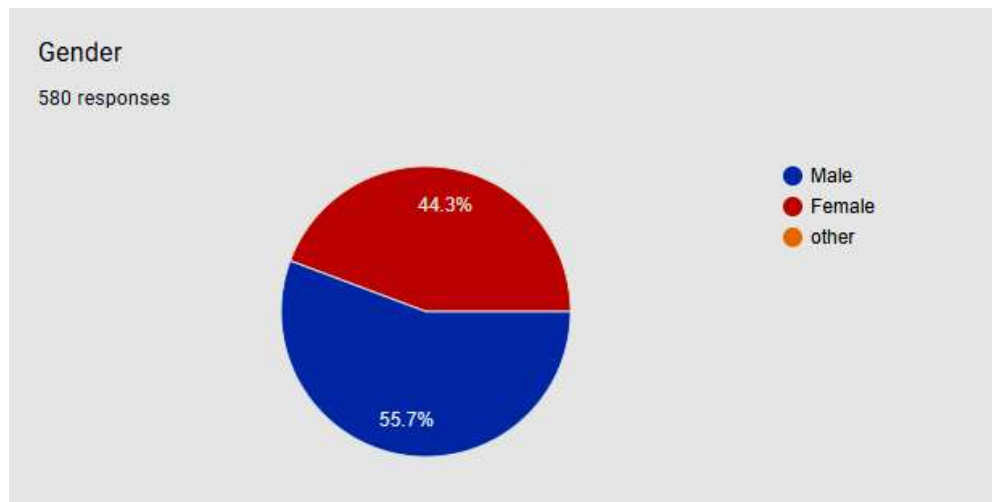


CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE SÜMI OF NAGALAND AND UPPER ASSAM

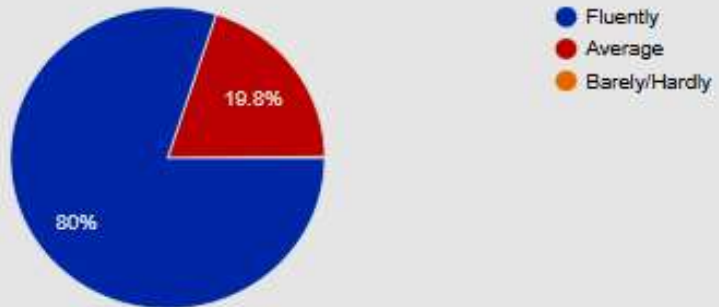
6.1. Questions and Responses by the Sümi of Nagaland

In order to understand the depth of knowledge and awareness about the Sümi cultural heritage, an online survey through questionnaire method was conducted using Google forms. Altogether 580 people responded out of which 55.7% were male and 44.3% were female. The questionnaire was distributed only among the Sümi people. The age group varied from as young as 18 years and as old as 68 years. Majority of the respondents were found to be between 30 to 40 years. The educational qualification of most of the respondents were BA and MA and some were M. Phils and PhDs. Majority of the respondents were from urban areas.



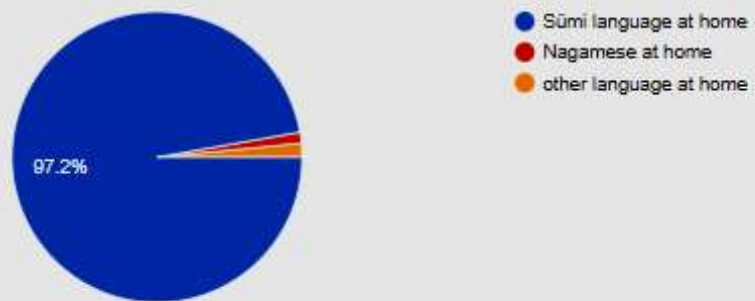
1. I can speak Sümi language

580 responses



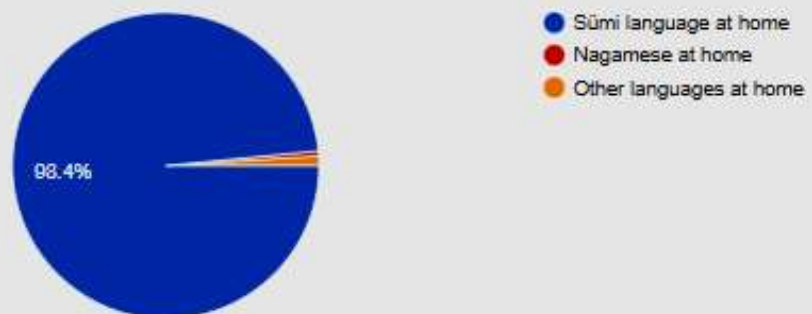
2. I speak

580 responses



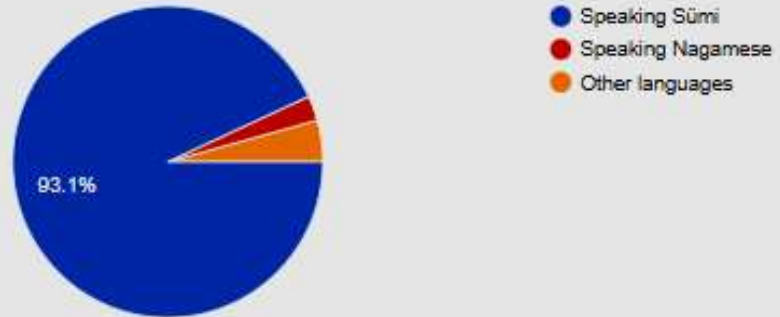
3. My parents speaks

580 responses



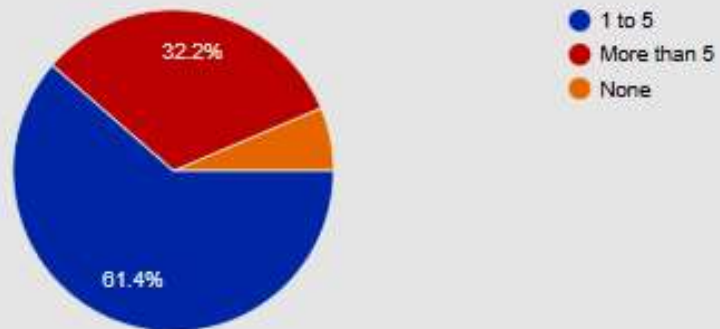
4. I am more comfortable/I prefer

580 responses



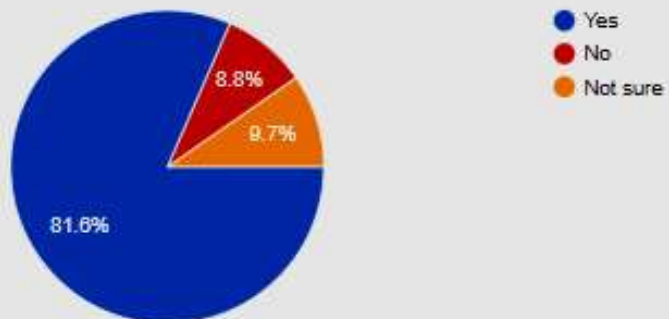
5. How many Sümi folktales do you know?

580 responses



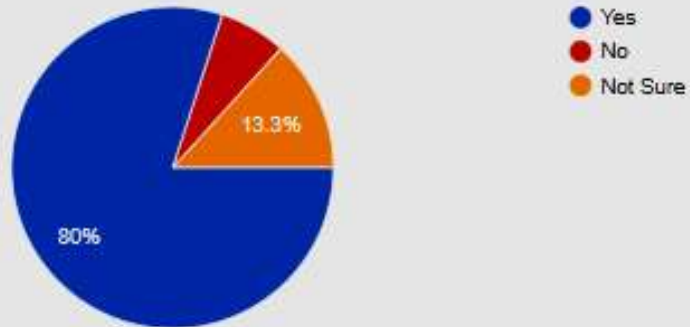
6. Do you know the village from where your forefathers migrated to the present location?

580 responses



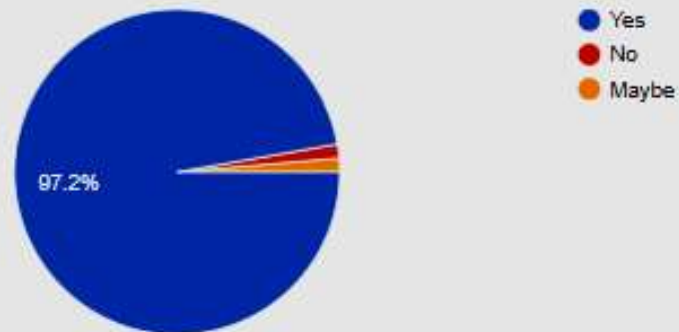
7. Does the women in your village still practise weaving?

580 responses



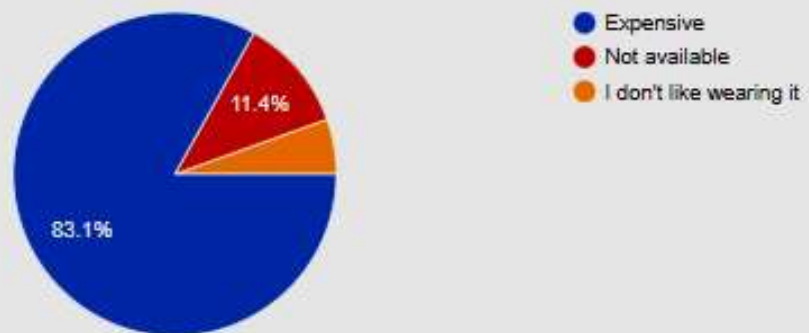
8. Do you own any Sùmi traditional attire?

580 responses



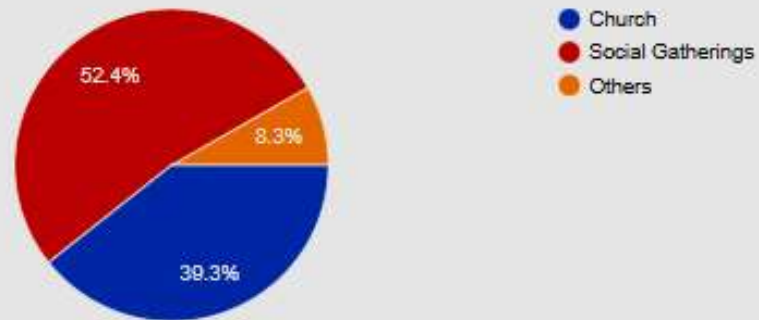
9. What makes owning Sumi traditional attires a problem?

528 responses



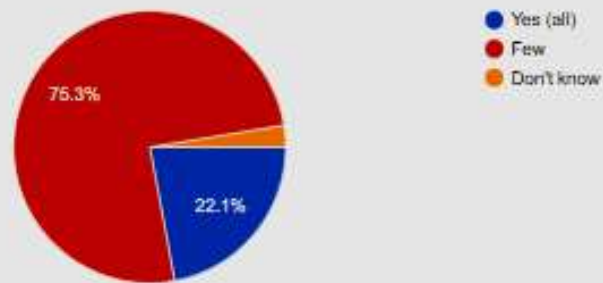
10. Where do you wear Sümi traditional attires?

580 responses



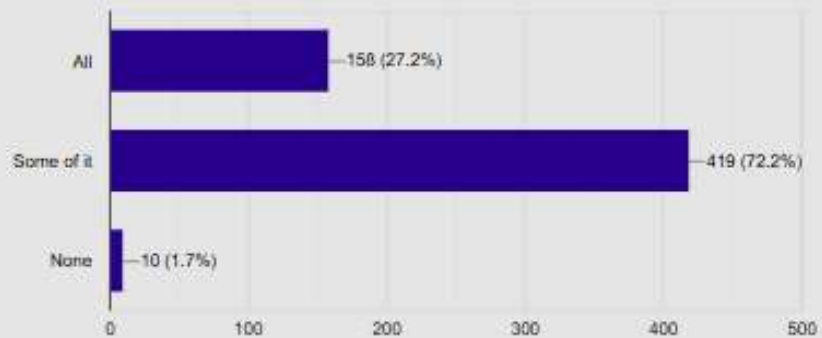
11. Do you know the significance of the Sümi traditional attires

580 responses



12. Which Sümi women ornaments are known to you- Tsükoli, Akütsüküka, Akichelachi, Achiku, Achunachi, Aküsa li, Asapu, Achichugho (Achigho), Achipa, Achixathi/Achipho, Achipu, Akuchomulu, Akucho

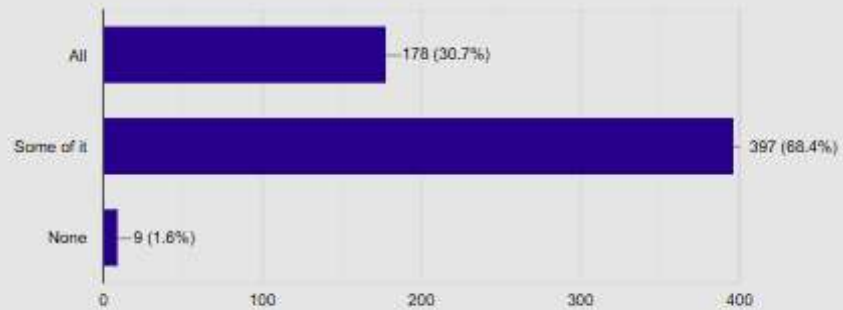
580 responses



13. Which Sümi men's ornaments are known to you? – Avabo, Aghachomhi, Akinisüpha (kinisupha), Aminihu, Ashitsüghüchi Amülaküxa, Aminikuda, Akühaghi, Auchikükha (Ausukukha), Asapu, Asükhi, Asukixi, Asüküdamini, Apukhu kikhí, Asholha, Azüto , Akukulu züto , Ashiyiko züto , Azüta, Angu, Apukhu kukha, Mlusaxxe, Lapucho

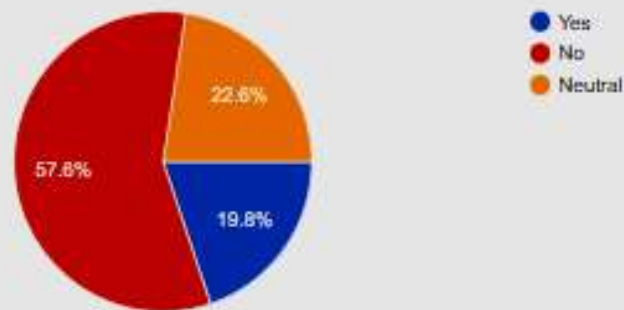
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580 responses



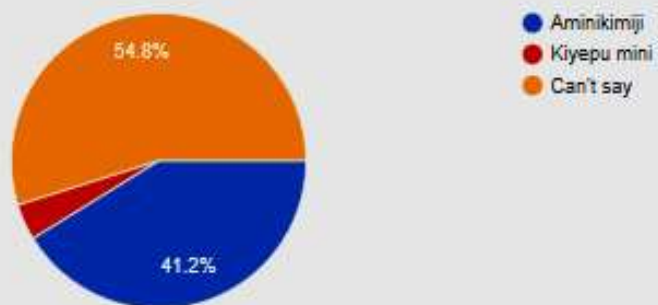
14. Can you recite any Sümi Leshele?

580 responses



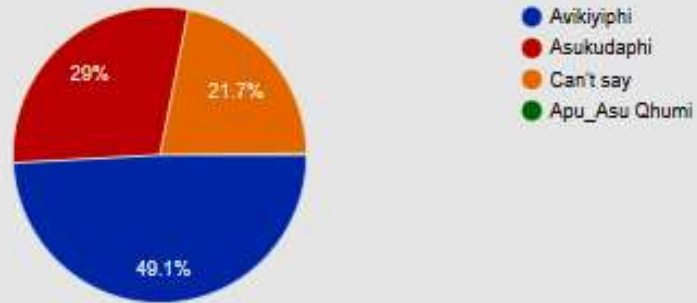
15. Which Sümi mekhala cannot be worn?

580 responses



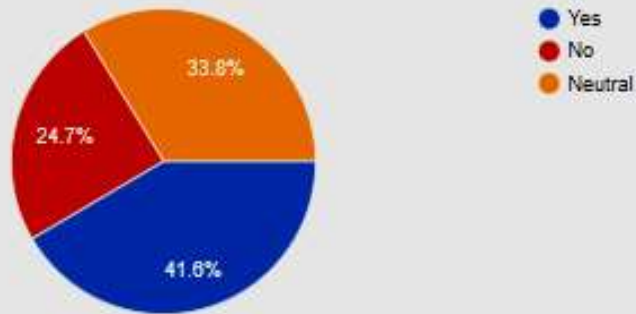
16. Which Sūmi men's shawl was to be worn only by a feast giver?

580 responses



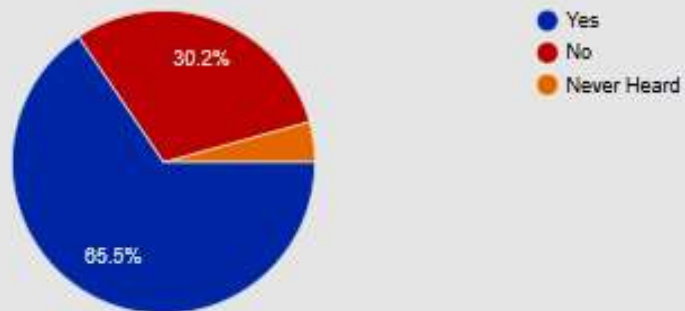
17. Do you have any knowledge about the Sūmi oral tradition?

580 responses



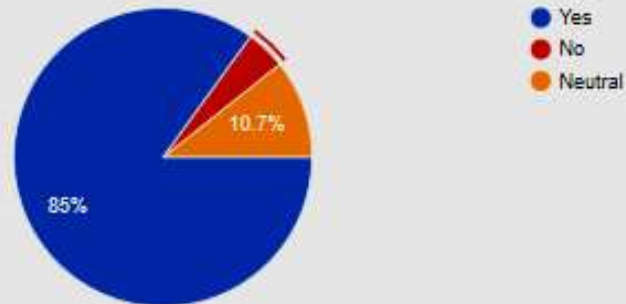
18. Do you know the story of migration of the Sūmi to your village?

580 responses



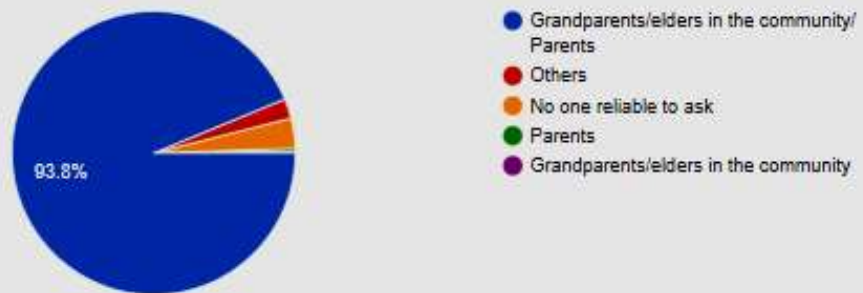
19. Have you ever felt curious to learn about the Sūmi oral tradition or cultural heritage?

580 responses



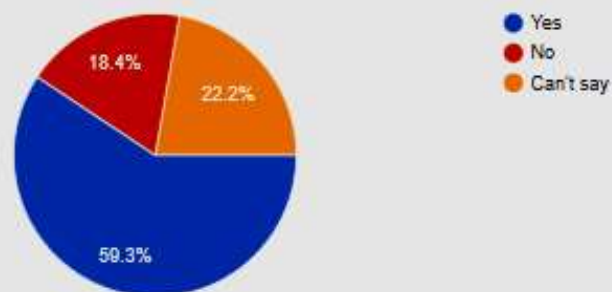
20. Whom do you approach when you have any questions about the Sūmi cultural practices?

580 responses

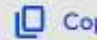


21. Do you feel the elders in your community are making efforts to pass the knowledge of the Sūmi cultural heritage to the younger generation?

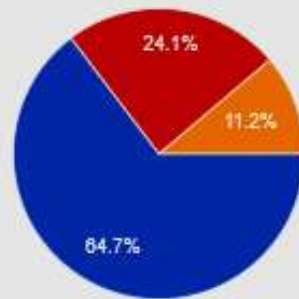
580 responses



22. Have you ever heard about the *Apuki/Iliki* and its significance?



580 responses

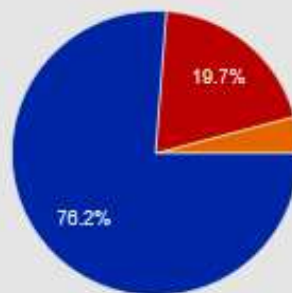


- I have heard and know its significance
- I have heard its name but doesn't know its significance
- I have never heard about it

23. Do you know about the practise of *Aloji* and its significance in the *Sūmi* society in the past?

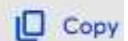


580 responses

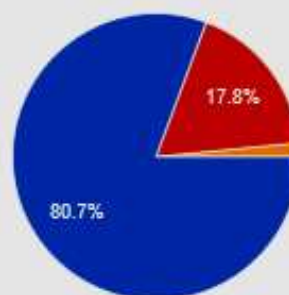


- I have heard and know its significance
- I have heard the name but doesn't know its significance
- I have never heard about it

24. Which *Sūmi* cultural heritage is popular among the young people?



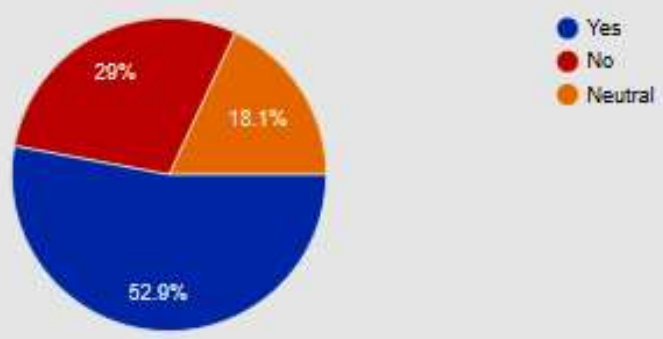
580 responses



- Wearing the traditional attires, ornaments
- Singing folk songs and folk dances
- Others

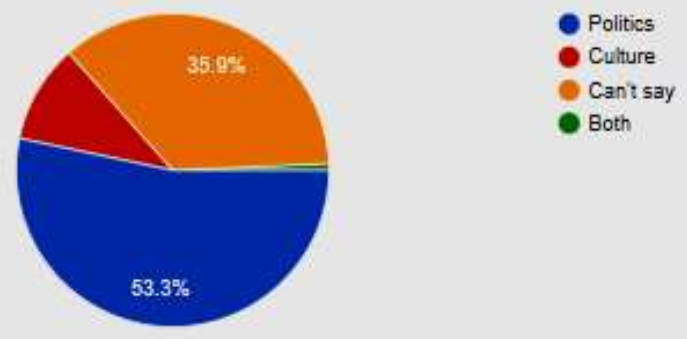
25. Have you ever heard of the Indian Army operation of the 1950s?

580 responses



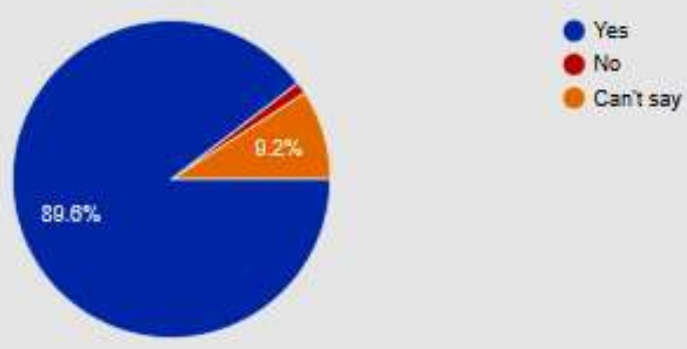
26. The impact of the Indian Army Operation was on:

580 responses



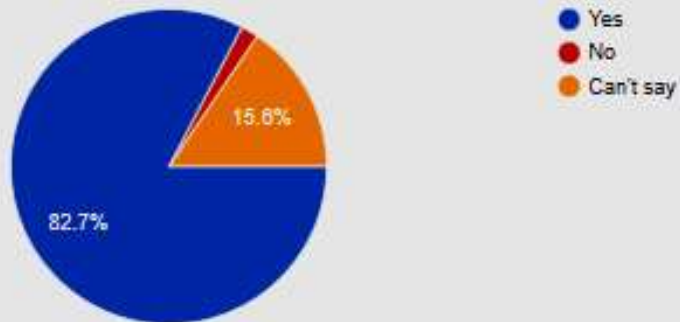
27. If you are a man would you prefer marrying a Sümi woman?

502 responses



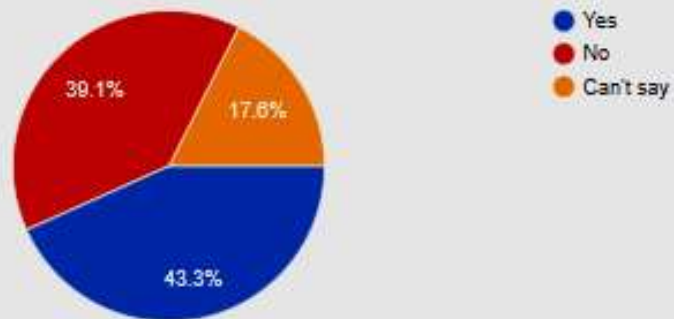
28. If you are a woman, would you prefer marrying a Sūmi man?

450 responses



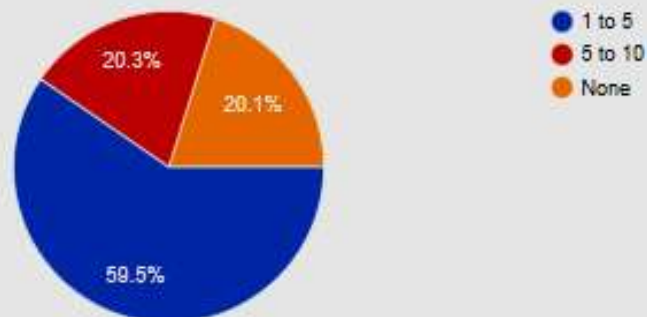
29. Do you think the bride price practise of the Sūmi should be continued?

580 responses



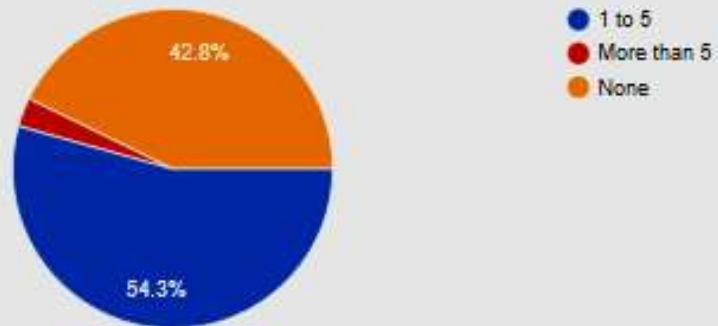
30. How many Sūmi proverbs and sayings do you know?

571 responses



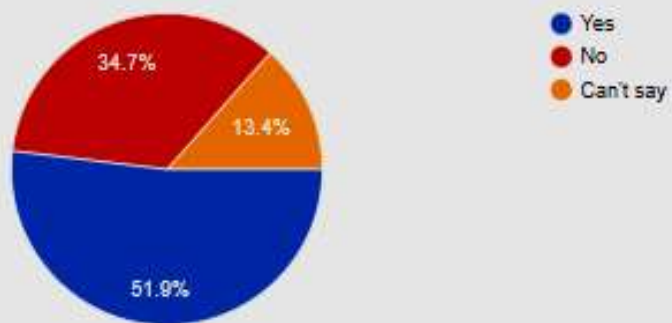
31. How many folk songs can you sing?

580 responses



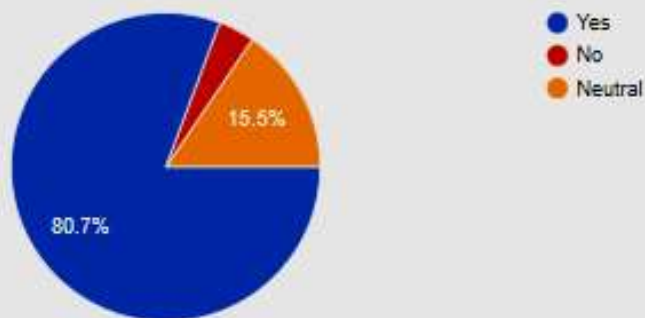
32. Do you know how to perform the folk dance?

580 responses



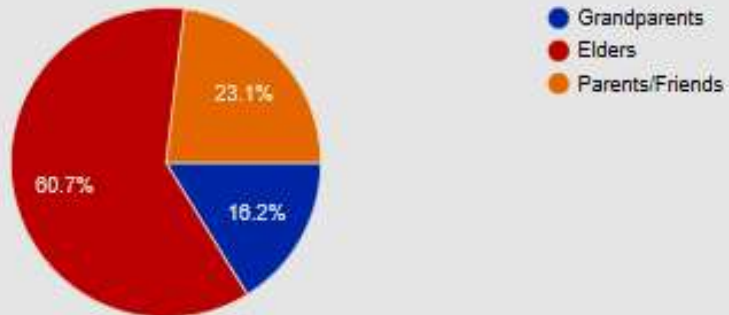
33. Are you interested in learning the folk songs?

580 responses



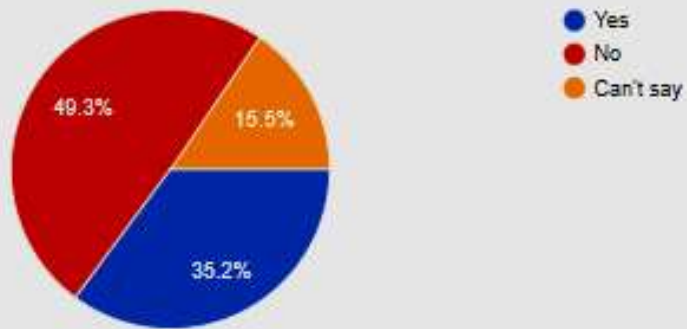
34. Who taught you how to sing the folk song?

580 responses



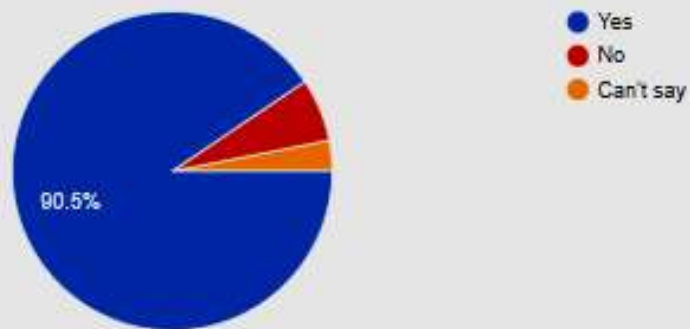
35. Do you know any Sūmi folk instruments?

580 responses



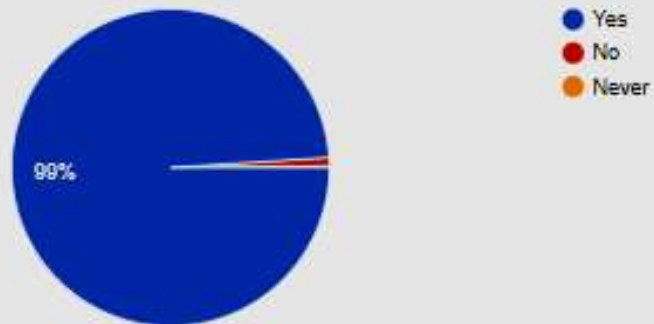
36. Do you know how to make axone?

580 responses



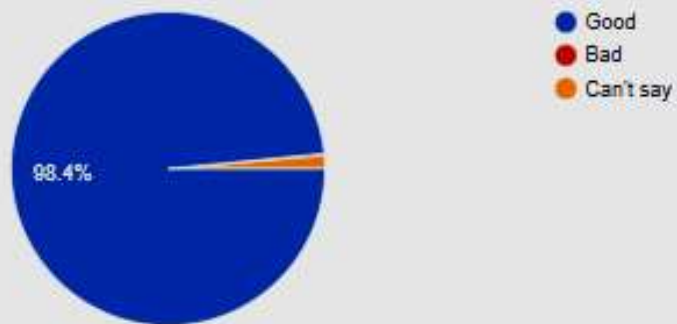
37. Have you ever shared Sūmi food with people from other community?

580 responses



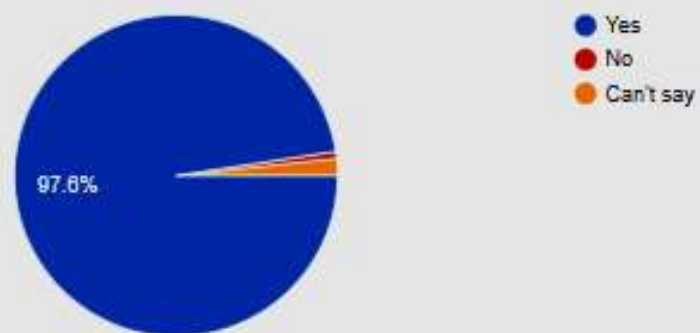
38. How was the response of people from other community towards Sūmi food?

580 responses



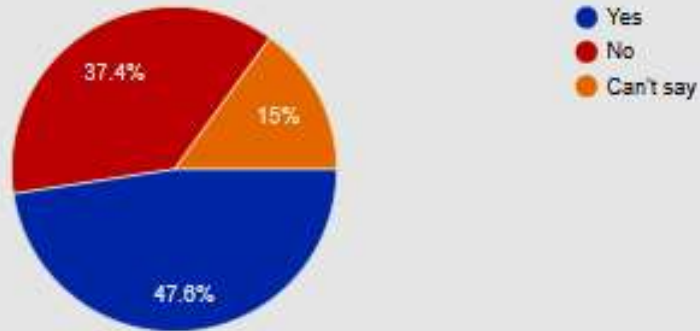
39. Do you know the significance of Tuluni festival?

580 responses



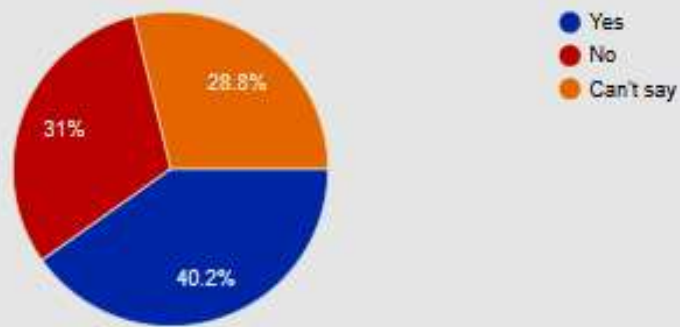
40. Can you recite the months of the year in Sumi?

580 responses



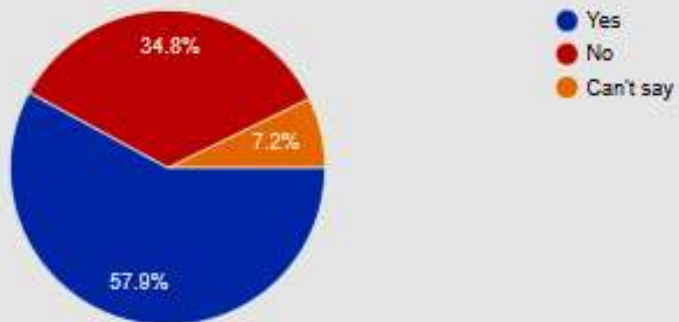
41. Are the Ahuna and Tuluni the only Sumi festivals from the forefathers' time?

580 responses



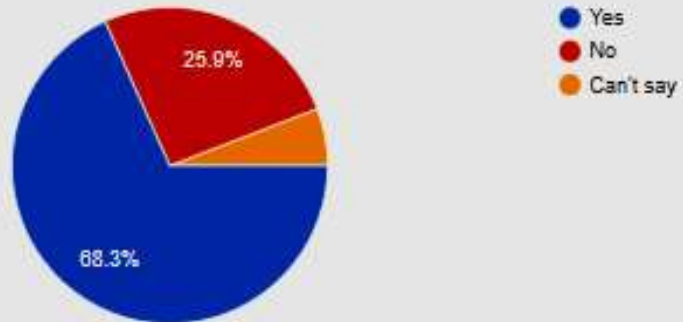
42. Have you ever heard of the charm stones (Aghatu) that had the power to make its owner rich?

580 responses



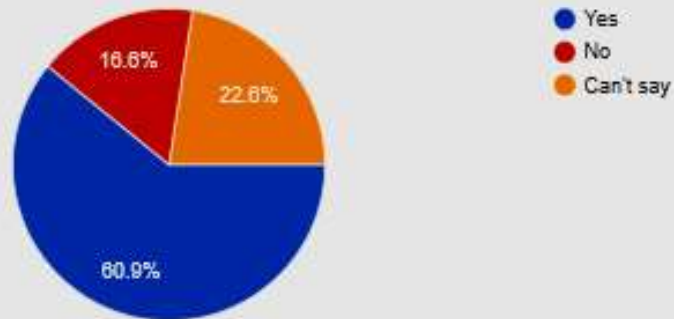
43. Have you heard stories about tiger men/women?

580 responses



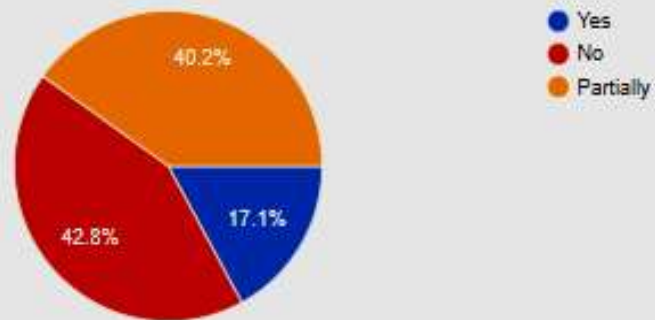
44. Do you support using folk tune in the church Worship?

580 responses



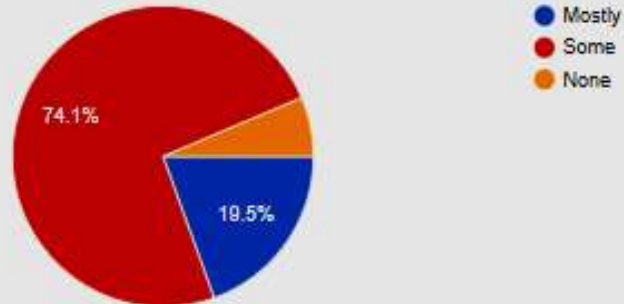
45. Is it easy for you to recognise a mistaken pattern/design/motif on the traditional attire?

580 responses



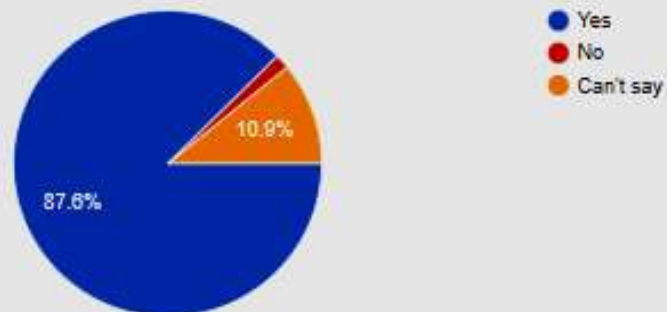
46. Do you still see practices from your childhood existing in the Sūmi society at present?

580 responses



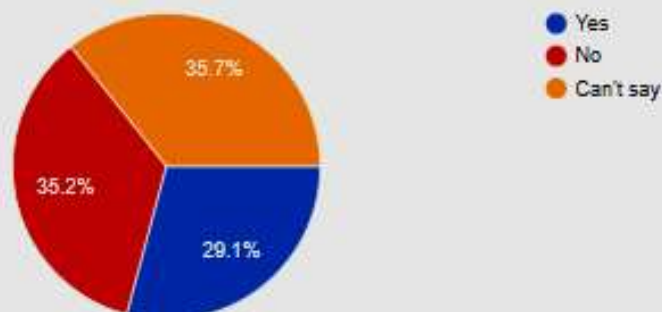
47. Do you think there is any hope in recovering the lost practices of the Sūmi cultural heritage through the initiatives that are being undertaken through research, documentation, trainings, language education, etc?

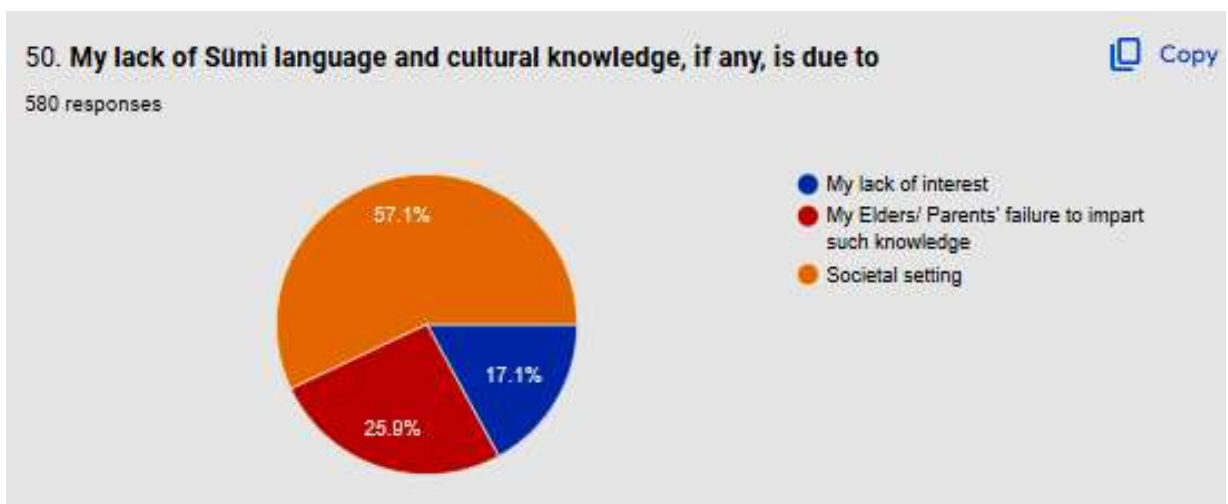
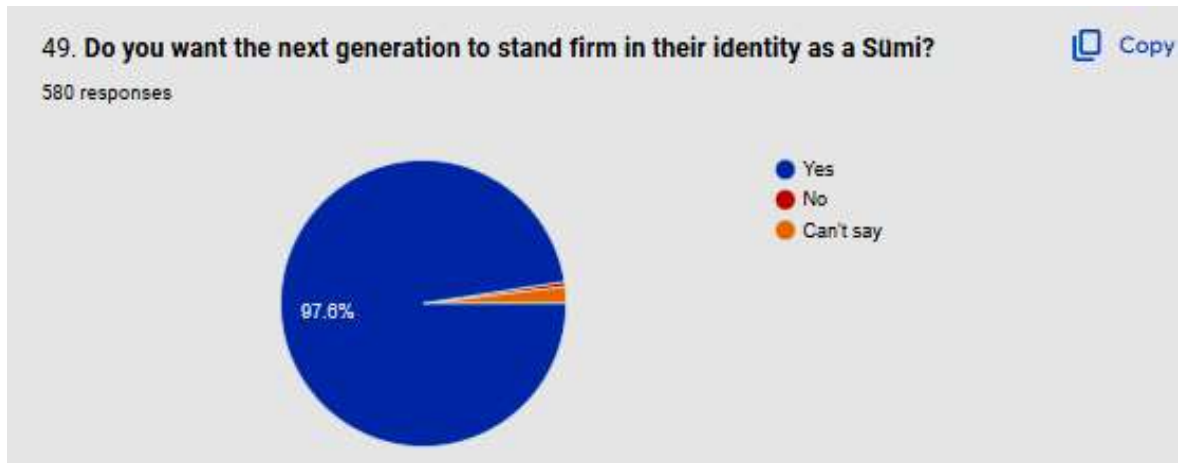
580 responses



48. Is the Sūmi society doing enough for the preservation as well as disseminating knowledge of the cultural heritage?

580 responses





6.1.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire Distributed Among the Sümi of Nagaland

The questionnaire consisted of questions on Tangible cultural heritage and Intangible cultural heritage. Comparatively there were more questions on Intangible cultural heritage. When one observes the pattern of responses, one finds that they seem to have clear ideas about both the tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. But the tangible cultural heritage questions were focused mostly on the commonly used aspect of the Sümi cultural heritage at present like the traditional clothes and ornaments. These are commonly used till today and haven't undergone much changes compared to other aspects of the Tangible cultural heritage inspite of encountering the various agents of age over the years which have had a deep impact on

the Sümi cultural heritage. One thing that has been observed is when it comes to owning and using the traditional attires, 97.2 % responded positively but 83.1% of respondents cited the expensive nature of the Sümi traditional clothes a problem in owning it. 80.7% of the respondents also responded positively about the wearing Sümi traditional clothes as being popular among the young people. But apart from using and owning the traditional clothes, when it comes to the narratives about the traditional clothes and ornaments, there seems to be a knowledge gap. As also can be seen in the question about whether they can recognise a mistaken pattern/design/motif on the traditional attire, 17% responded positively while 42.8% responded negatively and 40.2% responded as 'Can't say' which may mostly mean that they also cannot recognise. On questions about the most important tangible cultural heritage of the Sümi i.e. the practise of dormitory system called *Apuki/Iliki*, 64.7% knew about it as well as its significance while 24.1% heard about it but had no knowledge about its significance. Axone/ fermented soyabean paste which is a popular traditional food item of the Sümi people passed down from the forefathers' days, 90.5% of respondents had the knowledge about how to make it.

On the other hand, when we analyse the responses about the Intangible cultural heritage, it is clear that majority of them were more inclined towards speaking the Sümi language rather than other languages. When we analyse the responses on the fluency in speaking the Sümi language, 80% of the respondents could speak the Sümi language fluently while there was 0% for those who could barely speak Sümi language. 97.2% of the respondents spoke Sümi language at home while 1.2% spoke Nagamese at home and 1.6% spoke other languages at home. 98.4% respondents' parents' speak Sümi at home while 0.5% spoke Nagamese and 1% spoke other languages at home. 93% were more comfortable/preferred speaking Sümi languages while 2.6% were comfortable/preferred speaking Nagamese while 4.3% preferred other languages.

When it came to questions on oral tradition, 61.4% knew between 1 to 5 folktales while 19.8% could recite Sümi leshele/folk poetry while 57.6% responded negatively. 81.6% had the knowledge about how their forefathers migrated to their present village. Regarding the Sümi proverbs and sayings, 59.5% knew between 1 to 5, 20.3% knew between 5 to 10 and 20.1% didn't have any knowledge about the proverbs and sayings.

The next category of questions were on folk songs and folk dance in which 54.3% could sing between 1 to 5 folksongs while 42.8% couldn't sing any folk songs. 60.7% were of the view that folk songs were taught to them by their elders while 16.2% credited it to their grandparents and 23.1% to their parents and friends. The knowledge of Sümi folk instruments was known to 36.2% while 49.3% didn't have any knowledge about it. 80.7% were interested to learn the folk songs while 15.5% were not interested to learn it. 51.9% knew how to perform the folk dance while 34.9% didn't know how to perform the folk dance. At present, many artists and song writers have started incorporating folk tunes/music in the Christian songs, to this 60.9% supported the usage of folk tunes/music in the church.

The Sümi in the past conducted rites and rituals throughout the year and Tuluni is one such ritual which was accompanied by feasting and has today evolved into a very important festival of the Sümi people. Since this festival has become the main festival of the Sümi, when question was asked about the knowledge of the significance of this festival, 97.6% knew the significance of this festival. But when it came to the question of whether Tuluni and the now popular harvest festival called Ahuna were the only festivals from the forefathers' time, 40.2% responded as yes and 31% negatively. This indicates that their knowledge about the rites and rituals of the Sümi during the forefathers' time isn't accurate.

Apart from these questions there were also questions focused on the current trend and thoughts towards the Sümi cultural heritage which could give a clear picture about the attitude one has towards the Sümi cultural heritage. By looking at the responses, there is a hope for the future of the Sümi cultural heritage because majority of the respondents were between 30 to 40 years and in some decades, they are going to carry the baton as knowledge keepers of the Sümi cultural heritage and would be responsible for passing on the knowledge to the next generation. 85% respondents were curious to know about the oral tradition or cultural heritage which is a positive sign though of course, one cannot ignore the 4.3% who weren't curious about learning the oral tradition or cultural heritage but that is a reality one needs to accept because in any culture, one cannot expect the entire population to be enthusiastic about learning the oral tradition or cultural

heritage. In the long run, since for the Sümi the cultural heritage is a part and parcel of everyday life, there is hope for the 4.3% to also garner interest in the Sümi cultural heritage because in the long run there is tendency for them to change their attitude.

Since the Sümi depend on oral source and knowledge about the Sümi cultural heritage has been passed down from one generation to the other through oral source, it is the elders in the community from whom such knowledges are derived. For 93.8% of the respondents, they derive the knowledge of the cultural heritage from their grandparents/elders/parents, while 3.4% were of the view that they had no one reliable to ask. This seems to be a genuine problem as during the course of the field work, in some villages elders possessing such knowledge had passed away and the younger generation had knowledge but confined to only certain aspect of the cultural heritage and even for elders who were alive they were either at the stage of losing their memory due to old age or due to their inability to talk about such knowledge for a long period of time. Therefore in many aspects of the cultural heritage, getting reliable information has become a huge challenge.

59.3% of the respondents were of the view that elders in the community were making efforts to pass the knowledge of Sümi cultural heritage to the younger generation while 18.4% responded negatively and 22.2% were under the 'can't say' category. It was generally observed during the course of the field work that there were two views about the problem of not having accurate knowledge or complete knowledge about the Sümi cultural heritage. The younger generation were of the view that because of their disassociation with the elders they couldn't gather enough knowledge about the Sümi cultural heritage and the elders were of the view that most young people would never approach them with any question about the Cultural heritage. Most elders said that they would often encourage the young ones to learn certain aspects of their cultural heritage but they were more interested in current trends. In some villages, the elders were of the view that many young people had even stopped speaking in their village's language (in most Southern Sümi region, there are variations in the language of different villages).

The Sümi have the practise of Bride price which has been from the forefather's time. Till today this is practised but there have been misinterpretations which have led to rise of challenges in the society. Keeping this in mind, the question about whether the bride price practise should be continued/discontinued was also put up. To this, there was equal responses, 43.1% were of the view that this practise should be continued while 39% were against the continuation of this practise.

In order to understand whether practices connected with the cultural life of the Sümi that was in vogue some decades back were still existing in the society today, a question was asked as to whether the respondents notice certain practices from their childhood still existing in the Sümi society today, 74% respondents were of the view that they could still observe some practices existing even today, while 19.5% responded that they could observe most of the practices from their childhood even in today's society, while 6.4% said they couldn't observe any practices from their childhood at present. This question is pertinent because it makes one understand whether there is continuity in the practices from the olden days till today.

Over the years the Sümi cultural heritage have gone through lots of changes as like any other culture, it isn't possible for it to be static. With the changes that the cultural heritage has gone through, many aspects of the cultural heritage has been lost along the way with some never to be recovered again. With the development of awareness about the significance of the cultural heritage, over the years efforts in different ways is being undertaken in order to preserve the cultural heritage. Keeping this in mind, the question of whether there is hope in recovering the lost practices of the Sümi through the initiatives that are being undertaken at present through research, documentation, training, language, education, etc was raised, to which 87.8% responded that there is hope in recovering the lost practices of the Sümi through the initiatives being undertaken, while 1.6% responded negatively. In spite of the majority exuding hope for the recovery, the 1.6% who responded negatively reflects the reality of the Sümi society at present. Many practices have been lost along the way especially when the Sümi converted to Christianity and there is still a sect of Christianity today who treats it as a taboo to use the Sümi cultural materials. Therefore the apprehension about whether the present initiatives are enough to

preserve what has been passed down also comes up. This can be reflected in the 35.7% respondents responding that the Sümi society wasn't doing enough for the preservation as well as disseminating knowledge of the cultural heritage.

Understanding the importance of the Sümi cultural heritage which is a source of identity of the Sümi, there was a question as to whether the respondents want the next generation Sümi to stand firm in their identity as a Sümi to which 97.8% responded positively while 0.5% responded negatively and 1.9% were not sure. The respondents were also of the view that their lack of Sümi language and cultural knowledge if any was due to societal setting as per 51.1% of respondent and 17% respondents cited their lack of interest and 25.9% blamed it on their elders/parents for their failure to impart to them. From this one can understand that in order to earn one's livelihood many youngsters leave their villages and go to towns and cities to pursue their education or employment, in such a scenario most lose their connection with their roots. Some are more into other culture, for instance the Korean craze wherein their food, language, way of life has taken over many young people's lives. This results in the lack of interest towards one's own culture. Appreciating other culture isn't wrong but letting it become part and parcel of one's life is threatening towards one's identity. Some years down the line these group will neither be Koreans nor Sümi, and what would be the future of their children. This question needs to be pondered upon. This societal setting and lack of interest contributes towards their lack of knowledge. Blaming the elders/parents was also observed during the course of the field work where some middle aged men were of the view that when the elders were alive, they never took initiative to pass on knowledge about cultural heritage to them. But one needs to also understand that if one is interested then one need to approach and make connection with the elders by spending time with them. In the present scenario, one doesn't find young people being interested to associate or spend time with the elders and gain knowledge from them.

When one analyse the whole response of the respondents, it is clear that there is imbalance in the knowledge about tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In order to preserve the cultural heritage one first need to understand that for tribals like the Sümi, tangible and intangible are inter connected and one cannot survive without the other. Therefore one needs to maintain a

balance between them. The imbalance that has been observed for instance, majority of the respondents know about the tangible cultural heritage like the traditional clothes and ornaments and even the names and the reason is because these are used as identity markers and commonly used by everyone. These cultural materials are used by them and even popular. But the connection with the cultural materials stops there. When one observes the responses most of them doesn't know the significance nor the ability to observe the wrong motif/pattern/design on the textiles. These are the important components of the traditional clothes and ornaments. Without these intangible components, the tangible alone would lose its value and meaning. One may use a shawl as an identity marker but without the narrative of the shawl, in the long run one may not be able to even claim it as one's tribes' shawl. Another pertinent question was the impact of the Indian Army operation on the Cultural heritage of the Sümi which is actually both politics and culture but 53.3% respondents cited impact on politics while 10.2% on culture and 0.7% said both. From here one can understand that even after so many decades and the loss incurred on the Sümi cultural heritage due to the Indian Army operation in the 1950's which resulted in not only the loss of human lives resulting in knowledge gaps and the burning of villages resulting in loss of cultural materials, many Sümi till today think about the Indian Army operation's impact from the political point of view and not from the cultural perspective. The damage incurred on the Sümi cultural heritage is irreparable and till today the Sümis haven't been able to recover the loss.

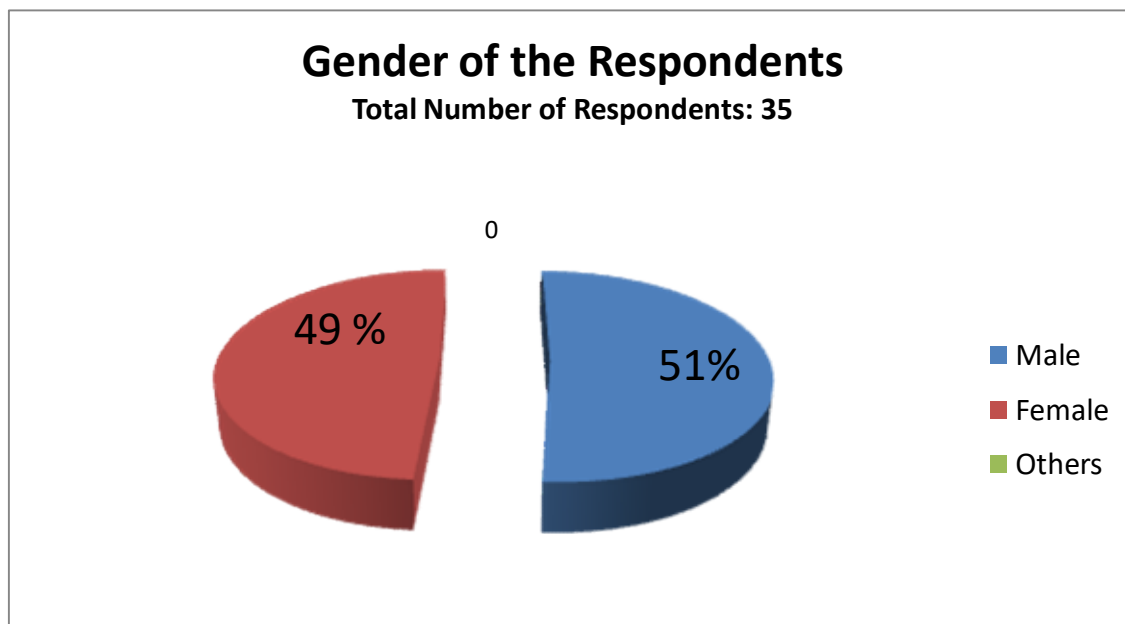
Thus from all these, one understands that to preserve and maintain continuity, it is very important for the Sümi to strike a balance between the tangible and the intangible cultural heritage, only then the task of preservation will become a fruitful endeavour.

6.2. Questions and Responses by the Youths of Sümi of Upper Assam

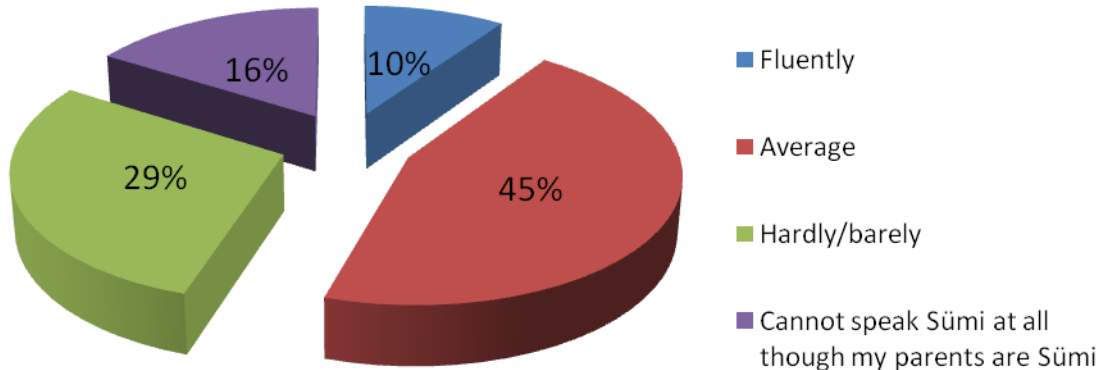
Understanding the complexity of the cultural life of the people of the Sümi of Upper Assam, the survey was conducted among young people aged between 16 to 30 years and the majority being around 24 years. Overall participants were 35 with 18 male and 17 female. The educational qualification of the participants was class 12 and above. The questions were on both the tangible

and intangible cultural heritage but in their case, since they are a minority in Assam some questions were also on general topics to assess their attachment towards the Sümi cultural heritage as well as their attitude towards the same.

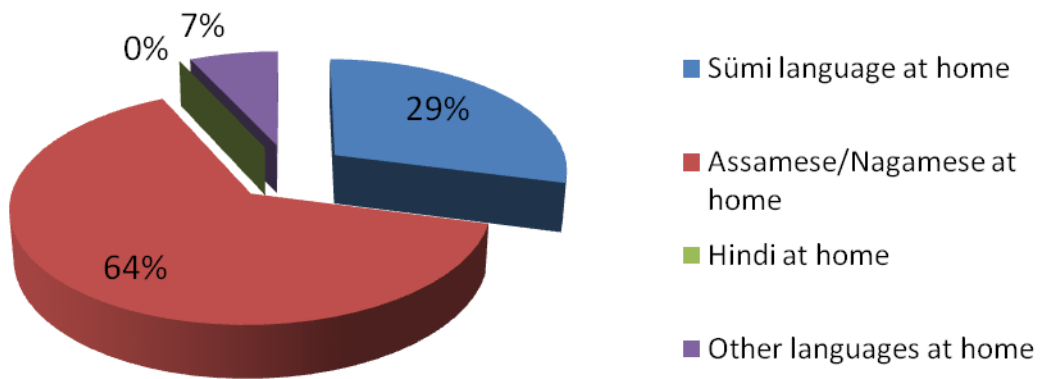
Villages: Lalpahar (Akuhuto phu), Paharpur, Longtong (Atuphu), Tsaliki, Tinkupathar (Amüsa phu) and BaliJan (Asaye phu).



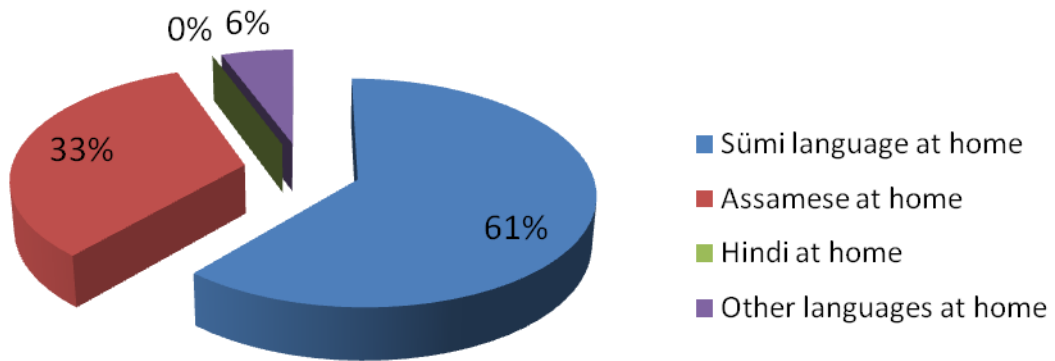
1. I can speak Sümi language-



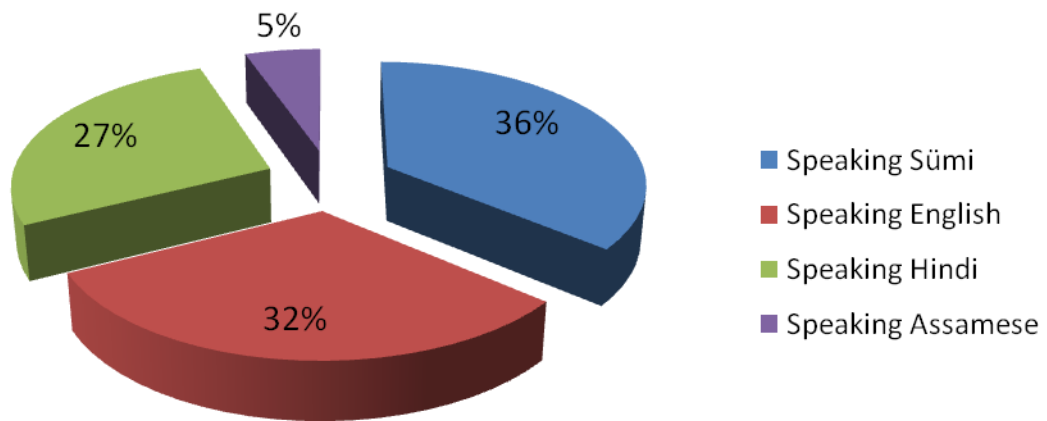
2. I speak



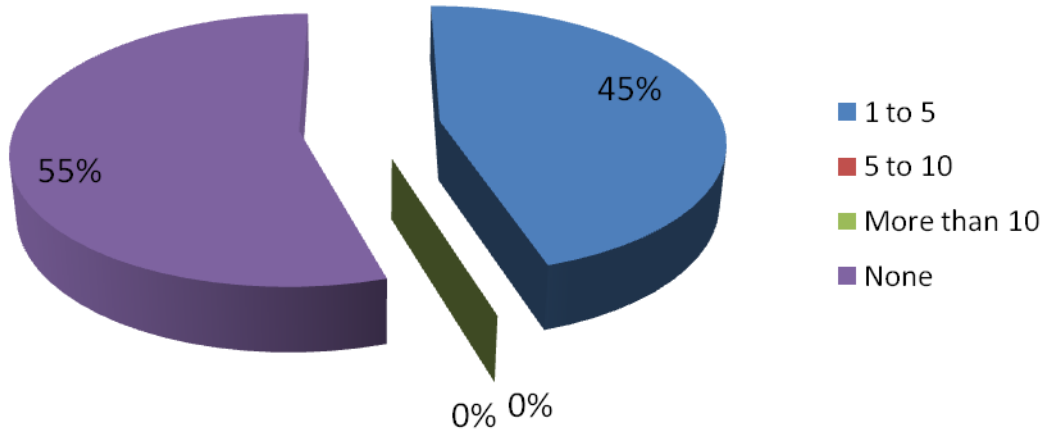
3. My parents speaks



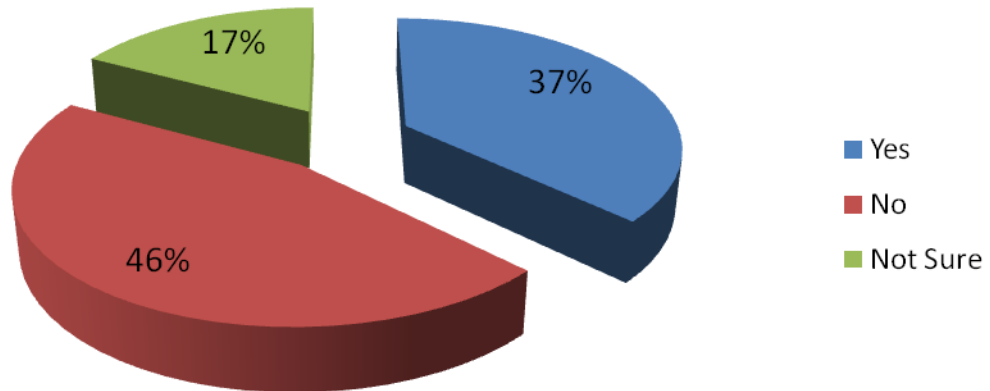
4. I am more comfortable/I prefer



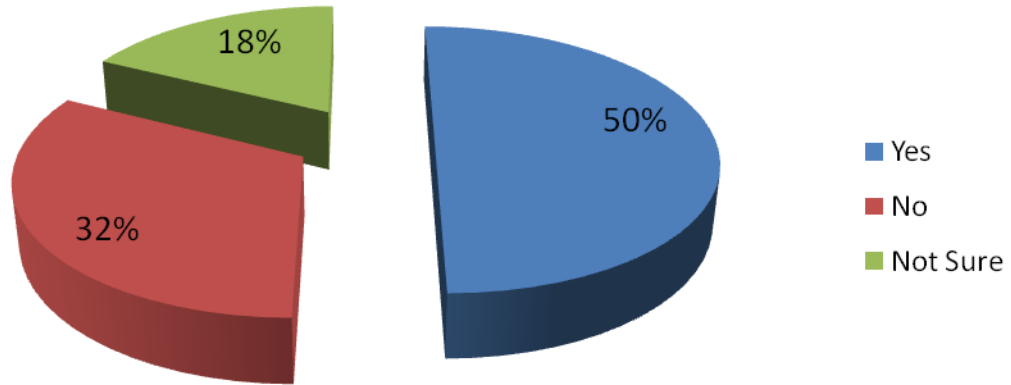
5. How many Sümi folktales do you know?



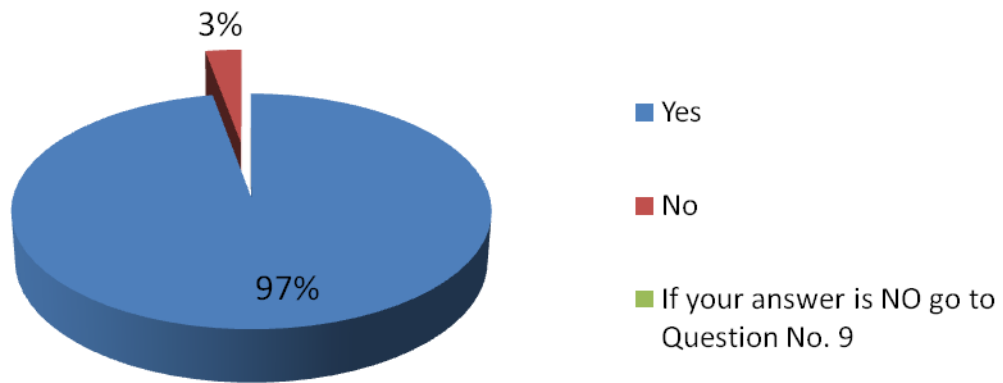
6. Do you know the village from where your forefathers migrated to the present location?



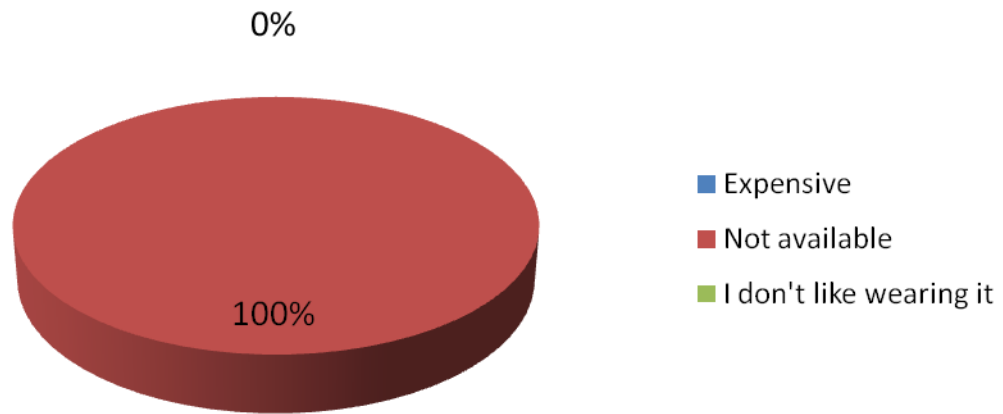
7. Does the Sümi in Upper Assam practise weaving?



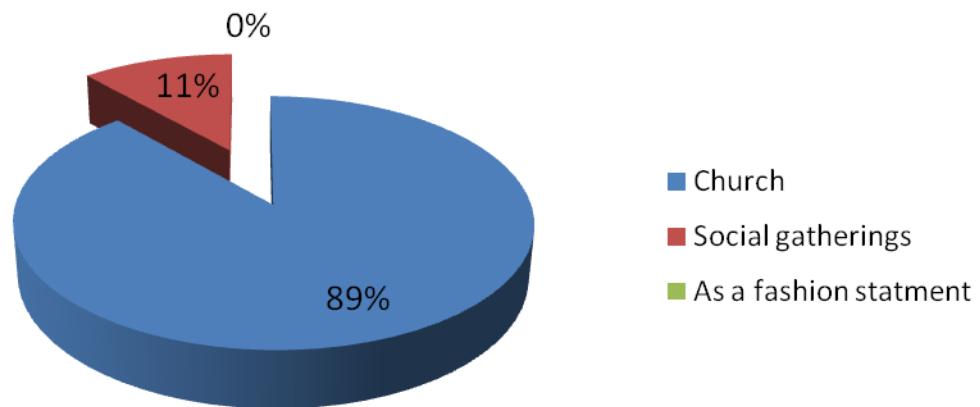
8. Do you own any Sümi traditional attire?



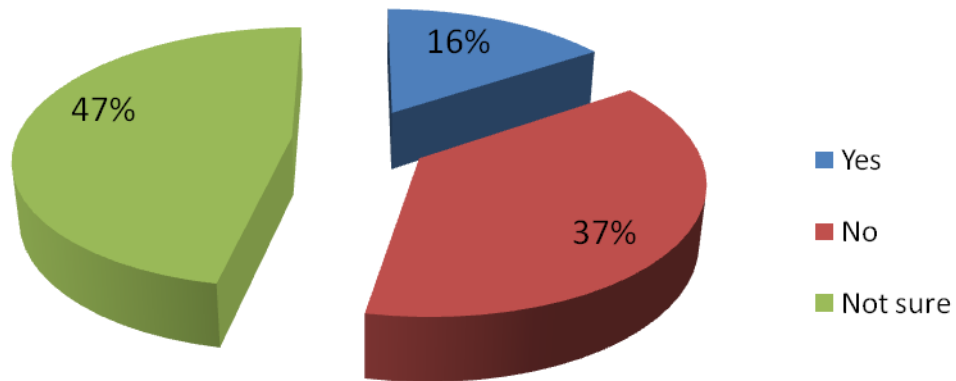
9. What is the reason for not owning any?



10. Where do you wear Sümi traditional attires?



11. Do you know the significance of the Sümi traditional attires?



**12. Which Sümi women ornaments are known to you?
Tick the ones you know/have heard of.**

- Tsükoli
- Akütsükükha
- Akichhelachi
- Achiku
- Achunachi
- Aküsali
- Asapu
- Achichugho
- Akuchomulu
- Akucho

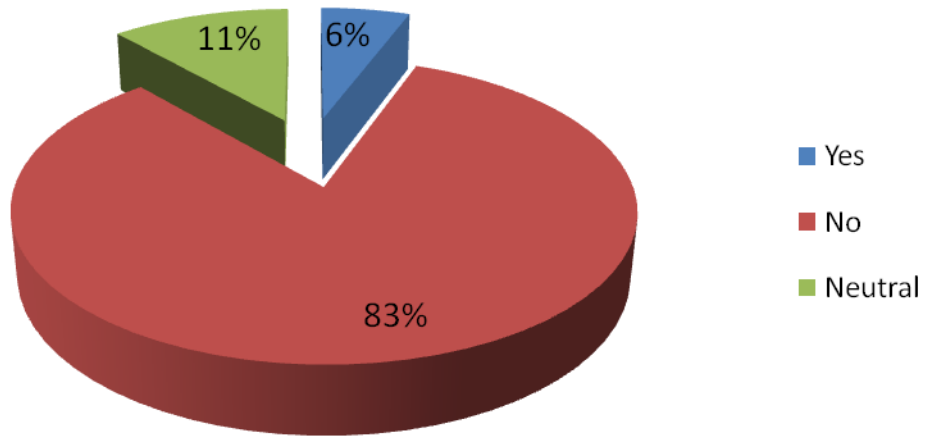
EQUATION: On average, the respondents ticked three items. The most ticked items were Tsükoli, Akütsükükha and Asapu.

13. Which Sümi men's ornaments are known to you? Tick the ones you know/have heard of

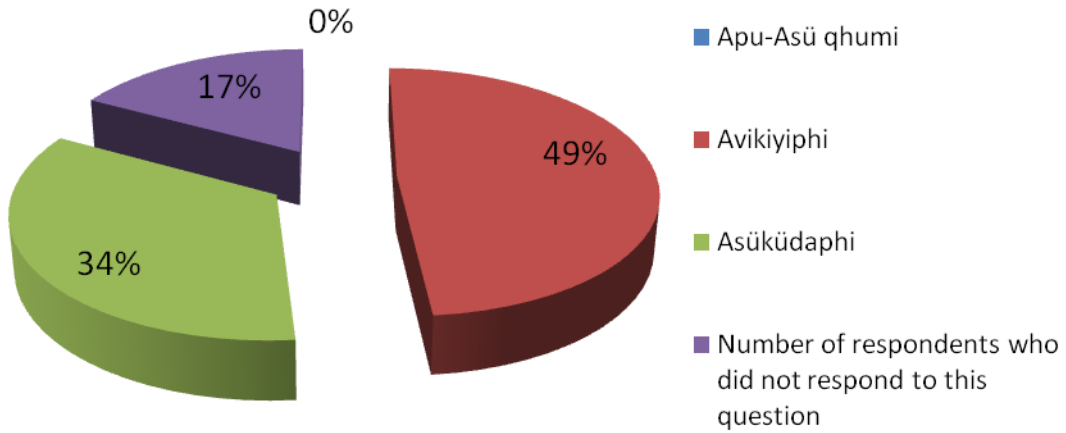
- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| ■ Avabo | ■ Aghachomhi | ■ Akinisüpha |
| ■ Aminihu | ■ Amülaküxa | ■ Akühaghi |
| ■ Auchikükha | ■ Asükhi | ■ Asapu |
| ■ Asüküda mini | ■ Apukhu kikhi | ■ Asholha |
| ■ Azüto | ■ Azüta | ■ Angu |

EQUATION: On average, the respondents ticked five items. The most ticked items were Avabo, Azüta and Angu.

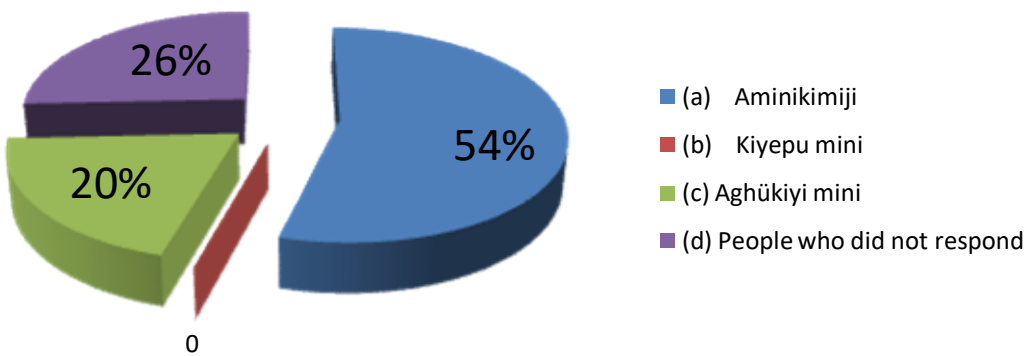
14. Can you recite any Sümi Leshele?



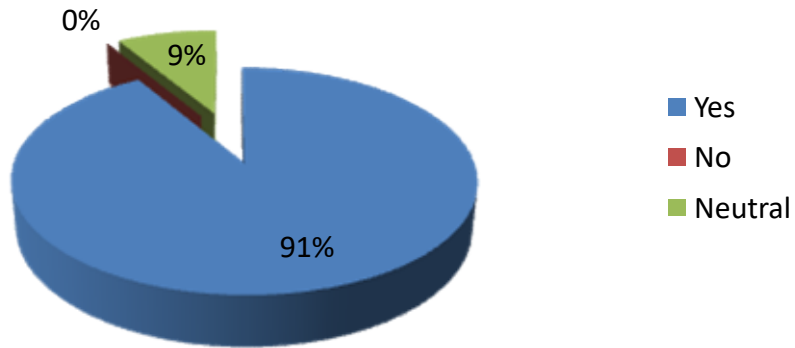
15. Which Sümi men's shawl was to be worn only by a feast giver?



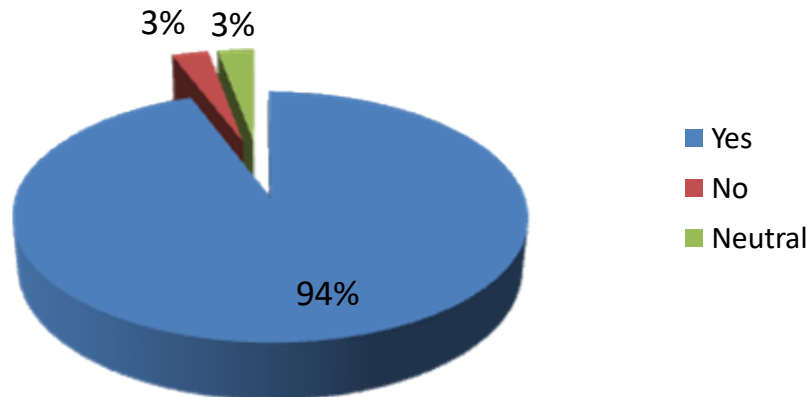
16. Which Sümi mekhala cannot be worn by all the women?



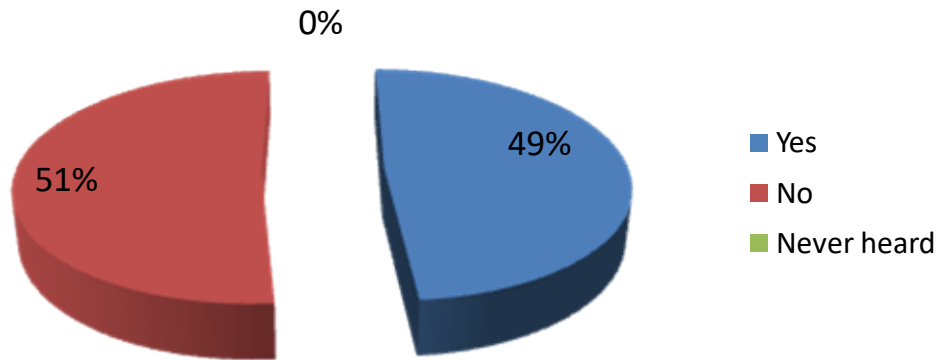
17. Do you have any interest to go back to the Sümi ancestral villages and learn about the Sümi oral tradition?



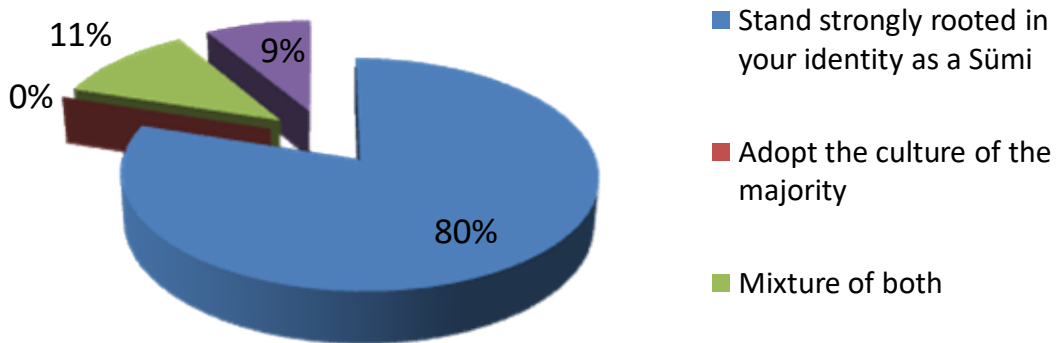
18. Do you want to stay connected with the Sümi of Nagaland?



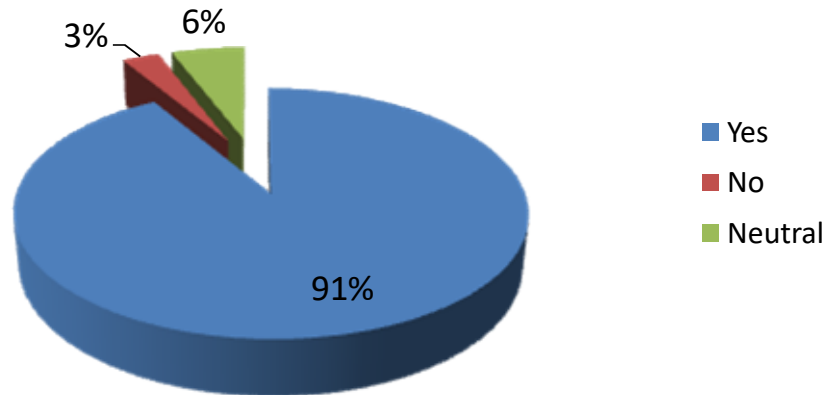
19. Do you know the story of migration of the Sümi to Upper Assam?



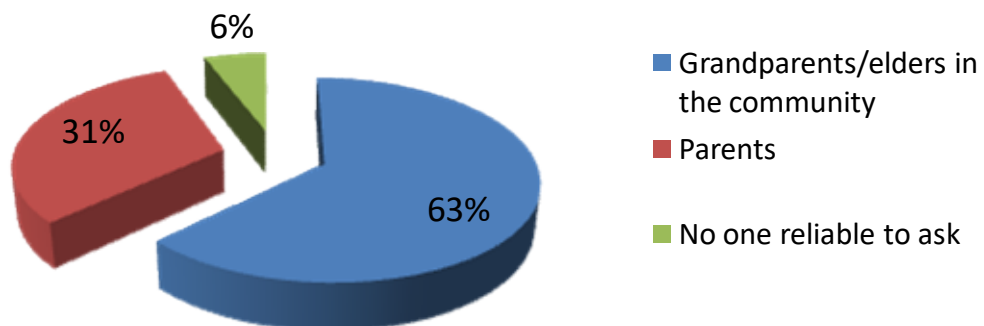
20. Given a chance which would you prefer?



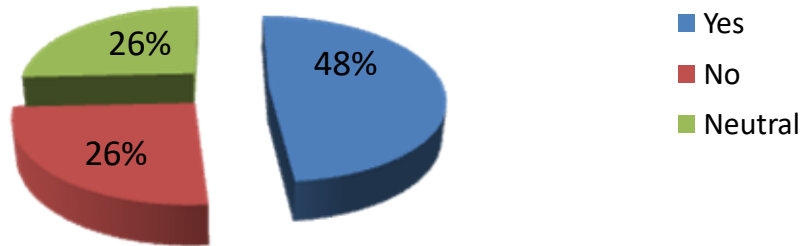
21. Have you ever felt curious to learn about the Sümi oral tradition or cultural heritage?



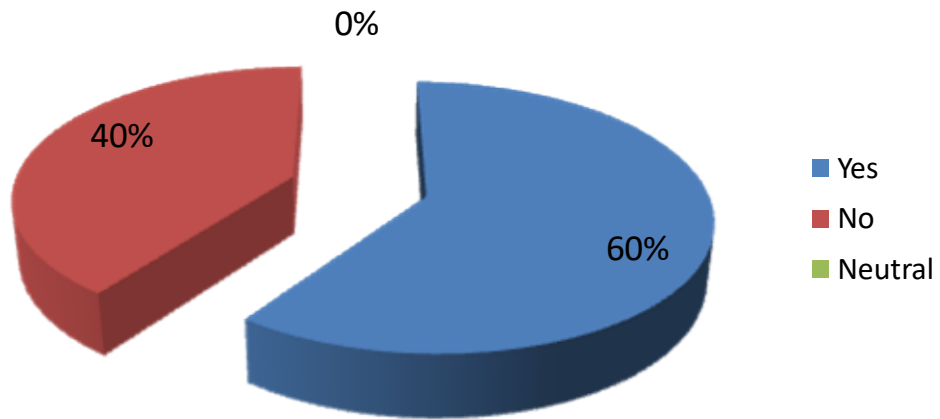
22. Whom do you approach when you have any questions about the Sümi cultural practices and history?



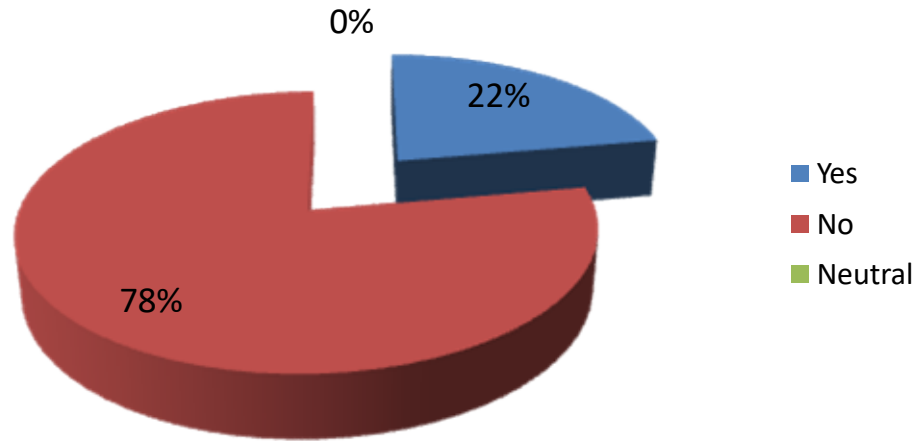
23. Do you feel the elders in your community are making efforts to pass the knowledge of the Sümi cultural heritage to the younger generation?



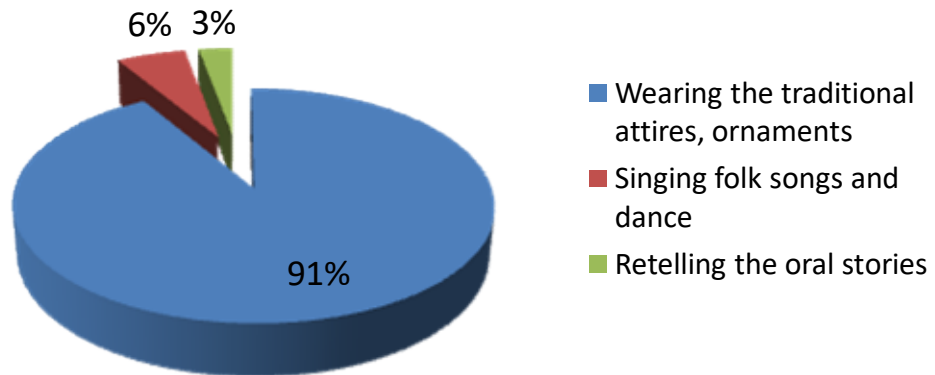
24. Have you ever heard of the Apuki/Iliki?



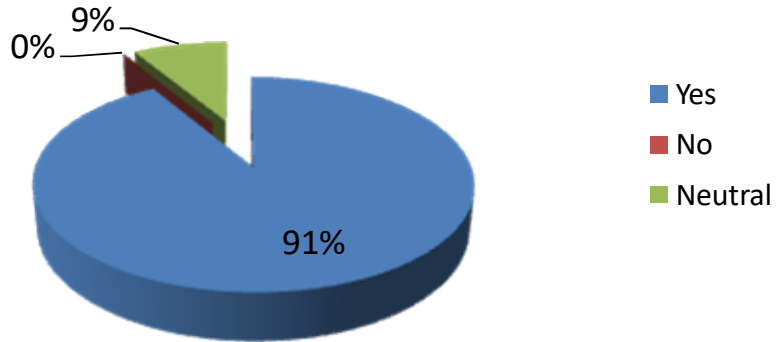
25. Do you know about the practise of Alojji?



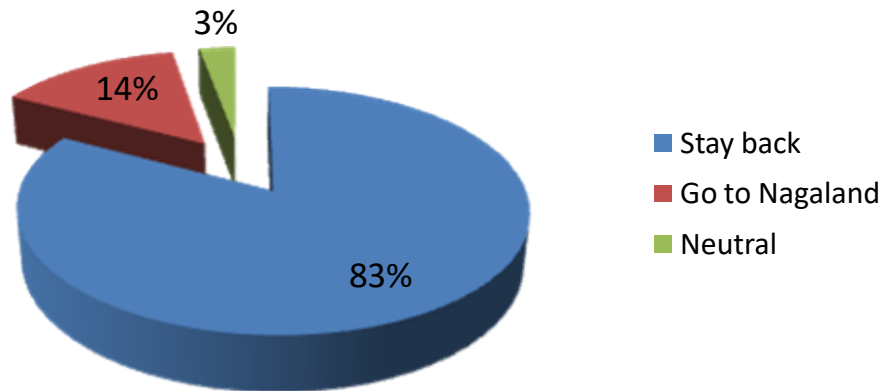
26. Which Sümi cultural heritage is popular among the young people?



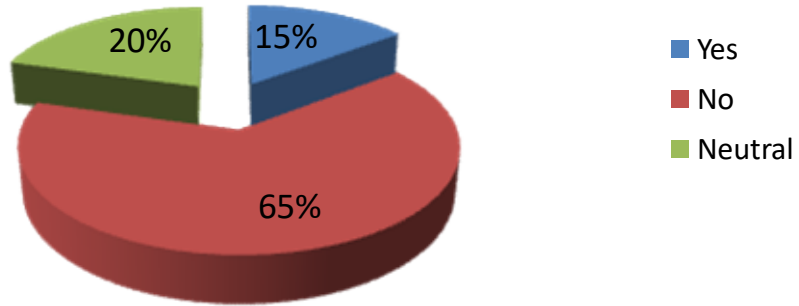
27. Do you think the Sümi in Nagaland should reach out more to you in order to let you stay connected to your roots?



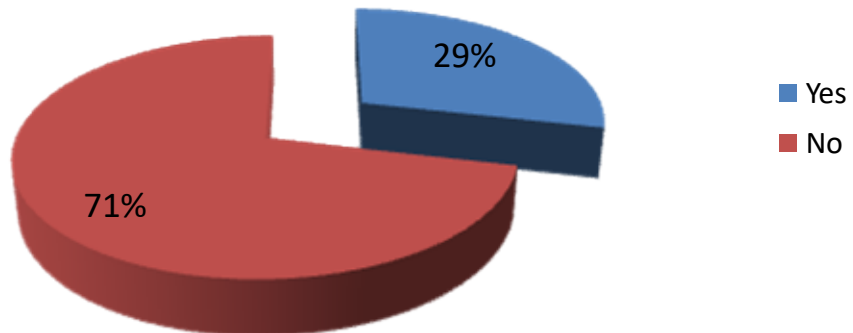
28. Given a chance would you prefer staying here in Assam or go back to Nagaland?



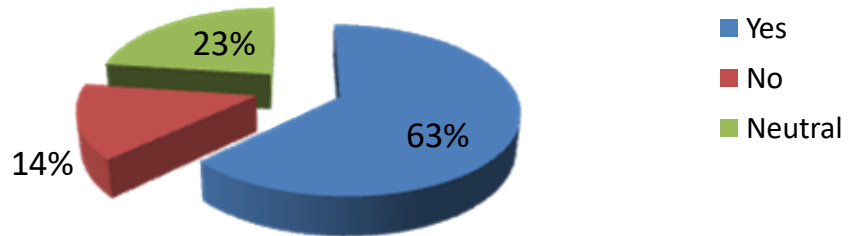
29. Do you think being a tribal and a Christian give people from other community the chance to discriminate you?



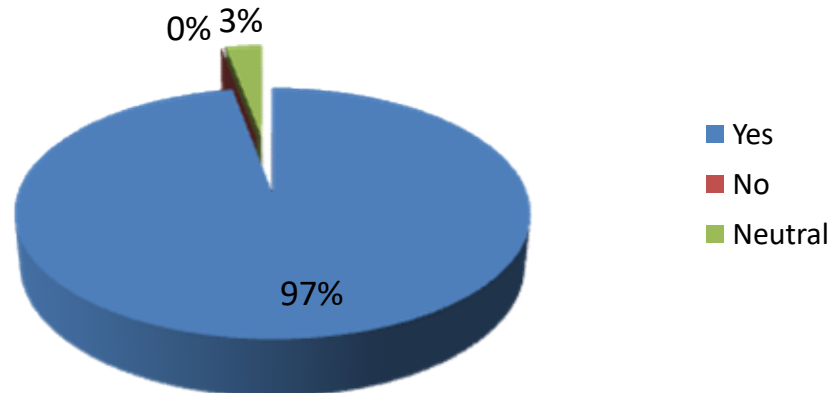
30. Have you ever heard of the Indian Army operation in Nagaland?



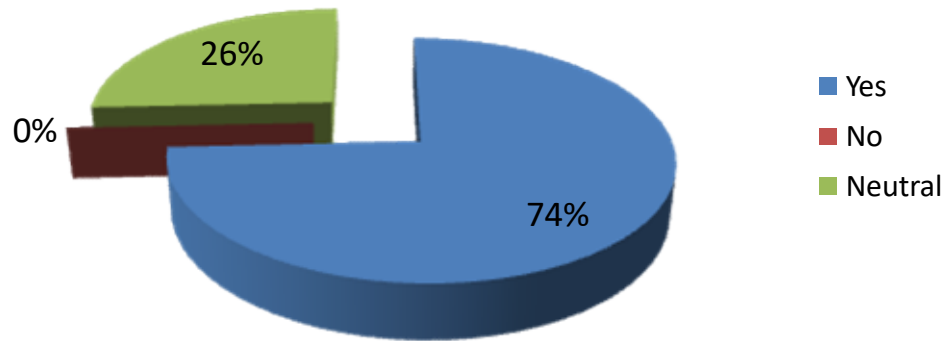
31. Do you want the next generation to stand firm in their identity as a Sümi or engage in mix and match so that your community will be accepted by others?



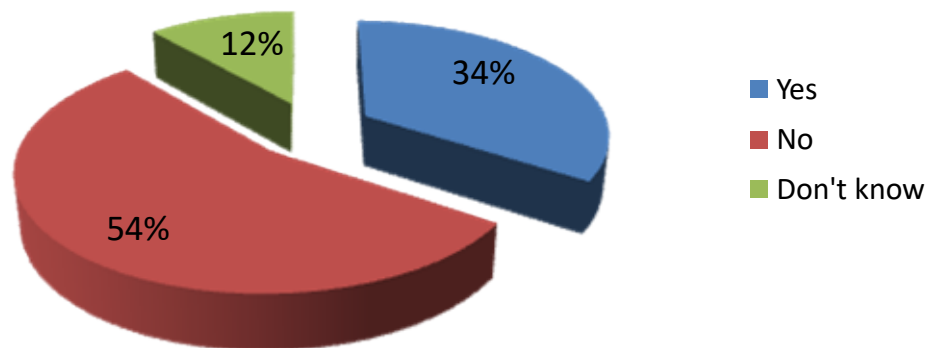
32. If you are a man would you prefer marrying a Sümi woman?



33. If you are a woman, would you prefer marrying a Sümi man?

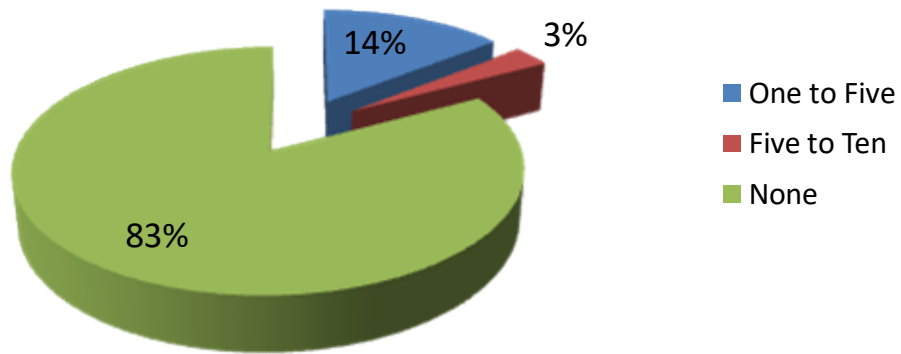


34. The Sümi practise dowry system, do you agree?

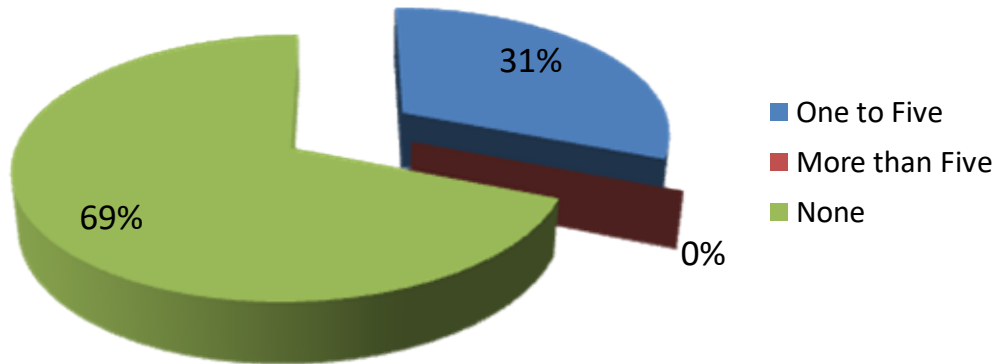


Note to Q.34. The Sümi practise the system of Bride Price but many Sümi seems to be confused about this term, therefore, the term 'dowry system' was deliberately used in order to check whether they know the difference.

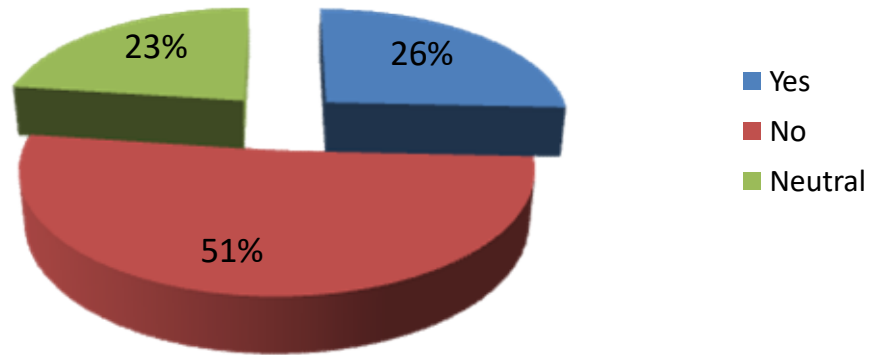
35. How many Sümi proverbs and sayings do you know?



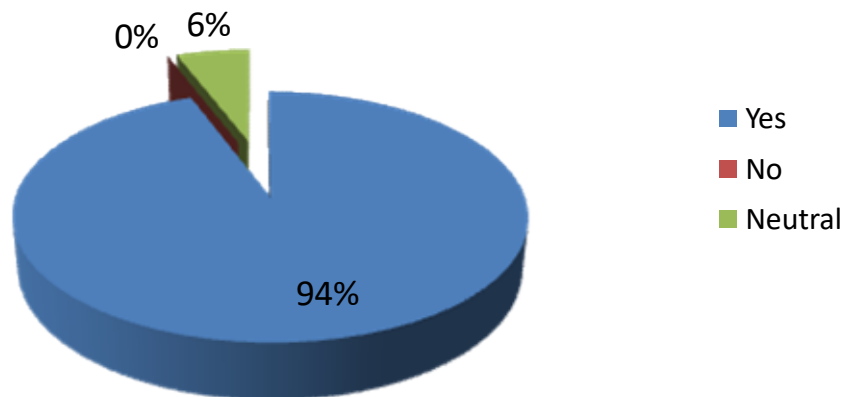
36. How many folk songs can you sing?



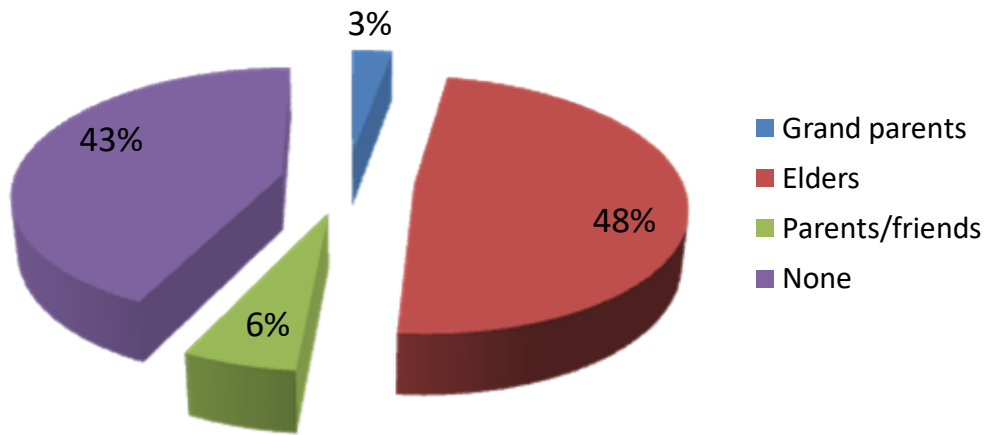
37. Do you know how to perform folk dance?



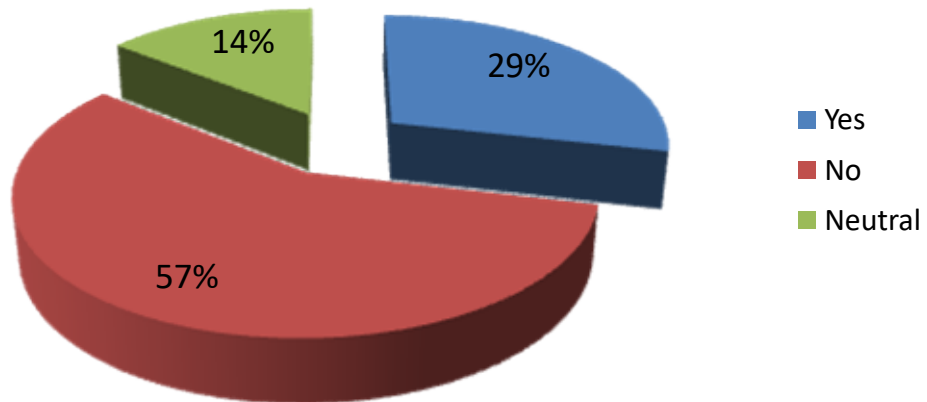
38. Are you interested in learning folk songs?



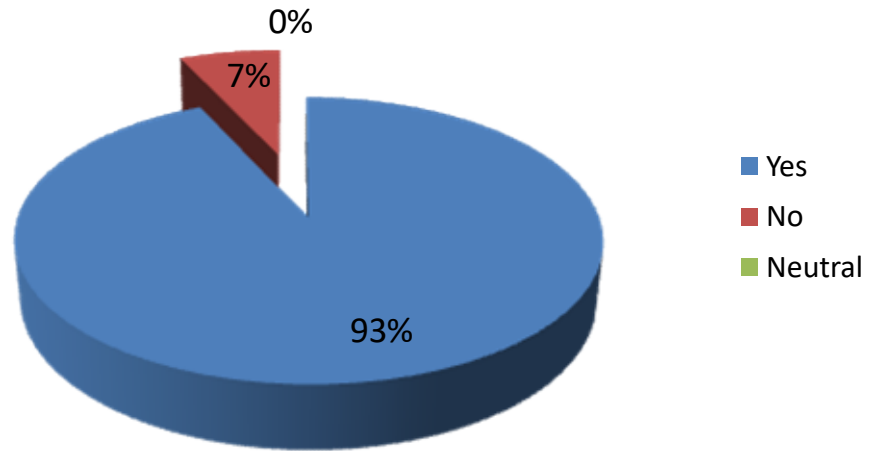
39. Who taught you how to sing folk song?



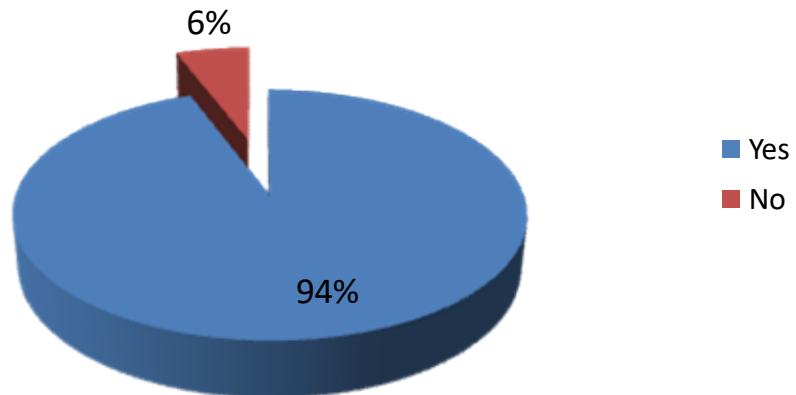
40. Do you know any Sümi folk instruments?



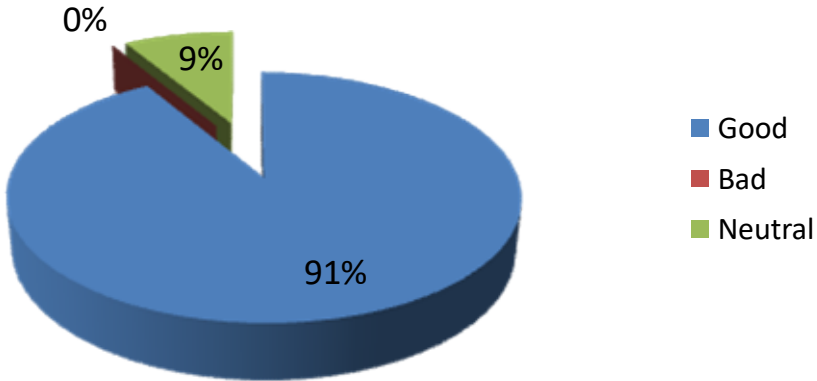
41. Do you know how to make axone?



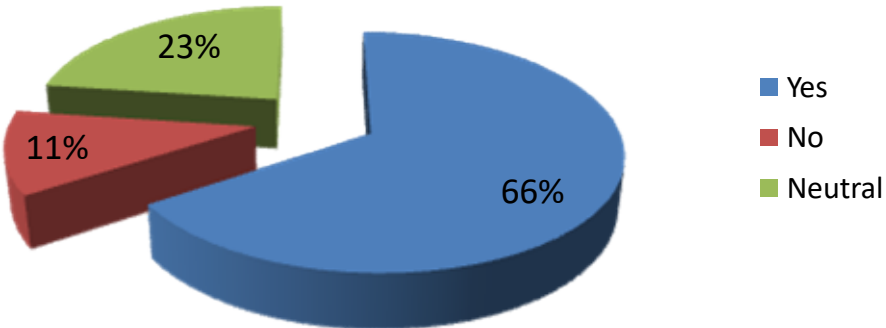
42. Have you ever shared Sümi food with people from other community?



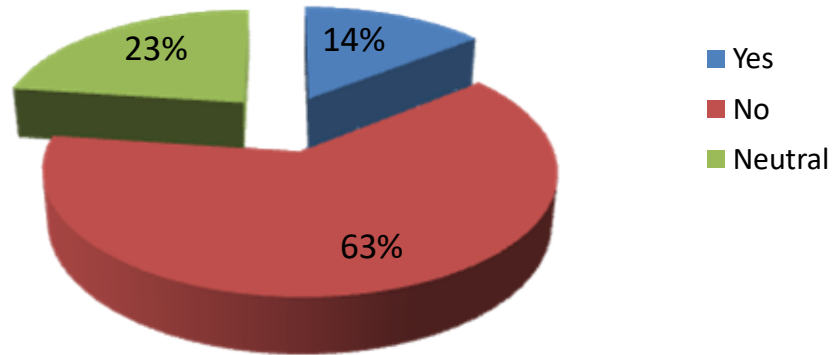
43. How was the response of people from other community towards Sümi food?



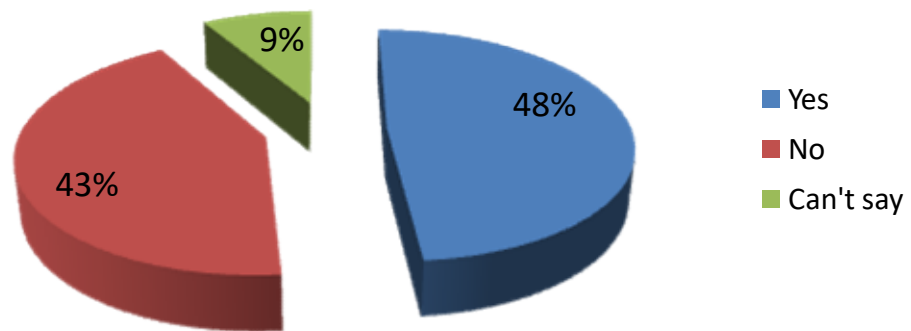
44. Do you know the significance of Tuluni festival?



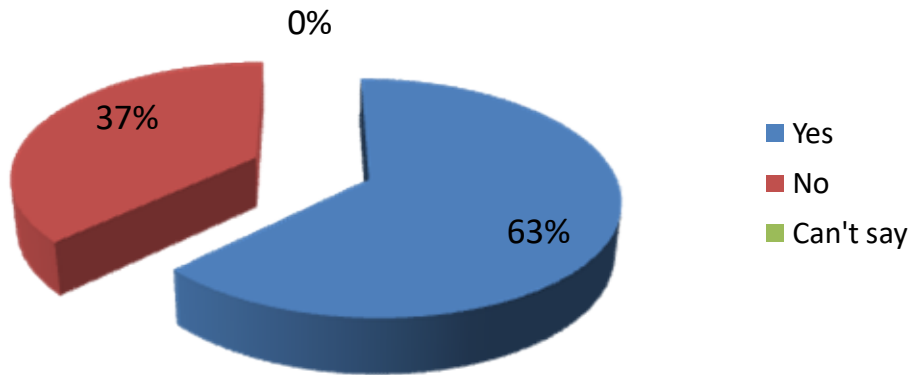
45. Can you recite the months of the year in Sümi?



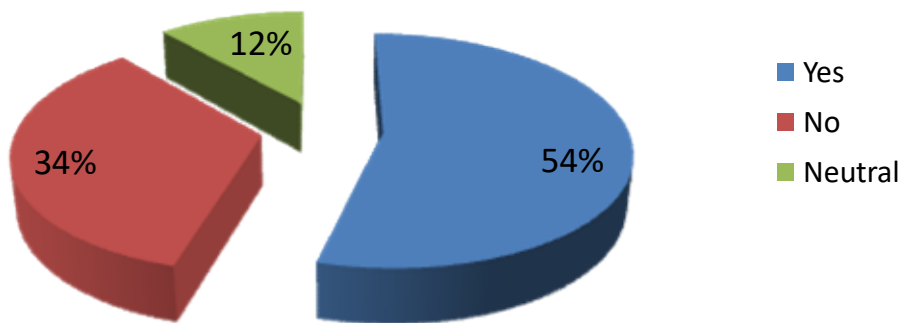
46. Are the Ahuna and Tuluni the only Sümi festivals from forefathers' time?



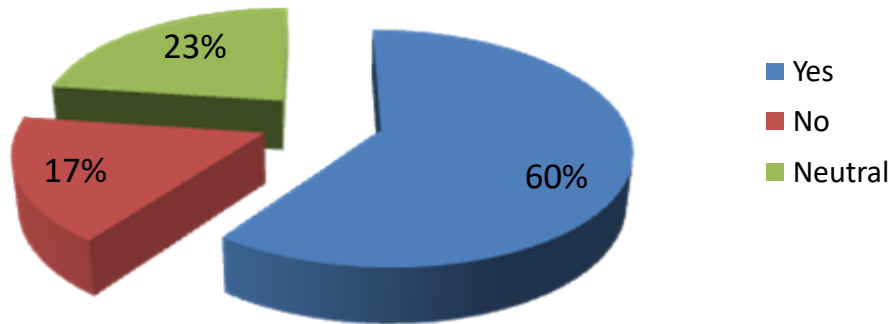
47. Have you ever heard of the charm stones that has the power to make its owner rich?



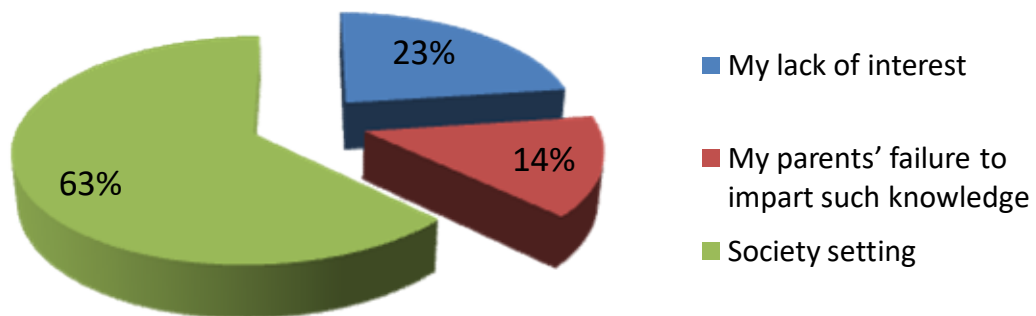
48. Have you heard stories about tiger men/women?



49. Do you support using folk tune in the church Worship?



50. My lack of Sümi language and cultural knowledge, if any, is due to



6.2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire Carried Out Among the Youths of Sümi of Upper Assam

When we analyse the questionnaire it is clear that their ability to speak the Sümi language is average as can be seen from the responses to the question of whether they can speak Sümi language, 45% were average, 29% could hardly/barely speak, 10% could speak fluently and 16% couldn't speak the language though their parents were Sümi. With such a huge disparity between those who can speak and cannot speak, when it came to the question of what language was spoken at home, 64% responded as speaking Assamese/Nagamese at home, while 29% spoke Sümi language at home and 7% spoke Hindi at home. When it came to their parents, 61% responded that their parents spoke Sümi language at home and 33% Assamese and 6% Hindi. About their ease in speaking the language, 36% responded being comfortable in speaking Sümi at home, 32% English, 27% Hindi and 5% Assamese. Language is considered the basis of any culture, especially in oral societies like the Sümi if one cannot speak or isn't strong in the ability to speak the language, then to understand the cultural heritage especially the oral stories becomes a problem. Lack of ability to speak in one's language would lead to losing one's identity as in the long run with the growing detachment towards one's cultural heritage due to the inability to understand it, one may ultimately lose one's identity as a Sümi. Therefore when we analyse the ability to speak and understand the Sümi language among the respondents it is clear that there is a growing tendency of becoming detached from one's language.

Oral traditions are very important component of the cultural heritage because they are passed down in their original form i.e. in the language used by the forefathers. But for those who speak the Sümi language it becomes easier to learn and decipher the meanings of the oral tradition. For the Sümi, being oral society, migration stories are the most important part of the oral tradition that has been passed down from one generation to the other. For the Sümi of Upper Assam, they were brought to this area in successive waves by the British since 1881, therefore there isn't a huge gap for the generations of people who first migrated to the present location and for those who are living here at present therefore to the question of whether they know the village from where their forefathers migrated to the present location, 46% didn't have they didn't have the

knowledge while 17% weren't sure and 37% knew the story of migration. To the other components of the oral tradition like their knowledge of the Sümi folktales, 55% didn't know any folktales, while 45% knew between 1 to 5. Leshele are folk poetry and are written as well as read in the original Sümi dialect. In the olden days, they would speak to each other in *Leshele* in order to send a message to their lovers, as a warning about impending danger, unrequited love, sorrow, etc. They give us glimpse about the way of life, emotions etc. To the question on whether they could recite any Sümi leshele, 83% said no. The next important component of the oral tradition is the Sümi proverbs/sayings, 83% responded as not knowing how to recite any Sümi. When it comes to folk songs, 31% responded saying they knew between 1 to 5, while 69% responded as knowing none of the folk songs. Knowledge about performance of folk dance was relegated to 26%, while 51% responded negatively and 23% neutral. 80% respondents credited their elders for teaching them the folk songs while 5% to their grandparents and 9% to their friends/parents.

Tuluni and Ahuna are the two most important festivals of the Sümi. Wherever the Sümi people maybe, they celebrate these two festivals. But these festivals have cultural significance therefore when question was asked whether these two were the only two festivals from forefathers' time, 48% responded as yes, 43% said no and 9% couldn't say. 66% knew the significance of Tuluni festival while 11% responded negatively and 23% were neutral. 63% respondents couldn't recite the months of the year in Sümi while 14% could recite and 23% were neutral. From here we can see that the knowledge about the intangible cultural heritage was very weak and it is further weakened by their inability to speak the Sümi language.

Tangible cultural heritage questions were focused on the most common aspect which is popularly used. Question was asked about whether they owned any Sümi traditional attire to which 97% responded positively and 3% negatively. For those who said no, a question was further asked as to what was the reason for not owning any, 100% responded as not available. The probable reason behind this is the fact that many Sümi of Upper Assam have stopped weaving the Sümi textiles and they either buy it from the markets of Dimapur or people from Nagaland would bring it to Upper Assam and sell it to them. 89% respondents responded that

they wear the Sümi traditional attires in the church, while 11% at social gatherings. When it came to the question of the knowledge of the significance of the Sümi traditional attire, 47% were not sure and 37% responded negatively and 16% had the knowledge. There is a ritualistic women mekhala called Amini kimji whose usage is restricted therefore a question was posed as to whether they had ever heard of it. 54 % responded with the right answer.

The Sümi practise Bride Price but in order to understand their understanding about this practise as they live with communities who practise dowry, an intentional question was put up saying the Sumi practise dowry to which majority responded that negatively (54%).

Sümi traditional ornaments are also very popularly used among the young people. Therefore certain questions were put up in order to understand their level of knowledge about it. When it came to the knowledge about Sümi women's ornaments, the most commonly known were headgear (akütsükükha), earrings (tsükoli) and bangles (asapu). For the men's traditional ornaments, the most commonly known were headgear (Avabo), machete (azüta) and spear (angu). The Sümi textiles are also commonly used and regarding which cultural heritage was popular among the young people, 91% respondents said wearing traditional attires and clothes were the most popular while 6% was of the view that singing folk songs and dance were popular while 3% responded with retelling the oral stories as being the most popular. But when it came to the most pertinent question which determines their connection as well as their knowledge about the Sümi cultural heritage like the intangible aspects of the tangible cultural heritage, their knowledge seemed to be below average.

Inspite of not having enough knowledge about the Sümi cultural heritage, they have the curiosity and the desire to learn about it as can be reflected from their responses in questions like whether they have any interest to go back to the Sümi ancestral villages and learn about the Sümi oral tradition, 91% responded positively while 9% were neutral. 94% of the respondents wanted to stay connected with the Sümi of Nagaland while 3% were neutral and 3% were negative. 91% were curious to learn about the Sümi oral tradition/cultural heritage. 97% male respondents wanted to marry a Sümi woman while 3% were neutral. 74% female respondents wanted to

marry Sümi man while 26% were neutral. In order to ascertain whether they face any discrimination as a minority both in terms of religion and community, a question was brought up as to whether being a tribal and a Christian gave people from other community the chance to discriminate them, 15% responded yes while 65% said no and 20% were neutral. They were also asked whether if given a chance they would prefer staying in Assam or go back to Nagaland. 83% responded that they wanted to stay back while 14% wanted to go back to Nagaland and 3% were neutral. 63% wanted the next generation to stand firm in their identity as a Sümi while 14% responded negatively and 23% were neutral. 91% respondents said they were curious to learn about the Sümi oral tradition/cultural heritage while 3% were not curious and 6% were neutral. 63% respondents said they approached their grandparents/elders in the community when they have any question about the Sümi cultural heritage while 31% approached their parents and 6% responded as having no one to ask. 48% respondents were of the view that the elders in their community are making efforts to pass the knowledge of the Sümi cultural heritage to the younger generation while 20% responded negatively and 26% were neutral. Since the Sümi settled in Upper Assam still have their relatives in their ancestral villages and most of them still have connection with them, when the question was asked as to whether the Sümi of Nagaland should reach out more to them in order to let them stay connected with their roots, 91% responded positively while 9% were neutral. 80% respondents wanted to stay strongly rooted in their identity as a Sümi while 11% wanted their identity as a Sümi as well as adopt the culture of the majority and 9% didn't respond.

Thus we can understand that this group of younger generation inspite of not having enough knowledge of the Sümi cultural heritage haven't given up on themselves or their elders but are curious as well as eager to learn about the Sümi cultural heritage and have the desire to maintain and strongly remain rooted in their identity as a Sümi. This is a big ray of hope for the future of the Sümi of Upper Assam as the young people knows what they want and they have the wish and the desire to stand firmly rooted in their Sümi identity. They are a vulnerable group especially because of the rampant inter cultural marriage but with such attitude and mentality there will be a better future of the Sümi of Upper Assam.