

Religion, Culture and Social Change among the *Abu Tani* Group of Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

All the ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh have some individual cultural, social and linguistic characteristics. But in the age of science & Technology, modernisation, globalisation and increase in education it is becoming impossible to remain within the boundary of own cultural aspects. On the other hand, the greater western culture is formed by the contributions of religious of all the ethnic communities. Various sociocultural processes like acculturation, assimilation, progressive absorption, fusion, sanskritisation etc. has influenced upon almost all ethnic communities. Religion is one of the important organs of society. It brings new elements to society and culture and a society is depended in large scale on religion in the maintaining of social norms and value. In the present scenario, religion and social change has become a common feature of every society. This is seen in the societies of the ethnic communities of Arunachal Pradesh also.

Key Words: Arunachal Pradesh, Christainity, Donyipolo, Neo-Vaishnavite, Socio & cultural Changes

Introduction:

North East India, which is officially called North Eastern Region, (NER), is located in the eastern most region of India. North East India is the home land of a large number of tribes. It comprises of eight states Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. This region shares international border with Bangladesh in the southwest, Bhutan to the northwest, China (Tibet Region) in the north and Myanmar in the east. The region comprises an area of 262,230 sq km, and 8.0 per cent of India. The total population of North East India constitutes 25.81 per cent of the tribes. There are 145 tribal communities of which, 78 are larger, each with a population of more than 5,000. 12 per cent of the total populations of India are constituted around by the tribal.

Arunachal Pradesh is situated in the northeastern extremity of the Indian continent, the boundary of which is demarcated by the McMohan line and the Inner - line. The mountains of Arunachal Pradesh receive the first sunrays in the morning and announce the day break for the whole country. The territory of the state covers an area of 83,743 sq km. of lofty mountain terrains. It is the largest state in North East India lying roughly between the latitudes $26^{\circ}28^{\circ}$ N and $29^{\circ}30^{\circ}$ N and the longitudes $91^{\circ}30^{\circ}$ E and $97^{\circ}30^{\circ}$ E, and its capital is at Itanagar. The entire area lowers over the plains of Assam in the shape of a horse shoe. Shanker (1988:2) writes, "The well-known term NEFA, short form of North East Frontier Agency of 1954, yield to Arunachal Pradesh in 1972 when it was renamed by its own people". The history of the administration of the area may be traced back to the

government of India's Notification of 1914. Prior to 1972, the area was popularly known as North - East Frontier Agency (NEFA) comprising five districts; Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap, named after the major rivers flowing through each of the district. Arunachal Pradesh has attained the status of state through different stages of political and administrative developments. The whole territory has been now divided into twenty-one districts for effective administration and meaningful development. Here live some twenty-six major tribal groups, broadly Indo - Mongoloid racially with distinct and varied culture, language, custom, religion and so on.

Arunachal Pradesh is the homeland of about twenty-six major tribes divided into 112 number of sub tribes with own culture, language, tradition and social structure. As per 2011 census the total population of Arunachal Pradesh is 1,383,727 of which male and female are 713,912 and 669,815, respectively, and scheduled tribe population forms 64.2 per cent of the total population. The density of the population has been recorded as 17 persons per sq km in 2011 as the area of the state is mostly uneven and covered with hills, forests, springs, rivers, etc. In the North East India as well as in the country it is the lowest population density. They were ancestor worshipper, Tantrik Buddhism, Sun worship in the society of the ancient NEFA. Animal sacrifice practices were common during this period. There were also many superstitions among the people of this period. In such a chaotic situation Christianity came to Arunachal Pradesh during British rule. Shankardeva and his disciple Madhabdeva propagated Neo-Vaishnavite movement in Assam and the tribal folk of neighbouring areas of Assam.

The Neo-Vaishnavite movement and Christianity have brought radical socio-religious changes to the society of Arunachal Pradesh. Besides Christianity, Neo-Vaishnavite other factors are also responsible for bringing social change such as modernisation, education, sankritizations, acculturation, assimilation, globalisation etc., has brought different change in the fields of religion, culture and society of the ethnic communities of Arunachal Pradesh.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the religion, cultural and social change and also to analysis the changes seen in cultural, religion and social aspects among the Tani groups of Arunachal Pradesh.

Research Methodology

Both the primary and secondary data has been used for gathering empirical data. To gather primary data the methods used are non-participant observation, interview and questionnaire. For collecting the secondary data published journals, books, new papers, district library and internet sources are used. Both descriptive and analytical methods are used to write this research paper.

Body of the Text

Elwin (1966:66) described Siang as, "one of the fascinating and exciting parts of NEFA' and said, 'the People are charming, hospitable, and filled with a zest for life: tribal institution still retain their vitality. It is a country of song and dance, of hard eager work, of fine spinning and weaving, where the rich and varied tapestry of NEFA is displayed". The mongoloids are taken as the first to come into this land. This Mongoloids were migrating from Tibet and South China. The

anthropologists have divided the whole population of Arunachal Pradesh into two units such as Caste unit & Tribe unit. The caste unit includes those social or language units who are follower of Hindu Varnashram religion or main religious sect. It includes Brahman, Kshatriya, Baishya and Shudras called as Chaturbarna in ancient Hindu religion. Various people of different professions comprise these four varnas such as Bamun or Brahmin-Gosain or dwija, Daibagyas, Kayastha-Kalita, Sudir etc. The Indian constitution has recognised those ethnic groups as scheduled (hill) tribe who are backward in comparison to other caste who lived in the plain and ethnic groups and who have abled to keep their old traditions till today. Due to lack of technical, economic and educational development these peoples like to live in an isolated area and hills with their old traditional rites and customs. The Tani group all are mongoloid and present days mass conversion is found among all the Tani groups of Arunachal Pradesh. The Adis, and the Galos are found mostly in the Siang valley and the Mishing are found both in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. While the Apa Tani are found among the Ziro valley of the states and the Nyshi are found in the central part of the Arunachal Pradesh. Some of them are non-tribals of the assam and main land India are seen in various part if this districts and Arunachal Pradesh for business, labours and work purpose. They are mainly Hindus who follows the Hinduism and a kind of acculturation are seen among the Tani tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Some other tribes like Mishimi, Singphos, monpa, Memba, and Nagas are also included in the population of Arunachal Pradesh. Marwari and Panjabi traders, Bengali clerks and tea garden labourers migrated to NEFA after Arunachal Pradesh

come up as an independent state after India Independent. The Nepalis began to come to Arunachal Pradesh since the early part of the 19th century to work as labourers in the cultivating land of the natives.

Result and Discussion:

Social change seen in the context of religion and culture among some of the Abu Tani group of Arunachal Pradesh: The indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh are Mongoloid stock and there are many linguistic and cultural similarities among them with small variation. From these major tribes there is a group called Tani group consisting of five tribes called the Adi, Galo, Apa Tani, Nyshi, Tagin and Mishing. This Tani group consider themselves as a descendent from the same ancestor called Abu Tani. The tribes have their own traditional beliefs called Donyipolo and social traditions. But with the passage of time culture, religion and social change have taken place among them rapidly.

The Adi:

The Adis are one of the major Scheduled tribes of Arunachal Pradesh consisting of 15 sub tribes. The word Adi is an umbrella term. Earlier, however, they were known to their neighbours in Assam as 'Abors'. Their population is found mostly in the Siang Valley comprising four districts of east siang, upper siang, lower siang, siang west siang. According to Singh (1995), the major contributors to the great association of tribes of the territory are, "The Adi inhabit in the Siang valley districts comprises of 15 sub - groups, viz., Ashing, Bori, Bokar, Galo, Karko, Komkar, Milang, Minyong, Mishing/Miris, Padam, Pasi, Panggi, Pailibor, Shimon, Tagin, Tangom, along with the Membas and the Khambas". Each sub - tribe has a mother village and it

comprises a number of villages. Most of the sub - tribes of the Adi have their distinct languages and cultures. The Adi people also have many commonalities in their culture. The Adis by nature are democratic and have a unique sense of history. The Adi, who form the subject matter of the present study, are hill people, constitute a major tribe in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The Adi is a blanket term which includes many sub tribes, 'united by a language that in spite of dialect variation, is fundamentally everywhere the same, and by a similar culture and temperament', principally inhabiting in the Siang valley of Arunachal Pradesh. Siang district is inhabited by a number of tribes of which the Adi forms the most dominant group. The Adi tribe is composed of sub tribes - Ashing, Bori, Bokar, Gallong, Karko, Komkar, Milang, Padam, Pasi, Panggi, Pailibar, Roma, Shimon, Tangom and Minyong. The main festivals of the Adis are Solung, Etor, Araan and Dorung. The Adis build permanent houses which require major repairs only after three or four years. Their houses are bamboo structures, strengthened with wood and secured with cane strings and the roof is covered with toko leaves. The house is built on wooden piles at a height of one to ten feet from the ground. Rice is the staple food of Adis in Arunachal Pradesh. Rice beer made of rice called *apong* is very popular among the Adis. As it is served to the guest for entertainment purpose. The Adi women are very expert in weaving cloths they make gale, adigaluk, etc., at home with various colour. The Adis domesticated chicken, pigs, etc., at their home.

A complex system of faith in the spiritual world and side by side, the concept of Supreme Being are the two

important factors which characterize religious aspects of the Adis. Their religious outlook has been to a great extent coloured by their environment. They predominantly believe in the existence of invisible spirits (*uyus*), who are not sympathetic to man. Besides spiritism and animism they believe in a hierarchy of powerful deities responsible for the creation and sustenance of the moral order of things. They believe in a high god known as Donyipolo (the sun and the moon). Donyipolo God is the nearest approximation to the supreme deity. Fowls, pigs, etc., are sacrificed and offered in the name of the spirits. As a result of the acceptance of Christianity and Donyipolo by the Adis many new socio-religious changes has come to their society. Besides religion other social processes such as acculturation, sanskritization, education, accommodation, diffusion, modernisation etc. also has been influenced the society of the Adis.

Galo

According to Dundar (1913:17), "The Adis divided into two groups - the Abors and the Gallongs. He also opines that there are some differences between the Galos Adis and the other groups of the tribe". The two groups occupy almost two equal halves of the total Adi area. The river Sido and Siyom form the dividing line between the two groups, the Adi and Galo, leaving the first group on the eastern and the second group on the western halves. Thus, on the basis of distribution and the location, the Adis can be again called the 'eastern Adis' and 'western Adis' (Nyori, 1993). The Galo consider themselves descendent of Tani group. Abo Tani is the father of Galo and all the clans trace their origin. Earlier they were included in the Adi sub tribes but now Galo prefer to called themselves

more as a tribe. The Galo were known as Gallong, Duba, Boba, in the past. Since 1950 they are listed as Schedule (hill) tribes under the name Gallong by the government of India. The Galo are mostly found in lower siang, west siang, south western of east siang and southeastern side of upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. Unlike the other Tani group of Arunachal Pradesh the Galo maintain genealogy through their names. According to Mr Kojum Koyu a politician, "We have a system of prefixing the second syllable of a father's name to that of a son, who passes on the suffix in his name to his son. We can trace the names of ancestors from the first syllable or prefix of our names". The Galo speak Galo dialects but younger generation are speaking trio language in the present day with the regards to the locations of the places like Assamese, Hindi and English. They villages are mostly in remote and isolated places and far away from the reach of modern life style. Their main livelihood is earned through agriculture and women are back bone of their economy. Earlier the Galo practised jhum (shifting) cultivation now they have started permanent and wet land cultivation. Mopin is the main festival of the Galos. Every year on 5th of April Mopin is celebrated. The festival lasts for 5-6 days and a month-long celebration in the rural areas. It is very important to sacrificed animal and it is also considered as sacred. Mithun is sacrificed and *opo* (rice beer) and good food is consumed on the particular day. All the folk smear rice powder in each other face/forehead on the occasion of Mopin. The traditional dance called *popir* is performed. The Galo are patriarchal society and bride price (*togupanam*) is given to bride parents at the time of marriage. Village council called '*keba*' prevail among the Galo tribe

to look after the administration of the village. The Galo build traditional house made of wood or bamboo and cane, which is 4 to 5 ft height below they keep chicken and pig. Boil rice, meat and fish along with bamboo shoot is important cuisine of Galo. The religious belief system of the Galos is animist and Donyipolo is developed with re interpreting the traditional believe. The shaman in the Galo is known as *Mibu*. The priest performs the rituals for sick person which involves with animal sacrificed. Along with Donyipolo and, Christianity is widely spread among the Galos.

Mishing

The Mishing are found mostly in Assam in 10 districts and 3 districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Tinsukia, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Gopur, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Majuli, Chariadow Jorhat, and Sonitpur districts. It is known from the history that the Mishing have migrated to Assam in search of fertile land but still there are district like east Siang, Lohit and lower Dibang valley a good number of Mishing villages are found. The main occupation of the Mishing is cultivation. The main characteristics of their family structure in the society is joint family. They lived in typical house called *talengokum* (changghar) or a house made of wood or bamboo with a raised platform and the roof is covered with toko leaves. Rice is the staple food among the Mishing along with those boiled leafy vegetables. Drinking of Apong (locally brewed rice- beer) in both morning and evening is habit and they served the guest with *apong* to welcome. By religion the Mishing are animism. They worship to their ancestor. However, with the passes of time changes are noticed in respect of religious beliefs among the Mishing. Hinduism, Donyipolo and

Christianity have been penetrated into their culture. They also have accepted Vaishnavism in 18 century and Christianity in 19th century. The main festival of the Mishings is Ali ai ligang. It is related to agriculture. The Mishings observe three Bihus of Assam Katibihu, Magh bihu and Bohagbihu. The Mishings also have *kebang* (village council) which solve the dispute. Due to close contact with the non-tribals the material culture of the Mishings undergoes changes. They now construct houses of modern styles. Modern dresses are becoming popular among them especially among the youths. The Mishings women now-a-days wear modern clothes like jeans, saree, t shirts, markets artificial ornaments, nose pin, bangles and use vermilion. Change is noticed in the health care instead of traditional medicine. After initiation of the Kalasanghati the Mishings begin to perform some Hindu rites like Tilonibiya, satjonia, najania, napurushia, Aaisakam, Gopinisakam, etc., Now a - days they take tea, jalpan, coffee, milk, etc., Joint family system is gradually disappearing and nuclear family system is becoming very popular among them. The Mishings had no permanent land and they did not regard land as personal property till the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth. They have accepted the idea of landed wealth and permanent wet land cultivation method from Assamese people. However, the Mishings with acculturation process they have been able to preserve most of their traditional cultural traits.

Apatani

The Zero valley in Arunachal Pradesh is called as Apatani valley. The Apatani are also known as 'Tanii' or 'Tanw'. Apatani are ethnic community approximately 26,000 living in Arunachal Pradesh. The Apatani inhabits in Zero

valley surrounded by lower Subansiri valley. It is a small plateau with mountains. According to Bower (1953), "Till 1950, all the Apatani inhabiting this plateau were living in the seven villages, Hong, Hari, Bulla, Hija, Dutta, Bamin-Michi and Mudang-Tage, whose foundation according to the oral tradition, dates back to the time their ancestors first entered the valley and eventually settled there". The Apatani society mainly divided into two division. They are Meti (patrician) and Mura (slaves). According to Bouchery (2010), opines "The Mite are distinguished by high stature, light skin, prominent nose and deep set-eyes, whereas the Mura have more mongoloid characteristics". The Apatani are patriarchal society who traced their descent from male line. The Apatani can be easily distinguish from the other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. There is mostly based on oral history. The Apatani speak Apatani dialect. The Apatani are very much rich in their cultural expression like traditional ornaments, tattoo, etc. The tattoo which is dark green in colour line on the thin are usually identity mark of the Apatani tribes. It is believed that the Apatani girls make tattoo on their faces to avoid the attraction from other tribes. Especially those neighbouring tribes Nyshi, who are known for the assaulting those beautiful Apatani girls and women. The main occupations of the Apatani are cultivation. The Apatani practise both wet and traces cultivation. Rice and paddy farming system among the Apatani is very popular in the world. According to Ramakrishnan (1992: 424), writes "Paddy cum fish culture is very popular among the Apatani with high level of sustainability". The Apatani have their own belief system known as Donyi Polo. The Apatani called 'Donyi' (Sun) as 'Ayo' Donyi and 'Polo'

(Moon) as 'Atho' Polo. They believe in the supernatural power of the sun and the moon. Ritual is carried out by animal sacrifice for the prosperity of the community. Apatani lived in traditional house made of bamboo. The traditional food of Apatani is rice and fish. The food is mainly boiled. Dree and Myoko are two important festivals of the Apatani. As a result of modernisation and impact of science and technology the Apatani now a days are converting to Christianity. The traditions are slowly replaced in every aspect of their life. Replacement is in everywhere including modern house, dress, food, medical treatment, etc.,

Nyshi

The Nyshi inhabits in the Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, Kurung Kumey, East Kumeng, Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh and near North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts bordering areas of Assam. The urban places of Arunachal Pradesh like Itanagar, Doimuk, Naharlugun, Nirjuli and Chessa areas are dominated by the Nyshi tribes. Majority of the Nyshi lived in rural areas in old traditional house made of bamboo and thatch roof. The Nyshi trace their descent from the Abo Tani group. They are very brave, courageous, straightforward, industrious, simple and confident by nature. They speak Nyshi dialects which belong to Sino-Tibetan family. Polygyny is common and still prevailing among the Nyshi. They are mainly agrigirian in nature and practise jhum cultivation. The Nyshi women are good weaver. They also have multi coloured ornaments for women made of various metals. Nyshi man wear traditional helmet made of cane called *padum*. The helmets are surmounted by the crest of hornbill bird. Rice, boiled and non-

vegetarian(fish, meat, etc.,) is the staple food of the Nyshi. Nyshi religion is shamanic and spiritualistic indigenous faith called Donyipolo. Animal sacrifice is important part of Nyshi religion. The main festival of the Nyshi is Nyokum. They also drink *apong* (liquor) locally made of rice and millet. Many of the practise are gradually declining slowly with the spread of education urbanisation and conversion of Christianity.

Tagin

One of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh is tagin. Previously they were known as the Gasimiri. They also traced their ancestor from the Tani group. Upper Subansiri district is mainly dominated by tagins. The adjacent district like Papum Pare, West Siang, Kara Dadi and Shi Yomi. They also found nearby area of Tibet those are adjacent to Arunachal Pradesh. The tagin has many sub tribes. Among them mara and nah tribes deny their claim of having common ancestry. The tagins are agrigirian society, hill duellers and belong to mongoloid stock. They are paritilineal society and inheritance, successor is trace through male line. Si – Donyi is the most important festival of the tagin. Si means 'earth' and Donyi means 'sun'. This festival is celebrated for 3 days from 3rd to 6th every year in the month of January to mark as a New Year and peace and prosperity for the society. Gayal (Mithun) is sacrificed on this occasion. They speak tagin dialect with variation among them which is Sino Tibeto linguistic group. The tagin are well known traders and for trading they engaged in bator system. The tagin pristine religion is known as animism. They worship nature by sacrificing animals, fowls, pigs, etc., to appeased them. They sacrificed those birds or animals in Nyuge

(Alter)made of bamboo or wood. This wood or bamboo is covered with leaves stuffed shapes. It is mean to propiated those spirits. The priest among the tagin is called as Nyibu, who is born with power to negotiate with the other world. But recently it is noticed that tagin is converting into Christainity and much of the western culture are being influence them. The tagin is very expert in weaving mats from a leaf called toku. Monogamy is common form of marriage among the Tagins however polygamy practise cannot be diney. Bride price are taken at the time of marriage. Village council is not found among the tagins, disputes are settled by the Gedung (arbitrators). Rice, maize and millet is the staple food among the tagins. Dried fish and meat, *apong* (local rice bear), are very much found of tagins. Traditional costume of the tagin are gale and beads made jewellery, necklace and earing with various colour are worn by them.

It is seen that both man and women of this tribal group begin to wear western and other modern dresses. Many of them have accepted Christainity. It is also to be mentioned that inter tribe marriage is also happened in their society. There are many superstitions beliefs prevails in their society which has been affecting in the development of their society. But social change has occurred among them also like other ethnic groups. It is seen that inter-tribal marriage is a new social element of the Tani group. Traditionally all the Tani groups are animists. Now most of them are found to be Christian converts. They also have accepted changes brought by modernization. Acceptance of Christianity has given them a modern outlook including education and outlook. They have left many superstitions of earlier society. They are gradually learning the

modern methods of cultivation. The Social change has occurred among them from all aspects of life. However, they have maintained their traditional life as far as possible. The Tani young girls and boys wear their traditional attire which is a part and parcel in their religious and cultural functions. Taking of vermilion and wearing bangles were seen among the Mishing of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh those who practised Hinduism. But these customs are very rarely followed at present among the Mishing of Arunachal Pradesh. The Adi and the Mishing had a common dialect. However, it's variations can be seen from place to place and they speak indaily life. The Adi now speak Hindi more than the Assamese language. They also have accepted changes of society. Hindi and Assamese are their state language. Day by day the languages spoken are in trio language like Hindi, English and Assamese in the present times. These languages also serve as a lingua franca in the state. Every change of human society such as change of idea, fashion, food, religion, house pattern, language etc. brings a new structure to society. It reset the social relationships. A society can be benefitted by social change because it brings many developments in the fields of technology, economy, education, etc., But all change may not be advantageous for a community. However, there found some results of religion and social change of the Tani group of Arunachal Pradesh

The Tani group had their traditional religious practices. But with the coming of Britisher and contact with neighbouring state Assam, the bordering area like Namsai, Roing, Tirap, Ruksin, Likabali, assimilated themselves by accepting Christianity and Hindusim. Later the tribals of border area also accepted Vaishnava rites from the Neo- Vaishnavite

movement of Srimanta Shankardeva from Assam. The Satra institution from Assam has been giving them initiation especially among the Mishing. Acceptances of other religion has brought social changes and given them better lifestyles. Besides Christianity and Vaishnavism, while other still follow their traditional faith called Doynipolo. These religions have given them a disciplined life and socio- religious life. Because of Christianity some of the tribes have given up their traditional polygamy marriages, acholic, thief, etc., Education, modernisation, sanskritization, assimilation, acculturation, globalisation, with the advancement of science and technology, etc., also has influenced on the societies of the Tani group of Arunachal Pradesh. All these factors have given a new look to the societies of the Tani group. Superstitions are disappearing from the society. Literacy rate is increasing even among females. As a result of education many people have been able to take employment in various part of the state, in others states and all over the country. With the establishment of school, colleges, hospitals and health centres in interior areas positive sides for the welfare of human educations and health are seen. Acculturation and Assimilation among different communities who are coming to state from other state has brought a sound change in the social life. With conversion of their religion the abut ani group has started to give up their customs especially in animal sacrificed to appeased the spirits. They do go against their tradition but in the occasion of festivals they do not discourage where the sacrificed of Mithun, pig, fowls, etc., are essential. It is seen in the state that followers of different religions within same tribes, sub tribes and other tribes. There is no trace for any religious conflict among themselves

regarding their religious believes and practices. The ethnic communities of Arunachal Pradesh are liberal in various matter including religious. Various social changes are found in the present day depended upon the economy. Those people who are financially sound, easily has accepted new modern lifestyles like construction of modern houses with proper water supply and electricity, boundary wall, modern sanitation system, medical facilities, electronic facilities, furniture, food habit, etc., People those who live in hill slopes and terrain who do not get proper road connectivity are still living in poverty and not able to adapt themselves with new social changes. Those families who are not sound in economy and education have faced problems in the change of society. People, who were living on traditional way of lifestyle, now are unable to accustom themselves with the new environment due to the lack of education and expensiveness of necessary materials. Despite conversion to different religion the ethnic communities of Arunachal Pradesh still have been practising their old traditional religious practices in certain occasions. In the social sides also, traditional lifestyles like construction traditional kitchen with bamboo, preparing local rice beer, etc., offering to the deities, are not disappearing totally even though new modern elements are entering into the society.

Modernisation, globalisation, educations, development of roads, assimilation etc. has given a new outlook to the societies of the ethnic communities. Especially the tribal people have got the opportunity to assimilate with non-tribal people of neighbouring state Assam especially the bordering areas. The tribal peoples are generally backward and they like to remain isolated in the hills and near the river bank.

But as a result of accepting to different religion and certain religion encourage them for education, social change can be seen. Many of them have left the hill and start migrated and live in the plains in the urban places. The Abu Tani group want to revive their traditional believes and various social patterns despite their new socio- cultural elements. It may be mentioned that Abor prefer to call themselves Adi while the Miris, Gallong and Dafla, prefer the names Mishing, Galo and Nyshi respectively as the people consider that Abor, Miri and Dafla were the names given by the neighbour Assamese people and the meaning do not carry the real meaning of their ethnic origin and sound to be barbarous. It also seen those members of the AbuTani group have not taken the advantages of social change. Many ethnic communities still depend on traditional practices in shifting cultivating, handloom, health care, etc., instead of modern facility available. They use to take various folk medicine as medicines during illness before going to doctor or taking any help from modern medical facilities. Most of them first try to appease their local deities and spirits during illness and with the advices of the *Mibu* (priest). The priest checks the chicken liver for the cause of the disease. With conversion to Christianity many tribals has given up of going the priest and look for modern medical facilities. Modern though and changes can be seen in traditional

festival celebration. Animals sacrificed is part and parcel of festival. But this day's people discourage the animal sacrificed and using of animal beak as they feel that because of killing animals they are becoming endanger species.

Conclusion

Religion is the most important organ of society. Society and religion are very much inter- related. So, religion tends to change when social changes take place. On the other hand, social change will occur when changes in religion take place. At present religion has become a very sensitive subject. In a troubled society, religion has to play an important role in the establishment of peace and security in a society. On the other hand, people should also notice the bad sides of social changes so that these may not harm the social norms and values of the society. Since the advent of British in India the ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh have been taking new elements in the fields of religion. Indeed, the religious system of the ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh is an evolutionary process which has included different religious elements in different periods. The ethnic societies have been changed in the present time in new environment of human life. But the change of religion and culture, the social life should also maintain the social norms, harmony and value.

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