



**UNIQUE SOCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE  
'DZUMSA' IN LACHUNG, NORTH SIKKIM IN INDIA  
AND ITS ROLE IN FOREST MANAGEMENT IN  
SHINGBA RHODODENDRON SANCTUARY**

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**Abstract:** Dzumsa is the social administrative structure that has the power to initiate any development activities and implement decision in the area. The paper covers the Dzumsa of Lachung, North Sikkim. The study conducted to unravel its structure and roles in the forestry activities. The data obtained during the survey of Microplanning of Shinga Rhododendron Sanctuary. Several interactions done to reveal the findings, which was presented here. Findings of the uniqueness of Dzumsa of Lachung were categorically arrange including its organization structures, functionaries, roles etc. The significant days in support of forest management were also discuss along with agricultural aspect and water sources to understand the livelihood of the regions.

**Keywords:** *Dzumsa, Lachung, North Sikkim, Self-Government*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Sikkim (India) is the mountainous area represented by distinct communities (Pradhan, 2021; Pradhan *et al.*, 2022). There are two unique places in Sikkim namely Lachen and Lachung where there are the formation of Dzumsa, the traditional social administrative institution. This local traditional setup of region is responsible for all development activities and cater the decisions in the particular region (MSRS. 2012; Thapa and Sachdeva, 2017; [mdd.sikkim.gov.in](http://mdd.sikkim.gov.in)). It is similar to the Panchayat Raj. The Dzumsa performed different activities pertaining to ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological, natural

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or zoological significances to protect and conserve the forest resources (MSRA, 2012). Thus, the paper presented the information of the Dzumsa and its setup in connection to the environment. Every household of the Lachung region is the member of Dzumsa, who by default, is the member of ecodevelopment Committee of Shinga Rhododendron Sanctuary and has the participatory roles for the developmental activities. The notification number of the ecodevelopment Committee of Shinga Rhododendron Sanctuary is 1/WL/F/76/204 (2002) (MSRA, 2012). Thus, the Dzumsa of Lachung has a pivotal role in the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary. The region of Lachung is the type habitat of several fauna and flora species and known across the world (Hooker, 1854; Hara, 1966 Hara, 1971; King and Pantling, 1898). Therefore, the paper included the information of Dzumsa of Lachung and its roles in the forest resources management in Shinga Wildlife Sanctuary.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

Reconnaissance of the data from the primary sources obtained interacting with the ecodevelopment committees (EDC) of Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary, Lachung, Sikkim. All data obtained from the eco-development committee (EDC) in the prescribed format were analyzed and presented in this paper.

#### Study Area of Shinga Rhododendron Sanctuary

**Table 1:**

**Name, Location, Constitution and Extent ((MSRA, 2012)**

<b>Declaration No</b>	46/WL/F/92/1585/F&WL
<b>Declaration Date</b>	05/12/1992
<b>Area</b>	43 sq. km
<b>Legal status</b>	Reserve Forests.
<b>Altitude</b>	3048m-4575m
<b>Range</b>	Shingba
<b>Division</b>	North Wildlife Division, Sikkim
<b>Revenue Sub-Division</b>	Tsungthang
<b>District</b>	Mangan

Table 2:

**Legal Boundaries ((MSRA, 2012)**

<b>East</b>	The boundary starts from the ridges of hot spring Sinkaam extending up to the highest peak above Chhuba Pangkhusum along the ridge of Sagachen.
<b>West</b>	The western boundary starts from ridges starting from Thingbong Dongney Yakchila following ridges up to little short off Seokeen.
<b>North</b>	The northern boundary starts from the Sinkaam Peak above hot spring and across the Yumthang chu further traverse the land by a stream known as Khigognongtong near hot spring bridge.
<b>South</b>	The boundary starts from Pangkhusum peak of Chhuba following ridge across the Yumthang chu and join the western boundary at above Thingbong dongney at Yakchay.

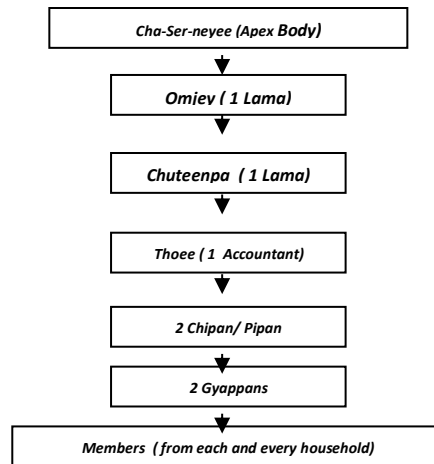
**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In accord to the National Forest Policy Resolution (1988)( <https://pib.gov.in/>), the State Government of Sikkim published a notification bearing number 202/F on June 26, 1998 to constitute the Forest Protection Committees for the forest management which is further amended by Notification No 105/F on May 14, 2001 and Notification No. 472/ FEWMD on October 1, 2002 for the EDC beneficiaries. The EDC of Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary included the members from the Dzumsa of Lachung and played a pivotal role for the development of regions.

**1. Setup of Dzumsa of Lachung**

Cha-Ser-neyee is the highest apex body of Dzumsa, Lachung that is constituted with Omjey ( Lama), Chuteenpa (Lama), Thoe (Accountant), Two Chi- pan (Pipans from Layma and Kedung), two Gyappans (Assistants of Pipan) and the representatives of each and every households of Lachung. All discussions and decisions are implemented in the region according to the guidelines and directions of the apex body. The doctrine of rules and regulations of the body, Dzumsa, is aged old practice that is documented in Tibetan Script or in khee-ooop. Socially, the people are having deep faith in Buddhism in

general, and the sacred place of Lachung is Chuba Gumpa that is an oldest Gumpa where local pilgrims (all inhabitants of Lachung) offer their prayers.



**Fig 1: Organogram of Dzumsa**

The Lachung’s Dzumsa divided the valley into the twenty two blocks (compartments) to manage the region where the Shinba Rhododendron Sanctuary (SRS) contains four blocks as per the Dzumsa Code of Doctrine ( Table 3). These blocks under Dzumsa are allocated for the forest development and conservation works and maintain ecological balance in Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary.

**Table 3:**

**Name of the Blocks and Place Names in SRS**

Sr No	Name of Blocks	Places names
1	Block 1	Yakche Kungoo, Kaka Feya, Shingba Kungoo, Yakche, Chubijam, Shingba, Dorangey, Dorangap Kungoo, PhuniChoka
2	Block 2	Singzam, Chuba, Chubatey, Phuni and Singzama
3	Block 3	Lamchung, Singkam
4	Block 4	Pom, Chachuja, Toryga

**Table 4:****Number of Household at the forest fringes of SRS (in 2012)**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Household Number</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
Yakche	7	28
Chuba	7	28
Chukoring	12	48
Namnasa	4	16
Taling	5	20
Dombang	25	100
Ferey Faka	26	104
<b>Total</b>		<b>344</b>

*Source: The Survey Team, 2012***MANAGEMENT OF DZUMSA, LACHUNG**

*Announcement of Meeting:* Dzumsa meeting is called from the hill tops of Bechu (Norbu Gang Hills) and Sarsook (Gompa hills) verbally on the contrary, to call the Meeting of Lamas, the shell (Sankha) is blown twice.

*Thuwa Nam-Tang:* Once in a year, all inhabitants of Lachung shall be called upon by the Dzumsa for the Taxation, Tuhoo tey (Smoke fee) and clean development of the regions. The day is called Thuwa Nam-Tang.

*Mitigation Plan:* A unique forest mitigation plan was found in Dzumsa. As per the plan, those who require one tree for household purpose ought to plant and maintain three plants. Such planning and actions discuss in the Dzumsa/ Char-Sah-Nee for the monitoring.

**Financial Management**

Financial Management of Cha-Ser-Neyee is placed in Dzumsa by Thoe (Accountant) for the transparency. The beneficiaries were allocated the benefits, especially among the stakeholders of Lachung. As the people have deep faith on Lamas,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the benefit (Chenee sumchi) is donated to Gumpa, 0.5% to Tibetan Gumpa, and rest is allocated to the upliftment of stakeholders and for village development fund as per the requirement.

### **POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF CHA-SEAR-NEE OFFICE BEARERS**

*Omjey:* Omjey conducts and presides the meeting of Cha-Sar-Neyee, consults with the lama and others for the final decision, and adds and delete the rules and regulations subjected to the development of the Lachung people.

*Chuteenpa (Lama):* Chuteenpa assists the Omjey for the meeting of Cha-Sar-Neyee and provides the advices to the Omjey for the developmental activities.

*Thoe (Accountant):* Thoe (Accountant) keeps and maintains the accounts of Cha-Sar-Neyee and Dzumsa and assists the meeting.

*Powers and functions of Pipan:* Pipan conducts the meeting in the Dzumsa house, monitors the financial activities of Dzumsa, allocates the financial assistance to each and every household. It provides the block allocation for the developmental work, maintains the rules and regulations of Dzumsa, sacred places and other, maintains the peace and harmony in the Lachung and administers and executes the rules and regulations of Dzumsa.

*Gyappan:* Gyappan assists the Pipan for the development of Lachung, announces the date of Dzumsa meeting as declared by Pipan, maintains and documents the financial and physical activities of Dzumsa and keeps the cordial relation with the people of Lachung.

*Term of Pipan and Date of Appointment:* The tenure of Pipan is one year only and may extend further or Dzumsa may elect the new Pipan. The selection of Pipan shall be performed in the month of December i.e on Chey-Cho chi. In case any detrimental act of Pipan, the Dzumsa meeting may be called upon and may declare new Pipan terminating the earlier Pipan.

## ACTIVITIES OF DZUMSA FOR FOREST RESOURCES CONSERVATION

Dzumsa allocated the area of valley for the work that is designated as Block (Table 3).

The specific days for the nature friendly activities perform by the Lamas of EDC (Shinga Rhododendron Sanctuary), who forbid the killing of any animals. Such days are Namkhang ( New Moon Day), Chegey ( 8<sup>th</sup> day of Month), Che Chu (10<sup>th</sup> day of Month), Che-Changa (15<sup>th</sup> of Month) and Neragang (25<sup>th</sup> of Month). The Lamas of EDC prohibit the burning of natural resources at their farm land especially during Chechanga of the Month (15<sup>th</sup> day of month) and observed Smoke free day..

Further, the Dzumsa, the traditional administrative institution, has the rules and regulations since time immemorial for the management of wildlife and flora, which are strictly followed by the Lamas, failing shall impose fine of Rupees five thousand and ought to light 108 lamps and offer pray from designated place from Lachung Bridge to Lachung Gumpa. It indicated that Lamas are proactive towards to the environment and conservation.

Cha-Sar-Nee is the rule of tree planting and forest management plan for every family. Based on this, the Dzumsa recommends the plantations to the appropriate authority. Remarkably, the Singba Rhododendron Sanctuary is known for the type habitats of many species of fauna and flora of Sikkim.

During the survey, it is noted that human interference in the Trans –Himalayan Valley Corridor interrupts the movement of animals from the East Himalayan belt. As Sikkim shares its international border with Bhutan, China and Nepal, the developmental activities at the international border areas, the loss of forest cover, natural habitat etc push the movement of animal towards the safe regions. These reasons might be the cause of decrease in visit of some animals like *Cervus elapus*, *Panthera tigris* in the sanctuary and now no more at all ([www.travelfilmarchive.com](http://www.travelfilmarchive.com)). The local inhabitants witnessed the last visit in the year 1960 as reported during the interview. Improving and addressing the threat in the trans-himalayan regions, the wildlife in Lachung areas might be strengthen, as commented by EDC during the survey.

## AGRICULTURE AND WATER SOURCES IN FOREST FRINGES OF SHINGBA RHODODENDRON SANCTUARY

Next, one of the livelihood activities of Lachung is agriculture. Lachung farmers cultivate potato, cabbage and other for two consecutive years in one field. Subsequently, these agriculturists abandoned the farmland for two to three years and again resume farming in same plot. They claimed that such farming benefit them as there is no plant pathogen at field and helps to regain the soil fertility due to crop rotation. The names of some crops are presented along with Lachungpa's Language (L) in parenthesis.

#### a) Kharif Vegetables

Cucumber (Kangey (L)), Pumpkin( Vangey (L)), Squash( Lopzodeybu (L)), Cabbage, Beans (Tibi (L)).

#### b) Rabi Vegetable

Radish (Lahoo (L)) Sag (Machu (L))

#### c) Crops of Lachung and Forest Fringes of Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary

Potato (Kiwoo (L)) Wheat (Noo (L)) Radish (Lahoo (L)) Maize (Kenchoo) Barley (Khyoe (L))

### Water Sources

The water sources are important for the agricultural activities so the writing included the water sources of the Shingba Rhododendron Sancturay, Lachung which are also significant for other livelihood activities of region.

**Table 5:**  
**Water Source of SRS, Lachung**

Perennial Water Source/s	Seasonal Water Source/s
Shingba	Shingba
Chuba	Dooyyap
Phuni	Chumado
Chuba Taye	Phuni
Yumthang Chu	Pom
Dobmang	Singzam
Sharsoo	Phuni-Phaka
-	Singkam
-	Pomlakha



## CONCLUSION

Interestingly, the people living in the far-flung area are obtaining unanimous decision for the development of region is highly appreciative. It is also helping to the communities to conserve the bioresources as well as maintain the social structure. In many cases, several explorers praised the local administrative structure of Dzumsa that is a sole responsible setup for the progressive action of the region. With the change of time, the region is available with several facilities even so the traditional administrative system is doing well and is the pivotal of the region. This writing attempts to document the Dzumsa, the local administrative institution and its roles in forest resources management. It warrants further studies on the resources mappings and impacts correlating with socio-economic development.

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