



Indigenous Salt Production among the Nocte and Tutsa Tribes of Tirap District, Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract: The salt well or salt deposit was one of the most important natural resources found abundantly in Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh. The black salt was one of the most precious and scarce commodities in the medieval and colonial period in the history of North East India. It was once regarded as a kind of black gold that brought the attention of the outsiders like the Ahoms, Sonowal-Kacharis, Bodo-Kacharis, Rabhas, Makum and other neighboring tribes. This black salt was locally produced by the Noctes and Tutsas of Tirap district. It has played a significant role in socio-cultural, political and economic development of the tribes in the region. In fact, the production of black salt was an important economic activity and livelihood of the Noctes and Tutsas at one point of time. In this paper, the authors intend to unearth the indigenous knowledge of salt production among the Noctes and Tutsas of Tirap District, Arunachal Pradesh. The paper has four parts – the first part focuses on the myth about origin of salt, second the traditional process of salt preparation, third the taboos associated with it and fourth the significance and relevance of the black salt.

Keywords: Indigenous, salt, black salt, myth, taboos, mediaeval and colonial period, trade, Tutsa, Nocte

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