CHAPTER – II
HABITAT AND SOCIO CULTURAL LIFE OF THE TRIBES
2.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed with a view to know the habitat of the tribes and to understand the socio-cultural, political and economic life in order to lay down the base for subsequent analysis of the inter tribe and intra tribe study. The tribes selected for the present study are the Khambti, the Adi and the Shyam of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Shyam have the cultural affiliation with the Khamptis with a very minor difference in the socio-cultural set up. So the socio-cultural life of the Shyam can be understood in the context of the Khamptis. The Adi forms the other group of the tribe under study. They are a migrant tribe in the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Adi are in fact a hill tribe who constitute a major tribe in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Former they are found in the three Siang Districts i.e. East Siang, West-Siang, Upper Siang and eastern fringe of Upper Subansiri district and South-Western district of Arunachal Pradesh.

2.2 Environmental Basis

2.2.1 Location characteristics:

Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh lies to the Northeastern part of Arunachal Pradesh, covers an area of 11402 sq. K.m between 95°15’ to 97°24’ East Longitudes and 27°33’ to 29°22’ North Latitudes. It is bounded by China along Mac Mohan Line and part of Dibang Valley district in the North, Changlang...
district to the south, China and Burma to the east and Assam state and part of Lower Dibang valley district to the west (Statistical Handbook of Lohit District: 1994:)

The Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh, consist of continuous chains of Hills and Mountains, the altitudes of which vary from 500 feet to 17000 feet. The mountains in the north, which are the eastward extension of the Himalayas, remain snow-clad almost throughout the year. The southern part consists of the plains drained by the rivers like Lohit, the Kamlang, the Digaru, the Noa-Dihing, the Tengapani, etc and their tributaries. The plain areas in the foothill regions are covered by dense tropical forests and provide safe living for varieties of wild animals.

Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh is one of the most important physi­culturally distinct regions of the state. The district has derived its name from the Lohit River flowing in the district. This district was part of the former Lakhimpur District of Assam prior to 1914. It has passed through different phases of constitutional and administrative changes. The present Lohit district took shape in June 1980 under Arunachal Pradesh Re organization act, 1980 when Anini subdivision of former Lohit District was formed into Dibang valley district then the district is divided into three subdivisions and 12 Circle Headquarters and 487 villages. There are two urban centers namely, Tezu and Namsai. The Present administrative units of the district is shown in Table No: 2.1
Arunachal Pradesh: Political Subdivisions of Lohit District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Sub Division*</th>
<th>Circle</th>
<th>No. of Villages and Towns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Tezu Sub-Division</td>
<td>1. Tezu</td>
<td>22 +1 Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Sunpura</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Namsai Sub-Division</td>
<td>1. Namsai</td>
<td>59 +1 Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Cowkham</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Mahadevpur</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Wakro</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Hayuliang Sub-Division</td>
<td>1. Chaglagam</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Goiliang</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Hayuliang</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Hawai</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Walong</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Kibithoo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subdivision is co-terminus with CD Block

2.2.2 Climate

The climate of the Lohit district is largely influenced by the nature of its terrain. There are high hills and snowcapped mountains, deep ravines and wide valleys intersected by innumerable streams and rivers. As a result, the climate is cool and highly humid in the lower elevations and in the valleys and intensely cold in the higher elevation. The winter prevail during the month from late November to March. Precipitation occurs mostly in the form of snowfall in the northern areas. It is hot and humid during the summers, ranging from month of April to October, with intermittent heavy rainfall. The climate in the district varies from
LOHIT DISTRICT:
RIVER AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Fig. No: 2.3
place to place. In foothill region such as Tezu, Chowkham, Namsai, it is extreme hot during summer and moderately cold during winter while at places in high altitude such as Kibithoo, Walong, Hawai, Chaglagam etc are extremely cold during winter and moderate in summer.

Table No: 2.2

**Lohit District: Rainfall, and Temperature of District Headquarters, Tezu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Rainfall in mm</th>
<th>Average temperature in degree Celsius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>163.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>301.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>173.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>172.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>822.6</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>975.6</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1258.6</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1262.2</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>423.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistical handbook of Lohit District, 1994, Government of Arunachal Pradesh*

The annual rainfall in the north of the district exceeds 4000 mm and in the south it is over 2500mm. In the northern most parts of the district, rainfall in the form snow occur during the winter months of January and February and amount to 5 to 10 percent of the annual rainfall. Variability of annual and monsoon rainfall being small, the variations in rainfall from year to year are not significant. The maximum temperature of the district is 38 degree Celsius. A statement showing the annual rainfall and temperature of the year 1993 of the district Headquarters is given in Table No: 2.2.
STUDY AREA: NAMSAL AND CHOWKHAM CIRCLE

LEGEND
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- CIRCLE BOUNDARY
- RIVER/DRAINAGE

Fig. No: 2.4
Fig. No: 2.5

Sample villages

Namsai
2.2.3 Drainage System

The Principal River of the district is Lohit. The Mishmi call it Telu. It rises from the mountain range across the northeast border of the district, where it is known as Zayul-Chu. Flowing southwards, it enters the district through a gorge approximately 6 K.m north of Kibithoo. The river has a course of about 190 K.m through precipitant hills and villages before it reaches the plains of Parashuram-Kund, a place of pilgrimage near Tezu. It receives in its course many tributaries of which Dao (Dou), Delai, Diganu, Ghalum, Dichu, Tidding and Kamlang are important, all these tributaries are not snow fed and before they join Lohit they are also fed by many tributaries.

The plain towards the south of the district is drained by the Kamlang and Noa-Dihing rivers. The main tributaries of Noa-Dihing inn the Lohit district are Dirak on the left bank and Tengapani on the right. During the monsoon, the rivers overflow their banks causing serious erosion, they change their courses very often and cut themselves into innumerable channels, The River Kamlang originates from Glow Lake in the Wakro circle and flow eat west to the Lohit River. The flood occurs due to these rivers causes considerable damage to the roads and bridges every year.

2.2.4 Mineral:

Geological survey of India has been engaged in geological investigation in this remotest part in India. Since the inception of the department, by organizing
expeditions in the course of geological investigation, the geological survey of India has located quite a few mineral occurrences in the areas so far investigate.

i) Asbestos: minor occurrence of asbestos have been reported from a place one kilometer upstream of the confluence of Lohit and Tidding rivers on the Tezu Hayuliang road and in the tiding valley

ii) Copper ore: Minor stringers of copper ore in the form chalcopyrite, boromite, covelite, ozrite etc and in the association of quartz veins have been noticed in hornblinds granite in and around Tellu River.

iii) Lime stones: Deposit of cement based lime stones have been located at Tidding which is about 56 km from Tezu

iv) Marble: Near Tezu there are two marble bands, namely, Tezu rivers deposit and Dura River deposit

V) Graphite: A deposit of low grade graphite schist occurs at Lalpani. The deposit comprises bands of granite forms graphite schist in which graphite occurs in the form of fine and medium sized flakes and inclusions

2.2.5 Flora and fauna

i) Flora: The district is endowed with varieties of flora and the banks of floods plains of several rivulets are chocked with luxuriant growth of tall grasses. They belong to “Neyaudiareyna-udina” species.

The regional adjacent to the Lohit river and in lower elevations support a deciduous forest with islands of evergreen forests, the vegetation look very much that of the adjacent upper Assam plains. The dense vegetation displays a
thick and tall arrangement of several species of trees very much similar to their rain forests. The trees are dense, close together, with tall boles carrying the widespread canopy to the sky. The dominant species are Dipterocerpus macrocarpus, terminalia myriocarpa, acrocarpus, fraxinifolius and chikrasia, larger stroemia pervitlora, ptersoperum acerifolium, bischofia javanica, cinamonum species and phobe species.

In many open areas and stream margins gregarious clumps of screwpine occur with tall grasses of Arundo donax and scharum spontenium. Herbacious epiphytic growth occurs on almost every tree. These include chiefly fern allies, orchids and members of family Gesmeriaceae, Comlinaceae and Zinggi-beraceae.

Subtropical evergreen forest occurs at higher elevations above 1000 meters to 2000 meters altitude. These forests are not so dense or impenetrable, which mere modest sized trees. The components are cinamonum, Lindrea, Mognotia, quecus, Castanopsis and Pyrus along with Ta-lauma, Sterculia, undergrowth undergrowth in these is composed of Oxyspora, Melastoma, Polygonum, and also Forestia and Musa.

About 2000 meters the woody vegetation tends to be sparse in the large areas of grassy land. Above 4000 meters, the mountain faces looks almost bare. The woody vegetation in scattered clumps consists of characteristics coniferous kind including Pinus Wallichianve, Abiesdensa and Texus. Further
up on mountain tops support alpine vegetation composed of tussocks of dwarf grasses.

ii) Fauna: The forest surrounding the region nourish a wide variety of wild animals, and birds, zoographically, the district lies in the indo Chinese sub region of oriental zoologically region, but some of elements of Indian sub-region and pale-arctic region are also represented in this region.

The alluvial plains at the foothills extending from Sadiya to Tez to Tezu is preferred by several species of bableers, chat, warblers, bulbuls, mynus, grasses and in the neighborhood of cultivation. The steep precipitous hill slopes bear lofty dense evergreen jungle comprising enormous forest trees covered with bananas, tree ferns and bamboo clusters and goat-weid and spiny creepers loops grow at the forest edge.

Above 4000 meters, Scaeltersmenal, Eardpheasent are found in suitable places. In the higher altitudes over 4500 meters, the Tibetan snow coke are observed along scrubs and the dwarf Rhodendrom searching for food among mosses and lichens. During the winter, concentration of bird population increases to a grater extent by augmentation of the migrating bird from the northern Asia. From the Himalayas and Tibet, the Brahminy duck visit the river waters.

Of the wild animals, the important among are carnivores, are the tigers and leopard. The jungle cat inhabits the drier and more open parts of the country keeping more to grasslands. The larger Indian civet is a solitary
sheltering in bushes or scrubs jungle while the common palm civet is more dominant in warmer forest. Different kinds of deer of which the principal varieties are the sambar, the flag deer and there barking deer, line in the thickly wooded hills. The wild boar lives in the grassy and bushy jungles of this region. The Indian elephant is fairly common, especially at the foothills. Among the smaller mammals, the insectivores and the rodents are very common.

2.3 Distribution of Major Ethnic Groups in the Districts

The major ethnic groups living in the district are Khampti, Mishmi (Digaru and Mizu), Singpho, Deori, Shyam and Adi. The distribution of each tribe is very skewed and confined to their pockets, typical of tribal settlement; they have their own social, cultural and religious peculiarities within their community.

Table 2.3
Lohit District: Circle Wise Distribution of Major Ethnic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Circles</th>
<th>Major Ethnic Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tezu</td>
<td>Miju Mishmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sunpura</td>
<td>Digaru Mishmi and Adi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Namsai</td>
<td>Khampti, Shyam and Adi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chowkham</td>
<td>Khampti, Singpho, Adi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mahadevpur</td>
<td>Khampti, Deori and Kachari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wakro</td>
<td>Digaru and Miju Mishmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hayuliang</td>
<td>Digaru and Miju Mishmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chaglagam</td>
<td>Digaru Mishmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Goiliang</td>
<td>Miju Mishmi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Demographic pattern of Lohit District

As per the 1991 census, the total population of the district is recorded 109706 out of the total population of 8,64,558 in the state. Lohit districts constitute 12 percent of the total population of Arunachal Pradesh. The rural population of the district of the state is 86460 and the urban population is 23246. The percentage of literacy in the district as per the 1991 census is noted 42.98 percent.

2.4.1 Distribution of population

The district is inhabited by four major Arunachalee tribes, two immigrated Assamese tribe and sprinkle of Adi population, there is a spatial variation in the distribution of population due to different geographical, cultural and economic factors. For instance, nearly 80 percent of the total population are inhabiting in the plains and the rest 20 percent are settled in remote and mountainous areas in the district giving very skewed pattern of population density.

Table No: 2.4

| Lohit District: Circle Wise Distribution of Population of Lohit District (1991) |
|-------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------------|----------|
| Name of the circles | HH | Total Population | Male | Female | % of the total population | Sex Ratio |
| Tezu | 5688 | 26033 | 15330 | 10703 | 23.73 | 698 |
The details of circle-wise distribution of population of the district as well as its sex composition of the census year of 1991 are shown in Table No: 2.4. The single most striking feature about the population is that it is not uniformly distributed. In 1991, the total population of Lohit district stands at 109706 and is 12.69 percent of total population of Arunachal Pradesh with 61043 males and 48663 females and the district is fourth in terms of area with 13.62 percent of the states of the states geographical area. It shows hat population of the district is more or less to its area as far as the state is concerned and the average density is ten persons per square kilometer at par with the state.

2.4.2 Literacy

According to 1991 census, 49.21 percent of the total population of the district found literates whereas the literacy percentage of the state is 41.91 percent in the year 91. Lohit stands at second rank in terms of literacy after Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh.
2.4.3 Agriculture

The people in the district are mainly agriculturist. About 70-80 percent of the population is involved in agriculture. The mode of cultivation is both permanent and shifting. Permanent cultivation is mostly confined to Namsai subdivision, Sunpura circle, around Tezu and its nearby villages where plain lands are available on the foothills. The Region mostly inhabited by Mishmi practiced shifting cultivation.

2.4.5 Land Tenure System

The ownership of land and the individual right to use, it is determined by tradition and custom of the people living in the district. Each tribe has its different customs and traditions. For example, the Khamptis have a chieftainship type of society and the Khampti chief (Chau Faa) is the de facto owner of the land. Among the Mishmi, there is practically no village council. A respected old man is approached to settle down to dispute. More or less so is the case with Deori. In the broader sense, three types of ownership of land is observed in the district. Firstly, villages or common land, second, clan land and thirdly, individual land. Clan land is feature among the tribes practicing Jhum cultivation. The individual right of land ownership is giving more importance in recent years, because of settled cultivation, especially promoted through land development.
2.5 Habitat of the Sample Tribe

The tribes under study in its geographical setting are similar to the geographical setting of the plains in the foothills of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. All the tribes inhabit beyond Kamlang River to the south east corner of the district. It spreads over mainly in Namsai and Chowkham circles and constitutes the plain portion of the district.

The study area supports a deciduous forest with patches of evergreen ones, the vegetation very much like that of the adjacent upper Assam plains. The trees are dense, close together with tall boles carrying the wide spread canopy to the sky. The plant species in this forest include *dipterocarpus- macrocarpu, Terminalia myricarpa, ocrocarpus, flanifolious and chikarasia, larger stroemia parvitlora, ptersoperum,accerifolium,*, *blistochia javanica,cinamonum* species and phobe species. Luxuriant growth of variety of climbers, herbaceous climbers, screw pines, tall grasses, epiphytes and bamboo makes the forest dense and impenetrable. The forest surrounding the study area nourishes a variety of wild animals, the common species being the Indian elephant, the tiger, the leopard, the shamher, the barking deer, etc. Among the small mammals, the insectivores and the rodents are very common. A large number of birds, reptiles, amphibians and *mollusca* are also found in this forest.

2.6 The Khampti

2.6.1 Village Settlement and House Pattern
Khampti villages The khampti inhabit some thirty villages big and small under Namsai and Chowkham circles the major Khampti villages in Namsai Sub-division include Lathaw, Sulongtoo, Sengsap, Enten, Mansai, Ningroo- Charalee, Piyong, Janglai, Nampong, Pangen, Wingko, Faneng, Nongtaw Khampti. Momong, Nalong, Chowkham, Gunanagar, Kherem, Mime, Empong, Mankaw, Tesu, Pankhao.

In Khampti villages, land is under the traditional ownership of the village council with Chaw Maan as head. No land record exists as no cadastral survey has been carried out. The village land is put to agricultural and non agricultural uses. As per tradition, individual families enjoy usu-fructuary rights in cultivable land but in practice individual rights on agricultural land have been established. Land use for non agricultural purposes mainly includes forest lands.

The Khampti villages are widely separated from each other. The spatial organization of houses in villages of the Khampti displays variations in the settlement pattern. In villages like Lathaw, Namsai and Chowkham Compact type of settlement is observed because the dwellings are almost clustered about the center. In some villages like Momong, the houses are being built along either side of the river which reflects linear pattern of settlement. Circular pattern of settlement is seen in Manmow where the houses are situated around the school and temple.
Invariably the Khampti villages are situated near water source. Each village has a definite boundary demarcated by streams or natural markers. Every Khampti and village has its own Monastery.

The Khampti houses are strong timber and bamboo structure on raised platform with thatched roof. To each house a Chan (Portico) is attached which is climbed by a wooden ladder. In recent years, many houses of the villages are either SPT (Semi Permanent Type) or RCC (Reinforced Concrete and Cement).

The unique feature about Khampti houses is that unlike the houses of other tribe, every Khampti houses has a compound with bamboo fencing for growing flowers and vegetables. Granary of every house is invariably constructed a little away from the main house on raised platform, but usually within the premises. The space below the platform on which the house is constructed is used for variety of purposes. It is the place for domestic animals, storage of firewood and for Howk (traditional loom).

2.6.2 Ethnic and Linguistic Affinities

The Khampti have their own distinct script resembling Burmese scripts. The language closely resembles the Northern Shan group of languages. A large portion of variability is common to both these languages while the Alphabets are nearly identical (Grierson: 1966:16). According to Grierson, the Khampti language belongs to Tai speech families of Siamese Chinese sub-family, which is

*The monastery is usually constructed to the East of the Village. But as the village becomes old and houses go on shifting from one place to another, the location of monastery changes the direction.
a branch of Tibeto-Chinese Family (Vidyarthi & Rai: 1976: 68). The traditional Khampti alphabet consists of 17 letters. But in recent years they have incorporated nine more letters so as to represent some sounds like ‘pa’, ‘ra’ which are absent in their original system of alphabets.

The Khampti manifest predominantly Mongoloid traits in their physical features. Contrary to the earlier observation that they are not a handsome race and ‘are of darker complexion” (Dalton: 1872: 6), the Khamptis are found to be fair in complexion. Men are tall, muscular and well built. The Khampti women are pretty. The Epicanthic eye fold is distinct and is easily observable. The nose is small rather than flat. The mouth is large and prognathism can be marked in some cases (Mishra: 1994: 42).

2.6.3 Migration

Available historical sources confirmed that the Khampti entered into Assam through Patkai Pass in Indo Burma Boarder from Upper Burma towards the last part of 18th Century. The process of immigration, however, continued in batches till 1850 and eventually the total Khamti population reached 3040 in Assam province by 1891 (Grierson op cit: 63)

The Khampti migrated from their original seat Bor khampti and entered into Assam probably when the Burmese King Alamphra dismembered the kingdom the Mongkong. He applied a policy of divide and rule and as a consequence the chief of the principalities of Bor-Khampti lost their unity. At first, the conflict broke out in between Longkeing and Manchey. In this conflict the
former was killed and his three sons: Pharateka, Chowtam and Lonkeing were kept in prison. In the meantime, Manchey chief was assassinated by his own son and brought the principality under his own control. At this time it is said that Pharateka, Chowtan and Longkeing left their homeland crossing Patkai range through chowkang pass and subsequently arrived in Ahom kingdom.

According to second version, there was a king or chief named Cha cham lonkeing kham in the principality of Longkeing. He had two sons. The elder killed his father to occupy the throne. The younger one chow NgI Llongkeing kham considering in security of his life migrated to India with his two hundred Khampti followers through Chow-khang pass. The entire version agrees that the Khamptis left their homeland owing to political instability.

Most probably they arrived at Khomong, the present Vijaynagar in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Khomong, a very fertile plateau situated on the southern slope of the Patkai ranges, was inhabited by the Khampti for a good number of years. From there they moved towards Tengapani and settled there with the permission of the then Ahom ruler. However, they had to fight with the Singpho chief, Beesagam, as Tengapani area was under his control. In subsequent years they had to fight with the Ahoms, Matakas and finally with the Britishers (Behera Opcit: 20-21)

2.6.4 Socio Cultural Life of the Khamptis

The Khampti, said to be Shan descendants, are of mongoloid origin and have held from Moung Khampti Loung (Bor Khamti area) near Upper Sources of
Irrawady river. They Migrated to India and to their present homeland in Lohit District towards the second half of the 18th century during the Ahom Rules in Assam. The first batch of the khampti made their settlement near Tengapani River in 1751 A.D with the permission of the then Ahom ruler Paramatta Singh (1744-1751) or of Rajeswar Singh (1751-1769) (Devi: 1968)

2.6.5 Social Institutions of the Khamptis

The Khampti normally live in multi clan villages. There basic social institution is family. A family is formed through marriage as is the case in general and as a rule consists of husband, wife, (wives) and children. The tribal endogamy and clan exogamy are the two basic principles in establishing marital ties. In the Khampti society marriages are usually solemnized outside the villages, although village endogamy is not prohibited. While monogamy is a general rule, polygamy has social section behind it. The family system is Petri-lineal and Petri-local, and normally they live in a joint family. But if there is misunderstanding among the members, the family breaks up and the married brothers/ sons establish separate house holds.

Next to family comes the clan. The clan is composed of a number of families, often bearing a common designation and which believe that they have all sprung from a common ancestor. But an interesting aspect about the khampti clan identity is that the clans are presently identified with reference to their earlier places of settlement before they entered into India. For example, Mantaw and Mannow are believed to have e sprung from a common ancestor. They have
assumed different clan identity because of their settlement in the upper course and lower course of the river in Moung-Khampti-loung. Members of the clan living in a village in the upper course of the river were identified as Mannow while those living in lower course as Mantaw, thereby forming two separate clans subsequently. Another feature about Khampti society is that the institution of the phratry exists in a very loose form, for which they use the phrase *si long si sam*. For example Mansai, Manphai, Khamhoo, and kokma are four clans and formed into one group which may be a phratry. Marriage is strictly prohibited among four clans of the same phratry.

i) Marriage

The Khampti use the term *Tang houn* for marriage which literary means to set up a home. Marriage is universal and cross cousin marriage is a preferential mode and usually first preference is given to ego's embedy (Mother's Bother's Daughter), if she is otherwise eligible. Parallel cousin marriage is strictly prohibited. Marriage is a responsibility of the parents, though Hak Kan (Love marriage), an laak (capture) an Khun koi (marriage by service) have the social section, Mimai tanghaun (widow remarriage), Put pillow (Levirate), Put-long-saw (Sorrorate) are also practice in the society. When bride is selected Ho kaa (Bride price) has to be paid to her parents about which there are prescribed norm in Thamasat, (law book of the Khampti). The custom of the bride bringing with her Khoung yam (gift) in the form of articles daily uses such as Saa and ampaa (basket) Mit (dao) koung Hok (traditional loom) etc is prevalent in the society.
ii) Social Stratification

Traditionally, the khampti society is divided into three distinct strata like the chiefs, the commoners, and the slaves. Although the Bhante or the monks among the khampti have higher status than other members of the society, they are not considered as a stratum in the three fold hierarchy due to their detachment from the mundane affairs (Mishra: Opcit:53)

2.6.6 Khampti Civic and Political Life

The Khampti village is a well defined political and administrative unit though the Khampti have the institution of chieftainship at the tribe level. Every Khampti village has a council of elders headed by the Chawmaan. He takes all the decision with the consultation of the village elders regarding civil and criminal cases. The decision is taken according to the provision codified in the Thamachat. The Chawmaan commands greatest respect in the village. He is the symbol of pride and prestige of village. The function of the village Chaumaan includes the following:-

(i) Allotment of land to the individual;
(ii) Allotment of land to the Kon mau (new comer) who wants to settle in the village area;
(iii) Allotment of land to the government;
(iv) Resolving internal disputes and quarrel of any sort in the village;
(v) Organizing co-operative activities for digging or repairing irrigational channel, common fencing etc;

(vi) Imposing fines or punishment to the offenders of the customary law of the community and to those who practice witchcraft or sorcery. *(Ibid: 13)*

The *Chau Faa* at the tribe level is also a functional head. There exist a *Mokchum* (Council of ministers) under the leadership of *Chawfaa*. The *Mokchum* is the representative of all the clans.

Though the *Chau Faa* is the head of the tribe, he never interferes in the functioning of *Chawmaan*. Cases not resolved at the village level are refereed to him and he gives his decision in consultation with the *Mokchum*. Besides the *Chawfaa* settles the inter village disputes and negotiate with an outsider on behalf of the community. He can also impose fine or punishment on the offenders of the law according to the provision of *Thamasat*. The permission of *Chau Faa* is sought for in case:

(i) a new village is established;

(ii) a tribal man other than khampti wants to settle in the area;

(iii) the government wants to occupy land in the area which does not fall within any village limit. However, in all the matters he invariably consults the *Mokchum*.

With the introduction of Panchayati Raj in 1972 in Arunachal Pradesh, the traditional civic and political institution has undergone changes. *Gram Panchayat* members, *Anchal Samiti* members, *Zila parishad* members continue to be elected
to represent their village and zones within the Khampti area. Though their
cultural and modern political institution co exists in the villages; the former is
gradually loosing its significance.

2.6.7 Khampti Economic Life

The Khampti are good agriculturists. Besides, they are also engaged in trade and commerce. Even in nineteenth century they are famous in trade and agriculture. Cooper writes that, “The Khamptis inveterate traders, and to their Northern Assam is much indebted for the best rice and vegetables, especially potatoes.” (Cooper: 18731995): 59). The Khamptis practice permanent cultivation and undertake both wet and dry cultivations. They raise both Khariff and Rabi crops: the former being paddy and later comprising potato, maize and vegetables and sometimes paddy. Paddy is mainly grown as Khariff crop. The Khampti are both engaged in agriculture and non agricultural activities. Non agricultural activity includes hunting, fishing, collection of firewood edible roots and leaves, house building material from the forest and trade. They were engaged in elephant catching and extracting rubber from a typical rubber tree of this area. Their traditional trade items consist of forest products like honey, ivory, rubber, task, elephant etc and agricultural products like rice and potato. Burmese clothes, gold dust, decorated khampti bags, opium are also the item which they used to trade with the people of plains.

The khampti women contribute a lot towards economic activities. In agriculture, right from preparing nursery bed to harvesting of paddy, the khampti
women virtually do all the activities except ploughing and felling of trees. Traditionally they have slavery system which also supplied to the work force. Usually well to do khampti people do little labour specifically related to forest activities and ploughing. Besides agriculture, the khampti women do the whole of weaving, the whole of collecting firewood, vegetables from the jungle, side by side their other household duties.

i) Food Habit

The food habit of the Khamptis is relating to their agricultural practice and their cultural life. Their food habit may be categorized under regular habit and occasional habits during festival occasion.

Usually rice constitutes their staple food but they also take a variety of vegetables and potatoes produced by them. Meat, fish, wild roots, herbs and shrubs and bamboo shoots constitute important item of food. The boiling process of food of the khampti has a specialty in the sense that they daily use quite a good numbers of locally available spices for giving flavour to the taste.

During festivals the Khamptis prepare more items like cakes and porridge. The cakes which are popular during festivals are *khaopook, khaumosen, Khaomotop*, etc. The porridge item includes *khaunampaa*. They also add *Khau Tek* (Dried paddy) to their Festive diet.

In the process of economic transformation in Arunachal Pradesh the Khamptis are also not left behind. Many entrepreneurs have emerged who have established saw and veneer mills. Many have taken to plantation industries mainly
at Chowkham and Lathaw. The entrepreneurial activities have also been extended to establishment of educational institutions (Behera and Mantaw: 1996).

2.6.8 Khampti Religious Life

The religious life of the Khamptis can neither be studied under the ‘tribal religious faith’ nor strictly under ‘Theravada’ cult of Buddhism which they profess, does a spirit of “animistic faith” prevail under the veil of Buddhism.

The people observe all the ceremonial pieties associated to the Theravada cult and at the same time believe tin the spirit worship. As Buddhist they are to be monotheists, but in practice they follow polytheism as they believe in so many deities, some being the gods of the village territory while others being the gods of individual capacity. For example, they worship Phi Moung (the deity of village), Phinoy (the deity of jungle/hill), Hong Khon Khaw (the mother of goddess of paddy), etc. At the same time, they also conceive of Chow khonsang (A supreme creator) and believe in another god subordinate to the supreme god of creation, called Chow ci giya, who look after the welfare of human beings.

Being Buddhist they believe that salvation or Nirvana after death is possible by following the noble eight fold path- Right view, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mind fullness and right meditation- as preached by the lord Buddha. Elderly Khampti follows Panchasheela, Asthasheela and dasha-shila or five eight and ten principles respectively, to lead a pious life like a devout Buddhist. They have a strong belief that worship of Buddha, offering food and dress to the monks, etc., are the deeds to attain Nipaen (Nirvana)
in the long run. Offering cooked food to the minks in the village monastery immediately after cooking and before anyone eating it, is still in vogue in all the khampti villages, showing Khampti attachment to Buddhism (Barua: 1976: 28-36).

i) Festival and Rituals

Khamptis usually celebrate seven festivals connected with the birth and death of Lord Buddha or death of monks, Most important festivals is Sungken celebrated in the khampti month of Nuen Haa corresponding to the Sunkranti of Baisakh. This Festival is observed for three consecutive days. The images of Lord Buddha are brought out of the Chong (Temple) to a specifically designed pandal in the premises. The images are given clean mask on all these days and at the end of the celebration, the images are taken back to the chong. The celebration is observed by praying, feasting, putting on new garments offering, merry making, and spraying coloured water on each other.

Besides Sungken, Khamptis also observe Khaowa and nauwa in the months of July -August on full moon day of Nuen Pet. This marks the beginning of three months’ period of meditation by the monks. They are not supposed to move out of the Chong for three months during the rainy season. During these three months they celebrate thirteen Satangs each on every seventh days beginning from the full month day of Nuen pet. On these days, the villagers visit the Chong (Vihara) with offering of fruits, candles flowers and food. Throughout the period especially old men and women visit the Chong to say their prayers. Potwaa which makes the
end of meditation period for three months which is celebrated during October-November, on the full moon day of Nuen Sip Pet. The monks are worshipped with the valuable offerings on this occasion. There are some festivals and rituals observed by the Khamptis which are associated with their faith in animism.

2.6.9 Khampti Cultural Life

Following Elwin’s (Elwin 1943:1) line of classification of Indian tribes with reference to “external influence” on them, the Khamptis are put in the second category (Behera Op cit. :31-33) Their cultural life is studied with reference to both material and non material culture.

i) Art and Crafts

The art and craft of the khampti are a part of their heritage. They form an integral part of their religious life as well as economic necessity. The culture realizes the economic necessity in artistic way. The Khamti arts and crafts bear their indigenous characteristics in respect of their pattern, colour schemes, shapes and techniques.

Their craft specimen include utilitarian decorative and magico religious objects of the former, mention may be made of textile items such as cotton jacket, scarf, loin cloth, lungi, bags and articles of domestic use such as baskets, fishing traps, daos, smoking pipes, music instrument and bamboo works etc.

Khampti art and craft have not remained unchanged. Availability of items in the market and economic diversification have almost destroyed making of
traditional art and crafts. Whatever now are made do not display the aesthetic sense of artistic beauty.

ii) Literature

The Khamptis have a rich tradition of written literature. They have volumes of texts all in the form of manuscripts. These include volumes of Abhidhamma, vijaya and sata-pitakas, illustrated manuscript on heavenly and ghostly worlds, handbooks on tenets of Theravada Buddhism, historical works, Jatakas and other tales etc. The manuscripts are copied, produced and preserved meticulously by the monks and the common men alike. Every village monastery is rich with manuscripts, which are donated by the individuals and monks to earn charity (Kondinya: 1986:57).

Besides, some of the households possess literature on medicine and some people in the community practice medicine. The Khamti have a chronicle Chetyu' similar to Ahom Buranji, in which their mythical origin, some of past events, their past seats of settlement have been recorded. The khampti like other Shans tribes copy the old texts and thus have the tradition to keep up the texts through centuries. Another important scripture to be found in the community is Thamasat. It contains a good deal of legal measures pertaining to criminal law and procedures, law contracts and civil procedures.

Khamptis also composes poems on different themes. A tune of love, romance, patriotism, heroism can be traced in the songs. However most of the poems are composed describing events in Lord Buddha’s life.
2.7 THE SHYAM

The Shyam which is also known as Khamyang, as they have been mentioned in the 1971 census are a small tribal group having close racial and cultural affinities with the Khamptis. Their original language is Tai as of the Khampti, their script is Shans. Their settlements are adjacent to the Khamptis villages in the Plain belts. They have been in close contact with the Assamese speaking people for as long period of time and in the process of cultural intercourse they have today taken up Assamese as their language.

The Shyams are Buddhist of the Theravada School. Their religious believes and ceremonies are virtually the same as those of the Khampti tribe of the district, namely the Khamptis and the Singphos.

2.7.1 Historical Background

The Khamyangs are said to have had the charge of the pass over the Patkai, and to have been divided into two sections of Mong Nam (Pani or Low land Nora) and Mong Noe (bam or highland Nora. They are called Khamyangs as they settled at the place of that name after they had left Mung Kong. This Place of one of the stage on the route followed by the Ahoms in entering Assam and was here from which Sukhapha, having committed a series of raids on some Naga villages brought them under subjection and put khamyang Mong (according to some Buronjis Kang – khrang – Mong) Gohain in charge. Census of 1891 only thirty persons were recorded as Khamyangs, but Hannay says that they are commonly known by the name of Nora or Pani Nora it is possible that some of the persons so
returned are Khamyangs. It may also be that many of them have lost their tribal identity, as even in 1841 it was reported that they had must mixed up with the Assamese and could speak that language, although at that time they still retained their own language, custom and Buddhist religion).

2.8 THE ADI

The Adis are in fact a hill tribe who constitute a major tribe in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Former they are found in the three districts i.e., East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang and the Eastern fringe of upper Subansiri district and south western part of Dibang valley districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Now some sections of the Adi tribe are inhabited in the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. For the present study the socio cultural life of the Adi are divided into two sections viz., the Adi in general in Arunachal Pradesh and the Adi somuwa in Lohit district. In Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh, the Adi form a migrant tribe. The first section describes about the Adi in general in Arunachal Pradesh followed by the description of the socio cultural life of the Adi Somuwa. The difference between the two groups is due to the long isolation from each other. For the present study four Adi villages have been selected in which two comes under the group of Adi in general namely, Namleng village and Ningroo Adi. Mabira village and Joipur village comes under the Adi somuwa group.


2 The people of Ningroo- Adi migrated from former Siang division of Arunachal Pradesh. They migrated from their original place after the shifting of Saw mill from Murkong Selek to Namsai area after the 1950
2.8.1 Migration

The problem of the original home of the Adis has not yet been fully studied. Some writers in the past attempted to trace out their early home and to give connected account of their migration to their present area. Each group of sub tribe has their own myth and stories relating to their early home and migration. The original habitat of the Adis was the lofty mountain ranges between the Assam and Tibet and the place Damro (Damloh), a Padam village in the present East Siang district as the common center of dispersal of the Adis. Due to the increase of population and want of more land, they came down to the lower Assam side through the gorge of Dihang.

2.8.2 Village Settlement and House Pattern

The Adi are settled in the five districts of the state constituting a large number of population of Arunachal Pradesh, though some sections are inhabiting in Namleng, Kaba, and Ningroo Adi villages of Lohit district also. Some of the important towns of the Adis are Pasighat, Roing, Along, Yingkiong, Daporijo

The house of the Adi in different districts reflects their surrounding environment and it differs from area to area. But the main structure and the interior arrangements and materials used for building of the houses are almost the same everywhere depending on the availability of materials and suitability of ground within in the village and the result of the divination. The traditional houses

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earthquake. The Adi of Namleng shifted after the 1950 earthquake in search of cultivable land with due permission of Khampti Chau faa
of the Adi are constructed with bamboos, woods, canes, leaves etc. No metal or nail is used in the construction of houses. They decorate their interior section with jaws, hides of animals, skulls of Methuns, jaws of pigs.

Most of the settlements of the Adi areas are of scattered type but some of the villages have compact type of settlement which was seen in the Kambu, Bene, and Kombo villages. Granaries are constructed at little distance from the cluster of the house usually in the outskirt of the village.

2.8.3 Socio Cultural Life of the Adi

i) Clan

As already mentioned the Adis are divided into two broad groups and the each group has a number of sub tribes. Each subtribes is consisting of a number of clan and the sub clans. Each such sub clans is consisting of families which may be considered as the smallest unit in the Adi society. The density of Cohesion thins out gradually from a family outwards towards a nebulous feeling of unity for an Adi people as a whole. (Roy: 1966; 207)

Practically the Adi Society is based on the clan organization. The clan or exogamous step among the Adis is known as Opins Or Ali. Each clan and its sub clans normally trace their descent from one common ancestor. The clans and sub clans of the Adis are generally exogamous and in the past that were in maintaining this principle. Today, however, some clans do not maintain this custom.
ii) Family

The family, called *Rumtum* or *Rutum* by the Adis is the smallest unit in the structure of their society. The society of the Adis is patrilineal and patriarchal. As the society is patriarchal, the senior most men in the Adi family are its head.

iii) Marriage

The marriage system of the Adi varies slightly from one group to another. Monogamy is common among the Adi but polygamy is also prevalent among them, particularly more popular among the rich persons. It exists for various reasons, economic, death of brothers, love affairs, and desires of male child and the bareness of the wife. In this system, the eldest wife has a position of superior to other co wives and it is she who holds the reign of the family affairs, for the subsequent marriages, the opinion of the first wife is always sought and after the marriage all wives live together under the same roof...

iv) Social Institution

Among the social institutions of the Adi the *Moshup* (Boys dormitory) and *Rasheng* (girl’s dormitory) of the Padam-Minyong area are important. The *Moshup*, a padam term which got considerable publicity is called *Dere* by the Minyongs and galos, *Ngaptek* by the Milangs and *benge* by the Boris, Ashings and Tangams. B.S Guha sums up the purpose of the *Moshup*;

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§ Discussion related to marriage system of each sub tribe is beyond the scope of the chapter. For details please refer ‘History and culture of the Adis’, by Dr T Nyori(1993)
“There are two underlying principles on which the institution (Mushups) is built, namely the creating of habits of discipline among the children at their formative stage of life and in developing of a spirit of cooperation and collaboration so that the tribe can act as a unit and fissiparous tendencies with in the body politics of the tribe may have very little room for growth”. (Guha:1953:83).

The girls’ dormitory is called Rasheng or Risheng in Adi, literally meaning a meeting place or rest house. It is training institution for the girls in discipline, comradeship, responsibility and leadership.

2.8.4 Political Life of the Adi

i) Kebang

Every Adi village (Dolung) is run by a council called Kebang. All the adult members of the village are its members and they participate in the sessions of the Kebang. The deliberation of the Kebang is guided by the elders of the council who are known as the Kebang Abu. Thus the Kebang has a collective leadership. The Kebang leadership is also not hereditary but is acquired by an elder by virtue of his personality, wealth, influence and ability to present a case in the traditional manner. During the British rule, some village elders who had been appointed as Gams also served as Kebang Abus in the village council. At present all the experienced and mature leaders, orators and gams of the village are the Kebang Abus.
Theoretically, the *Kebang* is a democratic institution and all the members of the village have to take part in it. Practically, however, the participation of women in the *Kebang* is very limited. Although, there is no restriction for the participation of women in the *Kebang* assembly.

After independence *Kebang* has been divided into three divisions. They are *Dolung Kebang* at village level which is the earliest and the smallest administrative institution of the Adi. It is *Bango-kebang* at circle level and *Bugum-Bokang kebang* for the whole Adi tribe.

In *Kebang* all conflict resolution is solved. In any *Kebang*, generally matters are introduced and moved by experienced member known as Kebang Abus and they guide the proceedings of the session. Matters of interest and importance are discussed, debated and argued in detail. The deliberation goes on as long as there sometime is willing to speak on the subject. Thus the session of the *Kebang* continued for along period till all are exhausted and arrive at an agreeable decision or is adjourned for the next session. (Nyori: 1993:pp 133)

2.8.5 Economic Life of the Adi

The economic life of a people in any particular region normally depends on its climatic condition, physical and topographical features, soil as well as their ingenuity to device means to improve their lot. The traditional economy of the Adi was primarily based on food gathering, hunting, fishing, Jhuming or Shifting cultivation.
i) Hunting

Hunting is one of the earliest occupations of the Adi. It is organized in two forms; one, collectively and the other, individually. In the collective hunting all the young male members of the village take part. But in the individual hunting, a man goes out to the jungle towards any direction at his will and hunts.

ii) Agriculture

The traditional economic life of the people centered *jhuming* agriculture. This method of agriculture engaged both men and women throughout the year. The entire land falling under the jurisdiction of the village is grouped into three different categories; 1) land for residential purpose; 2) land for games and hunting and 3) land for the agriculture, including grazing land.

The land assigned for *Jhuming* are divided into a number of patches called *patat*, each patch is divided among the families of the village. A particular patch is taken up for cultivation by families and this they do for about three years which they shift to another patch leaving the earlier fallow. In general, however, they open a new block in second patch in addition to first in the second year and in the third year still another block in third patch is opened for cultivation along with the earlier ones. But in the fourth year, the first is totally abandoned and the second and the third patches are under cultivation. At the same time a new block is opened in fourth patch (ibid; 186 1966). Crops like maize, red pepper, cucumber, gourd, pumpkin, bean, soybean till are grown.
Settled forms of agriculture are practiced in the Padam-Minyong group in the East Siang and Dibang valley districts. The Adi those who have shifted to Lohit district practice wet rice cultivation like the Khamptis.

iii) Food and Drink

The food habit of the Adi is related to their agricultural practices and their cultural life. Rice is the staple food for the majority of the Adi. However in the high altitude region, rice is not produced sufficiently: So the Bokars, Ramas, Ashings and others eat more food of maize, and millet. They prepare their curry from brinjal, pumpkin, gourd, arum, mustard leaves, bean, soybean, bamboo shoot and varieties of green leaves. They eat varieties of edible roots and leaves which are plenty in jungles. Meat and fish are taken with rice but these are not everyday item of food.

The common indigenous drink of the Adi is Apong or opo (rice beer). Apong is prepared from rice, millet and Job’s tears (Anyek) is essential item of their everyday consumption. It is taken at all social, economic, political and religious occasions.

2.8.6 Cultural Life of the Adi

i) Art and Craft

The Adi women are good weavers and they have also the colour choice and artistic designs of their own. The Adi make almost all the articles required for their daily use in their society. Most of these were made of bamboos and canes. They still make their bows and arrows, different types of household articles or
implements, such as varieties of baskets, bamboo container, and cups. They also make cane hats of different shapes and sizes. (Borgohain: 1980, pp 15-21)

ii) Dance and Music

Dance and music are an important medium through which the art and culture of the tribal people find expression. The Adis have varieties of song and dance such as *Ponung, Delong, bari, nitom, mopin* songs and dances. These songs and dances of the tribe may be grouped into two types. One is ceremonial or religious and these are performed on the occasion of festivals, wedding and other rites. The other type is recreational and these songs and dances may be sung and danced at any time; by the boys and girls, not to please the god but to please themselves.

iii) Dresses and Ornaments

The dresses of the Adi may be divided into two parts; one is the upper dress worn above the waist and the lower garment. The *galuk* (Adi coat) is used as the upper garment by the males of the Padams, Pasis, Pangings, Minyong, Galo and others. The Adi men wear as their head dress and caps made of cane or animal skin. A *dao* is carried by a man with the dress.

The traditional lower garments of the Adi males is their loin cloth (*Ugon* or *Sabe*) women especially were full sleeved black blouses with yellow bands of border designs as their upper garments, The lower garment of the Adi women are long skirts known as *Gale*. *Gales* are with free ends either pinkish red with a number of yellow horizontal lines or yellow with black horizontal lines running
across the middle. Both the Adi men and women wear most of their ornaments on their necks hanging down their chest.

2.8.7 Religion and Beliefs of the Adi

All the Adi group of people believes in animism. In recent years there has been a tendency among the writers, booth Adi and non Adi, to call the religion of the tribe as donyi poloism or Donyi polo religion, a name which has been derived from the recognition of Donyi polo, the combined devine figure of Donyi (the Sun), and Polo (the Moon), as their popular god (Erring 1985 pp1-4). Like religion of many people in the world the origin of the religion of the Adis too is shrouded in numerous myths and traditions of the tribe which are old as the tribe itself.

A priest is called as Nyibo or Nyibu or Miri. He performs all sorts of religious rites and ceremonies of the tribe. The Adis perform a number of rituals and socio religious festivals. Some of these are performed individually and while others are formed on community basis. For example, Solung is the most important festival of the Padam- Minyong group and Mopin is celebrated by the Galos where the goddess of wealth and prosperity is propitiated. All the festivals of the Adis are related to the agricultural cycle.

2.8.8 The Taboo

The Adis have number of taboos which are known as aririnam by the Galos and nyonam by the Padams-Minyongs. Taboos are observed to avoid bad luck, sickness, epidemic or anger of the spirits. First is the taboo on movement: when they keep themselves confined indoors, the period of confinement varies
from occasion to occasion. The second is the taboo on works by which, after a rite the restrictions are imposed on the felling of big trees, cutting of banana trees, digging of big holes and damming of the river. Third is the taboo on eating of some fruits and vegetables, during the illness and some rituals at home. (Nyori: 1993: P-281)

2.9 THE ADI SOMUWA

Adi Somuwa is a small group of tribal people living in the Namsai and Chowkam Subdivision in 13 villages namely Mabira, Joypur, Dhonekona, and Melangkong, New Joypur, Dodum Jona, Jengthu, New Jengthu, Deobeel, New Mohong, Samuguru, Jona II and Morapat.

2.9.1 Migration

Earlier the Adi Somuwa was known as Somuwa Miris. They have been knowing as Adi Somuwa from very recently. Adi somuwas is a newly adopted term by the Somuwa Miris. Shri Lokheswar Sharma, the 3rd Indian Political Officer of Sadiya Frontier Tract April 1948 to June 1951, mentioned in his book, “Mishmi Paharor Reng Singa” published in 1965, that there were two Miri villages Majera and Tengali at a distance of 2 miles East of Sunpura. Shri Sharma, the than Political Officer of Sadiya Frontier Tract visited the Majera and Tenagli villages on 6th and 7th January 1950 respectively and found 15 Miri families at majera village and Tangali village on 6th and 7th January 1950 respectively. According to Shri Sharma, these two Miri villages were situated in Lohit valley. The Majera village was situated at a distance of two miles East of
Sunpura and the Tengali was situated at a distance of three miles of East of Majera. Both Majera and Tengali had been migrated to the interior of Lohit district in and around 1954 and began to settle in a place called Mabira, a place near Tenagpani river as their properties had been badly damaged by the great earthquake of 1950. They left their old settlement in the year 1954. Now they are settling in various villages around Namsai and Chowkham sub-division.

2.9.2 Settlement and Housing Pattern

The villages of the Adi Somuwa are of small to medium sizes and are situated in the plain belt of the district. The people of four to five clans are found in the most of the villages. The villages of Adi Somuwa are not very filthy as their houses are not hurled in clusters. The villages are more or less neat and clean.

The Adi Somuwa invariably inhabits in the river side as observed in Jengthu, Mabira and Joipur villages. Their houses are built to face in any direction and are situated sparsely in the villages. There houses are not invariably rectangular in shape like the houses of other neighboring tribes of the district and not all having Chang type. Mostly there houses are of ground floor as only a few houses have been built as a Chang. Almost each household has one or two granaries at a very little distance from the main house for keeping paddy and other food grain.

2.9.3 Socio cultural life

i) Social Institutions of the Adi Somuwa
The word Adi somuwa is newly adopted term by Somuwa Miris as they were known by all to very recently as Somuwas Miris. However, Adi Somuwa is a compact social group but they do not strictly follow the rule of tribe endogamy which does not ensure the solidarity of the tribe, but they follow clan exogamy. No myth is available about their origin as the so called Adi Somuwas is probably being the branch of the Miris (Mishings) of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. However they marry with in their own group but deviation is found in their marriages between Adi Somuwa and the Mishing.

Unlike other tribal groups, the Adi Somuwa, clans cannot be ascertained as among them one can find some Mishing surnames, some padam surnames, some Gallong surnames, Some Minyong surnames. An Adi Somuwa can marry a woman from any clan except from his own clan. There is no language group among the clansmen for which marriage is prohibited. No specific rights and duties are vested on certain clan group and no specific opportunity is given to a particular clan’s man to have the village chief or community chief. The clan organization of the Adi Somuwa does not give effect to the social and political life of the people.

The elementary unit of the society is the family which consists of parents and their married and unmarried children. The Adi Somuwa’s basic family unit is mostly nuclear family as joint family is hardly found amongst them. In a family the father is the central figure and, therefore, authority is vested on him.

** Miris are Scheduled tribe of Assam
ii) Marriage

Marriage with consanguinous relation is not found but marriage with affinal relation is a common practice in the society. It was mentioned earlier that they follow the clan exogamy, so members of a clan usually marry from outside. However monogamy is their common form of marriage but polygamy is also found amongst them. The Adi Somuwa practice cross cousin marriage i.e. marriage between mother’s brother’s daughter or father’s sister’s daughter and it is prescribed and acquiesced as a preferential marriage even the father of the boy and mother of the girl are brother and sister of the same family group or very close affinal relation. In the society all the illicit and irregular unions are not given social cognizance. However, marriage by negotiation is performed in the society but elopement is very often practiced by them. For the marriage negotiation a go-between is engaged and he success the bride-price in consultation with the parents of either parties or the relatives. For negotiated marriage there is no fixed amount to pay as bride-price and not only that even for marriage by elopement and love marriages also there is no fixed amount for the bride-price but normally the bride-price for elopement and love are slightly higher than the marriage by negotiation. The bride-price is paid either by cash or by kind. Senior levirate and junior sororate are practiced by them. The system of widow marriage is also prevalent in the society. However the divorce is not uncommon but it is very rarely practiced in the society. Adultery is treated as a crime and punishment is given as per decision.
of the village elder besides negotiation, elopement, love and service, capture is occasionally practiced in the society. But this practice is not popular.

Child marriage is never heard in the society. Premarital and extra marital sex relations are treated as crime. However, divorce may raised by both husband and wife and proposal may be initiated by either side of the couple but it seem probable from the husband’s side. If divorce is happily happened by initial of the husband, than, the husband is to compensate the wives as per the decision of the village elders. The children of the divorced couple are taken by the husband except the milk sucking babies. Such children shall have to go to the father’s house after four or five years of age. In the case of marriage by negotiation the marriage ceremony is held first at the girl’s parent’s house and than at the boy’s parent’s house. To the marriage ceremony all near relatives are invited

2.9.4 Political Life of the Adi Somuwa

The system of self government of a particular society is called a local self government of that society the nucleus of this system is the village council which is age-old and informal in character. It is constituted by elderly and influential persons of the concerned village or villages whose judgment are acceptable by the fellow villagers. in such villages, every participants is regarded as a member of the consent of that day and although every participation has the liberty to speak in the village council but final decision prerogative to one of the village elder who is empowered to conduct the council of that day session and his decision would be binding and final. In such council all vital problems relating to the village or
villages are discussed and decisions are taken by the village elders. In Adi Somuwa society there is no organized village council like there Khampti neighbors.

In fact, the village council is a democratic institution where all the vital problems relating to a village or villages of particular tribe or society are discussed freely and publicly and the Adi Somuwa society to their discussion accordingly. It may be held for a day or more days if necessary until a consensus is raised. In each village there is a headman (Gao Bura) who is responsible for the welfare and other matter of the village. In Village council judicial and development matters are discussed including settlement of disputes of concerned village or villagers. The Gaobura is normally the head of the council of his village and moreover he acts as the representative of the administration at the village level. The Gao Bura is to assist the government officials in performing their duties in the village level.

Now a day the Panchayat Raj system of local self Government is functioning in the Adi Somuwa by three tier structure of self government bodies mainly Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samity and Zeela Parishad. The cases like theft, rape adultery and abduction are very rarely found in the society and if such crimes are happened than decision are taken by the village elders. Oath and ordeals are also practiced by them to proof the innocence and to detect he actual culprit, divorce is, however not unknown but it is happened very rarely and such cases are decided by the elders of the village in presence of the concerned persons.

2.9.5 Economic Life of the Adi Somuwa
i) Land Tenure

Since the Adi Somuwas have been migrated from Majera and Tingali villages of Sunpura areas around 1954 to Mabira village of Chowkham Circle of Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh. They do not have traditional land tenure system as the land they are now occupying for homestead and cultivation are spared by the khampti dominant areas of the district. Each village has a boundary for village land as well as cultivable land and the village people make their houses and do cultivation within their village boundary. There are wastelands for cattle grazing and for cremation. There are primary school in most of there villages and a middle school at Joipur village. There are Namghars and (Vaisnowite temples) almost in every village. The land as used for schools and Namghars and grazing for cattle are common village land.

The Adi Somuwa are mainly agriculturist and the economy is based on the agriculture and they are sedentary cultivators. Their main agricultural implements are Daos, hoes, axe, sickle and plough. Besides paddy they cultivate crops like also potato, brinjal, chili, pumpkin, bean, mustard seeds, pulse etc. Banana, betal and betal leaves are also grown. However they sometimes collect wild leaves and roots from the jungle for vegetables but food gathering is not there regular feature for food guest. Besides agriculture cattle rearing, fish rearing are not seen in their society for trade purpose. Their access agricultural produces are sold at weekly Sunday market at Namsai.
The Adi Somuwa society is primarily agriculturist and besides agriculture other occupation like weaving, cane and bamboo works, cattle breeding, poultry, and pig rearing etc. are not their supplementary occupation as they do very little in such occupation. In their cultivable field men, women and their grown up children work together. However, hunting and fishing, expeditions are part of tribal life, but hunting and fishing are not taken as pursuit of their livelihood.

ii) Food Habit of the Adi Somuwa

Rice is the staple food of the Adi somuwas. Along with the rice they cultivate seasonal vegetables. They also collect wild leaves and tubers occasionally for food. They cultivate Rabi crops like mustered seeds, potato, matimah and gourd at their cultivable field as well as at their kitchen Garden. They rear cows and buffaloes for ploughing and milking purposes and pigs and goats, fowls, ducks for meat as they do not scarifies any domestic bird as and animals to appeases spirit and deities. Rice beer is a common drink for all and its preparation is purely a job of the females.

(vii) Religious Life of the Adi Somuwa

As told by the Adi Somuwas, they are now follower of Nrigunaa dharma, but in earlier days they are animist. The word Nriguna seems to be a new word for common people but they have been following this religion for around 1956, when an old Gaobura of Joipur village was suffering from an unknown disease and to recover him from that disease they had to perform a number of worship by sacrificing a good number of domestic birds and animals by their local priest but
the old man ultimately died without carrying to their rites by sacrificing domestic birds and animals. Meanwhile they heard about their present guru (Priest) and to get rid of from the cause of unknown illness they invited him to Joipur village. He (Guru) advised them to give up sacrifice and to follow him where no sacrifices are required in any occasion. However they cannot explain about the doctrine of their religion but it seems probable that it may be the Vaisnawite cult. There guru belongs to Ahom Community of Assam but he is residing in Nongkhon area of Lekang Circle of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh.

It was mentioned earlier that the Adi Somuwas have Namghar (Vaisnawite Temple) in their villages where they used to worship in the system of Vaisnawite cult.

2.9.6 Cultural Life of the Adi Somuwa

i) Art and Craft

Cane and bamboo baskets that are required for their daily life are found in their houses. Out of these baskets the Assamese word Pasi, Kharahi are found in every household for keeping paddy, rice and other cereals and winnowing fan and sieve are also found in every household. The cane and bamboo baskets are made by their own artisans. The rain shields made of Takupat, cane and bamboo are also used by them. The fishing net and fishing traps of various shapes and designs are found in their houses. Weaving is found is found in every household but goldsmithy and blacksmithy are not found in their society. So, the tools and
implements that are required for their everyday use are purchased from outside markets

**i) Music and Dance**

In fact, the art of music and dance is one of the most important aspect of human societies and it is an important aspect even of the Adi Somuwa society too as rhythmical sounds and songs are often heard amongst them while working in the field and in the jungle and rhythmical songs and dances are played in the marriages, festivals. The youths of the villages used to hit drums and cymbals and the damsels and aged women used to dance with the males. The musical instruments like drum and cymbals are used by them besides the flute

**ii) Dress and Ornament**

The dress of Adi Somuwa men and women are simple. The men commonly wear shirt, coat and dhuti like the plain people. Some men wear white cotton turban as head dress but men and women are invariably found in barefooted, however, they use to wear shoe and chappal. The dresses of the males are purchased from the market but the dresses of the females are woven by the women at their own loin looms. The women wear earrings made of silver and ear bobs of amber and chains of four Anna or eight Anna coins around the neck as necklace. The women cover their bodies up to chest by coloured cotton skirts (Mekhela) which is folded over the breast under the arms and reaches the calves. The married women wear either a white or a coloured scarf around the waist which covers her hip. The unmarried girls wear a skirt around the waist either of plain cotton cloth
or of coloured cotton cloth and along with a blouse and chaddar are worn to cover the upper part of the body. Now a days it is seen that that the women and the girls used to wear Adi- Gale (Adi Female Skirt)

iii) Death and Disposal

Death may occur due to old age or other unnatural causes. Death at the old age is taken as natural death while the premature or accidental that like snakebite, killed by tiger, elephant, buffalo or other domestic or wild animal and falling from trees or drowning in water are considered as unnatural death. The deaths of a pregnant woman, stillborn and prenatal death are believed to be the cause of some evil spirits and such death are also considered as unnatural death. Suicide is also considered as unnatural death but it is very rare in the society.

For disposal of death the only system prevalent among the Adi Somuwa is burial as the question of natural or unnatural death does not arise for separate system of disposal. The burial ground lies outside their village boundary. To appease the soul of the death their priest (Guru) is invited and he performs all mortuary rites in the system of Nirguna dharma where no sacrifices are offered. The presence of the guru is must for the performance of all mortuary rites.

When a person grows old than his interest towards the life and destiny as well as mundane employment wanes and, therefore, he usually likes to relinquish himself from his day to day works by giving the charge to one of his grown up sons. Mortuary rites are performed according to the Nirguna cult and other rites
are also performed by their Guru (priest) during one's lifetime and as when necessity arises.

2.10 Concluding Remarks:

The study of both habitat and socio cultural life of the tribes under study helped to understand the base for subsequent analysis. The chapter revolves leads to the following conclusion

i) The district lies in the North Eastern part of the state and consists of both high mountains and plain region. The tribes selected for the present study are inhabited in the plain region of the Lohit district. The Mishmi, Khampti and the Singphos are Buddhist of Theravada section. The Mishmi, Adi and the Deoris worship super natural objects. The Khamptis have their own script for writing and they have a chieftainship type of society. The Shyams have the cultural affiliation with the Khamptis. The Adi are migrant tribes from other districts of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam

ii) As per the 1991 census, Lohit district consists of 12.69 % of the total population of the state and occupies 13.62 percent of the total area of Arunachal Pradesh. It can be said that population of Lohit district is proportionate to its area. The selected tribes under study inhabits in the plain region of the district. The higher concentration of population is noticed in the Namsai, Chowkham, Chowkham circles. The Scheduled tribe population is the second lowest with 40933 persons among the eleven districts of the state sharing only 37.3 percent.
iii) The occurrence of mineral like graphite, limestone, marble stone are available mostly in areas around Tezu namely, Lalpani, Tidding, Tezu and Dura river. There are no mineral deposits around Namsai sub division.

iv) Lohit District is probably the best developed district in agriculture amongst all the district of the state. About 70-80% of the working population is involved in agriculture. The mode of cultivation is however, not uniform all over the district due to the vast variations in terrains and rainfall between the various parts of the district. Permanent cultivation is mostly confined to Namsai Sub division, Sunpura circle around Tezu where plain land is available on the foot hills belt. Agriculture practices are also well developed in these areas and multiple cropping is practiced on a good scale. The variation of agro climatic condition provides wide scope of horticulture plantation in the district for cultivation of both horticulture plantations.