CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC LIFE

Economic life of the people in a community is the reflection of institutional arrangements at individual and group level to acquire their material means of existence. The group includes such social units as a family and other kinship relations. It may be the village community or the tribe itself in the process of communal mode of resource appropriation. At an individual, he performs such activities, which are institutionalised in the culture due to historical reasons. When a man makes a basket for his own use it does not reflect any institutional aspect. But behind it there are many aspects like the use of raw material, the purpose of use of the basket itself, gender consideration in the use of it and many others, which are institutionalised in the culture of the people, which they practise from generations to generations.

The economic institutions in a traditional tribal community are not as concrete as in industrial communities. These institutions define the economic life in terms of labour absorption, exchange, distribution and sharing of resources, mode of resource use for agriculture, hunting, fishing, etc., and inheritance practices in the
community. Sex based division of labour is an institutionalised reality; so also the rituals and rites associated with economic practices. The trade relations are also institutionalised in kinship relations; sometimes beyond it but to a limited scale.

In this line of thinking the present chapter discusses economic life of the Padam people to focus on the nature and extent of indigenous economic institutions in the community. The chapter more specifically discusses the economic activities institutionalised in Padam culture with a view to provide an analytical framework for an understanding of economic institutions.

General view on indigenous economic institutions constitutes the labour force in the process of production. In difficult situation, (especially occurrence of accident, bedridden or death of a family member, etc.), the family also gets the help of close relatives in terms of traditional reciprocity called engul, that is, rendering free help to the family who is in trouble. A family can also hire labour of a group or an individual on payment called rikrap or riklap. Normally payments are made in kind in the form of beads, pig, etc.\(^1\) During peak working season, members from different families form a working group and exchange their labour on rotation basis. This system of exchange of labour is called enlik.\(^2\) Now many Padam families who have sufficient horticultural and agricultural fields (wet rice

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\(^1\) An extract of interview with Smt. Mame Borang at Damro on 7. 5. 2002 and it is also informed that Poming Party usually prefer beads for their labour.

\(^2\) The researcher has been a member of such Enlik for many times.
cultivation) engage non-Arunachalees as agricultural labourers either on payment of wages or on contact basis.

Though the family is the unit of production, certain activities, both in economic and outside needed community cooperation. The basis of cooperation depends on the kinship on the basis of clan and village. Cooperation on kinship basis within the village is required while felling trees for wooden poles and wooden planks for house, community fencing, group hunting, fishing, ritual ceremonies, etc. The cooperation is reciprocal in nature. On some occasions a sense of obligation of belongingness to a particular clan or lineage also develops the spirit of cooperation in the community. The clan or kinship cooperation is sought for while the individual family or member is unable to pay nyamdum (bride price for a betrothed girl) and penalty for serious offence by himself/themselves.

In their traditional society, the production was for self-consumption rather than sale. The family produces all its food requirements namely, am (an upland variety of paddy), anyat (Coiz lachryma), sapa (maize), mirung (finger millet), ayak (foxtail millet), engin (yam), enge (colocasia antiquorum), singgo engin (topioca) and various type of fruits and vegetables. The surplus food grains were bartered for methun, pig, beads, bangles, and other valuables. Am bari (container of paddy containing about 10 quintals) was bartered for a methun.³ In those days their notion of wealth was closely related to display by sacrifice of animals and arranging feast. Thus, the

³ An extract of interview with Shri Yorang Borang at Damro on 9. 5. 2002.
Padams during *Sobo Panam*⁴ (killing of methun for a community feast) used to entertain the people lavishly according to their capacity. The status and prestige of an individual in the traditional society was positively related to the number of *sobo panam* he performed.

Division of labour in the Padam community is minimal. What exists is primarily based on sex and age and to some extent upon knowledge and leadership ability. Men folk take part exclusively in selection of agriculture plots, felling of trees, erection of fencing, hunting, fishing, basketry, building of house, etc. The womenfolk collect vegetables, fire wood, husk paddy, prepare food, monitor the grains of the granary, etc. The aged people and children used to look after babies, fetch water, look after pigs, fowls and household affairs while the able bodied are out for work during the day. The weeding, harvesting and carrying grains home are jointly undertaken by both the sexes. Thus the division of labour of the Padams like that of Tagin (Riddi: 1997, p.133) and the *Paharias* (Vidyarty & Ray: 1995, p.95) is based on gender and age issue rather than class. As there is no caste or class in the Padam society, nobody feels ashamed of doing any particular job. However, in taking decisions in relation to economic activities man plays greater role in the community.

The Padams had loose notion of private property, primarily usufructuary in nature. *Geta morang* (hunting, trapping, fishing grounds and some agricultural land are jointly owned by clan or lineage. Agricultural plots, *geta morang* and other immovable

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⁴ The practice of *Sobo Panam* was prevalent in pre-independence period. It was usually performed by the richest family in the village.
properties could be used by other people with prior permission from the owner. In terms of access to resources, they had little inter or intra-clan variations. However, after the introduction of money economy, people tended towards developing private property deviating from the old and traditional economic pattern of collective ownership system (Mibang: 1994, p.136).

In the absence of written records and archaeological evidence, not much is known about the early stage of the economic life of the tribe. However, oral Tradition current among them gives some clues about their economic life from the pre-historic period. In their traditional ballads (abang), they mention Siking Kingkang Kari and Toro, the two sons of Sedi-Melo as good hunters (Nyori: 1993, p.180). One of their myths says that Karpung and Karduk, both sister and brother of Engo-Takar land were the first man and woman who started the jhum cultivation of yam called nginti and nginko. The nginti and nginko cultivated by Karpung and Karduk were eaten up by a boar called Gumgong. Both sister and brother invited the two great hunters Nuyi and Gamro, who lived in the under world. Gumgong was first shot by Nuyi in the Engo Rikseng Patek (Jhum field in the Engo-Takar land). The injured Gumgong ran towards the under world, was made hot pursuit by Shanyi (dog’s name of Engo-Takar) followed by the hunters. Gumgong was finally killed by Gamro. The dog, Shanyi who was injured by Gumgong missed the scent. While trying to find out the way leading to the Engo–Takar land, he passed through the abode

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5. An extract of interview with Shri Loknik Saring at Damro on 8. 5. 2002.
of Kine Nane, the Goddess of grain. Kine-Nane felt pity on the dog and put seeds of grain in the pocket of the ears as a token of love. The seeds brought by the dog were sown in the field of Engo-Takar land. Thus, the cultivation of paddy, maize, millets, job's tears, etc., was started much later in the land of Engo-Takar. From this myth it is be presumed that before they learned the use of rice, maize, millets, etc., they did the cultivation of jams (Nyori: 1993, p.181). The Solung Abang (traditional ballads or rhapsody) narrates the legendary struggle between Nibo (the man) and Robo (the spirit of jungle) who were brothers, for the possession of the wealth and suitable land of the world (Osik: 1992, p.6). In the long drawn struggle they undertook various competitions like shooting, trapping and fishing but silent about Jhum cultivation and related competitions.

Hunting, fishing and food gathering

Hunting, fishing and food gathering were the earliest occupations of the Padams, before taking up agriculture as a permanent means of livelihood. Even after the settlement of the tribe as an agricultural community, hunting and fishing continued to supplement food. The expert hunter was called Miog or Migam and is respected in the society. Dried meat was bartered for paddy, beads, swords and other traditional valuable items. But with the change of the society and with the progress of the domestication of animals, hunting, and fishing gradually changed from a means of livelihood into a form of entertainment (Roy: 1960, p.136) and pastime. Though
hunting and fishing have lost much of their economic importance, they have social and religious significance. Because a good hunter enjoys special status and his contribution to the group hunting especially *Amph kiruk* in the festival of *Pime* and collection of trophies both from group or individual hunting in the *Musup* is recognised by the society. Even at the time of their death, imitations of the trophies called *monpur* are used to decorate the grave. It is believed that these add to their status in the next world.⁶

The Padams hunt individually and in-groups. In their pursuit of game, they use poisoned arrows called *yokmo*. This poison is produced indigenously from the roots of *emo* (aconite). The community hunting, called *kiruk*, is discussed, planned and organised in the *Musup*. The entire male members of the village participate in the *Amph kiruk* (annual hunting) during *Pime* festival, which is performed after the harvest. On the day before the start of *Amph kiruk*, the guardian spirit of the war and chase including the spirits of *Nuyi* and *Gamro*, the legendary hunters are worshipped in the *Musup* for successful hunting. Whenever a decision on a hunting expedition is taken in the *Kebang*, an announcement "*Gamyng pimpu molang ke...ei* "(prepare good luck lunch pack) is made by the *Musup ko* on the same night. All young and able-bodied men assemble at the *dumbang* (gathering place believed to be the favourite place of the spirit of good hunt), in the next morning, with their bows and arrows and hounds that help them trace the animals easily. One batch, mostly consisting of the

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⁶ An extract of interview with Shri Minno Perme at Damro on 7. 5. 2002.
youngsters with dogs, goes in one direction and forms a semicircle, which may extend to as much as one kilometre. The actual hunters take up their positions facing the beaters, each at a reasonable distance depending upon their number. They hide themselves behind trees or with the branches of the trees called *toding tonam* and wait, ready with their bows and arrows, to shoot at any game that may come within their range. The beaters, after releasing the dogs, beat the forest and dogs chase the animals towards the place where the hunters wait. The man, who first spots and hurts an animal, gets its head as trophy. The man who actually catches the injured animal gets the skin and tail in case of deer and bear, *makyup* (skin of penis) in case of *sibi*. All catches (other than the skin of deer, bear and *sibi makyup*) in the *Amph kiruk* are distributed to the old men (*mijing*) of the village. The old men in their turn prepare rice and *apong* for the hunters and bring it in the *Musup* in the evening of the fourth day of the kiruk called *Monnong yume*. During *Amphi kiruk*, the womenfolk of the village observe some taboo specially weaving, spinning and giving yeast for fermenting rice or millet to produced *apong*. But they are allowed to go to the fields and work as usual.

The community hunting, other than *Amphi kiruk*, has no fixed time. It can be organised when a tiger or a leopard or a jackal is reported to be roaming in the vicinity of the village or a methun being killed in the jungle. In plain areas, especially Mebo and Dambuk circle

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1. *Sibi makyup* was used for keeping *satmin/menmin*, which was use for igniting fire from the spark of flint stone.
*kink* is also organised to drive out the wild elephants from the cultivated lands. The meat of the animal killed in such hunting is distributed among the villagers who take part, but the men who kill the animal keep the trophies. But, if their catches are too small to be distributed among the hunters, it is equally distributed to the elders of the party.

The Padams of the Damro earlier used to organise group hunting called *bendi*. It was organised by a group of interested individuals for hunt of *siben* (Takin) from the distant mountains like Sarsing (the source of the Sipong and Sisar rivers). According to custom, if a takin (Bodar Taxi colour Hodgsonii) is killed, the hunter usually performs *sikkom* (offering of ritual by killing a pig) to pacify the spirit of the mountain.\(^8\)

The individual hunting is more common among the Padams than that of the group hunting. In an individual hunting the hunter chases the game by stalking, or takes his seat on a raised platform which is known as *toding* and waits for the game near a fruit tree. The *toding* is generally raised near the fruit/nut trees of *sirang*, *belam*, *silum*, *tatarang*, *dorge*, *tapil*, etc. Now individual hunters no longer use poisoned arrows for his hunting. The expert hunter who does not have a gun of his own may also borrow the gun of other people on good faith. If he kills an animal, the meat is equally divided between the hunter and the owner of the gun. The animal, sometimes, does not die on the spot. In such cases the hunter calls upon other members to

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8. An extract of interview with Shri Yorang Borang (who was once a member of *Bendi*) at Damro village on 7.5.2002.
stalk the wounded animal. If the animal is found dead the meat is
distributed among the members.

The Padams also use different types of traps for catching birds
and animals. Trapping is performed individually or in a group of five
to ten persons in the eda morang owned by clan or sub-clan. It is a
seasonal affair, generally starting from the month of November to the
last week of March. This dry season is free from leech and poisonous
snakes and is ideal for good hunt. Various traps employed by Padams
for catching animals and birds are yebat, tubat and oknyo, a noosing
type; etku, a sliding type; eda, etpe and egum, a weight loading
type and komang and sibat, a shooting type.

The fishing competition of Nibo and Robo in ‘Nibo-Robo story’
convinces us to believe that man practised fishing in hoary past. It
has its own importance in the economic life of the Padams because,
fish form an important item of their dish. That is why any surplus
catches is smoked and dried for use during the lean periods.

In Damro, clan and sub-clan own all the fishing water bodies
within land and forest they attached to. None can interfere or poach in
a water body belonging to the clan or sub-clan. An individual can
catch fish with a line and a hook and by casting net in any water body
but cannot deploy fish traps in those belonging to others. The

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9 Etku is a bow-shaped noose trap having small triangle made of bamboo strip in the one end.
10 Eda is a medium size bolder erected with the support of a small wood and a string. It usually kills
rats and small birds.
11 Egum is a medium size cage built with wood, bamboo and bolder in the jungle, on the regular tracts
of the animals.
12 Komang is an automatically operated bow and arrow, which is put clandestinely on the regular tracts
of the animals.
residents of other villages cannot do either of these without prior permission from the *Kebang* or owner of the streams.

Fishing is done either by an individual or in-groups or sometimes by community as a whole. In case of community fishing, the decision is taken in the *Kebang* (Roy: 1960, p.145). The most common method of community fishing among the Padam is the practice of raising band across a river and diverting its water, which is called *sibok petnam*. Another method is poisoning the water of the river known as *tamo runam*. For poisoning the water they use bark, roots, leaves, or whole plant of certain plants like *ombe* creeper (*Todelalia aculeate*), *tamir* creeper (*Derris elliptiaca*) *uyu mirsi* (*polyonum hydropiper*), (Borang: 1999, p.100) *rukje*, *golgikipom*, *onger aye*, *sibe-tulpi asik*, etc. All catches in a community fishing is collected in one place and divided among the villagers who take part in the expedition. However, old men and priests also get their shares in such fishing. In-group fishing, unlike hunting, persons of all ages and of both sexes take part.

For catching fishes, they use traps of different sizes and designs. The most commonly used traps are *porang* (fish traps made of single piece of bamboo) and *edil* (cylindrical shaped fish trap). The other instruments for catching fish are *esap* (cast net), *gaker* (hook and a line device) *ngok* (noosing of fish). Now, generators are also used for electrocution of fishes in foothill areas (Mebo, Dambuk and Roing). However, such uneco-friendly devices are banned in upper Padam areas. Fish is taken in all occasions whenever available. The surplus
catches are not only smoked for future use but also sold in the market.

In earlier days, food gathering was another means of sustenance for the Padams along with hunting and fishing. The forest of the Padam area abound in different varieties of wild fruits, leaves, roots, tubers, and wild sago palm (caryota urens) locally known as tase. Gathering of these edibles was their important economic activity because they were not only accustomed to use these products of the forest but also needed them to supplement their requirement of food.

Among the wild tubers remet is a special variety of tuber. A basketful (sopur) of remet could be exchanged for a pig of approximately Rs. 500/- to 7000/-. Among the leafy vegetables oyik, ongen, oji-ono, lori, etc., are mentioned as the most favourite vegetables of the Padams. The saying "Oyik e garyik-garyik mibo dobo nape garyik-garyik" and "Ogen e garen-garen mibo dobo nape garen-garen" tells that oyik and ongen leaves are the special vegetables for entertaining guests.

The Padams used to bring a variety of nuts from the forest. The most precious among the nuts were dipong-tarong and angke. In those days of food scarcity the Pasis of Adi Pasi village bartered angke and dipong-tarong for millet, job’s tear, maize, rice, etc., from Damro. According to the Pipe Line Land Owners portions of the river and stream situated above the boundaries of a village are under the Angke, dipong-tarong and belang (jack fruit) trees were earlier counted as wealth of the individual family, clan or sub-clan.

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13 Researcher got this information from his late grand father Pakjong Borang at Damro.
14 An extract of interview with Shri Ukyar Borang Gaon Bura of Damro on 10.5.2002.
From time immemorial tase\textsuperscript{15} a good food rich in carbohydrates (Koli: 1982, p.8) was used as major foodstuff for several tribes like Solungs (Tatep: 1983, p.51) and a supplementary food for the Nishi, Tagin and Adi. Collection of tase was important and almost necessary when there was no paddy especially during natural calamity like famine, earthquake, etc. Bamboo shoot was also considered important component of food. The common saying ‘Opan koe ibiing lok dogii sula’ (poor child eat bamboo shoot and keeps healthy) highlights the importance of supplementary food gathered from their forest.

Agriculture

The traditional economic life of the Padams is centred around shifting cultivation, which is the only means of its subsistence. The technology evolved is slash and burnt method. This system was evolved after ages of experimentation. They engage in agricultural activities all around the year and their calendar is a farmer’s calendar. The waving and waxing of the moon determine a month, which is of about 30 days. Each month is identified by the trees that flower, singing of birds and crunching sounds of beetles. The year starts with the month of Kombong, which corresponds to the month of March.

According to tradition, entire land, forests, portions of the rivers and streams situated within the boundaries of a village are under the

\textsuperscript{15} Tase is cut about one or more feet above the ground and the hard bark is peeled off. Then inner soft portion is cut into pieces and these pieces are again made into powder by repeated beating. The powders are kept in a bamboo structure with wall of about 3 to 4 feet high. The upper part is covered tightly with wild banana leaves or ekkam and kept for 3 to 4 days. Then the decomposed substances are collected into a numbers of tightly knit bâgu (cane or bamboo basket). After reaching home weighty stone or wood are placed on the bâgu to release water. The sticky substance left in bâgu after the water triples down is filtered in semu. The filtered substance are rolled like roti and dried for consumption.
control of the village authority. But within the village, each portion of
the land is owned by a different clan, sub-clan and family. Each
village has its own territory, boundary of which is fixed in the full
agreement with the surrounding villages and marked by stream,
hillocks, big trees, stones, gorges, etc. Generally, village situated in
the centre of the jhum circle form a permanent nucleus (Roy: 1960,
p.121).

The entire land falling under the jurisdiction of the village can
be roughly divided into three parts. The first part is the village and its
surrounding areas covered by bamboo groves and Jackfruit trees. This
is the common land of the village. An individual family is the owner of
the planted bamboo groves and fruit trees. The second part is the
agricultural land made up of plots demarcated by Risu lisik for each
family, clan or sub-clan. The third part is reserved for trapping and
hunting. Trapping and hunting ground is generally owned by clan or
sub-clan basis. For group hunting patches of jhum land called Patat
is divided among the clans of Damro where different clans have
separate Musup. The unprotected areas of these three categories of
land are for grazing of methun and cattle.

The Padam agriculture during the pre-independence was purely
jhuming (Osik: 1992, p.12). In the absence of other types of
agriculture all the cultivated fields were commonly called arik (Roy:
1960, p.122). However, separate arik for yam, ginger, cotton, chillies
and vegetables were also practised by the Padams in small scale.
The forestland assigned for jhuming purpose was divided into a number of patches or blocks called *patat*. A *patat* was divided among the families of the village and cultivated for two years. In the first year the *patat* under cultivation is called *rikpa*. In the second year the second *patat* is taken up as *rikpa* and the first *patat* is kept under tillage and is called *rigang*. When the third *patat* is taken up, the second is kept under tillage and the first *patat* (*rigang*) is left for fallow and is known as *rikbi*. The process rolls on till the last *patat*, and when the first *patat* is taken up again, it is beginning of a fresh cycle after a rotation of 11-12 years. The number of *patat* varies from village to village depending on the availability of agricultural land. In Damro there are 12 *patats*. Each *patat* has its special name and by the name of the *patat* under cultivation people are able to say which year he/she was born or an important happening that occurred. In Damro complete one jhum circle means 12 years.

When the time for cultivation approaches all *Gams* of the village assemble in a *Kebang* and decide to perform *Rikti* or *Oyi mopun* to propitiate the spirit of fertility - *Kine-Nane* and *Sisi-Moyi* for good harvest.

After *Oyi mopun* everyone gets busy on the clearance of jungle (*rikpa tatnam*) uprooting of undergrowth creepers and cutting down the bushes followed by falling of big trees (*esing benam*). The felled

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16. The old people of the village make a bamboo basket called *Mopun*. Then some bamboo poles and two branches of *Tan* and *Siri* are pierced through the *Mopun* and erected on the ground. Beside these, two basket filled with earth inner-side of which is covered by *tan* and *ekkam* leaves supposed to represent the crop grain are placed on the ground. Pig or pigs are scarified near the poles and blood and *enok-take* are sprinkled over the *Mopun* with some incantation for bountiful harvest.
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trees and branches are cut to pieces so as to keep the logs and branches lying downwards (north-south ward in case of level area) as far as possible so that during the clearing of unburned debris, there would be no impediments. Generally men do the arduous task of felling trees and women folk engage in the clearing of undergrowth creepers and bushes. The debris is left to dry for some weeks. After the debris is dried up, one member of each family goes to the field and determines the wind direction by floating some dry soil into open air. Accordingly they set fire along the wind direction (Borang: 1999, p.99).

It is called eme rinam. But in hilly regions fire is always set from lower region. When burning is thorough, ayak (scardaria italicica) is broadcasted on the same day. And the sowing of anyat (coix lachryma) and sapa (Zea mays) by dibbling starts from the very next day. It is carried out with the help of dibbling stick called batak. Other varieties of seeds sown in rikpa are makung (cucumber), namdung (perilla ocimoides), asitapa (pumkin), giri (bottle guard), epum (guard), bayom (brinjal), mirshi (chilly), petu (lettuce), lodor (peuraria tuberosa), engin (yam), dilap (onion), etc. On the first day of sowing they entertained themselves with rice, apong and meat called Olum.\textsuperscript{17}

After the introduction of wet rice cultivation the dwellers of Monggu area (Mebo-Dambuk-Roing) altogether abandoned the sowing of ayak and anyat\textsuperscript{18}. From the next day of eme-rinam, they started burning all the half burnt pieces of logs and debris in different mepom (where debris are collected and burnt again) called eme romnam. Just

\textsuperscript{17} An extract of interview with Mrs Ase Pertin at Damro on 24. 12. 2002.

\textsuperscript{18} An extract of interview with Shri Yeksup Pertin at Mebo on 29. 6. 2002.
after the completion of *eme romnam*, they start sowing *am* (an upland variety of paddy) with dibbling stick made of lightwood and bamboo called *batak*. Now it is replaced by *yokkin* (blunt dao). Other seeds sown in the field are *sapa*, *totok* (sesamum indicum) *enge* (colocasia antiquorum), *kerelang* (bitter guard), *lodor*, *petu*, *engin*, *dilap*, etc.

After sowing, the entire *patat* is fenced by the whole community working as separate unit by different clan in Damro. In *Monggu* area, however, the whole community work as one unit. Sometimes group of families used to cultivate separate patches called *pakok* for themselves. In such case, fencing is constructed on individual basis. After the completion of fencing, the owners of the methun are asked through *gogying* i.e., announcement to collect their cattle and then drive them out beyond the fence in the jungle. The ‘*Musup ko*’ of the village collects the remaining and fined the owner of the methun for his negligence.

After the harvesting of *anyat* i.e., Jobe’s tears, in the second year the field is ready for paddy cultivation. It is called *rigang*. Generally weeds also grow at the time of sowing the paddy and they are clear simultaneously. Sowing of the Paddy in *rigang* is called *rikbin*. It is sown by dibbling with the help of *batak*, but till recently with *yokkin*. *mirung* (millet or Eleusivce coracana), is sown by scattering. In practice Padams follow single crop pattern with mixed crops like *am*, *mirung totok*, *bayom*, *mirshi*, *enge*, etc. Some times a single seed is sown according to quality of the soil. *Mone* or *Moying*, the best soil is always reserved for paddy, *motuk* or *lijak* (stony ground) is reserved
for millet and *moruk* (sandy) is reserved for cotton and other vegetables. In Monggu area the mode of agriculture and the seed sown in *nikpa* and *rigang* are almost same. In comparison, however, *rigang* is less laborious.

The first weeding (*mobinnam*) starts about a month afterwards when the seeds have sprouted and grown about one foot and a half and is usually continued for months together. Traditionally weeding is done by *iik* but now it is done by *yokkin* in Monggu area. The second weeding is carried out when the crops are almost ready for bearing seeds. When the fields are too large to be managed by the family itself, they can employ other people on the basis of *engul, enlik* and *rikrap*.  

The last important agricultural operations in the field are harvesting and threshing. The early crops are harvested by August to September while late crops by November to December.

The traditional method of harvesting is very simple. The members of the family go together to the field with *egin*. They tie their *egin* at the waist allowing it to dangle down in front and the bunch of corn are plucked from the stalks by bare hand and empty their hands directly into their *egin*. A small knife is also used to cut the bunch from the stalks. The grains after reaping are carried to the *arik ippo* (a temporary small hut in jhum field) or *ekurang ipom* (open and level ground suitable for resting and threshing). The grains are put in *jare* (large flat bamboo basket) threshed with bare feet. They are then cleared of chaff with *epo* and then brought to the granary from the

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19. *Engul, enlik* and *rikrap* connote help, exchange of service and service on payment.
field in baye or egin, carried on the backs by men and women. It is then stored in big bamboo basket called bari or sopur. The daily requirement of the family is taken out from the granary and husked with kipar (wooden mortar) and egging (pestle) in the morning and evening.

The implements and tools used by the Padams are indigenously manufactured and are crude in nature. The implements used by them in agricultural operation are Eyok (dao made of iron for cleaning jungle), egging (iron axe for felling big trees), dading (stick for uprooting difficult creepers) and yokkin (blunt dao for dibbling seeds), iiik (tabo iiik made of tabo, a small durable bamboo has now been replaced by iron scraper for weeding), egin or baye (conical basket used for collection of paddy during the harvesting time), epo (winnowing fan), jare (large flat basket for threshing), etc.

Earlier the Padams did not know the use of plough like the “hunter-gather and shifting cultivator mode of resource use” (Gadgil & Gul, 1992, pp.11-66). They depended almost exclusively on human muscle power and wood fuel as source of energy, and on plants, animals, etc., to fulfil their needs. Their knowledge base was limited, and to them nature was capricious and not subjected to human control. Their ability to store food and other materials was very limited. However, of late, though in limited scale, they began to use plough and other modern implements and technologies in their agriculture operation and other related activities.

3. An extract of interview with Shri Tojing Borang at Damro on 7. 5. 2002
The livestock

The Padams knew the art of domestication of animals and birds. *Eso* (Bos frontalis), *eyek* (pig), *eki* (dog), *perok* (fowl) and *kadari* (cat) are associated with their legends since the origin of *Tani*. According to Limir-Libom Abang, Engo-Takar people, who were the ancestors of the *Tanis*, got the *eso* from *Dadi-Somi*, the original owner of the animals. Animals and birds are looked after by the owner, but left free to graze anywhere within the village territory. However, in rare cases, big herds of *methun* called ‘bone’ sometimes covers the territory of one or more villages. It is a status symbol of the owner. The ownership of *methun* is vindicated by means of identifying marks of various fashions of slit or punching of the ear lobes called *nyorung monam*. Methun is a semi-domesticated animal. Pig, dog are domesticated. *Goru* (cow), *soben* (goat), and *pejab* (duck) are not common in the village. These livestock were brought from the plains of Assam some years ago. It is said that Late Banom Perme, first brought goru (cow) to Mariyang area just after the independence of the country. The thorny plant called *kopi tang*, which grows out of cow dung, is nicknamed as *Banom tang* or *Banom kopi* (Banom’s thorn) in Damro.

Methun and pig have socio-cultural and religious importance. Methun is the most important sacrifice in the festivals and other religious functions. The main festivals of the Padams are *Lutor, Lune* and *Dorung* or *Gedi Solung*. These are the occasions on which sacrifice

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1. The Limir-Libom Abang is sung on the first night of solung festival of the Adi
2. The Bone of Late Pakjong Borang frequented the territories of Millang and Dalbing during his lifetime. Because of this he was nicknamed Bone Pakjong (owner of Bone) by Millangs.
of methun is obligatory. It is also sacrificed in social functions like marriage and ekum aran (house warming ceremony). It is also sacrificed on some special rituals like Pedong mopun, Dodgang, Epom patum, and Runggu.

Methun has always been in high demand. Its economic importance lies in the high price attached to it. In 1960s the price of a methun was Rs. 100/- to Rs. 200/- (Roy: 1960, p.152). In 1980s it was ranging from Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 5000/- (Nyori: 1993, p.194). At present, the price of a methun varies from Rs. 9000/- to Rs. 16,000/-. Methun is used as medium of transaction for payment of fine and compensation for murder. And sometimes as price of a lady when a woman divorces her husband and marries another man. It is also exchanged for valuable metal pots like dangki, kingku, leku, peking, and other valuable beads.

The importance of pig is next to the methun in religious and social functions. The Padams rear pigs in large numbers. Hogs are castrated by a divinely blessed Yektum Miri (expert in castrate surgery). Castrated hogs are usually kept in regum or gumpir (pigsty), which is generally attached to back side of the main house. They are sacrificed in all religious and social functions like Lutor, Lune, Dorung, Mopun, Ekum Aran, marriage and others. Like methun the price of a

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23 When drought continuing for month together, Pedong Mopun is performed with the sacrifice of a methun for immediate raining.
24 Dodgang is a sacrificial offered at the grave for the welfare of the soul of the deceased. However, methun Dodgang is generally sacrificed in the jungle.
25 When spirit of the jungle called Epom releases a man after keeping him in their captivity for sometime, Epom Patum is offered to Epom, so that it does not repeat such act in future.
26 Runggu ceremonies are performed for the welfare of the family or the clan.
27 The presence of Peking name Sorot kibung (price of half methun metal pot) in the Padam house suggests that methun was earlier bartered for Peking.
pig is in the rising trend. In 1960s it was sold at Rs. 10/- to Rs.35/-
(Roy: 1960, p.154). While in 1980s it cost from Rs.100/- to Rs.1000/-
(Nyori: 1993, p.194). Now pigs are sold at Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 6000/-. Some business minded Padam youths sell pork in the bazaar and earn
handsome amount.

Dog is kept as pet as well as for religious purpose. The main use
of the dog is for guarding house and hunting. An expert hunting dog
known as kimon, is a valuable asset of the family. If the kimon is
injured or killed in-group hunting by wild animal or by a hunter by
mistake, one day taboo is observed in the village.28 This is because,
the Padams believe that such misfortune occurred to dog instead of
human being. They also believe that evil spirit take the life of a dog
instead of a human soul. It is because of this belief, the Ayit Miri
(priest) sacrifices black dog in Ngipong ipak (ritual) in exchange of
human soul and sometimes saved the man from the clutches of the
evil spirit and long suffering. Dogs are also sacrificed in other religious
ceremonies, such as Donyi mopun, Pedong mopun, Eki pator,29 etc.

Thus, Padams loves their pet dogs and never kill them willingly
except during religious ceremonies. When a dog dies of natural death,

28 The researcher has witnessed such incident in 1989 when Shri Majing Yirang committed a mistake
during the nokyn kiruk (group hunting means for Raseng girls).
29 Eki pator is performed when nearby village is suffering from certain epidemic like dysentery,
measles etc. and a guest to enter into the village. In this situation, a gate is constructed at the entrance
of the village and a dog is sacrificed, disembowelled and suspended from it. The blood ooze out from
the stomach drops down on the head of the person who enters the village. This is done with the belief
that it prevents the entry of any evil spirit or disease accompanying the visitors.
the body is either buried or hung on a tree with a small pimpu (rice pack) called tamit.  

Fowl is also reared for religious purpose and consumption. Fowls of various colours are the favourite of different spirits (malevolent and benevolent). As per prescription of Ipak Miris, fowl of different colours are sacrificed in a number of ipak like Mime lambe, Doying, Ali-ango, Batum yutmo, etc. Fowl is also sacrificed in social functions. Before the introduction of money economy it was used as a medium of exchange and still is a source of income to many families.

Cows are milked and oxen are used in ploughing in wet rice cultivation and various types of agricultural gardens. Because of its multiple uses, the price of cow and bullock is ranging from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 7000/-.  

However, cows are never used in any sacrifice. Even taking a beef during Solung festival is looked down by the society. Ducks, goats, fishes etc., are reared for commercial purpose.

Industry

There was no industry in proper sense of the term among the Padams. However, they produced goods for daily use. What ever they produced was marginal in nature and primarily meant for family consumption, though few surplus items were bartered. Though crude

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30. Small pack of cooked rice is tied in the dog’s neck with the belief that the soul of the dog will take it on his way to another world.
31. When a family could not rear pigs and fowls in spite of repeated trial, Batum yutmo ritual is performed by sacrificing a grey hen (Perok yasang) for healthy livestock.
32. An extract of interview with Shri Kanying Borang (whose main activities is buying and selling of the methun and cow) at Tebo village on 5. 1. 2004.
in nature they practice craft ranging from the making of bow and arrows to the melting and casting of metals.\textsuperscript{33}

**Spinning and weaving**

The art of weaving is confined to the womenfolk only, although it is not known when the Padams learnt the art of weaving. As per the Abang, cotton was sprouted from the feathers of a pemti (eagle) named Kiki Nobo, since then it was cultivated in the field, ginning in the ginning machine called doket, spin on the spinning wheel called pyakong and weave with the help of loom called sumkong-talang (including gekong, gilgang, giiak, sumpa, tatnge, rulbung and ngekong).

The dance-drama of the Padams called Padam-Nyanyi, current in the society highlights how the Padam women started the cultivation of cotton in the field, ginning in the docket, spinning in the pyakong and weaving galuk (shirt) and gale (skirt) on their loom.

Weaving among the Padams is as long as the Padam Nyanyi song itself. From hoary past, they knew how to prepare warp from the raw cotton and dye them with the leaves and barks of the indigenous plants. Reddish brown coloured dye is obtained from the bark of Sipop esing (pteropsernum acerifolium), dye of blue colour is obtained from Ongot creeper (indigofera Sp.), plum coloured dye from Taman-manlong root and Taman-manyo leaves, etc.\textsuperscript{34}

In Padam village there is not a single family where loin loom is not available. It is an ancestral property for the girl. The Padam girls

\textsuperscript{33} An extract of interview with Shri Yorang Borang at Damro on 25. 12. 2002.

\textsuperscript{34} An extract of interview with Smt. Ase Pertin at Damro village on 24. 12. 2002
practice weaving from their teenage and become expert when they grow up. They weave textiles of highly artistic design and beautiful bodu and gadu (cotton blankets), muna-nyogon (shoulder bag), gale (colourful skirt), galuk (sleeveless coat) of various designs, ugon (loin cloths) and war coats of different styles from their own cotton.

Even in the onrush of modern mill made fashion clothes, the rich, colourful and variegated traditional handicrafts of the Padam are still famous among the people. The government of Arunachal Pradesh has established weaving training cum production centres at various places. The good weavers sell their clothes at Government sale emporium and private buyers and earn money. Thus weaving has now become an economic pursuit of the people.

Cane and bamboo works

The basketry of the Padam mainly associates with the cane and bamboo works and as such it is an important craft in the society. They make baskets from different species of cane and bamboo available in their surrounding forest. The baskets are mostly conical in shape and are used for carrying and storing essential commodities and valuable articles. The technique of the Padam basketry is twill weaving, open hexagonal and coil and both open and closed. They are expert craftsmen having technical knowledge and experience. Their skilfully made baskets and other works earn appreciation from every quarter. In the opinion of H. Borgohain, "Adi basketries are beautiful not only because of its fine texture but also because of their unusual
shapes. Many a baskets have pleasing form” (Borgohain: 1995, p.14). The cane and bamboo suspension bridge over turbulent rivers and streams in the hills are simple wonderful “marvels of untutored engineering skill”, remarked Elwin (Elwin: 1959, pp.119-120).

They make baskets of various shapes and sizes according to their necessity. The most commonly used baskets are narang- the conical basket for carrying paddy; kiro for carrying fire wood, water tubes; tali-haversack used by male; sokiap-haversack used by female; apong perop for storing fermented millet; edum for keeping cloth; ebong- a parasol for protection against rain; suja- a standard unit for measuring and exchange of commodities and dungkur suja, a bigger size equal to one tin (15 kg) of rice is used as standard unit for realising fine called Kumsung Sanam;35 dore stand for food plate, etc.

They also made different types of bamboo containers such as ambin dupu-long bamboo cylinder for keeping rice, ambin tirkak-for measuring rice, apong petok- for preparation of millet beer, apong kaklak-for storing apong, asi dupu-for storing and fetching water from the source.

Besides, they make epo (winnowing fan), epu (mat) of various sizes for drying grains as well as sitting and sleeping, lupro (war helmet), dumlup-fine hats, etc. At present, a good number of Padam basketry and cane hats are in high demand and are sold in the open market.

35. Kumsung Sanam is a realisation of fine from the granary of the offenders by Musup ko or a group of persons.
Blacksmithy

Blacksmith is the only metal work carried out by the Padams. According to Abang Resi Yokmo, Reman Yokmo and other smiths jointly made the earth inhabitable to various spirits and human beings. Kongki Yokmo, the blacksmith of repute said to have made Bomong (sun) and Boo (moon) out of Myane’s eyes, which was laying at the valley of Sedi Irbo Sikol. However, the first blacksmith exclusively dealt in metal works mentioned in the Abang is Ninur Bote. The Tanis first learnt the craft from Ninur Bote and inherited his property.

Smithy, locally called yokyup, a small structure of stonewalls and thatched roof generally stands in a corner of the village. The Padam blacksmiths are expert makers of iron tools- eyok (daos), yoksik (knives), ninger (spear head), yokmo (arrow heads), eging (axe), beyop (small brass disc) etc. These smiths are not a separate clan, but the profession is generally inherited by the son or the nearest male relatives. Black smithy is not a full time work or regular profession. Articles are made when the person are free from agricultural and other works. This profession, therefore, does not bring any change to the social status of the person but adds a little to his income.

The ancient source of iron used in the manufacture of tools and weapons is shrouded in mystery. According to Abang metal was

36 An extract of interview with Shri Apyang Perme at Damro on 7.1.2003.
37 Myane is the offspring of Sedi (Sedi-Dir-Irmyang -Myane)
38 An extract of interview with Shri Apyang Perme at Damro on 7.1.2003
39 An extract of interview with Shri Ugyar Borang at Damro village on 2.1.2000
40 The researcher saw the ruined structure of Yokyup at Libe, the north east corner of Borang Dolung at Damro.
extracted from 'Linggen Sobo'. However, after crossing the present MacMohan Line, the Padams do not extract iron from ore, but purchase tika oteng (piece of iron for making dao) from Assam and bartered from the Tibetans.

Woodcarving and making of sculptures, pottery and leather works are not found among the Padams. However, they make wooden dishes (esing ekung) and mortars (kipar) for grinding food grains, chillies, etc. The workmanship is very rough as they are not skilled in the craft. Tanning of hide is unknown to them, but they make beautiful Situm nyogon (bear skin bag) and sling from the raw hides of bear, methun etc. They also use earthen pot (kedeng peking) of various shapes and designs. But whatever pottery found among them are said to have been procured from other neighbouring tribes.

Trade

The history of trade relations of the Padams with their neighbouring tribes and outside world dates from the remote past. The Padam traders had traditionally bartered their goods with their counterparts and for this purpose they traversed along different routes to get exchange of the necessaries of life required by individuals, families or societies. It seems that trade with Tibet was as old as the history of migration of the Padams. Because the trade which the tribal did, was rather compulsory for them since they had to depend on the outside world for the supply of their basic requirements

41 Padams regards Linggen Sobo as the originator of metals
of life such as salt, metals, etc. C.V.F. Haimendorf drew similar observation. According to him, "the common factor in the economy of the mountain dwellers was a relatively inhospitable environment which precluded sole reliance on farming and compelled the inhabitants of the high lands to seek in mobility and adventurous trading enterprises as alternative means of subsistence" (Billorey: 1980, p.196).

Trade with Tibet

There were several important trade routes leading to the trade centres called Migo-Mimat (Tibet). But the two principal trade routes used by the Padams to Tibet were Nugong Gone through Nugong valley and Ringgong Gone through Ringgong River. These trade routes in the Siang valley are commonly known as Gone Matne or Matne Gone. The other trade routes through which the Tibetan traders of Nayi Lube, with whom the Padams had made an indirect contact, had come down from Tungkur Lego Pass, Elling, Mangu, Dele, etc. (Roy: 1960, p.32)

From the earlier times up to the settlement at Damro, the Padams had cordial relations with the neighbouring tribes. So they had direct contact with the Tibetans. The Tibetans in their turn visited the Padam areas from January to May and October to November. The Tibetans beyond Gelling came down through Matne Gone with rock

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42. Gone means trade route
44. An extract of interview with Shri Tukbeng Tayeng at Damro on 2.1.2000.
salt, iron, and warm and durable hand woven clothes, swords, muzzle loading guns, musk turquoise necklace, charm box (nok), blue porcelain beads, yarn of different colours, snuff, china silver and wooden bowls and metal pots and started exchanging their merchandise from the Ashing area and came down as far as Riga and Damro. In exchange, they carried back methun’s meat, raw hides and deer horns, white and red rice (Roy, S. 1960 p-33). This brisk trade was disrupted by a series of inter-tribal feuds. Henceforth, Tibetan articles began to reach Padam area through intermediaries. In the subsequent development the Adis of northern belt did not allow the Adis of southern belt to trade with the Tibetans. In retaliation, the Adis of southern belt (Padams and lower Minyongs) prevented the Adis of northern belt from trading with the Assamese (Osik: 1992, p.14). But this trade blockade was lifted after the fall of Adi in Anglo-Abor War (1911-12) by the British Administration. However, the regular trade relation on barter basis between the Adi tribal groups and the Tibetans continued until the international border was sealed in 1961-62.

Trade with the plains of Assam

As narrated by the elders, before coming to Damro or about twenty generations earlier, there was no trade relation with the plain people of Assam. It was only after the settlement at Damro the adventurous warrior called Miduk-Sopok or Miram, in pursuit of the...
Mishings, migrated from Yamne valley, reported the presence of Ahom and Khamtis in the plains. From that period onwards, the cross border trade between the plains people and the Padams started. Trade routes to Assam were collectively known as Sinung Gone. One of the trade routes to the west of the Siang River was Legong Gone through the Sile River. Through these routes the Padams reached Sadiya, Showkhowa, Rongdoi-Chaporli, Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur. During the cold weathers, the Padams brought to Assam markets musk, deer skins, wax, madder, ginger, gadus (Abor rugs), ivory and also a few copper pots, which they obtained from the Tibetans. They exchanged their goods for salt, tikoteng (a piece of iron for making dao), brass cooking pots, silver ornaments, tapum gasor (silk shawl), etc. (Choudhury: 1994, p.180). Often, the Mishings acted as a middleman between the Padams and the Assamese in the trades and later between the Padams and the British.

During the British period some trading shops were set up by tradesmen, who with the official licence, went for business inside the Inner Line area where some weekly markets were held and people from the hills came down from time to time for marketing purposes. The Padams had trade links with other neighbouring tribes such as Fishtal, Angami in the west, Phom in the east, Milam and Dalhing in the north, Kheri and Khapi in the north west and Karo, Singpho, and other Mishings villages in the far north. However, there was a Line as at Udalguri or Daimara in Darang District of Assam (Dalton:

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46 Mishing is commonly known as Miri.
47 An extract of interview with Shri Atuli Pertin at Dambuk (the first village of Padam in the neighbouring plain of Assam) on 22. 12. 1999.
1872, p.28). But the best centres for trade among the Padams were the Sadiya and Showkhowa Fairs. Similar fairs were later set up at Murkong Selek and Laimekuri. It was at these fairs that the British government paid the posa payable to the Padams (Osik: 1992, p.15). The money thus received from posa and selling of indigenous products like gadu, chillies, fowl, etc., was used for purchasing their annual requirements.

**Inter-Tribal and Intra-Tribal Trade**

The tribal groups of the Siang and Yamne valleys had a mutual economic dependence on each other for essential commodities. However, the most important trade contact of the Padams was with the Midi (Mishmis). The trade route with Mishmis was known as *Sayang Gone* that passed through Pesang Yorbe (mountain ridges). The main merchandise items of Mishmis were *miri kili* or *dangki* (a bell metal cauldron), *pyakting galuk* (Mishmi coat of high quality), *lukjok* (common Mishmi coat), *epo, epu, siye* (yeast) etc. In exchange, the Mishmi obtained methun, different varieties of rice, millet, *tumyo* (bear skin), etc., from the Adis.48

The Padams had trade links with other neighbouring tribes such as Adi Pasi in the east, Panggi in the west, Milang and Dalbing in the north, Komkar and Shimong in the north-west and Karko, Riga and other Minyong villages in the further west.49 However, there was

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8. An extract of interview with Shri Yorang Borang at Damro on 9. 5. 2002
8. Here Damro, the parent village of Padam community is taken as the centre of inter-tribal business activities.
no business transaction worth mentioning with the immediate neighbouring tribes like Pasi, Milang, Dalbing and Komkar. During the period of food scarcity only people of these villages used to visit one another for procuring food grains called Dogang Mibo.50

The Padams obtained Tibetan salt and axes from Shimong, Karko and its allied groups, which are commonly known by the name ‘Misong.’ The Tibetan salt and axes obtained from these allied groups was known as Misong Alo and Misong Egiing respectively. Besides these transactions, they frequently used to bring slaves from the neighbouring tribes.