

# **Cultural Heritage of the Sümi Naga: A Source of Identity, Creativity and Diversity**

## **ABSTRACT**

Cultural Heritage is about culture, traditions and values and it represents the people's history, identity, bond to the past, present and the future. Traditionally, cultural heritage has been categorised into Tangible and Intangible cultural heritage.

The Sümi is one of the major Naga tribes in the state of Nagaland. Like all other indigenous people, they do not possess any written record but depend on oral source to derive their history. These oral traditions of the Sümi have been passed on from one generation to the other since time immemorial without any gaps. However the encounters that the Sümi had with the outsiders in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries led to the destruction of not only the tangible but the intangible cultural heritage of the Sümi.

When literatures available on various aspect of the Sümi cultural heritage are surveyed, one find that a standard literary work on documentation is scarce. One main gap that was observed was the lack of documented works on the Southern Sümi region from where the Sümi trace their origin. Therefore observing that many elders in the Sümi community who possess such knowledge are either passing away or forgetting such memories due to old age or not having anyone to share such knowledge with, a nascent attempt has been made to document the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Sümi. The Sümi of Upper Assam has also been studied as they are a group that is undergoing changes in the cultural life.

This thesis therefore focuses on the categorisation of the Sümi cultural heritage along with the study on its characteristics as well ways in which the Sümi cultural heritage can be preserved.

**KEY WORDS:** Naga, Sümi, Culture, Cultural Heritage, Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage