

Report
on
A Study on Socio Economic Characteristics of the
Singpho Tribe of Assam

Submitted by :
Ashwini Machey

Sponsored by :
Assam Institute of Research for Tribal and Scheduled Castes
Jawaharnagar, Guwahati - 22 Assam

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the present work "A study on Socio Economic Characteristics of the Singpho Tribe of Assam" is an original and faithful work done by the undersigned under Assam Institute of Research for Tribal and Schedules Castes, Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati - 22

The Report in part and full has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma in this other program.

Ashwini Machey
ASHWINI MACHEY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the very outset I am thankful for the financial assistance granted to me by the Assam Institute of Research for Tribal and Schedule Caste for undertaking this Research Project. I express my deepest sense of gratitude to Ms. Mitra Das, Research Officer, AIRTSC, Jawaharnagar, Guwahati for her encouragement and support throughout the research study.

I offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Dilip Kumar Bhuyan, Principal, M.D.K.G. College, Dibrugarh, Assam for his encouragement during my research study.

I extend my sincere thanks to the library staffs of Dibrugarh University, Rajib Gandhi University, (Arunachal Pradesh), University of Delhi, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, District Library of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia, M.D.K. Girls' College, Assam Institute of Research for Tribal and Schedule Caste for their kind co-operation during my library visits.

I acknowledge the publishers, authors and researchers whose valuable contribution as referred in my work have immensely helped me in formulation and analysis of the problem under study in a proper perspective.

I am also grateful to Prof. Moushumi Bordoloi, Prof. Utpal Sut. Prof. Dipankar Sarmah, Prof. Pranjal Pratim Buragohain, Prof. Shrutimala Bharali for their technical suggestion and my brothers Ladoi Gudung, Dhiraj Machey, Anoj Machey, Bhasker Jyoti Nath, Manje La Singpho, Rajib Ningkhee, Rajesh Singpho and Basa Youngthoi Singpho

for their support during field study. I would also like to express my deep sense of gratitude to the respondents for their co-operation during my field study.

I am delighted to express my sincere gratitude to my life partner Jhorna Sharma Machey, who encouraged and stood by me throughout my project and parents for their blessing and support during this research work. Lastly, I would like to record my thanks to Pradyut Hazarika for lending me valuable books and J.N. Prasad for printing my project report in time.

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Map of Assam

Assam

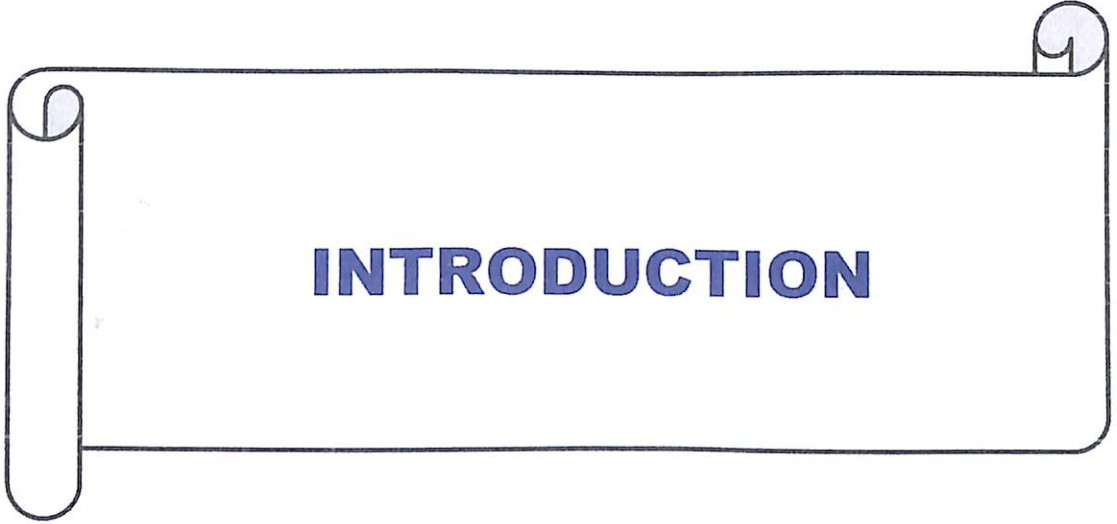


GLOSSARY

Singpho		English
Aba	:	Father's brother's daughter
Aba	:	Sister
Acha	:	Wife's father
Acha-ba	:	Mother's brother
Achi	:	Father's father
Achi	:	Mother's father
Adui	:	Mother's mother
Adui	:	Father's mother
Afu	:	Brother
Afu	:	Father's brother's son
Afu	:	Wife's sister's husband
Akhiri	:	Daughter's husband's sister
Akhri	:	Father's sister's daughter
Akhri	:	Sister's husband's sister
Anao	:	Father's brother's daughter
Ang	:	Jovial
Ani	:	Mother's brother's wife
Ani	:	Wife's brother's wife
Ani	:	Wife's mother
Anu or Ani	:	Mother
Aphuba	:	Elder brother
Arrat	:	Mother's brother's daughter
Arrat	:	Wife's sister
Arrat	:	Wife
Atung	:	Father's brother's wife
Awa	:	Father
Bukang	:	long skirt for woman
Bukang	:	Women's colourful lower garment
Bum-bam	:	Head turban for women

Bupa or Baka	:	Lungi, cloth covering waist for man
Ca	:	Sister's son
Ca	:	Son
Cha	:	Mother's brother
Chapuk (tsapup)	:	Home made liquor made from rice
Chatmukai	:	Streamed rice popularly known as Tupula Bhat
Chi	:	Both fathers' father and mother's father
Chinket	:	Belt (woman used to tie waist)
Chinket	:	Belt, women tied their waist
Chumtang Chra	:	Place of Lord Buddha worship at home
Cicang	:	Black in complexion
Cu or Acu	:	Daughter's son
Cu or Acu	:	Son's son
Doomsa	:	Priest
Dui	:	Both fathers' mother and mothers' mother
Empheng	:	A side bag on shoulder
Fra	:	God
Fu	:	Bride price
Fup	:	Impatient
Inbang	:	Staircase
Ingbangdun	:	Drawing room
Inta	:	Traditional house of the Singpho with rise platform
Inta	:	Traditional house of the Singphos (popularly known as Chang gar)
Intana Mitow	:	Head of the village
Khaici	:	Necklace
Kuman	:	Soft
Kumphraw pulang	:	Girl wear the dress with stitched emblems made of siver
Lakchawp	:	Finger ring
Mineng	:	Talkative
Miriyeng	:	Village
Miriyeng	:	Village

Mutung	:	Mother's sister
Naat	:	Spirit
Nam or Anam	:	Son's wife
Nam	:	Younger brother's wife
Nau	:	Younger brother or sister
Nungwat	:	A piece of cloth the breast being covered
Nungwat	:	Piece of cloth for covering breast
Pat lakan	:	Earrings
Phalap	:	Hot beverage (Singpho Tea)
Ree	:	Thread
Sagrat	:	Singpho calendar
Shlangjan	:	Singpho women
Tokou	:	Palm leaves for roofing
Tong	:	Round faced
Tsapup	:	Traditional beer made from rice
Wadi	:	Father's brother (younger)
Wadoi	:	Fathers' brother
Wali or Wadi	:	Mother's sister's husband (younger)
Watai	:	Mother's sister's husband (elder)
Watai	:	Father's brother (elder)



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction:

India is a land of diverse tribes and ethnic communities. It ranks the second in having tribal concentration in the world next only to Africa. India holds a unique position in the concentration of tribal communities (Sharma, 1966; Devi, 2005). The tribal communities are known by such name as Adivasi, Vanyajati, Vanvasi, Pahari, Adimjati and Anusuchit Jan Jati implying aboriginal inhabitants. There are 533 scheduled tribes as per notified schedule under Article 342 of the Constitution of India in different states and union territories of the country. They speak 105 different languages and 225 subsidiary languages (Devi, 2005). The languages spoken by Indian tribes can be classified into four major families of languages, namely; Austro-Asiatic family, Tibeto-Chinese family, Dravidian family and Indo-European family. The tribal population in India according to 2011 census was 104281034 (104.3 million). This was almost equal to the population of United Kingdom. The tribal community formed around 8.6 percent of the country's total population. The population of the tribal had grown at the rate of 23.7 per cent during the period 2001 to 2011. This is more than the decadal growth rate of 17.64 per cent for the nation as a whole.

Traditionally, the term 'tribe' was used for those groups of people, whose place of residence was situated in remote areas like hills, forest, sea coasts and islands and whose

life style was quite different from the mainstream population. Local indigenous people residing in these places of the world were termed as tribe or tribal to distinguish them from other people of the world. Imperial Gazette of India defines a tribe as, “a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is usually not endogamous, though originally it might have been so”. Hence basic characteristics of Indian tribal are common name, common territory, common language, common culture, endogamy, political organization, economic organization and agricultural organization.

The state of Assam, lying in the north eastern part of India is bound on the north, east and south by great mountain ranges inhabited by different hill tribes, mostly the Mongolians (Devi, 1968). Over the centuries the state of Assam is the melting pot of diverse races that migrated to the land and made it their home. Assam is considered as a miniature India for its composite nature of culture and peculiar structure of population. The population of Assam comprises of the representatives of major races like Aryans, Dravidians, Caustics and Mongoloids. The inhabitants of Assam can be divided into three categories, namely the scheduled tribe, the non-tribe and the scheduled caste.

The Singpho tribe is one of the important frontier tribes of North-East India. The tribe is known in China as *Jingpo* and in Burma as *Kachin* (Singpho, 2000; Hanson 2012). In India, the Singphos are found in the states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh adjoining the Patkai Mountain range. The Singpho tribe is of Mongoloid stock and presently they are mainly found in the upper part of the Tinsukia district of Assam. Apart from Tinsukia district a small size of the Singpho speaking population are also found in Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam. The total number of

Singpho population living in India is about 30 to 40 thousand (Linter, 1997). As per latest data, the Singpho tribe has a total population of 6625 in the Margherita Sub-division of Assam.

The meaning of the word '*Singpho*' is explained in various ways. In their own dialect the word '*Singpho*' means 'man'. J.F. Needham's report mentions that the word Chingpaw, Theinbaw, Kachin and Singpho must all refer to the same tribe as all these imply the same meaning, i.e. 'man'. At the same time it may be mentioned that the word Chingpaw (*Singpho*) means a '*pure Kachin*' and since all the pure Kachins claim their origin from the river source, it is only natural to assume that the Singphos are closely related to the '*Kakus*' (i.e. Kachin of Burma), a term literally meaning 'a man' or 'a man from the upper stream'. The term Kaku is believed to have been used by the southern Kachins or the Chingpaws while referring to the northerners. Thus, Singphos dwelling in the tracts of the Burhi Dehing, Noa-Dehing, Tengapani and Hukwang valley used this name to denote their kinsmen living further up in the north-east. Similarly, the Kakus describe the Singphos as the men of hot country, a term referring to their kinsmen who lived down-streams. The Singphos belong to the race called Burmese Kakhyens or Kakus, whose original settlements were on the great eastern branches of the Irrawady river; they are there in contact with the Kunungs, with whom they are closely allied in language and origin (Dalton, 1872). According to Hanson (1912), "The *Singpho* of Assam is the same as the *Jinghpaw* or Kachin of Burma. The Assamese being unable to pronounce the word *Jinghpaw*, render it *Singphaw*". The Singphos live intermixed with the Khamtis, the country watered by the Burhi Dehing, the Noa-Dehing and the Tengapani, which formerly belonged to the Ahoms. The real home of the Singphos is in the hilly country between the Chindwin River and the Patkai where they are known as

Kakhyens. The name by which they are known to the Assam frontier is simply the tribal word for 'man' (Gait, 2008). According to Colonel Hannay, the Singpgos are identical to the race Kakus or Kakhyens of Burma whose chief habitat was on the great eastern branch of the Irrawadi. They extend nearly as far South as lat. 25° North, while touching on the north and east the borders of China in lat. 27° North (Elwin, 1972).

According to the oral history of the Singphos, their ancestors migrated from 'Majoi Singra Bum' or 'Nojoi Singra Bum' which means naturally flat mountain. It may be somewhere in the highland of Mongolia. According to the Singpho history book 'Singda Laban' the Singphos originally migrated from Mongolia almost in 700-800 B.C. and entered the south west of Tibet in around in 600-300 B.C. and settled down in the Singpho valley over 400 years and during the period 300 B.C. to 100 A.D., the Singphos entered the Brahmaputra valley (Ningkhee, 2008).

The Singphos of Upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh are divided into four groups, locally known as *Numphuk Hkawng*, *Diyun Hkawng*, *Tieng Hkawng* and *Turung Hkawng*. *Hkawng* is a term meaning 'area' and each of these groups is named after a local river. *Numhpuk* is a Singpho term incorporating the word for a women, *num*.

The Singpho society is well organized and is divided into a number of clans. Each individual bears a clan name referring to the clan to which he belongs. The Singpho term for clan is 'Fan' which means belonging to the same blood. According to Ningkhee (2008) the principal clans of Singphos are - (a) *Marip* (b) *Lahtaw* (c) *Laphai* (d) *Nhkum* and (e) *Maran*. The Singphos speak their own language. The Singpho language serves as a lingua-franca among the Zi, Liso, Maru, Lashi and Nung. Moreover, Singpho language was a dominant link language in the north east frontier of the Patkai range.

The Singpho tribe has unique socio-economic-demographic characteristics with varied living patterns. The tribe lives in specified tribal areas, which are almost aloof from the mainstream of the society. Formerly the Singphos are a powerful tribe of the Patkai range but now they are facing many socio-economic and demographic problems. The rate of social mobility, education and health condition are not satisfactory; demographically they are scattered, and have a low birth rate compared to other tribes of North-Eastern Region (NER). After six decades of independence the Singphos live in the traditional way with low income and high incidence of unemployment, underemployment and poverty. Although the Singphos are a very important tribe of Assam, not much study and research have been undertaken. Hence there is an urgent need of studying the various problems faced by the Singpho community to address and understand their socio-economic and demographic conditions for providing a reasonable solution.

1.2. Significance of the Study:

The Singpho tribe of Assam has a rich culture and contributes a lot to the greater Assamese culture. But since couple of decades they are suffering from the problem of unemployment, poverty and low rate of population growth etc. Therefore, it is imperative to study the Singphos in terms of their socio-economic condition. As the tribal population is a decisive variable in the socio-economic and demographic sphere of the NER, importance has been given to address the problems, issues and concerns of the Singpho tribe.

Most of the earlier studies on the Singphos were done only on ethnographic and cultural aspects. Keeping in view the aforesaid problems and gaps of the earlier study, the researcher made an attempt to study the socio-economic characteristics of the Singpho

tribe of Assam. So that, it helps to know the Singpho society as well as the economic conditions of the Singphos.

1.3. Objectives of the Study:

The prime objective of the study is to trace the present socio-economic characteristics of the Singpho tribe of Assam. Apart from socio-economic characteristics the historical background, ethnographic and cultural aspects are also tried to cover in this study and identify the socio-economic problems faced by them.

1.4. Review of Literature:

Literature review is an indispensable part of research. Here an attempt has been made to review the existing literature of the related studies found to be relevant so as to get a proper orientation and perspective of the study.

Chatopadhyaya (1953) has discussed the living conditions of the Indian tribals and stated that the majority of tribals in India live a primitive life. He also suggests some feasible measures for tribal development. Further he mentions that for the development of tribals the education promotion programmes are indispensable.

Vidyarthi and Rai (1976) in their work have analyzed the socio-economic and political life of the tribal population of India. They highlighted the miserable picture of the tribal people living in the country.

Boruah (1977) states about the religious attitude and devotion of the Singpho tribes. In his study he also mentions about the traditional religion of Singphos and their conversion

to Buddhism. Along with religion he discussed about the 'Nat' (spirit) and religious beliefs and practices.

Rajkumar (1982) is mainly concerned with original habitation, social structure and political life of the Singphos. Further he mentions that Singpaw, Kachin and Singpho are the same people and live in different countries. Moreover, he distinguishes Singpho tribe with other tribes and also emphasizes Singphos' relationship with the Assamese and the British.

Dutta (1990) discusses about the socio-cultural life of the Singphos covering village structure, housing pattern, art and craft, dress, ornaments, food habits, festivals etc. The author also describes their social institutions such as family, kinship, clan, marriage, festivals, politics, social law and justice etc.

Kalita (2000) carried out an important study about the Singphos and their origin, religion, culture, society and relation with British during the period 1825 to 1947. Further, she describes the primitive way of communication.

Sharma (2000) in his book describes on various aspects of social change among tribal population. He tries to highlight the elements which adversely affect the tribes in various aspects such as direction of social change, crisis of cultural identity, land alienation as a factor of change, money lending as a method of exploitation, rapid growth of consumerism, market orientation, cropping pattern etc.

Sharma and Niranjna (2001) have carried out a study on social structure and fertility behavior of schedule tribe of Himachal Pradesh. They highlighted the social dynamics of human reproduction and the way of life of people of Kinnaur in the north-western

Himalayas. Further they mentioned the importance to look into the cultural aspects of women who give birth to the child, bring up the child and socialize him/her in accordance with the socio-cultural practices of the area. The work was carried out by adopting both explorative and descriptive method.

Changmai (2003) in his work explains the origin of the Singphos on the basis of historical evidence, their culture, religion and society. Further he highlights the relationship between the Singphos and the British and also the role of the Singphos during Second World War. He also mentions the Singpho freedom fighters and the problem face by the tribe due to huge opium consumption prevailing in their society.

Devi (2005) has done a study to analyse the socio, economic, cultural, religious and living conditions of different tribes in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. Based on both primary and secondary sources of data collected from field study she tries to evaluate tribal agriculture, employment conditions, income expenditure patterns, estimation of poverty levels, indebtedness and credit patterns of the selected households of Seetampeta tribal mandal of Srikakulam district. She also highlights the impact of tribal planning, tribal transformation and the policy measures for socio-economic development of the tribal.

Gogoi (2005) had undertaken an important study about the historical background of the Singphos and their society, culture and contribution to the greater Assamese culture, language assimilation, folk literatures, belief and practices and also problems of the Singpho community.

Borah (ed.) (2006) has carried out a result oriented research work in a very careful and lucid manner by exploring and analyzing the demographic characteristics of the Singpho

tribe living in Assam. The study aims at determining the fertility level of women of the Singpho tribe and analyses the factors influencing their attitude towards additional children. Moreover, the study also focuses on the health status, delivery system and the knowledge and practice of family planning of the tribe. Conceived thus, the work would be of immense value to the Singpho tribe and researchers in spite of the gap in the area particularly with issues concerning the socio-economic condition. The study is based on field investigation in the Margherita Sub-division of Tinsukia district, Assam.

Phukan (2008) has explained in her work that the social and economic condition of Singpho society is primitive and very poor. She describes their social system, dress, transportation, occupation, marketing, production, income and expenditure pattern. Moreover she highlights about the various socio-economic problems of Singphos.

Bora (2008) in her work discusses about the various aspects of social and cultural life of Singphos, such as marriage system, family, religion, dress, food habits, festivals, songs and dances, beliefs and practices etc. Moreover, she highlights the social norms and bindings of the Singpho society.

Ningkhee (2008) in his work mentions about the Singpho history, origin of Singphos, their relationship with the British, Singpho rules and norms, folk beliefs etc. He also describes the origin and present condition of tea and opium cultivation, marriage system, folk cultures, story and various socio-cultural problem and prospects of Singphos.

Das (2009) carries out an important study on the change and continuity of the Singphos living in Assam. She mentions that the Singpho society has been influenced by Buddhism in various dimensions. Moreover, she mentions about inter community marriage noticeable in the Singpho society. She states that, of late, the Singpho society has been

changing while keeping intact the originality of their heritage, culture, custom, festival, dress, language, food habits etc.

Rao (2009) has carried out an important work based on field study to evaluate the living condition of the tribes of Andhra Pradesh. In the study he finds that the primitive tribes Savara, Gadaba and Valmiki have yet to experience the benefits of development to improve their employment, income levels and living conditions when compared to their counter parts in plain areas like Jatapu, Bagata and Konda Dora. Moreover, he advocates the need for the governmental and non-governmental agencies to make concerted efforts and to implement a comprehensive strategy to accelerate the pace of structural change in the interior hilly areas where the primitive tribes reside.

Mahanta (2011) in her work has described the historical background of the Singpho tribe along with their socio-cultural life. Further she mentions the Singphos traditional tea cultivation and how the formal education system helps the present Singpho youths to develop their socio-economic condition.

Borua (2013) has described unique social-cultural life, impact of second World War and administrative system before British occupation and during the British period of the ethnic tribes of the Patkai range including the Singphos.

A close reflection on the foregoing review of the earlier studies relating to the Singpho tribe of Assam have not given a comprehensive view about the Singphos by considering all the dimensions. There are no specific studies with emphasis on the Singphos' socio-economic aspect. The present study is expected to fill this gap. In the light of the existing literature an attempt has been made to present the socio-economic characteristics of Singpho tribe of Assam.

1.5. Methodology:

The present research is carried out by using both primary and secondary data consisting of ethnographic, socio-economic and demographic records. Moreover information regarding the Singpho villages and size of population are collected from Margherita Development Block and Singpho Development Council. The methodology of the research is framed as follows:

1. Sampling:

In the present research multi stage stratified random sampling method is used. There are four stages in which sampling process is carried out. The first stage is the selection of district, the second stage consists of the selection of circle, the third stage consists of the selection of villages and the fourth stage is of selection of households.

- i. **Selection of District:** Out of the 28 districts (2011 census) of Assam one district, namely Tinsukia district is selected for the study keeping in view the concentration of the Singpho tribe.
- ii. **Selection of Circle:** The second stage of sampling consists of selection of circle. There are 4 circles in Tinsukia district of which only one circle namely the Margherita circle is selected which has more Singpho tribe concentration.
- iii. **Selection of Village:** The third stage of sampling consists of selection of villages. The Margherita circle has 25 Singpho habitat villages out of which 15 villages are selected for the present research work.
- iv. **Selection of Households:** The last stage of sampling consists of selection of households. There are 406 Singpho households in the 15 Singpho habitat sample

villages of the Margherita circle. Out of 406 Singpho households 37 percent (i.e. 150) households is selected randomly from sample villages.

2. Data Collection:

The primary data is collected through field study from the 150 sample households of the sample villages with the help of structured household schedule prepared for the purpose from May to August 2014 during different visits. For the socio-economic characteristics of the Singphos the information is collected from the Head or any other knowledgeable person of the family.

The secondary information is collected from the published materials, various books, journals, annual reports, newspapers, research papers, government reports, published and unpublished theses and dissertations, internet etc. to assess the socio-economic characteristics of the Singphos of Assam.

3. Techniques of Analysis:

In analyzing the data, apart from tabular analysis with average and percentage, different statistical techniques and software package SPSS are used at appropriate places. Tabular analysis with averages and percentages are used to explain the general profile and socio-economic condition. The incidence of poverty is estimated with households' expenditure data using poverty line estimated by the Planning Commission.

4. Limitations of the Study:

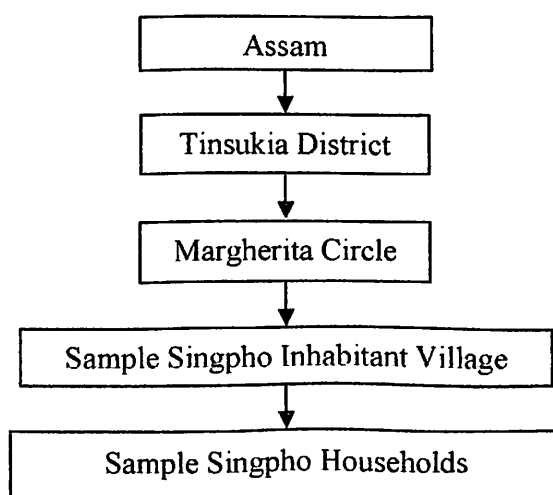
The present study is confined only to the Singpho community inhabited in the state of Assam. To analysis socio economic characteristics of the Singphos some important

indicators are considered which are broadly demographic compositions, family, education, transport, occupation, income, housing, sanitation, source of drinking water, source of food, land holding, health and family planning etc.

Table: 1.1
Sample Design

Sl. No.	Assam	
1	Total no. of Districts	27 districts (Census 2011)
2	Name of Sample Districts	Tinsukia District
3	Total no. of Circles	4
4	No. of Sample Circle	1 (Margherita Circle)
5	Total no. of the Singpho inhabitant villages	25
6	No. of sample villages	15
7	Total no. of the Singpho households in all the villages (Singpho inhabitant)	502
8	No. of Singpho households in sample villages (Singpho inhabitant)	406
9	No. of the Singpho sample households from the sample villages (Singpho inhabitant)	150

Figure: 1.1
Diagrammatic Presentation of Sample Design



The following table contains the names of the sample villages and the number of households in the village under study.

Table: 1.2

Name of sample villages, total households and sample households

State	Sample District	Sample Sub-division	Sample Villages	Singpho Households in the Village	Sample Households
Assam	Tinsukia District	Margherita	Dibong	37	14
			Ketetong	68	25
			Khalen-ga	4	1
			Bahbari	15	6
			Ulup-ga	15	6
			Pangna	13	5
			Inthem	90	33
			Mungang	20	8
			Duwarmara	51	20
			Pangsun	25	9
			Kumchai kong	39	14
			Namdeng	4	1
			Hasak	14	5
			Kotha-ga	7	2
			Bisa-ga	4	1
Total			406	150 (37%)	

Source: Reported by the Village Headman on basis of voter list.

1.6. A Brief Description of the Study Area:

Assam is the melting point of diverse races that migrated to the land over the centuries and made it their home. Assam is considered a miniature India for its composite nature of culture and population structure. Assam extends from 24.8° N to 27.25° N latitude and from 89.42° E to 96° E longitudes. Assam is surrounded by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur in the east and south-east, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya in the south and south-west, Bangladesh in the west and south west and West Bengal in the west. It has international

boundaries with Bhutan and Bangladesh and is linked with the rest of India by a narrow strip in the northern part of West Bengal.

The population of Assam according to the 2011 census stands at about 31 million, making it the 14th most populated state in India. The state makes up about 2.5 per cent of the country's population, a figure that has gone up since the last census in 2001. The state spreads over an area is 78438 sq.km making it the 16th largest state in the country in terms of area. The density of population per sq. km. is 397 which is higher than the national average of 382. The literacy rate in the state is 73.18 per cent (male 78.81% and female 67.27%). The sex ratio is 954 in Assam as per 2011 census. The Singpho tribe is a Mongoloid stock mainly found in the upper part of the Tinsukia district of Assam. Besides Tinsukia district the Singpho-speaking community is also found in the Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong districts of Assam.

Table: 1.3
Tribal Population in North-East India

States	Total Population	Tribal Population	Percentage of Tribal Population
Arunachal Pradesh	13,83727	951821	68.8
Assam	3,1205576	3884371	12.4
Manipur (Excl. 3 Sub-Division of Senapati District)	25,70390	902740	35.1
Meghalaya	29,66889	2555861	86.1
Mizoram	10,97206	1036115	94.4
Nagaland	19,78502	1710973	86.5
Tripura	36,73917	1166813	31.8
Sikkim	6,10577	206360	33.8
Total in NEI	4,5486784	12415054	27.29
Total in India	121,0193422	104281034	8.6

Source: Census report 2011, Govt. of India.

Tinsukia District of Assam

Tinsukia is the eastern most district of Assam, came into existence on 1st October, 1989 as a result of the bifurcation of Dibrugarh district. The district is bound by Lohit Changlang, Tirap and Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh in the east, Dibrugarh district in the west, Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and Dhemaji in the north and Tirap and Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh in the south at 95.22'E to 95.38'E longitude and 27.23' to 27.48'N latitude and 147.83 to 148.20 mtrs height above the sea level. Tinsukia has an area of 3790 sq.km. and a total population of 1316948, with a male population of 675986 and a female population of 640962 (as per 2011 census). Literacy rate placed at 70.92 per cent while sex ratio 948 and density of population 347 per sq. km. Some of the important tribes of Tinsukia district are the Singphos, the Sema Nagas, the Tai Phakes, the Tangsas and the Tai-Khayangs.

Margherita Sub-division of Tinsukia District

Margherita sub-division is an important sub-division of Assam which has a historical background. Margherita sub-division is located at the easternmost part of India in the lap of the sky-scraping hills of the Patkai range stretching along the Assam-Arunachal border. The total geographical area of Margherita sub-division is 1233.83sq.km. The total population of the sub-division is 319885 according to census 2011, out of which the total scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) population were 9368 and 15394 respectively. The sub-division has three Mouzas namely Makum, Buri-Dehing and Tirap. There are two towns in the sub-division - Margherita and Digboi.

The amount of rainfall is about 2000 to 2200 mm and about 85% of the rainfall occurs in the rainy season from May to September. Mean minimum temperature is recorded to be 8°C in the month of December and the maximum 36°C in the month of July.

Margherita sub-division is rich in natural resources. North-eastern Coal Field, Margherita and Digboi Oil refinery, which is first oil refinery in India, fall under Margherita sub-division. The coal mining under Margherita Sub-division, Tinsukia is a century old enterprise opened by Assam Railways and Trading Company in the year 1882. It was nationalized on 1st May, 1973.

The topography of Margherita sub-division in Tinsukia is plain. The climate of the Margherita sub-division is good. It is favorable for the production not only of paddy but also of commercial crops. The economy is agrarian as about 90 percent of the people have their livelihood from the primary sector.

Margherita sub-division is a confluence of a large number of races, creeds, culture and languages. Their present level of economic development is also quite varied. The Singphos are the major tribe of the Margherita sub-division.

The Singpho villages under Margherita Sub-division are Dibong, Inthong, Ketetong, Kumatuga, Pangna, Ulup, Hasak, Bisa, Namdeng, Toklong, Duwarmara, Tinsuti, Pangsun, Kumchai, Kotha, Jagun, Mungang, Inthem, Macheyga, Bhiton Powai, Longa, Khalega, Umbanga etc.

1.7. Chapterisation of the Research Study:

The present study is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter I: This chapter covers introduction, significance of the study, objectives of the study, review of literature, methodology and a brief description of the study area.

Chapter II: This chapter includes the historical backgrounds- origin, migration and settlement of the Singphos.

Chapter III: This chapter deals with village data of the sample villages such as topography, location, mode of transportation and communication, civic facilities etc.

Chapter IV: This chapter deals with ethnographic account of the Singphos. The socio-cultural indicators like society, religion, language, festivals, marriage, food habit etc. are covers in third chapter.

Chapter V: This chapter covers the socio-economic characteristics such as family, age distribution of the population, housing, education, occupation, income and expenditure, land holding and utilization etc. of the Singphos.

Chapter VI: This chapter includes change and continuity among the Singphos.

Chapter VII: This chapter includes summary and conclusion.



**ORIGIN, MIGRATION AND
SETTLEMENT OF THE
SINGPHOS**

CHAPTER – 2

ORIGIN, MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE SINGPHOS

2.1. Origin and Migration:

The origin of the Singphos can be traced back to mythological sources. According to the Singpho mythology they are descendant of Shwapawng Yawng, the fore father of the Singphos who had nine sons namely *Gam, Nong, La, Du, Tang, Yawng, Kha, Shroi* and *Enking* (Singpho, 2008).

The folklore of the Singphos trace that their ancestors inhabited in the *Nojoi Shingra Bum* or *Majoi Singra Bum* in the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau that means a natural flat mountain. The Singphos originally migrated from Mongolia almost in BC 700-800 and entered to the south west of Tibet around BC 600-300 and settled down in the Sangpo valley for over 400 years. In around BC 300-AD 100, the Singphos entered the Brahmaputra valley (Singda Labam).

According to H.N.C. Stevenson, Singphos migrated from Mongolia and settled down on the valley of Sangpo river in Tibet for more than 400 years. In course of time they were called as '*Sangpo*' or the tribe of Sangpo valley. The Singphos are an aggressive tribe of hardy highlanders that occupies a border strip of the mountains stretching from the western borders of Yunnan across Upper Burma to the Dehing valley at the upper end of the Brahmaputra (Waddell, 1901). According to the Singphos' own belief, they were the inhabitants of the *Hukang* valley of the Patkai range. *Hukang* is a Singpho word

which means "a fence of human heads" ('*Hu*' – Human head and '*Kang*'- fence). They crossed the Patkai range of Indo-Burma border and entered the Brahmaputra valley (Baruah, 1977).

The Singphos are one of the various groups of people who migrated to this part of the country towards the close to the 14th century A.D. from the Hukang Valley of Burma. They are akin to the Ka-Khiyens of Burma whose chief habitat was in the valley of Irrawadi (Dutta, 1990).

C. Gilhodes states that this tribe came from the north and soon became masters of the range of mountains, and they gradually inhabited in Burma. Having crossed the Hukwang valley in 1787, the Singphos entered the fairly plain forest areas lying at the bottom of the Patkai hills in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. According to A.F. Hannay the Singphos were the original inhabitants of the Shan state of Upper Burma and they came to Assam in 1773.

Baruah (1977) mentions that the Singphos were formerly inhabitants of Upper Burma. The invasion of the Ahoms in the second quarter of the 13th century constitutes the history of the recent Mongoloid migration into Assam. They were followed by other waves of immigration at regular intervals at later times; they were notably the Shans from Hkamti land who entered the country in the 17th century and settled in the Tirap Frontier tracts. The Shans were followed in the early century by other groups of Mongoloid people as the Kachins, the Singphos and the like (Barua, 1991).

The Singphos as a whole occupies a broad strip of area stretching from the western borders of Yunnan cross Upper Burma to the Dihing valley at the Upper end of the Brahmaputra River (Kar, 1999).

2.2. Settlement of the Singphos:

The Singpho tribe is one of the important tribes inhabited the north-eastern part of India. The Singphos belong to the Mongoloid stock, dwell in the hilly but fertile tract of the Patkai Hills range extending into the Hukwang valley of Burma. The Patkai Hills, lying in the extreme north-eastern part of the country, provide a natural boundary between Assam and Burma, rising in successive and parallel ranges from the plains to a height. A few peaks of this mountain range, like the Loimonyet or the Monyet hills and the Sampu hill on the south rise to a height of about 4000 to 5000 feet, some of the high and lofty peaks even reach as the Paikai and the river Irrawady divide the Hukwang valley between Assam and Burma.

They are a vigorous warlike race, and during the past two centuries have pushed the Shans and Burmese before them in many places. They cross the Patkai range near Dibrugarh and settled on the hills of the Dehing river bordering the Bor Khamti country (Waddell, 1901). The Singphos occupied the level tract of the country extending eastwards from the Moamaria borders across the Noa Dihing and Tengapani rivers (Gait, 1905).

According to Hanson (1913), "The true *Singhpaw* is in most particular one with his kinship further south, and in former days there was a great deal of intercommunication than there is now between the two sections. There are also some small families such as

the Darungs and Faqueers who speak *Singhpo*, but are of mixed blood. Pure *Singhpos* (Kachins) are found east of Ledo, and the dialect is spoken as far west as Dibrugarh and Golaghat". Dr. Ola Hanson states that the Assamese people and their pronunciations in the case of *Jingphaw*, they often pronounce as Singpho. The Singphos are by far the most powerful tribe bordering on the valley. The Singphos have for several generations been the terror of the Assamese. They were in the constant habit of making eruptions into the plains in conjunction with the Moamarias or Mattack by whom they seem to have been first called into Assam. They sometimes proceeded as far as the capital itself, plundering the temples, laying waste the country, and carrying off the inhabitants into slavery. These several eruptions have won for them the low lands they now occupy (Robinson, 1941). Robinson describes Singphos' habitat as "on the north they are bounded by that branch of the Brahmaputra known as Lohit, on the east by the Langtang range, which separates them from the Bor-Khamtis; on the south by the Patkai range, which divided them from the Burmese. Singpos, from whom they derive their descent, and on the west, by an imaginary line drawn south from Sadiya till it meets the last mentioned mountains". The habitat of the Singphos in Assam lay to the east of Muttock and was bound on the north by the Lohit river, and on the south by the Patkai ranges (Aitchision's Treaties, 1931).

According to S. Borua (1984) the tribes are as different and numerous as the hills they inhabit; the Patkai range, for instance, that separates Assam from Burma, is inhabited by tribes like the Singphos (Kachins), the Nagas, the Kukis and the Lushais. The border line of Assam on the north east is drawn by these people, and is also streamlined by their colourful life.

The Singphos, called *Kachins* in Upper Burma, must have originally lived near the source of the Irrawaddy. They gradually moved southwards, crossed the Hukwang valley, and entered the valley of the Brahmaputra through the Patkoi pass towards the end of the 18th century; their villages are located today in the Buri Dihing and the Tengapani area, east of Sadiya. The Singphos live side by side with the Khamtis. It is probable that a group of them lived in the tract between the Chindwin river and the Patkai mountains; here they were possibly known as the *Kakhyens*. At the time they crossed into this land, the Moamarias were in rebellion here. This took place in 1793 (Mackenzie, 1884).

The original home of the Singphos who inhabited the eastern side of the Patkai range, was located in the region of the Irrawady extending to the province of Yunnan, members of the Savage tribe, inhabiting the north and north eastern part of Burma, were referred to as the *Kachins* by the Burmese and after them by the English.

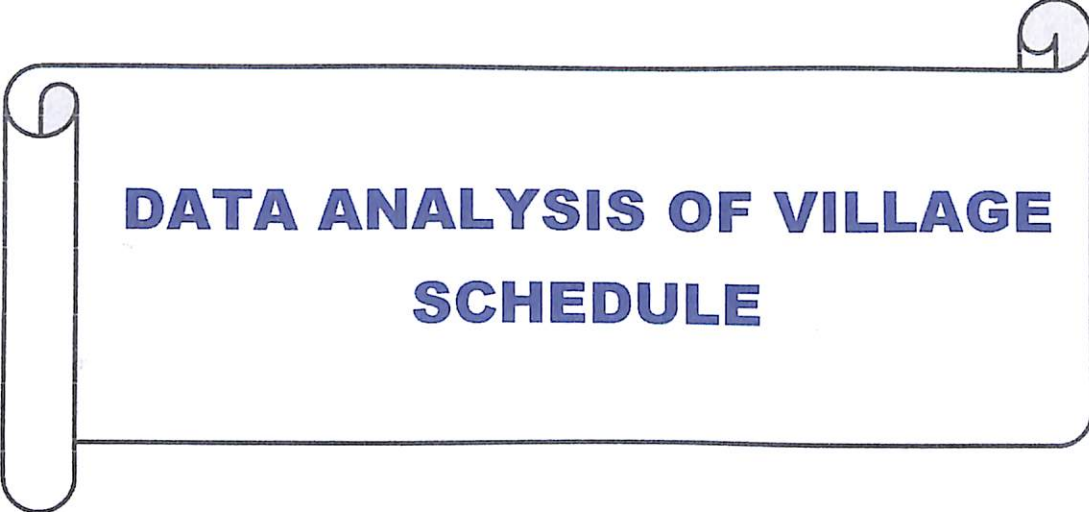
The word Singpho, which these people adopted as their name after settling down permanently in this country, means man in their native language; their language has greater similarity with the language of the Abors and the Karens than with that of the original Shans. The Singphos had known the use of iron, and their weapons are made of this metal; they weave their own cloths and colour them with different natural dyes obtained from the roots of trees called *khai-khau*, *romi*, *chin-lu* etc.

Baruah (1977) in his book mentioned that once in the Hukang valley the flowering of the bamboos was followed by a famine, which was believed to have been caused by the wrath of a spirit called *Kiyagung* who descended to the earth in the shape of wild fowl and sent hoards of rats to destroy the crops. Soon afterwards there occurred a terrible fire which spread through the whole valley. These calamities scared the people and they

deserted the valley and took refuge in the neighbouring countries. Some of them migrated to the Patkai hills and from there came to Assam through the Naga hills. This group of Singphos opened the way to Assam for others who followed them. There were about 2500 Singpho people living in Tirap and border areas (Neog, 1962).

After India's independence, the geographical location of the Singpho got divided and as a result a section of the Singphos settled in the Tinsukia district particularly and a few Singpho speaking people are found in Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong district of Assam and Lohit and Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh of India, Yunnan Province (Autonomous) of China and Kachin state of Myanmar (Burma). The Jingpo (Singpho) people in China, having a population of 132143 live mostly in the Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture of the Yunnan province. A few of them are found in the Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture and Simao, etc. The Kachins (Singphos) are mostly concentrated in the Kachin state of upper Burma.

From the above discussion we can conclude that the Singphos has own belief of their origin, deep route migration and a profound background of their settlement. Although the Singphos were war like tribe in the early times now they are peace loving community of Assam.



**DATA ANALYSIS OF VILLAGE
SCHEDULE**

CHAPTER – 3

DATA ANALYSIS OF VILLAGE SCHEDULE

The present study is carried out from the 15 sample villages under the Margherita Sub-division of Tinsukia district of Assam. Tinsukia district is selected due to concentration of the Singpho tribe in Margherita and Ledo area which are adjacent to Changlang and Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh where a large size of Singpho tribe is inhabited. Altogether 150 sample households have been taken from the 15 sample villages for the purpose of the study.

3.1 Village Information:

The sample villages fall under the Margherita Sub-division of Tinsukia District of Assam. The basic information of the sample villages has been given in the following table 3.1.

Table: 3.1

Sample size of village and households

Sl. No.	District	Sub-division	Development Block	Number of sample villages	Number of sample households	Total number of households
1	Tnsukia	Margherita	Margherita	15	150	406

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

All the sample villages covered under one Revenue Circle, Development Block and Sub-division while fall under six Gaon Panchayats and four police station. In the

following table 3.2 shows the name of the village, Sub-division, Development Block, Revenue Circle, Gaon Panchayats and Police Station.

Table: 3.2

Names of sample villages, sub-division, development block, revenue circle, gaon panchayat and police station

Sl. No.	Name of villages	District	Sub-division	Development Block	Revenue Circle	Gaon Panchayat	Police Station
1	Dibong	Tinsukia	Margherita	Margherita	Margherita	Ketetong	Margherita
2	Ketetong	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
3	Khalen-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
4	Bahbari	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
5	Ulup-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Inthem	-do-
6	Pangna	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
7	Inthem	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Pengeri
8	Mungang	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Pengeri
9	Duwarmara	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Bijuliban	Bordumsa
10	Pangsun	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Kumchai	Lekhapani
11	Kumchai	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
12	Hasak	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
13	Kotha-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
14	Bisa-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Ledo	Margherita
15	Namdeng	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	Borgolai	-do-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

The villages under study are comprised of mixed population. During the field study it was found that the Singphos lived in close proximity with the Tea tribe, Fakial tribe, Moran and Mattak community. The following table 3.3 highlights the total population with male and female along with characteristics of village population.

Table: 3.3**Names of villages with population, households and ethnic communities of the villages**

Sl. No.	Name of Sample Villages	Singpho Households	Sample Households	Male	Female	Total	Characteristics of village population
1	Dibong	37	14	40	37	77	Singpho
2	Ketetong	68	25	78	60	138	Singpho and Phakial
3	Khalen-ga	4	1	3	2	5	Singpho
4	Bahbari	15	6	17	15	32	Singpho and Tea Tribe
5	Ulup-ga	15	6	16	18	34	Singpho, Moran, Mattak
6	Pangna	13	5	15	13	28	Singpho and Tea Tribe
7	Inthem	90	33	101	87	188	Singpho and Tea Tribe
8	Mungang	20	8	21	23	44	Singpho
9	Duwarmara	51	20	64	54	118	Singpho and Tea Tribe
10	Pangsun	25	9	26	24	50	Singpho
11	Kumchai	39	14	39	36	75	Singpho and Tea Tribe
12	Namdeng	4	1	3	4	7	Singpho
13	Hasak	14	5	15	13	28	Singpho and Phakial
14	Kotha-ga	7	2	7	6	13	Singpho and Phakial
15	Bisa-ga	4	1	4	4	8	Singpho
Total		406	150	449	396	845	

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

The above table 3.3 shows that the total population of the 15 sample villages account for 845 people with male 449 and female 396 distributed in 150 households.

3.2 Topography of Villages:

The topography of the surveyed villages is plain though there is Patkai range of mountain in adjacent areas. The topographic details are shown in the table 3.4 below.

Table: 3.4

Topography of the selected villages

Sl. No.	District	Sub-division	Number of villages	Topography of the village		
				Plain	Hilly	Un-dwelling Plain
1	Tnsukia	Margherita	15	15	-	-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.3 Settlement Pattern:

As regard to settlement pattern it is observed that all the 15 villages under study are found to be dispersed. Details are shown in the table 3.5 below.

Table: 3.5

Settlement pattern of the selected villages

Sl. No.	District	Sub-division	Number of villages	Settlement Pattern of the Village		
				Agglomerated	Dispersed	Isolated
1	Tnsukia	Margherita	15	-	15	-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.4 Size of Villages:

The size of the sample villages in terms of areas varies from village to village. 9 villages have less than 1000 bighas of land while 4 villages have land in between 1300-1400 bighas, 1 village has in between 1500-2000 bighas and 1 village (Inthem village) has more than 2000 bighas of land. Details are given in the table 3.6.

Table: 3.6

Size of the sample villages (in bighas) under survey

Sl. No.	District	Size of Village (in bighas)				Total Number of Villages
		< 1000	1000-1500	1500-2000	> 2000	
1	Tinsukia	9	4	1	1	15

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.5 Size of Agricultural Land:

It is observed that majority of villages possess large size of land under tea plantation. As regard agricultural land almost all the villages have paddy field outside the villages at a distance 1km. to 10 kms.

Table: 3.7

Size of agricultural land (in bighas) of the sample villages under survey

Sl. No.	District	Size of Agricultural Land (in bighas)				Total Number of Villages
		< 500	500-1000	1000-1500	> 1500	
1	Tinsukia	-	15	-	-	15

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

It is observed from the table 3.7 that all the villages have 500-1000 bighas of land for agriculture. Basically the agricultural land is utilized for rice production, tea plantation, vegetables and homestead gardening.

3.6 Transport and Communication Facilities:

Transport and communication facilities are vital for development of any region or area. It is found that the sample villages are not well connected and facilitated with transport and communication system.

Table: 3.8

Transport and communication facilities in the surveyed villages

Sl. No.	Facilities	Distance of the nearest facility (in km)			
		Within the village	< 1	2-5	> 5
1	Nearest Motorable Road	3	5	4	3
2	Nearest Railway Station	-	-	-	15
3	Nearest Transport Station	-	-	-	15

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

Table 3.8 shows that almost all the villages possess the motorable road. Only 3 villages (20 per cent) have the nearest motorable road within the village. While 5 villages (33.33 per cent) lies at a distance of less than 1 km., 4 villages (26.67 per cent) gets facility at a distance of 2 to 5 kms. and the rest 3 villages (20 per cent) get facility at a distance of more than 5 kms. On the other hand all the sample villages get facility of nearest railway and transport station at a distance of more than 5 kms.

3.7 Road of the Villages:

Condition of the road is not good enough in the sample villages. The sample villages are mostly connected by katcha fair weather motorable road. There are 2 villages having the food track while 7 villages out of 15 have katcha fair weather motorable road, 1 village enjoys katcha all weather motorable road and 5 villages have graveled road. Details are shown in the table 3.9 below.

Table: 3.9
Condition of the road to the villages

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Villages
1	Food Tract	2
2	Katcha fair weather motorable road	7
3	Katcha all weather motorable road	1
4	Graveled road	5
Total		15

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.8 Mode of Common Conveyance:

The primary mode of conveyance of the sample villages is small vehicles such as Tata Magic, Auto and Private Car. There is no bus and rail service in the sample villages. During the rainy season the people of Kumchai and Hasak village use small boat to cross Buri Dehing river. Details are shown in the following table.

Table: 3.10
Mode of common conveyance used by villagers

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Villages
1	Motor Bus	-
2	Tata Magic/Auto/ Private Car	15
3	Bicycle	-
4	Rail	-
5	Boat	-
Total		15

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.9 Mass Communication Facilities:

The villages are well exposed to the outside world through communication. In the course of field study in the villages, Radio, Television sets, Mobile Phone, Internet connectivity, Community centre, News Paper in Assamese and English and few Journals were found. But none of villages has regular news paper and library facility. Details are shown in the following table.

Table: 3.11

Mass communication facilities in the surveyed villages

Sl. No.	Facilities Available	No. of Villages
1	Television	15
2	Radio	15
3	Newspaper	-
4	Telephonic Facility (Mobile Phone)	15
5	Library	-
6	Community Centre	15

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.10 Health Facilities:

Regarding health facilities almost all sample villages enjoy the health facilities. Ketetong, Khalen-ga and Dibong villages have satisfactory health facilities than that of other sample villages. During the field study it has found that about 70 per cent villages enjoy the facilities of nearest (within 5 kms) block public health centre and medical sub-centre. Among the 15 sample villages there are two medical sub-centre namely Ulup sub-centre facilities and Kumchai sub-centre while one public health centre at Ketetong area namely Ketetong Public Health Centre. The sub-divisional civil hospital is located at a distance 4-6 kms. for 1 village, 2 villages at range 6-8 kms. and remaining 13 villages distance at a 8 km and more. Details are shown in the following table.

Table: 3.12**Health facilities in the surveyed villages**

Total No. of Villages	Facilities	Distance of the villages (in km)					
		< 2	2-4	4-6	6-8	> 8	No Data
15	Block Public Health Centre	2	3	-	4	6	-
	Medical Sub Centre	-	2	3	6	4	-
	Sub-divisional Civil Hospital	-	-	1	2	13	-
	State Dispensary	-	-	-	-	-	15
	Private Hospital	-	-	-	2	13	-
	Private Medical Doctor	-	-	-	1	14	-
	Village Health Guide	4	10	1	-	-	-
	Trained Birth Attendant	1	2	12	-	-	-
	Pharmacy/ Medical Shop	2	-	3	4	6	-
	Nearest Weekly Market	3	-	2	3	7	-
	Other Shops	15	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.11 Civic Facilities:

As regards civic facilities, 4 villages have the Post office facility at a distance of less than 2 kms., while 2 villages enjoy the facility at as distance of 2-4 kms., 5 villages get it at a distance of 4-6 kms., again 2 villages get it at a distance of 6-8 kms., and rest 2 villages get it at a distance of more than 8 kms. Telephone office, Bank, Thermal and Development Block are located at a distance of more than 8 kms. for all the sample villages. Police Station is located at a distance of 6-8 kms for 2 villages while remaining 13 villages, it I at distance more than 8 kms. The distance of all the villages to the Panchayats office and Co-operative society are 2 to 6 kms. Regarding health care facility Veterinary, Dispensary and Hospital are located ranges of 2-6 kms. The Cinema hall is located at a distance of 4-10 kms away. Mahila Samity and Religious Institution are located at a distance of less than 2 kms. The distance of 3 villages to the weekly market is

less than 2 kms., while 2 villages at a distance 4-6 kms., 3 villages has range of 4-6 kms. and the remaining 7 villages has at a distance of more than 8 kms.

Table: 3.13

Civic facilities in the surveyed villages

District	Total No. of Villages	Civic and other Facilities	Distance of the villages (in km)					
			< 2	2-4	4-6	6-8	> 8	No Data
Tinsukia	15	Post Office	4	2	5	2	2	
		Telephone Office					15	
		Bank					15	
		Thermal					15	
		Development Block					15	
		Police Station				2	13	
		Panchayats Office	2	3	10			
		Co-operative Society	2	3	10			
		Veterinary/ Dispensary/ Hospital	2	3		4	6	
		Cinema Hall			1	3	12	
		Mahila Samity	15					
		Religious Institution	15					
		Nearest Weekly Market	3	-	2	3	7	-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

Regarding educational facilities all the sample villages have an Anganwadi within distance of 2 kms. In case of Primary school facility 4 villages has it at a distance of less than 2 kms., while Middle English School is located for 3 villages at a distance of 2 kms and for 12 villages range 4-6 kms away. On the other hand High School is located at a distance of 2 kms. for 2 villages, 2-4 kms. for 3 villages, and 4-6 kms. for 10 villages. There is only one Higher Secondary and two Colleges at a distance of more than 8 kms. Adult Education Centre is not available for the villager under study.

Table: 3.14

Educational facilities in the surveyed villages

District	Total No. of Villages	Category	Distance of the villages (in km)					No Data
			< 2	2-4	4-6	6-8	> 8	
Tinsukia	15	Anganwadi	15					
		Primary School	4	11				
		Middle English School	3		12			
		High School	2	3	10			
		Higher Secondary					15	
		College					15	
		Adult Education Centre						-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.12 Electricity Facility:

Regarding electrification all the villages enjoy the facility but quality of electric supply is poor and irregular.

Table: 3.15

Availability of Electricity

Sl. No.	Name of Sample Villages	Status of Electricity quality		
		Electrified but irregular supply	Electrified and regular supply	Not Electrified
1	Dibong	-do-	-	-
2	Ketetong	-do-	-	-
3	Khalen-ga	-do-	-	-
4	Bahbari	-do-	-	-
5	Ulup-ga	-do-	-	-
6	Pangna	-do-	-	-
7	Inthem	-do-	-	-
8	Mungang	-do-	-	-
9	Duwarmara	-do-	-	-
10	Pangsun	-do-	-	-
11	Kumchai kong	-do-	-	-
12	Namdeng	-do-	-	-
13	Hasak	-do-	-	-
14	Kotha-ga	-do-	-	-
15	Bisa-ga	-do-	-	-
Total		15	-	-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.13 Plantation and Cropping Pattern:

The Singphos are pioneer in tea consumption and plantation in Assam particularly and North East India as a whole. In case of cropping pattern they cultivate fruits, rabi and kharif crops for domestic consumption and for selling in local market. Paddy is a major crop and Orange, Pineapple, Banana are some common fruits cultivated among the Singpho in their village. Beside these they grow seasonal vegetables like Cauliflower, Tomato, Potato, Cabbage, Radish, Chilli, Pumkin, Pineapple, Sweet Potato etc. details of which are given in the following table 1.16.

Table: 3.16
Plantation and cropping Pattern

Sl. No.	Name of Sample Villages	Plantation	Fruit	Major Crops	Rabi	Kharif	All Seasoned
1	Dibong	Tea	Orange, Pineapple, Banana	Paddy	Cauliflower, Tomato, Potato, Cabbage, Radish, etc.	Chilli, Pumpkin, Pineapple, Eggplant, Limes, Sweet, Potato, Green Beans	Chilli, Papaya, Limes
2	Ketetong	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
3	Khalen-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
4	Bahbari	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
5	Ulup-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
6	Pangna	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
7	Inthem	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
8	Mungang	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
9	Duwarmara	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
10	Pangsun	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
11	Kumchai kong	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
12	Namdeng	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
13	Hasak	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
14	Kotha-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
15	Bisa-ga	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-

Source: Field Study Data, May to August 2014

3.14 Marketing Centres:

The sample villages are far flung from the marketing centre. The marketing centres of the sample villages are located at a distance of 8 to 20 kms. These are Digboi, Margherits, Ledo and Jagun.



**ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF
THE SINGPHOS**

CHAPTER – 4

ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF THE SINGPHOS

The tribal life is characterized by distinctive organizations through which most of their desires and aspirations are fulfilled. It is the result of the shared activities and understandings of the people. The Singphos not only live in an organizational society they but belong and work through various organizations. This chapter tries to trace how they are organized in their familial, economical, political, cultural, religious and marriage aspects.

4.1. Society:

The Singpho society is famous for its well organized social nature. The Singpho society is divided into a number of clans each under the control of a chief. In Singpho language a clan is termed as '*Fan*' implying same blood relation. There are five clans among the Singphos i.e. *Marip*, *Lahtaw*, *Laphai*, *Nhkum* and *Maran* (Ningkhee, 2008).

4.2. Villages and Housing Pattern:

Traditionally, the Singphos lived in high and dense forest areas and depended on forest resources and agriculture for their livelihood. The Singpho villages are large and the houses spread over a considerable area facing all directions. The village is called '*Miriyeng*' by the Singphos. The name of the village is based on by the clan name of the founder.

Singpho villages are usually situated on secure locations and the individual house is exceptionally large, eighty to hundred feet long, with a raised wooden platform, and divided into various compartments (Waddell, 1909). According to Hunter (1879), "The Singphos occupy large villages, often in somewhat inaccessible position, consisting of sixty or more large houses, each from eighty to one hundred feet long. The house is divided into a different apartment on both sides of a long passage open from one end to another end".

The Singphos live in raised platform (locally known as Chang Ghar). The Singpho house is constructed three to five feet above the ground, well set on a few sliced logs. The dwelling house is called 'Nta'. They are found living in *Nta* in the vicinity of forests, rivers and streams. Generally the size and length of the Singpho house varies depending upon the size of the family. A Singpho house has mainly three parts: the *Nbang* (front), the *Dun* (middle) and *Npan* (rear). They use *lakhann* (stairs) to go up and enter the house. The entire floor area is partitioned into several chambers. They give different names to the chambers. The living room is called *yup khok*, the guest room is called *manam khok*, the entrance room or first compartment from the front side is called *imbangtutat* or *rang tun* or *nbang* and the firewood store is called *Npan*. For a joint family the household has small compartments where each individual family is accommodated (Dutta, 1990). The first compartment is generally use for manam (guest) and there is a fire hearth. The second compartment where old parents sleep is called *ganugawa-tap*. The third compartment is occupied by the eldest son and his wife (*kha ang dun*). Each married couple occupies a separate compartment. The younger ones sleep towards the rear compartment (*dum'nta*) and the unmarried girls sleep in the rear most compartments (*pinla kha'k*) (Rajkumar 1978). At the centre of the chamber is the fire hearth called

indab kap for cooking and the members of the family can sit or make arrangements for sleeping around the hearth, and they can get the heat from the burning fire. Over the hearth there is a hanging smoking rake at a height of about 3 to 4 feet from the floor. Bamboo shelves are built on the walls of this compartment where they keep the cooking utensils, cooked food and other articles. This shelf is called *chufa*. Under the shelf there is a place called *chingthun chinat*, where they keep the water reservoirs.

Attached to the front side is the open bamboo platform called *imbang chan*, where they dry their paddy and other articles. The *imbang* is used for their loom and other accessories required for weaving. At the eastern most corner of the *imbang* close to the roof, there is a small shelf for worship, where they keep either an image or a statue of Lord Buddha. They decorate the place of worship with flowers. The worship place is called '*chuwom tan char*'. The Singpho houses are very simple, without any decoration. They are very particular about keeping the house neat and clean. Their sitting tools are only small pieces of wood, with two legs fitted to it. Some of them have sitting tools made of bamboo. They do not make any other furniture for themselves.

One of the important features of the Singphos is that they take their meal early in the morning. Before taking meal they offer meal to Lord Buddha at place of worship and also send meal for the monk residing at the monastery.

The Singpho houses are well built. The houses are built with locally available materials like bamboo, wooden planks [*Lerang fun* (Chapa), *Bi fun* (Bhola), *Lecghai fun* (Ajar)], cane, *toko* (the roofs are thatched with Assam fan palm leaves). The structure of the house is raised from the ground by raising it on the strong, wooden and bamboo pillars. It protects the floor of the house from the dampness of the soil below. The floor

and the walls are made of split bamboo, wooden planks and toko mats. The space between the roof and floor is partitioned with the help of a ceiling, the storey so formed is utilized as a store room and the space between the floor and the ground is used for keeping the domestic animals and birds. The grains are stored in the granaries. Each household has a separate granary which is built away from the main building.

One of the important characters of the Singphos is that they avoid performing any ceremony while reconstructing and /or repairing the house. But when new house has to be constructed in a new site they perform certain rites with the help of *dumsa* (priest).

Nowadays few of the people of the Singpho community live in modern households. However, they also use the traditional households to stay close to nature and to their tradition and culture.

4.3. Family System:

The Singpho family system is patriarchal and the father is regarded as the head of the family. The Singpho term for the head of the family is *Intana Mitow*. Both nuclear and joint family systems are prevalent in the Singpho society. The Singphos maintain their relationship through the male line (Singpho, 2000).

According to the Singphos there is a story about the origin of a family. Prior to the existence of human beings in the world, a certain semi-mythological figure came down from the heavens, split into two, and six brothers came out of it and they were *Gam, Nong, La, Du, Tang* and *Yawng* and till now accordingly the nomenclature of the Singphos goes on. The youngest son, also known as '*Shapawng Yawng*', became the forefather of the Singphos or the Kachins. According to Hanson (1913), the Singphos are

the descendants of a certain *Wahket wa*, a semi-mythological figure. His five oldest sons became the progenitors of the five recognized families of chieftains. The Shapawng Yawng's grandson '*Wahkyet wa*' became the father of nine sons. Out of the nine families only five families are with Chieftains. They are *Marip*, *Lahtaw*, *Lahpai*, *Nhkum* and *Marans*. The nomenclature of the sons and daughters of the Singpho communities are -

<i>Order</i>	<i>Male (Shadang Sha)</i>	<i>Female (Shayisha)</i>
1 st	<i>Gam</i>	<i>Kaw</i>
2 nd	<i>Nong</i>	<i>Lu</i>
3 rd	<i>La</i>	<i>Roi</i>
4 th	<i>Du</i>	<i>Thu</i>
5 th	<i>Tang</i>	<i>Kai</i>
6 th	<i>Yawng</i>	<i>Kha</i>
7 th	<i>Kha</i>	<i>Pi</i>
8 th	<i>Shroi</i>	<i>Yune</i>
9 th	<i>Enking</i>	<i>Dim</i>

In a household, the father has the responsibility to look after the family. On his death the eldest son takes the position and bears the complete responsibility of the family and the family property is divided among the sons into equal parts. But the one who stays with the parents to look after their welfare gets an additional share. A female member has no right to the family property but she can use it freely. The widow has however a share in the property left behind by her deceased husband. The members of the family work jointly for their livelihood. A joint family meal is prepared in one hearth by the eldest female member. The family properties both movable and immovable, such as cultivable lands, utensils, clothing, live stock valuable ornaments etc. are held as common. The earning of an individual member is his own, but when he lives in the joint family he has to give half of his income to the head of the family and can keep the rest for his personal use.

4.4. Marriage:

The Principal feature of the marital institution of the Singphos is the clan exogamy, that is, no person may marry in his or her own clan. A study of the Singpho marriages indicates that each clan normally prefers to confine its marital alliances to certain clans only. Marriage or marrying of one's maternal uncle's daughter is admissible. Thus it happens that once an individual has married a girl from a certain clan, it becomes customary for his successors to obtain their wives from the natal lineage of his wife. The marriage of a person is treated as one of the most important events of life. A marriage is called *numladai* which means the taking of a girl.

The way of celebrating marital ceremonies among the Singpho people is of great importance, because of its colourful tradition. The Singphos have distinct features of the marriage system. The features are as follows:

- (a) In the Singpho society the bride and the bridegroom must belong to separate clans. Marriage within the same clan is not allowed by the society. Each clan of the Singpho people is exogamous.
- (b) The married girls do not use vermilion unlike the Hindu girls. The married and unmarried are recognized by the dress code.
- (c) The marriage between a boy and his maternal uncle's daughter is a custom of the Singpho society. If the boy is not married to his uncle's daughter, he is required to get permission from his uncle to get engaged to anyone else.
- (d) Widow marriage is accepted in the Singpho society. If a husband dies, the wife is allowed to marry her husband's younger brother.

- (e) Both the boys and the girls enjoy the freedom to choose their respective life partners but they would also like to take consent from their parents.
- (f) Though the dowry system is not prevalent among the Singphos, they have a tradition of paying bride price. The bride price is called *Fu* or *Phy* in Singpho language. The bride's parents may claim several *fus* depending on the circumstances under which the marriage is settled and of course according to the groom's financial status.
- (g) The Singpho girls do not change their own surname after marriage. Marriage from a Buddhist family is generally preferred.

The Singpho society is reasonably liberal. The Singpho people are simple and easy going. The traditional way of celebrating marriage in the Singpho society is quite interesting. A man normally prefers to marry his maternal uncle's daughter. This cyclical system of marriage is known as *khowang*. But failing it, he may choose as his bride someone from a separate clan. The maternal uncle plays an important role in arranging the match for his nephew. In case he does not have a daughter of his own, it is his duty to negotiate the marriage of his nephew with another girl.

Among the Singphos, negotiated marriages are more common than any other forms of marriage. The negotiated or arranged marriage is called *mutung-ti-fi-dai*, and it is conducted by a go-between called *khungmung*. Like other tribal marriages, the Singpho marriage is also preceded by a series of customary rites and rituals.

Generally the Singpho society follows the sequence given below which conducting an arranged marriage.

- (a) At the first step a mediator known as *khungmung* arrange a meeting of the two parties for discussion about initiating the marriage.
- (b) The *funga* (bride price) is fixed after taking the required consent from both the parties and the time and date of the marriage is finalized.
- (c) Celebration of marriage.

There are some compulsory social rituals to be observed by the Singpho community, before a marriage. There are two types of marriages in the Singpho society – formal and informal marriage (Rajkumar, 1978).

In negotiated marriage, three rupees wrapped intricately in a *kaupat*, a type of long leaf is offered to the girl's parents as a mark of the new relationship. If the girl is considered suitable, a mediator (*khungmang*) is appointed to negotiate the marriage with the girl's parents. It begins with the acceptance of the marriage proposal and the father of the girl receiving some amount of money and a costume as gifts from the boy's father. This is followed by a ceremony called *khumbangchum*. If they approve, (girls parents), a message is sent to the boy's parents inviting them to come for discussing the terms of the bride price to be paid to them.

After a week, the parents of the boy along with a few co-villagers come to the girl's house. They bring some gifts for the girl such a *bukang* (long skirt), *lukhur* (bangle), *jodang* (silver hair clip) and rice bear contained in a bamboo section used as traditional utensil, *baow* (musical instrument), *yang phulang* (a royal shirt), *likhit ombaa* (homemade long cloth) *nga* (buffalo), *sinat* (gun) and dry fish etc. It is customary to offer them a sum of rupees seventy along with a piece of long Burmese cloth or joy in lieu of these items. The *joy* varied according to the status and economic condition of the boy's

family. The different rates of *joy* which could be paid by the boy's parents were *Joy ba* (Rs. 140), *Hansa joy* (Rs. 100).

It is the responsibility of the girl's father to welcome them to his house. The relatives of the girl prepare a grand feast for the guests. The parents of the girl must look after the guests nicely. On that day they also discuss the bride price. After the feast, the girl offers clothes, *inthu* (big knife) as a sign of honour. This honour indicates that the girl's family members have agreed to the marriage. Before leaving the house of the girl, the family members of the boy congratulate the girl by tying a white thread on her hand. After a few days the *khungmang* fix the date of the ceremony and the final process for the ceremony starts (Ningkhee, 2001).

A couple of days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the marriage, the bridegroom goes in a procession along with his friends and relatives to the bride's house. They also carry with them rice beer, two buffaloes and a few baskets of dried fish for the bride's relatives.

As a traditional rule the bridegroom's party is supposed to stay at the bride's house for three days during which the bride's parents and relatives have to look after them properly. The bridegroom and his party after having their morning meal, shift to some nearby place to determine the amount of bride price to be finally paid. They carry some *gungdon* (articles) to the husband's house. This presentation is called *likit-imba* which indicates that the marriage is finally recognized. A symbol of the hornbill bird is compulsory to carry out any social function. The entire articles including seeds indicate the bright future of the bride. In the fourth step, the marriage ceremony takes place. On

the day of the marriage the Singpho groom does not go to the bride's house. He sends his friends and relatives to the bride's house.

A feast is arranged together by the bridegroom's and the bride's relatives on the day of the marriage and generous hospitality have to be offered to all the guests. At the end of the marriage ceremony the bride is prepared by family members for starting a married life. Wishing a happy conjugal life, the family members tie a white thread around her wrist in the name of Lord Buddha.

Nowadays the Singpho people build modern pandals for marriage ceremonies. In front of the marriage hall they build a gate called *gambling salai*. The *gambling salai* is made with local green leaves in front of the bride's house. At the beginning of the journey of the bride to her husband's house she is accompanied by two of her friends who have to hold a traditional umbrella. A Singpho bride is not permitted to enter directly. In front of the groom's house another pandal is made for their rest. A partition is erected to divide the male and the female. The family members are offered steamed rice *pungkhng sat*, with meat and fish and other vegetables. It is interesting to note that the distributors wear traditional dress during this function.

Modern education has influenced the society and some changes have been noticed in respect of orthodoxy in marriage. The society has shown a more liberal attitude towards such sporadic changes.

4.5. Economy:

In the past the economy of the Singphos was based on barter exchange. Traditionally the Singphos were hunter. They hunted and caught the elephants, fish and other wild

animals to eat and domestication. They have wide knowledge about the forest products in different seasons and they collect wild yams and other jungle products for livelihood. The Singphos have developed expertise in their professions of being black smiths, largely producing excellent iron artworks. Moreover the women folks are expert in weaving and produce colourful clothes.

Agriculture plays a vital role in tribal society and it is the main occupation rather we can say livelihood of the tribals. The Singphos are very expert in the field of the permanent agricultural practice and they are the champion of tea (*Phalap*) cultivation. Unlike other tribes of North East India the shifting cultivation (*Jhum*) is not popular among the Singpho tribe. According to Dutta (1990) agriculture is the main-stay of life of the people and they practice mainly settled cultivation. They are one of the few tribes to use animal power in village. Singpho plough is very popular in the plains of Assam mainly because of the broad share which is very convenient for deep furrowing.

4.6. Political Organization:

The village chief is called *Agi* or *Mireng Agi* in whom the social and political control of the village rest (Baruah, 1977). Chieftainship is an important feature of the Singpho society and it is hereditary. The Singpho chief is considered to be the head not only of the village but also of the entire territory under his jurisdiction. The chief has several privileges and has the authority to use of whole land under his jurisdiction. (Baruah, 1977). The chief also exercises judicial powers over the villages and decides all cases except inter village disputes, punishing the offenders found guilty. The severity of the punishment depends upon the nature of the crime and the status of the offenders. The chief is also empowered to expel any offender from the village if the latter refuses to

obey his order. In legal matters, the chief is assisted by his counselors. The number of the counselors is determined by the villagers and the selected members depend upon his personal influence and wisdom. In certain exceptional cases the chief accepts the advice of his counselor members but generally he takes independent decisions in matters of day to day disputes.

The system of monarchy does not prevail in the Singpho society at present. But earlier, every village had a chief who controlled the whole village. The legal and administrative powers of the villages were vested in the chief and it was his responsibility to direct all village activities relating to the welfare and wellbeing of the villagers.

The most important position in the social hierarchy is given to the *Gaonbura* (village headman). Another important person in a Singpho village is the *Dumsa* (priest) who presides over the religious ceremonies. The *Dumas* is not found in every village and their services can be hired.

In the Singpho society there is no written laws and codes. The villagers settle the minor problems with the aid of the chief and his counselors. All the disputes among the villagers are settled by the village assembly or counselor (*Rung Jata*). This assembly of elders is held at the chief's house and it is empowered to give judgment in case any dispute arises (Dutta, 1990). If the offender is found guilty, he is convicted and punished by the *Rung Jata*.

4.7. Religion:

The Singphos are originally worshippers of *Nat* (spirit). They treat all the objects of nature as their *Nat* and also believe that *Nat* is responsible for any phenomenon of the society and even the rising of the Sun, the Moon and the season, natural phenomena like

storm, wind, fire, rain, shine, decease, death, sorrow etc. The Singphos believes that there are two types of *Nat* i.e. good and evil. While the former is for social welfare and the latter normally causes harm. They worship different *Nat* for the welfare of villagers and to save them from diseases or harm by offering flower and food (sacrificing animal). This ritual is performed by a priest called '*Domsa*'. There are some important *Nat* whom the Singphos worship and offer sacrifices. These are:

Nats (Spirits):

- (a) *Rukju Nat* : Abode in big trees
- (b) *Kha Nat* : Abode in water
- (c) *Bum Nat* : Abode in the hills
- (d) *Inlung Nat* : Abode in the hills
- (e) *Smathi* : Abode in the house
- (f) *Phun Guzu* : When the Singpho kill a tiger or elephant they
propitiate the Phun guzu (spirit of the forest)
- (g) *Mu Nat* : The spirit above
- (h) *Ga Nat* : Spirit below
- (i) *Tisam Nat* : A female deity

In the 19th century there was a renaissance in Singpho religious life. The Singphos have been highly influenced by Buddhism since the last two decades of 19th century. As it is said, a monk named *Dingla Chrado* who came from Hukong valley of Burma was the

first to introduce Buddhism among the Singphos. He extensively visited the Singpho villages and taught them about the various customs, manners and rites of Buddhism to be observed and initiated the construction of Buddhist temples in each village. As per his advice a Buddhist temple was constructed near the bank of the Dehing river at 2 No. Dibong Phakial village (Margherita) and this temple is known as '*Samuk Sing*' and it is still there in the village. Since then the Singphos constructed Buddhist temples in each village and every family of the Singphos has a place of worship at one corner of their house where they keep either an image or a photograph of Lord Buddha. This place is called *Chamtang Chra*. According to Verrier Elwin (1972), "Buddhism retains its hold on the Khamptis, but the religion of the Singphos has been considerably modified by a belief in witchcraft and sorcery and by the importation of local gods into its pantheon".



Dibong Buddhist Monastery & Dumsa of the village (Dibong Singpho Village)

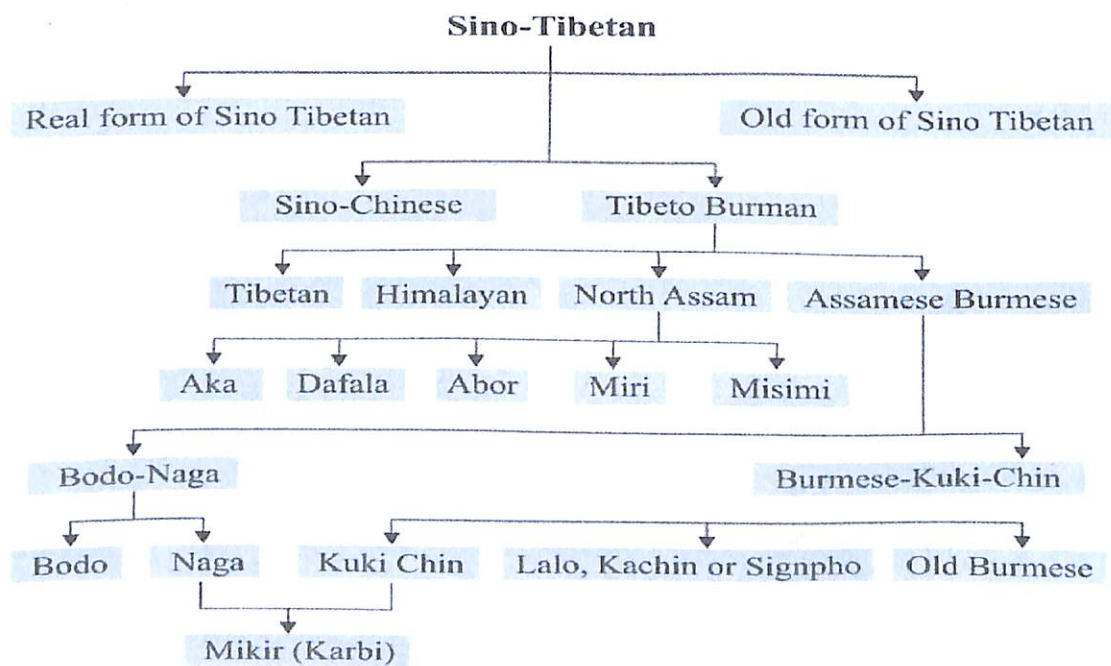


Duwarmara Buddhist Monastery (Duwarmara Village)

Culture is a way of life which includes dress pattern, language, food habit, drinks etc. According to Ralph Linton (1998), “The Culture of a society is the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation”. The Singphos has their distinct and rich culture which is discussed below.

4.8. Language:

The dialect used by the Singphos is Singpho which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the main Sino-Tibetan family (Sahu, 2002). Before discussing the Singpho language, it is important to provide the structure of the great Tibeto Chinese language family. It is as follows –



Source: G. A. Grierson (1966), *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III Part II* pp. 380

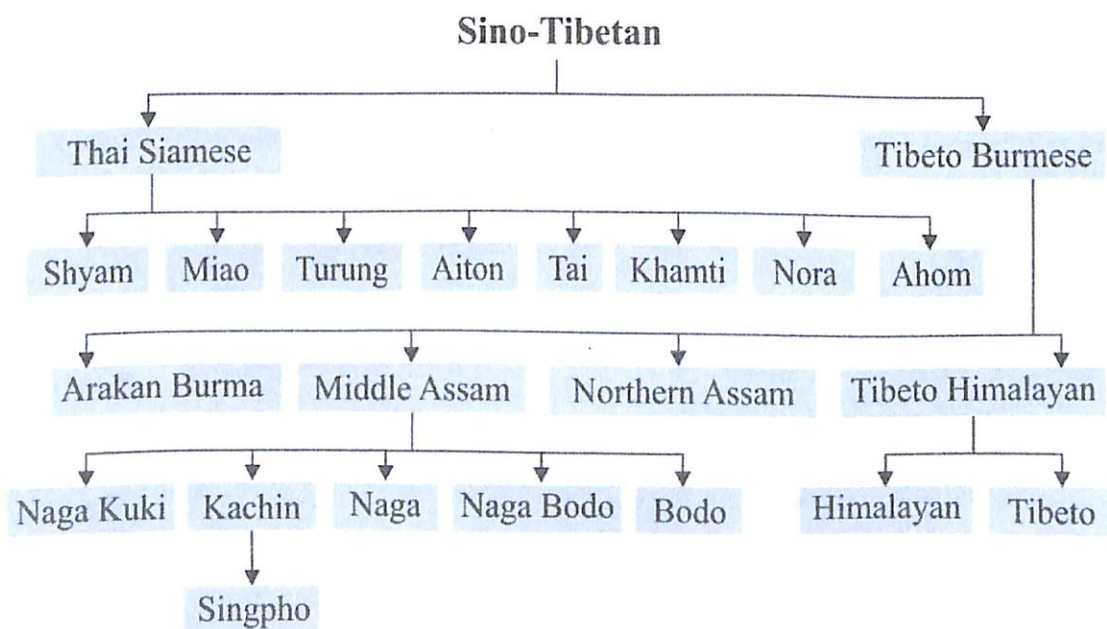
The great Sino-Tibetan language family is divided into two parts:

- (a) Real form of Sino Tibetan
- (b) Old form of Sino Tibetan

The old form of Sino-Tibetan branch has four sub-branches as follows:

- i. Himalayan
- ii. Northern Assam
- iii. Assam Burmese
- iv. Tibetan

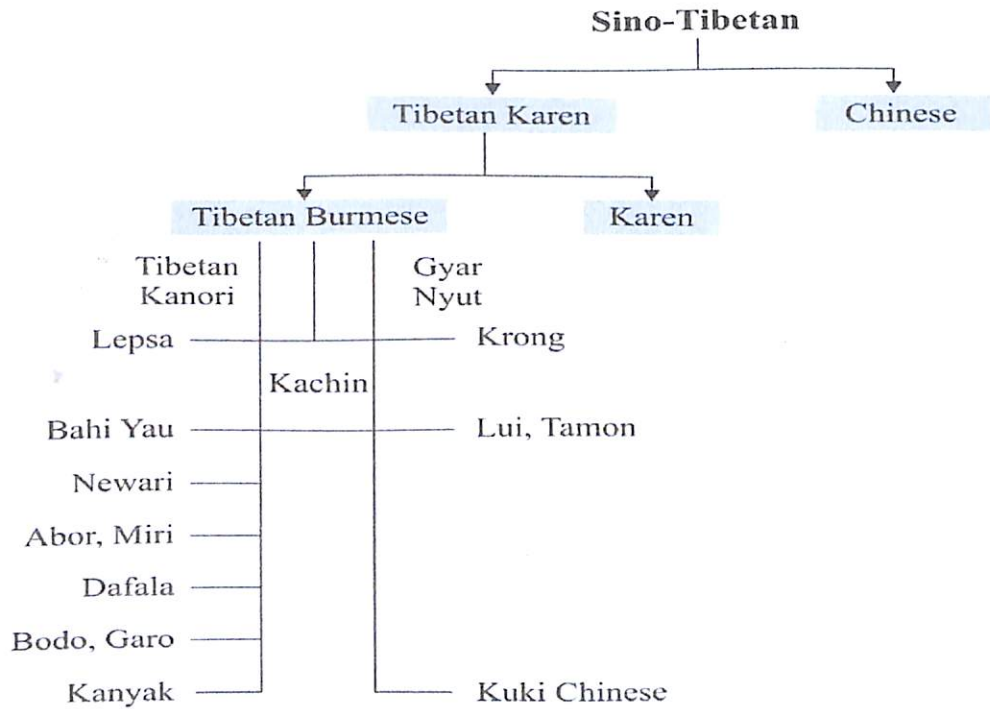
Assam Burmese may be further divided into two sub parts (a) Bodo Naga (b) Burmese Kuki Chin. The Singpho language originated from the Burmese sub Branch of great Sino-Tibetan language family. I. J. S. Taraporewala has provided the structured form of the Singpho language as shown below –



Source: I.J.S. Taraporewala (1962), *Elements of the Science of Language*, pp. 215

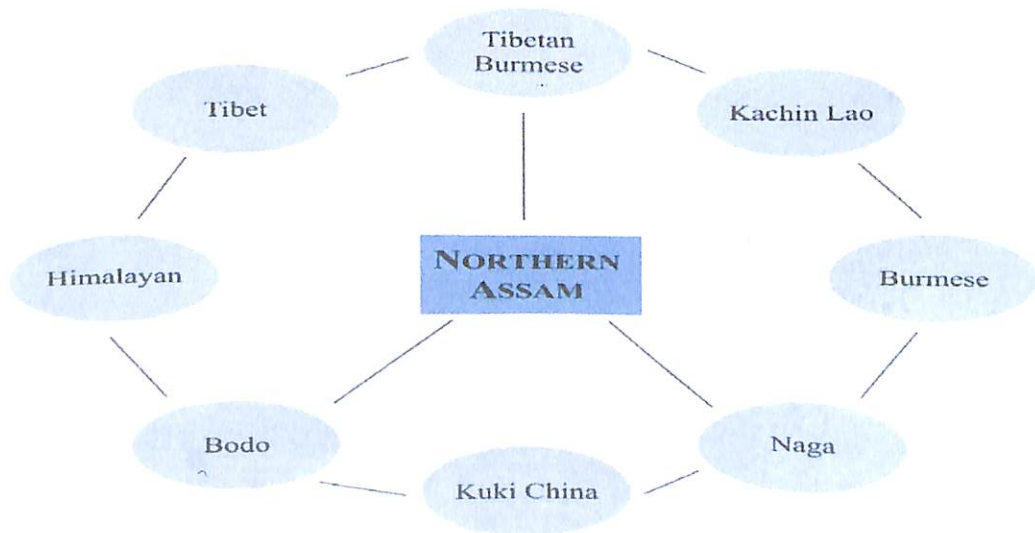
The Assam and Burma Branches:

The Singpho Language has come from the Burmese sub-branch. The Singpho language has no script, but they express their feelings through own dialects.

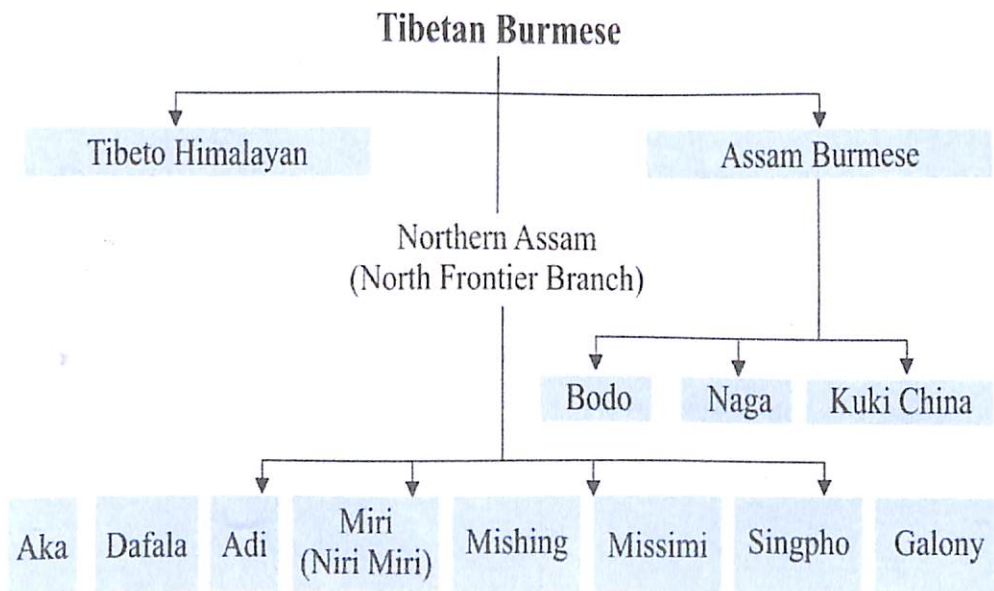


Source: Sino-Tibetan Conspectus- Benedict

Linguistic Satyandra Narayan Goswami (1988) has also provided a structure in his book ‘A study of Sino-Tibetan language’ which is shown below –



Upendra Nath Goswami (1982) has provided another structure in his book 'Bhasa Bigyan' where he has contended that the Singpho language has originated from the Northern sub-branch of the Sino Tibetan family. The structure is shown below –



4.9. Script and Literature:

The Singphos are considered a very backward community in terms of script and literature. They are not advanced educationally like some other tribes of north east region. Earlier they were not interested in their scripts and literature. However from the last decade of the 19th century onwards the community has grown much conscious about their scripts and literature. The Singpho language belongs to the great language family of Sino-Tibetan and a sub-branch of Tibeto Burmese. The first Assamese Magazine 'Arunodoi' commented on Singpho language and literature that the Singphos use the Shan scripts and have a different language that they write on leaves or papers.

According to the Singpho folk beliefs they have their own script which was preserved on animal skin. Unfortunately during the course of the migration of the Singphos to Assam this script was lost or was eaten up by some animal (Ningkhee, 2000).

According to the written documents, Miles Bronson selected Roman script for the Singphos in 1894. Later on in 1911 Dr. Ola Hanson reformed their script and prepared a Kachin (Singpho) Dictionary. The Kachin Dictionary contains 751 pages and nearly 10,000 Singpho words (Ningkhee, 2000).

The American Baptist Missionaries also took initiative to publish articles about Singpho literature and script in a newspaper in 1917, in order to develop their script and literature. But it was unfortunate that the script and literature remained confined to their own community and did not develop.

After the independence of India the script and literature of this community rapidly progressed. They initially published the Singpho primer 'Singpho Basic Reader' edited by Slg. Seng Gam Labam and Slg. Manjela Singpho. They are also giving importance to publishing songs and music related to their Religion and Culture. They have already established the 'Singpho Cultural Society' for the overall development of their literature. Under this organization they published a primer named 'Ningphong Jinghpaw Liti Laika'. Since the year 1995 a magazine named 'Jinghpaw' edited by Debananda Ulup, has been regularly published from Guwahati. This magazine plays a vital role in the growth of Singpho literature by publishing short stories, poetry, articles and other important articles related to Singpho community (Ningkhee, 2000).

Singpho Script

A	Ā	Ē	E	È
I	O	U	AI	AU
AW	OI	B	CHY	D
G	GY	H	J	K
KY	HK	HKY	L	M
N	NG	NY	P	HP
HPY	R	S	SH	T
TS	HT	W	Y	Z

The Singpho tribe has involved itself in the preservation of its traditional legendary and mythological origins as well as their folk believes, folk culture, music dance, musical instruments, social customs, marriage, ritual of the family and social life and funeral ceremonies. They publish articles in news papers, magazines to unite the Singpho people and to remind their heroic traditions and to contribute to different sides of the broad Assamese Society.

4.10. Singpho Calendar:

The Singpho calendar has twelve months in a year, and all the months have thirty days each. They count their months from one full moon to the other, and start the New Year from April, which corresponds to the Indian month of 'Baisakhai'.

The Singpho year is divided into four seasons, *Ningtun-ta*, the summer. *lunam-ta*, the Autum, *Ning-cung-van-ningrum-cike*, the period that is neither hot nor cold and

Ningsumta, the winter (Baruah, 1977). A month is called '*Ta*', a day is called '*Ningloi*' and a year '*Nining*'. There is no particular name for the days of the week (Dutta, 1990).

The following table highlighted the Singpho months with corresponding Assamese and English months.

Table: 4.1

Singpho Month

Sl. No.	Singpho months	Assamese months	English months
1	Rata	Bohag	March/April
2	<i>Wot-ta</i>	Jeth	April/May
3	<i>Slata</i>	Ahar	May/Jun
4	<i>Sithum-ta</i>	Sauon	June/July
5	<i>Singam-ta</i>	Bhada	July/August
6	<i>Simri-ta</i>	Ahin	August/September
7	<i>Gupsi-ta</i>	Kati	September/October
8	<i>Guptong-ta</i>	Aghun	October/November
9	<i>Kla-ta</i>	Puh	November/December
10	<i>Misi-ta</i>	Magh	December/January
11	<i>Muka-ta</i>	Fagun	January/February
12	<i>Khu-ta</i>	Chot	February/March

4.11. Food Habit and Drinks:

The factors responsible for the food habits of any community are the geographical location, nature of the climate, fertility of the soil, nature of the vegetation etc. The food habit of any creature develops in its early stages through a process of evaluation when it feels hungry and saves itself from hunger. He/she naturally starts to taste different things

available in his/her surroundings. Thus like any other creature the humans have developed their own food habits, drinks etc.

The Singphos are very particular about their food. The staple food of the Singphos is rice, pulses and vegetables which they have usually three times a day. In their meals, almost all the Singpho people devour meat in large quantities. Most of the dishes are cooked with traditional spices and herbs collected from the forest using bamboo shoots, laisa, chilli and salt. They drink traditional beer, a special type of beer that is prepared from rice. It is a conventional drink and it is a part of their conventions and practices. Opium consumption is common feature among them. Beer made from fermented boiled roots is not merely a favourite drink of the Singpho, but also a sacred libation for the spirits (Baruah, 1977).

They cook *pungkhong sat* (steamed rice) in a specially made utensil. The steamed rice is then wrapped immediately in 'Laphaw' (Kowpa) which they call 'Chatmukai' or *Pungkhong sat* which is served with boiled vegetables, roasted fish and meat etc. in spicy herbs. The Singpho women are very expert in collection of vegetables, pulses from the forest and the kitchen garden. These are Sago, Millet, Beans, Roots, Yan, Arum tubers (*Nai-fa Nai*), Sweet potato, Tapioca, Mustard leaves, Pumpkin, Ginger, Garlic, Green Chilly, Sesame, Bamboo shoot (*Kowa muku*), Cane shoot (*Rri-ci*), Banana flower (*Ngujja-ci*), *Cinglapju*, *Fokcampa khamaupa*, *Chum-pai kampaklap*, *Cimring-mukung*, *Murulap*, *Lupdui-lap*, *Adui-lap* etc.

4.12. Phalap (Singpho Tea):

Tea cultivation in India has a somewhat ambiguous origin. The Singphos living in northern Burma and north east India have stated that they have been consuming tea since

the 12th century. The Singpho community is credited for being the pioneer of the Phalap drink in India. The Singphos brew and consume Phalap as medicine to combat against diseases like- Diabetes, Blood Pressure, Tumour, Cancer, Malaria etc. The Phalap contains anti-oxidants called Polyphenol.

The Singphos pluck the tender leaves of tea and dry it in the Sun and expose it to the night dew for three days and nights. The leaves are then pressed into a bamboo cylinder and it is then exposed to smoke of firewood and then the contents are made into 5 grams tablets. Each tablet gives about 20 cups of tea. The Singphos have the liquor by just dissolving it in hot water without milk. It is the most popular hot beverage. The product is sold under the brand name Phalap.

Regarding preference of food and drinks of the respondents' two questions were formulated to know their view. The data of field study are presented in the following table.

Table: 4.2

Distribution of the respondents by the type of food prefer

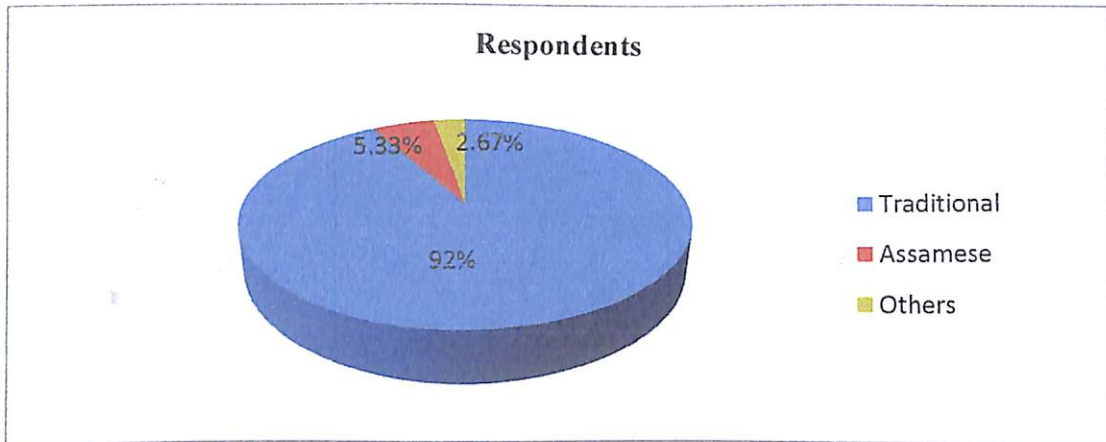
Type of food prefer		No. of Households	Percentage
(a) Traditional		138	92
(b) Non-traditional	Assamese	8	5.33
	Others	4	2.67
Total		150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The table shows that out of 150 respondents, 138 respondents (92 per cent) prefer to have traditional food while 8 respondents (5.33 per cent) prefer Assamese food and the

remaining 4 respondents (2.67 per cent) prefer others type of food. This is also shown with the help of the following pie diagram:

Figure: 4.1



It is noteworthy to mention that 8 per cent respondents are having business and service holder. Thus, they prefer to have non-traditional food because it is easy to cook in respect to traditional food.

The preference of the respondent regarding drink is present in the following table.

Table: 4.3

Distribution of the respondent by preference of drink

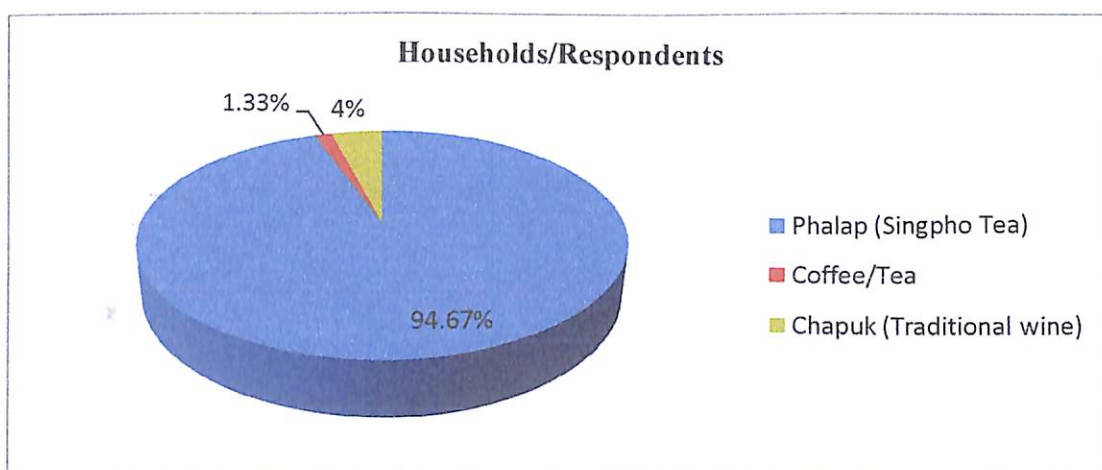
Preference of Drink	No. of Respondent	Percentage
(a) Phalap (tea)	142	94.67
(b) Coffee	2	1.33
(c) Chapuk (Traditional wine)	6	4.00
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

In the study it is found that out of 150 respondents, 142 respondents (94.67 per cent) prefer *Phalap* while only 2 respondents (1.33 per cent) prefer Coffee or Tea and

remaining 6 respondents (4.00 per cent) prefer to drink *Chapuk*. This is also shown with the help of the following pie diagram:

Figure: 4.2



4.13. Dress and Ornament:

The Singphos have a unique style and are in rich traditional dress and ornaments. The traditional dress of the Singphos has a great significance in their socio-cultural life. They are famous for the elegant designs, striking colours and the use of using indigenous weaving techniques. The Singpho women are highly skilled weavers and produce colourfull clothing. They prefer to wear their traditional dress. Each household has at least one indigenous set of loom. The use of the back-strap looms is more prevalent among the Singpho community than any other types of looms. All the clothing required for the families are woven in the indigenous looms using silk and cotton. To meet the family's clothing requirements, handloom weaving is considered to be an essential household industry among the Singphos.

The Singphos know the use of iron, and their weapons are made of this metal; they weave their own clothes and colour them with different dyes obtained from the roots of trees, called khai-khau, romi, chin-lu etc. (Barua, 1954). According to Waddell, "the Singphos wear a close fitting blue and black jacket and a checked loin cloth in Burmese fashion, and occasionally a plaid thrown over the shoulders. The women wear one piece of horizontally broadly striped red and blue cotton cloth wound round the waist, above the breasts in the case of maidens, also a jacket".

The Singpho women wear a rectangular piece of woven cloth, wrapping it around the waist which reaches down up to the ankles. It is called a *Bukang* (for old women *Batut*). It is woven in bright colours such as navy blue, purple, black etc. with multi-coloured decorative border on both sides along the length. There are generally two varieties of *bukang*, namely *Khakhukheng* and *Manmowkheng* of which the former is popularly used by Indian Singpho women throughout the year and the latter is used in occasionally (generally by young women). The upper part of the body is (above waist) covered with *polong* (like a short jacket) and with *ningwat or bathang*, wrapped around the breasts in such a way that the shoulders remain uncovered. It is woven with varieties of checked (colour) designs. The Chingket is tied around the waist. It is a long and narrow piece of cloth and generally worn by married women. The head is covered with a turban called *Phambam*. There are two varieties of *phambam*, colourful for younger women and white for elder women. The married women use a piece of cloth across the shoulder which is called *Bapai*. During the festivals the young girls wear colourful dresses with stitched emblems made of silver which is known as '*Kumphraw Pulong*' or '*Soi Pulong*'.

The Singpho men too have their specific dresses. They wear *Lasa bupa* or *Baka* as a lower garment wrapped around the waist reaching to ankle. It is also woven in the back-strap loom. It is made according to the required width by joining two pieces length wise. The common back ground is of different shades of green on which checks are woven of different colours (the strings are black, blue, violet and green colour). The upper garment of men is a colourful jacket known as *Polong*. The Singpho men also wear a turban which is very similar to the women's turban called *phambam*. A colourful bag called *empheng* is woven on the back-strap loom. This bag is a part of traditional men's costume; on one shoulder men carry the *empheng* and on the other a *pyan* (sword) is carried.

The Singpho men tie their hair into a knot and over that wear a small turban, over which a huge round mat hat is worn as a protector against the sun and rain. Married women wear their hair in a bun on the crown fastened with tasseled pins, the unmarried on the back of the neck (Waddell, 1901). The Singpho men folk do not wear any ornaments. On the other hand the women wear *khaichi* (Necklace), *pat lakan* (ear rings) and *lakchawp* (silver finger ring). The head of the Royal family sets tiger teeth on the Sheaths of the *pyan*. The men get tattoo as on the arm and shoulder, and all married women on both legs from the knee in broad parallel bands (Waddell, 1901).

In the study on ethnographic aspects a question was asked to the respondents relating to preference of cloth they used. It was found that most of the respondents prefer to use traditional cloth woven at home. Distributions of sample households by the type of cloth used are given in the following table.

Table: 4.4

Distribution of the sample households by the type of cloth used

Type of cloth used	No. of Households	Percentage
(a) Traditional	132	88
(b) Modern	7	4.67
(c) Both (a) and (b)	11	7.33
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The above table 4.4 shows that 88 per cent of the sample households prefer to use traditional clothing woven at home, while 4.67 per cent used modern clothing and remaining 7.33 per cent like is used both traditional and modern clothing.

4.14. Dance and Festivals:

Shwapawng Yawng Manau Poi (The dance festival of the Singphos):

Shwapawng Yawng Manau Poi is the most fascinating dance festival of the Singphos of India which is celebrated every year on 14th February and lasts for four days. At the beginning of the spring season the Singphos greet the Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi with pomp and glory to commemorate their forefather Shapawng Yawng. Singphos reside in many countries like Myanmar, Thailand, China, Japan, Singapore and even in the UK and the USA and all of them celebrate this festival of Manau Poi.

The Singphos believe that their ancestor Tingli Yawng celebrated Manau Poi as the praise of God (Sikan Gundon Poi) to get the blessing of the creator of the world 'Mathum Matha' and his father 'Shapawng Yawng'. It latter came to be known as 'Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi'.

The 'Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi' begins with the installation of 'Shadung', which is the symbol of the festival and around which various dances are performed viz. the dance of unity (Gikhing Gumdin Manau), war wining dance (Padang Manau), celebrating dance (Shut Manau), farewell dance (Kumran Manau) etc.

The manau (dance) is led by two leaders. They wear decorated masked caps especially the head of the '*Khung Rang U*' (Hornbill). Both leaders would wear long robes on which the pictures of dragons are embroidered and they hold a *N'thu* (long sword). The rest, follow the steps of leaders hold handkerchiefs (female) and *N'thu* (Male). The dress which is worn at the manua poi is called '*Thung Hkring*'. Female dresses are more elaborately designed and are costlier than the dresses worn by men, decorated with valuable metals like Gold and Silver.

The '*Shadung*' is beautifully designed with colourful paints and carvings. There are two equal length poles at the center of '*Shadung*' which are its main poles. One of them is called 'Dungla' and the other is called 'Dungwi'. Dungla represents the male and Dungwi represents the female as well as the seasons of nature. The rest of the poles and planks of the Shadung are called '*Dung Noi*' and 'Dung bye' or 'Dung Tawn'. One end of the Dung Bye plank is carved into the shape of the head of the *Khung rang U* and the other ends its tail. Other animals like Elephant, Cheetah, Monkey, Buffalo, Crocodile, Hen and Swan are imprinted on the *Dung Bye* or *Dung Tawn*. The Singphos believe that the Sun, the Moon and the Stars are also created by *Mathum Matha*. So these are also given their places on the main poles.

According to the mythology of the Singphos, after the creation of the world when the plants first bore fruits and flowers, the birds held a dance festival under the leadership of

'*Khung Rang U*' to praise '*Mathum Matha*'. That festival was witnessed by a boy called 'Mang Ding Yau' and later manau poi was held under his supervision.

The musical instrumentals of the Singphos which are used in manau poi are beat drums called 'Ching' or 'Thong'. It is a cylindrical percussion instrument, made of wood and leather. Other instruments are Gong (Bau), Pi (Flutes), Thongjien (Konggo), etc.

It is noteworthy that there is a house called '*Manau Thingnu*' in front of the Shadung built with traditional architecture. The *Manau Thingnu* is constructed only on special occasions with there are two ladders called '*Silip Lakang*' and '*Jan Lakan*'. Some vessels of bamboo called '*Madum Dumphen*' are hung in front of the house. A Jan Kinram (basket) made of bamboo is kept with meat in it as an offering to *Nat* (spirit).

The Singphos follows different religions in different countries. In India, the Singphos of the North East are mainly Buddhist. Although the Singphos believe in different religions and reside in distant countries in multilingual and multiracial societies, they preserve the same language and cultural idea of celebrating the Shapawng Yawng Manau Poi as way of commemorating their ancestors.

The Singphos celebrate different types of *manau* on different occasions (Singpho, 2003; Maio and Singpho, 2011). Traditionally there are eight types of manau. While the general pattern of celebration is similar, the meaning, mood and message are quite distinct in each type (Seng, 2000). The *manau* are-

Sut Manau: The sut manau is performed at the time of prosperity with friends and relatives (a thanks giving festivals). In its original animist setting, it is performed to appeal to the *nats* for further favour with wealth and fortune. The sut manau is now commonly performed and the festivities last for four or more days depending on the generosity of the host. It is also customary for the host to present invited guests with gifts.

Ju Manau: This is a burial dance, performed to mark the occasion of a paramount Chief's death some time after his funeral. Its purpose is to gain favours for the remaining family members. High cost is involved and only chiefs having considerable wealth can afford such a manau.

Pudang Manau: It is a victory dance related to warfare and it is a sign of a victory over the enemy in the battle field.

Kumrang Manau: It is a dance of separation performed when a family member separates from the parental family or migrates to a new place.

Htingram Manau: This manau is celebrated to resolve conflicts among relatives. It is an expression of reconciliation and union.

Ninghtan Manau: The manau is celebrated to encourage the people while they prepare to go to war. They would hold arms and weapons and instruments of war while dancing.

Thing Htang Manau: This manau is celebrated by the rich men and the manau lasts for eight days. They would prepare the manau ground both in the front and the back yards of the house.

Nau Sawt Manau: This manau is celebrated to get blessing from the elders.

Kumrum Manau: This is a dance of get together and is a dance of reunion.

Thingson Manau: This manau is celebrated when a family shifts to a new house.

Sangken Poi (New Year Festival):

Sangken is an important Buddhist religious festival observed with due solemnity for three days as per *Sagrat* (Singpho calendar) in the month of April (generally from 13th to 15th April). On the occasion of Sangken the image/idols of Lord Buddha is brought out of

its abode to *Song fra* or *sangken chong* and water is poured on the idols ceremoniously with great devotion by the villagers and the monks. This is a new year's festival.

As the Singphos are Buddhists, they throng at the well decorated Buddhist Monastery and place a small decorated stupa (*sangken chong*) which is connected to a boat like structure. Here the people pour scented water that falls over the idols. This they believe to be a display of as extreme humility towards divine Providence. Then they pour fresh water on friends and family members. This act of splashing water continues till the third day. During these days the women folk prepare delicious dishes and sweets like *Dungro*, *Dungtap*, *Satthu*, *Dungpet* etc. for their guests. For these three days people play, sing and dance celebrating the glory of the enlightened one.

Singpho Youth Enjoying Sangken Poi



Sangken Poi (Water Festival or New Year Festival)



Nawa Sitang:

This festival is celebrated on a full moon day at the beginning of the rainy season. It is believed to be a reminder of the right path shown by the Buddha. While monks recite from the scriptures, the devotees vow to observe the Panch Sheel for three months. During these three months the monks and devotees strictly observe the Pabcha Sheel.

Wa-Ok Sitang:

This festival is celebrated in the memory of one of Lord Buddha's disciples who performed meditation for three months during the rainy season. It is celebrated during a full moon in the month of Kartika when trees resembling the kalpa-taru Briksha of Hindu methodology are constructed with long bamboo poles and are decorated with coloured leaves and branches. Devotees offer different items which they hang on the branches of kalpa-taru for the monks as a mark of recognition for their piety and sacrifices.

Manglup Poi:

The festival is celebrated to pay homage to the departed souls. For the celebration of this festival, the relatives and friends of the deceased persons preserve a piece of cloth and later burn it according to the ritual. Thereafter, they invite the whole village to enjoy the feast with dance and song.

Kanda Poi:

The observance of this festival marks the organization of a prayer meeting for the welfare of the *Sangh* during which it is essential for every villager to pay a visit to the chief monk.

Poi Leng:

This poi is believed to have started after the Nirvana of Gautam Buddha. There is no fixed date for this festival and it is generally observed after the nirvana of a monk on a day which is convenient for the people living in distant areas wishing to attend the poi and pay homage to their monk.

4.15. Celebration:

The Singphos observe various ceremonies on different occasions. The ceremonies of the Singpho society are broadly divided into the following categories:

- i. Ceremonies for the well being of the individual or family or society.
- ii. Ceremonies for field or/and agriculture
- iii. Ceremonies for curing the sick
- iv. Ceremonies for the dead, and of death
- v. Ceremonies for rain and for prevention of draught

Whenever a ceremony is performed for the general welfare of an individual or a family, the spirit of *Natkun* is worshipped by sacrificing a fowl.

4.16. Pregnancy and Birth:

Child birth in an occasion of celebration in the Singpho society. The Singphos believe that a woman becomes pregnant not only due to sexual union but also due to the blessings of God the Almighty. A barren woman is considered unlucky and is referred to being deprived of as the blessings of God. A child is conceived in the womb of a mother

only due to God's blessings on the woman and therefore she is considered lucky (Dutta, 1990). The Singphos do not practice sex determination and female foeticide.

According to S. Barua, after the delivery, the mother observes a pollution period of seven to fifteen days. The child is usually given a name either on the very day of birth, or a day or two later.

4.17. Death:

The Singphos believe in a soul whom they regard as *Minla* or *Minla Majengwa*. *Milna* is the Singpho term for a soul. The Soul is believed to live inside the heart and to do all its action. As the active life of an animal or man is explained by the presence of the soul, the death is explained by its permanent absence (Baruah, 1977).


The Singphos either bury or cremate their dead, depending on the nature of the death and the age of the dead person. If a man dies due to old age or meets a natural death the body is cremated. In case of a premature or accidental death the body is buried. If a newborn dies, the body is kept in a bamboo container and is left under a tree outside the village (Borua, 1984). They bury their dead in wooden coffins. Beside the deceased warrior is placed with his sword, arrows, or his gun, bullets and flint, also food, clothes and money, for the use of his spirit in the next world. In case of chiefs, the body is kept for years unburied outside the village and is surrounded by the emblems of rank which it had in life. In death by violence a buffalo is sacrificed to appease the wrath of the spirits, and its head is fixed near the grave. The funeral is conducted by the *Dumsa* (priest) who chants mantras for the departed soul.

4.18. Domestic Articles:

The domestic articles of the Singphos are limited and simple, comprising of a few bamboo and cane baskets, brass utensils and weaving and agricultural implements. The Singphos are skilled in cane and bamboo work, and specially in wood carving (Baruah, 1977). Some of the domestic articles of the Singphos are *satfun* used for keeping flowers, *Cingka* used for carrying heavy loads, *karang* or the haversack used by men, *singnai* (haversack) for women. Some other articles of daily use are *Ban* (dish) *Rung Rhong* (saucepan), *Mokhang* (pan), *Kra* (jaki) *Lukung* (spoon), *Nkha* (bowl), *Kaithan* (khundona) *Bamong* (container), *Kok* (cup), *Kantow* (jug) etc.

Conclusion Remarks:

Earlier the Singphos lived in particular areas but after independence of the country the non tribal have also moved into their areas and have started settling down. Since then the interaction between the non-tribal and the Singphos have been taking place. There has been socio-cultural as well as biological interaction among these populations and as a result, lots of changes have been taking place in the Singpho community. But still the traditions, customs and rites and rituals have not undergone much change.



**SOCIO ECONOMIC
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
SAMPLES**

CHAPTER – 5

SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLES

Socio-economic factors have profound influence on economic development as it affects demographic setup, education, health, occupation, entrepreneurship ability and many more of a person living in a particular society (Buragohain, 2012). The first and foremost important task for a society is to maintain food, clothing and shelter for its members. In this regard, the economic activity is inseparable part of the human society, because without production of wealth and distribution the human society cannot live.

Every society bears certain unique socio-economic features. The Singphos too bear certain such features. Thus in this chapter an attempt has been made to study the socio-economic characteristics of the Singpho tribe.

The present study is carried out from the 150 households of the Singpho tribe out of 406 households of the 15 sample villages from Tinsukia district of Assam.

5.1. Population Composition:

Population composition of a community is very important for socio economic study. The population composition under present study is given on the basis of field data as reported by the head of households (respondent).

Table: 5.1**Population composition of the sample villages under study**

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	Sample Households	Male	Female	Total
1	Dibong	14	40	37	77
2	Ketetong	25	78	60	138
3	Khalen-ga (Rajnar)	1	3	2	5
4	Bahbari (Kuwato-ga)	6	17	15	32
5	Uluo-ga	6	16	18	34
6	Pangna	5	15	13	28
7	Inthem	33	101	87	188
8	Mungang	8	21	23	44
9	Duwarmara	20	64	54	118
10	Pangsun	9	26	24	50
11	Kumchai Kong	14	39	36	75
12	Namdeng	1	3	4	7
13	Hasak	5	15	13	28
14	Kotha-ga	2	7	6	13
15	Bisa-ga	1	4	4	8
Total		150	449	396	845

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

Table 5.1 shows that the 15 sample villages have a total of 845 people with 449 male and 396 female respectively. Average number of the households member is 5.63.

5.2. Religion:

Religion is a very important socio-economic variable, which play a vital role in the economic development as well as growth of the population. Rigid religious and spiritual practice adversely affect on economic development (Weber, 1930) and positive influence on population growth (Raj, 2003). The religion wise breakup of the sample households reveals that the Singphos have faith in Buddhism, but simultaneously retain their traditional religion of naturism and worship of their forefathers.

Table: 5.2

Distribution of the sample households by religion

Religion	No. of Households	Percentage
Buddhist	150	100
Christian	-	-
Hindu	-	-
Others	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The above table 5.2 shows that the respondents of the sample households are follower of Buddhism (i.e. 100 per cent).

5.3. Language:

The Singpho language serves as a lingua franca among the *Kachins* which comprises of *Zi, Lisaw Maru, Lashi* and *Nungs*. The Singphos are of Tibeto Burman group. There is a similarity between Singpho and Tibetan language, which proves that both the Singpho and the Tibetan are from same ancestral home. According to Dr. Ola Handson, the author of the Kachin dictionary both the Singpho or Kachin and the Tibetan (language) are sister group having a common source in some Mongolian mother speech.

The population under the present study use Singpho language in their communication. To communicate other people they use broken Assamese and broken Hindi/English.

Table: 5.3

Showing the preferences of spoken languages by the respondent

Sl. No.		Languages						Total
		Singpho		Broken Assamese		Broken English/Hindi		
		Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	
1	Spoken at Home	138	92	12	8	-		150
2	Spoken at Public	120	80	20	13.33	10	6.67	150

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The above table 5.3 reveals that out of 150 respondents, 92% (138 nos.) speak Singpho at home while only 8% (12 nos.) speak broken Assamese at home. On the other hand, out of the 150 respondents, 80% (120 nos.) speak Singpho in public while only 13.33% (20 nos.) speak broken Assamese in public. Significantly, another 6.67 % (10 nos.) also speak broken Hindi/English in public.

5.4. Type of Family:

Family is the basic universal social institution. It fulfills needs and performs functions which are indispensable for the continuity, integration and change in the social system. Among the Singphos both joint and nuclear family system are prevalent. However, with spread of modern education, communication facilities, growing importance of income, desire to freedom of couple, attitude towards life etc. are gaining momentum in the Singpho society. As a result, nuclear family is gaining its popularity among the Singphos. A nuclear family is one in which the family consists of the parents and their unmarried or without children. On the other hand joint family consists of several nuclear families joined by kinship relation in which several generations living together under the same roof and used the same kitchen.

The distribution of households on the basis of the type of family of the sample villages are presented in the following table 5.4.

Table: 5.4

Type of family of the sample villages

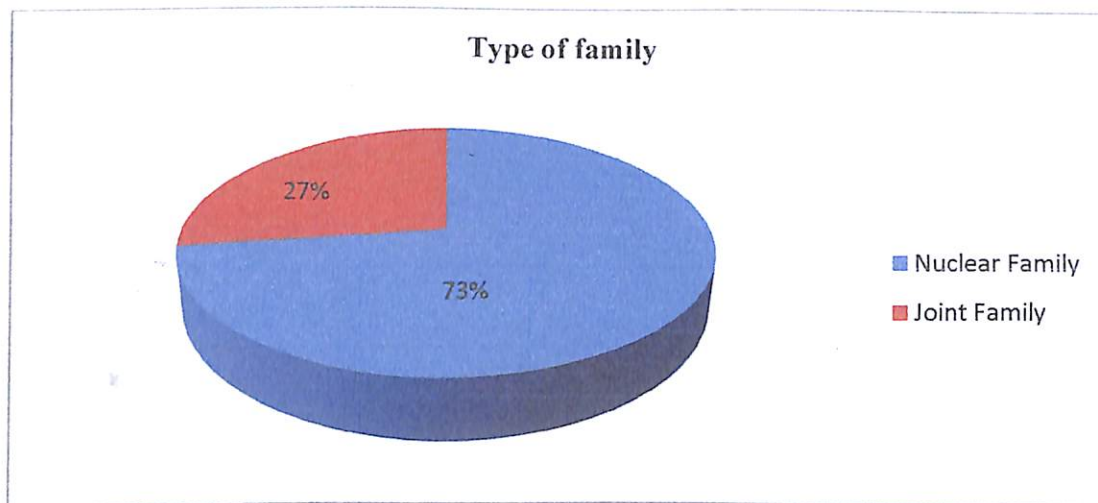
Sl. No.	Sample Villages	Total Singpho Households	Sample Households	Joint family		Nuclear Family	
				Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1	Dibong	37	14	5	35.7	9	64.3
2	Ketetong	68	25	4	16	21	84
3	Khalen-ga (Rajnagar)	4	1	-	-	1	100
4	Bahbari (Kuwato-ga)	15	6	2	33.33	4	66.67
5	Ulup-ga	15	6	1	16.67	5	83.33
6	Pangna	13	5	2	40	3	60
7	Inthem	90	33	11	33.33	22	66.67
8	Mungang	20	8	2	25	6	75
9	Duwarmara	51	20	4	20	16	80
10	Pangsun	25	9	2	22.22	7	77.78
11	Kumchai kong	39	14	4	28.57	10	71.43
12	Namdeng	4	1	-	-	1	100
13	Hasak	14	5	1	20	4	80
14	Kotha-ga	7	2	1	50	1	50
15	Bisa-ga	4	1	1	100	-	-
Total		406	150	40	27	110	73

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

In the study it was found that the dominant form of the family structure is nuclear family with 73 per cent (110 nos.) while 27 per cent (40 nos.) of the households are joint family.

The pie diagram shows the distribution of sample households by type of family.

Figure: 5.1
Showing the type of family



5.5. Family Size:

An attempt has been made to distribute sample households on the basis of the size of family members. It is been always considered a small size family is good for all around development of a household. The following table 4.5 gives an idea about the size of family members of the sample households of the Singpho tribe.

Table: 5.5

Distribution of the sample households by the size of family members

No. of Family members	No. of Households	Percentage
Up to 4	26	17.33
5 – 8	109	72.67
9 and above	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

Table 5.5 shows that most of the family consists of five to eight members which is 72.67 per cent (109 nos). Whereas 17.33 per cent (26 nos.) of households have the family members up to 4 and 10 per cent (15 nos.) of households are having 9 and above family members. Thus, the average size of family is 5.63.

Regarding the view of the small size of family two case studies were done.

Case Study 1

Name:	Lathoi Lazum
Age:	43
Sex:	Male
Education Qualification:	H.S.
Size of Family:	03
Village:	Dibong
Occupation:	Agriculture

Mr. Lazum is a small tea grower in the Dibong Singpho village. He prefers a small family rather than joint family. According to him, the small family offer better life style, health and education facility to their children.

It has been found that in all the sample villages most of the villagers prefer the nuclear family. They have also been found to be keenly interested in education for their children because they feel the future prospects of their children depend on education and health quality.

Case Study 2

Name:	Rajib Ningkhee
Age:	40
Sex:	Male
Education Qualification:	M.A. in Political Science, D.U.
Size of Family:	03
Village:	Ketetong
Occupation:	Service

According to Mr. Ningkhee, the Singphos are gradually taking the opportunities and facilities of modern education and they are very much familiar with modern technology. Nowadays they use capital intensive technology in their agricultural practice. Therefore, their traditional mode of family structure is changing day by day. Traditionally Singphos were owners of large plot of land. So, according to Mr. Ningkhee, a nuclear family can make better use of such plot of land by using modern agricultural technology. With the advent of modern technology, the need of manpower has reduced considerably. So a nuclear family can manage agricultural activities in the field with their few family members.

5.6. Age Distribution of the Sample Population:

Age is the important factor which determines the work force and occupational status of the population. The information regarding age distribution of the sample households has been presented in the table below.

Table: 5.6

Distribution of the sample population by age composition

Age group	Frequency	Percentage of Age group	Percentage of Working Population
0-14	198	23.43	-
15-30	178	21.07	63.32
31-45	236	27.93	
46-60	121	14.32	
60 +	112	13.25	-
Total	845	100	63.32

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It appears from the above table 5.6 that the working population was 63.32 per cent (excluding age group 0-14 and 60 +). The dependent (23.43 per cent) and old age (13.25 per cent) population consists of 36.68 per cent.

5.7. Sex Ratio:

Sex composition is one of the important socio-economic variables that indicate the numbers of female per 1000 male persons. The following table 5.7 shows the sex ratio of sample population under study.

Table: 5.7

Sex Ratio of the Singpho community

Sex	No. of Family Member	Sex Ratio (Female per 1000 male person)
Male	449	882
Female	396	
Total	845	

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The table 5.7 shows that the sex ratio of the Singpho community under study is estimated to be 882 which is much lower than the state sex ratio 954 and that of national 940.

5.8. Educational Status:

Education has been recognized as a key factor in socio-economic development of a community. The information regarding educational attainment of the respondent of sample households has been presented below.

Table: 5.8

Distribution of sample population by their educational level

Level of education	Male		Female		Total	Percentage
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%		
Illiterate	39	8.68	47	11.87	86	10.18
Up to Primary level (Class I to IV)	149	33.19	123	31.07	272	32.19
Up to M. E. level (Class V to VII)	134	29.84	131	33.08	265	31.36
Up to Matriculation level (Class VIII to X)	52	11.58	44	11.11	96	11.36
Up to Higher Secondary level (Class 10 + 2)	21	4.68	9	2.27	30	3.55
Graduate	13	2.89	9	2.27	22	2.60
Post Graduate and more	1	0.22	1	0.25	2	0.24
Too young to study	40	8.92	32	8.08	72	8.52
Total	449	100	396	100	845	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The table 5.8 shows that the literacy rate among the sample population is 81.3 per cent (with male literacy rate 82.4 per cent and female 80.05 per cent) respectively which is higher than state literacy rate 73.18 per cent and that of national literacy rate 74.04 per cent. However, it has been observed from the table that among the sample population the maximum number have received their education level up to class VII, while education attainment up to graduate and Post graduate level is only 2.84 per cent.

5.8.1. Educational facilities availed by the children of the respondent:

Education is the basic human right. In India up to age 14 years education is free and compulsory for all irrespective to sex and caste. The educational facility in the studied area is not satisfactory. There is a limited number of educational institution comprising government and private, but all the schools are of primary, middle primary and high school level. The following table gives the picture of the educational facilities availed in the sample villages.

Table: 5.9

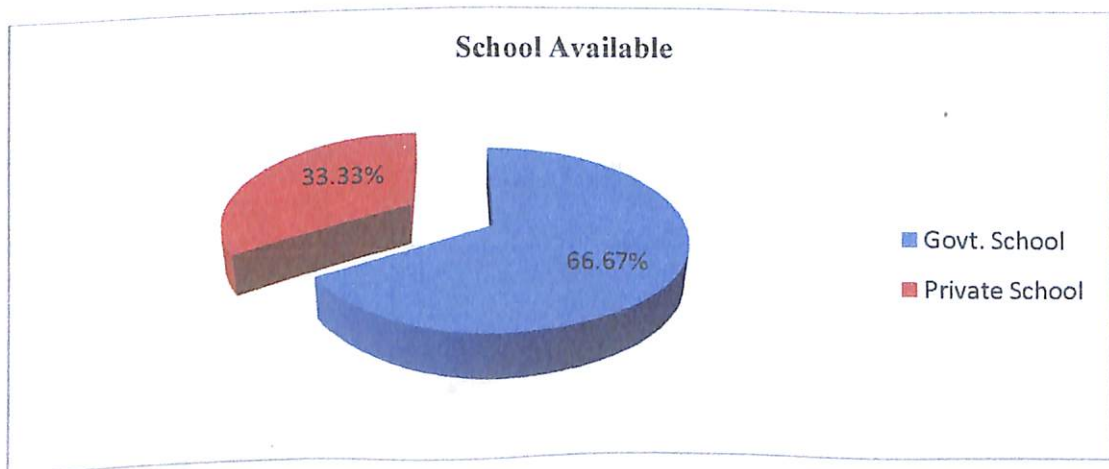
Educational institution in the sample villages

Schools Available	No. of School	Percentage
(a) Govt. School	4	66.67
(b) Private School	2	33.33
Total	6	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The table 5.9 shows that there are 4 nos. of government and 2 nos. private schools in the sample villages under study. The pie diagram shows clearly the picture of the type of educational institution under the study area.

Figure: 5.2



5.8.2. Distance of the School:

Location of the school is important factor in respect to enrolment of the student in the classes particularly in village. Therefore, it is important to have schools in the villages in proximity.

Table: 5.10

Distance of school from & within the village

Category	Distance of the villages (in km)					
	Within the village	2-4	4-6	6-8	> 8	No Data
Anganwadi	15					
Primary School	4	11				
Middle English School	3		12			
High School	2	3	10			
Higher Secondary					15	
College					15	
Adult Education Centre						-

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It is seen from the table 5.10 that regarding educational facilities all the sample villages have an Anganwadi within the village. In case of Primary school facility 4 villages have it within the village, while Middle English School is located at 3 villages and for 12 villages ranging at a distance of 4-6 kms. On the other hand 2 High Schools are located within the village, 2-4 kms. for 3 villages, and 4-6 kms. for 10 villages. There is only one Higher Secondary and two Colleges at a distance of more than 8 kms. No Adult Education Centre is found in the sample villages under study.

5.9. Mode of Transportation Facilities:

Transportation is the main means of development of an area and a country as a whole. In the study it was found that there is no public transport facility in the sample village under study.

Table: 5.11

Transportation facilities available

Type of transport	Mode of transport facility		
	Bus	Taxi/Winger	Auto rickshaw
Private	No	Yes	Yes
Public	No	No	No

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

5.10. Occupational Pattern:

Occupation pattern is an important indicator that reflects the status of an individual and the progress of the nation. According to Meinam (2007) economic progress of the nation can be judged on the basis of the occupational pattern of its population. Hence the occupational pattern of the Singphos reflects their position. The Singpho society is passing through a process of change and the occupational pattern is under the process of transformation. Occupational pattern of the sample Singpho population is presented in the following table 5.12.

Table: 5.12

Distribution of respondents by the nature of occupation under study

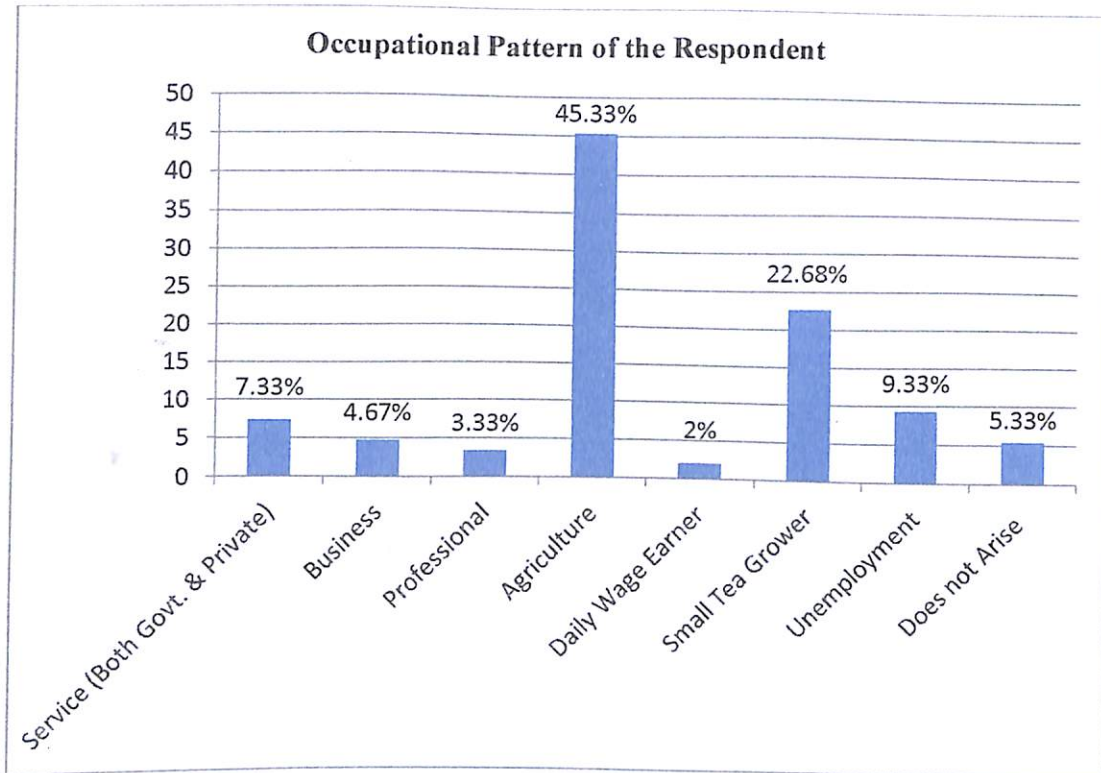
Nature of Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Service (both government & private)	11	7.33
Business	07	4.67
Professional	05	3.33
Agriculture	68	45.33
Small Tea Grower	34	22.68
Daily Wage Earner	3	2
Unemployed	14	9.33
Does not Arise (Either Old or Student)	8	5.33
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

Agriculture is the principal occupation of the respondents of the present study. Out of 150 respondents, 45.33 per cent (68 nos.) engaged in agriculture. Apart from agriculture 22.68 per cent (34 nos.) are small tea grower and also engaged in different occupations such as services (7.33 per cent), business (4.67 per cent), professional (3.33 per cent) and daily wage earner (2 per cent). However, it is estimated that among the respondents the unemployment rate is 9.33 per cent.

Over the year with spread of education, communication and economic development, occupational mobility is observed among the Singphos which is a good sign for economic progress. Occupational diversification of the Singphos can also be shown with the help of the following diagram.

Figure: 5.3

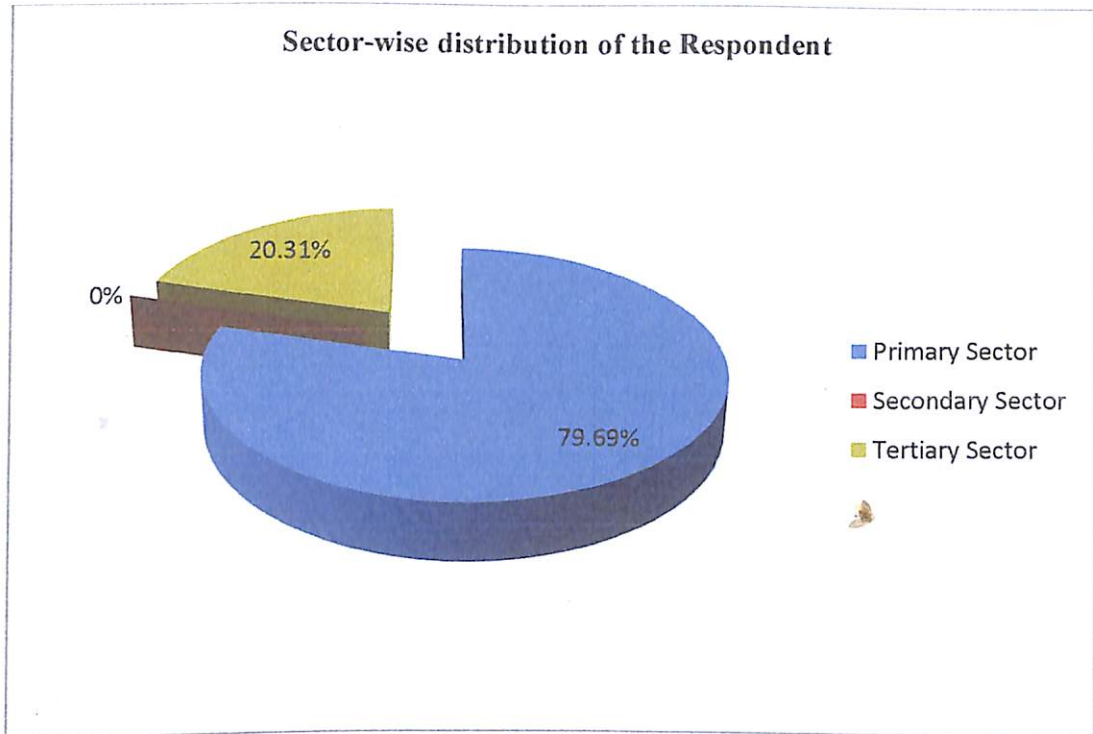


It is observed from the figure 5.3 that occupational diversification is gaining popularity among the respondents of the Singpho community and there is a gradual shift from agricultural activity to non-agricultural activities. However, agriculture is still in predominant mode.

5.10.1. Sector-wise Distribution of the Respondent:

Sector-wise distribution of the respondents tells us about their engagement for livelihood. It is known to us that there are three sectors in an economy namely primary or agriculture, secondary or industry and tertiary sector. The sector-wise distribution of the respondent of the Singpho community under the study is presented with the help of pie diagram.

Figure: 5.4



It is observed from the diagram that 79.69 per cent of respondents are engaged in primary sector while 20.31 per cent engaged in tertiary sector. However it is observed that none of the respondent of the community under study falls in secondary sector.

[N. B.: to compile sector wise respondent unemployed, either old or student (9.33 and 5.33 per cent) are excluded.]

5.11. Family Income:

Income has profound influence on the socio-economic status of a family. Standard of living of a family depends on the income of the family. Without sufficient income, a family can not enjoy a decent living standard (Buragohain, 2012).

In calculating the yearly income of a sample households the sources of income have been taken into consideration.

Table: 5.13

Distribution of sample households by monthly family income

Family Income (in Rs.)	No. of Households	Percentage
Below 5000	106	70.67
5000 – 10000	19	12.67
10000 – 15000	6	4
15000 – 20000	4	2.67
20000 – 25000	4	2.67
25000 – 30000	4	2.67
30000 – 35000	3	2
35000 – 40000	2	1.33
40000 – 45000	1	0.66
45000 and above	1	0.66
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The above table 5.13 shows that among the surveyed households 70.67 per cent (106 nos.) has monthly income below Rs. 5000. On the other hand 12.67 per cent (19 nos.) income is between Rs. 5000 – 10000; 4 per cent between Rs. 10000 – 15000; 2.67 per cent between Rs. 15000 – 20000; 2.67 per cent between Rs. 20000 - 25000; and also 2.67 per cent between Rs. 25000 – 30000; 2 per cent between Rs. 30000 – 35000; 1.33 per cent between 35000 – 40000; 0.66 per cent between Rs. 40000 – 45000 again 0.66 per cent between 45000 and above. Thus the per capita annual income of the sample population is Rs. 14412 which is lower than both state (Assam) Rs. 42036 as well as nation (India) Rs. 68748 during 2012-13 at current prices.

5.12. Family Consumption Expenditure:

Family consumption expenditure is another important socio-economic indicator. Sometimes it is considered as a proxy to measure development instead of the per capita income. But it is very difficult to calculate the expenditure in various heads. For the purpose of the study the respondents were asked to report the consumption expenditure on various heads such as food, cooking fuel, clothing, health, transport, education, electricity bill, telephone bill/cable bill/recharge bill, house repairing, festivals, donation, marriage and death etc. and expenditure incurred on some others items. The consumption expenditure of the households has been calculated by adding the expenditure incurred on the aforesaid various heads to meet the day to day needs during the last 30 days. The table 5.14 indicates the distribution of the sample households on the basis of the consumption expenditure.

Table: 5.14

Distribution of sample households by monthly family expenditure

Consumption Expenditure	No. of Households	Percentage
Below 1000	34	22.67
1001 – 2000	58	38.67
2001 – 4000	37	24.67
4001 – 6000	8	5.33
6001 – 8000	7	4.67
8001 – 10000	4	2.66
10001 – 15000	2	1.33
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It is observed from the table 5.14 that 38.67 per cent households belong to the consumption expenditure group of Rs. 1001 – 2000, which is the highest among the

community under study. Moreover, it is seen that only 1.33 per cent households fall under the consumption expenditure group of Rs. 10001 – 15000. On the other hand 22.67 per cent household's monthly consumption expenditure is below Rs. 1000. 24.67 per cent households belong to consumption expenditure Rs. 2001 – 4000, followed by between Rs. 4001 – 6000 is 5.33 per cent, Rs. 6001 – 8000 is 4.67 per cent and Rs. 8001 – 10000 is 2.66 per cent.

Further it is observed that the sample household's (about 86 per cent) monthly consumption expenditure is less than national average of Rs. 4860. Thus, the majority sample households under study fall under the below poverty line in terms of consumption expenditure.

5.13. Possession of Assets:

After analysis the income and consumption level of the Singpho tribe under study, an attempt was made to look at the possession of the assets of the sample households. Households' assets and amenities reflect a household's way of life. The table 5.15 gives the idea about the possession of different type of assets by the sample households. Possession of assets such a Sewing Machine and Mixer Grinder have only 1.33 per cent households. 8 per cent of the households own a Radio; while 24 per cent are owners of Television sets and 5.33 per cent of the households enjoy the C.D. Player. On the other hand possession of Bicycle (50 per cent), Bike (10 per cent) and Car (7.33 per cent) and own by the sample households, which are very important means of transportation. Mobile phone is very common among the sample households; 57.33 per cent sample households has at least one mobile hand set, 4.67 per cent households has a Laptop/Computer set; while 4 per cent households own a camera; 4 per cent own Refrigerator; 6.33 per cent

won Inverter; 4.67 per cent won Pump set; 2 per cent won Tractor; 32 per cent won LPG Stove; 2.67 per cent Tempo; 81.3 per cent won life stock; 34.66 per cent owner of Jewelry; 65.33 per cent have at least one loom, 50 per cent reported having a plough and the 18.67 per cent have a bank or financial deposit. The detail of the assets of the sample households is shown in the following table:

Table: 5.15

Asset possession of the households

Type of Assets	Nos. of Households	Percentage
Radio	12	8
Bicycle	75	50
Television	36	24
C. D. Player	8	5.33
Camera	6	4
Telephone	-	-
Mobile	86	57.33
Bike	15	10
Car	11	7.33
Tempo	4	2.67
Computer/ Laptop	7	4.67
Pump Set	12	8
Refrigerator	6	4
Sewing Machine	2	1.33
Tractor	3	2
Inverter	8	6.33
Mixer Grinder	2	1.33
LPG Stove	48	32
Livestock	122	81.33
Jewelry	52	34.66
Loom	98	65.33
Plough	78	52
Bank or Financial Deposit	28	18.67

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

5.14. Housing and Living Condition:

Housing is one of the basic necessities of every human being. Better housing and living condition is an important indicator of quality life as well as standard of living of the people. An attempt was made to study the housing conditions of the Singphos and it was found that the Singphos are fond of living in traditional house 'Inta' (Changghar) constructed from locally (or forest) available materials bamboo, wood, cane, *takou* etc. However some changes were observed in the housing construction during the field study that modern material like brick, concrete, rode, cement plaster are used and also non-traditional are seen in some villages. The study depict that the housing conditions of the universe as tabulated below:

Table: 5.16

Distribution of the sample households by type of house

Type of House	Number of families (Frequency)	Percentage
Traditional (Chang Ghar)	129	86
Katcha	11	7.33
Pacca	10	6.67
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The table 5.16 shows that majority of sample households (86 percent) is still living in traditional house; while 7.33 per cent in Katcha house and remaining 6.67 per cent in Pacca house. Thus the households are not encouraging in the sample villages. On the other hand, households in Pucca houses for India were 66.1 per cent and 12.6 per cent were Katcha during 2008-09 (NSS 65th Round).

Apart from the type of house of the sample households, the researcher considered some other parameters such as number of living room, toilet facility, drinking water facility, source of lighting, source of cooking fuel etc. to assess the housing and living condition of the Singpho community. In the table 5.17 the researcher tried to find out distribution of the sample households of the number of living rooms used by them.

Table: 5.17

Distribution of the sample households by the nos. of living room

No. of living Room	No. of Households	Percentage
1 to 3	58	38.67
4 to 6	83	55.33
7 and above	9	6
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

Above table 5.17 presents the number of living rooms of the sample households. It appears that 38.67 per cent of the households have 1-3 living rooms; while 55.33 per cent has 4 to 6 living rooms and only 6 per cent has more than 7 living rooms in the house. It was observed during the field study that almost all the households were not well ventilated.

The toilet facility of the sample households is shown in the following table 5.18.

Table: 5.18

Distribution of the sample households with toilet facility

Type of Toilet Facility	No. of Households	Percentage
Sanitary	23	15.33
Pit	120	80
No Toilet	7	4.67
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

The above table 5.18 shows that the majority of the households (80 per cent) uses pit toilet; while 15.33 per cent sanitary toilet and the remaining 4.67 per cent has no toilet facility. Thus we can say that the toilet facility of the sample households is satisfactory.

During the field study the researcher tried to collect information regarding various schemes such as Total Sanitation Campaign and also IAY scheme of the government to meet the toilet facility for every household. But none of the sample house got the facility of these schemes provided by the government.

Drinking water facility is immensely essential for good health. The source of drinking water facility scenario of the sample households is highlighted in the following table:

Table: 5.19

Distribution of sample households with the source of drinking water facilities

Source of Drinking Water	No. of Households	Percentage
Pond	2	1.33
Well	2	1.33
River	5	3.34
Tube – well	129	86
Water Pump	12	8
Water supply	-	-
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

From the table 5.19 it is seen that the 86 per cent households enjoy tube-well for drinking water; while 8 per cent of the households use water pump as source of drinking water. On the other hand 1.33 per cent households use pond, again 1.33 per cent use well, 3.33 per cent collect drinking water from river. There is no any water supply facility among the sample households. Thus it can be concluded that majority (95 per cent) of the

sample households has safe drinking water facility which is higher than both State (83.3 per cent) and National average (91.4 per cent) in 2008-09.

It is found from the collected data that none of the households treats water before consumption.

Electricity consumption or use in the households is one of the important socio-economic variables to measure the standard of living and progress of a country. Therefore, in the present study an attempt was made to highlight the sources of lighting.

Table: 5.20

Distribution of sample households with the source of lighting

Source of Lighting	No. of Households	Percentage
Electricity	110	73.33
Kerosene	40	26.67
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It has been observed from the above table 5.20 that 73.33 per cent households have electrification as the source of lighting while 26.67 per cent household used kerosene for lighting.

Source of cooking fuel is also an important socio-economic variable as the use of any fuel for cooking in general cause health hazard, basically to women and children in the form of indoor air pollution. Therefore, it is essential to use the fuels that produce less smoke and fumes. The following table 5.21 shows the source of cooking fuel of the sample households under study.

Table: 5.21

Distribution of sample households with the source of cooking fuel

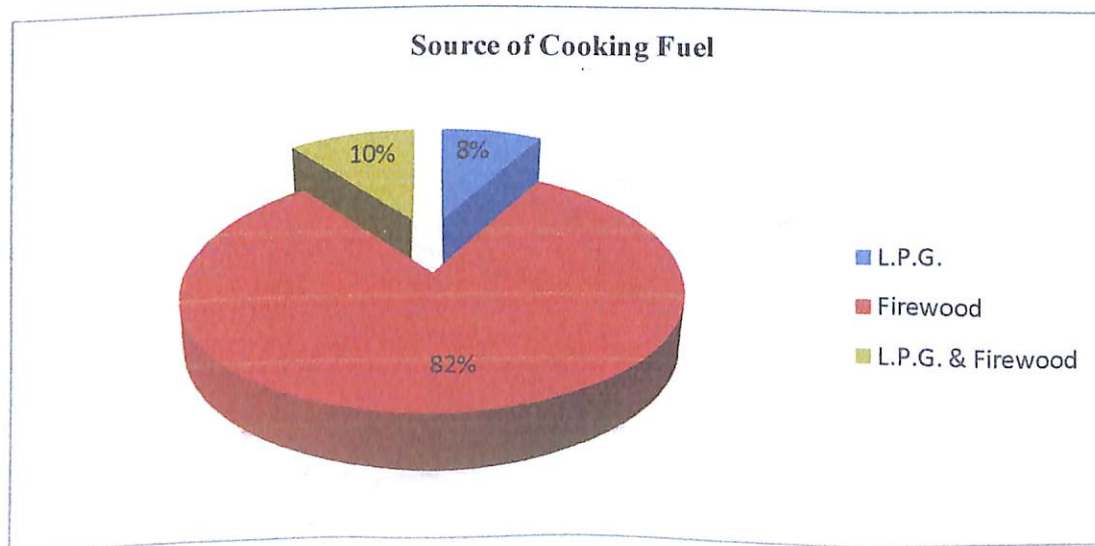
Source of Cooking	No. of Households	Percentage
L. P. G.	12	8
Firewood	123	82
L.P.G. and Firewood	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It is clear from the above table 5.21 that only 8 per cent of the respondents use LPG for cooking; while 82 per cent use firewood and remaining 10 per cent use both LPG and firewood. The villages particularly the women folk collect firewood from the neighboring forest and their own land for regularly for domestic use.

It indicates that use of firewood is still dominant among the sample households and of course produce huge in door smoke which adversely affect the health of the family members. Distribution of sample households with the source of cooking fuel can be clearly understood from the following diagram.

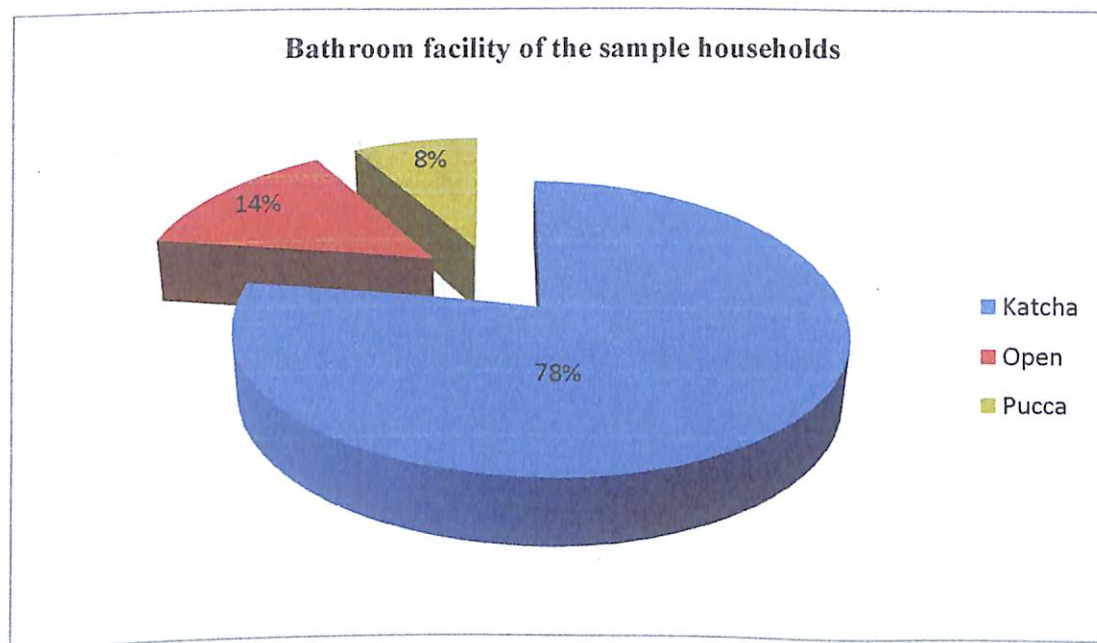
Figure: 5.5



5.15. Hygiene Condition:

The hygienic condition of the Singphos is not satisfactory. The majority of the sample households used pit toilet (80 per cent), while 4.67 per cent used open space for the toilet. In case of bath room facility 78 per cent households have Kutchha bathrooms, while 14 per cent have open and remaining 8 per cent enjoy the pucca bathrooms facility. None of the households were found having drainage facility. Following pie diagram clearly depicts the bathroom facility of the sample households.

Figure: 5.6



5.16. Landholding:

Land is one of the important variables of tribal life that provides the source of livelihood. Thus distribution of land holding among the sample households is presented in the following table.

Table: 5.22**Distribution of sample households with the average land holding**

Land Holdings (in bigha)	No. of Households	Percentage
1 – 2	8	5.33
3 – 5	45	30
6 – 10	25	16.67
11 – 15	12	8
16 – 20	10	6.67
21 – 25	22	14.67
26 – 30	20	13.33
30 bigha and above	8	5.33
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014.

It is seen from the table 5.22 that size of land holding of the Singpho is large and satisfactory. Among the sample household only 5.33 per cent have less than 2 bigha land; while 30 per cent hold between 3-5 bigha lands. On the other hand 16.67 per cent of the household own land between 6-10 bigha, 8 per cent hold between 11-15 bigha, 6.67 per cent hold between 16-20 bigha, 14.67 per cent hold 21-25 bigha, 13.33 per cent hold 26-30 bigha and remaining 5.33 per cent hold more than 30 bigha land.

Although the sample households hold large size of land, it is very important to know for what purpose and how land holding is utilized. It is found that majority (93 per cent) of sample households use their land for cultivation; while only 7 per cent use for homestead purpose.

5.17. Food Habits and Source of Collection of Food:

The Singphos have very healthy food habits mostly use the methods of steaming, boiling and smoking their food. Although to a large extent the Singphos continue to adhere to their original food habit, new methods like frying have been gradually been introduced in the Singphos menu. Although in the past the Singphos maintained self-sufficient village economy but in the recent time the required food items of their menu are collected from different sources. The following table shows the source of food of the sample households.

Table: 5.23

Distribution of the sample households by their source of food

Source of food	No. of Households	Percentage
(a) Cultivation/homestead	32	21.33
(b) Forest	6	4
(c) Market	12	8
(d) Cultivation & Market	75	50
(e) Cultivation & Forest	25	16.67
Total	150	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It has appeared from the table 5.23 that 21.33 per cent of the sample households consume food from their own production, while 50 per cent depend upon cultivation and market for their food. On the other hand 8 per cent households depend on market for their day to day consumption, 4 per cent consume from forest sources and 16.67 per cent consume their food from own cultivation and forest source.

5.18. Banking Habit:

Banking habit is an essential requirement for the development of an economy. India's 12th five year plan gives emphasis on the financial inclusion. Hence it is very important to study about the banking habit of the sample households of the Singpho tribe. The table 5.25 gives the picture of banking habit of the sample households.

Table: 5.24

Distribution of the sample households with bank account and loan

Bank account	No. of Households	Percentage
Yes	67	44.67
No	83	55.33
Total	150	100
Loan		
Yes	15	22.39
No	52	77.61
Total	67	100

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It is seen from the above table 5.24 that out of 150 sample respondents only 44.67 per cent have bank account, while remaining 55.33 per cent do not have any bank account. On the other hand 22.39 per cent respondents have taken loan from bank out of 67 sample households.

5.19. Agricultural Practices:

The Singphos practice cultivation since the past. They are known for being the pioneer of tea (*Phalap*) consumption and planters. In this study the researcher tried to look into the behaviour of the respondents on agricultural practices. The following table 5.25 depicts the picture of agricultural practices and behaviour among the respondent.

Table: 5.25**Respondents behaviour on agricultural practices**

Respondents Behaviour	Yes		No		Total	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Use of fertility, insecticide and pesticide	54	36	96	64	150	100
Use of organic fertilizer	2	1.33	148	98.67	150	100
Double Cropping	3	2	147	98	150	100
Irrigation Facility	-		150	100	150	100
Mode of Ploughing	Bullock/Buffalo		138 (92 per cent)			
	Tractor		3 (2 per cent)			
	Both		9 (6 per cent)			

Source: Field Study data, May to August 2014

It is seen from the table 5.25 that 54 per cent respondents used fertilizer, insecticide and pesticide in agriculture. Only 1.33 per cent respondents used organic fertilizer and 2 per cent respondents are engaged in double cropping. No respondent have the facility of irrigation for agricultural practices, they totally depend on the weather.

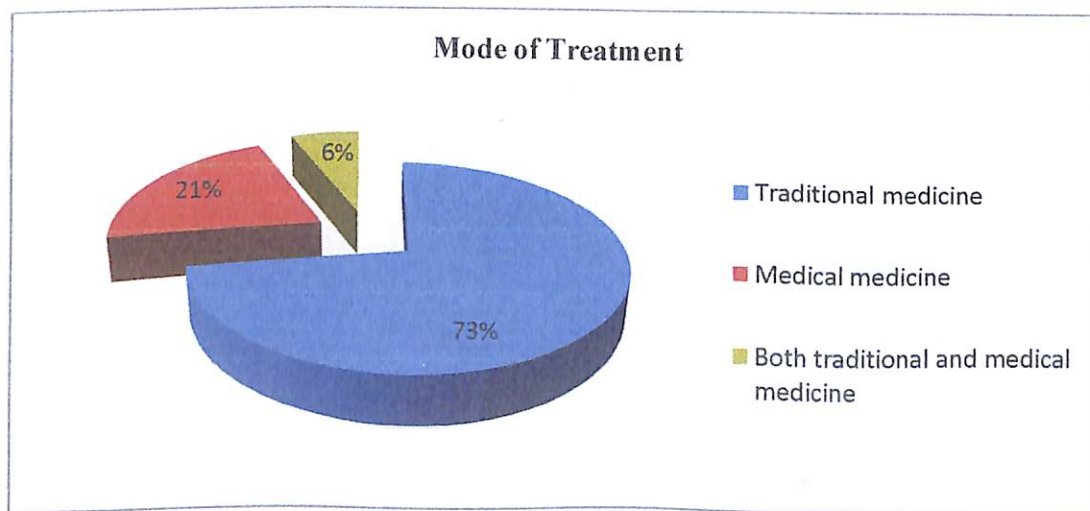
In case of mode of ploughing 92 per cent respondent used bullock and buffalo; while 3 per cent used tractor and remaining 9 per cent used both. Thus it can be concluded that the agricultural practices among the sample respondents are still traditional and modern farming is yet to popularity among them.

5.20. Health and Family Planning Knowledge:

During the field study the researcher tried to collect information about the existing health facilities in the villages and knowledge of family planning among the sample households. The presented data on health facility and adoption of family planning by the heads of sample households show that family planning has not become very popular among them.

Most of the sample households (73 per cent) used traditional medicine to cure ill or recovery from diseases, while 21 per cent consult with doctor and remaining 6 per cent used both traditional and medical medicine. This is shown with the help of diagram below:

Figure: 5.7



It is observed from the pie diagram that the sample households are still practicing traditional medicine for curing ill and prevention from foreign diseases.

5.21. Impact of Mass Media

The villages under study have been getting the facilities of Post; Mass Media like T.V., Radio and Newspaper are becoming very popular. It is also observed that recently mobile phone companies have introduced their business in the Singpho area which has had its effects upon the Singphos. Most of the villagers are keenly interested in Radio and Television news, Internet surfing is popular among the students.

5.22. Comparison of the Socio-economic condition of the Singphos with other tribes of Assam:

After examining the socio-economic condition of the Singphos, an attempt was made to compare the socio-economic status of the different tribes of Assam. For the purpose of comparison two tribes are considered here are- Tai-Phake and Mishing.

Table 5.26

Comparison of some selected socio-economic indicators of the Singphos and other two tribes of Assam

Indicators	Singphos ¹ (2014)	Tai-Phake ² (2007)	Mishings ³ (2011)	Assam	India
Literacy	81.3	93	65.10	73.18 (2011)	74.04 (2011)
Sex Ratio	882	948	948	954 (2011)	940 (2011)
Per-Capita Income (monthly) in Rupees	1201	3000*	708*	3503 (2012-13)	5729 (2012-13)
Access to Safe Drinking Water	95	100	96.93	83.3	91.4

Source: ¹Present Study, ²Borah (2007) and ³Mahanta (2011)

* Per capita household income

It is observed from the table 5.26 that several studies have been conducted to know the progress of different tribes of Assam. It is clear from the data available for the above mentioned tribes, the literacy rate of the Singphos is the lower than the Tai-Phake while higher than the Mishings. In case of sex ratio of the Singpho tribe it is the lowest of the all the tribes listed above which is not at all encouraging. Regarding per-capita household's income the Singpho tribes' position is lower than the Tai-Phake. On the other hand regarding the access to safe drinking water, the Singpho tribe is at the s lowest position in comparison to other two tribes.

After discussing the socio-economic features of the Singpho tribe it can be concluded that the Singpho tribe is backward in various socio-economic dimensions. During the post independence period, a number of policies and programmes were initiated in the tribal areas, which are expected far reaching consequences on tribal economy. But in the Singpho dominated area the policies and programmes are still out of reach.



**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY
AMONG THE SINGPHOS**

CHAPTER - 6

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY AMONG THE SINGPHOS

Till the advent of the British the Singpho community did not have much contact with the outside world. It was only after the advent of the British that various kinds of contacts began with the outside world and after independence, due to introduction of democratic system, extension of modern educational facilities, improvement of the transport and communication systems, impact of industrialization, urbanization, expansion of market economy and impact of modernization, there is increasing contact in all aspects of life of the Singpho community. As such changes have taken place in various aspects of their lives. But traditions, customs and certain traditional beliefs around family, marriage, religion etc. are still prevalent. The changes and continuity of traditions, customs, and beliefs around family, marriage, religion, economy, culture etc. are discussed below from the empirical findings.

6.1. Changes in the Family System:

The Singpho since their past have been maintaining patrilineal and patriarchal form of joint family system. With the spread of modern education, growing importance of cash income, desire for freeness of couple, exposure of the Singpho society to the outside world through communication and democratic way of making decisions, changes are gaining momentum in the Singpho Society. As a result nuclear family is gaining popularity in the Singpho society.

But family still performs biological, social, economic, religious, political functions like that of the bygone days. However, some changes are also noticed in the nature and style of functioning of the family. For instance, instead of going for agricultural work the children are now sent to the schools, adopting some new economic functions like tailoring, small trade and business, government and private jobs etc. and the degree of change in this respect observed is high in the village.

Continuity in the Family System:

No change was noticed in the villages in respect of old members' functions of the family. They still take care of the little children while parents remain away from home and fulfill some obligations, such as attending religious or social functions.

The income accruing from the agricultural product of the family is still kept in the common fund. But it is observed in the village that, the earning of some of the joint family members from non-agricultural sources like postal service, engineering, shop keeping, teacher, earnings are kept by the concerned family members in bank or elsewhere instead of depositing it in the common fund of the family. The habit of small savings is being seen as developing among such persons.

No change was noticed in the sample villages regarding the inheritance of property which was acquired in the name of the family and inheritance of property is still confined to the male descent lines only. Thus, it is observed that, no notable change is taking place in regard to property concept of the family.

6.2. Changes in the Marriage System:

The outlook towards marriage and some of its aspects have undergone changes over a period of time after the settlement of the Singpho in the Patkai region. For instance, it is observed that, Singpho have adopted some of the features of Assamese Hindu marriage, such as ring ceremony, ceremonial day of marriage known as '*Juran*' in which the exact day and time of the marriage ceremony are settled. Community endogamy is not strictly followed in marriage. Thus changes have taken place in Singpho marriage in the contemporary period.

Now-a-days the system of polygamy is almost out of practice. The new generations do not want to continue their traditional system of polygamy. Due to the influence of the Hindu Assamese counterparts, the attitude towards the way of acquiring life partner is also changing among the new generation of Singphos. With the present economic demands they do not want to bear the heavy expenditure of a marriage party. As a result, the system of mutual understanding in marriage is becoming popular among the new generations.

Though exogamous marriage was absent earlier but it is taking place in the present times. Thus the outlook with regard to tribe exogamy is found to have changed and the Singphos have no objection to inter community marriage. In the traditional period the Singphos did not give importance to personal qualities of a bride, but now-a-days the Singphos consider these aspects while selecting a life partner. Many of the traditional ceremonies related to marriage performance have been given up by the people at present.

Due to influence of the non-tribal, Singpho have started adopting some rites and rituals of the Hindus and other ethno-cultural groups. Besides, spread of education,

increasing importance of cash income, development of transport and communication facilities, exposure to mass media etc. may be regarded as the responsible for the change in the marriage system, and outlook towards marriage of the Singpho community.

Continuity in the Marriage System:

But some of the villagers still continue the traditional forms and types of marriages i.e. way of acquiring life partner that is the mother's brother's daughter. Marriage is strictly restricted from own patrilineal sibling.

6.3. Change in the Religious System:

The Singpho people accepted the non-violence principle of Buddhism and gave away traditional worship system of sacrificing animals and beasts. Since then, various Buddhist monasteries were established in every village for religious practices. The practices of sacrificing buffalo, fowl, etc. to spirit was in vogue. Ever since they accepted Buddhism, these practices have been abandoned.

Continuity in the Religious System:

But most of them are still adherents of traditional religious belief and practices and continuity of religious beliefs is found higher in comparison to a little change, they still have faith in Buddhism, but simultaneously retain their traditional religion of naturism and still worship their forefathers.

6.4. Changes in the Economic System:

In the villages studied, change is taking place in the method, techniques and tools of production, types of crops cultivated and rearing of domestic animals. Crops are not only

grown for household consumption but also for earning of cash income of the households and same is happening in case of birds and animals which are used for consumption as well as for sale. Due to scarcity of land many youth are taking up jobs of daily wage labours. Besides cultivation, some non-agricultural occupations and sources of income has emerged in the villages due to increasing rate of education, such as salaried jobs, professions and business etc. Educated young boys and girls are leaving their villages in search of white collar and other jobs in the neighboring towns and cities.

The households which are having non-agricultural source of earning are economically sound than the ones with agricultural source of earning. This is evident from their life style and through the use of different modern costly items in their day to day life. They used modern tool and technique such as tractors, power tillers and use of fertilizers and hybrid seeds for agricultural practice, give importance in tea cultivation etc. Connectivity of road and transportation, communication facility, growth of marketing centre are responsible for the change in the economic sphere of the Singphos.

Continuity in the Economic System:

No change is noticed in the sample villages regarding collection of wild yams and other jungle products. Generally the females are responsible for the collection of forest products. They have wide range of knowledge of the use of the forest products in different seasons.

6.5. Changes in the Political System:

The system of monarchy does not prevail in the Singpho society at present. But earlier, every village had a chief who controlled the whole village. The legal and

administrative powers of the villages were vested in the chief and it was his responsibility to direct all village activities relating to the welfare and wellbeing of the villagers.

The most important position in the social hierarchy is given to the *Gaonbura* (village headman). Another important person in a Singpho village is the *Dumsa* (priest) who presides over the religious ceremonies. The *Dumas* is not found in every village and their services can be hired.

Continuity in the Political System:

In the Singpho society there is no written laws and codes. The villagers settle the minor problems with the aid of the chief and his counselors. All the disputes among the villagers are settled by the village assembly or counselor (*Rung Jata*). This assembly of elders is held at the chief's house and it is empowered to give judgement in case any dispute arises (Dutta, 1990). If the offender is found guilty, he is convicted and punished by the *Rung Jata*.

6.6. Cultural Changes in the Singpho Society:

The Singpho community is becoming multilingual in their day to day communication with their non-tribal counterparts. They can communicate in Hindi, English and Assamese while exchanging their thought and ideas. Rapid development in scripts and literature is observed after independence. They are giving importance to publishing songs and music related to their religion and culture, short stories, poetry, articles and other important articles related to the community. Similarly changes are also seen in their food habits. Young boys and girls are seen taking a liking to continental foods. Foreign liquor consumption is also gaining popularity. Tea prepared in the way by the non-tribals is

becoming popular among the Singphos. Similarly in matters of dressing patterns changes are seen. Young boys and girls prefer wearing modern dresses. Observance of festivals other than their own is also gaining popularity. Birth dates are celebrated by the new generations among their friends and relatives. Furthermore young people are seen playing modern musical instrument while performing stage programmes like guitar, harmonium etc. available in the local markets. Now they have developed social religious and political links with other communities with whom they live along with. They interact with other communities at marriage and other religious gatherings. The Singphos, however, are adapting and they have come forward to accept the challenges of modern times.

Cultural Continuities:

Despite various cultural changes, traditional customs and practices are still adhered by the Singpho Community in respect of their culture.

Conclusion Remarks:

Change is the law of nature and society is not an exception. It is a dynamic entity. It is subject to changes and is in a flux and flow. It is influence by many forces and factors that cause changes. But the forces of change do not alter or swipe away all that existed. Certain aspects and elements are still adheres by the people despite the flux and flow. In this respect the Singpho community of Assam has been experiencing a change in their various aspects of traditional life. But it is noteworthy to mention that the Singphos have a very rich culture which still adheres.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER - 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter an attempt has been made to summarize the findings of the forgone chapters and make feasible suggestion and thereafter conclusion. The Chapter wise major findings of the study are outlined below:

The Chapter: 1 is an introductory one. In this chapter, brief outline about the Singphos, the tribe under study; significance, objectives, methodology and brief description of study area are given.

The Chapter: 2 is related to the historical background of the Singphos about their origin, migration and settlement.

The Chapter 3 deals with village data of 15 sample villages under study.

The Chapter: 4 deals with ethnographic account of the Singphos. It is observed that, though changes are taking place in many respect, yet the Singphos are maintaining their traditional pattern house, food habits, dress pattern, performance of festivals, traditional belief etc. The major findings are:

The social system of the Singphos has been found well organized during the field visit. Although traditionally they have a Chief (*Gam*) in each villages, among the sample villages under the present study only one village namely Bisa gaon have a Chief. The Singpho society is based on division of clan. The main clans are *Marip, Lahtaw, Laphai,*

Nhkum, and *Maran*. The Singpho society is an exogamous and patriarchal, the father is the head of the family.

In the sphere of religious life the Singphos were influenced by Buddhism. The growing interaction with Buddhism has brought great change among the Singphos of Assam in all aspects of their life. The impact of Buddhism on the Singpho culture and tradition is clearly visible among them. It is found that the traditional religious practices of the Singphos have changed to a great extent. Due to the interaction of non-tribal, Singphos have started adopting some systems and rituals of non-tribal. In the sphere of marriage, after careful observation of the findings, it could be opined that a changing trend is emerging in marriage system among the Singphos. The system of divorce, though exists and is allowed in the Singpho society, yet the cases of divorce are very rare. Generally, a Singpho husband never thinks of divorcing his wife because of the heavy bride price system. The main drink is '*Phalap*' (Singpho tea). Opium consumption is common among the Singphos and it is the major hindrance for the socio-economic development and one of the main causes of lower fertility rate among the Singpho tribe.

During the field study it is found that some of the educated youths of the villages are showing their concern for the growth of their languages, preservation of their music and dance and their distinct cultural and social identity.

The Chapter: 5 deals with the socio-economic features of the Singphos. The key findings of this Chapter are:

The Singphos under study (100 per cent) are followers of Buddhism. Apart from Buddhism they practice their traditional religion of worship '*Nut*'. The Singphos speak

their own language i.e. *Singpho*. In this study out of 150 households 92 (61 nos.) speaks Singpho at home; while 80 per cent (120 nos.) speaks at public. The dominant form of the family structure is nuclear family with 73 per cent (110 nos.) out of 150 sample households; while 27 per cent (40 nos.) are joint family. Total number of sample population is 845 and thus the average size of family is 5.63. Most of the family consists of the member of the category 5-8 (72.67 per cent). Among the sample population 63.32 per cent are estimated as working population. The sex ratio for the Singpho tribe has been estimated at 882 which are much lower than the State average and the National average. The literacy rate among the sample population is 81.3 per cent (with male literacy rate 82.4 per cent and female 80.05 per cent) which is higher than state literacy rate 73.18 per cent and that of national literacy rate 74.04 per cent. It is observed that there are only 6 nos. schools among the sample villages under study. There is no government transport facility among the sample villages.

Most of the respondents are agriculturist (45.33 per cent). Apart from agriculture 22.68 per cent (34 nos.) are small tea grower and also engaged in different occupations such as services (7.33 per cent), business (4.67 per cent), professional (3.33 per cent) and daily wage earner (2 per cent). However, it is estimated that among the respondents the unemployment rate is 9.33 per cent. It was found that 79.69 per cent respondents are engaged in primary sector while 20.31 per cent engaged in tertiary sector. On the other hand none of belong to industrial sector. 70.67 per cent (106 nos.) has monthly income between Rs. Less than 5000. On the other hand 12.67 per cent (19 nos.) income is between Rs. 5000 – 10000; 4 per cent between Rs. 10000 – 15000; 2.67 per cent between Rs. 15000 – 20000; again 2.67 per cent between Rs. 20000 - 25000; and also 2.67 per cent between Rs. 25000 – 30000; 2 per cent between Rs. 30000 – 35000; 1.33 per cent

between 35000 – 40000. On the other hand only 0.66 per cent fall between Rs. 40000 – 45000 and 0.66 per cent between 45000 and above. 38.67 per cent households belong to the consumption expenditure group Rs. 1001 – 2000, which is highest among the community under study. On the other hand only 1.33 per cent households fall under the consumption expenditure group Rs. 10001 – 15000. 22.67 per cent household's monthly consumption expenditure is below Rs. 1000. 24.67 per cent households belong to consumption expenditure Rs. 2001 – 4000, followed by between Rs. 4001 – 6000 is 5.33 per cent, Rs. 6001 – 8000 is 4.67 per cent and Rs. 8001 – 10000 is 2.66 per cent.

Assets possession of the sample households is not encouraging. Possession of assets such as a Sewing Machine and Mixer Grinder have only 1.33 per cent households. 8 per cent of the households own a Radio; while 24 per cent is owner of Television and 5.33 per cent of the households enjoy the C.D. Player. On the other hand possession of like Bicycle (50 per cent), Bike (10 per cent) and Car (7.33 per cent) own by the sample households, which are very important means of transportation. Mobile phone is very common among the sample households; there is 57.33 per cent sample households has at least one mobile hand set. 4.67 per cent households has a Laptop/Computer set; while 4 per cent households own a camera; 4 per cent own Refrigerator; 6.33 per cent own Inverter; 4.67 per cent own Pump set; 2 per cent own Tractor; 32 per cent own LPG Stove; 2.67 per cent own Tempo; 81.3 per cent own life stove; 34.66 per cent owner of Jewelry; 65.33 per cent have at least one loom, 50 per cent reported having a plough and the 18.67 per cent have a bank or financial deposit.

The majority of sample households (86 percent) is still living in traditional house; while 7.33 per cent in Katcha house and remaining 6.67 per cent in Pacca house. Thus the

households are not encouraging in the sample villages. On the other hand, households in Pucca houses for India were 66.1 per cent and 12.6 per cent were Katcha during 2008-09 (NSS 65th Round). Most of the households (38.67 per cent) are having 1-3 living rooms; while 55.33 per cent has 4 to 6 living rooms and only 6 per cent has more than 7 living rooms in the house. Majority of the households (80 per cent) uses pit toilet; while 15.33 per cent sanitary toilet and the remaining 4.67 per cent has no toilet facility.

Majority (95 per cent) of the sample households has safe drinking water facility which is higher than both State (83.3 per cent) and National average (91.4 per cent) in 2008-09. 86 per cent households enjoy tube-well for drinking water; while 8 per cent of the households use water pump as source of drinking water. On the other hand 1.33 per cent households use pond, again 1.33 per cent use well, 3.33 per cent collect drinking water from river. There is no any water supply facility among the sample households. Most of the households have electrification (73.33 per cent) as the source of lighting but quality of power is poor as reported by respondents; while 26.67 per cent household used kerosene for lighting. 8 per cent of the respondents use LPG for cooking; while 82 per cent use firewood and remaining 10 per cent use both LPG and firewood. Most of the sample households used pit toilet (80 per cent), while 4.67 per cent used open space for the toilet. In case of bath room facility 78 per cent households have Kutcha bathrooms, while 14 per cent have open and remaining 8 per cent enjoy the pucca bathrooms facility. 5.33 per cent have less than 2 bigha lands; while 30 per cent hold between 3-5 bigha lands. On the other hand 16.67 per cent of the household own land between 6-10 bigha, 8 per cent hold between 11-15 bigha, 6.67 per cent hold between 16-20 bigha, 14.67 per cent hold 21-25 bigha, 13.33 per cent hold 26-30 bigha and remaining 5.33 per cent hold more than 30 bigha land.

21.33 per cent of the sample households consume food from their own production; while 50 per cent depend upon cultivation and market for their food. On the other hand 8 per cent households depend on market for their day to day consumption, 4 per cent consume from forest sources and 16.67 per cent consume their food from own cultivation and forest source. 44.67 per cent have bank account; while remaining 55.33 per cent do not have any bank account. On the other hand 22.39 per cent households have taken loan from bank out of 67 sample households. Majority of respondents (54 per cent) used fertilizer, insecticide and pesticide in agriculture. Only 1.33 per cent respondents used organic fertilizer and 2 per cent respondents are engaged in double cropping. In the case of mode of ploughing 92 per cent respondent used bullock and buffalo; while 3 per cent used tractor and remaining 9 per cent used both. Most of the sample households (73 per cent) used traditional medicine to cure ill or recovery from diseases, while 21 per cent consult with doctor and remaining 6 per cent used both traditional and medical medicine.

Chapter 6 deals with Change and Continuity among the Singphos in various aspect of life such a family, marriage, religion, economy, polity and culture in which change and continuity is observed.

Suggestion for measures for the upliftment of the Singpho Tribe:

Based on the findings of the samples under study the following suggestions can be made to uplift the community:

- (i) Although literacy rate is very high among the sample Singphos, it is found that access to education especially primary level schooling is availed, but high and higher secondary schooling is still out of reach in many Singpho

inhabited areas. However, in the entire study area there are three community based nursery level mother taught language school. So, it is important to establish school for higher secondary and government should introduce Singpho language as fourth subject among the Singpho inhabited area.

- (ii) Unemployment rate according to the definition of NSSO usual status among the Singphos (9.33 per cent) is much higher than the all India average (4.4 per cent) and State average (7.3 per cent). Thus, the Assam government must take initiative to reduce unemployment rate by creating avenues for employment through the newly created Development Council for the Singphos, Sema, Tangsa, Tai Phakey, Tai Turung, Tai Khamyang, Tai Aiton and Khamti Communities. More power (both money and man) and revenues should be entrusted to the council and there is an urgent need to proper implementation of the tribal development policies by the Government.
- (iii) Entrepreneurship development is needed to make aware among the Singphos regarding viable enterprises and mobilizing them to initiate the process of starting activities. In this respect *Phalap* producing and packaging should encourage on the part of community and by the Government.
- (iv) Regarding health care facilities, the Singpho villages are not well-adequate. Special schemes should implement for the improvement of the health facilities of the Singphos particularly and as whole for all people and more PHC and sub-centres are to be set up in these villages.
- (v) Per capita income of the sample Singpho population is much lower than the per-capita income of the country. Thus, avenues for income generation of the

Singphos must be created through the Development Council and need to implement smoothly the tribal development programme.

- (vi) Electricity, irrigation, pucca roads, scientific toilet etc. are not adequate for not only the Singpho tribe but also for other tribe or communities of Assam and hence such provision should be provided to all the needy people of the State.
- (vii) Since the Singphos are basically agriculturists and hence provision must be created to develop agriculture for them. They should be encouraged for multiple cropping pattern and organic tea cultivation.
- (viii) There is huge Opium consumption prevalence among the Singphos which deteriorate the health and fertility of the community. So that step should be taken to control opium consumption among the Singphos at community level and by the government.

Conclusion:

Earlier the Singphos are one of the most powerful tribe of frontier border of North East India with rich socio-cultural life and self sufficient economy. But the present status of the tribe is not encouraging at all. It is revealed from the study that in certain dimensions, for example culture, rate in literacy is appreciable. However, in certain front, performance is very dismal, for example, in income, employment, living condition etc. Thus, it is need of the hour to take steps to provide employment opportunities to the Singphos so that incomes of the people go up. Thus, it can be concluded that socio-economic status is backward in many dimensions. Hence they rightly deserved the status as Schedule tribe of Assam. A concerted and whole-hearted effort on the part of the Government and the member of the community is required in desired direction.

Annexure – I

**A STUDY ON SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SINGPHO
TRIBE OF ASSAM**

[Funded by Assam Institute of research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes]

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Confidential & For Research Purpose Only

Name of the investigator:

Date of investigation:

Tribe:

Circle:

State:

Block:

District:

Village:

Socio Economic Information

(Respondent: Head or any other knowledgeable person of the family)

1. **Name of the respondent:**

2. **Sex:** Male 1 Female 2

3. **Age:**

4. **Religion:** Buddhist 1 Christian 2 Other 3

5. **Mother tongue:**

6. **Type of family:** Nuclear 1 Joint 2

7. **Which language is used for communicate with other people?**

Singpho 1 Broken Assamese 2 Hindi/English 3

8. **What type of cloth you used?**

Traditional 1 Modern 2 Both 3

9. What type of cloth you prefer?

Woven at home Machine made

10. What is your staple food?

.....

11. Sources of food:

(a) Forest (b) Cultivation
 (c) Purchasing from market (d) Both (a) & (b)

12. What type of food you prefer?

Traditional Non-traditional Others (specify)

13. What is the main drink?

Phalap (tea) Coffee Other (specify)

14. Number of family members: Male: Female: Total:

Person no.	Relation with the respondent (code only)	Sex	Age (Year/Month)	Education level	Personal Status	Occupation	
						Main	Secondary
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

Codes:

Column (2): Respondent = 1, Spouse = 2, Son = 3, Daughter = 4, Father/Father in-law = 5, Mother/Mother in-law = 6, Brother = 7, Sister = 8, Grandson = 9, Granddaughter = 10, Grandparents = 11, Others (specify) = 12
 Column (3): Male = 1, Female = 2

- Column (5): Child = 0 (Less than 3 years), Illiterate = 1, Primary (Class I to IV) = 2, Middle Level (V to VII) = 3, High School Level (VIII to X) = 4, Higher Secondary Level = 5, Graduate Level = 6, Master Level & Above = 7
- Column (6): Child = 1, Student = 2, Housewife = 3, Unemployed = 4, Retired = 5, Employed = 6, Self Employed = 7, Old = 8
- Column (7) & (8): Govt. Service = 1, Private Service = 2, Business = 3, Professional = 4, Cultivator = 5, Agro-based Industries = 6, Daily Wage Earner = 7, Small Tea Garden = 8, Weaving = 9, Unemployed = 10, Others (specify) = 11, (* Child, Old, Housewife = Does not arise)

13. Information relating to family income:

Income earning member of the family	Income from main occupation ('M' for Monthly and 'Y' for Yearly) in Rs.		Income from secondary occupation ('M' for Monthly and 'Y' for Yearly) in Rs.		Total income ('M' for Monthly and 'Y' for Yearly) in Rs.	
	M	Y	M	Y	M	Y
Husband						
Wife						
Son/ Daughter						
Others						
Total						

14. Information relating to family expenditure:

Sl. no.	Heads of expenditure	Rupees (per month)
1	Food	
2	Cooking Fuel	
3	Clothing	
4	Health	
5	Transportation	
6	Education	
7	Electricity Bill	
8	Telephone Bill/ Cable Bill/ Monthly Recharge	
9	House Repairing	
10	Religious festivals and practice	
11	Donation to village council	
12	Marriage and Death ceremonies	
13	Others (specify)	

15. Information regarding household assets and savings:

Sl. no.	Items	Quantity	Value (current price)
1	Radio		
2	Bicycle		
3	Television		
4	C. D. Player		
5	Camera		
6	Telephone		
7	Mobile		
8	Bike		
9	Car		
10	Computer/ Laptop		
11	Pump Set		
12	Refrigerator		
13	Sewing Machine		
14	Tractor		
15	Inverter		
16	Mixer Grinder		
17	Livestock		
18	Jewelry		
19	Bank or Financial Deposit		
20	Others		

16. Have you taken loan? Yes 1 No 2

If yes, (a) What is the amount of loan (in Rs.)?

(b) Source of loan:

(c) Purpose of loan:

(d) Repayment of loan: (i) How much you paid.....

(ii) Balance amount.....

17. Do you have bank account? Yes 1 No 2

18. Land holding: (in bigha)

19. Utilization of land:

- (a) Area under homestead: (in bigha)
- (b) Area under cultivable land: (in bigha)
- (c) Area under barren land: (in bigha)
- (d) Other (specify): (in bigha)

20. Have you adopted double cropping pattern? Yes 1 No 2

21. Do you possess irrigation facilities? Yes 1 No 2

If yes, type of irrigation facility: Canal Pump 1 Tube-well 2
Well 3 Others (specify) 4

22. Do you use any kind of fertilizer/insecticide/pesticide in crop field?

Yes 1 No 2

If not reasons behind it:

23. Do you have domestic animals? Yes 1 No 2

If yes mention the possessed:

Type	No. of animal	Use	Value (current price)
Chicken			
Duck			
Goat			
Sheep			
Pig			
Caw			
Buffalo			
Others (specify)			

Codes: Meat (Consume) = 1, Milk/ Eggs (Consume) = 2, Meat (Sale) = 3, Milk/ Eggs (Sale) = 4, Manure = 5, Domestic use = 6

24. **Housing condition:**

(a) Quarter Self-made house Rented house

(b) Type of house: Traditional Pucca Semi pucca
Kutcha

(c) No. of living rooms:

(d) No. of beds:

(e) Are the following conveniences enjoyed by the households?

i. Separate bed room for the married couple: Yes No

ii. Separate kitchen: Yes No

iii. Bathroom facility: Pucca Kutcha Open

iv. Toilet facility: Sanitary Pit Open

v. Source of lighting: Electricity Kerosene
Others (specify)

vi. Source of drinking water:

Individual water tap Public water tap

Individual Tube-well Public Tube-well

Well (separate) Well (common)

Pond/River/Spring etc.

vii. Do you purify drinking water? Yes No

If yes how Pills Boiling Filtering

None

viii. Fuel used for cooking:

Fire wood Kerosene Coal

LPG Faire wood & LPG
Others (specify)

(f) How frequently you clean the surrounding of the house?

Daily Weekly Twice in a month
Monthly Never

(g) Do you have sewerage system in your house? Yes No

If yes, how frequently you clean drains?

Daily Weekly Twice in a month
Monthly Never

(h) How do you dispose household waste?

Throwing any where Recycled container
Put them under soil

25. What are common diseases occurs in your family/locality?

.....
.....
.....

25. What do you do when family members suffer from any disease?

.....
.....
.....

27. Do you and your family enjoy cultural evening at your locality?

Yes No

Annexure – II

VILLAGE SCHEDULE

1. General Information

- i. Name of the Informant :
- ii. Age :
- iii. Sex :
- iv. Education :
- v. Occupation :
- vi. Name of the village :
- vii. Police station :
- viii. Block :
- ix. Sub-division :
- x. District :
- xi. Total no. of households :
- xii. Total no. of Tribal households :
- xiii. Total population :
(a) Male _____ (b) Female _____ (c) Total _____
- xiv. Name of the tribal living in the village

.....
.....

2. Topography (use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Hilly :
- ii. Plain :
- iii. Un-Dwelling Plain :
- iv. Others :

3. Settlement Pattern (use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Agglomerated :
- ii. Dispersed :
- iii. Isolated :
- iv. Others :

4. Cropping Pattern

- i. Major crops grown :
- ii. Rabi :
- iii. Kharif :
- iv. All seasoned :

5. Type of (tribal) houses

- i. No. of R.C.C. House :
- ii. No. of Pucca Assam Type House :
- iii. No. of Kutcha Assam Type House :
- iv. No. of Thatched Roofed Bamboo made house :
- v. No. of Chang Ghar (Traditional house) :
- vi. Others :

6. Land holding particulars of the tribals population at the time of survey

Category of land (in bigha)

- i. Homestead land :
- ii. Total cultivable land :
- iii. Tea garden :
- iv. Others :

7. Transport and Communication facilities

(a) Distance of the Village From

- i. Nearest Motorable Road :
- ii. Nearest Transport Station :
- iii. Nearest Ghat :

(b) Condition of the Road to the Village (use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Foot Tract :
- ii. Katcha Fair Weather Motorable Road :
- iii. Gravelled Road :
- iv. Others (Specify) :

(c) Mode of Conveyance (for winter or dry season):

(use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Bus :
- ii. Private Car :
- iii. Cycle :
- iv. Bike :
- v. Others (Specify) :

(d) Mode of Conveyance (for summer or rainy season):

(use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Bus :
- ii. Cycle :
- iii. Private Boat :
- iv. Public Boat :
- v. Others (Specify) :

8. Other means of mass communication available:

- i. Television :
- ii. Radio :
- iii. News Paper :
- iv. Library :
- v. Community Centre :
- vi. Telephonic Facility :
- vii. Others (Specify) :
- viii. Non available :

9. Civic Facilities

Facility	Total No.	Distance from the village to the nearest one
Distance from Margherita town		
Nearest Police Station		
Nearest Block Office		
Nearest Post Office		
STD Booth Bank		
Weekly Market		
Pharmacy/ Medical Shop		

10. Particulars of the (tribal) household occupation

Source	No. of Families
Service (Government)	
Service (Private)	
Cultivation	
Fishing	
Daily Wage Earner	
Business	
Others (Specify)	
Total	

11. Annual family Income (tribals)

Annual Income (Rs.)	No. of (tribal) Household
BPL Family	
Above BPL but below 50,000/-	
Above 50,000/-	
Total	

12. Whether credit facility is available within the village (Yes/No)

(a) If yes mention the source

- i. From Bank :
- ii. From Govt. Agencies :
- iii. From NGO / Self Help Group :
- iv. From village money lenders :
- v. From others (specify) :

13. Detail of the Self Help Group/ NGO presents or working in the village

Name of the Organisation	Is it situated within the village	Functions (Economical, Social, Cultural)

14. Marketing Facilities

- i. No. of fair price shop within the village :
- ii. No. of other shops within the village (specify) :
- iii. Other marketing facilities :

15. Whether any cottage industry/small scale industry is available within the village

(Yes/No)

(a) If yes mention the following details

Name of the Industry	Total no. of family engaged	Run by individual/groups
Handloom/Sericulture		
Boat making		
Bamboo and Cane product making		
Carpentry		
Poultry		
Pig firm		
Cattle firm		
Pottery		
Others		

16. Whether the village has any tourist related facility (Yes/No)

If yes, mention detail of the lodge/resort/facility _____

17. Village electrification

Sl. No.	Village Electrification	Use tick mark
1	Not Electrified	
2	Electrified but irregular supply	
3	Electrified and regular supply	

18. Health related facilities

Health	Nos.	Distance from village
Sub Centre		
Primary Health Centre		
Community Health Centre		
Govt. Dispensary		
Govt. Hospital		
Private Clinic		
Private Hospital		

(If the above mentioned facilities are available within the village itself, mention it clearly)

19. Availability of Health Provider in the Village (Yes/No)

- i. Private Doctor :
- ii. Village Health Guide :
- iii. Traditional Birth Attendant :
- iv. Mobile Health Unit :
- v. Asha Karmi/Supervisor etc. :

20. Education facilities available

(Mention the number of institutions present within the village if not write the distance to the nearest one)

Source	Nos. (present within the village)	Distance from the village to the nearest one
Primary School		
Middle English School		
High School		
H.S. School		
College		
Anganwadi		

21. Sources of drinking water

(a) Details of the Water Resources

Source	No.	Private Owned	Govt. Agencies
Pond			
Well			
River			
Tube Well			
Reservoir			
Water Supply Scheme			

22. Whether the following schemes are implemented in the village (Use Tick Mark)

Sl. No.	Schemes / Programmes	(Yes/No)
1	NREGA (Panchyat & Rural Development)	
2	Indra Awaj Yojana (IAY (Panchayat & Rural Development))	
3	Midday Meal Scheme	
4	Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)	
5	Family Oriental Income Generating Scheme of WPT & BC	
6	Scheme of infrastructure development (WPT & BC)	
7	Educational development programme (WPT & BC)	
8	Economic development programme (WPT & BC)	
9	Others	

23. Name and distance from the nearest 'Monastery'

.....

.....

.....

.....

24. Whether the village is effected by flood (Yes/No)

(a) If yes, mention the following (use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Partially affected (road and communication only)
- ii. Fully effected

(b) Whether the villagers have to take shelter outside the village for safety during flood

(c) Whether the government provides relief to the villagers during flood? (Yes/No)

If yes, mention the following (use tick mark wherever is applicable)

- i. Sufficient
- ii. Insufficient

(d) Distance of the nearest river from the village (mention the name)

25. Whether the village is effected by erosion (within last 25 years)

i. If yes, mention the area lost (in bighas)

ii. Whether the village had to be shifted within last 25 years (Yes/No)

If yes, mention the year of last shifting

26. Did the village experience any other natural calamity during the last three years?

(Yes/No)

27. Any other worth mentioning information not covered by the schedule.

.....
.....
.....
.....

28. Remarks

.....
.....
.....
.....

Annexure – III

Singpho Inhabitant Villages of Assam

Name of the Villages	Sub-division	District
Duwarmara	Margherita	Tinsukia
Munggang na	Margherita	Tinsukia
1 No. Munggang	Margherita	Tinsukia
2 No. Munggang	Margherita	Tinsukia
Inthem	Margherita	Tinsukia
Ritu Pathar	Margherita	Tinsukia
Inthem Naga Pathar	Margherita	Tinsukia
Ulup	Margherita	Tinsukia
Long	Margherita	Tinsukia
Bisa-ga	Margherita	Tinsukia
Bisa-ga 2 (Kamba)	Margherita	Tinsukia
Tinisuti	Margherita	Tinsukia
Kumchai kong 1	Margherita	Tinsukia
Kumchai kong 2	Margherita	Tinsukia
Pansoon	Margherita	Tinsukia
Pansoon Nabajyoti	Margherita	Tinsukia
Hasak	Margherita	Tinsukia
Kotha	Margherita	Tinsukia
Toklong	Margherita	Tinsukia
Phulbari	Margherita	Tinsukia

Bahbari	Margherita	Tinsukia
Pangna	Margherita	Tinsukia
Nakang Pathar 1	Margherita	Tinsukia
Nakang Pathar 2	Margherita	Tinsukia
Ninda-ga	Margherita	Tinsukia
Pithaguti	Margherita	Tinsukia
2 No. Phakial	Margherita	Tinsukia
Inthong	Margherita	Tinsukia
Dibong	Margherita	Tinsukia
Bhitor Pawoi	Margherita	Tinsukia
Namdang Jamidar	Margherita	Tinsukia
Panbari (Digboi)	Margherita	Tinsukia
Oguri	Charaidau	Sivasagar
Dhigali	Charaidau	Sivasagar

Annexure – IV

NOMENCLATURE

Nomenclature of the sons and daughters in the Singpho community are given below:

	Male/Son (Shadang Sha)	Female/Daughter (Shayisha)
1 st	Gam	Kaw
2 nd	Nong	Lu
3 rd	La	Roi
4 th	Du	Thu
5 th	Tang	Kai
6 th	Yawng	Kha
7 th	Kha	Pi
8 th	Shroi	Yun
9 th	Enking	Dim
10 th	Kying	Kying nang

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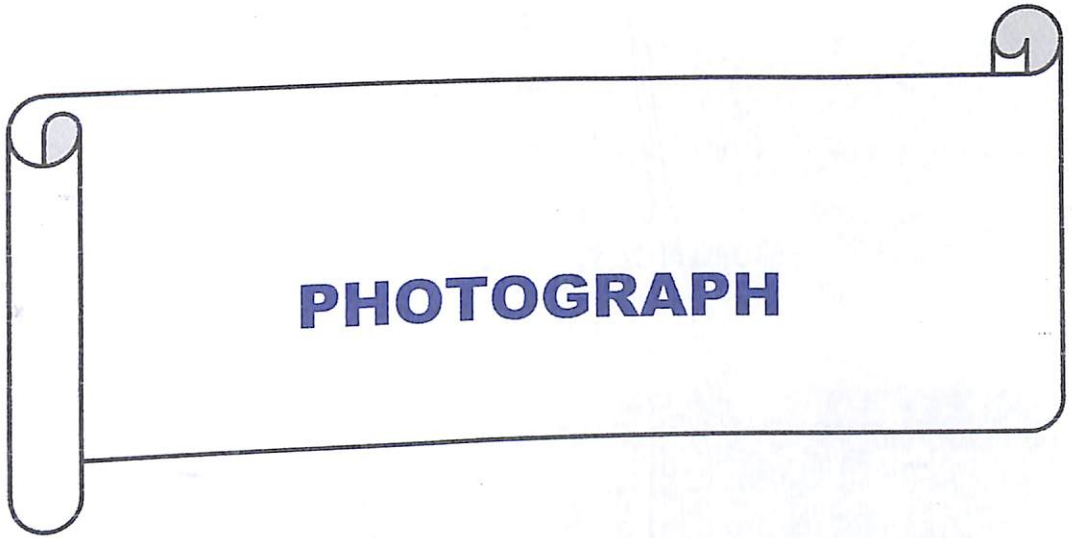
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PHOTOGRAPH

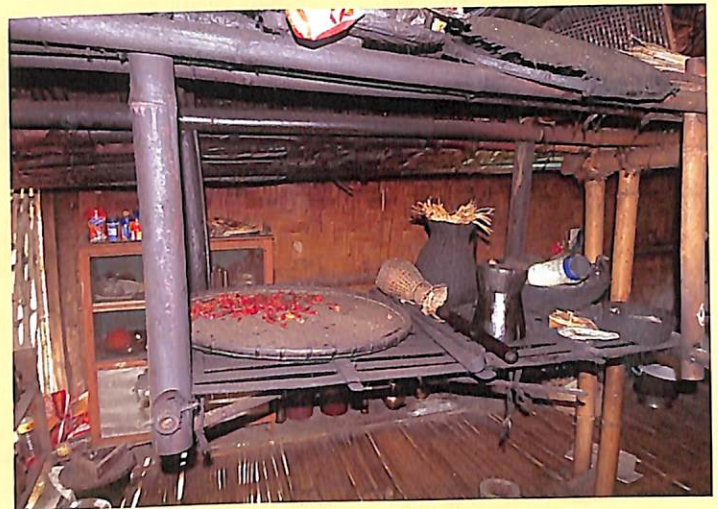
Singpho House



Traditional Singpho House



Traditional Hearth



Hanging Smog (rake)



Singnai & Dalang



Bongkhum

Singphos Dress & Loom



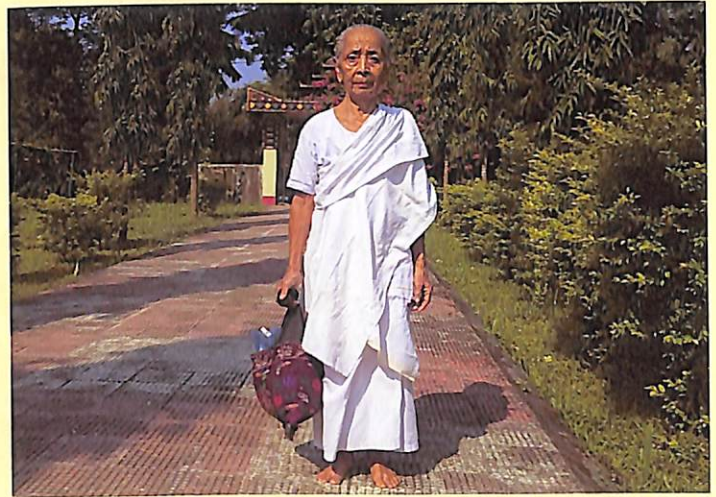
Back strap loom



In traditional dress at home



A Singpho woman return from market



Old woman on the way to meditation



Young Singpho girls in traditional dress



Foot loom

Religion of the Singphos



First Buddhist Monastery, 2 no. Dibong Phakial



Kumchai Kong Buddhist Monastery



Chong Fra or Sangken Chong



Nawasang Poi or Nawa-sitang

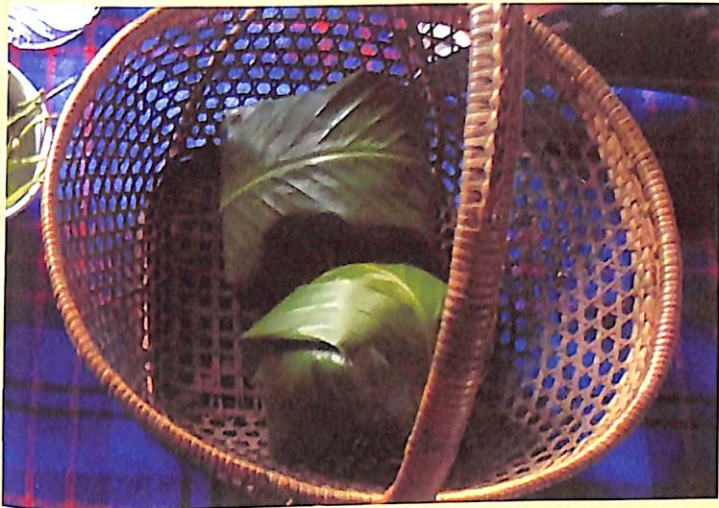


Dibong Buddhist Monastery



Jethi-na

Traditional Food



Pungkhong Chat



Si



U Chan

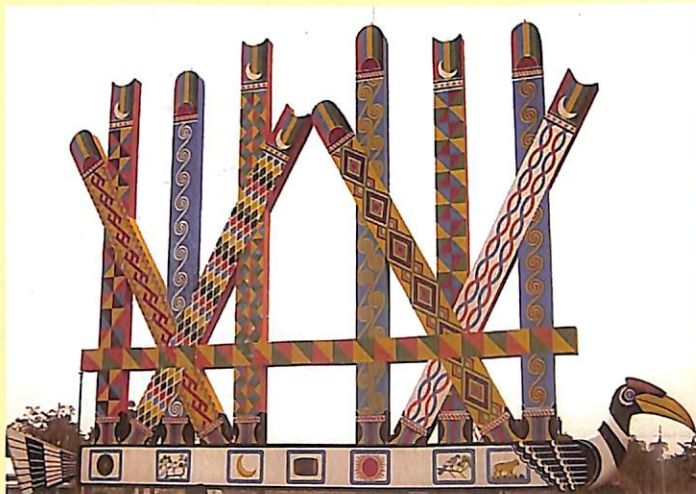


Sipa



Sithu

Festival



Manau Sadung



Women performing dance



Youth playing Bong



Nap and Emphang



Women in traditional dress

Opium Consumption in Remote Village



Singpho hut



Hearth



Hanging rack above the Hearrth



Preparing Opium



Preparing Phalap



A man smoke Opium