



The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh

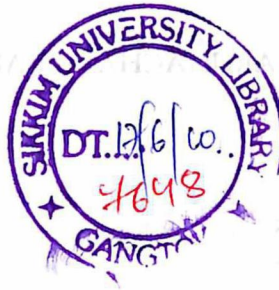
A Study of Continuity and Change

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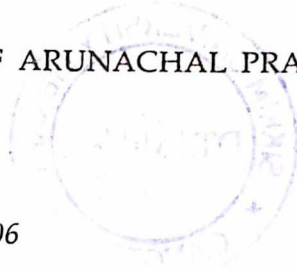
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Preface

My curiosity to work on the Tagins grew out of my engrossed experience during my childhood in tradition bound Tagin society. Being born in the Tagin society I was deeply touched by the rural and traditional way of life. Villages were isolated; unconnected and people were unaware of any modern amenities. Early in the morning, all able bodied persons used to leave for field. I carried my younger brother on my back to spend the day in feeding baby bother and playing with peers, impatiently waiting for evening keeping eyes on the path from where the parents will arrive. On their arrival the usual schedule begins; lightening fire, fetching water from stream, and then eating cucumber, yam, etc., brought by the parents from the field. Needs were limited, and nature provided all needs generously. Families were closely tied together. Individual were perfectly simple and self esteemed. However, the urge in my mind for modern education prompted me to leave aside those simple and self contained rural life. My early schooling started in a village called Bui which was about twelve kilometres away from Riddi, my own village located at the junction where the way to few nearby villages, a pristine traditional village and unconnected. Thus, till I have passed class VIII and have taken admission in Government Higher Secondary School, Daporijo, I was undergoing two parallel streams of education: Modern education - learning in classes taught by teachers from plain and traditional - traditional values, culture, legend and myths at home from elders of the society, I couldn't properly recollect all of them now. During the vacation very

often my father used to narrate the tales, legends and myths till late night that seldom I listened properly for which I feel remorse now.

I could see dense forests with tall, flowery trees, bamboo, cane, etc., and plenty of different kinds of animals, birds, etc., moving around. The culture in pristine form with exception of some popular Assamese, Nepali and Hindi songs aired occasionally. Society was free from influences of alien and organised religions. Traditional value governed the society and individual's behaviour. Community spirits had a strong hold on the socio-religious and economic activities.

However, during the period between my schooling and present professional life, the Tagin society had undergone tremendous transformation. Modern and allied forces like technology, education, administration, religions, etc have intruded into all domains of their life. The sudden onslaught of modern and alien forces created confusion in the minds of the younger generation. Simple and traditionally governed society finds it difficult to cope with the swiftly intruding forces. This led the society aimlessly drifting in vast seas. Younger generation tended to drift away from their tradition; they are neither capable to understand their traditional values nor to modernise in their thinking and perception. They try to be modern by appearance and adopting alien elements, but unable to face the challenges of complexity that accompany with modernity. A stanza from the popular song by Shri Takio Soki (Tagin Singer) explicitly reflects the confusing state of the younger generation in the Tagin society.

"Komji tudii ngo jerio jeri do,
tolo bolo jema jerio jeri do,
Tagin rela memrik uyi mensin jekuma,
nyipak rela siti pota liksin jeku"

[I find myself rootless. Neither perfect in traditional customary laws and ritual practice of the Tagins, nor properly literate like the plain people]

The younger generation wears jeans, salver kamesh, gold earring, Reebok shoe, etc., and think that they are modern without understanding of modernity. Society is becoming more materialistic and individualistic as necessities of individuals

increases. This phenomenon began during early 1980s. However, we may trace the root of modern onslaught from early 1950s.

The Tagins were never under the colonial rules. They were independent and were determined to retain their independence. The society was self regulated society without assigning regulatory authority to any individual. Their customs, social norms and tradition regulated their life. Because of their determination to protect their independence and hostility shown to the intruders, the colonial ruler had to retreat during the Miri Mission exploration of the 1911-12 and never made further attempt to penetrate into the Tagin's territory.

So, the Tagin's territory remained till the last to be explored. Soon after independence, in order to assert its sovereignty, the Government of India extend its administration in the name of administering justice by sending the Political Interpreters, Political Jemadars and Gams from Adi area to the lower territory to arrest those whom they viewed as a criminals and to award them punishment.

However, Chinese military activities along the McMahon Line gradually drew the consciousness of the government of India about the geo-political importance of the northern frontier along the McMahon Line. So, immediately the government of India launched forward policy to push the administration into the interior of the hills and to bring the entire hitherto non-administered territory unto the McMahon Line under regular administration. As a part of this forward policy, some administrative officers were deputed to explore the Tagin territory since 1951.

In 1953, the Tagins wiped out one of exploratory team at Achingmori and then come to national limelight. The government sent retaliatory expeditions which brought the Tagins to submission. In order to tame the Tagins the Government quickened the process of establishment of administrative centres in the entire Tagin area and started developmental schemes. This process was followed by other forces like education, culture, religions, etc.

Therefore, an attempt has been made in this work to study the nature of the Tagin's traditional institutions: social, economic, political, culture and religion, how the introduction of present

administration triggered the process of change and what are the forces that are responsible for it.

I received help and assistance from a large number individuals and institutions during my study. Recalling the names of all of them is an impossible task; some are likely to be missed. The individuals and institutions I acknowledge below are just those who readily came to my mind; I beg the indulgence of others.

I am profoundly grateful to Dr. J. L. Dawar for his help. He has opened up new spheres of research and enquiry at every point through his critical comments. His painstaking reading of the manuscript has helped me to reduce the number of errors I was likely to make.

I must thank the Faculty of the Department of History, Arunachal University for providing an intellectually stimulating atmosphere and giving me the opportunity to participate in their seminars and discussions. I owe my gratitude to Prof. S. Dutta for his cooperation and Dr. B. Tripathy, Dr. Sahara Hillaly, S. N. Singh, Dr. P. K. Mandal, Dr. S. K. Singh and Tana Showren for their help. I also acknowledge the help given by faculty members of other Departments, Arunachal University. To mention some of them, Dr. Pura Tado who had provided me lot of reading materials. I am grateful to Prof. N. Nagaraju and Dr. P. T. Abraham for helping me in editing a part of my manuscript. I am thankful to Dr. S. K. Patnaik for helping me in managing photographs. Special mention has to be made of my friends Tasing Dui, Abe Marde and my student Tania Nayom for their help during my fieldwork. I also acknowledge the help provided by Miss Lakhimai Mili in collecting data from Catholic Fathers and Brothers.

I am much indebted to Shri Hipshon Roy, IRAS [retired] former political officer, Shri Krep Singh Swer retired administrative officer, Major Rashid Yasup Ali, IFAS [retired] former Chief Secretary, Major S M. Krihnatry, IAS [retired] former Political Officer [Arunachal Pradesh] and Chief Commissioner [Andaman], Mrs. Leela Elwin, wife of late Verrier Elwin, Mrs. Mriyalmon Malngiang, wife of late U.H. Roy, Mrs. Hranga, wife of late of R K. Hranga, former Political Officer and T K. Bhattacharjee, former Director, Agriculture for narrating to me

their experiences in Arunachal Pradesh and the Tagin area particularly. Their reminiscences as narrated to me enriched my understanding of my own society, i.e. the Tagins.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratefulness to all of my informants whom I interviewed and without their help this work would not have taken this shape.

I am thankful to the staff of Research Department, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, the staff of State Archive, Itanagar for providing me all possible assistance in tracing the archival materials. I also acknowledge the help given by the staff of Central Library and Museum, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; staff of Arunachal University Library.

Lastly, the entire credit for my completing this work goes to my wife Ania and my kids: Shangam, Shanmyan, Tara and Yade who had suffered a lot for not giving them sufficient time and support in domestic chores.

Ashan Riddi

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Introduction

I

Arunachal Pradesh: Historical Background

Arunachal Pradesh, formerly Known as North East Frontier Agency [NEFA] is situated at the northeast extremity of the country. It lies roughly between 26°28' to 29°30' N latitudes and 91°30' to 97°30' E longitudes with the total area of 83,743 sq. km. It is bounded by Bhutan in the west, China in the north and north-east [Tibet], and Myanmar in the east¹. Arunachal Pradesh has a total population of 10, 91,117 persons as per 2001 census². There are about 26 major tribes about 110 minor tribes.

The Political and administrative history of Arunachal Pradesh may be traced back to year 1838 when British Indian Government took over the control of Assam³. However, they pursued the isolationist policy concerning the North-East Frontier Tracts [now Arunachal Pradesh] and were intending to leave 'the tribesmen alone'. The introduction of The Inner Line Regulation Act, 1873 in Arunachal Pradesh 1875 identifying Frontier Tracts as distinct from administrative unit of Assam and Creation of 'Excluded Area' and 'Partially Excluded Areas' under the Government of India Act, 1935 and inclusion of area inhabited by the aboriginals therein has been the outcome of this policy⁴.

The Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation, 1880 was extended to the Frontier Tracts⁵. First step towards some kind of

elementary administration, at least in the foothills was the appointment of J. F. Needham as political Special Officer at Sadiya to look after the tribesmen in that sector. In 1914, the area was constituted into three political charges: [1]. The Western Section [2]. The Central and Eastern section and [3]. The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract⁶

In 1919, the Western and the Central and Eastern Sections were renamed as Balipara Frontier Tract and Sadiya Frontier Tract respectively⁷. Subsequently, in 1944, curving out certain areas from both Sadiya Frontier Tract and Lakhimpur Frontier Tract constituted the new tract called Tirap Frontier Tract and in 1946 the Balipara Frontier Tract was divided into two administrative units: [1]. The Sela Sub-Agency and [2]. The Subansiri Area⁸.

By the North-east Frontier Tracts [internal administration] Regulation, 1948, the Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into the Abor Hills District and the Mishmi Hills District⁹. Then, in year 1954 by the North-East Frontier Area [administration] Regulation, 1954, the North-East Frontier Tracts collectively came to be known as the North-East Frontier Agency [NEFA]¹⁰ and Frontier Divisions were given names like Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Tuensang. [Tuensang was re-united with Naga Hills District in 1957]. Constitutionally, the North-East Frontier Agency was a part of Assam

Up to 1937, the Frontier Tracts was a part of Assam as 'Excluded Areas' and were kept out of preview of the scheme of the constitutional reform. Since 1937, the Governor of Assam acting in his discretion independently of cabinet administered the areas¹¹.

However, in 1950, the administrative responsibility of the Frontier Tracts was transferred to the Ministry of the External Affairs. The Ministry of External Affairs administered the areas with the Governor of Assam acting as agent to the President¹². The Administrative head was the Adviser to the governor.

The Chinese aggression of India in 1962 marks a swift in the administrative policy of Government of India towards NEFA. The Government appointed the Dying Ering Committee to consider the expansion and development of modern local self-government in NEFA in 1964. The committee submitted its report

in 1965, recommended for four-tier panchayat body. Administration of NEFA was again transferred to the Home Ministry in 1965. On the basis of Ering Committee recommendation, The North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation was promulgated in 1969. The Regulation created three-tier local administration—Gram Panchayat at village level, Anchal Samiti at Block Level and Zila Parishad at District Level. The fourth tier was the territorial level body named as NEFA Council, which was renamed as Pradesh council in 1975.

The Act of 1971 provided the Union Territory with one seat in Rajya Sabha and another seat in Lok Sabha. The North Eastern Area [Re-organisation] Act, 1972, the North East Frontier Agency [NEFA] was made Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh on January 21, 1972. The President of India acting through the Chief Commissioner of Arunachal Pradesh till 15th August 1975 when the Pradesh Council was converted into a Provisional Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers were appointed for Arunachal Pradesh ran the administration of the territory. The administrator of Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh until then designated as Chief Commissioner was upgraded to the Lieutenant Governor. On 20th February 1987, Arunachal Pradesh attained a full-fledged statehood of Indian Union¹³

II

The Tagin Area

The Tagins, the subject of this study are the inhabitants of the area covering roughly about 15000 square Kms. It is bounded by China [Tibet] in the north, West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh in the east, Lower Subansiri and Kurung Kumey districts in the west, confluence of Sinik [Subansiri] and Sigen rivers in the South West, and Sinyum River in South East.

The Sinik and its tributaries like Sippi, Menga, Sechi, Sibar, Koduk, Meni, Gelen, etc intersected the entire area. The general topographical feature of the area is mountainous, greatly cut up by river courses with deep gorges and difficult to access by steep hills and mountains. The most prominent mountains are Keru [15787 pts], Mela-Yorba [14541 pts] Dadau [18583 pts], Nayi, Diso, etc. The area lies approximately between latitudes 27.45°N and 28°N and longitude 93.13°E, 96.36°E. The

temperature varies with altitudes: Daporijo and Dumporijo lowest Tagin area is modest cool during winter and Longju [9300 fts] and Taksing are coldest and snowfalls during the winter. The annual temperature ranges between 10.74°C to 34.05°C and rainfall between 9.2 mm to 325 mm.

Flora and fauna in the areas also varies along with the different altitudes: In lower the trees of different species and sizes, cane, bamboo of different varieties are abundant, thus evergreen. While upper region, alpine forests in Taksing area fine trees are abundant. Yak and Takin is common animal in Taksing and Maja areas, while Tiger, leopard, bear, monkey, etc in lower region.

The Tagins constitute one of the major tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Their total population as per 1981 census is 27,128, out of which 13,821 are female constituting 50.96% of total population. Total literacy recorded as per 1981 census is 7.34% and only 2.05% are female.

Though, the Tagins constitute one of major tribe and have some distinct socio-political, economic, religious and cultural features no major work has been done on them. In 1911, the colonial officials made brief survey of the Tagin area up to Nguki, but had to retreat due to hostile attitude of the people. The report of this survey made little reference of the people, but not as common tribal name the 'Tagin' rather as moiety and phratry, even by place of settlement¹⁴. The general policy adopted after 1911 towards the Tagins by the colonial officials was to keep them in isolation, thus no second attempt was made to open up the Tagins' territory. Therefore, the colonial ethnographers and officials left scanty account of them.

In 1953, the Tagins wiped out the military survey team of the Government of free India and only then, the Tagins came to the national limelight. Yet, after the 50 years of Independence, no major ethnographical work has been done on the Tagins except 'Tour Diary' of Geeta Krishnatry *Gender Triumphs Unarmed in the Hostile Gorges: Re-Discovery of Border Tagins* [1997] and a descriptive monographic study by Niranjan Sarkar *The Tagins* [1999]. However, these could not represent in depth and true values of the Tagin's traditional institutions and undercurrent changing values with the onslaught of modernisation. Christoph von furer Haimendorf made some references to the Tagins, but

without using the term 'Tagins' in his ethnographic work *Ethnographic Notes on the Tribes of the Subansiri Region* [1950] and in his book *Himalayan Adventure; Early travel in North east India* [1983]. Verrier Elwin made few references of the Tagins in his books *A Philosophy for NEFA* [1957] and *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India* [1958] and Tarun Kumar Bhattacharjee in his monographic book *The Frontier Trail* [1993]. However, some of those books and references are littered with misrepresentations, misconceptions, prejudices and distortion of the Tagins' culture and history. Therefore, the main objectives of this study are to:

1. To investigate the nature of traditional institutions of the Tagins and attempt to portray comprehensive picture on it and
2. Examine the nature of changes taking place in the Tagin community and their responses to these changes.

This work is ethno-historical in nature. I have consulted Archival materials available in the State Archive, Itanagar i.e. tour diaries, reports, gazetteers, census reports etc. However, most important primary sources have been the field works involving interviews with large numbers of indigenous persons to get an emic views, participant observation etc; I have also interviewed the early officials of the Indian state who had been posted in the Tagin areas to get an etic views. Therefore, I have made an intensive use of oral narratives, which are as important a source as archival. The power of oral narratives cannot be underestimated. Besides archival and oral literature, large numbers of published as well as secondary sources have been consulted.

III

The Nomenclature 'Tagin': A Historiographical Survey

The origin and meaning of the nomenclature Tagin is shrouded in controversy. Here an attempt has been made to provide an overview of this term based on published as well as oral sources. Some of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries colonial ethnographers and officials used the term Tagin to denote a section of the Nyishis. These documents however, need scrutiny by relating with the oral sources.

Dalton was the first colonial ethnographer who provided a clue to the existence of Tagins as a tribe. Dalton wrote:

Dophla country extends from the hill course of Sundri river to the Bhoroli river, comprising the hills to the north of Chedwar in the Luckimpur and of Naodwar in the Tezpur District. They are in communication with the Tibetans as they possess many articles of Tibetan or Chinese manufacture, but like the Dihong Abors and Hill Miris, they tell wild stories of the savages between them and Tibet. It is said of these savages that they go absolutely naked, and have, or assert that they have, abhorrence of the smell of clothes¹⁵.

Therefore, we may infer that Dalton is referring to the Tagins. While, Administrative Report of 1872-73 gives the following account of outrage committed by Tagin Duphlas in 1872:

The tribe of Tagin Duphlas living in the hills on the borders of East Durrung and part of Lukhimpore have, however, this year placed themselves in an attitude of positive hostility to the government...on the night of the 12th February 1872 the village of Amtolla, two miles north of Gohpure police station of Durrung, and seven miles from the foot of the hills, was attacked by a body of two or three hundred hillmen. The village was sacked ...The villagers who were taken away were all western Duphlas (not Tagin), while a few settlers belonging to the Tagin Duphlas were left unharmed—a circumstances which tended to confirm the belief, since supported by ample evidence, that the aggressors were chiefly men of the Tagin tribe...All the Duphla passes to the east of Durrung and along the Lukhimpore frontier were blockaded, and payment of the allowances annually made to the Tagins was stopped¹⁶.

Here, it seems that the Tagins have been referred to be a section of the Nyishis. Further, it is universal knowledge that the people whom we refer to as Tagins in the contemporary literature had no direct contact with the plains of Assam and collection of posa or allowances. The Nyishis of foothill areas must have committed this outrage, but not the present Tagins.

Explaining the origin and meaning of the term Daphlas, the Assam census report of 1881 too threw some light on the Tagin:

The origin and meaning of the name Daphla are not known. As pronounced in Lakhimpur, it would be written Dompbila. They call themselves Niso or Nising. The Miri they call Bodo and the Abors Tegin, but this last word seems to be merely the name of a tribe common to the Abors and Daphlas¹⁷.

This report further confirmed Dalton's note that, the 'savages' below the Tibet were separate tribal group, hence could conclude that those savages were presently the Tagins. The Tagins have common boundaries with the Galo, Adis, Hill Miris, Nyishis and Tibet. However, the term Tagin was not used by either Dalton or Assam census.

The later colonial officials and ethnographers used the word Tagin referring to a section of the Nyishis. Thus, A. Mackenzie pointed out:

The Duphlas call themselves only 'Bangni', meaning 'men'. The tribe on the border of Durrung are now generally called 'Paschim' or Western Duphlas; and those on the border of North Luckimpore, 'Tagin' Duphlas¹⁸.

However, Dund did not make any distinction between the 'Abors' 'Paschims' and 'Tagins'.

As there is no distinction between the so-called Abors, Paschams, and Tangins [sic]...the inhabitants of the range nearest the plains and sometimes known to us as the Paschams and Tangins will be called southern Daphlas, while the inhabitants of the hills beyond the Misr Parbat Range will be designated northern Daphlas or Dikrang valley Daphlas, the clans dwelling more to the east Range valley Daphlas¹⁹.

The Miri Mission Survey 1911-12, made the first exploratory survey of the Tagins' territory. However, this Mission visited only the fringe of Tagins inhabited area up to Mukki [Nguki]. The reports of the Miri Mission Survey identified the Tagins by sub-clans name like Nguki, Bih [Bui] sub-clan of Tator clan and by place of settlement, i.e. Riddi people were referred as

Sarak, which is name of place and Riddi people were also identified as Paro clan. The Miri Mission Survey team had to return from Nguki due to hostile attitude of the tribesmen. It also mentioned that Tamak Sarak [Tamak Riddi] indebted the Miri Mission by cessation of the Nguki peoples' hostility towards them and for their safe returned²⁰. The Miri Mission Survey party for this cooperation presented Tamak Riddi a 12-Bore gun. Since the people had no knowledge about its utility, they broke the gun into pieces for making arrows head. The elder person of the Riddi knows the Miri Mission by rubber collectors not by the Miri Mission²¹.

Bor divided the Nyishis into two Sections: the western are Yanno and the Eastern section 'Tagin'²². However, Haimendorf viewed:

For administrative purposes the Daflas have been divided into western and eastern Daflas, and this division seems to be base on a difference in dialect in so far as the Daflas of the foothills and outer ranges are concerned. In their own language the eastern Daflas described themselves as NISU or NI, and refer to the western Daflas as 'YAN'. But the western Daflas call themselves MALU and refer to the Eastern Daflas as TAGEN²³.

At a same time, he identified the present Tagin by area of settlement and clan name like Rau for people of Sippi valley and Menga Valley and Nidu-Mara, for Mra clan²⁴.

Geeta Krishnatry viewed that for Tibetan Lhopa/Loba group of people residing in southern international frontier of Tibet covering Mishmis, Tagins, Nyishis, Adis and Monpas etc, in a generic sense²⁵. Kingdon Ward and F. Ludlow took Photographs of Lobas at Lung on the Chayul Chu and at Migyitung on the Tsari Chu in 1930s²⁶ that are indistinguishable from the people of Sippi²⁷. Mra and Na clans of the Tagin occasionally crossed into Tibet to collect taxes from Migyitung and Lung in Tibet. Thus, Ludlow and Kingdon might have taken the Photographs of those Tagins who crossed into Tibet. Mra Tabe claimed that he had met Pillangs [British] twice in Migyitung²⁸. Therefore, we can infer that Mra Tabe who was around age of 55 years in 1957 might have met Kingdon Ward and F. Ludlow in 1930s at Migyitung during his youthful years. Ludlow and ward might

have taken Tabe's photographs and referred to as Loba/lhopa. However, T T. Gamdik, first to become Deputy Commissioner and Director from the community believed that the Tibetan called Tagins Saptang²⁹. The Tagins called Tibet Nyeme and Tibetan officials as the Debe.

The first official in post-independence India to visit the Tagin area was B C. Bhuyan in early part of 1951³⁰ followed by K.T. Khuma in the last part of 1951. It was Bhuyan, for the first time that used the term Tagin referring the Tagins in upper course of Sinik [Subansiri] River. Before his visit in the Tagin area, Khuma had already encountered the Tagins at Galo area. He detained some Tagins who were brought to him by the Political Interpreter and Political Jemadar at Yomcha [Galo village] until their return from the tour to the Tagin's area³¹.

In following year, Hipshon Roy, another official visited the upper Tagin area up to Eba from Mechuka and clearly mentioned about the Tagins³². Then, came the fall out of Achingmori incident in 1953, which for the first time brought the Tagins in the national limelight. The government of India sent expedition in December 1953 under the command of P. G. Menzies from three columns: first from Gusar, second from Subansiri and last from Mechuka. After submission of the Tagins, the government established administrative centres at Taliha and Dinekoli³³. Roy also used term Moya and Tagin interchangeably³⁴.

Geeta Khrisnatry in her tour diary includes the people inhabited in upper Kamla Valley and Selu valley especially Soreng and Lingppu as a part of the Tagins³⁵.

Census of 1961 divided the Tagins into two groups: Tagin and Tagin Bangni³⁶. It included some of villages in East Kameng and Lower Subansiri districts under Tagins inhabited area, like, Gungtung, Deve, Veo of East Kameng district and majority of villages in Tali area and whole Huri area of Lower Subansiri except Sirin, Hagra, Paleng and Seji villages³⁷.

The Statistical Outline mentioned that 227 populations of the Tagins are inhabited in Kameng Frontier Division³⁸.

Shukla viewed that the 'Tagins' are entirely separate group of people inhabiting the north-eastern Sinik. Their concentration is mainly in the upper course of the Kamla River and in the

areas around the Taliha and Lemeking Administrative centres. However, the Daflas of Kameng Frontier who call themselves Bangni refer to the Daflas of the Subansiri Frontier as Tagins³⁹. M. L. Bose viewed that though the Tagins and the Nyishis are offshoots of the same stock, are separate group. The Daflas in north are called Tagin Daflas and the Tabins [Tagins]⁴⁰.

The people of neighbouring tribes have no clear ideas about the origin and meaning of the nomenclature Tagin. Tai Nyori believed that the word Tagin might have been used to indicate the people living in the interior. The Galo identify the Tagin by their respective clan name⁴¹. Vijay Sonam viewed that the Tagin means the eastern Nyishis including Pakekessang of East Kameng district⁴². This view was confirmed by discussion with J. T. Obi, Block Development Officer posted at Sepa, East Kameng district. Sepa people [East Kameng district] called him a Tagin⁴³.

The Tagins themselves too have no comprehensive ideas about the origin and meaning of the nomenclature. However, people of upper region Tagins⁴⁴ believe that the term 'Tagin' is meant to identify them and the term existed since time immemorial⁴⁵. However, the section of Lower region 'Tagins'⁴⁶ seem to have heard the term only after 1953 and believed that the nomenclature was given to them by outsiders⁴⁷. A term 'Tagin', believed to be given to them by the Tibetan traders⁴⁸. Prior to 1974, Tagin were identified among themselves by the phratry or clan like Bagi, Rau, Liyu, etc or Topo, Eshi, Tani, Tator, Tamin so on or by place of settlements like, Mayu/ Nurie which means south neighbouring of referring village and Moya/ Sedum which means north neighbouring of referring village⁴⁹.

The Tagin's oral traditions divided the entire human race into three groups: Nyeme means Tibetans; Nyipak means plain people and people living in the hills between Nyeme and Nyipak known as the Nyishis⁵⁰. Thus, as per their myths and legends, the term Nyishi denotes Tani group of tribes comprising Nyishis, Tagins, Adis, Apatanis, and Hill Miris etc.

The reference to so-called 'Tagin Dafla' certainly was not intended for the people of far off northern Subansiri, whom today, we know as the Tagin. The notes and references of the Tagins by the colonial officials and ethnographers in fact refer to the Nyishis of the foothills bordering the North Lakhimpur district of Assam.

The word Tagin might have its roots in Tagend⁵¹. The colonial officials might have used the expression to specify the people living in the last part of their frontier.

Therefore, the Tagins have been existed as a group belonging to the Tani group of tribes more akin to the Nyishis.

IV

Origin and Migration of the Tagins

Indeed, it is very difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding the Tagins' original homeland, route of migration and date of their settlement at present place. However, there are some views on it, which need critical examination to draw the conclusion. Sachin Roy viewed that the Tagins are believed to have migrated from the Penzi a village in Tibet to Tadedage region⁵². However, he failed to mention how they migrated to the present area from Tadedage. M. L. Bose put another view that the Tagins migrated from the Khams. Some Tagins are to be seen across that line in Tibet⁵³. Bose seem to be very assertive about the place of Tagins migration and claimed that some of the Tagin are found in Tibet, but has not mentioned about the route of migration. While, J.N. Chuodhury wrote that the ancestor of the Tagin came from Pui-Pudu believed to be located in Tibet. From there, they came to Pumte and from there to Dibeh. Abo-Tani was the first to come and died at Nide-Lankin. The Tagin from Dibeh to Nari and Nari to Nalo. In course of movement, their ancestors had crossed Subansiri and Khru rivers⁵⁴. As per the oral traditions, Abo-Tani was common ancestor of Nyishis, Adis, Apatanis, Hill Miris, Tagins, and Mishings. Therefore, as per this version all the Tani group of Tribes must have migrated together to Nide-Lankin.

The Hill Miri tradition says that Abo-Tani with his seven sons used to live at the source of Subansiri River called Sipo-Rigo. They were always crying for food, so Abo-Tani with his wife fled away while the children were sleeping. Following the footprints of their parents, they moved down stream the river Subansiri. The eldest one went to plains; the second lived in foothills, the third settled near Panior River, the fourth stayed in Kamla valley, the fifth near Simi River, the sixth near Sigen and the last that bother to travel was the ancestor of the Tagins⁵⁵.

As per this tradition, it seems that the Nyishis and Hill-Miris migrated down in course of Subansiri River from the Tagins inhabitant place, but the Tagins never undertook the course of migration. The Bori myth says the Tagins were living in Gamen in Upper Siang district, but the Boris and the people of Payum drove them away⁵⁶. This tradition believed that the Tagins migrated from upper Siang to the present settled area. Niranjana sarkar points out:

The Tagins believe that like the Boris, Bokars and Ramos, they migrated from north to Mechuka area in West Siang District in search of cultivable land. They settled there and lived for some time at two places known to them as Gembu Kakaksiriu and Gine Gedunglingne. These places are believed to be somewhere in present Bori area. They continued their migration southwards...some of them ... reached southern plain... They changed the direction of migration and came uphill by the banks of Subansiri till they reached present their habitant [sic] where their ancestor finally decided to settle⁵⁷.

Like other Tani tribes, the Tagins also claimed their origin from Tani/Abo-Tani⁵⁸ whom they regard as their ancestor. In the matter of genealogy, the Tagins have good memories and almost all elderly persons can trace their account from Tani, though they have different version about the evolution of human among themselves. This may be recounted as follow:

After the creation of the Sechi [earth] and Nido [sky] numerous spirits and organism-plants and living beings evolved on the lap of Sechi. In this evolutionary process a female human figure was originated in Simi-spirit form⁵⁹. The figure is believed to be created by Si⁶⁰. She grew up without human partner, however when attained maturity, she conceived through Rilo-Rianso [wind] and gave birth to Tunu and Tupe, Tunu was known to be Tani or Abo Tani and Tupe was known to be Chene-Yapi or Ane-Yapi in complete human form and later on from their wedlock human race started on the earth⁶¹. Another version is Si created a female form called Chetu; Chetu in turn procreated three children in human form Viz: two sons Tunu and Tuki and a daughter called Tune⁶². As there was no other human female, except his sister, Tunu married female of various objects and organisms such as leaves, tree, frog, bird, etc, but no human offspring was born. With all futile attempts to create

a human generation, Tuni consulted Dorichiji⁶³ for solution. Dorichiji advised Tani to take egg of Chei-Yashi⁶⁴ and throw it on the abdomen of Tune. If the egg does not beak any further action not to be taken, if egg burst into loud, Tani can marry Tune. Tuni carried out the action without Knowledge of Tune. Shocked at the bang of breaking egg thrown at her abdomen Tune jumped and embraced Tuni, thereby biological needs of body arose between them. Thereafter, both started the life partner and human races born out of their wedlock⁶⁵.

Another version is that, Sechi created Chetu [Tune], who born Poha-Tuni⁶⁶ then from Poha-Tani, Nigur was born; from him Gurni from Gurni, Nia-Tani⁶⁷ was born⁶⁸.

According to oral history of the Tagins' migration, the Tani group of tribes migrated from the same place Ane Puii-Pudu⁶⁹. From puii-Pudu, the Dogin-Mole [migration] started via Esi-Naka, Uyi-Pere [exit], to Laru-Satu, Yagne Dibah [upward route], from this point, the different groups moved to different directions: to Hampu-Rialu, Ditir-Dinia and Dikur-Dirik⁷⁰ the Adis and the Dodum, Dol and Dopum [Nyishis] moved toward Apa-Moya [dense forest], Ayu-Satu, [upward land], Diri-Dima⁷¹ and Lali-Lalen and Kara-Didi [mountains peak]. And to the middle following the course of Sinik [Subansiri] the Tagins come down to Dibin-Disap⁷² from there to Pute-Gate and Reko-Gah [entrance to vegetation], then to Sokek-Geli⁷³, and Nyprie-Sesso⁷⁴, and then to Pate-Yorja⁷⁵ and finally Rutu-hampu and Diso-Katu⁷⁶ [mountains in present settled area].

Another version is that the Tagins migrated from Ane Puii-Pudu in Tibet to present area. From Ane Puii-Pudu, they moved to southward via Hini-Dali, than to Tato, than to Yapik than to Polo, and from Polo they moved westward via Mobuk from Mobuk to Moya, than to Lipi than to Kora and Banium and finally spread in present settlement area⁷⁷. Nevertheless, some of the Tagins in and around Daporijo again moved upwards to upper course of Sinik [Subansiri] in order to search for a safer place away from their enemies⁷⁸.

However, Mra and Na Tagins do not claims to be line of Abo-Tani as their ancestor, but from Nido [rain]⁷⁹. They migrated from Helujiang [Migyithun] via same route together, but Mras stayed at Lemeking area whereas the Apatanis and Na Tagins

proceeded downward. Apatanis stayed at Ziro, while Na Tagins returned back to present inhabited area⁸⁰. The Mra and Na Tagins migrated from lower Tibet. The entire Tsari areas, including Yume-Yuto and chikchak villages belong to the Na clan. The Tagins collected taxes from these places as war gratuity after they had suffered defeat from the Tibet⁸¹. Helu [Migyithun] in both banks of Gelen [Tsari Chue] belong to Mra Tagins and the Tibetan came later on, therefore, the Tibetan gave annual subsidy and twelve years compensation to the Mra Tagins⁸². Once, the Tagins ransacked Yume village of Tibet⁸³. Still some of the Tagins are in Tsari area. In April 1956, Puri Taring (late) a Tagin leader of own clan in Helu/Longju invited S. M. Krishnatry to establish Gyagars [Indian] influence at Migyithun before the Khungden [Communist China]. However, Krishnatry informed Puri Taring that the Indian Frontier does not cover Migyithun on Indian sides and they must better remain with the Tibet. Then Puri Taring approached Krishnatry to rehabilitate his clan at Gilomo⁸⁴ in Indian side⁸⁵. Puri Taring finally took settlement at Daporijo town. The Tagin villages like Longju / Helu in Migyithun area in Indian side have been reported to be occupied by the Chinese patrolling party⁸⁶. Therefore, the Na Tagins and Mra Tagins were settled at Gelen [Tsari Chue] valley before migrating to present land and still some Tagins are said to be there.

Thus, according to the oral history of the tribe, they migrated from the South-Tibet. In any case, the Tagins along with other Tani group of tribes must have left Tibet before reaching of the Buddhism there, i.e. 7th century A. D, as the tribes do not bear any influence of Buddhism and retained their pristine way of life.

However, till 1973 confusion prevailed in the minds of the contemporary students and intellectuals, especially the Tagins of Daporijo and Dumporijo area whether they should merge with the Nyishi or Galo or to adopt common term for all the people living in the upper Subansiri area. However, the Galos were not enthusiastic to accept the idea, rather continued to call the people of upper Subansiri as the Tagin. Meanwhile, the people of Karga-Kara decided to merge with Galo and began to call themselves called Adi-Galo by celebrating the Mopin. Before that in 1969, people from west side Hankar and Niji

onwards adopted the name Hill Miri and celebrated the Boori-Bhoot at Daporijo. Then it was natural for, the rest to accept the Tagin as their generic name. The meeting was held at Daporijo under the chair of Tadak Dulom, then the Councillor of erstwhile Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh and was attended by the public leaders, well-known persons and educated Tagin⁸⁷. It was decided to celebrate Si-Donyi in 1975 at Daporijo. Late Popak Bage carried out the initiative and plan work. Thus, distinct identity as Tagins was re-enforced through community celebration of Si-Donyi.

V

This study is an attempt to discuss the various traditional institutions of the Tagins and how these are in flux as a result of onslaught of modern state and market. It has been organised as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Social Institutions:

This chapter deals with the study of the various aspects of the social Institutions. Though social institutions comprise of all the aspects of the society but we have confined our discussion in this chapter to some specific aspects only: family, clan, phratry, and moiety. It is how the Tagin society was organised. Another theme that has been investigated is the question of social stratification. Colonial ethnographers and following them many others have written about the existence of the institution of slavery among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh [formerly known as NEFA]. Therefore, an attempt has been made to study the existence of slavery in the Tagin society. The discussion revolves around the origin of slavery among the Tagins, their position/status in the society and abolition of slavery. Last section of this chapter is devoted to the question of social mobility and emergence of new social groups as a result of intrusion of modern state and market in the Tagin areas.

Chapter III: Institution of Marriage:

Marriage is an important institution created by human

society. However, different societies have evolved this institution in different ways. Chapter III proposes to study the various aspects of this institution as evolved by the Tagins. An important question to be probed in this chapter is the status of women in the Tagin family and the impact of modernisation on women and consequent changes in the institution of marriage.

Chapter IV: Economic Institutions:

It explores the various traditional economic activities of the Tagins: agriculture, forest, livestock, cottage industries and trade. An investigation has been made into the various changes taking place in these realms of economic activities.

Chapter V: Cultural Institutions:

This chapter deals with the various traditional cultural practices like: house construction, modes of dresses and ornaments, traditional system of education, games, means of transportation and communication, dances, songs and musical instruments. An attempt has also been made to study the changes taking places in various cultural practices.

Chapter VI: Political and Legal Institutions

In this chapter, an analysis has been made of the traditional political and legal system of the Tagins and its viability in the changing times. The question emergence of new political leadership and its role in the society has been taken up at length.

Chapter VII: Religion

In the last chapter of this study, an attempt has been made to understand the traditional religious belief system of the Tagins and how it has been facing threats from Hinduism, Christianity and Donyi-Poloism.

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64. Hen originated from the earth.
65. Tate Riddi, *op. cit.*
66. Tani in semi-spirit form.
67. Complete human Tani.
68. Interview with Takam Eke, Siyum, June, 13, 2001.
69. Place in their language imagined to be in Tibet.
70. Left side of slope down and last visible mountain.
71. Many mountains & hills.
72. Place imagined to be barren.
73. Single entry point between two patches of land mass.
74. Branch of tree that joined two patches of land at single entry point.
75. Elevated land sloping down.
76. Interview with Taru Bui (priest), Village Bui, January 27, 1997.
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Social Institutions

I

The social institutions of the Tagins have been undertaken here in relation to functional aspects of the social organisations having both vertical and horizontal dimensions. "Social institutions" says Samuel N. Eisentadt, "are usually conceived of as the basic focuses of social organization, common to all societies and dealing with some of the basic universal problem of ordered social life"¹. The social organisation primarily deals with the significant grouping of individuals². The survival of humankind depends on its mode of appropriating the nature, given the technology; to meet the basic material needs like food and shelter. Besides, these material needs, the men have social needs like recreation, religion and cultural activities, etc. Man is not capable of meeting all these needs all by him. He needs the cooperation of other individuals and so forms association. Social organisation usually has been taken as synonym for social structure³. Social structure indicates, "Ordered arrangement of parts" says Nadel, "which can be treated as transposable, being relatively invariant, while the parts themselves are variable"⁴. According to Redcliff Brown "The components of social structure are human beings, the structure itself being our arrangements of persons in relationship institutionally defined and regulated"⁵.

However, the social structure cannot be seen in isolation. This embodies some concept of a functional kind⁶. Thus, the

social institutions have structural dimension at functional level with vertical and horizontal organisations. This chapter proposes to study the social institutions of the Tagins within this broad perspective. Though a social institution embodies all aspects of life but we would be confining our discussion to the following features of the social institutions in this chapter: individual, Family, Clan, Phratry, Moiety, Social stratification, Slavery and Social mobility and emergence of new social group.

I

Individual

An individual in the Tagin society provides the basis for the society. Action of individuals shapes the pattern of social life that is reflected through different institutions. A group of individuals form the family, which is the smallest unit of the social life of any community in general and the Tagin in particular.

II

Family

Family is an important and primary unit of any social organisation. It is both biological and social. Family is a universal institution and it is created to fulfil some basic needs of humankind.

[a]. What is Family?

George Peter Murdock who examined the institution of the family in a wide range of societies ranging from small hunting and gathering bands to large industrial societies, defines the family as follows:

The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationships and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults⁷.

In other words, according to Murdock, the family has three essentials: [i]. Common residence, [ii]. Economic cooperation and [iii]. Reproduction

[b]. Size of the Family

The number of members in it determines the size of a family. Accordingly, we have: [i]. Nuclear family, [ii]. Extended family and [iii]. Joint family

[c]. Residence

Family types are also identified on the basis of the residence of the family. These are two types:

[i]. Matrilocal Family

The married couple resides with the wife's family or kin group in a family. In such families, the husband either visits their wives periodically or lives permanently with the matrilocal family. The women do not leave their families after marriage to live with their husband, and

[ii]. Patrilocal Family

This is a kind of family where in a woman after marriage comes and lives with her husband. In this kind of family, the descent is also traced through the male line.

Family in the Tagin Society

Though individuals are the basic ingredient of social structure, the basic unit of the Tagin society is the elementary family consisting of father, mother, and their dependant unmarried children. Without any exception the social organisation of the Tagin is patriarchal; oldest male member of the family is regarded as the head in the family⁸. Descent is always agnatic; son takes the title of father. The structure of the family changes with the attaining adulthood of the offspring in the family. A new family originates when sons get married and newly married couple start separate arrangement under same roof but separate farm and cooking. This course of separation continues until the separate house is built to become an independent family.

III

CLAN

Clan is an exogamous group which comes next to family. If the tribe or caste is endogamous, the clan is exogamous. The institution of clan is found in all the primitive societies. It resembles the family but differs from it fundamentally.

[i]. what is Clan?

Social anthropologists define clan as a unilinear group. Originally, the meaning of clan was taken from the Latin word 'gans' the literal meaning of which is unilinear group. However, in English the meaning of 'gans' has come to mean a partrilineal group. The meaning of clan runs into debate⁹. American anthropologists prefer to use 'sib' in place of clan in social anthropology. Murdock for instance, has suggested that clan should be used only for a descent group whereas in the British tradition the meaning of the clan is wider and includes both the matriarchal and patriarchal clans. On the other hand Morgan and others who favour evolutionary theory used clan only for the patriarchal descent group. Despite this controversy there is a consensus in social anthropology that clan is an important kin group, which determines the wider descent group.

It must be admitted that there is rich literature on clan in social anthropology. Kroeber has come out with a classical work on clan known as *Zuni Kin and Clan* [1917]. Firth has described the kin and clan organisation of the Tikopia tribal group of Africa in his book *we, the Tikopia* [1936]. Similarly, Fortes has studied the Ashanti tribe along with other African primitive groups. His book *The Dynamics of clanship amongst the Tallensi* [1945] very elaborately describes the changing character of clanship. Evan-Pritchard has also analysed the kinship organisation in his classical work, *The Nuer* [1940]. All these works assume importance in social anthropology because for the first time primitive clan and kin have been taken for comprehensive analysis. These studies have also conceptually examined the differences in kinship, descent, lineage, totemism and clan.

On the basis of definitions of clan as provided by Robert

H. Lowrie, *Primitive Society*, [Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1960]; Mayer Fortes *The Dynamics of Clanship among Tallensi*, [Oxford University Press, African Institute, 1945]; Thamas Hylland Erikson and John Lewis, *Anthropology Heinemann*, [London, 1982], we can infer some common characteristics of clan as under:

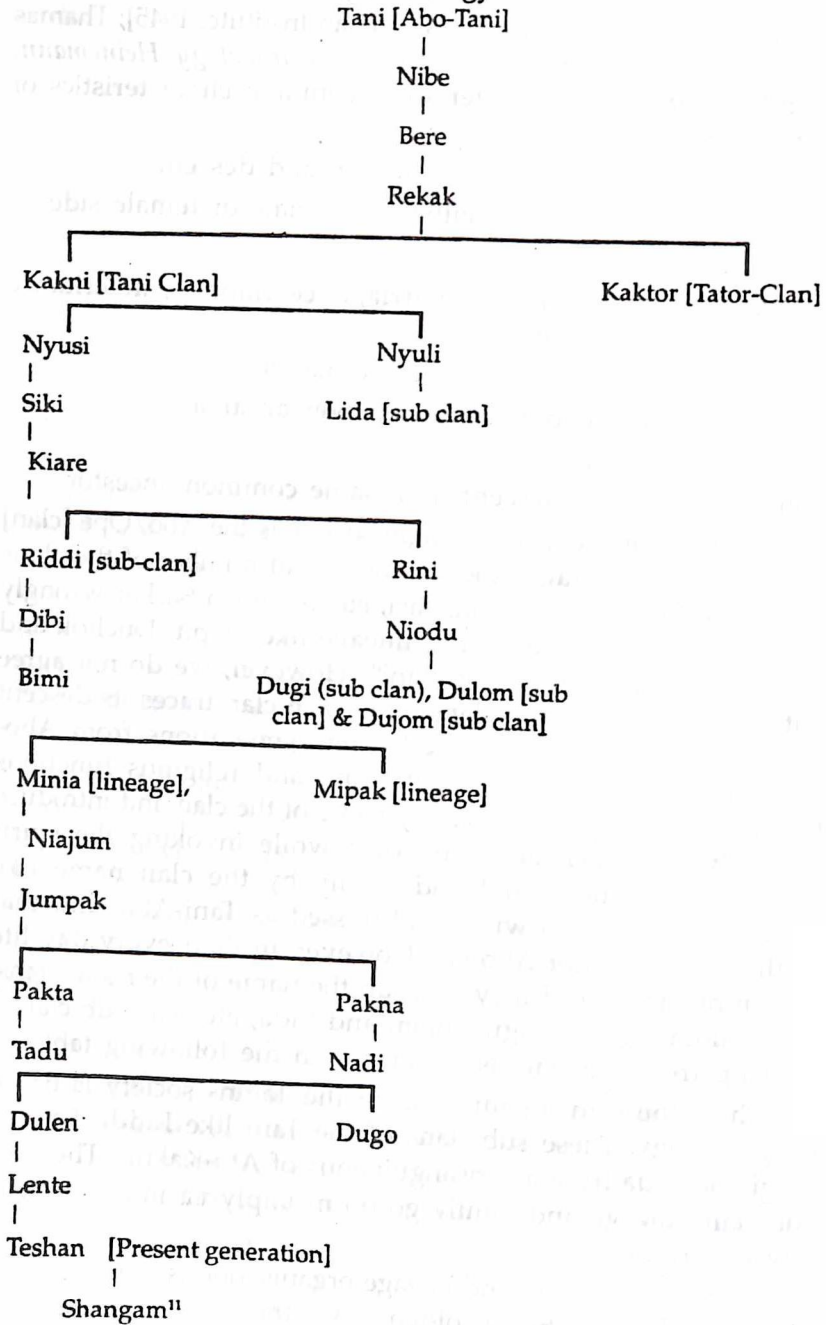
- i. Clan is a unit between family and descent
- ii. It is universal, i.e. either from male or female side
- iii. It is exogamous
- iv. It provides rule for marriage, ceremonies, inheritance and social control
- v. It is found in some specific places
- vi. It also has some authority over an area
- vii. It is totemic
- viii. It traces its descent from same common ancestor

The main element of the Tagin society is the Abo/Ope [clan] organization. The Tagin society consists of number of the clans like Topo, Tator, Tani, Tamin, Tasi, etc. Niranjana Sarkar wrongly identified some of sub-clan or lineage like Dupit, Duchok and Dui etc in the category of clan¹⁰. However, we do not agree with him. These are sub-clans only. Each clan traces its descent from one common ancestor after few generations from Abo-Tani. In social occasion or gathering and religious functions the Tagins identify themselves by name of the clan and introduce themselves as such and the priest while invoking the spirit addresses the individual and family by the clan name like member of Tani clan will be addressed as Tani-Abo, and that of the Tator as Tator-Abo etc. However, in their every day life and in official record they keep up the name of their sub clans, like Dulom, Riddi, Dugi, Dujom and Lida, etc. The sub clan is split up from the clan as illustrated in the following table:

Thus, the clan organisation of the Tagins society is based on genealogy. These sub-clans of the Tani like Riddi, Dulom, Dugi and Lida have a consanguineous of Ato-Kakni. The clan, sub-clan, lineage and family go on multiplying in a period of few generations.

This clan, sub-clan and lineage organisation is binding factor of their solidarity. So, in olden days, the Tagin villages used

Table No. 1.1
Genealogy



to be clan or sub-clan settlement for purpose of security and cooperation among the member of clan. Therefore, even today only member of a single clan or sub clan inhabits most of the villages. All members of the same clan are being considered as the brothers and sisters. The clan exogamy is stringently maintained.

IV

Phratry

The term phratry is applied to a group of two or more clans united for certain common objective¹². Majumdar and Madan opine that when a group of clans merge for some reason and the other emergent grouping is called phratry¹³. According to L.P. Vidhyarthi and Binay Kumar Rai:

In Tribal Culture phratry is more common among the North-Eastern Himalayan tribes and a few tribes of middle India¹⁴.

The Phratry among the Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh are merely an expression of group of nearest clans like Tator-Tani, Topo-Eshi, Tasi-Tamin, etc, rather than emerged out of exigency or common objectives.

V

Moiety

The Moieties are half-tribes. When a tribe "is socially divided into only two groups for its social activities, each grouping is called moiety. This organisation is also known as a dual organisation"¹⁵

The Tagin tribe is dividing into numbers of moieties covering particular geographical area. Like the inhabitants of Sippi and Menga Valleys are collectively known as Rau¹⁶, Paro inhabitants around Daporijo and Dumporijo area¹⁷ etc. The term Rau and Paro was to identify the particular area of settlement. Captain B. Duff in his report on the Miri Mission 1911 wrongly identified Paro as the clan¹⁸ of Sarak [Riddi] men.

VI

Social Stratification

"Social stratification", says Bernard Barber, "in its most general sense, is a sociological concept that refers to the fact that both individuals and groups of individuals are conceived of as constituting higher and lower differentiated strata, or classes in terms of some specific or generalised characteristic or set of characteristics"¹⁹.

Borrowed by analogy from the earth sciences, the term, Social stratification has come into general sociological use only since about 1940, although the matters to which it refers have been discussed under the heading 'social class' for a long time²⁰.

However, in contrast to its earth science usage the sociological usage of the concept of stratification "often includes, implicitly, or explicitly some evaluation of higher and lower layers, which are judged to be better and worse according to a scale of values"²¹. For Dipankar Gupta Social Stratification is not just differentiation but "differentiation that is made society visible"²². It deals with "the ways in which the human population is socially differentiated, i.e., differentiate publically and demonstrably"²³. Central to the theory of social stratification "are the concepts of 'hierarchy' and differences."²⁴

Social Stratification in the Tagin Society

There is no clear social division among the Tagins as practiced in Hindu society. However, the Tagin society may be broadly divided into two broad classes known as Gute and Guchi almost forgotten at present. According to a tradition, during the course of migrating downwards from Ane Puii-Pudu²⁵ all clans of the Tagin and other Tani Tribes had to cross Pane-geli [narrow deep gorge] by jumping to Pane-litak²⁶. While jumping Guchi, carried Papum²⁷ made of Hiri [Bell], but skidded at Pane-litak and broken the Papum while Gute carried Papum made of Hini²⁸ and triumphant landed at Pane-litak. Thus, the Guchi was branded more for unsuccessful landing. Throughout the course of migration the Guchi were using less significant and inferior items like Hhese²⁹, while the Gute using more important and superior items

like Hini, Kampu [sacred leaves], marched down with great splendour by killing animals. The Guchis being less imperative and insignificant attached themselves to the Gutes in marching down. Thus, it is believed that certain Gute clans have been attached and accompanied by some Guchis³⁰. Therefore, there is no Guchi village. Haimendorf, erroneously recognised Dei, Tamin and Raji as Guchi clans.³¹

There is a saying that the Gute clans are of higher social status than the Guchi and it is said that originally the two classes did not intermarry. However, unlike Indian castes, the Gute and Guchi were free to inter-dine. Today this restriction is not often in force and people of Gute clan seldom enjoy higher status.

Social life of the Tagin is divided into four groups. Chuodhury argues that the Tagin society was divided into four distinct classes: Nyibu [Priest], Nite [rich], Open [poor] and Nyira³² [slave]. B. P. Mishra writes:

"The hierarchy appears to be fixed according to the hereditary economic situation of individuals, with the Nibu at the top and the Nyira at the bottom standing apart as social castes by themselves"³³.

These references to classes are incorrect. The Nyira [male slave] and Pakne [female slave] form the bottom of social ladder. Atum-kine [causticity] and Takkek-nane [traditional acupuncturist] are next in ladder, Nima [poor] and Hopen [orphan] at the middle and at top Nyibu [priest], Nigam [hunter] and Nite [rich]. Although, the last groups enjoy a status in the society, they do not enjoy privileges. Except the Nyira and Pakne, the Tagins by nature are self-regulating and do not acknowledge any kind of supremacy. This was the reason for absence of any kind of central authority in the society.

Except the slave, this division of the groups and hierarchical order was neither permanent in nature, nor hereditary. The top status may be acquired by virtue of one's ability. However, it is believed that the Donyi-Polo determines one to become Nyibu, Nite and Nigam etc, while he is in the womb of mother. If an appropriate sacrifice is not performed to propitiate, the Donyi-Polo gets offended and soon the offender becomes Nima³⁴.

If Donyi-Polo blesses, Nima may become a Nite, Nyibu or Nigam at any time.

VII

Slavery

A slave may be defined as "any human being who is under the absolute control of a master and is considered by the latter as his property"³⁵. "Slavery in the fullest sense of the words" writes Verrier Elwin "has existed from time immemorial in NEFA"³⁶.

Elwin distinguished the institution of slavery, as it existed in NEFA from 'what once was practised in the west'³⁷. It was on a 'comparatively small scale' and it was marked by absence of racialism³⁸. In the Tagin society, a Nyira-pakne means a person who works for, lives in his master's house, and entirely depends on him for every necessity of life. The Nyira-pakne was one who was the property of another person and entirely belongs to him. A Nyira-pakne had to live with his master and work for his master even against his own will and must unquestioningly carry out the master's orders, and could be sold at any moment without being consulted. In case of male, it was called Nyira and female Pakne. Writing his tour Diary in 1952, Mr. K. T. Khuma, the Assistant Political Officer, Along, Sub-Division observes,

Slavery was practised in full swing. More than half of the inmates of a Tagin house are slaves. Selling and buying of slaves are common practises there. While I was at Laplo camp a boy who was bought recently by a man at Sidu village and kept in his house for sale by tieing [sic] a big log in his leg was released and brought down by me³⁹.

In an Official Report of December 1952, U Hipshon Roy, the Assistant Political Officer Mechuka stated, "the Tagins do not like that slave trade should be stopped"⁴⁰. Major P. N. Kaul, the Political Officer, Siang Frontier Division wrote in his Tour Diary:

I had desire to see the Tagin slave girl who had been living at late Guidam's house since 1951 but she was then on the fields. In the evening, she was brought by Guidam's son, Damli Yomcha to the IB at Yomcha. Her name is Yamak Dagam about

8 years of age...I asked the kid if she knew her parents and she replied in the negatives. I asked her if she would like to return to her parents and after thinking for a while she replied that she would not like to do so as she would not be sure whether she would not be recaptured by unsympathetic people; she said she would rather happy where she was and considered late Guidam's wife like a mother to her⁴¹.

While referring to the prevalence of the slavery at Lemeking and Taksing areas L.R. Sailo wrote:

Slavery is common among the Tagins...The slaves are mostly Tagins of Subansiri area and Sulungs and Bangnis of Upper Kamla and Khru valleys. At lower NA settlements, a single householder keeps as many as 9 to 10 slaves in his home...Before the advent of our administration, villages like EBA and CHEKE used to obtain their requirements of clothes, daos and others by indulging in slave trade⁴².

J. N. Chowdhury opines "the NYIRA as a definite class that existed at the bottom of the ladder of social order"⁴³. Verrier Elwin enunciating the existence of the slavery in Arunachal Pradesh wrote in his book *A Philosophy for NEFA*:

A slave by definition is something that can be bought and sold. Many NEFA slaves were used as merchandize, and in the course of a lifetime were bought and sold a dozen times. It is thus incorrect to say that there is no real slavery in NEFA and that the slaves could be called serfs⁴⁴.

[a]. Origin of Slavery

There were diverse causes for becoming slave. In the past, persons captured in the course of inter-tribal and inter-village raids or feuds became slave of the captor. Thus, Tare Riddi recounts:

I was about six-seven years old, sitting on the lap of my father (Yide) who fed me fish when our whole family was trapped and captured at Jeram village by Dubi people. Our family had matrimonial relation with Dubis, since my elder sister (Deya) was married to Dubi Puda. We were invited for marriage ceremony, and after feeding

'OPO' (rice beer) the team was trapped and captured, some managed to escape. I was captured and sold to Boje (Galo area) by Dubi Puda (my brother-in-law). After many years when the government came in Galo area, I went to foothill for collection and sale of cane. After obtaining some money instead of going back to Boje area I escaped back to my village⁴⁵.

In the traditional economy, the family needs more hands for production. Because of scarcity of labour force, the only means for securing extra-hand was by owning slaves. In this regard, Hipshon Roy wrote in his tour diary:

Economic necessity has made this inhuman institution has less made this an essential part of Tagin economy...we can root out this institution by tackling the economic side of the Tagins in a determine and effective manner. The Tagins are not without human love or feeling but perhaps that institution for self preservation in their economic plight that has continued for generation that has made them to part with their own as an escape from economic depression [sic]⁴⁶.

Socially, the number of the slaves one owned also determined the status of the person in the society. Owning of a slave was symbol of Nite and power.

A man who committed grave offences against other person or violating certain norms of the society like theft, adultery, etc but unable to pay the compensation was made as slave of the aggrieved.

The other related reason that encouraged the slavery was sale and purchases. Because of the socio-economic needs, the Nite resorted to purchase of slave wherever possible. The Tagins used to barter their war captives to meet the exigency of their essential items with distance villages, even with the other tribes. Thus, Sailo wrote:

Before the advent of our administration, villages like EBA and CHEKE used to obtain their requirements of clothes, daos and others by indulging in slave trade⁴⁷.

The slaves were usually sold to remote villages and to other

tribes to keep away the possibility of returning to their original villages.

"Most of Tagin slaves were sold to MECHUKA area through SEBAR valley Route"⁴⁸.

Elwin while describing the slave as a commodity in Arunachal Pradesh wrote,

Many NEFA slaves were used as merchandize, and in course of a lifetime were bought and sold a dozen times⁴⁹.

Sometimes, the rich men in their marriage ceremony gave away the slaves as a part of bride price and groom gift. Thus, Sailo in his *Tour Diary* wrote:

Slave may be originally prisoners of the war or poor people captured by unscrupulous persons or children and wives sold by the head of the household. Tagin often willing to sell their own wives and children as slave...Slaves are paid as marriage price or as part of marriage price⁵⁰.

Sometimes the people sold worthless wives as the slave. The worthless wife was one who indulged in illicit sexual relations or the one who was lazy or paid very little attention to the husband.

[b]. Position of Nyira-Pakne

The treatment of a slave depends on his individual conduct and the attitude and character of the master. A faithful and loyal slave used to win the affection of his master while unfaithful and idle slave were beaten up and sold. Sailo wrote:

A Tagin slave is absolutely the property of the owner and the general treatment he receives from his master is not very happy except in a few cases⁵¹.

On the other hand, Elwin viewed:

In NEFA too slaves often win a good position in their masters' homes, and naturally, after a period of years, come to be accepted as members of the family. The owner provides his slave with food, clothing and shelter; he arranges his marriage and pays the bride price-price. In some areas a slave is allowed to keep part of any earnings he may receive⁵².

However, Elwin contradicting himself in same book, he wrote:

The status of a slave is suggested by the use of such words as 'dog' or; 'fowl' to describe him—a dog or fowl is something that is entirely in your power; you can sell or otherwise dispose of it as you will⁵³.

While Chowdhury noted that, a slave was never asked to perform a job, which an average Tagin would not be expected to do⁵⁴. Generally, a good-hearted master gave lenient treatment to his faithful and obedient slave. A slave who lived with his master's house for long years developed strong attachment to his master. The slave addresses their master as Ato [owner]. However, slaves were certainly not addressed Nyira or Pakne, but always addressed by his or her name.

Practically, no segregation was imposed on slave. The slaves were allowed to mingle freely with the master's family. He lived in the master's house and shared common food and drink. The master arranged marriage of the slave and paid the requisite bride price. Slaves were allowed to enjoy personal liberty. Therefore, Hipshon Roy narrates:

They seem to be quite content with their status. They eat and sleep in the same house with the masters and work together but do not inter-marry⁵⁵.

Further, Hipshon Roy narrated that:

I saw the relationship between the master and so-called slave, except they don't intermarry; they live like member of same a family⁵⁶.

After his master's death, the slave became the property of his master's brother or nearest lineage, which inherits the deceased brother's property, wife and slaves⁵⁷.

Nevertheless, the social and religious segregation was imposed upon the slaves. The matrimonial relation between the freeman and the slave was stringently restricted. A Nyira could never marry until he found a Pakne, slave like himself and at the same times; her price was paid to her master by his master. Severe punishment was inflicted on the slave if he was found guilty of sexual relation with a free-girl. Free men

having sexual relation with a Pakne loose his prestige and social status.

Another form of segregation was ritual segregation. In the ritual ceremony of the master's family, the slaves were excluded from the participation and sharing of sacred meal and drink. Therefore, the ritual taboo observed by the master's family after ritual performance was not applicable to the slave⁵⁸.

[c]. Abolition of Slavery

Provisions of the 'Slavery Convention of 1926' were applied to Arunachal Pradesh in 1938, whereby it was agreed to bring about progressively and as soon as possible the disappearance of slavery in every form. However, at the same time, the Colonial Government took the line that it was not viable to enforce anti-slavery provisions in territory that were not under their full administration. However, it gave shelter to any slave who escaped into settled territory and occasionally even paid compensation for them⁵⁹. Thus, progress of British Government's anti-slavery policy was exceedingly slow and practically made no effect on the Tagin community.

The Government of free India's policy towards slavery in Arunachal Pradesh formed part of the general policy of retaining positive cultural practices and removing some of social evils. The modernising elite of the Indian State regarded slavery as the enemy of human freedom and therefore it had to be abolished. Verrier Elwin remarks in this regard are worth quoting:

We are agreed that the people of NEFA cannot be left in their age-long isolation. We are equally agreed that we can leave no political vacuum along the frontier; that we must bring to an end the destructive practices of inter-tribal war and head-hunting and the morally repugnant practices of slavery, kidnapping of children, cruel methods of sacrificing animals and opium-addiction, none of which are fundamental to tribal culture⁶⁰.

Thus, it was the Government of free India that taken up some positive approaches to abolish the slavery in the Tagin society as a part of general anti-slavery policy. This is evident

from the effort of early administrative officers like K. T. Khuma⁶¹, U. H. Roy⁶², etc who explored the territory inhabited by the Tagins. U.H. Roy wrote that:

The Tagins do not like that slave trade should be stopped. This trade can effectively stopped if we can improve the economic condition of the Tagins⁶³.

B C. Bhuyan, another Official of the Indian administration wrote:

No new case of slavery in the neighbouring Tagin villages (NACHI, GUSAR, DEBOM) has been known though it is not unlikely that the system of buying and selling of human beings are still going on in the interior Tagin area in a restricted way due to the establishment of an outpost at Gusar⁶⁴.

The advent of the regular administration around and in the Tagin area led the slaves to runaway from their master as the administration guaranteed them freedom from possible re-enslavement. Geeta Krishnatry, wife of an official accompanying her husband on a tour survey of the upper Tagin area noticed the way Indian officials were determined to liberate the slaves from bondage of their masters:

Krish was getting ticklish problems about slaves emancipation. Slaves had begun to desert their masters and runaway to us for emancipation and employment in Govt. It was becoming the Govt. Of the 'slave men'! The masters were coming to him to claim them back and there was no force to prevent taking them away forcibly. One slave Cheke Tanya ran away from his master in Eba village, the people of which has done much for success of this expedition by solving our logistic impossibility over that ladder- and if Eba men come to drag him away from in front of our eyes, it would be a big shame. One Tanya, sold by his two brothers, claimed they could not have sold him away at a paltry price of one dao and a belt of Cymbals. He asked for release into freedom. For such duties a force of Police or A/R (Assam Rifles) was an essential requirement to establish law and order. And

yet we were now duty bound to secure release of a slave if one approached or help. We were bound to give protective shelter⁶⁵.

Sailo also wrote about the kind of trend that was unleashed by the modern administration about emancipation of slaves in his Tour Diary:

Most of Tagin slaves were sold to MECHUKA area through SEBAR valley route and in view of our establishment of administrative centre at MECHUKA, it becomes a regular feature that the slaves from SUBANSIRI valley run away from their masters and return to their original villages⁶⁶.

Sailo, further recommended a kind of policy to be pursued by the government in order to emancipate the slaves in the Tagin area:

Provision of necessary funds for resettlement of deserving slaves who have neither home nor means of subsistence may greatly help in tackling the slavery problem which will be important feature in our administration of the Tagin area for some years to come⁶⁷.

Hipshon Roy recalls how the Government directed the officials to remove the slavery, when he was at Taliha as the Assistant Political Officer,

Order came for to stop slavery completely, because slavery was not allowed in India, from now we have been ordered within five to six months to take action to release slaves by paying compensation of Rs, 500.00 to 1000.00⁶⁸.

Roy's narration is justified by the writing of Elwin:

Since Independence, in all areas that are fully administered, Government has aimed at stopping traffic in slaves, the export of slaves across the borders of Tibet or Burma, and the capture of persons for extortion or ransom. This has been almost entirely successful...In recent years, 79 slaves have been freed in the Subansiri Division, 6 in Kameng, some hundreds in Siang and 32 in Lohit⁶⁹.

Thus, in course of time, because of spread of humanist ideas and the efforts of the officials of the Indian administration, the slaves began to demand their freedom and escaped in greater numbers. However, the anti-slavery movement had to suffer one major obstacle, because the tribals employed by the government officials like the Political Jemadars, Political Interpreters and Gam buras, etc themselves were keeping slaves in large numbers⁷⁰ making it uncomfortable for other slave owners who were reluctant to part away with their slaves. Therefore, the government of India had to take three tangible steps to abolish the slavery.

First, the government of India sanctioned good sum of money for ransoming a slave out of which some part was spent on rehabilitation of the slave after their release⁷¹.

Second, propaganda and holding of meeting to free the slave at official level as well as at village levels. Political interpreters were engaged to educate the people that slavery was against the laws and ideas of the free nation. They were asked to regard any child born after August 15, 1947 as free⁷². Elwin wrote in this regard:

In NEFA the Political Officers and their Staff educate the people to know...they inspire them with ideas of equality and justice which in time will make them release slaves of their own accord⁷³.

The third approach was initiative taken by the slaves themselves. They were persuaded to collect money and to pay their ransom with the help of the government. Village council was held under inspiration of local tribal official, the member of the same clan might supplement the contribution of government and what the slave himself can produce, to effect release⁷⁴.

Finally, slavery was put to an end by the administration in 1961. The slave owners were paid rupees 500/- only per slave as compensation by the government⁷⁵. Since then, the Government of free India took vigorous step to eradicate the slavery in Arunachal Pradesh and in the Tagin society. Though, the slavery could successfully abolished by the Government, some of the slaves had no alternative means of livelihood. They had been suffering from inferiority complex and society was

yet to fully accept them as its free member. It left some of them dejected and jobless. Thus, the abolition of the slavery was not sufficient in itself to end of the problem of the slaves. It had to be accompanied by three things: first was to effect the physical freedom of the slaves, the next to ensure that they had alternative employment or land, the third was to remove the stigma resting on the slaves and admit them into full membership of a free society. Some of the slaves were taken into the service of the Government as the Auxiliary Service Corps (ASC)⁷⁶ and some were restored and settled to their original clan and village. S. M. Krishnatry came across a former slave from lower Tagin named Tagyo who came along with him as Agency Service Corps. Tagyo was sold at Mechuka, but regained his freedom from slave status recently. Krishnatry detained him at Lemeking as permanent Agency Service Corps to show the Mra and Na clans how slavery has become an outdated and outmoded trade to indulge in⁷⁷.

After emancipation, slaves were restored to their original clans. At present, no difference is maintained between the former slaves and free men. There is no slave community in the Tagin society now. Many former slaves have now become rich and members of Gram Panchayat; some of them are appointed by the government as the Gam Buras.⁷⁸

The story of Yanyiong in Verrier Elwin's book *A Philosophy for NEFA* would exemplify how the Tagins enslaved free people and sold to other remote villages to make it difficult for them to escape to their original village, and how the process of reselling continued until the government intervened as the liberator. [See appendix F]. Thus, the institution of slavery has been eliminated from the Tagin Society.

VIII

Social Mobility and Emergence of New Social Group

Social mobility is the "Movement of individuals, families, and groups from one social position to another"⁷⁹. In the Tagin society new social groups have clearly emerged after the penetration of Indian state in the area. These new social groups are comprised of educated government servants, new political leaders and

business persons. Another kind of social mobility is migration from village to new administrative centres particularly educated, school dropouts and poor people.

[i]. Administration

The establishment of the modern administrative centres in the area was the beginning of the social mobility and emergence of the new social groups in the Tagin society. The Indian administration has broken the age-long isolation and confinement of the villages. Because, the modern state and modern humanitarian ideas no longer permit tribal feuds, raids, kidnapping and cruel punishment, etc and thus, advancement of the modern administration in the area ensured the safety and security of the life and property. When it ushered a new era of freedom of movement, the earlier idea of natural defence of village location has become irrelevant, rather new trend of shifting villages from secluded and isolation to more ideal place for the settlement has emerged; for easy access to district and circle headquarters, cultivation field and water sources. During the fieldwork, it was observed that wherever the border road has touched the village land, the village dwellers have been shifting their residence near to the roadside.

The administration has also introduced cash economy that gradually becoming more popular than traditional barter economy⁸⁰. In the beginning of administration, Tagins were engaged as the porters in forwarding the luggage of officials and as the labourers in cleaning of forest for creating zones for air dropping and construction of official camps, porter tracks [inter-village track], official buildings, barracks and ration Godowns in the administrative centres. The Tagins were also appointed as political Interpreters and Political Jemadars⁸¹. The money earned from these engagements was used for purchasing goods like salt, tealeaves, clothes, agriculture implements and household articles⁸². Thus, the cash economy was made familiar to the Tagins⁸³. Some enterprising youths took up the grocery shop in the administrative centres and settled in the urban centres like Daporijo and administrative centres like Taliha, Dumporijo, etc. Many Tagins migrated to Lemeking and other outposts in search of the government jobs⁸⁴.

The poor sections of the rural society started taking advantages of the new openings in form of wage labourers and liquor vendors. The expansion of administrative centres in the area created scope of contract work and entrepreneurship for both the literate and non-literate youths. The Tagin territory is very unfertile and therefore the agriculture needs very hard labour. Once the educated youths developed a taste for dwelling in urban centres, which involved more leisure and less hard labour as compared to the agricultural work in the villages, they started finding it difficult to adjust themselves with the rural environment. The growths of the administrative centres are also accompanied by the extension of the modern amenities like road, vehicles, shop, Television, cinema, etc. These amenities and opportunity in town attracted the youths both, literate as well as non-literate.

Table No. 1. 2
Social mobility from village to other areas among the Tagins

SN	village	%village dweller	% in Circle Hq	% in District Hq	% in Road side	other area
1.	A	66.5	24.2	1.6	66.5	12.6
2.	B	44.3	4.2	24.5	48	10.2
3.	C	62.2	24.2	Nil	Nil	23.9

Source: Computed on the basis of data collected from the sample villages

The village 'A' [Mech Marde] is one of the most exposed villages from most exposed circle [Dumporijo] in the Tagin area. This village is in the immediate vicinity of the Circle Headquarter, which is located at the 'Border Road Task Force' [BRTF] roadside. Though, there is no such dire necessity of mobility from interior to the roadside, yet, there is good percentages of population have already moved to proper circle headquarters.

The village 'B' [Nayom] is from less exposed circle [Taliha]. Below this village, the BRTF road passes from Daporijo to Taliha. It is observed that majority of the population has already shifted to the roadside.

While, village 'C' [Byaching] is from one of most backward circles [Siyum]. This village is located at left bank of the SINIK [Subansiri River], and there is no vehicular bridge connecting it with the right bank of the river and therefore there is no mobility from village to the roadside; however there is fair a good percentage of population migrating from the village to the other areas.

[ii]. Education

Education is one of the potential ways to bring about changes in the socio-economic situation and cultural outlook of a people. Through it new ideas are disseminated, new ideals are set up and a new life is brought into being.

No effort was made during the Colonial period to introduce education in Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh was only area in the North East India where missionaries were practically absent. In his *Ethnographic notes on the tribes of the Subansiri Region*, [1950], Haimendorf has highlighted the education policy to be followed by the Colonial State in Arunachal Pradesh:

The initial approach will have to be different. Small groups of selected young men should be taught colloquial Assamese in an informal way and this would create at least a nucleus of people who realize the advantages of learning a foreign language. At first the teaching should be purely vocal, and only when the students have understood that to every word in their tribal dialect corresponds a word in Assamese, should they be taught the link between the phonetic sound and a written symbol. An adaptation of Laubach's Method of Adult Education will probably be the most successful...The printing of charts and books will, therefore, have to wait, but specially chosen teachers from other hill tribes, e.g., Nagas under the guidance of an officer experienced in, and original education could start experimental teaching straightway. There can no two views as the script which should be used in writing the tribal dialects. Assamese is the obvious choice, for Assamese is the language through which the tribesmen will have to communicate with the outside world⁸⁵.

Once the idea of written words become familiar to few tribesmen through such an informal education, then the education of the children would begin⁸⁶. Therefore, the colonial ruler was satisfied with opening only two Lower Primary Schools for whole territory; one at Sadiya and other at Pasighat⁸⁷. Naturally, in 1947, when the Government of free Indian state set up the Department of Education, there were only two Lower Primary Schools in the entire Arunachal Pradesh.⁸⁸ However, the rapid growth of education in the state started from 1951 onwards. [See tables No. 1. 3 & 1. 4 below].

Table 1.3
Number of Schools, Teachers & Students in Arunachal Pradesh in 1951-52

SN	Year	Schools			Teachers			Students		
		LP	ME	Total	LP	ME	Total	LP	ME	Total
1	1951-52	67	1	68	120	6	126	2674	34	2708

Source: Statistical Outline of North-East Frontier Agency, April 1963, the Statistical Branch,

North East Frontier Agency, Shillong, p. 52

The Government of free India adopted a wider integrated education policy in Arunachal Pradesh. The basic aspect of education was integrated with wider education. The objectives of this integrated policy was besides, teaching a lesson to the students in the school by schoolmasters the other government officials would teach the tribesmen the ideas of love and loyalty to Indian state. They also taught the ideas of equality, justice, cleanliness, cultivation, house-construction, road building, preservation of environment, etc to the people. Therefore, responsibility of the education was not only of the schoolmaster, but also of entire administrative machinery. Elwin wrote in this regard:

The entire NEFA Administration might be called a tribal university with the Governor as its Chancellor...In NEFA the Political Officers and their staff educate the people to know, love and be loyal to India; they teach them how to built up and manage their councils for judicial and development work; they inspire them with ideas of equality and justice which in

Table No. 1.4

District wise distribution of education institution in Arunachal Pradesh in 1994

SN	District	University	College	H. S. S	Secondary	Training Institutes	M E	Primary	Pre-Primary
1.	Tawng			1	4		11	55	27
2.	W/Kameng		1	3	8		16	92	27
3.	E/ Kameng			3	4		19	104	19
4.	Papum Pare	1	2	6	4		16	65	7
5.	L/Subansiri			5	7		34	110	20
6.	U/Subansiri			3	5		23	101	16
7.	West Siang			8	11		44	151	27
8.	East Siang		1	10	8	2	30	134	40
9.	D/ Valley			5	4	1	21	43	29
10.	Lohit		1	6	11		23	120	34
11.	Changlang			5	9		22	112	29
12.	Tirap			6	6		19	119	24
Total		1	5	61	81	3	278	1205	299

Source: Statistical Atlas of Arunachal Pradesh, 1995, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1995, p. 24.

time will make them release slaves of their own accord; they are trying to educate them out of the opium habit and to aim, within framework of their own tradition, at living fuller and richer lives. The medical Officer educate them in habits of cleanliness...The agriculturists have the most vital task of all, in carrying on research and imparting its results to the tribal cultivators. The engineers are educating them in road-making and building houses. The forest officers are teaching them the value of their forest and to protect their wild animals and birds. This is real Adult Education, which is something much more than collecting a group of elderly men and making them trace laboriously a few letters of the alphabet on slates⁸⁹

The Indian state, however, to avoid rapid detribalisation formulated the education policy in Arunachal Pradesh very cautiously and slowly. Elwin wrote:

But tribal education is a difficult and rather risky enterprise, and the administration is wisely promoting it with caution⁹⁰.

The aims of education in NEFA was two folds: First to discover and develop boys and girls of exceptional promise, and train them up to the highest standard possible so that they can in time take place as leaders and administrators of their own people. Second, a combination of ordinary and basic education suitably adjusted to tribal needs to great mass that would be remained as the peasants⁹¹.

In this direction, the Education Department insisted that teachers should learn to give instruction in the tribal languages as soon possible and rule was made that if they cannot pass a tribal language examination within a certain time, their increment be withheld. Up to the end of the Primary stage, the mother tongue of the tribal students was being made the medium of instruction in the schools. Assamese would be medium of instruction from class IV onwards. Hindi and English were also taught compulsory languages from class III and IV respectively.

In order to integrate the school with life of the people, school textbook in various tribal languages for lower primary classes up to class I were prepared⁹² with appropriate tribal background. However, it resulted in healthy controversy about

the correctness of the translations⁹³. Then another plan was prepared to run the schools by using existing institutions such as the Gompas, Morungs, etc. This plan also failed because the Lamas were afraid that secular influence might impair their religious integrity⁹⁴.

Finally, the administration pursued common education policy, but had to become strict in guarding against detribalisation of the tribal youths in schools. The government carefully scrutinised the kind of equipment supplied to schools in the tribal areas, like books, charts etc. Elwin's directives are noteworthy in regard of education policy in Arunachal Pradesh:

We must not prevent a school-boy or indeed anybody else from doing his hair in a style he pleases. Equally, however, we should not in any way suggest to him that there is something backward or uncivilized in his own traditional method. As a matter of fact all our officials and particularly school-teachers should always bear in mind our policy of creating an atmosphere of respect for tribal culture and the tribal way of doing things. To summarize we are not to interfere if any boy or girl wishes to change his or her habit, but we should create an atmosphere in which the tribal people will not be ashamed to follow their own customs.⁹⁵

Establishment of the lone school at Gusar [Segi] in 1953 was the beginning of the modern education in the Tagin area. Numbers of the educational institutions in the Tagin area have been growing as a part of general education policy of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, as shown in the Table No. 1.5.

However, at initial stage, the education development in the Tagin area had to pass through certain hurdles from the Tagin folk themselves. Ignorance and lack of awareness on the part of the parents of the children made them to resist the modern education. The parents were reluctant to send their children especially the female children to schools. This reluctance was born out of their sense of insecurity and uncertainty. As has been pointed out in the section on Gindung [chapter - VI] that the Tagins were infested by raids, feuds and kidnappings therefore, it was natural on their part to be reluctant to send

their children to schools which were located in remote areas far away from their own villages. Secondly, this reluctance was also borne out of their economic necessity. The children formed an important aspect of the production power. The elder child had to rear young baby while their parents worked in the agricultural fields. The elder child, especially the female child had to help her mother in domestic and other works like collection of firewood, fetching of water from streams, etc. Therefore, sending of child to the school was considered as the wastage of the labour power. Their belief was that if their children get education, they would become Nyeme-Nipak-Ni⁹⁶; in that case, he would not be able to own the Geda-Eshi [land & water] of their parents. In some cases, the boy or girl was already betrothed. If either of them goes for study, the matrimonial relation would be disrupted and the bride price already paid would have to be returned⁹⁷.

On April 3, 1957, H. S. Butalia, Addl Political Officer Subansiri Frontier Division halted at Siga village around 25 Kilometres distance from Daporijo and found that residents were unwilling to send their children to school at Daporijo. Therefore, Butalia wrote in his tour diary:

They were however not very keen on sending children to school at DAPORIJO, which they said, was too far away. I did not achieve any result in spite of assuring them that I would be like a father to their children⁹⁸

Poverty was another factor that made the parents reluctant to send their children to school. Thus Tami Riddi reminiscences:

My mother and father did not want me to go to school. However, I insisted and therefore managed to go to take admission at Gusar against their will. There was no rice to eat at school, and sometime I had to sleep after taking single maize⁹⁹.

After formation of the Bango, the Bango leaders, gams and few students made it their mission to create awareness among the villagers about the importance of education for their progress. They toured villages in their respective Bangos, made public speeches and displayed dramas, songs and dances depicting importance of education. However, later on it was found that

most of the children admitted into the schools by this awareness team escaped and returned to their respective villages either under their parents' instigation or on their own whims. During my fieldwork, I had the occasions to converse with such respondents who stated that it was homesickness that made them to take decision of running away from the school. However, their parents recounted differently. Thus, Lora Dugi, [late] Head Gam Bura pointed out:

If the children are sent to school located at a distance would not be able pay attention to their old parents and also property especially landed one was the common notion among the parents in early period of education development¹⁰⁰.

I myself had to face strong opposition from my conservative parents on the question of sending me to school for education. They wanted me to look after my younger brother one-year-old at that time and now he is studying in B.Com. at Itanagar. It was in August 1978 that one fine morning, I fled from village to Lida Primary School and took shelter in hostel with one clan brother [Pigom Lida] and took admission. However, after three days at school, my father followed and took me back to the village. Again, it was sometimes in September 1979, I with one of my lineage brother [Tare Riddi] ran away from the village to get admission in school at Bui Middle School. However, his mother chased us on the way and he was detained. Apprehending that my father would follow me, I ran towards dense jungle, kept running on jungle track until I reached a remote village named Bui in upper Subansiri district. I took admission in that village school.

However, some parents understood the value of education and volunteered to send their children to far off school. Likewise, some young boys and girls also ventured into education and finally took up white coloured jobs. Being government servants, they are transferred to various parts of the states. Good numbers of the educated Tagins have taken up professional jobs. These new educated professional, businesspersons and public leaders are emerging as new elites in the Tagin society. The following table indicates this process.

Table No. 1. 5
Number of education institutions in Tagin area in 1999

<i>S N</i>	<i>Circle</i>	<i>Collage</i>	<i>H S S</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Pre-Primary</i>
1.	Daporijo		1	1	3	11	3
2.	Giba			1	3	17	
3.	Dumporijo		1		4	21	
4.	Taliha		1	2	4	9	
5.	Siyum				3	7	
6.	Nacho				2	4	
7.	Lemeking				1	1	
8.	Taksing				1		
Total		3	4	21	70	3	

Source: Statistical Handbook of Upper Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh, District Statistical Officer, Daporijo, 1998, p. 4,

Table No. 1. 6
Emergence of new educated professional group among the Tagins

<i>SN</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Nature of job</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Place of posting</i>
1.	T T. Gamdik	Administration	DRDA	Itanagar
2.	Tabu Konia	Administration	Under Secy.	Itanagar
3.	Tarak Konia	"	"	"
4.	Komkar Dulom	"	Dy. Resident Commissioner	New Delhi
5.	Ashan Rididi	Education	Lecturer, Arunachal University	Itanagar
6.	Vijay Raji	"	Lecturer in collage	Bomdila
7.	T. Ramsing	"	Vice principal	Kodak
8.	Taru Siga	Engineering	Ex. Engineer PWD	Itanagar
9.	Dube Dulom	"	"	Daporijo
10.	T K. Tagin	"	" RWD	Itanagar
11.	Nyayi Rigia	"	"	Pasighat
12.	Tanu Leriak	"	" "	Daporijo
13.	Tabu Paktung	"	"	Kurung Kumey
14.	Tania Raji	"	Assist. Engineer, PWD	Itanagar
15.	Tania Soki	"	"	Nacho
16.	Tachuk Bui	"	"	Daporijo
17.	L R. Sera	"	"	Seppa
18.	Lardik Kare	"	"	Taliha
19.	Taluk Jeram	"	Executive Engineer	Kholoring
20.	Taluk Rai	"	"	"
21.	N. Konia	"	" PHED	Daporijo
22.	Jomge Dulom	"	" Power	Dumporijo

23.	L/Tania Nima	Doctor	M. O	
24.	Take Dulom	"	"	Imphal
25.	Mrs Y. Dulom	"	"	Daporijo
26.	K. Mara	"	"	Daporijo
27.	Tara Nayom	"	"	Itanagar
28.	Mrs. N. Nalo	"	"	Itanagar
29.	Taling Mari	"	"	Khonsa
30.	Botum Bayo	"	"	Seppa
31.	Mrs Apu Bui	"	"	Daporijo
32.	Rumto Sekom	"	"	Nacho
33.	Singpor Rigia	"	"	Itanagar
34.	Bablu Nalo	"	"	Banderdewa
35.	Talum Dubi	Indian Army	Major	
36.	Tabin Siga	Administration	C. O	Wakro
37.	Manik Bui	"	C.O	Nacho
38.	T. Bage	"	C. O	Daporijo
39.	Tage Ekke	"	C. O	Baririjo
40.	Tayi Jeram	"	Dy. Controller, L/Metrology	Itanagar
41.	Take Mosu	"	ADI, Handicraft	Yupia
42.	Tako Dupit	"	DACO	Daporijo
43.	Tania Siga	"	DACO	Ziro
44.	R. Lowi	"	Member Secy. DUDA	Daporijo
45.	Tabu Mosu	"	DAEO	Daporijo
46.	Dusa Lida	"	DAO	Daporijo
47.	Rumro Sorum	"	ADO	Seijosa
48.	T. Hangu	"	ADO	

(Contd...)

Table No. 1.6 (Contd...)

49.	M S. Dupit	"	HDO	Itanagar
50.	Kolum Nalo	"	Joint BDO	Daporijo
51.	Bucha Riamuk	"	ADO	Baririjo
52.	Tadam Jeram	"	ADO	
53.	Malar Bui	"	HDO	Chayangtajo
54.	Talin Raji	"	ADO	Giba
55.	Tapa Dagyom	"	HDO	Taliha
56.	A T. Duchok	,	ADO	
57.	G. Garam	Doctor	Vitenery Officer	Itanagar
58.	Tago Bage	"	"	Doimukh
59.	S. Timba	Adm	SRA	Itanagar
60.	T. Konia	Police	Inspector	Daporijo
61.	Make Bui	"	SI	Itanagar
62.	Mrs N. Bui	"	SI	"
63.	Gopal Nayom	"	"	"
64.	P. Bayor	"	SI	Nirjuli
65.	Talo Rebi	"	"	Daporijo
66.	Tabi Bage	"	"	Yazali
67.	Taje Bui	Adm	ACF	Ziro
68.	Tali Bulo	"	Range	Changlang
69.	T. Chowkar	"	DTO	Tezu
70.	Tasar Gamdik	"	T O	Itanagar
71.	T. Maling	"		

72.	Minte Siga	"	Inspector, L M	Daporijo
73.	Daro Marbom	"	"	
74.	Tapor Bayor	Central service	JTO	Itanagar
75.	T. Marde	"	SI, Statistical	Daporijo
76.	Tagam Yekar	"	'	"
77.	Rowgi Mosi	"	"	"
78.	Taium Dagyom	"	"	Yinkiong
79.	Parlek Nima	Advocate	Advocate	Daporijo
80.	Biaro Sorum	Adm	C.O	Taksin
81.	Tuter Nima	Adm	Station Supdt. State Transport	Khonsa
82.	Tagio Kodak	Education	Lecturer in Collage	Pasighat
83.	Kapa Rai	Advocate	Advocate	
84.	Taye Riamuk	Adm	Fishery officer	Itanagar
85.	Tame Timba	Adm	District Planning Officer	Daporijo
86.	Tape Jeram	Edu	Vice Principal	Kodak
87.	k. Bage	Adm	ARCS	Daporij

Source: Computed on the basis of data collected from the field.

The educated boys and girls want to get away from their own villages. In addition, many of boys and girls leave their schools after some years and return home and find themselves misfits in their village, and therefore settle in administrative centres. Because the growths of urban/administrative centres are accompanied by new modern amenities, like road, vehicles, shops, electricity, wage labour, contract work, etc and therefore, there is a trend among the educated and school drop-outs to move from their respective villages to different urban and administrative centres in the district.

IV

To sum up: thus, the traditional institutions of the Tagins are in flux. As a result of introduction of a modern state system and market the earlier forms of social stratification are giving rise to new ones. Introduction of modern education has played a very significant role in bringing about changes in the society. Though there was, strong resistance to the modern education but the ceaseless efforts on the part of the various individuals to inculcate awareness among the people has made the older generation resilient and education is now regarded as a way to progress.

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