

Socio-Economic Status of Mising Women: A Study Based On Two Mising Villages of Lakhimpur District, Assam

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ABSTRACT:

The Miris or Mising are belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family of Mongoloid group and they are the one of the colourful tribes of Assam. The sixth schedules of the constitution of India include the Miris one of the schedule tribes of Assam. They are now recognized as plain tribes of Assam and found mostly in the district of Dhemaji, Lakhimpur Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Jorhat, Tinsukia, Sonitpur etc. from the point of occupation they are primarily agriculturists. Since very early time they mobilized on place to another because of their shifting cultivation till the introduction of the advance type of agriculture. Missing people are found at the most fertile land and the banks of river Brahmaputra and settle on the sides of the rivers. Through their production was great, frequent flood prevented from climbing the economic ladder. The Missing are comparatively small ethnic cultural group of Assam in terms of population size, but their contribution to the cultural political, social and economic life Assam in no less important than those of other groups. The first part will state a historical overview, the second part also indicates objective, methods, description etc. on Mising traditional way of life faiths, economy and livelihood along with religion-culture those intrinsically involves. Due to poor socio-economic situation their increasing discrimination with the general people compelling them in stagnation in existing position. It can be depicted their transformation instead of the strict adherence to native religions faith of their own the Christian Missionaries failed to convert them into the Christianity. But due to the improvement of communication systems both-mass media and transposition establishment of education intuition the villager have the opportunity to come into the contest with the other world. The third part will discuss their socio-economic problems and its consensus. Many changes and important measure took place in the socio-economic life of the Misings society with the passage in they have also been developing new attitude, outlook new ideas. At the last some new findings along with conclusions are to be drawn.

Keywords: Socio-economic study, innovative measures, behavioural management.

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I. INTRODUCTION:-

Assam, the easternmost State of India, is the abode of various tribes. Every tribal group of Assam has its own fascinating culture which includes dress pattern, dwelling, diet, art, music and dance. In the tribal scenario of Assam there are 14 hill scheduled tribes and 9 plain scheduled tribes. The list of the plain scheduled tribes comprises viz., Barman in Kachar, Bodo Kachari, Deori, Hojai Kachari, Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri (Mising) and Rava. Among these plain tribes after the Bodo, the Mising is the second largest tribe in Assam and the constituted 2.07% of the total population of the State (1991 census). According to the census of 2011 the population of Mising in Assam is 6,80,424 of which 3,45,786 are male and 3,34,638 female, with sex ratio of 967 per thousand. One of their

peculiarities is that they prefer to live mostly in riverine areas and are well adapted to those areas since their migration from the hills of Siang and Subansiri districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Their settlements lie approximately between 93° E and longitudes and 27° N latitudes. The society is Patriarchal. The women are more active than the men in certain spheres of life and are experts in weaving. The mirijim (gadoo), which is a heavy cotton rug, is well known in various parts of north east. Morung is the youth dormitory of the Misings. They have a rich tradition of folk songs and dance. Ali-aye-ligang and po-rag are their main festivals, which are associated with agricultural activities. Their religious beliefs, food habits, dress, songs and dances are reflected in the celebration of those festivals. We have drawn a pen picture of the

Mising tribe and other different aspects of the community below.

Population:

According to 1971 census, the total population of Mising (Miri) tribe in Assam was 259,551. In 1980, no census operation could be done due to Assam Agitation launched for detection and deportation of foreign nationals. The subsequent census of 1991 recorded total population of the tribe at 467,790. The total population increased to 587,310 in 2001 census. Of total 587,310 the male-female figures were 299,790 and 287,520 respectively, the ratio being about 959 female against per 1000 male population According to census of India conducted in 2011, the population of Mising in Assam is 6,87,310 of which 3,95,710 are male and 2,67,520 female. They live in 11 districts of Assam: Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Bishwanath, Tinsukia, Majuli, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Charaideo, Jorhat and Golaghat. The Misings have various clans such as, Bori, Gam, Doley, Kuli, Kutum, Kumbang, Kaman, Kardong, Morang, Mili, Narah, Pegu, Patir, Padi, Payeng, Regon, Chungkrang, Tayung, Taid, Taye, Yein, etc. There are further classification of nine different groups known as Pagro, Delu, Oyan, Dambug, Sa-yang, Moying, Samuguria, Temera and Bongkual. Moreover, to these groups, two more groups, namely Bihia and Bebejia are also described as Mising by some authors.

Economy:

Agriculture is the principal means of subsistence of the Misings community. The grow different varieties of rice paddy, some of which they sow in spring for harvesting in summer, some others being transplanted during the rainy season and harvested in autumn. Agriculture is the principal means of subsistence of the Misings community. They cultivate different varieties of rice paddy, some of which they are sown in spring harvesting in summer, they transplant some others during the rainy season and harvest them in autumn. They also grow mustard, pulses, maize, vegetables, tobacco, bamboo, areca, etc, principally for their own use, with the exception of, they are poor horticulturists. The women also contribute to the overall income of the family by rearing pigs, fowls and most often goats. They are buyers, not makers of metallic utensils and jewellery. They are also not known for carpentry. However, they make almost all the tools which are required in their regular life, such as baskets, carry bags, trays, boxes, fish traps of various kinds, hencoops, etc., bamboo and cane are the most used materials in

making these tools. They make wooden items such as boat-shaped mortar and the pestle, and, of course, canoes, so significant for riparian people living in flood prone areas.

Education:

Education is an important component of human society. The scope of education is so wide that it cannot be restricted within a specific boundary. Since education deals with the all-round development of the individual, it covers all aspects of human development such as physical, mental, moral, social and spiritual. Education is considered to be the best agent of social change. Education brings about modification in the personality of individuals and this turn brings about change in the society.

With regard to modern education, the Misings of Assam came in to contact during the last decades of 19th century .Before advent of the British in Assam in 1926, Misings were totally illiterate and avoid modern form of education. It was during early decades of the 20th century that the Mising individuals started modern education. In the year 1926, Charu chandra Doley and 1927, Muhi Chandra Miri did first B.A. and BSc respectively in Mising society. *Mising Bane Kebang* is a pioneer social institution who works hard to popularise modern education among the Mising society. As a result, the Misings people began to understand the value and importance of modern education. After independence of the country, the academic environment of India underwent great change. Educational facilities made available by the governments could not reach the Mising society .But after 1960s Mising youths were adopt modern education and very recently, Mising society was very much conscious about their children to sending them in convent schools. Although, it has become evident that there is bit increase of literacy rate of Mising society but they are enough to do in the field of education.

The Misings are facing various problems like, lack of permanent cultivable land, educational backwardness, lack of infrastructure facilities, absence of entrepreneurship etc. The concomitant problems like socio-cultural practices of the people are also not congenial to augment development programmes. On social status point of view, it was found that women's position is quite inferior to that of men. Similarly, a Mising woman does not have the right to decision- making process either in the family or in the village community. Thus, the whole question of socio-economic status of Mising tribe and for those reason tribal communities is a matter of tradition and belief. In view of the above, it is imperative to undertake an in-depth study on

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RECENT CONCERN: Women's political empowerment is becoming the central issue at present time. Independence has brought with it the opportunity for equality in social and political spheres, through the instrumentality of the Constitution. The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act has provided a statutory frame-work for decentralize democratic polity which intended to ensure the smooth functioning of the three-tier structure. The active participation of women in the decision making levels has already started at the grass roots level of Gram-Panchayat. 33% reservations of seats for women at all tiers of Panchayat have made a significant political change in the life of the women. The women are taking full advantage of the 33% representation are gradually come forward and acquire their rights and take direct role in the decision making process and leadership pattern. In the backdrop of this empowerment of women becomes a catchy word for the polical elites and an issue of discussion and research for the social scientists.

II. OBJECTIVES:

- i) To analyse the socio-economic condition of the respondents.
- ii) To analyse the impact of education in the occupational transformation among the Mising women.
- iii) To suggest various ways and means for improving the socio-economic status of Mising women and to empower them.

III. METHODOLOGY:

The study was designed in phase wise manner. The following were the phases of study:

SELECTION OF THE UNIVERSE:

In this study the researchers had selected 2 Mising villages, 1 each from 2 Gaon Panchayats in the Lakhimpur District of Assam. The selected villages were namely Borbil Mising gaon and Kachikota Mising gaon. Borbil Mising gaon, in the district of Lakhimpur is surrounded by Rangajan Tiniali on the East, Deejo Tea Estate on the West, Koilamari Tea Estate on the North and Bogolijan lies on the South. The village is situated at a distance of 10 km from the North Lakhimpur town. Kachikota Mising gaon is a well known Mising village in the district of Lakhimpur. This village is located at a distance of 9 km from the district headquarter and is surrounded by river Subansiri on

the East, Borongabari on the West, Bojar on the North and Badulipara gaon on the South.

SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENTS:

Since the study was related to socio-economic life of the Misings therefore, the researcher selected 100 respondents (50 women from each villages) who were definitely represent the Mising community.

TYPE OF DATA:

Since the study was an exploratory one therefore, both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. For collection of primary data from the respondents, an interview schedule was prepared and this schedule was canvassed to the respondents. Secondary data were collected from the Government records, books and journals etc.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The data for the study were collected from two sources i.e., primary and secondary. To collect the primary and secondary data, the following techniques were applied:

- i. Interview Schedules ii) Interview Guide and iii) Observation.

SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY:

The Miris, also known as Misings, are the second largest group of scheduled tribes' plains of Assam. Originally dwelling in the northern hills, they subsequently came down to the valley in the medieval period by following the river courses. This colourful ethnic group are now a plain tribe of Assam. The tribal's have great love for freedom. This has forced them to search for an area where they could live in the lap of nature. In the same way, Misings of Assam are very simple in their lifestyle. But the spread of modern education, development of transportation and communication, growth of urbanisation and industrialisation etc. have brought about much change in the Misings society including their economy, Polity, religion and culture etc.

This propose research will cover a vast range of a race i.e., Misings which has been a great contributor of the society but still the race is marginalised and it feels alienated. Like in all other tribal societies, women in Mising society too have their own roles and positions. Although they are treated inferior to their male counterpart, yet they have a great contribution in the society. In the context, we now examine the status of Mising women in their social and economic life. It is observed that the impact of modern forces such as modernization, westernization, industrialization,

modern education and science and technology etc. has deeply influenced on Mising society. Thus, a radical change is now coming in their societies so far as the status of Mising women is concerned. This research work has a great significance because the question of women socio-economic status of tribal society is at stake. The study is an attempt to take stock of the trend of socio-economic transformation of Mising women in sociological perspective. The study is significant because it will be useful to policy makers, implementing agencies to formulate policies and schemes for socio-economic development of women folk of Mising society. The present study is very significant because no one has done any research work in this topic. So there exists a genuine necessity for undertaking the present research work.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS:

The following are the major findings of this study:

- 1) The respondents of our sample consisted of 100% female. As many as 57% belonged to the age group of 20-40 years while 43% belonged to 41-70 years.
- 2) So far as the family settings and the type of family of 98% respondents was found joined family while 2% respondents was nuclear form of family.
- 3) The respondents of our study were found followers of Hinduism and Christian. In this study it was found that the religion of 97% respondents were Hindu and while the religion of 3% respondents were Christian.
- 4) With regard to occupation of respondents it was found that 81% had practised agriculture, 11% were involved in business and 8% were engaged in govt and other services.
- 5) With regard to traditional social structure of the society that 80% of the respondents were active part in village council meetings. Majority of the respondents i.e. 90% were considered that village council is settled item family or inter-personal disputes or crimes. We also found that maximum number of respondents 90% viewed on change in social structure due to impact of modern forces like education, science and technology, urbanization, industrialization etc.
- 6) In this study we find that 82% of the respondents were not aware of application of modern technology in agricultural activities while 18% of respondents were very much aware of using modern technology such as tractor, power tiller, pitchforks etc.
- 7) For most of the respondents the local area of concern in government schemes is economic development. A large majority of the

respondents 65% thought that their participation in Panchayats and provided schemes for economic development of their society.

- 8) Our study shows that 42% of our respondents were spend their leisure time in fishing activities.
- 9) In this study we found that 75% of our respondents viewed that for improving their socio-economic status women should participate or go forward and adopt modern education and skill development programmes.
- 10) Lastly, in this study we saw that 70% of the respondents were aware of their own tradition and culture. Most interestingly all the respondents spoke their own language at home as in society.

V. CONCLUSION:

The findings mentioned above suggest that a few socio-economic changes are taking place in Mising society. The young generation and specially educated women are always welcome the concept of modernization. Therefore, we can conclude that a trend of change can be observed in socio-economic aspect of tribal communities. It is noteworthy to mention here that the present study is not completely adequate to draw a perfect conclusion about socio-economic life of the Mising women because it is a micro level study based on 100 respondents of two Mising villages in Lakhimpur district of Assam. Thus, the findings and generalization of the present study may have limited Sapplicability. Further study in this area is required to understand the emerging trend of economic life of Mising women and this is left to the future investigators.

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