

Social and Cultural Life of the Wancho Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The Wanchos are the indigenous people inhabiting the Patkai Hills of Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Wanchos are the one who at one point of time was actively engaged in the head hunting. However the practice is now extinct since many years. The wanchos are famous for wood carving and bead work. The social life is governed by the traditional chieftain system assisted by the council of elders. The paper is based on primary data collected by using observation method, interview etc. Author broad objective was to know the socio cultural aspect of the wanchos.

KEYWORDS: Wancho, longding dist, traditional, chieftainship, Head hunting, wood carving, bead work

How to cite this paper: Dr. (Mrs) Kiran Kumari | Mrs Modang Reena "Social and Cultural Life of the Wancho Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-4 | Issue-4, June 2020, pp.572-573, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd30991.pdf



IJTSRD30991

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INTRODUCTION

People all throughout the world regardless of their origin and geographical setup possess their own peculiar way of living. What distinguishes them from other is not their biological genetic force but their culture.

Culture and society are interrelated, one doesn't exist without other. A society is composed of interacting individual and interacting group sharing a common culture. A society is a geographical aggregate consisting of individual who live a common life and group interrelated with one another.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on experiences information collected from different primary and secondary sources. Various books were consulted for obtaining secondary data.

STUDY AREA

Longding dist is one of the 17th administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh in .It shares its boundaries with Tirap district in the east, Nagaland in west and Myanmar in the south. Longding district was created by bifurcating erstwhile Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh on 26th September 2011 by Arunachal Pradesh assembly. The total geographical extension is 1063 sq.km.the total population in Longding district is 56953 out of which 28710 are male and 28243 are female according to 2011 census. The tribe inhabiting the district is known as wancho.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the data gathered the following significant finding were drawn:-

Society:

The wancho society is characterized by the existence of the class distinction the "Wangham" or the chief and " Wangpan "the commoner. The chief enjoys special facilities and are honoured in every sphere of life. Wangsa and Wangsu two classes spring from the matrimonial union between Wangham father and Wangpan mother occupying the third stratum of social classification or hierarchy. social distinction between the classes is very scrupulously observed in every sphere of their life. As for example in the village festival the Wangpans are not allowed to take meal in the same row with the Wangham. They are also not allowed to marry a girl from Wangham's family although there is no restriction on the part of Wangham to marry a Wangpan girl.

FAMILY

Family consist of the father mother and their children. This group form the household which transform to an extended family. Eldest son who by custom live in the parental house, he has the responsibility of looking after the family and age old parent. Other son has to establish individual household after marriage. All the family member of the family take their meal from the common kitchen but in case of chief its different. Chief marries a girl from same village especially to cook for him, she is calld " shachonnu ".The other wife cook

their own food separately. Each wife has her separate room called "Noi".

BACHELOR DORMITORY

The Wanchos have well institutionalized bachelor dormitory system which is called "Pa", but this institutionalized system is declining and almost became non-functional. In the good old days bachelor dormitory system was a part of life. The bachelor dormitory was an important educational institution for youth. The custom and tradition have been transmitted from generation to generation through folk music dance, folk tales and oral traditions, carving of figure on wood. It was also used as guard house during the times of war

The bachelor dormitory is decorated with wood carvings and skull of buffaloes and other animals sacrificed on various occasion. There is qualification for admission to PA. generally children do not stay in the 'PA'. As member though they may enter it, but women of any age are not allowed to enter. Only on the day of construction of "PA" young girls and women may serve food in the feast given on that day.

Each "PA" has a big log drum called **KHAM**. Different rhythm or sound of the log drum has different meaning. Each rhythm indicates different meaning. People on hearing the rhythm or sound act according to the message it conveyed.

Like boys dormitory girls dormitory was also prevalent known as "NOI" where the girl would stay after attaining puberty till they choose their life partner and settles for a family life. During her stay in dormitory she would learn weaving, cooking and ethical code of conduct. Males were allowed to enter the "NOI" but strict exogamy is maintained. The boys and girls of the same clan cannot enter in the dormitory of the same clan.

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