



Traditional Trade Activities between the Nyishi and their Neighbouring tribes in Precolonial era.

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Abstract - Historical studies and the accounts of various administrators views that during precolonial period the Nyishis had trade relation with both Tibet(China) and the Plains of Assam. The Nyishis who lived closed plains had trade relation with Assam and those lived near the international boundaries had trade relation with Tibet(China)The whole system of trade was based on barter or exchange of commodities according to the needs of family, individuals or village due to the absence of monetized economy in the Nyishi areas in precolonial era.

Keywords - Maji, Nyishi, Apatanis, Barter, Inter-tribe, Akas, Sajalong ,Monpas

I. Introduction

In the precolonial period the entire economy of the Nyishi people dependent on agriculture, domestication of animals, hunting- gathering and fishing etc. Besides meeting almost all the needs of economic life but still there have been some needs which are not met e.g like salt and iron etc. This made them to undertake trade with neighbouring countries as well as inter -tribe trade.

Inter-tribe and inter ethnic economic relations based on barter and exchange have been a significant aspect in primitive economy as its evident also in Nyishi economy.The Nyishi had maintained an inter tribal trade with neighbouring tribes like Apatanis, Akas, Sajalong and Monpas.

Trade with Apatanis :

The Nyishi's of keyi Panyor, Kamle, kara Dadi and Kurung Kumey had close trade relation with the Apatanis from the immemorial time the trade or barter relation between Nyishi and Apatani based on mutual inter-dependence and trade relation between them characterized by trade on agricultural product ,household items and animal husbandry.

Manyiang is a term used for the friendly relationship between the Apatanis and the Nyishis and its largely based on economic terms ,the Manyang tradition started for bartering of the necessary items from Nyishi territory to Apatani valley.

As Haimendorf pointed out that the trade between Apatanis and their neighbor Nyishi is largely based on the complementary nature of their economy.The Apatanis are



primarily agriculturist and their valley offer little scope for the breeding of large number of domestic animals. The Nyishi on other hand side are indifferent cultivators, had plenty of land lived loosely scattered over grassy hill slopes and forest the supply of domestic animals i.e mithun, pigs, cows, goats for their various usage.

Apatanis needs a large number of mithuns (Shey, Bosfront tails) and pigs (erik) in their Murung and Myoko for sacrifice and the other hand the need of the Nyishi is less constant and is not immediately connected with ritual observance, while on the time of scarcity, usually they exchange mithun for rice. Besides buying mithun and pigs Apatanis also obtain cotton and yarn which was essential for Apatanis for cloth weaving and its produced only in the Nyishi belt, local spices known as honam in Nyishi and yorokhum in Apatani, sin-ter in Nyishi and santu-tero in Apatani, Hikhu-Hiba (Bambooshoots), salt (Alloh), chilly (yumdik), maize (topu), millet (tami) and valuable articles such as tibetian bells (maji), brass plate (tal) and different varieties of beads (tasang/ tessi) and earthen pots were items of trade that Apatanis were purchased from the Nyishis villages vice versa from Apatanis Nyishis obtain paddy (Amm), maize (topu/toop), weaving cloth and swords (oriok) manufactured by Apatanis.

Trade with Tagins :

Nyishis of Keyi Panyor, Kamle, kara Dadi, Kurung kumey (Undivided subansiri region) had maintained an indigenous trade relation with the Tagins. Most of the Tibetan articles reached to Nyishi area of Kamle and subansiri valley through the Tagin people. Tagin also acted as intermediaries between the tibetian markets and the Nyishi of Kamle and undivided subansiri valley. The skins of monkey, hides, bear, musk deer, dry fish, cane, millet, madder brought by the Nyishis at Tagin villages i.e limekang and taksing and exchanged of it Tagins gave them Tibetan articles such as beads (Tasang/Tessi), metal disc, brass plate, Tibetan touchless bell, bangles, sword, woolen cloths, blankets and most important one salt (Nyime Alloh/Allh).

Trade with Akas, Sajalong (Miji) and Monpas

Nyishi of East Kameng region had a indigenous trade or barter relation with Akas, Sajalong (Miji) and Monpas, trade with Akas and Miji were called as Lekang Asa and trade with Monpas as Nyiecha Asa. They commonly called the Akas and Sajalong as Bangro and Monpas as Nyiecha, from Akas and Sajalong the Nyishi obtain commodities i.e paddy, cotton, mushroom, maize in exchange of mithun, cane, millet etc. Akas called this trade relation as Bjiwu. The Monpas they used to exchange produced goods such as maize, and yeast in return of musk, animal skin and cane from the Nyishis. The Akas, Monpas, Sajalong (Miji) also acted as the intermediaries between the Nyishis Tibet (china) valuable items from Tibet such as beads (tasang), Tado, Chungree, Stripes swords, salt (Nyime Alloh), tale, maji reached in Nyishi area through the Akas, Monpas, Sajalong (Miji).

II. Conclusion

From the study, it can be informed that the inter-tribe trade activities of Nyishi was significant during past which were maintained by them until the development of the modern amenities in their respective areas. Their trade activities was based on barter



system, they were unknown to the monetized economy and their trade activities were dominated by the petty local products which were used as medium of exchange apart from inter-tribe trade they had close trade relation with neighbouring state and countries Tibet(china) and plains of Assam.

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