

Social and Cultural Stratification in North East India



Edited by
Madhu Rajput

India's North East is an area of immense potential, varied culture and diversity which is unique and all embracing. Whether it is food, fashion, music, arts or religion, the region has much to offer. The development in cultural field is a phenomenon which can not be ignored. It has to be recognised for change is not superficial; it has permeated all sections. Circumstances have rendered to the people of this region exceptional survival instinct and they have carved a niche for themselves in their chosen fields. Music seems to be in blood. It is difficult to travel in North East and not find euphoria of dance and music. In this book an effort has been made to trace the development of culture and growth of the North East region.

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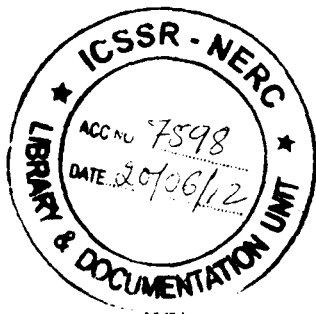
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North East India: An Introduction

India's North East, a region of mystic splendours and rich cultural heritage, is spread over an area of 262,179 sq km. It consists of eight states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mijoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It is stretched between 89.460 to 97.300 east longitude and 21.570 to 29.300 north latitude. Located in the North Easternmost corner of India, this region has 4,500 km long international border with five foreign countries namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), China and Nepal. The whole of the region is connected with the rest of the country by a tenuous 22 kilometer land corridor through Siliguri in the eastern State of West Bengal—a link that has come to be referred to as the Chicken's Neck. Comprising only 8 percent of the country's geographical area, the North East is home to a total of 4,55,87,982 people (2011 Census), which is 3.77 per cent of the country's population.

The entire region can be geographically divided into two parts: plains and the hills. The majority of those living in the plains of the region are Hindus and Muslims, while a substantial proportion of the hill tribes inhabiting the States of Meghalaya, Mijoram and Nagaland are Christians. The most populous part of the region is the Brahmaputra valley, which constitutes about 22 per cent of the region. There is stark dissimilarity among the

eight North Eastern states with respect to their resource endowments, levels of industrialization as well as infrastructural facilities. The economy of all these states remains underdeveloped with inflated service sectors. The industrial sector has mainly developed around tea, oil, timber in Assam and mining saw mills and plywood factories in other parts of the region.

ASSAM

Popularly known as the land of the red river and blue hills, Assam is the gateway to the North Eastern part of India. Situated between 90-960 east longitude and 24-280 north latitude, Assam is bordered in the north and east by the Kingdom of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. Along the south lie Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Meghalaya lies to her south-west, Bengal and Bangladesh to her west.¹

Assam has a recorded history going back to the 4th century BC. It was an independent kingdom till the end of the first quarter of the 19th century when the British conquered and annexed it to British India. The current state capital of Assam, Guwahati, known in ancient time as Pragjyotishpura or the Eastern City of Light, was the capital of Kamrup which finds frequent mention in the Great Hindu Epic Mahabharata and other Sanskrit volumes and historical lores.

History is a witness to immigration of numerous castes and tribes into the region. The Austrians, Dravid, Tibetan, Burmese, Mongols and Aryans came from many directions and seamlessly blended into one. The Austrians were the first to inhabit the Brahmaputra valley, but after a while were driven into the hills by invaders. It is said that Khasi and Jaintia living in Meghalaya belonged to the same Austrian community. Subsequently people of Dravid community known as 'Kaibarta' or 'Bania' in modern Assam arrived and the Mongols followed them. The people of this community within the Indo- Chinese group came to be known as Tibetan- Burmese family. These people are now known as Kachhari, Dimacha, Rabha and

Lalung tribes and inhabit the hills of present day Assam.

Normally physical configuration of the hill tribes differ from that of the inhabitants of upper Assam. Assamese have round faces, somewhat flat nose, protruding eyes, high cheekbones and course hair, whereas the inhabitants of upper Assam have yellowish complexion, flat nose and long hair. Females have average or short height. In the tribals here the males wear *Dhoti* and the females wear *Blouse* and *Mekhala*. However western impact has brought upon a considerable change in the outfits of this place.²

Assamese is the principle language of Assam. Besides Assamese, Bengali and Hindi are also spoken. Other major indigenous languages are Bodo, Karbi, Mishing and Rabha. Assam is predominantly a rural economy. Most of the hill tribes in this region practice a system of cultivation known as *jhumming*. In Assam rice and jute are the main crops which are cultivated generally during the rainy season. Tea is another important crop. Other crops include mustard, sugarcane, tobacco and maize.³

There are around 23 tribes in Assam and each of the tribe exhibit distinct and exquisite ways of life. Bodo, Kachhari, Karbis and Lalungs are purely patriarchal while the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos are strictly matriarchal.

The various forms of religion in Assam are Animism, Tantricism, Brahminism and Vaishnavism. The Assamese were practicing Tantric form of rituals until the advent of the new Vashnavite religion formed by Shrimanta Sankardeva (1449-1568). The pristine form of Hinduism began only when the Aryans arrived in Assam. The present Hindu caste system emerged with the immigration of the outsiders. Neo Vaishnavism entered the land in the 15th century and is the dominant faith of the Assamese people at present. The Muslims started coming in the 13th century and established mosques in Assam. Christianity began to grow in the state from the time of the British rule and spread out to all corners of the eastern regions quickly.⁴

Caste system has never taken firm roots in the Assamese social stratification. Child marriages are almost negligible here.

The communities do marry amongst themselves but it does not happen always. The custom of elopement before marriage is also prevalent. Earlier Assamese society preferred to stay in joint families but with the spread of education and industrialization, the concept of single families has germinated. In Assamese community one can divorce with mutual consent but the institute of marriage is so strong that such cases are rarely seen. There is a scarcity of crimes and murders relating to dowry system, untouchability or cruelty towards Harijans. In Assamese communities the people of the Brahmin or Vaishnav sect eat fish but do not eat flesh and Muslim women here do not wear *burkas*.

The contribution of the Shankerdeva towards social welfare cannot be overlooked by the Assamese society. He not only enlightened social consciousness but he had also been successful in bringing about great changes in the fields of art, education, drama, music and others. The impact of Vaishnav sect can be seen in the form of 'Satra' (sessions). Shankerdeva conceived this concept. There are hundred of sessions or its branches. They were known for the artistic and cultural activities. Similarly, 'Namdhar' (prayer house) exist in each village of Assam.

Assam is a land of fairs and festivals. Most of the festivals of rest of the India are celebrated here but Bihu is the main festival. Bihu is celebrated thrice in a year—(i) Rangali Bihu (Bohag Bihu), (ii) Bhogali Bihu (Magh Bihu), (iii) Kangali Bihu (Kati Bihu). Bihu is an agriculture based festival. Rangali Bihu is celebrated to greet the Assamese New Year which is in April. Bihu in various forms is also celebrated by other tribes. Bodo community worships Kherai, besides in the months of June and July the Ambuvachi Mela of Kamakhya temple is a special attraction. A Mela is organized on Shivratri in the Umanand Temple situated in the middle of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati.⁵

From time immemorial, the people of Assam have traditionally been craftsmen. Artists, sculptors, masons, weavers, spinners, potters, goldsmiths, artisans of ivory, wood, bamboo, cane and hide have flourished in Assam from ancient times.

Every Assamese woman takes pride in weaving. They produce silk and cotton clothes of exquisite designs in their looms. Assam is renowned for its exquisite silks namely Eri, Pat and the world famous Muga silk. The *Gamocha* is one of the most easily recognizable cultural symbols of the Assamese people besides the tamol-paan (areca nut & betel leaf) which is an integral part of almost all socio-religious ceremonies. The Gamocha, a white rectangular piece of cotton hand woven cloth with primarily a red border on three sides and red woven motifs on the fourth (in addition to red, other colors are also used) is put to many uses. It is used as a towel, as a waistcloth or a loincloth; a Bihu dancer wraps it around the head in a knot, it is also hung around the neck at the prayer hall and thrown over the shoulder to signify social status or respect. Gamochas, also known as bihuwaans, are offered during Bihu as a token of love. Significantly the gamocha is used equally by all, irrespective of religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Assam is one of the most beautiful and scenic states in India. There is hardly any other state which has such variety and colour in its natural scenery and in the cultural treasure. This land of contrasts is an amazing destination with each place having something special to offer.

Spread along the mighty Brahmaputra, Guwahati is the gateway to the enchanting North Eastern India. Guwahati's landscape is dotted with temples like the great Kamakhya temple, Nabagraha temple and Umananda temple. 32 kms from Guwahati is Sualkuchi, one of the world's largest weaving villages often called the Manchester of the East. This silk town produces three unique varieties of silks, the Golden Muga, the White Pat and the warm Eri. Majuli, the world's largest river island, situated in the midst of river Brahmaputra is the centre of Vaishnava culture in Assam. There are nearly twenty two Vaishnava monasteries or satras in Majuli. The major satras are Kamalabari, Natun Kamalabari, Auniati, Garmur, Samoguri, Dakhinpat and Bengenaati. These satras are regarded as the main centers for Assamese art, music, dance, drama, handicrafts, literature and religion.⁶

CENSUS OF INDIA 2011 PROVISIONAL POPULATION
TOTALS FIGURES AT A GLANCE

1. No. of Districts		27
2. Area in sq. kms.		78,438.00
3. Population	Persons	31,169,272
	Male	15,954,927
	Female	15,214,345
4. Decadal population growth 2001-2011		
(a) In absolute numbers	Persons	4,513,744
	Male	2,177,890
	Female	2,335,854
(b) In Percentage	Persons	16.93
	Male	15.91
	Female	18.14
5. Density of population (per sq. km)		397
6. Sex Ratio (No. of females per 1000 males)		954
7. Population in age 0-6		
(a) In absolute numbers	Persons	4,511,307
	Male	2,35,088
	Female	2,206,219
(b) In percentage to total population	Persons	14.47
	Male	14.45
	Female	14.50
8. Literacy		
(a) In absolute numbers	Persons	19,507,017
	Male	10,756,937
	Female	8,750,080
(b) Rate	Persons	73.18
	Male	78.81
	Female	67.27

NAGALAND

Nagaland lies between 93° 06' longitude and 24° 27' latitude with most of the towns and villages standing 4000 feet above sea level. It is bounded by Manipur in the south, Assam in the north and west, Arunachal Pradesh in the north and Myanmar in the east with which it shares an unfenced boundary of 1,640 km. Nagaland has an area of 16,579 sq kms with a population of 19,80,602 as per the 2011 census making it one of the smallest

states of India. The region has a subtropical monsoon type of climate and receives heavy rainfall from June to October with the temperature ranging from 120 to 320 and scant rainfall in winter with December and January being the coldest months. Mount Saramati is the highest peak at 12,662 feet above the sea level.

The Nagas were people who were originally referred to as Naka in Burmese languages, which mean 'people with pierced ears.' It is also said that the word "Naga" was used by the British which actually means "Naked" (in Hindi "nanga" means naked). The British first came in contact with the Nagas in 1832 and finally took full control of the administration in 1880 after a long battle. When they returned to England in 1947 the Naga territory was annexed to the administration of the Assam state as the Naga Hills by the Indian Government. On 1st December 1963, Nagaland became the 16th full fledged state of Indian Union. Today it has 11 districts with Kohima as its capital. It has a literacy rate of more than 70 percent, one of the highest in India.⁷

Naga people are divided into various tribes, sub tribes, clans and sub clans. In Nagaland, the 17 Nagas tribes are Anagami, Ao, Chakhersang, Chang, Chirr, Khiemnungan, Konyak, Lotha, Makhori, Phom, Rengna, Sangtaim, Sena, Tikhir, Yinchunger, Zeliang and Pochur.⁸ More than 85 percent of the people in the state speak tribal languages. English is spoken by 35 percent of the population. It is also the official language of the state. Nagas in the beginning were animist by faith. They believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, in angels and also in life after death. In the 19th Century with the advent of British rule, Christianity was introduced and Baptist missionaries became active in the regime. As a result, the population now is predominantly Christian.⁹

The soil of the Naga Hills is generally red laterite superficially covered by loamy soil that can be distinguished as red soil, grey-brown soil, black grass land, sandy soil, silty soil and clayey soil. There are large deposits of iron, chromite, salt rock and limestone. Other minerals found include brown coal, petroleum, copper and gold. However the main occupation

of the Nagas is agriculture. They practice two methods of cultivation namely wet terrace cultivation and jhumming.

The main crop is rice which is their staple food. The Nagas are generally non-vegetarians for ecological and cultural reasons. Chilly is an inseparable ingredient of curry and bamboo shoots of different kinds are very popular. Earlier rice beer called 'zu' was a common drink but with the introduction of Christianity many have abandoned the consumption. The Nagas also grow crops like potato, sweet potato, garlic, sugarcane, barley, cotton, beans, maize, millets, ginger and different species.¹⁰

Naga people are simple, friendly and hard working. The ancient Naga society was classless and casteless. Equality was the basis of social relations. The whole fabric of the Naga society is woven in social, religious and political customs. No Naga can marry another woman until divorce is accepted. The practice of monogamy is still honored by the Naga people.

Naga society is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal in structure. Naga women unlike other tribal women have a high place in society, work and agricultural activities. The girls are free to choose the husbands of their choice. For many tribes the payment of bride price as a custom is not essential, unlike the Lothas and the Semas. Divorce is easy in all tribes and remarriage is permitted. Although a married woman has no right in the property of her father, the unmarried daughter has a right to a share of property of her parents. Women also inherit rare ornaments, expensive wares and dresses from their mothers, sisters and aunts. Customary funeral practices among the Nagas are based on religious faith. The dead body of a person is buried with honour and dignity.¹¹

The Nagas are distinguished by an impressive bearing and splendid dress. The most prominent item of Naga dress is shawl. It is different for every tribe. The most prominent ones are Aviki-iphii (Semas), Tsungkotepsu (Aos), Kasksi nei (Chang) and Lohe (Anagamis). The most popular decorations for male dresses are ivory armlet, leggings, headdress, earrings, ornamented belts and embroidered cross straps. Women wear shawl, skirts and knitted sleeves of shawls, necklaces and brass earrings.

Tattooing is the form of decorating body parts like thigh, breast and face.¹²

The arts and crafts of Nagaland are inseparable; they are mostly associated despite their utilitarian aspects, with socio-religious rituals and ceremonies. The Nagas are known for making wonderful woolen clothes and utilitarian items. The important handicrafts of Nagas are woodcarving, bamboo work, pottery and blacksmithy. The Naga shawls are reputed all over India. Naga furniture made of bamboo and cane are also famous for the intricate craftsmanship.

The tradition of head hunting is no longer practiced in Nagaland. The practice had the basis in the cultural and religious life of Naga people in the olden days. Taking a head during a raid was the greatest honor for a man which specially conferred on him the right to put on certain dresses and jewellery. In many Naga shawls there are designs of mithun symbolizing wealth of the owner, elephant and tiger representing the valour of the man and human head indicating his success during head-hunting.

Also, the art of wood carving among the different Naga tribes had been under the practice of head hunting and Morung (bachelor's dormitory) institution. Carvings on the beams and pillars of a warrior men's house and morung primarily include human heads. Head hunting was the inspiration of Naga painting also.¹³

The Nagas celebrate different festivals throughout the year with feasting, dance and music built around the community life of the people. Most of these festivals revolve around agriculture where people predominantly offer prayer to the Supreme Being. Some of the important festivals of the Naga tribe are as follows: Anagami (Sekernyi - February), Chakesang (Tsukhen -iyie - March or April), Konyak (Aoling- April), Ao (Moatsu- May), Sema (Tuluni- July) and Lotha (Tokhu- Emong-November).¹⁴

Tourist attractions of Nagaland are not only the exotic tribes, their habitat and culture but also its natural flora and fauna, its fairs and festivals and its well known cities. Kohima, the capital city of Nagaland presents a magnificent view of the

rugged Naga Hills. Khonoma is one of the villages of Nagaland famous for its wildlife sanctuary which encompasses rare species of endangered plant life as well as wild life. Its beautiful terrace farming is a sight to behold. Tesminyu, Japfu Peak, Dzukou Valley and Peren are the interesting tourist spots in Khonoma. Wokha is another picturesque town of Nagaland. Home of the Lotha tribals, it is a land of superb oranges and pineapples.

CENSUS OF INDIA 2011 PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS
FIGURES AT A GLANCE NAGALAND

Population	Persons	1,98,0602	
	Male	1,025,707	
	Female	954,895	
DECADAL POPULATION GROWTH 2001-2011			
		Absolute	Percentage
	Persons	(-) 9434	(-) 047
	Male	(-) 21,434	(-) 2.09
	Female	12,000	1.26
DENSITY OF POPULATION (per Sq Km)			
		119	
SEX RATIO (Females per 1000 Males)			
		931	
POPULATION IN THE AGE GROUP 0-6			
		Absolute	Percentage to total population
	Persons	285,981	14.44
	Male	147,111	14.34
	Female	138,870	14.54
LITERATES			
		Absolute	Literacy rate
	Persons	1,357,579	80.11
	Male	731,796	83.29
	Female	625,783	76.69

MANIPUR

Nesting in the slopes of the south flowing Sub-Himalayan ranges in the North East of India at the latitude 23.80° N to 25.68° N and longitude 93.03° E to 94.78° E, lies Manipur.

Manipur came under the British rule after the First Anglo Manipuri war of 1891. After India became independent on August 15, 1947, the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947 established a democratic form of Government with the Maharaja as the Executive Head and a legislature constituted by election on adult franchise. This legislative assembly functioned till it was dissolved on the integration of the state with the Dominion of India in October, 1949. Manipur achieved full statehood on January 21, 1972.¹⁵

Manipur, as the name suggests, is a land of jewels. Its rich culture excels in every aspect as in martial arts, dance, theater and sculpture. The charm of the place is the greenery with the moderate climate making it a tourists' heaven. The beautiful and seasonal Shirui Lily at Ukhrul (district), Sangai (Brow antlered deer) and the floating islands at Loktak Lake are few of the rare things found in Manipur. Polo, which can be called a royal game, also originated from Manipur.¹⁶

Manipur presents a mosaic of traditions and cultural patterns. Particularly, it is famous for the Manipuri style of classical dance, distinct from other Indian dance forms. The Manipuri handloom and handicraft are known for their craftsmanship as well as ingenuity, colourfulness and usefulness.

In Manipur festivals are a symbol of cultural, social and religious aspirations which remove the monotony of life by providing physical diversions, mental recreation and emotional outlet. The main festivals are: Ningol, Chakouba and Cheiraoba (The Manipur New Year).¹⁷

Theatre is a part of the Laiharaoba festivals. Theatre in Manipur today can be broadly divided, based on the texts, into religious and secular. The former is the adaptation of religious epics, performed mainly in the sacred sphere such as temples. Within this Gauralila (the story of the childhood days of

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu), Sanjenba (an episode from the play between Krishna and his cows and Gopis), and Udukhol (an episode from Krishna's childhood days) can be incorporated. These are seasonal performances commanding spiritual devotions among the audience.

Secular theatre is mostly confined to themes that are not religious and is performed in the secular or profane spheres. Within these are Shumang lila and Phampak lila (stage drama). Though the religious genre is loved profoundly by the audience, the torch of theatre is being held aloft by the secular ones. Among the latter also Shumang lila commands a very wide rustic popularity among the audience though the stage drama still does not lack its serene and dignified position mostly because of its community-based themes and styles. Etymologically Shumang lila is the combination of "Shumang" (courtyard) and "Lila" (play or performance). It is performed in an area of 13/13 ft in the centre of any open space, in a very simple style without a raised stage or any set design or heavy props such as curtains, background scenery, visual effects, etc. It uses only one table and two chairs, kept on one side of the performance space. Its claim to be the theatre of the masses is underlined by the way it is performed in the middle of an audience that surrounds it, leaving only one passage as both entrance and exit.

Shumang lila is performed by a touring band of 12-13 professional artists on invitation basis. These troupes may be exclusively female (Nupi Shumang Lila) or exclusively male (Nupa Shumang lila). Though the male characters are played by the female artists in the case of the former, what is most intriguing is the acting of the female roles by the male artists or nupishabis (male actresses). They are feminine in their looks, bodily gestures and facial expressions disguised in masculine souls.

Historically the seed of Shumang lila was sown in Phagee lila (farce), performed during the reign of Ningthourel Chandrakirti (1850-1886), though traces of it were already present in the episode of Tangkhul-Nurabi Loutaba of Laiharaoba festival. Then it was succeeded by such plays as

Ramlila, Sabha parba, Kabul lila, etc. But the real Shumang lila with various rasas (sentiments) was ushered in with the epic play Harishchandra (1918). Then it was followed by others such as Meiraba charan, Thok lila, etc. One of the most successful of this era was Moirang parba, an epic play based on the legendary lovers Khamba and Thoibi of Moirang.

On the other hand, the world of Phampak lila (stage drama) performed in the proscenium theatre is similar, in form, to the Western theatrical model and Indian Natyasastra model though its contents are indigenous. The so-called modern theatre descended on Manipuri theatre culture with the performance of Pravas Milan (1902) under the enthusiastic patronage of Sir Churchand Maharaj (1891-1941). The pace of theatrical movement was geared up with the institution of various groups such as Manipur Dramatic Union (MDU) (1930), Arian Theatre (1935), Chitrangada Natya Mandir (1936), Society Theatre (1937), Rupmahal (1942), Cosmopolitan Dramatic Union (1968), and the Chorus Repertory Theatre of Ratan Thiyam (1976). These groups started experimenting with various types of plays apart from historical and pauranic ones. Today Manipuri theatre is well respected because of various excellent productions shown in various parts of the country and abroad. Manipuri plays, both Shumang lila and stage lila, have been a regular feature in the annual festival of the National School of Drama, New Delhi.

MIZORAM

Mizoram previously known as Lushai Hills or Mizo Hills lies in the southern most corner of North East India. It is bounded on the north by the Cachar district of Assam, on the east and south east by Burma and on the west by Tripura and Bangladesh. About 75 percent of its boundaries are bounded by foreign countries.¹⁸ Its diagonals are of about 250 km North-South and 125 km East-West covering an area of 21, 087 square km with a population of 121,01,93,422 (2011 census). The state is divided into eight districts with its capital at Aizawal. The

MANIPUR POPULATION
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION, DECADAL GROWTH RATE, SEX-RATIO AND POPULATION DENSITY

District Code	State/District	Population 2011		Percentage decadal growth rate of population			Sex-Ratio (Number of Females per 1000 Males)		Population density per sq. km.	
		Persons	Males	Females	1991-01	2001-11	2001	2011	2001	2011
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
14	Manipur	2,721,756	1,369,764	1,351,992	24.86	18.65	974	987	103	122
01	Senapati	354,972	183,081	171,891	36.09	25.16	951	939	87	109
02	Tamenglong	140,143	71,762	68,381	29.23	25.69	922	953	25	32
03	Churachandpur	271,274	137,748	133,526	29.36	19.03	944	969	50	59
04	Bishnupur	240,363	120,185	120,178	15.27	15.36	993	1000	420	485
05	Thoubal	420,517	209,674	210,843	23.87	15.48	998	1006	708	818
06	Imphal West	514,683	253,628	261,055	16.70	15.82	1004	1029	856	992
07	Imphal East	452,661	225,130	227,531	19.49	14.63	991	1011	557	638
08	Ukhrul	183,115	94,013	89,102	28.83	30.07	916	948	31	40
09	Chandel	144,028	74,543	69,485	66.62	21.72	981	932	36	43

*For calculation of sex ratio, others have been considered as males

POPULATION IN THE AGE-GROUP 0-6, NUMBER OF LITERATES AND LITERACY RATE FOR STATE AND DISTRICTS : 2011

District Code	State/District	Total Population						Population in age group 0-6						Number of literates*						Literacy rate #																			
		P		M		F		P		M		F		P		M		F		P		M		F															
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26														
14	Manipur	2,721,756	1,369,764	1,351,992	353,237	182,684	170,553	1,891,196	1,026,733	864,463	79,85	86.49	73.17	354,972	183,081	171,891	45,442	23,766	21,676	232,149	128,806	103,343	75.00	80.85	68.80	140,143	71,762	68,381	18,072	9,310	8,762	85,939	47,928	38,011	70.40	76.74	63.76		
02	Tamenglong	271,274	137,748	133,526	34,490	17,731	16,759	199,594	106,026	93,568	84.29	88.34	80.13	240,363	120,185	120,178	29,831	15,543	14,288	160,740	89,486	71,254	76.35	85.52	67.29	420,517	209,674	210,843	66,953	34,365	32,588	271,035	150,585	120,450	76.66	85.90	67.57		
06	Imphal West	514,683	253,628	261,055	58,239	29,972	28,267	395,731	207,844	187,887	86.70	92.93	80.71	452,661	225,130	227,531	60,760	31,451	29,309	324,535	174,044	150,491	82.81	89.86	75.92	183,115	94,013	89,102	22,954	11,951	11,003	131,118	70,618	60,500	81.87	86.05	77.47		
09	Chandel	144,028	74,543	69,485	16,496	8,595	7,901	90,355	51,396	38,959	70.85	77.93	63.26																										

No * Literates exclude children in the age group 0-6 years that were by definition treated as illiterate in the Census of India 2011.

Literacy rate is the percentage of literates to total population aged 7 years and above.

Literacy rate = Number of Literates / Population of age 7+ * 100

languages in use are Mizo (Zotaway), English and Hindi.¹⁹

Mizoram enjoys a fairly pleasant weather and is neither very hot nor very cold. There is a slight change of temperature during summer and winter. The whole area consists of small ranges of hills running in the North-South direction in parallel series separated from one another by narrow valleys. The general level of these ranges is about 3000 feet in the west and slowly rises as one goes eastward where there are ranges over 6000 feet high and the climate accordingly becomes cooler.

Of the 21,087 square kilometer area of the State, about 87 percent is covered by forests of which 7,127 square kilometer is reserved forest, 3,558 square kilometer is protected under control of District/ Village Councils and 5,240 square kilometer is unclassified State forest. Firewood, bamboo, timber, orchids and medicinal plants are found in abundance but the steepness of the ranges and transport bottlenecks are main constraints in the way of scientific forestry. Bamboo grows in abundance all over the State. There has been no trace of any minerals of commercial value in the State.²⁰

About 60 percent of the people of Mizoram are engaged in agricultural pursuits. The main pattern of agriculture followed is Jhum cultivation. Horticulture is also practiced. The main horticulture crops are citrus such as orange, lemon, kagzi lime, pineapple and papaya. Other crops are sugarcane, tapioca and cotton.²¹

Due to the absence of recorded history in the past, the early history of the Mizos remains obscure. However, the Mizos and all the related tribes claim to have originated from what they call 'Singlung' or 'Chinnlung.' All the writers on the subject and the traditional history of the Mizos verbally handed down through several decades agree that the term Chinnlung originated from China and that the Mizos and all the related tribes have originated from this. British annexed Mizoram in 1871-72 after military expedition. It was made part of the Assam vide Government of India Notification No. 591- EB dated 1st April 1898. During pre-British time, the inhabitants of the State had limited trade relations with outside world through their market centers. The independence of India in 1947 introduced

democracy in the primarily tribal region. However, for a long period it remained cut off from the mainstream of Indian union. Situation gradually changed with Mizoram becoming Union Territory in 1972 and finally the 23rd State on 24 February 1987.²²

The fabric of social life in the Mizo society has undergone tremendous change over the years. Before the British moved into the hills, for all practical purposes, the village and the clan formed units of Mizo society. The Mizo code of ethics or Dharma moved round "Tlawmngaihna", an untranslatable term meaning on the part of everyone to be hospitable, kind, unselfish and helpful to others. "Tlawmngaihna" to a Mizo stands for that compelling moral force which finds expression in self-sacrifice for the services of others. The old belief, Pathian is still in use to address God. The Mizos have been enchanted to their new-found faith of Christianity with so much dedication and submission that their entire social life and thought process have been altogether transformed and guided by the Christian Church organizations directly or indirectly and their sense of values has also undergone drastic change.

Mizos are a close-knit society with no class distinction and no discrimination on grounds of sex. Birth of a child, marriage in the village and death of a person in the village are important occasions in which the whole village is involved.

Marriages are generally arranged by parents among the Mizos and the youngest son inherits all the movable and immovable property of the father. The elder sons are supposed to move out of the parental home after marriage. The youngest son has the responsibility of looking after the parents in their old age. The dowry, called *thuam*, that a girl gets for her marriage from her parents is exclusively her own property. However, a written 'will' formally executed may now confer woman the right to inherit the family property. The dead are buried in the Mizos and memorial stones are erected by the relatives. Hymns are sung in the house of the bereaved for about a week.²³

The original garment of the Mizos is known as 'puan.' They were used by men and women more or less in the same fashion. One has to see them to believe the intricate traditional designs

woven by the Mizo women, born weavers who produce what can only be described as art on their looms. These traditional hand woven apparels are of different shades and designs and with exquisite colour combination and intricate weaving patterns. Some common clothing or puan are:

- *Puancheri*: It is by far the most colourful costume and is used by every Mizo lady.
- *Kawrcheri*: A distinctive blouse of the ladies.
- *Ngotekherh*: This traditional puan is worn around the waist. Originally it was a men's puan but now it is worn by men and women alike.
- *Hmar am*: Originally this was a small hand woven cloth of handspun cotton and indigo dye.
- *Cylma Ho*: It is a beautiful embroidered silk puan of the Mara's. It is used by both men and women.²⁴

Mizoram has an ancient and incredibly rich tradition with dances which reflect the amalgamation of centuries of cross-cultural inputs. The indigenous festivals of this beautiful state mirror its diverse heritage during the celebration of the seasonal cycle of sowing and harvesting. 'Kut' is the Mizo word for 'Festival.' Since Mizos are agriculturist in occupation, all the festivals are closely associated with agricultural activities. The major festivals of the Mizos are Chapchar Kut (March), Mim Kut and Pawl Kut (November/December) and Thalfavang Kut (November). Various indigenous musical instruments used during these festivities as accompaniments such as the "tingtang" (Guitar), a string instrument and the "Phenglawng" (a flute). On these days, people of all ages, young and old, men and women dressed in their colorful costumes and distinctive head gears and jewelries, assemble and perform various folk dances, singing traditional songs accompanied by beating of drums, gongs and cymbals.

One dance perennially popular is the Cheraw or the "bamboo dance" so called as long bamboo staves are used for this dance. This is the most colourful and distinctive dance of the Mizos requiring skill and an alert mind to perform.

The other main dances performed during Chapchar Kut

are Khuallam, Chheihlam, Chai and Sarlamkai. Exhibition and sale of indigenous Handloom and Handicraft products and other tourist attractions like flower show, food festival, musical competition and different traditional games are also organized during the festivals.²⁵ Bung, Tamdil Lake, Kolasib, Champai, Lunglei, Sibuta lung, Palphui Grave, Pangzawal, Mangkahia lung, Tualchang, Tomb of Vanhimailian are the major tourist attractions in Mizoram.

CENSUS OF INDIA 2011 PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS
FIGURES AT A GLANCE MIZORAM

POPULATION	Persons	1,21,01,93,422	
	Males	62,37,24,248	
	Females	58,64,69,174	
DECADAL POPULATION GROWTH 2001-2011		Absolute	Percentage
	Persons	18,14,55,986	17.64
	Males	9,15,01,158	17.19
	Females	8,99,54,828	18.12
DENSITY OF POPULATION (Per Sq Km)		382	
SEX RATIO (Females per 1000 males)		940	
POPULATION IN THE AGE GROUP 0-6		Absolute	Percentage
	Persons	15,87,89,287	13.12
	Males	8,29,52,135	13.30
	Females	7,58,37,152	12.93
LITERATES		Absolute	Literacy Rate
	Persons	77,84,54,120	74.04
	Males	44,42,03,762	82.14
	Females	33,42,50,358	65.46

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Arunachal Pradesh, North East India's remotest state, also known as 'Land of the Dawn-lit-Mountains' is the first Indian soil to greet the morning sun. It is the North Eastern tip of India with its borders touching China, Bhutan and Burma (Myanmar). Towards the south is Assam and Nagaland. The state offers a dazzling array of flora and fauna that is sure to enchant any tourist. More than 500 rare species of Orchids are found here. These shallow deep green forest hills celebrate summer seasons with flowers and orchids. Its mysterious, powerful and beautiful rivers with faces and moods that change dramatically ever so often form the colorful lifelines. These are ideal for rafting and angling and the rugged terrain is ideal for trekking, hiking and holidaying in a serene atmosphere.

Arunachal (Arun means 'sun' and achal means 'rays') is named so because it is the land of the rising sun. By 4.30 am the dawn breaks every day. The land is bounded on three sides by Bhutan, China and Myanmar and some plains of Assam. Therefore, the major occupants are Mangoloid and Tibeto—Burmese tribes, the main being Apatains, the Kamptis, the Padmad and the miris. Mostly they are Buddhist and Vaishnavites by religion; they adore Mithun—the offspring of cow and buffalo.

The landscape of green woods makes the tribals dwell with the rare species of wild animals amidst this primitive forest. The capital of state is Itanagar, and the state consists of 66.95 percent of literacy rating with a sex ratio of 92 females per 100 males. The population of the state as per 2011 census is 13,82,611. The principal languages spoken here are mainly the tribal dialects such as Migi, Aka, Tagin, Wancho, Khamti, Dafla, Mishmi, Monpa etc.. The state consists of 16 district headquarters, to list some of the important cities, tourist and religious places such as, Bomdila, Changlong, Daporija, Itanagar, Aong, Anini, Bhismaknagar, Khonsa, Psaighar, Seppa, Malanithan, Namdapha, Parashuram, Kund, Tawang, Tezu and Ziro. Mostly these places are connected only by road; there is no air or rail traffic to the state. The cities are well connected by

350 km highway and 7,900 km of road traffic throughout the state.

There are no records of the past about Arunachal Pradesh. The early Christian era has some information of the inhabitants of the year 1826. Few periodical accounts of historical values have been restored. Those days, the state was known as NEFA (North East Frontier Agency), later, the state had its identity when some tribal excavated during 1914 from Darrange and Lakhimpur districts of the Assam province and formed as North East Frontier Tract. This gave some more gateway separation of sparsely populated tribal such as Balipara Frontier Tract, Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier Tract and Tirap Frontiers Tract during the years of 1914 and 1946. Along with Naga tribal region it was named as NEFA in the year 1951. In 1954, NEFA had been reconstituted into six divisions. Wherein, one among them the Tuensang Frontier division was separated since 1957 and merged with the newly constituted Naga Hills Tuensang and today it is known as Nagaland. During the early 1972, Arunachal Pradesh had its political status and in the later year of 1987 it became a State.

Arunachal Pradesh is rapidly progressing in the field of trade and economy. Over 40 percent of population is mainly focused on agriculture; they grow rice, maize, millets, pulses, potatoes, wheat and mustard. The major industries are based on woods, such as handicrafts, handloom, saw mills, plywood, rice mills, fruit preservation units, soap and candle manufacturing, steel fabrication, oil expellers etc. The geographical values have provided valuables such as coal, crude oil, deposits of dolomite ores, limestone, graphite, mica, iron ore, copper ore and graphite.²⁶

The state has several medium industries based on its forest products. Plants to produce cement and fruit processing units have also come up in the state. There are a number of craft training centers and the states handloom industry has made good progress. The people are apt at cane and bamboo basketry work. Wood carving and black smithy are found in certain villages. Iron scrapers, spear head, and Daos required for day-to-day use are made in several villages.

Mineral resources found in the state are clay, marble, lime stone, graphite and pyrite. Arunachal Pradesh Mineral Development and Trading Corporation Limited was set up in 1991 and Namchik-Namphuk coal fields fall under it. The small scale cottage industry consists of weaving, cane and bamboo work and silver smithy etc. To provide training to craftsmen, there are two industrial training institutes at Roing and Daporijo.

The shifting cultivation which has come to be known as Jhuming which means collective farming occupies central position in Arunachal Pradesh in the field of agriculture. It is being practiced from earlier days and sustains majority of the people in the area. Jhuming consists of clearing of a patch of jungle by cutting and burning after a particular number of years called the jhum cycle, dribbling seeds into the cleared patch by the help of a poker, weeding at least four times, watching and protecting the growing plants from the wild animals and birds and finally harvesting a meager mixed crop, normally just enough to feed the workers - men, woman and children who had put in about 5 to 6 months of hard labour into the patch.²⁷

CENSUS OF INDIA 2011 PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS
FIGURES AT A GLANCE ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Number of Districts	16	
Area (In Sq.Kms)	83,743	
Population	Persons	13,82,611
	Males	7,20,232
	Females	6,62,379
Decadal Population Growth 2001-2011		
	Absolute	2,84,643
	Percentage	25.92
Population Density	17	
Sex Ratio (Females Per 1000 Males)	920	

Population In The Age Group 0-6

	Absolute	Persons	2,02,759
		Males	1,03,430
		Females	99,329
Percentage To Total Population		Persons	14.66
		Males	14.36
		Females	15
Literacy	Absolute		
		Persons	7,89,943
		Males	4,54,532
		Females	3,35,411

TRIPURA

Tripura is one of the seven states in the North Eastern part of India located between 22°56' and 24°32'N latitude and between 90°09' and 92°20'E latitude. It is bounded on the north, west, south and south east by Bangladesh whereas in the east it has a common boundary with Assam and Mizoram.

There is a common belief that the name of the State has originated from "Tripura Sundari"—the presiding deity of the land. Apart from this traditional view, it is believed that originally the land was known as "Tuipra" meaning a land adjoining the water. It is a fact that in earlier days the boundaries of Tripura were extended up to the Bay of Bengal.

The former princely state of Tripura was ruled by Maharajas of Manikya dynasty. It was an independent administrative unit under the Maharaja even during the British rule in India. After independence of India, an agreement of merger of Tripura with the Indian Union was signed by the Regent Maharani on September 9, 1947 and the administration of the state was taken over by the Govt. of India on October 15, 1949. Tripura became a Union Territory without legislature with

effect from November 1, 1956 and a popular ministry was installed on July 01, 1963. On January 21, 1972 Tripura attained statehood.²⁸

The economy of Tripura is primarily agrarian. Agriculture contributes about 64 per cent of total employment in the state and about 48 per cent of the State Domestic Product (SDP).

A variety of horticultural/ plantation crops are produced in Tripura such as Pineapple, Oranges, Cashew, Jackfruit, Coconut, Tea, Rubber etc. There is ample scope for increasing the area under such plantations as well as the productivity.

As regards animal husbandry and fisheries, the present level of production is not adequate to meet the demand of the state and there is need and scope for considerable development. The Industry Sector has also remained undeveloped so far, despite the vast potential. The secondary sector contributes only about 5 per cent of total employment and about 7 per cent of the total income (SDP) of the state at present.²⁹

The state government of Tripura has given tourism the status of an industry. The state has several places of tourist importance like Agartala, Unakoti, Pilak, Udaipur, Tripurasundari Temple, Ujjayanta Palace, Neermahal, Jampui Hill, Bhavaneswari Temple, Sepahijala, Kamalasagar, Deotamura, and Dumboor Lake. Moreover, there are the Buddhist monasteries in Agartala, Pecharthal, Kanchanpur, Manu Bakul, Pilak, and Boxnagar.³⁰

The main languages spoken are Bengali and Kokborok. Almost 50 per cent of the people of the state belong to the tribal community. The number of tribal communities here is 19, excluding the Bengalis and Manipuris. Bengalis constitute a large chunk of the population here. The art and craft of the state is very much tribal in character. Hand-woven dress material for both men and women are common. Moreover, other products like Pachra and Risha are very much in demand especially outside the state. Tripura is exceptionally famous for its bamboo and cane furniture and products. Palm-leaf handicraft products of Tripura are quite popular now a days.³¹

Because of its agrarian culture, most of the dances are based on the agricultural activities of the people. Garia Dance

is related to the Jhum cultivation while Lebang Boomani Dance is related to the monsoon season. There are also dances related to the different tribal communities like the Hozagiri Dance of the Reangs, Bizu Dance of the Chakmas, Hai Hak Dance of the Halams or Malsums, Welcome Dance of the Lushais, Cheraw Dance of the Darlongs and the Wangala dance of the Garos. The musical instruments used during these dance forms mainly comprise flutes and drums along with some locally made instruments.³²

There are community-specific festivals in Tripura observed with the related rituals and festivities. The Mog community observes the Way (Lamp) Festival from the full moon of Ashad to the full moon of Ashwin. The Ashokastami, Garia, and Gajan festivals are celebrated in April. Moreover, there are the Rabindra and Nazrul Jayanti, Boat Race festival, Kharchi, Manasa Mangal, Durga Puja, Diwali, Ras, Poush Sankranti Mela and Orange and Tourism Festival that are celebrated throughout the state with great fervor.³³

CENSUS OF INDIA 2011 PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS
FIGURES AT A GLANCE TRIPURA

1) NUMBER OF DISTRICTS :		4	
2) AREA (in Sq.Kms) :		10486.00	
3) TOTAL POPULATION :	Persons	3,671,032	
	Males	1,871,867	
	Females	1,799,165	
4) DECADEAL POPULATION GROWTH 2001-2011 :		Absolute	Percentage
	Persons	471,829	14.75
	Males	229,642	13.98
	Females	242,187	15.55
5) POPULATION DENSITY :		350	
6) SEX RATIO (Females per 1000 Males) :		961	
7) POPULATION IN THE AGE GROUP 0-6 :		Absolute	Percentage to total population
	Persons	444,055	12.10

		Males	227,354	12.15
		Females	216,701	12.04
	HIGHLIGHTS			
1) POPULATION	:	2001	Persons	3,199,203
		Males	1,642,225	
		Females	1,556,978	
	:	2011	Persons	3,671,032
		Males	1,871,867	
		Females	1,799,165	
2) DECADAL GROWTH RATE	:	1991-2001		16.03
		2001-2011		14.75
3) DENSITY	:	2001	305	
		2011	350	
4) SEX RATIO	:	2001	948	
		2011	961	
5) LITERACY RATE (%)	:	2001	Persons	73.19
		Males	81.02	
		Females	64.91	
	:	2011	Persons	87.75
		Males	92.18	
		Females	83.15	

MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya known as the 'abode of clouds' is one of the most beautiful state in the country. Nature has blessed it with abundant rainfall, sun-shine, virgin forests, high plateaus, tumbling waterfalls, crystal clear rivers, meandering streamlets and above all strong, intelligent and hospitable people.

Meghalaya attained complete statehood on 21st January, 1972.³⁴ It was carved out from two districts of the state of Assam—the United Khasi, Jaintia and Garohills.

Before attaining the full statehood, Meghalaya was given a semi- autonomous status in 1970. The Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia tribes each had their own kingdoms, until they came under the British administration in the 19th century. Later, the British incorporated Meghalaya into Assam in 1835. The region enjoyed semi-independent status by virtue of a treaty relationship with

the British Crown. When Bengal was partitioned on 16 October, 1905 by Lord Curzon, Meghalaya became a part of the new province of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam.' However, when the partition was reversed in 1912, Meghalaya became a part of the province of Assam. The Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act, of 1969 accorded an autonomous status to the state of Meghalaya. The Act came into effect on April 2nd 1970, and an Autonomous State of Meghalaya was created within the State of Assam.

In 1971, the Parliament passed the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, which conferred full statehood on the Autonomous State of Meghalaya. Meghalaya attained statehood on 21 January 1972, with a Legislative Assembly of its own.³⁵

The state capital is Shillong which is located at an altitude of 1496 mts. above sea level.

Meghalaya is located between latitude 20° 1' N & 26° 5' N and longitude 85° 49' E & 92° 52' E. The total area covered by the state is 22,429 Sq. Km and the total forest area is 8,510 Sq. Km. The highest point is the Shillong peak which is at a height of 1,965 m above sea level.³⁶

Meghalaya is mainly an Agriculture based economy. Nearly two-thirds of the total people of Meghalaya earn their livelihood through this. But still the contribution of agricultural sector is only one third to the state's Net State Domestic Product (NSDP).

The level of industrialization in Meghalaya is low. But it has a rich base of minerals like coal, limestone, silimanite and granite, which could be really helpful in increasing the trade and industries of the state.³⁷

CENSUS OF INDIA 2011 PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS
FIGURES AT A GLANCE MEGHALAYA

Number of Districts		7
Area (In Sq.Kms)		22,429
Population	Persons	29,64,007

	Males	14,92,668	
	Females	14,71,339	
Decadal Population Growth 2001-2011			
	Absolute	6,45,185	
	Percentage	27.82	
Population Density			
		132	
Sex Ratio (Females Per 1000 Males)			
		986	
Population In The Age Group 0-6			
	Absolute	Persons	5,55,822
		Males	2,82,189
		Females	2,73,633
Percentage To Total Population			
		Persons	18.75
		Males	18.91
		Females	18.60
Literacy			
	Absolute		
		Persons	18,17,761
		Males	9,34,091
		Females	8,83,760
	Rate		
		Persons	75.48
		Males	77.17
		Females	73.78

SIKKIM

Though land-locked, Sikkim is one of the strategically important states of the Indian Union. Sikkim lies in the heart of the towering eastern Himalayas; and is bounded by Nepal in the west, Bhutan in the south east, Tibet in the north east and the district of Darjelling (West Bengal) in the south. It is located between 27°5' and 28°10' N latitude and between 88°8' and

88°58' E longitude. This tiny state is barely 114 km long and 64 km wide and measures about 7,096 square km in area.

Sikkim has varied topography, with the elevation ranging from 920 feet to 28,000 feet. Most of the area of Sikkim consists of mountainous terrain, interspersed with ravines and green valleys. The two main rivers are Tista originating from the Tsolham Lake in north Sikkim and Ranghit originating from the Rathong glacier in west Sikkim. Sikkim's geographical location with its altitudinal variation allows it to have tropical, temperate and alpine climatic conditions. Temperature conditions vary from sub-tropical in the southern lower parts to cold deserts in the snowy north. It is also the most humid region in the whole range of the Himalayas, because of its proximity to the Bay of Bengal and direct exposure to southern monsoon. Rainfall is heavy and well distributed during the months from May to early October. July is the wettest month in most of the places.

Kanchenjunga situated on Sikkim's western border dominates the land with its awe inspiring beauty and majesty and its splendid height of 28,169 feet which makes it the third highest mountain in the world. There are over 4,000 species of different plants. Forests consisting of fir, oak, Sal, chestnut, birch, maple etc, cover almost a third of Sikkim. There are also varieties of moss, fern and bamboo profusely in the alpine zones covering entire hillsides with their splash of attractive colors.

The early history of Sikkim starts in the 13th century with signing of the brotherhood treaty between Lepcha chief Thekong thek and Tibetan prince Khe- Bhumsa at Kavi in north Sikkim, historical visit of revered saints at Yuksam in 1641 in West Sikkim and beginning of Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim in 1642. With the march of history, events also brought a change from monarchy to democracy and Sikkim became an integral part of the Indian Union in 1975.³⁸

The name of Sikkim is an appellation of Nepalese origin Sukkim meaning peace and happiness. The Tibetans called it Denzong, the hidden valley of rice. It was also known to the Lepchas, one of the early inhabitants of Sikkim as Nye-maed or heaven.³⁹ Sikkim has a very small population compared to any

other Indian state. The entire population of the state is 60,7,688 (2011 census). The sex ratio of Sikkim is 889 females per 1000 males. More than 60 percent of the total area of Sikkim is uninhabited due to difficult terrain and harsh climate. The settled areas in Sikkim are confined within the contour of 3000m and chiefly along river valleys.⁴⁰

The present population of Sikkim is composed of the Lepchas, who are supposed to be the early inhabitants of the state, the Bhutias who came some centuries ago and the Nepalese- who are more recent immigrants and now constitute the majority covering about 75 percent of the total population. The Lepchas and the Bhotia are roughly 13 percent and 12 percent of the population respectively. The three groups speak their own languages namely Lepcha, Sikkimese (Bhotia) and Nepali. In Sikkim, two third of the population are Hindus and a little less than one third are Buddhists. The Muslims, Jain and Sikh population in Sikkim is insignificant and less than one percent. Namsoon is celebrated by the Lepcha community. Fang Labsei, Lossong and Losar are celebrated by the Bhutis community. Maghey Sankranti, Durga Puja, Laxmi Puja and Chaita Dasai are the main festivals celebrated by the Nepali community.⁴¹

The attire of a Lepcha male consists of Thakro, a colourful sheet, Yenthatse (shirt) and a Shambo (cap). The Lepcha female dress comprises of Dumbun (a kind of sheet worn sari style), Tago (loose blouse) Nyamrek (belt) and Taro (cap). The beautiful ornaments used by the Lepcha women are: Namchok (ear-ring), Lyak (necklace), Gyar (bracelet), etc.

A Bhutia male wears Kho (Bakhu), Jya Jya (waist coat), Yenthatse (shirt), Kera (cloth belt) and Shambo (cap). The Bhutia female dresses are: Kho (Bakhu), Hanju (loose blouse), Kushen (jacket), Shambo (cap different in design than used by men), and Shabcha (shoe). Pangden, the striped apron is a symbol of married Bhutia women. The jewellery used by the Bhutia women are known as Yencho (earring), Khao (necklace), Phiru (pearl ornament), Diu (gold bangle), and Joko (ring).

On the other hand, common Nepalese men wear a shirt known as Daura, while their Churidar Pajama is known as

Shurval, the waist coat is known as Aaskot and their belt is known as Patuki. The colourful sari worn by a Nepali woman is known as Pharia, their long loose blouse tied from four sides is known as Chaubandi Cholo, while another type of popular blouse is known as Tharo Cholo. A piece of printed cloth covering the upper portion of the body is known as Hembari, whereas a colourful piece hanging from the head to waist during a dance performance is known as Pachauri.

The ornaments used by the Nepalese women are Sir-bandi (tiara), Kantha (necklace), Naugeri (necklace of pearl), Charanihari (another type of necklace), Tilhari (green bead with a long gold pendant worn normally by married women), Bulaki (nose-ring), Dungri (nose-pin), Tik-mala, Chandrahar, Cheptison (ear-ring), Gadwari (ear-ring), Chura of Silver (bracelet) and Kalli, thick heavy payal made of silver.⁴²

An overwhelming majority of the population is engaged in cultivation. The staple food of the people of Sikkim is rice, grown along with millet, cardamom, oranges, apples, potatoes, ginger etc. Besides agriculture, animal husbandry, pigraising and poultry are followed by many either as primary occupation or to supplement the need. Very few local people are in business; trade and commerce are mostly controlled by the outsiders. The extent of industrialization is very limited.⁴³

Folk dances and songs are an integral part of Sikkim's culture. Most of the dances relate to the beauty of the natural surroundings, some depict the harvest season and others are performed for good luck and prosperity. Many of the musical instruments that accompany the dances are unique to Sikkim. Sikkim's famous mask dances are simply spectacular. Chaams are performed on ceremonial and festive occasions. Though these dances differ from one another in style and theme, they all deal with the triumph of good over evil. Their origin lies in a dancing cult for exorcising malignant demons and human enemies. The Chaams performed during the New Year ceremony expel evil from the land, while closing the old year and ushering in benevolence and good luck for the new. The dancers wear fearful dragon, animal and bird masks, dress in richly brocaded costumes and tread the measure steps to the

sound of cymbals and trumpets. Singhi Chham or the snow lion dance is one of finest dance forms and is unique to the region. The Gnela Kipa is other folk dance of Sikkim performed on happy and festive occasions. Regional folk songs and instrumental music accompany the dancers. Kar-gnok lok is another important dance based on the migratory swans. These swans are special as they indicate harvest time. The dance is performed by young men and women who wear traditional costumes.⁴⁴

People of Sikkim seem to be born with exceptional skill required for craft making. One of the traditional practices of Sikkim is carpet weaving. The Sikkimese carpets are woven using wool in piles of knots. They are woven in beautiful traditional Sikkimese designs. Their workmanship, attractive colors and durability are renowned and are much in demand. The vegetable dyes prepared locally are mostly used to produce a variety of matching colors and in different sizes and designs.

Thangka paintings were and still are an item of reverence among the people of Sikkim. The thangkas are rich in color and entirely traditional in composition. These paintings truly represent the Sikkimese art and culture. The Lepcha cloth woven in traditional designs with rich colours are used for variety of purposes. It is manufactured in cotton, silk, staple and woolen yarn. These handloom designs demonstrate the very sensitive and distinctive marks of Sikkimese culture, mood and mind representing the creative and artistic mind of the Sikkimese people.

Of the various metal objects, jewelry is an important item. The Sikkimese jewelry depicts the different tastes of the three ethnic groups of Sikkim. The Dragon jewelry made in Gangtok is famous and is made in cuff-links, rings, necklaces, etc. The gold and lead jewelry of the Nepalis is also very popular. Articles, such as ash trays, nut- bowls, spoons and religious artifacts in the Bhotia pattern are often made. Arts and crafts on stone and clay do not seem to be very popular with craftsmen. Crafts made of bamboo and cane is often seen but they are also less popular and less honorable.

Wood carving is one of the most important crafts of Sikkim.

Throughout Sikkim, one can trace monasteries and buildings, festooned with symbols and icons carved in wood. The mask dance of Sikkim is also portrayed in wood carvings. Another well known wooden product from Sikkim, that is famous all over India, is Choktse tables. These are foldable tables which are around 2 feet in height and have some beautiful designs made on the all sides.⁴⁵

Sikkim is divided into four districts - in South Districts main attraction is Ravangla. The East District is where capital Gangtok is situated. West District offers destinations such as Pelling and Yuksom as well as beautiful treks such as the one to Dzongri. The North district bordering China has been recently opened to tourists. The most common destination here is Yumthang. There are about 200 monasteries in Sikkim.

DISTRICT WISE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION OF SIKKIM

	Total Popu- lation	No. of Males	No. of Females	Literacy rate	Sex Ratio	Popu- lation Density
Sikkim	607688	321659	286027	73.94	889	86
North District	43354	24513	18841	69.39	769	10
East District	281293	150259	131033	76.67	872	295
South District	146742	76663	70079	73.64	914	196
West District	136299	70224	66074	70.05	941	120

MAJOR TOWNS OF SIKKIM

Towns	Total Population	Male	Female
Gangtok	98658	51820	46838
Singtam	5874	3166	2708
Rangpo	10326	5501	4825
Rhenock	5892	3162	2730
Narnchi	12194	6178	6016
Jorethang Nagar	8895	4595	4300
Nayabazar	1230	650	580
Gyalshing	4009	2053	1956

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