

## Mother's Brother in Matrilineal Societies : A Study of Khasi Matriliny

ANGELICA QUEENIE LYNGDOH\*

A.K.NONGKYNRIH\*\*

### Abstract

*Scholars are of the opinion that Mother's brother is of immense significance in matrilineal societies. His status and role is embedded and intrinsic to matrilineal social structure. As a male member of the matrilineal descent group, he represents the placement of men vis-à-vis women in matriliney. Under the matrilineal social arrangement he holds authority, role and responsibility towards matrilineal descent groups, particularly in matters concerning the affairs of his sister's children. The paper discusses the status and position of mother's brother in Khasi society.*

**Keywords: Mother's Brother, Matrilineal descent group, Kinship, Authority Role, Modernisation.**

A human community in any part of the world has a system of descent, and broadly we can say that there are two kinds of descent system: patrilineal and matrilineal. Schneider explains that, '...kinship defines a number of statuses and interrelationships according to a variety of rules or principles and distinguishes kinsmen from non-kin' (1962:2). According to Schneider and Gough, 'a system which includes the matrilineal principle but does not include the patrilineal principle will be called a matrilineal system' (1962:3). They further elaborate that matrilineal principle has three important elements: (i) children under the care of the woman; (ii) men have authority over women and children; and (iii) the rule of exogamy is followed by the matrilineal community. Focusing on the second element, the paper discusses the significance of men as brothers in the matrilineal system.

---

\*Angelica Queenie Lyngdoh is a research scholar in Department of Sociology, NEHU, Shillong.

\*\* A.K. Nongkynrih is a Professor in the Department of Sociology, NEHU, Shillong

Kinship studies in matrilineal societies have focused their attention, among other things, on the position of mother's brother vis -a- vis sister's children. With regard to the role of men in the matrilineal descent group, Schneider explains that men are assigned roles which are different from that of women, that is, 'the role of men as men is defined as that of having authority over women and children. Positions of the highest authority within the matrilineal descent group, will therefore, ordinarily be vested in statuses occupied by men'. The author also highlights the authority of men in the domestic sphere and in the descent group by explaining that men of the descent group have authority over the women and children of that descent group, and that adult males of the domestic group have authority over the women and children of that particular domestic group (Schneider 1962:1-7). Based on secondary sources, the paper will try to conceptualise the mother's brother in matrilineal and reflect on his place in Khasi matrilineal.

### **The Position and Role of the Mother's Brother**

To have a proper sociological understanding of mother's brother in matrilineal communities, it is necessary to examine the position and role provided to them in the structure of matrilineal arrangement vis-à-vis women and children. In the opinion of Sweetser (1966), 'three categories seem to be needed to understand the mother's brother's role: the authoritative role (*avunculi potestas*); the indulgent role; and a third, intermediate role, called here the "respected and responsible" role, in which the relationship is freighted with some degree of responsibility and authority on the uncle's side and with obligations and respect on the children's side' (1966:1009). With regard to the role of a man as mother's brother and his role as father of his children, it was also pointed out the degree and nature of authority present in one role would be directly related to that in the other role, but the two different roles cannot have the same rights and obligations. It was also noted that the mother's brother has a distinctive role in the organisation of kinship and that the type of distinctive role for the mother's brother may differ with the conditions of marriage (1966:1010-1012).

In matrilineal societies the mother's brother is a non-authoritarian, indulgent figure, a sort of "male mother", with whom there is "frequent interaction" and "considerable freedom" and that this sentimental attachment is the efficient cause of "matrilateral cross-cousin marriage" (Homans and Schneider 1962:529). It was pointed out and emphasized by Homans and Schneider (1962) that 'the giving of help and advice by the mother's brother,

as distinguished from orders'. It was also brought out that 'the daughters of the mother's brother's, own clan or tribe, are marriageable women from whom a wife may be sought. The customary or most orthodox marriage found in some communities is that which takes place 'between the children of "blood" brother and sister. A man marries his mother's full brother's daughter-he marries back into his mother's clan, into which his father married before him' (Homans and Schneider 1962:530).

On the issue of authority, Homans and Schneider (1962:531) reflect that 'a mother's brother does not normally hold jural authority over his sister's children. He does so only while she is a widow'. The man's sister, as a widow, looks to her brother 'for protection and seeks the shelter of his camp. He is responsible for her and her children until the mourning for her husband is past and she remarries'. It is also stated that 'the mother's brother is something of a male mother to his sister's sons. In giving his daughters in marriage to them he is providing for their future, as well as that of his daughters'.

Some of the ethnographic studies on matrilineal societies provide interesting account of the position and role of the mother's brother. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown writes about the important customs related to the mother's brother-sister's son relationship in the context of South Africa. According to A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1996:173), '(i) the uterine nephew all through his career is the object of special care on the part of his uncle, (ii) when the nephew is sick the mother's brother sacrifices on his behalf, (iii) the nephew is permitted to take many liberties with his mother's brother; for example, he may go to his uncle's home and eat up the food that has been prepared for the latter's meal, (iv) the nephew claims some of the property of his mother's brother when the latter dies, and may sometimes claim one of the widows, (v) when the mother's brother offers a sacrifice to his ancestors the sister's son steals and consumes the portion of meat or beer offered to the gods'. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1996:174-177) explains that 'the sister's son is permitted to take many liberties with his mother's brother and to take any of his uncle's possessions that he may desire'. It was also noted that the mother's brother is important and that it was possible to treat him 'as being like a father...'. There is a tendency for sister's son to regard the mother's brother as some sort of a 'male mother'. It should also be noted that 'a man may treat his mother's brother, who is of his own sex, with a degree of familiarity that would not be possible with any woman, even his own mother... The mother's brother is the one relative above all from whom we may expect

indulgence, with whom we may be familiar and take liberties'.

A certain way of behaviour is displayed by the mother's brother when it concerns the sister's son, 'the mother's brother is a personage of vast importance; having the power even of life and death over his nephews and nieces, which no other relations, not even the parents, have; he is to be held in honor even above the father' (Radcliffe-Brown 1996:178). When speaking of the mother's brother, it is customary to use an honorific title given to people who are respected very highly. This indicates that in some societies, the power of the maternal uncle exceeds the power of the father. According to A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1996:179) 'the mother's father and the mother's brother are the objects of very similar behaviour patterns, of which the outstanding feature is the indulgence on the one side and the liberty permitted on the other'.

Evans-Pritchard observes that among the Nuer of Africa a man can rely on his mother's brother for assistance even if the man's own paternal uncles do not come to his aid. The mother's brother to sister's children is said to be 'both father and mother', but more importantly 'the mother'. He is a man's great supporter when he is in trouble'. The relationship between mother's brother and sister's son is one of tenderness. The mother's brother is indulgent and when his own children will trouble his sister's children, he would even 'admonish them to leave his sister's child in peace' (Evans-Pritchard: 1951:163). The sister's son prefers to go and live with his mother's brother than with father's brother when his own father dies and he 'may even marry from the uncle's herd. Also, a youth during his father's lifetime often visits his mother's kinsmen and stays with them for weeks together... has always a second home if his maternal uncle is a full brother to his mother' (Evans-Pritchard 1951) With regard to marriage of sister's children, the mother's brother may give cattle as a form of assistance for his sister's eldest son and makes further contributions towards the marriages of the younger sons of the sister. Evans-Pritchard (1951) noted that a man's mother's full brother receives bride wealth on behalf of sister's daughter at the time of marriage. But he is not obliged to contribute to sister's son's bride wealth. Even if the mother's brother refuses aid, he cannot be deprived of receiving bride wealth on the marriages of sister's daughters.

There are a number of special observances in the mother's brother-sister's son relationship, for example, while the 'blessing of a maternal uncle is desired, his curse is believed to be among the worst, if not the worst ...

for, unlike the father, a maternal uncle may curse a youth's cattle, as well as his crops and fishing and hunting, if he is disobedient or refuses a request or in some other way offends him. The curse may also prevent the nephew from begetting male children' (Evans-Pritchard 1951:164-165). The fear of the mother's brother's curse ensured that the sister's son avoid swearing at their maternal uncles, 'you must not swear at your maternal uncle. You might even think of swearing at your father but never, never, at your maternal uncle' (Evans-Pritchard 1951). The many observances relating to the mother's brother-sister's son relationship are indicative of the important position of the mother's brother in the kinship system. Evans-Pritchard also states that since the mother's brother is a relative through a female he is spoken about as a kind of 'male mother' himself (Evans-Pritchard 1951:166)

Among the Navaho of North Eastern Arizona, there exist three modes of relationship between mother's brother and sister's child: an avuncular role, the clan-mate role and the 'Local Clan' head role. In the case of avuncular role, 'mother's brother disciplines, arranges marriages and is traditionally a source of inheritance for the sister's child' (Aberle 1962:169-171). With regard to clan mate role, it was observed that 'joking between the mother's brother and the sister's son is symmetrical and egalitarian'. In the local clan head role, mother's brother as the senior member mobilises the kin group for ceremonies and in times of disputes. This shows that the mother's brother's role varies from context to context.

The mother's brother ought to help his sister and her children in times of need such as providing food, clothing, education, in payment of claims and in providing bride wealth. The mother's brother also assists in farming activities and in an emergency, he can call upon his sister's daughters to help him in his own household. On the other hand his sister's sons considered as his potential heirs remain attached to his household and also contribute their work to the building of the estate. The role played by the mother's brother in Tonga society has made him a figure of authority and respect, and he has been equated with 'mother' so in him vests the rights that a mother has over her children (Colson 1962:33-95).

In matrilineal societies the mother's brother plays an important role in the life of his sister and sister's children because he acts as their guardian. The sister respects her brother, obeys his commands and regards him as the legal head of her family of procreation. However, the mother's brother does not arrange his sister's daughter's marriage, except if there is a betrothal to

his son. He may be instrumental in getting a child spirit to impregnate his sister's daughter and as a practice she should give birth at the house of her father or mother's brother (Fathauer 1962:234-269).

When it concerns the sister's son, the mother's brother has the 'greatest authority' over him as he may be his uncle's heir. The uncle from whom a man expects to inherit may be the man who instructed and disciplined him from his youth. In some cases the mother's brother responsible for the young man's socialisation may die and be succeeded by his younger brother. This has been seen as problematic for the man as he becomes the heir of a man with whom he had little contact with in his youth. In such circumstances, the mother's brother may be more inclined to favour his own son against his sister's son than would be the case with the uncle who guided him into manhood.

With regard to socialisation of sister's son, Fathauer (1962:252-253) states that, 'a boy does not have much contact in childhood with his mother's brother since they usually live in different villages. As he grows older, his mother's brother begins to exert more influence on him. The uncle tutors his nephew in lineage and sub-clan traditions; he takes his nephew to work with him in the fields to which the youth has a claim. The mother's brother introduces the youth to take pride in his lineage, ambition, and promises of future wealth and prestige. As the boy grows older his mother's brother demands more work of him. The boy goes frequently to his mother's brother's house for ceremonies and feasts involving his own sub-clan'. It was also pointed-out that, the mother's brother also has the right to determine the distribution of his sister's son's harvest and may ask for his contribution towards his payment to the chief. Fathauer (1962) views this relationship between the two as asymmetrical one, characterised by considerable tension and resembles the elder brother -younger brother relationship in many ways.

Among the Ashanti of Ghana, the children live with the mothers or fathers and when they grew older they lived with their mother's brother. The mother's brother's area of 'control over sister's children was extensive - he could pawn his nephews and nieces, his approval was crucial for marriage, and he could demand that divorce be instituted. He could insist upon cross-cousin marriage and a nephew could not refuse, though a daughter might; likewise a niece could be forced to marry her uncle's son' (Basehart 1962:292). However, as Harry W. Basehart points out, considerable ambivalence characterises this asymmetrical relationship, particularly with respect to inheritance and succession (1962).

### Mother's Brother in Khasi Society

In the context of Khasi matriliney two persons are kin if they trace descent from a common ancestress or if either of them is descended from the other. The largest division in the society is in terms of *Kur* which is a near equivalent of clan. The *Kur* is an exogamous unit and every member is a kin of every other person of the same *Kur*. Hence every member belonging to the same *Kur* refer to each other collectively as *Shi Kur* or kin belonging to a single *Kur*. The basis of this is that they have all descended from a common ancestress. The *Kur* affiliation becomes a unit of identification and all members belonging to the same generation within the *Kur* accept each other as brothers and sisters on the basis of fictitious consanguinity. This affiliation also becomes a basis of identification when two strangers meet for the first time. The *Kur* comes into being when the female children of Khasi women get married and perpetuate the lineage of their mothers by producing children. Each such married daughter starts what is known as *Ka Kpoh*, which during the course of time develops into a number of lineages which share the same identification name with other lineages of *Ka Kpoh*. The name of *Ka Kpoh* is called *Ka Jait*. Members of different *Kpoh* having different *Jait* names develop a kinship affiliation believing to have ascended from a common female ancestress (Nongkynrih 2002: 33-35).

The most important functional descent unit in the matrilineal kin group is called *Ka Ing*, which is the lowest order of clan segmentation, smaller than *Ka Kpoh* - which may include two or more *Ing*. The central core of *Ka Ing* comprises two persons, one holding the authority and the other owning the property; the role of succession is strictly matrilineal. The authority goes from mother's brother to sister's son while the property is handed down from mother to daughter. A man continues to be a member of the same *Ing* all his life whether he marries or not. A woman if she is not an heiress will branch off after her marriage and though she herself will continue as member of her mother's *Ing* the third generation from her will form an independent *Ing*. As members of *Ka Ing*, men and women have their share of roles and position (Nongkynrih 2002).

In the structure of Khasi matriliney the position of men has been separated into two parts, that is, as *U Kni* (mother's brother) and as *U Kpa* (father). In the view of S. Lyngdoh (1999:42-43) the 'constitutive elements of the Khasi original matrilineal system are the following: (i) the mother's brother as the centre of authority and economy, of discipline and government

of the family; and (ii) the mother's brother's sister with her children as nephews and nieces of the mother's brother'. According to this system, the mother's brother is the 'sole ruler, the provider and the guardian. In his sister's house everyone and everything depends on him and therefore he is totally and eternally committed to his sister and her children'. By virtue of belonging to the same clan and of the same flesh and blood, the mother's brother 'cannot possibly disown his sister and her children and hence in this original form of matrilineal system, there is no danger of a family being broken or deserted'. It is the mother's brother who 'instructs and teaches his nephews and nieces so that the family can prosper' (Synrem: 1994: 28). In the marriage of his brothers or sisters, nephews or nieces, he takes the role of the mediator. The mother's brother has to mediate between the two clans, to enquire properly, to insure that there should be no incest, taboo or sin of sexual relationship among clan members (*ka sang ka ma*), and also to ensure that there are no reasons that forbid marriage alliance (*ka wit ka wai*) between the two clans. The mother's brother also has to perform rituals concerning the living as well as the dead, which gives rise to the Khasi saying; *U Kni*, in life and in death, as it is the mother's brother who shoulders the responsibility on behalf of his clan during these times. For his counseling, advice, and admonition, the brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces of the mother's brother in return give him happiness, gratitude, respect and love.

There are also other views provided by writers from Khasi community (Bairo 2009, Syiem 1983, Lyngdoh 1991, Mawrie 1983, Kharakor 1988, Rynjah 1999) on the mother's brother. According to them the mother's brother performs these roles: (i) he takes the responsibility as the counselor, advisor and guide to his family mother's group or families; (ii) he performs religious rites in the household such as naming ceremony; (iii) he controls property in sister's household; (iv) he is involved in taking decisions on all major family issues; (v) looks after the welfare of his nieces and nephews, and his siblings; (vi) provides care and support particularly in times of crisis; (viii) he assists in management of ancestral property; and (ix) helps in settling disputes. In addition to these, in traditional Khasi matriliney, the mother's brother had a role in conduct of various religious ceremonies and in engagement and marriage of nieces and nephews. The mother's brother shuttled between his mother's *iing* and his wife's *iing* and fulfilled the role of uncle and father with equal responsibility.

However, it was also noted by many writers that the position of the mother's brother is changing, and according to H.O. Mawrie (1983:83-85)

‘the position of the *U Kni* has been undermined from the period of colonial subjugation and the change over in faith has affected adversely the beliefs and practices of Khasi society and as result of which has created chaos and confusion in the family, clan and culture as a whole. In the present day, in many households, the Khasi man has lost his position, role and authority and significance both in his sister’s home and also in his children’s home’.

Similar opinion can be observed on the emerging trends with regard to the family system amongst the Khasi households. The observation of A. Mawlong (1998:80-93) explains that the mother’s brother plays a vital role in the lives of his sister and her children in traditional Khasi society. However, the paper also pointed out that 77.5-80 percent of the respondents in the survey stated that the role of the *Kni* is symbolic; he is now informed of family happenings but he does not take decisions. Only 20-22.5 percent of the respondents said that the mother’s brother continues to be a decisive role in the family. It should be noted that the respondents who affirmed the decisive role of the *Kni* belong to the Khasi indigenous faith. The author further explains that the role of the mother’s brother is also dependent on other factors such as the pattern of residence, property implications and his personality. His role may be dominant only in the natal home, the home where the *Khadduh* (youngest daughter) resides.

Expressing similar thoughts was Rynjah (1999:47) who stated that ‘the maternal uncle/uncles and brothers of the womb, are the managers/executors in respect of the ancestral property and the chief uncle, acted’ like a chairman and he listens to different views and seek for consensus from members of the group including women. The author also pointed out that before the conversion to another faith such as Christianity for example, the mother’s brother’s ‘word is law for that group’ and it was the consecrated duty and right of the maternal uncle to look after the sister’s family, including various aspects related to the role and position as the maternal uncle. However, the author also shared that as a result of change in faith, there came about disorder and confusion in matters of rights and responsibilities of the male and female members of society. The role of parents and the role of the other members of the mother’s group had been misinterpreted and practiced, and has resulted in the weakening of Khasi traditions and customs.

Another scholar, I.M. Syiem (1983:90-93) also observed that ‘the functional control of the mother’s brother is diminishing’ because the father has taken over the role of decision –maker with regard to his own children.

The importance of mother's brother is also determined by the frequency of interaction with his maternal kin indicating that lesser social contact with sister's children leads to 'a simultaneous loss of influence of the maternal male and maternal kin in the family'. However, Juanita War (1988) pointed-out that the *Kni* has lost his power and importance 'due to various reasons such as: (i) the geographical and psychological distance; and (ii) having set-up his own family, hence more concerned with his family's affairs (i.e., his wife and children). The author elaborated that, 'it has often been stated that to play the dual roles as father of his children in his wife's home, and that of an uncle in his niece's home is no longer possible nor feasible'.

There is another dimension which must be highlighted when referring to mother's brother. In the preceding description aspects related with position and role of mother's brother have been given due consideration. However, it should be noted that men in matrilineal descent groups may be considered mother's brothers but not all mother's brothers are given authoritative role. In other words, authority role is given to some mother's brothers in the matrilineal descent groups. On the basis of this factor, male members in matrilineal structure and matrilineal descent groups can be separated into three: the first group of mother's brother are 'those who play authority role and hence required for the current operation of the group; the second group of mother's brothers are those who are likely to succeed to replace the present incumbent when they are incapacitated or die; and the last group of mother's brothers are those who are unlikely to succeed to authority roles' (War 1988). It was observed that in the case of the last category of matrilineal males, the matrilineal descent groups may not have control over them and also the group may not directly depend on them so much as in the case of the first category of males and the second category. Consequently the third category of males may gradually loosen kinship ties from the matrilineal descent groups.

### **Conceptualising Mother's Brother**

The discussion on mother's brother may not have been very exhaustive. Taking into account the available literature, attempt has been made in the paper to throw light on varied aspects related with mother's brother and his position in the matrilineal kinship structure and matrilineal descent groups. Many scholars are of the opinion that the position of mother's brother in matrilineal societies is of immense and immeasurable one. Based on this information and understanding the paper argues that the mother's brother in matrilineal societies can be seen as follows:

- (i) The mother's brother has a distinct place in matrilineal descent groups and also assumes a position of respect in his group.
- (ii) The mother's brother who is required or given by the matrilineal descent groups to assume and exercise the authority role is the key decision-maker for and behalf of his group.
- (iii) As a member of the matrilineal descent group, the mother's brother bears responsibility for the well being of his sister and his sister's sons and daughters. His presence is sought in the rites-de-passage of his group such as birth and naming ceremony, marriage sickness and death.
- (iv) The mother's brother's relationship with his sister's children is often one of responsibility and authority. The mother's brother is also seen as an indulgent figure providing help and advice to sister's children. The relationship is of mutual respect and warmth.
- (v) In matrilineal descent groups, women care for the children. Mother's brother has the responsibility of socializing his sister's children in etiquette and manners, rules of kinship, transfer of knowledge and skills, and discipline of his nephews and nieces.
- (vi) At the level of the household his authority role deals with matters concerning management of ancestral property, settlement of disputes, performance of religious rites and rituals during socio-religious occasions, and in everyday life in particular concerning the socialization, discipline and marriage of his sister's children.
- (vii) He holds the power of control on his nephews and nieces. He is also responsible in maintenance of property of sister and her children and upholding of the customary practices relating to inheritance of property by sister's daughter; and he has a role in ensuring harmony and co-operation among the members of his sister's household and of his sister's daughter household.
- (viii) Lastly, as the authority role he represents the matrilineal descent group whenever required or needed such as to ensure peace, harmony and cooperation in the matri-lineage and clan; and harmonious relation with other clans of the matrilineal tribe or any other communities.

While writing on the role of mother's brother in the traditional matrilineal society, it is also pointed out that the process of modernisation of human communities in general and matrilineal communities in particular has brought about some changes on the mother's brother position and authority role. The changes have been attributed to the change in faith and the assuming of definite role by the father and less dependence on mother's brother; the change in occupation and mobility of both male and female members of the matrilineal descent group; and males' inability to cope and manage their dual position - their role as mother's brothers and as fathers; and the growing importance of the father overshadowed the importance of the mother's brother. The literature indicates that in the present times the position and authority role of mother's brother is symbolic and his social significance is gradually eroding.

### Conclusion

The subject- matter of mother's brother is crucial for understanding the social world of matrilineal communities. His status and authority is embedded and intrinsic in the matrilineal social structure. As a male member of the matrilineal descent group, he represents the placement of men vis-à-vis women in matrilineal. Traditionally he is entrusted with authority and responsibility for his matrilineal descent groups in general and the affairs of his sister's children in particular. It is noted that matrilineal communities could not remain immune and static to the changes taking place around. They were influenced directly or indirectly by various developments such as modernization, colonization, change in faith and changes in occupation. Such factors seem to be strengthening the authority role of matrilineal men as fathers and weakening the role of matrilineal men as mother's brothers. It is interesting to see whether the matrilineal structure remain intact, when the role of males in matrilineal societies have started changing.

### References

- Aberle, David. F. 1962. 'Navaho', in David M Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds.) *Matrilineal Kinship* (96-201). Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Bairo, Bandarilin. 2009. 'Eroding Traditional Values: The Role of *U Kni* (The Maternal Uncle) in Present Day Society as Depicted in Khasi Short Stories',

in Badaplin War (ed.) Tribal Literature of North-East India (188-194). Shillong: NEHU Publications

- Basehart, Harry. W. 1962 'Ashanti', in David M Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds.) *Matrilineal Kinship* (270-404). Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Colson, Elizabeth. 1962. 'Plateau Tonga', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds.) *Matrilineal Kinship* (36-95) Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Evans-Pritchard. E. E. 1951. *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fathauer, George H, 1962 'Trobriand', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds.) *Matrilineal Kinship* (234-269) Berkley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Homans, George C. & David. M. Schneider. 1962. 'Mother's Brother in Wikmunkan Society', *Ethnology*, 1 (4): 529-532.
- Kharakor, Philomena. 1988. *Ka Kolshor Khasi Katkum Ba Paw Ha Ka Litereshor Khasi*, Shillong: Don Bosco Press.
- Lyngdoh, M.P.R.1991. *The Festivals in the History and Culture of the Khasi*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
- Lyngdoh, Sngi.1999. 'Breakdown of Authority and Discipline in the Hynniewtrep Present Family Setup', in Margaret B. Challam (ed.) *Dynamics of Family System in a Matriliny of Meghalaya*, Shillong: Director, Arts and Culture, Tribal Research Institute.
- Mawlong, A.1998. 'Some Aspects of Change in the Family System of the Khasis', in Pariyaram M. Chacko (ed.) *Matriliny in Meghalaya: Tradition and Change* (80-93), New Delhi: Regency Publications.
- Mawrie, H. O. 1983. *Ka Longiing Longsem U Khun Khasi Khara*, Shillong: Ri Khasi Press.
- Nongkynrih, A.K. 2002. *Khasi Society of Meghalaya: A Sociological Understanding*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
- Radcliffe- Brown, A.R. 1996. 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa' in R. Jon McGee and California: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Rynjah, S. 1999. 'The Khasi Family: Dynamic Role of Father and Maternal Uncle', in Margaret B. Challam (ed.) *Dynamics of Family System in a Matriliny of Meghalaya*, Shillong: Director, Arts and Culture, Tribal Research Institute.

- Schneider, D. M. & Kathleen Gough. 1962. *Matrilineal Kinship*, Berkley & Los Angeles\: University of California Press.
- Sweetser, Dorian. A. 1966. 'On the Incompatibility of Duty and Affection: A Note on the Role of Mother's Brother', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 68(4): 1009-1013.
- Syiem, I. M. 1983. *Emerging Patterns of Family Relationships Among the Khasis in Shillong* (Unpublished M.Phil Thesis). Shillong: NEHU.
- Synrem, H. Kelian. 1994. '*Ka Bynta Jong U Rangbah Khasi Kum U Kni Bad Kum U Kpa*', in *Khasi National Celebration Committee* (ed.) Ba Ioh Ngi Klet, Shillong: Sevenhuts Enterprise.
- War, Juanita. 1988. 'The Matrilineal System and Social Change in the Khasi Society', Seminar: *Ka Jingshim Jait na ka Kmie Ka Ktah ia Ka Imlang Sahlang ha kine ki Por ba Mynta*. (Mimeographed Articles) (Collection of Articles presented in a seminar on 'Effects of Matrilineal Descent on the Social Life of the Khasi Community Today; Organized by Dr. J. War of NEHU Shillong; Sponsored by NERC-ICSSR, Shillong.