

# INTERFACE OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN POLITICAL INSTITUTION: A STUDY OF THE TSORGAN SYSTEM OF THE MONPAS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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Traditional governance at the grass root level has helped to sustain the simple folk societies in symbiotic relationship with their natural environs. The system and processes of this traditional governance maintain compatibility with the evolving needs of the traditional societies with village as functional unit for area of its operation. However, the cleavages seem imminent in the system of governance with onslaught of exogenous agencies and forces.

Traditional Village Councils functioned efficiently to cater the socio-economic, political, and cultural needs of the societies of the hill communities of Arunachal Pradesh until the enactment of the *Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation, 1945*. Even after this enactment, the exogenous influences could not make any substantial change in the society since the large chunk of population was beyond the reach of regular administration. However, the implementation of the provisions of the NEFA Panchayati Raj Act, 1967 began to effect structural and functional changes in the traditional village council and the changes became distinct and overbearing upon the socio-political processes at the grass root level with the implementation of *Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997*. The present paper makes a humble attempt to underline the changes that have occurred in the traditional system among the *Monpas* after the introduction of the *Panchayati Raj Institutions* as a 'modern political experiment'.

For proper presentation of the theme, the present paper has been divided into four sections: a brief profile of the *Monpas* among whom the *Tsorgan System* prevails in the first section; an attempt has been made in the second section to give the structural and processual details of the *Tsorgan System*. In the third section, the thrust area of discussion is to highlight the changing interface between the *Tsorgan* and the Panchayati Raj Institutions in respect of their responsibility and accountability to the people of the village under their jurisdiction. The moot points emerging out of the discussions of the previous three sections have been highlighted in the fourth section by way of conclusion. While concluding the transition or change in the traditional village council of the *Monpas*, I have taken into account only the determinants of legal enactments and administrative interference for part of our discussion here.

## I. MONPAS: A BRIEF PROFILE

Arunachal Pradesh is a state inhabited by 25 major tribes and more than 110 sub-tribes. The *Monpa* is one of the major tribe of the state inhabiting the twin western most districts of the state viz. *Tawang and West Kameng*. 'Monpa' is a common term used by the *Tibetans* to describe the people living in the lowland south of Tibet. The term 'Monpa' comprises of two words 'Mon' and 'Pa' in which 'Mon' means lower country or area and 'Pa' means people. Thus, *Monpa* means the people belonging to the lower country or area lying south of Tibet (*Lho-Mon*). However, in context of Arunachal Pradesh, the term 'Monpa' refers to a particular ethnic group inhabiting the Dirang administrative circle to the north of Bomdila, the Kalaktang administrative circle in the southwestern part of West Kameng district and entire Tawang district.

The Monpas are geographically divided into three sections viz. the *Tawang* or *the Northern Monpas*, the *Dirang* or *the Central Monpas* and the *Kalaktang* or *the southern Monpas*. All the three Monpas have similarity in tradition, custom, and culture except to the difference in the dialects spoken by the people of Tawang on the one side and of Dirang and Kalaktang on the other. The Dirang and the Kalaktang Monpas call themselves *Tsangla*. The Dirang and Kalaktang Monpas are commonly described as *Sharchokpa* (*the people of the east*) by the Monpas of Tawang. The Monpas of the present Dirang are also described as *Dangnangpa* (*the people of the valley*) and those of Kalaktang areas as *Rongnangpa* (*the people of the gorge*). The Monpas of Dirang and Kalaktang call the Monpas of Tawang as *Brami* (*the people of the mountains or hills*). However, they call themselves simply Monpa.<sup>1</sup>

The lives of the Monpas have been comparatively simple and their sphere of activities revolves round the village. A village is called *Yui* or *Dhung* in the Monpa Dialect.<sup>2</sup> There are at present 296 villages<sup>3</sup> including hamlets inhabited by the Monpas (*as per 2011 Census*). Most of the Monpa villages are situated on slope of hills, as flat lands are somewhat rare. Each village has its own territorial boundaries marked either by a stream or a hill, or by other natural objects like a rock or a big tree. The selection of the village site depends mainly on the easy access to drinking water sources and availability of agricultural land in abundance.<sup>4</sup>

The Monpas are peace loving and have a strong sense of justice. After the consolidation of settlements of the Monpas in the *Tawang Valley*, they gradually evolved a self-governing institution at various levels based on its socio-religious customs, traditions and mode of behavior in order to maintain law and order, so as to carry their socio-economic and cultural activities smoothly. It is not known with certainty, how and when these institutions of self-governance came into existence, but these institutions have been functioning effectively for the last several centuries.

## II. THE TSORGAN SYSTEM

The traditional village council of the Monpas is called *Mangma* or *Mangmazomsa*, in which *Mangma* signifies *mass* or *totality of the village community* and *Zomsa* means *assembly* or *gathering*. Therefore, *Mangmazomsa* literally means *assembly or gathering of the village community*. The *Dhung Tsorgan* (*Village headman*) or *Yui-Tsorgan* heads the *Mangma*. A group of the Monpa villages constitutes a 'Tso' and its assembly is called *Tsopa* or *Tso-Tsangzom*. The *Tsopa* or *Tso-Tsangzom* is headed by the *Tso-Tsorgan*. The *Thumis* (*representatives*), *Tsoblehs*, or *Gomis* (*messengers*) further assist the *Tsorgan* or *Tso-Tsorgan* in the day-to-day activities. This system came into being with the coming of Buddhism in the Monpa area. The socio-political system that every village has since the adoption of Buddhism is manifest in the institution of *Mangma*.

The *Monpas*, before their encounter with the *Tibetans* had headmen for each hamlet or for a group of small hamlets constituting a village and the office of the headmen was known as *Tsorgan* or *Tsobla*. Different villages selectively used the word *Tsorgan* or *Tsobla*, some using *Tsorgan* and others *Tsobla*. It is most likely that the institution of *Tsobla* emerged in the Tawang area and was later on hegemonised by the institution of the *Tsorgan*. In most of the villages of the Dirang and Kalaktang areas, the institution of the *Tsorgan* only can be traced. These headmen used to run the village administration with the help of *Tsoblehs*, *Gomis*, *Thumis*, *Tsakhans*, and *Chupons* respectively. Here, it is to be mentioned that the differences are only in nomenclature and not in functions. These lower rung of offices were entrusted to maintain village accounts and convening the meetings of the *Mangma* (assembly of the village community) as and when required. The *Mangma* selected them for a period of one year preferably on rotation basis and they enjoyed their office at the pleasure of the *Mangma*.

Subsequently, with the establishment of the *Tawang Monastery*, the system of ecclesiastic administration was introduced in the Monpa area. Under this system, the monks became virtually the administrators who were called *Dzongpons*. The *Dzongpons*, besides settling disputes also supervised the village administration in the collection of revenue in the form of *Khrei* (*Agricultural tax*) which was paid to the *Tawang Monastery*.<sup>5</sup>

With the end of the domination of the Tibetans over the Monpa area in 1951, the institution of the *Tsorgans* was not done away with and as of past they were again vested with the responsibilities of running the village administration. The institution of '*Tsobla*' was finally relegated to the background and discontinued.<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned earlier, a Monpa village is called *Yui*, or *Dhung*. Each unit is more or less a distinctive self-governing institution headed by an elected leader known as *Tsorgan*. Similarly, a group of few villages including hamlets constitutes a '*Tso*', which is headed by a *Tso-Tsorgan*. The term *Tsorgan* comprises of two terms, viz. '*Tsor*' and '*Gan*', in which '*Tsor*' means the chief and '*Gan*' means responsibility. Therefore, literally *Tsorgan* means the chief who shoulders the responsibility of the village.

In the past, when a *Tsorgan* was to be selected, few influential elders of the village informally met at an appointed place and time to discuss about selection of a suitable person as the next *Tsorgan*. The criteria of intelligence, popularity of the candidate and his versatility in customary laws and traditional moorings were the determinants of drawing the panel of suitable candidates. Panel of names of suitable candidates to hold this office was first drawn by the elders in the meetings. Generally, deliberations continued until they reached unanimity in selecting the most suitable person. Afterwards, a meeting of the *Mangma* was convened to obtain its approval on the criteria of the differential knowledge of traditional conventions, customary laws, oratory skills, and the differential levels of the integrity, social status, ability, experience etc. of the candidates for the post of *Tsorgan*. There was rarely any competition for this office as it carried onerous responsibility without much material reward or remuneration.<sup>7</sup>

However, these days the administration has started the practice of appointment of *Gaonburas* as the headmen for every village to act as an intermediary between the administration and the villagers. The villagers (*Mangma*) normally choose a *Gaonbura* partly by election and partly by nomination. Thereafter, he gets a formal letter of appointment along with a red coat and a brass badge as insignia of his office from the office of the *Deputy Commissioner*. Unlike in the past, today the *Gaonburas* are appointed by the administration ignoring the criteria of intelligence, oratory skill, and versatility in customary laws and traditional moorings etc.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes, while appointing the *Gaonburas* the consent of the *Mangma* including the village elders are not taken into account. The administration very often appoints a person as *Gaonbura* as recommended by the political leaders. Today, in most of the Monpa villages there are a good number of *Gaonburas*.<sup>9</sup> With the appointment of *Gaonburas*, the centre of powers devolved largely from *Tso* or village to the individual level. The other effect of its introduction is that, every village has now three functionaries- the *Gaonburas*, the *Panchayat Members* and the *Thumi Tsoblehs* and *Gomi* of the traditional system. By virtue of being the representative of the government, the *Gaonburas* enjoys more authority in the village than his counterpart does. All the instructions and orders of the government to the villages are passed on through the *Gaonburas*.<sup>10</sup> While preparing and implementing developmental schemes, only the *Gaonburas* and the *Panchayat Members* are consulted by the government developmental agencies like *District Rural Development Agency* (DRDA) and *Block Development Officers* (BDOs) etc.<sup>11</sup>

Though the office of the *Tsorgan* was not hereditary, but if the son of the *Tsorgan* had the above-mentioned qualities, he had better chance to be elected or selected as a *Tsorgan*. In theory, there was no restriction on women becoming a *Tsorgan* but in practice, no women ever had occupied this office so far. It may be mentioned here that only *Khreimi* (those who own taxable lands), not *Surmi/Naamtong* (those who do not own taxable lands) were eligible to hold the office.<sup>12</sup> As said earlier, now-a-days the *Gaonburas* are appointed by the district administration keeping aside the traditional norms and values. Now a day, even if a *Gaonbura* is appointed at the call of the *Mangma*, political considerations rather than traditional norms are followed. In common parlance, the villagers still use the nomenclature *Tsorgan* for them.

The normal term of the office of a *Tsorgan* was three years, but some good ones used to continue as long as twenty years. During my interaction with *Shri Pema Gombu* of Lhou Village (Tawang), *Shri Chhomu Monpa* and *Shri Tsering Dorjee* of Dirang, they revealed that they have completed more than 20 years of their service

in the capacity of the *Tsorgan*.<sup>13</sup> A good *Tsorgan* was never relieved from the office even if he wished to resign. The tradition, however, demands that the *Tsorgan* should convene a meeting of the *Mangma* before or after completion of the term. In the meeting, he may request the *Mangma* to excuse him by appointing a new one. Corrupt or very inefficient *Tsorgans* were made to resign prematurely, but in a very dignified and graceful manner.

These days, there is no fixed tenure for the *Gaonburas*. A person can remain in the office until he is terminated on the ground of proved misbehavior or incapacity. However, a *Gaonbura* can also tender resignation citing personal grounds and reasons. Nevertheless, sometimes due to political influences also the *Gaonburas* are either retained or removed from his office. However, while removing a *Gaonbura*, the administration reserves the right to know the ground of such anti-incumbency factors against him but this right is scarcely used on most of the occasions.

A *Tsorgan* was generally not paid any salary, as the post used to be honorary. However, he was given some remuneration in the form of *Blanpa/Branpa* (free labour) for a specific period by the villagers who would work in his field during sowing, harvesting of crops or other agricultural operations.<sup>14</sup> However, in case of *Tso-Tsorgans*, the *Khreimis* of a particular *Tso* had to pay mandatory contribution called *Tso-Khrei*<sup>15</sup> in form of food grains twice a year for the services rendered by respective *Tsorgans*. The *Tso-Khrei* from each family consisted of two *bre*<sup>16</sup> of barley or other grains in summer and an equal quantity of millet or other grains in winter.

The post of the traditional *Tsorgan* was honorary but the modern *Gaonburas* receive honorarium from the government. Due to the numerous appointments of *Gaonburas*, they are categorized as *Head Gaonbura*, *Gaonbura-I, II etc.* in the villages. They get an annual honorarium of Rs. 4200 and Rs. 3600 respectively. However, unlike the traditional *Tsorgans*, today the modern *Gaonburas* is not paid free labour (*Blanpa/Branpa*) or mandatory contribution (*Tso-Khrei*) by the *Mangma*.

### III. POWER AND FUNCTIONS OF THE TSORGAN: TRADITION vs. MODERNITY

The *Tsorgan* was vested with judicial, administrative, developmental, and socio-cultural functions until the introduction of the Indian Administration. He was competent to settle most of the civil and criminal cases (*Dondha*) within the area under his jurisdiction as per traditional moorings and customary laws. Nevertheless, the cases of very serious nature had to be referred to the semi-judicial wing of the *Tawang Monastery*. Here, it is to be mentioned that the Monpas always preferred private mediation in settlement of disputes.

Even today, the *Gaonburas* are competent to settle minor cases and disputes of any nature. However, due to the unintentional political affiliations of the *Gaonburas* and their resultant partisan roles and judgments, a person prefers to go to the civil administration for adjudication of disputes. As a result, the very integrity of the *Gaonburas* is also at stake.

The traditional political institutions received a further jolt when the government took to appointing Political Interpreters (*Lotsapa*). The main functions of the *Political Interpreters* are to interpret the administration's policies to the local people, and to represent the administration at the discussions held by the rival parties to adjudicate local disputes as well as to help in disposing civil and criminal suits in accordance with the judicial powers delegated to the local bodies. Since, they have important role to play in the settlements of disputes people have started approaching them instead of their traditional authorities.



Functions of the *Tsorgans* in the traditional society before the introduction of regular administration can be analyzed with their changing interface with respect to modernity under the following heads:

**(a) Judicial Functions:**

The *Tsorgan* used to try all petty civil and criminal cases, viz. minor theft, property, inheritance, marriage, divorce, mischief, adultery and house trespassing etc. that arose in the village. In the Monpa society, whenever disputes took place it was endeavored by both the parties involved to solve the case mutually without referring it to the council. This was actually done by engaging a mediator called *Barmi/Barmin* (intermediator). If he adjudicated the dispute to the satisfaction of both the parties, the parties might at their discretion, pay him *Drothang/Lekso*.<sup>17</sup> When the mediator failed to settle the case amicably, the case was then brought to the *Tsorgan* for adjudication.

Generally, the venue for hearing used to be held in the house of *Tsorgan*, *Mangkhem* (Community Hall) or in an open space (*Pang*). Although the *Tsorgans* was competent, enough to try by him any case or dispute lay before him, but he normally invited some elders of the village well versed in customary laws to aid in the proceedings of adjudicating the case for universal acceptance.<sup>18</sup>

Even today, the hearing of cases and disputes are held in the house of *Gaonburas* or *Mangkhem* (Community Hall) or in an open space (*Pang*). However, the elders of the village are now rarely consulted in any deliberations or in any adjudication of disputes. Moreover, today many young people are also appointed as *Gaonbura*, consequent upon which they are lacking in knowledge of the applicability of customary laws. Very often, there is a possibility of misuse of power on personal or political grounds or due to lack of knowledge of customary laws. As a result, now people prefer to go directly to the administration rather than to the *Gaonburas*.

While appealing to the council, the plaintiff (*Dondhapa*) was required to pay, a customary appellate fee called '*Shosum- Khada*'<sup>19</sup> in major cases and '*Sumten*'<sup>20</sup> in petty cases. If the *Tsorgan* took the cognizance in the case, the appellate fee was retained. Returning of appellate fee was considered refusing to take cognizance of the case. Where the *Tsorgan* agreed to adjudicate a case, he summoned through *Gomin/Chupon/Tsakhan* both the plaintiff (*Dondhapa*) and the defendant (*Khaptepa*) on a fixed date and time and accordingly arranged to convene the *Mangma*.

The judgments given by the council was recorded in writing in *Bhoti scripts*<sup>21</sup> under the hand and seal of the *Tsorgan*. The system of recording the judgments or verdicts was called *Gamja*. The parties to the disputes were required to sign this copy in presence of the witnesses. The *Tsorgan* for record as well as for future references handed over the copies of the decision taken to the parties retaining a copy.

After taking cognizance of disputes, the defendant (*Dondha-Khaptepa*) is allowed to explain his version of the facts of the case, after depositing the appellate fee of *Shosum-Khada* or *Sumten*. The parties to the disputes are allowed to put up their cases by themselves or to engage a *Khapa* (advocate).<sup>22</sup> After recording of statements of both the parties, they are asked to put forward evidences or witnesses, if any. This is followed by deliberations amongst the members. Examinations and cross-examinations of the facts and evidences are taken to record. A deliberation continues until all the members reach a consensus. At last, the *Tsorgen* in the presence of *Mangma* pronounces the verdict.

In case of insufficient evidences to take cognizance of the dispute/ crimes there has been a system of trial by ordeal. Sometimes, it also happened that a charge was denied or could not be proved based on available evidences. In such circumstances, the supernatural guidance or interference was sought through oath and ordeal.<sup>23</sup> It has been a tradition that the person charged with the commission of crime but denying the allegations of his or her involvement in the crime, would be punished by the supernatural agency. Oaths were generally taken in the name of the deity (*Sungma*) of *Tawang Monastery* or in the name of village deities, who are believed to be malevolent and extremely dangerous and wrathful if sworn falsely. The administration of oaths normally brought the culprit to surface for fear of the impending infliction.<sup>24</sup>

These days, even if the *Tsorgan* puts the disputes to trial, a person prefers judicial affidavit rather than the *Gamja*. Now, in the changed circumstances, the system of oath and ordeal has been done away except in few traditional Monpa villages.

**(b) Developmental Functions:**

Besides, settling of disputes the council also played a very important role in the developmental activities pertaining to the village. In fact, before the advent of modern administration in this region, the village community headed by the *Tsorgan* carried out all the developmental activities. The construction of roads, bridges, paths, porter tracks etc. were all done by the villagers under the supervision, guidance, and direction of the *Tsorgan*. The *Tsorgan* also managed organization of porters for the visiting official. The council used to manage the community land (*Mang-sa*) and forest etc. Fixing and collection of tax on pasturage (*Tzarin*), land tax, leasing out community land, contribution towards village funds (*Dulang*), fixing of fines & compensations etc. were done by the *Tsorgan* with the approval of the *Mangma*. The funds generated from these sources were used to feed the villagers who were employed for various developmental works of the village. The *Tsorgans* also used to monitor the functioning of the traditional system of labour cooperation among the villagers for larger works of agriculture and house construction.

These days, the Panchayati Raj institutions have taken away all the developmental works pertaining to the villages, which were once looked after by the *Tsorgan*. As a result, it is only the *Panchayat members* and the *Gaonburas* appointed by the administration, who are involved in the decision making process affecting the welfare of the village or villages. Generally, it is observed from the field data that the people are not satisfied with the working of the Panchayati Raj System. Many people are of the opinion that it has benefitted only panchayat members and other public leaders. At the cost of common rural poor people, the members themselves take up most of the government aids, sanctions, and enjoy its benefits. Because of their interference, some people feel that the sanctions and benefits rarely reach the deserving poorest of the poor.<sup>25</sup> These days' selection of beneficiaries is done with political consideration rather than on economic criteria. Besides these, it has also created division and rivalries among the villagers who otherwise used to live in harmony.

**(c) Socio-Cultural Functions:**

The *Tsorgan* had also certain socio-cultural functions. Social service for clearance of path after rainy season, cleanliness of the village *Gonpa*, arrangement of dances and pantomimes (*Cham*), community rites and rituals, community feasting and festivals were organized under the supervision of the *Tsorgan*. The *Tsorgan* in consultation of the *Mangma* also decides the problem of homogenization of people from outside. Even today, the *Tsorgan* decides the date and time of harvesting of certain crops. Here, it may be mentioned that even today in *Sangti* and *Khaso villages* of Dirang administrative circle, the villagers cannot harvest their paddy field unless the date is fixed and announced by the *Tsorgan* through the *Tsoblehs*, *Gomis* or *Chupons*. Beside these, the *Tsorgan* for the greater interest of the society also settled minor cases of marriages, separation, and divorce.

However, most of the works of socio-cultural nature of the individual villagers and village community have been either taken over by the government agencies including the Panchayati Raj Institutions or sufficient interference in these fields are affected through bureaucratic and legal practices. As a result, a rupture is very often observed due to meddling of the functions of the traditional and modern institutions.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, the traditional village councils of the Monpas have also undergone many changes in functions as well as structures because of exogenous influences as discussed in the previous section. To count the legal and administrative interventions we may highlight a few of these. Introduction of many new institutions by the government like *Political Interpreters (PIs)*, *Gaonburas (GBs)* and the Panchayati Raj System under the *Assam Frontier Tracts (Administration of Justice) Regulations, 1945*, *NEFA Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967*, *Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997* are largely responsible for introducing changes from above due to the administrative and legal impositions. With the administration taking over the major responsibility of adjudicating the cases this institution became less powerful.

*Gaonbura* is another institution, which came into being after the advent of modern administration. This is an addition to already existing traditional institution of *Tsorgan*. Though there is not much difference in the two, the former is elected or selected by the villagers (*Mangma*) themselves and the latter appointed by the district administration on the recommendation or without recommendation of the concerned villagers (*Mangma*). Some villages still do have both the traditional *Tsorgan* and the modern *Gaonburas*, whereas in others there is only *Gaonbura* appointed by the government.<sup>27</sup> The powers and functions of the traditional *Tsorgan* have dwindled considerably with the passage of time. Their role is now confined to the settlement of petty disputes and counseling the villagers in the need of the hour. On the other hand, the *Gaonburas*, with the blessings of the government, enjoy better position. In addition to the settlement of disputes in the villages, they have enough say in the distribution of grants, or selection of beneficiaries under *Annapurna Anna Yojna (AAY)*, *Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)*, *Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDP)* and other schemes. Hence, their status is higher than the traditional *Tsorgans*.

The introduction of *Panchayati Raj System* in Arunachal Pradesh has also brought changes in the role of the traditional village councils. They too take part in the settlement of disputes. Since Gram Panchayat member, Anchal Samiti member, and Zila Parishad members play major roles in selection of beneficiaries or allocation of petty contract works, they are more respected by the villagers. It took over most of the powers and roles of the *Tsorgans*. In the past, villagers themselves under the guidance and leadership of *Tsorgans* did all the developmental works. However, now all the developmental works are carried out by various governmental agencies. Most of the disputes are now adjudicated by the administration with the help of *Political Interpreters* and the members of Panchayat.

The village council can now try only those cases involving offences like theft, mischief, simple hurt, or house trespass etc. Summing up, the work of the traditional village council is now confining to the social and religious affairs and settlement of minor disputes.

Despite all these changes in the role of the traditional village councils, people still revere and respect this institution. In critical situation, they need the advice, suggestions, and guidance of the members of the traditional village councils. They still possess considerable influence over the villagers.

## REFERENCES

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2. Due to dialectical differences, a village is called *Yui* by the Tawang Monpas and *Dhung* by the Dirang and Kalaktang Monpas.
3. 'There are as many as 196 villages in entire Tawang district; 68 villages in Dirang administrative circle and 32 villages in Kalaktang administrative circle of West Kameng district inhabited by the Monpas', *District Statistical Handbook (2011) of Tawang and West Kameng districts*.
4. Norbu, Tsewang, *op.cit*, pp.47-48.
5. Dhar, B., *Arunachal Pradesh: The Monpas of Tawang in Transition*, Geophil Publishing House, Guwahati, 2005, pp.74-75.
6. *Ibid.*, p.75.
7. Norbu, Tsewang., *op.cit*, p.158.
8. *Ibid.*, p.161.
9. There are two to three *Gaonburas* in each Monpa villages, and who are appointed as *G.B-I*, *G.B. II*. etc. by the administration.
10. Norbu, Tsewang., *op.cit*, p.168.
11. *Ibid.*, p.167.
12. *Ibid.*, p.160.
13. This information was collected on 12-01-2009 during an interview with Shri Chhomu Monpa, the *Tso-Tsorgan* of Dirang Tso. He is also the *Head Gaonbura* of the Dirang administrative circle.
14. Pandey, B.B., Duarah, D.K., Sarkar, N. (ed.), *Tribal Villages Councils of Arunachal Pradesh*, Directorate of research, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, 1999, p.3
15. Norbu, Tsewang., *op.cit*, p.161.
16. A *Bre* is a local system of measuring grains, which is equivalent to 800-1000 grams.
17. *Drothang/Lekso* is an expression of thanks giving for settling the dispute amicably.
18. Norbu, Tsewang., *op.cit*, p.163.
19. *Shosum-Khada* is an appellate fee paid to the *Tsorgans* for taking cognizance of the major cases/disputes. It comprises of a ceremonial scarf called *Khada* and two silver coins. This system was mostly prevalent among the Tawang Monpas.
20. *Sumten* is also an appellate fee paid to the *Tsorgans* for taking cognizance of the petty cases/disputes. It comprises of an ordinary scarf called *Khada*, two flasks of locally brewed beer along with rice, flour, eggs, cheese etc.
21. *Bhoti* is a classical script developed by the Tibetan Scholar *Thongmi Sambhota* in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century and since then used mainly as the scripts for recording the Buddhist canons and important records all over the Himalayan regions.
22. Norbu, Tsewang., *op.cit*, p.163.
23. Pandey, B.B., Duarah, D.K., Sarkar, N. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.5
24. *Ibid.*
25. Pandey, B.B., Duarah, D.K., Sarkar, N. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.9
26. *Ibid.*