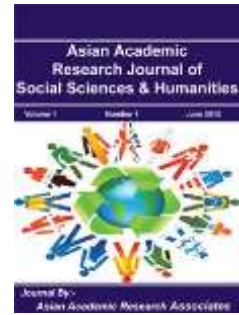




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**SIGNIFICANCE OF ORAL LITERATURE IN THE PRESERVATION OF  
CUSTOMARY LAWS (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE HMAR TRIBE IN  
NORTHEAST INDIA)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Hmar forefathers did not have written form of language and passed on orally the more memorable experiences and practices of their life, their customs and traditions, from one generation to another. It can be presumed that changes in content and spirit must have seeped in into these. The surviving ones, sometimes corroborated by British records, have provided materials for reconstruction of their history and inspired later generations to frame their customary laws. These oral sources include legends, folk tales, folk songs and poems, sayings and proverbs, riddles and puzzles, laws regulating village administration and distribution of cultivable land, practices in the event of death and other calamities, rituals related to death and disposal of dead body, the various processes involved in arranging marriages, bride prices, divorce, etc., punishment (and fines) imposed on criminals and law-breakers, inheritance and matters related to distribution of family properties among inheritors.

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