



INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University



MAHIS -507

History of Arunachal Pradesh (Early times-1972 AD) - II

MA HISTORY
4th Semester

Rajiv Gandhi University

www.ide.rgu.ac.in

**HISTORY OF ARUNACHAL
PRADESH
(EARLY TIMES-1972 AD)-II**

MA [History]

Fourth Semester

MAHIS – 507

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY
Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

BOARD OF STUDIES	
1. Prof. SK Singh Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Chairman
2. Prof.B. Tripathy Department of History Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Member
3. Prof. S. Dutta (Retd.) Ward No. 2, Bairagimath, PO: Dibrugarh-786003 Assam	Member
4. Prof. (Mrs.) S. Hilaly Department of History Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Member
5. Prof.AshanRiddi Director, IDE Rajiv Gandhi University	Member Secretary

Authors

Dr. Amrender Kumar Thakur,

Revised Edition 2021

All rights reserved. No part of this publication which is material protected by this copyright notice maybe reproduced or transmitted or utilized or stored in any form or by any means now known or hereinafter Invented, electronic, digital or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the Publisher.

"Information contained in this book has been published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. and has been obtained by its Authors from sources believed to be reliable and are correct to the best of their knowledge. However, IDE—Rajiv Gandhi University, the publishers and Its Authors shall be in no event be liable for any errors, omissions or damages arising out of use of this information and specifically disclaim any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for any particular use"



Vikas®¹ is the registered trademark of Vikas® Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

VIKAS® PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD¹

E-23, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education, Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14. The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:

(1) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counseling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counseling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counseling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University. The Counseling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counseling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

SYLLABUS
History of Arunachal Pradesh- 1972 AD-II

UNIT I: MCMAHON LINE

- a) Factors- Shimla Conference
- b) Border Controversy
- c) Problems after 1947

UNIT II: ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH COLONIAL PERIOD

- a) Demarcation of NEFT
- b) Govt. of India Act 1919
- c) Govt. of India Act 1935
- d) Regulations of 1945

UNIT III: ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH: AFTER INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

- a) Birth of NEFA
- b) Nehru-Elwin Policy
- c) Panchayati Raj
- d) Attainment of Union Territory

UNIT IV: Traditional Economy

- a) Agriculture and Supplementary Activities
- b) Exchange Forms and Routes
- c) Production of Utilitarian Items
- d) Pattern of Land Ownership
- e) Impact of the British Rule

UNIT V: TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND SOCIETY

- a) Indigenous Faiths
- b) Buddhism
 - 1. Mahayana
 - 2. Theraveda
- c) Social Change: Factors

INTRODUCTION

On 15th August, 1947, when India became an independent nation, North East Frontier Agency commonly known as NEFA became an integral part of the Union of India. It was administrated by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Governor of Assam acting as agent to the President of India. The administrative head was the advisor to the governor

In 1972, the NEFA became a Union Territory when Indira Gandhi was the prime minister and acquired the name of Arunachal Pradesh. After three years, in 1975, it acquired a legislature. And finally, on 20th February 1987 statehood was conferred on Arunachal Pradesh when Rajiv Gandhi was the prime minister and it became the 25th state of the Union of India.

Area-wise, Arunachal Pradesh is the largest state of the North-East region of India. It forms a complex hill system of Shivalik and Himalayan origin and is criss- crossed by numerous rivers and streams. The state shares a total of 1630 kms of international boundary with neighbouring countries; 1030 kms with China, 160 kms with Bhutan and 440 kms with Burma (Myanmar). The McMahon line defines the international boundary between India and China. Administratively, the state is divided into fifteen districts. The capital is Itanagar in Papum Pare district. Itanagar is named after Ita Fort meaning fort of bricks, built in 14th century AD.

This book is divided into five units:

Unit 1: Describes the significance of the McMahon Line.

Unit 2: Discusses the administrative growth that took place during the colonial period.

Unit 3: Discusses administrative growth that took place in Arunachal Pradesh after independence.

Unit 4: Familiarizes you with their traditional economy.

Unit 5: Covers traditional religion and society.

This book-History of Arunachal Pradesh (Early Times-1972 AD)-has been designed keeping in mind the mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Unit Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to- understand manner, and is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary, Key Terms and Activity further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

UNIT 1 McMAHON LINE

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Factors and Events Leading to recognition of the McMahon Line
 - 2.1 The Inner Line Regulation of 1873
 - 2.2 The Outer Line
 - 2.3 The Simla Conference (1913)
- 3 Border Controversy
- 4 Problems After 1947
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

The British authorities exploited the opportunity to settle the Indo-Tibetan boundary on the north. Enough work had already been done after the Abor Expedition of 1911 and the various surveys and explorations, which had been summarized in a 'confidential note' by the Chief of General Staff in June, 1912. The military authorities had suggested that the proposed boundary line should follow some prominent geographical features, preferably the main watershed of the mountain system; and the border thus demarcated should be easily approachable. The frontier, as suggested in the notes, was divided according to the tribes and river basin into Khamti Long, Mishmi, Abor and Miri or Subansiri sections.

The Tibetans expected that the British would help them defend their territory and secure their rightful place. The Chinese government, however, was not at all satisfied with the boundary agreement and disapproved the action taken by her representatives. She completely disapproved the action of these representatives. China wanted the whole of Tibet as an integral part of it. Sir Henry McMahon, foreign secretary of the British-run Government of India, informed the Peking government on 23 June, 1914, that if by the end of June, China refused to rectify the agreement, the British government would begin agreement with the Tibetan government and China would lose all the benefits of the Simla Conference.

China was willing to sign the agreement without the boundary issue being mentioned but the British government could not allow it since, as mentioned earlier, the settlement of the boundary issue was one of her main motives in the Simla Conference. China thus being adamant, India and Tibet signed the Convention with minor modifications on 3 July, 1914. Commenting on the boundary line along the whole of the North-East Frontier, that became famous as the McMahon Line, McMahon pointed out: 'The frontier work of the past three years and the negotiations of Tibet Conference at Simla have served to make clear the mutual rights and responsibilities of Great Britain, China and Tibet and it may be hoped that the North East Frontier will now be removed from the anxiety which beset the Indian government during the last few years.'

The McMahon Line runs over a distance of 820 miles or 1320 kms of which 640 miles (998 kms) is between India and Tibet from the tri-junction of Bhutan, Tibet and Kameng district of present day Arunachal Pradesh, through the crest of the Himalayas to the Diphuk Pass to northwest Burma where India, Burma and Tibet meet. Commencing from a point to the east of Bhutan at $92^{\circ}40''$ E, $27^{\circ}48''$ N, it crosses the Namjang River and follows the eastern range of the Great Himalayas, then proceeds east and northeast and crosses the Subansiri River and then the Tsari River just south of Migyitun. From this point, it takes a northeastern direction, crossing the Tunga Pass, continues eastward again, crosses the Siang River and ascends the watershed between Rangta Chu in Tibet and Dihang (Siang) and its tributaries in India. Thereafter, it runs south to a point, just below latitude $28^{\circ}30''$ and just west of longitude $96^{\circ}30''$, crosses Lohit a few miles to the north of Kabas and joins the tri-junction of Indian, Burmese and Tibetan boundaries near the Diphuk or Talik Pass.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the incidents that led to the recognition of the McMahon line
- Describe the border controversy emphasizing on the Inner Line, Outer Line and the McMahon Line
- Explain the Chinese interests in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh thus leading to problems after 1947

2 FACTORS AND EVENTS LEADING TO RECOGNITION OF THE McMAHON LINE

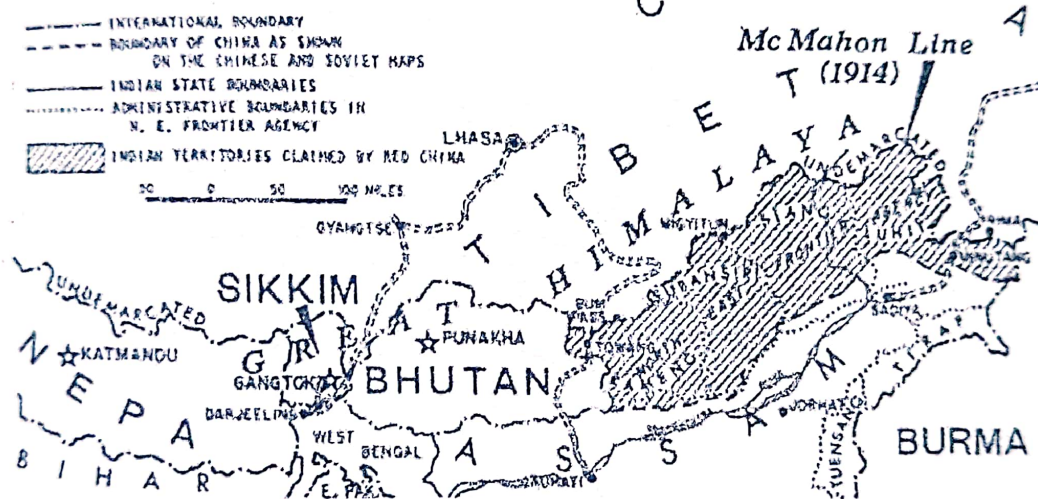
Colonialism, as we are aware, was not just a narrative of military conquest but manifests itself in a variety of ways, which according to Bernard Cohn lay in the 'production of the forms of knowledge'. Mapping has been one of the key exercises in the 'production of knowledge' in colonial India. In the 1780s, James Renell, the Surveyor-General of Bengal, produced maps using geographical information compiled during military incursions and was later instrumental in the cartographic 'framing' of India as a sub-continental territory. What is notable is that just like different parts of India came under British rule through various instruments of either direct control or indirect control, marking territoriality immediately followed it. In the mountainous and hilly regions of Northeast India we find that the modalities of mapping took different trajectories.

The main aim of the British government in Assam, as in other parts of India and the world, was promotion of their imperialistic designs and profit maximization out of the rule. In order to achieve this, certain rules and regulations were made operational. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh some of these rules and regulations left a deep mark on the history of the state in the politico-administrative as well as economic, social and cultural fields.

The new rulers of Assam, the British, however, faced a unique problem in this area due to the absence of a political boundary between the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam on the one hand and the boundaries among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh on the other. It was so because the Ahom kings neither possessed any documentary records describing frontiers nor were the boundaries fixed and mutually accepted. After

the establishment of British rule in Assam and, especially with the capital investments in the plantation economy and other areas, these boundaries needed to be settled permanently. Lt. Col. Graham had made a boundary line in some areas but the question of 'effective jurisdiction' of the British government could not be decided. This problem of 'jurisdiction' did not pose any serious problem for some time but the discovery of the tea-plant in Assam and the discovery of coal, oil and other precious minerals changed the entire picture and Assam began to attract British capital investment. Rubber, wood and ivory from the hills also brought prosperity. To promote the economic interests of the Empire, it was necessary for peace to be maintained. To achieve the same strict administrative control over the province as well as on the borders was to be established. Most of the troubles on the borders of Assam were caused due to the unrestricted and undefined intercourse between the tribesmen and the people of the plains who frequently visited each other's area mostly for commerce. Hill people also had some other political rights and they visited plains to collect the same (*posa*). Many times, the disputes arising out of the intercourse took very serious dimensions often leading to violence.

THE Mc MAHON LINE



It was not only the Company and the Company officials who were engaged in trade in Assam and neighbouring areas but many private European traders also came to this region and started private trade. The economic profitability of Assam and the policies of the British Government certainly attracted them. These private traders did not spare the hills and began exploiting them. The independent nature of most of the hill tribes and the frequent visits of these European traders led to suspicion in the minds of the tribal and on many occasions the Europeans were murdered in the hills. This was true not only in the case of Arunachal but also with all the hill states bordering Assam.

The establishment and development of the tea industry in Assam added fresh dimensions to the British relations with the tribal. In some cases the tea gardens were intended to be established on the hills. This required the occupation of the traditional tribal areas. The extension of the tea gardens and the cutting down of trees for tea- chests and construction of houses and sheds were resisted by the tribal. The aspects of land and labour (abolition of slavery) have been discussed in detail in the previous unit. The direct participation of tribes in the foothill markets with the resources of the hills also adversely affected the British interests. Thus, it was required to regulate the commercial relations of the tribal with the outsiders – both officials and non-officials – on the boundary of Assam valley and bring the same under the ambit of the Colonial control. All these factors compelled the British to pass firstly the Inner Line Regulation.

2.1 The Inner Line Regulation of 1873

Regulation I of 1873, called 'Regulation for the Peace and Good Government of Certain Districts on the Eastern Frontier' came into operation on 1 November, 1873. This became popular as the Inner Line Regulation because of the name given to the line of control by the author of the Act, Sir Arthur Hobhouse, a member of the Viceroy's Council. This regulation is also called 'The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation I of 1873.' The promulgation and basic provisions of the Inner Line will be discussed in the next unit. It is important, however, to mention that the Inner Line which was finally drawn up in Lakhimpur was to take the course of the Buri Dihing in the South eastern sector, as it was a good natural boundary though it kept the coal fields of Tirap and Nandang outside the Inner Line. The tea gardens of Namsang, Hukanjuri and Taurack, however, were brought within the Inner Line after an agreement with the Namsangia chief. The tea gardens of Joyhing and Hamnoti were also brought within the Inner Line. This Inner Line starting from Desang was to go along Desang River, Namsang River, Boori Dihing, Kherampani, Noa Dihing and upto river Brahmaputra. From the north of Brahmaputra, starting from the boundary of Darrang, it was to go along Rajgarh Ali, Dihing, Rangnadi, Joyhing tea garden, the Sisi River upto the Dimu guard. From there it was to go to the Puba guard, Lalimukh, Debongmukh upto Debong and Dikrang guard. It terminated on Noa Dihing Mukh in the east.

The Line for the Darrang District was drawn up with comparatively less difficulty, since much of the work was finished earlier and the boundary was settled by the Boundary Commissioner, Col. Graham in 1873. It was based on the revenue surveys of 1872-73 and 1874-75 and was notified on 8 March, 1876. The line started from the eastern boundary of Kamrup District on Bor Nadi, followed the southern boundaries of Bhutan in the eastern direction and of the hills of Akas and Nyishis. Then it ran in a south-easterly direction upto Bohum River and from there to Daflagarh till Mare Sessa River which was the north-western extremity of the Inner Line of Lakhimpur District.

Implications of the regulation and Arunachal Pradesh

In spatial terms the demarcation of this southern Inner Line was to be in accordance with the plan of Colonel Graham and Colonel Macdonald formulated on the Bhutan frontier in the early nineteenth century. Interestingly, this demarcation was not to be a 'boundary line' but marked the end of civil jurisdiction beyond which the British subjects were excluded. The natural contours of the landscape or in its absence the remnant of a road, path or river was to be followed. Wherever the survey operations had been completed the Line was to be drawn according to the map. Areas lying outside a mapped region were to be surveyed immediately.

It was here that William Lambton's new mode of mapping of triangulation, or trigonometrical survey introduced in the 1820s, and expanded by his successor George Everest into the 'Great Trigonometrical Survey' in the 1840s, was brought into play. This survey sought to connect the southern tip of the peninsula to the foothills of the Himalayas. The production of a map was not just for political and military purposes but 'also a way of constructing India as a domain of British cultural and political sovereignty'. As concrete factual information was gathered, it helped to do away with the 'uncertainties' of both cultural and physical difference making India more comprehensible. Colonial cartography therefore not only created new landscapes, but continuously denied the early spatial configurations.

A natural corollary of insistence in the document of the mapping exercise is a part of this great project to be taken up in Arunachal Pradesh. In the regulation there is a vague reference to the existence of an 'outer line' within which their loose jurisdiction exists. The Trigonometrical Survey was sent in as an imperative of having a defined knowledge of the territory between the Inner and Outer Line. Resistance from the communities in the northern frontier of Assam led to an incomplete mapping of the area, rendering truncated knowledge of the space. Attempts of missionaries to seek alternate access into China through Tibet were abandoned following the murder of a French Missionary. In 1854, Father M. Krick and his associate were murdered as they entered Mishmi hills.

This nuanced form of political control over the northern and eastern frontier of Assam in terms of 'loose political control' was marked by an absence of direct annexation. Though in the Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills where the demarcation of the Inner Line too occurred, the policy of 'indirect control' of the early nineteenth century was replaced by a 'forward policy' in the 1880s and 1890s, respectively. The exercise of mapping did crucially impinge upon the levels of definition of the territory and the policies thereupon. The Inner Line therefore remained more of a jurisdictional definition rather than a fixed boundary.

In the case of Lakhimpur, it was construed unnecessary to lay down a definite boundary of the British civil jurisdiction. It was to follow the natural contours of the landform where Rajgarh Ali (a well-defined embankment along the foot of the hills) formed an important landmark. Despite the insistence on following the pattern of the Bhutan boundary which clearly defined the hills and the plains, the Inner Line in Lakhimpur within British territory did not follow a well-defined boundary between hills and plains. Here it was to be defined by references to 'geographical features and habitats of particular tribes'. Towards Sibsagar, however, it was decided to clearly lay down a line between civil and political jurisdiction as soon as the regulation was put in place.

In 1895, a proposal was mooted that Rajgarh Ali between the rivers Dikrang and Subansiri were uninhabited by tribes and that portion of the Ali had been washed away by the Ranganadi; hence, it was proposed to push the Inner Line northwards. This was to accommodate the extension of the Dejoo garden invoking Section 2 of Regulation V of 1873 under which the powers of the Lt. Governor to alter the line from time to time was delegated to the Chief Commissioner. The proposal was notified to alter the jurisdiction in 1898. Along another section of the Inner Line in Lakhimpur district a precise mapping led to the proposal for adopting a line further north of the river Tirap and Dirak. These modifications were made to accommodate the demands of the planters in the neighbourhood and also enable the Assam railways and Trading Company to secure its timber, mining and petroleum leases outside the line.

The fluidity of the demarcations as permitted in the regulation allowed the 'government to prescribe, and from time to time alter by notification, a line to be called the Inner Line and to prohibit any subject living outside the area from living or moving'. This fluidity of the demarcation along various sectors in the northern and eastern frontier of present day Arunachal Pradesh helped to extend control over resources, particularly forests in the schema of colonial forestry. A conspicuous projection of the tours taken up by the first political officer Needham from 1881 and by Noel Williamson were 'not just to cultivate friendly relationship with the tribes in the tract within the Inner and Outer Lines'. In fact they were accompanied by a Surveyor for mapping the territory travelled as well as a Forest Officer to 'inspect the forest where timber is now being cut and advise us upon them'.

The flexible frontier got transformed into a fixed boundary only in 1914 when the Northeast Frontier Tracts (henceforth as NEFT) got demarcated into two sections. The sections were initially named as Central and Eastern, and Western Sections by two distinct notifications. In 1919, the Western Section was renamed into the 'Balipara Frontier Tract' and the Central and Eastern Sections into 'Sadiya Frontier Tract'. The mapping exercise which followed the Miri Mission, Mishmi Mission and Aka Promenade did create a sense of certainty about the territory between the 'Inner Line' and the 'Outer Line'.

In the aftermath of Government of India Act correspondences of the colonial government reveal the necessity of demarcating a well-defined boundary between the Balipara Frontier and North Lakhimpur Subdivision was envisaged including transfer of 32 square miles of a section of the frontier to the plains section. It is interesting to note that in the early years of colonial contact the jurisdiction was largely defined by Rajgarh Ali. This was based on the report's that there were no 'hill villages within a day's march of the plains' and hence the pushing back of Rajgarh Ali would not result in raids of the hill tribes. In the fringes of the Inner Line a number of 'forest reserves' had been created and the earlier ill-defined boundary was construed as problematic and hence the southern limits of the reserves would define 'new boundary'. As fixed territoriality grew after 1935 the contours of the boundary were decided by the extent of the state-controlled forests that infringed on to large chunks of the foothills. The southern limit of the Balipara Frontier tract was marked by Kalingduar Reserve, Rowta Reserve, Behali Reserve and Gohpur Reserve.

Analysis of the Inner Line Regulation

The Inner Line Regulation was the outcome of lengthy correspondence between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal on the subject of Frontier policy. Alexander Mackenzie in his book *The North East Frontier of India* provides some details of the same. The motives behind the extension of the Regulation into Darrang and Lakhimpur frontier were not so much political as economic and commercial and they can be summed up as follows:

- (a) To regulate the trade in Indian rubber between the hills and the British traders;
- (b) To regulate the transfer of lands in these areas; and
- (c) To control the extension as well as to protect the tea plantations in the foothills.

The implicit policy of noninterference into the affairs of the hill tribes was thus made official and the act sought to keep outside the British boundary all tracts over which 'semi-savage tribes wandered or in which they lived.'

The British government thus specified the area upto which it would exercise its authority and uphold law and order. It would decline any responsibility beyond that and the tribes living there would be left to themselves. The Inner Line further imposes restrictions on the movement of the people from outside and ascertained that their isolation maintained for it suited the economic and commercial interests of the Empire.

It may be pointed out here that the Inner Line Regulation did not impose any restriction on the movement of the tribal into the plains, they were allowed to fish, hunt and trade on both sides of the Line. The British rather organized fairs on the border villages of the administered areas and encouraged the hill men to come to these fairs with their forest products for exchange. This Inner Line was not a static line for all times and purpose. It was rather a flexible and elastic demarcation that could be altered so as to include any area when it suited the British purpose.

As far as the positive aspects of the Inner Line are concerned, there cannot be any doubt that this Regulation was a well-thought-of measure and was not objected to by either the tribal or the plains' people. Its efficiency and effectiveness can be judged from the very fact that it has remained in existence for the last 140 years without any alternations worth mentioning. From the ethnic point of view, this Inner Line greatly helped in the preservation of tribal culture. The policy of Verrier Elwin also helped in the continuance of their traditional institutions.

However, the Inner Line Regulation saw to it that the economic relations between the outside world and the tribal would remain only one-sided. That is to say, whereas the goods of the tribal could be sold in the outside markets and they could also purchase goods from the plains, the real profit was earned by the British people. No doubt some surplus money was generated in the tribal economy, but the British always induced the tribal to spend it on useless and sometimes even harmful products like opium. There were no new openings for the investment of this surplus money for economic growth. V Elwin has pointed out that in one year at the trade fair at Sadiya, the value of the opium sold to the tribal of the hills amounted to as much as Rs. 30,300. The Marwari people regularly traded opium for local products of hill men. Further, this Inner Line Regulation accelerated the process of economic drain from the hills. The natural growth of commerce was checked and the hill economy became tributary to the imperial economy. The grand British designs of developing trade with Tibet and China through Arunachal Pradesh could never materialize and the pre-colonial economy began to disintegrate.

Economic aspect aside, the Inner Line saw to it that the tribal remained in primitive conditions and did not allow any social, economic or administrative developments in the region. It served as the hinterland to the colonial economy. The process of modernization was postponed, with the result that till very recently, except for the district headquarters, the people of the state lived as they had been doing for centuries. The process of bringing modern institutions and elements of civilization was thus deliberately delayed by the imposition of this Inner Line. Since no outsider was allowed to cross the Inner Line and settle in the hills and as no effort was undertaken by the government, education could not be spread to the hills which proved to be a great obstacle in the path of progress. As early as 1886, Col. Hopkinson had clearly stated to the government that the British Government had undertaken an obligation to administer and civilize the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh after the annexation of Assam, but the issue was scrupulously avoided as it was to prove very expensive without any economic profit.

6.2.2 The Outer Line

There seems to be a lot of confusion and misunderstanding with regard to the meaning of the Outer Line. Unlike the Inner Line Regulation, we do not get any Regulation that would precisely define the Outer Line, nor do we know with certainty the origin of this term. The detailed discussion on 'Resistance Movement' of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh against colonial penetration in the previous unit clearly demonstrates that the British were unable to occupy the hills. Geographically difficult, economically unprofitable, futility of the military expeditions in the scattered settlement pattern of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and strong and unique defence mechanism of the village and the houses of the chiefs necessitated the British to search for an alternative policy in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh. It was also difficult because of the fact that in the event of direct possession of these lands the British would carry their international

border to that of the Chinese. They had no desire of doing it since it could lead to jeopardizing their investment in Assam.

Despite these problems, the Colonial authorities never wanted to keep themselves away from the hills of Arunachal Pradesh because of the economic prospects in the hills due to forests and other resources. There was also a bright and broad prospect of frontier and trans-Himalayan trans-border trade with Tibet and Central Asia. Therefore, the British wanted to exercise indirect control over these areas and their natural resources. Hence, the originally undefined and ambiguous territory was to be kept with them through some line, even imaginary. It was this imaginary line that became known as the Outer Line.

We have seen in detail the Inner Line as it was drawn after the Regulation of 1873. This Inner Line was the boundary of the ordinary and political jurisdiction of the district officers. The Outer Line was the originally accepted boundary of Assam.

Analysis of the Outer Line

The Outer Line, to some extent like the Inner Line, was a clever administrative tool that could absolve the British of any responsibility while at the same time granting them all the rights and privileges. Lord Hardinge summed up the whole issue of the Outer Line in 1910:

‘We only now claim suzerainty upto the foot of the hills. We have an Inner Line and an Outer Line. Upto the Inner Line we administer in the ordinary way. Between the Inner Line and Outer Line we only administer politically. That is our political officers exercise very loose jurisdiction, and to prevent troubles with the frontier tribes, passes are required for our subjects who want to cross the Inner Line. The country between the two lines is very sparsely inhabited and is mostly dense jungle.’

In the absence of any well-defined international border, this line served as the exterior extent of the British Indian Empire. This Outer Line was not a fixed line and was deliberately undefined for at least two reasons:

- (i) The British could extend the Outer Line upto any limit as and when necessary so as to bring any tract of territory within the jurisdiction of their officers.
- (ii) The undefined Outer Line would also make the task of extending the Inner Line to any extent into the hills to suit their colonial interests.

It must be made very clear here that the Inner Line was the jurisdictional and not the territorial limit of the British. As was pointed out by the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur, Godfrey, ‘The Chief Commissionership of Assam extends upto the borders of China and Tibet and Burma.’

Needless to say again, between the Inner Line and the Outer Line the British only administered in theory. Their political officers exercised very loose jurisdiction over these sparsely populated regions, and even this rested sometimes upon force. The line of executive actions of the British officers in these areas was bound to be ill-defined in the absence of a specific limit of the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The relations of the British Government with the tribes of the hills clearly bring out the reality of the whole situation. On many occasions the British pursued the Aka, Nyishis, Adi, Mishmi, Khampati and Singpho tribes as and when necessary. On different occasions, British troops were also sent beyond the Outer Line and the government collected fines, arrested criminals, and so on; and was always free to

deal with the tribal. Their officers conducted extensive tours and survey teams attempted to explore and map the area.

The issue of the Outer Line became more alive after the Chinese activities increased on the other side of the border after 1907. As early as 1908, it had been reported that there had been some activities of the Chinese beyond the Abor Hills. Noel Williamson had also reported the concentration of Chinese in Rima in the same year. Then a fresh Chinese force appeared beyond the Mishmi Hills in 1910. On the earlier occasions, the government had remained a passive spectator to the situation in the tribal hills and was not willing to interfere there, but now the Chinese interest in the hills rather compelled the British to give a serious thought to the problem. The reason for this was very simple. If the Chinese could bring the tribal hills under their influence, the plains of Assam would become vulnerable to the Chinese attack threatening the heavy British investment in the tea-gardens, oil-fields and so on. Therefore, it was advisable to prevent the Chinese from influencing and extending their control over the hills. The unspecified and undemarcated international frontiers were also threatening to be a point of dispute between the British and the Chinese.

The situation was, however, saved due to the internal troubles in China, i.e. the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Tibet declared her independence and the issue of the Outer Line was once again buried under the files. Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India was strictly opposed to running the risks or spending money on attempts to create a strategic frontier beyond the Outer Line. Lord Minto also held the views that the best means of safeguarding the frontier from the Chinese aggression would be to push forward the Outer Line so as to obtain, 'a good strategic boundary agreements being taken at the same from the tribes within and beyond the line binding them to have no relation with foreign power, other than the British.' Thus, till the demarcation of the McMahon Line in 1914, the British maintained the 'loose' political jurisdiction over the tribal hills with the help of the 'Outer Line', though it was indefinite and undefined. This Line served the British aims very well but kept the tribal in darkness and cut away from the rest of the world as was done by the Inner Line.

5.2.3 The Simla Conference (1913)

The Tripartite Conference, better known as the Simla Conference, was formally opened on 6 October, 1913 at the summer capital of British India, under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Foreign Secretary, Government of India. McMahon had been the spirit in the formation of the North East Frontier policy since he was made Foreign Secretary in 1911. He was assisted by Charles Bell, the Political Officer of Sikkim who had an intimate knowledge of the affairs of Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim. China was represented by Ivan Chen and Lonchen Shatra, and a leading minister of Dalai Lama represented Tibet.

At the conference, the Tibetan sought acknowledgment of its independence, repudiation of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, and the revision of the trade regulations. They wanted to have a frontier with China which would include all Tibetan people. The Chinese, on the other hand, wanted that their sovereignty over Tibet should be recognized and their right to control foreign and military affairs of the country should be accepted. The British who were more interested in the Indo-Tibetan border rather than in the internal problems of Tibet wanted to restore the position as it existed prior to 1904 so as to ensure a stable government free from the outside influence but having closer ties with Tibet. The discussions continued for about six months

both in Simla and in Delhi, and finally on 27 April, 1914 a Convention was signed under which Tibet was divided into two zones viz., 'Outer Tibet' and 'Inner Tibet'. Chinese suzerainty over the whole of Tibet was recognized; Outer Tibet was declared as autonomous and the Chinese agreed to abstain from any interference in its administration; in place of the earlier Trade Regulations the Convention agreed to a fresh treaty to govern commercial relations between India and Outer Tibet.

Great Britain gained the most from the Simla Conference and the agreement signed with Tibet. Her policy of making Tibet a 'buffer' between India and China was immensely successful. For the first time a proper frontier was defined and all the confusion prevailing due to the ill-defined 'Outer Line' was over. However, the demarcation of the frontier did not, in any case, change the position of the British vis-a-vis the tribal to any remarkable degree. McMahon himself commented that the acceptance of a clearly defined frontier by Tibet would enable the Assam government to leave the tribes to themselves, intervening as little as possible in their internal affairs.

Further, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, and the departure of Henry McMahon to Egypt made the whole issue of northeast India a remote concern to the authorities. The government was also not in a mood to publish the text of Simla Conference as long as there remained any hope of the final settlement of the Tibetan issue by negotiations with the Chinese. It was only in 1924 that a summary of the Simla Conference and the Boundary Agreement was published by Charles Bell in his book *Tibet, Past and Present* (Clarendon Press, London, 1928). Robert Reid also informs about the same in his book *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, 1883-1941* (New Delhi, 1983, reproduced). P. K. Nayak in his article 'British Strategy and McMahon Line: Arunachal A Means' (*The Proceedings of Indian History Congress*) provides us with the details of the problem. M. L. Bose's *History of Arunachal Pradesh* (Concept, New Delhi, 1997) based mainly on the primary sources and D. Pandey's *History of Arunachal Pradesh (Earliest Times to 1972 A.D.)*, a textbook, also is very useful to study the problem of drawing of lines and the involvement of other neighbouring powers.

The overall concern of the British government was to secure the frontier with China and to keep the tribal area of Arunachal as a buffer. Syed Ali Imran, the only Indian member of the Viceroy's Council was not very happy with this policy and pointed out: 'Is it (McMahon Line) intended to keep the wild tribes as buffer between the expansion of China and ourselves? If that be so, it entails our keeping them neither down in their present unhappy and barbarous condition for all time to come – for we will not govern them nor will we allow others to do so'. The McMahon Line remained only on the files of the government of India for many years to come. In 1935, Olaf Coroe, Deputy Secretary in New Delhi, insisted that the boundary dispute in the northeast should be settled and, therefore, in 1937, the Survey of India authenticated the McMahon Line as the Northeast boundary of India.

As we have seen earlier, after the British annexation of Assam in 1826 till very late, the extent of the territories of Assam and the hills was not known definitely. We have also noticed that some sort of agreement had been arrived at between the hill tribes and the British wherein the latter had agreed to pay Posa to the former, but again the question of British jurisdiction was never settled. The Inner Line Regulation also did not specify the exact relations of the British with the tribal and nor did it solve the issue regarding jurisdiction. Broadly speaking, British relations with the hill tribes were based on the fulfillment of the economic interests of the Empire, which had

resulted in an undefined and flexible frontier policy. It had been suggested by some officials that after the annexation of Assam the government had undertaken a moral obligation to administer and civilize the hill tribes but the government always avoided this responsibility.

The British not only avoided any direct administration over the hills, they also did not bother to specify the 'external boundary' of their rule in this part of India. In the form of the Outer Lines the external limit of their rule was defined very vaguely. However, the issue of the demarcation of the northern boundary to the extent of the British Empire would not be kept pending after the increasing Chinese influence in the hills, either on the other side of the Outer Line or in NEFA.

6.3 BORDER CONTROVERSY

The 'Inner Line,' which finds its echo to be the day-to-day transactions with the outside world in three states of Northeast India, in simple terms is understood as a 'boundary' set up during the colonial period. It is perceived to be for safeguarding the interests of the indigenous people against onslaught of the people from the plains. This is an example of how the space within the 'inner line' and outside it in addition to the political imperatives has been socially constructed on either direction of the mountains and plains. In the essence of Henry Lefebvre's contention, 'social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space'. What is important is that this spatial practice which had been initiated by the colonial state in this post-colonial era becomes a tool for defining and redefining the 'Inner space' of the federated territorial units within the larger nation state. This in turn is construed as a tool for enabling the sustenance of the 'unique' spatial entity reiterating Lefebvre's contention that 'every society produces a space, which can be seen and understood as its own space'.

This Regulation declared to be 'for political security' defined an 'Inner Line' that was to be applied in the five districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills, Cachar and Chittagong Hills. In the correspondences between the Government of Bengal and Government of India the object of Inner line was stated to be:

... to keep outside the Inner Line all tracts over which the semi-savage tribes wander, or where they live, and in which political complications may arise. If any tea gardens fall outside the line the Commissioner should consider how they should be treated; but the Lieutenant Governor would wish to stretch a point in favour of any old-established frontier gardens and bring them inside the line if we can.

The second stated objective was the desire to 'exert over the dealings between the traders and others from our settled districts and the people in the wild tracts beyond'. A crucial dimension in this trade transaction was to define the jurisdictional control over 'trade in rubber collected within and that collected without, the limit of British jurisdiction'. The right to collect and export India rubber within the forests of Cachar and Assam had been till then leased out by the government put up for auction annually. While certain leased areas fell under the jurisdiction of the directly annexed territory, rubber was categorized as 'foreign' from areas outside the ordinary jurisdiction of the British civil and revenue jurisdiction. The concern for the revenue accrued from these transactions to the British coffer was crucial in defining the jurisdiction. The regulation sought to render it 'unlawful for any British subject to

acquire land or in the produce of the lands or in any produce beyond any line defined under Section 2 of the regulation'. Entry into these domains beyond the 'line' was to be with written permission from officers authorized by the government. The Inner Line was extended to all the hills except for the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills and Mikir Hills.

The Boundary

The major issue in demarcating the boundary between Tibet and India was regarding the Tawang Monastery. Charles Bell pointed out that Tawang Monastery was clearly Tibetan, but due to strategic reasons 'we should insist in getting the Tawang area south of the red line and the adjoining Bhutan though this seems undoubtedly Tibetan territory, as otherwise Tibet and Assam will adjoin each other and, if Tibet should again under Chinese control, it would be a dangerous position for us.' The Tibetan minister raised objections to the inclusion of Tawang in the British territory and advocated that in some places the Abors, Miris and Mishmis (Lopas or Lobas) paid taxes to the Tibetan government. However, force of circumstances compelled the Tibetan government to surrender Tawang and the private rights and privileges which the monastery had enjoyed in the past.

The hopes and aspiration from which the Simla Conference was organized could not bring the fruitful and long-lasting results. China never accepted this boundary. In their opinion, the Simla Conference was an invalid conference. They held the view that the Simla Conference only discussed the boundary between India and Tibet and not between India and China. The Chinese government even asserted that the Tibetan government had no right to conclude the agreement without the formal approval of Peking. Though these objections of China were overruled by the Indian government, in the years to come China never accepted the boundary drawn there. Secondly, though the Indo-Tibetan boundary was delimited, it could not be demarcated because the terrain through which it ran was mostly covered with snow.

In order to understand the border controversy even after drawing the McMahon Line, the position of Tibet and Bhutan is important to be discussed here in brief. Since the 18th century, Tibet was under the suzerainty of the Chinese Manchu Empire. The Chinese grip over Tibet was further tightened when the Chinese army helped Tibet in repelling the Gorkha invaders in 1791. Thereafter, the entire administrations of Tibet including Dalai Lama were to act according to the dictates of the Chinese agent at Lhasa. Due to the weakening of the Manchu Empire in China the Chinese control over Tibet was, however, becoming weak and by 1905, there was almost vacuum in the north. It was suspected that the Chinese had surrendered their rights to Russia and that the Russian army had reached Lhasa. Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, fully realized that the Russian presence in Tibet would definitely harm the British imperial interests. As was pointed out that, 'we have had, and still have, quite enough trouble owing to Russia being so near as on the North-west Frontier of India... but we can and ought to prevent her getting a position which would inevitably cause unrest along the North-east Frontier.'

To counteract the Russian influence in Tibet, the Younghusband Mission was sent to Tibet in 1904. On 7th Sept, 1904, the Lhasa Convention was signed which laid down that no Tibetan territory was to be given to any foreign power for occupation and no power was to be allowed to interfere in the affairs of Tibet. The impact of Younghusband Mission was not long lasting and in 1906, after the Peking Convention, China got as much right over Tibet as Great Britain. In the Anglo-Russian Convention

that was signed on 31 August, 1907, Britain and Russia agreed to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and to carry out 'no political negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of China.' By the trade agreements of 1908, the activities of the British agents were further restricted in Tibet. The British troops withdrew from the Chumbi Valley in 1908 and the Chinese began to reassert their overlordship over Tibet. By the end of 1909, under the leadership of Chao-Erh-Feng, the Chinese troops entered Tibet. The Chinese at this stage aimed not merely to strengthen their control over Tibet but also to check the British influence along the Indo-Tibetan frontier. By the end of the year 1910, the Chinese were advancing towards Upper Burma and Tibet and plains of Assam. It was suggested by the Chinese High Commissioner for Tibet that the five colours, i.e. China, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, should be blended together. Thus, the Chinese imperial motives were clear from the beginning though they always participated in the dialogue to end the border controversy.

Whereas it was not very easy for the Chinese to influence Nepal and Sikkim, things were rather easier in Bhutan. Blessed with a temperate climate and fertile soil, Bhutan encouraged the Chinese to extend influence there. In fact, in one of the letters written by the Chinese agents at Lhasa, it was as pointed out that the Bhutanese were the subjects of the Emperor of China who was the Lord of Heaven. Bhutan had always maintained its independence and the Deb or King of Bhutan had always repudiated the authority of China over Bhutan. On the other hand, after 1905, a Bhutanese Vakil (lawyer) was stationed at Darjeeling as the channel of communication with the British Indian government. Charles Bell, the Political Officer in charge of the affairs of Sikkim, suggested to the government in 1908 that a new treaty should be concluded with Bhutan and her foreign relations should be controlled by the Government of India. As he suggested, 'This will enable us (British) to keep the Chinese agents, Chinese troops and the Chinese influence generally out of the country.' Lord Minto the Viceroy was also convinced that the Chinese influence in Bhutan would raise complications and, therefore, accepted the proposal of Charles Bell.

Subsequently, a treaty was signed with the Raja of Bhutan on 8 January, 1910, whereby the Bhutan government agreed to be guided by the British advice in foreign relations and the British undertook not to interfere in the internal affairs of Bhutan. Thus, through this treaty the British were able to put a check to the Chinese danger for the time being but the events in Tibet and Bhutan definitely compelled the British to give a serious thought to the issue of the boundary.

The Chinese appearance in Arunachal Pradesh

We have seen in detail British relations with the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and also the loose control that the British applied in this area. However, the Chinese were not willing to accept the sovereignty of the British over the tribes of the area, which was considered to be a 'terra incognita' or 'no-man's land'. In a telegram in May, 1910 the authorities in Calcutta were informed that one thousand Chinese soldiers had arrived at Rima, demanding taxes from Tibetan Governor. It was again reported in July, 1910, that the Chinese had established their firm control over Rima and erected a post at three miles off Walong as the southern extremity of their empire. Once again, Charles Bell highlighted the necessity of keeping the Chinese or any other power out of the narrow strip of territory between Tibet and Assam. He suggested the extension of political control over the affairs of the tribal of this area. It was also reported that the Chinese were influencing the Mishmis and were also active in the Adi area.

Various officers who kept a close watch over the situation in this area were of the opinion that in near future China might become a strong military power with the help of Western allies and would try to recover Burma, which she considered as a Chinese province. The Army General Staff also recommended that the first concern of the government should be to obtain such a frontier that would make the Chinese intrusion into very difficult. The memorandum, also suggested the extension of the Government's control over the tribes of these areas and an effective occupation of the valley of Zyu-chu as far as the Chinese outpost near Rima. The memorandum also recommended that the Chinese government should be informed about the Indian frontier which lay across the natural lines of Himalayas, and also suggested that intelligence posts should be established all along the frontier.

The situation in the Northeast caused further alarm when Dalai Lama escaped to India on 25 Nov, 1910 and conveyed that the Chinese would not rest contented with Tibet only and would certainly try to spread their influence across the Himalayas. At about the same time intelligence reports arrived that all trade between the Tibetans and Miju Mishmis had been stopped by the Chinese, thus confirming the fear of Dalai Lama. Sir Lancelot Hare, the Lt. Governor, suggested to the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, that the Mishmis should be immediately taken under the control of the government and that a forward policy should be pursued in the region. No immediate action was, however, taken on these proposals of Hare because the Government of India thought: 'We see no necessity at present for incurring the risk and responsibilities by a forward movement into the tribal territory beyond our control... we would not permit any general increase of activity in this direction nor can we recommend that any sort of promise be given to the tribes that they rely on our support or protection in the event of Chinese or Tibetan aggression.'

In the meanwhile, certain other developments rather compelled the British government to give serious consideration to the boundary problem. The most important was the murder of Noel Williamson who had crossed the Outer Line and had penetrated into the interior of the Adi Hills. This murder raised a storm regarding the hostility of the tribal towards the British and Chinese influence could be sensed behind this. The Abor Expedition was sent to the hills in 1911 to punish the culprits and also to study the situation in the area. Simultaneously, another mission, the Miri Mission was sent to Subansiri area to explore the country between the Dibang River and Bhutan. The results of the surveys and explorations carried out by the Abor Expeditions, the Miri Mission and the Mishmi Mission formed the basis of the recommendations put forward by the Political Officer of the Western Section and the Central and Eastern Sections, G.A. Nevill and W.C.M. Dundas, respectively. All of them were unanimous in their suggestion that the boundary between the two countries should be the water parting of the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri and their tributaries, which were co-terminus with the traditional, customary and geographical boundaries between India and Tibet.

Developments in China and Tibet

In Tibet, in the meantime, there was a strong opposition to the Chinese and in Lhasa the people resisted the Chinese in every way they could. The attitude of the Tibetan National Assembly towards the Chinese was also very hostile. The Dalai Lama, who was in exile in India, tried to seek British and even Russian help against the Chinese; however, this did not happen. In the meantime, revolution broke out in China in 1911 and the Manchu Dynasty was overthrown. The revolution had its immediate effect in Tibet where the Chinese garrison at Lhasa mutinied. The Dalai Lama returned to reassert his authority and declared his independence of China.

On the other hand, the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904, which was concluded after the Younghusband Mission, had become ineffective due to the signing of the Anglo-Chinese Agreement in 1906 and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The disorganized state of affairs in Tibet was beginning to pose a threat to the Indian affairs and the commercial interests of the Empire. The Japanese subjects were in intimate relations with the high authorities in Lhasa and the Russian students were receiving training in the Kumbum monastery on the Tibetan frontier. The collapse of Chinese power could lead to an increased activity on the part of Russia and even Japan whose imperialistic designs were not hidden.

The British were in a dilemma at this stage. They were not in a position to convert Tibet into a British protectorate, as it would mean extending their boundary by some 2000 miles or so, enclosing 50000 square miles of area, in which there were no means of communication and which would also bring her face to face with China and Russia. It would also give Russia a chance to press for the revision of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 which might not suit the imperial interests. On the other hand, Tibet was not in a position to survive as an independent country and was bound to seek the help of some foreign power. There was every fear that Tibet would throw herself into the arms of Russia, and that the British could never tolerate. The third alternative was to allow China to re-establish her control over Tibet but that would lead to intrigues and infiltrations into the British territories and Burma. Therefore, neither China's policy of considering Tibet as a province of China or the proposal of Dalai Lama to extend British control suited the British.

On 17 August, 1912, the British proposed to the new Republican Government of China that some discussions should be held to settle the status of Tibet for all times to come on the basis of the situation which had existed before the Younghusband Mission. The Chinese were also becoming alarmed over the success of the Russians in Mongolia and their ever-increasing greed. They were equally aware of the weakness of their own government and could see no better alternative than a conference to solve the issue of Tibet. They also realized that if they declined, the British would enter into negotiations with Tibet directly and, therefore, agreed that in the proposed negotiations there would also be a representative of Tibet.

4 PROBLEMS AFTER 1947

The issue of the occupation of Tawang remained in confusion despite the expedition of Captain Lightfoot in 1938, to study the situation there. It was not till 1947 that the Indian government became firm over the boundary line. This was reflected in a statement by Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lok Sabha in 1950: 'Our maps show that McMahon Line is our boundary, and that is our boundary, map or no map. The fact remains and we stand by that boundary, and we will not let anybody come across that boundary.'

Though it is beyond the scope of our work, it may be pointed out that the McMahon Line had taken into consideration the military requirements of the area and as such was in reality the root of India's troubles in 1962. The strategic limitations of the McMahon Line were never taken into account. It was pointed out by the Intelligence Chief in the 1960s that, 'the physical difficulties will remain on our side so long as the watershed of the Himalayas remained our boundary'. As we have pointed out earlier, the McMahon Line was designed to serve only the interest of the empire and was not aimed at solving the problems of the frontier for a long term.

ACTIVITY

Research on the Internet and write a report on the current issues concerning the Indo-Tibetan border. You may mention your personal views.

DID YOU KNOW

Two of the major factors leading up to China's eventual conflicts with Indian troops were India's stance on the disputed borders and perceived Indian subversion in Tibet. There was 'a perceived need to punish and end perceived Indian efforts to undermine Chinese control of Tibet, Indian efforts which were perceived as having the objective of restoring the pre-1949 status quo ante of Tibet.' The other was 'a perceived need to punish and end perceived Indian aggression against Chinese territory along the border.' John W. Garver argues that the first perception was incorrect based on the state of the Indian military and polity in the 1960s. It was, nevertheless a major reason for China's going to war. However, he argues the Chinese perception of Indian aggression to be 'substantially accurate.'

The CIA's recently declassified POLO documents reveal contemporary American analysis of Chinese motives during the war. According to this document, 'Chinese apparently were motivated to attack by one primary consideration — their determination to retain the ground on which PLA forces stood in 1962 and to punish the Indians for trying to take that ground.' In general terms, they tried to show the Indians once and for all that China would not acquiesce in a military 'reoccupation' policy. The secondary reasons for the attack, which had made it desirable but not necessary, included a desire:

- To damage Nehru's prestige by exposing Indian weakness
- To expose as traitorous Khrushchev's policy of supporting Nehru against a Communist country.

Another factor which might have affected China's decision for war with India was a perceived need to stop a Soviet-U.S.-India encirclement and isolation of China.

.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Regulation I of 1873, called 'Regulation for the Peace and Good Government of Certain Districts on the Eastern Frontier' came into operation on 1 November, 1873. This became popular as the Inner Line Regulation because of the name given to the line of control by the author of the Act, Sir Arthur Hobhouse, a member of the Viceroy's Council. This regulation is also called 'The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation I of 1873.'
- Various Lines were drawn and several missions and moves were made by the British to safeguard their colonial interests in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

- The Inner Line Regulation was the outcome of lengthy correspondence between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal on the subject of Frontier policy.
- The British though used armed interventions, more or less maintained a peaceful relation with the tribes. The growing Chinese influence and consequently their interest in this area complicated the issue further and made it truly international.
- The Outer Line, to some extent like the Inner Line, was a clever administrative tool that could absolve the British of any responsibility while at the same time granting them all the rights and privileges. In the absence of any well-defined international border, this line served as the exterior extent of the British Indian Empire. This Outer Line was not a fixed line and was deliberately undefined.
- The Tripartite Conference, better known as the Simla Conference, was formally opened on 6 October, 1913 at the summer capital of British India, under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Foreign Secretary, Government of India. McMahon had been the spirit in the formation of the North East Frontier policy since he was made Foreign Secretary in 1911.
- The British authorities also exploited the opportunity to settle the Indo-Tibetan boundary on the north. Enough work had already been done after the Abor Expedition of 1911 and the various surveys and explorations, which had been summarized in a 'Confidential Note' by the Chief of General Staff in June, 1912.
- Though through the McMahon Line efforts were made to solve the border controversy forever, the Chinese authority according to their own convenience never accepted it in full letter and spirit. Their interests in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh continued even after the British rule. The Chinese intrusion in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh in 1962 and even later is the forward policy of the Chinese.
- The major issue in demarcating the boundary between Tibet and India was regarding the Tawang Monastery. Charles Bell pointed out that Tawang Monastery was clearly Tibetan, but due to strategic reasons 'we should insist in getting the Tawang area south of the red line and the adjoining Bhutan though this seems undoubtedly Tibetan territory, as otherwise Tibet and Assam will adjoin each other and, if Tibet should again under Chinese control, it would be a dangerous position for us.'
- It was not till 1947 that the Indian government became firm over the boundary line. This was reflected in a statement by Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lok Sabha in 1950: 'Our maps show that McMahon Line is our boundary, and that is our boundary, map or no map. The fact remains and we stand by that boundary, and we will not let anybody come across that boundary.'
- The strategic limitations of the McMahon Line were never taken into account. It was pointed out by the Intelligence Chief in the 1960s that, 'the physical difficulties will remain on our side so long as the watershed of the Himalayas remained our boundary'.

6.6 KEY TERMS

- **Frontier:** A line or border separating two countries
- **Incursion:** An invasion or attack, especially a sudden or brief one
- **Memorandum:** A note or record made for future use

7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Frontier policy
2. True
3. Outer Line
4. 1913
5. 'Inner Line'
6. Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills and Mikir Hills
7. Tawang Monastery
8. Gorkha
9. False
10. True

8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What did the Outer Line signify?
2. Why was the Outer Line deliberately undefined?
3. What was the Simla Conference concerned with?
4. What did the Inner Line signify?
5. What path does the McMahon Line follow?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the Inner Line in detail.
2. What were the implications of the Inner Line Regulations of 1873 on Arunachal Pradesh?
3. Write a short note on the Simla Conference.
4. Describe the significance of the Indo-Tibetan boundary.
5. What were the problems that arose after 1947?
6. What led to the recognition of the McMahon line? Discuss.

9 FURTHER READING

Anrendra Kr Thakur, 2008. 'Historical Studies of Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview', in R. Bezbaruah, P. Goswami and D. Banerjee (eds.), *North-East India Interpreting the Sources of its History*. New Delhi: I C H R and Aryan Books.

UNIT 2 ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH: COLONIAL PERIOD

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Demarcation of North-East Frontier Tract (NEFT)
 - 2.1 Hopkinson's Proposals
 - 2.2 Division of Frontier in Three Tracts
- 3 Government of India Act, 1919
- 4 Government of India Act, 1935
- 5 Regulation Act of 1945
- 6 Summary
- 7 Key Terms
- 8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 9 Questions and Exercises
- 10 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

A new era started in the history of Northeast India with the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, which saw the expansion of the British rule over this part of the country. With the establishment and gradual expansion of the 'Raj', the era of modern politics also began in this region. After the assumption of political power, the task before the British was to consolidate their position, politically as well as economically, in this area. In this imperial desire they faced the problem of the hill tribes of Assam and the neighbouring hills, including the areas of modern Arunachal Pradesh. We have earlier seen that the British government aptly realized the political necessity and the economic potentiality of these frontier areas, especially the hilly tract inhabited by the tribal of present-day Arunachal Pradesh and initiated a number of measures to safeguard colonial interest. Direct military action was not feasible and, therefore, the British came forward to enter into peace agreements with various tribes of these frontiers. At the same time, taking advantage of the basic weakness of these tribes – the divided house of the tribes as a whole – the colonial rulers called upon these tribes to forego their rights over the foothills and the adjoining plain lands, for imperial interests. On the whole, however, the British followed a policy of watch and ward, limited or no direct interference and military intervention only when unavoidable.

Hence, as the beginning of the administrative measures, the Frontier Tracts Regulation was passed in 1880. It was mainly due to the unique geo-political conditions as well as the nature of the relationship between tribes and the British. These areas, by the time, were not under direct British administration and the terrains were also not suitable for the same. The provisions were made applicable not only to the areas of Arunachal Pradesh but also to the other areas of the region. The new Regulation provided that the operation of all unsuitable laws might be barred in the hill districts, in the north Cachar sub-division, the Mikir Hills tract in Nowgong and the Dibrugarh frontier tract in Lakhimpur. By orders issued under this Regulation, the tracts in question were excluded from the operation of the enactments relating to criminal procedure, (the

Civil Procedure Code was never in force in any of the hill districts), stamps, court-fees, registration and transfer of property. A simpler system of administering justice in civil and criminal matters was prescribed by rules framed under the Scheduled Districts Act. In these tracts, the head of the local government was to be the chief appellate authority in civil and criminal matters, and the high court would have no jurisdiction except in criminal cases against European British subjects. The deputy commissioner would exercise the combined powers of judge and district magistrate, and the assistant and the extra-assistant commissioners, the powers of magistrates and *munisifs*. Petty cases, both civil and criminal, were to be dealt with by village tribunals, presided over by village headmen elected by the people themselves, whose procedure was to be free from all legal technicalities. The Eastern Dwaras in Goalpara were to be administered in civil matters in accordance with the rules under the Scheduled Districts Act, in lieu of the Civil Procedure Code which had not been in force there.

The Government of India Act, 1919, was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It was passed to expand participation of Indians in the government of India. The Act embodied the reforms recommended in the report of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. The Act covered ten years, from 1919 to 1929.

The Act provided a dual form of government (a 'dyarchy') for the major provinces.

The Government of India Act 1935 was originally passed in August 1935 (25 & 26 Geo. 5 c. 42), and is said to have been the longest (British) Act of Parliament ever enacted by that time. The act of 1935 provided for the federal structure, distribution of powers, provincial autonomy, responsible form of government, bicameral legislature, emergency power of Governor General.

We shall study these in detail later in this unit.

The North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) (formerly the North-East Frontier Tracts) was one of the political divisions in British India and later the Republic of India till 1972, when it became the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. Its administrative headquarters was Shillong (till 1974, when it was transferred to Itanagar).

In 1914, some tribal-majority areas were separated from the erstwhile Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam Province of British India to form the North-East Frontier Tracts (NEFT). The NEFT was initially divided into two sections: the Central & Eastern Section (comprising the erstwhile Dibrugarh Frontier Tract, created in 1882, and some more areas in south) and the Western Section. Each section was placed under a political officer. After the independence of India in 1947, NEFT became a part of Assam state.

NEFA is discussed in detail in the next unit.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the demarcation of NEFT
- Describe the provisions of the government of India Act, 1919
- Discuss the provisions of the government of India Act, 1935
- Explain the Regulation Act of 1945

We have seen that the British government followed a few basic policies towards the North-East Frontier Tract. The first and foremost policy of the British was to contain the frontier tribes by continuing with Ahom period's provisions with certain changes in the right to collect '*posa*'. Cash payment, instead of kind, was started. Second, the East India Company government tried entering into friendly relations with these tribes through political negotiations and treaties. However, any violation of these treaties was viewed very seriously by the government and force was often applied against such acts.

Third, the government resorted to the 'blockade system', by which the tribes were debarred from coming down to the plains to buy their necessary commodities from the markets of adjoining areas. In the case of a serious offence like murder or the kidnapping of British subjects, a demand of surrender of the culprits to the British authority was imposed through the native political agent for the trial of the offender. Sometimes, expeditions were dispatched to arrest the offenders, or in the case of kidnapping, to secure the release of the captives. Evidences are not lacking in which the whole tribe or the village of the offender, as a whole, was punished severely, probably to impress upon the whole tribe or the village dire consequences of the acts of a few guilty persons. Though various frontier tribes tried to challenge the authority off and on, the British Government over-shadowed them with their superior force.

Fourth, the British government established a few markets and organized fairs in the foothill areas, such as Sadiya, Udalguri, and Doimara. However, the main motive behind these trade fairs was the promotion and popularization of European goods. Though the British wanted to open stores to provide the necessities to the tribal, this was not successful.

Fifth, the British followed a trade policy that led to the destruction of the tribal cottage industry and crafts. The import of salt, influx of the mill-made goods and yarn, and other machine-made goods destroyed the local productions and slowly a tendency developed to purchase manufactured goods and tools from the plains.

Sixth, the British stressed on consolidation but no extension of their rule to the hills. They tried to consolidate the portion of the frontier territory already under their possession and to secure its good administration. For this purpose, the government appointed the '*kotokis*' mainly to deal with the Nyishis, Adis, Akas, and other hill-tribes in the frontiers. In fact, these *kotokis* were like political officers and at the same time worked like ambassadors. The duties of the *kotokis*, as told by H. S. Bivar, were to proceed to the hills on any occasion when required to do so in connection with the tribes and to render aid in furnishing information on the tribes and in interpreting any matter as also to attend upon the deputy commissioner when he proceeded to the country bordering the hills of the tribes to which they were attached.

In addition, the British government established a network of the intelligence service, just after the Anglo-Burmese War of 1824–26, to keep strict vigilance on the movement and communication of the tribes beyond the frontier, particularly those situated near the Burmese frontier and gaining through them information of all movements in Upper Burma. As per the British records, by the middle of the 19th century there was one Jamadar, a Shan interpreter and seven Harkars in Sadiya Agency. Sadiya Agency continued to function under the district officer of Dibrugarh. However,

after the information of the combined Mishmi and Singpho rebellion proved to be a rumour in 1866, the intelligence service was subordinated to the police establishment of Sadiya. It is also known that after the Bhutia's raid of 1849, one Jamadar and ten Chowkidars were appointed to watch the Darrang frontier. Thus, at certain points, which were crossroads of the tribal movement, some intelligence was set up.

2.1 Hopkinson's Proposals

In 1862, Col. Henry Hopkinson, the Commissioner of Assam, had proposed to the Government of Bengal the ways and means to be adopted for the administration of the North-East Frontier Tract as he believed that the policy of conciliation with the hill people had failed. He wrote that, 'in restraining the savage tribes, which infest our frontier, reliance cannot be placed in one course of policy, but there must be a ready adaptation of expedients to suit every varying circumstances; sometimes we must apply coercion, pure and simple, sometimes blockade; very often a judicious system of subsidizing will keep the tribes quiet for long while, but still the surest foundation on which to build our control over them will be their fear of us.' He further argued that the payment of subsidies alone was not sufficient unless it was backed by military power. Hence, he urged upon the government the need for military preparedness to meet any tribal outrage. He seems to have been more in favour of coercion than of conciliation. He held, 'I believe that in our ability to coerce them (i.e., the hillmen) where conciliation fails, and in their absolute conviction that we can coerce them if they go too far... lies the most durable guarantee for their good behavior.' He also wanted that the British 'must cease to regard them (i.e., the hillmen) as aliens, or even as enemies, but acknowledge them as subjects, seek to establish ourselves among them, to extent our influence over them, and bring them under our control and within the pale of civilization.' In other words, he wanted that the tribal area should be brought under British occupation.

Col. Hopkinson was the first British officer who had the foresight to see that by the annexation of Assam, the British Government accepted the obligation to undertake the administration of the Northeast Frontier tribes, and he criticized the government for creating a wall of separation between the hills and the plains of the province. In a nutshell, Hopkinson urged the British to undertake various developmental projects for proper administration of the area. There would be no rest for the British, he held, in Assam till arrangements for administration of the hills were provided for. Col. Hopkinson wrote in his Report to the Government of Bengal: 'In taking possession of the country (Assam), we incurred a very distinct and positive obligation to administer it to the best of our ability, and at any expense to secure the most absolute protection to life and property by every means available to a civilized government; and it seems inconsistent with this view of our duty that we should have separated the people of the plains from the people of the hills and have made the former our subjects while we renounced the latter, and left them to prey upon those whom we had professed to take under our protection.' He further recommended the construction of roads in this inaccessible land, which he held 'would afford facilities for intercourse between the external world and the world of the tribes', and urged the government to help and aid the missionaries in their work among these hill tribes. This was not accepted by the British Government. He also recommended the re-organization of the police force of Assam and the withdrawal of the military and paramilitary forces from the border, which was, however, accepted by the authorities. At the same time, he urged the government to raise a local force under the orders of the chief civil authority for the

defense of Assam Frontier, because the management of the frontier tribes was a responsibility of that authority. This view seems to have been accepted by the Government of Bengal which requested the Supreme Government's sanction of the proposal to raise a force like that of Punjab.

In fact, the Government of India was convinced of the necessity of re-organization of the military force as suggested by Hopkinson, and accordingly, two battalions of military police were recruited, who were posted along the Inner Line. At the same time, heavy concentration was made at the district headquarters for immediate march of the army in any emergency.

It has been suggested by some historians, and with some justification, that the beginning of the political evolution of Arunachal Pradesh can be traced to the Inner Line Regulation of 1873, which was formulated to bring 'under more stringent control the commercial relations of the British subjects with the Frontier Tribes.' It is also worth mentioning that the experience of the Colonial rulers with the tribal in India had not been a pleasant one and they had faced trouble in different parts of the country while dealing with them. This was evident through the Mutiny of Singbhum in 1831, Khond Uprising in 1846 and Santhal Rebellion in 1885. Generally, therefore, the British declared these areas as Non-Regulation Tracts to be administered by the Deputy Commissioner according to needs of the time.

Declaration of Scheduled Districts

The constitutional and administrative growth of Arunachal Pradesh had its genesis in the Act No. XTV of 1874, also known as The Scheduled Districts Act of 1874, by which the districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills and Cachar were declared 'scheduled districts' on 1st January, 1875. Goalpara and Sylhet were also made almost as scheduled districts. This arrangement had a basic aim behind it – to provide a simpler form of administration in the province of Assam. Special rules for the administration in justice, in civil as well as criminal matters, were provided by this Act.

The problem of tribal administration caught the attention of the British Government of India after their occupation of Assam. Therefore, the government wanted to provide a simple form of administration in those areas where the local tribal customs and conventions could be accommodated for settling various tribal disputes; thus, the idea of the scheduled districts came into being. By this Act, the Chief Commissioner of Assam was authorized to extend the Act to the Frontier Tracts for peace and governance, with the previous sanction of the Governor General in Council. He could also extend to these areas any Act, or part thereof, passed by the legislators of any provincial or of the Central Government by a notification in the local Gazette. Under Section 2 of the mentioned Act, the Chief Commissioner had the power to propose to the Governor General in Council, the draft of any Regulation for peace and the good government of the Frontier Tracts, which when approved by the Governor General in Council, had the force of law after notification in the local Gazette. The same Act authorized the Chief Commissioner, under Section 6, Clause C, to define by what authority and jurisdiction, powers and duties incidental to the operation of any enactment, for the time being in force in the Frontier, would be exercised and performed.

Meanwhile, the Inner Line Regulation had been passed in 1873, and the Deputy Commissioners were asked by the Chief Secretary to propose the Inner Line of their

respective districts. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur, Col. Clarke, while submitting his proposal with respect to his district, stated that the frontier of his district was inhabited by tribesmen whom it would be inadvisable to administer as people in other parts of the district. Therefore, the Chief Commissioner of Assam wrote to the Government of India for drafting a set of rules for the administration of justice in the Frontier areas, which was approved by the authorities. This provided the basis of administration of justice in this area, the aim of which was to provide an outline pattern of rules, applicable ordinarily to all tracts of the frontier districts, allowing exemption to semi-barbarous or barbarous people over whom British control had been extended.

The passing of two Acts – the Scheduled District Act, XIV of 1874, and the Laws Local Extent Act XV of 1874 – made it clear how and in what parts of British India different laws passed by the Government were to operate. The Laws Local Extent Act XV specified the laws which were in force in India generally, except in certain backward tracts, described as 'Scheduled Districts'. The Scheduled Districts Act, XIV of 1874 authorized the Government to declare by notification in the Gazette what laws were in force in such districts, and to extend to them any enactments in force elsewhere which might seem desirable to bring into operation.

Direct administration

The next stage of administrative growth can be noticed in the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation (Regulation 2), 1880. The Act provided for the removal of certain frontier tracts in Assam inhabited or frequented by 'barbarous or semi-civilized' tribal from the operation of enactments in force therein. As a result, the first Frontier Tract called Dibrugarh Frontier Tract came into being in November 1882, under the authority of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. In the same year, the government realized the need of a local official to function among the frontier tribes. By the advice of Sir Charles Elliot, a separate office of Assistant Political Officer was established at Sadiya in 1882, and J.F. Needham, a British official, originally belonging to the Bengal police, was appointed as the first political officer, to regulate the political relation of the British with the Adis, Mishmi and the Singpho-Khampti tribes of the frontier tract. Till 1882, as we know, the conduct of relations with the frontier tribes was left with Kotokis, on whom the British officials in general put little reliance and to whom they used to pay scanty attention. But now onwards, the British officials started touring various parts of the frontier area and prepared notes and reports, which were given due weightage by the British Government.

Needham was succeeded by Noel Williamson, in 1906, who acted with indefatigable energy, courage and enthusiasm in putting the frontier service on a sound basis, till his murder in Abor hills in 1911. Williamson toured various parts of the Adi and Mishmi hills and tried to cultivate good and personal relations with the people of different tribes. Like Williamson, the Lieutenant Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Sir Lancelot Hare was also a practical man and supported the ideas of Williamson with regard to the frontier policy. He had his own idea of adopting a policy of direct and immediate British administration of these frontier tracts, which, however, was turned down by the Government of India. Though the Government agreed that the British territory should be protected at any cost, it forbade any expeditions to be sent beyond the Inner Line.

As early as the beginning of the 20th century, i.e. in 1908–11, the Chinese movement across the boundary, particularly in the Aka Hills, the Abor Hills and the

Mishmi Hills became a matter of concern which forced the government to propose to the Secretary of State for India, to secure, as soon as possible, a sound strategic boundary between India and Tibet. At that time, the local government proposed that in future their (British) policy towards the frontier tribes should be one of loose political control, having minimum interference and at the same time the government should assure the security and protection of tribes from unprovoked aggression from outside, so that they would be prevented from violating either the administrative border or the Chinese territory. Though, as a rule, the Government of India accepted the recommendations of the local government in the real sense of the term it did not permit the extension of the administrative boundary beyond the existing line. The Government of India also sanctioned various expeditions to tour the Mishmis, Miri, Adi and Nyishi Hills to know more about the land and the people for effective administrative control. It also addressed a dispatch to the Secretary of State for India, on the frontier issue, recommending the lines of action proposed by the Governor of East Bengal and Assam, C A. Bell, and the General Staff of Army. The Secretary of State, however, did not take any interest for pushing the British territory into the hills. The Government of India protested as they contemplated the idea to exercise loose political control over the tribes, which could not be done beyond the Inner Line boundary. The Secretary of State now agreed to the proposals and thus the hill tracts of North-Eastern Frontier areas were subsequently brought under direct administration.

The direct administration of this area, however, remained on paper and practically no arrangement was made for proper and direct administration. The political officer, responsible for direct administration, who continued to be under the local administration, was instructed to exercise 'loose political control' over the tribes. It seems that the Government of India was influenced by the 'buffer' concept of Sir Henry McMahon and his advice, not to offend the Tibetan vested interests in the tribal tracts south to the McMahon Line.

2.2 Division of frontier in three tracts

In 1912, the administrative divisions were recognized in Assam and a new system of administration on the frontier was introduced. Two new charges, afterwards known as the Sadiya and Balipara frontier tracts, were created and placed under the control of political officers. These charges consisted partly of the settled plains of the Lakhimpur and Darrang districts, in which the administration was practically the same as that existing in those districts, and partly of areas beyond the Inner Line inhabited by the border tribes, over whom only loose political control was exercised. The Sadiya Frontier tract extended in the Northeast to the confines of Tibet and touched Burma on the south-east and south, whereas Balipara tract included the important trade route from Udalguri into Tibet, which is the shortest way from India to Lhasa. As a result of this territorial reorganization, the relations between the hillmen and the people inhabiting the plains were considered to have greatly improved.

The Naga Hills, the Lushai Hills, the Garo Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and the North Cachar and Mikir Hills formed five ordinary hill districts of the state, of which the northeastern border areas of Assam were put directly under the Government of India to be administered by the Governor of Assam. This north eastern frontier land, known as the North Eastern Frontier Agency or NEFA in an abbreviated form, came to be divided into six zones: the Kameng Frontier Agency, Subansiri Frontier Agency, Siang Frontier Agency, Lohit Frontier Agency, Tirap Frontier Agency and Tuensang Frontier Agency.

The Kameng Agency included the Akas, the Subansiri Agency the Nyishis and Hill Miris, the Siang Agency the Adis, the Lohit Agency the Mishmis and Khamptis, the Tirap Agency the Singphos, and the Tuensang Agency some of the Naga clans.

The Anglo-Abor War of 1911-12, was a turning point in the administrative history of Arunachal Pradesh. After the war, Major General Bower, who was in charge of the famous Abor Expedition, in his letter on 16 January, 1912, recommended that the frontier should be divided into three sections viz.:

- (i) The Central section would comprise all the Abors and extend westward to the eastern watershed of the Subansiri but exclusive of that watershed under two political officers. It has to be kept in mind that the Abors have always been the most troublesome tribe on this frontier, and past experience has proved the impossibility of exercising effective control over them from a post in the plains.
- (ii) The Eastern section would include all the Mishmis and Khamptis, and should be in charge of an assistant political officer with headquarters at Sadiya.
- (iii) The Western section would include the eastern watershed of the Subansiri and extend westward to the borders of Bhutan. This section should be under the control of an assistant political officer with headquarters at some convenient centre to be selected later.

His proposal was accepted by the higher authorities with certain modifications. The Government of India, Foreign and Political Department Notification of 1914, promulgated that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation would extend to the hills inhabited or frequented by the Adis, Miris, Mishmis, Singphos, Nagas, Khamptis, Bhutias, Akas and Nyishis, and these hill areas were separated from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam.

Later it was decided that both geographically and ethnically the main channel of the Subansiri was a better dividing line between the Central and Western Sections than the Subansiri-Siyom divide. But, in spite of this decision, some confusion seems to have remained even afterwards regarding the boundary between the Central and Western sections, since as late as 1921 the Indian General Staff referred to the Subansiri-Siyom divide as the boundary. While supporting the proposals of Bower, the Local Government recommended that the political officer on this frontier should work directly under the Chief Commissioner of Assam; it should be inadvisable that they should be controlled either by the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, or by the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts.

In July 1912, the Chief Commissioner of Assam proposed that the entire tribal area east of the Subansiri-Siyom divide should be in the charge of Dundas, who should have the status of a Deputy Commissioner and work immediately under the Chief Commissioner. Dundas would require four assistants to begin with: one for the Lohit Valley; the second for the Bebejiya and Chulikatta Mishmis; the third for the Abor hills; and the fourth for assisting the Political Officer at the headquarters in the administration of the plains below the foothills. It was believed that these proposals were within moderate limits and that before long the political officer would require further assistance. For the area west of the Subansiri-Siyom divide, the Chief Commissioner recommended Captain G.A. Nevill as the political officer who would work directly under the Chief Commissioner.

In September 1914, the southern boundaries of the Eastern, Central and Western sections were notified to separate them clearly from the adjoining plains districts of Darrang and Lakhimpur. In 1919, the Eastern and Central sections were officially renamed as the Sadiya Frontier Tract, and the Western section as the Balipara Frontier Tract.

Thus, the North-East Frontier Tract came into existence, composed of the following three administrative units, as recommended by Bower: (i) The Central and Eastern Section; (ii) the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract; and (iii) The Western Section. The boundary of the Central and Eastern section ran along the then existing Dibrugarh Frontier Tract, stretching a little further south of it and included lands inhabited entirely by the Miris including five small villages inhabited by the Assamese people. The boundary of the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract was so defined as to leave it within the regular jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. The boundary of the Western Section of the North East Frontier Tract ran from the Subansiri River, which was the boundary between the Central and Eastern and Western sections.

To extend British authority over the three Frontier Tracts, a political officer was appointed in each of these. W C M. Dundas of Bengal Police was appointed as political officer of the Central and Eastern Section, and G A. Neville of Bengal Police was appointed as the political officer of the Western Section, while the Lakhimpur Frontier Section was left in the charge of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur. With the appointment of three political officers in these tracts, loose political control was gradually established over these areas. The political officers yielded a lot of influence regarding the administrative problems of the hill tracts. They had the powers to expel anybody from their respective jurisdiction, if the presence of such a person was prejudicial for the security and peace of the area. These political officers were assisted in their work by the political Jamadars, Harkars and Kotokis. The political officers were to hold an 'Annual Durbar' where they would present *Posa* to the tribes, listen to their grievances and explain to them the policy of the government.

The policy of non-interference introduced by the British in the 19th century lasted till 1911. But thereafter British tribal policy on this frontier underwent a fundamental change to cope with the Chinese threat from the north. The old policy was replaced by a policy of loose political control, and a very timely opportunity to introduce the new policy was provided by the murder of Williamson.

7.3 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1919

With the passing of the Government of India Act of 1919, there were some changes in the nomenclature of the sections of the North-East Frontier Tract. The Act of 1919 authorized the Governor General in Council under Section 52(A) of the Act to declare any territory in British India to be a 'Backward Area.' Accordingly, in 1921, all the tribal areas in Assam were declared as backward areas. This was followed by an Instrument of Instructions to the Governors of these provinces which laid down that he was responsible for carrying out measures for the social welfare of the tribal areas under his exclusive charge. In actual practice, this Instrument of Instructions implied that the rules framed by the Government of India as well as by the Government of Assam were not applicable to the tribal areas. Thus, while in theory the North-East Frontier Tract was a part of the Province of Assam, it was denied actual participation in the political process.

Now onwards, the Central and Eastern sections were to be known as the Sadiya Frontier Tract, and the Western Section as the Balipara Frontier Tract. However, there was no change in the name of Lakhimpur Frontier Tract. This position continued upto 1937, during which certain areas were either included or excluded in the so-called North-East Frontier Tract. By the Government of India Act 1919, the North-East Frontier Tract was politically made a part of the province of Assam, but the Government of Assam denied direct participation in the administration of the area. In the real sense, the tracts continued to be governed according to the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 and 1884 up to 31 March, 1937.

Moreover, after the First World War, a spirit of humanism spread far and wide in the world. People began to talk of human rights and protest against exploitation. The concept of 'Mandate' was developed for protecting the interest of the underdeveloped peoples under the supervision of the League of Nations. As a part of this worldwide change of outlook, the protection of tribal rights now caught the attention of the philanthropic people. In India, British administrators like J.P. Mill and J.H. Hutton who served in the hills in the northeast were struck by the exploitation of the simple tribal people by adventurers and businessmen which, if not actively patronized, was at least tolerated by the government. Essays appeared in the journals to enlist popular support for stopping such practices towards the tribal people. The government now adopted a more or less benevolent attitude towards the tribal people. But in an atmosphere of political tension between the rulers and the politically conscious sections of the Indian nation, the government solicitude for tribal welfare was utilized more for segregation of the tribal folk from the rest of the Indian community than for actual amelioration of their condition.

This policy of segregation was given shape for the first time in the Reform of 1919 although its beginnings may be traced back to the late 19th century. It has already been observed that the Scheduled Districts Act was passed in 1874 to provide for the administration of the tribal areas in a rough and ready manner and the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 began to be applied to segregate tribal areas of the North-East Frontier from 1875 onwards. When Edwin Montagu, in concert with Lord Chelmsford, under the direction of the House of Commons, prepared their report on constitutional reforms in India, they recommended measures to be taken for reconstruction of the Indian Government, but the tribal issue was not given any new complexion. While recommending the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and 'the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire', they did not deem it proper to either encourage the tribal people to participate in their own administration or to associate the Indian minister and legislators with the administration of the tribal hills of the frontiers.

The Mont-Ford scheme, which involved the division of functions of the Provincial Government between elected Indian Ministers and appointed Executive Councilors, proposed to keep the tribal areas separate from the regularly administered territory, on grounds that in those areas 'there was no material on which to found political institutions.' It was held that the tracts mentioned in the schedules and appendices to the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874, with 'certain exceptions and possibly certain additions, should be reserved for further consideration'. But the typically backward tracts (frontiers) should be excluded from the jurisdiction of the reformed provincial governments and administered by the head of the province. In these areas, therefore,

the old system was to continue, and the tribes were to be kept apart – ostensibly for their own welfare – from the people of the plains.

The reaction of the Government of India to the recommendations of the Joint Report was embodied in the Ninth Dispatch on the Constitutional Reforms. The Government of India was anxious to limit exclusion as much as possible both in its local extent and in its degree. With this end in view, it estimated the degree of backwardness of each of the tracts and recommended varying degrees of exclusion to conform to such estimates. The recommendation that the backward tracts should be directly administered by the Governors was not finally carried out, except in the Shan States of Burma. For Assam, the reserved half of the government was given full discretion to administer the tracts as per enactments under the Government of India Act, 1919.

With the passing of the Government of India Act of 1919, there were some changes in the nomenclature of the sections of the North-East Frontier Tracts. The Government of India Act, 1915, as amended by the Government of India Act, 1919, carried into effect the recommendations of the Mont-Ford Report. The Act of 1919 authorized the Governor General in Council under Section 52(A) to declare any territory, in British India to be a 'Backward Tract' and may, by notification, with such sanction, direct that this Act shall apply to that territory subject to such exceptions and modifications as may be prescribed in the modifications. When the Reforms were introduced in Assam in 1920, the frontier affairs were placed under the reserved half of the government and the elected half of the government did not have any jurisdiction over them. Accordingly, in 1921, all the tribal areas in Assam were declared as backward areas. This was followed by an Instrument of Instructions to the Governors of these provinces which lay down that he was responsible for carrying out measures for the social welfare of the tribal areas under his exclusive charge. In actual practice, this Instrument of Instructions implied that the rules framed by the Government of India as well as by the Government of Assam were not applicable to the tribal areas. Thus, while in theory the North-Eastern Frontier Tract was a part of the province of Assam, it was denied actual participation in the political process.

74 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935

Meanwhile the government has pursued a policy of bringing the frontier territory under its political influence. The tour reports of the political officers showed the popularity of the government in the tribal hills. By the time of the coming of the Statutory Commission, the officers serving in the frontiers and adjacent tribal hills, like the Lushai and Naga hills, had arrived at the conclusion that the British would withdraw some day from India and Burma, but if they could create a separate tribal belt along the North-East Frontier they might continue to possess a foothold on Indian territory.

In view of this trend of opinion in official circles, the Simon Commission, which was appointed to report on further progress on constitutional reforms in India, did not find it possible to recommend the incorporation of the hill tracts of the North-East Frontier for administrative purposes in the Province of Assam. It contains that the Backward Tracts of Assam are of great importance and extent, that nowhere in India is the contrast between the life and outlook of these hillmen and the total distinct civilization of the plains manifest more. The Commission recommended that the British Parliament should avow its special obligation for the tribal folk, educate them to stand on their own

feet, give them protection against exploitation, and prevent their raids on the plains. The Simon Commission appointed in 1928 made another recommendation regarding the administration of the tribal areas or the hill areas under tribal settlement. It suggested that the tribal areas should be designated as 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas in consonance with respective stage of development in the stage of literacy and political consciousness. For administration of the tribal area, excluded from the regular administered districts of the province, the Governor-General in Council should use the agency of the Governor.

The Commission expected that for developing the tribal areas and for educating the tribal people, huge money would be required. The money would not be forthcoming from the revenue of a poor state like Assam. Further, the Commission apprehended that the representatives of the provincial legislature would not vote for the appropriation of money for development purposes in the hill tracts since that would not immediately benefit the constituencies of the members who would vote. Though in the prevailing atmosphere of distrust and animosity, the British statesmen and administrators alike wanted to sympathize with the tribal folk and alienate them from the Indian people, the tribal people were a part of the myriad Indian population.

But in spite of the recommendations of the Simon Commission, the British Prime Minister disavowed any intention of the British Parliament to control any territory of British India. The hopes of the British officers in the tribal areas were thus destroyed. The Government of India now asked for reconsideration of the issue of Frontier administration by the Government of Assam since the previous scheme of retention of tribal territory under the British Parliament could not be worked upon after declaration of the British Prime Minister. The Government of Assam, nevertheless, proposed the perpetuation of the separation of the tribal tracts of the frontiers from the regularly administered areas in the province of Assam. It wrote, 'Its (tribal tracts) progressive absorption into the province of Assam in the past was forced upon the government by the unavoidable necessity of securing from the marauding and revengeful raids of its denizens, the safety of the plain districts for which the government had made itself responsible... what was needed for the future is a policy of development and unification on lines suited to the genius of the hill people, an object in itself of formidable magnitude.'

The formulation of such a policy could no longer be divorced from political factors. The Government of Assam pointed out that there had already developed in the hills an anti-Indian feeling, probably due to a fear of economic exploitation. It was even apprehensive that a change in policy with regard to the frontiers might provoke rebellion. Therefore, it recommended that in developing a scheme of administration for the hill tribes 'the essence of the system in the administration of the definitely excluded areas would be the personal rule of the Governor exercised through selected officers'. In course of time, it suggested that an indigenous staff of officers of all ranks might be provided for the hill districts and frontiers.

The Government of India Act of 1935, which was passed after taking into consideration Simon Commission's recommendations as well as the points of view of the provincial governments concerned with tribal areas, provided in sections 91 and 92 that his Majesty by an order in Council might declare some territory in India as 'Excluded Areas' or 'Partially Excluded Areas' and empower the Governor of a province to administer that area under the authority of the Governor-General. As such,

the Government of Assam was vested with wide discretion and authority in matters of administration in these areas. The Governor was given discretion to extend Acts or parts thereof passed by any provincial legislature or the federal legislature to the excluded areas which otherwise would not apply there. Moreover, the Governor was given the power to prepare and approve drafts of Regulations for the peace and good government of the excluded areas with the previous sanction of the Governor-General in Council. No Act of the Federal and Provincial Legislatures would be applicable to these areas without the prior sanction of the Governor of Assam. However, in 1937, a new development took place when J.P. Mills was appointed as the Secretary for Tribal Affairs to the Government of Assam. According to the Constitution Act of 1935 it was decided accordingly that Balipara Frontier Tract should be an 'Excluded Area'. It accordingly was entered as such in the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936, and came under the direct administration of the Governor from 1 April, 1937.

In 1938, the formation of a 'Control Area' to the north of Pasighat was sanctioned by the Government of India. The purpose of this was to take measures for the abolition of slavery in unadministered areas (this Control Area was subsequently extended in 1941). In the same year, Godfrey, the political officer, reported about the annual incursion by Tibetan officials into the Memba and Abor villages south of the McMahon Line and realization of taxes from the tribesmen who were claimed to be Tibetan subjects. As a result, Mr. Godfrey, the political officer of Sadiya, along with Mr. Williams, the Assistant Political Officer at Pasighat, with an escort of 45 Assam Rifles led an expedition into the south of the McMahon Line in February - March 1939, with a view to ascertaining the position as regards Tibetan infiltration south of the McMahon Line. It revealed from this expedition that Tibetan influence extended some 70 miles south of the McMahon Line and that the villages of Shimong and Karko had recently been paying tribute to Tibet. Accordingly, recommendations were made to the establishment of outposts at Karko and Riga in March 1941. In 1940, Godfrey made an extensive tour up the Siyom Valley through the unadministered Galong country for setting a serious land dispute between the Minyong and Galong Abors. A boundary was fixed and peace assured. The Government of India extended the control area of the political officer, Sadiya Frontier Tract, up to the McMahon Line in the Siang Valley on May 20, 1941, in order to check the Tibetan influence. They also agreed that if these incursions from the north of the McMahon Line did not cease it might be necessary at some further date to establish one or more additional outposts further up the valley.

Also, the Government of India sanctioned the extension of the control area of the political officer, Sadiya Frontier Tract, upto the McMahon Line in the Siang valley, in the year 1941, May. In 1943, a new administrative tract, called the Tirap Frontier Tract was created by taking certain portions of Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and Sadiya Frontier Tract. The new administrative division was placed under a separate political officer with its headquarters at Margherita. In 1943, N K. Rustomji was appointed as an Advisor to the Governor of Assam to look after the administration of the North-East Frontier Tracts including the Naga Hills, the Lushai Hill districts and the North Hill Subdivision of the Cachar district. The appointment of the Advisor is said to have set the pattern for the administration of the North-East Frontier Agency area later on.

5 REGULATION ACT OF 1945

The year 1945 saw an important administrative development in the North-East Frontier Tract. A regulation, known as Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation I of 1945) was introduced and its main objective was to ensure that a vast majority of disputes, both civil and criminal, were decided in accordance with the prevailing traditional codes of the tribal. It was recognized that modern laws as prevailed elsewhere in the country were unsuitable for the tribal areas. Thus, the Act of 1945 recognized the authority of the age-old village councils and also the authority of the village headmen. The village authorities were also given the duty of maintaining peace and law and order in their respective areas.

In 1946, the administrative divisions of the Frontier Tract were divided to make their working more viable and efficient. As a result, the Balipara Frontier Tract was divided into the Sela Sub-Agency and the Subansiri Area. Similarly, in July, 1948, Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into two separate units, namely, the Abor Hill District and the Mishmi Hill District, each with its own political officers at Pasighat and Tezu respectively. However, the Sela Sub-Agency and the Subansiri area, with their headquarters at Chardwar and North Lakhimpur, respectively, remained under the jurisdiction of the political officer at Balipara.

When India became independent in 1947, the North-East Frontier Tract consisted of Balipara Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract and the Naga Tribal Area, which lay beyond the regular administrative jurisdiction of the Assam Government. Immediately after the transfer of power, the Governor of Assam was divested of his discretionary powers with respect to the North-East Frontier Tract. The Constituent Assembly of India appointed a Sub-Committee headed by Gopinath Bardoloi to recommend the future pattern of administration of the hill areas of Assam and the Frontier Tracts. The Committee provided for the management of tribal and intra-tribal matters by the people themselves, but general administration, law and order were kept under the Government of Assam. It was also recommended that the tribes of the frontier should continue to be kept under their respective political officers, until they (tribal) were developed enough to control their own affairs. As per the recommendations of the Bardoloi Committee, the administration was to be carried out by the Assam Government.

ACTIVITY

Interview a person from Northeast India and report his or her viewpoint concerning the North-East Frontier Tract. How does the person relate to it? Is there an identity crisis?

DID YOU KNOW

Racial affiliation of Arunachal Pradesh has been described as mongoloid, indo-mongoloid, kiratas, protomongoloid and so on. There are 25 major tribes and 100 sub-tribal speaking over 50 main dialects. Principle tribes of the State are Monpa, Miji, Aka, Adi, Nishing, Apatani, Tagin, Sherdukpen, Hill Miri, Digaru Mishmi, Idu Mishmi, Khamti, Nocte, Tangsa and Wancho. Most of these tribes are ethnically similar, having derived from an original common stock. But due to geographical isolation certain distinctive

characteristics in each tribe in language, dress and customs can be noticed. The Monpas and Sherdukpens follow Buddhism. The second group of people are Adis, Akas, Nishing, Apatanis, Mishmis, Tangsas worship sun and moon as their God, Donyi-Polo. The Noctes practice elementary form of Vaishnavism.

The people of Arunachal Pradesh are rapidly changing socially, culturally, politically and economically and they are no longer what they were 50 years ago. The physiological integration is the greatest achievement to the credit of the Government's policy cultivated in this region. The amount of development that could take place during the planned era should be considered as joint efforts of the Governments, people, elected representatives and dedicated officials. A holistic approach, with the active participation of the people, will make this state a paradise.

6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- There was not much political development in the state of Arunachal Pradesh due to different reasons. The British wanted to leave this area undisturbed and did not implement any effective system of administration. Their interest in this area, as we have seen on many occasions, was aroused whenever they became suspicious of the Chinese designs; therefore, their prime concern was to keep this area as a 'buffer zone' between China and the Indian Empire.
- The British wanted to protect the colonial interest especially in tea and for this purpose they gave official recognition to the *Posa* system as a means of recognition of the rights of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in the foothills of Assam. The tribal, on the other hand, were never willing to give up their traditional ways of living and did not want to sacrifice their independence and freedom under the British yoke. Therefore, they never seriously accepted any innovation introduced by the British and refused to be a party to the modern administration.
- The first and foremost policy of the British was to contain the frontier tribes by continuing with Ahom period's provisions with certain changes in the right to collect '*Posa*'. Cash payment, instead of kind, was started.
- The British government established a few markets and organized fairs in the foothill areas, such as Sadiya, Udalguri, and Doimara. However, the main motive behind these trade fairs was the promotion and popularization of European goods. Though the British wanted to open stores to provide the necessities to the tribal, this was not successful.
- Things were further complicated due to the inhospitable geographical factors that discouraged the outsiders from going into the hill areas. Whatever changes were introduced by the British remained confined to a few tribes on the border of the state and the general populace remained unaffected by the administrative measures adopted in this area prior to 1947.
- J. N. Choudhry in his book *Arunachal Panorama* (Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, 1996) especially in the chapter 'Epilogue: The March of Time' has elaborated upon the details of administrative developments

in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh. P. N. Luthra's book *The Constitutional and Administrative Growth in NEFA* another government publication is important to gather information on the administrative developments in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

- Much of the administrative structure started by the British for the North-East Frontier Tract was retained even after independence. However, the approach and nature of administration underwent radical change and the Nehru-Elwin policy is significant in this regard.
- The North-East Frontier Tract came into existence, composed of the following three administrative units, as recommended by Bower: (i) The Central and Eastern Section; (ii) the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract; and (iii) The Western Section.
- In 1912, the administrative divisions were recognized in Assam and a new system of administration on the frontier was introduced. Two new charges, afterwards known as the Sadiya and Balipara frontier tracts, were created and placed under the control of political officers.
- The year 1945 saw an important administrative development in the North-East Frontier Tracts. A Regulation, known as Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (Regulation I of 1945) was introduced and its main objective was to ensure that a vast majority of disputes, both civil and criminal, were decided in accordance with the prevailing traditional codes of the tribal.

7 KEY TERMS

- **Administration:** Management of a large government or institution
- **Regulation:** A rule or directive made and maintained by an authority
- **Scheduled:** Included in or planned according to a schedule
- **Tract:** An area of indefinite extent, typically a large one

8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The main motive behind trade fairs was the promotion and popularization of European goods.
2. Dibrugarh Frontier Tract
3. (i) The Central and Eastern Section; (ii) the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract; and (iii) The Western Section.
4. North Eastern Frontier Agency
5. False
6. True
7. Ninth Dispatch on the Constitutional Reforms
8. Mont-Ford Report
9. 'Excluded Area'
10. The purpose of a 'Control Area' was to take measures for the abolition of slavery in unadministered areas.

11. Tirap Frontier Tract
12. The two separate units of the Sadiya Frontier Tract were: Abor Hill District and Mishmi Hill District, each with its own political officers at Pasighat and Tezu respectively.
13. When India became independent in 1947, the North East Frontier Tract consisted of Balipara Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract and the Naga Tribal Area, which lay beyond the regular administrative jurisdiction of the Assam Government.
14. The Constituent Assembly of India appointed a Sub-Committee headed by Gopinath Bardoloi to recommend the future pattern of administration of the hill areas of Assam and the Frontier Tracts.

9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What led to the destruction of the tribal cottage industry and crafts?
2. Who were the 'kotokis'?
3. In 1912 how were the administrative divisions recognized in Assam?
4. What did the 'Instrument of Instruction' imply?
5. What was the Simon Commission's recommendation regarding the administration of tribal areas?
6. What were the six zones into which NEFA was divided?
7. The year 1945 saw an important administrative development in the North-East Frontier Tract. What was it?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the demarcation of NEFT.
2. Write a short note on Hopkinson's proposals.
3. How were administrative divisions recognized in Assam?
4. Write a short note on Government of India Act 1919.
5. Discuss the Government of India Act 1935.
6. What were the provisions of the Regulations Act 1945?

10 FURTHER READING

Anrendra Kr Thakur. 2008. 'Historical Studies of Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview', in R. Bezbaruah, P. Goswami and D. Banerjee (eds.), *North-East India Interpreting the Sources of its History*. New Delhi: I C H R and Aryan Books.

UNIT 3 ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH INDEPENDENCE

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Birth of NEFA
 - 2.1 Bardoloi Committee
 - 2.2 Nehru–Elwin Policy
- 3 Panchayati Raj
 - 3.1 Estimate of Dying Ering Commission
 - 3.2 Panchayati Raj Regulation
 - 3.3 Critique of the Panchayati Raj
- 4 Formation of Union Territory
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in detail in earlier units, the development of modern administrative institutions or the growth of the overall process of political evolution after the British occupation of Assam and the gradual expansion of the colonial rule to this area were very slow and could not impact on society. In a nutshell, the British policy towards the area was to keep people in isolation and detached from the mainstream of the country. The Inner Line Regulation of 1873 is the best example of the British political policy and sums up the entire colonial attitude in this regard. As has been rightly pointed out by J. N. Chowdhury, ‘The British were solely guided by pragmatic consideration of securing their own empire in the plains of Assam from periodic incursions by unruly tribes who considered the borderland of Assam as their natural preserve’ (*Arunachal Panorama*, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Directorate of Research, Itanagar, 1996). This British policy of separation and segregation was not inspired by any idea of the welfare of the tribal people; rather it was followed to protect the colonial, political and commercial interests. They did not try to evolve any political system for the administration of this area as the geographical conditions of the land rendered it economically unprofitable for them.

Briefly speaking, a formal pattern of political administration by the British in Arunachal Pradesh began with the promulgation of a notification in 1914 by the Foreign and Political Department of the then Government of India. The notification provided that the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880 would be extended to the hills inhabited or frequented by Abors, Miris, Mishmis, Singphos, Bhutias, Khamptis, Akas and Dallas. These hilly areas of the then North East Frontier of Bengal were separated from Darang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam and were grouped into separate units termed as ‘North East Frontier Tract’. The creation of this tract may be considered as the beginning of the process of political evolution of the present state of Arunachal Pradesh. The tract had three administrative units namely:

- Central and Eastern Section
- Western Section
- Lakhimpur Frontier Tract

The first and the second units were placed under the administrative control of a political officer and the third unit was to be administered by the deputy commissioner of Lakhimpur District. Sadiya and Chardwar became the headquarters of the first and the second sections, respectively. In 1919, the first and the third sections were renamed as the Sadiya Frontier Tract and Balipara Frontier Tract, respectively. This arrangement continued till 1937; some areas were included and others were excluded in and from the North-East Frontier Tract. Through the Government of India Act 1935, the North-Eastern Frontier Tract was classified as 'excluded area' of the Province of Assam under the provision of Section 91(1) of the Act of 1935.

The area came under the direct administration of the Governor who would administer the area through the political officer and the deputy commissioner of north Lakhimpur. In 1943, a new administrative unit named Trip Frontier Tract was created taking certain areas from Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and the Sadiya Frontier Tract. The Balipara Frontier Tract was divided into two parts, viz., the Sela Sub-Agency and the Subansiri area in 1946. The Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into two districts of Abor Hills and Mishmi Hills in 1948.

When India got freedom in 1947, attention of the Government of India was drawn towards this area and there was a search for a definite political policy. What followed was a period of experiments, debates and innovations that kept the evolution process rather slow. The story of the political development of this area is, therefore, a story of an evolution of a common administrative system for a number of heterogeneous tribes. This background of administrative growth during the British period clearly indicates the desires of the administrators to introduce certain elements of administration in the area. However, the moves were never for the welfare of the people; on the contrary, it was for the administration.

After 1950, the administration of NEFA was influenced deeply by the policy laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru and Verrier Elwin towards this tribal area. There has been a misconception in the minds of many that both Nehru and Elwin were responsible in deciding the policy towards NEFA in the Indian Constitution. This is not true at all. In fact, they were rather guided by the Constitution to formulate their plans. Verrier Elwin got associated with the Government of India only in the year 1953, when he was appointed as a member of the Committee to select members for the Indian Frontier Services. In the same year, he was appointed honorary Advisor for Tribal Affairs for NEFA. An important development of the political evolution of Arunachal Pradesh was the introduction of the Panchayati Raj system in NEFA.

On 20 January, 1972, the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh was formally inaugurated; the year also saw the introduction of adult franchise in the area and all the Panchayat bodies were made fully elective.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the emergence of NEFA
- Describe the Nehru-Elwin Policy

- Discuss the Panchayati Raj
- Describe the formation of Union Territory

8.2 BIRTH OF NEFA

In this section, you will learn about the developments that led to the birth of NEFA.

8.2.1 Bardoloi Committee

Arunachal Pradesh in the year 1947 was an area of small population comprising various tribes, which was devoid of any developed means of communication and without the means of modern development. As mentioned above, the British considered and kept the area not only as backward and underdeveloped but also a buffer zone between the growing Chinese power and the British Empire of India. Thus, this area remained uninfluenced by any modernizing influence and traditional socio-political administrative institutions continued.

The Constituent Assembly that met for the purpose of drafting the Constitution of India was deeply influenced by the British legacy in so far as the administration of the tribal areas, was concerned. The Tribal Sub-Committee, popularly called the Bardoloi Committee, influenced by the British legacy, discussed in detail the issue of the tribal areas especially of North East India. It is interesting to note that the concepts of 'excluded' and 'partially excluded areas' that evolved during the debate on the recommendations of the Simon Commission of 1928 were incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935, and the Governor (of Assam) was given additional powers to make regulations for these areas.

It is interesting to study the debate that ensued among the members of the Bardoloi Committee over the administration of the tribal areas. Brajeswar Prasad from Bihar opposed to handing over the administration of the tribal areas to the provincial governors. As he pointed out, '. . . Is it politically advisable that the administration of such a vast tract of land should be left in the hands of provincial government, especially in a province (Assam) where there is no element of political stability?' The members of the committee coming from Assam were in favour of integration of the tribal areas with the rest of India, and Rohini Kumar Choudhary pointed out: 'Do you want an assimilation of the tribal and non-tribal people or do you want to keep them separate? If you want to keep them separate, they will join with Tibet, they will join with Burma.' It was pointed out that the 'hill people have not yet been assimilated with the people of the plains of Assam and the future of these hills new seem to lie in absorption; rather the evolution should come as far as possible, from the tribe itself.'

On the other hand, some members of the committee expressed the opinion that the provisions of 'excluded' and 'partially excluded areas' should be maintained, and that ways and means should be evolved to bring the tribal into the mainstream gradually. Jaipal Singh presented two obvious solutions that he called 'power solution' and 'knowledge solution'. Gopinath Bardoloi tried to distinguish between respective material and social progress of different categories of tribes. On the one hand, there were the tribes of the plains which were comparatively more advanced, and on the other hand were the tribes of the North-Eastern hills, generally on the northern banks of river Brahmaputra. He proposed that these hill tribes should be brought under the

Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, to be administered as autonomous groups. As he pointed out:

'I am convinced of the fact that the policy pursued by the British Government was a very sound one. I am not at all keen whether Biharis, Bengalis, Oriyas and Assamese are allowed to go into those territories. It is a matter which concerns the defence of the country as a whole. It is an area which is of international importance. Therefore, all the tribal areas should be centrally administered areas. The administration of the tribal areas of Assam shall be carried on by the President through the Governor of Assam as his agent and the provisions of Part VIII of this Constitution shall apply thereto as if such area were a territory specified in Part IV of the First Schedule.'

Briefly speaking, the recommendations of the Bardoloi Committee yielded the following results:

- (i) The acceptance of the principle of 'excluded' and 'partially excluded areas' though the names were changed. The 'partially excluded areas' were to be called Plain Tribal Areas whereas the 'excluded' areas were to be called Hill Tribal Area.
- (ii) The appointment of the External Affairs Ministry as the administrative agency for the President of India.
- (iii) The appointment of an Advisor to the Governor of Assam who was entrusted with direct responsibility of administering the Tribal Areas.
- (iv) Autonomous District Councils were created for hill states of Assam and the Governor was given the powers to create new autonomous districts or to increase or decrease the areas of already existing ones.
- (v) The consent of the Governor was made mandatory to pass any regulation passed by autonomous councils.

The plain areas of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hill District and Mishmi Hill Districts were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Government of Assam. The Committee also recommended the protection of tribal rights on land and forest and also tribal customs and traditions. It sought economic and administrative integration of the area allowing the scope for cultural plurality to co-exist with them. While remaining silent over the issue of 'Inner Line' the Committee emphasized the importance of controlling the immigration of non-tribal into the hills.

We see, therefore, that the Bardoloi Committee brought into effect the British policy of administration in this area. No attempt was made to bring the area into the mainstream of the country and no effort was made to introduce any serious political reform in the area. The dawn of independence in 1947 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1950, therefore, did not bring any major change in the political history of Arunachal Pradesh and the British legacy continued. Assam still remained the dominant power and enjoyed the benefits of development at the cost of the hills of Arunachal Pradesh.

2.2 Nehru-Elwin Policy

The year 1954 was important in the history of Arunachal Pradesh. This area was reconstituted and renamed as North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA). The units of administration were re-grouped and named Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap

and Tuensang. The Tuensang Division was merged with Nagaland in 1957. The NEFA was only an administrative unit and not the proper name of the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

It should also be pointed out that both Nehru and Elwin were to work within the framework provided by the Constitution of India and, therefore, did not make any new policy decision towards this state. Rather, they laid down certain guidelines for the implementation of the policy framework already framed in 1950. As has been pointed out by Dr. Elwin himself:

Many of the matters... have been put completely out of date as a result of one major circumstance – that the whole of India, including tribal India, will be covered by Community Development Blocks by 1963. ...it is, therefore, meaningless to discuss whether it is desirable to bring the tribes into the stream of modern civilization or whether it is good or bad to open up their country. Whether they like it or not, they are going to be civilized, their country will be opened up.

It deserves to be mentioned that Elwin and to a great extent Nehru were not the kind of planners, who thought only in terms of current or/and short-term politics; both of them were unique in their own ways and one thing in common was that they were great visionaries. The former was a philanthropist, an intellectual, a Gandhian, and the latter was a socialist; combined together, they represented a policy of growth and development with humane touch at its best at the ideological level. In the 'Foreword to the Second Edition' of the book by Verrier Elwin, *The Philosophy for NEFA* (Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Directorate of Research, Itanagar, 1959 (reprint, 1988), Jawaharlal Nehru writes that the question of our policy in the tribal areas has often come up before us. The policy should be on the general lines indicated in the book. We cannot allow matters to drift in the tribal areas or just not take interest in them. At the same time we should avoid over-administering these areas and, in particular, sending too many outsiders into tribal territory. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions. It is between these two extremes positions that we have to function. Development has to take place in various dimensions, such as communications, medical facilities, education and better agriculture. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected. At the end Nehru writes, 'We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.'

It needs reemphasis that the process of assimilation and integration, economic, political and cultural relationship between the hills of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam of the pre-colonial period was disrupted during the British period and especially after the imposition of the Inner Line Regulation. In addition to the Regulation, the British policies also led to isolation and retarded contact and reduced the feelings of integration with the mainstream. As Nehru rightly pointed out: 'Apart from our lack of initiative, we were not allowed to go there by British authorities then in power. That is why our freedom movement reached this people in the shape of occasional rumours.'

And further:

'...the people of North-East Frontier had been conditioned differently during the past generation and even in more recent years. The fault lay partly with us and partly with circumstances.'

When India became independent and a new constitution was adopted in 1950, the major issues before the government were to evolve guidelines and policies that

would not hurt the tribal emotions; and at the same time it would bring gradual peace and integration of these people with the rest of the country. The policy-makers realized fully well that the process was going to be a slow one and it will take some time to bring perceptive and synchronization between the tribal and the rest of the country.

The Report of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Elwin was submitted during the year 1960-61. It was pointed out in the Report that:

'We stand on the threshold of a new era. The tribal people prepared to make an entry into the era with other members of the family. The only thing they expect is that the changes should not destroy the harmony of their life, and the contact should not result in suppressing their distinctive identity.'

There were three different views with regard to bringing about modern developments:

- (i) According to the first school of thought, the tribal should be kept in a state of isolation, maintain their separate and unique identity. This school advocated that tribal should not come in contact with the rest of Indian population.
- (ii) The second opinion was that there should be an immediate and complete assimilation of the tribal population with the rest of the country and that there should not be any special status or reservation for them.
- (iii) The third opinion was a compromise between the first and second approach. It was assumed that national integration was possible without forceful assimilation of tribal people. It was possible to bring them into the mainstream while at the same time allowing them to maintain separate cultural identity. Behind the same the historical element of pluralism of Indian culture was pointed out, that is, peaceful co-existence of many cultures and races since the beginning of Indian civilization without the use of any force.

It was under these circumstances that the Nehru-Elwin policy towards the North Eastern Frontier Provinces was formulated. This policy is perhaps most fully articulated in the monograph, *A Philosophy for NEFA (op.cit.)* by Verrier Elwin, an anthropologist who was influential as the Advisor on Tribal Affairs for NEFA. The keystone of this philosophy is the idea that development should not be imposed from outside, but should emerge out of the culture, priorities, self-confidence and decision-making traditions of indigenous communities.

The Philosophy of NEFA emerged out of Gandhian notions of village-based development that emphasized the integration of traditional crafts into a modernizing economy and the integration of material and spiritual development. It also embodied the most idealistic period of social democratic thinking under Nehru. Nehru's words should 'develop along the lines of their own genius'. G. Das in his book *Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in Transition* (Delhi, 1995) provides an assessment of the policy.

Critique of the Policy

Keeping in view the condition of the then Arunachal Pradesh, there was some justification in the Nehru-Elwin policy. The area was still backward with hardly any modern means of communication; literacy was rather low and there was no administrative machinery. It was wise, therefore, to reactivate or to give sanction to the traditional system of administration through village councils. Similarly, the post

of Kotoki was given administrative sanction and for some time to come these Kotokis acted as intermediaries between the administration and the local people. A simple form of administration called 'Single Line Administration' was adopted for this area. All this was happily received by the people and the new form of administration was accepted without any opposition.

The policy framed by Nehru and Elwin for the NEFA was appreciated by all and things went on smoothly for a couple of years. All this, however, changed after the Chinese Aggression of 1962. Both Elwin and Nehru came under attack for this policy and were accused of wanting to keep the tribal as museum specimen. The critics failed to realize that before independence there was hardly any development in NEFA and the area was kept backwards due to the British policies. Nehru and Elwin did not want to take a sudden leap and wanted that there should be gradual but steady development in this area. Therefore, if the Chinese were successful in the area in 1962, it had nothing to do with the policy laid down by Nehru and Elwin. There was no development of social welfare schemes and technical services prior to 1950, and time was required to achieve all this.

Keeping in view the then prevailing circumstances in NEFA, the policy adopted by Nehru and Elwin cannot be outrightly rejected. In fact, that was the best possible policy that could be adopted at that time. What rendered the policy a failure was the Chinese aggression of 1962, and, it would not be wrong to suggest that Nehru could not recover from the shock.

Impact of the Chinese Aggression and After

The Chinese aggression of 1962 proved to be a landmark in the history of NEFA. For the first time the area acclaimed international recognition and people from the mainstream became concerned about it. The march of administration was quickened and serious thinking began regarding the reorganization of the administrative set-up of the area. As a first step, NEFA, which was administered under the Ministry of External Affairs, was transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India from 1 August, 1965. Likewise, from 1 September of the same year, the five Frontier Divisions were reconstituted into five districts, namely, Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap. The administrative set-up was also enlarged and streamlined. Posts of Political Officers, Assistant Political Officers-I and Assistant Political Officer-II were created. Officers at the headquarters were named as Deputy Commissioners, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Extra Assistant Commissioners and Circle Officers. One or more administrative units were carved out of the five districts and the new administrative set-up was as follows:

1. Kameng District

- (a) Bomdila under Deputy Commissioner.
- (b) Tawang under Additional Deputy Commissioner.
- (c) Seppa under Additional Deputy Commissioner.

2. Subansiri District

- (a) Ziro under Deputy Commissioner.
- (b) Daporijo under Additional Deputy Commissioner.

3. Siang District

- (a) Along under Deputy Commissioner.
- (b) Pasighat under Additional Deputy Commissioner.

4. Lohit District

(a) Tezu under Deputy Commissioner.

(b) Anini under Additional Deputy Commissioner.

5. Trip District

(a) Khonsa under Deputy Commissioner.

It may be pointed out that the Additional Deputy Commissioners, who were drawn from the I.F.A.S (Indian Frontier Administrative Services), enjoyed almost equal powers as that of the Political Officers in their respective jurisdictions. These officers were virtually independent and communicated directly with the Secretary at Shillong.

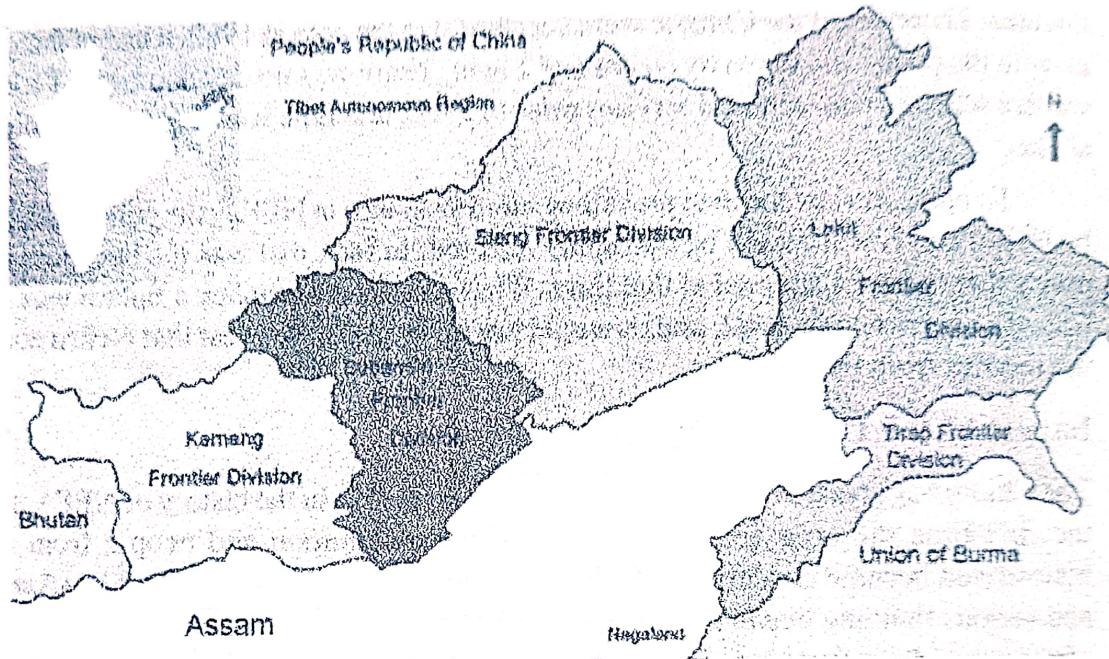


Fig. 8.1 Divisions of NEFA in 1963

It is interesting to note that after the Chinese aggression in 1962, the public opinion in Assam demanded that NEFA should be integrated with Assam, as provided for in the Constitution. The Chief Minister of Assam, B. P. Chaliha called for greater co-ordination between the two states and called for the exchange of administrative cadres. Hem Baruah, Member of Parliament from Assam, started a press campaign for the integration of the two. The introduction of Assamese as a medium of instruction and one of the subjects of study were demanded. These and some others are published in the book *The Outlook on N.E.F.A.* (compiled by Parag Chaliha, Asam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat, 1958). Finally, the matter was put to rest with the intervention of Jawaharlal Nehru, who pointed out that any sudden change in the policy would be unrealistic and inadvisable. He also rejected the plea for the withdrawal of the Inner Line Regulation on grounds that it would not be in the interest of the security arrangements in this area and that it would unnecessarily disturb the tribal population. It may be mentioned here that prior to 1972, there was no civil policy in the area and the duties were discharged by the Assam Rifle personnel who basically served as frontier guards. It was entrusted with the additional duties of protecting the newly established administrative units as well as maintaining peace between the tribes. The Chinese aggression also led to hastening of the process of road construction, beginning of educational and other developmental institutions in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

Realizing the importance of people's participation in the administration, the Ering Commission was constituted on 11 April, 1964, and the announcement to this effect was made by Lal Bahadur Shastri in Parliament. The Committee was chaired by Shri Dying Ering, the then Parliament Secretary. Other members of the Committee were Shri B. D. Pandey, Brig. D. M. Sen and Shri L. Thanga. The circumstances under which the Commission was constituted can best be summed up in the words of Prof. V. Venkata Rao:

'There was no legislative assembly to make laws for the good government of NEFA. NEFA was represented by one member in the Lok Sabha, nominated by the President. Laws made by the Assam Legislative Assembly were not applicable to NEFA. Laws made by Parliament were automatically applicable to NEFA unless there were specific orders against the application. Thus, except village council which existed from time immemorial, there was no representative institution in Arunachal.'

The major task before the Commission was to examine the scope and pattern of authority of the indigenous institutions. The relevance of these institutions and the scope for improvement were also to be considered so that they could be associated with judiciary, administration and local development. Briefly speaking, the committee was required to submit recommendations over the following issues:

- The type of democratic bodies suitable at the village level and above.
- The extent and nature of the jurisdiction of these bodies.
- The phase in which the recommendations of the Committee might be put into force having regard to varying stages of development of the different tribal group.

The Commission started its work in May 1964 and the report was submitted on 4th January 1965. The first meeting of the Commission, after the members had made an extensive tour of NEFA and interviewed people and officials at various levels, was held in Shillong and was attended by the Governor of Assam too.

The Report of the Ering Commission has never been in public scrutiny. It is, however, believed that the Commission had suggested major changes both at the administrative level and traditional local government. The changes suggested at the administrative level were not very drastic and were accepted without much debate or amendments. However, the changes suggested in the local government visualized a departure from traditional norms in many ways; in other words, new concepts of democratic decentralization unknown to the people were to be introduced. The major recommendations of the Commission in this regard can be summed up as follows:

- At the village level, there should be a village council. For this purpose, it was suggested that the existing village councils should be recognized. In the matter of election to these councils, preference was to be given to customary laws.
- On the next level, above the village councils, there should be Anchal Samitis in each circle. The Sub-Divisional Officer should be the ex-officio Chairman of these Samitis in their respective jurisdiction. The Anchal Samitis should be entrusted with developmental functions.

- Over the Anchal Samitis, on the next higher level, should be Zilla Parishads that should replace the then existing District Development Committees. These Parishads, it was suggested, should consist of 24 to 30 members. The Deputy Commissioner was to be the Chairman of these bodies.
- The Commission finally suggested that Agency Council should be established at the highest level. The Agency was to consist of 20 members—each district to be represented by 4 members.

Besides the above major recommendations, various other counsels were put forward by the Commission. It was suggested that the village headman should be a representative in his respective regional council (Anchal Samiti) or else he should have the right to nominate the same. The Anchal Samiti should meet at least four times a year. Each Anchal Samiti would send three elected members to the Zilla Parishad. It was felt that the tribal had the feeling that their loyalties and responsibilities were limited only to their own tribes; the Commission, therefore, suggested the development of multi-tribe institutions to change the concept of ethnic loyalty. It was also recommended that a language policy for NEFA should be formulated. There should be a recognized medium of instruction and up-to middle or primary level, three-language formula should be adopted. It also suggested removing the office of Political Interpreters since they had no function in the new set-up. It was proposed to merge the IFAS services into IAS cadre and a special pool for services in these areas should be created. From the above account it is clear that the Ering Commission addressed the problem of participation of the tribal people in the process of state making and bringing them into the mainstream of national politics. This was, however, not a simple task since naturally or deliberately – as was clear from the British policies in the region prior to 1947 – the tribals were compelled to maintain their loyalties towards the clan and family and their political vision was confined to the clan. It is important to note that the word ‘Panchayati Raj’ was never used in the Ering Commission Report; however, the pattern suggested by the Commission and its structural framework were in line with that of Panchayati Raj in other parts of the country.

3.1 Estimate of Dying Ering Commission

The Dying Ering Commission was the first serious attempt by the Government of India to address the problems of NEFA. Earlier attempts by Nehru, Elwin and some others were more on the intellectual and philosophical level than at the practical one. Ering and his teammates, for the first time, tried to review the tribal problems in NEFA in realistic terms, and for the purpose did extensive homework before finalizing their reports. Son of the soil as he was, Ering had an in-depth knowledge of the working of tribal mind and could understand their problems in the correct perspective.

The recommendation of the Commission for the creation of Agency Council to be imbibed in Panchayati Raj was of deep significance since in the years to come this Agency was to work as some sort of legislature for NEFA. Further, the Commission proposed democratic decentralization on a national pattern; at the same time, care was taken to integrate all indigenous tribes with a uniform system. The practice of the traditional system of election/nomination at the level of village councils was maintained whereas at the higher level modern election method was introduced. As mentioned earlier, the administration of NEFA was transferred from the charge of the External Affairs Ministry to the Home Ministry on 1 August, 1965, on the recommendation of the Dying Ering Commission.

The Ering Commission, therefore, was a milestone in the history of Arunachal Pradesh. For the first time on the spot social as well as political survey was carried out and it was the first official attempt to think through the aspirations of tribes of NEFA. It gave effect to modernization and attempted at promoting trans-tribal and intra-tribal culture. Whereas, on the one hand the Commission tried to maintain the traditional institutions and customs of the native, on the other hand it tried to evolve methods that would bring the area into the national mainstream; it was a subtle blend of ideological, philosophical and realistic thinking. As Dr. Dubey has pointed out:

'The Ering Commission Report, till date, is the most authentic knowledge about Arunachal Pradesh. It may sound a bit uneasy, but it is the fact that till today this report serves as a guidebook to the administrators of Arunachal Pradesh. Such is the significance of the Report that when one talks or even thinks about any new policy for the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh, he is forced to consult this report'.

§3.2 Panchayati Raj Regulation

The most important outcome of the Ering Commission Report was the introduction of Panchayati Raj in NEFA. On the recommendations of the Commission, the President of India promulgated the North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation (Regulation- III of 1967) that came into force from 2 October, 1968. Until the introduction of the Panchayati Raj, there were no mediating political bodies between externally appointed administrative officers and the customary tribal leadership. The District Administration had the right to appoint *gaon buras*, or village headmen, to settle certain disputes. The introduction of Panchayati Raj aimed at creating power distribution at the local level, between different tribal or ethnic groups, between different economic interests and between the genders. It also aimed at bringing about integration among the various ethnic groups of the region. It was pointed out that:

'The Panchayat in NEFA' will be the prime agency for rural development. It will provide a sound basis for economic and political growth. Secondly, it will provide a workable medium through which the rural people would be able to express themselves on various problems of the area and also to evolve an integrated community approach for solution of problems that concern the entire agency. The Panchayat will therefore not only be a decentralized form of government; it would be much more than that'.

Under the provisions of the Regulation, the traditional village councils of NEFA were accorded the status of Gram Panchayat. Above these Panahayats, there were to be Anchal Samiti, Zilla Parishad and the Agency Council. The Regulation aimed at establishing the Panchayat system of local-self government and investing the various bodies constituted under the Regulation with such powers and authority as might be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. A brief account of the different bodies is as follows:

Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayats were the lowest level of Anchal Samiti and served only as an electoral college. It had hardly any function except for helping the executive from time to time in developmental activities and mobilizing public support for the same. Since these Panchayats were covered under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, Regulation I of 1945, they were separated from village authorities and traditional governing institutions. Gram Panchayats were constituted for a village

or a group of villages with population of not less than 300. Election system in these bodies was introduced and every adult person who was normally a resident of the area was allowed to vote for the election of the member of Panchayat.

Very often, the institution of 'Gaon Bura' (Village Headman) and the Panchayat are intermixed with each other and the former is considered as part and parcel of the latter. However, the institution of Gaon Bura was created under the provisions of Regulation - I of 1945. The Deputy Commissioner was authorized to appoint these village headmen, and as a symbol of appointment, they were given a 'Red Coat' that denoted authority. They were also empowered to take up petty cases of criminal nature. They enjoyed great powers in regard to civil suits. The village Panchayats, on the other hand, came into being, as mentioned, through the Regulation of 1967. Thus, these Panchayats and indigenous institutions like 'Kebang' of the Adis or 'Buliang' of the Apa Tanis are two separate institutions and are guided by two different regulations. As stated above, the Gram Panchayats were formed to serve as the 'electoral college'. At the time of the introduction of Panchayat Raj, there were 938 Gram Panchayats in NEFA.

Anchal Samiti

Above the village Panchayats were the Anchal Samitis constituted by notification vide Section - IV of the Regulation - III of 1967. Contiguous areas in a district, as deemed fit by the Governor, were declared to be a block. It was to be a unit of self-government at the block level and was to have the following members:

- One representative elected by the members of each Gram Panchayat within the jurisdiction of a block.
- One representative from cooperative societies situated within the block as *ex officio* member.
- Five persons nominated by the Deputy Commissioner from among the members of unrepresented tribal communities.
- The Sub-Divisional Officer of the sub-division as *ex officio* member.

The members of the Samiti were to hold office for a period of three years but the deputy Commissioner had the powers to extend this tenure. A member was allowed to seek re-election to the body. The Governor reserved the right to remove any member and his behaviour was not in public interest. The Sub-Division acted as the President of the Anchal Samiti. The Vice President was elected by the members from amongst themselves in the first meeting. He could be removed from office by a no-confidence motion passed by not less than two-third majority.

The Anchal Samiti held its meetings, as far as practicable, quarterly for discussions about the development and forwarded the resolution to the Governor for necessary action. Any member of the Samiti was competent to move resolutions and put questions on matters concerned with administration. The heads of various departments or their representatives also participated in the meetings for preparation or suggestions pertaining to their respective departments. The President of the Anchal Samiti was empowered to convene a general meeting of all the members of Gram Panchayat falling within his jurisdiction to review the action taken by the Samiti during the preceding year and to present proposals for the following year.

These Anchal Samitis were an important unit of planning and development, and it was through this unit that various developmental works for the block were

canalized. They were empowered with certain executive and financial powers for taking up schemes for the improvement of health and hygiene, roads and communication, education and culture of the people. In 1968, the total number of Anchal Samitis was 38 that increased to 44 in 1972.

Zilla Parishad

The Zilla Parishad was the highest unit of local-self government at the district level and was to be constituted by the notification of the Governor. It consisted of the following members:

- The vice-Presidents of all the Anchal Samitis in the district as *ex officio* members.
- One representative of every Anchal Samiti in the district who was to be elected by the members from among themselves.
- Not more than six persons to be nominated by the Governor on the recommendation of the Deputy Commissioner from out of the tribe that had not got any representation in the Zilla Parishad.
- The Deputy Commissioner of the district was the *ex officio* President of the body.

As mentioned, the Zilla Parishad was the supreme body in finalizing the plans and programmes of the district, and with this consideration in mind, all the heads of the developmental departments were *ex officio* members of the body. This was an advisory as well as coordinating body; its main function was to advise the Governor on all matters concerning the activities of the Gram Panchayats and Anchal Samitis within the district. It also reviewed the work of the Anchal Samitis from time to time and advised them on certain matters as deemed proper.

Agency Council

At the apex of the new political setup, there was to be the Agency Council that was constituted in accordance with Chapter - IV, Section - 57 of the NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation of 1967. This body was to be an advisory body for the entire NEFA area to be constituted through notification by the Governor. It consisted of the following members: i) The Governor; ii) The Member Parliament representing NEFA; iii) The Vice Presidents of the Zilla Parishads; iv) Three representatives from each of the Zilla Parishad to be elected by its members; and, v) The advisor to the Governor as *ex officio* member.

The main functions of the Agency Council were:

- Matters of administration involving general issues of policy related to NEFA.
- The Five Year Plans and the annual plan approach for the development of NEFA.
- Proposals for undertaking legislations for NEFA with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- Any other matter deemed proper by the Governor.

The Governor was to preside over the meetings of the Agency Council that was to meet at least once a year. The members had the right to ask questions pertaining to matters of public interest in NEFA. If the Governor so deemed, he could call the meeting of the Council at any time.

3.3 Critique of the Panchayati Raj

The Panchayati Raj was thus introduced in the then NEFA on 2 October 1968 incorporating the recommendations of the Ering Commission with some modifications. The Agency Council functioned very efficiently and the deliberations were conducted in a mature and constructive manner. Administration was closely associated with the elected representatives of the people. The 1st session of the Agency Council was inaugurated by B K Nehru, Governor of Assam, Nagaland and Meghalaya on 3rd December 1969 at Raj Bhawan, Shillong. The second session was held on 10th and 11th August 1970, the third on 6th and 7th February 1971 and the fourth on 12th and 13th August 1971.

It may be pointed out that the Panchayati Raj Regulation was an administrative arrangement and did not signify any major political change in NEFA. It was regarded as a 'foreign concept' by many, and, as such, it had to face criticism. It was looked upon as yet another step towards constitutional separation of NEFA from Assam, though the declared aim of the Constitution itself was complete integration of NEFA with Assam in due course of time. Dr. Verrier Elwin, who had always supported the maintaining of tribal identity and tribal ways, pointed out that the introduction of the Panchayats was a threat to the traditional system of village councils.

The main objective of the introduction of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh was to modernize the political system of the area and to remold it on national lines. It also aimed at involving the local people in the developmental process of the area and the combined effect of the two was supposed to bring about modernization of socio-political philosophy in NEFA. The primitive and almost static society of the region needed some instrument for change and for this social engineering; Panchayati Raj was thought to be the best instrument.

To a considerable extent, the measure was successful in achieving its objective. As Dr. Talukdar has pointed out:

'In the villages, the Panchayats have set in motion a number of changes in the political operatives of *kebang*.'

It is suggested that prior to the introduction of the Bill, the political loyalties were confined to the clan or village level and age was respected in political decisions. The Panchayati Raj acted as an agency of social transformation to change the value system of society and to activate national objective. Introduction of adult suffrage through this Bill significantly affected the hierarchically organized tribal society. Earlier, the individual was subordinate to the clan or the village, but after the introduction of suffrage, individualism began to gain importance. Dr. S Dubey points out that after the introduction of Panchayati Raj, 'There is an overall trend in social change towards freeing the individual from traditional restraints and restricting human relations in place of hereditary and traditional authority. In consequence of such social changes, the backward tribal groups have started imitating their higher tribesmen style of life.'

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the Panchayati Raj has failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people and, instead, has led to inequalities in the society. Mr. Tanya Dabi, an influential public leader of the Siang District points out that: 'Despite the high ideals, the functioning of Panchayat in Arunachal Pradesh is not satisfactory, for, some undefined attitude prevails till today (1986) on the part of the authorities. There is too much of official domination. The powers and functions of the Panchayats are in total grip of *Ex-officio* President, Executive Officer and the representative of the administration.'

He further adds: 'In summary, the function of Panchayati Raj in Arunachal Pradesh is ridiculous, confusing and fails to serve the purpose of the system for which it was created. It is observed that approval of resolutions or plans and programmes resolved by the meetings of Anchal or Zilla Parishad is (*sic*) at the mercy of the representatives of the administration.'

It may be said in conclusion that the introduction of Panchayati Raj in NEFA was done with sincere intentions and the authors were truly concerned with the welfare of the ordinary masses. They had the sincere desire to bring this area into the national mainstream, and to foster nationalistic feelings into the minds of the people. And the fact cannot be denied that the Panchayati Raj has definitely brought rapid transformation in society. Old values have gradually given way to new and the outlook has widened. The myopic vision has given way to permissive outlook in matters of regional and national importance. Through the Panchayati Raj, people have been able to step into modern political civilization gradually and without being totally uprooted from their traditional culture and customary way of life.

On the other hand, there is some truth in the utterances of Mr. Dabi and the like, for the Panchayati Raj has created some problems in the area. First of all, the *Raj* has led to the destruction of the traditional institutions and customary laws, whereas the newly imposed system has partially failed to do justice to the people. In many cases, the local village councils have ceased to function, but the new institution is also demanding. The common man is thus deprived of justice. Moreover, the new judicial procedure is too complicated for the common man to understand. There is also a slackening in the tribal ethos of corporate and communal life that is being replaced by individualism. Dr. Dubey has pointed out: 'There is an emergence of the new elite classes like Gram Panchayat Members, Anchal Samiti Members, Zilla Parishad Members, who have virtually led an invasion upon traditional village councils. There are crafty attempts to politicize every decision delivered and every issue taken for deliberation by the Council.'

4 FORMATION OF UNION TERRITORY

As pointed out earlier, the Panchayati Raj regulation did not bring any change in the political status of NEFA, and it continued to be governed by the Governor of Assam. Also, the Panchayati Raj was not intended to bring any major change in the political organization of this state, and it continued to be controlled by the Governor of Assam. The opportunity for constituting the North Eastern Frontier Tracts into a separate political unit came with the reorganization of the northeastern states in 1971. Already, the Agency Council had proposed that the name of NEFA should be changed; and, as suggested by B D Shastri, the Director of Research Department, 'Arunachal Pradesh' was proposed to be the new name. In the same year, Indian Parliament passed a number of regulations and enactments that propelled the area towards political integration. The North-East Area (Reorganization Act), the 27th Constitutional Amendment Act, the Indian Union Territories Act, and the like were passed by Parliament with a view to change the political set-up of North East India.

As a result of all these measures, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh were separated from the province of Assam. Arunachal Pradesh now became a union territory with a Chief Commissioner. The post of the Advisor to the Governor of Assam was elevated to the status of Chief Commissioner and K.A.A Raja became

the 1st Chief Commissioner of Arunachal by an order of the President of India dated 21 January, 1971. The Act also provided the state with one seat in Lok Sabha and one seat in Rajya Sabha, and both these seats were to be filled by nomination by the President on the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner. The representation to the Lok Sabha from Arunachal Pradesh was also increased to two members and both these members were to be elected like other parts of India.

Appointment of Councilors from the five districts of Arunachal Pradesh with a view to help the administration was another important step towards the political evolution of the state. Regulation-IV of 1971 Act laid down that five councilors from among the members of the Pradesh Council would be appointed by the Chief Commissioner with a view to give equal representation to all the five districts. Accordingly, P K Thungon from Kameng, Tomo Riba from Siang, Tadar Tang from Subansiri, Sobeng Tayeng from Lohit and Wangpha Lowang from Tirap districts were appointed as Councilors on 6 October, 1972. It is significant to note that these councilors had no individual or joint responsibility because the government of Arunachal Pradesh at that time was not a parliamentary form of government in the true sense. The recommendations made by these Councilors were advisory in nature and the Chief Commissioner was not bound to accept any of them.

The whole idea behind the creation of the posts of Councilors was to provide an opportunity to the local people to get trained in the art of the modern political system. It may not be wrong to suggest that these Councilors served as probationers in responsible government. It is significant to observe that the relations between the Chief Commissioner and the Councilors were always cordial and the former normally listened to their advice. There was not a single occasion when the councilors and the Chief Commissioner parted company in disagreement. In fact, the Councilors were *de facto* ministers of the union territory.

The Third session of the Pradesh Council, held at Khonsa from 7th to 10th June 1973 was significant for the political developments in Arunachal Pradesh. In the session, the council resolved that a full-fledged Legislative Assembly be constituted in the union territory of Arunachal Pradesh. Acting on the recommendations of the Council, a committee, known as the 'Bhanot Committee' was constituted by the Government of India to look into the matter. On 26 January 1974, the Chief Commissioner, K.A.A Raja informed that the Committee had recommended the constitution of a Legislative Assembly in the union territory. Subsequently, in 1975, the Pradesh Council was converted into a Provincial Legislature. It was provided that the Legislature would have 30 members to begin with. The post of the Chief Commissioner was converted to that of Lt. Governor. Elections to the Legislative Assembly were held in February 1978 along with the rest of the country. On 14 March, 1978, the first ever elected council of ministers headed by Prem Khandu Thungon took the oath of secrecy. It is significant to note that, on popular demand, the union territory acquired the status of a full-fledged state on 20 February, 1987 and the number of the members of Legislative Assembly was raised to 40. In September 1988, the strength was further increased to 60.

ACTIVITY

Write a report on how the administrative growth of Arunachal Pradesh has affected its social circumstances. Has there been real improvement? You may conduct a survey by interacting with inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh.



DID YOU KNOW

PT. NEHRU'S PHILOSOPHY

It was Pt. Nehru who gave his philosophy for the development of NEFA to bridge the hiatus between the mainstream India and isolated people of Arunachal Pradesh. This state has been most peaceful state in the North Eastern region of the country. Pt. Nehru gave five fundamental principles for the administration of tribal areas. The principles are:

1. People should develop along the line of their genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage, in every way, their own tribal rights and culture.
2. Tribal rights on land and forests should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside the state will no doubt be needed especially in the beginning but we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into the tribal territory.
4. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with multiplicity of schemes; we should rather work through and not as rivals to their own social and cultural institutions.
5. We should judge not by statistics or the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The process of political development in Arunachal Pradesh has been a rapid process and the entire development has taken place within a short span of 35 years or so (i.e. from 1952 to 1987).
- Arunachal Pradesh has traversed many centuries with the span of three and a half decades. It remains for the social scientists to analyse the merits or demerits of these political developments and their impacts upon the development of the poor and weaker sections of the society. It is also to be analysed that the areas closer to the administrative headquarters and the societies having education in early days have monopolized the fruits of the political and economic developments.
- The plain areas of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hill District and Mishmi Hill Districts were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Government of Assam.
- The Dying Ering Commission was the first serious attempt by the Government of India to address the problems of NEFA. Earlier attempts by Nehru, Elwin and some others were more on the intellectual and philosophical level than at the practical one.
- The most important outcome of the Ering Commission Report was the introduction of Panchayat Raj in NEFA. On the recommendations of the

Commission, the President of India promulgated the North East Frontier Agency Panchayat Raj Regulation (Regulation- III of 1967) that came into force from 2 October, 1968.

- The Gram Panchayats were the lowest level of Anchal Samiti and served only as an electoral college. It had hardly any function except for helping the executive from time to time in developmental activities and mobilizing public support for the same. Since these Panchayats were covered under the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, Regulation I of 1945, they were separated from village authorities and traditional governing institutions.
- Above the village Panchayats were the Anchal Samitis constituted by notification vide Section - IV of the Regulation - III of 1967. Contiguous areas in a district, as deemed fit by the Governor, were declared to be a block.
- At the apex of the new political set-up, there was to be the Agency Council that was constituted in accordance with Chapter - IV, Section - 57 of the NEFA Panchayati Raj Regulation of 1967. This body was to be an advisory body for the entire NEFA area to be constituted through notification by the Governor. It consisted of the following members: i) The Governor; ii) The Member Parliament representing NEFA; iii) The Vice Presidents of the Zilla Parishads; iv) Three representatives from each of the Zilla Parishad to be elected by its members; and, v) The advisor to the Governor as ex officio member.
- The party system and the ideological commitments of the politics are yet to gain solid footings in Arunachal Pradesh. Yet the political development of the state is remarkable and credit must be given to the people who have adapted themselves so quickly to the new set-up and the contribution of Nehru–Elwin policy to shape the growth and development.

6 KEY TERMS

- **Autonomous:** Not controlled by others or by outside forces; independent
- **Ethos:** The characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as seen in its beliefs and aspirations
- **Ex officio:** By virtue of one's position or status

7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Assam
2. Governor
3. When India became independent and a new constitution was adopted in 1950, the major issues before the government were to evolve guidelines and policies that would not hurt the tribal emotions.
4. True
5. The administrative set-up of the Kameng district was as follows:
 - (a) Bomdila under Deputy Commissioner.
 - (b) Tawang under Additional Deputy Commissioner.
 - (c) Seppa under Additional Deputy Commissioner.

6. Ering Commission
7. The most important outcome of the Ering Commission Report was the introduction of Panchayat Raj in NEFA.
8. Anchal Samitis
9. Zilla Parishad
10. The North-East Area (Reorganization Act), the 27th Constitutional Amendment Act, the Indian Union Territories Act, and the like were passed by Parliament with a view to change the political set-up of North East India.
11. Provincial Legislature

8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Give two examples of results that the recommendations of the Bardoloi Committee yielded.
2. What were the three different views with regard to bringing about modern developments in the Northeast?
3. State two impacts of the Chinese aggression.
4. What were the main functions of the agency council?
5. How has the panchayati raj brought about rapid transformation in society?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the birth of the NEFA.
2. Discuss the Nehru–Elwin Policy.
3. What was the scenario of the panchayati raj in Arunachal Pradesh?
4. Write a short note on the attainment of the union territory of Arunachal Pradesh.

9 FURTHER READING

- Amrendra Kr Thakur. 2008. 'Historical Studies of Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview', in R. Bezbaruah, P. Goswami and D. Banerjee (eds.), *North-East India Interpreting the Sources of its History*. New Delhi: I C H R and Aryan Books.
- Elwin, Verrier. 1957. *A Philosophy for NEFA*. Gyan Publishing House, Arunachal Pradesh.

UNIT 4 TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Agriculture and Supplementary Economy
 - 2.1 Sedentary Cultivation
 - 2.2 Mixed Agriculture
 - 2.3 Hunting, Fishing and Trapping
- 3 Exchange – Forms and Routes
- 4 Production of Utilitarian Items
 - 4.1 Weaving
 - 4.2 Cane and Bamboo Work
 - 4.3 Smithy
 - 4.4 Pottery
 - 4.5 Wood Carving and Carpentry
 - 4.6 Miscellaneous Handicrafts
- 5 Pattern of Land Ownership
- 6 Impact of the British Rule
 - 6.1 Post-colonial Economic Conditions
- 7 Summary
- 8 Key Terms
- 9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 10 Questions and Exercises
- 11 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

Arunachal Pradesh has undergone constitutional changes in its evolution to attain statehood. The then North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) came into being as a Union Territory on 20th January 1972. The state acquired an independent political status and ceased to be a tribal area within the state of Assam.

The state plan is largely dependent on central assistance as the scope of internal mobilization of resources is limited in view of low tax base. However, central assistance to the state plan has been declining in real terms due to cost escalation and burden of non-plan expenditure. As a result, planned development activities of the State Government have been affected adversely and remained almost stagnant for the last few years. These trends need to be reviewed and reversed. The expenditure of the state has been rising sharply compared to its growth of revenue.

The state has not been able to contain non-plan expenditure in spite of best efforts. The State has been penalized by not granting adequate non-plan revenue gap grant as the state has not been able to transfer the committed liabilities/maintenance of assets from the Seventh Plan onwards. Major chunk of plan outlays is engulfed by salaries, maintenance of assets and committed liabilities. This leads to the state's limitation to take up new schemes and also to continue financing of ongoing/spill over schemes. As a result, a large number of assets created in the last plan periods have deteriorated resulting in declining productivity. Such projects are not found remunerative and self-sustaining. The assumption that the completed schemes will give enough return for their maintenance has not been realized in the state. If such a

trend continues, the expenditure on committed liabilities/maintenance of assets during Tenth Plan will have to be borne under the Eleventh Plan, unless it is transferred to non-plan.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the agriculture and supplementary economy of Arunachal Pradesh
- Recognize the various forms and routes of exchange
- Interpret the production of utilitarian items
- Explain the pattern of land ownership
- Paraphrase the impact of the British rule on traditional economy of Arunachal Pradesh

9.2 AGRICULTURE AND SUPPLEMENTARY ECONOMY

The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh practised agriculture and crafts of various descriptions for which they had indigenously developed tools and equipment. The tools and the methods of Jhum cultivation (slash and burn) had technology of an incipient type, the use of plough on the other hand was an improvement, which was a revolution in agrarian technology and agricultural production. They used knives (*daos*) and hoes made of bamboo or iron. The use of iron became popular only after the British rule in Northeast India, in the principal tools for agricultural operations. Though the *dao* and the hoe had some variations and differences in shape and size but the basics of these are almost similar among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Sachchidananda in his book *Shifting Cultivation in India* (Concept, New Delhi, 1989) provides us the details of the practices in various parts of India. The book is important for our purpose because in it he talks about various areas of Arunachal Pradesh. Sumi Krishna in her book *Genderscapes: Revisioning Natural Resource Management* (Kali, New Delhi, 2008) observes not only the Jhum but also the problem of women participation in the economic life of tribal societies. She has also studied some of the societies of Arunachal Pradesh.

Ever since the information has been available, we learn that the people were engaged in agriculture and not much is known about the earlier stages of economic life. We do not have any literary or epigraphic evidence to suggest the economic pursuits of the tribal people before the art of cultivation became known to them. One explanation to this can be that, as we have seen in the chapter dealing with the origin and migration of the tribes, almost all the tribes are believed to have migrated to this area in search of agricultural land, which suggests that the art of cultivation was already known to the people when they settled here. It is important to note, however, that hunting was partially prevalent among most of the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh until very recent times, and even today there are traces of it among some of them.

Most of the tribes of this area, with the exception of the Apatani, and to some extent the Monpas and the Sherdukpens, followed the cyclic method of shifting cultivation called Jhum cultivation. This mode of Jhum cultivation was not something peculiar to the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, for the history of shifting cultivation is as

old as the history of agriculture itself. It has been established by archaeological evidences that this type of cultivation was prevalent in the Neolithic period, some 9000 years back. In this form of cultivation, the farmer grows food only for his family and the small surplus are exchanged or bartered. The population is thus self-sufficient and self-reliant with a high degree of economic independence; however, the economy is almost static with little chance of rapid improvement.

Another important feature of the Jhum cultivation practised by the tribal people was that instead of rotation of the crops, the fields were rotated. Primitive type of implements, such as dibble stick or hoe, were used, and short periods of occupancy were followed by long fallow periods. The fields were generally abandoned after three years and the people shifted to another clearing, leaving the old site for natural recuperation. It, however, did not imply that the houses of the tribal were also shifted to the new site.

Though the Jhum cultivation has often been termed as a primitive and outdated form of agriculture, it represented a delicate relationship between ecology, economy and the tribal society. The Jhum fields, the forest area surrounding the village and the natural area provided two alternative sources of subsistence to them. Should the crops fail, due to one reason or another, the forests were tapped by the people for getting food items. The rearing of pigs was an important feature of Jhum cultivation, for the pigs not only cleared the waste, but also functioned as a buffer stock, which were used during the period of scarcity.

Jhum cultivation rather compelled the tribals to build their social organization around the concept of community ownership, community participation and communal responsibility. The basic guiding principle of the community life of the tribe was: 'From each according to his capacity and to each according to his need.' In society, therefore, the old, the infirm, and the widows, had an equal share, and each member of society played his or her role according to their respective abilities.

Generally speaking, the agricultural operations in Jhum cultivation, with minor local variations were marked by the following stages:

1. Selection of the forest land for cultivation
2. Clearing the forest by cutting it down
3. Burning the dried forest wood
4. Worship and sacrifice
5. Sowing of the seeds
6. Weeding and crop protection
7. Harvesting and thrashing
8. Merry-making and feasts
9. Fallowing

Sowing of seeds was generally done during the months of March or April, before the advent of the rains. Evil spirits were worshipped and sacrifices were made before the sowing for a good crop and prosperity of the family. The day of sowing was ceremonial for the entire village. The seeds were generally sown by the digging method which was generally performed by women. One important feature of Jhum cultivation was that the soil was never ploughed and no artificial irrigation was done. The crop was protected from stray cattle and wild animals by fencing the field with bamboos and in many parts; a hut was made in the fields to look after the crop.

Various tribes usually followed the system of mixed cropping. The mixture of these crops varied across tribes within the state; normally, the farmer tried to grow everything that he needed for his family consumption in his Jhum land. Among the food grains, the coarse varieties of rice, followed by millet, maize and small millets were the main crops. Ginger, lime-seed, rapeseeds, pineapples, and jute, were some other crops grown by the tribal people. Among vegetables, potatoes, pumpkins, yams, tapioca chilies, beans, onions and arum were cultivated. Tobacco and indigo were also grown in some areas of the state. The Singphos (one of the powerful tribes living in plains and hills of Assam has the glorious story to tell about their deep-rooted eco-social and cultural aspects in greater Assamese national life) also cultivated tea. The Jhum cycle, as it is generally called, was influenced by various factors such as the pressure of population, texture of soil and the average annual rainfall in Arunachal Pradesh.

2.1 Sedentary Cultivation

Broadly speaking, agriculture, as practised in one place by a settled farmer in which fields are not rotated is called sedentary agriculture. As mentioned earlier, the only tribe in entire Arunachal Pradesh which pursues this method of agriculture is the Apatani tribe. The tribes occupy an area of about 32 sq kms stretch of the narrow valley which is drained by a small river Kele. This area, occupied by the Apatani (tribal group of people living in the Ziro valley in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh), was possibly a lake in the remote past, which is confirmed by the traditions of their community. The agriculture practised by the Apatani provides a fine example of an elaborate and most efficient system of the utilization of the soil.

The principal crops grown by the Apatani are rice, millet, maize, pumpkin, tobacco, pepper, bottle-gourd, beans, potatoes and ginger. Except for rice, all these crops are cultivated on the dry land and the kitchen gardens. Rice is cultivated on the wet terrace land where artificial and natural water is available. There are varieties of rice which are cultivated and are classified according to early or late harvesting varieties. The system of irrigation developed by the Apatani with the help of the primitive tools, such as small iron hoes, sharpened wood and bamboo hoes, animal bones and horns, is really remarkable. Water from Kele River and other streams is diverted by a network of channels to the rice fields. Commenting on the system of irrigation of the Apatani, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (an Austrian ethnologist) has pointed out, 'The cornerstone of Apatani agriculture is the cultivation of rice on irrigated terraces.' He further adds: 'Every one of the larger streams rising on the wooded heights that ring the Apatani country is tapped soon after it emerges from the forests and reaches a gully wide enough to accommodate a series of narrow terraces.'

Like all other tribes of the state, agricultural operations of the Apatani are fully dependent on human labour. It is rather paradoxical that the method of the tillage of the tribe remained primitive in that no plough was used by them till recently and that they depended exclusively on human labour. During winter, the Apatani built and rebuilt the dams, channels of irrigation, fences of grooves and gardens and artificial manure was spread from the pits. Rice crops were seeded in the nursery during February and March, and in the month of April, May all types of crops were transplanted. The fields were weeded out at least three times, and from the last part of July harvesting started and continued till November.

Various tribes usually followed the system of mixed cropping. The mixture of these crops varied across tribes within the state; normally, the farmer tried to grow everything that he needed for his family consumption in his Jhum land. Among the food grains, the coarse varieties of rice, followed by millet, maize and small millets were the main crops. Ginger, lime-seed, rapeseeds, pineapples, and jute, were some other crops grown by the tribal people. Among vegetables, potatoes, pumpkins, yams, tapioca chilies, beans, onions and arum were cultivated. Tobacco and indigo were also grown in some areas of the state. The Singphos (one of the powerful tribes living in plains and hills of Assam has the glorious story to tell about their deep-rooted eco-social and cultural aspects in greater Assamese national life) also cultivated tea. The Jhum cycle, as it is generally called, was influenced by various factors such as the pressure of population, texture of soil and the average annual rainfall in Arunachal Pradesh.

2.1 Sedentary Cultivation

Broadly speaking, agriculture, as practised in one place by a settled farmer in which fields are not rotated is called sedentary agriculture. As mentioned earlier, the only tribe in entire Arunachal Pradesh which pursues this method of agriculture is the Apatani tribe. The tribes occupy an area of about 32 sq kms stretch of the narrow valley which is drained by a small river Kele. This area, occupied by the Apatani (tribal group of people living in the Ziro valley in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh), was possibly a lake in the remote past, which is confirmed by the traditions of their community. The agriculture practised by the Apatani provides a fine example of an elaborate and most efficient system of the utilization of the soil.

The principal crops grown by the Apatani are rice, millet, maize, pumpkin, tobacco, pepper, bottle-gourd, beans, potatoes and ginger. Except for rice, all these crops are cultivated on the dry land and the kitchen gardens. Rice is cultivated on the wet terrace land where artificial and natural water is available. There are varieties of rice which are cultivated and are classified according to early or late harvesting varieties. The system of irrigation developed by the Apatani with the help of the primitive tools, such as small iron hoes, sharpened wood and bamboo hoes, animal bones and horns, is really remarkable. Water from Kele River and other streams is diverted by a network of channels to the rice fields. Commenting on the system of irrigation of the Apatani, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (an Austrian ethnologist) has pointed out, 'The cornerstone of Apatani agriculture is the cultivation of rice on irrigated terraces.' He further adds: 'Every one of the larger streams rising on the wooded heights that ring the Apatani country is tapped soon after it emerges from the forests and reaches a gully wide enough to accommodate a series of narrow terraces.'

Like all other tribes of the state, agricultural operations of the Apatani are fully dependent on human labour. It is rather paradoxical that the method of the tillage of the tribe remained primitive in that no plough was used by them till recently and that they depended exclusively on human labour. During winter, the Apatani built and rebuilt the dams, channels of irrigation, fences of grooves and gardens and artificial manure was spread from the pits. Rice crops were seeded in the nursery during February and March, and in the month of April, May all types of crops were transplanted. The fields were weeded out at least three times, and from the last part of July harvesting started and continued till November.

2.2 Mixed Agriculture

In the context of Arunachal Pradesh, by the term 'mixed agriculture', we mean the system of agriculture in which both the Jhum cultivation and the sedentary cultivation are practised by some of the tribes. It should not be confused with the type of agriculture which involves crops as well as livestock. The mixed type of agriculture is practised mainly by the Monpas and the Sherdukpens of the Kameng district. In this area, therefore, the pattern of ownership of land also presents two-fold aspects. Land under permanent cultivation is owned privately while that under shifting cultivation is communal land. The agricultural operations in these areas are not easy. The labour put forth in agriculture is great as the soil is hard and rocky. Private lands are tended with great care both by the Monpas and by the Sherdukpens. Manuring is resorted to in all earnestness in order to preserve the fertility of the land.

One important aspect of the agricultural operations of these two tribes is the use of wooden ploughs drawn by cattle. In Arunachal Pradesh, traditionally, plough was used only by four tribes, namely, the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Singphos, and the Khamptis. Terracing of the private land on the mountain slopes is done with great care to prevent soil erosion and to get level patches as far as the lie of the ground permits. The leaves of oak trees are extensively used for making manure. The land is hardly left fallow and the main crops are wheat and barley in winter and maize in summer. Millet is grown by the Monpas as Jhum crop.

2.3 Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

Similar to the entire human race, hunting was the earliest occupation of the tribal of Arunachal Pradesh before they took up agriculture as a permanent means of livelihood; although, as pointed out earlier, it appears that when the various tribal groups migrated to this area, they had already learnt the art of cultivation and did not depend exclusively on hunting. It provided an alternative and supplementary means to the food supply. During recent times, hunting, despite losing much of its economic importance, had a greater social significance. As Dr Elwin has pointed out, '...hunting and fishing is something more than a search for food: it is a religious activity involving strict taboos; on the success or failure of a ceremonial hunt will depend the success or failure of the harvest; the horns of an animal, the bones of a big fish, are hung up in the hunter's house, and it is a taboo to desecrate them.'

Hunting in the society of Arunachal Pradesh is organized in two forms: one collectively/community and the other individually. Collective hunting and fishing are part of the tribal life. The time and place of such expedition were usually fixed by the village councils, since they were the concern of the village community as a whole. This tribal community hunting is a remnant of the remote past. Hunting in every tribe is supported by traditions and social sanctions. The hunting expeditions were generally undertaken during the months of November and December when the harvesting was over and the people were rather free from agricultural pursuits. Whenever the people succeeded in killing an animal, it was equally distributed amongst themselves. The organization of group hunting was informal and was done with the help of the dogs. Poisoned arrows were used for the hunting. Divination was generally undertaken before any such hunting expedition which was carried out only if the outcome of the divination was favourable. Trapping was another way of catching wild animals, big or small, by the tribal. Various tribes collected good catches from the hidden traps which were laid by the individuals. A number of these traps were in common use and

worked on the principle of lever-release. Birds, rats and squirrels were caught and killed in smaller traps. No individual was allowed to disturb the traps laid down in the forests by others. This prerogative was so strictly adhered to that the offender had to pay the traditional fine of a pig. One type of trap for big game was fixing of a big log of wood above the path of wild animals. When an animal passed under it, the mechanism by which the log was fixed gave away and the log fell on the animal. Small traps, like a bow-shaped nose trap or a falling stone trap were employed for catching porcupines, bares, squirrels and other animals.

Fishing also plays an important role in the economic lives of the people of Arunachal Pradesh even today. Fishing is done either by the community or by the individuals. Normally speaking, most of the tribes make dams over the rivers for collecting the fish. These dams are made of wood and bamboo and are tied with cane. Conical baskets are used for trapping the fish. Poison, too, is used by most of the tribes for catching fish in shallow water. It may be noted here that unlike hunting, both men and women participate in fishing in one way or the other.

It may be noted that most of the tribes smoke and dry the surplus catch of the fish, which is then consumed in the lean period. In fact, fish is such an important item of food that in past it often led to dispute between the tribes of the hill and the plains people. The Adis, for instance, claimed an absolute right over all the fish found in the rivers flowing through their areas; this claim of theirs was even recognized by the Ahom Government.

3 EXCHANGE – FORMS AND ROUTES

We have discussed some of the aspects of trade, trade routes, participation of the people of Arunachal Pradesh in the trade activities and changes in this practice during the British period. More important are the modern researches which are mentioned and when consulted will give a comprehensive idea of the same. All these writings clearly prove the notions of 'isolation of the tribes', and 'primitive economy', inappropriate for the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. To avoid repetition, we are not discussing the same in this unit. We begin our discussion here citing Dr Verrier Elwin. In his book *A Philosophy for NEFA* (Itanagar, 1959, pp. 9-10), he has also rightly pointed out that, 'The Sherdukpens and the Akas have, for generations, traded with the foothills, and the plains. There is much inter-tribal commerce in northern Siang. The Monpas, Khambas and the Membas trade with Tibet, the Tangsas with Burma. The Mishmis bring down musk and a febrifuge, the *coptis teta* (which contains valuable alkaloid berberins) as well as skins, textiles and baskets to barter in the plains.' Amrendra Kumar Thakur in his book *Slavery in Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi, 2003) provides in detail slave trade among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and the neighbouring areas.

Pliny, giving an account of India in the 1st century AD, refers to the river Brahmaputra and export of silk products from China to Greece through the mountains of present Arunachal Pradesh and Brahmaputra valley. Chinese writers Chang Kien (200 BC) and Kai Tan (8th century AD) described the ancient routes coming through the eastern parts of Arunachal and connecting China with the plains of Assam. At a subsequent time, numerous other routes were opened into China through Burma, Bhutan and Tibet, and not only the people from the plains but also the hill tribes—the Adis, the Nishis and the Mishmis in particular—were responsible for the early commercial contacts for the trade carried out through their areas. Alberuni, in his book

Kitab-ul-Hind written in the early part of the 11th century, also refers to the trade routes between Assam, Tibet and China. *Tabaqat-i-Nasir* by Minhajul-Siraj (13th century AD) gives us an account of the trade contacts of Assam with Tibet through various passes in northern Assam. Most of these passes were bound to pass through Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly, *Fathfya-I-Ibriyah* by Shibabuddin Talish refers to the musk-deer and the elephants in the hills inhabited by the Miri and Mishmi tribes. Xinru Liu in her book *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges AD 1-600* (OUP, New Delhi, 1988) also provides information regarding trade items and trade routes.

The tribes used various passes in the Patkai ranges to have access to Burma and the Choukam Pass was an important pass between Assam and Burma. From Sadiya, as many as five passes served as outlets to China and Burma from upper Assam, among them the Dipung Pass, Mishmi route and the Phungan Pass were frequented by traders between China and the present-day Arunachal Pradesh. The passes of Arunachal Pradesh were also used by the traders of Assam for the purpose of trade. The existence of these various trade routes, passing through the land of the tribal, inevitably contributed to the economy. The people of Arunachal Pradesh became the partner in the trans-Himalayan trade carried out between Assam on the one hand and Tibet, China and Bhutan on the other.

The Adis carried out trade with their neighbours, the people of Assam in the south and the Tibetans in the north. Most of this trade was carried out by barter. The Ramos, the Bokars, the Shimongs and other Adi clans of the North traded with Tibet in articles like, swords, brass bowls, woolen clothes, rock-salt, and beads. These were imported in return of chillies, rice, and colour dyes. Dr T. Nyori has given a detailed account of the system of trade that was carried out between the Adis and the Tibetans in his work *History and Culture of the Adis*. The Adis of the eastern part of Siang had trade relations with Assam from where they imported salt, utensils, clothes, *daos*, beads, cows, goats, woolen yam and exported chillies, ginger, animal skins, elephant tusks, musk, wax, rubber and other articles.

Trade with Tibet was carried out through Gestreng, Paying, Kaustheng, Niging, Mangu, Dele, Tungkur Lego Pass and Elling, reaching a place called Nayi Lube in Tibet where a regular trade market was held. There were other trade routes, which ran from Gelling via Yortong to Pomed. Another route came through the Mishmi Hills and after crossing the Abroka pass, reached Karka and Riga villages. In the lower region, there were a number of trade routes and a number of trading centres were there at places like Sadiya, Sissi, Dhemaji, and Majorbari. The Adis of Siang followed the trade route from Pangin to Pasighat along the right bank of the River Siang and the Adis on the left bank of this river came through the route from Damroh and Adi Passi area passing through Padu, Silli, Bodak and then crossing the Siang river to Pasighat. In addition to the trade with Tibet and Assam, trade was also carried out between the Miris and the Adis.

The Akas traded with Bhutan to the north-west and in the south, their trade was carried out with Assam. Clothing, warm blankets, *daos*, swords, and silver ornaments were imported from Bhutan and the payment was made in cash. The money was received from the plains of Assam which was obtained from selling rubber and fowls. Iron, salt, cotton and silk goods were bought from the plains of Assam. The common trade route of the Akas was the tribal track which went from village Jamiri to Bhalukpung situated at the border of Assam. Large number of Akas visited the plains of Assam through this route.

Both the Nishis and the Apatani had trade relations with the people of Assam and Tibet in addition to the inter-tribal trade relation amongst themselves, from very early times. The entire trade was based on barter system and money was not used. The Nishis went to Tibet for trade and the articles which they exported were hides, skins, musk, rice, salt etc. From Tibet, they bought wool, blankets, bronze or brass vessels, bells, beads, ponies, wax, etc. The Apatani bartered Tibetan rock-salt, swords and other articles of Tibetan manufacture. The Tagins regularly went to Migytum, a regular trade market in Tibet, for the barter of their goods. Cane was also exported to Tibet which the Tibetans required for making baskets. One of most important articles of trade was musk obtained from the nasal of musk-deer.

Tibetan *daos* were very much valued by the Apatani and were used on ceremonial occasions. Most important item imported from Tibet was the woolen clothes. Tibetan coats, hats and sometimes fur-caps were purchased by the people. The Tagins, for instance, both men and women used to wear red coats of wool imported from Tibet.

Trade relations existed between the tribes Mishmis and the Khamptis with Tibet as well as with Assam from very early times. Trade was also carried out with Burma. The Taraan Mishmis inhabited the Hills from Brahma Kund to the borders of Tibet and they regularly traded with that country. The articles they carried with them included musk-pods, hides, skins, furs and various kinds of barks and roots and Mishmi teeta. They bought from Tibet, cattle, brass pipes, gongs, woolen goods, copper vessels and beads etc. Likewise, the Ramans carried on trade with Zayul district in Tibet. Both the Taraons and the Ramans went in groups across the border to Tibet from time to time. Likewise, large groups of Idu Mishmis also traded regularly with Tibet. The Mishmis exchanged their bih (poison), galtewan (an odoriferous root), manjeet (madder), and teetah (a bitter root), for Lama cattle, brass pipes, gongs and copper vessels.

Money was used by the tribals as a means of exchange many a times. Coins from Tibet were brought and used for further trade or for making ornaments.

In addition to the trade with Tibet, regular trade was carried out by the Mishmis and the Khamptis as well as Singphos with the plains of Assam. The Mishmis bartered musk-pods, musk-deer skins, honey, mishmi-teeta, etc., for salt, yam, tools, utensils, etc. The Mishmis of even remote area visited the markets at Sadiya and Saikhowa regularly during the winter season.

A limited amount of trade was carried out by the Khamptis and Singphos with Burma. They traded in ivory, elephants and opium. The Kaman Mishmis also carried on trade with the people of Khampti-Long in Burma and visited the place. Inter-tribal trade was carried out on a limited scale. The Mishmis exchanged their goods with the Singphos and Khamptis. The Mishmis also traded with the Adis to whom they supplied textile-fabrics of various kinds. Mithuns were supplied to the Mishmis by the Adis in exchange for coats, helmets, bags, etc. Almost entire inter-tribal trade was carried out through barter. The people had developed an elaborate system of barter in which animal heads were used as currency.

The Noctes and the Wanchos of the Tirap district had trade relations with Upper Burma from very early times. Bhamo, a very big trade centre on the banks of river Irrawady, attracted a large number of the Nocte and the Wancho traders, who carried their merchandise for exchange or sale through the passes across the Patkai ranges of mountains. In exchange for handloom products, tea-leaves, salt, beads, etc., the tribal imported *daos*, iron implements, fishing nets, spears, and in some cases, Burmese garments. One of the main items of trade was opium, which was traded mainly amongst the Singphos and the Kachins of Burma.

4 PRODUCTION OF UTILITARIAN ITEMS

In Arunachal Pradesh, the main handicraft items are made up of bamboo as a raw material. It is an important raw material for tribal artisans. Wool is also an important raw material. Carpet making and weaving are the other important occupations of the people there.

4.1 Weaving

Nothing can be said with certainty about how and when the art of weaving started among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. In this regard, the myth prevalent among some of them is important; to begin with the discussion on weaving. It is believed that the 'Donyi-Polo' (Sun-Moon God) taught the art of weaving to a female deity. The deity was prayed by Abotani, the ancestor of the tribe by offering a rich sacrifice. Being pleased with the sacrifice, the deity appeared in a dream to Abotani's wife and showed her how to weave. Thus, weaving started among a number of tribes of the central Arunachal Pradesh. The looms which are used by most of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are very simple in their construction and are smaller compared to the looms used in the other parts of the country. The two little upright sticks of any sort driven into the ground, and one loosely tied across the offside, to which the woof was wound, another similar one being in front and looped to a band, against which the weaver leaned back to pull it tight. A huge flat paper/bamboo-knife seemed to complete the arrangement; being some four inches wide, it when placed on edge, open out the strings enough to allow a little ball of thread to pass through.

The Adi women are good weavers and have the colour choice and designs of their own. There are designs of red and black stripes on white background and white or yellow stripes on a black background. The traditional Galong cloth is white with broad rectangular design across the centre. The Padam-Minyong skirt is usually yellow or crimson with a number of coloured bands. Different shades are achieved by mixing threads of black with other colours. Dr Elwin has commented that 'The cross, is so popular among the Adis as a tattoo mark and as a decorative design on coats imported from Tibet that Father Krick (who visited them in 1851) supposed that they had once been converted to Christianity and had relapsed.'

The Monpa and Sherdukpen women are also very skillful weavers. The Sherdukpens mainly weave attractive coloured bags with beautiful designs which are called *bogre*. Influenced by Buddhism, this *bogre* invariably has a Swastika figure in the centre around which are woven different patterns such as the eyes of a yak, pigeons, face of a sheep or, in some cases, the Tibetan flag. The Monpa shawls and coats have a variety of stylized animals, cleverly suggested with a minimum of lines. The Monpas and the Sherdukpens are perhaps the only two tribes who have been influenced by the outside world in their weaving. The influence of Tibet and Bhutan is clearly evident in many of the items produced by these two in their looms. Tibetan style of dress can easily be detected in the entire Kameng district. Carpet weaving has been one of the most important activity of the Monpas for a long time. Amrendra Kumar Thakur has studied some of their features in 'Ecology, Technology and Societies of Arunachal Pradesh' in *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, 31st session, Tura, 2010, pp.103-114.

The Apatani are also very advanced in the art of weaving and make beautiful multi-coloured shawls with borders, skirts and loin cloths. They use indigenous dyes to

colour the thread for weaving in yellow, black and red. Certain taboos are associated with Apatani weaving. For instance, women must not weave for sometime after an important sacrifice, after death or after the community rites in order to avoid the displeasure of the spirits. The Nyishis are also expert in weaving; it may be mentioned here that quite a large amount of cotton is grown by them. The fabrics used by the Nyishis are of two types, namely cotton fibre and the indigenous fibre made of vegetation etc. A spindle is used, made of bamboo, for the preparation of yam from cotton. Like the Apatani, dyes are prepared from creepers and local plants.

The looms used by the Khamptis are slightly larger in size compared to those used by other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, but the basic design is the same. The Mishmis are also expert weavers and produce beautiful clothes with rich designs. They make textiles which are of remarkable artistic and cultural value and display workmanship of a very higher order. The Mishmis mostly produce loin and waist cloths, jackets, aprons, coats, shawls, skirts, bands, belts, etc. Natural dyes are used for colouring the fibre. The Singpho women are also very expert in the art of weaving and their skirts are often woven in large broad horizontal bands of red and blue. Most valuable specimens of the weaving of the Singphos are turbans and handbags, besides other clothes of daily use.

The Tangsas are very skillful in the art of weaving and their women produce hand-bags of diamond cut designs, bags of mixed colours and skirts woven in red, white, black and blue colours. They also use geometrical patterns in making ceremonial dresses, which show their artistry and skill in weaving. Amongst the Wanchos, weaving is confined only to the families of the chief, who display a keen sense of colour combinations and designs. In addition to the dresses of daily use, the Wancho women produce cotton blankets and sashes. Contrary to most of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, regarding the practice of weaving, the Noctes did not develop the same. The art of weaving was not popular among them in the past. The clothes of various types from Assam and other neighbouring areas were easily exchanged from salt produced by the Noctes. Salt was the most sought after commodity. This aspect has been explained by Amrendra Kumar Thakur in his article 'Salt: Source and Struggle in Arunachal Pradesh', *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, 30th session, Nagaon, 2009, pp.124–136 in detail. Thus, weaving was practiced by almost all the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh with exceptions. Generally it was the exclusive domain of the women of the societies.

4.2 Cane and Bamboo Work

The cane and bamboo work is practiced throughout Arunachal Pradesh by every single tribe of the state. Initially, the cane and bamboo were natural forest products, subsequently grown for increasing personal and commercial usages. Being natural in product the cane and bamboo have been common materials to be used for the construction of dwelling, furniture, utensils, bridges and other necessities of daily life.

The Adis like most of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have been making their bows and arrows, variety of baskets, haversacks, bamboo jugs, and cane hats of different sizes and shapes. They also made shields of cane to be used in the warfare. The Apatani made fine mats of cane as well as bamboo. A wide variety of cane-belts are also made by them. Cane and bamboo are to be found in plenty in the Nyishi area and as such, are widely used by them. Bamboos of different kinds are used for making vessels for bringing water, mugs for carrying and keeping beer, spoons and plates. They also make tongs and pipes for smoking from bamboo. These two items are also used for making weapons for

war and chase. For the Nyishis as well as the Apatani, a bag of cane for carrying food and other articles are also made of cane. The Nishi women use various ornaments made of cane such as tight-ankle bands and rings.

In the Lohit district, cane and bamboo work is an important household industry. Baskets of different sizes are made of bamboo for the purposes of agriculture, fishing, hunting and domestic use. Most of the utensils and containers are made of cane or bamboo. The basket commonly used by women is hexagonal in shape, round at the mouth and nearly rectangular at the bottom. Another finely woven basket of twilled pattern is used as food-grain container. Winnowing fans for husking rice and baskets for storing grains are strongly made with bamboo splits. Smoking pipes, bows and arrows are also made of cane and bamboo.

The Noctes, Wanchos and the Singphos are expert in cane and bamboo work. They mainly produce bamboo hats, jugs, trays, tea-cups, containers, mats, baskets and a number of other items. Utensils and other articles such as raincoats, leggings, armlets etc., are also made of cane and bamboo. The Noctes make bamboo rain-shields, sticks and spears fringed with dyed goat's hair and helmets and hats of fine cane strips. The Tangsas make baskets of open hexagonal form called *salai*. The mats made by the Wanchos were greatly demanded by the people of Assam in the past. The neck-laces made out of grass by the Wancho women depict their fine craftsmanship. In the Tirap district, all the tribes make morhas or cane stools as furniture item for their house.

As a matter of fact, the art and industry of the tribal people find a vivid expression through their fine work in cane and bamboo, which is of high artistic and utilitarian value. *Daos* and swords are fitted with beautifully woven bamboo and cane handles by all the tribes. In agriculture, bamboo is used for fencing and for making handles of spades, axes and dibbles. Poisonous bamboo is used for making traps for large animals. Cane and bamboo is also used for tying, making of strings and ropes and for decoration. The cane and bamboo work was practiced in such a large scale by the tribes of Arunachal that even the Akas, the Mijis and the Buguns, who developed no other craft, practiced it extensively. Though metals and plastic utensil have made inroads into the societies cane and bamboo products are still popular and most of the time they are not the items of daily use but also part and parcel of rites and rituals and the cultural life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

4.3 Smithy

Smithy, either in iron or silver, was popular among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Though the use of iron in plough was not popular, its use in other agricultural implements and weapons was common. Most of the iron which was required for the purpose was brought from the plains of Assam and also from Tibet, except the Singpho-Khampti area where iron ore was not only available but also the tribes had the technology to covert the ore into pig iron and refashioning it into weapons especially *daos*. The tools used by the blacksmith were crude and primitive, but they served the purpose very well. The Adis were expert in this craft and produced small knives, *daos*, swords, spears, arrowheads, etc. Air was pushed to the hearth through a bamboo piston placed in these two tubes. The Nyishis had amongst them skilled craftsmen. They made *daos*, knives, etc., and had earned a good reputation for their work. Their professional skill gave these workers a special recognition and people went to their houses to get their articles of their requirement. The Apatani smiths, in addition to the iron implement, produced iron bracelets as ornaments.

The Mishmis had their own blacksmiths who forged a great number of *daos* and knives annually. However, they depended on other tribes and nearby plains for their silver ornaments and articles. The silver tobacco-pipes were generally made by the Galos. The slaves of the Khampti masters were expert and renowned for extraction of minerals and smelting iron. However, the masters worked in silver. The society forged their weapons and ornaments. The Singphos understood the smelting of iron and produced excellent *daos* famous for their temper and durability. It may be interesting to note that some of the tribes, such as the Singphos and the Mishmis were expert in making the muzzle-loading gun. Amongst the Akas, the weapons required by them were produced locally but the silver ornaments which the women used were made in the plains of Assam. Various *Gazetteers* published so far and the writings of Verrier Elwin provide us valuable information on this aspect of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Amrendra Kumar Thakur in his works 'Technological Progress in Pre-Colonial Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview' in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 66th Session, Delhi, 2006, pp. 797-808, 'Technology of the Tribes of Northeast India with Special Reference to Arunachal Pradesh' (*op.cit.*) and 'Metal Culture in Pre-Colonial Arunachal Pradesh', in *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, 29th session, Dibrugarh, 2008, pp. 260-68 has discussed the developments in metal works and metallurgy also provides detailed discussion on the same.

4.4 Pottery

Due to clay type, durability and climatic conditions the potteries were not very popular among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. If the wheel turn ones were popular in the very limited areas of the foothills (Nakshaparvat and Bhishmaknagar) the other type beating and heating was prevalent in most of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. B. Tripathy in his article 'Ancient Potteries and Traditional Potters Craft in Arunachal Pradesh', *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, 22nd session, Tezpur, 2001, pp. 83-92 has given the details of the developments in the field of potteries in areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The Adis used earthen pots called *kanya pichi* which were made from a particular type of clay called takam. The Nyishis had a device of making earthen pots through a crude process of drying and baking lumps of clay. These pots made by the Nyishis were used only for cooking and were bartered for cereals or fowls. The Apatani have a tradition of making attractive clay models of animals which were used as toys. Significantly, pottery amongst the Apatani was confined to the village of Michi Bamin, and there also only to certain clan. In the Nocte area, earthen ware vessels were made on a small scale in the villages of Laju, Dadam and Kheti and had a good demand in the neighbouring villages. The manufacturing process was; labouring and the progress was slow, but the pots made by them were quite remarkable. The Monpas, Khambas and the Membas used to make images of Lord Buddha out of clay in addition to vessel. It must be noted here that like the craft of weaving, the craft of pottery was exclusively pursued by the women.

4.5 Wood Carving and Carpentry

Despite rich forests having a variety of woods, the use of wood in the household articles and the art of carpentry is rather rare in Arunachal Pradesh; may be because the tribal found it more easy to work in cane and bamboo and also because the tools for carpentry were not very easily available to them. A few tribal societies had carpenters who worked mainly to meet their household requirements. A few of the Buddhist tribes like the Monpas and Sherdukpens practiced carpentry and used wood for making doors, boxes, tables,

benches, saddles etc., for their use. The Wanchos, Noctes and the Tangsas also had some carpenters amongst them who made fairly good doors, shelves and windows for their houses. The other tribes had very little interest in wood and it was rarely used by them.

Some of the tribes of the area, though not very outstanding in carpentry, developed the art of wood-carving which was of a remarkable quality. This art was popular and was used as a part of their culture by a number of tribes, in particular, the tribes influenced by Buddhism. The Monpas and the Sherdukpens carved different kinds of masks and painted them differently with colours which they obtained either from the plains of Assam or from Tibet. The Khambas, Membas and the Buguns also carved wooden masks. The Khamptis made embossed shields and were fond of masks illustrating the temptations of Lord Buddha and other themes. Their finest work, however, was their carving of images of Lord Buddha. The Singphos also practiced the art of wood-carving and their priests were their leading craftsmen. They carved twisted snakes, dragons and other monsters on wood.

The finest and most outstanding work in wood-carving is done by the Wanchos, and the Nocte tribes. Amongst these tribes, wood-carving had been associated with their custom of Head-Hunting and the human head dominates almost everything that is made in wood by them. They made tobacco pipes with the bowl shaped and carved in the shape of a head; drinking mugs were made having warriors carved on them, and so on. These tribes of Tirap mostly used the wood of a local tree called Pangmou. The tools which they used were the dao, axe, chisel, saw and hammer. The Wanchos also carved the main pillars of the roof and the horizontal beam running across the front of their morungs with a fantastic rarity of designs representing animals and birds. Dancing couples, monkeys, tigers or frogs eating the moon, elephant etc. were commonly carved out. Many carvings were concerned with some sort of embrace, and the dancing couples were shown with their hands on each other's thighs. The art of wood-carving was also associated with mortuary rituals amongst these tribes, and this form was generally crude.

➤ 4.6 Miscellaneous Handicrafts

The paper-making craft, known to the Monpas, was a very significant technological progress in Arunachal Pradesh. The details of the same is provided by Amrendra Kumar Thakur in his article 'Indigenous Paper in Pre-Colonial Arunachal: A Study on Manufacturing, Trade and other Usage' in *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, Silver Jubilee Session, Shillong, 2005, pp. 255-64. The Khamptis and Singphos did some carving on ivory, horns and bones. Amongst the Singphos this carving work was done by the religious priests. The Wanchos made splendid ornaments of ivory, bone, horns, etc. and all these were often carved. The Singphos, and on a limited scale, the Wanchos, produced tea from the wild tea plants that grew in their area.

The Noctes are the only tribe in Arunachal which produce salt from the brine wells and springs found in the region. This salt was even supplied to the plains of Assam and at times, the plain's people depended entirely on the salt produced by the Noctes. In various *Proceedings of North East India*, *Gazetteers of Tirap District*, writings of S. K. Bhuyan, Narayan Singh Rao, Khetoan Khete and Amrendra Kr Thakur the manufacturing, trade and struggle for the control of salt have been highlighted. Some other details on this aspect have been discussed by Amrendra Kr Thakur in his article

5 PATTERN OF LAND OWNERSHIP

In accordance with the environmental conditions, the tribals evolved their own methods of agriculture, which can be divided into three categories namely: shifting or Jhum, permanent or sedentary and mixed type of agriculture. Accordingly, the ownership of land varied from tribe to tribe depending upon the type of agriculture followed by them. Those tribes which practiced Jhum cultivation and those which had taken to regular settled cultivation, would, naturally have rather different systems of the ownership of land.

In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, we can consider the ownership of land under three broad categories, i.e., the land owned by the village, the land owned by the clan and the land owned by the individual. In the areas where the shifting method of agriculture was followed, all the land as a principle belonged to the clan or the village. In these cases, there was, first the area established by the old traditions and agreements with the neighbouring village, which was regarded as belonging to the village as a whole. It should be mentioned here that in the past, villages used to be co-existent with single clan in Arunachal. All the members of the village were concerned to preserve the boundaries of the land belonging to them which were clearly marked by streams, hills or big trees. The tribal did not generally erect artificial boundaries for everyone knew exactly where they should be.

Almost every village was originally settled by the members of a single clan, who cleared the forests and endured all the hardships. Therefore, the members of this particular clan became the owners of land cleared by them and the title of which passed on to their male descendants. As per the tradition, the subsequent settlers, especially those belonging to other clans, were regarded as tenants on the land, though in actual practice they lived as the full members of the village community. However, the new settler, especially when he was not of the founder clan, was entitled only to use the land as long as he resided on the spot; he could not transfer his holdings to his own descendants without the permission of the village council, and should he go elsewhere, his land would return to the village as a whole. In this manner, a sort of individual ownership of land was established within a communal framework of ownership. Each family acquired the rights over the plot of land which it had cleared initially, and in course of time, each had a number of plots in different parts of the general village area.

It is important to mention here that no land revenue or tax of any kind was paid for the extension of cultivation into the land held in common by the village, nor the new settler was required to pay anything. In other words, land was almost free of cost; but, in fact, there was a considerable investment of time and human labour in every foot of the forest cleared. The rights of the tribal people over the Jhum land were recognized by the Government of India through three Jhum Land Regulations, passed during 1947-48. These regulations gave the tribal population absolute right over their Jhum land, which was defined as all lands 'which any member or members of a village or community have a customary right to cultivate by means of shifting cultivation, or to utilize by clearing jungle or grazing life- stock, provided that such a village or community is in a permanent location.' A village or community was considered to be in permanent location

if it always remained in a specific location, although the whole or a part of it might migrate from time to time in different locations within the specified areas.

The only example of settled regular cultivation of land in Arunachal Pradesh is perhaps the Apatani community, which confined in a comparatively small area, evolved a very strong sense of private ownership of land. Cultivable agricultural land in the Apatani community was and even is, completely privately owned. Dr C. Von Haimendorf, writing in 1944 has pointed out that the Apatani influence and social status depended largely on his property in land. 'Land is the source of wealth and all other and less permanent possessions are mainly valued as a means of acquiring more land.' The Apatani are very meticulous in caring for their land compared to the rest of the tribes of the state, may be because they have a very limited area under them. They do not leave even an inch of land unused. If it is barren for one purpose, it may be used for another purpose. Cultivable land is acquired by an individual mainly by inheritance from his ancestors or by purchase or by developing the forests. In addition to the private land, there is common village or clan land meant for burial, grazing, religious ceremonies etc. The territories of the village are well demarcated by natural features. N. C. Roy and P. K. Kuri in the book *Land Reforms in Arunachal Pradesh*, (Classical, New Delhi, 2001) also provide us information regarding the land ownership pattern in Arunachal Pradesh.

6 IMPACT OF THE BRITISH RULE

British rule had very little impact on the isolated, self-sufficient, in terms of economy and militarily uncontrollable tribal people.

6.1 Post-colonial Economic Conditions

The establishment of the British rule in northeast India changed the economic life of the people of this region and cracks began to appear in the conventional economic system. The impacts over trade practices and *posa* system have already been discussed in other units. The discovery of tea plant in Assam proved to be a turning point in the economic history of the entire region. Added to the tea-plant were the discoveries of coal and the presence of minerals of oil as well as other minerals which added to the economic viability of the region. The spread of the tea gardens to the foothills of Assam borders, however, demanded that the inroads of the tribal on the plains checked and the manner of the collection of *Posa* should be regularized.

In certain cases, this money was saved and used for production activities by the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The Mishmis used to purchase cattle from the money that they saved. In most of the cases, however, after the establishment of the British rule the surplus money was used to purchase 'luxury items' and was not at all invested for economic advancement. The tribal spent this money on English yam, English pottery, beads, etc., and the biggest source of drain was opium. It has been pointed out that opium constituted an important item of purchase by the tribal from the plains. Dr Elwin has mentioned that in one year at the trade fair at Sadiya, the volume of the opium sold out to the tribal amounted to ₹30,300.00. Many tribesmen of this area became addicted to opium during the colonial period.

During the early years of their rule over Assam, the British often gave opium to the tribals as present *so as to make them addicted to it*. S E. Peal, for instance, mentions

that while on a visit to Tirap district, one lady, 'complained to me.... that the *Nats*, or evil spirits, tormented her with pains, so I gave her a little present of opium and departed.' The Adis were also given two seers of Akbaree opium as political gift by an agreement dated 5th Nov. 1862. Capt. Dalton reported in 1852 that: 'Of late they (Adis) have added opium to their crops, and the use of the drug is rapidly spreading amongst them.' The Khamptis got so much used to taking opium that J. Errol had to admit in 1893 that only, 'a small proportion of the Khamptis are abstainers from this drug.' The use of opium gradually became widespread and to some extent the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh became partners in the 'Pagoda Trade' carried out by the colonial rulers. While the major portion of Indian opium was sent to China, a portion of it was sold in the north-eastern states. NEFA being new of them, this opium trade introduced and encouraged by the British, became new of the major sources of the economic drain from this area and prevented any economic development as such.

In the year 1884, the value of the opium sold to the tribal amounted to ₹30,300. This opium trade, as mentioned earlier, had many negative impacts on the economy as well as the social life of this area. Economically, it became the biggest source of drain of wealth from this region. Further, mostly through these trade fairs, the tribal economy became linked up with the economy of the outside world. The valuable tribal resources such as rubber, madder, Mishmi Tita, timber, etc., were largely sought after by the outsiders in these fairs and the tribal lost their natural resources rapidly without having been adequately paid for them. In no case, the money earned from the sale of these items was used for further economic investment. There can be no denial of the fact that the overall impact of the colonial contact on the tribal economy was definitely injurious to the lives of the tribal people. Low scale consumerism began to make its presence felt in the society; individual interests became more important than the group interest or the community interest; acquiring more wealth became an individual passion. All this led to the creation of inequalities in the society and the surplus wealth generated through the trade with the outside world got concentrated in a few hands. There was no marked improvement in the standard of living of the people.

The Inner Line Regulation of 1873 must be mentioned here, which also affected the economy of this area. The details of the Inner Line System and its impact have been studied in the unit concerned. Here, however, it is important to mention that the main motive behind the Inner Line was the protection of the British trade and the Imperial interests. Another economic aspect of this Regulation, which was to become evident much later, was that the outside investment was totally discouraged in Arunachal Pradesh and the state was deprived of the technological advances that generally follow the outside investment. The colonial government, as already said, was never interested in introducing any reform in this area. The overall result was that not only did the economy of Arunachal Pradesh remain backward during the colonial period, much of the natural resources of the state were exploited in addition to the loss of egalitarian social ethos. It is largely due to the impact of colonial rule that the economic considerations which played a restricted part among the tribal, became more important gradually, and it can now be seen and felt almost everywhere in Arunachal Pradesh.

ACTIVITY

Make a collage of Arunachal Pradesh, showing the people, dress, culture, occupations, food, etc.

DID YOU KNOW

Arunachal Pradesh, meaning 'Land of the Rising Sun,' long has been a recognized region of the Indian subcontinent, receiving mention in such ancient Hindu literature as the *Kalika-purana* and the epic poems *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. Formerly known as the North East Frontier Agency (from the British colonial era), the area became the Indian union territory of Arunachal Pradesh in 1972, and in 1987 it became an Indian state. The region, however, has been the subject of an ongoing sovereignty dispute between India and China.

7 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Most of the state land is covered with dense and rich forests. So forest products and industries, based on forest products are the lifeline in the state and provide income and employment to a large number of people.
- Most of the industries in the state are centered round forest products such as timber, veneer and plywood. In addition to forest-based industries, there are tea, cement and petrochemical industries.
- Shifting cultivation known as Jhum, which means collective farming, occupies the central position in Arunachal Pradesh, in the field of agriculture. This is the type of cultivation that is still popular with majority of the people in the area since earlier days.
- Land ownership pattern in Arunachal Pradesh is by and large communal but there is private ownership as well. However, there are no records of rights in the state. No survey and settlement has ever taken place in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The present role of land records is limited, in the sense that there are no land records in the state. Nor is there any law dealing with the land matters.
- The existing land record administration at various levels is rather weak. There is lack of trained revenue officers who could carry out land management and revenue administration.
- The present role of the revenue functionaries is extremely limited. Extremely meager revenue duties are performed by the Deputy Commissioners and by officers like Assistant Commissioner and Circle Officer posted under their control.
- Only a handful of technical personnel like surveyors, supervisors, Kanungos; Mandals and chainman are posted in the district headquarter who cannot cope with either rural or urban survey.
- On the basis of this discussion, we can conclude that the traditional economic life of people of Arunachal Pradesh was developed and developed further during the pre-colonial period.
- However, during the colonial period the British policy adversely affected the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

- **NEFA:** The North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) (formerly the North-East Frontier Tracts) was one of the political divisions in British India and later the Republic of India till 1972, when it became the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Non plan expenditure:** Consists of Revenue and Capital Expenditure on interest payments, defence expenditure, subsidies, postal deficit, police, pensions, economic services, loans to public sector enterprises and loans as well as grants to State governments, Union territories and foreign governments.
- **Remunerative:** Financially rewarding; lucrative
- **Hoe:** A long-handled gardening tool with a thin metal blade, used mainly for weeding and breaking up soil
- **Jhum cultivation:** A local name for 'Slash and Burn' agriculture practiced by the tribal groups in the north-eastern states of India like Arunachal Pradesh
- **Neolithic:** Of, relating to, or denoting the later part of the Stone Age, when ground or polished stone weapons and implements prevailed
- **Dibble:** A pointed hand tool for making holes in the ground for seeds or young plants
- **Fallow:** Cultivated land that is not seeded for one or more growing seasons
- **Singpho:** One of the powerful tribes living in plains and hills of Assam has the glorious story to tell about their deep-rooted eco-social and cultural aspects in greater Assamese national life.
- **Apatani:** Tribal group of people living in the Ziro valley in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Sherdukpen:** An ethnic group related to both the Aka and Monpa
- **Khampti:** A sub-group of the Shan people found in the Sagaing Division, Hkamti District in northwestern Burma as well as Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh.

9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The use of iron became popular only after the British rule in the Northeast India, in the principal tools for agricultural operations.
2. Most of the tribes of this area, with the exception of the Apatani and to some extent the Monpas and the Sherdukpens, followed the cyclic method of shifting cultivation, called Jhum cultivation.
3. An important feature of the Jhum, practiced by the tribal people was that instead of rotation of the crops, the fields were rotated.
4. Sedentary agriculture is practiced in one place by a settled farmer in which fields are not rotated. The only tribe in entire Arunachal Pradesh which pursues this method of agriculture is the Apatani tribe.
5. According to Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, the cornerstone of Apatani agriculture is the cultivation of rice on irrigated terraces.

6. Amrendra Kumar Thakur in his book *Slavery in Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi, 2003), provides in details the slave trade among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and the neighbouring areas.
7. Chinese writers Chang Kien (200 BC) and Kai Tan (8th Century AD) described the ancient routes coming through the eastern parts of Arunachal and connecting China with the plains of Assam.
8. The Adis of the eastern part of Siang had trade relations with Assam from where they imported salt, utensils, clothes, *daos*, beads, cows, goats, woolen yam, etc., and exported chillies, ginger, animal skins, elephant tusks, musk, wax, rubber, etc.
9. In Arunachal Pradesh, the main handicraft items are made up of bamboo as a raw material. It is an important raw material for tribal artisans. Wool is also an important raw material.
10. The traditional Galong cloth is white with broad rectangular design across the centre.
11. The Sherdukpens mainly weave attractive coloured bags with beautiful designs which are called *bogres*.
12. In the Lohit district, cane and bamboo work is an important household industry.
13. The Noctes, Wanchos and the Singphos are expert in cane and bamboo work.
14. In accordance with the environmental conditions, the tribal evolved their own methods of agriculture, which can be divided into three categories namely: shifting or Jhum, permanent or sedentary and mixed type of agriculture.
15. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, we can consider the ownership of land under three broad categories, i.e., the land owned by the village, the land owned by the clan and the land owned by the individual.
16. The only example of settled regular cultivation of land in Arunachal Pradesh is perhaps the Apatani community, which confined in a comparatively small area, evolved a very strong sense of private ownership of land.
17. The establishment of the British rule in northeast India changed the economic life of the people of this region and cracks began to appear in the conventional economic system.
18. The discovery of tea plant in Assam proved to be a turning point in the economic history of the entire region.
19. Opium was the most disastrous item purchased by the tribals.

10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What do you understand by non-plan expenditure?
2. What is Jhum cultivation?
3. What are the stages that mark the agricultural operations in Jhum cultivation?
4. Name the principal crops grown by the Aptani.
5. Define the term mixed agriculture.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a note on the agriculture and supplementary economy of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Elaborate on the various forms and routes of exchange.
3. Explain the processes involved in the production of utilitarian items in Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Describe the pattern of land ownership in Arunachal Pradesh.
5. What was the impact of the British rule on the traditional economy of Arunachal Pradesh?

11 FURTHER READING

- Mackenzie, Alexander. 1984. *The North-East Frontier of India*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi.
- Elwin, Verrier. 1959. *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Elwin, Verrier. 1965. *Democracy in NEFA*, North-East Frontier Agency, Assam.
- Bose, Manilal. 1979. *British Policy in the North-East Frontier Agency*, the University of Michigan, Michigan.
- Chaudhary, J.N. 1983. *Arunachal Pradesh from Frontier Tracts to Union Territory*, Cosmo Publications, Arunachal Pradesh.
- Dutta, S. 2008. *Sources of the History of Arunachal Pradesh*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi.

UNIT 5 TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Indigenous Faiths
- 3 Buddhism
 - 3.1 Mahayana
 - 3.2 Theravada
- 4 Factors of Social Change
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

0 INTRODUCTION

To understand the traditional and religious aspects of Arunachal Pradesh, it is important to understand their religion. The concept of religion has been enriched by scholars working on the aspects of societies all over the world as well as religion across ages. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* provides us different meanings of the term religion, such as: 1. Belief in the existence of a god or gods, who has or have created the universe and given man a spiritual nature which continues to exist after the death of the body; 2. Particular system of faith and worship based on such a belief 3. Controlling influence on one's life; something one is devoted or committed to. To the German philosopher, Karl Marx, 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.' American novelist and naturalist, Theodore Dreiser, said: 'If I were personally to define religion, I would say that it is a bondage that man has invented to protect a soul made bloody by circumstances.'

The *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Routledge, London, 2002) provides a comprehensive development in the studies of religion and the conceptual development of the same. The nineteenth century anthropologists considered religion as often opposed to science, and placed in an earlier position as a universal model of human evolution. The development in the study of religion is seen among the 20th century anthropologists. They freed themselves from the evolutionist assumption of the earlier scholars and studied religion from the perspective of the so-called 'primitive religion'. French sociologist, David Emile Durkheim emphasized upon 'ritual as a kind of collective action in which society celebrates its own transcendent power over its individual members'. The view of Durkheim is known as the 'functionalism'; from the middle of the twentieth century, the attention of the scholars shifted from functionalism to Max Weber's approach of comparative sociology of religion. American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, is also important to be quoted here: 'A religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence

and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.' Geertz emphasizes upon the roles of 'symbol' and 'ritual' in the religion in shaping the ethos of a society and making the worldview seem real, respectively. Maurice Bloch explains this by arguing that the ritual refers to the other-worldly, which is removed from historical events, and that its form of discourse (singing, dancing, use of material objects – activities that have no ordinary referential meaning) also distances it. The rituals provide an ideology in which this world is denied, or hidden, while the other higher world (of the ancestors) is shown to be more real.

These approaches to the study of religion seem to hold good when we try to study the indigenous faith of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Verrier Elwin, in his book, *A Philosophy for NEFA* (Itanagar, 1959) has pointed out five outstanding qualities of indigenous faiths of NEFA. Firstly, there is a very general belief in a Supreme God who is just, benevolent and good; secondly, in the tribal religion there is genuine emphasis on the spiritual realities behind the events of everyday life; thirdly, the tribal religion is built up from an elaborate mythology; fourthly, the tribal religion is associated with a social ethic that unites the tribe in its discipline; and finally, the tribal religion gives the people the power to reconcile themselves in the eternal emergencies of life. The indigenous religion of the people of Arunachal Pradesh is a part of their everyday life, much beyond the shrines or temples; statues and images. It has elaborate social ethical codes that unite the people and foster the tribal qualities of hospitality, truthfulness and integrity.

Besides, the book by Verrier Elwin, the articles and the introduction in the book *Religion in Indian History* (edited with an introduction by Irfan Habib, Tulika, New Delhi, 2007) situate the subject of religion from the ancient period to the contemporary period and the book as a whole is important to understand the horizons of religions in the changing times. The books edited by B. Tripathy and S. Dutta, *Religious History of Arunachal Pradesh* (Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2008) and N. Nagaraju and B. Tripathy, *Cultural Heritage of Arunachal Pradesh* (Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2006) contain articles which also deal with religions of Arunachal Pradesh. A recently edited book by Lalrinnunga Hmar, *Religion, Beliefs and Practices in Northeast India* (Mittal, New Delhi, 2013) is a collection of nineteen articles on the indigenous religions of the people of northeast India, including that of Arunachal Pradesh. This is the first such collection where the indigenous religions of the region is being studied and understood. The discussion on the Nyishi and Aka societies in the book is comprehensive. The articles published in the *Proceedings of North East India History Association* also provide valuable information and insight into the study of the indigenous religions. In the textbook D. Pandey also writes about the religions of Arunachal Pradesh.

This unit will look at the indigenous faiths of Arunachal Pradesh and the factors of social change.

1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the indigenous faiths of the people of Arunachal Pradesh
- Describe the forms of Buddhism popular in Arunachal Pradesh
- Explain the factors responsible for social change

The indigenous faiths of the people of Arunachal Pradesh are more or less recorded now. Initially they were extensively expressed in the form of oral traditions, poems, myths, legends, folklore, folktales and performing arts that are transmitted across generations by word of mouth by priests. The cult of sacrifice was also a dominant feature of indigenous religious practices of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. From the point of view of religion or faith, the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh can be roughly divided into three main groups. In the first place we have tribes like the Nyishis, the Hill Miris, the Apatanis, the Adis and the Mishmis who fall into the category of what has been termed as hereditary — Shamanism. The tribes included in this category have many cultural traits and beliefs including their pantheon of Gods and spirits in common. The second group consists of tribes like the Monpas, the Sherdukpens, the Singphos, the Khamptis, the Membas and the Khambas who came under the influence of Buddhism and their religious life is deeply influenced by this religion. The third group comprises tribes like the Noctes, the Wanchos and the Tangsas of the Tirap region who are related to the Naga tribes to their southwest and had a very strong tradition of headhunting in the past. The religion of the tribes falling into this category can be broadly termed as animism. The book edited by B. B. Pandey and D. K. Duarah, *Myths and Beliefs on Creation of Universe among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* (Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1999) is also an important source to understand the traditional religions of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Hereditary Shamanism Group

The most popular indigenous faith among the people of Arunachal Pradesh is the faith in Donyi-Polo. The people believe that it was at the beginning of this age, some uncountable centuries ago, that *Aane Donyi*, the Cosmic Supreme Authority, spoke to *Aabhu Thanyi* and Her devotees. Her teachings and discourse are one of the greatest philosophical and religious knowledge known to humankind that took place just after the creation of the Universe. *Aane Donyi* grants *Aabhu Thanyi* the divine vision and reveals His spectacular unlimited form as the Cosmic Universe. Thus, *Aabhu Thanyi* conclusively establishes His divinity. *Aane Donyi* explains to *Aabhu Thanyi* that His won all-beautiful humanlike form is the original form of the Supreme Progenitor of human generations; one can perceive this form only by pure devotional service to *Aane Donyi*. These spirits are known as *Uyu*.

The indigenous religious institutions like the *Nyedar Namlo* of the Nyishi, the *Medar Nelo* of the Apatani, the *Kargu Gamgi* of the Galo, the *Donyi Polo Dere* of the Adi, the *Rangfraa* of the Tangsa, and the *Rang O* of the Nocte are believed to be drawn out of this religious philosophical thought and considered as the highest end of spiritual existence ever known to humankind. God is worshipped in the form of a symbolic image of the *Aane Donyi* (the sun and other symbolic objects), which is kept on the raised small platform in a *Namlo* or *Dere* (temples). The worshipper comes to the worshipping place either alone or in a family group, makes his/her offering and then departs. It would be seen that the underlying philosophy of the *Aane Donyi* and the *Aathu Polo* is to emphasize on conjoint action to preserve the *Aabhu Thanyi* religion and culture with pristine ethos within the indigenous community of Arunachal Pradesh. The community also believes that all embodied souls are under the control of the Three Truths or Observances. They are *Aane Donyi* (The Creator), *Aabhu*

Thanyi (Inheritor and Preserver) and the *Swchme* (Mother Earth), the Supreme Abode of all human beings after death. *Swchme* is a dwelling place for living creatures including humans, animal and all living organisms. One or the other day all decadent living organisms are bound to enter into the lap of the *Swchme*. No one can escape from this Truth, whether it is animate or inanimate. This is the Absolute Truth of all souls which is realized in the Three Truths of philosophical understanding by the believer of the *Aane Donyi* and the *Aathu Polo*, and all souls are identical.

Humans have long recognized the Sun's role in supporting life on the Earth, and as a result many societies throughout history have paid homage or worshipped the Sun by giving it a prominent role in their religion and mythologies. According to religious belief and mythological traditions current amongst the indigenous communities the Sun is seen together with the other celestial bodies which move across the *nyedone* (sky). The bodies are called *dokar thamar* (planets). The religious significance of the Sun has its roots in the earliest recorded oral tribal history. The tribal myths personify the Sun as a Mother named *Aane Donyi* who wore a shining crown and have a golden walking stick across the sky, causing day and night. Moon is personified as the Father named *Aathu Polo* or *Aabhu Polo* who drew its cosmic energy from *Aane Donyi*.

The worship of the Sun amongst the tribal of Arunachal Pradesh has its cultural and philosophical origin since migration and settlement of the people in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribal identified the Sun and the Moon with the Supreme Authority of the powerful life giver and source of energy. God in their religion and the visible Sun of the present day are symbolic replica and representative of the supreme deity of the *Aane Donyi*. The tribal practices of indigenous religion have long been cultivated in their customs, and a traditional practice of ritual on a faith line revolves around the Three Truths. The tribe believes in the creation of Universe and worships the *Aane Donyi* as the Creator. She created the *Donyi* (Sun) and the *Polo* (the existing Moon) along with other planetary bodies including the Earth. The centre of philosophy of the *Donyi Polo* religion is called *Hibh Donyi*. The *Gyobh Donyi* means the Creator is far beyond the existing physical Sun and Moon, which had been created to give light and energy to the Universe and other living organisms. Hence, the bodily existence of the Sun and the Moon is merely a symbolic representative of the Creator and objective replica of it. To know the *Chength* or *Swchwignne* (Earth) and the *doth* (space) with innumerable *domar thakar* (stars), the Sun and the Moon are nothing but the creation of the *Aane Donyi* to perform the physical action on Her behalf as Her Agents to give life and energy to humankind. The permanence of these objects is testimony to lively creation and expression of its omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresence. The physical action of the *Aane Donyi* is characterized as *wjwng paanam* (the creation) of air, energy, light, water and life. Here entire act of creation phenomenon is known as *wjwng paanam* or *pabuq naam*.

Spiritual knowledge and wisdom, according to indigenous religious practitioners, may be gained from *nyubu* (priests), religious leaders, sacred knowledge and personal supernatural revelation. Tribal religions view such knowledge as unlimited in scope and sufficient to answer any question; others see religious knowledge as playing a more restricted role, often as a complement to knowledge gained through physical observation. Some *nyubu* maintain that religious knowledge obtained in this way is absolute and infallible (religious cosmology).

A complex system of beliefs in the spiritual qualities of nature and, at the same time, the conception of a Supreme Being are the two important traits which characterize

the religion of this group. The spiritual world of the tribes is dominated by a number of spirits either good or bad. It is normally believed that various diseases, miseries and misfortune are caused by the evil spirits. These spirits have such great powers that they may exert influence on man in his earthly life and after-life too. Also, almost every tribe believed in a Supreme God, who is regarded as just, benevolent and good. *Donyi Polo* or the Sun and the Moon are regarded often as one high God symbolizing eternal truth.

In the Adi religion, there are a number of benevolent and malevolent spirits and deities. These spirits are generally called *Uyu* or *Wiyu*. The main benevolent deities of the Padam-Minyong group of the Adis are Doying-Bote, etc., whereas the malevolent deities are *Robo*, *Taro*, *Banji-Bote*, *Lesi-Letang*, *Biri-Bote*, *Medeng-Mone* etc. The benevolent deities are believed to be nearer the creator whom they call as *Sedi*; whereas the malevolent deities are considered to be closer to the physical world. The Galo group of the Adis believed that there are different deities commanding different spheres of this world. They also hold that the same deity may act as benevolent or malevolent as per the need of the situation. Many of the spirits, according to the Galos, are the descendants of Taki. The Ramo group of the Adis also believes that the malevolent spirits are the descendants of Taki or Riki. They call these deities as Kibo-Rambo.

The Adis also believe that the universe and all the living beings have been created by a supreme natural power or a creator, which is called *Sedi* or *Jimi* by the Padam-Minyongs and the Galos, respectively. It is believed that this Supreme God has created a number of gods and goddesses who in turn have given birth to so many invisible spirits who control the various spheres of human life. It is believed that the entire universe is the physical embodiment of *Sedi* or *Jimi*. The Adi abangs (ballads), narrate that the Sun and the Moon — the *Donyi* and the *Polo* — are the two eyes of the Creator with which he keeps a vigil on the universe and humanity. The name of the *Donyi-Polo* comes next to *Sedi* or *Jimi* in the *abangs*. As per their myth, the creator becomes obscure and silent after the creation. The *Donyi-Polo*, thereafter, becomes the protector or saviour. It is interesting to note that no sacrifice is offered by the Adis in the name of *Sedi* or *Jimi*, the Creator. Since it is believed by the Adis that the *Donyi* and *Polo* are the two eyes of the Creator, forever watching them, they conduct themselves in the name of *Donyi-Polo* to realise the highest order of truth. The Galos believe that *Donyi* is the controller of the fate of men and they worship him for several reasons. There are different opinions regarding the sex of *Donyi-Polo* amongst the various branches of the Adis. Some hold that it is a single deity with a double personality having the functions of the sun and the moon, while some believe that they are two entities, *Donyi* being the husband of *Polo*.

Like the Adis, the Nyishis also believe in the existence of a number of spirits which are called *Wiyus*. They believe that there are *Wiyus* in the jungles, on the lofty hills, on the top of tall trees, in rivers, and inside and outside the houses and these spirits often hurt men. Unlike the Adi belief, most of the Nyishi *Wiyus* are malevolent in character and cause harm to human beings. The most dreaded *Wiyus* are the *Dojing* and *Yapom* who reside in the jungles and take a toll of the human lives as they please by making people fall ill. Similarly, *Jengee* and *Pamte*, *Nyori* and *Pamsi* are known for causing various kinds of fever. A number of these spirits live in the forests that make people miserable by causing fevers and aches, swellings, dysentery and sores. *Parte-Rinte Wiyus* are believed to be responsible for agriculture and, therefore, if a man is to have good crop, these spirits should be pleased. Then there are domestic *Wiyus* like *Rintum Purtum*, *Chirr Yorr*, *Erki*, etc., who look after the welfare of the

family and are given offerings of chicken and fowl. It is very difficult to mention the name of all the *Wiyus* here since their number is very big.

The Nyishis believe in *Ane Duini* (the Sun mother) who is regarded as the Supreme Mother, kind and benevolent. She showers her kindness on society and nothing can be achieved without her will. She gives crops and keeps the granaries filled; she gives children and keeps them well; without her mercy none could get or keep slaves. Generally, no special prayers are offered to *Ane Duini* on ordinary occasions, but on special occasions like marriage, she is given the highest offerings and her name is sung in the songs on all important occasions. Life would have been very difficult, so the Nyishis believe, without the existence of *Ane Duini*.

The Apatanis have a deep-rooted faith in their religion. Like other tribes they too have their own myths regarding creation and the Creator. There is a general belief in one Supreme God who is considered as just, benevolent and good. Donyi-Polo is often regarded as one high God representing eternal truth. The Apatani idea of soul, called *Yalo*, is that a separation of the soul and body takes place at the time of death. *Nelli* is the name given to the village where, as per their belief, all the dead persons go. It is held that an Apatani would live in the *Nelli* as he lived on the earth. Every woman is united in the *Nelli* with her first husband. *Nelli* is also the abode of many gods and spirits. They also believe that all those who die an inauspicious or violent death, go to a different world called *taliniko*, which is situated somewhere in the sky. Two important deities worshipped by the Apatanis are Kiru and Kilo and they are worshipped during the festival of Molko. Chandum and Didim are believed to be responsible for the creation of the earth and the sky. Ui-kascmg and Nia-kasang are the two gods of war. It is important to note that most of their deities are conceived as pairs by the Apatanis and they never invoke them single. Another Apatani myth tells us that in the beginning there was only water. The earth was then created by three female deities called *Ui-Tango*, *Ui-Ngurre* and *Tguntre*, along with their male counterparts known as *Ei-Karte*, *Rup-Karte* and *Ain-Karte*. These six deities are considered to be responsible for the creation of all the trees, plants, birds, animals and even the sun, the moon and the stars. The origin of man is ascribed to Hilo, who is believed to be the maker of Abo Tani, the first ancestor of the Apatanis.

The Akas believe in a number of gods and spirits who rule over mankind. There is a deity who is believed to be responsible for a particular phase of human life. Some of these deities are benevolent while others are malevolent in nature. The higher gods are identified with four major forces of nature, namely, the Sky, the Mountains, the Earth, and the Water. The most important deity of the Akas is *Tcharo* who is the ruler of the human as well as the animal kingdom. He looks after the welfare of human beings and protects their cattle. To keep him happy, he is appeased by ways of sacrifices from time to time. Another important deity of the Akas is *Aphinchi*, responsible for the birth of a child. The deity looking after the cattle of the people is called *Jinte-Phute Muje*. The deity of the wild life is *Pamle-gri*; agriculture is controlled by *Wee-Oesche*; and so on.

The higher Gods, according to the Akas, not only reign over mankind but control the deities as well as natural phenomena. These gods command great respect and reverence. There are four gods, namely *Netz Au* or the God of Sky, *Phu Au* or the God of Mountains, *No Ain* or the God of Earth, and *Hu Ain* or the God of River. These higher Gods are believed to be capable of both the benignant as well as malignant powers. Sacrifice is offered to these Gods so that they remain satisfied and do not cause any harm to the people. In addition to these four Gods, there is another God of the Akas, known as *Sikchi* whose kingdom is under the earth. All human habitation and

vegetation are above him and he must be kept pleased since the slightest disturbance on his part may result in unforeseen calamities (earthquake).

The Tagins, like many other tribes, believe in the Sun-Moon God whom they call *Daini-Pol*. *Daini* (Sun) is believed to be the female and *Pol* (Moon) as male. They are at the apex and have unlimited powers at their command. Sacrifice is offered to *Daini-Pol* only on special occasions such as marriage. The Tagins also believe in a number of spirits or *Wiyus*, who are considered as capable of exercising a direct and strong influence on the daily lives of the human beings. Some of these spirits, such as *Bago*, *Yabu* and *Pakya* are the benevolent spirits and they look after the welfare of human beings in many ways. If, however, these spirits are offended, they may cause harm and even take away the soul or *Yalo*. The Tagins believe that different spirits or *Wiyus* are responsible for causing different diseases. The *Daini* or the Sun, according to the Tagins, decides the destiny of a child and writes it in the heart of every new born.

The Mishmis believe in a Supreme God whom they regard as the Creator embodying the highest ethical principle of justice. The different branches of the Mishmis have different names for this Supreme God: the Idus call him *Inni*, the Taraons call him *Jab Main*, and the Ramans call him *Matai*. Since this Supreme God is believed to be above all human considerations, no sacrifice is offered to him; but his name is invariably involved on all religious occasions. In addition to the Supreme God, the Mishmis, too, believe in a number of spirits who influence the lives of the human beings. These spirits are believed to reside in trees, sky, water, and air and sacrifice is offered to them so that they remain pleased. Some of the spirits in which the Mishmis believe, are the *Cupe* of the Taraons and the *Kamans*, which is an evil spirit; *Slong* of the Ramans and *Achva* of the Taraons, who cause pain in the stomach of the children; *Kachel* of the Ramans and *Maiei* of the Taraons, who bring epidemics; the *Hambram* of the *Kamans* and the *Bra* of the Taraons, who cause serious illness. Amongst the Idus, there are spirits such as *Abruli-Ali*, the spirit who guards the household; *Asa*, an evil spirit living under the earth; *Beika*, a snake spirit living under water; *Asu*, a noble spirit who gives wealth; *Ithri*, a spirit who makes people vomit blood.

Priesthood

The priests or the shamans play a very important role in the religious life of all the tribes who fall in the category of 'Hereditary-Shamanism'. They are to play a very responsible role in society and their advice is sought on almost every important occasion such as building of a house, marriage, sowing in the field, before undertaking a long journey, before a hunting expedition, and so on. It is generally believed that only the priests have knowledge of divination and, therefore, they are summoned in case of sickness and temporal distress. They are the representative of the people to communicate their sufferings and grievances to the spirits and to seek redress. In other words, they are the intermediary between the spiritual world and this mortal world. Amongst the Adis, these priests are called *Nyibos* and one who shows special talent to foretell things and fall into trances in childhood becomes a *Nyibo*. The profession is not hereditary. As Dr T. Nyori has pointed out: 'Thus, *Nyibos* are born and not made as the poets are born and not made.'

Among the Galos there are two types of *Nyibos*, namely the *mumin nyibos* and the *nyigre nyibos*. It is believed that the *nyibos* are guided by spiritual attendants called *doyi-lulu* or *talo-tanya* when they perform the religious rites. Some of the *Adi nyibos* have special costumes which include strings of beads, sword, and feathers of cock or hornbill. Except while performing religious rites, the priests are regarded as ordinary citizens of the community, and, like all other members of *Adi* society, they lead

a common life. Dr Nyori has defined the position of the Adi priests in these words: 'His is an art just like any other and thus his position is like any other profession in modern society. For his work, he collects fees.'

In Nyishi society, the priests hold a distinguished position because of their ability to cure various diseases caused by the various spirits known to the Nyishis. Here again, there are two types of priests, namely the *nijik mube* who treat only ordinary sufferings and observe omens in egg or chicken, and *mube* who are greatly skilled in their profession and are known over wide areas. A third category of the priests is also there in Nyishi society, serving as the intermediaries between men and the spirits or *Wiyus*. These priests are called *nyoki mube*. The priest performs an important role in Nyishi society and his presence is a must on almost every important occasion like birth, death, marriage, sickness or sacrifice. For his services, he is given the traditional presents of special parts of the sacrificed animal, beer, beads, majis (imported bells), and duos. The *nyoki mubes* lead a comfortable life and are given rich presents. Their houses are decorated with heads of animals and fans made out of the feathers of rare birds.

Animism

The Noctes and the Wanchos, who inhabit the Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, are related to the Naga tribes to their southwest and, therefore, their religious faiths and beliefs have close association with the Naga religion that has been termed as 'animism'. Both these tribes, in the past had a strong tradition of 'headhunting'. There is a strong belief among both the tribes in the existence of a number of good or bad spirits, who are subordinate to a Supreme deity. Commenting on the Naga religion which forms the basis of the religion of the Noctes and the Wanchos, W Robinson wrote in 1841: 'Thus among the Nagas, we discern apprehensions of some invisible and powerful beings. These apprehensions, however, seem at first to be suggested to mind rather by the dread of impending evils, then to flow from the gratitude for the blessings received. Hence probably originated the worship of evil spirits... They seem to have a perception that there must be some universal cause to whom all things are indebted for their being. They appear also to acknowledge a Divine Power to be the Maker of the world and the Disposer of all events: Him they denominate the Great Spirit.'

The Noctes believe in the existence of a higher supernatural being, which dwells on earth and everything in the life of human beings is guided by Him. He is called *Jauban or Tesong* and is believed to have a dual personality – one good and one bad. The first form brings prosperity and happiness and the other brings sorrows and miseries in their lives. These two moods of the Supreme Being are called *Kat Jauban and Wang Jauban*. Parul Dutta in his book *The Noctes* has propounded that originally the *Jauban* might have been a malevolent deity and with the passage of time, it acquired the benevolent form. The Noctes also believe in a number of spirits and deities. These deities are again both benevolent and malevolent. There is, however, no uniformity in the names of these spirits and each village has its own name for the various spirits. The benevolent spirits dwell in house and protect human beings from sorrow and miseries. They are propitiated regularly with offerings of food and other things in order to get their continued support and protection from malevolent spirits. One main feature of the Nocte religion is that all the supernatural beings recognized by them are male in sex and female in spirit.

In addition to the traditional religious beliefs, the Noctes have adopted Vaishnavism in its rudimentary form around 250 years back. They are affiliated to Shree *Chaliah Bareghar Satra* of Nazira. The converts to Vaishnavism were the Namsangia and Borduarua Noctes. In accordance with the Vaishnavite tenets, the Noctes do not take

beef, and their hair is cut round the head in what is called *Satriya* fashion. The Wanchos also believe in the existence of a Supreme God of Heavens, whom they call Rang, who is benevolent personality and is considered as creator. Rang or the Sky God, so the Wanchos believe, is always opposed to *Bau-rang* the God of Earth and a malevolent Destroyer. Incidentally, both Rang and Bau-rang are brothers, as per their tradition. At times, conflicts take place between these two and result in an earthquake. Sacrifices are offered to Bau-rang to save the human race from evil and destruction.

Besides these two gods, Wanchos also believed in a number of deities. There are a number of magical belief and practices in the everyday lives of Wanchos that have become a part of their religion. They also propitiate a number of spirits by offering sacrifices on different occasions. Some of the spirits propitiated by the Wanchos are *Baua*, the benevolent spirit of jungle, *Lamlong kang*, the spirit of Rainbow, *Joka*, a malevolent spirit: *Nam* is the spirit of water who is malevolent. The Wanchos hardly perform any ceremony that can be strictly called religious. But there are a number of rituals observed in connection with sickness, disease and calamity.

The Tangsas whose religion can also be termed as 'Animism' also believe in a Supreme Being who lives in heaven and is called *Sikia Pra or Rang Kau Hawa*. Though he is considered to be benevolent and a fountain of blessings for mankind, he is not at all worshipped nor is any sacrifice offered in his name since he is believed to be above all such things. They believe in a number of spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, called *Thangs*, *Sangs* or *Jubedis*. Sacrifices are offered to these spirits. Like the Wanchos, a number of Magico-religious rituals are performed by the Tangsas. Most of these rituals are connected with the disease and its cure. Pigs and fowls are sacrificed in almost all rituals performed for the appeasement of deities and spirits. In the past, the Ron-Rangs, a branch of the Tangsas, performed human sacrifice on the occasion of *Dowan*, but this was banned by the government later on.

Tradition of Headhunting

As we have mentioned earlier, both the Noctes and the Wanchos had a strong tradition of headhunting in the past. In contrast to the views of some Western writers it was neither a sign of lawlessness in the societies nor the whims or fancies of the persons involved. Though the practice of headhunting was not purely religious, it carried behind it the religious sanctions and was undertaken only after divination. Belief in the magical powers of human heads, particularly in connection with the fertility cult, was one of the main reasons behind this practice. Omens were taken by the village priests to foresee the outcome, and the expedition started only if they were favourable. After returning from a successful raid, the headhunters indulged in dancing and singing. The heads were collected in one place and the priest mixed powdered rice and egg and sprinkled the mixture over the heads to calm down the spirits of the dead person. These heads were then hung from a tree. The headhunters got themselves tattooed. Khotang festival was then celebrated in which the heads were boiled, cleaned and put together in one place. The headhunters danced around the heads and a share of the community feast was offered to these heads. After the Khotang festival was over, the heads were put to rest in the *morung*.

The Wanchos also undertook headhunting raids in the past and human head formed the central motif of their traditional wood carving; in addition to the expression of their manliness and powers, the encroachment on other's territory and refusal to pay compensation by the poachers when detected were the causes of attack for headhunting. There was then, of course, the belief in the magical efficacy of human head because it

was believed to increase the yield of cultivated land. Here again, it was customary to take augury in order to tell the result, and the expedition was undertaken when the prediction was favourable. During the expedition, heads were taken indiscriminately, but under no circumstances could a commoner take the head of a chief. The exception to this rule was punished heavily. After the heads were brought to the village, the flesh was allowed to decompose, after which the heads or skulls were cleaned with boiling water and preserved in the *mornings* or a house specially constructed for the purpose near the house of the chief, which was called *ponu*. A ceremony was held after five days of bringing the heads to the village in which the headhunters were tattooed on different parts of the body. The festival which was celebrated after harvesting was called *gantang* in which, just like the Noctes, the heads were offered rice beer and pieces of ginger.

3.3 BUDDHISM

Buddhism is practised by the Monpas and Sherdukpens of West Kameng and Tawang, and the Singphos and the Khamptis of the Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh. In addition, there are small tribes like the Membas and the Khambas of Siang who follow the doctrine of Buddhism. These tribes following Buddhism can again be divided into two categories, namely, the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Membas Khambas follow the Mahayana school of Buddhism; and the Singphos and the Khamptis follow the Hinayana school of Buddhism. Before we discuss these two schools of Buddhism, it is worthwhile mentioning here that Buddhism, though its origin was in India, reached this part of the country from outside India. If the Mahayana school of Buddhism reached in this part from Tibet/Bhutan, the Hinayana School reached from Burma.

3.1 Mahayana

According to the legends, Padamsambhava, who is called Lopom Rinpoche, visited the Monpa as well as the Sherdukpen areas and planted Buddhism there. The period of his visit is, as per the legend, somewhere in the 8th century. There are some places in the Monpa area which are even today believed to be visited by Lopom Rinpoche. In the Pangchen area, the Master (Rinpoche) is believed to have visited Taktsang and passed some time in meditation. The walls of the cave of his retreat are adorned with stone images which are believed to have been divinely created and not made by man. The Sherdukpens have nine such places in their area. For example, in the Flujima area, there is a rock with pug-marks of a dog and imprints of a shod foot of it, which is believed to be visited by the master with a dog.

It is also believed that Padamsambhava predicted the construction of three oldest temples in this region. Accordingly, one Nyingmapa Lama named Sherbum came from Bhutan to Tsosum (Tawang) and built three Nyingmapa temples of Urcyeling, Sangeling and Tsorgeling. Collectively, these three temples are called Lingsum of Three Stones and it is held that they were constructed earlier than the Kamakhya temple in Assam, somewhere towards the end of the 11th century or the early part of the 12th century.

The Great Tawang Monastery, that is the centre of the religious lives of the Monpas and the Sherdukpens, was constructed sometime between 1641 and 1647 A.D., and it is held that Mera Lama was responsible, under directives from Dalai Lama himself, for undertaking the construction of this monastery. It is said that the horse of Mera Lama guided him to the site of the monastery and, therefore, in the honour of the horse,

the place was named as Tawang — Ta meaning horse and Wang meaning chosen or the place chosen by the horse.

The Monpas are devotedly attached to their religion. In the words of Dr Verrier Elwin, 'Quiet, gentle, friendly, courteous, industrious, good to animals, good to children, you see in Monpas the influence of the compassionate Lord Buddha on the ordinary man. They have little theology; they have a great deal of religion.' The villages of the Monpas are dotted with stone shrines called *mane* and *chorten*. The *mane* is made in the shape of a stone wall and is ten to twenty feet long and two to three feet high. The *chorten* is a stupa-shaped structure, where prayers are conducted. The Lama is responsible for conducting the prayers, and after the prayers are over, the devotees walk around *chortens* three times. Then there is the gompa which is the place to house the images of Lord Buddha and the religious books. Every gompa is under the supervision of one or more Lama and several flags are raised around this so that it can be noticed from quite a distance. The Tawang Gompa, as mentioned earlier, is the heart of Monpa life and culture. To quote Dr Elwin again: 'The Monpa Lamas are not perhaps very learned, but they have an infinite reverence for literature. There are some 700 books in the (Tawang Gompa) library and their great treasure is the Getompa, three volumes of which are lettered in gold... There used to be a printing press here, and there are still hundreds of oblong wooden blocks carved with Tibetan characters.'

In the Sherdukpen areas of Rupa and Shergaon, there are a number of gompas, which are generally three-storeyed and have wall-painting by artists from Tawang. The Rupa Gompa, the largest and the oldest monastery in the Sherdukpen area is said to have been built over 170 years ago. It was once used as a fort where people took refuge when the village was raided by the Akas. The Shergaon Gompa was built around 40 years ago. The Lamas from Tawang were invited after the construction of this gompa and the scenes of that occasion are portrayed in the paintings kept here. These Sherdukpen gompas, like those of the Monpas, are looked after by the Lamas, some of whom are trained in Tawang.

The duties of a Lama include looking after the gompa, making offerings to the images of Lord Buddha, caring of the holy books and presiding over the religious functions. Then, there are manes and *chortens* in every Sherdukpen village, similar to those of the Monpas. Both amongst the Monpas and the Sherdukpens, even the laymen have some understanding of the basic principles of their religion. This worldly existence, according to them, is full of suffering as it is followed by repeated births, old age, diseases and death. The 'Wheel of Life' depicts six planes of existence at different levels of being, namely, the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, men, titans, and gods. The human beings are at the fourth realm from the bottom. The belief is that it is one's actions and deeds in this present life that determine one's rebirth after death in one of the six realms of existence. The ultimate aim of their religion, therefore, is mainly other-worldly, i.e. to attain perfect bliss. They hold that every morally good action helps to build up the store of merit essential for their spiritual progress. It is this motivation to secure a better rebirth that has made their thought and action completely dominated by their religion. The social fame and standing of an individual primarily depends on his pursuits in the religious plane.

In addition to Buddhism, both the Monpas and the Sherdukpens have some ritual practices which aim at securing their material prosperity and physical welfare in this world. There are various sacrificial rites and rites of exorcism held in the temples and in

the private houses and directed at the appeasement of various spirits and deities. A detailed account of the religious customs and ceremonies of the Monpas and the Sherdukpens has been given by *Niranjan Sarkar* in his book *Buddhism amongst the Monpas and the Sherdukpens* (Itanagar, 1987).

It has been suggested by various writers that before the advent of Buddhism, the Monpas and the Sherdukpens believed in the existence of numerous gods and demons all around them; in other words they followed a Shamanistic faith. The fundamental principles of that religion were the same as those of the Bon religion of Tibet. When Buddhism had cast its spell over these areas, the sacrificial rites associated with the earlier religion were given up but the indigenous supernatural spirits and deities were included in its pantheon as the local defenders of faith and continued to be worshipped according to the modified manners of Buddhist rituals. A few of these supernatural beings are even today worshipped according to old rituals.

3.2 Theravada

The Hinayana form of Buddhism was brought to Arunachal Pradesh initially by the Khamptis and the Singphos who came from Burma. The Khamptis, following the Hinayana or Theravada School of Buddhism, believe that attainment of salvation or nirvana can only be achieved by following the Noble Eightfold Path, i.e. Right Thought, Right Views, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Meditation. This path, according to Buddhism, was taught by Lord Buddha as the only means of getting rid of the sufferings of this life. Like the Monpas and the Sherdukpens of the Mahayana School, the life of the Khamptis is deeply influenced by religion. To them, Lord Buddha is a great moral preacher, representing the virtues of love and pity, truth and honesty, and they seek his blessings in their daily prayers called *paiphara* for the welfare of the family as well as entire society. The religious preacher, who is devoted to the propagation of the teachings of Lord Buddha, is called *Phra-taka* or the disciple of God.

It is significant to note that the Khamptis are one of the few tribes of Arunachal having their own Tai-Khampti script and also having their written religious texts. The five principles or the Sin-Ha are an important part of the Khampti religion and in every religious prayer, the Sin-Ha are chanted by the devotees. Briefly speaking, these five principles say: I should abstain from killing the living beings; I should abstain from receiving unwilling donations; I should abstain from indulging in sexual pleasures and falsehood; I should abstain from telling lies; and I should abstain from taking intoxicating things and wine. In addition to these, there are the '*Ashta Shila*', and '*Dasa Shila*', called Sin-Pet and Sin-Sip. The Sin-Pet is generally followed by the aged people since it is stricter and the followers abstain from taking food after twelve noon, from participating in dances and other amusements and also from sleeping on comfortable beds. In the Sin-Sip, the followers take a vow to abstain from receiving money and wealth from others. It is held by the Khamptis that Gautam Buddha occupies the fourth position in the line of Buddhas, and after five thousand years from his death, he will be succeeded by Ari Mitya or the Fifth Buddha.

Besides their faith in Buddhism, the Khamptis also conceive of a Supreme God or Creator called *Chau-Khun Shang* and also a lesser god called *Chau-ci-giya*, who looks after the welfare of the human beings. There are other gods too in the Khampti pantheon, who are invoked in a prayer known as *waiakyu*. The religious priests or Monks are men of great importance in the Khampti society and are well versed with the

religious texts. The monastery where these monks or priests live is called *chong* or *kyong* and the chief monk is responsible for the maintenance of the monastery; he is assisted by other monks. This monastery is the centre of religion, cultural and learning, and in earlier days it also had political influence on society. The office of the monk is not hereditary and anyone who prefers to lead a life of celibacy and austerity can become a monk.

The Singphos are also the followers of Buddhism but have not given up their old shamanistic beliefs and practices. It is held that Buddhism was introduced amongst the Singphos by a monk called *Dingla Chrato* about a century back. *Dingla Chrato*, who is said to have come from the Hukawang Valley of Burma, built a monastery at Phakial village near Margherita in Assam. This monastery is named as Samuksing and the Singphos go there for pilgrimage.

According to their old beliefs, the Singphos believe in a number of spirits called *nats*, some of which are benevolent while others are malevolent. These spirits control their daily activities. The beneficent spirits are *Rukju-nat*, residing in trees; *kha-nat*, residing in water; *bum-nat*, residing in the hills; *inlung-nat*, also residing in the hills; and *smathi-nat*, residing in the houses. The maleficent spirits are *philu-nat*, *phinin-nat* and *lummun-nat*. These spirits are worshipped on a number of occasions and are regularly propitiated with sacrifices of bulls, cows and chickens. The Singphos believe that the soul exists forever and it is an imperishable commodity. But they conceive the soul as of two kinds—good and evil. The good souls are destined to go to heaven and the evil souls to hell. The evil souls may also turn into evil *nat* and harm the human beings. There is no regular priesthood amongst the Singphos, but there are local village priests called *dum sawa*. Great respect is however, paid to the Buddhist monks called *Phunggis* by them. Apart from their respective religious practices, both the Khamptis and the Singphos observe seven different Buddhist festivals, namely *Nawasang Sitang*, in the beginning of the rainy season; *Sare Sitang*, on a full moon day of September or October; *Mebi Sitang* on a moonless day of September or October; *Wa-ok Sitang* on a full moon day of November; *Chowmoon Kanda Pri*, in November or December; *Kathin Poi*, on the full moon day in November or December; and *Wan Lu Poi* in April.

Another important fact that may be mentioned here is that the Khampti monks have acted as the custodian and promoter of art and crafts as they are very good in carving figures on snakes, dragons, and other monsters forming into a unity of graceful designs, in wood, ivory, and bone. They also work in gold, silver and iron and also make embossed shields of buffalo or rhinoceros hides. In the past, education was also the responsibility of the monks or the priests in Khampti society.

Brahmanical Religion

The people of Arunachal Pradesh were also influenced by the religion of the plains of Assam. The influence of what is called the 'Brahmanical Religion' can be marked in the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, as attested by the literary as well as archaeological evidences. Of this Brahmanical religion, traces of Shaktism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism are particularly noticed in some parts of the state. Here it may be pointed out that during period from the 10th to the 17th century, the cultural and religious activities of Brahmaputra valley had occasional expansion into the hills of Arunachal Pradesh. Gradually it became the part and parcel of the belief system of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Bhismaknagar is a sacred heritage of the Idu Mishmis who inhabit the Dibang Valley. A faith very

fundamental to the tribe is that Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna, belonged to their community and Bhismanagar was the home of her father. Thus, for generations they have venerated the monument as a mark of their union with the Lord.

Religions of Arunachal Pradesh

According to the 2001 Indian Census, the religions of Arunachal Pradesh break down as follows:

- Hindu: 379,935 (34.6%)
- Others (mostly Donyi-Polo): 337,399 (30.7%)
- Christian: 205,548 (18.7%)
- Buddhist: 143,028 (13.0%)
- Muslim: 20,675 (1.9%)
- Sikh: 1,865 (0.1%)
- Jain: 216 (<0.1%)

The Idu are known to have played an important role in the great Vaishnava movement of Assam. When Saint Vamshi Gopala (1548: 1668) lay in trace during meditation, it is the Mishmi Brahmins who looked after him by giving food and drinks. Heroes of Mahabharata, such as Bhisman, Rukma and Shishupala, have found local habitation in this area. Bhismanagar represents the link between the eastern-most corner of the country and the main stream of ancient Indian culture. The Idus have formed a committee of their own to build one Inyi Masyelo Rukmini Kumu (i.e. place of worship of the great mother Rukmini), at Bhismanagar. This speaks for the intensity of their belief, even today.

What we find in the Rukmini legend around Bhismanagar, is complete transplantation of the Vidarbha setting in the northeastern corner of India. The region between Sadiya and Parasuramkund had come to be known as Vidarbha, with a number of allied ancient names localized in the new soil. Thus, we see Krishna, Rukmini, Shishupal and Kundil having acquired local habitation in Arunachal Pradesh.

Various myths and legends associated with Lord Vishnu or Krishna are also to be found in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh. It may be mentioned that Neo-Vaishnavism of Shankardeva greatly influenced the day-to-day life of the Noctes and the Wanchos. Even today, a great number of Nocte pilgrims visit the *satra* in Sibsagar. In conclusion, we would say that in the foregoing account, we have discussed the various religious trends that were and even today are prevalent among the various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. It is beyond the scope of the present work to discuss in detail the religious rites and practices of each and every tribe of the area — the task would require a separate volume. However, the tribal religion, as we have seen, is concerned more with the day-to-day life and the social values and ethics than with metaphysics or spiritualism. As Dr Verrier Elwin has put it: 'In their religion, the tribesman have created a realistic of life seen *sub specie eternitatis*; they face it in all its dismal trappings with courage; yet it is not the fear of things as they are, but a heroic appreciation of them which has brought it into being. The tribesmen are realistic; till recently they lived of constant anxiety and they projected this onto the wider canvas of their theology.'

15.4 FACTORS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

To get an idea about the factors that led to social changes in Arunachal Pradesh, a detailed study of *Social Change in Arunachal Pradesh 1947-81* by Tamo Mibang is essential. T. Mibang rightly locates the following as the agents of change: 1. The planned growth according to the plans and policies of the Planning Commission; 2. Beginning and development of education; 3. Participation of the people of Arunachal Pradesh in the democratic process; 4. Cultural contacts highlighting the aspects of exposure and response syndrome; 5. Science and technology analysing the roles of radio, road, railways and other modes of transport. These factors always bring changes.

Gurudas Das in his book *Transition of Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi, 1998) has highlighted a number of issues relating to social change including the critique of Nehru-Elwin policy of development with regard to Arunachal Pradesh. Some of the articles in Manish Sharma's edited book, *Economy of Arunachal Pradesh: Problems, Performance and Prospect* (Guwahati, DVS Publishers, 2008) also discuss the aspects of socio-economic changes in Arunachal Pradesh. A number of articles in the edited work of T. Mibang and M. C. Behera, *The Tribal Villages in Arunachal Pradesh: Changing Human Interface* (Abhijeet Publications, New Delhi, 2004) also provide materials to understand the dynamics of social change in Arunachal Pradesh.

In addition to the views and approaches of social changes in Arunachal Pradesh we can see some other perspectives and agents of changes in societies of Arunachal Pradesh. Amrendra Kumar Thakur highlights the aspects of institution of slavery as an important institution which brought about changes during the pre-modern period due to its use value and the exchange value and the post-Independence period too in his book *Slavery in Arunachal Pradesh* (Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2003). In the later period, masters got compensation amount in lieu of the liberation of slaves. Hence, due to abolition of slavery direct capital flow in cash started to the masters. The article of Thakur, 'Social Transition in Pre-Colonial Arunachal Pradesh: Servitude as a Prime Mover' (*Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 60th Session, Calicut, 1999, pp. 391-403) also provides insights to the problem.

The changes are also witnessed in the socio-cultural life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Amrendra Kumar Thakur has highlighted the issue in one of his articles, 'Pre-modern Accommodation of Differences and Modern Innovations: Religion and Society of Arunachal Pradesh' (B. Tripathy and S. Dutta (eds.), *Religious History of Arunachal Pradesh*, New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 2008, pp. 336-358). He is of the view that during the modern and more especially the contemporary period, identity issues are emerging in a big way in Arunachal Pradesh and this is an active agent of change.

Another important feature of social change in Arunachal Pradesh can be witnessed from the perspective of religion especially Buddhism. The Buddhism popular in the western part of Arunachal Pradesh not only brought about a change in the religious lives of people of Arunachal Pradesh but also in various other ways.

ACTIVITY

Make a collage of the various deities worshipped by tribes in Arunachal Pradesh.

DID YOU KNOW

The hairstyles of the Nyishi tribe are fascinating. They plait their hair and tie it neatly at the forehead using a Tibetan thread. Skewer made up of brass is passed horizontally through the tied hair. Rings made up of cane are worn around the waist, arms and legs. Additional decorations vary from person to person.

5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- In the social and religious life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh the plurality of beliefs and always the tendency of assimilation existed. The finest blend of traditional beliefs and the influence from the neighbouring areas are witnessed.
- Unlike the other areas of northeast India the influence of Christianity is very late in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh. It was only from the late 1990s that various Christian missionaries started their educational and evangelist missions in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Not only Christianity but also some other factors have fastened the process of socio-cultural change in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The indigenous faiths of the people of Arunachal Pradesh are more or less recorded now. Initially they were extensively expressed in the form of oral traditions, poems, myths, legends, folklore, folktales and performing arts that are transmitted across generations by word of mouth by priests.
- From the point of view of religion or faith, the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh can be roughly divided into three main groups. In the first place we have tribes like the Nyishis, the Hill Miris, the Apatanis, the Adis and the Mishmis who fall into the category of what has been termed as hereditary — Shamanism. The tribes included in this category have many cultural traits and beliefs including their pantheon of Gods and spirits in common.
- The second group consists of tribes like the Monpas, the Sherdukpens, the Singphos, the Khamptis, the Membas and the Khambas who came under the influence of Buddhism and their religious life is deeply influenced by this religion.
- The third group comprises tribes like the Noctes, the Wanchos and the Tangsas of the Tirap region who are related to the Naga tribes to their southwest and had a very strong tradition of headhunting in the past.
- The most popular indigenous faith among the people of Arunachal Pradesh is the faith in Donyi-Polo. The people believe that it was at the beginning of this age, some uncountable centuries ago, that *Aame Donyi*, the Cosmic Supreme Authority, spoke to *Aabhu Thanyi* and Her devotees.
- The worship of the Sun amongst the tribal of Arunachal Pradesh has its cultural and philosophical origin since migration and settlement of the people in the areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribal identified the Sun and the Moon with the Supreme Authority of the powerful life giver and source of energy.

- The Mishmis believe in a Supreme God whom they regard as the Creator embodying the highest ethical principle of justice. The different branches of the Mishmis have different names for this Supreme God: the Idus call him Inni, the Taraons call him Jab Main, and the Ramans call him Matai.
- The Adi abangs (ballads), narrate that the Sun and the Moon — the Donyi and the Polo — are the two eyes of the Creator with which he keeps a vigil on the universe and humanity.
- Buddhism is practised by the Monpas and Sherdukpens of West Kameng and Tawang, and the Singphos and the Khamptis of the Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh. In addition, there are the small tribes like the Membas and the Khambas of Siang who follow the doctrine of Buddhism. These tribes following Buddhism can again be divided into two categories, namely, the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Membas Khambas follow the Mahayana school of Buddhism; and the Singphos and the Khamptis follow the Hinayana school of Buddhism.
- The people of Arunachal Pradesh were also influenced by the religion of the plains of Assam. The influence of what is called the 'Brahmanical Religion' can be marked in the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, as attested by the literary as well as archaeological evidences. Of this Brahmanical religion, traces of 'Shaktism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism are particularly noticed in some parts of the state.

6 KEY TERMS

- **Anthropologist:** A social scientist who specializes in anthropology
- **Deity:** A god or goddess (in a polytheistic religion)
- **Hereditary:** Conferred by or based on inheritance
- **Indigenous:** Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native
- **Malevolent:** Having or showing a wish to do evil to others

7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Donyi-Polo
2. *Swchne*
3. *Hibh Donyi*
4. True
5. Naga
6. Hinayana
7. 'Wheel of Life'
8. *Dingla Chrato*
9. True
10. Democratic
11. False

10.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. From the point of view of religion or faith, the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh can be roughly divided into three main groups—What are they?
2. What are the Three Truths or Observances in the community of Arunachal Pradesh?
3. What is meant by 'Brahmanical Religion' in Arunachal Pradesh?
4. Who practices Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh?
5. What is the most popular indigenous faith among the people of Arunachal Pradesh? Write a few lines about it.
6. What is the significance of the Sun among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the indigenous faiths prevalent in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Who were the followers of the Mahayana cult of Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh? What is the significance of the Tawang Monastery for them?
3. Discuss the Theravada sect of Buddhism as followed in Arunachal Pradesh.
4. What were the factors that led to social change in Arunachal Pradesh?

10.9 FURTHER READING

Blackburn, Stuart H. *Himalayan Tribal Tales: Oral Tradition and Culture in the Apatari Valley*. IDC Publishers, Netherlands.



INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University

Institute of Distance Education

Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:



+91-98638 68890



Ide Rgu



Ide Rgu



helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in



**INSTITUTE
OF DISTANCE
EDUCATION** **IDE**
Rajiv Gandhi University

Institute of Distance Education Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:

 +91-98638 68890

 Ide Rgu

 Ide Rgu

 helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in