

# NYEDA -Marriage System of the Tagin Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh

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## I. Introduction

The marriage institution of the *Tagin* is popularly known as 'Nyeda'. In the *Tagin* society clan exogamy and tribe endogamy is the law of marriage. The society is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. The society does not endorse pre-marital sexual freedom. The virginity of a girl is valued much. In case of a pre-marital sexual relation with already engaged, the seducer was fined to compensate the loss of the virginity of the girl. The *Tagin* society recognizes the matrimonial alliance with great honour, and therefore, marriage is a relationship between two families. The individuals are secondary in a *Tagin* marriage. According to the patrilineal system of the *Tagin*, once a girl is married, she belongs to her husband's family and the children born by her bear the surname (which means the clan) of their father. A married couple has to go through series of social regulation considered by performing ritual known as *Layap* or *Nayap* (ritual ceremony for newly married couple) which will be followed by final marriage ceremony of *Nyeda*. The function of the *Tagin* law of marriage enunciates ritual and concedes rights. There is no fixed age for marriage or engagement in *nyeda* ceremony of *Tagin*.

Anthropologist distinguished between two forms of polygamy viz. polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny refers to the form of marriage in which a man is married to more than one woman at the same time. Polyandry refers to a form of marriage in which a woman is married to more than one man at the same time. Polygyny is the common practice of *Tagin* customary marriage but polyandry is uncommon and is not permitted in the society. Usually, *Tagin* man can marry more than two or more wives at the same time. There are various reasons of polygyny, when a wife is unable to bear child, her husband has legal right to marry with another in order to procreate children for himself and on behalf of his barren wife. Marriage to a second wife may take place where the wife concerned dies without leaving a surviving son or his descendants. Secondly, if unable to procreate or is barren, thirdly, wife has already passed the fertility age without leaving a surviving son; fourthly, divorced without a birth of child, and infected with diseases, witchcraft, mentally retarded, laziness, and immoral personality of the woman etc.

The divorce is permissible in the *Tagin* society. A husband can easily give divorce to his wife but wife is not permitted to give divorce without citing the reason. The divorce can be initiated by any one of the spouses. It is either from the husband side or from the wife. Grounds for seeking divorce are common such as neglect of family duties by either party, repeated infidelity, commission of adultery and unfaithfulness either by the wife or the husband, gross misconduct by the wife, impotence of the husband, physical cruelty of husband and his family members, barrenness by wife, quarrelsome, and unable to discharge her domestic duties, etc.

In *Tagin* society physical atrocity and domestic violence by the husband side is not easily tolerated by the parents of the wife. It is customary to protect their '*Dungne*' (married daughter) in event of such atrocities against her either by the husband side or some other party. Sometime such an unnecessary act by the husband may lead to the breaking of family bond including divorce itself. If the wife wishes to divorce her husband on the grounds of above reasons, she has to return the bride-wealth or marriage-wealth. And if husband wishes to divorce his wife, he will not get anything in return from his wife's side. He has to pay compensation as per the decision taken by the '*Dopam*' party along with two *mithuns* as '*Mathap*' and '*Paktap*' (type of customary fine).

Hence, present study is to examine on the traditional marriage system of *Tagin* tribe of Arunachal Pradesh and its continuity and changes in marriage system.

## Meaning of Nyeda

The marriage system of *Tagin* is complex of unique features which has its etymological origin since immemorial time. Marriage in the *Tagin* community is referred to as *Nying / Nelu Nanam* the literal meaning of

*Nying* means wife, *Nelu* means husband and *Nanam* means to get marry. The marriage institution of the *Tagin* is a complex network of several rituals and practices.

The institutions of marriage is popularly called as *Nyeda* and they considered this *nyeda* institution as one of the sacred and part of their believe system. They believe that if any one breaks this sacred institution, will get a super natural punishment. So, marriage bond emerges as a social arrangement and solemnized by which a husband and wife is legitimized and recognized by the society under the institution of *Nyeda*. A marriage among *Tagin* is recognized as a union between a man and woman for life, with the purpose of producing children and in doing so both strengthening and ensuring the continuity of the family lineage. The institution of *Nyeda* is not only solemnized for two individuals rather than for two family groups.

They consider marriage institution as one of the sacred and part of their belief system. Their marriage system involves many social codes and conducts which are regulated by traditional customs and customary laws. So, marriage bond emerges as a social arrangement by which a couple is legitimized and recognized by the society under the institution of *Nyedas*. There are different types of marriage system in the *Tagin* society which is regulated by the various forms of *Nyedas*.

The *Tagin* marriage system is quite different from other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The institution of *Nyeda* is a very unique, incredible and amazing marriage system in *Tagin* community. There are different types of *Nyeda* ceremony on the basis of marriage-wealth being exchanged between bride and groom families. In a lucid manner, *Nyeda* is defined as marriage institution of the tribe. It is a ritualistic ceremony which customarily solemnized the matrimonial bonding between two families and clan members. During the *Nyeda* ceremony both the parents exchange each other a marriage wealth. The marriage wealth comprises of *mithuns* (bros frontalis), pig, load of roasted meat, load of *opo* (local millet beer), and cash or kind from groom's parents and valuable local ornaments like verities of bangles, beads etc., viz., *koji*, *kotik*, *kopu*, *tasi sebok*, *setar*, *semin* (varieties of beads), *dengse* (belt disc), *riokse* (sword), *maji*, *mati*, *tal*, *takam*, *juru* (varieties of plates) and cash from bride's parent. The process of marriage wealth exchange sometimes starts much before the performance of *Nyeda* and it becomes a sort of contractual obligation on the part of the bride's family to give their daughter in marriage and this social sanction. In earlier days, any breach of it leads to social tension and sometimes leads to violence as well. Now days even in case of love marriage or in case of elopement of two young boy and girl, parents prefer to have the bridal exchange later on.

There is no etymological meaning of the word *Nyeda*. It might have been derived from the word *Nyin* (matrimonial relatives/guest). Often in marriage proposals a group of *Nyins* gathering to discuss for marriage settlement which later they constitute an institution like body which is called as the *Nyeda*. So *Nyeda* may be defined as "the collective obligations for both the bride's and groom's parents to solemnized marriage ceremony through rituals, worship and exchange of marriage wealth."

In a simple language it can be defined as the marriage institution of the *Tagin* tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. In fact, the *Nyeda* system is considered as the sacred marriage ceremony where two souls' mates get to be solemnized through holy ritualistic ceremony and blessings from the deities. The *Nyeda* is a sacred marriage institution observe by the joint venture of the parents of bride and groom along with clan members whom they praying for peace, prosperity and longevity of the married couples.

It is believed that the *Nyeda* ceremony bring peace and stability to the relations between both the bride's and groom's family as well as clan members which locally known as '*Nengnearum*' (matrimonial relatives). They believe that if anyone breaks this sacred law, will get a super natural punishment. The relationship between the families of bride and groom are marked by offering of ritual sacrifices on the basis of shaman's chanting during the *Nyeda* ceremony. This matrimonial relationship is tied up through an exchange of horns and jaws of sacrifices animals. Usually, they exchange horns and jaws of *mithun* and pigs, which they keep them in house for decoration which is locally known as '*Reteh-Hipu*' (*ret*eh means horns of *mithun* and *hipu* means jaws of pigs). This *ret*eh-*hipu* is kept through generation to generation which symbolize the *nyeda* relationship between two parties. It also signifies the socio-economic status of the person in society. The numbers of horns and jaws kept in house tells the economic and social status of the person. In olden days only wise man and economically sound people could conduct numbers of *nyedas* for their children. It is believed that this *ret*eh-*hipu* bears spirits which observes the wrongdoing of family and clan members. If anyone breaks the *nyeda*'s laws, the spirits of *ret*eh-*hipu* would attack the soul of that person. Thus, *Tagin* are always maintained cordial matrimonial relationship and shows their humbleness, respect and hospitality to *nengne arum* (matrimonial relatives) from generation to generation. It has been found that matrimonial relationship creates one of the strong friendship, peace and harmony among the society.

The regulations of *Nyeda* is not only for husband and wife, it is equally applicable to entire clan members. As like other tribes of the state *Tagin* do not have any dormitory pre-marriage institution. It is the sole responsibility of the parents to initiate a marriage proposal for boys and girls. In earlier time process of bride selection were gone through various stages of rituals process. In first stage, the parents of groom/boy will choose the girl from neighboring village or relatives, while selecting the girl most important part is to see that

whether there was any social conflict with the girl's society, like murder, homicides, incents. The economic background of the girl's parent is also determined the selection of the girl. The priest is invited especially lower rank priest locally known as *nejik-nekiok* (one who conducts rituals of eggs and chicken). An egg or chicken omen examination is conducted through rituals chanting by the shaman to proof that weather the marriage would success or not.

There are different forms of *nyeda* which regulates the different types of marriage system of the *Tagin*. Marriage system among *Tagin* involves many social codes and conducts which are regulated by their customs and customary laws. So, marriage bond emerges as a social arrangement by which a couple is legitimized and recognized by the society under the institution of *nyedas*. Basically, the *nyeda* institution comprises of many components as like bride and groom, parents, clan members, priest, family members, and negotiators or go-between. During the *nyeda* ceremony these components are known as different name like groom is locally name as *papum gene*, bride as *nyeme nyamne*, the groom's parent are known as *hew channeornyeda dapu* and the bride's parent is called as *home inne* or *nyeda dane* and relatives who participates during marriage ceremony in side of bride's family is called as *asha dohane* [one who contributes ornaments] and relatives who join in side of groom's party is called as *Lekku-Lebak Pane* [one who contributes case or kinds for bridal price].

In whole process of *nyeda* ceremony, a shaman/priest called as *nyibu* plays a significant role. As rituals part is the main components of the *nyeda* ceremony without which celebration of *nyeda* would be half hazard.

### Stages of Nyeda

The *Tagin* perform a number of ceremonies in connection with marriage. Of these *teggu-gute nyeda* or *hindu-hiri nyeda* ceremony is the biggest one. This marriage ceremony is performed in several stages. It is started with the divination of eggs and chicken livers. When the divination is found favourable for the *tegu-gutte nyeda* ceremony, the *nyetam* (negotiators) are being appointed from both side of the family. In the beginning process of *nyeda*, the parents of the boy first find out a girl suitable for marriage to the son. While selecting the girl, the socio-economic status of girl's parents is highly determined for her selection. When they have set their mind on a particular girl, they invite a shaman called *Nekiok* who takes omen examination from egg or liver of a chicken to find out that weather the girl, if married to his son, would live long or weather she would bring prosperous to family in future. If the omen is favour, the boy's father will select one elderly person to act as intermediary or go-between which is called as *Nyeda Nyetam*. The *Nyetam* goes to the house of girl village and places the marriage proposal before the parents of the girl. If the marriage proposal is agreed by the girl's parents, they tell him the bride price or marriage wealth to be exchanged between the two parties. The *nyetam* will returns to his village and informs the willingness of the girl's parents to the boy's parent's desire of marriage wealth to be exchanged or bridal price desired. After that the entire formal process of *nyeda* ceremony will start. As there are several stages of *nyeda* ceremony which should be fulfilled by the groom's parent.

#### 1. *Mimpa-Lemi (Darle-Kotar)*

It means that visiting of groom's party to the bride's house to inform their willingness of *nyeda* ceremony. This is the first stages of *nyeda* process, during this occasion *nyetam* (negotiators) accompanied by the parents of groom party visiting the bride's village with load of meat, basket of *opo* (millet beer), pig, and roasted meat. They inform the parents of the bride that their daughter would be taken to the groom's house during the *Tegu-Nyeda* ceremony. Since then, the parents of the bride start collecting items for ornaments and decoration and dowry for their daughter during the ceremony. All the relatives, clan members, and well-wishers of bride's will be invited in a prior intimation. They are locally called as *asha-dohane* (who contributes case/ ornaments for the bride). This stage of *nyeda* is also called as *Darle-Kotar*. During this first stage of *nyeda* process both the families agreed for *nyeda* ceremony which shall be performed later on.

#### 2. *Sepia Tenam (cutting of ritual tree)*

*Sepia tenam* is the second stage of *nyeda* process where the priest will arrive at the residence of groom's family for month long rituals chanting to propitiate the spirits for peace and harmony of entire clan members. During this stage a tree called *Hibi* shall be cut down from jungle to use it for ritual alters where mithuns are to be sacrificed through priest chanting. So, this process of cutting down of tree for ritual purpose through chanting by the priest is called as *sepia tenam*. After the *sepia* ritual a groom's family and relatives will visit the village of bride's parent with load of *opo*, meat and alive *mithuns* gifted as marriage wealth. In reciprocating this, the bride's parent will give valuable ornaments, case or kinds to groom's family members.

#### 3. *Roi-Depar(part of nyeda ceremony)*

During this third stage of *nyeda* ceremony two parties will exchange half of marriage wealth. The entire process of *nyeda* marriage wealth will be decided in this stage as negotiated by the arbitrators called as *nyetam*. After this stage the final ceremony of *nyeda* will be fixed between two parties and sometime it may take one or two

years to complete the entire *nyeda* process. Usually, it depends on the economic position of the parents of bride and groom. So, this *roi-depar* stage is an important part of *nyeda* ceremony where in two parties jointly fixed final marriageritual and rite.

#### 4. **Harcho Enam**

After fifteen to one month of the visit of the *mimpa-lemi*, the *harcho* (informal) party will visit the groom's house to inform the arrival day of bride's party. After two or three days, a big party of groom's side is sent to the house of the bride, taking with them a sufficient quantity of meat, smoked fish and *opo*. In this occasion, matters relating to formalities to be observed are discussed. The bride's parents also kill one or two pigs and entertain the party. On the proceeding evening, the relatives and well-wishers of bride's will gather at her house. From that evening the singing of folk song called as *nyeme kabnam* (singing song of blessings and farewell) starts. The old ladies literally give present and blessings and bid farewell to her).

#### 5. **Neme NyamlinAlu (bride bid farewell day from parent village)**

This ceremony symbolizes the final stage of *nyeda* process where the parents of the bride bid farewell to their daughter. It also symbolizes the new beginning in the life of the bride and to maintain a balance between her old and new life. This is one of the most emotional movements of the wedding day. In this day the bride with full traditional attire with decorated ornaments of long procession proceed towards the groom village.

The complete outfit of the Tagin bride comprises among others of a red woolen gown (*jelli-jebu*), belt studded with metal disc, (*dengse*), chains of small size beads (*tashing sengmin*), chains of large size beads (*sengbok/sengtor*), ear-rings (*runbin*), a metal bowl cap (*dumpin*), chains of *takam*, chains of *chorgin juru* (conical shape metal items made for marriage ceremony), bangles (*kopu/kotik/koji*), sword in right hand (*riokse*), etc.

In the morning the bride proceeds in procession with her parents, friends and other relatives to her groom's village. Just outside her own house, she takes her last meal as an unmarried daughter. Just Outside the groom's village, the bridal party is received with mock war dance called *pajok rinam*, ringing dish bells and dances from opposite side. This mock opposition war dance is known as *nyeda pajokrinam* which ends in a general merry-making. Shouting of *hoi-hoi*, *hoha hoha*, *hirr ho*, *pesing pesing pebok pebok* by the opposite party.

In the final day of *nyeda* ceremony, *mithuns* and animals will sacrifice at ritual alters for purification and blessings. Marriage wealth will exchange between the bride and groom parents. All members participated in *nyeda* will get their share of meats and *apong*.

#### **Lebak Panam(Marriage Wealth)**

The classic and arguably most misunderstood and contentious aspect of Tagins marriage system is the system of bride-wealth. It is erroneously called as 'bride price' by the outsider. The 'bride-wealth' or 'marriage wealth' burdens are equally shared and exchanged by both the parents. Some of the earlier writers have mentioned that Tagin sales their daughters for bride price. By this study it has been found that, marriage system of Tagins involves exchange of 'bride-wealth' or 'marriage-wealth' locally known as *Nyeda- Arreh*. These expenditures of *Nyeda-Wealth* are equally shared by the both families in a mutual understanding and co-operation. It depends upon the individual family's socio-economic status and is not compulsory for all to exchange or pay marriage wealth.

The institution of *nyeda* brings stability to the relations between both the families as well as clan members which are locally known as '*Nengne Arum*'(matrimonial relation). The marriage-wealth is donated by members of the family, and clan members which is popularly known as *Lebak Panam*.This *lebak panam* is an aged old traditional practice of the Tagin tribe. In this system all the clan brothers and relative will clap together to contribute the fixed amount of case or kind for bridal wealth. This *lebak panam* system is a voluntary contribution and marriage expense is dictated by custom and tradition with a proper plan and approved by the *Nyitam-Pinko* (negotiators or go between) of two families before the wedding day arrives. Thus, marriage-wealth can be classified into many broad groups as discussed below.

#### **The Cost of Marriage-Wealth Falls into Four Major Groups:-**

- a) Firstly, gifts or payment presented by the bridegroom's parents such as *Mithuns* (bros-frontalis), *Pigs*, *Cow*, *Meat*, *Opo* [local wine], and case or kind to bride's family members.
- b) Secondly, the bride parents reciprocate this gesture with traditional valuable local ornaments such as *Koji* [bangles], *Maji* [antique bell], *Riokse* [sword], *Tashi* [different kinds of beads], *Dese/Dengse* [disc belt], *Ahin-papok* [bell type structure ornament], *Rubins* [ear ring], to the bridegroom's parents.

c) Thirdly, contributions given by the relatives or clan brothers of the bridegroom which is locally known as *Lebak Panam*. It is a custom of Tagins that whenever anyone from a clan marries a girl, his clan members' will clap together to give voluntary contribution for marriage-wealth.

d) Fourthly, bride's relatives, clan members and well-wishers voluntarily present gift in terms of local ornaments, or case and kind to the bride. They are locally known as '*Asha Doha Ne*' (who shared the meat and *opo* of *Nyeda*).

This marriage-wealth forms a part of stability and legitimizes the marriage system. However, it is not mandatory for all to incur such marriage expenditure.

#### **Asha Dohane (Bride Clan Members and Relative)**

*Asha-Dohane* means clan members and relatives of the bride who contributes ornaments and case or kind for marriage wealth of *nyeda*. All those collected gifts and ornaments from each *Asha Dohane* will exchange to groom's family members and relatives as marriage gift and valuable ornaments will owned by bride. The bride's relatives, clan members and well-wishers voluntarily present gift in terms of local ornaments, or case and kind to the bride. They are locally known as '*Asha Doha Ne*' and they will share the meat and *opo* (millet beer) given by groom's parent to the bride family.

#### **Forms of Tagin's Marriage (Nyeda) Institutions**

Tagin's *Nyedas* are classified into following broad groups. All forms of *Nyedas* are determined by the exchange of 'marriage-wealth' between bride and bridegroom families. Some of the important *Nyedas* institutions are as follows.

##### **a) Hindu-Hiri Nyeda**

The *hindu-hiri nyeda* is the largest of all type of *nyeda*, it is generally practiced among the wealthier family of the Tagin society. In this *Nyeda*, thirty to fifty *Mithuns* [bros-frontalis] are given by the bridegroom's family as a marriage-wealth or bride-wealth. The bridegroom parent is locally known as *Nyeda Dapu/ Hew Chane*. On the other hand, an equal amount of *Lakte/Yira* [varieties of local ornaments] are to be reciprocated by the bride's parent. Bride's parents are known as *Nyeda Dane* and *Homhe Inneh*. In this *nyeda* priest plays significant role along with negotiators locally called as *Nyetam-Pinko*. On the day of *nyeda*, bride is sent off from her house richly decorated with several qualities of *Tasis* (necklace beads), *kote/koji*(bangles), *majis* (large brass bell), *juru* (small brass bells), *talu* (large brass plate), and *dengse* (ring disc belt). She holds a valuable *orok riokse* (sword) in her hand and a round metal cap called *duplup* with also richly decorated. Finally, at least ten *mithuns* are sacrificed at the ritual alters after the day long incantation of priest which is known as *Korte Duyee-Chanam or Hillo Konam*. The bridegroom is known as *Papum Gene*, and the bride is known as *Nyeme Nyamne* during *Nyeda* ceremony.

##### **b) Himpu-Hingkum Nyeda**

It is second highest form of *Nyeda* among the Tagin. In this *Nyeda* usually twenty to thirty *Mithuns* are to be gifted by the bridegroom's family, and an equal number of local ornaments have to be exchanged by the bride's family. In practice five *mithuns* are sacrificed at ritual alters. In this type of marriage, a priest also plays a major role for ritual bonding and incantation.

##### **c) Hingkum-Karkum Nyeda**

It is third category of *Nyeda* in terms of marriage-wealth exchange between the parents of the bridegroom and the bride. In this *Nyeda*, around 15 to 20 *mithuns* are negotiated between the two parties as marriage-wealth and an equal number of local ornaments have to be exchanged by the bride's parents. However, the mode of ritual ceremony and practice is the same in all forms of *Nyedas*.

##### **d) Dalwk-Dahak Nyeda (Exchange of Brides)**

It is one of the unique forms of Tagin's *Nyeda* (marriage system). In this form of *nyeda*, usually both the families exchange their daughters as a bride. However, it is seldom found in the society though not absent. In this *Nyeda*, marriage-wealth is settled by mutual understanding between the guardians and marriage expenditure has to be equally shared by both.

##### **e) Tado-Nyedas**

There are different types of *Tado Nyeda*. The *TadoNyeda* is considered as lowest form of *Nyeda* ceremony among the Tagin. *Tado Nyedas* are classified into following groups:

(i) **Tado- Mero Nyeda**:- this is the highest form of *tado nyeda*. In this marriage system a small ritual is performed by the priest which is called as *vnni-rialo* where one *mithunis* sacrificed in ritual alters for purification of family members as well as clan brothers. In this *nyeda* formalities are observed sincerely for the honor of the bride's parents. A maximum of ten *mithuns* along with some bundles of meat and unfiltered *opo* are given by the bridegroom's family. By reciprocating this an equal number of ornaments like *koji*, *maji*, *riokse* (sword) and *tashi* (beads) are given by the bride's family.

(ii) **Tado- Dopu Nyeda:-** In this *nyeda* no ritual formalities are observed. This *nyeda* is practiced by those whose economic is not good. A simple ceremony is just observed with exchange of marriage gift in form of bride's wealth of not more than seven *mithuns* along with bundles of meats and *opo* given by the groom's parent.

(iii) **Tado-Doki Nyeda:-** this is the lowest form of *tado nyeda* in Tagin society. In this *nyeda* not more than six *mithuns* are given by the groom's parents bride's wealth. It is one of the most commonly and easiest marriage system of the Tagins. It requires mere payment of 3 to 6 *mithun* to the bride's parents by the bridegroom but no question of return payment of valuable ornaments from the bride's side to the bridegroom.

#### **Types of Marriage among Tagin**

The different types of marriage among Tagins are regulated by the institutions of *Nyedas*. There are a number of marriage forms practiced in Tagin society which are as following:

##### **a) Child Marriage**

In the traditional marriage, there was no hard and fast rule about the exact marriageable age for the boys and girls. There was a practice of pre-birth or child marriage among Tagin. The child marriage was commonly practiced among them. In this form of marriage, the boy or the girl is married off at a tender age. Sometimes, the young girls were married to a man quite older to her. Another practice of child marriage was known as *Nepe-Nyeda Menam*, which means marriage proposal takes place between two families when the child is in the womb of the mother. In this practice, the priest is invited for egg or chicken liver examination to predict the possibility of child as boy or girl and such a practice is called *Leeh Mekanam*. It was the most common practice among Tagins in olden times. Now a days practice of child marriage rarely occurs in Tagin society due to influence of modern marriage pattern.

##### **b) Nyengne-Nyeda (Arrange Marriage)**

The arranged marriage is called *Nengne-Nyeda*. In this marriage form, the parents of bridegroom once decided to establish a matrimonial relation with a particular girl and family invite a priest to perform a ritual of chicken liver test. If test is favourable, the bridegroom's parents will entrust one '*Nyetam*' (arbitrator) to negotiate the parents of girl to offer marriage proposal. If the girl's parents agree to the proposal of marriage then they will jointly fix the final month for marriage ceremony. In this type of marriage, Tagins usually prefer hard working girls with good family background and sometimes depends upon the social reputation, integrity of the girl's family. Normally boy's parents initiate the matrimonial proposal but on many occasions it was found that girl's parents had also started marriage proposal.

##### **c) Kacham-Sunam (Love Marriage)**

The love marriage is called *Kacham-Sunam* which has become common practiced in Tagin society. In olden times, it was seldom practiced. However, due to the influence of modernity, now people prefer love marriage. There is certain social obligation for newly married couples without performing such an obligation they may not be recognized as husband and wife. The boy will bring his lover to parent's house to perform a usual practice called *Layap/Nayap* (type of ritual for new couple) for social recognition. In this system normally one pig is sacrificed and pig liver will be examined to foretell the future of the new couple. Usually one *Sebok/Tashi* (large size beads) will be tied around girl's neck. After performing this normal ceremony, a boy will visit the girl residence with one or two pigs/*Rikmas* with *Opo* (local beer). A similar ceremony will be done by the girl's parents in the same manner.

##### **d) Nemeh-Senam (Force Marriage or Marriage by Capture)**

The force marriage locally known as '*Nemeh-Senam*' which means a kidnapping of a girl or woman forcing her to marry a man against her will. This type of marriage occurs when there arises some controversy and dispute between two families in case of breakdown of marriage rules. If the girl was betrothed to either by child marriage, after getting puberty or maturing if the girl refuses to marry with a man whom she was betrothed, in such situation the boy's family will either force her to marry or make a demand to return the amount of marriage wealth or bride's wealth that they have incurred. If the girl's parents are unable to return the marriage wealth, then boy's party will capture the girl forcefully. In such condition, girl's family cannot go against the boy's family. Marriage by capture and marriage by service rarely occur in the present time.

##### **e) Dalwk-Dahak (Exchange Marriage)**

Another peculiar type of marriage system in Tagin society is exchange marriage called as *Dalwk-Dahak*. In this type of marriage, usually two families exchange their daughters. A marriage is solemnized through mutual understanding without investing much expense for marriage-wealth. However, all the process and ceremonies of marriage are to be performed by both the families.

**f) Nyamgio Neme Nanam (Married to Betrothed Girl)**

'Nyamgio-Neme' means already betrothed girl by process of child marriage. When man has married to betrothed girl of other man, such type of marriage is known as *Nyamgio NemeNanam*. Such type of marriage is considered as most controversial and unacceptable which often leads to family feuds and quarrel. In olden times such controversies had led to many blood feuds and inter clan war between girl's lover party and betrothed man's family locally known as *Nyimak-Panam* (aggression to enemy village).

**g) Hengmee Nyahee Chiknam (Levirate Marriage)**

The term 'levirate' is derived from the Latin word 'Levir' this literally means 'brother-in-law'. The Tagin people refer to the levirate marriage as *Hengmee* or *Nyahee chiknam*, 'Hengmee' means widow. A Widow re-marriage is permitted in Tagin society if she is young and desires to marry. When husband dies, his brother irrespective of age inherits deceased wife. In case of husband's death, first preference of widow is to marry the brothers of the deceased, in the absent of brother; the lineage brother (*Halung Aakin*) asserts the right and inherits the widow than last option to clan members. If there is no one to marry her from deceased husband's family, the widow is also free to decide and choose to marry someone else. If the widow does not want to marry, she may remain as widow for the rest of her life<sup>13</sup>. However, if widow has married to other person, new husband has to return the whole bride-wealth paid by the deceased family.

**h) Riknv Ning Nanam (Surrogate)**

The term 'Surrogate' is derived from the Latin word 'Soror', this literally means 'sister'. In Tagin society there is no social sanction against surrogate marriage. The practice of surrogate polygyny is allowed in society but it is seldom practiced and circumstantial only. A man is permitted to marry sister of the wife if all mutually accepted. A man marries the sister of his wife, when the wife is alive not as a matter of right but as a matter of bearing child if the first wife has no issue and desires so. If a wife dies, the husband may marry her sister but not as a matter of right and compulsory form of inheritance. It is possible with the consent of the deceased wife's sister and parents

**i) Neme/Nelo Nakeen Nam (Polygamy)**

It is well known that Tagin people practice polygamy. Polygamy is a collective term used to describe the phenomenon of entering into a marriage with more than one spouse simultaneously. Anthropologist distinguished between two forms of polygamy viz. polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny refers to the form of marriage in which a man is married to more than one woman at the same time. Polyandry refers to a form of marriage in which a woman is married to more than one man at the same time. Polygyny is the common practice of Tagins customary marriage but polyandry is uncommon and is not permitted in the society. Usually Tagin man can marry more than two or more wives at the same time. There are various reasons of polygyny, when a wife is unable to bear child, her husband has legal right to marry with another woman in Tagin custom, in order to procreate children for himself and on behalf of his barren wife. Marriage to a second wife may take place where the wife concerned dies without leaving a surviving son or his descendants. Secondly, if unable to procreate or is barren, thirdly, wife has already passed the fertility age without leaving a surviving son; fourthly, divorced without a birth of child, and infected with diseases, witchcraft, mentally retarded, laziness, and immoral personality of the woman etc.

**Changes in Marriage System of Tagin**

There is a tremendous change in the traditional marriage pattern of the Tagin tribe. There are many types of traditional marriage system like child marriage, exchange marriage, force marriage, levirate marriage and polygamy. One of the significant changes seen in the marriage system of the Tagin is declining of child marriage and polygamy marriage. It is found that many Tagin men and women have started marrying non-Tagin people from within and outside Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier *nyeda* ceremony was performed before the marriage but today people perform *nyeda* ceremony after marriage. Now a days marriage among the Tagins is more of a display of one's financial status and show of wealth. Traditional marriage customary laws are losing day by day due to interaction with other culture and religion.

In Tagin society, a matrimonial relation has got uniqueness in both meaning and importance. It served as a uniting force for long lasting family bonds between the two families. There is continues exchanging of materials i.e. *mithuns* and other eatables from the groom's side and traditional ornaments from the bride's side. The marriage formally culminates with the performance of rituals. But this is not the end rather it is a beginning because after this successful marriage the members of both families will try to tie another knot and this will go on. However, with the onslaught of new faith, this elaborate marriage institution becomes insignificant. It has practically turned to be a day's affairs, where a pomp and show party is arranged and the presents (gifts) are expected from the guests.

Traditionally Tagin *nyeda*/marriage begins with omen test by priest or other elderly man that would reflect whether the marriage decided upon will have a positive bearing or the contrary. The bridegroom parents sent *nyetam-pinko* (arbitrators) into bride's parent house for the settlement of marriage. Now due the influences of modern marriage system, bride and groom prepared love marriage without following traditional methods of marriage practices. Modern Tagin society has been highly influenced by the Christian missionaries and as due to which some of Tagin population have got converted, due to which there is seems to be an impact on their traditional system of marriage.

With the passes of time, the Tagin and their traditions did not remain unaffected by the forces of modernization and westernization in Arunachal Pradesh. Education facilitated Tagins to rise up the social ladder after engagement in various service sectors, government jobs, businesses, politics etc, this somehow down the line has created a society mired with class mindsets and has converted a classes society got educated, become officer, engineer, engaged in various business field and adopt class status and actively participate in politics and many become professional politician. Classless society turned into class society.

Modern economics gave new shape to the Tagin people in the form of cash while traditional economic system underwent a massive change. Positive effect is that through cash/currency system easily managed all the need article of *Nyeda*. Negative effect is that ornament prices rise double or triple in compares to traditional value. Marriage ceremonies are the only occasions where people can show his or her status, hence during *Nyeda* ceremonies, new and expensive gifts items are added to the list of presents as token of love. The number of ornaments to be exchanged has increased in number.

Earlier pre-sex and pre-marital strictly forbidden. School going teenagers engaged pre-sex and pre-marital relationships which greatly hamper the Tagin *Nyeda* practicing system. Presently love marriage has been practiced which stained the traditional norm of marriage. Couple stayed as married without confirmation from own their parents. These couple performing *Nyeda* after having number of children or after own properties. These kinds of practices have been fading the age-old cultural day by day. Some of the negative and positive impact on tradition marriage system due to modernization are; -

1. Due to influence of modernization today, marriage became a game for many youths, at any time they can mangle and leave from the life of each other.
2. Teenage marriage has increased rapidly.
3. Modern marriage has become a game for the rich people to display status symbol.
4. Due to influence of various cultures in the society, Tagin marriage system has partially diluted because instead of carrying *opo*/local beer now people carrying sugar and cold drink in the *nyeda*.
5. Role of priests in *Nyeda* procession is reducing day by day due to influence of western culture and religions.
6. Divorce is very common in the Tagin society earlier it was seldom practiced.
7. Now couples are married in church, and temple etc.,
8. Earlier the child marriage was commonly practiced in Tagin society but now a days child marriage has been completely abolished from society due the imposition of modern legal system.
9. The exchange and marriage by captured/kidnaped also been abolished in society.
10. Today Love and elopement marriage is very common these days, pre-marital sex is also common which was very rare in the traditional Tagin society.
11. Today marriage celebrations are organized in the modern and western style. Marriage ceremonies are also being organized in the churches as holy marriage, temple, restaurants, courts and open public places.
12. Divorce is very common which was unusual to the traditional society. The cases of abortion and family planning are reported which was unknown and considered as crime in customary belief.
13. The practice of inter-tribe marriage is becoming common in the Tagin society. It is also observed that there is a remarkable change in practices of demanding of bridal prices but slaughtering of animals and exchange of marriage gifts is still continuing in the society.

## **II. Conclusion**

Thus, for the Tagin people, marriage is a socially recognized institution. It is considered as must for them because it helps in maintaining the unbroken line of family descent and also generates more working hands in the family which in turn betters the economic conditions of the family. They are tribe endogamy and clan exogamy. After marriage they have a patrilocal form of residence because their society is largely a patriarchal society. Polygamy is permissible in Tagin society. In olden period man having two or three spouses were very common. However, in present time polygamy is diminishing in Tagin community due to modernization. Child marriage was also commonly practiced in olden time but it has been completely eradicated from the society.

The objective of present study is to investigate that the marriage practice still continues to exist among Tagin tribe. But with the spread of modern education and the advent of foreign culture and religion, the change is also taking place in the radiational custom and practices, when we closely looked into it. The Tagin's tribe



have been observing their traditional and customary practices relating to the marriage from time immemorial. They still attach great importance to social and customary norms. With the spread of education and foreign culture, the change in the traditional marriage system is inevitable. Now a days marriage has become common practices for young teenage group. Divorce cases are also largely found in the present society earlier it was seldom practiced in Tagin society. Nowadays, many educated Tagins married to other tribes of the state.

Thus, the Tagin society is in transition due to interaction with the people of other cultures and societies. At the same time it is the responsibilities of the present generation of the society to be on their guard against the onslaught of modernization, so that their rich culture, heritage and value system could be preserved without much damage.

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