

SYSTEM OF VILLAGE ESTABLISHMENT AMONG THE SÜMI NAGAS

Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment for the award of
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Ms. Tovikali Yephthomi Sumi bearing registration No. Ph. D/HAR/00064, 24/08/2017 has completed her research work on “System of village establishment among the Sumi Nagas” under my guidance and supervision.

The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or full for a degree or diploma in any other university.

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DECLARATION

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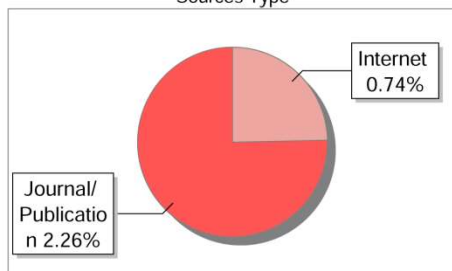
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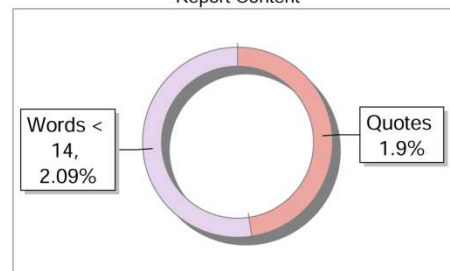
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(TOVIKALI YEPTHOMI SUMI)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Certificate</i>	i
<i>Declaration</i>	ii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	v
<i>Table of Contents</i>	vi
<i>List of figures</i>	vii
<i>List of plates</i>	viii
<i>Contents</i>	x
<i>References</i>	
<i>List of interviewees</i>	
<i>Appendix</i>	

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Nagaland

Figure 2: A chart indicating the three earliest migratory groups among the Sümi Tribe.

Figure 3: SümiPhratry.

Figure. 4: An Arial view of Lazami village under Pughoboto sub-division, Zunheboto District

Figure 5: Table showing the villages inhabited by Sümi and Co-Habited by the Sümi.

Figure 6: Bird eye view of Kiyezu village, Dimapur

Figure 7: Arial view of Longtong village, Upper Assam.

Figure 8: Map of Sümi villages in Zunheboto and Neighbouring villages

Figure 9: Map indicating Sümi villages in Nagaland

Figure. 10: A Map indicating Sümi villages in Tinsukia District, Upper Assam.

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1: Plant used for moving the spirit stone during migration located at Lazami Village

Plate 2: Historical Stones located at Sümi Village, under Phek District

Plate 3: Left, 'Aghuzaphe' (Source: J. H. Hutton). Right, 'Aghedu' at Mukalimi Village.

Plate 4: Model of 'Apuki' (Morung) at Lazami Village. Top-left, platform used as bed. Top-right, Skulls of animals used as decorative pieces. Bottom, 'Apuki' as seen from outside

Plate 5: Azüta (Machete/Dao) of the Sümi Tribe

Plate 6: Aphükhüki (mortar) for pounding

Plate 7: Aboshuü (mortar for pounding grains) Top-left, at Phisami Village. Top-Right, at Ighanumi Village. Bottom, at Lazami Village.

Plate 8: Amüto&Aphukho (Basket for carrying firewood)

Plate 9: Aphükhü (wooden hoe)

Plate 10: Azüto (shield) Left, Bamboo weaved shield at Lazami Village. Right, Elephant Hide shield at Phisami Village

Plate 11: Asüzü/asulika (crossbow), from Sitimi Town

Plate 12: Megaliths, Ighanumi Village

Plate 13: A tree where heads were hung up during the head hunting days at Phisami Village under Kiphire District

Plate 14: Village fission of Thazuvi, Kiyezhe&Xüvishe under Kiphire District

Plate 15: Fusion of traditional and modern house of Sümi Chiefs. Left, Thilixu Village, Chumoukedima District. Right, Phisami Village, Kiphire District.

Plate 16: Baskets for storage of grains at Ighanumi Village

Plate 17: Aleki (Granary) Left, common granary at Lazami Village. Right, Granary at Paharpur Sümi Village, Upper Assam

Plate 18: Khagho (Village gate) Left, traditional village gate at Ighanumi. Right, modern village gate at Thahekhu

Plate 19: Khagho. Fusion of traditional and modern village gates. Left, Mishilimi Khagho. Right, Lazami Khagho.

Plate 20: Azukhikhi (water source) Left, at Phisami Village. Right, at Lazami Village.

Plate 21: The abandoned site of Nitoi village shows evidence of agricultural activity.

Plate 22: Lineage of the chiefs of Phisami Village under Kiphire District Left, Zhukishe Yephthomi (founder). Center, Kihoi. Right, Vikato

Plate 23. Ighoto Village, under Kiphire District

Plate 24: Image of Sakhalu on the right and his brothers (Source: J. H. Hutton)

Plate 25: Traditional Cotton Spindle from Lazami Village

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1-20

1.1.Village and Its Status in India

1.2.Nagaland

1.3.Locating The Nagas

1.4.Identifying The Sümi Nagas

1.5.Literature Review

1.6.Statement of The Problem

1.7.Significance of The Study

1.8.Objective of The Study

1.9.Hypothesis

1.10. Methodology

1.11. Study Area

1.12. Chapterization

CHAPTER II: PRE-COLONIAL SÜMI VILLAGE SOCIETY, POLITY AND ECONOMY

21-55

2.1 Sümi Nagas Origin and Migration

2.1.1 Origin of The Word 'Sümi'

2.1.2 Migration of The Sümis

2.2. Society of The Sümi Nagas

2.2.1. Kinship

2.2.2. Family "*Akibolomi*"

2.2.3. Clanship "*Alagha/Alimi*"

2.2.4. Adoption "*TimiNgaSakulu*"

2.2.5. Marriage "*Kulakupu*"

2.2.6. Divorce "*Küghuxa*"

2.3. Sümi Naga Polity

2.3.1. *Akükaü/ Kukami*: Chief /Chiefs

2.3.2. Eligibility of The *Akükaü* (Chief)

2.3.3. The Process of Setting Up a New Village

2.3.4. Anükishimi

2.3.5. Aqhü-Axhe

2.4. Economy of The Sümi Nagas

2.4.1. Agriculture

2.4.2. Livestock Rearing

2.4.3. Tools and Weapons

2.4.4. Taboos Attached to Tools and Weaponry

2.4.5. Morungs

2.4.6. '*AshiAghüPhikimthe*' (Cleansing Rituals Observed for Headhunting/War)

2.4.7. Types of Tools, Implements, And Weapons

2.4.7.1 Domestic Tools

2.4.7.2 Agricultural Tools and Implements

2.4.7. 3. War Weapons

CHAPTER III: TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS: RITUALS, TABOOS AND CEREMONIES OBSERVED BY THE

3.1. Rituals and Taboos of the Sümi Nagas '*Chine-Chini*'

3.1.1. *Chini* – Taboos

3.1.2 *Achine* – *Genna* / Rituals

3.2. *Apunu Chine-Chini* - Birth Rituals and Taboos

3.2.1. *Kulakupu Chine* - Marriage Rituals

3.2.2. *Akithi Chine* – Death Rituals

3.2.3. *Ghile Chine*– Harvest Rituals

3.2.4. *AghaloXapikiKishi Chine*–Rituals of Constructing the Field Hut

3.3. Other Rituals and Taboos:

3.4. *Pinhe-Pini* – *Festivals of The Sumi Nagas*:

3.4.1. *Tuluni*

3.4.2. *Ahuna*

3.5. *Aphisa* - Feast of Merit

3.5.1 *Tiyeshikugho Atighiu* - First Process of Feast

3.5.2. *ShikushoAkiniu* - Second Phase

3.5.3. *Pinne Chine*: *Genna* Rituals

3.5.4. *Tileshe Chine*: Preparation

3.5.5. *Aphikusa Chine*: Feast of Merit

3.5.6. *AghuzaKiphe*

3.5.7. *InamiKupulhu*: Feast for Guests

3.5.8. *Avikuqo*: Sport of Mithun Killing

3.5.9. *Anivu*: Ear Piercing

3.5.10. *Kighithikeu Chine*

3.6. Norms Observed by The Sümi Nagas in Regard to Village Establishment

3. 7. Dog Sacrificial Ritual

3.8. Headhunting Rituals and Ceremonies

CHAPTER IV: TRENDS OF VILLAGE ESTABLISHMENT: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN

84-121

4.1. Concept of Sümi Village Establishment

4.2. Reasons of Village Establishment

4.2.1. Availability of Free Land

4.2.2. Status of Chieftainship

4.2.3. Internal Conflicts:

4.2.4. Village Fission

4.2.5. Land Ownership

4.2.6. Growing Population

4.3. Features/Description of A Village

4.3.1. Location of The Village

4.3.2. Village Structure

4.3.3. *Aghüthu-Aghiphi*: Boundary Demarcation of the Village

4.3.4. Type of Houses

4.3.5. *Aleki*: Granary

4.3.6. *Khagho*- Village Gate

4.3.7. *Alaghi*- Pathways

4.3.8. *Azükhikhi*: Water Source

4.4. Sümi Villages: Traditional Vis-A-Vis Modernity.

4.4.1. Traditional Village Establishment

4.4.2. Early Migration of the Sümi

4.4.3. Eastern Sümi Villages of Kiphire- Shamator District

4.4.4. Village Establishment During the British Colonial Period

4.4.5. Sümi Village Establishment in Upper Assam

4.5. Distribution of Sümi Villages

4.6. Chieftainship and Its Impact On a Village

4.7. Views On the Continuity of the Village Establishment

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

122-139

5.1. Boundary Issues

5.2. Assimilation of Tribal Communities

5.3. Land Issue

5.4. Demographic Change

5.5. Measures to Uphold Village Membership

5.6. Changes in Social, Economic, Political, Religion and Culture

5.7. Change in Social Hierarchy

5.8. Decline in Traditional Arts and Crafts

5.9. Gender Role

5.10. Change in The Powers and Functions of Chieftainship

5.11. Change and Continuity in The Practice of Village Establishment

5.12. Challenges in The Continuity of Village Establishment

5.13. Limitations and Recommendations

5.14. Conclusion

SYSTEM OF VILLAGE ESTABLISHMENT AMONG THE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A village is a distinct evolutionary entity, characterized by specific size, form, function, and inherent qualities and traits, regardless of where or when it may emerge in the world, as described by E. Christopher Mare (2022), in his article titled "*What is a Village?*". However, according to F.S. Hudson (1970, p.35), he describes that, "there is no clear-cut distinction between a hamlet and a village nor between a village and a town. It is generally assumed that a hamlet is smaller and less compact than a village and that it lacks some of its amenities, just as a village, in turn, is less built up than a town and is without some of the facilities that a town provides".

Sim Van der Ryn and Peter Calthorpe (1986, p. 57), deliberate that, "perhaps the village represents an organic vision of a community, because the central theme of a village is that of a community directly tied to the productivity of the land. The size of a village is usually defined by how far one can walk to outlying fields. The village is an organism that literally builds itself and feeds itself, and today, it would also grow or collect its own fuel and energy. In the village, everyone is both a producer and a consumer of goods and services to be sold, exchanged, or given freely. The composition of the village includes all age groups living together, not segregated spatially or by institutions. A village is formed from a few hundred to a few thousand people. In the larger village, the village's core is its trading center

and stores, also containing the centers of local governance, communication, education and religion, the town square or commons, and places to gather together – in other words, it contains coherence, stability, continuity, sustainability". This description or characteristics of a village could be considered universal and definitive; that is, they manifest no matter where and when a village may appear – as a primordial social-spatial unit. Thus, a village community is a collection of individuals inhabiting a specific geographic region, united by kinship, shared customs, and frequent social interactions.

The idea of village establishment is worth exploring further from Friedrich Ratzel, a German geographer's theory of 'Organic State' and the Concept of Lebensraum, which means 'Living space'. Ratzel uses the term 'organism' as a metaphor and deliberates that the state is like a living organism that needs to constantly grow, involved in an endless struggle for space. The larger the population, the more the tendency to move out and claim the empty land (Ratzel as cited in Adhikari, 2004, p. 30). Friedrich Ratzel's concept of the State as an organism, which behaves like a biological system to live and reproduce, shares a similar trait with the tradition of new village establishment wherein both expand, spread, and populate different parts of the region.

The practice of village establishment may appear different from region to region, but there are some factors that are common worldwide. In the past, various aspects like human migration, population increase, land availability, and conflicts led to the formation of new villages. These act as a push factor and lead to migration in some cases and lead to the

formation of the village. Various elements such as political, economic and social needs trigger the movement of people. The privilege of power and land holding are some key factors in establishing a new village. History has also shown that materialistic pursuits and access to economic privileges drove waves of migration and village establishment. One of the driving forces for village establishment was the possession of land and its resources. In the early history of humanity, the transition from nomadic life to settled life began with agriculture; therefore, villages exist along with the practice of agriculture. Typically characterized by agricultural pursuits, a village embodies an occupation and a holistic way of life. With agriculture closely tied to the village, land became an essential factor in the migration and settlement pattern of any agricultural society worldwide. However, the increasing sedentism and long-term food storage strategies of early farm communities limited the community's use of mobility to deal with risk (Wilshusen & Perry, 2008, p. 433). Since the village is the structural framework for agrarian settlement in many parts of the world, our general knowledge of societal development needs to be established by understanding the circumstances that led to village formation in various areas (Callmer, 1991, p. 337). Agricultural communities often seek well-resourced areas and use long-term storage to buffer themselves from environmental hazards. So, one possible explanation for early village emergence is that communities increasingly claim to and defend their rights to areas with sufficiently secure water, rich agricultural soils, and forested reserves for a community's immediate and future needs (Wilshusen & Perry, 2008, p. 433,434). Since the ancient past,

the necessities of life led to the movement and activities of the people, which also shows that the formation of the village is closely tied to the practice of agriculture to meet their basic survival needs.

An increase in population is another factor leading to the establishment of new villages. Wilshushen and Perry (2008, p.424), opines that human occupation depends on several favourable social, ecological, and economic factors and as population increases in particular regions, the tipping point for a group to decide to go or stay in a specific locale becomes more tied to these factors. However, in general, many researchers have noted that population movements were influenced by increasing competition and intra-village conflict (in the case of fission), as well as concerns over security and the pooling of labor and essential economic and social resources (Barrier & Horsley, 2014, p. 296).

Political power enjoyed by those in authority in administering a village is another stimulus to establish new villages. In communities bound by traditional norms, political authority is claimed by those who have the legitimate right to the throne by virtue of the traditions defining succession. The legitimacy of traditional authority rests upon the legitimacy of traditional norms. The bearer of authority- the king or the hereditary chief depends on traditional norms for his authority. (Spencer, 1970, p. 125) According to Weber, “such personal authority can, in turn, be founded upon the sacredness of tradition, i.e., of that which is customary and has always been so and prescribes obedience to some particular person” (Weber, 1925, Translated by Shils and Rheinstein 1967, p. 336). He also mentions

that the social conduct bound in relationships of traditional authority is typically represented by patriarchalism. This can be related to the Sümi society, which also practices strong patriarchy and chieftainship. The practice of chieftainship among the Sümi tribe prevails with another existing group of people, who can be identified as subjects of the chief. They are *arechochomi* (counsellors), *Anukishimi* (adoptees), *aqhu-axhe* (bonded labourers) etc. This group accepts the chief's authority based on their traditional and customary practice. As stated by Weber, "this staff's obedience to ruler or rulers can be based entirely on custom and practice, or entirely an effect, or on material interests, or on ideal, value-rational motives" (Weber, Edited and Translated by Tribe, 2019, p. 238).

Unlike many advanced European and Western countries that have surpassed the phase of village settlement, most Asian countries are still in the mode of agricultural society, with village settlement as its basis. For example, The Kachins of Burma, present-day Myanmar, are known for their rich practice of village settlement and society. They have a system of '*Hapalang*', which E.R. Leach (1954) in his book '*Political System of Highland Burma*' translates as '*village cluster*', containing nine sub-divisions and these sub-divisions were called '*Kahtaung*', which translates as '*Village*' (p.68). Likewise, many other Asian countries, especially China and India, are primarily known for their agricultural and rural practices. Karl Marx stated that "the Asiatic village community was a fossilized form of one of the earliest and most primitive forms of social organization: within it, the principle of individuality had

not yet developed; it also perpetuated man's subordination to nature and to tradition which ruled him as a natural force" (as cited in Sawyer, 1977, p. 63)

1.1. Village and its status in India

India is a large country with a high population density and a long history; it is one of the oldest civilizations in the world (Yen & Khanh, 2021). Moreover, according to S.C. Dube (2018, p.1), India is predominantly an agricultural and rural country. An overwhelming majority of her people live in the countryside. He also states that, from time immemorial, the village has been an essential unit in the organization of Indian social polity. Villages hold significant importance within Indian society, having served as integral units of social structure since ancient times. Village studies in India started during the colonial period and dominated anthropological-sociological studies until the 1960s and beyond (Dewey, 1972, P. 291). It is essential to recognize that for the social scientists in India, the village has been a crucial objective empirical reality and a critical sociological reality based on several methodological and theoretical conceptualizations.

According to Powell (1899, p. 2), all Indian villages were regarded as having been constituted initially in a single (typical) form; this form being, consequently, the Indian villages developed since the Aryan period. So conceived, "the village community" was asserted to represent a group of persons or households who cultivated and owned their land "in common"; it was, in short, an essential and widespread oriental survival of that "ownership in common" which was believed to have been universally antecedent to the

development of individual property in later times. Therefore, since ancient times, the villages of Indian society have been an indispensable part of the nation's social structure, economy, and polity.

India, considered one of the world's oldest civilizations, is now the world's most populated country and a large number of people are still engaged in agricultural production tied to the land. In the early part of the ancient period, many racial groups from different parts of the world migrated and inhabited the region. Compared to other societies, it is found that the village communities of India appeared quite early and persisted throughout its history (Yen & Khanh, 2021). Indian society can be understood as a rural society based on agriculture.

In the words of Dewey (1972), in most of the industrializing societies, the village community had disappeared, and no one seriously suggested that a nation of village community was of interest merely because it helped to explain and evaluate the present, adding poignancy to the pessimism of self-satisfaction, according to taste. However, where nations were still primarily composed of myriads of village communities, the fate of civilizations seemed to depend on their ruler's estimates of the village community's worth. India was such a civilization (p. 292).

India is known for its diversity in culture, tradition, race, religion, and language based on the region. The northeastern region of India has diverse cultures, races, and traditions and is another hub of tribal communities, where a large population lives in a village with rich cultures and traditions embedded within society. Migration and its memories assume a

sacrosanct place among most ethnic communities in Northeast India, which has witnessed successive waves of Migration from Tibet, Southern China and Southeast Asia (Hilaly,2014). The Nagas of Nagaland, in particular, also form a part of this migratory group.

1.2.Nagaland

Nagaland is inhabited by 17 tribes that share similar cultural beliefs and traditions. It is located in North-East India and occupies an area of 16,597 sq. km. Nagaland shares boundary with the states of Arunachal Pradesh to the North-East, Assam to the West and North-West and Manipur to the South. It also has international borders with Myanmar in the East (Figure 1). Nagas have diverse cultures, traditions, customs and languages. They did not have any written record but their tradition has been passed from generation to generation, through oral narratives and the society is still rooted in their traditional practice and culture. Though most of the Nagas have embraced Christianity, a more significant part of their activities is dictated by their inherent conventional beliefs, culture and customs. Nagaland has an agricultural economy, and more of the population is settled in the village which also gives them their identity and a sense of belongingness. There are 1280 recognized villages, 75 unrecognized and 111 hamlets, according to the March 1, 2021 survey published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland.

Map of Nagaland

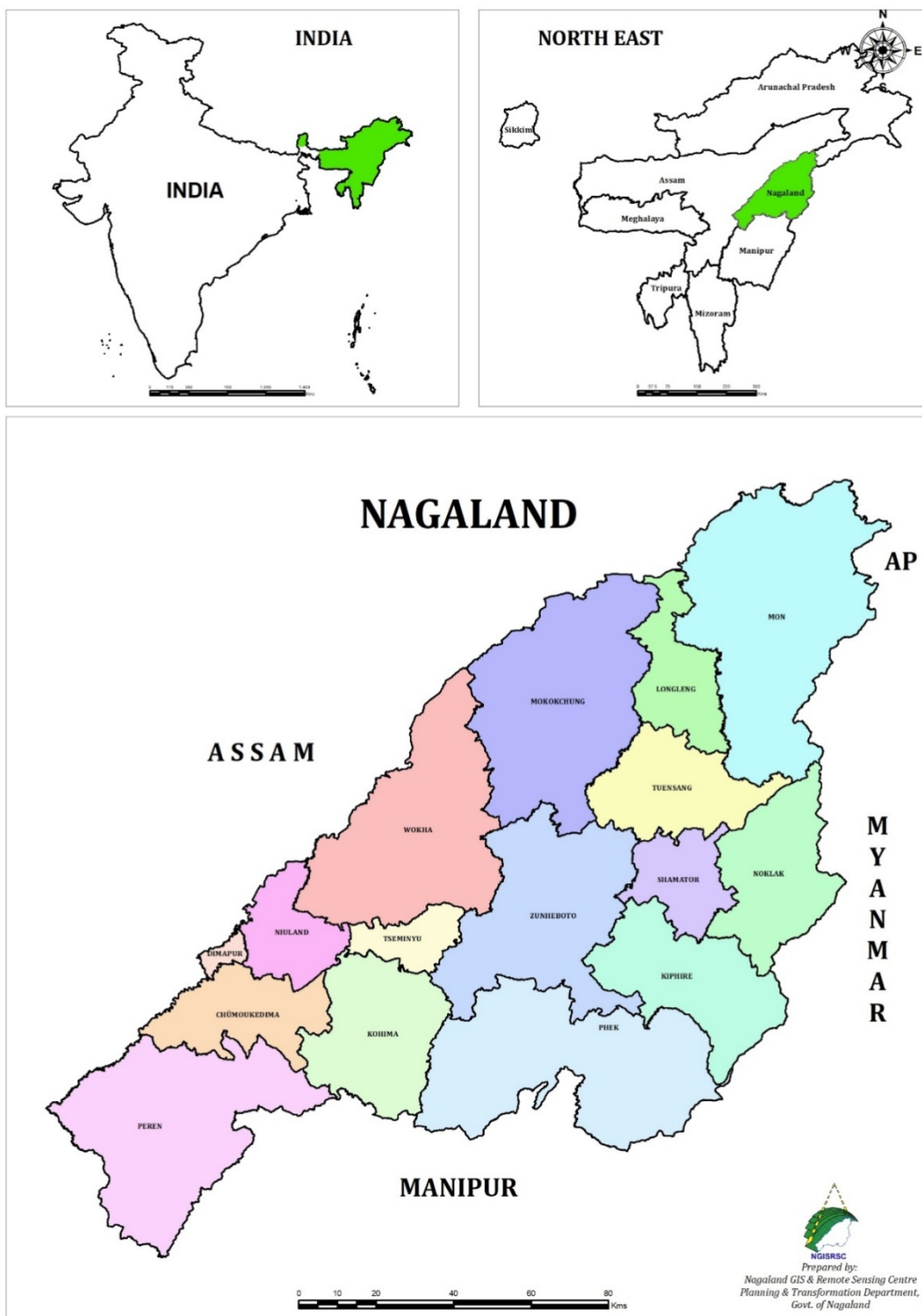


Figure 1: Map of Nagaland

1.3. Locating the Nagas

Nagas are a tribal community inhabiting the present state of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar. They belong to the Mongolian race and speak the Tibeto-Burman language. Though the origin of the term ‘Naga’ is shrouded in mystery and varied views on its derivation, it has been used since its political and economic relations with the Ahom Kings of Assam (Horam, 1975, p. 22). Likewise, even the origin of the Nagas and whence they came from are debated, and many theories and views are shared. M. Horam has stated that ‘though varied and dissimilar in detail, the different legends and stories have one thing in common: The Nagas have come from the Eastern part of the world (1975, p. 27). However, there is no concrete data to supplement this notion. Every tribe has their own myths and legends regarding their migration. Since the Nagas did not have any written records, through oral tradition, their stories, tradition and culture have been passed down through different generations. Almost all the Naga tribes point to ‘Maikhel’ in Manipur as the dispersal place of various Naga tribes. Migrations took place in different directions and settled in the current occupation in the form of villages and a large population of Nagas are still settled in the villages.

The Naga villages in the pre-colonial period were independent bodies and occupied their own specified territory. Each tribe was grouped into several villages and occupied a well-marked area and over the years, the villages emerged independent and managed its own administration (Venuh, 2019, p. 15). M. Horam also shares a similar view that the Naga

village is an independent unit in the tribes (Horam, 1975, p. 61). Every independent village exercised and functioned with its own traditional law and justice, similar to the States.

With many legislative and tenurial reforms and the inception of rural reconstruction development schemes, the village social system is confronted with new forces and factors of social change. Therefore, the village's value pattern, leadership, structure, economic and kinship system are challenged by new forces of democratization in the form of constitutional reforms, rural panchayats, and village council and village development board (Lohe, 2011, p. 1).

1.4. Identifying the Sümi Nagas

Sümi Nagas are one of the major tribes of Nagaland and are the most widespread tribe amongst the Nagas in terms of settlement. According to the 2011 census of India, Sümi Nagas numbered around 300,000. Their headquarters is Zunheboto, which is located in the central part of Nagaland, and thus, all the other tribes of Nagaland surround them. The Semas occupy the surrounding areas of the Tizu Valley and on the right bank of the Doyang, from the junction of the Sijju and Zulu rivers to the point where the Teshi River flows into the Doyang (Elwin, 1969, p. 372). They also inhabit other districts of Nagaland also such as Phek, Kohima, Wokha, Mokokchung, Kiphire, Tuensang, and Dimapur. There are six Sümi villages in Tinsukia District of Assam too.

The practice of village establishment is a continual process among the Sümi Nagas and the practice of chieftainship that comes along with powers and privileges can be considered as one reason that motivates to establish new villages. The Sümis were well-organized and were ruled by the chiefs. Like the Konyaks, the position of the chief in the village was autocratic and benevolent. It is autocratic because the chief leads arbitrarily by himself, and his assistants are subordinate to him (Sema, 2001, p. 30). However, with the coming of missionaries along with British administration, it has led to a change in the powers and functions of a chief as well as in establishing the villages.

This research attempts to study the pattern of changes in the system of village establishment among the Sümi Nagas from the pre-colonial to post-colonial periods.

1.5. Literature Review

Village studies have been an area of interest for many researchers and scholars, and studies have been undertaken worldwide from various perspectives giving a basic understanding of a village.

E.R. Leach's *Political System of Highland Burma* (1954) is a detailed work on the Kachins of Burma. The book deliberates on the social, political and economic structure of the Kachins and Shans of North-East Burma, which draws similar practices of culture with the North-East tribes of India with few references on the Nagas, and in particular mentions of 'Mughemi' of the Sümi tribe with that of Kachin's slavery system. This work deliberates on

the traditional polity and social structure. The author mentions about the hereditary chieftainship practice in both the aristocratic chief of Kachin's Gumsa chieftainship and Sümi Nagas chieftainship. Among the Gumsa community, the youngest son inherits the chieftainship and for the Sümi Nagas, the eldest son inherits the father. This book gives an insight into chieftainship and how the hereditary practice varies among communities.

Meanwhile, Charles Ramble's *The Founding of a Tibetan Village, the widespread Transformation of History* (1983) describes the founding of 'Lubra', a Tibetan village, with the help of literary and oral sources. This work demonstrates the use of an oral source in research work in the absence of written records. Ideas were drawn from this work to understand the Sumi Nagas who also do not have any written record.

Martin Walsh's paper on *Villagers, Villages and the State in modern Tanzania* (1985) is a work on the role of the Chief in the village polity at Usangu in Tanzania. This article elucidates the Chief's administration and political role in a village and a parallel was drawn as the Sumi Nagas also practice Chieftainship.

The colonial writings on the Nagas were mostly official reports and surveys to meet their needs. However there are some like J. H. Hutton's book, '*The Sema Nagas*' (2007), and Verrier Elwin's work, '*The Nagas in the 19th Century*', that give a basic description of the Naga tribes, particularly about the Sumis.

Local writers have also discussed the formation of the Naga villages from various dimensions. Kewepfuzu Lohe, in his book *Naga Village: A Sociological Study* (2011),

deliberates on the sociological aspect of Naga Villages concerning Chizami village. It gives information on the components of a Naga village. Visier Sanyu, in his book *A History of Nagas and Nagaland (Dynamics of Oral Tradition in Village Formation)* (2008), has described the origin and migration process of the Nagas, the settlement pattern and the formation of villages concerning the Angami tribe. In John. H.Sema's *'Traditional and Modern Political Institution of the Sumi Naga'* (2001), illustrates the political structure and system of the Sümi Naga chiefs and traditional laws. It gives a good understanding of the village polity and the governing body in a Sümi Naga village. Meanwhile, L. K. Achumi's *'Sumi Customary Practices and Usages'* (2012) highlights the village's customary laws and practices concerning the Sümi village polity. G. Kanato Chophy's book *'Constructing the Divine: Religion and World View of a Naga Tribe in North-East India'* (2019) is a detailed account of the traditional Sümi religion, society, culture, and the encounter with the West. The traces of traditional beliefs and practices are seen along with Christian concepts and teachings. This work gives a fair view of the factors of change and continuity of religion, tradition, and culture of the Sümi Nagas. A doctoral study by Kughatoli V. Aye titled "Migration and Social Change: A Sociological Study of the Sumi Nagas" (2015) is a sociological research that examines Sümi migration, socio-cultural aspects, and village establishment in the Western region, specifically in Dimapur. A. Husca's doctoral thesis on *"Changing Socio-Cultural and Political Institutions Vis-à-vis Migration: A Case Study of the Sümi Nagas of Kiphire District"* (2016) deliberates on Sümi Naga culture, society and polity

and the Sümi migration and settlement in the Eastern part of Nagaland State. In “*Village Formation Among Sumi Naga of Nagaland: A Case Study*” Inotoli L. Assumi and Queenbala Marak (2024) studied the village formation among the Sumi to understand the Sumi culture and society from the sociocultural perception of their land and the village formation using genealogy to understand the dynamics of Sumi kinship fabricated in the cultural construction of their space.

While various studies exist on the Sumis and their village establishment practices, a significant gap exists in understanding the traditional methods of Sumi village establishment and how they have evolved or persisted. The existing literature focuses on broader aspects of village formation, but the specific processes, cultural significance, and changes in establishing Sümi village have not been thoroughly examined.

This study attempts to study the system of village establishment by comparing past practices with the present to better understand the dynamics of continuity and change within the Sümi community.

1.6. Statement of The Problem

The abandonment of traditional practices like head-hunting and morung institutions has changed political functions and cultural practices associated with the Sümi villages which led to the loss of information. Few scholars have done research work on the Sümi Nagas and fewer still on the study of village establishments among the Sümis. This posits a lack of

clarity and continuity in understanding the history of village establishments among the Sümis. This research attempts to understand the system of the idea of village establishment and its significance for the Sümi tribe.

Unlike the other Naga tribes, who are usually settled in a particular area, the Sumi Nagas are widespread all over Nagaland and even beyond. How and why the Sumis established new villages and are widespread needs proper investigation, and thus far, adequate research works have not been carried out. The lack of written records about their early migration and village establishment also adds to the challenge of understanding their past history and tracing the year of village establishment. There is also very meager methodological and archaeological work done on the Sümi ancestral sites. On the other hand, older generations are on the decline and the few older ones who are surviving are unable to recollect detailed information regarding the norms associated with the village establishment.

There is also a decline in the traditional way of village establishment among the Sümi Nagas. Therefore, much information on traditions about village establishment or settlement is required to be researched.

1.7. Significance of The Study

This research gives vital information on the traditional practices associated with the settlement pattern and how and why the Sümi villages were established in the past. This research throws more light into the existing knowledge of Sümi villages. The study of the

village settlement will help generate more information to understand the past of the Sümi Nagas vis-a-vis culture, economy, polity, and social structure. The research can serve as a source for references and further research work.

1.8. Objective of The Study

1. To study and analyze the village settlement pattern, political setup and the traditional norms of establishment of villages among the Sümi Nagas.
2. To analyze the modern trend of village establishments and study the reasons for the decline of age-old practices associated with the village settlement pattern and to survey and explore abandoned ancestral villages of the Sümis.

1.9. Hypotheses

- The practice of establishing new villages among the Sümi Nagas is due to their tradition of Chieftainship.
- Modern villages are established among the Sümi Nagas because of the political and economic privileges.

1.10. Methodology

Field village visit was conducted on select Sümi villages. Sample villages were selected based on the earliest and recently established villages from various regions of Sümi Nagas

inhabited areas. Sumi Naga villages are widespread in different geographical areas and so the sample villages were considered based on the region and district. Sumi tribe are found in Zunheboto, Dimapur, Chumoukedima, Niuland, Kiphire, Phek and Shamator districts of Nagaland and Six Sumi villages are located in the State of Assam, inhabiting the Tinsukia District under Marghareta Sub-division. Therefore, for fieldwork, the villages from these various districts were visited. Village survey was carried out by visiting the location of the village, chief's house, granaries, water source, historical monuments and remains.

Permissions were sought in advance in order to visit the village as well as to conduct interviews. Unstructured interviews and observations were conducted to draw information with regard to village establishment from the village chief, elders, village council members, and other members of the village. Questionnaires were prepared for collecting data. In the process of interaction, audio and visual facilities were used for the observation method and narrative inquiry. The respondents were mostly male members though there were some women respondents. Sumi society has a strong patriarchy, therefore, with regard to the village establishment, most of the activities are observed by men. Moreover, the knowledge of traditional practices is passed down the generations through the male line, thus, mostly men bear the knowledge and information with regard to village establishment.

A field survey was also conducted at an abandoned site at Nitoi Village in Kiphire District. Where the current area of the village is located on a hilltop, and the initial settlement

is located below, on the foothill of the current inhabited village. The abandoned site is disturbed due to agricultural activity.

Secondary data from various sources, published and unpublished materials, from various libraries, government official records, documents, souvenirs, and archives were referred. Articles and books written in the Sümi dialect (vernacular) were also used.

1.11. Study Area

For this research, the following areas were taken into account constituting the oldest and the most recent villages:

1.Sümis inhabiting Zunheboto District (Eastern area): -

Ighanumi,Lazami, Ghathashi, Iphonumi, Mukali,Tuquliqha, Sukhalu

2.Phek District: -

Sumi village

3. Easternmost Sümis of Kiphire District: -

Phisami, Nitoi, Ighoto

4.Dimapur, Choumukedima and Niuland District (Western Sümi Area): -

Kiyezhu, Kuhoxu, Henivi, Nihoto, Chekiya, Thilixu, Pimla, Shoxuvi

5.Sümi village in Tinsukia district of Assam state: -

Longton, Lalpahar, Paharpur, Balijan, Tingupathar

1.12. Chapterization

This research work contains five chapters:

1. Chapter 1: Introduction.

This chapter deliberates on the concept of village and its establishment highlighting the Sümi tribe. Literature review, statement of the problem, significance of the study, objective of the study, hypothesis, methodology, and area of study are also given in this chapter.

2. Chapter-2: Pre-Colonial Sumi Village Society, Polity and Economy

This chapter discusses the origin of the Sümi Naga tribe, structure of the society, the traditional village polity, and traditional components of the tribe's economy.

3. Chapter 3: Rituals, Ceremonies and Norms in Establishing a Sumi Village

This chapter provides the various practices and norms that are observed by the Sümi tribe which are associated with village establishment and are practiced by the village community.

4. Chapter 4: Trends of Village Establishment: Traditional and Modern

This chapter deals with the continuity and changes in the system of village establishment among the Sümi Nagas. The views on change, the cause of the continuity, and patterns of establishing the village are deliberated here.

5. Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion.

This chapter provides an overview of the study and presents the significant observations and findings.

CHAPTER 2

PRE-COLONIAL SÜMI VILLAGE SOCIETY, POLITY AND ECONOMY

2.1. Sümi Nagas Origin and Migration

“Migration is hardly ever a simple individual action in which a person decides to move in search of better life-chances, pulls up his or her roots in the place of origin and quickly becomes assimilated in a new country. Much more often, migration and settlement are a long-drawn-out process that will be played out for the rest of the migrant’s life, and affect subsequent generations too” (Castles, S., Hass,&H.D, Miller, M.J. 1993, p. 25).

In the case of the Sumi Nagas, migration is one of the major characteristic features of the tribe’s traditional practices and culture. Despite the absence of written records, the history of Sumi migration is passed down to generations through oral narratives which serve as the primary source of information on the Sumi Nagas. The origin and migration story of the Sümi Nagas is similar to that of the other Naga tribes, especially that of the Angamis, Chakesang, and Lothas. It is intriguing to learn where the Sümi Nagas originated and how they settled in their current habitats. Many scholars of history, anthropology, and other disciplines have attempted to understand and gain more knowledge about this particular subject. Still, it has yet to be conclusive, primarily because of the absence of written records and the knowledge being shrouded in the minds of the older generation. Many centuries have passed since the Nagas migrated to the present settlement area. Likewise, the origin and migration of the Sümi Nagas have no less undergone a similar passage of time with the rest of the Naga tribes. The knowledge is gathered from various sources such as myths, legends, folklores, folksongs and folktales.

2.1.1. Origin of the word 'Sümi'

The word 'Sümi' has many narrations about its origin. According to the brief historical account found in the Golden Jubilee souvenir of the Sümi Village Baptist Church entitled "*A brief history of Sümi Village*" (2015, p.22), the word 'Sümi' has been named after the leader 'Süpu'. 'Sü' means 'wood/tree', and 'Mi' means 'people', indicating 'tree people'. Legend has it that Süpu is the eldest son of Khepui. When Khepui was migrating along with companions, they took shelter under a tree. During which, his wife gave birth to a son under the tree, so he was named Süpu. 'Sü' means 'wood/tree', and 'Pu' means 'Son/boy', meaning 'son of a tree'. Khuzamis, who belong to one of the two speaking group from the Chakesang tribe, refer to Sümis as "*Echumi*", '*Echu*' meaning 'trees' and 'Mi' means 'people', thus indicating 'tree people'. A similar version is found in the Ighanumi Baptist Church Centennial Jubilee (2004, p. 24) *Souvenir*. According to "*Sümi Phuthekuwo eno Axülhe-The History of Sümi Migration*" (2021, p. 12), published by Sümi Hoho, the word is believed to have derived from the word 'Süpu'. With the advent of the British administration in the Naga hills during the 19th century, Sümis came to be widely known as 'Sema', and recorded in all the official documents and reports. To retain the ethnic form, the Sümi Hoho appealed to the Governor of Nagaland to replace the term 'Sema' with 'Sumi' in 1995, and consequently the term 'Sumi' was made official for all purposes (Chophy, 2019, p. 57).

The people of the Sümi Nagas speak the 'Sümi' dialect. The Sümi dialect is considered to be of the Tibeto-Burman family. Variation can be found in the usage of certain words from region to region, however the structure remains the same. Under Pughoboto area, Lazami village and Ighanumi village have distinct variations of their own, which notably differ from the standard dialect; though these two groups of people understand the standard Sümi dialect, the other groups have difficulty in understanding the dialect spoken by those of the two villages under Pughoboto area. Unlike many other Naga tribes, the Sümi tribe does not have

subgroups in the dialect, for instance the Ao tribe have three dialects - Chungli, Mongsen, and Changki, and the Chakesang tribe have two dialects - Kheza and Chokri. The Sümis dialect is closest to the Angami dialect among the various Naga tribes. This view is cited in the earlier records and accounts of British officials as follows: “The Semas differ in language, customs and appearance from the tribes near them. Their language is more like 'Angami' than it is like any other languages spoken in this district” (Elwin, 1969, p. 372).

Following is a comparison of some words used in Sumi and Angami dialects:

- i) Mother: *Aza* in Sumi, *Azo/Aze* in Angami.
- ii) Father: *Apu* in Sumi, *Apou/* in Angami
- iii) Water: *Azu* in Sumi, *Zu* in Angami
- iv) House: *Aki* in Sumi, *Ki* in Angami
- v) Fire: *Ami* in Sumi, *Mi* in Angami

2.1.2. Migration of the Sümis

Scholars and intellectuals have undertaken many works in recent years to trace the roots of Naga origin and migration of the different Naga tribes. There is no absolute data on how and when the Nagas came and inhabited the present settlement. Though there are no definite details, almost all the stories share a similar narration with few variations. The history of the Sümi tribe will be incomplete without understanding the Naga migration history in general, considering that the Sumis are one of the prominent groups among the Nagas.

Variations in oral narrations are inevitable in the Naga society and the history of Sümi Naga is no exception with narratives varying across regions. The stories of migration about the Sumi tribe are similar to other Naga tribes, especially the Angamis, Lothas and Chakesang tribes. Many legends point to the direction of the south as the migratory route of

the Nagas, though the original homeland of the Nagas remained obscure (Hutton, 2007, p. 5, Ghosh, 1979, p. 22, Alemchiba, 1970, p. 19). It is generally accepted that they crossed the Manipur hills, and passed through the Barail range to enter and settle in the Naga hills. Most Naga tribes refer to 'Makhel' currently under Mao Area under Senapati district of Manipur State as their ancestral home, from whence some groups moved toward 'Khezhakeno', the Chakesang village under Phek District, as the traditional homeland of the Nagas (Hutton, 2007, p. 5; Choppy, 2019, p. 61, Jimomi, 2018, p. 57). According to oral narratives collected from prominent sources and elders, the Sümis also migrated from Makhel. Sümis are believed to be the descendants of *Khepui*, also known as the forefather of the Naga tribes. There is a story of common origin and migration as narrated by the Sümi, Angami, and Chakesang tribes, that points to a common ancestry at Khezhakeno, albeit slight variations in the narrative. As the story recounted by the Sümi goes:

Once upon a time in Khezhakeno, there lived a man with three sons, each being the progenitors of the Angami, Chakesang and Sümi tribes - the youngest son was the ancestor of the Sümis. Their father owned a magical stone-slab that doubled the paddy harvest on being dried on the stone. On his deathbed, he called his three sons and shared his will; he told his two older sons that, he had already secured their future by marrying them and helping them set up their own house and family. Now that he was dying before he could ensure the same for the youngest son, he instructed them to let the youngest son have the 'magic stone' as his inheritance. However, after the father's death, the wives of the two older sons took turns drying the paddy without giving a chance to the youngest son, who lived with their mother. The youngest son was embittered by this unfair treatment, and decided to avenge himself by destroying the magic stone. In preparation, he started to gather hays, and collect perilla seeds over time, drying the perilla seeds above the fireplace at his home. After collecting enough, he placed all the hays and dried perilla seeds on the magic stone and lit

fire to the stone. A massive fire broke out, and in the flames, a white rooster like bird emerged and flew away. Having witnessed this momentous event, their mother counselled the youngest son “Your blessing (spirit of the stone) has flown towards Yeti river, thus pursue the spirit and migrate towards its direction” Therefore, the youngest son embarked on a journey following the rooster’s direction, and eventually found that the rooster spirit had turned into a stone. He plucked some leaves (plate1)to move the stone like herding cattle, using verbal commands “shi...shi...shi”, as he followed the movement of the stone. On the way, he turned around and talked to some passersby, but when he turned ahead, the stone had stopped moving. Interestingly, the stone had grown roots in the ground, which he took as a sign to settle in that particular place. This narration is based on ‘Sümi Puthekuwo eno Axhile’.This particular stone is called 'Sümi tu/ Sümi stone' till the present day, and is located at a place called 'Chesezu' in Phek district.



Plate 1: Plant used for moving the spirit stone during migration located at Lazami Village

It can be surmised from the oral narrative that the Khezhakeno event marked a significant point in the migratory movement of the Nagas, that catalyzed phases and waves of migration among the Sümi tribe thereupon. The only deviation from this migration theory is found in the sources of Ighanumi village history recorded in the *souvenir* of 'Ighanumi Baptist Church Centennial Jubilee,2004, that claims to have migrated from Khezhakeno

before the breaking of 'magical stone' took place. Based on this account, the Ighanumi people are considered the first settlers in Zunheboto district among the Sümi tribe. In the aftermath of the event of 'Magical stone', the group that migrated from Khezhakeno towards the Lazami area are considered the second group of settlers. Meanwhile, three groups namely Hebo, Chisho, and Chishi are collectively considered the third group; they took the route from Kezhakeno towards Kikrumba, and settled at the same for some years, after which they proceeded towards Vethikusa and Ghathikusa, currently known by the name Thenizu, and Chesezu of the Chakesang tribe, which falls under Phek district. The fourth group is known to have migrated from Khezhakeno towards Kizari, Khuzami, Chepokita, Suthozu, Ahephu, Khuchoukhune, Sohemi, Mutsale and Ketsapo (Sumi Phuthekuwo et al., 2021) (Figure 2).

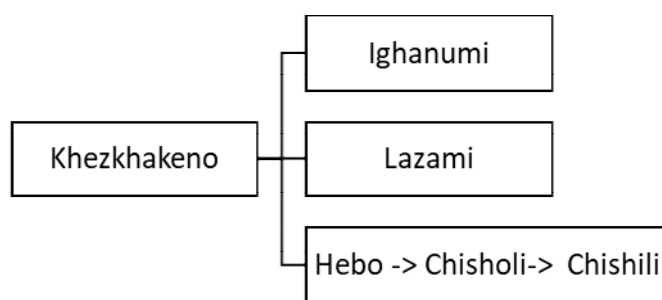


Figure 2: A chart indicating the three earliest migratory groups among the Sümi Tribe.

The village named, Sumi village located Near Chizami, under Phek district is also considered as one of the settlements of Sümi group who migrated from Kezhakeno. In course of time many groups migrated to different village and established villages. The village has a significant stone remnant which is marked as 'Historical stone'. As the legend says' the stone was brought to the village during headhunting days, and the stone served as an omen for the villagers of their fate during headhunting activity (plate. 2)

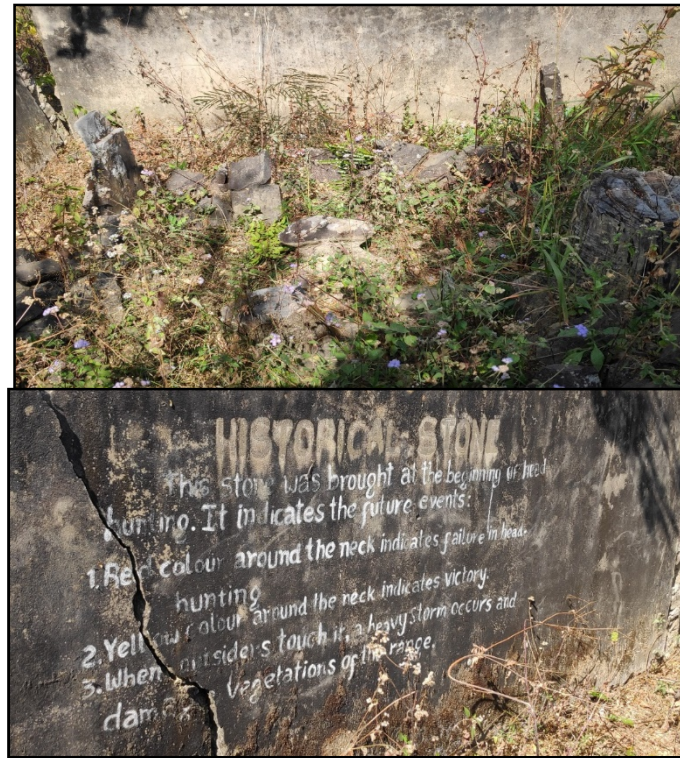


Plate 2: Historical Stones located at Sümi Village, under Phek District

It is considered that all the subsequent Sümi villages proceeded from these pioneering villages, and spread across different areas and inhabited it. The accounts of B. B Ghosh's "Nagaland district Gazeeteer-Zhunheboto" (1979, p. 24), Hutton's, *The Sema Nagas* (2007, p. 6) also states that 'the Semas were spreading fanwise in all direction...'. Ghosh also mentions that, they were checked on the west by the Rengmas and Lothas, and the Doyang river became practically the dividing line between the Semas and Lothas on the opposite sides.

It is observed that the Sümi people continue to have a migratory tendency. From their primary settlement at Zunheboto district in central Nagaland, they have undertaken migration, as evidenced by the presence of Sümi villages in neighboring districts and further beyond, even reaching eastern Nagaland. In recent records, Sumi had reached the borders of the Konyak tribe and established a village in Naganimora; countering their ambition, the Konyaks burned down the village in 1964 (Ghosh, 1979, p. 24).

2.2. Society of The Sümi Nagas

Every society comprises distinct systems of families, clans, groups, organisations etc that shapes its social structure, and determines how the society functions. The Sümi society like other Naga tribes is patrilineal, characterized by succession through male lineage in inheritance, family name, clanship and cultural continuity. The Sümi society is patriarchal, where men hold primary authority in social, economic and political domains. What distinguished Sümis from other Naga tribes was the practice of hereditary Chieftainship(s). Each village operated like an independent kingdom in all aspects – social, political and economic headed by *Akukau* (village chief) or a group of *Kukami* (Chiefs) who originally founded the village, and their hereditary descendants thereafter. The village community was composed of various groups of people, who performed different roles and responsibilities crucial to the function of the village.

In the past, Sümi villages exemplified a close-knit society, with strong familial and communal ties. The Sümi society, in general had a community-oriented culture, characterized by strong bonds amongst tribesmen, villagers, clans and families that influenced their sense of solidarity and cohesiveness. “It is not implausible to say that the Sümi identity begins with the group and not the individual because it is only in this expression that one can locate the significance of Sümi society and culture” (Chophy, 2019, p. 48).

2.2.1. Kinship

Kinship relations played a pivotal role in fostering group cohesion among the Sümis. Kinship is a key element in the social structure of the Sumi society. The Sumi kinship system is both affinal and consanguineous, where kinship based on blood relations and marriage relations has structured the society. These relationships are reinforced and fostered through observation of etiquettes, rituals, festivals, and other practices. Some key components of the kinship system of Sümi society are: i) Family ii) Clan iii) Adoption iv) Marriage v) Divorce.

2.2.2. Family "*Akibolomi*":

The term "*Akibolomi*" means family in Sümi dialect. '*Aki*' means '*House*', and '*bolomi*' means members. Most families are large and consist of a father, mother(s), children, servants, and sometimes grandparents. The traditional role of men in Sümi society have been a leader, provider, protector and custodian of cultural and social values. Thus, by virtue of social entitlement, a father/ man is the head of the family, while a mother/woman plays a submissive role in family and social affairs; she is expected to serve and be loyal towards her husband. A father makes all the decisions that pertain to the family and the community. His role is vital as he is expected to fend for his family members. However, the mother is also respected and consulted in some cases regarding household matters. Generally, Women are responsible for domestic tasks such as cooking, household chores, weaving and childcare. Together as a unit, they shared the responsibility of agricultural work and other economic activities, but the economic contribution of women was undervalued. In the past, a male child was preferred more than a female child, due to the perceived superiority in physical strength and competency of male over female in the traditional context. Though this perception has evolved significantly driven by education, employment opportunities, and modern lifestyle.

The Sümis were patrilocal, so after marriage, the wife followed the husband. They also followed neolocal residence system, where the husband establishes a new household independent of his parent's house; this enables the new couple to function as a family unit, and also foster peace and harmony among the extended family members. The youngest son inherits the father's house, and thereby, on marriage his wife moves into his father's household, and later they take on the primary role of caring for his parents in old age. However, this practice is not strictly followed as internal arrangements are made among the sons to look after their elderly parents and in some cases, the sons take turn for the same. In Sümi society, elders are highly revered as they play pivotal roles in family and community,

hence high importance is placed on etiquettes, customs, and respect for elders. For instance, when an elder arrives, the younger members duly offer their seats and serve with warm reception.

2.3.3. Clanship "*Alagha/Alimi*":

Kathleen Collins deliberates that “a Clan is an informal organisation comprising a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds” (Collins, 2004, p. 231). Clanship are found in almost every tribal society. The Sümi tribe is divided into various clans. Clanship is one of the major components of kinship in Sümi society. Socio-cultural heterogeneity is not only an essential characteristic of the collective Naga society; furthermore, non-uniformity may be found within a tribe itself. Underscoring the multifaceted systems that exists in Sümi tribe is the prevalence of various number of clans within the tribe that shaped the structure of the society.

“The Sümi comprise of various clans who further reckon their kinship to two main phratries: *Tukumi* and *Swumi*” (Chophy, 2019, p. 65). According to Oral tradition, as H.S. Rotokha narrates, *Swü* and *Tuku* are brothers. Within the two main clans, they are organized further into sub-clans based on genealogical lineages, and titled after their patriarch. As recorded by Najekhu (1985) Sema Literature Board, clan groups under *Swü* and *Tuku* are given here (Figure 3).

Swü Lagha	Tuku Lagha
1. <i>Süchomi</i>	1. <i>Awomi</i>
2. <i>Tsüqümi</i>	2. <i>Ayemi</i>
3. <i>Shohemi</i>	3. <i>Chophimi</i>
4. <i>Wotsami</i>	4. <i>Chiqhimi</i>
5. <i>Achümi</i>	5. <i>Kinimi</i>
6. <i>Jimomi</i>	6. <i>Mürümi</i>
7. <i>Khüjümi</i>	7. <i>Yephomi</i>
8. <i>Katimi</i>	
9. <i>Khakhomi</i>	
10. <i>Shochomi</i>	
11. <i>Lalami</i>	
12. <i>Khutimi</i>	
13. <i>Wokhami</i>	
14. <i>Chelami</i>	
15. <i>Kapomi</i>	
16. <i>Kibami</i>	
17. <i>Nünümi</i>	

Figure 3: Sumi Phratry

Sümi oral narratives establish a common ancestor of the *Swü* and *Tuku* clans, with variations about which of the two was firstborn; some claim *Swü* to be older, while others say *Tuku* is the older son. Nevertheless, it is commonly understood that *Swü* and *Tuku* formed into two clans due to divergence in the practice of traditional rituals '*chine-chini*'.

According to one legend, their mother who was well versed with the '*chine-chini*' of the ancestors, imparted the knowledge to her two sons; the younger son was taught all of the '*chine-chini*' at length, hence the *Swü chine* came to be in-depth, rigid and lengthy. Whereas, the older son learnt a simpler and rudimentary form of the '*chine-chini*', therefore *Tuku chine* became easier, convenient and attenuated. With the increase in population and migration of Sümis over time, these rituals and practices may have evolved, and developed variations as they spread out to different regions, especially as they came in contact with other societies.

The elaborate *Swü chine* presents a stark juxtaposition to the relaxed *Tuku chine* as demonstrated in the ceremonial procedures. Citing H.S. Rotokha, former president, Sumi Hoho, two examples stand out: Firstly, as seen in the rituals observed to host '*Aphisa*', i.e. Feast of Merit, according to the *Swü Chine*, the animal to be slaughtered must be healthy and should not bear any scar, marks or extra body parts. However, *Tuku Chine* does not adhere to these requirements strictly, and uses even animals found preyed upon by wild animals. Secondly, during *Ahuna* which is a post-harvest festival, *Swü Chine* observes '*Aghuzaphe*' ritual, whereas *Tuku Chine* performs '*Aqhedu*' ritual. '*Aghuzaphe*' involves erecting bamboo posts, and decorating leaves on top of the posts and the chosen cow/Mithun was tied to the bamboo and slaughtered. In '*Aqhedu*', Y-shaped wooden post are erected for each animal to be slaughtered and are tied to the posts as part of the process (Plate 3).



Plate 3: Left, 'Aghuzaphe' (Source: J. H. Hutton). Right, 'Aghedu' at Mukalimi Village.

2.3.4. Adoption “*Timi Nga Sakulu*”

Adoption was a traditional practice prevalent among the Sümi Nagas, and continue to be commonly practiced to this day. The laws of adoption were flexible, depending on the context and mutual understanding of the parties involved. For instance, when a man died and his widow re-married, their children were adopted by the brother of the deceased. In case of a childless couple, with mutual understanding and consensus among the family members, the couple could adopt one of their sibling's child.

According to '*Sümi Lhoyehza*' by Sumi Hoho(p. 12-13) (traditional law), in the past orphans could be adopted from within the family and village circle, however it was prohibited to adopt children outside of the community. The adoptive parents were held

responsible for the welfare of the adopted child for a lifetime. The father's inheritance could be given to the adopted son at the will of the adoptive father. A rigorous set of rituals were performed for adoption of a child, which began with '*Kushokulü Chine akipxi*' (meeting ritual), followed by '*Khuti*' (cleansing) and the third step was piercing ears of the child. After all these steps were followed, the child was accepted as a member of the family and the community. If the adoptee was an infant during the event of adoption, the naming was done only after performing '*Khuti*' by killing a chicken. However, this ritual was not performed if the adoptee was an adult.

2.3.5. Marriage “*Kulakupu*”:

Marriage was a significant ceremony and occasion for the Sümi Nagas. Marriage was always exogamous among the Sümi tribe. Most Sümis followed monogamy, though in some exceptional cases, polygamy was also prevalent. Polygamy was practiced mainly by the chiefs and wealthy men of the village. This view is supported by the statement, 'except in the case of headmen, the Semas do not, as a rule, practice polygamy. It is, however, allowed' (Elwin, 1969, p. 374). Avitoli Zhimo (2018, p. 158) has mentioned in her article titled '*Customary Laws, Patriarchy and Gender relations in contemporary Sumi Naga society*' that, in the past, among the Sümi Nagas, the more the wives, the higher the status of men and it was only the rich and wealthy men belonging to chieftainship lineage who could afford the bride of high price which indicates the prevalence of polygamy in the tribe.

Sümi marriage ethics, rituals and ceremony varied depending on the clan's practices and region. Arranged and love marriages were both prevalent among the tribe. There was no particular age prescribed for marriage, but in most cases, young men and women who had attained the age of adulthood were encouraged to get married. There were also cases of early marriage, which was primarily after the attainment of puberty.

There were four categories of marriage that established social hierarchy in the society:

- i) *Aminikimiji xe* was the highest form of marriage observed only by the chiefs and the wealthy who were eligible with rigid rituals, and exorbitant bride price.
- ii) *Ashoghix* was similar to *Aminikimiji xe* in grandeur, without the ritualistic criteria.
- iii) *Hatha xe* was observed among the commoners; the bride price' was fixed depending on the economic condition of the two families.
- iv) *Akupula xe* or *Topunasho xe* was remarriage of widow and widower, divorced, pregnant woman, and woman with child.

2.2.6 Divorce “*Küghuxa*”:

Divorce was a rare case in the Sümi society. Divorce could be initiated by the husband or wife on different grounds such as abuse, adultery, infertility, and failure to meet marital obligations. The divorce settlement was guided by customary law '*lhoyezha*' (traditional law) which could be specific to each village and group. Divorce cases would be deliberated by elders of the family who may attempt reconciliation, and determine the outcome while upholding community norms and values. Liabilities would be imposed depending on the party's fault; if the husband was found guilty, he would repay the 'bride price' offered during marriage. However, if it were the husband's fault, a portion of his property would be given to the wife. As the patriarchal society dictates that children belong to the father's family lineage, the sole custody of the children would belong to the father. Wife could have the daughters if the husband consents, however, sons remain with the husband. In some instances, where the husband cheats on his wife and marries another woman, the first wife may keep all their children, and the husband may not have claim to their children or children's property in the

future. In some cases, children have attained the age of 16 or 17 may have the autonomy to choose which parent to stay with but adopt the father's surname.

Women faced social stigma after divorce; with no inheritance, her economic security could be precarious, and negative perceptions of divorced women could hinder her scope of remarriage. On the hand, men's position in the society is not affected by the divorce. Divorce proceedings have social and economic outcomes for both families; kinship dynamics may be strained; this could impact family relations, and cause shift in social alliances within the community.

2.4. Sümi Naga Polity

The Sümi Nagas had a well formed political structure in the pre-colonial period. Chieftainship is an essential feature of their polity. The system of administration and governance was exercised by the chief and council of elders, who acted as the chief's subordinates. Since Sümi society practices a robust patriarchal system, the decision-making and administration are carried out by men folk. Women hardly participated or held any post in political affairs.

2.3.1. Akükaü/ Kukami: Chief /chiefs

According to John Sema's (2001) '*Traditional and modern political institution of Sumi Nagas*', "the institution of chiefship by and large seems to have grown out of the collective needs of the people, which characterized the tribal societies in India and elsewhere. However, it is not possible to state clearly when and how this institution of the chief came into being among the Sumis" (p.28). The chief of the Sumi tribe is known as '*Akükaü*', and '*Kükami*' for chiefs. Chieftainship is one of the key components of the Sümi Naga society.

Chieftainship in the Sümi society is well structured, and practiced to this day across all Sümi villages, though power dynamics may have evolved over time.

Though chieftainship was common among tribal societies, the Sümi chieftainship has unique features and characteristics. Konyak's practice of chieftainship, known as '*Anghs*', differs from Sümi's chieftainship. The difference is seen in the practice where the Konyaks have a ranking order of '*Anghs*' whereas, the Sumis do not have ranking system and each chief is autonomous. The difference of the Sümi chieftainship from other Naga tribes is highlighted in Verrier Elwin's '*The Nagas of the 19th Century*', where he states that "the point in which the Semas differ from the other Naga tribes living in this district is the possession of hereditary village chiefs" (1969, p. 372-373). The closest case of similarity in hereditary chieftainship was found in the case of Kachins's Gumsa in Burma. As stated by E.R. Leach (1954) "each village had a hereditary headman, whose lineage surname was in most cases the same as that of his village" (p. 68). In the case of Sümi, villages are named after the founder's name.

2.3.2. Eligibility of the *Akükaü* (chief):

The position of a chief is held in high esteem in the Sümi society. According to John Sema (2001, p. 29) "In the traditional political system like the Sümis, the chief occupied a unique position in the village. He was the guardian of the law and the owner of the village."

A man could become chief by establishing a new village and thereby claiming the '*Akükaü*' position. However, the process of establishing a village was a challenging and arduous task requiring certain qualities that befits the position of '*Akükaü*'. The virtues attributed to the '*Akükaü*' were extraordinary: A strong warrior '*aghütomi*', possessing leadership qualities to inspire and lead his followers, to protect the community from threats, to uphold customary laws, to ensure communal wellbeing and other remarkable qualities

distinguishing them from the common folk. Administering a village necessitated an '*Akükaü*' to possess immense power and authority over his councillors and community. "The Sema chiefs are also considered to be powerful enough to control the *Chochomi* or Council, and have the final say in most of the cases, therefore, semi-autocratic in nature" (Venuh, 2019, p. 19).

With these multifaceted roles expected of the '*Akükaü*', it was perceived that gods have sanctioned them to be the leader. In the words of G.B Hekuto from Sukhalu village, "it is believed that those who become '*Akükaü*' by fulfilling traditional criteria prescribed by the elders are blessed with good fortune and longevity. However, those taking over the position by violating the norm face repercussions such as short lives and other misfortunes. This belief surrounding chieftainship still holds true in contemporary times, further validated by similar teachings in the Christian faith followed by the Sümis.

Apart from *Akükaü*, the wife does not bear any political privileges. The chief's wife was expected to be of noble character, hospitable and polite. Her role was considered instrumental in hosting guests and visitors. Her duty was to keep the family together, prepare meals and feed the family. In some instances, the relationship of the *Akükaü* with his subordinates matters based on the treatment of the *Akükaü* wife towards them. It was said that some ties could be strained or strengthened by *Akükaü*'s wife's attitude toward the villagers. In matters where *Akükaü* has more than one wife, they are identified as the first wife, second wife, etc., and the chief's successor was the eldest son from the first wife. Since society follows patriarchy, women, in general, do not have any voice or are allowed to participate in any decision-making. They were mere observers, listeners and followers of rules and decisions taken by man.

2.3.3. The process of setting up a new Village

Establishing a village in the Sümi tribe involves a rigorous process that is deeply rooted in traditional beliefs and communal traditions. The process is discussed in brief here.

- i) An intended chief gathers his close aides and followers for setting up a new village. Then the matter is discussed with ‘*Akukau*’ and ‘council of elders’ of the parent village; the permission is given by the ‘*Akukau*’ with assurance from the intended chief to follow all the traditional norms to establish a new village.
- ii) Thereafter, the intended chief with his close aides survey the vast forest lands and explore suitable areas to ascertain the scope of establishing a new village. Such as strategic location for defense, fertile lands for cultivation, availability of water source and other advantages. On selecting the most favorable site, the area will be cleared or demarcated.
- iii) The group return back to their parent village, and make plans for departure. Once the departure day is finalized by the ‘*Akukau*’, it is followed by feasting and observation of rituals associated with migration. These rituals and practices hold spiritual significance and involve communal participation, which is discussed in detail in the next chapter.
- iv) The migration process involved the intended chief appointing individuals to the following offices, serving specific functions:
 1. *Ghüngü*—meaning Shadow, is the closest aide of the chief ‘*Akukau*’
 2. *Awou* – The Chief Priest
 3. *Arü-u*– The first reaper
 4. *Atsukupumi* – The dog bearer
 5. *Awo kupumi* –Four pig bearers
 6. *Aghü-u* – Two warriors
 7. *Lapumi* / *Anisu-u* – First taster of food and drinks
 8. *Amoshou* – Burier of the dead

9. *Atumu-u* – Seer

10. *Azukheu* – in charge of the village's water source

- v) A woman of upright character is chosen to step into the new village. A blameless woman is chosen to be the first to drink water from the water source of the new village.
- vi) At the new village, the chief's house will be first constructed by all the members, only then they will construct houses for the rest of the villagers.
- vii) For the first cultivation, the men folk will observe certain rituals. Bodies should be clean when they go to the field for the first time. *Awoü-ü* (chief priest) will cut a tree to initiate the cultivation. No participation of women is allowed

2.3.4. *Anükishimi*

The term '*Anükishimi*' refers to dependents of the village chief(s) and wealthy patron; these individuals were landless and poor. The benefactor provided shelter and allocated land for cultivation; the dependant would be indebted to the benefactor, and morally obliged to give free labor, tributes, and other services in return. The benefactor was addressed as '*Alii pighiü*' (landlord), '*Ampeü*' (master) or '*Apü*' (father), and the dependent(s) were called '*Inülishimi*' (my sons). Dependants took on the surnames of their benefactor, and pledged loyalty to their benefactor. '*Anükishimi*' was a traditional bondage system that was different from slavery, and other exploitative nature of bonded labourers. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement for both parties in the cultural context of that time. '*Anükishimi*' held lower social status in the hierarchical system of Sümi society and polity; they were subjects to the authority of the chief(s) and their benefactors. They played important roles as followers, labourers, fighters, and rendered other manual services in the village establishment and migration process. '*Anükishimi*' was hereditary; children inherited the title of their parents. *Anükishimi* could obtain freedom by paying a settlement price determined by his benefactor.

2.3.5. *Aqhü-Axhe*

'*Aqha-axhe*' was a traditional bondage system similar to '*Anükishimi*', both becoming adoptees of their benefactor – receiving surname, protection and other provisions. These individuals were poorest in the society, and became '*Aqhü-Axhe*' as they had no resources to survive. In some cases, they were also sold as slaves. The benefactor secured the economic security of his '*Aqhu-Axhe*', payed bride-price for his marriage, and took care of his family needs. This bondage was also hereditary. However, it was taboo for '*Aqhu-Axhe*' to leave their benefactor, inviting misfortune on even expressing their desire to break away. '*Aqha-axhe*' made up the entourage of the Chief(s) in village establishment and migration process, serving with unyielding loyalty.

2.5. Economy of The Sümi Nagas

In the past, wealth was indicated by possession of land, paddy, livestock and forest lands. Multitasking various activities to increase wealth, was a fundamental aspect of economic sustenance in a Sümi village; following seasonal cycles of agriculture, the villagers engaged in livestock rearing, craft production, weaving, trading and other economic activities. During the off-season from agricultural activities, men engaged in crafting tools and implements, whereas women specialized in weaving. Hunting, raising livestock and fishing were also commonly practiced. Another source of livelihood was foraging resources from the forest.

2.4.1. Agriculture

Agriculture formed the backbone of the village economy. Land was often communally owned under the authority of the village chief(s), or shared within clan and family groups. Every family was allocated a portion of land for cultivation, and all the household members

contributed to agricultural work. Sümis practiced traditional farming methods rooted in local ecological knowledge, passed down through generations. Two types of cultivation were prevalent: Jhum cultivation or Shifting cultivation known as '*Atolü*' was a significant practice, and also wet or terrace cultivation known as '*Akülü*'. Unlike the Angami and Chakhesang tribes, who commonly practiced wet cultivation, only the privileged who owned lands near water sources cultivated in the '*Akülü*'. However, a particular system of landowners leasing '*Akülü*' land for a fixed period to other village members had been in practice whereby the cultivator offered a percentage of the harvest to the landowners.

Subsistence agriculture was prevalent, characterized by self-sufficiency rather selling the produce for profit, even though there were surplus production in agricultural and forest produces. Only in the recent past, villages have transitioned to farming for commercial gain, with a shift from traditional barter system to money as currency, development of urban centers, access to market, and later the influence of government policies. Among the Sümi tribe, the concept of using money was unfamiliar in almost every village (Elwin, 1969, p. 375).

Every village had enough land for cultivation; they grew rice, maize, millet, beans, taro, potatoes, pumpkin, mustard leaves, cabbage, bitter gourds, ginger, garlic and many more. While each household accumulated personal wealth, the communal practice of pooling resources and sharing surplus produces within members of the village fostered interdependence and economic stability of the village community.

2.4.2. Livestock rearing

For the Sümis, domestication of animals and raising livestock were common practices and important source of livelihood. Livestock such as dog, pigs, cows, fowls, goat, and cats were reared both as a pet and for consumption. These resources served as a form of economic

security, and were traded in and outside the village. Buffaloes and Mithuns were mostly reared in some regions where there was enough source of water. Mithuns were considered as priced animal, mostly owned by the wealthy. During auspicious events like festivals and marriage, a Mithun is killed for the feast. However, pig is reared in almost all the household and commonly used for consumption in most of the occasions.

2.4.3. Tools and weapons

Since pre-historic times, the tools and weapons humanity has used have been significant in facilitating their progress. Historians have attributed the human race's advancement to the types and kinds of tools they made and used for various purposes. The survival of humanity in the harsh environment depended mainly on their ability to evolve, adapt and invent the best tactic for survival. The invention and usage of tools are considered one of the most important discoveries in the evolution of humankind from food-gathering to hunting. Gordon Childe noted that as archaeologists began tracing the history of tools, it was observed that humans not only altered their tools but also transformed their means of livelihood (their economy), which in turn reshaped the way society was organized for collaboration (Childe, 1944, p. 1).

Therefore, in the study of the progress of a community, the study of tools provides a vital knowledge bank to the type of society of a particular time and era. Humans are significantly shaped and defined by the use of tools and implements. One cannot ignore the fact that in the development of any society, the usage of tools and weapons is an indispensable part of the changes. Over time, tools, implements, and weapons have changed according to the needs and development of humankind. It serves as an evidence of cultural information. These tools are vital to gathering information on the people associated with it. Tools and weapons are like a storehouse of knowledge when no written records are available.

Gordon Childe states that, “any tool is a social product; the rules for making and using it are preserved and handed on by a social tradition” (Childe, 1944, p. 2). So, it can be a vital source for the Sümis oral society.

Nagas are expert makers of different *daos* (*machetes*), spears, scrapers, etc. and Sümis, specifically, produces handmade dresses, weapons, pots, baskets, metal works and musical instruments (Periera et al., 2019, p. 123). Sümi Nagas, in particular, has varied tools used for different purposes. As Sümi are primarily an agrarian community, the use of various agricultural tools is notable. They practice both traditional Jhum/Shifting cultivation and paddy/wet cultivation. According to the needs of the agricultural activity, appropriate tools are used to suit the needs, such as clearing jungles, cultivation, etc. Likewise, weapons are used during hunting and headhunting, which was in vogue during ancient times.

While the rest of the world had achieved tremendous progress in advancement of tools, implements and weapons during different eras, the Nagas continued to use traditional items as they had limited interaction with the wider world. The evolution in the usage of tools reflect the larger developments in Naga history as they came into contact with other civilizations. In the mid-19th century, the British's contact with the Nagas and the coming of Christian missionaries changed the Naga's ways of life. Britain was transformed by Industrial Revolution from late 18th century onwards, while the Nagas were living in relative isolation from the world, until British came to the Naga hills. British colonialism had both negative and positive impact for the Nagas. While, it led to the introduction of advanced tools and weapons of the West, these circumstances led to the decline of many traditional and cultural practices of the Sümi Nagas. To cite a few examples, headhunting was discouraged, and attending Christian schools was encouraged. Spades were replaced with pens. Traditional songs and dances were replaced with Christian songs and hymns. Western skirts replaced

traditional wrap-around for women; for men, their traditional shawls were replaced with red shawls distributed by the British government.

Therefore, it can be reckoned that the introduction of modern way of life as the West perceived, brought about rapid change in the lifestyle of the Nagas. This development disrupted the cultural and traditional practices of the Nagas and adversely affected the usage of traditional tools, implements and weapons. For instance, due to the introduction of advance tools such as hack-saws and machines, cutting down trees and clearing the land became easier, and thus substituted the traditional tools and weapons. Many tools and weapons became a symbol of past, kept as decorations and showpieces at home, having lost their purpose and importance and seen as outdated. This led to the decline of traditional craftsmanship, and transmission of skills and techniques of tool making.

2.4.4. Taboos attached to tools and weaponry

In the ancient past, the Sümi Nagas practiced indigenous religion, characterized by animistic beliefs in nature and spirits. They believed in taboos and rituals known as '*chine-chini*' that shaped their ways of life. Observation of rituals and use of tools are deeply intertwined with '*chine-chini*'. There were two '*chine-chini*' practiced by the two clans of Sümitribe – *SwüChine* and *TukuChine*, which were distinctly different from each other. *SwüChine* was elaborate, whereas the *TukuChine* was attenuated. Variations in rituals reflect in the usage of tools and weapons, as with the associated beliefs. Variations specific to a village indicate cultural contacts with neighboring villages and their influence. Certain rituals associated with tools and implements have several restrictions on women, who are not allowed to touch or make contact with the war weapons of the men. It is said to bring misfortune to the menfolk during hunting or war activity. For example, if a woman touches

the weapons which men take for hunting, it is considered a harbinger of ill luck, and no game could be killed as a consequence.

Concerning the development and progress of traditional tools, very few studies are found. Despite the advancement in society, the tools and weapons has remained primitive. Not much advancement is seen in traditional tools between the pre-colonial era and the post-colonial, except in matters where the foreigners introduced new tools and weapons. In the case of production, the nature of society directly influences the production of these tools and weapons. Every village was independent and self-sufficient. They lived a straightforward life, which resulted in less demand for articles. Their tools and weapons are confined to domestic, agriculture, hunting-fishing and headhunting activities. Therefore, their requirement for tools, implements, and weapons are limited to these needs. Moreover, since their life routine is circled around these activities, almost every male member of the family is expected to know and learn how to make tools and implements.

2.4.5. Morungs

Morungs are communal dormitories which served as informal institutions of learning for both boys and girls. Morung system played a vital role in transmission of traditional craftsmanship and artisanal skills to the younger generation such as weaving clothes, jewellery and adornments, basket weaving, woodwork, weaponry among others. In Sümi society, boys and girls had separate dormitories – ‘*Apüki*’ was boys' dormitory and ‘*Illiki*’ was girls' dormitory. In every village, boys and girls who have attained the age of adolescence would spend time and sleep in their respective Morungs until they are married. They are taught all the manners, customs and skills during their stay. All the essential skills, such as making arts and crafts, are taught and learned from this place. Therefore, in the past, traditional knowledge and skills were passed on from generation to generation at the Morung.

However, the introduction of schools and western system of education led to the decline of this institution, resulting in the loss of the practice of imparting traditional knowledge, craftsmanship and artisanal skills. This very reason can also be attributed to the decline of the art of making tools and weapons and their production. Though the original structure of Morungs are not prevalent, the Lazami village has erected the model of traditional Morung in their village to signify the practice of traditional Morung (plate. 4).



*Plate 4: Model of 'Apuki' (Morung) at Lazami Village.
Top-left, platform used as bed. Top-right, Skulls of animals used as decorative pieces. Bottom,
'Apuki' as seen from outside.*

2.4.6. '*Ashi aghü phikimthe*' (Cleansing Rituals observed for headhunting/war)

'*Ashi aghü shikimthe*' was a ritual observed to cleanse war weapons among the menfolk. This ritual was performed by every able male member of the village at the beginning of every year, before the felling of trees for firewood. Every able man would carry a rooster to the campsite in the jungle and prepared the rooster for a meal. All men ate the cooked rooster along with beer made of job's tears. After this, they cleansed their body and weapons like spears, *dao* (machete) and clothing. During this time, women would not consume any unclean food; they were forbidden to weave or touch threads, they would not touch chicken coops, etc. They are forbidden from any work and expected to observe the days solemnly. Though this ritual is not observed uniformly in the present context, the cleansing of weapons is carried out individually by male family members. Modern weapons like guns and bullets has replaced traditional weapons, while cleansing and threading these weapons are done through prayer based on Christian belief.

2.4.7. Types of tools, implements, and weapons.

There are many tools, implements and weapons used by the Sümi Nagas. Below are a few of the essential articles they commonly use. It must be noted that there are variations regarding the types of articles used, terms and purposes. In the past, the materials used for making tools, implements, and weapons were mostly wood, bamboo and metal. There are many tools and implements relating to household and agriculture, but they are constrained regarding weapons. The traditional tools, implements and weapons of the Sümi Nagas can be classified into different groups:

1. Domestic tools
2. Agricultural tools
3. Weapons

2.4.7.1. Domestic tools: -

I. *Azüta (machete)*

Machetes are one of the most essential tools found in every household. It is used for various purposes, both for household and agricultural works like cutting meat, slashing woods, clearing the jungles and headhunting. It has different shapes and sizes. The handle portion is made of wood, and iron metal is attached. A man keeps his personal '*Azüta*' chopping meat and headhunting separately. They are expected to keep their '*Azüta*' sharpened at all times. The family's father owns his personal '*Azüta*,' which is restricted to others and used by him alone. Women are prohibited from touching the personal belongings of a man as there is a belief that it will cause misfortune to the owner (Plate 5).



*Plate 5: Azüta (Machete/Dao) of the
Sümi Tribe*

II. *Aphükhüki (mortar) & Akhümü(pestle)*

In the past, all grinding was done manually. '*Aphükhüki*' is used for pounding and grinding rice, chilly, maize and other related crops. It is usually carved from sturdy trees that are locally available. The mortar is carved cylindrical in shapes of different sizes. This is mainly used to make pounded rice, perilla seeds, chillies, etc. This item is commonly found in every household (Plate 6).



Plate 6: Aphükhüki (mortar for pounding)

III. *Aboshü (mortar for pounding grain)*

'*Aboshü*' grinds paddy and other food in larger quantities. It is made out of the whole trunk of a tree. Odd numbers are preferred to carve the holes, which consist of 3-7 in numbers. The number of holes is carved based on the *Mithuns* killed during the '*Feast of Merit*'. It is sometimes used as a bed to sleep on. This item is found mainly in rich men's houses and the Morungs (Plate 7).



*Plate 7: Aboshuü (mortar for pounding grains)
Top-left, at Phisami Village. Top-right, at Ighanumi Village.
Bottom, at Lazami Village/*

IV. *Asükhü (wooden plate)*

'*Asükhü*' is a wooden plate commonly found in every household. Husband and wife eat together on the same plate; likewise, children eat together. Parents usually eat on their plates, and sanctity is maintained as a sign of respect. The mother must serve her husband and children. Sometimes, the youngest daughter does the errands during mealtime. Female members are also expected to serve water to the male members to wash their hands, along with other domestic duties. This practice is still followed, though not uniformly.

V. *Amüto (basket for carrying wood)*

Wood is the primary source of fuel for burning. Woods are collected from the forest and are carried in baskets called '*amüto*' by both men and women. It is also used to carry vegetables from the field. It is made of bamboo and has a square bottom (Hutton, 2007, p. 56). When the whole family goes to the field, this basket is stacked together and is carried by the youngest female member. Men do not carry while going to the field but they carry the filled '*amüto*' (basket) on their return from the field (Plate 8).



Plate 8: Amüto & Aphukho (Basket for carrying firewood)

VI. *Akho (basket for paddy)*

After the harvest, the paddy is carried on the head in an *akhö* -basket. It is also weaved out of bamboo. It is closely knitted to prevent paddy spillage. It has a tapered and pointed edge at the base and a large opening at the top, which is circular.

2.4.7.3 Agricultural tools and implements: -

- i.* '*Aphükhü*' is one of the most critical agricultural tools for the Sümi Nagas. It is used for cleaning weeds, tilling soil, digging for sowing, etc. It is found in different shapes and sizes. The handle is made of wood and attached to metal at the lower end for scraping and tilling the soil (Plate 9).

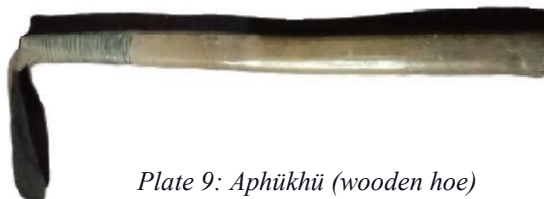


Plate 9: Aphükhü (wooden hoe)

ii. *Aküwa (scraper)*

According to the source of Najekhü in his work '*Sümi Lhoayezha*', it has been narrated that '*Akuwa*' is the first tool used by the forefathers of the Sümi Nagas. The origin of this particular tool is associated with the Naga Myth of '*Man, Tiger and Spirit*'. According to the story, Man, Tiger and Spirit were brothers. After their separation, Man and the spirit had their field sharing a boundary. The field of the spirit was immaculate, while the field of the Man was full of weeds. Therefore, one day the Man met the Spirit to enquire about the matter. Therefore, the Spirit decided to help the Man. The Spirit went to the Man's field and instructed him to turn his face to the other side while working. As the Man turned his face, the Spirit cleaned and removed all the weeds, hid it under the huge boulder, and told the Man not to lift the boulder or look under it. However, the Man became impatient and lifted the boulder, after which the field of the Man was again filled with weeds. So the Spirit again instructed the Man to look up at the particular tree and check out the tool kept by the Spirit. So the Man searched for the tree and found the '*Aküwa*' (scraper) hanging on the branch. After that, the Man understood the purpose and began to use this tool to clean the weeds in the field. This tool is smaller and is used for cleaning the weeds when the crops are sprouting. It is used in place of a hoe as it might cut off the crops that are shooting out.

2.4.7. 3. War weapons: -

The weapons used by the Sümi tribe are limited. Their weapons were relatively primitive. They are known to have used weapons like '*Angü*' (Spear), '*Azüto*' (shield), '*Asükhi*' (Machete holder), '*asüxu/asülika*' (Crossbow) and '*Ashü*' (Panjis).

iii. *Angü* (spear)

In the ancient past, the Sūmis practiced headhunting. '*Angü*' was one of the most important weapons used during the war. They would throw their spear at the enemy, and after killing them, the heads are chopped off with '*Azüta*' (machete).

iv. *Asükhi* (machete holder)

This item is used by every man when they go out to work. It is tied around their waist, and the '*Azüta*' is hung on it. Some decorate it women's hair. Legend says that if the hair of a person alive is used, that person will suffer from headaches or dizziness. This also indicates that the hair of the deceased person is usually used. In some cases, the hair of the head taken from enemies' villages is used for this purpose.

v. *Azüto* (shield)

'*Azüto*' is a type of shield used for protection during war. It is woven out of bamboo and buffalo skin. Men use this in times of war to shield themselves from their enemies. This armour is carried on the left hand while the spear is on the right hand (Plate10).



Plate 10: *Azüto* (shield)
Left, Bamboo weaved shield at Lazami Village. Right, Elephant Hide shield at Phisami Village

vi. *Asüzü/asulika* (crossbow)

All the Sūmis do not commonly use crossbow. The easternmost Sūmis may have learnt to use crossbows from other tribes they came in contact with, like Yimchunger,

Sangtams, etc. This weapon was primarily used for hunting. It is found in various shapes and sizes (Plate 11).



*Plate 11: Asüzü/asulika (crossbow)
from Sitimi Town*

vii. Ashü (Panjis)

Panjis is a spiked tool made of wood or bamboo. It is usually planted on the ground as a trap for enemies and used as a defense mechanism planted around the village vicinity (Hutton, 2007, p. 18). This is one of the only defense mechanisms known and used by the Sümi Nagas.

With so much progress and development of tools and technologies worldwide, it will be a great challenge to remain rooted in our culture and traditions. However, people must understand that along with the changes, we can still preserve our past cultural traditions and practices by embracing their values. Several traditional tools and articles are commonly used in every Sümi Naga household, and there is a preference for using these traditional articles over modern ones. The cultural traditions and practices are closely associated with the use of traditional tools and implements, which are vital in understanding the more profound knowledge associated with them.

CHAPTER 3

TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS: RITUALS, TABOOS AND CEREMONIES OBSERVED BY THE SÜMI TRIBE

In the past, the Sümi Nagas followed their own indigenous religion, characterised by animistic beliefs in nature and spirits, that guided their traditional customs. They believed in supernatural beings known as '*Alhou*', *Kungumi*, *Tughami*, *Aghao* and more. As described by Kanato Chophy, "The Sümi pantheon is comprised of various classes of spirits and supernatural beings" (2019, p. 84). According to J.H. Hutton, there are three distinct classes known as '*Alhou*' (or *Timilhou*)-creator, '*Kungumi*'-someone who dwells high above, '*Tughami*'-spirits of earth (2007, p. 191-195). Hence, the concepts of these supernatural beings shaped their belief system and shaped their interactions with nature, daily practices, community values and goals, social norms, rituals, taboos and ceremonies.

Rituals, taboos and ceremonies were integral to the functioning of the Sümi society. Sümis gave much importance to high morale and living an upright life. They valued honesty, loyalty, bravery, a sense of duty and responsibility. They also gave utmost importance to live a disciplined life, and social norms were treated seriously in the Sümi society. Sümis were known to be ritualistic, strictly adhering to their traditional rituals, taboos and ceremonies, in the form of '*Chine-Chini*' and '*Pinhe- Pini*', which is discussed in this chapter. These customs among the Sümi tribe varied, depending on clan, family and region. Variation of customs can be traced back to the origin story and waves of migration. Sümis are known to be the descendants of two brothers known as '*Tuku*' and '*Swu*', who practiced their respective forms of '*Chine-Chini*'.

3.1. Rituals and Taboos of the Sümi Nagas '*Chine-Chini*'

Like many other Naga tribes, the observance of *Genna* or rituals and taboos were prevalent in the Sümi tribe, in the form of '*Chine-Chini*'. The term '*Chine-Chini*' consist of two words; '*Chine*' can be understood as '*Genna*' or rituals, '*Chini*' means '*Taboos*' or forbidden things or acts. Thus, the term '*Chine-Chini*' can be understood as rituals and taboos. The origin of the concept of '*Chine-Chini*' is traced back to the common legend among the Nagas i.e, 'Man, Spirit and Tiger' who were brothers. It is said that the Spirit taught the man various arts, crafts, tools, and rituals. This legend reflects the core belief of the Nagas in the coexistence of Man with Spirit and Nature, influencing much of their rituals and taboos.

The practice of Sümi traditional customs are associated with the idea of prosperity and good life, such as invoking the blessings of the spirits for good harvest, good health, good marriage, and protection from misfortunes. '*Chine-Chini*' a compound term in practice; '*Chine*' meaning Rituals and '*Chini*' meaning Taboos were most often practiced simultaneously, serving distinct, yet interconnected purposes to reinforce the belief system. Taboos can exist independently of ritual, while most rituals involve taboos.

3.1.1. *Chini* – Taboos

In Sümi society, *Chini* served diverse functions, from regulating food, marriage, behaviour, gender, rituals, ceremonies, and other community norms, with consequences attached to the violation of these taboos. As such, taboos played a crucial role in maintaining social order in the community by establishing acceptable social and moral conduct and discouraging behaviours that could disrupt communal harmony and stability. *Chini* is a significant mechanism involved in imparting traditional values in Sümi culture, which is inviolable and sacred (Sumi, 2023, p.147). In the oral tradition of the Sümi, the significance

of *chini* is reflected in this saying “*pikha chini-pimo chini*” which means, it is a taboo to narrate ancestors story completely and taboo not to narrate at all. This phrase may have influenced the way oral narratives have been passed on to generations, in which *chini* weighed on a person’s conscience to exercise caution while narrating. In the Sümi society, such phrases and sayings which has been passed down through elders play an important role in establishing social norms. Such phrases began with ‘*apu-asu tsalo*’; which means “in the words of our forefathers”, emphasising the importance of traditional wisdom of the ancestors. To cite a few examples of *chini*:

1. It is taboo to talk, eat and sit before elders - *Itimi ye kichimi züu atsa pichemo, iqa chemo, chu chemo, zütha chemo tishi aye achinupu ke.*
2. It is taboo to steal and eat fish from others’ fishpond, it will cause body swelling- *Timi khabolo akha pukachu kiu ye chini, kughengu tishi aye aphi ingu nani.*
3. It is a taboo to tamper the boundary stones in a field, it will cause short life- *Aghuthu- aghiphi bukiqhe kiu ye chini, kughengu, alho ikhove nani.*
4. It is taboo to steal/cut others bamboo shoot, it will cause early blindness and falling of teeth - *Timi khaubo lo akuthu pukalu /micheve chemo, itheno anhehi ngo ahu kuhave nani.*
5. It is taboo for men to eat birds head, flies will hover in their eyes when they go for the hunt and distract their sight- *Kiptimi ye aghau nhehi chu chemo, amiyi no anhehi veho no ashi yi mula.*

3.1.2 Achine – Genna / Rituals

Achine is the plural form of *Chine*. Most of the *Achine* were associated with rituals to invoke blessings from the spirits for headhunting, hunting, fishing, agricultural work, construction of house, clearing the paths and other essential works. Rituals were also

observed to ward off evil spirits from destruction of crops, cattle, properties and from causing sickness, accidents and deaths. Ceremonies and festivals were observed with specific rituals associated with birth, marriage and deaths and other momentous events. *Achine* was broadly classified into two types: *Aki chine* and *Agha chine*; following are few of the mandatorily practiced *Chine*:

I. *Aki Chine* - Household rituals observed at home.

- a) *Apunu chine* - Birth rituals
- b) *Kulakupu chine* - Marriage rituals
- c) *Akithi chine* -Death rituals

II. *Agha Chine* - Rituals followed outside the household or village

- a) *Ghile chine* - Harvest rituals
- b) *Aghalo Xapiki Kishi chine* - Rituals of constructing the field hut

3.2. *Apunu chine-chini* - Birth rituals and taboos

In Sümi society, there were certain norms and rituals required to be observed before and after giving birth to a child. Pregnant women were forbidden from killing snakes. They were also forbidden to eat certain meat lest the unborn child might be harmed. If the firstborn was a boy there was ten days of *chine-chini*, and 9 (nine) days of *chine-chini* if a girl was born. For the rest of the children, *chine-chini* was observed for 6 (six) days in case of a boy, and 5 (five) days for girl. A rooster was killed for a boy, and a hen for a girl; the meat was consumed only by the mother and it was taboo for others to eat this meat. If a child died before the observation of all these rituals, it was considered an unnatural death.

3.2.1. *Kulakupu chine* - Marriage rituals

Kulakupu meaning marriage in Sümi, was an important institution and considered sacred by the Sümis, with multiple rituals observed as part of the marriage ceremony. Marriage among the Sümis was mostly arranged, with few cases of love marriage. It was the man who approached a woman for her hand. Though most of the Sümis followed monogamy, the village chiefs and wealthy men practiced polygamy.

Kulakupu chin was elaborate and involved the participation of extended family members of the bride and groom. The intended groom's parents would choose an '*Anisü*', who acted as a messenger to go to the proposed bride's house and meet her parents; he would inform them of the intention of marriage. This ritual is known as '*Akinesü*', '*Aki*' means house and '*Nesü*' means stepping in. The '*Anisü*' could be any member of the groom's relatives, preferably the groom's brother-in-laws, who could speak eloquently to act as a messenger for marriage. In the absence of a brother-in-law, it could be the brother or uncle of the groom's father. The '*Anisü*' would confirm the marriage proposal, and an engagement day known as '*Atsa Küghüta*' would be set for both families to meet formally. *Atsa Küghüta* is usually fixed during the '*Tülüni*' festival, though it is not strictly enforced. On the day of *Atsa Küghüta*, the intended groom's family members and elders would go to the proposed bride's house to fix the marriage date and negotiate the bride price known as '*Ame*', it was followed by sumptuous meal prepared by the bride's family.

Ame was the mandatory practice of 'Bride price' or 'Bride-wealth', which the groom's family paid to the bride's family. A marriage could only take place after the *Ame* was decided. *Ame* was in the form of mithuns, pigs and other animals, food grains and other valuable items. Depending on the *Ame* given, the bride's family also prepared gifts for the bride such as traditional baskets, household utensils, tools, ornaments, traditional clothes and animals, and a plot of land in rare cases. An important ritual was observed at a later date

before marriage: '*Azajünüla*' meaning the bride's mother's share, where the groom would give pig(s) to be slaughtered and distributed among the bride's family.

Marriage ceremony involved a feast that took place at the bride's house, and usually attended by the whole village. On the day of marriage, the groom's family, relatives and friends would go together to the bride's house with the goods arranged as *Ame*. The parents pronounced blessings upon the bride with this saying of the old '*Akuxhupushü, alhopushu peniu, thalaxu kughuko, chuwati kughuko shi peniu*' (meaning, may you have a long life and live long, may you bear children like spider lings and crablets). After the marriage ceremony, the bride would be accompanied by her relatives - aunties, uncles, mother, friends to her new house, but the father stayed back at home. Once the bride steps out from her parents' house, it was taboo for her to turn and look back. During the journey, the bride would take utmost care to reach the groom's house safely, as it was considered a bad omen if she stumbled on the way. The bride, on reaching the groom's house, would put her right foot first to enter the house. The groom's family would prepare a sumptuous meal for the bride's entourage. On the first night, the bride abstained from food and drinks. On the first night, the newlyweds would sleep separately, accompanied by their friends. The next morning, the bride abstained from any household chores, but later in the evening, she would prepare a meal for the family, as a sign of ending the marriage rituals. After all these rituals were observed, every day, normal life was carried on. There were four forms of marriage on the basis of social status, and the corresponding rituals observed in varying degrees:

- i. ***Amini kimji xe***: This was the most prestigious form of marriage practiced by chiefs and wealthy families. The rituals were rigid, and the *Ame* was exorbitant. The term of this marriage was derived from the wraparound called *Amini kimiji* which the bride's parents gave the bride as part of the ritual; this was a sacred wraparound with precious beads such as *Achiku, Achipu, Achixathi, Achizu* stitched around it, each line having different

significance. A person without any blemishes in society, and who had observed all *chine-chin* could observe this marriage for his daughter. Another criterion was that the bride's mother should have married under '*aminikimji xe*'. The bride's family prepared elaborate gifts in pairs, two of each item. There were rituals to be observed after the marriage, and after the first child was born. If the rituals were not fulfilled or had shortcomings, the new couple would face dire consequences, such as the early death of a partner or would remain childless.

- ii. **Ashoghu xe:** *Ashoghu xe* was also practiced by chiefs and wealthy families with heavy *Ame*. It was similar to '*Amini kimiji xe*' except that rituals were relaxed, such as *Amini kimiji* wraparound was not used, and the bride's family didn't prepare gifts in pairs. The marriage feast was nevertheless observed with great fanfare.
- iii. **Hatha xe:** This was a simple form of marriage in terms of rituals and expenses. *Ame* was reasonable, and was decided depending on the capacity of both families. Here, *Mithun* which stood for prestige and wealth, was not used in *Ame*.
- iv. **Akupula xe or Topunasho xe:** This was remarriage of widow and widower, divorced, pregnant woman and woman with child. A simple feast would be prepared and shared among the close family members. The '*Azajünüla*' ritual was not observed. The *Ame* was given according to the price taken in her first marriage, or a small token was accepted.

3.2.2. *Akithi Chine* – Death rituals

There were various rituals with regard to the dead and burial rites. Depending on the cause of death, the rituals for burial were observed. The dead body of a natural death was buried in the house compound after observing norms and rituals. But unnatural death known as '*Nahputhi*' was not buried in the vicinity or within the village boundaries. Those killed by enemies or by animals were buried outside of the village due to the belief that the same fate would befall the villagers and the next generation if buried within the village. In the case of

deaths that happened in the jungle or forests, the remains would not be brought into the village but would be buried in the forest without any rituals. After the burial, before entering the house, they would wash their hands and feet as a sign of cleansing. When distinguished persons known as '*Ashikivimi*' and brave warriors known as '*Aghukivimi*' died, their Spear, Shield, *Dao* adorned their graves for nine days. Generally, mourning the dead involved 10 (ten) days if it is the first death in the family, and the subsequent deaths involved a period of 5 (five) days for females, and 6 (six) days for males. The family members were forbidden to work until these days were fully observed. Only household chores were allowed. The fire at home had to be completely put off and remade. It was prohibited to use remnants from the old hearth, or to take fire from their neighbours, they have to make new fire by themselves. Fermented soybean '*Axone*' usually dried above the fire hearth had to be thrown away. The old water stored at home had to be replaced with new water fetched fresh from the source. Dead rituals varied according to the clans and regions.

3.2.3. *Ghile chine*– Harvest rituals

During the harvest season, the first reaper known as '*Amthau*' would initiate in performing the harvest rituals. On the chosen day, he would perform body cleansing ritual, and would not interact with anyone. Then he would bring a handful of grain from the field and place it in the granary. In the early morning of the harvest day, the blood of the pig killed for the harvest day is put into a bamboo vessel, and the dried top portion of cooked rice, made into nine packets is placed in the new granary as an offering to the spirit of harvest as mentioned by Inavi Jimomi (2018, p.181-182). More elaborate rituals followed for good harvest, with variations in practices.

3.2.4. *Aghalo Xapiki Kishi chine*—Rituals of constructing the field hut

Before any kind of fieldwork was carried out, a ritual was performed for the construction of a hut in the field. On the appointed day, the owner of the field would kill a chicken and prepare a meal and feed the members who joined to help in construction. After completing the rituals, they would construct the house, and only then begin the fieldwork.

3.3. Other Rituals and taboos:

Many rituals involved a '*Tuwumi*' who acted as a seer with varying abilities, such as connecting with the spirit world, acting as an intermediary between the living and the dead, divining the future, healing, and many more. A *Tuwumi* could be a man or woman, and their abilities were believed to be passed down through bloodlines. In case of unexplained illness, a *Tuwumi* was sought, who diagnosed illness through spiritual means. A well-established belief about afterlife was that the dead souls go to dwell in '*Losunito*' or '*Kithilato*', a mountain located in Wokha district. Therefore, *Tuwumi* seeks the soul of the sick person; the soul could be called back if found before reaching *Losunito*, and cured of sickness, but if the soul reaches *Losunito*, then the person cannot be revived, and was pronounced dead. Another important ritual was '*Kithixhashe*', in which necromancy was performed and a *Tuwumi* would be sought to communicate with the dead, usually a family member.

One of the commonly practiced *Agha chine* was appeasing the '*Tughami*' which means spirits. It was believed that *Tughami* dwells in steep slope hills called '*anheki-atuxhu*'. When such dwelling was found near the fields, the *Tuwumi* helped to mediate with the *Tughami* and relay his message. To appease the *Tughami*, a priest known as '*Kichelapumi*' led all the male members of the family, and they carried a dog or pig to slaughter in that particular place to perform rituals to the *Tughami*, after which the meat was cooked and eaten. The leftovers were properly buried in the ground and were never left out in the open,

as the meat offering would be considered contaminated if other animals ate it and the ritual would be nullified. Hence, proper care was taken during and after the ritual.

3.4. *Pinhe-Pini* – Festivals of the Sümi Nagas:

The term '*Pinhe- Pini*' can be understood as those festivals and ceremonies which involved the interest of larger group of people, or the whole village. These festivals were mostly associated with marking the beginning, completion and other milestones in agricultural activities, and were accompanied by specific rituals and taboos:

Following are the list of '*Apine*' explained in brief: -

1. *Asu yekipe pine* – To begin cutting of trees for Jhum cultivation
2. *Lu-u pine* – To mark the completion of clearing of field
3. *Visavela pine* – To mark the readiness of sowing seeds in the field
4. *Litsapa/ Kichimiyeh* – To propitiate the spirit of good harvest '*Litsapa*' or '*Kichimiyeh*'
5. *Asukuchu* – Ritual observed before sowing seeds
6. *Amütü küsa* – To weed the field once the seeds have sprouted
7. *Tuluni (Anni)* – Festival with elaborate rituals to mark the first fruit of the season
8. *Saghi* – Ritual observed after the harvest of crops.
9. *Aphikimthe* – Purity ritual observed before the beginning of reaping paddy
10. *Ahuna kuchu* – To mark the harvest of paddy grains, and end of cultivation season.
11. *Ana phikimthe* – Cleansing ritual observed by menfolk once in three years, to clean clothing, weapons, tools and implements.

Though there were a number of *Pinhe-Pini* observed in the past, in the current scenario only a few are observed, and without any rituals as Christianity was embraced by the Sümis. The

most important festivals were '*Tuluni*' and '*Ahuna*' that is practised to this day. Variations existed in the way these festivals were observed depending on clans, villages and regions.

3.4.1. *Tuluni*

Tuluni is one of the major festivals celebrated by the Sūmis. It is celebrated in the month of July. The term '*Tuluni*' referred to the period of abundance and merry-making by sharing and drinking '*Tulu*' rice beer, and hence the name was derived as a mark of its significance. This celebration was observed to feast on the harvested crops. During this festival, the in-laws would be invited, and they would be treated to a sumptuous meal. The peer groups would also butcher pig and share the meat. Some prepared food packs and gifted each other. During this festival, babysitters would be gifted with chicken, or pork meat was cooked and offered to them.

3.4.2. *Ahuna*

Ahuna is observed during the month of November. This festival was observed to mark the end of all the fieldwork in an agricultural cycle. On the last day of the fieldwork, men would gather and cook a type of bean called '*Akixhu*' and drink rice beer. The next morning, they would fetch fresh water to prepare food. In the afternoon they would cook the newly harvested rice in bamboo tubes and eat. They would later make a forecast for the new year by cutting the bamboo in half, and throwing the two halves into the air; if both halves fell to the ground in the same position it was considered a bad sign, and if the two halves fell to the ground in different position, it was understood as a favourable sign. After this, the two pieces of bamboo were thrown away in different directions

3.5. *Aphisa* - Feast of Merit

'*Aphisa*' refers to 'Feast of merit' which was one of the most prestigious events observed in the Sumi Society. *Aphisa* was observed by the wealthiest in the society, as it involved hosting a series of feasts with complex rituals over a period of time. It was observed to elevate one's status and achievement in society. There are variations in this practice depending on clan and region. There were different stages involved in observing *Aphisa*, as mentioned in the accounts of Rev. Najekhu (1985, p.9) which are explained below:

3.5.2 *Tiyehshikugho atighiu* - First process of Feast

'*Tiyehshikugho atighiu*' referred to the first process of *Aphisa*. Here, the family of the person who wanted to observe *Aphisa*, would clean the house and its surroundings. *Lapu* was assigned to carry out the manual works: First he encircled the surroundings with branches of trees and leaves. Then he would taste the food before others could eat. He would butcher one piglet, and the meat would be divided into two portions of 30 (thirty) pieces each, and packed in banana leaves. He buried the meat on outskirts of the village, in order to keep it away from dogs and pigs. *Lapu* would unload paddy grains for the workers to dry in the sun. A group of women would process the paddy grain for the feast, and some grains were used for brewing rice beer. On the third day, men would cut down trees for firewood to be used during the feast. After all these preparations were made, a pig was slaughtered and sumptuous meal was served to the villagers, along with the rice beer which marked the first feast of merit. After three days of the feast, the whole village would be involved in cleaning, and the next day was observed as a day of purification. Thus, the first stage of the *Aphisawas* completed.

3.5.2. *Shikusho Akiniu* - Second phase

After the first feast was completed, and the day for the second feast was set, the concerned couple was forbidden to speak to anybody. The next morning, the couple would wrap *Aqhicho* (yeast for rice beer) in banana leaves, each their own packets and hang separately above the kitchen hearth for 7 (seven) days, after which they would open these packets to check if it was ready to brew rice beer. Based on the condition of the *Aqhicho*, prediction was made about the family's fortune: Good condition was a positive omen, and bad condition would mean difficulties for the family.

The wife would fast when the preparations of the rice beer began. A piglet was killed and the meat cooked bland without adding salt and chillies was consumed by the wife. The couple would prepare their meals separately in separate hearths, till the completion of the feast ritual. The couple would prepare rice beer separately and serve others; the wife would serve women, and the husband would serve men. Then the *Lapu* would accompany the husband to the forest to collect the root of plants called '*Yeghubo*' and '*Aphighu*'. Depending on the condition of the roots, the outcome of their life would be predicted. The husband would fast for 10 (ten) days, and the wife would fast for 6 (six) days, but they were allowed to drink rice beer and eat meat. On completion of the fasting, the priest would remove the old kitchen hearth and replace it with the new one. Thus, the second stage of the *Aphisawas* completed.

3.6.3. *Pinne Chine*: Genna Rituals

The third process was '*Pinne chine*' meaning 'Genna rituals', which was vital to attain the Feast of Merit's status. This ritual was observed after a gap of one year, or in the third year. The concerned couple would inform the villagers of their intention to initiate the third process. The feast was observed during the post- harvest season when there was a full

moon. As a sign of beginning the feast, a piglet was killed and the meat was hung outside of the house for 9 days; on the early 10th day, the meat was taken to village outskirts and buried deep in the ground. Thereafter, a pig was slaughtered as an offering to seek blessings, and the priest would pronounce prayer of abundance. This was followed by cooking the meat, and the priest would offer meat pieces to each girl chosen from both the *Swu* and *Tuccuclans* to taste the meat, which would be followed by the rest of the members and begin the feast. Thereafter, the couple will fast: the husband will fast for 10 days, and the wife will fast for 30 days. Like before, they would use separate fire hearths to prepare their meals till the feast rituals were over. One of the requirements of the feast was to choose a cow without any blemishes, which the relatives butcher and share the meat. After which, another cow would be slaughtered by observing the ritual associated with it, and the feast was thrown for the whole village. The next day, all the villagers would observe Genna by abstaining from going to the field, cleaning the village, and performing body cleansing. With this, the third stage of the *Aphisawas* concluded

3.6.4. *Tilesu Chine*: Preparation

This process did not involve much ritual requirements to perform. But, cattle were slaughtered and portions of meat were distributed among the host's relatives, and to those who perform warrior dance, as well as the village members as a symbol of invitation to the actual feast of merit, to be held in the following year.

3.6.5. *Aphikusa chine*: Feast of merit

For this particular process, no limit of feasts was specified. Depending on the resources available, the host could throw feasts as many as he could afford. His status in society was also marked by the number of feasts he could host. The first step to hosting a

feast was to construct a temporary shelter for work and brewing rice beer. After which, the host would abstain from all kinds of manual works and stay at home. Then the workers would gather at the host's house to prepare for the feast, and work for 9 (nine) days, and on the tenth day, a pig would be slaughtered. The meat portions would be distributed among the 12(twelve)main people who played different roles in the process of observing the *Aphikusa*, followed by a sumptuous meal for them. The next day all invited guests would come for the main feast, which involved serving three times: *Tulhu* (lunch), *Lhuba* (noon lunch) and *Phitsu* (dinner) prepared by the hosts. On the day of the feast, the warrior troops in the village would perform first, which will be followed by neighbouring villages who are invited to the feast. There were other merry activities like dancing, singing, processions, and traditional games like spear kick etc. All the people would be served with food, rice beer and meat in abundance. After the feast, the religious leaders would initiate the cleaning and burning of all the waste. Villager members abstained from going to the field until the cleaning process was completed.

3.6.6. *Aghuza kiphe*:

At this stage, the host, who had repeatedly given feasts, would erect bamboo posts called '*Aghuzakiphe*' in the vicinity of his house as a symbol of status and prestige. Depending on the number of Mithuns or cows killed for the feasts, the number of posts was erected.

3.6.7. *Inami Kupulhu*: Feast for guests

In this stage, the feasting involved villagers hosting each other, often challenging each other on who was a better host, with big chunks of meat served. They practiced '*athumuza*' in which they competed to eat huge pork fat, cooked in long and large sizes.

3.6.8. *Avikuqo*: Sport of Mithun Killing

Avikuqo was observed after the fulfilment of the process involved in hosting the feast of merit. A 'Y' shaped post carved from a tree known as '*Aqedu*' would be erected in a particular location, and a Mithun would be pulled and tied to the *Aqedu*. The next day, young boys of the village in full traditional gear would line up to pull the mithun with a long rope tied around its neck. An egg would be thrown at the forehead of the mithun, and they would pull the mithun and go around the whole village, singing folk songs and warrior cries. On completion of the rounds, the priest would pierce the ribs of the mithun and kill it. Here, the host does not partake in consuming the meat, but it would be shared among the villagers.

3.6.9. *Anivu*: Ear piercing

This process was marked for piercing the ears of the young boys and girls of the village. A day would be set for this occasion, for which the host would slaughter a pig to serve as a meal. Poor children would be invited to the house of the wealthy to take part in ear piercing ceremony. The earlobes were pierced with sharp bamboo sticks attached with cotton at the bottom of the stick, which remains attached to the pierced ears. Pierced ears was an important mark of attaining adulthood, symbolising manhood and womanhood, who are now eligible for marriage.

3.6.10. *Kighithikeu Chine*

This stage was observed in old age of the hosts, who had performed all the rituals of the *Aphisa*. Not many hosts lived long enough to observe this stage. The term *Kighithikeu* refers to the later stage of human life, when second childhood sets in, exhibiting childlike behaviours and vulnerability. Therefore, to mark this stage of reliving childhood, the host couple would put on children's clothing and play out their childhood activities; the husband would go to the forest to collect firewood, play with top spinning and

the wife would play with the spinning of yarns, and some childhood games as a fulfilment of this stage of Genna. With this, the rigorous feast of merit known as *Aphisa* ends at this stage.

Though, Sümis in general does not practice in common erecting of megaliths marking the *Aphisa*-feast of merit, erecting of megalith was found at Ighanumi Village (Plate 12).



Plate 12: Megaliths, Ighanumi Village

3.7. Norms observed by the Sümi Nagas in regard to village establishment

Among the various tribes of the Nagas, Sümis are known for their practice of founding new village. Village establishment is one of the major characteristics of the Sümi tribe. Establishing a village elevated the position of the founder, irrespective of his previous background. In the words of B.B Ghosh (1979, p.24), unlike other Naga tribes, the Semas had, and still do have migratory habits and they often establish new village. There were various circumstances which led to a new village establishment. In some cases, it was carried out with mutual understanding and peace, but in some cases, villages were established due to differences among the brothers, and among the wealthy in a village. To obtain Chieftainship was another factor which encouraged village establishment, as the person who established a new village became the new Chief of the village.

The process of migration and village establishment was challenging and rigorous. There were many rituals, ceremonies and norms required to be fulfilled to establish a village. The person intending to establish a new village had to undergo many processes, such as getting approval, mobilizing followers, conducting surveys at the proposed site, appointment of his village officials, and observing many rituals and norms. There is no uniformity in the norms practiced, as these norms have evolved over time through practices guided by oral narratives. Also, differences and variations began to develop among clans, and the regions they inhabited, as the Sūmis migrated from one place to another. The term '*Puthekuwo Chine*' meaning migration genna, referred to the norms of migration to new village. Migration process mainly varied between the two clans *Tuku* and *Swu*, namely:

a) *Tuku Phuwo Chine*

b) *Swu Phuwo Chine*.

To migrate to a new village, people who belonged to *Tuku* village observed *Tuku Phuwo Chine*, and people who were from *Swu* village observed *Swu Phuwo Chine*. *Tuku* rituals were simple, but *Swu* rituals were difficult. *Swu* was especially rigid when it came to food, and observation of taboos and rituals. There was a strong similarity between the two groups, when it came to observing '*Aki chine-Alu chine*' (household and field rituals). Here, the common norms of establishing a village are discussed. The first step involved the intended chief mobilizing his group of followers called '*Shexhixhelimi*'. After obtaining approval from the chief(s) of the parent village for establishing a new village, the intended chief and some of his followers would visit the proposed site. In some cases, they would make a fire in the site and observe the smoke for forecast, which is called as '*Amipho Saqhi*'; when the smoke goes up and blows toward the parent village, it was a sign not to migrate, but if it blows toward a new direction, it was a favourable sign to migrate. When they return to the village, they will seek the '*Tuwumi*' to dream and predict the fate of their migration.

The main criteria for selecting the site was a strategic location, considering that head-hunting was practiced in those days, it was usually located on a hill top where enemies would not be able to penetrate and attack easily. They would also check land fertility, and the quality of the soil for cultivation; if they found an earthworm midden around the site, it was considered fertile land. Another important consideration was the availability of spring water source in and around the site. On choosing the site, either the chief or his subordinate would slash a mark on a tree with the local Dao/machete, and they would bless the site. After which, the whole village site would be fenced for defense and protection. After that final confirmation to migrate, the intended chief appoints his '*Ghungu*', and together they select the '*Awou*' and '*Arü-u*'. After which, the four of them appoints individuals to designated offices, each serving specific functions such as:

11. ***Ghüngü*** – Meaning shadow, he is the closest aide of the chief '*Akukau*'
12. ***Awou*** – The Chief Priest
13. ***Arü-u***– The first reaper
14. ***Atsu kupumi*** – The dog bearer
15. ***Awo kupumi*** –Four pig bearers
16. ***Aghü-u*** – Two warriors
17. ***Lapumi* / *Anisu-u*** – First taster of food and drinks
18. ***Amoshou*** – Burier of the dead
19. ***Atumu-u*** – Seer
20. ***Azukheu*** – in charge of the village's water source

Members who played vital roles in migration, and later in the village functioning are:

- a. ***Awowu***– The chief priest of the village who initiates all religious rites that are observed.
- b. ***Chochowu*** – The village elders and councillors chosen by the chief. In some cases, they function as spokesperson of the village chief.

- c. *Lapu/Amoshou*– They are chosen from the poor, and assigned multiple roles, as the first taster of food and drinks, and in some cases, as the burrier of the dead.
- d. *Amuthau*– He initiates all the rites related to agricultural activity.

The intended chief would call his new appointees to plan and prepare for migration to the new village. For this meeting, a huge male pig was butchered, and the cooked meat was served as the only dish with rice. Thereafter, rituals and activities would be performed by the appointed members as assigned to them.

Later, the appointees would pledge to contribute cattle for the rituals and feasts; five persons would contribute huge male pigs or Mithuns, one person would give a hen for the ritual to be released in the jungle, and one person would give a dog for the dog ritual. Later, the intended chief would slaughter a huge male pig, cut it into portions, and distribute it to all the households of the parent village. The norms further differed depending on the distance of the new site from the parent village. In case the site was located close to the parent village, they would visit the site occasionally to construct houses, gather firewood and make other necessary arrangements for the migration. During these activities, the religious leaders known as '*Achinemi*' would perform rituals regularly for their visits. The migrating group would prepare meals and eat together at the new site as they worked there, and they were forbidden to bring back any leftover to their parent village. In case the site was located at a far distance, all rituals and feastings would be observed well in advance, but the construction of houses and other arrangements would only begin after shifting to the new village.

The migration group would continue to slaughter pigs and observe rituals for the migration day. A common practice was the preparation of rice beer known as '*Asukupu ji*', which was done ahead of the migration day. Three days before the departing group proceeded to the new village, a hen would be released into the jungle, and if it survived it was believed

to be a good omen, but if some animals preyed on the hen, it was believed that enemies would kill some member of the new village, nonetheless, their plan never stand cancelled.

3.7. Dog sacrificial ritual

Another important forecast was observed through the dog sacrificial ritual. The dog was chosen due to their loyalty and companionship to man. The intended chief, with his departing group, would take an unblemished dog to perform this ritual at the outskirts of the new village site. This ritual was observed as an act of sacrificial offering to the spirits of the new village, as well as to seek omen. Early morning hours of the specified day, men and boys would arrange firewood at the location before they consumed anything. After that, they would eat food, and the young boys would be sent back home. All the brave warrior '*Atomi*' would carry shield '*Azuto*' and '*Asukuba*', a Y-shaped wooden stick for the ritual. A big bonfire was set up, and the dog was burnt alive. When the dog tried to escape by jumping out of the fire, the men standing around it would use the *Asukuba* stick to push it back into the fire. It was believed that on whoever's side the dog jumps out, that particular person would be blessed with good life and good luck. After this, they observed the burned bones of the dog to interpret their fate in the new village - Grey/white color is interpreted as blessings and prosperity, while black color signify misfortune.

It was believed that if other wild animals came in contact with the remains of the dog, it would lead to loss of cattle. To avoid contamination from any wild or domesticated animals, they would completely burn down the dogs remain, and the priest known as '*Achinemi*' would surround the area with '*Ashu*' spiked woods. They would go back to their parent village if the new village site was located close, and in case of far distance, they would go to the temporary shelter put up near the new village.

There was also a belief that the departing group might take along with them the village spirit as they moved out. In order not to let this happen they would put up a temporary fence on the direction of the new village. On the day of departure to the new village, another male pig was slaughtered to prepare meal for the journey. An important practice was the wrestling act to express reluctance in parting ways, where the villagers would try to stop the departing group from crossing the village boundary, and those departing would wrestle with them to break the boundary fence and cross over it. They also engaged in throwing un-hatched eggs at each other in fun and jest, to symbolize an act of going separate ways. As the group began their journey, they would rest for a while at the resting place near their parent village, and the head chief of the parent village may accompany the group to this resting place to give his final blessing. While resting, the head chief would instruct the intended chief to perform the war dance. The intended chief would perform the war dance wearing all his warrior dresses; if any dress item or ornaments fell from his body, it was believed that some members would die in the new village, but if nothing fell down, it was interpreted as a good omen that their next generations would be blessed. As they moved forward they would not look back at the direction of the old village with the belief that doing so would invite misfortune.

In case of long-distance migration, the group would camp near the vicinity of the new village and make preparations before they step in. At some distance before reaching the new village, firewood would be collected, and a few warriors with a Y-shaped wooden stick would stand around the collected firewood, guarding it at night. The next day, they would proceed to their new village site. The smartest among the warriors would be chosen to jump over the fence at the entrance. Then two smart women were chosen to stand together in alignment and take the first step with their right feet into the new village. An upright woman is chosen to be the first to drink from the new water source, for the generations of the villagers to be blessed.

The first fire making was considered a significant act, with taboo associated with it; when the first fire was made, a part of the burning wood was left unburnt, as it was believed that a completely burnt wood would lead to a shortage of firewood in the future. At the new village, the new head chief would contribute a huge male pig, and his successor would also contribute a male pig, and these pigs would be slaughtered and distributed to all the newly established households. The head chief would slaughter a pig, and give a huge portion of meat to the second chief, likewise the second chief would also slaughter a pig and give a huge portion of meat, along with the pig's head to the head chief. After observing all these rituals, people commenced their life in the newly established village.

One of the first tasks undertaken was the distribution of '*Asu-alu-luzha*' meaning forestlands, woodlands and fields; these lands were segmented and distributed among the new village members, and the remaining portion of lands was to be owned by the chief(s) and '*Apu-Amu*', '*apu*' means father and '*amu*' means brother; referring to 'elders' of the village.

It is important to highlight the practice of '*Akighaii*' which was prevalent, and significant during the village establishment. *Akighaii* were known to be invisible 'House Spirits' that generally lived in the houses of wealthy men. The ancestors kept this *Akighaii* at home, to protect them from various dangers, sickness, poverty and death. They could be heard making noises all over the house as they moved about. To feed the *Akighaii*, its owners would throw rice or meat in the air and it would disappear. *Akighaii* was treasured, hence the departing members who owned these *Akighaii* would call them to go to the new village, by knocking at the door and saying "I'm going to the new village, let us go together". From oral narratives, it can be understood that the owner and *Akighaii* shared a human-spirit bond, that was part of the belief system.

Recalling an incident with *Akighaii* that happened in the recent past, Mr. Kakheho Yeptho, the youngest son of *Akukaii* Nitoi, the founder of Nitoi village, narrated that when he

was a young boy, he and his friends had returned to his home after school, and nobody was at home since their parents had gone to the field. As they were about to eat food, the *Akighaii* caught hold of them and they couldn't move or speak at all. When their parents returned and saw them in that state, they reprimanded the *Akighaii* to be able to recognise and distinguish the owners from outsiders. At this reproof, the *Akighaii* released them. It is the belief of the people that *Akighaii* kept the thieves and outsiders away in the absence of the owner of the house.

3.8. Headhunting rituals and ceremonies

Headhunting was an important village activity, and the village members led by '*Aghütomi*' meaning 'warriors' were equipped in headhunting skills, and took measures to protect each other. Hence, *Aghütomi* were chosen during the process of village establishment. In the past, a man who hunted heads was hailed as a warrior and a hero among the Sumis known as '*Aghütomi*'. It was a high honor and status achievement. Any man who succeeds in taking heads could attain this status irrespective of their background or social status. Those who had taken heads were conferred the right to wear particular shawls or ornaments.

Headhunting was known by the term '*Akutsukulu*' in Sümi tribe. During war, *Aghütomi* would take the enemy's head with the *Dao/ Machete*, and take the head back to the village as a symbol of trophy. The purpose of headhunting was social-cultural, religious and political. This was practiced as a call of duty to protect themselves from the enemy, and to exhibit their bravery over the enemies. The raid among the tribes or between villages culminated in cutting and carrying away the head trophy, which was the glory of head taking. Hutton (2007, p. 26-27), in his book '*The Sema Nagas*', described the character of the Sümi Nagas as very impulsive and very cheery, easily depressed and quickly moved to laughter

and merriment. He observed that “in warfare and hunting, the Sema is plucky and daring, at any rate by Naga standards.”

Headhunting was associated with ushering prosperity to the village. It was believed that the enemy's head stimulated the crops to grow better, especially when the head was a woman's. Certain norms were attached to the headhunting practice, such as:

- 1) One can kill only one's enemy and not kill anyone randomly.
- 2) There was no bar to take heads of the enemies with age and gender.
- 3) Taking women's and children's heads was a high honor, as they were generally protected in the heart of the village by men.

There were various reasons for headhunting. For instance, villages declared an open war against each other when a village member has been killed by another village, or in cases when a weaker village seeks the more robust village's help to defend their village. The older members imparted the skills of war and headhunting to the younger ones. The ‘*Apuki*’ meaning ‘male dormitory’ played a significant role in serving as a place of teaching and learning skills of warfare, as well as strategizing for war. However, with the coming of the British administration in the Naga hills and the advent of Christianity, the practice of headhunting declined among the Nagas, and in Sumi society.

After a successful headhunting event, the victors would go back to their village singing a victory song with the enemies' head; they would be received by villagers on the way with great joy and pride. The exhausted warriors would be served with food, meat and ricebeer outside the village, and from there they would go to the skull tree to hang the heads. The warriors would sleep in the male dormitory called ‘*Apuki*’ as they were considered unclean, and would not go to their house till certain rituals and ceremonies were performed. The enemy's head was exhibited to the villagers, and the menfolk who had not experienced war were allowed to touch the heads to symbolize them taking the enemy's head, after which they

were eligible to pierce their ears and to wear the ‘warrior attire.’ The heads were hung up on the tree in the vicinity of the village. One such tree was found at Phisami village, under Kiphire district (Plate 13).



Plate 13: A tree where heads were hung up during the head hunting days at Phisami Village under Kiphire District

A warrior who had taken the enemy's head had to kill a big pig and throw a feast for the villagers, relatives, and for the family members to celebrate his victory over the enemy. The proud moment of victory could also turn out to be unfortunate if the warrior was unable to afford a pig to host the feast. If the warrior receives a pig from a wealthy person for the feast, then he becomes his foster son, indebted to him for the rest of his life. The whole village observed *genna* by abstaining from work, and spent time feasting and rejoicing. It was believed that if they didn't observe *genna*, they would never obtain a head again. Victims who died during the war, and the headless bodies of villagers were buried outside the village gate, and rituals were not performed during burial, as these were considered unnatural deaths.

By tradition, an unnatural death by drowning, falling from the cliff, being killed by animals, dying of natural calamities, and by any accidents, including the victims of the war were not allowed to be taken inside the village gate. It was a taboo to bring the dead bodies of unnatural death to the village.

Rituals, taboos and ceremonies were religiously observed in the past to uphold the community. However, with the advent of modernity, Christianity and westernization in the Sümi society and other Naga tribes, much of these practices have lost their socio-religious, political and cultural significance. Modern economic activities have disrupted the traditional agricultural rituals and practices. Younger generation is increasingly shifting towards westernisation and other cultures over their traditional culture and practices. The existing political systems are a far cry from the autonomous village kingdom structure, altering the role and authority of village chiefs, and elders in the community. Many of the rituals that were incompatible with Christian teachings were abandoned. Although diluted to a large extent, some of the traditional Sümi rituals and customs have survived, and are reflected during festivals. In some cases, traditional customs are observed along with Christian norms, such as marriage ceremony.

To explain the evolution of marriage ceremony, marriages mostly take place in a church supervised by the minister, with bride wearing a white gown and groom in a suit, exchanging vows and rings, followed by prayers, singing hymns etc. Along with these modern, western and Christian norms, traditional norms are still practiced, such as the departing ritual, where the bride's father stays behind at home, while the bride accompanied by her mother and other relatives escort the bride to the groom's house. The practice of '*Ame*' meaning 'Bride price' is still practiced by many, though the terms and conditions have evolved over time.

In the context of establishing a new village in the present scenario, though the Sūmis continue to migrate to new territories and set up villages, the new generation has largely distanced themselves from the norms and rituals associated with village establishment. With the coming of Christianity, many rituals and ceremonies have been discouraged, which has resulted in the decline of rituals performed during village establishment. Yet, some criteria like choosing the subordinates for the new village is still followed. Christian prayers are offered in place of rituals and norms observed in the past.

Thus, ritual, norms and ceremonies have a deeply rooted significance in the Sūmi society, and continue to influence their way of life. Evolution of rituals is an ongoing process, shaped by interactions with external elements to accommodate the new realities faced by the Sūmis. In response to changing realities that are a threat to the old ways of life, there is a growing need to preserve and revitalise the traditional customs. This thesis is a sincere attempt to document oral tradition to save what is not lost.

CHAPTER 4

TRENDS OF VILLAGE ESTABLISHMENT: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN

4.1. Concept of Sümi Village establishment

Village establishment is one of the characteristic features of the Sümis. The nature of the Sümi Nagas is relentless, brave, and strong, which motivates the community to explore new lands and areas, establish villages and expand their territories. The traditional practice of Sümis recognizes the right of an individual to establish a village if capable of doing so. The traditional customs also encourage the establishment of a village, by elevating the status of the founder, as he is ordained as the village chief known as '*Akukaii*'. In the words of *Akukaii* Vikato Yeptho, the Chief of Phisami village, 'it is our customary practice to establish a village'. The practice of *Akukaii* and the privileges that came with the position further inspired individuals to venture out and set up their own village. Sümis practiced the establishment of villages more than any other tribe, and continuity of this practice has also been found in recent years. This continuity has intrigued researchers, and led to many inquiries into this subject, to seek out more information, and to understand this cultural practice in a broader sense. However, it must be emphasized that the process of village establishment has undergone much changes, and transitioned from a glorious practice in the past, to an attenuated form in the present.

4.2. Factors of village establishment

The reasons for establishing a village among the Sümi Nagas varied; some of the important reasons are: Availability of free land, status of chieftainship, internal conflicts, village fission, land ownership, increase in population, which are discussed here.

4.7.1. Availability of free land

In the past, there were vast tracks of unclaimed lands, with mostly thick forested area, and the hills were uninhabited in the Naga hills. Most of these areas were considered to be no man's land, and there existed a customary law among the Naga tribes, that whoever would come first and mark an area as their territory, could claim to be its lawful owners. This was an accepted norm among the Sümis, however their tribal customs regarding land claims adapted to changing circumstances over the years, after the British administration, by creating the district hill of Naga Hills in 1866 (Venuh, 2019, p. 36). British authorities imposed laws and regulations that created shifts in the process of village establishment, such as seeking permission to establish a new village, ban on headhunting, land revenue policies, setting up administrative units and governance systems.

This dilution continued with the transfer of power by the British to the Indian government, and customary laws continued to be challenged by Government policies and regulation. Nevertheless, the practice of village establishment continued, albeit with restrictions, and changes in power dynamics in village administration.

4.7.2. Status of Chieftainship

The status of chieftainship is an eminent feature of the Sümi Nagas, which encouraged the establishment of a new village. An intended chief sets up a new village, and become the *Akukaii*, wielding absolute power and authority in his village. Establishing a village was not an ordinary feat, because of the rigorous process involved, and the

requirements of manpower, resources, and capabilities to lead the community. The power and privileges which are attached to chieftainship motivated individuals to establish a new village. The system of chieftainship was hereditary, and the eldest son inherits the father. A Sümi chief was entitled to days of free labor, access to possess large area of land, fields, cattle, forestlands, and woodlands.

The *Akukaü* was assisted by appointed members and village elders holding various offices in the functioning of the village. As Hutton states that “the Sema polity is particularly suited to colonization” (2007, p. 8). Hence, it is understood that the British administration could conveniently integrate the chiefs into their colonial administrative framework, as part of their indirect rule strategy. Village chiefs became intermediaries between the local community and the British administration. *Akukaü* continued to hold their position under British administration and is still prevalent. However, many powers and functions have undergone a change.

4.7.3. Internal Conflicts:

As per traditional customs, new villages are established with permission from the chief of the parent village, and with mutual consensus among the sons, and brothers of the chief. However, there are cases of internal conflicts that have caused migration to new villages. The practice of polygamy by Sümi chiefs had profound implications, as his sons from multiple wives would engage in power struggles, disputes over land resources, and other conflicts of interest. One of the respondents narrated an instance of migration where the Chief had more than one wife, which led to the ill-treatment of the younger sons by the older sons, which prompted the younger ones to establish their own villages. Internal conflict among sons is also reflected in the original story of migration, where the Sümi ancestor migrated from Khezhakeno because of unfair treatment. To avoid conflict over land resources, the father

who is the *Akukaii* would divide land portions among the sons and new villages are established despite smaller areas of forestlands and agricultural lands. This practice has led to the mushrooming of small villages and the gradual spread of territories, which is characteristic of the Sümi migration process.

In some case when there are multiple chiefs known as '*Kukamis*', there would be misunderstandings, internal strife, competing for authority, and control over resources and other conflicts among the chiefs. Each chief would have supporters, forming factions within a village, and prompting migration to form new villages.

4.7.4. Village Fission

Village fission refers to the process in which a single village splits into two or more villages over time. This practice was prevalent among the Sümi villages; circumstances of differences among the *Kukamis*, and among the brothers of the *Akukaii*, lead to division of the village into two or more parts. To cite an example, Thazuvi, a Sümi village under Kiphire District, was established in 1927. The area of Thazuvi village was further divided, and two other villages were formed i.e. Kiyezhe (1995) and Xüvishe (1996) (Plate 14). Existing agricultural lands, forestlands and woodlands, and other resources were divided among the three small villages after mutual consensus of the parties involved.



Plate 14: Village fission of Thazuvi, Kiyezhe & Xüvishe under Kiphire District

4.7.5. Land ownership

The tribal population in Naga hills relied on land as a primary means for survival and wealth. Land ownership also determined the status. Among the Sümis, the *Akukaii* of a village, owned all the land theoretically, and he would allot portions of land to his officials and community members who followed him in establishing a village. The *Akukaii* would claim the area according to his preferences: agricultural lands, forestlands, and woodlands. All the remaining lands after distribution also belonged to the *Akukaii*. Since Sümis practiced Jhum Cultivation for crops, and wet cultivation for paddy, the *Akukaii* would allot these agricultural lands to village members who do not own land to cultivate. Ownership of land was an important motive for establishing new villages; often groups who didn't have land, or wanted better land areas would choose to migrate.

4.7.6. Growing population

Population increase was one main reason for the establishment of new villages among the Sümis. Over time, an increase in population in a village led to a scarcity of essential resources like land, water, wood, and new villages had to be established to accommodate the growing population. The earliest Sümi settlements were characteristic of an Angami village, in that the villages were large in size, densely populated, and seemed to have '*Khels*'. The narration about the Sümi ancestors who emerged and migrated from Lelemi *Khel*, which was an ancient *khel* situated under Chizami subdivision also indicates the system of *khels* and population of the village (Chophy, 2019, p. 63). However, many groups migrated and formed their own villages that were lesser in population, and the size of the villages became smaller.

4.8. Features/description of a village

4.8.1. Location of a Village

Sümis generally chose high hills to build villages as a defensive strategy against enemies in the context of the headhunting custom practiced in the past. High vantage points and the steep terrain of such villages served as a natural advantage for survival. This feature was also noted by Elwin and Hutton who mentioned that most Sümi villages are located on the hilltop (Elwin, 1969, p. 373; Hutton, 2007, p. 33). The villages were surrounded by Jhum field, thick forest, hillocks, and paddy fields. Water springs were generally located within the village, or in the vicinity of the village. Some large Sümi villages were grouped into '*Asa*', (locality) which operated like an informal unit with no particular functions, unlike like '*Khel*' system based on kinship or clan, which was prevalent in Naga tribes like Angami and Chakesang.

4.3.2. Village structure

The Sümi villages are smaller in size and population, compared to villages of other Naga tribes. For example, Angami villages may have 500-700 households, whereas Sümi villages have 50-400 households. Hutton mentions that “Sema villages being as a rule very much smaller, - a village of 100 houses is quite large for a Sema village’ (Hutton,2007, p.34). There is no uniformity in the layout of the village structure. The structure of the village depends on the geographical landscape and its terrain. The layout of the Lazami village can be one good example of how the village structure was set up based on the terrain of the hill (Figure 4). The temporary traditional defenses are maintained in the village vicinity. The defenses are of ditches, spiked bamboos and Panjis. Every village will have an entrances gate known as ‘*khagho*’, made of wood.



*Figure 4: An Arial view of Lazami Village under Pughoboto sub-division,
Zunheboto District (Source Google Earth)*

4.3.3. *Aghüthu-Aghiphi*: Boundary demarcation of the village

'*Aghuthu*' means demarcation of boundary in length, and '*Aghiphi*' means demarcation by breadth. Thus, '*Aghuthu-Aghiphi*' can be understood as boundary demarcation in length and breadth. Before the village was established, consent was taken from surrounding villages,

and boundaries were demarcated to establish a new village. The village chief initiates marking the boundary with stones. Generally, the boundaries between villages were set by claiming the area as far as their eyes can see, locating the last mountains and forests as the boundary. The river course also served as natural boundaries between villages.

4.3.4. Type of houses

The term for a house structure is known as '*Aki*' in Sümi dialect. Traditionally, the most prominent house in a Sümi village is of the village chief(s). It served as a meeting place, and for many other events and occasions. The houses of the *Akukaü* at Thilixu and Phisami village have the fusion of traditional and modern structure (Plate 15). The next large house was the '*Apuki*', a male dormitory known commonly among the Nagas as '*Morung*'. Another important house was '*Illiki*', a female dormitory. Granaries known as '*Aleki*' was an important structure owned by each household. The Sümi villages were spaciouly structured; the houses were located quite apart, and each house had ample space for drying paddy, and for other recreational purposes. Pig sty was constructed in the vicinity of the house. There was also a backyard garden located at the rear of the house, growing fruits and vegetables as far as the space would allow.



*Plate 15: Fusion of traditional and modern house of Sümi Chiefs.
Left, Thilixu Village, Chumoukedima District. Right, Phisami Village, Kiphire District.*

4.3.5. Aleki: Granary

Granary known as *Aleki* was built close to the main house. Few villages that are neighbors with Chakesang and Angami tribes may have adapted their way of storing grains in large woven baskets inside the main house, for instance, Ighanumi village (Plate 16). Most of the Sümi villages had *Alekis* that were constructed at elevated heights to avoid touching the ground and are connected with wooden steps to wooden platform on which the grains would be spread. This structure served to protect stored grains from pests and moisture. This kind of *Aleki* was found at Lazami Village and Paharpur Sümi village, Assam (Plate 17).



Plate 16: Baskets for storage of grains at Ighanumi Village



*Plate 17: Aleki (Granary)
Left, common granary at Lazami Village. Right, Granary at Paharpur Sümi Village, Upper Assam.*

4.3.6. *Khagho* - Village gate

‘*Khagho*’ is a term for village gate in Sümi dialect. Unlike Angami villages which has gates in every '*Khel*', Sümi village did not have multiple gates. In Sümi villages, *Khagho* was built at the main entrance of the village. The gates were made of wood, with the support of large boulders. Some village gates were flanked by stones staked together to form a retaining wall. The *Khagho* was carved with traditional motifs such as Mithun head, human face, spear, dao, stars, women’s breast and other icons with significance to attached to it. The traditional and modern form of *Khagho* found at Ighanumi, Thahekhu (Plate 18) and Mishilimi and Lazami (Plate 19)



Plate 18: Khagho (Village gate)
Left, traditional village gate at Ighanumi. Right, modern village gate at Thahekh.



Plate 19: Khagho. Fusion of traditional and modern village gates.
Left, Mishilimi Khagho. Right, Lazami Khagho.

4.3.7. Alaghi- Pathways

There were different kinds of pathways maintained and used for different purposes, in Sümi villages. The term ‘*Alaghi*’ means pathways, and *la* means path.

1. *Aluhula*: This term refers to the path that leads to fields. ‘*Alu*’ means field, and *Aluhula* means pathway to the field.

2. *Azula*: The word '*Azu*' means water. *Azula* refers to the path leading to the water source of the village, or is sometimes used to indicate the irrigation channel dug for paddy fields.
3. *Aphula*: This term indicates the path that leads to a village. The term '*Aphu*' means village.

4.3.8. *Azükhikhi*: Water source

'*Azükhikhi*' means water source. Availability of water source was one of the main criteria for choosing the site of a new village. Most villages depended on natural springs, streams and small rivers that originated from higher altitudes. Some villages were set up near larger rivers. These water sources were crucial for providing water for drinking, cooking and agricultural purposes. Water was of utmost priority in the process of village establishment, as demonstrated in the first ritual observed at a new village was '*Azukhephe*' which was demarcating the water source, followed by '*Azushophe*' meaning 'the first drink', in which a woman of upright character would be the first to draw out water and drink from the *Azükhikhi*. This ritual is observed to invite blessings, prosperity and good fortune in the new village. The traditional water source maintained with wall surrounding it was found at Phisami and Lazami village (Plate 20).



Plate 20: Azukhikhi (water source)
Left, at Phisami Village. Right, at Lazami Village.

4.9. Sümi villages: Traditional vis-a-vis Modernity.

The practice of village establishment among the Sümi Nagas can be categorized into two phases.

1. The first phase is from the early migration period till the advent of the British colonial power. This migration phase mainly focuses on the Eastern part of Nagaland, which is currently under Zunheboto district and beyond.
2. The second phase is from the advent of British colonial power till the present. During this period, we witness the rise of village establishment and shift of migration towards the Western part, which is in and around Niuland, Dimapur, Chumoukedima, and Assam state.

Sümi villages have transitioned from traditional to modern models, as a result of unprecedented shifts in religious, socio-cultural, economic and political systems. The transition has created noticeable distinctions in terms of belief systems, communal values, demographic structure, village infrastructure, power dynamics, agriculture, and other livelihood opportunities, to name a few. The main factors of transition were the advent of British colonialism, industrial revolution, adoption of Christianity, and later merging into the greater Indian nation, and other external influences. These factors have influenced waves of migration, and the process of village establishment among the Sümis. An important transition that continues to this day, is the spread of Sümi settlements from the central region under Zunheboto district, to the eastern and western directions of Naga hills. There was large scale migration to eastern and western regions, and these settlements have come to be broadly classified under subgroups: the ‘Eastern Sümis’ and ‘Western Sümis’, as well as other subgroups that have come to be identified by the region they inhabit.

A clear distinction is seen in geography, topography, and vegetation between eastern and western regions. Villages in eastern region under Zunheboto and Kiphire districts are

characterized by its location in hilly terrain, with dense forest and hill slope vegetation. Villages in the western region under Dimapur, Niuland, and Chumoukedima districts are located at lower elevations and low-lying plains at the foothills. Furthermore, there is a major difference in the process of village establishment between eastern and western regions. Before the British colonial period, there were waves of migration of Sümis toward the east of the Naga hills; these villages are typical traditional villages, having followed traditional customs of migration, and process of village establishment. Meanwhile, the villages established during and after the British colonial period are non-traditional in character, considering that these villages were established after the community converted to Christianity, many rituals and ceremonies associated with the customary practice of the village establishment were not observed, while few norms may have been followed.

4.4.1 Traditional Village establishment

There are various aspects of village establishment. Generally, new villages were set up by a chief's son, or from the chief's bloodline, as chieftainship was a hereditary practice. However, establishing a village was not strictly restricted to the chief's bloodline, and any man who was capable of establishing a village could do so, with prior permission from the existing chief. While Sümi villages were mostly named after the founder of the village, there are villages named after the significance of the location. In many accounts, new villages were established because of reasons like growing population, insufficient land, fire or epidemic diseases, or conflict of interests in the community. In the past, migrating and establishing new villages involved strict observation of various customs, rituals, rites, ceremonies and norms. The process involved tremendous investigation for water source, location, land suitability and fertility etc. It can be understood that establishing a village was not an ordinary task that could be achieved with ambition alone; one had to be wealthy, whose capital was a good

number of cattle and an abundance of paddy and other resources to support his group of followers. There are instances where villages have been abandoned and relocated to new sites, such as Lazami and Nitoi villages. Lazami village was originally situated at a place called Fuyeqa but was relocated to its current location due to a shortage of water. In the case of Nitoi village, located in Kiphire district, the village was initially settled at the foothills of its present location. However, an epidemic, with symptoms resembling chickenpox, forced the villagers to move. According to one respondent, the outbreak occurred after a man from a neighboring village beheaded a live cat. As the epidemic caused numerous deaths, the villagers decided to relocate to a higher elevation for safety (Plate 21). Aye and Marak (2024, p. 13) also discuss the abandonment of old villages, noting that some were deserted due to unfavourable locations, with the inhabitants relocating to more fertile areas.



Plate 21: The abandoned site of Nitoi village shows evidence of agricultural activity.

To establish a village, the first step for the proposed Chief is to survey the area to check the possibility of establishing a village and visit the site. Once identified with the surveyed area, upon satisfaction, he will return home to make preparations and proceed with his plan. He will inform the then Village Chief about his plans and desires and seek permission to set up his village, after which the village elders will be called to a meeting. They will discuss the matter and grant permission for the new settlement. The proposed Chief will then consult the members who wish to migrate with him to the new village. After that, he will gather all of them and declare, 'I have decided to migrate, and you all have agreed to follow me; therefore, we will make plans and prepare for the migration. Whoever takes the first decision and step to set up a new village will become the village chief. He analyzes and chooses the capable and abled person to become the second chief after him so he will be entrusted to gather more members to join their migration group. With the agreement between the two, the second chief will gather his members to join the group. In cases where the migrating group becomes large, they choose another chief to be third in line for chieftainship. If there is no capable person to fill the position, the proposed Chief can hold the chieftainship alone.

There was a saying that whether the new village is established with peace and unity or with differences when the new group is about to migrate, the temporary fence will be made in the direction of the route the migration team was to undertake. After which, there will be a light wrestle between the two groups, and the new group will cross over the fence and go on their way. This act is carried out so that the new migration group will only destroy some of their fortunes.

Village officials were selected from various clans for practical aspects. Usually, a wise person, brave, intelligent, disciplined, obedient, and respectful of elders are chosen to hold different official positions in the village. For the Chief to select, the officials amongst

his brothers is meaningless because since he holds the position of the Chief, he is representing all his other brothers, and the other brothers also enjoy certain rights and privileges due to which they do not feel the need to choose the official from amongst the family of the Chief. To do so will invite criticism from the rest of the village members for unfair treatment. Any decision will be consulted among the members, and the Chief will give the final word, thus understanding that the Chief does not act arbitrarily and dictate his subjects. Officials are all chosen from different clan members of the village.

4.4.2. Early migration of the Sumi

All Naga tribes have their distinct stories of origin and migration, but there are also shared narratives among some tribes. The ancestors of Angami, Chakesang, and Sümi tribes are believed to have shared a common lineage in Khezhakeno. For the Sümis, Khezhakeno is an important point of migration, albeit variations in narrative among villages, which indicates that different groups emerged and migrated to various areas at different points of time. One of the popular narrative is of the village named 'Sümi village' located in the Chakesang area under Phek district. Another narrative is of the Ighanumi village, whose founders are believed to have migrated from Khezhakeno before the event of the Magic Stone, and considered to be the first settled village of the Sümis. While the narrative of Lazami village recounts the migration from Khezhakeno to their present village as a direct consequence of the event of magic stone. These variations in the migratory story underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of migration among the Sümis, offering a nuanced understanding of their migratory tendencies.

There is no absolute data on when the Sümis came and inhabited their present settlements, though some have proposed the approximate years of when these villages were formed based on oral narratives and folklore. The rough estimation of the year in which the

village was established is approximately 914 A.D. (Ighanumi Baptist Church Centennial Jubilee Souvenir, 2004). On the other hand, Lazami is also considered one of the earliest established villages among the Sümi Nagas. According to the legend, the village was established around A.D. 350-500 (Lazami et al., 2004, A History of Sümi Migration, 2021). In this regard, no proper data is available to validate the claim, yet, in general, the Sümis consider these villages as the earliest settled villages among the tribe. Both Ighanumi and Lazami villages are located in the Pughoboto Sub-Division under the Zunheboto district, which borders the Chakesang, Angami, and Rengma tribes of the Nagas.

The Sümis continued to migrate from these earliest villages towards different regions, and continued to set up new villages along their migratory routes. Over the centuries, as the different migratory groups proceeded further northeast, following the stream and river known in Sümi as the Tizü River, they were opposed by the Aos in the South, and Lothas in the North. Therefore, they had to go further down following the Tizü river route and populated the whole area around it. In the accounts of Verrier Elwin (1969, p. 372) “The Semas occupy the whole of the Tizu Valley and the whole of the country on the right bank of the Doyang, from the junction of the Sijju and Zulu rivers to the point where the Teshi River flows into the Doyang”.

Different groups migrated to eastern part of the Naga hills, and came into contact with the tribes of Yimchunger, Sangtam, Tikhirs, and Pochury. One of the prominent chiefs who acquired much territory in the east and achieved legendary status was *Akukaii* Sukhalu; it is narrated that around the year 1925, he invaded Purure village, now known as Pungro of the Yimkhiung tribe under Kiphire District bordering Myanmar. He established his village in Pungro, and lived there for about 12 (twelve) years until he was assassinated by his enemies around the year 1937. After his death, the rest of his community members retreated to different Sümi villages, and later established their own villages (Ayemi & Sumi, 2020, p. 85).

In the eastern region of Naga hills, the expansion of *Akukaii* Sukhalu is the last known event of migration and the establishment of a village, in accordance with the traditional customs.

4.4.3. Eastern Sümi villages of Kiphire- Shamator District

During the colonial period in the Naga Hills, the British government introduced various administrative systems under which the Naga Hills were grouped into administered and un-administered areas (Venuh, 2019, p. 46-47). The Eastern Sümis were part of the un-administered area under Tuensang District. In the records of H.Bareh (1970, p.47), '*Gazetteer of India, Kohima District*', a recommendation was made by the district administration in 1905-06, to absorb the entire Sümi tract, but after careful consideration, it was felt wiser to extend the administrative control up to the Tizu River and the rest as non-controlled area. Thus, the Tizu River formed a natural boundary between the controlled and uncontrolled territory; many Sümi villages remained under an un-administered area, and later, in 1948, when a separate administrative unit was created under the Tuensang administrative centre, these Sümi villages remained under it. Currently, 15 (fifteen) Sümi villages are under the Kiphire district, formed in 2004, and 1(one) village is under Shamator district(Ayemi & Sumi, 2020, p. 57).

The Sümi villages under the Kiphire-Shamator district are of two types: Sümi inhabitant villages and Sümi co-habiting with other tribes, especially the Sangtam and Yimchunger tribes. Below is the list of Villages under Kiphire- Shamator District (Figure 5).

Sümi inhabitant villages	Sümi Co- habitant villages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phisami village 2. Lukhami village 3. Shothumi Village 4. Nikiya village 5. Thazuvi Village 6. Nitoi Village 7. Xhuvishhe Village 8. Kiyezhe Village 9. Ighoto village 10. Sikiur village (under Shamator District) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shothumi A village 2. Yangzitong (Yezutu) village 3. New monger village 4. Natsami village 5. Sitimi village 6. Shishimi village

Figure 5: Table showing the villages inhabited by Sümi and Co-Habited by the Sümi.

According to the *Akukaü* Vikato Yeputho of Phisami village, Phisami is considered one of the pioneering villages amongst the Sümis of Kiphire district. This village was established by Asü Zhukishe from the parent village of Ghuvishe under the Zunnheboto district in 1887 (Plate. 22). The village was established by observing the norms of Tuku Chine with approximately 50(fifty) ‘*Angu Kipemi*’, which means warriors with spears. The rest of the Sümi villages followed suit and established villages, some occupying unclaimed lands and some by conquest. The last headhunting carried out by the Phisami village was in the year 1947, when the expedition was led against the Pangsori (Pangso) village of the Khamnungan tribe, currently under the Noklak district. It was mentioned that around 70 heads were taken by the Phisami troops.



*Plate 22: Lineage of the chiefs of Phisami Village under Kiphire District
Left, Zhukishe Yepthomi (founder). Center, Kihoi. Right, Vikato.*

The Sūmis of Kiphire may have cultural contact with more tribes as compared to the rest of the Sūmis of other area. Although there may be a few variations in terms of the accent and lifestyle, however, not much variations since they associate with the rest of the Sūmis. Ighoto village is the most recent village, established in the year 2014, and the government official recognized in 2022 according to Government of Nagaland order released on 4th Nov. 2022, under Home Department, General Administration Branch-1 (Plate 23).



Plate 23. Ighoto Village, under Kiphire District.

4.4.4. Village establishment during the British colonial period

With the arrival of the British and its colonial administration, there was a shift in the direction of establishing a village. In the beginning of 1911, *Akukaü* Kiyezu, who was originally from Nikuto Village under Zunheboto District, sought permission from British officials to establish a village in the present Dimapur area. Wherein, he was granted permission to go ahead with his plan. The establishment of this village ushered in the era of Sümi village's establishment in the Western region. Currently, the Sümi villages under the Jurisdiction of Dimapur, Chumoukedima and Niuland are referred to as Western Sümi Area. In the past, the region of present Dimapur was a very dense forest. The area was infested with mosquitoes and wild animals, making it inconvenient for the British subjects to pass through the thick jungle. The British officials learned about the nature and character of the Sümi Nagas as fearless, brave and relentless. Therefore, when asked to establish a village, they permitted them and thus began the establishment of the Sümi Village in these regions.

The first establishment of Sümi villages in the western part of Nagaland, i.e., currently in the districts of Niuland, Dimapur and Chumoukedima, was Asu Kiyezu in 1911 (The word '*Asu*' literally means grandfather, however it is also used as an indication of respect to older people among the Sümis) (Figure 6). As in the case of the Sümi Nagas, the villages are named after their founder; therefore, the village was named after him as Kiyezu village and followed by Nihokhu, Nikhekhü and many more. Villages established with the permission granted by the British Government were only 9-10. Some of the villages are as follows: *Kiyezü (1911)*, *Nikhekhü (1918)*, *Kuhoxü (1919)*, *Nihokhü (1918)*, *Khehoi (1919)*, *Hovishe (1920)*, *Shoxüvi (1923)*, *Sakipheto (1927)*, *Kiyevi (1937)*, *Zuikhu (1940)*, *Lothavi (1939)*, *Zutovi (1940)*, *Semadolong/Kukidolong (1916)*, *Kikidolong (1947)* as recorded in the 'Souvenir' of "*A Centenary Celebration: Kiyezu Village 1911-2011*" (2011, p. 8-24).

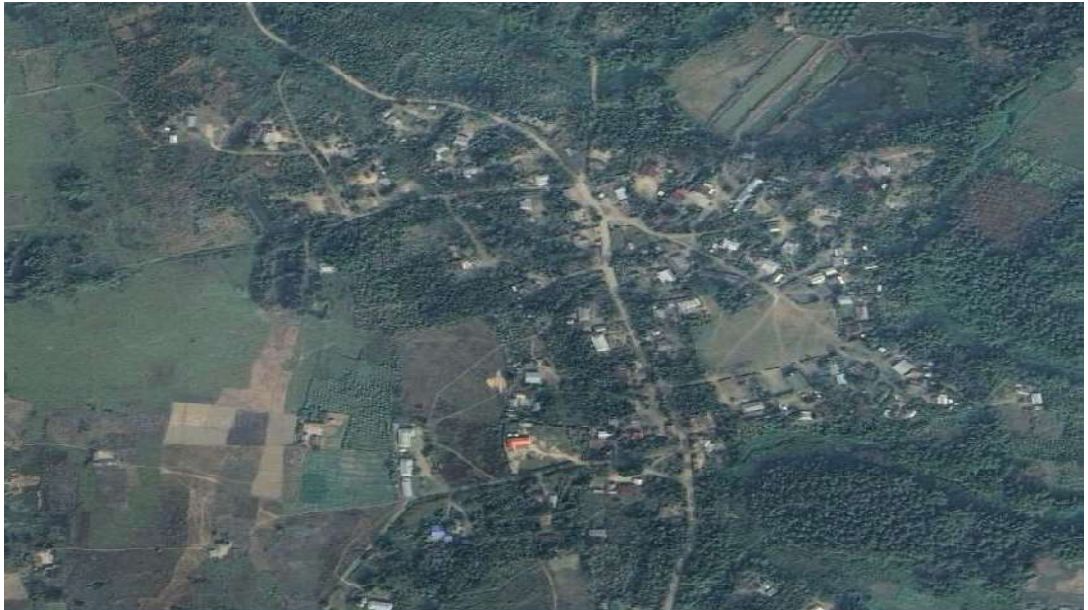


Figure. 6: Bird-eye view of Kiyezü Village, Dimapur, Nagaland (Source: GoogleEarth)

After India gained independence, around ten villages were permitted to be established in the Dimapur area. In the case of the Western Sümi, i.e., the Dimapur area, varied circumstances led to the village establishment. Before any habitation took place in this area, it was mentioned that the place was a dense forest with wild animals and evils in the forests. Due to this, for a long time, no man or group attempted to explore these areas for settlement. When they started to explore, initially, many other groups attempted to migrate to the area, however, many failed unable to withstand the obstacles of the forest in present Dimapur areas because of elephants, evils, mosquitoes, lions and tigers. Pherima, for example, which is now on highway No. 29, is settled by the Sumis. The initial dwellers of Pherima could not settle for long as the people of the village were challenged by obstacles as mentioned above and had to abandon, which is referred to in the Sümi dialect as '*Pighive*' (wiping out a large number of population) after that Sümis came and settled in that area. Sümis continued to set up villages in these areas. Migration towards the western region was encouraged because of the availability of land during those days. Numerous villages have been established over the years with many other Naga tribes. Gradually, these areas

have developed into a commercial hub, which has led to an increase in the establishment and settlement of different groups of people in this region. Most of the villages in this area have developed similar to an urban setting, unlike the traditional Sümi village, for example, Thahekhu, Chekiya, Thilixu and many more under Western Sümi Area which has urban features and characters.

4.4.5. Sümi Village establishment in Upper Assam

Over time, with the British administration, Sümi men were taken to Assam for various purposes, especially in the Tinsukia District of Upper Assam, which the British earlier administered as the Tirap Frontier Tribal Belt. The respondent of the Longtong village narrated that, the British took Many Sümi men as part of the Political Labour Corps in late 1882 and engaged them as labourers in Namdang coal fields and oil explorations in Digboi. They also took part in the construction of the historic Sitwell Road. Some continued to serve under British officials as cooks and labourers, primarily used for clearing the thick jungles, felling trees, clearing roads, etc. Thus, most were men; many married Arunachali women and settled in that area. At the same time, many returned to Nagaland, and those who remained in those areas grouped and established Sümi villages.

Between the 1880s and 1890s, British officials took many firm and abled men down to this region for war against Abhor, felling trees to make them work in Digboi, Assam oil factory and construction of roads. The British officials also found them to be fearless. It was said that Sümis used a large size of *Azuta* (machetes), which enabled them to cut down big trees, for which the British took them down for this purpose. Many stayed behind and did not return to Naga Hills. They sought permission from British officials to set up their villages, and settled there.

There are currently around 6 (six) Sümi Villages under Upper Assam in Tinsukia District. The first Sümi village in this region was the Longtong village, established in 1904 (Longtong et al., 2022, p. 29) (Figure 7). Followed by Lalpahar, Paharpur, Baliyan, Tingupathar and Tsaliki.



*Figure. 7: Arial view of Longtong Sümi Village, Upper Assam
(Source: Google Earth)*

4.10. Distribution of Sümi Villages

Sümis are the most widespread tribe amongst the Nagas in terms of settlement. Regarding the villages, Sümis has the highest number of villages among the Nagas. According to Sümi Hoho Publication' Sümi Puthekuwo eno Axxhülhe-the history of Sümi migration (2021, p. 131-152), these number of villages have been listed out region wise; the villages under Zunheboto District and its neighbouring villages are indicated below (Figure 8).

1. Atoizu-Saptiqa -21 villages
2. Aphuyemi/ Pughoboto-23
3. Aghunato area- 32
4. Akuluto-VK-20
5. Eastern Sümi (Kiphire-Shamator (earlier under Tuensang District))-16
6. Northern Sümi-32
7. Suruhuto-Asuto-32
8. Satakha-Satoi area- 33
9. Zunheboto-17

Based on this source, there are 210 (two hundred ten) villages in the Zunheboto district and 16 (sixteen) villages in the Kiphire-Shamator district. There are 157 (one hundred fifty-seven) Sümi Villages in and around Dimapur, and about 20-21 (twenty-twenty one) unrecognized Sümi villages are affiliated with Western Sümi Hoho. Sümis are also present in different districts such as Dimapur, Kohima, Wokha, Kiphire, Mokokchung, Shamator (earlier under Tuensang), etc (Fig. 9). There are also 6(six) Sümi villages in Tinsukia District of Assam (Fig.10).

Map of Nagaland indicating the Sumi Villages

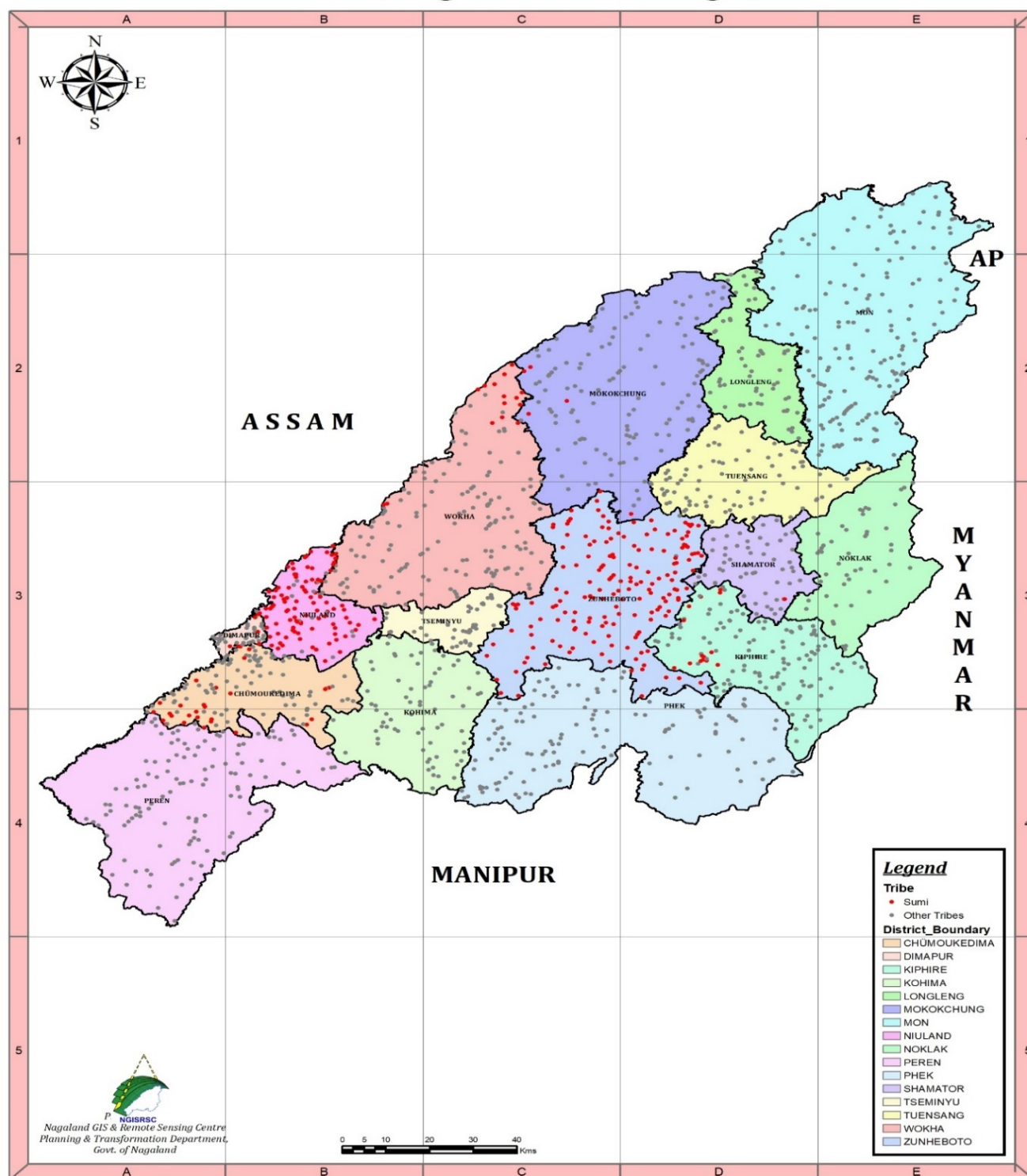


Figure 8: Map of Sümi Villages in Zunheboto and Neighbouring Village

Legend

- Tribe
 - Sumi
 - Other Tribes
- District_Boundary
- CHUKHMEDEIMA
- DIMAPUR
- KIPHIRE
- KOHIMA
- MOKOKCHUNG
- PEHK
- SHAMATOR
- TSEMINYU
- TUENSANG
- WOKHA
- ZUNHEBOTO

MANIPUR

Prepared by:
Nagaland GIS & Remote Sensing Centre
Planning & Transformation Department,
Govt. of Nagaland

Figure 9: Map indicating Sümi Villages in Nagaland

Map of Tinsukia District, Assam, indicating the sumi villages in Tirap Frontier Belt, Margareta Sub-Division

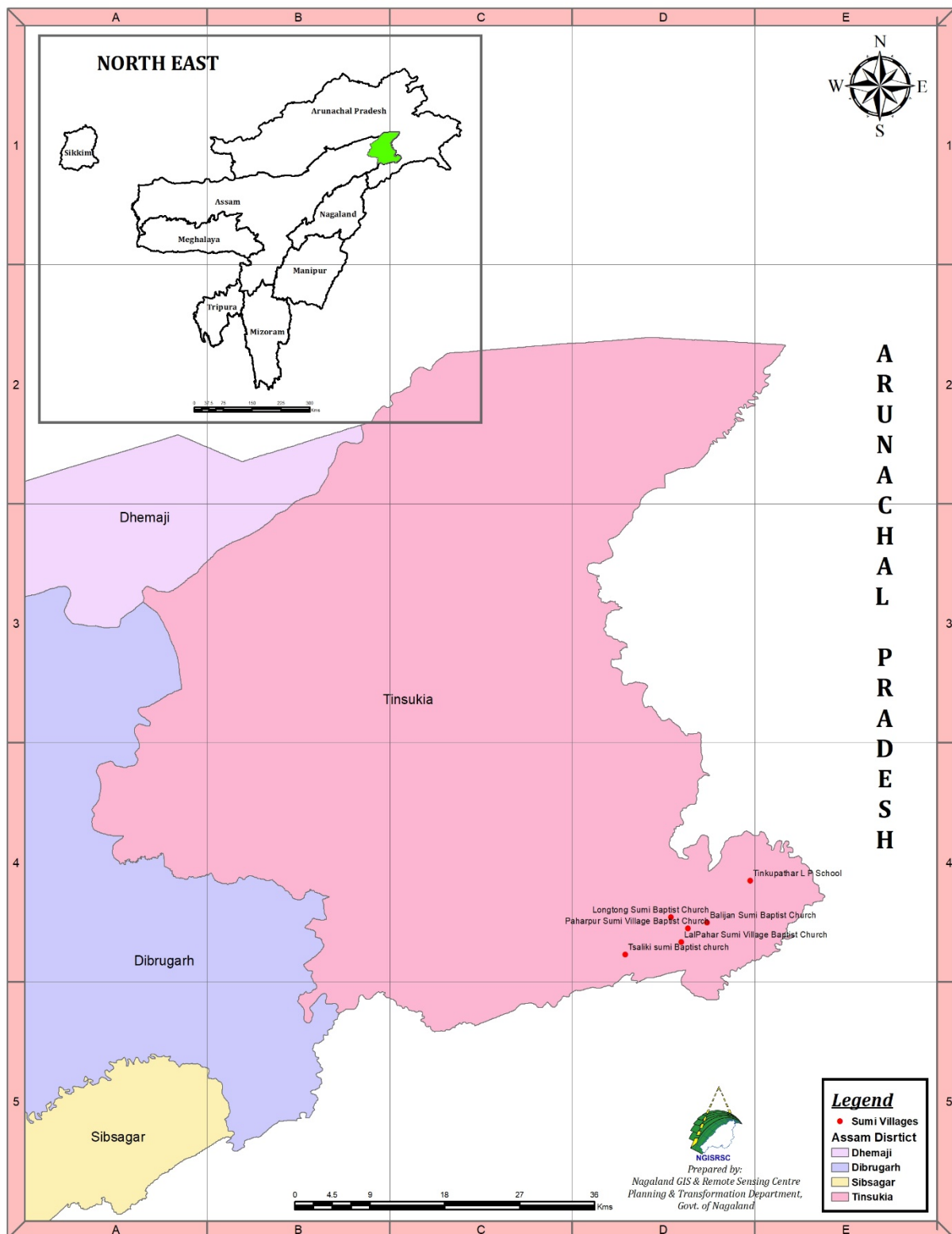


Figure 10: A Map indicating Sumi Villages in Tinsukia District, Upper Assam.

4.11. Chieftainship and its impact on a Village

One of the major reason for the Sūmis continuity in the establishment of villages is considered to be the practice of chieftainship, which renders many privileges and power. The responsibilities and role of a chief is crucial and influential. For instance, according to the narration of one respondent, *Akukaï* Hekuto Yeptho of Sukhalu Village, he served as the Tizu region chairman for three years. During his tenure, he strictly monitored the *Tizu* River area, prohibited fishing, and collected many fines for violating it, which resulted in good yielding of fish. However, after his tenure ended, the others could not impose strict prohibitions, so fishing activities began randomly, and people started selling Tizu river fish for Rs. 1000/- per 1 Kg. Many use generators and electrical machines for fishing, which has dramatically declined the number of fishes in the river. This example is cited to understand the importance of the role of *kukatoï* (chief) in the community. The inability of an *Akukaï* to execute his power has an adverse impact on the village's stronghold and may lead to split and division.

The case of abdicating the position of a chief is a rare occurrence, but there are possibilities where, if the Chief of the Village is incapable of exercising his authority, then he can be replaced. For instance, when the Chief of the Village imposes too many arbitrary rules and exercises his power excessively over the village members, instead of members abandoning the village and leading to the village's decline, the Chief will be replaced by one of his brothers.

It is a rare case, but if such events occur, it is believed that misfortune occurs. For example, in one particular (name undisclosed) village, one *Akukaï* XYZ bore too many debts and was constantly involved in court cases. He is a man of orator, but due to his bad image, the villagers decided among themselves and asked him to hand over his position to his brother.

Thus, he was replaced by his brother, who died within a year. So, there is a strong belief in the position of *Akukaü*; it should be considered very carefully and fearfully that even if one is incapable, people let him continue without removing him from his position for fear of misfortune. There is a saying among the Sümis which goes, '*Kichimi zu itha kevalo*' -which means don't go ahead of elders, '*kichimi gihu*'- respect elders (elders here may refer to *Kukami (chiefs)*); all these sayings indicate that the *Kukami (chiefs)* should be respected and the norms with regard to the chieftainship to be valued. In the case of Sukhalu village, the current *Akukaü* is Hekuto Yeptho, Hd GB, the third son of *Asu* (grandfather, used signifying as respect) Kuhozu: though he had two older brother he was made the *Akukaü* of the village and to hold the position and look after the village because of the inability for them to live in the village and hold the post. So, such cases are prevalent with mutual understanding however, when a person is denied of his chiefship considering his personality to be incapable and physically challenged, it is believed that this act does not bring good fortune to the one who replaces his elder as Chief. In this regard, one instance has been narrated as follows. There was an *Akukaü* from a certain village who was holding the position despite the existence of his paternal uncle, who was around 90 years was alive, so he was asked to give the position of *Akukaü* to his paternal uncle, since in the Sümi tradition there is a phrase which says '*Kichimi Zuü itha kevalo*' which can be understood as, 'don't go before your elders'. However, the then *Akukaü* did not oblige to the request and he unfortunately passed away shortly. This case was narrated to indicate how, in Sümi society, the position of *Kukami* has traditional customs and beliefs attached to it, and if those are not followed, then repercussions would befall.

In another case, which will be addressed as *Akukaü AB*, he had so much debt, and he might have nothing against the villagers, but since it reflects upon the reputation or glory, known in Sümi as '*aju aje*' (meaning glory) of their village, he was impeached and replaced

by his younger brother, but unfortunately, the younger brother's life was cut short. Such cases have occurred in many other villages. Therefore, it is believed that, the position of *Akukai* has a divine sanction from Gods, therefore if the intended *Akukai* holds the position with the permission and blessings of the elder with mutual arrangement and understanding despite the older candidates alive, then their *Akukai*-ship will be blessed; however, if the position is acquired by force and with misunderstandings, it is believed that repercussions will befall to that person.

There is a term commonly known among the Sümis as '*subonheghu*'. '*Subo*' refers to the bottom portion of the body part, and '*Nheghu*' refers to the head portion. When the son of a family slaughters any animals, the head is given to the father or eldest brother, and so the share or portion of *subonheghu* is entitled to the Chief or older male member of the family. *Subonheghu* refers to the portion or share of meat given to the family's Chief or elders; so, it is advised that one should not take the *subonheghu* of elders. This is commonly practiced among the Sümi Nagas till date.

Regarding chieftainship, those who hold the position of *Akukai* with the blessings of the elders are blessed with good fortune and longevity, but those who take over the position by other means are believed to have short lives or misfortunes. Thus, the concept of the *Kukami* (chiefs) considered to be chosen with divine blessing is prevalent among the Sümis.

The power dynamics had also undergone changes, with the dissolution of traditional roles of leaders and officials in the chieftainship system of a Sümi village. In the present context, it is mainly ascribed to political influence. When a person who is wealthy and influential in the society builds a good relation with the *Akukai*, he is given the *kukami* Status. This type of granting the title of *kukami* status is known as '*Papa kiu Kuka*', which can be understood as 'acquired Chief'. In this context, he did not establish a village or any other similar requirements, but he is given the status because of the goodwill

by the *Akukaii* of the Village. Traditionally, only the ones who established the village were identified as *Kukami* or *Akukaii*. So, this kind of status is awarded and not inherited or achieved. Another reason for establishing the new village could be availing the government funds, which are developing as a driving force for establishing new villages.

The *Kukami* (chiefs) take care of the affairs and matters of the village; the issues are discussed, and decisions are rendered according to the traditions and customs. In the past, the Chief would permit the *Chochou* to carry out necessary actions, and if any man rejected *the Chochou* or retaliated, that person would be expelled from the village. A number of the *Kukami*'s (chiefs) roles are now been transferred to the Village Council. However, the powers, positions, and roles of *Kukami* (chiefs) have undergone a change which has influenced the village polity, society, and economy and added to change in the village structure. Though there is a change in the role of village *Kukami* (chiefs) among the Sümi Nagas, the tradition of chieftainship is prevalent and in practice among the Sümis.

The *Kukami* (chiefs) hold a dual function according to the current times, both as a traditional village chief and Gaonbura, an institution which was introduced by the British in the Naga Hills. *Kukamis* were appointed as Gaonbura by the British in the colonial era. "Gaon-Bura" meaning 'Village old man' was institutionalized by the British, wherein the oldest person in the village, or the village chief was appointed as the head of a village, responsible for maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, and managing local disputes. According to Kughatoli Aye, "The introduction of Dobashis that started in 1842 and the Gaon Buras (G.B.) in the village council through the Nagaland Village and Area Council Act of 1978 altered the traditional legal procedures (2015, p. 194). After independence in 1947, the Indian government retained the system and their administrative functions were complemented under the Village Council, with the establishment of the Nagaland Village

Council Act in 1978. With these developments, the authority of *Kukamis* evolved from a traditional role into a formalized position within India's administrative framework.

4.12. Views on the continuity of the village establishment

In the past, the establishment of villages was encouraged because of the availability of land. However, at present, there is not enough land to occupy in the eastern region, as all lands have been claimed. Thus, it can be observed that Sūmis gradually shifted their attention towards western area which had vast unoccupied lands, and this trend is leading to an alarming decrease in population in the Eastern area.

In the current context, the glory associated with establishing a new village has faded, and its relevance seems to be lost with the new generation of the Sūmis. Perceptions of establishing new village have shifted from traditional worldview of community-centric value systems to modern considerations involving individual aspirations and self-expression.

The coming of missionaries and the conversion of Nagas to Christianity in Nagaland also led to a change in the establishment of the villages. The Western lifestyle influenced the traditional ways of life. Like the chief priests, the village officials were replaced by Christian evangelists. The erstwhile rituals and sense of reverence have been transformed into the power play of polity, economy and other modern aspirations. The influence of polity and economy has become severe in every Village (Husca, 2016, p. 177).

One of the essential factors for the establishment of new settlements is influenced largely by economic purposes. Therefore, there is a need to analyze and discuss the changes and purpose of village establishment among the Sūmi Nagas in the past and at present. The main reason why Sūmi established the village is to avail the privileges of chieftainship and enjoy its status and position. As of now, the Sūmis have stretched out far and wide. They

have established villages in almost every district of Nagaland except a few. However, now there are no free lands like in the past, so establishing the villages may not be feasible.

The more the villages are established, the more land disputes, tribal conflicts, and misunderstandings develop. There are options to buy land in towns and cities to settle, and there are no more accessible lands to establish a new village. The Sümis established village mainly to hold power and not just acquire the land. In the past, most villages were established to seek chieftainship, but in the current scenario, villages are established to avail government funds like VDB provisions.

In the past, only if a person had gone through the migration process and taken part in migration and stepped foot in the new village was one eligible to become the Chief. Even though the person enters the village on the second or third day, he is not eligible. However, in recent years, even if a person has not undergone the migration process and joins as a member of the village after years of establishing the Village, a Chieftainship is offered to that person.

Sümis are mostly known to be very brave, strong and courageous. They are ever ready to fight for their rights and causes. *Aju-Aje*, 'aju' means 'face' and 'aje'- 'name' signifying primarily fame or glory which drives them. Every clan has their own *Kukami* and has a '*Kukami Lagha*'. During the British Colonial administration, at one point, there was a decline in the village establishment in the eastern region of the Sümi tribe since the British discouraged headhunting and establishing new villages without their permission. No other Naga tribe ventured out to the Assam border region, i.e., the Dimapur area, due to dense forest, wild animals and evil spirits. However, the British Government learned about the Sümis, who were found to be very brave, fearless and courageous. For this, they granted *Akukaü* Kiyezu permission to migrate and establish the village in the present Dimapur area in 1911. Towards the Eastern side, the establishment of a Village by Asu Sukhalu at Puru (Pungro) Village can be considered the last village established among the Eastern Sümi

Nagas. There are no new villages established in recent years based on actual traditional norms.

The village of Sukhalu was established by Asu Khukiye in the name of his son Sukhalu, who in later years ventured out to the eastern side to establish many other villages with his subordinates. Asu Kuhozu, was the brother of Sukhalu who became the Akukaü of the Sukhalu village; Asu Kuhozu, stated that none of his sons or grandsons should divide the land among themselves. Even if one has to leave the village, he can do so, and his share will remain as it is, but the land should never be divided among the brothers. Because if they divide among themselves, they may sell off the land as it becomes personal property. Therefore, the land will remain in the founder's name so no brother can claim it. Due to this wise decision given by Asu Kuhozu, they have kept his word intact. Even though some nearby villages have divided their land, villages like Khukishe and Sukhalu village did not divide the land and maintained its original set up. The image of Asu Sukahalu who was the chief of the village as found in J.H. Hutton's account is given below (Plate 24).



*Plate 24: Image of Sakhalu on the right and his brothers
(Source: J. H. Hutton)*

According to many Sümi elders, Sümis should put an end to the practice of village establishment because, in the past, villages were established by hard labor, wealth and prestige earned, but in the present context, it is more of dividing the village and enjoying

certain privileges and avail funds. The position of *Kukami* is also given to those who have money and can please the *Akukaii*, but in an actual sense, chieftainship can never be bought. Just because one has wealth and money, he cannot be given the position to become the Chief; however, in recent years, in order to please the wealthy, the position of a *Kukami* is granted to them. Sümi Naga Shawl, known as '*Asukuda Phi*', is usually worn only by the *Kukami*. However, these traditional shawls are presented to the distinguished man as gifts, even if he is not a *Kukami*. In the past, the *Akukaii* or *Kukami* are distinguished men who hold the position with might and wisdom. However, many problems and complications arise due to changes and new trends that have emerged in holding the position of *Akukaii* or *Kukami*. The sanctity of the customs, traditions and cultural practices associated with chieftainship and village establishment have not been upheld by many in recent years. The actual purpose and prestige of village establishment have declined and have changed.

Most of the villages established in recent years are mostly found to be the breakup or division of the village into two or more parts. The more the village is divided, the more differences arise among the people. In the case of village development, comparatively, other Naga tribes, like Angamis, Aos, Lothas, etc., are advancing more in the case of development. However, in the case of Sümi villages, development could be improved. One reason is the size of the village and population, which is smaller and lesser in number compared to other tribe villages.

To cite one example, one informant visited a particular Ao village with around 800 houses where he was asked to speak. He jokingly commented that Aos are enjoying many developments and privileges today because of the sacrifice Sümis have made in constructing the road connectivity. His Ao friend replied that that may be true, but many Sümi Villages have only 50-60 households, whereas they (Aos) have more than 500 households. So they receive funds in terms of Crores, which enables them to bring developments, whereas the

Sümi villages receive a few lakhs, which makes it difficult. In the olden days, Sümis also had large villages like another tribe of the Nagas, but in recent years, the number of households in a village has shrunk due to an increase in village establishment. Most of the new village inhabitants are comprised of those who do not have ancestral land or want to venture out to seek new opportunities. Thus, it led to various establishments of multiple small villages all over Nagaland, some of which are yet to be recognized by the state government.

In conclusion, there is a continuity and change in the system of village establishment among the Sümi Nagas. In the past, village establishment was an essential customary practice of the Sümi tribe, and was encouraged. Upholding traditional values and customs is vital to preserving the unique identity of the Sümis. However, there is a need to evolve as a society in response to modern challenges. In the current scenario, where the world has become a global village, changes that are taking place globally influence every aspect of a village's life. Therefore, it becomes essential for the community to identify the changing dynamics in society, and make cautious efforts to adapt to these changes, while preserving traditions. In navigating the inevitable global changes, the Sümis could draw on their time tested resilience, and traditional wisdom to sustain their cultural identities, livelihoods and environments. Thus, a thorough understanding of the practice of Sümi village establishment needs to be analyzed to identify core values that are central to their identity, and integrate the vast indigenous knowledge systems with the modern systems.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Historically, the practice of village establishment was common among the tribes of Nagaland, as vast lands lay unexplored, and communities formed groups to look for areas with reliable water sources, fertile land for agriculture, woodlands, forestlands, wildlife, and other resources essential for their sustenance. As observed by Alemchiba (1970, p. 5-7), Many migratory groups moved from place to place in search of suitable locations to establish villages and settlements. This practice may have been passed down to the present tribes from the early indigenous population that first inhabited the hills. Various migratory groups established villages in a particular geography, and adapted to the environment over time, which shaped the diversity of the Naga tribes. As these tribes settled permanently in their established territories, and developed their unique identities, there was a gradual decline in migration and establishment of new villages. However, Sümi has continued to migrate and establish villages.

5.1 Boundary Issues

The geographical location of the Sümis is vital to understanding the various associations with other tribes, and their relationships. The earliest villages of the Sümis are located in the center of Nagaland under the district of Zunheboto, and surrounded by Kohima, Wokha, Mokokchung, Phek, Tsemenyu, Tuesang, Kiphire which are the headquarters of different tribes such as Angami, Lotha, Ao, Chakesang, Rengma, Sangtam, Yimkhiung, Tikhir and pochury. It was a natural progression for the Sümis to spread their territories through migration, and this practice had profound implications on boundary sharing with other communities, owing to the widespread establishment of Sümi villages across the different districts. Chophy (2019, p.64) noted that “the migration and settlement of the Sumi

in different districts have come at the cost of a new conundrum in ethnic relations and unprecedented cultural change”. In the Naga society, boundary issue arises due to discrepancies between tribal customs and administration boundaries imposed by the government. Land ownership and demarcating boundaries according to tribal customs, oral traditions, and agreements among communities have shortcomings in the absence of written records and data. Addressing boundary issues requires a comprehensive understanding of the context, considering the sensitivity of the parties involved, and balancing the integration of traditional customs with modern frameworks of boundary demarcation.

5.2. Assimilation of Tribal Communities

In the past, when Nagas were moving from place to place in search of a place for habitation, cohabitation among various migrating groups took place. Amid this situation, there are cases of absorption of the smaller groups into the larger group. In the case of Sümi Nagas, it was not exceptional; many Sümi Nagas were absorbed into other tribes like Chakesang, Angami, Rengma, Sangtam, etc. Likewise, many other tribes have also been absorbed into the Sümi tribe. These can be seen and understood from the language the absorbed group speaks. For example, Gariphema, an Angami village in the Kohima district, has a cohabitation of the Angami and Sümi tribes. Therefore, their dialect sounds like a mixture of Sümi and Angami dialects. Likewise, many villages in the Kiphire District have the Sümi and Sangtam tribes cohabiting together. To cite one example, Sitimi village has the Sümi and Sangtams tribes within one village, though a colony separates them. Likewise, cohabitation and assimilation have taken place amongst various Naga tribes.

5.3. Land Issue

In many societies, land is an essential part of the economy and for the Sümi Nagas too, land was an essential resource for survival and acquiring wealth. Hutton (2007, p. 155) mentioned that, there is strong prejudice against selling privately owned land to individuals from another village. This is acknowledged in practice in administered villages, where an order prohibits any land sales between villages without prior approval. Therefore, there were hardly any cases of purchasing or selling the land in the past. People mainly acquired land when they migrated and established a new village. They explored the area far and wide, searching for free land to claim and occupy. In some instances, they would wage war against the existing weaker villages and occupy them. In the past, the availability of land was one source of encouragement for them to venture out and establish villages. However, due to the unavailability of unclaimed lands at present, the villages established recently are mainly formed out of existing villages by bifurcating the village further.

The occupation of land has also changed. Village lands were never sold off as commodities earlier, but over the years, many Sümi villages have been selling off their lands for various reasons. The practice of village establishment is also gradually declining due to selling off the land as a personal commodity by the chief(s) and wealthy land owners. Over the years, many Sümis in different areas have developed the practice of selling off the land as a source of income. This is one factor causing a shrink in land ownership, and a decline in the village area. There are many cases where the village chief or elders sold off traditional forest and woodland community lands. This act adds to the current situation's misunderstandings and conflict within the village.

5.4. Demographic Change

The Sümi Naga society is not immune to development and change. Thus, progress, development, and lifestyle changes that come with modernity prompt many educated, employed, and younger generations to live in urban areas like Kohima, Dimapur, or other district headquarters. For this reason, a large number of the population is moving towards these urban centers for settlement, which, in the process, leads to a decline in the village population. In most villages, the demographic trend is towards the older population, who constitute a small percentage. The younger generation who constitute the larger population mostly move out of their villages in pursuit of better education, and later develop reluctance to return to their village, staying back in urban areas to seek career opportunities and modern lifestyle. Thus, the population in the villages is on the decline.

Sümi villages are smaller in size and population than other tribes. It can be described as a nuclear village settlement. Since they practiced rampant village establishment, the number of Sümi villages is more than any other tribe of the Nagas. They are also spread out to different parts of the State, which explains the nature of size and population. On the other hand, the village's population is shrinking due to the movement of the people towards towns and cities. Currently, many of the villages under Zunheboto district are also witnessing population decline due to the above-cited reasons. Most villages are left with elderly parents and dropouts from schools and colleges. There is a rise in the movement of people towards cities like Kohima and Dimapur or main district headquarters for better education, medical facilities, occupation, living standards, etc. Therefore, there is a concern regarding this matter, such as the abandonment of many villages, which will be inevitable if this trend continues.

5.5. Measures to Uphold Village Membership

Due to the decline in the village population, the Village Councils are taking the initiative to improve the condition, by imposing measures to maintain the identity of the village members who prefer to settle elsewhere. For instance, the village council passed a resolution for mandatory construction of houses for all the married males of the village in order to claim citizenship in that village. This initiative has boosted many to realize and understand the need to maintain a status quo in the village and served the purpose.

5.6. Changes in Social, Economic, Political, Religion And Culture

Establishing a village is considered a status symbol and achievement in the society. Though this practice was revered and applauded in the past, it has been criticized with contempt and allegations in recent years, due to changes in time and factors. Differences of opinion have arisen in many sections of society—an area of interest for many intellectual minds to contemplate. Through the context of time, one needs to approach this subject with an open mind, and understand the past and the present. No society is immune to criticism and the Sümi society is also not free from criticism especially with the continuity in the practice of village establishment and the powers and functions of Chieftainship.

The village is the hub of the traditions, culture, and identity of the general Naga society and Sümis. Since time immemorial, like any other Naga tribe, Sümis have been deeply rooted and tied to the village and its sources. In a society without written records, the village can serve as a storehouse of knowledge regarding tradition, culture and norms. It is vital to study and gather knowledge about the rich cultural practices imbibed in the village and preserve them.

Every society goes through a transitional phase as change is inevitable but it comes with a cost. Along with this change, many rich traditional and cultural practices had to be sacrificed. For example, the institution of Morung, which served as an informal school of education among the Naga society and Sümi Villages, is no longer prevalent. The traditional marriage institution has changed, and it is continuing to evolve. White weddings have replaced traditional marriage since Sümis embraced Christianity, although the conventional customs and norms are followed. The change is more in the observance of marriage ceremonies and rituals.

Though many changes have undergone among the Sümi Nagas in the field of culture, tradition and religion, they have not completely let go of their root, and various cultures and traditions are still in practice along with some modern influences. Sümi Villages has and is changing. Be it in the aspect of tradition, culture or norms and even the process of village establishment and the cause of it has some new perspectives.

Like most other tribal societies, Sümi Nagas are not exempted from the influence of western and modern cultures. Since the beginning of British contact with the Nagas and the creation of the Naga Hills district in 1881 (Venuh, 2019, p. 45) the Sümi Nagas were also fated to encounter with the colonial west. With this contact, changes in policy, culture and religion began to influence Sümi Nagas. With this concern, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive approach to studying and documenting these rich cultural practices.

Apart from the influence of external forces, many changes and variations have occurred in the succession process from one generation to another. On the other hand, the movement of the Sümi Nagas to different regions led to the association with various tribes and cultures, resulting in cultural variation and diversity from region to region.

One of the main components of the polity in the Sümi Naga village is the chieftainship position. In the past, the role of a Chief was powerful and strong. The chief is

pivotal in shaping the society and regulating the village administration and is the central head of all the village affairs. The Chief possessed infinite power and authority. There are two systems of chieftainship: the system of having a main chief known as *Akukau*, and the system of multiple chiefs known as *kukami*. As in the case of the Sümi Villages under the Pughoboto sub-division of the Zunheboto district, they have the head representative of each clan in the village. Currently, there are 21 '*Kukami*'- Chiefs in Lazami village.

Historically, the central power was in the hands of the village chief; however, with the advent of British administration, the chief's role began to decline. Currently, most of the chiefs hold the nominal head, and most of their responsibilities are shared with the VDBs (Village Development Board) and VCs (Village Council).

The privileges and services of the '*Akukau*' or chief have changed. This change has occurred due to the change in lifestyle and standards of the people. Some main factors are the abandonment of cultivation and the adoption of a modern lifestyle. For example, in the words of *Akukaü* Vikato Yeptho, the *Akukaü* / *Kükami* no longer cultivate the fields in large size, and because of this, they no longer require the service of village members. The traditional practice of '*Aina sa*', which means the participation of all village members in the field of *Akukaü*, is no longer practical. It is now considered to be a waste of resources and time. As such, the privileges of *Akukaü* are affected, leading to its decline.

Another practice among the Sümi Nagas, '*Anukishimi*' (adoptees) or '*Aqhü-axemi*' (dependents), is also declining, and many are giving up this position. The reason for this decline is due to the religious sentiment. Wherein with the people embracing the Christian religion, many of the families and individuals of this group are freed from their status. On the other hand, those who have earned their position and status in society and can afford money to make payments depending on the negotiation from their *Kukami* and free themselves. Modern education also contributes to this change.

The traditional concept of village establishment has undergone change, which is evident from the recent villages that have been established. There is a decline in the norms of village establishment. The causes of this decline and change are attributed to the Colonial administration and embracing a new religion, i.e., Christianity. Many indigenous rituals and norms were discouraged from being practiced by Christian Missionaries, eventually leading to the abandonment of norms in village establishment. For instance, dog-burning rituals are considered a brutal act; offerings to the spirits are replaced by Christian prayers, pastors, etc., replace priests. In the process of embracing a new administration and religion, many customs and practices were given up by the people.

5.7. Change in Social Hierarchy

In the past, *Akukaü* or chief(s) in Sümi society held significant authority and was central to the social, political, and cultural organization of the tribe. This leadership role can be compared to the feudal lords in European countries who governed over land and people. Though the *Akukaü*'s authority often extends over various social classes within the Sümi tribe, similar to the hierarchical system of European feudalism; the Sümi version of social stratification was less rigid. Both the prevalence of *Anulikishimi* (Adoptees) and *Aqhu-axhe* (Bonded Laborers) in the Sümi tribe, could be loosely compared to feudal systems where vassals or serfs were granted land in exchange for service to the lord, although in the Sümi context, this relationship was less rigid based more on mutual understanding and obligation; such relationships allowed for more autonomy or mutual agreement between the *Akukaü* and his subordinates. Another group of people known as *Aghutomi* (Warriors) in the Sümi tribe, similar to the knights or soldiers in feudal Europe, were responsible for defending the tribe or village. In both systems, these warriors were often highly valued and provided a key role in

protection. However, the Sümi warriors are more tied to community values and defense of the group.

The bond between the *Akukaii* and the people is described as both voluntary and obligatory, meaning that while certain duties and responsibilities existed, there was also a strong element of mutual respect and understanding. A similarity can be drawn between the Sümi tribe and the feudal structures, particularly in terms of social hierarchy, labor systems, and warrior classes. However, there are fundamental differences in the nature of relationships, the level of rigidity, and the voluntary aspects of obligations within the Sümi society. The voluntary aspect and mutual understanding make the Sümi system unique; the bond between the *Akukaii* and the subordinate is more flexible based on relationships maintained by the needs of both the chief and the people, which is different from the rigid nature of many feudal systems.

The research remains open to more interpretations and deeper analysis of the Sümi social structure, suggesting that while certain similarities can be drawn, the cultural and historical contexts of the Sümi tribe provide a distinct feature that cannot be fully explained by Western concepts of feudalism. This leaves room for further exploration of how indigenous governance systems like that of the Sümi evolved and functioned independently of Western models, and how their social contracts and obligations were culturally defined. In reality, while the Sümi tribe shares some slight similarities with feudal structures in the West, such as a hierarchical organization involving chiefs, adoptees, laborers, and warriors, the dynamics of their relationships are far less rigid and more rooted in mutual agreements and obligations than the strict systems of bondage seen in European feudalism.

Modern education and profession have brought a change in the mindset and perspective of the people towards many traditional institutions and practices among the Sümi Nagas. In the context of social hierarchy, now there is greater leniency and acceptance of new

social classes, particularly the educated and government officials are held in high esteem, irrespective of clan and economic condition. For instance, a person from a previously assumed lower class could become a high-ranking government officer, thereby elevating his status in the community, and he would be able to contribute and influence the village affairs and matters confined to the '*Kukami's*' in the past. With the decline of traditional warfare in Sümi society, the role of the *Aghutomi* has diminished. Additionally, the rise of Christianity and the introduction of modern education and new ideologies have led to shifts in the concept of *Anulikishimi* and *Aqu-axhe*, though still prevalent, resulting in changes within the social hierarchy of the Sümi tribe along with other group of social status. A new social order has set in with the introduction of modern education.

5.8. Decline in Traditional Arts and Crafts

Agricultural practices have declined drastically, leading to the loss of traditional practices, art, and indigenous knowledge of cultivation. Traditional arts and crafts have also been negatively affected since there is less need and demand for standard tools and implements; many have stopped producing them, and changed to modern arts and crafts. Likewise, a few remaining war weapons are kept as decorative pieces and are not used.

The Naga society is advancing towards modernity and change. Many tribes are in a transitional period of change and continuity. Sümi society, as one of the larger groups among the Nagas, is evolving in their social, political and cultural practices. One significant change is in agriculture, which was one of the mainstays of their economy. Education is one of the main factors that caused the change in the economy of the families and society of the Sümi tribe.

Along with education, many can access various sources of income, such as employees of both government and private sector, entrepreneurs, working in NGOs, etc. These new

avenues are some of the main factors in abandoning agricultural practices. With the decline of farming practices, many traditional skills, tools, crafts, and traditions are also declining.

The traditional clothes and attires of the Sümi tribe is another area of concern. Though there has been a rise in valuing traditional attires in recent years, cultural fusions and many new innovative ideas of design, pattern, and usage of color may lead to the loss of original traditional culture. The process of traditional weaving has also changed; to meet the market demands, many sellers are opting for machine-weaved clothes rather than hand-weaving. The use of traditional spindles for making cotton thread has declined(Plate. 25). The method of manual weaving is rigorous and time-consuming; due to this, many women are giving up the practice of weaving. Another reason is the better chance of employability and venturing into various kinds of businesses, which is on the rise—the reasons for the decline in the art of weaving and the knowledge of traditional weaving skills.



Plate 25: Traditional Cotton Spindle from Lazami Village

5.9. Gender Role

Naga society follows patriarchy, and the Sümi tribe is no exception. Sümi society has a strong patriarchal system, and therefore, male dominance was found in all the political, social and religious affairs. Women hardly participated in any decision-making and shared their opinions. However, in recent years, modern education, employment, legal and political reforms, and changes in attitudes towards gender roles in society have challenged the tradition of patriarchy. Women have been included in the Village Development Board committee, and their participation in legislative bodies and administration is rising. With

modern education, many women are now seen at the forefront, heading different departments of administration and professions.

5.10. Change in The Powers and Functions of Chieftainship

Sümi chieftainship's power and privileges derive legitimacy from their tradition and custom. However, with time, society, polity, and religion have changed and are in the evolving process. These changes influence the functions of *Akukaii*-chief(s). There are tendencies to shift from traditional hereditary chieftainship to elective chieftainship in the case of succession, which may lead to a change in the power dynamics of a traditional chief. In the current scenario, the governance of the State in the form of democracy has influenced the mindset of the people to more liberal ideas and democratic concepts, wherein the powers and functions of the chief have become democratically inclined to be shared between the chief and the council members of the village, especially in the process of decision making. Thus, many traditions and customs are compromised when adapting to change to suit the needs of changing times.

The rituals and ceremonies associated with the traditional village have undergone change and are on the decline; the role of the village *Akukaii* –chief is also on the decline. For instance, in the case of house construction, in the past, if a chief needed to construct a house, the villagers would come forward to give their service, but in recent years, most homes have been built with the help of professional constructors with modern designs and equipment. Therefore, the service of the villagers is no longer required. Likewise, the decline of the 'Headhunting' practice has immensely affected the role and status of the Chiefs. With the end of warfare, the chief could not display his ability and strength, so people no longer needed to fear or give their allegiance to the chief. Traditionally, '*Kukami*', has to be a descendant from

the Chief's lineage, but now a person of wealth and political influence is also given the position of '*Kukami*', without consideration of any other criteria prescribed by customs.

Changes in social norms and gender roles may be another aspect that led to traditional chieftainship being accommodative to women instead of the rigid male dominance. However, considering the past, there are some rare case of a woman initiating in village establishment: Phishumi Village, under Zunheboto district was found to be initiated by a woman named Shovili, wife of deceased Chief Kiyesh Assumi (Assumi & Marak, 2024, p. 5). There are also rare cases of women becoming *Akukaü* among the Sümi tribe; however, this case emerged during the erstwhile British administration. The first known female *Akukaü* is, identified as *Apuza* (meaning grandmother) Teli, from Ighanumi village. She was the daughter of a *Kukami* and married to the *Akukaü* Ghopfuna. She was known for her upright, wise and noble character. Though she did not interfere in any of the political matters of her husband, she was known to be a keen observer and, therefore, learned many affairs and issues related to the chief. When her husband died in 1936, for a short while, the position of *Akukaü* was under another *Akukaü*. However, due to her upright thinking and just, the villagers offered her the position of *Akukaü* in 1940. And she became the first woman *Akukaü*/ *Kukaliu* or chief among the Sümi tribe. This account is narrated by Mr Vikato Swu, former VC and chairman of Ighanumi village and also found in the accounts of Saikha Zhimomi (2022, p. 78-82). A recent example comes from Kiyevi village in Dimapur, where a woman named Satoli Z. Swu, the wife of the late Mr. Zhesito Swu, who passed away in 2023, was chosen as the chief of Kiyevi Village. Therefore, these examples illustrate that in a patriarchal Sümi society, the inclusion of women's participation are rarely found.

5.11. Change and Continuity in The Practice of Village Establishment

Establishing new villages among the Sümi tribe is one of the traditional practices that is still prevalent at present. However, along with the continuity, the traditions and customs have undergone drastic changes, and many of the rituals and ceremonies attached to the village establishment have declined. The frequency of village establishments is also on the decline. Another change in the practice of village establishment was the shift in direction. This shift of direction was mainly caused by the advent of British colonial rule and its administrative set-up in Naga Hills. The year 1911 can be considered the beginning of the shift in the direction of village establishment among the Sümis, which was earlier focused on the eastern region, shifted towards the western region. In 1911, the British government permitted Asu Kiyezu to establish a village under Dimapur jurisdiction, which ushered in the beginning of the Sümi village establishment in this area.

Along with the shift in direction, the traditional system of village establishment has begun to change. By then, most Sümis had converted to Christianity and did not observe most of the rituals and ceremonies attached to the village establishment. Though in most cases, the criteria for village establishment are still followed, for example, selecting a village official and naming the village after the founder, etc., most of these are done in respect of customary practices but do not hold much significance as in the past.

The practice of new village establishment may have been a significant and status achievement in the past as there was the availability of free land, the practice of headhunting, and access to their primary source of livelihood based on agriculture; however, in the present context, village establishment has many challenges attached to it. With the decline of headhunting culture and changes in religion, economy, society, and polity, the purpose of the village establishment of the past has changed. Most of the villages established in recent years are breakup of the village, village fission or division, rather than venturing out to a new

location and establishing a village. Many of these events are due to disputes over land, leadership, availing government funds, etc. Therefore, though there is continuity in village establishment, there is change in purpose and circumstances.

5.12. Challenges in The Continuity of Village Establishment

Concerning the challenges in the continuity of village establishment, opinions are divided on whether the practice of the Sümi Naga tradition needs to be discouraged or encouraged. The issue of the availability of land is one concern that needs to be considered when establishing a new village. In the past, the availability of free land was one factor that encouraged the migration and establishment of new villages. However, the situation has changed, and there is no more accessible land to occupy or claim. Another form of village establishment may also be considered in the case of the economic privileges in the form of Government funds, projects and development rather than the past conditions of establishing a village. In these conditions, there is little need to develop a new village. Moreover, in the past, permissions were sought from the parent village chief to establish a new village but, with the coming of the British and over the past years, individuals seeking to establish a new village in various region are required to provide a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from neighboring villages, which is then submitted by the Nagaland Government's Home Department, Central Administrative Branch, to the Government of India for village recognition (Aye, 2015, p. 43).

Unlike the Sümi villages in Nagaland, the Villages inhabited by the Sümis of Upper Assam of Tinsukia district portray a different view. In almost all the villages, the inhabitants are a mixture of the locals and the non-locals. Many villages are on the verge of being outnumbered by the non-locals. Therefore, their concern is increasing the Sümi population in their villages and the area they inhabit.

The establishment of Sümi villages in the Western Area, i.e. the present Dimapur, Chumukedima and Niuland district; the first village was established in 1911 by Asu Kiyezu, named after the founder Kiyezu village with the consent of British officials. This marked the beginning of a shift in village establishment from the Easternmost to the Western area. The territorial expansion and tradition of village establishment continued by Sümis directly or indirectly encouraged the different communities to follow suit. Over time, the lack of proper records and information has also led to the rise of land issues and border area conflicts. Recently, some Sümi villages under the Western Areas have been established by purchasing the land. The village settlement pattern is quite different from the usual traditional village settlement of the rest.

Those villages with enough land can allot or carve out portions of land to the group that aspires to establish a new village. Most of the new villages found in recent years are in the form of fission. In the case of a recently launched village, Ighoto, under the Kiphire district, the village was, established in 2012 and government recognized in 2022) with permission granted by the chief of the parent village, i.e. Nitoi, and their habitation is in the area of land which was allotted to them since the inception of the parent village. Likewise, many other cases of villages are established out of the existing villages.

5.13. Limitations and Recommendations

Sümi Nagas, like any other Naga tribe, did not develop any vernacular script and, therefore, did not have any written records. Thus, the researcher depended on oral sources to reconstruct history, and gather knowledge and information about the tribe. Archaeological research work is limited in the Sümi Naga inhabited areas. Most of the research works are historical research, which does not have the support of archaeological evidence. In the

absence of written records, the need for archaeological work is vital. Thus, archaeological research work in the Sumi area is needed.

By analyzing the changes of village establishment among the Sümi tribe, the research aims to throw light on the broader cultural, economic, and political systems of the Sümi Nagas. The study offers valuable references for future research, particularly the indigenous governance systems and cultural evolution. Further research work can be undertaken on the current village polity and the role of The Village Councils and Village Development Board among the Sümi tribe. Extensive research can be done on the demography of the Sümi villages too.

5.14. Conclusion

The study explored both the traditional and modern trends of village establishment, to understand the various factors that influenced village establishment over time. The research examined how villages were traditionally established among the Sümi Nagas, emphasizing the importance and influence of chieftainship. The *Akukaii* or Chief(s) refers to a system where the *Akukaii* or *Kukami*, a respected figure within the community, played a central role in determining where new villages were formed. This traditional practice required the choice of location and the structure of the village, ensuring that settlements were built with considerations of defense, water source, other resources, and social cohesion. The study also explores the significance and cultural importance of these villages, which were more than just places of residence—they represented the Sümi way of life, their social structure, political system, and cultural heritage.

Over time, the factors for establishing villages among the Sümi Nagas have changed. The research shows how political and economic factors in the modern period have influenced these new village establishments. Unlike in the past, where Chieftainship played a dominant role, in today's context, villages may be established for political privileges, such as availing

administrative recognition or accessing government resources and funds. These changes reflect a departure from age-old practices, as urbanization and modernization have brought new pressures and opportunities. There is also a shift of the rural population to the urban areas in the hope of better facilities and standard of life.

The research highlights how certain traditional village establishment practices have declined due to modernization. The conversion to Christianity can be considered as the beginning of declining age-old practices of rituals and ceremonies attached to the process of village establishment. Though there is continuity in the village establishment, the rate of establishing a village is less compared to the past. And as younger generations become more urbanized and exposed to global ideas, they may be less inclined to adhere to the old ways of forming villages.

This research on Sümi village establishment analyses the political and economic shifts and offers an insight into the complex interaction between tradition and modernity in the Sümi context. This research has brought out a systematic account of how and why Sümis established new villages, the spread to different parts of Nagaland and even Assam, the norms and practices of traditional village establishment, the role of Chieftainship and the continuity and changes.

The practice of Sümi village establishment is not just important from a historical perspective but also holds significant sociological or anthropological relevance. By studying how Sümi villages were established in the past, the research uncovers how the Sümi Nagas' culture, social hierarchy, and political systems have evolved. Understanding these village establishment patterns will help scholars trace the socio-political history of the Sümi Nagas, identifying how these establishments contributed to the growth of their communities and how the shift toward modern village establishment reflects broader changes in Naga society.

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LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

1. Akukaü Vikiho Yeputho, Hd. G.B., Aged 90+years, Nitoi Village, Kiphire District.
2. Mr. Zhetovi Yeputho, G.B. Age 80+years, Nitoi Village, Kiphire District.
3. Mr. Kakheho Yeptho, Age 60+years, UDA, Sitimi Town, Nitoi Village, Kiphire District.
4. Mrs. Viholi Yeputho, Age 80+years, Wife of Late. G.B, Kughai, Nitoi Village, Kiphire District.
5. Mr. Zutsonyi, Gaon Bura of Sumi Village, under Phek District.
6. Mr. Neitelo, Village Council Chairman of Sumi Village, under Phek District.
7. Mr. Ratshulo, Village Council Member of Sumi Village, under Phek District.
8. Mr. Zhiwoto, Village Development Board Member of Sumi Village, under Phek District.
9. Mr. Puloto P. Chishi, Age 90 years, Kiyezu Village, Dimapur
10. Mr. Hoshepu, VDB Secretary, Kiyezu Village, Dimapur.
11. Mr. Tokishe, G.B, Kuhozu Village, Niuland. Dated: 16th September, 2021. Akukaü Vikato Yeptho, Head G.B, Phisami Village.
12. Mr. Hevito Achumi, aged Around 90+years, Phisami Village.
13. Mrs. Zushevi, aged around 80+, Phisami village.
14. Akukaü Hekuto Yeptho, Aged 86 years, Sukhalu village.
15. Mr. H. Zhevito Achumi, age 70+years.
16. Dr. H.S. Rotokha, aged 80+years, former Sumi Hoho President, Zunheboto.
17. Akukaü Kasheto Awomi, Head G.B, Longtong village; Upper Assam.
18. Mr. Shittoi Kiba, V.C. Chairman, Longtong village; Upper Assam.
19. Mr. Khutoi Yeptho, Church Secretary, Longtong village; Upper Assam.
20. Mr. Kahoto Awomi, President, All Assam Sema Naga Council. Longtong village; Upper Assam. Dated.
21. Mr. Ihoshe Chishi, Cultural Secretary; Longtong Village Council. Longtong village; Upper Assam. Dated.
22. Mr. Vihoto Zhimo, G.B. Lalpahar Village, Upper Assam.
23. Mr. Nikuto VCC, Lalpahar Village, Upper Assam.
24. Mr. Hoito, Deacon Chairman, Lalpahar Village, Upper Assam.
25. Mr. Jugdan, Lalpahar Village, Upper Assam.
26. Akukaü Dohoi Pimla, Head G.B., Pimla Village, Chumoukedima District.

27. Mr. Loghozhe Swu, Age-86 years.
28. Mr. Ghotovi Zhimomi, Age-60 + years, Sokhuvi Village, Chumoukedima District.
29. Akukaü Mughato Yepthomi, Age-56 years, Henivi Village, Dimapur.
30. Akukaü Nihoto, Age- 98 years, Nihoto Village, Dimapur.
31. Mr. Vikato Swu, Former V.C. Chairman, Ighanumi Village.
32. Mr. Ghishe Kivelimi, aged 93, Ighanumi Village.
33. Mr. Isak Zhimomi, age 74 years, VCC-Ighanumi Village.
34. Mr. Kihoto Zhimo, age 60's, G.B, Ighanumi village.
35. Mr. Niyivi Kinimi, Age 65, VC Chairman, Iphonumi Village.
36. Mr. Yeshito C. Swu, Age 91 years, Chishilimi Village.
37. Mr. Asapu Assumi, Aged 86 years, Head G.B., Mukali Village.
38. Mr. Khukiye Kiho, Aged 76 Years, G.B. Mukali Village.
39. Mr. Hokhupu Zhimomi, Age 40 years, Head G.B.
40. Mr. P. Honikhe Yeptho, Age 50 years, Hd. G.B. Thilixu Village.
41. Mr. Zuhato, Hd. G.B., Tukuliqa Village
42. Mr. Vihoshe Futhena, Age 73, G.B., Lazami Village.
43. Mr. Yikishe Assumi, Age 93, G.B., Lazami Village.
44. Mr. Ghulesho Kappo, Age 95, G.B, Lazami Village.
45. Mr. Mixeni Tije, Age 73, Lazami Village.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

List of Sümi Villages in Nagaland

(Source: Sümi Hoho Publication, 2021)

Sl. No	APHUJE VILLAGE NAME	APHUJE KIQI (MEANING OF VILLAGE NAME)	KHILAU NO IGH I KEA (PARENT VILLAGE)
1	2	3	4
		APHUYEMI/PUGHOBOTO	
1	AWOHUMI	INAHUU YE KINIMI PHU IPI KUCHE IKEMU ASU KHUKIYE YIZUQA NO AWOHU XINI NO APHILO WOKE LONO IGHONO JUKIVI SHI ITHULUKE TITHIU YE KINIMI KUMO NO AWOHUMI KUVENI IPINO KUWOVE	LAZA PHUYEQA
2	KILOMI (MUDUTSUGH)	TUGHAMI NO AMUDU GHAI KUTSU JIPE PUAGHI KE GHENGUNO MUDUTSUGHO IPI KU IKEMU BRITISH MI NO AKUMLAU LONO KILOMI KUVETSU	KHUGHUTO
3	IGHANUMI	ASU IGHA NO APHU SHI	KHEZAKHENO CHESHEZU
4	NATSUMI	ASU NATSUKHA NO SASU APHU SHI KEU GHENGUNO IKEMU HAMI YE ANA KUKUMUGHA YEGHI LO APHU	FUYEQA

		SHILU KEHU IPI CHENI	
5	MUKALIMI	MUKA NO APHU SHIKE GEHNGUNO	IGHANUMI
6	HEBOLIMI	ASU HEBO NO APHU SHIKE	KHEZAKHENO CHESHEZU
7	CHISHILIMI	CHISHI NO APHU SHI	CHISHOLI
8	CHISHOLIMI	CHISHO NO APHU SHI	HEBOLI
9	KITAMI/LONGTOMI	CHUWAMI TSAUNO LONGTONG KUCHE KEMU AKITA LO KEHU KITAMI SHIVE	HEBOLI/LAZA
10	ASUKIQA	ASSUMI NO IGHA KEU A PESU APHU JE KUVE	KITA/GHOKI/TSAPI
11	LAZAMI	ASU LOZU NO SASU APHU SHI, LOZU NU KIVIYE NU LAZA JE LONO LAZAMI IPI KUVE	KHEZAKENO (KHUZABUMI) LOZUMI FUYEQA LAZAMI
12	KICHILIMI	APU ASU LO YE PHUGHUKUSAMI IPI KUCHE IKEMU ATHIU YE KICHILIMI IPI KUVE	AWOHUMI
13	GHOKIMI	GHOKI NO APHU SHI	AWOHUMI
14	TSAPHIMI	ASU KAPHI NO APHU SHINO KAPHI IPICHE IKEMU ITEHI YE TSAPHIMI KUKIDEVE	KITAMI
15	IGHAVITO	ASU IGHA JE LONO	IGHANUMI
16	KHUGHUTOMI	APU ASU NO ATOGHI HIPAU LO AGHUKHU A SHIQHE KE GHENGUNO KHUGHUTO KULU	KILO PHUYE
17	SHESULIMI	APUZA SHESU JE LONO APHU SHIKE	AWOHUMI

18	IPHONUMI	HEPHO NO APHU SHI	KHEZAKENO
19	GHATHASHI	CHUWOMI KUO LONO ACHI GHATHA LUVEKE GHENGHUNO GHATHACHI KUTSU KEMU ATHIU YE GHATHASHI KUYE	APHU KUTUTA LOBO IGHI
20	PUNEBOQA	PUNEBO (SILK TREE) ALHO KIVISHI AGHI KEU LO APHU SHILU	KITAMI
21	MISHILIMI	ANGA MISHIPUSU APHU GHEPHEWUKE LONO PUNUYE KE KEU GHENGUNO MUSHULIMI IPI KUCHE IKEMU ITEHI YE MISHILIMI KUYA	TUBAMI CHISHOZU
22	TUKULIQA	AYEGHI HIPAU LO ATUKU GHI XUKULO AM LUKE GHENGUNO TUKUHIQA KUTSU	LAZAMI
23	LAZA PHUYEQA		

SATAKHA-SATOI AREA

1	ITIVI	YITIVI J LONO APHU SHI IKEMU ITEHI YE ITIVI KULUVA	IKIYA
2	KHUVUXU	KHUVUXU NO APHU SHI	HOSHEPU
3	SATOI	SATOI NO APHU SHI	IKIYE
4	HOKIYE	HOKIYE NO APHU SHI	SATOI
5	TSUTOHO	TSUTOHO NO APHU SHI	SUTIMI
6	KHESHITO	KHESHITO NO APHU SHI	TSURUHU

7	GHOKHUVI	GHOKHUVI NO APHU SHI	IKIYE
8	IKIYE	IKIYE NO APHU SHI	YETHSUMI
9	THSURUHU	THSURUHU GHOKI JE LONO APHU JE KULU	IKIYE/SATOI
10	THAKIYE	THAKIYE NO APHU SHI	SUTIMI
11	AGHUYITO	AGHU KIYI A LO APHU SHILUKE GHENGUNO	KIYEKHU SHOIXE ZHEKIYE
12	ZHEKIYE	ZHEKIYE NO APHU SHI	KIYEKHU
13	XUYIVI	XUYIVI NO APHU SHI	KIYESHE
14	XUKHEPU	XUKHEPU NO APHU SHI	SUKO
15	KULHOPU	KULHOPU NO APHU SHI	GHUKIYE
16	ZUNGTI	CHUWO TSAUNO ATOPHU IPI ANI	KULHOPU
17	GHUKIYE	KHAGHI YE NAXI IPI CHENO TITHIU KHUKIYE IPICHENO BRITISH MI GHULOKI LONO KHUKIYE NU GHUKIYE JE KUVETSU	KULHOPU
18	NIKUTO	NIKUTO NO APHU SHI	GHUKIYE
19	KIYEKHU	KIYEKHU NO APHU SHI	KIYESHE
20	NUNUMI	AZU NO PHUPHUSHI KULOMI IPI KEKEMU ATHIU NO KILOMI IPI KUVE	CHISHILIMI- TUKUNASA
21	KILO PHUYE	AZU NO PHUPHUSHI KULOMI IPI KEKEMU ATHIU NO KILOMI IPI KUVE	CHISHOLIMI
22	SATAKHA PHU	SATAKHA NO APHU SHI	MOMI
23	GHUKHUYI	GHUKHUYI NO APHU SHI	KIYESHE/SUKHAI

24	HOISHE	HOISHE NO APHU SHI	NUNUMI
25	KHUKIYE	KHUKIYE NO APHU SHI	HOISHE
26	TUKUNASA	TUKUMI ALOJI AGHULO NO KUGHUNACHE KEU GHENGUNO TUKUNASA KUTSU	CHISHILI
27	SATAKHA OLD (MOMI)	SATAKHA NO APHU SHI	NUNUMI
28	KIVIKHU	KIVIKHU NO APHU SHI	KIYESHE
29	VISHEPU	VISHEPU NO APHU SHI	KIYESHE
30	LUKHAI	LUKHAI NO APHU SHI	KHUKIYE
31	KIYESHE/SUKHA	IKIYESHE NO APHU SHI KEMU BRITISHMI NO SUKHAI KUVETSU	VIYILI
32	SHOIPU	SHOIPU NO APHU SHI	NUNUMI
33	SHOIXE	SHOIXE NO APHU SHI	SATAKHA OLD

ATOIZU-SAPTIQA

1	ASUKHUTO	ATU NO ASUKHU TOI AGHI KE GHENGUNO ASUKHUTO KULU	VEKUHO NEW
2	SHENA OLD	SHENA JE LONO APHU SHILU	USUTO
3	USUTOMI	AUSU LI LO APHU SHIKEU KIQI	AWOHUMI KICHILIMI TUKUNASA
4	NAGHUTO NEW	NAGHUTOMI PHU LONO PHUTHE IGHIKE GHENGUNO	NAGHUTO OLD
5	YESHOLUTO	APHULU ALILU CHINAMU ASUYE YESHOLU ENO APOLU AM LU KE GHENGUNO YESHOLUTO KULU	IMLO
6	NAGHUTO OLD	NAGHUTO LO APHU SHILU KEU GHENGUNO	SHICHI

7	AWOTSAKILI	AWOTSA GHAU ISHI AGHI KEU YEGHI LO APHU SHILU KE	SURUMI
8	ZHEVISHE	ZHEVISHE NO APHU SHIKE	USUTO
9	SAPTIQA	SAPTA SUBO KUTOMO AGHIKEU A LO APHU SHI KEU GHENGUNO	SHENA OLD SHENA NEW USUTO
10	LITSAMI	TUKU TSAUNO AYEGHI GHUMA IPI KEU KIQI	IMLOMI
11	SHENA NEW	SHENA JE LONO	SHENA OLD
12	IMLOMI	APU ASU NO PHUTHE IGHU KELO AYEGHI NO MULO AGHIKE GHENGUNO KHAGHI YE MLOMI IPICHE KEMU ATHIU NO IMLOMI IPI KUVU	MATSUZU
13	KHRIMTO	CHOLIMI TSAUNO KHRIMITANG AKIQI YE ANGUSHUU KUTSU GHOPE QHICHE KEU IKEMU ITEHI YE NI GHOLAU NO KHRIMITOMI IPI KULUVA	KICHILI
14	VEKUHO OLD	AGHOKI NO AYEGHI VEHO MUXAPE AGHIKEU KIQI	IMLO- ANGUKHULA
15	LOKOBOMI	CHOLIMI TSAUNO LOKOBO YE ATUPHU' IPI ANI	SHICHIMI
16	ROTOMI	ASU HATSUMO SHOHEMI SAMOU NO AGHAU NO APHU JE LOTO KUTSULO IPI KEU KIQI LONO LOTO IPICHE KEMU BRITISHMI NO ROTO IPI KUVETSU	LAZA FUYIQA
17	PHILIMI	KHAGHI YE KIPHILIMI IPI KU CHE	KICHILIMI

		IKEMU ITEHI YE PHILIMI KULUVA	
18	VEKUHO NEW		VEKUHO OLD
19	SUKOMI	TUKUMI (SANGTAM) MINO A-A HILEHI KUGHUNA ACHE KELO AKUSU GHENGUNO PIGHIVEKE GHENGUNO SUMI NO HILEHI IGHI KUGHUNA KELO SUKO IPI KUVE	NUNU

ZUNHEBOTO

1	SUKHALU	KHUKIYE NO PA NU SUKHALU JE LONO APHU SHITSU	YEMISHE
2	NATHA NEW	ASHI AGHU GHULOKI LO TIMI ZU NATHALU KEU KIQI	NATHA OLD
3	NATHA OLD	ASHI AGHU GHULOKI LO TIMI ZU NATHALU KEU KIQI	SHOTO
4	YEMISHE	ANULIQO NO PANONGU PAPU YEMISHE JE LONO APHU SHITSU	SHOTO
5	HEKIYE	HEKIYE NO PA JE LONO APHU SHILU	LOCHOMI
6	SHEYIPU	SHEYIPU NO APHU SHI	SHOTO
7	ASUKHOMI	<u>ASUKHO OLD</u> PIVISHE NGO KUHOSHE PAMA KUSUKHOVE KE GHENGUNO KUSUKU- KHOMI IPI CHEGHI ENO ATHIU YE ASUKHOMI SHIVE	EMLOMI
		<u>ASUKHO NEW</u> ASU KOLA KHO KEU TO LO APHU SHIKE	ANGKHULA HU PIVISHE PHU LONO PHUTHE IGHI

		GHENGUNO ASUKHOMI IPI KULUVE	
8	KAWOTO	KAWOTO NO PAJE LONO APHU SHILU	SUKHALU
9	LIZU PHUYEU	A-A HIPAU LO APHU SHINIKE GHENGUNO GHENGUNO XUJUCHE KEMU ALA IZUVENO ATHIU ASU XUKHUPU NO APHU GHEPHELU ATUGHU LOYE LAZUMI IPICHE KEMU ATHIU YE LIZUMI IPI KULUVE	IMLOMI
10	LIZU PHUTHEU	LIZU PHUYEU JE KIKIME LONO	LIZU APHUYE LONO IGHI
11	LIZU AVIQATO	AVITSU NO PAPU ARKHA NANU XAPU SUWO QA KEU TO LO APHU SHILUKE GHENGUNO APHU JE LIZU AVIQATO KULU	LIZU PHUYE
12	LOCHOMI	LOCHOMU YIVE KEU TOGHI LO APHU SHILU KEU GHENGUNO LOCHOMI KULU	YEZAMI
13	SHOTOMI	APHU SHINI KELO KUSHOKUTSU SHINO APHU SHILU KEU GHENGUNO SHOTOMI KULU	YEZAMI
14	YEZAMI	TSUTHA ZUNGKI BOKHU LO APHU AYINA SUSHO ENO KHEPHE TSU AYEZA SHINO ASUQHA LUCHE KE GHENGUNO YEZAMI KUTSU	IMLO
15	NEW LAND	AYEGHI KITHE LO APHU SHILU KEU KIQI	YEZAMI

16	BAIMHO	ANA (RICE) IMHO AGHI KEHU "NAIMHOMI' IPI CHE IKEMU BRITISHMI NO BAIMHO KUVETSU	SHOTO
17	LIZU NAGHUTO	NAGHUTO KIQHE LO APHU SHIKE GHENGUNO	LIZU OLD

AKULUTO-VK

1	SASTAMI	CHOLIMI TSAUNO SANGSTA AKIQI: AYEMHILI' IKEMU SUMI TSAUNO SASTAMI KULUVE	MAROMI
2	LITTA OLD	CHOLIMI TSA LONGTISA' AKIQI ATU LI' ITEHI YE LOTISA KULUVA	PHISHUMI
3	LOTISA NEW	CHOLIMI TSA LONGTISA' AKIQI ATU LI' ITEHI YE LOTISA KULUVA	LOTISA OLD
4	AJIQAMI	JIQA SHINO AGHUMI YIVECHE KE GHENGUNO AJIQAMI KUU	ASUKHOMI
5	SUTEMI	CHOLIMI 'SUTEO' NO APHU SHI IKEMU ATHIU YE SUMI TSAUNO SUTEMI KULUVE	SHICHIMI
6	SUMI SETTSU	CHOLIMI SETSU SASU KUMUTSA KUGHUNA ACHE IKEMU ATHIU YE SUMI KUTASHI A-A KUTOLUVE NO SUMI SETTSU SHIVE	AWOTSAKILI
7	IZHETO	IZHETO NO APHU SHILUKE	AJIQA
8	LOTISA OLD	CHOLIMI TSA LONGTISA' AKIQI ATU LI' ITEHI YE LOTISA KULUVE	KHRIMTO
9	SHICHIMI	CHOLIMI TSAUNO SETSUNG' IKEMU SUMI TSAUNO SHICHIMI KULUVE	IMLO
10	LUMITHSAMI	I ALHUQU NO AYEGHI KUMTHSA YE	SURUMI

		HOMUXA AGHI KEU LO APHU SHIKE GHENGUNO	
11	MAROMI	CHOLIMI TSAUNO MANGRONG YE ATU PHU IPI ANI IKEMU ITEHI YE SUTSAUNO MAROMI KULUVA	PHISHUMI
12	LUMAMI	CHOLIMI TSAUNO LUMAMI	LIMITHSAMI
13	ALAPHUMI	TIMI ALA NO ATHI SHESU ENO LHOXU PIGHI AGHI KEU A LO APHU SHILUKE GHENGUNO ALAPHUMI KULU	LUMITHSAMI
14	PHISHUMI	KHAGHI YE PHUSHU IPI CHE IKEMU ATSALA KULU NO APhi SHUKUTHUI KE GHENGUNO PHISHU' IPI KUVE	MUKHAMI
15	MAPULUMI	CHOLIMI MAPU NO CHICHE KEU A LO APHU SHILUKE	LOTISA
16	MUKHAMI	CHUWOMI TSAUNO IKHUMI IKEMU NI TSAUNO MUKHAMI KULUVE	PHISHUMI
17	LITTA NEW	LITA APHUYE JE	LITTA OLD
18	ZAPHUMI A	CHOLI TSAUNO KHETSUNHE NO PHUDA KEU A IPI ANI	LUMITHSAMI
19	ZAPHUMI B		

AGUNATO AREA

1	VIYIXE	VIYIXE JE LONO APHU SHILU	THOKIHI
2	VIYILHO	VIYILHO NO APHU SHIKE	THOKIHI
3	TSUKOMI NEW	SUKO GHOKI PHIVILO APHU SHILUKE	TSUKO OLD (GHUVISHE)

4	GHOKISHE	GHOKISHE JE ONO APHU SHI	LUVISHE
5	LUVISHE OLD	LUVISHE NO PA JE LONO APHU SHI	AQUBA
6	LUTHSUMI	LUTHSU JE LONO APHU SHIKE	YEZAMI
7	KHUKISHE	KHUKISHE JE LONO APHU SHIKE	YEMISHE
8	YEZASHI	YEZAMI PHU LONO IGHU KEHU YEZA SHI IPI ANI	YEZAMI
9	SATAMI	TIMI NO PANO SASU AGHU PUGHUSA KE GHENGUNO SATAMI KUTSU	KHRIMTO
10	ZHEISHE	ZHEISHE JE LONO APHU SHILU	TSUKOMI
11	KHETOI	KHETOI NO APHU SHILU	KHUKISHE
12	SHEVISHE	SHEVISHE NO APHU SHI	LUKIKHE
13	KHEKIYE	KHEKIYE NO APHU SHI	HOSHEPU
14	PHULESHETO	PHULESHE NO APHU SHI	LUTHSUMI
15	NIHOSHE	NIHOSHE NO APHU SHI	KIYESHE/SUKHAI
16	LUVISHE NEW	LUVISHE NO APHU SHILU	LUVISHE OLD
17	LUKIKHE	LUKIKHE JE LONO APHU SHI	LUTHSUMI
18	KELTOMI	SANGTAM MI AKUKAU KELTO YILUKE PA JE LONO KELTOMI KULU	LUTHSUMI
19	TOKIYE TOWN	TOKIYE JE LONO MISHI PHU SHILU	TOKIYE
20	GHUVISHE	GHUVISHE NO APHU SHI	LUTHSUMI/SATAMI
21	KHEWOTO	KHEWOTO NO APHU SHI	HOSHEPU
22	AQUBA	AQU NO BA PUAGHI KEU A LO APHU SHIKE	SHOTO
23	THOKIHIMI	TUKUMI TSAU THOKIVA PA KIQI 'SHUGHUBO' IKEMU ATHIU YE	SHOTOMI

		SUMI TSAUNO THOKIHI KUVE	
24	AGHIYILIMI	APHU GHEPHE KELO AGHIYI KUTOMO AGHIKE GHENGUNO	YEZASHI
25	MELAHUMI	MELA GHOKI HU LO APHU SHIKE GHENGUNO	SATAMI
26	LIZUTOMI	APHU SHINI KELO TUMUMI NO ZUHU GHI KELO ILIMI NO AZU KUCHUNIYE JU PUHA CHEGHIKELO NO LIZUHATO IPI KU IKEMU ATHIU YE LIZUTO KUVE	SATAMI
27	NGOZUBOMI	YIMCHUNGER SUMI KULAKISHI LONO A-A HIPAU LO AZUBO KIVI MULA NO NGOLUKE	MELAHUMI
28	LUKHUYI	LUKHUYI GHOKI JE LONO LUKHUYIMI IPI KULUVE	YEZA
29	HOSHEPU	HOSHEPU NO APHU SHI	KIYEKHU
30	AGHULITOMI		
31	NIZHEVI		
32	AQUBA B		

SURUHUTO-ASUTO

1	KIYETHA	KIYETHA NO APHU SHI	YEHEMI
2	TICHIPAMI	TICHI KUPU KUTOMO PU AGHI KEU A LO APHU SHIKE GHENGU TICHIPAMI KUVE	SURUMI/ SHICHIMI
3	PHUYE NEW	PHUYE OLD LONO IGHKE GHENGUNO APHUYE JE LONO KULUVE	PHUYE OLD

4	PHUYE OLD	APHUYE LO IDE IGH I NO APHU SHILU KEU GHENGUNO PHUYE KULUVE	KHRIMTO
5	VEDAMI	ATO VEKUDA LO APHU SHIKE GHENGU J.H.HUTTON NO VEDAMI KUTSU	SATAMI/ SAGHEMI
6	KHOLEBOTO	KHOLETHI BO AGHI KEU GHENGUNO APHU JE KUVE	SURUMI
7	SAPOTIMI	TUKU TSAU NO SAMPUR IPI CHE IKEMU SUMI TSAU NO SAPOTIMI IPI KULUVE	NAGHUTO (TSUVUKHA)
8	YEVISHE	YEVISHE YEGHI LO APHU SHIKE GHENGU	YESHITO/ AKHAKHU
9	YEHEMI	SANGTAM TSAUNO YENGHARI IKEMU SUMI TSAUNO YEHEMI IPI KULUVE	SURUMI/ SATAMI
10	ZHEKUTO	ZHEKUTO NO APHU SHI	SURUMI/ KHOLEBOTO
11	ASUTO	SUCHOSUBO KUTOMO GHI KEHU APHU JE ASUTO KULUVE	SATAMI
12	KITAHUMI	AKITA LO APHU SHIKE GHENGUNO KITAHUMI	KOIBOTO
13	ATUNAKUGHA	ATU NO ANAKUGHA OI AGHI KE GHENGU ATUNAKUGHA KULU	A KHUMISHI B
14	TIZUHUMI	TIZU GHOKI HU LO APHU SHIKEU LONO TIZUHU KULU	LIZUTO
15	KATHARA	KATHARA YE SANGTAM KE IKEMU PANO NO PIGHIVE KEHU SUMI NO TILEHI APHU SHILU	YEHEMI
16	YESHITO PHU	YESHITO NO APHU SHI	KATHARA
17	TAZUHU	AGHOKI AHUU IQE IQHOVE AGHI KEHU	TUZUHU
18	SURUMI	ATU LONO AZU SUR SUR SHI PU IPEGHI AGHI KEU A LO APHU	KHRIMTO

		SHIKE GHENGUNO	
19	AICHISAGHEMI	IAPHU SHINI KELO AICHI GHEPHE NO ALA PULAKE GHENGUNO	SURU
20	LITHSAMI	LITSAPA PINETSALA LONO APHU SHIKE GHENGUNO APHU JE LITHSAMI KULU	YEHEMI
21	TOKIYE -TOKIJE	TOKIYE JE LONO SHI KEMU ITEHI YE TOKIJE	ACHIKUCHU B
22	ACHIKUCHU A		
23	ACHIKUCHU B		
24	NIHOSHE NORTH	ASU NIHOSHE JE LONO APHU SHI	ACHIKUCHU A
25	KOIBOTO		
26	KHUMISHI A		
27	KHUMISHI B		
28	TIZU ISLAND		
29	AKHAKHU	AKHAKHU NO PAJE LONO APHU SHILU	KIYETHA
30	KIKHEVI		
31	NIVISHE		
32	KHUNIHO	KHUNIHO NO APHU SHI	TICHIPA

EASTERN SUMI

1	NITOI	NITOI NO APHU SHI	NIKIYE
2	IGHOTO	IGHOTO NO APHU SHI	NITOI
3	HONITO	HONITO NO APHU SHI	NITOI
4	THAZUVI	THAZUVI NO APHU SHI	NIKIYE
5	SHISHIMI		SITIMI
6	SITIMI		

7	NATSAMI	CHEHOZU NO APHU SHI IKEMU TUKU TSAU NO NATSA KULUVE	NIKIYE
8	KIYEZHE	KIYEZHE NO APHU SHI	THAZUVI
9	NIKIYE	NIKIYE NO APHU SHI	SUKHALU
10	PHISAMI	APHI SAVE NO PHUTHEWO KE GHENGUNO PHISAMI KULU	GHUVISHE
11	LUKHAMI	LUKHA MISHI HEQHI NO APHU SHIKE GHENGUNO LUKHAMI KULU	GHUVISHE
12	SHOTHUMI B	PHISAMI PHU LONO SHOTHA PESU IKUGHI NO APHU KITHE SHIKE GHENGUNO SHOTHUMI IPI KULU	SHOTHU A
13	YEZUTU B	SHOIHO NO SUMI SASU APHU SHINO SHOIHO PHU IPI CHE KEMU ATHIUNO YEZUTU B IPI KUYE	YEZUTU A
14	XUVISHE	XUVISHE NO APHU SHI	THAZUVI
15	SUKIMI/ SUKIU	APHU YE IZUKHU KATY NO SHI KEMU 'SUKIMI' KUYE - ASHI AYE KUTAMI DOLONO APHU HIPAU SUKHALU KEU KIQI LONO	PHISAMI
16	SHOTHUMI A		

NORTHERN SUMI

1	SHEVUKHU	SHEVUKHU NO APHU SHI KEHU	MITHIHE
2	AMBOTO NEW	APHUYE JE	GHUVISHE
3	VIKUTO	VIKUTO NOO APHU SHI	PHUYE OLD
4	WOZHU OLD		VEKUHO OLD

5	SHIHAPHUMI	BRITISH SHIHA J.H.HUTTON JE LONO SHIHAPHUMI KULU	SHOTO
6	AMBOTO OLD	AM BO KUTOMO AGHIKEHU	MITHIHE
7	ZUXUSHE	ZUXUSHE NO APHU SHI	YEZAMI
8	AQAHUTO		SAPOTIMI & AGHAUTITO
9	SUMITO	SUMI NO SHIYE DOLO APHU SHILUKEU GHENGUNO	LOKOBO
10	MITHIHE	MITHIHE NO APHU SHI	KHUMISHI
11	KHAKUTHATO	APHU SHI AKE LONO AKUGHUKI LO KHATHA PE QHIVE KE GHENGUNO KHAKUTHATO KUVE	GHUVISHE
12	WOZHU NEW		ALAPHU & WOJI OLD
13	AGHAUTITO	ASUKE LO AGHAU PUSU AGHIKEHU	MELAHU
14	AKUHAIQA	AZUTA ANGU NO AKUHA YILU KEU KIQI	ATUPHUMI
15	AZUHOTO	AZU NO HOMUXA PE AKEU KIQI	SHIHAPHUMI
16	ATUPHUMI	ATU KUTOMO AKEU LO APHU SHIKEHU	PHUYE OLD
17	RONI OLD	CHUWOMI TSAUNO APHU PIGHIVEKEU IPI ANI. APHU PIGHIVE KEU A LO APHU SHILU KEU GHENGUNO APHU JE RONI KULU	ZUNGTI
18	RONI NEW	APHUYE JE	
19	AQAHUTO B	PHUYE JE	AQAHUTO
20	HEZHEKHU	HEZHEKHU JE LONO	ASUKHO
21	Y. KHUHETO	KHUHETO NO APHU SHI	ASUKHO
22	VIHOTO	VIHOTO JE LONO SHI	TICHIPAMI

23	XUKIYE	XUKIYE JE LONO SHILU	ASUKHO
24	P.TOKUGHA	TOKUGHA NO APHU SHI	AWOTSAKILI
25	KASUMI	APU NO PANU KASU JE LONO APHU SHITSU	AWOTSAKILI

WESTERN SUMI

SL. NO.	APHUJE VILLAGE NAME	APHUYE PARENT VILLAGE
1	KIYEZU	NIKUTO
2	KUHOXU	HOKIYE
3	KHEHOYI	KIYEKHU
4	NIKHEKHU	SATAKHA
5	NIHOKHU	VISHEPU
6	HOVISHE	SHOTOMI
7	ALATO	LIZU NAGHUTO
8	SHOXUVI	SHOIPU
9	KIYEVI	KHUKIYE
10	ZHUIKHU	MARUMI
11	LHOTHAVI	KIYEVI
12	ZUTOVI	CHAKHAMA
13	THAHEKHU	VIYILHO
14	GHOWOTO	KIYEZU
15	TOLUVI	KOPATALI
16	HOZUKHE	NIKHEKHU
17	LHOMITHI	GHUKIYE
18	PIMLA	ZUTOVI
19	SAKIPHETO	ALATO

20	CHEKIYE	SHOIXE
21	THILIXU	CHEKIYE
22	KUPUHE	SUKHALU
23	VIHOKHU	KHEHOYI

24	TOSHIHO	KHEHOYI
25	HEKHESHE	ZHUIKHU
26	ZUHESHE	SAPOTIMI
27	YEVETO	KUHOXU
28	PHUHOTO	SHOIXE
29	SUKHATO	HOZUKHE
30	GHOTOVI	ZHEKIYE
31	SUHOI	SHOTOMI
32	PUKHATO	ZHEKIYE
33	L. HOTOVI	LITHSAMI
34	SHOZUKHU	ASUKHOMI
35	HENITO	KUHOXU
36	XELHOZU	CHISHOLIMI
37	PHUHOTO	SHOIXE
38	SHITОВI	LONGTONG
39	HEZHETO	TSOSINYU
40	XEKIYE	SAGHEMI
41	KHEHOKHU	THAHEKHU
42	S. HOTOVI	SAGHEMI
43	LUZHETO	NATHAMI

44	HAKHIZHE	KUHOXU
45	LOTOVI	ZUTOVI
46	GHOKITO	KHEHOTO
47	XUKIYE	GHUVISHE
48	SHITOI	PHULESHETO
49	GHONIVI	TOLUVI
50	HENIVI	YEMISHE
51	PISHIKHU	LHOMITHI
52	VISHIYI	LUKHAMI
53	LUKUTO	CHEKIYE
54	NIHOTO	KHUKISHE
55	HEVISHE	NAGHUTOMI
56	SUNITO	AQUBA
57	KIQHEYI	SHEVISHE
58	TOKUGHA	VIYILHO
59	KIYELHO	LAZAMI
60	K.HETOYI	KUHOXU
61	KHUGHOVI	TOLUVI
62	HOITO	YEHEMI
63	TOSHEZU	LHOTHAVI
64	NIKIKHE	
65	HUSTO	SUKHALU
66	ZUKIHE	KELTOMI
67	TOHOI	LONGTONG
68	QHUHOI	YEZUTU
69	HOMELAND	ZHUIKHU

70	HEVIKKHE	KITAHU
71	PIHEKHU	LONGTONG
72	XELHOZU	CHISHOLIMI
73	ZUVUKHU	SETTSUMI
74	HOVUKHU	AWOTSAKILI

75	HUKATO	NAGHUTOMI
76	NIZHEVI	SHICHIMI
77	KHAGHABOTO	
78	HUKHAYI	MELAHUMI
79	YEHOKHU	THAHEKHU
80	NIULAND	
81	AHOJE	YEMISHE
82	VIKHETO	GHOTOVI
83	ZHEKISHE	ATUPHUMI
84	NITOUZU	PHISHUMI
85	NGUVIHE	PHUYE NEW
86	ZUTOI	GHOTOVI
87	XUKHUVI	ZUNGUTI
88	NIZHETO	HUKAI
89	LUHEVI	KELTOMI
90	IZHEVI	ATUPHUMI
91	ZHEXUCHE	NIHOTO
92	LUHEZHE	MARUMI
93	KHUTOVI	LITAMI
94	YETOHO	ASUKHOMI

95	A. HETOI	VIYILHO
96	P. VIHOTO	
97	SHOKHEVI	SHOIXE
98	MUGHAVI	LUKHAMI
99	KIYETO	KIYEVI
100	KUHUBOTO	
101	AHOTO	YEZAMI
102	VIYITO	KUHOXU
103	GHOSHITO	CHISHOLIMI
104	R. HOVISHE	VEDAMI
105	TOHOKHU	ZUTOVI
106	QHEHOYI	LITA NEW
107	KHEHUTO	AJIQAMI
108	KIYEZU B	KIYEZU
109	L. VIHOTO	HOVISHE
110	VIKUHO	NUNUMI
111	SAHOI	SUHOI
112	VIHUTO	HOSHEPU
113	GHOKUTO	XUYIVI
114	S. HETOI	KHEHOYI
115	K. XEKIYE	LAZAMI
116	QHITOHE	KUHOXU
117	KHAGHABOTO	
118	HOZHETO	ZUHESHE
119	PUKHAHO	GHOWOTO
120	KHEKIHO	SHEIPU

121	AKITO	THAHEKHU
122	HOLLOHON	KHUKISHE
123	SHIKAVI	THILIXU
124	DANIEL	KHUKISHE
125	AHOYI	LUKHAMI
126	SUGHUNA	
127	YEHOKHU	THAHEKHU
128	CHEKIYE NEW	CHEKIYE
129	NIKIHE	IZHEVI
130	SHIKUTO	ZUTOVI
131	NIHOYI	ZUTOVI
132	HEZULHO	HOVISHE
133	SHIWOTO	YEMISHE
134	K. L. CHISHI	NAGHUTO OLD
135	MISHIKITO	MAPULUMI
136	HOKHEJE	AWOHUMI
137	S. VIHUTO	THILIXU
138	A. K. INDUSTRY	SHEYIPU
139	KAKIHO	KHUMISHI
140	PHUSHITO	TICHIPA
141	IKISHE	CHEKIYE
142	HEVUXU	NITOUZU
143	KUGHATO	GHUKHUYI