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Culture & Architecture of North East India

a Study of Arunachal Pradesh

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1. Abstract

India is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of Cultural Diversity. And the largest concentration lies in North Eastern part of India. India also has the largest concentration of tribal population in the world. India due to its diverse ecosystems has a wide variety of tribal population. The prominent tribal population covers around 15% of the total geographical area of the country. Its sounds fascinating. But we face a problem. Most of the time North East is not considered as an integral part of India & face a lot of criticism. One of the reasons might be there Cultural Diversity & Geography. This research is an attempt to get familiar with the Culture & Architecture that is prevalent in North East India. This is an attempt to weaken the walls between North Eastern India & the rest of the India. The research seeks to identify the Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, their Lifestyle, their Traditions, Practices, their Festivals, their Arts & Crafts & their Architecture.

Keywords

Culture, Architecture, Tribes, Tribal, Festivals, Art, Vernacular Architecture, Beliefs

2. Introduction

India has a great history & diverse ecosystem. This has resulted in a great diversity in terms of Lifestyle, Traditions, Practices, Festivals, Arts & Crafts & Architecture. North East India shares international boundaries between China, Myanmar, Bangladesh & Bhutan. We find a blend of Cultural Diversity in North East India. It acts as a transitional area between the rest of India & above mentioned countries. Coming across people who are direct or indirect part of North East India, we have come to know that while travelling even few kilometres in these areas, we find a lot of difference in them in terms of Tribes, Cultures & Architectures.

Arunachal Pradesh popularly known as the land of rising sun is one of the most beautiful states of India, having so many tribes and sub tribes thinly populated in the state.. Arunachal Pradesh has 31 indigenous communities with different oral traditions and languages. Arunachal Pradesh is a hill state of India & is known to be one of the magnificent multilingual and multicultural indigenous peoples areas of the world. By songs, dances, dresses, rituals or simply the gestures, the people express and maintain their different living styles which make Arunachal Pradesh vivaciously vibrant.

3. Aim & Objective

Aim of the research is to study & grow understanding about the Culture, Arts, Crafts & Architecture of North East India.

Objective of the research is to :

- 1) Study the history & growth of North East India
- 2) Geographical influence & Political influence on North East India
- 3) Seek knowledge about different Tribes residing their and typologies in terms of Culture & Architecture among them

4. Scope & Limitation

The scope of the research would be an overall study of North East India

The limitation of the research would be a detailed study of only Arunachal Pradesh & only an overview of the rest of the North East Indian States

5. Methodology

- 1) Descriptive review of few authorised books on North East India & Arunachal Pradesh
- 2) Interaction with residents from their
- 3) Browsing for authentic information on it

6. Introduction of North East India

Eight North Eastern States are :

1. Arunachal Pradesh
2. Assam
3. Manipur
4. Meghalaya
5. Mizoram,
6. Nagaland
7. Tripura
8. Sikkim



Fig: 1 North East in India



Fig: 2 North Eastern States

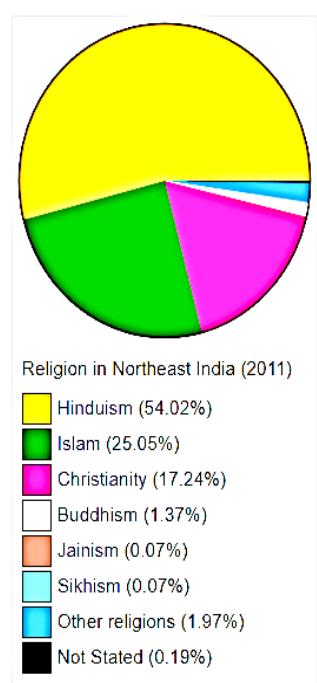


Fig: 3 Religions followed their

- Northeast India (officially called North Eastern Region, NER) is the eastern-most region of India. It comprises eight states – the contiguous Seven Sister States (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura), and the Himalayan state of Sikkim.
- The Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal, with a width of 21 to 40 kilometres (13 to 25 mi), connects the North Eastern Region with East India, and separates Sikkim from the Seven Sister States.
- The region shares more than 4,500 kilometres (2,800 mi) of international border with China (Tibet Region) in the north, Myanmar in the east, Bangladesh in the southwest, and Bhutan to the northwest. The region comprises an area of 262,230 square kilometres, 8.0 percent of India.
- The states of North Eastern Region are officially recognised under the North Eastern Council (NEC), constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the eight states. At the time of induction of NEC, the North Eastern Region comprised the Seven Sister States only. Sikkim was introduced as the eighth member in 2002. Sikkim is the least populous and the second smallest state in India.

6.1. History of North East India

- The earliest settlers were Austro-Asiatic speakers, followed by Tibeto-Burmese and lastly by Indo-Aryans. Due to the bio- and crop diversity of the region, archaeological researchers believe that early settlers of Northeast India had domesticated several important plants.
- Writers believe that the 100 BC writings of Chinese explorer, Zhang Qian indicate an early trade route via Northeast India. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mention a people called Sēsatai in the region, who produced malabathron, so prized in the old world.
- In the early historical period (most of first millennium), Kamarupa straddled most of present-day Northeast India, besides Bhutan and Sylhet in Bangladesh. Xuanzang, a travelling Chinese Buddhist monk, visited Kamarupa in the 7th century. He described the people as "short in stature and black-looking", whose speech differed a little from mid-India and who were of simple but violent disposition. He wrote that the people in Kamarupa knew of Sichuan, which lay to the kingdom's east beyond a treacherous mountain.
- For many of the tribal peoples, their primary identification is with subtribes and villages, which have distinct dialects and cultures.
- The northeastern states were established during the British Raj of the 19th and early 20th centuries, when they became relatively isolated from traditional trading partners such as Bhutan and Myanmar. Many of the peoples in present-day Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland converted to Christianity under the influence of British (Welsh) missionaries.

6.2. Formation of North East India

- In the early 19th century, both the Ahom and the Manipur kingdoms fell to a Burmese invasion. The ensuing First Anglo-Burmese War resulted in the entire region coming under British control. In the colonial period (1826-1947), North East India was made a part of Bengal Province from 1839 to 1873, when Assam became its own province.

- After Indian Independence from British Rule in 1947, the North Eastern region of British India consisted of Assam and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. Subsequently, Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972, Arunachal Pradesh in 1975 (capital changed to Itanagar) (formed on 20 February 1987) and Mizoram in 1987 were formed out of the large territory of Assam. Manipur and Tripura remained as Union Territories of India between 1956 until 1972, when they attained fully-fledged statehood. Sikkim was integrated as the eighth North Eastern Council state in 2002.
- The city of Shillong served as the capital of the Assam province created during British Rule. It remained as the capital of undivided Assam until formation of the state of Meghalaya in 1972. The capital of Assam was shifted to Dispur, a part of Guwahati, and Shillong was designated as the capital of Meghalaya.

STATE	HISTORIC NAME	CAPITAL	STATEHOOD
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	North-East Frontier Agency	Itanagar	1987 (earlier a Union Territory of India, constituted in 1972)
ASSAM	Pragjyotisha, Kamarupa Main	Dispur	1947
MANIPUR	Kangleipak	Imphal	1972 (earlier a Union Territory of India, constituted in 1956)
MEGHALAYA		Shillong	1972
MIZORAM	Lushai	Aizawl	1987 (earlier a Union Territory of India, constituted in 1972)
NAGALAND		Kohima	1963
SIKKIM		Gangtok	1975
TRIPURA	Tipperah	Agartala	1972 (earlier a Union Territory of India, constituted in 1956)

Fig: 4 Formation of the North Eastern States

6.3. Attacks on North Eastern States

World War II :

- In 1944, the Japanese planned a daring attack on India. Traveling through Burma, its forces were stopped at Kohima and Imphal by British and Indian troops. This marked the furthest western expansion of the Japanese Empire; its defeat in this area presaged Allied victory.

Sino-Indian War (1962)

- Arunachal Pradesh, a state in the North eastern tip of India, is claimed by China as South Tibet. Sino-Indian relations degraded, resulting in the Sino-Indian War of 1962. The cause of the escalation into war is still disputed by both Chinese and Indian sources. During the war in 1962, the PRC (China) captured much of the NEFA (North-East Frontier Agency) created by India in 1954. But on 21 November 1962, China declared a unilateral ceasefire, and withdrew its troops 20 kilometres (12 mi) behind the McMahon Line. It returned Indian prisoners of war in 1963.

21st century separatist unrest

- In 1947 Indian independence and partition resulted in the North East becoming a landlocked region. This exacerbated the isolation that has been recognised, but not studied. East Pakistan controlled access to the Indian Ocean. The mountainous terrain has hampered the construction of road and railways connections in the region. Some political groups have argued for creating states independent of India. On 2 November 2000, in Malom, a town in the Imphal Valley of Manipur, ten civilians were shot and killed while waiting at a bus stop. The incident, known as the "Malom Massacre", was allegedly committed by the Assam Rifles, one of the Indian Paramilitary forces operating in the state. This incident resulted in continuing unrest in the area.
- The separatist militant groups have formed an alliance to fight against the governments of India, Bhutan, and Myanmar, and now use the term "Western Southeast Asia" (WESEA) to refer to the region.

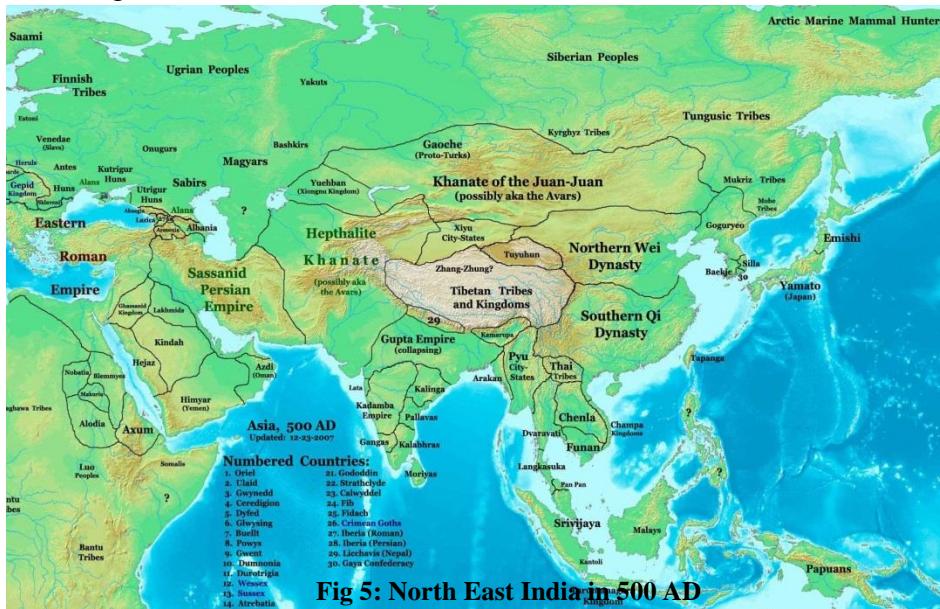


Fig 5: North East India in 500 AD

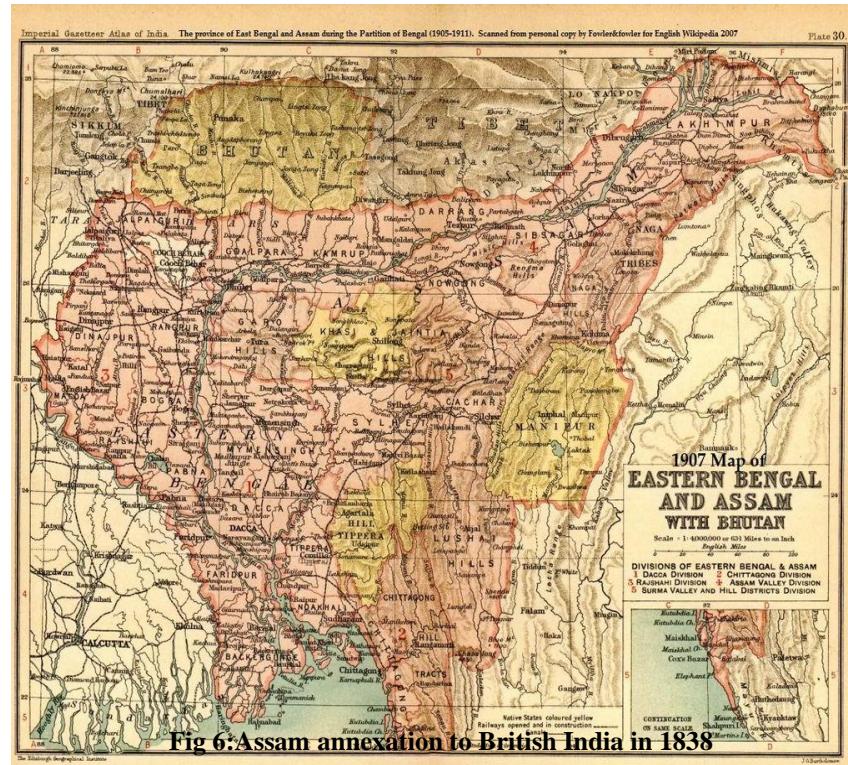


Fig 6: Assam annexation to British India in 1838

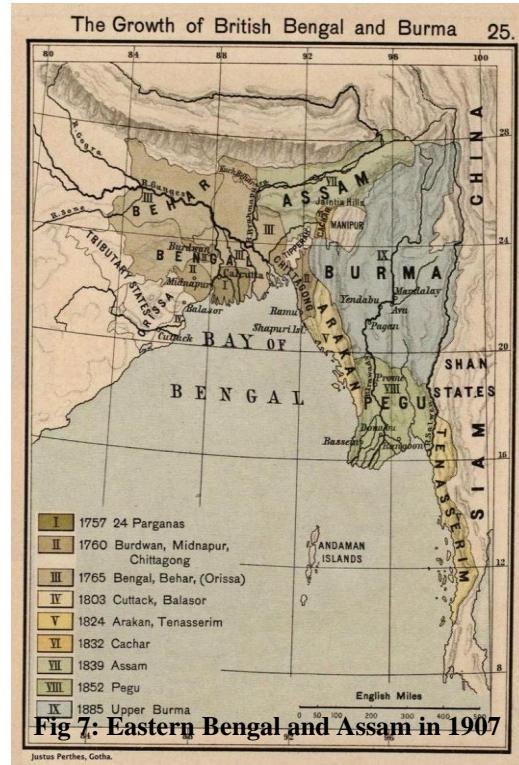


Fig 7: Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1907

6.5. Assam - Gateway to North East :

Wide range of metal ware for traditional use. Handloom silks in tussar, moga in subtle hues & woven designs. Grass mats for cushions & floors. Cane & bamboo furniture, cotton shawls & gamchas reflect ethnic origins. Many shops in Guwahati, the capital.



Fig 8: Cane & Bamboo Basketry



Fig 9: Hand Woven Mat



Fig 11: Metal Crafts

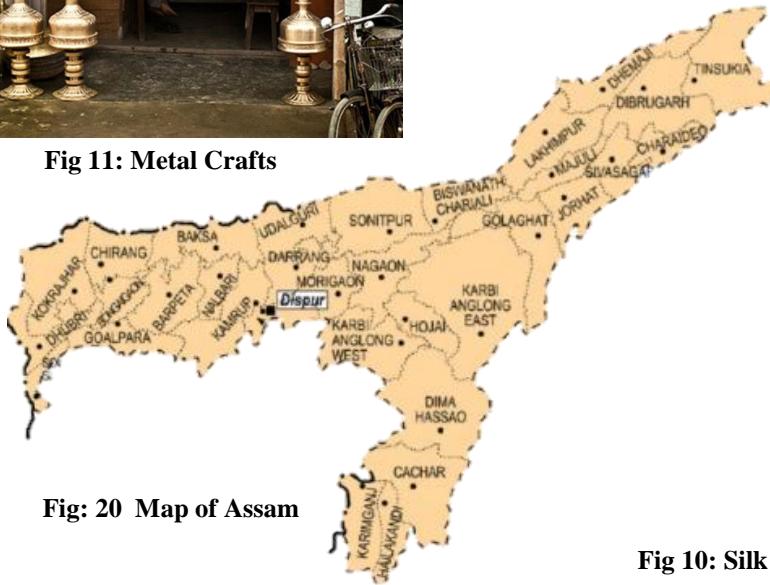


Fig: 20 Map of Assam



Fig 10: Silk with Geometric & Floral Designs



Fig 12: Assamese in Traditional Dress



Fig 13: Cottage made up of Bamboo

6.6. Meghalaya - Abode of Clouds :

Distinctive natural shade of pale green basketry cane & bamboo widely used for bags, boxes, stools, walking sticks,, & coat hangers. Woodwork includes carved memorial pillars, mugs, bowls, carved busts, musical instruments. Stonework carvings, handmade papers, dried flowers popular as gifts. Pineapple fibre bags, fishnets, vegetable dyed yarn still used. Capital Shillong's Police Bazaar good place to explore for handwoven fabrics. Cotton handlooms for yardage, table & bed linen. Khadi woven in many areas. *Endi* silk, mulberry silk for formal attire. Embroidery & applique, woven shawls, knitwear, artistic woollen garments follow the distinctive ethnic patterns of the various tribes of the north-east region



Fig 14: Cane Basketry



Fig 19: Tribal life as Decoration



Fig 15: Meghalayan Women Harvesting



Fig: 21 Map of Meghalaya



Fig 16: Ornamented Cultural Costumes



Fig 17: Vernacular/ Straw & Bamboo



Fig 18: Temple/ colorful/ Art on Walls

6.7. Nagaland - Land of Festivals :

Wooden kitchen implements, bamboo baskets, furniture, woodcarving for pillars, ceremonial weaponry, tools jewellery of metals & beads. Wide range of woven shawls made in almost every home.



Fig 22: Cane & Bamboo Furniture

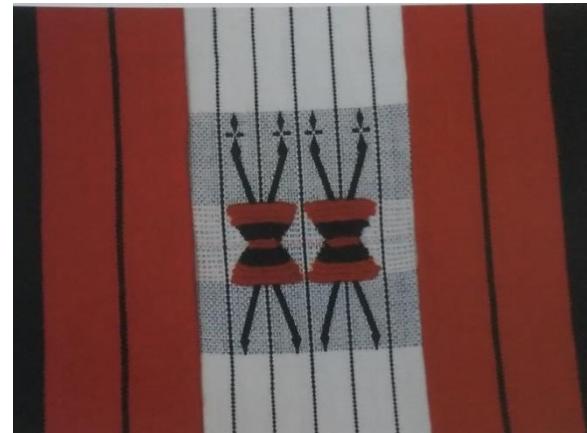


Fig 23: Shawl for Tribal Chief for Honor



Fig 24: Heavy Naga necklaces

Fig 5: Necklace from brass bars & bell

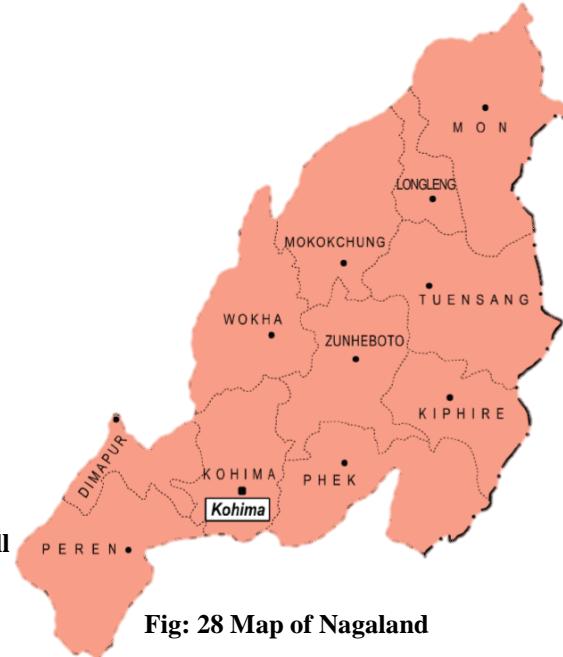


Fig: 28 Map of Nagaland



Fig 26: Traditional Cloths of Nagaland
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Fig 27: Vernacular/ Straw, Bamboo & Wood

6.8. Manipur - Jewel of India :

Rich in a variety of baskets including black & ivory coloured stools, furniture, trays, bowls in woven & coiled designs. Local reeds & grasses provide material for excellent floor seating & robust, comfortable mattresses. Woodwork offers kitchen utility items, printing blocks, carvings. Earthenware in hill areas remarkably turned & polished without a wheel by women. Classic shapes in bowls. Dlois in classical dress, local dancers all created in Manipur Local markets occupied by women sell colourful diaphanous woven shoulder cloths, sarongs, ceremonial mosquito nets & shawls. Apart from pavement market places, there is a beautiful Crafts Society of Manipur at Imphal, the capital.



Fig 29: Kauna Grass Basket



Fig 30: Manipur Pottery



Fig 31



Fig 32: Map of Manipur



Fig 33: Traditional Manipuri Dance



Fig 34: Vernacular/ Bamboo/ Straw/ Mud



Fig 35: Traditional Textiles

6.9. Tripura - Land of Diversity :

Delicate weaves of bamboo create basket trays & screens. Furniture in contemporary styles. From hairclips & jewellery to wall panelling, everything is available in bamboo. Engraved woodwork, fretwork lampshades. Famed blinds for use as curtains & screens woven on pit looms with bamboo splits & rayon thread in Nalchar village. Handlooms produce artistic cotton fabrics, shawls, Jungis, cotton stuffed quilts & a wide range of jute items from shoes to bags & wall hangings. Purbasha I the government marketing outlet at the capital Agartala.



Fig 36: Fine Handwoven Bamboo Matting



Fig 41: Map of Tripura



Fig 40: Tripura Traditional Dance



Fig 37: Cushion form Traditional Weaves



Fig 38: Yarn being stretched on Traditional Loom



Fig 39: Vernacular/ Straw, Bamboo & Wood

6.10. Mizoram - Land of Blue Mountains :

Local bamboo forests provide ample material for baskets, fans, furniture, trays, umbrella handles, caps. Amber & glass beads in local jewellery. Musical instruments are handcrafted, including a modern guitar & drums. Embroidered & handwoven sarongs & shawls, table linen, bedspreads woven in every enterprising woman's home. Small marketing societies finding their feet in the capital Aizawl.



Fig 42: Mizoram Bamboo Dance



Fig 43: Mizoram Textile Art



Fig 44: Mizoram Bamboo Dance



Fig 45: Mizoram Coin Necklace

Fig 47: Map of Mizoram



Fig 46: Vernacular/ Bamboo/ Wood/ Thatch

6.11. Sikkim - Himalayan Paradise :

Well developed Tankha Painting carved wooden tables, decorative woven fabric, dried flowers, jewelley.



Fig 48: Wooden Central Table



Fig 49: Women Weave Carpets in Traditional Tibetan Buddhist Patterns

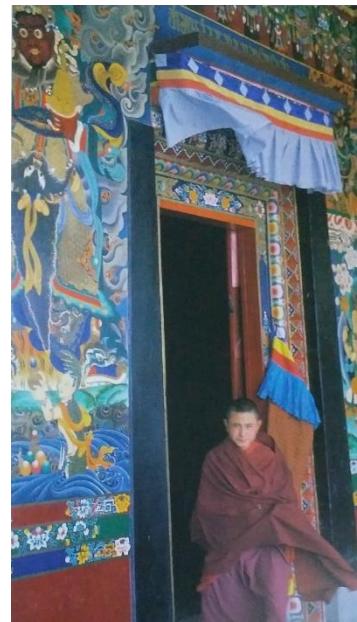


Fig 50: Monastery Wall Paintings



Fig 51: Masks of Light Wood for Monastery Dances



Fig 55: map of Sikkim



Fig 52: Traditional Cloths



Fig 53: Traditional Victory Dances at Monasteries



Fig 54: Vernacular Architecture Stone/ Wood

6.11. Sikkim - Himalayan Paradise :

Sikkim Traditional Dances are :

Tibetan Dance: Singhi Chaam

The associate five peaks of the scared Mount Khangchendzonga looks like the legendary snow lion, which is considered an important cultural symbol of the State and is elaborately depicted in the Singhi Chaam or the Snow Lion Dance.



Sikkimese Folk Dance: Talachi

It is fabled that a king once lost his favorite horse. A search party was sent to look for the royal steed. As they proceed along the solitary path amidst hills and forests, the searchers sang lively songs and danced ending the monotony of their long sojourn.



Sikkimese Folk Dance: Lu Khangthamo

It is dedicated to this day - a day of thanks giving to all Gods and deities of the three worlds, Heaven, Earth and Hell. This age old folk dance is performed regularly by the young and old folk alike in their traditional customs and ornaments accompanied by the pleasing song and music on the occasion like warming and New Year celebrations. It is a Bhutia folk dance.



Sikkimese Folk Dance: Gha To Kito

It is a song cum dance which describes all about the treasures of Sikkim like Mount Khangchendzonga and the snow covered Himalayan ranges, rhododendrons and primulas, holy places, caves ad minerals. It is a Bhutia folk dance.



Sikkimese Folk Dance: Be Yu Mista

It is a popular Bhutia folk dance performed in praise of Sikkim by group of males and females with pleasing songs and prayers.



Sikkimese Folk Dance: Chi Rimu

It is a popular Bhutia folk dance performed in praise of Sikkim by young and old folks. This dance is a regular feature in every happy occasion when Bhutias express reverence to great teachers and sacred places of worship.

Sikkimese Folk Dance: Rechungma

It is typical Sikkimese dance performed during the happy occasions like childbirth, marriage and other social gatherings, offer paying their sincere thanks to the god for his blessings.

Sikkimese Folk Dance: Gnungmala Gnunghay

It is a typical Bhutia fold dance performed in praise, by both male and female to the accompaniment of devotional hymns and song of the multi purpose majestic bamboos, describing its use.

Fig 56: Sikkim Folk Dances

6.11. Sikkim - Himalayan Paradise :

Sikkim Traditional Dances are :

Sikkimese Folk Dance: Tashi Zaldha

It is a dance depicting the Bhutia custom of offering scarves, performed by boys and girls.

Mask Dance: Enchey Chaam

Sikkim's famous mask dances provide a spectacle, perhaps nowhere to be experienced in the entire world. Performed by lamas in the 'Gompa' courtyard to celebrate religious festivals, dances demonstrate perfect footwork and grace. Costumed lamas with gaily painted masks, ceremonial swords and sparkling jewels leap and swing to the rhythm of resounding drums, trumpeting of horns and chanting of monks. It is the annual puja celebrated with religious masked dances on the 18th and 19th days of the 11th month of the Tibetan Buddhist Calendar corresponding to the month of December - January.

Mask Dance: Rumtek Chaam

It is the most important chaam (religious masked dance) performed on the 10th day of the 5th month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to the month of June. It presents eight manifestations of the Guru Rimpoche. This is highly colorful and spectacular and draws many pilgrim and visitors.

Mask Dance: Gouthor(Winter) Chaam

It is performed on the month of February - 2 days prior to Losar.

Mask Dance: Kagyed Dance

It is performed on the 28th and 29th day of the 10th month of the Tibetan Calendar, around December. This dance is performed symbolizing the destruction of the evil forces and hoping for peace and prosperity to flourish in every Sikkimese home. The dancers of this are extremely popular Chaam are always monks who are accompanied liturgical music and chanting. The solemn nature of the dance is interspersed with comic relief provided by the jesters. Kagyed dances enact various themes from the Buddhist mythology and culminate with the burning of effigies made of flour, wood and paper.

The other popular dances are

Bhutia Talachi
Sherpa Sebru Naach
Guning Sorathi
Bhutia Lu-Khang-Thamo
Bhutia Gha-to-Kito
Bhutia Be-yul-mista
Bhutia Chi-Rimu.



Fig 57: Sikkim Folk Dances

7. Arunachal Pradesh

7.1. Introduction :

Arunachal Pradesh literally means land of dawn-lit mountains. Carved as a full-fledged state in 1987, the evolution and formation of Arunachal is a testimony to the idea of federalism in modern India. Arunachal has a diverse culture, mountainous terrain and scenic beauty. It is an enthralling place and a perfect example of micro-India representing the idea of unity in diversity.

With an area of 83,743 sq. km, Arunachal Pradesh is the largest among the north-eastern states of India. Arunachal is sparsely populated, the total population being 13.83 lakh as per Census 2011.

Arunachal is comparatively a new state. Before it got its statehood on 20 February 1987, it was a Union Territory (UT) for 15 years since 1972. The name Arunachal Pradesh was first given then. Prior to that, it was known as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and was under the direct administration of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

7.2. History

The ancient and medieval history of Arunachal remains shrouded in the mist of legends and mythology. Written references to local people in Arunachal first appeared in Ahom Burunjis (chronicles) and later in the Mughal Chronicles during the medieval period. Arunachal is full of hills and forests. Its plain area, which is scanty, was probably under the minimal possession of the Sutiyas and Kalitas of Assam in ancient times. Subsequently, the Ahoms brought the entire plain stretch under their control. This brought them in direct contact with the local tribal communities, and was followed by sporadic raids and plundering by tribals in the foothills and retaliatory measures by the Ahoms in the hills. Finally, the Ahoms decided to contain the tribals in their own hills and conceded to pay posa, a kind of tax, to some tribes for the purpose. The first historical account about the tribesmen of Arunachal could be seen in the writings of a Mughal chronicler, Shihabuddin, in 1662. While mentioning about the Nyishis or Nishis, known as 'Daflas' then, the chronicler said, they knew no obedience to the Ahom kings of Assam. He also praised them for their physique. Though his observations were specifically meant for the Nyishis living in and around the Subansiri region, they are equally true of the other tribes of Arunachal as well.

The British replaced the Ahoms in Assam in 1826. In the next 12 years (1838), the British fully consolidated their position over the entire region. In 1873, they introduced the Inner Line, a regulation meant for segregating the populace of the hills from those of the plains. The hills in the North East were made a Non-Regulation Province of British India. Going beyond this Line required a licence. The Regulation also earmarked rules regarding trade and possession of land, etc., within the Inner Line. Thus, the British brought the hills under their administrative control without much interference in the lives of the people there. In 1914, the hill area in the north of Assam, which later became Arunachal, was separated from the plains to form the North East Frontier Tract. After the Independence of the nation, the region was named North East Frontier Agency or NEFA in short in 1954.

There are a few ruins in the foothills, which indicate evidence of contact between the medieval rulers of Assam and the tribesmen living near the plains. Ita Hill is a ruin around which the modern capital city, Itanagar, is set. As legends say, it was the capital of the Mayapore kingdom of the Daflas, now known as Nyishis. Though there is no archaeological evidence to ascertain the date, the bricks found in the ruins date back to the pre-Ahom period. The pottery also shows traces of medieval Assam. Similarly, Rukmininagar and Bhishmaknagar in Dibang valley, Parashuramkund in Lohit district, the ruins of Bhalukpong in West Kameng, and Malinithan in West Siang also indicate the contact of Arunachal people with those of the plains during the premodern times.

Going back to the British relations, in 1882, some sort of elementary administration began with the posting of an Assistant Political Officer in the foothill town of Sadiya in Assam. There were also British attempts to penetrate into the hills for exploiting its rich forest resources. However, this was not easy. The tribal people of Arunachal fiercely resisted the British on the latter's unwelcome moves. The tribals, though unaware of the British rule and its exploitative nature, considered the British as hostile to their society. This led to frequent clashes between the British and the tribal communities. In March 1911, one such British attempt was averted at Yagrung village near Pasighat in East Siang. A British officer named Noel Williamson and his Indian subordinate officials were killed by the villagers led by their village head, Jamoh. Following this, there was an unleash of British terror in the region. Known as the Abor Expedition (1911) in modern history, it led to large-scale torture and suppression of the local tribal people. Before this, the Apatani people from Ziro valley had also resisted the British and had faced hard suppression in 1896. Despite such suppression, the Arunachal people could not be silenced, thereby, compelling the British to keep away from their society to a large extent. Thus, the British design to subjugate the local communities was often thwarted in Arunachal Pradesh at an early stage.

A significant aspect of the history of Arunachal is that many tribes have shed their old names and adopted new ones. The old names were given by others and were sometimes considered demeaning and insulting. Two such examples are — Adis and Nyishis. The term Abor given to Adis and Daflas given to Nyishis by outsiders are considered derogatory and disparaging as they mean uncivilised and indisciplined. The people prefer their own names, Adis and Nyishis, which give a sense of self-respect to them and recognise their distinct identity.

7.2.1. Origin of Tribes & Migration

History furnishes a very important insight into the origin & decent of the tribes of the North Eastern Frontier. Robinson in his *A Descriptive Account of Assam* observes : “it seems almost vain to attempt to lift up the dark veil which conceals the origin of the tribes, to trace back their history, or to gain any information of the various revolutions by which they have been influenced; these subjects belong to times & circumstances which are beyond the limit of certain knowledge. It would be most cautious & perhaps the most philosophical course, to abstain from any conjecture relative to their origin or from any attempt to penetrate into the nature of causes of which even the most distant results are but partially known to us. Therefore, we must depend on the reflected light which is obtained by the comparison of language, by the analysis of civil & religious institutions & mythological fables, or by tracing clearly marked affinities in the manners & customs of different tribes.”

Indeed, it is very difficult to arrive at any definite conclusions regarding the original home, the routes of immigration & the dates of settlement of the myriad tribes of the North East Frontier. Even the names by which they were popularly known were attributed to them by the neighbours in the valley of the Brahmaputra & were quite unknown to the tribal people themselves who had no contact with the plains. The tribes of the present Kameng districts were collectively known by a generic name Bhutia, except the Hruссos who were known as Akas for their custom of tattooing their bodies. The Nishis were known as Daflas but the reasons why they were so called are still to be ascertained. The inhabitants of the present Siang districts were called Abors, perhaps for their unruly nature, but they call themselves “Adi” which means “hillmen”. The tribes of Lohit district were called Mishims, but they have objected to be known as such 7 are now known by their group names, eg. Idu, Miju & Taraon. Of the North East Frontier tribes, only the Khamptis & the Singhpos do not express any objection to being called by their agelong popular names. The tribes of the Tirap district were called Nagas; they are now recognised by their group names like Wancho, Nocte & Tangas.

But the identification of the tribes by their proper names has not in any way established the link with their past history. It has been pointed out that the assumption of the present nomenclature is perhaps more due to the rise of a sense of dignity & pride among the tribes who no longer like to be branded by their plains fellows in any manner they want. It is due to a tendency to identify themselves with a glorious race or kingdom elsewhere in the past or present as is the case with the Ahoms who now establish their connections with the empire of Pong which existed to the north of Burma & the Shan tribes who live in Thailand or Siam.

The tribes of the North-East Frontier trace their origin in the north-east. George A. Grierson holds: "North-western China between the upper waters of Yang-tse-Kiang and Ho-ang-Ho was the traditional cradle of the Indo-Chinese races, and from that starting point successive waves of immigrants entered Assam. The first were the Maan-Ahoms who have left Khasis and are now to be seen in Annam and Cambodia. Second came the Tibeto-Burmans, the ancestors of the Bodo tribes with whom the Abors, Miris and the Daflas are clearly connected."

C.H. Hesselmayer says: : "The Himalayan mountains as they form the northern boundary of Assam are inhabited by two distinct races of men. Originally probably one and the same race, they seem to have undergone a change sufficiently marked to authorise their being considered at the present moment as two distinct races. The mountaineers who occupy the eastern half of these frontier hills seem to be original occupants, or first arrivals, and to have retained their original habits and customs. Those who live to the west appear to belong to a later period of immigration, subsequent to their descent from Central Asia."

"It is very difficult to ascertain the date of immigration of tribes. But the statement of Hesselmayer also seems to be untenable. Beginning from the west, we know that the father of the Mompa tribe, Rupati of Kameng, had migrated to its present home in the hills from the plains of the Brahmaputra valley in the tenth century and is said to have married the daughter of a prince of Kamrup. The progenitor of the Sherdukpen tribe is the grandson of an eighth century king Strongtson Gempo; he again is an immigrant from Tibet and is said to have come from the ancestral home in the eighth century. According to a tradition recorded by Capt. Kennedy, the Akas trace their origin from the east. They trace their descent from Arima who migrated from the plains below the hills in remorse for having killed father in ignorance. The date of their immigration is not known, but it must have been after the decline of the dynasty of Bana, whose relics are found in Bhalukpong and Tezpur sometime after the twelfth century.

The origin of the Nishi is not known. They trace their descent from a legendary ancestor whose three sons are believed to have been the forefathers of the three clans known as Dapum, Dodum and Dal respectively. The first mention of Nishis is found in the Ahom Buranjis. Their atrocities caused the Ahom kings to hold a portion of their territory and erect a line of fortifications along their hills. But no account is available regarding their migration and origin elsewhere. It seems possible that they came from across the McMahon Line from the Khamsyul division of Tibet. To the north of the Nishis live the Tagins who are definitely immigrants of Khams. Some Tagins are to be seen across that Line in Tibet. The Nishis in the north are called Tagin Daflas and the Tabins, though a separate group, are off-shoots of one and the same stock. The two other tribes, Apa Tanis and Sulungs, have been overwhelmed by the Nishis. They seem to have been living in the region before the coming down of the Nishis from across the McMahon Line. The Apa Tanis have remained independent, but the Sulungs have been reduced to the status of serfs in relation to the numerous and powerful Nishis. The Apa Tanis trace their migration from a valley of two rivers Supupad-Pudpumi. They have cultural affinities with the Adis and Nagas.

The tradition of origin among the Adis, as recorded by R.C.R. Gumming in 1931 for the Census Report, is as follows: "In none of these tribes there are any traditions of origin which go back very far. All claim origin from one race or tribe settled at Killing in the Bomo-Janbo country. From

Killing, part of the tribe journeyed south across the Siyom river and occupied the hilly country between that river and the Subansiri and the Brahmaputra. These are now known as Galong. Others crossed the Dihang (San Fo) or settled on its bank or neighbourhood.” In the Census Report of 1961 they have been stated to be immigrants from the Khams province of Tibet. The Abors probably had close relations with the Ahoms of the Brahmaputra valley, for during the Moamaria rebellion of 1792-93 twenty to thirty thousand Abors are said to have assisted the Ahom monarch.

About the Mishmi immigration, J.P. Mills wrote that they were immigrants from Burma who entered Assam 500 years ago. The Mishmis were followed by the Khamptis and the Singphos. The Khamptis began to migrate to Assam from Khampti-long from north of Burma, somewhere in the 18th century. The Singphos followed them from north Burma much later. During the decay of the Ahom kingdom the Singphos crossed the Patkai circa 1793, entered into Assam, and capturing Assamese slaves settled down on this side of the Patkai range. The Wanchos and Tangsas of the Tirap district perhaps were preceded by the Ahoms who entered the valley of the Brahmaputra along the Buri Dehing valley crossing the Patkai range in the vicinity of present Vijaynagore, c. 1226.

Thus, it seems that the present tribes of the North-East Frontier in Arunachal had entered into their present homes at different times and from different directions. The Sherdukpens, Nishis and Adis had come from across the McMahon Line from Tibet and settled over territories displacing the tribes who were already living there. The Mishmis, Khamptis and Singphos had migrated to Assam from the Irrawaddy-Salwen valley, commonly known among the tribes as Khampti-long or Bor Khampti country, over hundreds of years before the coming of the British into Assam in 1824-26. They thus neither came from the upper waters` of the Yang-tse-Kiang and Ho-ang-Ho, nor were they of common origin as stated by Grierson and Hesselmayer.

7.3. Geography of Arunachal Pradesh & its Influence on its Tribes

Arunachal Pradesh is the first Indian Soil to greet the morning sun. It lies between $26^{\circ}30'$ north and $29^{\circ}030'$ north Latitude and $91^{\circ}030'$ east and $97^{\circ}030'$ east Longitude. It is bounded by Bhutan in the west, China in the north and Burma in the east and the state of Arunachal Pradesh in the south. Part of the Eastern Himalayan ranges, it covers 83,743 sq. km. and has a population of 8,64,558. It has the largest area as compared to other states of north-east.

The Climate of Arunachal Pradesh varies from sub tropical in the south to alpine in the north. The rainfall is amongst the heaviest in the country. The annual average rainfall in Arunachal Pradesh is more than 300 cm. The rainfall varies from 450 cm in the foothill areas to 80 cm. in the upper reaches.

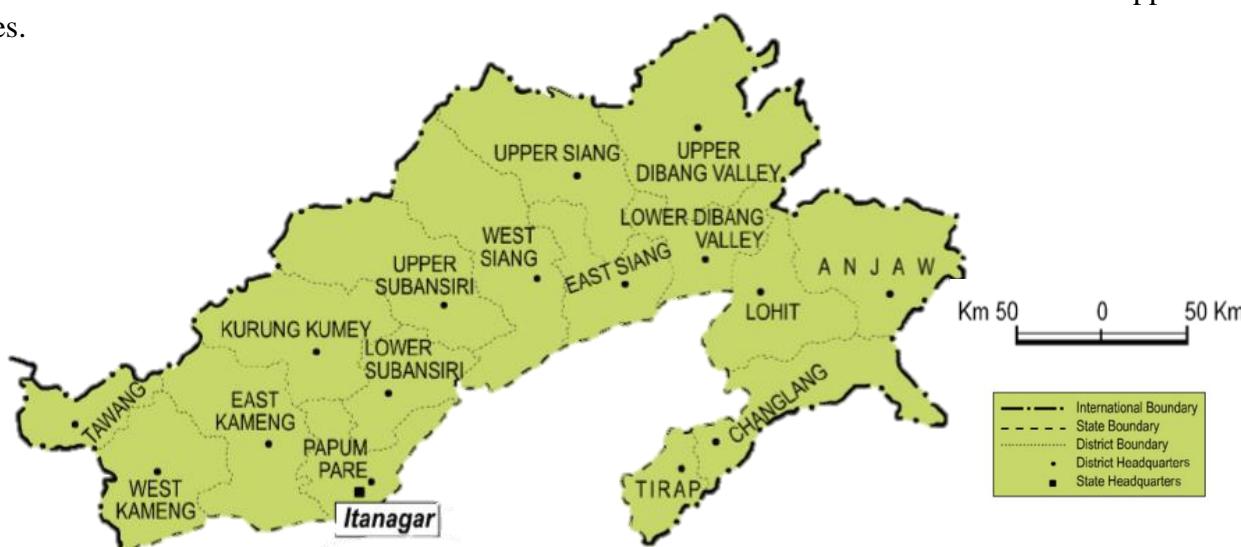


Fig 58: Map of Arunachal Pradesh

Physiographically the State is divided into 4 major division- namely, a) The Greater Himalaya b) The Shivalik c) The Purvanchal d) The Brahmaputra Plains. Evergreen forest covers more than 60% of Arunachal Pradesh. A picturesque and hilly terrain, Arunachal Pradesh is criss crossed by innumerable mighty rivers and rivulets. The five major rivers – Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap with a large number of tributaries drain the waters of this vast area to empty in the Brahmaputra. The vegetation of the whole of Arunachal varies greatly in relation to the elevation of the different regions. It ranges from a wide belt of swampy rain forests along the foothills and the low-lying areas to tropical and subtropical

The physical features of the territory of Arunachal have restricted the mingling of the people of different tribes and, retarded the growth of national consciousness among the people; geography of the area favours retention of local identity, and lack of transport and communication facilities had kept the tribes separate from each other. Much of the land in the northern region of the Greater Himalayas has remained virtually empty; the middle zone is moderately populated; but the foothills and valleys are relatively closely populated and are characterised by the scattering of population clusters. The uneven distribution of population among several small valleys without adequate communication with each other hinders cohesiveness among the people. To the people the tribal loyalties come first and national allegiance- if there is any such sentiment at all- comes second. The environment is largely responsible for the multiplicity of language and customs of the tribes which do not have easy communication with the neighbouring areas.

Geography has influenced the cultural development of the province to a great extent. The northern region had little contact with the lower region, particularly the valley of the Brahmaputra, and has been greatly influenced by the Indo-Tibetan culture. For the past many centuries, the Tibetan traders crossed the borders and traded in the region; many of them settled down in the valleys of the Greater Himalayas. This accounts for the large Buddhist settlements in the Siang districts and the Buddhist impact is visible in the way of life in the higher regions. The southern belt of the foothills has had similar contact with the plains of Assam. The results are manifest in the religion, language, clothing, food habits and mode of agriculture. But the middle zone has remained comparatively backward and both Tibetan and Assamese influence are visible in their way of life there. The tribes living in this region had very little contact with the outside world and even today they are living in extremely primitive conditions.

But nature has endowed the land with beauty and hydro-electric potential which, if developed properly, can more than offset the physical difficulties. The province is full of scenic beauty and can attract tourists from all parts of the world. If transport facilities are improved and the restriction on the movement of visitors is removed, a flourishing tourist trade will develop. The hydro-electric potential, if developed to its logical capacity, will transform the face of the land. If human efforts come to the aid of nature, Arunachal can develop into a second Switzerland.

7.3.1. Natural Vegetation & Biodiversity in Arunachal Pradesh

Most of Arunachal is covered by the Himalayan range. However, the Patkai Hills also cover parts of Lohit, Changlang and Tirap regions, bordering Myanmar in the east. The climate varies with elevation. Areas at high altitude in the upper Himalayas have a cold climate. The climate in the middle Himalayan range is temperate, while the sub- Himalayan region is sub-tropical with relatively hot summer and mild winters. Normally, the soil is not muddy because of hilly slopes. The state has a narrow belt of foothill plains along the border with Assam. There are also some beautiful valleys such as Apatani in the Lower Subansiri district.

Arunachal is covered by a dense evergreen forest. Forest products such as bamboo, cane, timber and medicinal plants are abundant in the state. Arunachal is a home to species of nearly 5,000

plants, more than 600 birds and close to 100 terrestrial mammals. The hornbill is a unique bird found mostly in the forests here. The mithun (*bos frontalis*), a semi-domesticated animal, is unique to the state. It plays

an important role in the socio-cultural life of the people. In the past, when money economy was almost absent, mithun also served as the medium of exchange in the Arunachal tribal society. The yak in the higher region plays almost a similar role as that of the mithun. Besides elephant, bear, barking deer, porcupine, etc., there are innumerable species of butterflies, insects and reptiles. The mountain slopes and hills are covered with alpine, oak, maple, fir, sal and teak trees, etc. A large variety of orchids grow in the state, enriching its endowment of flora. Such biodiversities make Arunachal a paradise for both botanists and zoologists.

The major rivers passing through the state include Siang, Kameng, Dibang, Tawang, Dihing and Tirap. Besides, there are innumerable tributaries. There are only two seasons - winter and rainy. The average annual rainfall ranges from 300 to 400 cm. The rainy season generally lasts from April to October. The transport and communication systems often get disrupted during the period. The temperature in the plains and foothills could even go as high as 40 degrees Celsius, whereas it can be as low as zero degree Celsius in higher altitudes.

The state is rich in mineral resources like dolomite, quartzite, graphite, limestone, coal, marble, oil and natural gas, etc. A crude oil extracting plant has come up at Kharsang in the Changlang district. Most of the people in the state live on agriculture. The practise of shifting cultivation was prevalent, but is on a decline now because of people's concern for the fast-depleting forest cover of the state. In the Ziro valley, the Apatani community has been quite proficient in combining both wet rice cultivation and pisciculture.

7.4. Language & Literature

Linguistic heterogeneity is a noticeable feature of Arunachal. The total population is not large, but dialects spoken here are as many as 42. Most of the languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. People of each community living in a specific cultural zone speak a distinct language. Sometimes the dialect is unintelligible to the other communities of the state. Arunachalese (earlier known as Nefamese, a name that originated from NEFA), a mixture of Assamese, local languages, Hindi, etc., serves as the link language among local people as well as between the locals and the outsiders. Of all the languages only the Khamtis, living mainly in the Lohit region, bordering Myanmar, have a distinct script. The Khamtis follow the Theravada sect of Buddhism and have intelligently used their script for preserving their scriptures. There are many scripture libraries in region. The largest such library is in Chowkham village. The other languages, which do not have a script, have traditionally preserved their literature, myths and legends in the oral form. However, now, Roman script is mostly used for inscribing their literature. In contemporary times, constructing the local history of different tribal groups by using and analysing the available oral literature could be an exciting area of study for the students of social sciences. With the development in trade, transport and communication in recent times, the people there, especially the literates have naturally been multilingual. They communicate not only in their mother tongue and Arunachalese, but also in the language or languages of their neighbours. The linguistic diversities have led to a situation in which English has been the official language in administration as well as the medium of instruction in schools. Further, Assamese as the neighbouring language and Arunachalese as the link language have also been in use by the people here. The language spoken by an average literate Arunachali today is quite fascinating, for it is laced with words, metaphors and similes from diverse languages and dialects. Such multilingualism has been a great strength of the state and its people

7.5. Land & People of Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal is a border state of India in the North East. It shares international borders with four countries – Bhutan in the west, Myanmar in the east and Tibet and China in the north. Only Assam and Nagaland are its entry points to the rest of India. Because of such a strategic location, the state has always been in political and public gaze in the country.

Arunachal is home to some 30 communities and their 47 sub-groups. The list of Scheduled Tribes includes 25 tribes. Of the remaining five communities, Meyor, Mikir, Mishings and Lisu, have been given the facilities due to the Scheduled Tribes, but are not recognised as such by the state government. The fifth, i.e., Chakmas, is regarded as a non-tribal community.

Going by the settlements, the state is divided into five cultural zones. The first is the Tawang and Kameng regions, where the tribes settled are Buddhist Monpas, Sherdupens, Akas, Mijis and Khowas. The second zone lying to the east of the first covers the area of East Kameng and Lower and Upper Subansiri. The tribes settled there are Nyishis, Banginis, Sulungs, Apatanis, Nas, Tagins Mikirs and Hill Miris. The third zone covers some parts of the Upper Subansiri and the East and West Siang districts, where the Adis, a major tribe, dominate. The Adis have 15 sub-tribes, namely the Ashing, Bori, Karko, Milang, Padam, Pangi, Ramo, Tangam, Bokar, Gallong, Komkar, Minyong, Pailibo, Pasi and Shimon. The Dibang valley and Lohit regions constitute the fourth cultural zone, where the major tribes include Khamtis and Mishmis. The fifth zone spreads over the Tirap and Changlang regions and includes tribes like Noctes, Wanchos, Tangsas and Singphos.

By and large, the Arunachalis are animists, worshipping the nature god. They believe in a supreme god, who is not only omnipresent and omniscient, but also just and benevolent. For example, the Adi group of people worship ‘Donyi-Polo’ (the sun-moon god), who they believe observes every minor development and upholds the truth in the world. Oath taken in his name becomes most binding of all. On every ritual, his name is invoked. Donyi-Polo as a religious faith has become a unifying force for people in large parts of Arunachal. In the regions bordering Bhutan, Tibet and Myanmar, the Monpas, Sherdukpens and the Khamtis follow Buddhism. As it happens in every religion, the practise of Buddhism in Arunachal has been greatly impacted by the local tradition of nature worship and food habit, etc. Christianity and Hinduism in a major way and Islam, Jainism and Sikhism in smaller ways have also established their presence in the state in the last few decades. This is so, because there is a large community of migrants from the rest of India in the field of trade, construction and in various administrative offices. All these people have also brought in their religious faiths and cultures to the state.

Village is the centre of community life in Arunachal Pradesh. Every village has a council to maintain the social order. The customary laws guide the functioning of the village council. The Adis term the village council as kebang and the inter-village council as bango. The latter is meant for the settlement of bigger disputes involving more than one village. There is a village headman, but the decisions are believed to be coming from the raij (people) as a whole, with strict impartiality towards both the contending parties. The headman is called gaon burha, because of his rich life experiences and respectability for giving elderly counselling. His position is hereditary but if needed, he could be replaced, the decision for which could be taken by other village elders. The women generally do not take active part in the council matters. The disputes are mainly related to non-payment of bride-price, marriage, theft, etc. Capital punishment is generally avoided and penalty either in cash or kind is preferred. The political and judicial system in traditional Arunachal is generally democratic, simple and effective. However, in contemporary times, the basic structure of customary governance is being overtaken by formal administrative and judicial system.

7.5.1. Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh

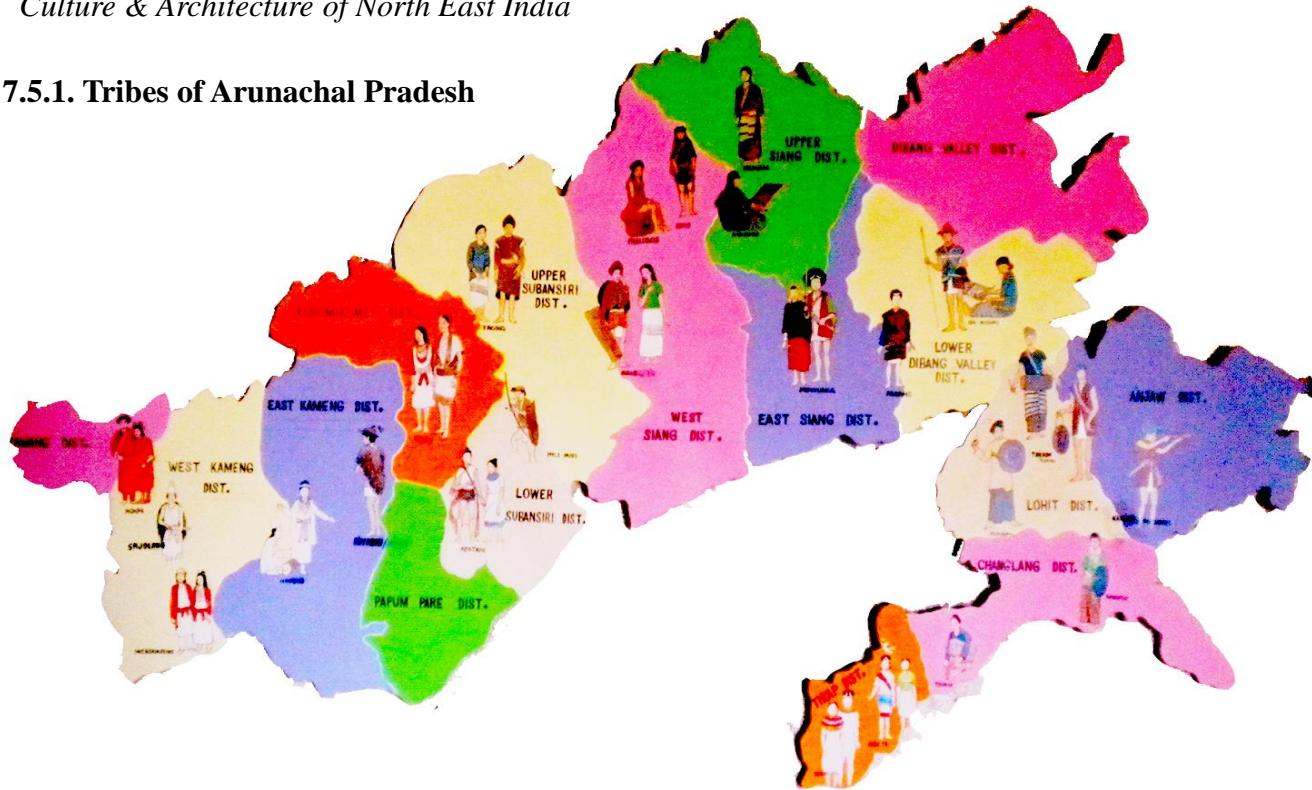


Fig 59: Cultural groups and areas in Arunachal Pradesh

Home to 52 million indigenous peoples (Miller and Wood 2007: 624), India is the most populated country of indigenous peoples. Within India, Arunachal Pradesh is the state where almost 31 indigenous communities inhabit (People of India survey, ASI, 1997). Arunachal Pradesh is a hill state in the lap of the Great Himalayan mountain range. This region was declared as Union Territory in January 20, 1972 and emerged as a full-fledged state from 1987.

The 96% per cent landscape of the state is covered by hills that create the natural boundaries for the different communities of Arunachal Pradesh. Being the home of many different indigenous communities, Arunachal Pradesh is known to be one of the magnificent multilingual tribal areas of the world. By songs, dances, dresses, rituals or simply the gestures, the people express and maintain their different living styles which make Arunachal Pradesh vivaciously vibrant in the realms of intangible cultural heritages. Though Anthropological Survey of India separate all tribes in five cultural zones in their survey, the tribes can broadly divide into three group. The first group is Buddhist tribes. It can again be divided into Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist groups of tribe. The Monpas, Sherdukpens, Memba and Khambas of the western part of Arunachal Pradesh practice Mahayana sect of Buddhism and the Khamptis and Singphos of the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh practice Hinayana sect of Buddhism.

The second group consists of Adis, Akas, Apatanis, Bungnis, Nyishis, Mishmis, Mijis etc., who have different beliefs on divinity, which again can be divided into two. Whereas Adi, Apatani or Nyishis believes in the the Donyi-Polo and Abo-Tani (the Sun and Moon God) as their original ancestor, the Mishmi groups believes in Nani Intaya as their goddess of origin. The third group comprises of Noctes and Wanchos in the Tirap district. They are little different on religious beliefs and social conducts against the other Arunachalee tribes.

All communities, whether it is Buddhists, or followers of Donyi-Polo or other faith, have a highly developed sense of music and rhythm. The dances vary from highly solemn and thoughtful religious dramas of the Monpas to the joyous and cheerful Adi dances to intense and powerful martial dance of the Noctes and Wanchos. While some Buddhist tribes maintain written records, mainly in the form of religious books, most Arunachalis have preserved their traditions in the oral form. The colours of the magnificent landscape and the rich & earthy life of the people of

Arunachal Pradesh have been captured in their handicrafts. Buddhist tribes specialize in painting religious and semi-religious motifs and wood carving while Nyshis are specialized in bamboo and cane goods making. Intricate patterns are also woven out of cane by the eastern tribes of Tirap district. Monpa carpets, Adi skirts and highly decorative Mishmi bags, shawls and jackets prove their traditional skill and estheticness. The people of Arunachal Pradesh are also well known for their traditional knowledge on flora and fauna from Mishmi teeta (Coptis teeta, a type of poison) to sheep breeding to produce local salt.

Adi: Ashing	Tangsa: Havi	Monpa: But	Mishmi: Digaru	Aka, Bangni, Deori,
Adi: Bori	Tangsa: Kimsing	Monpa: Dirang	Mishmi: Miju	Khamba
Adi: Karko	Tangsa: Lungphi	Monpa: Lish	Mishmi: Idu	Khampti, Apatani
Adi: Milang	Tangsa: Morang	Monpa: Chug		Lisu(Yobin), Miji
Adi: Padam	Tangsa: Muklom	Monpa: Kalaktang		Mishing/Miri
Adi: Pangi	Tangsa: Sangwal	Monpa: Tawrang		Hill Miri, Khowa
Adi: Ramo	Tangsa: Tikhat			Khamiyang
Adi: Tangam	Tangsa: Yongkuk			Mikir, Tagin
Adi: Bokar	Tangsa: Jugli			Na, Nishi/Nishang
Adi: Gallong	Tangsa: Lungchang			Sherdukpen
Adi: Komkar	Tangsa: Lungri			Sonowal Kachari
Adi: Minyoung	Tangsa: Mosang			Nocte, Singpo
Adi: Pailibo	Tangsa: Ronrang			Sulung, Memba
Adi: Pasi	Tangsa: Sanke			Tibetan Chakma
Adi: Shimong	Tangsa: Tonglim			Nepali, Wancho
				Zakhring

Fig 60: List of Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh

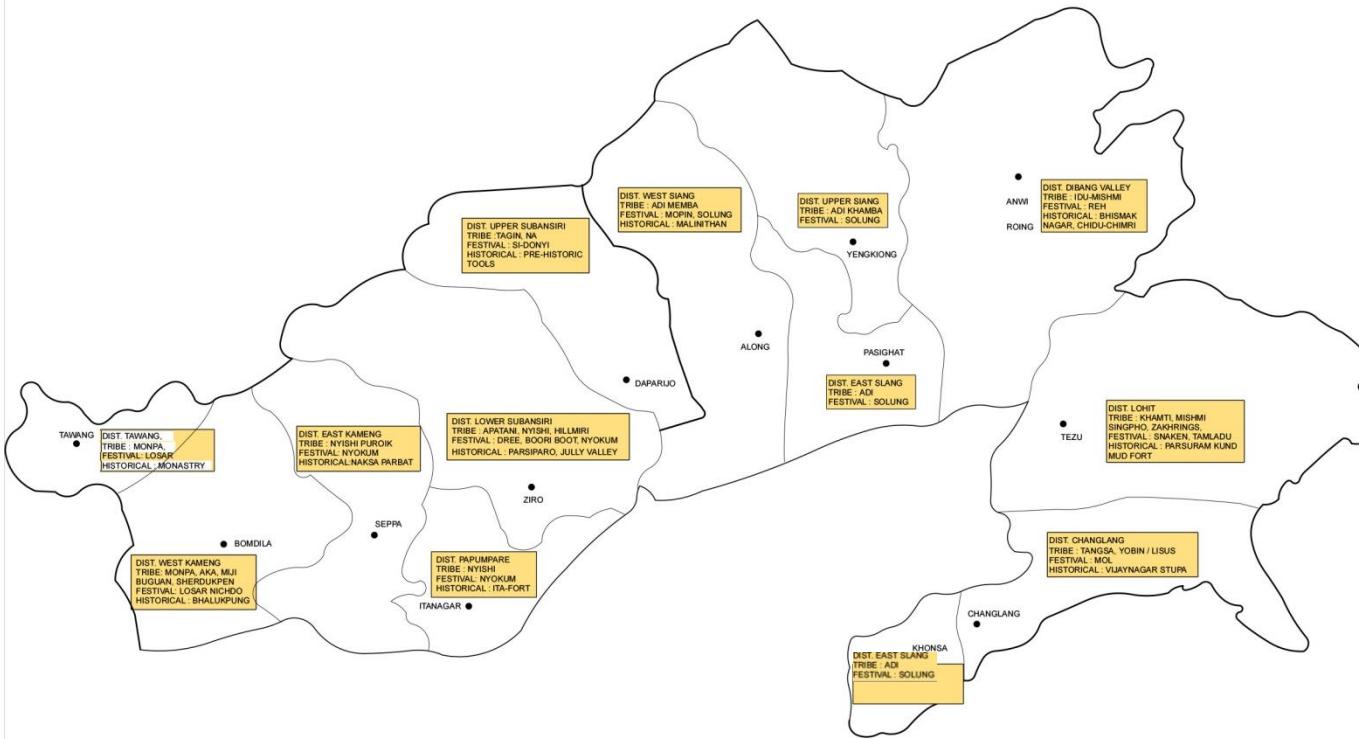


Fig 61: Tribes, Festivals & Historical Sites

7.5.2. Festivals & Dances

Festivals are plentiful in Arunachal. Each tribe has its own festival, which provides a creative forum for expressing the distinctness of their art forms, dresses, designs, dance forms, musical instruments, etc. The festivals are generally related to agricultural activities like sowing and harvesting. There are collective rituals performed and celebrated in public by the community as a whole. Both women and men dance during the festivals. The songs of the festivals show that they are celebrated for the harmony and prosperity of the people and fertility of the land. The women actively and publicly participate during the time of festivals, work in the fields and engage in the trade of buying and selling goods in the market without any discrimination or insecurity. In recent times, the presence and participation of women in offices is also quite pre-ponderous. Some of the local festivals are —‘Solung’ celebrated by the Adis in Siang and Dibang valley, ‘Nyokom’ celebrated by Nyishis, ‘Mopin’ by Gallongs, ‘Lossar’ by Monpas, ‘Dree’ by Apatanis, ‘Loku’ by Noctes and ‘Boori-Boot’ celebrated by the Hill Miris, etc. Like the dance which takes place in all festivals, prayers and sacrifices are also common. The indigenous dress, which is a product of local people’s long interaction with their ecological settings, makes the festivals exceedingly lively and colourful.



Fig 62: Nyokum Celebration by Nyishis



Fig 63: Nyokum Celebration by Nyishis

In Arunachal, Durga Puja, Vishwakarma Puja, Christmas, Baisakhi and Eid are also celebrated with equal zest and fervour, especially in urban centres like Pasighat, Ziro, Itanagar, Along, Tezu and Bomdila, where there is a visible presence of non-Arunachali population. A common feature of all festivals, including tribal festivals is that while the festivals may be organised by the followers of a concerned faith, people from all walks of life participate in them enthusiastically. This is a product of the co-habitation of innumerable tribes and sub-tribes in the region coupled with their distinct religious faiths, and above all their growing interaction with others in modern times.

Festivals celebrated are:

The Losar Festival

It is new year of the Monpas and is celebrated in Tanang and West Kameng districts. This 15 days festival falls in January/February. The houses are cleaned, lamps lighted, prayer flags are hoisted. It is a common belief that the wind carries the prayers to the heaven. Various dances like the Agi Lhamu dance, Lion and Peacock dance and the Yak dance are performed during the festival.

The Khan Festival

It is celebrated in the month of February in West Kameng District. It is considered as an Occasion for the seunion of the people. Besides the usual festivities, the significance of the festival lies in a ceremony whereby the priest ties a piece of wool around everybody’s neck. The belief is that the enchanted thread will bring good luck to each one of them.

The Key Festival

It is celebrated in the month of February in the Diabng valley district. Appeasement of the deities.

who control the peace and prosperity of the people is the thought behind the six day celebrations. It is essentially associated with the Idu Mishnis. The festival comes to an end with great fanfare and the priest dance performed, during the six days is its special attraction.

The Ojiyale Festival

The Ojiyale festival is celebrated by the Wanehos in Tirap district during March-April for a period of six to 12 days interspersed with prayer, songs and dance. Villagers exchange bamboo tubes of rice beer as a mark of greeting and goodwill. Pig's skin is offered to the village chief as a mark of respect.

The Tamladu Festival

This is essentially celebrated by the Digaru Mishmis tribe in Lohit district. During the festival, prayers are offered to the God of the Earth and the God of the Waters for protection against natural calamities. The Supreme Lord Jebmalu is worshipped for the prosperity and welfare of human beings, the stand of crops and domestic animals.

The Mopin Festival

It is celebrated in East Siang and Upper Siang districts for wealth prosperity, good health and universal happiness. Sonearing of rice powder on each others faces marks the beginning of the festival which is celebrated for five days.

The Targya Festival

It is a 3-days affair celebrated in Tawang when the courtyard of the monastery becomes a hive of activity. The lamas make a torgya (a pyramidal structure of barley floul). Pujas are offered and the monastery is illuminated with with colourful lights. The lamas perform the monastic dance wearing dresses rich in colour and frightening masks of animals. The dance and the festival signify the destruction of evil spirits and harmful forces and seek the rule of prosperity and happiness amongst the people.

Sr. No.	District	Headquarter	Festivals	Date & Month (Apprx.)
1	Tawang	Tawang	Losar (Monpas)	11 February
2	West Kameng	Bomdila	Losar (Monpas) Khan (Mijis)	11 February February/March
3	East Kameng	Seppa	Nyokum (Nishi) Gomkum Gompa (Sulungs)	26 February 15 April
4	Lower Subansiri	Ziro	Boori Boot (Hill Miris) Nyokum (Nishi) Dree (Apatanis)	6 February 26 February 5 July
5	Upper Subansiri	Daporijo	Si-Donyi (Tagins) Boori Boot (Hills Miris) Mopin (Adis)	6 January 6 February 5 April
6	West Siang	Along	Si-Donyi (Tagins) Solung (Adis)	6 January 1 September
7	East Siang	Pasighat	Aran (Adis) Mopin (Adis) Solung (Adis)	7 March 5 April 1 September
8	Lohit	Tezu	Tamladu (Taraon & Kamman Mishmis) Sangken (Khampti) Shapawng Yawng Mannu Poi (Singpho)	15 February 15 April 14 February
9	Dibang Valley	Anini	Reh (Idu Mishmis) Solung (Adis)	1 February 1 September
10	Tirap	Khonsa	Oriah (Wanchos) Chalo-Loku (Noctes)	16 February 25 November
11	Changlang	Changlang	Mol (Tangsas)	April
12	Papum Pare	Itanagar	Nokum (Nishing)	26 February
13	Upper Siang	Yingkiong	Mopin Solung	5 April 1 September

Fig 64: Festivals celebrated in various districts of Arunachal Pradesh

Tribal dances expressing the various elements of nature and human emotions is a classic example of cultural efflorescence of this state. Apart from the monastic dance performed by the lamas during the Torgya festival, the Monpas have extremely attractive traditional dances. The dancers wear masus, which have a human, an animal or a bird face and through their rhythmic movements and gestures they depict some mythical stories. They use musical instruments like trumpets, drums, cymbals, clarion and conch shell.

Dances Performed are:

Aji Lhamu Dance

One of the most prominent of the traditional dances, this dance drama is performed during 'Losai' festival. The five people who perform it represent Gueli, the Chief protagonist, Nyapa and Nyaro the antagonists and Lhamu and Lhum the female characters.



Fig 65: Aji Lhamu Dance



Fig 66: Yak Dance

Yak Dance

This dance celebrates the joy of the discovery of yak many hundreds of years ago. It is quite interesting to note that the importance of yak in the life of the people is completely realized. The yak has a major role in the prosperity and economy of people with its multi-purpose use.

Lion and Peacock Dance

This dance displays the story of saint Tenteling who performed an extremely difficult fast and meditation of the mythical mount Gangikarpo in the Himalayas for three years. The two snow lions that lived in the ridges of the mountain and witnessed this severe and pious life of the saint befriended him and offered him milk and their company. Overjoyed by this strange relationship between man and animals the people danced. And till today the people perform this dance on every important occasion for they know peace and prosperity comes when there is a harmony between all living neatness of the world.

The Ponung Dance

This dance of the Minyong group of Adis is performed especially on the occasion of the solung festival. The priest called Miri rattles an ancient sword and sings legends.

The Popi Dance

Similar to Ponung but is performed on the occasion of Mopin, festival of the Galos. The dancers wear white dresses and elaborate headgear of straw.

The Dishang Dance

It is performed by the men folk. It is a community dance using sticks.

The Tapu Dance

It is an interesting martial dance, performed with long swords, vigorous cries and rapid movements.



Fig 67: Ponung Dance



Fig 68: Dishang Dance



Fig 69: Tapu Dance

7.5.3. Performing Arts

The performing arts domain of intangible cultural heritage includes vocal and instrumental music, dance, theatre, pantomime, sung verse and beyond. This domain is inseparably related with other intangible cultural heritage domains; like music is an integral part of many other domains of intangible cultural heritage including rituals, festive events or oral traditions. Music can be performed in any situations: marriages, funerals, rituals, festivities etc. Diverse contexts, many dimensions or varied performing occasions make music universal. Dance illustrates specific events or daily acts, such as religious dances, hunting or warfare dance etc. The rhythmic movements, steps and gestures of dance express sentiments and moods. Traditional theatre performances generally combine acting, singing, dancing, dialogue, narration or recitation but may also include puppetry or pantomime. Traditional theatres play crucial roles in culture and society and they are more than simply ‘performances’ for the audiences.

The performing arts of Arunachal Pradesh are vivaciously colorful. They dance for merriment, festive & rituals, and wars or even for funeral. The dances, performed by the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, have been broadly divided into four groups. The first group is the ritual dances which are a part of a ritual. This group may again be divided into five subgroups. The first subgroup of the ritual dances includes those dances which are performing to secure prosperity, good health and happiness of the dancer, his family, village or the whole community in various rituals. The second subgroup comprises those dances performed in ceremonies related to agriculture and domestication of animals to secure a good harvest and increase of domestic animals respectively. The third subgroup is associated with the funeral ceremony when the soul is prevented from hunting its old house and guided by the priest to its abode in the land of the dead. It is generally believed that if the soul returns to its old home, the family suffers diseases and deaths. The fourth subgroup consists of the fertility dances where the imitation of the movements of coition is believed to promote fertility. War dances make the fifth subgroup, which are on the decline with the stoppage of the internecine feuds and raids. The war dance used to be prevalent among almost all the non-Buddhist tribes.

The second group is the festive dances which form the recreational part of a particular festival. The third group is the recreational dances which are not the part of any particular festival or ritual. These are occasional dances which inspire its participants to express their mirth. The fourth group is pantomimes and dance dramas which narrate a mythical story or illustrate a moral and are educative in purpose. The Buddhist tribes have a large repertory of these. The Buddhist tribes have organized parties of dancers for their pantomimes and dance dramas. The other tribes do not have such arrangement. The boys and the girls learn the dance movements by imitating the movements of the elders. Songs are the integral part of these dances. As a part of oral traditions, songs reveal the myths and legends of the communities as well as illustrate their love for nature and beauty.

Though there are no significant theatre performances among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the Khampti's dance dramas are noteworthy. They have many dance dramas like Ka-Mukchu dance

drama or chouliuchiyen dance drama that depict mythical events or stories with moral lessons. The dance drama is called kapung (ka=dance; pung=story) means the story depicted through dance. Women cannot perform kapung and female role played by the men in female costume. These dramas are generally staged during the religious festivals of Sangken or Khamsang. The dance parties are invited by the affluent villagers to perform kapung on their houses and given remuneration for the performance.

Pantomime is a part of the performing arts of the eastern tribes inhabited in the Mon cultural zone of Arunachal Pradesh, who are basically the Mahayana Buddhists. The Monpas and Sherdukpens have several pantomimes depicting some legendary stories or events. These pantomimes are performed by the performers wearing magnificent and colourful masks. The Sherdukpen pantomimes are perfumed during the festivals of Chokor, Chosiwang and Tonuwang and the Monpa pantomimes are staged during the Losar or New Year festival, though these can also be performed at any other time of the year. The dance parties are formed for performing the pantomimes and the trainer or the instructor is called the Lopon. The pantomimes are staged in front of the temple or at some central, open and convenient place. Drums and cymbals are the musical instruments that played in the pantomimes. The Sherdukpen pantomimes are Jiji – Sukham or yak pantomime, ajimalu pantomime, Jikcham or deer pantomime, Jachung cham or bird pantomime etc. The Monpas also have ajilamu, yak, and deer etc. pantomimes. The Khamba pantomimes, it is believed originated from Uzor Rimboche or the great Indian Buddhist monk Padmasambhava for suppressing the malicious activities of evil spirits. Only the adult khamba men are allowed to perform these pantomimes.

7.5.4. Handicrafts of AP

Handicraft and handloom are important occupation next to agriculture in Arunachal Pradesh. These are part of the tribal way of life. Most of them learn the art by tradition. According to the census conducted in 1995-96 there were 4044 handicrafts units covering 15735 artisans in the state. Nearly 95 percent of them reside in rural areas, Out of 15735 artisans nearly 8 thousand are engaged in cane and bamboo crafts and another 6 thousand of them make carpets, floor coverings and textiles. Roughly one thousand are involved in wood carvings.

Cane and bamboo products are done by the artisans in the districts of East Kameng, Papumpare, Hanglang, Upper and Lower Subansiri, east and west Siang, Lohit and Dibang valley. The products are mainly cane caps and head gears, cane hairs, cane tables, cane racks, cane trays for meeting domestic requirements. The state government provide training in the manufacture of these cane products

Carpet making is an important occupation in the districts of Tawang, West Kameng, Changlang and Upper Siang among women folk. Arunachal Pradesh carpets earned recognition for their different motifs and designs. The women folk through out the state have an excellent sense of colour. The basic colors that dominate the weaver are black, yellow, dark, blue, green and scarlet. These are all put together in most fascinating combinations. Shawls, and jackets shoulder bags and coats all stand for perfection that tribal artisans have attained in this art.

Wood carvings in the form of wood masks, gods and goddesses are made in the districts of Tirap, upper and west Siang, Lohit, Tawang, through locally available raw materials. Wood carvers scoops out beautiful cups, dishes, fruit bowls and magnificent ceremonial masks for dances. The state government promotes these wood carvings through imparting training at different craft centres. In addition, the artisans make ornamental beads, in different geometrical designs, paintings, bell metal products like traditional bells, rice plates and bowls and the like. Studies from Wanchoo tribes have shown that human figures, human head, smoking pipes are generally made by illiterates while literates prepare tigers, elephant, ash tray besides human figures and

made by illiterates while literates prepare tigers, elephant, ash tray besides human figures and motifs.



Fig 70: Cane & Bamboo Products



Fig 72: Carpets



Fig 71: Wooden Carving

7.5.5. Beads of Arunachal Pradesh

Beads can be perceived as natural substances with natural holes or the small fossilised crinoid segments with natural holes or even organic substances viz. wood, amber, coral, jet, shell, ivory, bone, the exception being pearls which are drilled to make beads. In addition to these, amber, coral, turquoise, jade, rose quartz, moonstones are used for beads.

Beads have been among the most ancient & widespread of human ornaments. As the Indian tribal population is concerned, undoubtedly the North East is one of the prime areas where beads are profusely visible.

Traditional use of Beads are associated with the prayer tradition of major religions. Tomalin mentions that Hindu *mala*, for example, is a specimen of prayer beads. Similar practice of counting beads are traceable among the Buddhists & Tibetans. He adds that the Christian *parnoster*, or rosary & the Muslim *tasbihah* have the same function.

Beads are also used to mark gender in infants. Baby girls have their ears pierced almost immediately after birth. A loop of string, sometimes with beads, is inserted in the hole. Baby girls often wear bead necklaces. In those communities where wrist wraps are common the babies sometimes wear its tiny versions. The only beaded item worn by both males and females is a small, red, seed bead bracelet, usually with a charm attached. These bracelets are sold in markets throughout central Sierra to protect babies against the evil eye.

What sets beads apart from other objects seems to be nothing more than that they are articles of adornment. In this, at least, they are in much larger company. It is remarkable how many of the objects adopted as currency in different parts of the world have been objects otherwise used primarily, if not exclusively, for adornment. Gold and silver are the most obvious examples.

Beads have multiple implications and functional values. They are deeply rooted in their aesthetic sensibility, cultural codes, trade mechanism, economic structure, social status, and gender specificity displaying the essential elements of their traditional as well as cultural identity. Beads continue to be an important part of traditional dress of women as well as men.

The geo-political location of this frontier state Arunachal Pradesh, having 26 major and

several smaller tribes and their innumerable migration stories, added a new dimension to the beads tradition.

Beads are part of the oral tradition of every tribe. Beads talk about their historic linkages across the political and cultural boundaries through trade, economic status of an individual in a society, as well as medium of exchange, and obviously help to identify the tribe to a great extent.

Beads were used by the tribes and remained an important item of trade between the people of the hills and the plains. It also constitutes an important element in bride price or marriage gifts. Beads even represent the hierarchy within the tribal social structure. Sacred beads also have tremendous value in their minds. Several tribes use such beads to ward off evil spirits or to protect children from unseen malevolent forces.

Beads also represent property and follow rules of inheritance, especially those considered highly valuable in the society. Some Arunachal tribes have the tradition of burying the belongings of the deceased in the graveyard or leaving those on the burial place with the body. In essence, traditional beads, which people today perceive as authentic, came mainly through trades with Tibet, Burma, and other neighbouring countries as well as through the plains of Assam. With the closure of such border trades obviously those old or pure or authentic are in circulation within the tribes and are passed on from one generation to the next.

The tribal situation of Arunachal Pradesh has undergone considerable changes were due to greater postcolonial administrative reforms, reorganisation of the state, and exposure to various forces of modernisation and to some extent 'globalisation'. This has resulted in significant changes in the overall social structure, cultural systems, and intra-ethnic as well as inter-ethnic social relationships.

This has made the so-called 'pure' or 'authentic' beads highly valued individual or family possession, symbolising their high socio-economic status besides, becoming a core component of their group identity markers. Such a transition has led to new realities. Beads have gradually been accumulated by some rich families. At the same time those have also come to the market as a commodity. In urban centres we can find small shops where people of Arunachal, mostly women, sell beads along with other traditional ornaments and costumes. Significance of beads is so deeply rooted in the value system of every tribe that people still buy beads to fulfill their desire to beautify the body & to fulfill cultural & ritual values. We are usually attracted to beads because they satisfy a human hunger for decoration, as small meaningful treasures they may have amuletic or talismanic properties, and since earliest times, long before money, they must have visibly displayed wealth and fulfilled acquisitive impulses even among early nomadic peoples. It's not so different today, as our range of ways of self-adornment are constantly extended to new limits by demands for so-called 'novelty' by the fashion industry.

Every bead has its own value, according to its colour and luster and, *very often, it is* considered as the family heirloom. Sometimes, the bead necklaces are so heavy that, even if there is no cloth over the breasts, these bead necklaces easily cover them.

Beads as Status Symbol and Identity. Brides bring *tadoks* from their parental homes and these become the property of the husbands' families, thus elevating the family status. Bead are worn to mark the wearer's social and cultural status during festivals, cultural events, and even at the reception of important persons.

Ritualistic Significance of Beads. Bead necklaces, especially the bigger varities, namely *sampu*, *sante*, *sampy*, *sambu*, & *lebu* have ritulaistic significance. Since time immemorial these were worn during *morung* ritulas conducted for the well being of the members of the household. These necklaces were worn mostly by the rich who afford to get it from Nyishis in exchange of *Mithuns*.

The prices of beads depends on their age & size. The more the age & size, the higher the price. Often the beads are graded into different classes such as first, second, & third.

Beads & Young Generation. Its difficult to say if the young & educated generation give much importance to the bead tradition. Many girls & boys prefer gold & silver ornaments over traditional beads. Many of them are quite aware of these traditions. It has been seen that as a person gains age, the liking for these beads increases.



Fig 71: Beads of Apatani Tribe

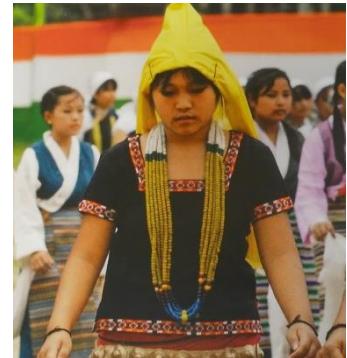
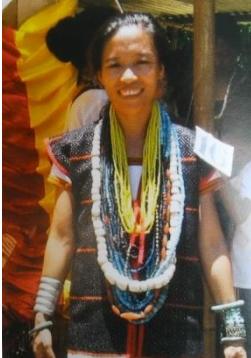


Fig 71: Beads of Adi Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Nocte Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Aka Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Membra Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Sherdukpen Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Solong Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Tagin Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Miji/ Sajolang Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Nyishi Tribe



Fig 71: Beads of Wancho Tribe

7.6. Architecture of Arunachal Pradesh

The tribal homes in Arunachal bear stamp of excellence of ancient homemaking style. The houses of Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh represents the traditional style of constructing the dwellings from the locally available materials & the size of the houses depends on the family patterns of the tribes. Since the living conditions are very tough in this area, the houses of the tribes are constructed to meet the challenge of nature.

House of Adi Tribe

- Size of the house depends on the family
- Traditional houses are constructed with bamboos, woods, canes, leaves
- House raised well above the grounds with the help of stilts
- On these stilts are tied wooden beams & thus the level floor is made
- Roof is made by dry paddy straws, dry tokow leaves or thatch grass
- No nail is used in their construction
- Construct their houses either on the plain level ground or on the sloping ground
- Adi house has no windows & there are two doors, one in the front for male members & the other at the back for women

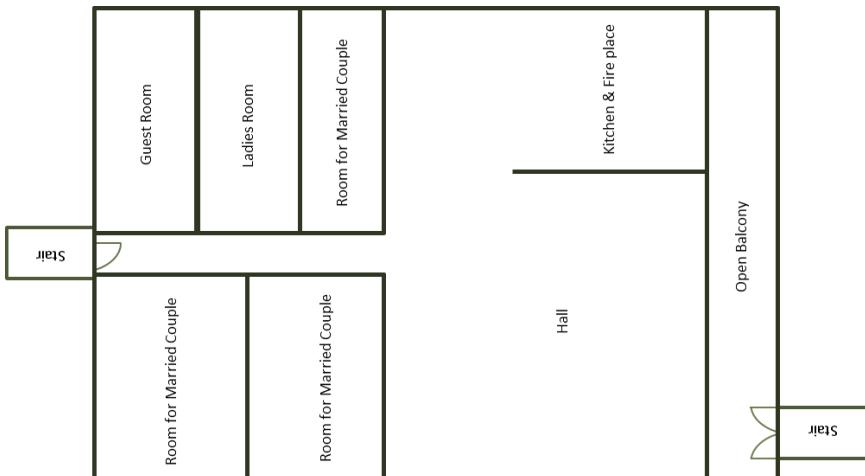


Fig 76: Basic Layout of Adi House



Fig 73: Houses of Adi Tribes



Fig 74: Houses of Adi Tribes



Fig 75: Houses of Adi Tribes

House of Nyishi Tribe

- The indigenous house is constructed with wooden & bamboo using (thatch, Chinese palm leaves, cane leaves, jungle banana leaves) as roofing materials whichever is locally available
- The entire joints are bind with cane ropes
- The houses floor level is raised 2.5 m from the ground level & ceiling level is 2.5 m from the floor level
- The plan consists of rear verandah, common room with fire place, bedroom, guest room, front verandah & side verandah
- The reinforcement nodes (diaphragms) prevent the emerging



Fig 77: Houses of Nyishi Tribe

longitudinal cracks from spreading over the entire tube length

- The kitchen come fire place “emmi” the base is constructed with four bamboo support & on the surface of the room four 1ft wooden blocks on a banana leaf & then soil is applied upto the height of the blocks, thus the stove can be laid for kitchen purpose.



Fig 78: Houses of Nyishi Tribes



Fig 79: Side Elevation

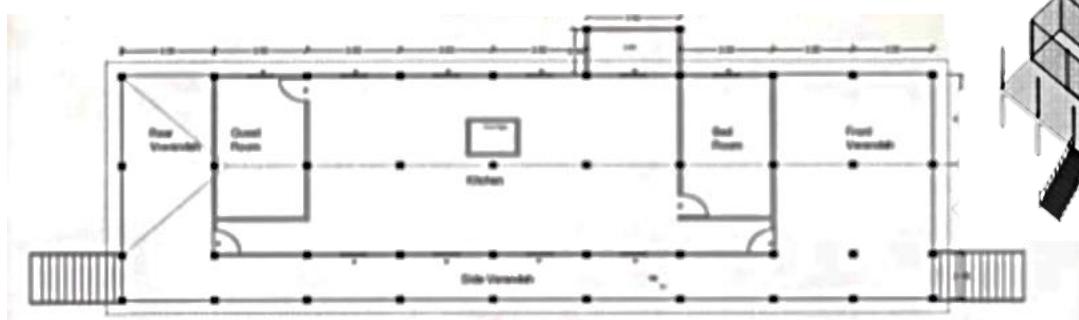
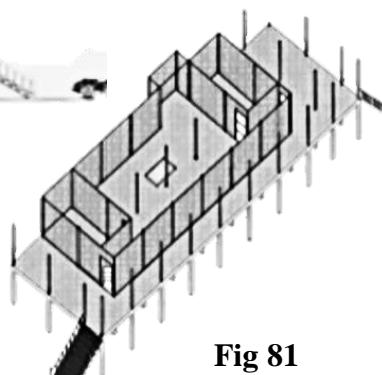


Fig 80: Plan

Fig 81



House of Apatani Tribe

The Apatani tribes, found in Ziro valley of Arunachal believe in living in harmony with Mother Nature and that aspect is reflected in their homes too. They are an animistic tribe and worship the sun and moon as deities. They set up simple bamboo huts atop vertical wooden stilts. With time, some of them have become fonder of using brick and mortar setups though. They light fire at center of house around which the members sit, eat and discuss things. Most such homes have a lifespan of 7 to eight years after which they are rebuilt.



Fig 82: House of Apatani Tribe

Houses of Monpa Tribe

Among the various tribes of Arunachal, a few are dedicated followers of Buddhism. The Monpa tribe is among those believers in Buddhism. They mostly live in remote valleys in Arunachal near borders of Bhutan and Tibet. Since these areas become very cold in winter months, Monpas set up multi-leveled houses using heavy brick, wood and stone. Their houses often have top notch wood carving on doors. To ensure the rooms remain warm they use layers of bamboo matting on rooftop.



Fig 83: House of Monpa tribe

House of Tangsa Tribe

The Tangsa tribe is seen mostly in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district and eastern side of Assam. Their origins can be traced back to Mongolia. The word Tangsa denotes children of the hills. They build houses with a hearth in every room and the stilts on which these are built help safeguard them from floods. Their houses are referred as 'Chang Ghors' and are made with wood and bamboo. A big hall is there that is used as guest room and common room. At back part of their houses, they set up the granary. In recent times, some of the Tangsa families located near Nampong offer home stay to tourists.



Fig 84: Houses of Tangsa Tribes

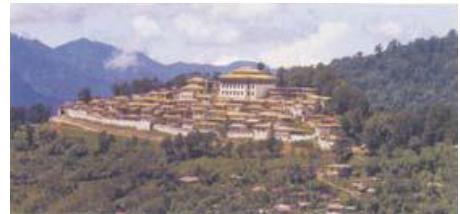
Places of Interest in Arunachal Pradesh

Malinithan A Pilgrimage center for Hindu located at Likabali, headquarters of sub-division of West Siang District. Ruins of a big temple belonging to 14th –15th century include sculptures of Indra, Airavanta, Surya, Nandi Bull, Akashi-Ganga waterfalls etc. 5 km away from Malinithan a bathing Ghat is located where people take a holy bath.



Fig 85: Malinithan

Tawang The district headquarters of Tawang District is situated at a distance of 180 km from Bomadila. The place is easily approachable by road from Bomadila. The place is famous for the 300-year-old Budhist monastery.



Parsuram Kund It is located in Lohit District, has been the pilgrimage centers from the ancient time. On the day of Makar Sankaranti, thousands of pilgrims take holi dips in the Kund to wash off their sins. It is believed the sage Parsuram washed his hand free of the murdouroous axe with which he had killed his mother.

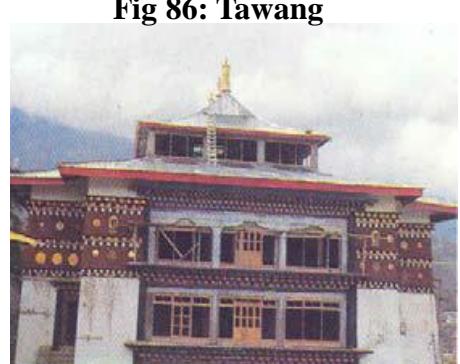


Fig 86: Tawang

Bhismaknagar It has now been established that the oldest site of archaeological importance is Bhismaknagar. Discovered in and around these structures are quite a good number of pottery terracotta and other objects of interest.

Vijayanagar The recently discovered (1969) along the Nao Dihing Valley in Tirap district throws light on the heritage of the tribes like the khampitis and Singphos. The discovery renealed stupa and monuments of archaeological interest at Vijayanagar and Miaobum. The ruins of the stupa at Vijayanagar was discovered in April, 1969. The finds are now dated as of the17th Century. The other important site in Nao dihing valley is Miobum. It is reported that this site contains a cylindrical stone structure about 250 feet in height. The remains of ancient road probably of the famous Rajgarh Ali are seen at various places in the foot-hills of AP specially up the Lohit, the Siang and the Subansire districts

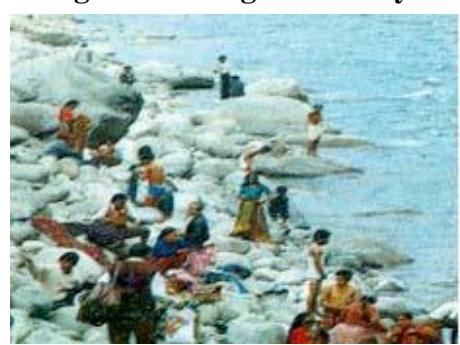


Fig 88: Parsuram Kund

Pukhuris Another category of historical monuments frequently reported from the Lohit District are tanks or Pukhuris. At present proper survey has been made in regard to the Paduni Pukhuri near Jia and Ahom Pukhuri near Koronu. Quite a good number of such tanks are known to exist in this area.

Itanagar Buried here under thick vegetation are ruins of an ancient capital which bears elegant testimony to the past glory of this area. The place has been identified as Mayapur or Kalyanpur which was the Capital of King Ramachandra, the last of the Titari Kings who ruled the North bank areas in the 11th Century A.D. Historians suggest that when Ahoms extended their political authority to the North Bank area of the Brahmaputra river.

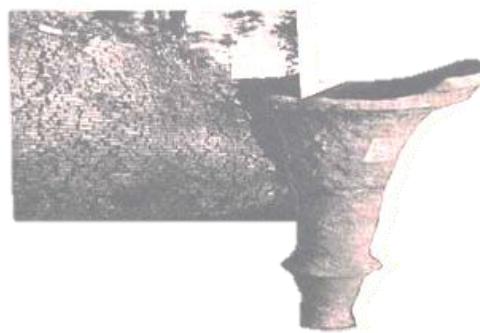


Fig 89: Terracota remains



Fig 90: Itanagar ruins



Fig 91: Archaeological Sites in Arunachal Pradesh

8. Inferences

1. North East India have a very large Cultural Diversity. We see large variations from area to area
2. These North Eastern states are a transitional zone between rest of the India and the neighbouring countries
3. One of the reason for such diversity in North East India is because of the geographical location of it
4. These states have faced a lot of influence from the neighbouring countries.
5. Historians even suggest that genetics suggest that most of the people residing in North East India have come from the neighbouring countries. These eight states complement each other. They have evolved from one. These states have evolved one by one over a long time frame. These states have suffered unrest for quite long time.
6. Each state has several tribes residing in different areas. Each of these tribes have their own type of clothing, jewelleries, arts, crafts, languages, festivals through which they can be easily identified.
7. They have festivals every month. They celebrate everything. They celebrate every season. They have celebratory dances & several rituals on different occasions
8. They also follow caste hierarchy. Higher status of a person can be identified from the type of clothing he/ she is wearing & type of jewellery he/ she owns
9. They have different architecture style. We see varieties of houses among different tribes even if they belong to one state. Houses are made of locally available materials & follows a very sustainable approach towards the construction of the houses

9. Conclusion

1. Richest part of India in terms of Culture, Art, Crafts & Architecture is North Eastern region
2. We all are but unaware & not much familiar with it. Due to lot of unrest in few regions there we choose to remain away from it. We need to provide integral safety in these regions.
3. Cultural diversity has also brought diversity in languages. These has led to communication barrier. We need to break these barriers. There must be centre where we could study the sociology of tribes in North East India
4. We need to promote tourism in these regions so that these North Eastern states becomes an integral part of India. These regions have very exciting geography. They can act as good tourist spots.
5. Tribal houses can be converted as guest houses to experience tribal lives. These will also increase more interaction with these tribes. We will know more about them & their lifestyles
6. We need to provide these with a platform, where they can perform & celebrate their Arts & Cultures.
7. Culture & Architecture are heritage of any country. They are precious gems. They need to be studied, understood & promoted because sociological studies act as a base for several further studies

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