

= Matrilineal society of Meghalaya =

Multiple tribes in the state of Meghalaya in northeast India practise matrilineal descent . Often referred to as Khasi people , Khasi is used as a blanket term for various subgroups in Meghalaya who have distinguishing languages , rites , ceremonies , and habits , but share an ethnic identity as Ki Hynniew Trep ( The Seven Huts ) . The Khasi , Garo , and other subgroups have a proud heritage , including matrilineality , although it was reported in 2004 that they were losing some of their matrilineal traits . The tribes are said to belong to one of the " largest surviving matrilineal culture [ s ] " in the world .

= = Background = =

Khasi , among multiple tribes in the state of Meghalaya in northeast India , practise matrilineal descent . They are referred to as Khasi people ; Khasi is used as an umbrella phrase to refer to many subgroups in Meghalaya who have distinguishing languages , rites , ceremonies , and habits , but share an ethnic identity as Ki Hynniew Trep ( The Seven Huts ) .

Khasi are an ancient tribe said to be the " largest surviving matrilineal culture [ s ] " in the world. who , along with other subgroups , such as Garo , live in Meghalaya , as well as bordering areas of Assam and Bangladesh . Khasis are believed to be migrants with ancestral links to the Mon @-@ Khmer people of East Asia . The matrilineal tradition which the Khasi and other subgroups practice in Meghalaya is unique within India . Matrilineal principles among the Khasi are emphasised in myths , legends , and origin narratives . Khasi kings embarking on wars left the responsibility of running the family to women and thus their role in society became very deep rooted and respected . Reference to Nari Rajya ( female kingdom ; or land of matriarchy ) in the epic Mahabharata likely correlates with the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Meghalaya 's present @-@ day matrilineal culture . The proud heritage of the Khasi , Garo , and other subgroups is matrilineality ; however in 2004 it was reported that their matrilineal traits were on the wane .

= = Rights , roles , responsibilities = =

Women have a dominant role in the matrilineal society of Meghalaya . The youngest daughter of the family , the Ka Khadduh , inherits all ancestral property . After marriage , husbands live in the mother @-@ in @-@ law 's home . The mother 's surname is taken by children . When no daughters are born to a couple , they adopt a daughter and pass their rights to property to her . The birth of a girl is celebrated while the birth of a son is simply accepted . There is no social stigma attributed to a woman remarrying or giving birth out of wedlock as the " Khasi Social Custom of Lineage Act " gives security to them . Women are known to intermarry outside their tribe . The women who enjoy all the rights live an independent life , dress well , attend church , and many prefer not to get married . They enjoy total security , unlike in the rest of the country . A successful career women of the Khasi society feels that " their societal anomaly " has enabled her to be successful in every way . Most small businesses are managed by women .

In 1994 , Bina Agarwal compared characteristic features between the Garo and Khasi . She reported that Garo practiced matrilineal inheritance , matrilineal post @-@ marital residence , a preference for cross @-@ cousin marriage , acceptance of pre @-@ marital sex by women , but adultery by women is punished , while the Khasi practised matrilineal inheritance , matrilineal and duolocal post @-@ marital residence ( in which the husband lives in a separate house while the wife stays at her parents ? residence ) , an aversion to cross @-@ cousin marriage , and again , acceptance of pre @-@ marital sex by women , but adultery by women is punished .

Care of children is the responsibility of mothers or mothers @-@ in @-@ law . The youngest daughter of this society who inherits the ancestral property holds a pivotal role of looking after the welfare of her parents in their old age , as well as the welfare and education of her siblings .

Some Khasi men perceive themselves to be accorded a secondary status . They have established societies such as the Syngkhong Rympei Thymmai ( SRT ) ( 3 @ , @ 000 members ) and Sam Kam

Rin Ku Mai ( Societal Restructuring Association ) to protect equal rights for men . They express that " Khasi men don't have any security , they don't own land , they don't run the family business and , at the same time , they are almost good for nothing . ? However , Patricia Mukhim , who edits the Shillong Times feels : " I tend to think Khasi men feel diminished in their manhood compared with outsiders ... it 's a pity , because that 's what distinguishes us from the others " .

While the society is matrilineal , it is not matriarchal . In past monarchies of the state , the son of the youngest sister of the king inherited the throne . Even now in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly or village councils or panchayats the representation of women in politics is minimal . As of 2013 , in a Meghalaya Legislative Assembly of 60 members , there are only four women . In the male centric Dorbar Shnong , which is the basic political arm of the tribes , women are not permitted to hold office . However , women feel that they take better care of money matters than men and they enjoy economic freedom .