

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES BEFORE INDEPENDENCE**2.1 AGRICULTURE****2.2 CRAFTS AND MANUFACTURE**

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Trade Fairs: Forerunner of Market Economy

An attempt is made in this Chapter to describe the various economic activities practised by the hill people of Arunachal which had been developed, prior to independence, in response to the natural processes of evolution. It has been pointed out in the preceding Chapter that the process of integration, both economic and political, started with Independence in 1947. While the pace of political integration was significantly fast during the early years,

the same for economic integration was however, rather slow. The latter only got momentum with the achievement of the former. Though no specific criteria have yet been developed to identify the particular time-period since when a particular area may be said to have been integrated either politically or economically with the other, we may consider 1969, the year of introduction of "mainstream" political structure through Panchayati Raj as the year of integration for Arunachal.

A good many of the tribes of Arunachal had been studied systematically mainly from anthropological point of view prior to as well as after the political integration of this ever isolated frontier tract with the India's mainland. These and other similar tribe-specific studies conducted elsewhere have led to the formulation and crystallization of the concept of "tribal economy"¹--a generalised abstraction of the economic activities of the tribes. But such formulations, though helpful for academic perception do hardly fit with the real life situation². In fact, the process of progressive integration of the tribal communities either with their neighbouring caste or class societies has caused significant variations within them in the spatio-temporal plane³. Moreover, the problem is further aggravated with the definition of tribe itself. There is a gulf of conceptual difference between the tribes of administrative category largely classified on the basis of socio-cultural parameters⁴ and tribes of historical category

determined by the parameters of political economy. All these have made it a remote possibility to arrive at any generalisation. It may, however, be pointed out that much yet remains to be worked out of the process of transformation of the tribal formations in human history as 'Marx and Engels' observations on pre-capitalist epochs rest on far less thorough study than Marx's description and analysis of capitalism'⁵ and so also of the later Marxists.

Coming to the Arunachal scenario, any attempt to arrive at any sort of generalisation under the caption 'tribal economy of Arunachal' for a period while there were no so-called Arunachalees as such, as we view to-day, may not go unquestioning. To be more specific, the territorial identity of the tribes of Arunachal is also a product of the processes of integration with the Indian "mainstream". Earlier to that communitarian identities with specific geographical locations prevailed where tribal groups used to live in relative isolation with their varied politico-socio-economic structures and degrees of advancement.

A look into the following Table-2.1 and the map overleaf will provide a rough idea about the multiplicity of the Arunachal tribal population, as it prevailed in 1961⁶.

In Table-2.1, we have only produced the break-up of Arunachal tribal population following their large group identities. The 1961 Census enlisted as many as a total of 82 tribes and

sub-tribes.

The Statistical Outline of NEFA, 1964, has shown 84 tribes and subtribes. In fact, the tribal identity in Arunachal is still at a state of flux with ever increasing new identities of tribes and

TABLE-2.1

Tribe-wise Distribution of Population in Arunachal - 1961

Sl. No.	Name of Tribal Group	Population
1.	Adi	1,07,880
2.	Aka	2,195
3.	Apa Tani	10,949
4.	Bangni	24,822
5.	Bangro	1,575
6.	Dafila (Nishi)	35,111
7.	Khoa (Bugun)	659
8.	Khampti	2,600
9.	Khamba	1,120
10.	Memba	2,497
11.	Miji (Dhammai)	2,144
12.	Mikir	564
13.	Hill Miri	5,075
14.	Mishmi	20,317
15.	Monpa	21,982
16.	Nocte	19,353
17.	Sherdukpen	1,154
18.	Singpho	983
19.	Sulung	1,519
20.	Tangsa	10,900
21.	Wancho	23,393
22.	Yobin	781
Total		2,97,573

Source: NEFA Administration, *Statistical Outline of NEFA, 1964, pp. 6-9.*

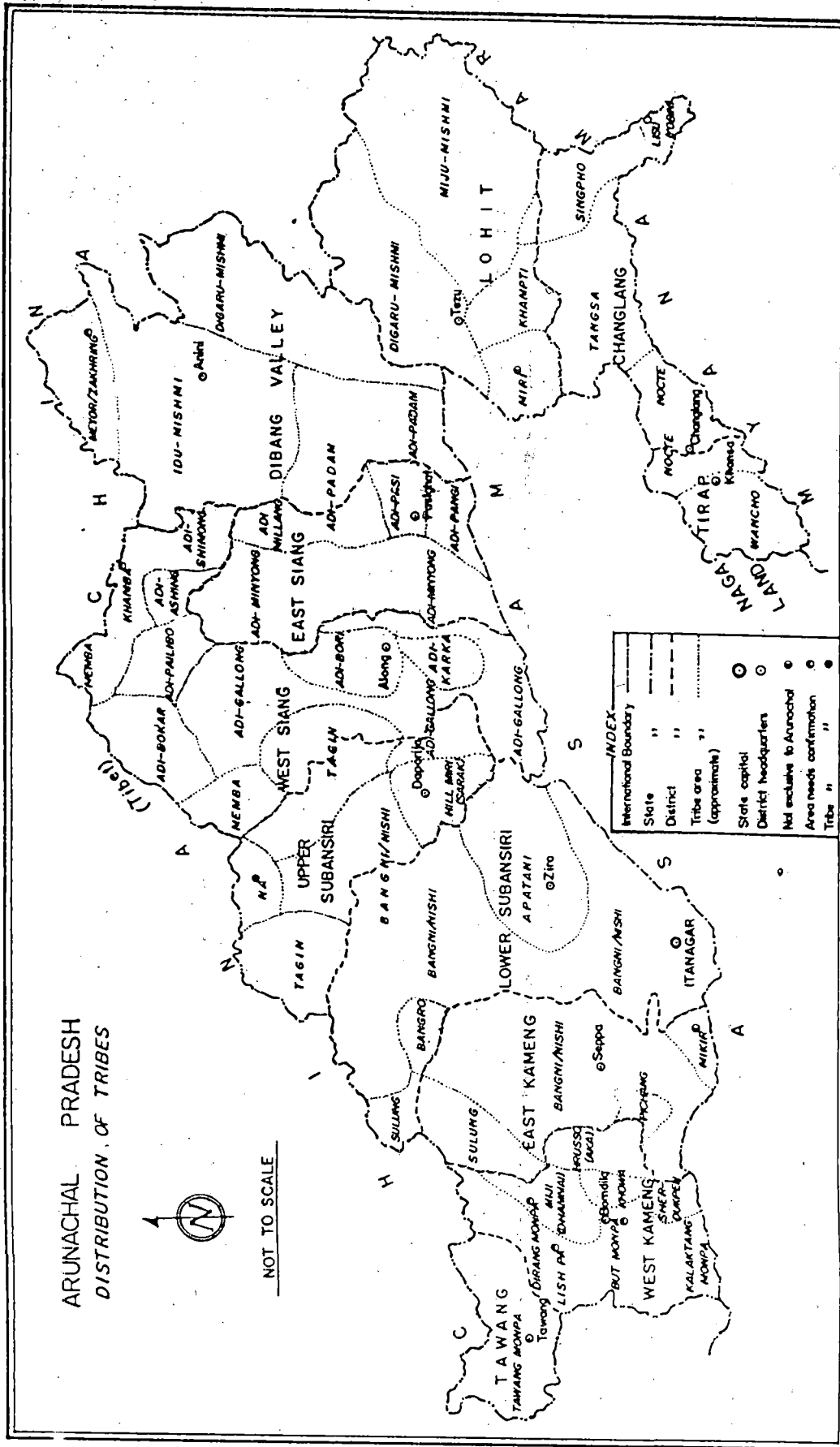
Note: This total of Arunachal tribal population does not tally with the total in 1961 Census document, i. e., North-East Frontier Agency, Part-II A, Vol. XXIV. As per the latter NEFA tribal population was 294,749.

sub-tribes and their integration with and differentiation from a common axial identity⁷. This number has again increased from 84 in

ARUNACHAL PRADESH DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBES



NOT TO SCALE



1964 to 110 in 1971 and the whole gamut of the process of identity assertion, factors behind it, and its nature are yet to be studied systematically.

However, in the sphere of production, various activities from hunting and food-gathering to manufacturing had been practised by most of the tribal communities with various degrees of intensity. While the Sulungs were found to have eked out their subsistence mainly by hunting and gathering, the Apa Tanis had developed Wet Rice Cultivation (WRC) without any spectacular improvement in tools of production, and the Khamptis were reported to have used ploughs and animal power in their agriculture-- all these three phenomena were reported to have co-existed even during the early years of Independence. This example amply indicates the gravity of the problem of generalisation.

In our discussion we shall frequently refer to the tribal specificities to substantiate the generalising trend, the style which will be abandoned gradually. It may, however, be pointed out that apart from early writings of the British scholars, ethnographic studies and other writings have been used as they had essentially projected the static view of the society and economy of the past. The District Gazetteers have also been used because of their role as the compiler of events of the past which have been weaved recently. The whole discussion has conveniently been divided into three parts

comprising of agricultural activities in section-1, manufacturing in section-2 and of trading activities in section-3. In describing the traditional economy, a special emphasis has been given to manufacturing activities in order to focus the change in this sector that has taken place during the subsequent decades of Independence.

2.1 AGRICULTURE

In the traditional tribal economy, agriculture occupied the central position supplemented by forestry. Two distinctly different agricultural practices, viz., *jhum* or shifting and settled cultivation, including both terrace and wet rice, had historically evolved among the tribal communities of Arunachal in response to the nature of topographic and climatic factors. Communal efforts that came into being during the hunting and gathering phase also continued in many cases in the labour intensive *jhum* life.

Nearly a century ago, in 1897, R.E. Mc Cabe visited the Apa Tani plateau and surprisingly noticed 'highly cultivated and artificially irrigated terraces'⁸ which had been developed in the past immemorial. The WRC had also developed, as a natural sequence, in the Basar 'bowl' of present West Siang district⁹. Traditionally developed Terrace Rice Cultivation (TRC) was found among the Monpas of Tawang district and among the Sherdukpens of West Kameng district¹⁰. In the Lower Subansiri district the Nishis residing in the villages adjoining the Apa Tani plateau had also learnt the

technique of WRC from their neighbours¹¹. The diffusion of superior method of WRC had also made inroad into the foothills of the territory from the neighbouring plains. For instance, the Nishis in the foothills of the Lower Subansiri district¹², the Khamptis of Lohit district and the Singphos of Changlang district had adopted WRC, perhaps from the adjoining plains of Assam. The Membas of the West Siang district had also developed TRC. But, the bulk of the tribal communities used to practise jhum cultivation till the middle of the century. The pace of change from shifting to WRC/TRC was limited by the geographical isolation, topographical difficulties, and social immobility. The exact position regarding the area under jhum and settled cultivation before the advent of capitalist penetration during the fifties could not be estimated¹³.

Apart from the topographic and climatic factors, abundance of land in this sparsely populated vast tract also helped in perpetuating the jhumming on a massive scale. In fact, tribal life in Arunachal rotated, for centuries, round the jhumming activities without any significant change in their internal socio-economic structures.

Every tribe had a definite habitation which was again divided into a number of hamlets or villages mostly organised along clan lines. The villagers, in many cases, used to move from one place to another within the village boundary alongwith the shift in

jhum plots. Thus jhum life did not allow them to settle down in the proper sense of the term. The permanent settlement in the hills appears to have started, *inter alia*, along with the switch over from jhum to settled cultivation.

In this jhum economy, the extent of area brought under cultivation by a family in a particular year primarily depended upon its size, i.e., the number of available working hands. The bigger the family size, the larger the area it could manage to cultivate. As jhuming involved arduous task of clearing the jungles by felling and burning of trees and bushes, digging or hoeing the land, sowing the seeds, fencing and guarding the crops -- a kind of division of labour by sex evolved in most of the tribal communities. It had been the usual practice that the males used to perform all labour in connection with felling of trees, burning and clearing and thereby making the field ready for sowing. Then from sowing to harvesting -- females were to play the key role. During the period while crops remained in the field, males had to look after them against the wild animals and birds.

The women were valued in such labour-intensive jhum economy for both production and reproduction. The institution of polygyny was common, at least among the wealthier section, in most of the jhumia communities. As the marriage of a girl was viewed as loss of working hand in her parent's family, this loss was generally

compensated in the form of bride-price that the boy had to pay to the family of the girl. It was this bride-price which had reduced the practice of polygamy into virtual monogamy among the commoners who hardly could afford it. Polygamy was prevalent among the Nishis, Mijis, Hill Miris, Khoas and the Tangsas. Among the Akas, Mishmis, Khamptis, Singphos, Noctes and Wanchos--monogamy was common but there was no restriction on polygamy. The wealthier sections and the Chiefs usually took several wives. A plurality of wives used to enhance one's social status. The Monpas, Sherdukpens, Apa Tanis, Adis and the Tagins practised monogamy as a rule and polygamy was recognised only under some special circumstances. However, though it appears that a shift from jhuming to settled cultivation had little direct correspondence with the switch over from polygamy to monogamy, their evolution and correlation require much closer attention.

Apart from family labour, the institution of slavery was quite prevalent among many of the tribal communities in Arunachal. The Akas, Mijis, Nishis, Adis, Khamptis, and the Singphos depended on the slaves to a large extent for their agricultural activities. The possession of a number of slaves, similar to the number of wives, had been counted as a symbol of wealth and social status.

During the agricultural operations, households could mobilize the labour of the neighbours on the basis of reciprocity.

Different systems of reciprocal labour supply developed in different communities. For example, among the Nishis the reciprocity principle operated either in the form of *Rey Yenam* or *Dorum Rey*. In case of the former, the family called for *Rey Yenam* had to serve *apung*, i.e., rice beer, at intervals during the working day and a rice-meal to all those who participated in the work. And it had been the obligation of the family to participate in *Rey Yenam* called by any of the participant family in turn. In case of the latter, the family calling it had to provide enough *apung* during the whole of the working day and in addition it had to serve a hot meal in the evening comprised of meat. The family had no obligation to reciprocate in turn for a *Dorum Rey* called by the responding families¹⁴.

A similar system of reciprocity, like *Rey Yenam* of the Nishis, was also prevalent among the *Apa Tanis* practising settled cultivation. Haimendorf observed that *Apa Tani* 'women often join forces in the tedious work of transplanting rice seedlings, a group of four or five women working in turn on each other's fields. No payment is made for such mutual assistance, but the person on whose field the group works is expected to provide a midday meal or at least a fair amount of rice-beer for the labourers'¹⁵.

The deployment and organisation of labour based on mutual interest and reciprocity also reported to have prevailed among other

tribal communities as well. But their communitarian specificities need to be studied at length.

The Apa Tanis developed a unique system to ensure the supply of labour for their rice economy. Haimendorf noted that 'from childhood, every Apa Tani boy or girl belongs to a labour gang'¹⁶ which was known as *patang*. Whenever a man needed extra working hand for his agricultural operations, he used to invite his *patang* friends to help in work, and in turn he had to work on their fields while needed. He further noted :

As a rule *patang* work in turn on the fields of their members' parents, and a man whose son or daughter has joined a *patang* has thus a right on the services of the entire *patang* whenever his turn comes. These services are free, except that he has the obligation to provide the *patang* with a meal to be eaten on the fields. But rich men can sometimes hire a *patang* out of turn for wages, and then the hire is divided equally among all its members¹⁷.

Thus, the Nishi system of Dorum Rey and the Apa Tani system of deployment of *patang* against wages may be viewed as the rise of agricultural labour or wage labour in the traditional tribal economy that transcended the general principle of reciprocity.

However, unlike the *patang* among the Apa Tanis, a kind of dormitory system for the youth existed among some tribes apparently in response to war need in the then state of internecine tribal war-fare. This dormitory system was also the tribal way of socialization of the young members. The existence of dormitories for both the boys as well as girls was reported among the Sherdukpens,

Adis, Khamptis, Singphos, Wanchos, Nootes, and Tangsas. In some cases this institution was found to be on the verge of extinction as it was losing much of its significance with the gradual fading away of inter-tribal hostility during the last century. At peace time, dormitory manpower was treated as a part of common village labour which could be deployed for execution of works of common interests. The use of this labour power for the benefit of individual's agricultural interest and the role of these institutions in the sphere of production are yet to be worked out in detail.

Jhuming was essentially a single cultivation of mixed crops. The hill people used their all purposive *daos* or knives and hoes either made of bamboo or of iron as principal tools for their agricultural operations. The use of plough was also known to a few tribes practising either TRC or WRC. The Sherdukpens used a kind of primitive all-wood plough which was suitable only for soft soil¹⁸. The Monpas also knew the technique of plough cultivation¹⁹. But the plough of the Khamptis was heavy and more developed. In each case the plough cultivation came in association with the use of animal power. Barring these few, the use of plough was unknown. Even the Apa Tanis, who practised highly developed transplanted WRC, did not use plough. While visiting the Apa Tani land in 1890, Crowe noticed iron hoes apparently of Garo-manufacture²⁰. But they developed a well-knit system of irrigation where stream and river water were channelled in the fields through the bamboo tubes.

With the help of the above mentioned forms of labour organisation, techniques of cultivation and tools & equipments, the hill people used to produce paddy, pepper, potato, millet, maize and pulses as their major crops and ginger, chillies, garlic, groundnut, sesamum, sugarcane, barley, jobstear, mustard and various other species and vegetables as their minor product. Dalton, in 1845, noted that chief crops of the Miris were 'bobesa, or bobsa dhan', 'goom dhan' or maize, yams, red pepper, and tobacco²¹. Butler, in 1847, reported that the Mishmis produced 'goom dhan', 'Konee dhan', yams and 'alooos' of several kinds. They also grew a small quantity of opium, mainly for sale to the Singphos, cotton for manufacture of their own clothing and tobacco²². In 1855, Dalton observed that the Adis cultivated rice, cotton, tobacco, maize, ginger, red pepper and sugarcane. With these, in late years, they added the cultivation of opium as well²³. Hessemeyer, in 1868, reported about the Akas that they produced rice, 'Dafla-Dhan' resembling millet, vegetables and pulses²⁴. Cooper's comment about the Khamptis, in 1873, that 'to their industry Northern Assam is much indebted for the best rice and vegetables, especially potatoes' reveals the prosperity of Khampti agriculture²⁵. Apart from high quality rice and potatoes, the Khamptis also had extensive poppy cultivation²⁶ like their Singpho neighbours who had been the great opium-eaters²⁷. Dun, in 1897, listed the Nishi-crops that consisted of paddy, red pepper, yams, pumpkins, poppies, sesamum, *dhal*, Indian corn, tobacco and *rhea*²⁸. While visiting Tawang in 1914, Nevil noted that land along the river

banks were "exceptionally well tilled" Apart from barley, the principal crop of the Monpas, 'large quantities of wheat, rice beans, peas, maize, onions, chillies, dal and garlic were grown'²⁹.

Tribes practising jhumming could hardly grow sufficient food-stuff needed for their sustenance and hence to some extent depended on Assam plains for the supply of rice. The procurement of rice was one of the main objectives of the predatory raids of the villages in the plains by the hill tribes. During the British rule, this mode of procurement changed from raid to trade. Although a jhumia tribe might not be self-sufficient in food, but self-sufficiency and surplus at the village or family level could not be ruled out. However, tribes like the Apa Tanis and the Khamptis, who developed transplanted WRC, had some surplus in agricultural produce, particularly in rice.

The system of distribution and circulation of the agricultural produce varied with the variation of social and political institutions and local customs and conventions that had been developed differently by different tribal communities. For example, the Khamptis developed the institution of chieftainship similar to the Noctes, Wanchos and the Singphos, having some elements of centrality. The agriculture produces of a village were kept centrally in public store houses built on the river bank so as to be near water in case of fire. The village Chief used to look after the system of redistribution about which Cooper had presented

a brief account³⁰. Unlike the redistribution pattern found in ancient Indian villages³¹ the Khampti-system involved distribution of foodgrains from the central stores on day to day basis. 'The Chiefs' man of business' used to attend at one of these storehouses at every day break to distribute paddy to the households of the village. A member from each house used to attend to receive the same. The principle of proportionality had been employed in redistribution. Each and every family seemed to have received according to its daily need. The surplus produces were sent to market and the returns were distributed *pro rata* among the different houses by the Chief.

The communities where there were no central socio-political institution but basically organised under the joint family system also usually followed the redistributive method in case of the distribution of agricultural produce. For example, the Nishis had no central village level institution but their large scale practise of polygyny had resulted in joint family system among many of them. Three to four generations of family members, 70 to 100 in number, used to live in a house. Such a long house might well be called as house-community with wife or daughter-in-law centred nuclear as well as molecular families each having its own hearth. Mishra noted the redistributive system of agricultural produce of such families where the produces were stored in a common granary³². Generally, either the eldest or the youngest of the co-wives looked after the redistribution of grains from granary for daily

consumption. All the separate hearths used to get according to their need. While the major part of their stored produce was used for the consumption of the families over the year, a portion was spent for making *Apung*, and for the meal to the workers who joined in the *Rey Yenam* or *Dorum Rey* in favour of the household. A third part used to go to different feasts and functions involving the whole house-community, the village, and clan, and similarly, a fourth part was spent for ceremonial or ritual feasts on occasions like birth, marriage, illness and death of a member. Finally, with the reaping of the next crop, the earlier surplus, if any, was disposed for barter.

Thus, the tribal economies were, by and large, based on the principle of reciprocity in regard to services and the system of redistribution in regard to the distribution of agricultural produce.

Next to agriculture, forestry had been the major source of livelihood. As we have referred earlier, the tribes like *Sulung* did completely depend on the forests for their subsistence. The others also had to look to this alternative source in case of crop failure or in times of scarcity. Forest products had been the major articles of trade of the hill people in relation to the people in the neighbouring countries. In the absence of any source for metals, household articles warheads, and construction materials--all were derived from the bamboos, canes and timbers that grow abundantly in

their surroundings.

Apart from agriculture and forest, animal rearing had also been universally practised by the tribal people. They primarily valued their cattles as a source of meat of which they were fond of. But except the Khamptis and the Sherdukpens, none of them used animal power in their agriculture. Due to their transferability, animals were often used as a medium of inter-tribal exchange. In trade between the Apa Tanis and the Nishis, the latter used to procure rice from the former in exchange of mithans, a domesticated animal highly valued by the tribals for its meat. Pigs and fowls were used in case of smaller transactions. This use of cattles as medium of exchange had made them the symbols of status and richness. Hunting the animals into the deep forests had been an important work for the men and a good hunter was respected and regarded by the co-villagers. Besides hunting, fishing was also not unknown to them. Usually, fishing was done in the streams, rivulets, and rivers over which the villagers' right was recognised by their neighbours.

2.2 CRAFTS AND MANUFACTURE

Along with agriculture and allied activities, some crafts had also developed in almost all of the isolated tribal communities barring a few. The main purpose of producing craft articles was to fulfil family demand as in agriculture. Later on, it developed as subsidiary, in some communities, to the principal activity of

agriculture. Unlike early caste societies of the Indian plains, no permanent occupational classes were, however, formed. In fact, the material condition for the formation of such classes remained immature mainly due to two reasons, viz., the nature of tools and equipments which were, so to speak, primitive, unfit for considerable surplus production, and the insulation of the tribal communities due to topographical considerations. Moreover, these handicraft activities also involved great uncertainties due to the scarcity of raw materials on the one hand and irregularities in exchange on the other. Those who had earned skills in any craft generally work at home on the raw materials supplied by customer himself. Also sometimes the artisan himself used to move to some other village, and, in such cases, he was maintained and paid by the family worked for. This phenomenon may well be interpreted as the embryo of the process of social division of labour between agriculture and manufacture. However, though no complete social division of labour did emerge explicitly, the division of family labour was distinct, well-defined, and developed to its full maturity--in both agriculture and industry. So far the handicrafts were concerned, women had been acting as the sole architect of weaving from time immemorial in all the tribal communities in Arunachal Pradesh where it had been practised. They were, indeed, as it were, the tailor-bird of Arunachal, always busy to dress up their naked people.

Among the traditional handicrafts, special mention may be

made of (i) weaving, (ii) cane and bamboo works, (iii) pottery, (iv) blacksmithy, (v) metal and ivory works, and (vi) wood carving and carpentry. Apart from these, manufacturing of salt from brine wells, paper, and tea on a small scale were also practised. Needless to mention that the manufacture of rice-beer and other home beverages were widely practised. In the following paragraphs an activity-wise narration of manufacturing activities of the tribes of Arunachal have been presented.

WEAVING

Almost all the major tribes practised, to some extent or other, weaving, the widespread household industry in Arunachal. Everywhere it was the exclusive business of the women. This feature among the upland societies resembled its counterpart in the Assam plain. The Report of Administration of North-East India (1921-22) observed :

The weaving of cotton cloth is very generally practised as a home industry by women in the Assam Valley. Weaving among the Assamese forms part of a girls' education and of a woman's ordinary household duties, and in former times the woman generally made their own clothes, and thereof the men as well The hill tribes, however, generally spin their own cotton. Among them weaving occupies much the same position as in the Assam Valley...³³

Unlike the Assamese, people of the hills of Arunachal used very simple, portable, reedless loom where 'the actual weaving is done with a bamboo tube throw-shuttle'³⁴. Scanty supply of raw materials was one of the main factors of retardation of this

industry. Cotton-cultivation was mainly limited to a few areas of the large tract and was practised by the Nishis, Adis and Mishmis. While bulk of the cotton yarn was imported from the plains, wools generally came from Tibet. Besides wool and cotton some of the tribes used bark-fibres extracted from trees like *udal*, *pudu* and *rhea nivea*. Different types of natural dyes were used by different tribal groups for printing their clothes. Influence of Assamese, Bhutanese, Tibetan and Burmese style and textile design was felt in the adjoining areas of Arunachal, even though no decisive conclusion can be made of either diffusion or evolution at this stage of our enquiry.

The similarity of Tibetan and Bhutanese style and design was especially marked in the Monpa loom. Monpa women wove with wool, cotton and bark fibre from the *rhea nivea*, shawls, sashes, coats, a wide variety of bags, 'the bogres used as a sort of knapsack' and 'tapes for tying round hats or securing boots'³⁵. Unlike the Monpas, the Sherdukpen women did not work in wool but used only cotton and plant fibre. Their two main products were *bogre*³⁶, which was woven with fibres of *hongchong* plant, and *dawn*³⁷ made of cotton threads³⁸. Both the Monpas and Sherdukpens used cotton threads of Assam plain and the former procured wools either from Tibet or Bhutan. The Akas, Buguns and the Mijis, neighbouring to them, did not have any cult of weaving and hence largely depended on them and Assam plain for the supply of their clothes³⁹.

Quite a large amount of cotton was grown by the Nishis especially in the valleys of the Panior and Palin but paradoxically Nishi women were not as good weaver as their Apa Tani counterpart and a substantial part was bartered with the latter⁴⁰. Nishi women wove in both cotton as well as Pudu plant fibres to produce blankets, skirts, loin cloths and waist bands.

They used natural dyes which were extracted from jungle creepers and certain plants--black from *Kukhi*⁴¹, red from *tamin* creeper and green from *ungu* plant--to colour their yarn used for borders. What they produce barely satisfied their home demand. Naturally very often they put on readymade garments of the neighbouring Apa Tanis, the most advanced weaver of this territory. Elwin observed -- "it was a common practice for Apa Tani girls to stay in Dafla⁴² houses for a time to do their weaving for them"⁴³. Apa Tanis had successfully combined the resources of the Nishis and their skill to produce their heavy cotton fabrics. Apa Tani women also worked in wool obtained from Bhutia blankets to weave ceremonial shawls, coats and to embroider cotton cloth⁴⁴. They usually extracted red dye from *manjeet* and black from *yango* leaves⁴⁵. Not only the Nishis, Hill Miris also largely depended on the Apa Tanis for their clothes. Unlike the Nishis, Hill Miris had no tradition of weaving and due to their close association with the plains, they procured their clothes either from the plains or from the Apa Tanis in the hills. Some of them also wore Tibetan clothes

which appears to come through Bhutiya traders. The Tagins, similar to the Hill Miris, did not weave. They imported Tibetan long woollen coats for use.

The Adis used to cultivate cotton in their jhum fields along with other produces in the 'neighbourhood of Pasighat' and 'throughout northern Siang'⁴⁶. Adi women worked in cotton, wool, goat's hair and in combination of all these raw materials. They also wove in fibres extracted from *udal* trees. Dalton noted that 'the dress of the men consists primarily of a loin-cloth made of the bark of the udal tree'⁴⁷. Those who residing in the vicinity of the Assam plain usually imported coloured cotton from the plain to manufacture their coloured coats, the special Adi variety. Unlike Apa Tanis, Adis were not self-sufficient in clothes. They often procured Mishmi coats, especially manufactured by the Idu Mishmi group. Very often the wealthy section wore Tibetan cloaks, a status symbol. While visiting the Adi country during 1820s Wilcox observed : "All the more wealthy Abors⁴⁸ have cloaks of Thibetan Woollens; indeed scarce a man is seen amongst them without some article of the manufacture of Thibet"⁴⁹.

The Mishmis had earned a great reputation in weaving. In fact, they were specially noted for their having to some extent commercial notion and making weaving commercially viable. They grew cotton on a small-scale in the neighbourhood of Roing and imported

cotton yarn from Assam plain and wool from Tibet⁵⁰. Mishmi women wove in cotton, wool, plant fibres of different kinds especially rhea nivea and human hair to produce varieties of clothes that include loin and waist cloths, aprons, sleeveless coats, jackets, skirts, scarves, embroidered bodies, shawls, sashes, bands, belts and bags. Of these Mishmi coat had a wide market among the Adis, and other products were bartered at Saikhwa market in the Assam plain as well as adjoining Tibetan region. To quote Elwin :

Idus too are excellent weavers and one of their best products is the black war-coat. This is woven with a mixture of cotton, bark-fibre and human hair and is said to be strong enough to turn aside a hostile arrow. The ordinary black-coats with an amazing variety of designs find a ready market among the Adis of Siang, especially in the north-eastern valleys, to which large quantities are exported⁵¹.

Unlike others, Khamptis used relatively larger loom which enable them to produce *lung'i*, a special Khampti product⁵². Elwin observed that the 'Khampti women are exceedingly industrious, spin, weave, dye and embroider, and can themselves make up all that they wear⁵³. Apart from *Lungi*, Khampti loom supplied 'elaborately worked bags', embroidered hair bands, belts, jacket, sashes, plain cloth, and other pretty things. The upper section often used Burmese *palso* made of silk which, it appears, represented their higher position in the society⁵⁴.

Singpho weaving had also earned much reputation. They grew cotton, though insufficient to feed their looms, in their land. A

bulk of yarn was also imported from the plains. Singpho women produced almost all the necessary clothes both for themselves and their men. Their important products consisted of turbans, hand bags, waist bands, women's skirts of different varieties, e.g., *mikhen pukang*, *muthat pakang* and *mukiy pakang*; and men's lungis of different designs, e.g., *patep*, *bamboo* and *pachang*⁵⁵. The varieties were the product of mainly the different combinations of dyes which they extracted from jungle trees and plants, e.g., 'a kind of indigo' from *rom* and yellow from the root of *Khai Khiew* creeper⁵⁶. Similar to the Singphos, Tangsas also grew cotton on a small-scale, spun, dyed and wove their clothes. Tangsa women mainly produced hand-bags, skirts and lungis of different patterns. Both "the Singpho and Tangsa women are experts in making ceremonial costumes, which show their artistry and skill in weaving. They weave a type of water-proof which is very durable"⁵⁷.

Among the Wanchos weaving was restricted only to the women associated with the chiefs' families--a community tradition⁵⁸. They produced cotton blankets, sashes, bags besides their dresses.

CANE & BAMBOO WORKS

Next to weaving is the cane and bamboo works practised throughout the tract by every households in almost all the tribes. Arunachal forests, characterised by heavy rainfall and temperate climate, are rich in bamboos. Cane is also grown in almost every

forest areas and especially in eastern hills of the territory. This abundance has made them common object to be used for the construction of dwellings, furniture, utensils and other necessities of daily life. In fact, the tribal communities of Arunachal, with limited use of metal and almost absence of pottery, depended heavily on bamboo and cane as the only raw-materials to make their implements, weapons and articles of everyday life. From bamboos and canes, they made their bows and arrows -- their only long range weapons, spears, dibbles, weaving equipments, fishing and hunting traps, war helmets (i.e. hats), digging sticks etc. Of household articles and utensils mention may be made of baskets, mats, cane belts, cane tools, *moras*, handles of daos, swords, and spades, smoking pipes, combs etc., *chungas* or bamboo tubes used as water container, mugs, spoons, plates, trays, jugs, tea cups etc. Even articles of adornment like rain coats, armbands, women's head-band, cane rings etc. were also made of bamboos and canes.

This craft was practised in such a wide scale that even the Akas, Mijis and Buguns, who developed no other craft, practised it extensively. The Monpas, Sherdukpens, Nishis, Apa Tanis, Hill Miris, Adis, Mishmis, Noctes, Wanchos and Tangsas -- almost all the tribal communities did fine work in cane and bamboo. The art of the different communities in this craft, it appears, was manifested mainly in the shape, style and basketry of their hat. Every tribe, those who make their own hats, had its own pattern which was quite

distinct from that of the others. Another object that deserves special mention is the cane suspension bridge of the Adis and Mishmis. The Adis built over 500 feet long cane bridge over the Dibang river⁵⁹. Similarly, "the Mishmees, like Abors [i.e. Adis], are most skilful in the construction of cane bridges; which they throw across rivers of eighty yards breadth"⁶⁰.

POTTERY

Pottery was also developed, though at a narrow scale, in some tribal communities of Arunachal. The two main hindrances to the development of this craft, as identified by Elwin, were : unsuitability of clay and substitutibility of cane & bamboo craft. To quote Elwin : "Pottery is rare, partly because the clay is not suitable in most places and partly because in the past the people have been accustomed to use the very large and fine bamboos that grow abundantly in their neighbourhood, for almost every purpose"⁶¹. Howsoever small might be the scale of operation, the Monpas, Membas, Khambas, Apa Tanis, Nishis, Adis, Noctes and Wanchos practiced it. Similar to weaving, this craft was also exclusively in the hands of women who, being unaware of the use of wheel, followed their crude indigenous process of drying and baking lumps of clay to make their earthen pots. Apart from ware vessels, the Monpas, Khambas and Membas used to make images of the Lord Buddha out of clay. The Apa Tanis made toys and the Wanchos skull containers. In some cases the wares were also used as medium of exchange. Among the Apa Tanis,

practice of pottery was restricted only to certain clans. Haimendorf had noted 'four ~~mura~~ clans of the village of Michi-Bamin' associated with this craft⁶². Apa Tanis also purchased wares from Nishi villages in exchange of rice. In the Nocte area, they also had some trade in wares with their neighbours. In the Adi country, there were also a few 'centres of a brisk pottery trade' on the banks of Siang and Kaking rivers⁶³.

BLACKSMITHY

Most of the major tribes had developed blacksmithy and produced their own weapons, implements and other household tools. Tribal smiths worked in iron rods which were brought from Assam plain and Tibet as well. Generally the customers had to supply their own metal to be worked by the craftsmen according to their preferences. Craftsmen generally used very crude tools like a lump of stone as an anvil and a rude hammer. The Monpa and Memba iron-smiths not only worked for their own communities, even they often came down from the extreme northern border to work for the others⁶⁴. The Nishi iron-smiths were skilled in smelting and casting. They made daos, knives etc. and had earned a great reputation. Some of them also work in silver. Sukla observed :

Their professional skill gives these craftsmen a special status. They are known by name over wide areas. People come to an ironsmith's house or workshop for bartering fowls or cereals with daos and knives or, they call the silver smith to their houses to make ornaments like the *rooft*. He is offered food, shelter and hospitality, and the people within the house attend to his needs eagerly so that he may do

his best. When he had finished his work, he is paid on the spot before his departure. Payment is in the form of meat, beer, daos, beads and pigs. The articles made by a silversmith⁰⁵ are remembered to have been made by him for years.

The Adis were also expert in this craft. They produced small knives, daos, swords, spears, arrow-heads, metal pipes, charms, girdle discs and beyop plates. Apa Tani smiths even produced iron bracelets used as ornaments. Sulung smiths were also regarded as good as others. The Akas usually manufactured their own arms and other implements. The Mishmis had their own blacksmiths who made daos, knives, arrow-heads, fire-stands, pot stands etc. The forges of the Noctes, Tangsas and Wanchos supplied daos--the common multipurpose tribal tool, iron scrapers, spearheads, spades and bangles. Singphos were renowned smiths and produced daos which were greatly valued all over the tract for their quality and durability. In the Khampti society, members of the upper strata usually practised various kinds of smitheries. They, like other communities, made their own weapons and implements but their forges were specially renowned for ornaments and ivory works which we shall discuss next.

METAL AND IVORY WORKS

Apart from iron, some of the tribes worked in brass, silver and gold beside bone and ivory mainly to produce ornaments

for their women. Metals were generally obtained from Tibet and Assam. Tribal craftsmen used to work with their simple tools, for example, hammer, punch, chisel, scissors, tongs, anvil, iron file, iron gauge, compass, iron bar etc., charcoal and certain minerals were used for making crucibles and solutions for washing the finished products. The Monpas and Sherdukpens, though not traditional silver-smiths, had learnt the art of silversmithy and practised it at small scale. They commonly used *Belang*, a Tibetan silver coin, for making ornaments which was available in their area. Bhutiya traders, who frequently visited the Monpa and Sherdukpen areas, acted as the source of both pure and German silver which they procured from Kalimpong. Their artisans produced *odas*, cups, ornaments, pins etc⁶⁶. Since there were no silver-smiths among the Akas, Mijis and Khowas, they usually purchased ornaments from the Monpa and Sherdukpens. The Sulungs worked in brass to manufacture ornaments, pipes and sacred bells.

Nishi silver smiths also made brass ornaments, dishes, sacred bells and silver smoking pipe not only for their own community but as well for the neighbouring Apa Tanis. The important product of the Adi metal-workers was the *beyop disc*⁶⁷. Adi smiths also worked for the Mishmis, as the latter had no silver-smiths among them. The famous Mishmi silver tobacco-pipes were made by the Gallongs. The Mishmis practised a little ivory work. Unlike others, Khamptis had earned a great reputation in both ivory and metal

works. It is worthy to quote Dalton's observations about the Khampti smithies; he wrote :

The priests in their hours of relaxation amuse themselves by carving in wood, bone or ivory, at which they are very expert. In making ivory handles of weapons they evince great skill, taste, and fecundity of invention, carving in high relief twisted snakes, dragons, and other monsters with a creditable unity and gracefulness of design.

It is customary for the chiefs also to employ themselves in useful and ornamental arts. They work in gold, silver, and iron, forge their own weapons and make their wives' jewels. They also manufacture embossed shields of buffalo or rhinoceros hide, gilding and lacquering them with skill and taste.

WOOD CARVING AND CARPENTRY

Though Arunachal forests are rich in woods, use of wood in household articles is rare, because of the absence of conducive development of the tools and equipments among the people of the entire frontier tract. A few tribal communities had carpenters who worked, with their primitive tools, non-commercially and mainly to meet their household demand. The availability of cane and bamboo in the nearby forests might have discouraged this craft as it is believed to have happened in case of pottery. Few of the Monpas and Sherdukpens practised carpentry and made doors, wall shelves, benches, wooden saddles, small tables, boxes, bowls, cups, plates, saucers etc.--all of which represented their crude workmanship. Similar to these two westernmost tribes, the easternmost Noctes, Wanchos and Tangsas also had some carpenters among them. However,

work in wood in the form of wood-carving was much popular, and was practised as a part of culture by a number of communities, mainly among the Buddhist tribes. The Monpas and Sherdukpens produced different kinds of masks, and painted them differently with colour which they obtained either from Assam plain or from Tibet, for their social and religious festivals. The Khambas, Membas and Buguns also carved wooden masks. The latter's was the imitation of the Sherdukpens. The Khamptis made praiseworthy images of Lord Buddha by carving wood. They were equally fond of masks in their ceremonial dances. The Singphos also had a little work in wood carving. However, the chief centre of wood carving was the Wancho area. Among the Wanchos, "this wood carving", as observed by Elwin, "may be considered under three main heads--connected respectively with head-hunting, the decoration of the morungs or men's communal houses, and the funerary images erected for warriors and other important persons"⁶⁹. Generally the images of different animals, e.g., dogs, elephants, monkeys, tigers etc. bearing different implications and important highlights of tribal life, e.g., warriors, dancing couple etc. were taken up for carving⁷⁰.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Apart from the foregoing crafts, a few more arts and non-agricultural economic activities, practised by the local people of Arunachal which deserve to be mentioned, are the paper-making craft of the Monpas, brewing done by almost every tribe, tea

manufacturing of the Singphos and salt manufacturing of the Noctes. A few families of the Monpas produced a kind of hand-made paper using local materials. They obtained the required pulp from a tree which is locally known as *Sukso*⁷¹. Generally these coarse papers were used by the Lamas (of Tawang Monastery) for their correspondence and religious books⁷². Brewing is another widespread household activity throughout the frontier tract. It was done from rice, millet and tapioca and, among the tribes of central zone, was known as "Apong", a cheap rice beer.

The Singphos produced tea from the wild tea plants that grow in their vicinity and were accustomed in taking it as their favourite beverage. Their indigenous mode of tea production is described well by Robinson. He noted that :

The young and tender leaves are first plucked and dried in the sun; by some they are exposed alternately to the night dews, and the heat of the sun for three successive days; whilst by others they are put into flat hot pans and turned about till quite dry. This done the leaves are placed in the hollow of a bamboo, and driven firmly down by means of a stick, the bamboo being at the same time held in the heat of a fire. When full, the ends of the bamboos are tied up with leaves, and then hung up in places where they may be exposed to the smoke of the fire. Thus prepared, the tea is said to keep good for years⁷³.

Lastly, the Noctes used to produce salts from the brine-wells and salt-springs in their areas by a process of heating⁷⁴. Salt was the most scarce commodity and highly demanded in

this land-locked frontier tract. Before the importation of salt from outside, Nocte-salt had a wide market not only in the easternmost part of the hills, but even in the north-eastern plains of Assam.

2.3 TRADE

The goods and articles which could not be produced locally or, even if produced, were not sufficient, were generally procured either through raid or by trade. Raid as a means of procurement of scarce articles had undoubtedly preceded trade in the history of mankind. The process of civilization saw a gradual replacement of the former by the latter⁷⁵. Though, what happened in the antiquity in our frontier went unrecorded, throughout the recorded history of about one and half century, the hill people were reported to have engaged in both the raid and trade.

The frontier people had trade relations with the people of neighbouring Himalayan states of Tibet, Bhutan and Burma on the one hand, and Brahmaputra valley in the south on the other.

TRADE WITH TIBET AND BHUTAN

The trading intercourse of the frontier tribes with Tibet had in many aspects important bearing in shaping the socio-economic life in the hills of Arunachal. The Mishmis, Monpas, Khambas, Membas, Apa Tanis, Adis and Nishis--all these tribes were in touch with Tibetan merchandise, directly or indirectly. Captain Michell

noted in 1883 that 'the Mishmis carry on a large trade in tita, a vegetable poison in exchange for which they obtain swords, woollen cloths and salt from the people of the Lama valley'⁷⁶. Earlier to Michell, Mishmis' trade with Tibet during the nineteenth century was elaborately highlighted by Cooper, who tried in vain twice to explore India-Tibet-China trade route⁷⁷. Griffith⁷⁸, an English botanist engaged in promoting tea-plantation in the Brahmaputra valley, and Robinson⁷⁹, an educationist of the Gauhati Government Seminary have also given some account of the same. In later years, Needham, who worked as Assistant Political Officer in Sadiya and as one of the earliest advisers to Government on tribal affairs during 1882 to 1905, also added a lot of information in this regard⁸⁰. These accounts revealed that Rima had been the centre of trade between the Tibetans and the Mishmis. The Tibetans used to come down upto Rima while the Mishmis used to go there following the Walong and Kibithu route. Both Walong in Mishmi hills and Rima in Tibet were developed as two big centres of barter trade. The Zakhrings and Meyors in the upper Lohit were largely engaged as intermediaries in trade between the Tibetans and Mishmis as they were positioned in between them. The Mishmis in Emra valley had direct trade link with the Tibetans. They were regular visitors to the village Mipi (Tibet), while the Tibetans used to pay frequent visits to Chindro Village of the Mishmis. In this Mishmi Tibetan trade, generally *bit* (Poison), *gathewan* (an odoriferous root), *manjeet* (madder), *teeta*, animal hides, musk, and dyed cloths were exchanged for Tibetan

cattle, brass pipes, gongs, copper vessels, wool, cloth, salt, tea, garments and Tibetan sword. Needham reported that during Anglo-Mishmi war, Mishmis also procured war-heads like gun, pistols and powder from Tibet⁸¹.

The Adis also had a 'considerable trading intercourse with the Tibetans. The Boris, Bokars and the Minyongs--different Adi sub-tribes--used to play the role of intermediaries in Adi-Tibetan trade. They used to exchange raw hides, chillies, *tamens* (a creeper used for dyeing), mithuns, pigs and spears for Tibetan woollen cloth, raw wool, swords, ear-rings, brass bangles, iron, utensils, cattle, bead necklace, silver ornament, copper pan, brass pipe, and above all, salt.

Tribes living in the western part of the frontier maintained not only commercial intercourse with Tibet from long past but also borrowed religious ideas and cultures from the noble ancient Tibetan civilization. Through this part passed the famous trade route to Tibet from Assam, i.e., Tawang route. More is yet to be known of this route that had once led to prosperous trade between Assam and Tibet. The tribes inhabiting in this part were under strong Tibetan influence. The Khampas, Monpas, Sherdukpens, and Bangros had direct access to Tibetan market and they had been intermediaries in trade between Assam and Tibet as well as between Tibet and the other frontier tribes living southwards to them. Lamb

observed the important role of the Khampas, a small Buddhist tribe bordering Tibet, 'in the carrying trade across Himalaya in which Tibetan salt and silver was brought down in exchange for rice, iron and silk'⁸². Haimendorf noted that the Bangros and Nas also acted as middlemen in Tibetan trade. Tibetan goods used to pass through them to the Nishis, Hill Miris and other tribes in the upper Kamla valley. Tribes of the Kamla and Sipi regions used to exchange hides, cane ropes, madder and other dyes for Tibetan woollen cloths, ornaments, bell-metal plates, swords and salt⁸³. The Monpas, who until 1950 had been under Tibetan rule⁸⁴, and the Sherdukpens also had played a long role of middlemen in trade between Assam and Tibet. While they used to go to Tibetan trading marts during the summer when the passes were open, they usually visited Assam plains during winter. Produces like chillies, vegetable dyes such as madder, peaches, handmade paper and husked rice were traded for Tibetan salt, wool and *churpi* (a hard, cheese-like milk-produce)⁸⁵.

Apart from these tribes who had direct trade link with Tibet, a number of others also had indirect link and were very much accustomed to Tibetan merchandise. The Apa Tanis, Nishis and Hill Miris highly valued Tibetan articles of ornaments, clothes, utensils, and articles of rituals and worships.

In 1944, Haimendorf observed that 'though the Apa Tanis have no direct contact with Tibetans, they use a good many articles

of Tibetan origin which reach them by devious routes through their Dafla and Miri neighbours⁸⁶. The position of Tibetan articles in the Apa Tani society and their association with Apa Tani customs and tradition have led Haimendorf to conjecture of the existence of direct link of the Apa Tanis with Tibet in the long past⁸⁷. Similar observations were also made by him in case of the Nishis⁸⁸. He noticed that both the Tibetan and Assamese economic influence overlapped among the Hill Miris. Those who lived in the lower Kamla region and bordering Assam plains were under Assamese economic influence and Miris living north to them were under Tibetan economic influence⁸⁹.

Though the influence of Tibetan economy upon the tribes of Arunachal and the nature and relations of exchange between them that existed before independence have not yet been systematically studied, some of the available information that have been presented above, no doubt, indicate strong economic ties between the people across the present Indo-Tibet border.

Apart from the indirect trade between Assam and Tibet through the frontier tribes, there had also been some direct trade and communication between them. In 1837 M'cosh reported :

During the flourishing period of the Assam dynasty, we are informed, that the kings of Assam were in the habit of sending presents to Grand Lama; and that a caravan consisting of about 20 people annually resorted from Lassa to the Assam frontier; and

transacted merchandise to a very considerable amount with the Assamese. The Thibetans took up their quarters at a place called Ghouna, two months journey from Lassa : and the Assamese, at Geganshur, a few miles distant from it. The trade at the former consisted of silver in bullion to nearly a lakh of rupees, and a large quantity of rock salt. This they exchanged with the Assamese for rice, silk, lac, and other produce of Bengal; but this trade had for many years been discontinued⁹⁰.

The cause of decline of this trade was ascribed by Pemberton to the destabilized political situation during the reign of later Ahom kings and the uncertainties cropping up in the wake of the Burmese invasion⁹¹. Thus, when the British took over Assam, there were no direct commercial linkage between Assam and Tibet. And the only way to explore Tibetan markets for British manufactures was through the frontier tribal intermediaries--an objective that was pursued by the Company in its frontier trade policy⁹². Unlike Tibetan trade, trade with Bhutan appears to have been limited to some pockets of western part of Arunachal alone. The Bhutanese trade mostly consisted of articles of Tibetan origin. But since the people of western Arunachal not only had direct access to Tibetan market but also shared ethnic and religious affinities with the Tibetans in large measure⁹³, the Bhutanese trade never figured prominently in Arunachal frontier. A few articles of Bhutanese origin having popularity among the frontier tribes rather found their entry into Arunachal through Tibet. Haimendorf observed that 'Tonga', a kind of coarse woollen cloth of Bhutanese origin, which was greatly valued by the Apa Tanis, used to reach them via the Nishi and Miri intermediaries⁹⁴.

TRADE WITH BURMA

Tribes living in the easternmost part of the frontier developed some trade relations with the people of Burma across the Patkoi range. The common racial affinities and history of the Singphos and Khamptis living on both sides of Patkoi range⁹⁵ worked behind this development of mutual trade across the present Indo-Burma border. Though the extent of early cross-country trade across the Patkoi range is not as voluminous as trade with Tibet, but the trade route connecting Sadiya, Hookang valley, Mogang and Bhamo went upto Ava and also Yunan in south-west China⁹⁶. Beyond Sadiya, all these Burmese trade centres in general and Bhamo in particular were regularly visited by the Chinese traders. Hence, the route attracted much attention from the Britishers who wanted to explore Chinese market for British manufactures through Assam-Burma trade route across the Patkoi range⁹⁷.

Frontier people, particularly the Singphos had developed a lucrative trade in rubber and opium with the Burmese. The total amount of rubber collected and sold in 1894-95 were about 10,000 mounds, according to one estimation, of which only about 2,300 mounds came to Assam and the rest went to Mogang, Bhamo and Kendet in Burma⁹⁸. There were a number of agents operating in and around the frontier, in places such as Bisa, Nigru, Samon, etc., from where rubber was collected from the frontier people and sent to Calcutta for processing⁹⁹. This brisk trade in rubber was reported to have

declined during the closing years of nineteenth century due to recurrent unscientific and uneconomical tapping of the trees that made them barren to meet the growing demand¹⁰⁰. Another important items of trade of the Singphos was opium for which they are very fond of. This opium trade was mainly carried with the Kachins of Upper Burma¹⁰¹.

Apart from rubber and opium, frontier tribes of present Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal used to go to Bhamo to procure Burma *daos*, iron implements, fishing nets, spears, penknives, and Burmese garments in exchange of their handloom products, tea leaves, salt, beads etc¹⁰². Wilcox's survey during 1825-28 revealed the use of Chinese, Tibetan and Burmese goods by the Khamptis and the buffer role in Burman trade of some of the tribes bordering the eastern part of the frontier in relation to their counterpart in the foothills and also people of Assam. He reported of a Mishmi Chief who was in the habit of trading with the Khampti country on the Irrawaddy¹⁰³. The main article that the Mishmis used to export was *daos* or knives. These knives were reported to have been made by the Kanangs, a dependent tribe of the Khamptis, who then sold them to the Singphos in its naive form. The latter used to pass them to the Miju Mishmis after fitting the handles and sheaths in exchange for cloth, musk pods and opium. The Mijus then brought these knives, *inter alia*, to the Barkhampti land in Burma by ascending the valley of the Ghalum Ti and crossing the snow covered mountains of the watershed in the basin of western

Irrawady¹⁰⁴. Captain Hannay, in course of his tour during 1835-36, from the 'capital of Ava to the Amber Mines of the Hookong Valley', also noted periodical markets at different places in Burma where the Assamese, Burmese and Chinese from Yunan and Shan states carried on barter trade¹⁰⁵. In 1840, a Christian missionary, Miles Bronson, reported extensive trading contacts of the Noctes with the Burmese and Chinese¹⁰⁶.

TRADE WITH ASSAM

The tribes living in the foothills, valleys and southern hills of Arunachal had exchange relations with the people of Brahmaputra valley for centuries. But due to their feudal vision the Ahoms did little to articulate it in any meaningful direction and hence they left no appreciable accounts of hill-plains trade. It was the Company who did first notice the prospect of both cross-country and frontier trade in the hills of north-east.

A few trading spots had been developed along the foothills of western part of the frontier which were known as *duars*. These duars were the passes through which the hill people used to come to the plains for trading and other purposes. Important among them were the Kariapara duar. Charduar (Four passes), Chaiduar (six passes), Na Duar (Nine passes) etc. Bulk of the Assam trade with Tibet flowed through these duars.

Reports and writings of different British administrators

and explorers like Welsh, Boileau, Robinson, Pemberton, M'Cosh, Wilcox, Dalton, Beresford, Cooper, Gray, etc., contained valuable but fragmentary information on the early frontier trade. In 1794, Captain Welsh, in his report to the Secretary to Government, enlisted the articles imported to Assam from her neighbouring north-eastern frontier. It noted the supply of copper, cotton, spring salt and fir trees from the eastern confines of Sadiya. From the northern confines the Daflas (Nishis) used to supply manjeet, long pepper, ginger and mithun; the Miris brought copper, manjeet and *ouka* to the Assam plain. And the Bhutias (tribes bordering Bhutan like the Monpas and Sherdukpens were often referred as Bhutias by the early British authors) supplied musk, blankets, cowtails, ponies, rock salt and different kinds of embroidered cloth and silk¹⁰⁷. The main articles of exchange of the hill tribes constituted of forest products, for example, Aka rubber, Nishi manjeet, Mishmi teeta, Singpho and Tangsa rubber and ivory, Nocte salt, Adi and Miri pepper, madder wax and musk; etc. The main articles of import of the frontier tribes consisted of salt. Assamese cloth, beads, cotton, dried fish, tobacco and other necessities. Tribes playing the intermediary role in trade between Assam and Tibet used to purchase mainly lac, raw and manufactured Assam silk, brass, copper and rice for which there had been a good demand in Tibet. And in turn, they imported Tibetan blankets, ponies, gold, specie and rock salt which had market in the Assam plains.

Thus, Tibet and Assam trade of the Arunachalese were more important than their Burmese and Bhutanese counterpart. Again, except Tibetan rocksalt, trade with Tibet largely consisted of luxuries while the same with Assam was confined mostly to necessities.

In order to tap the trans-Himalayan trade potential through the tribal intermediaries of the frontier, the Britishers had developed *inter alia*, a number of annual trade fairs along the foothills on the one hand and had successfully lessened the ethnocentric trade barriers arising out of inter-tribal or intra-tribal rivalries by establishing political supremacy on the other. As a result, a significant shift appears to have taken place in the direction of trade. The transborder trade in the late years of nineteenth century was increasingly being replaced by frontier trade following the British frontier commercial policy and the development of the Brahmaputra valley.

TRADE FAIRS : FORERUNNER OF MARKET ECONOMY

In 1833, Lt. Rutherford started 'a mart at Udalguri in the Darrang District in hopes of attracting merchants from Tibet and from the hills'¹⁰⁸. A fair used to be held at Kariaparaduar during the Ahom rule, which was discontinued during Burmese occupation of Assam. Lt. Rutherford who was in charge of Darrang had revived it at Udalguri. In 1837, the authorities at Fort William asked its Agent

in the North-East Frontier to arrange a similar mart at Sadiya¹⁰⁹.

But it was not before 1867 that Sadiya fair was organized¹¹⁰. Similarly, Doimara fair was also reorganised. From the sixties of the last century these fairs became more or less regular and played a crucial role in intensifying economic and non-economic exchanges between hills and plains. We have, comparatively, more information about the nature and extent of trade in these trade fairs. Early Administrative Annual Reports, Assam District Gazetteers, Reports on Early Trade in Assam, Assam Secretariat Records, Hunter's Statistical Account of Assam -- all these sources provide recorded facts and figures on these annual trade fairs.

The following points are worth-mentioning from all such available observations for the second half of the last and the first decade of the present century.

(i) Tribes living in the western part of the frontier like the Akas, Monpas, Sherdukpens, Nishis and Miris were regular visitors at Udalguri, Doimara, Charduar, Darrang, Subenkhata and Ghasrapara fairs. Tibetans were also reported to have visited Udalguri fair for which they used to come down through Dhansiri pass using Amratol-Udalguri route¹¹¹. In the eastern part, all the major tribes like the Adis, Mishmis, Singphos and Khamptis used to come to Sadiya.

(ii) The articles of exports of the hill tribes in Udalguri and Doimara fairs generally consisted of animals and animal

products like pony, sheep, dog, yaks tail, musk, etc.; and forest products like lac, garlic, dye, walnut, orange, madder, wax, and rubber; craft products like blanket and bag; agricultural products like chilly, onion, spice, etc. and gold and salt. However, their imports from the fairs was made of agricultural products like paddy, rice, cotton, betel leaf, betel nut, tobacco, and rape seed; craft products like cotton and eri thread, cotton cloth, brasspot, bell-metal pot, bar iron, etc. Apart from these, dried fish and salt were also important items of import.

Similarly export of the hill tribes in Sadiya fair consisted of a few animal products like elephant tusk, ivory and rhinoceros horns; forest products like mishmi-teeta, rubber, wax, honey, and timber; craft goods like Adi-cloth, Mishmi-cloth, spear, dao, knife, basket, and bag; they also occasionally brought rice and amber for sale. Their import mainly consisted of manufactures like eri-cloth, iron utensils, silver ornaments, muslin, bell-metal plates, tea, sugar, oil, tobacco cambric, cup etc. Apart from these, opium, salt and cattle also highly figured in the list.

(iii) Merchants from the plains, particularly the Marwaris who controlled the whole internal trade of Assam and were collaborators of British capital and interest, used to attend these fairs with their merchandise. Products like rubber, mishmi-teeta, ivory, lac, and wax had a good demand for them, which were sent

abroad through Calcutta.

(iv) Transactions in these fairs took place in terms of both cash and kind. A year-wise account of import into and export from Assam for the years 1876 to 1885 revealed erratic fluctuations in trade in all the important fairs of Udalguri, Doimara, and Sadiya. However, the aggregate of total import and export in all these three important fairs for the period (1876-1885) exhibited a trade surplus in favour of the hill people. For example, total imports of Assam was Rs. 1,06,978 in 1876, Rs. 1,02,886 in 1877, Rs. 1,38,590 in 1880, Rs. 1,92,861 in 1883 and Rs. 1,54,669 in 1885 against total exports of Rs. 75,823, Rs. 45,553, Rs. 62,020, Rs. 1,17,431 and Rs. 1,34,790 respectively¹¹³. This trade surplus was primarily due to the gold and other preciocities that had been brought for sale by the tribes against their own purchase of necessities. Thus, this trade deficit of Assam had been instrumental in monetising the hills in the early years.

(v) The Marwari traders at Sadiya were reported to have advanced large amount of money to the hill tribes on account of rubber and other hill products which they redeemed when the tribals came down on their annual visit to plain¹¹⁴. In fact the articles of exchange of the hill people had been changed in the later years following the demand of the traders in plains. The indirect effect of capitalist market forces, thus, played an important role in reshaping the supply from forest-based tribal economy of the hills.

(vi) These annual trade fairs largely penetrated into the life in the hills. The extent of dependence of the hill people on the trade in plains could be understood from the fact that the Britishers very often resorted to blockade of the entry of the tribes as a measure of punishment. In several occasions, the hostile tribes, who even could not be won with military power, responded favourably to such ban¹¹⁵.

Thus, the hill men's trade with the British Indian empire via the Brahmaputra valley was accelerated by the establishment of annual trade fairs which in turn helped the process of replacement of raid by trade. Moreover, the ethnocentric trade barriers appears to have been greatly reduced so much so that 'a party of Tibetans from Rima used the Sadiya route to Calcutta for the first time for trade purposes in 1920-21'¹¹⁶.

However, these flourishing annual fairs began to decline from the twenties of this Century¹¹⁷. Several factors were there behind it.

(i) In response to increasing need for frequent transactions and interactions, a number of weekly *hats* or markets had come into existence along the foothills. As the dependence of the hill people on the trade in plains increased, the annual fairs had become an interval too long to meet the need of the hill people who as a result started visiting the weekly marts instead of waiting for the fair.

(ii) With the growth of population in the Brahmaputra

valley, a number of urban centres and urban agglomerations came into existence along or near the foothills on both banks of the Brahmaputra, e.g., North Lakhimpur, Harmoti, Tezpur, Mangaldoi, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Margherita, Naharkatiya, Namrup and Sadiya. Most of these centres provided daily or weekly marketing facilities, and annual trade fairs began becoming irrelevant.

(iii) The growth of Pasighat as an administrative centre beyond the Inner Line largely reduced the importance of Sadiya fair.

(iv) The advancement of the plains traders especially of the Marwaris in some places beyond the Inner Line and establishment of regular trade relations by them with the frontier people also reduced to a large extent the necessity of the hill people to come down for the annual fairs. Generally the British administration issued passes to the willing traders to establish shops beyond the Inner Line. During 1884 to 1887 a total of 71 passes had been issued by the Political Officer at Sadiya¹¹⁸. As this passes were valid only for three months, many of the Marwari traders having shops beyond the Inner Line had to take such passes twice or thrice in a year.

(v) With the invention of artificial rubber, large scale import of cheap Bengal salt, development of communication, growth of tea industry and trade and commerce in the valley-- the old order of hill-plains trade were changed. Salt and ponies had been the principal articles of exchange for the Tibetans. But large scale

import of cheap Bengal salt competed out the Tibetan rocksalt (as well as spring salt of the Noctes). The development of transport and communication in the valley also made the trade in ponies redundant. As a result, Tibetans lost the incentives of such trade and their attendance was greatly reduced. Invention of artificial rubber also jeopardized the once lucrative rubber trade of the hill people. With the growth of tea industry, wood-based industry came as an ancillary which in turn caused a fillip to timber trade¹¹⁹. The exploitation of petroleum in the valley had brought the demand for wax down as it could now be produced as by products.

The gradual penetration of the colonial-capitalist economy into the hills since the second half of the nineteenth century had begun to reduce the earlier 'distance trade' into 'local trade'. In addition, the abolition of slavery (though not at full scale) encroachment of plain lands for tea plantations, creation of reserve forests, ban on head-hunting, measures taken to bring an end of the internecine inter-tribal feuds, and the provision of security for the safe movement of different tribes to the marts and trading fairs in the British occupied territory --all these jointly had weakened the very foundation of the stagnant economic basis of the tribal communities of Arunachal. Of these, abolition of slavery no doubt hit hard a number of tribes who used to employ slaves at a large scale for their agricultural operations. Naturally this sector demanded much attention at the cost of the arts and crafts, and labour, spent for arts and crafts, was redirected to serve the needs

of agriculture. The art of wood carving was intimately associated with the customs, highly esteemed among some tribes, of head-hunting. With the abolition of the latter, the urge to cling to this art was also losing its justification¹²¹. Establishment of annual trade fairs at different spots along the foothills and shops inside the Inner Line had made ready-made and mill-made clothes available to the people of the hills. This, in absence of any development schemes, became a disincentive for the local looms. The British policy of conciliation and persuasion, settlement of amicable relationship through the introduction of *posas* and above all the presence of 'great' British power at the door--all these had virtually forced an end to the era of conflicting 'little' powers of the small tribal communities. As the inter-tribal feuds were gradually coming to an end, the air of peace and tranquility began to blow in the hills, and the urge to produce war materials, e.g., war-helmet, war coat etc., was also disappearing. Moreover, there are reasons to believe that the political turmoil in Tibet and the fluctuation in the Tibetan policy of British India from time to time might also have adversely affected both the supply of raw materials from and demand for NEFA products in Tibet. The cumulative effects of all these change initiated by the external forces gradually eroded the age-old economic base of the tribal communities in this frontier tract as had happened in other parts of India. The arts and crafts of the tribes, following the general socio-economic trend, fared equally badly during the later years of the partial and loose

colonial regime leading to greater dependence on the plains.

Before concluding this Chapter, it needs to be observed that the catallactic triad of trade, money and market did not emerge in these traditional tribal economies of Arunachal, and transactions were made in terms of equivalencies. In most cases, equivalencies were set by social customs and conventions. These were, by and large, independent of the variation in demand and supply. As a result, the market defined by 'demand-supply- price mechanism' did not, in the true sense of the term, evolve. Rather, a number of market places came into existence in the outskirts of the frontier which were seasonally visited by the trading parties. In the absence of a common medium of exchange, like money, multiplicity of mediums, for different tribes as well as for different kinds of transactions within a single tribe, were in use.

This scenario, however, began to change since the middle of the nineteenth century with the establishment of trade fairs, and extension of market network into the hills by the plains traders. With the change in the old order of the hill plains trade, hill products were gradually brought under market mechanism. The equivalencies, particularly in external trade, became oscillatory with the fluctuations of the market. For example, the hill people used to exchange salt for rice in their trade with the plains. With the importation of Bengal salt into and exportation of rice from the

valley, the exchange rate came down from 15:1 to 8:1 (rice for salt) in 1886, 6:1 in 1887 and further declined to 4:1 in the next year¹²⁰. Money, that made in-road into the hills in the form of Posa, porterage and other transactions, was mainly used for external trade and that too remained restricted to certain sections only. The internal transactions were, by and large, carried out through barter. No separate economic institutions had apparently been evolved and the tribal social formations were more akin to anthropologist's 'status society'. In fact, economy in such an insulated kinship based tribal community was embedded in its socio-political processes.

NOTES & REFERENCES

1. The following construction of "tribal economy" by K. S. Singh may be noted :

Economy of the tribe is a projection of tribal society, a response to the ecosystem in which it is placed, its function of production and distribution are governed by the bonds of kinship within or between families, class and kindred. Production is based on the exploitation of the resources locally and easily available with the crude technology largely for consumption. Family is the unit of production, with little specialization and division of labour beyond that based on sex and age. Distribution of goods is regulated by the considerations of reciprocity. The ideal state of primitive economy is thus described as self-sufficient though at a subsistence level, non-acquisitive, non-machine and non-monetary (K. S. Singh, (ed), *Economies of the Tribes and their Transformation*, (1982), Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp. vii-viii).

2. Cf. Barun De and Nripen Bandyopadhyay, "An Approach to the Study of Tribal Economy in India", in K. S. Singh, (ed), *ibid*, pp. 8-14.
3. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, "The position of the Tribal Populations in Modern India", in Philip Mason, (ed), *India and Ceylone : Unity and Diversity*, (1967), Oxford University Press, London, pp. 182 - 222.
4. As per the Article 342(1) of the Constitution of India, the President may specify, after consulting with Governors, the tribes and tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities to be the Scheduled Tribe for each State. Though no uniform test has been adopted for the identification of the tribes to be scheduled in the Country, but tribal origin, indicators of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographic isolation and general backwardness--these indicators *inter alia* have commonly been used. In fact, Dr. Ambedkar's comment that "a backward community is a community which is backward in the opinion of the Government" also appears to be largely relevant in case of the designation of the tribal as well. (Marc Galanter,

Competing Equalities : Law and the Backward Classes in India, (1984), Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp. 147 - 153, 1601.

Also Andre Beteille, "The Future of the Backward Classes : The Competing Demands of Status and Power", in Philip Mason, (ed), *ibid*, pp. 89 - 120.

5. Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, E. J. Hobsbawm, (ed), (1969), International Publishers, New York, p. 20.
6. It may, however, be pointed out that the 1961 census has been the first census in Arunachal and is not complete in many respects. It only covered about 88.5 per cent of total NEFA population.
7. Cf. S.C. Dube, *Tribal Heritage of India, Vol. I. Ethnicity, Identity and Interaction*, (1977), Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, pp. 1 - 7.
8. From R.B. Mc Cabe's report, in V. Elvin, (ed), *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, (1959), Oxford University Press, Bombay, p. 191. (Hereafter Nineteenth Century).
9. J.K. Barhakur, Swidden to Sedentary Cultivation, Census of India-1971, Series 24, Part Misc. (a), p. 7.
10. Amalendu Guha, "Geography behind History : An Introduction to the Socio-Economic Study of North-East India", in *Science and Human Progress*, (1974) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, p. 92.
11. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Subansiri District*, (1981), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, pp. 171 - 72.
12. *ibid*, p. 172.
13. Elvin, in 1959, estimated the area under jhum cropping at any one time to be around 3 to 4 per cent of the total area of Arunachal (V. Elvin, *A Philosophy For NEFA*, (Second Reprint 1964), Published on behalf of the adviser to the Governor of Assam, Shillong, p. 82; Henceforth referred to as *Philosophy*). This estimate while translated into hectares comes around 300 thousand hectares -- which is much higher than the later assessment of 66,000 hectares made by the administration in early seventies (Government of

- Arunachal Pradesh, *Draft Annual Plan 1973-74*, Planning & Development Department, p. 81. Thus, no reliable estimate is found regarding the area under jhum.
14. S. N. Mishra, "Arunachal's Tribal Economic Formation and Their Dissolution", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 43, October 22, (1983), pp. 1842 - 43.
 15. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Apa Tanis and Their Neighbours*, (1962), Roudledge & Kegan Paul, London, p. 43, (Henceforth *The Apa Tanis*).
 16. *ibid.*
 17. *ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
 18. Amalendu Guha "Geography behind History", *op. cit.* p. 92
 19. *ibid.*
 20. H. M. Grove, "Account of a Journey to Apa Tanang Country", (1890), From the extracts in V. Elvin, (ed), *Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
 21. E. T. Dalton, "Report by Lt. E. J. T. Dalton, Junior Assistant Commissioner of Assam, of his visit to the Hills in the neighbourhood of the Soobanshiri River", in *ibid.*, pp. 152.
 22. J. Butler, "A Sketch of Assam", (1847), From the excerpts in, *ibid.*, p. 329. Also in William Griffith, *Travels in Assam, Burma, Afganistan and the Neighbouring Countries*, (1847, Reprint 1982), Mittal Publications, New Delhi, p. 39.
 23. E. T. Dalton, "Correspondence and Journal of Capt. Dalton, of his Progress in a late visit to a clan of Abors on the Dihong River" in V. Elvin, (ed), *Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, pp. 249 ff.
 24. C. H. Hesselmeier, "The Hill-Tribes of the Northern Frontier of Assam", in *ibid.*, pp. 435 ff.
 25. T. T. Cooper, *New Routes for Commerce : The Mishmee Hills*, (1879). From excerpts in *ibid.*, p. 370.
 26. J. E. Gray, *Diary of a Journey to the Bor Khamti Country, 1892-3*, (1893). From excerpts in *ibid.*, pp. 379 ff.

27. *ibid.*, p. 422.
28. G. W. Dun, Preliminary Notes on Daphlas", in *ibid.*, pp. 185 ff.
29. Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam : From 1885-1941*, (1942), Assam Government Press, Shillong, p. 286.
30. T. T. Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 370.
31. C. Walter Neale, "Reciprocity and Redistribution in the Indian Village : Sequel to some Notable Discussions", in *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Karl Polanyi, et al., (ed), (1957), The Free Press, New York, p. 218 ff.
32. S. N. Mishra, "Arunachal's Tribal Economic Formation", *op. cit.*, p. 1849.
33. *Report on the Administration of North-East India (1921-22)*, (1964), Mittal Publications, Delhi, pp. 27-28 (Henceforth referred to as Administration Report).
34. V. Elwin, *The Art of The North-East Frontier of India*, (1966), Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, p. 95, (Henceforth referred to as The Art).
35. *ibid.*, pp. 68 - 69.
36. A rectangular piece of cloth worn by males.
37. A kind of colourful bag.
38. Census of India-1971, *Socio-Economic Survey of Rupa*, Monograph No. 1, Part VI C, (Henceforth referred to as Rupa), p. 102.
39. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
40. S. Dutta Ghosh, (ed), *Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Subansiri District*, (1981), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, pp. 204- 5.
41. A kind of banana with black outer coating.
42. Daphlas call themselves as Nishing or Nishi.

43. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
44. *ibid.*, p. 105.
45. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed). *Subansiri District Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
46. V. Elwin, *Philosophy*, (Second edition, 1969), p. 93.
47. E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, (1960), Calcutta, p. 31.
48. Abor is a term used by the Assamese which implies savage or barbarian. But the people call themselves as Adi.
49. R. Wilcox, "Memoir of a Survey of Assam and the neighbouring countries, executed in 1825-6-7-8", in V. Elwin, (ed), *Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
50. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Lohit District*, (1978), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, p. 152.
51. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
52. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Lohit District Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
53. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
54. E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
55. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Arunachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Tirap District*, (1980). Government of Arunachal Pradesh, pp. 120 - 21.
56. E. T. Dalton, from the excerpts in V. Elwin, (ed), *Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 407.
57. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed) *Tirap District Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
58. *ibid.*, p. 121.
59. *Administration Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
60. J. Butler, *A Sketch of Assam*, (1847), from excerpts in V. Elwin, *Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

61. V. Elwin, *Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
62. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Apa Tanis*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
63. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
64. V. Elwin, *Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
65. B. K. Sukla, *The Daplas*, (1965), North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong, p. 30.
66. Census of India -- 1971, *Rupa*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
67. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
68. E. T. Dalton, from excerpts in V. Elwin, *Nineteenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 367.
69. V. Elwin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
70. *ibid*, p. 139.
71. *ibid*, p. 70.
72. V. Elwin, *Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
73. William Robinson, *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, (1841, Reprint 1975), Sanskaran Prakashak, Delhi, pp. 133-34. A similar description about processing of tea by the Singphos is also available in William Griffith, *Travel's in Assam, Burma, Bhutan, Afghanistan and the Neighbouring Countries*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
74. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Tirap District Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
75. A Census study (1961) of a Sherdukpen village, Rupa, revealed that the Sherdukpens in the remote past used to collect most of their consumer goods from the villagers of Doimara, mostly the Kacharese, either as an obligation in the form of tax or presents or by force. They used to come down at Doimara during December and returned at Rupa in April. Having arrived at Doimara, all the able bodied Sherdukpens under the leadership of their seven Rajas visited the Kachari villages situated in between the rivers Dhansiri and Belsiri in order to collect taxes (in kind). Such collection of taxes was stopped by the Britishers against a compensatory annual Posa of Rs. 2,500/-. But

though the collection of taxes has been stopped and the supremacy of the Sherdukpens over the Kacharese no more exists now-a-days, they continue to visit their past subjects in a friendly manner as a tradition and still do get respect among Kacharese. The Kacharese receive them cordially and make arrangements for their lodging and boarding The Sherdukpens stay for a few days and each *Thong* household collects some quantity of paddy from its respective Kachari household free of cost, as a traditional obligation. The household belonging to Chhao Community do not have any such right. Afterwards the Sherdukpens visit other villages and collect paddy from their own friends. Later on, the Sherdukpens visit the Kachari villages again taking with them chillies, spices, hide and skins, dried fish and woollen textiles. There they exchange such things with paddy and 'endi clothes. Some people who possess items of trade in more quantity, visit the nearby weekly markets like Udalguri, Dhokiajuli, Missamari and Rangapara, etc.' (B. K. Roy Burman, *Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India*, Census of India-1961, pp. 117-118).

However, though this extortion by the Sherdukpens apparently appears to be an act of raid but according to tribal myth the Sherdukpens thought it to be their legitimate right. According to Sherdukpen tradition, the land between the Dhansiri and the Belsiri rivers-where the Kacharese lived -- had been presented to their first King Japtang Bura by the Ahom King who happened to be his maternal grandfather. (R. R. P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens*, (1961), Research Department, NEFA Secretariat, Shillong, p. 71.

76. J. F. Michell, *The North-East Frontier of India*, (Reprint 1973), Vivek Publishing House, Delhi, p. 90. It may be noted that mishmi tita, often known as coptis tita, is a herbal plant and is not poisonous. A detail note on mishmi tita is available in Elwin's *Nineteenth Century*, op. cit., pp. 313-14. Also Raikar, Y. A., "A Note on Mishmi Tita" in *Resarun*, (1975), Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, pp. 36-38.
77. T. T. Cooper, *New Routes for Commerce : The Mishmee Hills*, (1873), London,.
78. William Griffith, "Journal of a trip to the Meeshmee Mountains, from the debouching of the Lohit to about

ten miles east of Ghalums", in *Selection of papers regarding the Hill Tracts between Assam and Burmah and on the Upper Brahmaputra*, (1873), reprinted under *Hill Tracts Between Assam and Burma*, (1978), Vivek Publishing Company, Delhi, pp. 83-110, (hereafter Hill Tract).

79. W. Robinson, *Descriptive Account of Assam*, *op. cit.*

80. J. F. Needham, *Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, 1899-1900*, (1900), Shillong.

81. *ibid*, p. 15.

82. Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, (1960), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, p. 108.

83. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *High Landers of Arunachal Pradesh*, (1982), Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, pp. 54-58, (Hereafter Highlanders). Rose and Fisher conjectured that the inflow of Tibetan goods in the Upper Kamla Valley might have been the result of trade relations between the people of Migyitun of Tibet and Longju of NEFA across the border in the Teari valley further north to Kamla (Leo E. Rose, and Margaret W. Fisher, *The North-East Frontier Agency of India*, (1967), Office of External Research, Department of State, pp. 9-10). The Na tribe as mentioned by Haimendorf has not yet been officially either be located, or recognised.

84. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *ibid*, p. 149. It may be noted that the political status of Tawang inhabited by the Monpas was debatable. Initially the British had the impression that the Monpas are of Tibetan origin, and since the ecclesiastical system of administration centring round the Tawang monastery was actually governed by its mother monastery, Drepung, in Tibet, they assumed Tawang be a part of Tibet. Later it was known that the Monpas came from Bhutan, not from Tibet and they expressed a preference for British rule, as opposed to Tibetan. Perhaps that is why Tibetan accepted the McMahon Line ungrudgingly.

In this connection it is interesting to note one observation by Rose and Fisher :

In the immediate vicinity of the main Gelugpa monastery at Tawang are several villages inhabited by Khampas brought to this area from Tibet some 375 years

- ago to aid in the construction of the monastery. From the beginning they have kept apart from their Monpa neighbours, with little intermarriage. These "Tibetans" are not allowed to own land, but function as artisans, craftsmen, and a labour force for both the monastery and Monpa land owners. Their existence as a separate group lends support to our general conclusions that the Monpas, while fitting into the Buddhist cultural pattern associated with Tibet, do not consider themselves to be Tibetan (Leo E. Rose, and Margaret W. Fisher *op. cit.*, p. 51).
85. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *ibid.*, p. 176-77.
86. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Apa Tanis op. cit.*, p. 57.
87. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Highlanders, op. cit.*, pp. 54-55. The possible link of the Apa Tanis with Tibet in the remote past was also indicated by R. B. McCabe in 1897 (Robert Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 277).
88. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Ethnographic Notes on the Tribes of the Subansiri Region, (1947)*, Assam Government Press, Shillong, p. 47, (Hereafter Ethnographic Notes).
89. *ibid.*
90. J. McCosh, *Topography of Assam, (1837, Reprint 1975)*, Sanskaran Prakashak, Delhi, p. 66.
91. R. B. Pemberton, *The Eastern Frontier of India, (1835, Reprint 1979)*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, p. 81.
92. In this context it may be noted that Noel Williamson, Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya, (1906-11), advocated to open up a trade route connecting the Tibetan border with Sadiya. He also proposed the feasibility of railways connecting India with western China which would then be helpful in bringing down the cost of export through sea voyage from Calcutta. He even foresaw the possibility of employing the Chinese labour in the tea gardens of Assam to solve their problem of acute labour shortage. (Robert Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 212).
93. The Gelugpa sect of Buddhism was, then, dominant in both Tibet and Tavang areas in contrast to the

Nyingmapa sect in Bhutan. Though originally the Monpas were also adherent to Nyingmapa sect, but with the establishment of the Tavang monastery by the Gelugpa sect, the former gradually lost its influence. The observation made by Rose and Fisher that while the monastery (Tawang) belongs to the Gelugpa sect, the Monpas generally adhere to the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism (Leo E. Rose and Margaret W. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 5), is found to be have undergone a sea-change in later studies (N. Sarkar, "Historical Account of the Introduction of Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens", in *Resarun* (1975), Research Department, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, pp. 16-30. Also Lopeln Nado, "Buddhism in Bhutan", in P.N. Chopra, (ed), *Contribution of Buddhism to World Civilization and Culture*, (1983), S. Chand & Company Ltd., New Delhi, pp. 348-401.

94. C. Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Ethnographic Notes*, *op. cit.*, p. 38
95. Both the Khamptis and the Singphos are later migrants in Arunachal from the Borkhampti area of Upper Burma near the sources of the Irrawady. The Khamptis, a branch of the Shans, came first and settled on the banks of the Tengapani wherefrom they were ousted by the later Singpho immigrants in about 1793. They, then, in turn, occupied Sadiya ousting the Sadiya Khova Gohain. The details about the origin and immigration of the Khamptis can be found in Jayanta Sarkar, *Society, Culture and Ecological Adaptation Among Three Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh*, (1967), Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, pp. 2-10.
96. The intermediary, role of the north-east frontier people in Chinese trade was hinted by a Chinese explorer of Central Asia as early as the second century B. C. (S. K. Chatterji *op. cit.*, p. 57). This trade mainly in Chinese silk and bamboo flute, between India and China was perhaps conducted through the route via Assam and Patkoi passes in Tirap district of Arunachal to Burma and then to Yunan in south-west China (R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 ff. Also in D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, (1964), Macmillan & Co. Ltd, London, p. 231. While visiting the court of Kamrupa kingdom in the seventh century A. D. Hiuen Tsiang also referred to this arduous route to China which took 'a two months' journey' to reach the south-western frontiers of the province of Sz'chuen (Samuel Beal, *Chinese Account of India*, trans., from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang, Vol. IV,

- (1958), Sushil Gupta (India) Private Ltd., Calcutta, p. 406. A summarised discussion on early trade of north-east India is available in B.N. Mukherjee, *External Trade of Early North-Eastern India*, (1992), Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi.
97. H. L. Jenkins, "Notes on a trip across the Patkoi Range from Assam to the Hoochoong valley 1869-70", in *Hill Tracts, op. cit.*, pp. 245-54.
98. R. A. Way, *Report on Assam -- Burma Connection Railway Survey*, (1896), Calcutta, p. 20. Cited in an unpublished note on "Rubber Trade in the 19th Century", by Rabijit Choudhury, Eastern Press Service, Gauhati. All the archival data showing single asterisk mark (*) are also taken from Choudhury's work.
99. Foreign Deptt., Extt. B. Procs. June, 1897, 177-178*.
100. R. A. Way, *op. cit.*
101. S. Dutta Choudhury, (ed), *Tirap District Gazetteer, op. cit.*, p. 133.
102. *ibid.*
103. R. Wilcox, "Memoir of a Survey of Assam and the neighbouring countries, executed in 1825-6-7-8", in *Hill Tracts, op. cit.*, pp. 11-82.
104. Assam Secretariat Records (A. S. R.), 1886, File No. 1735, T. A. Records*.
105. R. B. Pemberton, "Abstract of the Journal of a Route travelled by captain S. F. Hannay, of the 40th Regiment, Native Infantry, in 1855-56, from the capital of Ava to the Amber Mines of the Hoochoong Valley, on the south-east frontier of Assam", in *Hill Tracts, op. cit.*, pp. 83-109.
106. A. S. R., Letters Received from Miscellaneous quarters, Vol. No. 5(a), 1840, M. Bronson to F. Jenkins, July 22, 1840. Cited in an unpublished M. phil. dissertation, Sudatta Sikdar, "Assam Trade of the Arunachalis (1874-1905 : A Study of the British Policy", (1981), Department of History, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. Archival data showing double asterisk mark (**) are taken from this source.

107. Welsh's Report on Assam, (1794), in A. Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal*, (1884), Calcutta, Appendix-A, p. 587.
108. Alastair Lamb, *Op. cit.*, p. 108.
109. From W. H. Macnaghten, Secy. to Govt. of India to capt. Jenkins, Fort William, May 22, 1837*.
110. A. S. R., Letter issued to the Government, Vol. 34, No. 197, Agent to the Governor General, North-East Frontier, to the** Secretary to the Government of Bengal, June 20, 1867.
111. A. S. R., F. P., June, 26, 1876, No. 542**.
112. The history of immigration of the Marwaris in Assam, by and large, started with the rise of the British Power during the early nineteenth century. A detail account is given in Chapter- VI. A similar position of the Marwaris was also reported in *Provincial Gazetteer of Assam*, (1906, Reprint 1983), Cultural Publishing House, Delhi, p. 64.
113. *Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam, 1875-76 to 1885-86*. Cited in Sudatta Sikdar, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
114. A. S. R., F. R., May 26, 1881, No. 486**.
115. For example, during the blockade against the Nishis in 1874, Mitchell reported that one village had sent messengers to inform the British authority of their sufferings due to the want of salt and opium. They even agreed to counsel in favour of the Britishers (J. F. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 267). Graham observed that due to the blockade the marriages among the Nishis had to be stopped as the people could not procure silk clothes** from Assam (A. S. R., F. R., April 18, 1874, No. 65 p.). Furthermore, Medhi and Chandī -- the Aka Chiefs surrendered after a long blockade of four years (1864-68) against them (L. N. Chakraborty, *Glimpses of the Early History of Arunachal*, (1973), Research Department, Arunachal Pradesh Administration, Shillong, pp. 11-121).
116. *Administration Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
117. For & Pol. Deptt., General File No. 596, No. 1, p. 2**.

118. A. S. R., F. P., March 31, 1887, No. 89^{**}.

119. A number of saw mills operating at the foothills, e.g., Dehing saw Mills, Mekhla Nudde Saw Mills, Sissi Saw Mills, etc., were largely depended for their supply of raw materials from Arunachal hills. The Miris living between the frontier and Assam Plains were appointed in good numbers for the collection of timbers from the hills (A. S. R., F. R., November 11, 1903, No. 308^{**} and also *ibid.*, February 20, 1887, No. 397^{**}). Also in George Dunbar, *Frontiers*, (Reprint 1984), Omsons Publications, New Delhi, p. 99. The increasing demand for timber can well be understood from the following figures :

Year	No. of tea-boxes produced.
1895-6	386,488
1898-9	458,272
1903-4	429,942

(H. K. Barpujari, *Problem of the Hill Tribes : North-East Frontier, 1873-1962*, Vol. III, (1981), Spectrum Publications Gauhati, p. 148(footnote)).

120. Cf. V. Elvin, *The Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

121. A. S. R., R. P., June 8, 1875, No. 1548^{**}.