

Social and Political System of the Nocte Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The social and political system of Nocte has a well-defined structure. Nocte society is a patriarchal society. The father is the head of the household, thus occupying a central position in the family. Mothers play a supporting role in the family along with the father. The society is patrilineal in the sense that lineage and descent are traced through the father's line. The eldest son is the sole owner of all the movable properties and ancestral home along with other properties. Women have very limited rights over property. The eldest daughter has rights over her mother's ornaments which are brought by her mother from her maternal home during marriage. Younger sons and daughters have no right over any property. An important feature of the Nocte political system is chieftaincy which is hereditary and where the chief holds executive and judicial power and governs the land with the help of his council of ministers. The chief and councils are guided by customary law for any kind of decisions, both civil and criminal. Every individual has to abide by the customary law and whoever disobeys it is punished accordingly.

Keywords: social, political, chieftaincy, hereditary, patrilineal, property rights, chief, customary law

Introduction

Every society has its own social and political setup which defines it and sets it apart from others. The social structure of a society highlights the distribution of power, explains the root causes of social inequalities and identifies the mechanisms necessary for enacting meaningful social change. It provides the essential blueprint of society, revealing how institutions, roles, and norms connect and shape human behavior. Politics is people coming together to deal with common problems. Whenever and wherever people engage in cooperation and conflict to organize themselves and their resources in order to ensure their welfare, political processes are at work and political decisions are made. The political system of a society is the framework of formal institutions, laws and processes through which a state or community is governed. It dictates how power is distributed; how collective decisions are made and how resources and rights are allocated among the population. Here, an attempt is made to study the social and political structure of the Nocte to understand how power, laws and resources

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are managed in the society and how it functions.

Study area:

Nocte is one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh, the land of the rising sun, is situated in the north-eastern part of India between 26° 28' N and 29° 31' N latitude and 91° 30' E and 97° 30' E longitude. It covers an area of 83,743 sq. km and is the largest among the eight sister states of the North-East in terms of area. Multicultural ethnic groups reside in Arunachal Pradesh which differ from each other. There are 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes living in the state. Noctes are mainly concentrated in Tirap District, one of the oldest districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Located in the south-eastern part of the state, it extends between the latitudes of 26° 40'N & 27° 40'N and longitude of 95°11'E & 97°10'E. It shares state borders with Nagaland and Assam, an international border with Myanmar and district borders with Changlang and Longding. Having an area of 2,362 km² it accommodates a population of 111,679, with a total density of 47 persons per km² according to the 2011 census. Noctes are peace-loving and have a penchant for fine arts and sculptures. Some members of the Nocte community can be found in some parts of Changlang District and a few in Dibrugarh District of Assam though the majority resides in Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh. The term 'Nocte' literally means 'the village people', where 'Noc' means village and 'te' means the people in the Nocte dialect. They belong to the Indo-Mongoloid racial group.

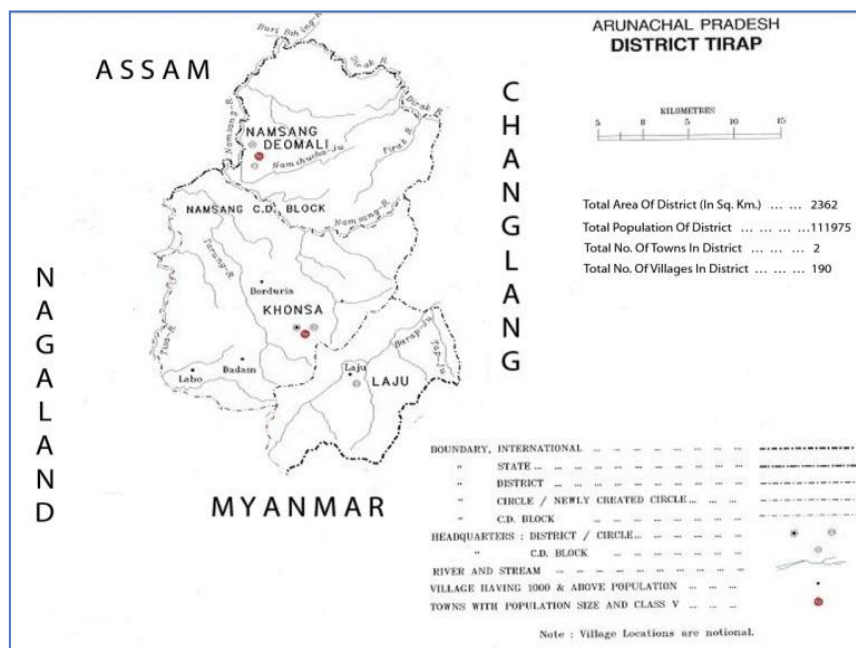


Fig. 1 Map of the study area

Database and Methodology:

The study has been confined to rural areas. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature. Owing to non-availability of written records of the study area, the study is completely based on the first-hand information or primary data from the field. Secondary data collected from various offices of the District and Circles has been used for stratification purposes. An

interview on the relevant topics was carried out. Voice recorders and cameras were used in the field for primary data collection.

Social Structure:

In a society, the family is the smallest unit. It is the smallest society for everyone. Children learn from their families manners and wisdom before becoming a part of the larger section. Nocte society is a patriarchal society. The father is the head of the household, thus occupying a central position in the family. Mothers play a supporting role in the family along with the father. The society is patrilineal in the sense that lineage and descent are traced through the father's line. Mostly, the final authority for both movable and immovable property is decided by the head of the household. In Nocte society, the eldest son has the sole right to all the immovable properties and the ancestral movable property like ornaments, weapons, household utensils and many more. The eldest son assumes the position of head of the family when the father dies or becomes old. The position of women is subordinate in the family. She cannot claim the hereditary property of her family but she can have a share of her mother's ornaments and the gifts received during her marriage. The families in Nocte society are both nuclear and joint. The father, mother, sons and daughters are the components of the family. Once the sons get married, they live separately. The house along with most of the movable property remains in the name of the eldest son as he is considered to look after his parents in their old age. The younger sons are given land or any other movable property if the eldest son desires.

In the Nocte society, the kinship bonds is very strong. In these relationships, the maternal uncle plays a vital role in performing rituals. He is known as *Hokapho* (eldest maternal uncle), *Hodam* (the second one), and *Hodi* (the third or youngest). They are commonly known as *Ho*. Among them, *Hokapho* is usually engaged in the traditional performances. Right from birth to death, he is engaged with all rituals. Hence, in order to maintain a close relationship with the *Ho*, marriages take place with their clan and thus the clans of *Ho* are referred to as *Honin* with whom matrimonial relationships can take place. The other group of people with whom one shares kinship and with whom one cannot establish matrimonial relations are called *Jongtey*. To marry within the same clan is considered taboo in Nocte society and if such things happen, then the couples are ostracised from the society. For example, in Khonsa village there are four titles – *Bangsia*, *Socia*, *Mesia* and *Tesia*. Here *Mesia* and *Tesia* are clan sisters and they cannot marry each other or within themselves. *Bangsia* and *Socia* are clan sisters and the same applies. *Tesia* can marry either *Bangsia* or *Socia* and vice versa. All the clans are exogamous but the tribe itself is endogamous. The exogamous character of the clan regulates the marriage system of the tribe. Like the other tribes, the Nocte girls and boys are free to choose their life partners. Most of the time, marriage with the maternal uncle's daughter is most favoured and in fact she is considered the potential wife of the father's sister's son. Similarly, mother's brother's son is the prospective husband for the father's sister's daughter. The Nocte society permits polygamy but most of the times, monogamy is preferred for a happy life. The chief can marry more than one wife in order to establish a good relation with neighbouring communities and to shoulder the social responsibility because as a chief of the village, he has to look after the village like a

father to his children. If a chief marries more than one wife, then the first wife should be from the equivalent rank or the chief's daughter from another village because there is a belief that the sacred royal blood of the two will give birth to a brave and brilliant child. People of different villages have migrated from different areas to settle in their present-day locations. Thus, on the basis of the position held, the place of their origin and the role played in the village the people are divided into different clans and surnames. Some of the surnames or clans found in the Nocte-inhabited villages are as mentioned below. Many villages have got bifurcated from the same village; thus, the surnames or the clan names are the same as that of their mother village.

Table no. 4.1

Sl. No.	Clans/ Surnames	Village where found
1	Lowang, Hondique, Lama, Tangjang,	Namsang
2	Nammati, Thingnok, Songthing, Moithak, Moika, Ngongwa	Doidam
3	Lowang, Rangpang, Kanglom, Moidam, Shin, Ramwa, Korok, Sawin	Soha
4	Shin, Chillum, Songthing, Ramwa, Moidam, Korok	Mopaya
5	Shin, Songthing	Lamlo
6	Shin, Songthing, Boi	Kenon
7	Bo, Songthing, Boi, Sawin, Kanglom	Dongron
8	Bo, Songthing, Boi, Sawin	Thalot
9	Songthing, Boi, Sawin, Rangpang	Turet
10	Phungjung,	Phinthing
11	Songthing, Ngongwa, Sawin,	Subang
12	Lowang, Panka, Aran, Bosai, Hosai, Wangsu	Wasathong
13	Lowang, Rangpang, Kanglom, Moidam, Shin, Ramwa, Korok, Sawin	Jumdang
14	Lowang, Ketok, Poro, Nammati, Aboh, Khamthin, Alok,	Sipini
15	Songthing, Shin, Sawin	Makat
16	Lowang, Janpi, Rangpang, Moinyak, Wotey	Longkhong
17	Lowang, Sumnyan, Abo, Afi, Poakna Khoisia, Hutu, Ketok, Ngowa, Anna, Wangccha, Hondique, Wangnow, Lamthak,	Natun Kheti

18	Matey,Lowang, Tangjang, Ramwa, Panka, Henkhe, Aran, Arang, Ajang, Kahko, Rango, Hochha, Wangchha, Wangsu, Mema, Akhang, Bosai, Ana, Tongluk, Khetey	Kaimai
19	Matey, Tangjang, Ramwa, Lamra, Henkhe, Lama, Lokho, Dada, Rango, Lowang, Wangsam, Ruttum, Pongtey, Wangha, Lowang Medam, Homchha Lowang, Letey Lowang, Khetey, Mongwang,Mema, Tocchu, Tangdong, Songlong	Borduria
19	Lowang, Bangsia, Tesia, Socia, Mesia	Khonsa
20	Lowang, Sumnyan, Abo, Afi, Poakna Khoisia, Hutu, Ketok, Ngowa, Anna, Wangccha, Hondique, Wangnow, Lamthak,	Kheti
21	Lowang, Sumnyan, Abo, Afi, Poakna Khoisia, Hutu, Ketok, Ngowa, Anna, Wangccha, Hondique, Wangnow, Lamthak,	Thinsa
22	Lowang, Bangsia, Tesia, Socia, Mesia	Khela
23	Lowang, Aran, Hosai, Akhang, Tangjang, Lamra, Lama, Dadam, Wangsam, Ajang, Khetey, Tangdong, Kakho, Wangchha, Mongchan, Henkhe, Ramwa, Aboh, Matey	Laptang
24	Lowang, Bangsia, Suyang, Kuyang	Pullong
25	Lowang, Aran, Hosai, Akhang, Tangjang, Lamra, Lama, Dadam, Wangsam, Ajang, Khetey, Tangdong, Kakho, Wangchha, Mongchan, Henkhe, Ramwa, Aboh, Matey	Pansumthong
26	Arang, Lowang, Tangjang, Anna,	Sumsipather
27	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapon, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Longbo
28	Lowang, Matey, Tangjang, Wangsam, Lokho, Rangchhu, Ajang, Bosai, Akhang, Ruttum, Pongtey, Mema, Henkhe, Rango, Wangsa, Lowang, Mongchan, Mongwang.	Longchang (Paniduria)
29	Bangyang, Chimyang, Khoiyang, Suyang,	Lapnan
30	Bangyang, Chimyang, Khoiyang, Suyang, Tesia,	Luthong
31	Bayang, Bangyang, siyang, Bangsia, Lowang, Rangyang, Khoyang, Nguapo	Tupi
32	Wangsupa, Wangsa, Nokbi, Bangyang, Wangpan,	Longo

33	Nokbi, Tonrang,	Kapu
34	Bayang, Bangyang, Siyang, Bangsia, Lowang, Rangyang, Khoyang, Nguapo	Noksa
35	Wangsa, Wangsu, Loham, Lukham, Lowang, Rajkumar, Wangpan, Wangnow, Ramwon	Chasa
36	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Lazu
37	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Noglo
38	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Lower Sinnu
39	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Raho
40	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Longliang
41	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wottey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Sanliam
42	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapong, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha,	Pongkong

	Wotey, Ranshong, Namphu.	
43	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapon, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wotey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Chinhan
46	Kongkang, Sumlam, Rumchu, Lowang, Wangccha, Hodong, Moinyak, Khocha, Weiti, Mophuk, Nyamtey, Ransong, Sapon, Jenpi, Rangwang, khocha, namet, menkhot, Juja, Tazin, Matey, Kalo, pangtok, Rakho, Ngongte, kheshum, Ngongpa, diosha, Wotey, Ranshong, Namphu.	Lonyen
47	Lowang, Bangsia, Mesia, Tesia, Socia, Dalo	Wathin
48	Lowang, Bangsia, Mesia, Tesia, Socia, Dalo	Sikho
49	Arok, Aphi, Sumnyan, Aboh, Kamhua, Sumpa, Nokbi, Kakho, , Akhang, Wangsu, Wangchha, Ruttum, Agi, Wangno, Atoa	Dadam
50	Arok, Aphi, Sumnyan, Aboh, Kamhua, Sumpa, Nokbi, Kakho, , Akhang, Wangsu, Wangchha, Ruttum, Agi, Wangno, Atoa, Lowang	Moktowa
51	Arok, Aphi, Sumnyan, Aboh, Kamhua, Sumpa, Nokbi, Kakho, , Akhang, Wangsu, Wangchha, Ruttum, Agi, Wangno, Atoa, Lowang	Hukan
52	Arok, Aphi, Sumnyan, Aboh, Kamhua, Sumpa, Nokbi, Kakho, , Akhang, Wangsu, Wangchha, Ruttum, Agi, Wangno, Atoa, Lowang	Bera
53	Lowang, Hakhun, Kamhua, Sumpa, Tekwa, Aboh, Nokbi, ata, Sumnyan, Longriam, Aphi, Ago, Agi, Atoa, Wangnow, Wangsa, Ruttum	Laho
54	Arok, Aphi, Sumnyan, Aboh, Kamhua, Sumpa, Nokbi, Kakho, , Akhang, Wangsu, Wangchha, Ruttum, Agi, Wangno, Atoa, Lowang	Boakfoam
55	Lowang, Hakhun, Kamhua, Sumpa, Tekwa, Aboh, Nokbi, ata, Sumnyan, Aphi, Ago, Agi, Atoa, Wangnow, Wangsa, Agan	Chingkoi
56	Lowang, Aran, Hosai, Akhang, Tangjang, Lamra, Lama, Dadam, Wangsam, Ajang, Khetey, Tangdong, Kakho, Wangchha	Tarung

Source: interviews in various Nocte villages.

The Nocte society is purely based on a chieftainship system and is divided into two classes: the *Lowang Jat* (the royal family) and the *Chha-Na Jat* (the masses). Each of these two classes consists of many clans or lineage groups called ku or Ru with various names and numbers in each class. Here, the suffix *Jat* has been used under the influence of the Assamese word meaning clan. In Nocte society, there is no caste system but the class system is very dominant. While asking the informants about the origin of the chieftainship system, they simply answered that it might have come out for protection purposes because in the olden days, there were frequent raids and feuds going on between the village and tribesmen. The women and the innocent children were usually soft targets. Once, in the process of a war, the strongest warrior was considered as the chief. They believed that the person closest to the chief can inherit all his abilities and attitudes of a true leader. Therefore, the male child born out of a chief can be the fittest to succeed him. This perception led to the adoption of a hereditary system.

Though the society is divided on a class basis, the difference between the Lowang family and the masses is not so sharp. They can marry each other. The existence of the chieftainship is seen when there is a need to resolve disputes among the village people. And in the social system, some of the rituals are to be followed by the chief's family only. Other than that, everyone is equally treated in the society. Haimendorf explained in his book entitled *The Naked Naga* (1962) that one of the drunken villagers was making fun of the chief, and to his utmost surprise he did not react. When the chief was asked the reason for not punishing the drunken man for such mischievous behaviour, the chief replied, "I am a chief in holding responsibilities towards my village and my tribesmen. If I were in a council right now, I would have punished him for the hilarious act without a second thought but when I am not in a council, I am a normal villager. This very line proves the decency of the chief in the tribal areas.

Political system

History is a witness of rise and fall of many states or regions bound with cultural ethics and traditions. Every state is unique in its own way. Despite vast differences in language, customs, traditions, etc., the states are able to stand together. The states which have strong political systems have always survived the storms of every kind and states with weak political setups fall due to lack of proper law and order. Thus, a strong and systematic political system is required for the society to prosper and grow. Nocte society since its existence has a strong political systems which is still continuing.

Every community is regulated by a council that actively rules the village administration. It serves as a guardian to the people. Not only that, even the people have complete trust in this political institution. Prior to the advent of the British rule and the establishment of the Dayeng Ering Committee in Arunachal Pradesh in the year 1967, the Nocte society was administered by the traditional village council i.e., *Ngoang- Awang*. It is a chieftainship system. It is known by different names in the various sub-ethnic groups in the Nocte community. The basis of this variation is the dialect. In the Hakhun Jaap-dominated areas, it is known as the *Ngoang- Awang*. In the Chasa area, it is known as Chophu, whereas in other areas, it is known as *Ngongthit*. And the formal meeting of the *Ngoang- Awang* is

'*Ngongthun*.' Though there is no written record of the time and purpose of the formation of *Ngoang- Awang* it is presumed that the purpose behind this might have been insecurity. In the earlier days, when the society was at its earliest stage, feuds between villages were very common and the soft targets were usually the children and women. That was a period of head captivation where the enemies' heads were brought to the village as proof of victory. Therefore, in order to guide the village in such a period of turmoil, the traditional village council was formed. With the passage of time, the *Ngoang- Awang* proved to be a worthy council. Along with war and feuds, it used to tackle the day-to-day issues of the village. Hence, it has gained a respectable place in the hearts of the Nocte people. Furthermore, it is also said that the *Ngoang- Awang* is not a man-made institution but rather a natural one which came into existence along with the passage of time. The existence of the *Ngoang- Awang* is older than civilisation itself. The designations of the posts have become the identity of succeeding generations and are used as a surname by the Nocte people. The council is loaded with many responsibilities. This council discusses the overall welfare of the village. At the same time, it is helpful in organizing festivals, village rituals and other activities. The traditional political institution/village council known as *Ngong- Awang* and *Ngonthun* is headed by the chief. The chief is known as *Lowangdong* which means the eldest chief. He enjoys a high position in the Nocte society. He is the guardian of the village. All the important decisions related to the community as a whole are decided by him after having discussions with the council members. The chieftaincy system is hereditary in nature and only the eldest son of a chief can succeed the chief. If the chief doesn't have a son then the eldest son of his younger brother may become chief. In the chieftainship system, a girl child is not allowed to succeed her father.

Composition

The *Ngoang- Awang* is composed of

1. Lowang- Chief
2. Ramwa- Messenger
3. Tanwa- Priest
4. Other elderly and renowned persons of the village.

On the basis of rank, the Lowang comes at the top. In some cases, he can override the council's decision. In such a case, the council members cannot refuse him. Not only the Lowang, but his entire family enjoys the status of being superior. On many occasions they are highly respected by the society. They are given a special place in the social gatherings. It is not just because he is a chief, but along with that, he has the responsibility of the entire village. Therefore, the chief is considered as the father of the whole village. After the Lowang, *Ngong-awang* comes in second-highest status. They are the council of ministers in the village. In some cases, they provide advice to the Lowang and also take important decisions in the council. The Ramwa is the messenger who spreads the news of the council to the villagers. He is an important link between the people and the council. The Tanwa is a priest who has an important place in the council. It is a belief that he can predict the future

and if some bad omens are in the near future, then he can suggest the best possible measures to avoid such situations. Female priests are also there in some villages. They can perform at the individual and family level but they cannot perform the rituals at the village level. And regarding the elderly persons, they are selected and recommended by the council for becoming a council member. They are chosen based on their lifetime experiences and skills in wise decision-making. The structure of the *Ngong- Awang* is similar to the Hindu Rajsabha. But one of the peculiarities in the *Ngoang- Awang* is that the women are not allowed to participate in the council business unless they are related to the case. The reason for non-participation of women might be the lack of decision-making capability as the menfolk assume that the women are sensitive and cannot make decisions wisely.

In different villages, the chief carries different surnames such as Lowang in Thinnyan (Namsang), Saala (Borduria), Kheti, Khela, Khonsa, Longthan (Laptang), Soha and almost in every village of middle-belt area; Thingnok in Doidam (Lamlak); Kamhua and Hakhun in Dadam area; Songthing in Lamlo; Ngongkhun in Mopaya (Jongku), etc., but their role in the village is more or less the same. Due to migration from different areas and settling down during different periods some villages have two chiefs. For example, Dadam has Kamhua and Hakhun chiefs.

The designations of the posts held by people have become the identity of succeeding generations and are used as a surname by the Nocte people in most of the villages. The council is loaded with many responsibilities. This council discusses the overall welfare of the village. At the same time, in the ancient times when the modern administration was not in the realm of *Ngoang- Awang*, the chief was considered next to God. Nobody could challenge his words or decisions. After the coming of modern administration, the Goan Bura began to serve as an important link between the village council and the government bodies which is a reflection of modernisation. Goan Bura started representing the village people on important occasions along with the chief. After the coming up of Panchayati Raj in Nocte villages the elected Gram Panchayat members started acting as a link between villagers and the government. But it is not necessary that the elected Panchayat member will be part of village council. So, when a dispute arises in the village and the parties involved in the dispute want to resolve it within the village then the village council headed by the chief plays an important role and the Panchayat members don't have much role to play. With time, changes are observed in the way people are solving the cases. People now prefer going to court as the customary law doesn't provide them the written legal document which the court does to avoid further disputes. People are becoming more aware of their rights and duties and thus, they want

Conclusion:

Since earlier times, the Nocte have a well-organised social and political system as in any civilised society. The social set-up is well defined and it helps in the planning and development of the society. The best thing about the social system of Nocte society is the absence of caste system. Every individual enjoys equal rights in the society without discrimination. But the clan system is rigid and strong in Nocte society. All have to follow the norms of the clan system and whoever violates the norms are punished according to

customary law. Marriages are strictly guided by clan norms. In Nocte society, the eldest male inherits all the ancestral properties including the house. A girl child doesn't have rights over any immovable property of her parents. But the eldest girl child has the full authority over her mother's traditional ornaments (*stree dhan*), which pass on from generation to generation. The younger children, both male and female, are deprived of any ancestral properties. Chieftainship is one of the most important and unique features of the social and political system of Nocte. It acts as a primary form of governance while being deeply rooted in family ties, tradition, and cultural identity. The political system of Nocte is managed by a village council consisting of the chief and his council of ministers which is governed by customary law. Customary law in Nocte is very strong and it governs the daily life, including marriage, inheritance, land ownership and local dispute resolution. There is no written document of customary law but it has been passed on from generation to generation orally. Though the chief is the most powerful person and is the head of Nocte council, Ngong-Awang, he too has to abide by the customary law. Thus, it can be concluded that the Nocte have a strong and well-organised social and political system since earlier days which has helped them to grow and prosper and to maintain their unique identity.

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