

## Chapter IV

### **4. Family, Kinship and Marriage:**

#### **4a. Family:**

Family is the standard social unit and is found in one form or another in all societies and at all times. According to Lowie (1950), the family may be considered as an association that corresponds to the institution of marriage. Brown (1941) includes in the family husband and wife and their child or children. The family will not only include the husband and wife and their minor children but also parents, in-laws, sons and their wives and daughters with their husbands. A wide range of approaches and frames of Reference (theories) are used in the study of family structure. These are structural-functional, social conflict, symbolic interaction, social exchange and developmental frames of Reference.

The social structure of a family refers to the arrangements of social units into an organization that helps to establish the interrelationship between the parts. Nuclear, polyandry, patriarchy, avunculocal, bilineal, primogeniture, exogamy, arranged marriage and consanguine are words that define the structural arrangements of various family systems. The structural-functional frame of Reference provides a framework for dealing with relationships within the family, as well as external influences on the family from other systems (Parson, 1951). Each component of society must be seen in relationship to the whole, since each component acts on and reacts with other components. Parson and Bales (1955) have suggested two basic functions to the family one, primary socialization of children so that they can truly become members of the society into which they have been born and two, the stabilization of the adult personalities of the society. However, according to social conflict frame of Reference conflict is natural and inevitable in all

human interaction. At micro level conflict may be between husband and wife, a son-in-law or two sisters or brothers. Therefore, the approaches of both the functionalist and conflict theorists are different. For the functionalist family is the primary agency of socialization. However, according to the conflict theorists (Eshleman, 1997) it promotes a false consciousness by making the individuals accept inequalities as natural. Functionalists believe that isolated nuclear family is tranquil, passive and in a state of equilibrium with other units of society but conflict theorist feel that conflict is inevitable and it will lead to change.

Symbolic interaction frame of References addresses the issues of socialization and social interaction, which are both of central concern to the family. Socialization is the process of moulding the personality of an individual. It internalizes the behaviour pattern and ways of feeling and thinking of society. Social interaction focuses on self in relation to others. The interactionist's approach to marriage and families is studied at their own levels i.e. the level of humans, human interaction and social system and also in context with the social setting in which each exists, for instance, the language spoken, the definition given to situations, and the appropriateness of a given activity only makes sense within a specific social context (Eshleman, 1997). Social exchange or social choice theory rests on the belief that human beings make choices, which they expect would maximize their rewards and minimize their costs. Social exchange theory also explains why certain behavioural outcome like marriage and sex and some structural conditions like age, race and class occur (Homans, 1961). In arranged marriages, gifts, labour or bride price is often exchanged for right to marry. Throughout the family literature, an exchange process is observed in mate selection, kin relationships, husband/wife interaction, sexual patterns and the like. Developmental frame of References joins

together certain sections of the previous theories into one compatible unified theme (White,1991)This approach accounts for changes in the family system and also in pattern of interaction over time and this time analysis has been termed family life cycle. However, these are not the only frames of References in family sociology. Alternative to mainstream approach is feminist frame of References, which aims at recognizing the absence of women in the history of social and political thought. It challenges patriarchal notions about the family, such as whether it is natural or biological, or it is monolithic i.e having a single structure (Eshleman, 1997). Feminist perspective asserts that gender is the basis of all social structures and organization. The impetus for contemporary feminist theory is a simple question and what about women? The answer to this question is that the experiences of women are different from men because women are unequal and oppressed (Lengermann and Brantley 1988). The basic assumptions of feminist thought are related to the following ideas given by Walker *et al.* (1988).

1. Women – or any group that is defined based on age, class, race, ethnicity, disability or sexual preference -are oppressed.
2. The personal is political. Nothing is exclusive to women’s personal lives, everything has social ramification. The social system imposes a reality on everyday life and is not separate from it. Social structure has to be taken into account.

However, Feminist theorists do not blame all inequalities on economic system, as argued by Marxian theorists. Male dominance is beyond economic and class lines, it implies female oppression and sexism. Every woman, whether employed or unemployed faces this oppression at home. Family will only be an egalitarian institution if women gain independence over resources like power, money, education etc. In light of the above theories an attempt is made to examine the position of Bhutia women in their family.

#### **4a (i) Family and Position of women:**

Family occupies an important position in the social structure. It comprises a residential unit where adults and children live under one roof, a place for the confluence of reproductive and productive relations, a site where domestic activity and functions are performed and also a place where gender roles and relations are defined and sexual division of labour takes place.

The Bhutias follow the patriarchal family system i.e. the father is the head of the family. He is the decision maker and his words are final regarding family matters. There were a few examples which led to the misconception that earlier among the Bhutias of Sikkim there existed a matriarchal family system. One of which is an assumption by Edgar (1874) who during his travels in Sikkim found a herd of three hundred cattle belonging to an old women, her children and grand children and concluded that the Bhutia had matriarchal society. But later it is authenticated by different researchers (Bhattacharya, 1994; Kotturn, 1988; Gorer, 1984 and Risley, 1894) that Bhutias are a patriarchal society but the mother also occupies a respectable position in the family and enjoys a great deal of freedom.

Traditionally, the Bhutias do not keep a family or clan name and no family surname is used. This is because there are no localized clans or lineages, rather there is a tendency towards geographical mobility and hence there is no sense of a genealogical ideology involved (Nakane, 1966). They use the first name only which is selected by the lama. A women also does not use the surname of her father in her maidenhood or the surname of her husband after marriage. She is identified by her own names, which is given by the lama (Bhattacharya, 1994). A nuclear family is the main type of family that

**Table: 2a (i)**

**Structure of families in the study area**

| <b>Family</b> | <b>East</b> | <b>North</b> | <b>West</b> | <b>South</b> |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Nuclear       | 18.50%      | 18.50%       | 18.50%      | 14%          |
| Extended      | 7.50%       | 7.50%        | 7.50%       | 8%           |

Source: Field survey

**Table: 2a (ii)**

**Ideal number of children and actual number of children in the family**

| <b>Actual number of children</b> |             |              |             |              |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Ideal number</b>              | <b>East</b> | <b>South</b> | <b>West</b> | <b>North</b> |
| 1                                | 2%          | 0%           | 0%          | 0%           |
| 2                                | 16%         | 12%          | 8%          | 4%           |
| 3                                | 4%          | 4%           | 4%          | 4%           |
| 4                                | 0%          | 5%           | 6%          | 2%           |

Source: Field survey

prevails among the Bhutias. However, other types of families which show characteristics of joint and extended are also present.

After an analysis of 200 respondents from the four districts, two main type of family structure emerged, viz. nuclear and extended.

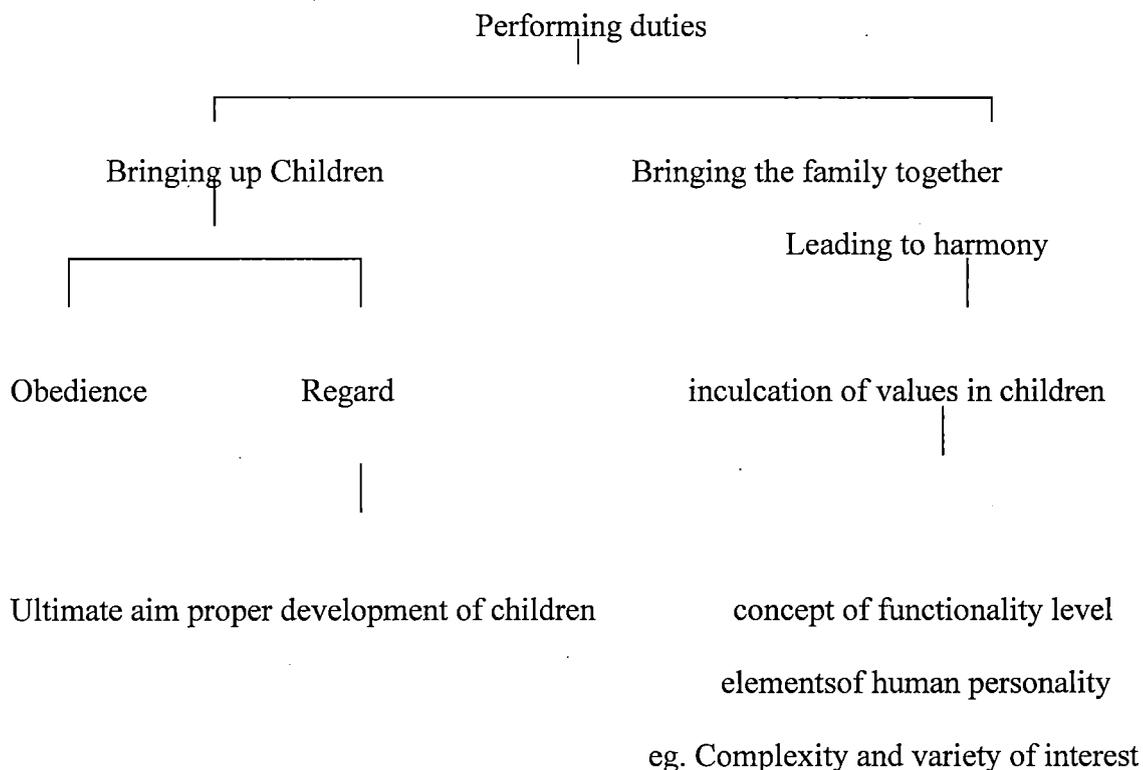
The result [Table: 2a (i)] shows that in all the four district (East, West, North, South) there is a dominance of elementary nuclear family. Nakane (1966) in Sikkim also reports similar result. He states that there is rarely any household, which includes two married couples, of either parent-children or sibling categories. When one old parent dies one of the sons or sometimes daughters take care of the widowed parents. There are a few examples of an extended family that live as nuclear family near each other. The nuclear family also includes families that have mother living alone with her children or a widow or divorcee living with her children. The widowed parents are observed to change their residence among the households of their sons or daughters.

#### **4a (ii) Role of women in family:**

The women in Bhutia family play a pivotal role in socialization of child and running of domestic affairs. Sen (1978) found that traditionally the Bhutia (Bhotiya) economy is substantially supported by their trade with Tibet. Because of trading all males, have to be away and as a result, in absence of male folk from the village, the interest of the trade demands the Bhutia (Bhotiya) women to handle matters of agriculture, which provides them, undisputed authority in family affairs. As a wife her relationship and obligation with her husband and with other members of the family are in tune with the traditional structure and setup. As a mother, also the Bhutia woman is closely involved in child rearing and in the development of the basic personality of the child.

Woman's role both as a wife and as mother can be depicted as follows:

Woman's role as wife and mother



[As obtained from Social Welfare, Vol.48 Saxena, 2001)]

A Bhutia woman commands a good position both as a wife and as a mother. She brings up her children and properly grooms her children by inculcating in them proper family values. In other words, she is the commander of the home domain. However, in context of production and consumption matters, men are the decision makers and women are kept out of it. The position of women can also be judged in the family in the light of two questions. First, does she have the right to achieve the desired family size? Does she have autonomy in making a decision with regard to bearing of children and practicing of

**Table: 2a (iii)**

**Method of family planning known to the female respondents**

| <b>Methods</b> | <b>East</b> | <b>North</b> | <b>West</b> | <b>South</b> |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Pills          | 85%         | 75%          | 75%         | 75%          |
| Condoms        | 90%         | 65%          | 65%         | 60%          |
| Copper-T       | 90%         | 85%          | 88%         | 80%          |
| Sterilization  | 30%         | 9%           | 10%         | 20%          |

Source: Field survey

**Table: 2a (iv)**

**Decision taken by Bhutia women for the use of method of family planning**

| <b>District</b> | <b>Low (%)</b> | <b>Medium (%)</b> | <b>High (%)</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| East            | 0              | 90                | 10              |
| North           | 58             | 40                | 2               |
| West            | 16             | 60                | 24              |
| South           | 70             | 30                | 0               |

Source: Field survey

family planning methods? These questions have been explored in the field setting and have been presented here with the empirical data.

The result [Table: 2a (ii)] shows that most of the families cannot stick to their desired number of children they actually want to have. However, in East district the results indicate that 16percent of people who want to have two children are able to maintain their desired number. This may be due to the urban exposure they have in the East district and they feel that having less number of children reduces the economic burden on the family. Most of the respondents in the East district are aware of the family planning practices, one of the reasons that helps them is to maintain their 'desired ideal number' of children. In rest of the districts the reasons why the desired number of children did not match the actual number were many. Most important of which was that the women generally though aware of the methods of family planning, followed them only after the family size had already increased. In a few cases the women quoted the ideal number of children as the actual number of children they had. In very rare cases in South and West districts the family size increased because the family wanted to have a son and due to this they continued to have children one after the other. However, in Bhutia society there is no discrimination between a girl child and a boy child and not even one case of female infanticide was reported. The sex of the child did not contribute to the increase in the family size. It was also noticed that the Bhutia women were not ignorant about the family planning methods which were apparent from the results in the table [Table2a (iii)]. The result shows that family planning practices are known to the women.

An analysis of family planning practices also gives an idea of the socio-cultural position of women in society. With a few exceptions, the result above shows that in

general the Bhutia women are aware of all the family planning methods. One of the most commonly known methods is the use of pills and the condoms with 90percent in East, followed by North, West with almost same result in South with 75percent. In Sikkim, the public health department and other agencies have been very active in bringing out awareness in women. Besides this these methods are also known to them through media, friends and husbands. Even in villages, these agencies carry out their jobs with great efficiency. Whether this knowledge is actually put to practice is another question asked to the respondents. This is done in order to prove whether they also hadve the knowledge about using the various family planning devices available to them. In general it was observed that the respondents are not using just one method. The maximum number of respondents in all the four districts reveal that they have been consuming the pills because this method was easier to practice. However, in South district women sterilization operation is one of the common methods used. This indicated that the respondents are not only aware of the methods but also using them. However, there is little relationship between the knowledge of methods and the actual methods used.

The result about the knowledge of family planning methods and the desired number of children do not correspond to each other. There may be two reasons for this. Firstly, it can be assumed that this variation could be due to the initial inhibition the women had in revealing their knowledge of certain personal things and secondly hesitation in expressing the desire to decide on using these methods independently.

The decision making power of Bhutia women for the use of family planning method was studied thoroughly during field investigation. Following is the analyses of the study.If the decision of practicing family planning was taken by the respondents on her own it was rated as high and given a score of 3. If this decision was taken both by

**Table: 2a(v)**

**Practice of family planning**

| <b>District</b> | <b>Low (%)</b> | <b>Medium (%)</b> | <b>High (%)</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| East            | 4              | 60                | 36              |
| North           | 6              | 64                | 30              |
| West            | 8              | 76                | 20              |
| South           | 4              | 30                | 4               |

Source: Field survey

**Table: 2 b (i)**

**Preferred marriage practice**

| <b>Districts</b> | <b>Traditionally practiced or arranged marriage (%)</b> | <b>Marriage by choice or love marriage(%)</b> |
|------------------|---|---|
| East             | 36  | 64  |
| North            | 66  | 34  |
| West             | 60  | 40  |
| South            | 68  | 32  |

Source: Field survey

husband and wife it was rated as medium and given a score of 2 and if the decision was solely taken by husband it was rated as low given a score of 1. For this a sample of 200 respondents were separately taken from the study area. The result [Table: 2a (iv)] reveal that in general, in East, North and West the result is medium. However, in South the result indicates women having a low voice in decision making with 70percent. This may only be due to low level of education in South district (refer to chapter 2, socio economic profile). Bhutia women are aware of the family planning methods and even want an ideal family size but they never come forward independently for choice of family planning methods. This may be due to the fact that Bhutia women are used to a patriarchal setup of the society in which they habitually accept the decision of their husbands. It is also observed that these women in due course of time probably have lost the initiative to take a firm decision and even think that it is not a great issue as to who should decide over the use of contraceptives.

Women were also questioned about the reasons why they felt that family planning should be practised. The result of this would reflect her position in the family.

They are put on high position and given a score of 3, when it is practised for spacing between two children, medium and given a score of 2, when it is practised after completion of the family and low position is given with a score of 1 when it is not practiced at all or only when asked by the husband. The result [Table 2a (v)] shows that in East, North and West the position of women is medium with 60percent, 64percent and 76percent respectively. This shows that most of the families opt for planning only after the completion of the family. However, East and North with 36percent and 30percent respectively show a high position. This may be because the number of educated and working Bhutia women and the impact of urbanization in East is very high. The sample

area in North (Tingchim) because of its proximity to Gangtok (Capital of Sikkim) also shows similar results.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the position of Bhutia women, when it come to planning family appears medium.

#### **4b. Kinship:**

The kinship system is built up from a unit of structure called the family. The existence of the elementary family creates three special kinds of social relationship, which is between parent and child, between children of the same parents (siblings), and between husband and wife as parents of the same child or children (Brown, 1952). The kinship system as defined by Brown (1952) is “a system of relation between person and person in a community” that means a ‘network of social relation’: ‘kinship system constitute one of the universal of human culture’ Murdock (1965). Therefore, kinship system is a network of social relation that constitutes the total social structure; however the term kinship and descent are not identical and are not always distinguished. According to Rivers (1924), kinship is the social recognition of biological ties. All the people who are related by blood in anyway to an individual are his cognates. Those who are related by marriage are his affine. Therefore, Murdock (1963) states that a rule of descent affiliates an individual at birth with a particular group of relatives with whom he is especially intimate and from whom he can expect certain kinds of services which he cannot demand from any other kinsmen. The terminological aspect of kinship system is important because kinship terms form a genealogically predicted field and is internally structured in such a way that certain members are primary and focal while others are secondary. Brown (1952) also felt the importance of the terminological aspect of Kinship. He states that in the actual study of kinship system the nomenclature is of

utmost importance and it affords the best possible approach to the investigation and analysis of the kinship system as a whole.

#### **4b (i) The Bhutia kinship terms: An Analysis:**

##### 1. Relation through father :-

- a) Grand Father – *Ajo*
- b) Grand Mother – *Anyo*
- c) Mother - *Am*
- d) Father – *Abha or Yapo*
- e) Father's elder brother – *Abha – Bonpo*
- f) Father's elder brother's wife – *Abha-Bonpa Amchung*
- g) Father's younger brother – *Aku*
- h) Father's sister – *Ani*
- i) Father's sister's husband- *Ani-cho*
- j) Father's sister's son – *Agya*
- k) Father's sister's daughter – *Aila*

##### 2. Relation through mother:-

- a) Grand father – *Ajo*
- b) Grand mother – *Anyo*
- c) Mother's brother – *Azhang*
- d) Mother's brother's wife – *Azhang Ani*
- e) Mother's elder sister – *Am bompo*
- f) Mother's younger sister – *Amchung*
- g) Mother's younger sister's husband – *Amchung Aku*
- h) Mother's elder sister's husband – *Am bompo Aku*

### 3. Relation through wife :-

- a) Wife – *Mobi*
- b) Wife's father ( FIL) – *gyap*
- c) Wife's mother (MIL) – *gyum*
- d) Wife's brother (elder) – *Acho gyap*
- e) Wife's brother ( younger) – *Kepo*
- f) Wife's younger sister – *Nhim*.

### 4. Relation through Husband:-

- a) Husband – *Phogya*
- b) Husband's father – *Gyap*
- c) Husband's mother – *Gyum*
- d) Husband's brother – *Acho gyap*
- e) Husband's brother's wife – *Nam*
- f) Husband's sister's husband – *Mako*
- g) Husband's younger sister – *Nhim*

Among the Bhutias of Sikkim both denotative and classificatory terms are found to be prevalent in the kinship terminology. However, the classificatory terms superseded the denotative terms. The denotative terms are generally absent in the second, third and above ascending generation and also in second and below descending generation. The denotative terms are found in the ego's generation, ego's first ascending and ego's first descending generation. But classificatory terms are prevalent in all generations. In the first ascending generation some denotative terms are Ani- Gyambo (FaelSi) *Ane- r Gan-bo*, Ani phusim (Fayosi) *Ane- bu- srim*, Cho (Faelsihu) Phusim Mako (Fayosihu) *Bu-srim- rmag- Ko*, Pinlo Chumbo (FayoBr) *sPun-lo chung-bo*, Pinlo Num (FayoBrWi)

*sPun-lo Num*, Azhang (MoBr) *A- zhang*, Ani (MoBrWi) *Ane*, Ama bompo (Moelsi) *Ama-sBom-po*, Amchung (Moyosi) *Am-chung*, Amchung Aku (MoyosiHu) *Am-chung A-ku*, etc. In the ego's generation Phogya (Hu) *Pho-r Gya*, Mobi (Wi) *Mo-bud*, Kepo (HuyoBr), Achu gyap (HueiBr) *chu-rGyap*, Aigume (HuelSi) *Ayi-gyum*, Aicho (HusiHu) *Ae-cho*, Phusim Mako(Huyo Si Hu) *Bu-srim-rMag-Ko*, Achugyap (WiBr) *Achu-rGyap*, Kepu (Wiyobr), WielSi (Aigyum) *Ayi-cho*, Num (Wiyosi) *Nh-um* are all denotative terms. The first descending generation also provides some terms such as *Phu* (so) *Bu*, Phum (du) *Bum*, Phu Nam (sowi) *Bu-gNam*, Phum mako (DaHu) *Bum-rMag- Ko* etc. Otherwise the Bhutia Kinship system is impregnated with a large number of classificatory terms which are distributed in almost all generations. In the third ascending generation FaFaFa and his siblings, FaFaFaelSiHu and FaFaFaYoSiHu bear a common term *Jozu*. Similarly FaFaMo and her sibling, FaMoMo and her siblings, FaFaFaelBrWi, FaFaFaYoBrWi, FaFaelSi and FaFaFaYoSi have a common term *NuNu*. In the second ascending generation the term *Ajo* covers FaFa and his siblings FaFaelSiHu, FaFaYoSiHu, FaMoelBr, FaMoYoBr, FaMoelSiHu and FaMoYoSiHu. Similarly the term *Anyo* includes FaMo and her siblings, FaFaelBrWi, FaFaYoBrWi.

In the first ascending generation the kinship terms are mostly denotative. Some terms like *Gyap* includes father of both husband and wife, and similarly *Gyum* covers mother of both husband and wife.

The ego's generation includes a good number of relationship terms which are classificatory in nature. For eg. the term *Agya* is used for elBr, FaelBrSo, FaelSiSo, the term *Ai* includes elSi, and daughters of FaBr, FaSi and MoSi. The father of both SoWi and DaHu is *Nen-den* and mother of both SoWi and DaHu is *Gume*.

## First Ascending Generation

The first ascending generation is characterized by both denotative and classificatory terms. Fa and FaelBr both have one single term *Abha*. But the only difference is that one term *gyampo* is prefixed after the term *Abha* meaning elder. In the case of Mo and MoelSi one single term Am is used and one term *Gyampo* is prefixed after Am which means elder. Father of both husband and wife have one term *Gyap* and mother of both husband and wife have one term *Gyum*. However, fathers younger brother is called *Aku* and MayoBr is called *A-zhnag*. However MoyoSiHu will be called *Am-chung A-ku* and MoelSiHu will again to called *Abha-rGan-bo*.

## Second And Third Ascending Generation

In the second ascending generation FaFa and his siblings have been equated by a common term with some relatives of this generation such as FaFaelSiHu, FaFaYoSiHu, FaMoelSiHu, FaMoYoSiHu, FaMoelBr FaMoYoBr and so on. They are referred by a common term *Ajo*. Similar, is the case with the term *Anyo* which includes FaMo and her siblings, FaFaelBrWi, FaFaYoBrWi and other relatives of this generation.

In the third ascending generation, identical situation prevails and members of different descent groups have a common term FaFaFa and his siblings, FaMoFa and his siblings, FaFaFaelSiHu, FaFaFaYoSiHu, FaFaMoelSiHu, FaFaMoYoSiHu, FaMoMoelSiHu, FaMoMoYoSiHu, FaMoFaelSiHu and FaMoFaYoSiHu all of them refer to a common term *Jo-zu*. FaFaMo and her siblings, FaMoMo and her siblings, FaFaFaelBrWi, FaFaFaYoBrWi, FaFaFaelSi, FaFaFaYoSi, FaMoFaelBrWi, FaMoFaYoBrWi, FaMoMoMoelBrWi, FaMoMoYoBrWi have a common term *Nu-Nu*.

## **Ego's Generation**

Most of the terms of ego's generation are classificatory in nature. In this generation the term *Agya* refers to not only one's own brother, but also includes son of ego's FaelBr, FaelSi. The term *Pinlo sPun-lo* is used for one's own YoBr and FaYoBrSo, FaYoSiSo and MoYoBrSo are referred to as *Ch-ung*. Besides, some other classificatory terms are found to exist in this generation ; such as father of both Sowi and Dahu are called *Gume*, HuelSi and WielSi are both called *Ai-gyum* ,HuYoSi and WiYoSi are referred to as *Num*, HuSiHu and WiSiHu are both termed as *Aicho*. Some denotative terms are also seen in this generation. These terms are elBrWi (*Machi*), Hu (*Phogya*) Pho- rGya, HuelBr (*Achu gambo*) Achu-rGyap, HuYoBr (*Kepu*) Wife (*Mobi*) *Mo-gud*.

## **First Descending Generation**

The unique feature of the first descending generation is that most of the kinship terms are classificatory in character although a few denotative terms are found to exist. The term *Agya* is used for a large number of relatives such as HuelBrSo, HuelSiSo, WielBrSo, WielSiSo, elBrSo (MS and WS), elSiSo (MS and WS). In the same way, the term *Ai* is used for daughter of HuelBr, HuelSi and some denotative terms like *Phu* (Son) *Bu. Dhum* (Da) *Bum*, (SoWi) *Bu-gNam*, (DaHu) *Bum-rMag-Koare* also used.

## **Second And Third Descending Generation**

One of the uniqueness of Bhutia Kinship terms is that among these people relatives of the second and third descending generation have one common term and undoubtedly classificatory in nature. For example, the term *Anyo Chapu* is used for (SoSo), (DaSo), (SoDo).

#### **4b (ii) Criteria Of Distinction:**

##### **Sex**

The Bhutia Kinship terms obey positively the criterion of sex distinction. All the terms are uni-sex terms, no single term refers to members of two different sexes. They are identified by different terms. For example while FaFaFa is *Jozu*, and his wife i.e. FaFaMo is *NuNu*, FaFaFaYoBr is also *Jozu* but his wife is *NuNu*, MoFaFa and MoMoFa are *Jozu* and their respective wives e.i. MoFaMo and MoMoMo are *NuNu*. In the same way FaFa, FaFaBr and FaFaSiHu is *Ajo*. FaMo, FaFaBrWi and FaFaSi is *Anyo*. This criterion also holds good for other ascending and all descending generations and also ego's generation. For example, in the first ascending generation father is *Abha*, Mother is *Am*. MoBr is *A-zhang*, MoBrWi is *Ani*, and FaYoBr is *A-ku*. In ego's generation too, while elBr is *Agya*, his wife is *Machi*, SoWiFa and DaHuFa are both *Nen-den* but SoWiMo and DaHuMo are *gume*, HuelBr is *Achu-r Gyap*. In the first and second descending generation also this norm is seen, while So is *Bu*, Da is *Bum* but SoWi is *Bu-gNam* and DaHu is *Bum-rMag-Ko*.

##### **Generation**

The analysis of Bhutia Kinship terms reveals that generation has a distinct role to play. Members of a particular generation have a particular term. Usually members of no two generations are referred to by the same term. We see that the terms *Jozu* and *NuNu* cover members of only one generation. Similarly, the term *Ajo* and *Anyo* are used for members of second ascending generations. But it deviates in case of terms used for second and third descending generation. Here the terms *Anyo Chapu* and *Anyo Cham* are used for grandson and granddaughter in second ascending generation and in the third generation SoSoSo, SoDaSo, DaDaSo, DaSoSo are referred to as *Yang Phum*.

## Relative Age

The criterion of relative age differentiation in various kinship terms is found to be prominent. They suffix the term *gyampo* to denote certain senior relatives eg. Fa is *Abha* and FaelBr is *Abha-rGan-bo* and they suffix the term *Chung* to denote juniors, example *Ai -Chung* is younger sister.

## Collaterality

The criterion of collaterality in Bhutia Kinship is not distinct. Though Fa and FaYoBr do have distinct terms (*Abha* and *Aku* respectively) Fa and FaelBr have same term *Abha*, only they use a suffix *Gan-bo*. Similarly though they make distinction between Mo and MoYoSi terminologically by using *Am* and *Am-chung* respectively, they make no distinction between Mo and Mo elSi by using the same term *Am*, only they suffix *Bom-po* or *gyam-po* after the term *Am*.

The criterion of collaterality on the other hand fails to show off in case of both second and third ascending generation. Same term is used for FaFaFa and his siblings, and FaMoFa and his siblings and same term *Jo-zu* is used for MoMoFa and his sibling and MoFaFa and his siblings also. Similarly in the cases of FaFaM, FaMoMo and their sibling a common term *Nu-Nu* is used. So it is seen that above criterion has failed in case of certain terms but is applicable in certain cases.

There are a certain joking relations and relationship of avoidance in the Bhutia Kinship system. Aman may have a joking relation with his wife's unmarried younger sister whom he refers to as *ngimu (snyingmu)*. A man has avoidance relation with his mother-in-law and a woman has relation of avoidance with her father in law. Thus we see that in Bhutia kinship system women are also referred with respect as their male counterparts. Kroeber (1932) writes that it is accepted among primitive people that

society is structured primarily on the basis of kins and in more civilized nations it is largely in terms of economic and political factors. In Sikkim too, the kinship ties help people to lay claim to land for cultivation, for mutual assistance in the pursuit of common interest and for cooperation.

#### **4c. Marriage:**

Marriage has been regarded as one of the oldest and the most basic institution for organization and functioning of social life. Marriage is a socially recognized union between a man and women that accords legitimate birth status right to their children (Curdy, 1975). Westermarck (1921) defines marriage “as a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born to it”. He claims that marriage is an economic institution and not only a means to regulate sexual behaviour. The institution of marriage establishes the family as -the smallest social unit of the society. However, most functions of marriage and family are interlinked. Majumdar and Madan (1970) stated that “marriage and family being two aspects of the same social reality, viz the bio-psychical-cum-social drives (needs) of a man, are coeval with each other and with culture, because without the family, there could be no preservation of the species and culture, and without marriage there could be no family”.

According to the indological perspective, the union between a man and women is not just for sexual gratification but it is a sacred affair. Although marriage is a universal institution but the manner and its mode of solemnization vary from society to society. However, the institution of marriage has essentially existed in four forms, namely monogamy, polygamy, polyandry and group marriage. Goode (1963) with References to

different societies argues that monogamy as a form of marriage emerged because of industrialization and urbanization which resulted in freedom, liberty and modernization. The transformation of family from polygamy to nuclear is the result of social evolution of society.

Among the Bhutias of Sikkim polyandrous, polygamous and monogamous forms of marriage were prevalent. Earlier Bhutias with more sons and limited resources went in for fraternal polyandry. Though fraternal polyandry functioned to conserve land and labour in the family yet it managed to produce a pool of unmarried females (Bhasin, 1989). In every society there are certain rituals and customs which are associated with marriage. There are some values attached with these rituals and customs which regulate the society.

The form of marriage which is practised among the Bhutias of Sikkim, is the Bride-price form of marriage, in which the parents or guardians of the bride receive as a compensation amount of money from the parents or guardians of the groom, for the transfer of the labour and services of the bride from the parent's household to her in-law's household. Brown (1952) has pointed out three important aspects of the payment of bride price in the tribal societies. They are (a) A compensation paid to the bride's kin group, for the breach caused in its solidarity as a consequence of marriage (b) A transaction to formalize the contractual aspect of marriage to impose some bondage (c) An expression of solidarity through a series of wealth exchange between the two kin groups brought together into affined bond. Some ethnographers (Tambiah, 1973; Schlegel and Eloul, 1988) used the term 'bride wealth' for bride price. However for Schlegel and Eloul's (1988) bride wealth carries the same meaning as given for bride price marriage. Payments are linked with a number of issues: most importantly, status

and the economic contribution of the bride's to the groom's family (Lindenbaum, 1981); nature of residence and the inheritance system (Spiro, 1975; Yalman, 1967); shortages of potential brides and bride grooms (Caldwell et al, 1983); and tendencies towards egalitarianism or stratification in a given society (Goody, 1973). In Sikkim, the bride price is given to value the girl and is linked with the status and economic position of the groom's family and not paying a price for the bride is a Rin- Mey-Bhumo -khyiley Tsog' – ( a bride without any price is treated worse than a dog). The girl selected for marriage should have a good character, should respect the elders, should be gentle, be polite, faithful, honest, sincere, compassionate, good natured. A woman with good character emanates a quasi- religious aura, since through her virtuous behaviour, she emulates that of a celestial female being called Khandro, a term also applied to the consort of a Rimpoche. Being compared to a Khandro is the greatest compliment for a girl (Balicki, 2002).

There is a wide variation in these rituals in terms of culture, linguistic group and communities. A number of studies conducted on India's tribal marriage practices suggest different forms of procuring a bride. Among the Bhutias of Sikkim the way of procuring a bride is through the payment of bride price. Marriage in the Bhutias is not regarded as a sacrament and is something of a social contract with the right to divorce. A man can take a second wife if his first wife is barren or he is a widower. However, monogamy form of marriage is prevalent at present. Marriage cannot take place among the relatives. Proper verification of clan and background is important before finalization of matrimonial alliance. However, marriage is allowed after fifth generation from paternal side and third generation from maternal side (Draft Report, 2002). As per custom, marriage between persons belonging to different communities and particularly when they profess different

faiths or religion is not valid. However, for a boy if he marries a girl other than his community or religion it will not affect dissolution of marriage, because a girl's religion or faith does not affect the boy's religion or faith. The girl however has to accept the boy's faith (Draft Report, 2002).

Traditionally polyandrous form of marriage was expected and in case of the death of her husband, a women could marry her brother-in law and regard him as her husband. During field visits, five such cases came into light and in all these cases the women were older than their husbands. They had children from their earlier marriage and even bore children from their second husband also. The Bhutias specially known as Lachungpas and Lachinpas of North Sikkim were polyandrous and some even practise it now. Various methods have been used in Tibet to keep the household undivided among which fraternal polyandry helps in maintaining its unity by keeping the land undivided among brothers from one generation to the next (Goldstein 1871, Levine 1988). Fraternal polyandry was common practice in Sikkim until it was abolished by Crown Prince Sidkeong Tulku in 1912 because he wanted to raise the population of the Bhutias and the Lepchas who had started diminishing due to Nepalese immigration.

Nakane's data collected in 1955 suggests that marriage between Bhutias and Lepchas at village level was rare while intermarriage at aristocracy were also taking place. Marriage with a Sherpa or other Buddhist highlander of Nepalese origin however was accepted for one common cause of having Buddhist background but a Bhutia mother would never want her daughter to marry a non Bhuddist Nepalese because of the fear that then her siblings would lose chances of a good marriage within Bhutia community. Mixed Nepalese – Lhopo children usually become servants in Lhopo households and thus have little chance of marriage with pure Lhopo-families (Balikci, 2002).

#### 4c (i) Sikkimese Bhutia marriage custom and rites:

Bhutia or Denzongpa community of Sikkim has its unique custom of marriage which differs from the other Bhutias of the Himalayas. There are five basic stages necessary for marriage.

##### A) *Thi-Chang* :- ( *Thi*, *Chang* millet beer)

When the parents of a boy decide to get their son married, they look for a girl whom they wish to bring as their daughter in law. Once such a girl is spotted, they arrange to send the boy's maternal uncle with a bottle of wine and khada to inquire if the maternal uncle of the girl is willing to have his niece married. If the family of the girl comes to an understanding to have their girl married, the horoscope (*Chi*) of the girl is given to the maternal uncle of the boy, who then visits the Astrologer. If the horoscope does not match and the results are harmful then the proposal is dropped.

B) *Kha-Chang* (*Kha* mouth, *Chang* millet beer) or the final proposal. If the horoscope has been found favourable, the *Aku pami* (*aku* the boy's paternal uncle, *barmi* middleman or representative) visit the parents of the girl to seek their consent for their daughter's hand, with a gift of *chang*. The girl's parents accept the gifts and give their approval.

##### C) *Nang Chang thung she* (gnang to ask, *thung shed* will drink)

In this ceremony, all the relatives gather at the girl's house to celebrate the occasion. After having offered away the gifts to the parents and main relatives the couple are asked to sit side by side and a village priest performs *Khelen* (oath rites), in which he seeks blessings from girl's ancestral deities called *Pholha – Molha* and local deities and declares engagement of the couple. At this event the parents and relatives duly finalize *Rinzo* or bride price. *Rinzo* (bride price) preferably gold/cash announced must be noted by the Boy's party.

**Plate: 3 A** A Bhutia Bride and Bridegroom.

**Plate: 3 B** Gifts brought by the grooms family for the Nyen or wedding.



Plate 3A



Plate 3B

D) *Nyen sha sa she* (*gnyen* wedding, *sha* meant, *za shed* will eat):- (Refer to Plate 3A and 3B) After a lapse of one year or two of *Nang-Chang*, the first part of the marriage is conducted at Girl's place which is the actual marriage. It is customary to bear the marriage expenses by the groom's family. During this event a team of seven persons chiefly led by maternal uncle and *bhami* go to the girl's house with bride price and other gifts in kind and cash to attend the marriage ceremony. A cup of *chang* is taken out from the ceremonial jar and given to the couple to drink thrice. This signifies that the couple is formally blessed by the Deities Buddhist lamas are engaged to perform *Yang-ki* rites to retain the fortune of the house, as it is believed that the fortune of the house follows the departure of the girl. Upon completion of the ceremony, the girl ceases to belong to her natural family and becomes member of the boy's family.

E) *Tashi – Changthung / Tong len kiap she* (*gtong* to send, *len* to receive, *skyab shed* will do) (Second part of the Marriage)

The ceremony conducted at the bridegroom's house is called '*changthung*'. Celebrations are arranged to rejoice the arrival of the girl/bride. A Buddhist Lama is engaged to perform a *Tashi* ceremony to bless the couple's entrance in the house bringing in prosperity. A Shaman priest officiates the *Khelen* rites, in which he invokes all the ancestral deities called *Pho-lha*, *Mo-lha* and *Yu-lha* (regional deities) to witness and to shower the blessings to the couple. At the same time girl's guardian deities are also invoked to induct in *Mo-lha* classes of deities. The Lama places a *Tashi Torma* on the heads of couple and smear some butter on the foreheads of both the couple and declares them husband and wife and the bride bears the '*Pangden*' (a striped apron) as a symbol of having entered into wedlock. It signifies the infallibility and indestructibility of the bond of marriage and is not even removed after the husband is dead.

An exploration into types of marriages prevalent in the study area are also described in some literature on Sikkim by Risley (1894). Here, people largely observe traditional marriage practices. The respondents reveal that traditional marriages are still followed but clan exogamy occurs. However, due to various social-cultural changes which are taking place, there is a changing preference for non- traditional or popularly called love marriages. However, these days even where traditional weddings are taking place, the boy quietly sends a message to the girl through his friend to know her opinion. (Balicki, 2002) These days even love marriages are arranged into traditional marriages. In light of the foregoing discussion of the marriage practices followed in Sikkim and a brief discussion of marriage rituals, two questions were explored in the field setting and presented here through empirical data. Firstly, what type of marriage is prevailing in the contemporary Bhutia society of Sikkim and secondly, how does it affect the position of women in Bhutia society.

As is apparent from the above data [Table: 2 b (i)], a mixed trend appeared. In East district more Bhutia women (64percent) are opting for love marriages now. This may be due to constant exposure of boys and girls in the school, college and at work places. However, in North district as apparent in the present study, traditional marriages (66percent) are still preferred.

Further elaboration of whether love marriages were acceptable amongst the Bhutias was taken up with the respondents. When questioned whether inter-community marriages were acceptable in the Bhutia society, the respondents said that after resistance from some quarters inter community marriage is finally accepted. This view of the respondents is in consonance with the result obtained in the present study. In three districts the respondents said that were free to marry outside their community. However in

**Table: 2 b (ii)**

**Acceptance of intercommunity marriage**

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Can marry outside community (%)</b> | <b>Cannot marry outside community (%)</b> |
|-----------------|--|---|
| East            | 90                                     | 10  |
| North           | 92                                     | 8   |
| West            | 60                                     | 40  |
| South           | 40                                     | 60  |

Source: Field survey

**Table: 2 b (iii)**

**Women's consent in the selection of the spouse**

| <b>District</b> | <b>Low(%)</b> | <b>Medium(%)</b> | <b>High(%)</b> |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| East            | 0             | 20               | 80             |
| North           | 4             | 32               | 64             |
| West            | 16            | 40               | 44             |
| South           | 4             | 36               | 50             |

Source: Field survey

South, this result was opposite [Table: 2 b (ii)], where, 60percent of the respondents said that they were not allowed to marry outside their community and even if they got married they were not accepted by the family. If a Bhutia girl gets married to a boy of a different community, the boy has to pay fine to the family of the girl for the formal acceptance of their marriage.

While marriage with Bhutias remains desirable, alliances with Tibetans and especially Buddhist Lepchas have now become totally acceptable in Sikkim. Many Kaji families are descendents of such families, while the Namgyal family had imported brides from Tibetan aristocracy.

Irrespective of preference of the type of marriage the women had, they were questioned whether they had any choice or consent in the selection of the spouse.

It is discernible from the data [Table: 2 b (iii)].

The position was rated high and given a score of 3, when the respondent has the freedom to select her partners, medium and given a score of 2 when it was jointly selected by the parents and the girl and low with a score of 1 when she was forced to marry a person of her parents choice. The result [Table: 2 b (iii)], showed that when it came to marriage the Bhutia women hold a high position in the society. The freedom to select life partner, as has been stated by Acharya and Bennett (1982) gives women greater autonomy affecting their work participation and greater input in decision-making. Several anthropological case studies have reported that in tribal community women have more freedom to choose their life partner (Mann, 1987; Jogdand, 1995).

It will be interesting to know that Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has been extended to Sikkim with effect from 1 May 1989. However, this law is not applicable to the Bhutia-Lepcha community as they have been declared as scheduled tribes. So the

marriage and divorce of the Bhutia-Lepcha people of Sikkim are still regulated by pure customary laws. Truly speaking, there is no difference between divorce and desertion and when the couple does not pull on well, they can be separated easily by mutual consent. Bhutia-Lepcha people, even from elite families, hardly go to court for either legal separation or divorce.

There is therefore, no hard and fast rule regarding the custody of the children when the marriage is broken. The elders of the family or of the society settle the issues relating to the custody of the children as to whom the children should go. If there is more than one child then both father and mother may take one or two children with them as per the direction of the elders. The question of maintenance of the children is also decided by the elders. The children may stay with their grand-parents, if they so desire. The divorced wife is also free to get married again with whom she likes. She can take the children of her first marriage along with her to her second husband's house (Bhattacharya, 1994). Therefore it can be summarized that unlike the other women in rest of the country, Bhutia woman holds a good position in making decisions about her marriage.

#### **4c (ii) Right To Ancestral Property:**

As the Bhutia-Lepcha people follow the patriarchal family system, all the property either movable or immovable, belongs to the father or head of the family. After the death of the father, the eldest son becomes the head of the family as well as care-taker of the property. As far as the property matters are concerned, the women, except for their movable personal belongings, ornaments and utensils etc., do not have any legal right in the family property.

Though the Bhutia women have no legal right in the property, usually, the daughters, sisters, aunts and near cousins are given gifts in the form of livestock,

domestic animals, utensils, ornaments etc. Affluent people sometimes give a piece of cultivated land or a house to the daughter or sister. This is generally given on compassionate grounds. During the field observations, one or two such cases were found where Bhutia a girl had married a Nepali boy with low economic status. Looking at their condition, the girl's parents gave her some land and a house on her name. In another case a widow was handed over the property of her parents for good bringing up her children.

Indian Hindu laws of succession, inheritance and marriage are not applicable to the Bhutia people in Sikkim. The Bhutia people in Sikkim are still governed and guided by their customary laws in respect of marriage, inheritance and also of succession.

The Bhutia daughters in Sikkim have no right to inherit the properties of their fathers, even when there are no sons in the family. When a Bhutia man dies leaving behind him his widow and daughter only and no sons, the widow shall inherit the property only for her life and on her death, the property shall go back to male kins of her late husband, but not to the daughter. She is not entitled to sell, transfer or mortgage that property of her late husband. If she remarries she holds no right to the property of her late husband.

The Bhutia women may, however, acquire property by way of gift or under a will from her father or other relations. However, under the "Married Women" Property Regulation Act, 1962, if a Bhutia woman marries a non-Bhutia person, she will have to dispense her rights to properties.

According to this Regulation:

1. "A Sikkimese woman who holds immovable property in Sikkim at the time of her marriage shall continue to hold such property notwithstanding her marriage with a person who is not Sikkim subject and shall have the power to

dispose of such property either by sale, mortgage or otherwise to a Sikkim subject during her life time.”

2. “A Sikkimese women married to a person who is not a Sikkim subject shall have no right to acquire any immovable property or any interest in such property in the territory of Sikkim subsequent to her marriage.”
3. “If a Sikkimese women marries a person who is not a Sikkim subject the husband and any offspring born of that marriage shall acquire no interest in any immovable property which she may hold in Sikkim by virtue of section 4 of this Regulation.”

This regulation has not yet been repealed by the Legislature and continues to be in force. Under the Government Proclamation of 1968, a Sikkimese woman was to lose her Sikkim subjectship if she married a non-Sikkimese.

Therefore, the position of Bhutia woman in the society in terms of property rights is not very high. In spite of this, Bhutia women in Sikkim still enjoy more freedom economically and socially as compared to the women in other parts of India.

#### **4d. CASE STUDY:**

1. Thamu Bhutia is a resident of North Sikkim and is 60 years old. She did not have any formal education and was married at the age of 24. Her husband was a farmer by occupation and when he expired, Thamu was only 35 years old and had three children. She was married to her husband’s younger brother who was a peon in the Agriculture Department. She had another son from her second husband but he also expired after four years of his marriage. It was after this that hell broke on her. She was badly treated by her in-laws and even referred to as a ‘witch’. She felt that she could support her family with the little pension she was getting,

though it was not enough. Seeing her deplorable condition her parents gave her a small cardamom field. Since immovable property is not given to the girls, she also had to face a lot of hostility from her brothers, but Thamu fought all these hardships. Her children have now grown and she is able to give them good education. Her eldest son is a teacher in the primary school of Tingchim, one is a lama and other a constable in Sikkim Armed Police. Her youngest son works in the cardamom field and she still accompanies him to work. She feels this field is the last memory of her parents and she should give her labour till the last.

2. Lizhum Bhutia is 28 years old, unmarried and a resident of Tingchim. She has had education till class 10 but could not complete it. She wanted to start again but because of paucity of money, she could not continue her studies. She took up a job in SITCO watch factory, Gangtok, and worked for eight months. She had to leave her job due to defective eyesight. She returned home and joined a tailoring course in Mangan. After she completed her course she returned and started to work on her small agricultural plot. She was not even given a certificate and her remunerations were not paid which made her very despondent.

Lizhum lost her father when she was a child and saw her mother struggle. She does not want to get married because she has seen how badly husbands treated their wives. She will only marry after she sees the boy and spends some time with him. Another reason why she has chosen to remain unmarried is because her brothers are not yet married and her mother will be left alone. However, she feels now the economic position of the family has improved and they can even afford to keep a groom at home, she admits with a smile. She intends to get married after her brothers are married and wants to marry in her own community. She feels

inter-community marriage requires a lot of adjustment and generally one's emotions and sentiments are hurt. For her, marriage is a commitment and she will prefer if the person she marries does not consume alcohol because alcoholism results in breaking homes.

3.Cheney Doma Bhutia is 30 years old and is a resident of Ralong (South Sikkim). She got married when she was 28 years old and has received no formal education. She met her husband at Singtam Bazar, he belongs to the Tamang Community. Since he was a driver by profession, he slowly started coming to Ralong to meet her. She saw him for five years before she finally got married. Her parents were against the marriage because the boy was already married and not from the same community and if she married him it would also jeopardize chances of her young sisters marriage. However, since she was already four months pregnant they had to give their consent. The boy's economic position was much lower than hers so she had to live in very poor conditions. She had liked the boy because he loved her a lot and used to take her for long drives. Now, her husband spends most of the time with his first wife. He was not even with her the day her child was born. The child was born at home with the help of an auxiliary nurse. She regrets not having any education and even marrying a man from other community. She now lives with her parents and works on the agricultural land they have. She rises at 6.00 in the morning, does all the domestic chores and then goes to the field with her child and returns at 4.00 p.m. when inquired what she would call her child, she said, he is a Bhutia and will remain a Bhutia. She has got herself operated and does not want any more children or even wants to marry. Her husband visits her once in a while but she says her love for him has died. Although 30 she looks

much older. This reflects the hardships of her life. She does not believe in getting dressed well and has no dreams for herself but has many dreams for her only child.

\* Names of the respondents have been changed

#### **4e. Summary:**

Bhutia woman in the family occupies a pivotal position and performs her duties well, both as a mother and a wife. However, she is not able to exercise her choice fully when it comes about planning the family size and practising family planning methods. The results of the actual number of children and ideal number of children is quoted as same. Although women are aware of family planning devices, in most of the cases methods are adopted after completion of family and on the advice of their husbands.

On the marriage front, women in majority of the cases have a choice in selection of the spouses. A noticeable change is seen in the attitude of the society towards inter community marriages, a shift was also seen from traditional form of marriage to love marriages. However, traditional form of marriage still remains the first choice. Therefore, Bhutia women commands a high position in the institution of marriage and her position is also accentuated by the fact that bride price form of marriage is practised. In Sikkim the bride price is given to honour the girl. But when it comes to dissolution of marriage they are governed by pure customary laws, there is no difference between dissolution of marriage or dissolution. There is no system of exchange of any documents and divorce is generally decided in the presence of relatives or village elders. The society is in favour of widow remarriage but no ceremony is performed. If a widow remarries,

**Plate: 3 C and 3 D** The thorn hurdles created for the grooms party by the girls side as they approach the house.



Plate 3C



Plate 3D

her right to claim property from her former husband ceases .The son succeeds the property of the father. The woman does not inherit property in her father's house or her husband's home. The daughters do not have a share in the family property, but may get a share as per the wishes of her father. The "Married Women Property Regulation Act", 1962 further imposes restriction on Bhutia women thus curtailing freedom in marriage and ownership of property .Despite all theseBhutia women do command a medium position in society in her family, kinship and marriage system.

#### **4f. Articles used during wedding:**

PLATE 3C and 3D:- As per Sikkimese tradition, grooms party have to cross through three thorn hurdles on the way, when they approach the girl's house. Each hurdle is kept on the way one after another at a distance of 21 yards and guarded by two women, each carrying a stinging nettle to give a symbolic checking to the groom's party.

- a) First hurdle : is made to check and ask them whether the bride price and other relevant articles as per the demand made in the earlier ceremonies have been brought or not.
- b) Second hurdle: is made to check and ensure that all the items presented to the relatives of the bride are complete in all respects.
- c) Third hurdle: is made to ask whether they have brought manglok or fee to village women folk which is usually called 'etmo-mang-po'. Mock beating of the middle man is also displayed by the women guarding the last hurdle.

**Plate: 3 E** The wooden horse or (Samaing Tapu) a symbol used for ragging the middle man.

**Plate: 3 F** The Khal-len or the oath ceremony performed by village priest.

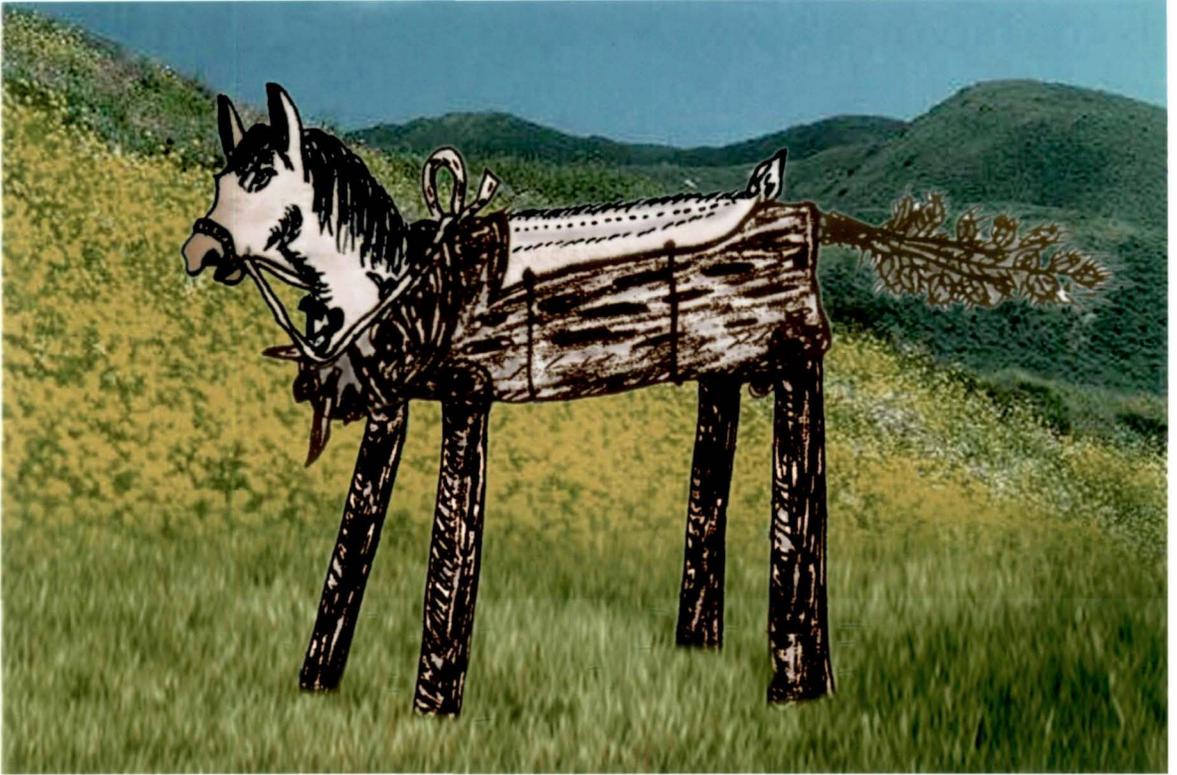


Plate 3E



Plate 3F

PLATE 3E :

Samsing Tapu (Wooden horse)

After this, the middle man is given some symbolic ragging by asking him to ride on the wooden horse.

Description of the wooden horse:-

- a) Body is made of chilawne log.
- b) Saddle is made with bamboo barks, which causes itching to the skins
- c) Horsetail is made up of red chilly and charcoal. This is to drive away the negative effects.

The middleman is exempted only if he pays some cash as an exemption fee to the women.

PLATE 3F:

Khal-len/Shal- len (Honourific word)

This is an oath ceremony performed by village priest to make bride and bride groom as husband and wife under the observation of local guardian deities and one's ancestral deities and also seek blessings from them before they become a married couple.

Procedure

The groom's party has to make a request with cash, wine and khada to the village priest to perform the Khal-Len rites.

He will be assisted by an unmarried woman to offer the wine and one male assistant to arrange the following ceremonial articles.

- a) A marwa filled wooden jar with net and serving spoon.
- b) A plate of cooked rice with a piece of boiled meat.

**Plate: 3 G** The Thab-ra believed to be a spiritual boundary.

**Plate: 3 H** Chabzang, a pot placed for prosperity.



Plate 3G



Plate 3H

- c) Some rice in saucer.
- d) A cup of plain water.
- e) Incense burnt in a pot.

PLATE 3G: Thab-ra

Thabra is often made near the gate of the courtyard of the bridegroom's house.

A bamboo fencing is made upon three shoots of plant and three bamboo cylinders filled with water are placed beside each shoot. Three fuel woodpiles are kept at the front of the fence.

This structure is believed to be a spiritual boundary between boy's ancestral deities and the girl's guardian deities. The head of the bridal party has to perform a short ritual there by offering water (in the cylinder) and appeal to the girl's guardians deities to return and seek a permission from the boy's ancestral deities to enter into the house with the bride. After this he ties a Khada to each shoot.

PLATE 3H: Chabzang/Temdey

At the entrance of the main door, a copper pot filled with water is installed as an auspicious sign at both the houses, as per Sikkimese tradition.

The pot is ornamented with butter paste and Khada.

Any party, who enters the house puts a coin to bring house prosperity to the home.

PLATE 3I:

Due -tse Yarche arrangement.

Due-tse yarche is a special wine prepared with extracted marwa or country liquor.

It is made tasty by adding sugar cube, honey and molasses.

**Plate: 3 I** Due-tse Yarche arrangement.

**Plate: 3 J** The Tashi Tarma.

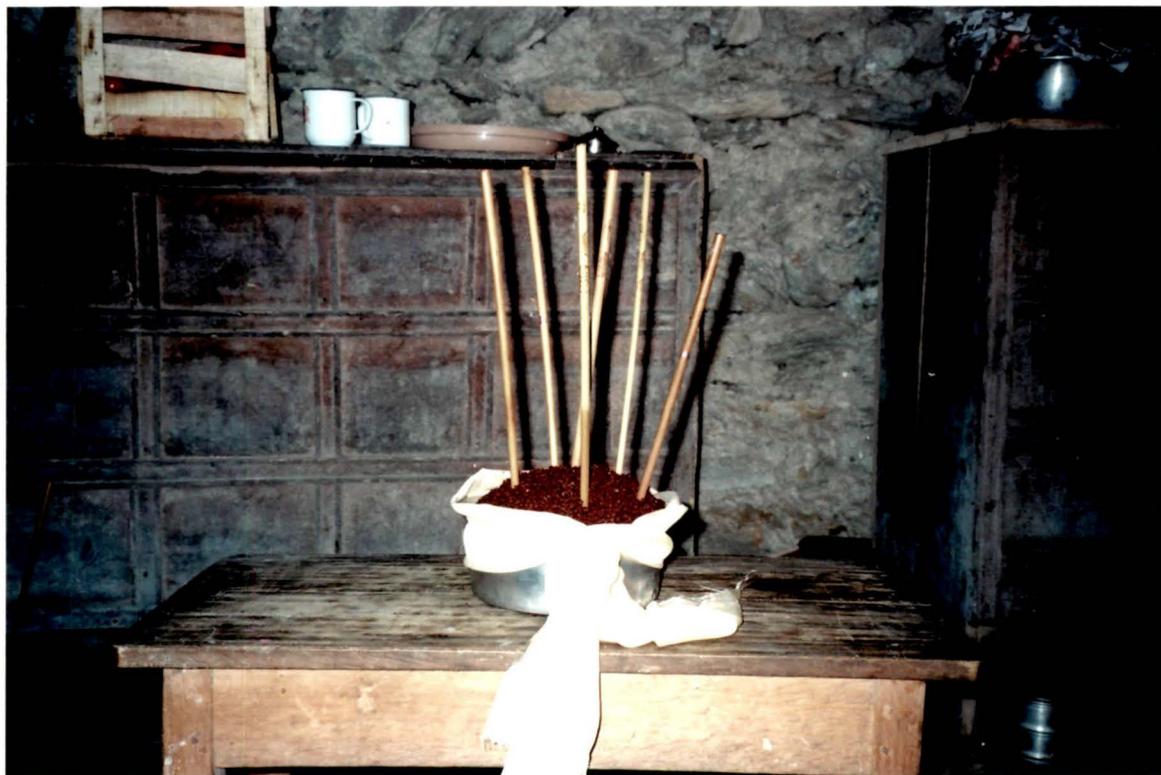


Plate 3I



**Plate: 3 K and 3 L** The Khau and Khachang.



Plate3K



This Duetse is served to following persons:-

1. Head Lama who officiates the marriage
2. Head of groom's party and bridal party.
3. Father of bride/bride groom.
4. Mother of bride/bride groom.
5. Bride groom
6. Bride.

PLATE 3J:

Tashi Torma: is actually preparation in groom's house. It is a symbol of clans to show how clans originated from Khye-Bumsa.

PLATE 3K and 3L: Khau:

Khaus are of two type , one is the religious khau and other is the traditional Khau which is used for marriage. The religious Khau is a big amulet (a thing worn to ward of evil) which is tied from around the left shoulder till the waist. In front of the Khau there is a glass window in which figures of deities are kept. It is hollow from inside in which holy charms provided by the lamas are kept. However, the modern Khaus are smaller and are called Khachang and are worn by the married women. Khaus are made of Yu (turquoise stone) and Phyr (red Tibetan coral) Khachangs are also made of silver so that they can be worn by every woman (Dokhangba , 2001).

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