CHAPTER-II

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE
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The Land

Location and Area:

The erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) now Arunachal Pradesh, is situated at the easternmost tip of our country (Map.1). The state is popularly known as the “Land of Lovely dawn” or “Land of Dawnlit Mountains”. The state can be better called the “Hidden State”. The picturesque Arunachal Pradesh is located between 91°15' E to 97°30' E longitude and 25° 32' to 29°30' N latitude (Jha 1985).

The state covers an area of 83,743 sq.km. An imaginary line called the Mac Mohan line determined the Northern and North Eastern political boundary of India and of Arunachal Pradesh with Tibet, and by the Patkai hills on the east. Arunachal Pradesh has international border of 160kms with Bhutan in the west. The state is bounded by Tibet in the northeast, Myanmar in East, Assam and Nagaland in the south (Anonymous 2003 & Doje 2002).

The study area, erstwhile Kameng district, now comprises of East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts (Map.2). The three districts are located in between 26°54' and 28°01' N latitudes and 90°45' E and 93°24' E longitudes. It has an area of 13,641 sq.km.

The East Kameng district (formerly known as Sepla subdivision), created on 1st June 1980 by bifurcating Kameng district is situated in the southwestern part of Arunachal Pradesh. It lies between 26°56' and 27°59' N latitude and 92°36' E to 93°24' E longitudes. It is bounded by West Kameng district in the west, Tibet on the north, Kurung Kurme district of Arunachal Pradesh in east and Sonitpur district of Assam in the south. It has an area of 4,134 sq.km. (Anonymous 2005).
Map 1: LOCATION MAP
(Not in scale)
The **West Kameng district** (formerly known as Bomdila subdivision) lies between 26°54’ and 28°01’ N latitudes and 91°30’ and 92°40’ E longitudes. It is bounded by Tibet in the North, Bhutan in the west, Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh in the northwest, East Kameng district in the east and Sonitpur district of Assam in the south. It has an area of 7,422 sq.km. (Anonymous 2005).

The **Tawang district**, broken off from the West Kameng district in 1984, lies between 27°22’ and 27°45’ N latitudes and 90°15’ to 90°45’E longitudes. It is bounded by Tibet in the north, Bhutan in the south and west and West Kameng district in the east. It has an area of 2,085 sq.km. (Anonymous 2005).

**Physiography:**

The Himalayan ranges in Arunachal Pradesh can be divided into (a) The **Siwalik and the foothills** that run along the southern border of Arunachal Pradesh. The area has a more or less flat topography and gradually merges with the plains of Assam in the northern part of Brahmaputra valley. In West Kameng district Bhalukpong, Doimara and Kamengbari and in East Kameng district Seijusa, Daflagarh, etc. areas fall under these ranges. (b) The **lesser Himalayas and the greater Himalayas** – The lesser Himalayas rising from the Assam plains, and the Siwalik attain a Sudden rise and merge into lesser Himalayan ranges in the north. This division has comparatively lower altitudes (up to 800m) along river valleys. Sessa, Seppa, etc fall under these ranges. **The greater Himalayas** – It is the dominant division of the state and Peaks reaching as high as 6000m and more are located in this division. Kangte (7090m), Gaurichan (7300m.)
and Geshila are important peaks of Tawang district in these ranges (Hajra et al 1996). Some valleys
Dirang valley (Fig. 1),
Pappu valley (Fig. 2) and
Tenga valley are located
in the study area.

**Drainage:**

There are five major rivers in Arunachal Pradesh, viz., Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap. They are so important that the former five districts of Arunachal Pradesh were named after them (Jha 1985).

The main rivers of Tawang district are Tawang-chu and Nyamjang-chu. The other small rivers of the district are Khouchu, Seruchu and Shyrochu rivers. The water of the Tawang valley flows into Bhutan (Doje 2002). In West Kameng district the main tributaries of Kameng River are Dirang-chu, Tenga and Kalaktang rivers. In East Kameng district important tributaries of Kameng River are Para, Pachi, Pachok, Pakoti, Keya, Bichom, Pacha, Pakke, Papu, Passa, Narmorah and Dikalmukh (Anonymous 2005).

**Kameng River** (Fig.3) receives the water of easterly flowing Tenga and Bichom rivers. It also receives the water of the Papu and the Pasar rivers flowing in the west. It is flowing in the northeastern corner of West Kameng district. Thus all the rivers within East Kameng and West Kameng district are drained to the Kameng River, which is finally drained to the powerful westerly flowing Brahmaputra. Excepting the small tributaries, the rivers in erstwhile Kameng flow round the year, since they originate from the snow-clad peaks.
On account of typical topography, the rivers in erstwhile Kameng are undulated. The depth of water is not uniform and rivers are full of stones (Jha 1985).

Soil:

On account of being a hilly terrain, the soils in major part of Arunachal Pradesh are rocky soil; a high degree of acidity is reported in the soil, which may be attributed to heavy rainfall (Jha 1985).

In Tawang district the soil is rather poor in humus and moreover due to heavy rainfall and resultant leaching, the soil is acidic in nature. However, in general soils are loamy to sandy loam; colour soils are black and yellow. The soils on the hills of West Kameng districts are moderately deep, moist, and covered with the fertile loamy layer. The shallow soils are not uncommon with underlying boulders and rocks at various places of the district. The subsoil at lower elevation consists mostly of boulders and pebbles supported by a layer of sandy loam of varying depth and overlain by a layer of humus. Soils are generally yellow, black, brown and red is colour. The soil in the East Kameng district is not very fertile. Only the valley area along the rivers has fertile soil. Sandy loam, silt loam and sandy soils are found here. Soils are black, brown and yellow in colour.
The soils in erstwhile Kameng contain humus with high degree of nitrogen on account of extensive vegetation coverage. In general, soils have rich layer of organic matter due to the rotting of the jungle leaves. Due to land erosion and deposition by the rivers, the soils are sandy to sandy-loam, mixed with heterogeneous matrix. The soils in the foothills of East Kameng and West Kameng are alluvial in character, being either loamy or sandy or both mixed.

Climate:

The climate is changing from area to area and even from place to place at short distance frequently and considerably in Arunachal Pradesh. Because, the topography changes are rapid and is rugged.

The climatic condition of the erstwhile Kameng district varies largely with topography and altitude. In Tawang area annual rainfall varies from 1200mm to 1600mm, maximum temperature varies from 15° C to 22° C and minimum from -4° C to -8°C and relative humidity varies from 70% to 94%. In Bomdila area of West Kameng district annual rainfall varies from 1000mm to 1400mm, maximum temperature varies from 16° C to 25° C, and minimum from -1° C to -5°C and relative humidity varies from 80% to 98%. In East Kameng district maximum temperature varies from 24° C to 30° C, and minimum from 12° C to 16°C and relative humidity varies from 18% to 84%. The district experiences heavy rainfall averaging 287 mm falling mostly between June to October. Snowfall from December to January is common in Sela (Fig. 4), Tawang and some pockets of Bomdila (Anonymous 2004, 2005).

Months of December and January are the coldest in the erstwhile Kameng and temperature falls to -10° C. Much lower temperature is experienced in Bomdila, Sela, Chayangtajo and Tawang areas. The temperature begins to rise
rapidly from the middle of March significantly and continues to rise till July to August. During July and August temperature rises up to 30°C in valleys and foothills area. High temperature experienced in Bhalukpong, Jamiri, Tenga valley, Salari, Dirang valley, Seijosa, Seppa and Mokto.

The hill slopes situated in the sun shadow are cooler as compared to those slopes exposed to the sun. After the sunset, the ground at higher elevation particularly begins to cool rapidly owing to outgoing radiation through the rarefied atmosphere. The cold wind drains down the mountain-slopes into the valleys below where it may remain constant and cool down further due to outgoing radiation during night. All these cause a considerable variation in diurnal temperature in the Tenga, Dirang, Pakke, Pappu and Passa valleys.

The intensity of wind blowing and its direction considerably affect the climatic condition. The wind circulation is considerably influenced by the nature of the terrain, which gives rise to various types of local winds. Katabatic blow in the valleys and down the mountains slopes is strong. Anabatic winds blowing up the mountains slopes are generally weak and appear in the afternoon (Jha 1985).

**Passes:**

There are some important passes in Arunachal Pradesh. Some of them are nationally and internationally recognized. Some of which are Chaukam pass in Changlang and Pangsau pass in Tirap (Doje 2002). **Sela Pass** 4,215 m in Tawang district is the second highest pass in the world (Hazarika 2005).

**Peaks:**

The mountainous state of Arunachal Pradesh has some important peaks like Patkai peak in Tirap, Deomali peak in Changlang and Pari mountain peak in West Siang. In Tawang district Kangte (7090m), Gaurichan (7300m) and Geshila are important peaks (Hajra et al 1996).
**Waterfalls:**

There are many attractive waterfalls looking like silver strips from distance. Sessa waterfalls, Naychayphu waterfalls (Fig. 5) in West Kameng district and Nuranang, Bomja waterfalls in Tawang district are important waterfalls of erstwhile Kameng (Doje 2002).

![Fig. 5](image)

**Lakes:**

There are many natural lakes in Arunachal Pradesh. Some of them are Glow lake in Wakro, Ganga lake in Itanagar, P.T Tso lake, Sungitsar lake in P.T Tso and Sela lake (Fig.6) at Sela 4,200m above sea level are some scenic lake in Tawang district (Doje 2002).

![Fig. 6](image)

**Vegetation and flora:**

The undulated and irregular topography, lofty hill ridges, deep valleys, gorges, river and tributaries accompanied by wide variation in climate and soil
have resulted into the formation of very rich vegetation cover in Arunachal Pradesh. The quality of forest is considerably influenced by the climate and topography. Erstwhile Kameng district is the extension of the great mountain range of Eastern Himalayas. Heavy rainfall and higher snowline are noticed in erstwhile Kameng, which favoured bearing distinct vegetation.

The elevation plays a vital role in determining the type of forest. Keeping this in mind, the vegetation in erstwhile Kameng district may be divided into following types:

1. **Tropical vegetation**: Such vegetation exists up to an elevation of 900m in the foothill regions and outer valleys with heavy rainfall and high temperature. This vegetation can be further divided into two sub types based on the composition and structure.

   1a. **Tropical evergreen**: This vegetation typically extends from foothills up to 900m in the area receiving maximum rainfall. The top canopy in this forest mainly consists of tall trees like *Bischofia javanica*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Dillenia indica*, *Mesua ferrea*, *Castanopsis indica*, *Duabanga grandiflora*, etc. The next canopy is represented by small trees and shrubs like *Bauhinia purpurea*, *Buddleja asiatica*, *Clerodendrum japonicum*, *Clerodendrum colebrookianum*, *Solanum torvum*, *Caryota urens*, *Pandanas nepalensis*, *Cyathea gigantia*, etc. The trees are densely covered with species of *Piper*, *Mucuna*, *Rhaphidophora*, *Acacia*, *Vitis*, *Thunbergia grandiflora* etc. Common epiphytic fern species are *Nephrolepis*, *Asplenium*, *Drymoglossum* etc. While common orchid species are *Rhyncostylis*, *Coelogune*, *Eria*, *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*, etc. Other common climber includes *Hoya*, *Clematis*, *Pothos*, etc. The ground flora mainly consists of *Arisaema* spp., *Colocasia* spp., *Tacca* spp., *Polygonum* spp., *Begonia* spp., *Oxalis* spp., *Rhyncotium* spp., *Plantago* spp., etc.
1b. **Tropical semievergreen**: This vegetation occurs along the foothills and riverbanks up to an elevation of 600m. Tree species of this vegetation are *Ailanthus* spp., *Elaeocarpus* spp., *Canarium* spp. *etc.* The second tier species includes *Ficus* spp., *Litsea, Strybilanthus* (Fig. 7) *Clerodendrum* spp. *etc.* The ground floor covered with species such as *Impatiens* spp., *Hedyachium* spp., *Amorphophalus* spp., *etc.*

2. **Subtropical vegetation**: This vegetation occurs between 900-2000m, and can be broadly divided into two sub types as follows:

2a. **Subtropical broad-leaved forest**: The dominant tree species are *Ficus* spp., *Prunus* spp., *Quercus* spp., *Schima* spp., *Magnolia* spp.; *etc.* while common shrubs include species of *Rosa* spp., *Urena* spp., *Artemisia* spp. Common climbers are *Lygodium japonicum, Rubia cordifolia, Rubus moluccanus* *etc.* the herbaceous plants are *Leucas ciliata, Leucas capitata, Osbeckia stellata, plantago major, Houttuynia cordata, etc.*

2b. **Subtropical Pine forest**: This vegetation occurs 1000 to 1800m. This forest is represented by *Pinus roxburghii, Pinus wallichiana* and *Pinus merkusii* (Fig. 8) along with *Betula alnoides, Rhus javanica, etc.* Shrubby and herbaceous tiers are represented by species of *Eleagnus, Luculia, Rubus, Elsholtzia, Fragaria, Rumex etc.*
3. **Temperate vegetation**: This vegetation found in between 1800m to 3500m and can be divided into two sub types as follows:

   **3a. Temperate Broad-leaved forest**: This vegetation is found in between 1800 to 2800m. The top canopy is represented by tall tree like *Populus* spp., *Betula* spp., *Acer* spp., *Illicium* spp. *etc* and the middle storey is represented by species of *Rhododendron*, *Prunus*, *Pyrus*. The small tree species represented by *Berberis* spp, *Debregeasia* spp, *Rhododendron* spp, *etc*. The ground flora comprise of species of *Polygonum*, *Potentilla*, *Thalictrum*, *Fragaria*, *Houttuynia*, etc.

   **3b. Temperate Coniferous forests**: This vegetation occurs in between 2800m to 3500m. The dominant tree species of this vegetation are *Acer* spp., *Quercus* spp., *Pinus* spp., *Taxus* spp., *Cupressus* spp., *Tsuga* spp., *Abies* spp., *Juniperus* spp., etc.

4. **Alpine vegetation**: The vegetation found above 3500m and comprises as **Alpine vegetation** (Fig.9). The characteristic of this vegetation type is the absence of tree species. The plants are herbaceous or dwarf shrubs with many adaptations to tide over the extreme cold conditions prevailing over there. Since these areas remain under snow for the major part of the year, the plants need special adaptations for survival in such areas. Another feature is the gregarious growth and profuse flowering of brightly coloured flowers. This vegetation is represented by the species of *Meconopsis*, *Primula*, *Saxifraga*, *Saussurea*, *Rheum*, *Rhododendron* *etc*.

![Fig. 9](image-url)
Besides, above vegetation the tributaries of erstwhile Kameng district are covered by varieties of Algae and rock surfaces are covered with various form of Lichen (Rout et al 2004) and mosses.

**Secondary forest:**

Due to biotic and abiotic factors like jhuming, urbanization, land slides, fires, etc. primary forest are destroyed in many areas and develop into secondary forests. Secondary forest of erstwhile Kameng district may be divided into:

(a) **Degraded forests** dominated by the species of *Rubus, Eupatorium, Mikania, Bauhinia*, etc.

(b) **Bamboo forests** mostly occur in the areas, which are abandoned after jhum. The common species are *Dendrocalamus strictus, Bambusa pallida, Schizostachyum latifolium* etc. Bamboo- Banana association (Fig.10) banana species are *Musa balbisiana, Musa ornata, Musa velutina*, etc.

(c) **Grassland** generally formed due to the practice of jhum cultivation and the common species are *Paspalum* spp., *Chrysopogon* spp., *Thysanolaena* spp, *etc.*

**Wildlife:**

Arunachal Pradesh is home to a very rich mammalian wildlife population as the wide variety of altitudinal and climatic conditions have given rise to different forest types, which create corresponding natural shelter, food, *etc* to varieties of wildlife. Arunachal Pradesh is the only state in India where the four cats, *i.e.* tiger, leopard, clouded leopard and snow leopard are found.
In Tawang wild animals like leopard, musk deer, barking deer and red Panda are found in the dense forests of the district. In West Kameng district tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, jungle cat, wild dog, jackal, Indian fox, common mongoose, civet, elephant, wild mithun, wild buffalo, barking deer, sambhar, musk deer, goral, common languor, Assamese macaque, rhesus macaque, slow lorries, Himalayan black bear, Indian wild bear, hornbill, kingfisher, red jungle fowl, various pheasants, egret, wild owls, common myna, cobra, king cobra, python, monitor lizard, prawn, mirgal and common carp are found. In East Kameng elephant, tiger, gaur, sambhar, barking deer, leopard, four hornbill species, pheasant, serow, goral, etc are found (Paul 2004).

Wildlife/Orchid sanctuary:

Wildlife sanctuary and orchid sanctuary are basically created to preserve and protect the animals and plants in their natural habitats. There are two wild life sanctuaries in East Kameng district viz., Pakhui wildlife sanctuary covering an area of 862 sq.km. and Eagle nest wild life sanctuary covering an area of 217 sq.km. (500m - 3500m) In West Kameng district Sessa Orchid Sanctuary covering an area of 100 sq.km. and have varieties of orchids, red panda, pheasants, serow, goral, etc. (Paul 2004).

The People

Ethnicity:

There are 25 major tribes and 110 sub-tribes in Arunachal Pradesh belonging to Indo-Mongoloid racial stock. The major tribes are Adis, Akas, Apatanis, Bangni (Nishi), Bangros, Hill Miris, Khambas, Khamtis, Khowas, Kongbos, Lisu, Meyor (Zakhring), Mijis, Mishmis, Momba, Monpas, Noctes, Sherdikpens, Singphos, Sulungs, Tagins, Tagas, Tutsa, Wanchos and Yobin (Jha 1985).
East Kameng district is mainly inhabited by Nishi (Fig. 11), Akas, Puroiks (Salung) and Miji. The Bangnis are also called Nishi, Nissi, Nishang, Nysi or Dafla. The Bangni tribe comprises of Daflas, Tagin Bangnis, Yano Bangnis, Sulung Bangnis and Khroden Bangnis. West Kameng district is inhabited by Monpas. They belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock. In addition to the Monpas, the Sherdukpen, the Khowas (Bugun), the Akas (Hrusso) and the Mijis are also inhabiting in West Kameng district. The inhabitants of Tawang district are mainly Monpas except in Shyo village which is dominated by the people of Tibetan origin. The word Aka denotes painted and it may have been used for them by the people of Assam largely because of their custom of tattooing their faces profusely (Sinha 1961).

Population:

According to 2001 census the population of Arunachal Pradesh is 1,091,117. The sex ratio is 910 females to 1000 males. The density of population is 13 persons per sq.km. According to 2001 census the population of West Kameng district were 74,595. The total male and female populations were 42638 and 31957 respectively. The sex ratio is 749 females to 1000 males. The density of population 10 persons per sq.km. The total population of East Kameng district was 57065. The total male and female populations were 28743 and 28322 respectively. In Tawang district total population was 34705. The total male and female populations were 17676 and 17029 respectively. The sex ratio is 963 females to 1000 males (Doje 2002).
Dialects:

There are 82 dialects belonging to Tibeto-Burman language group of family in Arunachal Pradesh.

The dialects spoken in Tawang district are Monpa. On the basis of variations of dialects used, they can be divided into six linguistic groups viz., (i.) Tawang Monpa (inhabiting in Tawang district), (ii.) Dirang Monpa, (iii.) Lish Monpa, (iv.) Kalaktang Monpa, v. Panchen Monpa, and (vi.) But Monpa. In West Kameng district Monpa, Miji, Sherdukpen, Aka and Khawas dialect are spoken. There are four independent local dialects spoken by the tribes inhabiting in East Kameng district, which are Bangni, Aka, Puroik and Miji (Doje 2002).

Clans:

Nishis are divided into three clans viz., Dopum, Dodum and Dal. Mijis belongs to the Mongoloid stock. They are divided into two sub classes namely Nyubhu and Nyullu. These tribes do not intermarry. Akas are sub-divided into eleven clans and sub-clans. Kutsum and Kovatsun are two most important sub-tribes of the Akas (Doje 2002).

Family system among the tribes of erstwhile Kameng district:

Nishi and Aka are patriarchal, and polygamy is practiced. Aka marriage can be done by the common way of negotiations or by elopements. Mithun are essential part of the bride price for marriage. Khawa is a patriarchal. Monogamy is the social norm but Polygamy is much common. Miji is patriarchal. Marriage among Mijis takes place by negotiation. Monpa and Sherdukpen are patriarchal, monogamy is common but polygamy is also practiced (Doje 2002). Levirate is popular in Aka society. A man usually inherits the widow of his elder brother. He, however, cannot inherit the wife of his younger brother (Sinha 1961).
Religion:

On the basis of religion, the whole tribes of Arunachal Pradesh can be divided into main three groups, namely-

1. **Hereditary Shamanism**: A complex system of beliefs in the spiritual qualities of nature and the conception of a supreme being. The Donyi-polo that is the Sun and Moon are often regarded as one supreme god symbolizing the eternal truth. Galos, Adis, Nishis, Tagin, Hill-Miris, Apatanis and Mishmis follow Hereditary Shamanism.

2. **Buddhism**: In this groups the Monpas, the Sherdukpen follow Mahayan Bhuddism. The Singphos, the Khamptis, the Membas and the Khambas are following Hinayana Bhuddism.

3. **Vaishnavism**: The tribes include under this group are the Noctes. They practice elementary form of Vaishnavism. Accordingly the Vashanavite the Noctes do not take beef, and their hair is cut round the head in what is called as Satriya fashion.

   Nishi, Puroik, Aka and Mijis of East Kameng and West Kameng district are follower of Dony Poloism. They believed that the whole world is controlled by Donyi-Polo who according to them is omnipotent and the supreme controller of living and non-living things of the universe. Monpas and Sherdukpens of Tawang and West Kameng district is follower of Mahayan Buddhism (Hajra *et al* 1996; Doje 2002).

**Gompa:**

Buddhist prayer hall/ temple is called Gompa. Gompa are found mainly in Buddhist dominated area in Arunachal Pradesh. Mechukha Gompa in West Siang, Budha Gompa in Taksing in, Upper Subansiri and Namsai Gompa in Lohit, Bomdila Gompa in West Kameng and Taktsang Gompa, Dablo Gompa, Gangong Ani Gompa and Tawang Gompa are important Gompas in Tawang district (Doje 2002).
Priesthood:

The priest of the Akas is called Mugou and gets his post because of some inborn supernatural qualities in him. There are two types of priests in Nishi, namely (a) the Nijik Nube who treats only ordinary sufferings and observe omens in egg or chicken, and (b) Nube who are greatly skilled in this profession and are known over wide areas. The priests of Monpas is known as Chobji who performs ritual ceremony as well as concern with the causes and cures of diseases The Sherdukpens have a class of priests known as Jijis who are capable of counteracting evil spirits (Sharma 1961). The priests of Bugun are called Phabi (Doje 2002).

Dresses:

All the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have their unmatched dress. Nishis men wear small garment hanging below the shoulder and covering the upper half of the body. They wear a kind of long coat that hangs from shoulder to knees. Use hand dress, which is a ring cap of bamboo, carry dao. Tie hair in a knot at the center of the head and forehead. Wear a ring made of cane below the knee and coral chains and ear rings made of bamboo or cane. Nishis women (Fig. 12) wear a long garment over the body, which hangs from the shoulders up to the ankles and a number of ornaments of silver and beads. They put on a number of coloured bead necklace around the neck and wear finger rings made of cane, and ear rings and chains of corals. Mijis are fond of
wearing a cross belt of bearskin faced with coloured shells arranged crosses. **Monpa** women wear coarse woolen stuff (Fig.13), red coloured, reaching below the hips, which are called Chupa and short loose drawers of the same material. Men and women wear fringe hat made up of yak hair. **Aka** men wear a long piece of cotton cloth wrapped round the body, pinned over their shoulder. A sash is then wound round the waist. Jacket with or without sleeves is worn over it. Aka women (Fig.14) wear same type of dress, but the cloth worn is long, reaching the ankle and a number of silver ornaments. Men wear a cap made of bamboo called musgera, on special occasion. Men and women wear bead necklaces of blue and other coloured beads (Doje 2002).

**Dances:**

Dances form a vital element in the zest and joy of living of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. During dance, the people put on their best traditional costumes, decorate their spears and daos, paint new designs and adorn themselves with multicoloured beads and ornaments. The dances
Dances of erstwhile Kameng tribe’s are Buiyasodaon dance, which is associated with the worship of a spirit called Yab. It is performed on the occasion of marriage. Ropsodon, Jorum and Talo, Rikam Pada, Roppi and Buiya are the other important dances of Nishis. Dumai and Jai are the most popular dance of Mijis. Niuksidow, Fachonisum and Dogohdou are dances of Akas. Jam dance performed to drive away the evil spirits, through Ajilamu dance the Tibetan version of the Ramayana is presented, and Yak and Deer dance are some of the principal dances of Sherdukpons. Clown, Gasiasiu and Chasoai are Khawas dance. Lion and Peacock dance showing friendship between a saint and the lion and peacock, Soni-Yala and Yak dance showing discovering of the Yak with the help of bird, are the important dances of Monpas.

All the tribes of erstwhile Kameng do not play musical instruments during the dance. The Nishis play gang during dancing. The Akas play drums called Sedi and metel plates called thalmu. The Monpas, the Sherdukpons and the Mijis play drums and cymbals during dance (Doje 2002; Paul 2004).

Festivals:

The colourful people of Arunachal Pradesh have rich cultural heritage. There are many festivals celebrated by the people in Arunachal Pradesh like Mopin, Dree, Solung, Nyokam, Losar, Boori-Boot, Sangken etc.

Festivals of Monpas are (a) Losar- It is celebrated to commemorate the New Year as per Buddhist calendar. (b) Torgya- It is celebrated in the month of January every year in the premises of the Tawang Monastery. (c) Dongyur-It is celebrated in the premises of the Tawang Monastery after every three years. (d) Jumonu- This festival is connected with agriculture, which is observed after the completion of sowing. Mijis festivals are (a) Khan –It is celebrated during the month of February and March after harvest. (b) Pongkolam- It is celebrated in the month of March every year. (c) Fungling- It
is celebrated either in the month of October or November mainly to appease the evil spirit of the locality as well as the Sun God (Ju) and the Moon God (Lu) for the welfare of all the villagers. Festivels of Sherdukpens are (a) Cheker- It is celebrated in the month of May for a happy and prosperous life of the community and a good harvest. (b) Losar-It is a New Year festival of Sherdukpens. Festivals of Nishis are (a) Nyokum- This festival is connected with the prosperity and good harvest. (b) Yulu- It is one of the important religious ceremony for the welfare of the society. Gum-Kum-Gompa-Puroiks is the main festival of Sullong and celebrated in the 17th April every year. The most important community festival of Akas is known as Nechido, performed by village priest once in a year. Kshyatsowai is the most important ceremony amongst the Buguns (Doje 2002; Anonymous 2005).

**The food habits:**

The staple food of Aka, Mijis, Nishi and Puroiks inhabiting in East Kameng and West Kameng district are maize and rice. The staple foods of Sherdukpens are rice, wheat, maize and millets. The diet of Sherdukpens is simple; it consists chiefly of cereals, fish, and wild vegetables and bears brewed from maize and millets. Buddhist influence has, however, created certain food taboos. They do not, for instance, take beef, pork, fowl or goat-meat. They take fish and meat of only non-domestic animals, such as deer and certain birds (Sharma 1961). The staple food of Monpas consists of rice or a paste of maize and millet powder and a curry of boiled vegetables and cereals. The milk and milk products like butter, ghee and cheese of Yak are integral part of their diet. Red tea with butter is a favourite non-alcoholic beverage of Monpas. They are fond of fermented soybean, which they called Surpea. Sometimes they take dough of maize with soup of dry fish. In common, the diet of the Akas and other tribes of erstwhile Kameng consists of cereals, simply boiled with little dose of salt and comparatively heavy dose of chilly
and home brewed beer, and also meat or fish if available. Soyabean, pumpkin, 
taro, yams, tapioca, bamboo shoots, tender fern, leafy vegetables and wild 
vegetables usually supplement the above cereals (Kar 2004). A number of 
taboo restrict the food habits of Aka women. They may take pork and beef 
but it is taboo for them to take fowls, brain and legs of a mithun (Sinha 1961).