

Kinship System of Konyak Nagas of Tamkoang Village of Mon District, Nagaland

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KEYWORDS: Konyak Nagas. Tamkoang village. Mon district. Kinship terminology. Nagaland, India.

ABSTRACT: The study of kinship has been regarded as the web of social relationships that form an important part of the lives of people living in a circle of social institutions in relation to marriage and family. This paper will attempt to analyse and decode the social structure through the analyses of the kinship system of the Konyak Nagas of Tamkoang village of Mon district, Nagaland by using the methodology of interview method, case study, and observation method. The study of the clan, and allied clans, special kinship usage, and kinship terminology will provide deeper insights into the relationships and alliances considering the relationship of consanguineal and affinal kin which will provide a better understanding of the community of Tamkoang village.

INTRODUCTION

In any part of the world, the introduction of any individual or Ego¹ starts with the question What is your name? In North-East India it is followed up with the question, which state do you belong to? Depending on the name of the state one can assume the identity and ethnicity of the individual. And if the individual belongs to Nagaland, the question of Which tribe do you belong to? generally follows. If the individual belongs to the Konyak tribe, the question of which area of upper Konyaks or lower Konyaks the individual belongs to is asked. Upon answering the individual's village will be inquired about next. And in the village level the individual's clan will be asked, depending on the name of the clan, the inquirer will often say to the person, I am your relative from your paternal side or maternal side and you can call me uncle, aunty, or etc., depending on the Ego's relationship with the inquirer.

In order to understand the above concept, it is

necessary to study the kinship structure of a particular village or group because, for any Nagas before identifying themselves to any Naga tribe, the identity of the individual within the village or clan becomes fundamental. Kinship is the study of what humans do with the basic facts of life that include mating, gestation, parenthood, socialisation, siblingship, etc (Morgan, 1871). Every individual in society belongs to two different families, the family of orientation and the family of procreation. Such relationship attributes to the formation of social structure. The study of kinship has always been an intriguing fascination for social and cultural anthropologists. For the past century, the field of anthropology has identified several related concepts and terms in the study of kinships, such as descent, descent group, lineage, affinity/affine, consanguinity/cognate, and fictive kinship with different theoretical approaches. The most scientific approach to the study of the patterns of kinship systems was identified by Lewis Henry Morgan identified through kinship terminology in his 1871 work *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of*

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the Human Family, which embarked on the beginning of the distributional study of kinship system and functional study of kinship

MATERIALS & METHOD

The research data of this paper has been collected during my fieldwork conducted from February 2021 to May 2021. The research methodology for this paper has been provided by applying the method of participant and non-participant observation, formal and informal interviews, focused group discussion, and has also been supplemented with photographs and from secondary sources.

KONYAK NAGAS

The Konyak Nagas are one of the major tribes of Nagaland, inhabiting the Mon District (see Fig. 1) also known as the 'Land of *Ahng*².' The tribe's unique trait is the presence of diverse cultures and traditions

within the community with multiple dialects spoken in more than a hundred villages. The Konyaks are found in the state of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, some villages in the Sibsagar district of Assam, and in Myanmar (Pongshing, 2006). The origin and meaning of the term 'Konyak' have been identified by scholars and writers with different theories and interpretations. The term can mean a man with black hair which might have been developed from the word '*khaonyak*' which means 'black head' (Konyak, 2022), it has also been assumed that the term is derived from two root words '*khou*'--head and '*nyak*'-black which literally means people with black hair or blackhead (Singh, 1994) and there is also an assumption that the term might have been derived from the Tobu area dialect '*khunyak*' which means human. The Konyak Nagas are a diverse group with different traditions, customs, cultures, traditional attires, and dialects varying through the different geographical locations of the Mon district of Nagaland.



Fig. 1: Map of Mon District of Nagaland
Source: Maps of India (2015).

The district is divided into two groups based on its geographical distribution. The Southern part of the district is known as Upper Konyak and the Northern part of the district is known as Lower Konyak. The first extensive ethnographic research work on the Konyak Nagas was conducted by an Austrian Anthropologist Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and has documented the people and the culture of the tribe of Konyak Nagas in his three books, *The Naked Nagas* in 1939, *The Konyak Nagas* in 1969, and *Return to the Naked Nagas: An Anthropologist's view of Nagaland 1936–1970* in 1976. He has also included the work on the Kinship terminology of the Wakching village in his book, *The Konyak Nagas*, 1969. In the concluding remark of his book, he writes,

“It would be necessary to record the Kinship terms current in Konyak dialects other than that of Wakching, a task which I was not able to complete in the time at my disposal (109).”

Based on his statement it is comprehensible to state that most of his research work was collected from the Southern region of the Lower Konyaks and the northern region of the Upper Konyaks remained untouched. Since the Konyak Nagas are a diverse group with rich culture and traditions it will not be biased to draw a general idea or picture of the Konyak Nagas based on Western ethnographic research work. And so, it is becoming necessary to document the culture and traditions of those groups who were less privileged to be studied in the past due to the geographical distance and the fact that most of the

cultures have been disappearing because of various factors. And therefore, this paper will attempt to study the kinship system of the Konyak Nagas of Tamkoang village which will be the central focus that will provide deep insights into human relationships and alliances, including those who can or cannot marry, mechanisms that are used to create families, and the kinship terminology within and outside the kin, that will provide a better insight into the people, culture, and traditions of the Konyak Nagas as a whole.

TAMKOANG VILLAGE

The Konyaks are distributed into ten areas. The areas of Mon, Tapi, Tizit, Phomching, and Wakching lie in the northern zone also known as Lower Konyak and the areas of Chen, Aboi, Longching, Mopong, and Tobu lie in the southern zone also known as the upper Konyak (see Fig. 1). Each area consists of 15-30 villages and speaks different dialects across those areas making it difficult to converse or to understand when spoken in their own dialects. The traditions, customs, and practices are similar among the villages of the Tobu area. The dialect spoken across the villages of the Tobu area are the same with different phonetic sounds. The Tamkoang village is in the Tobu area which lies in the Northernmost region of the Mon district in Nagaland also known as upper Konyak (see Fig. 2). The village is located at the latitude of 26.379004° and longitude of 95.008648° with a population of 2,873, out of which 1,509 are males and 1,364 are females (Census, 2011). It is situated 157 km away from district headquarter Mon.



Fig. 2: Ground-level view of Tamkoang Village
Source: Author

The culture, practice, and tradition of the Tobu area have been impacted immensely by the introduction of Christianity. The new religion brought new faith along with both positive and negative impacts on the culture and traditions of the people living in this region. Prior to that they believed in animism and use to practice the tradition of tattooing their face, chest, and legs (see Fig. 3), and headhunting but these practices were banned after the transition of the belief system which can be subjected to positive impacts. Along with the discontinuation of the

practices the people were asked to burn down the traditional attires and ornaments which were deemed as evil by the missionaries and manipulated them into selling their ornaments and artifacts which have been passed down from generation, this act can be labelled as the negative impacts of those people who were given the responsibility of spreading the gospel but took advantage of those ignorant villages by destroying the material culture that would have been their identity if preserved.



Fig. 3: Bemang and Thongo of Tamkoang village are two of the few remaining individuals of the tattooed group. They are the last generations that have practiced the traditions of tattooing the face, chest, and legs.

Source: Author

In Tamkoang village the practice of tattooing culture and head-hunting was abolished in 1958 after the coming of Christianity. However, the social institution of Kinship remained unaffected. The people still uphold and follow the rules and regulations that are included in the kinship system. Before understanding the kinship system, it is necessary to understand the clan system of the Tamkoang village.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Rules of Descent

Descent is a cultural rule which affiliates an individual with a particular selected group of kinsmen for a certain social purpose such as mutual assistance

or the regulation of marriage (Morgan, 1964). It is also the process regulating the recruitment of members into a social group, either through the father or the mother (River, 1914). Leach (1961) defined descent as the principle of recruitment that allows an individual to make their own place in the social group.

The study on the rules of descent among the Konyaks of Tamkoang village found that they practice patrilineal rules of descent (see Fig. 4). The descent is traced through the male line and the succession and inheritance are passed through the male descent. All the sons and daughters born in the family belong to the same descent but only the sons continue the affiliation. They also practice the law of primogeniture where the inheritance of land and property that includes all the material possessions are passed to

the eldest son. Along with the inheritance the eldest son inherits the responsibility of rendering care and nurturing towards his biological parents during their old age. However, in recent years it has been observed that the law of primogeniture has changed because of migration. Because of the responsibilities the elder sons migrate to towns and cities to earn a living and settle down. Therefore, the responsibility of the oldest son automatically passes down to the next son who stays behind in the village and automatically inherits all the inheritance which was supposed to be inherited by the elder son of the family.

Clans of Tamkoang Village

A clan is a unilineal kinship group. A clan is often a combination of a few lineages and descent that may be ultimately traced to a mythical ancestor of a human or human-like animal, plant, or even in inanimate (Majumdar and Madan, 1957). It is also a unilateral kin group based on either patrilineal or matrilineal descent. A clan is also an exogamous division of a tribe, the members of which are tied together by belief in common descent, the common possession of a totem, or habitation of a common territory (Rivers, 1914). A clan is found in almost all the primitive societies of the world. The study based on the nature of origin shows that the clans of Tamkoang village follow the patrilineal clan system where the ancestors are traced from a common forefather through a series

of male links (see Fig. 4). And they strictly follow the rule of exogamy where the man is not allowed to marry someone from his own social group.

The Tamkoang village was established by six clans that migrated from different villages. Each clan has its own story of origin and still maintains and establishes the relationship with the villages or clans of its origin. The six clans consider themselves the ancestral founding fathers of the Tamkoang village. The six clans are *Chihba-shu* (see Fig. 5), *Eanglam*, *Anden-shu*, *Suhkoang-shu*, *Yubuh-shu*, and *Bühsa*. Before the establishment of the village, the six clans have already formed an alliance among themselves. The allied clans are *Chihba-shu*, *Andenshu*, and *Eanglam*, and *Yubuh-shu* and *Bühsa*. *Suhkoang-shu* (see Fig. 6) is the only independent clan. The allied clans consider themselves *süm-phang*³. Once the alliance is formed, the clans consider themselves as family and define the alliance relationship as *sakcha*⁴. When they are introduced to clans of such alliances they usually say, '*müm sakcha nang*⁵,' which can be translated to 'We are the same.' Even though the allied clans are not related through blood and do not share common ancestors or the same route of migration the practice of strict exogamy does not allow any form of union among the allied clans. It is considered taboo to have any kind of relationship among the allied clans. And the practice called *yaobüh-liiksa* prevents them from engaging in such activities. Such prohibited activities are considered an incest taboo.

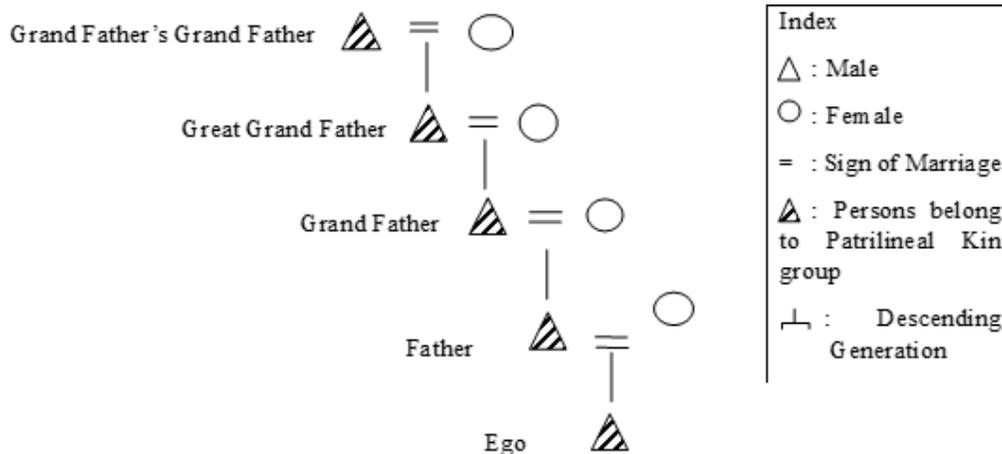


Fig. 4: Tamkoang village follows the Principle of Patrilineal Descent and Patrilineal clan system
Source: Author

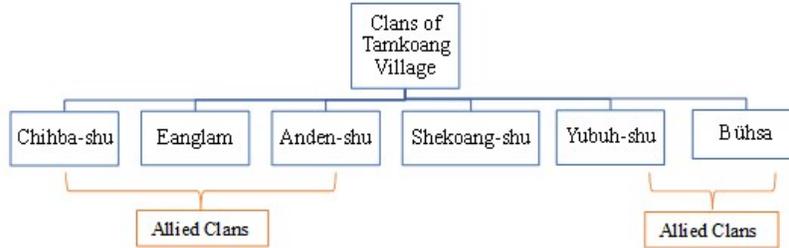


Fig. 5: Organization chart showing the six Clans and its allied Clans of Tamkoang village.
Source: Author



Fig. 6: The first house of the *Chihba-shu* clan that was built during the establishment of the village. The practice of the law of primogeniture has enabled the property to pass down to the eldest son of every generation since its establishment. At present the house is owned by the eldest son of the present generation Shri Anden Ngamlao.

Source: Author

The Concept of Yaobüh-Lüksa

This concept comes under special kinship usage. E.B. Tylor and other anthropologists termed this concept as the avoidance relationship. It is the relationship that involves great formality by virtue of the respective kin categories to which those in the relationship belong. The obligation to certain restricted relations between a son-in-law and mother-in-law in a matrilineal society (Tylor, 1924), the avoidance relationship between a brother and a sister among the Vedda, a Cylonese tribe and the Trobriand Islanders (Frazer, 1922), etc. Among the Veddas, brother, and sister may neither live under the same roof nor take food together, no kind of intimacy or familiarity can ever develop between them. The psychoanalytical explanation of Freud (1943) took great interest in interpreting avoidance. He argued

that the avoidance relationship is about sexual attraction and the need to prevent sexual intimacy between various kinds of relatives. However, Radcliffe Brown (1952) explained that such relationships occur as an arrangement to prevent any possibility of conflict between the kins. In addition, Majumdar and Madan (1957) wanted to point out the attitudes towards tabooed relatives as a behaviour of respect rather than that of hostile and ambivalent nature. However, if we look deeper into the concept of *Yaobüh-lüksa*, the practice among the people of Tamkoang village it involves more weightage than the concept of avoidance relationships that have already been studied.

Yaobüh-lüksa is a combination of two interdependent terms *yaobüh* and *lüksa*. The term *yaobüh* does not have any specific definitions in the

English language however, it is generally applied to the relationship that obliges to certain rules and regulations and contacts of any kind between brothers and sisters, and paternal aunts and nephews and the term *lüksa* applies to those individuals belonging to the category of such relationships. The subjectivity of such a relationship is more towards the relationship between the brother and the sister. It is also the tag that defines an individual whether he or she is marriageable or non-marriageable. Usually while conversing about a certain individual, they usually say, 'Toh tuh yaobüh nang,' or 'toh tuh lüksa nang,' or 'toh tuh yaobüh-lüksa nang.'

The above statement can be generally translated as he or she is non-marriageable and belongs to the same family. The concept of *yaobüh-lüksa* is a sacred relationship that exists between the individuals that belong to this category of relationship. Such a relationship also involves rules and regulations on what to say, how to act, how to dress, etc. Some of the rules and regulations that are considered taboo in the concept of *yaobüh-lüksa* are as follows:

The Rules of Speech: There are certain words and sentences that are avoided between brothers and sisters or aunt and nephew when they are in the same room. Sentence that involves the terms like *say*-sleep, *shih*-pee, *ëh*-excrement, *thao*-sit, *ingkheak chai*-changing clothes, *say-thang*-bed, *thao-thung*-a place to sit, etc., are avoided. Even the terms that involve body parts such as *üng kuh*-butt, *ngap*-waist, *yin*--stomach, etc. are avoided. A few examples are as follows:

- i. *Nüüh choang* is a term used for a ladder in the Tamkoang dialect and the term *nüüh* is also used for breast. Therefore, the usage of such kind of words is avoided in front of *yaobüh-lüksa*. The dialect of Tamkoang village involves the usage of some terms that have the same pronunciation but different meanings. Some words are the same expressing different meanings but if such words are associated with meaning associated with any body parts, it is avoided.
- ii. The term *kiak* is used for expressing meanings such as 'to spread the legs' in the Tamkoang dialect. This term is avoided as it involves the use of spreading and legs. The

term *thuh-kum* is used to express a seat made from wood. In the olden days, after carving out the bed from the wood, the remaining wood pieces were usually used for making the wooden seat. Since the term *say-thang* - bed is avoided and the object is carved out from the bed itself which involves sleeping that is why the term is refrained from mentioning, etc.

- iii. The term *yen joh* (see Fig. 7) is a traditional ornament used by the menfolk as a traditional dress. It is a belt-like structure that is worn around the waist and the back is used for keeping a *dao* or machete. This term is avoided because the material is used on the waist of the men's body which involves the butt. Terms such as *söng-luk*- traditional wrap-around used by women are refrained from using as well. Any items that are related to covering the lower body parts are avoided.



Fig. 7: Men of Tamkoang village in traditional attire wearing the traditional ornament called *yen joh* around the waist.

Source: Author

The Rules of Avoiding: The siblings are never seated together in the same room or kitchen except for certain situations like family gatherings, etc. The sisters will leave the premises if the brothers enter the kitchen or room. It applies to all the siblings irrespective of their elder or younger positions in the family. In the olden days, the siblings do not sleep under the same roof, they use to sleep in their respective boy's dormitory⁶ and girl's dormitory.

Rules for Females: The females of the family are expected to dress and sit appropriately. Sitting positions with the legs open is avoided. Certain gestures and behaviours that are considered inappropriate are avoided as well in front of brothers and any elderly men in the family.

Rules of Marriage: When any female member of the family gets married and during the delivery, the brothers are exempted from attending. The brothers of the family are also exempted from consuming the meat of the sister's daughter or son's naming ceremony.

Rules for Girls Before and After Marriage: Before marriage girls are not allowed to bring guys home and to engage in any intimate activities with the opposite gender in their father, brother, father's brother and male cousin, and paternal male cousin's house. It is believed that those activities are a form of disrespect and an insult to the men of the house and will bring bad fortune in the form of a short life span to the male generation. After the marriage, the daughter with her husband is not allowed to stay under the same roof along with the men of the family. After marriage, they are allotted the house of her paternal aunt during visitation, etc.

These rules and regulations are applicable to all the clans in the village. Mostly, the clan comes from the same ancestors sharing the same blood and the allied clans are those clans that came together with some mutual agreement and so on. But the concept of *yaobüh-lüksa* is not only for the clan sharing the same ancestor or blood, it is also applicable for the allied clans even though they share different ancestors. When two or more clans come together, they consider themselves as one. And all the male and female born under those allied clans are considered brothers and sisters and marriage or any kind of relationship are forbidden and they adhere to

the concept of *yaobüh-lüksa*. These are a few of the many rules and regulations related to the concept of *yaobüh-lüksa*.

The Practice of Naming a Child.

The most intriguing practice of the clans of Tamkoang village is the practice of naming a child. Each clan has its own name for both the male child and the female child. There are at least twenty names in each clan. And the names have been used in every generation. Every individual born in the clan is given a combination of two names, a first name, and a second name. Example: - *Bechung Chihba, Anden Ngamlao, Chingnyao Poangnyu*, etc., The use of the clan title is not practiced. There are some names that are owned only by specific clans. The names such as *Bechung Chihba, Thongo Khushu, Shellen Sühtuh*, etc., are used only by the *Chihba-shu* clan. Names such as *Mesheang Pongsa, Yanghi Langphong*, etc., are used only by the *Yubuhshu* clan. Most of the names are shared among the allied clans.

For example: *Chihba-shu, Eanglam*, and *Anden-shu* share most of the names commonly. And the rest of the names are a combination of the same first name and different second names among these allied clans. Some names like the first name *Khole* for males are combined with another name depending on the clan. The clan of *Chihba-shu* combines the name *Khole Chutba* and the clan of *Andenshu* combines the name *Khole Laoba*. The first name for the female *Neshe* is also combined with *Neshe Eangnyu* by *Chihba-shu* and *Eanglam* clans, and *Neshe Eangtho* by *Andenshu* clan, etc. The allied clans of *Yubuh-shu* and *Bühsa* are different from the first group but share the same procedure of naming as the first allied clans. Few names are used only by the specific clan such as the names *Shenok Chutba, Yanghe Langphong*, and etcetera are used only by the *Yubuhshu* clan, and the names such as *Angke Lalao, Nikay Maohnyu*, etc., are used only by the *Bühsa* clan. The rest of the names are a combination of the first same name and a different second name.

Recognizing the Individual's Clan Through Names

The six clans also share alliance relationships with clans from other villages respectively. The practice of naming the individual according to the clan allows

the people from outside or other villages to recognize the identity of the individual which allows them to know whether they are from the same clan or different. The names are associated directly with the clans so the name becomes the identity of a person. The names also allow the individual to recognize the kinship terminology of how to address the person because based on the individual's name one can assume the clan of the individual.

Kinship Terminology

The kinship terms by which the Konyak Nagas address each other are of unusual simplicity, and so few that the same term is used to address persons standing in quite different relationships to the speaker (Von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1969). The terms used for addressing each other among the Konyak Nagas of Tamkoang village are also of the simplified versions as compared to the other villages of Mon district where the kinship terms of address are rather in the nature of complexity. Among the Konyak Nagas of Tamkoang village, the terms used for addressing the person are the same within the clans as well as the allied clans. Some terms like the term for grandfather and grandmother from both the paternal and maternal sides of the ego are the same as well. The basic terms of address from the consanguineous as well as affinal kinsmen of the Tamkoang village and their connotations are as follows:

- i. *Epu*: This term is used for addressing the ego's father's father; mother's father; father's grandmother; mother's grandfather; and grandfather's brother; grandfathers' male cousin; grandfather extended male cousin; and grandmother's brother from both the paternal and maternal side. Also used for addressing those individuals from other clans who are old enough to be addressed as *epu*.
- ii. *Epi*: This term is used for addressing the ego's father's mother; mother's mother; father's grandmother; mother's grandmother; grandmother's sister; grandmother's female cousin; grandmother's extended female cousin; and grandfather's sister from both the paternal and maternal side.
- iii. *Epa*: This term is used for addressing the ego's father; father's brother; father's male

cousin; father's male extended cousin; and the term is also used for the mother's paternal auntie's son.

- iv. *Enyao*: This term is used for addressing the ego's mother; mother's sister; mother's female cousin; and mother's extended female cousin.
- v. *Ehao*: This term is used for mother's brother; mother's male cousin; mother's male extended cousin.
- vi. *Enye*: This term is used for addressing the father's sister; the father's female cousin; and the father's extended female cousin.
- vii. *Echai*: This is a general term used for addressing the ego's elder brother; father's brother's son; fathers' sister's son; mothers' sister's son; and mothers' brother's son (older than ego).
- viii. *Enya*: This is also a general term used for addressing the ego's elder sister; fathers' brother's daughter; fathers' sister's daughter; mothers' brother's daughter; mothers' sister's daughter (older than ego).

The above terms used for addressing use the prefix *e*. For the purpose of reference, the prefix *e* is used with the same root; thus 'the father' is *epa*, and the 'mother' is *enyao*. There are no specific terms for addressing the elder uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, etc., so the term is modified by combining the terms with the use of *khai büh* which means elder, and *sün büh* which means younger before the connotations such as *khai büh epa* which means elder paternal uncle, *sün büh epa* which means younger paternal uncle, *khai büh enyao* - elder maternal aunt, *sün büh enyao* - younger maternal aunt, *khai büh ehao* - elder maternal uncle, *sün büh ehao* - younger maternal uncle, *khai büh enye* - elder paternal aunt, *sün büh enye* - younger paternal aunt, and etc. There are terms as well to address the younger individuals, in-laws, friends, cross-cousins, etc. which are as follows:

- i. *Amoah*: This is a general term used for addressing the male group who is younger than the ego.
- ii. *Aya*: This is a general term used for addressing the female group who is younger than the ego.
- iii. *Nangse*: This term is used for addressing the

father's sister's son or daughter and; the mother's brother's son or daughter (cross-cousins from both the paternal and maternal sides).

- iv. *Koi*: This is a general term used by the male ego for addressing the male group of the same batch.
- v. *Nangla*: This is a general term used by the female ego for addressing the female group of the same batch
- vi. *Minjam*: This is a general term used by both males and females for addressing individuals with the same name.
- vii. *Saobüh*: This is a term used for the affinal kins for addressing the in-laws in general.
- viii. *Lilam*: This is a general term for addressing the paternal both elder and younger sister's son and daughter; paternal female cousin's son and daughter.
- ix. *Shutey*: This term is used for addressing grandchildren in general.
- x. *Sahtey*: This term is used for addressing children in general.

For elders, the terms of addressing individuals who are younger than them are not restricted to the above connotations. They have the liberty to either use the terms or to address them by names directly. But for the younger generations, it is compulsory to address the elders with respect by addressing them with the above-given terms. It is considered disrespectful to address any person who is elder than them by name. Suppose the ego has a nephew who is of the same age or a niece who is fewer years older than the ego, it is compulsory for the niece and nephew to address the ego as an uncle. It follows the birth order as well as the genealogical position.

There are no specific terms for addressing the husband and wife. It is found that the terms which are used for referring them to the third person are used. The term for husband is *pa* and for wife is *nyao*. While referring the spouses to the third person the use of *tüh* is combined with the term *pa* and *nyao*. So, they refer to each other as *tüh-pa* and *tüh-nyao*. It is found that the practice of teknonymy is also used among spouses. It is the practice that combines the child's

name and parental term for addressing the spouses rather than referring to each other by personal names. Here, the children's names are used first and then combined with the term *tüh-pa* or *epa* meaning father. Eg: - XYZ's *epa* or XYZ's *tüh-pa*.

Since it is an exogamous society, it is important for the ego to recognize the clans of the other individual for addressing them with the category of terms depending on the relationship the ego shares with the other person. The allied clans are also considered as one so the terms of address are the same as the terms used for addressing the consanguineous kins. They follow strict exogamic rules so the question of the marriageable and non-marriageable group can be recognized through the terms of address. The terms such as *epa*--paternal uncle, *enyao*--maternal aunt, *ehao*--maternal uncle, and *enye*--paternal aunt are important because from the paternal side, all the individuals addressed as *epa* and *enye* are considered as consanguineous kins, and the terms such as *ehao* and *enyao* are considered as non-consanguineous kins or marriageable clans. From the maternal side, the terms such as *ehao* and *enyao* are considered consanguineous kins from the mothers' side, and the terms *epa* and *enye* are considered non-consanguineous.

CONCLUSIONS

The Konyak Nagas being one of the biggest major tribes of Nagaland are a diverse group with different practices, traditions, and customs within the tribe itself. The culture of Tamkoang village has remained unnoticed because of the distance that disallows any researcher to explore the past as well as the present. However, this paper reveals that even within this one village the traditions of upholding the kinship structure are very much alive and different from those ethnographic works done in the other Konyak areas. The study on the clan system has shown that the sense of brotherhood among the people is practiced vigorously not only within the clan but also with the allied clans. The concept of *yaobüh-lüksa* does not limit only to the basic rules and regulations of the rules of avoidance that the researchers have studied so far. The depth of this concept is vast and it can be achieved only with the proper documentation of this concept independently.

The most notable feature of the kinship terminology of the Tamkoang village is the absence of any distinction in the terms of address used with respect to elder persons of the same exogamous group and of the different exogamous groups. The terms *ejai* and *enya* for referring to brother and sister are used simultaneously for both the paternal and maternal sides. The term *ejai* is used even for potential marriageable partners who belong to other clans or villages. This form of address is dropped in case the man becomes the lover or the husband. Similarly, the terms *epu* and *epi* used for addressing the grandfather and grandmother from both paternal and maternal sides are the same. The ego's grandfather from both sides belongs to two different clans and villages. The ego's relationship to his paternal grandfather from whom he inherits the property which is hereditary in nature is different from the maternal grandfather who belongs to different clans and villages. Based on G. P. Murdock's (1949) identification of six major systems of terminology on a global basis, the kinship terminology of Tamkoang village does not exactly fall under any group. However, it bears similarities with the Iroquois system and the Omaha system. Just like the Iroquois system, the father and father's brother are referred to here by the same name as well as the mother and mother's sisters. Mother's brother and father's sister are referred to by different terms. And, the parallel cousins are also equated with the ego's brother and sister under a single term. The difference is in the case of cross-cousins, here in the Iroquois system, cross-cousins of both the sets are referred to with the same term but differentiated by sex and according to the kinship terminology of Tamkoang village, the terms for cross-cousins of both sexes from the paternal and maternal sides are defined by a single term as '*nangse*.' And with the Omaha system, the similarities can be observed only with the traits where the parallel cousins from both sides are considered siblings. Therefore, considering the findings on the kinship system of Tamkoang village it can be assumed that the classifications identified by the earlier researchers do not apply to all the primitive societies on a global basis.

The major observations reveal that the arrival of Christianity has influenced every sphere of life, resulting in many changes taking place in the field of

economy, society, and culture of the people of Tamkoang village. Such influence has directly affected the traditions and customs of the culture that existed in the past. Some changes can be observed as well in the practice of the incest taboo or *yaobüh-lüksa*. After the acceptance of Christianity, the second generation does not follow the rules and regulations of avoidance, speech, dress, and gestures. But apart from that, the other practices still find their ways to exist unaffected by the influence of modernisation and advanced thoughts. After some years the traditions and cultures in all the villages of Konyak Nagas will be modified or lost. It is a threatening call for the extinction of various cultures and traditions of Konyak Nagas. Therefore, it is necessary to document and preserve the traditions, practices, customs, and cultures both tangible and intangible before it gets completely extinct or dissolved with modernisation.

NOTES

- 1 Ego- in this paper the individual will be identified as Ego.
- 2 Ahngs is a plural term for Ahng which means King. Mon District is known as the Land of Ahngs because of the practice of Kingship among the Konyak tribe of Nagaland. Ahng is the supreme head of the community. He has the political power to rule the people. It is his responsibility to keep his territory powerful in peace and prosperity (Wangsa, 2000). The Ahngs are regarded as the Chief of the village. He rules his village as well as those villages that lie under his jurisdiction. It is a hereditary system where the sons born with royal blood are entitled to become the Ahng of their village or jurisdiction.
- 3 Süm-phang - It is a term in Tamkoang dialect that defines family.
- 4 Sakcha - The term defines the meaning of same in Tamkoang dialect.
- 5 Müm sakcha nang-It means we are same in Tamkoang dialect.
- 6 Dormitory is basically a room built for unmarried boys and girls. Here the term dormitory is different from the Morungs which is a social institution used only by the men.

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