headgear).

Jaintia people have a rich culture. The people are fond of music. Through music, the people expressed their praise for the rivers, hills, valley, land, etc. Traditional musical instruments include ramynthei, duitara, sarong (both are stringed), ksing/nakra, ramynken, shawiang, tangmuri, etc. and consider ka duitara as the Queen of music.

Festivals of the Jaintia Hills, like others is integral to the culture of people of Jaintia Hills. Festivals contribute significantly to maintaining a balance between man, his culture and his natural environment or eco-system. At the same time it seeks to revive the spirit of cohesiveness and solidarity among the people. Festivals of Jaintias includes Behdienkhlam, Laho Dance, and Sowing Ritual Ceremony. Another adventurous festival for young boys and men is the Siat khnam or the archery competition. Shad Pliang or plate dance was performed in the Royal palaces to please royal guests. Another popular festival is the Rongkhli celebrated by the War-Jaintias at Nongtalang village. The Jaintia festivals reflect the socio-cultural and religious practices and beliefs of the people. Festival, in the Jaintia context, is male-bias as well as mirrors the male worldview. Key festival activities, for example, rituals, sacrifices and even prayers are managed by men. In festivals man's status is highly elevated as compared to that of the woman. Women are depicted as having an important role in domestic and household affairs but no significant role in the religious festivities.

Coming to folk dances of the Jaintia, there is gender disparity as regards the dancers. In almost all the dances, only virgin females can participate whereas there is no restriction for male dancers. A married man can also be a dancer. Like in festivals, in dances also females are represented as the weaker section of the society. If we look at the symbolic arrangement of the dancers in Laho dance or the Chad Chipiah, one cannot deny the male preconceived notion about

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the role of women in the society. In this dance, there are many groups of dancers and in each group there are three dancers. A female dancer dance in the middle and two male dancers flank her one in the right and the other in the left. The one to the right symbolises the maternal uncle, who is the protector of the family, the clan and the race as a whole. The male dancer to the left stands for the husband or the father of the children, who is the progenitor of the clan. This arrangement denotes that the female depends on male members of the society. She is protected and guarded by her uncle and her husband. She needs safety and the dance itself symbolises that she cannot live all by herself.

Jaintias has expertise in artistic weaving, wood-carving, cane and bamboo work. These are also the main crafts of the tribe. They are also famous for weaving of carpet and silk and the making of musical instruments, jewellery and pineapple fiber articles.

Jaintias have their own language, but no alphabets. Though they use their mother tongue in conversation with their tribal people they speak in Bengali to communicate with others.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Jaintias. They cultivate betel leaves and various nuts, which are used in local trading. A social panchayet system settles disputes through arbitration. The arbitration is conducted under the chief panchayet and supported by the elders in the society. The decision of the panchayet is final in respect of any social problems. The chief of the panchayet is elected by the community.

The people are often been described to be fond of amusements and happy-going. The cheerful disposition of the people was an attraction to the strangers. In general, they were simple, open hearted, honest people with a very good sense of obligations and capable of sincere gratitude. The bond of blood relationship is very strong among them. A popular ancient sport of the Jaintias, commonly known as *ka rah mookhrah* or *ka rah moo-mar* or *ka rah shmia-mar* among the War It

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was a sport similar to the present day weight-lifting. *Ka iaslait* or wrestling, *ka ia-kynthih* or gymnastics, *tdeh chrot* - a game where a rod or a pillar is erected firmly on the ground and the competitor has to pull it out with all his might, *Ka iatan tyllle* or tug of war, *ka iabeh mrad* or hunting, *ka iapuh syiar* or cock fighting, *ka iadaw masi* or bull fighting, *ka iaphet* or racing competition, *ka iasiat khnam* or archery and *ka ia khwe dakha* or angling are some of the popular traditional sports of the Jaintias. Most of the Jaintia tradition sports are extinct today but only a few of them survive the test of time. Today, the well-known sports and entertainments of the people are archery competition, bullfight and angling. The competition can be within the village or between villages or between Raids or *elakas*. In addition, angling is becoming an emerging entertainment sport for both men and women nowadays. Gambling takes place side by side during the said competitions.

Highlights of Handicraft in Study Area

Nature has affected man psychologically and in a metaphysical sense. This has given rise to other interesting creative trends that are characteristically symbolic, religious and pictographic. Crafts of Meghalaya speak of the artistic skills of the craftsmen and have a distinct individualistic touch. The crafts of Meghalaya are important part of the state's development. They play a significant role in charming the tourists from parts of the world. They are very intricately made and beautiful to look at. Handicraft holds an important place in Meghalaya's traditional, social and economic space. There are a number of crafts found in Meghalaya and the significant ones are cane and bamboo work, artistic weaving and wood carving. Cane and bamboo product making is one of the prime occupations of the tribal people of Meghalaya. Cane and bamboo products like different household items, baskets, furniture, beds, floor mats, wood carvings, flower pots, accessories and musical instruments are made by the people. Handicrafts made with cane and

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bamboo products, textile weaving, carpet weaving, ornament making, wood carving are important art and crafts of here. They are also famous for making domestic knives, utensils and even guns. The three tribes of Meghalaya the Garos, the Khasis and the Jaintias are apt in making different kinds of cane and bamboo products and in weaving. These products have now received recognition not only in the national market but also in the international market and are much in demand.

Weaving. Weaving is an ancient craft of the tribals of East Khasi Hills District - be it weaving of cane or cloth. Weaving can begin as soon as the harvests are over. Unlike anywhere else in India, where men do much of the spinning and weaving, the same activity in Meghalaya is an exclusive activity specialized by women. This craft is under the exclusive domain of women. The patterns in the cloth are obtained by combining different coloured threads in the warp and weft. Clothes for the family, waist coats, belts, bed sheets, blankets and floor coverings for the house and decorative accessories such as hand bags, wall hangings and table covers and are woven from home-spun cloth. Bedcovers, bed sheets and other house linen items, of fine quality, tablecloth and attires are the expertise of craftsmen from the Garo Hills. Brilliant hues and pretty motifs are used to embellish even the most utilitarian items. Excellent cotton and wool rugs in brilliant hues and fine motifs are of special mention. Woolen shawls and blankets from the East Khasi and Jaintia Hills are very popular. In Lamatong and Soniden in Ri bhoi district, vegetable dyes are being used for yarns. In western Meghalaya, from the Garo Hills comes the colourful Dakmanada. Dakmanda is a type of silk clothing for women which is decorated with beautiful flowers and butterflies in various combinations of colours. The Garos weave the material used for their dresses. They also weave shirts, bed covers, bed sheets and tablecloth. Soniden is an important silk weaving centre. A kind of silk produced in Meghalaya is called Eri silk, which has a fine texture. Sonidan is an important centre for weaving Eri silk. Silk weaving is also encouraged

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in the state by training local weavers in a number of places. Eri silk, brought from Garo to Palasbari is reputed for its durability and fine quality. The East Garo Hills, Jaintia Hills and Ri bhoi are known for their *khadi* material. Fine appliqué work and embroideries are done in Shillong, Tura and Ri bhoi. Khasis and Jaintias also weave cloth. Other arts are silk weaving, carpet weaving etc. Handloom weaving with unique and traditional techniques is an old-age process of the Khasis. The state produces three varieties of silk – Eri (locally known as *Ryndia* from the castor plants the silkworms feed on), Muga and Mulberry. The Ri Bhoi district is one of the main regions of Meghalaya where eri-culture and handloom weaving is still practiced. All the materials involved in the process are sourced from the district itself.

Weaving *Ryndia* is passed down through the generations and treated as an occupation, providing livelihood to families in the region. Traditionally a hand-spun, hand-woven fabric, worn with pride by both the men and women in Meghalaya, the fabric in its un-dyed off-white state, or maroon and mustard plaid design, is a cultural symbol of the Khasi people. Eri silk is also known as ‘peace silk’ as the production process is considered to be non-violent.



Figure 30 Eri silk shawls

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Eri silk is produced from start to finish by women working from home or in clusters. Eri silkworms are reared by the weavers in baskets and placed throughout the homes. Mature worms are collected and put on cocooning mountages. The ready cocoons are then sundried, degummed and hand-spun using a traditional spindle. Silk weaving is traditionally done on floor looms although now frame looms are also used due to the possibility of increased production. The traditional floor loom is completely made of bamboo, including the reed used to beat the cloth during weaving. The loom and its components are hand-made by the village women. The heddles are made from string, tied on manually every time a new warp is put on the loom. The floor loom produces one scarf per warp, whereas the frame loom offers increased production. The yarns are coloured using natural dyes from plants or minerals. Traditionally only 3 main colours used were Lac red, Turmeric yellow and Black from iron ore. With training from government schemes and NGOs the artisans are able to increase their repertoire of colours. Sustaining and promoting handicrafts, especially those at risk of being lost, is vital for cultural sustainability. As well as government schemes and NGOs, emerging designers and business owners can play a huge role in raising awareness and exploring design ideation for the development of the craft.

The loom used in Meghalaya is an interesting piece of equipment. The loom is a simple back strap with a continuous horizontal warping consisting of six sticks serving the function of a warp beam, lease rod, heald stick, beating sword and another warp beam. There are several steps to follow before installing the loom. The warp beam is fastening to the wall of a house or any other suitable form supported horizontally. Two loops of bark strings are attached to these fastened wraps. Adjust the length of each loop on an already woven piece of fabric so that the distance between the loops is slightly greater than the width of the piece of fabric. There are notches on both ends of the bottom fabric, so woven tape can be attached. This belt is worn by the operator

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on the back. With it she sits on a low bench in front of the loom and puts her feet on a firm support so that she can apply the necessary tension to the warp yarn. Women keep the necessary strain by sitting with the belt (*aphi*) on their back to maintain the tension they need to sit. A base (*kotong*) attached to a crossbar is connected by a beam that is rigidly attached to a well in the house or to a pole fixed to the ground.

A Khasi male's traditional dress is unstitched lower garment (*dhoti*), jacket and a turban. Such attire is rarely used today, except for ceremonial occasions where every man and woman are expected to be in their best ethnic wear. Their outfit has been heavily modernized in the recent times. It has become contrary to what it originally symbolized. On the other hand, women wore their traditional dresses. Their clothing consists of an undergarment, above it is a two-piece cloth pinned onto each shoulder and a shawl. The raw material for these clothes is primarily obtained from textile mills, as the Khasis have lost the art of weaving. Older women continue to wear another type of woolen cloth, the use of which is fast disappearing.

Bamboo and Cane crafts. Cane and bamboo craft occupies an important place in the economy of Meghalaya, next to agriculture. The artisans engage to the craft when free from agriculture. The products of bamboo and cane are mostly of two types, articles of medium quality, required for day to day use for local requirements; and articles of finer quality for more sophisticated markets, both decorative and functional. The Khasis are known for creating attractive cane baskets and sieves. The Garos are also rich in the various forms of bamboo culture. Garo Hills are rich in bamboo and cane. Some of them include also a few species resembling Khasi bamboo and cane. Abundant availability of canes and bamboos has encouraged the people to utilize it not only for producing utility items but decorative items as well. There are many kinds of constructions and craft made from bamboo, various kinds of basket and mat making. Sleeping

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mats, baskets, rain shields *moorahs*, lamps, side tables, sofa sets, trays, winnowing fans, containers and dried flower arrangements are made with different varieties of Bamboo and cane. Jaintia tribe of Meghalaya are skilled in making bamboo fishing traps which function very well. The excellent cane bridges traversing fast flowing stream reflect the native craftsman's skills. Pineapple fiber is used to make fishing nets, bags and purses in the east Khasi Hill villages of Tynrong. The semi-tropical climatic condition characterise the bamboo culture and influence the growth of a rich variety of bamboo. Articles locally known as *khok* or *thugis* are baskets and very popular. The Garo people make stunning baskets known as *meghum khoks* to store various items, valuable items including clothes. Artistic baskets *meghum khoks* are made in the Garo Hills. Another speciality of the Garo people is in expertise in Pokerwork in which designs are burnt into the bamboo with a red-hot pointed rod is also done by the Garos. Khasi women in Meghalaya wear an attractive large round hat composed of a circular bamboo frame with a thick brim that is covered with cloth. The crown is worked with a pretty lattice design of cane at the edge and the top, each triangle in the pattern being tipped with a small circular blob. Mats, *moorahs* and Khasi umbrellas or *kurup* are made in light and medium qualities.



Figure 31 **Bamboo and Cane Crafts**

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They make a special kind of cane mat called *Tlieng*, which guarantees a good utility of around 20-30 years. The extraction of bamboos from the Garo Hills is very difficult. Transportation poses as a hindrance too. The most important of all difficulties is the necessary capital required to undertake the work. Bamboo grows wild and some are specially grown. *Lana* is a sort of broomstick, *Siej iong* used as chungu, and tube for carrying water. *Rimet* and *Riphin* are canes. *Ryngngai* is used for constructions. *Try-a* is used for making fences, barns and walls. *Trylaw* is very good for factorial use and paper making. *Ry-ia-in* is used as a string for moulding and wrapping. *Kdait* is good for making house walls. Bamboo shoots or *Lung siej* are used for making condiments. Straw and Tynriew a palm growing in the south are good for thatching housing.

Baskets.



Figure 32 Open Weave Carrying Basket

Open Weave Carrying Basket. The pig basket is a basket to transport pigs and used in the Khasi Hills. The basket is shaped like a test-tube, the diameter increases gradually towards the rim. It is woven in an open-hexagonal weave using wide but thin outer bamboo splits. The elements are wide but thin- 10 mm in width and 1 mm in thickness. The diameter of the basket at the rim is

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280 mm and it is 510 mm in height. This basket incorporates an extremely interesting structural concept. Elements used in the weave are taken in multiples to make the whole basket much stronger. The inner layer of the basket is completed first and the outer layer is woven tightly, using the formed inner layer as a mould. Stiff splits of bamboo are bent sharply without breaking the fibres in the element.



Figure 33 Closed Weave Carrying Basket

Closed Weave Carrying Basket. The *khoh* is a coarse, closed-weave basket used for general-purpose marketing, carried on the back by a head-strap. Baskets known as *Meghum Khoks* are used for storing different items. The rim is of 420 mm diameter and the sides taper down sharply along a straight line to form a point at the base. The height of the basket is 620 mm. The warp elements are bent sharply at the base. The weft element of bamboo outer splits are half the width and thickness of the warp elements. In the weft, the outer layer of bamboo faces the outer surface of

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the basket. Four splints of bamboo strengthen the base. The upper edge of the rim is self-strengthened.



Figure 34 Khasi Fruit Basket

Khasi Fruit Basket. This basket is used for packing and transporting fruit and vegetables. Structurally it is similar to the *khoh*. The shape is like a parabolic dome. The circular rim has a diameter of 350 mm and height 300 mm. wide outer splits of bamboo are used in the warp, overlapping radially to form the base. The first few turns of the weft spiral is made from thin bamboo splits. The rim is self strengthened.

Shallow Carrying Baskets. The Shang made from split bamboo is a shallow storage and shop-display basket used by the Jaintia tribe. It has a square base of diagonal 240 mm and the sides spread out to a circular rim of diameter 430 mm. Its height is 240 mm. The base is woven in a twill weave in four-fold symmetry around the centre. A spiralling weft element forms the side weave that has an inverted herringbone pattern along the centre line of each side.



Figure 35 The Shangkwai

Khasi Shallow Basket. The Khasi basket woven from split bamboo identical to the Jaintia *Shang*. The difference is in the rim-strengthening detail and the side-strengthening structure. The diagonal of the base square measures 240 mm, the diameter of the circular rim is 360 mm and its height is 230 mm. The base is strengthened by wide, thick split of bamboo, bent to form a square band, on which the basket rests. This split is 35 mm wide and 4 mm thick and made from bamboo of fairly large wall thickness. Eight side-strengthening elements of wide bamboo splits are attached to the band, four at the corners and four at the centre of each side. These splints are shaped at both ends. The concept of reducing the width or thickness to achieve flexibility is structural feature of Khasi and Jaintia products. Most of the khasi household used Shangkwai for keeping betel-nuts, betel-leaves, lime and knife to cut and peel the nuts, where they serve to the guest on arrival and continue with conversation on any topics. Betel-leaves are kept in a bamboo tube, and tobacco

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leaves in smaller one. Lime for eating with betel-nut, is kept in a metal box, sometimes of silver, which is made in two separate parts held together by a chain.

Small Storage Baskets. Small Khasi Storage Baskets are used to store valuables and other small articles. These baskets have a square base with the sides moving up vertically and ending in a circular rim. The inner layer is woven with wide bamboo inner splits. The outer layer uses thin bamboo outer splits. In both layers, the warp elements interlace to form the square base. Some of these baskets are left open at the top, some have lids woven in the same structure as the container and hinged to the side by loops of split-cane. Among three types of baskets the first has a lid and a base square of diagonal 130 mm and 175 mm in height. The diameter of the circular rim is 115 mm. The second has a square base of diagonal 125 mm, a rim diameter of 115 mm, and is 175 mm in height without a lid but with loop of split-cane at the rim to suspended, from the waist while carried or suspended from a hook when stored. The third basket is wide but shallow. The diagonal of the base square measures 220 mm, the rim diameter is 210 mm and its height is 120 mm. The basket has legs made of spike-shaped splints of bamboo.

Coiled Cane Containers. This container is cylindrical with a diameter of 205 mm and height of 145mm. It has a lid of the same diameter. Both the container and the lid are made from coiled whole-cane elements. A flat circular base is first formed by a single whole-cane element coiled as a tight spiral. At the centre of the base, this element is thinned down so that it can be bent easily into the small spiral. This construction results in a very rigid container and the texture created on the surface by the binding tends to form a pattern of inclined lines. These containers are sold in sets of three or four nesting one inside the other.

Large Storage Baskets. The Khasi storage basket is a rectangular box with a lid and is woven from split bamboo. It is used by the Khasis to store clothes and valuables. The basket has

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a rectangular base, which is about 510 mm by 300 mm, and its height is about 320 mm including the lid. Both the container and lid have an identical double-walled structure. The lid overlaps the mouth of the container. The loops of split cane are bound to the rim of the lid and these loops act as hinges linking the lid to the container. A hasp made of split cane which is wrapped around by split-cane binding is attached to the rim of the lid in front of the basket and a staple of a similar construction is attached to the side wall of the container in a corresponding position. Four legs shaped like spikes and made from lengths of whole bamboo are introduced into the side weave to extend below the base at the corners of the basket. These keep the woven base away from the ground.

Rain Shields and Headgear. *Knup* is a Khasi rain shield. It is like a hollow, shallow cone, with half the circumference of the base elongated at a point. The rim of the rain shield looks like an inverted tear drop. When it is worn, the curved surface of the cone rests on the head, the apex protrudes behind the head and the elongated surface completely covers the back. The knup is made in two layers, each woven in an open-hexagonal weave. Two layers of palm leaves are sandwiched between the woven layers to provide the water-proofing. After both the layers are completed, dried palm leaves called shlew are tacked with bamboo pins onto each layer independently so that, when the layers are fitted together, two layers of leaves are sandwiched between them. All the layers are held together with bamboo pins, while the edges are sewn together with a fine split of bamboo.



Figure 36 Knup

Winnowing Trays & Fans. The winnowing fan is made using the simple basket-forming technique. The warp elements made from outer split are parallel to the axis of the fan. These are bent vertically at the back of the fan to provide the required depth. The fan is woven in the five-up-two down structure except at the vertical surface where it becomes a closer twill weave. The edges of the mat are sandwiched between a thick splint of bamboo on the outside and on the inside a thinner split. The thin split is folded over the front edge on both sides and thus ending on the side beside the thick splint. The front edge is sandwiched between a folded split of bamboo beginning and ending underneath the mat. The split is looped over the rim at the corners, holding it in position.



Figure 37 Prah, Handmade Khasi Wincwing Tray

Khasi Bamboo Comb. The Khasi comb is intricately assembled from several splits of bamboo. A number of fine teeth are shaped from individual bamboo splits. These teeth are held sandwiched between a pair of thick splits and this assembly is bound firmly with cotton thread. The thread passes between the teeth to create the required gap. The two teeth at either end of the comb are specially shaped from thick bamboo split to protect the fine teeth between them. The thread binding is coated with a thick sticky resin to permanently set the teeth in place. The teeth elements extend below the sandwiching binding and these are covered by two wide splits of bamboo to form the handle. Beyond these, a single whole culm length of a very small diameter is used to finish the upper edge of the handle. The entire assembly is now bound with cotton thread to complete the product. The resultant product is an extremely neat construction, intricately designed yet sturdy and functional. One can see in another variation made by the Khasis, the handle

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carved from soft wood and the bamboo teeth assembly bound with thread is set into a groove at the bottom of the handle with the use of resin.

Khasi Bamboo Pipes. The Khasi pipe is a simple construction incorporating a bamboo bowl connected to a bamboo pipe stem made from a length of branch. The surfaces of both bowl and stem are decorated with motifs scored on the outer skin by a sharp instrument. A bamboo cigarette holder has been evolved incorporating similar motifs on the surface. The holder has two parts connected along a common axis. The part that receives the cigarette is larger in diameter than the stem. Recent versions of this pipe incorporate a ceramic lining on the inner surface of the bowl after the hollow of the bowl has been sufficiently enlarged.



Figure 38 Khasi man Smoking Pipe

Wood Carving. It is an ancient art form that arose in the Meghalaya countryside, especially around the Garro Hills. Most of the woodcarving specimens in Meghalaya can be found in temples and shrines across the state. Due to the necessary skills, Meghalaya Woodcarving has grown exponentially in its popularity. Woodcarving was the art of the Meghalaya ancestors. Meghalaya's many temples and shrines are decorated with wood carvings. Toys, human figures, replicas of gods and goddesses, prominent characters, saints and sages, horses, birds, etc. are among the Meghalaya wood carvings. Both decorative and utilitarian items are crafted from wood with great care. The subject is inspired by nature and everyday life. Garro Hills has a great

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woodcarving tradition. Decorative items at East Khasi Hills are popular and available at Shillong and Meghalaya bazaars. Wood carving is the core of Meghalaya's cottage industry.



Figure 39 Wood Carving

Jewellery Making. Meghalaya jewellery also displays impressive craftsmanship. Handcrafted ornaments of gold, silver, and gilt beads are one of them Meghalaya's most famous dancing attires. Gold beads are basically hollow spheres filled with lac. Most of which are like amulets, bracelets, necklaces and anklets. Costumes are intricately embellished with them diamond-like crystals which are manufactured locally. Jewellery such as *Kynjri Ksiar*, *Paila* and *Rigitok* are some of the state's important crafts. *Kynjri Ksiar* made of 24 carat gold and *Paila*, a string of thick red coral beads are commonly worn by the Khasis and Jaintias. *Rigitok*, a thin glass stem with vertical grooves tied with a fine thread, is mainly worn by Garo women. Women wear gold and silver. Trinkets are usually made from very pure materials and are aesthetically crafted by local blacksmiths.



Figure 40 Traditional Jewellery of Meghalaya

Engravings. In some villages of Jaintia and Garo, we can see engravings of the figures of people and animals on the walls of their houses. Another engraving depicts Near Jowai, depicting a lover and his lover's passionate desires. This craft is known today for its design craftsmanship.



Figure 41 Engravings on the wall of house of Jaintia

There has been a gradual decline in the number of artisans engaged in the traditional art. The key reasons being that handicraft is meticulous to make and difficult to sell due to the high price when compared to modern alternatives. Consequently, many artisans have had no choice but to abandon this art and to opt for other means of livelihood. Tynnai is a classic example of such a place that is today struggling to preserve that heritage. Tynnai a small village of eighty six households located in South West Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya. The village was once renowned for its cane and bamboo handicrafts. The skilled artisans were capable of creating numerous useful and unique handicrafts and would pass down their knowledge to their children who would later succeed them. Some of the notable products produced by these artisans included

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stools, baskets, mats, cone baskets and bamboo rice winnowers, made using cane and bamboo from their own gardens. Their handicrafts would sell not only at the local weekly markets but also at far-away, bigger markets such as Iewduh in Shillong, Nongstoin, Mairang, Mawkyrwat and Riango. In the last decade however, the number of handicraft artisans from Tynnai started to decline. Most of the male artisans stopped making handicrafts because they could not earn much from it, and have opted to work as labourers in other towns and villages. The women artisans still engaging in making handicraft, have stopped producing for the market. The demand for such products has reduced significantly with the availability of cheaper mass produced alternatives. Concerned by the fact that handicraft, which was once the pride of the village, was at risk of fading into obscurity, Bah Twolding Jyrwa, the headman of the village, decided to do something to elevate the fading art. While demand for handicraft for household utility had declined, there was still huge potential in the tourism sector. Determined to revive this age old practice, in 2010, 26 women artisans got together to form the Women's Cane and Bamboo Industrial Cooperative Society with Mr. Twolding Jyrwa as their adviser to uplift their own economic conditions and statuses; to showcase their crafts to other parts of the country during exhibitions and trade fairs; to advance their own skills and abilities; to seek support from the government as aid and schemes; and to further expand their market. With the support of the District Commerce and Industry Center (DCIC), they have visited Assam, Tripura, Kolkata and other states and succeeded in commercial production of cane and bamboo. There, they learned to make new products from reeds and bamboo, such as table lamps, showpieces, table mats and other cane and bamboo decorative items. They then enrolled in the Mawkyrwat Enterprise Facilitation Centres (EFC) to promote their products by organizing exhibitions across the state. With every opportunity, Bach Thwolding has been able to expand its network and increase sales in the community. He was able to connect women to craft

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shops in Police Bazaar, Meghalaya's main shopping area, and to close deals with merchants in Kolkata. As a result, the company was able to do several wholesale deals, which significantly increased its earnings, currently starting at Rs 150 per member and averaging Rs 200 per day. However, this number may increase once some of the existing restrictions are removed. One of the biggest obstacles to increasing production is the lack of dry warehouses to store handicrafts. It rains almost all year round in Tönnai, and without proper protection, surplus handicrafts collect moss and mould, rendering them useless. Another reason why the members needed a workshed is to maintain consistency and quality in their products. As of now, each member works in their own house making it difficult to keep a check on quality and consistency. However, the members are already working on a plan to build a common work shed so they can all work together in one place. With the shed in place, monitoring and quality check of mass produced products can be done. A proper storage house is also planned for construction. The hard work of Bah Twolding and the artisans of the Society have not only improved their own livelihoods but also gradually helped to turn the tide for this age old tradition that nearly disappeared from their village. Today, even the men who had once abandoned this activity are beginning to return to their roots, a testimony to the great work of these astounding people.

CHAPTER 4

People and Handicrafts in Arunachal Pradesh

This part briefly brings out the tribal population concentration in Arunachal Pradesh and selected districts highlighting the various types of tribes inhabiting in those districts, handicrafts, their main and subsidiary occupations etc.

It is the land of breathtakingly beautiful sunrises between skyrocketing mountains, a land of mighty rocks and luxuriant forests, gentle streams and ragging torrents, sparkling lakes and ample of snow. It is the Arunachal Pradesh; the vast expanse of rolling plains, hills, and beautiful water bodies at the far eastern edge of India. Arunachal Pradesh is a hill state in the lap of the Great Himalayan mountain range. When the sun first strikes India, it shines upon Arunachal's wild jungles and tribal communities. Arunachal means "land of rising sun". Arunachal Pradesh presents a breath-taking spectacle of nature in all her glory, raw and unspoilt and untamed in wild profusion of flora and fauna, customs, language and dress. Arunachal Pradesh the 24th state of the Indian Union attained its statehood on February 20, 1987. Till 1972, it was known as the North- East Frontier Agency (NEFA). It gained the Union Territory status on January 20, 1972 and renamed as Arunachal Pradesh. On August 15, 1975 an elected Legislative Assembly was constituted and the first council of Ministers assumed office. The first general election to the Assembly was held in February 1978. Administratively, the State is divided into sixteen districts.^{xvi} Capital of the State is Itanagar in Papumpare district. Itanagar is named after Ita fort meaning fort of bricks, build in the 14th century AD. Arunachal Pradesh is mentioned in the literature of Kalika Purana and Mahabhart. This place is the Prabhu Mountains of Puranas. It was here the sage Parashuram atoned of his sin, sage Vyasa meditated, King Bhisma founded his kingdom and Lord Krishna

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married his consort Rukmini. The widely scattered archaeological remains at different places in Arunachal Pradesh bear testimony to its rich culture and heritage.

Arunachal Pradesh, situated in the north eastern part of India is 83,743 sq. kms area and area wise ranking 14th among the states of India. It has a long international border with Bhutan to the west (160 km), China to the north and north-east (1,080 km) and Myanmar to the east (440 km). It stretches from snow-capped mountains in the north to the plains of Brahmaputra valley of Assam in the south. Areawise Arunachal is the largest state in the north-eastern region, even larger than Assam which is the most populous. It is situated between 26°30' N to 29°30' N latitude and 91°30' E to 97°30' E longitude^{xvii}.

It is a land of lush green forests, deep river valleys and beautiful plateaus. The land is mostly mountainous with Himalayan ranges along the northern borders criss-crossed with mountain ranges running north-south. These divide the state into five river valleys: the Kameng, the Subansiri, the Siang, the Lohit and the Tirap. All these rivers are fed by snows from the Himalayas and countless rivers and rivulets except Tirap which is fed by Patkai Range. The mightiest of these river is Siang, called Tsangpo in Tibet, which becomes Brahmaputra after it is joined by the Dibang and the Lohit in the plains of Assam.

High mountains and dense forests have prevented intercommunication between tribes living in different river valleys. The geographical isolation thus imposed has led different tribes to evolve their own dialects and grow with their distinct identities. Nature has endowed the Arunachal people with a deep sense of beauty which finds delightful expression in their songs, dances and crafts.

The climates varies from hot and humid in the Shivalik range with heavy rainfall and pleasant climate at the lower altitude. It becomes progressively cold as one moves northwards to

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higher altitudes. The rainfall is heavy during monsoon causing flood and landslides. Trees of great size, plentiful climbers and abundance of cane and bamboo make Arunachal evergreen. Arunachal Pradesh is the second largest forest covered state next to Madhya Pradesh in the country. Tropical rain forests are to be found in the foothills and hills in the east on the border with Myanmar. Northern most border is covered with Alpine forests. Amidst the highly rugged terrain, there are green forests and plateaus. Arunachal Pradesh is blessed with breathtakingly beautiful hilly forest ranges from Alpine to tropical rainforest silvery fir tree, plentiful climbers and grass.

Itanagar, located at an altitude of 530 meters above sea level^{xviii} between 93 east longitude and 27 north latitude. It was built more than three decades ago. The population of Arunachal is 1.255 million (2012) which is 0.11 percent of the total population and population wise ranking 27th among the states of India.

Arunachal Pradesh is acknowledged to be one of the most splendid, variegated and multilingual tribal areas of the world. High mountains and dense forests have prevented intercommunication between tribes living in different river valleys. Isolation imposed by geography has led over major tribes with several dialects to live and flourish with their distinct identities. Nature has provided the people with a deep sense of beauty which finds delightful expression in their songs, dances and crafts.

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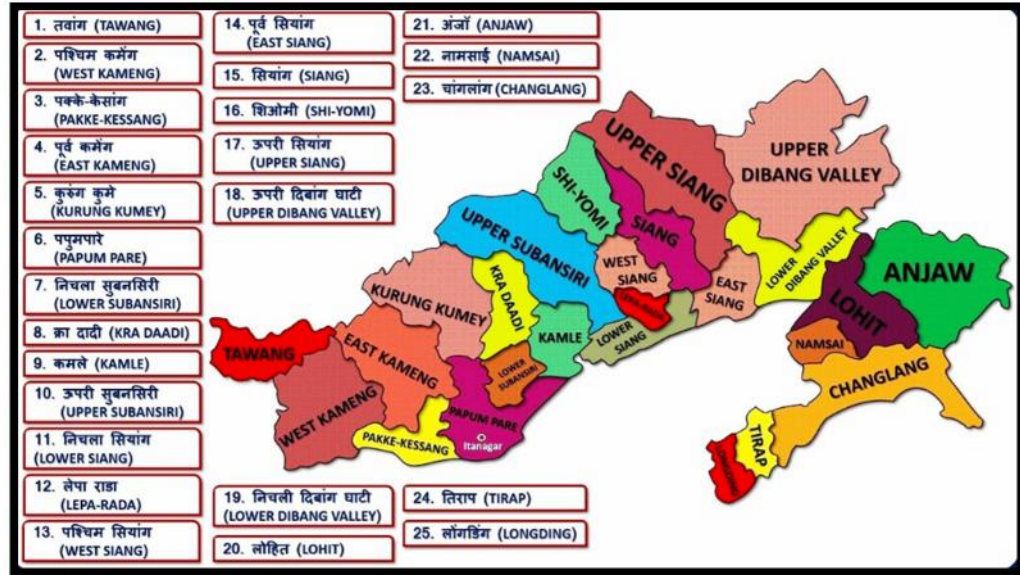


Figure 42 Map of Arunachal Pradesh^{xix}

Arunachal Pradesh comprises 25 districts, with more districts proposed.

Table 6

List of District, Headquarter, Year Created etc. of Arunachal Pradesh

District	Headquarters	Year created	Note
Tawang	Tawang Town	1984	
West Kameng	Bomdila	1980	
East Kameng	Seppa	1980	

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Pakke- Kessang	Lemmi	2018	Created from southern parts of East Kameng district along Assam border
Papum Pare	Yupia	1992	Created from southwest areas along Tibet border of the then larger Lower Subansiri district.
Kurung Kumey	Koloriang	2001	Created from northwest areas along Tibet border of then larger Lower Subansiri district
Kra Daadi	Jamin	2015	Created from eastern half of bifurcated Kurung Kumey district, cover area from Indo-China bordering northwestern parts of Subansari river valley
Lower Subansiri	Ziro	1980	Along Assam border
Upper Subansiri	Daporijo	1980	Along Tibet border
West Siang	Along	1980	Created from Tibet border to Assam

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Shi-Yomi	Tato	2018	Created from northern areas of West Siang district along Tibet border
East Siang	Pasighat	1980	Along Assam border
Siang	Boleng	2015	In the central area of state, created by bifurcating areas of East Siang district and West Siang district
Upper Siang	Yingkiong	1994	Along Tibet border
Lower Siang	Likabali	2017	Along Assam border
Lepa-Rada	Basar	2018	From southern parts of West Siang district along Assam
Lower Dibang Valley	Roing	2001	Along Assam border
Dibang Valley	Anini	2001	Along Tibet border

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Anjaw	Hawai	2004	Along Tibet border in the east of state
Lohit	Tezu	1980	Along Assam border in the east of Arunachal
Namsai	Namsai	2014	Along Assam border in the east of Arunachal. From westernmost parts of Lohit district along easternmost Assam.
Changlang	Changlang	1987	Between Assam and Myanmar with large area
Tirap	Khonsa	1965	Between Assam and Myanmar in south of Arunachal
Longding	Longding	2012	Between Assam and Myanmar in south of Arunachal. From southwestern parts of Tirap District along easternmost Assam.

Source: State Profile of Arunachal Pradesh. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India.

Among these 25 districts Tawang, West Kameng, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, West Siang and East Siang district have been chosen as the study area.

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Highlights of the districts within Study area

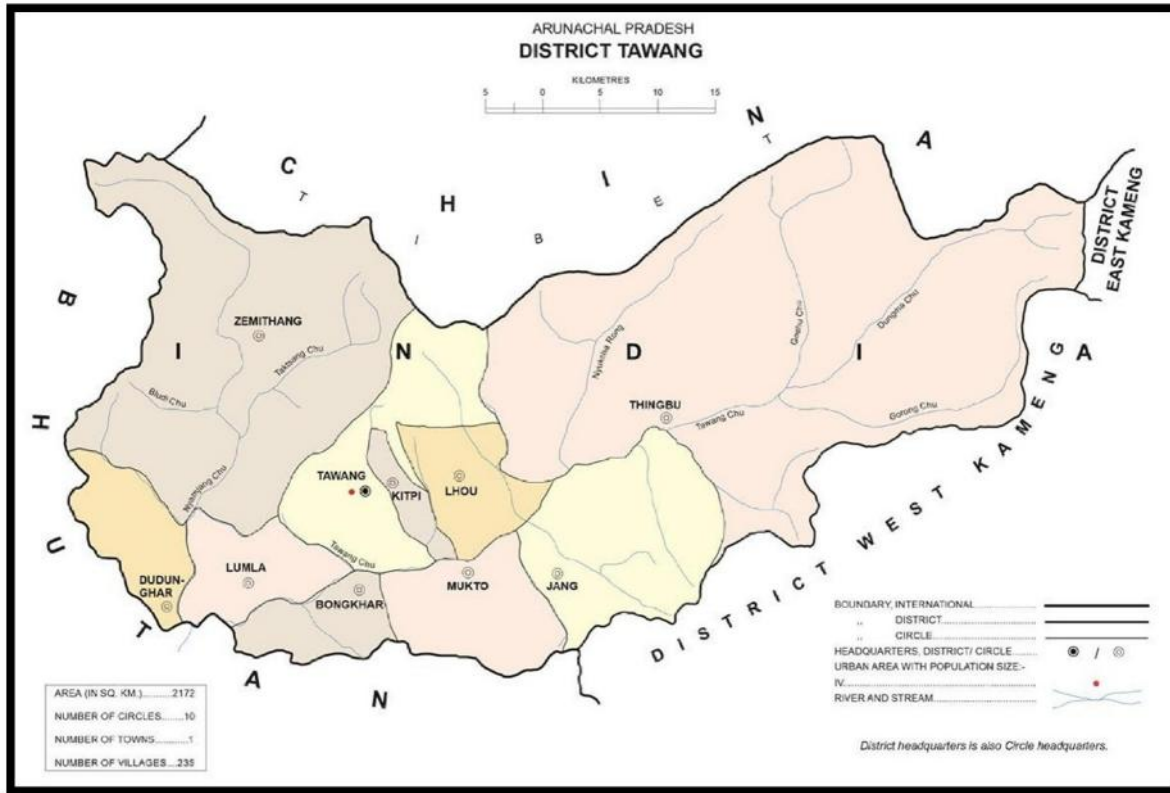


Figure 43 Map of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook Tawang, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh

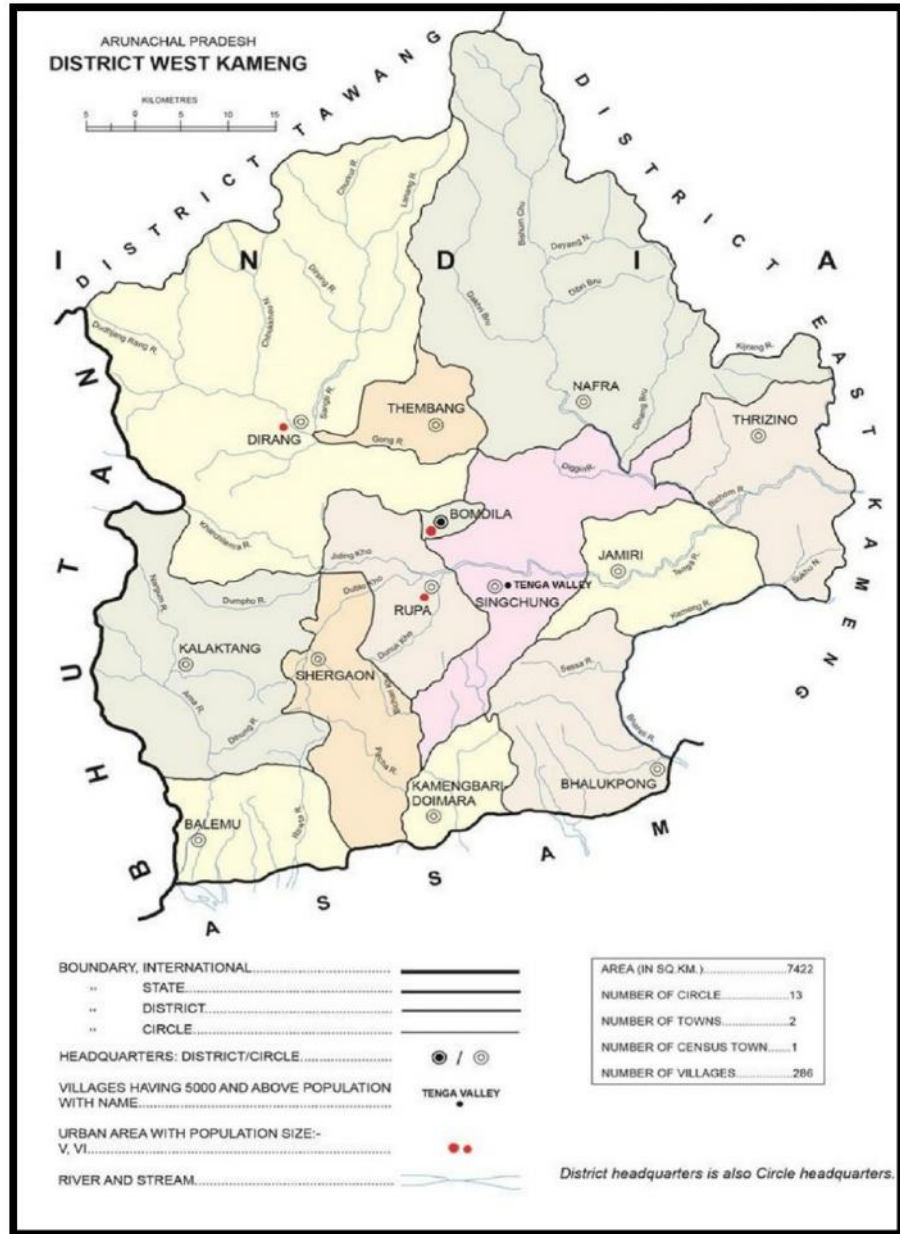
Tawang District. The name Tawang derives from some bearings on surroundings. But people’s interpretation is that the name Tawang was given by Mera Lama in the seventeenth century. The first administrative centre was set-up at Tawang, the district headquarters by Major R. Khating the first political officer on 6th February 1951. Previously the administration of the sub-division used to run by the local people. Prior to 1984 the Tawang district was a sub-division of West Kameng district which is situated in the north-western part of Arunachal Pradesh. This sub-division came into existence as full-fledged district of Arunachal Pradesh on 6th October, 1984. Tawang district is situated in western most part of Arunachal Pradesh with approximate area of

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2172 sq. km. As per the findings of 2011 Census, the total population of the district is 49,977 and constituting of 3.61 percent of the State Population. The district is located between 27° 22' (E) to 27° 45' (E) longitude and 90° 45' (N) to 92° 15' (N) latitude. The district is bounded by Tibet in the North, Bhutan in the South-West and Sela ranges separate it from the West Kameng District in the east. In terms of area, Tawang district is the smallest district of Arunachal Pradesh. According to latest administrative pattern the area is divided into three sub-division namely Tawang sub-division, Jang sub-division and Lumla sub-division. The whole district is covered under Tawang Valley. The region is of Bomdila and Sela groups of geology. The area has recently formed soils, shallow black, brown and alluvial soils of northern region. The area is covered by dense forest of East Himalayan moist temperate type. It is a *Dun* type valley in inner Himalayas. Tawang Chuu and Nyamjang Chuu are the two main rivers in Tawang District. The climatic condition of the district is moderate and pleasant during the summer and extreme chill and biting cold with snowfall during winter. The altitude varies from 3500 feet to 22500 feet. The climate is marked with variation in temperature in accordance with the elevation. The temperature generally goes down to the freezing point in winter. More than 70 percent in the district are engaged in Agriculture and its allied activities i.e. Cultivation of food crops, commercial crops, rearing of animal like Yak, Sheep, Goat, etc. More than 80 percent of the indigenous populations are involved in farming and the people of the district are hardworking and keenly interested in agro-horticulture activities. The economic conditions of the larger population of the state are basically dependent on animal husbandry. Prospects for dairy, goatery, gigger, sheep breeding and poultry etc. are very good in the district. The district has very rich potential with regard to cold water fisheries and has to be encouraged up to the maximum extent. Fishery based eco-tourism is also emerging as a potential area for employment generation. Tawang is the homeland of variety of exquisite craft

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and handloom. The inhabitants of the district belong to Monpa Tribe except Shyo village which is dominated by the people of Tibetan origin. The Monpas belong to the Mongoloid stock. They are well built, fair in complexion. Their houses are built with stones and timbers. Agriculture and



Animal Husbandry are the fundamental means of livelihood of the Monpa people.

Figure 44 Map of West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook West Kameng, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh

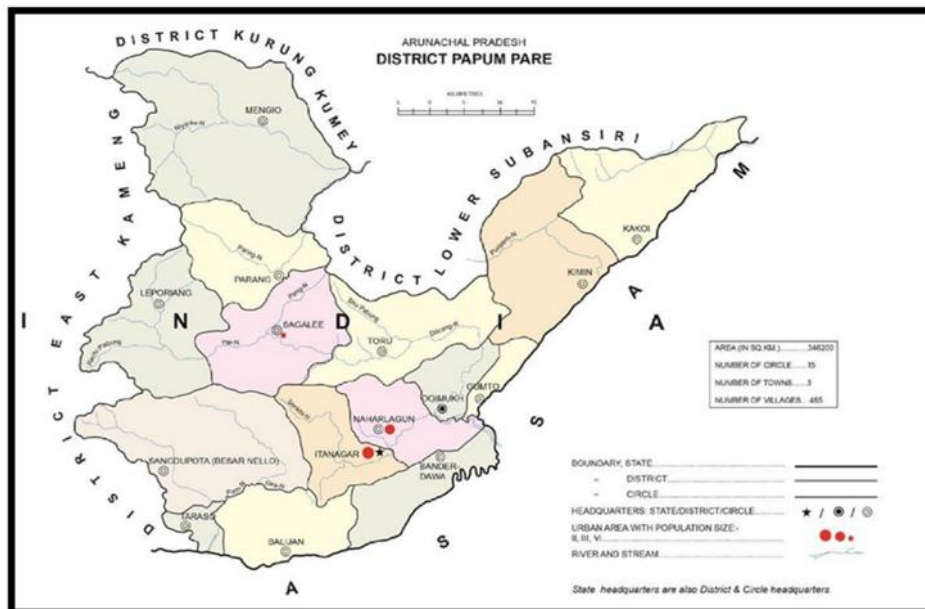
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West Kameng District. West Kameng derives its name from the river Kameng, a tributary of river Brahmaputra that flows through the district. It is an administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh with its Headquarter at Bomdila and bounded by Tawang district in the North, Bhutan in the West, East Kameng in the East and Assam in the South. Upon the arrival of the British, the entire area was known as the North East Frontier Agency. Till 1914, the district was a part of Darrang district of Assam. By a Government of India Notification of 1914, the area covered by this district became a part of the “Western Section” of the North East Frontier Tract. In 1919, this area was renamed as ‘Balipara Frontier Tract’ with its headquarters at Charduar in Assam. In 1946, the area covered by Balipara Frontier tract was divided into Sela Sub-Agency and the Subansiri Area. The area covered by the present West Kameng district falls under the Sela Sub Agency with its headquarters continued to be in Charduar of Assam but later on it was shifted to Bomdila. Following the independence of India, the Sela Sub Agency was renamed as the Kameng Frontier Division in 1954 with its Headquarters at Bomdila. Again in 1965, Kameng Frontier Division was renamed as Kameng District. In May 1980 the district was bifurcated into East Kameng District (erstwhile Seppa sub-Division) and West Kameng district (erstwhile Bomdila sub-division). Lately on June 6, 1980, the district of West Kameng was again divided into two parts curving out the area of Tawang Sub-division which became Tawang district and the rest of the area remained as West Kameng district. There are four Assembly Constituencies in the district namely, Dirang, Kalaktang, Thrizino-Buragaon and Bomdila.

West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh is lying approximately between 91° 30' to 91° 40' East longitudes and 26° 54' to 28° 01' North latitudes. It lies in the western most part of the state. The area of the West Kameng district is 9594 sq. km. The district is bounded by Tawang district in the north, in the east by East Kameng district, in the south by Sonitpur and Darang

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districts of Assam and in the west by Bhutan. The district is the 3rd largest district in the State in respect of area accounting for 8.9 percent of the total area of the state. The topography of the district is mostly mountainous. The principal river of the district is Kameng river, one of the major tributaries of the Brahmaputra river. The district is situated within the temperate zone. Although the district lies close to the tropic, it furnishes every gradation of climate from the salty suffocating tropical heat of foothills area to the arctic cold of snow clad peaks. The high terrain and topography of the district limit the scope of agriculture products. The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary is one of the most important sources of economic development in the district. The district has vast potential for development of plantation and horticulture crops. As per the findings of 2011 Census, the total population of the district is 83,947 and constituting 6.0 percent of the State Population spread over 7422 sq. km. area of the district. Among the thirteen Circles of the district, Dirang is the most populated circle and Kamengbari-Doimara is the least populated circle. The literacy rate of the district is 67.1 percent and work participation rate is 50.6 percent. There are three towns in



the district i.e., Bomdila, Dirang and Rupa. West Kameng comprises five major tribes: Monpa, Miji, Sherdukpen, Aka and Bugun. Minority tribes include Takpa, Lishipa, Chugpa, and Butpa.

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Figure 45 **Map of Papum Pare District of Arunachal Pradesh**

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook
PapumPare, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh

Papum Pare District. The name of the district is derived from the rivers Papum and Pare which flow through the district. The Papum Pare district, the capital district of Arunachal Pradesh is situated in the southwest part of Arunachal Pradesh bordering with the State of Assam. Papum Pare district is lying between 93°12' E to 94°13' E longitudes and 26°56' N to 27°35' N Latitudes. The district covers an area of 3462 sq.km in Lesser Himalayan zone and bounded by Lower Subansiri and Kurung Kumey districts in the north, East Kameng district in the west and North Lakhimpur district of Assam in the east and south. Papum Pare ranked 14th among the district of Arunachal Pradesh in terms of area. The district is covered by thick forest which has sub-tropical, deciduous and humid type of vegetation. The low land and valleys are occupied by inhabitations. The Hill range approximately varies from 300 Mtrs to 2700 Mtrs above sea level. Till 1919, the district was a part of Lakhimpur district of Assam and in March 1919 renamed as Balipara Frontier Tract. In 1946 Subansiri area was curved. In 1954 Subansiri area was renamed as Subansiri Frontier Division. On 1st September, 1965, Subansiri Division was renamed as Subansiri district. On 22nd September, 1992, Papum Pare district was created bifurcating from Lower Subansiri district and become the 12th district of the State. The district headquarter is located at Yupia, which is situated about 20 kms from Itanagar. Itanagar, the state capital is situated in an altitude of 440m above MSL. Papum Pare district is characterized by low to high relief hills and corrugated landform. General altitude in major part of the district ranges from 1000 to 2000 m above MSL. It is a land of lush green forests, deep river valleys and beautiful plateau. The land is mostly mountainous with Himalayan ranges. Trees of great size, plentiful of climbers, hundreds of variety of orchids, cane and bamboos are found in the district. The district is a part of Brahmaputra river

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basin. The main rivers of the district are Dikrang, Pachin, Panyar, Pare, Papum, Kimin and Kud. The Papum Pare district falls under mid tropical hill zone. The variation of altitude and varied climatic conditions has bestowed the area with three different type of forest: Tropical evergreen forest, Tropical mixed evergreen forest and Secondary Forest. Agriculture is the main occupation and considered as a source of livelihood of the people of this district. The district has a greater scope for horticulture development due to conducive climatic condition. Livestock occupied an important place in the economy of the local people of the district. Rearing of *Mithuns*, cows, pigs, goats, poultry, ducks, birds, etc. are taken up in the district. As per the findings of 2011 Census, the total population of the district is 176,573 and constituting 12.76 percent of the State Population. Among the fifteen Circles of the district, Itanagar is the most populated circle and Kakoi is the least populated circle. Other circles in order of their population size are Naharlagun, Doimukh, Banderdawa, Kimin, Balijan, Mengio, Sagalee, Leporiang, Sangdupota (Besar Nello), Toru, Taraso, Parang and Gumto circles. The literacy rate of the district is 80 percent and work participation rate is 37.2 percent. There are three towns in the district i.e. Itanagar, Naharlagun and Sagalee. The district as a whole is Nyishi pre-dominated area except the capital where all tribes from Arunachal Pradesh are inhabited.

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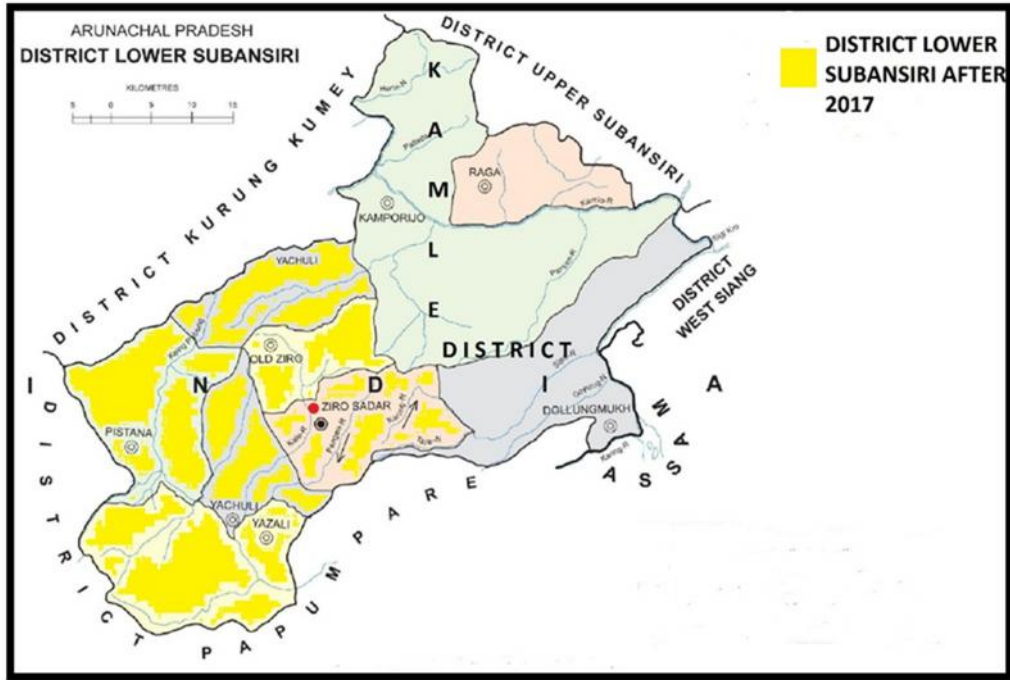


Figure 46 Map of Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook Lower Subansiri, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh. District Lower Subansiri after 2017 recreated from Census Map and marked by yellow colour.

Lower Subansiri District. The name of the district is derived from the river Subansiri, a tributary of Brahmaputra which flows through the district. Till 1914, the district was a part of the Lakhimpur district of Assam. In 1914, the area of the district becomes a part of the Lakhimpur Frontier tract of the North East Frontier Tract. In March, 1919 the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract along with western sector was renamed as Balipara Frontier Tract. In 1946, Subansiri area was carved out from the Balipara Frontier Tract. In 1954, Subansiri area was renamed as Subansiri Frontier Division. On May 13, 1980, Subansiri district was bifurcated into Lower Subansiri and Upper Subansiri districts. On September 2, 1992 Lower Subansiri district was again bifurcated and a separate Papum Pare district was formed. In 1999 Papum Pare district was split to form new district, and this was repeated on April 1, 2001 with the creation of Kurung Kumey district^{xx}. In October 2017 the state government approved the creation of Kamle district, involving the carving

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out of Raga, Dolungmukh and Kumpurijio circles from Lower Subansiri district^{xxi}. Lower Subansiri district is located in the western part of Arunachal Pradesh and lies approximately between 92°40' and 94°21' East Longitude and 26°55" and 28°21' North Latitudes, covers an area of 3,460 (approx) Sq.km., bounded on the North by Kurung-Kumey, Kamley and Upper Subansiri districts of Arunachal; on the South by Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh; on the East by West Siang and some part of Kamle; and on the West by Kurung-Kumey and Papumpare districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The altitude of Lower Subansiri district headquarters is 1500 meters above sea level. Lower Subansiri district has a long ancient history related with the Chutiya Kingdom. It was probably under Chutiya chieftain rule from a long time, and came under Birpal's rule in the 12th century. According to the 2011 census Lower Subansiri district has a population of 83,030^{xxii}. The topography of the district is mostly mountainous terrain, where Hill ranges varies approximately from 1000 to 1600 metres above sea level. Kamala River is one of the major river found in the district. In the foothills area of the district the climatic condition is moderate in comparison to high belt areas. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of the district. Ziro and Yazali are census towns in Lower Subansiri district. There are three major tribes in lower Subansiri District namely Apatani, Nyishi and Hill Miri.

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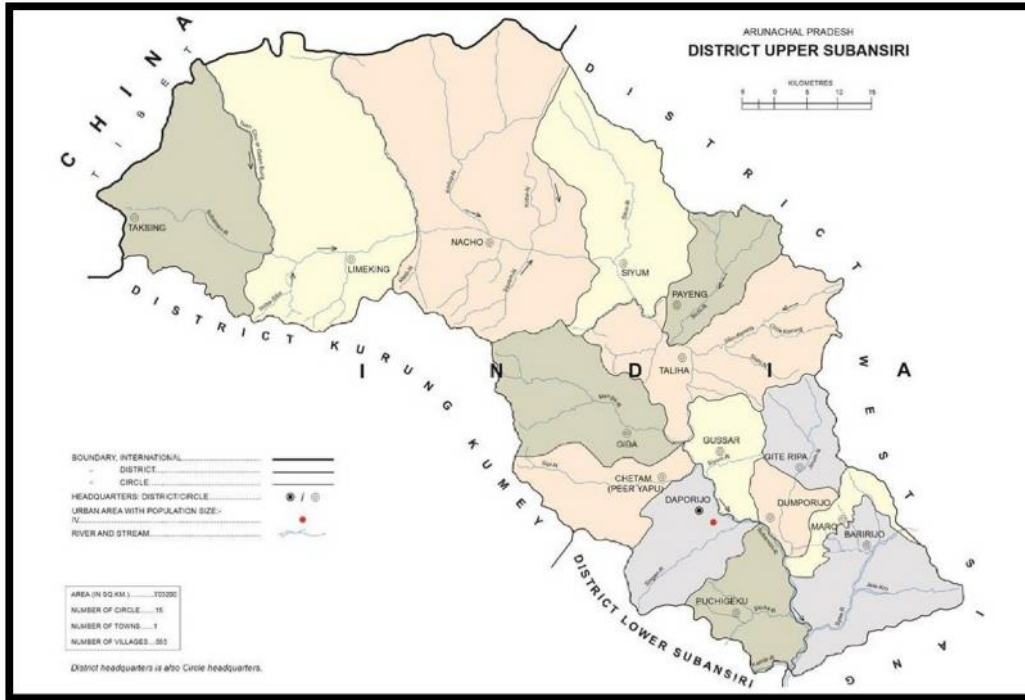


Figure 47 Map of Upper Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook Upper Subansiri, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh.

Upper Subansiri District. The district derives its name from the river Subansiri. During British India the area of the district was a part of the then North-East Frontier Tract. In 1914, the Western sector of the North-East Frontier Tract was renamed as Balipara Frontier Tract. Prior to 1914 this area was a part of Lakhimpur District of Assam. In 1946, Balipara Frontier Tract was divided into two Administrative Jurisdictions viz. the Sela Sub-agency and the Subansiri. The year 1954 marks the renaming of the Subansiri area as Subansiri Frontier Division. Subansiri Frontier Division was renamed as the Subansiri District in 1964. The Subansiri district was bifurcated into two districts on May 13, 1980. Daporijo has been declared as the District Headquarters of Upper Subansiri district with two Sub-divisions namely Nacho and Daporijo. Upper Subansiri district is located in the central part of Arunachal Pradesh and lies approximately between 28°45' to 28°42' North latitudes and 93°18' to 94°36' East longitudes. The district is bounded on the east and south by west

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Siang district, on the north by China (The Mc Mahon Line) and on the west by Kurung Kumey, Kamle and Lower Subansiri district. The district occupied an area of 7032 sq. Km and accounts for 8.4 percent of the total area of the state. It is the 4th largest district in Arunachal Pradesh in terms of area. The district is a rugged mountainous track of difficult terrain. The entire district is intersected by Subansiri river and its tributaries. The height of the snow clad mountains ranges from 7000 ft. to 18000 ft. above the sea level and stands like a barrier in the north. Most land is barren and inhabitation is scanty. The region is mostly covered by dense forest consisting Alpine, moist temperature tropical pine and temperate weather evergreen forests in upper, upper middle, middle and lower region respectively. The district is rich in flora and fauna. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of the state. The department of Textile and Handicrafts has been playing an important role in the rural economy which provides basic needs of people and the only life line for sustainable growth to improve quality of life. The basic policy and objective has therefore been to sustain the rich handicrafts and textiles tradition of the district and also to promote textile and handicrafts culture and tradition of the district. The important towns are Daporijo, Dumporijo, Taliha, Nacho, Siyum, and Maro. As per the findings of 2011 Census, the total population of the district is 83,448 and constituting 6 percent of the State Population. Among the fifteen Circles of the district, Daporijo is the most populated circle and Taksing is the least populated circle. Other circles in order of their population size are Taliha, Siyum, Chetam (Peer Yapu), Nacho, Giba, Dumporijo, Puchi Geku, Gussar, Maro, Gite-Ripa, Baririjo, Payeng and Limeking circles. The literacy rate of the district is 63.8 percent and work participation rate is 40 percent. Daporijo is also the district headquarter. Three major tribes inhabit the Upper Subansiri District, namely, the Tagin, the Nyishi, and the Galo. There is a close co-relation among the three tribes so far as their

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socio-economic aspects are concerned. Most of their traditions and customs have been handed down from generation to generation orally.

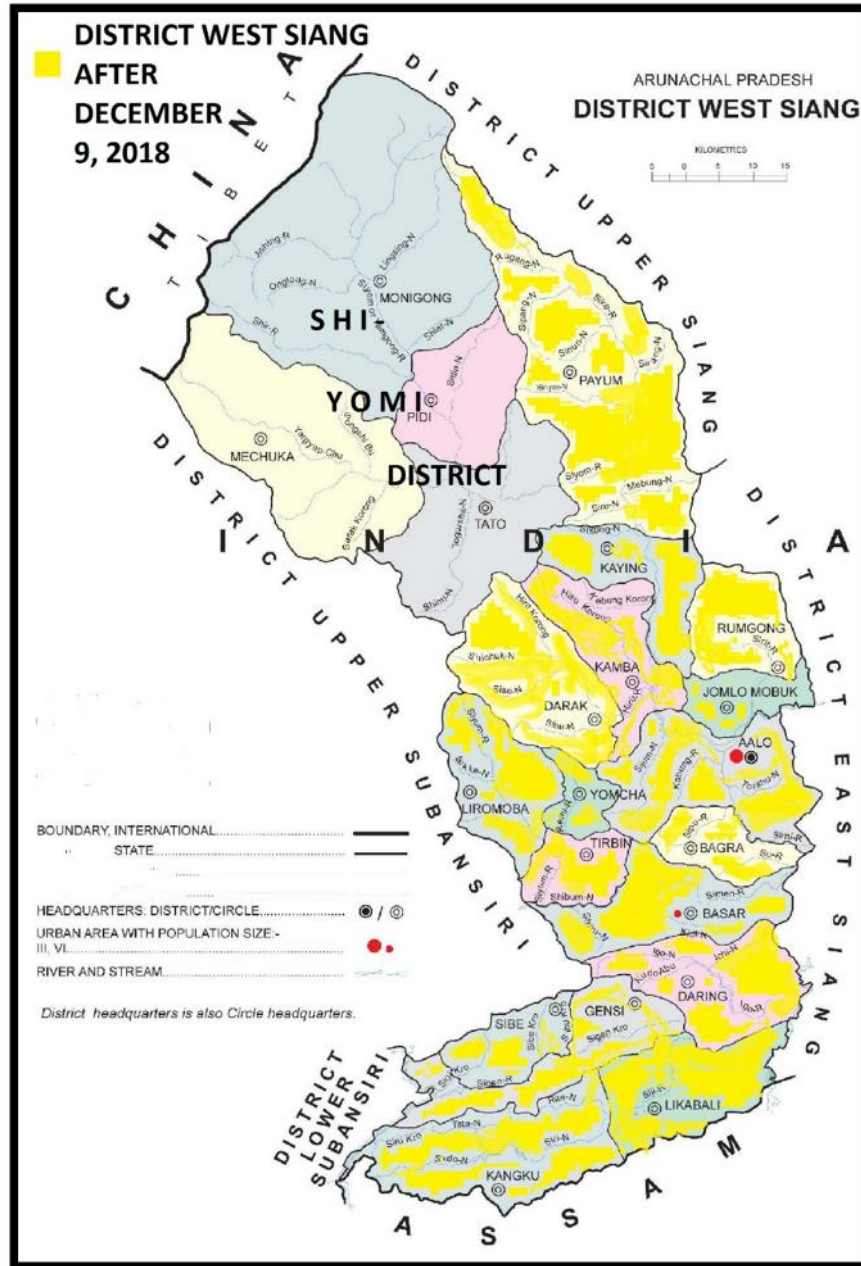


Figure 48 Map of West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook West Siang, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh. District West Siang after December 9, 2018 recreated from Census Map and marked by yellow colour

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West Siang District. The name of the district is derived from the river Siang a tributary of the river Brahmaputra. Prior to 1914, the district was a part of the Lakhimpur district of the Assam. The area covered by this district was a part of the Central and Eastern section of the North-East Frontier tract. In 1919 this tract was renamed as the Sodiya Frontier Tract. In 1948 Sadiya frontier tract was divided into Abor hills district and the Mishmi hills district. The North-East Frontier Regulation 1954 renamed the Abor hills district as Siang frontier division. In 1965, the Siang frontier division was renamed as the Siang district. The district further divided into East Siang and West Siang district on May 13, 1980. East Siang district was formed covering the area of the then Independent Pasighat sub-division and rest of the area of East Siang district was placed under West Siang district. Subsequently on April 1, 1989, the area of Tuting sub-division was curved out of West Siang district and placed within the jurisdiction of East Siang district. West Siang was divided into Upper Siang and Lower Siang. West Siang district was bifurcated on 9 December 2018 when northern areas along China border were made a sperate Shi-Yomi district. It was once a part of the Chutiya kingdom. West Siang District with its Head quarter at Aalo, bounded on the North by China, on the East by Upper Siang and East Siang districts, on the South by Lower Siang & Assam and on the West by Upper Subansiri, Lower Subansiri and Shi- Yomi districts of Arunachal Pradesh. West Siang district occupies an area of 8,325 square kilometres. Topography of the district is mountainous in northern part and falls within higher mountain zone consisting of a mass of tangle peaks and valleys. The foothill range which lies in Southern part has hills of low altitude. Agriculture has traditionally been and continues to be the mainstay of the inhabitants. The district headquarters are located at Aalo which is earlier known as Along, situated at an altitude of 300 metre from the sea level characterized by mild summers and moderate to severe winters. According to the 2011 Census, West Siang district has a population of 112,274.^{xxiii} As regard the

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composition of the people and their history it may be mentioned that the district is predominantly inhabited by the scheduled tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Adis are the main tribe of the district followed by Mombas, Kambas and Mishmis. The Adis, with its sub groups viz. the Gollong, Boris, Pailebos, Ramos, Bokars etc., accounts for the great majority of the total population. The homeland of various tribes like Galo, Minyong, Bori, Bokar, Pailibo, Ramos, Membra form a natural abode for many species of orchids, diverse flora & fauna endowed with a dense vegetation, and a wide

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range of climatic and geographical variations, the district enjoys a moderate and comfortable climate.

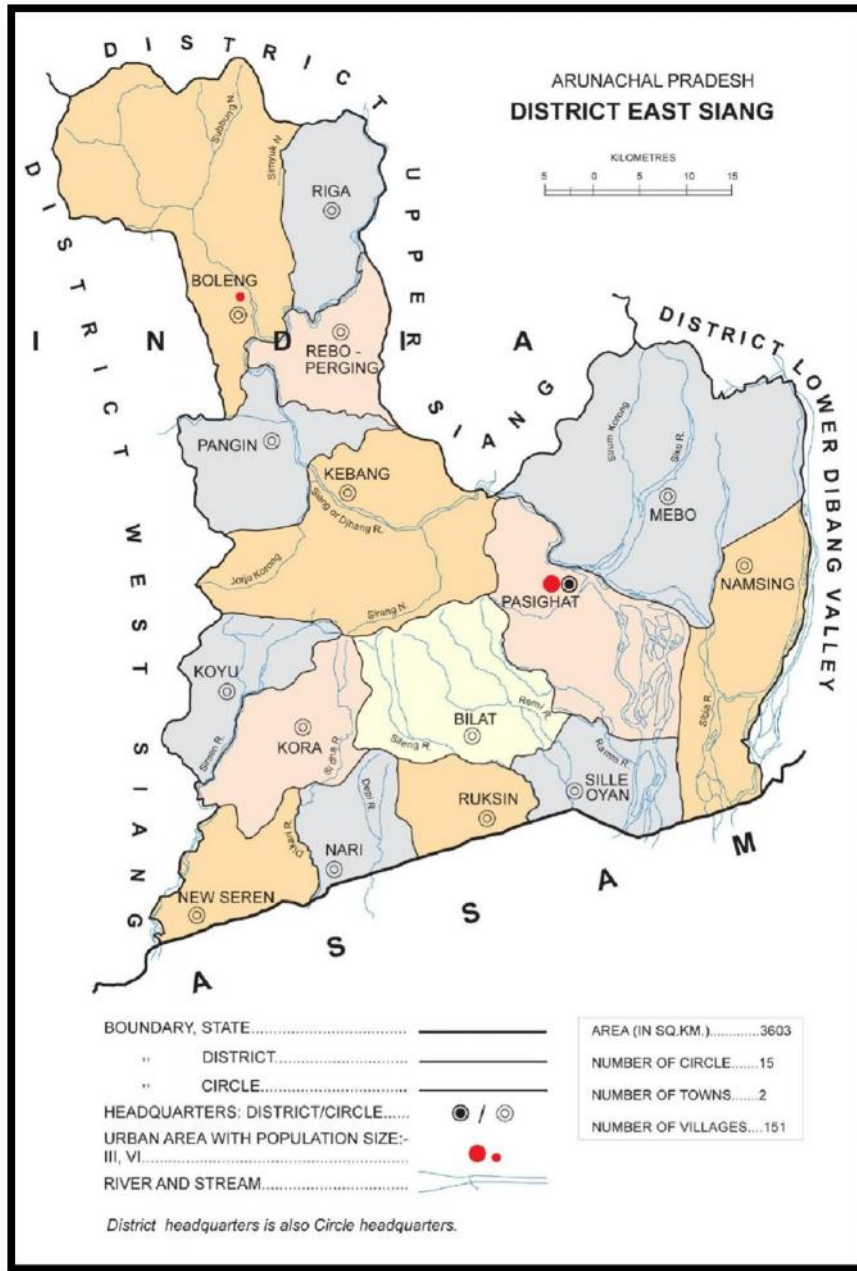


Figure 49 Map of East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh

Source: Census of India 2011, Arunachal Pradesh, Series 13, Part XII-A, District Census Handbook East Siang, Village and Town Directory, Directorate of Census Operations, Arunachal Pradesh

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East Siang. The name of the district East Siang is derived from the river Siang, which flows to the river Brahmaputra in Assam. Pasighat is the district headquarters, which is the first administrative centre in Arunachal Pradesh opened in the year 1911. In 1914 the area became a part of the central section of the North East Frontier Tract. In the year 1919 central section along with Eastern Section of the same tract was renamed as Sadiya Frontier tract with its Headquarters at Sadiya. In the year 1948 Sadiya Frontier Tract was bi-furcated into two separate administrative charges namely Abor hills district and Mishimi hills district. Under the regulation of 1954, Abor hills district was renamed as Siang Frontier Division. In 1965 Siang Frontier Division was again renamed as Siang district. In 1980 Siang district was bi-furcated into East Siang and West Siang district. On November 23, 1994 East Siang district was bi-furcated into two districts Viz. East Siang and Upper Siang. East Siang district has a long ancient history related with the Chutiya Kingdom. It was probably under Chutiya chieftain rule from a long time, and came under Birpal's rule in the 12th century. East Siang district is located in the central part of Arunachal Pradesh and lies approximately between 27°43' to 29°20' North Latitudes and 94°42' to 95°35' East Longitudes. The district is bounded by Upper Siang district in the north, Lower Dibang Valley district in the east, Dhemaji district of Assam in the south and West Siang district in the west. The district has an area of 4004 sq. km. The East Siang district is a wild, mountainous region and presents a remarkable topographic variety. The district is hilly in the north and gradually descending southwards. The district is a part of the Middle Himalayas and the Siwalik ranges but the Siwalik ranges in the southern portion of the district has turned into a plain due to erosion caused by the Siang river. The mighty Siang river is the principal river in the district. The varied topography of the district has a profound influence on the climatic conditions of the district. The altitude of the district ranges from 130 metre to 752 metre above the sea level. Pasighat, the district headquarters

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is situated at 155 metre above the sea level. It would not be wrong to say that the people of East Siang District were the first natives of the state to come in contact with the mainstream. Therefore this district is called as ‘the gateway to Arunachal Pradesh’. The mountainous part in the north have mountain type climate and the plains and valleys in the lower portion experience tropical climate. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of the district. Livestock plays an important role especially in socio-economic development of the people of the district. It is important to note that rural economy of the district is measured with the number of living animal like, *Mithun*, pigs etc. As per the findings of 2011 Census, the total population of the district is 99,214 constituting 7.2 percent of the State Population. Among the fifteen Circles of the district, Pasighat is the most populated circle and Kora is the least populated circle. Other Circles in order of their population size are Sille-Oyan, Namsing, Mebo, Boleng, Ruksin, Nari, Bilat, Riga, Pangin, New Seren, ReboPerging, Koyu and Kebang circles. The literacy rate of the district is 72.5 percent and work participation rate is 40.5 percent. There are two towns in the district i.e. Boleng and Pasighat. Boleng is a new town added in 2011 Census. The East Siang District is mostly populated by the Adi tribe which comprise of a large number of tribal groups and can be divided into various subgroups such as the Minyongs, Padams, Shimongs, Milangs, Pasis, Karkos, Ashings, Pangis, Tangmas and Boris.

People of Arunachal Pradesh

The population of Arunachal is 13, 82,611^{xxiv} according to 2011 census of which male and female are 7,20,232 and 6,62,379 respectively. Arunachal Pradesh is home to distinct ethnic groups, most of which are in some ways related to the peoples of Tibet and the hill region of western Myanmar. Arunachal Pradesh is the state where almost 31 indigenous communities inhabit^{xxv}. More than two-thirds of the state’s people are designated officially as Scheduled Tribes.

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In western Arunachal Pradesh the Nyishi, Sherdukpen, Aka, Monpa, Apa Tani, and Hill Miri are among the main tribes. The Adi, who constitute the largest tribal group in the state, live in the central region. The Mishmi inhabit the northeastern hills, and the Wancho, Nocte, and Tangsa are concentrated in the southeastern district of Tirap. Throughout the state, the tribal peoples generally share similar rural lifestyles and occupations; many are subsistence farmers who supplement their diet by hunting, fishing, and gathering forest products. Dispersed villages and isolated farmsteads are typical features of the landscape. Aside from the Scheduled Tribes, much of the remainder of the population of Arunachal Pradesh consists of immigrants from Bangladesh, as well as from Assam, Nagaland, and other states of India. The 96 percent landscape of the state is covered by hills that create the natural boundaries for the different communities of Arunachal Pradesh. Being the home of many different indigenous communities, Arunachal Pradesh is known to be one of the magnificent multilingual tribal areas of the world. By songs, dances, dresses, rituals or simply the gestures, the people express and maintain their different living styles which make Arunachal Pradesh vivaciously vibrant in the realms of intangible cultural heritages. The tribal groups speak about 50 languages and dialects, most belonging to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. They are often mutually unintelligible; thus, Assamese and Hindi, both of which are Indo-Aryan languages, as well as English are used as lingua francas in the region. Each of the tribes follows its own social, cultural, and religious practices, and most are endogamous (marrying within the group). Many of the groups practice local religions that involve interaction with various spirits and deities of nature. Ritual sacrifice is common, and a domesticated gaur (wild ox), locally known as a *mithun*, is especially valued as a sacrificial animal. Some residents of Arunachal Pradesh practice Hinduism, especially those near the lowlands approaching the border with Assam.

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Tibetan Buddhism is found among groups near the Tibetan border, and some tribes along the Myanmar border practice Theravada Buddhism, which is predominant in Southeast Asia.

Arunachal Pradesh is the Indian state with the least population density, with just over 13 lakh people living in the vast area of over 80,000 kilometers square. The population density of Arunachal Pradesh is 17 people per kilometer square of area which is lower than national average 382 per sq. km, according to Arunachal census of 2011. Most of the populace is concentrated in the low-lying valleys, with the hill peoples living in scattered upland communities. Though Anthropological Survey of India separates all tribes in five cultural zones in their survey, the tribes can broadly divide into three groups on the basis of their socio-religious affinities. The first group is Buddhist tribes. It can again be divided into Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist groups of tribes. The first group of people is the Monpas and Sherdukpens of Tawang and West Kameng districts who follow the lamaistic tradition of Mahayana Buddhism. Culturally similar to them are Membas and Khambas of the western part of Arunachal Pradesh who live in the high mountains along the northern borders practice Mahayana sect of Buddhism and the Khamptis and Singphos of the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh practice Hinayana sect of Buddhism. The second group of the people is Adis, Akas, Apatanis, Bangnis, Nyishis, Mishmis, Mijis, Thongsas etc., who worship the Sun and the Moon God namely, Donyi-Polo and Abo-Tani, the original ancestors for most of these tribes. Their religious rituals largely coincide with phases of agricultural cycles. The third group comprises Noctes and Wanchos, adjoining Nagaland in the Tirap District. They also practice elementary form of Vaishnavism.

Literacy in this state however is far more disappointing. With only over 60 percent of literate citizens, it is one of the two states in India having lowest literacy. Literacy rate in Arunachal

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Pradesh has seen upward trend and is 66.95 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 73.69 percent while female literacy is at 59.57 percent. In actual numbers, total literates in Arunachal Pradesh stands at 7,89,943 of which males were 4,54,532 and females were 3,35,411. Sex Ratio in Arunachal Pradesh is 920 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. Though large in size, the state of Arunachal has far less area urbanized; making most of the population lives in rural areas. As vibrant is the land, so are the people living in it. Arunachal population speaks above 50 dialects in total owing to the cultural diversity. Yet the official language is English.

All communities, whether it is Buddhists, or followers of Donyi-Polo or other faith, have a highly developed sense of music and rhythm. The dances vary from highly solemn and thoughtful religious dramas of the Monpas to the joyous and cheerful Adi dances to intense and powerful martial dance of the Noctes and Wanchos. While some Buddhist tribes maintain written records, mainly in the form of religious books, most Arunachalis have preserved their traditions in the oral form. The colours of the magnificent landscape and the rich & earthy life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh have been captured in their handicrafts. Buddhist tribes specialize in painting religious and semi-religious motifs and wood carving while Nyshis are specialized in bamboo and cane goods making. Intricate patterns are also woven out of cane by the eastern tribes of Tirap district. Monpa carpets, Adi skirts and highly decorative Mishmi bags, shawls and jackets prove their traditional skill and aestheticness. The people of Arunachal Pradesh are also well known for their traditional knowledge on flora and fauna from Mishmi *teeta* (*Coptis teeta*, a type of poison) to sheep breeding to produce local salt.

Highlights of the Communities under Study Area

Monpa. Monpa is one of the 25 major tribes. The Monpa tribe is one of the most populous tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and is considered as one of the major tribal communities in the entire region. The Monpa tribe is known as the most colourful tribe. Monpa people are Mongaloid in descent. Monpa means, “blessed by a horse.” Monpa people live in the regions of high altitude Tawang district and the mountain passes of Bomdila in West Kameng of Arunachal Pradesh in India. Historically, the Tibetan word Monpa referred to all the indigenous tribes of southern Tibet and Bhutan, who were considered barbaric by the highly civilized Tibetan Buddhists. Mera Lama of Tibet spread Buddhism in southern Tibet and converted these Monpas into Gelugpa faith of Tibetan Buddhism. As a result of which these inhabitants of Tawang came under the religious and cultural influence of Tibet and Tawang was administered by the Dalai Lama from Lhasa. The Monpas were later separated from their Tibetan connection when the British colonists drew the McMahon Line border with China and the Monpas remained in the Indian Territory.

Monpa people are known as friendly and hard working. They work in agriculture, trading, and breeding of yaks and cattle. They are cultivators of potatoes. Monpa people live in two story houses made of stone and with planks for floors. Apart from weaving, the Monpa tribes have been known for their skillful wonders with wood. They have also been credited for the manufactured paper from the pulp of the local sukso tree. They are artistic people who make carpets, utensils from bamboo, and wooden items. They have made a name for themselves with their paintings and paper making. Dragons, floral motifs and geometric patterns are the most common designs found across the various arts and crafts practiced by the Monpa tribe.

Marriage usually involves one spouse, although more are allowed. Cross-cousin marriage is the most common practice. Divorce, and remarriage of widows is allowed. Monpa celebrate

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festivals.

Their language is Tibeto-Burman, but different from that of East Tibet. Monpas speak Tshangla, which is also understood by the Bhutanese and Tibetans as these languages share a similar origin. The Monpas are however categorized into six clans depending on the variations of their dialect and the location of their villages. These groups were not in frequent contact with one another as Monpas lived in isolation.

Monpa are Buddhists. The Tawang monastery is the spiritual mainstay of their lives which includes spirit worship and animal sacrifices. The god Buddha has much influence over their lives. No written, audio, or visual Bible resources are known to exist in the Tibeto-Burman language which Monpa people speak. The most important need is for Monpa people to understand that their good works and worship of Buddha will never pay the penalty for their sins, and that Almighty Creator God has made a provision for them. Monpas follow Buddhism as their main religion. The Monpas, like most other autochthons of the eastern Himalayas, believed in the native animistic Bon religion before their conversion into Tibetan Buddhism. But unlike the other tribes, the Monpas were fully absorbed into their new religion leaving behind only a few elements of their old religion. Many Monpa families also send their children as Lamas to join the monasteries. The Buddhist influence increased with the growing importance of Tawang when a Monpa from this region was chosen as the Dalai Lama.

Losar is one of their main festivals, which is basically Tibetan New Year. Crowds gather at the monastery and the Lamas preside over the ceremonies. Choskar, or the harvest festival, is unique to the Monpa community. Though a non-Tibetan festival, it also has religious elements in the festivities as people travel to Tawang for pilgrimage and Buddhist Lamas would read religious scriptures in the Gompas for a few days during Choskar.

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Dances during Losar are extraordinarily colourful and mythical. Seen here is a celebration held in Tawang Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh, against a breathtaking backdrop of snowy Himalayan Mountains.

The traditional dress of the Monpa is based on the Tibetan Chugba, although people generally wear woollen coats and trousers as well. The men wear a cap in the form of a skull with trimmings and tassels. The women mostly wear a warm jacket and a sleeveless chemise which is ankle length. Their women used to wear striking “crinoline of cane rings” which served the purpose of a blouse which is however not a customary form of dressing in present day Arunachal Pradesh. Costumes of these people are endowed with attractive and vibrant colours and myriad patterns, characteristic of the tribe culture. It is significant for its embellishments and aesthetic culture. They also tie the chemise around the waist, and accessorize the outfit with jewellery that includes silver rings, earrings made of smooth pieces of bamboo with turquoise or red beads. The chemise worn by the women are also beautifully designed, bright coloured and have motifs defining the tribe. New patterns and motifs have been introduced which are more in tune with the younger generation’s tastes in fashion and designs. These chemises are now available in brighter colours, contrary to the initial shades of black, red, and green. Designs are no longer tribe-centric and display a modern technique which showcases how the tribe has embraced Western culture and imbibed it with their own traditional outlook. With its bright colours and bold motifs, these chemises can be accessorized the way an individual wants. In the past, these chemises were worn with large beaded neck pieces or silver rings, but now since fashion is all about understated elegance, these shirts are worn by young women as long dresses, or in shorter versions over jeans. On a worldwide platform, the chemise is worn as a waist belt adorned with trinkets and ornaments and worn with various outfits. Several International designers have drawn inspiration from this

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type of dressing and have used it to flaunt their designs and techniques across the globe. Hats with a single peacock feather, tassels and beads are also one of the common style statements. The trademark is the skull cap which is smeared with yak's hair. The hats are a trend that today's generation is following religiously, and mark a distinct style and flavor that is inherent to the Monpa tribe and its unique take on style. The hair styling of the Monpa women is very interesting. The women often tie their hair into a bun at the back or as a knot in front of the forehead.

The traditional Monpa society was administered by their Trukdri council which consists of six ministers. The Kempo, or high priest of Tawang monastery, was also included. The Lamas also hold a respectable position and two monks known as Nyetsangs, were also part of the council. Two others were Dzongpens, or fort administrators. The Monpa society is patriarchal; the man is the head of the family and is the one who takes all decisions. In his absence, his wife takes over all responsibilities. When a child is born, they have no strict preference for a boy or a girl. However, some prefer a daughter for she stays in the house of her parents once she is married. Her husband is the one who moves to the house of his parents-in-law.

Though many Monpas were initially practicing hunting and foraging in the mountains, they started shifting cultivation and recently switched to terraced farming agriculture. Barley, rice, maize, chili and beans are among their major crops. They also rear domestic animals like yaks, pigs and sheep. Since the end of their isolation culture, the Monpas have greatly participated in trade with other tribes of Arunachal, people of the plains and also the tourist visitors in to their region.

Due to the growth of tourism in the scenic Monpa territory, the Monpas have come out of their seclusion and have also emerged as a friendly community to outsiders. Their youth have also progressed in urban commerce and education, and are finding good and resourceful jobs.



Figure 50 Monpa

A typical home of a Monpa family is made mainly of stone and wood, easily available locally. Thembang is a Monpa village located at about 2300 metre altitude. It is of high historical and cultural significance as it is an ancient village. In medieval era it was a headquarter of a large

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territory which was ruled by the powerful Thembang Bapu who were the direct descendant of the king of Tibet. Traditional Monpa village lifestyle can be experienced in homestays in Thembang because of an active and benefiting community based tourism project which has been started with the help of WWF India.

Nyishi. Nyishi, also spelled Nishi is a subgroup of Tani people. Nyishi, believes that they are the descendants of Abo Tani. In the beginning, out of nothingness the universe was created by Jingbu Pabu Abu (Almighty). It is believed that, Jingbu-Pabu Abu invoked the power through different supernatural means to create and evolve the present-day universe. All living creatures including man were created and the Abo Tani was the progeny of the first human being on the earth. After completion of the process of creation of universe and its different components, Jingbu-Pabu Abu the creator disappeared from the scene. That is why Nyishis called themselves as Tani Group of Tribes. The Nyishi community is the largest ethnic group in Arunachal Pradesh. Hill-Miri and Bangni were the names given to them by the outsiders specifically Britishers. They were also called Dafla once but they don't like to be called so as they find it pejorative. In Nyishi, their traditional language, Nyi refers to "a human" and the word shi denotes "a being", which combined together refers to a human being. Another version is *Nyi* means human race descended from Atu Nyia Tani who is the son of Abo-Tani and believed to be the first real man on the earth and *ishi* means highland, which collectively means the descendants of Atu Nyia Tani who reside in the highland. The oral sources aptly mention that the Nyishis had migrated from the north. They referred the crossing of a mighty river named Supung, which probably might be a river Tsangpo in China. Oral source revealed that they left the place and migrated towards present territory before the advent of Buddhism in China and Tibet. This is fact that Buddhism has no influence on Nyishis. After crossing the high ridges corresponding to the international boundary, they moved towards

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different directions in batches or small groups precisely on the basis of lineage and clan. This is why they spread across nine districts of Arunachal Pradesh: Kra Daadi, Kurung Kumey, East Kameng, West Kameng, Papum Pare, parts of Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, Kamle and Pakke Kesang district. The most populous being the Akang and Leil community of Papum Pare districts. Their population of around 300,000 makes them the most populous tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, closely followed by the tribes of the Adi according to 2001 census. As per census-2001, Nyishi is the one third of the total Scheduled Tribe population.

Nyishis are believed to have come from Burma (now Myanmar) and Tibet, where Mangoloid tribal groups with the same cultural practices are still active. This hunter-warrior tribe believes that they are the descendants of Abo-Tani – a mythical forefather. The people basically belong to Paleo-Mongoloid stock.

The Nyishi are agriculturalists who practice jhum, known as rēt rung-o in Nishi, which is a form of slash-and-burn agriculture and shifting cultivation. The principal crops raised include paddy (rice), tapio (maize), mekung (cucumber), tak-yi (ginger), aeng (yams) and temi (millet). The Nyishi support themselves with hunting and fishing. Rice is the staple food of the people, supplemented by fish, meat of various animals, edible tubers and leafy vegetables. Before a Western market economic system arrived, they used a barter system. They greatly valued the generalized reciprocity and also balance reciprocity in their economic system. A locally-made drink known as upo (the two types of upo: pone, made of rice, and polin which is made of millet) is served at every social gatherings and important events. The Nyishis are typically fond of it. Traditional ways of preparing them include fermentation, steaming, roasting and smoking. Nyishis are expert in handicrafts i.e. weaving, cane & bamboo works, pottery, blacksmith, wood carving

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and carpentry etc. Traditionally, the basic purpose of producing these craft articles was to meet the demands of the family. Slash-and-burn agriculture (Jhoom cultivation) and fishing are their major professions. Nyishis love hunting, and fighting. Agriculture, livestock breeding, animal husbandry, hunting and fishing sustained the Nyishis to maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency in so far as food is concerned. However, the additional requirements such as cloth, utensil, salt etc. are obtained through barter trade-evolved since and immemorial, among themselves and from their neighbours. Early Nyishis confined their trading activities amongst the tribesmen themselves and with the people across the northern border called Nyeme chanam i.e. trade link with the Tibetans. Recently they have been forced to move towards a market based exchange economy.

Nyishis food choices revolve around their agricultural produce viz. rice, millet, maize, and yams. Rice is the staple food that is supplemented by meat and vegetables. They consume boiled food mostly. The meat is boiled with a little salt in it. No oil or spices are used. It's garnished with leafy vegetables and grated ginger. Sometimes, the meat is roasted or smoke-dried and kept in bamboo baskets to preserve it for future use. Bamboo shoots are used to add flavor to the food. They are particularly fond of smoked meat. *Mithun* meat in a bamboo hollow is kept above hearth for drying and smoking. That's how the Nyishi tribe likes its preferred food.

By nature Nyishis, are conscientious, confident, sturdy, brave, courageous, industrious, simple and straightforward. However, due to the variations of topographical features and climatic conditions, their physical stature, dress, phonetic accent of language etc. vary slightly from one region to the other. But because of the same racial blood, more or less their temperament, attitude and mentality are almost similar. Nyishis not only believe but demonstrate organic living. Nyishi

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villages are the epitome of sustainable, chemical-free agricultural production and are surrounded by lush and unexplored forests.



Figure 51 Nyishi

They live at elevations of 3,000 to 6,000 feet (900 to 1,800 metre) in houses built on pilings. Their tribal longhouses called *Namlo* are ecologically sustainable as they are made from the locally grown material like cane, bamboo, and mud. The houses are raised from the ground on bamboo and wooden pilings to protect the floor of the house from the dampness of the soil below. The

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floors and walls are made using split bamboo. The intention of these tribal homes is exquisitely beautiful and simple – to stay together in unity. Thirty to seventy people of single ancestry live in a longhouse without partitions with a separate fireplace for each connubial family i.e. the complete family stays under one roof, but each wife gets her own hearth. Nyishis evolved a joint family system, generally no individual owns properties – both movable and immovable. The movable properties include traditional valued items like *talū* (brass plate), *mazi* (Tibetan tongueless bell), *tasang* (bead), *dumping* (comb like item), *kozi* (bangle), *huhi* (disc), *oriok* (sword), *raji*, domesticated animals such as *sebe* (*mithun*, a bose front talis), *shey* (cow), *sebing* (goat), *erik* (pig), *puruk* (hen). It can also be used for bartering prestigious and costly traditional valuables such as *mazi*, *talū*, *tasang* etc:

Mithun (*Bos frontalis*) is a huge, semi-wild bovine indigenous to north-east India, Bangladesh, and Burma. The animal is closely associated with the social, cultural, economic and religious life of the Nyishi tribe. The *mithun* is treated sacred because in almost all ceremonial rituals, sacrifice of *mithun* is compulsory. The people's richness and economic status depend upon the amount of costly livestock they possess. Of all the livestock they acquire, *mithun* is the costliest of all.

One striking feature of Nyishi society is that it is neither based on caste system nor stratified into classes, except a loose type of social distinction, which is not determined by birth or occupation. They evolved broad base family organization and a joint and extended family norms which still exist but altogether in changed forms. Nyishis are divided into five major phratries based on lineage called Hosa (Identification through descendent of same forefather) namely Dopum, Dodum, Dolu, Hagung and Anyia Hari. The phratry system and for that matter clan

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division is mainly important on social and religious aspects. The family system is patriarchal and patrilocal. As in all patriarchal joint families, authority remains with the eldest member of the family. Single lineage is tracked along paternal lines to the first ancestor (Father – Abotani) which may number as many as 60 or 70 persons. Members of the clan are considered brothers and sisters and are known by their surnames. The most striking feature is that the members of same phratry and clan would help and co-operate one another in socio religious functions and they would share the blood and heart of a sacrificed or killed animal as a bond of brotherhood what may be called *Uyi Haa Debam Nam*. However, beyond this, it does not insist on same habitat nor forges separate political entity nor requires practicing similar pattern of economic activities. Clan is a very important component in the structural organization of the tribal society relating to marriage and breach of the clan rule is considered to be a serious offence. If its happen, such couple is not allow to attend in auspicious occasion like marriage ceremony, clan *Yullo* (puja) *Nyokum Yullo*, *Longte Yullo*, *Boori Yullo*, etc., even they cannot eat any item prepare in such occasion.

Polygyny is prevalent among the Nyishi. It signifies one's social status and economical stability and also proves handy during hard times like clan wars or social huntings and various other social activities. This practice, however is diminishing especially with the modernization and also with the spread of Christianity. Clan exogamy and tribe endogamy was the law of marriage. Exogamous (marriage outside a social group) marriages are the rule. Polygamy still remains common among them. Groom pays the bride price to the bride's family during the marriage. A reciprocal exchanges between both the parties i.e. the bride and the groom, actually bind them in more strict terms than one could imagine because it works as a renewing force through which the relationship continues from generations together. Thus, women have been given equal status in the Nyishi community. Usually, *mithun* (traditional cattle) is given to the bride's family. Most marital

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and neighbourly relationships are cemented through the medium of *mithun*. It normally depends upon the status of the groom's family or bride's education. They believe that the exchange of gifts and money ensures the bride's happiness in her new house. Their bond with their culture and rituals is amazing. They follow their rituals religiously. Nyishis believe that if rituals aren't done properly it can bring trouble. They perform omen examinations viz. boil egg examination (*peepchenam*), pig liver examination (*reksing kanam /keenam*) and chicken liver examination (*pachukuknam/ruksingkanam*) to predict if the alliance is suitable for the bride and groom and their families. The Shaman consults the liver of a freshly killed chicken that foretells the offering or sacrifice to appease the spirits during occasions and festivals. Other marriage rituals include invocation of God, Goddess, and Nature to witness the wedding and seek their blessings (*dapodidingnam*); purification process (*chngtun phahi*) because cleansing of one's soul and mind before any occasion is a vital ritual; and thanksgiving ceremony (*changtum bheenam*) which includes exchanging gifts and jewellery for the future wellbeing of the couple.

Nyishis are open-minded and progressive people. In ideological term, the Nyishis consider the women as a vital source of peace, progress and prosperity. According to them, the importance status of women increases and binds through an established 'reciprocal marital exchange' system in the society. Men always consult all sensible matter or seek advice from their women counterpart before taking any important decision.

Nyishis follow politico cum judicial legal institution called *nyelee* (formal gathering of people) to settle disputes (*yallung*) and listening to the grievances. The place where the disputes are resolved is called *nyelee miram* or *arekh merem*. The disputes are resolved by elderly persons

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(*nyagam aabhu/nyub aabhu*) who are experts in the traditions and customary laws of the community.

Their religion involves belief in spirits associated with nature. Nyishis are the worshipers of nature. They follow the animistic, shamanic religion called Donyi-Polo which is centered around the worship of Donyi (the Sun) and Polo (the moon). Ane Donyi (Mother Sun) and Abo Polo (Father Moon) are the corporeal depictions or visible forms of the supreme Gods, Bo and Bomong. According to them, nature includes humans as well as spirits and it is vital maintaining a balance in nature. Life on the other side of the death is what they perceive and along these lines they worship spirits. Nyishi people practice almost pagan or pre-Aryan beliefs, which is quite evident from their worship of trees, rocks, and plants amongst other things. Like other tribes, they too sacrifice animals to appease spirits and deities. The religion has no written scriptures and has been orally passed down from one generation to another. The priests remember the hymns by heart even though they don't have anything in writing. It's nothing less than a miracle. The religion strongly believes in the oneness of all the living creatures, from the teeny weeny creature to the powerful creature. Donyi-Polo believers uphold the faith that wrongdoers are punished and the righteous are rewarded by nature. Truth is the essence of Donyi-Polo ideology. To them, the truth is everywhere and always wins. They say, *Donyi-Polo e lenduku* – truth prevails upon ultimately. Donyi-Polo temples (*Nyeder Namlo* – The Home of Pure) have come into existence to revitalize and protect the ancient culture and religion. *Nyedar Namlo* follows the tradition of Sunday worships just like a church. Replicas of Donyi and Polo are kept on a raised platform inside the prayer house where devotees offer flowers, and light candles or incense sticks; Priest (*Nyibu*) recites hymns and sprinkles sacred water. Christian missionaries began operating in Arunachal Pradesh in the 1950s; however, many of their proselytising activities were limited by the

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government until the 1970s.^{xxvi} According to a 2011 survey, many of the Nyishi people have become Christian (31 percent), followed by Hinduism (29 percent), with many of the remaining still following the ancient indigenous Donyi-Poloism^{xxvii}.

Festivals purely mean social rituals for Nyishis. Celebrations are closely integrated into the lives of Nyishi people. Their major festivals are *Nyokum Yullo*, *Boori Boot Yullo*, and *Longte Yullo*. *Nyokum* is the festival celebrated by the Nyishi people, which commemorates their ancestors. All of these festivals are celebrated in the month of February.

Members of the Nyishi tribe, both men, and women, are recognized by their elaborate outfits. They normally tie their hair with a Tibetan thread just at the forehead with a brass skewer permeating through the tied hair in a horizontal fashion. The clothing of the men consists of two types of sleeveless shirts (*letum*) and with black and white stripe (*pomo*) made from thick cotton cloth, striped gaily with blue and red together with a mantle of cotton or wool fastened around the throat and shoulders. Men wear cane rings around the waist, arms and legs. Strings made of beads in varying sizes and colours are also worn, mainly for decoration purposes and to show the wearer's status. They also carry a *machete* or *dao* (*uryu* in Nyishi) (short sword) and a knife (*chighi*) in a bamboo sheath that are mostly covered with animal furs. Their armament consists of a spear (*nangkio*) with an iron head, a large sword (*uryu*), and a bow and arrows (*murto*); which are tipped with poison (*um-yu*). They usually carry a backpack called *nara*. During war, both the chest and back are covered with shields made from sabbe buffalo hide, and over it they wear a black cloak (*tassh nara*) made of indigenous fibre *sago palm*. The Nyishi women generally wear a sleeveless cotton mantle (*Par ij*) of striped or plain cloth, around the body and tie one portion at right shoulder and keep open the left shoulder. Its upper part tucked tightly over the breast and

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enveloping the body from the armpits to the centre of the calves addition with different colour tops worn underneath among which red (*fwle / fwlang*) is generally used. A red ribbon is tied at the waist. A girdle consisting of metal disks (*hupiya*), beads and cane garters is worn at the waist. Their hair is parted in the middle, plaited and tied into in a bun (*dumpuye*) just above the neck. Their ornaments include brass metal bells (*maji*), multicolored (mostly blue and red) beads (*tasang/muni*) neckpieces called *seetir*, bangles (*cojii*), bamboo slid (*roonos*), huge brass or silver earrings (*ringbings/belling*), chains, and heavy bracelets of various metals. Seeing Nyishi men and women wearing colorful beads jewellery is an ultimate treat to the senses! They fancy beads ornaments the way we desire gold jewellery. Most of the Nyishi women carry a *tokiri* (*egin*) on their back to pick firewood or grains from the fields. They look like the princess as the metal crown with blue beads (*dumping*) adorn their heads. There's a huge change in the dressing style of the young Nyishi generation and they have embraced the modern or urban dressing style while preserving their culture and traditions. Traditionally, Nyishi plaited their hair and tie it neatly at the forehead with locally-made thread. A brass skewer passes horizontally through the tied hair. Sharp pointed bamboo stick (*domkiyo*) and head helmet made of animal skin or cane (*bopiya*) together make their traditional headgear (*podum*). *Bopiya* is decorated with The Great Indian Hornbill's (*Buceros bicornis*) feathers and topped with the Hornbill's ivory (*casque*) and beak (*paga hebung*). eagle's feather (*kakam ganglang*), the tail of dronngo birds (*nangnee ganglang*), eagle's claw (*kokam kheeley*) and animal skin are also used as adornments. Due to Nyishis hunting practices, Hornbills were on a verge to become extinct. The tribe has now transformed into the guardians of nature and animals and their conservation efforts under the Hornbill Nest Adoption Program are quite evident. The usage of actual hornbill beaks is discouraged these days due to wildlife protection laws since the great Indian hornbill is a protected species and generally due to growing

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awareness among the people as well. Several organizations, such as the Arunachal Wildlife and Nature Foundation and the Wildlife Trust of India, have been trying to stop the Nyishi hunting these birds in order to protect the hornbill from extinction. Nature reserves, such as the Pakke Sanctuary, are being set up to protect the birds. Nowadays it is being supplemented by beaks made of cane or other materials and the entire headgear/cane helmet itself is readily available in the market for purchase. The exact replicas made from wood and fiberglass indicate the reformed practices of the hunter tribe as an alternative to the hornbill beak in Nyishi dress. Costumes and additional decorations varied depending upon the status of the person and were symbols of manly valour.

Rikham Pada is a traditional folk dance of Nyishi Tribe. The men, Rikham Bo Pada, and the women, Reeyam Bo Yam express their joy saying let us sing and dance without any fear like a beautiful bird called *tacha*.

Adi. Adi, meaning “hill man” or “man of hill”, is a large tribe inhabiting the unspoiled valleys of the Brahmaputra River during its course in South Tibet. The literal meaning of adi is “hill” or “mountain top”. The Adi people are one of the most populous groups of indigenous peoples in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. A few thousand are also found in the Tibet Autonomous Region (Previously Tibet) where they are called the Lhoba. The Adi along with Tagin, Galo, Nyishi, Na and Mishmi people are collectively called Lhoba in China and are recognized as one of the 56 ethnic groups of China. The term Adi however, is not to be confused with the Lhoba people, since the Lhoba also includes the Mishmi along with the Adi people. The Padams, Milangs, Komkars, Minyongs and Pasis collectively call themselves as Adi. The Adi constitute major group and inhabit. Akin to one another, they speak a same dialect, claim a common origin and also perform

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and celebrate same rituals and festivals. All the ethnic groups recognizing themselves as Adi believe to be descendants of the Abutani/AboTani. The Adi trace their origin from Pedong Nane, the ancestral mother of Tani-the man. Pedong Nane was the great grand daughter of Sedi Melo the creator. The older term Abor is an exonym from Assamese and its literal meaning is independent. With no written records, myths say that the Adis migrated from East and Southeast Asia. Early outsiders referred to them as Abor, meaning ‘uncontrolled or savage’, due to the tribe’s reputation as fierce warriors. This view of the tribe’s primitiveness was however detested by notable anthropologist Verrier Elwin, who described the tribe to be highly cultured and civilized, if one was to go by their philosophy of life and existential issues. Without seeing an ocean ever, the Adis devised the idea of a primeval ocean from which all things have emerged. They live in a region of the Southern Himalayas which falls within the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The present habitat of the Adi people is heavily influenced by the historic location of the ancient Lhoyu. They are found in the temperate and sub-tropical regions within the districts of Siang, East Siang, Upper Siang, West Siang, the lower part of Lower Dibang Valley district especially Roing and Dambuk areas, Lohit, Shi Yomi and Namsai within Arunachal Pradesh. The tribe, like other major tribes, is divided into sub-groups; Minyong and Gallong, which are in turn divided into various clans and subclans. This is quite remarkable as the various groups of Adis trace a different identity within the confines of the tribe. An early scholar writes, “Among their neighbors, Adis are perhaps the most forward-looking and a people of very independent character. An Adi is energetic, jolly, freedom-loving and plain spoken. Boris and Ashings have certain abandonment about them but have indomitable spirits. They are free, casual and independent. The Palibo and Ramo youth look bright, with smiling faces and dominating self-respect. Bokars are most disciplined and self-

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contained, who give impression of being men of the world. The Shimongs, Pasis and Padams are energetic. The Minyongs have great solidarity.”

The Adi tribe is organized into a number of clans. Clan is determinant of the social relationship and kinship. Some of the well known clans are Darang, Taggu, Siboh, Sitek, Perme, Tatak, Taga, Tayeng, Jerang, Pertin, Jamoh, Gao, Ratan, Lego, Saring, Boko, Borang, Langkam, Riyang (sometimes anglicised as RheeYang) etc. Family is the lowest unit of social organization and nuclear in character. Monogamy is the common form of marriage, though polygamy is socially restricted. A marriage arranged by parents and elders is considered ideal and decent though selecting a partner by initiating a love affair is also popular and common. After marriage, elder siblings separate and establish new local residence while the youngest stay back and look after the old parents. A marriage union is recognized with payments of bride price and the items (*kepel*) include meat either dried or raw, fish, rats, squirrels and rice beer. The society is Patrilineal and Patriarchal. Still, daughters get share of clothes, some movable properties like bead necklaces or any other items they themselves have earned during their stay in the parental house.

From a distance, village appears like an assemblage of huts with jackfruit trees in and around the surrounding. Houses are constructed in rows with ample space and passages for emergency purposes demonstrating a sense of planning. At the center of the village is the council hall called *Dere* or *Musup* where social and cultural affairs of the village are discussed. Granaries are constructed preferably at the village outskirts to avoid fire accidents.

The Adis live in hill villages, each traditionally keeping to itself, under a selected chief styled *Gam* or *Gao Burra* who moderates the village council, which acts even as the traditional court, referred to as a *Kebang*. *Kebang*, meaning ‘village council’, is the important traditional

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political institution of the tribe and on which the internal administration of the village is based and which maintains peace and order in the society on a highly developed system of democracy. The olden day councils consisted of all the village elders and decisions were decided in a *Musup/Dere* (village community house) on a majority. The council decides disputes and also directs developmental and welfare activities concerning the village. Influential and important persons of a village are council members and are provided judiciary power over deciding disputes and social issues such as celebration of festivals.

The Adi constructs their houses with locally available materials such as bamboos, woods, canes or leaves without use of nails. Houses are supported by wood and bamboo structure with raised floor (*chang*) of well splited bamboo over beams supported with wooden or bamboo stilts. Rough or sawn planks or bamboo splits are used as walls with dry paddy straws, thatch grass or palm leave for roofing. The houses have no windows making the living space dark or with limited sunlight getting through the spaces between wooden walls. The house is big hall with hearth (*Merom*) at the center where members sit together and all cooking activities are done. The big room serves the purpose of sleeping, living, cooking and dining. Some houses have divided into few chambers for married couples and young girls to have separate rooms. Along the sidewall is an attached and extended room for pigsty.

Like some other tribes of north-east India, the Adis too have dormitory systems for young males and females, called *moshup* and *rasheng* respectively. Dormitories play an important role among the Adi people, and certain rules governing the dormitories are observed. For example, a male can visit the dormitory of a female, although he is not allowed to stay overnight. At times, guardians will have to be around to guide the youngsters. These social institutions play an

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important role in developing the youth to responsible human beings by teaching them about discipline, co-operation, culture and customs. More importantly, as scholar Col. Ved Prakash observes, “It is here that they are initiated into secrets and romances of life. The boys from different *moshups* are permitted to visit *rashengs*; and the courtship often leads to happier alliances. A boy or girl is free to choose a partner for life.”

The Adis are basically dependent on agriculture. Both wet rice cultivation and shifting cultivation are practiced and have a considerable agricultural economy. Hills and slopes are terraced while the dry-lands are used to grow cash crops like maize and mustards. Abundant growth and production of crops have made them economically self-sufficient. Agriculture implements are simple consisting of *dao*, axe, spade, dibbles and scrappers. Ploughing is known but use of modern mechanisms and fertilizers are recent innovations. Besides, fishing and hunting are carried out to supplement food. Fishing at large scale by group is done by diverting the water flow of a branch of the stream from the main flow. The water is barricaded with leaves and gravels at the diversion point. Netting and trapping is other method of catching fish. Both shot guns and traps are used for hunting. Use of bows and arrows has become rare. Besides birds, rats and squirrels, the big games include wild boar and various kinds of deer.

Rice serves as the staple food for them along with meat and green vegetables, preferably boiled. Tea is common. Of the intoxicants, home brewed beer (*apong*) is commonly taken without any age or sex bar.

Besides land and residential buildings, beads, pots and dishes of brass, *daos*/swords, spears and guns are considered valuable possessions. Of the animals, *mithun* is considered precious for socio-religious activities and even payment of compensations against wrongs done. A family also

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boast/claim over their bamboo groves and jackfruit trees. Holding and running of business shops and commercial buildings, small industrial units etc. are however, emerging as a new property concept among the people. The traditional measure of a family's wealth is the possession of domestic animals (particularly gayals), beads and ornaments, and land.

The Adi are also noteworthy for their bridges. To Elwin, their bridges were "marvels of untutored engineering skill". An early explorer W Robinson was equally fascinated and wrote "The skill in constructing these bridges is really surprising, and is such as would not to discredit to the more civilized nations." The cane suspension bridges are quite a showcase of native ingenuity. When completed, such a bridge looks like a long tube of webbed cane work.

Handicrafts of the Adis are best seen in their cane and bamboo works. Baskets, trays, haversacks, mats, hats and headgears with artistic designs are produced for domestic use. Women are expert weavers. Their home productions, like coats, jackets, bags, skirts, shawls and blankets displaying their abilities in handloom. The Adis show a remarkable sense of artistry and proficiency in weaving, which Elwin described as "The Adi art is almost entirely confined to the decorations of their own persons, that is to say, it is expressed in the wearing of fabrics, the making of hats, and the forging of ornaments." It is again remarkable to notice a great diversity of textile patterns in the various clans of the tribe

There are separate dresses for women and men which are woven by women of the tribes. Helmets made from cane, bear, and deerskin are sometimes worn by the men, depending on the region. While the older women wear yellow necklaces and spiral earrings, unmarried girls wear a beyop, an ornament that consists of five to six brass plates fixed under their petticoats. Tattooing was popular among the older women.



Figure 52 Adi

The Adi people speak language also called Adi, which is distantly related to Chinese and Tibetan languages. The various languages and dialects of the Adi people fall into two groups: Abor (Abor-Minyong, Bor-abor (Padam), Abor-Miri, etc.) and Lhoba (Lho-Pa, Luoba). Adi literature has been developed by Christian missionaries since 1900. The missionaries J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge published an Abor-Miri Dictionary^{xxviii} in 1906 with the help of Mupak Mili and Atsong Pertin, considered the fathers of the Adi language or Adi script^{xxix}. Adi is taught as a third language in schools of communities dominated by the Adi^{xxx}. The Adis speak Hindi as a lingua-franca for communicating with other indigenous groups of people in Arunachal Pradesh and the other north-east states.

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The Adi celebrate a number of festivals, in particular, their prime festivals are *Aran* or *Unying*, celebrated on March 7, *Donggin* on February 2, *Solung* on September 1, *Podi Barbii* on December 5 and *Etor* (Lutor) on May 15. Being an agricultural society, most of the rites and festivals are in relation to the agricultural cycle. *Pomi* is held in February to mark the clearing of the jungle. *Mopum* follows to celebrate the completion of the sowing of the seeds into the earth. For 3 days in April, *Mopin* is celebrated praying for rich harvest to the God of rain and is considered an important festival. *Solung*, the most important is observed in the first week of September for five days or more to mark the completion of the weeding functions and transplantation of the paddy plants. It is a harvest festival performed after the sowing of seeds and transplantation, to seek for future bumper crops. It is the time when the entire community makes merry, eating, dancing, drinking and singing. It is again to be noted that in the complex Adi society, different sub-groups have their own names for these agricultural festivals. *Ponung* songs and dances are performed by women folk during the festival. On the last day of *Solung*, throne and indigenous weaponry are displayed along the passage of the houses - a belief that they would protect people from evil spirits. This ritual is called *Taktor*. Animals like *mithun* and pig are sacrificed, birds and wild animals are hunted and also huge quantities of local rice beer prepared and consumed. Feasts are hosted, offerings made to deities. Relatives, neighbours, friends and guests are entertained with utmost hospitality. Songs and dances are performed for nights together.

Dances performed are in-group lead by a main singer (*miri*). Popular dances are the *Ponung*, *Delong*, *Yakjong* and *Tapu*, which is in-fact, a war dance. *Ponung* is however most common of all the dances. Adi dances vary from the slow, rustic and beautifully enchanting *Ponung* style (performed in *Solung* festival) to the exhilarating, exuberant thumps of *Delong* performed by men during the *Etor* festival. These dances have led to certain forms of dancing

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which jointly narrate a story, the *Tapu* (War Dance). In the *Tapu*, the dancers vigorously re-enact the actions of war, its gory details and the triumphant cries of the warriors. Yakjong is performed in the Aran festival. This is another kind of dance whereby the dancers carry sticks with designs created by removing the barks in certain patterns and then put into the fire for some time, which creates the marked black designs.

The religion of the Adi is centered on Donyi-Polo, the Sun-Moon god, who is regarded as the eye of the world. Sedi-Melo is regarded as the creator but is neither worshipped nor followed as source of attain spiritual purity and eternity. Rather, they believe in and worship Donyi-Polo, the Sun-Moon duality. To them, Donyi-Polo is not the physical Sun and Moon but an unseen supreme power, which is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. On the other hand, the people also believe in the existence of numbers of spirits, which are both malevolent and benevolent. They believe in the world of spirits, and perform ceremonies to appease malignant ones to ward off the evil. Each deity is associated with certain tasks and acts as a protector and guardian of various topics related to nature which revolves around their daily life. This includes the food crops, home, rain, etc. *Keyum* is credited with all creation. *Doying Augang*, the sky-god, is credited for good harvests and blooms. The *Dere* or *Moshup* is the temple of the Adi. In Donyi-Poloism, there are numerous deities and spirits controlling various aspects of life, and the various sub-tribes have their own pantheon of deities. Animal sacrifice is the principal attribute of all the Adi festivals and rites. Worship of gods and goddesses like *Kine Nane*, *Doying Bote*, *Gumin Soyin* and *Pedong Nane*, etc. and religious observances are led by a shaman, called *Miri* (can be a female). Adi in Tibet, in particular the Bokars, have adopted Tibetan Buddhism to a certain extent, as a result of Tibetan influence. However, in recent years a revival in indigenous identity on the part of the Tibetan Adi people has made traditional religion popular with the youth again. In modern times, a

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few Adi people have converted to Christianity. But been increasing and call of local leaders to stop converting and demographics shift.

Dead bodies are buried. Body is washed and dressed with new clothes and at-least kept for a night. Mourners (*Penge*) are sometime engaged. Dead bodies from accidental or un-natural deaths are disposed off as early as possible in separate graveyard.

Highlights of Handicraft in Study Area

Arunachal Pradesh is a land of beautiful handicrafts comprising wide range in variety. Although the people of Arunchal Pradesh present an extra-ordinary divergence of culture, language, dress and customs, yet they have a tradition of artistic craftsmanship which manifests itself through their various products.

A wide variety of crafts such as weaving, painting, pottery, smithy work, basketry, wood carving bamboo-work and cane-work are practiced by the people of Arunachal Pradesh. From the point of view of art and culture the area may very conveniently be divided into three zones. In the first zone we may include the Buddhist tribes i.e. the Sherdukpens and Monpas of west Kameng and also to some extent the Khowa, Aka and Miji group; the Membas, Khambas of Northern Siang, the Khamptis and Singphos of Lohit. They make beautiful masks which are not seen in other parts of Arunachal. They also periodically stage pantomimes and mask dances. Beautiful woollen carpets, woollen and yak-hair caps, shoes, painted wooden vessels and silver articles are, however, the speciality of the Monpas of West Kameng. They are also experts at dyeing and painting. The second culture zone occupies the central part from East Kameng in the west to Lohit in the east. The people of the second zone are expert workers in cane and bamboo work. The Nyishis, Apatanis, Hill Miris and Adis make beautiful articles of these materials like Hats of different sizes and shapes, various kinds of baskets and a variety of cane belts and necklaces which speak

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eloquently about their skill in handicrafts. They weave articles that are in common use in their daily life. The shawls and Jackets of the Apatanis, the Adi's skirts (Gale) and shoulder bag and the Mishmi's coat and shawl are symbolic of the high weaving talents and artistic sense of the people. The third zone is formed by the south-eastern part of the territory. The people of the third zone, i.e., the Khamptis, Wanchos, Noctes are famous for their woodcarving. The Wanchos, however, weave beautiful bag and loin cloth also. The Noctes and Wanchos make beautiful strings of beads with attractive patterns and carve beautiful bamboo pipes and human and animal figures. The Khamptis make beautiful religious images, toys and other objects. Goat's hair, ivory, boar's tusks, beads of agates and other stones as well as of brass and glass are special fascinations of the people of this zone. The shawls and jackets of the Apatanis, the Adi skirts or gales, jackets and shoulder bags and the Mishmi coats and shawls are reflective of the weaving talents and artistic sense of these people. Shawls and jackets, shoulder bags and coats all stand for perfection that tribal artisans have attained in this art.

Weaving. Weaving is one of the areas where indigenous women have made some progress, according to a study of micro enterprises in Arunachal^{xxxii}. Weaving is the primary occupation of the womenfolk throughout the territory. Although there are a few tribes which have never had the art of weaving, handlooms are widely distributed through out the area. They are very particular about colours and have a beautiful sense of colour combination. The favourite colours are black, yellow, dark blue, green, scarlet and madder. Originally they used natural dye but now-a-days they switch over to synthetic dyes available in the market. The designs are basically geometrical type varying from a formal arrangement of lines and bands to elaborate patterns of diamonds and lozenges. These designs are sometimes enhanced by internal repetition and other decorations. A few of the woven products that deserves mention are Sherdukpen shawls; Apatani jackets and

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scarves; Adi skirts (*gale*), shirt (*galuk*), jackets and bags; Mishmi shawls, blouses and jackets and Wancho bags and loin cloths, cotton shawl, side bag, curtain cloth etc. in different pricing pattern according to the quality, traditional value, motif and design. The weavers are being engaged now to produce more of such items with modified design and different utility like ladies and gents' waistcoat, dress etc. Although fly shuttles are now being introduced particularly in the government run weaving centres, the traditional loin looms are still in use and the genuine textiles are products of these looms. Handloom forms an integral part of the culture and tradition, which is reflected in the State's apparels.

Weaving, the exclusive premise of the tribal women of the state is important household industry. The equipment used is a simple reedless loom where the actual weaving is done with a bamboo tube. Besides cotton and wool, some of the Arunachal tribes use barkfibres extracted from trees like *udal*, *pudu* and grass cloth (*Boehmeria nivea*). Similarly, in the sphere of dyes, one finds an abundant use of natural dyes.

The Adi women are known for their ability to weave and make viable cloths on their traditional handloom known as the *gekong-galong*. This traditional profession is a major occupation of Adi women and is historically significant. Weaving, according to them, is the process of interlacing two sets of parallel yarns, known as the warp and weft, at right angles to each other to create a piece of cloth. Knitting and crocheting involve weaving yarn loops through other yarn loops to create a piece of cloth.^{xxxii} It is believed to have been taught by the spider as narrated in folklore. According to Singpho folklore, the spider was the first weaver in the world. It came from watching the spider spin. The women learned to weave by watching the spider spin its web, and the men learned to span rivers with cane suspension bridges by watching the spider

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spin its web. To make the complete set of *gekong-galong* used in weaving, an experiential wisdom is required to select each handloom component made of different plant sources.

A complex weaving process is observed in various steps and processes in which women are highly competent. *Sumyinnam* refers to the entire weaving process in Adi. *Ege panam* refers to the beginning of weaving and the beginning of parallel yarns of warp and weft. *Sumnam* is a type of knitting and crocheting that involves pulling loops of yarn through other loops of yarn. The first step in any weaving plan is to determine what the cloth's life purpose will be. Such forethought aids the weaver in selecting the appropriate thread or yam. The yam used to weave a *gale*, for example, must be thick and durable, and the cloth must be hard and flat. It must not scratch, fold, or otherwise irritate anyone who wears it. The size of the wearer is also important. Before beginning to weave, they must decide on the length, width, and final process because these factors determine the amount of yam required in the warp. The fabric's design, or pattern, also has a role to play in the final process. When it was decided which thread to use, the weaving work began.



Figure 53 **Adi woman weaving traditional Arunachali fabric**

They are colour-obsessed and have a wonderful sense of colour combination. Black, yellow, dark blue, green, scarlet, and orange are the most popular colours. As a result, the role of women in traditional weaving and sustaining Adi tribe culture is equal to that of men. They are skilled at sowing local cotton varieties and preparing thread in the traditional manner. However,

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with the passage of time, the preservation and traditional cultivation of local cotton has deteriorated, particularly in transitional socio-ecological systems. Now, young women in such a system buy ready-made thread from the market. These are used to make a variety of cloths such as *badu* (blankets), *gale*, *galuk*, and so on. Originally, they used natural dye obtained from plant sources such as *engot*, which produces various colours (3 varieties red, black, and maroon), but they now use synthetic dyes available in the market. The Adi women weave wool, cotton, and goats' hair to produce attractive items. The integrity of culture and weaving skill can be learned through popular arts and culture that represent the historical background of weaving. These Adi dresses and cloths are culturally prestigious, as well as associated with Adi tribes' beliefs and spiritual aspects. For example, *gadu* (blanket) is thought to be very important after death and is used in funeral ceremonies. One *gale* or *galuk* takes about 7-8 days to make. To increase weaving productivity, women sometimes weave in groups, which is known as *ega pailk bidung*. Adi bag, *Gale*, *galu*, shawl, *badu*, and other female-made items provide a source of income for Adi. People in every remote socio-ecological system have the ability to create these technologies and sell them in the nearby town. Learning about weaving technology, on the other hand, is becoming less popular among young women, particularly those living close to town. With the assistance of various central and state government-sponsored training and entrepreneurship development schemes, an emphasis is now being placed on weaving technologies for the capacity building and empowerment of Adi women. The impact and longevity of informal learning and acquiring weaving knowledge has been observed to be longer than that of formally trained women with a short course and little cultural background. There is an informal network of Adi women and girls who collect and sell traditionally woven dresses in the market. The prices of Adi dresses vary according to their style. Cotton obtained from silkworms is used to make *gadu*. Women strive to

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diversify their weaving products. For example, they weave three to four different types of *gadu* in order to diversify the price range. The gendered aspects of traditional weaving technology play an important role in the diversity of Adi women's livelihood systems. According to the results of the PIC poll, women (62.0 percent) want Research and development institutions to help them add value and refine their existing traditional weaving technology so that they can compete with modern craft and loom industries. Women also want (84.56 percent) a partnership research and rational benefit share approach to promoting and conserving historically significant weaving technology. If benefit arises as a result of Research and development and value addition, the majority of women (95.68 percent) prefer to obtain most of the benefit at the individual level rather than the community level. The reason they mentioned is that, while weaving is a community heritage, it is only preserved and continued by women on an individual level, with no group effort. Thus, when developing a research and training programme on weaving and entrepreneurship development, such issues must be considered in order to make it a more economically viable and successful enterprise, as well as to preserve knowledge systems and weaving heritage.



Figure 54 Making of Adi Gale

The influence of Tibetan, Burmese, Bhutanese and Assamese cultures is easily apparent here. Weaving is an important activity in Monpa culture. Weaving is almost entirely done by women in their society. The Tibetan and Bhutanese influence is most pronounced in the Monpa loom on which the Monpa women weave with cotton, wool and bark fibre. They shear their sheep and do the washing, combing, spinning and weaving. Girls are trained in the art of weaving from a young age, and the craft is passed down from generation to generation. In a family where there is no weaver, either a weaver is engaged by family to weave cloth whenever necessary on payment basis or they buy woven clothes from them. Their woven products are primarily woollens, which meet their basic need for clothing. They also weave yak hair into blankets, haversacks, tents, and other items. They are well known for their fine and colourful coats, shawls, sashes, carpets, bags and tapes (for tying around hats). Their textile bags are sophisticated and artistic, made by combining five colours - red, yellow, white, black, and green. The Monpas weave with three types of looms: loin looms, high wrap looms (also known as treadle looms), and low wrap looms. The

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loin loom is used to weave bags, blankets, raincoats, tents, haversacks, and other items. It is also used to weave light woollen cloths. The majority of their woollens are woven on low wrap looms, while carpets are woven on high wrap looms.



Figure 55 Making of Monpa Shingka

The Nyishis grow a large amount of cotton in the valley of Palin and Panior. Though the Nyishi women are not regarded as expert weavers, they do produce woven cotton and *pudu* fibre skirts, blankets and cloth. The women folk are engaged in weaving traditional attires which are particularly worn during auspicious events like celebration (*Nyokum*) and marriages. The conventional handloom of Nyishi tribe is locally known as *Rubung Ruekio*. It could be a sort of loin loom operated by a single weaver and considered as traditional hone of Nyishi tribe. This traditional handloom has numerous components put totally different positions based on its work amid weaving.

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Table 7

Different components of Rubung Ruekio^{xxxiii}

Handloom parts	Description	Plants used
<i>Ruekio</i>	It is a pair of round wooden stick of suitable length (Its length depend on the size of the product). It is used as warp beam which is held high with support or with hooks.	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>
<i>Neni-lomi</i>	It is a small diameter bamboo stick of suitable length either round or flat shape which are used as an extra warp beam to detect the error in the interlocked warp and employed different take up rate or tension during weaving.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii, B. tulda, B. pallida</i> etc.
<i>Rubung</i>	It is a medium diameter bamboo stick of suitable length which is served as a lease rod in weaving.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii, B. tulda, B. pallida</i> etc.
<i>Ninisankyo</i>	It is a small diameter round bamboo stick of suitable length which is used to regulate the threads for weaving.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii, B. tulda, B. pallida</i> etc.
<i>Taap</i>	It is a wooden plank of suitable length and breadth with one edge thinner and other thicker. It is help to tighten and set the gaping in between the threads.	<i>T. myriocarpa, Gmelina arborea, Michelia</i> sp. etc.
<i>Putul</i>	It is a flat bamboo stick of suitable length and are used to keep the woven cloth stretched horizontally to avoid folding.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii, B. tulda, B. pallida</i> etc.

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<i>Gagar</i>	It is a medium size wooden cuboidal beam of suitable length with depression at both ends. It is used to tie the weaving back strap belt.	<i>Gmelina arborea.</i>
<i>Taping sankyo</i>	It is a thin bamboo stick where the threads are rolled and used as a throw shuttle.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii, B. tulda, B. pallida etc.</i>
<i>Gaetah</i>	It is a back strap belt made up of bamboo, clothes and leather, which are kept around the weaver back. This belt helps to create the necessary tension in loom by stretching legs against the foot rest.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii, B. tulda, B. pallida etc.</i>

Women weave a variety of traditional attires such as jacket, muffler (*Tona*), *gale* etc. Among these, *gale* is one of the most important cultural attires of Nyishi. It is a conventional female dress used particularly as a lower garment. It is typically made of *Eri* silk, *Muga* silk, wool, cotton and even beads. They use different motifs (design) such as *Bump*, *Dumping*, *Jinjab* etc. with different symbols. These motifs are inspired by the shapes of objects such as mountains, ornaments, cucumber seeds, and so on. With different colour combinations, each symbol represents cultural significance. The type of motifs woven on the *gale* determines the nomenclature of the Nyishi *gale*. Women typically weave two types of *gales*: *gales* with a single motif, such as *Pomo gale*, *Dumping gale*, *Juhu gale*, *Luch gale*, and *gales* with multiple motifs, such as *Muko-khum*, *Luch*, *Putu*, *Dumping*, *Juhu* and so on. *Muko-khum*, *Luch*, *Putu* and *Pomo* are the four motifs used in *Jekum gale*. The All Nyishi Women's Association, locally known as *acham*, created *Jekum gale*. It is a common *gale* designed for all Nyishi tribes living in Arunachal Pradesh's various

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districts. This *gale* is a synthesis of cultural and traditional values, as well as a symbol of the Nyishi tribe's unity. *Pomo gale* is the Nyishi tribe's oldest *gale* and has the highest traditional value. *Dumping gale* is specifically worn for performing *Rikampada*, a popular local dance, at the *Nyokum* festival. Traditionally, motifs are embeded on the *gale* at the same time as weaving. In some cases, however, motifs are embroidered on the plane *gale* with needles.

Table 8

Price Range of different types of gale and total time taken^{xxxiv}

Handloom items	Raw material	Market price (Rs.)	Number of days			
			Flying loom	shuttle	Jacquard loom	Loin loom
<i>Jekum gale</i>	Eri silk yarn	12,000 -15,000	5-7		5-7	20 -25
	Muga silk yarn	11,000 -14,000	5-7		5-7	20 -25
	Woollen yarn	8,000 – 11,000	5-7		5-7	20 -25
	Cotton yarn	8,000 – 11,000	5-7		5-7	20 -25
	Acrylic yarn	8,000 – 10,000	5-7		5-7	20 -25
	Eri yarn and coloured beads	30,000 – 60,000	7-9		7-9	25-30
<i>Luch gale</i>	Eri silk yarn	10,000 -15,000	5-7		5 -7	15-25
	Muga silk yarn	10,000 – 12,000	5-7		5 -7	15-25
	Woollen yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7		5-7	15-25
	Cotton yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7		5-7	15-25
	Acrylic yarn	4,000 - 6,000	5-7		5-7	15-25

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<i>Jinjab gale</i>	Eri silk yarn	10,000 -15,000	5-7	5 -7	15-25	
	Muga silk yarn	10,000 – 12,000	5-7	5 -7	15-25	
	Woollen yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7	5-7	15-25	
	Cotton yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7	5-7	15-25	
	Acrylic yarn	4,000 - 6,000	5-7	5 -7	15-25	
<i>Juhu gale</i>	Eri silk yarn	10,000 -15,000	5-7	5 -7	15-25	
	Muga silk yarn	10,000 – 12,000	5-7	5-7	15-25	
	Woollen yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7	5-7	15-25	
	Cotton yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7	5 -7	15-25	
	Acrylic yarn	4,000 - 6,000	5-7	5 -7	15-25	
<i>Plane gale</i>	<i>Pomo</i>	Eri silk yarn	3,000-5,000	1-2	1-2	4-6
		Muga silk yarn	2,500-3,000	1-2	1-2	4-6
		Woollen yarn	1,000-2,500	1-2	1-2	4-6
		Cotton yarn	1,000-2,500	1-2	1-2	4-6
		Acrylic yarn	700-800	1-2	1-2	4-5
<i>Dumping gale</i>	Eri silk yarn	10,000 -15,000	5-7	5-7	15-20	
	Muga silk yarn	8,000 - 12,000	5-7	5-7	15-20	
	Woollen yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7	5 -7	15-20	
	Cotton yarn	5,000 - 8,000	5-7	5 -7	15-20	
	Acrylic yarn	2,000 - 4,000	5-7	5-7	15-20	

The style and format of an indigenous dress is the product of a long interaction between the people and their ecological setting. Usually they make their own clothing. The different ethnic

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groups of Arunachal Pradesh, in spite of belonging to the greater fold of Mongoloids, mostly have a distinct style and fashion regarding their dress. This is manifested in their choice or selection of the colour for the fabrication of embroidery and the shape and size of their costumes. The male garment of the Nyishis consists of a coarse loincloth and a blanket whereas the Nyishi women wear a skirt with a green striped border and the upper part of their body is covered with a blanket. The Adi dresses have slight distinction in colour and decoration among the sub-groups, the Ashings, Boris, Bokars, Gallongs, Padams and Minyongs. The *gale* worn by women in Arunachal Pradesh has a distinct pattern or design, and it is often possible to tell a person's ethnicity by looking at the jackets and shawls worn by men. The weaving technology is gendered and location specific. Culture, history, nature, and livelihood are all intertwined with weaving and women's wisdom. Dress designs reflect the social and religious systems from which they originate. Design and colour palettes are inspired by everyday life, as well as myths and legends from their ancestors. The entire traditional weaving technique of women is linked with the ecosystem, and many of the designs depicted in the form of flowers reveal the people's spiritual and religious beliefs, as well as their belief in nature in the cosmic order. It is clear that the average production on the state's 46,000 looms was only 1.26 metre of cloth per loom, compared to the national average of 5.12 metre.

Cane and Bamboo Work. Arunachal Pradesh is well-known for its cane and bamboo crafts, which are practised at the household level by the state's tribes. Over the centuries, the region's heavy rainfall and temperate climate have ensured an abundance of bamboo and cane. It is not surprising, then, that the tribal population came to rely almost entirely on these materials to build their dwellings, utensils, furniture, and even weapons such as bows and arrows, spears, armour, and implements such as dibbles, hunting and fishing traps. Cane and bamboo are

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commonly used in the manufacture of furniture and baskets, mats, panels, partitions, flooring, lampshades, and other items. The famous cane cap and head gear are made for the state's various tribes. Carrying baskets, shopping baskets, and a variety of design and utility products, such as cane chairs, cane tables, cane racks, cane cradles, cane *murrahs*, designer cane trays, and so on, are available in various marketing outlets throughout the state and beyond to meet domestic needs. Arunachal Pradesh's cane and bamboo industry is of the highest quality. The majority of household items are made of cane and bamboo. Arunachal Pradesh's cane and bamboo work includes bamboo bridges. Aside from these traditional applications, bamboo and cane are skillfully crafted into colourful basket mats, attractive smoking pipes, combs, hats of various sizes and shapes, variety of household tools and implements, baskets of various types, cane vessels, wide variety of cane belts both woven and plain, bamboo mugs with carvings, variety of ornaments and necklaces are just a few of the items that deserve special mention. The use of bamboo as water carriers, spoons, mugs, plates and jugs, and trays made of this 'wonder shoot' will be a welcome change from the mundane world of plastic and metal cutlery and crockery for newcomers to this state. Another thing the tribes do with bamboo is make jewellery out of it. Tribal women in Arunachal Pradesh are frequently seen wearing cane rings and headbands.

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Figure 56 Cane and Bamboo Work of Arunachal Pradesh

Traditional cane and bamboo products are primarily found in the districts of Papumpare, Upper and Lower Subansiri, East and West Siang, and place a high value on design, quality, local technology, and cultural identity. The Adis, Monpas, and Nishis are especially skilled at creating fine, colourful, and appealing cane and bamboo items. The Adis are well-known engineers, having constructed a 500-foot-long suspension bridge over the Dibang River.

Basketry. Arunachal basketry is stunning not only for its fine texture but also for its unusual shapes. Many baskets have appealing shapes. There is a clear relationship between the region's shape, topography, and climatic conditions. Some of the baskets' angular and curved shapes have definite functional value. The basketry technique is consistent throughout. Twill and hexagon, both

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open and closed, are the two basic techniques. The state government offers training in the production of cane products.



Figure 57 Adi Storage Basket

Carpet Making. Carpet weaving is a significant occupation in the districts of Tawang, West Kameng, and Upper Siang. This trade is carried out by women. The quality of carpet weaving in various motifs and designs has earned Arunachal Pradesh's carpet national and international acclaim. Wall hangings, cushion pads, telephone pads, floor coverings, and other items are manufactured. The Monpa girls are known for their carpet-making skills. They make beautiful colourful carpets with dragon, geometric, and floral designs. The colour selection and colour combination are one-of-a-kind. Women all over the state have an excellent sense of colour. The primary colours used by the weaver are black, yellow, dark blue, green, and scarlet. All of these are combined in the most fascinating ways. Though they originally weave carpet for domestic use,

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it has now become a trade item and a major occupation for some ladies. Along with the increase in demand, there has also been an increase in production on a large scale.



Figure 58 Monpa girl weaving a carpet

Wood Carving. Wood carving is a tradition among some Arunachal Pradesh tribes. Upper and West Siang, as well as Tawang, offer one-of-a-kind and artistic indigenous wood carving items. It is practised by a very small number of artisans / craftsmen from the aforementioned districts, both passed out trainees from the Department of Craft Centre and traditional artisans. Monpas of Kameng play an important role in this art form. The primary raw materials are readily available wood. Various types of wooden masks, gods, and goddess figures are depicted as the main subject, taking into account the cultural and religious value, which are popular in the districts of Upper, West, and East Siang, using locally available raw materials. The Monpa wood carver

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creates lovely cups, dishes, and fruit bowls, as well as magnificent masks for ceremonial dances and pantomimes. The Monpas make a variety of masks, many of which are coloured.



Figure 59 Monpa Wooden Mask

Ornaments. Another popular craft in Arunachal Pradesh is ornament making. Both man and woman wear ornaments. The decorations are made of silver, expensive beads, and shell. Aside from beads of various colours and sizes, blue feathered bird wings and green beetle wings are also used in decoration. The ornaments worn by the people of Arunachal Pradesh differ from one another. Bead ornaments of various types can be found throughout Arunachal Pradesh. Women are the ones who make bead ornaments. All types of ornaments, such as necklaces, wrist bands, waist bands, head gear, and earrings, are made with beautiful geometrical patterns that are worn by both men and women. The Nyishi women adorn their fingers with a slew of multicoloured bead strings and a couple of brass or silver rings. While some people simply wear strings of beads around their necks, the people of Arunachal Pradesh are particularly fond of various ornaments

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made of coloured glass beads. The Nyishi women wear multicoloured bead necklaces, brass chains and metal bells, and adorn their wrists with heavy bracelets. The earlobes are extended by inserting bamboo plugs in infancy, which are substituted by huge brass or silver rings when the girls grow up, stretching the earlobes to the shoulders.



Figure 60 Ornaments worn by the Nyishi Women

Thangka Painting. Thangka painting is one of the most artistic craft. It is prevalent mainly in Buddhist dominated area like Tawang, West Kameng, and Upper Siang districts. The motif of the painting is mostly religious subject along with traditional value.

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Figure 61 Thangka Painting, Bomdila

Other Crafts. Other crafts practised by the people of Aurnachal Pradesh include paper making, smithy work, carpentry, pottery, and ivory work. Kameng's Monpas make paper trees. These handcrafted papers are used for religious prayers and hymns. In Arunachal, smithy work is almost universal. The majority of tool and implement requirements are created by the people themselves. Some Arunachal Pradesh blacksmiths are also skilled in the manufacture of firearms. The Adis were once masters of brass casting. Nyishi smiths continue to create brass ornaments, dishes, and sacred bells. Pottery is a female-dominated occupation. The Nyishis work in this industry. Many other minor arts, such as doll making and ivory work, are practised in various parts of Arunachal Pradesh. To supplement their food, the people of Arunachal Pradesh go hunting in their spare time. Spears, bows and arrows, and *daos* are common weapons they use and make. The arrows are sometimes poisoned and are carried in quivers made of bamboo tubes. Crossbows and firearms are also employed. They also have their own methods of capturing and trapping animals and birds. Fishing, like hunting, is a secondary occupation. They make a variety of fishing traps, both large and small, with and without valves. Fishing nets of various types, such as hand nets, cast nets, and

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so on, that are woven by the people themselves, are also in use. These are some of Arunachal Pradesh's traditional crafts. Many other minor arts, such as poker work, doll making, ivory work, and so on, are practised in various parts of Arunachal Pradesh.



Figure 62 Artisans at the ‘Monpa handmade paper making unit’ in Tawang creating
Mon Shugu

Image courtesy: Press Information Bureau

CHAPTER 5

Evaluation of Tribal Handicrafts of Study Area alongwith Development Programmes

The tribal economy is also distinct in that it is closed and undifferentiated, with economic pursuits characterised by the use of primitive technology. The tribal people earn a living by engaging in a variety of occupations such as forestry and food gathering, shifting cultivation, settled agriculture, and industrial labour, animal husbandry, fishing, and traditional commerce, the most important of which is household industry including handicrafts. The scheduled tribes and the rest of the population have significantly different levels of development. The scheduled tribes' labour force made up 58 percent of the total tribal population. Around 55 percent of them are cultivators, the majority of whom are marginal and small farmers. Handicrafts and handlooms are part of their activities, but they are not their main source of income, as their forefathers did. Regardless of occupation, the majority of tribals live below the poverty line. Their low incomes and expenditures, as well as their standard of living, reflect their poverty levels. The tribal life in the country is further characterised by a lack of basic facilities and infrastructure, as well as a secluded life cut off from the rest of the country. Over centuries, tribal peoples have created a variety of utilitarian and decorative handicrafts.

Historically, the tribal economy was based on a barter system based on mutual assistance. Lending between members of the community, if any, is also governed by customs, and no interest is charged. As a result, the tribal economy's self-sufficiency does not have significant surpluses to warrant the establishment of regular markets, nor do they realise the potential of their handicrafts. Slowly, market economies began to emerge around religious festivals, and demand for new items began to rise. This results in weekly markets. Traders or middlemen appeared on the scene, and gradually these tribal artisans who displayed their skill, acquired through tradition, began to sell

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their products to these traders or middlemen; unfortunately, these artisans are exploited and are paid pitiful sums. Even this system is eroding due to inadequate marketing facilities and is unable to compete with manufacturing industries. According to studies, their numbers are steadily dwindling over time, and many of them have become a large body of landless agricultural labour. Their pride in traditional craftsmanship, which provided an outlet for innate artistic talents by manifesting itself in a wide range of variegated shapes, sizes, and designs, is currently in shambles. They are gradually fading away, and the government's assistance in marketing them is sluggish. To address the problems of unemployment and poverty, as well as the increased incidence of active population migration, diversification of the economy from subsistence to commercialised production of farm and non-farm products has been identified as one of the most important alternative options and a necessary policy.

However, the potential for large-scale diversification of economic activities is severely constrained by a number of factors.

The tribal economy is primarily based on agriculture. Their land holdings, however, are uneconomical and unproductive. They cultivate, water, input, and harvest using traditional technologies. Due to inertia, a lack of knowledge, and input constraints, tribals do not want to diversify their crops, despite the fact that there is some opportunity. But the scope for large scale diversification of economic activities is severely limited because of a number of factors.

A significant proportion of households report migration of some members for a living, particularly male members, due to job opportunities, poor harvest recovery, and poor economic condition of family members.

The government has launched some poverty-relief programmes that have created job opportunities in rural areas. To provide employment to tribal households, a wage employment

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programme must have been launched in tribally concentrated areas. However, such programmes have not effectively reduced rural poverty. This was due to a lack of abilities, education, and technical knowledge. The majority of tribal people work in the organised sector, where there is no social security.

Tribes rely on non-farm sector activities due to a lack of raw materials, skilled family labour, market access, communication availability. Tribal women make significant contributions to the non-farm sector. Lack of knowledge, lack of proper marketing facility, lack of finance, raw material problem, lack of demand, lack of proper communication, competition from organised sector, lack of time, lack of technology, lack of common facility, and lack of training are all problems in promoting non-farm activities.

Development Programmes taken by the Government. Since time immemorial, the craft sector under study-area has grown in its spontaneity from generation to generation due to the inherent creative aptitude of the people to work with our country's natural resources. Later, people's subsistence needs increased their reliance on the sector, transforming it into a thriving economic activity. Despite the phenomena of global recession, industrial sickness, natural calamities, and so on, this sector has been steadily growing while also providing employment (both full-time and part-time) to artisans, a large portion of whom are socio-economically poor and marginalised.

The craft sector accounts for one-fifth of the country's total household industry. The revenues generated by this sector do not reach the artisans and craftspeople, who are at the mercy of middlemen, traders, and exporters for both sustained earnings and exposure to marketable designs that change frequently over time.

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Recognizing the unique needs and problems of tribal peoples, several development initiatives were launched as part of the Five Year Plans. The Government of India's Five Year Plans emphasised the various development measures to be undertaken by the Central and State Governments to improve the living standards of the tribals and bring them on par with the other developed societies in the country. The First Five Year Plan of India (1951-56) did not attempt to establish long-term development programmes for tribals, instead focusing on the immediate problems that needed to be addressed. This plan placed a strong emphasis on education, economic development, communication system development, and the provision of medical and housing facilities. During the Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961), a number of development programmes in the tribal area were launched. Under the sphere of tribal economic upliftment, schemes such as land settlement, land reclamation, seed distribution and demonstration farm establishment, establishment of service cooperatives and forest cooperatives, and improvement of communication facilities were broadly undertaken. The policy of establishing Tribal Development Blocks on a large scale was implemented in the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66). These blocks were established in all tribal areas to facilitate integrated development. These blocks were designed to promote the development of specific core sectors such as agriculture, education, health, communication, cottage industries, and so on. These economic upliftment programmes prioritised the economic rehabilitation of people engaged in shifting cultivation, forest work through cooperatives comprised of Scheduled Tribe members, and the formation of Multi-purpose Cooperatives to meet the credit requirements of tribal agriculturists and artisans for marketing their products. During the Fourth Five-Year Plan, six pilot projects for tribal development were undertaken in the Central Sector in a few tribal areas located in specific states under the name of Tribal Development Agencies. For the first time, a strategy of earmarking funds for the development of specific areas

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of tribal population concentration was evolved in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78), a watershed moment by adopting a new strategy for tribal development. The Tribal Sub-plans instrument was developed to ensure the flow of benefits from all sectoral programmes and to provide integrated service delivery in tribal areas. The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) has as its primary goal the abolition of poverty and the mobilisation of all latent energies for the creation of a more dynamic and equitable society. The main thrust of the policy for the development of Scheduled Tribes during the Sixth Plan was fourfold: integration of services at the point of delivery to the beneficiary in order to develop self-reliance in him; development of services from the bottom-upward rather than top-down; and development of skills to diversify occupations, introduction of latest technology based on local materials and skills to alleviate workers' drudgery while also removing the social stigma associated with their current occupation. The flow of funds for the development of Schedule Tribes increased significantly under the sixth and seventh plans, resulting in the expansion of infrastructure facilities and coverage. In addition, two national-level organisations, the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) and the National Scheduled Caste and Tribe Financial and Development Corporation, were established (NSCTFDC). Efforts were stepped up in the Eighth Plan to close the developmental gap between Scheduled Tribes and the rest of society. The Ninth Plan aimed to empower Scheduled Tribes by creating an environment in which they could freely exercise their rights, enjoy their privileges, and live a life of self-confidence and dignity alongside the rest of society. This process consists primarily of three components: social and economic empowerment, as well as social justice. The Tenth Plan emphasised closing educational, health, and economic development gaps. Despite all efforts, even after more than sixty years of planning, tribal economic progress has not brought them any closer to the mainstream of society, as the gap in their socio-economic status has widened. The tenth Plan

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calls for decisive action to improve their conditions, as their unproductive uneconomic holdings, use of traditional technologies for cultivation, watering, input use, lack of crop diversification, and poor harvesting techniques have persisted. Their agricultural and livestock productivity has been jeopardised due to dwindling natural resources such as forests and dwindling water and fodder supplies. The tribal's low productivity forces them to look for other opportunities in non-farm sectors. The majority of them are landless and rely on non-farm activities such as hereditary handicrafts and handloom clothing. There is less perfection in these items due to a lack of skill, education, and technical know-how. Even in non-farm activities, tribals face challenges due to poor marketing, a lack of demand, competition from substitutes, and a lack of training. In fact, tribals who own land do handicrafts to supplement their incomes during non-agricultural seasons.

Institutions involved for promotion of Handicrafts in Study Area. To provide and protect the inherited skills of artisans, both the central and state governments have established Handicrafts Emporiums in major cities and at the district level. Various government institutions also encourage these artisans to participate in national and international exhibitions to showcase their skills.

The following institutions are involved in the promotion of handicraft.

Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) office is the Government of India's central nodal agency for craft and artisan-based activities for socio-economic upliftment of the artisans and supplement the efforts of the State Governments for promotion and development of handicrafts within the country and abroad. The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) is an attached office of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. It aids in the creation, marketing, and export of handicrafts, as well as the promotion of craft forms and skills. The assistance takes the form of technical and financial

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assistance, as well as schematic interventions carried out through its field offices. The Development Commissioner, as the nodal agency, leads the country's efforts to promote the handicrafts sector. Through its six regional offices in Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow, Chennai, Guwahati, and New Delhi, the Office assists artisans and the sectors through various development schemes. It has 5 Regional Design & Technical Development Centres at New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Guwahati. There are 52 Handicrafts marketing and Service Extension Centers. In addition to above, there are 61 Field Administrative Cells.

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED). The Government of India established TRIFED in August 1987 under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 as a National level Cooperative body under the administrative control of the then Ministry of Welfare of India, with the basic mandate of bringing about socio-economic development of the country's tribals by institutionalising the trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) & Surplus Agricultural Produce (SAP) collected/cultivated by them. For the socio and economic welfare of tribal population Government of India established TRIFED. Initially TRIFED activities were confined to purchase of forest products and sell them at their retail counters. TRIFED's goal as a market developer and service provider is socio-economic development of tribal people in the country through marketing development of tribal products on which tribals' lives rely heavily as they spend the majority of their time and earn the majority of their income. The philosophy underlying this approach is to provide tribal people with knowledge, tools, and a pool of information so that they can conduct operations in a more systematic and scientific manner. The approach entails tribal people's capacity building through sensitization, forming Self Help Groups (SHGs) and training them for a specific activity, exploring marketing possibilities in national and international markets, creating opportunities for marketing tribal products on a sustainable basis, and creating a brand.

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TRIFED's MSP for MFP & VanDhan programme is in accordance with the “The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Forest Rights Act, 2006),” a key forest legislation passed to secure the protection and livelihood of poor tribals, as well as to address the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other natural resources. Since 1999 TRIFED expanded their activities by encouraging tribal artisans in the production of arts and crafts which they have inherited from their forefathers. TRIFED aims to improve tribal communities’ livelihoods by creating a sustainable market and business opportunities for tribal people. It entails investigating marketing opportunities for the long-term marketing of tribal products, developing a brand, and providing other necessary services. It has a nationwide network of 14 regional offices that identify and source tribal products for marketing through its retail marketing network of 73 Tribes India outlets. Tribes shop are set up to show case tribal arts and crafts by procuring the crafts from tribal artisans at remunerative prices and sell the same at these shop and organizing periodic exhibitions at different places all over India and abroad. Through TRIFED, it has been sourcing various handicraft, handloom, natural, and food products. TRIFED has been marketing tribal products through its retail outlets throughout the country, as well as through exhibitions. In collaboration with state-level organisations promoting tribal handicrafts, it has established a chain of 35 own showrooms and 8 consignment showrooms.

As a cooperative, TRIFED’s primary objective is to serve the interest of its members therefore in order to serve their interest in the field of marketing development of tribal products, some of the services which TRIFED offers are

- ✿ To facilitate, coordinate and promote the marketing of the tribal products by its members;

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- ✿ To undertake/promote on behalf of its members/institutions or the Government or Government organizations, inter-State, intra-State and international marketing of tribal products;
- ✿ To act as an agency for channelisation of export and import and facilitate, wherever necessary inter-State trade of tribal products under any Scheme formulated by Government of India or any other State agencies;
- ✿ To develop market intelligence related to supply, demand, price trends, supply/market chain, value addition and processing facilities, product quality specifications, product applications, market trends, buyers for the tribal products and disseminate the information to the members as well as planners, researchers and associate organizations and business circles etc.;
- ✿ To assist in capability & capacity building of the members relating to the marketing development of the tribal products;
- ✿ To provide consultancy and advisory services to the members relating to the activities in furtherance of their objectives;
- ✿ To act as advisors, consultants and project managers to Government projects relating to marketing development of Tribal products in the form of capacity building, infrastructure development, special programs;
- ✿ To expand and extend the markets for Tribal Products through marketing development and promotion programs;
- ✿ To assist in the development of new products through product development, product innovation, product designs, new product applications and special Research & Development drives for tribal products;

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- ✳ To collaborate, network, associate with similar and allied international bodies in Fair Trade, Tribal product marketing development, Tribal Research, Tribal Funding Agencies to further the interests of Tribal Product marketing;
- ✳ To collaborate, network, associate with similar and allied international bodies/agencies, societies (NGOs, Co-operatives, Foundations, and Trusts, organizations (Private and Government), institutions to further the development of Tribal Products marketing.

TRIFED has planned Skill Upgradation Trainings and Design Development Workshops to address the problems of artisans in north-east India and to protect and promote the craft and artisans involved in this sector. According to the TRIFED mandate, tribal artisans are the target beneficiaries among handicraft artisans from disadvantaged communities. Individually, these tribal beneficiaries engage in handicraft activities in their household settings. As a result, their family income is pitifully low in comparison to the effort they expend in producing and selling handicraft items. As a result, it is necessary to organise them into producer groups and provide them with a platform so that they can reap the benefits of various government interventions, including TRIFED.

Towards this end, TRIFED has been implementing the following activities:-

Skill Up-gradation Training & Design Development Workshop for the tribal artisans.

The objectives of this training are as under:

- (a) To train the tribal artisans in Art and Craft practices.
- (b) To impart knowledge and training on design and technology and thus upgrade their skill in producing good quality products with innovative designs in order to meet challenges of the changing market needs.

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(c) To develop new products through the trained artisans and create a sustainable supplybase on tribal handicrafts for showcasing and marketing through Tribes and other outlets.

(d) To crate sustainable income opportunity for the tribal artisans through entrepreneurship development.

Networking with other Organization to gather the tribal artisans and give the technological and marketing support.

(a) Implementation of various skill upgradation programs in collaboration with development commissioner (Handicraft)

(b) Collaboration with development commissioner (Handlooms) for identification of clusters for providing them market support

(c) Convergence of TRIFED activities in promotion of handicraft with national skill development agencies (NSDA)

Collaborating with premier Design Institute for providing training to artisans on current design trends as per market taste and preference. To provide tribal artisans with market trend exposure and to add current design products to the existing product line, TRIFED collaborated with National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), the premier Design Institute of the Government of India in the field of fashion and design, to undertake a variety of activities such as brand building, the establishment of Design Studios, the design of outlets, and the infusion of various contemporary designs for the development of TRIFED.

Institutionalizing tribal artisan group in the form of Collectives/ Groups/Federation. The training includes information on the sources of resources and the procedures for accessing

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them, information on funding agencies, relevant schemes, formation and operationalization of cooperatives/self-help groups (SHGs)/collectives and documentation, and management of such groups, practises for starting and running the enterprise, including sourcing of quality raw materials, machinery & equipments from various sources/suppliers at reasonable prices, and assistance for starting and running the enterprise. Marketing linkage, marketing channels, marketing support by TRIFED through Tribes India, and Fairs & Exhibitions organised by TRIFED and other Agencies. The trainees also provided information on pricing, standards, certifications, packaging details, branding, margins, and supply terms for their products.

Empanelment of Tribal Producer/Tribal Artisans. TRIFED has created a system for sourcing products from its authorised tribal suppliers. Individual tribal artisans, tribal VDSHG, and organizations/agencies/NGOs working with tribals are among the suppliers who have been empanelled in accordance with the guidelines for supplier empanelment. TRIFED identifies suppliers by entering into institutional agreements with Central/State Departments/Organisations/Reputable Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to bring their tribal artisans within the scope of tribal operations. Other methods used by TRIFED to identify suitable suppliers include approaching district Collectors/ITDA and district level officers who work with tribal artisans, contacting craft persons, artisans who have been trained by TRIFED and other organisations, field visits, and organising Tribal Artisan Melas (TAMs).

Tribal Artisan Mela (TAM). TRIFED pioneered a new concept of organising Tribal Artisan Melas (TAM) as a means of reaching tribals in remote tribal areas and sourcing tribal art and craft directly from tribal artisans/groups of artisans. As part of this initiative, TRIFED,

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in collaboration with state governments and organisations, invites tribal artisans to an exhibition area where they can display their wares. TRIFED sends its Merchandising team to these melas to identify the items that can be marketed through its outlets and to suggest any changes that may be necessary to make the items more marketable. This initiative not only aids in the acquisition of one-of-a-kind tribal art and craft, but it also aids in the dissemination of information about TRIFED's activities and how tribal members can benefit from them. Efforts are made through these TAMs to appoint new artisans as potential suppliers to Tribes India outlets, as well as to incorporate new and innovative design artefacts into the existing product line.

To promote tribal artisans and their crafts, theme exhibitions are held in the shop premises, and tribal artisans are invited to participate for better exposure and interaction with customers. Though the performance is commendable, TRIFED and state agencies still have a long way to go in developing, promoting, and selling tribal arts and crafts. The economy of the north-eastern states is heavily reliant on tribal arts and crafts.

States Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Ltd. Various states Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation of north-east India, has endeavoured to carry forward the rich heritage of all the respective states by reaching out to the products developed by the artisans residing in these states and abroad through its network of emporia and a large number of exhibitions, expositions, and crafts fairs.

National Centre for Design and Product Development, New Delhi. National Centre for Product Design & Development (NCDPD), a non-profit organisation founded by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) and the Development Commissioner's office (Handicrafts). NCDPD has been involved in inviting prominent designers,

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collaborating with leading design institutes, and assisting Indian artisans, particularly tribals, in honing their skills. Through international standard design and technical inputs, NCDPD aims to provide cutting-edge assistance to the Indian handicrafts industry.

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, Delhi. The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) was founded in 1986-87 under the Government of India's Export Import Policy, also known as the Exim Policy, and is a non-profit organisation. EPCH is an apex organisation of trade, industry, and government sponsored by the Ministry of Textile, government of India, for the promotion of handicraft from the country and projecting India's image abroad as a reliable supplier of high quality handicraft goods and services, as well as ensuring various measures in accordance with international standards and specifications.

Council of Handicrafts Development Corporation, Delhi. The Council of Handicrafts Development Corporation (COHANDS) represents 23 member organisations and operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Textile's Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). COHANDS serves as a facilitator for workshops on integrated design and technical development, interior design, and participation in domestic and international fairs, cultural programmes, seminars, and symposiums.

Non-Government Organizations. Various non-governmental organisations organise capacity-building and training programmes in their respective clusters in the north-east Indian states. During field visits, it was discovered that non-governmental organisations are receiving assistance from the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), NEDFI, and various other government departments in order to promote tribal handicraft.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ARTISANS OF STUDY AREA

An artisan, also known as a craftsman, is a skilled manual worker who creates items that are either functional or strictly decorative, such as clothing, jewellery, toys, agricultural tools, and so on. The use of hands and hand tools add a uniqueness to each item that is lacking in manufactured goods. The artisans play an important role in our society. They improve our aesthetic life by providing us with beautifully crafted products. Aside from that, they make a significant contribution to our national economy. Our handicrafts have found a unique market in both developed and developing countries. The term “artisan” refers to people who use ordinary or simple tools to create items of basic necessity. They primarily use locally available resources to create valuable products without the use of machinery. Artisans are primarily employed in the traditional and unorganised sectors, where they are vulnerable to exploitation and low wages. They are socially and economically at the bottom of the social hierarchy. These people are mostly employed in household or cottage industries, where they work hard but do not earn enough to live on. The middleman, who takes a large portion of the profit and leaves very little for the artisans, is a major issue in this situation. The majority of India’s household industries rely on pre-colonial tool-based technology. Thus, artisans are skilled manual workers who imagine, plan, and build things with their hands to meet the needs of the local people. Their creative visions are realised through a wide range of artefacts. Traditionally, artisans have been the backbone of rural society, but they are now the most enigmatic figure in rural development. With their specialised skills, the artisans have served both urban and rural society. The craft or handicraft sector, in which artisans work, is India’s largest decentralised and unorganised sector, and it is one of the country’s largest foreign exchange earners^{xxxv}. This artisan industry is India’s second largest employment sector,

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trailing only agriculture. Handicrafts are rightly described as a people's craft, with over twenty-three million artisans employed in India today^{xxxvi}. Craft is more than just an industry in north-east India; it is viewed as a creation that represents the community's inner desire and fulfilment. According to the Craft Council^{xxxvii}, no north-east Indian craft is ever purely decorative. While handicrafts, whether metal ware, pottery, mats, wood-work, or weaving, fill a positive need in people's daily lives. They also serve as a vehicle for self-expression and a deliberate aesthetic approach. The artisans, who trade and market a wide range of products, have risen to prominence in Indian society and culture. They ascertain status and responsible position in society by performing valid and fruitful social functions. They are the heirs to the people's traditions, which they weave into their craft, transforming it into an art form. Local styles developed and practised by village artisans have contributed to the evolution of north-east Indian art, increasing the variety of colour and design. Since caste and family affiliations, most craftsmen have learned their skills from their fathers or mothers.

The artisan workers may be classified into three major categories (i) rural artisans, (ii) urban artisans and (iii) sub-urban artisans.

Rural artisans. Rural artisans are people who live in villages and work to meet the needs of their neighbours. They contribute to the agricultural sector's needs by manufacturing and repairing agricultural implements. Agricultural produce is converted into usable commodities such as cloth, oils, and so on for both local consumption and export to urban areas. The rural artisans' class has its own distinct place in the people's rural lives. Its position has recently been severely disrupted to some extent by the modernization of the factory sector and the inability of their trades to adapt to technological changes. They must compete with Indian factory goods that have flooded rural areas. Despite the advances made by modern industries, traditional industries continue to play a

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dominant role in terms of output and employment due to their ability to generate employment at a low cost.

Urban artisans. Urban artisans are not more important because they are completely reliant on rural artisans due to a lack of facilities, but they have recently begun to establish their position in the business. From a commercial standpoint, they produce the articles in response to market demand. The economic situation of artisans in towns is not significantly better than that of their counterparts in villages. Urban artisans lack job security, whereas rural artisans are more secure in the knowledge of their indispensability to the rural economy. Craftspeople in towns and cities appear to be free of some of the constraints that their counterparts in rural areas face. There are two kinds of urban artisans. One type of specialist is one who manufactures goods and articles in their specialised trade based on the needs of their clients. They use their own tools and materials and are compensated for their efforts. Others work on a daily wage or on a contract basis in shops and factories. Their employers provide them with the necessary tools and raw materials. The products of urban artisans are more diverse and, on the whole, more sophisticated. They manufacture textile fabrics, jewellery, and a variety of other everyday items in urban areas.

Sub-urban artisans. Because of the manual demand, sub-urban artisans serve as a link between rural and urban artisans. They are not required to meet the criteria in order to produce the articles; rather, they assist artisans on both sides, rural and urban, by providing the necessary items, either fully or partially finished. Artisanal activities have been incorporated into household industries, and workers engaged in some of the artisan group's service activities have been treated as other workers. The participation of one or more household members is the main criterion for household industries. This sector may include economic activities such as the manufacture, processing, servicing, or repair of articles or goods such as handloom, weaving, dyeing, carpentry, pottery

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manufacturing, blacksmithing, and so on. Depending on the location of their work, all artisans' work may be classified as household or non-household. In any case, urban areas have a large number of artisan's industries that are not confined to precincts of the house due to space constraints and thus fall outside the purview of household industries known as non-household establishments as defined in the census.

Economics of North East Indian Arts and Crafts

Handicrafts are the indigenous creations of ordinary village people. They have a tradition that has remained unchanged or unaffected from generation to generation. Previously, these were made with a utilitarian motive, but demand has gradually increased. The modern man lives in a technologically advanced society. He is tired off living in such a complicated and hectic world. He finds freshness and simplicity in these rural art productions. These handicrafts provide him with plenty of refreshment and artistic recreation. Without a doubt, it is because of this that handicrafts have recently gained popularity around the world. But, over time, there was a separation of industry and art, which was a universal affliction for the decline of handicrafts. When art was separated from industry in the modern era, handicrafts were forced to fall behind. This division marks the beginning of the decline of handicrafts and the rise of mechanised industries. The craftsman is the first victim of the new social system everywhere. The competition with machine-made goods was beyond his abilities, and the result was disaster. Industries satisfy economic wants, which constitute the majority of human wants, primarily from a utility standpoint. Crafts satisfy not only economic needs, but also the aesthetic desires of the human heart. The figure below depicts the interrelationship of issues, organisations, and market mechanisms involved in raw material procurement, handicraft production, and marketing linkages.

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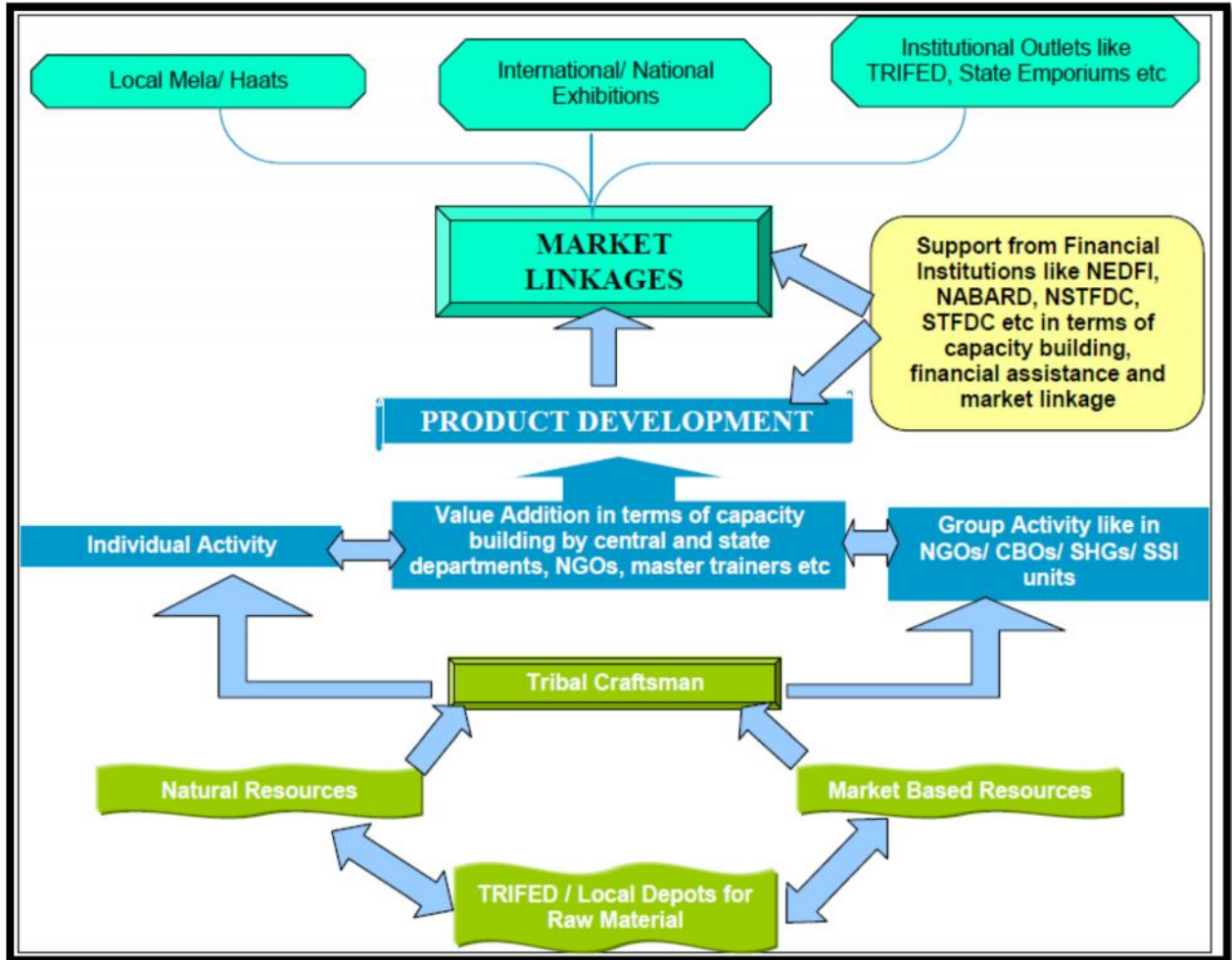


Figure 63 Interrelationship of Issues, Organizations and Market Mechanisms involved in Procurement of Raw Material, Production of Handicrafts and Marketing Linkages

Raw material. Craftsmen’s production of handicrafts in study areas of north-east India is linked to the availability of raw materials locally or in the district. It has been observed that craftsmen either rely on natural resources or purchase raw materials from the open market with the assistance of The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) or other local raw material suppliers. Cotton and acrylic yarn, wool, cane, bamboo, wood, and beads are important raw materials for artisans in north-east Indian states.

There are two types of difficulties for obtaining of raw materials.

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- i. Reasonable price
- ii. Diversification of raw material for commercial consumption

Source of Supply. Raw materials are primarily available in tribal areas due to the presence of forests or difficult geographical terrains. Though all raw materials are available locally or in towns or district headquarters of the producing districts within the study areas of north-east India, craftsmen must make an extra effort to procure or purchase them from local vendors. Despite the fact that raw materials are available locally or in towns or district headquarters, the survey looked into the challenges that tribal artisans face in procuring raw materials.

Following multiple problems were reported by the artisans:

- ▣ Non-availability of raw material supply due to restrictions enforced by different forest departments
- ▣ Poor quality
- ▣ Price-hike
- ▣ Lack of certification facilities; wood carvers complained about non-seasoned wood being supplied by private traders

Product Development. It has been observed that the production of craftsmen is seasonal and irregular, that is, between sowing and weeding, between reaping and sowing, and so on. As a result, he or she is unable to obtain a consistent market. As a result, production must become more even and consistent. This can be accomplished through improved labour-saving techniques. This would allow for the allocation of specific hours of the day even during the height of agricultural production. The primary need of handicrafts is a reorientation in production techniques that does not interfere with artistic varieties of production.

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Furthermore, statism in design is a significant disadvantage of handicrafts. The majority of craftsmen are either bound by sentimental traditionalism or are unaware of changing demand and continue to use century-old designs. Craftsmen are unable to command a fair market price due to the use of century-old production techniques and statism in design. This low income from handicrafts causes people to abandon them.

A pertinent question was asked about various constraints in the way of product development:

- ④ *Unorganized market.* Due to dispersal of their product at distant and remote location with or without proper communications problems
- ④ Lack of working capital
- ④ *Drudgery.* The work on handicrafts as long drawn process bringing drudgery or tiresomeness in the work
- ④ Lack of market intelligence

The sampled respondents suggested that central or state government should organize active design development training which would improve their marketing prospects. According to some of the respondents TRIFED should diversify their activities and purchase their handicrafts.

Marketing. Following an examination of raw material procurement issues, craftsmen and NGO representatives raised the marketing issues. The artisans not only meet their domestic needs, but they also market their products at home, at village *haats*, and to businessmen.

During the survey following problems of marketing were ascertained:

- Increasing competition

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- Low return on handicraft products despite the amount of labour involved in producing these handicrafts
- Raw material scarcity
- Competition from machine made products: Machine-made products or plastic substitutes have encroached on the tribal's formerly exclusive domain

Despite their best efforts, these artisans require market support to ensure the survival of their traditional handicrafts. The survey elicited household opinions on the types of support required for the survival of their arts.

The majority of craftsmen suggested that the state governments in the study areas of north-east Indian states take responsibility for purchasing handicraft items and promoting state handicrafts at national and international markets through their effective marketing teams. The state governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Sikkim purchase a portion of handicrafts, but this does not meet the demand. Village markets are held on a weekly basis and continue to be the focal point of economic activity. The weekly markets serve as the main channels through which local products and other essential items brought from outside are distributed on a purchase and sale basis among tribals and non-tribals. The marketing of finished products is critical. Only through organised markets can the middle man, who snatches the fruits of hapless craftsmen's labour, be eliminated.

Transport Bottleneck. Lack of transportation and poor road conditions impede the sale of handicrafts by the craftsmen themselves. As a result, middlemen and traders control the market. According to S. Nongeri's article, *Problem of Marketing of Handicrafts Products in Meghalaya*, 64 percent of the rural artisan's produce is captured by these middlemen and is at their mercy. Due to poor transportation services in handicraft production areas, the majority of craftsmen prefer to

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sell their products to middlemen, who pick up handicraft items from individual households and sell them at district or state level shops.

Awareness about the Development Programmes Related to Handicraft. The development of the people of north-east India is the primary concern of the country's central and state governments. Despite the fact that funds are released by the Government of India, state governments bear the primary responsibility. However, craftsmen were asked if they were aware of any development programmes taking place in their village or in their community. It was discovered that the majority of craftsmen were unaware of the government-initiated development.

Share of Handicraft Income. Because of the subsistence economy, most craftsmen work as daily wagers or engage in small-scale handicraft activities or farming on a small plot of land, or collect forest products from nearby areas. In most cases, handicraft is regarded as a part-time or tertiary activity on the economic ladder. Handicraft revenue accounts for a sizable portion of total household income. During the survey, it was discovered that the primary source of income is from the sale of handicrafts. Despite facing numerous challenges, craftsmen derive the majority of their income from the sale of their handicrafts.

Handicraft Economy. The handicraft economy was primarily concerned with meeting domestic demand. Though the agricultural/farming produce was insufficient to sustain the household throughout the year, a small amount was exchanged due to dire necessity. Handicrafts are also traded in the market in order to survive. Even in the most remote areas, marketing plays a significant role in raising the living standards of craftsmen. The only places where the craftsmen can sell their products are at nearby weekly *haats*. Private traders go to the weekly *haats* and

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exchange money for the crafts. These traders typically offer low prices and engage in questionable practises.

The traders transport the purchased items to nearby towns and cities and sell to wholesalers, who in turn sell to retailers, who in turn sell to consumers. Every transaction has market margins from the craftsmen to the final purchaser. Despite the lack of information, it appears that there is a 500 percent increase between the price received by the artisan and the final consumer. In some cases, money lenders appear on the scene and offer loans to craftsmen in times of distress, only to exploit them by purchasing the crafts at a loss. According to the survey, artisans are unable to recoup their labour costs, let alone make a profit.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the preceding analysis:

- ➡ Craftsmen are unable to recoup the labour costs associated with the preparation of their crafts.
- ➡ In the absence of a guaranteed market, all craftsmen sell their crafts at weekly *haats* or exhibitions held in major cities. Their profits are nil.
- ➡ TRIFED has started registering tribal artisans who are very good in carving the crafts.
- ➡ Except for those who work on a daily wage with business houses or non-governmental organisations that manufacture handicrafts, many artisans do not have a way to make a living.
- ➡ Arts and crafts are purchased by the state governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Sikkim and sold at various exhibitions. According to an official source, at a north-east states Expo held in Delhi, north-east crafts worth Rs 75000 were sold, while crafts worth Rs 3 lakhs were purchased. The cost of transportation to and from Delhi was Rs

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50000. In such a case, can we confidently assert that tribal arts and crafts provide a viable source of income?

If a cooperative society is formed at the Block level or TRIFED opens a raw material counter at the Block level to advance raw materials to their members in exchange for their products being purchased by the Society or TRIFED, then only a ray of hope for these artisans as a livelihood option remains.

Status Survey of North East Indian Crafts and Craftsmen under the Study Area

The country's North Eastern Region has a low per capita income and significant growth needs. Growth in social infrastructure must be accompanied by physical and economic infrastructure development through national programmes. In this context, states' development efforts must be supplemented in order to reduce certain distinct geophysical and historical constraints. For a variety of reasons, development in the NER had been slow. NER's traditional system of self-governance and social customs of livelihood were largely unaffected by British rule. The only major economic activity undertaken in the region during this time was the construction of a rail network to connect tea-growing areas for commercial purposes. The region was further isolated after the country was partitioned in 1947. This has also thrown off the socio-economic equations in many parts of the region, leading to a demand for autonomy from the region's more backward areas. The region has a physical infrastructure deficit, which has a multiplier effect on economic development. The Ministry of Development of the North-Eastern Region (DoNER) was established in 2001 to coordinate and accelerate the Centre's development efforts in the region's socio-economic development. The Ministry of Development of the north-eastern Region (DoNER) was established in 2001 to coordinate and accelerate the Centre's development efforts in the region's socio-economic development. DoNER is in charge of coordinating the planning,

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implementation, and monitoring of developmental schemes and projects in NER, NEC, NEDFI, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited, North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation (NEHHDC), and other organisations. The Central Government has also announced special packages for the NER's socio-economic development on a regular basis. Priority funding (both in the Central Plan and the State Plan) is arranged on an as-needed basis to expedite the implementation of these packages. The NEC was established by the NEC Act of 1971 to serve as an advisory body for the NER's socio-economic development and balanced development.

Over 43.31 lakh people are employed directly or indirectly in the handicrafts and handloom sectors across the country, with 77 percent of them being women, producing exquisite products that can be exported around the world. The north-east states, which are home to a large number of tribes and sub-tribes, have a prosperous and vibrant craft tradition. According to the Handloom Census, Arunachal Pradesh has over one lakh weavers. Textile crafts from this region with ethnic, tribal motif, textures are gaining popularity in international markets due to their distinct style and uniqueness, especially amongst discerning buyers seeking refinement in hand made products, created with highly evolved sense of design and colours, hand-woven exquisitely by skilled weavers. With an abundance of bamboo, cane, and other natural materials, a variety of handicrafts are created, with cultural and social influences that are now well-known in many countries other than India. The story of this region is thus essentially one of artisans shaping natural materials and resources to create beautiful and useful products that are eco-friendly, sustainable, and one-of-a-kind, in addition to fitting into consumers' modern lifestyles. This land is a trove of hand-spun and hand-woven textiles. Surprisingly, in most tribal communities in the region, textile production is solely a female-dominated activity, in contrast to other parts of India where spinning and weaving

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are primarily male-dominated. Looking at the high potential and long-term socio-economic relevance of handicrafts in the study areas, the Government of India has taken a number of initiatives to improve the quality, design, and commercial prospects of handicrafts from the north eastern region, ensuring that their growth potential is fully realised. The Textile Ministry is attempting to introduce innovative design and diverse products in order to increase the marketability of north-eastern products in competitive markets and promote them on national and international levels. Some self-help groups and non-governmental organisations are attempting to educate craftsmen at the grassroots level about the Ministry's various schemes.

Handicraft Design Banks in digital formats are being established, as are regular awareness programmes, urban *haats*, regular seminars/workshops to support participation in Trade Expos and Craft Bazaars, and providing market linkages to craftsmen. The Development Commissioner Handicrafts office operates a few general and special schemes to assist the region's artisans, craftsmen, and marketers. They are intended to take steps for technology mapping of various craft clusters in order to introduce appropriate technology in various craft clusters. Their top priorities are design development, marketing, and infrastructure. The Government of India and state governments have made concerted efforts to develop this region as a sourcing hub for various handcrafted items, particularly those made of cane and bamboo. Some of the initiatives include: organising *Gandhi Shilpa Bazaar* exhibitions in which artisans can directly participate; can get marketing support and financial support for participation abroad in international marketing events to promote Brand Image and boost exports, skill and design development programmes to improve quality and potentiality under the guidance of renowned designers, and so on. The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, runs a number of promotional programmes to promote handicraft development in the north-east. For

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implementation of these programmes in the north-eastern region exclusively, a specified budget has been allotted.

The Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom (D.H.H) began its history in 1957 as a Technical Institute for Training and Production of Traditional Arts and Crafts with 58 trainees. This Institute has grown into a major centre of learning and training in the state's traditional arts and crafts over the years. As of today, the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom is a hive of activity, development, and progress showcasing Sikkim's traditional arts and crafts.

The following are the primary goals of the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom:

1. To be a major centre of learning and training in the state's traditional arts and crafts.
2. Preserve and revitalise the state's dwindling ethnic Traditional Arts and Crafts.
3. Increase human participation and skill development through capacity and skill development programmes.
4. Capitalize on the handloom and handicrafts sector's employment and income-generating potential.
5. Promote and disseminate information about the state and federal governments' policy orientation and plans.
6. Make Sikkim a leading handicraft and handloom destination in India and around the world.

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The Directorate's primary goal is not only to preserve and showcase Sikkim's traditional arts and crafts, but also to promote and disseminate information about the government's policy orientation in setting the highest standard comparable to the best in the world for arts and crafts, skill development, and an environmentally friendly working culture. As a policy initiative, there has been significant investment in Skill Development Programmes, in which local trainees and artisans are trained in a variety of crafts with the goal of developing and acquiring skills that will enable them to not only generate employment, but also to achieve self sufficiency and self reliance in the long run. The need of the hour is to channel the potential of this extremely large resource of educated and mobile youth force into a productive socio-economic entity that is inherently strong and provides a solid foundation for future growth. The challenges of ensuring the integration of various growth factors as well as the creation of a competent civil system in Sikkim are formidable, but with the government's support and the implementation of various initiatives in the right perspective, these challenges can be overcome. A development strategy has been planned and evolved to bridge the gap in terms of income, education, region, and particularly population living in cities/towns and remote villages, taking into account the prevailing resources, ground realities, and people's needs and priorities. This sector is expected to grow into a formidable industry with multiplier effects that will positively penetrate the social and economic fabric in the coming years. The state government has identified this sector as one of the priority areas for the development of skilled human resources and the creation of self-employment opportunities.

Meghalaya Handlooms And Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited is a Private company that was established on January 10, 1979. It is a State Government company that is registered with the Shillong Registrar of Companies. It is involved in the production of furniture.

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In the year 2000, the Textile and Handicrafts Department, Government of Arunachal Pradesh was separated from the Industry Department in order to provide better support and technical guidance to weavers, artisans, and silkwarm rearers at the grassroots level. The department is one of the most active areas in terms of meeting the demand trends for textile products. It is endowed with enormous talent in Handloom and Handicrafts, which represents rich diversity in design pattern, motifs on Handloom fabric of different tribes in the state, reflecting cultural value and pattern of respective tribe. The Department of Textile & Handicraft(s) was established to develop the weaving sector in order to improve the state's economic situation and to provide self-employment opportunities to weavers and artisans through various Development Schemes/Projects. The department operates 88 Craft Centres that provide training in cane, bamboo wood carvings, bead making, and carpet making for skill upgradation to local youth/women, drop out students in 14 trades, and pass out trainees who work as production workers, with 886 trainees sanctioned to strengthen annually. Next to agriculture, the department generates the most self-employment. The Government Craft Centre promotes wood carving, traditional ornaments, and carpet making, with training available. The Craft Centres are operating with obsolete and out-of-date equipment and traditional design practises, depriving artisans/weavers of the actual value of their products. To meet the current trends in quality Handloom, Handicrafts, and Textile products, a solid method of favourable government policy and the use of modern concept design with improved technology equipment machinery inputs is required. The state government has established emporia at the state and district headquarters to promote and cater to demand. The state government encourages artisans to participate in national and international *melas* in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and elsewhere to popularise various handicrafts.

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Department's thrust areas

- ✿ Setting up power loom to feed the fabric requirements of the garment and apparel unit's incubation centre
- ✿ Establishment of a Woollen Hosiery and Apparel Unit to meet the general public's demand for warm clothing, apparel, and sweaters
- ✿ Textile Tourism will benefit from the establishment of a Crafts Village with website amenities
- ✿ Construction of a Yarn Dyeing Processing Unit
- ✿ Miniature Silk Spinning Mill
- ✿ The Textile Park
- ✿ The Design Bank
- ✿ Bulk raw material

One cluster^{xxxviii} in Arunachal Pradesh is Ziro and Hong in the Papum district. Over 500 textile weavers are supported by the Arun Kutir Udyog Cooperative Society in Ziro. Damro village in Mariyang is another region cluster known for textile weaving, cane and bamboo products. Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. brings together over 200 artisans in this cluster to produce exquisite goods.

Although the study areas in the north-eastern Region are very rich and diverse in handicrafts and handlooms, the potential of these states has yet to be fully realised. According to the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, New Delhi, the share of north-east handcrafted items in the country's total handicrafts export is currently negligible. Though efforts have been made to improve the conditions of north-east

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craftsmen and weavers, much more remains to be done. Award for the best craftsmanship at various levels, such as districts, state, national, and international level must be implemented. Transportation, communication, raw material availability, law and order situation, power, water, banking facility, blockade, bureaucracy, and other issues abound in the region.

The Study areas under north eastern product markets are expanding. The key markets are the United States, Europe, France, Italy, Japan, and Australia. With growing awareness among textile consumers worldwide about sustainability, organic, natural, eco-friendly, global warming, low impact, high impact concepts, the products are becoming increasingly appealing in developed countries. These products are popular not only internationally, but also in the Indian domestic market.

At a Glance:

Strength

- Popular in the international markets due to distinct style and uniqueness
- Products are high value added, and handicrafts have various applications
- Easy availability of eco-friendly raw material
- Partial initiatives of Government and NGOs
- Potential sources of employment
- Potential source of foreign revenue

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Weakness

- ② Absence of adequate intervention
- ② Absence of local markets
- ② Inadequate market study and marketing strategy
- ② Unawareness about international requirement and market
- ② Presence of middle man between the craftsmen and the buyers make the profit of craftsmen minimal, if marketed outside
- ② Lack of adequate infrastructure and communication facilities
- ② Lack of coordination between government bodies and private players
- ② Inadequate information of new technology
- ② Less interest of young people in craft industry
- ② Still confined to rural areas, small cities and untapped market
- ② Infiltration of cheap goods from outside
- ② Lack of promotion of products

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Socio-cultural Change: Disappearing Cultural Heritages or Reappearance in a new form?

The close interaction with nature, as well as the ability to adapt and adjust to one's surroundings, have had a significant impact on the lifestyles of the communities in the study areas in India's north-eastern region. This adaptability and interaction with nature can be seen in their distinct social structures, such as family, kinship, marriage institutions, economic life, political organisation, and so on. However, social and economic transformation has occurred in the state over time, which is reflected in their traditional socio-cultural structure.^{xxxix}

With the new politico-administrative configuration, the traditional socio-cultural structure of the north-eastern region has undergone tremendous changes in the post-independence period. Today, changes can be seen in the economy, politics, education, material culture, religious beliefs and practises, and so on. These changes had an impact on traditional socio-cultural structures as a whole. The old social structures no longer exist in their original form, and new elements have rapidly infiltrated the old patterns. Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh have changed to a considerable extent and the changes can have seen in all the domains of cultural heritage.

With the fast economic and political movement and the growing challenges of change, the younger generation is moving away from their traditional social environment, which affects traditional arts and crafts in such a way that these traditions may vanish along with the elderly people of the society. The changing patterns of the arts in the study areas of the north-eastern region are the result of diffusion and acculturation. The traditional legal system has changed as the administrative structure has changed, with villages now falling under the purview of the

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Panchayatiraj. Individual ownership of cultivable land is gaining importance over community ownership, and people's traditional consumption patterns have changed, resulting in an increase in the demand for cash. Traditional economic systems have become incompatible with market systems, and the introduction of the monetary system has resulted in a fundamental transformation of the economy.

Multiple forces are at work behind these socio-cultural changes, though their intensity varies from tribe to tribe. The emergence and expansion of modern education, the extension of agricultural lands and settled agriculture, the increasing popularity of new religions, the introduction of new politico-administrative structures by nation, the new economy system based on cash, and, most importantly, the desire of the younger generation to participate in a global life that is far from their own traditions and customs have all resulted in these changes.

Cultural heritage, like any living body, has a life cycle, and as a result, some elements must fade away, but only after giving birth to new forms of expression. Perhaps certain forms of cultural heritage are no longer deemed relevant or meaningful to the community as a whole. The north eastern region is on the verge of a total socio-cultural transformation that will alter the forms of these communities' cultural heritages. However, whether the transformation forces cultural heritages to vanish or, accepting the nature of cultural change, heritages will reappear in new forms is entirely dependent on the people themselves.

Conclusion

Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh have a rich cultural and natural tapestry. The presence of a large number of diverse groups, as well as breath-taking flora and fauna, heritage drawn from the ages, and the presence of a large number of diverse groups, make these places a

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treasure grove. If culture encompasses all of the relationships that humans have with themselves, as well as with nature, the built environment, folk life, and artistic activity, then these locations are ‘cultural and biodiversity hotspots,’ with enormous potential that is only now being recognised. There is a need for increased awareness and sensitization in this area, particularly among the young. In this regard, a cultural mapping approach is extremely beneficial, as socio-economic development must accompany multi-cultural understanding. Cultural resource mapping is a newer practise. This guide has started to distil best practises and propose a solid process for carrying out cultural resource mapping as it is currently understood. As a final note, this database has the potential to play a significant role in identifying rare and vanishing art/craft forms in the areas under study. This will aid in identifying gaps in resource availability, access, and use, as well as gaps in traditional knowledge base and cultural rootedness for crafts. It will also enable a researcher to work extensively on forms that have not previously been explored or studied. Almost all of the fragile, complex, and beautiful tribal cultures have evolved into something else. As we face a future of increasingly limited options and decreasing biodiversity, the loss of linguistic and cultural diversity is just as tragic. This effort is significant for the peoples involved, whose history they hope to investigate and disseminate, as well as for us, because this history is shared. It has the potential to make the north-east a cultural hub by providing a platform for regional artists, folk performers, filmmakers, writers, and poets. This will provide invaluable data for the creation of historiographies and ethnographies of various communities based on lifestyles, occupations, festivals, practises, music, and other aspects of heritage. Much more work is required. This is a step in the right direction. It will provide insights and inspire a new generation of young writers and scholars to conduct more detailed research on the various interesting and significant aspects of India’s most important region.

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Handicrafts are facing stiff competition from machine-made goods, and efforts should be made to revitalise and sustain handicraft items. It has been observed that emphasis should be placed on modification and development in order to improve tools and equipment that are acceptable and comfortable to craftsmen for high-quality products while also being economically viable. These products will then be able to outperform machine-made items and become the prized attraction and possession of customers. The products' quality should be of international standard. Market intelligence, customer taste, trends, and preferences must also be identified, and design diversification must be implemented accordingly. The prices of the products should be competitive as well as cost-effective.

Tribal handicrafts contribute significantly to the economies of Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh. It employs a large number of tribal craft workers in rural and semi-urban areas and generates a lot of money. The handicraft sector has suffered as a result of poor infrastructure, transportation facilities, low capital and poor exposure to new technologies, a lack of market information, a lack of customer awareness about product features, a lack of promotion and advertising, a lack of quality control, a lack of logistics management, a lack of raw material supply, increasing competition, a lack of roads connectivity, a lack of market price, an inadequate market study, and a lack of communication, unable to handle large orders, absence of market intelligence, poor institutional framework, competition from other neighbouring states, lack of better packaging, inefficiency of timely delivery, maintaining consistent quality and competition with faster growing of machine made alternative products.

Handicraft, on the other hand, has great growth potential in the changing scenario, with its basic strength being the abundant and cheap availability of manpower, low capital requirement, easily available local raw materials, and unique product features. Sikkim, Meghalaya and

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Arunachal Pradesh's tribal handicrafts have the potential to produce a wide range of products, generate employment and marketing, increase consumer interest in handmade products due to the influx of tourists, and use E-commerce in direct marketing. However, there is a need to introduce new technologies and designs, as well as product advertising, logistics management, and product awareness.

Thus, it has been observed that tribal handicrafts of the study areas have good opportunities to grow, as well as to create a competitive market and an alternative source of income for tribal artisans. However, despite advancements in technology elsewhere, no discernible change has been observed in these areas. The use of traditional tools such as a wooden hammer, scissors, knives, and so on should be replaced with modern tools. Each district of the state needs to establish a research and design development unit to generate sustainable livelihoods in both urban and rural areas.

The value of traditional weaving and craftsmanship in Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh have been demonstrated in terms of conservation and development potential. The statement depicts the potential and scope of weaving and handicraft technology in the regions. It also allows formal institutions to participate in weaving and handicrafts through refinement, value addition, and commercialization. This is an entire chain that necessitates an integrated approach involving multi-institutional collaborations in order to make weaving and handicraft technology economically viable while also preserving the associated knowledge systems. Despite of having many tribal women's considerable weaving skills, recent studies show that, despite of having looms in their homes and basic weaving skills, many women do not make time to weave their own dresses. Specialist weavers are becoming scarce, and even older women in villages are beginning to purchase shawls from the market. As a result, if weaving is to be a viable source of income,

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financial and marketing support, as well as training and design inputs, will be required. A collaboration programme can be used to market women's traditional weaving knowledge. The need of the day is to expedite and open a number of small-scale industries to promote such knowledge and technology, sustain livelihoods, and conserve traditional knowledge and resources. The rich heritage of Adi women's arts and weaving technological knowledge will undoubtedly add colour to the country's cultural heritage; however, mass production and the incorporation of new elements in this field have not contributed significantly to the cause of revival of such traditional weaving.^{xi} Women's wisdom and the ethics associated with such traditional means of livelihood are primarily responsible for the revival of traditional weaving, and as such, they must be recognised, rewarded, and promoted through various tangible and intangible incentives.^{xlixiii}

It has been observed that there is a need for employment through the development of the handicrafts sector using locally available resources that can be used for the development of the handicrafts sector. Employment opportunities are divided into three categories: (1) self-employment, (2) regular employment, and (3) daily wage. On a priority basis, employment efforts will be made to engage the unemployed tribal youth in order to provide them with Self-Employment through various development schemes. Several financial institutions have identified financing promotion and development of the rural non-farming sector as one of their thrust areas and have implemented a number of measures to expand and diversify credit and development activities in the field of rural development. They have been providing banks with refinancing against loans for manufacturing, processing, and service activities in small, tiny, cottage, and village industries, including handicrafts. Simultaneously, a large number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have recognised the importance of income-generating activities for rural, poor people and have diversified into enterprise promotion through training and saving and credit

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programmes through groups. They were able to establish a close and long-lasting relationship with the rural people. These NGOs articulate the needs and aspirations of the local people, translating them into effective action/plans that are implemented with the active participation of the people.

The synergistic approach and planning between the tourism industry and the handicrafts sector have the potential to create new milestones in the country's prosperity and economic growth. Various government schemes (such as Training-Cum-Production Centres, Rural Entrepreneurship Development Programme, Training for/by Master Craftsmen, Market Oriented Training, Artisan Guides, Mother Units and Common Service Centres, Assistance for Rural Women in Non-Farm Development) assist tribal for generation and enhancement of livelihood opportunities in tribal areas in a sustainable, demonstrative, and cost effective manner.

There is a growing need for awareness and planning to recognise handicrafts as a potential sector of the Indian economy for maximising natural resource utilisation through human labour for self-employment and natural wealth creation. The strength of Indian Handicrafts lies in the largely inherited creativity and skill of craft people, the traditional and cultural foundation, the low capital investment, and the high value addition. Opportunities include expanding the export market, particularly in developed countries with a preference for handicrafts, raising awareness of and use of handicrafts in dress and lifestyle, and exploring technological possibilities for reducing drudgery and improving quality.

The handicrafts industry's weaknesses stem from its unorganised nature, with dispersed production bases, a lack of working capital at the producer's end, a diversity of input needs that makes collaboration difficult, market intelligence and perception, and the attitude that craft is primarily decorative and non-essential. The challenges and threats to the craft and craftsmen stem from increased competition in the export market as a result of the WTO, continued low return

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weaning craftsmen away from their traditional occupation, scarcity of raw materials due to depletion and non-presentation of natural mediums, and competition from machine made goods.

In the current scenario, a craftsperson represents the profile of a person with great skill, creativity, and capability for self-employment, but lacking in finance, unsure of the market, and constantly at the mercy of intermediaries who have access to both finance and market. As a result, from a planning standpoint, it demonstrates that the handicrafts sector is full of opportunities for employment and export, but it is highly disorganised and difficult to service. The approach to planning must be aimed at sustaining strength and capitalising on opportunities, while removing weaknesses and converting them to strength and dealing with threats.

Recommendations

The establishment of common facilities centres at the producing villages for training, marketing, providing market intelligence, establishing links with financial institutions, providing raw materials, and providing managerial inputs is absolutely essential.

Following recommendations are suggested for development of promotion of tribal handicrafts in the study areas of Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh:

Availability of raw material at reasonable rates. It has been realised that in a few cases, the raw material for handicraft products is not readily available locally. Craftsmen's development is hindered by the lack of raw materials, which can be expensive at times. It has been proposed that raw material depots be established in craft concentration tribal pockets to ensure an uninterrupted supply of standard raw materials to craftspeople in appropriate quantity and quality at reasonable rates. In such cases, state governments may provide raw materials such as seasoned wood or wool at reduced prices, providing an incentive for tribals to continue producing crafts.

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Provision for Special Fund. The development of tribal economies is the responsibility of state governments, though funds are provided by the Government of India. Unfortunately, no special funds have been set aside for the development of specific tribal handicrafts under study areas. As a result, the quality of tribal handicrafts is deteriorating. Special funds must be released by the GoI's Handloom and Handicrafts Commissioner to the state governments for the establishment of training and design centres at the village level in districts with a tribal population of more than 50 percent.

Credit Facilities/Financial Support. Craftspeople are mostly employed on a job/contract basis, and they lack the necessary storage capacity to produce their own products. Instead, they depend heavily on intermediaries for credit facilities/financial support at a higher rate of interest. Furthermore, they live in remote and far-flung areas with really no access to modes of transportation. In view of this, some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) recommended that instead of craftspeople approaching banks individually, the bank should camp at a particular location to complete the documents and distribute the loan to the tribal artisans. It has also been suggested that finance be made available through the Post Office.

Up gradation of technology and production techniques. Owing to their high products, the main drawback for these artisans is a lack of a dependable market for their goods for sale, which is aggravated by a lack of a proper communication network, which influences the price of their products. In such a circumstance, the prices of their products became outrageously costly. The use of mechanised items, including the use of plastics as replacements, has eroded demand for handicrafts. It has been found that the quality of the goods is not up to the mark with market taste and preferences. The tools and equipment are also based on very old and traditional techniques, which increases the cost of production and makes final product sales difficult. Design

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development, production of new items, and improvements to traditional tools and age-old techniques must be attempted in such items that retain the originality of tribal designs. The existing design and training institutes may continuously bring new items with improved models in order to attract new customers and explore new markets. As a consequence, it has been recommended that the central and state governments hold regular seminars to update technology and technique production. There is a need to improve their skills, diversify their products, design market-oriented products, and participate in exhibitions in India and abroad.

Setting up of Institute of Design. During conversations with various stakeholders, it was made clear that the artisans are still using very old designs. Some of which have become out of date in the market, and the cost of these designs is also on the higher side, leading to a lack of demand. It has been recommended that the state governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Meghalaya consider establishing an exclusive Institute of Designs under the umbrella of the Directorate of Small Scale Industries. The Institute will work with the mission to become a professional centre point of Design excellence and innovation, disseminating technical knowledge and developing skills based on the topographical requirements of a rich human resource base of artisans. The Design Institute will also work to raise the value of art ware products, leading to increased demand for the products while preserving traditional skill and excellence and blending with contemporary marketing content and taste for handicrafts. The central or state governments should also look into involving ITIs in skill development and training in the handicraft sector, particularly in tribal districts in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

Parity between Handloom & Handicrafts Sector. During the conversation, craftsmen responded by pointing out that the handicrafts sector is treated differently than the handloom sector in terms of concessions. Because handicraft production requires even more time than handloom

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production, the government need to provide concessions in terms of sales, subsidies, and rebates, among other things.

TA/DA to Artisans for Marketing Programmes. Participants voiced concern about the withdrawal of TA/DA to skilled craftsmen/NGO for attending market-related initiatives such as Crafts Bazaars, Expos, or other Exhibitions. Since most tribal states are relatively poor, it has been recommended that TA/DA/Transportation charges be offered to craftsmen in the old pattern in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

Consultancy for Handicrafts Sector. It has been proposed that occasionally, consultancy/seminars in various crafts be arranged for the advantage of artisans/exporters and the dissemination of market information, technological advancement, uniformity of quality, and packaging for higher value addition of products. A survey to encourage handicrafts should be undertaken, and the results of the survey may be used to develop policies while drawing up plan proposals. Tribal Research Institutes/TRIFEDs founded with GOI assistance may undertake regular analysis to identify crafts for increasing popularity.

Publicity of Tribal Handicrafts. Due to the scarcity of documentary literature, it has been recommended that facilities for uploading the handicrafts profile of Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh in details on their website, as well as the publication of brochures and other promotional materials, be made available to promote the state's handicrafts. NSTFDC/TRIFED should take a proactive role in supporting tribal handicrafts and market linkage by organising region-specific promotional activities and opening display centers/sales outlets at important tourist destinations/places in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.

Exemption of Tax on Tribal Handicrafts Products. Regardless of the fact that handicrafts are indeed a manual labour and low capital industry, a tax equivalent to machine made

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goods is imposed, which is unfair. As a consequence, it has been proposed that the tax on handicrafts be waived.

Implementation of Welfare Schemes for Artisans. It has been noted that welfare programmes such as insurance, pensions, work-sheds, work-shed-cum-housing, and many more should be supervised and executed more quickly.

Creation of Handicrafts Cell in Directorate of Industries. An exclusive handicrafts cell should be formed under the Directorate of Industries to give preference to fixing issues of crafts and artisans in the state. To deal with uncertainty in the marketing of their products, tribals may form cooperative societies to supply their items to state government handicrafts cells.

Setting Up of Urban *Haats* / Sale cum Demonstration Centres. To publicise handicrafts in tourism destinations, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh may set up urban *haats* to provide artisans with a strong promotional channel. State governments may permanently establish tribal *haats* throughout major cities for continuous interaction. TRIFED may be involved in the formation of a sale-cum-demonstration centre in major cities. As part of the launch of tribal handicrafts, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs could release the funds for the same. TRIFED and other handicraft development organisations must build tribal emporiums at vital national and international tourist destinations.

Skill dissemination by Master Artisans in each district. It has been recommended that the state government make the first move by identifying master artisans at the state level. Moreover, these master artisans would be involved in finding district level artisans and providing Training for Trainers (ToT) to them. These qualified district level master artisans will come back to the clusters to help educate the local artisans their newly acquired skills. It will result in the

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skill-upgradation of local artisans, allowing them to command a good rate for their handicraft items.

Establishing integration with other state departments. For the promotion of tribal handicrafts in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya the central or state government should investigate the possibility of partnering up with other state departments such as the Social Welfare Department, Tourism Department, Industries, so on and so forth. State Tourism Development Corporations, for example, should be actively involved in the promotion and sale of tribal handicrafts. The state government needs to ensure that a certain percentage of Tribal Artisans' products are purchased by them.

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