CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In this work a sociological study of Lathao, a Tai Khampti village in the Namsai District of Arunachal Pradesh was undertaken. The preceding chapters discussed the various aspects of the village in its four major institutions namely- marriage, family and kinship, religious institutions, political institution and economic institution of the village concerned. The first chapter introduced the concept of village. Besides discussing the conceptual framework and the various works produced in the field of village studies in India we set the objectives for our study as:- 1) examination of the structural arrangements of the village in terms of the organised pattern of inter-related rights and obligations of persons and groups as reflected in the following institutions- economic, political, religious and kinship. 2) examination of the structural response of the village to external factors like introduction of market system, state policy of development and power structure; and 3) understanding the process of continuity and change as reflected in the social institutions. The first chapter also described the methodology employed for the collection of data.

The present study was carried out in the Tai Khampti village of Lathao which during the start of field work was a part of the Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh until November 2014 when a new district was declared- Namsai District of which it became a part. The village is located at a distance of 12 km form the newly created District headquarter of Namsai. The field setting was described in the second chapter. Firstly we attempted a definition of the Tai group to which the Khampti belong. Secondly we traced the migration pattern of the Khampti of Arunachal Pradesh in general and the village members in particular. The village as understood
in the Khampti context has also been dealt with. This chapter also contained a
detailed description of the socio-demographic characteristics of the village.

To a Khampti their first loyalty was to a village. Clan do not have a major role to
play in Khampti local organisation and instead it was the land holding in the village
which formed the element of structural continuity. The notion of a clan as a
corporate group did not have a role in the lives of the people. The study found that
the founder of the village was a migrant from the neighbouring village of Momoung.
The reason for migration from Momoung to Lathao was twofold: the first was due
to the position of the son of the deceased chief of the village and his desire to start a
new village based on his father’s will. A secondary reason was the due to ecological
reasons as the search for higher land was felt necessary to avoid the effects of
floods.

In Lathao we found that all the households were clustered at the centre of the village
with the rice fields, community forestlands and the river Tengapani surrounding the
village residential areas roughly in the form of a circle. Lathao was a multi tribe and
multi clan village as there were two tribes permanently residing there- the Khampti
and the Khamyang. The minority Khamyang population comprised 11 out of a total
of 163 households in the village. Altogether there were 22 Khampti clans and 3
Khamyang clans in the village. The village had a population of a total of 856
persons with an almost equal number of male and females. Out of the total number
of people living in the village 426 are males accounting for 50.93 percent of the total
population while 420 are females accounting for 49.05 percent of the total
population.
The standard of living of the members of the village based on the analysis of the housing materials used implied that a majority of the village had simple living conditions. There were three main types of housing that was identified in the village viz. 1) kaccha, 2) pucca and 3) semi-pucca houses. The kaccha type of house was the most in number in the village, accounting for 60.12 percent of the total number of houses in the village. This was followed by the pucca houses which accounted for 26.99 percent of the total number of houses. 12.88 percent of the total population of the village lived in semi-pucca houses. Generally the semi- pucca and pucca houses were owned by the occupational group of part-time cultivators who supplemented agricultural pursuits with other small business such as shop keeping or timber cutting.

The study identified that there was a hierarchical ordering of the village based on the location of the houses of the two tribes. In the study we found that the houses of the Khamyang population residing in the village for the past three decades are located in the north west part of the village behind the much more larger Khampti houses hidden from immediate public view. They were additionally not considered part of the village but since they were permanent residents of the village they were included in the study. Among the Khampti villagers there was no social distance although a sharp hierarchical ordering did exist primarily based on the economic position that a particular clan or lineage of a clan occupied in the village. It was also observed that early settlers were ranked the highest in the socio-political sphere of the village as well in terms of access to resources in the village. Land ownership was the main factor that distinguished the founding clan from the other clans in the village. Later settlers who migrated from the Khampti villages in Lakhimpur District of Assam were placed lower in the socio-political scale of the village. The study found that the
time of arrival into the village and the economic level of a household had direct implications as far as the social and political positioning in the village was concerned.

In the third chapter we discussed the institution of kinship, marriage and family as practiced in Lathao. The family system was patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal in nature. Firstly a discussion on the nature of descent among the Khampti of Arunachal Pradesh in general was presented. Descent among the Khampti was found to be patrilineal or agnatic in nature and it was continued unilineally through the male descendents. Kin groups were defined by the principle of patrilineal descent which in turn forms the primary basis through which the village and community as a whole are organised. *Phan* was the word which was alternatively used to describe class or clan. When it was used to mean the class category there were three main divisions in this conception comprising of- i) *phan chow* or the royal clans, ii) the *pu-yaa pakloung-* the commoner clans and lastly iii) the *phan kha* or the slave clans. The *phan chow* occupied the highest position in society due to their claimed divine origin. There were only three clans during the present day among the Tai Khampti of Arunachal Pradesh regarded as *phan chow*- Namchoom, Chowtang and Lungking. In Lathao the Namchoom clan was the ruler of the village. There were two additional groups of the Namchoom clan however we observed that the villagers did not pay them the same kind of ritual reverence that was paid to the ruling Namchoom patrilineage. Hence we concluded that only the founding members of the lineal segment of the clan assumed a position of privilege and power.

In the second conception of the word *phan* it denoted clan. In this sense the *phan* was indicative of the largest patrilineal descent group. The clan among the Khampti
did not function as units that emerge as corporate groups and they had no political, economic or ritual functions at the level of the clan collectively. As far as clans were concerned, the organisational potential of territoriality and co-residence was absent among the Khampti. The clan functioned primarily for limiting the principle of exogamy.

It was the lineage system which provided the operational basis of the ritual, economic and domestic life in the Khampti society. The smallest consanguineal kin group of the Khampti was the lineage. We found that it was the lineage level ties that were of importance as an individual’s ritual roles and political, social and economic status was predominantly determined by it.

While descent groups such as the clan and the lineage provided the framework of the social structure it was the domestic family unit where the crystallisation of kinship relations took place. We identified one of the most important functions of the family to be the socialisation of its members. With regards the type of families found in the village, we found that a higher frequency was observed in the presence of hern leu (nuclear families) where 68.71 percent were nuclear while 31.28 percent were of the traditional hern lai (joint family). We found that the actual distribution of household types in the village to be of the joint family ideal and the nuclear family to be a phase in the developmental cycle of the family. Hence there were 44.17 percent of the population who started their married life by living in the husband’s natal house but later set up an independent hern. The most common reasons cited for the separation from the joint family was due to quarrels between brothers or between the women of the household. More often than not it involved an issue over division of property. We found that as long as the family formed a common unit of production
and consumption they continued to form a single domestic family unit. The division of *na* (rice fields) by the father was identified as the primary reason for the fission of the domestic family unit.

Within the family the eldest male was the head of the family and his decision was final in most matters. The women within the domestic family unit had a low status. 82.82 percent of the total household in the village identified the eldest male as the final decision maker while 17.17 percent said that decision making was a collective affair.

The domestic family was also the unit of property inheritance and succession. In the village under study it was observed that both movable and immovable property was exclusively inherited in the male line. The most valuable form of immovable property was identified to be the land. It was the father as the *chow hern* (head of the household) who had the sole authority to decide the division of property among his sons. The decision of the father was final and usually the other brothers did not interfere in his decision. However it was clear in Lathao that fission in the domestic family unit and enmity between brothers was mainly caused when one or more brothers were unsatisfied with the division of parental property. In Lathao, it was usually the youngest son who stayed back with the aged parents. If a man died without a male issue the nearest agnate of collateral line inherited the property. There were some married couples in the village that resorted to adoption of a male child in order to deal with the impending situation. Land was never passed on to women. 92.63 percent of the households in the village said that no form of immovable property would be inherited by their girl children. 7.37 percent of the total population said that their daughter could inherit land if she fulfilled either of
two criterions: 1) if she remained unmarried and took care of them at their old age and 2) if she followed the uxorilocal form of residence. In Lathao there was only one case where such a transfer of land occurred. As reflected in the village a daughter or a wife’s right to inherit the father’s or husbands property lay entirely at the discretion of the father or husband. Overwhelmingly the exclusive right over property was maintained by the male members of the family.

We found that there were some changes in the family life of the villagers observed in their daily routine and family life. In the old days the work of women was confined to the domestic sphere. While the senior generation women of the village were inclined to follow this traditional calling, we observed that many young girls in the village having been educated were working within and outside the village in various capacities. Their mothers and grandmothers generation however continued to perform the traditional duties expected of them.

With regards to the institution of marriage tribal endogamy and clan exogamy were the two basic principles regulating marriages in the village. Traditionally matrilateral cross cousin marriage was prescribed among the Khampti. The rule of cross cousin marriage served the purpose of continuance of the circulation of women into the same lineages as the previous generations. This resulted in the avoidance of direct exchange of bride at particular levels with the exchanges between two patrilineages then taking the form of a ‘generalised exchange’. At the empirical situation we found that the rule was not strictly followed. There were six patrilineages in the village which had flouted the traditional exchange rules. While the villagers were quick to identify them as a breach of rule there were no action taken at the collective level of the village against the offenders. We found that the
breach in customary rule was interpreted by the villagers as something that comes along with the ‘changing times’.

In the village under study elopement was the predominant form of marriage that was practiced with 105 respondents representing 64.41 percent of the total population in the village following this form of marriage. 53 respondents, representing 32.51 percent of the total population followed the system of marriage of the arranged type. Three marriages in the village were of the marriage by capture. There was a direct correlation between the type of marriage form followed by a respondent and their economic position in the village. Only those who were placed higher in the economic scale could afford the expenses of the rituals and ceremonies that the formal marriage procedure entailed.

We found that there were many changes that have been accommodated in the institution of marriage. As far as choice of marriage partners was concerned there was considerable freedom granted as many of the villagers were of the opinion that this should depend entirely on the preferences of the individual. Marital union in the younger generation appears to have become more of a personal affair as the villagers selected their spouses and their mutual choice was then communicated to their parents. Many of the respondents said that during the present times unlike in the past, the younger generation were not particularly inclined to listen to their parents and agree with their choice. It was noted that it was among those villagers placed higher on the economic scale that choice of marriage partners for their children became a concern as many of them pointed out that good family background and sound economic position were important criterions in selecting marriage partner for their children. In such cases the parents had a greater role to play in the final
decision. The favourable age of marriage was extended particularly for girls, with the respondents citing that with the introduction of the modern education system even the girls purse an education and many of them even go on to seek jobs hence their marital age was extended due to this reason.

During the present day many rituals in the marriage ceremonies of the arranged type have been accommodated to keep up with the changing times and lifestyles of the present generation. For instance one of the great material changes to have occurred is with regards to the pong phak items which was a symbol of the two individuals engagement. During the present times often the traditional items of the sticky rice and dried fish are not used and instead Indian sweets are used in its place as it is more convenient and easy to procure and store. Additionally in contrast to the old days the customary rituals which were performed prior to the wedding day was during the present times being performed on the same day in order to avoid the hassles, cut costs and shorten the otherwise lengthy rituals. Pong phak unlike in the old days has become a mere ritual and has ceased to have the role and purpose it served before.

In Lathao the institution of marriage was found to be still associated with bride price. Those respondents who paid bride price were quick to point out that they distributed this simply as a kind of fulfilment of the marriage rituals along traditional lines.

With regards to kinship terms there have been little alterations in the use of the traditional terms. Social relations between the members of the village continued to be defined in kinship terms as it formed the most important organizing principle in the social life of the villagers. We observed that the institution of kinship, family and
marriage to be relatively stable and the traditional socio-cultural life of the villagers continued to be determined to a great extent by their inter-personal relationships based on kinship relations.

In chapter 4 we discussed the religious institution of the village. We found that the village had a uniform Buddhist population where they practiced the Theravada school of Buddhism. At the root of the Buddhist thought was the statement that ‘life is suffering’ and that the cravings after life is the cause of suffering. Only when this craving is extinguished no new existence can arise. Hence ones endeavour must be geared towards freedom from worldly life to reach the state of nipaan (enlightenment). Most Khampti consider enlightenment to be a desirable goal but also incredibly difficult to attain.

The Khampti cosmology and belief system incorporated within it a whole world of spirits and gods. They believed that the universe was divided into three types of beings- phan kon (humans), phan phi (spirits) and gods, phan sang (the world of gods). They believed that there were 31 planes or levels in which these different categories of beings live. An individuals present state was dependent on their kamma- and depending on the kinds of deeds performed during the current life they are reborn in these different worlds. They believed that out of these 31 worlds there was only one plane where one could earn akieu (merit). They perform various kinds of lu (offerings) in their lifetime to earn akieu (merit) so that they were reborn in the world of the gods- moung kang and moung phi. They believed that as human beings they did not live as pure beings hence they feel that they have to keep accumulating merit so that they are reborn in a better place.
The chapter further described the religious beliefs and practices at the empirical situation. We found that in Lathao, the *chong* (monastery) was a central component of the village. At the time of formation and organisation of the village the demarcation of site for the temple was of primary importance. The sacred world of the monastery was kept distinctly apart from the profane world of the village. Since the monks are bound by the strict rules and code of conduct they do not have any form of direct interaction with the village folk except for the conduct of rites and rituals at the individual or collective level. The monks had no say in the management of the socio-political affairs of the village and the villagers in turn had no say in its internal management.

We found that it was the male members of the village under the leadership of the *Chow pha* who made decisions regarding matters such as organisation of feasts and festivals as this did not fall within the purview of the monks. The role of women in such decision making process was not present in Lathao as they were usually made to follow what the men had decided. Their chief responsibility in all religious festivals was cooking and serving food.

We found that there was a symbiotic and reciprocal relationship between the village monastic order and the villagers. The *chong* depended entirely on the village for its day-to-day subsistence and maintenance. The monkhood survived only on offerings made by the members of the village. Food offerings were made everyday in rotation by one household in the village. While the villagers made such offerings the monks prayed for the household and gave them their blessing. While the village look after the basic needs and necessities of the monks the monks in turn performed the function of blessing the village which was needed by the people who believed that
this would earn them merit which is required for the after-life. The monks provided the lay people opportunity to make offerings during different types of social and personal occasions such as birth and death rituals. Such offerings allowed the lay people to earn merit.

In the religious life of the village we found that the role of the *chow chere* (priest) to be indispensable for the performance of all rites and rituals both at the collective level of the village as well as at the individual household level. We found that the *chow chere* did not belong to the monastic order however he was required to generally live by the precepts of the Buddha and display good moral character at all times. All the members of the village irrespective of their social status had equal access to the *chow chere* and he was obliged to perform the rites and rituals for them once they had performed the ritual of *pang* where they formally request his services.

We described the religious feasts and festivals of the village conducted throughout the year. The religious action of the villagers as evidenced in the numerous feasts and festivals was geared primarily towards one fundamental aim- accumulating merit through the performance of *lu* (offering). The villagers believed that merit is required for a higher state of existence and one way of acquiring merit was through offerings. Hence we found that in all the religious feats and festivals throughout the year the central activity was the act of offering.

Alongside the canonical Buddhist beliefs and practices we found that the villagers also believed in *phi* (spirits) of all kinds. The sphere of religious oriented action was therefore not exhausted by temple centred activities. We found that the village in particular and the Khampti in general had two realms in the religious sphere- the first was the canonical Buddhist beliefs and the second was the extra Buddhist
beliefs and practices. They believed that they lived in a universe inhabited not just by human beings but by gods and spirits of all kinds. They believed that everything in the world was animated by spirits- the phi lived in houses, fields, water, rice, cows, trees and so on. There were two types of spirits- malevolent and benevolent. Propitiating spirits were a common occurrence in the village where regular tending to spirits were required to avoid bad luck and the wrath of the spirits.

The village as a collective whole engaged in the propitiation of only one spirit- the Phi Moung (spirit of the country). We found that the priest, monks and the elderly citizens of the village who observe the precepts of the Buddha kept away from the ceremony. The acknowledgement of spirits is kept apart from the Buddhist practices. Propitiating the spirits is done in a space and time that is different from Buddhist practices. Thus for instance when the phi moung (spirit of the country) is being propitiated it occurs in the afternoon hours as the Khampti consider that the hours after 12 noon. Other spirits such as the phi pha (lightning spirit) and spirit of ancestors and so on are propitiated at the individual household level. While the villagers said that the propitiation of the spirits did not earn them any merit they said that since these spirits were so powerful one could not ignore them even if one was a Buddhist. Often the rationale for the acknowledgement of spirits was that the world of spirits had power only in worldly matters while Buddhism was concerned with supra worldly ends which was distinct from worldly matters.

In the religious institution of the village the traditional practices were most fully displayed. The rituals and practices in the religious life of the village have remained largely unchanged. By and large the religious beliefs and practices of the villagers and their beliefs and attitude towards the supernatural world show an overall
continuity with some peripheral changes. The changes may be more among the younger generation members of the village population.

We identified the religious institution of the village in fact as the primary source for continuation of the beliefs and practices of the village. The many feasts and festivals which were organised at the level of the village provided them with a sense of continuing identification as a community that collectively upheld the values and norms of the society. The continuity of traditions was in no way manifested as in the religious institution. It determined the pace and formed the basis of the rules of community living to a great extent. The numerous feasts and festivals observed at the collective level of the village was indicative of the primary importance of Theravada Buddhism in the daily lives of the people. In fact social occasions where there was interaction and collective participation of the villagers were all religiously oriented. The entire social fabric of the village community was woven around the numerous rites and rituals, feasts and festivals that they observed as one unit.

Through the case of Lathao village we found that Theravada Buddhism and other aspects of Tai Khampti culture together come to form a comprehensive expression of Tai Khampti identity. In conclusion we could say that since Theravada Buddhism had such a defining role to play in the creation of a Tai Khampti identity any sort of evolution of temple life would definitely effect the larger lay Tai Khampti village population in general.

In Chapter 5 we discussed the politico-juridical system of the village and focusing on the traditional political institutions and the modern day political institutions and their inter-linkages in the current times. Lathao was one among 8 villages out of a total of 64 Khampti villages where the traditional political institution of the Chow
pha was still in practice. The position of the Chow pha was hereditary in nature and could be assumed by only three clans during the present day in Arunachal Pradesh-the Namchoom, Chowtang and Lungking. In Lathao it was the Namchoom clan which formed the ruling patrilineage. The Chow pha was the highest authority in the village before the advent of the British and the introduction of modern day political institutions. There was no other authority above him and he assumed all powers for himself his position drawing legitimacy from their high ascribed status and apparent divine origin.

During the tenure of the old Chow pha of the village the ideal typical model of the Khampti political structure was maintained to a great extent which included all the paraphernalia that this entailed. During his tenure for instance, the conferring of honorary titles on male members of the village was carried out who in turn became his counsellors. The old people of the village recalled the past days not more than a decade ago, as if it were a time from another era. After his demise in the year 2004 some structural changes were observed in the village. First of all, for the new incumbent, the position of the Chow pha was not a fulltime occupation like it was for the former occupier of the position. In the old set up the Chow pha assumed all powers and directly administered the village in the social, political and religious sphere. The villagers were more prone to accept his unquestioned dominance and authority based on the fact that they were given settlement and land for cultivation through his permission or invitation. During the present time the traditional functions that were dispensed by the Chow pha were divided among two brothers of the ruling patrilineage. With regards to the functions in the social and religious domain the younger brother of the chow pha was put in charge since the year 2010. All other matters which encompassed two main area i.e. settlement of disputes and
land matters came under the jurisdiction of the *Chow pha*. Hence whereas in the old set up no such division of authority was made during the present time in Lathao the study observed that there was division of responsibility between the two brothers of the ruling patrilineage. Hence we found that in the present set up the traditional political institution has evinced some form of decentralisation of functions.

With regards to the powers and functions of the *Chow pha*, we found that the most important function he performed was in relation to land and territorial matters. As the founder and ‘owner’ of the village he was at liberty to occupy as much land in the village as he wished to and final decision regarding land matters within the boundary of the village came under his control.

While the *mokchum* was the name of the traditional village council of the Tai Khampti in the old days, such an institution was no longer found in the village. The study found that the word *mokchum* was met with a lot of confusion whenever a question on it was posed. Very few people were able to define in precise terms what it meant and even the elderly population did not have a recollection of this institution. Instead of this institution the study could identify two groups of people in the village who acted as counsellors of sorts to the *Chow pha*. Firstly there were the elites of the village belonging to the clans of the early settlers and affinal kin of the *Chow pha* who are consulted with on matters related to the village. They enjoyed a higher socio-political position in comparison to other clans in the village. Secondly there were the elderly male citizens of the village formed the *chow tra* (judges bench) whenever they were called on by the *chow pha* for the adjudication of cases. During the tenure of the late chief of the village there were actual appointments made and roles assigned on the basis of their appointment, after his demise this
practice was discontinued. With the introduction of modern day administrative and political institutions at the village level, such as the panchayat and modern electoral politics, these posts became redundant and did not survive.

With the coming of the British Administration certain changes were incorporated into the political structure of the Khampti which has modified the traditional village system of governance. An important change was the incorporation of Gaon Bura (GB) introduced by the British so as to make their administrative work easier and conducive to maintaining law and order. The main functions of the GB was the settlement of cases of civil and criminal nature according to their respective tribal customs and established usages and were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their respective village jurisdiction. In Lathao it was found that with the introduction of the institution of the GB a new element was added to the village political structure. The position of the GB was based on the nomination of the Chow pha of the village. Till date it was the ruling patrilineage that decided which individual was fit to take this post and based on their prior nomination and approval the village supported and accepted the nomination. Since the time of its inception the position of Gaon Bura was maintained only amongst the male members of the Mannaw clan of the village and has been passed down from father to son. We found that the two institutions of the Chow pha and the Gaon Bura worked in tandem with each other. The structural change brought about into the village with this institution was that now there were two courts of justice- one being the Chow pha and the other the Gaon Bura. While the chow pha very often referred minor cases that came to his notice to the Gaon Bura, in turn the latter referred all serious cases, particularly relating to land disputes to the Chow pha. With this institution the unquestioned power of the Chow pha in judicial matters was curtailed to a great extent.
After Independence with the process of integration of the hitherto isolated peoples of Arunachal Pradesh into the mainstream national identity and the introduction of the Panchayat Raj Institution to the village in was another major development that brought about far reaching changes in the political structure of the village. For a long period of time right from its inception the ruling patrilineage successfully maintained their presence and dominance even in the Panchayat bodies. The current *Chow pha* served as Vice-President of the Panchayat for three terms, after him his brothers served for two decades as Anchal Samiti members. Most recently the wife of the *Chow pha* of the village became the first female Zila Parishad member in the 2003 elections. The study identified that during the time of fieldwork there were major changes in the character and composition of the Panchayat bodies. We found that the village factions have emerged in the village wherein the recently conducted Panchayat elections the opponents of the ruling patrilineage formed the majority and occupied the posts in the various levels of the Panchayat bodies in the village. Starting from 2013 thus we could say that the control of the Panchayat bodies by the ruling patrilineage came to an end.

Similar trends were observed in the behaviour of the village during the general elections of 2014 where the village was again divided forming two groups one which supported the ruling patrilineage and one which opposed it under the leadership of an affinal kin of the *Chow pha*. In the electoral processes we found that divisions have been formed in the village which become heightened during elections. The political system in Lathao displayed a highly dynamic character where power relations within the village have transformed as new institutions and organs have been set up. As new organs and institutions were created at the level of the country as a whole they have also affected the village political set up in
fundamental ways. In these new institutions membership and control were based on factors that were diversely divergent from those that operated in the traditional set up. The *Chow pha* was a position that was hereditary in nature and based on ascribed status while the village council was also nominated based on the wishes of the king. Members of the Panchayat in the village were democratically elected. While the ascriptive quality were the most important criterions for the traditional political institutions the new political structures provide greater scope for manipulation and personal initiative.

With regards to the participation of the village members in the political institutions of the village we found differences in the way this occurred in the traditional political domain and the modern day political institutions. In the traditional political institutions there was a direct correlation between their time of arrival into the village, their kinship affiliation with the chief and their relative socio-political position in the village. The founding clans held all the powers often making decisions on behalf of the entire village. In a hierarchical ordering of the village the Khamyang population stood last in terms of access to resources and rights in the socio-political sphere. We found that the participation of women in the traditional political domain was nil. They were bound to accept the decisions made by the male members of the village as it was customarily considered improper for a woman to even attend village level meetings. In total contrast to the traditional political institutions we found a change in the character of the village participation in the modern day institutions of the Panchayat Raj and Electoral politics. Irrespective of clan and lineage affiliation the members of the village participated in the modern day political institutions. Of note was the inclusion and growing participation of women. In Lathao the frequency of female members was higher than male members.
in the village Gram Panchayat. In the general elections the women of the village were actively involved in the campaigning process.

In chapter 6 the economic institution of the village was discussed. The economy of the village was based on the agricultural practice of wet-rice cultivation and although there were many new economic pursuits being practiced by the people, agriculture was identified to be the mainstay of the village economy. We found that the village was fully dependent on the primary sector of the economy. Thus the village could be classified as agrarian as all the households in the village were engaged in agricultural activities. *Langnin* (land) was the greatest asset among the villagers. This asset was held at the level of the individual and at the communal/village level. We found that once an individual obtained ownership of land they were free to use it without interference from the traditional heads such as the *Chowpha*. Both permanent wet and dry cultivation was practiced by the members of the village.

We conducted a detailed enquiry into their relations with their land in both the wet and dry lands used for cultivation. We found that it was the middle and low income category who directly participated in the cultivation process. Those placed higher in the economic scale either leased out their land to tenant farmers or they hired wage labourers to perform the task for them. 42.94 percent of the total population were farmers, 36.80 percent of the total population in the village came under the category of rentiers, 15.33 percent of the total population in the village chose to partly cultivate and partly lease out their land while 4.90 percent of the total population did not own any rice fields. Rentiers then formed the largest group in the village.
The study found that there was an increasing tendency of the villagers to lease out land and not directly participate in the cultivation process. It was found that among the 60 households that leased out their lands there were several reasons for this occurring. A small section of them were either employed in the government service or small business and due to the nature of their work did not have the time to devote to the cultivation of their own fields. The majority of the respondents said that it was due to lack of monetary resources that they could not cultivate it by themselves as they could not depend on the household labour entirely and some form of labour was required. The respondents said that since labour was expensive to hire without extra helping hands they could not cultivate the fields themselves. Some of them also added that their advanced age prevented them from working in the fields and said that their children were inapt since many of them were either going to school or pursuing further education. Some among them said they were not in the habit of cultivating the rice fields at all since they had no interest in it. There were a few respondents in the younger age group who had never tilled the land since it was transferred into their hands. What was apparent was that due to the emergence of modernizing elements such as education and market forces the villagers relation with their land was also changing to a certain extent. This was particularly true of the younger generation as many of them were educated and been sent to school, they did not have an interest in farming.

Presently we found that the villagers were involved in the cultivation of tea as a major cash crop. The cultivation of tea was introduced to the village in the year 1987 by the Chow pha of the village. Other members of the village started its cultivation only in the last decade. All the tea growers in the village came under the category of small tea growers. Only the chief of the village permanently employed
labourers living in the village and also a tea production centre. The other villagers have homestead gardens selling their green leaves to intermediaries or vendors. In the face of lack of heavy capital required for both initial investment and working capital for maintenance, homestead gardens were popular in the village, where management as well as initial investment was feasible for the villagers. This form of planting tea bushes within the residential compound gained ground only in the past half decade and was increasingly becoming a popular trend in the village as more villagers are attracted to its huge potential for generating income. Today there was a considerable population in the village who indulged in this productive activity. In the absence of access to tea culture and practices, the small tea growers have developed a kind of cultivation of tea that is thus a combination of their traditional knowledge coupled with rudimentary knowledge obtained from observance of the larger tea gardens in the village and surrounding villages. As yet the land that was traditionally used for rice cultivation has not been converted for the use of tea plantation as was the popular trend in many parts of neighbouring Assam.

Another conspicuous form of income generation among the people of the village was timber logging. Most of the unemployed youth of the village preferred to indulge in this trade. This was a rather risky business as many of them operated without legal permission. Despite being aware of this reality they continued with the trade as many of them pointed out that without this trade they would have nothing else to fall back on apart from their rice fields. We found that competition and market forces was making the people more individualistic where self interest and economic gains is taking precedence over community life and participation.
Based on the summary of the chapters discussed above the study found that there was a hierarchical ordering of the village based along class lines determined to a great extent by the traditional conceptions of the term. Another basis for the relative position of a particular lineage and clan in the village was based on their time of arrival into the village and their relations to the ruling clan of the village. Those settlers who arrived earlier have a higher socio-political position in the village as opposed to latecomers. And those clans in the village who were either affines or consanguines of the founder of the village occupied the positions of privilege in the village in terms of both socio-political positioning as well as access to resources in the village. Primarily based on their socio-economic position, determined by the above mentioned criterion, a particular family, lineage and clan obtained their identity in the village which also have bearings on their participation and opportunities in the village level institutions. We found that this traditional aspect of the village was very much adhered to by the people of the village.

Prior to 1947 the village was an insulated entity where traditional institutions determined every aspect of an individual’s life. The village polity was administered by the Chow pha, the cultivation of their na was the chief economic activity where production was primarily for domestic consumption and the household economy was self sufficient. Cash economy was still in its nascent stage. The study identified that it was primarily after the period of Independence and the state activities and interventions in the traditional social, political and economic structure that the village society was thrust into the throes of change.

The domestic family was the most important unit of village life organisation. To a large extent lineage level ties determined the workings of the various institutions of
the village especially that of the political institutions. Ties of kinship and the relationships that were established through marriage alliances created a web of social relations in the village such that every individual was known to each other primarily based on kinship relations. We found that the institutional and organizational structure of the village was still based on tradition and customary usage. The strong kinship ties, the institution of the Chow pha in the traditional political sphere and their lifestyle based on Buddhist principles and ideas are some of the aspects that still continue to be important and relevant focus of their collective identity. These traditional institutions were accepted and viewed as the cultural symbols that gave them a distinctive identity. All these indicate that the village as an entity was held as sacrosanct for it was only through the membership to the village that people obtained an identity and from this point of reference the cultural roots of an individual was derived.

The Chow pha of the village occupied the highest position in the village and all internal matters of the village was decided by him. Political decisions in the village were largely decided by the ruling patrilineage and even the clans who were consulted on by the Chow pha had a role only as an advisory body with the final decision making ultimately lying in the hands of the Chow pha.

However as we have discussed above, there has been a progressive politicization of the village. We found that the social world of Lathao was in a process of continual expansion. The relation of the village with the outside world has been articulated in a number of ways. Particularly after Independence and the various political and social institutions introduced at the level of the village it has increased its articulation with the outside world at a much greater degree and this has had
implications for the traditional power base of the village. Since the state of Arunachal Pradesh was introduced to modern electoral politics and the system of Panchayat, the village became linked to the wider political processes through a wide network comprising government officials, political party leaders and MLA’s. The introduction of modern political institutions to the traditional village society based traditionally only on customary laws have led to the emergence of new values, aspirations and attitudes particularly among the younger generation members of the village. This was not to say that the traditional political institutions were completely been suppressed by the modern day political institutions as the village under study clearly reveals that they continued to function and the villagers tended to uphold the system along customary and traditional lines. However it is undeniable that the seeds of change has been sown in the consciousness of the villagers as sections of them express dissent over the ruling patrilineages hold over the political structures of the village. While in the traditional domain they paid the traditional political institutions its due regard, in the modern institutions, they have been able to express their dissension with many villagers weaning away from the ruling patrilineage and as opposed to the united front of the village in the old days they have been able to take contrary stands.

The people of Lathao village were primarily agriculturalists where rice formed the main crop. While the traditional society was simple as they were engaged only in the same work which was the primary sector of the economy, during the present times people have been introduced to new economic pursuits and they have had to adjust with people of other social systems. The process of socio-economic structural change made it increasingly suitable for a new situation, leading to the emergence of a simple-complex society. While the primary activities of the villagers
centred around their rice fields there were other agro-based economic activities that a section of the village population practice. Activities such as the cultivation of tea by a section of the village population have directly brought them into contact with wider economic structures and market forces. Such economic ventures were however availed only by those individuals in the village who had a relatively stronger socio-economic footing. Prior to the period when the village formed a component of the tea industry, the villagers were a part of the wider economic forces through another industry ie. the timber logging. The timber trade formed the main occupation apart from agriculture. Even among the younger generation male members of the village, a majority of them were engaged in this trade. Often with the money made from this they would invest it in planting tea. In the material aspects of the village while the outlook and aspirations of the younger generation village members may be different from their parents we find that they continue to follow much of the same practices followed by their parent’s generation. The two main forms of income generation in the village was either activities related to timber logging or more recently cultivation of tea. For decades these two forms of income generation have formed the only sources of livelihood among the villagers, a fact that is also mirrored in the larger Khampti society in general. A cursory look at the occupations of the younger generation we observed that these two industries continue to form the main sources of income generation. Particularly among the younger generation men those who are unable to pass high school drops out and joins agricultural related activities or timber trade in the village. Those who are successful in achieving educational degrees take up other occupations such as teaching. But even among those who have been able to secure some form of salaried employment they prefer the village level pursuits.
On the analysis of the data presented in the study we observed that certain definite changes have been taking place among the people brought about by various agencies. The study observed that there was some continuity and also simultaneously some form of change in some aspects of the institutions examined in the study. There was a process of selective and adaptive changes in order to accommodate the requirement of modernization. It is an empirical fact that the process of social, political, cultural and economic transformation by its very nature tends to be accumulative, adaptive and selectively promotes structural replacements and differentiation in society. We have identified that there was relatively more continuity in the institutions of kinship and religion. More changes have been observed in the sphere of the political and economic institutions of the village.

The main sources of change as observed in Lathao were exogenous in nature that was built up as a result of many factors the primary ones we identified were: colonial administration, the imposition of laws by the colonial administrators, the imposition of laws and modern day political institutions at the very grassroots of village society, the integration of the village society into the fabric of the Indian nation state, the spread of formal education, the villagers growing contact with non-tribal communities and new economic ventures. These were the main factors that change the simple socially organized pattern of interrelated roles and statuses, rights and obligations in the system of interaction into simple-complex social structures. In the state of Arunachal Pradesh the sway of these exogenous forces were imposed more rapidly only in the post independence period. Since Independence the process of transformation was accelerated by the Government in as much as the ideology of development has been the main basis of state action.
In conclusion we may say that Lathao village was a traditional village where the continuity of traditions was found in its institutions. Agencies such as government intervention, new economic opportunities, education, exposure to outside forces and the people themselves were identified as the main forces of change introduced to the village. The village may be transforming through the forces of development and the process of change but the pattern of change that the village was going through was such that the traditional intuitions were mostly maintained as they were adaptive in nature. This was most discernible in the general characteristics of concrete social relations and patterns of behaviour as well as in the customs practiced by the people of Lathao village. As Yogendra Singh suggested that change is essential in the instrumental values of society facing modernization. Modernization is an integrative, adjusstive and cohesive process which does not necessarily oppose or weaken tradition.