

Cultural Heritage and Legal Tradition: Folk Life of Lotha Tribes

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Abstract: This article describes the organisational systems, rites, and rituals of the Lotha people in Nagaland. Additionally, the manner in which it addresses its legal history and traditions is also crucial, as it has its own set of regulations. The Lotha people, particularly those from Wokha, possess a rich and diverse cultural heritage that has been preserved over time. This is characterised by traditional dances, music, and celebrations; as such, TokhuEmong and PikhuchakEmong, two significant agricultural celebrations, are celebrated with great enthusiasm. This guarantees the preservation of tradition and the unity of the community. The article also addresses the challenges associated with maintaining historical tradition in the context of modernisation and Lotha traditional norms. In a society, the implementation of new norms and educational methodologies may lead to conflicts with existing norms and methodologies. Indigenous Lotha history is still being researched and preserved, despite these setbacks. Indigenous languages and practices are frequently featured in various community services, cultural events, and educational activities. To accommodate their evolving society, the Lotha people have implemented a combination of traditional and contemporary laws. Their remarkable resilience is the consequence of this. How can the Lotha preserve their rich culture while adapting to a swiftly changing world? This post pertains to that matter.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Lotha Tribes; Legal Traditions; Modernisation and Implementation; Nagaland People; Community Unity; Organisational Systems; Agricultural Celebrations.

Received on: 16/07/2024, **Revised on:** 29/08/2024, **Accepted on:** 13/10/2024, **Published on:** 07/06/2025

Journal Homepage: <https://www.fmdbpublish.com/user/journals/details/FTSHS>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69888/FTSHS.2025.000479>

Cite as: Y. J. A. Patton and S. Dixit, "Cultural Heritage and Legal Tradition: Folk Life of Lotha Tribes," *FMDB Transactions on Sustainable Humanities and Society*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 54–61, 2025.

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1. Introduction

Nagaland, situated in northeastern India, boasts a vibrant ethnic culture, stunning scenery, and a rich tradition of cultural preservation. Since becoming the sixteenth state of India on December 1, 1963, Nagaland has been defined by its Naga culture, history, and persistence. Strategically and culturally diverse, the state borders Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Myanmar. It covers 16,579 square kilometres in 25°60' to 27°40' North latitude and 93°20' to 95°15' East longitude [5]. Geography has significantly shaped the state's history, ethnicity, and sociopolitical landscape. Nagaland's biodiversity and ecological importance are enhanced by its rugged, mountainous topography, which features stunning valleys, steep gorges, and

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extensive forest cover. Kohima, the state capital, cultural and administrative centre, was the scene of the 1944 Battle of Kohima, which shaped the state's politics and history [2]. The sixteen primary indigenous populations in the state have distinct histories, languages, attire, and customs. Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Tikhir, Yimkhiong, and Zeliang tribes are represented. The Naga people share a linguistic ancestor with populations in Southeast Asia and the Himalayas, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family. The many tribes of Nagaland speak different languages that are incomprehensible to one another, yet share common ethnolinguistic origins.

Language diversity shows the state's ethnic diversity and tribal ties. The Nagas have always passed on their culture and history through oral traditions. Myths, genealogy, folktales, and storytelling are transmitted. When there was no common script, these tribespeople relied on oral storytelling to preserve their culture, enriching their traditions and making them valuable. Christian missionaries influenced most indigenous languages to adopt the Roman script in the 19th and 20th centuries. This was done to address the diversity and lack of a written alphabet. The missionaries brought the Roman alphabet, formal education, and the Bible into the Naga hills in local dialects. Roman script contributed to the development of reading and formal education. English's rise as a medium of inter-tribal communication, a result of colonial influence, led to the push for a common language. Following this shift, the Nagaland Legislative Assembly declared English the official language of business, government, and education in 1967. Despite the state's linguistic variety, English is the *de jure* language of business, law, and education, and unites. Despite English being the commercial language, the Nagas established Nagamese as a means of communication. The requirement for communication and trade between Assamese-speaking plainspeople and tribes speaking other languages led to the development of this creole language.

Ngamese, a simplified form of Assamese with Naga elements, became the official language of indigenous business, social gatherings, and communication. In cities and public spaces with many ethnicities, its role in daily communication is vital. Although it is neither a school nor a governance language, Nagaland's diverse population uses Nagamese for social cohesion [12]. Nagaland's tribal and village-centric social structure varies across its tribes. The village is the primary social and political unit of each tribe, which is composed of many sub-clans. Before colonialism, leaders and elder councils ran these villages like republics. The tribes' customary standards for community norms, conflict resolution, marriage, and land inheritance varied greatly. Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution still recognises several of these customs. This provision grants Nagaland broad legislative autonomy in matters related to social and religious traditions, customary law, and land ownership. Christianity transformed Nagaland's religion and culture in the 19th century. More than 87% of Christians are Baptists. Christianity transformed politics, education, and culture, extending its influence beyond the realm of religion. Missionary schools helped the Naga become more literate and active in national politics, making modern education a staple of their lives. The church influenced Naga society through social development, healthcare, and community mobilisation. The independence of Nagaland was the result of decades of discussions and conflicts.

The Naga National Council (NNC), led by Patnaik [7], led the independence campaign in the 1940s and 1950s. Conflicts between the Indian state and Naga nationalists led to prolonged insurgencies, military operations, and peace talks. Nagaland became a state after the 1960 16-Point settlement between the Naga People's Convention and India. Insurgent groups that remained after statehood led to the negotiation of peace treaties, ceasefires, and reconciliation efforts. Nagaland is a small state demographically, with a population of little over two million according to the 2016 Census. Most people reside in rural areas where traditional farming practices, tribal festivals, and low population density are still common. This differs from other Indian states. A significant portion of the growing urban population resides in Dimapur, Kohima, and Mokokchung, which serve as key commercial, administrative, and cultural hubs. With most people engaged in shifting cultivation (JHUM), agriculture remains the principal occupation. Modern farming methods and agro-based companies are growing. Nagaland's notable exports include its rich folklore, textiles, vibrant festivals, and diverse dances. Many tribes' ritual calendars focus on harvests, warrior traditions, and community cohesion. The December Hornbill Festival at Kisama Heritage Village near Kohima is the most notable cultural event. The Naga government celebrates the variety and unity of Nagaland's major tribes through music, dancing, cuisine, and crafts over a week. Tourism and youth pride in their heritage have expanded due to national and international recognition [14].

Education and literacy in Nagaland have experienced significant growth in recent decades. The government and the church collaborated to enhance literacy, which had been poor following independence. Elementary, middle, high, and university are available in various places. Nagaland University and other private colleges offer higher education in the state, reducing the need for students to leave the state. However, poor infrastructure, excessive unemployment, brain drain, and delayed industrialisation hinder comprehensive growth. Nagaland's socioeconomic landscape is a combination of tradition and modernity. Tribal identity, traditional leadership, and communal connectedness remain prominent despite urbanisation and global influences affecting people's lifestyles. Young people are increasingly involved in the arts, entrepreneurship, education, and social activities, indicating a shift in their aspirations and perspectives. Youth today are interested in eco-awareness, creative industries, and internet connectivity. The government and community must handle insurgency, identity politics, inter-tribal tensions, and the lack of long-term economic possibilities.

Wokha is one of Nagaland's sixteen districts and is inhabited by the Lotha people. Wo, meaning “number of people,” and kha, meaning “count,” are the roots of the word Wokha. So, “counting the number of people” is what the word Wokha signifies. Lotha oral tradition states that the tribe's ancestors came from a distant land. The Lothas may have become disoriented during the long journey, so they probably gathered in one place and counted themselves when they finally reached what is now Wokha. They then counted the population to find out exactly how many heads there were. As a result, they decided to call it Wokha. One of the most prominent indigenous groups in Nagaland is the Lotha.

The Lotha people refer to themselves as kyong, which translates to “men” in English. The word “Lotha” has multiple possible meanings due to its enigmatic origin. “Lo” means “offering” or “sacrifice,” while “tha” means “full” or “satisfactory,” according to Singh [11]. Lotha, then, is a name for persons who went to extreme lengths to satisfy the gods, whether by offering full offerings or by sacrificing themselves entirely. According to Saikia [22], the name may have originated from the Khuza word “Latha,” meaning “gone forward” or “gone to a far-off region” in English. Lotha may have originated from the Khuza word “Latha,” which the British may have borrowed when they initially visited the Khuzas and Angamis in the 1930s. The majority of Lotha people reside in the Wokha district, while the Lotha dialect, known as “kyong-yi,” is also spoken throughout this region. Its total area is 1,628 square kilometres, or 9.82 per cent of Nagaland State's total area. Wokha district is located in the central-western part of Nagaland, near the Assam districts of Golaghat and Jorhat. East: Zunheboto district; south: Tseminyu and Kohima districts; and west: Assam Plains district; Mokokchung district borders it to the north. Wokha district is characterised by its mountainous terrain, which is marked by numerous mountains, extensive ridges, and seasonal streams [16]. There are three hilly zones within the district:

- The higher terrain, which includes the Wokha village, Longsa, Chukitong, Englan, and Phiro circles, is also referred to as the Wokha circle. A long chain of ranges stretches from the Rengma area in the Kohima district to the River Doyang in the east, after traversing the district's northeastern section.
- The Sanis circle, which includes the Pangti, Sungro, Lakhuti, Aitepyong, Sanis, and Lotsu circles, is the middle range. Eventually, it meets the Changkikong range in the northern Mokokchung region, after rising between Wokha and Bhandari districts.
- Beginning in Mokokchung District's Japukong Range and continuing northwest to the Assam Plains, the Lower Range—also called the Bhandari Circle—consists of the following circles: Baghty, Changpang, Tsori, Yimpang, and Ralan. Nagaland is a vibrant fabric of ethnic identity, cultural diversity, political turmoil, and adaptability, not just a remote region populated by indigenous peoples. Nagaland's oral traditions, modern education, village autonomy, state politics, linguistic diversity, and digital expression all reflect the conflict between history and modernity. To understand Nagaland's ethnic tapestry, one must realise its ongoing battle for social and political unity and inclusive development. A vibrant and dynamic state in India, Nagaland has a unique story of perseverance, transformation, and legacy.

2. Literature Review

Scholars have investigated the cultural history and legal traditions of Naga tribes, including the Lotha people. They have focused on indigenous governance systems, customary laws, and the impact of modernisation these tribes have experienced, highlighting their customs, traditions, and development. In his study, Odyuo [18] examined the impact of tradition on the development of gender roles within Naga society. He noted the ongoing conflict between traditional practices and contemporary legal frameworks. The study's findings revealed that conventional gender norms remained deeply ingrained in societal views, despite the increasing employment opportunities offered by modernity. The topic of Zhimomi's [17] research was the intersection of tradition and modernity, specifically the challenges indigenous government structures face in adapting to modern legal systems. Based on this research, it was found that, despite constitutional provisions protecting tribal practices, external legal pressures have affected property rights, inheritance rules, and conflict-resolution processes. The Lotha community, like other Naga tribes, faces challenges balancing its traditional practices with state-enforced laws. Additionally, Patnaik [7] has examined the role of oral traditions in preserving the legal practices of the Lotha people.

As a result of the transition from oral to written law in Nagaland, his research highlighted the fact that both customary practices were preserved and lost as a consequence of this transition. Although the documentation of legal traditions made them easier to recognise within India's legal framework, it also led to disputes between statutory laws and indigenous dispute-resolution mechanisms. Several researchers, including Humsae [5] and Saikia [8], have investigated the influence of modernisation on Naga traditions, despite the roles of urbanisation and education in the cultural changes that have occurred. For example, tribal councils continue to exercise responsibility for local government, indicating a hybrid system in which formal and customary laws coexist. The findings of this research lay the groundwork for understanding how the Lotha tribe navigates the cultural and legal shifts of modern times. Odyuo [18] offers a nuanced examination of how traditional customs continue to influence gender roles within Naga tribal society, particularly among the Lotha people. His study highlights the enduring strength of customary

gender norms, which remain deeply embedded in societal attitudes, even as modern education and employment opportunities expand for both men and women.

According to the research, while modern legal frameworks promote gender equity, these often clash with indigenous practices, especially in areas such as inheritance rights and leadership roles, where men traditionally dominate. This reveals a persistent tension between long-standing cultural values and contemporary legal standards. In a related study, Zhimomi [20] investigates the broader challenge of aligning indigenous governance with the modern Indian legal system. His work emphasises that although constitutional protections exist for tribal customs, external legal pressures—particularly those related to property rights, inheritance laws, and dispute resolution—have gradually altered traditional structures. Like other Naga tribes, the Lotha tribe navigates a complex landscape in which traditional councils and customary systems are forced to adapt to state-imposed legal expectations. Furthermore, Patnaik [19] examines the impact of transitioning from oral traditions to written legal codes on the preservation of indigenous legal practices. His research reveals that while formal documentation of customary laws has conferred legitimacy within the national legal framework, it has also led to the dilution and misinterpretation of practices once transmitted orally within a cultural context.

In the case of the Lotha, this transition has resulted in both the preservation and partial loss of their traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Together, these studies offer critical insights into the evolving intersection of tradition and modernity within Naga society, laying the groundwork for further exploration of the Lotha tribe's cultural resilience and legal adaptation. Walling [14] presents a comprehensive study of the linguistic and cultural shifts among the Naga tribes due to increased exposure to urbanisation, formal education, and inter-tribal interactions. His research notes the decline in the use of native dialects among younger generations and the growing reliance on Nagamese and English as *lingua francas* in daily communication. This linguistic shift, while facilitating broader communication and education, also reflects a deeper cultural transformation that risks marginalising traditional identity and oral heritage. Saikia [22] examines the coexistence of customary governance systems with modern administrative frameworks in the tribal state of Nagaland. She argues that while tribal councils still hold significant influence in local conflict resolution and social regulation, they increasingly function in parallel with statutory legal institutions.

Her research illustrates how this dual-governance model has led to both cooperation and friction, especially when state laws conflict with traditional verdicts. The Lotha tribe, like many others, finds itself caught in a delicate balancing act between preserving customary practices and complying with external legal requirements. Complementing these perspectives, Jamir [21] focuses on the education system in Nagaland and its role in shaping cultural identity. He finds that while formal education has empowered many tribal youth, it has also accelerated cultural homogenization. The curriculum, often designed with minimal input from local communities, tends to prioritise national narratives over indigenous histories and traditions. As a result, younger members of the Lotha community may grow increasingly distant from traditional knowledge systems. These three studies collectively emphasise the complex and often contradictory impact of modernisation on the tribal identity and governance of the Lotha and broader Naga societies. According to Ali and Das [1], those who have known loved ones who have died away throughout the course of the year are given parts of the meat that was slaughtered at the feast.

This ritual is performed to free the deceased's spirit. During the celebrations, the men of the village demonstrate their participation by singing and dancing, while the ladies of the community remain on the sidelines, observing. On the day after TokhuEmong, the ornaments that were set on graves are removed. This is done as a visible representation of the separation that exists between the living and the dead. As a result of the magnificent event that this festival represents, people can forgive one another, make amends, and grow closer as a community while celebrating this holiday. According to Samdarshi et al. [9], in an insight into the significance of the Folk dance and music of Nagaland, they note that the carefree spirit of the Naga people is reflected in their music and dancing. Get ready to groove to the rhythms of the native dance and music. Groups of dancers often gather to play traditional instruments, such as the asem (drums), tata (mouth organ), bamboo flute, and others, in perfect time with the folk melodies they're learning. The vibrant, distinctive traditional attire and ornaments lend the tribal dance an air of greater elaboration. Verman [13], in one of the related studies, draws the reader's attention to the importance of Rice as the primary food source for people, which they consume to stay healthy. The vast majority of people worldwide consume three meals per day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Their food consists of a wide variety of meats derived from both wild and domesticated birds, as well as fresh and dried fish, honey, cultivated plants, bamboo shoots, and a profusion of jungle fruits and foliage. In addition, they consume large quantities of bamboo shoots. Additionally, certain meals are prohibited, while others are not consumed at all. The traditional notion that consuming food considered cursed can bring bad luck or omens is still held by many people. Certain foods are completely off-limits for children—absolutely no exception. A soko, often known as rice beer, is their preferred beverage. The traditional applications of this substance include rituals performed before and after meals, as well as more celebratory occasions such as weddings and festivals. Currently, however, it is completely unlawful to use it in community activities. According to Zhimomi's [17] research findings, the low status of women is the result of a pattern of development imposed on top of an existing system in which social institutions are biased against women. This research sheds light on the friction that exists between modernity

and tradition. The social realities, which include myths, customs, and beliefs, that define how people regard women continue to be too deeply ingrained to bring about meaningful change in their lives, even though progress has been made in the legal framework. It provided a good understanding of its status and hierarchical division in the public domain.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a secondary research methodology, relying on existing books, journal articles, and research reports to examine the cultural heritage and legal traditions of the Lotha tribe. The data was collected from scholarly publications, government reports, and ethnographic studies that provide insights into the customary laws and governance systems of the Lotha people. The research follows a qualitative approach, analysing historical and contemporary sources to understand the evolution of Lotha legal traditions. Books by prominent scholars on Naga tribes, including studies on customary laws, the impacts of modernisation, and gender roles, form the primary basis of this analysis. Additionally, peer-reviewed journal articles were examined to explore how traditional governance structures have adapted to modern legal frameworks. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, sources were selected based on their relevance to three key themes: (1) the historical foundation of Lotha legal traditions, (2) the impact of modernisation on indigenous governance, and (3) the interaction between customary and statutory laws. Comparative studies on other Naga tribes were also reviewed to identify similarities and variations in legal traditions across the region. Data analysis was conducted through a thematic review, categorising findings into sections on the persistence of Lotha customs, the challenges posed by external legal influences, and the ways in which modernisation has reshaped traditional governance. While this study does not include primary fieldwork, it synthesises extensive scholarly discussions to present a detailed account of the Lotha tribe's legal and cultural landscape.

3.1. Case Studies and Analysis

3.1.1. Case Study 1: Land Dispute and Customary Resolution

There is a patrilineal pattern of land ownership in the Lotha tribal system, meaning that inheritance is passed down through the male line of descent. A dispute between two families regarding the ownership of ancestral land was reported in a case from the Wokha district [22]. One side advocated for traditional patrilineal succession, while the other sought recognition of equal inheritance rights for daughters within modern legal frameworks. The conflict originated from the fact that the two sides had different conceptions of inheritance rights. OyamoEphyo-Esan, also known as the village court, issued a ruling in favour of the patrilineal system during a village council meeting. The legal basis for this decision was Lotha customary law.

Nevertheless, the dispute was eventually brought before the state judiciary, where the daughters were granted a portion of the property in accordance with the statutory inheritance provisions. This particular instance exemplifies the contradiction between customary and statutory laws, illustrating how modernisation poses a threat to traditional mechanisms of government. The case highlights the parallel legal system within Lotha society, where traditional government remains very much in place but modern legal intrusions create difficulties. Customary rules place greater priority on community stability, whilst statutory laws place greater emphasis on individual rights. This results in disagreements that require negotiation between the two legal systems.

3.1.2. Case Study 2: Marriage Laws and Modern Challenges

The customary marriage law of the Lotha emphasises negotiations between families over the bride price. Notwithstanding this, younger generations are questioning long-standing practices and seeking to modernise the traditions surrounding marriage. In a case recounted in Nagaland's Legal Awareness Report, a dispute involving a Lotha lady's reluctance to pay the traditional bridal fee was described. The woman claimed that she was acting in accordance with principles of gender equality. Despite the couple arguing that marriage should be based on mutual consent rather than monetary transactions, the woman's family was adamant about adhering to the conventional norm. When the village elders heard the argument, they concluded that the traditional approach should be used. This decision brought to light the cultural significance of bride payment. Although Indian marriage laws do not require a bride price, the couple eventually sought legal protection under these laws to secure their marriage. This case study illustrates the evolution of perspectives on marriage rituals. While older Lotha members struggle to preserve their cultural identity, younger Lotha members, who are affected by educational and legislative reforms, dispute the legitimacy of patriarchal traditions. The tension between modernisation and the preservation of cultural traditions is a significant issue in contemporary Lotha society.

3.1.3. Case Study 3: Gender Roles and Leadership Rights

Traditionally, Lotha tribal councils have been male-dominated, with limited representation for women. In 2020, Lotha women in Wokha filed a legal petition demanding the right to serve on village councils. They argued that modern democratic principles should apply within tribal governance, granting equal leadership opportunities. The case received widespread attention, with

human rights organisations supporting the petition. While village elders initially rejected the demand, citing traditional governance structures, state intervention led to a compromise that allowed women to hold advisory roles in councils. Analysis: This case reflects the broader debate on gender inclusion in tribal governance. While Lotha customary laws prioritise elder-led decision-making, modern legal frameworks advocate democratic representation. The compromise solution advisory roles for women suggests an evolving system that accommodates both tradition and modern legal standards.

4. Role of Elders and Customary Laws

In the Lotha people's legal system, elders hold a key position. People look up to them not only because of their age but also for the knowledge they possess and the way they understand classic legal principles. Respect and trust are the foundations of their influence, and people generally do not question their decisions. As mediators and arbitrators, community elders help individuals resolve their disagreements while upholding values passed down through generations. Customary law addresses a range of issues, including rights to land, marriage, inheritance, and conduct.

4.1. Dress and Ornaments

The traditional men's garment was the *reve*, a narrow, lengthy piece of durable cloth that ended in a large flap. It was worn around the waist with the wide strap hanging between the legs. Lotha men would wear shawls called *Phanghrüp-sü*, *Longpen-sü*, *Jümthe-sü*, *Etha-sü*, *Eshüm-sü*, or *rükyu-sü*, which were named by the many “*genna*” that the wearer would do. Except for the often-worn *Phanghrüp-sü* and *Longpen-sü*, the background of the other shawls is either completely absent or barely touched upon [10]. The intricate patterns and designs on a man's shawl reveal the extent of his social involvement. For the first *Genoa*, he wears a *phangrüp*, a shawl with black-and-white stripes, which is either dark red or dark crimson. After many generations, a man puts on *longpensü*. The costliest shawl, called a *rükyusü*, is typically worn by men of high social rank. A *serüm* is a type of skirt worn by women, coiled around the waist and tucked in at the hips. *Serüm* could have ornamentation or be plain.

Young ladies are expected to wear *loröserüm* before they are married and *konröserüm* after they are married. The *serüm* isn't the only shawl that women wear; *etsöksü*, *obveramve*, *tepkasü*, and others are also common. Men and women alike can accessorise their ears with earrings crafted from feathers and dyed wool. Additionally, men are seen wearing *khoro* and *khekhüp* wristbands, respectively, while women wear *laküp* necklaces fashioned from plaintain seeds and huge conch shells. Lotha women also traditionally wear thick spherical pewter armlets (*tivü*) and multiple little flat brass bracelets (*rümbüm*). As for the rest of the Lotha warrior attire, men wear a wig (*tengkho*), feathers from a king-tail crow (*wotsü-emhi*), feathers from a hornbill (*rüjüng-emhi*), cotton wool pads, a sash (*rhutsen*), a little basket tied with human hair (*tssükyip*), and leg guards (*jorü*). Traditional dress and decoration are no longer the primary indicators of social rank; nowadays, people can wear whatever is convenient and affordable.

4.2. Language Status

Among the languages spoken in the Wokha district, the Lotha dialect is one of the most prevalent. This tradition serves to chronicle the Lothas' history and to pass on information. It is believed that their ancestors brought it with them when they migrated. On the other hand, it is believed that a dog ate this script at the appropriate moment because it was not properly stored. According to legend, by that time, all the elderly individuals who had written them had passed away, and the screenplay could no longer be written due to memory loss. After the arrival of American Christian missionaries at the tail end of the nineteenth century, the Lothas ultimately adopted the Roman script as their writing system. Schools, from elementary school through secondary school, are required to teach the language. The use of lotha can be found in a wide variety of contexts, including gatherings of the general public, religious services, talks, festivals, and numerous ceremonies and rituals. There is a possibility that Nagamese or English may be spoken during weddings between Lothas and members of other tribes or clans, despite Lotha being the native language of the Lotha people. In public gatherings and assemblies, such as the assembly and the panchayat, the languages *Hoho* Lotha and English are used, with Nagamese also being used if deemed necessary. It is common practice to utilise both Lotha and English in religious settings, such as churches. On the other hand, Lotha and Nagamese are both utilised in commercial settings, as stated by Das [3]. Lotha is the only language used in cultural domains, including celebrations, ceremonies, and rituals. Both the Lotha language and English are utilised in the educational sector, except for higher education, which is conducted outside the Lotha territory.

4.3. The Challenges and Preservation

Terming Lotha's cultural heritage as “vast” and “greatest wealth”, advisor to agriculture, Mhathung [15] said the vast culture also comes with many challenges and called upon the community to focus on preserving it. Mhathung [15] underscored the importance of safeguarding one's cultural heritage and language, as they are essential parts of one's identity and community. He said knowing one's linguistic roots and honouring ancestral legacies were essential acts of “cultural protectors” and stressed

the need to appreciate and take pride in the rich cultural heritage. Expressing regret at the gradual disappearance of the traditional attire that their ancestors once proudly wore, Mhathung [15] urged the gathering to research and rediscover the traditional ornaments and attire. The advisor also expressed concern over the decline of communication in the mother tongue, especially among the younger generation. He then urged the gathering to put effort into preserving and promoting the Lotha language, advocating the creation of more vernacular-language books and encouraging students to study it as an academic subject [15].

Naga considers customary law as intrinsic to their identity and an integral part of their tradition and culture. Nagaland is a multilingual tribal state; therefore, customary law is multifarious. The constitution of India was amended in 1963, and Article 371A19 was introduced to bring civil affairs in Nagaland under the tribal customary law. The Lotha society is patriarchal and patrilineal. According to Customary law dealing with property rights in traditional Lotha society, it was the son who inherited immovable property. Properties are divided into two types: movable and immovable. The movable property includes agricultural tools, weapons, clothes, ornaments, livestock, and other items that are considered valuable. The immovable property consists of land, such as houses and forests. Women do not have inheritance rights over movable property and are underrepresented in decision-making processes within society. As far as customary law is concerned, there is inequality between men and women. There is discernment in the mode of inheritance rights for women [4].

4.4. Folk Dance and Music of Nagaland

The carefree spirit of the Naga people is reflected in their music and dancing. Get ready to groove to the rhythms of the native dance and music. Groups of dancers often gather to play traditional instruments, such as the asem (drums), tata (mouth organ), bamboo flute, and others, in perfect time with the folk melodies they're learning. The vibrant, distinctive traditional attire and ornaments lend the tribal dance an air of greater elaboration. Stories of courage, love, and historical events are told via folk songs. Tourists love this place due to its exceptional taste in dance and music [9].

4.5. Interface of Tradition and Modernity

The topic of women in relation to tradition, modernity, and the past has been the subject of significant debate and analysis by many academics, as demonstrated by numerous literature reviews. An illustration of this is Odyuo's [6] research on how tradition influences the roles women play in modern society. Tradition and modernity are two concepts that are opposed to one another.

4.6. Impact of Modern Legal Systems

The more recent legal systems have had a significant impact on the long-standing legal systems among the Lotha communities. The Constitution and rules of the Indian people have gradually but certainly made their way into the territories of the indigenous people. There is a possibility that written law and unwritten law may not always align, which is a significant point. There is a potential for controversy and litigation if statutory laws conflict with long-standing rules. In contemporary legal theory, there has been considerable discussion of women's rights and property ownership. Several papers have been initiated to make certain aspects of customary law official and facilitate easier collaboration among various systems. As a result, the Lotha can preserve their culture and ensure that their regulations are just and up to date regarding matters of human rights and government policies. The way individuals interact with one another is significantly shaped by these principles, which are grounded in time-honoured traditions and conventional wisdom.

5. Conclusion

The Lotha people of Nagaland are a living testament to their rich cultural heritage and long-standing traditions. Changes in society have made traditional ways of doing things and adhering to rules more challenging. There have been significant shifts in the traditional customs of the Lotha people due to industrialisation. As the number of young people proficient in native languages declines, it is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve oral traditions. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the Lotha to adhere to their traditional rules and govern themselves independently, due to changes in the educational and judicial systems. Certain long-standing conventions are in direct conflict with existing laws, such as those regarding property ownership and the equal rights of men and women. In turn, this helps to strengthen the nation's identity. There are numerous national and local education projects, and one of their primary objectives is to preserve and transmit the native languages and ways of life. They are resolute in their commitment to preserve their traditional culture. In the middle of all this, they have new chances to grow and change. The Lotha people are very determined to keep and reclaim their traditional heritage. To do this, they plan parties, training sessions, and get-togethers for the neighbourhood. In a world that is always changing, Lotha's traditions can endure only if they learn to embrace new ideas while preserving their rich past.

Acknowledgement: We sincerely appreciate the collective expertise and dedication of all contributing authors, whose collaborative efforts have deepened this work.

Data Availability Statement: All study data can be obtained from the corresponding authors upon reasonable and ethically compliant request.

Funding Statement: This research was carried out entirely by the authors, with no external financial support.

Conflicts of Interest Statement: All authors jointly confirm that no conflicts of interest influenced the conduct or outcomes of this study.

Ethics and Consent Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, and the authors obtained informed consent from all participants.

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