

**Culture Change, Globalization and Disappearance: A Study  
in Arunachal Pradesh**

**A Thesis Submitted  
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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction: Cultural Change and Cultural Disappearance

[This introductory chapter discusses culture, culture change and gives a conceptual account of the disappearing cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage. A review of previous works by different authors and researchers in the concerned field, i.e., cultural disappearance in general and cultural change of the target area in particular, is also provided in this chapter. The last part of this chapter comprises of the issues and objectives of the study.]

#### 1.1. Culture, Cultural Change and Cultural Disappearance

The definition of the word *culture* ranges from an all-encompassing thought that includes everything related to life to a narrow lookout that only indicates painting, music etc. Noted Anthropologist, Ralph Linton (1945, 30) defined *culture* as:

Culture refers to the total way of life of any society, not simply to those parts of this way, which the society regards as higher or more desirable...Every society has a culture, no matter how simple this culture may be, and every human being is cultured, in the sense of participating in some culture or other.

To Marsella (1994), “culture is shared learned behaviour which is transmitted from one generation to another for purpose of promoting individual and social survival,

adaptation, growth and development. Culture has both external e.g., artifacts, roles, institutions and internal representations e.g., values, attitudes, beliefs, cognitive/ affective/sensory styles, consciousness patterns, and epistemologies” (Samovar and Porter 2004, 32).

Culture, therefore, refers to countless aspects of life. Thus, how people behave, how they interact with others, habits they share with others and the things of material culture, all are encompassing in culture.

Hall (1959, 169) comments, “there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture” (Samovar and Porter 2004, 28). Change is a basic character of culture. Malinowski (1945) describes *culture change* as a process by which the existing order of society (means its social, spiritual and material civilization) is transformed from one type to another. Thus, culture change covers the more or less rapid processes of modification in political constitution of a society, in its domestic institution and its mode of territorial settlement, in its beliefs and system of knowledge, in its education and law, as well as its material tool and their use and consumption of goods on which its social economy is based (Sharma A. 2005, 23).

In *Our Creative Diversity*, a report of the World Commission on Culture and Development UNESCO (1995, 54) comments, “All cultures are influenced by and in turn influence other cultures. Nor is any culture changeless, invariant or static.” According to human need, cultural patterns are changed from time to time. Culture diversity is the product of culture change overtime or it can be called the product of differential change. Research on cultural change increases understanding of how and why various types of changes are occurring. Understandings of present cultural change help to understand the processes of cultural change in past and in future (Ember and Ember 2002, 286).

Culture change occurs through different processes: mainly discovery and invention, diffusion, acculturation or revolution (Ember et al. 2008; Miller and Wood 2007). Discoveries and inventions of any object or idea help cultures to change. Diffusion is a

process by which elements of one culture are borrowed and incorporated by another culture. Diffusion is a two way process with mutual borrowing in two societies. Acculturation is almost the same process of diffusion though in this process, one society is more powerful than the other and the less powerful society borrows the most. According to Bodley (1990, 7), it is a process of extensive cultural borrowing in the context of superordinate-subordinate relations between societies. Revolution is the most rapid way to replace cultural traits though generally it alters rulers, not the culture.

Commonly, these processes are selective and adaptive. It is selective because not every element of one culture is borrowed by the next and it is adaptive because different cultural patterns are tried and developed and they coexist over a long period of time and societies accept the best from them. Though all cultures are in a state of constant change, it is usually a gradual process. Gradual change occurs in a slow and steady manner. Brower and Johnson (2007) comment that geographical isolation and socio-cultural niches allow people to exist as culturally unique groups over long stretches of time. Adjusting and adapting to new people, new ideas, new technologies etc. is a long gradual process. Often, adaptation happens and changes occur over many generations and that allows the old ways to coexist with or alter to new ways.

However, at the present time, globalization is another process that spreads, incorporates, assimilates or develops different cultural features worldwide on a much grander scale and direct cultures towards adopting similar cultural traits. The similarities in the cultural elements or consumption patterns worldwide are immensely noticeable these days. Watching the same movies or television shows, listening to the same music, wearing similar dresses, eating same food, using same currency and following similar ideology are the results of globalization. In short, people are increasingly sharing behaviours and beliefs with people in other cultures (Ember et al. 2008, 510), and these transitions create the globalization process. Globalization creates a world in which societies, cultures, politics and economies have come close together (Kiely 1998, 3).

At the same time, globalization leaves no room for the gradual process of cultural change; rather it is rapid, vast and a complex phenomenon. Though acknowledged as having facilitated connectivity across cultures, globalization, has also served to impede the process of cultural diversity. Miller and Wood (2007) comment that many indigenous people and their cultures have been exterminated as a result of globalization. Prof. Kurt Luger says that people in developing countries do not have the buffer zone of time to accept and assimilate in the change as their developed counterparts. They have been forced to jump from their long traditional subsistence living patterns into global era of unlimited mobility (Sharma 2000). The ‘rate of change’ is an important aspect of cultural change (Sharma 2005:23). The rate of change differs from one culture to another and even at different level in the same culture. The present study tries to evaluate conceptually this pace of change or rapidity and examine if this pace of culture change or rapidity has led to cultural disappearance or has it adapted and taken a new form? Rapid pace of culture change is an important aspect (Sharma 2005, 23) that differs from one culture to another and even at different levels in the same culture.

Figure 1.1. Cultural Change and Cultural Disappearance



Source: Created by Rashmirekha Sarma

The idea of cultural disappearance was introduced by Barbara A. Brower and Barbara Rose Johnston in their edited book *Disappearing Peoples? Indigenous Groups and Ethnic Minorities in South and Central Asia* published in 2007. The main emphasis of this compiled research work of different researchers is the struggle of cultural survival of different indigenous groups of Central and South Asian country. They argue that “the

sweeping force of globalization radically changes cultural diversity which is based on unique identities developed over generations by the indigenous groups and includes them in the global mainstream, in the name of ‘development,’ to fulfill a cultural mandate of endless growth.”

In essence, the idea of cultural disappearance points towards the disappearance of cultural diversity and globalization is considered as the driving force of disappearance of cultural diversity. The present study deals with those indigenous peoples who have lost or are in the process of losing their cultural elements as a result of globalization, have merged fast with a global homogenized cultural community and have gradually become culturally unrecognizable.

## **1.2. Globalization and the Disappearance of Cultural Diversity**

Article No.1 of UNESCO’s *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, 2001 (UNESCO 2002) states:

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature.

In the *Foreword* of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2004), Koïchiro Matsuura, former Director General of UNESCO, remarks:

The cultural diversity around us today is the outcome of thousands of years of human interaction with nature and among people with different customs, beliefs and ways of life. It is also an important source of identity and basic human rights. Having inherited this priceless legacy, we need to ensure it is passed down to future generations... This transmission cannot and should not be taken for granted. All cultures are creative and dynamic, but they are also unique, fragile and irreplaceable. A culture neglected for a single generation can be lost forever.

Cultural diversity, which is “a key area of concern” (UNESCO 2009, 1) is threatened by the erosion of traditional cultural values as a result of scarcity of traditional resources and the adoption of modern lifestyles. In general, it is presumed that globalization will lead to cultural standardization and disappearing cultural diversity.

The word *Globalization* is referred to as, “the massive flow of goods, people, information and capital across huge areas of the earth’s surface” (Trouillot 2001, 128). In thought and action, it makes the world a single space (Somayaji and Somayaji 2006, 4). Giddens (1990, 64) defines Globalization as, “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa (Kiely 1998, 3).”

The concept of Globalization primarily stands (Ember et al. 2008; Barker, 2006; Somayaji and Somayaji 2006) on global economic flow, global cultural flow and the nation-state system. Somayaji and Somayaji discuss (2006, 2-3) these three major strands as world polity theory or the theory of international relations (Giddens 2001), world system theory and world culture theory. The world polity theory of globalization focuses on the development of the nation-state and the globalization of world politics and the world system theory focuses on the capitalist economic flow that globalize world economic system. Within the world culture theory, the discussion has centered on how globalization impinges on the local and how the local responds with “the issues of cultural meaning” (Barker 2003, 169).

There are many works and different dimensions of the concept of globalization. (Friedman 1994; Kiely and Marfleet 1998; Robertson 2001; Held and McGrew 2000; Appadurai 1996, 2001; Isar and Anheier 2010; Schirato and Webb 2003; Bhagwati 2004; Sen 2006; Wise 2008). But two basic perspectives of cultural globalization, cultural homogenization and cultural hybridization are most popularly known (Schirato and Webb 2003, 155). The cultural homogenization perspective accepts that globalization create cultural homogenization by erasing local cultures. The followers of this perspective argues that the dominated power have less to choose from what they want. J. Macgragor Wise (2008, 32) gives an example from the book *How to Read*

*Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart published in 1971. In this book, the authors explore and evaluate how the Disney comic books influences the minds of the children of Chile (a socialist society at that time) by representing a society where no families exist; there are only uncles and nephews who compete with each other for advantage, women who simply and only flirt with men, a world of stuff to buy, and overall a world that is build on materials more than on family and love. The followers of this perspective believe that globalization have forced and accelerated the processes of change that leads to increasing social inequality, the destruction of indigenous cultures, environmental degradation and an overall decline in global cultural diversity (Millar and Wood 2007, 612).

Giving counter argument, supporters of cultural hybridization perspective have not accepted the full extinction of local culture and argued that the globalization is a two way process, through the mixing of different cultures or “hybridization of culture.” By definition, Globalization indicates universality and homogenization, though the actual experiences of globalization of the people differ. Thus, according to Robertson (2001, 462), Globalization is not an all-encompassing process of homogenization but a complex mixture of homogenization and heterogenisation. For Arjun Appadurai (1996, 11), globalization is not the story of cultural homogenization. He argues in his book *Modernity at Large* (1996, 17) as, “globalization is itself a deeply historical, uneven, and even *localizing* process, globalization does not necessarily or even frequently imply homogenization or Americanization, and to the extent that different societies appropriate the materials of modernity differently, there is still ample room for the deep study of specific geographies, histories, and languages.” Amartya Sen also believe that globalization is not a single way process from west to east, it is also a process from east to west. In his book, *Identity and Violence* (2006), Sen illustrates examples of the knowledge of mathematics of Indian scholars and the way it had passed to western countries through the Arab traders in 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century, or the transaction of the technological knowledge of printing technology, a Chinese invention, magnet and gunpowder, which helped the west in the period of industrialisation and power. Sen believes that one person can carry many identities. He can be a global citizen as well as he can have an equally powerful local identity.

Accepting both perspectives, the present study tries to explore the involvement of global cultural flow in increasing homogeneity or increasing heterogeneity or a mixture of both in context of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **1.3. Disappearing Cultural Diversity and Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Cultural diversity is based on cultural heritage of different communities. Heritage is often defined as a legacy from our past that we pass on to future generations to learn from, marvel at and enjoy (UNESCO 2004, 22). Cultural heritage is separated into two categories: tangible heritage, which includes historic sites, monuments and other objects, and intangible heritage, which includes dances, songs, stories, chants, languages, music, theatre and other oral traditions. The tangible and intangible cultural heritages are elements of culture. The disappearing cultural diversity means the disappearance of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. However, the present study deals with the intangible cultural heritage elements as these elements are more fragile and endangered by effects of globalization.

Intangible cultural heritage is a prime aspect of cultural diversity. Ruggles and Siverman (2009, 1) quoted William Logan (2007) on the definition of intangible cultural heritage as, “heritage that is embodied in people rather than in inanimate objects.” Article No. 2. of UNESCO’s *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* 2003, (UNESCO 2003) define the intangible cultural heritage as,

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith- that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Intangible cultural heritage could be anything; objects that can be held, songs that can be sung, stories that can be told or skills that can be learned. Regardless of their significant present or possible economic value, these are considered important to preserve for future generations, because these create the bond and belongingness: to a country, a tradition or a way of life. Intangible heritage, which cannot be touched, but can be experienced, form the community's sense of identity. Existence and understanding of intangible cultural heritage increases mutual respect for others way of life and encourages peace and social cohesion in the world. It includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010, 2004).

UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010) comments on intangible cultural heritage:

While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. If intangible cultural heritage is not nurtured, it risks becoming lost forever, or frozen as a practice belonging to the past...To be kept alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to the community, continuously recreated and transmitted from one generation to another.

UNESCO, the specialized agency of the United Nations, takes steps for an effective safeguarding of the cultural heritage. Among those measures, the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* 2003 was a major step for safeguarding intangible cultural heritages and developing new policies. This convention distinguishes five broad domain of intangible cultural heritage as:

- Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage

- It facilitates in the vibrancy of cultures including preservation and continuity of cultures.
- Performing arts (such as traditional music, dance and theatre)
  - The performing arts, including mainly music, dance and theatrical performances, are an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage domains.
- Social Practices, rituals and festive events
  - These are identity markers. They help in developing and strengthening bonds of affiliation and link between a community’s worldview and perception of their history.
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
  - Many of the rituals and beliefs of the community originate from their attitudes towards the physical and natural environment.
- Traditional craftsmanship
  - This involves the traditional skills and expertise and it serves a repository of the knowledge and belief system of a particular community.

However, the boundaries between domains are extremely flexible and multiple domains may have the same element(s) of intangible cultural heritage, i.e. a theatre performance include in performing arts domain as well as oral tradition domain and the craft objects used in that performance are included in traditional craftsmanship domain.

Table.1.1. Numerous forms of the broad domains of intangible cultural heritage

<b>Oral Traditions and Expressions</b>	<b>Performing Arts</b>	<b>Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events</b>	<b>Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe</b>	<b>Traditional Craftsmanship</b>
Proverb riddles, tales, nursery rhymes,	Vocal and instrumental music, dance,	Worship rites, rites of passage, birth, wedding and funeral rituals,	Traditional ecological wisdom, indigenous	Tools, clothing and jewellery, costumes and

legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances	theatre pantomime, sung verse	oaths of allegiance, traditional legal systems, traditional games and sports, kinship and ritual kinship ceremonies, settlement patterns, culinary traditions, seasonal ceremonies, hunting, fishing and gathering practices, special gestures and words, recitations, songs or dances, special clothing, processions, animal sacrifice, special food	knowledge, knowledge about local fauna and flora, traditional healing systems, rituals and beliefs, initiatory rites, cosmologies, shamanism, possession rites, social organizations, festivals, languages, visual arts	props for festivals and performing arts, storage containers, objects used for storage, transport and shelter, decorative art and ritual objects, musical instruments , household utensils, toys, (amusement and education)
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Source: Adapted from UNESCO ICH Kit. 2010. Table by Rashmirekha Sarma

UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010) mentions different effects and forces of globalization that threatened the domains of intangible cultural heritage. These effects are listed in a table below.

Table.1.2. The effects of globalization in the domains of intangible cultural heritage

<b>Intangible Cultural Heritage Domains</b>	<b>Major Effects Of Globalization</b>
Oral Traditions and Expressions	Rapid urbanization, large-scale migration, modern mass media (electric and print) and internet, industrialization, environmental change
Performing Arts	Standardization, Abandonment, Commoditization, Social and Environmental Factor

Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events	Migration, individualization, the general introduction of formal education, the growing influence of major world religions
Traditional Knowledge and Practices	Rapid urbanization, the extension of agricultural lands, climate change, continued deforestation and the ongoing spread of deserts
Traditional Craftsmanship	Mass production of the goods needed for daily life by the multinational corporations, environmental change and climatic pressures, deforestation and land clearing, changing social conditions or cultural taste

Source: Adapted from UNECO ICH Kit. 2010. Table by Rashmirekha Sarma

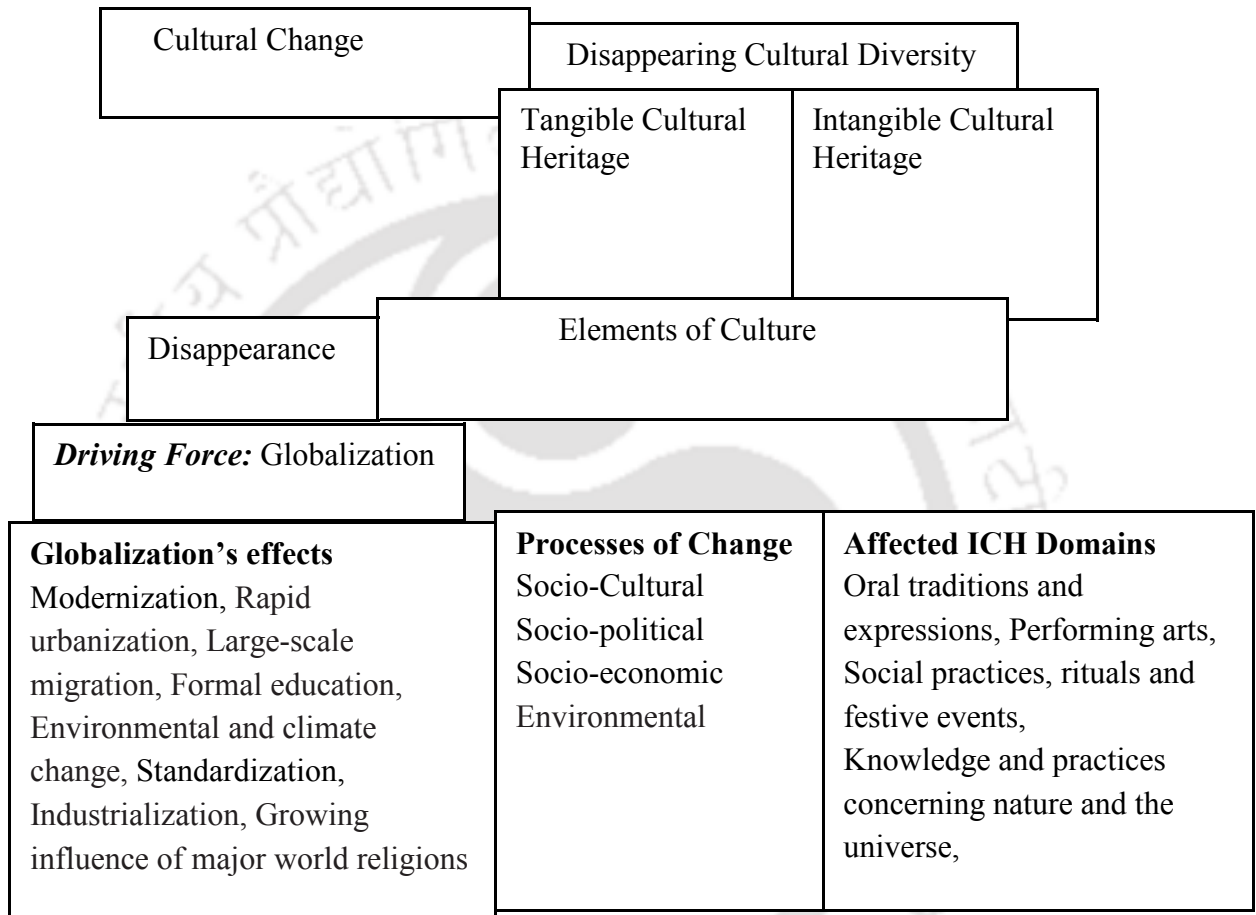
These effects of Globalization have brought rapid socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political or environment processes of change. These change processes are:

- Socio-cultural Processes of Change: Lack of respect towards traditional knowledge, lack of knowledge of their traditional literature, lack of time for performing traditional rituals and reluctance to speak their mother tongue are the causes that brought the socio-cultural changes among the indigenous peoples e.g., the Minhe Mangghuer of China or the the Tharus of Chitwan (Nepal) (Yongzhong & Stuart 2007, 243-257; Guneratne 2007, 91-106).
- Socio-economic Processes of Change: The development policies that are taken by the governments are also responsible for the disappearance of cultural diversity. Knowingly or unknowingly, an image is created among the people that development only happens through some particular and specific ways, like modern education system, modern medical facilities etc. Economic developments create new jobs and professions that attract this newly educated generation to opt for modern professions. There are often no options available except to accept the changed life to step in the modern world and get the desirable future. This follows loss of interest in their old and ancestral profession, which formed part of their cultural identity.

- Socio-political Processes of Change: There are many political causes like closed border, war and terror, defense projects etc. that affect cultural diversity. Nations have been fragmented often by the political powers into geopolitical borders that disrupt the movements of indigenous groups. For security reasons closed borders are created and it affects the way of life of many groups, like the peripatetic (Rao 2007), who resides in the vicinity of the border. The movements are essential to the groups' long-term ability to sustain families, kin, and ways of life (Dhar 1996). War and terrorist activities often leads to rapid changes of culture (Rao and Casimir 2007). The Asian region of the world is extremely affected by these two factors and cultural minorities are the worst sufferers in this era of militarization and conflict. Mission for nuclear power prompted many powerful countries to develop defense projects and establish research centre's in the distant and previously isolated regions, which are dominated by indigenous groups (Reddy 1995).
- Environmental Processes of Change: The indigenous groups also face environmental problems that impede their traditional subsistence strategies. Many of these groups are essentially dependant on the forests for their livelihood but these forests lands have now been converted to reserved forests and restricted for use as grazing fields (Mahanty 2003). Climate change is also largely responsible for bringing in changes in the subsistence pattern of the people. In a programme named as *Cultural Shock: Geo sessions* and telecasted in NatGeo Adventure channel (21 June, 2009: 7.30 am), Falu, a singer of Indian origin, expressed that we not only lose the environment for climate change, but also lose cultural diversity related to seasons. She comments, "...We have six seasons or *ritus* and music related for every season. Some years ago, the rainy season or *varsha ritu* was 4 months long, but now, it is only for two months. The cultural moments, songs or other traditions related to *Varsha ritu* and Monsoon are gradually disappearing with the reducing period of time of the season."

Consequences of these processes have been seen in all the domains of intangible cultural heritage. The situation is more alarming because all these processes are interwoven. Few elements of intangible cultural heritage are limited to a single domain. If one domain is affected, the other would also be threatened.

Figure 1.2. Conceptual Structure of the Study



Source: Created by Reashmirekha Sarma

Although there are different views and different polarized arguments about globalization, it is simply not possible to go back to a non-globalized era. Ember et al. (2008, 511) rightly comment:

Even those who are most upset with globalization find it difficult to imagine that it is possible to return to a less connected world. For better or worse, the world is interconnected and will remain so.

The essential challenge would be to propose a logical vision of globalization to clarify how, far from being a threat; it can become beneficial to the actions of the safeguarding of cultural diversity. To explore the idea of cultural disappearance in context of Arunachal Pradesh, the essential part is to view both the arguments through the eyes of the people of Arunachal Pradesh who are now involved in their own efforts to negotiate with globalization's effect to survive and reshape their way of life.

#### **1.4. Disappearing Cultural Diversity: Selected Writings on Arunachal Pradesh**

Cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage are new in the global research arena. UNESCO is the major forum, which primarily focuses on these two aspects in recent times at the global stage. Disappearance of cultural diversity has an important focus on the recent world reports of UNESCO. With UNESCO's *Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage or World Heritage Convention* in 1972, the concept of "world heritage" took centre-stage. In this convention, it is clearly stated that the loss of any specific cultural or natural heritage represent the immeasurable loss of heritage of all nations of the world. UNESCO enunciated a *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* in 1989, which was the first document specifically targeted at intangible cultural heritage and its preservation. In 1995, *Our Creative Diversity*, a report of the World Commission on Culture and Development was published where UNESCO emphasized on importance of culture on development. In 2001, UNESCO announced the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. This document states that cultural diversity is as necessary as biodiversity, a source of social cohesion and development, human rights and identity and a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence. This Universal Declaration conceived the idea of Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention as *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003. Accepting the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as the key word of cultural diversity, this convention defined some specific domains of intangible cultural heritage for safeguarding it from the threats of the effects of globalization. Giving importance to the relation of cultural diversity and globalization, UNESCO published a world report as *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* in 2009. This world report

states that while globalization may threaten cultural diversity, it also may encourage social cohesion through cultural awareness and interchange. To circulate the idea of safeguarding the threatened intangible cultural heritage domains, UNESCO released an intangible cultural heritage brochure kit in 2010.

Brower and Johnson (2007) articulates that the situation of disappearing cultural diversity is apparent in South and Central Asia mainly, where people belong to small groups with unique identities developed over generation and which is now radically changing under the effects of globalization. The people from India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and other South and Central Asian countries, who specifically have different and unique cultural identities, face the rapid decline in their ethnic cultural diversity and have merged fast in a global homogenized culture.

India is home to 52 million indigenous people, one of the largest in the world (Miller and Wood 2004, 624). However, large majorities of these groups are rapidly losing their cultural diversity and entering into a global homogenized community (Robbins 2007; Rao 2007; Reddy 1995) Cultural Diversity, Intangible Cultural Heritage and particularly its disappearance are “least researched areas” in the country, and some sketchy works had been done recently. For example, the Raikas (Robbins 2007, 37-51), a semi-nomadic community of animal breeders and livestock raisers of India, who are facing the threats of changing and transforming lifestyle and culture for reasons like climate change; the Kashmiris whose socio-cultural traditional system known as ‘Kashmiriyat’ have collapsed after decade long civil war and political unrest (Rao and Casimir 2007,129-152) or the peripatetic people whose survival is a question as they face challenges in practicing their traditional occupation (Rao 2007, 53-72).

The Yanadi is a scheduled tribe community of Andhra Pradesh. Nearly 50% of Yanadi live in Nellore district. A small fraction of them live in the Shriharikota Island and they are more primitive than the Yanadi of Nellore district. In 1969, the Yanadi group was forced to migrate to places outside the island to facilitate the establishment of the Shiharikota High Altitude Range project as part of the East Coast Rocket Launching

station at Shriharikota island by the Indian Space Research Organization, Government of India. This displacement of the people by this project for the larger interests of the nation not only involves socio-cultural and economic changes among the Yanadis of Shriharikota island, but also disrupted their day to day life (Reddy 1995).

The Garos of Northeast India is another indigenous group who has suffered as a result of the closed border. The division of Garos actually started during the British period when the British divided them into two different political territories, the Garos of the hills of Assam and the Garos of the plains of Mymensingh. After independence, the plain Garos were forced to join East Pakistan and latter on Bangladesh. The majority of Bangladeshi Garos are now living in Madhupur forest, 75 kilometres from the Bangladesh border. They have lost connections with their hill counterparts and changes are seen in their traditional life style, rituals, dress, food and housing patterns. A number of Garo women domiciled in Bangladesh wear sari and the males wear lungi as other Bangladeshi men, often speak in Bengali, follow wet paddy rice system and construct houses of mud because they are denied access to forest resources, which are on the other side of the border (Burling 1998, 345-363).

In Assam, there are only 5000 people of the Tai Phake community, who have migrated from Thailand. They mostly live in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia district. Their language bears close resemblances to the languages of Thailand. Moulet Toomten, a member of the community said, "...though most of them can speak the language, the script is used by few and on rare occasions...there is a knack among the students moving out of their villages or hometown to pursue quality education at an early age and they tend to lose touch with their mother tongue and its literature." They fear that with the tragic and early end of their language and literature, performing marriage and other rituals in the traditional manner would not be possible (Ray 2009). The adoption of modern lifestyle has resulted in changed culinary and dietary habits of the Sonowal Kacharis of Dhemaji and Dibrugarh district of Assam. They now use spices in preparation of meat, which is not a part of their traditional cooking (Celeng Deka Baruah 2008, 211-215).

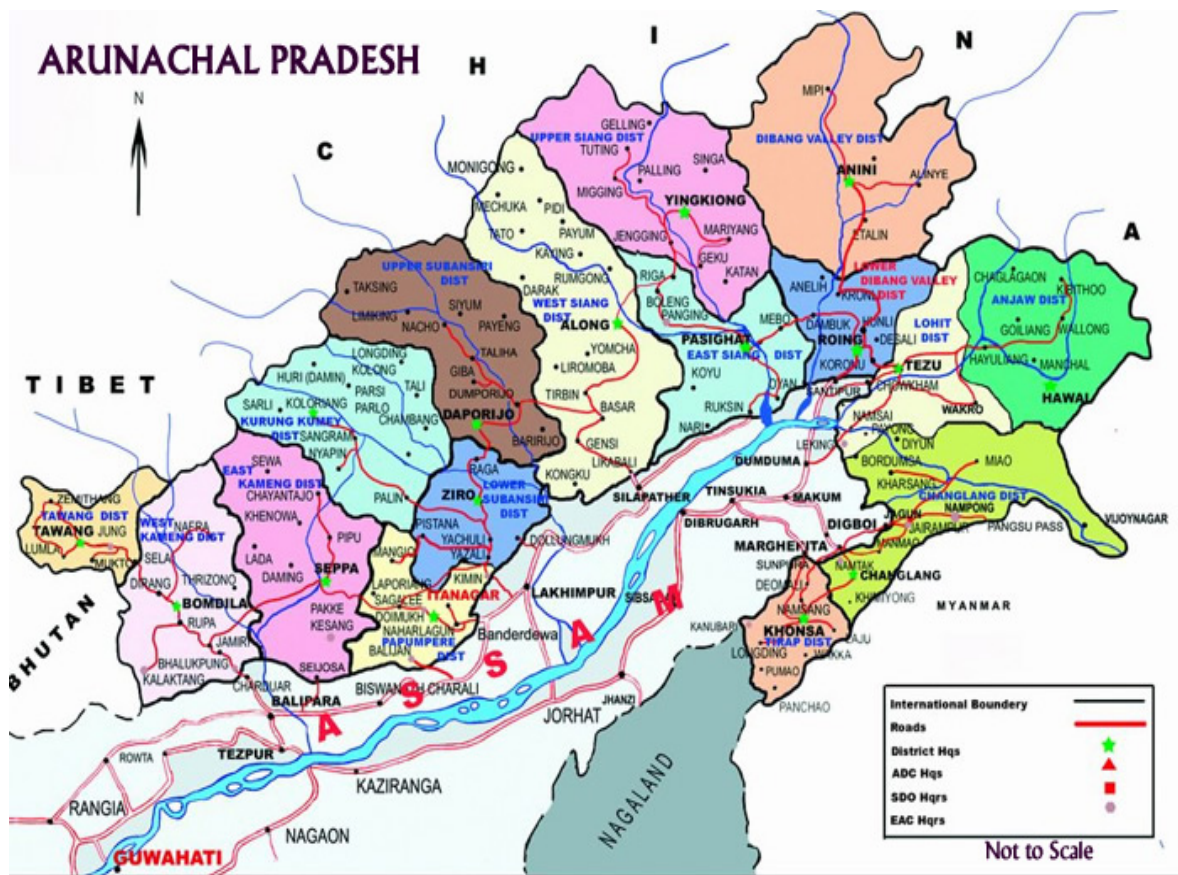
This pan India situation is visible in Arunachal Pradesh too. Arunachal Pradesh is a hill state of India in the lap of the great Himalayan mountain range. Though the Government website of Arunachal Pradesh mentions that the number of major tribe is 26, according to the *People of India* (POI) series of the Anthropological Survey of India (Singh 1995), there are 31 communities in Arunachal Pradesh along with the sub-groups.

Map. 1.1. Political map of Arunachal Pradesh

**India**



Courtesy: <http://www.mapsofindia.com>



Courtesy: <http://arunachalpradesh.nic.in/pgallery.htm>

Table.1.3. The list of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh

Adi tribe and its sub groups	Tangsa tribe and its sub groups	Monpa tribe and its sub groups	Mishmi tribe and its sub groups	Single tribes
Adi: Ashing	Tangsa: Havi	Monpa: But	Mishmi:	Aka, Bangni, Deori,
Adi: Bori	Tangsa: Kimsing	Monpa: Dirang	Digaru	Khamba
Adi: Karko	Tangsa: Lungphi	Monpa: Lish	Mishmi:	Khampti, Apatani
Adi: Milang	Tangsa: Morang	Monpa: Chug	Miju	Lisu (Yobin), Miji,

Adi: Padam	Tangsa: Muklom	Monpa:	Mishmi: Idu	Mishing/Miri,
Adi: Pangi	Tangsa: Sangwal	Kalaktang		Hill Miri, Khowa
Adi: Ramo	Tangsa: Tikhak	Monpa:		Khamiyang,
Adi: Tangam	Tangsa: Yongkuk	Tawang		Mikir, Tagin
Adi: Bokar	Tangsa: Jugli			Na, Nyishi/Bangni,
Adi: Gallong	Tangsa:			Sherdukpen,
Adi: Komkar	Lungchang			Sonowal Kachari,
Adi:	Tangsa: Lungri			Nocte, Singpho,
Minyoung	Tangsa: Mosang			Sulung, Memba,
Adi: Pailibo	Tangsa: Ronrang			Tibetan, Chakma,
Adi: Pasi	Tangsa: Sanke			Nepali, Wancho,
Adi: Shimong	Tangsa: Tonglim			Zakhring

Source: Adapted from POI: Arunachal Pradesh series. Singh 1995

Arunachal Pradesh is a new area for studying cultural diversity and particularly its disappearance. According to UNESCO, 197 languages of India are endangered (Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger), among which majority are from Arunachal Pradesh. Many researchers have been working on the linguistic diversity in Arunachal Pradesh (Post 2012; Blackburn 2012) and its disappearance (National Geographic 2011). As language is the base of all other domains, the intangible cultural heritage domains of Arunachal Pradesh are under pressure.

However, rapid cultural change is noticed in Arunachal Pradesh after the independence of India and largely, after the Sino-Indian war in 1962. After this war, government of India started development programmes in a large scale and it had a great impact on the social, political, administrative and economic development of the indigenous groups (Modi 2004; Dhar 1996; Riba 1997; Sebastian 1999; Arunachal Pradesh Development Report 2009, 193). The various development activities helped in developing communication between the communities of Arunachal Pradesh and the rest of the country and this introduced new customs, ideas or goods. In matter of hairstyle, dress, ornaments or traditional household articles, the old orders are being replaced by modern trends and modern utensils. Changes have taken place in matters of food, new items

like oil, spice, pulses etc. have been added to their traditional meat, fish and rice diet (Dutta 1981, 1997).

The issue of cultural change and change related concerns started to get importance as early as 1957, in the works of Verrier Elwin, one of the earliest and most prominent writers on Arunachal Pradesh. Verrier Elwin [(1957)2009, 1958, 1970, 2009] not only introduced Arunachal Pradesh (Then NEFA or North East Frontier Agency) to the world, he was equally concerned about the changing worldview of the indigenous people as they were gradually merging themselves in the global mainstream.

This changing worldview is reflected on different domains of intangible cultural heritage of the communities. After Verrier Elwin, few works highlight the change on the cultural components (the forms of intangible cultural heritage). The rich heritage of oral literature, which is the only medium to illustrate their past and the base of the traditional knowledge for the conservation of environment and traditional medicine, is fading out due to urbanization, since the new generation is not in a position to give much importance to their traditional way of life (Bhattacharjee 1997; Pandey 1997). The indigenous methods of treatment, ethno medicine or use of herbs are also decaying fast due to deforestation and modern methods of scientific treatment (Pandey 1997). Their changed lifestyle is also reflected in their housing patterns. In recent years, concrete pillars are being constructed to support the raised platform in place of the wooden post and the roof is being constructed with C.G.I. sheets replacing *toko* leaves (Behera 2007). Most of the indigenous cane and bamboo household articles have been replaced by the aluminum, enamel and other readymade ceramics available in the market (Buragohain 1982). Trousers, blouses and long skirt is gradually replacing their traditional clothing styles, woven at home (Buragohain 1982).

To describe the cultural transition, the previous researchers indicate that formal education, modern democratic institution, contact with the outside world and various developmental activities are the main agents that reshape the traditional lifestyle of the various communities of Arunachal Pradesh.

The staple diet of Padam Miyoung group of the Adis is boiled rice, boiled vegetable curry and few pieces of meat or fishes either boiled or smoked. These traditional food habits of the Adis of the neighbouring villages of Pasighat township like Yagrung, Bilat, Balak, Sille, Rani etc. have changed as they prepare their dishes using edible oil, spices etc. Similarly new set of cooking utensils made of aluminum have replaced the cane and bamboo utensils. These changes have also spread to the interior villages. Milk or milk made items e.g., sweets were traditionally considered as taboo, though the Adis have started to consume milk or sweets (Chakrabarty 1981).

The development programmes undertaken by the Government of India after the Sino-India border dispute of 1962 had a great impact on the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous groups like Milang, Padam or Tangsa. The opening of administrative centres and roads brought these groups closer to modern life. Modern education system changed their traditional dormitory institution for boys or girls. The introduction of the modern democratic institution, particularly the Panchyati Raj has changed the leadership pattern and traditional political system of these groups. Women have also started to active participation in politics. Though traditional shifting cultivation methods continue, the wet-rice cultivation is gaining popularity (Modi 2004, 2000; Sebastian, 1999).

The Monpas are a group of highland tribesmen inhabiting the district of Tawang and West Kameng of Arunachal Pradesh. Unlike the other groups of the state, they had a strong indigenous trans-Himalayan trade through which they were connection with the Tibetans, the Bhutanese, the Assamese and the other communities in the mountains. There was a sudden break in this flourishing tradition after the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962 and they were forced to change their indigenous subsistence pattern. However, the development policies of government of India have brought rapid transformation in their socio-cultural life (Dhar 1996, 2005).

The Noctes, a major tribe of the Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh are aware about the benefits of modern education and they are now engaged in jobs and business, beside their traditional subsistence pattern of agriculture. They practice wet paddy cultivation in place of their traditional *jhum* or shifting cultivation, maintain kitchen gardens, which were unknown to the people in the recent past. The inter-community marriages have also been found in present Nocte society which previously strictly followed the rule of clan exogamy and tribe endogamy tradition and violating this rule was once regarded as a great offence and was severely punished (Singh 1997). Although Noctes have their own language, customs, traditional faith and rituals, they are influenced by Vaishnavism. In recent years, they are newly adopting some features like nam-kirtan, bhaona etc. of Eka-sarana-nama-dharma (the Vaishnavite ideological tenet of Assam) (Mahanta 1996). The rehabilitation of Tibetans, Hajongs or Chakmas and migration of Nepalese, Bengalis or Boro-Kacharis, who are not the indigenous community of Arunachal Pradesh, have brought in new elements to the culture of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh (Dutta and Sebastian 2000). The unauthorized renaming of the natural lake 'Shonga-Tser' as 'Madhuri Lake' or gradual abandoning of the practices of the art of tattooing shows the volatile nature of the intangible cultural heritage elements among the indigenous peoples of Arunachal Pradesh (The Assam Tribune 2009 and 2010)

Lamenting on the state of affairs in Arunachal Pradesh, at a seminar on tribal tradition, in 1997, the then Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Geong Apang, remarks as such,

I am not a culture vulture, but when I reflect on all the years of my life gone by, I find that our tribal life is slowly losing its charm, beauty and intrinsic values...We cannot wish away this sad reality by merely blaming the new generations of their reluctance or inability to appreciate the inherent catholicity of our tribal culture in which not only nature and spirit but also

life in all its forms are worshiped. There is new current pulsating the world and these currents are driven by a new *religion* called materialism. Western culture, which we are trying to imitate, has given rise to consumerists' society. We have gone to the extent of consuming the very vitals of our culture making its spiritual muscle so weak that we cannot fight the invasion of acquisitive society. It has affected all walks of our life, be it social, economic, political or legal.

### 1.5. Issues and Objectives

The study of cultural change in different societies or groups has developed and diversified from a long time by anthropologists. The scant literature available on cultural change in Arunachal Pradesh has belittled the significance of cultural disappearance as a perspective. Therefore, Arunachal Pradesh is a potential site for research into cultural disappearance.

Viewed from this perspective, globalization is accepted as the main aspect of rapid cultural decline. However, it is inevitable in the modern world, and the people of Arunachal Pradesh are now involved in their own efforts to negotiate survival with globalization. To negotiate the idea of cultural disappearance and its perspective in the context of Arunachal Pradesh, some questions have been raised:

- Has cultural change resulted in disappearance of cultural traits or have it just taken a new form?
- What are the affected domains of intangible cultural heritages in Arunachal Pradesh and how these are affected?
- (If changes have resulted in disappearance), what are the specific processes operating in Arunachal Pradesh causing this disappearance of cultural diversity and resulting in homogenization?
- (If changes have resulted in disappearance), is there a chance to slow the accelerating rate of culture loss? Have we found a place of utilization for them in the new patterns of life and create a new field of appreciation?
- (If change has just taken a new form), have the new form appropriate or appreciate the old school/ field of tradition?

The research will try to answer this question based on the domains of intangible cultural heritage. In Arunachal Pradesh, identification of the effect on these domain areas will be the focus of the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### In a Methodological Frame: The Study

[This chapter emphasizes on the theoretical and methodological approaches of the study. It deals with the methodology and theory used for data collection, analysis and explanation of the field findings. To do this, the chapter discusses the process of research designs with emphasis on the specific design or methodology used for this study along with the various methods and techniques adopted for the data collection at length.]

#### 2.1. Approach to Theory and Methodology

The method of investigation is one of the most important parts in a proper study. In any research, the researcher must have ideas regarding what he/she considers important in order to describe and or explain his/her research. The aspects of life which will be focused on a research project is usually based on researcher's subject interest, theoretical orientation or preferred method of research (Ember et al. 2008, 231).

In writing research, four key words- *theory*, *methodology*, *method* and/or *technique* are particularly necessary. Theory helps to explain the situation and methodology helps to reach that understanding of the situation through a step by step process. The key terms are defined as:

- A. Theory: Theory is an approach or approaches to explain phenomena or data. Theoretical perspectives also shape choice of methodology and methods. Cargan (2008, 30) defines the theory as, “logically interrelated, generalized statements or propositions about empirical reality that explain or describe the interrelationship of more specific propositions.”
- B. Methodology: Methodology is a systematic process of investigation to collect and analyze data. A *methodology* can be defined as, “a global style of thinking used to investigate a research” (Gobo 2008, 18), “a general approach to studying research topics” (Silverman 2010, 121), or an “overall research strategy” (Mason 1996, 19).
- C. Methods/Techniques: Some researchers have accepted the terms *method* and *technique* as same (Gobo 2008; Creswell 2003) whereas some define these two terms differently (Ellen 1984; Cargan 2008); though there are no firm definitive line between these two. Gobo defines (2008, 22) the method as, “a tool, a technique or a mode of collecting data that is specific, codified and widely used operational procedure”, e.g., case study, ethnographical study, community study, survey etc. There are techniques for collecting data and there are techniques for analyzing that data.

The theory and methodology, particularly used in this study is discussed at length in this chapter.

## **2.2. The Methodological Frame**

Different social scientists have discussed the process of social investigation in different ways. In *Research Methods in Social Sciences*, Somekh and Lewin (2005, ix) have asked some core questions of social investigation or research. These are:

- How does research begin?
- How are problems formulated?
- How is the research problem influenced by the theories that are used?
- What form does the research design take?
- What kind of methods of social investigation can be used to assess the research problem?

- What are the techniques of social science research that can be used?
- What approaches can be taken for analyzing data?
- What processes occur during the course of research that impact on the researcher and the research findings?
- In what ways can research be communicated, disseminated and published?

Colin Robson (2002) identifies some activities that answer these core questions. These are:

- Deciding on the focus
- Developing the research questions
- Choosing a research strategy
- Selecting the method(s)
- Arranging the practicalities
- Collecting the data
- Preparing for analysis
- Reporting what you have found

Activities to answer the core questions clearly indicate that social research is based on a step by step process, though in many points, the steps are cyclic and parallel. There is no fine line among the steps and more correlated sub steps are noticeable in many steps.

This process of social research is:

- **First step:** Finding focused or broad area of research from where the research begins.
- **Second step:** Find out the types or purpose of research that indicate various routes of investigation.
- **Third step:** Formulating research questions or research problems based on the broad area and the purpose of research.
- **Fourth step:** Choosing the research design/approach and strategies/methodologies with the theories influencing the research.
- **Fifth step:** Selecting the methods and techniques to collect the data.
- **Sixth step:** Choosing the theories and approaches for analyzing data.

- **Seventh step:** Selecting the ways that the research can be communicated or published.

### **2.3. Beginning of the Research**

Research begins with choosing the focused area or the broad area of research and gradually develops into the formulation of the research question or problem. Finding the focus involves identifying what it is that researchers want to gather information about. The ideas come from own experience or observation or from discussion with others or from reading different ideas. Curiosity is generated by media happenings, personal values, everyday life and topics of current interest and concern (Neuman 1994, 110). Inspired by Barbara A. Brower and Barbara Rose Johnston edited book *Disappearing Peoples? Indigenous Groups and Ethnic Minorities in South and Central Asia* (2007), the idea of the focused area of this research is mainly based on the current interest and concern of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the disappearance of intangible cultural heritages (ICH) of different communities.

Reviews of literature on the focused area are to start along with the selection of the broad area of research. “No research takes place in a vacuum, and so there exists relevant literature” (Cargan 2008, 19). The literature review is an ongoing process that starts with researcher’s primary literature review for researching the background. Review of the relevant research of previous investigators is useful in indicating gaps in existing research studies on the topic and unanswered questions and signifying best methods for carrying out the research. Literature review includes theoretical literature about the research topic, empirical literature about the earlier research in the field of the study or similar fields and methodological literature about how to do the research and how to use the selected methods (Flick 2006, 58).

After the preliminary review of relevant literature on the focused area, the research question(s) are developed. Based on Flick (2006), the key points of research questions are:

- Formulating clear and specific research question(s).
- Many research questions can arise in a research topic, but it is important to decide the primary one or two among them.
- Research questions should be answerable. It is necessary to identify already answered questions.
- Deciding the purpose or type of research will help to concretize research questions.
- Research questions are refined and reformulated as the research proceeds.

Choosing the types or purpose of research is the parallel step with formulating research question(s). Research can follow various routes of investigation or enquiry: research can be used to explain, evaluate or emancipate, explore, and/or describe the received material (Cargan 2008; Robson 2002, 59-60). Exploratory research includes relatively unstudied areas or new topics and generates ideas and hypothesis for future research. It evaluates phenomena in a new light and almost exclusively based on qualitative approach. Looking for an explanation of a situation or problem, explanatory research finds out the answers of *why* questions. Descriptive research defines and describes social phenomena. “In evaluative research, the researcher is trying to establish how successful the implementation of a policy or a particular project is in achieving its goal” (Cargan 2008, 7).

The perspective of this study emphasizes the accelerating rate of cultural change at the present age of globalization. The primary research questions of the focused study (mentioned in chapter 1) basically indicate the exploratory and explanatory nature of the study, because it is a relatively unstudied area and the transformation of culture has never been seen by most of the researchers from this perspective.

### **C.6. Research Design**

“Research design turns research question(s) into project” (Robson 2002, 79). The framework of research design is commonly based on research questions, purpose and theories. Usually social science research design is of two types, qualitative and

quantitative, though Creswell (2003) mentions about another approach as mixed method approach. In quantitative approach, the researcher employs predetermined and fixed strategies such as experiments and surveys that help to collect statistical data. Qualitative approach includes flexible strategies based on open ended questions and observation data. The mixed method research utilizes both fixed and flexible strategies to get a more feasible analysis of research. Both explanatory and descriptive researches are based on either qualitative or quantitative design. As the research questions of this study indicate exploratory and explanatory purposes of research, qualitative research approach is more appropriate to design this study.

Qualitative research is enriched by number of methodologies. The key methodologies of qualitative research approach are case study, ethnography, grounded theory etc.

**A. Case study:** Case study strategy is widely applied and practiced for a long time, though the definitions are diverse. It can be defined as “a research strategy that focuses on the behavior, history, social context, symptoms, and treatment of one organization at one definite point in time or a small number of individual cases that have features in common” (Cargan 2008, 204) or “development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single ‘case’, or of a small number of related ‘cases’” (Robson 2002, 89). A case can be almost anything; it can be an individual, community or group, organization, event, or a situation to either explain or describe in-depth and in-detail. The case study can be useful for generating theories or for developing tentative conclusions, so it is appropriate for descriptive or exploratory studies (Cargan 2008, 204). A case study design involves a number of data gathering techniques, such as in-depth interviews, participant/ non-participant observation, the documentary materials found in available data sources etc.

**B. Ethnographic study:** The literary meaning of the word “ethnography” is “writing about people.” Creswell (2003, 14) defined ethnographic studies as, “in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data.” The characteristic features of ethnographic research (Robson 2002; Gobo 2008; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) are:

- It observes, explores and interprets a group, organization or community's life and experience in their own world in a flexible research process.
- The researcher participates in people's daily lives and studies them in everyday contexts in ethnographic research.
- Participant observation and relatively informal conversations are usually the main sources of data, though the different kinds of documents and audio-visual materials are also the important source.
- Data collection is mostly unstructured because no fixed and detailed research design is specified at the start of the ethnographic research. The focus is usually on a few small-scale, perhaps a single setting or group of people to facilitate in-depth study.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, 3) mention that, “the analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts.” In small-scale communities, researcher depends on participant observation but in large and complex societies, the researcher inevitably relates to “fiction and mass media, statistics and historical studies” (Eriksen 2004, 48).

**C. Grounded theory study:** “Grounded theory is a theory generating research methodology” (Corbin & Holt 2005, 49), based on flexible research design and applicable to a wide variety of phenomena (Robson 2003, 90).

Creswell (2003, 15) mentions two other important strategies of inquiry: phenomenological study and narrative research. Phenomenology is a philosophy as well as a method (Moustakas, 1994), which study the human phenomena within the everyday social contexts (Titchen & Hobson 2005, 121) and in this process, the researcher ‘brackets’ his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadmy, 1993). In narrative research, the researcher studies the lives of individuals based on their self narrated life stories.

Based on the UNESCO identified five broad domains (oral traditions and expressions, including language; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship) of intangible cultural heritage, the study will organize five case studies to illustrate the answers of the present research. The review of literature on cultural change of Arunachal Pradesh revealed that most of the studies cover the transition of all aspects of the life of the studied group and none has assessed cultural components thoroughly through the standpoint of cultural change or cultural disappearance. This is why the case study methodology is accepted as the primary methodology.

### **2.5. Data Gathering Techniques of Research**

To gather most of the primary data for research, researchers undertake fieldwork after selecting the primary research methodology for the research. Fieldwork needs (Eriksen, 2004):

- Hypotheses and/or research questions based on prior ideas about the research area.
- A framework for the planned fieldwork to what to collect or what not to collect.
- Read relevant literature from other societies to sharpen one's understanding or preparing for comparison.
- Prepare theoretically for fieldwork.

In the arena of research, talking on the phone to get interactive conversation for ethnographic data, visiting libraries for collecting documents are also doing fieldwork.

There are many techniques for conducting qualitative fieldwork. The major clusters of data gathering techniques are *observations, interviews, audio-visual materials and different kinds of documents collection* (Creswell 2003, 185-188). In observation, researchers meet informants, observe them and converse with them in their ordinary everyday contexts through participatory or non-participatory ways. The observation is noted as field note, research diaries, document sheets etc.

In interviews (Robson 2002, 70; Crewell 2003, 188; Gobo 2008, 191; Flick 2006, 173), researchers conduct different types of interview e.g., individual interview, telephonic interview, focus group interviews, depth or in-depth interview, narrative interview, ethnographic interview etc. However, there is no ultimate borderline in these interview types and ethnographic or narrative interviews can also be in-depth individual or in-depth group interviews. On nature, interviews are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews have fixed and predetermined questions within a fixed set-up and generally, these are applied in fixed (quantitative) research design. In semi-structured interviews, questions are predetermined, but question order and wording can be changed. Unstructured interviews have general area of interest, but conversation develops in its own way within this area. Both these two interviews are extensively exercised in qualitative research. Telephonic interviews are mostly structured whereas individual and focus or group interviews have stretched in structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Ethnographic interviews are in depth and unstructured interviews that are conducted on the field and as part of ethnographic techniques like participant and non-participant observation (Gobo 2008, 191).

Different kinds of documents, including public documents e.g., news papers, journals, minutes of meetings, census data, official reports, archival records etc. and private documents e.g., personal diaries, letters, e-mails etc. are also collected in a qualitative research. Techniques of audio-visual materials are taking photographs, viewing and examining art objects, films and videos, collecting any forms of audio or sound and computer software.

Selected techniques from all the four clusters of techniques are used in the case studies. Collecting relevant documents is the first step to initiate the present research. To structure the background of the study, different kinds of public documents, e.g., books, research journal's article, newspaper article, census data etc. are collected for literature review. These documents will also be helpful to analyze the data after collection. The main data gathering technique is interview. Interviews are primarily unstructured and open-ended, based on descriptive and in-depth questions, though the initial questions

are directly answerable biographical questions on family, occupation etc. The interviews are generally individual and group ethnographic interviews. Observation techniques (non-participant) along with the audio-visual techniques such as, taking photographs and audio recording will be extensively used in the data collection for all case studies of the present study. The observation is noted as field notes.

## **2.6. Theorizing the Idea**

Theorizing the idea is an essential part of any research. Selection of any aspect of life for a research and explanation of that particular aspect is based on the theoretical orientation. Infinite numbers of valuable data is observed and gathered in a research project; it is the researchers' idea what they consider important in order to describe and or explain among those unlimited valuable data and to do so, a theory can help them. Cargan (2008, 30) remarks, "it is the theory that directs the researcher, aids the researcher in making sense of interrelated phenomena, and allows for the prediction of attitudes or behavior likely to occur under certain conditions." No theory is universal to explain human lives and different theoretical approaches provide different styles of explanation.

There are two forms of theory (Flick 2006, 60). The first form of theory is substantial theory and the second form of theory is context theory. The first form of theory helps to conceptualize the research study through literature. The second form of theory explains the issue under study and the theoretical context of the issue(s). The idea of this study has emerged from the notion of globalization's effect on the process of cultural disappearance. Globalization, as a source of socio-cultural change, is considered as the substantial theory of present research. Globalization's effects are multidimensional and the present study is rooted on the current interest and concern of UNESCO on the disappearance of intangible cultural heritage worldwide by the effects of globalization. In this study, it is attempted to explore if global change is involved in increasing homogeneity or increasing heterogeneity, or making a mixture of both.

For the context theory, this study will focus on new ethnography ((Saukko 2006). The new ethnographic approach is amalgamating the essence of phenomenological and hermeneutics approach of research with the methods of ethnography. The defining feature of new ethnography is its commitment to be 'truer' to lived realities of other people (Saukko 2006, 56). A variety of research tools, including ethnography, life story interviews and autobiography is used in new ethnography approach. The main features of new ethnography (Saukko 2006, 57-58) are:

- Traditionally, any kind of social research aims to present the view of locals rightfully. However new ethnography accepts that it is never possible to capture and present 'native's point of view' rightly from outside and the researcher can only try to examine or analyze how they are different from the researcher or similar to the researcher.
- New ethnography also accepts that the researcher always has some limit because of his own understandings. The researcher has some prior personal ideas or social values based on his lived experience, which he cannot give up when studying others. For example, if an Indian researcher studies western culture, it is difficult for him/her to remain neutral and his analytical ability is based on his experience. As Kirby and McKenna (1989, 46) put it: "Remember that who you are has a central place in the research process because you bring your own thoughts, aspirations and feelings, and your own ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, family background, schooling, etc. to your research."
- Another important characteristic of new ethnography is that it accepts the non-rational ways of lived experience such as emotions or the sacred (Saukko 2006, 57). The traditional social science research neglects or does not accept these non-rational ways of experience. In new ethnographic study or writing, the writer tries to be truer to the emotional form of experiences.
- Besides being truer to others, new ethnography includes self-reflexivity, polyvocality, testimony etc. Self-reflexivity shows the researcher's own reflexiveness of his experience on research by which he understands others and it accepts that the researcher cannot be unbiased. Polyvocality indicates that the

lived experiences and realities are many in a research and testimony explains one's personal account or experience that speaks for a collective experience.

To understand the locals and their intangible cultural heritage through accepting my limitation and their emotion towards the intangible heritage forms, new ethnography is the most appropriate approach. New ethnographic approach helps to explore the wide factual background of the study and evaluate the answers of the central research questions of this research. *'Has cultural change resulted in disappearance of cultural traits or has it just taken a new form?'* --- to answer this question, this approach is most suitable as persons from different age and gender have their own views on this perspective.

### **2.7. Making Sense of Data**

Analyzing data is not a separate phase of the research. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, 158) rightly comment that analyzing the data starts in the pre-fieldwork phase and continues through to the process of writing the research reports. "As a conceptual process of reasoning, thinking and theorizing" (Phelps et al. 2007, 208), qualitative data analysis involves making sense out of text, image and sound data.

Based on Creswell's "generic step" (2003, 191), the process of analyzing data can broadly be divided into four chronological steps. These are:

Step.1: Read the data thoroughly to acquire a general sense and overall meaning of the information and write notes

Step.2: Sorting & arranging the data into different categories based on research questions, concepts and themes.

Step.3: Generate a description from the categorized data. Description involves a detailed picture of information about people, places or events in a setting (Creswell, 2003:193). To convey the findings of the analysis, the most popular style is using a narrative passage including visuals, figures or tables with descriptive information.

Step.4: Interpreting the data is the final step in data analysis. Creswell (2003, 194-195) comments, "these lessons could be the researchers' personal interpretation, placed in

their individual understanding originated from their own culture, history and experiences. It might also be a meaning derived from a comparison of the findings with information gathered from the literature or present theories, that suggest that the findings either support and confirm past findings or diverge from it. It can also suggest new questions raised by the data analysis that the inquirer had not predicted earlier in the study and that need to be asked.”

In the present study, collected data will be first described in detail and then analyzed according to central issues of the topic. There is no single standard form to analyze qualitative data, hence, through a systematic and comprehensive approach; the present study will try to answer the research question.



The conceptual structure of the research design of the present study is presented in a table below.

Table. 2.1. Conceptual Structure of the Research Design

Topic Name: Culture Change, Globalization and Disappearance: A study in Arunachal Pradesh	
What is already known about this issue in particular or the area in general?	UNESCO works on effects of globalization on intangible cultural heritage, disappearing intangible cultural heritage and it's safeguarding. Besides this, a selected group of researchers is visible globally mainly working on South Asia. On Arunachal Pradesh, few works on cultural change have been done till now. No researcher has observed cultural change from 'cultural disappearance' perspective.
What concept are used?	Observing cultural change from the perspective of disappearing cultural diversity (intangible cultural heritage).
What has not been studied yet?	Assessment of specific cultural component of the various communities studied through the standpoint of cultural disappearance.
What are the still open questions?	Culture and its transition---Are cultural elements disappearing or changing to a new form? Is there any way to slow the accelerating rate of culture loss?
Which theories are used and discussed in this area?	My theoretical approach is manly Globalization. For interpreting the data, this study will focus on new ethnography.
What are the theoretical debates or controversies in this field?	Has Globalization forced the disappearance of the cultural elements or has it opened new avenues for these elements?
What are the methodological traditions and alternatives here?	The present study observes and tries to analyze the research questions on local's lived experience and their adaptation and negotiation with the situation.

Source: Adapted from Fliwk, Uwe. 2006. *An introduction to qualitative research*, P.59 and Burton, Dawn. ed. *Research Training for Social Scientists: A Handbook for Postgraduate Researchers*, P.221.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Arunachal Pradesh: Land, People and Intangible Cultural Heritage**

[An overview of Arunachal Pradesh including the glimpses of intangible cultural heritages is illustrated in this chapter. This chapter gives a brief account of the state's geographic and ecological background, history, people and their demographic and ethnographic features and the state's economic and political development. The chapter also provides a brief introduction of the domains of intangible cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh and highlights the broad agents of change.]

#### **C.7. Arunachal Pradesh: The Landscape**

Arunachal Pradesh, formerly known as NEFA (North East Frontier Agency), is one of the youngest states of Northeast India. Arunachal, an extension of mountain ranges of the Himalaya and the Patkai, is the largest state among the states of Northeast India, occupying an area of approximately 83,578 sq. kilometer. This thinly populated state lies roughly between the 26<sup>0</sup> 28'N and 20<sup>0</sup>30'N latitudes and 91<sup>0</sup>30'E and 97<sup>0</sup>30 E longitudes. Situated along the northeastern frontier of India, the area has great strategic significance. This easternmost part of the country is bounded on the three sides by international borders with Bhutan in the west, China in the north and northeast, Myanmar (Burma) in the east and Assam and Nagaland to the south. The entire area towers over the plains of Assam in the shape of a horseshoe.

The altitudes range from 300 metres on the edge of Assam to above 7,000 metres on its northern borders. Arunachal Pradesh has a varying geo-morphologic and geo-climatic set-up. While the climate is very humid in the lower altitudes and valleys, it is extremely cold in the higher altitudes. Except a narrow belt of comparatively plain area in the foothills along the border with Assam, there is hardly any plain territory in Arunachal Pradesh. The temperature varies from 30<sup>0</sup>C in the foothills and plains to 0<sup>0</sup>C in the higher altitudes.

The state has only two seasons: winter and rainy. The south-west monsoon makes Arunachal Pradesh one of the wettest states in the country, with an average annual rainfall of 350 cms. The rains start as early as April and continues almost until October, though the extremely wet months are June and July.

Table. 3.1. Arunachal Pradesh at a glance

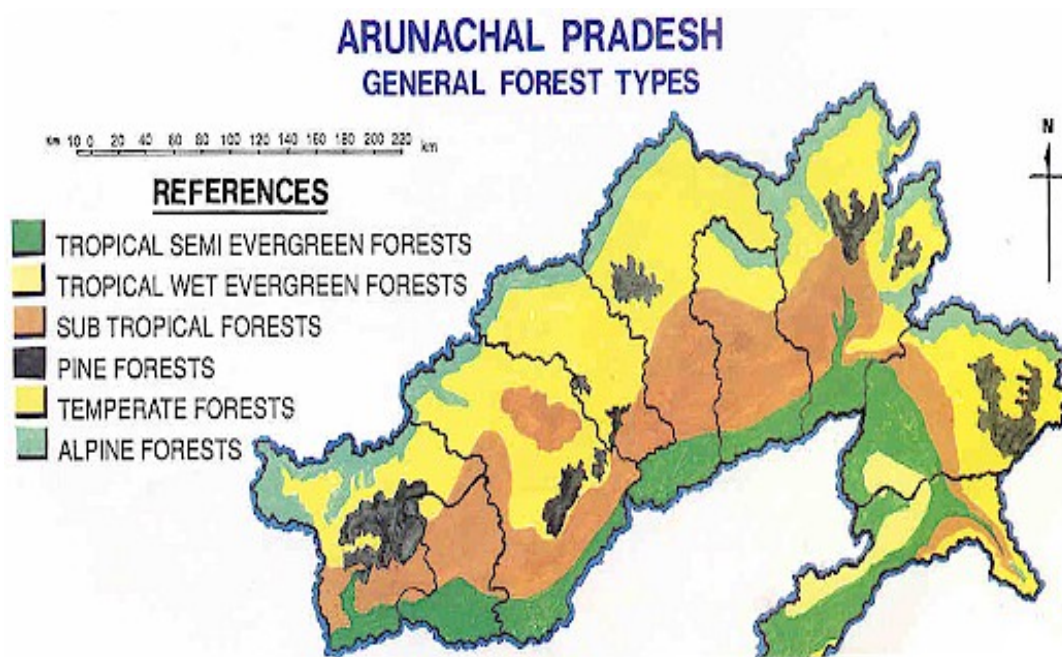
<b>Area</b>	83,743 sq. km.
<b>District</b>	17
<b>Sub Divisions</b>	20
<b>Circles</b>	108
<b>No. of towns</b>	24
<b>No. of villages</b>	3863
<b>Population (2011 Census)</b>	13, 82,611
<b>Males</b>	7,20,232
<b>Females</b>	6,62,379
<b>Density of Population (Per sq. km.)</b>	17
<b>Sex Ratio</b>	920 (females per 1000 males)
<b>Literary rate</b>	66.95%.
<b>Major Tribes/Indigenous Groups</b>	26
<b>State Bird</b>	Horn Bill
<b>State Animal</b>	<i>Mithun</i> (Bos frontails)
<b>State Flower</b>	Fox tail orchid ( <i>Rhynchosylis retusa</i> )
<b>Places of historical and tourist interest</b>	Tawang, Nkshaarvat, Itanagar, Ziro, Malinithan, Akashiganga, Malinithan, Bhismanagar, Parasuram Kund, Namdapha N.P., Tippi Orchid Centre etc.

Source: Adapted from Census of India 2011 and various brochures of Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh state website.

The important rivers passing through the state are Siang, Kameng, Subansiri, Dibang, Lohit Tawang, Dihing and Tirap. Small scattered settlements are found in the mountainous terrain, whereas the foothills plains are comparatively thickly populated.

The entire state is covered with forests, which vary from the western part of the state to the east, and with changing altitude. There are alpine forests, temperate forests, pine forests, subtropical and tropical forests as well as wetlands, grasslands in the mountains and riverside grasslands (Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2005).

Map.3.1. Forest map of Arunachal Pradesh



Courtesy: <http://arunachalpradesh.nic.in/forest.htm>

The temperate forests are mainly conifer, larch, juniper and spruce. Temperate bamboos form shrubby undergrowth in many places and the broad-leaved forests include magnolia, oak, rhododendron, chestnut, sal, teak, and poplar. Out of the 1000 species of orchids in India, more than 500 are found in Arunachal Pradesh. A large variety of medicinal plants, including *Mishmi Teeta* (*Coptis teeta*, a type of poison), are also found here. The state has a great variety of wild life, which includes the hornbill,

gibbon (one of the great apes), tiger, leopard, black panther, elephant, bear, wild boar, barking deer, musk deer, monkey, langur, wild goat, wild buffalo, flying fox etc. The state bird is Hornbill and the state animal is *Mithun* (*Bos frontalis*). *Mithun* is a semi-domesticated animal and has played an important role in the socio-cultural and religious life of the people. The yak is a common domestic animal in the higher regions. The state is also rich in mineral resources like dolomite, quartzite, graphite, limestone, coal, marble, oil and natural gas.

### 3.2. Arunachal Pradesh: The People

Though Arunachal Pradesh is the largest state of Northeast India, it is the most sparsely populated state of India. According to 2011 Census, its population is 0.11% of India's population. All the states of North-East India, except Mizoram, have larger populations than that of Arunachal Pradesh.

According to the 2011 Census, the total population of the state is 13, 82,611 of which 7, 20,232 are males and 6, 62,379 are females. The sex ratio is 920 females per thousand males. The population density in Arunachal Pradesh is 17 people per square kilometer. The population is distributed over 24 towns and 3863 villages. The literacy rate in the state is 66.95 percent. The state is divided into 16 districts for effective administration. The capital of the state is Itanagar, situated in the Papumpare district.

Arunachal Pradesh is the home of 31 indigenous communities (listed in chapter 1, table no. 1.3.). The entire population of the state is divided into three cultural groups in the government website ([www.arunachalpradesh.gov.in/people.htm](http://www.arunachalpradesh.gov.in/people.htm)), based on their social, political and religious similarities. However, the Anthropological Survey of India broadly distributes the indigenous communities into five cultural zones in Arunachal Pradesh (Singh 1995).

Table.3.2. List of the cultural zones of Arunachal Pradesh

Mon cultural zone	Nishi cultural zone	Adi cultural zone	Mishmi cultural zone	Nocte-Tangsa cultural zone
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Monpas, Sherdukpens, Akas, Mijis and Khowas	Bangnis, Nishis, Sulungs, Apatanis	All the Adi sub-groups, Khambas, Membas and Mishings	All the sub-groups of Mishmis, Zakhrings/Meyors, Khamptis, Khamiyangs, Deoris, Chakmas and Tibetans	Noctes, Wanchos, Tangsas, Singphos, Sonowal Kacharis, Lisus and Nepalis
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Source: Adapted from the 'Peoples of India (POI)' (Arunachal Pradesh) series of Anthropological Survey of India, 1995.

Table. 3.3. District wise population of major indigenous groups/ tribes (Scheduled Tribe)

<b>Districts *</b>	<b>Districts headquarters</b>	<b>The major indigenous groups that inhabit the districts with their new names in bracket</b>
<b>Tawang</b>	Tawang	Monpa
<b>West Kameng</b>	Bomdila	Dirang Monpa, Lishpa, Chugppa, Miji (Sajalong/ Nimmai/Dhammai), Aka (Hrusso), Sherdukpen, Khowa (Bugun)
<b>East Kameng</b>	Seppa	Nyishi, Sulung (Puroik), Aka (Hrusso), Bangni
<b>Papum Pare</b>	Yupia	Nyishi, Apatani, Bangni
<b>Kurung Kumey</b>	Koloriang	Nyishi, Sulung (Puroik), Tagin
<b>Lower Subansiri</b>	Ziro	Apatani, Nyishi, Hill Miri
<b>Upper Subansiri</b>	Daporijo	Tagin, Adi (Galo), Nah, Hill Miri
<b>West Siang</b>	Along	Adi (Galo), Memba, Khamba
<b>East Siang</b>	Pasighat	Adi (Minyong), Mishing
<b>Upper Siang</b>	Yingkiong	Adi, Memba, Khamba
<b>Dibang Valley</b>	Anini	Idu Mishmi, Adi (Padam)
<b>Lower Dibang Valley</b>	Roing	Idu Mishmi, Adi (Padam)
<b>Lohit</b>	Tezu	Digaru Mishmi (Taraon), Khampti, Singpho, Mishing

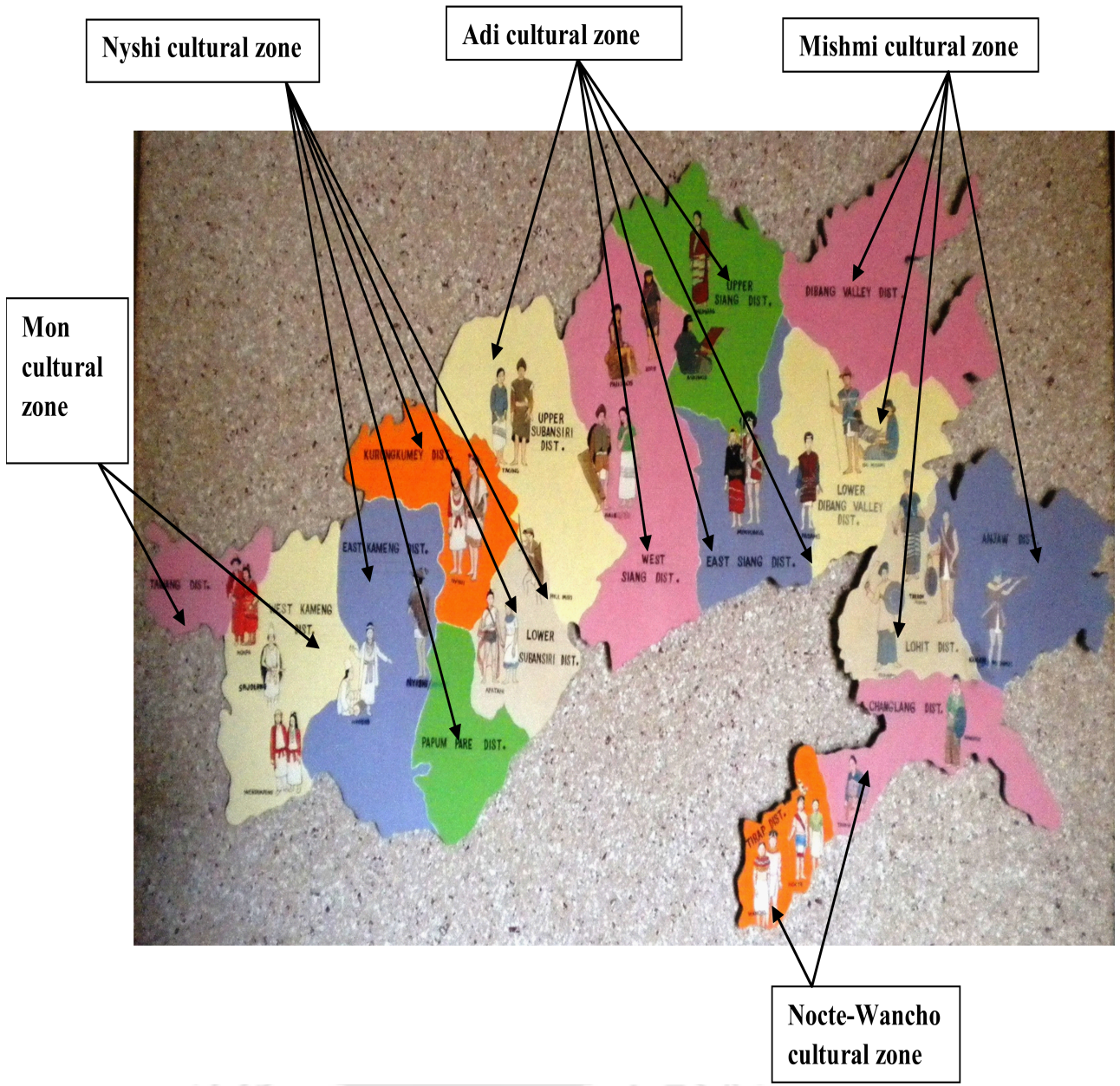
<b>Changlang</b>	Changlang	Tangsa, Singpho
<b>Tirap</b>	Khonsa	Nocte, Wangcho, Tutcha
<b>Anjaw</b>	Hawai	Miju Mishmi (Kaman) Zakhring (Meyor)

Source: Adapted from Tada and Ghosh (2008), Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2005 and Census of India 2001. As prepared from the data of Census 2001 the table may have some changes after the availability of the data of Census 2011.

\* Not included the newly formed Longding district

Co-existence and symbiotic relationship with nature is reflected in the traditional knowledge and belief system of the communities of Arunachal Pradesh. The westernmost groups of the state, Monpas, Sherdukpens, Membas and Khambas are the followers of Mahayana Buddhism. These Buddhist groups specialize in terrace cultivation, carpet making and yak and sheep breeding. Khamptis and Singphos, inhabiting the eastern parts of the state, are Hinayana Buddhist. They migrated from Thailand and Myanmar long ago. The Khamptis are good craftsmen, enterprising traders and export agriculturalists. The Noctes and Wanchos inhabit the southeastern part of Arunachal Pradesh.

Map 3. 2. Community and cultural zone map of Arunachal Pradesh



ute of Technology

Courtesy: The Directorate of Research, Arunachal Pradesh, Guwahati, Assam. Photo: Rashmirekha Sarma

The central indigenous communities of Arunachal Pradesh, the Hrusso, Nyishi, Apatani, Tagin, Adi, Mishmi, Tangsa etc., are the worshippers of the sun and the moon, called *Donyi-Polo*. They believe themselves to be descendants of *Abo-Tani*, claimed to have been the first human being on earth. They traditionally practiced *jhum* or shifting cultivation, though wet-rice cultivation is also practiced in many places. The Apatanis, settled in Lower Subansiri district, are famous for wet-rice cultivation and a stable agricultural economy.

**3.3. Mythical History:** The history of Arunachal Pradesh is full of myths and legends. Legends says that at this place sage *Parasurama* washed away his sin, sage *Vyasa* meditated, King *Bhismaka* founded his kingdom and lord *Krishna* married his consort *Rukmini*. *Puranas* describe this region as *Prabhu Parvat*.

However, there are hardly any written records of the ancient period, widely scattered archaeological remains found in many districts of Arunachal Pradesh testify to its rich and varied cultural heritage. Archaeological evidences i.e. the Neolithic and Paleolithic tools show that this region was inhabited (Sharma 1984-85, 10; Sharma 1991, 53-54; Dutta 1999, 136; Tripathi 2002, 29-33; Sarkar 1982, 11-14). Malinithan, a temple in the foothills of West Siang district is a prominent site strewn with temple ruins like stone sculptures, ornamental pillars, lintels etc. (Chakravarty 1975, 3-4; Das 1992, 43; Tada 2005, 26). In Itanagar, a historical fort has been identified with old Mayapur, the capital of the 11th century AD Jitri dynasty (Das 1941). Though there is no archaeological evidence to establish the date, the bricks of the fort are typically medieval and of the pre-Ahom period. The Tawang Gompa (monastery) in the Tawang district is one of the best Buddhist monasteries in India and was built in 17<sup>th</sup> century. This monastery consists of a huge complex with 65 residential buildings and the main temple structure (Sarkar 1981). It still contains a wealth of old scriptures and records, beautifully

illustrated religious books and images. These archaeological and architectural findings illustrate the rich tradition of Arunachal Pradesh from ancient times.

The mythical tales of different indigenous groups however describe the past of the inhabitants of this state. The rich oral tradition of the communities of Arunachal Pradesh depicts the stories of their migration and settlement in this high land including their relationship with nature. The Sherdukpen tales tell that they are the descendents of the Tibetan king who married an Assamese princess and their third son was given the area now occupied by the Sherdukpens (Sharma 1988). The Bugun folk tales indicate that they arrived in this state even before the Sherdukpens (Pandey 1996a). The Hrusso beliefs inform that they migrated from Ziga, possibly situated somewhere in upper Assam to their present habitat. The Hrusso believes that *Buslo Aou* was their ancestor and they are the offspring of *Nyarji* (sky) and *Now* (earth) (Ahmad 1995a). The Miji have similar legends that say *Abu Gopen Gomo* was their mythological ancestor and they had migrated from the plains of Assam (Ahmad 1995b).

The oral tradition of Adis, Bangnis, Apatanis, Tagins, Hill Miris, Niyishis etc. groups tell that they are the descendent of the mythological ancestor *Abo-Tani*, the first man on earth though every group have their own version of the *Abo-Tani* story. According to the Mishimi mythology, God penetrated the womb of the first woman and the child, born of this union, is the father of the first Idu Mishmi (Baruah 1988). There are different legends of the mythological origin of the Noctes and one of them indicates that they are the descendents of *Khunbao*, who was a chief (Ahmad 1995c).

The Khamptis, belong to the greater Tai-Shan groups, who immigrated from Mung-Khampti or Bor-Khampti of Irrawaddy valley of Myanmar and settled around Tengapani river in the year 1751 and later, scattered to different places in and around Sadiya (Dutta Chaudhury 1978). The Lisus are the most recent migrants among all the communities, who came to this region in the year 1940-41 from Putao, the northern most town of Kachin state in Myanmar and settled in Vijayanagar and Miao area of Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh (Maitra 1995).

The written references to the people of this area first appeared in the Ahom *Buranjis* (chronicles of the Ahom rulers of Assam). The Ahoms came in direct contact with the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh when they successfully brought the entire area from Sadiya to the Subansiri river under their control. Some of the hill tribes troubled the Ahom rulers with their sporadic raids and plundering in the foothills. The kings continuously struggled to restrain the people of Arunachal Pradesh within their hills, though they never attempted to annex the tribals' territory, nor did they interfere in their internal affairs. The Ahoms simply wanted to hold them in their own hills and sent out punitive expeditions only when there were major raids. Ahom ruler *Swargadeo* Pratap Singha introduced the system of paying *posa* to some tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The *posa* was a kind of payment made by the Ahoms to the tribes in lieu of peace. This was the forerunner to the frontier policy of the British (Singh 1995). The Ahom Government appointed some officers to supervise the maintenance of relations with the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

This hilly region remained as an independent area without any administrative control until the Anglo-Burmese war 1824-26. After annexation to the British territory, it was declared as Non-Regulation province in the year 1838. The area was a part of Bengal until a separate post of Chief Commissioner was created in 1874. In 1873, the Lt. Governor of British India prescribed the Inner Line, which would pass through the Kamrup and Goalpara districts towards Bhutan; the Darrang district towards the Bhutiyas, Akas and Daflas; the Lakhimpur district towards the Daflas, Miris, Abors, Mishmis, Khamptis, Singphos and Nagas. This "Inner Line Regulation" proscribed rules regarding transit, trade, possession of land beyond the line and other related matters. In 1882, the post of the Political Officer was created. After bringing the whole area under British administrative control, this hilly region was separated from Assam and formed North East Frontier Tract (NEFT) in 1914. The tract was divided over a period of years into administrative units from west to east called, Balipara Frontier Tract, Lakhmpur Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier tract and Tirap Frontier Tract Units (Singh 1995).

### **3.4. Arunachal Pradesh: Development after Independence**

After India's independence in 1947, the North East Frontier Tract was renamed as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the year 1951 under part- 'B' of the sixth schedule of the constitution of India as the tribal areas of Assam. In 1954, the territory was reconstituted under *North East Frontier Areas Administration Regulation* and renamed as the Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Tuensang Frontier Divisions. In 1957, the Tuensang Frontier Division was excluded from the NEFA and included in Nagaland (then Naga Hills). In 1965, the other frontier divisions were renamed as the Kameng, Subansiri, Tirap, Siang and Lohit districts. From August 1, 1965, the administrative responsibility of NEFA was transferred from the External Affairs Ministry to the Home Ministry of the Government of India (Brochures of Government of Arunachal Pradesh 2008a, 2008b, 2005). On January 20, 1972, NEFA became Union Territory and was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh. The Union Territory emerged as a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987. With the formation of a new district of Longding in 2012, there are 17 districts in Arunachal Pradesh. The State legislative assembly comprises of 60 members including three members of parliament.

Development came late to Arunachal Pradesh. It was only after independence of India, the communities of Arunachal Pradesh experienced a process of transformation from a state of traditional economy to a stage of multi-faceted socio-cultural-economic development. However, this development has not fully flourished yet. The major resources of traditional economy of the communities are land, water and forests. As per 2001 census, 63 percent of total workers were engaged in agricultural activities (Arunachal Pradesh Development Report 2009, 191). The majority of the people practice *jhum* or shifting and terrace cultivation, but settled farming is gaining popularity. Nearly 60 percent of lands have been brought under *jhum* cultivation (Arunachal Pradesh Development Report 2009, 193).

Their indigenous economy is based on the systems of barter and exchange. Before the British occupation over this region and imposition of the restrictions on trans-border movement, the communities have had barter trade relation with the people of Assam, Tibet and Myanmar. The communities who lived along the border of Tibet brought

various items such as salt, copper, woolen garments, precious and semi-precious stones from Tibet in exchange for forest and agricultural products. The people of Lohit, Tirap and Changlang districts imported daos, fishing nets, spears, penknives and garments from Burma in exchange for handloom products, tealeaves, salt and breads. Opium was one of the main items of trade. The Mishmis supplied musk deer, skin, honey and *Mishmi Teeta*; the Noctes supplied local salt, and the Wanchos supplied raw coal and crude kerosene oil to the people of Assam in exchange for cloth, yarn, utensils and other agricultural products. They also have intercommunity barter trade relation (Singh 1995).

After independence of India, the people of Arunachal Pradesh have been gradually experiencing large scale contact with people of pan-India composition and as well as exposure to modern trade and commerce such as industries, factories, workshops, co-operative movements etc. A number of small-scale industries like saw mills, piggery, basketry, bamboo-work and cane-work have been established in the state since independence of India. The educated persons of various communities are engaged in government and private jobs as well as small-scale business. However, they are still far from the dynamic processes of industrialization and the mineral resources of Arunachal Pradesh are still unexplored and unexploited, though some initiatives have been taken (Sharma D. 2005).

To boost up the development scenario, the government of Arunachal Pradesh has taken up a number of policies and schemes. To tap the State's natural resources such as mineral wealth, hydro power and horticultural potential, the Government's focus is on building up infrastructure, transport and communications, and power sectors. However, because of dense forest, mountainous terrain, cold climatic condition and thinly distributed villages' (some villages are situated even as high as 10,000 feet above the sea level) and flood, the development of communication networks have become expensive and difficult. Arunachal Pradesh has shown effective progress in education, though only after 1947 the state has started to get exposure to modern education system. The male literacy rate in the state is 73.69 percent and female literacy rate is 59.57 percent (Census 2011).

Though there are many economic and administrative developments in the state through government policies and other administrative activities, the region is also facing rapid changes in cultural diversity in the last two decades, indicated in many previous studies. However, will this rapid change lead to cultural disappearance or not, is the big question that is explored in this present study.

### **3.5. Intangible Cultural Heritages of Arunachal Pradesh: A Cohesive Idea from Previous Writings**

The first chapter of this study draws the attention to the issue of cultural disappearance in context of Arunachal Pradesh. However, before proceeding to the case studies, it is necessary to look at the broad-spectrum of every domain of intangible cultural heritage in the context of Arunachal Pradesh and how the key issue of disappearing cultural diversity emerges through the socio-cultural changes in this region.

Being the home of almost 30 indigenous communities, Arunachal Pradesh is vivaciously vibrant in the realms of intangible cultural heritage. All communities, whether it is Buddhists, or followers of *Donyi-Polo* or other faith, have a highly developed sense of colour, music and rhythm. From cheerful to solemn, the dances and music of the communities have a large variety. Except some Buddhist communities, who maintain written records (mainly in the form of religious books), the other communities have preserved their traditions in the oral form. The colours of landscape and life are reflected in their handicrafts. Buddhist communities specialize in painting religious and semi-religious motifs and woodcarvings while other groups are specialized in making bamboo and cane objects. Women from almost every indigenous community are excellent weavers. The people of Arunachal Pradesh are also well known for their traditional knowledge on flora and fauna from *Mishmi Teeta* to sheep breeding and to producing local salt.

**3.5.1.** The origin and identity of every society mirrors in its *oral tradition*. Oral tradition is very diverse in Arunachal Pradesh as almost sixty-six dialects are spoken in

Arunachal Pradesh including Chakma and Nepali language. However, the whole structure of the linguistic diversity of the state is based on verbal form as only the Khamptis, Monpas, Sherdukpens, Khambas and Membas have their own script (Singh 1995). The evidence of richness in oral tradition and expression is visible in the mythical stories of the origin of the indigenous communities, in their prayers and rituals, in their knowledge and skills, and in their performing arts.

Unfortunately, few studies have been done particularly on the oral traditions of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Directorate of Research, Arunachal Pradesh is a pioneer organization who works on the languages of the majority of indigenous groups and publishes many books on phrase, tales, dictionaries etc. The district gazetteers and published and unpublished research works on indigenous communities of the state also give some lights on their oral traditions. However, despite the richness, not all these works illustrate the overall picture of oral tradition of Arunachal Pradesh. Besides few dictionaries and grammars, very few works are available on proverbs, myths and tales, songs etc., and no works are noticeable on riddles, nursery rhymes, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants and dramatic performances. These few works on myths, tales or proverbs are also limited to only two or three indigenous groups and there is a total silence on the oral tradition of other groups.

Even with the fact that the material life including oral traditions of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh highlighted from the pre-independence era through some then British residents and other foreign researchers works, perhaps, the first significant work on the oral tradition of Arunachal Pradesh is Verrier Elwin's *Myths of North East Frontier of India* (1958) and *A new book on tribal fiction* (1970). In *Myths of North East Frontier of India*, the author includes nearly four hundred myths collected from all over the Arunachal Pradesh from 1954-1957. In *A new book on tribal fiction*, Elwin includes the tales of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, which gives brief glimpses of institution of slavery, village councils, dormitory of boys and girls, barter trade, attitude towards women, rare and popular motifs etc.

The Adi indigenous community (the Adi is a generic category which includes 15 sub groups) is one of the most studied and written group in the oral traditions and expressions domain. The oral tradition of the Adis are preserved in the form of *Abang* (rhapsodies relating to myth of creation, origin of several institutions), *Bari* (myth of origin and evolution of various institutions), *Abe* (introductory speech of *Kebang* i.e. village council), *Kongki Bote* (narration of historical facts and exploits of great ancestors in verse in Abe tune), *Penge* (the funeral hymn relating birth, material life of deceased, death and journey of the soul to the next world), *Odong* (genealogy) etc. (Borang 2006, 48-49). Eshi and Angu (2005) describe Adi oral literature in two sections: ritual and social. The *Nyibu* or the priest recites the oral ritualistic chants. These chants are different types, e.g., *Uyu Benam* (here the priest alone performs the chanting with the parallel tunes), *Uyu Dinam* (the *Nyibu* with one *Boo* or supporter perform the prayer part and sings word by word and the *Boo* follows each and every word starting from the second syllable of the *Nyibu* in a high pitched tone), *Yebo Henam* (related with the hunting or putting the fire for *jhum* cultivation) etc. The social section of Adi oral literature includes *Anne-Yo-Anna* (the love song), *Ajen-Aa-Ito-Laka* (entertainment song) etc.

The Nyishi group also have their treasure of myths and tales that throw lights on their faith and beliefs and customs. The most significant feature of Nyishi myths and tales is the perception of *Abo-Tani*, their mythical ancestor and cultural hero. Their priest chants different myths on different occasions, such as myth concerning the origin of *mithun* (*Bos frontlis*) is chanted before the animal is sacrificed on any ritual (Bora 1995).

There is very little information about proverbs from previous works. The Idu Mishmis have a rich oral tradition including songs, tales, proverbs and sayings and most of the elderly members of their society are well versed with the oral literature. Some popular proverbs of Idu Mishmis are (Pulu 2002):

*Imu lahindo mey yeha laha yi:* It is human nature to commit mistakes.

*Imu khege mey tapumme chiku-ga yimi:* A man cannot enjoy all comforts and pleasures in his life so also one cannot attain every-thing in life.

Proverbs and saying are also very popular among the Adis that are generally used in narrating *Abangs* mythology and in *Abe* speech. Some popular proverbs and saying of Adis are (Tayeng and Megu 1990):

*Doying kar-pitem pugi jin-pimang, biri gilobem danik topimang (ami takam luyinnam agom dem ati ilamang)*: A matter, which is decided by absolute majority of people, cannot be altered easily.

*Dodum tumiem giijinako toro rokpoko doomalo donagko lotmuem paajibo-nako kibo aroko doomalo (Kebang lubona abuko kamamilo dolunge dulamang)*: If there is no perfect man who can lead or guide the people, a society cannot exist.

**3.5.2.** The *performing arts* of Arunachal Pradesh are vivaciously colorful. They dance for merriment, festivals & rituals, and wars or even for funeral. The boys and the girls learn the dance movements by imitating the movements of the elders. The dances, performed by the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, have been broadly divided into four groups. The first group is the ritual dances that are a part of the ritual. This group may again be divided into five subgroups. The first subgroup of the ritual dances includes those dances, which are performed to secure prosperity, good health and happiness of the dancer, his family, village or the whole community in various rituals. The second subgroup comprises those dances performed in ceremonies related to agriculture to secure a good harvest and increase procreation of domestic animals. The third subgroup is associated with the funeral ceremony when the soul is prevented from haunting its old house and guided by the priest to its abode in the land of the dead. It is generally believed that if the soul returns to its old home, the family suffers diseases and deaths. The fourth subgroup consists of the fertility dances where the rhythmic movements are believed to promote fertility. War dances make the fifth subgroup, which are performed on the victory in intergroup feuds and raids. The war dances are common among almost all the non-Buddhist communities (Sarkar 1974).

The second group is the festive dances that form the recreational part of a particular festival. The third group is the recreational dances that are not the part of any particular festival or ritual. The fourth group is pantomimes and dance dramas which narrate a

mythical story or illustrate a moral and are educative in purpose. The Buddhist communities mainly perform pantomimes and dance dramas (Sarkar 1974).

Songs are the integral part of these dances. As a part of oral traditions, songs reveal the myths and legends of the communities as well as illustrate their love for nature and beauty. The mythical song or *Abang* of the Adi group about the origin of paddy and other crops, *mithun*, fowl etc., is sung during their *Solung Punung* festival in August-September after the last weeding or before harvesting. Though there are no significant theatre performances among the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, the dance dramas of Khamptis are noteworthy. The dance drama is called *Kapung* (*ka* means dance and *pung* means story) means the story depicted through dance. These dramas are generally staged during the festivals (Sarkar 1974, 50-51).

Pantomime is a part of the performing arts of the eastern indigenous communities inhabited in the Mon cultural zone of Arunachal Pradesh, who are the Mahayana Buddhists. The Monpas and Sherdukpens have several pantomimes depicting some legendary stories or events. The performers wearing magnificent and colourful masks perform these pantomimes. The Sherdukpen pantomimes are performed during the festivals of Chokor, Chosiwang and Tonuwang and the Monpa pantomimes are staged during the *Losar* or New Year festival, though these can also be performed at any other time of the year (Sarkar 1974).

**3.5.3.** Small gatherings to large-scale social celebrations and commemorations, *social practices, rituals and festive events* are closely linked to a community's worldview and perception of its own history and memory (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). Arunachal Pradesh is inhabited by different indigenous communities professing different religions. Monpas, Sherdukpens, Membas and Khambas are the Mahayana Buddhists, the Khamptis, Khamiyangs and Singphos are the Hinayana Buddhists, many groups of central Arunachal Pradesh are the followers of sun and moon or *Donyi-Poloism*, while some others follow Vaishnavism or their very own traditional religious beliefs. Each of the groups has their own festivals.

Most of these festivals are associated with agricultural activities and propitiating of deities to invoke their blessings for better health, production and prosperity. Dances and songs are the integral parts of the festival. Animal sacrifice is invariably associated with most of the festivals (Singh 1995, 45-46). Losar, the Tibetan New year festival, is one of the most important festivals of the Mahayana Buddhists communities, which is held for 15 days sometime in January-February according to the Tibetan calendar. Sangken is the biggest festival of the Hinayana Buddhist communities (Khamptis, Khamiyangs and Singphos) which is celebrated for three days according to the Tai-Burmese calendar in the middle of April as a spring festival. During this festival, the monks and the villagers pour water on the images of Lord Buddha and they sprinkle water on each other for merriment. The indigenous groups of central Arunachal Pradesh celebrate their major festivals from July to August. The Nyishis celebrate their major festival *Nyokum* in the month of August, the Adis celebrate their major festival *Solung* during the month of July-August for seven days and the Apatanis of the Subansiri district celebrate *Dree* festival in the month of July for three days. The other important festivals celebrated by the various communities of Arunachal Pradesh are *Tamla du*, *Reh* and *Thung* of the Mishmis, *Mopin* of the Adi Gallongs, *Khan* of the Mijis, *Mol/Moh*, *Kuk/Kuh* and *Champang* of the Tangsas, *Loku* of the Noctes, *Oriya* of the Wanchos, *Gumkum Gumpka* of the Sulungs and *Mokhosil* of the Lisus (Singh 1995, 45-46).

There are many traditional games and sports in Arunachal Pradesh, though many of these are now disappearing. The common games among the indigenous groups are wrestling, hand wrestling, the snake game, hog's rub, skipping, dragon's tail, cat and mouse, mimic warfare, hunting, archery, tug-of-war, the long jump, high jump, putting the shot etc. There are different local names of these games as these are popular almost all over the state. Wrestling is known as *Gublaka sha* in Subansiri region, *Roga and Lomin* in Lohit region, and *Garrang Wog Pom*, *Bhai Jakpo*, *Barjakpan & Cham-Cham-Po-Ana* in Kameng region. The Mishmis call skipping as *Kambu* whereas the Mijis call it as *Sithang Rai Disulou*. The snake game is a unique game that is played by 10 to 12 players, who bent down from the waist, lightly hold on to each other and cover themselves completely, as a unit, with blankets. It is known as *Harram Peya* in Subansiri region whereas Idu Mishmis call it *Tabu* (Pugh 1958).

Various indigenous communities inhabiting Arunachal Pradesh have some unwritten customary laws of their own, which are applicable for maintaining peace and harmony and settlement of disputes in the respective societies. The laws were framed by the people and applied through organized bodies like the village council. These unwritten laws are handed down from generation to generation through application and necessary addition and alternations are made in these laws subsequently to cope with the changing situation. Each of the adult individuals of that particular society are supposed to be well versed with their laws. These village councils are called variously such as *Kebang* of Adis, *Mele* of the Hrussos, *Buliang* of the Apatani, *Khapong* of the Tangsas, *Ngothun* of the Noctes, *Wangsu-Wangsa* of the Wanchos, *Bang-Nyele* of the Bagnis etc. The crimes and disputes are generally related with marriage, adultery, theft, murder, assault and physical injury, divorce, disputes about land and fishing sites (Dutta and Duarah 1997).

The food habits and culinary traditions are more or less similar among the indigenous groups of the state. Their main agricultural products are rice, maize, millet, potatoes, garlic, chilies, soyabeans, sugarcane and a variety of leafy vegetables. Rice is the staple food for most of the people; however, the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Pailibos, Boris, and Tangams take maize and millet as their staple food. Other food items are wild roots and shoots, wild edible leaves and fruits. All the communities of Arunachal Pradesh eat almost all kind of fish and meat and take rice or maize beer. Vegetables, meat and fish are usually taken boiled, though some food items, especially meat and fish are smoked over fire and preserved for months together. They also consume roasted meat or fish. Only Buddhist communities consume milk and milk products and though the other communities domesticate cattle they never drink milk, as milk and milk products are taboos in many groups (Singh 1995, 24-25; Chakrabarty 1981).

**3.5.4.** *Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe* include knowledge, knowhow, skills and practices of the communities developed through the interaction with the natural environment and expressed through language, oral traditions, memories, spirituality and worldview (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). Beliefs in a

Supreme Being (called variously as *Inni*, *Jab Malu*, *Matai*, *Nani Intaya*, *Ske*, *Rangfraa*, *Rangkauhauwa* by different communities) along with the spiritual qualities of nature characterize the tribal religion of Arunachal Pradesh. They believe in good spirits and evil spirits. Whereas the benevolent spirits give good harvest and prosperity, the malevolent spirits are believed to be capable of causing diseases, miseries and misfortunes to human being (Singh 1995). The idea of the soul and a spiritual existence beyond death coexist with this belief.

*Donyi-Poloism* is a reappearing and returning religious idea that is accepted as a form of religion by many tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, especially by the Adis, Apatanis, Tagins and Nyishis. *Donyi-Polo* (*Donyi* means sun and *Polo* means moon) is believed to be the supreme power governing the universe. There are numerous hymns and myths in *Donyi-Poloism*, though it has no written scripture (Phukan 2000, 2004). Divination is another characteristic feature where an omen is explained or attempt is made to know the future (Dutta Chaudhury 1980, 54; 1978, 73). Every tribe has its priests or *shamans* for performing rites and sacrifices, who is also the medicine man of the tribe and who transmits the oral tradition. A *shaman* has a very responsible role among the tribes who is known by different names in different communities such as *Nyibu* for the Adi, Tagin, Nyishi; *Gampa* or *Giva* or *Rami* for the Wancho etc.

The dormitory provides a place to learn the art of living in an informal manner. It is not only a training centre for all practical purposes but also the centre and upholder of cultural traits. It gives an opportunity to young unmarried boys and girls for courtship prior to selecting a life partner. The institution is called by different names by the different indigenous groups; *Moshup* (Adis), *Dere* (Minyongs), *Ngaptek* (Milangs), *Bango* (Boris and Ashings), *Pang* (Noctes) etc. The communities have also dormitories for girls called *Rasheng* (Adis), *Pinta-Khak* (Singpho) etc. (Singh 1995).

The people of Arunachal Pradesh have their own traditional methods of diagnosis and cure, and they have faith in their own medicine men and priests. According to their beliefs, the diseases are caused by evil spirits and therefore, can be cured only through spiritual interventions. In case of any illness, fowls, pigs and *mithuns* are sacrificed to

appease the evil spirits who are believed to have caused it. They use herbs and roots and leaves of wild plants as preventives against indigestion, stomach trouble, cut and wounds, diarrhea and dysentery. The village physicians have in their possessions some effective local herbs for the treatment of the patients (Dutta Chaudhury 1981, 318). Some of the common herbal remedies are:

*Baye*: It is a kind of ginger root chewed up by patient suffering from dysentery, diarrhea and flatulence. The Monpas, Khowas and Sherdukpens use this root as a cure.

*Somharu*: A kind of creeper that is cut to pieces and boiled and then its juice is applied as medicine for snakebite among the Noctes.

**3.5.5.** The people of Arunachal Pradesh present an extraordinary tradition of artistic *craftsmanship* which manifests itself through their various products. The people of Arunachal Pradesh practice a variety of craft making i.e. weaving, painting, pottery, smithery work, woodcarving, bamboo-work and cane-work. From the perspective of art and crafts, the region may be divided into three zones. The Buddhist indigenous groups make the first zone, the second zone occupies the central part from the districts of East kameng to Lohit and the third zone is formed by the southeastern part of the state.

The people of the first zone, i.e., the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Khambas and Membas make masks, woolen carpets, woolen and yak-hair caps, shoes, painted wooden vessels and silver articles. They are also experts at dyeing and painting. Those from the second zone, i.e., the Nyishis, Apatanis, Hill Miris and Adis are skilled in cane and bamboo work. They craft bamboo and cane hats of different sizes and shapes, various kinds of baskets and a variety of cane belts and necklaces. The Khamptis, Wanchos and Noctes, belonging to the third zone, are famous for their woodcarving work. The Khamptis make toys, the Noctes and Wanchos make strings of beads with attractive patterns and bamboo pipes (Singh 1995, 51-52).

The ornaments worn by the people of Arunachal Pradesh vary from one community to another. Some of them tattoo their bodies, while others colour their teeth to decorate themselves. Men and women, both wore ornaments. The ornaments are made of silver,

costly beads and shell (Singh 1995, 49-50). The style and format of an indigenous dress is the product of a long interaction between the people and their ecological setting. Usually they make their own clothing. The different indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh have a distinct style and fashion regarding their dress. This is manifested in their choice or selection of the colour for the fabrication of embroidery and the shape and size of their costumes (Singh 1995, 46-49).

### **3.6. Agents of change**

I am greatly disturbed at certain shabby articles of modern civilization replacing the artistic products of these people. I do not agree with the criticism that the preservation of tribal art and tribal dress indicates a desire to keep the tribal people as museum specimens. The danger is that these people will lose their culture and have nothing to replace it.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru [Elwin (1957) 2009, 32]

The close interaction with nature and the ability to adapt and adjust with surroundings is the common characteristic of the lifestyle of the communities of Arunachal Pradesh. This ability of adaption and interaction with nature is visible in their distinctive social structures: family, kinship, marriage institutions, economic life, political organization and so on. However, this traditional socio-cultural structure has undergone tremendous changes in the post independence period with the new politico-administrative configuration. Today changes are visible everywhere, whether it is in economy, polity, education, material or other elements of culture, religious beliefs and practices. New elements have penetrated into the old settings and new forms are emerging, resulting in increasing inter-tribe communication, cutting through former tribal boundaries (Arunachal Pradesh Development Report 2009).

In the arena of intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO identifies many effects of globalization (as mentioned in chapter one), which threaten the cultural diversity of many societies and caused the disappearance of many elements of intangible cultural heritage domains. More or less, these effects of globalization are also visible among the

communities of Arunachal Pradesh, revealed in previous works, though these effects are cited as cultural changes produced by modernization. In Arunachal Pradesh, though each community has a voluminous oral literature, common people knows very little about them and they depend on their priests who have preserved the mythical tradition. Bagra (2005) noticed that modern education is the root cause behind this dependence and gradual disappearance of oral traditions from Arunachal Pradesh. The younger generation is going away from their traditional social atmosphere with the fast economic and political movement and growing challenges of change affects oral traditions such a way that these traditions may evaporate along with elderly people of the society (Pandey and Duarah 1999). Sarkar (1980) argues that diffusion and acculturation is behind the changing patterns of the performing arts, especially dance forms in Arunachal Pradesh. He observes that the Khowas nowadays perform some dances of the Sherdukpens for merriment. The *Ponung* dances of the Padams have spread to the Minyongs and then to the Gallongs and Hill Miris. The Sherdukpens girls have picked up many recreational dances of the Tibetans whereas the Nyishis or Bagnis who had no dance form for women, are now picking up female dance and it has been probably adopted from the Nepalese. The traditional legal system has also undergone changes. Villages in Arunachal Pradesh are now under Panchayati Raj. Food habits are also changing rapidly and the people are now using food items available in the markets (Chakrabarty 1981).

In bringing about social changes, multiple forces have been working together, though their intensity varies from one community to another. In Arunachal Pradesh, the emergence and expansion of modern education, the extension of agricultural lands and settled agriculture and the increasing popularity of new religions like Christianity and Hinduism have resulted in visible deterioration of the relationship of the communities with nature and this has weakened the traditional knowledge system. Individual ownership over cultivable land is gaining importance over community ownership. With the introduction of money economy, it has resulted in institutional transformation in land, labour and capital markets. The traditional economic systems have become non-compatible with market system (Arunachal Pradesh Development Report 2009, 193).

As any living body, intangible cultural heritage follows a life cycle and therefore some elements will disappear with time, but after having given birth to new forms of expressions. Perhaps, certain forms of intangible cultural heritage are no longer considered relevant or meaningful for the community itself. To keep alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to the community. Preserving intangible cultural heritage means allowing it to change and adapt gradually and passing it to future generations, which make it stronger and vivacious (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). By playing a major role in giving the community its sense of identity and continuity, it supports social cohesion, without which development is impossible. Arunachal Pradesh stands on the threshold of a socio-cultural change: extinct, revival or merging with new style will depend on the people themselves.

**Space for Table. 3.4.**

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **From the Field: The Case Studies**

[The research questions are answered in this chapter with the help of the five case studies. The case studies are organized in three different segments. The first segment gives a general introduction whereas the second segment presents a brief detail of the

groups and the location where the fieldwork is conducted. The third segment explores the answers of research questions including the effects of globalization. In the last part, the chapter focuses on the cross case analysis and synthesis of all cases.]

I am alarmed when I see — not only in this country but in other great countries too — how anxious people are to shape others according to their own image or likeness, and to impose on them their particular way of living. We are welcome to our way of living, but why impose it on others? This applies equally to national and international fields. In fact, there would be more peace in the world if people would desist from imposing their way of living on other people and countries.

Jawaharlal Nehru

[Extracted from *A Philosophy for NEFA*, Elwin (1957) 2009]

The socio-cultural life of the indigenous people is in a state of flux due to lack of interest, time and even respect for the traditional knowledge. The inroads of economic development facilitated by the new education system, new professions, new currency system or medical facilities have resulted in changes in the age-old economy in such a way that there are no options available but to accept the altered way of life. Many political causes like closed border, war and terror, defense projects etc., have affected the cultural diversity while environmental factors (among them many are the consequences of political causes) as deforestation, construction of dams etc. has brought about changes in the life of the indigenous groups. This has initiated a process of struggle for survival of their ecological as well as cultural diversity.

All the domains of intangible cultural heritage face these processes of change. UNESCO (2010) mentions that globalization processes like rapid urbanization, large-scale migration, industrialization, standardization, individualization, the general introduction of formal education, the growing influence of major world religions, environmental changes including deforestation, the mass production of different

household products etc. have impacted on the intangible cultural heritages and cultural diversity, which forms the essence of the theme for the present research.

The primary research question of this study is--- *has cultural change resulted in disappearance of cultural traits or have it just taken a new form?* The idea of cultural disappearance is largely accepted as the result of the homogenization and uniformization of culture. Homogenization again is largely the effect of globalization. Still many disagree on it. The big debate on globalization's effects on the rapid loss of cultural diversity creates the necessity to explore this question in a new platform. This new platform is Arunachal Pradesh, a state of India inhabited by 31(possibility of finding more in next surveys) indigenous communities (Singh 1995).

Answering the primary question raises some more queries. First, if changes have resulted in disappearance, what are the specific processes working in Arunachal Pradesh causing this disappearance and is there a chance to slow the accelerating rate of culture loss? Second, if the change has just taken a new form, then does the new form appropriate or appreciate the old school of tradition?

*What are the affected domains of intangible cultural heritages in Arunachal Pradesh and how these are affected?* - is another major research question. To answer this question, all the five domains are taken for the case study because the effects of globalization are not limited to one single domain as the all domains are interrelated. Five different indigenous groups were selected to discuss five different domains, because Arunachal Pradesh is a big platform of diverse and distinct cultural zones and the intensity of the effects of globalization on intangible cultural heritage domains vary from one group to another. For each domain, the selection of each indigenous group is based on their potentiality. For example, the Khampti dance drama is the only theatrical performance that has dialogues, music and dance or the Apatanis are the only group who prepare traditional salt substitute among all the indigenous groups.

By their religious beliefs, some indigenous groups differ from others though they live in the same cultural zone (for example, Tai-Khampti and Idu-Mishmi). Based on the

cultural zones and religious beliefs, the present research is spread out in three cultural zones, i.e., the Mon, Nyishi and Mishmi cultural zones. The present study includes:

- the Dirang Monpa community from the Mon cultural zone, who are Mahayana Buddhists.
- the Nyishi and Apatani communities who are from the Nyishi cultural zone. Though both groups consider *Abo-Tani* as their ancestor, the Apatanis have converted to Christianity and is distinct from the Nyishis who are still followers of Abo tani.
- the Idu-Mishmi and Tai-Khampti groups from the Mishmi cultural zone. The Idu-Mishmi group reveres Goddess *Nani-Intaya*, their goddess of creation. The Tai-Khamptis are Hinayana Buddhists.

As mentioned in the chapter two, the process of analyzing data is divided into four chronological steps. Following these steps, the collected data from the fieldwork for the five case studies are first sorted and arranged, then coded and categorized and after that presented with the description of the situation or event. Wolcott (1994) presents three distinct ways of organizing and presenting qualitative data. These are description, analysis and interpretation. Description narrates the situation or event. Analysis systematically identifies key factors and relationships, themes and patterns from the data. Interpretation focuses on the major question of meaning- *what is to be made of it all* (Simons 2009, 121). These three categories are neither separated from each other nor sequential. Though it is easier to follow the sequential style from description to analysis, it is also possible to move from description to interpretation or a blend of these approaches or emphasizing in one particular way.

To make sense of the collected data, a sequential but blended form of description, analysis and interpretation is followed to present all the five case studies. The description highlights the focused subject of the particular case study and analysis and interpretation answers the research questions through indentifying the key factors of disappearance or simple change.

#### 4.1.

## Case Study One

### Traditional Craftsmanship

The perceptibility of intangible cultural heritage reflects in traditional craftsmanship. It is mainly concerned with the skills and knowledge involved in craftsmanship rather than the craft products themselves. The skills of craft making are as varied as craft items and range from delicate work e.g., weaving intricate designs to rough work like making large sized cane basket (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010).

There are numerous expressions of traditional craftsmanship as indicated in the table below.

Table 4.1.1. Numerous expressions of traditional craftsmanship

- 
- Tools
  - Clothing and jewellery
  - Costumes and props for festivals and performing arts
  - Storage containers, objects used for storage, transport and shelter
  - Decorative art and ritual objects
  - Musical instruments
  - Household utensils
  - Toys, both for amusement and education

Source: Adapted from UNESCO ICH Kit 2010. Table form is created by Rashmirekha Sarma

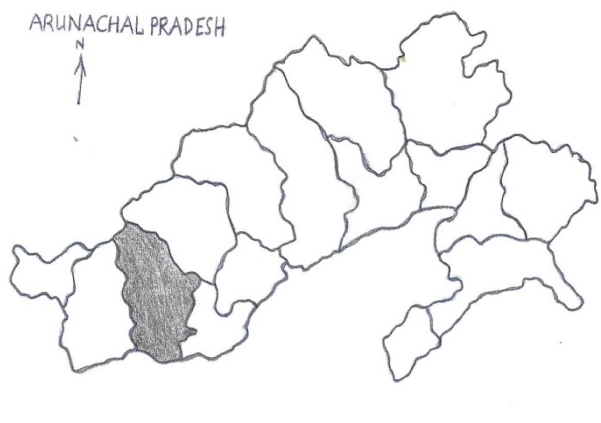
These numerous expressions of traditional craftsmanship marked its presence in different arts and crafts products of Arunachal Pradesh. The people of Arunachal Pradesh practice a wide variety of crafts that include weaving, painting, pottery, smithery work, woodcarving, bamboo and cane work including basketry. In present times, different kind of traditional crafts of Arunachal Pradesh take the form of industry as indicated in the development report of Arunachal Pradesh (2009).

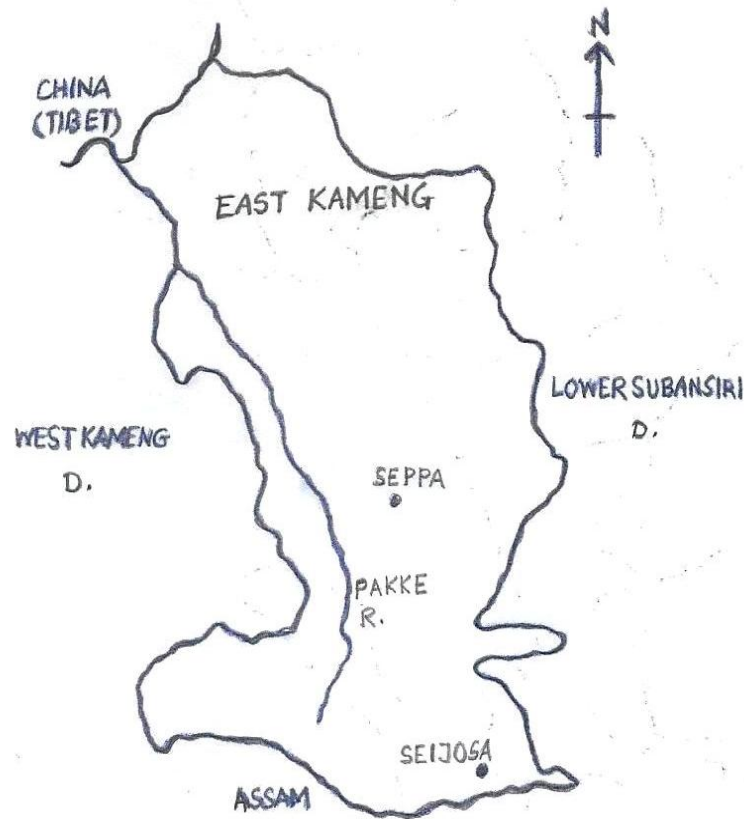
Among all the numerous expressions of traditional craftsmanship, household utensils is the focused sub theme for the case study, as these have the maximum influence of the external world within short period of time. The domestic articles of an average ethnic

house of Arunachal Pradesh usually consist of agricultural tools and implements, a loom, various cane and bamboo household utensils including fishing tools and implements, gourd vessels, and earthenware. However, modern utensils (aluminium and still utensils) and cooking style (cooking in gas stove) have gradually replaced the traditional household articles (Dutta 1981; Buragohain 1982; Vidyarthi 1986).

### **Focused Group and Location**

Map. 4.1.1. East Kameng district and the area of fieldwork





### **The area of fieldwork**

The traditional cane and bamboo household utensils of the Nyishi community of Seijosa area are particularly focused in this case study. Seijosa is in East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh. The total population of the district according to the 2001 census is 57,179. In East Kameng district, the density of population is 14 per sq. kilometer and the literacy rate is 40.64%. Seijosa is one of the 13 administrative circles of the district. It is inhabited by Akas (Hrusso), Mijis and Nyishis along with some Nepali and Bihari people. Due to flood and landslide because of heavy rainfall, the roads are almost inaccessible between May and October in Seijosa.

Though the surveys of Anthropological Survey of India separate the Bangni and Nyishi tribes (Shingh 1995), the Bangnis are recognized as a schedule tribe under the fold of the Nyishis (Dhar 1995, 47). The official website of the East Kameng district reports

that the Bangnis are called as Nyishi and the Bangnis of Seijosa area also introduced themselves as Nyishis in fieldwork. Their staple food is rice and maize including meat and fish. Community endogamy and clan exogamy is the general norm for marriages. They are patriarchal and extended families are common. The Bangnis are primarily agriculturist and the lands are individually owned. Their religious beliefs consist of malevolent and benevolent spirits. The main community festival is *Nyokum*. They are expert in basketry and weaving. They have business relationship with Assamese people since a long time and Itakhola, close to Seijosa is the main market for exchanging goods with the plain people.

### **Answering the Research Questions**

To conduct the case study on traditional craftsmanship and explore the answers of the questions of present research, such a place is required which not only interacts with the world outside their own regularly but has also preserved their own traditional world. Seijosa, situated in the periphery of Assam, has been maintaining a relationship with the Assamese people from time immemorial and at the same time, it is a geographically secluded area.

Data was collected from three Nyishi villages of Seijosa: Goloso, Darlong Basti and Upper Seijosa. Goloso is a Nyishi village with 30 households with an average of 5 members in each household. The other two villages are comparatively smaller with 10 and 15 households. In these two villages besides the Nyishis, a few Nepali and Bihari migrant households were also seen, though their number is insignificant. The total number of population studied is around 300. Their economy is mainly based on agriculture. Nyishi men between the age group of 30-45 years from these 3 villages have newly started small enterprises of their own. They mainly deal with supplying construction material like cement, sand, bricks and steel which they collect from Tezpur or Balipara.

Unstructured and open-ended group ethnographic interviews are made with the villagers in a conversation mode. Based on the research questions, some descriptive and

in-depth queries, though not treated as fixed and closed questions, were framed to collect data. To begin the discussions with the villagers, initial enquires were about the different kind of Nyishi household articles, particularly made by cane and bamboo materials, the purpose of the articles and their techniques etc. The subsequent queries posed were regarding:

- the changes on the traditional household objects and the pattern of transmission of skills and knowledge involved in this craftsmanship,
- interest of the new generation in making these products and learning the skills and if they are not interested then the reasons,
- could these products be redefined with a new function and is there any initiative undertaken by the community in Seijosa,

The non-participant observation technique along with the audio-visual techniques (photographs) was extensively used in the data collection procedure.

To observe the items of regular use in the household, their style of making and their utility, unstructured and open-ended individual interviews are conducted primarily with the craftsmen in these three villages. The case query mainly emphasized on the traditional craftsmen's perspective and observations about the changes on the traditionality of the cane and bamboo household objects of Nyishi community, as they regularly involve with making and distributing of these products.

### **The household objects and their purpose**

In an average Nyishi household of Seijosa, the common household articles of cane and bamboo are baskets, mat, hat, storage containers, fishing tools and waist loom. The main varieties of cane and bamboo plant families used for making the articles are the Poaceae (Gramineae) and Arecaceae (Palmae) (Duarah 1990, 16). The common term of cane is *Esse* in Nyishi. There are three kind of cane available in this area, named as *Tatti*, *Tatter* and *Takhi*. The local name of bamboo is *Ae*.

The two principal raw materials of handicrafts- cane and bamboo are seasoned properly by their indigenous methods. A fully matured cane and bamboo is normally considered for the purpose. A matured cane collected from the forest is first trimmed and made into rough strips. Even if the strips are not made, they are twisted round in several coils and placed over the hearth to be smoked for a considerable period. The constant smoke from the hearth seasons the cane, which make it durable and insect proof. Similarly, matured bamboos are also seasoned by the same process of smoking or by keeping them out in sunlight. Often the strips of cane and bamboo are further steeped in muddy water for more strength. Finally, the seasoned strips are trimmed to finer strips and kept ready for making the required craft items. The tools used by the artisans are knives, large and small. There are different kinds of designs like cross-woven, diamond, zigzag etc.

The utility of Nyishi household material is different, though a large number of cane and bamboo goods are mainly baskets of different shape and size. The household goods that are normally used in a Nyishi house can be classified into the following divisions based on their functions and utility.

1. Carrying and storage baskets
2. Straining baskets
3. Bags, both for men and women
4. Fishing tools
5. Hats
6. Mats and other miscellaneous objects

### **1. Carrying and storage baskets:**

- a. Eging:* *Eging* is the bamboo basket largely used by the Nyishi women. Bamboo stripes are used for weaving the inner frame of the basket while ribs on the edges are made of cane. There are three types of *Eging*.

- i) The smallest basket is *Eging Ginchi*. This is used for shopping and carrying small goods.
- ii) The medium size basket is called *Eging Yeping*. The Nyishi women use it for collecting forest products like leafy vegetables, tubers, roots, berries and also for collecting potable water in bamboo tubes. Sometimes they also use it as a baby carrier.
- iii) *Eging Gingro* is the largest bamboo basket used by the Nyishi women. They use it for heavy-duty work like carrying large amount of rice or firewood. One *gingro* can carry almost 40 kilograms of rice.
- b. Aabaar:** This is used for collecting vegetables and wood and is used by both Nyishi men and women. The ribs and the carrying handle is made of cane.
- c. Dangsing:** *Dangsing* is a storage container for rice. According to the Nyishis the technique of making *Dangsing* is very sophisticated, it needs special artistry as the lower portion, and the upper portion of it is made differently.
- d. Aphyaa:** It is a small bag used to carry the seeds of rice when women are working in paddy fields.
- e. Chungcha:** It is a small bag to store and carry small things.

## **2. Straining basket**

**Kaazaar:** It is used for filtering rice beer after the rice is fermented.

## **3. Bags, both for man and woman**

- a. Naraa:** *Naraa* is a kind of bag, carried by the Nyishi men. This is made by bamboo and cane materials.
- b. Pyape:** The *pyape* is a traditional bag like *Naraa*, used only by the Nyishi women. There are two kinds of *pyape*, with and without the cover.

## **4. Fishing tools**

The fishing tools are called *Adar* and *Raadaa*. They are made of bamboo.

## **5. Hats**

- a. **Byopa:** It is the Nyishi hat for men. Earlier Hornbill feathers were attached on the Byopa. Following the Government ban on the use of hornbill feathers, it has been replaced by similar looking plastic material. Presently, this is used more in cultural events like Nyishi day etc.
- b. **Abibo:** It is a big hat used during working in paddy fields.

## 6. Mats and other miscellaneous objects

- a. **Opio** or **Apio:** It is a traditional winnowing fan.
- b. **Aphiu:** It is the traditional Nyishi mat. This is made of cane or bamboo and used as sitting mat.
- c. **Sabok** or **Sabiuk:** It is the cap of the *Dao*, the traditional Nyishi weapon. This is totally made by bamboo.
- d. **Tofo:** It is the traditional beer mug. One such mug is used almost by one or two generations before it is discarded
- e. The traditional *Nyishi* waist loom is called **Rongbongrokyo**. Only the women use it.

Generally, making of cane and bamboo crafts item is a man's job, although there is no taboo for a woman. However, the women generally devote their time at the loom. Products are manufactured for family requirements only.

Though traditionally the Nyishi men are proficient in basketry, surprisingly the three interviewed craftsmen are the single craftsman in their respective village who are actively involved in traditional craftsmanship. Sisu Lamnio is the only craftsman in Goloso village who makes traditional bamboo and cane household goods in his village. Hofe Tachang, the craftsman of Upper Seijosa village, is an educated person. He has innovated new ideas in making the traditional cane and bamboo household goods and use new raw materials. He is the only craftsman who has the knowledge and skill of making traditional cane and bamboo product in this village. The only craftsman in Darlong Basti village is Bogong N Abong. Abong is very old now, he can only make *egings* and cane stools, though he knows the techniques of making the entire range of

Photograph. 4.1.1. The cane and bamboo household materials of the Nyishis

*Eging Ginchi*



*Eging Yeping*



Bamboo cane

*Eging Gingro*



*Eging Gingro*



*Aabaar*

*Dangsing*



Cane

*Dangsing*

*Aphyaa*



*Chungcha*

*Kaazaar*



*Kaazaar*

*Naraa*



*Pyape*

*Pyape without cover*



*Raadaa*

*Adar*



*Byopa*

*Abibo*



*Opio or Apio*



*Aphiu*



*Tofo*



*Sabok or Sabiuk*



*Rongbongrokyo*

*Rongbongrokyo*



The techniques and style of making these household objects are very fine and elaborate and need very high level of skill. The process of making these objects is also very lengthy and time consuming. Most of the objects require three to six months of manufacturing time. However, the craftsmen from their practical experience revealed that they take less time to make one such object at a time because of their regular

practice. For example, though making *aabaar* takes a month, Lamnio can make it within one week. They sell their products and it is their secondary occupation. The prices of *byopas* vary from ₹2500 to ₹3000. The finer one is charged up to ₹5000. *Naraa*, *aabaar* or *eging ginchis* cost ₹1000 to ₹1500. Prices of other products range similar to these.

### **Globalization's Effects: Change or Disappearance?**

As change is a normal and a basic characteristic of culture, household objects, skill and knowledge associated with traditional craftsmanship also change with the time. However, exploring the idea of cultural disappearance in context of Arunachal Pradesh needs the necessity of finding out the essence of the argument that changes are creating new form of culture or turning it to disappearance of culture.

The knowledge and skills associated with traditional craftsmanship are passed on from one generation to the next among the Nyishis. However, many products have not been produced for many years, as the durability of these products is very long. Some household objects lasts for generations. For example, all *egings*, *aabaar* or other objects lasts atleast for 20 to 30 years *Tofo* has the longest durability period of 50 years or more. The *tofo* at Tachang's house made by his uncle is more than 50 years old. Only *Kaazaar* needs frequent replacement as it lasts for just 2 or 3 years. This is also a deterrent in transmitting the knowledge. As there is fewer requirements the younger generation can escape without learning the art. Once in a lifetime they might require to buy it and till now the few surviving craftsmen are able to provide it. For this reason, also it cannot be pursued as full-time profession. Earlier with agricultural activity, people practiced it during their free time and could make the objects as and when required. But today if somebody is engaged in the service sector they cannot afford to give the time rather they miss this opportunity. Students come home during vacations or even if they are studying staying at home they can hardly match the schedule of the craftsmen who can only teach them when he or she has time from other activities like agriculture, foraging, managing homestead lands etc. At present the Nyishi cane and bamboo craft tradition rests on the shoulders of a handful of aged craftsmen. Already

there is a vacuum in certain villages after the demise of such elderly craftsman. Gradually the finer techniques of making these objects are disappearing. Even among the few surviving craftsman only a few are making all kinds of cane and bamboo objects. As mentioned earlier Bogong N Abong the only craftsman in Darlong Basti village very old now and he can only make *egings* and cane stools, though he knows the techniques of making the entire range of household products.

Also the few craftsmen between the age group of 30-50 years are not proficient in making all the items. While some makes only *aabaar*, some are proficient in making *aphiu* or some can make something else. For example, Lumla, the neighbour of Sisu Lamnio, roughly knows to make *aabaar* and another female neighbour of Lamnio can weave mats.

Observation and interviews with the Nyishi locals have clearly established that the household products are in vogue today in these households, though the techniques of making them are gradually disappearing. As a form of intangible cultural heritage, globalization poses a significant challenge to the survival of these traditional forms of craftsmanship. UNESCO, in its reports and brochures, has regularly pointed out some of the challenges or effects of globalization and among these, almost all the effects are noticeable on traditional household articles in the Seijosa area.

The first prominent effect of globalization on traditional craftsmanship which is noticeable in Seijosa and mentioned by UNESCO is it's "too demanding but low paying" nature that does not attract the younger generation to learn traditional crafts. UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010) points out that the young people of the indigenous groups regard working in factories or service industry as a better paying option rather than investing time in a lengthy apprenticeship that "pays less" as is the case with many traditional forms of craft. This effect is particularly visible in the Seijosa area. It was apparent from the conversations that people's interest in learning the crafts is on the wane. While they can earn ₹200 to ₹300 from a day's wage labour e.g., road construction work, craft making enables them only an average (maximum) of ₹100 per

day. Every craftsman, to whom I spoke to, held that the low earnings and lengthy process of learning and weaving the objects discourages the people to learn the crafts.

UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010) has marked that with changing social condition or taste, the handicrafts are no longer in demand in daily life or during special occasion and festivals. In Seijosa the plastic bags and packets have replaced the cane and bamboo baskets for everyday use. The traditional cooking utensils are no visible now because of the use of steel, aluminium and other metal utensils. In this situation, many craftsmen struggle to adapt to the competition with the factory-manufactured items and that has resulted in a decline in the number of craftsmen.

UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010) indentified that one of the reasons of the disappearing traditional craft is that many craft traditions involve ‘trade secrets’. It means that the knowledge should not be taught to outsiders and also restricted within certain members of the community. However if family members or community members are not interested in learning it, the knowledge may disappear because sharing it with strangers violates tradition. In Nyishi community of Seijosa area, it is surprisingly observable, though not spoken, that the women are not taught or encouraged to learn the knowledge and skill of the craft. Even though they learn it by observing their male counterparts, the craftsmen are not interested to teach them. The women, who know the craft making, do not sell the products. Pane Dako, the neighbour of Bogong N Abong, and another neighbour of Sisu Lamnio are two such women who know the craft (Pane Dako makes *eging ginchi* and Sisu Lamnio’s neighbor weaves mat), though they do not sell it.

Traditional craftsmanship has also been affected by environmental and climatic pressures. Deforestation and land clearing has reduced the availability of key natural resources (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). The situation of Seijosa is little different. In Seijosa, the raw materials for making cane and bamboo household goods are collected from the nearby forest, the Pakke Tiger Reserve. However, the forest administration only permits the local people to collect cane and bamboo for their personal use and collecting these materials to make crafts for business purpose is strictly prohibited. The difficulty of the availability of raw materials has increased the popularity of plastic as a

substitute raw material for making the cane and bamboo products. Tachang has already started to use plastic as raw material in making these traditional objects. The increasing popularity of plastic as a raw material in traditional techniques is alarming.

Photograph. 4.1.2. Use of plastic as raw materials



However, the most important effect of globalization on skill and knowledge associated with traditional household objects of Nyishis of Seijosa area is the modern education system. “Education for all” lies on the idea of same kind of education for all everywhere in the country (UNESCO 2009). Though UNESCO has not mentioned modern education system as a challenge for traditional craftsmanship, it has emerged as a key challenge posed by globalization that does not give young Nyishis the scope to learn the traditional skills. As they are busy with their books, they do not get the time to learn the craft. Lamnio says that his own child in class X do not know to make these artifacts. The only way to transmit the knowledge according to the informants was by teaching the craft in school, which is absent from the local school curriculum.

To observe the effect of shrinking craft production and declining knowledge associated with it, an exercise was undertaken as part of the fieldwork, amongst the schoolchildren of Nivedita Vihar, a residential girls’ high school. The female students of class VIII, IX and X of Nivedita Vihar were asked to identify the above-mentioned Nyishi bamboo and cane traditional household items from photographs. Out of almost sixty students,

only one student from class VIII and one from class IX could identify the products with their name and purpose. The rest could not identify the items and their functions though they have seen these items in their houses.

**Safeguarding Nyishi Cane and Bamboo Household Materials: Is there Any Chance to Slow the Accelerating Rate of ‘Cultural Loss’ and Find a New Field of Appreciation in the New Patterns of Life?**

Safeguarding traditional craftsmanship means to ensure the transmissions of knowledge and skills of craftsmanship to next generation of that community, rather than focusing on preserving craft objects.

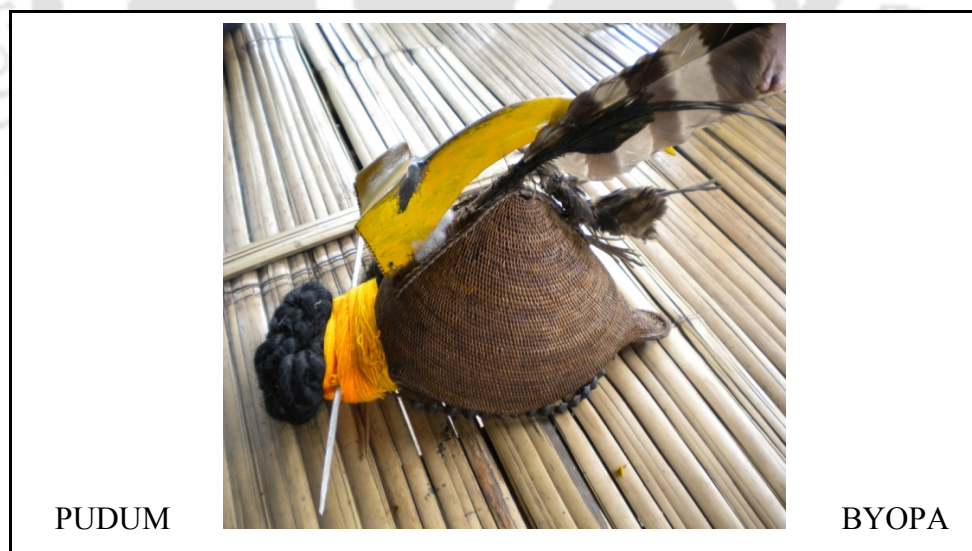
Craftsmen informed that recently some Nyishi social organization (like Nyishi Elite Society etc.) has taken active initiatives for the preservation of Nyishi traditional crafts and they have influenced the Nyishi officials to use *naraa* in offices. Hence, the popularity of using *naraa* among the Nyishi young men in office and educational institutions or using *byopa* or *eging ginchi* in the cultural festival and programmes is increasing. They made *byopa*, *eging ginchi* and *naraa* at a mass level for the traditional *Nyokum* festival and Nyishi day, which is celebrated on December 4 in every year. The popularity of *eging ginchi* has increased among the girls who participate in various cultural processions in these festivals. As a result of such steps for preservation, handicrafts, especially the market value of these three items is increasing. The demand of *naraa* and *eging ginchi* is high, followed by the *byopa*. Hafe Tachang’s products have even managed to capture the markets at Bhalukpong and Itanagar.

The craftsmen and villagers of Seijosa area usually prefer to use these objects only for the purpose they are made. For example, the *Nara* will never be used for collecting wild fruits and vegetables. However, in the recent years they have tried modifying their traditional objects in trying to adapt to the changing market conditions. Tachnag, the lone craftsman of Upper Seijosa village, has modified *tofo*, the traditional bamboo beer mug into a water bottle. He charges ₹200 for a piece and these *tofo water bottles* are now very popular among the school children of the area. Hano Dodom, another informant, says that in and around Itanagar new kind of cane and bamboo products mainly purses, shopping bags are made mainly for tourist but these are not the newer

version of old traditional crafts, these are totally new products and only the raw materials is same (cane and bamboo). Also nobody clearly knows where these are manufactured though they are sold as handicraft items of the state.

However, the question of transmitting knowledge and skills to future generation is still there. The problem is that safeguarding Nyishi crafts, is the main focus of the policies of the government, NGO's etc. but nobody is talking about preserving the technique. Though they have been motivating the craftsmen for producing the craft objects, they have not emphasized on the transmission of knowledge to the younger generations. As result the young Nyishis can hardly identify the objects and their use. During my interaction with Arjun, a young Nyishi boy who is a student of class X, or with the girl students of Nivedita Vihar, they identified *byopa* as *pudum*. But, Hano Dodom explained that the front hairy knot of *byopa* is called *pudum*. In earlier days, the Nyishi men tied the long hair in a knot on the front of *byopa*. Now days, when men cut their hair short, artificial *pudum* is fixed with *byopa*. As the Nyishi youngsters do not have the knowledge of the craft, they are identifying the whole *byopa* as *pudum*.

Photograph. 4.1.3. Difference of *Byopa* and *Pudum*



From non-participant observations and unstructured interviews, it is also noticeable that the locals do not appreciate the agenda of the self-help groups, as according to them,

these groups never converted their aims into practical reality. In the Seijosa area, legal measures that give them the right to collect cane and bamboo from the forest, financial incentives to the craftsmen and the learners and most importantly, inclusion of the knowledge and skills of crafts making in local school curriculum will help more in reinforcing and strengthening this intangible cultural heritage or traditional craftsmanship.

## 4.2.

### **Case Study Two Performing Arts**

Strongly interconnected with many other intangible cultural heritage domains, the performing arts reflect human creativity through numerous cultural expressions (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). These diverse expressions of performing arts are listed in a table below.

Table. 4.2.1. Numerous expressions of performing arts

- 
- Music, both vocal and instrumental
  - Dance
  - Theatre
  - Pantomime and puppetry
  - sung verse etc.

Source: Adapted from UNESCO ICH Kit 2010. Table form is created by Rashmirekha Sarma

Music, an integral part of many other performing art forms and other domains of intangible cultural heritage, is perhaps the most common performing art. Found in every society, it has diverse contexts and occasions. It can be sacred or profane, classical or popular, closely connected to work or entertainment and is performed in marriages, funerals, rituals, festivals and all kinds of entertainment and celebrations. Sometimes, the narratives of the music also reflect political or economic dimensions of the society. Dance or the rhythmic physical movements with facial expressions illustrate a sentiment or mood of a specific event or act, usually performed to music. Traditionally, theatre performances combine acting, singing, dance and music, dialogue,

narration or recitation but may also include puppetry or pantomime. Performing arts also include musical instruments, masks, costumes, makeup, the scenery and props of theatre and specific spaces where the theatrical performances are staged (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010).

Arunachal Pradesh is immensely rich in all forms of the performing arts, maintained and enriched by different indigenous groups. Music is an integral part of their dances. Dance forms of all communities of Arunachal Pradesh can be divided into four broad groups that incorporate pantomimes and theatrical performances.

Figure. 4.2.1. Dance Forms of the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh



Source: Graphic figure is created by Rashmirekha Sarma. Information adapted from Sarkar 1974.

The dances of Arunachal Pradesh have its own mythical origin depicted through different songs and tonal narrations sung on the different rituals. As a part of oral traditions, songs reveal the myths and legends of the indigenous groups as well as illustrate their love for nature and beauty. They dance for merriment, festivals and rituals, even for wars and funeral. Pantomimes, performed by wearing magnificent and

colourful masks, are part of the performing arts of the eastern Buddhist groups like Monpa and Sherdukpens of Arunachal Pradesh. However, the only significant theatre performance among the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh is the dance dramas of the Khamptis (Sarkar 1974, xiii-xvi).

Theatrical performance is a total performing experience, which includes dance, song, dialogue, musical instruments and expressions. Therefore, among all the forms of performing arts, traditional theatrical performance is the focused subtheme for this case study. As the dance drama of the Khamptis is the lone prominent theatrical performance among all the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, it is selected as the theme issue for this case study.

### **Focused Group and Location**

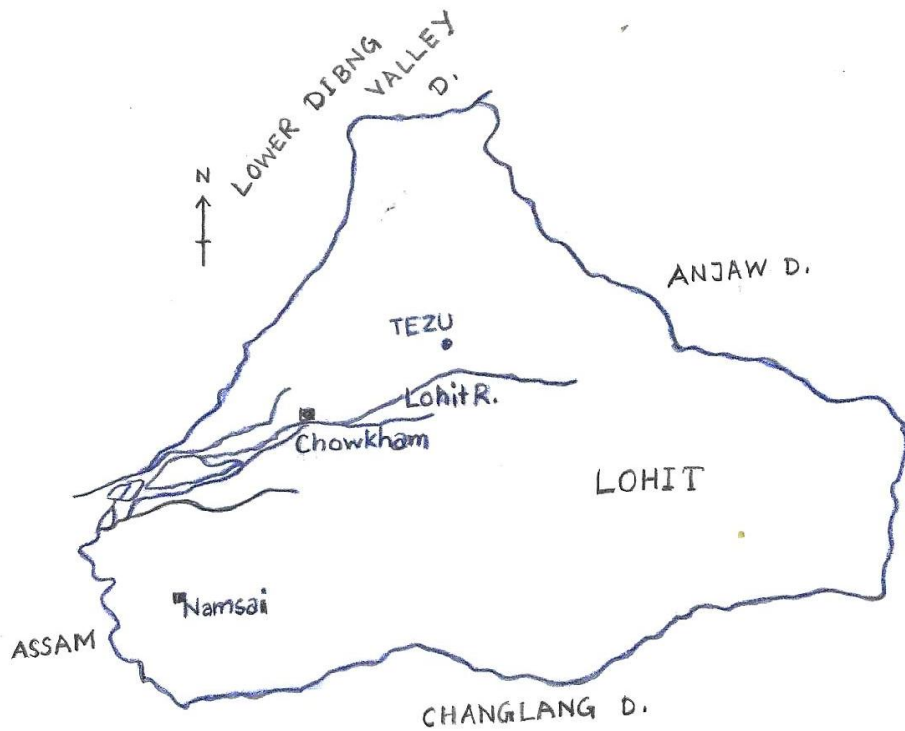
The Khamptis are listed schedule tribe group of Arunachal Pradesh belonging to the greater Tai-Shan civilization. They migrated from Bor-Khampti or Mung-Khampti-Lung in the Irrawaddy valley of Burma and settled around the Tengapani river in 1751 (Dutta Chaudhury 1978, 44). They mainly inhabit the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh, though a small fraction also lives in parts of Assam as well as East Siang district. The word *Khampti* means “a land full of gold” (*Khamp* means gold and *ti* means place). The 2001 census of India recorded the population of the community as 11,503.

The Khamptis are one of the most advanced indigenous groups of the state. The Khampti language, belonging to the Tai family, is known as ‘Khamp-Tai’ language and is one of the very few languages of Arunachal Pradesh, which has its own script. The Khampti people are believers of Hinayana Buddhism. Their main festival is *Poi-Sangken*, celebrated for three days in April. Rice is their staple food. Large varieties of vegetables, fruits, fish, meat, mushrooms and bamboo shoots are included in diet. Traditionally, they ate boiled food, but now they also use oil for cooking. The Tai Khampti people are settled agriculturists. They use the plough drawn by a single animal, either an ox or a buffalo (or even an elephant in the olden days). The Khampti women are expert weavers.

Namsai and Chowkham is the study area of the present case study. Namsai is one of the three subdivisions of the Lohit district. There are around thirty Khampti villages in the Namsai area. Among them, Pathargaon, Monpong, Chengsab and Chowkham, these four villages were covered in the field study. Availability of informants like master artists, associated performers and musical instrument makers is the main criteria of selection of these villages. These four villages are well known for organizing dance dramas and have their own drama troops and musical instruments. Chowkham, 18 kilometre from Namsai township, is the largest Khampti village. In Chowkham village, there are young performers who are trained in a new modified performing style of Khampti dance drama. For this reason, this village was important for my study. Chowkham is a large village divided into 4 parts. Total population of Chowkham is approximately 1500 while the total population of Pathargaon, Monpong, Chengsab is 500.

Map. 4.2.1. Lohit District and the area of fieldwork





#### **Area of Fieldwork:**

Fieldwork was also undertaken in the Namsai town area. Some other villages like Manphriseng, Manpaw, Kherem basti, Momong etc. were also visited for more insight about the dance dramas of the Khamptis.

#### **Answering the Research Questions**

As it has been already stated that Khampti's dance drama is the only significant traditional theatrical performance among all the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, it is very important to see that how changes have occurred in these dance

dramas and further investigate whether the changes have resulted in the disappearance of certain components of this theatrical performance.

To conduct the case study on the dance drama of the Khamptis, unstructured and open-ended individual interviews were conducted with the locals based on some in-depth and descriptive queries. The interviews primarily focused on the performers of the dance dramas, though not excluding the other villagers and the persons who have taken the initiative to popularize the dance drama among the locals and the world outside. Among the performers, the master performer, the dancers and the performers who generally perform on stage are included in the conversations. This diverse interaction helped the fieldwork to become more pragmatic. The non-participant observation techniques along with the audio-visual techniques (taking photographs and audio recording) were also used in the data collection for this case study.

The initial queries were about the traditional forms and themes of the dance dramas, the musical instruments, the performing time, and the transmission style of the knowledge of dance dramas. The field-study enquiries also included the types of musical instruments, costumes or props, availability of the instruments and instrument makers in present days and most importantly, the transmission of the technical knowledge for making these instruments.

However, the most important field queries are about the changes that have occurred in these dramas with the changing time and will these changes result in disappearance of dance dramas or is it taking a new form. The most vital part of the change is the response of the new generations towards the traditional form of performing arts, as the traditions survive through them. Therefore, the response of the next generation Khamptis on dance dramas and its performance is the most essential part of the field interactions and observations.

Information was also collected about the documentation and digitization measures of these dance dramas, and whether any measures were initiated or proposed to be taken to

popularize these dramas among the younger generations including the steps taken to encourage the locals to perform and participate in these dance dramas.

### **The Dance drama**

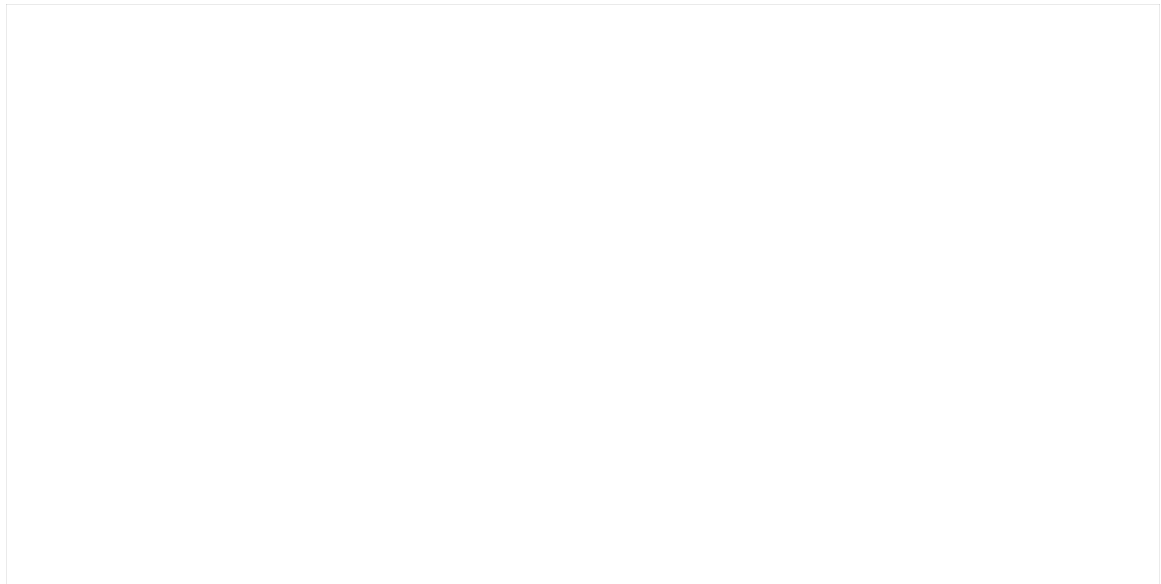
The Khampti dance drama is called *Kapung*. *Ka* means dance and *pung* means drama. The whole word means the story depicted through dance. *Kapung* reflects the rich culture of the Buddhists in this territory and unfold the myths and tales of moral values. The Khampti people generally mention dance dramas only as *pung*. *Pungs* are performed to educate people through entertainments and it represents the socio-religious and socio-cultural features of the society.

Religion, classical literature and mythology are the source of origin of all *pungs*. There are two traditional themes for the dance dramas of the Khamptis. The first source is the *Jataka* stories of Lord Buddha (the stories of 550 previous births of Lord Buddha) which is the popular and dominant theme. The second source is the two great Indian epics, the *Ramayana*, the Mahabharata, and some part or stories of these two are taken as the stories of *pungs*. Though the stories are traditional, the dramas are re-written based on the same source or story. Thus, though the storyline is same, the dialogues are different in each *pung*. Sometimes dialogues are also collected from old *pungs*, which are suitable for new *pungs* with some modification to suit the taste of the present audience. There are no specific names of the *pung*. The *pung* is named on the main character of the story by attaching the word “*pung*” before the name of the main character. For example, Rama is called *Choulamang* in Khampti language and when one *pung* is based on Ramayana then it is called *Pung Chowlama*.

These dramas are generally performed after the festival of *Potwah*. *Potwah* is a festival held in the months of October-November (*Kartik Purnima*) after rainy season. After three months of long rigorous religious practices involving learning the teachings of Buddha and following the lessons of Buddha, the festival is celebrated. During these months or just after these three months, the Khamptis donate *stupas*, statues of the Buddha etc., and it is to celebrate these occasions that *pungs* are organized.

Traditionally it is performed in an open place. The performers form a circle around one or two banana saplings planted in the middle of the ground where they plan to have the performance. The orchestra sits with the performers. The audience also sits in a circle around the performers.

Figure.4.2.2. Performing style of *Kapung*



Source: Graphic figure is created by Rashmirekha Sarma

The performance is a combination of dialogue, music and dance. Dialogue is narrated in chanting style. The tonal dialogues of *pung* have three categories.

1. *Kham-poy* which is the sound for respect and serious matters
2. *Kham-chakheng* which is the sound for excitement
3. *Kham-pali*, which is the sound for romantic, pleasant, fun or playfulness

An actor sings a *kham-pali* dialogue that is a melancholy dialogue, where the boy says:

*En long polong kham syang mi*

*sam sip su lem mi  
aei  
pi mou ke moukat  
si kiw de khatu n sai*

*En long polong kham syang mi  
sam aei,  
sam sib sulum wa  
ee moukong moursa  
si  
kirikhatnsangkei*

*Ta hang mei fu mi kewan luan  
saa aei  
puwat mi li mwa wan kolom  
ta ha mei kowan luwam pu mi  
pur mi mwa wa wo lang na  
koi ou salong po wan.*

Summary: The boy is sad because he cannot give the material pleasure to his girlfriend that she deserves and the other eligible boys are richer than he is. He is upset and sings:

*“How can I made a big house to make you happy  
How can I take you to a life  
that provides a standard living?”*

Another dialogue is:

*Panei ok thwrang, nokung maw chai, pai kang bung- jun de,  
puong aan, kaw chow phrew lung lang  
phungfuchakhaw aw aan,  
khaw pang kaw naam  
khaw pang kaw naam-iche,  
po lok ok pak tong.*

*toung teng po ne-ishi pentriyo no.*

Summary: The messenger from the groom's side says to the father of the girl:

*“We are not coming by our own;  
It is the girl's beauty,  
that spread like fragrance of flowers  
and bring us from far distance.*

After the dialogues, the instrumental music starts and with the music, dance is also performed. There are no particular forms of dance. The dance movements exhibit the emotions that the dialogues express. The playing styles of musical instruments also express different moods of the situation like sorrow, anger, happiness etc.

*Kongpat* (big drum), *Kongtail* (long narrow drum), *Paiseng* (cymbal), *Yammong* (Gong) and *Ting* (instrument with one string) are the main musical instruments. Based on the story, instruments are used. *Kongpat* and *Kongtoil* are locally produced. Gongs are purchased from Myanmar. Cymbals are procured from Assam. Drums are made by hollow wood and buffalo skin. Raw materials for costumes and masks are bought from Assam.

Photograph. 4.2.1. Different parts of drum



Courtesy: Sanjay Mien Photo: Rashmirekha Sarma

Photograph.4.2.2. Some musical instruments and masks

*Yammong* (Set of Gongs)



*Kongtail*



*Kongpat*



Cock mask

Demon mask



Courtesy: Sanjay Mien, Photo: Rashmirekha Sarma

The instruments, costumes and masks are used for generations. The costumes and masks are stored in the houses of local villagers. Musical instruments are also stored in the villager's house except the gong. The gong is stored in the monastery. There is one craftsman in every Khampti village who can make or repair the musical instruments of *pungs*.

After the harvesting season, from October onwards, the performances of *pungs* start and it culminates in January-February. To perform dance dramas, *pung* troops are organized. A big *pung* troop consists of 35 to 40 members whereas the small troops have 10 to 15 members. These dance dramas are performed every year though not in the same villages. Not every village can organize *pung* every year as it is expensive. The troops first perform in their own village and then perform in other villages on invitation. Sometimes *pungs* are also invited by individuals. The host family has to provide hospitality to the *pung* troop. Sarkar (1974, 50-51) mentioned that the troops are invited by the affluent villagers to perform *pung* in their houses and they are paid for their performance. The invitation to perform *pungs* in other village is known as "ful-paan". In "ful-paan", an amount of money is given as token honorarium. There are no fixed amounts of money to be paid for inviting the troupe. The master artist or other performers believe that performing in *pungs* is like offering prayers to god and getting the blessings. Therefore, the performers do not demand money. At present *pung* troops are paid an amount of ₹2000 to ₹10,000 as per the capacity of each village. On special

occasions, for example, the donation of the statues of Buddha, the honorarium is higher and it ranges from ₹10,000 to ₹20,000. Still, everyone related to *pung* performance admits that it is impossible to practice *pung* as a full-time job because the amount they receive for the performance is not enough to sustain for a whole year. That is why all the performers are part timers. Traditionally, these *pungs* are overnight performances.

The Khampti language is known as *Kham-tai* and the script is known as *Choung* or *Kyang*. The villagers, who are selected to perform in *pungs*, must have some working knowledge of the spoken and written form of the *Kham-tai* language. To learn their language and the teachings of Buddha, traditionally the Khamptis have a policy of “stay and learn” in their village monasteries where they learn the formal form of their language to study the Buddhist literature. In this policy, the boys or men stay in the monasteries (*Viharas*) for a stipulated time. The time frame could be anything, though it generally ranges from three months to six or seven years.

In *pungs*, everyone can do everyone’s job. For example, the master artist who creates the screenplay also directs the drama or makes the costumes or mask; the dancers also can play the musical instruments etc. Moreover, many of the local villagers who act on *pungs*, are also the craftsman who make the musical instruments. There are 10 to 15 master artists in all the Khampti villages at this time. However, traditionally women cannot perform in *pungs* and female roles are played by man in female attire.

### **Globalization’s Effects: Change or Disappearance?**

The knowledge of the *pung* is traditionally transmitted from one generation to the next among the Khamptis. Unlike the other indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, the Khamptis have an organized style of transmission of the knowledge of *pung* with the help of Buddhist monasteries. Almost every Khampti village has a Buddhist monastery (*Vihara*) that has played a significant role as cultural centre for the villages. Most of the Buddhist monks are eminent scholars of Buddhist literature and *Kham-tai* language and they always help the villagers to organize the *pungs*.

Before performing the *pungs*, they rehearse for almost one month. Rehearsal is significant, because no other community of Arunachal Pradesh rehearse before the performance of their dances or dramas. It is done spontaneously. For rehearsal, the villagers invite a master artist or performer. The master artist is a distinguished person of the society who can choreograph and teach dance, write screenplay, teach dialogue delivery and can play all musical instruments. He is invited to teach for 10 days, 15 days or for one month. He instructs local villagers about the form of dialogue delivery, dance style and steps, how to play musical instruments properly etc. Moreover, he also creates the screenplay and dialogues from the stories of *Jataka* or modifies the old script of *pung*.

However, with the introduction of the modern education system and the arrival of the new medium of entertainment, *pungs* have witnessed some changes. Almost all informants admit that *pungs* have changed quite evidently in the last 20 years. The fieldwork shows some fundamental changes in these dance dramas.

The *pungs* are now mostly performed in stages, rather than in open places. The stages are constructed with bamboo or wood. Most of the artists like to perform on stage. Even in the villages, people build the stage and cover it on one side and the top with cloth screens. The other three sides of stage are open. The screened side of the stage is used as the changing room for the artists. The height of stage is generally 2 to 3 feet, though sometime it is in the ground level.

Though limited to performances in national or international stage, the Khampti women have now started to perform in *pungs*. In local *pungs*, though men still perform female roles, these days, women performers are also allowed.

The duration of the *pungs* has been reduced to three to four hours from the traditional full night performances. Some parts of the traditional *pungs* are removed reducing the period of performance. Sanjay Mien, the President of *Tai-Khampti Heritage and Literature Society*, an NGO, said that in the International Folk Theatre Festivals held in Delhi, they executed the *pung* in 45 minutes.

Not many changes are observed in musical instruments. Costumes have become elaborate with increased ornamentation both in costume and ornaments worn. The traditional masks are still used. Dance steps have become more complex and elaborated. Some dance steps were repeated four to five times in earlier performances, though now this repetition is reduced and rather, dialogues are given more importance.

Culture is always changing and it is a very gradual process. Adaptation and change happens over time and then allows the old ways to coexist with or alter the new ways. In the process people are made aware of the changes. They have the power to decide what elements to alter and what not, and what will coexist with new things. The above stated changes on *pungs* are also the common changes that represent the basic character of culture. The basic difference of this case as with the other cases of this research is that the change is gradual in this case. The changes in *pungs* are gradually accepted by society and the Khamptis are aware of these changes. According to them, as a result of these changes *pungs* have become shorter, compact and more appealing to viewers. They think that with these changes, their traditional dance dramas will sustain for generations to come.

But, is this form of dance drama of the Khamptis above all danger? Are there no problems in *Kapungs*? Before answering these questions, it is important to observe the factors that threaten performing arts globally.

These days, many forms of performing arts are disappearing. Traditional performing arts are being accommodated in the popular culture in the name of popularizing folk art (Fiske 1990; Barker 2003). Many traditional cultural forms, nowadays, are abandoned for standardization. Even if one form attains some popularity, only certain expressions or parts of it are benefitted, not the entire form of art (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). Integrating traditional performing arts with global forms play a significant role in cultural exchange and encourage creativity that enriches the international art scene though it becomes the root or starting point of source of homogenization of many diverse forms. It also affects the playing or making of traditional musical instruments.

Again, traditional art forms become commodities in the name of entertainment or cultural promotion to attract tourist. Though tourism or entertainment industry gives a “market value” to many forms of intangible cultural heritage, including performing arts, it can also standardize or alter many cultural expressions. Wider social or environmental factors also have a serious impact on performing art traditions (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010).

These issues are also noticeable in Indian scenario of the traditional performing arts. Abandonment and standardization are taking place in many traditional performing arts of India. In India, many traditional art forms are gradually vanishing, failing to compete with the global style of performance or have lost many important elements even if the form become more popular and many people have doubts about the present nature of different traditional performing forms which become popular with mixing modern technology, instruments or style of performance (Gandhiya 2011; Mudgal 2011). For example, *Bihu*, the traditional festival of Assam (the neighbouring state of Arunachal Pradesh) with distinct music and dance form, though very popular among the locals and gaining popularity in national and international level too, is standardized for stage performance and has lost many elements. Many Assamese people think that to accommodate itself in a globalized style of entertainment, *Bihu* has lost its identity of expressing sorrow and joy of the Assamese masses and this has become an issue of debate (Gandhiya 2011; Neog 2009). In another example, the *Baul* music of West Bengal has gained popularity though alarmingly missing its mysticism and cohesive worldview-the soul of this form (Dutta 1998, Bhattacharya 2011).

However, standardization and curtailing of the scenes and reducing the time has made a positive impact on *pungs*. It has become more appealing to the new generation. Still, it is very premature to tell that by changing its style *pungs* will sustain. At present, some other threatening factors may affect the *pungs* negatively and force *pungs* to disappear or lose its traditional character.

Conversation with the local Khamptis in the villages and the Namsai town area reveals that many Khamptis cannot understand the words used in *pungs*. They said that the

language in which the dialogues are delivered is classical. Actually, the fieldwork analysis reveals that *pungs* are labeled as *classical* because nowadays, Khampti common talk is colloquial and the common people are used to the oral-informal style of the language.

The new generation of Khamptis only knows the oral form of language these days and it is difficult for them to understand the written and formal form of the language. In *pungs* the language is different and so the dialogues. The words are different and the younger generation cannot understand *pungs* properly and have lost their interest in the *pungs*. For example, Chow Niwaya Monpang, son of a master artist and a student of 12<sup>th</sup> standard in Namsai higher secondary school, admits that he cannot speak, read or write formal *Kham-tai* language and though he watches *pungs*, he cannot understand the dialogues of *pungs* properly. According to him, this is the case with most of his classmates as well. Very few students of his schools, mostly young Buddhist monks, know how to read and write *Kham-tai* script.

But the question is, why so? Unlike the other Arunachal Pradesh indigenous groups, they have their own language and script as already stated here. There are many interlinked causes behind this scene, which were exposed during the fieldwork.

The practice of writing and reading the formal language is gradually decreasing, because the language is primarily taught in the Buddhist monasteries of the villages. Again, the Khampti women are prohibited from the “stay and learn” policy in the monasteries. This is a hindrance in learning the language for a large section of the Khampti people.

Many villagers, mainly the elderly Khamptis, have showed their concern about the decreasing number of Khampti monk. The Khampti monks have extensive knowledge on indigenous script writing and reading. Besides a few big monasteries like Tengapani, Chowkham etc., there are no Khampti monks in a number of monasteries of the

Khampti villages. Therefore, even in the monasteries nobody can teach *Kham-tai* these days.

These conversations with Khampti people raise a question inescapably that what is the role of schools located in the Khampti vicinity to save the *Kham-tai* language? Unfortunately, the medium of teaching in primary or secondary level is English, including the government schools. Khouk Manpoong, a patron of the Khampti society informed that few years ago, the *Kham-tai* language was introduced in local schools and 18 teachers were appointed. Now more schools have been opened and no new *Kham-tai* language teachers are appointed. As a result, teaching *Kham-tai* as a third language from class VIII to X has been discontinued in a majority of the schools.

Assamese and Sanskrit has also been introduced as the third language in local schools and my interactions with a few young Khampti students reveals that they are keen to take up learning the Assamese language instead of *Kham-tai*, as it is more meaningful to learn the language that will be usable in interaction with outer world. Many Khamptis think that lack of interest to learn *Kham-tai* among Khampti students makes the situation worse. Non-Khampti teachers of both private and government schools act as deterrents for teaching and development of the *Kham-tai* language.

Chow Na Manpong, a master artist from Pathargaon village, can read and write the Khampti language. However, none of his three sons can either read or write the language. He tried to teach *Kham-tai* to his sons though he was not much successful. He says that around 80 to 90 percent of the young generation of Khampti cannot read and write their language. The elder generation complains that television the new medium of entertainment has become a barrier in the process of teaching *Kham-tai* to the younger generation.

Around fifty years ago, every village used to organize *pung*. However, nowadays, only the big villages can organize *pungs* as it has become more expensive. Though it seems like a normal change, it has slowly made organizing *pungs* a privilege of the elite.

Will *pungs* disappear because of these threatening factors? How will the younger generation preserve the *pungs* without knowing the language?

**Safeguarding *Kapung*: Is there a chance to slow the accelerating rate of ‘cultural loss’ and find a new field of appreciation in the new patterns of life?**

The continuity of the subtlety of the songs or the intricate movements of dances or precise theatrical interpretations is very important to keep any form of traditional performing arts alive (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). UNESCO focuses on three measures to safeguard traditional performing arts (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010):

- Transmission of knowledge and techniques of performance
- Transmission of knowledge and techniques of playing and making instruments
- Strengthening the bond between master and apprentice

So what are the Khamptis doing for transmission of knowledge and techniques of performance, techniques of playing and making instruments or strengthening the bond between master artists and new performers?

*Pungs* have their own religious and moral outlook and as stated by many master artists or performers, these are acknowledged as a kind of ritual of veneration and because of it, many Khamptis think that it will survive to next generation. Though the frequency of *pung* performance has decreased, the importance and effects have not reduced and the elderly people are even now interested in *pungs*.

To deal with the problem of the lack of knowledge of the script of *Kham-Tai* language, nowadays, the *pung* dialogues are written in Devnagari (Hindi) or Roman (English) script. The young Khamptis, who cannot read or write *Kham-Tai* language, memorize the dialogues which are then perfected by the trainer or master artist. Then the master artist helps them to correct pronunciation and tonal style of dialogues.

The master artist informed that they love to train the Khampti youngsters and in their respective villages, they have tried to train the local youth in the month long rehearsals.

However, as there are no fixed and formal training formats the youngsters take it casually.

To improve this situation, many NGOs or educated Khampti persons have stepped in the field to revive and to popularize this old form in a new and modified style without altering the subtlety of tonal dialogues or dance movements. They modify the duration of performance of traditional dance dramas for modern performances with female casting, though they do not change the musical instruments, steps or storytelling. They have tried these modifications for performing in national or international level, to attract the attention of the young Khamptis towards the *pung*.

The people, who are associated with preservation and development of the *pungs*, identify boys or girls who have little knowledge about the formal form of their language (in which the dialogues are written and delivered), train them and then organize programmes in national or international stage. The *Tai-Khampti Heritage and Literature Society* organized workshops on Khampti dance, music and literature to educate new Khamptis about their traditional performing arts and literature. This NGO works for the development of traditional artists to become music directors, scriptwriters, choreographers etc. for performing in the national or international stage. This kind of promotional activities have given a very positive impact on the young Khamptis and awareness has increased about the *pungs* among the new generation. The young Khamptis are now keen to associate in the *pung* performances. The persons, who are associated with modern and modified performances of *pungs*, also think that younger generation easily takes part in *pung* as new modified *pung* dialogues are easy to catch. The people, who are associated with *pungs*, master artists or NGO workers, admit that proper funding is necessary to sustain this training period.

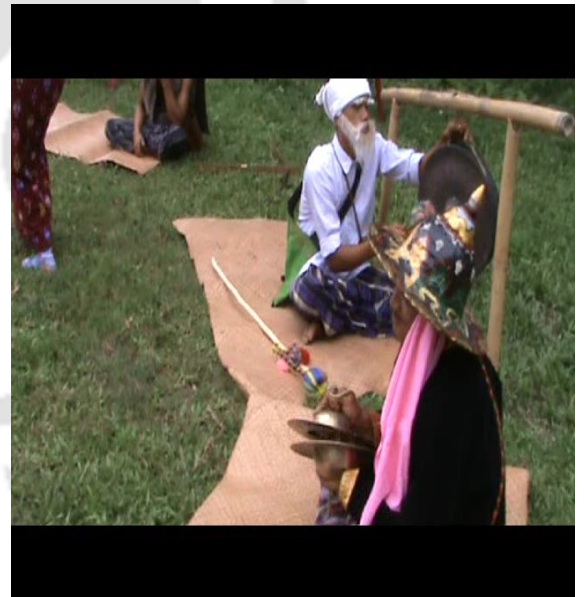
Around 20 to 30 years ago, they tried to reform their language by including more alphabets (as the Kham-tai script has only 17 alphabets) and improved tonal pronunciation. After the development of the script, different kinds of reading materials including textbooks have been written. They believe that this reformed language would help the existing *pungs* to appear in a written form leading to a proper documentation.

The older generation in the community are also concerned about the decreasing knowledge of their language and tried to teach the language at home and personal level. The informants accept that the rituals to visit monasteries to learn teachings of Buddha have also helped a lot to pass on the language to the new generation.

Government is also sensitive about the preservation of the language and this is a positive development. Master performers and other artist have informed that proper documentation of the tunes and dialogues is now underway. A centre is expected to come up in Tengapani under *Tai Khampti Heritage Trust* for developing performing arts and Khampti literature.

Among all the cases, this case is encouraging with constructive work for development. People are aware of the changes. This awareness has prevented the changes to transform it to disappearance and rather, changes have resulted in a new form.

Photograph. 4.2.3. Photographs of a *Kapung*\*





\*These photographs are taken out from a video, originally captured by Sanjay Mien. The name of dance drama is *Pung Kung- Cheti- Kongmu* (The virtue of Pagoda Donation). The video film is presented by the “Tai-Khampti Heritage and Literature Society.”

### 4.3

#### Case Study Three

##### Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

Knowledge, skills, practices and experience of natural environment that developed in communities from generations create their knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe. These knowledge and practices strongly influence values and beliefs of communities and can be useful for livelihood and betterment. Human beings made use of this knowledge for utilizing of resources for their subsistence and survival. Lying beneath many social practices and cultural traditions, these are shaped by the natural environment and the communities' worldview. The knowledge about nature and the universe are expressed through language, oral traditions, memories, spirituality and worldview (Subramanyam 2008; UNESCO ICH Kit 2010).

Table 4.3.1. Numerous areas of knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

- 
- Traditional ecological wisdom
  - Indigenous knowledge
  - Knowledge about local fauna and flora
  - Traditional healing systems
  - Rituals
  - Beliefs
  - Initiatory rites
  - Cosmologies
  - Shamanism
  - Possession rites,
  - Social organizations,
  - Festivals,
  - Languages
  - Visual arts

Source: Adapted from UNESCO ICH Kit 2010. Table form is created by Rashmirekha Sarma

Among all the areas of this intangible cultural heritage domain, indigenous knowledge is picked up for this case study. The root of the modern technology is the indigenous knowledge that developed among different human groups since an unknown period of time (Subramanyam 2008, 1). Indigenous knowledge is often considered to be informal knowledge that exists in local societies, as against formal knowledge developed by the modern society. Indigenous knowledge of any community covers the relationship of the community with nature as well as social, cultural and economic practices of the community members. This knowledge is the product of centuries of experience acquired and developed into a spectrum of information, skills and technology. It is the basis of communities' skill in agriculture, practice in health care, food preparation, education, natural resource management and many other activities of the community. Indigenous knowledge is an important natural resource that can facilitate the development process in cost effective, participatory and sustainable ways.

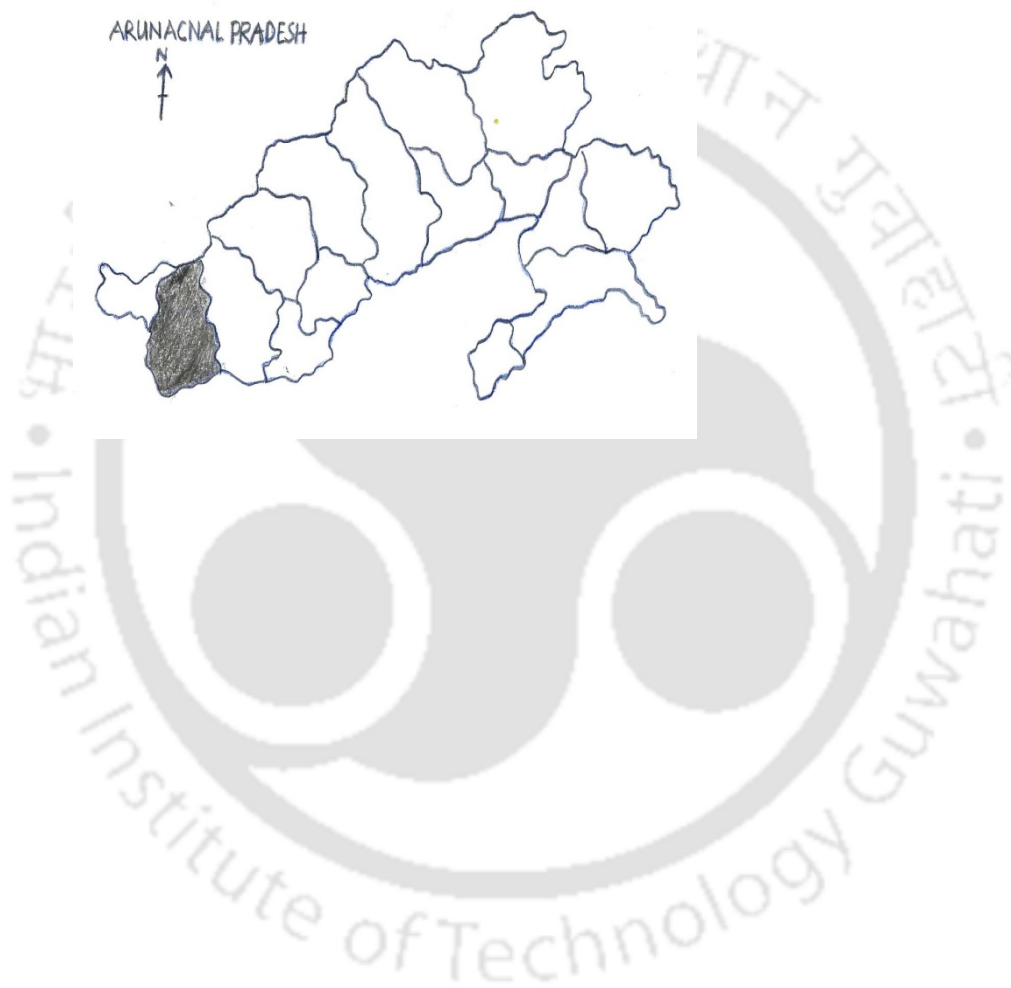
Interacting with nature from an unknown period, the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh have developed ecological wisdom that makes them rich in traditional knowledge. It includes a complex system of spiritual beliefs, knowledge about local flora and fauna, traditional healing systems, festivals, rituals and social organizations, possession rites, cosmologies and shamanism, visual arts and finally language.

### **Focused Group and Location**

For the indigenous knowledge, the traditional water mill system of the Dirang Monpas of West Kameng district is taken up for the study. The district is divided into six administrative sub-divisions and twelve circles. Dirang is both a subdivision and a circle. The Dirang Monpas are one of the major sub groups of the greater Monpa indigenous group. The 2001 census records the population of the Monpas of West Kameng district as 19, 596. Monpa is the standard term originally used by the Tibetans to mention the people living in the lowlands south of Tibet (Singh 1995, 216). The Dirang Monpas belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock and are the largest indigenous group of the West Kameng district. They inhabit mainly the Dirang circle.

They practice Mahayana Buddhism with cultural and religious affinity to the Bhutaneses and Tibetans. The Dirang Monpas are an endogamous community. The Dirang Monpas are agriculturists, and pursue both shifting and settled types of cultivation. Maize is the traditional staple food item. Milk and milk products are also popular items. The Monpa men and women are expert in making handicrafts and weaving.

Map.4.3.1. West Kameng District and the area of fieldwork





### **Area of fieldwork**

To conduct the case study on the traditional water mill system of the Dirang Monpa community, three villages of Dirang circle were visited. These three villages are Namshu, Sangti and Rama camp. Namshu is the biggest village of Dirang circle. The household number of this village is around 100. The other two villages are comparatively smaller. Rama camp is adjacent to the Dirang town. Sangti is about 12 kilometres and Namshu is around 27 kilometres from Dirang town. Literacy rate is approximately 60% and they are mainly agriculturalist.

### **Answering the Research Questions:**

The present research is trying to answer whether *cultural change has resulted in disappearance of cultural traits or has it just taken a new form*. The indigenous knowledge has diverse form and this case study has opted for the traditional human technological skill that relates them with nature. To answer the prime research question, it is important to consider as to how this technology of the Dirang Monpa can be sustained? Is this traditional technology disappearing with time or is it taking a new form?

To collect the data, unstructured and open-ended group ethnographic interviews are made with the villagers in a conversation mode. Based on the primary research question, some descriptive and in-depth queries, but not treated as fixed and closed questions, were framed to collect data. The non-participant observation technique along with the audio-visual techniques (photographs) was extensively used in the data collection procedure.

The queries were initially about the function of the traditional water mill and their construction process and style. The queries were also made to know the interest of younger generation in it, difficulties, if any, that they have faced in the process of making or using it nowadays, and their opinions on its sustainability. It is also important to know if the same technology can be used in the different areas or if it can be improved by application of modern technology.

To explore the functions of traditional water mill and its consequence on villagers, the case query mainly emphasizes local peoples' perceptions and observations about the changes on it, as it is a part of their daily life routine.

### **Traditional Water Mill System**

Throughout the Himalayan ranges, from Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh, thousands of water mills are being used for grinding grains. In the hills of India, grinding mills operated by hydropower have significant role in the daily life of the local people.

The Dirang Monpas live in high altitude and because of the terrain and inaccessible poor road conditions, the villagers totally depend on natural resources for their subsistence. To produce maize flour, the Dirang Monpas have traditionally used mills run by hydropower. These mills are locally known as *chuskor*.

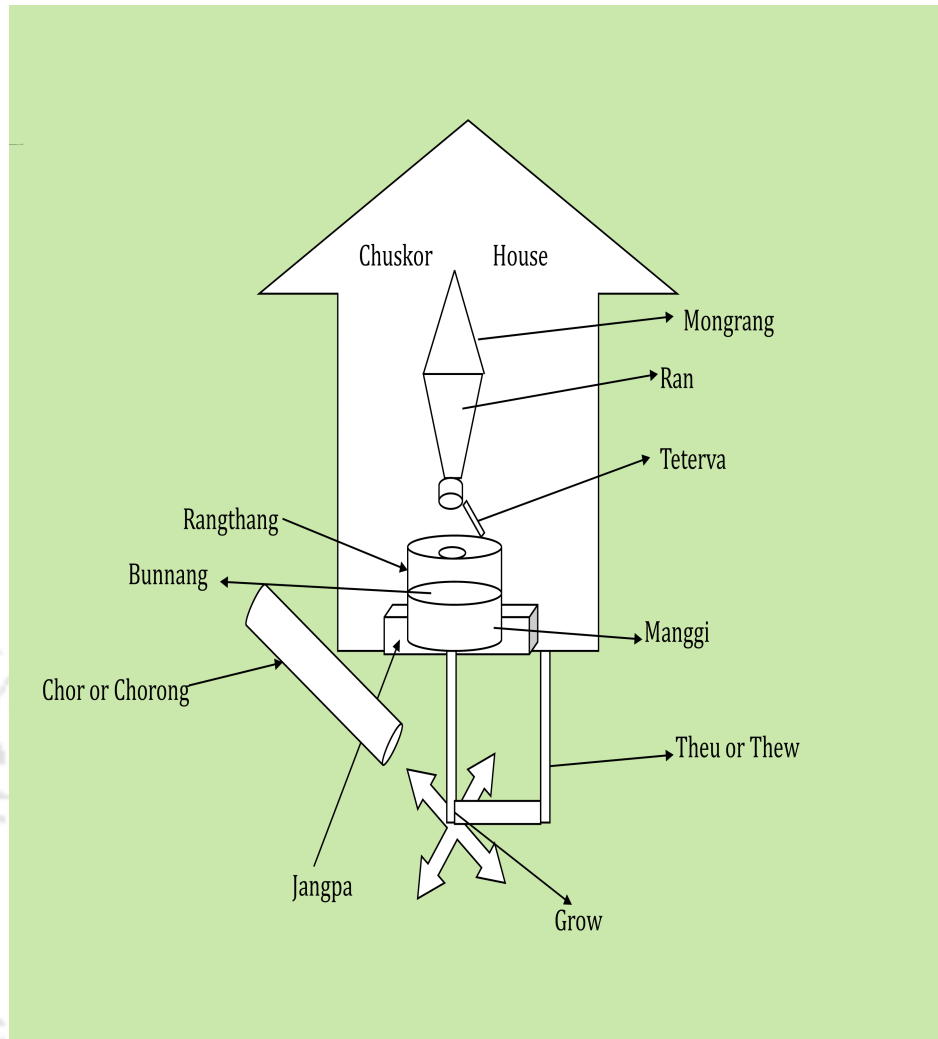
The *chuskor* is the traditional grinding mill for agricultural crops like maize, millet etc. The design of traditional water mill is quite simple and is built and maintained by using locally available stone and wood. The mill is generally constructed near or on above a water source.

Water is led from the stream via a channel, extending towards the mill house through a wooden tube made up of a hollow tree trunk. This tube is called *chor* or *chorong*. This tube can open or close as required. A wooden vertical shaft runs through the floor of the mill house, which is attached directly to the grinding stones. This shaft has wooden blades or a wooden wheel and is known as *grow*. It whirls the top pair of grinding stones. The grinding stones are called *rangthang* and these are set on the floor of the mill house. In *rangthang*, there are two grinding stones, upper and lower, upper stone known as *bunnang* and lower stone known as *manggi*. Grooves are cut in both the grinding stones to make them rough and uneven. When the stones become flat and even, these are reshaped. A wooden barrier is used to block the water flow when the mill is not in operation. When the wooden barrier opens the mouth of *chor*, the water flows quickly down and hits the *grow*'s wooden blades or the wooden wheel, which start to spin automatically. As the *grow* is attached to the *rangthang*, the grinding stones also start to whirl. The *grow* is attached with another shaft which is adjustable. This shaft is known as *theu* or *thow*. *Theu* or *Thow* is used to control the flow of water. If fine flour is required then the flow of water is increased and it is decreased if an individual prefer rough flour. A filter shield is used to prevent the surface debris as well as to regulate the water flow. A hole is carved in the centre of the upper grinding stone. Grain is poured slowly into the hole through a conical shaped wooden basket hanging above *rangthang*. This basket is called *ran*. Sometime, *rans* are also made by bamboo or cane. To make the flour fine or coarse, a wooden stick is attached to the *ran*. This

wooden stick is called *teterva*. The *ran* is hung in the ceiling of *chuskor* house by rope and that rope is called *mongrang*. *Mongrang* is adjustable to make flour coarse to fine. The grinded flour is collected in a wooden frame that encircles the *rangthang*. This wooden frame is called *jangpa*.

Figure. 4.3.1. A illustration of *Chuskor*





The *chuskors* are private properties, but are made available by the family that owns them for use to those families who do not own one. One village may have one or more than one *chuskor*. To use *chuskor*, one has to pay by manual labour or one portion of

grinded flour or sometimes, money. However, the owners of *chuskor* do not prefer monetary compensation. They largely provide their *chuskor* to others either for manual labour or for a portion of grain. If someone uses a *chuskor* for four days or he grinds 50 kilogram (or more than 50 kilogram) grain (any kind of), he gives one day manual labour. The system of giving one portion of grinded flour is also in practice. Some people also give money, though the amount is not fixed. It may vary from ₹20 to ₹40 and go up to ₹100 or ₹200.

The operational ability of any *chuskor* is dependent on the water flow and the weight of the grinding stones. One medium sized *rangthang* can grind up to 50 kilogram. The *chuskors* are generally made by the local craftsmen. The raw materials of *chuskor* are locally available wood and stone. However, not all the stones are suitable for making the grinding stone and the *chuskor*-maker traces the right stone himself.

To establish a *chuskor*, the minimum cost ranges between ₹40,000 to ₹50,000. The minimum cost of making *rangthang* is ₹30,000 approximately. The construction cost of a *chuskor* house is around ₹10,000 to ₹15,000. Earlier, the government offered loans and grants to the villagers to set up *chuskors*, though now this policy has been discontinued.

The knowledge of *chuskor* making is passed on from one generation to next. The priest forecasts the best dates for setting up a *chuskor* and this ritual of setting up the water mills is known as *segrong*.

### **Globalization's Effects: Change or Disappearance?**

Knowledge and practices concerning the nature and the universe is at the root of the culture and identity of any community. However, this knowledge is under serious threat from globalization at present time (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). Today, many indigenous knowledge systems are at risk of becoming extinct because of rapidly changing natural environments and fast pacing economic, political, and cultural changes on a global scale. UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010) comments that rapid urbanization, the extension of

lands for agriculture, climate change, continuous deforestation etc. have a noticeable effect on natural environment and the community's knowledge of it.

World Bank ([www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm)) noticed that the practices and skills are gradually vanishing because either they are unprepared for the challenges or they adapt too slowly. However, many practices disappear only because of the imposition of foreign technologies or development concepts that promise short-term gains or solutions to problems without being capable of sustaining them. The effect of disappearance of indigenous knowledge puts those to hardship who have developed it, but the others are also affected when skills, technologies, artifacts, problem solving strategies and expertise are lost.

So, what are the effects of globalization on *chuskors*? Is it challenged by any risk mentioned by UNESCO? Undoubtedly, urbanization has an impact on the present condition of the *chuskor*. The conversation with villagers points that the use of *chuskor* is gradually decreasing in every village of Dirang circle nowadays. The reason behind it is the changing eating habit of the local people. Traditionally, maize was their staple food, which has now been replaced by rice. Rice has to be de-husked for eating and it cannot be done in *chuskors*. So, to de-husk rice (maize or millet also), they now use the mechanical mills run by electricity or petrol or diesel. These mechanical mills have gradually replaced the traditional water mills in this area. *Chuskor* are now used mainly for making *Lopani*, the traditional maize beer.

Beyond the external challenges to the social and natural environment, many underprivileged or marginalized communities are themselves inclined to adapt to a new way of life or a purely economic development model, which are far from their own traditions and customs. It is visible in the present lifestyle of Dirang Monpas. The villagers accept that their younger generation has no interest in *chuskor* and its style of production. They do not eat maize or drink maize beer. Earlier their economy was based on barter system as they exchange the maize flour with other goods. *Chuskor* fits into this system as it mainly functions on the payments of manual labour. Now, it does not attract new generation as the new economic and cultural set-up is based on currency

system. These days, the few who use *chuskor*, mainly use it for selling the flour of maize or millet to buy the necessities. They also accept that the persons who know the technique of making *chuskor* are decreasing in number. Earlier, in every village, at least one *chuskor*-maker was available, whereas in the present time, locating one *chuskor*-maker within two or three villages is also difficult. The *chuskor* owner of Sangti village says that the only *chuskor*-maker of their village is very old and now, even for repairing *chuskor*, it is very difficult to invite *chuskor*-makers from far villages.

Changing natural environments also affect the traditional water mill system. Streams have dried or their water flow as reduced as a result of the decrease in rainfall. The low water flow hits the operation system of *chuskors*. The situation is worse because the government has now started to use the stream water for water supply in the villages and the town area. It not only affects the water mills but also affects the cultivation system as irrigating the fields by their traditional methods have become difficult.

Photograph. 4.3.1. The operational system of *Chuskor*

1. Chuskor house



2. **Chor** or the wooden tube. Water flows quickly down through this tube.



3. The wooden barrier open and



water the flows

4. The *Grow* and *Theu*



5. Water hit the shaft and its start to running



6. The *Runthang*



7. The *Runthang*

8. *Ran & Tetterva*



9. *Jangpa*



10. The grinded flour



### **Safeguarding *Chuskor*: Need a New Field of Appreciation in the New Patterns of Life?**

Safeguarding traditional knowledge and skill is more challenging than preserving natural environments, performing arts or traditional crafts. The knowledge can be safeguarded by retaining its use in everyday life and transforming the use of the knowledge into different new areas.

Many of the Dirang Monpas, especially the villagers from far villages like Namshu, believe in the feasibility of *chuskors* in future. The reason behind it is the distance of

their villages from the market place and new technological devices. A number of villages of the Dirang Monpas are in the peaks of high mountains. To take the grain to the Dirang town and grind it in the electric machine located in the town is a herculean task for villagers as it is heavy and costly. Again, most of the villages are small and cannot support the business of electric grinding machines. On the other hand, as the villagers do not produce huge amount of crops as per the capacity of electric (or petrol/diesel) machines, *chuskor* is handy and a practical option for them. For sudden necessity also, *chuskor* helps a lot. They also think that younger generation can easily learn the techniques of making *chuskor* as the mechanism of the machine is not so complex.

However, after observing the situation, it is clear that the real reason for the disappearance of this traditional skill is the change of taste and the adoption of Kiwi fruit cultivation. As they are gradually becoming rice eaters grinding maize is not required. It is only occasionally done. Villages on the lower levels have started Kiwi or apple fruit cultivation in the fields where they use to cultivate maize. This change of taste and the adoption of new cultivation pattern is the main reason behind the gradual disappearance of this traditional knowledge. If this situation continues soon this traditional technology of *chuskors* will disappear. Improvisation of the technique is necessary to make it cost effective for the villagers in this changing situation. For its sustenance certain changes have to be made.

### **New form proposed**

Popularly known as '*Gharats*' in other Indian states, these traditional water mills are an excellent alternative source of energy, where no complex and foreign technology is required. Many NGOs and government organizations like Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) and Alternate Hydro Energy Centre (AHEC), Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IITR) has been involved in modification and development of water mills as small hydro power [SHP] systems to produce electricity. The Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organization (HESCO), the main organization which popularize the modified water mills to produce electricity in Uttaranchal realized that the basic mechanism of this traditional water mill is the same

with large hydro-electric projects and they technically upgraded about 150 water mills in the Garhwal region of Uttaranchal. The developed water mills not only produce electricity, but also increased its grinding power. Against the traditional one, modified and upgraded water mills can coarse grind grain in 20 minutes and fine grind grain in two and half hours.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India also gives a special package to Arunachal Pradesh to develop SHPs. AHEC lists 550 SHP projects in Arunachal Pradesh. Government of Arunachal Pradesh established a new department for managing hydropower as the department of hydropower development, which gets funds from Prime Ministers special package for developing SHPs.

However, the people from the villages (where the fieldwork was conducted) have never heard about this kind of small hydropower systems that can be based on their traditional watermills or *chuskors*. The research reveals that no initiative has yet been made by any NGO or Government to educate them that with little modification of their water mills, they can produce their own electricity.

HESCO points out that being a traditional activity of the mountains, knowledge, skill and infrastructure for these water mills are always accessible and available and power produced in a decentralized manner would result in the transformation of development in the Himalayan region. In the absence of appropriate initiatives to popularize the technical modification and up-gradation of water mills to produce electricity, water mills have never been used for any purpose other than grinding in Dirang area. It is proved in other Himalayan-Indian states that with a minor change of the technology used in the water mills, not only the locals fulfill their power needs but also suitably modify an age- old practice to suit their present life.

## 4.4

### Case Study Four

#### Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events

Social practices, rituals and festive events establish the identity of people who practice these as a group or a society. They structure the lives of communities and groups. These vary from small gatherings to large-scale social celebrations. Such diverse social practices, rituals and festive events help to mark the passing of the seasons, events in the agricultural calendar or the stages of a person's life. They are closely linked to a community's worldview and perception of its own history and memory (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010).

There are numerous forms of social practices, rituals and festive events as indicated in table below.

Table.4.4.1. Different forms of social practices, rituals and festive events

- 
- Worship rites
  - Rites of passage
  - Birth, wedding and funeral rituals
  - Oaths of allegiance
  - Traditional legal systems
  - Traditional games and sports
  - Kinship and ritual kinship ceremonies
  - Settlement patterns
  - Culinary traditions
  - Seasonal ceremonies
  - Practices specific to men or women only
  - Hunting, fishing and gathering practices
  - Special gestures and words, recitations, songs or dances
  - Special clothing
  - Processions
  - Animal sacrifice

- Special food

Source: Adapted from UNESCO ICH Kit 2010. Table form is created by Rashmirekha Sarma

These numerous forms of social practices, rituals and festive events mark its presence through different rituals, festivals, ceremonies, oral tradition or even in the lifestyle of all indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh. Furthermore, these make the platform from where the identities of different groups are manifested and flourished. Among all the numerous forms of social practices, rituals and festive events, culinary tradition and special food are the focused sub theme for this case study, as food is one of the most basic forms that has been rapidly integrated and influenced by the globalized world. Food consumption is a social process that shapes the relations within the family and the community and “it is playing a crucial role in the construction of local and national identities and in the changing self understanding of social groups, migrants and ethnic communities” (Nützenadel and Trentmann 2008, 1-2).

The patterns of food habit and food preparation style of all the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are almost similar. Their diet consists of boiled or roasted meat, fish, rice or millet, herbs, and few vegetables (Singh 1995). Traditionally, most of the groups of Arunachal Pradesh do not use oil or pulses and milk is a taboo for many of them. However, salt occupies a significant place in the culinary tradition of all indigenous groups of the state because of its scarcity in this high altitude region. Available historical data mention salt as an important commodity of trade and barter for many indigenous groups prior to Indian independence. E. T. Dalton wrote in 1872 about the Saikhowa market where the Idus traded their stuff with salt brought by the plain people (Dalton 1972- 73, 20). Salt was one of the “costliest edible items” among the indigenous groups of this region and one of the major imported products notified in the district gazetteers of Assam in 1928. One Apatani blogger (*What is the price of SALT?* 3 February, 2008) mentioned that the Apatanis used to travel for five to six days of long journey to the nearest plains of Assam every year to buy salt and barter it with Nyishis and Hill Miris in earlier days, which is also reported in much earlier by H.M. Crowe in 1890 on his account (Dutta Choudhury 1981, 217).

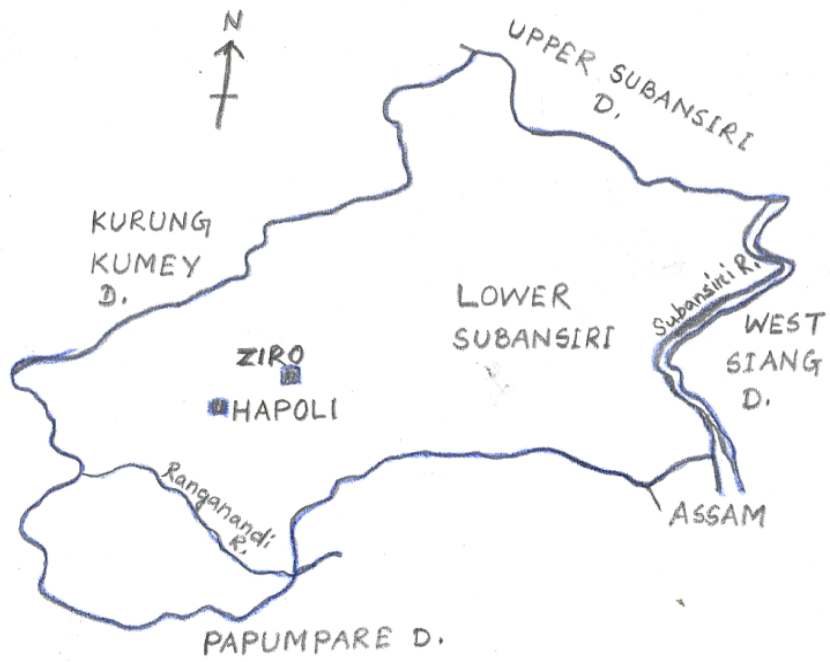
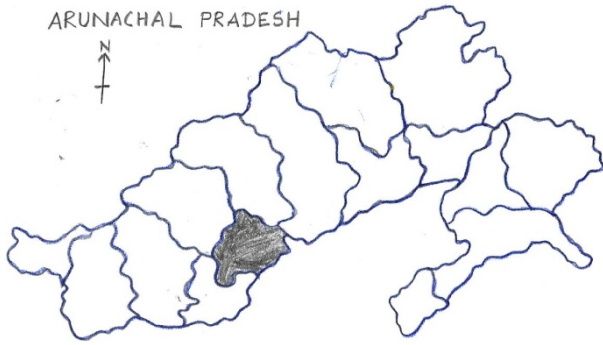
Among all the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, only the Apatanis have a distinct traditional salt making process and thus, the traditional salt of the Apatanis is particularly studied under the sub theme of “culinary tradition and special food.”

### **Focused Group and Location**

The Apatanis are a schedule tribe. The Apatanis believe that they are the descendant of a mythical ancestor, *Abo-Tani*. They live mainly on the Apatani Valley of Lower Subansiri district, concentrated at Ziro and Hapoli. The valley is crisscrossed by the Kele river and surrounded by hills with an altitude of 5557 feet. The number of Apatani people is 18, 233 (Census 2001). They speak Apatani language, which has no script. Their literacy rate according to the 2001 census is 44.79%.

The Apatanis live in large villages in compact houses. Among all the groups of Arunachal Pradesh, the Apatanis have a distinct and well-known form of permanent cultivation. The community’s diet includes mainly beef, *mithun* meat, pork, rice, millet, maize, fruits, herbs and few vegetables. A homemade drink ‘*O*’ is prepared from rice, millet or maize. Pulses, mustard oil, milk, vegetables like cabbages, cauliflowers have been recently added to their diet. Though they have indigenous religious beliefs, these days, many of them have converted to Christianity. The major festivals of Apatani are *Myoko*, *Dree*, *Morum* and *Yapung*.

Map.4.4.1. Lower Subansiri District and the area of fieldwork



**Area of fieldwork:**

Traditionally, there are seven major villages in Apatani Valley. These seven villages, inhabited by Apatanis, are Hong, Hari, Bulla, Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, Michi-Bami. However, at present these larger villages are separated into smaller one for better administrative function. Hapoli and Ziro are two small twin towns mainly inhabited by the Apatanis.

Among all the seven villages, Hong, Duta, Mudang Tage, Bulla, Sibe (a part of Michi-Bami village) villages are visited for collecting data. Conversations were also made with people from Hapoli and Ziro township area. The traditional salt is made in every village though Hong is the only village where this salt is produced for commercial purpose.

#### **Answering the Research Questions**

To explore the research questions taking the culinary tradition of making salt by the Apatanis, unstructured and open-ended group ethnographic interviews are made with the villagers. Some descriptive and in-depth queries, though not treated as fixed and closed questions, were identified to collect data. The audio-visual techniques (photographs and video) are extensively used in the data collection procedure.

To begin the interviews with the Apatani locals in the villages, the queries were initially about the process of Apatani salt production and the raw materials used to produce this salt. It also includes discussions on the social impacts of this salt on the Apatani lifestyle.

The main emphasis of the fieldwork queries is understanding how the knowledge of salt-making was passed on to the next generation and the changes that have occurred in the traditional salt making process. Consequently, two significant questions are also asked, first, is the knowledge transmitted and secondly, if the new generation is not interested, what are the reasons behind it.

Queries were also asked about the economic prospect of traditional salt to ascertain its survival. Will it be a marketable commodity in near future or would it decline and gradually disappear?

### ***Tapyo*: the traditional salt of Apatanis**

The traditional salt of Apatani is called *Tapyo*. *Tapyo* is prepared from the ashes of different plants available in the surroundings of the Apatani villages. Three main traditional plants that are used for making *tapyo* are:

- *Sarshe* or *Marwa* (*Eleusine coracana*): Marwa is Finger millet crop.
- *Pepu* (*Phragmites karka*): This is kind of small bamboo like plant, which is used for making mats.
- *Taari*: It is a kind of grass.

However, nowadays they have started to use other edible plants too.

### **The preparation style**

There is no specific ritual or custom to make *Tapyo*. To prepare *tapyo*, the plant materials, mainly *marwa* and other edible plants are collected after harvesting. *Pepu* or *taari* is not dried and used directly while *marwa* or other edible vegetable plants are sun dried for one or two days. Usually, *tapyo* is prepared in winter months, because to dry the raw materials, it requires dry sunny weather. After drying, the materials are burnt immediately to avoid contamination, smoke and air pollution. The ash is known as *piu*. To make good *piu*, the raw materials are needed to dry at one go. The ashes are then piled up in a conical shaped basket, locally known as *sader* and is filtered by pouring water on the ash.

These baskets have small outlets at the bottom side for dripping filtered ash liquid. Water is slowly added in the ashes to create a filtered ash liquid. The filtered liquid is collected after three days and it is known as *pila*. *Pila* is the liquid form of *Tapyo* that is directly used in many recipes, though it is mainly used for preparing *Tapyo*. To make half a kilogram of *Tapyo* almost one and half kilolitre of *pila* is needed.

Tapyo is a solid substance made by condensing *Pila* by heating it on a pot at high temperature. To make *Tapyo*, a little pig fat is melted in a pot (mostly kadhais) placed on the fire. When the fat is melted, liquid starch (of boiled rice) is added in the pot. When the starch starts to dry, *Pila* is added slowly in the middle of the starched pot. It is added until it is transformed into a solid form. The pot is then removed from the fire and left to cool at room temperature. After cooling, the solid substance is wrapped by a kind of grass, locally known as *Loli* or *Trabo* (*Molinaria capitulata*). This grass is not affected by chemical compounds in the *Tapyo*. The final substance ready for consumption resembles dried red clay. After wrapping, it is stored on a rack located above the fireplace, because *Tapyo* remains solid with the heat of fire. The solid substitute is broken down when needed.

Photograph. 4.4.1. *Tapyo*, it's raw materials and making process

*Sarshe or Marwa*



*Taari*



*Pepu*

*Tapyo*



Piu

Pila



Sader

Loli



### The making process

Pig Fat





### ***Tapyo*: a special culinary practice with medical values**

Traditionally *tapyo* is accepted as a food of respect. It is an essential component of many socio-religious occasions. It is placed in the *Myoko yugyang* (the platform of prayers) in *Morum*, *Myoko* and the other festivals and then offered to the *nyibu* (the priest). *Tapyo* is also offered as gift to *bunjin ajin*, the friend from other community, especially from the Nyishi group.

*Tapyo* is also a delicacy. Very small pieces of it is offered to guests with ‘*O*’, the traditional beer of the Apatanis, as the Apatanis believe that the taste of ‘*O*’ increases with it. *Pila* is used as food ingredient. *Pila* works as a sizzling ingredient. When *Pila* is used in any other recipe, the recipe is called as *Pike*. *Pike* is a kind of spicy mixture or paste (*chutney*), traditionally made with dry bamboo shoot, herbs and *pila*.

*Tapyo* has medicinal use as well. They use it to treat mild fever, dehydration, indigestion etc. However, the effective quality of *Tapyo* which is most important is controlling iodine deficiency among the Apatanis. Goitre, an iodine deficiency disease, is common among many indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh. This disease produces a swelling inside the neck just below Adam's apple caused by hypertrophied thyroid glands in humans, which limits thyroid gland activity. This disease, called as *Lanchu alin* in the Apatani language, is absent among the Apatani people.

### **Economy of *Tapyo***

Conversations with the Apatani locals provide an insight into the fact that *tapyo* has always had an exchange value among the Apatanis. Enquiries about the commercial production of *tapyo* led me to the Hong village, which is the lone Apatani village where *tapyo* is commercially produced. Interestingly, there is only one old woman in this village, Tapi Padu, who makes *tapyo* on commercial basis. She makes *tapyo* on everyday basis and can make three *tapyos* within 10 hours. In her family, there are only two persons: she and her husband. For commercial production, after every two-three days, both the husband and wife go to their clan or community forest to collect raw materials for making *piu*. Usually they start at 3 a.m. in the morning and come back

after sunset. Sometime, if they did not collect sufficient materials, they do not mind putting up at the forest at night. They generally burn the collected materials in the forest itself and bring the ashes back home.

Usually the intermediary or the retail seller comes to them every week to buy the *tapyos*. They sell it for around ₹250 to ₹280 to the retailers. She said that for buying other domestic necessities like tea, sugar etc. she sells *tapyos*, which supplements her income. The retailers, however, sell *tapyos* for a much higher price. In the Duta village, villagers said that they buy big *tapyos* at ₹500, give ₹300 for medium and ₹200 for small *tapyos*. I also visited the Apatani families residing in Itanagar, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh, who informed me that they buy about four hundred gram *tapyo* that is sold at roughly ₹500 to ₹800 nowadays.

The salt making process is a 'see and learn' process. Many informants, particularly the women, who now make *tapyo* for home-use, say that they learned to make it from their elders. There is no specific learning process and while learning the daily chores from childhood, they learnt it. There are two distinct views regarding questions on whether salt making is only done by the women or by particular households and does it have any specific ritual or custom for salt making or not. One old Apatani woman informant remarks that the families, who sacrificed *mithun* (*Bos frontalis*) or other animal in religious ceremonies, are barred from making *tapyo* in their houses. However, all other informants informed that they do not know about this tradition. Perhaps, it was a custom that has already disappeared.

### **Globalization's Effects: Change or Disappearance?**

Conversations with the locals indicated noticeable changes in the transition process of *tapyo* from generation to generation. Any cultural element is alive only when it is allowed to adapt and adjust gradually with change of time. Change, a characteristic feature of culture, is very constant, fluid and serves to enrich the culture. *Tapyo* has also faced some gradual change. The first change is visible in the raw materials. Though they think that *pepu* or *taari* are best raw materials for *tapyo* making, these days they

also use banana plants and other edible vegetable plants, because not all these traditional raw material are easily available. The next change is noticeable in the preparation style of different recipes. In preparation of *pika*, instead of using liquid form (*pila*), people have started to use the solid form (*tapyo*). The Apatani families living in Itanagar mainly do this because of unavailability of *pila* in their area. Besides the traditional *pika* of bamboo shoot and pork, the Apatanis now make soya bean *pika* or potato *pika* or *pika* with other vegetables.

All informants said that though new raw materials are added and new kind of *pika* recipes are tried, the making process of *tapyo* has not changed. They believe that it will be continuing to the next generation, because as a mandatory item, *tapyo* has its own ceremonial and religious importance.

But, do these suffice when discussing the disappearance or existence of *tapyo* in near future? The analysis of the case study on traditional craftsmanship shows that only products, not the process of product making, survive. This analysis generates the same question in this case study too, that only the product (salt), not the techniques, is passed down to the generations. To adequately answer this question, it is important to understand the response of the young Apatani generation towards the traditional salt making process. Their interest to learn this process is a very important aspect for this study and reflects the continuity of the tradition of making *tapyo* in near future.

In the course of my conversations with the young girls or boys, it was apparent that the new generation of the Apatanis is not interested to learn the process. Although they savour the taste of the *tapyos*, they do not know the preparation style. The tradition now lives and is surviving with the elderly women in the house and these women lament that their daughters or younger girls are not interested to learn it.

This shows the decreasing number of *tapyo*-makers in spite of it's growing demand. The knowledge of *tapyo* making is gradually disappearing and it is not being passed on to the next generation. I stayed with a Apatani family in Sibe village during my fieldwork. The owner of the home-stay was an elderly Apatani woman who was

brilliant in making *tapyos*, though none of her four daughters know to make it. Tapi Padu also informed me that nobody ever expressed interest to learn the process of making *tapyo*.

One informant who is a government official and lives in Hapoli area says that his wife knows the process and can make it but has never tried to do so. Another girl, who resides in Hong village and introduced me with Tapi Padu, says that she never tried to make it but was aware of the process. Interestingly everyone from new generation I spoke to, appeared to possess the knowledge, but actually, nobody ever tried to make *tapyo* and most of the families purchased or barter *tapyo* from others or purchased from the market.

What are the reasons behind this apathy? Survival of any kind of social practices, rituals and festive events depends on the broad participation of the community members, which are tremendously affected by the changes that have occurred in the lifestyle of the communities. The changing socio-economic conditions of the community members are affecting the feasibility of the social practices, rituals and festive events. UNESCO, in their reports and brochures, point out that the globalization processes like migration, the introduction of formal education, growing influence of major world religions, individualization and other effects of globalization markedly affect on these practices. Among these, almost all effects are noticeable on *tapyo*, the traditional salt substitute and food delicacy of the Apatanis.

Changes in the lifestyle and lack of interest in participating in any kind of rituals or festivals are easily noticeable among the Apatanis. The new eating or drinking habits affects the use of *tapyo*. Earlier, *tapyo* with 'O' was also relished as a stimulant. However, with the availability of new kind of drinks, they do not take *tapyo* with it. Since the preparing process of *tapyo* is tedious and collection of raw materials is arduous, it is highly demotivating to the youngsters.

The process of *tapyo* making is very lengthy and needs constant supervision. The young Apatanis go to school and so, they have little time for such prolonged process. The lack

of time creates lack of interest and lack of concern to learn *tapyo* making. With the expansion of modern education system, the younger generation are not interested to drink 'O' and hence, the use of *tapyo* with 'O' is reduced. Many Apatani children are in the boarding schools and many informants think that it affects the transmission of their tradition to next generation, as tradition is passed informally but this children hardly can spend quality time with their family.

Migration to towns and cities for better job opportunities and education has also added to the change in lifestyle. Observations from fieldwork point out that almost every family to whom I spoke to, have send their children to Guwahati, Bangalore, Delhi or other metros of India for better education where they are pursuing their career and life. These have clearly influenced not only the transmission process of *tapyo*, but also the other social practice, rituals or events.

Religion is another strong but invisible cause for the decreasing numbers of *tapyo* makers. During my home-stay, I observed that most of the Apatani families have converted to Christianity. The conversion to Christianity of a large number of Apatanis affects the traditional rituals or social practices. Some Apatani locals state that though they celebrate their major traditional festivals, many rituals or customs have declined and the importance of *nyibu* (priest of Apatanis) has reduced. Due to this, uses of *tapyo*, as a food of respect have considerably decreased

The use of plastic is another area of change and concern. Plastic made equipment have replaced *sader*, the bamboo conical basket to filter the *piu*, because the numbers of craftsmen to make *Sader* have declined. They now use plastic bottle, aluminium, or iron water bucket to filter the *piu*.

Photograph. 4.4.2. Use of plastic bottle, aluminium or iron water bucket to filter the *piu*

Plastic bottle	Plastic bottle	Iron bucket
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The commercial feasibility is also an important aspect while discussing about the future life of any traditional product. Few people are commercially associated with *tapyo* making. The population of the Apatanis is few and many of them even do not consume *tapyo*. A single *tapyo* of half kilogram can be used by a family for almost one year, because of its little and occasional use. Thus, the sale of *tapyo* is not in a large amount though the demand is high. Hard labour and low sales makes it a non-profitable product for large commercial production.

**Safeguarding *Tapyo*: Is there any Chance to Slow the Accelerating Rate of ‘Cultural Loss’ and Find a New Field of Appreciation in the New Patterns of Life?**

Ensuring the continuity of social practices, rituals or festive events requires the mobilization of large numbers of individuals and the social, political and legal institutions and mechanisms of a society (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). *Tapyo* also requires large participation from the Apatani individuals in its making process. *Tapyo* needs large amount of natural raw materials and formal actions need to be taken to guarantee the sustainability of natural resources and access rights of the community to these natural resources necessary for making *tapyo*.

Safeguarding the tradition of *tapyo* making and using it is another tricky question as the Apatanis appear unconvinced that this will disappear in near future. They believe that making *tapyo* is not a difficult task and they can easily make it, though the fieldwork observation contradicts their statement. However, many Apatanis are concerned about their gradually vanishing cultural elements and over the past few years, there has been some local initiative towards preservation of the art of *tapyo*. Though the quantity is decreased, in every village, *tapyos* are made and hopefully, it will continue in future. To preserve *tapyo*, the socio-religious customs of Apatanis needs to be safeguarded.

Answering the question that whether this traditional salt has got a new place in Apatani cuisine, besides the traditional style, is a trickier one. Though the majority of the Apatanis say that they did not know any other use of *tapyo* besides using *pila* in making *pika*, nowadays they make different kind of *pika* where the ingredients are not traditional. As mentioned earlier, they make *pika* of soybean chunk, potato and other vegetables now. It will definitely be replaced as a salt substitute as the packaged salt is available everywhere in Apatani Valley, though, it may survive as an exotic food.

#### 4.5

#### Case Study Five

#### Oral Traditions and Expressions Including Language

“A un populo  
mittitilu a catina  
spughiatillu  
attupatici a vucca  
é ancora libiru  
Livatici u travagghiu  
u passaportu  
a tavula unni mancia

u lettu unni dormi  
é ancora riccu.  
Un populu,  
diventa poviru e servu,  
quannu ci arrobbanu a lingua  
addudat di patri:  
é persu pi sempri.”

(Put a people in chains, strip them,  
plug up their mouths;  
they are still free.  
Take away their job, their passport,  
the table they eat on,  
the bed they sleep in;  
they are still rich.

A people become poor and enslaved,  
when they are robbed of the tongue  
left them by their ancestors:  
They are lost forever.)

Ignazio Buttitta, “Lingua e Dialetu”

Sicilian poet, born 1899,

Extracted from *Our Creative Diversity*  
(UNESCO 1995, 178)

Oral traditions and expressions including languages ensure the continuity of a culture. It serves as a repository of knowledge, values, beliefs and collective memory, which is transmitted through songs, dance, drama etc. (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010). This domain of intangible cultural heritage encompasses a vast variety of spoken forms of languages that shows in a table below.

Table. 2.1. Numerous oral tradition and expression

- 
- Proverbs
  - Riddles
  - Tales

- Nursery Rhymes
- Legends
- Myths
- Epic Songs and Poems
- Charms
- Prayers
- Chants
- Songs
- Dramatic Performances etc.

Source: Adapted from UNESCO ICH Kit 2010. Table form is created by Rashmirekha Sarma

Some types of oral expression are common and can be used by entire communities while others are limited to a few members –either men or women or the elderly.

The continuity of an oral tradition depends to a great measure on the performer, who has the onus of improvising on the forms and also creating/reproducing genres according to the context. (UNESCO ICH kit 2010). A death of language means the inevitable permanent loss of oral traditions and expressions (Crystal 2000).

Since Independence, India has accepted the principle of language sovereignty that creates India as a safe dominion of language. With 22 official state languages, India is a habitat to 380 spoken languages (Müller 1995). Every part of India has its own oral tradition like *Bhaona*, *Kathakali*, *Ramleela* etc., which passes through the narrators and dramatic performances. Among these 380 spoken languages, almost 66 dialects are spoken in Arunachal Pradesh and the whole structure of the linguistic diversity of the state is based on the verbal form as only the Khamptis, Monpas, Sherdukpens, Khambas and Membas have their own script (Singh 1995). The evidence of richness in oral tradition and expression is visible in the mythical stories of the origin of the tribes, on their prayers and rituals, on their knowledge and skills, and on their performing arts.

Apart from being threatened by rapid urbanization, large-scale migration, industrialization and environmental change, oral traditions also are considerably

effected by modern communications medium as print/electronic and the Internet. (UNESCO ICH kit 2010).

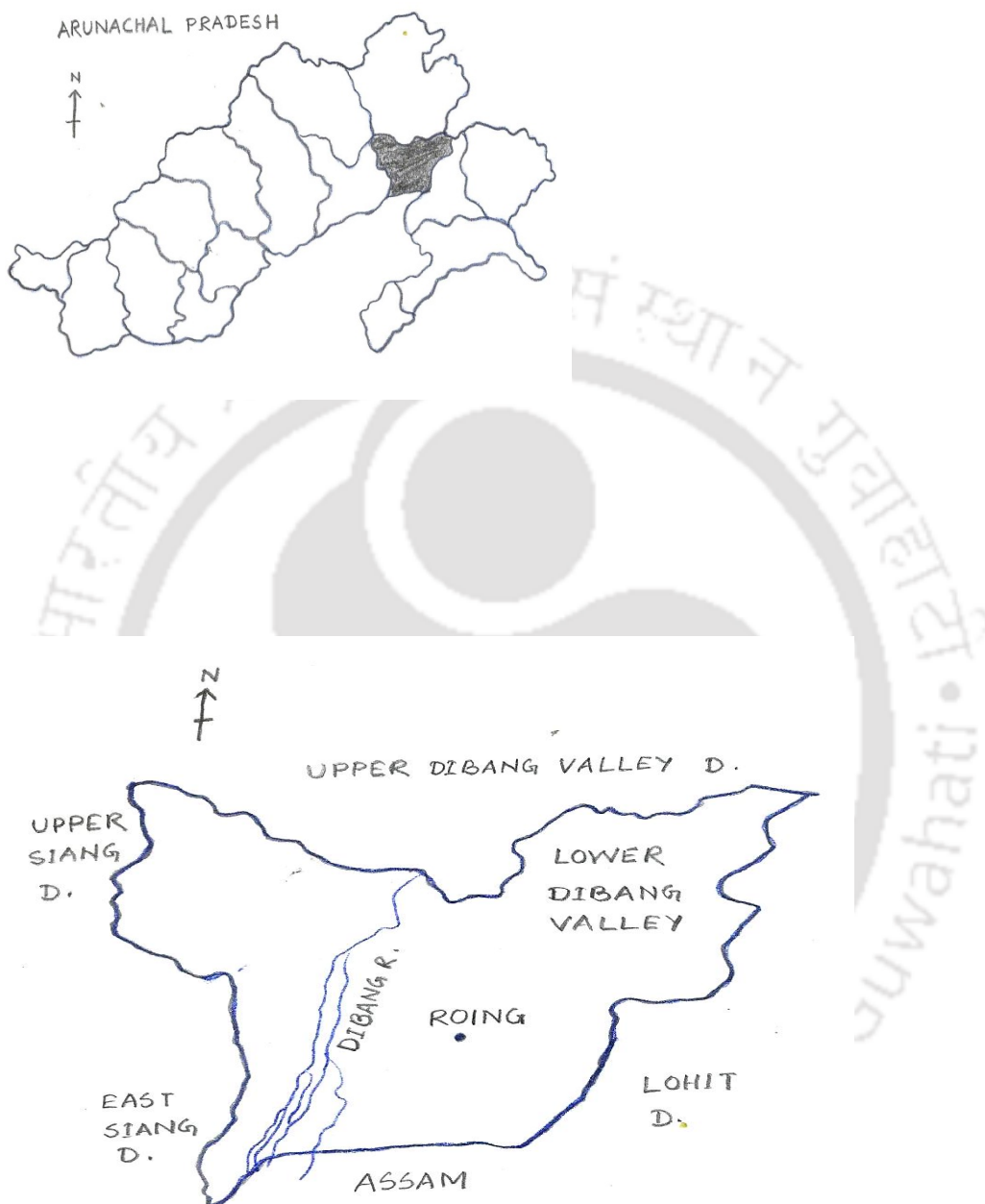
Up till now, this is a situation that is occurring globally with oral tradition and language. Is the situation same in Arunachal Pradesh, one of the richest place of linguistic diversity? To explore the answers of the core questions of this present research and to understand the situation of oral traditions and expressions domain in Arunachal Pradesh, a case study on oral traditions and expressions of Idu-Mishmi group is conducted.

### **Focused Group and location**

The Idu-Mishmis are one of the major sub groups of the greater Mishmi indigenous group. They mainly inhabit Dibang Valley district and Lower Dibang Valley district. During fieldwork, I came to know that some of the Idu-Mishmis also live in Tezu of Lohit district and Tuting-Mechuka area of Upper Siang district. The Census 2001 records the population of Idu-Mishmi at 9,076 in undivided Dibang Valley district and the literacy rate is 58.89%. The Idus have their distinct dialect, which falls under the Tibeto-Burman group of languages. Traditionally, Idus believe in animism and worship several benevolent and malevolent spirits and the goddess *Nani-Intaya* is the sole creator of the humankind and universe for the Idus. The Idus practice both terrace and wet rice cultivation. Rice, Maize and Millet are the staple food of the Idu-Mishmis. The major festivals of the Idus are *Reh* and *Ke-meh-ha*.

The focused group for this case study is the Idu-Mishmis who inhabit the Lower Dibang Valley district. Roing, the head quarter of the Lower Dibang Valley district was selected for the case study on oral traditions and expressions. Roing is the main area where most of the Idu-Mishmi villages are located. There are two circles in Roing area inhabited by the Idu-Mishmis. The first one is Kornu circle. This circle has seven villages. These are Engino, Deno, Abango, Abali, Iduli, Imuli and Rukmo. The next circle is Roing, which has eight villages. These are Mayu-cheta, Egengo, Kebali, Chidu, Bhismak Nagar, Itaya, Aasali and Ithili.

Map. 4.5.1. Lower Dibang Valley district and the area of fieldwork



**Area of fieldwork:**

To conduct the case study on the oral tradition and explore the answers of the questions of present research, such a place was necessary which not only interacts with outer world regularly but has also preserved its own traditional world. Roing circle is selected for the study because being a district headquarter and an education hub for the Idu-Mishmis, in Roing, the effects of globalization are noticeably visible. Approximately the Idu-Mishmi population in the area is 4000. However, no specific villages were picked for the fieldwork as the aim of this research is not collecting data about the different types of oral tradition of the Idu-Mishmis, but to present a comprehensive idea of the present condition of their language and oral traditions and how their present generation relate and communicate with it.

#### **Answering the Research Questions**

Among all intangible cultural heritages, oral tradition and expression is perhaps the largest ICH domain that incorporates all other cultural heritages. Discussing oral tradition and its change, particularly in the context of Arunachal Pradesh, is very difficult because almost all the indigenous groups are rich in oral tradition and expression. However, Idu-Mishmi oral traditions and expressions were selected for certain specific reasons. The Idu-Mishmis form a separate cultural zone in Arunachal Pradesh by their distinct beliefs, rituals, dialect and strong knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe. This knowledge is reflected in their century old and extensive oral traditions. The respondents say that the oral tradition of the Idu-Mishmis specifies about seventy-six clans and some clans count their genealogy up to about twenty-eight generations. The Idu-Mishmi oral tradition has helped the community till the recent times to maintain a healthy relationship with their surroundings. The Dibang valley district has still preserved 80% of its forest cover ([www.arunachal.nic.ac.in](http://www.arunachal.nic.ac.in)) and it is believed that the credit goes to the oral traditions of the Idu-Mishmis. This rich tradition has been the topic of research of many Anthropological and Sociological Researchers (Blackburn 2005). It has been chosen as a case study because of its already recorded potential revealed in the literature survey of the present work. Previous studies (Blackburn 2005, Pulu 2002, Elwin 1958, 1970,

Baruah 1988) also have created the foundation for this research to explore the changes in oral tradition of the Idu-Mishmis.

To collect data, unstructured and open-ended group ethnographic interviews are made with the Idu locals. Based on the primary research question, some descriptive and in-depth queries, but not treated as fixed and closed questions, were framed to collect data. The non-participant observation technique along with the audio-visual techniques (recordings) was extensively used in the data collection procedure.

To begin the conversations with the Idu locals, the queries were initially about the number of Idu people (mainly the younger generation) who can speak Idu fluently and speak it at home. Subsequent queries were directed to understand the available forms of oral tradition and expressions among the Idu-Mishmis and its importance. Queries were also made about the everyday use of the different forms of oral traditions (as it is already known that to sustain any oral tradition it has to be part of the daily habits) and the way it is transmitted.

However, the main focus of this case study is the transmission of this oral tradition to the younger generation. While collecting data special emphasis was laid on observing the interest of young Idu-Mishmis in their language and oral traditions, to explore whether the oral tradition of Idu-Mishmi is disappearing or reappearing with new forms. Enquires were also made about the present conditions of the priests because in most of the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh, the priest is the main bearer and carrier of the oral traditions.

To know the chances of survival of the oral traditions and expressions, it is important to explore the safeguarding measures. Enquiries were made about the measures undertaken by the government or any other body to save their language and oral traditions. The enquiry mainly emphasizes on:

- The script developed for the Idu language and the introduction of Idu language in local primary school.

- Presence of any local initiative for safeguarding the oral traditions through any new kind of approach like writing literature on the language, publishing magazine, or organizing storytelling festivals.

**Idu-Mishmi oral tradition and expressions including language: In a “life support system”**

Language is not just a mean of communication but it also represents the rich fabric of cultural expressions. It carries individual’s or community’s identity and mediates value systems, social codes, worldviews and sense of belongingness (UNESCO 2009, 67). Language vitality is a benchmark for cultural diversity because virtually every major aspect of human culture, from kinship classification to religion, is dependent on language for its transmission (Haarmann, 2004).

Preliminary conversations with the Idu locals clearly indicate that few Idu-Mishmis have the ability to speak Idu fluently. This is particularly visible among the younger generation. English is their medium of study and surprisingly, the youngest members of the group cannot speak Idu at all. Not only the young generation, but also the middle-aged generation has difficulties in speaking Idu fluently. The present lingua franca of the Idu-Mishmis is Hindi. Majority of the informants accept that only the elderly generation can speak Idu fluently and regret that their children cannot speak Idu language. Even at home, Hindi is the preferred language; children and parents do not talk in Idu with each other. Rather Hindi or sometimes English or Hindi mixed Idu language is used within the family. Sumitra, a non-Idu NGO worker who works for the development of Idu women from many years, observes that the whole language is in a “life support system” and is surviving artificially.

An informant, who is a doctor, and also an Idu-Mishmi activist says that though he can speak Idu fluently and converses with his friends in Idu, his children cannot speak Idu because of his wife is from the Nepali community and cannot speak Idu. They speak in Hindi at home. He said that if the parents are not educated or less educated and if both are Idu, then their children can speak in Idu. He introduced me to a friend of his, whose wife is an Idu woman and his family converses in Idu at home.

The picture is not very different in the villages too. Many informants accept that the number of Idu speaking people is gradually decreasing in villages. Specifically, the new Idu generation from villages cannot speak Idu and mostly use Hindi in day to day conversation.

Kotige Mena, another informant who is well known speaker of the Idu language, says that the earlier generation of the Idu-Mishmis were fluent in Idu and each individual was well versed with their. Assamese was their lingua franca to communicate with the outside world. But from his generation, only twenty percent people can speak Idu fluently. He divided the educated Idu people in three generation. He belongs to the first generation. From the second generation educated Idus, merely around ten percent people know the language and oral tradition. Nobody from the third generation educated Idus can speak their native language fluently nor do they possess sufficient knowledge about their oral traditions or expressions. The youngest members of the group, under the age of 10 years, only speak few words and understand very little Idu. For example, a woman I met, expressed her regret that her children cannot understand the words related to the handloom and does not know which part of the loom is called what. Even in present times a few who know Idu well, cannot even understand many words of the chants or genealogical narration.

The “Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger” recognizes Idu-Mishmi language as “definitely endangered language”. In the UNESCO report (2009, 77), nine factors are mentioned for assessing the vitality of a language, as identified by the *Language Vitality and Endangerment framework*, UNESCO. Idu-Mishmi language fits into most of the parameters of the factors that are identified for assessing the vitality of a language.

#### 4.5.2. Table of the vitality test of Idu-Mishmi language from the fieldwork\*

Vitality of Idu-Mishmi Language	
community members attitude towards their own language	Unconcerned and uninterested

Intergenerational language transmission	Decreasing in every generation
Availability of materials for language education and literary	Very few
Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use	Accept as third language but no use
Response to new domains and media	Positive
Type and quality of documentation	Amateur

Source: Adapted from UNESCO World Report 2009. P. 77

\*(Of the nine parameters in the UNESCO's "Language Vitality and Endangerment framework," I have retained only those parameters, which I could observe and assess during my fieldwork.)

Among all the forms, chants take the first place in the Idu-Mishmi oral traditions and expressions. Other than chants, they mostly have (but are not limited to) proverbs, tales, legends, myths, songs, rhymes etc. Idu-Mishmi oral traditions relate to their myth of origin and narration is the most important part of any Idu oral tradition. Though the chants and narrations are mostly recited by priests, respondents confirmed that there is no such form of oral tradition that is restricted to be performed only by only a specific group within the community likes women or priest etc. Chants are occasionally performed and proverbs, rhymes, tales are included in everyday conversations.

The stories, proverbs and rhymes, (rather every form) of Idu-Mishmi oral tradition speaks about the society, social values and their worldview. Informants narrate interesting stories that indicate the formation of their eating habits, their hairstyle or childbirth rituals. A story informs as to why the Idu-Mishmi women do not eat meat except chicken. The story tells that in the past, the Idu-Mishmi women secretly ate hen when their male counterparts were busy for hunting in the forest. When the Idu men came back, they were angry and decided that no women were allowed to eat any kind of meat collected from hunting except chicken from that day onwards. Another story tells that the women should feed their child from the right breast for first time, because it is believed if women first feed their child from left breast, the child will be a left-hander and will not be able to fix the arrow in the bow. The Idu-Mishmi cut their hair short in the front and there is a myth attached to it. Long ago, three brothers sat down for a meal. The two elder brothers ate properly but the third could not eat. When the deity

asked why he is not eating, the third brother said that he is embarrassed and the deity ordered that from that day onwards, the third brother and his descendants should cut their hair short to show their facial expressions. Their chants are full of rich geographical information. Informants say that they have even one paragraph in Assamese in the narration of chants during the death rituals, that says,

‘Oh, the boatman, please take the boat and cross the river  
The soul start the journey to the next side of the river”

This chant indicates the Brahmaputra River. Their rhyme also shows their value system and beliefs.

Dibuli Miuli, an elderly woman sings two nursery rhymes during conversation. One of these rhymes is sung for the for boy child. The mother says,

“Oh dear child (boy),  
I am fondly swaying you  
Why are you crying?  
God has given you birth,  
Given you a beautiful life,  
And you will become one day rich and beautiful, surely,”

The Idu-Mishmi proverbs are already mentioned in the third chapter. There are published book of Idu proverbs.

However, as the language, these proverbs, lullabies etc. are also missing from their regular life. Informants say that there is no scope nowadays to apply or listen to their native proverbs, tales, rhymes etc. because they generally talk in Hindi with each other from individual conversation to community conversation. Many elderly informants said that though they converse in Idu language with their parents or spouse, the use of proverbs etc., is very restricted and Hindi words or proverbs have occupied this space. The situation is worse among the young generation as they cannot speak in Idu and so, using proverbs is out of question. The elderly informants regret that even they forgot many stories, rhymes or proverbs that they heard in their childhood, because there is no applicability of these in their present life. For example, there is a kind of narration, called as *aanja*, specifically meant for death rituals. This is a kind mourning song

(Blackburn (2005) call it as “specialized verbal art”) sung in a low tone (almost whispering) to pray for the soul of the deceased and its salvation. To sing this the singer must use proper phrases, pronunciation and correct melody. These mourning songs are rapidly disappearing. Only a few Idu can sing this elaborate and specialized song. I met only one elderly woman, Dibuli Miuli, who could sing *aanja*. She is already above 70 years and if nobody learns the art from her now (or from few priest who know *aanja*) *aanja* will surely disappear.

### ***Igu*: the Treasure-trove and Carrier of Idu-Mishmi Oral Tradition**

Each community of Arunachal Pradesh has voluminous oral literature on the myths and legends of origin and religious beliefs and the priest of every community mostly has the essential duty to preserve and pass on these literatures.

The Idu priest is known as *Igu*. The priest is the treasure-trove of Idu-Mishmi oral tradition. The oral literatures are the base of all rituals of the Idu-Mishmi group and Idu oral tradition is primarily passed on through the priests. *Igu* mainly recite chants. Their priestly chantings are based on myths of origin. The chanting of an *Igu* is a process of narration and includes the creation of universe (*innila fri tazu*), evolution of mankind (*yupu ayu thru*), origin and migration of Idu-Mishmi, struggle of mankind against malevolent spirits (*Kinu*), invocation of benevolent spirits, origin of animals, birds, crops and festival (Lingi 2011). The priestly chants begin with the narration of the genealogy and then proceed to the prayers for the rituals of that particular occasion and for the well-being of the household.

The oral language of Idu-Mishmis is divided into two parts. The priestly language is called *Anga-Apuya* whereas the colloquial version is known as *Ang-Nga-Aaliya*. This is important because most of the informant says that they do not understand properly the priestly language even though many of them are fluent in the colloquial version.

Observations and information collected during the fieldwork has pointed that the number of priests is decreasing, because priesthood in Idu society is attained and not learned. In some villages, there are no priests. Though the Idu women also can attain

priesthood, this is very rare. In the recent years nobody has attained priesthood in the community.

Decreasing number of priests is a cause for increasing interest in Christianity among the Idus. For example, as part of their death rituals, there is continuous chanting of the genealogy of the death for the first four to five days. At present, this has been reduced to three days but even that is not possible as it is difficult to find a priest who can do this. Even if a priest is found, there are no listeners who can spare three days. Rukmo, a respondent, who hails from Anini, informed that when his father, a priest of Anini area, had recently passed away, not only his village, but also two-three neighbouring villages lost their lone priest. As the Idu-Mishmi villages of Anini area are distributed over a large area and the population, finding a priest to do the death rituals was difficult for him. Even after a priest was found, finding a companion for the priest was equally difficult. The companion has to repeat every word after the priest recites it. The companion is very important in Idu society as without them the ceremonial obligations would be incomplete. There are now not more than ten priests in the entire community, as Rukmo said, but the number of companion is almost zero. These are apprentices mostly later on succeed the priest.

### **Globalization's Effects: Change or Disappearance?**

The field data reveals that the young generation of Idus can neither speak their mother tongue nor do they have any interest in their oral tradition. This is the most apparent case of disappearance among all the case studies. But what are the reasons? Are there the same reasons as indicated in the beginning of this case, mentioned by UNESCO in their reports?

Among the UNESCO identified effects of globalization, only migration and environmental change to some extent are creating threats for the Idu-Mishmi oral tradition. The other factors like industrialization or rapid urbanization are not visible in Roing. On the contrary, formal education systems, small population, impact of new religions etc., are the issues that threaten the oral tradition of Idu-Mishmi including their language. Interestingly, mass media has been playing a significant role in preservation and safeguarding oral traditions and expression of this group.

The most prominent reason that was apparent was the formal education system. Many respondents believe that modern education system is a major reason of disappearance of oral tradition. In primary schools located in Idu areas, Idu is not taught, though it is declared as the third language by the government. Even in pre-primary level, the medium of teaching is not Idu. The respondents admitted that the majority of the Idu children can speak Idu before starting to go to school, but after sending them to schools, they gradually forget to speak in Idu, because not only the medium of teaching, but also the communication in school is in Hindi or English. The fieldwork observations indicate that though Roing has many good quality educational institutions, these are mainly run by private organizations, profitable and non profitable and are mainly from outside Arunachal Pradesh. These organizations, no doubt, have good intentions, but have less understanding and interest in local culture and majority of them have ideas that development of Arunachal Pradesh will come when the people merge with the thoughts of mainstream India. The teachers are appointed from outside. They are unaware of the Idu-Mishmi culture or cannot relate with the locals or many times, they have no interest to learn the local culture or know the locals. The children are not encouraged by their teachers or the school authority to communicate in Idu and by this way, the Idu children have no choice other than to converse either in Hindi or English. Kotige Mena shares a heart-wrenching story. This story is related with his younger son. His age is nine now. As an Idu language enthusiast, Mena confirms that everyone in his family should speak Idu. He punished his children if they did not speak in Idu and speaking in Idu at home and outside with the Idu friends is mandatory for his children. His younger son could also speak in Idu before he started to go to school. But when he started to go to school, it was then that the problem started. In school, the teaching medium is English and the teachers or his friends talk in Hindi. As he cannot speak Hindi or English at home and cannot communicate only in Idu outside home (because his teachers or many of his friends cannot speak or understand Idu) he started to stammer and gradually stop talking. Mena was very worried and had to consult a doctor, as the problem was serious. According to the doctor, the child has no physiological problem but it was difficult for him to comprehend and speak in three different languages at the same time. He was advised to stop forcing his son to speak

Idu and allow his son to develop normally. Mena accepted the doctor's advice. Gradually his son began to talk again.

The Idu's feel that their children speak more in Hindi because of the influence of TV, medium of instruction in school and for sending them to boarding school. Majority of Idu children are now sent out to boarding schools located within Arunachal Pradesh or out of the state. These Idu children cannot speak Idu at all. One informant conveyed another factor during conversation. He said that Idus who can afford appoint housemaids/babysitters for their children and these are usually girls or women from different communities like Adi, Nepali, Bihari etc. These housemaids either use Hindi or English for conversation with the child and they sing lullabies, proverbs etc. from their own mother tongue. According to him, this worsens the situation, as the child even at home cannot learn the language properly in their beginning years and after sending these children to boarding schools, they totally forget the language.

According to the Idu locals, their small population makes them susceptible to all the major problems, from political, economical to cultural or environmental.

According to some informants, the cause of the disappearance of priestly language or oral tradition, mainly chants, is inadaptability. The specific oral language and literature of priest is fixed in the same place and does not grow with the time, as it cannot be modified. As a result the present generation is not accepting it and it is disappearing.

Many informants feel that inter community marriages affect adversely in the transmission of Idu language and oral tradition to the next generation. This factor also relates to the issue of migration. Foreducation or professions, many Idu boys or girls are going outside Arunachal Pradesh or Northeast India and have settled in cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Mumbai etc. Many of these boys and girls marry outside their community or sometime even outside their state. As the numbers of Idu people are very few, the whole process has a big impact on the transmission of the oral tradition.

Environmental change is a big issue for the Idu-Mishmis. Researches indicate that the loss of any language has a negative impact on the ecological diversity and the erosion of language diversity is linked to the loss of knowledge of flora and fauna (Harmon and Loh 2008). During my fieldwork, I observed that the Idus consider the high magnitude hydro-electrical project on the river Dibang as a major threat. A number of Idus are anxious and concerned that if the dam is constructed, it will result in the loss of three villages and a large part of their forest. Almost 80% of the Idu-Mishmi territory is covered by the thick green forest and these forests are important part of their life. It forms an ideal pastureland for their most expensive livestock, the *Mithun*. Again, to attain priesthood, the has to meditate in the forests to get the cosmic power (according to their beliefs). Because of this dam, a huge fraction of their people will have to be shifted to another area and as a small indigenous group, they cannot afford this loss. One concerned Idu-Mishmi person wrote in Reh souvenir (2011) that their culture is endangered as the majority of the socio-religious and socio-cultural practices are nature based and so, they face huge challenges in their existence and identity because of the high magnitude hydro-electrical project (Linggi 2011). The Idu activists and other workers who work on the development programme for Idus also think that the rapid changes in the economic and political life alone have posed many challenges before them. In the process of adapting to these changes which are creating bigger problems like housing, food etc, in front of them they have no time to think for their oral tradition or language.

### **Safeguarding Oral tradition: Will Idu-Mishmi oral traditions survive?**

The most important part of safeguarding oral traditions and expressions is by maintaining their every day role in society. Safeguarding measures should focus on oral traditions and expressions as processes, where communities are free to explore their cultural heritage, rather than as products.

On the issue of safeguarding Idu language, the Idus (persons communicated during fieldwork) are divided in two groups. According to the first group, the new generation will definitely start to give interest in their oral tradition and learn the Idu language

properly. They look forward that the new generation will be doing research on their language and oral traditions. The other group is pessimistic about this situation. They believe that it is impossible to save the Idu language, as the population of Idus is very low. They also think that the young generation has shown their urge to save the Idu language and tradition but in a superficial level like building it as an issue in the social networking sites, in the NGO sector etc.

The main organization working for preservation and development of the Idus is Idu-Mishmi Cultural and Literary Society (IMCLS). This society in 2007 sent 3 Idu elders to CIEFL Hyderabad to develop their script. With the help of CIEFL, the script is now fully developed in Roman. Unfortunately, Idus are divided into two groups on the question of selecting a script for their language; one group wants Devanagari script whereas other wants the Roman. The supporters of Roman script think that it is better because of the nasal pronunciation of Idu words and different meaning of the same word with different pronunciation. It is very unfortunate that after completing the script development, it is not introduced fully and it has adversely influenced the transmission of the script to the locals. Nobody has come to introduce the language in schools. Though the government recognizes Idu language as the third language, teachers do not teach Idu in school; students also have no urge to learn Idu. When the script was developed, teachers from Roing, Anini, Dambuk circle were trained in the new script. However, for the teachers and for the commoners the new script is very tough and symbolic for which it is hard for students to learn it.

Many of the Idus, with whom I conversed, tried to teach their children Idu. Many of them believe that the third language concept has helped the language to survive. They think that the government has provided sufficient funds to preserve and promote their culture including announcing the Idu-Mishmi language as third language. A noticeable number of the young Idu-Mishmis has shown their interest in saving their language. One of the woman informants established a school in Roing, where the student can learn Idu at fourth and fifth standard. She advocates saving and popularizing the oral form of Idu rather than the written form, as she believes that Idu language will survive if the Idu people can speak in Idu. She writes Idu rhymes for the young children to

improve their vocabulary. Another young boy, who is doing post-graduation, suggests that a power point presentation should be made of the Idu letters and their pronunciation. This should be uploaded in the 'you tube' or other social networking sites to encourage the young Idu to learn the language. They made a docu-feature film on their culture, recorded many Idu songs, chants, prayers etc. and organized seminars on their literature and traditional knowledge.

Above all, the biggest success in the domain of oral tradition is perhaps the compilation of the genealogical record of the Idu-Mishmis by Kotige Mena, which are the base of their oral tradition and all rituals and events. The narration of genealogy is very much important for Idu-Mishmis because to arrange any kind of rituals or social events they depend on the chronological genealogical record. The research department of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh publishes books on Idu-Mishmi proverbs or language. The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London has also documented the Idu-Mishmi oral tradition in their project (October 2002 to October 2007) on tribal transitions.

#### **4.6.1. Cross Case Synthesis**

Presenting the current research as a complete story, it needs more interpretation that takes patterns and relationship of the factors indicated by the data in every case study. For this a cross case analysis and cross case syntheses is done. Cross case synthesis applies specifically to multiple case studies (Yin 2009). This technique treats every individual case study as a separate study and can synthesize in word tables that speak up for all the case studies.

The first table (table. no. 4.6.1.) presents the traditional features, changes and factors behind the changes of all the five cases that concisely illustrate the story. From oral tradition to traditional craftsmanship, every domain is threatened by different globalized effects, as identified by UNESCO (ICH Kit 2010), but all the threats are not visible in every domain when we discussed intangible cultural heritages in context of Arunachal Pradesh. The second table (table no. 4.6.2.) may help to understand these.

Some of the threats that are visible in the intangible cultural heritages of Arunachal Pradesh are not identified in global platform whereas some are altered into positive effects on the domains. In the case study on traditional craftsmanship, where the cane and bamboo household materials of the Nyishis is discussed within this theme, almost all effects that are identified in the global scenario are noticeable. On the other hand, in the case study on oral tradition, the global effects have less impact in the Idu-Mishmi oral tradition, though this is also in a state of disappearance. Again, not all the threats are the direct effects of globalization (for example, low population). The cases also show that how one intangible cultural heritage is interrelated to another and how effect on one element affects on another. *Tapyo*, the traditional salt of the Apatanis is a classic case of interconnectivity. The decreasing uses of *Sader*, the bamboo basket to filter ash liquid, indicate the decline of traditional craftsmanship among the Apatanis. Again amongst the Idu Mishmis oral tradition the decreasing number of priests has resulted in the decrease of the oral genealogical narratives and tradition.

**Space for Table 4.6.1. and 4.6.2.**



Answers of the research questions are explored in details in all the case studies. However, some other aspects need more attention and discussion. All the cases have a

common issue — the introduction of formal education system. This issue is significant because the effect of globalization has very strongly affected the intangible cultural heritage domains in Arunachal Pradesh. Education is never a culturally neutral process. The learners and the teachers cannot isolate themselves from their social and cultural contexts. However, the approach of formal education system is ‘one size fit all’ and with this standardization, it has become disconnected from the learners’ own experiences and concerns. In many times, the formal education system does not serve learners’ needs in the context of their lives, indeed formal education system, and the very notion of standardized learning processes, have sometimes created immense gaps between what pupil learns and what they live (UNESCO 2009, 97-99). This is seen in the cases of disappearing intangible cultural heritage domains in Arunachal Pradesh. In every case, the senior informants, master craftsmen or master artists lamented that the new educated generation is not interested in their heritage and the transmission process has either stopped or is gradually declining. The young Nyishi does not know the names of their cane or bamboo household materials, the young Monpas are not interested in how *chuskor* works, the Apatani youngsters do not know the preparation process of *tapyo* or cannot recognize the plants used to make this salt, and the young Idu-Mishmis even cannot speak or understand their mother tongue. Though literacy is rapidly spreading all over Arunachal Pradesh, the young generation of each studied group (perhaps from all indigenous groups) are severed at the same pace from their elements of culture that are markers of their identity and belongingness to their group. Language is very important to pass on the elements of intangible cultural heritages and not only the studied indigenous groups, but oral languages of other groups of Arunachal Pradesh too are under severe threats because of this reason. During my fieldwork in Seijosa, I had the opportunity to interact with the young children of a school in their game period and when I asked about the traditional sports, everybody informed that they never played any traditional game. In the prayer times of the schools, the Sanskrit prayers or carols are recited and no prayers from local community are chanted. They pray to the gods of other religion in schools, they eat food of global character in hostels and they worship the national or international heroes, not heroes from their communities. Their knowledge, their heroes, their stories or their rituals are not included in school curriculum. The formal education system of Arunachal Pradesh cut the children from

their traditional knowledge, value systems, and the belongingness to their community, which creates a huge identity crisis among the young generation of Arunachal Pradesh irrespective of the indigenous groups. Education covers a variety of learning systems, including non-formal education, informal education and the transmission of local and indigenous knowledge and values (UNESCO 2009), which is missing in the approach of present education system in Arunachal Pradesh.

This thesis deals with the disappearance of intangible cultural heritages that create the identity of the locals. The four case studies, for instance the Idu oral tradition have almost disappeared and the cane and bamboo materials of Nyishi, Chuskor of Dirang Monpa and Apatani Tapyo are standing on the conveyor belt. However, the threats of globalization can be tuned into the positive effects like the example of *Kapung* or the dance drama of Khamptis. Every threat that affects severely the performing arts worldwide, the Khamptis has turned these forces of globalization according to their necessity and has got good results. It is noteworthy that if handled well cultural changes do not result in disappearance, rather it reappears in new forms.

The cross case analysis brings to light another strong point. It is observed that if the community has no force on them, they choose the best for themselves automatically. It means that the gradual cultural changes do not create cultural erosion that results in disappearance of cultural elements even under the pressure of globalization and homogenization. The Khamptis have history of connection with the Assamese and other Tai groups, especially the rulers of Assam, the Ahoms. For many years even not for centuries, they acted as the linkman and mediator between the plain people and the hill tribes. However, the Assamese as a community never forced them to change or to merge with them. Both the communities have adapted with each other in the course of time, Even in my fieldwork, it is observed that Namsai is the only area where two communities have lived peacefully without confronting or assimilating in each other's lifestyle. I visited the local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly of State) office where I saw both Assamese and Khampti people waiting and they could be easily differentiated from each other from their dress and from their conversations. Almost every Khampti can speak Assamese for communication but they have not forgotten

their mother tongue. The neighbouring Assamese villages have adopted the style of building houses on raised platform from the Khamptis. The Assamese language is their lingua franca for centuries and unlike their neighbouring hill tribes who accept Hindi or English as lingua franca; they are fluent and effortless in their colloquial mother tongue. The reason is the gradual change that is discussed in first chapter, and that has helped the communities to adapt, associate, adjust and coexist with others over a long stretch of period.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Writing the Finale: Conclusion

[This conclusive chapter mainly emphasizes on the results of the study and some more thoughts that have indirectly or directly influenced the whole background of the study. The limitations of this study and potential areas for further research in this area are also included in this chapter].

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, framed five fundamental principles for the development of indigenous communities under which communications, medical facilities, education and better agriculture should be pursued. These are:

- People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.
- Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected.
- We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.
- We should not over administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions.
- We should judge results not by statistics or by the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

[Extracted from *A Philosophy for NEFA*, by Verrier Elwin, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1959 and quoted in Sharma Dinesh. ed. 2005. *Souvenir: Arunachal Statehood day, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2005.* ]

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritages, though recent, is also a parallel thought of these fundamental principles. Yet the question is how much these principles are followed in tribal areas, specifically in Arunachal Pradesh in the last sixty five years after independence of India.

Rapid changes have taken place in Arunachal Pradesh after the independence of India and largely, after the Sino-Indian war in 1962. After this war, Government of India has speeded the implementation of different development programmes and it had a great impact on the social, political, administrative and economic development of the indigenous groups. The opening of administrative centers and introduction of the modern democratic institution, the emergence and expansion of modern education system, the extension of agricultural lands and settled agriculture and the increasing popularity of new religion like Christianity, Hinduism changed their traditional way of life. The indigenous trans-Himalayan trade was stopped after the war for which many indigenous groups (for example, the Monpas) of the state lost contact with the Tibetans and the Bhutanese (Modi 2004; Dhar 1996), their main trading partners. The traditional consumption pattern of the people has changed, as new products have entered into their consumption basket, which has resulted in an increase in demand of cash. The traditional economic systems have become non-compatible with the market system (Arunachal Pradesh Development Report 2009, 193). The people of Arunachal Pradesh are now participating in the process of global commonness.

This study establishes that in Arunachal Pradesh, globalization has brought rapid changes in the way of life and its effects are visible in the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic structure of the society. From the case studies, it is evident that different forms of intangible cultural heritages are in a state of disappearance because of the effects of globalization and homogenization; however, some cultural traits have taken new forms in certain cases. This has been identified as adaptability in the study, which has been consciously done by the people for sustenance. However, in the all cases, the struggle for sustenance is going on.

In each case study, effect of different forces of globalisation is identified but the rate of impact is different in different case studies. The issue of cultural disappearance has been viewed through the eyes of the peoples of Arunachal Pradesh who are now involved in their own efforts to negotiate with globalization's effect to survive and reshape their way of life. By adopting the new ethnographic approach and by using polyvocality and testimony for collecting data in the field lived realities of the people of the study area have been captured.

The first case study done on traditional craftsmanship of the Nyishis show that the household items are in use but the techniques of making them is gradually disappearing. The younger generation is reluctant to learn the art, plastic items replace the cane and bamboo items and used as raw material in the traditional crafts. There are few people who adopt new styles for the old crafts (e.g., the bamboo water bottle made by using the technique of making *tofo*, the traditional Nyishi beer mug).

The second case study is the traditional dance drama of the Khamptis under the performing arts category. These are known as *Kapungs*. Only the male artists traditionally perform *pungs* on open grounds. They are overnight performances. Stories from the Jataka, Mahabharata or Ramayana are selected for writing the drama. Changes have also been seen in this traditional dance drama. Now, the *pungs* are performed on stage, women can also perform and the duration is reduced to two to three hours. These changes have made *pungs* popular again and the young Khamptis have reacted positively by participating both as performers and as audience. However, the changes in this case are gradual and these neither affect the subtlety of the dance-dramas nor the soul of it. Steps taken for sustenance of *pungs* have resulted in a new form.

*Chuskor*, the traditional water mill system of the Dirang Monpa of West Kameng district is the third case study under the knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe indigenous knowledge domain. This eco-friendly technology suitable for people living in the high hills is on the verge of extinction. Rice has replaced maize, their traditional staple food. Rice cannot be de-husked in *chuskor*. On the other hand, mountain streams have dried as a result of reduction in rainfall and climate change.

Thus, the efficiency of *chuskors* have come down. If these mills are not modified and their efficiency not increased they may soon become a thing of the past.

The fourth case study is the salt making tradition of the Apatanis. *Tapyo* is the traditional salt substitute of the Apatanis that is prepared from different herbs present in the surroundings of the Apatani villages. The knowledge of preparing *tapyo*, is gradually disappearing, as its socio-cultural and religious-ceremonial importance has declined. But, a new form of *tapyo* is emerging as an exotic food.

The fifth case study is of the oral traditions of the Idu-Mishmis of the lower Dibang Valley district. The oral tradition including the language of the Idu-Mishmis is rapidly disappearing. Attempts are being made to preserve it in digital format by enterprising Idus and also by researchers (Blackburn 2005). The most important part of safeguarding oral traditions and `expressions is by maintaining their every day role in society. In its traditional form maybe it will not sustain. The Idu society is going through various experiments like reviving the language, training interested Idus to become priest etc. but till now no new sustainable form has emerged.

In all these case studies, one of the major issues is the transmission of the traditional knowledge. Culture has to be transmitted to survive. The younger generation is reluctant to accept it for various reasons. In traditional craftsmanship it is because the craft making is time consuming and not profitable economically. For the same reason the young Apatanis are also not ready to learn the art of making *tapyo*. Also as many Apatanis have converted to other religions the traditions associated with their animistic faith in which *tapyo* was an integral part are no longer practiced. In the traditional water mills of the Dirang Monpas, with the switch over to rice as the staple food the requirement of the water mills have reduced. In *Kapungs* of the Khamptis and oral tradition of the Idu-Mishmis, decreasing speakers in their respected languages create the barrier. Their education medium is English and *lingua franca* is Hindi. No fruitful results of the third language system has emerged among the groups that I have studied, as because their languages is neither taught in the private schools nor in the government schools. Either there are no teachers or no books or they opt out of it by choice. Again

the students who come out of the state for education lose complete touch with their mother tongue and tradition. Among the Khamptis conscious attempts made by the community have produced positive results. There are few Buddhist monks well versed with the Khamptai script present in the monasteries of the region. They have successfully trained interested young Khamptis in the language. Again the few elderly Khamptis who knows the language is teaching the language at a personal level at home. For teaching sounds they are using English and Hindi alphabets. Young Khamptis have picked up the spoken language as this has been made available to them in English and Hindi. While in the case of the Idu-Mishmis this has not been possible though efforts are being made by enterprising Idus.

In course of my research, particularly in course of my field trips, I did come across various other issues, which could not be discussed under the principal research explanations, but have definitely influenced the study.

First, the assimilation process of the people of Arunachal Pradesh with the modern world by replacing their mother tongue, changing food habits or living style is the most alarming issue. Hindi and English have replaced the language of majority of the groups. In the case study of Idu-Mishmi oral tradition, an informant Mr. Ingore Lime regrets that even his illiterate sister, who is a middle-aged lady, is trying to speak in Hindi at home in place of Idu.

More or less everywhere in Arunachal Pradesh, the situation is similar. This is not only limited to the communities studied, but also other communities of Arunachal Pradesh are equally effected. During my fieldwork in Namsai, I had a chance to participate in the *Mopin* festival of the Adi's. I interacted with some young girls from Adi community who came to join the programme. They wore the traditional dress and jewelery, however, when I asked them about it, it came to me as a surprise that they did not know the names of the different parts of their dress or jewelery or how these were made or what are the materials used for making these. When I visited Apatani villages to collect information about *tapyo*, I saw a boy wearing a traditional Apatani headgear, which is actually a fake headgear made by plastic. The study of intangible cultural heritages

points that to keep it alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to the community.

There are many organizations, which work in Arunachal Pradesh for education and development. But, many of the locals are not satisfied with the way these organizations operate. Such an account is from Mr. Jonta Lingi. He uses the word 'Hindiaization' to define the activities of these organizations. He comments that, "Endangered animals have rights, but not the endangered peoples." Jonta gives an example; Nani (his mother) recently started to follow some rituals propagated by a theosophical organization to attain spiritual calmness. By following these rituals, Nani is not eating ginger, garlic, onion, fish and meat and has to take bath at 5 a.m. in the morning. Jonta says that meat and fish are part of their staple diet and as it rains almost throughout the year and as the temperature is pretty low by taking bath early in the morning and also by not eating their staple diet, his mother at present is not keeping good health.

Though India is a multilingual country and the government of Arunachal Pradesh has introduced majority of the local dialects as third language in the schools, in the curriculum there is no space for imparting the local traditional knowledge, art form, craft, oral tradition, beliefs and rituals which are shaped by its geographical landscape. People are disappointed that teachers for local languages are not appointed or no holiday is declared on local festivals by the private schools.

### **Methodological Problems**

Studies on culture change (Ember et.al 2008; Miller and Wood 2007) usually focuses on acculturation and diffusion, the two main processes of culture change popularly mentioned in Anthropological literature. In this study this two processes have not been conceptually dealt with because the literary survey convinced me that this two processes are not responsible for the type of culture change happening in Arunachal Pradesh today.

The process by which cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture by the recipient group is called diffusion. The new cultural elements in Arunachal Pradesh today for example are (1) modern education (CBSE) (2) modern political institutions etc. This has not been borrowed from any particular society but rather they are part of a global change.

When a group or society is in contact with a more powerful society, the weaker group is often obliged to acquire cultural elements from the dominant group and this process is acculturation. There is no visible dominant group or powerful society with which the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh is in contact. Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity are world religions which are present in Arunachal Pradesh but unlike Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur their impact on the way of life of the people is minimal. It is more the global development model which is responsible for bringing in the changes. To explain these changes the concepts of diffusion and acculturation were found to be insufficient.

In the case of *pung*, I faced contextual error between my literature review and field work. According to my literature review previous writers have mentioned *ka-fifai* as a dance drama while actually it is a form of a dance only. *Pungs* are dance dramas and *ka-fifai* dance is performed in a *pung*.

Furthermore, studies available on the indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh, are not recent. Rather, many important documents about the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh were written in the British period. The directorate of research of government of Arunachal Pradesh has published many ethnographical accounts of different indigenous group, but majority of these were published during 1960s to 1980s. As culture changes regularly and the world has changed fast in last two decades, it is impossible to entirely base on the data about these groups that are collected before or just after independence of India. Though the study follows some previous researches and surveys on the indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh, the present research is primarily a fresh attempt to study the groups and their intangible cultural heritages.

### **Limitation of the Study**

To discuss about the effects of globalization in intangible cultural heritage domains and the disappearance of elements of intangible cultural heritage (the essence of this research), only one subtheme from every domain of intangible cultural heritage was selected for this study. Perhaps, there are different threats and results noticeable in other sub-forms even within Arunachal Pradesh which should be covered in future. The time frame of PhD research does not permit to study different communities and their numerous cultural components minutely. I submit that it has not been possible for me to cover all the communities of Arunachal Pradesh within this work. Again, the threats and results are perhaps different if different indigenous community was selected for the themes.

### **Further Research in this Area**

This research is perhaps the first attempt to study different cultural components of the indigenous groups of Arunachal Pradesh under the arena of the intangible cultural heritages and definitely one of the primary studies, which discusses the effects of globalization on the elements of cultural or intangible cultural heritages of Arunachal Pradesh. So, if it is a first step of the ladder, there are many more steps to climb up for the final results.

Before this research, the previous studies have mainly focused on a single group, not a single cultural component. No one had assessed the cultural components minutely from the standpoint of cultural disappearance. In this study, only five intangible cultural heritages are explored and the other components need to be studied in future. The further research in this area should also cover different communities of Arunachal Pradesh besides the studied ones.

### **Conclusion**

Becoming a treasure house of thought and ideas developing from centuries, every culture enriches the others. As like the ecosystem, cultural diversity is based on the

network of our tangible and intangible cultural heritages. If one element in cultural diversity is affected, the whole structure of humanity will be affected. “Increasing uniformity holds dangers for the long-term survival of a species. In the language of ecology; the strongest ecosystems are those which are most diverse” (Crystal 2000: 33).

Cultural diversity encourages mutual respect for other ways of life and creates intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. Everyone has the right to live how he or she desires and to be different from others around them. Respect to cultural diversity helps to live peacefully without any conflict in a multi-cultured world (UNESCO ICH Kit 2010, 2004, 2009).

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ANNEXURE. II.

Profile of the Key Informants

**Case Study. 1. The cane and bamboo household materials –the Nyishis**



Hano Dodom

Age: 45

Education: Higher Secondary

Profession: Small business and 'Nagar Pramukh' of Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Seijosa

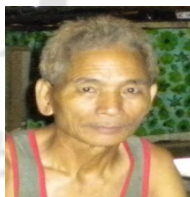


Sisu Lamnio

Age: 40

Education: Literate

Profession: Master craftsman



Hofe Tachang

Age: 55

Education: High School

Profession: Master craftsman



Bogong N Abong

Age: 70

Education: Illiterate

Profession: Master craftsman



Moniya

Age: 25

Education: High School

Profession: Supervisor of Arunodoy Centre of Vivekananda Kendra, Seijosa

Mousumi Bora

Age: 28

Education: Graduate

Profession: Teacher in Nivedita Vihar Girls HS School Seijosa



Arjun

Age: 16

Education: Class X

Profession: Student

## Case Study. 2. *Kapung*: the traditional dance drama - the Khamptis



Chow Posana Namchoom

Age: 33

Education: Graduate

Profession: Teacher in Government Secondary School



Sanjay Mien

Age: 35

Education: Graduate

Profession: Performing Artist, working on preservation of performing arts of the Khamptis and president of 'Tai-Khampti heritage and literature society'



Chow Ngonho Manlong

Age: 50

Education: Literate

Profession: Master Artist



Chow Vimukta Namchuk

Age: 40

Education: Graduate

Profession: Businessman



Khouk Manpoong

Age: 70

Education: Graduate

Profession: Ex-MLA



Chow Na Manpong

Age: 50

Education: Literate

Profession: Actor-Dancer

Chow Niwaya Monpang  
Age: 17  
Education: Class XII  
Profession: Student

### Case Study. 3. *Chuskor*: the traditional water mill system - the Dirang Monpas



Norbu Chojjom  
Age: 65  
Education: Illiterate  
Profession: *Chuskor* Owner

Nawang Tsering  
Age: 35  
Education: Graduate  
Profession: Teacher in Government Secondary School

Gelong Bapu  
Age: 55  
Education: Literate  
Profession: *Chuskor* Owner



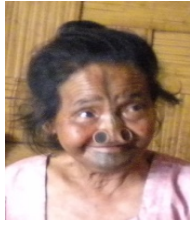
Tenzin Choten  
Age: 30  
Education: Graduate  
Profession: Businesswoman

Saibal Goswami  
Age: 40  
Education: Graduate  
Profession: Officer, Block Development Office

### Case Study. 4. *Tapyo*: the traditional salt substitute - the Apatanis



Chiging Taga  
Age: 18  
Education: Class XII  
Profession: Student



Tapi Padu

Age: 60

Education: Illiterate

Profession: Commercial *Tapyo* maker



Chiging Yami

Age: 45

Education: Illiterate

Profession: *Tapyo* maker



Hage Renio

Age: 60

Education: Literate

Profession: *Tapyo* maker

Tage Tabin

Age: 35

Education: Graduate

Profession: Government Officer

Tage Tada

Age: 55

Education: PhD

Profession: Director, Directorate of Research, Arunachal Pradesh

Tage Rinya

Age: 48

Education: Graduate

Profession: House wife

### Case Study. 5. Oral Traditions and Expressions- the Idu-Mishmis



Dr. Mite Lingi

Age: 37

Education: Bachelor of Dentistry Science

Profession: Dentist, Patron of Idu-Mishmi language



Ingore Linggi

Age: 45

Education: Graduate

Profession: Businessman, Patron of Idu-Mishmi language



Dibuli Miuli

Age: 70

Education: Illiterate

Profession: Lady who know most of the oral traditions of Idu-Mishmis



Moprap Mepo

Age: 55

Education: Literate

Profession: Priest

Kotige Mena

Age: 45

Education: Graduate

Profession: Businessman, Patron of Idu-Mishmi language

Jonta Lingi

Age: 32

Education: Graduate

Profession: Engineer

Rukmo Mo

Age: 35

Education: Graduate

Profession: Businessman, Patron of Idu-Mishmi language

**Table 3.4. Areas and processes of cultural change in Arunachal Pradesh based on previous researches**

Cultural Heritage of Arunachal Pradesh		
Intangible Cultural heritage		Tangible cultural heritage
Domains	Area of Cultural Change	Ruins of ancient monuments and historical and archaeological sites i.e., Bhismanagar, Rukmini nati, Malinithan, Bhalukpong etc.
<u>Oral traditions and expressions</u> (Including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage)	Folk Literature	
<u>Performing arts</u> (such as traditional music, dance and theatre)	Folk dance and music	
<u>Social practices, rituals and festive events</u> (many sub-domains like culinary traditions, settlement pattern, birth, wedding and funeral rituals, traditional games and sports, traditional legal systems, expression and physical elements, special gesture, special food, procession, animal sacrifice, worship rites etc.)	Traditional hairstyle, Traditional food habits, Traditional cultivation pattern, Traditional marriage system, Traditional institution like boy and girl dormitories Traditional political system Traditional trading system Traditional belief and worship	
<u>Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe</u>	Traditional medicine Traditional knowledge of herbs	
<u>Traditional craftsmanship</u>	Traditional dress pattern and weaving, Pottery, Wood carving, Mask making, ivory and bead work, Smithy, cane and bamboo work, House making pattern, Traditional ornaments Traditional utensils	
	Processes	
Globalization	Modernization, Modern education system Implementation of development projects, Commercialization, Modern medicine and treatment, Modern agricultural system and technology, Modern democratic system, Internal displacement etc.	Processes given in previous literature

Table. 4.6.1. The traditional features, changes and factors behind the changes of the five case studies

<b>The case groups and the case theme</b>	<b>Traditional Features</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Factors behind change</b>
The cane and bamboo materials of the Nyishis	Knowledge is transmitted from one generation to next	The transmission of knowledge is decreasing	Formal and modern education system
	Expertise in weaving, designing	Expertise is disappearing	Low earning from making cane and bamboo items for which it is not practiced and thus expertise is decreasing
	Majority of the Nyishi men can make all the products	Only craftsman can make the products.	Lengthy process of making the product for which the younger generation refuses to learn the craft.
	Only cane and bamboo is used as the raw material	Plastic as also used as raw material	Shrinking availability of natural raw materials
	Products like Byopa, Eging or Naraa were used regularly	Occasional use of Byopa, Eging or Naraa	This has been replaced by bags and purses available in the market at a much lower cost. Adjusting to modern day fashion these items are often neglected.
	The women were not taught the knowledge and skill of craft	Women have started to learn and produce craft	To fulfill the requirement of the household the women have no option but to make the items for themselves
Tai-Khamptis	Performing in open ground	Stage Performance	Stage performance is highly valued as the present order of the day
<i>Kapung</i> /the dance-drama	Full night performance	Duration of performance reduced to 3/4 hours to 45 minutes	This was required as an adjustment to the time constraints of modern life,

			Attract to audience
	Women could not perform	Women have started to perform	Attitudes towards women have changed
	Simple dance step	Elaborate dance step	To attract the audience
	Simple costume and masks	Ornamental costume and masks	To make it more attractive and appealing
	Less expensive and need less human resource	More expensive and need more human resource	Production expenses (including stage making, costume, music instruments , performers expenses) are rising
The Dirang Monpas	Grinding mill for maize the traditional staple food	Changed eating habit Rice is the present staple food	Changed food habits
<i>Chuskor/</i> the water mill	Using water force of streams traditionally	Water flow of streams has reduced. Use of Mechanical grinding mill by using electricity, petrol or diesel	Climate change water flow has become seasonal
	Low cost	Cost is high for mechanized machines	Modern machine system
	Utilization and construction technique are easy	machines are brought from the market. Maintenance cost is high	Lack of knowledge to repair the Chuskors reduction in water flow
	Payment is through manual labour or one portion of grinded flour	Payment is through money	Labour is much more costly for which it is no longer considered and people are more used to the money economy
The Apatanis	Used as salt substitute	Use of packet salt	Low cost packet salts are easily available
Tapyo/ traditional salt substitute	<i>Sarse, Pepu</i> and <i>Marwa</i> are the traditional raw materials	New raw materials	The plants have become rare and also few Apatani people can recognize them
	Used bamboo conical shaped basket for filtering ash	Uses plastic bottle, aluminum, or iron water bucket for filtering ash	Bamboo filters are rare as the knowledge is disappearing
	Most of the Apatani families prepare it	People starts to buy <i>tapyo</i> from market	Lack of time and interest, Migration

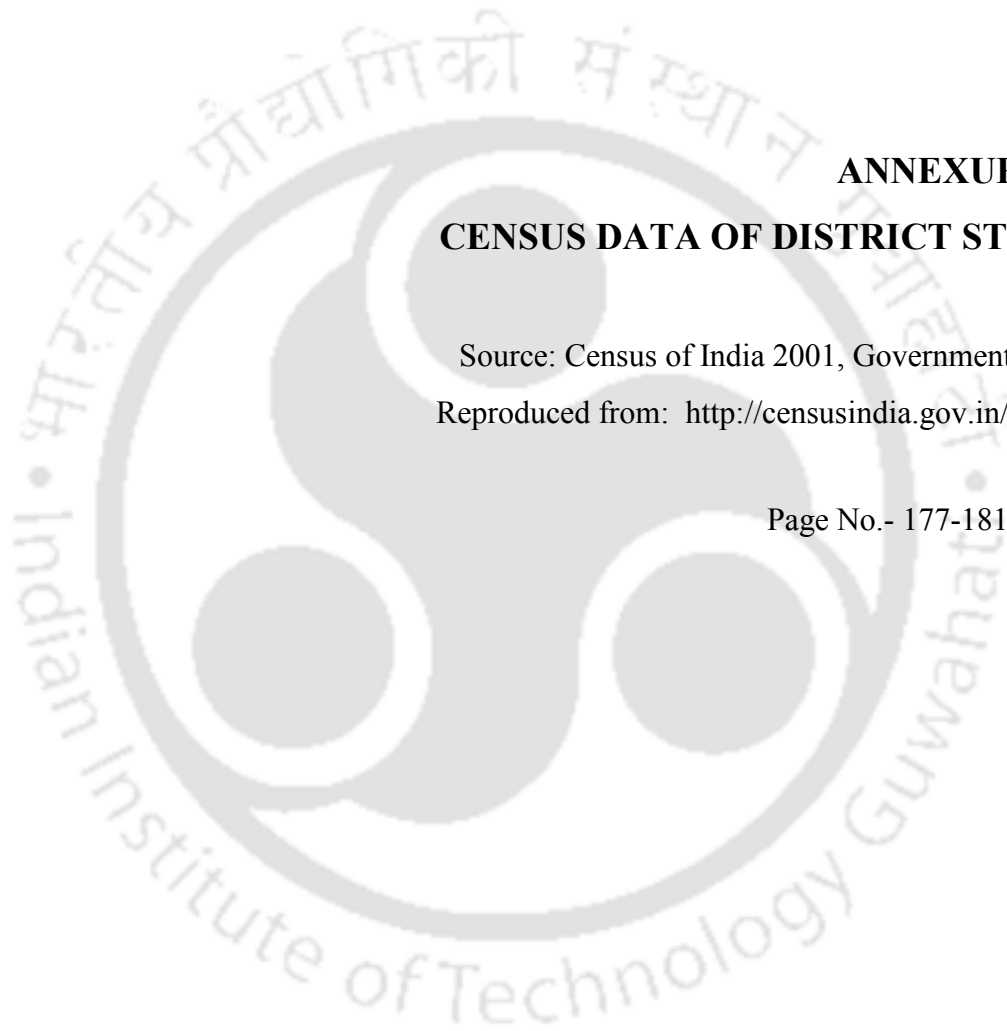
	in their houses		However, not considered as a commercially profitable product
	Take it with traditional beer 'O'	Consumption of 'O' has decreased. <i>Tapyo</i> consumption has also decreased	Decreasing influence of traditional religious beliefs
	Medicinal use	It is eaten with pork or vegetables as normal food	Availability of modern medicines
The Idu-Mishmis	Oral dialect	Script developed though not followed Few speakers	Low population, Formal and modern education system, intercommunity marriages, migration
Oral traditions and expressions	Base of all socio-cultural and socio-religious rituals	This base is disappearing	Changed lifestyle and individualization
	Priestly oral tradition, mainly chants	Number of priest has decreased	Priesthood cannot be learned it is attained
	Oral tradition shows their genealogy and origin	Knowledge of genealogy and origin is disappearing	Low population, Formal and modern education system
	Different ritualistic narrations related to life, death, nature and spirituality	Decreasing ritualistic narration like <i>aanja</i> , narratives of death and spirituality	Lack of priest and awareness among the community for keeping it alive

Table. 4.6.2. A cross case synthesis of the five case studies

<b>Intangible Cultural Heritage Domains</b>	<b>Common Threats</b>	<b>Threats visible in Arunachal Pradesh</b>	<b>Threats not identified in global Platform for the particular domain but present in Arunachal Pradesh</b>	<b>Threats that has positive effect</b>
Oral Traditions and Expressions The Idu-Mishmi Oral Traditions and Expressions	Rapid urbanization, Large-scale migration, Industrialization, Environmental change, Modern mass media	Migration Environmental change	Formal education system, Low population, Intercommunity marriages	
Performing Arts <i>Kapung</i> : the traditional Khampti dance drama	Standardization, Abandonment, Commoditization for entertainment, Social or environmental factors		Formal education system	Standardization, Abandoning full elements and only popularizing certain expressions, Commoditization for entertainment, Social factors
Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events <i>Tapyo</i> , the traditional salt of the Apatanis	Migration, Individualization, The general introduction of formal education, The growing influence of major world religions	Migration, Individualization, The general introduction of formal education, The growing influence of major world religions	Environmental change	
Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe <i>Chuckor</i> , the Traditional Water Mill of the Dirang Monpas	Rapid urbanization, Extension of agricultural land and disappearance of a sacred forest, Climate change, Continued deforestation and The ongoing spread of deserts	Rapid urbanization, Climate change	Economic and social changes that force to adopt a way of life or a purely economic development model, Formal education system (it merged with economic and social change)	

<p>Traditional Craftsmanship</p> <p>The cane and bamboo household materials of the Nyishis</p>	<p>Mass production, Lengthy apprenticeship, Too demanding but low paying, Environmental and climatic pressures, Changing social conditions or cultural taste, Mass production</p>	<p>Lengthy apprenticeship, Too demanding but low paying, Environmental and climatic pressures, Changing social conditions or cultural taste, Mass production</p>	<p>Formal education system, longevity of the products</p>	
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## **ANNEXURE. I.**

### **CENSUS DATA OF DISTRICT STUDIED**

Source: Census of India 2001, Government of India.

Reproduced from: [http://censusindia.gov.in/Dist\\_File](http://censusindia.gov.in/Dist_File)

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\*In Census of India 2001, the Dibang Valley district was undivided.