

Village Council and Administration of Justice: A Study Among the Dimasa Kacharis of Assam

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Village council is a socio-political organisation that is the connection between people who relate themselves to each other creates an arrangement of persons that makes unit. It is a part of the large social organisation which refers to the institution which maintains rules and regulation of the society. For instance, stability of every social structure is needed to have the connection between the people who relate themselves to each other creates an arrangement of persons that makes unit. The organisation stands for juridical rights of the people's safeguard and these juridical obligations are inferred in them. Village organisation coincides as in most cases that villages act as territorial social as well as political unit. The Dimasas inhabited in plains of Assam also have their traditional village council which acts as a socio-political unit into their parochial life. In this paper, an attempt has been made to evaluate the function of village council for the maintenance of peace and smooth functioning of the socio-cultural life of the Dimasa Kacharis inhabiting in a rural context of Assam.

Keywords: village council, Dimasas, gaonburah, customary law, administration of justice

Introduction

Administration in human society is based on healthy life and progress of that society. Any deviation from path of justice brings about disorder in any societies. India is a classic land of villages and village form the one exclusive social and political institution which housed a variety of subsystem of justice within it. The tribal villages in India stand as administrative unit where traditional laws control their life ways and it is intricately knitted with the value system of the community. Kullu (1994) mentioned that for the tribe, their village means everything. It is in their village that they live out their family, economic, religious, and political life. In the villages, the tribes have their altar, their place of government, and their court of justice; in a nut shell, a mini world is within it. Majumder and Madan (1999) said that justice is administered through kin groups. Village councils consisting of representatives from different kin groups sit in judgment over breaches of the tribal norms. Or where there are chiefs, the cases are decided by them, but rarely without consulting family heads or village headmen.

Every village is an independent unit and it is under the jurisdiction of a traditional council headed by one elderly elected person assisted by council of elders. These elderly persons are responsible for the maintenance of law and order of the village. Disputes arise out among the inhabitants who are settled by the per jury of the council in accordance with their customary law and justices are dispensed by it, which is collectively honoured by the inhabitants of the village. It stands as one of the integral part of organization of the village. Zaman and

Upadhaya (2015) defined “in the age-old traditional system of the tribes, every aspect of the people’s life is regulated by the customary practices” (p. 52). Their family, marriage, divorce, kinship, guardianship, descent, inheritance, succession, right over land, forest right, fishing authority, and transfer of land, sale, lease and civil and criminal cases, etc. are all governed and trialed according to their customary laws. Breach of customary law is considered as punishable offence for which village council acts as a traditional court with definite name and function exists in every tribal society. The regulatory mechanism is controlled by the village council through the customary laws. The procedure of the trial in the village council varies from tribe to tribe. Most of the disputes are settled in a single sitting. Customary laws thus include those rules, which are acknowledged and approved by the public opinion in the society and sanctioned by the will of the community. It is thus apparent that customary laws existed even prior to the emergence of the nation or the state and which continue to exist along with the change of time.

Village council is a social organisation which bears an important role in the broad social organisation. It refers to institution as well as social structures and machinery through human activities required to satisfy human needs are monitored. The word “organization” does not mean only the aggregates of individuals, but it must have a common interest or aim to full fill human needs of a society. The individual interest thus mixed or hidden with common interest and different social structures under these circumstances operate itself as an organisation. In broad sense, a village itself is an organisation. In a village, there is a fine relationship among each family or each number of families by one or another means. Village organisation is actually a mirror image of social organisation which forms through social relationship. Village organisation is the voluntary organisation of society. It has been included among human society from long part. But its forms and structure have always been changing with time.

Every indigenous community of Assam has their own system of administration of justice carried out by the concerned village council in accordance with their customary laws. Law and justice are integral element of each culture and it has an indispensable relation with social, cultural, and political life of the community. Elaborate ethnographic study of a particular community regarding the customs, rituals, taboos, etc., related with traditional law and justice were carried out by different scholars, like Thaosen (1962), Pospisil (1963), Stack and Lyall (1973), Danda (1978), Majumder (1980), Mills (1980), Bordoloi (1984), Bordoloi, Sharma Thakur, and Saikia (1987), Das (1987), Roy and Rizvi (1990), Dutta (1991), Nakha (1993), Singh (1993; 1995), Kilikder (1998), Playfair (1998), Gurdon (2002), Mitkong (2002), Vitso (2003), Barooah (2007), Endle (2007), Medhi and Barpujari (2007), Barpujari (2011), Zaman and Upadhaya (2015), et al., and they also focus on the correlation of customary rules and practices regarding justice dispensation with social life. In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the traditional village council, its role in conflict resolution along with administration of justice among the Dimasa Kacharis of Dakshin Kumerakata village in Hojai district of Assam.

The Dimasa Kacharis

The Dimasa Kacharis are one of the scheduled tribes of Assam. They belongs to the great Bodo groups of people; ethno linguistically who are Tibeto-Burman. The main abode of the Dimasa Kacharis is the Dima Hasao District of Assam. They are also found in Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, and Hojai districts of Assam and Dimapur of Nagaland. Bordoloi (1984, p. 6) mentioned that “the term Dimasa literally means the children or descendants of a big river, meaning the Brahmaputra. ‘Di’ means water, ‘Ma’ means big and ‘Sa’ means

children” (p. 6). According to Thaosen (1962, p. 44), the Dimasas were known as Bodosas prior to their settlement in Dimapur. When the Bodosas migrated to Dimapur region and started living on the Bank of Dhansiri, they came to be known as Dimasa. He refers Dimasa as the son of the big river (Brahmaputra). The Dimasas are Hindu by religion but traces of animism are also observed among them. They have their own parochial gods and goddesses known as *Madai*. The Dimasas believe that they are the descendents of Bangla Raja, the god of earthquake and Arikhidima, the great divine bird. Arikhidima laid seven eggs amongst whom from the first six benevolent ancestral gods (*Madai*) were born, namely, Sibrai, Doo Raja, Naikhu Raja, Waa Raja, Ganyung-Braiung, and Hamidao. From the seventh egg, evil spirits were born who are considered as responsible for all diseases and natural calamities. Amongst the six ancestral gods, Sibrai is considered as supreme and he is equated with Lord Siva of Hindu Pantheon and his wife Ranchandi/Hedemdi with Goddess Parvati or Kali. There are 40 male clans known as *Sengphong* and 42 female clans *Julu* or *Jaddi* among the Dimasas. They are exogamous with each other and presence of female clan among them is one of the unique features found only among the Dimasas which is very rare within the other tribes of North East India. The main economy of the Dimasas is agriculture and they are also engaged in government jobs, petty trades, wage earners, etc. The main festivals observe by the Dimasas are Bishu, Rajini Garba, and Harni Garba amongst which the Bishu is most elaborate one. During the festival various types of dances, like *baidima*, *baimajai*, etc., were performed by the Dimasa people. *Fangsla*, a special decorative gate erected during the Bishu festival is worth mentioning.

Objectives

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To study about the village council among the Dimasas of the study area;
2. To know about the administration of justice of the village council;
3. The present scenario of the role of the village council.

Methodology

The present study is an empirical one and standard anthropological methods, like non-participant observation, household survey schedule, unstructured interview, and case studies were used during the field investigation. Data gathered from one individual/informant are cross checked with other individual/informant in order to verify the authenticity of the information.

Findings

Administration of justice is unique in its function and structure among the Dimasas and governed by the age old customs and tradition that is unique from the rest of the communities of Assam. Kumurakata is one of the oldest Dimasa villages. The village has its own traditional council, headed by the *gaonburah* (*khunang*) who is the head of the village council and other 10-12 elderly members who help the *gaonburah* solve the village disputes are known as *barikah*. The disputes are settled within the village by them. Whenever any disputes or crimes take place in the village, the villagers should immediately inform the *gaonburah* and accordingly *gaonburah* orders the *barikah* to investigate about the case. The village council headed by the *gaonburah* reviewed the case and settled it by pronouncing a fresh judgment, which is mandatory for both the parties.

Village Leadership and Administration

The village system of the Dimasas in their own language is called *nolai* and the whole inhabitants of the village are known as *raji*. The village council among the Dimasas is *hosom* which is no other than a council for the entire administration of the village. It is headed by a headman appointed by the government known as *sarkari gaonburah* to assist in the administration of the village. Below this government appointed headman, there is the traditional elected headman who assists him in the maintenance of law and order of the village.

The village headman who is at the top of the village administration is called *khunang*. He has both executive and judiciary powers. He is appointed by the government through the Deputy Commissioner of Hojai district, and is selected through his educational qualification. He is the second authority of the village after the Deputy Commissioner. He had seven villages under his jurisdiction: Dakshin Kumurakata, Uttar Kumurakata, Mainapathar, Raikota, Chandanpur, Raikota Islampur, and Raikota Kacharigaon. In each of these villages, one traditional *gaonburah* is appointed to assist him. The traditional *gaonburah* is elected through open selection by the villagers. All the official works are done by the *sarkari gaonburah*. Both of them have different duties and responsibilities towards their office. They have both executive and judicial powers.

Sarkari Gaonburah

The *sarkari gaonburah* is well-educated and takes care of the village administration. The tenure for the *gaonburah* is upto 60 years old. He should be a politically neutral person who is selected on the basis of his impartiality, knowledge about traditional custom, and educational qualification. In the earlier days, the *gaonburah* used to be elected through hereditary process, but nowadays, it is through educational qualification. The minimum qualification for a government appointed *gaonburah* post is higher secondary passed with good command in Hindi language. His powers and functions are as follows:

- (a) To solve the problems of the village people, like disputes, crisis, etc.
- (b) The *gaonburah* is mainly involved with the Revenue Branch. He has to represent as a circle officer and conduct the revenue administration. He appoints meetings and gives information regarding the local land development schemes. Moreover, he also organizes awareness campaigns through the VLMCC (Village Land Management and Conservation Committee) for flood affected areas, landslide, and other natural calamities. The circle officer or the *gaonburah* also checks about the land production used in the village. He assembles the people in a particular place and collects land revenue. Here, agendas are also made on how the tax should be collected or paid.
- (c) The *gaonburah* also plays a major role in the events of birth and death. He issues the birth and death certificates. In case of home delivery of a child, the *gaonburah* writes an application to the Birth and Death Registration Office.
- (d) The *gaonburah* organizes and supervises village meetings. He organizes the meetings in a community centre named Devosthan.
- (e) During the time of elections held at government level, the Deputy Commissioner selects the polling centre and the circle officer, i.e., the *gaonburah* has to look after it. He has to provide facilities and protection to the duty officers and it is his duty to protect the ballot boxes (or voting machine) and safely transfer them to the designated office.
- (f) The *gaonburah* also summons and settles civil and criminal disputes to the villagers. In case of murder, the villagers have to inform the *gaonburah*.

(g) The *gaonburah* also plays a major role in oaths and ordeals, to control society, to unite the society for mutual understanding and binding each other in the village.

(h) If an unknown people from other places come to the village, then the *gaonburah* has to inform the police station through written application. It is formal and mandatory for the *gaonburah* to inform the police.

(i) If in a cultivated area or a government property land, a house is built then the owner of the house has to inform the *gaonburah* and take permission from Deputy Commissioner.

(j) As Kumurakata is a flood affected area along with frequent attack and encroachment of wild elephants, the *gaonburah* provides relief camps to the villagers and advises them to shift to the unaffected areas.

(k) If a *gaonburah* dies, then his land will be registered under his son's name as a nominee.

(l) The *gaonburah* also issues marriage certificates and verify it.

Traditional Gaonburah

In Dakshin Kumurakata village, there are three divisions viz., *Nolai Khro* (souther part), *Nolai Hagjer* (middle part), and *Nolai Yaphang* (northern part). For administration of the whole village, there is one elected local *gaonburah* who is under the control of the *sarkari gaonburah*, the chief head of the village. He has both executive and judiciary powers. His executive powers consist of giving guidance in respect of celebration of community festivals in the village. While his judiciary powers consists of trail of cases, maintenance of law, and order in the village. According to their tradition, the *gaonburah (khunang)* is to be elected by the village elders in a formal meeting. From the point of view of age and experience, *khunang* should be the senior most elderly person of the village. Thus, in the traditional village council setup, the Dimasas have four officials, viz., the traditional *gaonburah (khunang)*, next to him is the *barika* (informer), and then *kharao* (council members) and the subjects (*raji*). The role played by them is as follows:

(a) *Khunang* or the *gaonburah* is the traditional headman of the village. The traditional village council with the four officials headed by *Khunang* settles disputes, tries cases of thefts, incest, elopements, etc.

(b) Next to the *khunang* is the *barika*. He is the informer to the villagers. He acts as an assistant to the *gaonburah*. Any information or notice from the *gaonburah* is informed to the villagers through him.

(c) *Kharao* or the council member consists of 10-12 council members. Their roles are attending the village meetings, and other programmes in the villages. They assist the *gaonburah* in solving disputes.

(d) The subjects (*raji*) also play an important role in the traditional village council. In case of any disputes and problems in the village, they give their opinions to the *gaonburah*.

Powers and functions of the traditional *gaonburah*:

(a) To solve the disputes in the village.

(b) If a boy marries a girl of another tribe or community, the *gaonburah* is called to attend the ceremony. Without his permission, the marriage is illegal.

(c) In case of robbery or crime, the *gaonburah* will call meeting along with the council of members; and as a punishment, the accused has to offer five numbers of *tamulpaan* (bettlenut and bettle vine leaf), banana and 100/- rupees cash as a mark of *rahi* (fine).

(d) If a married couple gives birth to a child, the owner of that house has to inform the *gaonburah*.

(e) In case of robbery, the victim should have an oath taking before the *gaonburah* saying that he would not commit any more mistakes.

(f) If any person from other places visits the village, then he/she has to inform the *gaonburah*.

Selection of the *Gaonburah* and the Members of the Village Council

Selection of *gaonburah* is the most vital event in the Dimasa village. *Gaonburah* is generally selected from among the active members only. Wise, cool-tempered, impartial, and well-versed in pristine customs and traditions are the essential qualities of a *gaonburah*. Therefore, *gaonburah* and other village council members are selected by the villagers. No females are elected as the members of village council but sometimes headman (*gaonburah*) seeks advice from some elderly women of the village in some women related cases. The village council settles most of the disputes under their jurisdiction. As the village council is responsible for the village peace, so the council tries a variety of cases for peaceful settlement. The civil and criminal cases, such as boundary disputes, disobeying or breaking the village rules, theft, assault, adultery, illicit relation, divorce, etc., are settle by the council.

After receiving suit, the village council fixed a date in consultation with *gaonburah* and venue for the settlement of the dispute. Accordingly, the *barikah* announced the message to the villagers at evening when he patrols the village regarding the meeting and venue. On the appointed date, all the council members, village elders, and *gaonburahs* of different villages attend the meeting. The village council has their unique systems of sitting arrangement. The *gaonburahs* and elderly members constitute one bench and the members of the council constitute the other bench. Before the council, the complainant and accused arbitrate on the subject matter. Then, the council heard the witnesses. After hearing both the disputant parties and their witnesses, the members arrived into a consensus judgment, which they sent to the higher bench constituted by the *gaonburahs* and elderly persons for approval. Normally, the bench approved the judgment, but in some cases, if the bench is not satisfied with the judgment, they may send it back to the member's bench for review. After reviewing the judgment, they again send to the *gaonburahs* bench for approval. After getting the approval, the verdict is passed and pronounced for public and is mandatory for both. The guilty may offer prayer for pardon and to minimize the fine, as he cannot afford the prescribed fine. The *gaonburahs* have the power to minimize the fine if found necessary looking at the economic ground of the guilty person. This is the most important part of the council system. This flexibility nature of the council makes it more convenient and participatory in the Dimasa society. Before minimizing the imposed fine, they consult the future consequences on similar cases. Thereafter, the person found guilty has to pay a *dai sumaiba* (fine) to make him free from all allegations.

On the other hand, if the case is complex, to avoid any conflicts between both the parties, the council does not permit to attend the meeting. The disputed parties are asked to stay in relative's house nearby the venue of the meeting. The council chooses a mediator to mediate between the two parties. As per tradition, they choose a mediator from the third clan to avoid any partiality, i.e., neither from the complainant clan nor from the accused clan. The mediator is sent to the complainant to hear the grievances and he directly comes to the council meeting and conveyed the same. Again, he is sent to the convicted person to hear the defensive statement and the mediator convey the same to the council. On the basis of the information of the mediator, the council alter prolong discussion arrive into a unanimous judgment which is binding for the both. The guilty person has to pay the fine imposed by the council on the spot.

Nature of Offence

Divorce (*Garlaiba*)

Customarily, divorce is permissible among the Dimasa tribe. Both male and female have equal right to divorce their partner. The practice of divorce is very rare in the society because of their strong social bondage

and social cohesion. The village council approves divorce on sufficient reasonable ground. The grounds of divorce are maladjustment, extra marital relation, disobedient nature, and so on.

As per customary law of the Dimasa in divorce cases, the following fines are imposed:

(1) When a husband wants to divorce his wife, the divorce proposal is not immediately acceptable and the couple is given a period of one month to resolve their matter to avoid divorce. But when even after one month, the husband wants divorce, then the couple has to sign in a paper before the *raji* (community) and the husband has to give half of his property to the wife.

(2) On the other hand, if wife proposed to divorce her husband, then also a period of one month is given to her to resolve the conflict between them. But even after one month, she wants to take divorce if she has a valid reason, then she will get divorce by signing a divorce form by her and her husband in front of the *gaonburah* and the whole community. She would also get half of his husband's property as per customary law.

Here, it is interesting to note that this is applicable if the divorced woman has her child. On the other hand, if the woman is adamant on divorce without any genuine reason as judge by the council, this clause is not applicable. Some time, the woman herself pardons her husband from this clause. *Dai sumaiba* (fine payable to the Village council) of Rs. 1,000/- has to pay by the husband for this purpose.

Illegitimate Child

In case of an illegitimate child born out of illegal sexual relation, the woman has to pay a fine amounting Rs. 501/- to the village council. If the man responsible is identified, then he has to pay the fine of Rs.1001/- on behalf of the woman.

Adultery

The case of adultery is not very uncommon among the Dimasa society. If a Dimasa woman is indulged in adultery and caught red handed, then her husband would divorce her and she would not get anything from her husband property. On the other hand, if a man caught red handed, then it depends upon his wife whether she wants to divorce her husband or not because mostly Dimasa woman tends to forgive their husbands. But he has to pay a *dai sumaiba* of Rs.1001/- to the *gaonburah*.

Illicit Relation

Illicit relation, i.e., clan incest or illegal sexual offence within the prohibited categories, are considered as punishable offence. The accused male or female who are indulged in this type of offence are directly excommunicated from the community.

Law of Marriage

In the Dimasa society, marriage is endogamous but they follow strict clan exogamy. Dimasa people have very unique clan system. In Dimasa tribe, both male and female have different clans. Male clan is known as *Sengphong* and female clan is known as *Julu*. There are about 40 male clans and 42 female clans. Male clan is inherited by the sons and female clan is passes to their daughters. There are different types of fine and punishment when a Dimasa girl or a boy marries by violating the pristine rule. They are:

(a) Marriage within the clan: Violation of clan exogamy leads to severe punishment. Whenever marriage within clan takes place, they are excommunicated from the village. They are not allowed to take participate in any public ceremonies. For 12 years, the couple has to reside outside of their community, and after completion of the period, they can return into their tribe and village, but for that couple has to invite the whole village or

tribe members for a feast arranged by them, special invitation is given to the *khunang* (*gaoburah*) with *tamulpan* (betel nut and betel vine leaf), banana and Rs.101/-. After the success of the feast with due consent of the *khunang* and other elderly members of the village, the couple is permitted to stay in the village. But in spite of all, these women who had married within the clan lose her *Julu* and she cannot further pass her clan to her daughters.

(b) Marriage outside of the tribe: Marriage outside of the tribe is also prohibited. When a girl marry a boy of other tribe, she is bound to lose her *Julu* and when a boy marry a girl of any other tribe, then the boy's family has to arrange a feast and offer beetle nut and leaf with Rs.501/- to the *Khunang* (*gaonburah*). The females who come from other tribes as daughter in law are conferred a new *Julu* (female clan).

(c) Marriage by elopement: When a boy and a girl elope to marry each other, then it is called *Khaolanglaiba* in their local term. The boy's father should immediately inform the *khunang* about the matter with bettlenut-leaf along with Rs.101/-. Then, they have to arrange a community feast for the whole village and the eloped couple has to bow down before the elderly invited guest, beg pardon for their misdeeds, and seek blessing for their happy married life.

(d) Marriage outside of the religion: Marriage outside of the religion is strictly prohibited in Dimasa society. Anybody marrying outside their own religion is excommunicated from the village. Their family members have to pay the *dai sumaiba* to the *khunang* (*gaonburah*). The estimated fine is Rs.1000/- .

Violation of the Customary Law

If anyone in the Dimasa community of this village violates any kinds of customary law, he/she is liable to get punished by the *gaonburah*. The intensity of the punishment is depending on the intensity of the law. When someone breaks a law in the village, he/she has pays the fine of Rs.1005/-. But sometimes, if anyone violates a law which is also regarded as taboo, then he/she might get excommunicated.

Theft (*Makhau*)

The theft cases are very rare among the Dimasas. It has been observed that the village people do not locked their door while working in the field. Even though the cases of theft are not reported, the thefts cases are considered as minor offence for which a minimum line is impose on the offender. The fine is decided depending on the value of the things being taken by the thief. A single fine is not fixed in case of theft.

Transfer of Land

(a) According to the customary law, restriction is imposed on transfer of land to the non-tribal and outside their own community.

(b) The Dimasas are the absolute owners of their permanent plots, which they can transfer through sale, gift, etc. But, the owner is expected to discuss with his clan members before disposing the land.

(c) The agricultural plots belong to an individual and the owner exercises absolute right over the land. So, individual can transfer this plot if the owner of the plot abandons it, it will remain fallow and no other person can cultivate there without the owner's permission. On the other hand, the agricultural plots are heritable and it is transferred to the sons of the owner.

(d) The transfer of land is very rare in the Dimasa society.

(e) Exchanging of the land among Dimasa society is also rare due to variation in value of the land; exchange is done only after judging the value of the land to be exchanged by the parties concern.

Mode of Inheritance

Certain customary laws of the Dimasas, which are followed since time immemorial, govern the transmission of property. The Dimasas are patriarchal and follow the patrilineal system, i.e., descent is traced through male line only but their mode of inheritance of property is unique.

(a) Among the Dimasa tribe, all movable and immovable properties are heritable. The movable property consists of livestock, household belonging, cloths, ornaments, domestic utensils, agricultural implements, and so on. The immovable property includes the house, cultivable land, and the areas reserve for fishing, collection of honey, etc.

(b) For the distribution of property, the clan members are informed and distribution is done in the presence of the witness.

(c) According to customary laws, equigeniture is the method, where father's properties are equally distributed among the sons called *basa han riba* in their local term and mothers properties are equally distributed among the daughters called *busu han riba*. Here, equal does not imply partition of land by measuring it but by the number of plots owned by individual.

(d) At the time of distribution of property among the sons and daughters, a valuable property is kept in the name of the parents. This is perhaps to make the parents life secure in their old age.

(e) The son who lives with the parents in their old age and performs the last rite entitled to inherit the parents remaining property and the house.

(f) The household belongings, agricultural equipments, cooking utensils, and ornaments are equally divided among the sons and daughters.

(g) The practice of will for distribution of properties is not practiced. A declaration of parents in front of the relatives is the only method of distribution of property.

(h) In the family where there are no sons, the order of inheritance goes to the paternal uncle, then to the paternal cousins and to the distant clan relatives.

(i) In sonless family, both father's and mother's property are inherited by the daughters equally.

(j) In case, if a couple is childless, then their property is inherited by any close paternal relatives whom they want to give their property or the one who will perform their last rites.

(k) Personal garments are generally disposed along with the dead body. Any surplus garments that the deceased may leave behind are divided among the sons and daughters.

(l) In Dimasa tribe, if any childless couples want, then they can donate their property to any tribal organization within their village.

(m) A widow can enjoy the husband's estate as long as she lives without remarriage with any outsider. Among the Dimasa, a marriageable widow is allowed to remarry her deceased husband's brother and thereby he become the father of children born out of his deceased brother.

The adopted son is entitled to inherit his parents properties provided the adoption is done on the basis of the customs. Adoption is allowed only within the clan and preferably within the lineage.

Conclusion

The traditional village council of the Dimasas of Kumurakata is still functioning actively and they have great faith in their customary laws. The judgment of the village council is very much respected in the society. Therefore, the people have good faith over their traditional justice delivery system. The justice is based on

customary laws, which are established and followed since time immemorial. Therefore, the Dimasa people do not approach the modern court of law. The justice delivery system among the Dimasas is not burdened with cumbersome formalities, as it is in case of modern court of law, which is expensive and time consuming. There is a common saying that justice delayed is justice denied, but it is not applicable in the justice delivery system of Kumurakata village council. It is because justice is quick, cheap, and perceptible. Moreover, due to the flexibility nature, the advantage lies on its economic consideration, by minimizing the fine as deem fit for the offender. The villagers become confused while approaching the Modern Court of Law, due to its formalities, time span and moreover they cannot afford the expenses required to suit a case. However, when serious crimes, like murder, homicide, rape, etc., are committed, the matter is referred to and decided by the modern statutory law court. In this case, they approached the nearby Police Station, located at Hojai. There is an interpreter preferably from their own community or a person belongs to Dimasa tribe, who has an adequate knowledge regarding the customary rules of the land as well as their dialect intervenes between the government authority and the aggrieved party. The cases related with disputes are therefore settled in accordance with the customary rules of the community.

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