

INDIGENOUS HUNTING PRACTICES: CHANGES AND CONTINUITY AMONG THE ZOU OF MANIPUR, NORTHEAST INDIA

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Abstract: The traditional hunting practices and the charismatic cultural norms regulating the hunting society of the Zou deepen their structural social bondage among cultural kin. These governing customs depicted their traditional pride being attached to forest ecological niches in their locales. In recent years, the introduction of traditional guns along with the espousal of new faith brought tremendous changes from enriching their hunting cultural heritage to amending the existing customary practices. Though the dependency on hunting and marginalised income limits their alternative preferences but to hunt to support the dependent family households, the Zou hunters on the other hand also concede the importance of wildlife conservation.

1. Introduction

Human being has been a hunter and social gatherer since the establishment of their survival strategies in time and space. Hunting can be designated as a classical paradigm of one of the most primitive methods of economic way to prosper. It is technically the practice of carefully stalking and killing them or trapping animals, or pursuing and tracking cautiously with the intent to catch them mainly for consumption and also for another legitimate purpose. Hunting, in general, is considered to be a male profession. Fishing on the other hand is usually excluded and not categorised as hunting among the hunting society. At present, the existing hunting techniques undergo tremendous reform since the primitive

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methods of hunting are technically incompetent to tackle sagacious prey during the hunt. Consequently, there were remarkable transformations at the behest of human being's initiative to domesticate animals and the means of earning livelihood renovate itself from the hunting profession to an agrarian economy. These succeeding evolutions provide ample opportunity to develop skills supporting to sustain economic resilience.

The state of Manipur, also known as 'Switzerland of India' as described by Lord Irwin is located in the extreme North-Eastern part of India. The state capital, Imphal valley is surrounded by chains of hills covered with dense forest. The geographical location is blessed with neighbouring countries like Myanmar in the east and south, a state like Mizoram in the south-west, Assam in the west followed by Nagaland to the North. The Zou/Zo literally 'Highlander' or 'lofty hill ranges' also translated as 'colder region of higher altitude' is a recognised hill Christian tribal population of the state. They live across the mountainous region adjoining the Myanmar border mostly concentrated across Chandel and Churachandpur District. They are Mongoloid ethnic population speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. Forest covers about 78% of the total geographical areas of the state. The hilly region including the valley has thick forests that provide a luxurious home for various wild animals.

Despite tremendous socio-economic transition at present across the region, the practice of primitive occupation like wildlife hunting remains an important profession among the Zou tribe till today. The practice of assimilating hunting and gathering as well can be highlighted at the behest of current issues hampering the progress of wildlife conservation. Though hunting wildlife or feral animals is mostly done for foodstuff, it is also done to remove predators, for trade, pest control, etc. in the region. Besides, lawful hunting is distinguished from poaching which is the illegal killing, trapping or capturing of the hunted species.

2. Aims and Objectives

The study aims to explore the traditional norms regulating the hunting society of the Zou and the encumbrance ramification of wildlife conservation.

3. Methodology

The present study tries to explore the Zou traditional hunting system of Manipur particularly the adjoining areas of the Indo-Myanmar region in Churachandpur District. Data collection has been carried out basically from October 2015 to January 2016 with the aim to witness all the seasonal events related to hunting activities. However, spared information has been optimized through interview methods conducted occasionally during off-seasons. The information on traditional hunting practices and the existing transformation among the

Zou society has been collected based on the narrative description provided by the old traditional hunters as key informants and my own experience through participant observation in the field. Hunting events are standardized in chronological order through exploratory and descriptive methods. To validate my finding, further consistent sources especially in regards to social resilience and attitude towards alternative means of livelihoods from the hunting households have been incorporated successively. Certain accounts on economic prosperity perception among the marginalized section of the people are also randomly collected from the participants. Some inclusive torchy incident about hunting-related event from the town is also monitored to substantiate the present study.

4. Explorative Finding

A descriptive analysis of the present study can be illustrated in the following headlines in chronological order from primitive to contemporary revolutionized norms within the Zou hunting society.

4.1. Zou Hunting History

The Zou are highland wanderers in search of better productive agricultural land resources and permanent settlement. In course of time, they developed a sense of hunting culture acquired from their ancestors like many other ethnic groups in different parts of the world. They were hunters and hunting since time and immemorial. Most of them have been a profession in hunting through the assimilated skills acquired from their forefather.

The Zou hunters adopted many strategies to tackle such games during hunting. Beside skillful tracking and trapping of wild animals, most of the hunter uses bow and arrow along with spear. The use of spears was an important tool of hunting before the invention of modern techniques. Today, the introduction of a traditional gun known as 'Zouthau' brought tremendous changes in the hunting game. Due to the technological superiority in terms of efficiency, most of the hunters employed it extensively. Other techniques like trapping or snaring systems are also adopted side by side.

During prehistoric times, hunting was done mainly by using stone and wooden tools. In course of time, new tools, weapons, methods and techniques were developed with the evolution of human civilization. Hunting people require technical competence despite their simplicity, to hunt or trap animals. Wildlife is an important resource for those communities that live in and around forests and is exploited for various reasons, including food, additional income, cultural practices and as a sport (Aiyadurai, 2011).

There are other reasons for hunting back then particularly among the Zou people. Most of the hunters considered hunting as a symbol of pride and honour bound sense of superiority. The hunter also earns respect with a grand reputation inciting him to hunt for

more dreadful wild animals. In other words, a person who could hunt down a wild beast like a lion, tiger, bear which are considered to be a symbol of bravery has earned premier respect in the social hierarchy. Indeed, the hunter is sturdy and vibrant generally approach by the village chief and elders whenever there are inter-village disputes and conflicts. It is also a grand reputation for the villagers. However, wild beast like lion or tiger may be disregarded unless it becomes a threat to their life or interferes in exploiting domesticated animals.

Furthermore, the primacy of hunting is that, while it does not bring in the most food everywhere, it produces the kind of food that most people like best. The majority of the people who belong to north-east India have a rich natural resource which includes animals, which are thus seen as a source of food for many communities (Marak & Kalita, 2013). The exploitation of natural resources as a rich source of diet is not an exception among the Zou tribe.

4.2. Traditional Hunting Practices

There are certain responsibilities for a hunter while preparation for hunting. On a hunt, the hunter brings along some light bedding, cigarette, knife, rope, torch, lighter/matchbox, gun and its essentials and a saggy bag to carry. In some cases, they also bring lunch boxes or rations if they decided to stay longer. In the past, the use of a spear for hunting has been widely practiced. With the development of superior technology and wild animals being niftier, such an approach as in the past will be utterly irrelevant in the present scenario.

Hunting activities are predominant throughout the year, but it intensifies in winter. Better weather conditions as compared to summer and seasonal changes prompted wild animals to wander in search of better food accessibility during winter. Consequently, there are strategies adopted according to the circumstances of the weather and phases of the day.

4.3. Group Hunting

As the name suggests, group hunting, also known as collective hunting is the type of hunting wherein a group of interested participants ventures wild animals with the intent to catch them mainly for domestic consumption. This method has been adopted mostly during the day preferably with a clear sky above. Group hunting begins with certain conditions. For instance, if the side of wild animals like deer, boar, etc. has been spotted somewhere suddenly and could not be traced in the bushes they opt for group hunting known as *tanghawl*. They may also adopt group hunting if they find some inciting and tempting spot assumed to ensure the presence of wild animals. Different strategies are adopted according to the aggressiveness possess by various wild animals. In this regard,

some of the hunters who possess a gun are set to wait for the animal to come by sitting on a comfortable tree eying on the prey to shoot at any opportunity. The other participants who did not possess a gun simply shout to scare the animal such that if the hunted animal(s) is present will run towards the predator. In certain cases, the animal did not die instantly when they shoot but hide in the bushes. In those instances, they examine the fallen hair or blood droplets from the spot where it has been shot and follow the tracks carefully. Due to its aggressive nature, the utmost precautionary measure has been followed especially in case of injuring boar and bear.

4.3.1. Meat Distribution

In this type of group hunting, the meat is being shared equally with all the participants. There is no other customary duty of distribution of meat known as *sapai* for the hunter (shooter) besides the participants except if someone used hire gun/tools outside the participants known as *thausaap*, which is used to kill that particular slain wild animal and *saliang tangsen* which is also given to the village chief as tax. This *thausaap* is applicable for more than one hunted game at once to any number of killed animals by that particular hire gun/tool. It is interesting to note that, if more than one gun/tool is used to kill a particular animal, the first hunter who injures the slain animal will be entitled to get his due share, after proving the injured spot of the killed game in a certain controversial contender. The eldest member among the hunters or any other elder member present at the time of distribution of meat for the participants has to segregate and share the meat evenly among the participants. However, parts like the head and all inner parts known as *sasung* are part of the hunter due share which is claimed by the first hunter who injured the killed game. However, the present-day context appears to be laxer as far as *sapai* is concerned. The customary practices of distribution of meat outside the participants including *thausaap* have been obsolete except *saliang-tangsen*. The discontinuation of such customary practices could be attributed to the fact that the quantity of meat share among the participants seems lesser after distribution. Besides, the killed game is the price of the exclusive mutual efforts of the group hunters.

The distribution of meat known as *saseb banm* among the Zou hunters has certain anomalous distinctive practices. The other member can't argue about any wrongdoing within or after distribution. The allocation of meat *saseb banm* done by the eldest member is a mark of respecting elders is a common practice among the Zou. Ironically, the hunter cannot complain over his killed animal unless he is the eldest member present at the time of allocation of meat for the hunters.

In the past, group hunting begins generally with some special events. Before the advent of Christianity among the Zou, they occasionally opt for collective hunting attributed to

an annual festival known as *ZoKhodo Pawi* held during October. At present, they also expedite group hunting on certain events like Xmas and New Year celebrations in remote villages.

4.4. Individual Hunting

Individual hunter has more responsibilities during the hunting game. The perfect timing for hunting is just before dusk and early dawn. The hunter is the sole responsibility of his area for any luck.

4.4.1. Meat Distribution

The distribution of meat for an individual hunter is more complicated as compared to any other type in hunting practices. If fortune does favour the hunter, there are certain obligatory traditional norms for him; *the first case*- if the tools/gun is not owned by him, he has to provide the right hind-leg of the slain wild animal as 'fee' known as *thausaap* for the tools/gun for certain animals like deer, boar, bear, gazelle, etc. (except rodents, birds and frugivorous animals). The right front leg was given to the village chief as *saliang-tangsen*. Besides, the neck portion known as *sa-ngong* is given to the hunter's maternal sibling known as *pusa* as a symbol of utmost respect and a sort of honouring his matrilineal lineage. There are certain instances of exceptional distinction of sharing meat *sapai* among the hunter siblings. If the hunter is the younger sibling from an independent nuclear family, he has to give the head of the slain animal to the eldest brother who lives an independent family. This customary practice by the hunter to the eldest brother signifies his respect and honor in the family lineage. Besides, any matter related to the hunter in terms of festivity and grievances will be decided by his eldest brother on his behalf. These norms also include the hunter children if they caught one until they got married and live an independent family. In other words, *pusa* is limited to the hunter generation only. Apart from *saliang-tangsen*, the sharing of the neck portion *pusa* to the eldest member from his matrilineal lineage is another obligation for the hunter regardless of the methods and technique of catching wild animals. Besides, he can share his best friend (usually a childhood friend with a similar name), the *zawlsa* portion of the slain animal if he has one. As a result, the remaining segment seems to be lesser than expected. *The second case*-if the gun/tools belong to him, the hunter can enjoy having the entire right hind leg which is usually given out as *thausaap* though he has other obligations just as in the first case.

4.5. Trapping

Animal trapping, or simply trapping, is the use of a device to remotely catch a wild animal. Wild animals may be trapped for a variety of purposes including food, fur for trade, hunting, pest control and management. Trapping is another means of hunting practices existing till

today. It is basically done by an individual for his own benefit. Trapping is done with careful observation of the path of wild animals.

4.5.1. Meat Distribution

Except for *pusa* and *saliang-tangsen* in the case of trapping, the hunter is free from all sorts of obligations. It is interesting to note that the hunter sibling/relative may not live together in the same village; still, the hunter may roast the allocated meat and send someone who is determined to go to that village or by himself. They felt that it is a source of blessing from the matrilineal lineage and considered indispensable to allocate especially *pusa* at all cost.

5. Customary Norms

In hunting societies, each one has some form of mechanism about the distribution of meat within the ambit of their customary practices. In the Zou society, the first person who injures the animal is entitled to claim the head of all types of animals during group hunting. Though there are no concrete traditional rules that the owner must get the head and inner meat like parts of liver, heart, intestines, lungs, etc. of the hunted game just as in the case of distribution of meat during group hunting, the hunter is entitled accordingly as part of his due share. The remaining parts will be shared equally with the other participants. Similar practices are also found among the neighbouring tribes like the Zeliangrong Naga and Kukis of North East India. Hunting games have also been a mechanism for maintaining the structural relationship of certain kin groups (Kamei, 2017).

In the case of dreadful wild animals like lions/tigers, they did not eat nor distribute the meat. Instead, the entire village gathers to perform certain warrior song and ritual ride known as *sa-ai* by killing other tamed animals (having four legs usually pigs) along with traditional wine (mostly rice beer). The villagers perform the ritual throughout the night at the residence of the hunter. During the ritual ride, the hunter has been given the honour to perform a certain warrior song *haanla* during the ceremony. He shouts and proclaims the honour ride with a gunshot in certain intervals. Accordingly, they have cited victory songs over different dreadful wild animals. Some of the warrior song and ritual song performed during the event can be recited as below:

Humpi/Kamkei haanla (Lion/Tiger warrior song)

*Zangsa kbapaahpi'n e,
Sung gilkiel a lang-ai bang na vah,
Na muol taangtawn z'il ing e,
Na giel phala'ng han lung kuong e...*

Free translation: *With your proud huge jaw, the ravenous lion has been roaring and wander in search of prey. I have been tracing your tracks across mountains and valleys. I am furious as to why I am unable to beat your strength...*

Saai-ai la (Elephant ritual ride song)

*Saai lien e... nang na masa aw,
Simlei leh thangvan lai ah...
Ka vuiplawng in seem e,
Haw... haw... haw... pung...*

Free Translation: The mighty elephant... Please lead the front... Be it on earth or haven, my gun is my luck... Hoo... hoo... hoo... pung...

Vom haanla (Bear warrior song)

*Vom phuoi e, den ab vomphuoi taang ing e,
Tulsing kangkuoi tang ing e,
Tang a ngim tullel basing kbeing e,
Haw... haw... haw... pung...*

Free translation: You, the great bear. I have been prowling you like a predator. I have seen your tracks and traces from the trees bearing fruits. Finally, I shot you and you fell freely/readily just as I simply cut down its branches! Hoo... hoo...hoo... pung...

Ngal haanla (Boar warrior song)

*Ngouvaal e, mawngpi pang ab ding dildel e...
Betal aw singchin manglien saguol...
Ka vang a lien e...
Haw... haw... haw... pung...*

Free translation: The sparkling teeth, Ya, I can see you standing right there near the fig trees. You, the dominant Alpha male boar boasting among the folks... You have given me great honour!... Hoo... hoo...hoo... pung...

Zaangsiel haanla (Wild Yak warrior song)

*Ka nu aw, kapkaplou aw,
Maumau lou aw, dumpuon sil aw,
Keima'n dumpuon dumpuon se ing e...*

Free translation: Dear mother (wild yak), do not set your tears or marvels about it any longer. Put on your attire and rest in peace. I clothed you with my traditional attire...

The cultural practice of *sa-ai* particularly for lions and tigers has been given special importance as the popular belief goes beyond myth about bringing harm to the villagers if they do not perform *sa-ai*. When all the ritual rides *sa-ai* are done, they will skin the animal and bury the dead body in an isolated place. Skinning the animals and preserving would signify the presence and evidence of warrior hunter from other neighbouring villagers that stand as a symbol of pride and honor to them. Today, this traditional practice among the Zou is very rare and near to absent. This could be attributed to the absence or rare presence of a lion or tiger in this region. Besides, embracing Christianity from the old traditional religion *Sakhuo/Lawki* could be another factor for not practicing ritual rides if any.

6. Defaulter Customary Law

Yet, in another interesting attribution among the Zou hunting society, the hunter is responsible for the misconduct while sharing meat regardless of who did the allocation and distribute the meat *saseb hawm* in the first place. Earlier, hunting occupation has no limit and doesn't have any stringent rules and regulations or fines imposed upon them. The meat was served together with the village chief and elders especially *sasung* (inner meat including intestine, liver, lungs, etc. sometimes with the head) mainly for an animal like reindeer, boar, gazelle, bear, etc. With the increase in household members, the traditional customary practice of serving dinner together with the village chief is not always possible. At present, the trend seems to be different from the introduction of traditional guns for wildlife hunting. Prior to the introduction of guns, the hunter gives a piece of meat to the village chief as a symbol of respect. Today, it became a new norm for the new generation to share a portion of meat i.e. the entire right front leg to the village chief as *saliang-tangseu* of the hunted game. The remaining part has been sold mostly for income bonuses. The chief however sometimes ignores *saliang-tangseu* as a humble gesture usually according to the socio-economic status of the hunter.

If the hunter did not allocate *saliang-tangseu* as per the governing norms to the village chief, he shall be accountable for the action he committed. He has two options; firstly, if the hunter is not aware of the village custom, he can seek forgiveness following certain norms for reconciliation. Secondly, if he ignores intentionally, he is obligated to compensate by a regulated traditional feast for the village chief with a traditional wine. He must offer a tamed animal (four feet mostly pig) as a sign of a humble offer seeking his forgiveness. In some extreme cases, he may be abandoned by the villager. The village chief, however, has the liberty to forgive anytime as he always has the supreme power vested upon him.

Again, there are instances where the customary duty of *pusa* has been neglected intentionally by the hunter. If it does bring notice to his matrilineal sibling that the hunter

did not share *pusa* with his matrilineal relatives, the hunter must seek forgiveness for settlement. In certain cases, the matter can get worse. The hunter must offer *Sial* (mithun/gayal) along with traditional wine usually rice beer (replaced by tea and snacked at present) as a penalty for reconsolidation with his matrilineal lineage. Otherwise, the hunter matrilineal sibling may consider it as an indication of disrespect or an insult to their mother's pride. If the matter could not be settled, they may not communicate or share any occasion in terms of joy or sadness and even in bereavement. In some cases, the matter is brought over to settle within the highest Village Court Authority known as *hausakant* literally 'Village Chief Jurisdiction'. Indeed, till today, all disputed matters are settled within the village chief jurisdiction as the apex governing body. However, such practice of penalizing is withdrawing gradually particularly after embracing Christianity.

In another notable unique tradition among the Zou, the customary practices of sharing meals while serving formal dinner with the village chief and elders are governed by certain idiosyncratic norms. The hunter usually invites dinner with the elders and village chief whenever he is fortunate to bring home wild meats. While serving meals, the eldest member (usually the chief) has the privilege to have some of the inner parts like the liver, intestine, stomach, spleen, etc. which is a mark of respect for elders. They refer to these types of inner meat as *upa-sa* meaning 'meat of the elders'. It was first served by the eldest person especially men among the gathering in the first place followed by the then elders members and so on. It would be better to call this customary sharing of meals within the relative, which I would like to term as 'meat partaking culture'. However, be it sharing dinner together or culturally followed norms while serving dinner together, this charismatic traditional practice has been slowly diminishing among the new generation. Besides, they are gradually replaced by tamed animals' bought from the market.

7. Impact of Excessive Hunting

Hunting may be an entertaining game for some of the new participants. In several instances, it serves as social bondage among the cultural kin group. For the past few decades, most of the antelopes were under threat in the state, particularly among the tribal areas. In recent years, many hunters shifted their occupation to land cultivation in the lofty hill ranges. At present, the number of wild animals is significantly reduced. Interestingly, many wild animals wander across the international boundary in search of mates during the breeding season and the availability of natural abundance during winter. This facilitates the hunting culture to continue among the tribal communities.

Hunting wild animals is a burning issue in the state but remains an essential component of the rural people's livelihoods, particularly among the Zou community. Though the state administration encourages the people to minimized excessive hunting, the propaganda is

perceived as another obstruction by the villagers owing to the ecological barriers between the urban society and the incessant reliance on wildlife hunting in rural areas. Besides, the scarcity of land resources for the common masses and the alternative means of livelihood suggested by the government like plantation farming or sedentary farming in remote areas are indisputably insignificant. These further disseminate their doubts about the certainty and reliability of government schemes to provide sufficient income for most of the poorer sections of the remote inhabitant. Consequently, it provides no option but to hunt in order to support their marginalised family households' income. Duda et al (2017) studies also show that wild animal hunting in Central African forest dwellers hinders the progress of wildlife conservation. However, they also divulge the fact that it remains an essential component for the local people's livelihoods.

8. Discussion

One of the most important aspects of hunting is the development of skills to hunt and the reason for being hunted. Though hunting could be essentially one of the reasons to balance the ecological sphere as men are considered to be part of nature resembling a component of the food chain, the imbalances of ecological niche have an adverse effect on the environmental stability in the long run. Besides, though the natural course of action is considered a limiting factor causing an adverse effect on nature powerful tool to controls the overpopulation of species, the chain of connection appears to have misled the entire meaning of balancing nature at the optimum level when human being intervene with limitless usages of natural resources.

The geographical location itself and the people living in the state are extensively diversifying to enculture the importance of environmental management for the masses particularly within the Zou chiefdoms in the hilly region. They benefit exceedingly rich diet including antelopes and various wild animals being attached to the forest ecology. This provides ample opportunities for wildlife hunting. The adoption of *Zouthau* for wild hunting is another notable urge inducing additional temptation. As most of the Zou villages came under chiefdoms, subsequently it poised additional sovereignty to govern in their own village dignitaries. The state administration has little to no control of the affairs of the people regarding the social welfare of the remote villages. This provides ample opportunity for them to hunt for domestic purposes and economical reliance thereby making it even more challenging to exercise stringent law to minimized hunting. Besides, there are instances where the hunter himself has an acquaintance and relative serving in Forest officials buzzing the hunter more daring for wildlife hunting. The local officials themselves knew the good taste of wild meat which makes it more vulnerable for the hunter to easily approach them and negotiate through mutual consensus. Being exposed

to the good tastes of wild meat from their childhood, some of the family members of the ranger themselves are tempted occasionally to buy wild meat from the market. In turn, they often indirectly infused themselves by obtaining prohibited wild meat from the market even though they have obligation to wildlife protection management on the other. However, in recent years there are incidents where roasted meat of wild animals in markets has been capsized to make awareness about preserving wildlife by the state government bureaucrats. Today, there are slogans in public places and runway encouraging wildlife conservation.

9. Conclusion

The practice of wildlife hunting among the Zou has been enrooted as part of their cultural ceremonials. The traditional hunting bondage depicts their pride and beauty within the society that serves as bonding between relatives and kin is admirable beyond comprehension. The traditional hunting practices and sharing meat shows the type of despicable occupation acquired from their forefather. On the other hand, though they were culturally embedded in their ancestral heritage to wild hunting depicted from their folk songs and stretch pride to their achievement from the traditional perspective, they gradually realized the importance of education and awareness of the facilities provided by government schemes as an alternative reserved from their hunting dependency at large. However, this measure is not a reliable source of living in the real state of affairs. Moreover, it is challenging for a traditional hunter to leave his pride to embrace diverse professional skills for his livelihood. As already reflected in the economic activities of the remote dweller especially among the Zou community, the most effective way to prevent wildlife hunting is to spread awareness and to convert chiefdoms into government land ownership but most importantly to provide an alternate means to support their livelihood. However, these ambiguous structures of transformation at the grassroots level will take years to be pragmatic at the costliest price if ever implemented.

The tremendous transformation of hunting techniques evokes a hot topic of discussion among forest officials. The villagers, on the other hand, have little knowledge about the purposed of the fact that nature plays an important role in ecological balance. This further enhances the degeneration of wildlife due to excessive hunting in addition to the ever-increasing demand for consumption. Since it is a 'gift of nature' at all levels according to the people living close to the forest ecology, they mainly benefit natural resources at their behest devoid of any restriction from outside interference. In addition, economic self-reliance and hunting culture have been part of their ambit adherence to living in society among the Zou people. They enjoy such enthralling liberty since time and immemorial.

New dawn emerges with the introduction of arable land. The Zou slowly witness a remarkable transitional stage to sedentary economic existence. They have been practicing

shifting cultivation in their land ever since the establishment of the traditional governing system in their society. However, with the increase in household expenses and the progress and development in relation to social dimensional changes at present, the hunting profession could no longer support their existing economic prosperity. There are instances of family members enjoying financial assistance from their employed sibling in addition to the introduction of various government schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes (NREGS), Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers, to mention few reaching the remote places in the state. Though many of them still hunt mainly for consumption and income bonus, hunting seems to be a type of fun learning for the expatriate fresh generation when they visit their native places. Though these motivated curious youthful are conscious of the importance of conserving wildlife through their secular education, they would rather love to take this opportunity to learn hunting skills for recreational purposes during vacation.

In addition to the liberalization of gun culture in the hills, hunting activities and the indirect oppression of natural habitats through traditional shifting cultivation have increased manifold in exploiting natural resources. Although the Northeast region represents one of the highest biodiversity of the Indian subcontinent, the region itself is already notified under the biodiversity hotspot. More species are on the verge of extinction due to unrestrained exploitation of endangered species. If a solemn measure is not mediated across these regions, the current rate of exploiting wildlife will eventually exhaust the rich biodiversity of the state in the near future. Nonetheless, as the decrease in forest-covered along the hilly terrain instigate little scope to hunt wild animals at present, most of the Zou hunters started to shift their traditional occupations. Besides, the significance of traditional hunting practices has limited significant today as it was replaced by tamed animals for seasonal festivals and important ceremonies.

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