

**CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH SINCE INDEPENDENCE: A
CASE STUDY OF TANI GROUP OF TRIBES**

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY**

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2010

DECLARATION

I, Karabi Bharali, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH SINCE INDEPENDENCE: A CASE STUDY OF TANI GROUP OF TRIBES" is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis for the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in other University or Institute.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH SINCE INDEPENDENCE: A CASE STUDY OF TANI GROUP OF TRIBES**” submitted by Miss Karabi Bharali in fulfillment of Ph.D degree of this University is original research work and has not been submitted elsewhere for other degree.

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ABBREVIATION USED

AAPWWS:	All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society
APSCW:	Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
FGA:	Future Generation Arunachal
GB:	Goan Buras
HDR:	Human Development Report
MP:	Member of Parliament
NPE:	The National policy on Education
NIEPA:	National Institute of Educational, Planning and Administration.
NEFA:	North East Frontier Agency
OWA:	Oju welfare association
POA:	Programme of Action
PRI:	Panchayat Raj Institutions
SSA:	Sarva Shiksha Aviyam
THP:	The Hunger Project
MLA:	Member of Legislative Assembly

CHAPTER-I

LAND AND PEOPLE

I

Arunachal Pradesh, earlier known as the North East Frontier Agency [NEFA] is a wild and mountainous region situated along the north-eastern frontier of India. The whole state is covered with the eastern Himalayas and is bounded by Bhutan to the West, Tibet to the north and north-east, Myanmar [Burma] to the south east ¹and Assam in the south. The state lies roughly between the 26 28`N and 29 30`N latitudes and 91 30` E and 97 30`E longitudes and occupies an total area of 83,743 sq kms. Arunachal Pradesh is the home of twenty-five major tribes nearly one hundred ten minor tribes², totaling a population of 10,91,117 according to the 2001 census³.

Arunachal Pradesh has a diverse physical and climatic conditions. The climate is very humid in the lower altitude and the valley; it is extremely cold in the higher altitudes. The altitude varies from 100 to 7,000 meters. The rugged terrain has snowbound peaks, deep river gorges, swift flowing streams and river valley flats. It has

1. V.Elwin, **Myths of the North East Frontier of India**, Second Rprnt., Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1993, p.xiii

2. *Ibid.*, See R.Gopalakrishan, **Arunachal Pradesh[Land and People]**, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1994, p.xiv

3. **Census of India**, 2001, Arunachal Pradesh, p.14

a narrow belt of foothill plains along the border with Assam. Besides the highly rugged terrain there are also some beautiful valleys. The entire state is covered with a dense evergreen forest, which presents a very colourful and picturesque sight. Thus variation in the climate is found in the state due to the undulating mountains and variation of altitudes.

The rivers passing through the state are Siang, Kameng, Subansiri, Dibang, Lohit, Tawang, Dihing and Tirap. Small scattered settlements are found in the mountainous terrains whereas the foothills and plains of Lohit, Dihing and Tirap are thickly populated. The temperature plummets from 40c in the foothills and plains to 0c in the higher altitudes. The state has only two seasons namely, rainy and winter. It falls in the heavy rainfall zone of the country with the annual average rainfall ranging from 300 to 400 cm. The rain starts as early as April and continuous almost till October⁴. However, during the monsoon, communication is completely disrupted between some areas of the state and rest of the country and communication by air depends upon the weather.

The rivers in Arunachal Pradesh played an important part both emotionally and physically. It largely shapes the tribal life. Rivers do supply the routes of migration besides facilitating irrigation and fishing. They also contribute in generating the

⁴ J.N.Chowdhury, **Arunachal Panorama**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1982[1973], p.13

hydroelectric power leading to development of the region. It is interesting to note that the administrative areas are named after the rivers flowing by it⁵.

The rocks found in the region are generally of the Himalayan type- shabs, schists and conglomerates. The soil is generally sandy and progressively clayey in the lower reaches of the valley. The soil acidity is high caused by heavy rainfall. The forest land exhibit a thick layer of leaf mould, rich in organic matter, but as a result of early rains the top soil is easily washed off. In the foothills the soil is alluvial in nature. The rain brings down loam or sandy loam mixed with pebbles from higher altitudes. Thus the soils in the valleys became clayey alluvium and rich in organic content⁶.

The variation in characteristic of soil and the different climatic conditions influence the flora of the state. The natural vegetation varies from tropical evergreen forests in lesser Himalaya to the coniferous forests in the higher altitude and the alpine forests in the extreme north. The tropical forests are abundant with trees like Hollong, Makai and Hollock etc. In Arunachal Himalaya the coniferous trees are seen growing with a mixture of broad leaved trees in the considerable higher altitudes. In the western part of Arunachal Pradesh shrubby juriper, silver fire, pine, dwarf, rhodedennrons and strawberries grow in the areas ranging in height from 2,500 to 4,500 meters elevations. This area is covered by the green meadows⁷ upto the snowline presenting a picturesque scene.

⁵ B.B.Pandey, **Arunachal Pradesh:Village to Statehood**, Second Repnt., Himalayan Publishers, Delhi,1997, p.9-10

⁶ M.L.Bose, **History of Arunachal Pradesh**, Concept Publishing, New Delhi, 1997, p.5-6

⁷ B.B.Pandey, **Arunachal Pradesh:Village to Statehood**, *op.cit.*, p.10

Arunachal Pradesh is also rich in fauna. Tiger, Black Panther, Leopard, Elephants, Black Deer, Barking Deer, Musk Deer, Flying Fox, Wild Goat, Fruit Bat, Bandas etc are found in the state. *Mithun* [gaur] is a semi-domesticated animal of the people. Moreover, the state is rich in mineral resources like dolomite, quartzite, graphite, limestone, coal, marble, oil and natural gas⁸.

II

Arunachal Pradesh can be broadly divided into three main cultural groups: The first group is largely inspired by Buddhist ideas, includes the people of Western Kameng and Tawang, namely, Monpas and Sherdukkpans. They are, to a great extent, under the influence of the lamasery of Tawang⁹. Both these tribes combine in their religion and mythology traditional tribal ideas with Buddhist theology¹⁰. In its close proximity live the Buguns [Khowas], Hrussos [Akas] and Dhammais [Mijis] who, although not Buddhists, share some aspect of their neighbor's cultures¹¹. The Membas and other tribes living along the northern frontier may be conveniently grouped with them and so may be the Buddhist Khamptis and the Singhphos inhabiting the Lohit districts¹². The second cultural groups inhabit the Eastern Kameng, Subansiri, Siang and Lohit areas. The area is also populated by; Nishing(daflas), Tagins, Hill Miris, Apa

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ V. Elwin, Myths of the North-East Frontier of India, Cited in Jagdish Lal Dawar, **Cultural Identity of Tribes of North- East India**, New Delhi, 2003, pp4-5

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid*

Tanis, Na, Gallos, Adis(Abors). Mishmis(Idu, Digaru and Miju) tribes. The third group inhabiting the eastern Arunachal Pradesh is comprised of: Wanchos, Noctes and Tangsas. Here the exception is that Noctes have adopted a very elementary form of Vaishnaism¹³.

III

A. Administrative Organisation after the Advent of the British:

The administrative history of NEFA and now Arunachal Pradesh can be traced back to the year 1838, when the British Indian Government took over the control of Assam¹⁴. The policy of the British Indian Government, till the first decade of the twentieth century was to leave the tribesmen alone and not to establish any detailed administration in these tribal regions which was found in the rest of British Indian territory. The British introduced Inner Line Regulation in 1873 to isolate these tribes from the people of the plains. Onward 1875 a people of the plains have to obtain Inner Line Permit to enter into Arunachal Pradesh. The Regulation prevented possession of land and property and set rules concerning trade beyond the line.

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ **White paper on Chakma and Hajong Refugee Issue**, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1996, p.3

In 1880, Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation was extended to frontier tracts¹⁵ and in 1882 J.F.Needham appointed as Assistant Political officer at Sadiya to take step towards establishing of an elementary administration for the region¹⁶. In the year 1914, the region assumed administrative importance. Under the Notification which promulgated that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation 1880 would extended to hill inhabited and frequented by the tribes mentioned in the act. These hill tribes were divided from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam and as a consequence the North East Frontier Tract constituted into three political division came into existence¹⁷ : (a) The Central and Eastern Section, (b) The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and (c) The Western Section.

In the year 1919, the Western section and the Central and Eastern section was renamed as the Balipara Frontier Tract and the Sadiya Frontier Tract¹⁸. However the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract continued the name as such. In 1937 this tract came to be known as North – East Frontier Tract with exclusion and inclusion of some areas under.

In the year 1921, all the frontier tracts of Assam were declared ‘backward tracts’ in which the law would be directly administer by the Governor in Council or the Governor-General in Council.¹⁹ For the administration of the hill areas upto the international boundary, the Government of India Act, 1935, made special provision by

¹⁵ Regulation 2 of 1880, ‘The Assam Frontier Tract Regulation, 1880 in, P.N.Luthra, **Constitutional and Administrative Growth of Arunachal Pradesh**, North East Frontier Agency, Shillong, 1971, p.53-54

¹⁶ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District, Government of Arunachal Pradesh**, 1981, p.92

¹⁸ P.N.Luthra, **Constitutional and Administrative Growth of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.10

¹⁹ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District**, *op.cit*, p.94

reclassifying the 'backward tracts' as 'Excluded Areas' and 'Partially Excluded Areas'²⁰. In 1937, under the provision of Section 91(1) of the aforesaid act, in 1936 an order brought the Balipara, Sadiya and Lakhimpur Tracts earlier known as excluded areas, under the direct control of the Governor, who administered these areas in his discretion through the Political Officers and the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur²¹.

In 1943, a new political unit was created with certain regions from the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the Sadiya Frontier Tract and renamed as the Tirap Frontier Tracts. In 1946, the Balipara Frontier Tract is separated into two political divisions (a) Se La Sub- Agency and (b) Subansiri Area²². In the year 1948, the remaining part of the Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into two administrative units (a) the Abor Hills District and (b) the Mishmi Hills District²³.

In 1951, the plain portion of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills Districts and Mishmi Hills Districts were transferred to Government of Assam administrative control. Thus, the Frontier Tracts and the Naga Tribal Areas were brought under one unit and renamed as North- East Frontier Agency. Under the Regulation Act of 1954, the administrative units were reconstituted and renamed as Kameng, Subansiri, Tirap, Siang, Lohit and Tuensang Frontier Divisions. In 1957 the Tuensang Frontier Division was reunited with the Naga Hills²⁴.

²⁰ P.N.Luthra, **Constitutional and Administrative Growth of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.11

²¹ *Ibid*

²² *Ibid*

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ *Ibid*, p.12

Up to 1937, the Frontier Tracts was a part of the province of Assam as Excluded Areas and were directly under the provisional Government. Hence, it was kept out the purview of the scheme of the constitutional reform. Since 1937, the Governor of Assam carried out the administration of the Frontier Tracts acting in his discretion independently of his cabinet²⁵.

In 1950, the Ministry of External Affairs took the responsibility of administration of the Frontier Tracts. The Ministry of External Affairs through the Governor of Assam, acting as a agent to the President administered the territory²⁶. The Advisor to the Governor was head of administration.

In 1980, all the districts of Tirap were splited. Kameng was divided into East Kameng and West Kameng, Subansiri into lower and Upper Subansiri, Siang into East and West Siang and Lohit into Lohit and Dibang Valley districts. In 1984, Tawang district came out of West Kameng District and in 1987 Tirap district is divided and was formed into Changlang District. In 1992, Lower Subansiri was separated into Papum Pare and Lower Subansiri districts. In 1994, the Upper Siang district created out of East Siang District. In 2001, Lower Subansiri is again divided into Kurung Kummey and Lower Subansiri Districts. In the same year, Dibang valley districts are separated into Lower and Upper Dibang Valley. In 2004, Lohit district is divided into Lohit and Anjaw districts.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.14

²⁶ **White Paper on Chakma and Hajong Refugee Issue**, *op.cit*, p.7.

In 1964, the Government of India appointed Dying Ering Committee to study the possibility of development of modern democratic government in NEFA. The Committee submitted report in January 1965 with recommendation for four- tier Panchayati system in 1967, the Panchyati Raj Regulation Act was passed which created three-tire local self- Government namely, Gram Panchayats, Anchal Samitis and Zila Parishads. However, the introduction of Panchati Raj system is a step towards NEFA's politicization.

The Act of 1971 provided the Union Territory with one seat each in both Rajya and Lok sabha. The North Eastern Area (Re-organisation) Act, 1972, the North East frontier Agency was declared full fledged Union Territory and renamed as Arunachal Pradesh on January 21th , 1972. On 20th February 1987, Arunachal Pradesh was declared as full-fledged state.

From 1838 to 1987 the state of Arunachal Pradesh witnessed tremendous administrative changes. Every Act passed during these years was set to organize new administrative units by disorganizing old units. The attitude of the British government in this area was not to allow these tribes to come into contract with the other plains people. The apparent motive to keep them isolated was to protect them from the contamination might be taking place when coming into the association of the other peoples. This might be the one reason why Arunachal was not Christianised as in case of the Mizos and the Khasis in the North East.

It can be said that by 1967 Arunachal progressed to have democratic institutions. The government of India introduced the Panchyati Raj system, preparing the tribes to

have political training and education. Thus within twenty years Arunachal could achieve its status as a full- fledged state among the other states of India.

Table 1.1: Showing district headquarters of the main tribes of Arunachal Pradesh		
District	Headquarter	The main tribes
Tawang	Tawang	Monpa
West Kameng	Bomdila	Monpa, Sherdukpen, Lishpa, Chugppa, Aka, Miji
East Kameng	Seppa	Nyishi, Sulung
Papum Pare	Yupia	Nyishi
Lower Subansiri	Ziro	Apatani, Nyishi
Upper Subansiri	Daporijo	Adi, Tagin
West Siang	Along	Adi, Memba
East Siang	Pasighat	Adi, Mishing
Upper Siang	Yingkiong	Adi
Dibang Valley [New]	Anini	Idu Mishmi
Lohit	Tezu	Mishmi, Khampti, Singpho, Meyor
Changlang	Changlang	Tangsa, Singpho
Trip	Khosa	Nocte, Wangcho
Kurung Kumey	Koloriang	Nyishi, Sulung, Tagin
Lower Dibang Valley	Roing	Mishmi, Adi [Padam]
Anjaw	Hawai	Mishmi

[Source: Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 2005, p.5]

IV

B. The Tani Group of tribes:

The Tani group of tribes belongs to the central areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Nishis, Tagins, Hill Miris, Na, Apa tanis, Adis, gallos and Mishings [also in Assam] come under the term ‘Tani group’. All these tribes claim themselves as the direct descendants of their great legendary Human Father, called ABOTANI. All these groups of tribes come under the name of Tani group. The people of these tribes are the ardent believer of a faith, called Donyi-Polo. By Donyi, they literally mean the sun and Polo stands for the Moon. The conjugation of Donyi and the Polo becomes a strong channel of socio-cultural aspiration of the Tanis²⁷.

Sl.No.	Name of the tribes	1961	1971	1981	1991
1.	Adi group including gallos.	77,187	93,959	1,20,839	1,58,059
2.	Nyishi	51,023	82,187	87,075	1,16,258
3.	ApaTani	10,793	12,888	16,580	22,526
4.	Hill Miri	2,442	8,174	6,936	11,017
5.	Tagin	24,055	22,107	27,124	28,860

Source:- [Census of India, 1961, 1971, 1981 and1991]

²⁷ Oshong Ering, **Donyi-Polo-A faith and belief of the Tani**, Donyi PoloMission, Itanagar, Series-1, p.1

B.(i) The *Nishi*:

The Nishi occupied the hilly terrains of the Lower Subansiri, Papum Pare and East Kameng Districts of present Arunachal Pradesh. Haimendrof, says these tribesmen were earlier known as Dafla. But they now that want they should be called as Nishi or Nishing, following the word *ni* which means ‘human being’²⁸. In the past, the Nishis inhabited across the northern borders of the Darrang and Lakhimpur Districts of Assam and were referred to as “Paschima Daflas” or Western Daflas and “Tagin Daflas” or Eastern Daflas respectively²⁹. The Ahom Chronicles referred to both Eastern and Western Nishis. However both of sections of Dafla were known by various names, the Eastern Daflas commonly call themselves as Nishis and the Western as Bangni, meaning man³⁰. The term ‘Nishi’ first mention in the *Ahom Buranjis*³¹. Haimendrof noted that both the sections of Daflas acknowledged a common predecessor named AboTani and they got divided into three chief clans, like Dopum, Dodum, and Dol³². The Daflas are less homogenous in comparison to other tribes.

The Nishis do not have script of their language. The stories of their origin and migration are vague and unclear. Such stories are told by their ancestors from generation to generation in course of their migration. The Dafla claims that their origin

²⁸ C. V. F.Haimendrof, **Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh**, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi,1982, p.9

²⁹ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District**, *op.cit.*,p.80

³⁰ *Ibid*

³¹ M.L.Bose, **History of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.1

³² J.N.Chowdhury, **Arunachal Panorama**, *op.cit.*, p.81

is traced to their legendary figure Abo Teni. This common legend is also shared by the Apa Tanis, the Sulungs, the Miris, the Tagins and the Bangrus. But with regard to their dress, social institution and culture³³ they had differences. The Daflas believed that their ancestors lived in a place called Supung which was far away in the east. First they came to a place which they remembered as Narba and, later passing through Begi, Bolo and Yalang, they crossed Shinit or Subansiri river and finally went over to another Kumme or Kamla river. From there they gradually spread over the tract lying between the Kamla and Khru rivers and pushed far up to the Palin and the Panior hills.

This myth throws some light on the origin and migration of the Nishi tribe. B.K.Shukla stated that the various places mentioned in the myth are narrated in the *id* songs, sung during the marriage ceremonies and *Yulo* festivals. Hence, if this conclusion is to be believed, the original home of Daflas can be traced to somewhere in remote eastern Himalayas. No doubt this migration took place in successive waves.

The Nishis are found to be most formidable tribes met by the Ahoms. Since the times of Aurangazeb, the Daflas were known as independent and turbulent tribe's³⁴. The Ahom Chronicles referred to number of Ahom expeditions into the Nishi country. However the Ahoms were not successful in their attempts to suppress the Nishis completely. During the reign of Pratap Singha (1603-41) a fort was constructed called Dafala-garh in the Darrang District to defend against the Nishi. He granted the right of

³³ *Ibid* p.82

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.84

collecting *posa*³⁵ to the Nishis, to be collected from the particular villages in the foothills, provided they paid tribute to the king. For this purpose *Katakis* were engaged to look after the necessities for the Nishis. Therefore, the Ahom kings put a large number of *paiks* in the *duars* in this connection.

Mackenzie refers that the Nishis were given the right to receive, from every ten house at the foothills, one double cloth, one single cloth, one handkerchief, one *dao*, ten heads of horned cattle and four seers of salt³⁶. From this it can be surmised that the tribal raids were basically economic.

In spite, of the right of *posa* granted to the Nishis, they could not be resisted to stop their raids in the Plains of Assam. The hostilities between the Ahoms and the Nishis continued. During the reign of Rudra Singha an expedition was said to have been sent to the Dafla hills for the violence the Daflas had perpetrated on the plains of Assam. A large number of Daflas said to have been brought to the plains to serve under the Ahom Government as deterrent³⁷. After the death of Rudra Singha (1696-1714) the Nishis again raised their heads and committed outrages in the plains of Assam. In the year 1717, the Eastern Nishis were restrained by king Siva Singha (1714-44) and to restrict the further raids of the Nishis, an embankment was erected along the border of the hills. To check the Western Nishis, King Rajeswar Singha (1751-69) blockaded

³⁵ The *posa* system is interpreted in various ways, some believed that the Ahoms paid *posa* just to get rid of them from committing depredations in the plains. Since it became a regular feature, it was considered that Ahoms submitted to the Nishi whims. But if it is looked deeply the *posa* system was a measure of compromise for maintaining peace in the hill border areas besides it also speaks about the generosity to the hill tribes in mitigating their economic needs.

³⁶ S..Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District**, *op.cit*, p.81

³⁷ M.L. Bose, **British Policy in North East Frontier Agency**, Concept Publication Company, New Delhi, 1979, p.178

them by fortifying the strategic positions and closing the passes leading to their hills. However, the Nishis were not totally suppressed and right of *posa* was restored to them.

By the treaty of Yandaboo (1826) Assam was finally occupied by the British. In the year 1838, the British Government took over the administration of Upper Assam. Till 1852, the Nishis created troubles to the British Government. And it became necessary to establish military outpost along the frontier. In the same year, the *posa* paid to the Daflas was finally commuted for a money payment. The Nishis continued to create disturbances up to the year 1870³⁸. However, the Eastern Daflas committed two raids. In October 1916, in the Harmuty tea garden a small party of the Nishis raided the coolie lines, killed two coolies, injured the third and burnt five houses³⁹. Another raid was committed in March 1919, when few Daflas carried off three persons to the hills. The Political officer, made tour to some Dafla villages and arrested four men in this connection⁴⁰. One after another military expedition took place to check the raids of the Daflas. But without any desired result. In the early part of the twentieth century the Nishi- British relations took a new turn. In 1911-12, the Government sent a survey team called as the Miri Mission. The purpose was to have effective and direct control with the Nishis living in interior areas.

³⁸ .Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District**, *op.cit*, p.86

³⁹ L.N.Chakravarty, **Glimpses of the early History of Arunachal Pradesh**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1975, p.19

⁴⁰ *Ibid*,p.19-20

B.(ii). *Hill Miris*:

The Hill Miris occupied the region both sides of the Kamla river east of its confluence with the Khru and as far as its junction with the Subansiri⁴¹. West of the Dirjemo and to the north of the Sissi sub-division of the Lakhimpur district, the Ghy-Ghasi Miris, the Sarak Miris north of Bordoloni, and on both banks of the hill course of the Subansiri river. The Panibotia Miris derived the name as they journeyed to the plains through the rivers on the canoes while Tarabotia Miri derived their name for traveling through land⁴².

L.A.Waddell states that the group known as Mishing was to the Assamese as Miri and to the Nishis (Daflas) as Hill Miris “Chi-mur”. The terms now Miri, Mishing and hill Miris posit a very pertinent question as to the distinctiveness of the Hill Miris. Besides the divisions of this tribe is yet to be established satisfactorily. The Hill Miris are said to be independent of the Adis (Abors). They usually treat the Miris of the plains as serfs⁴³. This lends a support to the fact that they were an independent group.

Prior to 1911, this group was not known. When the British administrative officers spotted them first, they found them as a separate distinct group⁴⁴ apart from the plain Miris, Adis(Abors) and Nishis(Daflas). Since, they lived in the high ranges of the hills they were called as Hill Miris and came to be identified as an independent group.

⁴¹ J.N.Chowdhury, *Arunachal Panorama*, *op.cit.*, p.95

⁴² E.T.Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Indian Studies Past & Present*, Calcutta, 1972, p.32

⁴³ L.A.Waddell, *The Tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley*, Reprnt, Sanskaran Prakashak, Delhi, 1975, p.58.

⁴⁴ Padma Shri S.S.Shashi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Indian Tribes*, Reprnt, Vol-III, Anmol Publications Pvt. LTD., New Delhi, 1997, p.63. These officers were Gait, Grierson, Mackenzie and Dalton.

At the same time, these British officers found that they might be a cognate group of other tribe surrounding them, particularly, the Adis (Abors) and the Nishis (Daflas).

The Hill Miris had its settlements in the Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. Scholars are not of the same opinion with regard to their origin. Some finds them as a separate distinct group, not at all connected with the Miris of the plains⁴⁵. Haimendrof has named them as *GUNGUS*, who lived on both sides at the confluence of the Kamla and Khru rivers on the western side. Since, the prevalence of the free intermarriage between the **Gungus** and the Nishis(Daflas)⁴⁶, perhaps, it led Haimendrof to identify them as one and the same with the Nishis (Daflas).

He further states that the Hill Miris were akin to the Nishis(Daflas) both racially and culturally. He has also referred to the settlement patterns between the Hill Miris and Nishis (Daflas) on the basis of their inhabitation in the mountain ridges and says that feudes between a Hill Miri village and a Nishi (Dafla) village often took place⁴⁷.

Linguistically, it has been found that there were differences between the Hill Miris and the Nishis (Daflas). But these differences do not appear to be substantial⁴⁸.

In a similar vein, Verrier Elwin has also stated that the Nishis (Daflas) and the Hill Miris resemble in many ways in matters of dress and appearance⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ P.T.Nair, **Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh**, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1985, p.104.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Padma Shri S.S.Shashi, **Encyclopedia of Indian Tribes**, *op.cit.*, p.66.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.67.

⁴⁹ V.Elwin, **A Philosophy for NEFA**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar,1988, p.16.

Speaking of the Hill Miris Dalton observes:

*“Though in language and in many of their customs they resemble and are no doubt of common stock with the Abors, they differs from them greatly in form of Government, and in many social observances and customs”*⁵⁰.

To conclude, Haimendorf `s theory of Daflas(Nishis) and the Hill Miris being one and the same, has not been found convincing to several other scholars .Following Dalton, Gait, Grierson,Mackenzie and several British administrative officers who served in the Hill Miri areas have recognized the Hill Miri as a separate group as against the considered opinion of Haimendorf.

It is during the reign of King Pratap Singha[1603-41] we get reference to the Miris for the first time. In order to stop the acts of atrocities committed by the Miris, king Pratap Singh appointed *katakis* to watch them and keep the authorities informed of their movements. With that end in view he introduced the ‘*posa*’ system in order to conciliate them. In recognition of this privilege granted to them he arranged for the payment of annual tribute by the Miris to the Ahom government and thereby compelled the Miris to recognize the overlordship of the Ahoms. This arrangement made by king Pratap Singha with the Miris remained in tact till the end of the Ahom rule in Assam. The Miris referred to here are evidently the Hill Miris, who had the right to *posa* as

⁵⁰ E.T.Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Indian Studies Past & Present*, *op.cit*, 1973, p.30.

enjoyed by the Nishis, while the Miris of the plains did not have any such right It is noted by Mackenzie that the Hill Miris had acquired the right to '*posa*'⁵¹.

Before the Miri Mission 1911-12 the Hill Miris were not known as a separate tribal group. Besides the Hill Miris are divided into different broad groups according to popular conception and these groupings had been clearly recorded in the Preliminary Notes on the Miris in 1987⁵².

Colonel Dalton and Captain Maxwell are the two political officers who have been to Miri villages of high hills and their reception was most satisfactory. The Balipara Frontier tracts Gazetteer assert that the Hill Miris are well behaved and never given trouble to the British authority. The Government was always been on friendly terms with them. The *posa* which the government paid to them was more of a charitable nature than any government payment in the North-East Frontier⁵³.

B.(iii) *Apa Tanis*:

The Apa Tanis are one of the few self sufficient tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, occupying a part of the Subansiri district. The highland, watered by river Kali which ultimately falls into the Panir, is inhabited by these people. The ApaTanis are not only good cultivators but expert traders and meet all their necessities in exchange of paddy which is always in excess of their requirements. Their interest has got additional momentum because of the establishment of the Headquarters of the district at Ziro in

⁵¹ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District**, *op.cit*, p.83

⁵² L.N.Chakaravarty, **Glimpses of the early History of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.98

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.91

the ApaTani plateau⁵⁴.Till the last part of nineteenth century the existence of the Apa Tanis tribe were not known to the plain peoples⁵⁵.

The Apa Tanis were refer by various names in the British records. Ankas (sometimes called Tenai Miris), Apas or Apa Tanang. E.T. Dalton states:

*“between the Duphla and Meri countries there is a tribe called ‘Auks’ and Auka Meris’ (clearly the ApaTanis) by the Assamese, who never visit the plains...”*⁵⁶

Apa Tanis believe that their community decended from the mythical ancestor , Abo Tani, who came from a country north or north-east of Arunachal Pradesh, situated near two rivers known as Supupad Pudpumi⁵⁷.According to another tradition, three batches of people following three different courses arrived at Baru, a site full of reptiles, and settle there. Later, these reptiles were destroyed by magical metal objects in possession of the ApaTanis⁵⁸.

For the first time Major Graham on the Report of Dafla expedition of 1874-75 mentions about the ApaTanis. Earlier to this the Apa Tanis were little know to the plain people and they looked upon them as a group belong to the Miris and refer them as

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.28

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ V.Elwin, **India’s North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century**, London, 1962, p.156-157

⁵⁷ K.S.Singh, **People of India Arunachal Pradesh**, ed., Vol. XIV, Anthropological Survey of India, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1995, p.141

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

Aukas or tattooed. Mr Crowe Manager of the Joying Tea Estate visited for the first time the Apa Tani country in December 1889⁵⁹.

The Apa Tanis are gentle and peace loving people but in the year 1896 they committed raid in the house of Padu Miri near the Kadam Tea estate and killed Padu and his stepson and were taken captive with the four family members. A punitive military expedition was sent after three months. Thereafter followed prolonged discussions and they agreed to handover the captives and punished the Ankas by forcing them to return the six captives and a gun which was taken during raid of Tara's village in the year 1896⁶⁰. Since then they had not created any trouble to the government.

In 1912, the Miri Mission visited the Apatani country. Haimendrof was appointed as special officer in 1944⁶¹.

After independence the ApaTani people has come in contact with the outside people and the communication gapped was removed and they came into contact with outside world.

B.(iv) *Tagin*:

Tagins are spread over an area covering roughly about 15000 square kms. It is bounded by China (Tibet) in the north, West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh in the

⁵⁹ V. Elwin, *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, *op.cit.*, p.156-157

⁶⁰ L. N. Chakaravarty, *Glimpses of the early History of Arunachal Pradesh*, *op.cit.*, p.29

⁶¹ S. Dutta Choudhury, *Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District*, *op.cit.*, p.89

East, Lower Subansiri and Kurung Kumey districts in the West, the confluence of Sinik (Subansiri) and Sigen rivers in the South west, and Sinyum river in South-East.

Dalton was the first ethnographer to furnish some information in his book “Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal” to the existence of Tagin as Tribe. He wrote:

*“Dophla country extends from the hill course of Sundri river to the Bhoroli river, comprising the hills to the north of Chedwar in the Luckimpur and Naodwar in the Tezpur District. They are in Communications with the Tibetans as they possess many articles of Tibetan or Chinese manufacture, but like the Dihong Abors and hill Miris, they tell wild stories of the savages between them and Tibet. It is said that these savages that they go absolutely naked, and have, or assert that they have, abhorrence of the smell of clothes”*⁶².

In the Assam census report of 1881 records that:

*“The origin and meaning of the name Daphla are not known. As pronounced in Lakhimpur, it would be written Dompbila. They call themselves Niso or Nising. The Miris they call Boro and the Abors Tegins, but these word seem to be merely name of a tribe common to the Abors and Daphlas”*⁶³.

⁶² E. T. Dalton, **Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Indian Studies Past & Present**, *op.cit*, p.37

⁶³ **Report on the Census of Assam**, 1881, Ch-VI, Caste & Tribe Section, p.89

The Tagins are believed to have migrated from the Penzi, a village in Tibet in Tadedage region⁶⁴. M.L.Bose stated that the Tagins are definitely immigrants of Khams and some of the Tagins are to be seen across the Line in Tibet⁶⁵. Though Bose seems to be confident about the Tagin migration but he did not refer to the route of migration. J.N.Chuodhury viewed that the ancestors of the Tagin believed to have come from a place called Pui Pudu farther beyond the source of the Sipi. They have no clear remembrance as to where the place was exactly located but believe that it was across the frontier, in the land of Nimme or Tibet. From Pui Pudu they came to Pumta and from there to Dibeh. The first to come was said to have been their mythical ancestor AboTani who reached a place called Nide-Lanking and died there.

The followers of AboTani pursued the course of migration from Dibeh to Nari and from Nari to Nalo which is another name of the present village of Siggen. However in course of sojourn, their ancestor had crossed Chhimik [Subansiri] and Kuru(Khru)⁶⁶. According to oral tradition, the Nyishis, Adis, ApaTanis, Hill Miris, Tagins and Mishings are the descendants of common ancestor AboTani. Therefore, they must have migrated together to Nide-Lankin.

As per Hill Miris tradition that **Sipo- Rigo** is the place in the far north of the river Subansiri. There was a man named Abo-Teni who produced seven sons in seven years. This created the problem of food. Abo-Teni and his wife in disgust, left the place down to the valley of Subansiri without the knowledge of the sons. When the sons came

⁶⁴ S. Roy, *Aspect of Minyong Padam Culture, North East Frontier Agency*, Shillong, 1966, p.13

⁶⁵ M.L.Bose, *British Policy in North East Frontier Agency*, *op.cit*, p.19

⁶⁶ J.N.Chuodhury, *Arunachal Panorama*, *op.cit*, p.136

to know about this, they went out in search of their parents. They moved down the stream of the river subansiri. Thus they settled in different places and in course of time, their successors became different tribes. The eldest son went to the plains; the second lived in the foothills, the third settled near Panior river, the fourth stayed in the Kamla valley, the fifth near Simi river, the sixth near Sigen and the last one became the ancestor of the Tagins.⁶⁷

The Tagins moved from place to place in search of cultivable land. Like the Boris, Bokars and Ramos they moved from north of Mechuka region in West Siang District. They said to have settled in two places which is located at present in Bori region. They continued their migration and in course of time changed the direction and came uphill by the bank of the river Subansiri till they reached the final place where their ancestor decided to settle down⁶⁸.

In 1911, a military survey party carried out survey of the dreary and difficult terrains under the occupation of the Tagins. The report of this survey had little reference to the people. Until the Achinmori massare of 1953⁶⁹ a very little was heard about them. In the same year, a group of Tagins ambushed a official party and caused serious casualties. The administration realized the importance of the situation and dealt with the Tagins from both the law and order and on humanitarian ground. To deal with the problems of the Tagins with regard to their various grievances, the government set up

⁶⁷ V. Elwin, Myths of the North-East Frontier of India, Cited in A. Riddi, **The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh A study of Continuity and Change**, Abhijeet Publication, Delhi, 2006, p.11

⁶⁸ N. Sarkar, **The Tagins**, Directorate of Research, Department of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1999, p.1-2

⁶⁹ J. N. Chowdhury, **Arunachal Panorama**, *op.cit.*, p.135

two administrative centers, one in Denekoli and another in Tahila under two officers namely K.T.Khuma and U. Hipshon Roy respectively⁷⁰.

The kind attitude of the Government towards the whole affair created a good impression on the Tagins towards the Government. They come forward to cooperate with the government in various nation building activities⁷¹.

Since, the incident of 1953 the Tagins settled down peacefully and created no disturbances.

Moreover, in the last century the Tagins appear not to have any direct or close contact with the people of plains. Assistant Political officer of Along, K.T.Khuma visited the Tagin area and give a vivid account of the area and the people.

B.(v) *Adis*:

The Adis occupy the east, West and upper Siang districts of the state. Previously they were known as 'Abor' meaning 'unruly' or 'disobedient'⁷². They were very much independent in their nature. The astonishing change that has come over the Abors in recent years, transforming them into a friendly, co-operative, progressive community has made the use of the old name inappropriate. They themselves have suggested, the

⁷⁰ S. Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh Subansiri District**, *op.cit*, p.88

⁷¹ L. N. Chakravarty, **Glimpses of the early History of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.33

⁷² V. Elwin, **A Philosophy for NEFA**, *op.cit.*, p.17

name 'Adi' in place of 'Abor'. The word 'Adi' meant 'hillmen'⁷³. The government then accepted this proposition.

The word 'Adi' covers a large number of tribal groups. They are united, although they speak in different dialects. But fundamentally it is same everywhere including their culture and temperament. The Adis fall into two main groups. One group includes the Minyongs, Padams, Pasis, Panggis, Shimongs, Boris, Ashings and Tengams while the other is the Gallong groups consisting of Ramos, Bokars and Pailibos of the far north⁷⁴. The Minyongs and the Gallong who were previously referred to and classified as Minyong Abor and Gallong Abor now known as Adi Minyong and Adi Gallong. The word Adi has now been prefixed to the Minyong and Gallong⁷⁵ in the list of schedule tribes.

The Padams earlier know as Bor Abors⁷⁶, is one of the sub-tribes of Padam-Minyong group. According to some writers, they occupy the area from the left bank of the Siang river to the Dibang valley. In the south their habitat extends upto the border of Assam and in the north upto the Sidip river on the left bank of the Yamne river⁷⁷. The main settlements of Padams in the Siang and Yamne valleys are Damro, Padu, Silli, Bodak, Ayeng, Mebo, Siluk, motum, Ngopok, Kiyit, Borguli and Sigar, and those in the

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.18

⁷⁴ *Ibid*

⁷⁵ C. V. F. Haimendorf, **Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p9

⁷⁶ See T. Nyori, **History and Culture of the Adis**, Omsons, New Delhi, 1993, p.9

⁷⁷ *Ibid*

Dibang valley are – Bijari, Bomjir, Dambuk, Kappang, Tapat, Poblung, Anpum, Bolung, Kang- Kong, Roying, Parbuk, Rayang, Ibuk, Ekasia and Balek⁷⁸.

The Pasis were originally a branch of the Padam Adis. The Adi Pasi village is the only settlement which lies in the upper region of the Yamne valley. In the lower region they are found in the Pasihat area and their villages are Tigra, Rasam, Balek, Monku, Roing, Kelek and Gine. These altogether known as the village of the Balek group⁷⁹.

The Panggis are located in the lower Yamne valley. In the east their land is bound by the steep bank of river the Yamne; in the west it is bound by the Siang river. The confluence of the Yamne and the Siang is the southern tip of the Panggi area. To the north, the area is bound by the Minyong and Milang settlements of the upper Yamne valley⁸⁰. The Panggi villages are Geku, Sumsing, Sibum, Jeru and Pongging.

The Minyongs inhabit in the right bank of the lower Siang valley and a part of land between the Siang and Yamne rivers. Their settlements are also spread over the Siyom valley particularly in its left bank upto the Bori area in the north. To the West of their area are the Galo settlements⁸¹. To the south it is bound by the Jonai sub-division of the Lakhimpur District of Assam. The main settlements of this sub-tribe are – from south to the north- Ledum, Sido, Mirem, Yagrung, Rengin, Rotung, Kebang, Yemsing,

⁷⁸ *Ibid*

⁷⁹ *Ibid*

⁸⁰ J. Panggeng, "The Unknown Panggis", *Arunachal News*, Sept., 1977, pp12-15

⁸¹ T. Nyori, *op.cit*, p.10

Pangin, Yeksing, Boleng, Dosing, Pankang, Parong, Yebuk, Sitang, Riga, Riu, Komsing, Rungong, Pessing, Molom, Moput, Ioring and Jomlo⁸².

The Milangs located in the upper Yamne valley extending upto the Shimong area in the north and the Sidip river in the south. There are now three Milang villages- Milang, Dalbing and Pekimodi⁸³.

The Karkos are mainly found in the Karko villages, which lies between Pankang and Ramsing villages on the Siang river. However, a number of Karko families are found in Ramsing, Gosang and some other neighboring villages⁸⁴.

The Shimongs are inhabitants along the left bank of the upper course of the Siang river and are spread over ten villages which include- Ngaming, Jido, Anging, Singing, Palin, Likor, Pudingm Gete, Shimong and Gobuk⁸⁵.

The Tangams, who live along the upper reaches of the Siang river and the Nigong, or Yang- Sang- Chu river of the Tibetans. Their present important settlements are Kuging, Ngering and Mayum⁸⁶.

The Ashings area starts from Tuting in the north to Ramsing village in the south⁸⁷.

⁸² *Ibid*

⁸³ *See, Ibid*

⁸⁴ *Ibid*

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ *Ibid*

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.11

The Bori settlements are situated on the spurs of the hills on both of the banks of the Siyom and the Sike rivers. The area is surrounded by high ranges of hills on three sides, in east by the Luyor ranges, in the west by the Piri hills and in the north by a wall formed by these ranges closing together⁸⁸.

The Galos inhabited the area from Sido valley in the east and upto the Subansiri river in the west. To their south is the Lakhimpur district of Assam and on the north-east, the Siyom river forms the dividing line between the Minyong and the Galo areas. The Galos are divided into several smaller groups inhabiting a compact area and each group had its own villages. To the north, the area extends up to the Bori, Pailibo-Ramo and Tagin areas.

The Pailibo area is situated in the Tato circle of the West Siang District. The Ramos is found in the Mechukha sub-division of the West Siang District. In some places they were mixed up with the Bokars and the Membas, and some with the Pailibos. The Bokars are found in the Monigong circle of the Machukha sub-division⁸⁹.

The origin of these tribes is shrouded in darkness. It is also difficult to explore their past history. There is no definite information about the changes that came over them. No record has been found with regard to this fact.

However, Dalton traces the tradition of origin and records the following story:

⁸⁸ *Ibid*

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.12

“The human family are all descended from one common mother. She had two sons, the eldest was a bold hunter, the younger was a cunning craftsman; the latter was the mother’s favorite. With him she migrate to the west, taking with her all the household utensils, arms, implements of agriculture and instruments of all sorts, so that the art of making most of them was lost in the land she deserted; but before quitting the old country she taught her first-born how to forge daos, to make musical instruments from the gourd, and she left him in possession of a great store of blue and white breads. These breads and the simple arts known to him he transmitted to his posterity the Padams, and from him they received the injunction to mark themselves on the forehead with a cross”⁹⁰.

As per the Galos tradition “At the beginning of the time, the Gods for seven generation dwelt alone on the earth, to which they came in the following order, father to son, as they are named by the Miri in his incarnations. Jimi, Michek, Chegrum, Rumbuk, Buksin, Sintu, Turi and in the eight generation, Riki and Rini. Riki as the custom of the gods , ate flesh raw, but Rini cooked it. Riki was renamed Taki and Rini, who burnt the flesh before he ate it, was Tani”⁹¹.

Therefore, they have been said to be the immigrants from the Khams province of Tibet.

According to Another tradition about the origin of the Adis

⁹⁰ E.T. Dalton, **Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Indian Studies Past & Present**, *op.cit.*, p.26

⁹¹ T. Nyori, **History and Culture of the Adis**, *op.cit.*, p.32

*“It was night, there was no day, there were Wiyus in the world, but not men. kayum’s son was Yumkang, Yumkang’s son was Kasi; Kasi’s son was Siang; Siang’s was Abo; Abo’s son was Bomuk; Bomuk’s son was Mukseng; Mukseng’s son was Sedi; Sedi’s son was Dilling; Dilling’s son was Litung; Litung’s son was Tuye; Tuye’s son was Yeppe; Yeppe’s daughter was Pedong Nane; Pedong Nane’s son was Doni or Tani”*⁹² the first man.

Among the Adis there are different myths which speak about their origin. Though it is varied accordingly but they have a common theme.

The 1931 census report recorded by R.C.R Gunning speaks about the home and migration of the Adis as

*“In none of these tribes there are any traditions of origin which go back very far. All claim origin from one race or tribe settled at Killing in the Bomo-Janbo country. From Killing part of the tribe journeyed south across the Siyom river and occupied the hilly country between that river and the Subansiri and the Brahmaputra. These are known as Galong. Others crossed the Dihang (San Fo) or settled on its bank or neighbourhood”*⁹³.

⁹² *Ibid*

⁹³ *Census of India Report*, 1931 ,Part III, p.XIV

Sachin Roy found similarity of the Adi culture to that of the Nagas on the Southern bank of river Brahmaputra⁹⁴. He views that:

“the pattern which Adi culture belong lies in the south and east of it and stretches across the Brahmaputra in the hills beyond”⁹⁵.

He further opined that the Adi migrated from the south to the north and in the process of their migration to the extreme north, the Tibetan Buddhist culture and the southern culture met each other on the frontier and held each other’s progress there⁹⁶.

According to a Mishings traditions, indicates that the Milis, Kumbangs, Patirs and others followed the Adi-Pasi and Mebo of Regam hills; the Tayu-Tayes, the Taidis and others took the Pasighat-Pangin route of the Bapi hills. The Paits, the Paos, and some others migrated along the route of the Torne and the Joging hills. The Shayang clans came down from Pasha-Shayang near present Dambuk. The Boris, Regons and Sarohs had come down much later⁹⁷.

However it is observed that other related Tani tribes do not have any tradition of their migration from the south to the north⁹⁸. Tarun Kumar Bhattacharjee’s assumption on the Adi migration is not based on traditions of the tribes⁹⁹. However the stories of migrations of different Adi groups throw some light of the directions and stages of their

⁹⁴ S.Roy, *Aspect of Minyong Padam Culture, North East Frontier Agency, op.cit*, p.255

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

⁹⁶ T.Nyori, **History and Culture of the Adis**, *op.cit*, p.43

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.45

⁹⁸ *Ibid*

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

migration. Apart from the migration stories expect the Panggis the Minyong-Padam group migrated from the north to the south through the valley of the Siang river and spread to their present areas. Similarly the Gallo group migrated through the Damla Pass and Tadadge of the present Mechukha-Monigong area of the West Siang District. From there they spread to the entire area between the Siyom and the Subansiri rivers up to the foot hills near the border of Assam¹⁰⁰.

The Abor (Adi) tribe is first mentioned in the Ahom chornicles . During the reign of King Pratap Singha (A.D. 1603-41), the Abors were allotted a number of villages in the plains whose inhabitants had to cultivate paddy for them. Moreover, the ryots who cultivated for them were exempted from payment of revenue to the Ahom Government.¹⁰¹

In 1840, when the Khamptis, in alliance with the Mishmis rose against the British government¹⁰², the Adis remain firm not to join against the British. Up to 1847, the Abors remained friendly with the British Government. When Captian Vetch visited their place they had friendly conference. However this friendly relation did not last for long time. The first Adi outrage broke up when the Adis from hill attacked and killed some people of the Beeah village of Sengajan. The Government dispatched a force to follow the raiders but the party had to come back. The second expedition entered the Abor hills and crushed the Adis.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.61

¹⁰¹ M. L. Bose, **British Policy in North East Frontier Agency**, *op.cit.*, p.66

¹⁰² L. N. Chakravarty, **Glimpses of the early History of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.37

In the year 1861, the Meyong group of the Adis attacked and wiped out a Beeah village on the Southern side of the river Brahmaputra. Taking the situation seriously the Government took measures to protect the border which attracted the attention of the Adis who being afraid made overtures for general reconciliation. In 1862, the British Government concluded agreement with eight communities of Meyong Adis¹⁰³. Number of such agreements were concluded with other Adi groups and in 1866, the last agreement was made with the remaining Adi communities. This agreement set for the payment to the Adis of various goods in kind.

In 1876-77, the Adi representatives were asked to come to receive their *posa* and from 1877, payment of *posa* is substituted for money. In order to establish better relation with the frontier tribes in 1882 Jack Francies Needham was appointed as the Assistant Political officer, which main duty was to cultivate good will of the tribe, to make himself familiar with the languages and politics of the races in the neighborhood¹⁰⁴.

In 1887, the Abors (Adis) carried away domestic articles including four girls from and within the British territory. However the captives and articles were recovered when the British government stopped the payment of *posa* but the accused person declined to come down¹⁰⁵. Four Miris were carried away across the frontier in the year 1889 and murdered while they refused to pay *posa*. The British government imposed fine on the raiders and stopped the payment of *posa* for the same year and set up

¹⁰³ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.39

¹⁰⁵ M.L.Bose, **British Policy in North East Frontier Agency**, *op.cit*, p.71

blockade on the Abor (Adi) frontier. As a result the Abors (Adis) came down with fine and the blockade was withdrawn and *posa* was restored¹⁰⁶.

In the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century, all the Abors (Adi) united against the British to take combined actions. Several police parties were attacked. Some Miris were taken away and their village is attacked by the Pasi and Miyong Abors (Adi) which is under the jurisdiction of the British. Hence the Government ultimately sanctioned an expedition to punish the guilty¹⁰⁷. However the British relation with Abors (Adi) did not improve after the expedition of 1894. The Abor (Adi) hostility continued to worry the officials hence they wanted to bring the Abors (Adi) under the direct and complete control. In 1905 Needham was succeeded by W. Williamson. In the year 1908, he made tour of the foothills region of the Abor (Adi) hills visiting all the Pasi villages, the foot hill villages of the Minyongs and some of the Gallong villages. He proposed a forward policy and set up advance posts beyond the frontier¹⁰⁸. However the Government of India rejected the proposal.

In 1911, Williamson and accompanied by Dr. Gregorson went across the British jurisdiction and were murdered by Kebang Abors (Adi). The Government of India sanctioned a military expedition for punishing the murderers. The outcome of the

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.72

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.73

expedition is the ring leaders were arrested the murderer were caught and tried and sentence¹⁰⁹.

General Bower, who led the Abor (Adi) expedition, recommended the division of the Frontier territories into three political units under the charge of different officers who can directly control the tribes from within the tribal territories under their respective control¹¹⁰. In 1912, the tracts were divided into three sections and different officers were posted for each. With the creation of new political units of the Frontier administrative posts the officers began to tour the Abor (Adi) hills up to the international boundary. In the Administrative report of 1917-18, W.C.M. Dundas stated that “the Abor (Adi) villages had been brought under direct administration; but a large area to the north but south of the Mc Mahon Line remained outside the control of the Political Officer of the Abor (Adi) hills. There was no hostility against the new order; rather inter-tribal disputes were brought before him for settlement¹¹¹.” In the recommendation of Godfrey in 1838, to stop Tibetan incursions south of the Mc Mohan line, two posts were opened at Karko and Riga respectively. As a result, the control of territory was extended to cover up entire Abor (Adi) hills or the Siang valley and they came under the jurisdiction of the British Government.

¹⁰⁹ L.N.Chakravarty, **Glimpses of the early History of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.43

¹¹⁰ M.L.Bose, **British Policy in North East Frontier Agency**, *op.cit*, p.73

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p.74

V

The entire subject matter has been organized in the chapters below:

Chapter –I: Land and the People

In this chapter, discussion has been focused on the geographical and cultural space of Arunachal Pradesh with special reference to the Tani group of tribes.

Chapter-II: Gender Issues: Status of Women

In this chapter, discussion of our study has been confined to some specific aspects: the meaning of status of women, an approach to the study on the status of women, Indian history and the status of women, status of women in the North East and Status of women in Arunachal Pradesh.

Chapter-III Status of Tani Women: Traditional View

This chapter has been devoted to study the socio-cultural, economic, political, educational and religious role of Tani women in the traditional society as prescribed in the customary laws.

Chapter-IV Violence against Women

This chapter deals with various types of violence inflicted on Tani women: domestic violence, rape, kidnapping, sexual harassment, prostitution, trafficking of children and violence arising out of traditional Practices.

Chapter-V Women and Education

This chapter deals with the development of modern education in the area inhabited by the Tani groups of tribes with special reference to women's literacy. It also deals with the impact of modern education on the status of Tani women.

Chapter-VI Women and Empowerment

This chapter focuses on how modern education empowered the Tani women in terms of their participation in both economic and political spheres.

Chapter-VII: Concluding Remarks

The last chapter is devoted to the findings of the research.

CHAPTER-II

GENDER ISSUES: STATUS OF WOMEN

In the 1970's the United Nations focused world attention on the status of women. Member countries were asked to appoint committees that could gather statistics and produce reports on this topic. As India and other countries set up commissions to study the status of women, the U.N declared the year 1975 as International Women's year and 1975-85 as Women's decade¹. In India, as in the West, the international mandate was welcomed by small but determined academicians who were already examining questions related to women's status². To Gerda Lerner, 'Women have a history; Women are in history'³. Her words 'became a manifesto. What emerged was a new way of thinking about gender'⁴.

The growing focus on women and the gradual spread of gender awareness among scholars have brought about a need for studying women's status in society. Thus it can be said that the status of women in a society assumes significance in evaluating the degree of civilization attained by a particular society in time and space continuum⁵.

¹ See, G. Forbes, **Women In Modern India**, Reprnt., Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.2

² *Ibid*

³ G. Lerner in *Ibid*,

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ K. Devendra, revised edn., **Changing Status of Women in India**, Delhi, 1994, p.32

I

A. The Meaning of Status of Women:

The meaning of ‘status’ is difficult to put in one word. However, it can be defined as the term pre-supposes certain factors. Even then there is no single definition of ‘status’ as given by individuals and organizations. These are varied but will be fairly acceptable as a conceptual frame for our study.

We quote here at first a definition on the status by David Sills. He defines,

*“Age, sex, birth, genealogy and other biological and constitutional characteristics are very common basis of status. Until about 1920, the term status was most commonly used to refer to either the legally enforceable capacities and limitations of the people or their relative superiority and inferiority”.*⁶

The National Committee on status of women has put it more succinctly and elaborately encompassing wider dimensions. To quote it,

“The term ‘Status’ denotes relative position of persons in a social system or sub-system which distinguishable from that of others through its rights and obligations. Each status position is expressed in terms of a role. Since each individual occupies a number of distinct statuses within a society, he/she performs a variety of roles.

⁶ D. Sills, **The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences**, Macmillan Publication, Oxford, 1968, p.250

*Status is realized through roles. This brings into focus the rights and opportunities provided to women by the state and socio-cultural institutions to perform these roles, which may not necessarily re-inforce each other. Processes of change are responsible for divergence between the expected and actual role behaviour”.*⁷

Women’s status moreover can be determined by the power she enjoyed in the domestic and social fields. However, women’s status in the society has been changing from time to time and it differs from one society to another. Generally the status of women has two dimensions .Firstly, the extent to which they have access to the decision – making process and are effectively in position of power and authority, and secondly the level of literacy, education, employment, political participation and representation are the important indicators of women’s status. Moreover, some aspects related with the status of women are multidimensional such as the educational, social, psychological, political, religious and economic status.

I

B. AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN:

According to Engles economic organization of a society and resultant family organization of a society determine the status of women. They enjoyed higher position up to the lower stage of *Barbarism*. But it declined with the origin of private property and from that period of time women became cut off from the public character and were converted into some sort of domestic servant. With the development of private property

⁷ **The National Committee on the Status of Women**, ICSSR, New Delhi, 1975, p3-4

and capitalism the women's status was degraded and reduced to servitude. She became slave of man's lust, and a mere instrument for the breeding of children⁸.

However, Engles' work is based on generalizations of the work of nineteenth century ethnographers and theoreticians such as J.J. Bachofen and L.H.Morgan. They claimed that originally before the emergence of private property there existed classless 'communist' societies. Such societies may or may not have been matriarchal, but they were egalitarian⁹.

G.Lerner sums up Engles' major contributions to women's position in society and history as follows:

“(1) He pointed to the connection between structural changes in kinship relations and changes in the division of labour on the one hand and women's position in the society on the other (2) He showed a connection between the establishment of private property, monogamous marriage, and prostitution. (3) He showed a connection between and political dominance by men and their control over female sexuality. (4) By locating ‘the world defeat of the female sex’ in the formation of archaic states, based on the dominance of propertied elites, he gave the event historicity¹⁰.

⁸ F.Engles, **Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1948, p.82

⁹ See, G.Lerner, **The Creation of Patriarchy**, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1986, p.21

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.23

Lerner further states that Engles limited his discussion on the question of women by offering a persuasive, single- cause explanation and directed attention to a single event, that is, linking it to a revolutionary change¹¹. Again she explains that if the development of private property was the cause of women's enslavement and the institutions emerging out of it, than it would be a natural conclusion that the abolition of private property would liberate women. The theoretical works so far done relating to the origin of women's subordination needs toward proving, improving or disproving the works of Engles¹².

Engles' basic assumptions about the nature of the sexes were based on an acceptance of evolutionary theories of biology, but his great merit was to point out the impact of societal and cultural forces in structuring and defining sexual relations. Parallel to his model of social relations, he developed an evolutionary theory of sex relations, in which monogamous marriage among the working classes in a socialist society stood at the apex of development"¹³.

Simone de Beauvoir says that the evolution of women's condition is to be explained by the concurrent action of two factors: 'sharing in productive labour and being freed from slavery to reproduction'¹⁴. Karl Marx stated that equalization of sexes is not possible if women are restricted to private household work. He saw women

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ P. R. Sanday, "Towards a Theory of the Status of Women", in: **American Anthropologist**, New Series, Vol.75, No.5 (Oct,1973),1682-1700, p.1685

emancipation possible only when she is able to participate on an extensive scale in production and when household works claims an insignificant portion of her time¹⁵

This early work is supported by the work of D'Andrade who links participation in economic activities to power and control. He comments that "the sex which performs or initiates the basic subsistence activities is more likely to control the property that is involved in these activities" and that such characteristics as dominance and aggression are related to which sex controls economic capital and the extent and kind of division of labour by sex. According to him the predominant cross-cultural mode, is that males are more dominant, and more aggressive than females. Further he adds that the extent of these differences varies by culture, and in some cultures these differences varies according to culture, and in some cultures these differences do not exist or may be actually reversed¹⁶.

Murdock refers to a number of conditions which enhanced the status of one sex relative to another. Production and the ownership of land are the principal indicators of status. To him these conditions are (a) absence of movable property in herds, slaves, or other valuables which in the hands of men becomes a destructive factor of polygyny.(b)The importance of men increases after war for they bring slave wives or they acquire the capacity to purchase women. (c) Politically the women have a low level in organising themselves as the men have a wider political authority having power, property and prestige¹⁷ where the women are generally submerged. However, it can be

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*,pp.1685-1686

said that women's status is not the same in different domains of a society. It differs from domain to domain. In one domain it might be inferior while in other domain the status might be higher.

To understand the status of women in a particular society is based on the role of gender differentiation and patriarchy.

B. (i) Gender:

Socio-culturally, the society differentiates men and women by assigning them specific roles in social activities¹⁸. Thus Kamla Bhasin observes,

*“Each society slowly transforms a male or female into a man or a woman, into masculine and feminine, with different qualities, behaviour patterns, roles, responsibilities, rights and expectations. Unlike sex, which is biological, the gender identities of women and men are psychological and socially- which means historically and culturally-determined”.*¹⁹

It follows the fact that the social classification of men and women into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’²⁰ falls within the term ‘gender’. Ann Oakley also holds the same view.

Though the gender division is basically biological it is reflected through cultural norms that assigned to men and women to perform role in a society. Men are believed to be bread – earners, holder and managers of property, custodian of women and

¹⁸ K. Bhasin, **Understanding Gender**, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 2003, p.1

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p2

²⁰ *Ibid*

children who depends on him, active in politics, religion, business and the profession. On the other hand, women are believed to be “home makers”, she produces children, take care of children and as such her role is confined to house hold activities while men dealt with the out side world. It is gender which has been largely responsible for fixing women’s place in particular societies²¹. Thus, the gender based theory of women status refers to women’s social and psychological positions and rights and privileges in a particular social set up. It is accustomed by the existing ideas and functions in that particular society, the approach, and the behavior of men towards women and their own acceptance or rejection of these roles. Therefore, women’s status is a dynamic concept that surrounded their traditional as well as changing position in a society, where both present and emerging status is based on the prevalent ideas, functions, norms and traditions. The consequent changes and development in women status is associated directly with social and cultural traditions, stages of economic development, level of education and political participation²². These issues influence the characteristics of women.

It followed the issues in gender relations. The society needs to determine such relations between men and women, between the masculine and feminine. Perhaps, Kamla Bhasin appears to be more specific in this regard.

“the relations of power between women and men which are revealed in a range of practices, ideas, representations, including division of labour,

²¹ G. Lerner, **The Creation of Patriarchy**, *op.cit*, p.21

²² G.S.Pande, **Political Participation of Women in India: Implementation of 73rd and 74th Amendments**, New Royal Book Co., Lucknow, 2001, p.4-5

roles and resources between women and men, and the ascribing to them of different abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits, behavioural patterns and so on. Gender relations are both constituted by and help constitute these practices and ideologies in interaction with other structures of social hierarchy such as class, caste and race. They may be seen as largely socially constructed (rather than biologically determined), and as variable over time and place".²³

Politics in relationship is another issue intrinsically linked to gender relations. The factors governing this in the society are based on the assignments of different degrees of power, authority and control and power games taking place between the genders within household and outside. Thus gender relations speak of wider dimension than it could be generally conceived of.

However, theoretically gender hierarchy represents the domination of both genders. But in real sense of the term it means a hierarchy in which men dominate women. So, gender relations are relations of dominance and subordination of women with elements of co-operation, force, violence continuing on them.

It is noticed that in every society women are not subordinated to all men. The rich women who help men in household activities for e.g. is in the position to dominate men due to her class relationship. Here gender is less important than the women class. The different religious laws also influence the gender relations in a society.

²³ Quoted from K. Bhasin, **Understanding Gender**, *op.cit*, p. 26-27

Generally, in comparison to the lower caste women the upper caste women face more restrictions on their mobility since they are much more male dominated and have to preserve caste purity. Likewise a lower caste is not restrained because she does not have to preserve caste purity. The socio-economic and political status of men and women also differ according to classes. G. Lerner opines that “Class is not a separate construct from gender; rather, class is expressed in generic terms”²⁴

Maria Mies built up the theory on subordination of gender to class. Her theory is based on patriarchy on a materialist perspective. Based on the masculine and feminine subjectivity, the principle of Marxist philosophical anthropology that defined labouring activities as the essence of being. There is an examination of the place of the sexual/gender division of labour in the subordination of subsistence to a predatory (masculine) mode of production, characterized essentially by the subordination of women. This predatory mode is comprehended as inclusive of all forms of natural and social domination and exploitation. She identified a fundamental distinction between women labouring activities in bio-social reproduction-sensuous, burdensome and self-fulfilling (non-alienating)- and men’s activities, seen as mediated tools and inherently alienated in industrial societies. The subsistence- based mode of production is construed as liberating, promoting wholeness of body and mind for both sexes, especially men. Women are regarded as revolutionary due to their non-alienating labour²⁵.

²⁴ G.Lerner, **The Creation of Patriarchy**, *op.cit*, p.213

²⁵ K. Saunders, ed., **Feminist Post- Development thought: Rethinking Modernity Post- colonial and Representation**, Zed Books, London, 2002, p.9

Maria Mies further says that “relics on essential subjects to ground a theory on social domination and exploitation that has its ultimate basis in a predatory(masculine) mode, thereby privileging patriarchal relations over class and all other vertical relations”²⁶.

The gender division of labour is the key to understand the gender inequalities. The gender division of labour can be explained as

*“the allocation of different roles, responsibilities, and tasks to women and men based on societal ideas of what men and women should capable of doing”.*²⁷

According to gender roles every society allocates certain roles and responsibilities to men and women. These works can be broadly divided into three groups. These are productive, reproductive and community. The gender division of labour controls all three groups. The gender division of labour is not rewarded or valued equally in case of men and women and thus it paves the way to hierarchies and inequalities. Women work outside the household and in the family. Men’s share same position within and outside home and women’s position is same as a subservient within and outside home.

Citing Joan Kelly, Kamla Bhasin argues:

²⁶ *Ibid*,p.10

²⁷ K.Bhasin, **Uderstanding Gender**, *op.cit*, p32

*“We should look at property relations and women’s relationship to work as the basic determinant of the sexual division of labour and sexual order. The more the domestic and public domains are differentiated, the more work and, hence, property are two clearly distinguishable kinds. There is production for subsistence and production for exchange, and this is what influences the sexual division of labour”.*²⁸

The division of labour limited the role of women in household activities and men outside the world. Hence this separation between public and private fields sharpened the inequalities between women and men. The division of labour as Engles stated is quite primitive :

*“The men went to war, hunted, fished, provided the raw material for food and the tools necessary for these pursuits. The women cared for the house, and prepared food and clothing; they cooked, weaved, sewed. Each master was master in his or her activity; the men the forest, the women in the house. They owned the tools they made and used: the men, the weapons and the hunting and fishing tackle, the women, the household goods and utensils. The household was communistic, comprising several, and often many, families. Whatever was produced and in common is common property: the house, the garden, the long boat”*²⁹.

²⁸ See in, *Ibid*, p.38

²⁹ F.Engles, **Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**, *op.cit.*, p.225-226

In primitive societies there existed no division of labour but with the growth of state and change of monogamous family to patriarchal family, the wife became a labour and became a private service. She is restricted to participate in social production.

In the word of Engles,

“The administration of household lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became a private service. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production”³⁰.

Gradually, inequalities between the sexes mounted. The assault on women became frequent and considered to be so. Kamla Bhasin presented the situation in a lucid manner.

“Wife –battering, marital rape, rape of girls by fathers or other male relations, mental and physical torture of girls and women, and general deprivation experienced by girls have, till recently, remained invisible, un discussed and unchallenged”³¹.

It can be noted that this picture still holds good even in our ultra modern times and perhaps it will continue to be so as long as the gender differences pervade through the society.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.105

³¹ K.Bhasin, **Uderstanding Gender**, *op.cit*, 2003, 45

B. (ii) Patriarchy:

Gender inequalities and subordination of women is based on the concept of patriarchal ideological system. Men naturally desire that women should remain under the dominance of men. This is just to confirm his superiority over women. The intent is to prevent the women from asserting herself in any way but to submit her passively to men's whims. Thus the system which enables men to dominate in all social relation is termed in feminine parlours as 'patriarchy'³². The word patriarchy literally means the rule of father or the "patriarch" and originally it was used to describe a specific type of male- dominated family-the large household of the patriarch which included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants all under the rule of the dominant male. Generally, it is used to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways³³.

Walby refers to patriarchy as

"A System of government in which men ruled societies through their position as heads of households. In this usage the domination of younger men who were not household heads was as important as, if not

³² K.K.Ruthuen, **Feminist Literary Studies:An Introduction**, Reprint, Cambridge University press, New York, 1991, p1 &2

³³ The subordination of women to male domination is universal. Different societies treat women differently but the underline concept is the same for example in an Assamese proverb, *lao jimane dhangor nohok kio, sadai pator talat*, meaning a woman however she is great always has to be under the man. Even in some tribal societies it is heard that 'women are like crabs and they should be crushed' this is the attitude of men towards women particularly when the society is patriarchal.

more important than, the element of men's domination over women via the household''³⁴.

The subordination of women which takes various forms at a daily level experienced , regardless of the class anyone belong to- discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression , violence- within the family and at work place, in society³⁵.

Every society and historical periods give a insight on how patriarchy functions and how social and cultural practices differ. However, the broad ideology remains the same that is men control most the of the economic resources and all social, economic and political institutions.

Kamla Bhasin opines that

“Patriarchy is both social structure and an ideology or a belief system according to which men are superior. Religions have played an important role in creating and perpetuating patriarchal ideology. They have spread notions of male superiority through stories like Eve and Adam's rib; or man is created in the image of God etc. Today, media and even educational institutions spread patriarchal ideology by showing men to be stronger in decision- making positions, and women as

³⁴ S. Walby, **Theorizing Patriarchy**, Reprnt, Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1992, p.19

³⁵ K.Bhasin, **What is Patrarchy?**, second impression, Kali for women, New Delhi, 1994, p.3

*voracious consumer, dependent and jealous. Ideology plays an important role in perpetuating social systems and controlling people's mind".*³⁶

Under patriarchy different forms of violence inflicted upon women to control and subjugate and this type of violence considered as justifiable. Male violence against women is systematically condoned and legitimate by the state's refusal to intervene against it except in exceptional instances, through the practices of rape, wife beating; sexual harassment, etc are too decentralized in their practice to be part of the state itself³⁷.

The patriarchy ideological system is deep- rooted in major social institutions – the family, religion, political, economic, and educational and knowledge system etc. Ann Oakley stated that one occupation in particular that is of housewife is exclusively feminine.³⁸

Women experiencing patriarchy for long period of times and can be described as paternalistic domination. The phrase speaks of 'the relationship of a dominant group, considered superior, to a subordinate group, considered inferior, in which the dominance is mitigated by mutual obligations and reciprocal rights'³⁹

In the patriarchal families, responsibilities and roles are distributed among the protected. Female children and wives are subordinated life long. The basis of

³⁶ K.Bhasin, **What is Patriarchy?**, *op.cit.*, p.21

³⁷ As cited in, S. Walby, **Theorizing Patriarchy**, *op.cit.*, p.21

³⁸ See K. Bhasin, **Understanding Gender**, *op.cit.*, p.25

³⁹ G.Lener, **The Creation of Patriarchy**, *op.cit.*, p.217

paternalism is a traditional contract for exchange but it also involves set of mutual obligations and is frequently continues not apparent as oppressive⁴⁰.

G.Lerner stated that

*“the system of patriarchy can function only with the cooperation of women. This cooperation is secured by a variety of means: gender indoctrination; educational deprivation; the denial to women of knowledge of their history; the dividing of women, one from the other, by defining” respectability” and “deviance” according to women’s sexual activities; by restraints and outright coercion; by discrimination in access to economic resources and political power; and by awarding class privileges to conforming women”.*⁴¹

Perhaps, this needs no further explanation when G Lerner has outlined the issues in a very transparent manner.

B. (iii) Matriarchy:

Basically matriarchy⁴² is the very opposite of patriarchal system. In this system the women have power in all activities relating to the allocation, exchange and production as well as political power. This was the situation in the days of yore when

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp.217-218

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.217

⁴² Originally the term ‘Mutterrecht’ was used meaning ‘Mother Right’ to describe matrilineal kinship relations. In which the property of men did not pass to their children but to their sisters’ children. The family structure also got changed from group marriage to monogamous marriage. This slightly improved women’s position since she acquired ‘the right to give herself to one man only’. See F.Engles **Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**, *op.cit.*, p.60 & G.Lerner, **The Creation of Patriarchy**, *op.cit.*, p.22

the society was simple and much depended upon the natural bounty. There was no question with regard to the status of women. But as the civilization progressed, it witnessed sea-saw change due to the appearance of materialistic culture. The earlier monogamous family got changed into the patriarchal family wherein the position and status of women became much lower, the men having to over dominate over the women kind.

In India, matriarchal systems are found among the tribes of Megalaya and among the Nairs of Kerela. But with the advance of time the system is fast disappearing as some recent studies would prove⁴³. Anyway, the status of women is related as far as the societal changes are concerned from time to time. It would be difficult to put up a definite frame as can be understood from the different sources.

From the foregoing discussions it becomes clear that there is no definite yardstick to determine the status of women articulately and rationally. This arises out of the fact that different societies have different norms in giving status to women in every field of human activities. It is widely varied and encompassing different dimensions. Hence the pertinent issue always remains relative.

III

C. Indian History and the Status of Women:

We have sufficient sources to relate the power, prestige and status of women as enjoyed by them in the course of the progress of Indian civilization. For a

⁴³ See Nita, 'Matriach', www.google.com (accessed on 19 March,2008). She has highlighted the reasons of lost status of women in Hindu society comparing with the societies of the tribes.

comprehensive discussion it can be divided into four broad sections such (a) Women in Ancient India, (b) Women in Medieval times, (c) Colonial period, socio-religious reformers and status of women and (d) Status of women in post-independence period of Indian history. Needless to say that India witnessed tremendous changes as far as the role and position of women are concerned both socially and culturally in different phases of time.

C. (i) Women in Ancient India:

We get some ideas on the position of women in ancient India as represented in the Vedic, post-Vedic and Puranic literatures. The epics Ramayana and *Mahabharata* give us sufficient evidence of the women's status in society. The accounts of foreign travellers also record the position of women in ancient India.

A.S.Altekar analysis the situation in Vedic times and says that:

“The position of women in the Vedic age was far from being analogous to what it usually is in early uncivilized societies. In communities that have not yet emerged from barbarism, there hardly exist any checks on the tyranny of man over women”⁴⁴.

During the Rig Vedic period (B.C.E 2500 to B.C.E 1500) the women enjoyed a better position in the society. Though the families were patrilineal the birth of a girl was less welcome than boys but once they were born they were treated with kindness and consideration. Girls were allowed to impart education like boys and had to pass through

⁴⁴ A.S.Altekar, ‘The Position of Women in Hindu civilization: Retrospect and Prospect’, in; K.Roy, ed., **Women in Early Indian Societies**, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1999, p.50

a period of *brahmacarya*. Visvavara, Ghosha and Apala are some of them who lived to compose hymns and rise to the rank of seers⁴⁵. Girls were given in marriage in a fairly advanced age. Both love marriage and marriage for money was known. Though monogamy is the rule but polygamy is also practiced among the rich and royal families. Widows were permitted for remarriage. The women had a respectable position in the household. The wife participated in religious offerings of her husband. Though a woman was the joint owner of the household but for aid and support she had to depend upon her male partner. In the Rig Vedic age there is no evidence of seclusion of women, and ladies trooped to festal gatherings “decked, shinning forth with sunbeams”⁴⁶.

Thus, during this period women occupied an honorable position socially, politically and religiously. Women were given freedom for different activities and they were respected.

By the time of later Vedic age the position of women was gradually and continuously declining. Daughters were regarded as misery. Women were restricted to attend public meetings. However some cases of child marriage came into vogue⁴⁷. Polygamy was prevalent. Though women continued to have their share in religious rites but did not have the right to take inheritance.

The reformatory movements represented by Buddhism and Jainism considered a progressive attitude towards their position. Buddhism provide a degree of equality and

⁴⁵ R.C.Majumdar, et.al. ed., **An Advanced History of India**, Reprnt., Mc millan Company ,Madras, 1980, p.30

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ *Ibid*,p.43

freedom to all including women. The women who wished to disassociate themselves from the normal functions provided an alternative vocation to women by the order of nuns. Under certain condition divorce was allowed and widows were honored⁴⁸.

In post Gupta period the position of women saw no development, though girls of upper class, received liberal education. But still women had subordinate position in the society. The custom of getting herself burnt in the funeral pyre of her husband, in other words the *sati* system was coming into general use, at least among the ruling clans⁴⁹.

The change in women's status from the high in the early Vedic period to low during the later period may be due to the transformation of society from pastoral to settled agricultural based community. In the early Vedic times the community was moving in search of new and fresh pastures and men were engaged in military and semi military activities and they relied upon women to a greater extent in normal as well as family activities. Later on, with the surplus production and settled agricultural economy women lost their social mobility and the degree of freedom they enjoyed before, now gradually declined.

C.(ii) Women in Medieval Times:

The medieval age saw the rise of two different reactions against the organized and hierarchal religious doctrines in the form of Sufism and Bhakti movement. Both raised their voice against social hierarchy in general and caste system in particular.

⁴⁸ S.Sivaramakrishana, **Hindu View of Life: A Contemporary Perspective**, Dharmaram, Bangalore, 1991, p.2001

⁴⁹R.C.Majumdar, **An Advanced History of India**, *op.cit*, p.190

Though not overtly they also tried to restore women's status in the society and questioned some of the forms of suppressions.

Women were completely dependent on their husbands or male relatives. Hence their position became somewhat lower in the society. Though women were respected but they were required to adhere to strict fidelity in their conjugal life. Girls were married at an early age. Women lived under seclusion in the sphere of their homes. The *Purdah* system became a common feature while the *sati* system was followed jealously⁵⁰.

During the Mughal period the practice of committing the obnoxious social evils like the *sati* system, child marriage, *Kulinism* and dowry system continued unabatedly. Such kind of practices lowered the position of women in the society. In spite of such hindrances some women excelled in the field of politics, literatures, education and religion. Mention may be made of Gulbadan Begam, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahanara Begum and Zed-un – Nisa⁵¹.

C.(iii) Colonial Period, Socio-Religious Reformers and Status of Women:

The age old traditional practices and customs such as *sati* system, *purdah* system, dowry system, polygamy etc were becoming rampant in the Indian society. It demeaned the status of women so much so that it became a huge problem for the 19th century social reformers.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p.393

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.573

Reformers like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Rai Salig faith, a follower of the Radhaswami faith, Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali, Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, Govinda Ranade, Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar and Jotirao Phule etc fought relentlessly against such obnoxious practices in order to save the status of women. Jotirao Phule intensely realized that the main reason for India's backwardness is her failure to educate women and no change can be made unless they would form an integral part of the process⁵². These ideas on gender can be noticed in the activism of the nineteenth century reformers in their personal experiences. They left no stone unturned during their lives to change the position of women with whom they lived and worked. However, these reformers were instrumental in compelling the British Indian Government to pass humane laws in eradicating social evil practices from the society which had blatant discrimination in case of women.

During the course of the nineteenth century, the role of women began to change. By the end of the nineteenth century there were some women who were educated, articulate, mobile, and increasingly involved in public activities. With the increase of urbanization and growth of new professions associated with colonial domination, the women got increasingly separated from their homes. Similar to this change was the establishment of new educational, religious and social institutions. As families moved from the village to the city, their contact with "foreigners" resulted in the erosion of traditional household activities. Some of these girls attended educational institutions, social gatherings unrelated to family matters, and new religious ceremonies. These

⁵² W.Fernandes & S. Barbora, **Modernisation and Women's Status in North Eastern India**, North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati, 2002, p.17

“new women”, as they were called, were part of a modernizing movement which sought to modify gender relations in the direction of greater equality between men and women⁵³.

In the first decade of the twentieth century few educated women were convinced that they needed an All India women’s organization, specifically to deal with the women problems. In 1910, Saraladevi Choudhurani founded the *Bharat Stree Mahamandal*⁵⁴. Moreover, from the period 1910 to 1920 many women organizations under different names emerged in the cities, towns and native states of British India.

The activities of these local as well as national level women organizations joined hands together in the national movements but also launched a separate movement of their own to fight for their rights.

After four years of the foundation of Indian National Congress only ten women attended its annual meeting. In 1890, Swarnakumari Ghosal and Kadambini Ganguly and one of the first female medical doctors, attended as delegates⁵⁵. From this time onward women attended the meeting of the INC as delegates but more often as observers. In the early phase of nationalist movement their contribution was decorative and symbolic⁵⁶. During the partition of Bengal, women worked together with men in

⁵³ G. Forbes, **Women in Modern India**, *op.cit.*, p.28

⁵⁴ G. H. Forbes, “The Women’s Movement in India: Traditional Symbols and New Roles”, in: M.S.A, Rao, ed., **Social Movement in India**, Monahar, New Delhi, 1979, p.7

⁵⁵ G. Forbes, **Women in Modern India**, *op.cit.*, p.122

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

protesting this division by boycotting foreign goods and buying only *swadeshi* goods⁵⁷. Many other women became determine to devote themselves to the cause of the motherland and participated in every day setting aside a handful of rice for the cause⁵⁸. Women hid weapons, sheltered fugitives, and encouraged the men. They played significant roles from their home fronts in providing cover for the subversive and revolutionary activities⁵⁹ by men.

In all such activities the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi provided the much needed impetus to imbue women in the national cause. Jawaharlal Nehru was also not an exception. In his monumental work **Discovery of India**, he stated that:

*“Our women came to the forefront and took charge of the struggle. Women had always been there of course but there was an avalanche of them which took not only the British Government but their own men folk by surprise. There were these women, women of the upper or middle classes leading sheltered lives in their homes, peasant women, working class women, rich women- pouring out in their tens of thousands in defiance of government orders and police lathis. It is not only the display of courage and daring but what was even more surprising was the organisational power they showed”.*⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.123

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁶⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru, **The Discovery of India**, John Day, New York, 1946, p.27

Women from different communities, castes, and religions came out of their houses and took active part by participating in the protest, marches and demonstrations. They displayed extraordinary capacity in spearheading the freedom movement. They faced British bullets heroically, suffered from privations, tortures, incarceration in prison and *lathi* charges inflicted by the British Indian Government. It tremendously changed the image and attitude of the Indian womanhood.

Further Mahatma Gandhi too gave a clear message as to what should be done by the womanhood in the struggle for independence. He said that:

*“to gain independence not for the literate and the rich in India, but for the dumb millions,... I shall work in India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people”.*⁶¹

The term ‘dumb million’ here referred to women for whom Gandhi wanted to free them from all shackles. His main objective was to established equality of women by involving them in the free struggle⁶². So he observed that:

*“I am uncompromising in the matter of women’s rights. In my opinion, she should labour under no legal disabilities not suffered by man. I should treat the daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality”.*⁶³

⁶¹ Cited by R. Pandey & N. Upadhyaya, **Women in India Past and Present**, Churge Publication, Allahabad, India, 1990, p.65

⁶² *Ibid*

⁶³ *Ibid*

C.(iv) Status of Women in Post-Independence Period:

Within three years of India being independent, the constitution of India was enacted, adopted by the people of India on January 26 1950. The constitution guaranteed equal protection of the law, equal opportunities in public employment, and prohibited discrimination in public places. The Article (14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. (Article 42) of the Constitution of India granted equality on Women⁶⁴. Moreover, the Government of India enacted many laws and schemes for the development and advancement of women and to eliminate discrimination against women so as to give equal rights and privileges to women with men. For instances, The **Factories Act 1947** gave legal protection for working women. The **Hindu Code Bill of 1955**, prohibited Hindus from contracting bigamous marriage and outlawed polygamy, the **Special Marriage Act 1954**, **Hindu Succession Act of 1956**, gave women equal right to succeed to all property of the parents along with the son and his children. The **Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act of 1954** (initially passed in 1961) has put restraint over dowry. The **Maternity Benefit Act 1961**, allows maternity relief to women. The **Child Marriage Restraint Act 1976**, has barred the early marriages of both boys and girls.

⁶⁴ Women In India, www.wikipedia.com(assessed on 13th February,2008)

The **Equal Remuneration Act 1976**, guaranteed equal pay and equal work for women. The **Suppression of Immoral Traffic Women and girls (Amendment) Act 1986**, came into force against flesh trade⁶⁵, **Family Court Act 1984**, **Women Domestic Violence Act 2005** and **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006**. Other measures such as the Social Welfare Board, *Mahila Mandals* and development programmes were formed to promote women welfare. In 1971 a National Committee was set up to make a socio-economic survey and to suggest plan for women's welfare. For the development of rural women, programmes like DWCRA were introduced⁶⁶. The Government of India declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment and The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women came into force in 2001⁶⁷.

Most of the middle class gained some economic freedom by taking up salaried job. With this, they became full time worker without any change in their role as housewives. This brings a change in their attitude about their work and status in the society. They became more conscious about their rights. The status of women in urban middle class was fast changing, yet it was not to a desired level. As far as the rural women were concerned, the condition of majority of women went from bad to worse. It may be due to lack of proper education and building up of a social infrastructure before enacting the laws⁶⁸. However, the Indian Government's commitment to equality was not seriously challenged until 1974, when on the question of equality, a report on the

⁶⁵ See R. Pandey & N. Upadhyaya, **Women in India Past and Present**, *op.cit*, p.73-74

⁶⁶ W. Fernandes & S. Barbora, **Modernisation and Women's Status in North Eastern India**, *North, op.cit.*, p18

⁶⁷ *Women In India*, *op.cit*

⁶⁸ W. Fernandes & S. Barbora, **Modernisation and Women's Status in North Eastern India**, *North, op.cit*, p.19

Status of women was published and a Social Welfare Committee was appointed “to examine the constitutional legal and administrative provisions that have a bearing on the social status of women, their education and employment”⁶⁹.

However, in the true sense of the term, it would be impractical to state that after so much of government’s efforts women achieved equality. Only some classes made progress. The social attitudes and beliefs stood as the barriers in the path of women’s equality and women continued to live under the male domination which was clearly discernable in various forms of cruelties inflicted on them by men.

IV

D. Status of Women in the North East:

The societies in North East India can be divided into two categories viz., patriarchal and matrilineal. Although most tribal groups of the region are patriarchal, matrilineal systems also prevail among the Khasi, Garo and Jaintia of Mehalaya and some sub-groups of the Rabha like the Rangdani⁷⁰. Matrilineal decent and inheritance are found also among the Lalung and Dimasa tribes of Assam⁷¹. However, one can take it for granted that the status of women is higher in the matrilineal system as compared to that of patrilineal system.

⁶⁹ G. Forbes, **Women In Modern India** , *op.cit.*, p.228

⁷⁰ W. Fernandes & S. Barbora, **Modernisation and Women’s Status in North Eastern India**, *North, op.cit.*, p.29

⁷¹ A. Nath & D.N. Mazumdar, ‘Tribal Women of North-East India in the Perspective of Change and Continuity’ in: J. P. Singh, et al. ed. **Tribal Women and Development**, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 1988, p. 151.

Among the Lotha Naga women, they work with men side by side⁷². Again the women of Tangkhul clans are assigned with the important social functions. On the other hand the women of Sema Naga tribe occupied a higher social position but women have to work harder than their male counterparts even though the works of the male members are no less⁷³. J.P. Mills⁷⁴ found that there is an equitable distribution of works among the Ao Nagas between the sexes. In Khasi and Garo societies women share the burden of work equally with the men⁷⁵. The Mizo⁷⁶ women have to work hard in the domestic sphere, even when the male folk while away their time. In case of day today affairs concerning household management decisions are usually taken by both men and women together. In case of more important matters the decision is left to the males. This is the case with regard to the all societies in North East India.

Most of the tribes of the north east region are patriarchal. Inheritance and succession rules follow the male line. Women do not have right to inherit paternal property whether married or unmarried. However, among all communities of northeastern region inheritance of women are not completely neglected. The Naga tribes of Manipur, for instance, have patriarchal tendencies but women are not ignored in case of inheritance⁷⁷.

⁷² J. H. Hutton, **The Sema Nagas**, Macmillan, London, 1922, p.111-112

⁷³ J. H. Hutton, **The Angami Nagas**, Macmillan, London, 1921, p.186

⁷⁴ See, A Nath & D.N Majundar, 'Tribal Women of North-East India in the Perspective of Change and Continuity' in: J. P. Singh et al. ed. **Tribal Women and Development**, *op.cit*, p154.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

⁷⁶ Lt. Col. S. Shakespear, **The Lushai Kuki Clans**, Macmillan, London, 1912, p.18

⁷⁷ T. C. Hodson, **The Naga Tribes of Manipur**, Macmillan, London, 1911, p.103.

As far as political organizations are concerned the women are completely excluded from participating. Among the Nagas the village affairs are run by a council of elders which was exclusively a male affair. Even though the Khasi and Garo societies are matrilineal the males used to be the Chiefs, the females having no such privilege⁷⁸.

Customs such as bride price are prevalent among the traditional tribal societies of North East region. In the traditional tribal societies unmarried girls enjoyed considerable freedom, and in most of the tribes the girls could select their life partners. Among the Mizo the unmarried girls enjoyed considerable freedom⁷⁹. Among the Garo a widow with a daughter used to think it to be her privilege to get married to a bachelor who considered her daughter also as his wife⁸⁰. Among the Ao Nagas, bride price is nominal. So divorce is very common. The Angami Nagas, too have a nominal bride price and this is probably a token payment for the change of residence on the part of the bride after her marriage⁸¹. On the other hand, among the Rengma Naga, in case of divorce a man loses the bride price, and it is difficult for him to collect the money to pay for a new wife. So divorce is very rare among them⁸². Divorce is said to have been very common among the Lhota tribes. However, the most striking feature is that the rules of divorce are not rigid and also not the same in case of the various tribal societies of North East India. It varies from tribe to tribe, the determining factor being the bride price.

⁷⁸ See J. P. Singh, et al. ed. **Tribal Women and Development**, *op.cit*, p.157

⁷⁹ S. Shakespeare, **The Lushai Kuki Clans**, *op.cit*, p.52-53

⁸⁰ See J. P. Singh, et al. ed. **Tribal Women and Development**, *op.cit*, p.155

⁸¹ *Ibid*

⁸² J. P. Mills, **The Regma Nagas**, Macmillan, London, 1937, p.163

Women in North East whether tribal or others enjoyed a higher position compared to that of their counterparts in India, considering that the caste society of the North East is devoid of evils like dowry, and bride burning. However, the most the societies of North East India, other than the tribal ones, have some tribal background and have retained some of their value system of equity. These societies follow some tribal norms in according a higher status to women without accepting them as equal to men⁸³. Here instances may be cited from the Meitei and the Assamese societies.

V

E. Status of Women in Arunachal Pradesh:

The culture of the people of Arunachal Pradesh is kaleidoscopic. They have a varied culture with a variety of languages and traditions of their own. These are well reflected in their socio-cultural, political and religious aspects of life. There are some similarities among the different Arunachalee tribes as far as food habits, observance of taboos and mode of living are concerned. We can have a glimpse of the status of Arunachalee women from the roles they have in the fields of economic, political and socio-cultural life. It is abundantly clear that the Arunachalee society is patriarchal, the head of the family being a male exercising the supreme authority in the household.

Among the tribes of Arunachal there is no discrimination between girls and boys. Both boys and girls are welcome and brought up in same way giving priority to both the sexes. But boys are preferred because the son is to inherit the ancestral property

⁸³ W. Fernandes & S.Barbora, **Modernisation and Women's Status in North Eastern India**, North, *op.cit*, p.29

and for the continuity of the family line. The role of married women in household activities is limited to the maintenance of house, cooking, brewing liquor, works in agricultural fields⁸⁴. The unmarried girls help their mother in house and fields alike and take care of the minor ones. Women enjoy freedom in the household affairs. The right to inherit properties of her parents and husbands are denied to them. But in case of movable properties granted by their parents, they acquire absolute rights over these.

Both exogamy and endogamy are prevalent in general. However decisions in case of marriages are not settled arbitrarily⁸⁵. Different types of marriages are practiced by the tribes. However, in majority cases marriages are settled after protracting negotiations. Child marriage system as traditionally approved by the society is in vogue among the Hill Miris, Nyishi, Tagins and others. On the other hand it is unknown among the tribes like Wanchu and Nocte and others⁸⁶. Polygamy is said to have been practiced among some tribes. But polyandry is few and far between particularly with the exception of the Gallongs. In any kind of marriages payment of bride price is must. The amount of bride price varied from tribe to tribe. Moreover, the payment of bride price goes according to the status of the parties. The system of taking bride price had its economic obligation since it is believed to be as a compensation for the girl who had been an economic asset for the family. The custom of paying bride price has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, payment of bride price strengthens the

⁸⁴ See B. B. Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, Directorate of research, government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1997

⁸⁵ T. K. Bhattacharjee, 'The Status of Women In Arunachal Pradesh', in: **Resarun**, Vol: XIX No.1 &2, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1993, p.17

⁸⁶ B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*

bond between the families; on the other hand, it becomes disadvantageous for the bride since she has to live under total submission with her husband. This definitely makes the status of the women lower in the society. Remarriages of widow are permissible under certain social norms.

The main occupation of the people is agriculture. Herein the role of women in particular is very important. Sowing of seeds and harvesting are her prime jobs. Besides, she has to undertake other activities such as rearing of pigs, goats, poultry, weaving of cloths etc in order to boost the household economy. The Wanchu women prepare bead, bag, ear rings, necklaces etc⁸⁷. Normally a woman has the right over her earnings but she uses it for the entire family.

The existence of traditional village councils among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh is the root of their prime political life. The names of these councils vary from tribe to tribe but for the women such councils have no meaning since they are not allowed to participate in it actively. The general conception among the tribes is that women are inferior to men and not capable of taking momentous decisions. Thus the status of women here cannot be said to be a respectable one.

As far religious matters are concerned, the roles of women are confined to the preparation of food, drinks and serving the guest present. As regards priesthood, earlier the female had no chance but gradually with the changes in time women are now not deprived of priesthood provided they demonstrated valuable knowledge. For example a

⁸⁷ P.K.Bhuyan, 'Status of Women: Wanchu', in: B. B. Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.4.

Khamti woman can become a nun in the Buddhist order but they shall have to lead a life of celibacy and asceticism⁸⁸ as the Buddhist religion demands.

It appears that the status and position of the women in Arunachal Pradesh is considerably better than elsewhere in India. It can be admitted that the traditional taboos and discriminatory measures hitherto remaining in practice, do stand in the way of liberation of women *vis-a-vis* their status.

⁸⁸ S.Chowdhury, 'Status of Women: Khamti', in: B.B. Pandey ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.78

CHAPTER-III

STATUS OF TANI WOMEN: TRADITIONAL VIEW

The traditional status of women in Arunachal Pradesh has been taken here to make an attempt to study the position of Tani women in their traditional society and their impact on their status. Speaking about the traditional society Walter Fernandes & Sanjay Barbora defines that:

“the traditional societies belong to informal sector. In them the source of power and legitimacy is the community and the word of mouth. For their sustenance they depend on the resource under the control of the community”¹.

Referring to the ‘Traditional Status’ Kwa’ioloa & Burt have further explained in the following words:

“the beliefs that shape the lives of people regarded by outsiders as “traditional” and how their modes of living have changed through interaction with processes of modernization. A humane description of one man’s struggle towards self-understanding within a powerful

¹ W. Fernandes & S. Barbora, **Modernisation and Women’s Status in North Eastern India**, North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati, 2002, p.8

home community, it may be used as a case study for sociological interpretations of traditional society”².

However, the right or status of women is customary in nature rooted in their tradition, custom and mythology. Within a specified social set up, every society is accustomed by certain prevalent ideas and functions which denote the idea of status of women’s legal, social and psychological position , rights and privileges, the attitudes, the behaviour of men towards women and their acceptance or rejection of these roles in that society³.

The status here is characterized by socio-economic and political heterogeneity. As such, disparity in women’s status differs from community to community. The Tani groups of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are Patriarchal. The status of women here are comparatively better as compared to the societies elsewhere in India. However, they are also subjected to the Patriarchal ideological system. Their status might not be equal in their traditional milieu but they had more rights than their counterparts in other societies. Yet these are not sufficient and they need elaboration. The socio-cultural, economic, political or religious rights clearly defined there status. Moreover, among the Tani tribes, the custom and practices, social system and life style have some similarity.

Here the view of Elwin is worth quoting:

²H.Johnson, ‘Traditional Society’, in: Jonathan Michie, ed., **Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences**, vol 4, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, London, 2001, p. 1678

³ W. Fernandes & S. Barbora, **Modernisation and Women’s Status in North Eastern India**, *op.cit*, p.4-5

“Although there is no matriarchy in NEFA, women hold high and honorable position. They work on equal terms with the men in the jhums and make their influence felt in the tribal councils .Women became shamans and their intimate relations with the unseen world gives them great authority :Adi women ,with daos in their hands and wearing sacred ornaments, often lead the ceremonial dances”⁴.

Even then, to analyze the traditional status of women which is dynamic in nature cannot be studied in a narrow perspective. The traditional status of women among the Tani group of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh embodies all aspects of life. Therefore our discussions will be articulated on the following sub-heads.

- A. Status In Terms of Marriage
- B. Women and Production
- C. Women and Recreation
- D. Women and Household Activities
- E. Women and Inheritance
- F. Women and Traditional political systems.
- G. Women and Religious activities.

⁴ V. Elwin, **A Philosophy for NEFA**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1988, p.28

H. Women and Education

II

A. STATUS IN TERMS OF MARRIAGE:

Marriage is a recognized social institution which resulted in a union between men and women to lead a family life.

Among the Nishi, Tagins, Hill Miris, Apatanis the virginity of the girl is given much importance. The society does not allow pre-marital sexual freedom. If a pre-marital sexual relation is found the seducer was fined to compensate the loss of virginity of the girl. In case the girl is engaged, her parent pays fine for the loss of her virginity. However, most of the tribes belong to Adi groups have complete freedom of pre-marital sex⁵. The Girls have there separate dormitories, where they spend nights. The bachelor visit the girl's dormitory at night. Such visits continue till they became husband and wife⁶. In the Pailibo society women before marriage can establish sexual relation with a male in an understanding to be his wife⁷. In this society pre-marital sexual relation with other exogamous groups and preferential mates are considered provided marriage is possible and acceptable to

⁵ K. Mann, 'Bride Price in Tribal North-East India' in J.P.Singh,et.al, **Tribal Women and Development** , Rawat Publications,Jaipur, 1988, p.170

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ D.K.Dutta, 'Status of Women:Pailibo',in: B.B.Pandey,et.al.ed.,**Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**,Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1997, p.172

people⁸. Among the Padam- Minyong women can go and meet freely with the other males, in this way most of the girls select their partners. However, society only allows and accepts physical relation with unmarried women and men⁹. In the Gallong society, till one get birth of a illegitimate child, premartial sexual relations are tolerated in the society. If out of this relation a child is born than the person involved is persuaded by the relatives of the girl to marry her. But in case, he refuses than fine is imposed by the village council¹⁰. Though the clan-exogamy as well as the tribe endogamy happens to be the basic rule, but this is not generally adhered to as an exception.

The Nishi and Hill Miri marriages are quite different from that of Apa Tanis and Adis¹¹. The outcome of marriages concluded after long negotiations between the father or the guardian of the bride and the groom or the men of his household. Before marriage opinion of girls is not taken. In the Nishi society girls are given less freedom to mix with boys before marriage as their parents fear that pre-marriage attachment may led to sexual relation and pregnancy and it will deprived their father to acquire a large bride price. There are different types of marriages among the Nishi and Hill Miris. The position of the wife to some extent depends on the ceremonials with which the wedding was performed. The system

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Padam Minyong', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.148

¹⁰ T.Norbu, 'Status of Women: Gallong', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.125

¹¹ C.V.J.Haimendorf, **Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh**, *Anthropological Research in North-East India*, Vikas Publication, New Delhi, 1982, p.64

among the Nishis and Hill Miris are same but the terminologies used for different types of marriages are different.

A. (i) *Arranged Marriages:*

The most prestigious marriage among the Nishis are called *jel honam dui kot*¹² and the Hill Miris called it as *nieda*¹³. It is expensive form of marriage which may extend over several years and involves exchange of gifts. Before the sending marriage proposal a priest (*nyubu*) is deputed to go to the would be groom's house to see the prospect. If the condition is favourable girl's parent is contacted. If both the families are to go ahead with the marriage both the families invite one priest and both the priests see the omens. Once the contact is established the groom is invited to the girl's house and her mother signs the betrothal by garlanding the boy with a string of beads. This is followed by a series of visits and exchanges of gifts, and these may continued for a long period till the bride attains maturity. In the first ceremonial visit to the girl's house the groom party goes with a grand procession taking several *mithuns* for killing and feasting. In exchange the girl's father gives those Tibetan bells and bronze- plates.

In the final marriage ceremony the bride is taken in procession to the groom's house. Feasting continues for several days in the groom's house. The wedding festivities included the sale of a Tibetan bell. There are song sung involving questions and answers about the Nishi mythology and the legendary

¹² *Ibid*, p.65

¹³ *Ibid*, p.66

history. These songs are called as *ud*. The celebrations may continue for several nights. The boys and girls dance in mixed rows in which brass-plates are beaten like *gongs*.

Among the Apatanis Girl's parents have no right to choose their daughter's life partner and the boy's parents very often selected the bride. The selection process is peculiar. The liver of a chicken is examined if the proposed union will have good omens. After this the chicken liver is brought to the girl's parents. After following the due process the parents of the girl agree to the proposal. The father of the groom and another person would then go to the girl's house. The party is welcome at girl's house by the close relatives of the girl. The bridegroom is offered a typical cloth called *Mahbo Pulya* by the bride's mother¹⁴. Besides; they entertained the party with rice beer and meat. The bridegroom's party brings with them a typical kind of sword to be offer bride's parents.

In the Padams and Minyong society traditional system of marriage are simple and cheap. If a boy gets enamoured a particular girl than he informs his parents through his friends. If the girl is well behaved and cool tempered there is not much to object. The father of the boy meets the girl's father with the proposal. With him he brings two big wild rats as a mark prelude to future payments. However, the acceptance of presents signifies the acceptance of the proposal.

¹⁴ H.Yapa, '*Status of Women Apatani*', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.228

Before making any decision the girl is asked to express her opinion¹⁵. After the acceptance of proposal the boy father started sending gifts to girl father. Sending of gifts continue till the girl is finally married and brought to her husband house.

The girl's parents too reciprocate this gesture with some gifts and presents. The duration of betrothal may last from one to four years till the parents agree for the marriage. If the betrothed girl came to know that her fiancée had fallen in love with other girl she had the right to break off the engagement. For instances, Tabang Tatik was betrothed to Yayam Tapak. But when the villagers came to know that he is carrying an affair with his sister Yako Tatik whom he kept as his wife, Yayam refused to marry him¹⁶.

If the betrothed girl marries someone else with the approval of parents than the man who marries the betrothal girl have to pay compensation to him. But if a betrothed boy had fallen in love or married some other than he is not liable to pay any compensation.

Traditionally, marriage is negotiated by parents of both boys and girls among the Tanis. The proposal normally comes from the boy's side. Usually, boy's parent search for girl with the help of mediator. When they find one the boy's parent meets the parent of the girl along with the mediator and offer proposal for their girl. Opinion of girl is not taken into consideration. If they

¹⁵ L.R.N.Srivastava, **Social Organisation of the Minyongs**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1990, p.193

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.194

agree, a priest confirms the marriage by examining the chicken and pig livers. After that, the boy's parent sends gifts as token of confirmation.

A. (ii). *Polyandry*:

Polyandry is one of the most prevalent forms of marriage among the Gallongs¹⁷. This kind of marriage among the Gallongs takes place mainly due to economic reason in the family. The amount of bride price is so high that sometimes the family is unable to effort the bride price and for marrying separately for each brother becomes impossible. Thus, the income of all the brothers has to be put together for meeting the bride price. So, the other brothers are allowed to have sex rights over the women brought by the eldest brother. Here the married woman is bound to agree to have sexual access to all the brothers of her husband. But in most of cases if the women express her unwillingness she is honoured. Under this system it is difficult to know the actual father. Besides from having physical relations with the women, the rest of the brothers or the clan members have no right over the children born to her. If the economic condition of the family is strengthened afterwards, the younger brothers may get married but the other brother both married or un- married have sex rights over the women¹⁸.

¹⁷ L.R.N.Srivastava, **The Gallongs**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1988, p.74

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.75

A. (iii) *Child Marriage:*

In the Traditional Tani society child marriage is commonly in vogue. The marriage negotiations take place when the proposed bride and bridegroom are minors. They are yet to develop their mental and physical faculties. Thus the entire consideration is left to their parents. Hence, the boy and the girl cannot have any opinion or choices. As such, opinion of the girl does not arise nor she can choose her partner. In such cases sometimes the minor girl is given away in marriage to an older man. Factors like social condition, tradition and customs economy etc responsible for child marriages.

Due to poor economic condition bride price is taken for the female child at a very early stage or during mother's pregnancy. This is because they would get more time to arrange the bride price. Moreover, the social system also paved the way for child marriage. Because the status of a person was considered to be high when he can take a number of wives¹⁹. Herein a case may be cited, Taba Toru when she was six years old was married to a person who already had two wives with children. He could do so as he could pay twenty seven mithuns for her²⁰.

¹⁹ D.K.Duarah, 'Aspects of Drug Abuse and Child marriage practices Among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh' in: B. Dhar ed., **Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh History and Culture**, Abhijeet Publications, Delhi, 2004, p.163

²⁰ K. Mishra, **Women in Tribal Community: A Study of Arunachal Pradesh**, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991, p.52

It is interesting to be note that where Child marriage is very uncommon among the Padams Minyongs²¹, whereas it is very common among other Tani tribes.

Sometimes the practise of child marriage leads to broken marriages. It is frequently observed that the boy and the girl refuse to marry. On many occasion the boy when grows up, he elops with a girl other than he was suppose to marry. This happens in case of the girl also. It needs to bitter quarrels. If the girl refuses to marry she is captured by both her kins and boys party forcefully, then a heavy wooden flank with a whole one of her leg is put inside the whole and tightened with nails to prevent from escaping away.

Ani an old lady says that, her marriage is arranged when she was not born. When she grew up she came to know about her marriage. At first she refuses to go to her husband house as she does not know about meaning of marriage. But she was forcibly taken and she remembers that with a heavy wooden flank her leg is tight with so that she can't run away²².

A. (iv) *Polygamous Marriage:*

If a man marry more than one wife called polygamy. Among the Tani tribes polygamy is commonly practiced. Marrying more wives speaks of the status of the husband in the society. The first wife gets higher status in comparison to

²¹ N.Mitkong, "Status of Women:Padam Minyong",in:B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**,*op.cit.*, p.149

²² Interviued with Ani, Itanagar, 27.8.2008

other wives and she is responsible to maintain the household affairs²³. The Nishing and Hill Miris may marry more than one wife. Taking of more wives means not only increased the social status but also economic well being²⁴. Bengi Tao, a graduate teacher, shop owner and a part-time contractor opined that if he go for second marriage his wife will never object. His wife reacted and said “No I will never like it”. Than Bengi replied that “I will enlarge the business so much as that you will beg me to bring another wife”²⁵.

Forty two years old Rojo Tok, a tribal peasant in Arunachal Pradesh, was all decked up in local finery to wed Mepong Taku, a girl who will turn 14 this winter. The atmosphere in this remote township in East Kameng district was festive, with tribal villagers making hectic preparations for the marriage. Tok’s first wife and their three children, one of them aged 18, were equally excited as they were waiting little Taku’s arrival in their home²⁶

The prime incentive among the Nishi of having more women is the desire to have security and political influence. In case a matrimonial alliance promised to strengthen and enhanced power than even an elderly men married a young girl. The father of the girl is attracted with high amount of bride prices and the status of

²³ D.K.Duarah, ‘Aspects of Drug Abuse and Child marriage practices Among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh’ in: B. Dhar ed., **Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh History and Culture** *op.cit.*, p.163

²⁴ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh: Subansiri District**, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1981, p.129. Also see, Kiran Mishra, *op.cit.* **Women in Tribal Community: A Study of Arunachal Pradesh**, p.83, C.J.Haimendorf, **Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.70

²⁵ K. Mishra, **Women in Tribal Community: A Study of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.61

²⁶ **The Tribune**, Chandigarh, Wednesday, October 18, 2000

an alliance with a prominent family. The works are shared among the wives in the household. An old man who may be having sons in the house, not only inherit his fortune but also his wives except his own mother²⁷. In the Nishi household the wives have their own hearths and granaries and allowing them to cultivate and mess on their own seem to minimize friction among the wives. The senior wife occupied the highest position and the junior wives are under her control. Tabar Tasser of Sekhe village in the Pinior valley has twenty wives²⁸.

In 1972 Dalton²⁹ made mention of polygamy amongst the Hill Miris, and the custom of inheritance by the sons or heirs. Polygamy is still prevalent in these societies. To have better economy more workable hands are required and this led to polygamy which subsequently gave rise to child marriage. The women are considered as assets for better economy. In the Raga as late as in 1980, a prominent Hill Miri acquired his fourteen wives³⁰. It is said that after the death of his son he acquired the young girl brought for his son.

Among the Apatanis polygamy is rare. A man generally not inclined to take second wife till his first wife is alive in the fear of offending the first wife's

²⁷ C.V.J.Haimendrof, **Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.71

²⁸ Cited in *Ibid*

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.136

³⁰ *Ibid*

kinsmen, who may take revenge for having being insulted³¹. In certain cases polygamy is accepted if the first wife has no son.

K T Khuma observed that:

*“Like Gallongs that: the Tagins husband is at liberty to take more than one wife and there are cases where man takes as many as four wives even ”*³².

Among the Tagin the first wife is called *Hete* and the second called as *Hessi*³³

In the Gallong society also persons having sound economic position can have bring more than one wife³⁴. For such marriages the opinion of first wife is sought. She may not have much objections as she will get additional working hand to share her works³⁵.

Minyong society is monogamous but polygamy is not rare and is socially sanctioned. L.R.N. Srivastava wrote that:

“Except in Alipasi, a Pasi Minyong village, I did not come across a man having more than two. From the previous two wives the

³¹ S.Dutta Choudhury, *Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh: Subansiri District*, *op.cit*, p.135

³² K.T.Khuma, *Tour dairy*, Along Sub division Along for the months of Nov and Dec 1952, The Assam Government Press, Shillong, 1953, p.6

³³ A. Riddi, *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh A study of Continuity and Change*, Abhijeet Publication, Delhi, 2006, p.65

³⁴ L.R.N. Srivastava, *The Gallongs*, *op.cit*, p.75

³⁵ *Ibid*

concerned person had no child and so, he, under compelling circumstances, had married for the third time. Society does not lay down any prescribed number of wives but during my prolonged visit to many Minyong villages, I hardly found a man with more than two wives. The Minyong avoid, as far as they can, indulging into polygynous marriages. They say that it is very difficult to control two wives in one house as the peace of the house is thereby threatened. In Riga, the biggest Minyong village, I came across hardly half dozen polygynous families. Such men also had married for the second time under very compelling circumstances; either they did not have any child from the previous marriage or they possessed very big plots of land and wanted a second helping hand to till the entire plot and not let it go waste³⁶. ”

A Minyong house has one hearth, so having wives both have to sleep in same hearth. If in case both of them keep quarrelling each other the husband is obliged to make another fire place in the house. The works are divided among the both of the wives. The elder wife is in charge of the house and the granary and the younger wife cooks food, attends to the cultivation fields and brings firewood and water.

Ani's husband is a big contractor, and with him she has a son about four years old and a infant daughter. Ani is the second daughter of her parents. Ani's

³⁶ L. R. N. Srivastava, **Social Organisation of the Minyongs**, *op.cit.*, p.210

elder sister has been married in some other village and the rest of the remaining three younger sisters are to be married to her husband. Already her next sister started staying with her. Her husband paid fifteen *mithuns* for her and he had already paid thirteen *mithuns* for her next sister. Ani is happy that her sisters will be with her as co-wives. The fourth sister who is staying with her parents already twelve *mithuns* have been paid and anytime would be joining the family when her husband desire. Her fifth sister who is studying in class four, her husband paid fourteen *mithun* for her. Her husband is keen that she should study as much as she can and she can't refuse because this is her /their tradition and her sister will not break. Ani says that anytime her husband wants she also have to stay with them³⁷.

Taw Yai³⁸ is the third wife of her husband and her husband have five co-wives who he inherit after the dead of his brother. Thus there are eight hearths in her husband long house. In her house all her co-wives have separate granary. Her day begins early in the morning at four O' clock since her husband takes food with his eldest wife so she does not have to bother about him. After preparing food for her children she goes to her jhum field. Major portion of her produce is used in feeding her children and occasionally she had to contribute to her own long house, village community, or clan functions or feasts. The surplus she batters away for obtaining *mithuns*, clothing, salt, pigs, ornaments etc and now a days she also sells to get a small sums of money.

³⁷ K. Mishra, **Women In Tribal Community: A study of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.57

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.50-51

Her relationship with her co-wives is that of indifference. She always avoids getting herself involved in any kind of controversy. Whenever she receives call for help from co-wives she goes for help. Her husbands always try to restore peace in the house. In case of a wrangle, he attempts to pacify them by remaining starve.

These are some of the few cases which focus the existence of polygamy which is deeply rooted in the traditional system of the Tani society and is still in vague.

A. (v) *Forced Marriage:*

Sometimes forced marriages also take place when a girl is force to marry a man without her consent. However, the boy's party sends proposal to girl and her parents. For instance, among the Tagins and Hill Miris this is much in vague³⁹. But if the girl refuse the proposal then the boy's party resorts to kidnapping. Among the Nishis and Hill Miris also this system is very often found. The Nishis term it as *nyem selam*⁴⁰ while the Hill Miris called it as *nim-moli or lut*⁴¹. From Haimendrof we know the following account:

“Chaglo Tara of Mingo village in the Upper Kamla valley had four wives when I visited his house in 1945. His first wife was Rei Yemak

³⁹ N.Mitkong, ‘Women Rights In Tagin and Hillmiri Society of Arunachal Pradesh, in: **Resarun**, vol:XXII,No 1 &3, 1996,p.32

⁴⁰ C.V. J. Haimendrof, **Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.66

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.68

*whom he captured by force, though subsequently he paid her parents ten mithan as a bride price. His second wife, Rei Yabin, had been "brought" by tado-hale for one female mithan. The acquisition of his third wife, Taia Nyame, was more complicated. Tara had given two mithan into the care of Dom Tarak of a nearby village. These two mithan were robbed by Have Taka on account of a quarrel between Have Taka and Taio Totu. In retaliation Dom Tarak captured Taio Tara's youngest wife Nyame and gave her to Chagla Tara in compensation for his mithan which had been captured while in Dom Tarak's care. At the time of my visit Nyame stayed peacefully in Tara's house irrespective of fact that she had been forcibly abducted from her original husband, who lived in a village only two day's journey from Mingo "*⁴²

However, women brought under hostile condition or captured during the feud could be kept as a wife but it depended upon the status of women her nature, temperament and qualities. If she did not possess the qualities then she is not kept as wife and she is sold out as slave.

A. (vi) *Marriage of Exchange:*

In this kind of marriage, generally two men exchange their sisters. In establishing such relation here consideration of age is not a dominant factor. Bride

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.69

price is to be given by both sides. In Padam Minyong society it is commonly practiced. It is known as GIPE⁴³ and among the Gallongs also it can be noticed⁴⁴. Among the Tagins also this kind of marriages can be found. In this kind of marriages there are many disadvantages. When the betrothed children grow up the boys disliked if she looks ugly or unmatched age. This kinds of marriages are performed with the mutual understanding between both families.

A. (vii) *Sororate*:

This kind of marriage is not obligatory though it has social sanction. A man after his wife dead can marry her sister whether younger or elder but not as a matter of right. This marriage is possible only with proper consent of the deceased wife's sister and parents. This marriage is considered as new marriage and proper bride price is paid in a regular way⁴⁵.

A. (viii) *Levirate*:

Levirate is usually practiced in the Tani society. After the death of husband the widow is allowed to remarry if she wishes. The brothers of the deceased husband whether elder or younger inherits his wife. If the deceased husband has

⁴³ N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women:Padam-Minyong' ,in:B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.149

⁴⁴ L.R.N,Srivastava,**The Gallongs**, *op.cit.*, p.76

⁴⁵ L.R.N.,Srivastava,,**Social Organisation of the Minyongs**,*op.cit.*,p.209. Also See.,Ashan Riddi, **The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh A study of Continuity and Change**, *op.cit.*,2006,p.64 & L.R.N Srivastava, **The Gallongs**,*op.cit.*,p.76

no brother the lineage brother asserts the right and inherits the widow. If she wish to marry other than the brothers of the deceased husband , the bride price has to return back to them. L.R.N. Srivastava finds that:

“Tanyo and Tapir were two sons of the same mother, while Talem was their mother’s sister’s son. Tapir married Yasup and died after a few years of marriage.As a matter of right, Tanyo should have inherited Yasup,but he was already married and did not want to keep another wife. Talem was unmarried. Tanyo waived his claim in favour of Talem and yasup began living with the latter as his wife. Talem started sending little presents of meat,rice and opong from time to time to Yasup parents”⁴⁶

A. (ix) Love Marriage:

This is a common form of marriage. The boy approaches the girl first for marriage. If the girl accepted the proposal, they informed their respected parents. If both parties accepted the proposal the bride price is paid. In case if both parties differ by any of the party, the boy elopes with the girl. If the girl is already betrothed the parents have to send back the bride price received from either party. The Pailibo society approves this kind of marriages⁴⁷.In Padam Minyong society girls too can enjoy rights to love marriage. Even they marry men of other

⁴⁶ L.R.N., Srivastava, **Social Organisation of the Minyongs**,*op.cit.*,p.209

⁴⁷ D. K. Dutta, 'Status of Women: Pailibo',in: B. B. Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.173

communities and castes but marrying outside the tribes affects her property rights at certain level⁴⁸.

A.(x) *Cicibeism*:

Cicibeism is also practiced and sanctioned the Gallongs society⁴⁹. Here the married woman is bound to agree to have sexual access to all the brothers of her husband. Sometimes even the members of the clan of her husband can also claim sexual right. But in most of cases if the women express her unwillingness she is honoured

A.(xi) *Bride Price*:

Bride price is happened to be an important feature of the Tani groups of tribes. The bride price varies from tribe to tribe and family to family. As far as the payment of bride price is concerned, in one or the other way everyone could attempt to pay the amount of bride-price. Marriage may be in any form but the payment of bride price is compulsory. Girl's are believed to be economic asset for a family so paying of bride price is to balance there absence from the family.

The Gallong society also follows the same system⁵⁰. Bride price is varied accordingly from 1 (one) *mithun* and 1 (one) cow to 20 *mithuns* and 20 cows, with

⁴⁸ N. Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Padam-Minyong', in: B.B. Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.150

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.126.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*. p.127

any brass utensils⁵¹. Among the Gallongs especially the system of betrothal and marriage often result in mature girls being married to minor boys.⁵²

In the Nishing society too bride price is compulsory in any kind of marriages. Generally the bride price is paid in the form of kind such as *Mithuns (Subu)*, Tibetan bell (*Maji*), beads (*Tasang/Moni*), brass discs (*Talo*), bangles (*Koji*)etc⁵³. It is believed that, the payment of bride price plays an important role as the bond between both families is more strengthened. If a girl dies without any children the husband may claim back the bride price paid for her. Thus this clearly speaks that a wife is for life long companionship and service and also to give birth to children. If a girl runs away with some other, it became the responsibility of the girl parents in restoring her to the husband. Since a girl has been paid the bride price they are not supposed to back out the wedlock. The payment may be paid at a time or in installment. Sometimes, the amount of bride price is too heavy and difficult to pay the amount at a time. Then the boy had to make an adjustment of bride price for a certain period by serving his father-in-law and then he can take his bride⁵⁴. However, if the payment is not made as demanded it may result in the breaking of the marriage⁵⁵. It is to be noted, that to match the bride price received by them, the parents of the girl give valuable things to the boy's parents.

⁵¹ *Ibid*

⁵² V.Elwin, **A Philosophy for NEFA**, *op.cit.*, p.247-48

⁵³ K.Tayeng, 'Status of Women:Nishi', in:B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.244

⁵⁴ K.Mann, 'Bride Price in Tribal North-East India', in:J.P.Singh,et.al, **Tribal Women and Development**, *op.cit.*, p.171

⁵⁵ T.Norbu, 'Status of Women: Gallong', in:B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**,*op.cit.*, p.127

Moreover, when the girls leave for her husband's house she is also given ornaments, utensils, pigs, cows etc akin to a dowry.

By paying bride price, the wife becomes an asset to the husband. Hence, the husband can claim absolute right over her. This problem is seen by Verrier Elwin in the following way:

*“A special and difficult problem is the high price of wives. There is a marked inflation in the NEFA marriage-market, inevitable where bride-price is usually paid in kind. Twenty years ago, six mithuns did not represent a very large sum of money; today they do. The coming of a money –economy to NEFA may make it difficult for sons of poorer families to obtain suitable wives, with a consequent lowering of moral standards, and a postponement of the time of marriage with a consequent decrease in population”*⁵⁶.

Among the Apatanis a custom known as *Barumi-Ari* is prevalent. *Ari* means price but does not mean bride price. According to this custom the bridegroom has to offer values equal to the three *mithuns* to the in-laws⁵⁷.

In case of the Bori, if the bride belonging to the rich family, then payment ranges goes up to five *mithuns* and if the bride belongs to a poor family then the bride price goes upto two to five *mithuns*. The payment here to be in kind or

⁵⁶ V.Elwin, **A Philosophy for NEFA**, *op.cit.*, p.247

⁵⁷ H. Yapa, ‘*Status of Women Apatani*’, in: B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.229

cash⁵⁸. If the bridegroom is unable to make the payment he is looked down upon by the community. Hence he may not win the sympathy from his in-laws⁵⁹.

In the Bokar society Nyamne *Are* means bride price. Like other Tani groups payment of bride price is made in cash or kind which include home made rice beer (*OH or OPO*), *Mithun*, Cow, Hog, Goat, *Sobin* (a cross breed between a cow and a *mithun*) or both⁶⁰. However, payment of bride price among the Pailibo consists of minimum four *mithuns*, two-three pigs, five loads of rice, some kgs. of Salt, some Kgs. of Ghee, sufficient rice beer and cash worth Rs. 500/- to 1500/-⁶¹.

Among the Padam –Minyongs, the boy pays bride price from time to time by serving apong, foodstuffs, meat etc to girl's house till the parents of the bride agree to send her to husband's place⁶².

Bride price is also prevalent in the Tagin society and according to the economic status of the families bride price is fixed. The items consisting for payment is similar to that of tribes like Nishi, Hill Miris etc.

Parents of the family in case of unborn babies accept the amount of bride price if the baby born happens to be a daughter. Otherwise, if the baby born is

⁵⁸ J. Ete, 'Status of Women: Bori', in: B. B. Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.209

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁶⁰ B. Banerjee, 'Status of Women: Bokar', in: B. B. Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.185

⁶¹ D. K. Dutta, 'Status of Women: Pailibo', in: B. B. Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.173

⁶² N. Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Padam-Minyong', in: B. B. Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.151

male than the parents had to return the bride price already taken. This usually seen among Hill Miris⁶³. If a widow, decides to get married, the bride price for her is generally low. It is said to be half the amount given for normal marriage among the Pailibo⁶⁴. Sometimes bride price is so high that it resulted in polyandry which can be noticed among the Gallongs⁶⁵.

Among the Pailibo, Bori, Apatanis bride price for a slave girl is given by the master to her would be slave husband so that after marriage she stays in his house and served the master through out her life⁶⁶.

Bride price is unavoidable among the Tani groups of tribes.

A. (xii) *Divorce*:

Separation between husband and wife occurs because of barrenness, adultery, impotency, quarrelsome nature of either husband or wife, taking of second wife, child marriage, extra-martial affair, etc. Among the tribes like Nishi, Tagins, Hill Miris divorce is very rare as far as paying back of the bride price is concerned. The women have no right to seek divorce from her husband. But a wife can seek divorce when she finds it unbearable to stay with her husband. In doing so she has to return back her bride price. In case if wife is divorced by the

⁶³ K.Mann, 'Bride Price in Tribal North-East India', in:J.P.Singh,et.al.ed., **Tribal Women and Development**,*op.cit*, p.171

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.174

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ *Ibid*

man the bride price has to be paid back after a discount from the original price by her parents. Moreover, children of the married couples are allowed to stay with the husband and mother may keep the infant for some years. Such separations are not uncommon and perhaps lowered the status of the wife to a certain extent. Kiran Mishra noted:

“A man of 55, a successful priest, Tolum was divorced by his young wife for ill-treatment. Her parents returned all the mithuns given by him. Within a year she married another man and now has children by him. Tolum on the other hand has not been able to find another wife”⁶⁷.

Divorce is also very rare in the Apatani society. In case, of a divorce if the couple fails to compromise or arrive at a solution, the parents interfered in it⁶⁸. The divorced women are respected in the family among the Apatanis⁶⁹. Among the Adis the customary rules can permit a wife to divorce her husband when situation between both becomes unbearable⁷⁰. However the divorced women are not allowed to return directly to her parent’s house except to her relative’s house. In the society the divorced women is little neglected and it depends on the reason

⁶⁷ K. Mishra, **Women In Tribal Community; A study of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.49

⁶⁸H. Yapa, ‘*Status of Women Apatani*’,in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.231

⁶⁹ *Ibid*,p.232

⁷⁰ N.Mitkong, ‘*Status of Women: Padam-Minyong*’,in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.153

of the divorce⁷¹. But society permits her for re-marriage⁷². Among the Gallong the status a divorced women is not much affected⁷³. Both husband and wife can seek for divorce. She can go for another marriage. However women with grown up children do not marry. Divorced women in Pailibo society are not dishonored and they can remarriage on payment of bride price like maidens in the society⁷⁴. In the Bokar society women have right to divorce her husband if she gets maltreatment from her husbands. The entire case is adjudged in the *Kebang*. A divorced women can lead a normal life and her position is not much effected in the society and she can have another marriage⁷⁵. But Among the Bori divorced women is looked down upon in the society and even she has problem for re-marriage⁷⁶.

B. WOMEN AND PRODUCTION:

The traditional economy of Arunachal Pradesh is based on agriculture. It is based on extensive practice of *jhum* or shifting cultivation or slash and burn

⁷¹ *Ibid*

⁷² *Ibid*

⁷³ T.Norbu, 'Status of Women: Gallong', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh** *op.cit*, p.128

⁷⁴ D.K.Dutta, 'Status of Women: Pailibo', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh** *op.cit*, p.174

⁷⁵ B.Banerjee, 'Status of Women: Bokar', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.188

⁷⁶ J. Ete, 'Status of Women: Bori', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.209

method of cultivation. Every member of the community is supposed to participate equally in various agricultural operations.⁷⁷

Ownerships of land vary from tribe to tribe. There are three categories of land: (a) individual ownership (b)clan ownership and (c) common village-land⁷⁸.The first category of land includes all cultivated land, irrigated rice-fields, fields for dry crops, garden plots for maize, millet, vegetables and fruits trees, groves of bamboos, pines and other useful trees, as well as sites for houses and granaries.

The second categories of land consists of meadow-land near the village used as pasture and tracts of forest, sometimes far away from the village, where the members of the family of the owner-clan have the right to hunt and trap.

The third is the common village-land confined to one or two usually not extensive stretches of pasture, and to forest tracts. However, the Apatanis are confined to a small area and has a very strong sense of private possession⁷⁹.In 1947-48 the Government of NEFA formulated the three *jhum* Land Regulations which give absolute right to the tribal people over their *jhum*-land⁸⁰.

The villagers carried *jhum* cultivation within the boundary of the village. Generally, the right to ownership of land was acquired by clearing of jungle and it

⁷⁷ *Ibid*,p.63

⁷⁸ *ibid*

⁷⁹ *Ibid*

⁸⁰ *Ibid*

was demarcated clan wise having been marked either by a stream, a hill or by any other natural object. Now a days *jhum* cultivation is being replaced by permanent cultivation. Apart from agriculture the secondary activities are hunting, fishing and collection of forest produce. However, weaving and handicrafts are important economic activities interwoven with the household level of production. The traditional economy generates low surplus and it is insufficient to meet the necessary needs of living.

Prior to Independence, barter is used as form of exchange. Barter is also confined to the members of a community; inter-tribal transactions were limited but not uncommon. Nishings always had barter trade of this nature with the people in Assam plains on the one hand and with Tibet on the other, either directly or through other neighboring tribes⁸¹. Trading activities are well illustrated by Haimendorf :

“The trade between the two tribes was never confined to the exchange of rice for livestock. Besides buying Nishi pigs and mithun the Apatanis used to obtain from Nishi nearly all their cotton. Though they could have grown themselves, they found more profitable to use their skills for irrigation to produce rice and barter

⁸¹ K. Mishra, **Hearths and Fields Changing Life Of Nishing Women Of Arunachal Pradesh**, Satvahan, 1985, p.41

it for cotton which their Nishi neighbours could grow in their dry field”⁸²

The Tani woman’s played important part in production. They perform almost all numerous tasks as men do. Clearing of jungle is done by both men and women. The sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing and winnowing are mostly done by women. Among the Apatanis, practiced permanent cultivation (Wet Rice Cultivation), the women specially the girls work in the paddy fields in rotation aged 8-12 years. Girls of similar age group called *patang*⁸³ and no specific works are considered as taboo for women⁸⁴. Women often co-operated in the tedious work of transplanting rice-seedlings, consisting of groups of four or five. They work in turn. Haimendorf has drawn a pen picture of the agricultural activities in this regard:

“Each morning, long before the sun dispelled the thick white mist that usually filled the valley at dawn, strings of women with hoes on their shoulders and small work-baskets on their backs would trip along the paths that led past our house on their way to distant fields and gardens. The digging over and the manuring of dry fields and the weeding of vegetable and tobacco plots were early morning work, and soon after sunrise most women would return to cook

⁸² *Ibid*

⁸³ C.V.F.Haimendorf, **Himalayan Adventure Early Travels in North East India**, Sterling Publishers(P)LTD, New Delhi,1983, p.56

⁸⁴ H. Yapa , ‘*Status of Women Apatani*’,in: B.B.Pandey et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.226.

meal and do the housework. Then, together with the men, they left for the irrigated rice-fields, where young and old spent the major part of the day”⁸⁵.

When the winter season comes the Nishing women get busy preparing the old plots for early paddy and maize sowing. Except hunting, fishing and tending *mithuns* women almost do everything. Spinning, weaving making earthen pots by beating clay to different shapes and sizes are exclusively women’s work⁸⁶.

Among the Adis, sowing, harvesting, threshing, and winnowing are done mostly by the women⁸⁷. In case of the Padam Minyongs, there is no hard and fast rules to differentiate between the occupation of women and male⁸⁸. But it is the moral obligation that the female members should perform easy work and the male should perform the tough. Among the Bori no occupation is tabooed except hunting⁸⁹. The Adi women made earthen pots (*kode-peki or kamyapichi*)⁹⁰.

In the both Hill Miri and Tagin societies about seventy percentage of agricultural work is done by women⁹¹. But for the Hill Miris certain works are tabooed for women. For instances, visiting the sacred spots relating to hunting;

⁸⁵ C.V.F.Haimendrof, **Himalayan Adventure Early Travels in North East India**, *op.cit.*, p.54

⁸⁶K. Mishra, **Hearths and Fields Changing Life Of Nishing Women Of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.48

⁸⁷ T. Nyori, **History and Culture of the Adis**, Omsons publications, New Delhi, 1993, p.189

⁸⁸ N.Mitkong, ‘Status of Women: Padam-Minyong’, in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.133

⁸⁹ J.Ete, ‘Status of Women:Bori’, in: B.B.Pandey et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.201

⁹⁰ T.Nyori, **History and Culture of the Adis**, *op.cit.*, p.193

⁹¹ N.Mitkong, “Women Rights in Tagin and Hill Miri Society of Arunachal Pradesh”, in: **Resarun**, *op.cit.*, p.31

their preparing hunting materials, going to jungle for hunting and carrying hunting weapons etc⁹². In case of the Tagins too women are not allowed to work related to craft- making, and preparation of traps, arrows and bow⁹³

Thus, women share economic responsibilities of a family almost by taking active part in the agricultural activities.

Moreover, the other secondary activities such as weaving, rearing of animals and birds are solely dependent upon the womenfolk.

Verrier Elwin has given a detailed account of the weaving skills of the women of NEFA in his writings. Like many other traditional crafts, weaving also requires a wealth of ecological knowledge. The intricate motifs and designs, the combination of colours, all reflect the social status and ethnic origins of the people. Women are custodians of this knowledge and to the elaborate process of spinning, dying, and weaving. The loom that is traditionally used is the loin loom, and colours are organic colours, prepared largely from the plants that grow in the forests.⁹⁴

⁹² N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Hill Miri', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.256

⁹³ N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Tagins' in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.277

⁹⁴ See, *Ibid*

It can be said that, in Arunachal Pradesh all crafts are strictly gendered. Weaving and Pottery are women's crafts and carpentry and cane work are meant for men⁹⁵. The Bori Adi folklore records that:

“In the beginning , only Donyi Polo- the Sun Moon God- know the art of weaving. He taught it to female spirit, who taught the wife of the first man to weave”⁹⁶.

It is difficult to say as to when the Adis learnt the art of weaving. The Bori legends contain some folklore about this. But these are mostly imaginary. The cultivation of the cotton is said to have been the necessity of invention. How the cotton was cultivated is also elaborately told. Any way we get a glimpse of the cotton production in the Adi society from their legends. Thus, weaving among the Adis is as old as the story itself but when the society became current it is difficult to say exactly. Be that as it may, that the Adis knew the art of dress making is without doubt. The Adi women were excellent weavers and their knowledge of colour sense is simply spectacular.

In the early days the Adi produced war-coats. The production of rug (*gadu or jepe*) known as *Adi jim*, of coats (*galuk*), of lion cloths (*ugon or sabe*) for males, of scarfs and skirts (*gale*) for women are the outstanding products. Since now the weaving industry has gain momentum and it has become a viable

⁹⁵ Sumi Krishna, ‘Gender, Tribe and Community Control of natural Resources in North-east India’, in: **Indian Journal of Gender Studies**, 8:2, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2001, p.312

⁹⁶ **Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2005**, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Department of Planning, Itanagar, 2006, p.106.

economic pursuits. The cloth market of the Adis spread up to Along, Pasighat, Pangin, Dipa and other places⁹⁷.

Among the Padam Minyongs there is no hard and fast rules to differentiate between the occupation of women and male⁹⁸. But it is the moral obligation that the female members should perform easy work and the male should perform the tough. Among the Bori no occupation is tabooed except hunting⁹⁹.

C. WOMEN AND RECREATION:

The Tani women have the rights to perform all recreational activities if they desire. Generally, the married women are busy in household activities and do not get time for these activities. Even then, they participated in the common recreation like songs and dances on occasions. The women participate in Singing and dancing but their participation depends upon the nature of the songs and dance. There are songs and dance for women only. Again there are songs and dance for both male and women. The songs and dance of women play very important role in the society because such activities make the ceremonies as well as social functions enjoyable, attractive and meaningful and successful.

⁹⁷ T.Nyori, **History and Culture of the Adis**, *op.cit.*,p.192-93

⁹⁸ N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Padam Minyong', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.133

⁹⁹ J.Ete, 'Status of Women; Bori', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.201

D. WOMEN AND HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES:

The head of the family is the male who plays the authoritative role. Women are not traditionally entitled to the succession of the family. However both girls and boys are equally welcome. But they prefer son to daughter. Sometimes the husband may go for second or third wife too if in the family no male child is born. All important decisions are taken by the male member and the female follows it.

Household duties are divided on the basis of sex. A woman after getting married is of much importance with the household activities and operations along with her normal outdoor activities. The females are assigned all the domestic chores like preparing of food, carrying water, collection of wild vegetables, collection of firewood, cleaning and washing of utensils, cloths etc looking after infants and children, pounding of rice, brewing of local drinks called *Apong* and entertainment to family members as well as guests. They have got little time to take rest. The women have absolute right to control over the family purse. Haimendorf writes about Apatani women:

*“Apatani women have great freedom in managing in their household affair. They can sell grain and cattle without consulting their husbands, while a man will rarely dispose of any part of his crop until he has discussed the deal with his wife”*¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰C.V.F.Haimendorf, **Himalaya Adventure Early Travels in North East India**, *op.cit.*, p.82

In the Tagin society there are certain assigned works for both men and women but yet male and female help each other¹⁰¹.

However, when wife or any other member who normally does the household chores falls sick or is away from home, the male do the work.

In a Nishing community the ability of a women is tested by her efficiency in running her family affairs with minimum dependence on her husband's labour¹⁰². In case a husband married more than one wife each wife have right to maintain certain degree of individuality. Each woman has a hearth where she cooks foods. She has her own poultry, pigs, and goats etc which generally sell at the time of need. She may also have her own plot of land cleared by the husband in addition to the general field found among the Nishing women. However, in case of the polygamous marriage, the eldest wife has precedence over other wives in household affairs¹⁰³.

In the Hill Miri society the wives have very decisive influence. Their position is as though the wives are the real owners, and they decide as to how best to utilize the house- hold property such as field produce, pigs and fowls. The granaries are at their disposal. In case of the polygamous family, the wives may

¹⁰¹ N.Mitkong, "Status of Women :Tagins" ,in: B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.286

¹⁰² K. Mishra, **Hearths and Fields Changing Life of Nishing Women of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.47

¹⁰³ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh: Subansiri District**, *op.cit*, p.126

have separate property and they can augment it with their own initiative and intelligence¹⁰⁴.

E.WOMEN AND INHERITANCE:

The inheritance laws do not allow women to inherit property. Women have no right to movable or immovable property except some share of their mother's ornaments among the Tani groups of tribes. .

A women whether married or unmarried enjoys freedom over right to earn and can enjoy her own earnings among the Tani tribes. She may spend and no family members interfere. She may have her own plot of land temporarily allotted.

The Nishing customary rules are rather silent about the Status of women¹⁰⁵. As a rule, the girls do not inherit any share or can have no claim over the landed property, but she can use it as long as she is alive. After her death of her husband the landed property goes to her son or the close relatives of her husband. The widow has no right over her deceased husband's landed property.

The customary rules regarding the division of property among the Nishings are simple and are based upon principles of need and equity. Each mother-centred family undertook to cultivate land only as much as it needed and it could cultivate with family labour. The only private property consisted of the

¹⁰⁴ Padam Shri S S Shashi, **Encyclopedia of Indian Tribes: Arunachal Pradesh**, Vol 4, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 2004, p.85

¹⁰⁵ K.Mishra, **Women In Tribal Community; A Study of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.70

stock of *mithuns*, ceremonial goods like *maji*, bells, *gongs* and ornaments. As one son after another established his own household, the father gave mithuns, maji, etc, to each one them. Married sons got less than unmarried sons. In case a son was not happy about his share, he could appeal to the elders of the village or to the relatives who would settle the matter amicably. A daughter never inherits anything except a portion of her mother's ornaments. A daughter received ornaments generally equivalent to the bride-price the family received for her¹⁰⁶. If a family have no sons, the daughters enjoy the right to property left by him and later on the property vests on the next of kin in the male line. When a man has several wives, each wife also maintains certain degree of individuality. She has her own poultry, pigs, goats etc.

Among the Hill Miris and Tagins, a part of immovable property is given to daughter during her marriage. The Women in this communities too have right to possess and enjoy husband property earned during her married life¹⁰⁷.

Among the Gallongs it is found that if a daughter gets married the plot of land given to her is taken back¹⁰⁸. In the Padam Minyong¹⁰⁹ society the most valuable properties are inherited by sons or divided among both son and daughters. Sometimes between daughter and the married one gets more share than

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.73

¹⁰⁷ N.Mitkong, 'Women Rights In Tagin and Hillmiri Society of Arunachal Pradesh', in: **Resarun**, *op.cit*, p.32

¹⁰⁸ T.Norbu, 'Status of Women: Gallong', in: B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.118

¹⁰⁹ N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women: Padam Minyong', in: B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.137

the youngest one. Moreover, sometimes the share of properties to be given to daughter depends on the nature of the marriages and the family background and level of marriages. Among the Bokars women have no right to inherit movable or unmovable properties except few ornaments and beads¹¹⁰. Even married women have any right on husband properties¹¹¹.

E(i) *Place of Widow:*

As far as the custom of inheritance of property of widow is concerned the rules are vary from tribe to tribe. Among the Nishi and Hill Miris widow does not get share of her husband property¹¹². After the death of her husband if she continues as widow she enjoys the same right as she enjoyed when her husband was living. She is the guardian of the property of her deceased husband till her children grown up. If in case she has no issue than the immovable properties are generally inherited by the immediate kin of her deceased husband. However, after the death of her husband, the widow may be adopted by the brother of the deceased. In case of several brothers she has the right to choose one of them to marry. If she has no brother-in law she becomes the wife of one of her deceased

¹¹⁰ B.Baneerjee, 'Status of Women: Bokar', in: B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.183

¹¹¹ *Ibid*

¹¹²R.N.Bagchi, 'Family System and Inheritance of Property Among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh' in: **Resarun**, Vol. V. No 1, 1979, p.40

husband's parallel cousins. However, she may also remain single and live in the husband's house.

In the Tagin community too a widow can enjoy property right till she remain un married As bride price is already pay to her no widow are allow to marry other man except nearest relative of the deceased husband¹¹³.

Among the Adis the custom of inheritance of property of widow is common. At the death of the husband the widow of the deceased husband is not completely deprived nor given sole rights of ownership over the properties¹¹⁴.However, the enjoyment of deceased husband properties by the widow depends upon certain condition as in customary laws. If the widow has a son, he has the right to ownership over the properties of her deceased husband and for the shake of her son can take initiative in affairs of such properties. If having no male child then the property can be just kept in the possession of the death husband properties. As such she/they can enjoy the property right under the ownership of the deceased husband relatives as long as they live in the house of the father/ husband. However, they can spend a little share of father's properties during the marriage. Even widow with a minor child can sell some portion of property with the consent of her dead husband heirs in time of her extreme need.

¹¹³ N.Mitkong, " Status of Women :Tagin", in:B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.279

¹¹⁴ N.Mitkong, 'Customs and laws of Widow inheritance of the Adis', in:**Reserun**,vol. XI No. 2, 1985, p.20

Among the most of the Adi groups we can find that a major portion of the property is transferred to son and some minor portion of her property is inherited by daughter. But among the Gallongs all valuable and properties of a widow or women is under the ownership of the husband or male in laws¹¹⁵.

The son takes the property of the widow, in case she is not having daughter.

If the widow is childless than the properties are taken over by the brother-in-law or by the nearest kins of the dead husband or the person who buries his dead body.

If the widow re married distant relatives or an un-related man of the deceased husband, than she loses her possession over the properties of her husband. However, she possesses only her personal belongings she carried with her during the time of her marriage from her parents house.. But among the Gallong the widows would not taken back her valuable gifts¹¹⁶.

Among Minyong, Padam, Pasi etc, if a widow remarries a distant relative or goes back to her parents she is entitled to a share of the properties acquired

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*

during their marriage¹¹⁷. But she cannot claim it if she is having son of that deceased husband. Among the Gallongs such rights are not in practice.¹¹⁸

A widow who remains unmarried but stays with her native kins has no right of ownership over her deceased husband's properties. Only if she stays in the house of deceased husband and closest relative of deceased husband than she can avail such ownership. She cannot claim any paternal property of her deceased husband. If she gets also it would be taken back by the male heir of the deceased husband¹¹⁹. If the widow is living in the deceased husband's house unmarried and she is deprived to enjoy the right to any possession over the property of her deceased husband is considered as an offence¹²⁰. However the possession of deceased husband properties is varied and not in equal with their different positions. On the other hand the customary laws hardly denied the right of individual ownership of properties or self earned properties¹²¹.

E.(ii) *Place of Divorced Women:*

Divorce is not a very common aspect of Tani societies. Such cases are even fewer when bride prices are paid in marriage. A divorce woman could not exert right over the property of her separated husband. But in most of the cases the divorced wife is given some amount of property. In case of Hill Miri tribe, if

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.21

¹²⁰ *Ibid*

¹²¹ *Ibid*

husband divorced wife without sufficient reasons, she gets back the properties she inherited from her parent's plus an equal share of the properties earned during their conjugal life. In addition, the husband has to pay Rs.5000/- to the divorcee as fine.¹²²In case of divorce among the Tagins, women have right to get back her properties which she brought during her marriage. Among the Apatanis too a divorced women have no right to inherit husband's properties except in few cases. Moreover, a son can inherit father's property but not the daughter except when the family has no son in that case the daughter can inherit immovable properties¹²³.

Among the Gallongs once women is divorced she can't claim any husband's property and compensation or maintenance. Moreover, the parents of either party have to return back the bride price with extra *mithun*. But if the divorce is in mutual understanding than none is to imposed fine of a *mithun* extra¹²⁴.In case of Padam Minyong , the divorced women cannot claim over husband properties but she can claim over that equal share of the properties they have earned during their married life¹²⁵. In case divorce is caused by her she do

¹²² N. Mitkong, 'Status of women:Hill Miri',in:B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.259.

¹²³ H. Yapa, '*Status of Women Apatani*',in: B.B.Pandey, **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*,p.228

¹²⁴ T.Norbu, 'Status of Women: Gallong',in:B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*,p.119

¹²⁵ N.Mitkong, "*Status of Women:Padam Minyong*",B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*,p.138

not have right in claiming husband properties. Among the Pailibo, the divorced women have right of her own earned property¹²⁶.

F. WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL POLITICAL SYSTEMS:

There seems to be no society where political activities are non-existent. However, the tribal groups do not have any distinct and identifiable political system in terms of assembly or parliament. Tribal political structure are of various kinds and incorporate individuals, elders, families, a clan group, a village and a tribal territory¹²⁷.

In absence of any central authority, the tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh have evolved certain customary laws within the society itself to regulate the society. These customary laws covered the entire range of their life. However, self-governing institutions regulate these customary laws. Their customary laws are being handed down from generation to generation. The elders use to have expertise in customary laws. However, the nature, character and functioning of self-governing institutions differs from tribes to tribes.

¹²⁶ D.K.Dutta, 'Status of Women: Pailibo', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*, p.167

¹²⁷ A. Riddi, **The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh A study of Continuity and Change**, *op.cit*, p.139

F.(i) *TYPES OF VILLAGE COUNCILS:*

The *Adi Kebang*¹²⁸, the *ApaTani Buliang*¹²⁹ are the most well developed and influential village councils among the Tani tribes. The *Adi Kebang* is patriarchal in structure and role of the male is predominant in political spheres of their life or partly due to observances of traditional taboos¹³⁰.

There are four types of the *Kebang*. Cases related to the members of the family or lineage or clan is called *Ering* or *Opin-Kebang*. In case, a dispute is not settled in this *Kebang*, the case is then placed before the *Dolung-Kebang*¹³¹.

Dolung-Kebang is a council of the village. It has power to try and conduct civil and criminal cases in the village. The *Dolung-Kebang* is held in the *dere* or *moshup*[dormitory] which is normally located in the middle of the village as an when required. If the contending parties disagree with the decisions of the *Dolung-Kebang*, the cases are referred to the *Bango-Kebang*¹³².

The *Bango-Kebang* is inter-village council. A group of villages formed a *Bango*. Disputes and conflicts in the *Bango* are settled by *Bango-Kebang*¹³³.It is

¹²⁸ V.Elwin, **A Philosophy for NEFA**, *op.cit* ,p.154

¹²⁹ *Ibid*

¹³⁰ U.K.Singh, **Arunachal Pradesh:A Study of the legal system of the Adi Tribe**, Her Anand Publication,Delhi,1991,p.38

¹³¹ A.Megu, "Traditional Village Council and Village Authority of the Adis", in:**Resarun**, Vol.XVI No.1&2,Journal of the Research Department, Directorate of Research,Government of Arunachal Pradesh, ,Itanagar,1990,p.25

¹³² *Ibid*

¹³³ *Ibid*

more well organized than the village *Kebang*, for it has a secretary and it maintains funds.

The *Bogam-bokang-Kebang* is the intra-tribal council. This is highest and supreme body of the Adi communities. This council deals with cases of inter-Bango and inter-tribe disputes¹³⁴ and also takes up important questions concerning developments.

Thus, the Adi *kebang* is a moving force which keeps maintaining integrity and a peaceful cohesive society among the Adis.

The traditional village council of the Apatanis is known as *Buliang*. The villages exist in close proximity to one another. The Apatanis have an close cooperative social system. The council is an informal agency of clan representatives¹³⁵.

There are three types of *Buliang* in each clan:

In *Akha Buliangs*, old men take a very active part in the conduct of village affairs but with them lies the decision in all important matters¹³⁶. The *Yapa Buliangs* consisted of middle-aged men Their task is to negotiate and to sit in the village councils. They had to keep the *Akha Buliangs* informed of developments.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p.26

¹³⁵ S. Dubey, 'Tribal Indigenous Political System In Arunachal Pradesh', in: **Resarun**, journal, Vol:XXV, No.1&2, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1999, p.24

¹³⁶ V. Elwin, **A Philosophy of NEFA**, *op.cit*, p.155

They were to place the agreed settlements and disputes before the *Akha Buliangs* for approval¹³⁷. The *Yapa Buliangs* engaged the young men as the messenger go-betweens and assistants and they were known as *Ajang Buliangs*¹³⁸.

The *Buliang* though are the arbiters of the tribal law and the upholders of justice they are mostly the spokesmen of their own clan or clan-group and not village headmen with supreme power. However, if the dispute has become a public issue which must be dealt with by the community as a whole they do not take action.

Traditionally, the Nishis lacked a centrally organized system to follow. They are highly individualistic in nature¹³⁹. They regarded the long house where several related families stay is the real unit of the society. The village council is called *Nyele*. In case of need, the head of the families assembled and discussed the matter. Moreover, within the village a specific place is fixed where the cases are amicably settled. It is known as *Nillai langplya*. In the case of *Yallong Nyele* also separate nomenclature has been made for separate cases. *Nima Yallong* is held for the settlement of marriage cases. *Dacho Yallong* is for theft cases while the *Marana Yallong* for settlement of quarrel etc. Similarly *Migramama Yallong* is held for settlement of land disputes. For solving sexual scandal *Yoshi Yallong* is held

¹³⁷ *Ibid*

¹³⁸ *Ibid*

¹³⁹ *Ibid*,p.154

and *Yolle Yolla* is held for the settlement of rape cases¹⁴⁰. Moreover cases related to crime and disputes are settled by important agent of law called *Gingdungs*. Their services are valid only if they are responsible to settle the case of the disputes, in peaceful manner.

The village council of the Hill Miri tribe is *Keba* or *Kebang*. The structure and functioning of *Keba* or *Kebang* of Hill Miris are similar to those of *Adi Kebang*, but is less influential than the later.

The village council of Tagins is known as *Keba*, which is also similar to that of *Adi Kebang* but also less influential.

F.(ii) *Role of Women:*

Women are generally barred from taking any part in the functioning of the village councils among *Adis*¹⁴¹, *Nishis*¹⁴², *Tagins*, *Hill Miris*, *Apatanis*¹⁴³. Women have no share in the administration unless some women are involved in the particular cases concerned. The male members are the vigorous participants as the decision making always entirely remained restricted to the men only. Among the *Apatani* women is considered to be less knowledgeable in contrast to men folk and

¹⁴⁰ P.C.Dutta & P.K.Duarah,ed., **Aspects of Customary Laws of Arunachal Pradesh**, Directorate of Research, government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1997,p.133-34

¹⁴¹ S. Dubey, 'Tribal Indigenous Political System In Arunachal Pradesh',in: **Resarun**, *op.cit*,p.19

¹⁴² K.Tayeng, 'Status of Women: Nishi',in:B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit*,p252

¹⁴³ H.Yapa, '*Status of Women Apatani*',in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**,*op.cit*,p.234

she should be engaged in household activities¹⁴⁴. However in recent times, women also can step into the council which was a taboo in the past¹⁴⁵. The Gallong women were given to wear ‘red coats’ so that they can be identified as council member and serve tea at the meetings but they were not allowed to speak¹⁴⁶.

G. WOMEN AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES:

In the traditional societies religion forms the only available mode of articulation and self definition¹⁴⁷.

Traditionally the Tani groups believed in the existence of Supreme God “*Donyi- Polo*”, by this they means sun and moon god, supernatural powers and spirits. The combined god *Donyi-Polo* or Sun and Moon is believed to be the eye of the world. It is the upholder of moral laws; it beholds all and from its prying eyes nothing can be hidden¹⁴⁸. It is believed that the spirits are responsible to affect the life of individual and society as well. They worship of these spirits to obtain blessing for success, happiness and wealth etc.

The person performed the religious rites and ceremonies are known as *Nyibo* (priest). They believed that the priests are powerful, intelligent and

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁵ S. Dubey, ‘Tribal Indigenous Political System In Arunachal Pradesh’, in: **Resarun**, *op.cit.*, p.19

¹⁴⁶ S.Krishna, ‘Gender, Tribe and Community Control of natural Resources in North-east India’, in: **Indian Journal of Gender Studies**, *op.cit.*, p.318

¹⁴⁷ A.Mahanta, ‘Women, Religion, Science in the Non-Tribal Societies of Assam’, in S.L.Baurah, ed., **Status of Women in Assam**, New Delhi, 1992, p.93

¹⁴⁸ J.N.Chowdhury, **Arunachal Panorama**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1982[1973], p.137

knowledgeable people having knowledge of supernatural world and expertise in chanting religious hymns. The priest performs rituals both for communal and individual welfare. The priest perform religious rites related from birth, marriage, sickness, household, agricultural and festivals and even detecting culprits. Generally, the males performed the priestly functions. However, there are women priest but their services are confined to some small rites and ceremonies only¹⁴⁹. A woman can perform ritual as long as she has the capacity and power to do so. Moreover, it is believed that Nishing women priests are more powerful and successful in appeasing the spirits¹⁵⁰.

However, in the religious ceremony women's role are confined to offerings at altars, serving of food and *apong* to the priests, guests and relatives coming from distant places. Moreover, women in their traditional dress in and around the altars perform sacrificial dance in the religious ceremonies like the *Si-Donyi*, *Bori-Boot*, *Nyokum Yalo*, *Mopin* and *Sulung* and *Dree* festivals. Among the Nishing too participation of women in religious matter is confined to preparation of beer on ceremonial occasions¹⁵¹. In certain occasions women are not allowed to participate but in most of the functions they participated¹⁵². Still women are not

¹⁴⁹ D.K.Duarah, 'Women Movements In Arunachal Pradesh', in: **Resarun**, Vol. XXII, No.1&2, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1996, p.40

¹⁵⁰ K. Mishra, **Women In Tribal Community: A Study of Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.76

¹⁵¹ S.Dutta Chodhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh: Subansiri District**, *op.cit.*, p.127

¹⁵² T. K. Bhattacharjee, 'The Status of Women in Arunachal Pradesh', in: **Resarun**, Journal of the Department of Research, Vol: XIX No.1 & 2, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1993, 17.

allowed to participate directly in ritual performance¹⁵³. Among the Apatani the women cannot participate in the religious affair like the males nor have the equal right to express their views¹⁵⁴. Moreover, in the menstruation¹⁵⁵ time women are not allowed to participate in any kind of the religious ceremonies.

Tagin women are not allowed to observe certain rituals like *Pekia-Uyi* [certain kind of ritual sacrifice to the spirits that guard and guide the man]. They do not take part of the sacrificed meat of the animals and fowls during this rite. One of the discriminatory terms against the Tagin women is *Nyeme-Pakne* (female maid). Female are considered as inferior in their thinking and deed, as they are physically also inferior to men¹⁵⁶. The Tagin women could also become *Nyibu* if she is divinely inspired¹⁵⁷. Among the Padam Minyong there is no permanent religious institutions and regular prayers to Donyipolo or other supernatural powers¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵³ B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society**, *op.cit.*, p.xi

¹⁵⁴ H. Yapa, 'Status of Women Apatani', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society**, *op.cit.*, p.235

¹⁵⁵ Women in Assamese also like the Tani, women are not allowed to enter certain *namghars* like at Barpeta and Patbausi *namghars*. This is because women have menstrual periods and at such it might effect the sanctity of the *namghar*. Recently this tradition of not allowing women to enter *namghars* was broken by the new Governor Shri J.B.Patnaik when he took some women with him and enter the *namghar*. This invited wild reactions and the reason given was the menstruation of women.

¹⁵⁶ A.Riddi, **The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh A study of Continuity and Change**, *op.cit.*, p69

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁸ N.Mitkong, 'Status of Women:Padam Minyong', in: B.B.Pandey, et.al.ed., **Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**, *op.cit.*, p.161.

In case of the Bori women they have equal rights to celebrate and observe in religious activities with men. Even they have right to voice against any religious matter.

H. WOMEN AND EDUCATION:

In the traditional Tani society, girl's education is not given much attention. From their childhood they learn household work and weaving from the elders of the family, friends and mother. They are made to believe that they should look after their parents till they are in their parents house and after marriage they have to look after husbands in economic and domestic chores. In the Padam village Damro, the girl's dormitory known as *Raseng* believed to be the traditional training institutions for girls¹⁵⁹.

In the past there is a fear that a school will lead to a breakdown of respect for traditional authority and that every boy or girl who attends it is economic loss¹⁶⁰. Besides this many other reasons attributed to send their girls to impart education. Firstly, girls have to help parents in the cultivation and household chores. Secondly, child marriage is another hindrance in the path of imparting education. A girl is married in a tender age and she gets hardly any chance to have education both in parents as well as husband's house. As girls have to take care of husband, parents preferred boys for education.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.140

¹⁶⁰ V, Elwin, **A Philosophy of NEFA**, *op.cit.*, p.194

However now a day's government took various steps and schemes to provide education to both girls and boys and motivated the parents to send their girl child to schools. Now a days, Nishing mothers are interested to give best education to their daughters, in order to free them from the age old social shackles.

III

Form the above discussion it can be said that, the women roles in the traditional society, position or status among the Tani groups of tribes are determined by the customary laws prevalent among them. However, it is interesting to note that the customary laws are silent about their rights. Though women enjoy freedom traditionally but in the patriarchal structure the male dominance and their upper hand in every spheres of their life can be easily noticed.

The taboos and prejudices against Tani group of women's are not exceptions. Similar issues are discernable elsewhere. The striking feature is that the Tani groups of women have much more freedom in their social relations. Even then as far as their status is concerned it cannot be said that as human being they do not have the same equal place with men.

CHAPTER- IV

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

I

Introduction:

Violence against women is an aged old phenomenon. Primarily all violence against women arises out of the physical weakness of women. Naturally a woman cannot fight equally with a man. This is one reason as to why the women fall victim to men's physical strength. Secondly in some societies particularly in the Hindu society, the husband is usually considered as the god. This is a tender issue which the women cannot ignore. They pray for the long life of their husbands and for any reason the widowhood is a grace in the society. Therefore, women's tolerance against husband's atrocities is an aspect based on traditional values. In this perspective the violence against women was common in the past and continue to be so in future in varying degrees from society to society.

The term violence against women technically used to refer collectively to the acts of violence that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. The United Nations General Assembly defines

“Violence against Women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life.”

The 1993 declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women noted that this Violence could be perpetrated by assailants of gender, family members and even the “State” itself¹.

In the other words violence against women can be also defined as

“Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women’s full advancement”².

Violence against women is a global phenomenon which effect the lives of million of women, in all socio- economic and educational classes. It cuts across cultural and religious barriers, impeding the right of women to participate fully in society. However, the primary motive of violence is to targets a particular group with the victim’s gender. The patriarchal social order often limits the space available for women to exercise their rights. The rise of violence against women is a matter of concern which is complementary to society’s indifference to it. Women faces violence in many forms such

¹ **United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 1993**, 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

² **Platform of Action**, 1995, World Women’s Conference, Beijing, 1995.

as domestic abuse, wife- beating, sexual harassment in the work place, rape, trafficking in women, forced prostitution and so forth, It constitutes hostile physical and psychological acts³.

The various crimes which includes: (a) abduction and Kidnapping; (b) co-habitation and rape; (c) Outrage of modesty;(d) Torture and harassment;(e) victim of matrimonial disharmony under Personal laws; (f) battering by husbands etc⁴a women generally used to be victimized.

It is observed that violence against women is one of the greatest barriers to development. It affects health, self esteem and ability of women to participate in developmental process. Violence and abuse are factors which are keeping women from functioning independently in the world. Women are prone to multiple disabilities in economic activity-wage discrimination, legal constraints and poor access to education and this puts them at continuing risk for exploitation and abuse⁵.

However, in the context of India the violence against women is one of the most alarming and politically volatile issues. Often, women are not victims of just individual acts of violence but also in the political mobilization of and against social groups. Violence is a weapon which has been used against women. It affects various aspects of women's well-being such as mobility, emotional and psychological capabilities, self-esteem as well as the freedom to lead a normal and healthy life. The nature and the extent

³ G. Shah & K.N.Gupta, **Human Rights Free and equal**, Anmol Publications, New Delhi,2001,p.127

⁴ *Ibid*,p.128

⁵ L. Gonsalves, **Women and Human Rights**, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi,2001,p.55

of violence aimed against women vary across regions, classes and cultures. Moreover, women often feel more insecure in more developed and well- connected areas, especially in the cities.

In this chapter the meaning of violence is not limited to physical, sexual or psychological abuses but also encompasses those types of violence that are coercive, threatening and which deprived women liberty in both their public and public lives. As such, the study recognizes some values, social norms and traditional practices as contributory factors to violence against women.

In the context of the Tani groups of tribes here we shall limit our discussion under following heads only:

- A. Domestic violence
- B. Rape
- C. Kidnapping
- D. Sexual Harassment
- E. Prostitution
- F. Trafficking of Child
- G. Violences Arising Out Of Traditional Practices

II

VIOLENCE AGAINST TANI WOMEN:

In the context of Tani women of Arunachal Pradesh, the meaning of Violence against women is a very complex question to be dealt with. Among the Tani tribes the old traditional system still plays an important role in conflict resolution and administrative justice. However the incidence of crime against women are reported are on rise. During the year 2000-2002, the total percentage of violence against women is highest in districts like East Siang, closely followed by West Siang. West Kameng recorded lowest⁶. Violence against Women reported as high as 20 per cent reported from West Siang district, while the districts of East Siang and Papumpare contributed 15.25 and 14.83 per cent respectively⁷.

The composition of crime against women for the State as whole in 2000-2002, shows that 41.74 per cent of the cases relate to molestation, 28.18 percent to rape, while cruelty by husbands and relatives accounted for 6.35 per cent of the total reported crime against women. Women typically become easy targets of violence in areas of prolonged and chronic conflicts. In parts of the State, where there has been some insurgency, women face constraints not just as victims of violence but, also in terms of denial of

⁶ **Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2005**, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Deptt of Planning, Itanagar, 2006, p.112

⁷ *Ibid*

opportunities and options, which would otherwise have been available to them under normal circumstances.

Table 4.1: Crime against women(in%) :2000 to 2002		
Districts	As % of Total Crime	Per 10,000 Population
West Kameng	2.80	0.402
Papum Pare	4.92	1.916
Lower Subansiri	6.43	1.091
Upper Subansiri	6.11	1.504
West Siang	9.59	2.987
East Siang	9.97	2.748
Upper Siang	8.02	1.298
Dibang Valley	8.53	2.142

Source:[The Director of General Police, Government of Arunachal Pradesh]
 Note: Calculations are based on average of three years-2000,2001 and 2002

Table 4.2: Crime against women: 2003 to2005

Sl.No	District	year	Rape	Molestation	Dowry Death	Kidnaping/ Abduction	Cruelty by husband & Relatives	Sexual Harassment (eve teasing)	Total
1	East Kameng	2003	-	10	-	02	01	-	13
		2004	-	04	-	02	-	-	06
		2005	02	05	-	03	02	-	12
2	Papum Pare	2003	03	07	-	08	01	-	19
		2004	04	08	-	04	-	-	16
		2005	06	04	-	07	02	-	19
3	Lower Subansiri	2003	03	-	-	-	-	-	03
		2004	-	01	-	-	-	-	01
		2005	-	04	-	03	-	-	07
4	Upper Subansiri	2003	01	-	-	02	-	-	03
		2004	-	03	-	04	01	-	08
		2005	02	05	-	-	01	-	08
5	K/Kumey	2003	-	-	-	02	-	-	02
		2004	-	-	-	01	-	-	01
		2005	01	-	-	02	-	-	03
6	East Siang	2003	09	04	-	09	01	-	23
		2004	11	11	-	10	01	-	33
		2005	13	15	-	05	01	-	34
7	West Siang	2003	05	06	-	04	01	-	16
		2004	06	08	-	06	-	-	20
		2005	03	05	-	04	-	-	12
8	Upper Siang	2003	01	-	-	01	-	-	02
		2004	01	02	-	-	-	-	03

		2005	02	08	-	01	-	-	11
9	Lower	2003	02	01	-	01	05	-	09
	Dibang	2004	03	-	-	-	-	-	03
	Valley	2005	-	05	-	04	-	-	09

Source: [The Director General of Police, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 2003 to 2005]

During the year 2003 the total number of reported crimes is highest in East Siang district followed by PapumPare and West Siang districts. Kurung Kumey and Upper Siang recorded the lowest. East Siang and West Siang reported the highest number of rape cases while the districts of Upper Subansiri and Upper Siang recorded the lowest reported cases of rape. The cases of molestation is found highest in East Kameng followed by Papum Pare and West Siang districts. Papum Pare and East Siang recorded highest number of Kidnapping cases. Upper Siang district recorded the lowest cases of Kidnapping. East Kameng, Papum Pare, East Siang and West Siang districts reported one each cases of cruelty by husband or relatives.

In the year 2004, East Siang district reported the highest number of rape cases followed by West Siang and Papumpare districts. The district of Upper Siang reported the lowest cases of rape. The maximum cases of molestation reported in the districts of East Siang, Papum Pare and West Siang. However, Lower Subansiri district reported the lowest. Both East Siang and West Siang districts reported the highest number of kidnapping cases followed by upper Subansiri and Papum Pare districts. Kurung Kumey district recorded the lowest. Both East Siang and Upper Subansiri districts reported one cases each on husband cruelty. However, the total number of crimes reported highest in

East Siang district closely followed by West Siang and Papum Pare districts. The districts of Upper Subansiri, East Kameng, Lower Subansiri and Kurung Kumey reported the lowest.

In 2005 East Siang district reported cases of rape and molestation. Papum Pare district reported the highest number of kidnapping cases followed by East Siang, West Siang, and Lower Subansiri districts. Upper Siang and Kurung Kumey districts reported the lowest. The cases of cruelty by husband reported in Papum Pare and East Kameng district. The districts East Siang and Papum Pare recorded the total number of highest reported cases next followed by West Siang, East Kameng, Upper Siang, Upper Subansiri and Lower Subansiri districts. Kurung Kumey district reported the lowest.

From 2003 to 2005 the total number of cases reported in East Siang and Papumpare districts and Kurung Kumey district reported the lowest. Cruelties by husband cases are reported in a low marginal way. However, the crime against women reported are increasing. The districts where crime reported low may be due to the reason that women do not want to come forward.

In an interview in my field work Yade says that she do not want to go to police to complain about her husband because she is worried about her family reputation and by complaining she do not want to loose her husband and better to tolerate the torture inflicted upon her⁸.

A.DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

⁸ Interviewed with Yade 22.8.2008

Scholars like Dobash and Dobash were first to publish and throw new light of scholarship on violence against women in the home by men⁹. With the beginning of the women's movement, particularly the women's right in the year 1970's the domestic violence came into attention, as concern about wives being beaten by their husband. All people belonging to different races, religion, classes whether men and women can be perpetrator of domestic violence.

Domestic violence can be defined as the violence that occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner tries to dominate another physically or psychologically¹⁰. Domestic violence is of various forms: Physical, emotional, economic etc.

Physical violence, the abuser use physical force and cause injury, harm and incapability or death by hitting, kicking, biting or use of a weapon.

In emotional violence the victim is humiliated, control and withhold information intentionally and keeping victim aloof from meeting family and friends, keeping away to the access of money and other resources. This slowly gives rise to depression and increased the risk of suicide, eating disorders and drug and alcoholic abuse.

Economic violence can be notice when the abuser controlled the money and other resources of the victim, the victim receive less money which is not limited to fullfil other needs.

⁹ Jalna Hanmer "Domestic Violence", ,in: Jonathan Michie ed.,**Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences**,vol 4,Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, London,2001,p.403

¹⁰ Domestic Violence,**www.Wikipedia.com** (assessed on 9th sept 2008)

Stalking refers to repeat behaviour which causes the victim a feeling of fear. It is very common among the types of Intimate Partner Violence.

Among the Tani women the domestic violence cases are not exceptional. The following domestic violence cases highlighted how women are discriminated and facing such situation in the Tani society. Domestic violence, for example, is hardly treated as a crime, even by the victims themselves. Both tolerance and experience of domestic violence are significant barriers to women's empowerment¹¹.

A.(i)Cases of Domestic Violences:

The following cases highlight the discrimination that women have to face in such situation.

Case No 1:

Tadam Aane¹² who lost her hand due to domestic violence. The victim is brought up by her uncle. She received weaving training and at the same time she met a person who was an outsider and wants to marry him. When her uncle came to know about it he opposed it and inflicted inhuman torture on both of them. Even that person is ready to pay the bride price in monthly basis. Although she is pregnant they have to separate. She gives birth to a baby boy. She was broken and separated herself from her uncle because she does not want that her uncle should arrange her marriage with other to gain profit

¹¹ **Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2005**, *op.cit.*,p.112

¹² D.B. Tako, "Domestic Violence- The Price of Tolerance", in: T. Azu, at.al.ed., 'The Meandering Drawn' *Souvenir All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society*, 10th Oct-10th Nov 2004, Itanagar,p.15-16

from her bride-price and decided not to marry again. For her livelihood she started a small business.

When her son was about four years of age her second husband entered in her life. The man started coming to her house and make friendship with her son and this favour him to become her husband. From her second husband she is having three children. To save her married life she ignored him and tolerates his misbehaviour and other short comings. Many times he goes out from house and come back again. Once again he went out of house carrying two children with him. This time is trying to start a new life with another woman who is a divorcee. But the victim is confident that her husband will come back with his children when his money will be exhausted.

The victim then led a normal life, and joined Adult Education classes started by All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society at Polo Colony School. One evening, while the victim is coming back from jungle with heavy load of fire, her husband was at home and when she entered her husband knocked her down unconscious with a heavy firewood stick. She is rushed to the hospital. The doctor advice her to report the police and she logged complain against her husband. The police arrested him but soon he is bailed out.

This time the victim took the matter seriously. According to traditional rule made him to sign agreements. The victim wanted separation. The man wanted his son in case of separation. One evening the the victim one hand has been chopped off by her husband. She is in hospital and her husband fled away.

The victim looks after her children in this condition. But husband relative never refrain from teasing her even today. She is waiting to pounce on her small plot of land and sometimes she is still threatening to cut her off the other hand. The husband is still disappeared. Her eldest son get married and her two daughters now collect vegetables and sale them after the school time.

Case No 2:

x¹³ is now forty three years of age and working as peon. From eight years she is having love affair with a person who later became her husband and for her husband she even refuse to go with the person with whom her marriage has been already engaged. Her husband is already married. The first wife of her husband is barren. For some years she is having a happy life with her husband. She is having three children. But from five years her relation with her husband became bitter. She came to know that he developed new affair with her aunty. This lady always provoked her husband by saying ill about her. Her husband started torturing her. Always misbehaved and she bear him because of her kids. Always threatened to kill her and beat her. She is hospitalized twice. Second time when she is hospitalized she is determined to lodge complaint against him to the Women Commission. But for certain circumstances she could not lodge the complaint. Meanwhile again the husband started behaving well with her and she leave the issue. After some time again he started torturing her and slowly he started stop coming home and now it is

¹³ Interviewed with Khoshi ,22-8-2008

almost 1 ½ years over that he never come down to see her or her kids. She came to known from other source that he settles down at Delhi with aunty.

Now she does not want to fight for her right. To maintain her family side by side she is running a business, selling of traditional jewellery. Before she was very much fear of society to go out for work. Now she is less bordered and giving better education to her children and whole family. She says that no girl should spoil her life by marrying person who already married. She said that this kind of person never brother to marry many girls.

Case No 3:

Y¹⁴ staying with her sister in her brother in-laws house. She was studying in class two. Her husband is friend of her brother in- law and often visit her sister house. After her school hour she always found him waiting for her and sometimes he passes very bad comment to her and teases her. So she do not like his attitude and always try to avoid talking with him. Even he once opine that he wish to marry her since she is too small her sister not shown any interest about it. One day when she is coming from church with her friends he talk very nicely with her and offer her to have tea with him, she accepted. She saw a big bus waiting in the road site than her husband ask her to go inside and see that there is a T V inside the bus. She is very egar to see T V inside the bus and went inside. After that the bus started and she is not allowed to come down by her husband. She cried and shouted but no one came for help and she became unconcious. She is taken to Tirap district. For many days she did not take food properly and crying her condition slowly declining. Her husbands after some days wrote a letter to her sister and inform them

¹⁴ Interviewed, 23.8.2008. (kept undercover)

about her. After staying one and a half month in Khonsa they back home. She is send to village but people of the village advice her parents not to keep her and send back with her husband. Unwillingly she is forced to accept him as her husband. Now she has passed seventeen years of her married life having four children.

To help her husband in economic front she started construction business and started earning money. She even purchases a plot of land and constructed a house with her own earning. Slowly her husband is against her going out for business purpose and started suspecting her. He inflicted both physical and mental torture on her. For this kind of his behaviour she call up *Kabeng* but with no result. He always threatened her that he will going to torture her till her death. From five years they are staying separately in the same house. Sometimes for a week she do not see him as he get up in the early morning and go out before she get up and at night he come back too late. She even heard that he had a affair with a girl. Even she asks him to get marry if he wants and stay separately or stay together by extending the same house in the same place. But he did not agree. Two years before he throws a heavy thing in her head and she has to admit in the hospital. After that she became very slow and lost her mind. Now she is recovering but still her mental heath is not normal. Her health condition is not permitting her to work or look after her business. she is worried as she have to take care of the needs of her kids. On 22nd August 2008, once again her husband attempted to kill her. That day in she was cleaning the dinning table and all and a sudden from the opposite room he shoots at her but she is lucky enough that the bullet could not touch her.

Though she knows and heard about All ArunachalPradeshWomen Welfare Society or Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women but do not wish to lodge complain against her husband. She is waiting her kids to grow up and till than she will tolerate.

Case No 4:

This case is about a woman who is educated but victim of domestic violence. X¹⁵ completed her education from outside of state. Both of them having love marriage and she is having two daughters. She is staying with her in laws. When her husband return back from office her in -laws always complain him about her. She is beaten like anything by her husband. She does not have any right to speak in any matters whether it is related to her personal life. Always she have to listen from her in laws that if she will not give birth to a baby boy this time they will force her husband to marry other. She has no other way than to bear the pain. Sometimes she want to lodge complain against it but the fear of losing her husband prevent her to do so as she loves her husband and her kids are too small.

Case No 5:

¹⁵ Interviewed , 24.8.2008. (Name kept under cover.)

Dene thirty four years of age speaks that her husband harassed her in matters of properties. Her husband sends her to her parent's house to bring movable properties and if she failed to meet the demands of her husband than he harass her mentally and physically to the extent that she almost lost her mind. With the help and support rendered by the honorably members of the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women during the days of her unsound mental health and depression she regain her confidence¹⁶.

Case No 6:

Messo Effa got marry in the year 1991 out of which they have three children. In the year 2000 Tungri Effa is having affair with a girl named Keru Sangdo, because of this she is harassed both physically and mentally by her husband. However this case settles in the court of Executive Magistrate Seppa on 19.11.2000 by which Tungri Effa will not marry for the second time in future. If he will than have to pay his all properties to his wife Messo Effa.

As per the advice of her husband Messo effa had taken beads from her relatives and other and also money for business purpose. But when the time came for returning her husband denied of taking such loan. Due to this reason she became mentally sick. After three to four months she is taken to "Iokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health", Tezpur. She was advice for CT scan (brain) but until now it is not done. She is avoided and not getting medicine in time, food and stay long time away from

¹⁶ Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women, **Combined Annual Report 2005-06 & 2006-07**, Printed at Impressive Printers & Stationaries, Guwahati, p.23

home and whenever he returns beat her and go away. One day she came to know that he started again affair with Kirya Ete (anya Ete). To avoid physical and mental torture she accepted kirya Ete as second wife of her husband. Messo called up her father and brother and on 11.11.05 an agreement was made between three of them. According to the agreement her husband will stay with her in the same house and will not torture Messo in future. After the agreement Tungi and his second wife started torturing her more. Both her husband and his second wife openly have physically intercourse and comment her harshly which compel her to commit suicide. Now she became weaker both physically and mentally and her children have been provided food sometimes by her neighbour. When her husband is admitted in hospital she went to visit but his second wife insulted and assaulted her. His second wife also threatened her to kill over mobil. Now she and her children's are being cared by Commission for Women, Itanagar¹⁷.

Case No 7:

It is sometimes during the 2005, Ama a mother of three children for the first time summoned before the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women in regard to the allegations made by her husband that she is receiving harassment from many quarters owing the issues related to their common property. When she first appeared before the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women it emerged that she is not in good health either mentally or physically. In fact she is disturbed by her husband's misconduct, domestic violence and suppression. However, the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women made all efforts to get treated, formally by the mental health institution and

¹⁷ **Data** Collected from District Commissioner office, 24.8.2008, Itanagar

informally, by the members of the Commission. With intensive personal care and support from the Members of the Commission, she regained her physical and mental health to a large extent. On her recovery her case regarding civil matters was referred to concerned Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner was requested to settle the case through the local council by ensuring an impartial experienced body to try the case.

Today Ama secured both social and economic security and her dignity and social reputation has been once again restored. She is now known as good women wronged by her husband and not otherwise as projected by him¹⁸.

Case No 8:

This is a case of middle aged women, sell vegetables in the daily market to run the household. She is a mother of four children's. Her husband whole day sit at home and drink *apo* (rice beer) and do nothing. Evening when she return backs home he always try to snatched her money and if she refuses than she is tortured to a extent that sometimes for weeks she is enable to recover from her injuries. She stated that now every evening it became a common story of her house that after going back home after whole day work her husband inflicted torture on her and every evening she is scared to return back home. It is just because of her children's she is bearing this torture¹⁹.

Case No 9:

¹⁸ Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women, **Combined Annual Report 2005-06 & 2006-07**, *op.cit.*, p.21

¹⁹ Interviewed, 25.10.2008. (name kept under cover)

Y is a mother of two kids and the second wife of her husband. She started living with her husband when she is a class six student. Everything is going well between both of them till she gives birth to her first baby boy. But after the birth of her first son she could slowly noticed some changed in the behavior of her husband. After one year she came to know that her husband started affair. Whenever she protested against it she is beaten badly and admitted in hospital many times. Slowly this created distance in her relation, in name they are living as husband and wife. Last year he fight with her and throw her belongings and asked her to leave his house and when she refuse to do so she is beaten badly and admitted to the hospital. Still his behaviour is not changed after so many years of their marriage and continuing relation with other girls. Sometimes she feel like leaving him but whenever she look at the face of her kids she cant and she accepted this miserable life²⁰.

Case No 10:

Anni says that she is always treated badly by her parents. She had three brothers. She is not allowed to study after class one and her mother take her to help her in the field. They collected vegetables and sell in the market. Her mother always gives more things to her brother to eat when she demands she is beaten up. She opines that a day has not passed without getting beaten for her brothers. Now she is having three daughters and a son but she treats them equally²¹.

²⁰ Interviewed, 20.10.2008. (name kept under cover)

²¹ Interview,20.10.2008. (name kept under cover)

Most the cases of the domestic violence among the Tani women is seen as a private matter, not to be interfered with or commented on by others. There are also differences in opinion among women about what comprises violence. The physical violence which is generally occurred within the household is recognized as domestic violence. However, the psychological and sexual violence are not taken into account by majority of women. Thus it is very important to reach in a common understanding on what constitutes violence against women.

In an interviewed with Mrs Gumri Ringu, Member Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women she opined that maximum cases of domestic violence which can be noticed among the Tani women are because of extra martial affair²² though other reasons for the domestic violence can also be noticed.

To create understanding amongst the women regarding Domestic Violence Act and the related legal procedures among the women and law enforcement agencies in India, the Centre for Social Research, Delhi along with All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society organized a day consultation in 21st October 2008²³. The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women organized a workshop on “Prevention of Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Harassment at Work Place Bill” on 27th May 2006²⁴.

B. RAPE:

²² Interview with Gumri Ringu, Ex President (APWWS, 2003-05), Member Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women (2005-08), 16.10.2006

²³ **The Arunachal Times**, Wednesday October 22, 2008, p.1

²⁴ Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women, **Combined Annual Report 2005-06 & 2006-07**, *op.cit.*, p.12

Rape can occur anywhere, even in the family, where it can take the form of marital rape or incest. It occurs in the community, where a woman can fall prey to any abuser. It also occurs in situations of armed conflict and in refugee camps.

Rape is said to have occur due to power distortions and socio-economic inequalities²⁵

According to NGO activists, the nature of rape has undergone changes in Arunachal Pradesh- while in the past, in many cases, it took the form of forced marriages, in recent years, rape is just a brutal criminal assault on a women²⁶.

Some of the cases of rape:

Case no 1:

The prosecution story of the case is that on 12/11/05 at 14:05 hours a complaint was received from T. Lambi of Naharlagun PS to the effect hat during her enquiry that on 8/11/05 one minor girl Miss Yomdo Yadik who was kept in the custody of Chairperson, Oju Welfare Mission, Naharlagun was kidnapped by one Sri Passanf Ekiang and three others of Oju Welfare mission of Naharlagun. Later Miss Yadik revealed before the investigating officers that she was told to go with them. The accused persons kept her in some places next two to three days as wife of Passang Ekiang and forcefully rapped her several times. Later the rape was ascertained in the hospital. The accused later confessed that his parent arranged his step younger brother's Passang Thakar with Miss Yamdo Yadik, daughter of Yamdo Mali when both were minor and paid two mithuns as bridal

²⁵ F. E. Siddiqi & S. Ranganathan, **Women and Human Rights, A Guide for Social Activities**, Part-2, Kanishka Publishers, 2001, p. 529

²⁶ **Arunachal Pradesh HDR 2005**, *op.cit.*, p. 112

price. Later in 2000 Passang Thakar fell into sickness at the age of fifteen and couldn't marry her. Since, Yamdo Mali couldn't return back the two *mithuns* that she took as bridal price, both parents decided that Miss Yadik would be married to the accused, the brother of Passang Thakar. He caught Miss Yadik in illicit relation with one Gajamar Raja on 15/10/2008 which led him to bring her forcefully his home and had rapped her. He also revealed that they stayed together as husband and wife till 6/11/05 when she managed to escape to Oju Mission, Naharlagun. On 8/11/2005 he found that she was kept in Oju Welfare mission and managed to take her out of it with the help of three friends²⁷.

Case No 2:

Miss Poonam Padung was 7 years old child from Yingkiong. On 10/06/2007 at around 12 pm she went out from her house. One Getem Saring took her to jungle and rapped her. She could return home at 2:30 pm only. Her mother Mrs. Mina Padung lodged the FIR to the Yingkiong Police Station on same day²⁸.

Case No 3:

This incident of rape took place in the Siang River Festival Fashion Show in 13/01/2007 at around 1 am. One Mr. Talo Jamoh, claimed to be the elder brother of the Miss Yameng Jamoh lodged an FIR to the Police Station of Boleng only on 28th February, 2008 after a delay of 45 days. According to the FIR Miss Yameng Jamoh was rapped by one Takeng Taggu. The cause of delay in lodging the FIR was cited as the long

²⁷ Data collected from District Commissioner office, *op.cit*

²⁸ Data Collected from Director General Police office (Crime Branch), 20.10.2008, Itanagar.

silence of the victim about the incident fearing bad repercussion of her family and other people.²⁹

Case No 4:

Y was married to a boy of the same village at minor age and boy's parent paid 3 *mithuns* to her father as bridal price. After she had a baby her husband died. Her parents wanted to marry her to one of deceased brothers but the brothers were not interested. Since her parents couldn't return the bridal price once they took, she was not allowed to return home. Unfortunately her father-in-law showed his interest to marry her which she vehemently refused. So, he kept her locked in a room for several days and repeatedly raped her. One day, she managed to flee away from the house with the baby to Itanagar. Now she is only sixteen years old and staying at Itanagar with her cousin³⁰.

C. KIDNAPPING:

Kidnapping can be explained as to take away illegally and keep them as a prisoner, especially in order to get money or else for returning them.

Case No1:

Case of Tanang Yangfo

It has been reported that Byabang Nikpo ordered miscreants to kidnap his wife and infant children from near jully road, Ganga market on 17th October, 2008. After

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ Interviewed,20.10.2008. (name kept undercover)

wards the kidnapper handed over his wife and infants to Byabang Nikpo who threatened to kill his wife and infants³¹.

Case No2:

The case of Techhi Nakti

Mrs Techhi Nakti was wife of Mr. Techhi Tama a resident of A sector, Nahar Lagan. On 10/09/05 at 5pm she was kidnapped by Mr. Parag Konwar and Mr. Pranto Konwar by a Maruti van and also taken away a sum of Rupees eighty thousand and some ornaments. During the course of interrogation Parag Konwar and Pranto Konwar arrested and Mrs. Techhi Nakti was recovered. Later she was handed over to her elder brother, since neither she nor her husband wanted to stay together again. On interrogation Pranto Konwar said that he had a physical relation with Techhi Tamang. Techhi Tamang did not deny this allegation. She told to the police that her husband did not take care of her much and enjoyed illicit relations with several women. So, she voluntarily went away with Pranto Konwar, but the police case lodged by her legal husband changed the whole situation³².

Case No 3:

³¹ **Data collected from Director General Police (crime branch) ,op.cit**

³² *Ibid*

The case on the basis of complaints and reports received by Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women³³:

A widow of ten years was released from the clansmen of her deceased husband by one of the district courts through an order. The clansmen were order to take back the bride price paid for her. But they had not done so nor appealed against the court's order for three years.

In the meantime, after two to three years, the women has taken a man of her own choice and a child was born to her from this union. She had undergone caesarean operation for the delivery in Assam. When she came back to her mother's house and was recuperating, one night, her deceased husband's clansmen came and abducted her, her teenage son and the fifteen days old baby and took the three to the unreachable high mountains and keep them without food and cloth for seven days in caves. She had to ask the elder brother for his shirt to wrap the baby. The mother had lost her wrap when she was dragged into the vehicle by the abductors. There was not a single soul in the whole clan to even feel for the baby or the little boy.

For one whole week the district administration failed to recover the trio. It was intervention at the highest level that saved them when a cabinet minister was deputed and flown out to the inaccessible mountain village to negotiate with the unruly clansmen for the released of the mother, teenage son and few days old baby.

³³ Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women ,**Combined Annual Report 2005-06 &2006-07**, *op.cit.*,p.24

However, it can be noticed that most of the kidnapping case are due to personal rivalry. The Tani groups of women witness this kind of violence too.

D. Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is unwelcome attention of a sexual nature and is a form of legal and social harassment. It includes a range of behaviour from seemingly mild transgressions and annoyance is considered a form of illegal discrimination in many countries and is a form of abuse (sexual and psychological) and bullying³⁴.

In India sexual harassment is termed as 'Eve teasing' as is described as : unwelcome sexual gesture or behaviour whether directly or indirectly as sexually coloured remarks; physical contact and advances; showing pornography ;a demand or request for sexual favours; any other unwelcome physical, verbal/ non verbal conduct being sexual in nature. The critical factor is the unwelcome ness of the behaviour, thereby making the impact of such actions on the recipient more relevant rather than intent of the perpetrator³⁵.

Sexual harassment is matter of concern for women in the workplace. The authority Employers abuse their authority to seek sexual favors from their female co-workers or subordinates, sometimes promising promotions or other forms of career advancement or simply creating an untenable and hostile work environment. Women who refuse to give in to such unwanted sexual advances often run the risk of anything from demotion to dismissal.

³⁴ Sexual Harassment, www.wikipedia.com (assessed on 14th Oct 2008)

³⁵ *Ibid*

In Arunachal Pradesh the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women received only one case against sexual harassment in the work place. In a group discussion with some girls working in Itanagar and Along opine that being unmarried and working they had to face lots of problems. Not only from their authority but also from male colleagues. But they tolerate because of the job and keep quite. Y, says that after joining the job she normally behave in the office she even talk with her male colleagues but indirectly they demand for sexual favors from her. She feel irritate at their attitude n now she even stop talking with them. She do not want to complain against them because she is very much concerned about her reputation and her family reputation nor want to lose the job but bearing it keeping herself silent³⁶.

Case No 1 of Tarak Yapa:

The complaint is lodged by Miss Tarak Yapa fifteen years of age on 30.5.2008 that Nabam Tangam, working as ASI (T) PHQ, Itanagar promises her to marry for six months and four days subjected to sexual harassment with her. She is kept at Nirjuli, Emchi, Doimukh and Chandannagar in rent house without informing at her home. On 28.5.2008 she was dropped at her parents house and lied that she is found in Nagaland Women Arms hostel (under ground) group- C cadre militants.

³⁶ Interview,25.10.2008.(name kept under cover)

She realized that Nabang Tangam made false promise to marry her rather made allegation that he is not interested to marry her because she is having illicit relation with her father and elder brother.

Case No 2:

Lila was working in a Pco/ Xerox machine operator. During the time of holi the proprietor of the PCO raped her and since that time he had sexually enjoyed with her and made promise to be marrying with her. During this period she got pregnant twice and he gave medicine time to time and done her miscarriage. But one day her owner refused to marry her and kicked her from the PCO. Moreover, the lady committed suicide and left a suicide note against the accused³⁷.

But in recent years few women have been coming forward to report such practices some taking their case to courts.

E. PROSTITUTION:

Prostitution can be define as

“the act of engaging in sexual activity in exchange for money or goods”³⁸.

³⁷ **Data Collected from Director General of Police office, *op.cit***

³⁸ Prostitution, **www.wikipedia.com**(assessed on 15th Oct 2008)

But many a times due to the result of poor economic and social conditions many women are forced by their husband, parents or boy friends forced them into prostitution. Sometimes, the ‘mail- order bride’³⁹ agencies forced women into prostitution making promise to find women a husband or a job in abroad. However, in this condition they are illegally confined in brothels and they face violence and they are physically abused.

Case No 1:

On 26.05.2001 this case is lodged in Along PS by Miss Sita Pradhan. It is stated that she is brought to Along by Jumi Ete, who forced her to have physical relation with several Assam Rifle jawan during day and night. When she became physically weak in activity, Jumi Ete herself involve physically with the jawans by taking per night 500 Rs. and 400 Rs per day time⁴⁰.

However, the above mentioning cases reveal that women are forced into prostitution and to take up as there livelihood by violating the human rights.

F. TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN:

Trafficking of Children can be defined as:

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes forcing

³⁹ F. E. Siddiqi & S. Ranganatham, **Women and Human Rights, A Guide for Social Activities**, *op.cit.*, p.522.

⁴⁰**Data collected from Director General of Police(crime branch), *op.cit***

children into prostitution or other form of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. For children exploitation may include also illicit international adoption, trafficking for early marriage, recruitment as child soldier, for begging or as athletes (such as child camel jockey or football players), or for recruitment for cults”⁴¹.

The cases throw some light on such crime. This is the first case on restoration of liberty and right to childhood of a trafficking child.

Case No 1:

The seven years old Nani was kept as child domestic by a person who had paid Rs 30,000/- to someone named Hanish. During the year 2006 on receiving the complaint the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women summoned the person immediately who have alleged to have paid Nani. It was came to the light that Nani was brought from her parents house to help small babies by one family and that Nani some time ran away from that family and then she came in the hands of Hanish who handed her over to other family for some consideration⁴².

G. VIOLENCE ARISING OUT OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES:

The traditional practices which are customary in nature sometimes violate human rights and have harmful effects on women both physiologically and physically can be

⁴¹ Trafficking of Childern, www.wikipedia.com (assessed on 15th Oct 2008)

⁴² Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women, **Combined Annual Report 2005-06 & 2006-07**, *op. cit.*, p.22

regarded as violence against women⁴³. Among the Tani groups of tribe's traditional practices like child marriage can be very commonly noticed although the constitution of India had passed the law of Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929. However, the All Arunachal Pradesh Women's Welfare Society, Arunachal Pradesh Women Commission and other Voluntary organization took various steps eradicate such traditional practices from the Tani society sanctioned by customary laws.

The All Arunachal Pradesh Women welfare Society protest against the bill for review earlier passed by the state legislative assembly for the Protection of the customary laws and Social Practices which legalise polygamy and child marriage. Jarjum Ete Secretary General of the All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society stated

*"The bill, which has been rightly sent back to the state government for review, literally equates women with cattle"*⁴⁴

However, the All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society have to face tough opposition from the government as the former chief minister who himself having four wives has even stated in the state assembly, on International Women's Day, Jarjum Ete stated that, "Physical thrashing is necessary to discipline errant wives." The government's propaganda machinery meanwhile, has painted Ete as an enemy of the indigenous people for nationalising an internal issue of tribesmen. Apang had even attempted to have Ete's

⁴³ F. E. Siddiqi & S. Ranganatham, **Women and Human Rights, A Guide for Social Activities**, *op.cit.*, p.518

⁴⁴ 'Storming the male citadel in Arunachal', **Newsan**, December, 1998.

passport impounded in order to prevent her "vilification" campaign from being taken abroad⁴⁵.

Some Cases:

Case No 1:

A district judge in a historic ruling school student's marriage has declared void in Arunachal, in connection of the marriage of a class XII student who was married by her father at a tender age in Arunachal Pradesh's Kurung Kumey district. The girl Yumbam Yaku was married as child to Aman Bengia Kami in return for a bride price in form of *Mithuns*, cows and pigs, as per tribal practice. Yaku managed to study up to class XII and moved to court for her released from the bondage of Child marriage.

In her verdict, sessions judge Repo Ronya observed that the victim was not a party to the betrothal agreement as neither her consent was sought nor was she in a position to give her consent.

The court was also of the opinion that marriage could not be solemnized against the will of one of the concerned parties, citing the provisions of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929. The verdict was given on 7th December. Yaku is in the safe custody of the district administration after being handed over to it by the State Women's Commission. The respondents have been directed to file a separate petition for settlement of the bride price paid by them⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ **The Assam Tribune**, 13 December, 2006, p.7

Case No 2:

Twenty one years old x hailing from Tali says that she does not even remember when she is given for marriage. Though do not like but started staying with her husband and with time she given birth to three kids. Her husband do nothing so to run the house she sales bamboo. After that also her life is hell and her husband torture her to such extend that 3 times she is admitted in the hospital. She is always submissive because of her kids. Once she run away from her husband house and her parents make agreement with her husband not to torture her but instead of this he always threatened her to take life. He still is continuing his torture on her. Form her friends she came to know about the Women Commission and run away from her husband house and logged complain. Her case is still going on and registered in Women Commission and she is staying in Short Stay home from 3 and half months. After realized from her husband captive and child marriage bindings she want to lead a happy life with her kids⁴⁷.

Case No 3:

The eighteen years old Nishi girl from Palin says that, when she is in class one her marriage is fixed by taking 20 *mithuns* as bride price and it is when her elder sister refused to marry the same boy. She is unknown about her child marriage. In class four she is forced to go boy's house but she refused to go with him. At first she was not supported by her parent and they even pressurized her to go with them. She came to

⁴⁷ Interview with Victim, 16.10.2007.

know about the State Women Commission and run away from home and logged complain. It is again in 2007 the boy again claim her after accepting the agreement made in 2005. She again run away and now staying for 2 ½ months in the Short Stay Home Oju Welfare Association, Naharlagun. Her case is registered in State Women Commission and still going on. Dollang is waiting for the day when she will get the judgment and the day she will realized from Child marriage bindings. She wants to continue her study and wish to do something for girls who were suffering from such customary practices⁴⁸.

Case No 4:

When Anga was one years old her parents expired and she was taken under care of her cousin brother. At the age of three years she was sold to a man of thirtythree years old of the same village. When she was six years old she was sent to mans's house. At a early age she attained her puberty and the man who is fortyfive years started harassing to fulfill his desires. In the year 2003 Anga run away from the captive of the man and after staying as a free person for three years during the March 2006, she reached with her prayer in the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women. The commission provided shelter to Anga through the offices of Deputy Commissioners. The Commission referred the case to the Deputy Commissioners of the respective area Anga belongs to. Though the issue was surrounded with controversies, the JMFC passed a unique judgment was passed, who restrained the alleged child marriage, under section 12 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929. Anga was freed from the bondage of child marriage without carrying any liability as the matter of bridal price. Today Anga is managing her

⁴⁸ Interviewed with victim, 16.10.2007. (name keep undercover)

own enterprise with small loan arranged out by the personal resources of the Members of the Commission⁴⁹.

Case No 5:

Anya a fourteen years old girl recorded her statement that she is an orphan and sold off when she was a mere child and she would have force to stay with a sixty years old man or she would have to be wife of his 12 years old son or she might have suicide having no way open. In fact the district court sent her to co-habit with the minor boy in face of Anya's resistance to the old man since could not pay back the bridal price taken by her late parents. Today Anya gaining education and able to read and write, with the support of the Members of the Commission⁵⁰.

Case No 6:

The case of Nganga is during her childhood she was taken as a child bride for a youth. After some years of her father deceased, her own brother forcibly took her to in-laws. In the year 2000, on her refusal to go she was bound up and taken. However, the betrothed boy refuse to accept her as wife and he decided that she could either cohabit with one of his brother or wife of his father. In the same year she somehow managed to stay away from the three and come down to Itanagar. Around 2003, she came to know that her betrothal had taken a wife. After two years in 2005, her in-laws started looking

⁴⁹ Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women, **Combined annual Report 2005-06 &2006-07**, *op.cit.*, p20-21

⁵⁰ *Ibid*,p.23

after her so that she stays with the betrothal father. When she refuses to go she is threatened.

In the year October 2005, Nganga came to the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women; the Commission immediately made arrangement for her safe custody and referred the case to the concerned District Commissioner. In September 2006 Nganga wrote a suicide note received by one of member of the commission where she opine that, since her brother would not pay back her bride price ‘there was no way she could escape her owner’ and if she was handed over she would have no other option than to commit suicide.

The Commission was forced to admit that ‘the letter speaks volumes about the ground realities in the case of women victimized by customs’ It appealed to all the persons who could make a difference to the cause. The Honorable MLA as well as Honorable Minister of the area contributed generously to Nganga’s brother, through the commission to pay back the bride price. Today Nganga is free and continuing education with the support from the Members⁵¹.

Case No 7⁵²:

Taki Laa, aged about fortyfive years S/O Late Tok Laa of village Laa, in Puchigeke circle under Daporijo police station in the district of Upper Subansiri appeared in person before the court on 27th Aug`06. The complainant Miss Kampu Kengam was

⁵¹ *Ibid*,p.22-23

⁵² **Data collected from Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women office, 16.10.2006, Itanagar**

not in the attendance on that day. However she appeared in person before the court on 21st Aug`06. Hear the parties to the case in length.

The facts of the case succinctly stated were that the complainant Miss Kampu Kengam, who is an orphan girl since her birth, of village Kengam, under Raga circle in the district of Lower Subansiri was taken care of by her cousin Sri Kegam Tacha of same village and at her age of about 3(three) years, her cousin Sri Kegam Tacha traditionally sold her in a child marriage deal to the respondent Sri Taki Laa of Laa village since her procurement by the respondent. When she attained her puberty, the respondent started harassing the complainant Miss Kampu Kengam to fulfill his carnal desire, claiming that the complainant was his traditionally purchased bride. The complainant, helplessly had to stay some how under sever hardship in the respondent's house, until May 2003 and repudiating her Child marriage, she managed to flee away from the respondent's house to her unknown destiny. But ultimately she, somehow not even known to her how it was, reached to the custody of the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women, Itanagar for justice and her shelter. The Chairperson of the said Commission took cognizance of the matter, gave shelter to the victim child and referred the matter immediately to the deputy Commissioner, Daporijo who thereupon taking prompt action, endorsed the case to this court for immediate steps.

The case of the respondent Sri Taki laa was that Sri Kegam Tacha, cousin of the complainant Miss Kempu Kengam and also being the guardian of her after the death of her parents, traditionally sold the complainant in child marriage, voluntarily to the respondent and brought the child to his residence at Laa village by the cousin of the complainant, at her age of about 3(three) or 4(four) years and consideration of this

traditional child marriage transaction, the respondent had given 4(four) numbers of mithuns, 4(four) numbers of cattle and cash worth of Rs. 10,000/- in different installments to Sri Kegam Tacha. Hence he wants the said bridal price back from the guardian Sri Kegam Tacha, if the marriage bond is dissolved between them by the complainant Miss Kampu Kengam.

Case No 8⁵³:

Smti. Yadik Doka (Now Nangram yadik) was engaged to one Taye Cheda during her childhood, as per child marriage system prevailing in district (East Kameng). The father of Ms. Yadik Doka died after fixing the engagement and receiving the bridal price from Cheda family. Her would be husband Taye Cheda was much older than her in age.

Once Ms. Yadik Doka came to Itanagar for treatment and met one Nangram Karo, a casual Labour in Civil Power Department. In course of time, they started staying as husband and wife. They have now a four months baby. They have been staying together as husband and wife for last 3(three) years.

On 19th March, 2005, a group of people led by her cousin Brother Shri Tali Doka, HGB from Pipu village East Kameng District came to her residence in Itanagar and forcibly took her away from her husband. The intention of her brother-in-law Shri Tali Doka was to hand over Ms. Yadik Doka, back to Cheda family, as Shri Tali Doka and his Doka families were repeatedly pressed by the Cheda family to repay bridal cost Rs. 80,000/-

⁵³ *Ibid*

Now, the husband of Yadik Doka, Shri Nangram Karo, a casual labour of Civil Power Deptt. Itanagar, has appealed to Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women and Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society, expressing fear about the welfare of his wife and son and requesting the Commission and the NGO to intervene and ensure-

- (a) Giving him sufficient time to manage the amount of Rs. 80,000/- for repayment of bridal price.
- (b) Help him negotiate a reasonable bridal price
- (c) To ensure that mother and son are not sent to the Cheda's custody.

2. The "Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women" and "Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society", which in turn has sought the intervention of Deputy Commissioner East Kameng District vides their Fax letter No. Nil Dtd.28/3/2005. Accordingly, the Deputy Commissioner East Kameng has endorsed the case to Shri Tabing Yangfo, PA Seppa to settle the case through one of the PIs.

3. The Yallong for the dispute was held in District Commissioner's office Seppa on 28th March,2005 under the overall supervision of Shri Nisham Lamgu,PI. After prolong deliberation, the case was settle as below:

- (a) Smti. Yadik Doka and her four month child will not be handed over to the Cheda party. The husband of Smti. Yadik Doka Shri Nangram Karo will pay the bridal cost amounting Rs.50,000/- to the Cheda party. The payment will be made within month of April 2005.
- (b) If Nangram karo or the Doka party on his behalf fail to pay the bridal price of Rs.50,000/-, he will be handed over back to Cheda parties.

- (c) Shri Nangram Kora and the Doka party under took that commitment made by them as SL.No.: above will be fulfilled within the stipulated time.

4. hence, the case in between Tai Cheda and Smti. Yadik Doka disposes off.

Case No 9:

Sri Lukra Nguki father of Miss Rater Nguki of Nguki village under Dumporijo Police Station in the Upper Subansiri district entered into an agreement with one Sri Taluk Yudik for a child marriage of the daughter of the former namely Miss Rater Nguki with the son of the later Sri Tamir Yudik, during her childhood. As per customary practices and the agreement Sri Lukra Nguki took the bride price both in kinds with numbers of mithun and also in case from Sri Taluk Yudik. The father of Sri Tamir Yudik from time to time at various installments to give his daughter Miss Rater Nguki in child marriage with Sri Tamir Yudik.

Rater Nguki being a child was completely ignorant of the agreement of her father for her child marriage with Tamir Yudik. But when she attained puberty her father forced her to go to her matrimonial home and stay with Tamir Yudik. Rater Nguki then refused and wanted to repudiate her marriage and asked her father not to force her to enter into the marriage bondage against her will but no one of her family stood for her and in the year 2002 she was compelled to go to her matrimonial home against her will when still she was a minor. By that time Sri Tamir Yudik had already had married one Smt. Yalik Riba and they had one child out of their union. Sri Tamir Yudik refused to accept Rater Nguki. Then she came back to her paternal house and asked again her father to cancel her

child marriage. But the parents of both parties are adamant and wanted to fulfill their agreement at any cost and continued further transaction where again Rs. 8000 in case was taken by Sri Lukra Nguki from the father of the groom Sri Taluk Yudik to forcefully hand over his daughter to the groom's party.

Having known the facts and secret under standing of her parents with groom's father, Rater Nguki approached her other relatives for help but no one came forward to stand for her and ultimately feeling insecure in her own paternal home she left for Itanagar and brought the matter to the notice of the Honable Chairperson Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women who took cognizance of the matter and referred the case to the court for immediate steps.

The subimmison of Rater Nguki appears that she repudiates her child marriage and prays the court to prohibit her marriage and her parents be asked to return her bride price to the Yudik party. She further submits that she should be made free from the bondage of the child marriage enabling her to live with her personal liberty and dignity like any other citizen of the country.

The court order to free Rater Nguki from the bondage of child marriage and asked her bride price to be retuned back to Yudik party⁵⁴.

III

As far as violence particularly against women of the Tani groups is concerned, it is very difficult to draw a conclusion on the basis of official statistics, because only few

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

women came forward to report the crimes but most of the women suffer more violence silently. However, there are many problems in measuring the extent of violence intended against women. Firstly, for various reasons, most of the crimes against women go unreported, such as the attached social stigma, distrust of legal mechanisms, fear of retaliation, and so on. Secondly, some forms of the extent of violence remain unnoticed or hardly described as violence because they are to a great extent justified within the structure of the socially sanctioned value systems, beliefs and practices. Hence, most cases of violence are not reported to the police.

The tendencies to cause violence against women have generally social, cultural and psychological bases, for instances, feeling insecurities, drinking habits, to established superiority over a women etc.

Fatima Esham & Sarala Ranganatham opines that

“Combating violence against women requires challenging the way that the gender roles and power relations are articulated in society”.

The changing attitude and mentality towards women by growing awareness and educating men to view women as important partners in life or development of the society.

In the first two years of the establishment of Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women recorded the reported of cases of domestic violence in form of battery, insults, physical, mental harassment, torture and deprivation owing to multiple marriages, rape, gender discrimination etc.

The chairperson of Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women Jarjum Ete in a report entitled “status of women in tribal Arunachal” opines that

“the state still witnesses child rape, marital rapes, impregnation in confinement and not to mention polygamy.

‘In the last 19 years, we have seen Patriarchal, Patrilineal, Paralegal male dominated society,’

‘In my state when it comes to institution of marriage, we still have child marriage, forced marriage, multiple marriage and rape of young girls and in case women seek divorce because of incompatibility, because of domestic violence by the husband but she does not get divorce’.

‘In the worst case, marital rape is sanctioned by society in many tribes of the state and even if a woman complains, the penalty is minimal. All these had led to autonomous women organisations and movement for demand of codification of customary laws in April 1994,’

Female foeticide has been also happening in the state but the cases are not on record”.

The egalitarian society of Arunachal Pradesh has no record of female foeticide but there is a male child preference so much so that not bearing a son could be a reason for committing polygamy or divorcing a wife.

Even if customary practices are documented and codified and they become laws, there should be scope for the laws to be changed from time to time, she feels.

The essence of declaration by the tribal people was that tribal customary institutions of decision making bodies must be recognised by the states and that these institutions must have equal participation by women.

Women of tribal societies could benefit much from the protective statutory laws and provisions of the constitution but they would also be better off and on such grounds with their own customary practices”⁵⁵ .

To create an understanding on domestic violence Act among the women the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women in 2006 27th May and All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society October 21st 2008. As per the provisions of Rule 22 of the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women Act 2002 recommends for the issue of a government order to constitute the sexual harassment Complaint Committee in all the department agencies, public sector as well as private sector offices etc within a stipulated time frame of two months⁵⁶ .

Under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2005 appointment of Protection officers , qualified, sensitized and well trained in dealing with women victim of violence, was required to be expedited and the Government has taken some necessary

⁵⁵ Child Marriage, Rape, Female Feticide on rise in Arunachal, **Excelsior nation (PTI)**, Guwahati 21 April,2000

⁵⁶ Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women, **Combine Annual Report 2005-06 &2006-07**, *op.cit*,p.32

action towards the appointing the Child Development Project officers in the districts also as protection officers⁵⁷.

It is astonishing that the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 is yet to be given effect. It has to be come most imperative for the immediate implementation of this Act so that the position of the wratched women to some extent.

The Oju Welfare Assocation and the All Arunachal Pradesh Women's Welfare Society join hands together to bring pressure on the government to take step and stop illtreatment to women such as multiple marriages, child marriages, wife battering etc which is sanctioned by the customary law of the people⁵⁸.

However, it is noticed that there is a lack of knowledge and concern of about human rights of the women, the constitutional guarantees and laws of the land that protects the rights of citizens particularly the females among the Tani women. Moreover, now a day the Tani women are slowly and in a low margin coming forward to raise their voice against the violence they are suffering.

To substantiate our contentions we have cited here some twentyfive cases regarding the victimization of the Tani women. Of these the domestic violence appears to be very common while rape cases are few and sexual harrasement, kidnapping are also very few and far between. Violence inflicted on Tani women happens to be very common in the society. While prostitutions and child trafficking are almost minimal.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.31

⁵⁸ 'Stroming the male citadel in Arunachal', *Newsan*, *op.cit*

We do not find the operation of any principle in the cases above. Most of the violences took place on the spur of the moment.

However, the psychological impacts of these violences over the Tani women are irreparable. When the body and the mind are in constant threats it would not lead to any creative activities on the part of the Tani women. This is an area in which the entire people, the society and the government should put their heads together to eradicate it. It might be a herculean task because even in the twenty first century violence against women is still rampant. So to speak of women's status and position would be superfluous without attending the basic area of women's agonising maltreatment.

CHAPTER-V

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Knowledge is power. Education means to gain power in all fields of human activities. Homo sapiens are gendered in male and female. The later being of weak constitution generally occupies an inferior position. But as human being both occupy an important place in social formations. Progress in human society cannot be achieved with the men alone. Women must have a place of equal partnership. Thus women must occupy a position equal to that of men. This can be achieved only through the education of women.

I

Education encompasses both teaching and learning processes of knowledge to promote proper conduct and to achieve technical competency. It thus focuses on cultivation of skill, trades or professions as well as mental, moral and esthetic development.

Education has been recognized as essential agent of social change and development in any society. Moreover, it is a life long process for the development of individual harmonious personality which opens the door to life by widening one's vision, develops the sense of concerns towards the growth and development of the country.

The word 'education' implies the characteristics of both the types of knowledge, viz., material and spiritual¹. The Indian concept of education is well summarized by University Education Commission in the following words.²

“Education, according to Indian Tradition, is not merely a mean to earning a living; nor it is only a nursery of thought or a school for citizenship. It is imitation into the life of spirit, a training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue. It is a second birth, dvitiam jana”.

Education of Woman in India is confronted by various issues which are more often debatable (primary education, secondary education, tertiary education and health education in particular for women).Moreover, it includes areas of gender equality and access to education, and its connection to the improvement of poverty.

Education is an important indicator of women's development. It is also an important instrument for attaining economic power and independence, for it opens up opportunities that are linked with various levels of formal education through which subordination of women has to be intellectually perceived and gradually the process of subordination has to be removed³.

¹ N.L.Gupta, **Women Education Through Ages**, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2000, p15

² R. N. Safaya, and B.D Shaida, , **Development of Educational Theory and Practice**, seventeen edn., Dhanpat Rai Sons, Jalandhar, Delhi ,2000, p.3.

³ M.M.Rehman & K.Biswal, **Education, Work and Women**, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 1993, p.6

Women's access to education has been recognized as a fundamental right, for attaining economic power and independence, for it opens up various levels of opportunities and it is access among the goals of most developing countries. The benefits of educating women are manifold, ranging from improved productivity, income and economic development on the national level to a better quality of life on the individual level, notably a healthier and better nourished population and greater autonomy among women. Moreover, educating women is important for all kinds of demographic behavior, affecting mortality, health, fertility and contraception. In almost every setting, regardless of region, culture, or level of development, well- educated women are observed to have fewer children than do uneducated women⁴. Thus if a women is educated, she can benefit the children with her enlightenment and learning experiences. In her guidance entire family may be educated.

Realising the situation the University Education Commission [1948-49] has made some important observations regarding the need and importance of women's education.

“There cannot be an educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for then it would most surely be passed on to the next generation. General education is important not only for men but also for women; because it is the education that makes men's or women's

⁴S. Jejeebhoy, **Women's Education, Autonomy, and Reproductive Behaviour**, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p.2.

living interesting and intelligent. It also makes a person a good, useful and productive citizen of his society⁵”.

According to Jacqueline Chabaud

“The education of women has become a world-wide need. It is not a question of providing the rudiments of an education of humanitarian grounds; women must be given all the means of participating in the building of the world”⁶.

Education can empower the women to play important role in the development programme and to expand their economic opportunities and income generation ways and means, which help to achieve basic change in their status and acceleration of social transformation. Thus, social change is possible largely by educating women.

In the words of Altekar⁷,

“...denied the benefits of education, brought up in the authoritarian atmosphere, having no opportunities to develop their natural capacities and facilities, women became helpless, illiterate, narrow-minded and peevish, the theory of perpetual tutelage of women became more and more deep rooted in society”.

⁵ See, N.L. Gupta, **Women Education Through Ages**, *op.cit.*, p.11

⁶ *Ibid*, p.12

⁷ Quoted from S. Bora, ‘The Role of Education in Fashioning Women in the Brahmaputra Valley in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century’, in: **Proceedings of North East India History Association**, Presidential address, 26th session Nov 24-26, NEIHA, Kokrajar, 2005, p.3

The lack of education in women leads to an imbalance in the society. The Constitution of India and the legal structure grant women the privilege of equal rights with the same facilities of education, the same opportunities of profession and employment. However, lots of women are deprived of the basic right, mainly because majority of them are deprived of education in the concept of a weaker sex.

Stromquist discusses that:

*“Cultural norms and the division of labour within the home are two factors which effect women’s participation in education negatively and reinforce rather than challenge the sexual division of labour”*⁸

On November 7th 1967 the United nations adopted the ‘Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women’ Article 3 stipulates: “All appropriate measures shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women”⁹. But women happen to be the mirror of the society and so Ann Oakley says that:

*“Women’s formal education mirrors, rather than determines, their position in society”*¹⁰

⁸ See, A. Datta & S. Sinha, “Gender Disparities in Social Well –being : An Overview”, in: **Indian Journal of Gender Studies**, 4:1, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1997, p.56

⁹ N.I.Gupta, **Women Education Through Ages**, *op.cit.*, p.12

¹⁰ A. Oakley, **Subject Women**, Martin Robutson, Oxford, 1981, p.134

It is very difficult to give a proper picture of education among the Tani women in Arunachal Pradesh because of scarcity and fragmentary nature of relevant data. However, we would try to focus some of its aspects on these following heads:

A. Policies and Programmes of Women Education

B. Education in Arunachal Pradesh.

C. Literacy and Tani Women

II

A. Policies and Programmes of Women Education:

After independence the Government of India adopted many policies and programmes from time to time to promote women educationally. The Report of the Committee on Education of Women 1958-59 is the step ahead in part of the Government to realise the importance of girl's education.

The Education Commission, 1964-66 gives a serious concern over women education. It stated:

“For full development of our human resources, improvement of homes and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of even greater importance than that of men”¹¹.

The National policy on Education (NPE) of 1968 noted that:

¹¹ M.M.Rehman & K.Biswal, **Education, Work and Women**, *op.cit.*, p.25-26

“The education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on ground on social justice, but also it accelerates social transformation”¹².

However, the policy of 1968 did not furnish detailed on women education.

In May 1986¹³, the Government of India has adopted new policies for the upliftment of educational status of women.

“Education will be used as a argent of basic change in the status of women, in order to centralized the accumulated distortion of the past there will be a well conceived edge in favor of women, the rational educational system will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will frontier the development of new values through orient action of teachers”.

“The removal of women illiteracy obstacle in citing access to and retention in democracy education will receive over riding support service setting target and effective monitoring; major emphasis will be laid on women’s participation at different level the policy of non-discrimination will be persuaded vigorously to eliminate sex stereo typing in vocational and professional course and to promote women participation in non-traditional occupation”.

¹² **National Policy on Education 1968**, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Deptt. Of Education, Government of India,1977,p.5

¹³ **National Policy on Education 1986 as modified in 1992**, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Deptt. Of Education, Government of India1998, para 4.2 &4.3

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, and its Programme of Action [POA] revised in 1992, give a priority to be undertaken to increase women's educational opportunities which work for women's equality and empowerment. The Programme of Action envisages development of institutional/departmental plans for integrating gender concerns within the education sector. The POA, also, emphasizes inter sectorial collaboration and convergence of efforts of all concerned ministries of NGOs in promoting universal literacy and universalisation of primary education with focus on girl and women. The NPE and POA is to link education of girls and women to broader concerns of national development and to develop in them a culture of self-reliance, a positive self-image and the capacity to participate in decision making at all levels on an equal footing¹⁴.

The year from 1980's and 1990's witnessed the growth of more better information on women coming in through research-cum-activities efforts and the rise of women's study to analyze, generate and support action.

III

B. EDUCATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH:

Till very recent times, the people of Arunachal Pradesh were unfamiliar with the written form of language. Except Buddhist tribes of Kameng District and Lower Lohit valley, other tribes did not have their own scripts. Monasteries provided religious

¹⁴ **National Policy on Education 1986- Programme of Action 1992**, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Deptt. Of Education, Government of India, 1992.

instructions in Tibetan language in Kameng region and Khamtis got these traditions from its Tai ancestors in Burma¹⁵.

Since there is no formal educational institution, knowledge was passed from generation to generation, through oral histories and learning by doing from the elders. A girl child follow and learns from her mother and other women folks of the family in various household activities such as weaving, cooking, brewing wine (opong) etc. Moreover, community institutions for instances like *Musup* and *Raseng* among the Adis etc played an important role in teaching both young men and women the responsibilities that were relevant to their needs. From knowledge of farming, hunting, of conservation, of herbs and medicinal plants, were all passes down from one generation to the next. The institutions like *Kebang* of the Adis, *Buliang* of the Apatanis, *Nyelley* of the Nyishis, etc help in imparting knowledge to the youths.

The colonial state never made any effort to introduce education in the then NEFA. Their main interest in this region was to keep some minimal political influence over the village heads by recognizing them as the authority of traditional political system for safeguarding their territory from possible Chinese intrusion¹⁶. However, they did not extend any administrative headquarters beyond Pasighat.

During the Post Independence period the Government of India introduce an integrated and wide spread nature of policy and programmes in Arunachal Pradesh. The main aim of the integrated policy includes that apart from the teachers the political

¹⁵ **Arunachal Pradesh Human Development Report 2005**, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Department of Planning, Itanagar, 2006, p.19.

¹⁶ J. Begi, **Education In Arunachal Pradesh since 1947{Constraints, Opportunities, Initiatives And Needs}**, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 2007, p27

officers and their educated staff will teach the tribesmen to develop love and loyalty to the Indian nation. At the same time they also teach to build up and manage their village council for judicial and developmental work, to inspire them with the ideas of equality, justice, cleanliness, cultivations, construction of house and road, safeguard the environment¹⁷ etc were introduced to create a familiar surroundings.

To keep away from the rapid growth of detribalization the Government of India promotes the educational policies in Arunachal Pradesh very cautiously and slowly. We may quote here what Elwin said:

*“Tribal education is a difficult and risky enterprise, and the Administration is wisely promoting it with caution”*¹⁸.

The nature of integrated policy to the familiar conditions of the tribesmen is not a breakthrough step for the development of education in Arunachal Pradesh. Its root can be found in the guidelines of resolutions on the Indian educational system. Though many educational policies came into existence, Arunachal Pradesh followed the goals and objectives of National Policies of Education of 1968 and 1986 because of certain issues like affiliation, political and administrative growth etc. However in accordance with the National Policy (1986) on Education and the overall needs of educational development in the state, its priority areas and programmes are:

- a. universalisation of elementary education
- b. eradication of illiteracy; and

¹⁷ V.Elwin, **A Philosophy of NEFA**, Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1988, p.190-191

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p191

c. promotion of education for girls.

The impact of the National policy on Education 1986 can be noticed in the state educational system some of the major recommendations being realized are:

- i. introduction of new curriculum;
- ii. up gradation of the Teacher's Training Institute at Changlang to the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET).
- iii. implementation of operation black board scheme.
- iv. adoption of measures to reform the examination system;
- v. introduction of pre-vocational courses at the secondary stage;
- vi. orientation programme for teaching and supervisory staff with regard to the introduction of the new curriculum;
- vii. introduction of work experience; and
- viii. improvement of the teaching of science and mathematics.

The formation of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, in 1972, it created different committees and Commissions and appointed officials to execute above mentioned programmes to check educational developmental in the state.

However Arunachal government had launched an innovative scheme under which an amount of Rs 5,000 will be kept in fixed deposits for 50 girls each studying in class VI in every district¹⁹.

¹⁹ **The Assam Tribune**, Wednesday, July 18, 2007, Guwahati, p.7

The scheme was launched by CM Dorjee Khandu at a function for Sarva Shiksha Aviyan [SSA]programme to make Arunachal Pradesh a 100 percent literate State by 2010.

Arunachal has attained 54.74percent literacy rate, having 44percent women literacy.

The SSA, since its inception in 2001, raised the number of schools from 1,126b to 2,236²⁰.

Altogether 3,464 teachers had been appointed and 276 cluster and block resource centers set up²¹.

A.(i) Educational Development from 1947:

Before independence few schools were established due to local initiatives in the areas located in Pasighat,(1918), Ningroo(1934), Bolung(1940), Riga(1940), Dambuk(1945), Balek(1946), Yomcha(1947), Along(1947), Pangin(1947), Ledum(1947), and Dirang (1947) ²².

In 1947, Indira Miri is appointed as the education officer with headquarters at Sadiya Frontier Tract²³. The first Teacher's Training Institute was also established in December, 1947 for training of teachers from for the spread of education in the interior areas. The trained teachers from this institute were sent for opening of new schools. In

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ *Ibid*

²² J. Begi, **Education In Arunachal Pradesh since 1947{Constraints,Opportunities, Initiatives And Needs}**, *op.cit.*,p.29

²³ S.Dutta Choudhury,**Gazetteer of India,Arunachal Pradesh, Subansiri District**,Government of Arunachal Pradesh,1981,p.293

the great flood of 1952 caused damages to the town of Sadiya with the result the Education Department and the teachers Training Institute were shifted to Margherita in Assam in 1952 and the latter was finally shifted to Changlang in the Tirap District. Institute was later renamed as Buniadi Siksha Bhavan²⁴.

The post of Director of Education was later converted into that of Director of Public Instruction, and appointed to the new post was made in 1977²⁵. From then now, the Director of Education was later converted into that of activities of the Director of Education under the administrative control of a Secretary[Education].The Education Department in the districts is placed under the control of the concerned Deputy Commissioners, who in their respective jurisdictions are assisted by a District Education Officer and Principals for management of the educational institutions and implementations of schemes and programmes to promote education among the Arunachal people²⁶.

Till 1947, District of Subansiri remained as an area of darkness as far as education is concerned. As the local people are less interested in having education, thus the attendance in school was poor. Only a few Nishis living along the foothill areas received little primary education at some places in North Lakhimpur in Assam. The educational activities of the Baptist Mission were confined to small areas of Upper Assam. But in the year, 1948-49, in Subansiri district, two lower Primary schools at Kore and Pap [Ziro]

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and west Siang district**, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1994, p.269

²⁶ *Ibid*

were opened by Kandarpa Nath Ojha and Probhat Chandra Saikia who were the first two school teachers in the Subansiri district²⁷. Ojha died of malaria in July 1949 and the school at Kore was closed. The other school at Pap was gutted by fire on 11th June, 1949, after this incident the school was closed and the teacher was transferred to Doimukh to start a new lower Primary school there in August 1947²⁸. With the opening of an administrative centre at Ziro another new school was established.

In 1952, a new school opened at Mechuka. However, in the following years up to 1956, nine new schools were opened at different places. The total number of schools rose to thirty. Moreover, the four schools which were closed earlier were reopened. Towards the end of the First Five Year Plan [1951-1956], thirty-five schools were operated in the area.

Twenty two out of thirty-five schools were in the erstwhile Pasighat sub-division²⁹.

A lower Primary school at Daporijo was for the first time established in 1957. Till the end of the second Five Year Plan in 1960-61 there were only two schools in this sub-division. During the third Five Year Plan in 1960-61, 12 new schools were reopened and two existing Primary schools were upgraded to Middle and High school standards respectively.

In the year 1968-69 there were 19 schools, which is now upgraded to Higher Secondary school, one Middle school and 17 Lower Primary schools in the sub-division.

²⁷ S.Dutta Choudhury, *Gazetteer of India, Arunachal Pradesh, Subansiri District*, op.cit,p.293

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ *Ibid*

By the end of the fourth Five Year Plan in 1973-74, the total number of schools rose to 25 comprising one Higher Secondary, two Middle and 22 lower Primary Schools³⁰.

Year	Number	Of Educational Institutions				Number of Student		
		Middle School	Junior Basic/ Primary School	Nursery Pre-primary School	Total	Boys	Girl	Total
1972- 73	3	9	78	-	90	5,141	1,039	6,180
1973- 74	3	9	78	-	90	5,496	1,348	6,844
1974- 75	4	14	88	1	107	6,595	1,841	8,438
1975-76	4	19	103	2	128	5,990	1,459	7,449
1976-77	4	18	129	2	153	6,668	1,941	8,609
1977- 78	5	21	153	4	183	9,049	2,648	1,16,977
1978- 79	5	26	167	8	206	8,236	2,981	1,12,177

Source: [S.Dutta Choudhury, *Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and west Siang district*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1994, p.269]

School	Number
Pre-Primary	10
Junior Basic	178
Middle	27
Secondary	3
Higher Secondary	4
Total	222

Source: [S.Dutta Choudhury, *Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and West Siang district*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1994, p.269]

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.294

Besides these educational institutions, the district has a central school at old Itanagar and two Vivekananda Kendra Primary Schools³¹.

In the year 1977-78 number of girl student in the district was 2648 as against boy students 9046³². Places like Ziro, Daporijo and Doimukh are having girl hostel facilities in Higher Secondary schools.

Both in the East and West Siang districts has a District Education officer, who is in charge of all primary, Middle and secondary schools in his district with their headquarters at Pasighat and Along respectively. The District Education Officers are assisted by the Assistant district Education Officers posted in district and sub-divisional headquarters. The Secondary Schools are looked after by Headmasters³³.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid*,p.301

³³ S.Dutta Choudhury, **Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and West Siang district**, *op.cit.*,p.266

Table 5.3: Number of educational institutions and students in East Siang and West Siang districts :1974 to 1981									
Number of Educational Institutions							Number of Students		
Year	College	Higher Secondary/ Secondary school	Middle School	Junior Basic/ Primary School	Nursery/ Pre-Primary School	Total	Boy	Girl	Total
1974-75	1	6	22	167	2	198	0998	880	14,878
1975-76	1	7	31	181	2	222	9,573	3,940	13,513
1976-77	1	7	33	198	1	240	11,335	5,021	16,356
1977-78	1	10	35	213	4	263	12,094	5,998	18,092
1978-79	1	10	37	227	8	283	12,716	6,504	19,220
1979-80	1	10	39	237	10	297	-	-	21,000
1980-81	1	12	38	242	10	303	15,397	8,297	23,694

Source: [S.Dutta Choudhury, *Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and west Siang district*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1994, p.269]

Table 5.4: Educational institutions between the two districts of Siang as in March 1984			
Institutions	Number[as in March 1984]		
	East Siang	West Siang	Total
College	1	-	1
Higher Secondary School	3	3	6
Secondary School	7	5	12
Middle school	15	24	39
Junior basic/ Primary School	102	139	241
Pre-Primary School	28	20	48
Ramkrishna Mission School	-	1	1
Vivekananda Kendra Primary/Middle School	1	1	2
Assam Rifles School	-	1	1
Other Schools	1	1	2
Total	158	195	353

Source:[S.Dutta Choudhury,*Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and west Siang district*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1994,p.269]

Table 5.5: Number of students and teachers in the schools of East Siang and West Siang district as in 1983-84.		
Districts	Students	Teachers
East Siang District	14,270	936
West Siang District	14,730	574
Total	29,000	1,510

Source:[S.Dutta Choudhury,*Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh East Siang and west Siang district*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1994,p.269]

With the advance of time people gradually realized the importance of acquiring education. They took initiatives to open more schools in their areas. They established some schools by their own initiative at Along, Daring, Tirbin and Tabasora. The first two schools were taken over by the administration.

During the five years Plan period [1956-1961], three new Lower Primary schools were opened besides establishment of inter-village residential schools at Along, Basar, and Mechuka. In the year 1981 Siang area have two towns, Pasighat and Along all areas are rural. Therefore it envisaged that instead of having many scattered schools, it would better to have a few centrally situated inter-village residential schools. The students admitted into these schools were given free educational and boarding facilities.

As the number of schools increased and higher classes were opened in these schools, requirement of trained teachers became imperative. It was decided that the Lower Primary schools would be gradually converted into Basic schools. In order to implement this decision, steps were taken to depute the existing teachers to the Buniadi Siksha Bhavan at Changlang for basic reading. Additional teachers including local young men trained in Junior Basic courses were also introduced to strengthen the position of teaching staff in initial stages of educational activities in this region is that they could not converse with the local students freely for they did not have any knowledge of tribal dialects. The problem is initially solved when more and more veteran and trained teachers learned the dialects.

The Five Year Plan included following programme [1961-66]:

1. Opening of 10 Lower Primary Schools in border areas,

2. Conversion of six Lower Primary schools into basic pattern schools,
3. Upgrading of two Lower primary schools to high Schools
4. conversion of some Lower Primary Schools to inter-village residential schools, and
5. Upgrading of the High school at Along to Higher Secondary school.

The first college was established at Pasighat in 1965 in Arunachal Pradesh.

During the following Five Year periods, all out measures were taken to consolidate the achievements already made and extend educational facilities to a greater section of the people through opening of new schools. By the month of March 1979, there were altogether 283³⁴ educational institutions in Siang.

Table 5.6: Educational Institutions in Arunachal Pradesh by type in rural and urban areas in year 2007-08								
Type of School	School Categories					All Other Categories	No Response	All Schools
	Primary Only	Primary With Up. Primary	Primary with U. Pr. & Sec/H. Sec	Upper Primary Only	Upper Primary with Sec. / H. Sec			
East Kameng District								
Girls	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Co-Educational	144	33	11	0	1	92	0	281
Total	145	34	12	0	1	92	0	24

³⁴ *Ibid*,267

East Siang District								
Girls	4	2	0	3	0	0	0	9
Co-Educational	100	62	9	2	6	76	0	255
Total	104	64	9	5	6	76	0	264

Table 5.6: continued from previous page								
Type of School	School Categories					All Other Categories	No Response	All Schools
	Primary Only	Primary With Up. Primary	Primary with U. Pr. & Sec/H. Sec	Upper Primary Only	Upper Primary with Sec. / H. Sec			
Kurung Kumey District								
Girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Co-Educational	80	38	4	0	0	271	0	393
Total	80	38	4	0	0	271	0	393
Lower Dibang Valley District								
Girls	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Co-Educational	40	19	10	0	3	78	0	150
Total	41	19	10	0	3	78	0	151
Lower Subansiri District								
Girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Co-Educational	84	52	11	0	5	267	0	419
Total	84	52	11	0	5	267	0	419
Papum Pare District								

Girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Co-Educational	139	64	22	0	1	358	0	584
Total	139	64	22	0	1	358	0	584
Upper Siang District								
Girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Co-Educational	60	18	4	2	4	65	0	153
Total	60	18	4	2	4	65	0	153
Upper Subansiri District								
Girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Co-Educational	101	57	9	0	2	259	0	428
Total	101	57	9	0	2	259	0	428

Table 5.6: continued from previous page								
Type of School	School Categories					All Other Categories	No Response	All Schools
	Primary Only	Primary With Up. Primary	Primary with U. Pr. & Sec/H. Sec	Upper Primary Only	Upper Primary with Sec. / H. Sec			
West Siang District								
Girls	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Co-Educational	185	65	20	0	3	140	0	413
Total	185	65	21	1	3	140	0	415

Source:[NIEPA, New Delhi,2007-2008]

IV

C. LITERACY AMONG THE TANI WOMEN:

If literacy is the criterion for education it may be said that the women literacy among the Tani groups is low because of various reasons.

In the traditional society, the scope of learning of a girl is very limited as it has to go by the social norms, customs and traditions in the society. Her behaviour and activities are controlled by the parents and elders. Her childhood period is generally passed through by doing assigned jobs like taking care of and looking after the baby, bringing water and firewood, drying up the grains etc. When she attains the age of 10 or 11 she helps her parents and family members in agricultural fields. Gradually in course of time she plays the role of wife and mother.

Moreover, parents are not willing to send girls to school and preferred boys in having education, since the daughters are to be cared by their husbands. Moreover, the practice of child marriage is another hindrance in the path of girls' education because neither they get chance to go to school before marriage nor from their husband after getting married. Marriage is another stumbling block in the girls' education. Sometimes the poor economic condition of the parents stood in the way of girls' education.

While interviewed with Khoshi³⁵, her case gave a clear evidence of how women education was not welcomed in her society. She had a great will to go to school during

³⁵ Interviewed with Khoshi 22.8.2008.

childhood, but could not do so since her mother threatened her to commit suicide if she did so. Finally she has to give up her studies.

Anya speaks that though she is very much interested in attending but she have to take care of her sister as her parents go for field works. But when she looks at her brother going to school she feels happy³⁶.

Yade wants to complete her education, now she is in class eight and wants to become a doctor. Her parents are also supporting her³⁷.

The experience gathered from the interviews is quite revealing. Learning or for that matter going to school is appears to be somewhat incongruous in the typical tribal life. This happens in the case of all first generation learners in which the parents did not understand anything of reading or writing. Hence obstacles are galore for them. It was in the past but in the modern times this situation no longer remains.

In the census of 1961, the Women rate in literacy is 0-41 percent. The district of Kameng is having highest female literacy level and Subansiri is lowest female literacy rate. The year 1971 witnessed the increase of literacy among the female as compared to 1961. Siang reported the highest literacy rate and Subansiri reported the lowest respectively.

³⁶ Interviewed with Anya, 22.8.2008

³⁷ Interviewed with Yade, 22.8.2008

The Table shows 1991 literates exclude children in the age group 0-6. It reported highest female literacy in Lower Subansiri and lowest East Kameng followed by Upper Subansiri respectively.

According to the census 2001, the Women literacy rate in Arunachal Pradesh is 43.5 per cent, lower than the national average of 53.70 per cent. However from only 14.02 per cent in 1981 to 43.5 per cent in 2001 the state of Arunachal Pradesh made a rapid progress in women's literacy. Although the State has made progress but there are distinct variations in women's literacy. It ranges from 60.4 per cent in Papum Pare to 28.6 per cent in East Kameng District. West Siang and East Siang are with comparatively high female literacy levels. The urban and rural gap in female literacy is lowest in East Siang district. The gap is highest in Lower Subansiri and Dibang valley.

Table 5.7: Showing literacy percentage (including 0-4 years population) of Scheduled Tribes from 1961 to 1971							
SCHEDULED TRIBES							
Arunachal Pradesh/District		1971			1961		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Arunachal Pradesh (Overall)	Total	5.20	8.72	1.70	2.51	4.62	0.41
	Rural	4.91	8.31	1.56	2.51	4.62	0.41
	Urban	34.85	46.82	19.22	-	-	-
Kameng	Total	2.96	5.18	1.31	1.98	3.43	0.54
	Rural	3.04	4.88	1.16	1.98	3.43	0.54
	Urban	33.00	41.91	22.37	-	-	-

Subansiri	Total	3.16	3.64	0.72	0.86	1.66	0.08
	Rural	3.16	3.64	0.72	0.86	1.66	0.08
	Urban	-	-	-	-	-	-
Siang	Total	7.71	12.91	2.61	3.69	6.87	0.52
	Rural	6.96	11.80	2.25	3.69	6.87	0.52
	Urban	37.09	49.58	19.77	-	-	-

Source:[Census of India 1971,Arunachal Pradesh]

Table 5.8: Showing district- wise literate population: 1991			
District	Persons	Males	Females
East Kameng	10,260	7,573	2,687
Lower Subansiri	50,614	33,015	17,599
Upper Subansiri	14,599	9,743	4,856
West Siang	32,292	20,951	11,341
East Siang	35,782	23,576	12,206
Dibang Valley	16,218	11,301	4,917

Source: [Census of India, 1991, Arunachal Pradesh]

Table 5.9: Showing female literacy rate(2001)of both rural and urban areas				
Districts	LITERACY RATE (FEMALE)			Urban-Rural Gap
	Total	Rural	Urban	
East Kameng	28.6	20.8	52.7	31.9
Papum Pare	60.4	49	71.3	22.3

1	East Kameng	0	151	0	6999	0	5692
2	East Siang	0	152	0	9920	0	8882
3	Kurung Kumey	0	102	0	5062	0	4028
4	Lower Dibang Valley	0	73	0	5857	0	4741
5	Lower Subansiri	0	170	0	6434	0	5820
6	Papum Pare	0	144	0	12306	0	11180
7	Upper Siang	0	80	0	3590	0	3504
8	Upper Subansiri	0	218	0	7826	0	7201
9	West Siang	0	265	0	12280	0	12351

Source:[NIEPA, New Delhi,2003-2004 & 2004-2005]

District	Year	School	Boys	Girls
Lower Dibang Valley	2006-7	78	6110	5145
	2007-8	151	6642	5522
East Kameng	2006-7	68	727	702
	2007-8	70	753	705
East Siang	2006-7	163	5796	5373
	2007-8	284	5373	7292
Kurung Kumey	2006-7	208	6460	5622
	2007-8	264	11547	12557
Lower Subansiri	2006-7	322	9872	9758
	2007-8	393	5622	9992
Papum Pare	2006-7	194	16127	15520

	2007-8	419	8695	8188
Upper Siang	2006-7	107	6687	6498
	2007-8	584	25951	24705
Upper Subansiri	2006-7	396	9293	8700
	2007-8	428	11842	11240
West Siang	2006-7	349	13582	13566
	2007-8	415	15306	15322

Source:[NIEPA, New Delhi,2006-2007 & 2007-2008]

In the year 2004-05 within the age group of 1-8 years, the highest enrolment is reported in West Siang , Papum Pare , East Siang respectively and lowest in Upper Siang. In the year 2006-07 highest enrolment was in Papum Pare district and Lowest in East Kameng district. In the year 2007-08 it was highest in Upper Siang district and lowest in East Kameng district respectively.

However, from the year 2004- 08 the enrolment of the female child reported to have been increasing. By 2007-08 the spread of enrolment of the female child was gaining momentum. A consciousness appears in the minds of the illiterate parents about the impact of going to school for learning. They came to realize that education is something which will largely shape the lives of their daughters. So we find that Yania a mother of two daughter expressed her great desire that she wants her daughters are to be educated aiming at civil services³⁸.

³⁸ Interviewed with Yania , 23.10.2008

C.(ii) *Drop Out of schools:*

Inspite of the increase in the enrolment there were considerable drop outs in the schools. The reason might be various as given in this chapter elsewhere. Therefore the hounarable MLA RT khunjuju commented on 22nd Oct 2008 in a facilitation function about the girls getting educated.He observed that educating a girl is equivalent to educating a family³⁹. Another speaker B N Lendo said that in order to promote girls education and to contain dropout rates and encouraging girls to pursue higher studies the Pratibha Khoj was introduced by the government in 2002⁴⁰. Yet another speaker Rinchin Tashi lamented over the performance of the district head quarters in spite of all facilities and necessary infrastructure made available⁴¹.

Table 5.12: District-wise girls drop outs in the year 2006- 07 age groups from 6-10 and 11-13			
		S T	
District	Age Group	Boys	Girls
Lower Dibang Valley	6-10	182	164
	11-13	128	151
East Kameng	6-10	39	35
	11-13	52	44
East Siang	6-10	4	6
	11-13	1	6

³⁹ **The Arunachal Times**, Thursday, Oct 23, 2008,p.1

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ *Ibid*

Kurung Kumey	6-10	540	511
	11-13	665	575
Lower Subansiri	6-10	96	96
	11-13	40	33
Papum pare	6-10	119	104
	11-13	172	153
Upper Siang	6-10	110	120
	11-13	226	195
Upper Subansiri	6-10	0	0
	11-13	0	0
West Siang	6-10	45	53
	11-13	55	40

Source:[NIEPA, New Delhi,2006-2007]

Table 5.13: District-wise girls drop outs in the year 2007-08 age groups from 6-10 and 11-13			
District	Age Group	Boys	Girls
Lower Dibang Valley	6-10	21	23
	11-13	26	23
East Kameng	6-10	116	119
	11-13	65	51
East Siang	6-10	7	4
	11-13	1	1

Kurung Kumey	6-10	436	380
	11-13	530	460
Lower Subansiri	6-10	56	56
	11-13	24	12
Papum Pare	6-10	119	135
	11-13	179	157
Upper Siang	6-10	71	71
	11-13	99	88
Upper Subansiri	6-10	68	69
	11-13	35	29
West Siang	6-10	40	51
	11-13	32	21

Source: [NIEPA, New Delhi,2007-2008]

The drop out of girl children in the year 2006-07 in the age group 6-10 years is the highest in Kurung Kumey district. The drop outs were less in number in the district of East Siang . In the age group of 11-13 years, the district of Kurung Kumey reported to have been the highest followed by Upper Siang, Lower Dibang Valley and Papum Pare and East Siang where the drop outs were very low.

In the year 2007-08 the age group of 6-10 years the drop out is highest in Kurung Kumey district and lowest in East Siang district. In the same year in age group of 11-13 years the Kurung Kumey district witnessed the highest drop outs and lowest in East Siang

district, next followed by Lower Subansiri district. However the drop out of girl children in the age group of 11-13 years is substantially higher than in the age group of 6-10 years. In the year 2007-08 the drop outs of girls is the lowest as compare with the year 2006-07.

School droup out is a general phenomenon not only in the Tani society but in many rural areas of India as well. We have attempted to find out the reasons for drop outs but it is more or less the same among the different Tani groups. Some times the distance of the school also becomes a hurdle and it contributes to the drop outs as said by taru who failed to go for further education from the primary level to the upper primary level⁴².

Sl.no	Reasons for drop out	Tribe Name
1.	Marriage & school far away	Nyshi
2.	Household work & Marriage	Nyshi
3.	Poor condition of household	Adi
4.	School far away	Tagin
5	Marriage & household works	Hill Miri
6.	Poor condition of household	Hill Miri
7.	Household work load	Apatani

Source: [Computed from field data]

V

It can be said that the Tani still have a primitive patriarchal society with very little change in matters of live and living. Here the geographical isolation is the main factor of

⁴² Interviewed with Taru, 23.10.2008

impediment in the development of women education as seen in Tani groups of women of Arunachal Pradesh.

In spite of the the New Policy on education,efforts made by the Governmental, non-governmental organizations and various private bodies, the women literacy remains low among the Tani women's.

Since 1980s there has been a growth of educational opportunities in Arunachal Pradesh but the growth of education among the girls is still slow mainly due to lack of specific educational programmes for spearheading girls education. The gender bias and discrimination in educational attainment in different dimensions towards women are still continuing to act as barriers to gender equality.

Modern education changed the outlook, now women became conscious about the equal right and privileges with there male counterparts. Women too became aware about their position in their society as well as outside world. The women now started questioning their subordinated position in the society and initiated programmes for upliftment of traditional society by eradicating social evils and customary practices of the societies such as child marriage, polygamous marriages, force marriages, payment of bride price etc. Now they are taking up jobs in different fields and became economically independence. As such there involvement in economic, political socio-cultural affairs has increased to a great extent.The spirit of enquire is being now cultivated leading to a new regeneration among the Tani women.

Independent India is giving due attention to such problems and is trying the best to remove the hindrances faced by the women kind. Thus there is a constitutional

provision under Article 46 that declares, “The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations”.

However the establishment and expansion of systems of modern and formal education is one of the significant accomplishments during the last 50 years. It has made a far- reaching impact on the people, and on the society. Education has brought a momentous change in the lives of the Tani women, bringing with it new knowledge and ideas. It has empowered them, instilled confidence, and encouraged them to tread new roads. These changes have taken place in an extremely short span of time, at best over a couple of generations, and have made considerable impact on social relationships and society in an irreversible manner. Now the Tani women became more career conscious. Whether in politics or in social concerns Tani women have already occupied a forefront. This is being discussed more elaborately in chapter six with regard to empowerment of women.

CHAPTER-VI

WOMEN AND EMPOWERMENT

I

Empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985. The conference defined empowerment as a redistribution of social power and control of resources.

Thus Empowerment may be termed as

'the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power'¹.

Thus empowerment is both a process and the result of that process. It is however, manifested as a redistribution of power, whether between nations, classes, castes, races, gender, or individuals².

Empowerment refers to a series of activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenged basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resource and power, their empowerment begins when they not only recognize the systematic forces that oppress them, but act to change existing power relationships. Therefore, empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of

¹ **Gender Issues In Population Studies**, International Institute for population Sciences (Deemed University), Department of Extra Mural Studies, November 2004, p.36

² *Ibid*

systematic forces, which marginalized women and other disadvantaged groups in a given context³.

The term empowerment is used to change the social and economic institutions that embody the basic and unequal power structures in society, whether between individual men and women or groups of people⁴. The process of empowerment involves not just an improvement in physical and social conditions, but also equal participation in decision- making processes, control over resources and mechanisms sustaining these gains.

Andre Beteille describes that:

*“The idea of empowerment may be invoked in virtually any context: in speaking about human rights, about basic needs, about economic security, about capacity building, about skill formation or about the conditions of a dignified social existence”*⁵.

Moreover, the focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis in the building of economic and social capabilities among individuals, classes and communities⁶.

Empowerment enables women to realize their full potential for their own self development as well as for the benefit of the society. Thus, empowerment is a very

³ *Ibid*

⁴ N. Rao, ‘Empowerment through Organisation: Women Workers in the Informal sector’ in: **Indian Journal Of Gender Studies**,3:2 ,New Delhi,1996,p.173

⁵ A. Beteille, ‘Empowerment’,in: **Economic and Political Weekly**,March6-13,1999,p.590

⁶ *Ibid*

broadly term as it includes all types of empowerment such as educational, economic, social, political, legal and cultural empowerment of women⁷.

However, the goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology; to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality and to enable poor women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources⁸. Patriarchy which perpetuates male dominance in the home, at work place, unequal man-women relationships, male control of women's sexuality, and gender based subordination in religion and culture⁹. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women.

Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) and onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent times, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in local bodies

⁷ K Shanthi, ed., **Empowerment of Women**, Anmol Publication Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1998, p.3

⁸ **Gender Issues In Population Studies**, *op.cit.*

⁹ C. Bulbeck, **One World Women's Movement**, Ajanta Publication, New Delhi, 1988, p.20

of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels¹⁰.

The decade from 1975-85 was declared as the Decade for Women by the United Nations. For the first time there was an official recognition to consider the relationship between development and gender with the question of women's empowerment emerging. Now empowerment implies changed in gender relations, such as greater control of women over greater physical security and greater reproductive control- issues that household decision- making, greater reproductive control- issues that cannot be addressed in terms of economic self-sufficiency¹¹. Here women empowerment means to achieve equality with men or at least to reduce gender gap considerably. In this chapter a focuses being is made to show as to how the women of the Tani groups realize their own capacities and power to face challenges to overcome social and cultural barriers. We shall limit our discussion within the following heads:

A.Educational Empowerment

B.Economic Empowerment

C.Political Empowerment

¹⁰Na tional Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001,para 15.1.

¹¹ S. Bora, 'The Role of Education in Fashioning Women in the Brahmaputra Valley in the Early Twentieth Century', in:**Proceedings North East India Histroy Association**,North East India History Association Presidential Address,26 session, November 24-26,2005,Kokrajhar,p.2

II

A. EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT:

Education is a powerful instrument which enables women to gain more knowledge about the outside world, enhancing skills, self image and self confidence. Without education empowerment to women would be superfluous. To understand the status and the rights it is imperative that women must have education. Therefore; empowerment and status are intrinsically linked to women's education in proper perspective.

A.(i) *Tani Women in Decision Making:*

Among the Tani groups the elderly males or the males of the household play a key role in the decision making processes. It is due to the male dominance which is found to be quite over bearing. Though within the community the women enjoy some control over the decisions taken within the household, but this is just limited. However with the changing views among the new generation and followed by the disintegration of the family system, the balance of power and authority have changed within and outside the household.

We would relate here such a change as we derived it from our field experience. A Tani woman can take decision independently. Sometimes and on occasions, the Tani

woman can take decision independently when she is living apart from her husband¹².But this is not universal applicable.

However, the decision making process among the Tani groups of women widely varies according to the position they hold in the household. A Nishi woman even though may be service holder and married cannot take decisions herself without consulting her husband on all important matters. The same in the case with the Nishi woman married and she happens to be a vegetable seller. An Adi woman married but carrying business does not have the right to take important decisions without her husband's consent. In case of the Hill Miri, the married woman has to depend upon her husband to take important decisions in matters what so ever.

Ofcourse in case of Apatani woman unmarried but may be service holder have to depend upon her parents for any important decision.

This then is the picture of the decision making process among the Tani women. Though time has changed yet modernity has not set in the social milieu of these groups of people. This is certainly an impediment in the empowerment of women as well as is their status.

However, it is a general rule rather than an exception that most of the Tani women consult along with their husband before taking any important decision and the unmarried girls have to go with their parents.

¹² Interviewed with Khoshi , Seppa, 22-8-2008.

A.(ii) *Women Movement:*

With the impact of education Tani Women became aware about there position in their society as well as outside world. The women now started questioning about their subordinate position in the society.They initiated programmes to bring out a change in their egalitarian society.They took up measures to eradicate social evils and customary practices. The child marriage, polygamous marriages, forced marriages, payment of bride price were a bane in their social upliftments. Now attempt have been made to remove such hindrances through voluntary organizations and NGO's. Thus this educated women started movement to assert their right in every sphere of the society by raising voice against the traditional practices.

Women's movements are associated with a broad range of struggles for national liberation, human rights and for the democratic principles¹³.

Women's movements have organized into in multiple arenas; they have addressed a range of issues. These issues cluster round some broad themes: these include Women's legal and political rights, violence against women, reproductive choice and abortion, sexual freedom, employment opportunities and discrimination and women's political participation and representation¹⁴.

In the post colonial world, nationalist movements often provide opportunities for large scale women's activism. With this comes the recognition of gender specific grievances and concerns.

¹³ A. Basu,ed.,**The Challenge of Local feminisms: Women`s Movements in Global Perspective**,2nd impression,Westview Press,2001,p.9

¹⁴ *Ibid*,p.11

The idea is to fight against domination, discrimination and subordination. By this movement the women question the conventional and traditional attitude of society and men towards women.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the women movement had started in the early part of 1972 in a modest way. However, earlier to that the three tier *Panchayati Raj* Act of 1967, implemented in 1969 has given ample scope to the members of the Pradesh council, to prepare plan scheme for all round development of the hilly territory as per their own thoughts and objectives. Since then various developmental projects were framed and implemented from time to time for upliftment of the woman, children and rural people when the then North East Frontier Agency[NEFA] was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh and attained the status of union territory on 20th January 1972¹⁵.

The women movement in Arunachal Pradesh is lead by various socio-cultural and voluntary organizations constituted with educated and enlighten women folks. These organizations are of different status such as district, sub-divisional and village level etc. There is at least one central women organization in each tribe. Te state level organization is known as ‘All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society’ with representative of all the indigenou tribes of the state.

Among the Tani group of tribe comprising of Adi, Apa Tani, Nishi, Tagin, Hill Miris, their movements are more prominent compare to that of the other tribes. In the school magazine of the Government Higher Secondary School, Daporijo, a student of class XI science stream Ms. Yanu Batak condemned the child marriage practices and questioned

¹⁵ B.B.Pandey,ed.,**Status of Women in Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**,Directorate of Research,Government of Arunachal Pradesh,Itanagar,1997,p.xi

as to why the parents give more preference to males in terms of education and other prospects¹⁶.

A.(iii) *All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society (AAPWS):*

The 'All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society' came into existence on 10th October 1979, at the capital Itanagar. This was initiated by some wives of the IAS officers. The purpose was to fight against the evils which the Arunachalee women were suffering in the society. Moreover, mention may be made of women like D. Mihi (founder President), Lomte Riba (founder Secretary), members like Jome Riba, Maken Kena, Yade Riba, Kenyir Ringu, Osuk Perlin, Yajen Gara, Sange Lhamu, Padi Tana, K. Namchoom, Yagi Donyi and Yadek Gadi¹⁷ They were instrumental in giving shape to the APWWS. After 90's the Arunachal Pradesh Welfare society became very prominent and active¹⁸. The silver jubilee celebration of this organization was observed with the publication of the souvenir on the occasion. The Tani groups had wider representation in the executive body of this organization. There are now twenty six active women besides some junior members¹⁹. The main objective of the All Arunachal Women Welfare Society is work for the cause of human rights of Women and Children. They also took up

¹⁶ Miss Y. Batak, 'Status of Women in Tagin Society', in : **Singik**, (School Magazine, Govt. H.S. School, Daporijo, published by J.P. Verma, printed at Golden Graphics, Sutahat, Cuttack-1, Orissa, 1994, p.1

¹⁷ See T. Azu, et.al.ed., 'The Meandering Dawn', in: **The Silver Jubilee Souvenir of the All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society**, 10th Oct-10th Nov, Itanagar, 2004.

¹⁸ Interview with T. Azu, Secy. General, Arunachal Pradesh Women's Welfare Society (CEC), Itanagar, 21/09/2006. Itanagar.

¹⁹ *Ibid*

cases against violence, deprivation, desertion. They gave moral support and counseling to the victims. Their aim was to give justice to the women²⁰.

Since the time of its inception this organization has taken up various measures for upliftment of woman folk in general by eradicating different evil practices of the societies such as child marriages, polygamous marriages, payment of bride price etc. To some extent they have succeeded in their objectives too. In February 1989²¹, in a seminar organized by them on 'Nehru and women welfare' they have passed three resolutions viz-

- [I] Abolition of Polygamy, Registration of marriage and divorce cases.
- [ii] Ban of forced married and child marriage, and to fix girls marriage at the age of 18 years, and
- [iii] To encourage inter tribe marriages. Recently the widow of Apa Tani have formed a organization to look after their affairs.

To make people aware of this organization specially the women they even conducted tours. In 2005 they visited Upper Siang, East Siang and Lower Subansiri districts of Arunachal Pradesh²².

The society happens to be the apex body. Other such societies formed in the districts or sub-divisional level affiliated to it. However, these local bodies try to handle

²⁰ T. Azu, et. al ed., 'The Meandering Dawn', in: **The Silver jubilee Souvenir of the All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society**, op. cit., p.4

²¹ *Ibid*

²² Interview with T. Azu, *op. cit*

the cases by themselves but when the cases are too complicated they need interference of the apex body that is, All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society.

Since the Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society is a voluntary organization, finance had been a big problem implementing the welfare schemes. Sometimes due to financial problem payment to the lawyer cannot be met and if the opposition is strong financially, they obviously won the cases. Moreover, the members cannot give full time to the organization as they were engaged in different professions²³. Now women became aware of and conscious about their equal rights. Their confidence level is increasing and they do not hesitate to lodge complaints against the injustice cause to them. But in this regard official data are lacking. Therefore it is not possible to furnish a list of cases already lodged with regard to their settlements and solutions. Ofcourse members are trying to maintain the records but not wholly²⁴. However, in pursuit of its idea, the All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society has played an important role in pursuing the government for the implementation of the 73rd Amendment. The All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society played a great role in pursuing the President of India not to give assent to the Arunachal Pradesh customary law and Practices Bill, 1994. This Bill was passed in the State Assembly without any wide consultations and discussion among the public. In particular, it ignored the perspective of women who stood to suffer if the Bill was implemented in-toto. Further, though the State Commission for women is yet to be

²³ Interview with T. Azu, *op.cit*

²⁴ *Ibid*

constituted, the credit for lobbying for its creation goes to All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society²⁵.

A. (iv) *Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women (APSCW)*:

The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women was set up in 17th January 2005 after a prolonged movement of All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society (APWWS). Its headquarters was in Itanagar. It endeavoured to fulfil the aspiration of the women. The Commission's responsibility is to promote and protect the interest of women and to safe-guard their rights. Its main role was to review of laws, looking into specific cases of complaints of atrocities, Harassment, denial of rights, and exploitation of women and taking remedial action to restore their legitimate rights. Thus, the Commission is another weapon to fight against the evils inflicted on the women by the society. The Commission had its Chairperson and three non - official members to carry out the works with a term of three years. The main objective of setting up of a Women Commission is to deal with problems of women in Arunachal Pradesh and to abolish all forms of social prejudices. The Commission is now fighting to get thirty three percent reservations for women in the state assembly and codification of the customary laws. The 33% reservation of women in Panchayati Raj, speaks about the empowerment of the women. The Commission organized workshops to make the women aware about the Commission and the problem they were facing²⁶.

²⁵ T. Azu, 'The Meandering Dawn', in: **The Silver jubilee Souvenir of the All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society**, *op.cit*, p.4

²⁶ Interviewed with Ms. Gumri Ringu, Ex President (APWWS, 2003-05), Member Arunachal Pradesh State Commission For Women (2005-08), 16/10/2006, Itanagar.

The institution of the state commission for women is a milestone in redressing the social injustices faced by women of Arunachal Pradesh. This is a solid body and goes a long way as far as the women's position, status and empowerment are concerned. This is discernable in the powers and functions to be exercised by the commission.

i. Powers of the Commission:

According to Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women Act 2002 section (14) , for the purpose any enquiry under this Act , have the same powers as are vested in a Civil Court while trying a suit under the Code of Civil procedure,1908, (Central Act 5 of 1908), in following matters²⁷:

- a. summoning and enforcing the attendance of any witness and the examining him/her on oath;
- b. requiring the discovery and production of any document;
- c. receiving evidence on affidavits;
- d. requisitioning any public records or copy thereof from any public office;
- e. issuing Commission's summons for the examination;
- f. Any proceedings before the Commission shall be deemed to be a judicial proceedings within the meaning of section 193 and 228 of the Indian penal code (IPC) , (central Act 45 of 1960) and the Commission shall be deemed to be a court for the purpose of section 195, of the code of criminal procedure, 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974).

²⁷See Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women, **Combined Annual Report 2005-2006 & 2006-2007**,Printed at impressive Printers & Stationers, Guwahati,p.8

ii. *Function of the Commission*²⁸:

The Commission shall perform any or all of the following functions as per the section (15) of the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women Act 2005

- a. Can inquire any unfair practices, take decision thereon , and to recommend to the government the actions to be taken in that matter;
 - b. The Member Secretary have to be made cause investigations on issues of importance concerning women or issues concerning unfair practice and to report thereon to the government in the corrective measures to be taken.
 - c. Submit annual report to the government.
- (i) On the defect, inadequacies, or shortcomings in the laws in force which effect the constitutional right to equality and fair treatment of women and also on the remedial legislative measures to be taken to meet the situations.
 - (ii) Of the monitoring of the workings law, in force, concerning women with a view to identifying the areas where the enforcement of law is not adequately effective or has not been streamlined and recommending executive or legislative measures to be taken in the effective/better standard thereof.
 - (iii) Of monitoring of the recruitment made to State Public Service and State Public Undertakings and , promotions within the said services and , scrutinizing the rules and regulations governing such recruitment and promotions, with view to reporting

²⁸ *Ibid*

to the Government for the action, if any, required to guarantee equal opportunity to women in the matter of such recruitment;

- (i) Inspect or cause to be inspected, by the member Secretary or any office of the Commission duly authorized by the Commission, on its behalf, prisons, police stations, lockups, sub-jails, rescue homes or other place of custody where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise, or shelter for women or, other similar places run by the government, or any of its agencies including agencies receiving aid from the government for the purpose of offering rescue or shelter for women, or hostels intended for women or girls run by any person or all such other places wherein in unfair practices against women is complained of and, cause further inquires to be made about the treatment that women and girls are subjected to at such places and, to report to the government for taking remedial actions;
 - (ii) In case the Commission is of the view that any public servant has been grossly negligent or grossly indifferent regard to the discharge of his/her duties in relation to the protection of the interests of women, it may recommend to the concerned disciplinary authority to initiate disciplinary action;
- d. Recommend to Government, the welfare measures to be adopted and implemented by the government with a view to ameliorating the conditions of women;
 - e. Formulate a comprehensive and affirmative/ good scheme for securing equal opportunities to women and devise a programme for implementing such scheme which shall be forwarded to government for approval and, on obtaining approval

thereof with or without modification. Implement the same or cause the same to be implemented;

- f. Empower the Member Secretary to recommended to the appropriate authority to take prosecution proceedings in respect of offences committed against women under any statute providing for penalty for violation of the provisions of such statute;
- g. Maintain a comprehensive Data Bank relating to the social, economic and political conditions of the women including comparative study, updating the same from time to time, making available such data for use in actions for vindication of the rights of women;
- h. Recommend to government to initiate legislation for removal of discrimination in the case of inheritance, guardianship, adoption and divorce or for matters relating to the safeguarding the dignity of women and the honour of motherhood;
- i. Call for special studies or investigations into specific problems or situation arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constraints so as to recommended strategies for their removal;
- j. Participate and advice on the planning process of social, political and economic development of women;
- k. Fund litigation involving issues affecting a large body of women;
- l. Make periodical reports to the governments on any matter pertaining to women and in particular, various difficulties under which women toil/suffer;

- m. Undertake promotional and educational research so as to suggest ways to ensuring due representation of women in all spheres, including monitoring of the academic curricula in the state so as to check gender- bias, sex stereotyping, envisaged in the core curricular area of National Policy of Education, 1986 (revised 1992).
 - n. Identify factors responsible for impeding the advancement of women, such as lack of access to housing and basis services, particularly for single women and female headed households, and inadequate support services and technologies for reducing drudgery and occupational health hazards, for increasing their productivity.
 - o. Hold Family court to dispose off the cases related to unfair practices against women;
 - p. Any other matter which may be referred to it by the government.
2. The government shall lay the recommendations of the Commission under subsection of section15, before the Legislative Assembly during its next session and cause action to be taken thereon by the authority concerned within 60 days from the date of filing such recommendations.

Though the women of urban areas are aware about the role of Women Commission but in the rural areas they were unaware of it.As such, particularly in the rural areas the aged old social injustices remain to a great extend untouched²⁹.

The members of the Commission had to face many problems even sometimes physical assault while counseling the parties in the field. The State Commission since

²⁹ *Ibid*

February 2005 had registered sixty four cases³⁰ relating to atrocities against women.

The below table shows the cases of child and force marriage registered under Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women Office³¹.

Sl. No.	Name of the victim	District	Area/ village	Age	Remark
1.	Ms.Yumra Yatup	K/Kumey	Circle: Damin	13 years	Settled
2.	Miss Nabum Yajak	K/Kumey	Circle: Tali	13years	
3.	Miss Nangram	East Kameng	Vill. Doka,Seppa		Settled
4	Miss Kei Yapik	P/Pare	Dam site, Naharlagun	15years	
5	Miss Dolang Sumpa	K/Kumey	Chambang	15years	Settled
6.	Miss Yora Ana	P/Pare	Nirjuli	15years	
7.	Miss Lingdom Nani				
8.	Miss Keji Yagak	K/Kumey	Circle;Parsi Parlo, Vill,Renchi Poriang	14years	
9.	Miss Yade karsang	K/Kumey	Circle: Landing Kolang	14years	
10.	Miss Yomdo Yadik	K/Kumey	Circle :Nyapin	16years	
11.	Miss Meme Taiyu	East Kameng	Type- I, Barrack, seppa	13years	Settled
12.	Miss Churi Diru	P/Pare	Nirjuli,C/O Yapa Phinya	11years	
13.	Miss Kampu Kigam	L/Suban-siri	Circle:Raga ,Vill.Kegam	20years	settled

³⁰ P. Kumar, 'Feminist Movement in Arunachal: The beginning of a socio-cultural renaissance-I', in: **The Aunachal Times**, Thrusday, July13,2006,p.2

³¹ **Data collected from Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women office**,16.10.2006,Itanagar

Table 6.1: Continued from the previous page

Sl. No.	Name of the victim	District	Area/ village	Age	Remark
14.	Miss Rater Nguki	U/Suban-siri	Circle: Gusar, VII.Nguki	20 years	Settled
15.	Miss Bengia Anjuna	K/Kumey	Koloriang	13 years	
16.	Miss Giogi Yalf	K/Kumey	Vill.Hiba, Sangram		
17.	Miss Bake Yada	K/Kumey	Vill.Pada, Parsi Parlo	17 years	
18.	Miss Bamang Yein	K/Kumey	Vill. Pada, Parsi Parlo		
19.	Miss Kipa Singkap	P/Pare	Banderdewa	19 years	
20.	Miss Yangru Sharjo				
21.	Miss Yumlam Yaku	K/Kumey		20 years	
22.	Miss Tadar Nita	K/Kumey			Sellted
23.	Miss Karsang yasi	K/Kumey		19 years	
24.	Miss Licha Yajo	L/Subansiri			
25.	Miss Chera Sita	P/Pare	Naharlagun	10 years	
26.	Miss Yame Mangkha	East Kameng		15 years	
27.	Ms.Kaya Rigom	East Kameng	Vill.Rigom		
28.	Ms.Lingdom Nani	P/Pare	Pachin Colony, NLG		Setted

This is the cases file by the Tani women. It reveals the fact that some of the prejudices against women are still in vague. Such cases earlier remain unattended. But now women have come forward to lodge complains courageously. The government on their part has become more concerned and as taken good care to settle the cases with due honour to their status and position.

They are ready to undertake a vigorous social movement to reorient and remind the state machinery, its social- orientation in this globalization era. Since the civil society

in the state has submitted a seven-point unanimous recommendation to the state Govt. which includes appointment of at least two credible, experienced women, social activities to aid ensure a gender sensitive planning in the state³².

A v). *Women Association and Women Question:*

The Women Associations Arunachal Women Welfare Society (APWWS) its twentyseven years of existence along with State All Pradesh with Commission for Women (SCW) have been spreading awareness throughout the State against all social evils, like force marriage, child marriage, polygamy etc. There have been protests and revolts to such discriminations and to make women position vulnerable to any discriminatory trend in the society, which makes women's position subordinate in the society.

A.(v) i. *CHILD MARRIAGE:*

Child marriage has become a social problem at present and is the cause of great resentment among the women folks. The child marriage is very commonly practice among the Tani groups. By this kind of marriage the boy and girl married off at a very early age. As a result sometimes, the young girl was married to a man quite older to her. Negotiation of this kind of marriage took place while child is in the womb of the mother.

A twentyone year old Niyshi woman says that she does not even remember when she is given for marriage. Though do not like but started staying with her husband and

³² P. Kumar, 'Feminist Movement in Arunachal: The beginning of a socio-cultural renaissance-II', in: **The Arunachal Times**, Firday, July 14, 2006, p.1

when she grown up she gave birth to three kids. Her husband was doing nothing. So to run the house she sales bamboo. After that also her life is hell and her husband tortured her to such an extent that for three times she was admitted in the hospital. She is always submissive because of her kids. Once she run away from her husband house and her parents made agreement with her husband not to torture her but instead of this he always threatened her to kill. He still is continuing his torture on her. From her friends she came to know about the Women Commission and run away from her husband house and lodged complain. Her case was registered and still going on in Women Commission and she is staying in Short Stay home from three and half months. She wants to get rid of her husband, to get rid of the captivity and from the bindings of the child marriage. So that she can lead a happy life with her kids³³.

Obiviously child marriage is a curse of Tani women. It is obnoxious to give a child in marriage for she might have widowhood even before knowing what marriage is.

A.(v) ii. *Forced Marriage:*

The forced marriage takes place by kidnapping when the girl refuses to marry against her will. In 1957 there was a case attempt at force marriage in Sippi valley, when Col. Butalia was exploring the valley. Russi Budh of Deke village had promised his daughter's marriage to Hinju Dagio of Hinju village, who had only partly paid for her price. Meanwhile, Gumsar Sado asked Budh to marry her to him. This offer was refused;

³³ Interview with Maruyakia, 16.10.2007.

one day Gumsar sado abducted the girl from the fields and kept her in his house for one day before she could be recovered³⁴.

However the forced marriage has disappeared and modern laws do not permit such a practice. But this kind of practice make the women position low in the society.

A .(v) iii.*Polygamy*:

Marrying more than one wife can be defined as Polygamy. The practice of polygamy is very common among the Tani groups. Earlier having more wives was a status of symbol in the society. There is no restriction in the matter of the number of wives. Moreover, it is doubtlessly economic, a women shares much of the responsibilities for growing food. She not only works in the field but also look after the household chores. She is inseparable for household and agricultural works. However in the Apatani society Polygamy in theory is recognized, but only a few men have more than one wife. An Apa Tani is not usually inclined to take a second wife if the first wife is still living, for the fear of offending first wife`s kinsmen, who may feel insulted and take revenge. Polygamy receives social acceptance only under some special circumstances, as in the case of a wealthy man who has no son by his first wife³⁵.

Polygamy is still prevalent in some interior pockets of the Tani societies. To have better economy more workable hands are required and this led to polygamy which

³⁴ Cited in A.Riddi, *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Continuity and Change*, Abhijeet Publication , New Delhi,2006,,p.43

³⁵ S.Dutta Choudhury,*Gazetteer of India Arunachal Pradesh:Subansiri District*,Government of Aruanchal Pradesh,1981,p.135

subsequently gave rise to child marriage. The women are considered as assets for better economy.

It is very interesting to note that the customary Laws do not explicitly state about any right of women whatsoever. This kind of practice which is still in vogue in the Arunachal society affected the position of women. She is discriminated in the society and her position always remains subordinated. The women organization now had taken up cudgels in asserting the rights of women to free them and to live a life with dignity. They are being encouraged to raise their voice. That is why they are demanding for codification of the existing customary laws, chaffing out good for them and converging them with the modern laws³⁶. To prevent or at least to minimize the crimes against women a two day workshop on “Atrocities against women: Problems and remedies” was organised by Arunachal Pradesh Police in collaboration with the Impulse NGO Network, Human Rights Law Network of Arunachal Pradesh and Voluntary Health Association of Arunachal Pradesh, Prayas, United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) on 25th November 2005³⁷.

A. (vi) *Oju welfare association (OWA)*:

For invaluable services to the nation by fighting social evils such as child marriage, bride price and force marriage and carrying number of development programmes aimed at empowering women under the Oju Welfare Association.

³⁶ P. Kumar, ‘Feminist Movement in Arunachal: The beginning of a socio-cultural renaissance-II’, in: **The Arunachal Times**, *op.cit.*, p.4

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Mrs. Binny Yanga formed the All Subansiri District Girls Welfare Association, became its President and fought against the dowry system and child marriage. She opened a school for the orphans in Arunachal Pradesh and a weaving institute for destitute women. She also started a school in a low literacy pocket of Seppa in East Kameng District. She was awarded with Dr. Durga Bai Deshmukh Award 2000, presented by the former Prime Minister of India Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee. She is a National Awardee of NCDC award of Co-operative Excellence and was also honored with many prestigious awards and certificates of honour to her credits³⁸.

Started in the year 1979, Oju Welfare Association is purely a voluntary, non governmental and non Political Organization. It imparting and extending various welfare activities for orphans, needy and destitute women and children. Association fulfils these objectives through campaigning community awareness, through need based training, production- cum- vocational training, rehabilitation services for orphans and rural mass. The association has completed more than 27 years of services as on 31.03.2007.

Oju mission (OWA) is working broadly towards the following objectives³⁹:

1. To extend social and welfare activities amongst the people of area in general, women and children particular.
2. To extend socio-economic activities in the area for the betterment of the community as a whole.
3. To undertake activities in the field of education, health and hygiene, to spread awareness of appropriate sanitation and diffusion of useful knowledge.

³⁸ *Oju welfare Association, Annual Report 2006-7*, Arunachal Pradesh, Naharlugun, p.8

³⁹ *Ibid*, p.6

4. To undertake activities in the field of horticulture, agriculture, environment etc.
5. To campaign for awareness in environment and educate them about the effect of the environment.
6. To provide facilities of Health and Homes to the poor.

The Oju Welfare Association has established Short Stay Home for women and girls, with a view to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who were facing social, economic and emotional problems due to family problems, mental strains, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes or are being forced into prostitution are in moral danger. The Department of Women and Child Development, Central Social Welfare board is giving grant-in-aid for maintenance of 30 destitute women to the organization to establish and run short stay home⁴⁰.

With the increased opportunities for employment for women and the need to supplement household income more and more women entering the job market. Working women need support in terms of quality, substitute care for their young children while they are at work. Crèche and day care services are not only required by working mothers but also women belonging to poor families, who required support and relief for childcare as they struggle to cope with burden of activities, within and outside the home. It is also a protection measure as it addresses issues such as child labor, school drop outs, child prostitution, out reach for medical and health programme female literacy etc⁴¹.

Family counseling Centre aims in counseling and rehabilitative services to women who are victims of atrocities, exploitation and family mal-adjustment etc. There is a team

⁴⁰ *Ibid*,p.10-11

⁴¹ *Ibid*,p.11

of experienced post graduate counselors in the family counseling centre run by Oju Welfare association⁴².

Help line(SWADHAR)⁴³ is a twentyfour hours phone emergency outreach programme for women and girls in distress and in moral danger needing immediate protection and shelter. The scheme of Swadhar is a project launched by Govt. of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of women and Child Development in collaboration with well recognized Voluntary Organization.

The Objectives of SWADHAR⁴⁴:

1. To provide quality services to women and girls in need of special care and protection and to ensure that proper care provided till they are rehabilitated.
2. To provide Crisis Intervention Services
3. To provide referral services like Short Stay Home, Free Legal Aid, Police Assistance, Counseling and Hospitalization.
4. To arrange suitable rehabilitation services to the target group.
5. To provide counseling
6. Awareness, opinion building and documentation
7. Documentation of the type of cases being registered, to understand the trends in society.

⁴² *Ibid*,p.12

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ *Ibid*,p.13

Oju Welfare Association running Oju Mission School at Wessang,Seppa in the East Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh. In which the educational and residential facilities are provided to the girls of low literacy pocket of the State⁴⁵.

The Organization has opened several vocational Training Centres with the following objectives⁴⁶:

1. To provide relevant skills to women to become eligible for employment for identifiable remunerative work opportunities.
2. To facilitate empowerment of women and social activism.

The OWA conducted Training programmes, seminars and workshops to create and generate awareness to people toward socio-economic, rural health women empowerment and other issues related to society. Women Entrepreneurs Development Training Programmes and workshops has been a regular and integral part of the programmes.

The Self help group and Micro Finance are to benefit of the backward sections of the society, preferences being given given occupational groups and women⁴⁷.

There are many other facilities and services that OWA provides for the development of the masses especially for the women of the state. For instance, the Shishu Greh, Residential Primary School, Computer Education, Residential Secondary School, Maintenance of Destitute Children, Horticulture and other Agro based activities, Jan Shikshan Sansthan,Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya(KGBV), Active participation in national and regional handloom and handicrafts expo.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*,p.16

⁴⁶ *Ibid*,p.19

⁴⁷ *Ibid*,p.21

A vii) *Future Generation Arunachal (FGA)*:

Since 1995, an American anthropologist, Betsy Taylor⁴⁸ commented working with Future Generations Arunachal (FGA) in the interiors of the state for empowering women through Mahila Mandals. The Mahila Mandals have undertaken the task of the women movement to fight against the structure of community to achieve equality and freedom. They feel the tradition is an impediment which was visualized by the late Lummer Dai.

A. (viii) *The Hunger Project (THP)*:

THP which started working in six districts of the state since 2003 initially to empower elected women representatives to village panchayats to become effective leaders to end hunger. It is observed a tribal women works 15 to 18 hours a day. The Arunachal Chapter of THP can mobilize the women to spare 5 to 6 hours to studies through the panchayat women functionaries, which may boost their self esteem and confidence. Further, a commitment to take women out of mal nourished environment remains a necessary precondition for women empowerment⁴⁹.

III

B. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

Women's economic empowerment can be gained through participation herself in various sectoral employments which not only provide economic independence but also

⁴⁸ *Ibid*

⁴⁹ P. Kumar, 'Feminist Movement in Arunachal: The beginning of a socio-cultural renaissance-II', in: **The Arunachal Times**, *op.cit*

enabled her to control over the resources, move out of their homes, express their ideas, exchange views on their problems, and evaluate their position vis-à-vis men in many areas of social life. The lack of education and the patriarchal compulsions stood on the way of having economic independence. Therefore, they are deprived of the equal accesses to the income generating and employment avenues. The needs for consumption goods and survival materials, the woman remain busy day and night. Besides performing domestic work which is an unpaid labour, they also work outside for earning money to strengthened their home economy. But it ia an irony of fate that their labours in and outside the household remain unrecognized. As such, in the sphere of economic front they do not enjoy much empowerment. In Arunachal Pradesh due to low level of commercial activities and the prevalence of subsistence economy gives an underestimation of the women's labour.

However, with the changes taking place in the last few decades, the state of Arunachal Pradesh is redefining the role of women in and outside the household. With the improvement in the level of education, greater facilities for learning and skill building, along with infrastructures have open new vistas of employment.

It is very difficult to give a clear picture of economic contribution of women among the Tani groups. There is a lack of systematic reports in the official data. However the district wise women participation rate furnishes an idea about Tani women's involvement in different works.

Population		1971	1981	1991	2001
All Population	Male	63.14	58.63	53.76	50.69
	Female	51.28	45.67	37.49	36.45
Rural	Total	57.65	52.63	46.24	43.97
	Male	62.78	58.50	53.69	51.13
	Female	52.27	47.64	40.86	41.33
Urban	Total	57.88	53.42	47.69	46.47
	Male	70.32	60.24	54.18	49.99
	Female	10.58	11.62	11.95	16.69
Total		51.57	41.47	36.39	34.19

Source:[Census of India,2001, Arunachal Pradesh]

District	1991			2001		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Famale
East Kameng	50.77	53.98	47.43	45.42	48.63	42.76
Papum Pare	40.22	51.78	26.31	36.32	46.71	24.71
Lower Subansiri	50.12	53.21	46.88	46.08	47.63	44.50
Upper Subansiri	47.38	51.37	42.78	40.22	44.17	36.12
West Siang	43.40	50.20	35.05	41.30	47.07	34.95
East Siang	41.24	49.94	31.31	38.45	45.41	31.01
Upper Siang	52.41	58.64	44.83	51.30	57.34	44.17
Dibang Valley	45.77	56.11	32.65	44.31	52.53	34.51
Arunachal Pradesh	46.24	53.76	37.49	43.97	50.69	36.45
All-India	37.5	51.6	22.3	39.26	51.93	25.68

Source: [Census of India, 2001, Arunachal Pradesh]

Note: Work Participation Rates have been calculated for total workers, and includes both main and marginal workers.

In the year 2001, the female Work participation Rates in Arunachal Pradesh declined significantly from 51.28 per cent in 1971 to 36.45 per cent, although an increase in Female Work Participation Rate was noticed in Urban areas during 1991-2001. The decline in the overall Female Work Participation Rates in the State can be largely attributed to a sharp decline in Female Work Participation Rates in the rural areas. The gap between male and female Work Participation Rates increased during 1971-91 but, in the 1990's it declined, partly because of a sharper fall in the Male Work Participation Rates during this period. As expected, the gender gap in work participation is much higher in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

In 2001 Lower Subansiri had the highest Female Work Participation Rate, while Papum Pare had the lowest (which are significantly below those in the rural areas of all the districts) East Kameng is at the top with 21.82 percentage, which implies that in East Kameng one in five urban women is a worker. The Rural Work Participation is the lowest in Papum Pare, almost one in three women likely to be working. The lowest gender gap in work participation is found in Lower Subansiri and have the lowest gender gap in the rural areas. The gender gap in urban work Participation is lowest in East Kameng and Lower Subansiri. The gender gaps in work Participation is lower in rural areas than the urban areas. Most of the women are engaged in agricultural works, however, in 2001 the percentage of women workers participating in non-agricultural activities is quite high in Papum Pare which is 55.37 per cent. Dibang Valley recorded the highest female agricultural labourers to total female workers.

There are number of women officials of different status as administrator, academicians, medical practitioners, engineers and other non-technical ministerial staff in the government and non-government organizations. But still the gender gaps can be noticed which continues to be cause of concerned.

B. Bagra⁵⁰, belonged to a middle class family hailing from Bagra village, under West Siang district of Arunchal Pradesh. After completing her MA she joined as Archivist under the Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh says that her parents supported her both morally and financial to impart her education. She supported her family and fulfilled the needs of her children. Moreover, she also attends to the needs required all and a sudden. As a working woman she has to maintain her position at home and society by playing the role of a mother and father (when the father serves elsewhere far away) at home and as responsible citizen, teacher and well wishers for the society. She has to lead a very life. She has to attend the social calls, attend to social problems besides looking after her family and the kids. She is constraint with time limits when she has to be very punctual in her duties.

Haga Yakam⁵¹, an Apa Tani girl working as the Assiastant Programme officer says that her parents give preference and support her for study. She even wants to study further and she is independent to take her own decision but consulted her parents. It can be said that economic independence makes the women to think and act independently to a great extent.

⁵⁰ Interview with B.Bagra,9.11.2007.

⁵¹ Interview with Haga Yakam,16.11.2007

Moreover, mention may be made of few Tani women who occupied different jobs. Ms. Mamang Dai, qualified in IAS in 1979 and left it soon on personal reason. As circle officer mention may be made of Ms. Mamang Padung (Adi), Ms. Sangita Yirang (Adi), Ms. Oli Perme (Adi), Mrs Yame Tadar (Nyishi), Ms. Onam Lego (Adi). In Extra Assistant Commissioner Ms. Yashi Wangmo Ringu (Adi), Ms. Mimum Tayeng (Adi) and Ms. Mamta Riba (Adi)⁵², Mrs Y. Dulom (Tagin), Mrs Apu Bui (Tagin) are doctors and Mrs N. Bui (Tagin)⁵³ police in profession.

However, due to unavailability of sufficient data, it is difficult to estimate as to what extent Tani women share in different posts in the state both technical and managerial. The presence of low level of industrialization and private corporate sector the economic share of the women may be assessed indirectly by looking at their share in top level of professions.

IV

C. Political Empowerment

The political empowerment to women is a 20th century phenomenon. Great Britain gave political right to women in 1911 only. This issue was increasingly discussed in various states and many states were happy to grant political rights to women during

⁵² S. Dubey, 'Tribal Women And Their Political Empowerment-A Case Study Of Arunachal Pradesh' in; **Resarun**, Vol-20, Directorate of Research, Itanagar, 2000, p.10

⁵³ A. Rididi, *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Continuity and Change*, op.cit., p.50-43

this century. Countries getting freedom from colonial rule have accommodated this right in their new constitutions. India was also not an exception.

Thus the introduction of Panchayat raj and parliamentary democracy has given women an equal footing with their male counterparts by offering both voting and political rights to women. This is a landmark progress in this direction.

B. (i) Panchayat Raj Institutions{PIAs}:

Since the time immemorial the people of Arunachal Pradesh have their own village council through which they looked after the welfare of the village people apart from the settlement of disputes. Arunachalee women are not allowed to participate in the traditional village councils. Thus the councils are male dominated institutions and however, women are rarely allowed to take any part in these traditional institutions.

The report by the one man commission headed by Daying Ering (later became Deputy Minister in the centre) was constituted for in-depth study of the functioning of the indigenous tribal institutions and furnished recommendations regarding the feasibility for introduction of Panchayat Raj institutions in the state. The result is the outcome of the three tier Panchayat Raj institutions, namely, Gram Panchayat, Anchal Samiti and Zilla Parishad in erstwhile North East frontier Agency (NEFA) through promulgation of NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation 1967 w.e.f 2nd October 1968 by the President of India⁵⁴.

The 73rd Amendment Act 1992 not only provided the Panchayat raj to Constitutional Status but it gave impetus in respect of its continuity, stability, financial

⁵⁴ **Report On Panchayat Election In Arunachal Pradesh 2003-2005**, State Election Commission, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, p.1

and administrative measures for management of the Local self Government to the best interest of the rural people.

However, the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act 1997 came into being with the objective of setting up of:

- 1) Gram Panchayat at the Village level
- 2) Anchal samiti at the intermediate level and,
- 3) The Zilla Parishad at the district level.

A significant feature of the Act is the provision for reservation of seats for women in the three tier Panchayat Raj institutions both as the members as well as Chairperson in the Constitution of the State Election Commission⁵⁵.

The functioning of the statutory Panchayat Raj institutions from 1969 to 1997 in Arunachal Pradesh where some 24000 elected incumbents as Gram Panchayat Member(GPMs), Anchal Samiti Members(ASMs) and Zilla Parishad Members(ZPMs). Out of them there had been only 4 women Anchal samiti Member or Gram Parishad Member. Till date not even a single women could become Zilla Parishad Member, either in elected or nominated capacity. In 1987, at Anchal samiti level, there was 1 and in 1992 there were 3 elected female representatives⁵⁶. The percentage of female representatives remained almost same or similar to conditions prevailing in the traditional village councils.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ S. Dubey, 'Tribal Women And Their Political Empowerment-A Case Study Of Arunachal Pradesh' in; **Resarun**, op.cit., p.7

Out of the total 8,260 elected PR members, 3183 (38.53%) are women, including 2561 Gram Panchayat members (GPMs) and 547 Chairpersons, 577 Anchil Samiti Members (ASMs) and 50 Chairpersons, 45 Zilla Parishads Members (ZPMs) and 6 Chairpersons⁵⁷. It can be said that with the advance of time people are slowly accepting Women entry as PRIs members. In the 1992, in the Panchayat Raj election three Tagin women namely Smti Yami Tabenmsing, Smti Yanga Mayaba and Smti Latit Chader from Nacho Anchal Samiti were elected as Gram Panchayat Members⁵⁸.

However, the 33.3% reservation for women in Panchayat Raj was a positive step to empower Arunachal Women. This of course led to the emergence of new women leadership. But the power structure and the patronage did not extend to women as was expected. Therefore, Mrs. Nanong Jamoh a ZPM from Pasighat lamented that “the women PR leaders are in pathetic situation their representation without power has no value. There is urgent need of devolution of power”⁵⁹. Moreover the empowerment through Panchayat Raj institutions is yet to get ideological legitimacy in the on going social system.

A Zilla Parishad member opined that it is very difficult to be a women member since the women member have to remain silent and their position was not at all worth while existing only in name⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ P. Kumar, ‘Feminist Movement in Arunachal: The beginning of a socio-cultural renaissance-I’, in: **The Arunachal Times**, *op.cit.*, p.2

⁵⁸ A. Riddi, *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Continuity and Change*, *op.cit.*, p.49

⁵⁹ P. Kumar, ‘Feminist Movement in Arunachal: The beginning of a socio-cultural renaissance-II’, in: **The Arunachal Times**, *op.cit.*, part-II, p.2

⁶⁰ Interviewed with Zilla Parishad Member, 22.8.2008 (name undercovered)

To substantiate such views and comments we produce here the tables below.

Table 6.4: Sex-wise elected Gram Panchyat Member as per result of Panchayat General Election held during the year 2003					
Sl.No.	Name of District	Total Constituencies/ Seats	Male	Female	Unfilled Seats
1	East Kameng	407	225	175	07
2	Papum Pare	338	208	129	01
3	Kurung Kumey	581	347	224	10
4	Lower Subansiri	653	328	293	32
5	Upper Subansiri	511	290	207	14
6	West Siang	827	536	291	-
7	Upper Siang	220	140	80	-
8	East Siang	562	354	207	01
9	Lower Dibang Valley	254	144	104	06

Source: [Report on Panchayat Election in Arunachal Pradesh 2003-2005, p.41]

Table 6.5: Sex- wise elected Anchal Samiti member as per result of Panchayat General Election held during the year 2003					
Sl.No.	Name Of District	Total Constituencies/ Seats	Male	Female	Unfilled Seats
1	East Kameng	118	75	43	-
2	Papum Pare	77	50	27	-
3	Kurung Kumey	161	106	55	-
4	Lower Subansiri	190	123	67	-
5	Upper Subansiri	145	95	50	-
6	West Siang	211	141	70	-
7	Upper Siang	62	43	19	-
8	East Siang	144	95	49	-
9	Lower Dibang Valley	60	39	21	-

Source: [Report on Panchayat Election in Arunachal Pradesh 2003-2005, p.42]

Table 6.6: Sex-wise elected Zilla Parishad Member as per result of Panchayat General Election held during year 2003					
Sl.No.	Name of District	Total Constituencies/ Seats	Male	Female	Unfilled Seats
1	East Kameng	10	07	03	-
2	Papum Pare	10	07	03	-
3	Kurung Kumey	13	09	04	-
4	Lower Subansiri	14	10	04	-
5	Upper Subansiri	13	09	04	-
6	West Siang	18	12	06	-
7	Upper Siang	4	02	02	-
8	East siang	11	07	04	-
9	Lower Dibang Valley	06	04	02	-

Source: [Report on Panchayat Election in Arunachal Pradesh 2003-2005, p.42]

The tables above represent the three tier Panchayati Raj system district wise giving number of constituencies and women participating in the election.

B.(ii) Pralimentary Democracy:

In terms of female representations in the Parilamentary democracy Women in Arunachal Pradesh remain completely marginalized. In the State Legislative assembly the

share of women member never exceeded 5 percent⁶¹. However the 60-member Assembly has only three women MLAs as.No women has ever been elected to the Lok sabha from the State. The state has yet to have a women MP in the Lokh Sabha. However, one women MP got elected from the state to the Rajya Sabha in the last 25 years.

In Arunachal Pradesh in the parliamentary representation there have been 5 Rajya Sabha and 18 Lok Sabha MPs totaling 23 MPs⁶² till date.Mrs Omen Deori belonging to Adi tribe was the first women MP from Arunachal. She was a member of the Rajya Sabha and an awardee of Padmashree in the field of social service⁶³.The first MLA elected for the Assembly was from Seppa in the second general election held in January, 1980. She was late Nyari Walli belonging to the Nishi Bangni group⁶⁴.Mention may be made of Ms Mekup Dolo belonging to Nishi group⁶⁵ and Yadap Apang belonging to Adi group⁶⁶,Smti Yari Dulom formerly cabinet minister and President of Pradesh Mahila Committee belonging to Tagin group hailing from Dulom village is a prominent and experience political activist⁶⁷ represent ting in the State Assembly.

In the Assembly election of 2004, several women contested the elections.But none could succeed. Among the prominent losers from the Tani groups were Niani Natung from the Pakke Kessang constituency of East Kameng district, Yabik Gongo

⁶¹ **Arunachal Pradesh HDR Report 2005**,op.cit.,p.110

⁶² S. Dubey, 'Tribal Women And Their Political Empowerment-A Case Study Of Arunachal Pradesh' in;**Resarun**, *op.cit.*,p.9

⁶³ *Ibid*

⁶⁴ B.B.Pandey,ed.,**Status Of Women In Tribal Society Arunachal Pradesh**,op.cit., p.xi

⁶⁵ S. Dubey, 'Tribal Women And Their Political Empowerment-A Case Study Of Arunachal Pradesh' in;**Resarun**,*op.cit.*,p.11

⁶⁶ *Ibid*

⁶⁷ A. Rididi, *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Continuity and Change*,op.cit.,p.49

from the Dumporijo constituency of Upper Subansiri district, Jumbi Bagra from the Along West constituency of West Siang district and Nanon Jamoh from Pasighat East constituency of East Siang district⁶⁸. It can be said that still women's participation in the election process is very negligible and hence the women of Arunachal belonging to the Tani group share low empowerment. Thus the female contestants are less elected and Arunachal still remain away from actual sharing of power with their male counterparts particularly in case of Tani women.

B. (iii) *Goan Buras*:

The appointment of women *Goanburas* started since 1998, and have facilitated to some 91 women to occupy the office of *Goanburas*. It was noted that every Tagin village had at least one Goan buri, i.e., in Riddi village there are two *Goan Buri* namely, Smti. Yate Riddi and Smti Yajar Riddi. Besides the Tagin women get appointed as the political Interpreter at Dumporijo⁶⁹. The table below shows the women representation as goanburas⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ **General Election, Legislative Assembly October 2004 Statistical Report**, The Chief Electoral Officer, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar. pp.15,19,20,22.

⁶⁹ A. Riddi, *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Continuity and Change*, op.cit., p.70

⁷⁰ S. Dubey, 'Tribal Women And Their Political Empowerment-A Case Study Of Arunachal Pradesh' in; **Resarun**, op.cit., p.8

Table 6.7: Women representation as Goanburas in the year 1998			
District	Male	Female	Total
Dibang Valley	222	05	227
East Siang	366	00	366
West Siang	1406	00	1406
Upper Siang	320	00	320
Upper Subansiri	1002	29	1032
Papum Pare	593	07	600
East Kameng	1038	20	1058
Lower Subansiri	2029	29	2058
Total	6976	90	7067

From the tables above, it is discernable that the Tani woman has to go miles and miles to achieve political empowerment at par with their counterparts. The government has given enough opportunity. Even then as to why the Tani woman fail to come up to the mark in matters of acquiring political empowerment. The reasons must have been vast it is left to the future researchers to find out the lacunae.

V

In conclusion it can be said that because of various reasons the data to measure women empowerment among the Tani women of Arunachal Pradesh is not adequate to show the women per capita income, share of the unorganized sector, professional and managerial jobs to judge women participation in decision making process, parliamentary representations and to access political discourses.

With the access to education Tani women's became more conscious about their rights and privileges in the society. They are presently well aware of their status and steps have been taken by them for their upliftment and eradicate various social evil and customary practices like child marriages, polygamy etc which considered to be derogatory for women. The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women, All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society and other women organization in other districts of Tani inhabited areas making women aware about their subordinated position in the society and in the enlightenment of their rights and position in the society.

The 33.3% reservations for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions [PRIs] have become a weapon for a social movement for fair sex to get their due social status. However, the Tani women's participation in state legislatures and parliament are very negligible. Their participation in managerial spheres, they are still away from their actual sharing of power with their male counterparts.

However, the PRIs and NGOs have reached a near consensus on the issue of women empowerment, though further exploration is needed.

In this 20th century the Tani women are not lagging behind and wanted to break the shackle and free themselves and want equal footing with their male counterparts in every field. Moreover, education in general and higher education in particular is an assurance against economic security, access to education- will guarantee economic and political independence leading to social status and so empowerment to women.

The ground reality in all these aspects a vast gap is found in the man made policies. To do away with this gap the economic status of women along with their legal and protective

measures are to be addressed rationally. Without this women's empowerment in the economic sector will always remain a far cry.

CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Tani group of tribes belong to the central region of Arunachal Pradesh and consist of the Nishis, Tagins, Hill Miris, Na, Apa tanis, Adis, gallos and Mishings[also in Assam]. They are spread over the districts of East Kameng, PapumPare, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, East-Siang, Upper- East Siang, West Siang and Dibang valley. All these tribes claim themselves as the direct descendants of their great legendary Human Father, called ABOTANI. The people of these tribes are the ardent believer of a faith, called Donyi-Polo. By Donyi, they literally mean the sun and Polo stands for the Moon. The conjugation of Donyi and the Polo becomes a strong channel of socio-cultural aspiration of the Tanis.

‘Status’ denotes position in terms of rights and obligations in a society. Generally the status of women has two dimensions .Firstly, the extent to which they have access to the decision – making process and are effectively in position of power and authority, and secondly the level of literacy, education, employment, political participation and representation are the important indicators of women’s status. Moreover, some aspects related with the status of women are multidimensional such as the educational, social, psychological, political, religious and economic status.

Women’s status is a dynamic concept that surrounds their traditional as well as changing position in a society, where both present and emerging status is based on the

prevalent ideas, functions, norms and traditions. The consequent changes and development in women status is associated directly with social and cultural traditions, stages of economic development, level of education and political participation. These issues influence the characteristics of women.

The traditional status of the Tani women is evaluated in terms of her role in marriage, household activities, recreation, productions, inheritance, religious and education fields.

There were various types of marriages prevalent among the Tani group of tribes: Arranged marriage, Polyandrous marriages, child marriages, polygamous marriages, force marriage, exchange marriages, levirate marriages, sororate marriages, cibibeism, and love marriages.

However, there was a differentiation among the various sub-tribes of the Tanis. This differentiation was mainly related to the question of bride price. The bride price was widespread among the Nishis, Tagin, Hill Miris, Gallos and ApaTanis. The Bride price was to be paid by the bridegroom parents'. Therefore, the virginity of the girl was given very much importance among the Nishis, Tagin, Hill Miris, Gallos and ApaTanis. However, the Padam Minyong group of the Adi tribes had a very developed system of bachelor dormitories known as *Moshup* for boys and *Raseng* for girls among the Padam and Minyong. Therefore, virginity was not given any importance among them. The institution of dormitory played a very significant role in providing training to the young boys and girls for preparing them to perform future roles in the society.

Though polygamy was universal among all the groups but polyandrous form of marriages was prevalent among Gallos only. However, in all types of marriages among the Tanis the women were subjected to patriarchal norms.

The Tani women played important part in production. They performed almost all numerous tasks as men do. The sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing and winnowing are mostly done by women. Among the Apatanis, who practice permanent cultivation (Wet Rice Cultivation), the women especially the girl's work in the paddy fields in rotation in form of a group of 8-12 girls of similar age group called *patang* and no specific works are tabooed for women. Women often co-operated in the tedious work of transplanting rice-seedlings, a group of four or five working in turn on each fields.

Besides production it was the women who had to look after various household activities while women had no rights in terms of the ownership of property. Women were also not allowed to participate in the village councils.

Violence against women whether literate or non-literate is universal in any patriarchal society. Tani women of Arunachal Pradesh have been subjected to various forms of violence: domestic, sexual harassment, Kidnapping and rape. Even certain traditional cultural practices too embody the physical and psychological violence.

Though official data is insufficient to draw a complete picture of violence against Tani women since large number of victims are scared to make an official

complain, but extensive interviews and field works conducted by us revealed the large number of unreported cases of violence on women.

In the traditional society there was no formal educational institution in pre-colonial Arunachal Pradesh, knowledge was passed from generation to generation, through oral histories and learning by doing from the elders. A female child followed and learnt from her mother and other women folks of the family in various household activities such as weaving, cooking, brewing wine (*opong*) etc. During her childhood she had to perform duties assigned by her parents: looking after the baby, bringing water and firewood, drying up the grains etc. On attaining the age of 10 or 11 she was made to help her parents and family members in agricultural fields. Gradually in course of time she played the role of wife and mother.

The colonial state made no effort to introduce education in the then NEFA. Their main interest in this region was to keep some minimal political influence over the village heads by recognizing them as the authority of traditional political system for safeguarding their territory from possible Chinese intrusion. However, they did not extend any administrative headquarters beyond Pasighat.

The post-colonial Indian state introduced modern education in Arunachal Pradesh very cautiously in the initial stage. There were only two primary schools in 1949. However, gradually the numbers of schools were established in different district headquarters of Arunachal Pradesh but overall women literacy was very limited. After

India-China war 1962, the Government of India established large number of schools and colleges in Arunachal Pradesh. Gradually the women literacy also made rapid progress.

But in the rural areas the women literacy has been very slow. This was because of the parents' reluctance to send their female children to school because of her importance in looking after the babies as well as her role in the production process. The child marriage was another hindrance in the path of female children education. This imbalance in rural-urban areas in term of women education has overall kept the status of women among the Tani group of tribes inferior since till today Arunachali societies are predominantly agrarian based.

However, Women literacy though limited has played an important role in their empowerment. Literacy has generated consciousness among women about their rights in the society.

The process of empowerment involves not just an improvement in physical and social conditions, but also equal participation in decision- making processes, control over resources and mechanisms sustaining these gains. Empowerment enables women to realize their full potential for their own self development as well as for the benefit of the society. Thus, empowerment in broader sense includes all types of empowerment such as educational, economic, social, political, legal and cultural empowerment certainly raised the status of women.

Though on individual basis Tani women have been asserting their rights and raising their voices against certain cultural practices like child marriages, polygamy and

domestic violence, but this protest has also been collective when the first Women's Organization known as 'All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society' was established on 10th October 1979. This was the beginning of the Women's movement in Arunachal Pradesh. All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society has its branches in all the districts of the state. However, the major role in this organization is performed by literate women belonging to the Tani group of tribes.

Literacy has also empowered women economically. Many literate women have been employed in various government as well as non-governmental organizations. Therefore, economic empowerment has enabled them to participate in the decision making process: in private as well as public spheres. However the political participation of women in Arunachal Pradesh is very insignificant. Only one Tani was elected till 2004 in the Legislative Assembly. Nevertheless, women's reservation in the local bodies has enabled some women to take advantage of participation in the political process of the society.

Thus, we find that status of the Tani women has been undergoing change in spite of the prevalence of various traditional cultural practices.

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APPENDICES

I have devoted to fieldwork extensively by conducting interviews orally. As such, I used both structured and unstructured method for collection of data. For understanding some specific aspects, I have used framed schedule and on that basis a computation of data had also been made.

Appendix-A

Questionnaire-cum – interview Schedule

(Information collected through this schedule will be used only for research purpose)

Part I: Household Information

- 1 Name of the Village :
- 2 District :
- 3 Locality condition : (Unexposed/semi-xposed/exposed)
- 4 Name of the Household head :
- 5 Name of the respondent :
- 6 Religion of the Household :

(1=Hindu,2=Christian,3=Donyi Polo,4=Buddism,5=others)

Part II: Individual information of the household

Sl. No	Age	sex	Marital status 1= married 2= unmarried 3= widow 4= divorced 5= separated	Type of marriage 1= traditional 2= love 3= Forcefully 4=Family liability 5=others	Age of Marriage	Occupation 1= farmer 2=service 3=HW 4=GB 5=priest 6=Business 7= others	Level of Education (classes attended)	Reason for not going school	Literate 1=yes 2=no	Drop out 1=yes 2=no	Reason of Dropout
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											

@ Code for reasons for not going school and dropout

1 =poor condition of household

2= School far away

3= not interested

4= household work load

5=marriage

6= family responsibility

7=others

Part III: Crime against Women (To be asked to married women members)

Sl. no	Is your husband & relatives torture you physically 1=yes 0=no Reasons: 1=he drink 2=he had relation with other gal 3=pay more attention to other wives 4=others	Type of injuries 1= admitted in medical 2=minor injuries 3=lost organ/ parts of body 4=other	Did you ever face molestation 1=yes 0=no	Are you aware of women Commission 1=yes 0=no	Did you complain about your husband 1=yes 0=no Reasons: 1= fear of loosing husband 2= fear of society 3=economically depend on husband 4=others

Part IV: Questionnaires, to be answered in one/ two sentences(Women specific information .To be asked to married women members)

1 Do you think education is necessary?

2 Do you prefer girl child?

3 Do you want to send your girl child to school?

4 How many wives your husband have?

5 What do you think male or female member works more for household incomes?

6 Is family depends on you?

7 Do you own land and asset?

8 Do you or can you participate in the decision making process at family or village level?

Date:

Place:

Signature of the respondent

Appendix-B

The lists show the name of women organization in different districts registered under All Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society.

1. APWWS, Sagelee Unit/Branch
Sagelee, Dist. Papum Pare.
2. Apatani Women Welfare Society,
Ziro, L/Subansiri
President-Landi Reniyo
3. APWWS, West Siang/Along
President-Jumbom Ete
Secy- Henga Ete
4. Indria Women's Welfare Association
IWWA-Along

- New market,Along W/Siang
5. All Nocte Women Welfare Society(ANWWS)
Trip District-Khonsa
President -Rajkumari
 6. Kimin Mahila Mandal
Kimin,District PapumPare
President-Tane Yasuk
 7. APWWS,Naharlagun Branch
Naharlagun,District Papumpare
 8. APWWS Itanagar Branch
Itanagar,District Papumpare
 9. Women Welfare Organisation(W.W.O)
East Kameng, Seppa
 10. APWWS Changlang Branch
Changlang
 11. APWWS Koloriang
District Kurung Kumey
 12. Yazali Women`s Welfare Society
Yazuli, District L/Subansiri
 13. Women Welfare Society, Palin
Palin, District Kurung Kumey

14. Doimukh Myem Welfare Society
Doimukh, Papumpare
President-Taw Podumi
15. Women`s Welfare Committee, Wakro
District Lohit
President-Yade Kri
16. Bordumsa mahila Mandal
Bordumsa, Changlang
President-Pisihu Singpho
17. Para Bazar Women Welfare Society(PBWWS)
Hapoli,(Ziro)L/Subansiri
President-Bamin Rinia
18. APWWS, East Siang,
Pasighat,
President-Opak Takink erring
19. APWWS, Longing
Tirap
President-N. Wongcha
Secy-K. Lukham
20. Shungkah Wancho Women welfare Association(SWWWA)
Pongchau, Tirap

21. Women Welfare Society Basar(WWSB)
Basar,W/Siang
President-Hengam Nyodu
Secy- Ribbom Basar
22. APWWS Miao-Kharsang Branch
Changlang District
President-Jumpo Jugli
Secy-Korong Longri
23. All Mariyang Women`s Welfare Society
P/O mariyang
Upper Siang District
Pin-791002
Phone222230
President Yamang modi
Gen. Secy Tinam Tayeng
24. Women`s Welfare Society Yachuli
Love Care Hostel,yachuli
P.O. Yachuli
President-Joram Yajum
Secretary Joram Haga
25. Nyumkainang Welfare Society

Changlang

President- Livile Taiju

Secretary Widam Longri

26. Idu Women`s Welfare

Lower Dibang valley district

Roing-792110,phone 22296-953803

President-Baka Pulu

Appendix- C

17/06/2005 03:13 222327 (10) PAGE 01

⑦

KEBANG DECISION

Silo ke longa dated 25-06-2005 lo lonyi nape lodum bomdola Shri Eleng Nokar kelang Smt. Oyon Modi ke divorce legang em D.C Office Kebang Gosang to ... pe luyin bito.

1. Shri Eleng Nokar kelang Smt. Oyon Modi ke mime-milo pe dubosidolok eku-serang rebo sinam kidar em Smt. Oyon Modi kepe Gam Abu Kidar e luyin bito.
2. Delokke Hamsing elok Gal Arik Shri Madang Apang king renam denkom Smt. Oyon Modi me lubito.
3. Delokke I ... arva(4 kilo) belok arik Shri Atit Sibok king renam denkom Smt. Oyon Modi kepe lubito.
4. Delokke Shri Eleng Nokar ke Basic Pay lok 5% (five percent) em Smt. Oyon Modi me every month lok ... dorma padilo Smt. Oyon Modi me biye. Dem 5%(percent) em June 2005 lokke ila biropye, edilopeai Smt. Oyon Modi milo kakumayen.
5. Delokke Moying elok Lekong Arik dem Smt. Oyon Modi me Nyitak pe tombito. Dem arik dem tonakokayemilo dem Nokar erang e dorye.

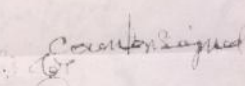
Kebang sim party anyi ekai tolukto.

Smt. Oyon Modi
wringklong
Shri Eleng Nokar,
Yingklong.

Shri Akin Apang,
F/O Smt. Oyon Modi,

Kebang sim luyin dina Gam/ami amin kidar.

1. Shri Akkong Apang, H/GB, Karko
2. Shri Tagin Litin, H/GB, Simong
3. Shri Tatom Pangkam, H/GB, Gosang
4. Shri Atang ^{Nokar} Nokar, GB, Gosang
5. Shri Dungkeng Nokar, GB, Gosang
6. Shri Olik Modi, GB, ^{Gette} Gosang.


 Councilor
 Upper House District
 Arunachal Pradesh

Signed
 30th June 2005

P/D

- 8. Shri Teknying Takong, GB, Gette
- 9. Shri Abuk Pangkam, GB, Karko
- 10. Shri Kanying Epir, GB, Gette
- 11. Shri Teknying Takong, GB, Gette
- 12. Shri Agin Libang, GB, Haleng
- 13. Shri Papang, GB, Gette
- 14. Shri Tani Nangkar, GB, Gosang
- 15. Shri Angkin Nobeng, GB, Karko
- 16. Shri Akkong Libang, GB, Gosang
- 17. Shri Libuk Nangkar, GB, Gosang
- 18. Shri Balok Nangkar, GB, Karko
- 19. Shri Boson Apang, GB, Karko
- 20. Shri Ahon Litin, GB, Mifang
- 21. Shri Kadok Libang, GB, Simenu
- 22. Shri Abuk Noker, GB, Gosang
- 23. Shri Matjeng Nobeng, GB, Gosang
- 24. Shri Komtuk Noker, GB, Gosang
- 25. Amut Nopi, P.I. D.C. Office Yinklong
- 26. Shri Ason Talo, P.I. D.C. Office Gosang
- 27. Shri Kayang Burang, GB, Gosang
- 28. " Dukung Miyu G.
- 29. " ~~Atix~~ Apang-fuller Gosang
- 30. " Tetek Burang
- 31. " Matbang Pangkam

Upper District
 Gosang

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Glossary

Indigenous terms (English Equivalent)

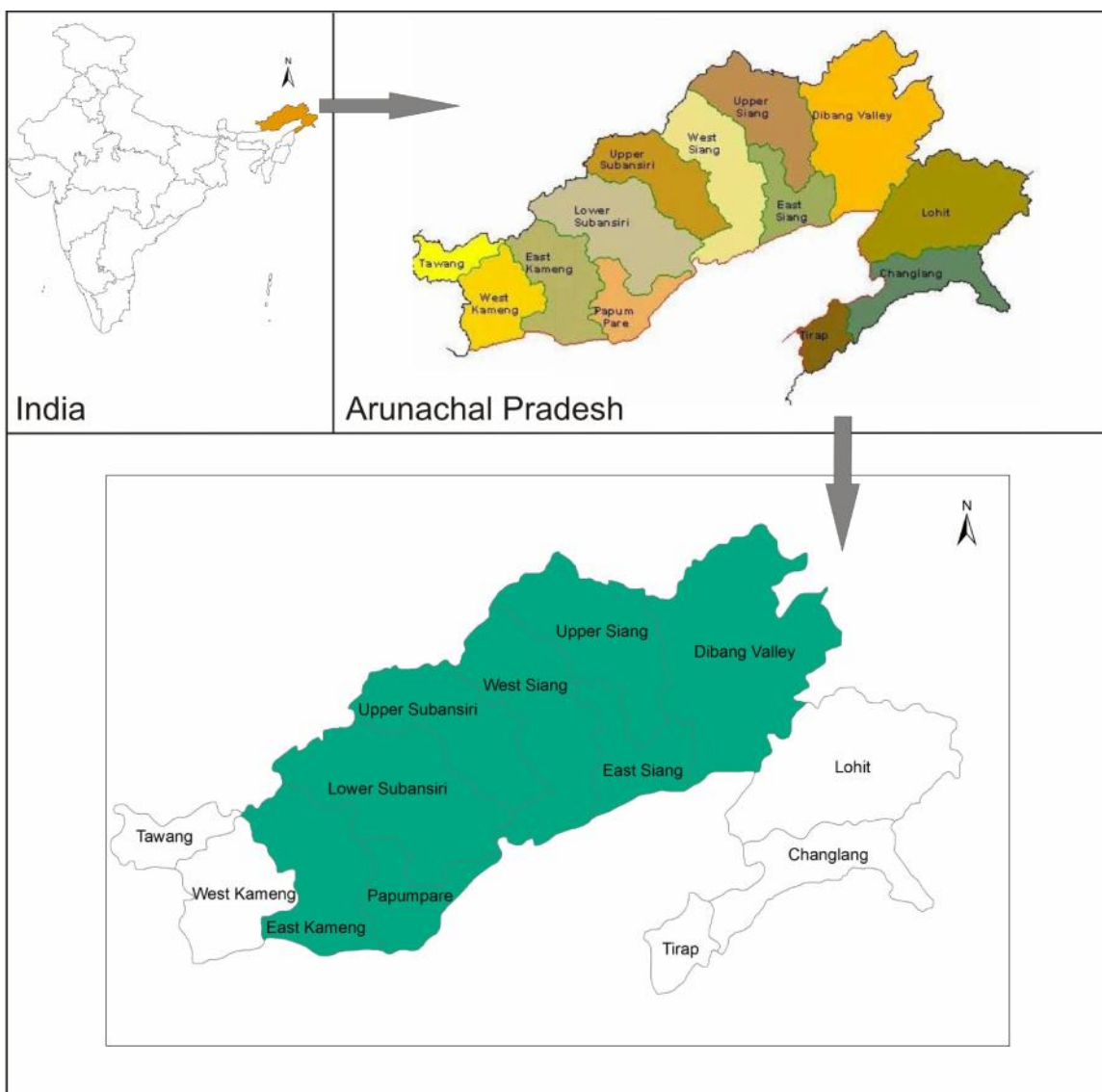
Abotani	:	Legendary ancestor of the Tani
Apong	:	Rice beer
Akha Buliangs	:	Old member of the buliang
Ajang Buliangs	:	Young men acted as messenger in between Yapa buliangs
Adis	:	Hill men
Ari	:	Price/value
Anchal Samiti	:	Block level panchayat
Abor	:	Adi
Achingmori	:	Place name where 1953 incident took place
Adi Jim	:	Cotton rug made of coarse cotton yarns
Buranjis	:	Chronicles
Barumi-Ari	:	Custom prevalent among the Apa Tanis
Buliang	:	Traditional village council of the Apa Tanis
Bango	:	Inter-village council
Bogam-bokang	:	Inter bangos
Bori-Boot	:	A festival
Bipu-sabe	:	Cloths make out of bark fibres

Dolung	:	Council of village
Donyi Polo	:	God
Dere	:	Bachelor's dormitory of the Adis
Dacho yallong	:	Village council where cases of theft were settled
Dree	:	Festival of Apa Tanis
Ering	:	cases related to family, lineage or clan
Gadu	:	Rug
Gipe	:	Exchange marriage
Galuk	:	Coats
Gale	:	Skirts
Gingdung	:	Traditional village council of the Nyishis
Gram Panchayat	:	Village level panchayat
Gong	:	Kind of musical instrument
Hessi	:	Second wife
Hete	:	First wife
Jel honam dui kot:	:	Marriage ceremony of the Nishis
Jepe	:	Cotton rug
Koji	:	Bangles
Kebang	:	Traditional village council of the Adis
Kode-peki or Kamyapichi:	:	Earthern pots
Keba	:	Village council of the Tagins
Lepia-legnam	:	To prevent from running putting of wooden flank
Mahbo Pulya	:	Typical cloth offer to bridegroom by the bride mother

Maji	:	Tibetan bell
Musup	:	Dormitory
Marana yallong	:	Village council where cases of quarrels are settled
Migramama Yallong:		Council where land disputes are settled
Mopin	:	Festival of the Adis
Nieda	:	Marriage ceremony
Nyubu/ Nyibo	:	Priest
Nyem selam	:	Force marriage of the Nishis
Nim-moli or lut	:	Force marriage of Hill Miris
Nyamne Are	:	Bride price
Nyele	:	Village council of the Nishi
Nillai langplya	:	Place where cases are settled
Nima Yallong	:	Council where marriage cases were settled
Nyokum Yalo	:	Sacrificial festival of the Nishis
OH	:	Rice beer
Opo	:	Locally produced beer
Opin-Kebang	:	Cases related to family / lienage or clan
Podi Barbi	:	Goddess
Patang	:	Girls from age group 8-12 works in paddy fields
Pekia-uyi	:	Kind of ritual
Posa	:	Kind of levy
Raseng	:	Girls dormitory
Subu	:	Mithun
Sabe	:	Lion cloths

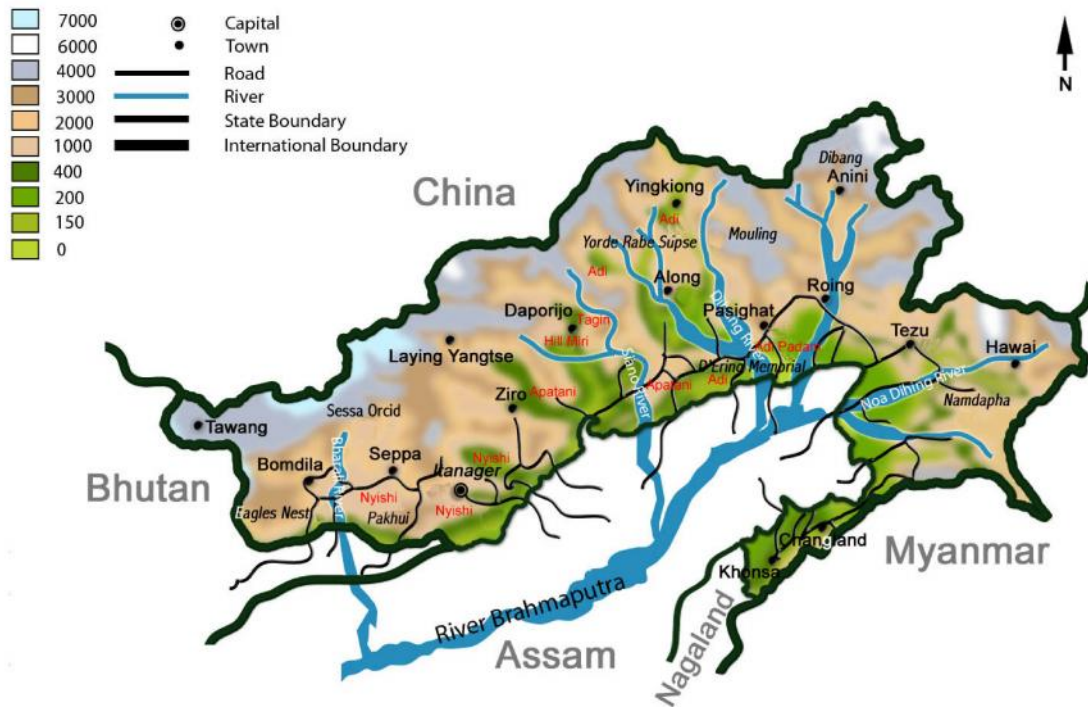
Si-Donyi	:	Ritual festival
Sobin	:	A cross breed between a cow and a mithun
Sulung	:	Festival of the Adis
Tasang	:	Beads
Talo	:	Brass
U d	:	Songs involve question and answers about mythology and legendary of the Nishis
Ugon	:	Loin cloths
Yapa Buliang	:	Youth member of the Buliang
Yallong Nyele	:	Village council
Yoshi Yallong	:	Village council where sexual scandal cases are settled
Yolle Yolla	:	Village council where rape cases are settled

MAPS



Map 1: Location map of the study area

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF TANI TRIBES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH



Map 2: Geogrphical distribution of Tani tribes in Arunachal Pradesh

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1: Apatani woman coming from cultivation



Photograph 2: An elderly Adi woman cooking food



Photograph 3: Apatani women participating in dere festival



Photograph 4: Tagin girls dancing



Photograph 5: Adi women participating in a dance



Photograph 6: An Adi woman caring her children to a primary health centre for vaccination



Photograph 7: Women selling vegetables in Pasighat



Photograph 8: Women selling vegetables in Ziro



Photograph 9: School girls in Pasighat



Photograph 10: Apatani shop owner