

PROPERTY RIGHTS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN
PRE-INDUSTRIAL ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- 3.1 PROPERTY RIGHTS
3.2 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

It has already been pointed out that the village was the core socio-political unit of tribal life in Arunachal. The villages were, in general, mono-ethnic and constituted along clan lines. Although cases of multi-clan settlements were not infrequent, but villages having multi-tribe members were rare. Two different kinds of socio-political institutions, viz., Village Council and Chieftainship, had been developed to administer the village life. The Village Councils like *mangma* of the Monpas, *jung* of the Sherdukpens, *melle/raiz* of the Akas, *buliang* of the Apa Tanis, *Kebang* of the Adis, *abbala* of the Idu Mishmis, and *Khapo* of the Tangsas--played crucial role in every sphere of activities

including political, judicial, social and economic affairs of collective life in the respective tribal villages. Of course, not all the Councils of different tribes were equally effective and organised. Elwin made a valuable compilation of these tribal institutions in his *Democracy in NEFA* which provides the details of the composition and functioning of the Village Councils in different tribal communities¹.

Every Village Council was headed by a village headman, recognised by outsiders as *Gaonburah*, who was either elected or nominated by the members. Every head of household in a village had active participation in the affairs of the Village Council. The *Gaonburah* along with the other office bearers used to run the village administration on the basis of tribal customs and traditions.

The institution of Chieftainship, diametrically opposite to the democratic Village Councils, had developed among the Singphos, Noctes, Khamptis and Wanchos. Under this system of governance, clan or village Chief had been the centre of power. Though, theoretically, the Chiefs had the privilege to say the final word in any village affairs, there were also Village Councils consisting of village elders or representatives of different clans to be consulted by the Chiefs. In fact, a Chief was the leader of the Council who in collaboration with the members used to administer

the village life. Unlike the office of the Gaonburah, the post of the Chief was hereditary, either in family line or in clan line.

All land in a village, theoretically, was common village land under the management of Village Council or the Village Chief. The Gaonburah or the Chief, as the leader of the village, used to decide which plots were to be brought under jhuming, when agricultural operation would be undertaken, when and where would hunting or fishing be done, etc. In the matter of common interest like construction of village road, bridge, houses for common use, etc., the village head used to mobilize the communal labour in this regard². Thus, in the absence of any separate economic institutions, economic activities were also organised by the tribal socio-political organisations.

The transition from communal to private property has been a slow process in these communities till the middle of this century³. While the private property right fully matured in case of moveable wealth like cattle and household articles, the same did not emerge in its entirety in case of immoveables, particularly in cultivable land, in most of the communities. The formation of private property in land within a community appears to have been correlated with the land use pattern, method of cultivation, size of the community, and the area under its occupation.

3.1 PROPERTY RIGHTS

Though the tribal landscape of Arunachal Pradesh encompasses 110 tribes and sub-tribes as per 1971 Census, the major groups, arranged in descending order of numerical importance, are the Adi, Nishi, Wancho, Monpa, Mishmi, Nocte, Tagin, Tangsa, Apa Tani, Hill Miri, Sulung and the Khampti--in fact, these 12 tribes constitute 94 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population of the territory. Each tribe occupied a definite habitat which was further divided into a number of villages. Inter-tribe as well as intra-tribe inter-village mobility was limited due to difficult terrain and frequent feuds and conflicts. The land ownership pattern, which had been emerging in the tribal societies, was unique in the sense that customs did not allow inter-tribe transfer of land. Even in most cases, except the Apa Tanis, people of the same tribe but belonging to different village were not allowed to own land as per the village customs.

However, an attempt is made below to draw an account of the land ownership pattern emerging along the natural process of evolution among the different tribal communities in Arunachal. The following outline is drawn on the basis of some village studies by the Agro-Economic Research Centre, Jorhat, Census authority and Law Research Institute, Gauhati, and studies on individual tribes by various administrators and academicians⁴.

The Adis of East Siang and West Siang districts were predominantly jhumias. The system of jhum cultivation prevalent among the different sub-tribes of the Adi-group had led to individual ownership of cultivable jhum land. Generally every household in each well-demarcated Adi village possessed a number of jhum plots. Cultivation was done by rotation. The family returned to the first plot after each jhum cycle. During the fallow years, no one claimed the land. As the same family moved round the plots under possession generation after generation, it enjoyed the right to use and occupy the plots permanently. Since plots were well defined, these were, therefore, heritable and transferable too. The plots developed for WRC/TRC were owned individually. In some cases, clan ownership was found in the hunting, fishing and forest areas. House sites belonged to the common village land and was controlled by the village council, Kebang.

Next to the Adis, the second largest tribal group is the Nishis of Lower Subansiri and East Kameng district. Except in a few villages, they used to practise jhum cultivation extensively. The Nishi system of jhuming was quite opposite to that of the Adis. They usually did not return to the same plot after a jhum cycle. A person who cultivated a jhum plot in the opening year might not return to the same after the completion of jhum cycle and any other villager was free to take up the land for cultivation. Due to this rough and

ready type of jhum practice, individuals did not entertain any permanent right upon the jhum land. The Nishis therefore appear to be more individualistic than any other tribes and no strong village council had evolved in their society. Lands not taken up by the individuals for cultivation remained as village common land and no one exercised any right of ownership on them. But individual ownership was recognised in the WRC/TRC fields. Clan ownership was the rule in hunting, fishing and forest areas while homesteads were owned individually.

The Wanchos of Tirap district, the third largest tribal group of Arunachal, a branch of Konyaks of Nagaland, had evolved a hierarchical society under the well-organised system of chieftainship. They practised only jhum cultivation. Individuals enjoyed a kind of non-transferable ownership right of jhum plots. The same was the case for homesteads. Forest and fishing areas were treated as common village land. Villagers enjoyed equal right to hunt and to fish in such areas. Though cultivation of jhum plots was done by the individual families, collective effort was reported at different phases of jhuming.

The Monpas, the westernmost Buddhist tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, developed extensive terrace cultivation along with jhuming. Both individual as well as common village ownerships evolved in the Monpa society. Individual ownership was predominant in cultivable

land while the village council, Mangma, controlled mainly village forests and pastures. Mangma leased out its land to the individuals in exchange of some annual tax. The household sites, *Mangshah*, belonged to the village common land and individuals enjoyed non-transferable permanent ownership right.

The Mishmi group, consisting of Idu Mishmi, Digaru Mishmi and Miju Mishmi, figures next to the Monpa group in terms of population size and inhabits in the Lohit and Dibang Valley districts of Arunachal Pradesh. They practised only jhum cultivation and developed a system similar to the Adis which had led to the emergence of a rudimentary form of individual ownership in jhum land. Hunting, fishing, grazing and forest areas were owned either clan-wise or by the village council. Homestead areas were treated as village common land within which the individuals enjoyed heritable right of use and occupancy.

The Noctes along with the Wanchos live in Tirap district. Until recently they did not practise permanent cultivation. This group of jhumias developed "Adi-type" jhuming system. Individual ownership seemed to be the usual custom. In some cases where jhum lands were owned by the village council called *Ngothum*, individuals could utilize the village lands with the permission of the village Chief. Generally the village Chief used to allot common village lands to the individuals in consultation with the village council.

Common village ownership was recognised in hunting, fishing, grazing and forest areas. Housesites also belonged to the village council.

The Tagins of Upper Subansiri district used to practise only 'Adi-type' jhum cultivation. Preliminary individual ownership right is reported to have been recognised on the jhum plots. Household sites were generally the abandoned jhum plots and owned individually. Hunting, fishing, grazing and forest areas were treated as common village land.

The Tangsas of Changlang district used to practise only shifting cultivation. All land in a Tangsa village theoretically belonged to village common land. Preliminary individual ownership of use and occupancy was recognised within the broad framework of village ownership. Right of inheritance was also respected.

The Apa Tanis of Lower Subansiri practised only permanent-cultivation. Every inch of cultivable land in the Apa Tani Plateau was occupied by some one or the other. Scarcity of land had created a mounting problem in this society. Individual ownership in cultivable land was full and complete in all respects. It was the only tribe which recognised intra-tribe but inter-village mobility with equal footing in case of land ownership right. Similar to the cultivable land, homesteads were also owned by the individuals and clan ownership was recognised in the forest areas falling under the

village jurisdiction. Fishing areas belonged to the category of common village land.

The Hill Miris of Lower Subansiri district used to practise only jhuming of the type similar to the Nishis. Individuals enjoyed the right of use and occupation of the jhum lands for the period of cultivation only. Like the Nishis, no strong village organisation was there in the Hill Miri society so as to control and to regulate the village lands. Homesites were heritable but not transferable. Forests and fishing areas belonged to common village land and every villager had equal access to them.

The Sulungs, inhabiting predominantly in East Kameng and Lower Subansiri districts, did not practise any cultivation in the past. They were mainly food gatherers and most of them worked, as slaves, mainly for the Nishis. The Akas and the Mijis also used them as slaves. Later, it is believed that they had learnt jhum cultivation from the Nishis and hence used to follow almost as similar "rough and ready" system of jhuming as practised by the Nishis. As this group was subdued by the other dominant tribal groups, as a result, it appears, no institution like village council was evolved in the Sulung society. A little is known about their village administration.

The Khamptis of Lohit district used to practise only settled cultivation like the Apa Tanis. Even the former was advanced than the latter if the tools of production used by them are taken into consideration. Unlike the Apa Tanis, they used plough and bullock in their fields. Like the Wanchos and the Noctes, the institution of chieftainship played a pivotal role in the Khampti society as well. According to Khampti custom, all land was the village common land. The village Chief and the village council together used to allot this common village land to the individual villagers. With the abandonment of any land by any individual it automatically reverted to the village common land. So individual ownership was non-transferable but permanent by virtue of the right of inheritance. In Khampti villages, certain parts of cultivable lands were kept exclusively under the village council where production took place under voluntary community labour to generate a common fund for the welfare of the community as a whole.

Apart from the above numerically major tribal groups, there are many small groups who are also not less important for their distinctive characteristics. The Sherdukpens of West Kameng district is one of them. They were traditional jhumias till recently and had developed Adi-type jhuming system beside their limited settled cultivation. A preliminary individual ownership of jhum land was recognised which enabled them to use, occupy and inherit the jhum plots. The right to dispose by means of sale was strictly

prohibited. But an individual could hand over his jhum plots to others, if he desired so, in a particular jhum cycle. Village forests and fishing areas were demarcated for the use of different clans. Lands not occupied either by individuals or by clans were considered as common village land.

The Akas (Hrussos) and the Khowas (Buguns) live in the West Kameng district who used to practise only Nishi-type 'rough and ready' jhum cultivation. The right of an individual upon the jhum plot was recognised so long it remained under his occupation. Traditionally, the Khowas did most of the cultivation for the Akas along with their own. In both cases, hunting, fishing and forest areas were treated as common village land.

Another small tribe, the Mijis, lives in proximity to the Akas. The former bears close resemblance with the latter. All lands in a Miji village were owned clan-wise. They only practised jhuming and did not know WRC/TRC until recently. Individual families used to undertake jhuming in the plots allotted by the clan-heads. All other categories of lands were also owned clan-wise.

The Membas of the northern borders of West Siang district also evolved a system of clan-wise ownership of all categories of land. They commonly practised permanent cultivation. Individuals could only enjoy the right of use. In the Memba society, a member of

the same clan inhabiting another village was also allowed to enjoy equal right to use the land belonging to his own clan.

The Singphos of Changlang district were advanced agriculturists and had developed permanent cultivation in the areas of Noa-Dihing, Buri-Dihing and Namphuk rivers. According to Singpho custom, the village Chief was the lord of all lands in the territory under his jurisdiction. But in practise, his authority was not absolute. Individuals could enjoy the right of use and occupancy of the cultivable land and could pass it to his successors. Thus a kind of non-transferable individual ownership on cultivable land was recognised. However, all other categories of lands was considered as common village land.

It appears from the foregoing discussion that both the land-use pattern and agricultural practices had some bearing on the emergence of the land-ownership pattern. While some sort of individual ownership was found to be the dominant feature in case of cultivable land, village and/or clan ownership was the general norm in the homestead, hunting, fishing, grazing and forest areas. Again, in case of cultivable land, the degree of individual property right varies from tribe to tribe. Those who developed permanent cultivation, enjoyed greater degree of ownership right. Where the tribes practised Adi-type 'circular system' of jhum cultivation, they also, in general, attained a kind of preliminary individual ownership. But the Nishi-type 'rough and ready' jhuming hindered the

emergence of individual property right in land and in such cases even cultivable land also belonged to the category of village common land.

It may be noted that although individual/family property right in immovables did not mature in all the communities, but it was, by and large, already recognised in moveables. The moveable properties like mithun, old metal bells, rare stone beads (monis), Tibetan swords, etc., were treated as symbols of wealth and status. One who had these valuables at his command could earn much name and fame. Thus, even before the emergence of private property in land the disparity existed in terms of possession of moveable properties. But this disparity had little significance for the determination of economic status as these moveables are not the means of production. A qualitative change in the socio-economic base of the early highland societies of Arunachal came with the emergence of private property in land particularly among the communities who had developed settled cultivation. Those who had superior plots and larger number of working hands could now earn more than those who did not. Now, the disparity did not remain any more only in the sphere of unproductive wealth; rather, it appeared in the sphere of income fit for playing the role of a catalytic agent in the formation of capital in land at an appropriate period after Independence.

3.2 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Another trend, latent or distinct, as the case may be, i.e., a structural drift from egalitarian towards hierarchical society was also operating in most of these pre-industrial tribal formations along with the process of evolution of private property in land. The tribe-specific micro studies conducted by the anthropologists and other scholars provide us factual data in this regard. An attempt has already been made by Misra to weave these isolated factual data in order to interpret the 'modes of production in tribal societies in north-east India⁵'.

Most of the tribal communities were found by him to have stratified into, at least, two or more social 'classes'. While in some cases this division was intra-tribe, in some other it was essentially inter-tribe in nature. There were also some cases where both the types were found to have co-existed in some communities. And the communities where slavery was prominent, even non-tribal slaves--mostly Assamese--constituted a section of the bottom strata.

However, this stratified social classes were not equally distinct, rigid and well-defined in all the communities. Moreover, their implications in relation to the sphere of production, in many cases, remained obscure. But, howsoever nascent they might be, they

indicate the process of transition of the so called 'archaic' tribal formations.

As has already been noticed, the tribal communities of Arunachal, as they were before Independence, can conveniently be divided into two broad types : (i) those who developed and governed by the institution of Chieftainship and (ii) those who developed and Governed by the democratic Village Councils. While the former includes the Khamptis, Singphos, Noctes and the Wanchos, the latter, by and large, covers the rest⁶. In the following paragraphs we shall make a synoptic discussion on each of them.

The society of the Sherdukpens was based on a fundamental division into two classes--the *Thongs*--the upper class--and the *Chhaos*--the lower class. According to a Sherdukpen myth, the Thongs were the descendants of a common ancestor, Japtang Bura, who came from the north with a large retinue of porters and servants. The Chhaos were the descendants of the porters and servants. Both the Thongs and Chhaos were further divided into a number of clans. The Clan exogamy and class endogamy were observed in the Sherdukpen society⁷.

Similarly, the Apa Tani society was divided into *Mite*--the upper class and *Mura*--the lower class. While Mite was the fortunate landed aristocracy, Mura constituted of the unfortunate poor. The Mite enjoyed unquestionable superiority in the social

hierarchy and the two classes were exogamous. This class division was so rigid that 'under no circumstances can a Mura ever become a Mite'⁸.

In the Tagin society, *Nite*--the upper class--and *Nyra*--the lower class (slaves)--resembled the Mite and Mura found among the Apa Tanis. Apart from these two, *Nibu*--the priests-- was placed at the top of the social hierarchy and the commoners, the poor, were known as *Open*. 'The hierarchy appears to be fixed according to the hereditary economic situation of individuals, with the Nibu at the top and the Nyra at the bottom standing apart as social castes by themselves'⁹.

The Aka, Miji, Nishi, Adi and the Mishmi group of tribals depended heavily on the services of the slaves recruited mostly from other tribes like the Khowas, Sulungs, Miris as well as from the Assamese. While the Khowas were recruited as slaves -- known as *Khulo* -- by the Akas, the Sulungs were employed by the Nishis, and the Miris by the different Adi groups. Though the Nishis had been the major exploiters of the Sulung labour, they were also recruited by the Akas and the Mijis as well. The slaves were to labour for their masters in every sphere of activities starting from preparation of jhum fields to participation in the war against the enemies. In return for their services, they were provided with food, shelter and clothing. Apart from the Sulungs, a class of people--

called *Nera* in case of males and *Pare* in case of females-- emerged from within the members of the Nishi society who were as good as the slaves¹⁰. But unlike others, no hereditary slave class was reported in the Nishi society and the 'children of slaves by virtue of talent and initiative could in time acquire wealth and become free man of good social status'¹¹. However, the Adis were not so flexible in regard to their slaves or *mipaks*, as they were called, as the Nishis. Any incident of marriage between the free Adi member and the *mipak* usually brought the former to the status of the latter¹².

Evidence shows that a kind of social hierarchy was latent among the Mijis and the Monpas of Tawang area. In the former, the *Nyubbu* was considered to be socially superior than the *Nyullu*¹³. Similarly, among the Monpas of Tawang area, *Ki* was the upper class and the lower class was called *Kharma*¹⁴.

Among the Adis, Mishmis and the Tangsas, no social classes appeared to have emerged on the basis of birth or occupation. But there were privileged groups who had more wealth at their command and hence had more influence in their respective societies. The fact that a union of an Adi boy and a girl having opposite economic family background was hardly consented by the better off parents-- indicates the social distance between the rich and the poor and seeds of class division based on wealth¹⁵. Similarly, among the Mishmis, the Chiefs and their associates had been the men of wealth and they enjoyed some distinction in their society. Also in the Tangsa society, people having considerable wealth were respected.

Wealth and intelligence figured a lot in the selection of village headmen. The wealthy people possessed a number of servants-- known as *binasa* -- to work for them. Such servants were as good as slaves¹⁶.

The institution of Chieftainship among the Khamptis, Singphos, Noctes and the Wanchos had been instrumental in dividing their respective societies into two main classes--the patricians and the plebeians. In the Hinayani Buddhist Khampti society, Chiefs occupied the higher position and they were followed by the priests. Below them, there was the class of free men. And at the bottom, there were the slaves¹⁷. The Chiefs and the priests--the patricians--being the leisured class--largely depended on the labour of the commoners--the Plebeians--as well as of the slaves. Misra observed that 'a system incorporating elements from both feudalism and slavery prevailed among them till very recent times'¹⁸.

Misra noted that

[The] Singpho society has been found to be divided into three classes -- the Chief, the plebians and the slaves. The former is called *Agi* or *Hireng Agi* in whom the social and political control of the village rests. He is not only a clan Chief but also a village Chief and so far as his village is concerned he is the owner of the village land which he allows his people to cultivate. In case a villager refuses to obey his order, he may turn the offender out of the village. The people as a whole are known as *Cingmung* or *Hreng-dong* which, in fact, refers to the commoners under a Chief's jurisdiction. The people are obliged to render the Chief some services and report to him whenever called upon for any assistance. Next in rank are the *Mayam* who are considered to be the descendants of non-Singpho progenitors such as the Ahoms, Marans,

and Muttocks who occupied the Noa-Dihing valley prior to the advent of the Singphos, and were subsequently reduced to slavery by their new masters. In the course of time they adopted the clan names of their respective masters and formed a class by themselves. Almost all the field work is done by the slaves and women while the men delight in lounging in the sun when not engaged in hunting or feuds¹⁹.

The society of the Noctes was divided into two distinct classess. The Chief and his descendants formed the patrician class called *Lowangjat* while the commoners were called *Sanajat*. The former being the ruling class treated the latter as their subservient class. Though inter-marriage between them was prohibited, the Chief had the privilege of taking second wife from the commoner class²⁰. 'The Chief and his family are not supposed to do any manual work, therefore a system of extracting compulsory labour, called *Pokat*, from a number of subordinate villages evolved²¹.

Similar to the Noctes, the Wancho society was also divided into a number of social classes. The Chiefs constituted the upper class called *Wanghams* and the commoner formed the lower class called *Wangpans*. Between the two--there were two more classes--i.e., *Wangshas*--the offsprings of Wangham fathers and Wangpan mothers--and *Wangsus*--children of Wangsha fathers and Wangpan mothers²². The upper class did not dine with their lower counterpart and in case of marriage, the former was free to take any girl from the latter but not other way round. The three higher classes virtually controlled the Wancho society and the Wangpans at the bottom merely followed their decisions²³.

Thus, the internal structure of the tribal communities of Arunachal was not as egalitarian as they are often projected as a blanket description of the tribal societies of north-east India. The seeds of inequality in both social and economic spheres were there even in jhum life. Though the cause--effect relationship of these two sets of disparities could not be established in definitive terms, it can safely be said that they re-inforced each other towards the interlocking of economic power and social status. The status enjoyed by a man in such kinship based 'status societies' is undoubtedly largely pre-determined; but, one could also earn a name through acquisition of wealth. Among the non-Buddhist tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the legend states that --

A man's status in another world reflects his status in this. However cruel and oppressive he may have been, if he has been rich here, he will have a good house and many possessions there. If he has had slaves and servants in this life, he will also have them in the next. The ghost of a warrior will be respected after his death as he himself was admired during life. On the other hand, a poor man will remain poor after death and an insignificant person of no position in his village will be regarded without respect in the land of shadows.²⁴

This eschatological belief appears to have played some role in shaping the material culture of the non-Buddhist tribes of Arunachal. Not only such tribal belief stands opposite to the Biblical saying that the poor has a greater ease in entering the gates of Heaven, it may also be taken as a hint of inherent potential of unequal social stratification legitimised for a fuller unfolding in the future.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. V. Elvin, *Democracy in NEFA*, (1965), North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong, pp. 56 ff.
2. Sheelendra Kumar, *Law and Administration of Justice in Arunachal Pradesh*, (1982), S. Kumar & Associates, Lucknow, pp. 22-23.
3. It may be pointed out that till now no clear-cut land ownership pattern has been evolved in Arunachal. In the absence of cadastral survey and land records, the customary tribal ownership hardly conforms with legal property rights.
4. The following sources have been consulted : E.T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, op. cit., R.S. Kennedy, *Ethnological Report on the Akas, Khoas and Mijis and the Monbas of Tamang*, (1914), Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong; V. Elvin, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, op. cit.; Parul Dutta, *The Tangsas*, (1959), North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong; T.K.M. Baruah, *The Idu Mishmis*, (1960), P.C. Dutta, on behalf of the adviser to the Governor of Assam, Shillong; R.R.P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, op. cit.; C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Apa Tanis*, op. cit.; Raghuvir Sinha, *The Akas*, (1962), North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong; B.K. Shukla, *The Dafilas*, op. cit.; Sachin Roy, *Aspects of Padam-Minyong culture*, (1966), North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong; J.N. Chowdhury, *The Hill Miris*, (1969), North-East Frontier Agency Administration, Shillong; B.K. Roy Burman, *Socio-Economic Survey of Rupa*, op. cit.; C.R. Stonor, "The Sulung Tribe of the Assam Himalayas", reprinted in *Arunachal Research Bulletin*, August, 1972. L.R.N. Srivastava, *Among the Manchos*, (1973), Research Department, Arunachal Pradesh Administration, Shillong; J.N. Chowdhury, *Arunachal Panorama*, (1973), J. Chowdhury, Shillong; J.K. Barthakur, *Swidden to Sedentary Cultivation*, op. cit.; U. Phukan, et al, *Bamin, A Socio-Economic Survey*

- of an Apa Tani Village in Subansiri District of Arunachal, (1978), Agro-Economic Research Centre, Jorhat, (mimeo); J. K. Barthakur, *Land and Landlock (1980) Census of India, Series-24, Arunachal Pradesh, Part Misc. (a) (1)*, S. Dutta Choudhury, *District Gazetteers, Lohit (1978), Tirap (1980), Subansiri (1981), op. cit.*; N. R. Gosvami, et al, *Hatiduba, Socio-Economic Survey of a Miju Mishmi Village in Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh, (1982)*, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Jorhat, (mimeo); Neeru Nanda, *Tawang, (1982)*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi; Law Research Institute, *A study of the Land Systems of North Eastern Region, Vol. II, Arunachal Pradesh, (1983)*, Law Research Institute, Eastern Region, Gauhati High Court, Gauhati (mimeo); N. Rustomji, *Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, (1987)*, Special Lecture--VII, Centre For Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University, (mimeo); R. K. Kar, "A Small Tribe in the Eastern Himalayas--An Appraisal of its problems and development", presented at the seminar on *Problems and Strategies of Development in the Eastern Himalayas, (1988)*, Centre For Himalayan Studies, North Bengal University.
5. B. P. Miera, "Kirata Karyokinesia Modes of Production in Tribal Societies in North-East India", in Arvind N. Das, et al., (ed), *Agrarian Relations in India, (1979)*, Manohar, New Delhi, pp. 51-81. Also in K. S. Singh, (ed), *Economics of the Tribes and Their Transformation, (1982)*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. 43-62 (abridged), (Hereafter referred to as *Kirata*).
6. The Nishis and the Hill Miris were the exceptions where there were neither village councils nor the system of Chieftainship.
7. D. P. Choudhury, *The North-East Frontier of India 1865-1914, (1978)*, The Asiatic Society, p. 5. All the legendary *Sat* (seven) *Rajas* of the Sherdukpens were from the Thongs and no such personality had emerged from the chhaos. All the benefits accrued to the community usually enjoyed by the different clans of the Thongs and the chhaos did not have any claim over them. For example, the *Posa*, which the community used to receive, was divided among the seven clans of the

Thongs where the Thongdoks had a greater share than the others. The chhaos were not entitled to any share. (B.K. Roy Burman, (ed), *Socio-Economic Survey of Rupa : A Sherdukpen Village in Arunachal Pradesh, Census of India -- 1971, Monograph No. 1, Part VI C, p. 109-111.*

8. B.P. Misra, *Kirata, op. cit., p. 58*; D.P. Choudhury, *op. cit., p. 59.*
9. B.P. Misra, *Kirata, op. cit., p. 59.*
10. *ibid., p. 54.*
11. D.P. Choudhury, *op. cit., p. 9.*
12. *ibid., p. 14.*
13. B.P. Misra, *Kirata, op. cit., p. 56.*
14. *ibid., p. 57.*
15. Sachin Roy, *Aspects of Padam Minyong Culture, op. cit., p. 201.*
16. B.P. Misra, *Kirata, op. cit., p. 66.*
17. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Lohit District op. cit., p. 80.*

18. B. P. Misra, *Kirata, op. cit.*, p. 62.
19. *ibid.*, p. 63-64.
20. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Tirap District, op. cit.*, p. 48.
21. B. P. Misra, *Kirata, op. cit.*, p. 65.
22. J. N. Chowdhury, *Arunachal Panorama, op. cit.*, It may be noted that Dutta Choudhury, in Tirap District Gazetteer, referred to Wangsus as the offspring from Wangpan men and Wangham women which contradicts the arrangement of the Wancho Society.
23. *ibid.*, p. 239.
24. V. Elvin, *Democracy in NEFA, op. cit.*, p. 36. .