

TRIBES IN INDIA AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH

**BA [Tribal Studies]
Second Year
Paper II**



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Tribes in India and Arunachal Pradesh

Syllabi		Mapping in Book
Unit-I Tribes and their Habitat	(a) Tribes in India: Geographical Distribution and Demographic Composition (b) Tribal Ecology: Knowledge System (Health Practices, Resource Conservation, Beliefs and Practices)	Unit 1: Tribes, Habitats and Characteristics (Pages 3-68)
Unit-II Socio-Political Organisations	(a) Family, Marriage and Kinship (b) Types and Function of Tribal Polity (c) Customary Laws and Social Sanctions (d) Religion: Faiths, Beliefs and Practices	Unit 2: Socio-Political Organizations (Pages 69-121)
Unit-III Economic Organisation	(a) Types of Economy: Hunting and Gathering, Pastoralism, Horticulture and Agriculture (b) Distribution, Consumption and Exchange (c) Property and Inheritance	Unit 3: Economic Organizations (Pages 123-169)
Unit-IV Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh	(a) Demography, Geographical Distribution and Linguistic Classification (b) Politico-administrative Growth of Arunachal Pradesh (c) Tribal Studies in Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview	Unit 4: Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh (Pages 171-201)
Unit-V Society and Emerging Issues in Arunachal Pradesh	(a) Social Organisation (b) Emerging Issues: Land Relations, Occupational Diversification and Modern Polity (c) Women and Society: Inheritance; Women and Empowerment	Unit 5: Society and Emerging Issues in Arunachal Pradesh (Pages 203-236)

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INTRODUCTION

A tribe is essentially a group of distinct people who are dependent on land for their livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient, and who are not integrated into the national society. India is the home to a large number of tribal or *adivasi* people, who are still untouched by the lifestyle of the modern world. Estimates put the number of tribal people in India to be around 84 million. These people are the poorest in the country and are still dependent on hunting, agriculture and fishing for their livelihood. Some of the major tribal groups in India include the Gonds, Santhals, Khasis, Angamis, Bhils, Bhutias and the Great Andamanese. All these tribal people have their own culture, tradition, language and lifestyle. The north eastern part of India especially is considered to be one of most culturally diverse regions in the world and is inhabited by more than 200 tribes.

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

This book is divided into five units:

Unit 1: Discusses the habitats and characteristics of tribes in India. It also discusses how tribes are classified and how the ecology influences tribal knowledge systems.

Unit 2: Examines tribal social organizations as well as customary laws and faith and belief systems among tribes.

Unit 3: Describes the tribal economic in detail. It also discusses property and inheritance among tribes.

Unit 4: Discusses the different tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, describing their demography, language and political divisions.

Unit 5: Describes the emerging issues in Arunachal society such as land relations, women’s empowerment and social life.

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UNIT 1 TRIBES, HABITATS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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Structure

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the present unit the focus will be on the term ‘tribe’, tribes in Indian context, their characteristics and habitats. You will learn (i) *what/who is a tribe*, (ii) *why a community or a person is called a tribe*, (iii) *where do they live?* and (iv) *how are they distinguished?* As an answer to the first question you will learn that tribe is a social categorisation. The second question will answer the definitional and conceptual issues relating to the term tribe. Answer to the third question will inform you about tribal habitats in India. You will also learn about the concept of tribal ecology and its importance in healthcare and resource conservation practise. The fourth question will provide an outline of characteristics that have evolved from the study of tribes.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Define a tribe in general and in the context of India in particular
- Define a tribe academically and as a constitutional category

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- Understand the scope of tribe as a social category
- Explain the concept 'Tribal India'
- Describe the evolution of the term 'tribe' in India in a historical perspective
- Classify tribal habitats from different angles
- Identify the distribution of tribes in regions, states and Union Territories
- Enumerate the characteristics of tribes
- Explain learn how ecology influences tribal knowledge system
- Understand tribal health care and resource conservation practices in terms of their ecological knowledge

1.2 WHAT/WHO IS A TRIBE?

You know that we divide human population into various groups on the basis of some criteria. The grouping of people as *tribal* and *non-tribal* is one of such divisions of human beings. In this sense, a 'tribe' is a group of human population designated differently in different countries of the world. In Australia and Canada this group is known as 'natives'. Many scholars also use the term 'aborigines' to designate them. In Africa, India and in many Asian countries the group is known as 'tribe'.

During the concluding decades of 20th century, particularly in 1990s, the use of the term 'indigenous' to designate this group came in a big way. This trend still continues. However, there is disagreement over the use of the term 'indigenous' for 'tribe' in many countries. Therefore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has accepted the use of a compound term 'tribal and indigenous people' to designate this group of people in general.

You have already learnt that the group which is designated as a tribe has its own *community name* such as Oraon, Munda, Monpa, Khampti, Baiga, Santhal, Birhor, etc. All of them have been brought under an umbrella term, namely tribe by the people who wanted to create a distinct identity for these communities.

The nomenclature for this group of population as native, aborigine or tribe originated during colonial period. Even the term 'indigenous' has a colonial overtone.

The European colonisers distinguished themselves from the people of the land they occupied by using the terms as mentioned. This was not the case in India. You will learn that the term tribe in India was used in Census record after a long period of colonial contact. Moreover, the term was not used to designate all Indians, the entire population of the territory they colonised, as they did in other countries. In fact, it was the colonial mindset of 'divide and rule' which guided the British motive of dividing Indian population on various grounds. On the basis of caste factor, based on occupation, they divided the Indian population into *tribe* (people without caste system) and (caste) *non-tribe* (people having caste system).

Gradually, anthropological studies helped in perpetuating these divisions. After Independence, the Constitution of India scheduled (listed) a number of communities under Scheduled Tribe Category following some criteria of anthropological studies. So in India, a tribe is not fully an anthropologically

identified group; rather it is a social category administratively identified and termed as Scheduled Tribe (ST). For academic purposes, a tribe is both an administrative social category (ST) and non-administrative social category (non-ST).

By now you have learnt that in independent India a tribe is a community scheduled in the Constitution (administrative category). You will also find tribe as a non-Constitutional (non-administrative) category following the tradition of anthropological perspectives. In both cases a tribe is a group consciousness with reference to a distinct community identity. This identity got a separate status in colonial strategy and continued in anthropological studies and through constitutional recognition. Obviously, while categorising a community as 'tribe' in India historical process has played an important role. You can also notice that in other countries the tribe formation has a historical context.

However, a tribe also refers to an individual when we say he is a tribe or he is, say, a Gond. This means the person belongs to a tribal community. Tribe as a person represents the collective consciousness of belonging to and sharing with other members of the same group a code, rules, regulations, belief system, social customs, practices and norms which determine their actions both at individual and group levels.

1.2.1 Scope of a Tribe as Social Category

A tribe as a social category is not homogenous. It does not represent one category or the other. The category has bio-genetic variability, language diversity, different levels of cultural contact, varieties of livelihood options, different faiths and practices and distinct systems of governance within and without. You will learn the scope of tribes as a social category with reference to these dimensions.

Bio-genetic Variability

J.H. Hutton (1931), B.S. Guha (1935) and D. N. Majumdar (1961) in their study of racial classifications have presented bio-genetic variability of Indian tribes. Among these, B. S. Guha's classification which he summed up in 1955 is scientifically sound. According to him the tribal population of India belongs to three major bio-genetic groups as follows:

1. **Proto-Australoids:** People belonging to this group are found mainly in central and eastern India. They are characterised by dark skin colour, sunken nose and lower forehead. The Munda, the Santal, the Bhil, the Oraon, the Ho, the Kondh, the Gond, etc. belong to this group. There are tribes in South India like the Chenchu, tribes spread over many regions like the Bhil also exhibit the characteristics of this group. The Kurku tribe of western India is considered to be of Australoid origin.
2. **Mongoloids:** We find people belonging to this group in the Northeast and Himalayan region of North India. The people of this group are characterised by yellowish skin colour with straight and dark hair, flat nose, prominent cheek bones and almond shaped eyes with epicanthic fold. Tribal groups like the Naga, the Adi, the Nyishi, the Bhoti, the Lepcha, the Chakma, etc. belong to this group. The Khasis of Meghalaya and Nicobarees of the

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Check Your Progress

1. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) A tribe is also used to address an individual.
 - (b) All tribal people in India are indigenous people.
 - (c) ILO did not make any distinction between tribes and indigenous peoples.
 - (d) In India tribe is only an administrative category.
 - (e) Historical process is the right approach to study of tribes in India.

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Car Nicobar also belong to this group though their languages belong to a different group.

The Mongoloids are divided into two groups: *Palaeo-Mongoloids* and *Tibeto-Mongoloids*. The Lepcha of Sikkim is an example of the Tibeto-Mongoloid group. The Mongoloid tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, etc. belong to the Palaeo-Mongoloid group.

3. **Negrito:** This group of people spread over many regions of the country. The people of this group are characterised by short stature, dark skin colour, black curly hair, thin lips and broad nose. The people of this group are found in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar and even in Nagaland. The Kadar, the Irula, the Paniyans, the Jarawa, the Onge, etc. belong to this group.

The classification of tribes on the basis of bio-genetic characteristics cannot be applied strictly in India. Since time immemorial the population groups in India have been in the process of migration and social interaction. As Majumdar (1961) remarks, India as being the 'melting pot of races'. Therefore, you will find mixed characteristics to a fairly large extent. You will learn from various works that many ethnic groups have sprung from intermarriage between different groups. Edward Balfour (1885) in *The Cyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia* writes that in Mewar the Grasia is of mixed Bhil and Rajput descent. R. K. Sinha (1995) in his work entitled *The Bhilala of Malwa* also mentions about the mixed origin of the Bhilala from the marriage alliances of the immigrant male Rajputs and the Bhil women of the central India.

Language diversity

India has four linguistic families, namely:

1. Austro-Asiatic family
2. Tibeto-Chinese family
3. Dravidian family
4. Indo-European (Aryan) family

This is shown in Figure 1.1.

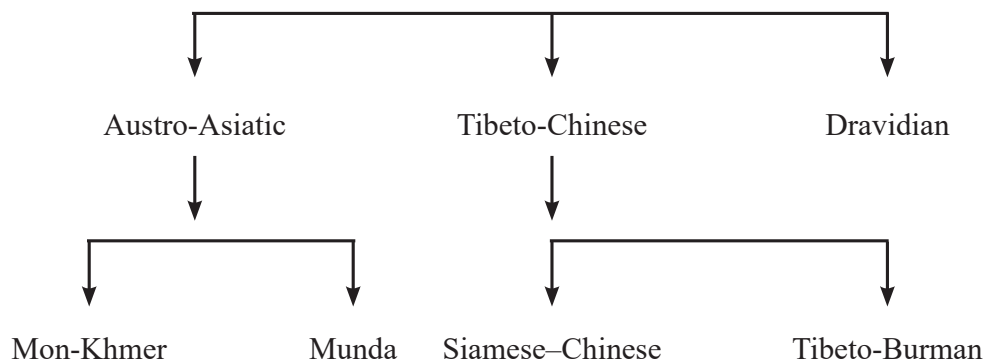


Fig. 1.1 Linguistic Family of Tribes

There is no disagreement on the nomenclature of Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian group of languages. But we do not have an agreeable designation for Tibeto-Chinese family. Linguists like Kun Chang, Austin Hale suggests Sino-Tibetan designation in which Tibeto-Burman group is a sub-family. G. A. Grierson in *Linguistic Survey of India* suggests eight major divisions of Tibeto-Burman group. These are:

- (i) Tibetan
- (ii) Himalayan
- (iii) North Assam
- (iv) Burma
- (v) Kachin
- (vi) Naga
- (vii) Kuki-Chin
- (viii) Baro or Bodo

Another linguist, Paul Benedict, suggests seven divisions. Even today, different linguists use different classificatory term for these groups of language. The classification shown above is taken from Vidyarthi and Rai (1976).

The *Austro-Asiatic* family is classified into the Mon-Khmer branch and the Munda branch. The Khasis in Meghalaya and the Nicobarees in Nicobar Islands speak languages belonging to the Mon-Khmer branch. The Austro-Asiatic family, which sometimes called the Austric family, is different from the Dravidian family of languages. In India, the Munda speech family belongs to this group. The Munda speech family is mainly spoken by tribals of Central and Eastern India. Languages used by the Santal, Ho, Kharia, Bhumij, Savar, Khond, Gadaba, etc., belong to this group.

The *Tibeto-Chinese* family has two main sub-families:

- (i) Siamese-Chinese branch
- (ii) Tibeto-Burman branch

The Tibeto-Burman branch further has five sub-branches. The speakers of languages of this branch spread in the Himalayan and the Northeast regions of India. The sub-branches and the speakers in each branch are mentioned as under:

- (a) *Siamese-Chinese sub-branch*: The Tai group of people use this speech family. They are the Khamptis, the Phakials, the Ahoms, the Khamyangs, etc.
- (b) *Tibeto-Burman sub-family*: As has been said the languages of this sub-family are spoken in the Himalayan region and among tribes of the Northeast India. The speakers of Himalayan region are divided into as follows:
 1. *Tibeto-Himalayan Branch*: The Bhotias of Darjeeling in West Bengal use language of this speech family.
 2. *Western sub-group of pronominalized Himalayan group*: Tribes, such as Laamba, Lahaula, Swangla, Kinaura, etc. mainly living in Himachal Pradesh speak languages of this family.
 3. *Non-pronominalized Himalayan group*: Toto in West Bengal and the Lepcha in Sikkim use language of this family.

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4. *Arunachal branch*: The tribes like Adi, Apatani, Nyishi, Aka, Mishmi, etc. use languages of this branch.
5. *Assam-Burmese Branch*: This branch has four sub-branches.
 - (i) *Bara or Bodo group*: Kachari, Garo, Tripuri, Dimasa, etc. belong to this language family.
 - (ii) *Naga group*: People belonging to Naga sub groups like Ao, Angami, Sema and Naga-Bodo sub-group like Kacha Naga, Rongmei Naga and Kabui Naga use languages of this family.
 - (iii) *Kachin group*: The Singphows of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam use Kachin branch of language.
 - (iv) *Kuki-Chin group*: The language is spoken by Kuki group of tribes, and Thadou, Ralte, etc. in Manipur. Mizo tribes in Mizoram and Manipur also belong to this language group.

The **Dravidian** family of languages is spoken by tribes living in Central and Southern India. The speeches of the Toda, the Paniyan, the Korwa, the Chenchu, the Iruval, the Oraon, the Yerukula, etc. belong to this family.

Out of these four groups, scholars believe that the tribes belong to first three linguistic families. Tribes do not belong to Indo-Aryan family of languages. The adoption of Indo-Aryan family of languages by some tribes is however, due to cultural contact.

The Santal, for example, is a large Proto-Australoid tribe found in West Bengal, northern Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam and also in Bangladesh. The compactness of the tribe having been broken, they have gradually adopted languages of the areas inhabited, like Odia in Odisha, or Bengali in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

The language group and the bio-genetic group are not coterminous. For example, the Khasis of Meghalaya and the Nicobarees of the Car Nicobar belong to Mongoloid genetic group, but they speak languages that belong to Austro-Asiatic language family. It is found that Mundas and Santals who belong to Australoid bio-genetic group speak languages of Austro-Asiatic family. On the other hand, the Bhills and the Gonds belong to Australoid bio-genetic group. Interestingly, the Bhills speak languages which do not belong to any of the language families of the tribes. Their language belongs to Indo-European (Aryan) family while Gondi, the language of the Gonds belongs to Dravidian family.

Different Levels of Cultural Contact

As you know tribes in India do not exist in complete isolation. They have been part and parcel of Indian civilisation even during Ramayana and Mahabharata periods. Even many tribal groups have taken part in state formation. In recent years the tribal communities form a part of Indian nation state. Obviously, you will not find tribes in an *ideal state*. Tribes have been integrated with different forces at different level of cultural contacts. Verrier Elwin (1943) with reference to different dynamics of cultural contact has classified the tribes of India into four groups in his seminal work on *The Aborigines*. The first group is considered to be the purest of tribal groups. Geographical factors have largely protected them from the debasing contact of the plains. The Jarawa tribe can be said belonging to this category.

The second category has been experiencing contact with the plains and consequently has been undergoing changes. This group though retaining their tribal mode of living exhibits the following characteristics in contrast to the first group:

- (i) Instead of communal life, this group lives a village life which has become individualistic. Their communal life and traditions are only preserved through their village dormitories (institutions).
- (ii) In contrast to first group the members in this group do not share things with one another.
- (iii) Axe cultivation has ceased to be a way of life for them.
- (iv) The members of this tribe are more contaminated by the life outside. They come in contact with the group living on the periphery, who live a more complex, viz. civilised life.
- (v) The members of these groups are less simple and less honest than members of the tribes belonging to first group.

The tribes who belong to the third category constitute the largest section of the total tribal population, about four fifths of it. Members of this class of tribal groups are in a peculiar state of transition. According to some investigations, they are tribal in name but have become 'Backward Hindus' constituting a sizeable section of the lower rung of Hindu society; one section is described as Christian. These tribes have been appreciably affected by external contacts. They have been exposed to the influence of economic and socio-cultural forces of Hindu society.

The tribals of fourth category according to Elwin consist of the old aristocracy of the country represented by great Bhil and Naga Chieftains, the Gond Rajas, a few Binshevar and Bhuniya landlords, Karku noblemen, wealthy Santhals and Oraons and highly cultured Mundas. They retain the old tribal names and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion though they adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even European style. Obviously, levels of cultural contact do not present tribes as a homogenous social category.

Varieties of Livelihood Options

Tribes live in different eco-habitats. They interact differently with different natural environments and eco-habitats therein. Primarily, they interact with natural environment — forest, land, etc. to secure livelihoods. As eco-habitats in a natural environment differ, you will find difference in ways that people follow to secure their livelihoods. Securing a livelihood depends on the strategy of economic pursuits. Many scholars have categorised the tribes on the basis of different livelihood options depending on their diverse economic pursuits.

You will find that Nirmal Kumar Bose (1967) has divided the tribal people into three principal categories on the basis of their economy. These are (a) hunters, fishers, and gatherers; (b) shifting cultivators; and (c) settled agriculturists using plough and plough bullocks. He also lists two other categories, viz. nomadic cattle keepers, artisans and labourers and workers in plantation and industries. Among these groups settled agriculturists using plough and plough bullocks account for the overwhelming majority of the tribal people. The workers in plantations and industries are also recruited from these groups.

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Vidyarthi (1976), however, has presented seven types of economic pursuits among the tribes. These are (i) forest hunting type; (ii) hill cultivation type; (iii) plains agriculture type; (iv) simple artisan type; (v) the pastoral and cattle herder type; (vi) the agricultural and non-agricultural labour type; and (vii) the skilled and white collar-job type working in offices, hospitals, factories and so on.

You will learn details of livelihood options in Unit-III of this Paper. The point which is clear is that different livelihood options do not disqualify tribal status of a tribe or a section of it. Tribe as a social category is neutral to differences in ways of pursuing economic activities.

Another point merits mention here. A tribe can be categories as hunting-gathering tribe or agriculturist tribe. But you cannot categorise a tribe as non-agricultural or agricultural labour tribe or skilled worker tribe or white collar-job tribe. This is because these types of economic engagement exists in all the tribes in different degrees and a tribe is not organised on the basis of social activities as is around hunting-gathering, agriculture or pastoral activities.

Check Your Progress

2. What is the basis of division of Indian population in tribes and castes?
3. Mention the mind-set of colonial rulers responsible for dividing the Indian population in tribes and castes.
4. Mention the tribal groups on the basis of variation in bio-genetic traits.
5. Mention any three livelihood options of Indian tribes.
6. Write the language families which the tribal groups originally belonged to?
7. What are the divisions of tribal communities on the basis of governance?

Different Systems of Governance

The tribes do not have a uniform system of governance. Broadly you will find two types of systems-cephalous and acephalous. The former is a system with a centralised authority which may vary from tribes to tribes. The central authority or the chief may be at tribe or village level or at both levels. You will learn about it in details in unit-II. Similarly, in acephalous system of governance, there is no centralised authority. Village councils or tribal councils are examples of acephalous system of governance.

Different Religious Faiths and Practices

Religion is not a qualification for acceptance or rejection of tribal status. The Constitution of India also does not put any restriction. You will find tribes belonging to different religious denominations. A large number of tribes like Dimasa, Kinnaur, Juansari, etc. have been recorded as Hindus. You will find 17 tribes of Lakshadweep, Sidhi tribe of Gujarat, and Gaddi and Bakriwal of Jammu and Kashmir professing Islam. In the Northeast tribal groups like the Khasi, the Mizos, the Nagas profess Christianity. Some sections of the Oraon, the Santhal and the Ho also profess Christianity. The Monpas and Khamptis of Arunachal Pradesh and the Lepchas of Sikkim profess Buddhism. In recent years there is a movement of revivalism. Many tribes or sections within identify religious affiliation with traditional faiths and practices. The Adis, the Nyishis, the Apatanis, etc. believe in Donyipoloism, the Oraons believe in Sarana faith and the Zeliangrong group of Nagas believe in Hereka faith. These are clubbed under indigenous religions. Now you must have understood that the religious denominations do not restrict the scope of tribe as a social category. You will find tribes whose members follow different faiths and practices.

By now you must have understood that a tribal community may belong to any biogenetic group, language family, religious faiths, economic pursuits, level of cultural contact or/and system of governance. The scope of the tribe as a social category is wide and is not restricted on the basis of any of the above criteria.

1.2.2 Terms of Address of Communities Before Designated as Tribe

The tribal communities existed before they were designated as tribes. Did they have any identity as a community or as a group? This means how these communities were addressed. In early times the communities who are now called tribes were known by their community names like the Baigas, the Oraons, the Saoras. Over the years, for the term 'tribe' in India, a number of synonyms have evolved. These are *Adivasi* (original settlers), *Girijan* (forest dwellers), *Vanyajati* (forest caste), *Adim jati* (primitive caste), *Jana jati* (folk people), *Vavavasi* (inhabitants of forest), *Pahari* (hill dwellers) and *Anusuchit jati* (Scheduled Tribes). David Hardiman (1987) notes that in Gujarat, terms like, *kaliparaja* (the 'black people') is used to refer to the tribal people. Persian terms like *qabila*, *qabilewale* were also in vogue to refer to tribes. There are empirical evidences which suggest that the term 'jati' was used as a suffix to tribal communities. Mention may be made of the appellations *Adivasi jati*, *Vanyajati*, and *Jangli-jati* (the 'kind of forest dweller'). Denis Vidal (1997) writes,

"In Sirohi [Rajasthan]... the same generic term (jati) was often used to refer indiscriminately [to] the castes or tribe".

You know that the term *jati* is used as a synonym for the term caste. This is a use in a rather restricted sense. In fact, this synonymous use is a borrowing from writings of western scholars during colonial period. Hence, we understand Indian *jati* system with reference to the conceptual frame of 'the caste'.

But the fact remains that the term 'jati' does not bear the connotation of its English equivalent 'caste'. The word connotes to 'kind or type' rather than 'caste'. In India it is used in a variety of other contexts such as *manushya jati* to mean humankind, *devta jati* and *danav jati* to mean gods and demons respectively, *stri jati* to mean women, *pashu jati* to mean the 'category' of animals or *vanaspati jati* to mean plants.

Many tribal communities were also designated through fictitious names, sometimes a common nomenclature. Often the designations by which tribes are known are outside constructs. Therefore, most of them are not known to outside world by their respective indigenous names. Contrary to the terms that the outsiders have improvised for them, tribes refer to themselves by their respective community names like Munda, Santhal, Gond, Baiga, Sahariya, Gaddi, or by the generic term *jati*, or the hybrid term '*Adivasi jati*'. The outsiders may also be neighbouring tribes or clans. The Laju Nocte, known to outsiders and to other clans of Nocte by this name, refer themselves as Olo. The Khamptis address themselves as Tai, though the term Khampti has meaning in their language system.

It becomes difficult to decipher the meaning of some names, even by the people to whom it is labelled. For example, the Tagin and Nyishi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were designated as Dafla whose origin and meaning are still a matter of speculations. Nihar Ranjan Ray (1972) has suggested the term 'Jana', used earlier to denote tribal communities like Savaras, Bhils, Nagas, Kirat, Pulindas, Kols, etc., in place of the term 'tribe'. He argues that 'Jana' and 'Jati' are both derived from the root 'Jana' meaning 'to be born', 'to give birth to' and hence has a biological connotation. Their inhabited territories are known as 'Jana Padas' in ancient India. G. S. Ghurey, however, uses the term 'Backward Hindus' for the tribes. This connotation is in conformity with the

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‘nation building’ project, which requires the national identity, essentially of a Hindu nation, through amalgamation of all peoples in a common bracket. However, Indian nation state does not believe in amalgamation; it rather believes and practises celebration of diversity.

1.2.3 Tribes and Tribal India

The terms *Tribal India* convey two meanings: apparent and conceptual. Apparently and literally it refers to tribes living in particular states and Union Territories of India. This meaning has a restricted territorial sense. In this sense its scope is narrowed down to include 30 states and Union Territories where Scheduled Tribe population is enumerated. In this sense you will understand tribal India in relation to the existence of tribal habitats in Indian states and UTs. You know it very well that a tribe is a state subject. Tribal India therefore, does not comprise India’s whole geographical boundary as states and UTs such as the Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh and Puducherry do not have ST population (2011 Census). Moreover, in terms of existence of habitats tribal India presents a fragmented picture, as you already know a tribe in one state or UT is not a tribe in another.

Tribe being a state subject and some states/UTs having no ST population do not mean that tribe persons confine themselves to their habitats. In fact, you will find migrant tribal population in educational institutes and jobs of central government in states/UTs with no ST population. They are also found in institutes run or funded by central government in other states/UTs where they do not enjoy tribal status. In there a tribe person enjoys educational concessions, recreational service and promotional benefits and social safeguards. Obviously, tribal India has a meaning wider than the apparent one.

In wider sense, tribal India is a concept. The national character of many *tribal safeguards* in central government concerns extends the dimension of tribal India beyond the state/UT boundary. Moreover, there are non-ST communities in states/UTs where STs have not been enumerated. These non-ST communities are the ones who possess characteristics that enable a community to be scheduled in the Constitution. A few of these communities were also enumerated as criminal tribes during British rule. The Bangal and Nat in the Punjab belong to such groups, but not scheduled. In terms of STs and Non-STs Tribal India is coterminous with geographical and political India. Conceptually, therefore, tribal India is not a mere presentation of ST habitats; it is rather a geographical spread of both STs and Non-STs, a cultural expression of interaction and identity formation and also a national commitment.

A tribe in India is a part of the *nation state* unlike many other countries and earlier time. The concept of *nation state* is mainly a post-Independence phenomenon. Before Independence tribes existed in two periods- colonial and pre-colonial. In pre-colonial period, though they lived within a kingdom they enjoyed territorial autonomy and autonomy in the management of their internal affairs. During colonial period there were interferences to an extent in the field of encroachment of their resources and through appointment of administrative representatives in their areas. Many tribal revolts against the British were result of such interferences. Nevertheless, tribal areas were either excluded or partially excluded from the direct administrative interferences. They enjoyed

their autonomy to a large extent. But after Independence the tribes are a part and parcel of Indian nation state. In fact, during freedom struggle the tribes have contributed a lot to the Independence of the country and making of the nation state. Economically and politically a tribe is integrated with the Nation. Whatever autonomy they enjoy is guaranteed by the Constitution of India. Tribal India does not limit itself only to states/UTs where communities have been scheduled as STs in the Constitution.

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1.3 WHY A COMMUNITY OR PERSON IS A TRIBE?

By now you know that a tribe is a social categorisation, may be a community or a person and has different terms of address. It was first the colonisers who noticed different social habits and cultural traits among the people whom they colonised. In order to distinguish these people having different life styles from their own, the colonisers put them under a different social category, called 'tribe'. This distinction has been continuing since then under different contexts. The Constitution of India recognises this distinction and designates the communities as Schedule Tribes (STs) with a welfare concern. A social group is considered a tribe because the people in it live differently from what we supposedly believe to be a *standard*, be it in social or economic or political or cultural front.

This difference is reinforced during academic pursuits. Studies of these groups generated information which is used to define and conceptualise the category already made. This distinction subsequently provides the basis of their integration and welfare in the nation state. You have already learnt about the definition of the term tribe, its variant like PTGs and the terms of reference. Here you will study these topics further to understand why a community is a tribe.

1.3.1 Background

In this section, you will have background knowledge of the term tribe and its use in India. You will learn how the term originated, and why, when and where the term is used in India. You will come to know that the term is used in census records, Government acts and other documents including the Constitution of India and academic works.

Origin of the term

There are different sources from which the term 'tribe' is believed to have originated. However, it was used by the Portuguese to designate the colonised people in Africa. Other colonisers used the term for the same purpose.

The term's origin might be found with the Latin word '*tres*' for three. The dative and ablative case forms of this word are both *tribus*. The word *tribus* could therefore mean "from the three" or "for the three".

The English word tribe occurs in 12th-century Middle English literature and refers to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The word is from Old French *tribu*, which is in turn from Latin word '*tribus*'. In Latin the term 'tribus' refers to the threefold ethnic divisions of the ancient people of Rome: Ramnes (Ramnenses), Tities (Titienses), and Luceres, corresponding, to the Latins, Sabines and Etruscans respectively. The Ramnes were named after Romulus, leader of the

Latins, Titius after Tatius, leader of the Sabines, and Luceres after Lucumo, leader of an Etruscan army that had assisted the Latins.

Colonial Creation

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Before the British rule no community in India was designated as tribal community. The term was used first in Census report of 1901 to designate a group of people. However, the communities designated as tribes have/had their own terms of reference and reference by the outsiders. As the communities have their own terms of reference and you will not find any community designated as tribe, nor was there any generic social category of the sort before the colonial rule. It is therefore deduced that the term is a colonial origin. In other words, the British administrators improvised and used it for making distinctions between population in India. This is also evident when different terms were used in successive Censuses because the enumerators could not understand the prevailing Indian dynamics within their theoretical construct when they attempted to fit some section of population as tribe in it. K.S. Singh (1998) writes:

The tribe is a colonial concept, and Anglo-Saxon word, defined for the first time in the Census of 1901, in contradistinction to caste. The notion of tribe has evolved over the censuses, from a hill and forest tribe, to a primitive tribe, to a backward tribe, and finally, to the scheduled tribe.

Susana B. C. Devalle (1992) from her study of Jharkhand tribes concluded that 'tribe is essentially a construct', and is a 'colonial category'. The characteristics attributed to tribes, such as egalitarianism, subsistence economy, little or no external control, autonomy and isolation of such a unit, Devalle argued, are not found among Jharkhand people, known as *Adivasi*. There are no evidences found to prove that these characteristics existed in the past. Needless to say, according to her, there were no tribes in Jharkhand until the European understanding of the Indian reality constructed them. The category, thus devised later, evolved into an administrative concept.

1.3.2 Evolution of the Term

The use and evolution of the term tribe has two stages — census records of colonial India and the Constitution in Independent India. Of course, the term was used in an Act in 1871 before it appeared in census records in 1891. It was an arbitrary use, and the term did not evolve from its sense of use in Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. You have studied the motive behind such an Act in Paper-I, unit-I. The said unit also reasons out the arbitrariness in grouping communities as criminal tribes and fixes the responsibility in colonial polices that forced some people to resort to theft, looting, etc for livelihood.

Criminal Tribes Act

You will learn that tribe as a social category is characterised in contrast to the caste. In other words, the Indian society is divided into *tribe* and *caste*. This broad division of society was administratively recorded in the Census Report of 1891. But before it the colonial government has used the term 'tribe' to create a category from law and order point of view. The name of the Act is ***Criminal Tribes Act of 1871*** of the British Government in India.

The purpose of using the term ‘tribe’ to people in other colonised countries does not fit in the context of some communities only as colonisers confronted all the communities in India on their arrival.

Denotified Communities and Criminal Tribes

The denotified communities were earlier known as criminal tribes. After they were denotified they were also known as ex-criminal tribes. It is to be mentioned that ex-criminal tribes are those tribes who were earlier listed under the British Government’s Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and in subsequent amendments. The only difference is the term denotified communities is an administrative cum social category, while ex-criminal tribe is a social category.

The term tribe has already been in the mind of colonial administrators and academics. It is evident when Mayhew (1862) used the phrase ‘nomad tribes’ in Indian context in the book *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*. It was a thoughtless use of the term which the colonisers had in mind to categorise communities other than theirs. The absurdity continues through census reports till date.

You will find the use of the term for the communities even after the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act. The Government of India repealed the Criminal Tribes Act and replaced it with Habitual Offenders Act 1952. The Habitual Offenders Act is a state Government legislation. With the repeal of Criminal Tribes Act, the communities notified under this Act as ‘Criminal Tribes’ were denotified and were recognised as recognized as ‘Denotified Communities’. The Act being repealed, the tribes were denotified and designated as ex-criminal tribes or denotified communities (*Bimukta Jati*). In academic writings, however, you will find use of the term ‘denotified tribes’. The colonial hangover, the familiarity with the term, the idea it conveys and an attitude of superiority feelings of a section, even in unconscious state of mind does not distinguish the implication of replacing communities for tribes.

Census Records

The term appeared second time in a government document, the Census Report of 1891. In the first Census Report of 1891, Baine, the then Commissioner for Census of India, classified some groups of people as ‘Forest Tribes’ under the sub-heading of Agricultural and Pastoral Castes’. Their number was enumerated at 16 million. In subsequent Census Records the nomenclature underwent successive modifications. In the 1901 Census, Risley classified them as ‘Animists’. In 1911, E. Gait further classified them as ‘Tribal Animists’ or people following ‘Tribal Religion’. Hutton categorized them as ‘Hill and Forest Tribes’ in the 1931 Census. By this time, these people were numbering 22 million. The term ‘tribe’ or ‘tribal religion’, however, does not have any definitional note in the above Census Reports. In the Government of India Act, 1935 these people came to be recorded as ‘Backward Tribes’ without a definition of the term. Similarly, in the Census of 1941 they were designated as ‘Tribes’ accounting for 2.47 crore people. After Independence, some of these people were listed in the Constitution of India and designated as Scheduled Tribes (STs). You shall know more about the concept of Scheduled Tribes subsequently. The preconceived notion in the mind of the enumerators of what people of a section could be called was the factor of not defining the term.

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Check Your Progress

8. Write *True* for correct statements and *False* for wrong ones:
 - (a) Each tribal community has its own term of address.
 - (b) The term tribe existed in India before the British rule.
 - (c) The first reference of the term tribe in government records is found in 1871.
 - (d) In the Census Report of 1891 some group of people were classified as ‘Forest Tribes’ under the sub-heading of ‘Agricultural and Pastoral Caste’. These people were classified as ‘Tribes’ in Census Report of 1941.
 - (e) Ideally a tribe is a social category in contrast to caste.

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Though the definition of the tribe was not clear, it was more the less considered in contrast to caste which are occupational groups. In caste system the principle of caste endogamy is strictly followed, which was in Risley's opinion not the case with the tribes. Contrary to Risley's definition, the tribes in India even during that time had an occupation or set of occupations; they spoke many languages. They were mobile and had migrated to different parts of the country. For example, Santals who are the native of Chotanagpur plateau are also settled in Assam for occupational reasons for a very long time.

By now you must have understood that the term tribe has evolved from a *hill and forest tribe*, to a *primitive tribe*, to a *backward tribe* in census records and finally, to the scheduled tribe in the Constitution of India. Over the Censuses during colonial period the nomenclature referring to tribes underwent successive modifications, involving primarily changes in the *descriptive adjectives* like hill and forest tribe, a primitive tribe or a backward tribe. The Constitution of India has dropped the qualifying adjectives and has adopted the notion of Schedule Tribe for this category.

1.3.3 Academic Perspectives

This section will list a few definitions which emerged from studies of tribal communities from academic perspectives. You will be able to understand the characteristics of tribes better in section 1.4 outlined with reference to these definitions. Besides, you will also learn other terms used in different contexts to address the communities who are now designated as tribes.

Definitions

This section presents some definitions of the term tribe drawing on the study of different scholars.

Imperial Gazetteer

A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so.

J. Lewis Gillin and J. Philip Gillin

Any collection of preliterate local group which occupies a common territory speaks a common language and practices a common culture, is a tribe.

Budhadeb Chaudhuri in the introduction to a set of five volumes entitled *Tribal Transformation in India* provides the following definition of a tribe:

Anthropologically, a tribe is a social group, the members of which live in a common territory, have a common dialect, uniform social organization and possess cultural homogeneity having a common ancestor, political organization and religious pattern.

Paul Hockings

... a tribe is a system of social organization which embraces a number of local groups or settlements, which occupies a territory, and normally carries its own distinctive culture, its own name and its own language.

...it is small, usually preliterate and pre-industrial, relatively isolated, endogamous (with exogamous sub-tribal divisions), united mainly by kinship and culture, and in many places also territorial boundaries, and strongly ethnocentric ('We are the people').

D.N. Majumdar

A tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations.

George Peter Murdock

It is a social group in which there are many clans, nomadic bands, villages or other/subgroups which usually have a definite geographical area, a separate language/a singular and distinct culture and either a common political organization or at least a feeling of common determination against strangers.

It is evident from these definitions that a tribal community possesses some characteristics which we shall discuss in 1.5. It should be made clear that all the characteristics may or may not be found in a particular community.

You will not come across a tribal community having all the above characteristics which are advanced to define a tribe. There is a gap between the conceptualization of the term tribe and the empirical evidences. As Anthropology usually studies individual communities, the definitions would apply to the individual tribes at large. Its cross cultural implication therefore becomes weak and so there is no agreement on a universal definition of the term tribe.

Conceptual Perspectives

Academicians have tried to understand 'tribe' from different perspectives. You will learn the following three perspectives.

- a. **Evolutionary perspective:** This perspective has three dimensions, namely 'tribe' as
 - (i) Stage in the Process of Social Evolution
 - (ii) Primitive Social Formation
 - (iii) Segmentary Society
- b. Tribe-Caste-Peasant Continuum
- c. Tribe in Transition

a. Evolutionary Scheme

The definition of the term tribe in empirical situation deviates substantially from the ideal definitions because the tribes are in the process of transformation. Moreover, the tribes and civilizations also coexist. In such a situation due to the process of interaction the definition of the tribe would be substantially different from the one living in relatively isolation. The ideal type definition informs us about the tribes living outside the state and civilization. Therefore, André Beteille in his articles written in 1960, 1980 and 1992 has argued that the definition of the term tribe should be historically approached to understand the gap between the ideal type definition and the deviations. He suggests considering, while defining a tribe in historical

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perspective, 'a particular mode of human grouping' in which many tribes were living in different parts. According to him mode of human grouping reminiscent of a stage in social evolution appeared to be the two essential elements in a definition. Obviously, he suggests for a definition of tribe situating tribe as a stage in the scheme of evolution of society.

- (i) **Tribe as a Stage in Social Evolution:** Earlier anthropologists like Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-81), Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) and other evolutionists defined tribes as type of society and regarded them representing a particular stage of evolution. Morgan attempted to demonstrate the stages of social evolution by the comparison of contemporary primitive societies. Tribe was seen as primitive social formation; primitive because they were supposed to represent the earlier stages through which the contemporary western civilization has evolved.

The evolutionary explanation is also evident in the writings of Marshall Sahlins (1961) and Elman Service (1962). Service defined four stages of social evolution which are also the four levels of political organizations: hunter-gatherer, tribe, chiefdom, and state. According to their scheme, socio-political development has occurred through four stages and the tribe represents the second level in the pre-state social organization. Their scheme was:

Band → Tribe → Chiefdom → State

Band: It is a small group of people related through the ties of common descent. Members have face to face interaction and migrate together within a specific locality. Bands are generally exogamous and other than marriage partner each band is self-sufficient and independent of the other.

Tribe: For certain strategic significance like conflict or exploitation of resources some bands are believed to have come together to form a tribe. A tribe represents more than a mere collection of bands; it differs from bands in terms of nature of integration of society. Other than kinship affiliation, association was based on age groups, religious congregation and ceremonial parties. In the absence of any centralized authority, social order was maintained through the relative differences of statuses and roles. This perspective on tribe puts chieftain type communities outside the group. But tribes with chieftain type of authority are considered as tribes beyond evolutionary frame. This marks the existence of chiefdom as a distinct stage in social evolution redundant.

Chiefdom: A third stage of pre-state social organization was marked by emergence of a ruler. In the initial stages the chiefdoms were theocracies, with the ruler or the member of his family also serving as a high religious official. When the chief died the role was filled by someone from a particular line of descent.

State: It is a system of social organization marked by stratification with separation of political power from religious power. The centralized government bestowed with political power, i. e. the State, had the right to collect taxes, drag citizens for work and for war, and enact and enforce law.

- (ii) **Primitive social formation:** Godelier (1977) also argues that the tribe is a type of social organization which can only be understood if we view it as a stage in social evolution. The 19th century evolutionists readily believed that the development of a more complex or a more advanced type of society would automatically lead to the effacement of the tribal type. For these scholars of tribal studies, it is a truism that tribes have preceded states and civilizations on the broad scale of social evolution. That is why Godelier and his associates placed tribes as opposites to civilisations. Ideally, they saw a tribe as an isolated, self-contained primitive social formation, but not part of civilization by force or by choice. It was defined on the basis of absence of those characteristics which we associate with civilization.

In the study of the tribes; the concept of civilization has its own connotation. Henry Lewis Morgan's work of 1877 (1944) emphasises on the 'practice of reading and writing'. It is also understood in the presence of 'great tradition' as defined by Robert Redfield in 1947 (1956). Naturally, the tribes do not have a 'great tradition', but have their local specific cultural behaviour, i.e., the 'little tradition'. In the sense of absence of the 'practice of reading and writing' they are not illiterate, but are 'preliterate'. So while putting the tribes in the scale of civilization they would not feature in the binary oppositions of 'civilized' and 'literate', i.e. they should not be designated as 'uncivilized' and 'illiterate'. Rather they should be designated as 'non-civilised' or 'preliterate'. Therefore, B eteille has suggested for a flexible attitude towards the definition of the term tribe.

- (iii) **Tribe as a Segmentary Society:** Marshall Sahlins (1968) places tribe as a stage of evolution. But he associates the term tribe, i.e., the stage with Segmentary lineages as distinguished from centralised chiefdoms. According to him, a tribe is a segmental organization. It is composed of a number of equivalent, unspecialized multifamily groups, each being the structural duplicate of the other - a tribe is a congeries of equal kin group blocks. The segments are the residential and proprietary units of the tribe. It is held together principally by likeness among its segments and pan-tribal institutions, such as system of intermarrying clans, of age grades, or military or religious societies, which cross cuts the primary segment.

b. Tribe-Peasant-Caste Continuum

As has been said, tribes in India have never lived in isolation. So a tribal community is not static. In other words, the community is in transition. There is another dimension to understand the tribal interaction with non-tribals (caste-based societies). Tribes learned from caste-based societies and castes also learned some aspects of life of the tribals. Due to this process of interaction assimilation, acculturation and adaptation have taken place between tribals and non-tribal communities in different degrees.

This interaction has been a feature of Indian society from early period and can be traced back to the days of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*. The groups were referred to as *Jana* in *Ramayana*. When Rama reached the borders of the forests of central India during his exile, the land was introduced to him as *Jana-sthan*, the land of tribal people. His meeting with Guha and the Bhil woman *Savari* is a popular episode in *Ramayana*. In *Mahabharat*, there are references to *kiratas*, Bhim's marriage with a

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tribal girl, Hidimbika, Krishna's fight with Banasura, etc. These in fact point to the prevalence of contact between tribes and non-tribes during that period.

Thus, in the process of this interaction the tribals have adopted some aspects of non-tribal ways of life. The converse is also true.

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There is a legend in Odisha about the incorporation of a tribal god into the Hindu tradition which evolved into 'Jagannath Cult'. The Badaga of the Niligiri Hills were influenced by neighbouring tribes. The Karma festival of the Oraons has also become a festival of many neighbouring communities in Jharkhand and Odisha.

We do not have sound logic to put tribal communities at one end of a pole and the non-tribal peasant communities at the other end. If we place tribal and peasant communities at opposite ends of a pole, there will be many tribal communities displaying characteristics of peasant and caste-based communities and many caste-based communities displaying characteristics of tribal communities at different degrees. There will not be a vacuum between tribal and caste-based societies placed at the end of opposite poles. That is why it is said that there is a continuum between tribal and caste-based societies, known as tribe-caste and tribe-peasant continuum.

We can cite some examples of such continuum. Anthony Walker (1998) working among the Toda of the Niligiri Hills for several years, arrived at the conclusion that in comparison to 'tribe', the term 'caste' has a 'considerable value', for it helps in placing them in the context of the south Indian cultural matrix, to which they actually belong. He finds it confusing when the Toda are designated as a 'tribe' in the sense in which this term has been used in anthropological and sociological literature. In a similar methodological perspective Hockings (1998) after working among the Badaga of the Nilgiri Hills finds that the Badaga have been called 'tribe', 'caste', and 'Hindu race' in the literature on them starting from 1922. He argues like Walker that instead of focusing on a unit and labelling it, the entire system of which the unit is a part needs scrutiny. The Badaga had migrated to the Niligiri Hills from the plains to the north. Theirs is an example of a caste group which adopted a tribal model through its regular interaction with the Toda, the Kurumba, and the Kota, the Scheduled Tribes of the Nilgiri Hills. Hockings considers the Nilgiri peoples as a 'case of a caste society' displaying 'several distinct indigenous cultures' which have their 'respective origins in pre-caste social formation'.

F. G. Bailey (1961), proposed this continuity in his concept of Tribe-Caste continuum, where he showed there are societies with both characteristics of tribes as well as caste. Surjit Sinha (1965), similarly proposed a continuum between the tribe and peasant societies in India. Further, with several changes occurring among them in independent India because of government programmes of planned change, many of the tribes have undergone rapid transformation.

c. Tribe in Transition

As it is repeatedly expressed, tribes in India were never in isolation. The communities at different levels of civilisation have co-existed with non-tribal communities since time immemorial. Because of this co-existence, the tribal communities have been interacting with non-tribals (caste societies) at different levels. Needless to say, tribal communities in India are not static; they are always in the process of adoption and

Check Your Progress

9. Answer the following in brief:
 - (a) What are the sources of origin of tribe as a social category?
 - (b) Who are denotified communities?
 - (c) What are four stages of social evolution?
 - (d) What do you mean by tribe-caste continuum?

change. The process is more visible when these communities, whether scheduled or non-scheduled are integrated to the Nation's development agenda. A.R. Desai (1969) has, therefore, aptly remarked that the tribes in India are in transition. According to A. R. Desai (1969), in India majority of tribes should be viewed as 'tribes in transition'. To define them as tribe one has to take a historical perspective. Beteille (1992: 76) advocates a historical perspective to define a tribe. According to him, only by going into antecedent of a group we can say whether or not it should be considered as tribe.

The transition concept can also be understood with reference to syncretism or adaptation to different livelihood strategies. This concept portrays tribal society against the background of self-contained and static nature as was attributed in earlier writings on tribes.

Among the Khamptis of Arunachal Pradesh one would find a syncretic tradition of Buddhism and indigenous practices. They belong to the *Theraveda* cult of Buddhism, but also believe in the deities of mountains, forests and many other of animistic traditions. Ancestor worship is a practice of their curative system. Such a syncretic tradition is noticed in the study of Subhadra Mitra Channa on the Jad of Harsil (one of the five ST groups of Uttarakhand included within the generic category of Bhotiya). The people do not subscribe to any clearly bounded social or religious category; rather display a tradition betwixt and between the Hindu and Buddhist tradition. Tribe as a 'closed cultural group' is not evident in Khampti or Jad communities. Subhadra Mitra Channa further writes that Jad, being the pastoralists, shifts with their animals from one location to another as an adaptive strategy to different ecological niches. Obviously, they do not follow a singular adaptive strategy for themselves and their animals. Appropriately, she labels them as a 'mode of adaptation', a way of life with adjustment to different ecological conditions rather than a bounded unit as a tribe is understood in conventional scholarship.

Changes have been occurring in 'tribal' communities of India at different perceptible levels. Tribes do not stick to one locality. They migrate when the resource base is depleted. Against this background 'tribes in transition' is one of the characteristics to explain the tribal communities in India.

1.3.4 Tribe and its Constitutional Categories in India

The Constitution of India accepted the term 'tribe' to designate a social division. While scheduling the communities it used terms like 'caste' and 'tribe'. However, you will come to know that there is no definition of the term tribe in the Constitution, though it has accepted the communities earlier listed as tribes in its Scheduled Tribe category following the parameters laid down by Lokur Committee.

In India the tribe is largely an administrative concept. It refers to Scheduled Tribes, i.e. the tribes and communities listed in the Constitution of India. Other than the Scheduled Tribe we come across another term, namely Particularly Vulnerable Tribes. Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (earlier known as Primitive Tribal Groups; both abbreviated as PTGs) is a sub-category of STs. In this section we shall discuss the concept of tribe with reference to Scheduled Tribe and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs).

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Scheduled Tribes

With the attainment of independence, a large number of communities enumerated in census records were found backward in terms of development indicators like literacy, access to health care, nutrition, income and poverty. These communities came to be known as Scheduled Tribes as per Art.342. Certain pockets in India are largely dominated by these ST communities. These pockets were known as ‘excluded area’ during the colonial rule and later designated as Scheduled Area. The tribes and other communities, especially in ‘scheduled area’ were listed in Indian Constitution in order to provide them special assistance.

There was a debate on the use of a term for these communities. In the debate of Constituent Assembly, Jai Pal Singh, a tribal leader, favoured the term *Adivasi* in place of Scheduled Tribe. But Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, argued that *Adivasi* is a general term, which has no special legal *de jure* connotations. On the other hand, the term Scheduled Tribe has a fixed meaning, because it enumerates the tribes, and so he favoured its use.

The Constitution of India, Article 366 (25) defines Scheduled Tribes as “such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to the scheduled Tribes (STs) for the purposes of this Constitution”. It is to be noted that only those tribes which have been included in the list of Scheduled Tribes are given special treatment or facilities envisaged under the Constitution. The Scheduled Tribes are specified by the President under Article 342 by a public notification. The Parliament may, by law, include or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes any tribal community or part thereof in any State or Union Territory. In Article 342, the procedure to be followed for specification of a Scheduled Tribe is prescribed.

Article 342 of our Constitution states that:
The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor on... thereof, by public notification, specify tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purpose of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory, as the case may be.

In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 342 of the Constitution of India, so far **nine** orders specifying the Scheduled Tribes in relation to the state and union territories have been promulgated. Out of these, eight are in operation at present as mentioned in table 1.1 in their original or amended form.

Table 1.1 Orders Specifying the Scheduled Tribes

S. No.	Name of Order	Date of Notifi- cation	Applicability to States/ UTs
1	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order 1950 (C.O.22)	6-9-1950	Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura And West Bengal.

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2	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951 (C.O.33)	20-9-1951	Daman & Diu, Lakshdweep
3	The Constitution (Andaman And Nicobar Islands) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1959 (C.O. 58)	31-3-1959	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
4	The Constitution (Dadra & Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1962 (C.O. 65)	30-6-1962	Dadra & Nagar Haveli
5	The Constitution (Uttar Pradesh) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1967 (C.O. 78)	24-6-1967	Uttar Pradesh
6	The Constitution (Nagaland) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1970 (C.O.88)	23-7-1970	Nagaland
7	The Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1978 (C.O.111)	22-6-1978	Sikkim
8.	The Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989 (C.O. 142)	7-10-1989	Jammu & Kashmir

No community has been specified as Scheduled Tribe in relation to the States of Haryana and Punjab and Union Territories of Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry.

One order namely the Constitution (Goa, Daman & Diu) Scheduled Tribes order 1968 has become defunct on account of reorganization of Goa, Daman & Diu in 1987. Under the Goa, Daman & Diu reorganization Act 1987 (18 of 1987) the list of Scheduled Tribes of Goa has been transferred to part XIX of the Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 and that of Daman & Diu II of the Schedule of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951.

The criteria followed for declaring an area as Scheduled Area are preponderance of tribal population; compactness and reasonable size of the area; under-developed nature of the area; and marked disparity in economic standard of the people. The Orders, by which communities have been scheduled as tribes, do not contain the criteria for the specification of any community as Scheduled Tribe. These criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution of India either. However, these criteria have become well established. It subsumes the definitions contained in 1931 Census, the reports of first Backward Classes Commission 1955, the Advisory Committee (Kalelkar), on Revision of SC/ST lists (Lokur Committee), 1965 and the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (Amendment) Bill 1967 (Chanda Committee), 1969.

However, the criteria laid down were not very precise and it would have been difficult to go about identifying tribes with it. For example, what is meant by primitiveness was nowhere defined. The Draft National Policy of Tribals, 2006 admits, "The criteria laid down by the Lokur Committee are hardly relevant today. For instance, very few tribes can today be said to possess 'primitive traits'." The Presidential Order, 1950 declared 212 tribes located in fourteen states as Scheduled Tribes. In fact the list was more or less similar to the list prepared in the 1931 census. Their number increased to 427 in 1971, 437 in 1981, and

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to 621 in 1991. Communities can be excluded or included in the list based on the recommendation of the President. The National Tribal Policy, 2006 puts the figure around 700 while in the First Draft, 2004, the number of ST communities was given 698.

According to V.K. Srivastava (2005), today when the anthropologist uses the term tribe in the context of India, they include all the communities included in the list of the Scheduled Tribes although some of them may not be in accordance with the anthropological conception of tribe.

Ambiguity in ST category

Scheduled Tribe is an administrative and political concept and applies to individual communities and to territories as is the case of Kinnaur, Jaunsar-Bawar and Pangwal. In these territories people irrespective of their social categories have been declared as Scheduled Tribes.

The territorial dimension of the concept of Scheduled Tribe needs an explanation. Though Kinnauras are a territorial group which forms their socio-cultural identity, the Constitution of India has treated them differently unlike the Jaunsar-Bawar. T.S.Negi (1976) writes, originally there was the Kinnaura tribe, by legendary belief as well as some historical evidences and deduction, to be the descendant of the Kinnera Tribe of Hindu Mythology. But the tribe is stratified on caste basis as Khashia, Chamang and Domang on the basis of specialised occupation. Those who followed the profession of shoe making are called Chamang, and those who followed the profession of iron works are called Domang. Khasias are equated with Rajput. Consequent of these occupational divisions, the Rajputs are known as 'Sawarn'- the high caste, and Damang and Chamang as 'Harijan'. Interestingly, all these groups have their socio-cultural identity as Kinnaura. Strangely, in Indian Constitution the Khashias are enumerated as Scheduled Tribes and the Damang and Chamang as Scheduled Castes.

Some of the areas like Jaunsar Bawar in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand were declared Scheduled Area in 1967. As such the communities living there were scheduled as Jaunsar Bawar. Jaunsar is derived from the name Jamunasar meaning Jamuna tract of the District. The communities living there have three distinct social divisions. These three divisions are Khasa, which includes Rajput and Brahmins. The second one is the middle division under which Luhar, Sunar, Badi, Ode, Bajigi—the artisan communities are included. The third division is categorised as *harijans* and includes such communities as Dom, Koli, Kolta, Koir, Angi, etc. The Jaunsar Bawar tribe in fact has a complete social categorization, in addition to it being a territorial construct. The territorial dimension of the tribal status is also reflected in case of many other tribes. The Malai Kuravar is a Scheduled Caste community in Tirunelveli district and ST community in Kanya Kumari district of Tamilnadu. Another interesting case of territorial dimension of identification of a tribe is the Bharia which is a primitive tribal group in Patalkot valley of Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh. Outside the valley but within the district they are recognized as ST community. Further, outside the district the community is not scheduled. Similarly, Rabari community enjoys Scheduled Tribe status in Gujarat but Other Backward Class in Rajasthan.

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The territorial dimension also emerges from the fact that ST is a state concept. The tribe of one state does not enjoy the same status in another state. The Adivasis of Central India who belonged to Munda, Santhal, Saura, and other tribal communities were brought as tea plantation labourers to Assam during British period. They are designated as Adivasis in Assam, the place to which they migrated, but without the status of ST. This ambiguity stems from the Constitutional provision as is read in Article 342 (1).

Article 342 (1): The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities, which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory as the case may be.

Article 342 (2): Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

In early anthropology literature tribe is depicted as a community outside the state. But in India there are tribal communities scheduled in the Indian Constitution which participated in State formation. Raj Gond, Jaintia, Tripuri and Bhuyan are examples.

Hugh Chisholm (1910), informs us in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*,

“... The 16th century saw the establishment of a powerful Gond kingdom by Sangram Sah, who succeeded in 1480 as the 47th of the petty Gond rajas of Garha-Mandla, and extended his dominions to include Saugor and Damoh on the Vindhyan plateau, Jubbulpore and Narsinghpur in the Nerbudda valley, and Seoni on the Satpura highlands ...”.

It is to be mentioned that the tribal chiefs were not the rulers of their own communities only. There are ‘non-tribal’ communities which were also ruled by them. The Khamptis of present Arunachal Pradesh were rulers of Sadiya outpost of the Ahom kingdom some times during first half of 19th century. Interestingly, Sadiya was not the inhabited land of the Khamptis.

R. Singh (2000) in his book entitled *Tribal Beliefs, Practices and Insurrections* writes,

...The Gond rajas of Chanda and Garha Mandla were not only the hereditary leaders of their Gond subjects, but also held sway over substantial communities of non-tribals who recognized them as their feudal lords ...

Raji, a small primitive tribe in central Himalaya claims to be the rulers of northern half of Pithoragarh district. They are descendents of Esht's dynasty. Similarly, the history of Jaintia kingdom of Meghalaya is an example of participation of the Jaintia tribe in state formation. The Tripura state is named after the Tripuri tribe who once ruled the land through Debabarman clan.

During British period the construct of tribe was basically in contrast to caste which is a construct of occupational groups. But there are scheduled tribal communities within which occupational diversification is clearly visible. Kolcha, a primitive tribal group in Valsad and Panchmahals districts of Gujarat are basket makers, agriculture and forest labourers. But traditionally, this community was handling carcass.

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The ST group also includes communities with class formation. The Bhoksa tribe of central Himalayas lives in two territorial divisions. Dehradun Pauri Gharwal and Bijnor districts constitute the first zone, while Nainital district constitutes the second one. The Bhoksas of second zone are economically better off as compared to those in first zone and consider themselves superior. The territorial dimension of ST is also reflected in their nomenclature. You will study about it in unit-IV of this paper. The Khampti tribe of Arunachal Pradesh has derived its name from a place full of gold (*Kham-gold; ti-* land). The Tangsa tribe of the same state derives its name from a place called *Tang*, Tangsa meaning the children of *Tang*. The Nyishi tribe identify themselves as the people living in a territory lying between *Nyeme* (Tibet) and *Nyipak* (plains). The Scheduled Tribe communities do not exist in all the states of India. In states of Punjab, Delhi and in Union Territory of Chandigarh there are no communities identified as STs. This does not mean that there is no ST population in these places. Thousands of students and members from ST communities come to these places for study and work. It is to be mentioned that ST category is not synonym of the social category called tribe in anthropological literature.

By now you have learned the following:

- (i) ST communities include societies with social hierarchy;
- (ii) they do not have only social dimension;
- (iii) these communities include societies which have participate in the process of state formation; and
- (iv) accommodate communities displaying occupational divisions;

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs)

The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) is not a Constitutional category different from the Scheduled Tribes. It is a category within the ST category. The distinction between PTGs from within the STs is a matter of degree of development. The Shilu Ao Committee constituted by the Planning Commission in 1969 had observed that the impact of planned 'change and development' has not been uniform on all the tribal communities. Within the Scheduled Tribes, conditions of some of the communities have not improved. They remained extremely backward and some of them continued to be in the primitive food gathering stage. In view of this, in 1973, the Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups but retained the abbreviation PTGs.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs use the abbreviated form of PTGS and PVTGs interchangeably for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

In view of this, in 1975, the Government of India identified 52 most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called PTGs. Further, in 1993 an additional 23 groups were added to the category, making it a total of 75 PTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes, spread over 17 states and one Union Territory (UT), in the country (2011 census). Table 1.2 below provides information on distribution of PTGs in states and UTs.

Check Your Progress

10. Write short answer of the following:
 - (a) What are Constitutional categories of tribes?
 - (b) Which Articles relate to the definition of ST?
 - (c) Mention the states and UTs where STs have not been enumerated.
 - (d) What are social categories corresponding to tribes which are not scheduled in the Constitution?

Table 1.2 State and Union Territory-wise Distribution of PTGs, Census,2011

Name of States/UT	Name of PTG with population in parentheses
Andhra Pradesh & Telengana	1.Chenchu (64227), 2. Bodo Gadaba (38,081, This includes the Gadaba Group), 3.Gutob Gadaba, 4.Dongria Khond (103290 Includes Khond grpuo except Khon Porja)), 5. Kutia Khond, 6. Kolam (44912), 7. Konda Reddi (107747) 8. Kondasavar (139424), 9. Bondo Porja, 10. Khond Porja, 11. Parengi Porja (36502), 12. Thoti (4811) (<i>Population figures of Bono Porja and Khon Porja not available</i>)
Bihar	13.Asur (4,129), 14. Birhor (377) 15.Birjia (208) 16. Hill Kharia (11,569), 17. Korwa (452), 18. Mal Paharia (2,225), 19. Parhaiya (647), 20. Sauria Pahari (1,932), and 21. Savar (80)
Jharkhand	13.Asur (22,459) 14. Birhor (10,726) 15.Birjia (6,276) 16. Hill Kharia (196,135), 17. Korwa (35,606) 18. Mal Paharia (135,797) 19. Parhaiya (25,585) 20. Sauria Pahari (46,222), and 21. Savar (9,688)
Gujarat	22. Kolgha (67,119), 23.Kathodi (13,632), 24.Kotwalia (24,249), 25.Padhar (30932), and 26.Siddi/Sidhi (8661)
Karnataka	27. Jenu Kuruba (36,076), and 28. Koraga (14,794)
Kerala	29. Cholonaikaqyn(124), 30. Kadar (2,949), 31. Kattunayakan (18,199), 32.Koraga (1,582) & 33. Kurumba (2,586)
Madhya Pradesh & Chatishgarh	34. Abujh Maria (5,093,124), 35. Baiga (414,526), 36. Bharia (193,230), 37. Birhor (52), 38. Hill Korwa (<i>not available</i>), 39. Kamar (666), & 40. Sahariya (165)
Maharashtra	41. Kathodi (285,334), 42. Kolam (194,671), & 43. Maria Gond (1,618,090)
Manipur	44. Maram Naga (27,524)
Odisha	45.Chuktia Bhunjiya (2378), 46.Birhor (596), 47. Bondo (12231), 48.Didayi (8890), 49. Dongria Khond (6306), 50. Juang (47095), 51. Kharia (222844), 52. Kutia Khond (7232), 53. Lanjia Saura (5960), 54.Lodha (9785), 55. Mankidia(2222), 56. Paudi Bhuyan (5788), & 57. Soura(534751)
Rajasthan	58.Saharia (1,11,377)
Tamil Nadu	59. Irular (189,661), 60. Kattunayakan (46,672), 61. Kota (308), 62. Korumba (6,823), 63. Paniyan (10,134), & 64. Toda (2,002)
Tripura	65. Riang (1,88,220)
Uttar Pradesh	66. Buksa (4,710), & 67. Raji (2,241)
Uttarakhand	66. Buksa (4,710), & 67. Raji (1,295)
West Bengal	68. Birhor (2,241) , 69. Lodha (1,08,707) &70. Toto (66,627)
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	71. Great Andamanese (44), 72. Jarwa (380), 73. Onge (101), 74. Sentinelese (15), & 75. Shom Pen (229)

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According to Census 2001 the total population of PTGs in the country is 2,768,322. The figures for 2011 census are not available due to non-availability of population in three tribes. But the total population figure of PTGs excluding these three tribes stands at 10,709,967.

The Abhuj Maria tribal group in Madhya Pradesh has the highest population which stands at 5,093,124 and the Sentineles the lowest at 15. Similarly, the population of PTGs in Madhya Pradesh is 5,701,763, highest among the states, and in Andaman & Nicobar Islands it is the lowest at 769. Further, Odisha has

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recorded the highest number of PTGs at 13 followed by 12 in Andhra Pradesh (Telengana was not created by then). States like Manipur, Rajasthan and Tripura have one PTG each.

PTG is an administrative category used for those Scheduled Tribe communities who were identified as more isolated from the wider community and who maintain a distinctive cultural identity. These hunting, food-gathering, and some agricultural communities, have been identified as less acculturated tribes among the tribal population groups and that is why these are in need of special programmes for their sustainable development. In these communities the development indicators are most vulnerable. Understandably, these groups are more vulnerable to hunger, starvation, malnutrition, and ill health. Some groups like the Andamanese, Shom Pan, Cholanaiakan and Sentineles are on the verge of extinction.

1.3.5 Beyond Constitutional Category

There are tribal communities which are outside the Constitutional category. Further, the shifting nomenclature of the communities designated as tribe has not got a place in the Constitution. These communities adopt the name of a dominant tribe (see Unit-IV). What we will discuss here is about two terms address - Non-ST for communities who are not scheduled and 'indigenous' which does not have Constitutional approval as a synonym for the term 'tribe'.

Non-Scheduled Tribes

As has been discussed, in India the tribe is an administrative and political concept. The concept whether we accept or reject, has both administrative and political overtone. ST, Denotified Tribe, and PTG are examples. Though the term indigenous is not accepted administratively, its origin and debate on it has colonial shadow. All these concepts do not cover all the communities which anthropologists designate as tribe. There are communities possessing all the characteristics which have been the criteria to enlist a community as ST. But still they are not scheduled in the Constitution. These communities are called Non-Scheduled tribes and unfortunately are deprived of the benefits which accrue to STs according to Constitutional provisions. Members of these communities feel that they are tribes. At the same time, they feel that they are deprived of what their counterparts enjoy having been scheduled in the Constitution. It is not a surprise that the Gujars in Rajasthan and Koch Rajbanshi in Assam claim for ST status. The Dhankuts of Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh have all the characteristics of a tribe but are not scheduled in the Constitution. Similar is the case with Badaga of Nilgiri Hills who do not enjoy ST status. However, in Census 2011, many such communities including earlier SCs have been enumerated under ST category.

Indigenous People

You have studied already that native people of many countries did not like to continue the use of the term 'tribe'. The communities whom the blanket term 'tribe' is applied in fact have their own appellation. Moreover, they are designated differently in different countries in contrast to colonial settlers. In Australia these people are recognised as 'Aborigines', in New Zealand as 'Maaori', in Canada, as 'First Nations' and in Americas as 'Indigenous people'. All these appellations point

to their original/earlier settlement. This originality again is related, as you will know, to the colonial contact. These people existed in their countries before the colonisation of their territory. Therefore, they are indigenous. Indigenous movement has been a global phenomenon. In countries like India, China and some other Asian countries different groups lived together before colonial contact. Nevertheless, some groups of people from these countries who somewhat resemble to the original people of Australia, Americas, Africa in social, cultural and economic life also have become a part of indigenous movement.

Historical Background: The issue of indigenous people was almost non-existent in the Indian academic as well as political world before 1993. The United Nations declared 1993 as the ‘International Year of the Indigenous People’. Arguments against and in favour of considering tribes in India as indigenous people have come up with the same degree of intensity. Many of those who defended the term ‘indigenous’ for tribes happened to be activists. The slogan – ‘The adivasi of the world unite’ – acquired popularity. This slogan was printed on the cover of the booklets that the Indian Conference of Indigenous and Tribal People brought out in 1993 on the occasion of the UN Year of the Indigenous Peoples of the World.

However, the indigenous movement that culminated in 1990s can be traced back to 1923. During this year, the Cayuga Chief Deskaheh, a representative of the Iroquois of Ontario in Canada went to the League of Nations to represent the “Six Nations of the Great River”. He carried a passport issued by the “authority of his people”. However, two years before this event in 1921, the General Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) had showed concern for indigenous workers, who were among the most exploited. In 1926 its Governing Body adopted Convention No.50 “Concerning the Regulation of Certain Special Systems of Recruiting Workers”. In 1939 it adopted Convention No.64 “Concerning the Regulation of Certain Special System of Recruiting Workers”.

It is to be noted that the real indigenous rights movement began only with decolonisation after World War II. Autonomy movement began in several independent countries. Most such movements were in Latin America whose indigenous populations were feeling doubly exploited. On one side foreign companies controlled their wealth and on the other the national elite collaborated with those foreign corporations. Many indigenous communities of the Americas asked question about the genocide of their own ancestors. Additionally, European indigenous peoples began to become more aware of their rights.

These movements created heightened awareness in some international organizations, especially ILO whose mandate is protection of workers’ rights. The result was ILO Convention 107 of 1957 “Concerning the Populations in Independent Countries”. In this Convention term ‘indigenous people’ came in. The convention used the term as a ‘population of special category analogous to the tribal and semi-tribal population’. Later, the ILO adopted a revised Convention 169, where the concept of indigenous has been overtly de-linked from the concept of tribe. By implication, however, they have been treated as synonyms.

The General Assembly of the United Nations also accept the term indigenous in the sense of tribal people in relation to colonial contact. Later it has modified the definition to include tribes of every country because the State structure incorporates national, social and cultural characteristics alien to theirs.

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Indigenous People in contrast to colonisation: The term ‘indigenous’ to designate original people of a territory was born in the Americas, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand where a clear line divides them from the colonial conquerors. In Australia and Africa for example, the natives who inhabited the land before colonial contact and the new migrants including the colonisers live together in post-colonial period. Obviously, the population is divided into earlier settlers and new migrants. In countries of South Asia, however, different ethnic groups lived for millennia. As a result, there is difference of opinion on who is indigenous to these countries.

The use of the term ‘indigenous’ as synonym of ‘tribe’ lacks definitional clarity when its universal applicability is concerned. Because of this ambiguity the ILO Convention 169 (Article 1) recognises both indigenous and tribal people. This means those who live in a way that sets them apart from the national community, whether or not they are descended from “first inhabitants.” For instance, in several Central American countries, garifunas (or maroons, or other terms) are descendants of escaped African slaves, and thus are not indigenous in the literal sense, but they are tribal and are covered by the Convention.

It is to be noted that the definition of Daes on indigenous is taken as unofficial UN definition of the term indigenous people. However, Miquel Alfonso Martinez (1999) does not agree to the universality of its application.

While working on a UNESCO report entitled *Study on Treaties, Agreements & Other Constructive Arrangements between States, and Indigenous Populations* he has questioned the usage of the term indigenous people in Asian countries in general and in India in particular. We know that in India not only tribal communities but all the communities which form into Indian nation state in post-colonial era were inhabitants even before the colonial contact. Needless to say, the parameter of colonisers contact put all the communities in India including the tribals under indigenous category.

Tribe and Indigenous Interface in India

In India, the use of the term ‘tribe’ as synonymy to ‘indigenous’ is contested. In India those who live in post-colonial state also lived together during pre-colonial period.

But some scholars apply the concept to tribal communities considering their domination by nation state. The state power is considered to be dominating the marginalised people including the tribals. It is often highlighted that these peoples are reduced to a colonial situation and are dominated by a system of values and institutions maintained by the ruling groups of the country.

However, this type of explanation of the relations between the power of the state and the marginalised communities is too partial an understanding. The dominating role of the state as ‘colonial invasion and domination’ does not hold to the principles of welfare commitments of the nation state like India. Policies and programmes are formulated for the general welfare of marginalised people with compensatory discrimination and affirmative action to raise their level of development at par with national level.

The definition of the term ‘indigenous’ by applying the ideological principle of colonisation, in which ‘intent of dominance’ is inherent, to include the tribal people of India does not have a stand.

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There are other concerns which need scrutiny when one addresses the issue of the 'indigenous'. The moot issue is whether to consider tribes that includes ST, non ST and denotified tribes as indigenous people or only the ST category under it. If we consider ST category, it becomes problematic. There are migrants from plains to hills like some communities of Jaunsar Bawar and Gaddi of Himachal Pradesh who are included in the ST category. Moreover, the ST being a state specific category, the same community across the political boundary may not be considered as indigenous. As we have discussed earlier, the Rabari community enjoys Scheduled Tribe (ST) status in Gujarat but Other Backward Class (OBC) in Rajasthan. Similarly, the Malai Kuravar is a Scheduled Caste (SC) community in Tirunelveli district and a Scheduled Tribe (ST) community in Kanya Kumari district of Tamil Nadu. If the tribe is called indigenous, then that indigeneity is lost if they migrate to other places. The Santhals and Mundas, who are called Adivasis in their respective earlier settlements and in Assam to which they migrated, belong to tribal category in an Anthropological sense. These people migrated to Assam which was then inhabited by the Assamese people. So in comparison to them, the Assamese population are early settlers in Assam. Being Adivasis they could not be indigenous while non-tribe Assamese would come under the definition of indigenous as they are early settlers.

Many ethnographical studies on tribals point to the migratory nature of Indian population in general and tribes in particular at different points of time. The *Tani* groups of tribes in Arunachal trace their migration in different batches from a place in Tibet over centuries till they came to their present habitation with short sojourn en route. This context's the remarks of Ludwig Gumplowicz and Irving Louis Horowitz (1980) in their work entitled *Outlines of Sociology* is worth mentioning. They inform us that,

... The Negritos were the earliest inhabitants of India ... The Proto-Australoids who followed them had their type more or less fixed in India and therefore may be considered to be the true aborigines. Thereafter the Austro-Asiatic peoples came ... the Indo Aryans came and settled in India; so, too, did the Dravidians... This being the state of our knowledge regarding the peopling of India, it would be hazardous to look upon one particular section of the population as the aborigines of India ...

On the basis of the findings of the People of India Project, K.S. Singh (1997) writes:

Four hundred and nine tribes (64.3 per cent) claim to be migrants to their present habitat. In fact, all our tribal people have been migrants. Their migration is recorded in oral tradition and historical accounts. About eight per cent of the tribes record their migration in recent years.

The migration has led to various levels of interaction of different communities. In this context S.C. Dube (1998:5) notes:

The Kol and Kirda of India have had a long association with later immigrants. Mythology and history bear testimony to their [tribals'] encounters and intermingling.

It is a known fact that the indigenous debate is a recent origin. It has political overtone and colonial intention. So the point is that the tribal world should be understood in

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the context of its cosmology and the thoughts of the people. In this context Andre Béteille observes:

Where historical records are scarce and historical memory is short, the idea of 'indigenous people' provides abundant scope for the proliferation of myths relating to blood and soil.

Does it then mean that the term 'indigenous' does not have any use in the Indian context? The term *Adivasi* is analogous to the term indigenous. The *Adivasi* concept was accepted by the communities much before the indigenous issue emerged. Whereas, the term indigenous has international dimension that of *Adivasi* has India specificity. When two communities co-exist in a particular place there is the possibility that one community could be the earlier settler. If this earlier settler is a so called tribal community, then the *Adivasi* appellation has some meaning. If two communities are so called Aryans, for example, the *Adivasi* identity does not have any meaning for the earlier settlers. For all practical purposes *Adivasi* word was used to refer to the tribal groups, who identified themselves in their community names like Gond, Bodo, etc. To bring all of them to one category the generic *Adivasi* term has been coined. In this sense indigenous as an equivalent to the term *Adivasi*, perhaps will have a meaning in India. On the other hand, the term indigenous with its international connotation is a misnomer.

To conclude, in India, the term tribe is essentially a politico-administrative concept. Certain techno-economically backward communities, mostly inhabiting forests, hilly and remote interiors, have been administratively determined as such for uplifting them to higher standard of life in consonance with provisions of Indian constitution. But, in academic parlance the concept signifies socio-cultural homogeneity, a lower stage in the techno-economic parameter, practice of animism, lack of recorded history and literary tradition, Segmentary social structure and a lack of elaborate division of labour other than these based on age and sex criteria. (Behura,1997).

1.4 HABITATS

Habitats ordinarily refer to natural environments and therefore, are physical environments. In this sense tribal habitats refer to ecological base of tribal settlements and tribal way of life. However, information on tribal habitats and dependent life style is not available for all tribes in India. There are micro studies, but for tribes as a whole a comparative presentation of habitats and life style is not available in details. You will have an idea of tribal habitat with reference to the following:

- Tribal village
- Scheduled and Tribal Areas according to the provisions of Vth and VIth Schedules of the Constitution of India.
- Physical divisions
- Regional distribution
- Distribution of tribal population
- Concentration in districts

1.4.1 Tribal Village

As you know the habitat of a tribe has a territorial boundary. This boundary is notional according to tribe's perception. However, often natural objects like streams, rivers, big trees, or boulders mark the boundary. In this sense the smallest territorial unit of tribal habitat is a village with its own spread. The territorial spread or the physical dimension includes all the available resources-forests, hills, rivers, lands, etc. Resources are common property and individual ownership is defined within the frame of community ownership based on customs and practices. Resource perception is an important characteristic of understanding a habitat. Each tribe has its own perception. For example, the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh use the term *Gida-isi* or *Kode-isi* to mean all the natural resources in Galo area and in village territory. *Gida* literally means land and forest, whereas '*Kode*' means land and '*isi*' means water. In general, '*Kode-isi*' includes land including hills, water and forests.

The tribal habitat has also a cultural dimension. The village territory is dotted with sacred places and objects. Caves, big trees, deep gorges, etc. are revered as abode of spirits. Myths, legends, tales and associated heroic deeds and migration stories attach a sense of belonging to the territory. The village territory has social and political dimensions also. The members of the village have well defined ways of social interaction as individuals and in groups. The tribal system of governance, whether cephalous or acephalous, decides upon development works, hunting and fishing, raids and settles disputes.

A tribal habitat also is an extension beyond village to include adjacent villages of the same tribe or different tribes. In this case a tribal habitat is the sum total of individual village territories while in a chieftainship tribe the habitats present the sum total of individual village territories and territorial tracts under the direct control of the chief. Such tracts do not fall under the jurisdiction of any village. For example, the Khampti tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is a chieftainship type of society. Traditionally they claimed a vast area in the foot hills of Lohit district even though they lived in some 20 villages. They claimed the eastern boundary of their territory from Diban to Parshuramkund, northern boundary from Pashuramkund to Sadiya along the river Lohit, the western boundary from Sadiya to Lajum and the southern boundary from Lajum to Diban. But at present hundreds of villages of non-Khamptis, both of tribes and castes have been set up within this perceived territory of the Khamptis.

In such large tribal habitats, in recent years, other groups have settled. You will not find the continuity of a tribal habitat with tribal villages and land tracts outside village boundary. In Jharkhand you will find Oraon villages within the traditional Munda territory. The Oraons who migrated from Rohtasgarh some 300 or more years ago; established settlements in the territory which was inhabited by the Mundas. The tribal habitat then is a sum total of Oraon and Munda habitats. Besides the Oran and the Munda tribes, will be found settlements of other caste communities in the territory. Census of India 2011 does record tribal villages, but, with the habitation of people from non-tribal communities. Therefore, it is found that 110118 villages consist of tribal population more than 50 per cent and 35504 villages consist of tribal populations between 25 and 50 per cent. In 124114 villages tribal population is less than 100 per cent.

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By now you have come to know that a tribal habitat cannot be understood in exclusive sense. In recent years, Constitutional recognition of tribal and scheduled areas in India would be of much help to understand tribal habitat administratively.

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1.4.2 Scheduled and Tribal Areas

The Vth & VIth Schedules of The Constitution of India have defined and identified scheduled and tribal areas. Administratively these areas can be called as tribal habitats.

Fifth Schedule and Scheduled Areas: The term ‘Scheduled Areas’ has been defined in the Indian Constitution as “such areas as the President may by order declare to be Scheduled Areas.” Paragraph 6 of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution prescribes procedures for scheduling, rescheduling and alteration of Scheduled Areas. So, specification of Scheduled Areas in relation to a particular State/Union Territory is by a notified Order of the President, after consultation with the concerned State/UT Governments.

The criteria followed for declaring an area as Scheduled Area embody principles followed in declaring Excluded and Partially-Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act 1935. These embody principles followed in Schedule B of recommendations of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Sub Committee of Constituent Assembly and the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission, 1961.

The Fifth Schedule covers Tribal areas in 9 states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Rajasthan. The scheduled areas in these states have been shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 List of Scheduled Areas in Nine States

State	Areas
Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Adilabad, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Mahboobnagar, Prakasam (only some mandals are scheduled mandals).
Jharkhand	Dumka, Godda, Deogarh, Sahabgunj, Pakur, Ranchi, Singhbhum (East & West), Gumla, Simdega, Lohardaga, Palamu, Garwa, (some districts are only partly tribal blocks, such as Rabda and Bakoria Panchayats of Satbarwa Bolck in Palamu district, Bhandaria Block in Garhwa district and Sunderpahari and Boarijor Blocks of Godda district).
Chhattisgarh	Sarbhuja, Bastar, Raigad, Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Durg, Bilaspur, Sehdol, Chindwada, Kanker.
Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti districts, Kinnaur, Pangi tehsil and Bharmour sub-tehsil in Chamba district.
Madhya Pradesh	Jhabua, Mandla, Dhar, Khargone, East Nimar (khandwa), Sailana tehsil in Ratlam district, Betul, Seoni, Balaghat, Morena.
Gujarat	Surat, Bharauch, Dangs, Valsad, Panchmahl, Sadodara, Sabarkanta (parts of these districts only).
Maharashtra	Thane, Nasik, Dhule, Ahmednagar, Pune, Nanded, Amravati, Yavatmal, Gadchiroli, Chandrapur (parts of these districts only).

Odisha	Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Koraput (fully scheduled area in these three districts), Raigada, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Boudhkondmals, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Balasore (parts of these districts only, Khondmals tahsil of Khondmals sub-division, and Balliguda and G. Udayagiri tahsils of Balliguda sub-division in Boudhkhondmals district).
Rajasthan	Banswara, Dungarpur (fully tribal districts), Udaipur, Chittaurgarh, Siroi (partly tribal areas).

You know that the President of India by Orders called the Scheduled Areas (Part A States) Order, 1950 and the Scheduled Areas (Part B States) Order 1950 set out the Scheduled Areas in the States. Further by Orders namely the Madras Scheduled Areas (Cesser) Order, 1951 and the Andhra Scheduled Areas (Cesser) Order, 1955 certain areas of the then east Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts were rescheduled.

Later these Scheduled Areas were extended to be coterminous with Tribal Sub-Plan Areas in some states. At the time of devising and adopting the strategy of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) for socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes during the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79), certain areas besides Scheduled Areas, were found having preponderance of tribal population. Therefore, in August 1976 it was decided to make the boundaries of the Scheduled Areas coterminous with the Tribal Sub-Plan areas. Accordingly, the President has issued from time to time Orders specifying Scheduled Areas afresh in relation to the States of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan. Areas in Himachal Pradesh were scheduled on 27.11.1975. Thus, presently the Tribal Sub-Plan areas (Integrated Tribal Development Projects/Integrated Tribal Development Agency areas only) are coterminous with Scheduled Areas in the States of Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan. However, in Andhra Pradesh the Scheduled Areas are not coterminous with the Tribal Sub-Plan Areas.

The Sixth Schedule and Tribal Areas: Tribal areas mean areas where provisions of Sixth Schedule are applicable. The Constitution of India refers tribal areas within the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Tribal Areas of these states as specified in Parts I, II, IIA and III are as under:

Part I	Part II	Part IIA	Part III
1. The North Cachar Hills District	1. Khasi Hills District	Tripura Tribal Areas District	The Chakma District
2. The Karbi-Anglong District	2. Jaintia Hills District		The Mara District
	3. The Garo Hills District		The Lai District

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Check Your Progress

11. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) Lepcha is an example of Tibeto-Mongoloid group.
 - (b) Khasis are Mongoloids but speak a language that belongs to Austro-Asiatic family.
 - (c) Tribal villages have only territorial sphere.
 - (d) The designation 'indigenous people' has a colonial context.
 - (e) You can also study distribution of tribal habitats on the basis of rural-urban divide.
 - (f) A Scheduled Tribe in Odisha is also Scheduled Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - (g) Tribal dominated states have more total population than non-dominated states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, etc.

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1.4.3 Physical Divisions, Regions and States/UTs

In a general sense, tribal habitats are areas where tribes live. These areas are found across the physical divisions of the country. Further, these areas are located in different states. You will study tribal habitats with reference to distribution of tribes in different physical divisions and political units of India. This will give an understanding of the location of tribal areas which tribes inhabit.

Tribes normally inhabit hills and forests. You will also find some tribal habitats in the plains. The tribal habitats in the plains, for example, are found in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar etc. Similarly, the habitat of a tribe may be found in more than one state. To cite an example, the habitats of Bhils belong to Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Tripura and Madhya Pradesh. On the other hand, the habitat of Khasi tribe belongs to the state of Meghalaya only. Often, India is divided regionally on the basis of its directional spread. You already know about South India, North India, Western India and so on. Moreover, the tribal areas which include tribal habitats are constitutionally defined. Therefore, we will discuss tribal habitats with reference to physical, political and regional divisions along with constitutionally defined areas. As a result, you will be able to understand tribal habitats from different angles. For example, you will understand that the political territory of a tribe is not co-terminus with cultural territory. The habitat of a tribe across two or more states has a cultural territory which is divided politically. Further, the cultural territory of a tribe is not always in continuity when the habitat spreads in many states like that of the Bhils. The tribe lives along with other cultures, even in a *cultural territory* and develop micro cultural habitats.

In recent years the political economy of a state affects the life of tribal communities. If a state government allows MNC activities in tribal areas of the state; then quite naturally the life of the tribal communities is greatly affected. Tribal habitats in different geographical areas influence occupation, food, dress, house type and even the culture in general. The interaction with the natural environment defines a culture to a great extent. In different geographical areas the strategy of interaction differs. The tribes living in hills practise shifting cultivation or cattle herding or hunting and gathering. But tribes living in plains practise settled cultivation or pursue activities drawing on available resources. The Khamptis of Arunachal Pradesh practise settled cultivation while the Mishmis living in the same district in the hills practise shifting cultivation. The tribes, living in Netrahat area in Jharkhand pursue blacksmithy. The staple food of tribes living in the Himalayas is traditionally maize, millet and roots. Speaking of the types of houses especially in the Northeast part of India, the houses are built on raised platforms unlike tribal houses in the Deccan plateau. The dress pattern of tribes living in desert region also differs from that of cold Himalayan region. That is why we have discussed tribal habitats under physical divisions, political divisions, etc.

You know that tribes do not exist in an ideal state. You will not find a tribe that fulfils all the characteristics. They live in diverse conditions and in recent years they have been exposed to development forces. Tribals migrate to urban areas for livelihood options. Further, you will not find a compact territorial area for a large tribe. Under the habitat section a discussion on tribal concentration will be useful to understand that the tribes are in the process of integration with national territory.

Check Your Progress

12. State whether following statements are True or False:
 - (a) A community living in two states is enumerated as ST community of the said two states.
 - (b) Definition of the term 'tribe' differs as tribal communities are homogenous.
 - (c) Tribes in India live in isolation.
 - (d) Any tribe is in India is a stateless society.
 - (e) STs having declining or stagnant population are grouped as PTGs.

Geographical or Physical Divisions

The Commission for Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes (The Dhebar Commission) has divided the tribal settlements in India under three geographical divisions. These are:

- (i) The tribes living in the Himalayan Region including North-Eastern zone in the mountain valleys and Eastern frontiers of India;
- (ii) Those occupying the central belt of the older hills and plateaus along the dividing line between peninsular India and Indo-Gangetic plains; and
- (iii) Those scattered over extreme corners of South-Western India and converging lines of the Western Ghats.

Here you will understand the physical divisions according to geographical features as follows:

India is divided into six physical divisions, namely the Himalayas and other Mountain Ranges, Great Plains, Plateau, Desert, Coastal Plains and Islands. You will find tribal habitats in all these six divisions. In fact, in all these divisions there are mountains and hills inhabited by tribes. We have included them within the broad physical division. For example, we have considered the tribes living in Nilgiri Hills as tribes in plateau region.

The Himalayas and other Mountain Ranges: The Himalayas extend from Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The tribal communities living in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and in Arunachal Pradesh share Himalayan habitats. Important tribal communities living in the Himalayas are Gaddi, Lahaula, Beda, Brokpa, Mon, Purigpa, Gujjar, Tamang, Bhutia, Lepcha, Buksa, Juansari and many others.

As you know, the Himalayas run from west to east. But there are mountain ranges from north to south that runs almost as a continuity of Himalayan ranges. These are the Naga Hills, Mizo Hills, etc. which form parts of Patkai ranges. Quite a number of tribal communities live in these mountains. Beside Nagaland and Mizoram, other states such as Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura are also mountainous states. In these mountains a large number of tribes have been living from time immemorial. Some of them are Chakma, Jamatia, Tripuri, Riang naga, Kuki, Mikir, Garo, Khasi, Hajong, Hmar, Paite, Synteng, Dimasa, Anal, Angami, Ao, Gangte, Chothe, Thangal, Kom, Ralte, and Vaiphei.

Great Plains: The plains formed by the Gang and the Brahmaputra along their tributaries are known as Great Plains. Assam is an extension of this Great Plains. In Assam the Barmans in Cachar, Bodo, Bodo-Kachari, Deori, Hojai, Miri (Mishing) Kachari including Sonowal, Lalung, Rabha and Mech are plains tribes. In Uttar Pradesh tribal communities like Buksa in Balia and Gazipur districts, Juansari in Varanasi, and Gond in Deoria, Balia, Varanasai and Basti districts live in plains.

Plateau: The region is triangular in shape. Its northern side stretches from the Aravallis in the west to the Raj Mahal Hills in the east. Its eastern and western sides form boundaries of coastal plains and terminate almost on a point in Cardamom Hills. The Vindhyas, the Anaimalai Hills, the Nilgiri Hills, the Satpuras are hill ranges in the plateau and home to a number of tribal groups. The Chotanagpur plateau that consists of a large area in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand has a large concentration of a number of tribal communities. The tribal communities in

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Check Your Progress

13. Fill in the blanks:
 - (a) There are --- PTGs
 - (b) Tribe is the ---stage in the scheme of social evolution.
 - (c) Tribal Sub-Plan and Scheduled Areas are not coterminous in the state of ---.
 - (d) --- Schedule defines Tribal Areas and --- Scheduled Areas.
 - (e) --- recommendations are behind the creation PTGs.
 - (f) Scheduled Tribe is a ---- subject.

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a plateau habitat are Gond, Bhil, Baiga, Munda, Oraon, Lohar, Yenadi, Yerukula, Bonda, Gadba, Nagesia and many others.

Desert: Deserts are found in Rajasthan. Bhil, Lambadi, Gadia, Lohar, Garasia and Rabari are tribal communities in desert habitats.

Coastal Plains: The plains starting from West Bengal to the Kutch of Gujarat via Kanyakumari are coastal plains and include famous Coromandel Coast, Malabar Coast, and Kankan Coast. Santhal habitats are found in the coastal plains of West Bengal. In the western coastal plains you will find Kokna, Dhodia, Varli and Nayaka tribal groups.

Islands: India has a group of islands in the Bay of Bengal and in the Arabian Sea. The Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands in the Bay of Bengal is the home of Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentinelese and Shompen tribes. In the Lakshadweep group of islands in Arabian Sea, all the 17 communities living there have been scheduled as tribes.

Regional divisions

In earlier works tribal habitats in terms of settlement of tribal communities and their population have been divided region wise. In these works, we do not have the distribution of tribal communities on the basis of physical or geographical divisions of India, though regional divisions are often equated with geographical divisions. You know that a region may have different geographical features or a geographical feature may appear in more than one region or zone. You will see that the regional or geographical divisions include physical features unevenly. But divisions suggested by B. S. Guha include plains and partially plateau region while grouping the states of tribal habitats. B.S. Guha (1955) has classified Indian tribes into three zones as follows:

- (i) **The Northern and North Eastern Zone:** This consists of the sub-Himalayan region and the mountains and valleys of the eastern frontiers of India. The tribal people of Assam, Manipur, Tripura, and other states of North East India were included in the eastern part of this geographical zone. In Northern zone tribes of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and present Uttarakhand were included. Guha's classification draws on data available around Independence. In Post-Independent India organization and reorganization of states have affected state-wise distribution of the tribal habitats.
- (ii) **The Central or the Middle Zone:** This zone consists of plateaus and mountain belts between the Indo-Gangetic plain to the north and roughly the Krishna River to the south. Diverse physical features have been clubbed together in this classification. Moreover, the South India which forms a part of this region was dealt separately.
- (iii) **The Southern Zone:** This zone consists of that part of the southern India which falls south of the river Krishna stretching from Wynaad to Cape Comorin, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Coorg, Travancore, Cochin, Tamil Nadu, etc. are included in this zone.

Guha did not include the Island region in his classification. A new classification considering the political and regional factors became due. In Independent India two more scholars attempted such classifications. One is that of B. K. Roy Burman's

(1971). He divided the tribal communities living in different region into five territorial groups, taking into consideration their historical, ethnic and socio-cultural relations.

- (i) North-East India comprising Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Tripura.
- (ii) Sub-Himalayan region of north and north-west India comprising the northern submontane districts of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.
- (iii) Central and East India comprising West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh.
- (iv) South India comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka.
- (v) Western India comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

In B. K. Roy Burman's division the Island region is absent. Sub-Himalayan region has taken geographical criterion while other divisions have political dimensions.

L. P. Vidyarthi (1976) classified the tribes of India into five regions as follows:

- (i) The Himalayan Region, with three sub-regions, viz. 1) North-eastern Himalayan region, 2) Central Himalayan region, and 3) North-western Himalayan region. Assam, Meghalaya, the mountainous region of West Bengal (Darjeeling area) Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura fall in the North-eastern Himalayan region whereas the Tarai areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar come in the Central Himalayan region. Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir constitute the North-western Himalayan region.
- (ii) Middle India Region: It comprises Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.
- (iii) Western India Region: It includes Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
- (iv) South India Region: It comprises Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.
- (v) The Island Region: The islands of Andaman and Nicobar in the Bay of Bengal and Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea constitute this distinct sub-region.

In his classification the Northeast is grouped with sub-Himalayan regions. The Northeast however, stands out as a category in itself as at least six states are predominantly tribal. Moreover, the Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas have been overlapped in this division. This classification also does not mention the territory of Daman and Diu. In the meantime many former states have been bifurcated and data are available for the newly constituted states.

A fresh classification of regions is made taking into consideration the contemporary situation. The guidelines of Roy Burman and Vidyarthi have been followed and updated. Besides, the region is delineated considering the locational position of states and union territories. The confusion of earlier classification clubbing geographical and political features has been removed.

A 'Region' generally conveys the idea of a geographical zone with physical characteristics. It can also mean an administrative zone. In earlier works and in our present discussion the region is defined combining states and union territories in terms of their locational position. Needless to say, a region or zone has a political

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dimension. You will learn state and UT-wise distribution of tribal population and thus their habitats.

Table 1.4 shows tribal regions in India. As you know these regions are classified on the basis of locational position of states and union territories. We have five regions in the mainland according to directions and another off the main land lying to its east and west.

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Table 1.4 Distribution of Tribal Population in Regions, States and UTs (2011 Census)

Region (State/UT)	Total Population (In State/UT)	Total Tribal Population (In State/UT)	Rank	% of Total Tribal Population to Total Population	Rank	% of Total Tribal Population to Tribal India
North India	229,915,114	3,517,961	V	1.5	VI	3.4
Jammu & Kashmir	12,541,302	1,493,299	14	11.9	17	
Himachal Pradesh	6,864,602	392,126	23	5.7	25	
Uttarakhand	199,812,341	1,134,273	17	0.6	30	
Sikkim	10,086,292	291,903	24	2.9	26	
Uttar Pradesh	610,577	206,360	25	33.8	08	
Central & Eastern India	368,509,926	48,009,010	I	3.0	III	46.0
Odisha	41,974,218	9,590,756	03	22.8	12	
Bihar	104,099,452	1,336,573	15	1.3	28	
Jharkhand	32,988,134	8,645,042	06	26.2	11	
Chatishgarh	25,545,198	7,822,902	07	30.6	10	
Madhya Pradesh	72,626,809	15,316,784	01	21.1	13	
West Bengal	91,276,115	5,296,953	09	5.8	24	
Northeast India	44,876,207	12,208,694	III	27.2	I	11.7
Arunachal Pradesh	1,383,727	951,821	19	68.8	05	
Assam	31,205,576	3,884,372	10	12.4	16	
Manipur	2,570,390	902,740	20	35.1	07	
Meghalaya	2,966,889	2,555,861	12	86.1	04	
Mizoram	1,097,206	1,036,115	18	94.4	02	
Nagaland	1,978,502	1,710,973	13	86.5	03	
Tripura	3,673,917	1,166,813	16	31.8	09	
Western India	243,407,959	29,009,123	II	11.9	IV	27.8
Rajasthan	68,548,437	9,238,534	04	13.5	15	
Gujarat	60,439,692	8,917,174	05	14.8	14	
Maharashtra	112,374,333	10,510,213	02	9.4	19	
Goa	1,458,545	149,275	27	10.23	18	
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	343,709	178,564	26	52.0	06	
Daman & Diu	243,243	15,363	30	6.3	23	

South India	251,229,165	11,446,596	IV	4.6	V	11.0
Andhra Pradesh & Telengana	84,580,777	5,918,073	08	7.0	21	
Tamil Nadu	72,147,030	794,697	21	1.1	29	
Karnataka	61,095,297	4,248,987	10	7.0	22	
Kerala	33,406,061	484,839	22	1.5	27	
Indian Islands in the East & West	445,054	89,650	VI	20.1	II	0.1
	380,581	28,530	29	7.5	20	
Anadaman & Nicobar Islands Lakshadweep	64,473	61,120	28	94.8	01	

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1. **North India:** This region includes five states namely Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim. These states were earlier included under the Sub-Himalayan Region along with the Northeast region. Moreover, even the Darjeeling area of West Bengal was a part of it. This region records 3,517,961 tribals who constitute 1.5 per cent of total population in the region. Clearly, tribal habitats are significantly less as compared to total habitats. Tribal habitats in this region belong to Bhot, Bhutia, Jad, Lamba, Khampa Bakarwal, Jannsari, Bhotia, Lepcha, Buksa, Raji, Tharu. Bot, balti, Borkpa, Changpa, Gaddi, Gujjar, Kanaura, Kinnara, Lahaula, Pangwala, Swangla and some other tribes. Some tribes are found in more than one state while others are state specific. For example, the Lahaula tribe is found in Himachal Pradesh while Gujjar in both Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
2. **Central and Eastern India:** Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal form the regions of central and eastern India.
3. **Northeast India:** This region is also known as Seven Sisters and includes Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
4. **Western India:** Four states and two union territories namely Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu form this region.
5. **South India:** The region includes Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. On 2nd June 2014, the former Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. By that time census enumeration was over and so the figures relate to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana combined together.
6. **Indian Islands in the East and West:** Two union territories off the mainland namely Andaman & Nicobar group of islands to the east in the Bay of Bengal and Lakshadweep group of islands to the west in the Arabian Sea form the island regions.

The Table 1.4 shows both region wise and state/UT wise distribution of tribal population. The Central and Eastern India region records highest concentration of tribal population, 46.0 per cent of total tribal population of the country. This is followed by Western India. This region records 27.8 per cent. The third concentration is noted at 11.7 per cent in the Northeast India. The concentration in South India

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trails behind the Northeast with a record of 11.0 per cent. The island region has the lowest concentration. In this region the tribal population constitutes only 0.1 per cent of the total tribal population of the country. The second lowest concentration is noted at 3.4 per cent in the North India Region.

This variation is mainly due to the variation in tribal habitats and number of tribal population in states which form the region. For example, in Madhya Pradesh, which lies in Central and Eastern India the total tribal population is recorded 15,316,784 as against a total of 12,208,694 in seven states of Northeast India put together. Another factor of such variation is the number of states/UTs included in a region. This mainly holds for island regions consisting of two small union territories.

By now you have learnt that tribal habitats are found in mountains, plains, plateaus, deserts and in islands. Even in plains, plateaus and in islands they live in mountains and forests.

1.4.4 Distribution of Tribal Population

The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs and the number of individual communities notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705. The ST population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 104.3.43 million, constituting 8.6 per cent of the total population. The ST population has increased from 30.1 million (6.9%) in 1961 to 104.3 million (8.6%) in 2011. Notably, the decadal population growth from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66 per cent against the 17.69 per cent of the entire population.

Over the years, the ST population has migrated to urban areas. In other words, tribal habitats are located in urban areas too. Obviously, the tribal habitats display rural urban divide. You will find that 89.97 per cent of them live in rural areas and some 10.03 per cent live in urban areas. Population in the Rural Areas has increased from 10.4 per cent to 11.3 per cent whereas the Urban Tribal Population has increased only marginally (from 2.4% to 2.8%). With respect to districts, Kurung Kumey district of Arunachal Pradesh has the highest concentration of Scheduled Tribes (98.58) and Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh has the lowest concentration of Scheduled Tribes (0.0009).

You will learn the distribution of habitats of the STs with reference to the distribution of population and number of ST communities inhabiting a state/UT. You will find instances of a community living in two or more states but scheduled in only one or two or in all the states. The community enjoys ST status only in the state for which it is scheduled. Despite having more than one entry corresponding to more than one state, the community is enumerated as one. For example, Raji is an individual community, but is enumerated as STs in Uttar Pradesh and in Uttarakhand. You have also read that an individual community inhabiting different states has different status. The Munda for example is an ST in Jharkhand, but not in Assam.

The distribution of tribal population and thus their habitats is concentrated in Central and Eastern India Region accounting for 46.0 per cent of tribal population with regard to total tribal population in the country. This is followed by Western Region accounting 27.8 per cent. The Region of Indian Islands in

the East & West has the lowest concentration accounting 0.1 per cent only. However, Lakshadweep, the UT, in the island region has 94.8 per cent of total tribal persons which is the highest in the country. But among the states, Mizoram has highest concentration of tribal population accounting for 94.4 per cent. In fact the states of Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh have more than 60 per cent tribal populations. These states are tribal dominated states. In spite of the lower concentration of tribal population in Assam (12.4%) and Tripura (35.1%) the Northeast India region has highest concentration of tribal population accounting for 27.2 per cent, though it accounts for only 11.7 per cent of country's tribal population.

In terms of concentration of tribal population the Island Region stands second accounting for 20.1 per cent followed by 13.0 per cent in the Central and Eastern India Region.

On the other hand, in terms of total tribal population in the country, the Central and Eastern regions in India rank first with a population record of 368,509,926 followed by 251, 229,165 persons in the Southern Region. Islands Region records 445,054 persons, lowest among the regions, and less than the total tribal population in any of the mainland states. In terms of total population, states having first (Madhya Pradesh with 15,296,953 persons) to seventh (Chhattisgarh with 7,822,902 persons) ranks fall in the Central & Eastern and Western Regions of the country. Already you know that the number of communities in a state and number of states/UTs included in a region accounts for this variations. If you consider distribution of habitats in terms of number of STs inhabiting a region you will find the Central and Eastern Region ranks first with 255 ST groups followed by the South India Region with that of 195. Islands Region occupies the bottom rank with 23 ST groups followed by 47 such groups in the Northeast Region.

You will also be interested to know the distribution of habitats according to economic backwardness of STs. As you know, PTGs were created as a category on the basis of vulnerability and backwardness. So knowledge of the distribution of PTGs will be useful to understand the distribution of tribal habitats of economically backward ST groups.

The PTGs, 75 in numbers, inhabit 17 states and one Union Territory, according to census, 2011. As you know, an individual tribe is scheduled more than once in different states. Asur is an individual tribe, though it is scheduled both in Bihar and Jharkhand, as a community it is one but in terms of ST groups it presents two groups in two states. That is why number of communities and state and UT-wise scheduled communities differs.

The PTGs vary in terms of population figures, from 15 of Sentinels in Andaman and Nicobar Islands to 5,093,124 of Abhuj Maria in Madhya Pradesh. You will find 16 PTGs having less than 1000 persons in five states and one union territory. Interestingly, in the UT out of six tribes, five tribes are PTGs with a total of 769 persons, less than even 1000. Further 17 PTGs, 22.7 per cent of total PTGs, in 10 states have been recorded with a population of one lakh and more. In other words, more than 50 per cent (58.8% to be exact) of states have PTGs with a population of more than one lakh.

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Table 1.5 State-wise Largest & Smallest PTGs in terms of Population

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State	Name of the PTG		Total Population	
	Largest	Smallest	Largest PTG	Smallest PTG
Andhra Pradesh	Konda Savar	Thoti	139,424	4811
Bihar	Hill Kharia	Savar	11,569	80
Gujarat	Kolgha	Siddi	67,119	8,661
Jharkhand	Hill Kharia	Birjia	196,135	6,276
Karnataka	Jenu Kuruba	Koraga	36,076	14,794
Kerala	Kattunayakan	Cholonaikayan	18,199	124
Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh	Abhuj Maria	Birhor	5,093,124	52
Maharashtra	Maria Gond	Kolam	1,618,090	194,671
Manipur	Only One PTG, Maram Naga with a population of 27,524			
Odisha	Saura	Birhor	534751	596
Rajasthan	Only One PTG, Saharia with a population of 111,377			
Tamil Nadu	Irular	Kota	189661	308
Tripura	Only One PTG, Riang with a population of 188,220			
Uttar Pradesh	Buksha	Raji	4710	2241
Uttarakhand	Buksha	Raji	4710	1295
West Bengal	Lodha	Birhor	108707	2241
Andaman& Nicobar Islands	Jarawa	Sentinels	380	15

You will see from Table 1.5 that 15.1 per cent of tribal persons in the Central and Eastern Region is recorded under PTGs followed by the Western (8.1%) and Sothern (7.6%) Regions. In the Northeast Region only two STs have been recorded as PTGs constituting 1.8 per cent of total tribal population in the region. The Northern India has only 0.4 per cent of STs as PTGs. In terms of total population; the Central and Eastern Region records 7,255,529 persons, the highest among regions, followed by 2,354,065 in the Western Region. The island region records, as you know, only 769 persons under PTGs.

In terms of number of PTGs, 32 groups inhabit the Central and the Eastern Region, 25 Southern Region and 9 Western Region. The belt, covering part or complete regions of Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand. West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Rajasthan accommodate 66 PTGs accounting for 88 per cent of the groups. The large PTGs are found in this belt. You can say that the tribal habitats of this belt are comparatively economically backward. Interestingly, no PTG is listed in tribal dominate states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Lakshadweep.

You can sum up the above discussion as follows:

1. In India you will find ST habitats in twenty-six states and four UTs according to the Census of India, 2011. Two states, namely Punjab and Haryana and three UTs such as Delhi, Chandigarh and Pondicherry/Puducherry do not have any ST habitats.

The habitats of PTGs, however, are located mostly in Fifth Scheduled areas. The tribal dominated and Sixth Scheduled areas of the Northeast account for two PTGs, one in Manipur and the other in Tripura.

2. The Central and Eastern Region has highest tribal population accounting for 368,509,926 persons in the country and Island Region has the lowest, which accounts for 445,045 persons.
3. Among the states, Madhya Pradesh has the highest population, 15,316,784 and Daman & Diu the lowest, recording 15,363 persons.
4. In terms of the number of habitats of tribes Odisha ranks first followed by Karnataka. There are 62 tribes inhabiting Odisha and 50 in Karnataka. In each of Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Daman & Diu five tribes have been recorded, but no PTGs. The PTGs have been recorded more in the regions having more ST groups. You will find 32 PTGs in the Central and Eastern region.
5. In terms of tribal (ST) concentration, i.e. percentage of tribal population with reference to total population, Mizoram ranks first (94.4%) from among the states (Lakshadweep, a group of Islands and a UT ranks first in the country accounting for 94.8 per cent) in the country followed by Nagaland (86.5%). Uttar Pradesh has the lowest concentration accounting for 0.6 per cent. You will find that except island region, the Northern Region has the lowest concentration of ST population accounting for 1.5 per cent.
6. Tribal dominated states in the Northeast (11.7%) and UTs in the Island Region (0.1%) have less population as compared to states in the Central and Eastern Region (46.0%) and Western Region (27.8%).
7. State total of STs accounts for 744; in terms of tribal communities the number stands at 507. This means some STs in two or more states have been considered one community. This is also the case for PTGs. For example, the Buksas are two ST communities in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, but in terms of community they form one identity.
8. The population of PTGs varies between 15 and 5,093,124 in the country. However, in each state the variation between the large and small group is quite noticeable as is shown in Table 1.5. Siddi, Birijia, Cholonaikayan, Raji, Birhor, Kota in main land have very less population. You will also find three PTGs in Island Region having population figure less than 100.
9. Though recorded in a zone, some tribes are practically confined to a state, as for example Sugalis to Andhra Pradesh; Boros to Assam; Koli Mahadev to Maharashtra; and Tripuri to Tripura. Some ethnic groups spread over many states but they may not be ST population in all the states. The Khamptis of Assam do not have ST status in Assam though they are STs in Arunachal Pradesh. The Bharias in Madhya Pradesh have different constitutional status. In Patalkot valley of Chindwara they are enumerated as STs, while beyond Patalkot, but in the same district and in the same state, they are Non-STs. Munda group of people is recorded in the Central and East India and Northeast India regions. Except in Tripura; the Munda people in Assam do not have the ST status.

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1.4.5 Concentration in Districts

Out of 640 districts in India, in 50 districts of Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi and Puducherry, there is no Scheduled Tribes population, as no Scheduled Tribe is notified there. As per the Census of India, 2011, there are 640 districts in the country out of which 631 are rural districts. There are 5879 sub districts, (Tehsils), 597483 villages, 8398 towns and 82251 wards.

At the district level, The Census of India, 2011, reveals that there are 90 districts where ST population is 50 per cent or more (Table 1.6). As per Census 2001, this number was 75 districts. Out of these 90 districts, 48 districts are in seven North Eastern States. All the districts in Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland have more than 60 per cent of ST Population.

You will also find tribes with more than five lakh population along with their habitat distribution in table 1.7 as per 2001 census enumeration. The table also shows male female distribution of these major tribes. Table 1.8 shows habitat distribution and concentration of tribes in each zone. Table 1.9 shows state-wise districts where the ST population constitutes more than 50% and between 25% and 50% according to Census 2011. In table 1.10 you can compare PTGs with reference to STs and total population in different regions.

Table 1.6 Concentration of ST Population Across Districts

Sl. No	Percentage of ST population	No. of Districts
1.	Less than 1 per cent	55
2	Between 1 and 5 per cent	282
3.	Between 5 and 20 per cent	134
4	Between 20 and 50 per cent	79
5	50 per cent and above	90

Table 1.7 List of Tribes with more than 5 Lakh of Population and their usual Place of Habitation per Census 2001

Tribe name	Population			Zone & State of Residence
	Person	Male	Female	
Bhil	12689952	6428757	6261195	Central & Eastern India: Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh; Western India: Rajasthan, Gujarat & Maharashtra; South India: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana & Karnataka; and Northeast India: Tripura
Gond	10859422	5441476	5417946	Central & Eastern India: Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh; Western India: Gujarat; and South India: Andhra Pradesh & Telangana and Karnataka

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Santal	5838016	2945209	2892807	Central & Eastern India: Bihar , West Bengal, Odisha & Jharkhand; and Northeast India: Tripura
Mina	3800002	1976425	1823577	Western India: Rajasthan; and Central & Eastern India: Madhya Pradesh
Naikda, etc.	3344954	1696530	1648424	South India: Karnataka; and Western India: Maharashtra , Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa, Daman & Diu, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli
Oraon	3142145	1580607	1561538	Central & Eastern India: Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh Madhya Pradesh, Odisha & Jharkhand; and Western India: Maharashtra
Sugalis, etc.	2077947	1071589	1006358	South India: Andhra Pradesh
Munda	1918218	966070	952148	Central & Eastern India: West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar & Madhya Pradesh; and Northeast India: Tripura
Naga, etc.	1820965	937444	883521	Northeast India: Nagaland
Khond	1397384	689330	708054	Central & Eastern India: Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha
Boro, etc.	1352771	682710	670061	Northeast India: Assam
Koli Mahadev etc.	1227562	625019	602543	Western India: Maharashtra
Khasi, etc.	1138356	564412	573944	Northeast India: Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam
Kol	991400	508920	482480	Central & Eastern India: Odisha, Chhattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh; and Western India: Maharashtra
Varli	974916	484893	490023	Western India: Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, & Goa; and South India: Karnataka
Kokna	926763	466087	460676	Western India: Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Rajasthan, Gujarat, & Maharashtra; and South India: Karnataka
Kawar	812770	405524	407246	Central & Eastern India: Odisha, Chhattisgarh, & Madhya Pradesh; and Western India: Maharashtra
Ho	806921	401913	405008	Central & Eastern India: Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha
Gujjar	799344	418655	380689	North India: Jammu & Kashmir & Himachal Pradesh

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Korku, etc.	774196	395334	378862	Central & Eastern India: Chhattisgarh, & Madhya Pradesh; and Western India: Maharashtra
Bhumij	765909	387336	378573	Central & Eastern India: West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha
Garo	725502	366629	358873	Northeast India: Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, & Assam, Tripura; and Central & Eastern India: West Bengal
Koya	692435	345040	347395	Central & Eastern India: Odisha; Western India: Maharashtra; and South India: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka
Any Mizo (Lushai) Tribes, etc.	667764	334983	332781	Northeast India: Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam
Halba, etc.	639094	319254	319840	Central & Eastern India: Chhattisgarh, & Madhya Pradesh; and Western India: Maharashtra
Dharua	630469	316877	313592	Western India: Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, & Goa; and South India: Karnataka
Dubla, etc.	627599	316502	311097	Western India: Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, Goa
Mising/ Miri	587310	299790	287520	Northeast India: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh
Tripuri, etc.	543848	275784	268064	Northeast India: Tripura
Rathawa	536135	273754	262381	Western India: Gujarat, & Maharashtra; and South India: Karnataka
Saharia, etc.	527015	271471	255544	Central & Eastern India: Chhattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh; and Western India: Rajasthan

Table 1.8 Zones & Tribes

Zone	Inhabited Tribes
Central & Eastern India:	Bhil, Santal, Mina, Oraon, Munda, Kol, Kavar, Ho, Korku, etc., Bhumij, Garo, Koya, Halba, etc., Saharia, etc.
Western India	Bhil, Gond, Mina, Naikda, etc., Oraon, Koli - Mahadev, etc., Kol, Varli, Kokna, Kavar, Korku, etc., Koya, Halba, etc., Dharua, Dubla, etc., Rathawa, Saharia, etc.
South India	Bhil, Gond, Naikda, etc., Sugalis, etc. Varli, Kokna, Koya, Dharua, Rathawa,
Northeast India	Bhil, Gond, Santal, Naga, etc., Munda, Khasi, etc., Garo, Any Mizo tribes, etc., Mishing/Miri, Tripuri, etc.
North India	Gujjar

Table 1.9 State wise Districts where the ST Population is more than 50% and between 25% to 50 % as per Census 2011

State	Name	Total Population	ST Population	Percentage of ST	More than 50% ST Population	Between 25% to 50% ST Population
01	Jammu & Kashmir	12541302	1493299	11.9	2	3
02	Himachal Pradesh	6864602	392126	5.7	2	1
08	Rajasthan	68548437	9238534	13.5	3	3
11	Sikkim	610577	206360	33.8	1	3
12	Arunachal Pradesh	1383727	951821	68.8	13	3
13	Nagaland	1978502	1710973	86.5	11	0
14	Manipur (Excl. 3 Sub-Divisions of Senapati Dist.)	2570390	902740	35.1	5	0
15	Mizoram	1097206	1036115	94.4	8	0
16	Tripura	3673917	1166813	31.8	1	3
17	Meghalaya	2966889	2555861	86.1	7	0
18	Assam	31205576	3884371	12.4	2	5
19	Jharkhand	32988134	8645042	26.2	5	8
20	Odisha	41974218	9590756	22.8	8	6
21	Chhattisgarh	25545198	7822902	30.6	7	6
22	Madhya Pradesh	72626809	15316784	21.1	6	13
23	Gujarat	60439692	8917174	14.8	5	4
24	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	343709	178564	52.0	1	0
25	Maharashtra	112374333	10510213	9.4	1	3
26	Andhra Pradesh	84580777	5918073	7.0	0	1
27	Lakshadweep	64473	61120	94.8	1	0
28	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	380581	28530	7.5	1	0
	Total				90	62

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Table 1.10 Comparative Region wise Distribution of STs and PTGs

Region	Total ST population	Total Population of PTGs	% to Total ST Population	State Total of PTGs in the Region	PTGs – Community-wise
North India	3,517,961	12,956	0.4	47	4
Central & Eastern India	48,009,010	7,255,529	15.1	255	32
Northeast India	12,208,694	215,744	1.8	114	2

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Western India	29,009,123	2,354,065	8.1	110	9
South India	11,446,596	870,904	7.6	195	25
Indian Islands in the East & West	89,650	769	0.9	23	5
Total	104,281,034	10,709,967*	10.3	744**	75

* This figure excludes population of three tribes which is not available. So, the percentage is just indicative.

** Figure is calculated by adding total numbers of STs in each state/UT. But the communities are 507 as ST groups in two or more states with the same name is considered as one community.

1.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS TRIBES

We have already discussed that the concept that a ‘tribe’ is a colonial construct and does not fit well into Indian context. Nevertheless, the concept of ‘tribe’ has its contribution to the growth of academics.

You know that academics and academic administrators studied communities which were listed as tribes in census reports. These were heterogeneous communities and included such communities as hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, shifting cultivators, artisans and many others. These groups also inhabit different topography. Definition of a tribe therefore, differs from one tribe to another. Obviously, their culture is not homogenous. But within the heterogeneity there are some commonalities that give a meaning to the concept ‘tribe’. As you know there are two visible interests on tribes—one is for academics, and the other for development imperatives. Both are combined to understand the characteristics of tribe in Indian context. So we have presented the characteristics both from general and Indian contexts. The general context presents academics view point more in an ideal situation.

In ideal situation the characteristics of tribes have been enumerated with reference to some criteria. These criteria are definite territory, sense of unity, common language, kinship bond, endogamy, common culture, faiths and practices, age sets, rites of passage, emblems of allegiance, common name, and political organization. The criteria to characterise tribal communities are in the process of change. Moreover, these criteria were never accepted completely even in earlier days.

In India a tribe is always in the process of interaction and we have a constitutional nomenclature for it. Though the tribes are in the process of interaction, still they differ in respect of their level of interactions, place of habitation and so on. You can outline the characteristics of Indian tribes in three different categories- as ST, as PTG and as Non-ST. If you combine the features of these three categories, you will have an idea about the characteristics of Indian tribes in general.

Characteristics of STs

As you know, criteria are not specified in the Constitution to declare a community as ST. You also know that Lokur Committee has evolved some criteria for declaring a particular community as ST. Obviously, at an ideal level these criteria are characteristics of STs. The characteristics of tribes which enable them for

Check Your Progress

14. Who are the tribes in the Western Region?
15. Which district in the country has highest concentration of tribal population?
16. Which region has highest concentration of tribal population?
17. Which states are tribal dominated states? Why?
18. Which Commission created PTGs?

recommendation of state governments for scheduling in the Constitution are as follows:

- *Geographical isolation* - they live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forests.
- *Backwardness* - their livelihood is based on primitive agriculture, a low-value closed economy with a low level of technology that leads to their poverty. They have low levels of literacy and health.
- *Distinctive culture, language and religion* - communities have developed their own distinctive culture, language and religion.
- *Shyness of contact* – they have a marginal degree of contact with other cultures and people.
- *An ensemble of primitive traits.*

Characteristics of PTGs

PTGs are special groups within the ST category. They display the characteristics present in STs along with some additional traits. These groups are regarded as the poorest of poor amongst the STs. The criteria fixed for identification of such PTGs are:

- (i) Relatively physically isolated;
- (ii) Homogenous with a small population;
- (iii) Economic and social backwardness;
- (iv) Absence of written language and a very low level of literacy;
- (v) Declining or stagnant population; and
- (vi) Relatively simple Pre-agricultural level of technology and slow rate of change.

Characteristics in the frame of academic generality

Indian scholars have their schema of characterising a community as tribe. All characteristics may or may not be present in a community but these are general features for our understanding of what a tribe stands for.

S.C. Dube (1990) has listed the following characteristics which we have discussed here with reference to present situation:

1. Their roots in the soil date back to a very early period. If they are not original inhabitants, they are among the oldest inhabitants of the land. However, their position is different from the American Indian, Australian aborigines and the native African population. They were there much before the white settlers arrived in these countries. There is no doubt of their being the indigenous population of these places.

However, this cannot be said so in the case of tribes in India. Tribes have been living in close interaction with the non-tribals for centuries. Some tribes like the Mizos and Khamptis are even late comers to their place of habitation.
2. They live in the relative isolation of the hills and the forests. This was not always so. There are evidences of their presence in the Gangetic plains. It is only because of subordination and marginalization that they have been forced to retreat to inaccessible places.

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3. Their sense of history is shallow, for among them, the remembered history is restricted to three to four generations. Beyond that it tends to get merged in mythology. But in recent years the oral tradition which was considered as a weak source of history is accepted as the source material to reconstruct the history of the pre-literate people.
4. They have a low level of techno-economic development.
5. In terms of their cultural ethos-language, institutions, beliefs, worldview and customs, they are different from the others.
6. By and large they are non-hierarchic and undifferentiated. There are some exceptions like the Gonds, the Ahoms and the Cheros who had a ruling class or the landed aristocracy.

T.B. Naik (1956) has given the following features of tribes in Indian context:

- A tribe should have least functional interdependence within the community.
- It should be economically backward (i.e. primitive means of exploiting natural resources, tribal economy should be at an underdeveloped stage and it should have multifarious economic pursuits).
- There should be a comparative geographical isolation of its people.
- They should have a common dialect.
- Tribes should be politically organized and community panchayat should be influential.
- A tribe should have customary laws.

Naik argues that a community should possess all the above mentioned characteristics to become a tribe. A very high level of acculturation with outside society debars it from being a tribe. Thus, the term tribe usually denotes a social group bound together by kin and duty, and associated with a particular territory.

General Characteristics of Indian Tribes

The society is changing and so the concept shifts to accommodate changes over the period to understand the dynamics. Today, in India, a tribe is characterised as a social category scheduled in the Constitution. Moreover, they display dynamic characteristics, often different from the ideal types. You cannot find a tribe completely in isolation. You can enumerate the characteristics of PTGs to understand a tribal community in particular and the characteristics of STs to understand a tribal community in general. Moreover, you have Non-STs which to a lesser degree agree to the ideal type of remote habitation. The characteristics below will give you an idea of heterogeneous tribal communities in India.

- (a) A tribe is both a broad social category to include STs and Non-STs;
- (b) When confined to the category of STs, it is a social category in an administrative sense within the frame of the Constitution;
- (c) It was relatively isolated at one time and later had its integration with the outside world, but has continued to call itself tribe because of vested interests;
- (d) A tribe is a community that still dwells in remotely situated forests and hills and is backward in terms of the indices of development, although the community may not have yet found a place in the list of the scheduled tribes; it belongs to Non-ST category;

- (e) A tribe does not exist as a stage of social evolution;
- (f) A tribe as ST is state specific status; the same community having no ST status in other states if not given the same status according to the Constitution;
- (g) As a corollary, a tribe is not always a community specific status, the same community may be ST in one state and a Scheduled Caste or Other Backward Caste or General Caste in another;
- (h) A tribe is category in contrast to caste, but it is not always so; some caste based communities in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand also have ST status; and
- (i) A tribe is not ideally a stateless society, there are some tribes like Garo, Gond, Bhumija who participated in statecraft as rulers.

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1.6 TRIBAL ECOLOGY

In section 1.3 you have learnt the meaning of **habitat** and its classification on the basis of physical and political divisions. You have also learnt about the habitats of tribes and tribal concentration in India. This section deals with how a habitat influences the way of life of people living in it and how it shapes its culture. This is what we call Tribal Ecology. In general, you can say that the ecology or habitat has influence on the knowledge system of people, which is the dynamic aspect of culture. Precisely, you will learn two aspects, namely health care and resource conservation beliefs and practices of tribal knowledge system.

Ecology and Habitat

The term ecology has several connotations. It may refer to the scientific study of interactions among organisms and their environment. In this sense it is a branch of knowledge that includes Biology, Geography and Earth Science. It also refers the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity. An ecological area inhabited by a particular species of animal, plant or any other type of organism is known as its Habitat. The two concepts, Habitat and Ecology have diverse uses in different disciplines. Here we will use habitat and ecology as synonym terms. While the former manifests the physical characteristics in a wider sense, the latter reflects the interaction between physical and mental aspects in relation to the knowledge system evolved in a local habitat i.e. in a particular ecology.

In section 1.4 we have presented a broad category of habitats. But within this broad division you will find local variations. For example, forest habitat is a very general idea about tribal habitats. It includes forests of all types. You will find forests like desert type, mangrove type, bamboo forests, mountainous forests, plains forests and so on. Each forest type defines interaction among organisms in a particular way and thus has its distinct influence over people living there. As you know mangrove forests have swampy floors and so houses are constructed on raised platforms which are characteristic of all swampy areas. But where forest is not swampy and the ground is plain and there is no water logging, houses are constructed on the floor like the houses of Savaras, Santhals, Birhors, etc. in plains forests. The materials used for house construction also differ from one forest type to the other. Livelihood sources also depend on the nature of the habitat. Forest tribes living near rivers or sea coast depend on fishing while in deserts they depend on hunting. Tribes in mountainous forests normally practise shifting cultivation in contrast to permanent cultivation

Check Your Progress

19. Who said/
proposed?
 - (a) Tribe is a Backward Hindu.
 - (b) Tribe is a Segmentary society.
 - (c) Tribe-caste continuum
 - (d) Tribe-peasant continuum
 - (e) Tribe in transition
 - (f) *Adivasi* is a general term which has no special legal de jure connotations.

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in plains. Plants and animals also vary from forest type to the other. While forest is defined as habitat, each forest type is considered ecology for our present discussion.

Tribal ecology is the small habitat of a tribal community where interaction with nature shapes a distinct culture and way of living for them.

In this section you will learn about tribal ecology in both general and specific senses. We separately discuss ecology to focus on interactions among organisms to explain knowledge system. So, you will learn tribal knowledge system in course of tribal people's interaction with natural resources—plants, animals, land, water, air and other natural objects like the Sun, the sky, etc. Precisely, we will discuss tribal people's faiths, beliefs and practices as a part of their knowledge system.

Knowledge system

Tribal knowledge system is known as traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge, folk knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, community knowledge, etc. This knowledge is greatly based on long tribal experiences of interactions with their immediate ecology consisting of *biotic* (living) and *abiotic* (non-living elements).

As you know tradition refers to a 'long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another'. The statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc. pass on from generation to generations, especially by word of mouth or by practice. This system of knowledge and its transmission does not exist exclusive among the tribes. There are rural communities in which knowledge is also transmitted and is traditional. Traditional knowledge has a wider meaning than tribal knowledge system. Similarly, folk, people or community has also wider meaning.

Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge of indigenous people, the people who are native to a locality or ecology. In this sense, it seems that tribal knowledge system is indigenous knowledge. As you have learnt, in India tribal people are not considered indigenous people because of their history of migration. It is not easy to establish nativity of a community to a particular place. Without going into the controversy of who are indigenous and who are not, there is another way of defining indigenous knowledge. The knowledge is not created in formal institutions like research laboratories, Universities or research institutes. So, indigenous knowledge is defined in contrast to formal scientific knowledge. But this knowledge is not community specific or confined to tribes only. You will find the knowledge of weaving or basket making not only among tribal groups in Northeast India but also among non-tribal groups also. Obviously, tribal knowledge is indigenous knowledge but indigenous knowledge is not a synonym of tribal knowledge. The former is broader in meaning, content and context.

What you have learnt is tribal knowledge system as a part of indigenous, folk, people, ecological or community knowledge system preserved from generations to generations through oral transmission. It is a generic term and includes the knowledge of all the tribes of all the ecological settings. It covers all aspects of life, including management of resources, health care practices, faiths and beliefs, agriculture, food preparation, weaving, education, communication, technology, cattle herding, hunting and gathering, fisheries, mode of production, ethics of consumption, institutions, language, customs, arts, paintings, etc. which people of an ecology have generated and preserved as survival strategy. The

knowledge is based on experience, often tested over centuries, adapted to the ecology and cultural life of people.

Tribal knowledge like any traditional knowledge system is stored in people's memories and activities. It is expressed in the form of myths, legends, tales, stories, songs, proverbs, riddles, dances, values, beliefs, rituals and other practices.

You have learnt that knowledge system has two components: physical (visible) and mental (invisible/intangible). The two components however do not exist separately; they often exist together. While a tribal man constructs a house (a visible action) he is aware of the taboos and beliefs (invisible aspect) associated with his actions. He will not violate, say, the rule or belief associated with erecting the first pillar.

In short tribal knowledge is the generalisation of specific knowledge system of a tribal culture, existing within and developed in the habitat ecology of the people.

As you have learnt knowledge system has both visible and non-visible (mental) components. We will discuss these two aspects of knowledge with reference to health care and resource conservation of tribal people.

1.6.1 Healthcare

Clements (1932), Lewis (1954) and many other have studied health care system of traditional communities. The notion of 'health' in these communities is ordinarily perceived as an opposite to 'disease' or 'sicknesses'. In other words, health is a condition of the 'absence of disease'. We can cite an example to illustrate the point. The Miju (Kaman) Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh, for example, use the term 'naat' to mean the condition of disease or sickness. They use the term 'ma-naat', meaning no disease, for a person who enjoys a 'normal' condition. In fact, they use this term to answer to any query like: Is s/he sick? Or how is she? In a tribal community the condition of 'health' is perceived as bipolar opposite to the condition of sickness or disease.

The idea of disease is also based on subjective judgement. Disease or sickness is a condition of deviation from normal life. A person is considered sick, i.e. 'not in good health' if s/he shows signs of pain or discomfort while performing normal works. You will learn from the studies of many scholars that the condition of sickness arises due to supernatural or physical reasons. Supernatural reasons are attributed to the wrath of deities (spirits), evil eye, witchcraft and sorcery, breach of taboo, failure to perform rituals, violation of social norms like committing adultery or incest, violation of culturally approved norms to be obeyed while interacting with natural objects like rivers, sacred places and so on. The reasons for supernatural punishment may be due to mistakes committed by human beings or even without them. The reason of sickness caused due to breach of a norm is attributed to human mistakes. But sickness due to an evil eye, for example, is caused without the mistake of the sufferer. Physical injuries of a person also may cause him/her discomfort or pain to carry out normal work and obviously, s/he is considered sick in tribal notion of health. However, the cause is not normally attributed to supernatural factors. The tribal people also believe that a wicked shaman, sorcerer or witch may send supernatural force into a person's body through black magic and cause sickness.

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Thus, from the above discussion we know that sickness is caused by three factors. These are supernatural agency like spirits, human agency like sorcerer and natural causes responsible for physical injuries. In addition to these three disease causing factors, scholars have also classified two ways of understanding disease and the concept of health in tribal communities, namely - subjective and objective. Subjective ways refer to sickness due to supernatural causes while physical injuries are objective perception of sickness.

Ecological Knowledge and Health

It will be interesting for you to know that the notion of health as opposed to the condition of sickness has developed in ecological knowledge system of the tribal people.

First, the trees, segment of a river, a cave, or any natural object which is considered sacred appears in the habitat ecology. There are cultural norms of how people would behave with these objects. Violation of norms relate to disobedience of relational behaviour of cultural prescriptions. Such violations invoke the wrath of supernatural power which inhabits the ecological place. It is to be mentioned that a tribe may live in different ecological space and its knowledge about the perception of supernature in material objects of that space is created. The *Hirek* tree in the ecology of Yomcha area of Galos in West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh is considered sacred. Anybody shouting or urinating near it invokes supernatural punishment. But the tree is not found in the ecology of Lika Bali plains of the tribe in the same district or in Nari –Telam area of the Galos in East Siang district.

In Damro village of the Adi Padams, the *Siri-Rine* tree was considered to be a wish-fulfilling tree. Any act of defilement near it was considered sacrilegious as long as the tree existed. But such a belief is not attributed to any tree of other Padam villages like Mebo or Dambuk.

The important think which you learn here is that the material objects which have connection with the notion of health are ecology-specific.

Second, supernatural curative practices prescribe taboos or use of objects for offerings which are available in the ecology. Monkey meat is a taboo during pregnancy in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh, but not among the tribal groups living in Lakshadweep or Konkana ecological zone. In fact eating of some varieties of fish like *shingada* and *kolambis* is prohibited at least for six months after delivery in Kuli community of Konkana region. Coconut is invariably used as an offering in Kerala while it is not the case in Arunachal Pradesh where ecology is not suitable for coconut cultivation.

Third, materials used in curative practices also occur in the ecology. In Kerala, for example, *neem* leaves are used in curative rituals or as medicine by many tribes. You cannot find this item among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh or Meghalaya or Nagaland, as *neem* is not endemic in the ecology.

For the same disease in different ecology the plant medicine used are different. In case of diarrhoea and stomach disorder people in different ecological setting use different plants available. The Adis of East Siang district use *Aoeratum Conyaoides*, a weed, the Nyishis of Papum Pare district use *Arigiopteris evecta* (a type of fern called commonly as King fern –looks like the matured leaves of

Dhekia in Assamese whose botanical name is *Diplazium esculentum* and the Kuli in Konkan region use Chariamilo (*Oxalis corniculata*, in Sanskrit it is called *ambastha*).

Occurrence of disease has a link with ecology. The same disease does not occur among the members of a tribe living in different ecological setting. For example, Adis living in foot hills and plains suffer from malaria frequently while those living in Tuting, a clod region, have very rare cases of malaria.

The ecological knowledge is not uniform with regard to different medicinal plants available in the same ecology. You will find that the Gond medicine men of different wards in Pathai village of Betul district in Madhya Pradesh use different plant species for the cure of jaundice. In one ward, the traditional medicine man uses mixed juice of *Cuscuta reflexa* (in Hindi it is *amar bel*) and *Curcuma aromatic* (in Hindi *-jangli haldi*) while in another ward a concoction of *Hathikan leea macrophylla* (in Hindi-Hathikan leaves) and *aamras* (a mango dessert) is used.

One important point about tribal health is occurrence of new diseases with changing ecology. In mining areas of Odisha tribes suffer from diseases like black lung disorder, tuberculosis; noise induced hearing loss, irritation to eyes, pneumoconiosis, severe cough and cold, skin infections, bronchitis, ulcer muscular pains, back pains, wearing out of joints, arthritis, spondylosis, numbness, fatigue and lack of stamina and so on. The traditional ecological knowledge does not have curative methods for these diseases though often they adopt to traditional practices before medical treatment. Treatment in hospitals could be an addition to their knowledge system as these institutions are located in their ecology.

1.6.2 Resource Conservation

Do you know 80 per cent of biodiversity on this earth is found in areas inhabited by tribal and indigenous peoples?

World Resources Institute (WRI), Washington, D.C. reports this fact in *World Resources Report 2005: The Wealth of the Poor – Managing Ecosystems to Fight Poverty*. It is reported that

‘many areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples coincide with some of the world’s remaining major concentrations of biodiversity. Traditional indigenous territories encompass up to 22 per cent of the world’s land surface and they coincide with areas that hold 80 per cent of the planet’s biodiversity’.

Do you know why?

The reason is that these peoples are carriers of traditional knowledge and wisdom about biodiversity resources. These peoples have inextricably linked the natural resources in which they depend on to their identities and cultures. For them biodiversity resource is not an isolated and compartmentalized concept, but an integrated part of their lives. That is why it is not a surprise that these people make up only 4 per cent of the world’s population, but represent 95 per cent of the world’s cultural diversity. Scholars have found that traditional knowledge provides for intricate resource management systems that have sustained indigenous societies for millennia. In other words, tribal and indigenous communities survive due to the

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survival of the resources and therefore their knowledge of biodiversity conservation is a survival strategy.

Coming to India we find that tribal people do not involve in wasteful consumption and sell or purchase biodiversity resources like a commodity. In their belief system nature or natural resources are free gifts. A tribe considers nature as *giving environment* or preserver and feeder (*thow-gew* in Aka language). In their belief, the nature has a supernatural (spirit) realm and its use requires propitiatory rituals for the presiding deities. In this belief system land, water, plants, animals are related to human beings, their identities and way of life. A tribe does not feel some one different from the Nature. S/he considers her/himself as a part of it.

Totem as a strategy of conservation

It is not a surprise to find many tribal clans or lineages trace their origin from animals and plants. In other words, they possess totem of animals and plants for their ancestry. The clans in Ho tribe have their respective totems. The totem, for example of Purti clan (*kili*) is crocodile, of Hasda wild goose, of Tiu jackal, of Bage tiger, of Jamuda spring and of Hembram clan the totem is a tree bearing berries. Among the Santals the Murmu clan has a wild cow as its totem, Chande has a lizard and Boyar has a fish and so on.

A totem is a being, object, or symbol representing an animal or plant that serves as an emblem of a group of people, such as a family, clan, group, lineage, or tribe, reminding them of their ancestry (or mythic past). In kinship and descent, if the ancestor of a clan is nonhuman, it is called a totem. Normally this belief is accompanied by a totemic myth. The term totem belongs to Ojibwe tribe of North America.

You know that an ecology has its own species of plants, animals or land forms. The totemic names come from these species, not from any other which is not endemic to the ecology. The totems mentioned above are all found in the ecology in which the tribe lives. We can also cite the example of Oraons who live in Chotanagpur plateau in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. The species found there are linked to totems of their respective clans. The Karkha clan has cow, Tirki has a young mouse, Lakra has the tiger, Kindu has the 'Saur' fish, Toppo has a small bird, Kerketta has the quail, Ekka has the tortoise, Gidhi has the eagle, Tiga the field mouse, Hartu has the monkey, Tatenga has the lizard, Minz has Eel, Xaxa has crow, Xess corn, Godo has a water creature as their totems. During the common lineage festival known as Dharm puja, every lineage member has to undergo rituals of fast to worship his own totem. You will find that the Kharwars of South Lohardaga regard the Khar grass as the totem of their tribe, and so they never cut or injure it while growing. In fact, totemic clans do not kill or injure totems nor allow others to do so; these are very sacred to them.

The idea and concept behind Totemism is that people have a spiritual connection or kinship tie with creatures or objects in nature, making the practice very similar to Animism. Animism is a belief based on the spiritual idea that the universe, and all natural objects within the universe, has souls or spirits. It is believed that souls or spirits exist not only in humans but also in animals, plants, trees, rocks and all natural forces. Tribes consider themselves as a part of the Nature.

Sacred Groves

If you read the history of human interaction with immediate ecology you will find a variety of human strategies to preserve the resources. One of the strategies is the demarcation of special areas of the natural environment which have connection with cultural needs. Such areas are diverse and range from the common resource areas for livelihood purposes to sacred trees and groves to meet cultural needs. You will find sacred grove as a resource conservation strategy still existing in India including areas inhabited by tribes.

Sacred Grove is a traditional example of community based resource conservation strategy. This age-old traditional conservation practice appears in all religions throughout the world. In India, sacred groves are scattered all over the country. They have different names in different parts of the country. These groves are called as ‘Sarna’ or ‘Dev’ in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Devrai or Devrahati in Maharashtra, ‘Sarnas’ ‘Jaherthan’ in Jharkhand, ‘Orans’ in Rajasthan, ‘Devarabana’ or ‘Devarakadu’ or ‘Rulidevarakadu’ or ‘Nagabana’ etc. in Karnataka, ‘Kovilakadu’ in Tamil Nadu ‘Kavu’ in Kerala, ‘Dev van’ in Himachal Pradesh, ‘KI Law Lyngdoh’ or ‘Ki Law Kyntang’ etc. in Meghalaya, Dumbang among the Adi Padams of Arunachal Pradesh and ‘Lai Umang’ in Manipur.

Dumbang is an enclosure situated on the way to forest. The Papdam hunters perform rituals before and after a hunting expedition to propitiate *Gamik*, the presiding deity and owner of all kinds of wild animals.

The phrase sacred grove is combined from two words –sacred and grove. Sacred is considered to be holy or ‘connected with a god’ and the word ‘grove’ refers to a small area of land with trees of particular types grown on it. So sacred grove means a small area of land with particular types of trees grown on it and that are considered to be holy by the local community. Such groves are associated with the notion of a “presiding deity”. In many cases these trees are dedicated to local deities or ancestral spirits. The local community preserves the trees through cultural traditions and taboos.

The Sacred Groves of Meghalaya

As you have learnt, in Meghalaya sacred groves are known as – and found in every village. Among them two large groves are Mawphlang and Mausmai. The Mawphlang grove close to Shillong town is one of the best preserved groves. The Mausmai grove in Cherrapunji is about 6 km² of protected mixed broad-leaved rain forest area. The traditional religious belief is that the gods and the spirits of the ancestors live in these groves. In early time ceremonies were performed in all the groves regularly to propitiate the ruling deity. But due to influence of Christianity these rituals have been stopped in many groves. Nevertheless, cutting of trees or removal of plant parts is still considered to offend the ruling deity, leading to local calamities.

Beliefs and Practices in Day-to-Day Life and Conservation

Tribes dependence on resources is for subsistence living. Their wants are less; they do not put resources into multiple uses and do not use in large scale. The tools and weapons they use are appropriate to the worldview of their needs and so do not do large damage to the resources beyond their needs. Subsistence community based

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needs, rudimentary technology, belief in life of every natural object, linking human welfare to less damage to plants and animals, use of local resources only to meet their local community needs and so on form the bed rock of their ecological knowledge system. This knowledge puts restraints on indiscriminate use of resources.

The Nyishis profess 'animism' and believe in *wiyus* (spirits) –both benevolent and malevolent. There are *wiyus* in the jungle, on the lofty hills, in shadowy recesses and inaccessible caves on the top of the tall trees, in the rivers, and inside and outside the house. The Nyishi have developed a relationship of mutuality or avoidance with objects believed to have belonged to *wiyus*. In their belief system tiger happens to be the brother of *Abo Tani*, their ancestor; so they avoid killing of tigers. This belief is also there in Galo culture, another tribe in Arunachal Pradesh.

As the legend goes, *Abo Tani* and *wiyus* were contemporaries. *Wiyus* were jealous of *Abo Tani's* supernatural power and always were in search for the opportunity to harm him. *Tu Tungung as Bingdarbo* (Mediator who settles disputes, presently *gingdung*) settled the dispute by demarcating area for their dwelling. *Abo Tani* was allotted areas suitable for human settlement and *wiyus* were given inaccessible places, trees and hills, rivers and marshy land for their dwelling. So, the Nyishi do not cut nor use trees like *domrang*, *sangrik* (*ficus species*), *tara posi sangkang* because they are believed to be the dwelling places of the *wiyus*. *Sanda dumbangbo* (any tree with a special structure), *osso dumbangbo* (cane with special structure), *hatek hanek* (knotted bamboo) etc. are believed to be the dwelling place of *wiyus*. Nyishis do not use leaves of *kamyar* plant, for *wiyus* are believed to use it. *Sangne netebo* (very big trees), *aleng patebo* (peculiar shaped big stones), *senyik* (marshy land), *sele koibo* (deep river with dark-colour water) and distant and inaccessible forest and mountains are believed to be the shelters of *wiyus*. *Tab* (snakes) and birds like *pup* (owl), *puwa* (crow) are dreaded as *wiyus*.

That the belief system of the Nyishis puts restraint on resource use could be comprehended from the following example. *Peagaa* (horn bill) is a much sought after bird among the Nyishis. Its *hibu* (beak) is decorated on the top of the *gopiya/bopiya* (hat) that gives a social status to its user. But still, they do not go for its indiscriminate killing in the belief that one who does so will never prosper. They use the term *Khumom-ho/who* to mean misery of all sorts for the present and future. Nest-killing is practised but silently, lest the *shewu/swng* (the protecting spirit in the jungle) would harm the hunter. This belief stops indiscriminate killing because the killing expedition in a particular nest breaks silence and checks further killing. They do not kill all members of its family in the fear that the killer's family would be subject to supernatural punishment. In the same line of thinking, Nyishis do not kill a male *peaga* flying alone as they know that it carries food to the female bird that hatches egg in the hole-nest. Its killing, as the people believe, amount to the destruction of its family of starvation that would bring bad-luck to killer's family.

There are some specific trees having specific uses. For example, trees like *kora*, *karsing*, *porio*, *tai* are used as house building materials and trees like *kora*, *ninch* and plants like *tajar* are used for constructing *ugang* (ritual structure). After major rituals with mithun sacrifice, such as *ganda wiyu panam*, *himi panam*, entire community observes taboo for five days when outside works including

Check Your Progress

20. State whether the following statements are true or false:
- (a) Ecology has no influence in tribal knowledge system.
 - (b) Tribal knowledge system is largely based on oral transmission
 - (c) An ecological area inhabited by tribal people is known as a habitat.
 - (d) Tribal knowledge system does not recognize faiths and beliefs.
 - (e) Tribal people normally understand health in opposition to the concept of sickness.

felling of trees are prohibited. The Nyishi also observe restraint in the matter of harvesting trees during flowering and bamboos during shooting period. They strictly observe taboos because of the fear of supernatural punishment consequent upon their violation.

Use of land resource for shifting cultivation is not indiscriminate; rather it follows norms consistent to their belief system. The selection of new jhum plot is based on the ritual *wiyu kokanam* in which chicken liver or egg yolk is examined. Sometimes, dreams also play significant role in selecting a jhum plot. The jhum cycle is limited to particular fields for a number of decades and fallow period is at least above ten years. Moreover, jhum fields are selected in places where *tajar* plant and *kokam* leaves grow abundantly, for such fields are believed to be fertile.

You will find that the Khamptis another tribe in Arunachal Pradesh have developed the practices of restrained resource use. For example, *Ton Mei Hung* (peepal tree), trees having seven or more branches (believed to be the abode of spirits) are wholly protected. Some trees have specific use, eg. *tonliu* (simul)-used in making bier, *kamko* (nahar) branches used during *Sangken* festival, and thus are protected. The Khamptis have the belief that *Ariyanitya* (the future incarnation of Lord Buddha) will get enlightenment under *kamko*.

There are restrictions on the harvest of trees in certain seasons. At the time of flowering, harvesting is prohibited because of the belief that trees will yield soft wood prone to insect-infection. Same belief prohibits bamboo harvesting during *Nuen Napi* (fortnight preceding full moon day) and when shoots are tender. Harvesting of bamboo and trees are prohibited during festivals such as *Nawa* and *Sangken*.

In earlier days, the Khamptis followed a practice called *Tang Ton Mei* (to put a new tree in place of old one) to appease *phinoy*. Perhaps this was the traditional way of forest conservation, which in later years has been diluted to the practice of putting a branch in place of the felled tree. Any violation of traditional practice of resource use is linked to supernatural punishment like *maa* (madness), *khom tuk* (soul loss), etc.

The rationality behind taboos, beliefs and practices associated with restrained resource use is the prudence which seemingly contributes towards ensuring long term sustainability of resource use.

1.7 SUMMARY

- In this unit we have discussed the origin of the term tribe, its academic and administrative nature and particularly, the characteristics of tribe in changing perspectives. In India, tribe constitutes a large portion of its population constituting 8.6 per cent of only constitutional category. The population is distributed in 30 states and UTs of the country. You have read the nature and extent of distribution with reference to geographical regions and political divisions based on regions, states and districts.
- By reading this unit you are expected to learn details on the concept of tribe, characteristics and the distribution of their habitats.

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Check Your Progress

21. State whether the following statements are true or false:
 - (a) Faiths and beliefs put restraints on resource use.
 - (b) Any item, whether available or not in the ecology can be prescribed as a taboo for people living in it.
 - (c) Traditional knowledge system has clues of resource conservation.
 - (d) Sacred grove is a strategy of religious belief.
 - (e) People do not violate social norms knowing that it will help in resource conservation.

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- You have studied that the term ‘tribe’ is a colonial creation. But the communities designated as tribes during colonial period had their terms of address and outsiders’ designation for them.
- The term tribe largely denotes to social category and includes both ST and Non-ST communities in India. ST category includes its variant i.e. PTGs. The ST category though refers to a broad social group its basis is socio-economic backwardness. Being a social category it deals with social institutions and organizations. But in a narrow and implicit sense the term is used to distinguish a tribal individual from its non-tribal counterpart. Further, being a social category the concept of tribe is not confined to the boundary of any socio-cultural characteristics. Tribes are heterogeneous in terms of bio-genetic traits, language, levels of cultural contact, economic pursuits, religious faiths and beliefs and in the field of governance system.
- You have further studied that the term tribe though originated in colonial vocabulary it continues to stay consequent upon its use in academics and government documents. However, a tribe does not exist in its ideal state; it is in transition. The characteristics of tribes, therefore, present not only an ideal state but also the changing perspectives.
- The habitat of tribe is finally explained in terms of ecology. The ecological habit, as you have learnt, influences knowledge system of a tribe. In turn the knowledge system helps in resource conservation. You have also learnt that ecological knowledge relates to the notion of health and health care practices in tribal communities.

1.8 KEY TERMS

- **Aborigine:** The original or native or earliest known inhabitants of a country or region in relation to colonisers or other migrants.
- **Acephalous:** Literally, ‘headless’, meaning without any centralised authority.
- **Bio-genetic variability:** The phenotypic variance of a trait or the genotype in the population of a group or many groups due to genetic difference amongst individuals.
- **Census:** Complete enumeration of something. In India, the total population is enumerated once in 10 years, called Population Census.
- **Cephalous society:** A society with centralised authority like a chief.
- **Colonial:** Relating to the subjugating policy and power of a country over another independent country.
- **Concept:** A generalized form of abstract or generic idea of what something is or how it works; it is wider than in the meaning or definition of something.
- **Cultural Territory:** A geographical space generally across the political divisions where a community of a homogeneous or at least undifferentiated culture lives.
- **Divide and Rule:** The policy of gaining and maintain power over a population by creating small divisions within and causing rivalries and creating discord among them.

- **Evolution:** A gradual process through which something changes into a different and usually more complex or improved form.
- **Evolutionists:** Those who believe in the idea that things change through a gradual process from simple to complex forms.
- **Great Tradition:** The tradition based on the idea contained in epics, purans and other classical sanskritic texts and shared as a common cultural consciousness by the people.
- **Habitat:** Place or environment that is natural for the normal life and growth of plant or animal including human beings.
- **Ideal category:** The category that is expected to conform to the idea considered to be perfect and thus a model.
- **Interface:** The meeting point or area of different communicating ideas.
- **Little Tradition:** The tradition that is the local version of the great tradition which exist among folk artists, medicine men, tellers, stories , bards and in a region or village.
- **Livelihood:** Activities undertaken for the purpose of securing the basic necessities life such as food, water, shelter and clothing.
- **Non-literate:** Absence of the ability of reading and writing.
- **Perspective:** A particular way of viewing a phenomenon independently or in relation to another.
- **Political Territory:** A geographical area having a well-defined political boundary like that of a country or state or district.
- **Pre-literate:** Absence of the practice of reading and writing.
- **Scheduled Areas:** ‘Excluded’ or ‘partially excluded’ areas identified by the British Government and later declared in Indian Constitution as Scheduled Areas as per the provisions of Fifth Schedule, these are Fifth Schedule Areas in nine states at present with predominance tribal population.
- **Scope:** With regard to a discipline it refers to subject matter and its relation with other disciplines.
- **Seven Sisters:** The seven states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
- **Theraveda:** Literally it means ‘words or wisdom of the elders’, it refers to the Buddhist School of Hinayana Cult that draws its scriptural inspiration from the Pali texts, or Tipitaka.
- **Tribal Areas:** Tribal inhabiting areas where provisions of Sixth Schedule are applicable.
- **Tribal Sub-Plan:** An integrated strategy of development of tribals in Fifth Schedule Areas of India introduced during the Fifth Five Year Plan.
- **Ecology:** Scientific study of interactions among organisms and their environment.
- **Traditional knowledge:** Knowledge that passes on orally from generations to generations.
- **Supernatural:** That does not exist in natural form and that cannot be explained in natural ways.

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- **Sacred grove:** An enclosure with trees which is considered holy and linked to supernatural being(s).
- **Resource:** Resource has different meaning in different disciplines like Economics, Geography, etc. In natural resource it means natural materials used for human welfare.
- **Conservation:** Preservation, protection and promotion.
- **Totem:** Natural objects like plants or animals which are considered to be mythical ancestors of a clan or lineage.

1.9 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. (a) True, (b) False, (c) False, (d) False, (e) True
2. Occupation
3. Divide and Rule
4. Proto-Australoids, Mongoloids, Negrito
5. Hunting-gathering, shifting agriculture, herding
6. Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Chinese, and Dravidian
7. Cephalous and acephalous
8. (a) True, (b) False, (c) True, (d) True, and (e) True
9. (a) Colonial mindset of divide and rule, evolutionary scheme of society, Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, Census Reports.
(b) Communities who were notified as Criminal Tribes under Criminal Tribes Act, 1871
(c) Band, tribe, chiefdom and state
(d) Between tribe and peasant there are many tribal communities displaying characteristics of peasant and many peasant communities displaying characteristics of tribal communities at different degrees
10. (a) Sts and PTGs
(b) Articles 342 and 366 (25)
(c) The Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh and Puducherry
(d) Non-Scheduled Tribes and Indigenous people
11. (a) True, (b) True, (c) False, (d) True, (e) True, (f) False, (g) False
12. (a) False, (b) False, (c) False, (d) False (e) True
13. (a) 75, (b) 2nd, (c) Andhra Pradesh, (d) Sixth Schedule, Fifth Schedule, (e) Shilu Ao Committee, (f) State
14. 1. Bhil, Gond, Mina, Naikda, Oraon, Koli - Mahadev, Kol, Varli, Kokna, Kavar, Korku, Koya, Halba, Dharua, Dubla, Rathawa, and Saharia
15. Kurung Kumey in Arunachal Pradesh
16. The Northeast India

17. Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. The concentration of tribal population is more than 60%
18. Dhebar Commission in 1973
19. (a) G.S. Ghurye, (b) Marshal Sahlins, (c) F.G Bailey, (d) S.C.Sinha, (e) A.R.Desai, (f) B.R. Ambedkar
20. (a) False (b) True (c) False (d) False (e) True
21. (a) True (b) False (c) True (d) False (e) False

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1.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Do you think Indian tribes lived in isolation before British rule? Give examples to justify your answer.
2. Write any five characteristics of tribes in ideal state. Do you think tribes in India live in ideal state? Why or why not?
3. Do you think defining tribes in India has a territorial dimension? Support your answer with examples.
4. Distinguish between the concepts of Political Territory and Cultural Territory with reference to tribal communities of India.

Long-Answer Questions

1. 'Tribe as a social category is a colonial legacy'. Explain why or why not.
2. What is the basis of classification of Indian population in tribes and caste? Do you think the basis is correct? Support your answers with examples.
3. In India the term 'tribe' can be replaced with 'indigenous people'. Justify your answer with suitable examples.
4. Do you think concentration of tribal population correlates to the percentage of Country's tribal population? Support your answer with examples.

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UNIT 2 SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Structure

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have learnt the definition and evolution of the term ‘tribe.’ You have also learnt about the categories of tribes in India, terms of reference, distribution of habitats and their characteristics. By now you are aware that tribal communities are heterogeneous. But in the community itself the aspects of life show a harmonious blending through interconnectedness in terms of culture. In other words, the culture presents a holistic understanding; it means that aspects of life do not exist as separate domains. There is one domain, the cultural domain of all aspects of life, and each aspect, therefore is an integral part of that single domain, integrated and interconnected.

We can take an example for clarification. Economics as an aspect of life does not exist as a separate domain as in modern societies. It is instituted in social process and interconnected with other aspects such as social, political and religious life. Similarly, social aspect of life is interconnected with political, economic and

religious aspects of life, and all together form the culture of the community. In this unit you shall learn social and political aspects of life and their interconnectedness from the study of socio-political organizations.

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Each and every society believes in stability, solidarity and harmonious living. In view of this a society evolves its mechanisms to ensure social harmony. Political organizations help enforcing these mechanisms. However, these mechanisms may vary from formal system to informal way of living, but the essence remains the same to maintain harmony and ensure stability. In tribal communities, customary laws and sanctions are such mechanisms which you will learn in this Unit.

You have already learnt that religion is a component of holistic tribal life. It is integrated with other aspects of life and plays a significant role in many ways. Its ethical component puts checks on unwanted social behaviour; beliefs and practices influence understanding disease and curative system; and faiths, beliefs and practices present the cultural identity of the members of the tribe in a holistic sense. You will learn about all these aspects in this unit also.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the meaning of various tribal social organizations
- Discuss institutions like kinship, marriage and family in the context of tribal social organizations
- Describe the working of tribal political organizations
- Examine the customary laws and social sanctions followed in tribes
- Discuss the tribal religious faith, belief and practices

2.2 MEANING OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

You already know the meaning of *social organization*. The meaning has been compared with the meaning of *social structure*. Briefly but clearly a distinction between social structure and social organization is made by Brown and Barnett (1942). They state:

Social organization refers to the systems of obligation-relations which exist among and between groups constituting a given society, while social structure refers to the placement and position of individuals and of groups within that system of obligation-relations.

The clan displays obligation-relations among members. Families within the clan, for example, reciprocate labour exchange. At the same time, clan is also a social structure because of its distinct position in the schema of lineage, clan, phratry etc.

You will learn that different communities display different organizational schemes. The scholars study these schemes from different perspectives also. We present here definitions of social organizations advanced by leading scholars in the field.

You must be aware that in any given society collective life involves methods of grouping and grading people for effectively carrying out various types of activities required for survival existence. In view of this Malinowski (1992) has defined social

organization in terms of the manner in which humans combine to act upon their environment in order to satisfy their needs. Along Similar lines, Lowie (1969) refers to the significant grouping of individuals as social organization.

Raymond Firth (1951), however, presents the notion of social organization with reference to a scheme of three analytical levels namely, **social structure, function, and social organization**. According to him, *social structure* is the set of rules or principles governing social action. These rules or principles are social relations and how these relations serve individual or collective ends refer to *function*. Social organization on the other hand refers to the dynamic, situational and decision making aspect of social relations which serve individual or collective ends. Radcliffe-Brown (1952), who is also a structural functionalist, holds that social organization is an arrangement of roles associated with the statuses which constituted the social structure. Redfield (1955) emphasises kinship relationship and holds that three relations – consanguineal (blood relations), affinal (marriage relations), and ritual relations form the scheme of social organization in a village.

By now you must have an idea of the *dynamic nature* of social organizations from different perspectives of scholars. With this idea you can understand and relate social organizations of tribes in India.

2.2.1 Socio-Political Organizations-Framework of Discussion

Normally, a few questions may come to your mind when you look at the compound word ‘socio-political’. Why not study *social* and *political* organizations separately? Do they mean same thing as socio-political organizations? Why at all do we should study these organizations?

As you know all aspects of life in a traditional tribal community are interconnected. There are organizations which predominantly display characteristics of both social and political organizations. It will not be useful to study such organizations from either social or political points of view. You will learn that traditional political organizations are based on kinship relations and as you know, kinship is an institutional social organization. Therefore, we study **socio-political organizations**, not social or political organizations separately. The study of this type is known as interdisciplinary study, the approach to study two aspects of life as they exist interconnected.

Recent studies recognise that each discipline has linkages with a number of disciplines. The approach to study such linkages between two disciplines is interdisciplinary and among three or more disciplines is multi-disciplinary.

The essence of a political organization is authority, the power to take decision. The authority does not exist independent of social or religious norms of tribal communities. For example, a family is a social organization where the authority may lie in father (male head) or mother (female head). In the family, if father has the authority it is a patriarchal family; if the mother has the authority it is matriarchal family. The family, whether patriarchal or matriarchal, display features of both social (family) and political (authority) aspects of life. However, we will discuss socio-political organizations under *two separate sections* on the basis of the feature which is crucial. We will include such organizations in which social relations are crucially significant under social organization section. Similarly, organizations with focus on political aspect of life will be discussed under the section of political organizations.

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We will classify **social organizations** under three types: (i) village, (ii) kinship and non-kinship organizations, and (iii) kinship based institutional social organizations.

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You will learn that a tribal social organization is based on both kinship and non-kinship relations. In kinship relations members of a tribe have a common ancestry through blood relations or marriage relations. But in non-kinship relations type of social organization members have different ancestral origin with no inter-organizational marriage relations. A tribal organization also may have features of both. You will study that the Sherdukpen tribe has two social divisions *Thong* and *Chao*, not related in kinship bonds at the beginning. Similarly, the Koro and Hrusso sub-tribes of the Aka tribe of Arunachal Pradesh are not kinship based. The kinship based social organizations namely, family clan, sub-tribe, etc. are based on the foundation of institutional social organization like marriage. You will learn that family as a social organization may be monogamous or polygamous depending on marriage practices.

Needless to say, you will learn social organizations like family, lineage, clan, etc. and related institutional organizations like kinship and marriage.

Under the section **political organizations** you will study organizations with reference to classification of societies on the basis of authority and supernatural means of punishment. In many tribal communities a few persons derive their authority from community's faiths and beliefs of supernatural connection with 'crime and punishment'. So oath and ordeal have been discussed within political organization. In particular, you will study various traditional tribal councils and family types on the basis of authority along with a few individual cases.

Let us come to the third question: why to study social organizations?

You are aware that the term society is an abstract concept; it is not visible by itself. But it manifests through its various institutions and organizations. In other words, the study of its institutions and organizations make the concept of society meaningful and comprehensive.

Charon (1986) informs us that social organization basically refers to patterns of social interactions. It is society specific and precisely includes how people interact, the kinship systems they use, the marriage, pattern of residence, division of work, who has access to specific resources and knowledge, the strategy of social ranking and so on. There are different approaches to an understanding of social organization. Some scholars have used linguistic and cultural affiliation of tribes made up of bands (for predominantly mobile groups) or villages. The others have based their study on kinship and included nuclear families, clans, phratries and moieties. A society is also organised on political basis.

2.3 TRIBAL VILLAGE

A tribal village is normally a social organization. It displays a network of interconnectedness of relations among kinship groups and non-kin families. It also reflects all aspects of life as instituted in social, economic and political organizations. This means village as a social organization does not reflect social dimensions alone. It is a cultural space, an identity marker, an economic organization and a frame of governance. We can very well say that the tribal village is also a socio-political organization in terms of interconnectedness of its social and political functions.

A tribal village is a **microcosm** of tribal society. Social organization of families, for example, in the village is a part of the family organization of the tribe spread in many villages. The institutions in a village, to cite another example, constitute a part in the domain of such institutions of the tribe. When we say 'tribal village' it logically follows that 'tribal village' is a category by itself within the tribe. Though tribe is a social category the tribes are heterogeneous groups across region, religion, race, level of development and language affinity. Similar is the case with tribal villages. The notions of village, for example, for pastoralist tribes like Brokpas, Bhutias, Gaddis; and hunting gathering tribes like Birhor and Sulungs (Puroiks) are different. Further, the village has a different notion for permanent cultivating tribes like Oraons, Khamptis, and the like.

By now you must have understood that a tribal village gives the idea of a social category and a territorial space.

Village as Social identity: A sense of identity goes with a person having belonged to a particular village. That is why the villagers of a particular village are identified with certain attributes and characteristics. A village may also feel superior to other villages of the same clan because of its specific tradition. The people of Riga, the cradle of the Adi Minyong villages, display a sense of superiority in the process of interaction with other Minyongs. Interior Nyishis similarly show a sense of superiority because they believe their tradition is not polluted. The people of Hong Village of the Apatanis are called *Subu Hangu*, meaning Mithun (*bos frontalis*) Hong, by people of other Apatani villages. According to one version, the Hong people had a large number of *mithuns* and so, people from other villages call them Mithun Hong. There is another version which tells that the people of Hong are fond of eating like a *mithun*. The people of Bula Village are known as *Bula tuda yari betu*, meaning short tempered. So a village carries with it an identity as perceived by other villagers.

You can understand the significance of village as a social identity from the writings of N. Talitemjen Jamir and A. Lanunungsang about the Ao society. They write:

In Ao society, they do ask *koyimer*, 'whose village' /*shir chir*, 'whose son'? *kechi kidong*? Which clan? The identity of a person is known better through these answers that start from the village and clan hold followed by tribe's name. Generally, the character of a person is well read even by the name 'village' in Ao society because every village has peculiar traits of its own...

Territorial and social dimensions of villages: Tribal villages differ in terms of territorial occupation with reference to number of households. They also differ in terms of number of clans settled within the territory and marriage norms. You will find Ao villages in Nagaland with several hundred households, whereas a Mishmi village in the hills may consist of one long house. Usually, the villages of any tribe in the plains are large in size while those in the hills are comparatively small.

The villages may be a *clan based village* or a *multi-clan village*. Traditional villages of the Nyishi and Galo are clan based, though in recent years some of them have become multi-clan. On the other hand, the Khamptis, Adis, etc. live in multi-clan villages. Multi-clan villages are often endogamous. The clan based villages are mostly exogamous; the village exogamy binds all men and women born in the same village in the same generation as brothers and sisters. So marriage is an important factor of interaction with other villages. Even marriage takes place

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between two neighbouring tribes. Needless to say, tribe exogamy is not universal. We have examples of the Akas and the Mijis tribes of Arunachal Pradesh who have marital relations between them from time immemorial.

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You will also find some cases of non-tribal families living in tribal villages. These villages have a greater social sphere beyond tribe. Sachidanada (1968) reports that in tribal villages of undivided Bihar some households belonged to a few Hindu castes. But they were found not making their influence felt and did not keep themselves apart as distinct entities. As a result, separate caste Panchayats did not operate for them in the tribal villages where they lived.

Villages of some tribes have social organizations in the pattern of satellite settlements as among the Adi Padams of Damro. In satellite settlements which are clan based; the Padams use the term *Dolung* not only for the clan settlement but also for the village itself. So Damro is Damro *Dolung* and the satellite settlement, for example of the Pertin clan, is Pertin *Dolung*. The Ho villages in Jharkhand, however, have a number of satellite settlements called *tola*.

Village as a shifting social organization: Usually the concept of village is associated with settled life, precisely with practices of agriculture - settled, shifting and wet rice cultivation. But the hunter-gatherers like Bonda, Birhor also have a village life. N. Patnaik (1987) informs us that the nomadic Birhors distinguish three seasons, namely rainy, winter and summer and in each season they change their *tanda* (settlement/village). The location of a *tanda* depends on livelihood concerns. For example, in rainy season the *tanda* is located in a place which is close to the market centre and also to the forest covered mountains. The *tanda* is a multi-clan structure with a distinct small hut for each clan to house clan deity. The *kumbha* (house) is leaf thatched conical structure for living of individual families, though there are two other *kumbhas*, *dhingla*-dormitory of unmarried boys and *kudi ada* - dormitory of unmarried girls in each *tanda*.

Professor A. C. Bhagabati, former Vice Chancellor of the then Arunachal University often narrates the replica of Shedukpen villages when they migrated to the plains of Assam in winters during colonial days. Therefore, you can say that some tribal villages are shifting in nature.

Interacting Tribal Villages: Tribal villages in India do not present the picture of an isolate. In the area of social relations, the village is closely connected with other villages of the same tribe or of other neighbouring tribes. In central India, tribal people of different villages used to meet in weekly markets. In the Northeast India, tribes from different villages and different communities used to visit the trade fairs of Sadiya and Udalguri. The Adis, Mishmis and Khamptis were important among the visitors to Sadiya fair.

Villages of a tribe interact not only through marriage relations, but many of them also interact through political institutions.

For example, tribes like Adi, Khasi, Jaunsar Bawar, Oraon, Gond Bhils and Jaintia have a structure comprising three different levels. The Jaintia, for example, had tribe level chief (*Siem*) at the top, provincial governors (*Dollois*) in the middle at the level of *Raids* i.e., group of villages and village head (*Wahehchanong*) at the village level. In some tribes there is chieftdom. The point is that in such systems the village does not exist as an isolate. In chieftaincy vertical interaction or satellite interaction of villages with the chief takes place. You can also come across a group

of villages under a territorial chief as is the case among the Noctes. When there is a tribe level chief like that of the Khamptis the issue of village as an isolate does not arise. A Khampti village is a well-defined structural unity with its *Chauman*, the village head, but linked to the tribe level chiefdom. In contemporary tribal villages both traditional and Panchayati Raj institutions exist side by side and thus, the village has become a part of the institutional arrangement of the nation and the provincial state. Not only in the present times, but also in earlier periods as well; a tribal village displayed the characteristic of *an extension* beyond its territorial and social boundary.

Organization of Institutions of socialisation: There are distinct organizations in the villages of some tribes which play a crucial role in the process of socialisation. In fact, it is not only significant in socialising process, it also teaches cultural norms. These institutions are better called social cultural institutions than dormitories. You will find such institutions among the Oraons which is called *dhumkuria*, among Konyaks called *murung* and among Ao Nagas which is called *arju*. Verrier Elwin's excellent study on Muria Gonds' *ghotul* (dormitory) presents its functions that relates to different aspects of social life. Among the Wanchos, the *paa*, (dormitory) is such an institution. It is divided along the Chief and commoner line and is both sacred and a secular place. The *mushup/dere* (dormitory) of the Adis is a cultural space where both sacred and secular activities take place.

2.4 TRIBAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

You already know that social organizations are kinship or non-kinship based. Information on formation of a tribe by non-kinship groups for marriage purpose is not available yet. But within the tribe, even having a common ancestry, marriage rules such as endogamy and exogamy among the groups culturally evolve.

A tribe is also formed by members genealogically unrelated. The *Man* community in Meghalaya is formed by Burmese soldiers who settled in India and married native women. The Siddis of Gujarat are of African origin, who came as porters of Portuguese but settled as a community. The community formation is not obviously based on the consideration of genealogical relations. Similarly, the Khampti tribe is not based on blood relations. Members of the constituent clans migrated under the leadership of a chief. The members were not genealogically related to the chief which formed a distinct clan namely *Namchum*, in India. The Sherdukpen have two social divisions, namely *Thong* and *Chao*. The clans in the *Thong* group are the descendants of the chief who migrated and established the community. On the other hand, the clans in the *Chao* group are formed by the descendants of the people who came along the *Thong*. Though the Sherdukpen tribe is not kinship based, the clans are. In a tribe there may be both kinship based and non-kinship based organizations.

We normally discuss social organizations of a tribe as they exist in different segments like family, lineage, etc., but arranged in ascending order, i.e. vertically. The individual is the base of any society. But family is the segment at the bottom and the tribe at the top of the arrangement order of organizations. In between you may find lineage, sub-clan, clan, sub-tribe, phratry, and moiety. However, all tribes do not have the same sequence of the Segmentary organizations.

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Check Your Progress

1. Choose the correct answer:
 - (a) A tribal village is a social/religious organization in a territorial space.
 - (b) A village ensures a sense of identity/conflict among its members.
 - (c) Tanda is a permanent/temporary settlement of the nomadic Birhors.
 - (d) In India the village is an isolate/extension.
 - (e) Your village is your social/religious identity.
 - (f) The essence of political organizations lie in power/oratory skill to take decision.
 - (g) The compound word 'socio-political' points to interdisciplinary/separate branch of knowledge.

2.4.1 Schema of Social Organizations

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As you know units/segments of organizations vary in tribes. All the units are not present in every tribe. Obviously, the scheme varies depending on the number of units in a tribe. On the basis of study of different tribes, scholars have presented different schemes found in social organizations of tribes in India.

T. C. Das (1953) presents seven schemes of social organizations existing among tribes of India. Each scheme is based on the number of units in social organizations of a tribe. According to him, you will find any one of the following schemes of social organization in a tribe:

1. Family → Local Group → Tribe
2. Family → Clan → Tribe
3. Family → Moiety → Tribe
4. Family → Clan → Phratry → Tribe
5. Family → Clan → Phratry → Moiety → Tribe
6. Family → Clan → Sub-tribe → Tribe
7. Family → Sub-clan → Orthogamous clan → tribe

S. C. Dube (1971) on the other hand, presents a general scheme such as Family → Clan → Phratry → Tribe. According to him social organizations of a tribe in India include four units or segments. The units are families formed by individuals, clans or local groups formed by families, phratries formed by clans and tribe formed by phratries and in some cases by clans.

Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have advanced the scheme in a more elaborated way. They have listed eight common schemes found among the tribes in India. They have presented the schemes *from tribe/tribal groups to individual* unlike Das's scheme of *family to tribe*. The schemes based on the number of units in a tribe's social organization are as follows:

1. Tribal groups → Tribe → Sub-Tribe → Phratry → Clan → Family → Individual
2. Tribal groups → Tribe → Moiety → Phratry → Clan → Sub-Clan → Lineage → Family → Individual
3. Tribal groups → Tribe → Territorial group → Social class → Clan → Lineage → Sub-lineage → Family → Individual
4. Tribe → Sub-tribe → Clan → Lineage → Family → Individual
5. Tribe → Territorial group → Clan → Sub-Clan or Lineage group → Lineage → Family → Individual
6. Tribe → Clan → Lineage → Family → Individual
7. Tribe → Local group → Lineage → Family → Individual
8. Tribe → Clan → Family → Individual

2.4.2 Kinship-Based Social Organizations

We have not distinguished between social organizations based on blood relations and marriage relations. But you will find a connection between the two in following discussions. Sometimes you will find a common designation for a group of tribals. This grouping is hardly based on kinship relations. Nevertheless, they exist in the scheme of tribal social organizations.

Tribal group: Designations like Naga, Gond, Bill, Gadaba, etc. are common name of a group of tribes; they do not refer to a single tribe. Such designations are generic names. For example, Naga is the generic name for tribes like Ao, Angami, Konyak, Rengma, Sema, etc. Similarly, Bhil is the generic or group name for tribes like Bhil Garasia, Dholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, Dungri Garasia, Mewasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Tadvi Bhil, Bhagalia, Bhilala, etc.

Tribe: As you know, tribe is a social group/social category that includes other units of organizations. This organization is common in all tribal communities. In evolutionary sense, it is the second intermediate stage in social evolution from band to state. In this sense also, a tribe is a social formation. However, the tribe as a social organization displays some characteristics that situate it as a distinct category. You have defined a tribe and learnt its characteristics in Unit-I of this paper entitled *Tribes, Habitats and Characteristics*. The important point which you have to keep in mind is that *tribe* is the apex social organization in the scheme based on kinship and non-kinship relations.

Sub-tribe and territorial group: We have discussed about the Noctes of Arunachal Pradesh. The Noctes have territorial divisions, Borduria and Namseng noctes. The Nocte villages are grouped under the Chief of Borduria or the Chief of Namseng or other Chiefs. Accordingly, they are designated as Borduria Noctes or Namseng Noctes. These divisions are sub-tribes of the Noctes. The Monpas have also been territorially divided into Dirang Monpa, Tawang Monpa and Kalektang Monpa. In this sense, the Monpa has three sub-tribes. Ordinarily, a sub-tribe is a division of the tribe identified on the basis of economy or ecology or geographical isolation. A tribe may have two or more sub-tribes. The Korwas of Palamau, for example, has two divisions based on geographical isolation. The two divisions are Hill Korwas and Plain Korwas. These groups are also called as territorial groups when culturally or economically much difference is not found. Nocte sub-tribes, Aka sub-tribes, Monpa sub-tribes could be good examples of territorial groups.

Moiety: When a society is divided only into two halves, each half is called a moiety or dual organization. Thus, a moiety is in simple terms a half tribe. Each moiety consists of several phratries, clans and lineages. A Moiety is different from sub-tribe in the sense that in sub-tribe territorial factor is the basis while in moiety it is social factor. There is often a sense of superiority and inferiority feeling between two moieties of a tribe. Moiety organization is normally endogamous. But examples of exogamous moieties are also found. In traditional Minyoun group of the present Adi tribe the society was divided into Kuri and Kuming moieties. The social division of the Apatanis into *Gyuchi* and *Gyutii* presents the features of moiety organizations.

Social class: The Tharus living in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh have two social divisions distinguished by the use of titles such as *Rana Thakur* and *Thakur*. In the social hierarchy the former enjoys a higher status than the latter. You also know the Thong and *Chao* divisions of the Sherdukpen. These are two social classes. Similarly, the Khamptis have three social divisions namely *Phanchau* (royal families), *Paklung* (commoners) and *Phan-e-on* (other than the two groups). Often the line of division of a tribe as moiety or social class is overlapping. However, a moiety may have kinship relations from the beginning while a social class, with high and low status, may not have such relations.

Phratry: It is larger than clan, because such a kin group includes various clans. It is a combination of brother clans. It is the immediate higher grouping of clans in

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the scheme of tribal social organizations, but a lower grouping than moiety and social class. All the tribes may not have this organization. However, these organizations are common in many tribes of the Northeast India. You will find phratry organization, for example among the Rabhas. In the community, a *bar* is clan equivalent. Two or more *bars* unite to form an organization called *hur*, which is a phratry equivalent. You will also find four phratries, such as *yerwen saga*, *sarwen saga*, *siwen saga* and *nalwen saga*, among the Raj Gonds who mainly live in Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Clan: A clan is a kin group that consists of members who are the unilineal descendants of a common ancestor whose identity is forgotten and therefore fictitious. A clan is a large kin group than lineage, and includes members belonging to many generations and also many lineages. A clan is distinguished from a lineage in that a clan merely claims common ancestry; a lineage on the other hand traces its origin from a common progenitor. A clan may have several lineages.

Majumdar and Madan (1970) consider *sibs* as clans. According to them, a *sib* or a clan is the combination of a few lineages and descent ultimately traced to a mythical ancestor who may be human, human like, animal, plant or even inanimate. The clan of a tribe is an exogenous social group and regards marriages among their members as incest. It is formed by the members who hold the view of descent from a common ancestor, possession of a common totem or habitation of a common territory.

The clans among Indian tribes can be a totemic clan, a genealogical or territorial clan, or a clan based on *rishis*. The Santal, Bill, Munda, Ho, etc. have totemic clans. As K. K. Misa (1987) notes, the Hos have 90 clans with totems. The totem of Purti clan (*kili*) is crocodile, of Hasda wild goose, of Tiu jackal, and of Hembram clan the totem is a tree bearing berries. The Gonds have clans whose members believe *rishis* like Bashistha, Kashyap as ancestors. The clans of Arunachal tribes are mostly genealogical in their claim of ancestry. However, some of the Khampti clans are based on habitation in a common territory. The group that inhabited upper course of the river are designated as Mannow and that inhabited the lower course are designated as Mantaw. However, the Mannow and the Mantaw combine together to form an exogamous group.

Sub-clan: A sub-clan is a part of the clan. Among the Hos for example, the Purti clan has seven sub-clans. Majumdar and Madan (1970) state that the division of a clan into sub-clans is the result of either migration or adoption to new cultural traits or both by different sections of the clan. The Parmer clan of the Bhils have sub-clans like Dhararya, Devodia, Pipria, etc. based on the places of their habitation such as Dhar, Devod, Pipre, etc.

Lineage: You will find a number of families (of ego generation) related because these families are formed by brothers born to a father. In the generation of the 'father', i.e. the second generation, there may be families of his brothers. In third generation, i.e. grandfather's generation, there may be families of his brothers. In the fourth generation, i.e. great grandfather's generation there also may be families of grandfather's brothers. In the fourth generation, i.e. great-great grandfather's generation, he may be the single person. So all the families from great-great grandfather to the families of first (ego) generation form one group in terms of blood relations and recognise him as a common ancestor. This group is called a lineage. A lineage is, therefore, a kin group that consists of members who are the unilineal descendants of a common ancestor whose identity can be traced. The lineage is also called unilineal descent group. The lineage can be patrilineal

or matrilineal depending on whether the descent is traced from a male or female ancestor (Firth, 1956). Generally, members of five to six generations are included in a lineage. In this regard Lowie (1969) states that 'the lineage is made up exclusively of provable blood relatives, i.e., all members are demonstrably descended from a common ancestor or ancestress'.

Sub-lineage: It is a subordinate division of the lineage. When the population grows the group who believe in the same lineage settle in different locations. The families of each location form a sub-lineage. Nath (1960) states that the Bhils of western India live in a few villages; the families in these villages believe in the single lineage group with a depth and extension of five to six generations. The families who claim descent from Kadla are found living in four villages. The families of each village that belong to different generations form sub-lineage groups as they feel that they all form a single lineage of families descended from Kadla.

Family & Individual: You already know that family is the basic social unit in the scheme of social organization. However, an organization is formed by individuals, and therefore, an individual seems to be the basic element in social formation. An individual, on the other hand, is not a social organization by itself. You have learnt from the definitions of social organization that a social organization always begins with a group and therefore, family is the first basic group in the scheme of social organizations.

By now you have learnt that individuals form the smallest group such as family or household. Families of five to six generations combine together to form lineages; lineages form sub-clans or sub-local groups; sub-clans form clans or village or local groups; clans form phratries or territorial groups; phratries forms moieties or sub-tribes; and finally sub-tribes form a tribe.

With the growth of population, the lineage may grow into a clan and a clan into a phratry and so on. So, study of social organizations of a tribe is a continuous process. However, once a tribe is identified and recorded, it and its organizations remain static in spite of the fact that many internal dynamics change over the years.

2.4.3 Non-kinship Based Social Organizations

We have given the example of non-kin based social organizations of a tribe when two organizations do not have kinship relations, such as *Thong* and *Chao* of the Sherdukpen. In course of time there may emerge a kinship bond in terms of marriage relations.

In addition to this type of non-kinship organizations Indian tribes also have another such organization in the form of age-grades and age-sets. The age-based groups among the tribes are termed as age-grades by the anthropologists. For example, in the youth dormitories of the Oraon of Jharkhand, known as *Tur*, there used to be three grades of members: *Puna Jokhar* or novices entering at the age of 11 or 12, *Majh Turia Jokhar* or the middle class members, and *Koha Jokhar* or the oldest members. While the first two age-grades are of three years, duration each the last grade continues until the member is married, and sometimes until he has a child. Among the Padams of Arunachal Pradesh, *musup* is a male institution similar to youth dormitory in other tribes to some extent. The members in a *musup* are graded as *Musup ko*, *Minil*, *Ruutum* and *Pator Mijing*.

In many tribal societies of India, social groupings are made on the basis of gender also. This differentiation is more visible in the tribal youth dormitories.

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Among the Oraon of Jharkhand and the Juang of Odisha, the youth dormitories were divided on gender lines, which means that there used to be separate dormitories for unmarried boys and unmarried girls. Among the Padams of Arunachal Pradesh, there is *musup* and *raseng* for boys and girls respectively. Among Ao Nagas *Ariju* existed for boys and *Tsiiki* for girls. Similarly, the girl's equivalent of the boys' dormitory (*pa*) among the Wanchos is called *haam*. Of course, many of these dormitories are now extinct among the tribes of India.

Some cases: You know that tribes in India have different schemes of social organization. Here you will find the difference with reference to three tribal communities.

Rengma Naga: The Rengma Naga comes under the generic Naga tribe. The tribe is territorially divided into the Eastern Rengmas and the Western Rengmas. J. P. Mills writes that the Western Rengmas are further divided into six exogamous groups or phratries. Each of these six phratries is further divided into a number of clans. The Eastern Rengmas have no such phratries, but are divided into three clans. The clans have sub-clans, which are divided into families and families into individuals.

Kondh: The Kondhs in Odisha are territorially divided into Kutia Kondhs, Desia Kondhs and Dongria Kondhs, which are the sub-tribes of the main tribe. Each sub-tribe is further divided into many exogamous totemic clans, constituted by a number of families. Each family is again constituted by many individuals.

Toda: The Toda tribe is endogamous in nature. It is divided into two exclusively endogamous dual organizations i.e. moieties. The higher and the major moiety is known as *Tarthar* while the lower one is *Teivali*. Each moiety is divided into a number of exogamous, totemic and patrilineal clans. A *Tarthar* comprises of twelve clans, whereas a *Teivali* consists of only six. Each clan is territorial in nature and possesses a number of villages. Further, each has two types of sub-clan divisions. A sub-clan is divided into a number of families. A Toda family is based on fraternal polyandry. A sharp division of labour is observed in a Toda household which is based on sex. The family consists of individuals.

The scheme of social organizations of the above three tribes is given below:

Rengma Raga	Kondh	Toda
The generic tribe (Naga, for example)	Tribe (Kondh)	Tribe (Toda)
⇓	⇓	⇓
Tribe (Rengma, for example; others could be Ao, Angami, etc.)	Sub-tribe (e.g. Dongria)	Moiety (Tarthar & Teivali)
⇓	⇓	⇓
Territorial group	Clan	Clan
⇓	⇓	⇓
Phratry	Family	Sub-clan
⇓	⇓	⇓
Clan (Khinzonyu/Apungza, etc. for example)	Individual	Family
⇓		⇓
Sub-clan (Tslanyu, for example)		Individual
⇓		
Family		
⇓		
Individual		

2.5 INSTITUTIONAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kinship, marriage and family are institutional social organizations. These institutions are established relations that govern the social organizations in tribes. A discussion of these institutions will help you to understand the social organizations we have already discussed. We will study these institutions from organizational point of view.

2.5.1 Kinship

Kinship is a social institution. It includes the classification of relatives, the formation of kin groups and rules of marriage. Rodney Needham's (1960,1971) definition of kinship is important in this regard. He defines kinship as following:

The study of kinship is the investigation of how social ties of descent and marriage are established, elaborated, fabricated, modified, forgotten, suppressed; how these ties are related to other manifestations of personal and social action.

So, kinship is the recognition of the ties with other human beings by descent, marriage or adoption. The ties need to be expressed in words, by using different terminologies. For example, children born to same set of parents are recognised through the uses of terms like brothers or sisters. There are practices, verbal or non-verbal, which are either avoidance between relations or a kind of nearness like joking relations. Such practices are kinship usages in day to day life.

As you know, kinship includes the classification of relatives, the formation of kin groups and aspects of marriage. Marriage is also associated with residence rules, meaning the settlement practice of married couples among the relatives. Scholars who study kin groups are called *descent theorists* and those emphasise on relations of groups through marriage are called *alliance theorists*.

You will learn the following aspects of kinship:

- Types of kin
- Rules of residence
- Descent
- Kinship terminology
- Kinship usages

Types of kin

Kin is of several kinds. The kinds of kinship are based on different criteria. We shall discuss them as follows:

1. **Blood and Marriage:** Kin can be through blood or social (marriage) relations. The kin groups believed to have been formed biologically related to blood are *consanguineous kin* while those formed through marriage alliance are called *affinal kin*. The bond between parents and children, and that between children of the same parents is *consanguineous* in nature. On the other hand, there is a bond between spouses and their relatives as a result of marital relationship which is called *affinal kinship*.
2. **Nearness of members:** On the basis of the nearness of members in the group and beyond, the kin can be *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary kin*
 - (a) A **primary** kin is a person who is directly related to the ego either through blood or through marriage alliance. One's father is one's primary kin

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Check Your Progress

2. Fill in the blanks selecting the suitable answer from the bracket:
 - (a) Kinship is __ (institutional/ political) organization.
 - (b) The ancestor of a lineage is __ (real/fictitious).
 - (c) A dormitory is an institution of __ (socialization/ orphans).
 - (d) My maternal uncle is an example of __ (kinship/ non-kinship) relations.
 - (e) A tribal village is a __ (microcosm/ reflection) of tribal society.
 - (f) Bachelor's dormitory is a __ (kinship/ non-kinship) organization.

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through blood (primary *consanguineous* kin) and while one's wife is one's primary *affinal* kin.

(b) A **secondary** kin is a person related to ego through his/her primary kin. For example, the brother of ego's father is ego's secondary kin as it is through blood relation. The brother of ego's father is related to ego through his/her father who is a primary kin. The step mother of ego is his/her secondary *affinal* kin; the relation is through marriage alliance of ego's father, the primary kin.

(c) A **tertiary kin** is the primary kin of the secondary kin or secondary kin of the primary kin. We know that the brother of ego's father (uncle) is ego's secondary kin. Ego's aunt from the marriage alliance with ego's father's brother (uncle) is an example of tertiary kin.

3. **Direct and Indirect relationship:** On the basis of direct and indirect relationship the kin can be *lineal* or *collateral*.

(i) **Lineal** kins are those persons who are related to each other directly through descent, such as father, father's father, son and son's son. On the other hand, **Collateral** kins are persons who are related to each other indirectly through the mediation of another relative such as father's brother, mother's sister and so on.

(ii) **Real and Fictive:** Kinship can also be *real* or *fictive*. The distinction between the two, however, has the notion of 'blood group'.

The **real** kin members are born out of a biological relationship. The children of the same set of parents are real kin. Even a collateral kin like father's brother is a real kin. So a person, whose descent is either patrilineal or matrilineal, belongs to the group of real kin. In some societies social recognition of a father gives the status of real kin. For example, an adopted child is treated everywhere as if one's own biologically produced off spring.

Fictive kinship entails relationship which are quite like real kinship ones in some way. These relationships often have the same emotional and obligatory force as those between blood relatives. However, the relationship does not fulfil the requirements of the real kinship. The metaphorical use of kinship terms such as 'sisters' in the feminist movements or 'fathers' for priests are examples of fictive kinship.

Rules of Residence

You will understand nature of organization of some family types on the basis rules of residence. The types of family on the basis of these rules are as follows:

1. **Patrilocal residence:** When married couple resides in or near the parental home of the bridegroom it is called patrilocal residence or *virilocality*. Tribes such as Oraon, Adi, Nyishi, Kharia and Ho are patrilocal.
2. **Matrilocal residence:** This system is the opposite of the patrilocal residence. In the system of matrilocal residence married couple resides in the parental home of the bride. This type of residence is also called as *uxorilocality*. The Khasis of Meghalaya have matrilocal residences.
3. **Bilocal residence:** This system of residence permits the married couple to reside in or near the house of parents of either of the spouse.

4. ***Matri-Patrilocal residence:*** This is a system of residence in between the matrilineal and patrilineal types. It is a special combination of matrilineal and patrilineal residences that alternate periodically throughout the married life of a couple.
5. ***Avunculocal residence:*** This system requires the married couple to live with bridegroom's maternal uncle. This rule invariably involves an initial period of matrilineal residence when the baby stays with its mother in his/her maternal uncle's home.
6. ***Neolocal residence:*** In the system the married couple establishes their own residence independent of the location of the parental home of either spouse. The residence can be located even at a considerable distance from both bride's and bridegroom's parental homes. Many of the highly industrialised societies follow this rule. Societies in which there is food shortage, as in the Tundra region, also adopt this rule for obvious economic reasons.

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Descent

On the basis of descent kinship relations can be unilineal or non-unilineal.

1. ***Unilineal Descent Systems:*** Unilineal descent systems recognise only one line of descent either along father's line or mother's line or along both father's and mother's line. The last one is called double descent. In addition to this, the descent can also be cognatic i.e. bilateral descents.
 - (a) ***Patrilineal:*** This is a descent in male line; group membership is determined by descent through father. This line of descent is also denoted by the term ***agnatic***. In this system of descent an individual is affiliated with a group of kin who are related to him/her through the father alone. Thus, in patrilineal systems, the children in each generation regardless of child's sex belong to the descent group of their father: their father, in turn, belongs to the descent group of his father and so on.
 - (b) ***Matrilineal:*** This is a descent along female line; particularly through mother and the system is denoted by the term ***uterine***. In this system of descent, the individual is affiliated with a group of kin who are related to him/her through the mother alone. Thus, in matrilineal systems, the children in each generation belong to the descent group of their mother; their mother, in turn, belongs to the descent group of her mother and so on. This system of descent does not necessarily imply that authority is in the hands of the mother or female; it only means that one traces membership in the group through female links.

Both patrilineal and matrilineal rules of descent are unilineal rules because an individual recognises descent through linkages with either males or females exclusively.
2. ***Unilineal Descent Groups:*** Unilineal descent groups in a tribe form into different groups beginning with a group of families called lineage. This group identity expands through clan, sub-clan, etc. till it merges into the greater identity that is tribe. You have already learnt these groups earlier.
3. ***Complex Unilineal Systems:*** In complex unilineal systems the descent is traced in varying directions. For example, the directions could be both patrilineal and matrilineal. We shall discuss the systems as follows:

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- (a) *Double descent*: In this system every one belongs to two lines of descents: one patrilineal and the other matrilineal. A double descent system is thus a discrete combination of unilineal affiliations.

In double-descent system both matri-group and patri-group are simultaneously operative. The Herero tribe of Namibia and the Yako tribe of Nigeria have double descent systems. Each Herero, for example, belongs both to an *oruzo* (patrilineal clan) and an *eanda* (matrilineal clan). We have not come across such a system among the tribes of India.

- (b) *Cognatic/Bilateral*: This is the opposite of double descent. In a fully cognatic society, there are no patrilineal or matrilineal groups. The kinship is determined on the basis of mother and father; the person is reckoned to be equally related to kinsfolk on either side of the family. This type of kinship is found especially among hunter gatherer tribal communities. The descent does not go beyond five to six generations. As descent is not traced directly, the bilateral kinship is known collateral kinship.

Kinship Usages

In every kin group, there are certain types of behaviour patterns which define relationships between relatives. The behaviour, verbal and non-verbal, constitutes kinship usages. Some of the universally found usages are as follows:

- (a) *Avoidance*: In many societies persons or groups who stand in a particular relationship avoid each other. As a mode of behaviour, avoidance always expresses respect. Although the prohibitions are binding on both, it is usually the duty of one party specifically to avoid the other, e.g. it is the duty of a man to avoid his wife's mother. The extent of avoidance varies from society to society. It may include such prohibitions as not eating from the same dish to not entering the other's village. Avoidance is universal phenomenon and exists in all known societies.

According to Frazer, the purpose of avoidance is to prevent such sexual intimacy as would amount to incest. Frazer's notion of avoidance is based on sexual intimacy between various kinds of relatives. Incest is technically a sexual act between individuals prohibited from engaging in such acts because of their relationship. All societies have incest prohibitions. In many tribal communities everyone is classified as 'kin'; there are categories of kin whom it is especially permissible to engage in sex and to marry. For example, in some communities, mother's brother's daughter is a potential bride and the ego can engage in sexual act, while in others this could lead to incest.

- (b) *Joking Relationship*: The reverse of the avoidance relationship is joking relationships. A joking relationship involves a particular combination of friendliness and antagonism between individuals or groups in certain social situations. In these situations, one individual or group is allowed to mock or ridicule the other which is not taken as offence. A. R. Radcliffe Brown in his *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* distinguished between symmetrical joking relationships where each party has the right to tease and asymmetrical relationships where only one party is so privileged.

The joking relationship may be indicative of potential sexual relationship and the marriage sphere. Such a relationship between a man and his wife's

younger sister or of a woman and his husband's younger brother is indicative of potential mates. They are in the marriage sphere.

The joking relationship may also occur between men or women of alternate generations, e.g. grandfather and grandson. There are instances where joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren lead to marriage between the two. Verrier Elwin also reported an instance from the Baiga community where a grandson married his own grandmother.

- (c) *Teknonymy*: Sir Edward Burnett Tylor had coined the term Teknonymy to describe the custom of naming parents after the birth of a child. In many tribal communities and in rural India the father and mother are called as the father and mother of his/her child. For example, a mother may be named 'mother of x'. Thus, Teknonymy is a term which covers both cases. This practice occurs in Khasi tribe of Meghalaya.
- (d) *Avunculate*: This term designates the special relationship existing in some societies between a man and his mother's brother i.e. the maternal uncle. If the maternal uncle comes first among all male relatives, then this kinship usage is called *Avunculate*, and the maternal uncle's authority as *avuncopotestality*. If nephews and nieces are brought up in their maternal uncle's family, the condition is referred to as *avunculocal* residence. This is a common usage in matrilineal communities.
- (e) *Amitate*: It is the relationship between a man and his father's sister. The sister is designated as *Amitate*.
- (f) *Couvade*: It is the practice which requires a husband to lead the life of an invalid along with his wife whenever she gives birth to a child. He refrains from active life, goes on sick diet and observes certain taboos. Such a practice has been reported among the Khasis and the Todas.

Kinship Terms

Human beings use different terms to designate kinsfolk. However, no language has terms for all biological relatives. For example, we do not have a term to designate, say the 10th ancestor of the 'father' of a man.

In the English language we speak of brothers and sisters, but, social scientists use the term *sibling* to designate brothers and sisters together. Other kin of the same generation besides brothers and sisters are designated as *cousins*. If we want to signify sex, then we specify as girl cousin or boy cousin. Similarly, if we want to specify the side of the family, we refer to as cousin on my father's side and so on. When we say *father* or *mother* we recognise sex. However, for other persons of the same generation we use *uncle* or *aunt* but do not recognise the side of the family except sex. Father's brother is as much an uncle as is mother's brother.

These are the relations for which we have designated terms. We have classified the relations into some categories. At the same time there are relations for each of whom we use single term. The two interrelated issues of designating kinsfolk have been conceptually distinguished by Morgan as classificatory and descriptive systems of kinship terms. The classificatory system designates several people, lineal as well as collateral, and often even affinal, by the same term. In other words, in this system two or more kin are grouped together and each group is assigned one single term. We have given the instance of uncle which is a classificatory term. A wide

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range of relations is expressed in one term. The classificatory terms refer more to relationship rather than to kin.

Opposite to classificatory terms there are descriptive terms which describe an exact relation directly. One may use this term to address and refer to a relation. For instance, the word father is a descriptive term. Descriptive terminology provides a specific kin term for each person. Rivers refers to a third *family system* of terms. Such terms refer to members of a single biological family individually.

The whole ensemble of kinship terms - classificatory, descriptive and family system—is referred to *Kinship Terminology* or *Relationship Terminology*.

In tribal communities the same term is used to address a wide number of relations of various generations. Among the Kukis, for example, the term *hepu* is used for father's father, mother's father, mother's brother, wife's father, mother's brother's son, wife's brother and for wife's brother's son. In the Angami community *shi* is used for elder brother, wife's elder sister, husband's elder brother, elder sister's husband, elder brother's wife, mother's brother's wife, and father's brother's wife. Clearly the same term is used even for members of opposite sexes.

2.5.2 Marriage

Marriage is the most fundamental of all social institutions. This institution is both culture universal and culture specific. This means the marriage institution exists in all the known cultures of the world, but there are variations of marriage rules, forms, modes of obtaining a bride or marriage rules from one culture to another.

As marriage is culture specific, it is difficult to get a universal definition which can adequately cover all types of human marriage despite the fact that marriage is also culture universal. As an important social institution, marriage has different implications in different cultures. That is why Edmund Leach (1961) argues that a universal definition of marriage is not possible. However, some eminent sociologists and social anthropologists who have studied different societies and tribes have tried to define marriage in their own ways. Some of the important definitions of marriage are mentioned below:

E. Westermarck in his *History of Human Marriage* (1921) says that the marriage is “a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognised by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it.”

Gillin and Gillin (1953) define marriage as a ‘socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation’.

Johnson (1970) defines marriage as ‘a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in community, to have children’.

R. H. Lowie (1969/1948,1933) remarks that marriage is ‘a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates.’ He further states, ‘Marriage denotes those unequivocally sanctioned unions which persist beyond sexual satisfaction and thus come to understand family life’.

Malinowski (1927) is of the opinion that marriage is “a contract for the production and maintenance of children.”

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Check Your Progress

3. Who is a primary kin?
4. What is the basis of affinal kinship?
5. What is incest?
6. Give an example of fictive kinship.
7. Name the kinship types on the basis of direct and indirect relations.
8. What are the three types of kinship relation according to Robert Redfield?
9. What are the levels in relation to which Raymond Firth attempted defining social organization?
10. What are the stages of evolution of societies?
11. What are the types of tribal society on the basis of the nature of political organization?

All these definitions of marriage make it quite clear that it is nothing but a socially and legally/customarily recognised union of one or more males with one or more females. These people, tied in marital relationship, play the roles of husband and wife in society. For them, the marriage is the means through which they satisfy their sexual appetite and it imposes on them mutual rights and obligations.

Forms of marriage

The forms of marriage simply give the idea of the number of marriage partners of one person from the opposite sex. Scholars have noticed following forms of marriage in tribal communities:

1. **Monogamy:** Monogamy is an important form of marriage. Under this form a male or a female cannot have more than one spouse at a time. During the life time of the husband, his wife cannot marry another man. Similarly, the husband also can not marry another woman while his wife is alive. Only death of a life-partner makes the acceptance of a second spouse possible. There is a wrong notion that tribal men marry many wives. But ethnographic studies show that monogamy prevails among the tribal people on a wide scale. The Kamar tribe of Madhya Pradesh and the Ho of Jharkhand, Barmans of Cachar in Assam for example, practise monogamy. Even in tribes labelled as polygynous, monogamy prevails on a large scale. The incidence of monogamy is noticed more in Adi, Khampti and Singpho communities of Arunachal Pradesh though polygyny is socially approved. Among the Hmars of the North Cachar Hills, Sonowal Kacharis of Dibrugarh, Jorhat, etc., Rengma Nagas of Karbi Anglong in Assam monogamy is the prevailing practice although polygyny has social approval.
2. **Polygamy:** It is the marriage practice in which one person marries two or more persons of opposite sex. In other words, polygamy permits a man to marry more than one woman and a woman to marry more than one man. The practice is fairly widespread all over the world. Murdock reports 78 per cent polygamous families in a sample of 250. This practice prevails in many tribal communities in India. Polygamy has two forms: polygyny and polyandry.
 - (a) **Polygyny:** In this form of marriage one man marries several women. In other words, under the system of polygyny a man is eligible to marry more than one woman. Polygyny, once again, is sub-divided into two types, namely, *sororal* polygyny and *non-sororal* polygyny. This type of marriage is prevalent among the tribes like Gond, Baiga, Lushai, Nyishi, etc. The Naga tribes also practise this form of marriage. The sororal polygyny is a form of marriage in which co-wives are sisters; the man marries to the sisters of first wife. The sorrorate marriage can be *junior sorrorate* or *senior sorrorate*. In the former case after the death of the wife a man can marry his deceased wife's younger sister. The Bodo Kacharis of Assam practise junior sorrorate but not the senior sorrorate marriage, i.e. on the event of death of one's wife, one cannot marry the elder sister (if unmarried then) of the deceased wife. On the contrary, non-sororal polygyny implies the marriage of a man to women who are not sisters to one another.

As a widower can marry the sister of the deceased wife, so also a widow can marry to the brother, younger or elder or both depending on the

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custom, of the deceased husband. This practice is known as *levirate* which can be either *junior levirate* or *senior levirate*. Junior levirate is prevalent among the Bodo-Kachari and Rengma Naga of Karbi Anglong in Assam where the younger brother can marry the wife of deceased elder brother. Marriage of one's wife (during life time of the husband) with the brothers also takes place in polyandrous communities like the Toda, Kota, Khasa, etc. This is also a form of levirate.

- (b) **Polyandry:** The system of polyandry allows a woman to marry two or more men. The practice of polyandry is rare these days. In some pre-literate communities, the practice is still prevalent. It is usually a marriage with two or more brothers. While discussing polyandry in India, K.M. Kapadia (1966) describes polyandry as 'a form of union in which a woman has more than one husband at a time or in which brothers share a wife or wives in common'. The word 'polyandry' has been derived from the Greek word 'polyandria' meaning thereby a woman having many husbands (poly = many; *aner, andres* = man). *Note and Queries on Anthropology* defines it as a custom 'by which a woman is permitted to have more than one husband at the same time.' Sangree and Levine (1980) refer the term 'polyandry' to any 'situation in which a woman is married to two or more men simultaneously' and assert that 'it does not apply to circumstances in which women are permitted or encouraged to engage in extra-marital liaisons of the sort which may be termed *cicibeism*, a form of polykoity.' Radcliff-Brown (1952) also feels that 'it is not sexual Intercourse that constitutes marriage' for 'marriage is a social arrangement by which a child is given a legitimate position in the society, determined by parenthood in the social sense.' According to him, marriage establishes a relationship between off springs and social father but not between off springs and biological father in communities where extra marital sexual relation is permitted.

The Khasas of Jaunsari Bawar, the Kotas of Nilgiris and the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh practise polyandry. Earlier writers put the Galo community as polyandrous. But with more empirical evidences, the Galo practice can at best be called *cecibeism*. Polyandry is of two types: *adelphic* or *fraternal polyandry* and *non-fraternal polyandry*.

- (i) **Fraternal Polyandry:** When a woman is shared by all the brothers living in a family, polyandry becomes fraternal. Her children are regarded as the children of their eldest brother. The Todas of Nilgiri Hills practise fraternal polyandry.
- (ii) **Non-fraternal Polyandry:** The non-fraternal polyandry is a form of marriage which allows a woman to marry many men as her husbands who are not necessarily brothers. This practice is not recorded among Indian tribes.

Marriage rules and regulations

After reading this section you will learn (i) Sphere of marriage (ii) Modes of obtaining a bride, (iii) The practice of settlement of marriage discords, and (iv) Marriage exchanges.

(i) Sphere of marriage

A person of a tribe cannot marry any person of opposite sex. There are prescribed rules which determine the sphere of marriage. In this sphere marriage cannot take place within a category and marriage is preferred within the other category. This can be explained with reference to the terms like endogamy, exogamy and preferential marriages.

Endogamy: This means that an individual *can marry* within a culturally defined social group in which s/he is a member. Usually a tribe is endogamous, as one is required to marry within the tribe one belongs to.

Exogamy: This means that an individual *cannot marry* within a culturally defined social group in which s/he is a member. In tribal communities the clans are exogamous. The family is exogamous as in no circumstances one can marry from one's family.

Preferential Marriages: Sororate and levirate are preferential marriages. We have explained about these two forms. There are different forms of preferential marriage like Uncle-niece marriage, and cousin marriage. Cousin marriage can be patrilineal (parallel cousin marriage) or matrilineal (cross cousin marriage). Cross cousins are children of *brothers and sisters*, while parallel cousins are children of *brothers or sisters*. In patrilineal marriage a man marries his father's sister's daughter (FZD), while in matrilineal marriage the first preference of a bride is mother's brother's daughter (MBD). The Bigas, Garos, Kadars, etc. practise FZD form of marriage, while the Gonds, Birhos, Mikirs, Todas, etc. practise MBD form.

(ii) Modes of obtaining bride

Tribal culture prescribes different approved ways of obtaining a bride. Interestingly, no single way is specific to any community. More than one way is adopted by every tribal community though one of the ways may be considered ideal. Every community considers negotiated marriage as ideal. Other important ways of obtaining a bride are as follows:

Marriage by Trial, Marriage by Capture, Marriage by Exchange, Marriage by Service, Marriage by Purchase, Marriage by Elopement, Marriage by Intrusion and Marriage by Probation.

(iii) Settlement of marriage discords

The marriage rules and regulations also extend to the settlement of marital discords like divorce. Normally, divorce is not so common in traditional tribal communities. However, this practice is not totally absent. The elders first try to reconcile between husband and wife. If the attempt fails divorce procedure is initiated. The clan or village council or mediator takes decision of the divorce. Marriage exchanges and sharing of children are also discussed.

(iv) Marriage exchanges

Marriage exchange plays a crucial role in tribal marriages. This practice is wrongly recorded as bride price. Exchanges during marriage take place on different grounds as bonding relations between two families. A few scholars are of the opinion that there is a future security concern in such exchanges. In case of divorce from husband's side the items brought by the wife is returned. The items are given from both bride

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Check Your Progress

12. Choose the correct answer:
- A man marrying the sister of wife is a practice of levirate/sororate type of marriage.
 - A clan is normally endogamous / exogamous.
 - Marriage is a social organization/ institutional organisation.
 - My paternal uncle (father's brother) is my primary/ secondary kin.
 - Unilineal kinship relations are based on descent/rules of residence.
 - My father's elder brother's daughter is my parallel/cross cousin.
 - Polyandry is a form of polygamy/ monogamy.
 - My aunt, the wife of my father's brother is my secondary/ tertiary kin.

and groom families. In majority of the tribes the items given by the groom's family have two components. One component is reciprocated and the other, given either in the name of the bride or her mother or father or to three of them, is not counted for reciprocation. For example, among the Kaman and Taraon Mishmis, one mithun (*bos frontalis*) is given to mother which is not reciprocated, for it is considered to be *rak-tantong* the 'price' of her breast milk. The same practice also prevails in Galo and Nyishi communities.

The items which are exchanged are bargained and agreed upon by both the sides. The bargain also takes place for the items which the bride would bring. Demand from the bride's family, bargaining, obligation to meet the demand, as it leads to the practice of marriage by service, and corresponding reciprocation are more indicative of the commitment to cultural prescriptions, social status, and relations than mere consideration of bride price. The strength of bargain from bride's family depends on its ability to reciprocate the items it would receive. In cross-cousin system of marriage the bargain takes place between the relatives and is a method of reinforcing the relations associated with the practice of preferential marriage.

2.5.3 Family

Family is a basic social organization. It is a universal institution found in every human society. The term family has been derived from the Roman word, 'Famulus' which implies servant. The servants, slaves and such other persons enjoyed the status of members of a household in ancient times. Therefore, the term family is derived from the word, 'Famulus'. In order to have a comprehensive idea of the concept of family it is essential to describe some of its important definitions given by eminent scholars. These definitions are mentioned here:

Ogburn and Nimkoff (1960) define family as 'a more or less durable association of husband and wife with or without children, or of a man or a woman alone with children.'

Maclver and Page (1974) in their book '*Society: An Introductory Analysis*' remark that family is 'a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children.'

According to Elliott and Merrill (1950), 'The family may be defined as the biological social unit composed of husband, wife and their children. The family may also be considered as a social institution, a socially approved organization for meeting definite human needs.'

According to Burgess and Locke (1963), family is 'a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption, constituting a single household, interacting and inter-communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating a common culture.'

Davis (1949) thinks that 'family is a group of persons whose relations to one another are based upon consanguinity and who are, therefore, kin to another.'

The American Bureau of Census, U.S.A. defines family as a group of two persons related by blood, marriage or adoption and residing together.

The family, in short, may be described as a group or an association of a body of persons such as father, mother and one or more children. In other words, it is

used to mean the body of persons such as parents and the children who live in one house under one head. Among all the above mentioned definitions, the definition given by Maclver and Page seems to be quite adequate.

Types of Family

As you have studied, family is a social organization. It is also an important institution of culturally prescribed relations. We will discuss the types of family to understand the organizational aspect. There are different criteria on the formation of families. These criteria are based on kinship and marriage. We will discuss them below:

1. **Family on the Basis of Family Circle:** The family circle/sphere is the basis of a family. The division of the family circle is as follows:
 - (a) *Conjugal or nuclear family:* The nuclear family is a type of family which develops around the nucleus of a man, his wife and their children. It is regarded as the most dominant form of family in the modern industrial societies.
 - (b) *The extended family:* The joint or, as it is called consanguineous family is organised on blood relationship and comprises a father, his children, brothers, sisters, etc. It is different from a nuclear family which is organised on the basis of marital ties between a husband and his wife. The members of the extended family belong to several generations. Usually, they live together under this family system. The bond binding the member of a joint family is very strong and therefore, is described as 'a nucleus of blood relations surrounded by a fringe of spouses.' There is another view which says that 'an extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of parent-child relationship i.e. by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of his parents.' The Nyshis and the Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh live in long houses which accommodate a number of nuclear families.

We call that household a joint family which has greater generation depth (i.e. three or more) than the nuclear family and the members of which are related to one another by property, income and the mutual rights and obligations.

I.P. Desai, 1956.

2. **Family based on residence:** You can learn the organization of a family by its residence of location. The nature of residence has led to the division of family into three kinds. They are as follows:
 - (a) *Matrilocal family:* The Matrilocal residence is the basis of the family to which the husband goes over and joins his wife after his marriage. Under this family system, the residence of the wife is all important and here the husband occupies a secondary position. The children live with the mother at her residence. The Khasi tribe in Meghalaya follows this system.
 - (b) *Patrilocal Family:* The Patrilocal family, as opposed to the Matrilocal one, is the residence where the wife leaving her father's home, joins her husband to live with him in his house permanently. The family system based on Patrilocal residence exists in most parts of the world.

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Check Your Progress

13. What do you mean by polygamy?
14. Name two polyandrous tribes in India.
15. Name a tribe which practises matrilineal system?
16. What is endogamy?

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3. Family based on marriage practices: On the basis of marriage practices the family is divided into following types:

- (a) *Polygynous Family:* A polygynous family is a type of family which allows a man to marry more than one wife simultaneously and to live with them and their children in the same house. This kind of family system exists among the Gond, Baiga, Nyishi and many other tribes in India.
- (b) *Polyandrous Family:* A polyandrous family is a kind of family system which allows a woman to marry more than one man. She lives with them and is shared by them or she lives with each of them by turns. A few tribal communities like the Toda, Khasa, etc. follow the system of polyandrous family.
- (c) *Monogamous Family:* A single husband and single wife living together with their unmarried children form a monogamous family. Under this family system a man can not have more than one wife at a time. The women also cannot have two husbands simultaneously. Today, the whole world has accepted it as an ideal type.

4. Family based on descent or ancestry: There is a kind of family which is based on descent or as we call it ancestry. The term descent is used to mean the accepted social relation between a person and his/her ancestors. This family is of two kinds, namely matrilineal and patrilineal. The description of the two types of family is given below:

- (a) *Matrilineal family:* In this family type, the mother or the female line is the basis of the lineage. The rights and privileges of the family go along female line. The Khasis and the Garos are examples of matrilineal family.
- (b) *Patrilineal family:* In this type of family the lineage is determined on the basis of male line. The father hands down his rights and privileges to his sons as per cultural norms. Among the Apatanis, according to traditional norms, the eldest son inherits the ancestral property.
- (c) *Bi-lineal family:* If the descent is reckoned both through the father's and mother's line it is known as the bi-lineal family.

5. Family based on authority: The various forms of family fall into two broad categories, the matriarchal or the maternal and the patriarchal or paternal family. This division is made on the basis of authority and power of the father or the mother in the family.

- (a) *Matriarchal family:* The matriarchal family is also known as the Mother-Right family or Maternal family and in such a family the power rests in the woman head. She owns all the property and rules the family. In her family the name, status, inheritance, etc. are transmitted matrilineally. The lines of descent are traced on the basis of matrilineal principles. The Khasi tribe of Meghalaya has adopted this system of family.
- (b) *Patriarchal family:* The patriarchal family has a number of forms. Its significance, great as it is, has been realised at all stages of human civilization. Essentially, it is a joint family ruled over by the eldest married male member. The 'patriarch' or father is the centre of power and authority and exercises his unchallengeable authority in the family.

Check Your Progress

17. What is a nuclear family?
18. Do the terms patrilocal and patrilineal carry the same meaning? Clarify.
19. What do you mean by a matriarchal family?
20. What does marriage by exchange mean?
21. What is MBD form of marriage?

There is no one to question his decision regarding the rights and property of his family. The ancestry of the patriarchal family is determined on patrilineal basis and the family is Patrilocal in respect of residence. Under this system, the eldest son succeeds to the position of his father after the latter's death.

2.6 POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Political organizations of Indian tribes are varied in nature. The evolutionary scheme of socio-political organizations from *band* to *tribe* to *chiefdom* and finally to *state* will not be of much help to understand the political organizations of tribes in the Indian context. Nevertheless, the scheme will be useful to understand the nature and scope of political organizations in pre-state communities like the tribal communities.

Therefore, at the outset we will briefly discuss the various stages of political organizations with reference to their evolutionary schemes. Then we will classify the political organizations of Indian tribes with examples of a few individual tribes. And finally, we will discuss the supernatural means of establishing evidence to find the culprit. As you know, power and authority are the underlying principles of a political organizations, hence, oath and ordeal by invoking supernatural power have some sort of connections with authority, for the supernatural means are pronounced and obeyed.

2.6.1 Political Organizations-Evolutionary Scheme

You have studied in unit I and also in this unit that [Marshall Sahlins (1961) and in Elman Service (1962)] advanced stages of social evolution which are also the four levels of political organizations: hunter-gatherer, tribe, chiefdom, and state. In India we do not have a state corresponding to a tribe. In other words, at tribe the level the state as defined by the evolutionists did not emerge among Indian tribes. But there are tribes like the Khampti, Jaintia, Gond, Bhumija who once took part in the process of state formation. Their jurisdictions were beyond their respective tribes.

Band: Birhors and other hunting gathering tribes like those in Andaman and Nicobar Islands are believed to have the band form of political organization. A band acts as a political unit and is autonomous in operations. Political decision making is generally informal and taken by the band head. The decisions mainly relate to shifting of camps or settling any dispute if any arises among the band members.

Tribe: In a tribe political organizations are informal and also include organizations based on age grades and sex. Normally the society does not have centralised authority. The entire society does not act as a unit. Organizations based on kinship groups rather provide basic framework of political organizations.

Chiefdom: This is the third stage of pre-state socio-political organization and is marked by emergence of a ruler. It displays some formal structure, because in some societies the position of chief is hereditary. Chiefdom usually has a council, for example *mukchum* of the Khamptis, which is headed by the chief. In the initial stages the chiefdoms were theocracies, with the ruler or the member of his family also serving as a high religious official. When the chief died the position was occupied by someone from a particular line of descent. In India we have the chieftainship form of society but these societies *are not a stage* after the tribe.

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Check Your Progress

22. State whether the following statements as True or False:
- A phratry is a dual organization. True/False
 - My maternal uncle is an affinal kin. True/False
 - A village is an isolate. True/False
 - Nomads do not have village. True/False
 - There is no social class in Indian tribes, so the tribes are egalitarian. True/False
 - A generic tribe is a kin-based tribe. True/False
 - The ancestor whose descendants form the clan is a historical figure. True/False
 - A tribe can have a non-kinship based social organization as its component. True/False
 - Socio-political organizations perform the dual function of both social and political aspects of life. True/False

2.6.2 Types in Indian Tribes

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A political organization is embodied with power and authority. This power and authority is distributed in various ways. It may lie on an individual or on a group of individuals. The power and authority along with the individual or individuals form political organizations. You will find these organizations at various levels, from family to tribe.

You have already learnt about the types of families such as matriarchal and patriarchal families based on authority in one of the previous sections and the head (male or female) who takes decision. Similarly, decision making capacity also lies at the level of the lineage and clan. However, from our present discussion you will learn political organization not from multi-functional social organization point of view, but with reference to specific organization like councils as decision makers.

In India, tribal communities are broadly classified on the basis of cephalous and acephalous characteristics of societies. Accordingly, you will find councils with centralised and without centralised authority. These councils may exist at the village level, at the level of territory or group of villages and at tribe level. However, all the tribes may not display a uniform scheme of political organizations.

In the centralised forms of political organizations you will find a chief, whose position is normally hereditary, as the head of the council. In case of the non-centralised forms you will find a range of organizations when authority lies with the council of members equally or in varied degrees, or on an arbiter or on a group of elders. You can also find members elected or selected to the council.

Among the Kaman Mihsms of Arunachala Pradesh, usually the clan or lineage head is the decision maker. In such communities, the role of arbiter is also important. The Gindu/Gindung (middleman, arbiter) in Nyishi and Tagin communities of Arunachal Pradesh has the important role to play in organising Nyele/ Dupam, a council of elders when the need arises. Even arbiter(s) can mediate between two disputing parties. In multi-clan villages with a sort of stratification the members of a higher social division (gerontocracy) form into the body politic. The *Buliang* of the Apatani or the *Jung* of the Sherdukpen can be taken as examples. Among the Adis, Jaintias and many central Indian tribes the councils exist at village, territory and often at tribe levels. You will also find an exception among the Todas who invite members from neighbouring tribes. In case of Sulungs (Puroiks), the Nyishi/Miji masters play the decisive role in settling the dispute. Sulungs are predominantly hunter-gatherers and subordinate to the neighbouring Nyishi and Miji tribes who are agriculturists.

We will present hereunder the political organization of a selected few individual tribes.

1. Parhaiya Political System

The *Parhaiyas* of Jharkhand have political organizations both at village and inter-village levels. The village level organization, called *Bhaiyari*, is presided by a hereditary headman called *Mahato* assisted by *Kahato*. The *Baiga*, the religious leader is an important member of the council. Besides, there are other 5-6 elderly and experienced people as members in the *Bhaiyari*. Usually the *Bhaiyari* is a lineage (*khut*) based organization. The inter-village council, called *Kara-Bhaiyari* or *Khut Bhaiyari* represents several villages. The head is called *Pradhan* and there are representatives from each *Bhaiyari* to this council.

Check Your Progress

23. State whether the following statements are true or false:
- In Matrilocal residence the mother is the head of the family. True/False
 - A band is a form of cephalous society. True/False
 - Sexual relation between persons of opposite sex within joking circle is incest. True/False
 - Levirate is related to widow marriage. True/False
 - Polygamy means one man marrying many women. True/False
 - In tribal marriages only the groom's family makes presentations to bride's family according to the demand of the later. True/False

The *Bhaiyari* deals with cases arising out of breach of social norms like adultery, divorce, sexual offence, marital conflict, etc. If the cases are of inter-village nature the *Kara-Bhaiyari* looks into it. Usually the Councils try to reconcile the disputing parties. But in cases of severe offence they impose fines depending on the nature, magnitude and gravity of the crime committed by the accused. In extreme case the accused is ex-communicated.

2. Monpa Village Council

The Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh have evolved a self-governing village institution to maintain law and order so that social, religious and economic activities are carried out smoothly. Tawang, the present district was traditionally divided into six regions, which were further sub-divided into *Tso* or *Ding*. Each *Tso* or *Ding* was more or less a distinct self-governing unit headed by a man called *Tso-Tsorgan*. He is usually elected by the influential members of the society. During the selection of a *Tso-Tsorgan* the knowledge of the individual in traditional conventions, customary laws, oratory skills, integrity, social status, ability to handle cases and experience are considered. Once he is selected, the meeting of the *Mangma* (totality of the inhabitants) is called upon for its approval. Although the *Mangma* is the supreme authority over the *Tsorgan*, it does not interfere in day to day affairs of the *Tso-Tsorgan*. Occasionally, when the opinion of the *Mangma* is required, the meeting of the *Mangma* is convened to decide the matter.

The *Tsorgan* can be from among the Lamas or from *Khraimi* (those who own taxable land). *Surmi/Naamtang*, those who do not own taxable land are not eligible for the post of *Tso-Tsorgan*. The post is not hereditary, but if the son of the *Tso-Tsorgan* is otherwise found capable, he stands a better chance of being elected/selected. In principle, there is no restriction on woman becoming a *Tso-Tsorgan*, but in practice no woman ever had occupied this office. The normal term of office of a *Tso-Tsorgan* is three years, but some capable ones have had continued in office quite a longer term, more than 20 years. He is not paid any salary, but it is mandatory for all the *Khraimi* of that *Tso* to contribute in form of food grains twice in a year as remuneration (*Tso-khrai*) for the services he renders.

The *Tso-Tsorgan* is vested with judico-administrative and development functions. He is authorised to settle most of the civil and criminal cases within his jurisdiction. In discharging his normal duties, the *Tso-Tsorgan* is assisted by other functionaries. These functionaries are known by different names at different places. During a field study in 2009 it was observed that Lhou village is divided into six *Kachungs* on the basis of geographical settlement and each *Kachung* is headed by an official known as *Gomi* who is assisted by *Thumis*. At the lowest of the hierarchy is a functionary known as *Shi-Tza*.

3. The Tangsa Chieftainship

The political and social life of the Tangsa is maintained and regulated by *Ruung*, the village council with *Lungwang*, the chief who is assisted by *Kengsalang* (village elders), *Ngongwa/Lukhap* (advisor), *Kamwa* (messenger) and the *Shamma* (priest). The *Lungwang* being the final decision maker is also called *Khaphongwa* or *Phongwa* - the decision maker. The *Kengsalang*, usually elderly persons with oratory skill and knowledge in customary laws are the representatives of each clan in the village to the *Ruung*. *Ngongwa/Lukhap* (advisor) is selected by the chief from among the knowledgeable persons who always accompanies him. The *Mamwa* (messenger)

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Check Your Progress

24. Choose the Correct word.
- Tribe is a pre-state society in the scheme of evolutionary/revolutionary perspective.
 - Authority/Hereditary is the basic consideration is a political organization.
 - Village council does not exist in chiefdom/state.
 - In traditional village councils, membership is hereditary/gender discriminatory.

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typically comprises of two or more individuals and they mediate between the *Ruung*, the plaintiff and the accused. The one who assists the chief during the settlement of dispute with information is given membership in the *Ruung*. The *Shamma* predicts success or failure by performing rituals and reading omen before going for any community hunting, waging raids against the enemy and searching for the suitable land for new settlement.

Ruung tries the cases like theft, adultery, murder, seduction of a girl, assault, simple injury, house trespass, non-payment of bride wealth, land encroachment, marital discord, etc. The Council seats in the chief's house as and when needed. The village council is always instrumental in selecting the site for shifting cultivation, burial place, etc. The council also decides, the date for agricultural operation, fixation of date for celebration of festivals, organization of hunting expedition, fishing, etc.

4. Sherdukpen Gerontocracy

According to Sherdukpen mythology it was a descendent of a Tibetan chief who established the community. The Sherdukpen community has two social divisions, namely *Thong* and *Chao*. The clans in the Thong group are the descendants of the chief who migrated and established the community. In a Sherdukpen village the body politics is called *Jung* which has a member from the *Thong* group of clans as the chief. The position of the chief is not hereditary in the family or in a particular clan but is hereditary in the upper division of the community, i.e., the *Thong*. There are also members with specific assignments. The village body politics of the Sherdukpen is gerontocratic in nature.

5. Kharia Panchayat

The Hill Kharias, who prefer to call themselves Sabar, mostly live in West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand states. The traditional political system of the Kharia is a village *Panchayat* with *Pradhan* as its head. A traditional Hill Kharia village consists of households ranging from 5 to 30, though the size of rehabilitated villages may run even up to 100 households. Traditional villages are not practically lineage based as a man either before or after marriage can settle in another village. However, the households in the villages or in adjacent villages belong to near kin groups. The *Pradhan* heads the village Panchayat; his post is hereditary in the family along the male line. The eldest son if otherwise normal and capable inherits the post. The *Pradhan* is assisted by *bhandari* (messenger), *loya* (a religious functionary) and *dehuria* (who performs magico-religious rituals) along with family elders in the village. Usually the *Pradhan* settles disputes in a social gathering in consultation with the members present. The council can excommunicate or impose fines depending on the nature of the offense. The Panchayat of the Kharia not only settles disputes but also decides on the rituals to eradicate epidemics, natural calamities, etc., along with rituals relating to economic activities like hunting. An adopted son gets inheritance rights only after the approval of the council. Naturally, the Hill Kharia Panchayat is more of a socio-cultural institution than a mere politico-judicial body.

6. The Kora Council

The Kora tribe has its village council which is called *Kulhi-Dhurup*, meaning the Panchayat in session. Obviously, the people do not have a permanent body though its head *Mahato* is a hereditary post and thus permanent. He is assisted by *Gorait*,

Charidar and other village elders. Every session is attended by at least one member of each and every family of the village. The function of the council includes social, economic and cultural aspects of Kora life along with the politico-judicio and administrative responsibility.

Now it is clear that tribal political systems are of various kinds. Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have outlined three characteristics to which we can add one more feature. These are: (i) Political Association Based N Clan/ Lineage; (ii) Political Association Based on the Village as a Unit; and (iii) Political Association of a Group of Villagers of a Territory and (iv) The Political Association at Tribe Level.

From the above characteristics the structure of the Tribal Political System can be outlined. Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have provided the following structure of the political system existing in the tribal world of India (some examples are added):

- The Council of Elders, a temporary body of selected villagers, generally coincides with clan elders to look into cases brought before them. (Sometimes all village elders in principle are members of the village council as is the case with the Adis).
- The Village Headman, a hereditary post and/or subject to villagers' opinion if and when required. (The Khampti village chief or the Tangsa village chief is a hereditary head).
- The Village Panchayat: a body of the *Panchs* headed by the village Headman. The panchs are elected by the villagers directly. (There can be also a village council with elected head. For example, traditionally each Khasi village has its Village Council called *Durbar Shnong* headed by *Rangbah Shnong*).
- The Union of Villages, a regional panchayat headed by the regional head (can also be a body of selected members from village councils like the *Bango Kebang* of the Adis. It can also be a territorial council with elected head as is the case of the Khasi. The territorial organization called *Durbar Raid* has elected head called *Basan* or *Lyngdoh*).
- The Tribal Chief, a hereditary post of supreme judicial authority at the tribal level. (The tribe level chief can also be an elected head like the *Syiem* in Khasi state, the tribe level political organization of the Khasis).

2.6.3 Traditional versus Modern Organizations

The tribal village councils do not exist in traditional forms. The traditional role of the councils has declined due to introduction of village Panchayats. The developmental works are now in the sole domain of the Panchayat bodies. In many tribes the head of the council used to be hereditary in nature, but in Panchayats, all the members including the head (Sarpanch, Anchal Samilti Member, etc.) are elected ones. Whereas the village councils in Chieftainship type of societies had chiefs as heads, the Panchayats in such societies have elected representatives including the head. The village Panchayats are gender sensitive whereas in traditional councils women were deprived of active participation or membership. These modern village councils do not have religious advisors as members; in other words, the present councils, i.e. the Panchayats are secular in character.

In traditional tribal communities, the village councils were either democratic or monarchic. The compositions and functions varied across the tribes. Some

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village councils were clan or lineage based. But the modern democratic Panchayats are uniform across both the tribal and non-tribal villages of the country and in composition and function. In Panchayats all the members of the village can participate if otherwise eligible without clan or other social considerations. We know that in Sherdukpen community the *Chaos* do not have the right to membership in Jung. Similarly, a person who does not own taxable land cannot be elected/selected to the post of *Tso-Tsogrgan* in Monpa community.

In some tribes, the jurisdiction of functioning of both traditional and modern councils is distinct. The Adis take up all the traditional matters in *Kebang* while those of developmental works in village Panchayats. In Hill Kharia tribe, matters other than those involving social secrecy are decided in the Panchayat. The cases of conflict and quarrel between non-tribals or with other tribals and Hill Kharias are represented in the modern village Panchayat. Both the traditional and modern councils coexist harmoniously. We also see from field experience that the traditional and present political head happen to be the same person. But in some tribes, even in some villages of the same tribe there is conflict and the role of the traditional leaders is on decline.

Check Your Progress

25. State whether the following statements are true or false:
- Traditional tribal political system had its origin during hunting-gathering stage of social evolution. True/False
 - An acephalous society is characterised by centralised authority. True/False
 - Social division is found in acephalous type of political organizations. True/False
 - All tribes have political organizations at village, territory and tribe levels. True/False
 - Gerontocracy has a sort of social division. So it is chiefdom. True/False

2.7 CUSTOMARY LAWS AND SOCIAL SANCTIONS

Human beings live in societies and forge individual, interpersonal and institutional relationships with other members of the society. Particularly in traditional societies such relations extend beyond human sphere to include *nature* and the *super-nature* as well. These relations define and get expression through different pattern of behaviours. It has been known that relations along with patterns and expressions of behaviours are culture specific which generally vary from one culture or community to the other. In a matrilineal society, for example, the relation of sons with the institution of property inheritance would differ from that of a patrilineal society. Accordingly, a son's behavioural relation towards maintenance of parents or practice of inheriting father's surname would also differ in the two systems. You will study about this difference in Unit-III of this paper in the section of Property and Inheritance.

The sphere of relations and pattern of behaviours are known to each and every individual of a community and one knows one's position in it. In other words, relations and associated behavioural patterns of a community which are perceived in its totality are its customs. Disobedience and violation of customs invoke sanctions.

In this section you will read about *customs* or *customary laws* and *sanctions* with a few examples from tribal communities of India. There are mechanisms through which customary laws are enforced for the maintenance of equilibrium, social order, peace and tranquillity. These mechanisms are taboos, social sanctions, ritualistic faiths, obeisance to super-natural powers and adherence to ethics and traditional values.

2.7.1 Customs

Custom normally refers to a long-established practice based on the values, mores, and norms of a tribe and is expressed in its beliefs, traditions, and practices. M. Chanock (1985) defines customs or customary laws as a body of rules, values, and traditions, more or less clearly defined, which were accepted as establishing

standards or procedures to be followed and upheld. Customary law is not simply about law, but it is about ways of conceiving the past and therefore, the present. As J.S. Bhandari (1995) writes customary laws are sustained by moral and ethical values of the members of a community and have implicit sanction of the people and may be enforceable by the collective coercive force of the people. In the tribal societies, the goal is to maintain the continuity of social relations based on primal ties. Therefore, customary laws can be understood more from the functions that it performs- the functions of inter personal relations and the maintenance of overall social order. According to L. Pospisil (1971), customary law is a law that is internalized by a social group which considers it to be binding. If such a law is broken, the culprit has a bad conscience that he has behaved improperly. Conformity to such law is not usually affected by external pressure. It is produced by an internal mechanism, which can be conscience in some cultures and fear or shame in others.

Customs or Customary Laws: Sometimes a difference is made between customs or customary laws. E.S. Hartland (1924) maintains that 'Law and customs are not one; it is wrong to identify law with custom'. The customs recognised by formal legal system are often called by some scholars as customary laws. In that sense customary laws have a formal legal sanction and a formal enforcing authority.

The customs of Munda tribe documented by S. C. Roy in 1912 or the Garo inheritance practices recorded studied by J. K. Bose in 1930s have subsequently got recognition of formal legal institution. The Baliapara/Tirap/Sadiya Frontier Tracts Jhum Land Regulations, 1947 recognises traditional land tenure practices of tribes of present Arunachal Pradesh. Assam Frontiers (Administration of Justice) 1945 has introduced the system of village head (Gaon Burha) and the post of *kataki* to maintain law and order which continue and have become a tradition in tribal communities of the region. Enforcement of customs by these authorities obviously has legal sanction. In contrast to it, there are many customs in tribal communities which are informal but still continue and do not have a legal sanction. For example, we can cite the custom of the type of bridal dress in a tribal marriage. Logically, a distinction is noticed between a set of customs which are recognised in legal system and the other which is not and yet continues in practice.

From above explanation you must have understood that there is a distinction between customs and customary laws. However, customs are sources of customary laws which have formal recognition in a wider system. For a tribal community both do play the role of maintaining social solidarity, cohesion and harmonious living through approval and disapproval of behaviours. For a particular community the traditional authority enforces both customs and customary laws within the community until and unless the need of intervention by formal outside authority is felt. In our contemporary time tribes are citizens of the country and have constitutional position which recognises their rights, particularly their uncodified customs and practices. L. Pospisil (1971) is of the opinion that without the authority's consent, customary law can never be called law; it would only be custom. He has made a distinction between *law* and *customary law* and equates the latter with custom.

Needless to say, the customs in general have approval in the formal system through recognition to their autonomous existence and in the absence of provisions to replace them. So, we use **customs** and **customary laws** interchangeably, for these are community specific at the core and customs exist within a greater system of formal authority, i.e. the State

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Check Your Progress

26. According to which perspective socio-political organizations have four stages?
27. Do you think that village councils perform only political functions? Why or Why not?
28. Do you think that there is the practice of exclusion of members of a village in village councils? Give reasons.
29. Who said, 'social organization is an arrangement of roles associated with the statuses which constituted the social structure'?
30. In which tribe the head of the council is elected?
31. According to whom 'family is a group of persons whose relations to one another are based upon consanguinity and who are, therefore, kin to another'?

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By now you have got some idea about customary laws. From the definition and its scope the following characteristics of customary laws in general and tribal customary laws in particular can be enumerated:

- Customary laws are a body of established mode of social behaviours within tribal or traditional community. The laws are community based and thus confined to a particular tribe.
- In this sense tribal customary laws are universal. This means that there is no tribal community in the world where customs are not found.
- The body of customary laws refers to the totality of behaviour patterns.
- It is broad and all encompassing. Custom can relate to use of and access to natural resources, rights and obligations relating to land, inheritance and property, conduct of spiritual life, maintenance of cultural heritage and knowledge systems, and many other matters.
- These laws are long established and do not have any authorship. Nobody remembers who frame the law.
- As a corollary, the laws are uniform and continuous, meaning these have been followed continuously and uninterrupted for a long time. In other words, these are group accepted techniques of control mechanism, taken for granted and are passed along from generation to generation.
- Customary laws are certain and definite as these are observed as a matter of rights.
- Customary laws do not oppose community morality and value system.
- A custom is formed on the basis of habit gaining the sanction over time. But it is not an individual habit. Customs are social habits which through repetition become the basis of and order of social behaviour. So customary laws are contrasted with mere random personal.
- Customary laws are generally unwritten. But in recent years many tribes have documented their customs which they follow and produce in the court while settling a dispute. The Nyishis of Arunachal Pradesh and the Darlongs of Tripura for example have codified their customary laws which they use to solve the problems arising in the society. Even the land record department of Gauhati High Court has documented the customary practices of land inheritance of more than 35 tribes in the northeast.

2.7.2 Sanctions

Sanctions are social control mechanism in every type of society. As you know a society is a harmonious organization of human relationships and associated pattern of behaviours. You also know that there are customs that guide these relationships to maintain harmony. But these customs are often violated by individuals due to one or the other reason. Such violation disturbs the social harmony. However, every society has developed sanctions which help in maintaining society solidarity. Sanctions are thus a means of controlling human behaviour. In general, social sanctions are means by which a moral code or social custom is enforced, either positively in the form of rewards or negatively by means of punishment. In tribal communities, sanctions

are not formal like the non-traditional industrial societies. These are in conformity with tribal morality and value system.

The word sanction has two nearly opposite meanings. In its first meaning it is used to refer to *approve of something* while in its second meaning it is used in the sense of disapproval and action taken or punishment given for disobedience or violation of rule or custom. The incidence of divorce is not considered normal custom; it is a disruption in social life of married couples. Obviously, for breaking the custom of marriage union the society has its sanctions in terms of fine. Among the Darlongs of Tripura, a husband has to pay *maktha* for initiating divorce, and the wife has to pay *hamanpui* if she initiates the process. The sanction is a negative enforcement for disruption of a socially approved bond.

Characteristics

Sanctions are social control mechanisms. These sanctions are community specific and exist in all types of societies. The following are the characteristics of sanctions in tribal communities.

- Sanctions may be positive or negative, i.e. rewards or punishments. Positive sanctions are used to encourage a particular behaviour. But negative sanctions are invoked when a particular behaviour is sought to be discouraged.
- Sanctions in tribal communities are social and supernatural in nature.
- These sanctions are informal and based on customary laws.
- Therefore, sanctions are comprehensive and relate to customs of the community in general.
- Members of the whole community are aware of sanctions prevalent for violation of customs and like customs these are repeated and broadly continue from generation to generation.

Some Examples

You will understand customary laws and sanctions along with their characteristics in tribal communities better through examples. Some examples are produced below:

1. Tobdan (2000) informs us about an interesting tribal custom, called *Zang-Zang*, which is prevalent among his people of Lahuli in Himachal Pradesh. *Zang-Zang* is a behavioural relationship between a guest and member (s) of the host family at the time of offering food to the guest. The guest vehemently refuses to accept the food, but the host persuades and offers the food. Even for any additional help the situation of refusal and persuasion continues till the guest eats to his heart's content. Later, the host ridicules the guest with the remark that he was pretending to eat, though he was really starving and the guest keeps on putting his stand that the food was not necessary. Tobdan does not know the origin of this practice and there is no folklore about it. But he believes that it originated sometime in bygone days when people did not have enough to eat. However, the practice continues as a custom even though people have enough to eat now-a-days. Its absence during meal time is not considered in good taste and the relations between the guest and the host is not considered normal. Now you see that the practice of *Zang-Zang* shows its past origin, long continuity as a tradition passing on from generation to generation.

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2. The Munda and the Oraon tribes of Jharkhand believe in tribe endogamy. The violation of this custom invokes the sanction of excommunication till the non-Mund/non-Oraon partner is given up. The violation of social custom of endogamy also invokes purification ritual for re-entering into the tribe. In other words, social and spiritual mechanisms are adopted to rectify any wrong committed in the society. Witchcraft is not a socially approved practice among the Mundas, and the one who practises it is severely dealt with. The woman found guilty is thrashed, driven out of the village and sometimes even beaten to death. For adultery and theft the culprit is thrashed and fined as well.
3. The Munda and the Oraon practise avoidance between relations. Even touching of a man to his younger brother's wife or wife's elder sister is tabooed. Such a breach of custom is expiated for through some observances prescribed by elders in the family. Utterance of name of husband, father-in-law or mother-in-law by a woman is tabooed. Violation is socially disapproved; the violator is scorned. There is no other punishment from society as the offender is liable to fall into bad time one day for disobedience of the custom.

4. The custom of silent trade once prevailed between the Raji tribe and its neighbouring communities in Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. Even though the two parties did not meet face-to-face the behavioural relation is an interesting example of a custom and nature of disapproval.

The Rajis normally left their articles, mostly roughly manufactured wooden bowls at the door step of the Kumaoni villagers along with some symbols including the items the Raji desired to have in exchange, under the dark cover of night when whole village was fast asleep. Next morning the family concerned, on finding the bowls would know that they were left by the Raji previous night and would know the motive behind the action. The concerned Kumaoni family would fill the bowls with the desired items, usually cereal grains as per the indication. The bowls were on the same spot where these were initially left by the Raji. At night the Raji visited the place and collected the grains offered by the Kumaoni villager leaving the bowls as barter exchange for the grains received. In case they are not satisfied with the quantity or item they would not touch the bowls and leave it as they were. The family would understand that some more quantity of grains is required. Accordingly, the family would supply the grains to be lifted by the Rajis.

5. Among the Adi Padams movement taboo is observed after the performance of certain rituals. As per custom, villagers are discouraged to work in agricultural fields. Even the *Musup kos* (a particular group of Dormitory boys) organise *bedang-duubom*, meaning act of sitting on the way to block the path. Despite precautions if someone is found working in the field on that day a fine, equal to his one days labour, is imposed on the violator. Without coming to terms if the person refuses to pay, then *Musupkos* inform to the senior *Mushup* group called *Ruutum*, who also try to persuade the person to pay the fine. In case of failure they resort to *kumsung saanam* (forcible collection of grains from granary) and intimate their action by putting branches inside the basket used to carry grains. This act of the *Musup* boys is not reacted; rather it is accepted in the society. The practice has both positive and negative enforcement of sanctions.

6. Many tribes believe in the custom of not urinating near/in the place considered to be the abode of spirit. Violation invokes fever, madness or any such punishment. This is the example of a supernatural sanction which could affect remedial sanctions. In order to avoid supernatural punishments remedial measures like performance of rituals are organised. Rituals are socially approved cultural enforcements which are performed to rectify the wrong of violating the custom of right interaction with supernatural beliefs. The relations between customs and sanctions are not one-to-one, it is rather a multi-dimensional.
7. All types of violations of custom do not invoke sanctions. In Garo tribe, except youngest daughter, all other daughters are to leave the house after marriage. In the event of two daughters, the eldest daughter may stay in the family, though authority would lie with the youngest one. Such a violation of the custom of residence after marriage does not invoke any sanction.
8. In matrilineal community it is the custom that the youngest daughter has to stay in the home, look after parents and carry forward the family tradition. So she inherits the family property. But in case of her desire to build a separate household she is deprived of inheritance rights. The custom has the reward of according inheritance rights and the punishment of depriving it on violation of the custom.
9. In rituals human and supernatural relations are defined and behaviour pattern is established. For example, members observe taboos like food taboo or movement taboo or both in connections with some rituals. Any intrusion is a violation of customary norms. That is why visit of an outsider is considered a taboo. Outsiders are not allowed to the ritual sphere, may be a family or village territory. Disobedience leads to imposition of fine or confinement of the outsider till the taboo period is over. In case of non-compliance by the outsider the people are believed to incur supernatural sanction. In this regard Verrier Elwin's example given in *A Philosophy for NEFA* will be useful.

An Agricultural Inspector once arrived at a certain place one morning when the people were engaged on a special sacrifice and it was strictly taboo for anyone to enter the village. The headman and others came to the visitor and begged him to camp outside, as it was against their rules and would be sure to lead to an outbreak of disease if he came in. To the Inspector, however, this seemed absurd and he insisted on making his camp in the headman's house. A week later an epidemic broke out and no fewer than twenty people died...the villagers are convinced that these deaths were caused by official ignorance and scorn of local custom.

10. In some tribes the custom of pre-marital sexual freedom prevails. But extra-marital relations are strictly prohibited. Violation of this custom is considered as a crime of adultery and the culprits are imposed fine. Even the husband can divorce the wife on this ground. Among the Darlongs, if married man commits adultery, his wife charges a fine of ₹ 50 from the woman with whom her husband has affairs. But in case of a woman, the husband reacts on his wife but not on the man committing adultery. The customary laws of punishment in case of extra-marital affairs and approval to pre-marital affairs conform to the community morality on the matter of sex. Moreover, relaxation for the man is inconformity with patriarchal values in a patriarchy. You have understood

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Check Your Progress

32. Write whether the following statements are true or false:
- Customs and social sanctions in tribal communities are formal in nature.
 - Social sanctions are punishments to wrong doers and are generally negative in nature.
 - A few customs and practices have been recognized by formal legal system.
 - Customs have been framed by intelligent people in the society and thus have know authorship.
 - Customary laws are followed as a matter of rights.
 - Sanctions in tribal communities are also supernatural in nature.
 - Customs are generally unwritten.

how customs and sanctions confirm to the ethical and moral perception of a community.

- In Birhor tribe a young man has to show his skill of building a water proof *kumbha* (hut) in order to prove his eligibility for marriage. The display of skill is a positive enforcement where he gets silent social approval to begin his marital life. Before that if he expresses his desire for marriage he is ridiculed which is a negative enforcement for not achieving the eligibility as per the custom of the community.
- Among the Bhils of Rajasthan, *mautana* (a type of compensation) is a sanction against the crime of committing physical injuries or death. The man who causes death of another person has to pay *mautana* to the relatives of the victim. His family or clan members may also come to his rescue by paying the compensation. *Mautana* is a negative sanction in order to discourage the crime and establish a normal social order. Among the Darlongs also a similar practice prevails in the event of injury caused accidentally. The culprit has to bear all expenses for his cure or the funeral rites in case of death.

2.8 RELIGION: FAITHS, BELIEF AND PRACTICES

In this section you will study about the religion of the tribal people in India. We shall begin our discussion with two important but interrelated questions. The questions are:

- Does a tribe have a religion?
- What are the components and features of a tribal religion?

You have to keep in mind that a tribe in India is not always outside the framework of organised religion. One shouldn't be surprised to see tribes like Gond, Riyang, etc. professing Hinduism; tribes like Khampti and Monpa professing Buddhism; tribes like Gadi, Siddi and tribes living in Lakshadweep professing Islam and tribes like Khasi, Ao, Mizo and many others professing Christianity. There are also several tribes like Raji, Onge, Jarwa which follow their own traditional system of faiths, beliefs and practices. On the other hand there are tribes like Adi, Mishim, Zeliangrang, etc. which follow traditional faiths, beliefs and practices but with reforms. In other words, they follow a revived and evolved form of traditional religious life.

There are two things one must bear in mind while studying these tribes. The first one being that all members of a tribe who are identified by the name of a particular religion may not necessarily follow that religion in totality. For example, in a Christian tribe, there may be families/individuals professing their traditional faiths, beliefs and practices. The second aspect is that almost all tribal religions have had exposures to forces of organised religions in various degrees. However, these influences are either negligible or nil among tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands owing to their isolation. So, when you study a tribal religion you may find features belonging to different times and common to other religions. In other words, tribal religions have become syncretic in nature, meaning displaying characteristics of two or more religious traditions. With reference to the Khampti and Monpa tribes, Buddhism could be better understood as a syncretic tradition.

Does a tribe have a religion?

What does a religion mean? Is there any definition of a religion?

There have been many attempts at defining religion, but what J. Z. Smith reminds us is that “The moral... is not that religions cannot be defined, but it can be defined, with greater or lesser success, in more than fifty ways’. In other words, there is no single definition of religion. But all the definitions agree on its three components: faiths & beliefs, practices (rituals, for example) and transcendental experience (mysticism). In a community all these components may exist in different degrees.

As you know religion does not have an isolated entity as it is for the members of the society. It may be a personal experience or affair but the experiences manifest in the socio-cultural setting. Religion is believed to have evolved as a human endeavour to link the natural and the supernatural worlds in order to understand the phenomena she/he experiences. A human being perceives the natural and the supernatural differently and tries to adjust between them. The ideas and the means he/she applies fall under the domain of religion. The ideas through which man perceives his different natural and supernatural worlds may ‘evolve into a belief system’ or may be the ‘belief system itself’. The realm of ideas takes expression through rituals. The belief system also extends to the belief in Transcendental Experience with which the members of the community communicate through intermediaries like priests. If any member of the community experiences the supernatural being he/she is called a mystic. Hence, mysticism, supernatural experience or altered status of consciousness is also a question beyond the realm of the natural world and hence deemed religious.

By now you would have understood how one could interpret and understand a religion. In other words, it may be understood that a religion has three main components. With respect to tribal studies one may ask if these components are also present in a tribal religion?

2.8.1 Tribal Religion

The dictionary meanings of ‘faith’ and ‘belief’ are almost synonyms to one another. Both refer to acceptance of or trust in something. Further, faith is also used in the sense of religion such as the Hindu faith. Obviously there is confusion in the use of two synonym words such as ‘faith’ and ‘belief’ to understand religion.

People believe in what is natural, i.e. normally visible or logically understandable. But to believe in something which is not natural one must have feelings for it, an acceptance about its existence. Faith is the first step towards an understanding of religion and it is based on the foundation of feelings, an idea and an acceptance of its existence. When the feelings are strong and acceptance is understandable it becomes a belief. As you know there is a saying: *seeing is believing*. Religion cannot be seen despite it being based on impersonal ideas at its core, it only can be speculated through imagination and contemplation.

So, first one must have faith before one begins believing in it. Faith may be just a beginning of an idea and when that faith becomes strong it becomes a belief. Hence, faith is a belief. But faiths and beliefs are not two separate words that form a combination of different things. The two things give one single impression as expressed in phrases like ‘bread and butter’ or ‘slow and steady’. In the same analogy

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‘faith and belief’, express the singular idea about religion. Religious traditions, however, are different among the tribes and faiths and beliefs rightly represent the diverse traditions existing among tribes. It is ‘faith’ that sustains belief and the emotional element in faith leads to practices such as rites and rituals, all religious activities in general. Emotional elements are present in human-nature-supernature relations.

Religion in tribal communities’ expresses through an integrated process. As you know all aspects of life in a tribe are instituted in cultural process. Culture is an integrated whole. The aspects of life are so integrated and instituted that they present overlapping ideas. Therefore, you cannot distinguish an independent domain each for economic life, political life, social life or religious life. In economic life you will find components comprising of social, political and religious aspects. In other words, each aspect reflects in other aspects and vice versa. It is therefore, natural to find religious aspect of life pervading all other aspects of life. Precisely, faiths, beliefs and practices are all encompassing and so reflect in social relations, economic pursuits, resource perceptions and management practices, healthcare, artefacts and so on.

The belief system can be understood in terms of human-nature-supernature relations. Human beings relate themselves with supernatural beings in different ways. These beings are considered to be creator, protector and destroyer. There are benevolent spirits who help in the welfare of humans and animals. They protect them from misfortunes. On the other hand there are malevolent spirits who wait for the opportunity of harming human beings and animals which they use. The Nyishis, for example, believe in *Jengte, Pamte*, etc. as fever causing deities. *Rintum, Purtum, Rine Chine* etc. are domestic *Wiyus* (supernatural power) which look after progress and prosperity of the inmates of a house.

These supernatural beings, often spirits dwell in natural objects like trees, rocks, water bodies caves, etc. So human is related to supernatural through nature. If human relation with nature is disturbed supernatural sanctions are release forth in the form of disease or loss of crops or natural calamity. In most of the tribes there is the belief of a supreme creator, who often creates not only human being but also other living and non-living beings.

As human beings cause disturbance in relations, it is natural for them to remedy it. For that they have to appease or compensate the loss. Rituals are the media to restore the harmony of relations. In between humans and supernatural religions priests play a significant role in the process restoring normalcy. Many of their priests are known to have the power of communion with supernatural beings. In other words, they have transcendental experience.

You will understand tribal religion not only in terms of faiths and beliefs, practices and transcendental experience, but also in terms of its all encompassing nature. We will confine our discussion to a few examples from different tribes.

2.8.2 Faiths & Beliefs, Practices and Transcendental Experience

Among the tribes of India, faiths, and beliefs, practices and transcendental experience are embedded in culture. They vary from tribe to tribe. However, these can be understood as follows.

Animism: Tribes are believed to follow animism. E.B. Tylor used this term to refer to ‘belief in souls’ and ‘supernatural beings’. These beliefs include belief in

ghosts, nature spirits, doctrine of spirit possession, the presence of witch doctors, the practice of magic, the worship of dead, belief in the supernatural causation of disease, the presence of taboos, the performance of ceremonial dancing, worship, and the like.

All tribes of India believe in supernatural beings. Verrier Elwin mentions that Muria Gonds worship nature, mountains, rivers, trees animals, etc. Even he has mentioned that men possess life as an animating substance as per Muria's belief.

Supernatural force

The core of a faith and belief centres round supernatural forces and beings. Supernatural force is an impersonal force. A place, for example, possesses that power and therefore, can be considered a taboo. After ritual, for example, some food items are tabooed; some animals are not to be killed, places not to be entered or works not to be done. For a Galo Nyibu (religious specialist) local wine, flesh of wild animals, wild fruits, etc are tabooed before ritual. A newly married couple in Galo tribe observes taboo on meat of wild animals, ginger, garlic, onion and thorny vegetables for a year. It is because there is impersonal force in them and such forces need to be avoided. The Aos believe that a power, called *Tiar* or *Tiyer*, is inherent in man, which often withstands the evil power of ghosts.

Supernatural Beings

Supernatural beings can be of human and non-human origins. Supernatural beings of human origin are ghosts and ancestral spirits while non-human origin are spirits, gods, godlings, presiding deities of natural objects and human activities. The Adi Padams believe for example in the spirit of hunting (Galling Gojo) presiding deity of a house (Gumin Soyin) and so on. The spirits can be benevolent or malevolent. The Aos believe in a host of supernatural powers (Tsungrams) who are traditionally supposed to cause illness and other misfortunes. Temsula Ao reports that they live in small springs, lakes, lowland, stagnant waters and deserted sites, bamboo groves and deep jungles, and also in certain trees.

You will find that tribal faiths and beliefs recognise a host of supernatural beings. Their belief system can be termed as polytheism, meaning belief in many gods, none having subordinate relations. In other words, they do not have the notion of a hierarchy of them in their belief system; they know a deity for its work. Temsula Ao informs us that among the Aos the term *Tsungrem* is used in a non-discriminatory way to denote several gods who are associated with mountains, big stones, rivers, forest etc. For the Ao *Lijaba* (creator of the earth) is a *Tsungrem* and so is *Meyutsungba* (the keeper of the land of the dead). There is no status differentiation among the gods.

Nevertheless, in many tribes there is a hierarchy of gods and deities. Elwin finds such a hierarchy in Muria tradition. Moreover, the gods exist at different levels. For example *Hana duma*, believed to be an ancestral spirit is presiding deity at home, *Tallurmutte*, goddess earth at village level and *Anga* is presiding deity at *progona* level.

Totem: Tribes like Ho, Oraon believe in totem which could be normally an animal or tree. The animal in itself is not sacred but something inherent in it makes the animals sacred. Emile Durkheim considers this as a symbolic perception. This means the totem animal is a symbol of a clan. Each clan of a tribe believing in

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totem has its own totem animals. The totem distinguishes one clan from another. So according to Durkheim the totem occupies an important place in the clans' religious rituals. It symbolises both the clan and the clan's spirits.

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Life after Death

In tribal communities the notion of 'after life' is a part of faith and belief system. Many tribes like Muria Gond, Ranglong also believe in rebirth. The Adi priest narrates different stages that a soul passes through after death. Loss of soul is considered to be cause of disease which if not brought back results in death of the person. The notion of life after death differs in the belief system of tribes. For example, they have different notions about the status of the soul of people on the basis of accidental or normal death.

The Bongchers of Tripura believe that the soul of a person after death goes to *Rih Li* (a lake in Mizoram and Myanmar Border) and from there enters *Mithi Khua* (the abode of the dead). However, the soul of a wrong doer turns into butterfly after it passes *Rih Li*. The soul after the death of butterfly is born as pig, after the death of pig as goat, then a cow, and after the death of the cow it is born as monkey and finally it is reborn as human.

Omen and Dreams

Faiths and beliefs in omens and dreams are important aspects of tribal religion, though these exist in non-tribal world also. The number 13 (thirteen) is not considered auspicious even today in many non-tribal traditions. Omen and dream are culture specific. What is bad in one culture may not be so in another and the event that is considered as a sign of good or bad happenings in future has a cultural context. The same event may not exist in another culture.

You will learn a few omens believed by the Darlongs of Tripura.

Good Omens: A sick person sneezing twice uninterruptingly – Quick recovery.
Two persons accidentally speaking out same thing simultaneously – The elder one would receive a message.

A swinging spider in front of an unmarried girl - sign of receiving a marriage proposal soon

Coming out of ants from holes and moving around during a rainy day – Indication of a sunny weather,

Bad Omens: A dog climbing the roof of the house – Indication of misfortune or death of owner.

A tortoise crossing the path of hunter – sign of unsuccessful hunting.

Stumbling at the door while beginning a journey – a sign of uncomfortable or unsuccessful journey

Sudden and intermittent twitching of right eye brow or shoulder – sign of serious illness or death of a near one.

As you know dream has a significant place in the belief system of tribal people. By interpreting dream they predict future course of event. Elwin (1959) has recorded a case of dream in the then Siang division of Arunachal Pradesh, which led to the discovery of a hidden corpse and the subsequent conviction of the murderer. B.K. Shukla (1965) has also recorded the belief of the Nyishis on dreams. The Nyishis

believe that the soul leaves the body while a person is asleep and goes out wandering. What it sees or experiences is recollected by the person on awakening. When a Nyishi hunter is bitten by a snake in dream or sees a pigsty with open door he is sure of hunting a wild boar. But, if it is a closed door pigsty in dream the indication is about failure in bagging any game.

The Nyishis believe that an article of decoration seen in a dream is a bad omen indicating the death of a near one. L.R.NB. Srivastava (1962) also has explained about the belief in dream by the Galos. The Galo people believe in a successful hunting if the hunter dreams of a tooth knocked out. Similarly, a dream of broken legs is an indication of death of a child or wife of the dreamer. When a herd of *mithun* (*bos frontalis*) enters the village it indicates heavy rain.

Dream is considered an indication of things to happen and guidance for solving problems like sickness. When a dream is an indication of bad omen the effects are countered by rituals and sacrifices identified through the process of divination by the priest.

Magic and witchcraft

Magic and witchcraft are important elements in many tribal religions. These elements together present a combination of beliefs and practices. Magic involves manipulation of supernatural force for good or bad. The Monpa monk is believed to stop rain by invoking supernatural power. Magic also involves some action where supernatural power is not manipulated. A Darlong turns his/her pillow while dreaming about his/her love so that s/he can have the same dream. Traditional rituals of Mishmis are believed to be magico-religious practices. When a person suffers from *Miknat* (conjunctivitis) a curative magico-religious ritual called *pachu-takap* is performed. The affected eye is covered with any cup-tumbler-like container to which a bow-man hits with an ordinary arrow made of bamboo-splint. The bow-man faces towards the east, while the patient to the west and the container covering the eye is hit nine times with the arrow. Each time the bow-man chants:

Pachu ahul than ki lo lo... (I kill the male of this disease.)

Next, the act is repeated with the bow-man facing to the west and the patient to the east. This time the bow-man hits the container eight times chanting.

Pachu kamia mu than ki lo lo... (I kill the female of this disease)

Some Galo Nyibus (religious specialists) also know the art of magic (*tarum-tago*). They can induce natural objects such as pebbles or beads into a person's body and remove the same.

Witchcraft is a practice carried out through thought process. This differs from sorcery. In sorcery materials and medicines are used to invoke supernatural evil action. In many tribal communities, witchcraft and sorcery are practised. The Baigas are known for practising sorcery. In traditional Munda and Santal belief system witchcraft is widespread.

Practices

As you have studied, magic and sorcery are both beliefs and practices. However, there are beliefs on the basis of which practices like rituals, festivals, etc. are performed. Anthony Wallace has listed a number of practices which broadly include prayer

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(asking for supernatural help), physiological experience (doing things to the body and mind), simulations (manipulating imitations of things), feast and sacrifices.

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Among the tribes of India incantation forms a part of many rituals. Religious specialists, common people, medicine men involve in chanting during a curative session. Chanting by a priest is a normal scene while invoking supernatural force. The Adi people pray Almighty Donyi-Polo to be the witness to the judgement process in the Kebang (village council). Through rituals people pray for good harvest, good health, etc.

During a ritual performance religious specialists of many tribes observe food taboo, consume wine or opium, perform priest dance to commune with supernatural power. The *Igu* dance of the priest in Idu Mishmi tribe is a famous priestly dance. During Yaalo *Lonam* (the ritual of calling back lost soul), some Galo Nyibus fall into trance by performing *Nyigre dance*. In the process they establish communion with supernatural power. Such practices refer to doing things to body or mind.

Simulation like voodoo is not a popular practice among Indian tribes. However, there are instances when a symbol of a person is maltreated. The belief is that the person will also feel the same pain. Simulation is also employed at the time of divination. Among the tribes of Northeast India chicken lever reading, egg-yolk testing, etc., are carried out to understand the supernatural cause of disease or predict general welfare, good harvest, etc.

Feasts are organised on ceremonial occasions like marriage, death ritual and other rituals. Community feasts are organised as a part of dispute settlement process and atonement of sin.

Sacrifices and offerings are common features in tribal belief system. Offerings may include food items, drink and other items like ginger, turmeric, etc. Animal sacrifice is also a practice among the tribes. In Arunachal Pradesh tribes sacrifice poultry birds, pigs and *mithun* (*bos frontalis*), etc. Human sacrifice was prevalent among tribes like Kondh in Odisha.

Oath and Ordeal: Oaths and ordeals are practices organised to invoke supernatural interference in detecting the wrong doer. A guilty person is punished by the council when he/she owns up the guilt. But there are instances when no one owns up the crime and evidences do not suffice to identify the guilty. Then the council takes recourse to oaths and ordeals to detect the culprit. An oath is a swearing taken by both complainant and accused in the name of supernatural being to prove innocence in a public gathering. The tribal people in general believe that the God /Supreme Being watches everything. An ordeal is on the other hand a prescribed torture to prove innocence. It is believed that the innocent person escapes injury.

Usually the process of ordeals is initiated by the priests with rituals. In many tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and in Central India this traditional practice still prevails. Among the Oraons, when a person is suspected of guilt his hands are dipped into boiling water mixed with cow dung. There is the practice of putting burning charcoals over palms. The belief is that an innocent person is not hurt.

Mundas and Oraons also administer oath. The suspect takes oath of his/her innocence by placing a lump of paddy, cow-dung and clod of earth on his head. If one takes a false oath it is believed that he/she will suffer from the loss of crops, cattle or land.

In Adi community a person accused of theft declares him/herself innocent by cutting one of his fingers in a public place. The cut of the innocent simply bleeds, but the blood rushes out from the corresponding part of the body of the culprit. These types of ordeals are practised in many tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

Transcendental Experiences

This experience is an altered state of consciousness one feels when one is possessed. This consciousness arises when a *shaman* (religious specialist) is in communion with supernatural force. He embodies the supernatural consciousness. The shaman enters into a trance and makes a journey to the world of spirits. He gets help from spirits to cure illness or gets news of impending disaster or answers to people's queries about their problems. Dreams are also used by the shaman to commune with spirits. A person becomes a shaman after long rigorous training under a master or with the help of supernatural power. In the latter case the shaman is inborn.

In Galo tribe a person to become a *Nyibu* (shaman) shows signs deviant behaviours from early life. S/he would have unique dreams and show deviant behaviour. Penny Potom in 2004 narrated a case of Shri Dibo Potom who had a dream before he became a *Nyibu*. In his dream he saw a door which opened up, he travelled across and saw mountains, rivers, forests, villages, fields and everything that exist in the physical world. As he journeyed further these panoramas became invisible and he entered into broad day light where he could see the Sun rising. He remained in this state and unconscious for some days and during this period supernatural power dawned in him. When signs indicate that a person is a *Nyibu* in making, *Nyibu Goal* (a ritual) is performed by a senior *Nyibu* as a mark of recognition. Sometimes one has to prove his supernatural power for acceptance. On one occasion when people asked such a person to show his power, he uttered some chants and threw away rice grains. He showed his empty hands. But next moment people saw these grains in his fist. This miracle established him as a *Nyibu*.

2.8.3 Belief System of Selected Tribes

The Garo and the Khasi

In recent years the Gaors and Khasis have largely adopted Christianity. However, their traditional faiths and beliefs have rich content. The creator in Garo religion is Tatar-Rabugs. He as the Almighty, created the world and all the creatures. He also protects the world against the most dreaded diseases that afflict mankind. His worship demands elaborate rituals and expensive sacrifices i.e. the sacrifices of a bull, a goat and a cock. Less important gods include Chorabudi, the protector of crops; Saljong, the god of fertility who blesses man's labours in the fields. The god is represented by the sun, and the annual festival, Wangala, is held in his honour. He is also worshipped with sacrifices of cock and offering of liquor before the beginning of the festivities. The god Kalkame is invoked to protect the people of the village from the evil intentions of the spirits of the forests. He demands the sacrifice of a goat or a cock, the blood of which is smeared on the *asong* (the sacrificial stone) erected in his honour. Among the evil spirits which are worshipped, Nawang, the monster that could even swallow the sun and the moon, causing eclipses is greatly feared. This spirit can also waylay their souls on their way to the purgatory.

The corporate worship is there in other tribal religions. The priest plays an important role in all the worships. The Supreme God of the Khasis is called U Blei

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Nongthan or U Blei Nongpynlong. The deity is addressed a Ka Blei (Goddess) which exposes the matrilineal characteristics of the society of the Khasis. Minor deities include U Lei Long iing who is the household deity and U Ryngkew U Basa and U Phan-U kyrpad, venerated as village deities.

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The Khasis also venerate the spirits of their ancestors as it is believed that they protect their descendants. The spirits responsible for creating diseases like malaria and cholera are believed to be malignant. Khasis also have their institutions of priesthood. Their priest who performs higher ceremonials is called U Lyngdoh. The priests who perform rites for the cure from the illness of the people are called U NongKhan (Diviner) or U Nongknia (Sacrificer). For divination, the Khasis resort to the breaking of eggs or sacrifice of a cock. The cock plays a vital role in the Khasi religion. It is a mediator between God and man. According to the folk myth, at the beginning of time, sin had become rampant among men so much that even the sun refused to appear. It was cock which sacrificed to bring sun to the sky. At its crowing the sun came out of his hiding.

Nocte

Tirap Distric Gazetteer has included the belief system of the Noctes of Arunahcal Pradesh in brief. The Noctes believe in the existence of a Supreme Being whom they variously call *Jauban*, *Jongban* or *Tesong*. This Supreme Being is ambivalent as he embodies both good and evil. He causes miseries and troubles as well as he brings happiness and prosperity to human beings. They also have a belief in a number of spirits and deities. These deities are both malevolent and benevolent. The benevolent deities dwell in houses and protect human beings from sorrows and miseries. They are propitiated regularly with the offerings of food and other things in order to get their continued support and protection from the malevolent spirits.

‘They believe that, after death, the soul substance, called *mang* or *ja khang*, repairs to *ulim* or *balum*, a place in the sky. It may take the shape of a kite and appear the day when the dead body is disposed of. So when a kite is seen flying over the house, the relations of the dead pour water on the ground for the departed soul. In case of abnormal death, they believe that the soul turns into an evil spirit.

Tiger-soul of the Ao belief system

Tiger-soul is a fascinating aspect of the Ao belief system. The people believe in tiger soul, meaning the tiger as being the other soul of a person. Temsula Ao informs us that according to Ao belief system certain persons are also believed to reside in rats, snakes, wild cats, etc. However, this belief is different from the belief in totem where animals are symbolically regarded as ancestors. According to Ao belief system some persons have more than one soul and souls of these person also reside in tigers. The tiger that embodies the person’s spirit is like any other normal tiger except that a strong attachment to the person concerned. When a person acquires the tiger soul, there is no replacement. In other words, if the tiger is killed the person whose soul is in the tiger will also die. In case of illness, the animal’s symptom of illness, pain, etc. are believed to be felt by the person also.

A person which embodies the soul of a tiger is believed to possess certain supernatural powers like curing illness, mending broken legs, etc. by prescribing the right rituals. However, there are notorious person who with such supernatural power avenge their enemies by threatening, killing or destroying their crops.

Khampti System

The Khamptis believe in supernatural powers and Khampti Buddhism views the world full of ghosts (*phi*), demons (*phi phai*), evil spirits (*pik-ta*). One is constantly and unpredictably in danger of being harmed. Moreover, they are concerned with health, illness, drought, rain etc. Khamptis believe that devotions, rituals, ethics, scriptures, etc. act as a protective shield against harms and dangers from spirits and ghosts. Illness, natural calamities are believed to be the effect of supernatural displeasure. The existence of this belief system is the remnants of pre-Buddhist animism which the community, probably, practised. Present Buddhism in the Khampti society is a mix of Buddhism and extra-non-Buddhist beliefs and practices. In extra-non-Buddhist practices monks do not play a direct role except that they offer their blessings. However, they preside over some rituals like worship of household deity. The spell *mangala sutta* in Pali and traditional *Chas-sere* spell (Tai traditional hymns). *Paritta (pilik)* spells consisting of various books of canon (*pitakat*), *sutta (suk)* are chanted for protection against danger. These *parittas* give protection from misfortune as well as positive blessings. For curing illness, for granting a long life, for the protection of a new house from the evil spirits of the land on which the house is constructed, *mangala sutta* is recited. According to Khampti Buddhism, *paritta* is effective only if the person leads moral life following Buddhist tenets.

The Khamptis believe in the presence of the spirit (a super power) in inanimate objects around them. All the objects around them are as animate as the people themselves. So they have their non-Buddhist ways of propitiation or appeasing this superpower which is believed to direct and control the human life. Rituals associated with forest activities or agricultural activities go with the belief in a non-Buddhist super natural power. These rituals are performed by villagers but not by Buddhist monks.

Phinoy (the spirit of jungle / hills) is propitiated before forest activities like hunting, elephant catching, etc. for safety and success. Before ploughing the field and before harvesting, the Khamptis worship *phimung* (also called *Pang-ci-mung*), the village deity. *Phimung* is propitiated to save the village from any type of disaster, calamity like epidemic, drought, etc. and to grant a good yield and provide a good harvest. He is worshipped in a hut/alter near jungle, away from the settlement area. Sacrifices, though against Buddhist tradition, are made to the *Phimung*. The Khamptis also perform rituals like *kin-khao-mao* (eating of new rice) and *hong-khan-khao* bringing home the goddess of wealth i.e. paddy which relate to their agricultural life.

Loss of the soul is believed to be the cause of illness. So, *Pap hong khon* (village seer for the purpose) prescribes the method of calling back soul through *hong kon* ritual. *Chao-mo*, the village poet/chanter, who composes hymns/song about the ancestors or deliberation of soul, worship *Nang Sulasati*, the Khampti version of goddess Saraswati. The Khamptis believe in charms and both monks and ordinary villager prepare amulet or tie threads around the wrist to ward off evil eyes. They also believe in the ancestors (*philan*) and worship them in houses when someone falls ill or for the prosperity of household.

Monpa System

Monpa, a Buddhist tribe of Mahayan cult, inhabits the West Kameng and Tawang districts of the Western part of Arunachal Pradesh. They believe in the *Gelukpa* sect of the Mahayan division of the Tibetan Lamaist form of Buddhism.

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Check Your Progress

33. State whether the following statements are true or false:
- Many tribes profess organized religions also.
 - Tribal religions are syncretic in nature.
 - Faiths & beliefs, practices like rituals and supernatural experiences are components of non-tribal religions only.
 - Tribal belief system is an expression of human-nature-supernature relations.
 - A tribe has faiths and beliefs but not a religion.

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Prior to their conversion to Buddhism they followed the religion of *Bon*. Black magic, a feature of *Bon* religion, still exists among the Monpas. The disposal of the dead by cutting the body into hundred and eight pieces and throwing them into stream was a practice in their traditional religion. The Monpa Buddhism in fact, is found as a safety valve against the harmful effects from the spirit world. In their *Bon* religion, there were means and ways to encounter the doings of malevolent spirits, but it seems that Buddhism was implanted and accepted as more effective means in place of their traditional ones. They still believe in *Shein*, *Geapu*, *Tchan* (name of spirits) who dwell in big trees and harm those who violate traditional norms by cutting the trees or making loud noise in the jungle. Apparently, spirits punish those who disturb them. The Monpas believe that the spirits appear in the form of snake with three or nine heads. Anyone who sees them falls ill; his or any of his relatives might face death consequently. Lama performs *khurom* if such tragedy befalls upon any individual or family. Any villager or lama reads through ‘mo’ (a Buddhist scripture, horoscope) and prescribes for rituals. *Luth* is an important ritual where *luth* (balls of flour) are offered to cure the person possessed by *Shein* (Spirit of the dead).

The Monpas observe movement taboo and do not visit Sela or Bangajang on the occasion of death or birth in the family. Onion, garlic, etc. are prohibited to these places. They worship *Tso* (lakes), *Gangri* (snow fields) and make offerings like *Sha Chow* (replica of animal made of flour paste) to forest and mountain deities. In order to avoid theft by *Thipreng* (the mythical thief) they put magic spells like suspending egg shells/other ritualistic symbol in the front door of the house. Undoubtedly, worship both *Bon* gods and Buddhist deities and thus maintain the continuity of the features of their traditional religion even after they were converted to Buddhism.

Buddhism in different countries and among various communities display a wide range of variation because of its ‘tendency of localization’; each Buddhist tradition being an amalgamation of Buddhism and indigenous religion. ‘Tendency of localization’ in Buddhism and its various forms in different countries and communities refuse to attach exclusiveness to the Buddhist tradition. Buddhism is not absolute as a religious doctrine like other religions.

Witchcraft in Manipur

Happy Baglari informs us about the tradition of witchcraft, known as Postam Jadoo, practised in some communities in Manipur. This particular witchcraft is performed by Maiba (males who perform good or bad rituals for the community / shaman) or Maibis (females who perform the same). They perform this practice when a person seeks for something which would benefit with their lives. Another practice is Mingsel Kanglon Yengba, here a Maibi uses a mirror and utters chants in order to find a thief or someone has lost something / goods, and then she will inform them the place where the goods may be kept. Thaoda Yenga is again a different practice performed by Miabis. They use oil, utter chants and during this she can describe physical features of the culprit and can also tell the thief / place where the things have been lost would be found from.

2.9 SUMMARY

- In this unit we have discussed society, social organizations and political organizations with reference to tribal communities. We have found that social organization, as the members of a society are grouped, are of two types.

- (f) The practice of suspending egg shells in front of the door to avoid theft is known as animism.
- (g) Religious tradition of a tribe displays features belonging to different time periods and common to traditions of others.
- (h) Rituals are media to restore the harmony in human-nature-supernature relations.
- (i) Belief in tiger soul among the Aos is a belief in totem.
- (j) Hierarchy of gods and deities is a feature in tribal religion.

The first one is kin-based. It includes kinship organization and its functional components like marriage and family. The second one is non-kin-based and includes the village, age gradation, territorial division and cultural practices reinforcing social order of a tribe. We have focused on these points under four thematic divisions, namely the village, kinship, marriage and family.

- Marriage and family are universal in all known tribal communities. But the forms vary from tribe to tribe. There is a relationship between forms of marriage and forms of family. Though the rules and regulations of marriage are tribe specific, they display broad features of uniformity. Similarly, family types vary from tribe to tribe. But they also have broad common features.
- Under marriage rules and regulations, we have discussed who can marry whom. This depends largely on kinship relations. We have discussed consanguineous and affinal kinships and how kinship determines the rules of residence of married couple in different tribes. The kinship has also a significant role to play through family organization. Under kinship we have also discussed incest taboo and joking relations — the behaviour patterns which define relationships between relatives.
- The political organizations of the tribal communities present a contrast. We find both democratic and chieftain type societies and political organizations. In recent years, the tribal villages have modern panchayats. Both traditional and modern village institutions coexist and in many cases the functionaries of both the institutions are one and the same.
- In tribal communities, the political life is not distinct from other aspects of life. It is instituted in social process. Therefore, socio-political organization is a befitting term to understand interconnectedness of social and political organizations.
- Like any other communities, tribes also maintain social harmony and therefore adopt different mechanisms. In this unit we have discussed customary laws and social sanctions which are mechanisms to ensure social stability and maintain harmony. In addition, we have discussed tribal religion which constitutes an important aspect of tribal way of life like social and political organizations. Whether it is social organization, political life, economic pursuits or faiths and beliefs, all are integrated into a cultural whole in tribal communities.

2.10 KEY TERMS

- **Acephalous:** Literally, 'Headless', meaning without any centralised authority.
- **Agnate:** A kinsman whose connection is traceable exclusively through male line.
- **Avunculocal Residence:** Residence with the man's mother's brother.
- **Cephalous society:** A society with centralised authority like a chief.
- **Chief:** The person of highest authority in the political organization of a community, often hereditary.
- **Chiefdom:** The political unit with a chief as its head.
- **Cognate:** Related by birth, of the same parentage, descent; **cognates-** words that are similar in sound and meaning.

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- **Cognatic descent:** Descent from both sides of the family equally, opposite to double descent; there are no clans or lineages.
- **Cross-cousins:** The children of a brother and a sister.
- **Culture:** Everything which is socially learned and shared by members of a society.
- **Double descent:** Descent in both the male line and female line; Everyone belongs to two lineages-patrilineal and matrilineal simultaneously.
- **Ego:** The reference person; person from whom kinship relationship is traced. It is from the Latin meaning 'I' or 'myself'.
- **Endogamy:** Marriage practice within the group.
- **Incest taboo:** The prohibition of sex with a category of persons, such as brother and sister, mother and son, etc.
- **Kula:** A ceremonial exchange of shell ornaments in the Trobriand Islands.
- **Moiety:** One of two basic sub-divisions of tribe.
- **Monogamy:** Marriage between one man and one woman.
- **Oath:** The act of calling upon a supernatural power to stand witness to the truth of what one says.
- **Ordeal:** A culturally approved torture to identify guilt or innocence of a person.
- **Parallel-cousins:** The children of two brothers or two sisters.
- **Polygamy:** Marriage to more than one person.
- **Polygyny:** Marriage between one man and more than one woman.
- **Potlatch:** A ceremony by peoples of the Northwest Coast of North America in which feasts, giving away of goods and sometimes destruction of goods take place to earn social prestige.
- **Product based division of labour:** The same labour engaged in the production of a commodity from the beginning to end.
- **Reciprocity:** Exchange without the use of money.
- **Sacred:** Relating to faiths and beliefs, something set apart from normal world, having the notion of forbiddances.
- **Secular:** Relating to normal world, opposite of sacred.
- **Sib:** Clan.
- **Social father:** Socially recognised husband of the mother of a child.
- **Social Organization:** Significant grouping of members of a society.
- **Subsistence:** Obtaining living for survival needs.
- **Supernatural:** Not subject to natural laws.
- **Totem:** Normally a plant or animal from which a clan traces origin. In Ojibwa tribe's belief it is the spirit of a patrilineal clan represented by an animal. It may mean a similar spirit among any people.
- **Animism:** belief in the existence of soul in physical-living and non-living things.

- **Customs:** accepted and long established beliefs and ways of behaviour and practices in a culture.
- **Revivalism:** religious reformation movement with the intention of saving the tradition and culture by infusing it with new purpose and meaning.
- **Sanctions:** reinforcements to encourage good deeds and discourage unwanted behaviour.
- **Syncretism:** a display of amalgamation of features of two or more cultural traditions.

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2.11 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

- (a) social (b) identity (c) temporary
(d) extension (e) social (f) interdisciplinary
(g) power
- (a) institutional (b) real (c) socialization
(d) kinship (e) microcosm (f) non-kinship
- A person directly related to the ego either through blood or through marriage alliance
- Marriage
- The prohibition of sex between certain relations
- To address a priest ‘father’
- Lineal and collateral
- Consanguinal, affinal and ritual
- Social structure, function and social organization
- Band, tribe, chiefdom and state
- Cephalous (centralised) and acephalous (with centralised authority)
- (a) sorroate (b) endogamous (c) institutional
(d) secondary (e) descent (f) parallel
(g) polygamy (h) tertiary
- The marriage practice between one man and more than one woman and vice versa
- the Khasa and the Kota
- Khasi
- marriage within a culturally defined social group, not outside of it.
- The basic unit of the family formed by the married couple with their unmarried children.
- No. The term patrilocal refers to the practice of residence in or near the parental home of the bridegroom. Patrilineal refers to descent along male line
- Woman as the source of power and authority in the family.
- The marriage between groom’s sister bride’s brother

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21. Cross-cousin marriage, the practice of marriage with mother's brother's daughter
22. (a) False (b) True (c) False (d) False (e) False (f) False
(g) False (h) True (i) True
23. (a) False (b) False (c) False (d) True (e) False (f) False
24. (a) evolutionary (b) Authority (c) state
(d) gender discriminatory
25. (a) true (b) false (c) true (d) false (e) false
26. Evolution perspective,
27. No, there are functionaries who also look after religious aspects of life. The functionaries also play important roles in the selection of jhum plot, consignment of dead body, etc.
28. Yes, the women do not participate in councils like meal members. Among the Sherdukpens, the Chao section of community does not have the right to membership.
29. Radcliffe-Brown,
30. The Monpa
31. K. Davis
32. (a) False (b) False (c) True (d) False (e) True (f) True (g) True
33. (a) True (b) True (c) False (d) True (e) False (f) False (g) True
(h) True (i) False (j) False

2.12 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Define social organization. Discuss how the tribe is divided and sub-divided into different kin and non-kin groups.
2. Define family and discuss the types of family.
3. Distinguish between patriarchal and matriarchy family.
4. Define marriage and discuss its various forms in brief.
5. Discuss the forms of marriage and their corresponding family types.
6. What is polygamy? Discuss its forms and causes.
7. Describe the nature and types of tribal political organizations.
8. Write a note on oaths and ordeals? What are its objectives? Give your comments.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the types of political organizations with reference to selected tribes.
2. Which types of family are socio-political organizations? Why?
3. Modern panchayats in tribal villages are new forms of traditional village council. Do you agree? Give reasons to your answer.
4. Distinguish between customs and customary laws?

5. Define customs and sanctions. How do they help in maintaining social harmony? Give your answer with suitable examples.
6. Do tribes have religion? Give reasons to your answer.
7. What are various forms and components of tribal religion? Discuss.

NOTES

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UNIT 3 ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

Structure

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- 3.2 Tribal Economic Organizations
- 3.3 Tribal Economy and Economic Organizations
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 - 3.3.3 Economy as a System of Activities
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 - 3.7.5 Matrilineal Society
- 3.8 Summary
- 3.9 Key Terms
- 3.10 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.11 Questions and Exercises
- 3.12 Further Readings

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit I you have learnt that tribes are heterogeneous groups and they inhabit different geographical areas in different zones and states/UTs of India. Obviously, their interaction with diverse natural surroundings to satisfy their material needs would be different. Such interactions to satisfy material needs are studied in Economics.

In Unit 2 you have learnt that human beings as individual or in groups enter into relations with the purpose of achieving social or political objectives. Such relations are social or political organizations. While interacting with nature, to achieve economic ends, tribes also enter into such relations which are essentially the economic organizations of tribes.

In this unit we will discuss tribal economic organizations. As you know tribes are in transition, as also are economic organizations. We will focus our

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discussion on economic organizations predominant in tribes. In a tribe, members may pursue different economic activities and for each one of these one may not find an organization. For example, in a hunting-gathering community you may notice wage labourers in recent years, but without an organization in the tribe. So, we will discuss hunting-gathering as an economic organization of the tribe, though some members may be found engaged in other activities.

Economic organization is also linked with the institution of property inheritance. But the institution reflects distinctly through different types of societies. Broadly we have patrilineal and matrilineal societies. The patrilineal societies can also be polyandrous and polygynous. Societies, as you know, are pastoral, hunter-gatherer or agricultural according to organization of economic activities. We shall discuss different rules of property inheritance in selected tribes belonging to different social types as mentioned above.

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3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the meaning, nature and scope of economy of the tribes
- Distinguish the concept of tribal economy from the conventional economy
- Discuss the meaning and nature of division of labour in tribal economic organizations
- Identify the types of economic activities and corresponding social types among the tribes
- Explain the trend of change in economic organizations in contemporary tribal societies
- Describe the rules of property inheritance in patrilineal and matrilineal tribal communities

3.2 TRIBAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

We pursue various activities to satisfy our economic needs. However, there are many that we cannot perform alone. So we enter into relations with others at the individual level or at the group level and in so doing organise ourselves into groups. For example, in a tribal community, people collectively engage in the extraction of food from natural resources. You know that technology cannot replace human beings fully. Nature of physical environment and the level of technology available determine how people should organise themselves in order to engage in economic activities successfully. In other words, we form economic organizations which in general refer to person to person, family to family, group to group, and country to country relations in the matter relating to economic activities, policy making, strategy

formulation, etc. to achieve economic ends. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and European Union are examples of economic organizations of countries at regional level. These are formal organizations based on set written laws.

But tribes, by definition, are self-reliant groups. So, tribal economic organizations at inter-tribe level are conspicuously absent and hence you cannot find regional economic organization in traditional tribal societies. Tribal economic organizations are informal in nature as these are interlocking social structures guiding how people work together to achieve economic ends. So, economic organizations of tribes refer to person to person and kinship group to kinship group relations while organising economic activities. Family to family relationship in a lineage is an example of kinship group relations. However, families from different lineages living as a village community also enter into relations to organise economic activities.

Some families organise labour on the basis of mutual reciprocation. This means, members of a family work for another family and in turn the members of second family work for the first one as and when necessary. This type of labour organization of mutual reciprocity is frequent in the fields of agriculture and house construction. As you know, tribes are also classified into hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, agriculturists, etc. on the basis of dominate economic pursuits at tribe level. Within such an organization, labour organization can be studied as a characteristic of economic organization of the tribe. However, in itself labour organization or division of labour is an economic organization. As labour organization draws on social relations, the organization is also a social organization. In general, economic organization, especially of a tribe, is a part of social organization which is directed to achieve economic ends.

The phrase *economic organization* presupposes the existence of an economy. Obviously, an understanding of tribal economy is a prerequisite to understand tribal economic organizations. You will learn about the nature and characteristics of tribal economy, and of economic organization in a tribe in sections 3.3.5 and 3.4.

3.3 TRIBAL ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

Before discussing tribal economy let us understand the use of terms like economy, economic, economics, and economic systems. *Economy* is a system relating to principles of production, consumption, distribution and exchange of goods and services with reference to cost and market. *Economic* is the adjective form of economy usually meaning *judicious use relating to economics*. *Economics*, on the other hand, is the name of the subject; it is the science on the principles governing an economic system that evolved after industrial revolution. *Economic system* refers to the activities of production, consumption, distribution and exchange of goods and services along with their governing principles. The definitions mainly relate to conventional economics.

3.3.1 Economics as a Discipline and Economy as a System

Economics, which is also known as conventional economics, is a discipline in social sciences. This discipline is a specialised branch of knowledge like political science, history, sociology, social anthropology, etc. From the study of economics,

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Check Your Progress

1. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) Organizations are formations of relations.
 - (b) Economic organizations are formal in nature.
 - (c) European Union is a country level Economic organization.
 - (d) A tribe is a self-reliant group.
 - (e) You will find inter-tribe economic organizations of tribal communities.

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Check Your Progress

2. Choose the correct answer
- (a) We study interaction of human beings with diverse natural surroundings to satisfy their material needs in - (Economics/ Material Culture).
- (b) (Economic system/ Market system) refers to the activities of production, consumption, distribution and exchange of goods and services along with their governing principles.
- (c) Tribal economy is a - (macro/ micro) level of economic system.
- (d) Labour organization in tribal communities are based on - (mutual reciprocation/ cash payment).

we learn the nature and scope of economics, underlying principles and assumptions governing the discipline, economic systems and their types and so on. Under nature and scope, you study subject matter and different branches of economics, relation with other disciplines, approaches to study economics, etc. Under various economic systems you will study about capitalist economy, socialist economy, mixed economy, rural economy, urban economy, developed economy, developing economy, regional economy, national economy, global economy and many others of the kind. You will study institutional framework of business enterprise with its machine technology, impersonal labour market, profit orientation; limited liability companies, international trading, banking and credit systems, globalisation of finance, policies of privatisation and liberalisation, monetary policy, tax structure, etc. Admittedly, conventional economics will not cover the subject matter of a tribal economy.

3.3.2 Tribal Economy or Economies

The term tribal economy apparently refers to the economic system of the tribes at a macro level. In this sense it seems that the tribes are homogenous and so the economy represents a system common to all the tribes. In real world situation this is not so; the tribes differ from one another on several counts, and you will experience a wide range of micro contrasts. For example, economically, you will find agriculturists like Apatanis, Khamptis, Oraons; pastoralists like Brokpas, Todas; hunter-gatherers like Puroiks (Sulungs), Birhors; and traders like Sherdulpens, Bhutias, Ahirs and so on. You have already studied classification of tribes with reference to political typology, levels of cultural contacts, etc. in unit I of this paper. Necessarily, the pastoralist economy and its principles are different from the economy of the tribes practising shifting cultivation. So, you cannot have a blanket term like *tribal economy* to cover all types of economic activities pursued by the tribes. Admittedly, the concept *tribal economy* does not give us an analytical category of economic system common to all the tribes, for example, scheduled tribes in India. This variation is also present among the tribes all over the world.

Then should you reject the use of the term *tribal economy* from academic discussion? Or is there any other interpretation for it?

Practically, there is no single economy of the tribes; rather there are many economies which are quite heterogeneous. The economies of tribes differ in terms of nature of production system, distribution pattern and consumption norms. The phrase that would better present the economic life of diverse tribal communities is 'tribal economies'. When you see the phrase 'tribal economy' you will understand it as a collective noun that stands for all its categories. In other words, tribal economy is a general notion for all types of economic systems existing in tribal communities.

Let us discuss what the term **economy** means.

3.3.3 Economy as a System of Activities

In a simply way economy is a system of economic activities, namely production, consumption and distribution and exchange. But the nature of economic activities and the underlying operating principles vary from one system to the other. When we refer to 'economics' we mean the body of specialized knowledge dealing with the systems of production, consumption and distribution and exchange which evolved with Industrial revolution during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In other words,

economics as a discipline took its birth with industrialisation and began studying economic life of industrial or modern societies and principles governing it.

3.3.4 Definitions of Economy and its Nature in Tribal Economy

There are three main definitions to understand economics as it evolved after industrialisation. The first one is by Adam Smith, regarded as the Father of Economics, who defined economics in terms of the ‘wealth of the nations’. The publication of his book, entitled *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes and of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) or simply *The Wealth of Nations* has been described as ‘the effective birth of economics as a separate discipline.’ In Smith’s view, the ideal economy is a self-regulating market system that automatically satisfies the economic needs of the populace.

J. B. Say (1803) defined economics as the science of production, distribution, and consumption of wealth. He distinguished the subject from its public-policy uses which was emphasized by earlier economist like Sir James Stuart (1767) and Adam Smith (1776). But the central focus of the definition remained on the use of money like his predecessors. The earlier term for ‘economics’ was political economy which was adapted from the French Mercantilist usage of *économie politique*. This extended *economy* from the ancient Greek term for household management to the national realm as public administration of the affairs of the state.

From the title of Adam Smith’s book, it is clear to you that economics studies *the wealth* of nations, not any organizations other than the nations. Therefore, the discipline was named as *Political Economy*, implying a branch of statecraft, and continued till the end of the 19th Century when *Political Economy* was renamed as *Economics*. In India also economics was understood as a branch of statecraft which is evident in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*.

Moreover, the economy operates in a self-regulating market system according to Adam Smith. But the fact of the matter is that ‘nation’ as concept and organization did not exist among tribes then and subsequently. Similarly, the concept and working of a self-regulating market system was conspicuously absent even in tribal worldview. Obviously, economics could not incorporate the study of ‘wealth of tribal communities’ as tribal communities did not confirm to the notions of *a nation* and *self-regulating market mechanism*.

The second representative definition came from Alfred Marshall (1890). In his book entitled *Principles of Economics* (1890) he defined economics in terms of a ‘science of material welfare’. His definition extended Smith’s analysis beyond wealth and from the societal to the microeconomic level. According to him, Economics is ‘a study of man in the ordinary business of life. It enquires how he gets his income and how he uses it’. Thus, it is on the one side, the study of wealth and on the other and more important side, a part of the study of man and his material welfare.

As you know, a tribal person destroys ‘material possession’, for example as in *potlatch*, not to gain material welfare, but to attain social status. Non-material considerations form an important component in the perception of *welfare*, especially of tribal people.

The third one is an improvement over the earlier two definitions of economics. This definition became the philosophical basis for understanding economics and

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economic activities. The definition, known as *scarcity definition*, came from Lionel Robbins (1932). He defined economics as ‘a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses’. His definition is based on the assumption that human wants are unlimited and the resources to satisfy them are limited and have alternative uses.

To understand economics in a scarcity sense is opposite to how a tribal person views his/her wants and resources. To a tribe person resources have much more meaning than a mere sense of physical entity and the basis of securing material means of existence. Primarily, resources are interwoven into whole aspects of tribal life and define the cultural identity. A tribe person nourishes few wants in a cultural perspective and exploits nature minimally for these few wants. To him/her, the resources are ‘unlimited’, bountiful, ‘giving’, ‘ever nourishing’, and are ‘free gifts’ of the Nature. Resources are not considered in terms of money value; nor used to maximise revenue or energy consumption as in conventional economic system. Many scholars, therefore, label tribal communities as *Affluent Society* (Sahalnis, 1972). Obviously, the economic life and underlying principles of tribes do not confirm to the underlying assumptions of the scarcity definition.

As you know, the society is not static; its material needs keep changing. Inventions and innovations make new consumable things available. Consequently, new issues crop up. Obviously, the nature and scope of economics, underlying principles and perspectives need adjustment to accommodate changes. Mention may be made of the definition Paul Samuelson (1948) that has introduced *time element* to Robbins definition, focused on distribution of whatever is produced and has considered ‘*men and society... with or without the use of money*’. In his definition there is a scope to consider barter economy, but within the frame of scarce *productive resources which could have alternative uses*. The definition does not provide a clear cut outline of economic principles to include both barter and money economies within the scope of economic discipline. As you know, the underlying principles in both the economies are different on many grounds. His consideration of future consumption has implication of sustainability. But the tribal ways of resource use, without the assumption of ‘scarce resource’ already provide a sustainable strategy. Obviously, extension of the scope of economics to include barter economy is not just what understanding of a tribal economy in contrast to conventional economy demands.

Economics is the study of how men and society choose, with or without the use of money, to employ scarce productive resources which could have alternative uses, to produce various commodities over time, and distribute them for consumption now and in the future among various people and groups of society.

- Paul Samuelson, 1948.

Beside the use of money, another underlying principle of conventional economics is rationality. This means a consumer must maximise his/her satisfaction from consuming a commodity in terms of money spent. The producer will act in order to maximise his/her profit. Maximisation is considered in money terms. In other words, rationality is based on *optimising principle* and in terms of money value. While optimising, subjective factors like impact of personal relations are kept neutral; non-paid services like nourishing of a mother to a child does not have a place in the frame of optimisation principle. But tribal rationality is not based on such criterion. A tribe person’s rationality is not partial; it is a holistic perspective based on cultural norms.

By now you must have understood that all these definitions of economics emerged when the economic behaviour of the people and the State was governed by the price mechanism. This was the characteristic of economics after industrialisation. The demand and supply of goods and services determined the quantity to be produced. Under such a situation market played a significant role. But this situation does not exist in pre-industrial non-monetised societies to which we give the appellation of 'tribal societies'. In this context Herskovits (1952) merits mention. According him

...in no conventional treatise on economic theory is primitive man depicted in a manner either in harmony with the facts of non-literate societies as known to anthropologists or in line with the anthropological theory concerning the nature of interaction between man, his environment and his traditions.

It is clear that the definitions of the economists do not provide an understanding of tribal economics which are non-monetised and mostly based on non-industrial mode of production. These people largely depend on their immediate natural environment. Normally, people consume what they produce or sometimes exchange from others. To put it in a simple way every society on the basis of its available resources evolves its economic system. So we can conclude that different societies have different economic systems, that is, the system of managing the process of production, consumption and distribution.

There are other ways, by looking at which you can understand the areas of difference between conventional and tribal economies. You already know that a tribal community displays holistic understanding of events and aspects of life. To a tribe person, an aspect of life does not exist independently. All aspects of life are integrated. You cannot study economic aspect of life in isolation, for it is instituted in the whole social process. In other words, all aspects of life are integrated and interconnected. You will find that the economic life is connected with faiths and beliefs of people. That is why, while selecting a plot for shifting cultivation or before hunting people perform rituals to appease presiding deities. Kinship relation plays an important role in labour organization, for there is not practice of wage labour in a tribal community. Mutual reciprocity within kinship relations determine labour exchange.

Let us take another example. Gift exchange during marriage is an important feature. This involves the exchange of material goods and hence falls within the purview of economics. But what goods are to be given, in what quantity and to whom are determined not by any market mechanism but by the cultural norms. As the gifts materialize a social bond and sometimes reinforces the kinship relations the practice of gift exchange is very much the subject matter of sociology. That is why an activity or phenomenon cannot be isolated from other activities or phenomena in such societies. These are interrelated and instituted in the social process. Needless to say, economic activities depend on social appropriation of labour. Therefore, in a tribal community economy reveals through interconnectedness as instituted in social process which is conspicuously absent in convention economic systems.

You also know that conventional economics took birth in the process of industrialisation. In this process factory production played the leading role. The place of production and the place of residence became separated as production was organized in a factory. Prior to it, production was organized at household level within the community frame for the subsistence needs of household members. In tribal community, production takes place at household and community space by members of the household and community. In the factory system, production was

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organized in a large scale for the consumption of those who are even not distantly involved in the process of production. We consume, for example, mobile or computer. But most of us are not involved in the process of production of these items. In the factory system there was surplus production which required a mechanism to reach the ultimate consumers far away from the place of production. The consumer and the producer did not meet face to face. In between there were intermediaries. Further, barter exchange became irrelevant. The producer usually would not require all types of the goods which consumers might like to exchange. Again for the intermediaries it became difficult to gather various goods from the consumers to pay the producer. The goods which the consumers would like to exchange were of different types, quality and quantity; and so did not have a commonly accepted standard value. There was also the problem of transportation and storage. Hence, a common medium of exchange, i.e. money was used in the process of distribution and exchange of goods produced in a factory system. As a matter of fact, the economic activities evolved a system of production, consumption and distribution and exchange consequent upon the emergence of factory system of production which was different from the household system and which still continues in our time.

In household system the production was meant for self-consumption. This does not mean that there was no surplus production at all. There was in fact surplus production at household level. The household had to produce more during a year when a marriage ceremony was planned or a house was to be constructed. Besides, if there was surplus due to good crops, it was used not for accumulation but for earning prestige. In chieftain type societies, the chief's household had to produce more to feed others. The concern to meet present needs was considered more important than future. A social status was enhanced not by keeping wealth but by giving it away. The surplus items were used to organise feasts for the community members to raise one's social status. Even the surplus households, like a chief's family used to compete in organising feasts. In some Melanesian societies, for example, the pig feasts contain an element of competition. 'Big men' would try to enhance their status and prestige by the size of their feasts. A similar situation existed among many Native American groups. The chiefs attempted to enhance their prestige by organising feasts called *potlatches*. At a potlatch, a chief and his group would give away blankets, pieces of copper, canoes, and large quantities of food to the guests.

As the community was not producing surplus, there was no exchange beyond the community. But in some communities' exchange took place in prestige goods. Bronislaw Malinowski (1961/1922) mentions of a type of exchange among the communities known as Trobriand Islanders of the eastern coast of New Guinea. The items of exchange were *red shell necklace* and *white shell armbands*. The possessors of the former would travel to other islands in a clockwise direction, while the possessor of the later in anticlockwise direction. That is why the exchange tradition is called *kula ring*. With the trade in these items the members in the party also traded in food and other necessities. It is in fact the men who did possess the necklace and armbands would initiate the exchange expedition following the tradition. However, the movement of goods was limited within a defined territory, meaning long distance trade was not carried.

The sharing was a predominant mode of ensuring future security. A person with a good catch of fish would usually share it with his clan/community members instead of preserving the surplus against rainy days. If in the following day he did

not get any catch, he would not go hungry; for he knew that he would share the catch or edibles with some other member of his community.

3.3.5 Division of Labour

An individual cannot fulfil all his/her wants working alone hence the need for bonding relations arises. Such bonding relations among a group of individuals refer to cooperation. As you know people form groups and cooperate with one another to satisfy their wants, of which material wants are predominant. Material wants are also called economic needs. In other words, people work together to satisfy economic ends. People organise in different ways while working together. This type of organization in economic activities is called *Division of Labour*. You can understand division of labour using two concepts. The first one is popular in conventional economic systems and relates to *specialisation*. The second one relates to *Social Solidarity*; though it has social concerns, it clearly explains the nature of division of labour.

Division of Labour Through Specialization

In the conventional economic system, an output is produced at different stages. For example, the stages of production of bread can be procurement of materials including firewood, making the dough, preparing the oven, putting the dough in moulds and then into the oven for baking, slicing, wrapping the sliced bread and then eventually marketing the finished product. In industrial processes of large scale production a different worker or set of workers are engaged in different stages/processes of production. Hence, the division of labour is *process based*.

There is another way of labour engagement in the production process. The work at each stage in the production process carried out either by an individual worker or a group of workers is combined to produce bread. This type of labour organization is called a *product based* division of labour. In tribal communities specialisation of labour is product based, not process based as it is in the conventional economy.

Division of Labour Through Social Solidarity

Émile Durkheim has explained the nature of division of labour with reference to the analytical concept of social *solidarity*. You can understand the nature of division of labour in tribes with reference to his above concept. His primary concern, however, was sociological rather than economic. Nevertheless, it gives an idea of understanding of division of labour in the economic activities of tribes, for these organizations are part of social organizations and economy is instituted in social process.

Social solidarity is of two types: *Mechanical* and *Organic* and it was Durkheim who introduced the concepts of *Mechanical Solidarity* and *Organic Solidarity* in his book entitled *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) to correlate society types with the degrees of social cohesion. He emphasised on ways in which individuals are connected to each other and how they identify with the groups and societies in which they live. Depending on the degree of cohesion and the level of integration, the division of labour would be simple or complex. In other words, by looking at division of labour one can identify whether the society is simple or complex. According to him, as the society moves from simple to a complex stage, corresponding social solidarity changes from *Mechanical Solidarity* to *Organic Solidarity*. He attributed

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Mechanical Solidarity to simple societies like the tribes and Organic Solidarity to complex industrial societies like ours. Division of labour is in the nature of Mechanical Solidarity in simple societies and of organic nature in complex societies.

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Let us take two analogies to understand the terms *Mechanical* and *Organic*. In a machine different constituting parts do not have independent functioning. All the parts combine and cooperate in a way that the machine functions as a unit.

On the other hand, let us consider our body. The functioning of the body is the sum total of distinct functioning of its constituents like hand, legs, eyes, ears etc. The hands have their own functions and the legs have theirs. When we consider the functioning of the body we take into account the distinct functioning of all its parts. But in a machine, constituent parts do not have distinct ways of functioning like legs or eyes; they cooperate in the functioning of the machine only. The internal energies generated by the parts become the energy of the machine as a unit. In body parts each constituent part's functioning is distinct and together they make the functioning of the body possible. Different parts are distinct but interdependent unlike in a machine.

In simple societies, social cohesion and integration comes from the homogeneity of individuals. For example, people of a tribe feel connected through customs, feelings of obligation to others, shared set of values and beliefs and so on. These are handed down from generation to generation and they exhibit homogeneity of character. In such societies solidarity is based on kinship ties of familial networks. All the above forces in a tribal community work together to generate 'Collective Conscience' and cause them to cooperate like parts of a machine. They carry on the same kinds of thoughts when working to attain economic ends. There is resemblance in the nature of their works and hence, their works also exhibit resemblance with the nature of cohesion and the division of labour corresponds to mechanical solidarity.

In complex societies population size is huge and people are spread over larger areas. They display different characteristics and heterogeneity. They seldom feel connected through customs, feelings of obligation to others, shared set of values and beliefs, and so enjoy greater individual freedoms. Nevertheless, they are linked to other people and consequently the society through dependency in order to fulfil their economic functions. People become specialized in one particular area. Since people are only able to do one particular thing, they depend much more on the rest of society to do other things. In organic solidarity some people would produce one kind of goods and the others different kinds. These are often reciprocally exchanged in conformity to laws and contracts.

Division of labour becomes complex and specialised. Social solidarity therefore is maintained through the interdependence of its component parts much like the interdependent but differentiated organs of a living body. Society relies less on customs, shared faiths, uniform rules on regulating the relations but more on formal contracts and laws. The division of labour corresponds to the complex nature of organic solidarity. Division of labour in terms of organic solidarity is conspicuously absent in tribal societies.

Specialisation and Solidarity Interface

According to Durkheim different members work independently but produce to meet the requirements of the whole community. This type of division of labour, according

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to Durkheim, is *Organic Solidarity*. This is a division of labour that ensures social solidarity in an organic sense. Here division of labour and bonding among them lies in individual or group specialisation. One or a few workers produce one kind of goods and the others produce different kinds. These are reciprocally exchanged so that like constituent organs of an organism everyone is dependent on each other. In a community, for example, the blacksmith depends on potters and farmers, framers on potters and blacksmith, and potters on blacksmith and farmers. All three groups produce what the community requires and meet this requirement by reciprocal exchanges. The exchange takes place not in terms of formal contract or law, but in recognition to customary practices and norms, as binding in tribal communities as the formal law. This type of specialisation is noticed in caste based societies. As you know, tribe by definition is positioned in contrast to caste. In other words, division of labour in terms of organic solidarity could not be found in tribal communities.

However, this example of specialisation is not complex like the ones we see in industrial societies. You will notice from this example that division of labour is more or less product based. The potter for example, normally attends to all the stages of work in pot making. Similarly, a farmer by himself or with the cooperation of others attends to all stages of work in agriculture. The specialisation is product based, but not mechanical as the potter does not do the work of blacksmith or the blacksmith of the farmer. The works of the three do not resemble one another.

In addition to the product based division of labour you can also see process based division of labour in terms of Organic Solidarity. We have already given the example of making bread. In view of this you can state with certainty that *process based* division of labour is not a characteristic of tribal economic organizations.

In tribal communities a person or a group of persons undertake works and attend all the stages of production without specialising in any work. Of course there is age and sex difference in their organization of labour. But the product does not come from reciprocal exchange of male and female specialisations. This means the works of both male and female are not combined to produce one commodity like the bread in our example. They together produce or independently produce the commodity if the production is governed by sex differences. This is called *Product Based* Division of Labour. Durkheim calls it *Mechanic Solidarity*. In the community everybody, individually or as a group, performs similar types of works, involving themselves in all the processes in the work like producing bread. In other words, product based division of labour is noticed in tribal communities. Obviously, social cohesion reflects through Mechanical Solidarity.

3.3.6 Tribal and Conventional Economics Interface

By conventional Economics we understand the economic system in industrial societies. In contrast, Tribal Economics refers to the economic system of pre-industrial societies. We will find disagreement between scholars as to the relation between the two. Some scholars believe that the two economic systems are essentially different, while others believe that in both of them, the governing principles are similar. The latter school believes the difference *in degree, not in kind*.

Difference in Degree

Some economic historians view tribal economics by applying conventional principles. They assume resource management to be common both in conventional

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and tribal economics. Accordingly, economy is a system concerned with the way people manage mainly their resources, but not entirely material, whether in tribal or industrial societies. To cite an example, management of human resource in the process of production is an example of non-material resource. The management is also concerned with choices to be made between different uses of resources when these resources are scarce. Economics, therefore, studies the allocation of scarce resources having alternative uses in the process of production, consumption and distribution. Raymond Firth (1967) who studied Polynesian economy has called it,

“...that broad sphere of human activity concerned with resources, their limitations and uses, and the organization, whereby they are brought in a rational way into relation with human wants.”

This is what Leone Robbins (1948/1932) has emphasised in his scarcity definition of economics. The tribal people due to their subsistence needs use the resources in a minimal way and so they do not face scarcity. But, when they face it, by any chance, they migrate to another place. However, there are instances when the scope of migration is limited, people make the best use of their resources. The land management system of the Apatanis can be cited as an example for such a case. In recent years due to population rise and in the absence of earlier fear of feuds with other tribes, the Apatanis have also migrated to different places in the state. But the facet of the matter is that scarcity, as we understand, in an industrial system of production does not arise in pre-industrial tribal communities. We cannot study tribal economics in right perspectives by applying analytical frame of conventional economics.

Those who believe that much of the laws of economics are applicable to study all types of economics are called *formalists*. They hold that the differences between conventional and tribal economic systems are only in *degree*, but not in *kind*. The point of focus is that the biological and social wants are universal and hence the operational principles can be generalized. This stand is clearly explained in the words of Herskovits (1952) who writes,

“The basic problem is universal: not only to have enough to eat to keep alive, but also to satisfy the demands of personal tastes, religious rules and a multitude of social obligations, all as important to life of the group as mere subsistence is to life of the organism.”

In general, the formalists follow Robbins' (1948/1932) scarcity definition of economics which you have already studied. You have already learnt how the definition of Robbins is inadequate in explaining tribal economics in its totality.

Difference in Kind

Many economic historians and anthropologists are of opinion that the differences between two economic systems are in kind. These scholars and academics are called *Substantivists*. They believe that culture affects economic attitudes, and therefore also to the working of economic systems. They have advanced Substantivists approach to study tribal economics which differs from formalist approach.

The Substantivists approach to study tribal economics owes its origin to the writings of economic historian Karl Polanyi (1957). He and his disciple George Dalton (1967) argued that the differences between conventional and tribal economics are more fundamental. Their stand is also supported by Paul Bohannan, and Marshall Sahlins. Polanyi (1957) takes a position that economics is

“an institutionalized process of interaction between man and his environment, which results in a continuous supply of want satisfying material means.”

Dalton considers this meaning of economics as a substantive one, because in substantive sense

“... economics refers to the provision of material goods which satisfy biological and social wants.”

Biological and social wants are often culture specific. The Substantivist approach takes the position that economics is institutionalized in culture. Hence, they maintain that no general law can be applied across the cultures. The tribal economics therefore differs in kind.

If you analyse the assumptions behind substantive and formal economic systems, you will find two ways of looking at economics. Cook (1973) following Godelier (1972) distinguishes these two ways. In the first sense, economy is viewed as a field of specific activities and as such not related to other aspects of socio-cultural life. This is an understanding of economics in its formal sense. In other words, this is the nature of conventional economics.

In the second sense, economy is viewed as a field encompassing a specific aspect of human activities in totality. Economic aspect does not exist independent of social, political or religious aspects of life. All these aspects are integrated and interconnected. This is what embeddedness means. In other words, economy is instituted in social process. This nature of economics exists in substantive economy which is usually tribal economy.

By now you must have understood that what conventional economics says is not what the economic life and underlying principles in it mean to a tribal person. Before the birth of *Political Economy*, there was *Economy* different from economy as statecraft. Naturally, tribal economy is different from that of political economy. This difference is viewed by some as a matter of *kind*, while others see it as a matter in *degree*. But tribal economy displays characteristics which contrast with conventional economics.

In short, tribal economy

- (i) Is not a political economy;
- (ii) Does not give the notion of the political nation;
- (iii) Considers both material and non-material wealth and welfare;
- (iv) Does not deal with choices between unlimited wants and scarce means; and
- (v) Division of labour is instituted in social process and hence not purely economic in nature.

N. K. Behura (1997) has summed up tribal economy in following terms:

“Economy of the tribe is the projection of its socio-cultural system. It demonstrates the level of technology a tribe possesses, and the manner in which the tribe has responded to the ecosystem in which it is placed. Family is the unit of production which is based on the exploitation of locally and easily available resources with a simple technology. Distribution of goods and services is regulated by considerations of right, obligation, reciprocity and mutuality. The state of tribal economy has been described to be at the level of subsistence or below it.”

This ideal definition does not display the nature of many tribal economies in contemporary India. They are at different levels of integration with national economy,

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though the ideals of tradition exist in different degrees among different tribes. Tribal economy is thus a system encompassing a range of practices in between substantive outlook and formal economic practices, but with an irreversible trend of moving towards conventional economics.

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3.3.7 Underpinning Ideals

In modern economy activities like production and exchange are governed by formal contracts and laws. For example, a producer enters into contract with labourers according to labour laws of the country. Profit motive is a determining factor of production. But, in a tribal economy, labour appropriation in production is not governed by formal contracts and laws; rather cultural norms and social factors guide appropriation of labour. In other words, the ideals behind tribal economy do not corroborate to many ideals of conventional economy. As you know, profit in terms of money is not the ideal behind production activities in a tribal society. Similarly, production of marketable surplus is not a characteristic of such an economy.

We will discuss some ideals behind economic organizations of tribal economy. The ideals are attitude, perception and in general, the world view of tribal people. Ideals are culture specific and have ethical considerations. These ideals often appear as characteristics of a tribal economy. But both are different because ideals determine the activities and organizations for these activities. Characteristics, on the other hand, reflect structural and functional aspects of economic activities and organizations drawing on the ideals.

Ethically, the tribes believe in *sharing*. The sharing practices in economic activities and their organizations designate tribal economy as a sharing economy. The practices, necessarily, are based on the ideal of sharing. The practice of mutual reciprocation of labour in economic activities, for example, has sharing ideal at its back. A hunter while kills a big animal usually shares the game with other families. He does not preserve for future. Sharing is a type of insurance for future. Though there is technological reason, the primacy is the ideal of sharing. Had there been the tendency to accumulate, the people would have developed technology for preservation. The ideal of *non-accumulation* is behind production *for self-consumption* without marketable surplus. It is not a surprise that tribal economy is rightly characterised as a subsistence economy because of the ideal of non-accumulation.

The ideals are interlinked and so also characteristics of tribal economy. However, a few interconnected ideals are outlined as follows:

- (i) Sharing attitude;
- (ii) Subsistence tendency;
- (iii) Perception of economy in socio-cultural sense;
- (iv) Community sense and mutuality;
- (v) Sense of community of being, human being considered as a part of living and non-livings beings;
- (v) Non-futuristic attitude, concern for present issues; and
- (vii) Restraints in resource use within socio-cultural norms.

3.3.8 Characteristics of Tribal Economy

In the earlier sections you have learnt about the differences between conventional and tribal economic systems. You have also studied definitions forwarded by different

scholars. So you are aware of the characteristics of a tribal economy to some extent. The differences and the characteristics discussed above are ideal ones. In reality, contemporary tribal societies do not exist in the ideal stages. We will discuss some of the characteristics of tribal economies in India so that you can have better insight into economic organizations of tribes.

The tribal communities of India display several stages of economic development. As we have discussed, there are food gathering, hunting and fishing, farming, pastoralist etc. communities among the Indian tribes. Their economic activities depend on the ecological settings they inhabit and thus are diverse. Nevertheless, the economic pursuits of different tribes in different ecological setting display some common characteristics. Some important ones are as follows:

1. Simple Organization of Labour and Technology

The production process in tribal communities is based on the use of simple tools and implements. In hunting-gathering economies bows, arrows, traps, etc. are the main hunting implements. Fishing techniques are also not sophisticated. They use handmade traps of different varieties and divert river channels manually by piling up stones from whose cavities they catch the fish. Some communities use drag nets and herbal poisons to intoxicate the fish. For collection of bamboo, cane, poles etc. for house construction the tribal people use axes, *daos*, knives, etc. The shifting cultivators use dibbling stick, spade, axe, baskets and some locally produced iron implements like crow-bar, *khurpi*, etc. In transportation they generally use human energy. In addition to these implements the plains agriculturists use plough and bullock for cultivation and also use animal energy in transportation.

The division of labour is based on sex and age. It is a product based division of labour, i.e., the total process of production of a good is not divided into different stages with specialised labour in each stage.

2. Mixed Economic Activities

The tribes do not pursue any single activity for their sustenance. The plains agricultural community also combines gathering and hunting with agriculture to supplement food requirements and thus, the tribes depend on a number of sources for livelihood.

3. Economic Backwardness

The tribal economy is synonymous with the backward economy. It is difficult to quantify their activities in monetary terms. Even if we quantify their income we will find that their per capita income is very low. Even today, the lowest per capita income is attributed to the tribal people. The production process is carried on using simple tools and implements. The economy operates around the primary sector activities. The consumption is conspicuous in nature and the choice between goods and services is limited. There is no capital formation and the market forces do not determine resource allocation.

4. Barter and Non-Monetised Economy

The traditional tribal economy is designated largely as a barter economy, wherein goods are exchanged for goods. Money as a medium of exchange, store or measurement of value has little or no role to play in a traditional tribal economy.

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Check Your Progress

3. Who said the following lines?
 - (a) A self-regulating market system automatically satisfies the economic needs of the populace.
 - (b) Economics is 'a study of man in the ordinary business of life. It enquires how he gets his income and how he uses it.'
 - (c) Tribal communities are Affluent Society.
 - (d) Specialisation is an aspect of division of labour.
 - (e) Division of labour is in the nature of organic solidarity in tribal societies.
 - (f) The sharing ethics is insurance for future uncertainty.
 - (g) *Red shell necklace* moves in a clock-wise direction in *kula* exchange.
 - (h) Formalists believe that conventional and tribal economics differ in degree.

The notion of property is closely related to the display and spending of wealth rather than accumulation. In recent years the situation is changing and the barter economy is giving place to a market economy.

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5. Subsistence Economy

The tribal economy by definition is a subsistence economy. The production and consumption level is of bare minimum type. This means production is meant for self-consumption. However, one should not think that there is no surplus in tribal economy. There is surplus at individual level. When a family thinks of constructing a house or organising a marriage ceremony it produces surplus by engaging community labour which it reciprocates later. However, there is no marketable surplus with a commercial motive.

As the economy operates at the subsistence level, the production is organised on a small scale.

6. Marketless Economy

The tribal communities are exposed to weekly markets; they sell and exchange their goods in the market places. But the tribal economy does not exhibit the trends of a market economy. Their social, economic, political and religious needs are satisfied within their system itself. These needs are embedded in their culture and it is this culture that influences their economic activities. As the economic affairs of a tribe are not determined by the general market forces, hence, the economy is called a *marketless economy*.

7. The Economy of Mutual And Reciprocal Cooperation

The economic activities are carried on the basis of mutual cooperation. Lineage, clan or community based labour is appropriated when family labour supply falls short of demand. The labour engaged is usually not paid any wage; rather the employment of labour is reciprocated in some future date. Thus, the appropriation of community labour is mutually reciprocated. In addition to this, hunting, fishing, food gathering, and all such activities need cooperation because of the nature of the work.

8. Less Diversified Economy

The tribal people depend on several activities for their livelihood. As has been said, no single pursuit meets up their material means of existence. For example, hunting is supplemented by fishing and gathering; the shifting cultivators depend on fishing, gathering and hunting to supplement their food requirements. But all these pursuits are based on land, forest and water resources. Even manufacturing of utilitarian objects like baskets and wood crafts depend on forest resources. Though some tribes manufacture iron and other metal products, they quarry the minerals primarily from the surface of the soil. In other words, the activities are related to the primary sector activities. There is no entrepreneur class in a tribal economy; and the secondary and tertiary sector activities virtually do not exist.

9. Domestic Mode of Production

The production is organised for the consumption of family members by employing the family labour itself. Each and every family normally produces what they require using their material means of existence. Any shortage is fulfilled through

exchange within the lineage, clan or village community. Inter village exchange takes place within a known circle or kin group. There is *face to face relation* between the exchanging parties. Since production takes place in the household and within the village, there is no difference between the place of residence and the place of manufacturing as in the case of the factory system of production.

10. Sustainable Resource Use

The subsistence nature of economy is characterised by small scale of production and thus minimisation of needs. As a result, the resources were not used to a critical limit posing a threat to natural regeneration. In addition to small scale of production, the resources were not put to diversified uses. For example, the forest resources were not used for making furniture in traditional community. Besides, the resources were not either used or used in a very limited scale to meet the demand beyond the community which owned the resources. As a result, the resources were sustainable.

11. Embedded Economy

The tribal economy is embedded in nature. The economic activities cannot be isolated from other activities, say social or religious. The forests are not cleared for shifting cultivation before the performance of a ritual. Rituals are performed for good harvest and good catches during hunting. Many tribal people observe taboos after the hunting of big animals. The division of labour is based on social criteria like sex and age. As a matter of fact, the economy is institutionalised in the culture.

12. Sharing Economy

Tribal economy is not an accumulated economy. Sharing plays a major role in such an economy. Whenever one hunts a big animal he distributes it among the fellow villagers keeping his own share. In a tribal economy, sharing is a type of insurance for the future as a family is not sure of getting an animal every day from hunting. Moreover, the animal one hunts cannot be preserved or consumed by the family if it is big. So, if one shares today, he holds a claim tomorrow over the meat of the animal hunted by other. By sharing his product, a tribal insures his future that is vulnerable to uncertainty.

Besides the above characteristics, the tribal economy is marked by the absence of profit motive as it is normally designated as the self-sufficient economy. This is because the material means of existence are mostly produced within the system. As far as ownership of resources is concerned it is community based and the individual rights operate within the community frame as per customary prescriptions. When a family migrates from the village, he ceases the right to use the resources. Normally, the individual rights are 'use rights' (*usufructuary* rights).

It is a known fact that tribes in India have been a part and parcel in the process of nation building since Independence as they are integrated in the policies and programmes of development. Obviously, the economy displays characteristics different from the tribal economy in an ideal stage. Majumdar and Madan (1970) have identified nine different traits of tribal economy in India which emerged within two decades of its development planning. The features of integration are visible but fluid. These traits are also found in contemporary tribal economy. Taking the cue from Majumdar and Madan we can outline the following features of tribal economy:

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1. There is an absence of technological aids in the tribal economy resulting inefficient, inadequate and even wasteful exploitation of nature. Consequently, the bare minimum necessity for sustenance is raised with great difficulty. An economic surplus is rare in their community.
2. The economic relations among the tribes themselves are mostly based on barter and exchange. Money as a store and measure of value, and medium of exchange is not used widely. Institutions like banking and credit are used only in dealing with non-tribal groups which depends upon the nature and frequency of contracts with them. The use of money is also linked with development projects and schemes. Money as a medium of exchange among tribes is found in urban areas and to some degrees in rural areas. Barter is still predominant and exchange of traditional items is still prevalent.
3. The profit motive in economic dealings is generally absent. The role of an incentive is fulfilled by a sense of mutual obligation, sharing and solidarity.
4. Co-operative and collective endeavour is a strongly developed feature in tribal economy.
5. The rate of innovation, internal and induced, is very low and consequently the economy is relatively static.
6. The regular market as an institution along with its conditions of market like perfect competition and monopoly is absent. What comes nearest to is the weekly market of festival or seasonal meets. In urban centres market for tribal items, including vegetables are coming up. Production, consumption and distribution have opened up to market linkage to some extents.
7. The manufacture of consumer rather than capital goods is common. In fact, production of goods for subsistence is still the practice in tribal villages.
8. Specialization based on specially acquired specific technical abilities is very low. In some areas weaving, iron works, etc. are being specialised for market. However, division of labour, based on factors other than specialization like sex, age, is widely present.
9. The notion of property is closely related to display and expenditure of wealth rather than to its accumulation. Property includes both movable goods like cattle, ornaments, utensils, etc. and immovable goods such as land. Notion of inheritance of property is traditional though in some areas new norms like a girl inheriting landed property is coming up. Both types of ownership, collective and individual, are known.

3.4 DOMAIN OF ORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

There are three economic activities fundamental to all types of economic systems. These are production, consumption and distribution & exchange. However, the nature of these activities varies between industrial and pre-industrial communities. Here we shall focus on the basic economic activities in pre-industrial, precisely the tribal communities.

3.4.1 Production

The process of production, whatever form it takes, is the beginning of the economic activities of a community. In hunting-gathering and fishing communities, human beings exploit nature for satisfaction of material needs without transforming it. But in agricultural communities, material necessities are produced by transforming nature. Maurice Godelier (1972) defines it as the “totality of operations which supplies a society with material means of existence”. In a tribal economy, production refers to utilisation of natural resources for livelihood sustenance with a well-defined organization of technology and labour. These resources are not available uniformly everywhere. Some areas have one type of resources in abundance than the others. . Naturally, the available resources engage people in a type of production different from other areas with different resource base. In short, production primarily depends on the natural environment and is specific to that environment particularly for subsistence people. To cite an example, the natural environment of Assam is suitable for tea plantation while that of Kashmir for apple cultivation. In this section we shall outline the ownership of resources, organization of technology and labour in production process.

In tribal societies, resources are community owned and individuals exercise *usufructuary* rights over them. Hence, individual ownership exists only in the community frame of ownership, where the community is either a lineage or a clan or a village or tribe. However, private ownership exists in cases of personal belongings such as in the case of tools and ornaments etc. The production takes place in a private (family) sphere. In pastoralist economies, pastures and water sources are owned by the community in the customary frame, but the animals are owned individually. Private individual ownership is usually associated with intensive agriculture. But this may not be always the case. Till the 1970s the Khamptis and the Apatanis, who traditionally practice intensive agriculture in Arunachal Pradesh, enjoyed individual rights within customary frame.

People in every society have a technology which consists of the cultural knowledge and the information that people possess about manufacture and use of tools. It also includes the practice of extraction and refinements of raw materials. Precisely, in tribal communities the technology is simple and includes handmade tools and implements, constructions (such as animal traps) and required skills (such as how and where to fix the animal traps). It helps carrying out small scale economic activities for subsistence, whether it is in agriculture, hunting, or fishing. Practically, technological knowledge consists of the technique of weaving, making looms, construction of traditional houses, basketry, wood carving, iron smithy, etc. It extends to the practice of agriculture and use of forest resources. You have learnt the nature of technology in tribal economy in section 3.3.8.

The division of labour is based on age and sex. Some activities like hunting are exclusively meant for male members while weaving for female. Similarly, the old and children are not given hard works. The division of labour as we have discussed is *product based*. There is no specialisation in different stages associated with the process of production of a commodity. An individual does not have any specialisation; an expert hunter also takes part in constructing a house or in agricultural activities. An iron smithy does not carry on the iron works exclusively for his/his family’s livelihood; he also makes basket and involves in agriculture and forest activities. A tribal woman weaves cloth, cooks for the family members,

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collect vegetables and firewood, goes out fishing and works in the agricultural field. Each one, whether a male or female, is engaged in a number of assignments, which together fulfil the material needs of the family members in general.

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In forest hunting type, hill cultivation type and even in some plains cultivation type communities there is little formal organization of labour. The labour group is organised when there is a need at the time of production. The *patang*, a labour corps of the Apatanis, is active mainly during house construction, collection of house building materials from frosts, transplantation and harvesting. During other parts of the year it stands dissolved. The number of members in the *patang* may vary from season to season and new members may join in it. Obviously, the labour organization has changing composition and leadership; the membership is voluntary and depends on individual's willingness.

3.4.2 Consumption

The unit of production and unit of consumption in tribal communities are normally homologous. For example, the family is generally the unit of production; and it is the family which is largely a unit of consumption. Occasionally, it differs when surplus goods are bartered against some goods which a family does not produce but require fulfilling material needs. A widower may not produce cloth, but he gets it from others for his use through barter exchange or otherwise. The position we take here is that the consumption is direct when the units of production and units of consumption are homologous. But it could be also indirect when the units differ and consumption takes place through barter exchange.

In fact, consumption refers to the utilisation of goods and services to satisfy both material and non-material needs of the individual and the group. At individual level one consumes material goods like food, clothes, shelter; and non-material goods like the service of a priest who performs rituals as curative measure when he/she falls sick. Traditional tribal communities were prone to epidemics. These were thought to be caused by supernatural beings and hence supernatural curative practices like rituals at village/community level were organised.

The tribal people are not individualistic, for they are community people. Community commitment, for them, has greater significance than individual concern. As you know, the smallest unit of production is family, and this family is also the unit of consumption. The surplus if any in the family is shared by community members on different occasions. Obviously, the consumption has a community dimension.

The consumption has both sacred and secular dimensions also. The services of the priest rendered through the performance of rituals to cure a sick person has sacred dimension. It relates to the faiths and beliefs of the people. The Apatnais do not share sacrificial pig blood even with their married daughters as after marriage daughters belong to the other clans. Obviously, the consumption of pig blood by clan members has sacred dimension. But all types of consumption are not sacred. Normal dietary intake, daily use of clothes and so on have secular or profane dimension as they do not relate to the faiths and beliefs of the people and no restrictions are imposed in the process of consumption. Wearing a particular type of dress during a ritual has a sacred consideration. The priests use specific dresses for performing specific rituals as is considered sacred. On normal occasions his dressing pattern does not have any sacredness attached to it.

As discussed, consumption has a social dimension. The male and female dresses are different in all the tribal communities. The dressing pattern of the chiefs and the commoners are different in chiefdoms. In Buddhist tribes, the monks wear maroon or yellow dresses. In some Tani group of tribes a competition is held to ascertain the social status by sacrificing *mithun* (*bos frontalis*). One who kills more *mithuns* is considered to have the highest social status. It is not accumulation but consumption that determines the status of an individual in the society.

3.4.3 Distribution and Exchange

Distribution refers to sharing of the output of production by those who have helped in its production. In a tribal community distribution is simple and mostly guided by cultural norms. When a productive activity like hunting is undertaken on cooperative basis, output so produced is divided according to cultural norms among the number of families or working hands participated in it. Even the meat of the hunted animals is distributed among the old persons, priests, widows, etc. who did not participate in the hunting. The distribution of goods and services in traditional tribal communities is one of the three main types of reciprocity: *generalised*, *balanced* and *negative*. These are exchanges without the use of money. However, there is market exchange where money plays an important role of distribution. But we will discuss the exchange without the use of money. Exchanges are made with the expectation of a return or without any apparent return. When goods and services are given to others without the apparent expectation of a return we call it generalised reciprocity. The parents give their children food, clothes, etc. for which they do not expect any return. The chiefs often organise feast for the commoners without any expectation of returns. The dormitory boys render their services at the time of agriculture. They get food and drinks, but not in lieu of their labour. These are examples of generalised reciprocity. In *balanced reciprocity* the equal amount or value of the goods or services rendered is expected to be returned. The return may take place immediately or in a future period. The so-called bride price given to the bride's parents is reciprocated equally with the gifts of beads and other ornaments by the bride's family in many tribes in Arunachal Pradesh. This is an example of balanced reciprocity. If the return is not equal or of equivalent value it is called a negative reciprocity. This happens when the tribal people are cheated by the traders in a market situation.

Further, there is the system of redistribution especially in communities with a centralised authority. The people pay rent, tributes, etc. to the chief which he redistributes among the people as gifts, rewards, etc. In fact every society has the incidence of redistribution at least within the family. The members of the family pool the products of their labour together, may be under the custodian of the family head, which they use later for common good. But our point of focus on redistribution as a means of exchange is beyond the level of family.

There are two classic examples of distribution and exchange: *potlatch* and *kula*.

Potlatch: The word *potlatch* comes from Chinook jargon which simply means *giving* in the sense of giving a gift. This is a practice among the tribes in Northwest Pacific coast including the Kwakiutl. In their territory there is abundance of resources, though variable across regions and seasons. For example, the salmon fishing may be good in one area while poor in another. Such variations can be seasonal, but they can be also for a long period. Traditionally, each area was owned by a kin group with its chief as the designated owner of the kin group's resources. When one kin

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Check Your Progress

Answer the following in brief:

4. Why are tribal economic organizations informal?
5. Why is the welfare definition of Marshall not applicable to tribal economic system?
6. What is rationality in conventional economics?
7. What is the difference between factory and household system of production?
8. Who are formalists?
9. What do you mean by technology is a tribal community?
10. What is a barter economy?
11. What is consumption?
12. What do you mean by production in a tribal society?
13. What do you mean by sacred dimension of consumption?

group had more food than the neighbouring kin groups, it would hold a potlatch. The chief would collect food and other goods from members of his kin group and then distribute these to neighbouring groups. This is also a case of redistribution.

In the following years when any of the neighbouring kin groups had enough goods they would hold a potlatch. This always adds to the prestige of the chief who holds potlatch. The process went on till the end of the 19th century when instead of giving, the chiefs decided to destroy the wealth.

In some communities the destruction practice led to the rivalry potlatch. Rivalry potlatch took place because of the competition between two men for a specific social status. A chief would destroy great quantities of valuables, break coppers, smash canoes and slay slaves in order to humiliate his rival. However, in recent years this practice exists only in social occasions like the marriage ceremonies.

Kula: The *Kula* was first described in Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* as the system of exchange between the Trobriand Islanders and neighbouring seafaring peoples. The system of exchange has three spheres, *kula*, *wasi* and *gimwali*. Of these spheres *kula* is the most prestigious one which is practised by chiefs and other powerful men to gain status.

Kula is the exchange of valuable white armshells for equally valuable red necklaces. The possession of one or more of these items requires a man to organise an expedition to the house of his trading partners on another island. Trobrianders and neighbouring islanders exchange these valuables in a never-ending circle called the *kula ring*. It takes the shape of the ring because necklaces move in a clockwise direction and armshells in an anti-clock wise direction from one island to the other. The trading partners know the history of each item which is discussed during exchange. In a formal sense, the *kula* comprises ceremonial exchange of non-utilitarian goods. Trobrianders only exchange items in the *kula* sphere, armshells and necklaces, at the time of *kula*. They cannot exchange these for yams or fish or anything else which have their own spheres such as *wasi* and *gimwali*. *Wasi* is the exchange of fish from lagoon villages for yams from inland villages. It is based on standing partnerships and obligations to give and receive, but of utilitarian goods. On the other hand, *gimwali* is a barter exchange carried out between villages at the time of *kula*. It comprises non-ceremonial exchange of utilitarian goods except fish and yams which come under *wasi* sphere.

3.5 COMMUNITY AND OCCUPATION BASED ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

You have already studied that 'tribal economy' is a general notion for all types of economies or economic systems existing in tribal communities. In other words, economy is tribe specific. To put it differently, a tribe is designated, for example, as a pastoralist tribe or hunting and gathering tribe depending on predominant activities its members pursue for survival needs. Accordingly, a tribe is a pastoralist tribe if its members engage in cattle herding for sustenance. In this sense the type of major economic activity of a tribe is synonym of economic organization of that tribe. Needless to say, economic organization can be tribe specific.

As you know tribes do not exist in ideal stage. Almost all tribes have exposures to various forces, particularly development forces of the nation. Obviously, the tribes are in transition and members of a tribe do not depend on one type of economic

activity for survival needs. In addition to traditional practices members of a tribal community are found working in government and private sectors.

Within tribe, there is no economic organization for these members. There are also no inter-tribe economic organizations of persons engaged in similar type of works outside. But, their engagement in various occupations marks a change in the division of labour in the family and community. However, these workers fall in the domain of greater economic organizations of the nation. Despite the fact that emerging occupational groups in a tribe do not have tribe based organization, still we have discussed the emerging occupation categories among the tribes. As the tribe is in transition and in the process of integration with national economy, so also are tribal economic organizations. We can argue that members of tribes are organised around both traditional economic pursuits and non-traditional occupations.

3.5.1 Elements of Economic Organizations

You will find some elements common to all types of economy. A discussion of these elements will be useful to understand an economic organization better. In fact differences in the characteristics of these elements distinguish among economic organizations. These elements are production, consumption, distribution and exchange, ownership, inheritance rules, technology and division of labour.

We will discuss production, consumption, distribution and exchange as a separate section. Similarly, we will attempt a general discussion of other elements. In community based economic organizations we will advance a general type of discussion on the nature of economic activities with occasional reference to elements of economic organizations.

There are several ways in which tribal people secure their livelihoods. The ways presently can be broadly of two types: traditional and non-traditional. The traditional type includes the age old practices of securing material means of existence. On the other hand the non-traditional one is the emerging trend consequent upon their encounter with external forces including development interventions. However, the economic activities of the tribes cannot be put into this or that type; there are always mixed activities. In fact they have more choices available to them. Of course one of the activities may be the main pursuit of the group and this characterizes their typology. Even within the tribe different sub-groups may specialise in different occupations. For example, the different sub-groups of the Mahali are found practising different occupations. The *Bansphod* Mahali has basket making as its main occupation; the Patar/Ghasi Mahali practise both basket making and cultivation; the Solanki Mahali are cultivators and labourers ; and the Tanti Mahali are palanquin bearers.

N. K. Behura (1997) following Nash's (1966) classification of economic system has mentioned of five typologies which would explain the social categories of the tribes on the basis of economic activities. These are: (i) hunting-gathering type, (ii) pastoral type, (iii) simple artisan type, (iv) shifting or jhum cultivation type, and (v) settled agriculture type.

Though these types happen to be the core of economic activities pursued by the tribes, there are certain variations and additions in the case of Indian tribes. There are regional classification of economic activities and also inclusion of emerging trend mainly due to development interventions. For example, Vidyarthi (1963) has proposed a threefold classification of economic activities for the south Indian

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tribes, namely (i) hunters and food gatherers, (ii) plough cultivators, (iii) tribes engaged in business centres, mines, factories, etc. He has also classified the tribes of Odisha into (a) hunting and food gatherers, (b) forest or shifting cultivators, and (c) settled agriculturists on the basis of their economic pursuits. Majumdar and Madan (1970) have provided a six fold classification of economic activities pursued by tribes of India which includes (i) food gathering, (ii) agriculture, (iii) shifting axe cultivation (iv) handicraft, (v) pastoralism, and (vi) industrial labour. But Vidyarthi's classification (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1985) is more comprehensive, includes a wide range of activities and presents a grading from hunting and food gathering to the industrial phase. His typology includes (i) forest hunting type, (ii) the hill cultivator type, (iii) the plain agricultural type, (iv) the simple artisan including the forkl-artist type, (v) the pastoral and cattle herder type, (vi) the agricultural and non-agricultural labour type (traditionally they belong to the tribes of plain agricultural and simple artisan categories), (vii) the skilled and white-collar-job type working in offices, hospitals, factories, etc.

3.5.2 Community Based Economic Organizations

The community and its economic organization are coterminous. In other words, the tribal community is characterised on the basis of predominant economic activities which its members pursue. As such the tribal community is classified on the basis of its predominant economic activities. Accordingly, you will find the following community/tribe-based traditional economic organizations in India.

The Forest Hunting Type

This group of tribes live in and around the forests and largely depend on forests for their livelihood. They are mostly hunter gatherers and regularly resort to collection, gathering and hunting in the forests near and far. These forest hunting type tribes use forest and water resources which vary according to season, cycle and area. Their main activities are (a) food gathering, (b) hunting, and (c) fishing. The individual as well as community life of these tribes is organized to secure livelihoods by hunting, fishing, collecting roots, tubers, fruits, nuts, leaves, fibres, bamboo, cane, honey, wax, etc. Usually they collect leaves, roots, fruits and honey as survival strategy, and other raw materials for clothes and for exchange. The Birhors, for example, collect raw materials to make ropes which they sell in the market. Similarly, as Elwin (1948) informs us, the Juang's of Odisha used to collect leaves traditionally for their dress purpose.

The tribes belonging to forest hunting type are distributed all over India in different States. We have Rajis in Uttarakhand; the Birhors in Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha; the Hill-Khariyas, the Parahiyas, the Birjias and the Korwas in Bihar and Jharkhand; the Juangs and the Bondas in Odisha; the Hill Maria Gonds in Madhya Pradesh and Chhatishgrah; the Chenchus and Yanadis in Andhra Pradesh; the Kadars and Mala-Pantarams, the Arandans and Kurumbas in Kerala; the Paliyans in Tamil Nadu and the Onges, Jarawas, Sentinalese, Shompen and Nicobarese in Andaman and Nicobar Islands who fall in this group.

It is to be mentioned that most of these tribes are not to be found in their ideal state in recent years. Many of them have taken to agriculture, wage labour and other occupations consequent upon development interventions. Nevertheless, they are still hunter-gatherers at heart and perceive their identity as such.

Check Your Progress

14. State whether the following statements are true or false:
 - (a) Consumption is the starting point of all economic activities.
 - (b) Paul A. Samuelson's definition of Economics is known as scarcity definition.
 - (c) Face to face interaction between buyers and sellers is a characteristic of market economy.
 - (d) In balanced reciprocity the value of the goods and services rendered is not expected to return soon.
 - (e) Division of labour in tribal economy is process based.

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Even in ideal state there are examples when the hunter gather communities had relation with neighbouring communities. The Sulung of Arunachal Pradesh presents a singular case in the state where they were subordinate to their neighbouring tribes like the Miji and the Nyish who had superior technology to secure their livelihoods. The Nyishs and the Mijis were hill cultivators whereas the Sulungs were hunter-gatherers. They had entered into an informal agreement of labour appropriation which is called ‘slavery’ in earlier writings. The Sulungs worked for the Nyishis and the Mijis in their agricultural fields, carried their loads and made iron implements which they did not use. The appropriation of Sulungs’ labour continued through a social arrangement. The Nyishis and the Mijis used to look after their material needs during marriage and other occasions and to repay these obligations the Sulungs worked for them. This patronage to meet the material needs became a mechanism to perpetuate the system of labour appropriation. Once the Sulungs entered into such obligations it renewed with every marriage, sickness, etc. which are recurring events in a family. The arrangement is more like a bonded labour system than that of slavery. In spite of their exposure to better technology through their interaction with the neighbouring Nyishi and Miji tribes they remained primarily hunter-gatherers for their livelihood.

Behera (2009) informs us that the Sulungs used to practise traditionally both organized group hunting and individual hunting. Individual hunting is more frequent and common than the group hunting. In group hunting all the villagers take part and get equal share of the game. The actual hunter of the animal however, gets a larger share such as fore leg, a hind leg and a portion of meat from the chest, in addition to his normal share with others. The hunter must give meat to his ‘master’ (the head of the family in either Nyishi or Miji community for whom he has bonded his labour), otherwise the master would beat him or inflict any torture upon him and might even forcibly take away the share of his meat. There is another type of sharing of games. Every Sulung village has its own hunting territory divided among its individual households. The hunting territory of individual household is known as *Houng*. When a wounded animal dies in another’s *Houng* then a share of the game has to be given to the owner of the land. But usually among the hunter-gatherer people common rather than community ownership of hunting and gathering territory is the rule.

There is a distinct, but not rigid, division of labour even in forest hunting type tribes. It is found in Birhor tribe that the women are responsible for childcare, food preparation and gathering. The women usually collect roots, jungle fruits and leaves for vegetables. However, both male and female collect firewood. The menfolk engage themselves in hunting, rope-making and house construction. The Birhor men play important role in hunting, chiefly of monkeys and in collection of honey. A part of the meat is distributed among the members of the group as per customs. Thus, men have a greater involvement in production and distribution outside the family; while home remains essentially the sphere of women’s production and distribution (feeding of family members) works. In the field of exchange, the women have a role. The sale or barter of rope in the neighbouring non-Birhor villages, for example, is entirely carried on by women.

The tools and implements used by hunter-gatherer people are simple. Except iron products like axe, knife, arrow-head, they make other implements like digging sticks, rope or bamboo traps from raw materials available in the surroundings. They also make pit traps to catch big animals.

These people use dogs during hunting. For fishing they have a variety of traps made of rope, yarn and bamboo. Diversion of the river, use of herbal poison, etc. are some of the techniques of fishing. Fishing is also done by hand. In fishing both male and female take part.

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The Hill Cultivation Type

The hill cultivation type tribes are those who practise shifting and terrace cultivation. The practice of hill cultivation among the tribes is widespread in our country. The Tenth Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1960-61 mentions that 26 lakhs of tribal population belonging to 109 different tribal communities of the country practise shifting cultivation. It is estimated that 618 thousand hectare land was under shifting cultivation during 1960-61 and 1326 hectares thousand in 1974-75. Presently, it is practised on a large scale in the states and union territories of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura and to a smaller extent in States of Gujrat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

In various regions of India, shifting (swidden) cultivation is known by different terms. In Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, Swidden cultivation is widely known as *Jhum*, though each tribe has its own term for it. The Adis of Arunachal Pradesh call it *Adi-arik*, whereas among the Rang of Tripura, it is known as *Hooknismong*. In some parts of Nagaland, it is known as *Teknaglue*. In Madhya Pradesh among the Baiga, it is known as *Bewar* whereas among the Abhujmaria Gonds of Bastar it is known as *Penda* and among the Korku of Melghat forest it is known as *Dahya*. In Tamilnadu, South Kanara of Karnatak, it is called *Kumari*; among the Sologa of Karnatak and in Andhra Pradesh and the Kondah, the Koya and other Dravidian speaking tribes in Odisha it is known as *Podu*; the Soura call it *Buguda*. It is known as *Angwal* among the Lanjia Soura. Some divisions of the Kondha of Odisha call it *Rama* and the Kutia Kandha of Phulbani name it *Berenga*. In northern Odisha, among the hill Bhuyans, it is known as *Komanchas*.

Definition and Characteristics: Shifting cultivation is a land use practice in the hills. There are different definitions. Pelzer in 1958 defined it,

...as an agricultural system which is characterised by a rotation of fields rather than of crops, by short period of cropping (one to three years) alternating with long fallow periods (upto twenty and more years, but often as short as six to eight years) and by clearing by means of slash and burn.

Conklin in 1957 had given a similar definition, but in 1961 simplified it as ...any agricultural system in which fields are cleared by firing and are cropped discontinuously.

Generally, the shifting cultivation has some distinct features. These are community ownership of land, community-basis of appropriation of labour on mutual reciprocity, production for subsistence needs, rotation of fields, multiple cropping, sex-based division of labour and fallow period. Sachchidananda (1989) provides a detailed account of the features of shifting cultivation; some important ones are as follows:

1. Shifting cultivation practised chiefly in simple cultures or where the size of population is small; but it is practised by almost anyone for whom there is no alternative;
2. The practice uses human labour and normally few hand tools like dibbling stick, axe, dao, etc.;
3. Labour organization is reciprocal, though involves variation in working group structure (may be of only female population or of male population of different age groups);
4. It involves clearing of forests by felling, cutting, slashing and burning and using fire to dispose of dried debris;
5. Under this system the cropping fields shift after a certain period of cultivation which may be of one year also;
6. Multiple cropping pattern is followed;
7. The crops are short-term and long-term varieties;
8. Primarily, crops are produced for subsistence needs though sale of part or the whole product is not altogether absent;
9. In this practice traditional techniques like vegetative cover, leaving stumps of big trees, preparation of hedges with half burnt debris on deep slopes are followed to prevent soil erosion;
10. It is operative chiefly in regions where more technologically advanced systems of agriculture have not become economically or culturally possible;
11. It is also operative in regions where land has not been appropriated by people with greater political or cultural control; and
12. This practice is destructive of natural resources when operated inefficiently and to meet market demands where it is possible.

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Stages of Shifting Cultivation

The shifting cultivation is not a mere economic pursuit; it is a practice institutionalised in culture. So the different stages include both economic activities and ritualistic performances. Right from the selection of forest land to storage of grains there are certain distinguishing stages of activities. The stages vary from region to region and tribe to tribe. However, some common stages are as follows:

- (i) Selection of site and ritual performance for its suitability (in some tribes the suitability is ascertained by dreams);
- (ii) Clearance of forest for cultivation, drying of felled trees and burning;
- (iii) Rituals for good harvest (in some tribes);
- (iv) Demarcation of plot for various crops and construction of a field house;
- (v) Sowing/broadcasting the seeds;
- (vi) Weeding – for two to three times;
- (vii) Watching for the protection of crops;
- (viii) Rituals (by some tribes);
- (ix) Harvesting;

(x) Transportation and storing in granaries which are constructed away from the dwelling houses (some performs rituals in granaries); and

(xi) Fallowing (after one or two years' cultivation).

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Traditionally the fallow period used to vary from 12 to 20 years and even more, but in recent years the recuperative period has been minimised to three to four years due to population growth. Moreover, large plots are cultivated as products are now linked to the market. People produce not only for subsistence needs but also for the market demand to earn money income. The land is also put into other uses for developmental works, plantation, industries etc. As a result, there is a shortage of land and so the *jhum* cycle has reduced to three to four years.

The Plain Agriculture Type

As recorded in the Census of India 1961 all the major tribes of India, which includes 68.18 per cent of the total tribal working population, practise agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. These figures have not changed much over the years. According to the Census of India, 2011, records 797 (79.7 %) persons ST workers in primary sector, 132 (13.2%) in secondary sector and 71 (7.1 %) in tertiary sector out of a sample of 1000. The Khasas and Tharus of Uttarakhand ; the Kinnauras, Pangwalas and Swanglas in Himachal Pradesh; the Bhumij, Koras, Bhuiyas, Santals, Mundas, Oraons, Hos, Kharwars, Baigas, Gonds, etc. in central India; the Bhils, Minas, Garasias, Damarias, Koli Maldadevis, Varlis, Thakurs, Korkles, Dubla, etc., in western India; the Koyas of Andhra Pradesh; the Malayalis of Tamil Nadu in south India, the Apatanis and the Khamptis in Arunachal Pradesh, the Bodos, Lalungs of Assam and so on belong to plain agriculture type groups.

The agriculturist tribes generally follow hill and plain type cultivations, mainly shifting and wet rice cultivation respectively depending on the topography which they inhabit. A single tribe may pursue two types of agriculture due to topographical variation of their habitats. The Galos and Adis of Arunachal Pradesh who live in the hills practise the hill type of agriculture, while those living in plains practise the plain type cultivation. The tools and implements they use are simple. However, they use animal power for ploughing their fields. Their implements include the sickle, spade, *khurpi*, axe, pick, crow-bar, long wooden plank, leveller, small and big baskets, earthen pots, etc. However, the production only meets their subsistence needs. The agricultural implements are made by local iron-smiths or obtained through barter exchange from the neighbouring people. A few tribes are recorded by scholars using cow-dung as manure.

Stages of cultivation: Like the shifting cultivation the plains cultivation also has different phases. Right from preparation of the land and nursery bed to storage of produces there are different sequences of activities. Some of the activities relate to rituals and entertainment. The plains agricultural tribes grow both *kharif* and *rabi* crops. *Kharif* crops are grown during the period from May to November. The *rabi* crops are winter crops and mainly include pulses of several varieties and some vegetables. Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have outlined the following stages of *kharif* crops in plains agriculture of Indian tribes.

- (i) Ploughing the land which begins from May with the collection, repair and purchase of implements;
- (ii) Rituals to worship plough, bullocks and gods;

- (iii) Ploughing the field following the first shower in June;
- (iv) Sowing using the broadcast seeding technique in the uplands in June and preparation of plant nursery for transplantation;
- (v) Transplantation in July or early August;
- (vi) Weeding by hand after a fortnight or light ploughing when crops grow to a height of about 25 to 30 cm;
- (vii) Watching-guarding against the herbivorous inhabitants;
- (viii) Use of some magical device in plots with diseased crops;
- (ix) Regular watch to clear weeds and to maintain the required level of water;
- (x) Harvesting, firstly of upland land and then of late variety crops;
- (xi) Threshing in renovated threshing floor by cattle or by beating the shears of paddy and watching the threshing floor;
- (xii) Winnowing;
- (xiii) Worshipping;
- (xiv) Husking and storing by November.

Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have also outlined seven phases of *rabi* crops as

- (i) ploughing to clear the field,
- (ii) manuring,
- (iii) sowing,
- (iv) weeding,
- (v) watching,
- (vi) harvesting, and
- (vii) cleaning and storing grain.

In plains cultivation mono-crops are raised. The system of plains cultivation is associated with the emerging private ownership of land. However, in some tribes both community and private ownerships exist side by side. The labour organization is mainly based on community consideration with mutual reciprocation. Some families also engage wage labour from neighbouring villages or tribes.

The Simple Artisan Type

A number of tribes practise certain crafts such as basket making, spinning and weaving, mat-making, iron-smithy, etc. The Kanjars are engaged in basketry and rope making; the Birhors also make a part of their livelihood from basket making. The Monpa tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is famous for its carpet making. The Chik-Baraiks make hand-woven clothes which they supply to the Mundas, Oraons, etc. The Kotas of Nilgiris depend on carpentry, tool making and pottery. The Muria of Chhattisgarh and Kurumbas of Tamil Nadu manufacture several wooden objects. The Asurs in Jharkhand are good iron smelters. The Bondo, the Gadaba and the Dangaria Kondha are good embroidery workers.

Even the tribe or a clan is designated on the basis of its craft in which it is specialised in. For example, one of the sub-groups of the Mahali tribe are named *Bansphod Mahali* because of their specialisation in basket making. With their simple

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tools and traditional skills, making use of the locally available raw materials the tribal people make several objects for their own use and for local markets as well. For instance, the Kamars, whose occupation is iron smithy, use simple technology like hand bellows, big iron hammer, short shaft hammer, small hammer, anvil, chisel, earthen bucket, etc.

The Pastoral and Cattle Herder Type

The pastoral tribes are another social category whose sustenance depends on cattle herding. The cattle wealth varies from tribe to tribe depending on the ecology they occupy. In plains people keep buffalo and cow while in high mountains tribal groups like the Brokpas keep yaks. The pastoral people use the animals either for milk products or meat or for both. A number of tribal communities in the central India raise cattle for meat and use them as draught animals.

A tribe may be fully or partly depend on cattle herding for its sustenance. The Todas of Nilgiris, the Gujjars of Kashmir, the Gaddis and Jads in Himachal Pradesh, the Brokpas of Arunachal Pradesh depend on cattle herding as their only source of livelihood. However, tribes like the Kisan in middle India or the Nagesias of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh cling to cattle herding as a part of their total livelihood strategy. The Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand are midway between pastoral economy and agriculture.

The pastoralist community which depends on cattle herding as the only source of livelihood is normally a nomadic community, who move from place to place in search of green pastures for their cattle. In some communities, however, some male members move with their cattle in different seasons. The population size of individual pastoral communities is small as compared to agriculturist tribes.

The pastoral communities also depend on forests for fodder and collection of minor forest products to supplement their pastoral economy. However, in recent years the pastoral communities have also responded to the winds of change in modern times. Here are examples of two pastoralist tribes in India:

The Toda Tribe of Nilgiri Hills are pastoral people. However, they are not nomads. They rear buffaloes and produce different milk products, like ghee, cheese, butter, curd etc. which they sell or exchange with different products of the neighbouring tribes to procure the things of their day-to-day use.

The division of labour is sex based. The dairy works such as looking after buffaloes, milking, churning, etc. are absolutely in the domain of male members. Females are prohibited from entering the dairy house. Domestic chores such as fetching of drinking water and fuel wood from the jungle, cooking and rearing of children are in the domain of female tribe members. Previously, cooking was in the domain of male jobs. The exchange of milk products with the neighbours is normally carried out by male members, though it is not taboo for women to get involved in it. In recent times, the Todas are also engaged in other economic activities like agriculture to subsidize their pastoral economy.

Ownership of buffaloes is both individual and clan based. The Todas classify their buffaloes into ordinary and sacred herds. The former type is being owned by individual Toda family while the latter type is considered to be the property of the clan.

The Gaddi tribe in Himachal Pradesh is also a pastoral tribe. These people settled in villages, and so they are not nomads. Like the Todas, the division of labour

in the Gaddi tribe is also sex based. Male members go with their goats and sheep to different regions of Himachal Pradesh during the summer season. The men feed the animals, milk them and take care of them. The females do the house keeping along with weaving. They make long coats, caps, *dhoru*, pyjamas and shoes from wool and goats' hair. They also use the wool of their sheep to make carpets, shawls and blankets. As the Gaddi women are fond of jewellery they also make gold, silver and precious stone jewellery. The animals are individually owned and inherited among the sons.

The Folk – Artist Type

This includes the tribal communities whose members depend on songs, dances, snake charming, acrobatics, etc., as their main occupations. Normally, these people economically depend on their art. The Nats and the Spaeras of south-eastern Uttar Pradesh, the Kelas of Odisha, the Pardhans and Ojhas who are bards of the Gonds, the snake-charmer Pamulas, the Garadis, the acrobat Dommaras and Bynollus, the conjuring Palukumuggulas and Paddintigollas, the Bahuroopas, etc., of Andhra Pradesh, a few Kotas of Nilgiris and the snake-charmer Kalbelias of Rajasthan come under folk artist type. Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have described the performance of the Nats as under:

“The Nats perform their shows of singing and dancing or acrobating, etc., lasting 15 minutes to an hour at one place before the local gathering and earn inam (gift) to subsist on. Apart from a few Muslims, they are generally Hindus by religion. They move from place to place and from village to village... they work in a group of two to seven persons comprising one or two child artists, one or two boys or girls between 9 and 14 years; one or two persons, may be. Generally, a drum-beater and an expert child acrobat accompany each other. The drum-beater attracts and collects a gathering, erects the rope or trapeze base. There is a dance to a local tune, rope-dancing or acrobating, at times with iron rings, or daggers. Sometimes they show balancing feats or play with fierce flames and so on. It is very interesting to note the imitating young Nat child of two to four years of age. As the show draws to an end the other fellow Nat goes around collecting inam, in the shape of money or cereals, and the show comes to an end with the most common wording, *khel khatam paisa hazam* (the play is over, the money gone).”

3.5.3 Occupation Based Economic Organizations

The fact is that you will not find community based economic activities or any formal or informal organization in tribal communities under the activities mentioned below. But these activities in a wider sphere involve labour participation and production. The organization is there at a different level, but not tribe based. As tribal people participate in it and it is an emerging trend we have discussed these activities as occupation based economic organizations. The following activities come under this category:

Labour Type: Agricultural and Non-Agricultural

In most of the tribal areas of middle and eastern India a number of industries have been established. Mining operations have taken place to a large extent. In the process of industrialisation and mining operations lots of tribals have been uprooted from their habitat and have lost their traditional source of livelihood. These people have turned to wage earning as an alternative source of livelihood in urban centres and are particularly involved in industries and mining activities. Those who are not fortunate to work in urban centres turn to agriculture and work in other's field on daily wages

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basis. The agricultural work is mostly available in the locality itself within a radius of a few kilometres. During the agricultural off season, tribals also migrate to urban centres to work as labourers, at railway and road construction, forestry, construction work like civil work in emerging factories, houses, dams, bridges, etc. You will find among the Hos an emerging trend of agricultural and non-agricultural labour.

We learn from Misra (1987) that the Ho economy is organised around cultivation and wage labour. Most of the Hos practise shifting and sedentary cultivation depending on topography. You will find agricultural labourers in the tribe also. The first iron ore mine in India was started in 1901 at Pansira Buru and subsequently in Chiria, Gua, Noamundi, Kiriburu in Ho territory. These areas developed into small mining towns. A chunk of Ho population is found working in the mines of these areas.

Similarly, engagement in diverse activities is noticed among the Siddis. The Siddis living in Gir area of Gujarat are engaged in a number of jobs including farming, forest conservation and as wage labour and as tourist guide.

The Skilled, White-collar Job & Traders Type

Tribes in India are no longer pursuing traditional life exclusively. A number of individuals or families are now working in different offices, hospitals, factories and business enterprises for their livelihood. A few of them are also found self-employed in their own enterprises. This has happened because of government policies and programmes and Constitutional provisions to ameliorate their socio-economic condition. The formal system of education has provided knowledge and skills which is required in the job market. Associated with it is the reservation of seats in different services including jobs in government and private enterprises. Christian Missionaries have also helped in the spread of education and changed their outlook towards modern lifestyle. Initially, these tribal converts to Christianity were found engaged in offices, hospitals and in administrative jobs, etc. Presently, many individuals are found working as doctors, teachers, engineers and bureaucrats. The Meena tribe is credited with having a large number of civil servants in the country from among the tribal communities.

But trading by some tribal communities is neither a recent origin nor a post-Independence phenomenon. There are tribes like the Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand, the Valmiki and the Haiskers of Andhra Pradesh, the Monpas and the Noctes of Arunachal Pradesh and a few individuals of different tribes from different regions of the country who used to trade with neighbouring people long before India's Independence. Even some of them had business connection across the border. The Bhotiyas and the Monpas have had close business contacts with the bordering areas of Tibet since pre-Independence. The Khamptis of Arunachal Pradesh had trade relations with the people of present Myanmar. The Nocte used to trade in salt because of the existence of natural brine springs in their territory.

We have seen that the tribes in India are not a homogenous category in terms of their economic pursuits. Traditionally, they differed in terms of pursuing different activities to secure their livelihoods. In recent years, after they got exposed to forces of development along with some new avenues including wage labour and white collar job, etc. Interestingly, some tribes depend on trade as their main source of livelihood. Even for the cattle-herder tribe trading is an essential component of their pastoral economy. So is the case with the artisan and folk-artist type tribal

communities. Obviously, the tribes in India never lived in isolation as the earlier scholars had taken position while conceptualising the tribe as a social category.

3.6 CONTEMPORARY TRIBAL ECONOMY AND ORGANIZATIONS

Social process is often marked by changes and continuity. So a study of the past helps in understanding the present in order to plan for the future or understand the possible future trends. Needless to say, the society is dynamic, so is also the tribal economy and associated economic organizations. So far we have focused on economic organizations in both ideal stage and changing contexts. The contexts, however, are presentation of the trend of changes which have taken place. Obviously, the context has a past reference. The changes are also taking place even in contemporary time. Communities in India exist as Scheduled Tribes, but their economic life is changing. In keeping with this view we will discuss the changes noticed in tribal economic organizations in recent years due to development interventions. This will help delineating the emerging organizations in tribal economy with reference to the process of integration and interaction with national economy. No doubt, enumerating the emerging features in tribal economy will be useful to visualise tribal economic organizations differently from the ones in ideal stage.

As you know tribal communities are in contact with various external forces, development interventions being the most significant of them. These interventions have generated forces of change in internal structure of the society and the economy too. You will find a number of programmes and schemes being implemented for the development of tribals. The economy is gradually getting monetised through these schemes. For example, monetary loan from micro-finance institutions, banks or other credit sources and exchange of goods and services for money play a crucial role for implementation of development schemes. You will also notice that the schemes having market linkage and the beneficiaries of these schemes purchase raw materials and sell products for money. Further, traditional economic pursuits no longer stand out as the only source of employment. Tribal people are found working in various development projects in the village and outside where there is opportunity. Moreover, due to education many tribals work as bureaucrats, professionals, teachers etc.

You will find A. K. Danda's (1990) observation with regard to changes in tribal economy very useful. He informs us that the influence of the market is very significant in every aspects of economic life of tribes in India. Influences are noticed particularly in economic relationships and widening up of the network of such relationships, ownership and inheritance rights of land, differentiation of profession, specialization of roles etc. The ideal of mutual reciprocity and traditional system of redistribution are losing functional value. In response to these changes, the notion of tribal economy is losing its distinct characteristics and giving way to the forces of the formal economic system.

In recent years, many tribes and tribal families have been displaced due to mega development projects and have lost their traditional resource base. Members of displaced tribes and families work as agricultural labourers or wage labourers in urban centres. Income earning families do not have necessary supply of labour from family source for mutual reciprocation with kin or participation in community works or to meet own requirements. Needless to say, in many tribes money plays

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a crucial role in labour exchange in traditional and non-traditional activities. Even in place of mutual reciprocation of labour in some tribal societies like the Apatani, the Galo, the Adi, the clan youth or even females often form labour groups to earn money. In Central and Eastern India money lending has emerged as a distinct feature in tribal economy.

You are also aware that development schemes are sanctioned mostly in the individuals' names. A fish pond, tailoring machine, handloom or power loom, rice huller, goatery, piggery, diary unit, horticultural garden, cardamom scheme etc., are sanctioned to individuals. Many of these beneficiaries use these schemes profitably. In the Northeast, many tribal entrepreneurs have undertaken such activities as tea plantation, rubber plantation, horticultural units and chitronnullah plantation etc. A few of them have started tea processing units, saw and veneer mills and educational institutions as well. You will also find tribal elites as contractors and many engaged in commercial ventures, politics and in high salaried jobs. These elite people invest money outside and on land inside and outside the village. These families along with some other families produce for market. The Khasis and Monpas of this region are known for the production of vegetables, fruits, etc. for sale in markets.

In the plains of Arunachal Pradesh tribes like the Adi, the Khampti, the Mishmi, the Singphow, etc. produce large scale commercial crops like mustard seeds and ginger. In the foothills of Lohit, Changlang, Dibang Valley and East Siang districts of Arunachal Pradesh a number of tea plantations have come up. In Odisha, especially in undivided Koraput district tribal families cultivate cashew nuts, clove and turmeric etc., under various schemes for sale in the market. These ventures are non-traditional and individual based in contrast to traditional community based pursuits. In such activities, wage labourers from the village and outside play a very significant role.

Needless to say, surplus production is undertaken by tribe persons for market and money is used, though not by all, as a medium of exchange. The present economic life in a tribal community, therefore, presents a scenario of a mixture of traditional and non-traditional activities with corresponding governing principles.

In tribal villages, tribal self-help groups (SHGs) have come up in response to development schemes of the government for poverty alleviation and empowerment. However, SHGs are not community based; in fact, these are formal and activities undertaken are both traditional and non-traditional types in order to earn additional money income. The activities are not organised following traditional ideals of production and distribution.

In the Northeast you will find a politico-economic agency like Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) to ensure tribal participation in their own governance and to take decisions on development programmes in their areas. These agencies are tribe specific like Mishing Development Council, Bodo Development Agency etc. which are constituted as per the provisions of the Constitution of India.

The point which we want to make is that monetisation has emerged as a significant feature in tribal economy. Of course, in a tribal economy, there still exist spheres of barter exchanges, more spread in interior villages among the families following predominantly traditional economic practices.

Producer to Consumer Economy

You will find development-inducing formal cooperatives in tribal areas. As a result of the entry of these cooperatives, mutual cooperation, reciprocal exchange and thus, the sharing ideal in tribal communities are declining gradually. Shortage of food grains is overcome by subsidised Public Distribution System (PDS) and money income available from various schemes of the government guaranteeing income and employment. Rural development schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) etc. are working in the Sixth Schedule tribal areas and activities relating to these schemes through Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) in tribal Sub-Plan Areas of the Fifth Schedule. These schemes provide for money income to meet food shortage and other newly acquired wants in response to market connections. Central Assistance is given to States/UTs to supplement their efforts in tribal development through Tribal Sub-Plan. This assistance is basically meant for family-oriented income-generating schemes in the sectors of agriculture, horticulture, minor irrigation, soil conservation, animal husbandry, forestry, education, cooperatives, fisheries, village and small scale industries and for minimum needs programme.

You will also find Large Sized Agricultural Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPs) along with Marketing and Processing Cooperatives in Tribal Sub-plan Areas. In the states of Odisha and Gujarat, Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS), and in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Girijan Cooperatives play a crucial role in tribal development through market linkage.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) is another agency which is playing a very crucial role in marketing tribal products. The cooperative was set up by the Government of India in 1987, with the prime objective of providing marketing assistance and remunerative prices to ST communities for their minor forest produce and surplus agricultural produce and to wean them away from exploitative private traders and middlemen. The federation is a national level cooperative apex body which came into existence under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 (now the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002). It started functioning in 1988 under the administrative control of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, formerly and Ministry of Tribal Welfare. TRIFED promotes a wide range of tribal products such as tribal textiles, tribal jewellery, metal crafts, organic food products, cane & bamboo works, terracotta & stone pottery, tribal paintings and gifts and novelties.

TRIFED participates in various exhibitions and fairs to promote the tribal art and forest produce. It also organises Tribal Artisan Mela to reach tribals located in interior areas. Further, it sources tribal art and craft directly from the tribal artisans. You will find show rooms of tribal art and craft in many urban centres maintained by TRIFED.

Minor Forest Produce (MFP) are non-timber forest produces like tamarind, lac, gum karaya, amla, mahua flowers/seeds, honey, sal/siali leaves, tendu patta, soap-nut, shikakai, myrobalan, hill grass, nuxvomica, etc.

The majority of the tribals live in and around forests and depend heavily on the MFP for their livelihood. Initially, tribals used to collect MFP for their own consumption. In case of some excess stock, they used to sell these in the nearby

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weekly markets for barter or for cash. MFP has a major demand even outside the tribal areas. But tribals lacked awareness about the market value of these produce. Moreover, they did not have marketing knowledge and skill. Often they fell victim to the manipulation of unscrupulous traders and middle men. To overcome this situation, most of the States nationalised their major MFP items. States also established Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations (STDCCs), State Forest Development Corporations, Minor Forest Produce (Trading and Development) Federations (MFPTDFs) etc. for procuring and trading in MFPs. These were established for procuring MFP from tribals and protecting them against exploitation by private traders. These organizations often faced resource constraints and could not work to achieve objectives properly. In view of this the Central Sector Scheme of 'Grants-in-Aid to State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations (STDCCs) etc. for Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Operations' was thus launched in November 1992 to help these STDCCs to ensure that tribals got remunerative prices for their MFP. Under this scheme institutional support is provided for development and marketing of tribal products/produce. It also promotes and supports mechanism for marketing of MFP through minimum support price. Cooperatives, formal in composition and a new socio-economic agency, provide institutional frame for tribal development.

Check Your Progress

15. State whether the following statements are true or false:
- Division of labour in a pre-industrial economy is process based.
 - In tribal communities' division of labour is based on age and sex.
 - Accumulation is a characteristic of tribal economy.
 - Substantivists believe that the distinction between tribal and formal economics is a difference in kind.
 - Fishing, hunting, gathering are the activities pursued by The Forest Hunting Type tribes for livelihood.

3.7 PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE

Tribal societies are governed by traditions and customs. Since these societies mostly depend on subsistence living, they do not have the tendency to accumulate property or other material goods. Obviously, their notion of property is different from that of our present society. There are no codified rules and regulations to define the ownership of something and its inheritance practice. Needless to say, the concept of property and the practice of inheritance varies from one tribe to the other, even within the broad frame of similar principles. You will learn about the nature of property and inheritance in tribal societies in this section.

3.7.1 Types of Property

Across all tribal cultures, property is considered to be either movable, or both movable and immovable. The property can also be ancestral and self-acquired (personal). Immovable property is land which also includes resources like forests, rivers, cultivable fields, etc. In some hunting gathering tribes like the Birhor, Raji or Puroik (Sulung) the concept of immovable property is not recognised. They do not claim any territory as their own unlike the Jarwa or Onge who has a notion of territorial boundary. The land is an immovable community property for these Andaman and Nicobar tribes. In pastoral tribes like the Toda of Nilgiri Hills or the Brokpa group of the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh the grazing ground of a village/clan is demarcated, thus having the notion of immovable property. These lands are community owned. But in agricultural, semi-agricultural and horticultural tribes' use of land as immovable property is associated with individual families within community frame of ownership or individual ownership. The issue of inheritance relates to such landed property.

Moveable property on the other hand occurs in all tribal communities and includes livestock, beads and ornaments, bride wealth of any form, utilitarian objects like loom utensils and other household articles. Hunting equipments and traps also

are moveable properties especially of hunting gathering tribes. Among the pastoral tribes you will find livestock as the most valuable moveable property.

A loom, domestic animals or birds (except in pastoral tribes), household articles, etc. belong to the family and thus do not have defined rule of inheritance. But in case of bridal wealth, beads and ornaments, etc. the ownership rest on the woman and is transferred to daughters and daughters-in law. In other words, daughters and daughters-in-law have rights to inherit mother/mother-in-law owned movable property. The woman owning domestic birds and animals could dispose them in exchange or as gift to daughters or use them for domestic rituals or consumption purpose. However, there is no established norm guiding inheritance practice of such properties.

3.7.2 Inheritance

The rule of inheritance of immovable properties like land, house, grove and movable properties like livestock, hunting equipments depend on nature of society and economy. In relation to nature of a society you will find two types of society namely patrilineal and matrilineal. A patrilineal tribe may be polyandrous, monogamous or polygynous. Similarly, you will find broadly agricultural, pastoral and hunting gathering tribes in relation to traditional economic pursuits. In relation to nature of inheritance you will find mainly three types of practices, primogeniture, ultimogeniture or both and sharing. Sharing may include inheritance by all the sons equally or otherwise. Primogeniture norm allows the eldest son to inherit the property wholly or the largest part of it. Ultimogeniture is the norm where youngest son inherits property as a rule, may be equal to or less than the first son. If only this principle is followed the youngest one, whether son or daughter, gets the entire share or the largest part of it.

3.7.3 Patrilineal Society

Polyandrous patrilineal pastoralists

Toda is a polyandrous pastoralist tribe living in the Nilgiri Hills. The tribe is divided into two moieties: Tarter, the privileged one and Teivali, the underprivileged one. Among the Todas, the property consists of buffaloes which are of two types: ordinary and sacred herds. Two types of ownership-individual/private and clan/community are recognised in Toda tribe. Sacred herds are owned by the clan in a village and clans of Tarter moiety of the Todas in general. Clans in Teivali moiety supply herdsmen to tend these sacred herds of buffaloes. The Toda village is clan based and this people have the notion of territory which includes homestead land, pasture ground and are clan owned. The ordinary buffaloes of an individual family are inherited by brothers like the polyandrous families in Jaunsari Bawar of Uttarakhand if they want to separate. Otherwise, if they live in a joint family they perform works as assigned to them by the eldest brother and the ownership rights on buffaloes is vested all of them together. Sons inherit from fathers (social fathers) to who they are attached. The rule is that the property is divided first among the brothers and sons inherit from them following primogeniture and ultimogeniture norms. The first son inherits or otherwise gains control of more family land, livestock or other wealth followed by the youngest son. Other sons may get a share if there is enough wealth. Women do not have rights to inherit buffaloes.

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Check Your Progress

16. State whether the following statements are true or false:
 - (a) Shifting cultivation is a practice in hunting-gathering communities.
 - (b) Following is a characteristic of plains agriculture.
 - (c) Tribal economy is in the process of transformation from producer to consumer economy.
 - (d) TRIEFED is a tribal economic organization.
 - (e) Formalists believe in culture determination of economic attitudes and the working of economic systems.

Monogamous/polygynous patrilineal agricultural tribes**NOTES**

In agricultural patrilineal tribes, land inheritance follows primogeniture, ultimogeniture or both practices. This rule is not in practice in many agricultural tribes like Mishings and Thengal Kacharis of Assam who enjoy formal ownership rights according to state laws. The inheritance practice follows according to these laws. The rules of primogeniture and ultimogeniture also do not exist where property is equally distributed among sons. But in most of the traditional tribes, inheritance rule follows customary norms.

In traditional Apatani community of Arunachal Pradesh both primogeniture and ultimogeniture rules are followed in the matter of inheritance of ancestral landed property. The eldest son gets cultivable land, groves, etc. while the youngest one who would look after parents gets house, homestead land, remaining plots and movable properties like domestic animals and birds. The middle sons do not have the rights to inherit ancestral property. However, the father if purchases land during his life time that land could be shared with middle sons.

Lamgang tribe of Manipur on the other hand follows ultimogeniture norm; the youngest son gets the house, suitable plots of land, livestock and other movable properties. For other sons, the father distributes the property during his life time if there is enough property. Ultimogeniture is also the rule among the Ranglongs and Bongchers of Tripura. Among the Bongchers, father may distribute land to all the sons, keeping a share of his own which normally goes to the youngest son along with house, livestock etc. as customarily he looks after the parents. In case of his inability or parents desire any one from other brothers may also look after parents and inherit the property.

The practice is interesting in polygynous families as is in the Nyishi community. When a man brings an additional wife he allots cultivable plots to that woman. The sons from a woman share her cultivated plots as per the decision of parents. In general, all the land belongs to father and thus patrilineal inheritance rule is followed among the Nyishis.

The practice of primogeniture is attenuated in tribes like the Bhil, Khamptis, Adi as all the sons inherit landed property; the eldest son in some cases getting a little more. Among the Darlongs of Tripura, the land is distributed among sons without any customary privilege to any son. Father may distribute land during his life time or sons distribute among themselves or the widow mother distributes after father's death in the presence of relatives and village elders. Among the Mundas and Oraons of Jharkhand primogeniture is not very strong in the matter of inheritance of all types of properties. As a rule the eldest son is entitled a little more than the other brothers in the form of land or any of the movable properties. This may be an extra cow or a goat, a bullock or a plot of land in recognition to earlier practice. Normally the property is divided among sons after death of the father. The practice is that a maintenance share is kept aside for widowed mother, unmarried sons and daughters and then it is equally divided among sons with a little more to the eldest son. But after the death of the widowed mother and marriage of brothers and sisters the land is equally divided among brothers for whom the share was kept aside. If the share is more than that of other brothers, then they also get some proportion of it. The maintenance property is used by the brother, often the youngest one, till maintenance is not required.

Patrilineal Hunter-gatherers

By now you have learnt that the Birhor, a hunting-gathering nomadic tribe has immovable properties and these includes arrow and bow, axe, *dhara* (roll of ropes), *dauli* (a short sword), net, *kullay* (rabbit trap) and other traps, *khanti* (sharp pointed iron rod), cage, knife, etc. These equipments are own made except iron ones which are exchanged with forest produces and individually owned. The *kumbha* (hut) is made by individual male members as every male member makes his own *kumbha* after marriage. In case of the death of the owner of the *kumbha*, it belongs to inmates and in case of need the community looks after those who cannot build *kumbha* for themselves. The equipments are shared among sons, brothers or community members according to need and there is no establish inheritance norm.

Puroik (Sulung) was primarily a hunter-gatherer tribe in Arunachal Pradesh before they entered into client-patron relationship with their neighbouring Nyishi and Miji tribes. During that time they did not have any notion of territorial boundary for the tribe or band. But after the relationship, ownership of forest tracts from where they collected wild Sago, or the land they used for hunting and foraging was claimed by Nyishi or Miji patrons. Their settlement became permanent and attached to their patrons' village. They started domesticating pigs, goats and poultry birds. Their properties included domestic animals, utensils, beads, hunting and trapping equipments and other articles of daily use. These properties are equally apportioned among the sons. Married sons build their own houses though they may stay with parents. Under such a situation the house is also divided among sons living in it.

3.7.4 Women's Inheritance in Patrilineal Tribes

Women in general do not have the right to inherit landed property in patrilineal tribes. They do not even have the rights to inherit major livelihood sources, such as buffaloes as is the case in Toda tribe. Among the hunting gathering societies women do not inherit hunting equipments and traps.

In traditional patrilineal societies the land of a man without a male child is inherited by a nearest consanguinal relative in male line who looks after the man and his wife during their last days. The custom of adopting a male child also prevails in many tribes. Obviously, the land and other properties are inherited by the adopted son. You will be interested to know another way of inheritance among the Lamgang. The man with only a female child or female children pays a nominal amount to consanguineal male relatives to purchase inheritance rights for the daughter(s). In practice the land goes to the male children of the daughter (s) after death and becomes the property of husband's lineage. In rare cases a man can also transfer his property to his sons-in-law following the method of obtaining permission from consanguineal male relatives.

But in most of the patrilineal tribes, daughters do not have any inheritance rights in landed property even in the absence of a socially approved male heir. A woman may normally pass through three stages, unmarried life in parental house, life with husband and life without husband (widow). There are two other possibilities of a woman staying in parental house. First, she may remain unmarried throughout her life or return after divorce or separation from husband. In this case she may be without father. A woman, without husband or father, has a residual life interest in land. This is a custom in many tribes like the Santal, Munda, Adi, etc. She can dispose of the produce and income from the land as she wants. This life interest of

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the widow restricts the property rights of the agnates of the deceased husband till her death. In case of a widow with male children the inheritors of property are her own children according to customary norms. In the latter case it is not life interest in the entire land, but a maintenance right. In fact, the life interest is also ideologically governed by the ethics of maintenance principle. However, if the widow marries outside the family circle of the husband she is deprived of this maintenance rights. This traditional maintenance right of unmarried girls or widow is known as *Taben Jom* in some tribes of Jharkhand. After the death of the girl or widow the land returns to the lineage as per customs. In Galo community of Arunachal Pradesh an unmarried girl also enjoyed the rights to use a plot for herself. However, such a practice is not a case of inheritance rule.

As you have already studied, women have the rights to inherit a few movable properties like beads of mother or mother-in-law.

3.7.5 Matrilineal Society

In India, tribes like the Khasi, Garo of Meghalaya follow matrilineal norms of inheritance. These tribes are agricultural tribes and so land ownership is a crucial factor in inheritance norms. Like many patrilineal tribes the family property of these tribes mainly includes land, house, household articles, agricultural and other implements, livestock, etc. But unlike patrilineal tribes the property, both movable and immovable are inherited along female line. It will interest you to know that the principle of female ultimogeniture is in practice among these tribes. This means, the youngest daughter inherits family property from her mother. Other daughters and sons do not have inheritance rights.

Major A. Playfair (1909) while writing on Garos during first decade of the twentieth century mentions about clan ownership and finds that village land and clan land are coterminous. The *Nokma* is the 'owner' of the lands of his village which he receives by his marriage to *Nokna*, the heiress of the clan land. One of the Garo scholars, Milton Sangam has clarified in 1985 that *Nokma* is not the owner of the land, but the representative of the *Nokna* who is the head of the clan or the village community. The *Nokmas* with the possession of title to *A'khing* land is known as *A'khing Nokmas*. The Garo Hills District Council Act No 1. of 1959 defines the *A'khing nokma* as 'the head of the clan or *Machong* who holds any land as a custodian on behalf of a clan or *Machong*'.

Let us elaborate the inheritance rule of the Garos following J. K. Bose who studied them in late 1930s and early 1940s. His study on Garo Law of Inheritance practically became an official manual for deciding cases of land ownership and inheritance among the Garos.

Among Garos, the youngest daughter who is selected by parents as *nokna* (heiress), inherits family property. Garos live in hills and plains, in India and Bangladesh and are divided along traditional faiths and practices and Christianity. As a result, to cope with changing situations and requirements there are adjustments within the broad principle of female ultimogeniture. You will also find adjustments within the broad principle when there are departures from normal situation. For that permission of the *machong* is inevitable. However, for minor changes, for which earlier instances also exist, the *machong* is informed of the change which the family wants to introduce.

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Bose informs that a poor family may not designate any of the daughters as *nokna*. In that case all the daughters get equal share of the property. The selection of a *nokna* depends entirely on the choice of parents. If there be any difference of opinion between the parents about the selection of *nokna* the opinion of the mother prevails. Bose further informs us that there is no hard and fast rule to select the youngest daughter as *nokna*. Generally, the daughter who is more affectionate and obedient to the parents is selected. It is expected that the *nokna* will serve and look after the parents in their old age. But in practice, the youngest daughter is selected as *nokna* and thus female ultimogeniture has become the norm of inheritance of family property among the Garos.

The *nokna* inherits mother's property after the death of the latter. Her husband normally from father's *mochang* (preferably one of father's sister's son) simply manages the land as the representative of the wife (*nokna*). The husband of the *nokna* is known as *nokram* till he becomes *nokma*, the custodian of land after the death of *nokna*'s father. As land is owned by mother, *nokna* inherits it after her death. Then *the nokram* becomes *nokma*. But there may be a situation that the mother is alive but father is dead. In that case the *nokram* has to marry the mother to become *nokma* and the arrangement continues till the death of mother.

After the marriage of the *nokna* the mother normally has no right to deprive her of the property. But under some circumstances the *nokna* may forego her rights. When a *nokna* and the *nokram* leave the family and start a separate household they have to relinquish their right to property. The *machong* is informed about this situation. In this situation a new *nokna* is selected to inherit the family property.

Other sisters of *nokna* do not have inheritance rights and they live with husbands in separate households after marriage which may be constructed with the help of *nokma*, the father. In case sisters stay in the same house with mutual agreement, the *nokna*, however enjoys all the powers and the sisters have to live under her supremacy. During their life time, the sister and her husband may accumulate property and select the *nokna*. If they do not accumulate enough property they may not select any *nokna* and all the daughters then get equal share and live with their husbands.

The Khasi tribe also follows rule of inheritance along family line. You will learn the rule of property inheritance from the writings of Gemini Paul (1956) and Hamlet Bareh (1967). There are minor variations with regard to ancestral and personal properties among different groups. But the general rule is not affected by these variations. The general rule takes into consideration two factors directly or indirectly. First in the matter of inheritance and management maternal relations are deciding ones, and second inheritance along female line prevails as against male inheritance.

As a general rule, the youngest daughter, designated as *Ka-Khadduh*, inherits all the properties, including *Ka-ling Seng* (foundation house). However she does not have the authority to dispose off foundation house as it is the sacred ground for the family rituals and place for get-together of family members. The Khasi inheritance norms do not permit brothers and sisters of *Ka-Khadduh* to inherit property and so they are designated as *Nonghiih Ling*, outgoing members of the family.

Though *Ka-khadduh* inherits property she remains only the custodian of the ancestral property. She cannot dispose of such property by herself without the consent of the members of the family (in the case of family property) or members

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Check Your Progress

17. State whether the statements are True or False:
- Ultimogeniture could be the institutional practice of inheritance in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies.
 - Properties are ancestral possessions and pass on from one generation to another without any addition in the process.
 - In pastoral community land is not a property.
 - Inheritance of property by brothers before passing on to sons is a practice in polyandrous tribes.
 - In many tribes, middle sons and daughters generally do not have rights to inherit ancestral property.
 - Women's life interest in land refers to maintenance security rather than inheritance rights.
 - In any matrilineal society a husband is the manager of wife's property.

of the clan (in the case of clan property). As a rule, it is the maternal uncles or brothers or senior members of the family or clan of maternal relations who manage such properties on her behalf. According to the Khasi customary law, the husband of *Ka-khadduh* has no right to his wife's ancestral property.

In the event of the death of the, the ancestral property goes to her own youngest daughter, whether minor or otherwise. In case she is without any daughter, her next survived elder sister inherits the property and, after her, the youngest daughter of that sister irrespective of age. In extreme case of having no claimants such as a sister or a daughter of a sister, the property reverts to the mother's family but through the line of the mother's sister, sister's daughter and so on.

As it is mentioned there are variations among different groups. The Wars group of the Khasi has two divisions Khasi Wars and Wars of the Jaintia Hills.

The tradition of Wars in the Khasi Hills provides for sons and daughters to share the property of their parents and grandparents. But amongst the Wars of Jaintia Hills, the rule provides for inheritance along female line. The Syntengs also do not follow the practice of male inheritance. But the *Ka-khadduh* is not the sole inheritor of the property in this group. The *Ka-khadduh* gets double the share of other daughters, because of her social and ritual responsibilities. She has the right of first selection of her share from landed property. The eldest daughter gets one and a half times of what the other daughters (other than the *ka kadduh*) get. She gets this comparatively large share because of her role in rearing the younger children. The other daughters share the remaining property equally.

There is a slight variation between Garos and the Khasis with regard to the property accumulated by husband of the property inheritor, *nokna* in case of the Garos and *Ka-khadduh* in case of the Khasis. Bose notes that the self-acquired property of a man before marriage passes on to mother and in her absence to his sister(s). From the writings of Bareh and Paul you will learn that under such a situation in Khasi community a part of the property goes to his mother and the rest is his personal. In the event of his dying issueless, his earnings revert to the mother or failing her to the nearest female *kur* (family).

But if the man acquires it while living in the family of *nokna*, it is considered as *nokna* family's property and the man has the right to enjoy it as long as he is alive. In Khasi community a large portion of his self-acquired property after marriage is used for the maintenance of the wife and children. Properties earned jointly by the husband and wife go to the wife after the husband's death. After the wife's death in his lifetime, the youngest daughter inherits the property and failing daughters, the youngest son. After the son, the property goes to his *kurs*.

3.8 SUMMARY

- In this unit we have discussed economic organizations of the tribes in India and contemporary trends. So, you have learnt the nature tribal economy in contrast to conventional economics. You have also learnt economic activities like production, consumption and distribution and exchange in the context of tribal economy. As you have learnt through examples, the economic organizations of tribes are community based.
- Tribal economy and economic organizations have been discussed with reference to a number of tribal communities. As a result, you have acquired

the knowledge of governing ideals in contrast to formal economics which emerged with Industrial Revolution. This equips you to enumerate general characteristics of tribal economy ideally and in changing context. Ideal economic life of tribals does not exist in contemporary situation. You have studied their engagement in modern economic pursuits as wage earners, in white-collar jobs, business, etc. For these new activities tribe-specific economic organizations have not evolved yet.

- You must have understood that economic organizations and social institutions are interconnected. A suitable example is social ways of labour organization in economic activities. Another example is the institution of inheritance in different types of societies and economic organizations.

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3.9 KEY TERMS

- **Consumption:** Use of goods and services to satisfy both material and non-material needs.
- **Division of labour:** Different kind of activities that are carried out by specific individuals or groups in a formal or informal production system.
- **Distribution:** The process through which goods and services reach the consumers/users.
- **Formalism:** The perspective of looking at all economic systems following the laws of industrial and post-industrial economics, regardless of culture.
- **Function:** Relating to functional approach. It refers to way or ways through which different parts of a system that are interrelated with each other and contribute to the continuity and stability of the total system.
- **Kinship:** All people who are identified as relatives either through blood relationship or through marriage.
- **Kula** A ceremonial exchange of shell ornaments in the Trobriand Islands.
- **Market Economy:** The economy where demand for and supply of goods determine what to produce, in what quantity and at what cost. There is no interference of national government in decision making.
- **Mode of Production:** Combination of means of production (how people make living and what they use) and relations of production (organization of social relations in production).
- **Potlatch:** A ceremony by peoples of the Northwest Coast of North America in which feasts, giving away of goods and sometimes destruction of goods take place to earn social prestige.
- **Product based division of labour:** The same labour engaged in the production of a commodity from the beginning to end.
- **Reciprocity:** Exchange without the use of money.
- **Sphere of exchange:** A category of items which can be exchanged for each other but not normally for other things as it happens in *kula* ring.
- **Subsistence:** Obtaining living for survival needs.
- **Substantivism:** The perspective of looking at economic systems as diverse and as embedded in culture.

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- **Agnate:** male relatives through father's side.
- **Immovable property:** property which cannot be physically shifted from one owner to the other, such as land.
- **Inheritance:** the institutional practice of receiving property, title, etc. in a society after the death of the predecessor.
- **Movable property:** property that can be physically shifted from one owner to another.
- **Primogeniture:** the practice of inheritance or succession by the first born, especially the eldest son.
- **Property:** material possession, in contrast to intellectual property which includes cultural heritage.
- **Ultimogeniture:** Institutional practice of inheritance by the last born, the youngest child, whether male or female.

3.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. (a) true (b) false (c) false
(d) true (e) false
2. (a) Economics (b) Economic system (c) Macro
(d) Mutual reciprocation
3. (a) Adam Smith (b) Alfred Marshall (c) Marshall Sahalnis
(d) true (e) false (f) true
(g) true (h) true
4. These are interacting social structuring without any procedural formalities.
5. It tells about material welfare, whereas in tribal economy people are concerned with both material and non-material welfare.
6. Maximisation of satisfaction from a unit of consumption.
7. The difference between place of residence/living and place of work.
8. Scholars who believe in the applicability of the laws of conventional economics to study all types of economics.
9. Knowledge and skill in manufacturing and use of tools, the practice of extraction and refinement of raw materials.
10. The economy in which money is not used as a medium of exchange, goods and services are exchanged for goods and services.
11. Use of goods and services to satisfy material and non-material needs
12. Utilisation of natural resources for livelihood sustenance with a well-defined organization of technology and labour.
13. When utilisation of goods and services relates to religious faiths and beliefs of the people.
14. (a) False (b) False (c) False
(d) False (e) False

15. (a) false (b) true (c) false
 (d) true (e) true
16. (a) false (b) false (c) true
 (d) false (e) false
17. (a) True (b) False (c) False
 (d) True (e) True (f) True
 (g) False

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3.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is tribal economy? Is it different from formal/conventional economy? Explain.
2. Tribal economy differs in kind. Explain.
- 3 Distinguish between economics and economy.
4. Do you think tribal economy is a single type of economy? Why or why not?
5. Discuss production, consumption and exchange in the context of tribal economy.
6. What is division of labour? What are its types?
7. Mention the underlying ideals of tribal economic organizations.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a detailed note on occupation based economic organizations.
2. What is tribal economy? Discuss its characteristics.
3. Discuss some important types of economic activities and corresponding types of tribal communities.
4. Do you think traditional economic organizations continue in present time? Why or why not? Critically examine.
5. Can you apply Robbins' scarcity principle to understand tribal economy? Give reasons to your answers.
6. What is the basic difference in the inheritance practice between patrilineal and matrilineal tribes? Explain with an example from each type of communities.
7. Write a detailed note on woman's rights over land.

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UNIT 4 TRIBES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Tribal Arunachal Pradesh
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 - 4.2.2 Tribes and Other Communities
 - 4.2.3 Tribes as Administrative Category
 - 4.2.4 STs and Ethnos
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 - 4.3.1 Demography
 - 4.3.2 Distribution of Tribes
 - 4.3.3 Linguistic Classification
- 4.4 Politico-Administrative Growth of Arunachal Pradesh
- 4.5 Tribal Studies in Arunachal Pradesh: An Overview
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 4.9 Questions and Exercises
- 4.10 Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Arunachal Pradesh is a tribal-dominated state spread over 83,743 km². According to 2011 census, the Scheduled Tribe population of the state is 951,821, constituting 68.8 per cent of the total population of the state. It ranks 19th in the country, though the tribal population of the state constitutes only 0.9 per cent of total tribal population. Among seven Northeast states it ranks 5th and constitutes 7.8 per cent of total tribal population in the region.

The Northeast comprises seven states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, and popularly known as ‘seven sisters’. In December 2002 the North Eastern Council (NEC) Reorganisation Act was passed and included Sikkim as a member of NEC. Presently for development purposes the Northeast Region (NER) consists of eight states.

As you know, a tribe is defined as an isolated group in ideal sense. At present this definition does not hold particularly for the tribes of India as they are in the process of transformation. Moreover, the tribes and civilizations also coexisted in the past. This is true for the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. They had historical connection with plains even during the Ahom rule. In this unit, we shall discuss the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh from different aspects. This will add to your understanding of the concept of tribe in Indian situation that differs from the ideal type. Moreover, you will know the diversity that exists among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

You have studied that tribes inhabit different zones and environments. The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh come under the Northeast region of Tribal India. Obviously, they share a number of traits with the tribes of Northeast such as the

bio-genetic characteristics. Like many other tribes of the region they belong to Mongoloid stock. They inhabit Eastern Himalayan ecology. So you will also study Arunachal tribes in terms of their geographical distribution.

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Arunachal Pradesh is a state in the Indian union. As such the state is divided into political and administrative units. Needless to say, we will also discuss the distribution of tribes according to their habitats in politico-administrative divisions. Therefore, we will focus our discussion with the process of emergence of Arunachal Pradesh as a state and its various physical and political divisions.

Since colonial period tribal culture has attracted the attention of scholars and administrators. Of course they had their own purpose. After Independence of the country tribes have become a part of Indian nation. Knowledge about their rights and perspectives has become essential for their welfare as citizens on equal footing. This necessitates tribal studies important. Therefore, an overview of studies on tribes of Arunachal Pradesh has been presented right from colonial period.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Examine the general tribal situation in Arunachal Pradesh
- Distinguish between tribes as per administrative category and ethnos
- Identify demographic characteristics of Arunachali tribes
- Classify the tribes with reference to bio-genetic variability and linguistic family
- Discuss the distribution of tribes in the state both in political divisions and geographical regions
- Trace how Arunachal Pradesh evolved politically and administratively over the years to attain statehood
- Provide an overview of tribal studies in Arunachal Pradesh

4.2 TRIBAL ARUNACHAL PRADESH

You already know that 68.8 per cent of population in Arunachal Pradesh belongs to ST category. In other words, 31.2 per cent of its population belong to Non-ST category. The question is who are these Non-ST people? You have also studied in Paper-I that in India tribes belong to both ST and Non-ST categories. Does this division hold in Arunachal Pradesh? What is the settlement pattern of different tribes? Do they inhabit a particular geographical region? Or do they share different regions? You will get answers to these and some more questions after studying this section. The answers will give you an idea of tribal situation in Arunachal Pradesh, i.e. the Tribal Arunachal Pradesh.

4.2.1 Tribes and their Nomenclature

Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have an identity with regard to nomenclature. This nomenclature is often an outside import. The import does not have a meaning in the linguistic system of the tribe. Thus, it expresses the outsider's perception of

the community. In recent years a few tribes have adopted their own tribe names administratively in place of the earlier designation.

In general you will find three sources for the tribes' name, namely outside import with or without a meaning in the language system of the tribe, a territorial distinction, an ancestor based identity and the sense of designating as *human* in contrast to 'others'.

1. Outside import with or without a meaning in language system: Aka, Tagin, Hill Miri, Dafla (present Nyishi), Abor (present Adi), Khampti, Mishmi (such as Chulikata, Digaru appellation), Sulung and Apatani
2. A territorial distinction: Nocte, Tangsa, Galo, Adi, Monpa and Wancho
3. Ancestor based identity: We do not have a nomenclature for a tribe based on the name of an ancestor. Minyong, Pertin, Perme, Joram, Tana are nomenclatures of clan or phratry in a tribe. Apatani can be thought of as an exception, for the nomenclature Apatani is interpreted as 'lovable Tani'. Of course the designation was given by Haimendorf. If Apatanis were named after Tani, the mythological ancestor, then other tribes like Adi, Galo, Nyishi would have also used this nomenclature as they also claim descent from Tani.
4. Human: Bangni, Nyishi and Puroik

The distinctions are not exclusive. In other words, in some nomenclature you will find a combination of more attributes. For example, the appellation Wancho is derived from two words: *Wang* and *Cho*; **Wang** is further derived from *Wangham*, who is the ruler and **Cho** meaning hill men. Hence, the name Wancho means the hill men who are followers of the Wangham or the hill men with a chieftainship type social system. You will learn a few more examples on the topic.

The designation Apatani is derived from two words namely, Apa (a term used as prefix to show affection) and Tani (human race, Tani is the mythological ancestor of Adi, Galo, Nyishi, etc.). The name was used by Haimendorf in 1944-45 to the people who were known differently as Onka Miri, Anka, Apa Tanang, Auka Miri, Tanag by earlier visitors to the valley. Apatani people, however, express that they call themselves Tani.

The word Khampti means 'country full of gold' (*Kham*-gold; *ti*-place), and from this the people themselves came to be known as Khamptis. There is also a second version of the origin of the nomenclature. E. R. Leach (1954) writes, 'Khamti (Khampti) appears to have been originally a title associated with the royal family of Mogaung (Mungkong). After the elimination of Mogaung (Mungkong) as a political unity, it continued to serve as the description of those Shan principalities which had formerly political dependencies of Mogaung (Mungkong) in a feudal sense'.

There is also a third version of it. A Tibetan army attacked the Shan state situated in the then North Burma, and the King Sam-Lung-Pha pushed back the Tibetan army and closed the Nai-Khoma Pass of the Patkoi ranges for ever; and the Shans lived there peacefully for several centuries. Therefore, the country was known as Khampti (*Kham*-to adhere to; *ti*- place or country). In view of this, the Shans residing in that region came to be known as the Khamptis.

The nomenclature 'Khampti' in all the versions has a territorial significance.

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Eli Doyi, in his Ph. D dissertation has given an account of the possible versions of the origin of the term Galo. Those sections of people in course of their migration who crossed or climbed down the famous *GoloYorbe* (a high mountain range/ridge near the present International Boundary with China) are called the *Galo*. Another version is that the *Galo* were found to be rapidly encroaching jhum lands of others like that of the wave ripples of the water. So they were given the name of *Galo*, meaning wave ripples. Again, the third one is that this nomenclature evolved from their erstwhile settlement at '*Riga*' (a village in Upper Siang District where the *Galo* settled before migrating to *Aalo*) and subsequent settlement at *Aalo* i.e., *Riga* + *Aalo* = *Galo*. This version is a construct of Adi vocabulary. However, this version has a restricted applicability as other Galo divisions did not disperse from *Aalo*.

The Aka, a Scheduled Tribe of the state, inhabits 38 villages in both East Kameng and West Kameng districts. The nomenclature of the Aka is an Assamese import. It is believed that the word is derived from the Assamese word *ankit*, meaning painted, for the custom of this group to paint forehead, nose and chin.

However, the tribe has two sub-tribes namely Hrusso and Koro which is further divided into a number of exogamous clans. You will study from history that its two earlier subdivisions were territorial based. These two groups, namely Kutsun and Kuvatsun had the nickname of *Hazarikhowa* and *Kapaschors* respectively. The former is interpreted as 'breakfast eaters', 'eaters at a thousand hearths', etc. but the reason for such an interpretation is obscure. *Kapaschors*, however mean 'cotton thieves', but again details of an account for such an appellation is also obscure. One thing is certain that this tribe had interaction beyond the tribe and bears the import of outside nomenclature.

Lakshmi Devi (1968) provides an account of the origin of these nomenclatures. She writes;

The first of these names probably arose out of the circumstances that a thousand *gots* paiks or individual groups of revenue payers were set aside for the collection of 'posa' by the Akas. The second class of Akas known as Kapachors or cotton thieves who had no right to 'posa' but extorted them from the cultivators by their night attacks, in which they lurked in the cotton fields with a primitive sort of cark lantern, waiting their opportunity for theft, and thus received their name.

Paiks were adult males whose names were registered for state service; for paiks constituted one unit called a 'got'.
– Lakshmi Devi, 1968.

You have studied about the Kutsun and Kuvatsun sections along with the Hrusso and Koro sections of the Akas. The Hrusso and Koro divisions are not same as the Kutsun and Kuvatsun. The Hrusso and Koro are distinct subdivisions in terms of language and territorial occupation, and each consists of exogamous clans. The Hrusso mostly live in West Kameng district in 29 villages and the Koro in East Kameng in 09 villages. The Kutsun and Kuvatsun were two village based groups designated by earlier visitors to these two villages.

The nomenclature Monpa is also a reference to the inhabitants of the region South of Tibet. In Tibetan language, *Mon* means 'people' and *pa* means 'lower territory'. The Tibetan tradition distinguishes people and territory together. For example, *Mon Bumthang* refers to the people living in *Bumthang* area. Similarly, *Mon Thimphu* refers to the people living in Thimphu in Bhutan. Understandably, the nomenclature Monpa has also a territorial reference.

The topic of tribal nomenclature raises two interrelated issues. The first one relates to the need of an identity above the clan or lineage identity. What was the occasion for which the clans came together under a common nomenclature?

In earlier days the people of Arunachal Pradesh used their clan or lineage identity, along with village or directional identity to introduce themselves to another clan or lineage. Within the clan an individual was introduced or addressed with reference to the lineage in the clan or ancestor of the lineage. But when these clans interacted outside the boundary of clan or group of clans, the outside people designated them in terms of their perceived attributes, whether derogatory or honorific. Therefore, the designation Abor was attributed not only to present Adis but also to some other tribes even south of the Brahmaputra.

The second one relates to the possibility of use of a common nomenclature by a group of clans or lineages themselves. We do not have ethnographic data for a valid answer. We can only make some logical suppositions. For example, there might have been an alliance of clans or lineages having common mythological ancestor or any other common bondage against adversity. The bondage might be due to sharing a common territory or some cultural traits. There must have been a common interest for grouping more than one clan or lineage or sub-tribe as it happens to gain political mileage in recent years.

That the clans, lineages, phratries or sub-tribes came together to forge a common identity such as a tribe or generic group negate the notion of *tribal isolation*. However, this proposition needs to be verified with field data. Nonetheless, we know from other studies that tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were not living in isolation even a few centuries before colonial rule.

The word Nocte means people living in an organised community. It has been derived from the words *Noc* (village) and *Te* (the people) i.e. the people who live in village. But in some dialectical group of Nocte like *Damlak* and *Tutsa* the Nocte means *man* or *human being*. The words *Noc* and *Te* also stand for united and people respectively. So Nocte also means united people. Sahu (2002) mentions that etymologically, the word Nocte means people living in an organised community (*Noc* village and *te* people). During Ahom and early British periods, the Noctes were known as Borduarias, Paniduarias, Namsangias, and Jaipurias. They came in close contact with the people of Assam from the middle of the 19th century when they started to work as labourers in the tea gardens of Assam.

Dutta (1978) has classified the Noctes as *Koute Nocte* and *Hawa Nocte*, meaning hills and plains Noctes.

The *Tangsa* is a territorial name given to a tribe inhabiting the Changlang district. The *Tangsa*, called *Tangshang* in Myanmar, is a community of several thousand people living in Changlang and Triap districts of Arunachal Pradesh and parts of Tinsukia district of Assam in the Northeast India, and across the border in Sagaing region of Myanmar. The term *Tangsa* is derived from *Tang* (high land) and *Sa* (son), and means people of highland.

Rikam (2003) informs us that the Nyishing or Nyeshang is derived from two words, *Nyi* or *Nyia* and *Ishing* or *Ashing*. *Nyia* means man or human race or the descendant of *Atu Nyia*; and the word *Ishing* or *Ashing* means highland. Therefore, *Nyishing* means descendants of *Atu Nyia* who dwell in the highland or highlander. But in earlier writings the Nyishi tribe including the Tagins and Hill Miris have

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been mistakenly or without justification termed as Dafla during the Ahoms reign and later used by the Britishers, sometimes spelt as Duphla or Dumphla. Interestingly none of these terms are known to the tribes themselves nor the meaning has been clearly explained by those who used it. They call themselves as Nyeshang, Nishi or appropriately as Nishing since time immemorial.

In British writings the present Tagins were addressed as Eastern Dafla and Tagin Dafla interchangeably (see Devi,1968). However, Rididi (2003) feels that the Tagins have been misrepresented as Dafla by the colonial ethnographers and administrators as the Tagins had no direct contact with the plains of Assam nor did they enjoy the privilege of posa. The people as Tagin existed from time immemorial. But the origin of the term is still shrouded in mystery. The word Tagin might have its roots in Tagend (literally meaning the last part of something). The colonial ethnographers and officials might have used the expression to specify the people living in the last part of their frontier. But as the term existed earlier it is believed that the Tibetans, with whom the people had trade relations, addressed them Tagin from their fashion of using Yagin to cover the lower part of body.

4.2.2 Tribes and Other Communities

Arunachal Pradesh is a multi-ethnic state. In addition to tribes of Arunachal Pradesh there are habitations of ethnic groups like Chakmas, Hajongs, Tibetan Communities and Adivasis. Groups like Hajong, Adivasi, Chakma, etc., have not been recognized as Scheduled Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh; the Hajongs, Tibetan Communities and Chakmas are treated as refugees. And Adivasi is a generic term for former tea garden labourers from different ethnic groups of the present Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh who were brought here during the British time. Moreover, Nepali and other communities are found in Arunachal Pradesh who are immigrants for job and business. You will also find habitations of Assamese and Nepali communities in Lohit district. Because of the presence of members of other communities, tribal villages are of mixed types. In other words, all the families who inhabit a village are not tribals. You will learn this from census records presented below:

Tribal Villages and Concentration of Tribal Families in 2001 and 2011									
100% Tribals		> 90 % Tribals		> 75% Tribals		> 50% Tribals		> 25% Tribals	
2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
2165	2382	2894	3929	3144	4367	3378	4667	3555	4859

Out of a total of 4859 villages in the State only 2382 villages in 2011 were considered to be 100 per cent tribal. This constitutes only 49.02 per cent or less than half. In 2001 out of 3555 villages only 2165 constituting 60.9 per cent had 100 per cent tribal population. In others, non-Arunachali population is recorded along with tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

4.2.3 Tribes as Administrative Category

The list of STs in Arunachal Pradesh is open in nature. According to the *Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956* and as inserted by Act 69 of 1986 states, the STs in the state are ‘All tribes of the State including: Abor,

Check Your Progress

- State whether the following statements are true or false:
 - Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh are isolated groups.
 - Arunachal Pradesh ranks 5th in the country in terms of tribal population.
 - Arunachal is a tribal dominated state as its tribal population is more than 60 per cent of its total population.
 - The Noctes are known as *people living in villages*.
 - Posa is a fine paid by hill tribes to the Ahoms.

Aka, Apatani, Dafla, Galong, Khampti, Khowa, Mishmi, Monpa, Momba, Any Naga tribes, Sherdukpen, Singpho'. The notification gives only an illustration of a few STs.

In 2001 Census, total of 100 STs have been enumerated. The census enumerates the following 25 tribes as the major STs:

Major STs as per 2001 census				
1. Abor	6. Aka	11. Deori	16. Mishing/ Miri	21. Nocte
2. Adi	7. Any Naga Tribes	12. Galong	17. Mishmi	22. Tagin
3. Adi Gallong	8. Apatani	13. Idu/ Chulikata	18. Monpa	23. Tangsa
4. Adi Minyong	9. Bangni	Mishmi	19. Nishang	24. Tawang Monpa
5. Adi Padam	10. Dafla	14. Khampti	20. Nissi	25. Wancho
		15. Miji		

According to census, 2011 all tribes of the State are included in the list of Scheduled Tribes in India. After Census 2001, more specific names like *Idu*, *Taroan*, *Hrusso*, *Tagin*, *Khamba* and *Adi* have been mentioned in this list. In the State/Union Territory-wise list all tribes in the State are recognised as STs including:

1. Abor	5. Galo	9. Momba	13. Hrusso
2. Aka	6. Khampti	10. Any Naga tribes	14. Tagin
3. Apatani	7. Khowa	11. Sherdukpen	15. Khamba
4. Nyishi	8. Mishmi, Idu, Taroan	12. Singpho	16. Adi

The statement 'all tribes in the State' is confusing. In a way it may refer to the list of tribes which is prepared and recommended by the State Government for scheduling in the Constitution. One thing is clear. The State Government at least in recent years will not be confused with 'Abor' and 'Adi' nomenclature. Moreover, it will not be confused over tribe, sub tribe and repetition of a group like *Adi Minyong* and *Minyong*. There are many lapses in listing the communities which neither agrees with academic criteria nor with ground picture.

Normally, tribes belong to the Fifth or Sixth Scheduled Areas of the country with regard to administration. Article 244 in Part X of the Constitution with regard to the administration of *Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas* reads:

- (1) The provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- (2) The provisions of the Sixth Schedule shall apply to the administration of the tribal areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

List of STs of the State of Arunachal Pradesh compiled from *T 1.24: Census 2011: State-wise list of STs with details in terms of Households, Population (Total, Male, Female), sex ratio, child sex ratio, Literacy (Total, Male, Female), Worker Participation Rate, Main worker and Marginal Worker Only.*

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1. Abor	37. Hotang Tangsa	73. Laju
2. Aka	38. Kaman / Miju Mishmi	74. Nonong
3. Apatani	39. Karka	75. Padam
4. Nyishi	40. Kemsing Tangsa	76. Dalbing
5. Galong	41. Khamiyang	77. Pailibo
6. Khampti, Kamti	42. Komkar	78. Panchen Monpa
7. Khowa, Bugun	43. Korang Tangsa	79. Pangi
8. Mishmi, Idu, Taroan	44. Langkai Tangsa	80. Pasi
9. Momba, Memba	45. Libo	81. Phong Tangsa
10. Any Naga tribes	46. Lichi Tangsa	81. Ponthai nocte
11. Sherdukpen	47. Liju Nocte	82. Ramo
12. Singpho	48. Lish Monpa	Pasi
13. Hrusso	49. Longchang Tangsa	83. Adi Ramo
14. Tagin	50. Longin Tangsa	84. Rangai Tangsa
15. Khamba	51. Longphi Tangsa	85. Rongrang Tangsa
16. Adi	52. Longri Tangsa	86. Sanke tangsa
17. Adi bori	53. Longsang	87. Simong
18. Adi Gallong	54. LongsangTangsa	88. Siram
19. Adi Minyong	55. Lowang Tangsa	89. Sulung
20. Adi Padam	56. Meyor	90. Sulung Bangni
21. Adi Pasi	57. Miji	91. Tagin Bangni
22. Ashing	58. Mikir	92. Taisen Tangsa
23. Bagi	59. Millang	93. Tangam
24. Bangni	60. Minyong	94. Tangsa
25. Bogum	61. Mishing / Miri	95. Jugli
26. Bokar	62. Mishmi	96. Taram
27. Bomdo	63. Moglum Tangsa	97. Tawang Monpa
28. Bori	64. Monpa	98. Thai Khampi
29. But Monpa	65. Morang Tangsa	99. Tikhak Tangsa
30. Darok Tangsa	66. Mossang Tangsa	100. Tutcha Nocte
31. Deori	67. Muktum	101. Wancho
32. Degaru/Taraon Mishmi	68. Namsang Tangsa	102. Yobin
33. Dirang Monpa	69. Ngimong Tangsa	103. Yongkuk Tangsa
34. Haisa Tangsa	70. Nishang	104. Yougli Tangsa
35. Havi Tangsa	71. Nissi	
36. Hill Miri	72. Nocte	

Source: Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India, 2013

From this one will deduce that tribes in Arunachal Pradesh are covered under the Fifth Schedule. But in the state there are neither tribal sub-plan (TSP) areas nor the Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) as in the states of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, etc. The Scheduled areas of nine states such as Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan are covered under the Fifth Schedule. In these states, tribal population co-exists with larger group of non-tribal population which is not the case of Arunachal Pradesh. It was created as an autonomous state as per the provisions of the Article 244A on *the matter of formation of an autonomous state comprising certain tribal areas in Assam and creation of local Legislature or Council of Ministers or both therefore*. However, the State is a Special State under the provisions of Article 371H of the Constitution. The tribes are covered by general plan programmes and administration, and special provisions under Article 371H as well.

4.2.4 STs and Ethnos

Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh present a wider canvas than the category of Scheduled Tribes. All the groups do not have ST status according to the group designation, but at the same time all of them have access to ST status having being clubbed to the group scheduled in the Constitution. In a way, there is a loss of identity at one level and gaining a greater identity at the other. In 1987, the Meyors of present Anjaw district got ST status, but the Zakhrings who used to claim themselves superior gradually assumed Meyor identity in order to have access to ST status. Both the groups have a less population, around 1500 persons. You will not find a Zakhring family in Walong and Kiboontho circles of Anjaw district. There are other ethnic groups who do not have ST status, but merge with a group, and at the same time, maintain socio-cultural distinction in terms of genealogy, clan endogamy and group identity.

There are also instances where a group identified with a larger group now tries to establish its separate identity.

The Constitution of India had scheduled Dafla in the category of Scheduled Tribe. Some distinct ethnic groups like Sulungs (Puroiks), Hill Miri, Nah, adopted Dafla nomenclature for administrative purpose, but maintain community identity separately. Even these communities are also scheduled. But it is not clear whether these are sub-tribes of a tribe or a distinct ST category. These tribes are listed under the category of ST as mentioned above. In 2006 the Constitution of India replaced the nomenclature Dafla for Nyishi, by which a large group of people address themselves from earlier time. In view of this, the ethnic communities which earlier adopted Dafla nomenclature for administrative purpose now use the nomenclature Nyishi. Even among the people the trend of addressing themselves as Nyishi has emerged in many such communities.

The Khampti and the Khamiyang of the Tai race have been maintaining a distinct ethnic identity until recently when the latter began to identify themselves with the Khampti. The appellation Khampti, refers to the people of Tai origin who migrated to India during the Ahom Rule. The Idus — a sub-group of the Mishmi tribe have developed a distinct ethnic identity owing to their cropped hairstyle. They are popularly known as *Chulikata Mishmi*. The Nah group, considered as western Tagins, has Buddhist influences and has also developed a distinct identity for itself. The Tutsas, earlier considered as a clan of Tangsas of Changlang District, have now ascertained their independent identity as a tribe. Similarly, the Sartang, earlier grouped under the Monpa tribe, now claim a separate identity. The Adi, Apatani, Nyishi and the Tagin who have a common faith and belief in the Almighty Donyi-Polo and have Tani as their common ancestor are presently distinct ethnic groups. The Bangni of East Kameng were taken as a distinct ethnic group in earlier records but presently come under the Nyishi tribe. The Adi-Samuwas, believed to be a branch of Miris (Mishings) of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh inhabit the Lohit District. Nyori (1993) informs us that The Adi included 14 sub-ethnic groups under the Padam-Minyong and the Galo groups identified on the basis of minor differences in material culture, hair, dress and local institutions. The Galos, however, have been scheduled in the Constitution since 1950. But in recent years, the Galo community has withdrawn itself from the generic Adi community. The Padam-Minyong groups, including the Adi-Samuwas use the appellation Adi which has replaced the earlier appellation Abor - as mentioned in the Constitution.

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It is interesting to note that communities like the Hill Miri and the Sulung have been scheduled in the Constitution. However, this list is confusing as it mentions tribes and sub tribes together and there is little distinction as to which are tribes and which sub-tribes. Moreover, when sub-tribes are mentioned there is no mention of its main tribe which doesn't cut any ice as tribes and sub-tribes are placed together in the same categories. For example, Adi is the name of the Scheduled Tribe which includes the Adi Padam and the Adi Minyong etc. In addition to Adi Padam and Adi Muinyong it also lists Padam and Minyong separately thus, leading to enormous confusions.

The members of the Nyishi community are believed to have descended from four ancestors, namely Dopum, Dodum, Dol and Nyiv. The social organisation of the community is kinship based as is evident from earlier studies. Available literature is not helpful to situate the ethnic groups like Hill Miri, Nah, etc. in the social organisation scheme of the Nyishi after 2006. Further studies in this regard will be helpful to address the issue of reconstructing the scheme of social organisation in the changing context.

Lack of proper ethnographic study creates much confusion with regard to proper classification of the ethnic groups in Arunachal Pradesh. As mentioned earlier, census reports have enumerated clans and sub-clans as distinct ethnic groups.

Check Your Progress

2. What are the sources of the nomenclature of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh? State with examples.
3. Give an example of a tribe whose nomenclature has territorial significance. Why?
4. What are the sub-groups of the Akas? Is Aka tribe consanguinal? Why or Why not?
5. Are all communities living in Arunachal Pradesh ST category? Give your answer with examples.
6. What is the Constitutional status of Arunachal Pradesh?

4.3 DEMOGRAPHY, GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND LINGUISTIC CLASSIFICATION

Arunachal Pradesh is an ethnic mosaic. The tribes inhabiting the state present a picture of heterogeneity. The heterogeneity results from geographical distribution, language diversity, different economic pursuits, diverse socio-political organisations and bio-genetic variability. You will also find diverse cultural traditions among the tribes. We will discuss demography, geographical distribution of population in the state in this section.

4.3.1 Demography

Arunachal Pradesh is the largest state in Northeast India in terms of its territory. The state covers an area of 83743 sq km. But it has a small population, only 1383727 persons according to Census, 2011 which constitutes 0.11 percentage of country's population. The topography of the state is mountainous, covering about 80 per cent of the territory; only five per cent remains as plains, river valleys, etc.

The state has a very sparse settlement, so sparse that it has smallest density of population in the country. As per Census, 2011 the population density of Arunachal Pradesh is only 17 persons per sq.km as against the country's 368. The sex ratio in the state is 938 females per 1000 male population.

Distribution of population: Arunachal Pradesh has a highly uneven distribution of population. The plains are densely populated than the hills. Unevenness is also noticed in districts. Inter-district variation in population primarily depends on the size of the districts. In addition to size the density also varies and this indicates unevenness of inter-district variation. This depends on topography and level of development.

There were only 16 districts at the time of census enumeration. You will find that eight districts have population density below the state average and eight districts have equal to and/or more than 17 persons per sq.km, the state average. The districts with density below average cover 65.23 percentage of the state's area but as high as 35.43 per cent of its population. On the contrary, 64.57 per cent of the state's population lives in 34.77 per cent of its area. You will find Dibang Valley district having the lowest density, one person per sq.km, while Papumpare district, that accommodates twin capital cities, has the highest density, 51 persons per sq. km. Anjaw district has second lowest density, 3 persons per sq.km followed by Upper Siang district with 5 persons per sq. km. Similarly, Tirap district has second largest density of population, 47 persons per sq. km followed by Changlang district with 32 persons per sq. km.

ST population: As you know Arunachal Pradesh is a tribal dominated state. The non-ST population consists of migrants from other states and a few others who have settled in the state. The ST population consist of 68.8 per cent of total population with 65.61 per cent male and 72.17 per cent female population. They live in 27 urban centres and 4211 inhabited villages. In Arunachal Pradesh 22.93 per cent of total population, both ST and non-ST, is recorded in Census, 2011 living in urban areas. These urban centres are in fact census towns, though many of them could be counted as overgrown villages rather than towns. The sex ratio of the Scheduled Tribe population in the state is 1032 female per 1000 male population.

Literacy: Census, 2011 records 64.6 per cent ST literacy (65.38 per cent for the state in general), out of which 71.5 per cent ST male and 58.0 per cent ST female are literates. In rural Arunachal Pradesh the literacy rate is 60.4 per cent and it is 84.6 per cent in 27 census towns that constitute the urban Arunachal Pradesh. Out of rural ST literacy 67.7 ST males and 53.3 ST females are literate. Similarly, 90.3 per cent of ST male and 79.4 per cent of ST female in urban Arunachal Pradesh are recorded literates.

Birth and death rates: National Health Profile, 2013, records combined birth rate at 19.4 which constitutes 21 as rural birth rate and 13.9 as urban birth rate for the year 2012. It also records 5.8 as combined death rate including 6.7 rural and 2.7 urban death rates during the same year. The infant mortality rate (IMR) is enumerated 33 in the state.

Arunachal Pradesh had a crude birth rate (CBR) of 36.8 and a crude death rate (CDR) of 19.8 in 1971. Over the years there is an improvement. The HDR of Arunachal Pradesh, 2005 reports CBR of 34.62, CDR of 11.57 and IMR of 77 in 2001.

Bio-genetic Variability

Broadly, the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh display the biogenetic traits of the Mongoloid stock. The Khampti, Singpho, Tangsa and Nocte belong to the Palaeo-Mongoloid branch while the Adi, Apatani, Nyishi, Galo, Aka and Monpa belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid branch. The divergent processes of fission and fusion determined by historical factors over a long span of time have given distinct ethnic identity to many earlier singular tribes.

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4.3.2 Distribution of Tribes

In this section you will come to know how tribes are distributed according to recent political divisions and across geographical regions of the state.

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Distribution of Tribal Habitats in Political Divisions

Traditional concept of tribal habitats refers to a contiguous territory which does not have political dimension in modern sense. The territory is exclusive to the tribe and the people do not share it with other tribes. But the modern political divisions do not keep the territorial habitats confined to one division. A particular tribe may spread over more than one political division or share the division with the habitats of more than one tribe. The study of the distribution of tribes and thus their habitats will help you to understand the changing territorial divisions. In Arunachal Pradesh, distribution of tribes in political divisions is as follows:

<i>District (Political Divisions)</i>	<i>Tribes/Ethnic Groups</i>
Anjaw	Miju & Digaru Mishmi, Meyor
Changlang	Tangsa, Lisu, Singpho, Tutsa
Dibang Valley	Idu Mishmi
East Kameng	Nyishi, Puroik (Sulung)
East Siang	Adi, Galo (Minyong, Padam, Pasi and others)
Kra Daadi	Nyishi
Kurung Kumey	Nyishi, Puroik and Bangru
Lohit	Miju & Digaru Mishmi, Khampti, Singpho, Meyor, Tibetan Community
Longding	Wancho
Lower Dibang Valley	Adi (Padam), Idu Mishmi
Lower Subansiri	Nyishi, Apatani, Hills Miri
Namsai	Khampti, Deori, Chakma, Galo, Adi, Samua/Miri and few other communities
Papumpare	Nyishi
Siang	Adi (Minyong, Shimong etc)
Tawang	Monpa
Tirap	Nocte, Wancho, Tutsa
Upper Siang	Adi (Minyong, Padam, Karko, Millang, Ashing, Tangam etc.), Memba, Khamba
Upper Subansiri	Tagin, Na, Galo, Nyishi (Hill Miri)
West Kameng	Monpa, Sherdukpen, Aka, Miji, Khowa, Tibetan Community
West Siang	Galo, Memba, Adi (Bori, Bokar, Pilobo, Minyong, etc.)

Distribution of Tribal Habitats in Geographical Regions

You will find habitats of many tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are not confined to a particular geographical region. They inhabit more than one geographical region. However, a few tribes inhabit a particular region. The geographical regions are broadly classified as follows:

1. Longitudinal belt of the Assam plains at a height of about 200m in its southern border;
2. The foot hills;

3. The ranges of lesser sub-Himalayas; and
4. The Greater Himalayas.

The Deori, the Khampti and the Singpho inhabit the first geographical region in Lohit and Changlang district. In this region also you will find Adis and Galos in plains of East Siang district. Though Nyishis live in hills, you will find a few villages located in the foothills of East and West Kameng districts also. Digaru Mishmis inhabit the foot hills of Lohit district. A few villages of the Singphos are also located in foot hills. A few villages of Idu Mishmi, Nyishi, Galo and Adi are located in the foot hills of East Siang and Lower Dibang Valley. The Galos also inhabit plains and foot hills of West Siang in Likabali circle. The Nyishis spread from plains to the Greater Himalayas in Kurng Kumey and Kra Daadi districts. The Apatanis, the Bugun, the Aka, the Miji, the Nocte, the Meyors, the Wancho, the Tangsa and the Sherdukpen tribes have settled in ranges of lesser Himalayas. However, a few villages of the Tangsa and the Nocte are found in foot hills and plains. The Yobin, the Monpa, the Memba, the Sulung and the Khamba inhabit the Greater Himalayas. Many villages of Digaru Mishmi and the villages of Miju Mishmi have spread in both lesser and Greater Himalayas. The Tagins also live in both the regions.

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4.3.3 Linguistic Classification

Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh belong to different language groups. Efforts are still going on to properly identify and classify the language groups of all the tribes. However, Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* classifies the languages and dialects spoken by different ethnic communities under the Tibeto-Burman language group. Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) have considered Tibeto-Burman as sub-family of Tibeto-Chinese family. Language groups in Arunachal Pradesh are classified as under:

Tai-group of Siamese	Khampti, Khamiyang and Aiton groups.
Kachin group of Assamese	Singphos.
Arunachal branch of Tibeto-Burman sub-family	Aka, Adi group of tribes, Nyishi, Apatani, Mishmi, etc.
Bhoti language of Tibetan group	Monpa and sub-groups, Meyors

Among the tribes, the Khamptis have adopted the Tai script, while the western Buddhist tribes adopted a Tibetan script called *Uchan*. The Adi, Nyishi, Apatani, etc., have adopted the Roman script in recent years and are creating literature in their respective languages. The Millangs, a sub-group of the Padam Minyong branch, use their own language for intra-group communication though they use Minyong group language for inter-tribe communication. Their own language is believed to be a symbolic mode of communication which they developed during the days of frequent tribal feuds. So, linguistically they are identified with Adi language group. However, in recent years, the linguistics like Mark W. Post have started to consider their mode of communication as a distinct language group. Recently, Koro has been identified as a distinct language, though Koro is a sub-tribe of the Akas. According to linguist Harrison and Anderson, Koro does not have any sister languages nor is it a dialect of any other language. But undeniably, it belongs to the larger Tibeto-Burman linguistic family.

You will find from census 2001 (information on tribe wise language speakers in 2011 census report is not available) that Nyishi language is spoken by the largest number of people accounting for 18.94 per cent followed by Adi (17.57%). The

Monpa speakers constitute 5.1 per cent followed by Wancho (4.3%), Tasngsa (3.1%), Mishmi (3.1%), Nocte (2.9%) and others (11.5 %).

In recent years the language groups spoken by different communities are re-classified. The Bhoti language is presented as Bodhic language group. Similarly, the languages of Tani groups of people are classified as Tani group of languages. In the earlier scheme it was classified under Tibeto-Burman sub-family. However, you will study the recent classification of language groups during further higher studies on the subject.

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4.4 POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh can be better understood as ‘tribes of Arunachal Pradesh’. The construct of *Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* is an identity which is a later development. The identity has a territorial dimension and a political composition. It presents the notion of a group belongingness blending together all the heterogeneity across the communities. In doing so the individuality of the tribe is not sacrificed. However, this identity has evolved over the years.

As you know a tribe’s concept of a territory is notional and is defined in the community’s collective mind. In that sense the territory is exclusive to the tribe’s notion of traditional rights. But Arunachalee identity has introduced sharing a territory among the communities at various levels—state, district, and at least subdivision. Even two or more tribes share territorial boundary of a circle in the district. One tribe also shares the territory of circle or subdivision boundary with two or more different tribes. As has been said, the change has evolved over the years with politic-administrative development since British rule. A discussion will help you to understand the emerging identity of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh from a number of heterogeneous communities.

The present State of Arunachal Pradesh has evolved over a period of about 100 years, organizing and re-organizing the administration, and naming and renaming the territory a number of times. Similarly, the administration has evolved through different stages, right from the colonial rule — from punitive expeditions to passing of regulations.

The territorial and administrative evolution of Arunachal Pradesh dates back to 1875 when the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 was drawn up. However, the territory assumed administrative significance only in 1914. In this year, the frontier line (the McMohan Line) between the then Tibet and the North-east India was defined. Further, a territorial entity emerged in the name of North-East Frontier Tract (NEFT), which included the areas either inhabited or frequented by the tribes mentioned in the 1880 Act; the Act mentions tribes such as Abors (Adis), Miris, Mishmis, Singphos, Nagas, Khamptis, Bhutias, Akas and Daflas (Nyishi).

Following the Act and subsequent knowledge on the region, the Notification of Presidential Order, 1950, listed 12 tribes namely, Abor, Aka, Dafla, Apatani, Galong, Monpa, Khampti, Singpho, Khowa, Sherdukpen, Mishmi and any Naga tribe. In another Notification in 1989, based on the proposal of the State Government, 25 tribes were enlisted. Later Adi was used for Abor, Nyishi for Dafla and Galo for Galong.

Keeping in view the provisions of the 1880 Act, the territory for NEFT was carved out from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam. Administratively,

NEFT comprised the Western Section — the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, and the Central and Eastern sections, and was placed under the Assam Government. In 1919 the Western Section was renamed as Balipara Frontier Tract, and the Central and Eastern sections as Sadiya Frontier Tract.

In 1937 the post of the Secretary for the Tribal Affairs, to the Governor of Assam was created. During the same year, the Frontier Tracts, namely Balipara Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier Tract and Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, came to be known as ‘Excluded Areas’ of the Province of Assam under the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936. The Excluded Areas came under the direct control of the Government and the legislation for these was to be affected only through regulations. There was no line ministry responsible for the administration of the Excluded Areas.

In 1943, the post of an Advisor to the Governor of Assam was created, and the Tirap Frontier Tract was formed by combining some portions of areas from Sadiya and Lakhimpur Frontier Tracts. In 1946, Balipara Frontier Tract was bifurcated into Sela Sub-Agency and Subansiri Area.

In 1948, the Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into Abor Hills and Mishmi Hills districts with their headquarters at Pasighat and Sadiya respectively. In 1951, the entire Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, and the plains of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Mishmi Hills District and Abor Hills District were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Assam Government. In the same year, the Tuensang Division was created, merging the Naga Tribal Area and placing it under the jurisdiction of NEFT.

In 1954, NEFT was brought under a single administrative unit and re-designated as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The Frontier Tracts were renamed as Frontier Divisions. In the same year, Balipara Frontier Tract was divided into Kameng and Subansiri Divisions; Abor Hills and Mishmi Hills districts were changed to Siang and Lohit Frontier Divisions; Sela Sub-Agency to Kameng Frontier Division and Subansiri Area into Subansiri Frontier Division. In 1957, the Tuensang Frontier Division was excluded from the NEFA and included in Naga Hills. In 1965, the divisions of the NEFA were designated as districts, and Political Officers as Deputy Commissioners. The territory was divided into five districts namely, Tirap, Lohit, Siang, Subansiri and Kameng. These districts were later bifurcated and at present the state has 20 districts.

In 1980 all districts except Tirap were bifurcated. Kameng was bifurcated into East and West Kameng; Subansiri into Lower and Upper Subansiri; Siang into East and West Siang; and Lohit into Lohit and Dibang Valley districts. Later, Tawang District was carved out from West Kameng District in 1984; Changlang from Tirap District in 1987; Papum Pare from Lower Subansiri District in 1992; Upper Siang from the East Siang District in 1994; and Kurung Kumey from Lower Subansiri District and Lower Dibang Valley from Dibang Valley District were carved out in 2001. Lohit District was further bifurcated into Lohit and Anjaw districts in 2004. In 2012 the Tirap district was further bifurcated and Longding district consisting of six subdivisions namely Longding, Kanunbari, Rongchau, Wakka, Pumao and Lawnu was carved out. The remaining area of Lohit, after bifurcation of Anjaw, was again bifurcated. From it Namsai district was carved out in 2014 consisting of the Namsai Subdivision of the undivided Lohit. In 2015 two more districts were created namely Kra Daadi and Siang. Kra Dadi was carved out from Kurung Kumey

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Check Your Progress

7. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) A name by which a tribe is known must have a meaning in its language system.
 - (b) Joram is an ancestor based identity.
 - (c) In Arunachal Pradesh all the people belong to one or the other tribal groups.
 - (d) Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh belong to Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) areas.
 - (e) Density of population in the districts of Arunachal Pradesh is uniform.

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district constituting Tali and Palin constituencies. The Siang district was carved out from both West Siang and East Siang districts. It is constituted of Rumong-Kaying Constituency of West Siang and Boleng-Pangin Constituency of East Siang districts. In total the state has 20 districts. As the number of districts increases, the ethnic diversity in a district decreases.

A development took place in 1965. As mentioned earlier, the NEFT received administrative and territorial recognition in 1914 through a notification by the Foreign and Political Departments of the Government of British India. In other words, the affairs of the territory remained with the Foreign Department thereafter. Even after the independence of the country, though the present Arunachal was linked with Assam administration, it was placed under the Ministry of External Affairs. On 1 August 1965, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, took over the charge of administration of NEFA from the Ministry of External Affairs.

On 20 January 1972, NEFA was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh and became a Union Territory. In 1974 the capital of Arunachal Pradesh was shifted from Shillong to the present Itanagar. And On 20 February 1987, Arunachal Pradesh became the 24th state of the Union of India.

The territorial and administrative evolution of the present state dates back to the pre-independence period. But the political development took place in two phases before it became a Union Territory: The first was the nomination of Shri Choukhamoon Gohain (Namchum) as MP in 1952, while the second was the introduction of Panchayati Raj in 1967. In 1971, the representation to Lok Sabha was increased by one seat, while one seat was provided in Rajya Sabha. In 1977 the people of the state exercised their franchise for the first time to elect their representative for the Lok Sabha. Currently there are two representatives to the Lok Sabha and one to the Rajya Sabha.

On 15 August 1975, an elected provincial Legislative Assembly with 30 members was constituted and the first council of ministers assumed office. The first general election for the Assembly was held in February 1978. When Arunachal Pradesh attained full-fledged status in 1987, the seats in the State Assembly were increased from 30 to 60.

4.5 TRIBAL STUDIES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: AN OVERVIEW

It will be of your interest to know that tribal studies began as a department in the then Arunachal University in 1995. This department has been further upgraded to Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies (AITS) subsequently. But this is not what the title of the section *Tribal Studies in Arunachal Pradesh: An overview* implies. In this section you will learn about researches and other studies on tribes of the state. Other studies normally include creative writings like stories, novels, songs on tribes and their cultures.

Broadly, studies on tribes include all topics relating to tribes-their cultures, inter-cultural interactions, tribe and non-tribe exchanges and negotiations with emerging national and international policies and perspectives and so on. You can understand the growth of tribal studies in the present state of Arunachal Pradesh in terms of its phases of growth, topical focus, purpose, sources of studies, etc.

Check Your Progress

8. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) As per Census, 2011 Arunachal Pradesh has 27 census towns.
 - (b) Habitations of Nyishi tribe are spread over six districts.
 - (c) Singphos belong to Kachin language family.
 - (d) Inner Line regulation was introduced in the territory of present Arunachal Pradesh in 1873.
 - (e) Pasighat became the district headquarters of Abor Hills district in 1911.

Phases of Growth

You have already studied Vidyarthi and Rai's (1976-1985) classification of the stages of growth of tribal studies in India in Paper-I, Unit-II. Here we will discuss the growth following Vidyarthi and Rai but will suitable modification in Arunachal Pradesh Context. We propose three phases Formative or Colonial phase (1774-1919), Constructive phase (1920-1954) and Institutional phase. You will understand the reasons of our scheme of classification from the discussions presented below.

Colonial Phase: Interest on the study of tribes began during colonial period due to administrative requirements. Academic administrators were engaged to study the tribes and their cultures to know them better for administrative purpose. The colonial phase is same as the formative period of Vidyarthi and Rai. But we emphasise on Colonial period as colonial attitude was at the centre of interest on studying tribes. Academic administrators were mostly colonial officers and they approached tribes as 'others' and with an attitude of cultural superiority. Studies on tribes appeared in government notifications, gazetteers, census records, acts and regulations, administrative reports and in published articles and volumes.

During this period, tribes of present Arunachal Pradesh and different aspects of their lifestyle appeared in studies undertaken for different regions like the then British province of Bengal and its North-eastern frontiers. You will find references in the following writings:

R. Wilcox's *Memoir of a Survey of Assam and the Neighbouring Countries Executed in 1825-1829* (1832); **R.B. Pemberton's** *Report on the Eastern Frontier of India* (1835); **W. Robinson's** *A descriptive Account of Assam to which is added a short account of Neighbouring Tribes* (1841); **E.T. Dalton's** *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (1872); **G.W. Beresford's** *Notes on the North-East Frontier of Assam* (1881); **George Dunbar's** *Frontiers* (1932); **A. Mackenzie's** *History of the Relations of Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-east Frontier of Bengal* (1884); **J.F. Nedham's** *Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition, 1889-1900* (1900) and **E.A. Gait's** *History of Assam* (1905).

As you know Asiatic Society of Bengal was established in 1774. This society published a journal entitled *the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1784. The journal contained papers on 'Nature and Man' describing the life and culture of people of India. In it papers on life and culture were also published. You will find an article on Aka as early as 1884 in it. There were a number of articles on different tribes of present Arunachal Pradesh published in the journal. Later these papers were compiled in two volumes, namely *Selection of papers regarding the Hill Tracts between Assam and Burma and on the Upper Brahmaputra* (1873), and *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (1959) edited by Elwin.

Some other important articles available are on individual tribes are as follows:

G.D.S. Dunbar's *Abors and Galongs: notes on certain hill tribes of the Indo-Tibetan border* (1915); **W. Griffith's** *Visit to the Mishmee Hills in Assam* (1836); **E.A. Rowlatt's** *Report of an Expedition into the Mishmee hills to the northeast of Sudyah* (1845); **W. Robinson's** *Notes on the Dophlas and the Peculiarities of their Language*; **G.W. Dun's** (1896) *Preliminary Notes on Daphlas* (1851); **B. Duff's** *Report on the Miri country and Operations of Miri Mission* (1912) and **R.S. Kennedy's** *Ethnological Report on the Akas, Khoas, and Mijis and the Monpas of Tawang* (1914).

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Two seminal works published during this period based on tour to Mishmi and Galo areas are:

T.T.Cooper's *The Mishmee Hills* (1873) and **A. Hamilton's** *In Abor Jungles* (1912).

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Constructive phase: You have studied in Paper I that Vidyarthi and Rai (1976/1985) have marked the period from 1920 to 1950 as constructive phase for tribal studies in India. The greater part of the period is a part of colonial rule. But during this period, tribes were studied in the discipline of Anthropology and Sociology with more focus on academic discourse. Sociology was introduced in Bombay University in 1919 and Anthropology in Calcutta University in 1921. Moreover, the journal *Man in India* started publishing articles mostly on tribes from the year 1921. Not only there was a shift in focus from colonial interest to academic engagement, but Indian scholars like G.S. Ghurye, N. K. Bose, M. N. Srinivas, D. N. Majumdar and many other studied tribes from a national perspective of interaction and integration. It will be of interest to know that the works of S. C. Roy on the Munda and J. K. Bose on Garo customary inheritance laws were cited in courts while dealing with disputes of these tribes. The judiciary recognised tribal rights as instituted in their customs. Obviously tribal studies entered into a new phase during this period. Of course the book on Munda was written in 1912 but its perspective was academic and rights based.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the constructive phase begins from 1920, corresponding to Vidyarthi and Rai's scheme, but continues till 1954. In 1954, North Eastern Frontier Tracts, (the name of the present territory before 1954) was brought under a single administrative unit and re-designated as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). The following year a research branch was established under NEFA Administration. Verrier Elwin worked on Arunachali tribes after it.

During this period problem oriented publications of C. Von Furer-Haimendorf on Apatanis and of other scholars like Ursula Graham Bower are significant academic contributions to tribal studies. Of course Haimendorf's studies continued even after 1954 but his focus was on academics. During this period also Haimendorf produced a report of his expedition into Subansiri area. In addition to his works seminal contributions in the field of folklores and ethnography have been made by faculties of the department of Anthropology of Gauhati University which was established in 1948. In their works tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have appeared along with other tribes of the Northeast. During this period, tribes like Gallongs (present Galos), Abors (present Adis), Daphlas (present Nyishis) and many others were recognised as Scheduled Tribes by the Order of the President of India in 1950. During this period colonial perspective was weaning off and academic approach to national perspective was gaining momentum. However, as is the case of tribes of India in general, much work is not available on Arunachalee tribes. The following works will give you some idea on tribal studies during constructive period in Arunachal Pradesh:

J.P. Mills' 'A Brief Note on Agriculture in the Dirang Dزونg Area' (1946); C.Von Furer-Haimendorf's 'Agriculture and Land tenure among the Apa Tanis' and 'Notes on Tribal Justice among the Apa Tanis' of (1946) and *Ethnographic Notes on the Tribes of the Subansiri Region*, (1946; and Ursula Graham Bower's *The Hidden Land* (1953).

In early fifty's social workers visited different places of Arunachal Pradesh. A couple, S.M.Krishnatry and Geeta Krishnatry by name, visited Tagin areas. Recently

Geeta Krishnatry's diary is published under the title *Gender triumphs unarmed in the hostile gorges: rediscovery of border Tagins: Tour Diary of Mrs Geeta Krishnatry*. The diary was compiled by S.M. Krishnatry and edited by B.B. Pandey in 1997 and published by Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

Institutional Phase: The beginning of this period departs from Vidyarthi and Rai's scheme of analytical period. During this period institutional interest and analytical academics have given a new height to tribal studies in Arunachal Pradesh. The institutional interest was visible in constructive period for tribes of other parts of the country. But in case of Arunachal Pradesh it began from 1955 and combined with analytical and problem oriented studies. That is why the phase is labelled as Institutional Phase (1955-). The overall trend depicted in the scheme of Vidyarthi and Rai does not appear in toto in Arunachal context. The research on tribal studies has its own dynamics in Arunachal Pradesh. The periodisation has slight variation to suit the context of Arunachal Pradesh, though like Vidyarthi and Rai it believes in overlapping of perspectives between the last two phases.

You have already studied that the present territory of Arunachal Pradesh was known as North Eastern Frontier Tracts (NEFT) before 1954 and North East Frontier Agency from 1954 to 1972. There was slow down in tribal studies during the Constructive phase and picked up momentum when the NEFA Administration established as special research Branch in 1955 for anthropological, philological and historical researches. As Elwin writes in *A Philosophy for NEFA*, the work of the Branch centred round the concept of *Philanthropology*, meaning scientific anthropological research 'for the benefit of human beings'. Therefore, anthropologists approached to the tribal people with an attitude of respect and humility, but not with the colonial notion of considering tribes 'as savage or inferior.' Elwin further writes that the NEFA 'research workers were not concerned with policy as such'. They studied people and their institutions so as to encourage people and institutions to provide the basis to establish the foundation of the Administration. Obviously there is a departure from the colonial attitude in the works of the research branch of NEFA Administration. The stress was on the process of integration of Arunachalee tribes into national ethos and development agenda. This is also manifest when philologists devoted attention to the academic study of languages and dialects. They prepared 'Grammars, Dictionaries and Phrase-books to help officers to learn the local languages'. They also supervised 'the translation of school textbooks, so that education at least in the primary stage can be carried on in the mother tongue'. During this period, a substantial collection of myths and legends have been published.

The cultural anthropologists in the research branch have studied tribal religion not only to create knowledge on the subject but to help other colleagues in the Administration to understand and respect tribal beliefs. They have studied 'material culture so that information thus obtained may help the development of cottage industries.' Further, they have investigated 'social organisation and jurisprudence to assist in the building up Cooperatives on the right lines and to help the development of tribal political institutions'. Verrier Elwin and his scheme were predominant quite for some time in tribal studies. Excellent monographs also have been prepared and published in the early few decades.

In 1960s and there after some national institutes like Anthropological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, Archaeological Survey of India, Central Institute of Indian Languages at Mysore, National Council of Applied Economic Research at

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New Delhi and a few others have conducted their researches in the state. Interesting publications and reports are available based on such researches on various topics. In the *People of India* project of Anthropological Survey of India tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have been studied from different aspects. The volume on Arunachal Pradesh is a rich account of tribes and their culture.

Scholars of the Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC), Jorhat also conducted socio-economic survey in few villages in Arunachal. Some important works among them include: D. Gohain and S. Saikia's '*Khonsa: A Socio-Economic Survey of a Nocte-Naga Village in NEFA*' (1970) (mimeograph); M. Barkataky and P.C. Dutta's '*Pakam: Socio-Economic Survey of a Gallong Village*' (1972) (mimeograph), U. Phukan's (et al) '*Bamin: A Socio-Economic Survey of Apatani Village*' (1978) (mimeograph), and N.R. Goswami and S.N. Burgohain's '*Hatiduba: A socio-Economic Survey of a Miju Mishmi Village*' (1982) (mimeograph). These surveys provide general idea about traditional economy of Arunachal tribes.

Gazetteers were published in 1970s. Another interesting feature is the publication of a journal in the name of *Resarun* by the Research Branch and *NEFA Information* by Publicity Branch. *NEFA Information* has subsequently been re-designated as *Arunachal News* after it became a Union Territory in 1972 and *Arunachal Review* after it attained statehood in 1987. Since NEFA Information days articles on culture, development initiatives and achievements, government's vision along with news and views have been featuring regularly. Some college teachers of that time, such as Tamo Mibang, Tai Nyori, S. D. Jha, A. K. Agarwal and some others, have contributed on topics relating to culture, history and development. A few among them also have worked on tribal issues for their Ph.D degree.

Institutionalisation process of tribal studies prepared to take off when Arunachal University was established in 1984. The departments like education, political science, and history conducted seminars on topics related to the people and their cultures focusing on changing context. Faculty members attended national and regional seminars where they produced papers on tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Some studies were also undertaken in North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong; Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University on topics pertaining to Arunachal Pradesh as project works and Ph.D. assignments.

Scholars have used historical accounts to study British relations with hill tribes. In these studies Arunachal Pradesh has occupied an important place. Among the works mention may be made of B.C. Chakravarty's *British relations with the Hills Tribes of Assam* (1964), D. P. Choudhury's *The North-east Frontier of India* (1978) and M.L. Bose's *British Policy in the North-east Frontier Agency* (1979). Chakravarty covered the second half of the nineteenth century, from 1885 to 1900; Choudhury supplemented Chakravarty's work up to 1914. Bose on the other hand covered the period from the British annexation of Assam in 1826 to the Independence of the country in 1947. You will find that scholars of other Universities studied the tribes and tribal institutions of Arunachal Pradesh. K. K. Misra of Utkal University, Bhubaneswar studied Khampti elites for his Ph.D assignment in the later part of 1980s which he published under the title *Tribal Elites and Social Transformation* (1993). Soihiamlung Dangmei (2012-2013) of Jawaharlal Nehru University has compared Donyipolo faiths of Arunachal Pradesh with Heraka faith in his Ph.D dissertation titled *Religious Politics and Search for Indigeneity: A Study of Donyi-Polo and Heraka Movements in North East India*. Foreign scholars like Mark W.

Post, Stephen Morey have studied the languages of some Arunachali tribes. Post has exclusively studied Galo language while Morey has studied Singpho and Nocte languages.

The process however took off after the establishment of the Department of Tribal Studies in 1995. The Department (presently it is Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies) runs interdisciplinary M.Phil and Ph. D programmes in tribal studies and language package course in tribal languages. It also started P.G. programme in anthropology in 2001 which later has been upgraded to an independent department, but yet having tribal studies as core area of research. In addition to routine teaching and research programmes, faculty members of AITS regularly conduct seminars, conferences, edit books and involve in sponsored projects on topics related to tribes, their cultures and development in the changing context. They use recent methodological and conceptual perspectives in their researches which also include current issues.

Interestingly departments like political science, history, economics, botany, geography. etc. organise seminars and conferences on various topics relating to people, their institutions, history and often locating them in development process. The department of economics acted as the nodal department in preparing *Human Development Report* and *State Development Report* of Arunachal Pradesh. You will also find that research scholars of these departments take up topics related to tribes and their ways of life for M.Phil. and Ph.D degrees. Some of these research works have been published subsequently. Mention may be made of the publications of N. T. Rikam's (2005) *Emerging Religious Identities of Arunachal Pradesh*, Ashan Riddi's (2006) *Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Continuity and Change*, Tana Showren's (2009) *The Nyishi of Arunachal Pradesh-An Ethnohistorical Study*, Otem Pertin's (2009) *Rethinking Tribal Institutions*, Gibji Nimachow's (2011) *The Akas: Land and People* and N. N. Hina's (2012) *Cutomary Laws of Nyishi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh*.

You will find that topics such as empowerment, social capital, customary laws, political participation, working of Panchayati Raj Institutions, etc. relating to tribal life of Arunachal Pradesh have been covered as Ph.D. assignments of the Department of Political Science. Similarly, scholars of Department of History have worked on ethnohistory, colonial interventions, socio-economic changes, change and continuity of traditional institutions, identity issues, British-tribe relations and many such related topics. Resource management and socio-economic dynamics lie at the core of research topics on which scholars have worked for Ph.D. degree of the Department of Geography.

Ph.D. scholars of the Department of History have worked on topics having bearing on tribal institutions and interactions with outside forces. Mention may be made of Ashan Riddi's (2003) dissertation entitled *Traditional Institutions of the Tagins: Continuity and Change*, N.T. Rikam's (2003) *Changing Religious Identities of Arunachal Pradesh: A Case Study of the Nyishi Since 1947*, Khetoan Khetey's (2007) *Socio-Cultural Development of the Noctes of Arunachal Pradesh since Independence*, and Jommi Loyi's (2012) dissertation entitled *Colonial Interventions into Adi Areas (1825-1947)* as examples.

North-East India History Association (NEIHA) and Economic Association (NEEA) and many regional and national NGOs provide academic platform in seminars and conferences where many research papers on Arunachal Pradesh are

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presented. You will find a series of publications of these organisations including those of by the North Eastern Council (NEC), and the North-East Council for Social Science Research (NEICSSR), Shillong. These publications include writings covering various topics on Arunachal Pradesh and its people.

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Bio-genetic studies

You have studied bio-genetic characteristic of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. From various studies on bio-genetic traits we know about these characteristics. Anthropological Survey of India and the Department of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh have carried out projects on these topics. In addition, individual scholars also have taken up studies from where we know about bio-genetic traits of the tribes. In almost all the phases importance was given to such studies. We cite a few as examples.

You will find that bio-genetic studies include a small report on serology ('ABO' and 'MN' blood groups) of Digaru Mishmis by D. K. Duarah (1979) based on 80 individuals. Waddell (1901) had undertaken an anthropometric survey among the *Khamptis*. He found that the *Khamptis* belong to the Mongoloid racial stock with an average stature of 1,641 mm, an average cephalic index of 79.1 and an average nasal index of 80.8. B.S. Guha (1948-49 and 1949-50) and P.Gupta and P.C.Dutta (1962) had also undertaken an anthropometric survey among the two sub-groups of the *Adis* i.e. the *Adi-Pangis* and *Adi-Padams*. S. Roy (1966) made a systematic anthropometric survey of *Adi Shimongs*, *Adi Pasis*, *Adi Minyongs* and *Adi Ashings*. N. Kumar (1954) and P. N. Bhattacharjee (1954) undertook serological studies among the *Gallongs*, *Minyongs*, *Padams*, *Pangis* and *Pasis*. A survey conducted by P.N. Bhattacharjee (1955) of finger dermatoglyphics among three *Adi* sub-groups (*Minyongs*, *Padams* and *Pasis*) suggests that the *Minyongs* and *Padams* have a higher frequency of whorls rather than loops, while the opposite is true in the case of *Pasis*. I.J.S. Jaswal and S. Jaswal (1981), I. J. S. Jaswal and P. B. S. V. Padmanabham (1983) and I.J.S. Jaswal, S. Jaswal S. Sengupta (1986) undertook a detailed bio-anthropological survey of *Apatanis*. D.K. Duarah (1986) had also studied the *Monpas* of Dirang, Kalaktang and Tawang and found a high frequency of the 'O' blood group gene followed by 'A' and 'B' blood group genes.

Publications of Government of Arunachal Pradesh

Among the publications of the department of research Government of Arunachal Pradesh on tribes the following works are noteworthy:

- (a) **Monographs:** The Department of Research has prepared a number of monographs. These include **P. Dutta's** *The Tangsas of the Namchik and Tirap Valleys*(1959) and *The Noctes* (1969); **T. K. M. Baruah's** *The Idu Mishmi* (1960) and *The Singphos and their Religion* (1977); **R. Sinha's** *The Akas* (1962); **T.K. Bhattacharya's** *The Tangams* (1975); **R. K. Deuri's** *The Sulungs* (1982); **K. Kumar's** *The Boris* (1978) and *The Pailibos* (1979); **R.P.R. Sharma's** *The Sherdukpens* (1961); **B.K. Shukla's** *The Daflas of Subansiri Region* (1965); **L.R.N. Srivastava's** *The Gallongs* (1962) and *Among the Wanchos* (1978); **A. Tayeng's** *The Millang* (1976) and D.K.Dutta's *The Membas of Arunachal Pradesh* (2006).

Publications on socio-cultural and historical topics: On this topic you will find **Sachin Roy's** *Aspects of Padam Minyong Culture* (1960); **N. Sarkar's**

(1974) *Dances of Arunachal Pradesh, Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens* (1980) and *Tawang Monastery* (1981); **R.K.Deuri's** *Festivals of Kameng* (1983); **L.N. Chacravarty's** *Glimpses of the Early History of Arunachal* (1989); **A. A. Ashraf's** *Prehistoric Arunachal* (1990); **P.C Dutta & D.K. Duarah's** *Aspects of Culture and Customs of Arunachal Pradesh* (1990) and **A. Tayeng's** *Adi Folk Songs* (1990).

- (b) **Gazetteers:** Gazetteer of India, Arunachal Pradesh – *Lohit District* (1978), *Tirap District* (1980), *Subansiri District* (1981), *East Siang and West Siang Districts* (1994) and *East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang Districts* (1996) and *State Gazetteer of Arunachal Pradesh, Vol-I* (2010).
- (c) **Individual scholars on policy directives and culture:** **Verrier Elwin's** *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India* (1958), *A Philosophy for NEFA* and *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India* in 1959, and *Democracy in NEFA* (1965) were published by the Administration of North-East Frontier Agency, Shillong. There is a joint work of **Verrier Elwin** with **B. Shastri and I. Simon**, which is entitled *Important Directives on Administration of NEFA* (1967) and published by NEFA Administration. **P.N. Luthra's** *Constitutional and Administrative Growth of North-East Frontier Agency* (1971) has also been published by the administration. Two works namely *Enchanted Frontiers* (1973) and *Imperilled Frontiers* (1983) by Nari Rustomji are noteworthy. These books provide rich information on life and culture and development imperatives of the government.

Writings included in *Resarun* cover a wide range of topics. Some of them are *Origin and Migrational History of Mishmis* (2009) by Dimso Manyu; *An Account of Gorcham Chorten; The largest Stupa in Arunachal Pradesh and Neolithic Celts from Arunachal Pradesh* (1982) by N. Sarkar; *Galo House as a Cultural Space* (2006) by Jumyir Basar; *Nutritional Status of Children in Arunachal Pradesh an Overview* (2000) by Helina Mantaw & Priyanka Priyadarshni; *Nutritive Values in the Natural Food Items of Some Arunachal Pradesh* (2001) by R Rina, & Y.P. Kohli and many on cultural life. As early as 1972 C.R. Stoner has published one paper in Arunachal Bulletin on *The Sulung Tribes of the Assam Himalayas*.

In *Arunachal News* writings generally discussed development scenario of the state. As early as 1978 I.K. Barthakur wrote on Economic Review of Arunachal Pradesh-1977. Same year S.K. Chatterjee wrote on the functioning of Arunachal Pradesh Forest Corporation Limited in the article of the same name. Tribal relations with forests have been discussed in many papers included in *Arunachal Forest News*, another government publication. For example, Ruchi Pant (1998) wrote a paper entitled Joint Forestry Management vis-a-vis Conservation Laws of Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly S.N. Hegde (2000) wrote on Conservation of North East Flora in which Arunachal case is adequately covered.

Census publications: You will be interested to learn that the first comprehensive census was introduced in the state only in 1961. Based on census data B.K. Roy Burman compiled a book entitled *Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of Hills Areas of North-East India* (1961) based on village surveys. You will find socio-economic survey conducted in the villages of Sibuk, Jia, Momong, Dalbing, Ramsingh, Jara and Koreng were included in this volume. The 1971 census two important micro-studies namely, J.B. Ganguly's *A Pilot Study of Pasighat* and Roy Burman's *Socio-economic Survey of Rupa* provide rich information of two

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places. Census reports right from 1961 provide us rich information on Arunachal Pradesh and its people.

Projects at AITS

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Faculty members of Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies have undertaken a good number of projects and have contributed significantly to the growth of tribal studies Arunachal Pradesh. A few of them are cited as examples.

M. C. Behera: *Objective Assessment of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in selected villages of Arunachal Pradesh* (2003), *Base-line Survey Report on handmade Paper Industry in Mukto Village* (2001), *Village India: Identification and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage, Arunachal Chapter* (2000), *Impact of Orange Cultivation on Traditional Role of Galo Women* (1999) and *Articulation of Indian Society through a Pilgrim Centre : A Case Study of Parshuram Kund* (1997).

S. K. Chaudhuri: *Continuity and Change Among the Mijis of Arunachal Pradesh; Relocating Morung in Wancho Society: A Study of a traditional Social Institution at the Cross Roads and Around the Loin-Loom: A Study of Indigenous Knowledge of Wancho Women; Documentation of Indigenous Knowledge and policy Issues related to Fisheries of Arunachal Pradesh and Beyond Cattle to Cash: Changing Agrarian Economy of the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh (1946-2008).*

P. T. Abraham: *A comparative Study of Tani Languages-Dialects of Arunachal Pradesh.*

S. S. Chaudhuri: *Culture of Weaving and Women: Special Reference to Indigenous Knowledge System.*

S. K. Chaudhuri & S.S. Chaudhuri: *Beads Traditions among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study on Ethno-History, Gender, Identity and Emerging Cultural Context.*

Jumyir Basar: *A Study of Indigenous Knowledge System and Resource Management Practices among the Galo Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh and Ethnographic Study of Minor Communities of Arunachal Pradesh*

H. V. Singh: *Tribal Health Issues in the Context of Arunachal Pradesh.*

Simon John: *Documentation of Performative Traditions Associated with Funerals of Idu Mishmi of Arunachal Pradesh and A Multidisciplinary Survey, Research and Documentation of Rock Art in North East India.*

Lisa Lomdak: *A Preliminary Language Documentation of the Tribal Minor Speech communities of Bangru and Meyor of Arunachal Pradesh and Arunachal Volume, Peoples Linguistic Survey of India.*

AITS has also collaborated with SOAS, London's project on *Tribal Transitions* in Arunachal Pradesh.

Seminars/ Conferences/Workshops in AITS: *Indigenous Faith and Practices of Arunachal Pradesh* (1996); *Ethno Medicines of The Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* (1996); *Indigenous Religion and Culture of Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* (1998); *Women and Health with Special Reference to Arunachal Pradesh* (1999); *Arunachal Towards the New Century: Communication for Tribal Development* (2000); *Indigenous Knowledge System of the Tribes of North East India* (2001), *Dynamics of Tribal Villages of Arunachal Pradesh: Emerging Realities* (2003); *Marriage System in the Tribal Societies of Arunachal Pradesh* (2004); *Marriage in*

tribal Societies Cultural Dynamics and Social Realities (2005); *Traditional Political Systems in Arunachal Pradesh: Emerging Realities* (2005); *Traditional Political Systems in Arunachal Pradesh: Emerging Realities* (2006) The Institute has also conducted workshops on topic like issues on *Culture Identity and Change* (2000), *Phonetic Features of Arunachal Languages* (2002) and many others.

Not only do university departments, but also affiliated colleges of Rajiv Gandhi University conduct seminars pertaining to tribes of the state. Recently J. N. College, Pasighat, conducted a national seminar on *Ethno Science and Technology of India: With Special Reference to North East India* (6-7 October 2016). D. N. College, Itanagar also conducted a seminar on *Cultural Heritage of Northeast India* (10-11 March 2017) and DPGC, Kamki on *Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity at Grass-Root Level in Arunachal Pradesh: A Historical Perspective*. Doimukh College also conducted a seminar on *hunting and gathering* in 2016.

M.Phil./Ph.D. assignments in AITS

AITS promotes interdisciplinary researches. In its M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes students come from humanities and commerce streams. From its inception in 1995 more than hundred students of History, Political Science, Economics, English, Commerce, Geography, Education, Sociology and Anthropology disciplines have completed M.Phil. course. Similarly, about fifty students from these disciplinary backgrounds have registered/completed Ph.D. course of AITS. In both the programmes scholars have worked on topics relating to both of their respective disciplines and tribes. The topics covered relate to resource management, socio-economic development, rural development, oral narratives, symbolism, indigenous knowledge, employment, political participation, status, empowerment, PRIs, urbanization, social practices, disaster management, customary laws, customs and traditions, traditional political organization, social organizations, dance, festivals, economic pursuits, faiths and beliefs, forestry, tourism, crime and punishment, banking, health, educational technology, educational problems and many others.

You will understand the nature of interdisciplinary studies conducted at AITS from the following titles of a few M.Phil and Ph.D dissertations. Besides, the topics of research are tribe based and region based pertaining to different aspects of life both in tradition and contemporary situation and thus diverse in nature.

M.Phil. Dissertations

Pokling Tayeng's (1996) *Role of Forest in the Socio-Economic Life of the Padams of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Ashan Riddi's** (1996-97) *Indigenous Institutions of the Tagins and the Changing Trend*; **Nani Anku's** (2009) *Teaching of English Language in Secondary Schools of Capital Complex: A critical study*; **Jombi Bagra's** (2009) *Interpretation of Women in Patriarchy: A case study of Galo*; **Onong Perme's** (2008) *A Study on the Culture and Process of Education in Arunachal Pradesh with the Adis of East Siang as case study*; **Rinchin Dawa's** (2008) *Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions: A study on the Monpas of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Oimang Megu's** (2007) *Cane and Bamboo in the Life of the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh: An Anthropological study on Indigenous knowledge system*; **Punyo Yarang's** (2006) *Dapo: Social control mechanism of the Apatanis*; **Sila Dele's** (2007) *Juvenile Delinquency in Idu Mishmi Community*; **Kokom Gao's** (2006) *Ecological and socio-economic implications of hunting practice of Adis*; **Taw Azu's** (1998) *Women in Nishing Society (a Case study of Yachuli Circle of*

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Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh; **Leki Norbu's** (2002) *Utilization and Management of Animal Resource by the Monpas of A.P.*; **Dimso Manyu's** (2003) *Understanding Indigenous Trade: A study on the Roles of a few Mishmi Clans of District Lohit, Arunachal Pradesh*; **Rajiv Meso's** (2005) *Priesthood among the Idu Mishmis (A case study of Idu Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh)*; **Nending Butung's** (2010-2011) *Analysis of Culture Reflection in Oral Narratives: The Apatani Tribe at Perspective*; **Raju Balo's** (2008-09) *A Study of the Growth and Status of Elementary Education in East Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Tage Pugang's** (2008-09) *A Study of Social Reality of the Apatanis in Selected Folk Narratives*; **Tenzin Yeegha's** (2008-09) *A Study of Symbolism in the Dances of Tawang Monpas*; **Tade Sangdo's** (2007-08) *A Study on Festivals and Rituals of the Nyishi (A Case Study of East Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh)*; **Millo Mamung** (2008-09) *Transformation of Tribal Economy and Workforce Participation in Arunachal Pradesh (A Case Study of the Apatanis)*; **Koj Tacho's** (2006-07) *A Study of Buliang of the Apatanis in Contemporary Society*; **Fames Linggi's** (2005-06) *A Study on Economics of Indigenous Industrial Activities of Arunachal Pradesh with special reference to Idu Community*; **Tarun Mene's** (2006) *Suicides among the Idu Mishmis: An Anthropological study of the tribe of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Kamjai Taism's** (2003-2004) *The Tangsa Traditional Polity in Transition (A Case Study of Changlang Circle of Changlang District, Arunachal Pradesh)*; **Taba Soring's** (2003-2004) *Crime, Punishment and Village Authority in Traditional Nyishi Community (A Case Study of Three Nyishi Villages of Pipsorang Circle under Kurung Kumey District in Arunachal Pradesh)*. **Nongja Singpho's** (2004-2005) *A Study of Folk Narratives of the Singphos of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Wangda Gyatso's** (2004-2005) *A Study of Employment and Income Situation in Small-scale industries (SSIs) in Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Kalen Lego's** (2002-2003) *The Production, Exchange and Distribution System in Adi Village: A case study of Ngopok village under Mebo Circle, East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh*. **Tashi Kayi's** (1998-99) *Role of Rural Bank for the Development of Rural Sector in Arunachal Pradesh (A Case Study of APRB, Lumpo Branch, Nari Sub-division, East Siang District)*; **Bulu Baruah's** (1997-98) *Teaching, Learning, Technology and Students' Achievement in schools of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Helina Mantaw's** (1996-97) *Poverty Alleviation Programmes and Tribal Development (A Case Study of the Khampti Tribe)*, etc.

Ph.D. Dissertations

Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri's (2000) *A Tribe in Transition: A Study of the Mijis of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Vineeta Dowerah's** (2003) *Oral Narratives of Nocte Society*; **Gindu Borang's** (2005) *Indigenous Institutions of the Padams of Arunachal Pradesh*; **Egul Padung's** (2006) *Emergence of Pasighat: A case study on the Dynamics of Urban Growth*; **Juri Dutta's** (2007) *Tribal life and society in select novels of Lummer Dai and Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi*; **Srinibash Panda's** (2009) *Imperial Dynamics in India's North East Frontier: A case study of Arunachal Pradesh (1824-1914)*; **Otem Pertin's** (2008) *Musup and Raseng of the Padam: A Study in Cultural Continuity and Change*; **Kangki Megu's** (2008) *A Study of Tourism and Economic Development in Arunachal Pradesh: Problems and Prospects*; **Jumyir Basar's** (2011) *A Study of Indigenous Knowledge System in Development Policies and Programmes with Special Reference to Resource Management by the Galo of Arunachal Pradesh*, etc.

Publications of NGOs and Research Institutes: For example we can cite **Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore's** publications of *Apatani*

Grammar (1985) by P.T.Abraham and *Mishmi-English-Hindi Dictionary* (1991) by G.Devi Prasada Sastry; **Anthropological Survey of India's** publications such as J. Sarkar's *Society, Culture and Ecological Adaptation among three tribes of Arunachal Pradesh* (1987), P. Lal, and B.K. Dasgupta's *Lower Siang People* (1979) and P. Dutta and S.I. Ahmed's *People of India Arunachal Pradesh* (1995); **Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture's** *Traditional Systems of the Nocte and Traditional Systems of the Tangsa and Tutsa* in 2005; **Itihas Sanklan Samiti's** *Itanagar-A Profile* (2002) edited by J.Begi and publications of **North Eastern Social Research Centre**, Guwahati on Arunachal issues included in volumes edited by Walter Fernandes and his team. Anthropological Survey of India in its Journal Vol. 52, No. 4, Dec 2003, has carried 7 out of 14 papers on ethno medicine of selected tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. We have also discussed Anthropological Survey of India's other works in different places. Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manava Sangrahalay (IGRMS), Bhopal occasionally promotes research on Arunachal tribes. In its recent endeavour it has published a book entitled *Amazing Arunachal Pradesh* (2013) authored by M. C. Behera and K. K. Misra.

Faculty members of AITS have published more than fifty books (authored/edited) on different aspects of life of Arunachalee tribes. The themes include marriage, village studies, indigenous knowledge, folklore, ethnomedicine, religion, grammar, identity, and many others

Creative works

The scope of tribal studies is not confined to academic researches only. The beauty of tribal culture, its encounter with external forces and the emerging contradictions in changing situation of Arunachal Pradesh has captured the sensitive mind of creative writers. It is not a surprise to find tribal authors like Lummer Dai, Y.D.Thongchi and Mamang Dai writing on their own culture as it encounters external forces of change. There is a humanitarian overtone in their writings and a critical description of the cultural change; somewhere a conflict between tradition and modernity is noticed in their writings. Lummer Dai's *Paharor Xile Xile* (In the Midst of Rocks of Hill), 1961; *Pritibir Hanhi* (The Smile of the Earth), 1963, *Mon Aru Mon* (Heart to Heart), 1968; *Kainyar Mulya* (Bride Price), 1982 and *Upur Mahal* (Higher Level) are novels written in Assamese. Y.D. Thongchi's *Saba kota Manuh*, *Mouna Ounth Mukhar Hriday* (Silent Lips, Talking Heart) situate the culture in the changing context. Mamang Dai's *Legends of Pensam* (2006) is a search of her own cultural identity through her journey from the past to the present. Besides, she also writes poems on themes pertaining to own culture; some of them are compiled in *River Poems*. her other creative works include *Once Upon a Moontime: From the Magical Story World of Arunachal Pradesh*, *The Sky Queen* and *Stupid Cupid*. Not only Arunachalee writers, but also others have shown their creative genius. Mention may be made of *Into the Hidden Valley* (2016), the novel written by Stuart Blackburn. He has brought alive the Apatani worlds during colonial period.

4.6 SUMMARY

- In this unit we have discussed communities of Arunachal Pradesh as a broad social category. This category includes the politico-administrative concept of Scheduled Tribe and ethnic communities. Moreover, tribal habitats have also been discussed. We have classified tribes on the basis of bio-genetic variability and language in order to situate them in Tribal India.

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- In Indian context, as you have learnt in unit I, tribes do not exist in isolation. This proposition also holds for the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh who had relations with Tibet, Ahom and later with the British.
- Tribes almost have their contiguous territory. But political division has put them in different administrative districts. The discussion on geographical and political divisions of tribes has been presented to explain tribal habitats in different perspectives.
- We have also discussed politico administrative development of the state in order that you understand the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in the context of Tribal India. Finally, we have briefly presented studies conducted on tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. We have categorised various phases of growth of tribal studies and cited some examples for a better understanding of thematic diversity.

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Ahom:** Descendants of ethnic Tai people who accompanied Tai prince Sukhapaa of Mong Mao, presently in Yunnan Province to India. Sukhapaa established a kingdom in Assam in 1228 which is known as Ahom Kingdom; Ahoms ruled Assam till 1826.
- **Crude Birth rate:** $(\text{annual births} \div \text{annual mean population}) \times 1000$.
- **Crude Death rate:** $(\text{annual deaths} \div \text{annual mean population}) \times 1000$.
- **Demography:** Scientific study of population and its characteristics like literacy, birth and death rates, sex ratio, density, etc.
- **Endogamy:** Marriage practice within the group.
- **Ethnos:** Ethnic group, a common culture.
- **Exogamous:** Marriage practice outside the group, opposite to endogamous.
- **Ideal type:** Pertaining to the idea which is considered to be perfect and thus, a model to follow.
- **Infant Mortality Rate:** $(\text{Number of deaths during 1 year of age which occurred among the population of a given geographical area} \div \text{Number of live births which occurred among the population of the given geographical area during the same year}) \times 1000$.
- **Paik:** An adult male whose name was registered for state service during Ahom rule .
- **Posa:** A type of payment made to some Nyishi, Galo, Adi and Sherdukpen villages by the Ahom rulers and later by the British as a peace measure.
- **Sex-Ratio:** Number of female population per thousand of male population expressed in percentage.
- **Tribal Sub-Plan:** An integrated strategy of development of tribals in Fifth Schedule Areas of India introduced during the Fifth Five Year Plan.

4.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. (a) False (b) False (c) True
 (d) True (e) False

2. The sources are a) outside import with or without a meaning in language system, b) a territorial link, c) own name

Outside import with or without a meaning in language system-Aka, Abor, Dafla

A territorial link- Nocte, Wancho, Monpa

Own name - Nyishi, Puroik, Adi

3. Nocte. Because one of the words which form the name Nocte has territorial significance. *Noc* means village and *te* means people. So Nocte means people living in village.
4. Hrusso and Koro. The tribe is not consanguinal as the two groups do not share a common descent.
5. No. The Chakmas, the Hajongs, the Adivasis and the Nepalis, for example, living in the state are not STs of Arunachal Pradesh.
6. Arunachal Pradesh is an autonomous state as per the provisions of the Article 244A and a Special State under the provisions of Article 371H.
7. (a) False (b) True (c) False
(d) False (e) False
8. (a) True (b) True (c) True
(d) False (e) False

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4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a note on the anomalies in listing tribes of Arunachal Pradesh in Census records with example.
2. List the geographic divisions in Arunachal Pradesh? Present the distribution of tribes in each division.
3. Write a note on the language groups in Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Give a brief account of administrative growth of in Arunachal Pradesh.
5. Briefly discuss various phases of growth of tribal studies in Arunachal Pradesh.

Long-Answer Questions

1. The name of a tribe comes from different sources. Discuss.
2. Outline the demographic features of Arunachalee tribes.
3. Are the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh isolated groups? Justify your answer by citing two examples.
4. Explain the importance of *posa*.
5. Discuss the territorial evolution of Arunachal Pradesh starting from British rule.

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UNIT 5 SOCIETY AND EMERGING ISSUES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Society and Social Organization
 - 5.2.1 Social Life
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 - 5.3.1 Land Relations
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 - 5.4.1 Inheritance
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- 5.5 Summary
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- 5.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.8 Questions and Exercises
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5.0 INTRODUCTION

You have studied in the previous unit that the Arunachal society is not homogenous as broadly speaking it consists of tribal and non-tribal population. Except a few like the Nepalese, Chakmas and Adivasis etc. other non-tribal populations do not have a community identity in Arunachal Pradesh because these groups of people are migrant groups from different communities from outside of Arunachal Pradesh and are thus mixed groups. Further, the non-tribal population again can be categorized as settlers and non-settler migrants. The second group is the mixed population group of migrants which consists of participants in development process and their family members.

Since Arunachal Pradesh is a tribal state we will discuss the society of Arunachal Pradesh as 'Tribal Arunachal Pradesh'. You have studied in the earlier section that the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh belong to different bio-genetic and linguistic groups, even though they belong to the greater Mongoloid stock. In addition to this broader bio-genetic commonality, there is another common feature among them in that they are all patriarchal in nature. Moreover, they did not exist in complete isolation at least from the time they were reported in colonial writings. These writings report not only inter-tribe interactions but also contacts and interactions with Tibet, Myanmar and the Assam plains. As a matter of fact, all the tribes inhabiting Arunachal Pradesh migrated from different places of Tibet and Myanmar during different time periods. It is common to find relatives of many tribal groups living across the Indian border.

By now you must have understood that the Arunachali society is a society in diversity which manifests across tribes. As there are different tribal groups, certainly

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each group has its distinct identity. This distinctiveness is largely the distinct perception that the people of a tribe nourish. Basically, their distinct identity emerges from differences in social organization schemes, spoken tongues, faiths, practices and so on. Therefore, we will discuss social organization of tribes in general and with reference to a few tribes as examples. The general discussion will be useful to appreciate Arunachali society which is a manifestation of diversity.

A tribe as a distinct group has its own organizational set up. You will find more than one tribe having similar set up. In other words, a group of tribes could be identified on the basis of similar scheme of social organization along the line of grouping different relations vertically and horizontally. Horizontally, a group of families would be organized into a lineage and a group of lineages say, into a clan. When an organization of family, lineage and clan is arranged in ascending order, the family is placed first followed by lineage and clan. Such an arrangement is a vertical arrangement of social organization.

In addition to commonality in the organization of social groupings of a group of tribes, there may be commonality in the system of governance as well. The tribe may have the central authority or a council of members without any central authority. In this Unit you will learn the nature of Arunachali society with reference to social groupings and their governance system.

You have already learnt that traditional tribes are self-reliant units and enjoy tribal autonomy. But this characteristic of a tribe is hardly found in the process of contact with colonial governance and later in the process of integration with national goals in India. Undoubtedly, there are changes in the traditional ethos of tribes. You will find these changes in various spheres, but we will discuss the issue with reference to the status of women, land relations, occupational diversification and emerging political scenario.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss social life of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh
- Explain the scheme of organization of different tribes
- Explain emerging land relations and occupational diversifications
- Discuss tribal body politics of the past and at present
- Describe the status of women in terms of inheritance rights and empowerment and
- Identify trends of change in recent years

5.2 SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Arunachal region is the abode of a number of tribal groups professing different religions, belonging to different linguistic groups and spreading over different geographical regions. It is the social life of a tribe within the cultural perspective that distinguishes it from others. Besides, tribes also display different schemes of social organization. We will discuss social life and social organizations of a few tribes to appreciate the rich diversity in the state.

5.2.1 Social Life

The communities in Arunachal Pradesh are patriarchal in nature which are organised on the basis of clans, villages and around kinship relations.

The tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh are not egalitarian in nature due to the existence of social divisions along the lines of class and gender. There are distinctions even between the rich and the poor, for example, the Galos call a rich person *Nyite* and a poor person *Nyima*; while the Apatanis refer to the rich as *Miingho* and the poor as *Aroh*.

Marriage: Tribe endogamy is a prevalent practice among tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh, although marriage beyond one's own tribe is not rare. It is an established fact that there were matrimonial alliances between the Aka and the Miji tribes since earlier times. However, the upper division of one community establishes matrimonial alliance only with the upper division of the other community; and similarly the lower division has alliances only with the lower division of the other community. The Padu clan of the Galo and the Padung of the Adi tribe do not enter into matrimonial alliance with each other, in spite of their being two different clans in two different tribes, because they believe in a common origin. Similarly, matrimonial alliances were not traditionally permitted between the Basar and the Riba clans of the Galo and the Perme and Pertin of Adi Padam due to their traditional bond of friendship. However, instances of matrimonial relation between two different tribes/communities living in adjacent villages are not rare. For example, the Khampits have had matrimonial relations with the Assamese.

The modes of obtaining a bride, which are still in practice among the tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh, include marriages by negotiation, exchange, elopement, marriage by force/capture and love marriage. In all communities, social recognition solemnises the marriage and for which there are elaborate or notional rituals. Rituals with apparent specificity and deeper connotation are the passages for a bride to attain the status of a wife. The rituals and ritual objects that solemnise a marriage have deeper meanings in relation to a community's world view.

The most common family structures in tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh are nuclear, joint and extended types. The families can be monogamous or polygynous. However, in pastoral Monpa community, polyandrous families are also found.

Mutuality: The tribal communities are rich in social capital, both from the community and institutional perspective. Mutual cooperation in the processes of agriculture and house construction are inherent characteristic of their life. *Riglap* or mutual reciprocation of labour, for example, is an institution among the Galos and the Adis. An individual is more of a community person belonging to a family, lineage, clan and tribe. A member sees his/her own benefit through the general benefit of the community.

In many tribes, murder of a person is avenged by his clan members by killing the murderer, and if he/she is not alive or could not be killed, then by killing any member of the clan. Collective consciousness and the principle of sharing characterise tribal communities in general and those in Arunachal Pradesh in particular.

Social Institutions: Social life of tribals in Arunachal Pradesh reflects through various institutional and organizational arrangements. The *Musup/Dere* of the Adis is an institutional arrangement that works for the community. Similarly, *Patang*, a

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labour corps in the Apatani community is a unique institution of appropriation of community labour. Since childhood, every Apatani boy and girl belongs to a 'Patang'. It is such a socio-economic institution where the Apatanis get an opportunity to come together and mutually help each other. Among the Galos, mutual labour exchange takes three forms depending on its nature, these are:

- (i) *Rigur*: free labour exchange between the relatives;
- (ii) *Rige* or *enlik*: reciprocal labour exchange; and
- (iii) *Riglap*: Labour exchange on payment in kind or cash.

In various community works like construction of houses, performance of important rituals like *toгу panam* (mithun sacrifice during marriage), *hurin* (household ritual for prosperity), *peka* (performed by hunters and warriors), *mopin* (household and common festival for prosperity), etc., it is the village community which provides the labour. As all members of the village community are bound in a reciprocal bond, a sense of community feeling pervades at all levels including individual household works.

Appropriation of community labour is an important component in *kiruk* (community hunting) and in both community and group fishing like *hibok*, *hipe*, etc.

In the *dir tachi* ritual of the Galos it is mandatory for all the households in the village to provide labour for a day in the fields of the nodal family which performs the *yidum lignam* (sacrifice of animals) and *uyi gelik nam* (transportation of effigies from village to river). This family observes longer taboo periods than the other families in the village.

In a tribal community, a widow or a disabled person is not a burden. Even when they do not have working hands in the family, the clan or community members work in the fields without any return. They construct their houses and take care of them when sick. Thus, mutual co-operation extends beyond the community.

The Nyishis and Apatanis have a bonding relation called *Diilikanii*, and the Apatanis call the Nyishi friend as *Manyang*. The Apatanis have the tradition of leasing out their *mithuns* to their Nyishi *Manyang* on the condition of sharing the calves. The Nyishi friend is invited during festivals like *Myoko* and other rituals. In a normal situation when one visits the other's village, it becomes the responsibility of the friend to look after the friend's safety. Such bonds of friendship not only bring two families together but also the clan members at large with sense of responsibility and oneness. Gifts are exchanged during many rituals. The friendship between different clans in the same tribe is known as *Ajing* among the Adis and *Bunii Ajing* among the Apatanis.

It is said that 'sharing' is a social capital, for it is an insurance against uncertainty. One who shares meat of his game animal with his fellow villagers gets a share from others when they hunt down animals. A share of meat given to *Pator Mijings* after community hunting is an ethical insurance during old age.

A member in the community is secure and safe through the institution of village councils. All the same, the wrong doers in the community are only punished with a fine so that they can change themselves. However, beyond the community, whether it is a clan or a village, the punishment is severe for the same crime.

Interactions between members in a village or a tribe are based on mutuality and any breakdown of relations are corrected through an institutionalised process, in order to maintain social solidarity and cohesiveness. Within the community, the

Check Your Progress

1. Choose the correct word/phrase from the parentheses:
 - (a) Communities in Arunachal Pradesh are (patriarchal / matriarchal).
 - (b) Arunachalee society in general is (egalitarian / differentiated) in nature.
 - (c) Tribe (endogamy/ exogamy) is the general marriage rule among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - (d) Rituals solemnise social recognition of (marriage/ divorce).
 - (e) In Arunachal Pradesh you will normally find nuclear, joint, (extended/ single parent) types of family.

fine or punishment is compensation — a corrective measure for reinforcing inclusion, and not a process of exclusion.

Changing Trend

The social life of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh is in transition and these changes are noticed in all aspects of life, whether it is political, cultural, religious or economic. The joint family is replacing nuclear family system. Mutuality has a monetary dimension in place of exchange of labour and items. The family that remains absent in community work makes alternative arrangement in terms of payment of money or hired labour. The game from hunting by individual hunter is brought to the market for sale or sold in the village. Traditionally, the tribal social life has predominantly been rural in character and according to Census of India 2011 at present there are tribal people living in 27 census towns. Out of the total, the population of the STs was enumerated in the said census at 1,61,975 persons who lived in urban centres constituting 17 per cent of the total numbers. The tribal social life undoubtedly takes part in the process of urbanisation.

You will find women in public sphere of social life. A number of teachers, professionals, technocrats, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, social activists, journalists, freelance writers, police, etc. are women. In recognition to their services Ms. Mamang Dai and Ms Bini Yanaga have been honoured with the award of Padmashri. Though the traditional mind-set privately does not feel elated at the changing role of women, it nevertheless appreciates the changes. Not only in PRIs, have women also participated in representative democracy. You will find quite a good number of women legislators in the state. In addition to this, women raise their voices against social evils and on their rights from various platforms. Mentioned may be made of Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society, State Women Commission, etc.

In social life, there is the differentiation in status-role. You have already learnt social hierarchy in chieftaincy and gerontocracy. The women do not have inheritance rights to landed property. There is a gender bias in terms of participation in traditional village councils and in some rituals. But this trend is changing. You will study this in various sections in this unit. You know that the communities are patriarchal. There is a preference for male child, but a girl child is not discriminated against. Incidences of female infanticide, sex determination, etc. do not occur in Arunachal communities at all.

Education plays a significant role in the process of social change. Census of India 2011 records a literacy rate of 64.6 per cent among STs (65.38 per cent for the state in general), constituted by 71.5 per cent ST male literates and 58.0 per cent ST female literates. In rural Arunachal Pradesh the literacy rate is 60.4 per cent and it is 84.6 per cent in 27 census towns that constitute the urban Arunachal Pradesh. In rural areas ST literacy stands at 67.7 per cent for males and 53.3 per cent for females. Similarly, in urban Arunachal Pradesh, literacy stands at 90.3 per cent among ST males and 79.4 per cent for ST females. As on 31.3.2014, there were 3744 educational institutes in the state including one Central University, one National Institute of Technology, one Deemed University, 18 Degree Colleges, 09 Professional/Technology Colleges and 02 Polytechnic Institutes.

The social attitude toward health care is also changing. This is evident from the number of modern health care institutions existing in the state. Along with traditional health care practices, one state hospital, 06 general hospitals, 07 district hospitals,

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Check Your Progress

2. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) Community interest is more important than individual interest in traditional tribal society.
 - (b) Appropriation of community labour through a type of informal institution is a feature in most of the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - (c) Sharing is a onetime adjustment to ensure equality when inequality is noticed.
 - (d) Compensation is a measure to correct the behaviour and action of a wrong doer.
 - (e) Tribal women in Arunachal Pradesh enjoy equal ownership rights in land.

63 Community Health Centres, 143 Primary Health Centres and 584 sub-centres are available up to 2014 in the field of modern heal care.

The processes of assimilation and acculturation also bring about changes. You will find that the Buddhist features in animist Bugun tribe, Tikhak sub-group of Tangsa and Nah group have resulted from the process of assimilation. In assimilation members of one culture merge into another culture. Changes in dresses, food habits, etc. can be an example of the process of acculturation. In this process changes take place between two interacting communities. In fact, acculturation entails a two-way process of change. You will find Arunachalis adopting to the dresses and food items of non-Arunachalis. At the same time there are many instances of taking on the dresses and food habit of Arunachalis by non-Arunachalis.

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5.2.2 Social Organization

The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have been organised broadly into two broad social categories, namely Cephalous and Acephalous. In other words, the societies have either a centralised authority or are without one.

In addition to this each tribe has its scheme of social organization. In some tribes there are moiety divisions and this moiety division is also recorded in groups like the Minyong which now form a sub-tribe. There are tribes which are spread across sub-tribe divisions. Whether it is a moiety or a sub-tribe organization, it is divided into phratries and clans or clans. The clan organization is common to every tribe.

Table 5.1 Clean Organization

Adi (The generic tribe)	Galo (Tribe)	Khampti (Tribe)	Tangsa (Tribe)
↓ Tribe	↓ Territorial Division (Lare, Pogo Lodu-Karka.....)	↓ Phratry (Namchoom, Lungkeing, Chaotang group; Mansai, Manfai, Khamoo, Kokma group)	↓ Sub-tribe (Longchang, Yogli, Muklom, etc.)
↓ Moiety	↓ Phratry (Loyi, Loya, Lomi, Lollen, Lotem Group, etc.)	↓ Clan (Namchoom, Manpong, Manlong, etc.)	↓ Clan
↓ Phratry	↓ Clan (Loyi, Basar, Potom, Nochi, etc.)	↓ Lineage	↓ Family
↓ Clan (Mibang, Tatak, etc. for example)	↓ Lineage	↓ Family	↓ Individual
↓ Sub-clan	↓ Family	↓ Individual	
↓ Lineage			
↓ Family			
↓ Individual			

The traditional Minyongs are divided into two moieties-*Kuming* and *Kuri*. The Moiety is further divided into Phratry (*olung*), *olung* into clans (*opin*) and *opin* into sub-clan (*pinmik*). A *pinmik* is divided into *odong* (lineage) and lineage into *erangs* (families). All tribes, however, do not follow the same scheme of socio-political organization. We present four examples in Table 5.1 to show the differences.

Check Your Progress

- How do you describe the social life of the people in Arunachal Pradesh?
- What do you mean by taboos? Why do people observe taboos?
- Give two examples of mutuality in tribal social life.
- Do you think the social status of women has changed? Why?

In tribes which have common ancestors, the community has moiety divisions. For example, the Apatani tribe is divided into *Gyuchii* and *Gyutii*, while the Minyong group of the Adi tribe into *Kuri* and *Kuming*. Traditionally, marriage is not allowed between upper and lower moiety divisions. The social division of the Sherdukpen is better categorised as sub-tribe division. Similarly, the Tangsa, the Wancho, the Nocte, the Monpa have sub-tribe divisions. The sub-tribe organization is territory based in most cases. The Monpas are divided into Tawang Monpa (Northern Monpa), Kalaktang Monpa (Southern Monpa) and Dirang Monpa (Central Monpa). But socially the Dirang and Kalaktang Monpa call themselves *Tsangla*, but the Tawang Monpa call them *Sherhokpa* (the people of the east). Separately, the Dirang Monpas are called Danganngpa and the Kalaktang Monpas as Rongnangpa. The Monpas of Kalaktang and Dirang call the Tawang Monpas as Brami though they call themselves only Monpa.

The Wancho community is also territorially divided into Lower and Upper Wanchos depending on the two branches of the migration to the present settlement from Sangnu. Manlong (2006) informs us that from *Sangnu*, Wanchos were divided into two sub-groups i.e. *Tangjen* and *Tsangjen*. Later, they migrated to different directions and places. The groups which migrated towards south are called *Tangjen* (Upper Wanchos) and the group which migrated towards North-west is called *Sangjen* (Lower Wanchos). But socially the tribe is also divided into three hierarchal groups such as *Wangham* (ruler), *Wangsa* (middle order born out of the wedlock between a *Wangham* father and *Wangpan* mother) and *Wangpan* (ruled). We do not have adequate information to name these divisions either as moiety or sub-tribe. It could be two different clans bound by affinal relations.

In the social organization of the Khamptis there is no moiety, sub-tribe or territorial division. You will see the scheme of their social organization in Table 5.1 Lila Gogoi (1971) has informed us, quoting from Alexander Mackenzie, the migration of the Khamptis in batches in 1835 and 1850. During field study in 1985 a few families were reported having migrated around Independence. According to migration history the descendents of Chau-Lungken who first migrated to India are now Namchoom and Lungkeing clans, and the descendents of his brother Chautang are now the Chautang clan of the Khampti tribe. The group of these clans is a phratry as they consider themselves brother clans and is traditionally exogamous. However, it was reported that all the Namchooms come from different lineages. Though we do not have written documents, it was reported that ancestors of these lineages belonged to the same consanguineal kin group in Myanmar and assumed Namchoom title in India after their migration in different periods following the first groups of kins.

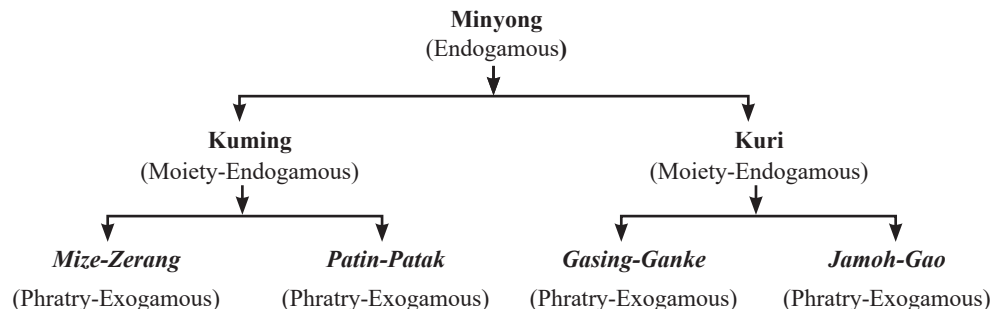
Clearly, the Khamptis have clan divisions next to the tribe. However, there are some clans which form an exogamous group. For example, Mansai, Manfai, Kokma and Khamho are brotherly clans and do not have affinal relations. Similarly, the Namchum, Chaotang and Lungkeing clans traditionally do not have such relations. We can say that the Khamptis also have phratry division below the tribe level organization. The tribe or sub-tribe or phratry organization has also exogamous divisions that determine marriage spheres. We have already discussed with reference to four clans of the Khamptis which form an exogamous sphere. The Namchum, Chaotang and Lungkeing clans also form an exogamous group.

Existence of exogamous social sphere is common to every tribe. The Minyong group of the Adis has also exogamous marriage spheres. As the phratry is exogamous, so are also all its subdivisions—*opin*, *pinmik*, *odong* and *erang*. But the moiety is not

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exogamous and it is not strictly endogamous. We can see the exogamous marriage spheres of the Minyong as under:

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As a rule, clans are exogamous. But there are exceptions also. The Hage clan of the Apatanis and Pertin clan of the Padams are endogamous. Probably, what continues to be called as a clan might have developed features of a phratry or sub-tribe. In fact, we continue with the nomenclature of social organizations of a tribe once they are categorised. It may be the possibility that many earlier phratries have evolved to the status of the tribe and lineage to clan or phratry. But study of social organizations of a tribe is not a dynamic process and we accept the given information. Moreover, an earlier tribe will not accept its division into a number of tribes given present socio-political dynamics.

You will find that all the tribes are not organised along genealogical line. There are upper and lower divisions. There are different groups forming into a tribe; Lare, Pugo and Niz-Karka/Lodo-Karka, for example, are three different groups among the Galos. Similarly, two groups, Hrusso and Koro, form the Aka identity. The Sherdukpen community is divided into *Thong*, comprising the aristocrat clans and the *Chhao*, comprising the commoner clans. The Miji society is also divided on the same line into *Nolluh* and *Nob'k*. Similarly, the Nocte society is also divided into chief and commoner clans.

The Khamptis have three social divisions, namely *Phanchau*, *Phan-e-on* and *Paklung*. The Phanchau division consists of the royal clans, the Paklung is the commoners' division, while the Phan-e-on comprises the clans of lower division in the community. These genealogically unrelated groups have formed the Khampti tribe in India. It also does not seem to be genealogical (consanguineal) before its migration to India. We learn from Lila Gogoi that during Chau-Cham's rule in Myanmar, Mancheay was an independent chiefdom. Probably, the chiefdom had a chief of Mancheay group of people. The Mancheay (also spelt as Manci, Manjey), comes from a royal dynasty, so also Munglang. Even some Singpho families have been christened as Khamptis. Nevertheless, at present, the Khampti is a tribe of consanguineal and affinal relations, meaning a kinship based tribe in India.

As far as studies are available, all the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh are kin based. Even if initially two or more unrelated groups form the tribe, in course of time affinal relationship is established. Wangham and Wangsa are consanguineal groups, whereas Wangham and Wangpan are not consanguineal groups. But these two groups have affinal relations and so they together form Wancho community. So also is the case with Thong and Chao groups of Sherdukpen tribe.

Despite the fact that the tribe is a kinship organization you will find social divisions other than kinship sphere. Earlier writers like Haimendorf, Elwin, Mackenzie, Dalton have mentioned of free born and slaves in almost all tribes in

the state. T. T. Cooper mentions in the context of the Khampti, 'Free-born people also possess numerous herds of tame buffaloes and oxen used for tilling the ground, and also as a means of barter with the Mishmees'. Obviously, there is a group which is not free born. Elwin in his book *Philosophy for NEFA* has also mentioned of the existence of slaves which was abolished by the British.

In the Nyishi community there were two types of slaves, *Nera* and *Beta*. The Nera class is said to be Nyishi by birth that entered into the position because of non-payment of fines/loans, etc. The other category consists of slaves purchased from other tribes and captured during raids. In fact, tribes like Khampti, Singpho, Adi, Galo, Miji, Nyishi, etc., had slaves to help them in agriculture and other activities. A *pagbo* is a male slave while a *pagne* is a female slave in the Galo community. But you cannot understand such sharp divisions in present society. In the Khampti community, along with the freeborn and slaves, there is a priestly class, whose members are Buddhist monks and *shamans*.

You will find that in some tribes the clan and lineage have a common boundary. The Mongmaw clan of the Khamptis, for example has families of four generations. Similarly, the Langkhun clan is also a lineage as it has few families of four to five generations. Mansai clan of five generations depth trace the common progenitor who lived in Kherem village. In Galo tribe, the Nyoris present the status of phratry, clan and lineage as the growth of population is slow and do not have many branches. So is the case with Doso and Saring clans of Damro village which have less than 10 households. However, a few writers club these two clans as sub clans of Ratan clan because of their settlement in Ratan territory.

The scheme of social organization of a tribe continues since the time it was first recorded. Over the years, internal contradictions have emerged in the scheme. Pertin clan in Adi Padam sub-tribe is no more exogamous. So is the case with the Hage clan of the Apatanis. On the other hand, the phratry exogamy is breaking down. In Galo tribe, the group of Loyi, Loya, Lomi, Lotem and Lollen that once formed an exogamous phratry due to their common forefather, Aalo has been divided into two phratries; Lomi and Loya forming one exogamous phratry and Loyi, Lotem and Lollen forming the other. Inter-marriage between clans of these two phratries takes place though each newly emerged phratry is exogamous.

There are also examples when a lineage claims clan status. Families in Badu lineage of Riba clan have started using Badu title. Such trends often crop up but are fluid in nature. After asserting the lineage identity for a distinct clan status, families also drop the title after a few years and adopt the old title.

One of the criteria of tribal social organization is clan exogamy. But when clans like Pertin, Perme, Hage, etc, become endogamous, it implies that the clan has grown to the status of a phratry. In other words, the lineages have displayed clan characteristics. In that case the criterion that the members of a clan trace their origin from a totem or from an ancestor whose historicity is uncertain does not hold. Obviously, there is a need to look afresh at the social organization of the tribes in an academic perspective. In doing so, however, people's sense of identity should be addressed with caution.

Normally, the family organization of many tribes is of nuclear type. However, in some tribes like the Adis, Khamptis you will find joint family system. Among the Nyishi and Miju (Kaman) Mishmi extended family system is the traditional practice. In recent years, however, the trend is shifting towards nuclear family type rapidly.

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Further, the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are patrilocal, patrilineal and patriarchal in nature. You have learnt the meaning of these terms in unit-II. Obviously, on the basis of authority families are patriarchal. This could be a reason of gender bias in representation in traditional councils.

Cephalous Tribes

The cephalous tribes are the Khampti, the Singpho, the Nocte, the Wancho and the Tangsa. These tribes have chieftains. The chieftainship is also diverse in nature. It is either tribe based, village based, territory based or a combination of them. The Khamptis have a chief for the whole tribe called the *Chou-pha Konmung* and for each village called the *Chou-man*. In Khampti community, family is the basic social institution formed through marriage and consists of husband, wife (wives) and children. The society is patrilocal, patrilineal and patriarch in nature. Normally, the Kamptis live in joint families, but in case of misunderstanding among members' shortage of space, the family breaks up and the married sons establish separate households.

The Nocte and the Singpho have *territory and village based chiefs*. On the other hand, the Tangsa and the Wancho have village based chiefs. There are also instances of territorial chief among the Wanchos. For example, the Chief of Senua receives yearly offering from other Wancho and Nocte villages. These tribes do not have a tribe level chief. The two important territorial chiefs in Nocte tribe are Borduria and Namsang Chiefs. Interestingly, the gift of Nature has been used as a source of authority. In Tirap District, there are a few natural saline wells, a large number of which fall into the territory of Borduria and Namsang villages. On the basis of ownership of these wells the chiefs have extended their authority to other villages who accept them as paramount chiefs. Otherwise, the Noctes would have village chiefs. Among the Singphos the Ningroo chief and Bisa Gam are two important territorial chiefs. The chief is hereditary in the family and among the Khamptis it can extend to the clan in case there is no apparent successor in the family.

In chieftaincy, the social division is *hierarchical*; the society is stratified with division of unequal status. The Wancho tribe for example, as we have said, is divided into three hierarchal groups such as *Wangham* (ruler), *Wangsa* (middle group) and *Wangpan* (ruled). Similarly, the Khampti tribe is divided in to three social divisions namely *Phanchau* (ruling clans), *Paklung* (commoner clans) and *Phan-e-on* (clans with further lower status).

Along with the chiefs, there are councils among cephalous tribes. The council of the Khamptis is known as *Mukchum*; and that of the Noctes is known *Ngongwang*. Sometimes the tribe may not have a genealogical origin and in such a case, each group with different dialect/language may have a different name for the village council. The traditional village council of the Koro group of the Akas in East Kameng District is called *Nelley*, while that of Hrusso group of the Akas in West Kameng District is called *Malley/Mele*. Similarly, in the Tangsa tribe it is known as *Ruong*, *Rangtun* and *Rungkathin* by the Longchang, Muklum and Yogli sub-tribes respectively.

Acephalous Tribes

The societies with acephalous socio-political organizations have four variants: clan organizations, village councils, gerontocracy and a system of arbiter or go-between.

The organizations are informal and more often situational. You will also find councils at different levels—village, group of villages and tribe.

Gerontocracy prevails among the Apatanis and Sherdukpens. The village organization of the Apatanis is called *Buliang* whose members (also called the *Buliangs*) are more or less hereditary. The *Buliang* also exists at the inter-village and tribe levels. Besides, there is the *Gondu* who acts as an intermediary between conflicting parties. He is authorized to settle disputes without calling the *Buliang*. But when a matter relates to the whole tribe, a *supung dapo* — a tribe-level organization — is organized. In a Sherdukpen village the body politics is called *Jung*, which has a member from the *Thong* group of clans as the chief. The position of chief is not hereditary — chieftainship is not restricted to a family or a particular clan; rather it is held only by the upper division of the community, i.e., the *Thong*.

You will find a type of social division in societies with gerontocracy. The Sherdukpen community has two social divisions, namely *Thong* and *Chao*. The clans in the *Thong* group are the descendants of the chief who migrated and established the community. In Apatani community there is also a type of social hierarchy. The fact that the *Buliang* is hereditary is an evidence of different social status. Takhe Kani (1993) writes, ‘The tradition of the Apatani society is stratified as *Gyuchi* (plebeian), *Gyutii* (patrician), *Mitti* (patrician master) and *Miira* (slave)’. However, these status divisions are vanishing rapidly.

As has been stated, the village councils are ordinarily informal in nature. These councils do not have centralised authority like that of in chieftaincy. The councils are more or less democratic in nature. However, the word democracy should be used with caution. In all the village councils, women membership is conspicuously absent. In other words, democratic sense is limited to male members only. So we can use restricted democracy to understand the decentralised nature of village councils.

The democratic village councils are of three categories: The first one is the council of the Monpas with an elected head of the council called *Tsorgen*. The second is a council of all the adult members of the village, popularly known as *Kebang*, for example, among the Adis. But in practice, elderly men with knowledge of tradition and skill in oration actively participate during any session of the council. Apparently, there is a gender bias with regard to membership of the council. The membership is not permanent and the council is held when the need arises. The system has further extended beyond the village to cover a group of villages and finally to all the villages. This system is popular among the Galos and Adis — the council for the group of villages is practically a territorial body known as *bango* *Kebang*. The *bogum bokang* is the apex body and is a tribe level institution.

There are also members with specific assignments in the scheme of socio-political organizations. Besides, there is a type of village council organised through a mediator. This practice prevails among the Nyishis and Tagins — the mediator or arbiter is called *Gingdung*. Among the Mishmis, the village or clan elder organises the council inviting other members when the need arises.

Some village councils have office bearers too. In the Miji community; the village council, the *Laubang/Syambang*, has *Nokhu* as the head and a *Gobo* (informer) as a member. A *Gobo* is selected for five years while a *Nokhu* is selected with unanimous consensus from the people, and continues in office till his death or relinquishment of the post.

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Check Your Progress

State whether the statements are true or false:

1. All the tribes have moiety division.
2. Existence of exogamous social sphere is a common feature in every tribe.
3. Chieftain type of society displays social stratification.
4. A tribe in Arunachal Pradesh is based on kinship relations.
5. Clan endogamy is a feature in tribal social organisation of Arunachal Pradesh.
6. Hierarchical social division exists in acephalous tribes.
7. Tribal village councils are gender discriminatory.

5.3 EMERGING ISSUES

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Arunachal Pradesh is not a territory incognito. It has become a part of national territory and national goals. In the process many opportunities and challenges have emerged. You will learn these opportunities and challenges with reference to land relations, occupation and political dynamics.

5.3.1 Land Relations

Arunachal Pradesh is predominantly a tribal state. Census 2011 records 68.8 per cent of its population belonging to APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe) category. The rest belongs to non-APSTT category which includes both Arunachali and non Arunachali population. Even before independence, a few villages of Adivasis (tea garden Adivasis) and Assamese were established in the territory which is now Arunachal Pradesh. These villages are located in Changlang and Namsai districts bordering Assam. In Chowkham area of Namsai and Tezu area of Lohit district a few Assamese and Nepali villages existed even before independence. This is also the case in Pasighat and in some other areas of East Siang district bordering Assam. These people enjoy rights to land ownership, but cannot sell their land to any non-Arunachali. In addition to these populations we find migrants from various states of India to meet human resource requirement in state sponsored development process. These people neither own land nor do have any rights over land in the territory.

Another group of post-independence migrants to the state is found settled in some places of the state. One section of this group of people like Tibetan and Chakma refugees from Tibet and Bangladesh respectively have been settled by the government. The other section of the group is Indian nationals who were settled by the government after Chinese aggression in 1962. Das (1995:82-83) informs us that 2275 families belonging to Assam, ex-servicemen, ex-Assam Rifles personnel, ex-NEFA employees, Chakma and Tibetan refugees were settled by the government in the territory during the transitional phase between 1963 to 1971. Out of the families 90 per cent belongs to Chakma refugees who were settled in Khagam, Miao, M'pong and Kharshang of Changlang district and Chowkham of present Namsai district. Ex- NEFA and Assam Rifle personnel were settled in Vijay Nagar of Changlang and Bhalukpung of East Kameng districts.

As per the provision of the Constitution of India, land belongs to the tribal people living in it. The Government is not the custodian of the state land. But after Independence you can find the land that belongs to the government, to the settlers like refugees and Assam Rifles personnel in addition to the tribal people.

Tribe and Land

The nature of relations of a tribe with land is excellently articulated by Verrier Elwin in the following words:

The tribal people are bound to their land by many and intimate ties. Their feeling for it is something more than mere possessiveness. It is connected with their sense of history, for their legends tell of the great journeys they made over the wild and lonely hills and of the heroic pioneers who made the first clearings in the forest.

This means land belongs to the tribe linked with the sense of history and thus to the community for the purpose of use. In other words, land is community owned. In Arunachal Pradesh a tribe lives in villages which are either clan based or multi-clan settlements. Traditionally, a family cannot own land in two or more villages.

As mentioned, a community is not always the tribe; it could be a village, clan, or a lineage. When a tribe has territorial spread you will find settlement of members of other tribes, though this phenomenon is not very ancient. In fact, there was no identity of the people as 'tribe' by themselves till colonial administration and academicians labelled it. A group of people moved from one place to another in a single batch or in batches and claimed these places belonging to them. They had to fight with others also for territorial claims. For all practical purposes land belonged to the village community.

This sense of community ownership of land which includes forests, rivers, hills, etc. even has changed during 19th century. In this regard, T. T. Cooper's (1873) observation of Khampti land relation provides a useful account:

Although the chief is Lord of the soil, the whole community till it on the cooperative system, the chief having his portion allotted to him; after which the produce is equally divided between each house; according to the number of hands in it who have helped in the cultivation... Besides common land small plots are also cultivated by individuals.

Land, as has been mentioned, belongs to the community, particularly tribes living in it. The communities, as you know, are of two types: cephalous and acephalous. Accordingly, in the management of land, the role of the institution of village government is of two types. The land belongs to the chief in the cephalous community like the Wangcho, Nocte and Khampti as Chieftainship is the form of village authority among them. The Chief is assisted by the elders and clan heads in the control of land and the management of access to it. In the case acephalous tribes like the Adi, Nyishi, Tagin, Galo, the village authorities are custodian of village land. Except pastoralist Borkpas and hunter-gatherer Puroiks other communities almost live settled village life and pursue agricultural activities. So people developed attachment to the plots they cultivated over the years within the village and thus private ownership emerged. This private ownership is not exclusive; it rather operates within the customary frame. Nevertheless, community ownership exists in forests, rivers, jhum fields, hunting and trapping tracts, etc. However, individual ownership is gradually replacing the community ownership over these assets. Even you will find jhum fields, river segments, etc. under the ownership of individual households.

Inheritance

You have already learnt about the nature and practices of inheritance rules among the tribes in India. In this section you will study the rules of land inheritance among the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh. As you know, the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are patrilineal. So land is inherited along male line. In principle women do not have any rights to landed property. In the absence of male children, the land goes to the nearest patrilineal kin as per customary norms. Generally, primogeniture rule is followed in every tribe, though the degree varies. In traditional Apatani community of Arunachal Pradesh, however, both primogeniture and ultimogeniture rules are followed in the

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matter of inheritance of ancestral landed property. The eldest son gets cultivable land, groves, etc. while the youngest one who would look after parents gets house, homestead land, remaining plots and movable properties like domestic animals and birds. The middle sons do not have the rights to inherit ancestral property. However, if a father purchases land during his life time that land could be shared with middle sons. This practice of primogeniture is attenuated in tribes like the Khampis, Adi as all the sons inherit landed property; the eldest son in some cases getting a little more. In Nyishi tribe, a man practising polygyny, inheritance from father comes to sons through mother whose cultivated family land is distinctly recognised.

Daughters do not have any inheritance rights in landed property even in the absence of a socially approved male heir. A woman may normally pass through three stages, unmarried life in parental house, life with husband and life without husband (widow). There are two possibilities of a woman staying in parental house. First, she may remain unmarried throughout her life or return after divorce or separation from husband. In this case she may be without father. A woman, without husband or father, has a residual life interest in land. In case of a widow with male children the inheritors of property are her own children according to customary norms. In the latter case it is not life interest in the entire land, but a maintenance right. In fact, the life interest is also ideologically governed by the ethics of maintenance principle. However, if the widow marries outside the family circle of the husband she is deprived of this maintenance rights. This traditional maintenance right of unmarried girls or widow exists in almost all the tribes. After the death of the girl or widow the land returns to the lineage as per customs. In Galo community of Arunachal Pradesh an unmarried girl also enjoys the rights to use a plot for herself. However, such a practice is not a case of inheritance rule.

Land Relations: State and Tribe

Before contact with formal system of governance, the land belonged to the tribes. But with the advent of administration in tribal areas, land was required by the government for its administrative use and infrastructure creation, also for welfare of people. So the government acquires land for the purpose and now the land of the territory belongs to government through acquisition and to the tribal communities through traditional ownership rights. The regulation enacted during colonial period still continues. The government acquires land in public interest under the provisions of section 4 (1), (2) and 5A (2) of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. The state is yet to have an Act dealing adequately the various issues related to effective management of land. There are three old regulations which are supposed to govern the land till today. These are:

- Balipara Frontier Tract Jhum Regulation of 1947
- Sadiya Frontier Tract Jhum Regulation of 1947
- Tirup Frontier Tract Jhum Regulation, 1947

But these acts recognise the customary rights on land and the power of village council. The institution of village council has gone through changes also. The first wave of change began with the introduction of the institutions of Gaonburah (Village Headman) and Dobhasis (Interpreter) by the British rule. The second wave of change

made its beginning with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) by the state government. Operationally, in the state now, two types of local governments exist and function at the grassroots level. The one that continues with the legacy of the tradition may be distinguished as traditional village government. PRI, the other one that exists and functions under an Act of law of the state government may be distinguished as modern. But the matter of land issues is addressed by the traditional village council headed by Gaonburah.

In addition to the above Acts, The Arunachal Pradesh (Land Settlement and Records) Act, 2000 is available chiefly to facilitate revenue administration and prepare land records. There is also a Commissioner (Land Management) and a Directorate in the state for management and administration of land in the state. The Commissioner issues notifications under the provisions of LA Act, 1894 to acquire land in public interest as and when necessary. Broadly, therefore, the land in the state belongs to the government after acquisition and to tribes traditionally. This is also recognised in the Act, 2000. Clause 9 (1) in Chapter III of the Act reads:

All lands, public roads, lanes and paths and bridges, ditches, dikes and fences on or beside the same, the beds of rivers, streams, nallahs, lakes and tanks, and all canals and water course and all standing and flowing water, and rights in or over the same or appertaining thereto, which are not the property of any person or community are hereby declared to be the property of the Government.

Land records: There is no cadastral survey of land in the state except in few cases though conduct of survey and settlement is one of the activities of the Directorate. The activity however, is piecemeal in nature. The areas targeted under it are the government land in the capital complex and district, sub-divisions and circle headquarters. Land records are prepared and provided when sought for. Documentary proofs of land are required more often for undertaking various development activities and particularly where credit from formal banking institution is involved. Since such records are not available in the present system, the government of Arunachal Pradesh has introduced a system of issuing land possession certificate (LPC) to the holder of the land to fulfil such necessity of the people. The Deputy Commissioner is the recommending authority and the state government is the approving authority of such land possession certificate.

Land Use and Holdings Pattern

The territorial area of the state accounts for 83,743 km². As against this, the reporting area that figures in land use statistics of the government stands at 54,978 km². This means that the reporting area of the state is less by 34.35 per cent as compared to its total territorial area.

Out of the reporting area, the use of land on cultivable and uncultivable account stands at 5.72 and 94.28 per cent respectively. On cultivated and uncultivated account, the corresponding area covers 3.54 per cent and 96.46 per cent. With cultivable land (5.72%) if the area put to non-agricultural use (0.08%) and the forest area under Anchal Reserve (0.64%), Village Reserve (0.58%) and day today use of villagers, say one or two per cent are added, the total area under human intervention remains around 8 per cent of the reporting area. Table below shows area under broad land use categories in the state.

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Broad Land use Category, 2004-05

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<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Area (Km²)</i>	<i>% to Geog Area</i>	<i>% to Reporting Area</i>
Geographical Area	83743.00	100.00	
Reporting Area	54978.00	65.65	100.00
Total Cultivable land	314.27	3.75	5.72
Total Cultivated land	194.63	2.32	3.54
Total Uncultivable land	5183.49	61.90	94.28
Total Uncultivated land	5303.13	63.33	96.46
Nine fold Categories of Use			
Forest area	51540	61.55	93.75
Land put to Non-Agri. Uses	4.59	0.05	0.08
Barren & unculturable Land	20.95	0.25	0.38
Pasture / Grazing Land	3.95	0.05	0.07
Misc. Tree Crops & groves	35.98	0.43	0.65
Culturable Waste	36.65	0.44	0.67
Old Fallow	47.02	0.56	0.86
Current Fallow	30.43	0.36	0.55
Net Area Sown (NAS)	164.19	1.96	2.99

Source: *Statistical Hand Book*

Arunachal Pradesh Development Report (2005) informs that former Dibang Valley district has highest net area shown, being 6.54 hectares per family. On the other hand, Twang district has recorded the lowest net area shown, being 0.66 hectares per family. This difference could be attributed to availability of land, practice of cultivation and population concentration. In Dibang Valley district it was reported in Agricultural Census that the people largely practised community based jhum cultivation. It is also further reported in the state development report that the high land availability has kept the problem of landlessness in the state to a minimum.

Over the years there is a shift in the pattern of operational holdings in both gross and net area shown under shifting and permanent cultivation.

Though there is no land survey and settlement and verifiable land records (except urban centres) in the state, Agricultural Census operation has enumeration system and according to 2000-01 records, the number of operational holdings stands at 1.07 lakhs in the state. Across the holding categories, the marginal category accounts 14.04 per cent, small- 18.78 per cent, semi-medium- 34.04 per cent, medium- 27.80 per cent and large- 5.33 per cent. These categories account 1.90 per cent, 6.73 per cent, 24.57 per cent, 43.49 per cent and 23.30 per cent of total operation holdings respectively. The holding categories were recorded 7.67 per cent

with 0.71 per cent operational holdings under marginal category, 11.96 per cent with 2.77 per cent operational holdings under small category, 25.91 per cent with 11.63 per cent operational holdings under semi-medium category, 36.40 per cent with 35.0 per cent operational holdings under medium category and 18.06 per cent with 49.89 per cent operational holdings under large category in 1970-71. Reportedly, there is an increase in number and area under marginal, small and semi-medium categories and decline of the same in other two categories.

You will also find that the share in total operated area under jhum has declined from 94.27 per cent in 1970-71 to 68.04 per cent in 1995-96. During the period the share in total operated area under permanent cultivation has increased from 5.73 per cent to 31.96 per cent. The same trend is recorded in the share of net area shown during the period of reference. Under jhum it has declined from 75.69 per cent to 51.16 per cent and under permanent cultivation it has increased from 24.31 per cent to 48.84 per cent.

Changing trends

Traditional tribal land relations in Arunachal Pradesh have changed particularly due to administrative interventions from the time of colonial rule. During post-independence period along with exposure to administrative intervention for welfare the tribal people have also been exposed to contact with non-Arunachalis in the process. The following trends have emerged in traditional land relations in the state:

1. Community ownership coexists along with private ownership and the trend is towards increasing individual rights on land.
2. Cadastral survey and land records are not available for all categories of land.
3. Customary rules still govern the practices of land transfer and inheritance. Land is inherited along male line, though trend of transfer of land by parents to daughters has emerged in a very small scale. Instances of tribal women marrying outsiders and enjoying usufructuary rights over paternal land have been reported. The children of the couple also enjoy this right as long as they live there. However, the right is not transferable to others. The land reverts to the family or lineage if the children of the couple settle elsewhere.
4. Tribal women with income have started purchasing land in administrative centres. Land is also allotted to female applicants by the government in administrative headquarters subject to fulfilment of conditions and availability. To get benefit of schemes like Indira Awas Yojana land is recorded in female beneficiary names.
5. Inequality in ownership of land holdings has emerged. A number of households have occupied more land for plantation and commercial crops.
6. There is a gradual decline in jhum fields and increase in area under permanent cultivation.
7. Tenancy system has emerged as people shift from traditional subsistence mode of agriculture to scientific cultivation and to non-agricultural activities like business, jobs, etc.
8. Land is commoditised; it can be sold and purchased even in rural areas within customary frame.

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5.3.2 Occupational Diversification

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Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh were traditionally engaged in mainly primary sector activities. These included hunting, gathering and other forest activities, cattle rearing, fishing and agriculture. In primary sector activities, however, mining and quarrying were not undertaken till 1971 as is evident from Table 5.2. In addition to it women were engaged in weaving to meet domestic clothing needs. A few people were found practising iron smithy and pot making in a small scale. These works were not regular and depended on the interest and skill of the individual. It was not a family profession either. Inter and intra tribe barter exchange also existed though it was not a regular occupation. Similarly, basket making was a leisure time activity but had utility as a support to other activities. Labour payment was reciprocated in terms of labour or kind. These activities were traditional occupations of people for livelihoods. But there was no tribe wise, family wise or activity wise specialisation in occupations though gender division was a distinct feature. The people combined different activities even in a day's routine.

With government interventions through plan programmes for all-round development, many new avenues have opened up. People are found engaged in different activities. In fact, they are engaged in activities which did not exist earlier and existing sectoral activities have been diversified. You will find construction, mining and quarrying, transport, etc. are additional activities in corresponding sectors. It is worth mentioning that development interventions started right from 1947. Nevertheless, as you can see from Table 5.3 that some activities shared less than one per cent workforce participation even in 1971, after more than 20 years.

Though there is no specific study, still you will find in the field that many Arunachalis are employed in sectors like education, health, public administration, transport, banking, hotel, etc. in addition to this people also pursue their traditional occupations.

You can learn the nature and extent of occupational diversity with reference to sectoral distribution of works and changes therein. Arunachal Development Report (2005) informs us about it which is presented in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. You will find that occupations in tertiary sector have increased from 1971 to 2001 as shown in Table 5.2. During this period there is a decline in primary sector activities. Secondary sector occupations have increased but very marginally in comparison to tertiary sector, though these have increased more in urban areas than in rural areas.

Table 5.2 Change in Sectoral Distribution of Workers Over a Period of 30 Years

Area/Workers		Primary sector		Secondary sector		Tertiary sector	
		1971	2001	1971	2001	1971	2001
Arunachal Pradesh	Persons	80.44	62.27	0.44	11.41	19.12	26.32
	Male	68.78	51.57	0.65	14.54	30.56	33.93
	Female	97.12	81.70	0.14	5.74	2.74	12.55
Rural	Persons	82.92	74.14	0.36	9.17	16.72	16.69
	Male	72.30	64.59	0.55	12.18	27.15	23.23
	Female	97.38	89.04	0.11	4.47	2.50	6.49
Urban	Persons	8.01	8.40	2.78	21.57	89.21	70.03
	Male	5.39	6.70	2.58	22.63	92.03	70.64
	Female	45.99	15.40	5.75	17.22	48.26	67.39

Table 5.3 Change in Work Participation in Sectoral Activities

Sectors	Percentage of Workers	
	1971	1991
Primary sector	80.44	67.44
Cultivators	78.34	60.36
Agricultural labourers	1.96	5.13
Livestock/forestry/fishing	0.14	1.77
Mining and Quarrying	0	0.18
Secondary Sector	0.44	8.66
Manufacturing in Household Industry	0.31	0.19
Manufacturing in Other than in Household Industry	0.04	2.49
Construction	0.01	5.98
Tertiary Sector	19.12	23.29
Trade and Commerce	0.58	3.31
Transport, Storage and Communication	0	1.13
Other Services	18.54	19.47
TOTAL	100	100

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Census, 2011 also records work participation in agriculture and other activities in the state. Table 5.4 shows percentage distribution of total workers as cultivator, agricultural labourers and workers in household industries and other category of works.

Table 5.4 Work Participation as per Census, 2011

Workers	Cultivators (%)	Agricultural labourers (%)	Household Industry workers (%)	Other Workers (%)
Total	57.8	3.9	1.3	37.0
Male	46.4	3.5	1.1	49.0
Female	75.5	4.5	1.5	18.5

It is clear that agriculture is still predominant with 57.8 per cent as cultivators and 3.9 per cent as agricultural labourers. Tertiary or service sector activities occupies second place recording 37.0 per cent of work participation. However, activities in household industry are very insignificant with 1.3 per cent of participation. A greater percentage of women have been recorded in agriculture than in other work category. The trend is also notice in other two tables.

As you know, tribal people were engaged in primary sector activities. Gradually, participation rate in this sector is declining and the rate in secondary and tertiary sector occupations has been increasing. In other words, occupations are not confined to traditional or primary sector activities alone.

5.3.3 Modern Polity

Modern polity among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh is not a total deviation from the traditional ethos. In modern polity, the first M.P. was nominated in 1952 to represent the tribes of North Eastern Frontier Tracts of Assam, which is now Arunachal Pradesh. In many cases there is a fusion of traditional and modern authority. So, in this section we will discuss the political life in tribal communities both in general

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and in some specific contexts with reference to tradition and recent practices. In other words, what the people do, how they do and why they do certain activities that we call political in nature will be our focus of discussion both in the past and present. The discussion on above lines will give you an understanding of political life of tribal people. In general, you will learn activities which people perform, faiths and beliefs related to those activities, individual or group that enjoys the authority and the motive behind functioning of political institutions.

Ideology

The motive changes over time and among communities. However, a common force exists across political institutions. You will find that the political institution of a society ensures stability, peaceful coexistence; controls chaos and conflict and thus establishes conditions for survival and sustainability of the community. To achieve this objective, the ideology they follow varies from time to time and community to community. At one time it could be *tooth for a tooth* and *an eye for an eye*. At the other, it could be the issue of creating awareness and realisation of the adverse impact of wrongs. For this purpose, the actions to be initiated, for example, awards and punishments, also vary. Roy (1960) transcribes an elaborate introductory speech (*abe*) made at the beginning of the proceedings of an Adi village council (*kebang*) that throws light on the ideology behind its functioning. He writes:

Oh! Villagers and brethren let us strengthen our customs and *kebang*, let us improve our regulations; let us make the laws straight and equal for all. Let the leaders who can speak best stand up and speak out for our betterment; let them speak out in a bold voice unabashed and undaunted like a cock crowing. Let our laws be uniform; let our customs be the same for all. Let us not decide differently for different persons; let us be guided by reason and see that justice is done and a compromise reached that is acceptable to both the parties. Let us keep nothing pending, let us decide while the dispute is fresh, lest small disputes grow big and continue for a long time. Let the *ajeng* (fine) be levied reasonably. Let it be commensurate with the guilt and be just. Poverty should have compassion and justice be tempered with mercy. We have met in this sacred place of justice; we have come together for a *kebang* and let us speak in one voice and decide on one verdict. Here are iron pots and brass pots brought by the accuser and the accused; here stands the mithun. So let us decide and mete out justice so that all these go to him who is in the right.

Traditional political life in tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh needs clarification. In 1945 Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Act was enacted and enforced in the then NEFA. Since then the tribal councils work within the general framework of this Act. The Act recognises the tribal authority and gives tribal councils very wide powers, but limits the types of 'punishment'. Elwin (1959) writes, '...in fact the heavy punishments of former days have already almost entirely disappeared. Girls may still have their hair cut for immorality, but they are no longer stripped naked and beaten. Offenders are no longer buried alive, rolled off cliffs, or pushed into rivers to drown; already, of their own accord, the people have adopted the system of compensation, which in practice is adjusted to the wealth and position of the accused'. Needless to say, the guiding principle of punishment is compensation to the victim or his/her family.

Elwin (1959) further writes, 'Where an autocratic system has previously existed, it (*the Administration*) is trying to associate with the Chief a number of elders and give them a stronger voice in village affairs'. According to the provisions of this

Act, *gaonburah* (head of the village), who is the representative of the Administration got a place in the council. In other words, in many tribes the traditional head became the representatives of the Government. The villagers choose the head which is ratified and recognised by the Government with the presentation of a red coat.

It is obvious from the above paragraph that the functioning of councils has changed to some extent from the practices before 1945. So when we say traditional political life, it covers the practices that prevailed before 1945 and the changes thereafter. Nevertheless, the practices followed in tribal communities, before 1945 or thereafter, that we call tribal political life are not as distinct as we see around us. There is no domain of activities which can be exclusively called political in a tribe. You have studied in unit II how oath is taken the name of Supreme Being. Elwin (1965) writes that the council is supported by supernatural sanctions, and to give false evidence, for example, may call down the vengeance of the gods as well as excite the scorn of man. Sacrifices are made to avert supernatural displeasure, to beseech the divine blessings on the council's deliberations, and to ensure peace between the contending parties. So, political activity is linked with faiths and beliefs. In family types in unit II which primarily deal with social aspects of life, you have studied patriarchal and matriarchal family types that depend on whom the authority lies. The notion of heredity associated with chieftain type of societies has a social context. In other words, the political institution is also linked with the social aspects of life. So, you will learn political life as integrated and interconnected with all other aspects of life.

Members of Council

In tribal councils, the head is either elected as is the case with the Monpas, or a hereditary chief as among Khamptis, Wachos and Noctes, or is an informally recognised person on the consideration of age and capability. The authority in council is derived from the convention of tradition as rooted in culture. Elwin (1965) writes, 'They all derive their authority from ancient times and the fact that they are the expressions of the will and power of the whole people'. Normal criteria of membership are age, knowledge in customs and practices, character, ability, and oratory skill. In some tribes, wealth and influence of the person is considered.

Membership is open and informal to male members on the basis of the above criteria in Adi Kebang. Normally, clan elders with the above qualities are members in the Kebang though all adult male members can participate in principle. Among the Nyishis, even the *gingdung*, the mediator who organises the *Nyel* (Nyishi village council) when need arises is a man of influence and wealth with oratory skill and knowledge in customary rules and practices. In chieftain type of societies, the chief who is the head of the council inherits the position.

Besides the head, there are other functional members in some of the councils. In others, the power is delegated to the youth groups. Elwin (1959) informs us that in Apatani community the village council, called *Buliang* is of three types. The *Buliang* of the young men, called *Ajang Buliangs*, are employed as messengers, go-betweens and assistants of the *Yapa Buliangs*. But, Kani (1993) informs us that what is presented as types are in fact three divisions of the council according to age gradation. In Apatani tribe, the council is known as *Buliang* and the members are also called *Buliangs*. The council exists at clan level, village level, and tribe level. Elwin (1965) also notes that ... 'the moshup or dere boys of the Adis, the morung

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boys of the Wanchos and Noctes have always played an important part in looking after their villages, maintaining paths, helping in cultivation, providing a simple relief service...' Pertin (2009) informs us that *Musupkos* (*musup*, i.e. dormitory boys) deliver important messages through *gokying*, an announcement of any kind of community programmes. In case of non-compliance of the punishment or breaking of taboo *Mushupkos* perform *kumsung saanam* (forcible collection of paddy from the granary of the offender). During feuds, the youths used to do the scouting. In *mushups* or *morungs* they always remain alert to any types of accident.

In councils of some tribes, priests have a role to play. During trial, the priests examine, chicken liver, or egg yolk to predict good omen for selecting *jhum* field or for hunting. A priest also renders his service at the time of conducting ordeal. In Tangsa village council (Ruung), for example, *Shamman*, the priest is an important member who predicts good or bad omen before any expedition like community hunting, waging war against the enemy or searching suitable land for new settlement. If the omen in favour is predicted by the *shamman*, the expedition is performed and if not it is dropped.

Inequality, hierarchy and exclusion

The political life does not display the ideal of egalitarianism. You will find inequality in every tribe and hierarchy in some tribes. As you know Arunachal societies are patriarchal. In principle women are excluded from exercising the social authority or power like members of the council. In fact, no instances are recorded where a woman heads a council or is a member in it. Women do not take part in decision making, but can make complaint, give witness, attend the council to watch the proceedings and in some tribes to arrange food and drinks. The nature of composition of councils displays exclusionary traits, the first being the gender bias. The nature of heredity to the post of headship/member in the council in chieftain type of communities, or in gerontocracy is exclusionary. It does not allow free competition among all the clans or groups of people living in a village under democratic spirit.

Among the Wanchos, Noctes, Khamptis and the Singphos the chief is hereditary in the family, or at best in the clan. In Nocte chieftaincy, the *Nokbang* (commoner) and *Mikhiak* (people forming a still lower status) do not have the right to head the Council. The Wanchos have three social divisions such as *Wangham* (ruler), *Wangsa* (middle order born out of the wedlock between a *Wangham* father and *Wangpan* mother) and *Wangpan* (ruled). Even a member from *Wangsa* group has no right to the post of chief though members and advisers come from this group. Obviously, exclusion of clans and groups as head in the council are pronounced in chieftain type of societies.

Even in non-chieftain type of societies exclusion is a distinct feature. We have already mentioned the gender and age bias. The Buliang in Apatani community, though not a chieftain type of society, is hereditary in the family. Anita Sharma (2013) informs us that the traditional Sherdupen community was governed by a central administrative council based at Rupa. Though Shergaon has a council, originally it was affiliated to Rupa. Most of the sizeable villages have a council (Jung) whose head, now *gaonburha*, comes from the Thong clans. The same pattern is followed for the post of *Jungme*, i.e. ordinary members. Only for the post of the *Kachung/Kaching* members come from Chao clans. A council may have one or two or more than two *Kachungs* who work as couriers, messengers and watchmen of the village.

In case of more than one *Kachung*, a leader is selected between the two or among them if three or more. They take care of the store of the village council, organise activities like meetings, festivals, important days, and ensure strict observance of taboos and social discipline. In Monpa community all people do not have the right to the post of Tsogen. Norbu (2008) informs us that only *khraimi* (those who own taxable land) are eligible to the post of Tsogen. The *surmi/naamtong* (those who do not own taxable land) have no such right. In other words, landless people do not have the right to head the village council of the Monpas.

Role of village council in political life

The political life of tribals in Arunachal Pradesh is governed through various roles played by the council. Elwin (1965) has made a threefold classification of these roles as: judicial, administrative and developmental. By developmental role he means the functioning of development officers through involvement of village councils. This is not a traditional function of the council. However, the council has its traditional role of development of the village. We may include construction and maintenance of paths, bridge, water sources, etc. But Elwin groups these activities under administrative function of the village council. The judicial function includes settlement of various disputes. We may classify the traditional functions of village council as that of settlement of disputes, community works and village safety and security.

Disputes may broadly relate to criminal and civil matters. Theft, murder, rape, incest, adultery, elopement with a married woman, killing of *mithuns*/domestic animals, sorcery and witchcraft, assault and inflicting physical injuries, breaking of taboos, quarrelling and fighting are serious offences and hence can be grouped under criminal cases. Judicial role of the council is associated with settlement of criminal and civil cases. The council imposes fines as compensation for the loss to the victims. If the accused does not pay the compensation, an alternative course of action is taken. The person, who does not pay compensation, is handed over to the victim's family. He or she is left at the mercy of the person or family or clan. Payment of compensation has a community dimension. When the person is not able to make the payment the lineage or the clan group comes forward to bail him/her out.

Civil matters broadly relate to marriage and land disputes. Marriage disputes normally cover divorce, elopement, breaking of marriage negotiation, matter relating to marriage exchanges (earlier known as bride price). The village council decides all sorts of land disputes including maintenance of village boundary. It settles land disputes between families, decides upon land allotment to families and new settlers, to development projects like school, hospital, government offices, etc. Inter-village encroachments are settled by joint meeting of councils of two or more villages as the case may be. But in tribes like the Adis the dispute is settled by the territorial and tribe level councils such as Bango Kebang or Bogum Bokang Kebang. Some issues like adoption, inheritance disputes, disputes over hunting and trapping ground, absence in community works are also civil in nature.

Community works include community fencing, fixation of date and time for festivals, rituals, community fishing and hunting, construction of irrigation channels, and clearance of *jhum* fields. We have already mentioned some works under what Elwin called administrative work.

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When a new village has to be set up, the council visit different places/sites; ensures water supply, longer hours of sun shine, locational safety and quality of soil for cultivation. Matters regarding inter-tribe or inter-village feuds are decided in the council. Details of raids are also planned in earlier days.

Present Context

The village governance in tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh is in transition. The changes have resulted from the government interventions. The first intervention, as you know, was the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945 (I of 1945). The Act recognised the traditional village authorities of the tribes to administer the villages. But the functioning of the council did not remain informal as the Act provided the frame of its functioning. A sort of uniformity prevailed in the composition of the council with the entry of recognised members to the council of Chieftains. The traditional head of the council formally became the head of the village, designated as *gaonburha* in government records. In councils, where there were other members, they got the recognition with the designation of *gaonburha*. Nimachow (2011) informs us that the position of village elders (*Nyetri Kheo*) in the council of many Aka villages, for example, is held by the appointed *gaonburhas*. We have already discussed that the nature of punishment which became more compensatory in nature.

The second ripples of change came with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj system in 1967. The Panchayati Raj system was introduced in the state at four levels — the level of village, *Anchal*, *Zila* and the state. At the village level, the traditional councils functioned side by side with the village Panchayat. Beyond the village level, at the *Anchal* and *Zila* levels, the *Anchal Samiti* and *Zila Parishad* are the higher Panchayati Raj Institutions corresponding to a circle and a district respectively. At the apex is the Agency Council consisting of the then Governor of Assam, the MPs from NEFT, the Vice-Presidents of *Zila Parishads*, three representatives elected by each *Zila Parishad*, and the Adviser to the Governor as an *ex-officio* member.

The system again changed when the NEFA became Union Territory in 1972 and a full-fledged state in 1987. Further, 73rd Amendment to the Constitution strengthened the Village Panchayats. You will find the same person in some tribes like the Sherdukpen and the Khamptis is both traditional head and *gaonburha*. You will find *gaoburhas* constituting a majority of the members in the council as is in Kembang or Nyel. The elected Panchyat members are also members in many village councils, but they conduct the councils as per the tradition. In Khampti villages, the post of Chauman (traditional village head) is different from the post of the head of the Village Panchayat. While the traditional council look after disputes and other traditional issues, the Panchayat looks after developmental works following relating to government programmes and schemes. Sometimes, the village head is consulted. However, differences are also noticed between the traditional head and the panchayat head in the selection of beneficiary and implementation of programmes. You will find the Adi Kembang in many villages functioning effectively in settling disputes. In a nutshell, the traditional councils and modern Panchyats coexist in tribal villages. Their working area is distinct in some villages and in others they have merged together.

The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India has brought changes in the sphere of participation. All adult members, irrespective of social sections, enjoy the

rights to participate in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Needless to say, the people exercise their voting rights to elect Gram Panchayat Members (GPMs) and ASM as their representatives to the Village Panchayat. Any adult member, until and unless disqualified otherwise, has the right to contest for any post of PRIs. The *gram sabha*, the important component of PRIs, has empowered all adult members to place their view points and participate in decision making. According to this amendment 30 per cent of seats in PTIs are reserved for women. As a result, contrary to traditional political institutions, the women are not excluded from participation in decision making. No doubt, tribal women play a major role in PRIs.

In addition to the Panchayati Raj system in the state another development also marks a change in traditional political life. It is the participation of the people in representative democracy of the country both at national and state levels and introduction of election. The political process made a small beginning, as already mentioned, with the nomination of Shri Choukhamoon Gohain (Namchum) as MP in 1952. The seat to Lok Sabha further increased by one in 1971, and during the same year the state opened its account in Rajya Sabha by sending Shri Todak Basar as its first MP in Rajya Sabha. However, real political process began with the introduction of elections during its Union Territory phase. In 1977 the people of the state exercised their franchise for the first time to elect their representatives for the Lok Sabha.

Prior to it, on August 15, 1975, a Provincial Legislative Assembly with 30 members was constituted with Mr. P.K. Thungon as the Chief Minister. Its members were elected by an electoral body. But the first general election for the Assembly was held in February 1978. When Arunachal Pradesh attained full-fledged status in 1987, the seats in the State Assembly were increased from 30 to 60.

5.4 WOMEN AND SOCIETY

Women in Indian society belong to weaker sections. This is the idea about women and important considerations for their development in almost all the countries of the world. In India, tribes also belong to weaker sections. Obviously, tribal women are doubly vulnerable on this count. The idea of weaker section means that women are not equal to men; they do not enjoy equal rights like men counterparts. It is not therefore a surprise to find equality claims in contemporary feminist movement. In the field of development or political participation you will find gender issue as a significant point of discussion and consideration. This is the case in general and issue of tribal women in particular.

In some quarters there are opinions that tribal women enjoy better position as compared to non-tribal women. The Dhebar Commission Report of 1961 states that a tribal woman is not a drudge or beast of burden. She is found to be exercising a relatively free and firm hand in all aspects of her social life unlike in non-tribal societies. When compared to 'non-tribal' counterparts, the general impression is that tribal women enjoy a better status. This is because in tribal communities there is no stigma of widowhood and often of unwed mother, no purdah system and no dowry unlike in non-tribal communities. A tribal woman can divorce and remarry easily. She earns and is, therefore, to a great extent financially independent.

But this is a myth, for the position of an individual, for example a woman, is examined in relation to the culture she belongs to. In fact, you will find status

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differentiation between male and female members in tribal societies also. Of course in matrilineal tribe, women's position is considered better. The daughter, only one, inherits family property. Among Garos it is the youngest daughter who inherits family property which belongs to mother. Here the comparison is made about the status of women belonging to two different cultures-patriarchy and matriarchy. In matriarchy, the inheritor daughter is subject to cultural prescriptions. In the event of her decision to stay with her husband elsewhere she has to forego the right. Moreover, a male member, especially from maternal side, manages the landed property, though the right of ownership vests in the female. Therefore, in a culture, a comparison shows that men and women have different status, often marking inequality.

But in patriarchy women in general do not enjoy equal rights with men in many aspects of life. With reference to these aspects the status of women can be compared with men. One of such aspects is inheritance.

5.4.1 Inheritance

We have discussed the rules of inheritance of property in tribal societies in Unit-3, in detail. In this section, a brief account of women's inheritance in the context of Arunachal tribes will be presented.

As you know property in tribal societies are of two types: moveable and immovable. Moveable property normally includes livestock, beads and ornaments, bride wealth of any form (land traditionally does not constitute a part of bride wealth), utilitarian objects like loom, utensils and other household articles. Hunting equipment and traps also are moveable properties especially of hunting gathering tribes. Among the pastoral tribes you will find livestock as the most valuable moveable property.

Ownership of movable property has male and female domains. For example, hunting equipment, traps, animals in pastoral community belongs to male ownership domain. Women do not have rights to inherit such types of movable property. Beads, ornaments, bride wealth, etc., on the other hand, belong to female domain of ownership. Therefore, in case of bridal wealth, beads and ornaments, etc. the ownership rest on the woman and is transferred to daughters and daughters-in law. In other words, daughters and daughters-in-law have rights to inherit mother/mother-in-law owned movable property. The woman owning domestic birds and animals could dispose them in exchange or as gift to daughters or use them for domestic rituals or consumption purpose. However, there is no established norm guiding inheritance practice of such properties.

Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh are patriarchal in nature. Naturally inheritance rights of immovable property like land rest on male line. Normally sons inherit father's property and in the absence of sons, lineage male members or other male relatives inherit the property as per cultural norms. In principle women either as daughter or wife does not have right to inherit father's/husband's land property. She enjoys maintenance rights as per customary practices.

A woman passes through two major phases of life: married and unmarried. During unmarried stage, maintenance of the daughter is responsibility of parents/family members till her marriage. There is the possibility that the daughter may not marry thorough out her life. In that case her maintenance depends on the family and if she wants to be dependent, she is allowed to cultivate a family plot for herself on availability. However, this practice is not the inheritance rule. Only the women enjoy usufructuary rights as long as she is alive and capable of cultivating. After

her death, the land reverts to family. Even in some tribes like the Galo, a daughter can cultivate a plot by herself independently before marriage.

After marriage, the maintenance rights of a woman rest on husband as long as he is alive. She would cultivate the land owned by her husband. In case of the death of the husband the widow does not have any right over husband's landed property. She may have a residual life interest in land meant for maintenance. However, this right is subject to her not remarrying outside husband's family circle. If she remarries, she foregoes the right of life interest in land. In case of a widow with male children the inheritors of property are her own children according to customary norms. When they are young, the woman remains as the custodian of land on their behalf. After husband's death, children take care of the maintenance responsibility.

The issue of inheritance has another dimension. A widow may marry her husband's brother/lineage brother as per sororate and levirate practices followed in the community. In that case the brother-husband inherits property. This type of marriage is often labelled as 'widow inheritance'. This practice exists in most of Arunachali tribes.

Another trend is noticed in the matter of land transfer and ownership. There are instances where a father legally transfers land to a daughter. Moreover, many women have started purchasing land in their names. Obviously ownership rights rest on them. But how this land will be inherited depends on future practice, for in tradition, there is no such practice and rule.

Life interest in land has an emerging trend in recent years. Many tribal girls marrying outsiders enjoy this life interest in land. There are cases where the land deed is manipulated in the name of the woman giving them legal ownership rights. But to what extent the woman enjoys the rights depends on future, for the tribal land cannot be transferred to non-tribals. In other cases, without any legal rights, when the children of the women would not like to stay after her death, the land will revert to her parent's family. These are some emerging trends for which there are no traditional rules. Moreover, there is no land rule in the state to guide these matters. In future, the practices will determine rule.

5.4.2 Women and Empowerment

In recent years, empowerment of women has been recognized as a central issue in determining the status of women as well as development of a country. In this connection, Human Development Report, 2003 is of immense significance which speaks of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that prominently emphasise on women empowerment. Empowerment of women is a worldwide concept. The last 30 years of 20th century prepared the action plan in the four world conferences on women held at Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). These conferences have helped to strengthen the socio-economic, political and legal dimensions of the role of women. In the Mexico conference it was decided that the decade of 1975 to 1985 be celebrated as the decade of women. During the decade, in 1979 the UNO adopted Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which on 1993 was adopted in India. The concept of empowerment was introduced at the international women's conference at Nairobi in 1985. This conference defined empowerment as a redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women.

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Check Your Progress

8. State whether the following statements are True or False:
 - (a) Individual ownership has emerged in land.
 - (b) Primogeniture is the normal rule of land inheritance among many tribes.
 - (c) Residual life interest in land is an inheritance rule.
 - (d) The government occupies tribal land in public interest as per the provisions of Land Acquisition Act 1984.
 - (e) Inequality in land holdings has emerged in the process of development interventions.

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Check Your Progress

9. State whether the following statements are true or false:
- (a) In tradition land is considered as a commodity which can be sold and purchased.
 - (b) Tenancy system has emerged mainly due to shift in family labour to non-agricultural activities.
 - (c) Tertiary sector has been emerging as a significant employment provider.
 - (d) Traditional village council ensures egalitarianism in decision making process.
 - (e) Women empowerment is necessary to raise the status of women in patriarchy.

The emphasis on women empowerment has its origin in their subordinate position in patriarchy and associated ill treatments and non-recognition to their contributions. Not less important is the additional positive contribution of women to general development by enabling their participation meaningfully in development process.

Literally, empowerment means becoming powerful. The question is powerful with regard to what? In a common sense of understanding empowerment is to make an individual, a group, a section of a community or the community as a whole powerful so that the members participate, decide upon, get access to and enjoy freedom of choices in matters which they are deprived of or denied to within the existing system.

As you know, tribes in India have been integrated to national development process. Obviously empowerment of tribal women is an important subject of national commitment.

You are already aware that Arunachali tribes are patriarchal in nature. In a patriarchy, in principle and practice, participation and decision making power rests on men. In economic matters, village councils and religious affairs women are subordinated to men's decision. Cultural prescriptions and taboos prohibit women to take part in many aspects of life. Though they participate in economic and religious activities, they do not have decision making power. In Adi kebang for example, and for that matter in all village councils, women may lodge complaints, stand as witness, serve food and beverage, but can neither be a member nor can participate in decision making process. Obviously, in these spheres tribal women are not empowered in traditional system.

However, this does not mean that women at all do not have any power to take decision. In marriage matter, a girl can exercise her choice in the selection of life partner. In some tribes, the girl enjoys pre-marital sexual freedom. More significantly a woman can decide upon the use of produces. What she earns from keeping poultry birds, pigs or selling clothes is spent by her. The produce of the land cultivated by an unmarried girl is used according to her desire. The women can decide upon whom to transfer her movable property- to daughter or daughter-in-law.

As you know in the process of development tribal economy is linked to market though in a very minimal scale. Tribal women for a long time have been selling some produces in local markets. You will find tribal women selling clothes, vegetables, fruits, etc. in administrative centres. From their earnings they purchase their personal necessities. Even they spend the money for children education, medicine, dress, toys, eatables, etc. Empowerment of tribal women can be observed, though to a very limited extent, in domestic sphere of life. In public sphere, however, it was conspicuously absent in traditional society.

Such instances of decision making power, however, do not improve upon their general status of subordination in a patriarchy. Women empowerment is not related to these instances, it is rather an ideological assertion against subordination in patriarchy in general. The empowerment which we talk about is the power given to women through government interventions so that their status in patriarchy improves at par men's power.

At present, you will find two systems in Arunachal Pradesh. One is the emerging formal system through government interventions and the second one is

the continued traditional informal system. Similarly, you will find corresponding public spheres – one at formal level and other at informal traditional level.

Due to development and education schemes, the level of empowerment of tribal women is rising in the formal system. You will find tribal women as administrators through civil services and working as police personnel, doctors, teachers, lawyers, technocrats, bankers, journalists, writers, executives, social workers, entrepreneurs, and in other formal institutions and sect oral activities. These women are decision maker in accordance with the position they hold. In addition, they have access to state resources as income earners. Thiers contribution to state economy is recognised unlike in traditional system.

You will find Self-Help Group (SHG strategy for women empowerment. Self-Help Group model was introduced as a core strategy to achieve empowerment in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) with the objective to organize women into Self-Help Group, and thus, marked the beginning of a major process of empowering women. This has empowered women to organise into SHGs, maintain their accounts, organise their activities, and interact with development personnel and so on. In Arunachal Pradesh women organised into Women Welfare Society have raised their voice against ills of society that subordinates women. You will find women voice in State Women Commission. There are district and local level women organizations which advocate for equality eradication of practices of gender discrimination. These women empowered in formal system interventions in public sphere of informal traditional system for general women empowerment. When a woman is prohibited to organise traditional religious festivals like Mopin, she can do so in capital complex. Such women stand as ‘interface’ between tradition and modernity, though women empowerment in traditional life is yet to make a significant dent.

However, in political sphere empowerment in tribal women can be observed. The state has sent women representatives to the State Assembly and Parliament of the country. Besides, due to 33 per cent reservation women participate as members in Panchayati Raj Institutions. The government has been appointing some women GBs (women village head) since 1987. These members participate in village council meetings which have emerged as a combination of tradition and modernity. You will find another trend of women empowerment in revival religious organizations. In revival movements like Donyipolo, Nani Inteya, etc. women play leading role in conducting prayers and some other activities.

5.5 SUMMARY

- In this unit we have discussed tribal life in Arunachal Pradesh. This is discussed with reference to social organization, emerging issues and women in changing society.
- Life of a community gets expressions through activities belonging to different spheres. The spheres of activities are broadly cultural, religious, social, political and economic in nature. They present cultural, religious, social, political and economic aspects of life of people. You have learnt these aspects in general and with reference to few individual tribes as case studies.
- As you know, in the tradition of a tribe all aspects of life are integrated and interconnected. Therefore, in the discussion of a particular aspect, a few references pertaining to other aspects of life have come up. For example,

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Check Your Progress

10. What are the objectives of punishment?
11. The traditional political institution is gender discriminatory. Justify.
12. Even non-chieftain type of societies can be exclusionary. Prove with examples.

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the status role of women in terms of participation in village council has been referred to in social aspect of life.

- Society is dynamic; so also the aspects of life. That is why you have learnt changing trend in various aspects of life. Largely, you have learnt tribal way of life in the tradition and the emerging trend consequent upon assimilation, acculturation and development interventions. The emerging issues have been discussed with reference to land relations, occupational diversification and modern polity. Women empowerment is also an emerging issue in tribal society. We have discussed the nature and scope of empowerment of tribal women in Arunachal Pradesh. The issue of inheritance is discussed to appreciate women rights in land and thus the issue of empowerment.

5.6 KEY TERMS

- **Acephalous society:** A society where there is not centralised authority.
- **Cadastral Survey:** Survey or mapping land boundaries.
- **Cephalous society:** A society with centralised authority like a chief.
- **Contemporary:** Belonging to the same time or period as the one mentioned.
- **Egalitarian:** The belief that everyone is equal and should enjoy same rights and opportunities.
- **Endogamy:** Marriage practice within the group.
- **Exogamous:** Marriage practice outside the group, opposite to endogamous.
- **Fallow land:** Land which is left uncultivated to restore fertility.
- **Levirate:** The custom of a man marrying his deceased brother's widow (sister-in-law).
- **Moiety:** One of two basic sub-divisions of tribe.
- **Oath:** To speak out in the name of supernatural power; the act of calling upon a deity to stand witness to the veracity of what one says.
- **Ordeal:** The practice of determining guilt or innocence by asking the accused to undergo certain acts believed to be under the control of supernatural power.
- **Patriarchy:** The system where power and authority rests on male members.
- **Phratries:** A kinship group composed of families with a notional common ancestor. In the organization of tribes, it refers to a group of clans.
- **Rites of passage:** Rituals to mark the transition from one stage of life to another, for example puberty ritual.
- **Sacred:** As was used by Emile Durkheim, refers to what is not a part of the normal world, including forbidden knowledge or practices and ritual activities. It is opposite to 'profane'.
- **Shaman:** A ritual specialist who mediates between the human and spiritual world through trance.
- **Social capital:** Value and practice of trust, cooperation, mutuality, reciprocation in the society.

- **Social Organization:** Significant grouping of members of a society.
- **Sorrorate:** The custom of a woman marrying her deceased sister's husband (brother-in-law).
- **Supernatural:** Something which is not subject to the laws of the nature.
- **Tenancy:** The custom of leasing out land.
- **Usufructuary:** By virtue of use, usufructuray rights- the right enjoyed because of use.

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5.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. (a) Patriarchal (b) Differentiated (c) Endogamy
(d) Marriage (e) Extended
2. (a) True (b) True (c) False
(d) True (e) False
3. The society in Arunachal Pradesh is patriarchal in nature. There is inequality across gender. Women do not have rights to own landed property. The society is organised on the basis of social groupings. Broadly the society is of two types: cephalous and acephalous—on the basis of central authority. Social institutions like marriage, appropriation of community labour, and values like mutual cooperation, community interest, sharing, etc. characterise the society in Arunachal Pradesh.
4. Taboos are prohibitions. There are movement taboos, food taboos, etc. People observe taboos because its violation would incur supernatural punishment. Moreover, taboos also make the result of rituals effective.
5. Mutuality in general sense refers to reciprocal cooperation. It is more visible in mutual labour exchange. This practice exists in agricultural activities and during house construct.
6. Yes. Women take part in decision making as Panchayat members. They have entered into public sphere of like as professionals and techno-bureaucrats. They have been able to raise their voices against social evils.
7. (a) False (b) True (c) True
(d) True (e) False
8. (a) False (b) True (c) True
(d) True (e) False
9. (a) False (b) True (c) False (d) True
(e) True (f) False (g) True
10. To ensure about social cohesion, to make the wrong doers realise his mistake and to compensate the loss incurred to the victim
11. In traditional political institutions of chieftain type societies women are not members. When the council is informal and open like the *kebang* women do not take part in decision making.

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12. Non-Chieftain type of societies has different political institutions- gerontocracy, democratic village councils, and arbiter system. In such institutions, women are generally excluded from taking decision. In gerontocracy, there is social hierarchy like the Thong and Chao of Sherdukpen. In such a society a section of the people is excluded from decision making. The slaves/serfs are also excluded from participation.

5.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Tribal social life is founded on the principle of mutuality and sharing. Discuss.
2. Traditional Political life in Arunachal Pradesh is exclusionary. Do you agree? Justify.
3. What do you mean by the word 'empowerment'? Why is it absent in traditional society? Give your answer with examples.
4. Give a brief account of inheritance rights of women in traditional tribal society.
5. What is the emerging trend in tribal land relations? Discuss.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the trend of change in social life of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Enumerate contributing factors of change.
2. Discuss various stages of change in political life of the people in Arunachal Pradesh.
3. Discuss the judicial and administrative functions of village councils.
4. Discuss the nature of inequality in landholdings.
5. Do you think the status of tribal women in Arunachal Pradesh is changing? Give answer with examples.
6. There is a shift in economic life from primary to secondary and tertiary sector activities. Do you agree? Why?

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