

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRADITIONAL
INHERITANCE PRACTICE OF CHAKHESANG TRIBE WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE,
NAGALAND**



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**“A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRADITIONAL INHERITANCE
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TO PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE, NAGALAND”**

Thesis submitted to St. Teresa’s College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in *fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology*

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled “**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRADITIONAL INHERITANCE PRACTICE OF CHAKHESANG TRIBE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE, NAGALAND**” is a record of bonafide research work carried out by **KENEIPHRUONUO KERETSÜ**, under my guidance and supervision. The thesis is worth submitting in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

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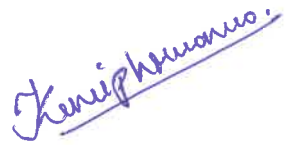
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DECLARATION

I, **Keneiphruonuo Keretsü**, hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRADITIONAL INHERITANCE PRACTICE OF CHAKHESANG TRIBE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE, NAGALAND**” is a bonafide record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Smt. Elizabeth Abraham**, Head of the Department, St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship or other similar title.

Ernakulam

March 2022


Keneiphruonuo Keretsü

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CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE NO.
<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</i>	
LIST OF TABLES	
LIST OF FIGURES	
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1-17
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	19-30
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	32-36
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	38-76
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	78-83
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	85-87
<i>GALLERY</i>	88-92
<i>APPENDIX</i>	94-101

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
4.1	Age of the Respondents	38
4.2	Sex of the Respondents	39
4.3	Educational Qualification of the Respondents	39
4.4	Occupation of the Respondents	40
4.5	Distribution of Property Assets	40-41
4.6	Whether the inheritance practice of ‘Labü’ is given to daughters only	41
4.7	Whether ‘Kalu’ is considered to be one of the oldest forms of traditional inheritance practice in the village	42
4.8	Whether the traditional inheritance practice is still rigid in the village today	42-43
4.9	Position/status of a Phüsachodü man in the village structure	43-44
4.10	Whether the male members in the village play a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice	44
4.11	Do the Phüsachodü men still dominates over the village activities today	45
4.12	Changes are seen in the position of men in the village today	45-46
4.13	Position of a Phüsachodü woman in the village structure	46
4.14	Types of property inherited by the Phüsachodü women in the village	47
4.15	Phüsachodü women are given fair share of property holdings like the male members in the village	48
4.16	Changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice due to the impact of the modern society	49
4.17	Whether the ‘Gifted land or Acquired land’ property is practiced among the people in Phüsachodü village	50
4.18	In the case of ‘gifted-land’, the woman’s property can be inherited by	51

4.19	Whether fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is seen today in Phüsachodü village	52
4.20	'Customary Law' plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice	53

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
4.1	Religion of the Respondents	54
4.2	Whether Land is an important property asset in Traditional Inheritance Practice	55
4.3	Rightful Heir for the Inheritance of Ancestral Property, according to the Traditional Inheritance Practice	56
4.4	In case of no heir, the village elders decide to pass down the property of the deceased person to the claimer by tracing the claimer's	57
4.5	How the village elders make decision regarding the passing down of property assets to the next heir or next person in the family or among the village members	58-59
4.6	Whether 'Shesüh' is still practiced in the village today or not	60-61
4.7	As per the traditional inheritance practice, the youngest son gets to inherit his father's house and the best plot of land are also given to him as his share of property inheritance - is such system of inheritance still practiced in Phüsachodü Village today	62
4.8	As per the traditional inheritance practice, the gender it favors the most is	63
4.9	Aware of the traditional inheritance practice in the village	64
4.10	Whether the villagers still practice the old traditional system of inheritance	65
4.11	Whether the men in the village are the rightful owners for the inheritance of the village properties	66
4.12	Whether the Phüsachodü men are economically independent than women in the village	67
4.13	Phüsachodü village is a highly Patriarchal society	68

4.14	Whether property rights are given to female members in Phüsachodü village	69
4.15	Phüsachodü women are treated equally at par with men in the village	70
4.16	Whether the Phüsachodü women are economically independent	71
4.17	Whether the Phüsachodü people practiced the system of 'Will'	72
4.18	Due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance practice can change the people's attitude towards different gender	73-74
4.19	Should the traditional inheritance practice still be continued in this 21 st century	75
4.20	'Traditional practices need to be preserved in order to safeguard and keep our cultural identity alive'	76

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

The history of the world is traced by the heritage that each generation receives, as a gift passed down through a transaction based not on market economy principles, but on a concept that is inextricably linked to issues of inheritance and identity. Leaving aside the legal meaning of inheritance, its moral meaning can only be recognised and assessed within the innumerable cultural differences that it encounters; not only in different geographical areas, but also within a single country.

The practice of passing down of properties, titles, debts and liabilities after a person's death is known as "**Inheritance.**" It has long played a crucial role in human communities, prompting the development of a number of inheritance laws to control the process. According to the New World Encyclopaedia (Sociology), it states that "A less common – but no less important - use of the term has to do with the notion that, as **human beings**, we receive an inheritance at **birth** from our **family, society, culture, nation, and world**. This second kind is cultural or social inheritance, and is also known as heritage."

According to the **Collins English Dictionary**, Inheritance means 'the right of an heir to succeed to property on the death of an ancestor.'

According to the **Encyclopaedia of Social Science (Sociology)**, Inheritance is the process whereby wealth is transferred from one generation to the next, upon the death of the older members. Systems of inheritance vary and are sociologically important for the distribution of wealth in society.

According to the **Britannica Encyclopaedia**, Inheritance is also called '**Succession,**' the devolution of property on an heir or heirs upon the death of the owner. The term 'Inheritance' also designates the "property itself." This process is governed in 'minute detail by Law' in modern society.

'Inheritance' is ultimately a "natural process." As every 'Individuals' have the right to pass on their goods and heritage to their children, who inherit not only the property and traditions, but also the responsibility for how they are used.

Inheritance also refers to the conditions, cultural practises, and environment in which a person is born. Customs, beliefs, traditions, and values are all examples of this. The cultural legacy of

each person varies widely depending on factors such as the era, geographical area, and socio-economic status of one's family. The era in which a person is born and nurtured, for example, has its own "merit of the age," which might have an impact on the events in a person's life. A person's upbringing and worldview are also influenced by whether they were born in an eastern or western society.

Each person integrates their cultural legacy into their lives in their own unique way, selectively accepting certain components while rejecting or disregarding others. This is a continuous process that might happen knowingly or unintentionally. Many people let go their entire lives without ever questioning the nature of their heritage, while others construct or find new, often unusual, paradigms for living in order to improve or increase the quality of their lives.

Inheritance may sometimes or most of the time may create/stir social stratification or inequalities among the people in society. Inequalities in both material and social dimensions of inheritance might be considered to be unfair and should be regulated in order to promote a more egalitarian society and globe. These sorts of heredity, on the other hand, are equally as natural and difficult to regulate as biological attributes like eye or hair colour, facial features, and body build. Inheritance is not chosen, nor is it even required; it occurs spontaneously as a result of lineage. Individuals do, however, have the flexibility to decide what to do with their inheritance, as well as the duty to use it for good or evil. Finally, the greatest advancement in human civilization occurs when individuals accept responsibility for their heritage, whether it is an asset or a liability, and put it to good use for the benefit of all.

Thus, the laws of inheritance vary by society and have evolved over time.

A Glimpse of Northeast India

Northeast India is India's eastern-most area in the country. The contiguous **Seven Sister States** - **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura** as well as the Himalayan state of **Sikkim** make up this region. They are known as "**Seven Sisters and one brother.**" These eight states in India are significant not only for their geographical location but also for their cultural and historical diversity. These states are distinct from the rest of the country due to their terrains, diversity of communities, geographical and biological diversity.

These states cover 2,63,179 sq.km or about 8% of the country's overall geographical area and house around 3.76% of the country's total population. Around 98% of these state's borders have international borders (NCERT,2017).

The Northeast India states are officially recognized under the North Eastern Council (NEC), constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the eight states.

The North-eastern region is bordered by five foreign countries – China, Bhutan to the north, Nepal to the west of Sikkim, Myanmar to the east and Bangladesh to the west.

The North-east states are surrounded by hills and lovely rivers which are part of the eastern Himalayan ranges and Patkai-Naga Hills as well as the Brahmaputra-Barak River systems and valley plains. Mountain ranges, plateaus, low hills and valleys make up the hills and basins. The region is said to be the '**Gateway to East and South-east Asia**' blessed with abundant of natural resources and flora and fauna.

The states are a great illustration of "**Unity in Diversity**" because they have a diverse cultures and ethnic groupings. The states multi-cultural nature is reflected in the diversity of ethnic groups, languages and religions thereby exemplifying the state's multi-cultural nature.

Over 200 of the country's 635 tribal groups live in the region, speaking a range of the Tibeto-Burman languages and dialects (NCERT,2017). Tribals comprising of the majority of the population in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland have a wide range of tribes.

Culture of Northeast India

The North-eastern region is a slice of heaven on earth, with breath-taking natural beauty and its vibrant flora and fauna. The regions scenic position of meandering water bodies, waterfalls,

its lush green forest and blue mountain ranges along with favourable weather, provides a stunning vista. It is well known for its unique culture and traditional way of life.

The Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist cultures all co-exist in the North-east.

The people of the North-eastern Indian states are classified into tribes and sub-tribes and their lifestyles vary from one place to the other. Each of these states – the tribal groups have its own tribal culture, folk dancing, food and crafts. Due to their habitation in the hilly or high mountain regions they have a primitive lifestyle, with hunting and fishing as their primary professions.

Tea plantation, traditional handicrafts, agriculture and weaving are the main activities of these people.

Nearly a hundred million tribal people is said to make up India's population. The North-eastern states of India, bordering China and Burma, and the highlands and plains of peninsular India are considered to be the two main areas of tribal settlement in the country. Thus, **North-East** India is the '**Home**' to diverse **Indigenous** populations with distinct cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical backgrounds of the country.

A WINDOW TO NAGALAND – IT'S LAND AND PEOPLE

Nagaland state is primarily a '**Tribal state**' on India's eastern border which is mostly hilly and is known for being the 'Home to the Nagas,' a brave ethnic group in the region. With 'Kohima' as its state capital. During the **World War II**, when the Japanese invaded British India, its capital – **Kohima** was the key '**battleground**' during the war. Today it stands as a prominent tourist destination as the "Kohima War Cemetery," which was built in remembrance of the soldiers slain in the '**Battle of Kohima in 1944.**'

The state of Nagaland was formally inaugurated as the 16th state of the Indian Union on December 1st 1963. It is bordered on the west by Assam, on the east by Myanmar (Burma), on the north by Arunachal Pradesh and part of Assam, and on the south by Manipur.

Nagaland has an area of 16,579 sq.km (6,401 sq. mi) and a population of 1,980,602 as per the 2011 census. Out of this 71.03% of the population live in rural areas and 28.97% population live in the urban areas. The density of the population is 119 per sq. km (according to 2011 census). As per the 2011 census, Nagaland state has literacy rate of 80.11% with female literacy rate of 76.69% and male literacy rate is 83.29%.

The state is divided into 16 administrative districts which are home to 17 major tribes and sub-tribes. In terms of customs, language and dress, each tribe is distinct from the others.

The **Tribes** in Nagaland are: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Dimasa Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Tikhir, Yimchunger and Zeliang. The **Districts** in Nagaland are: Chümukedima, Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Niuland, Noklak, Peren, Phek, Shamator, Tseminyu, Tuensang, Wokha, Zunhebphoto (out of the 16 districts four districts are the recent created districts, they are- Chümukedima district, Nuiland district and Tseminyu district which are carved out from Dimapur and Kohima districts on 18th December, 2021 while on the 19th January 2022, Shamator district was also carved out from Tuensang district).

PHYSICAL FEATURE

The state of Nagaland lies between 25°6' and 27°4' latitude north of equator and between the longitudinal lines 93°20' and 95°15' east. Geographically, the state of Nagaland is mountainous with elevations ranging between 194m and 3048m above sea level. Many villages in the state are said to be located between 1000m and 2000m above sea level, this is due to security concerns the Naga villages are typically located on hilltops and at a higher elevation.

The Mt. Saramati is considered to be the highest peak in Nagaland as it stands as an altitude of 3,840m above sea level located in Tuensang District. While Mt. Japfü and Mt. Paona which stands at 3014m and 2841m respectively are considered to be other important mountains in the state.

THE PEOPLE

The indigenous people of Nagaland are considered to be predominantly of the 'Mongoloid descent.' As their lifestyles are heavily influenced by mongoloid characteristics. There are various ideas about the origin and the meaning of the word "Naga," but no single hypothesis has been agreed upon. The people of Nagaland are divided into various tribes and sub-tribes with each of them having their own distinct languages and cultures. Each tribe of this exotic hill state wore colourful and intricately designed costumes, jewellery and beads which can be easily be distinguished from one tribe to the other.

RELIGION OF THE STATE

The state has a population of 1.978 million people, with 88% of them being Christians. The state's Christian population was estimated to be 1,739,651 as per the 2011 census thereby making it one of India's three Christian-majority states, along with Meghalaya and Mizoram. In both urban and rural regions of the state, church attendance is relatively high.

Other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism are also prevalent in the state but in minority category that is because of the non-locals residing in the state. But the indigenous people of Nagaland are all Christians. And only few groups belonging to the Zeliangrong and Rongmei Nagas practice folk religions. Otherwise, the state is dominated by Christian religion.

ECONOMY OF THE STATE

The state's economy is dominated on agricultural activities.

Since time immemorial, Jhum cultivation (i.e., slash and burnt cultivation or dry Farming) has been the principal employment of the people in rural areas. Jhum cultivation, Terrace cultivation and Shifting cultivation are the important cultivation system practiced by the people in Nagaland.

With the attainment of statehood, the state government has given incentives to the farmers thereby demonstrating how to undertake wet farming using the technical knowledge of 'Village Level Workers or Gram Sewak's' (V.L. Ws) who were trained from outside the state. Mechanical farming has become popular in Dimapur and Peren districts in recent years. Nagas nowadays, engages in floriculture, sericulture, horticulture, bee-keeping, handloom and handicrafts, plantations, cottage and small-scale industries, thereby adopting the modern technologies for their livelihood.

Nagaland state is considered to be a "Land of Folklore" which are passed down through generations by word of mouth/orally. Music plays an important part in the lives of the Nagas as their folk songs eulogising their ancestors, the brave deeds of their warriors and traditional heroes, poetic love songs immortalising ancient tragic love stories, etc. Nagaland is richly blessed by mother nature and due to its stunningly picturesque landscapes, vibrantly coloured sunrise and sunsets, its lush and verdant flora it is being referred as the "Switzerland of the East."

Nagaland is blessed with pleasant climate throughout the year. Its lush and beautiful sub-tropical rain forests which are also a treasure trove of a myriad of medicinal plants. It is blessed with a diversity of flora and fauna. And it is considered to be the home to many medicinal plants in the region.

Nagaland is famously known as the “Land of Festivals” because it is truly a festival place as all the tribes in the region celebrate their unique seasonal festivals with colour pageantry along with a music feast. Agriculture is the mainstay of ‘Naga society,’ hence most of these festivities focus around it. Although some religious and sentiments are woven into secular ceremonies and rituals, the main focus of the festivals is the offering of prayers to a ‘supreme being’ known by various names in different Naga languages. The spirit of the God is propitiated with offerings by the village shaman/priest for a bountiful harvest either before planting or on the eve of harvest at these festivals. These celebrations dates way back before the arrival of Christianity in the region.

Nagaland’s agriculture employs over 85% of the inhabitants, who live in villages perched atop steep ridges or slopes overlooking beautiful valleys teeming with whispering streams. And ‘monocrop agriculture’ is prevalent in most areas.

Nagaland has also a diverse ‘linguistic heritage,’ with as many languages as tribes and each distinct from the others. Inter-tribal and intra-tribal communication is extremely difficult. As a result of the circumstances, ‘English’ has become the official language, while ‘Nagamese’ a pidgin Assamese has become the common lingua.

Thus, Nagaland is a hill state with a diversity of vibrant and colourful tribal groups in the region.

CHAKHESANG TRIBE

Chakhesang tribe is also another majority tribes in Nagaland. This Chakhesang tribe previously was under the jurisdiction of the Angami tribes as the ‘**Eastern Angami**’ but later it got separated from the Angami tribe in August, 1964. The term Chakhesang is an umbrella term for the three sub-clans/communities that are “**cha**” which refers to ‘**chokri**’, “**khe**” refers to ‘**khezha**’ and “**Sang**” refers to ‘**Sangtam**’ (today it has been referred as Pochury) due to which the people of Chakhesang tribe uses three – local dialects they are – Chokri, Khezha and Poula. It is said that till today, the creation of Sangtam tribe as a separate tribe did not interrupt the word ‘**Chakhesang**.’ It is clear that the founders of the Chakhesang tribe had a clear vision

about the multi sub-tribes within their tribe. Thus, the three primary communities created Chakhesang. The district headquarter of Chakhesang tribe is located in the **Phek district** of Nagaland situated in the eastern most part of India.

The Chakhesang Tribe is said to come from the ‘Mongoloid race’ and their languages are classified as ‘Tibeto-Burman.’ Their community is said to be multilingual in nature. The Chakhesangs are also said to be mostly a **land-owning group**. They engage in terrace farming, jhum farming and agroforestry. It is said that the Chakhesang tribes are blessed with great skills in weaving as well as art and crafts.

ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE

Most Naga tribes in the state, including the Chakhesang, are thought to have migrated from ‘Makhel.’ Migration from the northwest to Kohima is mentioned in Chokri folklore. The British used to call the Chakhesangs as ‘Eastern Angamis’ (but it is no longer in use today as they have separated from the Angami tribe due to their geographical location as they settled in the eastern most part of the region) and they also have a similar migration history to the Angamis. But there is no written record to show which hamlet/village was home to the Chakhesang people’s earliest inhabitants, but history has it that ‘Khezhakenoma Village,’ also known as the Naga Legendary Village, was the birthplace of many of the Southern Naga tribes.

FESTIVALS OF THE PEOPLE

The Chakhesang tribes are said to have several festivals but the agricultural cycle, namely rice plantation, is said to be the focus point of the major traditional festivities of the people. Sükrü nye (‘nye’ means festival), Khutho nye, Shoda nye and Thüri nye are some of the major festivals of the Chakhesang tribe.

VILLAGE STRUCTURE

The kinship system was the foundation of the traditional Chakhesang villages. Any new village is founded after surveyors examined the regions habitation potential, that is by taking into account the aspects such as abundant water supplies for cultivation and an abundance of flora and fauna.

There are no social classes or economic distinctions among the Chakhesang tribe. There are, however, specific social duties within the society, and the entire village looks to an able and wise man known in the name of ‘Thüvomi,’ who was chosen by the people to offer leadership.

In Khezha dialect it is known in the name of 'Mewumi.' He is aided by few elders who have specific tasks to fulfil. The Thüvomi is both the religious and social leader. He observes religious fasts and ceremonies, he also counsels the villagers on issues such as law and order, discipline, war, peace, health and economy. Thüvomi's role is sometimes passed down to his son after his death. But if the son is determined to lack the qualities and abilities necessary to be an effective leader, another man from a good family who is familiar with the Thüvomi ways or the most capable man is nominated by consensus.

The Chakhesang culture is said to promote conformism because it secures the tribe's survival as conformist values among its members; nonetheless, merit is praised and fostered. At the same time, it demonstrates enough tolerance to accommodate the two-language situation, which results in dialect, dress and attitude in all 73 Chokri speaking villages and 13 Khezha-speaking villages, yet there is a celebration of many colors of a people who are connected by their Chakhesang identity.

Smaller communities from different tribes of Nagaland are also found among the Chakhesang tribes and it is also believed that one can trace the origin of some few Tangkhul people or families from the Chakhesang tribe. This makes the Chakhesang tribe a unique tribe amongst the Naga tribes of Nagaland.

With its diverse socio-cultural aspects, the people speak different dialects among them. It is considered a natural phenomenon that the Chakhesang tribe could easily converse in other tribe's dialect. They also use **Angami** dialect which is "**Tenyidie**" in their Bible and Hymn books as their official language in church which provides them an easier communication with the Angami tribes of Nagaland. With all such connections there is no doubt about this tribe's richness in its traditional folklores, songs and other traditional practices. Another significant feature about this tribe is its unique topography (place/sites). It also shares boundaries with Moa, Poumai, Tangkhul, Sumi, Angami and Pochury tribes of Nagaland which gives them an easier way of connection or relation with the neighboring tribes residing both in Manipur and Nagaland states. Regarding all the advantages access to them in various fields they are becoming successful in all aspects of life be it in the socio-political and religious field as well. Today, almost all the Chakhesang tribe practices Christianity as their primary religion.

CUSTOM AND TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF INHERITANCE PRACTICE

The system of land holdings is described as the local people's traditional possession or inheritance of land in their customs and traditions. In the traditional system of land ownership, the individual who owns the land has absolute right of ownership of the section of land that he or she owns or has. He or she has the absolute traditional right of possession of a certain precise piece of land, as well as the rights and advantages that come with it. Such specific property is either inherited from his forefathers or purchased by the individual himself or herself.

Land holding refers to the ownership and possession of land in native custom and tradition, and there are numerous types of land holdings practiced by the natives. They are-

- a) Individual land
- b) Land of one ancestor's family
- c) Sub-clan land
- d) Clan land
- e) Land of the major clan/khel
- f) Land of the village community

Sequence of Succession preferences according to the traditional custom of the natives-

1. When a deceased father has not made any testamentary disposition during his lifetime, the eldest son of the family is typically given the first priority for inheritance and succession and it goes down from the eldest to the youngest in preference for a single property.
2. When there are too many immovable possessions, they are occasionally divided and, in such circumstances, the brothers of the customary heirs are bound to share terrace fields, plots of land, jhum fields, woodlands and the house.
3. According to the custom, the debt and associated expenses shall be paid and cleared by the son or sons who inherited their father's property.

In this modern day, the landed properties of unmarried boys and girls, if any is said to be inherited solely by their fathers, without any preference or sharing. And if, the father is no longer alive, the mother is said to take the responsibility of her children's property.

There is also a custom and tradition of the natives that when a male child is adopted, the boy's title is transferred to the person who adopts him and at the same time, the boy becomes the flesh and blood of his adopted father and inherits his lineage. When the adopted father dies, the

adopted son becomes his adopted father's customary heir, assuming there is no other true blood and flesh son to inherit the father's property.

As per the custom and traditional system of inheritance practice of the natives, when someone claims to inherit someone else property without ascertaining the inheritable lineage and rights against the deceased person's property through a wrongful claim as a customary heir is strictly prohibited and it is considered to be taboo according to the natives. This is because the native's belief that the unseen God will punish the wrong doer as there is no such cure available to redeem the wrong doer from the wrath of an unseen God. And also, the children of the wrongdoer may also face adversity and disasters in their near future. Furthermore, taking an oath on such a subject of ambiguity for inheriting lineage in one's life is usually disallowed in the community.

There is no provision in the custom and tradition of the natives for the female to inherit the immovable properties from the ancestor's line in any way. Only males can become the inheritable heir for his father or ancestral properties, according to the native's customary law. The reason for restricting the female members to inherit such ancestral properties is that the lands are conquered land by the ancestors from nobody's land. They had conquered by defeating the enemies. The lands are conquered and acquired by the forefathers by taking oath with the counterpart's opponents by the man folk only. The land inherited from the descendant of the ancestral lineage cannot be lost by the marriage of a female child. As the title of the female can be change after marriage but the title of the land cannot be changed because of marriage ties, as land holds a very important integral part in the lives of the natives.

But another striking feature of the native in giving landed properties to female child is that there are some exceptions in the custom and tradition that if the land is not an ancestral property than the landed properties are given to female child on the basis of 'Udo Unyü' which means that it can be given to a girl child indefinitely, where the girl child can own and cultivate the land till her lifetime.

With regard to landed properties there is restriction to transfer properties to non-ancestral lineage as it is against the local custom and tradition to sell or transfer properties inherited from the forefathers to families from other clans, even within the same village. As a result, it is customary law that prohibits the sale of immovable properties inherited from the ancestral lines as it is voidable unless the headmen of the clan or sub-clan give their prior consent. Hence, the

transaction of such sale is voidable and shall not be regularized unless the elders and headmen of the clan or sub-clan give their prior consent.

Such traditional practices are still practiced and kept alive by the natives of the Chakhesang tribe.

Today, Phek district is the home place for almost all the Chakhesang tribe as the majority of the tribe is under this district.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

With a geographical area of 2026 sq.km, Phek district is located in India's easternmost region, sharing borders with Zunheboto and Tuensang districts in the north, Kohima district in the west, Myanmar in the south. It has a mix population of both the Chakhesang and Pochury residents but the former (i.e., Chakhesang tribe) is the majority.

POPULATION

According to the 2011 Census, the Phek district has a population of 163294 people and 104 villages under its belt. Agriculture is said to be the main source of income for the locals.

LITERACY RATE

According to the 2011 census, the Chakhesang tribe has a literacy rate of 79.13%, which is extremely similar to Nagaland state's literacy rate of 80.11%.

LANGUAGE

The Chakhesang people speak in three major languages namely: Chokri, Khezha and Poumai, with subtle tonal differences according to the range, location and village. They can also interact in Sumi, Tenyidie and English.

The majority of the Chakhesang people live in rural areas as their roots can be trace back to villages. They have expanded their base to towns and cities in modern times, but the family system and values have remained mostly unchanged. Even when they leave their communities to pursue an education degree outside of their comfort zones it is said that the tribe mostly live a basic traditional life. Thus, Chakhesang tribe are well known for their folk songs, dance such as 'War dance and cultivation dance' and their indigenous games such as the 'Greased bamboo climbing', Wrestling, and also for their art and handicrafts. Hence, they still value their traditional practices and take pride in their culture till date.

PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE

Phüsachodü is a village in Phek district which is located approximately 60 kilometres from Kohima district. It is situated in the north-west ward between the two prominent peaks of **Zaneibou** and **Kapamedzü** inhabited by the Chakhesang mainly '**Chokri.**' Phüsachodü Village is considered to be the '**largest village**' among the 'Chokri' area. Hesühmi Khel, Müdetsomi Khel, Sakhamotsomi Khel, Rühotsomi Khel, Thelütsomi Khel, Veromi Khel and Chüzhonumi Khel are the seven Khels in the village.

The Phüsachodü Village is considered to be about 14 - 15 generations old and it is believed that the '**location**' of the village was a '**path way for the warriors**' during the times of head-hunting mainly for the purpose of the expansion of their territory and fight for their supremacy to control over the neighbouring villages. The term "Phüsachodü", etymologically refers to "A new settling place at the straight upward path leading to the place traditionally known as 'Sühsazu', 'Sühthohüzu', 'Tsüshephüzu' or 'Tüphozhieu'; prior to human settlement or simply means 'Hamlet settled on the way.' Thus, the natives take great pride for being regarded as 'brave people' and it was traditionally believed that only brave warriors had settled over the edge. Hence, this village was considered to be the pathway for the warriors in the olden days.

ORIGIN OF PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE

It is belief that most of the ancient people of this village was said to have immigrated from the village of the '**Eastward Foothills of Japfü**' range, thus, there was no racial difference with them.

NATURE AND FEATURES OF PHÜSACHODÜ PEOPLE

The people of Phüsachodü village are said to be simple, peaceful, honest, sincere and good-natured people. The people were typically short in stature, like the other Mongoloids, because their bone structure was shorter and smaller than that of the Aryans/Dravidians. They appeared to be more muscular, powerful, stalwart in appearance and well proportioned. The faces are typically lozenged-shaped, with a flat profile, small eyes, black hair and a yellowish or dark skin colour.

RELIGION OF THE VILLAGE

The name of the religion during the pre-Christian era was usually referred to as “Thürunami” since the people worshipped “Thürümi” (means Unseen God). It was animism, where there were so many different kinds of God. “Thürümi” was a typical name for their Gods, who includes both good and malicious spirits. Benevolent spirits aided the people while Malevolent spirits caused havoc. The people believed that in an unseen God who was said to be the giver of everything and the creator of life. People used to refer “Thürümi” or “Unseen God/spirit” in their formal spoken prayer whenever a religious rite was conducted. In addition, the locals believed that this Phüsachodü village was guarded by two good high Gods known as “Shüde and Deshulü.” The sun and the moon, for example, were revered as sacred objects. In ancient religious life, natural items such as unusual stones, trees, rivers, mountains and particular regions were also viewed as sacred objects or the dwelling of the spirits. Offerings and sacrifices were made on occasion to satisfy their Gods. Offering ‘gennas’ and sacrifices was how people purified themselves. Before eating, harvesting, sowing, gaming, hunting, war and childbirth there were customary prayers and worships.

But with the advent of Christianity into the State of Nagaland by the English missionaries the people were converted to Christianity and no longer such animism type of religion was practiced by the locals. Today the majority of the people of Phüsachodü village are Christians.

LOCATION OF THE VILLAGE

Phüsachodü village is situated at an altitude of 1838m above sea level between 25°24’ and 25°37’ north latitude, and 94°19’ and 94°14’ east longitude.

POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE

According to the 2001 Census, Phüsachodü village had a population of 5849 consisting of 2857 males and 2992 females with a sex ratio of 1047.

But today, Phüsachodü has a total population of 7885 with 1917 households (According to the 2020 census).

LITERACY RATE OF THE VILLAGE

According to the 2001 census, the literacy rate of Phüsachodü village is 75.5% out of which 83.8% are male and 67.8% are female.

ESTABLISHMENT OF VILLAGE

It is believed that the founders of the Phüsachodü village came from two villages that is - Hesühmi Khel and Müdetsomi Khel from Mima village; and the second village was Sakhamotsomi Khel from Viswema village. As the population grew, people began to migrate to other regions and villages (24 villages) for various reasons and many new villages were formed.

For the people of Phüsachodü village, 'Land' is the most valued asset. As being an agriculturalist society since time immemorial, their life revolves around agriculture and is depended on the produce of land. Property can be essentially classified into two types- movable and immovable. Movable properties include items such as traditional attires/clothing, jewellery, household items, automobiles, etc. while in immovable property it includes landed properties. There are four different categories of land ownership -

- a) Land that belongs to a community or village
- b) Clan lands
- c) Lineage or ancestral Lands
- d) Individual land

Lands are said to be passed down via the male bloodline from generation to generation, whether inherited or self-acquired, and have been in the family or lineage for multiple generations and continue to be. Phüsachodü village is a 'Patriarchal and Patrilineal society.' Land is said to be bought and sold inside the village community and residents are instructed not to sell their properties to outsiders. Das argues that land ownership pattern was unique in the sense that customs did not allow inter-tribe transfer of land. Even people of the same tribe but belonging to different villages were not allowed to own land as per the village customs (Das, 1995). Land is held in several ownerships, but no alienation outside the clan is permitted. In cases where attempts have been made to dispose off the land to persons who were neither members of the clan nor members of the village, public opinion has dealt very severely with the offender (Hodson, 1911).

Due to the patrilineal system in the village, the people of Phüsachodü follows the 'patrilineal system' of inheritance practice since time immemorial where the male members in the village is considered to be the rightful heir for the inheritance of the 'ancestral property' as well as the 'village properties' as per the traditional customs of the village. Property is said to be passed down through the male blood line, with men inheriting both movable and immovable assets.

The youngest son is considered to be the most fortunate among the sons because he can inherit not only the ancestral properties but also the other property assets such as plot of land or paddy fields which are cultivated by his parents is also said to be given to him. The property of households with only a daughter and no boys is said to be passed down to the nearest male bloodline. Barthakur (2010) states that a man with no son and only female children cannot pass on his properties to his daughters and after his demise his property is inherited by his brother's sons. Though women cannot inherit the ancestral properties according to the traditional inheritance practice they are given land ownership for her to cultivate till her life time by her parents during the time of her marriage.

Till date the traditional inheritance practices are still followed by the people of Phüsachodü village in spite of the advancement with time they still have the traditional touch in the system of inheritance practice.

Phüsachodü village also holds a significant position among the villages of Chakhesang tribe because all the important events are said to be taken place from this village. That is starting from the first "Chakhesang Student conference" was held from this village which lead to the formation of 'Chakhesang Student Union,' the first "Chakhesang Region NNC Conference, 1955" was also held from this village and the Chakhesang Cultural Day, 1978 was also celebrated from this village. In 2003, the first Chakhesang Senior Citizen Conference was also held from this village. Phüsachodü village is said to have 'Friendship Treaties' with many villages namely – Pudunamai village (1880), Chüzho Runa Suh-Zapami (1923), Leshimi, Lusami, Jakhama and Chedemi village (1940). The friendship treaty with Pudunamai village in 1880 was considered to be the 'first friendship treaty' among the Nagas.

Thus, Phüsachodü village is a village that has involvement in the formation of different frontal organisation as well as land marks undertakings among the Chakhesang villages. Hence, is also famous for preserving its traditional practices and cultural identity till date.

Therefore, this study focuses on the traditional inheritance practice of Chakhesang tribe with special reference to Phüsachodü village.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Inheritance plays a very crucial role in the lives of every humankind. In fact, it is linked with the society since time immemorial. Inheritance is the process of obtaining private property, titles, debts, entitlements, advantages, right and duties. Sometimes, it can also stir social inequalities among genders or the common masses in the society.

This study is significant because studies on the traditional inheritance practice of Chakhesang tribe is limited and rare especially with Phüsachodü village.

It is significant because the study stresses upon the traditional system of inheritance practices of the Chakhesang tribe with special reference to Phüsachodü village, Nagaland. It also tries to highlight both the position of the two genders in the traditional inheritance practice. This study also provides information regarding the different types of traditional inheritance practices of the locals. It tries to highlight the various changes or the new trends taking place in the traditional inheritance practice due to the advancement of modernity in the society. Thus, from this study, we can understand how the traditional inheritance practice impacts and binds the tribal society together.

REVIEW
OF
LITERATURE

CHAPTER-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review is a critical assessment of past research on a topic that classifies, compares and critically assesses what has already been published on that topic. It enables the researcher to summarize and contextualize the relevant research and scholarly publications. It aids in mapping of several approaches to a particular subject and the discovery of patterns. It lays the groundwork for the researcher's later research works and establishes the importance of the new study.

This chapter deals with the secondary data that is used for the study of the traditional inheritance practice. It includes the works of previous research in relation to tribal studies, articles, books and periodicals.

Shupao (2019) conducted a study on “**Naga Customary Laws and its Relevance in Present Society: A Study of Zhavame of Chakhesang Tribe of Nagaland**” where he states that “Customary Laws are those sets of belief of traditional laws which are passed down by the forefathers” (p.131). These traditional laws differ from region to region and culture to culture. The researcher's main aim is to focus mainly on the customary practices among the Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland and its relevance with the present society today. It also looks into how the customary laws are affecting the people of the ‘**Old Generation**’ with the ‘**Present Generation**’ thereby bringing out the comparative views on the traditional as well as the modern structure with the help of both the qualitative and interview methods used in these findings with special reference to Zhavame Village of the Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland. This study highlights the identities and its social practices among the Naga society. Shupao (2019) states that “As tribal, the Nagas have its own unique social fabric cultures with various dialects, tribes, ethnic groups and different customs and its usages” (p. 131). Through the detailed study conducted by the researcher on Zhavame village of Chakhesang tribe it is founded that this village is one of the biggest village under the Chakhesang tribe with a **population** of **4567** and the **total household** to be of **1170**, this data was recorded from the village council chairman at the time of data collection by the researcher. This village is mainly a patriarchal based system.

This village is said to be governed and function together by the traditional and customary laws practice by the people in this village. This research work is done by utilizing both the qualitative and more descriptive in design. This study also looks into the relation of “Marriage and Inheritance” it has mentioned that during the ancient days the marriage ceremonies in Zhavame village are conducted through the animism and ritual practices but with the coming of Christianity in the village area the people had accepted the church marriage system of Christianity. The people of Zhavame village practices the system of monogamy and in the case of extra marital affairs penalty or actions are taken against the offender. There is no bride price or any price in relation to the marriage. The parents of both the bride and the groom can present them land, fields, etc. in terms of gifts to them. The gift of a paddy field to the newly wedded couple is known as ‘**Luphra**’ (Shupao, 2019, p.134). Luphra is an old traditional practice whereby if the husband dies his widow wife and his offspring’s can continue to cultivate and use the land for various purposes as it is their every right to do so and no other relatives have the right to interfere to take away the land but in case the widow remarries or die the paddy land will be handed over to the concern relatives.

In relation to women status the researcher has mention in this study that with the practice of patriarchal system in the society, there is no hesitation that the male members are prefer more and they are given the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process, the ancestral properties are passed down to them, they also take part in the administrative process in the village. But at the same time the women folk of this village enjoys a rightful social position as compare to other women in many parts of the country. The women of Zhavame village are also given the opportunity to get education, receives equal love from both the parents, they are also given land, paddy rice, etc. during the time of their marriage as gifts from their parents. Both man and woman are seen to work side by side together in the present context today. As the women folk of Zhavame village holds a rightful position in the society, they also hold another important organization under the banner “**The Zhavame Women Society**” where cases such as rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, adultery, selling of alcohols, etc. are solve under this women organization jurisdiction falling under the authority of the village council. The Zhavame women does not hold a low-level status when we look at the external surface but when looking at the internal matters the women folk are still deprive from participating in the administrative level as well as the property inheritance are still given to the male members. But with the impact of modern education among the present generations the women of todays are becoming more active and competitive than compared to the olden days.

The researcher also mentions that **“Land”** and its production are one of the important sources of income to this village. The villagers have the full authority of land ownership in their community land holdings. Under this land ownership the preferences are given more to the male members in the village and the womenfolk does not have much land holdings. Land disputes is another main issue in the village which occurs both within or outside the village jurisdiction. When land disputes arise within the village jurisdiction the village elders as well as the clan members come together and solves the issues but if any individual or the clan are caught in the act of conspiracy, they lose their share over the community land. If land dispute cases occur outside the village jurisdiction the village council members of the two villages come together to solve the issue but if the cases become even worse the third party which is the other neighboring villages come into the issues as the mediator to solve the cases.

Therefore, this study concludes by highlighting the significant role played by the customary laws among the tribal societies and the changes brought about by the modern education and Christianity in the society.

In the study of **Adino Vitso (2001)** which she had conducted a case study in Khezhakeno Village with regard to “Customary Law and Women Among the Chakhesang Nagas,” she had also mention about the **‘Inheritance of properties’** among the Khezhakeno Village. Thereby, stating that when it comes to ‘Inheritance’ the main priority is given to the **‘Sons.’** Property assets such as – ‘houses, lands, fields are always inherited by the males whether rich or poor’ and **‘fields’** was said to be given to the **daughter** in the name of **“Lüna”** but it does not stay as a permanent property because it has to be ‘reverted back after seven generations’ (Vitso,2001, p.108). But such system of practice is said to be vanishing from the village thereby indicating the upswing of the economic status of women in the society. According to the natives, women are denied of ‘landed properties’ after marriage because once a woman get married all the things owned by her belongs to her husband and she becomes a part of her husband’s clan. The main reason for this is that when a wife commits adultery or has an extramarital affair than the husband has the right to take away all the properties of the wife. Or else whatever possession of the wife has would be passed on to her children. The notion of all the things that are owned by a woman after marriage it all belongs to her husband this set of rules does apply the same for the husband also because once married the properties of the husband also becomes the possession of his wife as long as they stay together as a married couple but in the case of divorce the women lose her rights to claim any properties.

If **'Immovable Properties'** were given to the women it would definitely become a possession of others after marriage and in order to avoid such circumstances in the village most of the properties given to their daughters are **'Movable Properties.'** Such properties inherited by women are – 'shawls, mekkelas, household articles like pots, cups, weaving implements, rice, baskets, etc.,' (Vitso,2001, p.108). In this study, it states that even though the women in the village own such properties they do not have the liberty to trade it at their own will as the decision of both the couple is mandatory as to whether or not to dispose of such things.

As according to this study, it mentions that if a 'daughter' is unmarried than she can keep the 'properties of her parents' but at the same time she does not have the liberty to trade the properties of her parents at any time she wants or desires. While the 'sons' have all the liberty and control over all the properties that their parents have acquired. And the daughter is said to lose her right to keep her parental properties once she gets 'married.'

According to the conduct of the study it has found out that women during the time of their marriage, they can be or are gifted with **'Landed Properties'** such as field, plots of forest land and even house but not the ancestral properties. 'The giving of such properties to women depends on the economic status of the family whether they can afford to give or not' (Vitso,2001, p.109). It is stated in this study that according to the **traditional inheritance practice** system the **'Eldest Daughter'** is said to inherit her mother's properties known as **"Labu."**

A **'widow'** is said to have the right over her **'husband's properties'** as long as she lives under her **'husband's roof.'** And if she wishes to go back to her parent's house or get married with the approval of her 'in-laws' than her share of properties is said to be given out to her. In this matter, the children can either reside at the father's house or can leave and stay with their mother. In case a widow gets married without the 'knowledge' of her 'in-laws' than she gets 'nothing' and not even the 'custody' of her children. In this case, the 'widower' is said to have more 'privilege' than the 'widow' because 'unlike the widow' the "the consent of the in-laws or relatives are not very important" (Vitso,2001, p.109).

In this study it had also mention that according to the tradition of the village "Properties can be of two types when it comes to **'inheritance'**, i.e., properties which can be willed to others and those that become the **absolute property of the clan** or simply **ancestral property** which cannot be given away to the daughters or others except one from the same clan" (Vitso,2001, p.110).

Properties such as **'Paddy fields'** which are given to the woman during the time of her 'marriage' is said to be known as **'Lüna'**, this property is said to be passed down to her daughters only but in case of no daughters then it is pass on to her son. This traditional practice of inheritance was said to be temporary or not permanent as it needs to be return back **'after seven generations'** which can be also given to the 'sons' but today such system of practice is said to be disappearing as the people no longer follows it rigorously. But there are some arguments or disagreements with regard to the **'reversion of Lüna'** as due to the changes taking place in the **'traditional laws.'** In order to acknowledge the **'relationship'** between the **'reversioners'** and the **'inheritors'** of the Lüna over the years the villagers have adopted a practice that "whoever inherits it has to give a part of the product of paddy to the reversioners" (Vitso,2001, p.110). Apart from the 'Lüna', there is other movable properties such as **'Labu'** which is said to be given to the 'daughters' especially the eldest daughter after her mother's death but today it is stated that there are changes in the 'custom' of the society.

In this study the researcher has stated that in the case of 'divorce' the women are said to 'get half of the husband's properties, excluding the ancestral property, which cannot be given away to others' (Vitso,2001, p.112). But such decision is said to be depended on three factors as mention in this study and they are – **Wife's Infidelity, Husband's Infidelity and Divorce by Mutual Consent.** In the case of wife's infidelity, it is stated that she is send away with nothing but her clothes upon her. It is stated that her 'personal properties' as well as the 'sole custody' of her children will not be given to her as the punishment of the wife is so severe that not even a change of clothes is given to her. This highlights the 'high moral values prevalent in the old Khezha Naga Society.' But in the case of the husband's infidelity, properties are said to be equally shared between the husband and wife. Though the wife gets the 'custody' of her children they still belong to her husband's clan. Even though the husband commits adultery he still gets the properties which he 'rightfully can lay claim on.' "Whatever be the reason children belonged to the father in the Khezha society. The **Motsotsüli** were divided into two equal parts: one half to the husband and the other half to the wife, or the property could be divided into three equal parts: one third to the children, one third to the husband and another one third to the wife" (Vitso,2001, p.113). And in the case of divorce by mutual consent, the properties are said to be 'divided in the ratio of 3:1' between the husband and the wife which also depends upon the 'proportion of the marriage settlement' (Vitso, 2001, p.113).

In this study it has also mention that in cases of 'childless couple', they can give their properties to anyone of their choice particularly to those who have 'helped or looked after them' yet again

such properties are inherited by the husband's side. And if they adopt a son or a daughter, they have the right and freedom to inherit the parental properties as long as they remain in the **'clan.'**

In the study it has also mention about the 'disputes over the Inheritance of properties' and in such cases the family members will first try to solve the problem and if the problem cannot be solved it will be hand over to the higher authority. As there is no written law for settling disputes the final decisions of the disputes may differ and at times it can be very much settled cordially and sometimes it can be settled by swearing.

Therefore, the study concludes by stating that the 'Customary laws' of Khezhakeno village has a direct impact on the family, marriage and kinship system thereby mentioning that the traditional customs form the 'essence' of the society as it could be seen from the various laws documented from the study. Hence, customary laws are said to be based on the needs of society and its influence can be observe in every aspect of the people's. Lastly, it has also mention that though the women do not enjoy an equal status with men in the customary law, she does play a significant role for the proper and peaceful functioning in the village.

"Commemorating the Chakhesang 75th Anniversary" (2021), in this book, under the chapter of the **'Chakhesang Customary Laws and Traditional Practices'** it has mention that with regard to the topic of the **"Inheritance of Properties by Customary Heirs"** it has stated that as per the tradition of the customary law of the natives that after the death of a person only the **'rightful customary heir'** can inherit its properties. But in the case of a **'inter-village migration'** and **'adoption of adult male,'** the adopted person who has given up all his **'paternal and biological lineage'** such cases create a problem to 'ascertain the customary heir after such a person's dead' (Chakhesang Public Organisation,2021, p. 237).

And in the case of 'no male child' than the village customary court members shall decide and investigate carefully the **'patriarchal lineage'** and find out the heir from the **'ancestral lineage'** before handing over the properties to the claimer.

This book also mentions that according to the principles of the native customary law, certain 'criteria' are laid down for the **'buyers and sellers'** of property land on the ground of **'what immovable properties can be sold or cannot be sold?'** as the conditions for **'sale, void, and voidable sale'** the duties and responsibilities of the seller and buyer are all been specified according to the tradition of the customary law. It also states that an adult person having the

“absolute traditional right of ownership only can sell the immovable properties” (Chakhesang Publication Organization, 2021, p.236).

“Naga Women’s Right to Inheritance takes Centre Stage”

in this newspaper article it compares the past and present scenario of the Naga women right to inheritance of property. It states that for the past centuries Naga women were not able to inherit property land due to patriarchal traditional system. But in today’s present context some parents especially from the **“Educated and Wealthy Families”** write wills and gift deeds are practice by them to leave behind for their daughters as according to **Adani Ngullie**, an Assistant Professor of History at Unity College, Dimapur (**“Naga Women’s Right to Inheritance Takes Centre Stage,”** 2019). Ngullie address on **‘The Concept of property in Naga Customary Tradition’** at a second day of a national seminar held at Immanuel college where she states that this system is yet to reach the rural areas **‘where women are usually found to be poor’** (**“Naga Women’s Right to Inheritance Takes Centre Stage,”** 2019). Ngullie spoke on the **Lotha tribe of Nagaland** where this tribe in Nagaland practices two types of marriage that is an **‘Arrange marriage’** and **‘Negotiated marriage.’** Negotiated marriage is said to be a common marriage system practice among this tribe. While **polygamy** also existed in this tribe but this such type of polygamy was practice among the **Village Chiefs, the great warriors and the wealthy people** of the village. In Lotha community, if a married women is said to be infertile the husband is said to have every right to remarry another woman to him an offspring. It is stated by Ngullie that being a patriarchal society the birth of a male child was preferred and favored the most than the birth of a female child. And it is not an unusual thing to look down upon a barren woman or a woman who fails to give birth to a son in Lotha tribe. But Ngullie also stated that in the present scenario, there are cases where the husband divorces his wife for not bearing a son to him and marry another woman thereby the custody of the children goes to the father in whatsoever the issue of the divorce may be. But in some rare cases, if the child is a girl she goes to the custodian of the mother. But in the case of a widow woman if she remarries again the children are taken away by the husband’s relatives. In the matters of inheritance of property, the property lands and the ancestral property are given to the male heir and not the women in the family. In the case of no male member or heir in the family the nearest cousin or relatives will take over the properties. In the customary law, the youngest son has all the property share comprising of the ancestral home of the family. The daughter in the family has no power over the family properties and has no voice to say in the matters of land selling or over her parent’s property as she is only a visitor and a keeper of the family as one day, she

will be sent off to her husband's home someday. Ngullie also stated the Article of 371(A) has a stern adherence to the customary law that denies the fundamental rights of Naga women granted by the constitution of India. To add on this Ngullie stated that it would be good if the customary laws are to be **'redefine'** ("Naga Women's Right to Inheritance Takes Centre Stage," 2019) with special references on the issues of divorce and inheritance of the parental properties so that it would give a new life to the economic status of the women as well.

With special references to Khezhakeno, Velhou Koza an Assistant Professor of Sociology Don Bosco College, Kohima spoke on the topic **"The Marriage Implications on Property Rights: Some reflections with special references to Khezhakeno Village"** ("Naga Women's Right to Inheritance Takes Centre Stage," 2019). He stated that **'Endogamy'** was a common form of marriage practices among the Khezhakeno village. Thereby the mate selection was done on the basis of **'endogamy'** and **'exogamy.'** According to Koza, he stated that the marriage ceremonies held at Khezhakeno village was organized in a detailed manner comprising of instructions and guidelines to be followed by the people in the village. 'Cross-cousin marriage' was strictly forbidden in the village. Koza stated that the nature of patriarchy system in Chakhesang community follows the practices of passing down the property rights to the male members only while the status of women was a state of dependence as she has limited rights without full ownership of property rights. He also mentions that according to the customary laws of Khezhakeno, men have better rights in the property distribution than compared to women. But in the cases of misunderstanding or fights between the husband and the wife for any other reason resulting the wife leaving the husband than the wife gets the share of one third of the marital property but if the husband leaves the wife, the marital properties are shared equally between them. Thus, the property distribution among the gender differs thereby the male holds a better opportunity than the female in the society.

In the book of **Verrier Elwin (1969) "The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century,"** **A.W. Davis** under 'Angami Marriage Customs,' has pointed out the differences of custom among the Angami tribes because he states that "Daughter's received no share in their father's property except amongst the certain of the Eastern Angami villages," in this context of 'Eastern Angami' he was referring to the present day Chakhesang tribes. As to learn the history of the Chakhesang tribe and its people from written records especially before 1946 one has to go through written books entitle as "Angamis" because Chakhesangs were once apart of the Angami tribes known in the name of 'Eastern Angamis.'

In the works of **Metha (2021)**, where she conducted a study on “**Women and Property Inheritance Practice**” in Chiechama Village of Nagaland. This study was based on a ‘micro-survey’ where she gathered the narratives and opinions of Chiechama Village on women and property inheritance. With this motive, the study tried to locate the reasons as to why women do not have the right to inherit land properties. The major findings of the study are the realm of property in the Angami society in general and in the study area, Chiechama village in particular, includes land, its production, residential houses, animals, granaries, ornaments, traditional attires, weapons, furniture’s, agricultural equipment, and so on. The people of Chiechama village are said to follow a patriarchal inheritance system, in which the father is considered the rightful owner of inherited ancestral and self-acquired properties both movable and immovable, which is passed down to his male children. Women, on the other hand, have no rights when it comes to inheriting property. The women are said to received only the movable properties at the time of her marriage. The main reason for denying women inheritance rights was based on customary law. This law, they argued, was fundamental to their identity and should not be modified. Another reason that has been found in the study to the argument was to keep and maintain the property within the village because not all the women may not get married within their village. As a result, when women marry outside of the village, customary ensures that the land property remains inside the village.

Paul (2019) in her works on “**Socio-economic and Cultural Status of Naga Women,**” she has mentioned that the Naga society follow the ‘**patriarchal**’ and ‘**patrilineal**’ system thereby tracing their decent from the male line. This proved that the Naga women still does not have an equivalent status with men due to the patriarchal system in the society. It also further adds that the status of women in the Naga society is closely connected with its role in the social participation in the society. From the study it is found that the Naga women are considered to be hard working and they are taught all the domestic tasks since childhood as she is entrusted with all the household works. In Naga family if the first-born child is a female the entire family becomes happy since the girl child will lend a helping hand to her mother. With concern to economic aspect the Naga women does not occupy a bad position but enjoy her position in the economic level. Dowry system has no place in the Naga society but during the marriage the parents of the bride can give their daughter ‘property’ which in term can be both ‘**movable or immovable**’ which becomes more or less type of an absolute property to her. But an **ancestral property** is **prohibited** to be given to the daughters. In this journal article it throws lights on the inheritance system of Naga society. It

also states that the Naga women are seen as the ‘sustainer and manager of the home’ thereby standing equivalent to man in every aspect of their life without depending on their husbands earning. With the progression in the areas of education there are many women who has become salaried wives and daughters. Therefore, it concludes by stating that with the coming of Christianity into the Naga hills, it has created a transformation in the cultural belief systems but at the same time the traditional inheritance practices are still prevalent and practice among the people of Nagaland today also.

In the newspaper article **“Denied for Centuries, Naga Women get Right to Own Land Now,”** the writer states that for decades, the Naga Women was denied to get the ancestral property or land property due the practice of patriarchal customary law. But there has been a recent **“Silent Revolution”** which has been started in Nagaland where the parents are preparing **‘wills’** and **‘gift deeds’** for their daughters of what they have acquired during their life time. According to T.L Kuisumona Tikhir, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Kohima, says that **“In urban areas of Nagaland it is happening at large scale these days, parents are transferring ownership of land to daughters, which was earlier unheard of”** (Das, 2018). **‘Gifted land’** are those lands considered to be an **acquired land** whereby **‘ancestral land’** cannot be sold to any member of any tribes or give to daughters because they will be married into another tribe and which may result in decrease of the village land which was an unimaginable notion for the Nagas. So acquired land in the urban areas are considered to be less troubled and it would not disturb the **‘tribal boundaries.’** **“Land Rights”** is always a sensitive subject in Naga community for the past periods. This is because according to a Naga Social Activist, S. Varah, says that **“for Nagas, land is identity. He belongs to a village and he has his forefathers buried there. Therefore, he can never forsake his ancestral village”** (Das, 2018). It also further adds that today, highly educated parents are coming up with the concept of writing the wills and gift deeds in terms of land for their daughters. An IAS lady named Anenla, she put **‘education’** first before land for the empowerment of her daughters thereby stating that **“I am the commissioner secretary to the government of Nagaland today because my father gave me the best education”** (Das, 2018). With the conception of education being empowered among the women in Nagaland they are now able to buy their own. To make the statement stronger, according to Toshimenla Jamir an HOD of Sociology at Nagaland University says that **“given the high literacy rate and subsequent growth of women professionals in every field, there is an increasing trend of women buying their own land and property in Naga society today.”**

In the works of **Kamei (2011)** “**Customary Inheritance Practices and Women among the Kabui Naga of Manipur,**” this research aims to place the Kabui Naga women in Manipur in relation to traditional land inheritance practices. According to the study, it is found that ‘Gender Inequality’ is an intrinsic part of the Kabui Naga society with ramifications for women’s economic and political standing. However, it claims that Kabui women are not passive viewers, using the examples from Imphal. They strive to get around the customary laws and manipulate them to their advantage. Another aim of this research is to demonstrate that gender inequality is ingrained in Kabui society by analyzing the ‘Kabui Naga customary laws’ relating to inheritance and using examples from the cases of Imphal. The women of this community employ a variety of tactics in an attempt to resist and manipulate the situation to their favor. The researcher further adds on that there are many written extensive works on ‘Naga’s system of inheritance and customary law’ in general and the Kabui in particular but none of them have looked at it from a ‘gender perspective.’ As a result, the current study, the researcher has used the ‘exploratory study’ into the Kabui land inheritance system and how women are positioned within it. This study is based on ‘unstructured interviews,’ field visits to Imphal and secondary materials on the subject.

In the works of **Christina (2006)** on “**Changing Land Relations in an Angami Village,**” a study on the land relation of the Angami village states that every individual owner of land has absolute rights under Angami traditional law, allowing him or her to do whatever they want with it. From the study is found that he or she losses the possession of land as a result of a sale or a gift. He or she is free to leave it to his or her offspring in any way he or she sees fit. However, there are some prohibition or limitations on bequeathing ‘ancestral land’ to daughters. The study points out that according to the customary law, only males are eligible to inherit the ancestral properties. The study states that there are no prohibitions on giving or bequeathing personally ‘Acquired land’ to daughters. If a daughter receives land as a gift from her parents, she is free to do whatever she wants with it. However, in most situations, she will give that land to her daughters, resulting in a situation where some land is passed down through the female line. From the findings, it states that the lineage, clan or village is in charge of the communal land ownership. But to be a part of it an individual must be a member of that particular group or unit that owns ‘Kayie’ land (which means inheritance of ancestral property) in order to enjoy ownership rights. It has also found out that only by being adopted or assimilated into a patrilineage or clan through a recognized process can get an outsider accorded to such rights. However, communal ownership is not absolute because

even individuals without ownership rights have some access to it as long as they are village members. Thus, the goal of this study was to determine the changes in land relations in a tribal group, specifically the Angami tribe in Nagaland. The patriarchal principles are so strong that a member obtains his or her identity only from the father's side. Furthermore, due to the agrarian nature of the Angami community, land is the most highly valued type of property. Hence, the traditional Angami law recognizes property ownership by people, houses, lineages, clans, khels and the community as a whole due to the practice of terrace agriculture. As a result, the Angami have a tradition that both individual and communal land have ownership which are passed down from generation to generation.

Therefore, in a nutshell, from the above literature reviews which are taken from various sources, we can see that patriarchy has a strong ties or relation when it comes to the practice of inheritance among the tribal societies especially with regard to the tribes in Nagaland. Mostly, the majority of the tribes give their ancestral properties to the male members only. In most cases of the tribes, we can find similarities with regard to the traditional inheritance of property especially with the succession of the 'Ancestral properties.' And only in few communities or tribes (e.g., Chakhesang tribe) landed properties are given to women in the society. Otherwise, the women are not entitled of such immovable property assets due the patriarchy system in the region.

Thus, there are only few and limited studies on the traditional inheritance practice system with regard to Chakhesang tribes.

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER-3

METHODOLOGY

“Research Methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them” (Kothari, 2004).

This chapter deals with the information with regard to the statement of the problem, objectives, conceptual and operational definition, variables, universe, sample size, sampling method, research design, tool of the study, pilot testing, pre-test, analysis of data and limitation of the study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The distribution of inherited wealth varies greatly across cultures and legal traditions. The practice of passing on property, titles, debts and liabilities after a person’s death is known as ‘Inheritance.’ It has long played a crucial role in human communities. It also has an impact on the societal allocation of wealth. It also plays an important role in the tribal societies with regard to property rights, entitlements of one’s identity, titles and obligation within the tribal groups.

Thus, the problem undertaken in the study is entitled as “A Sociological Study on The Traditional Inheritance Practice of Chakhesang Tribe with special reference to Phüsachodü Village, Nagaland.”

OBJECTIVES:

General objectives-

- ♣ To study the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü Village.

Specific Objectives-

- ♣ To study the position of men in the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü Village.

- ♣ To find out the place of women in the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü village.
- ♣ To study the various changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice in Phüsachodü village.

DEFINITIONS –

- **Conceptual Definition:**

- ❖ **Phüsachodü:** Etymologically, Phüsachodü means ‘A new settling place at the straight upward path leading to the place traditionally known as ‘Sühsazu’, ‘Sühthohüzu’, ‘Tsüshephüzu’ or ‘Tüphozhieu’; prior to human settlement or simply means ‘Hamlet settled on the way’ (Phüsachodümi Student’s Union,2015).
- ❖ **Chakhesang:** “The name ‘Chakhesang’ is an acronym of the three allied sub-clans taking ‘Cha’ from the name ‘Chokri,’ ‘Khe’ from ‘Khuzha’ and ‘Sang’ from ‘Sangtam.’ It is a name unanimously selected by the leaders of the three sub-clans in a joint meeting in order of the alphabetical serial of arrangement giving full recognition and equal respect to each individual sub-tribe’s entity. It is said, the name Chakhesang was approved on the day it was formed by the British government. Since then, Chakhesang has been fully recognised tribe” (Vitso, 2001).
- ❖ **Inheritance:** According to the Encyclopaedia of Social Science (Sociology), Inheritance is the process whereby wealth is transferred from one generation to the next, upon the death of the older members. Systems of inheritance vary and are sociologically important for the distribution of wealth in society.

- **Operational Definition:**

- ❖ **Phüsachodü:** In this study the term Phüsachodü is being referred to is a village in Phek district known for its legacy of the long-lasting traditional practices among the Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland.

- ❖ **Chakhesang:** In this study the term ‘Chakhesang’ is being referred to a major Naga ethnic group found in the state of Nagaland. They are the former ‘Eastern Angamis’, now recognised as a separate tribe.

- ❖ **Inheritance:** In this study the term ‘Inheritance’ is being referred to the traditional practices of passing on the properties, titles and obligations to an individual among the Phüsachodü village of Chakhesang tribe of Nagaland.

VARIABLES:

- ✓ **Independent variables:**

Age

Sex

Traditional

- ✓ **Dependant variables:**

Inheritance Practice

UNIVERSE:

The universe of the study is on the Phüsachodü people of Chakhesang tribe, Nagaland.

SAMPLE SIZE:

In this study 50 samples are selected from among the Phüsachodü people with the age group starting from 20 to 50 years above.

SAMPLING METHOD/TECHNIQUE:

The sampling method used in this study is ‘Simple Random Sampling.’

As Simple Random Sampling method is a probability sampling technique that gives each element in the population an equal probability of getting into the sample and all choices are independent of one another.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The research design used in this study is 'Quantitative' research design.

Quantitative research design is used for describing the collected data and a detailed explanation on the opinions of the respondents was able to analyzed through their responses.

TOOL OF THE STUDY:

Questionnaire is used for the collection of the data.

Due to the Covid-19 situation, Google form was used for the data collection which consists of 35 questions respectively.

PILOT STUDY:

Before the conduct of the study, a Pilot study was conducted among some few members of Phüsachodü people in order to analyse the feasibility of the study.

PRE-TEST:

A Pre-test was conducted to check whether the tool for data collection is appropriate or not and to make necessary correction. A Pre-test on the Questionnaire was conducted among five Phüsachodü people who are residing in Kohima district. The researcher approached them and they were cooperative and gave sincere answers which lead to the process of redesigning the parts of the Questionnaire was possible.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

The primary data was collected using the Questionnaire method which was analyzed and interpreted using Microsoft Excel.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The researcher had to face some difficulties in getting the responses from the respondents immediately since all of them were busy with their profession and even though the respondents were cooperative few were reluctant to give their responses due to their busy schedule.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER-4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The process of attributing meaning to the data obtained and deciding the conclusions, relevance and consequences of the findings is known as ‘**Data Analysis and Interpretation.**’ It plays an important role in the study process because it identifies and improve the problems at the same time it explains, compare and contrast the data acquired for the study. Thus, it can also make future predictions based on the information obtained from the data of the study.

This chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation of the study on the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü village.

Table 4.1 Age of the Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
21 – 30	28	56
31 – 40	11	22
41 – 50	5	10
Above 50	6	12
Total	50	100

From the table, it is evident that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-30 with a percentage of 56%. Followed by the age group of 31-40 with a percentage of 22% in the second highest category of respondent and the age group above 50 has a percentage of 12% of respondents. While 10% of the respondents fall under the age category of 41-50.

Table 4.2 Sex of the Respondents

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	25	50
Female	25	50
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clear that 50% of the respondents are Male and the rest of the 50% of the respondents are Female.

Table 4.3 Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Under-Graduate	36	72
Post Graduate	14	28
Total	50	100

In the present study there are no illiterate respondents as the total 50 respondents are all literate/educated.

As from the table above, it clearly highlights that the majority of the respondents are Under-Graduates with a percentage of 72%. Followed by the qualification category of Post Graduate with a percentage of 28%.

Table 4.4 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Student	12	24
Govt. Service	25	50
Private Firm	13	26
Total	50	100

As from the table above, the majority of the respondents fall under the occupation category of ‘Govt. Service’ with a percentage of 50%. Followed by the occupation category of ‘Private Firm’ with a percentage of 26% and the occupation category of ‘Student’ with a percentage of 24%.

Thus, the majority of the respondents falls under the occupational category of ‘Govt. Service’ as compared with the other two occupational category of the respondents that is the ‘Private Firm’ and ‘Student.’

Table 4.5 Distribution of Property Assets

Distribution of Property Assets	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Sons Only	47	94
Clan Members	1	2
Relatives	0	0
Kinship (relation by blood, marriage or adoption)	1	2
All the above	1	2
Total	50	100

As from the above table, it is clear that properties are distributed among the sons only.

Hence, the majority of the respondents agreed with the option “Sons only” with a percentage of 94 %. And only few opted for the remaining option that are – ‘Clan Members’, ‘Kinship’ and ‘All the above’ options with a percentage of 2% respectively.

Thus, the property assets in Phüsachodü village are said to be distributed among the sons only. This is followed due to the strong patriarchal system in the village.

Table 4.6 Whether the inheritance practice of ‘Labü’ is given to daughters only

‘Labü’ is inherited by daughters only	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	100
No	0	0
Don’t know	0	0
Total	50	100

As from the above table, it is clear that the inheritance of ‘Labü’ is given to daughters only. As the total 50 respondents has opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 100%.

The term ‘Labü’ is a local dialect/term of the Phüsachodü village which is a traditional practice of inheriting the mother’s property. This traditional inheritance practice of the mother’s property in the name of ‘Labü’ is inherited by the daughters and not sons. This is because ‘Labü’ is a traditional basket which is woven from bamboo splits which contains the mother’s ornaments, shawls/mekhelas or the traditional women attires. Such properties according to the traditional custom is given to the daughters only and the sons cannot inherit such properties. This is the main reason why the total 50 respondents agreed with the option ‘Yes’ and did not opt for the other two options.

Hence, from the table it is clear that the traditional inheritance of ‘Labü’ is given to daughters or girl child only.

Table 4.7 Whether ‘Kalu’ is considered to be one of the oldest forms of traditional inheritance practice in the village

‘Kalu’ is considered to be of the oldest forms of traditional inheritance practice in the village	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	24	48
Agree	26	52
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	50	100

As from the above table, it is clear that ‘Kalu’ is considered to be the oldest form of traditional inheritance practice in the village as the total respondents has opted both for the options – ‘Strongly agree’ and ‘Agree’ which has clearly substantiate the statement.

The word ‘Kalu’ is a local dialect/term of the Phüsachodü people which means ‘Inheritance of Ancestral property’ or simply as ‘Ancestral property.’

Hence, from the responses of the respondents it is verified that ‘Kalu’ is the oldest form of the traditional inheritance practice in the village.

Table 4.8 Whether the traditional inheritance practice is still rigid in the village today

Rigidity of the traditional inheritance practice in the village today	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	18	36
No	1	2
Partially	31	62
Total	50	100

From the above table, it highlights that the majority of the respondents has opted for the option ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 62%. Followed by a few responses which had opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 36% while the remaining few has responded with the option ‘No’ with a percentage of 2%.

By taking into account the total 50 responses, it can be pointed out that for the older generation the traditional system of inheritance is still rigid as compared to the olden times while with the responses to the option ‘Partially’ such opinion may arise due to modernisation in the society, the rigidity may have loosened a bit. But still the traditional inheritance practice continues to remain in the society. As a tribal society such traditional practices are deep-rooted within the communities and thereby it cannot be shaken by any force.

Hence, from the table above, we can observe that there are two view point with regard to the traditional inheritance practice being rigid or not in the village today. Such opinion or responses may have arisen due to the generation gap or differences between the ‘Old’ and the ‘Young’ generations as the younger generation may not be well versed in such old traditional practices in short, they may not have wide knowledge with regard to such traditional practices.

Table 4.9 Position/status of a Phüsachodü man in the village structure

Position of a Phüsachodü man in the village structure	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Decision Maker	28	56
Head of the family	13	26
Bread earner	0	0
Leader	0	0
Option 1,2 & 3	9	18
All the above	0	0
Total	50	100

From the above table, it clearly highlights that the majority of the respondents has opted for the option ‘Decision Maker’ with a percentage of 56% while 26% has opted for the option ‘Head of the family.’ And only few has opted for the option 1,2 & 3 with a percentage of 18%.

Such responses can be seen in the table due to the impact of patriarchal mindset/system in the society thereby making the male member a leading factor in every aspect of the society.

Hence, the majority of the respondents has agreed that a Phüsachodü man occupies a position of decision maker, head of the family and bread earners in the village structure.

Table 4.10 Whether the male members in the village play a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice

Male members in the village plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	34
Agree	32	64
Neutral	1	2
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clear that the male members in the village plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice as the majority of the respondents has opted for both the options of ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ with a percentage of 34% and 64%. While only 2% was opted for the option ‘Neutral’ and for the rest of the options none has opted for it.

The majority of the respondents has strongly agree/agreed that the male members play a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice in the village. This is due to the patriarchal system in the village where the male members play a dominant role in the village.

Hence, from the above table it is clear that the male members play a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice.

Table 4.11 Do the Phüsachodü men still dominates over the village activities today

Do the Phüsachodü men still dominates over the village activities today	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	48	96
No	1	2
Partially	1	2
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clear that the majority of the respondents has opted for the ‘Yes’ option with a percentage of 96%. And only a few has opted for the remaining options that is option ‘No’ and ‘Partially.’

From the majority of the responses, one can observe that the patriarchal system can be clearly reflected upon their responses.

Hence, from the above table, it is clearly evident that till today the Phüsachodü men still dominates over the village activities.

Table 4.12 Changes are seen in the position of men in the village today

Changes are seen in the position of men in the village today	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	12
Agree	43	86
Neutral	1	2
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clear that the majority of the respondents has opted for the options – ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ with a percentage of 12% and 86%. And the remaining few

has opted for the option ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 2%. While none of the respondents has opted for ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly Disagree’ options.

Hence, it is clearly evident from the responses of the respondents that there are changes seen in the position of men in the village today. Such changes are taking place in the village due to social change in the society as well as the influence of modernity.

Table 4.13 Position of a Phüsachodü woman in the village structure

Position of a Phüsachodü woman in the village structure	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Caregiver	0	0
House keeper	42	84
Peace maker	0	0
All the above	8	16
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clear that the majority of the respondents has opted for the option ‘House keeper’ with a percentage of 84%. While some few has opted for the option ‘All the above’ (which comprises of – caregiver, house keeper and peace maker) with a percentage of 16%.

It is clearly evident from the table above that a Phüsachodü woman occupies a position of house keeper as majority of the respondents has opted for this option.

From the responses of the respondents, it can be observed that a stereotypical mindset of patriarchy can be clearly seen from the responses.

Hence, from the above table, it is clear that a Phüsachodü woman occupies a position of house keeper in the village structure.

Table 4.14 Types of property inherited by the Phüsachodü women in the village

Types of property inherited by the Phüsachodü women in the village	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Plot of land/fields	0	0
Shawls/Mekhelas and ornaments	45	90
Household articles-pots, cups, weaving implements, rice, baskets, etc.	0	0
All the above	5	10
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clearly evident that the types of property inherited by the Phüsachodü women in the village are shawls/mekhelas and ornaments as the majority has opted for this option with a percentage of 90%. While some few has opted for the option ‘All the above’ with a percentage of 10% which comprises/includes – plot of land/fields, shawls/mekhelas and ornaments, household articles such as pots, cups, weaving implements, rice, baskets, etc.

The majority has response to shawl/mekhelas and ornaments because in a patriarchal tribal society women can only inherit movable properties rather than immovable properties. As the immovable properties are inherited by male members only.

Hence, from the above table it is clear that the types of property inherited by the Phüsachodü women in the village are shawls/mekhelas and ornaments.

Table 4.15 Phüsachodü women are given fair share of property holdings like the male members in the village

Phüsachodü women are given fair share of property holdings like the male members in the village	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	1	2
Neutral	5	10
Disagree	42	84
Strongly Disagree	2	4
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clearly evident that the majority of the respondents have disagree with the statement that Phüsachodü women are given fair shares of property holdings like the male members in the village with a percentage of 84%. Followed by the option ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 10% while the remaining few has opted for the option – ‘Agree’ and ‘strongly Disagree’ with a percentage of 2% and 4% each. And no one has opted for the option ‘Strongly Agree.’

From the responses one can observe that there is less possibility that the women are given fair share of property holdings like the male members in the village. This is because of the patriarchal system as well as the customary law in the village.

Hence, it is clear from the table above that Phüsachodü women are not given fair shares of property holdings like the male members in the village.

Table 4.16 Changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice due to the impact of the modern society.

Changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	18
Agree	26	52
Neutral	13	26
Disagree	2	4
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clearly evident that there are changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice as the majority of the respondents have agreed with a percentage of 52%. While some has opted for the option 'Neutral' and the remaining few respondents have opted for the options 'Strongly Agree' with a percentage of 18%. And only few respondents have disagreed with a percentage of 4%.

The majority has agreed that there are changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice the reason for this may be due to modernization as well as the younger generation being ignorant towards the traditional inheritance practice which may lead to less practices of such traditional inheritance practices.

Hence, it is clear from the table above that there are changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice as the majority of the respondents have agreed upon this statement.

Table 4.17 Whether the ‘Gifted land or Acquired land’ property is practiced among the people in Phüsachodü village

‘Gifted land or Acquired land’ property is practiced among the people in Phüsachodü village	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	49	98
No	0	0
Partially	1	2
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clearly evident that the Phüsachodü people practiced the new trends in the system of inheritance practice such as ‘Gifted Land or Acquired land’ as the majority of the respondents has opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 98%. While only few has opted for the option ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 2%.

‘Gifted land/Acquired land’ are those type of land which are gifted to the daughters by their parents where the parents buy the land property with their own savings.

Hence, from the table above it is clear that such type of trends of inheritance are practiced among the Phüsachodü people.

Table 4.18 In the case of ‘gifted-land’, the woman’s property can be inherited by

In the case of ‘gifted-land’, the woman’s property can be inherited by	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Girl Child	42	84
Sisters	2	4
Son	0	0
Both option 1 & 2	6	12
Total	50	100

From the table above, it is clearly evident that in the case of ‘gifted-land’, the woman’s property can be inherited by the Girl child. This is because the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘Girl child’ with a percentage of 84%. While the remaining few respondents have opted for the option ‘Both option 1&2’ with a percentage of 12% and the option ‘Sisters’ with a percentage of 4%. And none have opted for the option ‘Son.’

In the case of ‘gifted-land’, the woman’s property is given/inherited by the girl child because according to customary law women are not entitle to inherit landed properties it is only entitle for male members to inherit the landed properties this may be the reason why a girl child is given the ‘gifted-land.’ Or it may depend upon the parent of the child to whom they will give such properties but mostly such ‘gifted-land’ are given to the girl child since the sons will get landed properties by no means.

Hence, from the table above it is clear that ‘gifted-land’ are given to girl child or the sisters.

Table 4.19 Whether fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is seen today in Phüsachodü village

Fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is seen today in the village	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	1	2
No	39	78
Partially	10	20
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clearly evident that the fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is still not seen today in Phüsachodü village as the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘No’ with a percentage of 78%. While some has opted for the option ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 20% and very few has opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 2%.

The majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘No’ because of the patriarchal system as well as the rigidity of the customary law. As customary law is strictly followed till today by all the inhabited tribes in Nagaland. And customary law is considered to be the ‘back-bone’ of all tribal societies.

Hence, from the table above it is clear that fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is still not seen today in Phüsachodü village. Though the women may occupy a stable position in the village yet still there is no fair share of property holdings seen among the gender today.

Table 4.20 Statement - ‘Customary Law’ plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice

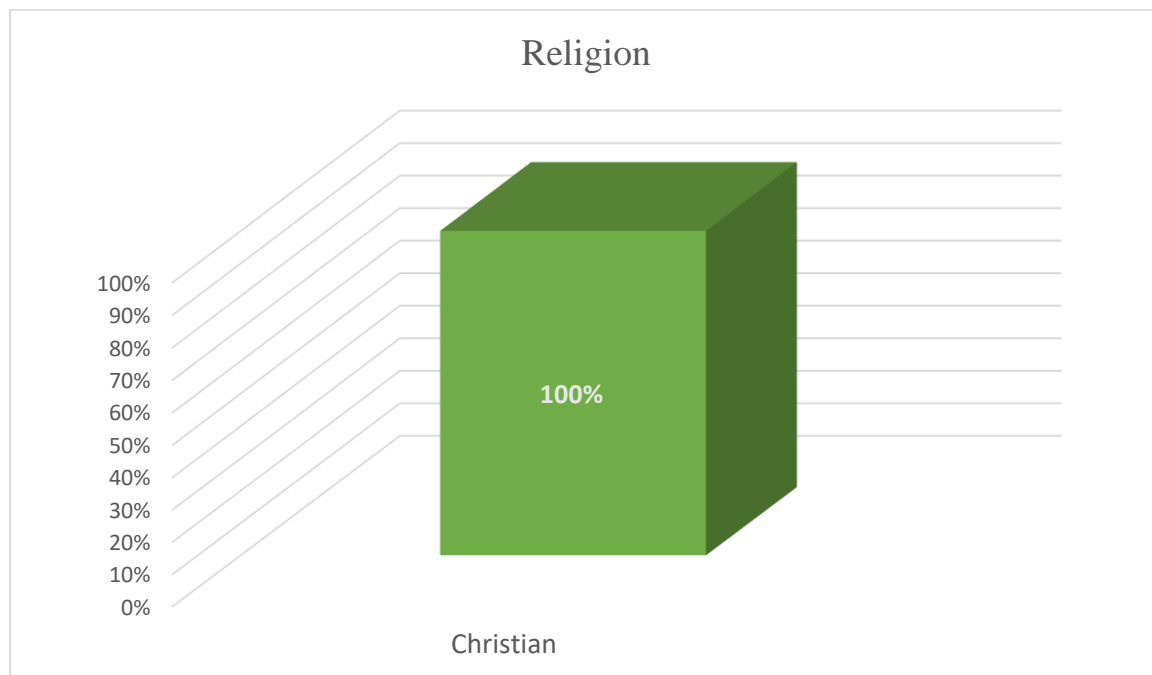
‘Customary Law’ plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	10
Agree	38	76
Neutral	7	14
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	50	100

From the above table, it is clearly evident that ‘Customary Law’ plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice as the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘Agree’ with a percentage of 76%. The remaining respondents have opted for both the options – ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 10% and ‘Strongly Agree’ with a percentage of 14%. And none of the respondents have disagree with the statement.

The majority have agreed that customary law play an important role in the traditional inheritance practice because customary law help to resolve problems in the community when conflicts or disputes emerges. And also, the Naga society are governed by the customary law. Among these tribal societies, customary law serves as a guardian/protector.

Hence, it is clear from the table above that customary law plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice.

Figure 4.1 Religion of the Respondents

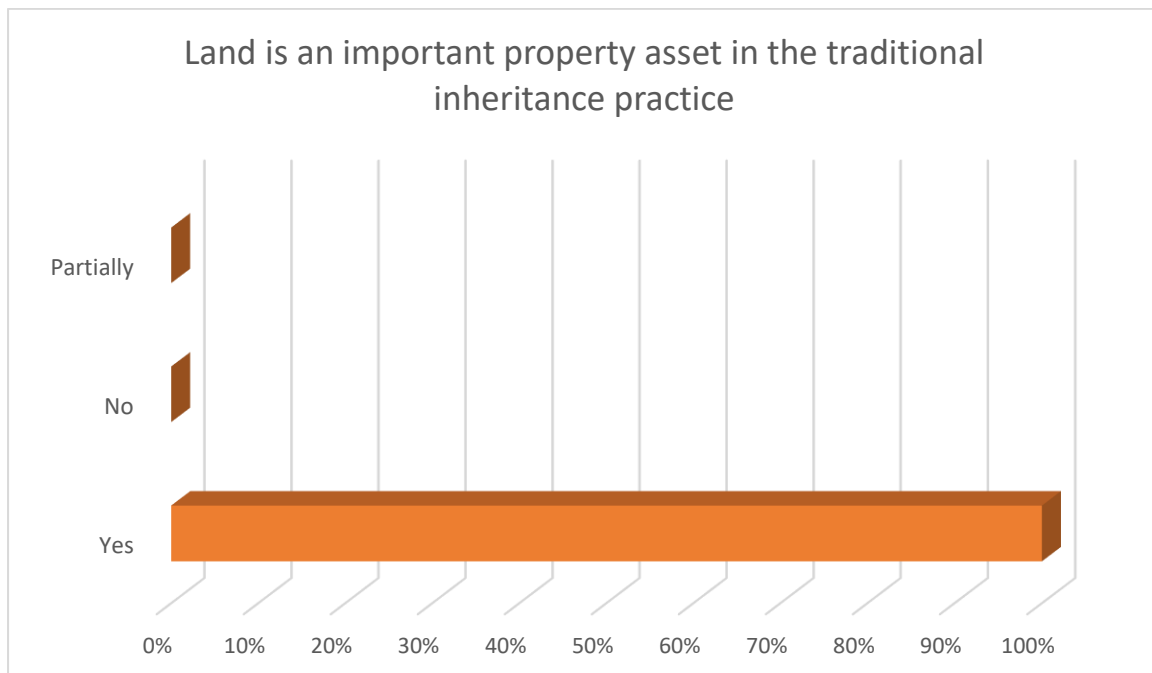


From the above figure, it clearly highlights that the total 50 respondents are all Christians with a percentage of 100%.

Hence, in this study the total 50 respondents are all Christian. This is because Nagaland is a state where the majority of its total population are all Christians. As according to the 2001 Census, the state's Christian population was estimated to be 1,739,651 making it one of India's three Christian-majority states, along with Meghalaya and Mizoram.

Nagaland is also known as "the world's sole predominantly Baptist state" and "the world's most Baptist state." Other Christian denominations include Catholics, Revivalists, and Pentecostals. Catholics can be found in large numbers in parts of Phek, Wokha, and Kohima districts, as well as in Kohima and Dimapur's urban regions.

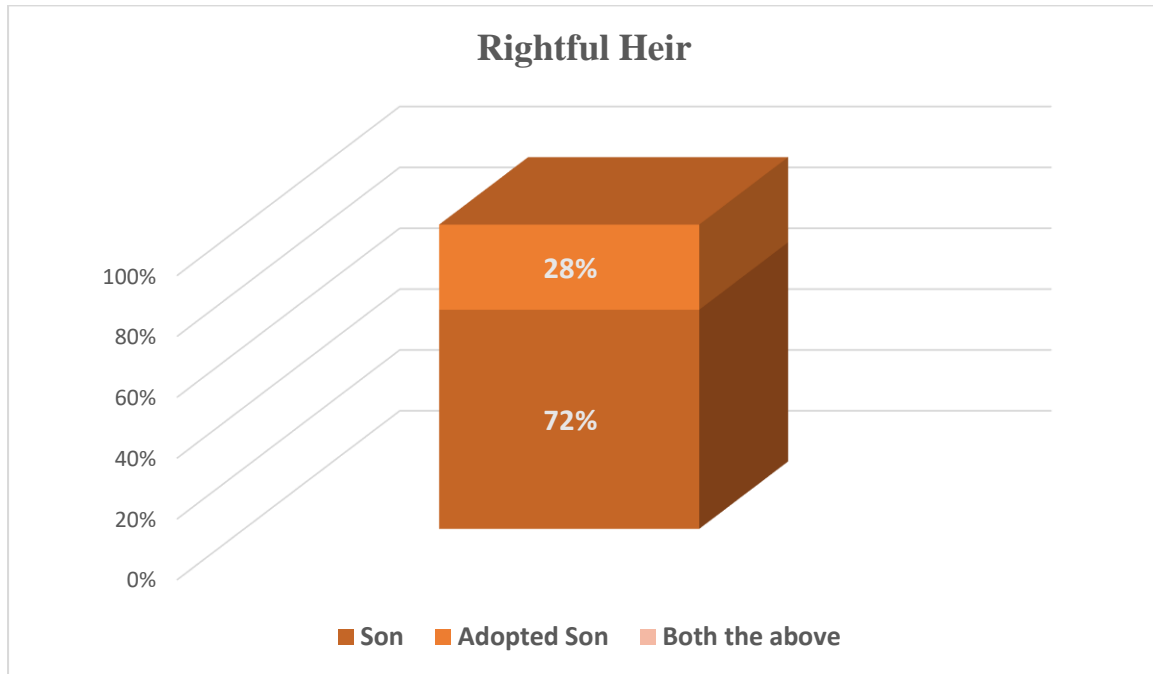
Figure 4.2 Whether Land is an important property asset in Traditional Inheritance Practice



From the above figure, it is clear that ‘land’ plays an important role in the traditional inheritance practice among the Phüsachodü people as the total number of the respondents all responded with the option “Yes” with a percentage of 100% and no one had opted for the other two options that is “No” and “Partially.”

Hence, from this figure, it is evident that ‘land’ plays an important property asset in the traditional inheritance practice among the Phüsachodü people.

Figure 4.3 Rightful Heir for the Inheritance of Ancestral Property, according to the Traditional Inheritance Practice

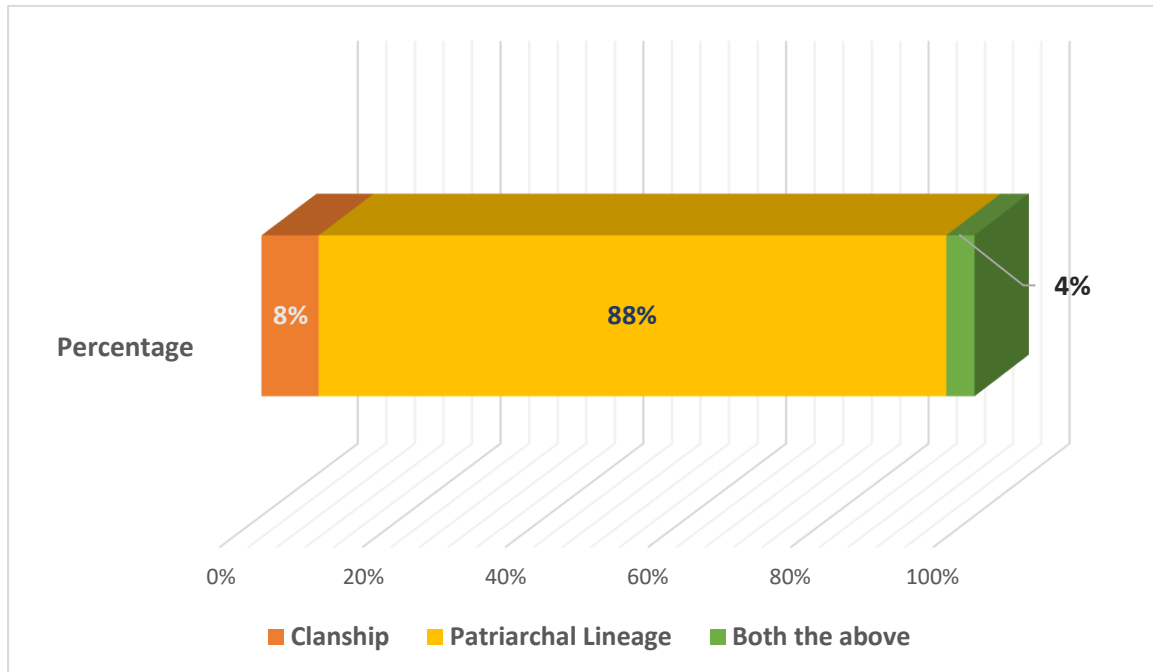


From the above figure, it is clear that for the inheritance of Ancestral property ‘Son’ are the rightful heir and are preferred the most for inheriting such properties. As the majority of the respondents opted for the option ‘Son’ with a percentage of 72%. Followed by the option ‘Adopted Son’ with a percentage of 28% responded by some few respondents. And no one opted for the option ‘Both the above’ since the respondents had two opinions regarding the two option that is ‘Son’ and ‘Adopted Son.’

The option ‘Adopted Son’ is given in the option list for cases such as in case of no heir or off springs the ancestral properties are given to the adopted son.

Hence, from the study it is clear that according to the traditional inheritance practice the inheritance of the ‘Ancestral Property’ is inherited by the sons and they are the rightful heir for such entitlements.

Figure 4.4 In case of no heir, the village elders decide to pass down the property of the deceased person to the claimer by tracing the claimer's

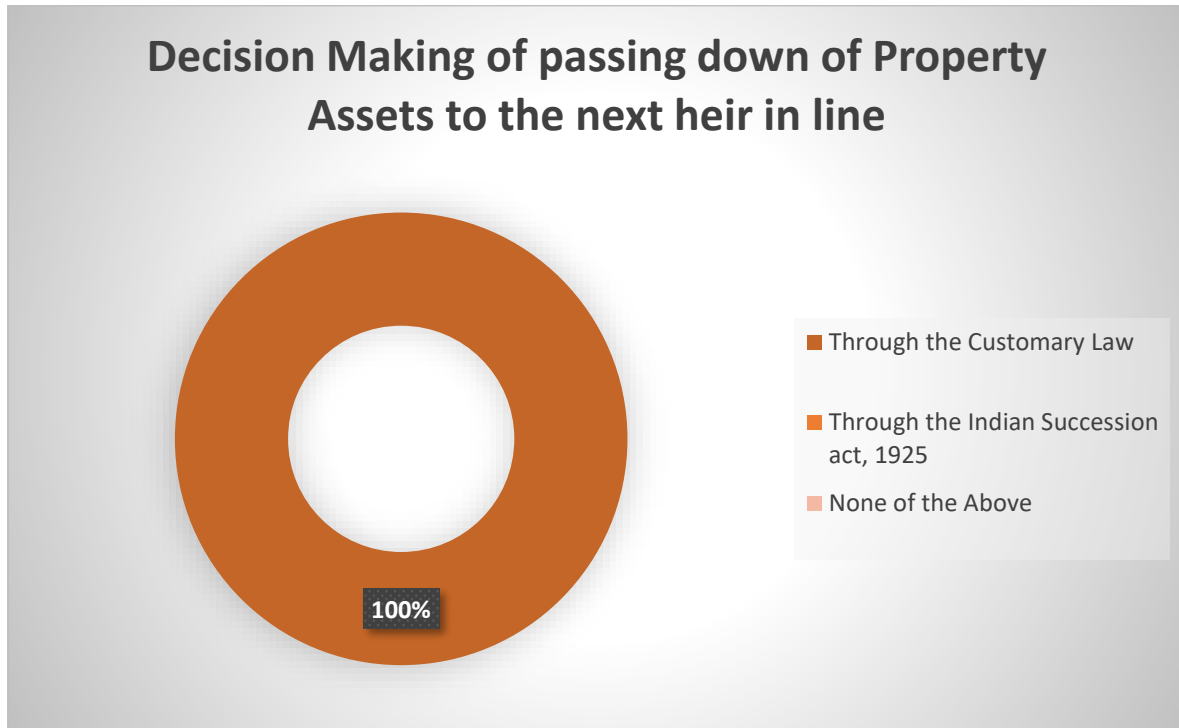


From the above figure, it is clear that the majority of the respondents have opted for the option 'Patriarchal Lineage' with a percentage of 88%. While some respondents have opted for the option 'Clanship' with a percentage response of 8% and very few respondents have opted for the option 'Both the above' with a percentage of 4%, this last option is an option that includes both the options of 'Clanship' and 'Patriarchal Lineage.'

But the majority of the respondents agreed with the option 'Patriarchal Lineage' and it also got the highest number of responses among the remaining two options this is because of the Patriarchal system in the village which have reflected upon the responses of the respondents.

Hence, from the figure above it is clear that in the case of no heir, the village elders decide to pass down the property of the deceased person to the claimant only after tracing/thorough investigation of the claimant's patriarchal lineage, the property is handed down to the claimant.

Figure 4.5 How the village elders make decision regarding the passing down of property assets to the next heir or next person in the family or among the village members



From the above figure, it is clear that all the 50 respondents had opted for the option ‘Through the Customary Law’ with a percentage of 100%. And none of the respondent had opted for the other two options that is ‘through the Indian Succession Act, 1925’ and the option ‘None of the above.’

All the respondents had opted for the option ‘Through the Customary Law’- this is because Customary Law plays an important integral part in the tribal society especially in a State like Nagaland. As every tribe in Nagaland has its own customary practices and Law.

Customary Law are those natural law which does not have a written records but are passed down orally to the next generations. Customary Laws are those sets of conventional beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

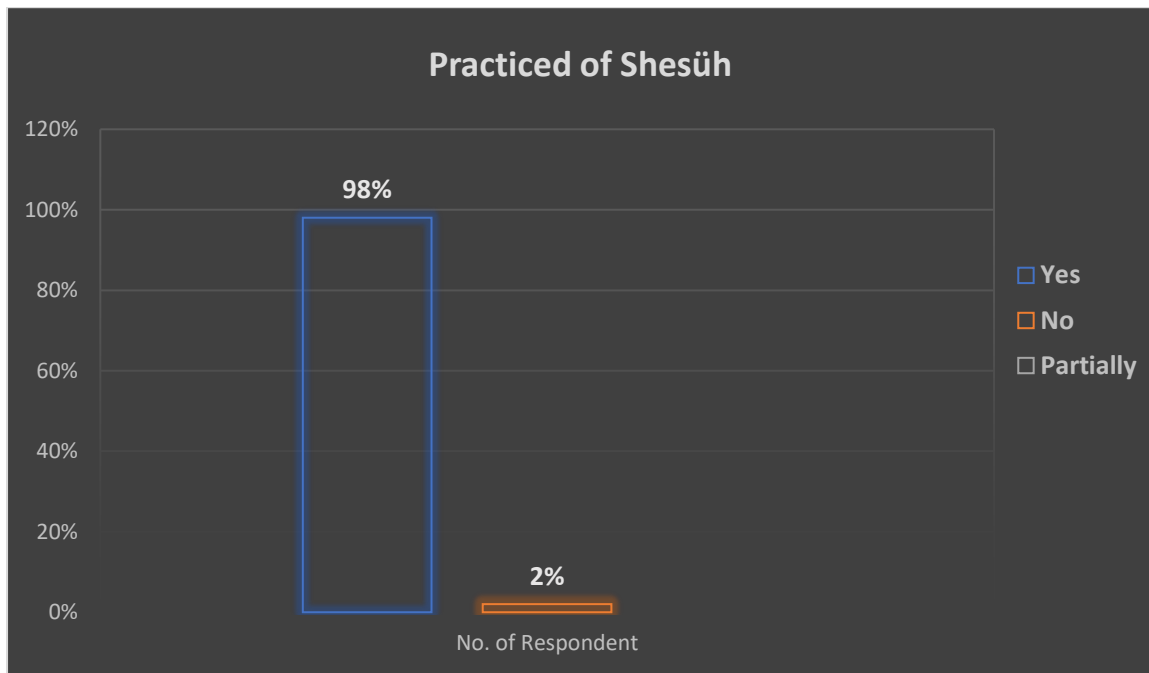
The Nagas are said to be bounded by the customary laws to which they belief that these laws are passed down by their forefathers to the next generation who are well verse in the field of experience and wisdom. They pay respect to such customary laws because it solves the

problems when such conflicts or disputes arises in the community. The customary law plays the role of a protector among these tribal societies.

With the creation of the new statehood of **Nagaland** on the **1st December 1963**, the Union parliament of India has allotted the **article 371(A)** under the thirteen Amendment Act, 1962. This article provides a special safeguard to the state of Nagaland with respect to religious, social and customary practices, ownership and transfer of land and rules for administration of justice. Thus, the Customary Laws are said to serve as a fence between the good and the bad citizens of every Naga community.

Hence, this is the reason why all the total 50 respondents had responded/opted for the option - 'through the customary law' the village elders make decision regarding the passing down of property assets to the next heir or next person in the family or among the village members as the customary law plays a very important role in the Naga society.

Figure 4.6 Whether ‘Shesüh’ is still practiced in the village today or not

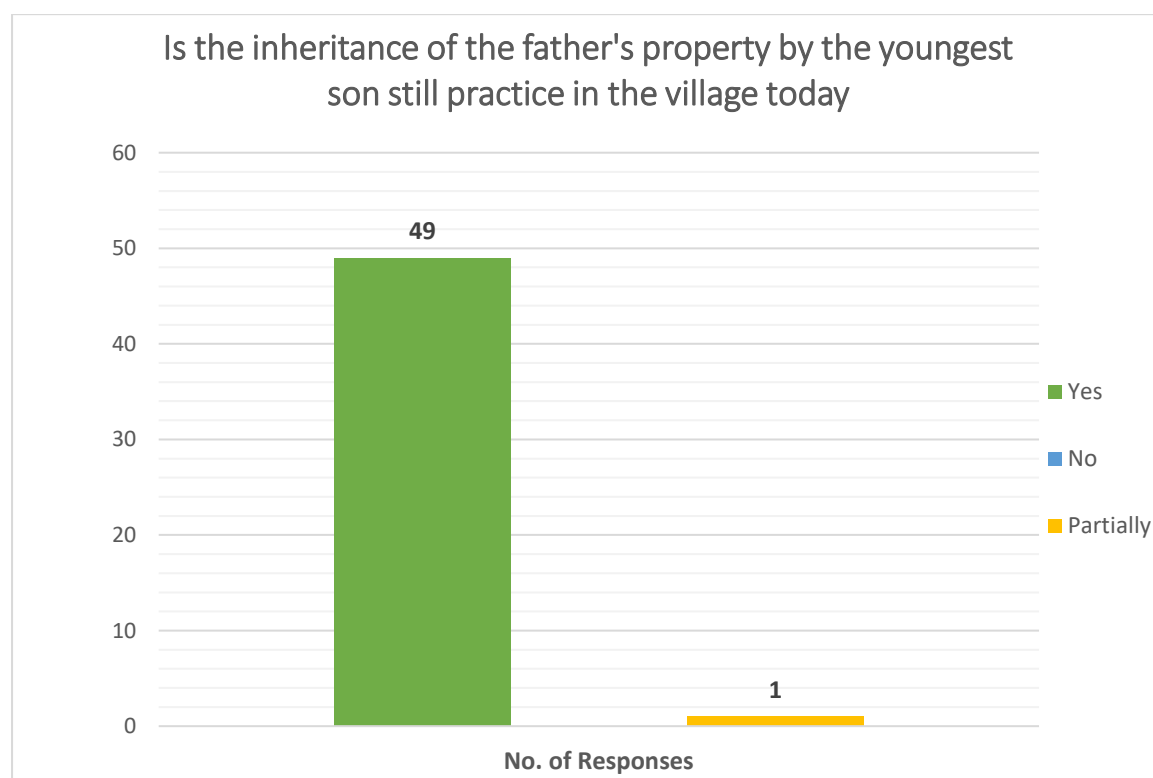


From the above figure, it is clear that ‘Shesüh’ is still practiced in the village today as the majority of the respondents had opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 98% while the remaining few has opted for the option ‘No’ with a percentage of 2%. None has opted for the option ‘Partially.’

The term ‘Shesüh’ is a local term/dialect of the Phüsachodü village. The term ‘Shesüh’ is an old traditional practice which means ‘temporal land-ownership’ where paddy fields or a plot of land is given to the woman during her marriage. In this traditional practice, a particular plot of land is given to her so that she can cultivate till her lifetime but after her death the land is taken back by her father or brothers. With regard to this, the property of the deceased will be taken back by her family inheritance line (that is her father or her brothers) only after they pay the price of the properties or property to the deceased husband that is by killing cows or pigs and sharing it to the whole village or family members in the memory of the departed soul. They (deceased brothers and father) also prepare all the necessary things for the funeral that is starting from her ‘Casket’ to her burial ceremonies. Here the real value of the property is given less important than the ‘act of love and family connection.’

Thus, from the figure above it is clear that the practice of ‘Shesüh’ is still prevalent in the village today as the result can be clearly seen from the figure itself as the majority of the respondents had responded that the practice of ‘Shesüh’ is still practiced today in the village. The reason behind this is because Phüsachodü village is best known for the preservation of its old traditional and cultural practices as compared to other villages among the Chakhesang tribe. This maybe the reason behind the responses of the majority respondents who had opted for the option ‘Yes.’

Figure 4.7 As per the traditional inheritance practice, the youngest son gets to inherit his father’s house and the best plot of land are also given to him as his share of property inheritance - is such system of inheritance still practiced in Phüsachodü Village today



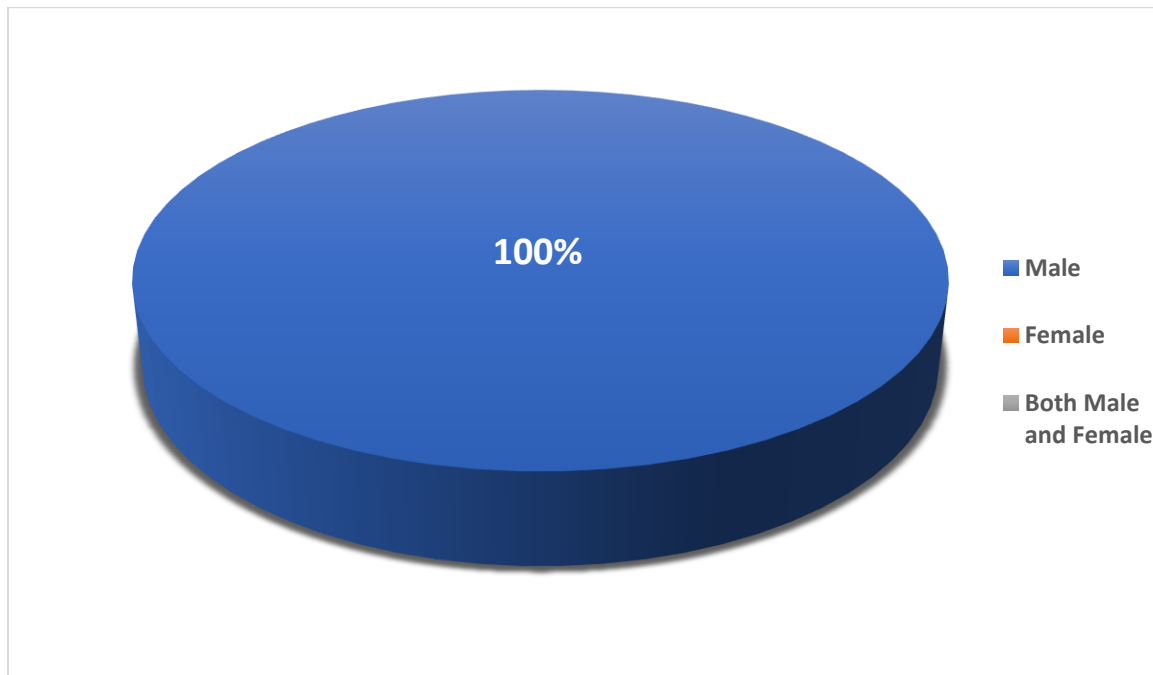
From the above figure, it is clear that the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 98% while the remaining respondent has opted for the option ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 2%.

According to such traditional inheritance practice, the youngest son is given the right to inherit his father’s house and the best terrace fields which is cultivated by his parents is also given to him as a share of property inheritance.

The majority of the respondents have agreed that such traditional inheritance is still practice today in village.

Hence, it is clearly evident from the figure above that such traditional inheritance practice are still followed today in the village.

Figure 4.8 As per the traditional inheritance practice, the gender it favors the most is

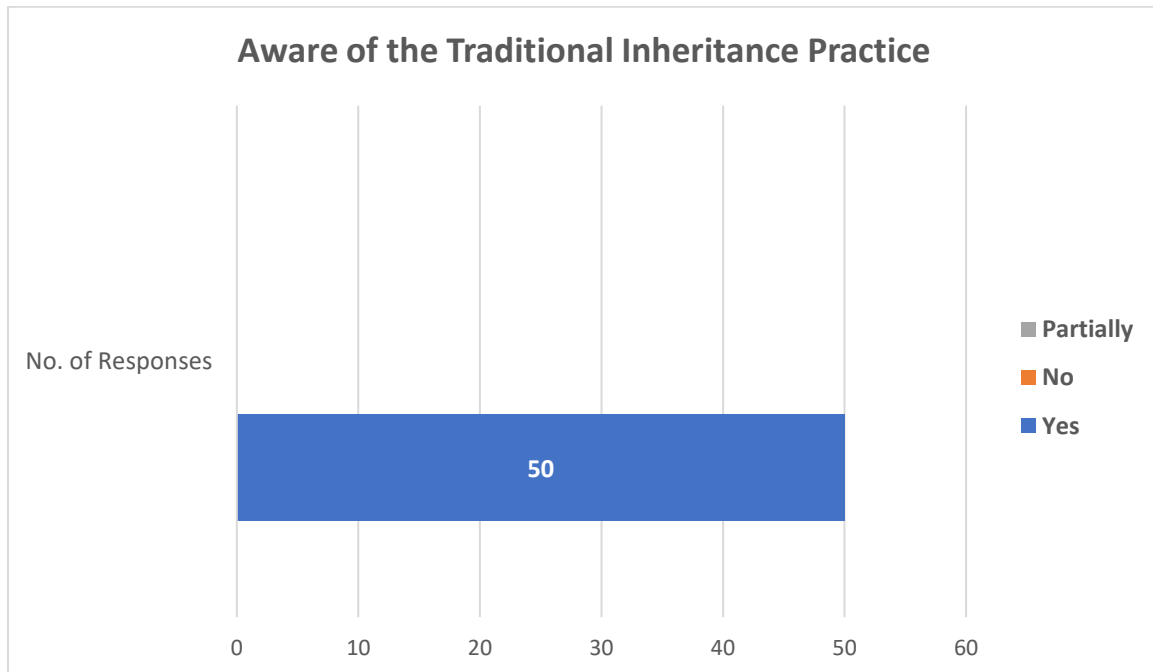


From the above figure, it is clearly evident that as per the traditional inheritance practice, the gender which it favors the most is male members as the total 50 respondents has opted for the option 'Male' with a percentage of 100%. And none have opted for the rest two options – 'Female' and 'Both Male and Female.'

From the responses of all the respondents, it clearly highlights that patriarchy runs strong in the village system.

Hence, it is clear from the above figure that male members are favored/preferred the most as per the traditional inheritance practice.

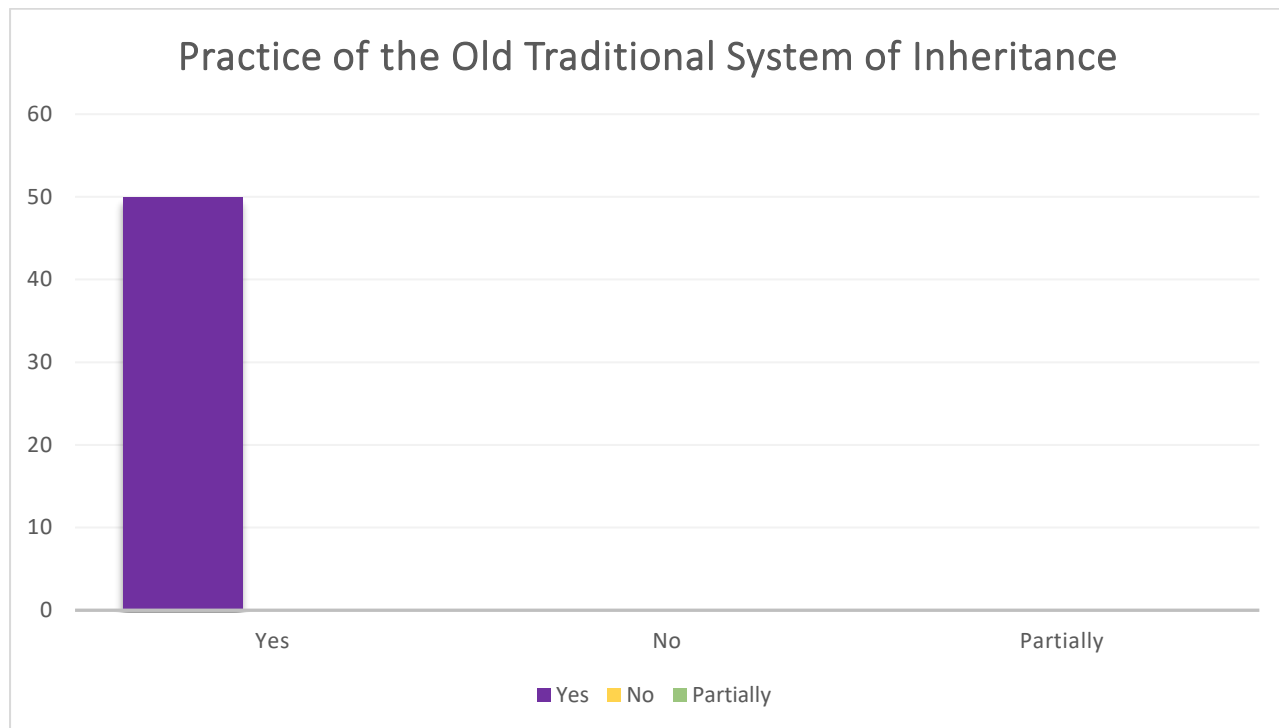
Figure 4.9 Aware of the traditional inheritance practice in the village



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that all the 50 respondents are all aware of the traditional inheritance practice in the village as all of the respondents have opted for the option 'Yes' with a percentage of 100%. And none of the respondents has opted for the remaining options – 'No' and 'Partially.'

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that all the total 50 respondents are well aware of the traditional inheritance practice in the village.

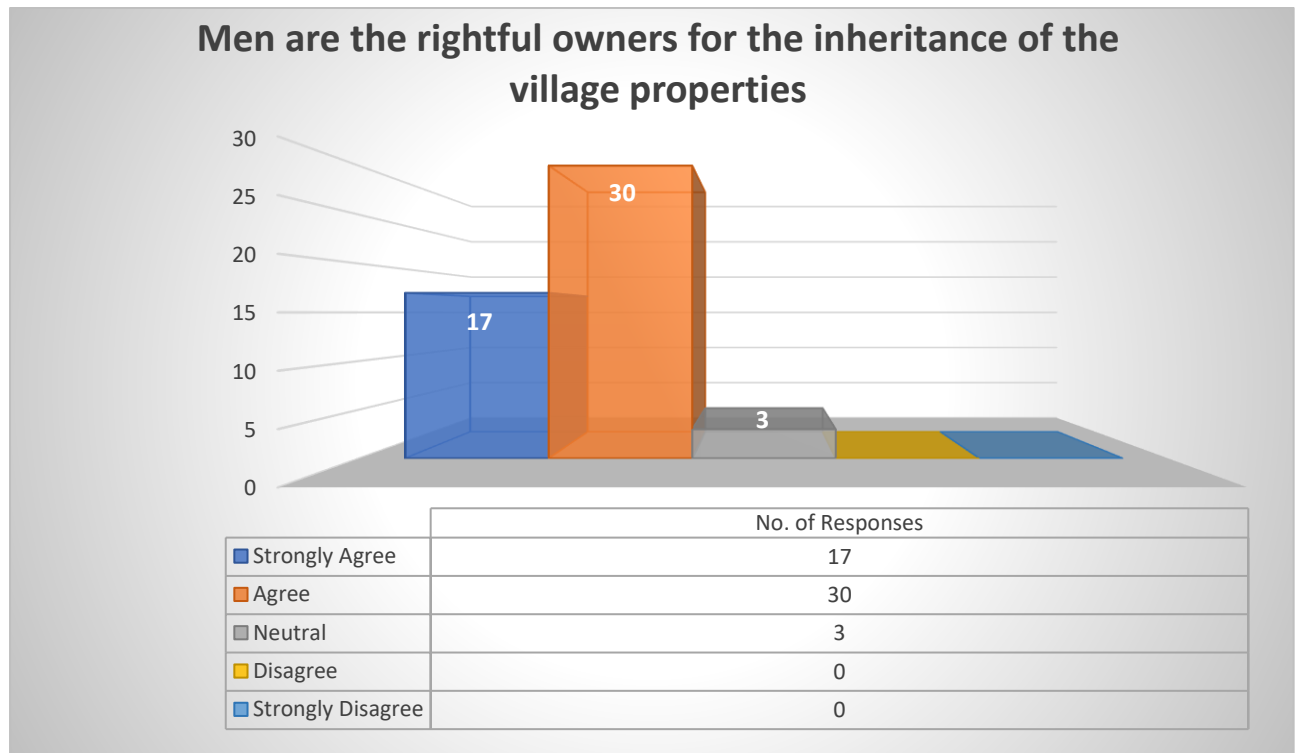
Figure 4.10 Whether the villagers still practice the old traditional system of inheritance



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the old traditional system of inheritance is still practiced in the village today because all the 50 respondents have all opted for the option ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 100%. And none has opted for the other two options.

Hence, it is clear from the above figure that the villagers still do practice the old traditional system of inheritance.

Figure 4.11 Whether the men in the village are the rightful owners for the inheritance of the village properties

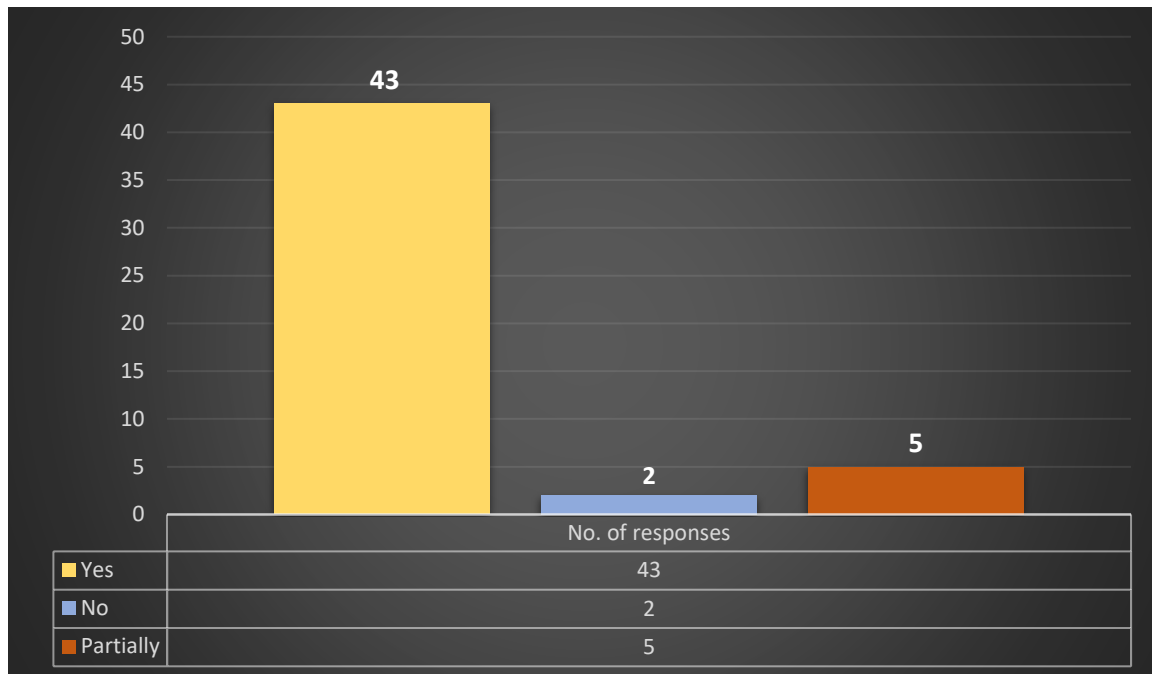


From the above figure, it is clearly evident that men are the rightful owners for the inheritance of the village properties as the majority of the respondents has ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ with a percentage of both 34% and 60% each. While only a few has opted for the option ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 6%.

From the responses of the respondents, we can see that the patriarchal system has a strong impact on the ownership for the inheritance of the village properties.

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that men are the rightful owners for the inheritance of the village properties.

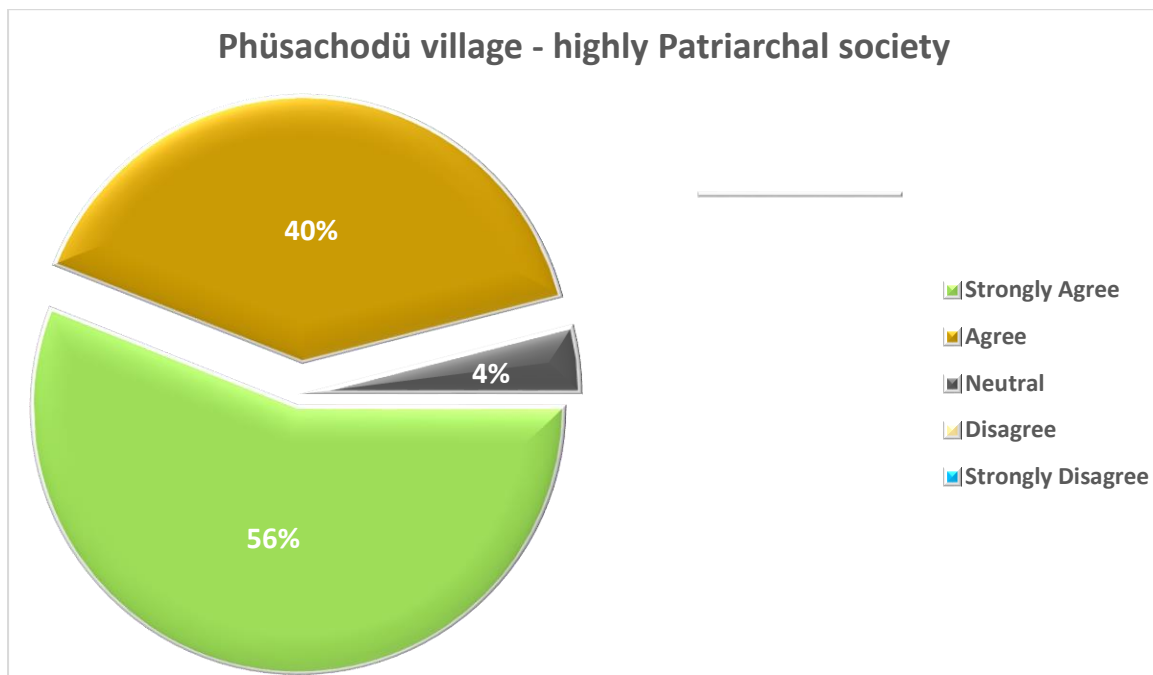
Figure 4.12 Whether the Phüsachodü men are economically independent than women in the village



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the Phüsachodü men are economically independent than women in the village because the majority of the respondents has responded ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 86%. While some few respondents have opted for the options – ‘No’ and ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 4% and 10% respectively.

Hence, from the figure above, we can see that the Phüsachodü men are economically independent than women in the village.

Figure 4.13 Phüsachodü village is a highly Patriarchal society

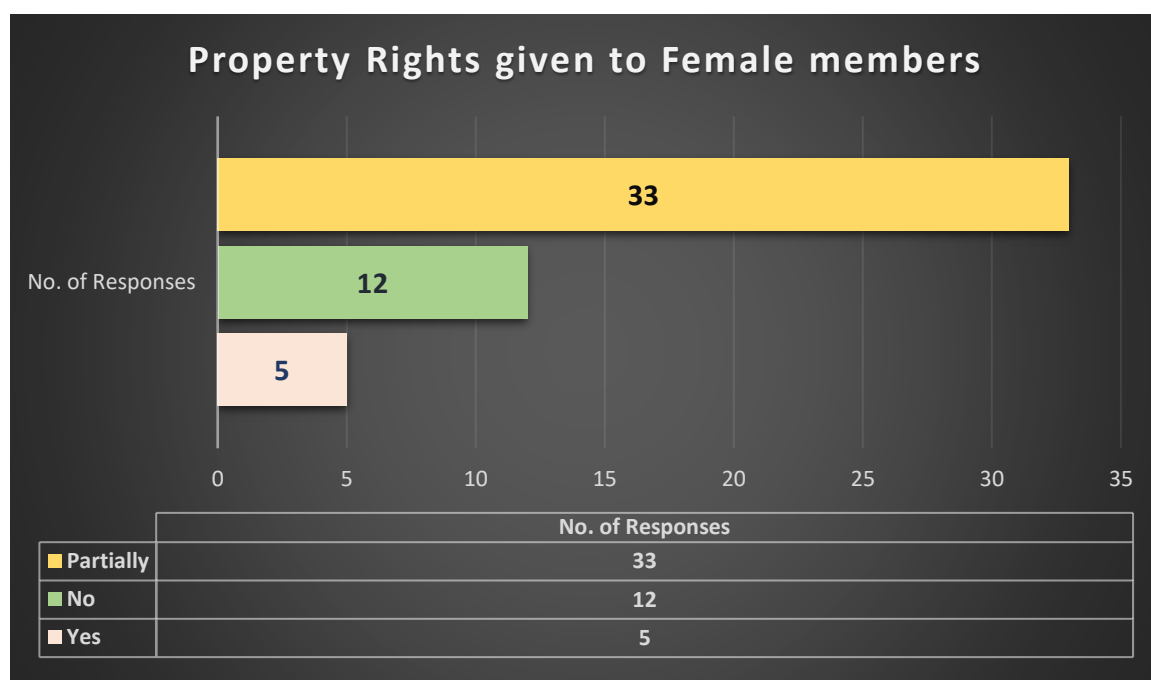


From the above figure, it is clearly evident that Phüsachodü village is a highly patriarchal society as the majority of the respondents have 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' with a percentage of 56% and 40%. While only some few has opted for the option 'Neutral' with a percentage of 4%. And none of the respondents has 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree.'

From the responses of the respondents, we can observe that Phüsachodü village is a highly patriarchal society. This is because Phüsachodü village is a male dominated society where male members take control of almost all the activities in the village and at the same time the village functions according to the decision made by the male elders in the village.

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that Phüsachodü village is a highly patriarchal society.

Figure 4.14 Whether property rights are given to female members in Phüsachodü village



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that property rights are ‘Partially’ given to female members in Phüsachodü village because the majority of the respondents has opted for the option ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 66%. While the remaining few of the respondents have opted for the options – ‘No’ and ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 24% and 10%.

From the responses of the respondents, we can see that property rights are ‘Partially’ given to female members in Phüsachodü village this maybe because of the patriarchy system and the customary law in the village. As according to the customary law, the property rights are given to male members only and rarely to women.

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that the property rights are partially given to female members in Phüsachodü village.

Figure 4.15 Phüsachodü women are treated equally at par with men in the village

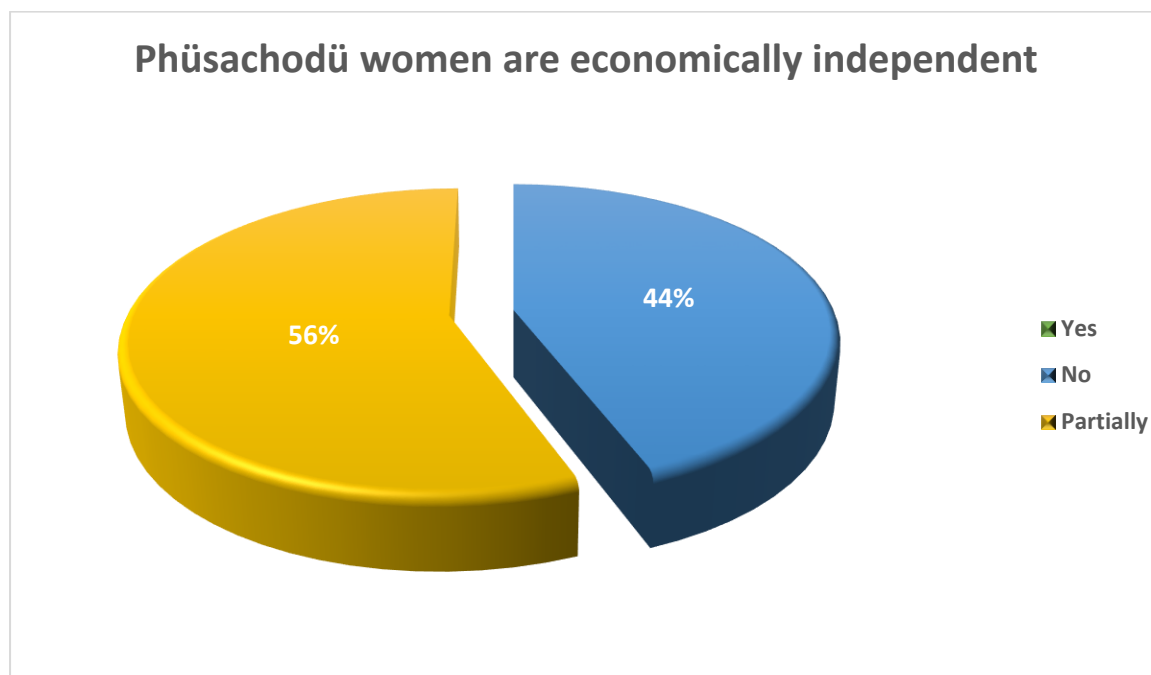


From the above figure, it is evident that Phüsachodü women are not treated at par with men in the village as the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 62%. While some respondents have opted for the options – ‘Disagree’ with a percentage of 18%, ‘Agree’ with a percentage of 14% and ‘Strongly Agree’ with a percentage of 6%.

For the statement whether women are treated equally at par with men in the village or not, to this statement the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 62%. The main reason behind the answers of the respondents maybe because of the patriarchal society, its patriarchal mindset and the attention given to the male members than women (due to the patriarchal system) may lead to such responses from the respondents.

Hence, it is clear from the figure above that the women in Phüsachodü village are impartially or neutrally treated at par with men when it comes to the notion of ‘equality/equally’.

Figure 4.16 Whether the Phüsachodü women are economically independent

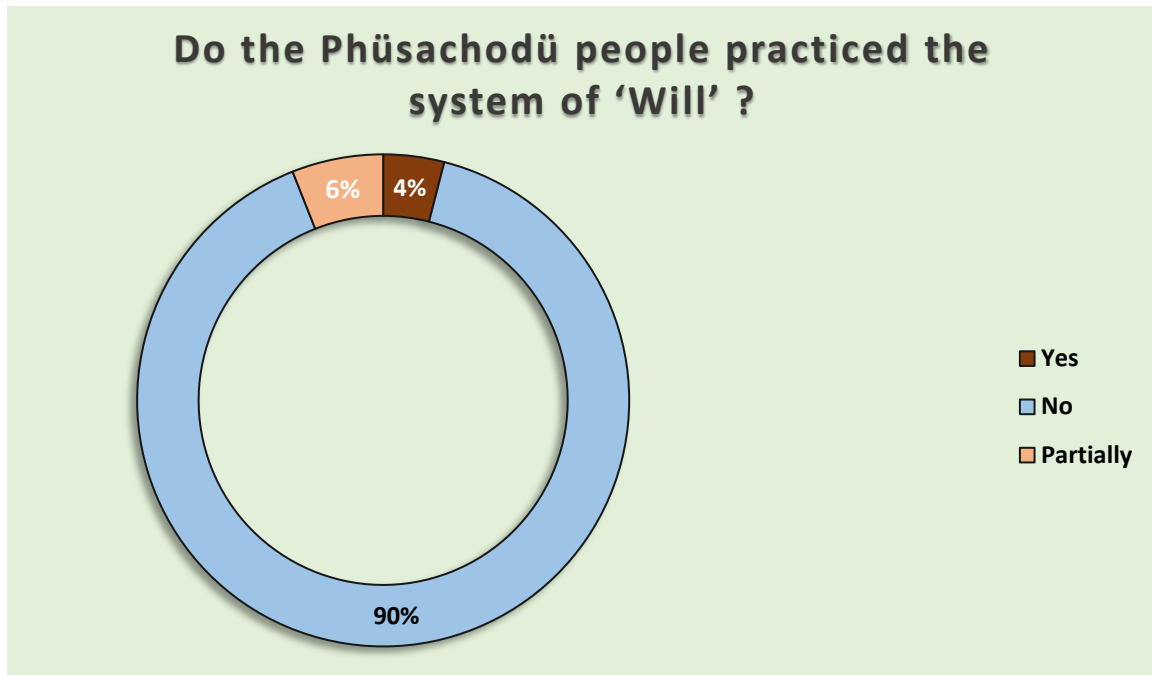


From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the majority of the respondents have opted for the option 'Partially' with a percentage of 56% while the remaining respondents have opted for the option 'No' with a percentage of 44% to the statement whether the Phüsachodü women are economically independent or not. And none have opted for the direct option 'Yes.'

As from the responses of the respondents, we can see that there are two sides of opinion; one being - Phüsachodü women are moderately independent when it comes to the 'economic' aspects while the other opinion being stated that – Phüsachodü women are not economically independent. This maybe because of the effect of the patriarchal system in the village.

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that the Phüsachodü women are partially independent when it comes to the 'economic' aspects.

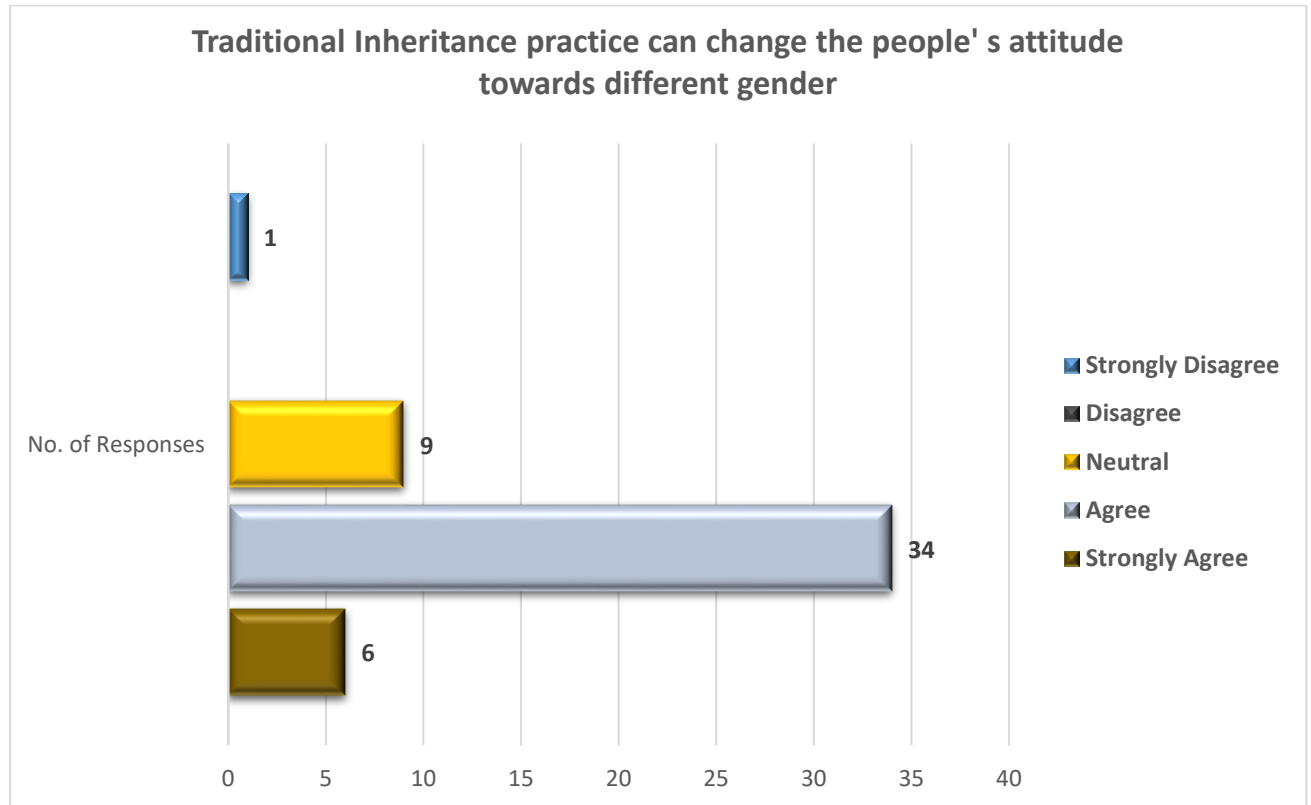
Figure 4.17 Whether the Phüsachodü people practiced the system of ‘Will’



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the people of Phüsachodü village does not practice the system of ‘Will’ as the majority of the respondents have opted for the option ‘No’ with a percentage of 90%. While only a few has opted for options – ‘Yes’ with a percentage of 4% and ‘Partially’ with a percentage of 6%.

Hence, from the responses of the respondents, it is clear that Phüsachodü village does not practice the system of ‘Will’ (the new trends of inheritance practice).

Figure 4.18 Due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance practice can change the people’s attitude towards different gender



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance practice can change the people’s attitude towards different gender. As the majority has opted for the option ‘Agree’ with a percentage of 68%. While some few has opted for options – ‘Strongly Agree’ with a percentage of 2%, ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 18% and ‘Strongly Disagree’ with a percentage of 12%.

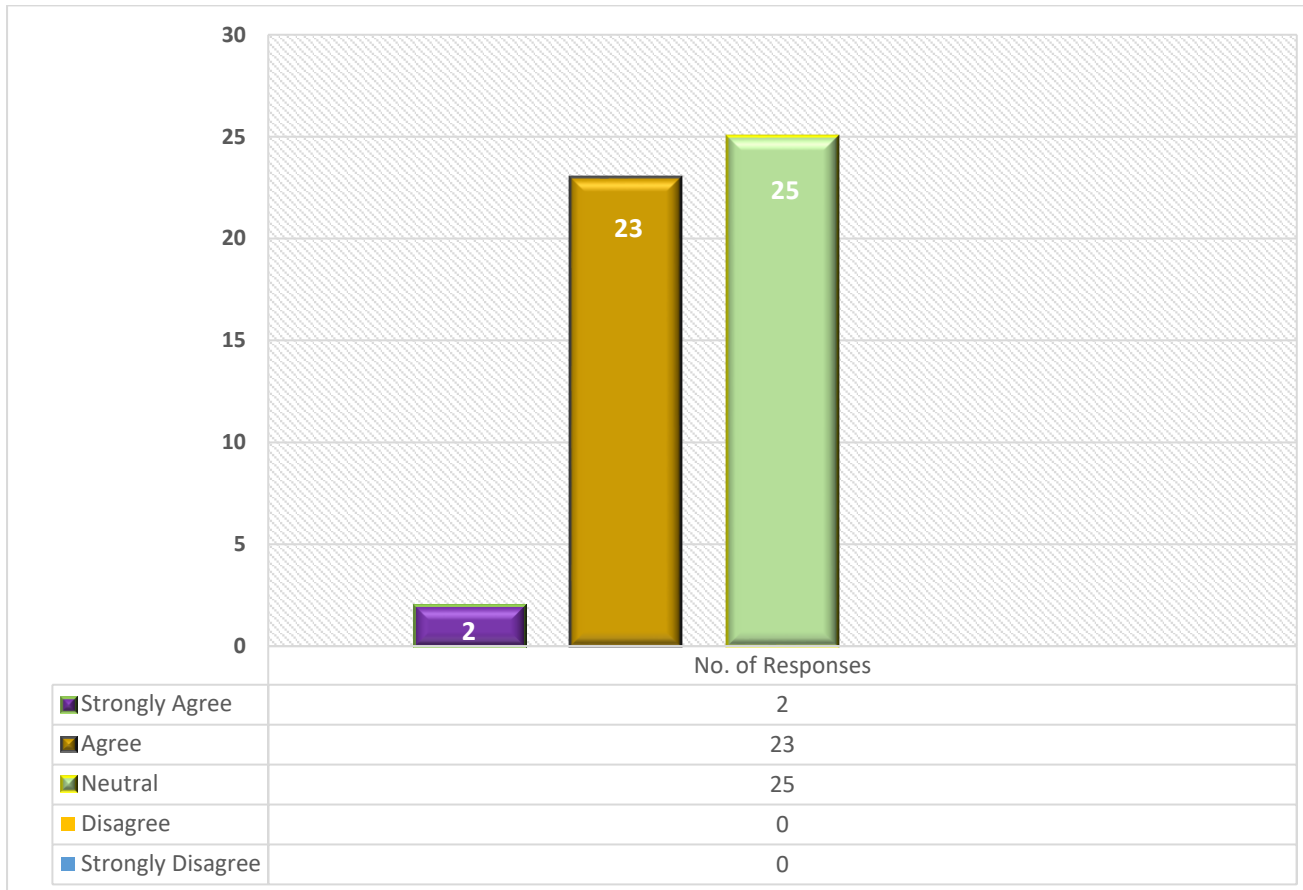
As per the responses of the respondents, we can see that the respondents have different views with regard to the statement. Though there is different opinion with regard to the statement the majority of the respondents have agreed with the statement that due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance practice can change the people’s attitude towards different gender.

‘... the social construction of gender is actually a system of power that not only divides men and women as masculine and feminine but typically also places men and masculinity above women and femininity and operates to value more highly those institutions and practices that

are male dominated and/or representative of masculine traits and styles.’ (Peterson and Runyan, op. cit. (1993), p. 18.)

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance practice can change the people’s attitude towards different gender.

Figure 4.19 Should the traditional inheritance practice still be continued in this 21st century



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the majority of the respondents has opted for the option ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 50% for the statement – whether the traditional inheritance practice should still be continued in this 21st century. While some few has ‘Agree’ as well as ‘Strongly Agree’ with a percentage of 46% and 4% respectively.

As per the responses of the respondents, the majority of the respondents are with the opinion that the practice of the traditional inheritance practice in this 21st century should be neutral. While the remaining few has agreed with the statement that it should still be practice in this 21st century.

Hence, from the figure above, it is clear that there is neutrality in the opinions of the majority of the respondents with regard to the statement whether the traditional inheritance practice should still be continued in this 21st century.

Figure 4.20 Statement - ‘Traditional practices need to be preserved in order to safeguard and keep our cultural identity alive’



From the above figure, it is clearly evident that the majority of the respondents have agreed with the statement - ‘Traditional practices need to be preserved in order to safeguard and keep our cultural identity alive’ as it got the highest number of responses with a percentage of 78% as compared to other options. While some few respondents opted for the options – ‘Strongly Agree’ with a percentage of 12% and ‘Neutral’ with a percentage of 10%.

Though the traditional practices may have some drawbacks yet still it is a tradition which makes one indigenous/tribe different and vibrant from one another thereby making one group unique and marked its identity from the other. This maybe the reason why the majority of the respondents have agreed with the statement - ‘Traditional practices need to be preserved in order to safeguard and keep our cultural identity alive.’

Hence, it is clear from the figure above that the ‘Traditional practices’ should be preserved in order to safeguard and keep one’s cultural identity alive.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER-5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Traditional cultural practices represent a community's values and beliefs over many generations. Every social and tribal group in the world has its own set of cultural traditions and beliefs.

This study was conducted to study the traditional inheritance practice of Chakhesang Tribe with special reference to Phüsachodü village, Nagaland. It provides information about the traditional inheritance practice of the Phüsachodü village. It also tries to understand both the genders position in the traditional inheritance practice of this village. It also studies the various changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice in Phüsachodü Village. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic situation, google form was used for the collection of data. Quantitative research design was utilized to describe the data obtained, along with a detailed explanation on their answers. Hence, from the study, we can understand the various traditional inheritance practice which are practiced among the Phüsachodü people of Chakhesang tribe, Nagaland.

From the study, it has been found that out of the 50 samples, the age group of the majority of the respondents who took part in the study falls under the age group of 21-30 years of age. Both male and female with an equal percentage of 50% each took part in the study. All the respondents who took part in the study are all Christians and all of them are educated. And the majority of the respondents belong to the occupational category of 'Govt. Service.'

The first objective of the study was to study the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü Village. In a sample of 50 responses, it has been found out that 'land' plays an important role in the traditional inheritance practice among the Phüsachodü people because all of the respondents have stated 'Yes' to the importance of land in the traditional inheritance practice with a percentage of 100%. 94% of the respondents have agreed that properties are distributed among the sons only. The majority of the respondents (72%) have stated that according to the traditional inheritance practice the inheritance of the 'Ancestral Property' is inherited by the sons and they are considered to be the rightful heir for such entitlements. The majority of the

respondents (88%) have responded that in the case of no heir, the village elders decide to pass down the property of the deceased person to the claimant only after a thorough investigation on the claimant's 'patriarchal lineage' the property is handed down to the claimant. All the total 50 respondents have responded that 'Through the Customary Law' the village elders make decision regarding the passing down of property assets to the next heir or next person in the family or among the village members with a percentage of 100%. And traditional practices such as 'Shesüh' is still said to be practiced in the village today as the majority of the respondents (98%) have responded that it is still practice in the village. Another traditional inheritance practice which is followed among the Phüsachodü people is the practice of 'Labü' which is an inheritance of the mother's property by the daughters as all the respondents (100%) have responded that such properties are given to daughters only. 'Kalu' which is an old traditional practice of inheritance is considered to be the oldest form of traditional inheritance practice in the village as per the responses of all the total respondents. The majority of the respondents (98%) have responded that as per the traditional inheritance practice, the youngest son is given the right to inherit his father's house and the best terrace fields which is cultivated by his parents is given to him as a share of property inheritance is still practiced in the village today. All the respondents (100%) have agreed that as per the traditional inheritance practice, the gender which it favors the most is Male members. 100% of the respondents are well aware of the traditional inheritance practice in the village. And from the responses of all the respondents (100%) it is evident that the old traditional system of inheritance is still practiced in the village today. There are two view point with regard to the traditional inheritance practice being rigid or not in the village today as the majority of the respondents (62%) have stated that the traditional inheritance practice is partially rigid as compared with the olden times and the rest of the respondents have agreed that it is still rigid as before. Such opinions may have arisen due to the generation gap or differences between the 'Old' and the 'Young' generations as the younger generation may not be well versed in such old traditional practices.

The second objective of the study was to study the position of men in the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü Village. As out of the 50 samples of responses, 56% of the respondents have responded that the Phüsachodü man in the village structure holds the position of 'Decision Maker' in the village. 60% of the respondents have agreed that men are the rightful owners for the inheritance of the village properties. And 64% of the respondents have agreed that the male members in the village plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice. The

majority of the respondents (86%) have also responded that the Phüsachodü men are economically independent than women in the village. The majority of the respondents (96%) have responded that due to the patriarchal society, the Phüsachodü men still dominates over the village activities till today. The majority of the respondents (56%) have strongly agreed that Phüsachodü village is a highly patriarchal society. 86% of the respondents have agreed that changes are seen in the position of men in the village today. Such changes are taking place in the village due to social change in the society as well as the influence of modernity.

The third objective of the study is to find out the place of women in the traditional inheritance practice of Phüsachodü village. From the 50 samples of responses, 84% of the respondents have stated that a Phüsachodü woman occupies a position of 'House keeper' in the village structure. The majority of the respondents (66%) have stated that property rights are 'Partially' given to female members in Phüsachodü village. The majority of the respondents (90%) have point out that the types of property inherited by the Phüsachodü women in the village are shawls/mekhelas and ornaments. 62% of the respondents have responded that Phüsachodü women are not treated at par with men in the village as there is neutrality in the treatment of women being equally at par with men. The majority of the respondents (84%) have stated that Phüsachodü women are not given fair shares of property holdings like the male members in the village, this is due to the patriarchal system as well as the customary law in the village. With regard to the economically independent status of the Phüsachodü women, there are two sides of opinions; as 56% of the respondents states that Phüsachodü women are moderately independent when it comes to the 'economic' aspects while the rest 44% of the respondent's states that – Phüsachodü women are not economically independent.

The fourth objective of the study is to study the various changes taking place in the traditional inheritance practice in Phüsachodü village. Out of the 50 samples of responses, 52% of the respondents have stated that changes are taking place in the traditional inheritance practice due to the impact of the modernity in the society. Out of the various trends of inheritance practice, 90% of the respondents have stated that the people of Phüsachodü village does not practice the system of 'Will.' But they do practice the other trends of inheritance practice such as the 'Gifted Land or Acquired land' as 98% of the respondents have stated that 'Gifted Land or Acquired land' of the new trends of inheritance practice are practiced by the Phüsachodü people in the village. With regard to the inheritance of the 'gifted-land', the majority of the respondents (84%) have stated that the woman's property is inherited by the Girl child. 68% of the respondents have agreed that due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance

practice can change the people's attitude towards different gender. The majority of the respondents (78%) have stated that fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is still not seen today in Phüsachodü village. 50% of the respondents have stated that the practice of the traditional inheritance practice in this 21st century should be neutral. The majority of the respondents (76%) have stated that the 'Customary Law' plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice. Though the traditional system of inheritance practice may have its positive and negative drawbacks, 78% of the respondents have agreed that the traditional practices should be preserved in order to safeguard and keep their cultural identity alive.

Thus, in contrast to the other tribes in Nagaland, particularly the Angami Tribe who are considered to be the dominant tribe in Nagaland due to their greater numbers - no landed properties are given to women but landed properties are given to women in the Chakhesang Tribe, even if the properties are temporary, they are given land ownership authority. As an example, in the Phüsachodü village of Chakhesang Tribe the tradition of giving women land ownership is known as 'Shesüh.' Although the terminology for such land ownership may differ from village to village, yet the process is the same.

SUGGESTIONS

- Give men incentives or encouragement to accept rather than oppose or boycott changes in the society.
- Create awareness among males and females regarding the 'Gender Equality' through various programmes. For children, it must begin from the family at the earliest stages and should be stressed and included in the school curriculum as well.
- By promoting more of the local handlooms or hand weaving works of the women in the village can encourage and give more motivation for the women in the village to come out and work by themselves independently which can lead to a 'self-build independent life' of a woman in the village.
- By promoting investments in manufacturing and open markets particularly for products with special preferences (importance) to female labour content which can boost both revenues and the demand for female employment, in that case it can uplift the economic status of the women in the village as there is still female dependency on male when it comes to 'being economically independent' in the village.
- Organizing an awareness program on the traditional inheritance practice can make the younger generation aware of their unique traditional inheritance practices, their culture and their identity. As this particular village has a unique way of its traditional inheritance practices.
- Inheriting a property is not a regular incident so it is one's own duty to take utmost care to have all the details in place.

CONCLUSION

As a result, a statistical analysis of 50 members was undertaken to finish the study. The facts and views from the study revealed that the traditional inheritance practices are still practiced by the Phüsachodü village till today. Thereby, holding the legacy for preserving and practicing the traditional practices among the Chakhesang tribe in Nagaland. Changes are seen among the people of Phüsachodü village, this is due to the arrival of Christianity as well as the advancement in the modern society which has led to the changes in the mindset of the people. But at the same time the traditional inheritance practices are still unable to be shaken as it is still running strong in the village as these practices are deeply rooted in the community. And also, despite the impact of education and occupation on people's lives, their lives are still governed to some extent by the old customary rules and traditional practices.

As an outcome of the study, it can be concluded that the traditional inheritance practice among the Phüsachodü people continues to grow even today as the people still values the traditional practices in the village. As this is a continuous process that might happen knowingly or unknowingly because since the ancient times, the value of traditional practices as well as the customary law has been extremely high. With the passage of time and people, many young educated minds have gained the knowledge of both the present modern inheritance practices and the traditional inheritance practices of the past which are still practiced by the people in the community. As a result, they live equally on both sides as 'modernity and tradition' go hand in hand. Traditional practices are still highly important in the lives of the local communities till date because during the olden times these traditional practices as well as the customary law serve as a barrier between the good and evil inhabitants of the community or village in particular that is the reason why it is still valued today by the people in the community. As they play a vital role in maintaining stability, peace, harmony and unity in the village.

Therefore, some traditional practices may have both positive and negative consequences for all the members in the society, as good and bad things always inevitably follow each other. But despite the fact that such traditional practices may have both pros and cons, yet each individual in the society incorporates their cultural heritage into their lives in their own unique way.

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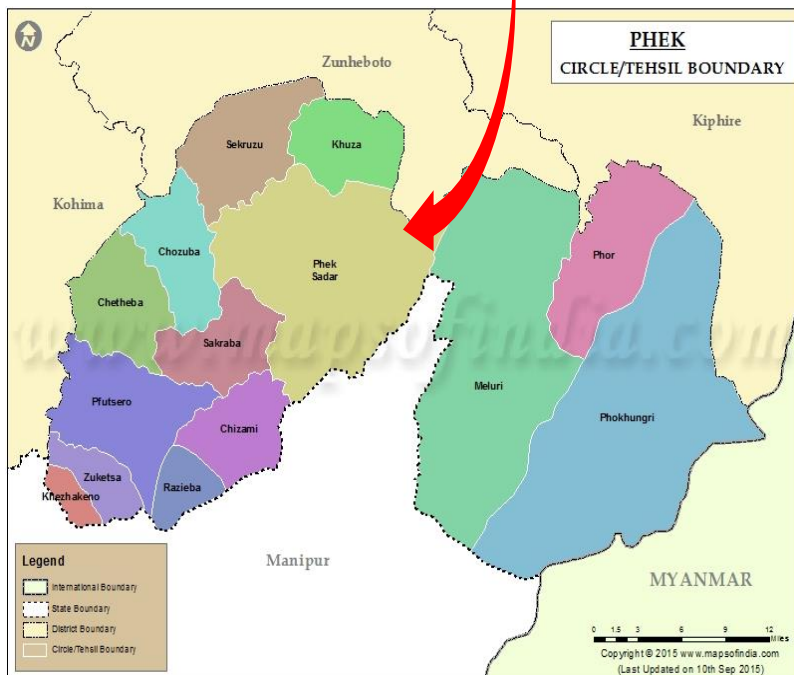
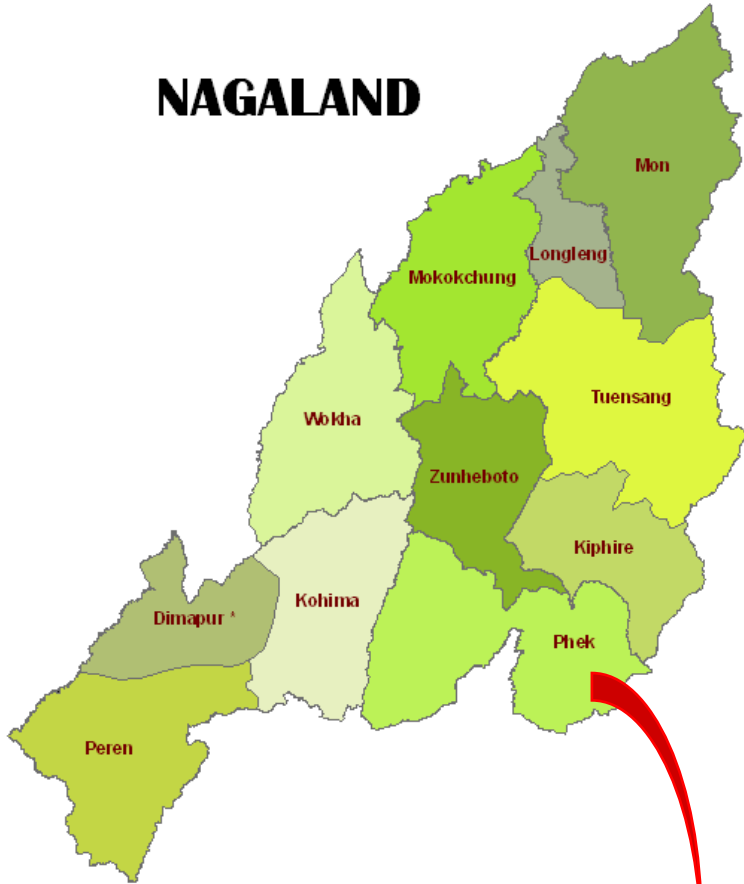
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GALLERY

NAGALAND



CHAKHESANG TRIBE



Chakhesang Men (Sources: Pinterest)



Chakhesang Man drinking his local rice beer (Sources: <https://johangerrits.com/>)



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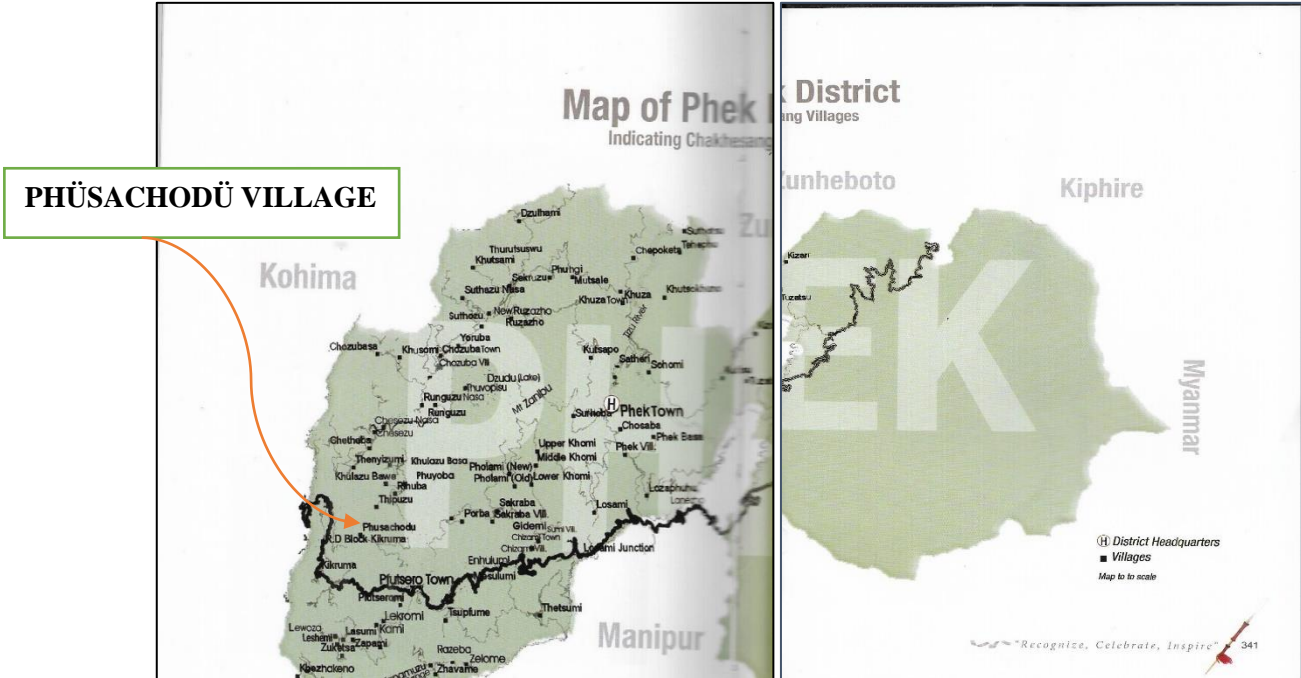


Chakhesang Women Weaving their traditional shawls (Sources: <https://www.sahapedia.org/nettle->)

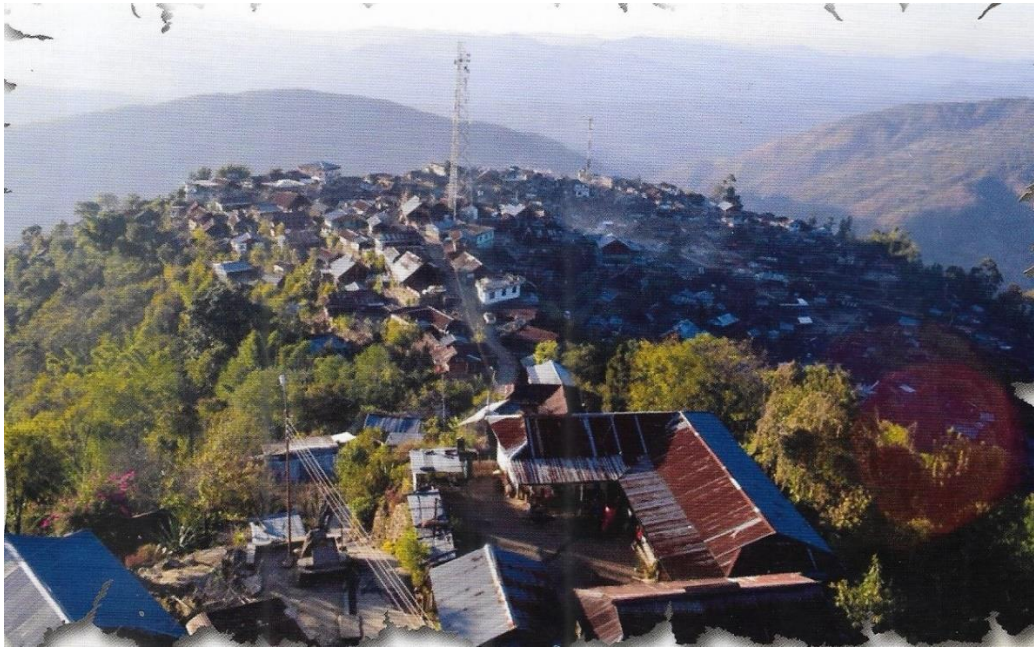


Chakhesang Woman (Sources: <https://pixels.com/featured/chakhesang-tribal-lady-hira-punjabi.html>)

PHÜSACHODÜ VILLAGE



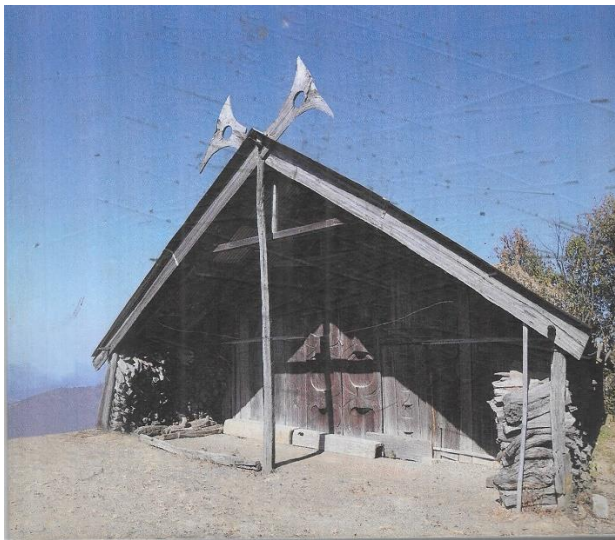
Map of the Villages of Chakhesang Tribe (Sources: Commemorating the Chakhesang 75th Anniversary Book)



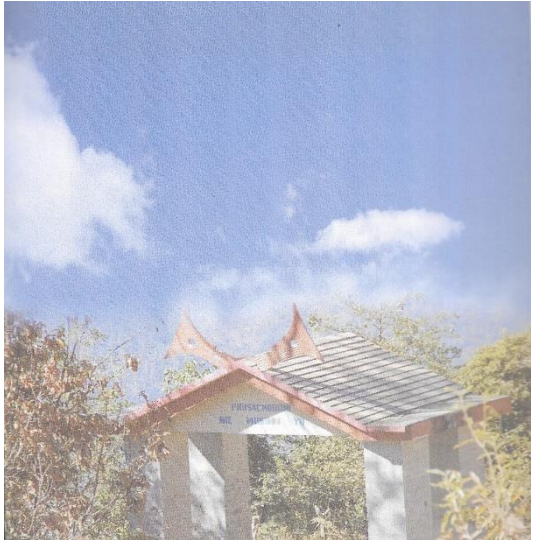
A Glimpse of Phüsachodü Village (Sources: Book - Golden Jubilee of Phüsachodümi Youth Society, 1971-2021)



Aerial View of Phüsachodü Village



Old Traditional House at Phüsachodü Village (Sources: Book – The Venture)



Modern Day Village Gate of Phüsachodü (Sources: Book – The Venture)

APPENDIX

**A Sociological Study on the Traditional Inheritance Practice of
Chakhesang Tribe with special reference to Phüsachodü Village,
Nagaland.**

Questionnaire

Personal Profile:

Name: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Religion: _____

Qualification: _____

Occupation: _____

1. Land is an important property asset in the traditional inheritance practice
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

2. The property assets in Phüsachodü village are distributed among
 - Sons only
 - Clan members
 - Relatives
 - Kinship (relation by blood, marriage or adoption)
 - All the above

3. The rightful owner/heir for the inheritance of ‘ancestral property’ according to the traditional inheritance practice system is
- Son
 - Adopted Son
 - Both the above
4. In case of no heir, the village elders decide to pass down the property of the deceased person to the claimer by tracing the claimer’s
- Clanship
 - Patriarchal lineage
 - Both the above
5. How does the elders in the village make decision regarding the passing down of the property assets to the next heir or the next person in the family or among the village members?
- Through the Customary Law
 - Through the Indian Succession Act,1925
 - None of the above
6. ‘Shesüh’ an old traditional practice of ‘temporal land-ownership’ where paddy fields or a plot of land is given to the woman during her marriage. Is it still practice today in the village?

(*Shesüh is a temporal land ownership i.e., a particular land is given to her to cultivate till her lifetime but after her death the land is taken back by her father/brothers.)

- Yes
- No
- Partially

7. For the inheritance of the mother’s properties in the name of ‘Labü,’ such properties are given to daughters only

(*Labü - A basket woven from bamboo splits containing the mother’s ornaments, mekheldas/traditional attire)

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

8. "Kalu" is considered to be one of the oldest forms of traditional inheritance practice in the village

(*Kalu – Inheritance of Ancestral property/Ancestral property)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. As per the traditional practice of inheritance, the youngest son is given the right to inherit his father's house and the best terrace fields which is cultivated by his parents is given to him as a share of property inheritance – is such system of inheritance still practiced today in Phüsachodü village

- Yes
- No
- partially

10. According to the traditional inheritance practice, the gender which it favors the most is

- Male
- Female
- Both male and female

11. Are you aware of the traditional inheritance practice in the village?

- Yes
- No
- Partially

12. Do the villagers still practice the old traditional system of inheritance?

- Yes
- No

- Partially

13. Is the practice still rigid today in the village as compare to the olden times/days?

- Yes
- No
- Partially

14. What position does a man holds in the village structure of Phüsachodü village?

- Decision maker
- Head of the family
- Bread earner
- Leader
- Option 1,2 & 3
- All the above

15. Men are the rightful owners of inheritance of the village properties

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. Male members play a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice in Phüsachodü village

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. The Phüsachodü men are economically independent than women in the village

- Yes

- No
- Partially

18. As a patriarchal society, the Phüsachodü men still dominates the village activities till today

- Yes
- No
- Partially

19. Phüsachodü Village is a highly Patriarchal society

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. At this present-day modern society, there are changes seen in the position of men in the village

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. A Phüsachodü woman in the village structure occupies a position of

- Caregiver
- House keeper
- Peace maker
- All the above

22. Property rights is given to the female members in Phüsachodü village

- Yes
- No
- Partially

23. What type of property does the women inherit in Phüsachodü Village?

- Plot of land/fields
- Shawls/Mekhelas and ornaments
- Household articles – pots, cups, weaving implements, rice, baskets, etc.
- All the above

24. Phüsachodü women are treated equally at par with men in the village

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. Phüsachodü women are given fair share of property holdings like the male members in the village

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. Are the Phüsachodü women economically independent

- Yes
- No
- Partially

27. In the modern society, there are certain changes in the traditional inheritance practice

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

- Strongly Disagree

28. Do the Phüsachodü people practiced the system of 'Will' (defined under the Indian Succession Act, 1925)

- Yes
- No
- Partially

29. The new trend - 'Gifted land or Acquired land' property is practiced among the people in Phüsachodü village

(*Gifted land/Acquired land – those land which are gifted to the daughters by their parents where the parents buy the land property with their own savings)

- Yes
- No
- Partially

30. In the case of 'gifted-land', the woman's property can be inherited by

- Girl child
- Sisters
- Son
- Both option 1 & 2

31. Due to the patriarchal outlook, the traditional inheritance practice can change the people's attitude towards different gender

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

32. Fair share of property holdings/ownership between the gender is seen today in Phüsachodü village

- Yes

- No
- Partially

33. Do you agree that this system of traditional inheritance practice should still be practiced at this 21st century?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

34. Do you agree that the 'Customary Law' plays a significant role in the traditional inheritance practice among the Phüsachodü village?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

35. Do you agree with the statement that such 'traditional practices need to be preserved in order to safeguard and keep our cultural identity alive'?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree