



## Research Article

Volume-06|Issue-09|2025

## Evolution of Administrative Structures in the Tagin Area: A Historical Perspective

TAI GUMJA<sup>1</sup>, YABOM CHEKE<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh, Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>2</sup>Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of English, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh, Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh.

## Article History

Received: 12.09.2025

Accepted: 26.09.2025

Published: 30.09.2025

## Citation

GUMJA, T., CHEKE, Y. (2025). Evolution of Administrative Structures in the Tagin Area: A Historical Perspective. *Indiana Journal of Arts & Literature*, 6(9), 27-32.

**Abstract:** The present study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the administrative system in the Tagin area by examining how and when administrative processes have undergone significant transformation. It critically explores the necessity of administrative change as a “need of the hour,” highlighting the transition from traditional governance structures to contemporary administrative patterns. This transformation reflects broader processes of administrative growth and development driven by modernization, state intervention, and socio-political integration. Methodologically, the study adopts descriptive, analytical, and exploratory approaches to systematically document and interpret the changing administrative framework. It further identifies the enduring impacts of these transformations that remain visible within Tagin society today, thereby situating administrative evolution as a dynamic process of continuity and change.

**Keywords:** Administrative Transformation, Traditional and Modern Governance, Tagin Society, Socio-political Change.

**Copyright © 2025 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

## METHODOLOGY

The study employs descriptive, analytical, and exploratory methods. The descriptive method is used to systematically present and document relevant information as recorded in available sources. The analytical method facilitates a critical examination of the data to develop a deeper understanding of the evolution of administrative processes in the Tagin region. The exploratory method helps to trace and identify distinct phases of administrative growth and development in the area. Data for the study are primarily derived from secondary sources, including books, journal articles, websites, and other relevant published materials.

## INTRODUCTION

The Tagin trace their lineage to *Abutanyi*, the revered ancestral figure from whom the community believes it has descended. They constitute one of the major tribal groups of Arunachal Pradesh, alongside communities such as the Nyishi, Mishimi, Monpa, Wancho, Apatani, Galo, and Adi.

Geographically, the Tagin are distributed across several districts of the state, including parts of Shi Yomi, Kamle, Papum Pare, Changlang (Miao), and Upper Subansiri. However, their principal concentration is in Upper Subansiri District, where settlements extend from Dumporijo Circle through Daporijo, the district headquarters, to Taksing Circle in the northernmost region bordering Tibet. According to the Census of India 2011, the Tagin population stood at 62,931.

Tagin social organization is primarily clan-based, structured around Clan-Based Organizations (CBOs), locally known as *Kambv*. At present, more than twenty such CBOs exist within the community, including prominent groups such as *Tamin*, *Bagang*, *Kojum*, *Leyu*, *Dugam*, *Nalo*, *Maying*, *Topo*, *Heche*, *Reri*, *Tator*, *Sunyi*, and *Dukam*. Each CBO comprises multiple clans and sub-clans, reflecting a complex and layered kinship structure.

In contemporary times, these clan-based organizations function under the umbrella of the Tagin Cultural Society (TCS), the apex representative body of the Tagin people. The TCS plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, fostering inter-clan coordination, and representing the socio-cultural and political interests of the community.

## MEANING OF ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH AND EVOLUTION

**Administrative growth and evolution** refers to the dynamic process through which an administrative system expands, diversifies, and adapts to changing socio-political, economic, and technological conditions. At its core, this process often entails **decentralization**, whereby decision-making authority and operational responsibilities are progressively transferred from central authorities to subordinate or local units. This decentralization fosters efficiency, responsiveness, and inclusivity in governance.

In broader contexts, administrative growth may also be understood as the **extension and refinement of**

**existing administrative patterns**, encompassing the replication of successful structures, the institutionalization of new procedures, and the adaptation of governance frameworks to emerging needs. Thus, it is not merely a matter of numerical expansion such as the increase in administrative units or personnel but a **qualitative transformation** in how administrative systems are organized, managed, and integrated.

Ultimately, the evolution of administration is a **developmental process**, marked by both structural changes and functional maturation, aimed at enhancing the capacity of the system to deliver public services effectively, ensure accountability, and support societal development.

### TAGIN'S ADMINISTRATIVE GROWTH AND EVOLUTION.

The initial phase of administrative penetration into the Tagin region can be traced back to the colonial period, when British India undertook its first systematic attempt to establish contact and extend administrative influence into the area. This effort materialized through the **Miri Mission Survey of 1911–1912**, which was primarily an administrative and exploratory expedition conducted in the erstwhile undivided Subansiri region. The objective of the mission was to explore and survey the upper Subansiri belt with a view to understanding the geographical, social, and administrative landscape of the frontier areas.

During this expedition, the survey team entered parts of the Tagin region with the assistance and guidance of a local figure, **Tamak Riddi**, whose cooperation facilitated their initial movement. However, the mission faced strong resistance from the local inhabitants, which significantly limited its progress. The expedition could only advance up to the area of present-day **Nguki village**, beyond which further penetration into the interior Tagin region proved impossible. Owing to the intense opposition encountered, the British survey team withdrew and did not attempt further exploration into the area at that time.

Despite the limited success of the mission, **Tamak Riddi** received formal recognition from the expedition authorities for his cooperation and assistance. As a mark of appreciation, he was reportedly rewarded with twelve guns. This early encounter represents a significant historical moment, marking the first recorded colonial attempt to introduce administrative exploration into the Tagin area and highlighting the initial resistance of the Tagin people to external administrative intrusion.

In 1913, another significant colonial expedition took place from the northern frontier when F. **M. Bailey**, a British intelligence officer, accompanied by **H. T. Morshead**, undertook an exploratory mission along the frontier between Tibet and the erstwhile North-East Frontier region (present-day Arunachal Pradesh). The

primary objective of this expedition was to survey and map the frontier areas in preparation for the demarcation of an international boundary during the **Shimla Conference (1913–1914)**, which later came to be known as the **McMahon Line**.

During the course of their exploration, **Bailey** and his team traversed the Tsari region of Tibet and came into contact with the Tagin population inhabiting the adjoining frontier areas. Their observations led them to classify the Tagin into two broad categories, **Khalo** and **Tinglo**. The term **Khalo** was used by **Bailey** to denote those Tagin groups who exhibited Tibetan cultural influences, particularly in terms of customs, dress, and socio-religious practices. In the present context, this category is often associated with the Nah clan of the Tagin community, who historically maintained closer interactions with Tibetan cultural spheres.

The remaining Tagin groups were seemed to be categorized under the broader term **Tinglo**, which **Bailey** employed as a collective designation for those Tagin communities who retained relatively indigenous cultural patterns and did not display significant Tibetanized influence. Thus, **Tinglo** functioned as a conglomerate term encompassing the majority of the Tagin population.

This classification by **Bailey** not only reflected colonial attempts to ethnographically map and categorize frontier communities but also marked an important moment in the historical documentation of the Tagin people. It underscored the strategic significance of the region within the broader framework of British frontier policy and boundary-making in the Eastern Himalayas.

Simultaneously, the frontier region of present-day Arunachal Pradesh gradually entered a new phase of administrative development under British colonial policy. The implementation of the **Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880** marked an early attempt to bring the frontier areas under a structured administrative framework. This process led to the formation of the **North-East Frontier Tract in 1914**, which was divided into three administrative units: the **Central** and **Eastern Section**, the **Lakhimpur Frontier Tract**, and the **Western Section**. Subsequent administrative reorganization took place in 1919, when the **Central** and **Eastern Sections** were merged and renamed the **Sadiya Frontier Tract**, while the **Western Section** was redesignated as the **Balipara Frontier Tract**. The **Lakhimpur Frontier Tract** continued under its existing nomenclature. Further expansion of administrative control occurred in 1943 with the creation of the **Tirap Frontier Tract**, carved out from portions of the **Lakhimpur** and **Sadiya Frontier Tracts**. These successive administrative reorganizations reflect the gradual consolidation of colonial governance in the frontier region, laying the foundational framework for modern administrative structures in present-day Arunachal Pradesh.

Amid the ongoing processes of administrative growth and frontier consolidation in the region, the Tibetan Government also undertook an expedition during 1919–1920 under the command of **Dasang Damdul Tsarong**, the Tibetan Commander-in-Chief. This mission aimed to extend Tibetan territorial influence into the upper regions of present-day Upper Subansiri, particularly the frontier areas of Taksing and Limeking circles inhabited by the Tagin community. The expedition was conducted during the reign of the **Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso**, reflecting Tibet's strategic interest in the eastern Himalayan frontier.

**Tsarong** and his battalion reportedly visited and surveyed the region with dual objectives: first, **to assess the feasibility of establishing a military presence in order to secure and extend Tibetan influence**, and second, **to explore commercial prospects, particularly the potential for tea cultivation and trade in the frontier belt**. Although this attempt did not result in permanent territorial control, it highlights the geopolitical significance of the Tagin region as a contested frontier zone where colonial British and Tibetan interests intersected. This episode thus forms an important chapter in the historical trajectory of administrative and territorial contestations in the Upper Subansiri region.

Following the earlier **British and Tibetan** expeditions, no significant territorial surveys or expansionary efforts were undertaken by either British India or the Tibetan authorities in the Tagin region between **1920 and 1944**. After more than two decades of relative administrative silence, a renewed engagement with the region emerged in the form of an anthropological survey conducted by the noted anthropologist **C. V. Haimendorf** in 1944. His primary focus was the undivided Subansiri region, particularly the Ziro Valley, with the objective of studying and documenting Apatani society and culture.

During the course of his fieldwork, **Haimendorf** also extended his exploration into the Tagin-inhabited areas, especially around present-day **Sippi Valley** and **Menga Valley**. In this process, he interacted with members of several Tagin clans and sub-clans, including **Raji, Dignium (Dungium), Tamin, Dai (Dei), Gyadu (Gidu), Mosu, Dasi (Dade), Nilling (Nilo), Kare (Karre), Sikkom (Sikam), Soki, Hina**, and others. Significantly, all of these clans and sub-clans continue to exist within the Tagin community today, demonstrating continuity in their social and kinship structures.

While exploring the Sippi region in 1944, Haimendorf paid a friendly and diplomatic visit to the residence of **Nilling Takhe (Takhe Nilling)** and also met **Nilling Dari**, both of whom were influential figures in the area. During this visit, Haimendorf entered into a

**Daapo** pact with Nilling Takhe, a traditional agreement symbolizing friendship, mutual protection, and guidance. This pact facilitated trust and cooperation between the anthropologist and the local community, enabling deeper engagement and documentation.

Haimendorf's visit thus marked a significant phase in the historical engagement of external administrative and scholarly agents with the Tagin region, laying the groundwork for subsequent administrative outreach and ethnographic understanding.

On the other hand, in the phase of gradually administrative growth and reorganization leading to the eventual formation of present-day Arunachal Pradesh, a significant development occurred in **1946** when the **Balipara Frontier Tract** was reorganized into two separate administrative units, namely the **Se La Sub-Agency** and the **Subansiri Area**. This administrative bifurcation marked a crucial turning point in the colonial frontier policy, aimed at enhancing administrative efficiency, political surveillance, and socio-cultural engagement in the remote tribal regions of the eastern Himalayas. As a result of this reconfiguration, the present Tagin-inhabited areas were automatically incorporated under the jurisdiction of the **Subansiri Area** after being carved out from the **Balipara Frontier Tract**. This administrative inclusion not only formalized the political positioning of the Tagin people within the emerging frontier governance structure but also laid the foundational framework for their subsequent integration into the evolving administrative and territorial identity of Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, the 1946 reorganization stands as a decisive administrative milestone that structurally positioned the Tagin community within the Subansiri administrative unit, ultimately contributing to the broader historical process of state formation in the region.

Following India's independence in 1947, the Tagin-inhabited region became an integral component of the broader process of Indianisation, as the former frontier tracts were gradually incorporated into the administrative framework of the newly independent Indian state. As part of this process of political consolidation and administrative expansion, the Government of India undertook systematic efforts to establish formal administrative institutions in the remote frontier areas. In this regard, a significant step was taken in **1953** when two administrative circles, Daporijo and Dumporijo were successfully established within the Tagin region under the undivided Subansiri Frontier Area. This marked the formal extension of modern administrative governance into the Tagin territory and represented a crucial phase in the integration of the region into the Indian administrative system.

However, the initial phase of administrative penetration was not without tension and resistance. In the same year, **1953**, the Taliha region witnessed a serious

confrontation between the local Tagin population and the Indian forces, which is known as **Aching Mooring Incident**. Owing to a lack of familiarity with modern legal-administrative structures, communication barriers, and instances of alleged ill-treatment and unauthorized appropriation of domesticated animals by security personnel, a climate of distrust and resentment emerged among the tribal inhabitants. These factors cumulatively generated hostility towards the Indian presence, eventually culminating in a violent outbreak in which a large number of security personnel, reportedly **forty-seven(47)** members of a company, were killed by local tribesmen.

This tragic episode stands as a significant historical moment in the early phase of state expansion into the frontier region, highlighting the complexities and challenges of integrating remote indigenous societies into a modern administrative and legal framework. In the aftermath of this confrontation and subsequent administrative reassessment, Daporijo was firmly established as an administrative centre in **1953**, while Taliha gradually emerged as a separate administrative unit from **1954** onwards. Thus, these developments reflect both the difficulties and the gradual consolidation of administrative control in the Tagin region during the formative years of post-independence governance.

In the aftermath of the violent confrontation in the early 1950s, the Government of India undertook renewed administrative expeditions into the Tagin-inhabited areas with the objective of consolidating state presence and extending the frontier administration into the peripheral and previously unadministered regions. One such significant expedition advanced up to the present-day Limeking area and was led by **Geeta Krishnatry** along with her husband (**S M Krishnatry**) in **1956**. This administrative outreach formed part of a broader strategy of gradual political engagement, persuasion, and confidence-building with the indigenous population to facilitate the peaceful extension of Indian governance.

The expedition proved largely successful in establishing communication and fostering a measure of trust among the Tagin communities residing in the bordering and interior regions. Through sustained interaction and negotiation, the administrative team was able to convince local inhabitants to accept the establishment of Indian administrative outposts and check posts in their respective areas. Consequently, Limeking emerged as an administrative circle and formally began functioning in **1956**. Similarly, Dumporijo and Nacho were incorporated into the administrative framework in **1953**, Taksing was brought under formal administrative service in **1959**.

These developments collectively represent a crucial phase in the progressive expansion and consolidation of Indian administration in the Tagin

region. The establishment of these administrative circles not only strengthened governmental presence in the remote frontier but also facilitated greater political integration, administrative communication, and socio-economic interaction between the state and the indigenous Tagin population. Thus, the post-expedition administrative expansion marked a decisive step in the gradual incorporation of the Tagin areas into the evolving administrative structure of what would later become Arunachal Pradesh.

In the broader trajectory of administrative transformation from the Frontier Tract system to a more structured frontier governance, a major institutional development took place in 1954 with the promulgation of the **North-East Frontier Areas (Administration) Regulation, 1954**. Through this **Regulation**, the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) formally came into existence, marking a significant shift in the administrative organization of the frontier regions under the Government of India. This reorganization aimed to ensure systematic governance, political integration, and administrative consolidation of the diverse tribal-inhabited territories along India's northeastern frontier.

Under the NEFA framework, the territory was divided into several administrative divisions, largely named after the major river systems of the region, namely **Tirap, Lohit, Kameng, Siang, and Subansiri**. The Tagin-inhabited areas were placed under the **Subansiri Division**, thereby formally integrating the Tagin community into the evolving administrative structure of NEFA. This incorporation represented an important stage in the gradual extension of modern administrative institutions into the interior tribal regions.

As part of this administrative consolidation, Daporijo, one of the important circles within the Subansiri Division, was upgraded to the status of a sub-divisional headquarters in **1957**. This upgradation was carried out by incorporating and adjoining several areas from the northern bank of the Subansiri River, thereby expanding its administrative jurisdiction and significance. Subsequently, in **1959**, an **Assistant Political Officer** was posted at **Daporijo** as the head of the administrative unit, reflecting the increasing institutionalization and formalization of governance in the region.

These developments collectively illustrate the progressive administrative growth and structural reorganization of the Tagin region within the NEFA framework, laying a firm foundation for its later incorporation into the modern administrative system of Arunachal Pradesh.

On the eve of the Indo-Sino War, the administrative reorganisation of the frontier areas was undertaken with greater urgency in order to ensure effective governance and closer supervision of the

remote tribal belts. In this context, the creation of **Siyum** in **1963** marked a significant administrative intervention in the Tagin inhabited region. These new circles were established primarily to facilitate smoother administrative functioning, improve communication between the state and the local population, and extend governmental services to previously less-accessible areas. The measure reflected a broader policy of consolidating administrative control and integrating the frontier tribal areas into a more structured governance framework.

A major transformation followed in **1965** when the **North East Frontier Agency (NEFA)**, now Arunachal Pradesh, witnessed a systematic change in administrative nomenclature and structure. The earlier colonial-derived administrative terms were replaced with designations that aligned more closely with the standard Indian administrative system. Thus, “**Divisions**” were redesignated as “**Districts**,” the “**Political Officer**” became the “**Deputy Commissioner**,” and the “**Assistant Political Officer**” was redefined as the “**Assistant Deputy Commissioner**”. This transition signified not merely a change in terminology but a shift toward a more formalised and integrated administrative apparatus. Consequently, Upper Subansiri Division came to be officially recognised as **Upper Subansiri District**, with Ziro serving as its headquarters. This reorganisation represented a decisive step in the institutional consolidation of governance in the frontier region and laid the foundation for subsequent administrative and developmental initiatives.

#### EVOLUTION OF TAGIN’S DISTRICT

The formal emergence of Upper Subansiri into the public administrative domain may be traced to **13 May 1980**, when the erstwhile undivided **Subansiri District** was bifurcated into two distinct administrative units, **Lower Subansiri District** with **Ziro** as its headquarters and **Upper Subansiri District** with **Daporijo** as its headquarters. This reorganisation marked a decisive phase in the constitutional and administrative evolution of the region, as it brought the Tagin-inhabited areas under a full-fledged district administration headed by a Deputy Commissioner. Such restructuring reflected the broader post-independence policy of the Government of India to strengthen grassroots administration in the frontier tribal regions and to ensure effective implementation of constitutional safeguards, developmental schemes, and governance mechanisms within the framework of the Indian Union. This formation period indicates that district was formed and bifurcated before the Arunachal Pradesh as a full-fledged state come into existence.

The subsequent creation and reorganisation of administrative circles within Upper Subansiri further illustrate the gradual process of administrative consolidation and territorial rationalisation. The establishment of Giba Circle in **1980** initiated a series of

micro-level administrative expansions aimed at enhancing accessibility, governance efficiency, and service delivery in remote Tagin-dominated areas. Over time, the administrative map of the district continued to evolve through the creation of new circles by bifurcating existing ones: Paying Circle was carved out of the erstwhile Taliha Circle on **26 January 1999**, Chetam Circle emerged from the former Giba Circle in **2001**, and Gusar Circle was established in **2003**. This process of administrative decentralisation continued into the twenty-first century with the formation of Lab-Le Circle in **2023** from the undivided Paying Circle and Nilling Circle in **2024** from the erstwhile Chetam Circle. Each of these developments signified the state’s sustained effort to deepen administrative penetration, strengthen local governance, and facilitate developmental outreach in geographically challenging terrains.

From the perspective of constitutional development, these administrative transformations embody the extension of modern governance structures into tribal frontier regions while simultaneously accommodating indigenous socio-cultural realities. The progressive multiplication of circles and sub-divisions within Upper Subansiri demonstrates a deliberate attempt to bring governance closer to the people, ensuring representation, administrative accessibility, and effective implementation of welfare and development policies. At present, the Tagin population is predominantly distributed across twelve administrative circles, Daporijo, Dumporijo, Gusar, Siyum, Taliha, Nacho, Giba, Paying, Chetam, Nilling, Taksing, Lab-Le, and Limeking, and three sub-divisions, namely Dumporijo, Taliha, and Siyum. This administrative configuration reflects not only the demographic concentration of the Tagin community but also the broader trajectory of administrative growth and constitutional integration of Upper Subansiri within the evolving governance structure of Arunachal Pradesh.

#### CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion clearly indicates that the administrative framework in the Tagin-inhabited region evolved through parallel initiatives undertaken from both the British Indian and Tibetan sides. In its initial phase, the extension of administrative authority into this frontier zone was neither immediate nor effortless, owing largely to its difficult terrain, sparse population, and limited communication networks. Consequently, the early process of administrative expansion remained gradual and exploratory in nature. Through a series of surveys, expeditions, and ethnographic engagements, the region was progressively brought within the ambit of formal governance. These exploratory undertakings laid the foundation for the eventual incorporation of the Tagin areas into a structured administrative system.

Over time, with sustained efforts of territorial mapping, political expeditions, and anthropological

surveys, the Tagin community gradually came within the purview of an organised administrative set-up. This transition marked the beginning of a more systematic process of governance, characterised by the establishment of administrative units, circles, and later districts, aimed at ensuring effective supervision and service delivery. The administrative growth in the region, therefore, may be understood as a continuous and evolving process rather than a single historical event. It reflects the gradual consolidation of state authority alongside the integration of indigenous communities into a broader constitutional and developmental framework.

Furthermore, the trajectory of administrative development in the Tagin belt has remained closely linked with demographic expansion and the growing socio-economic needs of the population. As population increased and settlements expanded, the necessity for further administrative decentralisation and institutional strengthening became evident. This led to the creation of additional circles, sub-divisions, and district-level structures to facilitate governance, development planning, and public service accessibility. Hence, the administrative evolution of the Tagin region represents an ongoing journey of institutional growth, shaped by historical exploration, territorial consolidation, and the dynamic requirements of a developing frontier society.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Haimendorf, C. V. (1947). *Ethnographic notes on the tribes of the Subansiri region*. Assam Government Press.
2. Haimendorf, C. V. (1955). *Himalayan barbary*. John Murray.
3. Bailey, F. M. (1957). *No passport to Tibet*. Butler & Tanner.
4. Elwin, V. (1957). *A philosophy for NEFA*. Manohar Publishers & Distributors.
5. Luthra, P. N. (1971). *Constitutional and administrative growth of Arunachal Pradesh*. M/S Y. D. Enterprise.
6. Choudhury, S. Dutta. (1981). *Subansiri district*. N. K. Gossain & Co. Pvt. Ltd.
7. Bose, M. L. (1997). *History of Arunachal Pradesh*. Ashok Kumar Mittal.
8. Huber, T. (1999). *The cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*. Oxford University Press.
9. Tsarong, D. N., & Chodron, A. T. (2000). *The biography of Dasang Damdul Tsarong: Commander General of Tibet*. Snow Lion Publications.
10. Krishnatry, S. M. (2005). *Border Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh*. National Book Trust.
11. Riddi, A. (2006). *The Tagins of Arunachal Pradesh*. Abhijeet Publications.
12. Huber, T. (2011). Pushing south: Tibetan economic and political activities in the far eastern Himalaya, ca. 1900–1950. In A. McKay & A. Balicki-Denjongpa (Eds.), *Buddhist Himalaya: Studies in religion, history and culture* (Vol. 1, pp. 259–276). Namgyal Institute of Tibetology.
13. Raji, B. (2014). *Political transition in Tagin tribe of Arunachal Pradesh*. Himalayan Publishers.
14. Dubey, S. (2014). *Government and politics in Arunachal Pradesh*. Premiere Publications.
15. Riddi, A. (2024). *Dibv Nyilwng-IV*. Eureka Offset & Imaging Systems.
16. Jana, B. (2021). Evolution and development of public administration. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 9(1), 4239–4244.
17. Upper Subansiri District. (n.d.). *Circles*. <https://uppersubansiri.nic.in/circles/>