"TRANSITION IN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES OF THE KHAMTIS OF LOHIT DISTRICT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH: an ethnographic study of their culture, economy and society"

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A project report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies

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Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Mumbai
2013
DECLARATION

I, Suraj Gogoi, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled 'Transition in agricultural practices of the Khamtis of Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh: an ethnographic study of their culture, economy and society' is the outcome of my own study undertaken under the guidance of Dr. C J Sonowal, Associate Professor, Center for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. It has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this Institute or of any other institute or university. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

11 March 2013

Suraj Gogoi
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'Transition in agricultural practices of the Khamtis of Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh: an ethnographic study of their culture, economy and society' is the record of the original work done by Suraj Gogoi under my guidance and supervision. The results of the research presented in this dissertation have not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this Institute or any other institute or university.

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11 March 2013
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the robust support of several individuals. At the outset I would like to thank Prof. J Sonowal for his constant support and guidance. He has been truly helpful and have made himself available to attend to all the requirements of the dissertation. This dissertation would not have been possible without his sincere guidance.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the different families of Chowhkam who have been quite eager and helpful during my ethnography. I am also grateful to the District Agriculture Office and District Research Office of Tezu for helping in getting access to the needful and valuable secondary data.

I would like to express my gratefulness to Dr Prasenjit Biswas for making me believe that I was doing something meaningful. This process would not have been possible without the constant support of my friends in TISS. They have made the journey a worthwhile experience. I would also like to extend my gratefulness to my friend Sachin for assisting me in the field. I am also grateful to the infrastructure that TISS had to offer.

Finally, I would also like to thank my beloved parents and sister without whose support I don't deserve to stand my ground here. They have been a source of inspiration for struggle.
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE, PEOPLE AND THE STATE INTERACTION

(Photograph by S. Harikrishnan, Tawang 2011, October 24th)

Why did we think it was trivial
that it would rain every summer,
that nights would be still with sleep
and that the green fern would uncurl ceaselessly, by the roadside.

why did we think survival was simple
that river and field would stand forever invulnerable, even to the dreams of strangers,
for we know where the sun lay resting
in the folded silence of hills
(Mamang Dai 2004; Rememberance)
1.1 Arunachal Pradesh at a Glance

Arunachal has a ‘highly precipitous and varied terrain’ (Fleming 1995). ‘The land is unparalleled in the world, for the concentration, isolation and diversity of tribal cultures it contains. Nowhere else can one find such a patchwork of discrete types of pre-industrial political economies in such a small area, including semi-nomadic swidden agriculture, terraced wet agriculture, high mountain pastoralist and traditional trade and barter. Traditionally, the political organisation ranged from aristocratic ranking or stratified chiefdoms to egalitarian clan or lineage-based societies and highly corporate villages run by democratic debate in traditional councils’ (Taylor, 1998; HDI report Arunachal 2005). Arunachal is the receiver of most of the south-west monsoons and due to the great barrier of the Himalayas receives almost an annual rainfall of 350 cm, making one of the wettest states in India. The rainy season extends from the pre-monsoon months of March and April, through the extremely wet months of June and July and continues till September-October. Out of its total geographical area of 83,743 sq km Arunachal Pradesh is 96 per cent hill terrain. It shares international border with China, Bhutan and Myanmar. There are alpine forests, temperate and subtropical forests, and semi-evergreen forests. The temperate forests are mainly conifer, larch, juniper and spruce. Temperate bamboos form shrubby undergrowth in many places and the broad-leaved forests include magnolia, oak, rhododendron, chestnut, sal, teak, and poplar (HDI Arunachal 2005). There are wetlands, where the rivers meet the Brahmaputra, and grasslands in the mountains as well as riverine grasslands (Sumi Krishna, 1997, and T C Upreti, 2002).

Home to 26 major tribes and 110 sub-tribes and minor tribes, Arunachal has received waves of migration from different directions, over centuries. The early waves were probably from Bhutan, Tibet, Burma, and Yunnan province. The distributions of different tribes are outlined as under:

Table 1.1: district and related tribes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
<th>Main tribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Kameng</td>
<td>Bomdila</td>
<td>Monpa, Sherdukpen, Lishpa,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chugppa, Aka, Miji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kameng</td>
<td>Seppa</td>
<td>Nyishi, Sulung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papum Pare</td>
<td>Yupai</td>
<td>Nyishi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Subansiri</td>
<td>Ziro</td>
<td>Nyishi, Apatani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Subansiri</td>
<td>Daporijo</td>
<td>Adi, Tagin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Siang</td>
<td>Along</td>
<td>Adi, Memba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Siang</td>
<td>Pasighat</td>
<td>Adi, Mishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Siang</td>
<td>YingKiong</td>
<td>Adi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibang Valley</td>
<td>Anini</td>
<td>Idu Mishmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>Tezu</td>
<td>Mishmi, Khampti, Singhpo,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
India’s North-East is a mosaic of different races, languages, religions and ‘agro-cultural complexes’\(^1\). With a beautiful landscape amounting to about 2.6 lakh square kilometres it is a space where around 475 different ethnic-groups and sub-groups have been living and producing their natural, cultural and social niches. The linguistic diversity gives the base for ethnic diversities and these linguistic origins can be traced to the Indo-Austric, Mon-Khumr, Indo-Tibetian, Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan families. A sense of the complex mix can be understood when we compare it with mainland India. Though India’s North-East amounts to only 8% of the total landscape of India and 4% of the total population of India, it is a homeland to 200 communities out of 635 communities listed as tribal. If one looks at the linguistic diversity, 175 different languages are spoken out of the 325 listed by the ‘People’s of India’ project. Generic identities like Nagas, therefore, have a substratum of plurality and diversity that co-hear but do not collapse the specific term of reference (Ahmed & Biswas 2004). The idea of North-East is a colonial construct and has also been carried forward by the Indian state in its post-colonial imaginations. The power structures have changed, not the imaginations. The colonial powers justified their penetration into India’s North-East in terms of possible threats of tribal raids. The post colonial state sometimes directly and sometimes through different developmental policies in order to close the ‘developmental gap’, not to forget the Look East policy, have invaded into the life-worlds of the different communities and have exploited their imaginations and have deprived of their rights. Developmental gap is defined by the comparison of space of North-East with the rest of India and how culturally, socially, economically and politically the life-worlds are perceived in the ‘mainstream’ India. The Look East Policy started since the time of Narasimha Rao, is a political-economic decision to integrate North-East with the larger economies of South-East Asia. The spillovers of such a policy is a narrow vision of development by which there will be increased displacement and conflict in North-East and the local people will not be able to reap the benefits of such a conscious public policy decision. The idea of development is vehemently put forwarded by the Indian state while completely discounted the extraction and expropriations that have been mete out to the people of India's North-East both by the ‘other’ actors- the colonial and the post-colonial state. History gives us the picture that the ethnic groups belonging to the Mongoloid race entered the space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meyor</th>
<th>Changlang</th>
<th>Tangsa, Singpho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changlang</td>
<td>Changlang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirap</td>
<td>Khonsa</td>
<td>Nocte, Wangcho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurung Kume&lt;/noscript&gt;y</td>
<td>Koloriang</td>
<td>Nyishi, Sulung, Tagin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Dibang Valley</td>
<td>Roing</td>
<td>Mishmi, Adi(Padam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anjaw</td>
<td>Hawai</td>
<td>Mishmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>Tawang</td>
<td>Monpa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of North-East from the north, east and the south. On the other hand, the Caucasoid took the western route. Over the centuries the ethnic groups of the same race as well as the two major races have intermingled, exchanging socio-cultural and biological traits among them producing cultural and biological diversities (Das 2002). Both the processes of detribalization and retribalization have come into being and both of them are equally important if we try to look at the history of ethnic identity assertion in relation to the Indian state. These processes are also closely associated with the notions of cultural revivalism and political aspirations. Both the notions have to be problematized. The fifth and the sixth schedule provides for the space of scheduled areas under which the tribals are given the separate laws for governance and administration. North-east is also included in the scheduled areas but there is a contradiction and fallacy of governmentality. These rights made available through scheduled areas are bestowed artificially to the indigenous people by the state, have come to be arbitrary in nature. The relationship that the indigenous people maintain with the nature and its resources within the ambit of Rights is not recognised by the state. As the constitutional provisions and rights are strategic arrangements, they are subject to change and given the nature of the nature of political machinery it is easily achieved. People are robbed off their rightful control over their resources in the name of development like through construction of roads and dams. This provision allows them to preserve their distinct identity, history, customary practices and traditional beliefs. It also gives control to the natural resources over which the tribes have the rights traditionally. How will the Indian state restore and rehabilitate the different communities of Arunachal Pradesh who have different land arrangements and rights unique to their culture? The Fifth Schedule includes the tribal dominant areas in nine states of India and Sixth Schedule allows for the formation of autonomous councils. Bodoland Territorial Council districts are a classic example of this which is burning in flames now. The development of the region has a agenda of national security. Autonomous provisions have been problematic and one can go to the extent of saying that it is a conscious public policy intervention in order to do away with integration among different communities. The hidden idea is to create disorder of some sorts whereby sub-nationalist tendencies can be subdued. Also, constitutional provisions in this regard have been subject to excessive state intervention, improper and incomplete transfer of power in vital issues and vested interest interest, has made sixth scheduled areas mostly unproductive and tribal development in their own terms has remained a distant dream. The national security approach is reproduced at various levels of governance all the way to the local level, affecting state and non-state actors (McDuie-Ra 2008). The narrowness of the national security results in very narrow agenda of development, sustained by patronage politics and militarization of society which in no way meets the need of the people (ibid). Ethno-nationalisms decide what is contested and what is not. The national security provides narrow developmental idea from the above, on the other hand the ethno-nationalisms in civil society like Apunba-Lup gives a meaningful contestation from below (ibid). The

2 I am referring to Michel Foucault's conception of Governmentality.
subaltern consciousness of civil society of being elitist isn't always true as there are possibilities of a rightful civil society from below which can contest the hegemonic and nationalist tendencies in India. Such efforts are necessary and needs a more conscious effort and thinking on the part of the subaltern theorist to have a renewed look in a more pragmatic way.

Observing the state of exploitation by a dominant other in life-worlds and historiography, I write:

> When imaginations are lost in selfless reality;
> When reality reckons a following;
> When the following is intimidated by 'other' beings;
> When the other is constructed and imagined;
> Existences come to follow the constructed imagination.

A Political Map of Arunachal Pradesh is shown below:

![A political map of Arunachal Pradesh](image)
1.2 INTRODUCING THE TAI-KHAMTIS: THE DIASPORA OF TAI-KHAMTIS IN LOHIT DISTRICT

A humble expression on the Tai-Khamti society as I saw them:

*Extensive land and swift rivers penetrating their space,*

*Smoky huts and smell of their food and opium fills the air;*

*Colourful dresses and well decorated stupas and temples treat the eye;*

*Fresh food and robust people, such a life-world that still survives.*

Verrier Elwin writes, 'the Khamtis are today a quite, industrious and progressive people of Shan or Tai stock who migrated from the Bor-Khamti country near the source of the Irrawaddy about 200 years ago' (Elwin 1970). The Tai-Khamtis belong to the great Shan race and migrated to Assam only in the second half of the 18th century. The word Khamti means a 'land full of gold'. The crust of the migration lies in the destruction of the Shan empire of Pong by King of Burma, Alompara. The Shan Empire of Pong was quite illustrious and it had amassed the regions and provinces of Tipperah, Yunnan and Siam with its capital as Mogang and Mongmarong as called by the Burmese and the Shans respectively (Neog 1969). The Shans are believed to have their homes to the west of China, and many oral records also points out to the similar direction. With reference to such a history and conflict among themselves groups of Shan immigrants began to migrate into Assam. Moreover they have also heard of the exploits of the Tai-Ahoms of Assam, who were ruling successfully in the region of Assam for few centuries. The first batch of Khamtis are recorded to have migrated from the Bor-Khamti region, which is also known as Mung-khamti-lang or Manche in Upper Burma, were allowed to settle north of Sadiya on the banks of Tengapani river at the behest of the Ahom authorities (Neog 1969; Dalton 1872). It is understood that there were seven principalities in the Bor-Khamti area, which were- Mung-yek, Long-nu, Lang-tu, Lung-king, Man-nau, Man-ci and Man-ce-khun (Gogoi 1971). It is also believed that the Khamtis and the Ahoms lived together in the thirteenth century in Mung-kong and after the Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra Valley, the Khamti also moved northward and established their kingdom namely khamti-long. A reliable Ahom chronicle also suggests that the founder of Ahom Kingdom Sukapha also lived in the Khamti areas (Gogoi 1971). The second version of the history of the Khamtis says that there was a king named Chao-Cham-Lungking-Kham in the area of lung-king and they maintained a matrimonial relationship with the king of Mung-kong. The king of Lung-king had two sons and the eldest son killed his father to capture power. Sensing insecurity the youngest son, Chao-ngi-Lungking-Kham migrated with two thousand Khamti followers to the present Tirap district. They initially resided in Khamong which is located to the southern side of the Patkai Range, which was believed to be eight days of walk from the Bor-Khamti area (ibid).

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3 The Tai is a generic name given to the great bunch of Mongoloid population of Asia. They are mostly concentrated in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The present habitat of the Tai extends from Assam in the West to Guangxi and Hainan in the east and from interior of Yunnan in the north to Thiland in the south.
However the Khamti *Chyatuie*(chronicle) records that the Khamtis left their original land Mao-pong in the fifteenth century A.D. But such a history has been difficult to trace due to the variations and frequency of migration of the Khamtis. During the civil war of Rajah Gaurinath Singha's time (A.D. 1780-1790), the Tai-Khamtis took over Sadiya and crowned one of their fellowman as 'Sadiya Khowa Gohain'. His status was also respected and accepted by the Ahoms and British administration later. Dalton states that 'in the 1839 A.D. the Khamtis rebelled against the latter government and having been expelled from Sadiya in the consequence, they for some years lived the life of the hunted, scattered on the frontiers, but were eventually allowed to settle somewhere in the vicinity of their old villages.'

I would also like to add a description that Neog provides following Shri Chenia Gohain. Neog (1969) describes in his account that the migration of the Khamtis happened towards the end of the 18th century and somewhat roughly in the year 1781 A.D. Before the initiation of the migration a king of Tai origin was ruling North Burma and had three nephews. They were Chau-ai, Chau-nge and Chau-cham who lived in Khamti-lang. Later Chau-cham came to be known as lung-keng and he ruled his own country with the existence of another strong tribe called Man-che-khum, but the latter never invaded lung-kengs area. But following his death the Man-che created havoc on his people, took away his wife took control of Khamti-lang. Meanwhile Chau-ai managed to pull off an escape along with his nephews and the image of Buddha which was a gift from the Burma King (ibid). Neog also claims that the image of Buddha can still be seen in the Mikir hills. In the process of escape Chau-ai crossed the Patkai range to Assam, the same path the Ahoms followed. On the way they confronted the Bisa chief and many other obstacles but they somehow managed to confront them and move on to Sadiya and then to Matak country, a group formation which ruled Sadiya for a long time. The Khamtis defeated the Mataks too and made their advancement into the Ahom territory under the leadership of their chief Chau-hu-kap-kham and commander in chief Chau-hu-kep-nge-kham and successfully dethroned the Sadiya Khowa Gohain. Though the Sadiya Khowa Gohain of the Khamtis was recognised by both the British and the Ahoms they at the same time faced serious opposition from the Mataks and the Bisa chief for many years. Given such a historicity Neog very importantly notes that - 'all this tended to make the Khamti a warlike race all the time, and their ferocity with the enemy hid from people all around the message of kindness of the All-enlightened which they held dear to their hearts (ibid).'

### 1.2.1 Buddhism and culture among Khamtis

History of Burma suggests that 16th and 17th century was a disturbed time both in terms of politics and religion. The rules of discipline as set forth by Buddha raged in the country in the 18th century (Neog 1969). The Khamtis still maintain contact of Burma in terms of religious necessities like getting paints for the temples and also 'to refresh their knowledge of their faith'. Religion has played a great role in binding the Khamti society together and I believe has been quite instrumental in having their lived memory intact of their cultural specificities. This also becomes important given the history of
migration and conflict they came across since the mid 17th century. Religion guides their worldview in many ways as it acts as an institution to institute all the cultural and economic acts of the society. The Khamtis follow Theravada Buddhism and has a vihara or temple which will be the most prominent structure of the village. Most of the temples in the present times are neatly made with the uniqueness which defines the Buddhist temple architecture.

There are several other festivals among the Khamtis, of which the major ones are the birthday of Gautama and his death anniversary. Dalton observes: 'at these ceremonies boys dressed up as girls go through posture dance, for which I believe, Burmese woman are celebrated, and at the anniversary of the saint's death the postures are supposed to be expressive of frantic grief; but a distinct commemoration of the birth, a lively representation of an accouchement is acted. One of the boy-girls is put to bed and waited on by others. Presently something like the infantile cries are heard, and from beneath the dress of the invalid a young puppy dog is produced squeaking, and carried away and bathed, and treated like a new-born baby (Dalton 1872). Sankyen is another important festival of the Khamtis which is almost same like the Bihu of the Assamese, and it is also celebrated around the same time of April towards the end of second week. It is observed that their society is highly stratified into different groups or classes, derived from the social and economic status one holds. For instance the Chief or Chow-fa occupies the highest of regards in the society followed by the priests or monks. There can be no denial that there has been erosion of power in this social hierarchy but still it holds considerable significance in the Tai-Khamti society.

Among the Tai, Loka-samukthi and Thammasat are useful text to reflect on the sociological conditions of the Tai. Loka-samukthi contains ninety-nine different sections of rules which gives reference to disposal of the dead in accordance to the nature of death and is preserved in the vihara of Bar-Khamti village. It also provides reference to the Sankyen festival of the Shan Buddhist of Assam (Neog 1969). On the other hand the Thammasat is a book of judicial rules and has been preserved by the Gohain family as they are the ones who put them into practice. The book lays down different crimes and different provisions for evidence analysis and how to adopt penal measures (ibid).
1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Statement of Problem
The Khamtis have been living in the Lohit district for quite sometime and have created certain social, cultural and economic niches in that space. The lived experiences are hence not only a product of their experiences and geography of the space but also of their lineages to the Tai Family, which could be best explored through its irrigated wet-rice cultivation practices. Wet rice constitutes the nucleus of the family and the society in the Tai family, hence any changes in the practices of the rice cultivation is certain to leave a mark on the existing social order. The category of migrant labour will be interesting to explore on several grounds. Firstly, with the migration of the labour the agricultural practices is getting extended and in a sense moving away from the irrigation and river systems and hence making it largely rainfed. Hence there is visible impact on its productivity. Secondly, since the land relations are bound to observe winds of change, it will potentially impact or bring about division of labour in the society. This will happen as the availability of labour from the plains will lessen the work of the female members in the family and hence making them more close to household activities. This is contrasting as against what is generally seen in a Tai family system where there no fixed division of labour being marked out. Thirdly, since irrigated wet rice practices brought the society close, the movement agriculture moves away from such a practice, induced by the other, it may lead to breakdown of solidarity in the society. This can be an explanation of the present claims or notions of property among the Khamtis.

1.3.2 Rational of Study:

The research has broadly two outlines of rational. Firstly, societies keep on transiting due to various categories and factors and hence it is important to look at the shifts and changes. I am deeply committed in contributing to the ‘absence’ of social history of the region of North-East India, as it suffers from unacceptability of its oral history due to its embeddedness in oral traditions and mnemonic space. I believe it is high time that one addresses to the absence of ethnography of social history and re-articulate ethno-philosophy of the region and thus contribute to the whole-scale re-definition of the Indian state and its relation to South-East Asia. It is a crucial endeavour in itself as the space of North-East presents a mosaic of cultures more closely associated to the region of South-East Asia than mainland India. Such cultural existence needs an understanding beyond the existing discourse. Secondly, the discourses that arises after the negotiation (mostly forceful) of cultural differences in the imagined nationness and through the process of cultural difference has led to the production of multiple minorities. India's North-East exhibits such a space where the difference is read and perceived as a 'pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition (Bhabha 2004: 3)'. Hence the philosophy of this research is to knit together these two rational taking reference of the Khamtis of
Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh and to provide with a perspective which exhibits a performative history rather than an imagined one.

1.3.3 Objectives
The objective of the research has been to assert the importance of irrigated wet rice cultivation as a backbone of cooperation and solidarity in the Khamti society. In a economic sense a common property resource is socially rational practice arising performatively which leads to creation of a cohesive social order. The notion of lived experiences of the lineages to the Tai family has to be explored along with the assertion of the fact that irrigation has not not only being a product of memory and need but also of convenient geography(this inference has been drawn as the same Khamti people's ancestors did not practice irrigated wet rice cultivation when they were in Sadiya but did in Arunachal ).

1.3.4 Area of Study and Population of Study
The broader area under consideration is primarily the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. The community development blocks of Namsai and Chowkham were the specific area identified for the location of the study. These two blocks were selected because it is precisely in this blocks of the district of Lohit that the Khamtis reside. For the purpose of data collection the villages that were selected of Namsai and Chowkham areas were Kherem, Impong, Momong, Nalong, Manmao and Chowkham town. These areas were specifically selected because these were the original settlements of the Khamtis near the river Tengapani after they migrated from Sadiya and they still practice irrigated wet-rice cultivation as well as there has been spillover of non-irrigated cultivations are prevalent. Kherem and Impong also had the largest irrigation systems and are also quite old.

1.3.5 Research Design and data collection
The researcher chose a ethnographic study and secondary data review to collect information of the subject at hand. We need to be willing to let the field alter our theoretical standpoints hence I believe that ethnography as a philosophy will be a good means to know the world contribute to production and representation of knowledge. The study also followed up with participant observation and also use of open ended questionare schedule to collect information from the people about their history, culture and economy.

The selection of respondents were at three levels, which are, community specific, village specific and government officials and offices. The community specific respondents included the prominent people in the Khamti society of both Namsai and Chowkhkam. In Namsai I met C J Manpong who is closely associated with the cultural activities of the Block and is also an forest officer at Namsai. Through I came to know about the prominent people in the society like C K Manpong who happens to be an Ex-MLA and the first graduate of Arunachal. He was of great use in identifying more people and also to
learn about substantial part of Khamti history, culture and their transition. I also interacted a lot with regard to agriculture and culture with Thanen Mansai and Sujanta Mansai. Both of them are closely related with the development of Khamti and Singpho museum in Chowkham and Khamti culture in general. They were of immense help in understanding the dynamics of transition and preservation of their culture. I also met the village headman of the villages of Impong, Kherem, Nalong and Momong. They could give exact references to land holdings and distribution and in the process also learned about their irrigation science.

The village specific respondents included the interacting with villagers who had large holdings of lands to migrant labourers. Households were selected on the basis of the information provided by the village headman. In most cases it was seen that most of the villages were extended family and hence was a very cohesive unit. Data about their culture were conducted through detailed informal interactions and participant observation with the villagers at different points of time of my stay with them.

The government officials and offices were really kind and helpful in providing me with information regarding agricultural practice. The places I reached out for were the Farmers Training Centre in Kherem, the District Agriculture Office in Tezu, the Statistical Department in Tezu and the District Research Office and District library of Tezu.

To conclude, the data collection of secondary data was first verbal and than physical and most of the data regarding their culture and history were oral literature which were collected through detailed interview and participant observation. The research design can be diagrammatically shown as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Respondents</td>
<td>Community specific (prominent people in the society which included village headman/chief, people associated with institutions like museums for Khamtis, political leaders etc)</td>
<td>They represent the visible, thoughtful, knowledgeable group of people in the society and in the world of changing political and cultural order, not to forget the invasion of the state, their say holds considerable significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village Specifically (this included households of different villages and migrant labourers)</td>
<td>the households were selected on the basis of information provided by the village headman and their association with agriculture. They were also selected on the basis of the land holding information provided by the village headman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Government Officials/ Offices**  
(Farmers Training Centre, District Agriculture Office, District Research Office, District Statistical Office, District Library)

and a sample was arrived at by mixing the different area under hold. The area under each household was not that divergent so a sample was made on the basis of area and extent of the irrigation systems. They were the primary sources of secondary data.

**Location of Study**  
District, CD Block and Villages(Kherem, Impong, Momong, Nalong, Manmao and Chowkham town.)

The two blocks are those where the Khamtis reside. These were the main contact villages for my data collection because they were the primary settlements of the Khamtis on the banks of the river Tengapani. Moreover this region exhibits a both irrigated and non-irrigated cultivation.

**Data Collection**  
Secondary and primary

They were done verbally and physically. Substantial existence of oral literature made it necessary to conduct detailed open ended interviews and also participant observation.

### 1.3.6 Limitation of the Study

The study is limited only to the Khamtis of Lohit district and should not be used as a generic terms of reference for the 'Khamtis'.
1.4 POLITICAL SPACE, HISTORIOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL APPARATUS OF INDIA'S NORTH-EAST VIS-A-VI THE INDIAN STATE

1.4.1 Theoretical Observations

India’s North-East is ‘doubly displaced’ in terms of its political space and its culture, and the ‘developmental ensemble’ break the exclusivity of the region and is a product of mainstreaming (Biswas 2012). This raises the question related to the existing discourse that is it not appropriate and even needful to identify the region of North-East that doesn’t fit in to the mainstreaming. As a space in comparison to the mainstream it preserves a sense of sovereign and sovereignty-free simultaneously.

The diasporic homelands of North-East are not only a cluster of non-state entities and a discourse and ethnography on them are not lived through the discourse of ‘reading’ or ‘seeing’ like a state (ibid). Historiographies of the people living in the highlands are also possible from the accounts of lived experiences, migration and memory and they are also located in the unknown and the unmapped.

There is also a great deal of ambiguity of the migration history of much group formation of North-East and especially Arunachal, which also leads us to the ambiguity of their settled history in the present. Two objective theoretical frameworks that have surfaced the literature on history of migration are that of James Scott and Richard O’Connor. Scott proposes a theory of non-state spaces which rests on these three major findings. They are: a) that people living in the areas of Zomia have come to live in those spaces in order to escape slavery or due to various problems faced in their earlier areas of settlement like famine. And hence they decided to find new places and also at the same time run away from the states b) these group of people mainly practiced slash and burn cultivation and also lot of root cropping which were politically chosen so that the state cannot take them away that easily, and c) they all have a tradition of oral history. The first and second finding will fail to stand its ground if we put them into the historicity of the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and the kind of dynamics that existed between the highland and the plains. The existence of slavery in Arunachal in a point of history complicates his theoretical premise. Verier Elwin states that they were captured in the war. They were purchased. They were used to repay the debt. Many were born slaves. Sometimes a man becomes a slave because he has committed a serious offense against the community and could not afford the fine demanded (Elwin ). The analysis of Scott does appear logical in many circumstances but it suffers from pragmatic inconsistency if we try to objectify the notion of Zomia. In Scott's words:

Zomia is a new name for virtually all the lands at altitudes above roughly three hundred meters all the way from the Central Highlands of Vietnam to north-eastern India and traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China. It is an expanse of 2.5 million square kilometres containing about one hundred million peoples at the
periphery of nine states virtually everything about these peoples livelihoods, social organization, ideologies, and even their largely oral cultures, can be read as strategic positioning designed to keep the state at arm’s Length to avoid incorporation into states and to prevent states from springing up among them.

As against the discourse drawn by Scott, O’Connor speaks of ethnic succession in its relation or role of agro-cultural complexes and the interaction of lowlands and highlands and their related agricultural practices of flow management and flood management. Within the ambit of differences of agricultural practices the migration history can be traced and also the lineages to family. The closure of later migrants can also be seen as by-product of migration itself and the complexes that the societies of South-East Asia produce in terms of its historicity. These two points of view goes beyond the local knowledge of the subjects and systematizes the empirical details and gives us standpoints to look at the relationships between subjects and power and agents and structure. The Zomias of Scott also falls under the categorization of O’Connor in terms of agricultural and cultural practices such as home-gardening and wet rice niches. The lowlanders migrate from lowlands to highlands but transited their practice of wet rice cultivation from flood management to flow management. O’Connor explains this transition in the following way:

Now let us map peoples and contrast, say, 700 A.D. and 1700 A.D. In the early era Pyu, Mon, Khmer, and Cham rule the mainland, while to their north are Burmese, Tai, and Vietnamese. Ten centuries later the northerners dominate everywhere. In irrigable niches the southerners are gone (Pyu) or in decline (Cham), and their remaining strength is in the unirrigable lower deltas where Mon and Khmer flood farmers live in states under northern overlords. Juxtaposing these two eras reveals an epochal change. The date, pace, and completeness of the change vary but not the larger fact of a succession.

The journey of the 'grain producing communities' is never complete as they keep on copying and adapting from plains to hills and hills to plains in terms of their religious beliefs and rites of passages in close relation to fields, water, mountains and spiritual well-beings (Scott, 2009: 9-10,23). Moreover there is a need to look at the nation state in terms of its logic of territoriability as to how do they perceive and posit the group formations that have a fuzzy history of migration of their life-worlds (Biswas 2012). Such subversion is more metaphysical and ideological as it is directed at producing, appropriating and making the communitarian group formations and their identities a part of the narrative of the larger popular identity of the Indian nation-state (ibid). Such politics is problematic and it produces politics of violence and contestations within the ethnic and with the nation-state. The discourse draw by Scott and van Schendel of 'borderless territories’ as against Graham Chapman's idea of 'resource owning and resource sharing deterritorialized identities' (Chaplan 2009)suffers from a narrow vision of the communities as well as the nation-state. However one of the principal focus of our generation and of the historicity of these regions should be to look at the processes of nationalistic
appropriation of these group formations and identities who inhabit the frontiers or borders and on the fringes of the nation (Biswas 2012). Within this ambit we also have to look at the travel and flight of identities across time and space, be it ‘national boundary’ or of ‘internal boundaries between communities’ which remains ‘non-negotiable in mutual encounters’. Hence there is a greater need to draw our attention towards indignity, migrancy and situated belonging of different group formations. Within this ambit we need to throw some light to the literature that is available on the local histories of the Himalayas. Understanding the localized ‘indigenous’ history making becomes necessary in understanding the history of the highlands like Arunachal and also to theorize the social. The main focus should be to construct pastness as a ethnographic phenomenon and in the broadest sense history should be seen as a cultural representation and imagining of the past and remembering the past (Gaenszle 2003:8). Local histories can be constructed through oral accounts which can be broadly divided into: legends or oral histories (Blackburn, Schmidt), folk narratives or myths (Sutherland, Schlemmer, and Berg), also written discourse (Schlemmer) and official texts (Steinmann). Transmission of history can be observed at multiple levels where narration forms the dominant discourse but other forms like beads (Blackburn), images (Schlemmer) and/or ritual performances (Sutherland, Schlemmer, Steinmann, Berg). We have arrived at a point of history where both the past and the present have become increasingly important. Hence both the questions becomes important, i.e. how does the past leads to the present and also how does the present create the past (Chapman 1989:1). The dissertation seeks to answer the second question in broad detail, taking the example of the Khamtis of Lohit district in its spatio-cultural-lived-experiences-and-memory. Their life-worlds as a product of their strong memory and a history of migration and related adaptation or in O'Connor's word 'succession' of a kind.

L.P. Hartley in one of his novels concedes that ‘the past is a foreign country: they do things differently there. This is the precise element of history of people as they try to produce in the present what is not done in the past as the work of memory and process of construction is never finished (Gaenszle 2003:9). Gaenszle writes:

In recent years we have seen a return of the local as a counterpoint to the global, but what exactly this “local” means is rather indefinite and dependent on context (Harneit-Sievers 2002: 12-17). Often, it is more or less circumscribed by ethnic attributes, and of course, anthropologists have always been experts on this kind of small-scale social unit. But today neither the local nor “the ethnic” are necessarily constituted as territorial spaces: both can have a distributed (diasporic) and virtual existence, e.g. through print or electronic media (see Schlemmer). Locality is not simply there, it is constantly “produced” (Appadurai) through forms of communication, ordinary discourse, ritual action, and the imagination. The spatio-temporal production of locality is a complex affair: it is not only the conceptual demarcation of a life-world, a space and its history, but a “structure
of feeling”, i.e. it implies an emotional tie and thus affects experience. The production of locality have certainly grappled its pace in its post-colonial discourse but the problem is subsumed in the larger discourse of ‘mainstreaming’ which devalues and make the production of locality meaningless entity. The modern nation state, exerting its homogenizing force, leaves little room for distinct local identities, and hence in the Himalayas demands for political and cultural autonomy have been voiced that are reminiscent of earlier nascent nationalisms worldwide (Gaenszle 2003:13).

The origin of the tribes in Arunachal is placed under the ambit of two hypothesis. They are the ‘Tibetian’ and the ‘Burma/China’ hypothesis. With regard to the Khamtis there is no ambiguity that they migrated from the nearby areas of Irrawaddy River, so they fall under the later hypothesis. There linkages to the Tai family give strong references to the second hypothesis. Mary Helms observes that ‘distant places, events and people and the objects associated with them are vested with authority, authenticity and power’ and with reference to the Khamtis wet-rice niches and irrigation forms such a premise of ‘authority, authenticity and power’ (Helms 1993:96). It is also true that the ‘legends which describe long journeys, genealogies and shared ancestry, are not publicly performed’ (Blackburn 2003:40), but they express in many ways and are located in their religious practices and the agro-cultural complexes which is a product of lived-experiences and memory. Such practices and memory leads to meaning making which is quite within the circumferences of the Tai tradition and they exhibit the cultural linkages which is preserved even with migration and is not stored quietly unlike the central Arunachali tribes, as Blackburn observes (Blackburn 2002:40).

1.4.2 Irrigation as a common property resource

A common pool of resource or common property resource is a type of good consisting of a natural or man-made resource systems (e.g. an irrigation system or fishing grounds), whose size or characteristics makes it costly, but not impossible, to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use. Unlike pure public goods, common pool resources face problems of congestion or overuse, because they are subtractable. A common-pool resources (e.g. Water or fish), which defines the stock variable, while providing a limited quality of extractable fringe units, which defines the flow variable. While the core resources is to be protected or entertained in order to allow for its continuous exploitations, the fringe units can be harvested or consumed (Ostrom 1990). These features of CPRs demands heterogynous types of institutions to govern them. One institutional mechanism used to govern a CPR may not work in other setup. This is due to: a) appropriations in CPR situations face a variety of appropriation and provision difficulties due to the spatio-structural differences, also depending on the values of underlying parameters b) appropriations must switch back and forth across arenas and levels of analysis (Ostrom 1990: 44). The institutional frameworks needed to provide
different kind of goods are discussed as under.

Two types of goods that should be brought to the discussion with regard to the institutional arrangements are public goods and common property resources. Samuelson was the first economist to bring in the notion of public goods into the discipline of economics by highlighting one of the important characteristics of consumption in terms of its 'jointness'. On later period it was Musgrave who brought the most popular and distinctive characteristic of public goods in terms of its 'non-excludability'. Oslow in 1965 forwarded the Musgravian understanding to develop it into a collective action problem and hence the sphere of problem in public goods is a subset of larger problems of collective action. As aforesaid that the collective action problems where the consumption by one person does not reduce the amount available to others. On the other hand, this is not so with regard to common-pool resources or common property resources as consumption on one reduces or affects the consumption of others in terms of its availability. Although Ostrom held the view that non-excludability as a straight character of every public good recent theoretical work has understood that the capacity to exclude potential beneficiaries depends both on the technology of physical exclusion devices and the existence and enforcement of various bundles of property rights. Thus people facing collective action problems have invented newer forms of institutional mechanisms to overcome non-excludability. The main variable in determining the differences between various collective action problems is the cost of difficulty in devising physical or institutional means to exclude others (Ostrom 1990). These costs are largely influenced by biophysical world itself. It is difficult to exclude non-contributors from global commons but easier in the case of a much more closed environment. Contemporary researches in the institutional setup have confirmed that a single theoretical lens is not sufficient in looking or analysing the multilevel complexity of maintaining and provisioning these resources. This is due to the uncertainty that a particular institution will work best at a given condition. Olson himself classified the public goods in to exclusive and inclusive public goods. In an exclusive public goods system the members in a group will try to keep the size of their group as small as possible. This is to restrict the number of people who use the resource as the action of one non-participant individual can take away all the benefits of action of others. People derive this institutional setting due to subtractibility of certain resources. On the other hand in an inclusive public good members try to increase the number of people in the group. The more members there are in an inclusive group, the more individuals there will be who will share the cost of providing a good to all beneficiaries. Pure public goods can be seen as an example for exclusive good. Viewed from this spectrum it is easy to see that public goods and common property resource are not merely different in theory but they have large impact how individuals behave in different circumstances. In case of public good the non-cooperative behaviour of an individual do not have much of an impact on its provisioning. In many cases individuals do escape from contributing for providing a public good and still enjoy its
benefits. In the case of common pool resource individuals non-cooperative behaviour can have large impact on its outcome. This is why different institutional setting is required to provide common pool resource and public good. A slight difference in the pattern of good can impact behaviour of individuals and desired institutional framework for maintaining and providing them. For example much of decision regarding attributes which will influence the outcome in common pool resource can explain using production function and appropriation function.

When individuals feel that they are critical achievement of collective good the scenario becomes a coordinated situation. One of the important factors which influence the distribution of benefit is the allocation of property rights. Property rights can be distributed in different ways such as based on value of asset holding, seniority etc. Different property right regimes have both different advantages and disadvantages. A property right is an enforceable authority to undertake particular actions in a specific domain (Commons, 1968). There are many kinds of property rights that are seen in common pool resource settings.
Chapter 2
TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF KHAMTI SOCIETY

2.1 THE BACKGROUND OF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ORTH-EAST

'The idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history (Raymond Williams 1980).’ The social, cultural and natural histories of any society have a very close relationship with each other; they co-exist and co-produce each other. The moment we try to separate those categories while attempting to understand their 'becoming' we invariably produces lacunae in the genealogy of their historicity. The absence of adequate and acceptable history of and for the 'known' people have left a great void in presented and presenting historiography of India's North-East in an ethical apparatus for the 'below'. The Other have accumulated their distorted understandings and feelings, and such an understanding gets reflected in anything directed at the region and perceived of the region, for instance the lenses of Indian nationalist discourse. Such a discourse is problematic if we put it against the various ethno-nationalisms that emerged from India's North-East, also not to disregard the history of struggles and claims in the colonial times. However, this discussion tries to locate the cultural, social and natural history of India's North-East from where the various communities and group formations evolved in their earlier lived spaces and how their present historiography reflects a relational space. Hence it argues for a regional ontological understanding of time and space through the colonial and post-colonial discourse. These communities of India's North-East have a close association with South-East Asia and not India in particular, in terms of producing social, cultural and natural history of its kind. Hence, an attempt is made through the 'lived' and 'mnemonic space' of the Tai-Khamti society of the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh, in understanding their social, cultural, economic and political boundaries which have a bearing on their life-worlds.

There is self-ignorance and there is also produced ignorance. The first being due to the change in their psyche (induced by multiple constructs)\(^4\) and second is the product of power (both distributive and collective)\(^5\), self-determination and ignorance of the 'other'. Oral history is a very important discourse, agent and base of many knowledge systems among different sections of people across the globe. They may be minority in real terms but nevertheless there have been and are the people who share such a historicity of lived experiences. Hence, there are certain social, cultural and natural niches that are being produced which tune in with the socio-economic, political-economy and ecology of

\(^4\) In the context of India's North-East the impositions of imaginations, for instance the nationalist discourse and the likes.

\(^5\) Giovanni Arrighi’s concepts of distributive and collective power.
that space. Such specificities mould the metaphysics of their lived spaces which constitutes their life worlds. One such space is the 'non-state space' as James Scott profoundly calls it. The idea of 'non-state space' is not without contradictions in terms of its objective reality across the spaces of 'Zomia'. But nevertheless, it gives useful insight in understanding certain groups of people who inhabit in 'non-state spaces'. One of the fundamental categories of the people inhabiting 'non-state spaces' is their oral history. This practice is embedded in their culture. The oral history has the power of democratising, as Bipan Chandra points out. It certainly did within the society where it is located, but the conceptualizations of such narratives located in the oral, are often undermined. Here one can refer to the oral tradition of Dalipuran which preserved the narratives of Pathrughat in colonial Assam. Such an understanding is often justified in the absence of 'written history'. However, the drought of 'written' should not be the category to define and infer the notion of 'inferiority'. Hence there is a urgent need to locate, understand and deconstruct the existing social, cultural and natural understanding of history and arrive at writing what I would call 'relativised space post-subaltern historiography'. The imagination of the 'known' category should be interdisciplinary and anti-essential in nature.

Change and transition are inevitable, but we have to dig deep into such a phenomenon. For instance, what are the agents of change? What are the causes for transition? Is it due to someone's ignorance? What are the circumstances under which transitions can take place? The idea of North-East renders spontaneously the conduct and synthesis of hardships in the colonial and post-colonial times. The North-East has been a space of demographic transition, given the peculiar dynamics of labour, but mostly due to the conduct of the colonial state and the nature of Indian independence. The frontier and post-frontier spaces of India’s North-East have observed a dominant generalised discourse among many people out of that space, and has found sufficient reflections even in policies directed towards that region pushing for an ‘epistemic violence’ and 'explosion of bodies' resulting into/from 'sustained low ethnic conflicts'. On a Scottian premise we can possibly argue that the transformation of 'non-state spaces' into ‘state controlled spaces' (Baruah 2007)) through legal, extra judicial and developmental categories and agents paint the canvas of many ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts of India's North-East.

Many communities in India's North-East did and still belong to the theorization of the ‘world of the third' which essentially means that they remain outside the circuit of global capital (Chakraborty, Dhar 2009). Given such a discourse and a drought of history of the North-East in general, it becomes increasingly important to look at the social history and to locate the social, cultural and natural history and to observe very carefully the transitions that the different societies underwent due to the

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6The word ‘Zomia’ used in the conference title, refers to the mountainous regions of the Himalayas and lower ranges that run from the Central Highlands of Vietnam through most of Laos, southwest China, northern Thailand, northern Burma, and into India’s North-East. It was originally coined by Van Schendel and is derived from ‘zo’ which refers to a hill in some dialects along the Burma-India Bangladesh border (Scott 2009: 14).
interactions with the 'other'\textsuperscript{7}. Such an attempt will be justified if we locate their social history through the phenomenological understandings of their life-worlds and also their level of interactions with other societies and the state.

2.2 THE TAI CONNECTIONS AND AGRO-CULTURAL COMPLEXES

The Tai-Khamti society becomes interesting because it is undergoing a probable transitory phase through the belonging of the other\textsuperscript{8}. The first category which is critical to this society is of its spatial location of the people and secondly of the culture that they have invariably preserved throughout history, be it language, religion, social structure and so on, as against Ahoms who were also of the Tai family. The practice of agriculture holds a very prominent place within the Tai-Khamtis society and they have been traditionally practicing wet rice cultivation. O'Connor observes that the wet rice cultivation first appeared along the Red River Vietnam, then in Burma, and finally in the intervening Tai areas. He states: arguably these are independent cases scattered on a 600 mile arc broken up by steep mountains, ethnic boundaries and dry-field peoples, but then all that appears on rivers whose headwaters converge in Yunnan. If the three are connected the link is Tai (O'Connor 1995). Irrigation is arranged by the society by tapping water from the river systems. The irrigation system is indeed progressive. It is done communally by making channels from the river systems. They also produce electricity and husk rice through the irrigation system, a wonderful narrative of their innovatation and progression of their race. These people break the stereotype of the perceived reality that people in the hilly areas practice only shifting cultivation, or most commonly known jhum cultivation. In fact the Khamti people practice permanent cultivation and without any direct dependence over rainfall. Such a practice has a history. The Burmese, Tai, Vietnamese have something in common and it goes on to define their status and identity, which is their practice of wet rice cultivation (Aung-Thwin 1990). Tai people have a very close association with wet rice cultivation and their language suggests the Tai began as wet rice specialists (Chamberlin 1986, 6), despite of their movements across different places the common denominator remains to be wet rice (O'Connor 1995). This makes their family and society a cohesive unit as the solidarity within society and family is required to carry out such agricultural practices rooted in flow management. This is apparent in case of the Tai-Khamtis of Lohit district. Question arises why are the Tai skilled irrigators? Do they perform irrigated agriculture only when it becomes necessary? Why did the Khamtis not perform similar pattern of agriculture when they inhabited Sadiya? Why was there a sudden shift to irrigated wet rice cultivation? How do memory, lived experiences and necessity correspond to each other under such circumstance? It is because they

\textsuperscript{7} The other is defined here mostly in the post-colonial context in terms of other communities, the traditional order, the plainsmen’s changing dynamics towards the highland and the other highland communities within Arunachal and their greater association to their respective families like Tai, Mon-Khmer and so on, if any.

\textsuperscript{8} The term belonging of the other has its historicity and is used to imply the changes brought about by the migrant labourers and farmers who have been changing the ways of cultivation with the consent of the Khamti society.
configured their culture to fit into difficult mountain valleys and topography which contained fast water bodies (ibid). Is it just to adjust to the topography as O'Connor points out or is there a philosophy beyond such a existence and practice? For the Tai the link to stream watered mountain valleys is ancient and unambiguous (ibid). It is said that wet rice households cooperate in principle but compete out of pragmatism and their predecessors did just the opposite (ibid). Among the Tai people it is seen that Lao (Taillard 1972), Yunnan (Bruneau, 1968; Potter 1976, 81-102) and Lii (Chen 1949, 41-42; Moerman 1968, 50-51) the management of the local irrigation systems is done under the supervision of their leaders and there is solidarity among the different households and villages. For instance people in Tai-Khamti society have the culture of extending help to the needy household, say in the form of giving some rice in times of need. The favour is not seen as a superior act but rather as an obligation and the receiver ideally returns the favour. Irrigation thus sets the discourse of the Tai-Khamti society as a roughly egalitarian and interdependent set of households (O’Connor 1995). This is also proven by the fact that there is no rigid division of labour in their society. The Tai-Khamtis, like the Tai family, are into irrigated systems, where they tap water from water bodies to their fields. Hence they are into 'flow management rather than 'flood management'. It is seen that the Mon and Khmer manage floods whereas the Tai, Vietnamese and Burmese manage flows; Pyu and Cham mix the two. In South East Asia agriculture constitutes a very significant part of their life-world cosmology. O'Connor states that all these societies arise performatively (O'Connor 1995; Sahlins 1985, 26-31); farmers technical practice easily become ritual acts (Condominas 1986) that constitute a moral stance (Hamks 1964) and define ethnic identity (Leach 1965, 29-41). For the Tai-Khamtis, agriculture has many linkages to their life-worlds. It is more than subsistence. The property rights distribution is closely related to the way of cultivation. Certain specific categories are to be closely examined in detail keeping in mind the specificity of a community and then locating into the broader association to the Tai and the ideas of lived spaces.

2.2.1 The Tai-Khamtis in the lived spaces of Lohit district

We should throw light into the practice of agriculture and the agro-cultural complexes in order to understand the philosophy of their life-worlds. Given the feasibility of the landscape, the Khamtis prefer irrigated agricultural practices. This is very apparent if we compare the different groups of Tai-Khamtis that have settled in different parts of Assam and Arunachal due to their encounter with the Britishers. For instance, the Tai-Khamti of Arunachal is into irrigated wet rice cultivation whereas the Tai-Khamti of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh are into rainfed wet rice cultivation. In case of the absence of suitable river systems they look for deep marshy land where water can be retained for a longer time. Water harvesting is also an old traditional practice of the Tai family and so it is with the Tai-Khamtis.

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9 It is a term used by Richard O'Connor to explain the close relationship between agriculture and culture in Southeast Asian agriculture. A complex also implies a sudden break with the past.
The idea of 'pond' or 'pukhuri' is a wonderful practice of fishery and water harvesting. Cultural complexes are very closely related to agricultural practices in the eastern societies (O'Connor 1995). The first plough is very important for the Tai-Khamti. According to them some days are not good to start ploughing their land, so an ideal day of 'Nao-nin' is sought after. If someone runs out of resources to start ploughing on a large scale they just initiate the process by cutting a small portion of the earth. Once the process is initiated on the good day it can be ploughed anytime. In the month of June-July the rice is sown in a small portion of land. The actual land for cultivating the rice is ploughed in the month of May, June and July. The soil is left to decompose for a long time, till the month of August. Due to the decomposition a foul smell appears. In their folklore it is said that the foul smell indicates a very right time for them to cultivate. The soil is ploughed thrice along with 'bindha' or levelling done equal number of times. In earlier times ploughing was done with buffalos and later bulls and elephants. Off late mechanization has come in, hence tractors are also used. The idea of bindha is for the equitable distribution of the water across the field. One more bindha is done in the month of August and finally the rice is cultivated. The rice that is transplanted from the nursery is planted after cutting the top part of the plant so that the roots don't shake due to the blowing wind. After the cultivation process is completed the water is taken out of the field in order to make space for the rice plants to get a good hold of the mud. This continues for a week and after a week the field is again irrigated. What this does is that it restricts the growth of other unnecessary plants and they die after certain point of time due to excess water. After twenty five days of the second irrigation, the field is again dried for a week and the cleaning is done. Water is again let in after a week and it remains till the time of harvesting. Water is finally drained accordingly before the crops are harvested. A reason behind it is that it becomes easier to harvest and store the rice in the field.

It is to be kept in mind that this form of agriculture is done with the help of 'nom-phai' or irrigation system. In this irrigation system, the river system is trapped on the upstream and they follow the slope in order to retain the required current. Water is brought by blocking the main stream during winter and during summer there is no need of it as the water is present in sufficient volume. In this irrigation system there will be a main channel, and many small channels are carved out to water the fields. There exists a difference in temperature of the water as its distance increases from the main channel. It is observed that rice that grows in warm water is more productive but the rice that grows in cold water is of better quality. The Tai-Khamtis cultivate a very good quality of rice called the Khamti Lahi. It is small grain rice, which is sticky, sweet and pleasantly oily and odoured. Within the Khamti lahi there are different varieties. For instance Khaw Aan is the best of its kind and it harvests early; Khow Now is the stickiest of all and is also used for making liquor; Khaw Pakhi and Khaw Nامتیک are good for deep water cultivation.
2.2.2 The Tai-Khamti imaginations and their social, cultural and natural relations:

A historically observed phenomenon among the Tai is of an integrated village system; this is no exception to the Tai-Khamti. For Tai, village is a very dominant unit (Izihowitz 1985, 111), which also appears to be a distinct whole within a larger polity, in practice (Condominas 1980). But it is also an integral part of the society. This becomes clear in the conduct of marriage and religious practices in the Tai-Khamti society. For the Tai-Khamti, whole of the year is religious. For instance 'Borkha-bakh' or 'Mou-Wa' a religious conduct where the Tai-Khamti people and Bikhus accept the ‘Sheels’, and according to Buddhism it happens in the month of July-August. The general public accept five ‘Sheels’ and the Bikhus accept ten Sheels. The Mow-Wa starts on a full moon day and the Sheel is accepted thirteen times during the Mon-Wa period. While acceptance of the Sheel continues in the Mon-Wa period the Bikhus do not keep themselves away from the temple. Even if they have to go out they have to return to their respected temples by nightfall. At the end of the Mou-Wa, Poi- Putwa is observed. It is an occasion of farewell of Mon-Wa. This celebration has a rotation policy across villages and each village takes it as an honour to host and serve. For them religion is very essential and powerful. A belief goes that there are certain religious chants which can open any lock. It is observed that religion as a whole brings people together which in turn provides a space for interaction at a constant pace and the whole society gets involved through different religious festivals. Though the villages are divided into families there is a constant give and take and interaction among the families and villages, establishing themselves as independent but strongly embedded in equality and integrity.

Another festival that is very important for the Tai-Khamti is Poi-Sanken. This celebration marks the beginning of the new-year, a similar conduct like the Bihu celebrated by the Tai Ahoms in Assam. There is also a practice of 'nang-khon-khow' or 'lakhimi', which is to bring the first grain of rice to the house. It is done by a women and she observes silence while bringing the grain of paddy to the house from the field. A celebration of the new rice is also observed, where offering is made to the temple and the villagers. O'Connor writes:

The wat is a Tai creation. Joining monastery and shrine creates a social whole that is a community in itself and often the centre of a lay community. Thai custom makes the wat the moral, social and symbolic centre of a community and certainly farmers say a village needs a wat to be complete. Ethnographic reports generally confirm the functional and symbolic centrality of the wat, but exceptions exist and statistics collected by Jacques Nepote suggest complex regional variations in the actual wat/community relationship. Such variety testifies to localism but apparently everywhere the wat weaves Buddhism into local life (O'Connor 1993:331).

This is quite evident even in the case of the Khamtis that the monastery and the shrine creates a cohesion
in the society but unlike the serious conflict that is seen between the wats in case of say Thailand (ibid), here there seems to be a great deal of understanding among different villages and among the different people that were associated with different wats. For instance there seemed to be no animosity between villages like Momong, Nalong or Kherem in Chowkham where the Khamtis inhabit. The religious centres also become centres of law in societies like that of the khamtis and such legality flourishes on the 'ambiguity between cosmic, natural and positive law (O'Connor 1981). The notion of agro-cultural complexes with regard to Teravadda Buddhism is further explored my O'Connor in the following way and has the potential to give strong references for the Khamtis who used to inhabit near the Irrawaddy.

O'Connor states:

Within this Southeast Asian context each people and each era worked out its own legal systems, elaborating some Indian distinctions, abandoning others, and imposing new indigenous ones. Here the Mon played a pivotal role. Their wet rice homeland in the Chaophraya and Irrawaddy river basins was a center of Theravada Buddhism. Like the Buddha, the Mon stripped away the Brahmanical particularities of the Dharmasastras, leaving what Lingat (1950:14) has called "a perfect civil or lay code." Eventually the Mon succumbed to Burmese and Thai rule, but their legal code and style of Theravada Buddhism passed to their conquerors. The Burmese restored religious substructures to the legal code (Lingat 1950:18), while the Thai continued the separation so that cosmic law was the context, but not the content, of the ordinary law. Using the Mon-derived Thammasat (from Dharmasastras) as the natural law core of their legal code, the Thai appended the law like edicts and decisions of kings to create a system of positive law (O'Connor 1981:225).

2.3 TRANSITION AND BEYOND

In fact the Tai-Khamti society has been observing a transition in their agricultural practices. The Arunchali economy is historically deficient in labour. This is proved by the existence of slavery in the economy. Verier Elwin states that they were captured in the war. They were purchased. They were used to repay the debt. Many were born slaves. Sometimes a man becomes a slaves because he has committed a serious offence against the community and could not afford the fine demanded. The Arunachali economy is characterised by use of human labour power. Moreover the inputs used were very simple in nature and given the abundance of land the labour power played a significant role in the economic process. But slowly and steadily there has been labour migration into Arunachal. This phenomenon was welcomed by many tribes. They saw the possibility of extending their economic activities due to the increment to the labour force. The Tai-Khamti society is no exception to this. The migrant labours have started cultivating in their lands and simultaneously have been changing the dynamics of cultivation in the traditional order, a classic case of what I pointed out earlier as belonging of the other. The different forms of contract with the migrant labour are as follows:

a) all the expenses are borne by the cultivator (the migrant) and then the total produce is halved.

b) 'bhagi' – a system where the total land area will be arranged for cultivation by the migrant labour
and he will cultivate a part of the total land on his own and the other half will be cultivated by the owner of the land, and

c) lastly, the owners keep migrant labourers at their houses or fields for their uses as required.

Over here, the first two kinds of arrangements are important as they are directly engaged in the cultivation process. The impacts are visible in terms of the crop they cultivate, the ways of cultivating and in many places agriculture have become rain fed as it is moving away from the water system or/and the migrants do not have the knowledge to construct the traditional irrigation system. It has invariably impacted the productivity from the land and also changed the customary land relations. This form of transition on land, law and rights along with the emergence of an informal land market can have certain impacts on a tribal space like Arunachal Pradesh and also on the Khamtis. The area of concern is that of the migrated tenants who come into informal contract and have been investing in assets, despite existing insecure property rights (Baruah 2007). This behaviour can be attributed to the huge supply of land on the backdrop of limited supply of indigenous labour. This transition will be interesting to capture and its immediate impact on 'non-state spaces' through agricultural practice, communal land and customary laws. The agro-cultural complexes with the Mishmis and the migrant labourers have to be studied with specificity.

2.4 THE LAND ARRANGEMENT IN ARUNACHAL: COMMUNITY LAW AND DEVELOPMENT

The contest for territory has become increasingly important and problematic at the same time. The notion of territory was quite an issue with regard to the formation of the nation-state of India. Even with the powerful might of the different institutions of the state and the proclaimed distributive justice of an equitable and secular society there have been many claims and contestations on many areas of independent India. India's North-East is a hotbed of such claims which has observed many decades of uprisings from the above and below questioning the legitimacy of the Indian state on its notion of Sovereignty. The ethnic claims to self-determination have been profound in almost all the states of North-East, with Arunachal being the only exception. Few of the issues that have rocked the region are ethnic upsurge and claims for territory, floods, draconian laws like AFSPA, the Look East Policy and demographic transitions for decades. Each of these issues has been discussed by various scholars at length. However the production of the locality has always been a problem due to the nature of the Indian state, media and the perception of the region. This 'known' region has over the years become the centre of debate and interest of the Indian state. One would notice that there has been an invasion of the state and also state making way for private and international capital. There has been diverse course of actions unfolding in this part of India and they have to be studied specifically and also with the objective position of the Indian state. Prasenjit Biswas writes:
Colonial modernity created localised spaces of exclusion in the form of 'excluded area', 'partially excluded area' and 'inner line permit'. The Post-colonial Indian state has merged this colonial space of exclusion with the project of inclusion of its internal other as a part of a pathology of the dominant centre that simultaneously constituted conditions of suspension of sovereignty as well as conditioned the interminable biopolitical presence of the Indian state in an alien and hostile territory like North-East... The self image of various communities of the North-East is overdetermined by this biopolitics of the Postcolonial state, within which the agency of self-description undergoes a transformation (Biswas 2004).

The interest of the Indian state in the region of India's North-East was mainly due to security reasons and the potential of capital created by oil and tea in Assam. The postcolonial state in understanding of the region has sustained the policy of exclusion and in the process of trying to address the developmental gaps have managed to create confusion and conflict among the people from that region quite successfully. Also due to the construction of big dams in Arunachal as an extension of the Look East Policy the contestation for space have increased as many 'indigenous' tribes are subject to displacement and shrinking in there space which defines their group formations.

The importance of land of the tribal communities is being beautifully brought out United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights José R. Martinez Cobo, in volume V of the Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations. It states: "It is essential to know and understand the deeply spiritual special relationship between indigenous peoples and their land as basic to their existence as such and to all their beliefs, customs, traditions and culture. For such peoples, the land is not merely a possession and a means of production. The entire relationship between the spiritual life of indigenous peoples and Mother Earth, and their land, has a great many deep-seated implications. Their land is not a commodity which can be acquired, but a material element to be enjoyed freely."

The ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries states that "governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship."

If we look at Arunachal historically it has been a frontier space and even in the colonial to the present times there is existence of Inner Line Permit which was a colonial policy of security parameter on economic front.

The existence of 'posa' and the power balance and composition that the highlands of Arunachal had with the most powerful rulers historically in the plains of Assam i.e. The Ahoms defines the power over their land of the tribes or group formations of that space. The colonizers couldn't but make it a frontier space and there is a historically persisting communal land relation among different group formations of Arunachal. So in this regard it is a stateless space but with the invasion of independence,

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10 King Pratap Singha introduced the system of paying ‘posa’ to the Miris, Daflas, Akas, and the Bhutias. It was a tribute paid in kind to the Ahom rulers.
the nation-state of India also rationally and by default included the space of Arunachal. At the outset it found few minds that seemed to care for such spaces which were located in the 'ethnic' sense of 'distinction'. I am of course referring to Nehru and Elwin and the very interesting discourse both drew in independent India. Nehru being at the helm of the nation-state of India thought of bringing the people of frontier, excluded and partially-excluded areas very hurriedly into the ambit of nation making, at a pace which was not only contradictory to Elwin but at the same time was not in resonance with the life-worlds of the different group formation especially Arunachal. Such a discourse of Nehru has given rise to the emerging contestations for identity and governance in the post colonial discourse, so much so that a draconian law like AFSPA has been existing as a fundamental law of the state in the realm of governance. This has given rise to a classical case of 'state of exception' whereby the identities are reduced to political subjects (Biswas 2012). The space for re-articulation as perceived within the ambit of nationalistic discourse produced multiple fractures with the nation-state of India and consequently the scars of sub-ordination have taken a subaltern turn from the colonial to the post-colonial discourse as against the 'mainstreaming'. On the other hand, Elwin stress on protecting the cultural within the cultural mosaic of India's North-East. The 'ethnographic cannons' of Elwin created a discourse of nativist 'human science' which gave the rightful regard to the 'historical, philosophical and aspects of political economy'. In a way the two divergent discourses marked a beginning in the arena of 'colonialist-statist discourse' which evidently carried 'culturally-loaded notions of primitivism and superiority'. 'The nationalist state, however, largely remained irresponsible to the humanistic approach of Nehru-Elwin, as it tended to ensure self-same re-production of markers of identity within a homogenizing processes, operating through its territoriality and administrative functions (Biswas, Suklabaidya 2008).'

Given such a beginning, the nature of land relation within the group formations and also the state and centre have changed in Arunachal. So it is necessary to study the land arrangements in Arunachal how it is placed legally as perceived both by the state and the community, when we study agricultural practice in the state of Arunachal. Land has been a state subject and around 62% of the total land of 83,743 sq km is considered under the Unclassed State Forest (USF) which brings about direct conflicts of rights; statute law and customary rights. The politics of such a discourse is outlined in the T.N. Godavarman vs Union of India case of 1996 as it bluntly declares that the idea of forest has to be understood in its meaning of dictionary. Such a outlook lacks not only historical, philosophical and political-economic considerations but also leaves a space for politics of 'disorder' by 'instrumentalizing' it. Right to land is possible by the following ways:

1. by prescription i.e. Possession.
2. title by occupancy
3. customary right right to land
4. land revenue code
5. Res nullius i.e. nobody's goods (belong to the sovereign and in the modern times to the state)

Historically right to land in Arunachal was mostly determined by occupancy and possession and the unpossessed and unoccupied belongs to the state as per the Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence. *The Assam Forest Regulation* laid some very interesting propositions with regard to land relations. Section 4 states that 'the government may constitute any land at the disposal of the government as reserve forest... due to absence of land revenue code,. It also declared 'jhumming to be a privileged and not a right' and gave power to the state to acquire property under *Land Acquisition Act 1894* for public purposes. This gives us a clear picture that the regulatory power was vested with the state and the communities enjoyed only very minimal rights and privileges. But the *Balipara/Tirap/Sadiya Frontier Tract Jhum Regulation 1947* made jhumming a customary right in favour of an individual. With much surprise as late as in 2000 the *Arunachal Pradesh (Land Settlements and Records) Act* was introduced in order to have a land revenue administration for the whole state and most importantly incorporating customary rights on land. Though it maintained that rights to mines, quarries, natural gas, petroleum etc, in the hands of government. By this it meant that customary rights should get converted to statutory rights. On the other hand the *Forest Rights Act 2006* has some interesting propositions. It rightly gives due recognition to the land rights to those people who have been living in Arunachal for many generations but does not possess any land records. But it interestingly lays down this provision that forest right should not exceed 2.5 hectares per nuclear family. Such a policy initiative has some structural and potential for long standing impacts. Firstly, Arunachal Pradesh is highly dependent on agriculture and a huge percentage of the population is engaged in agriculture. Secondly, the productivity of different crops is slightly low due to the nature of cultivation and topography of the area. Thirdly the provision of 2.5 ha to each nuclear family will not only lead to exploitation but at the same time lead to exclusion and deprivation of the powerless due to bureaucratic and political interference. In this light this statement by Patricia Mukhim sheds an illuminating light: 'Those interested in the science and sociology of corruption should visit the North Eastern states to observe from close quarters how corruption had created societal cleavages and how some tribals have grown exponentially in affluence while others have dipped below the poverty line. This is what Delhi’s policy of pouring in development funds into the region without seeking an iota of accountability has perpetrated. It has allowed development funds to leak into a black hole that no one wants to visit.' Same is the situation in Arunachal whereby there is emergence of societal cleavages and inequality in the society and that have come to re-establish power relations based on political and economic underpinnings.
Chapter 3

SITUATING KHAMTIS IN BROADER GEO-ECONOMIC DOMAIN

3.1 PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF LOHIT DISTRICT

Lohit district is the largest district of Arunachal Pradesh with an area of 5212 sq km and is named after the mighty river Lohit, which also happens to be one of the major tributary of Brahmaputra. Geographically it extends from 27°30' to 28°21'N & 94°18' to 95°45’E. It bordered by Lower Dibang Valley on West, Changlang on the East & China on the North. With its headquarters in Tezu the district has 2 subdivisions, 6 administrative circles with 5 Community Development Blocks with population of 1,25,086 as per 2001 Census. Tezu is a small township which has grown over the years and the increase of ‘new’ people in the town are generally passerby of different kinds. They are students from Sadiya or Dibang Valley, many tourists making a move towards Parsuram Kund or occasional businessman trying luck at their trade. The civic consciousness of the youth exhibits a modern concern which is reflected in dress, psychology, their emerging material understandings and the conduct in public spaces. The district observed a decadal growth rate of 30.8 during the decade 1991-01. The district is a very inconsistent and rough terrain. It is largely inhabited by the Taraon Mishmis, Kaman Mishmis, Khamptis, Singphos, Zakhrings & other tribes. With a density of 13 the land holding in the district can be divided into the following groups: (1) community ownership (2) clan/Individual ownership and (3) Govt. Ownership.

3.1.1 Agro-climatic zones:

Tezu, the headquarter of Lohit District is situated at 210m above mean sea level observes mild summers & moderate to Severe Winters. The mean annual precipitation ranges from 2700 to 4300 mm. But supply has hardly exceeds demand. The availability of moisture to the crops is recorded generally over 270 days a year. The mean annual soil temperature (MAST) varies between 18 degree centigrade to 22 degree centigrade and hence the region falls under ‘Thermic’ temperature regimes. However there are variations within the district where there are prevalence of sub-tropical climate, for instance, Namsai. Half of the district qualifies under Thermic Humid (Mid Hills & Valleys & 30% under Alpine & High Hills & 20% under Prehumid hyperthermic (foothills) agroclimatic sub-regions.

3.1.2 Soil:

The district has soil of moderately acidic in nature (PH 4 to 7) which are loamy sand, sandy loam, rich in organic matter content (0.3 to 3.31% OC). The soil profile from the Summit to the Ridges varies and the variations are seen in terms of their differences in loam and sand content and erosion vulnerability.
There is also great deal of difference within the moderately steep slopes to moderately sloped areas. In the first category it is observed that the land is somewhat excessively drained and exhibits soil types which can be clayey/loamy-skeletal, fine-loamy to fine, the later being vulnerable to severe erosion. On the other hand the moderately slopped areas are well drained, with similar soil composites as the previous but due to the altitudinal difference and drainage is less/moderately eroded.

3.1.3 Rainfall
Lohit district receives heavy rainfall especially from the month of March up to September. By the beginning of November the rainfall recedes and almost becomes absent by December. The most busy months are June and July. And 90% of total rainfall is experienced during the monsoon i.e. from May to September. The importance of precipitation is enormous and forms an essential component of climate which is directly related to hydrological processes of an area. Its seasonal variations and distributional pattern are of vital concern as it impacts the productivity of different crops. There are significant seasonal imbalances recorded in the spatial distribution of rainfall on account of prevailing relief features and drainage systems. The low land areas receive annual rainfall exceeding 2454.47 mm on an average.

3.1.4 Demography and land distribution – an overview
The population of Lohit is 1,25,086 according to 2001 census with density of 13 persons per sq. km. The sex ratio of the district is recorded at a low ratio of 863 females to 1000 males which is lower than the state average of 893. The literacy rate is higher than the states average of 54.3 and is recorded at 58.7 as per 2001 census. The rural population constitutes about 78.61 % against state average of 79.3 % in 2001 indicating no signs of rural to urban migration but there has been considerable rural to rural migration which the census fails to indicate. The main reasons for migration in the recent times are due to search of better job opportunities, access to educational institutions and health care facilities.

3.1.5 Land patterns & Operational land holdings in the district:
In Lohit District and Namsai CD Blocks in particular the occurrence of land-fragmentation is very minimal due to the stronghold of the customary land rights arrangements. However there has been significant land grabs for petroleum products and there are further such possibilities due to the discovery/existence of coal fields. Though state reports states that the farmers are resource rich they often forget that the farmers are also subject to weak and exploitative market conditions and lack of labour. The justification is also often placed as low existence of population as giving more opportunity for better holding but the above mentioned conditions acts as a vicious cycle which the farmers often are not able to come out. The cultivable land is the most valued form of property for its
economic and symbolic significance due to agro-cultural complexes. It is a form of ethnic identity. It is observed that the interrelation between different group formations in eastern Arunachal is more of a 'class structure' among them but not within. They command a great deal of power in terms of the space they represent and inhabit with relation to other groups. Hence, the chronology of arriving at a space seems to account the power dynamics that it releases upon that space by a particular group formation that inhabit that particular space. The Chakmas seems to fall within that lacuna of their historicity in the 'non-state' space of Arunachal. The land ownership of the different group formations of Lohit District is based on patrilineal descent. Property is inherited by the male heirs and transmitted through them but the philosophy is that the female members automatically enjoy the rights of the property indirectly. For instance, in the Khamti Society when a girl gets married a lot of things is offered to the girls new family. Such a practice is not dowry as within their norms they don't have such strict differentiation and distinctions of functions being outlined for different genders. The customary land holdings of Arunachal and the district of Lohit has not been codified yet. Apart from the Private land, Clan land and Common land the state government owns just remaining area. However the land in Arunachal is not sold to the people who are not from the state. It is protected legally and constitutionally and is being consciously followed by the people of different communities. This is probable one of the reasons the issue of migration could not grapple the imagination or surface as a big reason in the history of 'politics' of the state. But there also government owned land and it is mainly through that the invasion of private capital is observed in Arunachal. This is also to not withstand the construction and re-construction of spaces due to the proposed look East Policy.

The following table is the land distribution of Lohit district in hectares:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical area</th>
<th>Forest area</th>
<th>Land under non-agri use</th>
<th>Total rainfed area</th>
<th>Permanant pasture</th>
<th>Land under miscellaneous</th>
<th>Current fallow</th>
<th>Other fallow</th>
<th>Net sown area</th>
<th>Net sown area more than once</th>
<th>Net irrigated area</th>
<th>Net irrigated area</th>
<th>Gross cropped area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52120</td>
<td>3207</td>
<td>616.55</td>
<td>21003.27</td>
<td>340.17</td>
<td>103720.46</td>
<td>2596</td>
<td>3551</td>
<td>19163</td>
<td>12742.22</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>30959</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.1.6 Status of Irrigation:

Lohit is largely an agricultural district which makes water evidently the most vital element in the plant life and is normally supplied by natural rain. The district does not have any major or medium
irrigation project. The department of Water Resources Development in the district has undertaken the Minor Irrigation schemes which are most vital and very suitable for the district. Most of those canals constructed were on the already existing canals of the Khamtis. That also happened at the behest of the Khamti leaders like C K Manpong who came to power. The report IWMP-II-NAMSALI CD BLOCK states that:

Lohit has 226 ha irrigation potential created with 7 nos of canals, 12 ha of area irrigated more than once, 87 ha net area irrigated & 99 ha of gross area irrigation as on 200607. District economy being largely agrarian, irrigation is to play vital input, increased agricultural output to keep pace with food requirement and population. Owing to frequent occurrence of natural calamities – heavy rainfall, landslides, flood etc. emphasis is to be given to creation of extensive irrigation facilities so that dependence on nature and uncertainty in agricultural production would be minimized. This is against State irrigation potential of 1.03 lakh hectare created since inception. Expansion of irrigation facilities and control of flood menace, utilization of ground water potential tapping thereof at higher scale and common area development works need be taken up in a big way to bridge the huge gap of above 60% between creation and utilization of irrigation potential in the State. Large irrigation in a compact area for the district is not possible owing to undulating topography. However medium irrigation projects at foot hill belts are to be taken up. There is acute need of resource support of centre for reconstruction and rejuvenation of irrigation structures along with taping of ground water potential and appropriate centrally sponsored scheme is imperative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Gross cultivated area</th>
<th>Net cultivated area</th>
<th>Gross irrigated area</th>
<th>Net irrigated area</th>
<th>Net irrigated %</th>
<th>Rainfed area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lohit</td>
<td>33,547.5</td>
<td>12,460.47</td>
<td>8679.9522</td>
<td>2768.211</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>3973.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh '2007)

3.1.7 Role of watershed management in the District:

In Lohit District, the high prevalence of shifting cultivation, also known as Jhum, is generally portrayed as the major cause of wastelands. But such an observation is not only suffers from narrowness but also lacks certain empirical fallacy and failure to understand the philosophy of such a practice. The population pressure might have reduced the jhum cycle but the reduction of the cycle has not done much harm to anybody. The State government is seen to persuade people from such a practice. Shifting cultivation is estimated to support the livelihoods of some 300-500 million people worldwide (Brady, 1996). The common belief that it is an outmoded and ‘irrational’ system in urgent need of replacement through external intervention must be treated sceptically. Esther Boserup’s classic
work 'The Conditions of Agricultural Growth (1965)' was one of the first to show that - far from being
an irrational system and a survival from a ‘traditional’ past - shifting cultivation might well represent a
highly efficient adaptation to conditions where labour, not land, is the limiting factor in agricultural
production. Brown and Schreckenberg (1998) observes that the transition to more intensive systems of
land use is unlikely to offer increased output per unit of labour - in fact, the transition is usually
associated with declining output per unit of labour, as more and more effort needs to be given to
development of infrastructure, tending of draught animals, etc. They further elaborate in the following
way:

The main reason that more intensive systems are adopted is lack of choice - faced with declining returns to
labour, the farmer is forced to invest increased labour in order to preserve the existing levels of output. Only
later, as technology starts to develop, are the conditions created for a progressive increase in productivity. In
recent years, opposition to shifting cultivation has taken new forms. While its rationality at the farmer level now
tends to be conceded, critics increasingly focus on the disjuncture between the individual and social costs and
benefits, particularly as regards alleged negative environmental effects. Here again, the evidence is in doubt. For
example, the role of farm burning under shifting cultivation in starting forest fires has been exaggerated (see
NRP 28, on forest fires in Indonesia), and the assumption that it is a major cause of biodiversity loss has been
challenged by recent research. The historical record offers little support to the supposition that the low
population density areas of tropical rainforests will inevitably fall into agriculture-based decline as population
and land pressures increase, leading to human impoverishment and loss of species richness. Where historical
records are available, these usually attest to the innovativeness of traditional societies and to the force of
endogenous processes of agrarian change. Likewise, many areas of prolonged habitation are marked by high
biodiversity, and in some cases biodiversity may be higher in inhabited areas than in neighbouring zones of
climax vegetation.

The practice of shifting cultivation has a long history of struggles when the notion of a modern nation-
state did not even concern them. There is also no record of famines in this region except for one; so
what degradation and productivity are the experts talking and for whom? The negative stereotype of
shifting cultivation tends to be derived from a rather different type of economy, which is arguably not
a ‘shifting cultivation’ system in the proper sense of the term but rather a variant of forest pioneer
farming or ‘shifted’ cultivation. ‘Shifting cultivation’ is not, therefore, a single stage in the evolution
of agricultural production, but a variable element within a wide variety of farming systems
encompassing stable rotational systems, extensive forest fallow cultivation and also forest mining
(Brown and Schreckenberg 1998)

For a long period of time the international development agencies have been quite committed to
'modernize' agriculture and to do away the traditional practices of the farmers just in the name of
productivity and that the practice of shifting cultivation is deforesting Asia. India and the state of
Arunachal is also not immune to such tendencies and related spillover. But it is being seen that efforts
to eliminate shifting cultivations have infact lead to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and reduction in
carbon storage rather than the practice of shifting cultivation itself. In fact, shifting cultivation may be ecologically appropriate, culturally suitable, and under certain circumstances the best means for preserving biodiversity in the region. However the real threat to these tropical forests is posed by the steady advance of large-scale permanent and commercial agriculture (Fox 2000).

But the rigidity of the experts and the failure to accommodate regional, geographical and cultural differences have led to many Watershed Development projects which are directly directed at reducing jhumming. The inclusiveness and benefits that the project talks about looks like a distant dream. Such a public policy is nothing but a weak understanding of geography and social-anthropology. The spilover of such project is filled with lacuna and more so when the cultural aspects are kept at bay. The Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) under Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources, for development of wastelands on watershed is one of the major watershed programme implemented in the state. Out of the 24,500 ha of total watershed area sanctioned by Government of India, Namsai CD Block covers an area of 2000 ha. The expected outcomes are as follows:

1. Increase in productivity of the land.
2. Create employment opportunities
3. Raise rural incomes and living standard
4. Reduction in migration from rural areas
5. Increase in water table in the area
6. Restore ecological balance and overall environmental improvement.

### 3.1.8 Common Property Resources (CPR):

A major strength of tribal society is its common pool of resources and Lohit district is also very vibrant in it. Building on the rich social capital of the village communities and benefiting from this structural linkage, the Village council member and office bearers of traditional institutions can be involved in culturally appropriate and resource efficient developmental activities. A glance at the CPR of the district is outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPR particulars</th>
<th>Total area owned/in possession of</th>
<th>Available area for treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private persons</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wasteland/degraded land</td>
<td>23188.04</td>
<td>25188.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pastures</td>
<td>45188.94</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: distribution of CPR in the district of Lohit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>orchards</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>408.832</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village woodlot</td>
<td>25008</td>
<td>20180.04</td>
<td>13636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forest</td>
<td>46647.4</td>
<td>46647.4</td>
<td>46647.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village ponds/tanks</td>
<td>20190.72</td>
<td>10190.72</td>
<td>20190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuity buildings</td>
<td>17095.36</td>
<td>17095.36</td>
<td>15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly markets</td>
<td>34,190.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent markets</td>
<td>24,190.72</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temples/places of worship</td>
<td>34,190.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>18,721.44</td>
<td>4002.8</td>
<td>44,561.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: report IWMP-II-NAMSAI CD BLOCK)

### 3.1.9 Trends in agriculture and food productivity

Lohit is an agricultural district and more than 80% percent of the people are engaged in agriculture. Rice is the staple food and it occupies about 12151 ha out of total of 46,511 ha of cultivated land in the district in the year 2011-12. Other cereals include maize, millets and wheats which is cultivated in about 10330 ha, 101 ha and 475 ha respectively in the same year. 55.5 percent of the total cultivated area and constitutes about 75 percent of the total food grain production. In the pulses segment it includes black gram, green gram, peas, local pulses, tur/arhar and others. Among oil seeds mustard is the prominent crop followed by soya bean and sesames in marginal amounts. Many people are fond of spices, like the Khamtis who practice a very distinct and amazing plethora of cuisines based on traditional herbs and spices. In general ginger, turmeric, chillies, garlic and onion are cultivated. Potato, sweet potato, sugarcane, tapioca also forms a major part of agriculture of the district.

### 3.2 GEOMORPHOLOGY AND SOIL TYPES

Geomorphologically, Lohit district qualifies under two categories, Structural hills and Piedmont plains. The first consists of valleys and ridges of definite trend lines. On the other hand, Piedmont plains
are the plains in the foot hill belt of structural hills. Hence, major settlements like Tezu, Namsai etc come under piedmont plains. The are significant soil variations that are recorded with regard to topography. Generally in the hilly regions it contains high humus and nitrogen due to extensive cover of the forests. The soil along the foothill areas is alluvial, loamy or sandy loam mixed with gravel and pebble brought down by rain from higher attitudes. The soil in the valley is rich in organic content and acidic in nature. The soils in the district can be divided into a) plain alluvial soils up to 305 m attitude and b) hilly soils above 305m.
Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geomorphic Unit</th>
<th>Geomorphologic Unit</th>
<th>Lithostratigraphic Unit</th>
<th>Structure /Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>Flood Plain</td>
<td>Alluvium</td>
<td>Narrow stretch of alluvial plain consisting of river borne alluvium (Sand, Silt &amp; Clay) occurring along the major river occasionally flooded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPL</td>
<td>Piedmont Plain Lower</td>
<td>Alluvium</td>
<td>A stretch of alluvial plain formed at the lower part of the foot-hill zone consisting of intercalations of course fan material and river alluvium of silt, coarse sand &amp; pebbles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPU</td>
<td>Piedmont Plain Uppe</td>
<td>Alluvium</td>
<td>A narrow stretch of alluvial plain formed at the upper part of the foot-hill zone consisting of unconsolidated sediments comprising of assorted silt, sand, pebble &amp; boulder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Structural Hills</td>
<td>Dihing Fm (Mi0-Pliocene)</td>
<td>Steeplly dipping hills with pebble, boulder, sandstone, mudstone, clay beds are mostly ferruginous, semi-consolidated nature associated with folding, faulting and showing definite trend lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Denudation Hills</td>
<td>Tenga Fm. (Upp. Proterozoic)</td>
<td>Moderate hills of bedded sandstone, fractured quartzite &amp; phyllites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMM</td>
<td>Denudational Mountain (Moderate)</td>
<td>Tidding Fm.</td>
<td>High top mountains consisting of quartzite, phyllite, mica-schists and gneiss occurring in the thrust zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMH</td>
<td>Denudational Mountain (High)</td>
<td>Lohit Granodiorites (Unclassified)</td>
<td>High top mountains consisting of biotite, granite, granodiorite, mica-schis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE OF THE KHAMTIS IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

The earlier chapter already dealt with the traditional forms of agriculture that the Tai-Khamtis of Lohit
district had been practising. However, adequate attention is required to be given towards changes in the methods of cultivation, extension of the cultivated area, shrinking of the irrigated land to the total cultivated land and the arrival of labour power into Arunachal mostly due to migration. To my mind the above four conditions defines the agricultural transition of the Khamtis and also Arunachal in general. Changes in methods of cultivation is caused by the new labour force who brings with them new ways of cultivation on one hand and the absence of knowledge of the prevailing technical know-how. This has invariably impacted the culture of irrigation practices making the cultural complexes vulnerable and opens up space for new relations of culture within the new migrant diaspora. Complexes are also seen at the level of imagination where for instance the failure of crop is attributed to not following their agro-cultural complexes. The new changes and shifts have brought about changes in levels of production apart from the cultural-complexes. However before going into the contemporary discourse I would like to visit briefly the history of agriculture in Arunachal and the relations of people with the forest and the produce.

3.4 AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE AND EMERGING RELATIONS IN ARUNACHAL

Without a doubt the factors of production are closely related in the practice of agriculture and the changes in one or more factors are bound to bring about changes in the overall outcome. The growth of human history suggests that institutional changes are bound to occur with the growth of agriculture and the advent of capitalism. Most communities have owned land communally till a certain point of time, but of late individual ownership has largely replaced the previous existing order. This seems to be true to almost all major group formations of Arunachal. The emergence of this new land order has increased the risk factor of the individual as Arunachali economy was labour deficit. Roy and Kuri (1995) observe that: risk is very common in any economic realm. However, its nature and intensity vary; at a very low level of development, the net accumulation of many people is almost non-existent. So any drastic fall threatens the income and consumption of those people. The risk factor is closely related to labour power, irrigation or rainfall, credit market and access to market. Firstly, the shortage of labour historically in the space of Arunachal is proved the existence of slavery and land-people/labour ratio. Even in the present times Arunachal is one of the least densely populated areas of India. Hence with the changes of land holdings from communal to individual made this problem more apparent as they could not increase the total productivity as well as the total area under cultivation. Secondly, most of the agricultural practices of Arunachal are dependent on rainfall with the exception of only a few like the Khamtis. This is also the reason that they have been observing very steady levels of productivity if the traditional way of cultivation is followed. Thirdly, the invasion of institutions of the public and the private is very recent in the state of Arunachal; hence there exists a very weak institutional support like a credit market. Also it will be apt to add that many areas of Arunachal are
still inaccessible by road. Last but not the least; the market conditions are very weak in Arunachal. Though there has been history of trade since the Ahom days, the access to market has always been a problem which is a major hindrance to a lot of farmers. In many cases the produce are bought informally by the vendors from the plains of Assam. For the Khamtis it’s the vendors from Tinsukia, Assam who buy a major chunk of their produce.

If we consider the district of Lohit one will observe that the Khamtis are the major group formations. All the communities are equally dependent on agriculture. The Khamtis claim that the Mishimis had learned lot of their present agricultural practices from the Khamtis. Let us look at the recent datas on rice cultivation in the district of Lohit.

### Table 3.5: Rice un-irrigated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Area in Hectares</th>
<th>Production in (M.T.)</th>
<th>Average Yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>7240</td>
<td>10136</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>7150</td>
<td>16302</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>7007</td>
<td>17938</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>7865</td>
<td>19112</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>7424</td>
<td>19527</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>7796</td>
<td>19802</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.6 Rice irrigated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Area in Hectares</th>
<th>Production in (M.T.)</th>
<th>Average Yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>2450</td>
<td>5880</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>2595</td>
<td>8356</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>2725</td>
<td>8474</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>9664</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>3424</td>
<td>10272</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>3526</td>
<td>10543</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.7 Rice Jhum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area in Hectares</th>
<th>Production in (M.T.)</th>
<th>Average Yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The un-irrigated areas under cropping have an increasing trend but again it depends on the rainfall patterns and also availability of labour. For unirrigated agriculture rainfall is important as it is highly dependent on rainfall for irrigation as there are no artificial channels to the field. If we look at the productivity, rainfall has played a role in the yield along with the availability of labour. The average yield of the un-irrigated areas is 23.04 quintals per hectare and that of the irrigated cultivation is recorded at 29.56 quintals per hectare during the period 2006-2012. Jhum cultivation on the other hand recorded an average yield of 7.4 quintal per hectares. Also there has been a very significant increase of area under cultivation in the period 2005-06 to 2006-07. The data show that there was a increase of 2000 hectares of land under cultivation, however, it does not distinguish the area of the increase, i.e. if it was under irrigated, un-irrigated or jhum. However, my interaction with the Khamti people suggests that there was no significant increase in irrigation practice and it is more or less has shown stable increase. Neither there was enough manpower to increase the Jhum production area. So the area that had witnessed a major increase has to be the un-irrigated areas. Hence as it is so there have been increased settled temporary cultivators from the nearby states and mostly Assam.

Yet another aspect that has to be looked at is of the relation and co-relation productivity, ways of cultivation, rainfall and availability of labour has. The un-irrigated cropping is most vulnerable to rainfall than the practices of wet-rice cultivation and jhum. This can be seen if we look at the precipitation levels of the district of Lohit in the past five years. Following is the data of rainfall since 2007.
Graphically the yield of paddy under irrigated, un-irrigated and jhum of Lohit district can be shown us under:

**Figure 3.2**

The total cultivated areas in un-irrigated areas is shown in the following diagram:

**Figure 3.3**
The total cultivated areas under irrigated areas is shown in the following diagram:

Figure 3.4

The total cultivated areas under jhum areas is shown in the following diagram:

Figure 3.5

The difference of productivity across different ways of cultivation is shown in the diagram in the following way:
Figure 3.6

- Production(UI)
- Production(I)
- Production(Jhum)
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 THE POLITICS OF CROSSING BOUNDARIES

The ‘habitus’ of the Tai-Khamti society, within the Bourdieu’s framework is seen to have reasonably and consciously internalised certain categories within its imaginations, where the lived experiences of the Tai-Khamti have a historicity and clear linkages to the Tai traditional order. The Khamtis who share a common religion with the Chakmas, i.e. Teravada Buddhism has, a sense of ‘distinction’ when it comes to the Chakmas. This seems to indicate that 'habitus' have played a significant role in production of such a discourse. They seem to protect the production of their 'work' and 'practices' and 'differentiate and appreciate practices and products(tastes)' that have gone to produce their locality (Bourdieu).

Their kinship in relation to the Tai can be traced in terms of agricultural practices, not so much in terms of their religion. It is interesting to look at the historical progress of the different groups of the Tai family who migrated to North-East India at different epochs of history and under different ‘becoming’. Their social histories have taken different routes. Tai groups like the Ahoms went through considerable transition so much so that they gave up their language. Such a transition of the Ahoms is quite different from the Tai-Khamtis. The Tai-Khamtis retained their culture. Hence, it is interesting to throw some light on the internal and external boundaries.

The natural is also evidently cultural and social. Nature is at the same time real, collective and discursive- fact, power and discourse- and needs to be naturalised, socialised and deconstructed (Latour 1993; Escobar 1999). The ‘social’ which is closely associated with the cultural and natural has a ‘political’ dimension to it as it lives in a essential ‘antagonistic’ space that arises out of the exercise of identity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Escobar 1999). Experience and production of nature are based on one’s social position and the space is determined by human practice (Guha 2011). Cultures are subject to ‘tensions and contestations, bio-physical laws, meanings, labour, knowledge and identities with different degrees (Escobar 1999). What French social thinker Foucault has called ‘governmentality’ is a modern phenomena where societies are appropriated, processed and transformed by the owners of expert or ‘superior’ knowledge, the administrative ‘state apparatus’ and the logic of capital. In case of India we should also not forget about the nationalist discourse. The nationalist discourse along with the statist and capitalist logic have internalised the processes of capitalist accumulation and have produced a politics of post-colonial culture where conflict between communities have come to dominate their imagination. This has shifted the imagination from the ‘other’ to the ‘below’ within the discourse of subjugation. The material basis of political economy have become more resounding with time and the lived experiences of different places have become linked increasingly to other spaces thereby producing a politics of spatiality (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Guha 2011).
Gender is not static concept or a regionally consistent cultural system but rather a fluid, contested and negotiable conceptual field, characterised by multiplicity, ambiguity and reinvention (Ong and Peletz 1995; Steedly 1999). 'Modernization and global capitalism have profoundly affected indigenous gender concepts and practices; thus the oppression of women in Southeast Asia Today cannot be viewed separately from global capitalist expansion and development of the state (ibid).’ However such a sweeping generalization is not true. There may be erosion of gender relations but it is not just the logic of modernization or capital. For instance the Tai-Khamtis are in some senses moving away from irrigated agriculture hence the old order of family and group solidarity is eroding to some extent as there are migrant farmers or labourers doing the job. A very cohesive and close group of people is required in order to constitute the irrigation system as they do and now as they are moving away from such a cause either due to the availability of manpower from outside or due to the changes in agricultural practices; the traditional order is rendered idle if not dead. The state has also helped them in the irrigation but mostly due to the initiative of their own leaders. So at least here it appears that it is not just modernization or global capital that is consistent in the making and remaking of spatial relations of production but also opening up of spaces, migration and assimilation to the lowlands has a role to play under such emerging dynamics. This logic of analysis can be extended to most areas of Arunachal which is not a homogenous entity of people. Cultural forms are also not monologic as they give rise to meanings that are often in conflict with each other and are not always resolvable to an internally coherent structure (Bowen 1995; Steedly 1999). Through the study of the Tai-Khamti society my idea is to knit together the discursive geographical and cultural entities of Southeast Asia in a common cultural landscape of their genealogy of kinship as belonging to a singular family structure or ‘phratry’.

Moving away from the irrigated agricultural practices will break the solidarity within the society to a large degree and family to some. But the family will undergo a construction in the practice and execution of the activities. It can have the potential of bringing about division of labour which is absent in the strict sense. Irrigated wet rice cultivation has played a significant role in the unity of the Tai people. It has gone to the extent of determining the property rights within their society.

Hence the disassociation from such activity due to the changing agricultural practices within the Tai-Khamti society paints a peculiar dynamics first of its kind in their present lived-spaces. Religion per say has been a dominant cohesive unit and democratising force within their community, which forms a large part of their culture. Crossing the cultural boundaries leads to certain form of disregard internally within the existing system not the wholesome movement of the structure. Hence locating the 'objective, subjective and the social' in the space and time becomes necessary. We can also throw light to the consumption of opium in this regard, which is a taboo among the young and women and
especially in the presence of the elderly people.

The lived spaces are created, experienced and transformed in lieu of cultural, economic, political and geographical conditions and relations. The cultural aspect casts a shadow in the articulation of kinds of practices which are in resonance within the cultural boundaries. The social might appear to be cultural but the social dimensions of a society encompasses in a way the different dimensions of society. The social boundaries are larger, which can be a kind of reaction or response to different ideas, wants and perceptions of groups, individuals, institutions and so on. The economic and political relations of a society are largely located in the cultural and social behaviour which have certain boundaries of ethno-philosophy. What may appear important in one society can be of minimal importance or significance in other group formations. The social and cultural boundaries have a huge role in the determination of economic and political aspirations in society like the Khamtis, as their ‘being’ is a product of the cultural and social boundaries that the Tai family adheres to. Cultural and religious festivals produces spaces of locality and creates distinct imaginations within the self and the other, where depicting the past have assumed a politics of re-presentation. Locality is not simply there, it is constantly “produced” (Appadurai) through forms of communication, ordinary discourse, ritual action, and the imagination. The spatio-temporal production of locality is a complex affair: it is not only the conceptual demarcation of a life-world, a space and its history, but a “structure of feeling”, i.e. it implies an emotional tie and thus affects experience (Gaenszle 2004: 9).

4.2 CONCLUSION

The philosophy of the developmental discourse has to be critically aligned with the political economy and the ethos of different ethnic groups. Hence a better understanding of their life-world will be realized out of that space and hopefully have reflections in political, administrative, policy and administrative apparatus, beyond Patel's horrific and insensitive discourse. There is a strong need to locate such cultures and attempt to understand their social, cultural and natural niches. Before attaining such a position we have to deconstruct the un-appropriableness of the ‘tribal’ life worlds in terms of documentation of social history from mnemonic space. Consequently, the case for 'regional anthropology' as O'Connor strives for becomes important to capture the specificity of culture in the changing dynamics of relations of production and the ever widening logic of global capital and the increased invasion of the state. Hence in order to create a just society we have to through at the classical question, which I think is of great relevance today, which Roman thinker Heraclitus posed which is that do we look at the totality of things or the changes of totality of things? To arrive at a conclusion will be hard given the nationalistic imagination of the different institutions of the nation-state of India. This is so because the dominant historiography does not give space to meaning making of the people at the margins. To add to the woes even in the aspect of higher education the space of
North-East is left out from both South Asian History and South-East Asian History making it an 'state of exception'. But we can have an appreciation and struggle from the margins of philosophy, history and annals of ethnography to counter-posit and redefine human behaviour and life-world cultural-complexes to remove notions of subjugation. Having said this it has to be equally political and vocal to make the ‘dominant’ and ‘mainstream’ believe that that there cannot be a way of living but there can be ways of living and most importantly by not insulting and intimidating the other. The governmentality has to change within the institution and they have to get rid of the modern oblivion of meritocracy of a culture
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