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Tribals and Scheduled Castes
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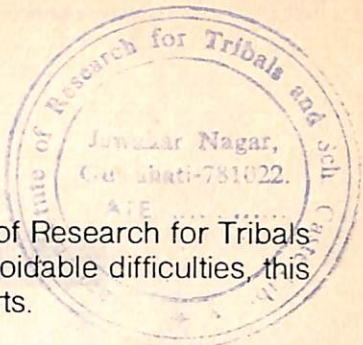
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EDITORIAL NOTE



This is the IXth issue of the Bulletin of the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Assam. Guwahati. Due to some unavoidable difficulties, this issue could not be brought out in time inspite of our best efforts.

In this issue apart from the articles contributed by our faculty members, we have also incorporated articles from Shri Promode Goswami, Ex. Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam and Shri M. P. Hazarika, Director, Information and Public Relations, North Eastern Council, Shillong. We have also incorporated in the Bulletin a note containing information and the type of activities undertaken by the Institute for the general information of the esteemed readers.

I am happy to note that our earlier issues were well received by the scholars from various parts of our country and feed backs were also sent to us by our esteemed readers from various parts of the country. For the present issue also we would like to receive the feed backs from our esteemed readers and well wishers in the form of comments and suggestions. These will surely enable us to improve the quality as well as the standard of the Bulletin.

My thanks are due to Shri Paramesh Dutta, Research Officer, AIRTSC for assisting me to bring out the IXth issue of the Institute's Bulletin.

I am also thankful to other faculty members and staff of the Institute and the owner and employees of the Nabanita Printers for their help and co-operation for bringing out this issue of the Bulletin and Shri Homarnab Borah, Artist, DIPR, Assam for the cover design of this issue of the Bulletin.

B. K. HAZARIKA
EDITOR

*Bulletin of the Assam Institute of Research
for Tribals & Scheduled Castes, Guwahati,
and*

DIRECTOR

*Assam Institute of Research for
Tribals & Scheduled Castes, Guwahati-22*

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A batch of trainee officers with th Faculty members of the Institute. ▲



Rabha girls performing a dance.

▼ The Officers and the staff of the Institute.

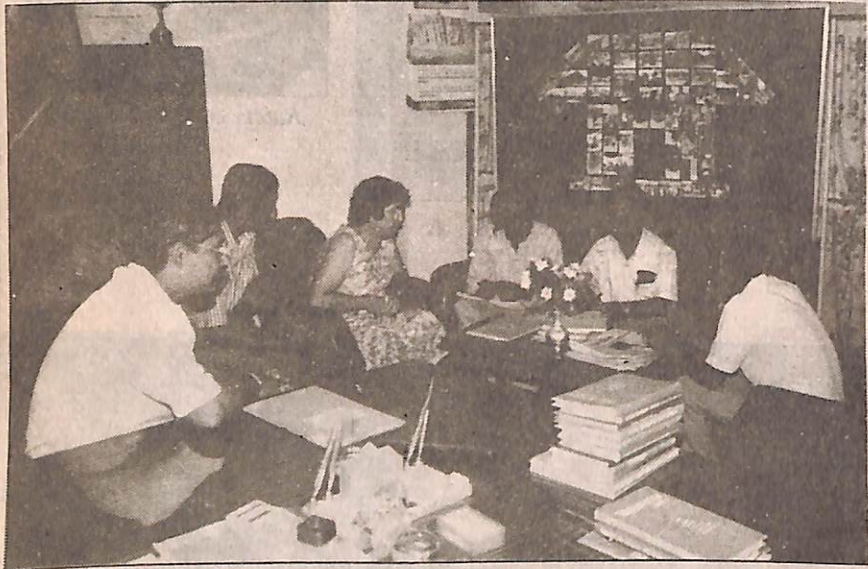
A group of Zema Nagas getting ready for a dance





Inauguration of Training Course ▲

World Bank Official having a discussion with the Director and faculty Members of the Institute. ▼



A Tribal damsel- on her way to the market. ▼

Shri H. N. Das, IAS., Chief Secretary to the Govt of Assam visiting the AIRTASC Museum.



▲ A Hill Tiwa (Lalung) woman sitting at the gate way to her house

▼ A tribal woman. ▼



IDENTIFICATION OF TRIBAL BENEFICIARIES IN THE NORTH EAST INDIA UNDER POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES - A FEW BASIC ISSUES.

DR. B. N. BORDOLOI*

INTRODUCTION

When we speak of the present North East India, we refer to the seven states of this region, viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. The total geographical area of these states is 25,5083 sq. kms. and the total area constitutes 8.74 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. The total population inhabiting these seven states of North East India is 3,15,47,314 as per 1991 Census.

Geographical distribution of the scheduled tribes population in the North Eastern States as per 1991 Census is given below:

Name of the State	Total population	Total S.T. population	Percentage
1. Arunachal Pradesh	8,64,558	5,50,35	63.66
2. Assam	2,24,14,322	28,74,441	12.87
3. Manipur	18,37,149	6,32,173	34.41
4. Meghalaya	17,74,378	15,17,927	85.53
5. Mizoram	6,89,756	6,59,565	94.75
6. Nagaland	12,09,546	10,60,822	87.70
7. Tripura	27,57,205	8,53,345	30.95
Total	3,15,47,314	81,42,624	25.71

(Source - Aspects of Population Profile of Assam, 1991 Census, Guwahati '93)

The total population of the seven states in the North East constitutes only 3.72 per cent of the total population of the country although the total geographical area constitutes 8.74 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. This shows that in this part of the country the density of population is quite low and it is 123 per sq. km. as against 257 per km. for all India as per 1991 Census. While Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest density, that is to say, 10 per sq. km., Assam has the highest density, that is to say, 285 per sq. km (1991 Census) among the North Eastern states.

As per Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, as amended up-to-date altogether 119 communities have been enlisted as Scheduled Tribes in the seven North Eastern States as shown below:

1. Arunachal Pradesh	-	12.
2. Assam	-	23.
3. Manipur	-	29.
4. Meghalaya	-	17.
5. Mizoram	-	14.
6. Nagaland	-	5.
7. Tripura	-	19.
Total	-	119

* Ex-Director, Asam Institute of Research for Tribal and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati.

However, if we examine the lists of the scheduled tribes in the seven states two important facts come to our notice. Firstly there are many communities which are enlisted as scheduled tribes in more than one state. Let us look at the Kukis for example. The Kukis are scheduled tribes in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. Similarly, the Nagas are enlisted as scheduled tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Secondly a few tribal communities are grouped together under one head. As for example, 'Any Kuki Tribes' include 37 sub-groups which are, in fact separate tribal ethnic groups, each group having its distinctive culture and even the languages/dialects spoken by these groups are different. Thus the actual number of communities having their own tribal entity will be more than 119 in the North Eastern states.

Now if we avoid repetition and at the same time take into account the sub-groups or sub-tribes having their own ethnic identities, the total number of tribal communities in the North East would be 200 as against 430 for all India. In other words, it may be inferred that about 47 per cent of the scheduled tribe communities of India belong to the North East.

It is also worthwhile to notice that out of 315.47 lakhs of total population in the seven North Eastern states as per 1991 Census, the total number of tribal population is 8142 lakhs and in terms of percentage it would come to 25.71 per cent of the total population of the North Eastern states.

The tribal communities in the North East differ each other ethnically, linguistically, religiously and socio-culturally and from the point of view of economic development also they are at various levels. Even among the members of the same community, regional level of development is not the same. The pace of development among the hill dwellers and the plains dwellers also differs considerably. All these indicate that poverty among the scheduled tribe communities of the North East is not of the same level and degree.

DIFFICULTIES IN DETERMINING POVERTY

The pre-requisite for success of any poverty alleviation scheme or programme is correct ascertainment of the families who are actually below the poverty line and then to determine who are the poorest of the poor among them so that the first preference could be given to them as the target group. The present basis of determining poverty line is annual monetary income of the family. But unfortunately, a tribal family in the North East does not maintain any family budget showing its monetary income and expenditure. In fact the family hardly keeps a track of income and expenditure. The tribal families do not feel the necessity of maintaining a family budget. Ignorance and very often illiteracy are also responsible for such a state of affairs. Non-maintenance of family budget is a characteristic not only among the tribal families but among non-tribal families living in the rural areas of the North Eastern States of India also.

Bereft of a family budget what is then our way out? Since agriculture, whether shifting or settled, is the basic occupation of the tribal families inhabiting the North Eastern states, a Credit officer of District Rural Development Agency or an Officer of any other development department implementing poverty alleviation schemes tries to determine the annual monetary income of the families depending heavily on the estimated production of agricultural crops in a year. He also tries to ascertain whether the family has other sources of income and if so, how much they contribute towards the gross annual income.

In case of settled cultivation it might be possible to determine approximately the quantity of rice produced. But what is about shifting cultivation? Production from shifting cultivation depends on a variety of factors, such as -adequacy of rainfall, pest infestation, depredation caused by wild animals and birds, the year of successive cultivation - whether it is the first year, second year or third year of cultivation - other conditions like the erection of watch tower to keep a vigil throughout 24 hours of a day, etc. Unless the Credit Officer or the Extension Officer or the Development Officer is well conversant with all these aspects mentioned above, his approximation regarding the annual output of rice might be a guess-work only which will naturally have an adverse effect in determining as to whether the concerned family is actually below the poverty line or not.

The matter does not end here. Let us look at the question of social status. In a modern society to a great extent the social status of a family is determined by its economic status. But in a traditional tribal society this may not be so. The most well-to-do family in a traditional society may not necessarily be the most respected one or may not be esteemed to be holding a high social status. A family which can entertain the people of a village with greater number of feasts, even though it may not be economically so sound, has definitely a higher social status. Again

a very experienced man well-versed in customary laws, customs and traditions, religious rites, etc. is highly respected and held in high esteem although from the economic point of view he and his family might be below the poverty line. In a traditional tribal society, therefore, social status of a family may not necessarily indicate the economic status. Unless the Credit Officer of the District Rural Development Agency or the Extension Officer of a Development Department entrusted with the task of identification of the families below the poverty line is familiar with such types of social ethos and values, his attempts to identify tribal families below poverty line might lead to erroneous results.

It is also said that a tribal society is egalitarian in character. Now let us see how this has been achieved in a traditional tribal society like that of Karbis. An example may clarify this point. Let us assume that in a Karbi village 'A' there are thirty Karbi families. Among them there are three families, say, 'X', 'Y' and 'Z' which produce annually sufficient rice not only for family consumption for the entire year, but for sale also. Let us also assume the remaining 27 families do not produce sufficient rice annually for family consumption to last throughout the entire year. As soon as their food stock is exhausted, there would be no other alternative for these families except collection of wild roots, tubers, fruits, leafy vegetables, etc, from the nearby forests and living a half-starved life till the new harvest. But in practice this does not happen in a traditional Karbi society. Those who 'haves' help the 'have-nots' in a very peculiar way which is explained in the next paragraph.

It has already been mentioned that in the Karbi village 'A' only three families, say 'X', 'Y' and 'Z' have annually produced enough rice which is not only sufficient for domestic consumption but surplus after meeting their family needs could be sold also. Let us for example assume that after six months the remaining 27 families have exhausted their stock of rice. The members of these families would now approach at first, say the family 'X', to feed them since they do not have anything to eat. The family 'X' would never refuse them. The family members of the 27 hunger-stricken families would be fed at least once a day till the stock of rice of the family 'X' would last. Now let us assume that after one month the rice stock of the family 'X' is exhausted. Now the position of the family 'X' would be the same as that of 27 'have-nots'. This process would then continue in respect of other two 'haves' families. Now after say about three months all families would be equal in the sense that all are now poverty stricken and half-starved. What is the net result then? The same three families, namely, 'X', 'Y' and 'Z' which could have been treated just after the harvest as families above poverty line for the purpose of poverty alleviation programme would now be below poverty line till the next harvest due to social convention still prevalent in the Karbi society in the remote areas of the Karbi Anglong District even today. What should then be our approach in identification of such families? Can we treat these three families as ones above the poverty line or below the poverty line?

Another very vitally important aspect which has a direct relevancy in identification of tribal families below poverty line in the North East India is the brewing of rice beer in large quantities by almost every tribal family. I am saying 'almost every tribal family' because of the fact that the number of tribal families who have already given up brewing as well as drinking of rice beer in the North Eastern states is very few and far between.

Rice beer is a pre-requisite for the performance of all religious rites by the tribal families who follow their traditional religions. It is required in the name giving ceremony of the new born babies of the Khasis, Jaintias and the Karbis. At the death of a person also it is required. For the tribals of the North East it is a nutritious beverage which is required not only for the domestic consumption but also in the performance of community festivals and in entertainment of guests. But at the same time a well-to-do tribal family above the poverty line might be turned into a family below the poverty line because of the excessive brewing of rice beer throughout all the days of the year.

A case study conducted by the author on a rice brewing tribal family reveals a very interesting fact. The family under the purview of the study produces about 27 quintals of paddy in total in khariff and Rabi seasons. The family consists of five members - four adults and one minor and for the purpose of domestic consumption 18 quintals of rice are sufficient. But the end of the year presents a totally different picture. Because of excessive brewing of rice beer, the family which could have easily sold at least 9 quintals of rice, was compelled by circumstances to purchase approximately 10 quintals of rice from a non-tribal Mahajan by mortgaging newly planted orange garden covering about half an acre area which was at the fruit bearing stage for the first time, only because of excessive brewing of rice beer. The head of the family was quite conscious regarding the evil effects of exces-

sive rice beer brewing. But at the same time he expressed his helplessness. Unless the agents of development are familiar with such types of situations, they might arrive at a erroneous conclusion regarding the poverty or otherwise of the families investigated.

In computing poverty line among the tribal families of North East India, one must have a clear conception of 'absolute poverty'. All of us are aware of the fact that 'absolute poverty' refers to the lack of three basic things for a human being and these three basic necessities are food, clothing and shelter. Among the tribal communities of the North East India, there would perhaps be not a single family which does not have a shelter. However poor a family might be, it would surely have a hutment constructed with locally available materials in the traditional pattern. The hutment might be small, but it is constructed with such indigenous technique that it could easily withstand the wear and tear of nature in a tropical climate like ours with heavy rainfall and humidity at least for a few years.

The tribal women in North East India being expert weavers, the family requirement of traditional cloths is met from their own household looms.

Food requirement is met to a greater extent from their own cultivation. Meats of domesticated animals and birds supplement their food stuff. Their food requirement is also partially met from the collection of tubers, roots, wild vegetables, fruits, etc. specially by the womenfolk from the nearby forests, fishes caught in the streams and rivers and wild animals and birds hunted. Their food articles compared to the urban areas are always fresh and, therefore, are full of vitamins. Although no attempt has been made to study the calory intake of tribal food, I myself feel that its calory value would be much more than what is required for computation of poverty line. The present method of computation of poverty line is as follows:

1. Determination of the minimum daily calory need of a person in the rural area as well in the urban area separately.
2. The quantity of food stuff that could generate the required calory in a person daily.
3. The monetary value of food stuff mentioned at Sl.No.2.
4. Computation of poverty line is, therefore, Amount at Sl.No.3x 365 days.

Now if the calory intake is the basis on which the poverty line is computed, we may perhaps infer that in the North East India no tribal family could be regarded lying below the poverty line since from the point of view of food nutrients a tribal family in the North East which supplements its food with wild roots, tubers, fruits, leafy vegetables, fish, meat and so on, is getting much more calories than the minimum needs.

The identification of the families below poverty line among tribal communities of North East India, therefore, is a complicated question. We know that the success of poverty alleviation schemes or programmes so far as income generating family oriented schemes are concerned depends on correct identification of families below poverty line and giving them such schemes which are suitable to their needs, social traditions, customs and culture. The Extension Agents connected with the identification of tribal families below poverty line must be thorough and well-conversant with the life, cultural patterns, traditions, customary laws, patterns of land ownership like the community ownership, clan ownership, individual ownership etc., rules that govern inheritance of immovable properties and such other things relating to the tribal communities. These agents should have also proper orientation trainings. Moreover, the total condition of the family, i.e., habitation environment, ecology, topography, agro-climatic conditions, pattern of living and the means of livelihood, food habits, different cultural aspects, economic activities and the degree of participation by male and female members in these activities, etc., has to be taken into account. Annual income can not be and should not be isolated completely and put into a water-tight compartment to make the matter easy for the Extension Agents at the field level who are assigned the task of identifying the tribal families below poverty line for the purpose of poverty alleviation programmes.

The tribal elders of a village including the village headman and the traditional village council can play a vital role in identifying the poor, poorer and the poorest families provided they are properly approached for this purpose.

SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF SCHEDULED CASTES DEVELOPMENT

DR. G. C. SHARMA THAKUR.

Spread over entire rural and urban areas of Assam, the sixteen sub castes of the scheduled castes account for 9,12,537 as per 1971 Census or 6'24 per cent of Assam's total population of 146'25 lakhs (1971 Census). As there was no Census in 1981 in Assam, the estimated projected scheduled caste population in March 1981 in Assam, the estimated projected scheduled caste population live in rural areas, the percentage being 90.6. It may be mentioned that the percentage of urban scheduled caste is higher than the state's total urban population which is 8'8 per cent. This urban status however, does not indicate a normal high socio-economic standard with allied modern urban facilities. There are sizable influx of rural scheduled caste people to towns in search of employment and small petty avocations like fish selling, thela pulling, rickshaw plying, opening panshops, doing menial jobs in "hotels and in individual households, etc. Besides there are scheduled caste Harijans like the Bansphors, Dhobis, Dholis, Maharas, Labegis, Mehtars, Muchis, who live urban in areas doing all low and unclean jobs with pitiable economic standard.

Among the sixteen scheduled caste sub castes, the Namasudras and the Kaibartas account for 32'97% and 32'31% respectively of the State's total scheduled caste population followed by Patnis (9'41%), Muchis (4'47%), Hiras (3'58%), Baniyas (3'10%), Malis (2'40%), Dhobis (2'30%), Bansphors (0'7%), Bhangis (0'7%), Dholis (0'4%), Maharas (0'1), Jalkeots (0'3%) and Labegis (0'01%).

Unlike the scheduled tribes, the scheduled castes do not have distinct traditional material culture. Except the scheduled castes who are living in urban areas coming from different states, the overall socio-religious practices of the rural scheduled caste people do not materially differ much with those of the non scheduled castes who live close by. However participation in socio-religious occasions has been generally restricted to the members of the caste groups and very few except the microscopic rich and influential members of scheduled castes can participate actively in public socio-religious functions.

The economic base, particularly of those living in rural areas, is agriculture. As per 1971 Census 53'5% scheduled castes people are engaged in agricultural activities as against 55.95% of the State's total. The people are never self sufficient in agricultural products as cultivable lands are insufficient. The main reason for lack of agricultural lands is that originally the scheduled caste people, by and large, were not agriculturists and the forefathers of the present generation of scheduled castes did not care to possess lands in those days when there was enough foodstuff and needs and aspirations were limited. Due to lack of agricultural base the scope of economic development has been hindered and the present generation is feeling the pinch of acute hardship. About 50% of the scheduled caste people are in a perpetual state of indebtedness which can be attributed to the age old deficit economy accelerated recently by lack of employment opportunity and other social disabilities like shyness of contact and age old inferiority complex of under estimating their capabilities. The Assam Indebtedness Relief Act, 1975, is still to make visible impact in this regard.

Next to agriculture the rural scheduled cast people have had to depend upon fishing particularly by the Kaibartas, Namasudras and Jalkeots. Pottery and foldsmithy are the important occupations of the Hiras and Baniyas respectively. But of late occupational mobility has been observed among these groups and agricultural activities become the accepted profession of the scheduled caste communities living in rural areas. But as mentioned earlier the scheduled caste people had to face problems in the changing profession. They lack the agricultural skill and their paddy fields are not suitable for a flourishing crop. Because the people entered into the profession at a late stage and the lands under their possession are mostly marshy or high lands and the people do not have sufficient resources to improve those lands. The condition of the non-agricultural scheduled caste communities is no better. The Baniyas do not

get enough to maintain their families as the people no longer use ornaments made by this community. The urban dwellers like Bansphors, Muchis, Mehtars, Maharas have to switch over to other professions because of the changing social scenario. Machine made cheaper articles were popular with the people and the scheduled caste people who produced bamboo items of day to day use can no longer withstand the stiff competition of plastic items. In Kamrup district we had observed that a few scheduled caste families used to live with the earnings of playing drums in festivals and other socio-religious occasions but now-a-days people do not employ them in such festivals and Kamrupiya Dhulia, a renowned institution mostly of the scheduled cast people, is fast disappearing.

The scheduled caste groups of urban areas who were not the autochthones of Assam are engaged in various occupations such as leather work, washing cloths, sweeping and scavenging etc. These occupations are in the unorganised sector. The groups which are engaged in carrying night soil, scavenging, sweeping, flaying and tanning have been relegated to very low, economic and social status. Majority of them have very little assets and they suffer from the dual handicap of social disability and economic deprivations.

Although not to that extent which is prevalent in some other states of the Indian Union some kind of disguised untouchability still prevails in group actions especially in the rural areas. Because of the lesser numerical strength, the scheduled castes can hardly assert themselves in getting the benefits provided by Government. It is well known that poverty has been writ large upon the scheduled castes since past generations. Poverty, malnutrition and consequent indebtedness are the socio-economic constraints inherited by the scheduled caste people from their forefathers and these problems still remain unsolved even in spite of the implementation of the Special Component Plan within the State Plan.

A study conducted by the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes on the socio-economic condition of the Kaibartas reveals a disheartening picture. The Kaibartas till about two decades back had fishing as major source of income and most of the Kaibartas depended solely on fish trade. But to day the situation underwent metamorphic changes. The fishermen from other states have snatched the age old trade from the Kaibartas and for this the local Mahaldars are largely responsible. Even those who are clinging desperately to this business in spite of the odds, are suffering from the 60 : 40 syndrome i. e. a sizable share of their catch is to be given to the Mahajans who provide them with the capital for day's catch. Further, poor fishermen are indebted to the influential Mahajans who belong to both scheduled caste and non scheduled caste. This indebtedness is a never ending affair and the poor fishermen have no alternative but to bow down to the whims of the Mahajans. The fishing sources like rivers, beels are not accessible to the poor fishermen as the same are auctioned to the Mahajans who generally prefer the Bihari fishermen to the local ones. Consequent upon degradation of the traditional income sources and non availability of fresh avenues, the time worn economic backwardness has been further aggravated.

Educationally, too, the scheduled castes are behind the non scheduled caste people. As per 1971 Census the percentage of literacy among the scheduled castes was 25.8 as against 28.3 for the entire State while the all India average was 29.5. Sex-wise it is 18.3% for male and 7.5% for female. Sub-caste wise, the Banias with 38.8% came first followed by Kaibartas 34%, Patnis 31.3% Hiras 27.4% and Sutradhars 26%. The peculiar socio-economic environment of the scheduled caste inhabited villages, coupled with dependence upon the school going children for assistance in the day to day economic pursuits, are the major deterrents for the socio-educational backwardness. These were some of the stark realities which compelled the planners to quantify amounts in the Fifth Five Year Plan for the socio-economic upliftment of this sector of population. But mere quantification appeared to be inadequate and in order to provide more economic support, a new strategy was evolved during the Sixth Five Year Plan. A separate sub-plan known as Special Component Plan (SCP) for the welfare of the scheduled castes was formulated. For implementation of the SCP schemes funds from four sources have been earmarked. These are (1) Flow from State Plan (2) Flow from Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (3) Special Central Assistance and (4) Institutional Finance. Suitable sectoral plans

based on grass root study have been chalked out and income generating schemes have been incorporated. It was seen at the end of Sixth Plan that the desired progress was not there. In Assam the outlay ratio was less than 60%. The Working Group on the Development of the Scheduled Castes formed during Seventh Five Year Plan observed "Some of the Departments avoided strenuous exercise of earmarking fund especially for the development of scheduled castes". The Working Group has termed this as "attitudinal problem lack of proper orientation". The main argument put forward for such action was that a large portion of the total State Plan Outlay was in indivisible sectors like Power, Irrigation, Road, Transport etc. But there are scheduled caste villages which are, by and large, exclusive and beneficiaries in blocks could be easily located in such areas. The 'cluster cum saturation approach' started during Sixth Plan has much relevance even in the Assam situation. Incidentally it may be mentioned that in a particular scheduled caste inhabited area two or more subcastes live together. Thus we find that Kaibartas and Banias, Hiras and Kaibartas, Namasudras and Hiras live side by side indicating a harmonious living of more or less similar socio-economic standard.

As mentioned earlier, the people are changing their traditional occupation under various compulsions and the literates and semi literates among them are seeking employment in Government and semi Government organisations and private firms in the urban areas. Although statutory provision of 7% reservation of vacancies for scheduled caste is under implementation, yet the position has not improved much. The main constraint here again is the overall socio-economic backwardness of the people. It is not uncommon to find roster vacancies reserved for scheduled caste candidate unless the general economic backwardness is removed, the economy of the scheduled caste people will always remain at a considerable distance from the take off point. Raj Bahadur, the honourable representative of the then Central province and Berar in the Constituent Assembly rightly remarked "To ask for representation, however, on class or caste basis in the service is to remedy that disease only superficially. But we have got to cure the disease from its very roots."

Caste based reservation of vacancies in services and posts and reservation of seats in Parliament and State Assemblies for the scheduled castes are short term ameliorative measures to remove the centuries old neglect and apathy of the enlightened section of the people and these should not be considered as the be all and end all. Today the great traditions are in a mood to help the little tradition to march ahead and Government in the Centre as well as in the States have taken suitable steps in that regard. Socio-cultural development of the scheduled castes depends largely on mutuality and it is largely visible in the present day Indian inter and intra society relations especially in the urban social milieu.

SHIFTING CULTIVATION OF THE HILL TRIBES OF ASSAM

Pramod Goswami

Retired Chief Technical Adviser of F.A.O of the United Nations.

1. Discovery of Agriculture:

The discovery that seeds of certain grasses thrown on upturned soil would germinate and produce hundred times more and that such seeds were good for mankind, is the most important discovery along with fire because of which civilizations were built up - men became civilised is believed to be accidental.

Through out of stone age which lasted for hundreds of thousands of years, man lived entirely on "products of chase" - he produced no food but exploited the wild resources of Nature.

Men learnt to produce food at least part of it in different ways at different periods of pre-historical times. Rice is believed to have been cultivated in China and India from 3000 to 2000 B.C., millet in South Russia, in Lake dwellers areas in Switzerland in 3000 B.C. and one variety of millet even earlier in Sudan and Egypt. Growing of maize in South America and Central America is believed to be recent since civilization in these areas is believed to have started only about 2000 years ago-Civilization, that is agriculture.

2. Shifting cultivation is the most primitive form of agriculture.

However, depending on the remoteness of the areas or isolation of the communities - it is in various stages of transitions. In India, tribals of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa practise shifting cultivation. But the system in these states is not as primitive as in N.E. India., many of the shifting cultivators in these states only partly dependent on shifting agriculture.

3. Difference between Fallowing and shifting cultivation-

Under fallowing system, the land continues to be owned by the family, the fallow period is short and not much woody vegetation takes over the fallow area. In shifting cultivation the fallow period is much longer and there is no knowing who will re-cultivate the area, The land is owned by the community.

4. Shifting cultivation in Assam and North-Eastern India.-

Jhum cultivation or Jhuming. The system of shifting cultivation is essentially same in whole of North-Eastern India. It is practised by the Karbis in Karbi Anglong District (other tribes-Dimasas, Lalungs, Hajongs) Hill Kacharis, Nagas and some Khasias and Jaintiyas.

Shifting cultivation is also practised by the Garos residing on the border of Kamrup, Goalpara District (Boko, Rani, Byrnihat) and some Arunachal tribes near Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur. But these people only partly dependent.

5. The System.-

Shifting cultivation is also known as slash and burn agriculture, Jhum cultivation, Bush fallow system of agriculture and by other names. (West Africa). The essential operations of the system of Jhumming are-

Taro (Kachu), brinjals, Ruzette shrub (Zorrel), Chilli, pigeon pea (Arahar) cotton and tapioca.
* Retired Chief Technical Adviser of F.A.O of the United Nations.

(1) Cutting down of all vegetation of the selected area by community together- large trees are lopped, in Nov/Dec.

(2) Burning vegetation in March, April.

(3) No cultivating of the soil.

(4) Dibbling of seeds after burning by a hand hoe. Crops dibbled or broadcast - the upland paddy, millets, corn beans, sweet potato*.

(5) No weeding or cultural operations.

(6) **Harvesting** - time different for different crops. Some crops are bi-annual (brinjal, sorrel, tapioca, taro etc.) After two years, at most 3, the field is abandoned and a new area selected, because of very low yield, invasion by weeds etc.

The most important features of jhum cultivation in N.E. India are - (a) Land is owned by the community but each family cultivates its own field after selection jointly with the help of the headman. (b) Fire is employed to clear the cut and dry debris. Jhuming is not done without burning - if no fire is employed as in many other parts of India and abroad - then the process is following and damage to ecology is less.

(c) Soil is not cultivated.

(d) Community approach in certain broad operations - jungle clearance, burning crop protection from animals.

(e) Yield goes down rapidly - hence field is abandoned after 2/3 years.

(f) The field remains with the jhumia as long as he continues to use.

6. Historical Perspective-

The hill districts of Assam and the present states of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal were administered as excluded or partially excluded districts which meant non-interference with the customs and practices and the people except head hunting. Neither was any developmental activities undertaken - no medical facilities poor communications, poor education etc. In other words total isolation from developed areas. This kept the population more or less static - sometimes even population decreased. This permitted to jhum cycle to be quite long - 30/40 years - thus restoring soil fertility. Now often independence rotation has come down to 35 years due to increased population. Besides, due to contact with more developed areas - people's urge for economic growth, conveniences and comforts of modernism have increased. Shifting cultivation as a way-of-life is no longer adequate to give a satisfactory living standard even for poor community like India.

7. Control Measures.-

The objectives of the control measures are to encourage settled agriculture - settled land use. The soil conservation Deptt. of undivided Assam headed by your today's lecturer-introduced scientific land use, the most important pre-requisite of settled land use - on the basis of land capability.

The land capability system was simplified as below to suit the people and the concerned areas. Land capability.

Class A- Slope upto 50% (20°) with good soil-suitable for permanent agriculture.

Class-B - Slopes from 51 to 100% (26°-45°) Horticulture, Plantation crops, Coffee, Rubber, Black piper (if shallow soil-pasture).

Class C - Slopes above 100% (45°) Forestry.

Except that lands, sloping land under class-A needs terracing, contour binding etc. All these were introduced.

This approach with modifications of technique according to locality and the people - have achieved moderate success in areas accessible to infrastructure marketing etc. such as area on both sides of Guwahati-Shillong road in Byrnihat area, Diphu area etc. This approach was subsequently recommended by the I.C.A.R. Complex at Shillong also.

8. New - approach - Agro-forestry system.

Under this system shifting cultivators encouraged to plant fruit trees or other utility trees along with jhum crops. This attaches the farmers to their jhum plots which gradually gets converted into permanent orchards or forests without compelling them to sudden unaccustomed change. Short term fruit crops like papaya, pineapple etc. yielding within 2/3 years. Guava, sembanice grandifbram, banana etc. Yet to be adopted extensively but has good promise.

Conclusion

Due to development of communications, establishment of communications, establishment of educational, marketing facilities etc. people are becoming attached to their land and localities. Side by side the benefits of settled land use as demonstrated and encouraged through various subsidies, programmes, and projects people are becoming convinced about land use. Besides, opportunities for employment, and earning and living in pursuance other than shifting cultivation, has tremendously increased. The intensity of shifting cultivation is decreasing because of all the above. This is also confirmed by the latest satellite imageries of 1990- recent ones showing reorganisation of considerable abandoned jhum land into forest cover (e.g.-approx 8000 Sq. Km., in Arunachal 206 Sq. Km. in Manipur, 5 Sq. Km in Nagaland.

The tribal societies by and large are still bound by their traditions and superstitions. They have strong prejudices against low lying areas preferring to reside on hill tops and cultivate hill slope. However, awareness is coming to them. helped by contact with the plains men, seeing their highly productive permanent agricultural fields. knowing that settled agriculture with modern technology gives a better life than the subsistence economy under shifting cultivation - seeing electricity, running water and medical facilities at the door step, learning from radio. Television programmes etc - are accelerating the process of settled cultivation amongst our hill brethren. It is the duty of the land - use scientists and administrators to accelerate the process still further with their specialised training, scientific knowledge and experience.



Integrated Development of the North Eastern Region and NEC

M. P. Hazarika

The North Eastern Region which constitutes the eastern frontier of the Nation is unique in many ways. It is a meeting point of many religious, cultures and civilizations and in historical perspective the region represents India's encounter with the eastern civilizations. This region is a mosaic of incredible ethnic and linguistic diversity. For historical and geographical reasons a sense of neglect continues to be a note of so much of people's grievances and feelings in the region that the region's integration with the National mainstream gets impeded. There is therefore a necessity to foster the cause of the integrated development of the region as a whole and removal of intra-regional imbalances within the region. But while doing so, it is equally important that the cultural, ethnic and linguistic mosaic of the region is not disturbed and the development takes place in various sectors of economy in tune with the sustenance of the cultural heritage of the people.

The North Eastern Council, set up under an Act of Parliament is an Advisory Body to discuss matters in which some or all the Constituent Units represented in the Council have common interest. But in the context of the North-Eastern Region, this commonality of interest extends to critical areas of planning for economic development, building up of infrastructure and developing human resources. Keeping these points in view, the Council have been formulating regional plans especially in the field of development of Power and Transport and Communication, two most important infrastructural pre-requisites for any type of development in the region. In the NEC plan, the main thrust has therefore, been given on schemes of regional importance whose benefits could be shared by all the Units. However, as a part of its efforts to achieve balanced development, the Council has also been supporting several schemes of broad economic importance in individual States. The regional plan processes adopted by the Council is based on periodic discussions and review with the Constituent Units and Central implementing agencies and field visits of its experts. This has enabled the Council to identify major constraints both short term and long term, in development of the North-Eastern Region. The efforts made by the Council over the years have helped the region to achieve success to a certain extent towards removal of basic infrastructural deficiencies.

The North Eastern Council has also identified its efforts for an integrated planning in the region and the first of these measures is the preparation of Master Plan for Road Development in the Region upto 2001 AD. Giving priority to the removal of Transport and Communication bottlenecks, the Council has succeeded in formation cutting of 4581 Kms of roads and completion of roads of 2240 Kms pavement till this year and approximately Rs. 467 crore have been spent by the Council towards construction of roads and bridges in the region in Fifth and Sixth Plan period. The completion of the second Bridge over the river Brahmaputra on the 14th April 1987 is an important event in the history of development of Transport and Communication in the North-Eastern Region. The Council has now provided financial help for construction of the 3rd Bridge over the river Brahmaputra at Jogighopa in Assam. Besides, the Council has financed Surveys and Studies for undertaking 15 important railway projects with a view to developing railway communication in the region.

Inadequacy of power generation in the region is one of the major factors which has retarded the growth of industries in the North East. Poor supply of electricity in the region has also affected the daily life of the people of the region. The Council is aware of these difficulties and in view of the vast resources for development of power in the region, measures have been taken in this field. The North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) has been set up under the aegis of the Council of integrated development of power in the region. The NEEPCO has successively completed the construction of Kopili Hydel Project with a total capacity of 150 MW and 46 Km. of 132 KV transmission line has been successfully completed under NEC's financial assistance connecting

the projects with some of the Constituents of the North-Eastern Region. Under the Council's financial help and assistance another two important Power Projects Ranganadi Hydel Project in Arunachal Pradesh and Doyang Hydel Project in Nagaland are now under construction. The Council has also funded for 6.5 MW Baramura Gas Thermal Project in Tripura which has since been commissioned.

The Council has also undertaken a sizeable number of well planned and carefully formulated programme aiming at overall development of Agriculture in the region especially in the critical areas with higher potential for development over the years. In fact the thrust areas of development of Seventh Plan with NEC's financial support for Bio-Fertilisers Seed Input Centre, Seed Testing Laboratory Training-cum-Production of Mushrooms, Regional Farm for Pulses and Oil Seeds, Water Harvested and Weed Control Schemes, etc. All these priority programmes have substantially helped in building up of infrastructure and also built up sound technology base to accelerate the process of growth in agricultural field in the region. In Animal Husbandry as also in Horticulture Sector about 50 major projects were undertaken with a view to developing the animal breeding involving cattle, buffalo, mithun and pony, pig, rabbit production and cross breeding, artificial insamination programme and development of vaccine to Institute of Veterinary Biologicals. All these programmes undertaken in the field of Animal Husbandry have created substantial infrastructure for developing in this area.

The Council has also laid emphasis on Surveys of resources and adequate availability of seeds in the 6th and 7th Plan Period for development of fisheries in the North-Eastern Region. Under the auspices of the Council, twelve Seed Farms in different States of the North-Eastern Region have been established. Besides implementation of schemes in resource survey, reclamation of beels and Establishment of Institute-cum-Training at a total cost of about Rs. 4.75 crores.

The question of development of Human resources assumes crucial importance particularly in the context of wider implementation of various socio-economic measures. Lack of trained and technically qualified people is one of the reasons for slow process of execution of development schemes in the North-Eastern Region. The North East Council has realised the situation and has therefore embarked upon a number of schemes on Manpower students from this region for Under-graduate, Post-graduate and Post-Doctorate studies in specific branches of Science and Technology. Besides the Council has also helped in strengthening and expansion of some existing Technical Institutes for bringing out technically qualified and skilled people.

During the last few 5 year Plans including the last 7th Five Year Plan, the Council has devoted its considerable efforts towards development of infrastructure in the region so that productive ventures can be under-employment generation for the young and educated people in the North East. The problem of unemployment has of the people.

The Eighth Plan allocation provided by Planning Commission is much less than the requirement of funds for the scheme taken up in 1992-93 NEC Plan. The Council needs a minimum of Rs. 1800 crores to these are major power generation projects viz. Ranganadi and Doyang Hydel Electric Project, important inter state roads and regional Institutions. Apart from this, the Council wanted to take up a small number of new programmes in the productive sectors. With these ideas the Council had approved Rs. 2300 crores. Against this the Planning Commission had allocated a sum of Rs. 1160 crores. The Chairman of NEC had repeatedly informed the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission that to complete the power projects alone the requiring a number of others, the requirement is Rs. 650 crores for 1992-97. To complete the Institutions set up by NEC like the NERIST, RMC, NEPA etc. and to maintain them till the end of the 8th Plan, Rs. 100 crores is needed. The 8th Plan outlay of Rs. 1160 crores will therefore cause a major set back to the aims of the Council. It means that the important power projects, road and Institutions cannot be completed as scheduled within the 8th Plan.

This low allocation will result in serious cost and time over-runs in the case of Power Projects, Roads and Regional Institutions and at this rate some of these projects may go beyond the Eighth Plan.

However, the 1993-94 allocations fixed earlier have been raised now to Rs. 265 crores and the allocations in the subsequent Annual Plans in the Eighth Plan Period will have to be raised to complete the projects and schemes some of which were taken up for implementation in the Sixth Five Year plan.

About the crucial role the NEC is expected to play in the socio-economic development of the North-Eastern Region, what is important is to know the Council's share in the total plan expenditure in respect of the entire region. It will be quite interesting to know that since its inception upto 31st March 1992, the Plan expenditure of the North Eastern Council in the entire North-Eastern Region has been to the tune of Rs. 1700 crores only. Out of this, 86.5% has been spent on Power and Communication. This 1700 crores of rupees happens to represent only 10% of the total Plan expenditure incurred in the North-Eastern Region from the commencement of the Plan schemes which however excludes direct Plan expenditure by Central Agencies in the North-Eastern Region. The remaining 90% fund allocation have gone directly to the State Government for their Plan schemes. So this situation should dispel any mistaken impression in the matter of financial resources for the entire North-Eastern Region. In fact both in terms of its statutory role and its funding, the Council has a very limited role in so far as the economic development of the North Eastern Region is concerned.

The question of implementation of NEC sponsored projects and schemes also needs little elaboration. The NEC is not an implementing agency and all NEC financed schemes are implemented through State Government agencies in the region as also the Central Government agencies and other autonomous Institutions. There is however an in-built mechanism in respect of each projects and scheme and a process of continuous monitoring is adopted by the concerned officials in the Secretariat through visits, discussions and meetings. However, due to procedural delays in starting projects, delay in release of funds received from the NEC to the implementing agencies by the State Governments and the poor monitoring of the schemes by the State Government are the major factors which dislocate the process of implementation of the schemes and projects.

Problems of cost over-run and time over-run create serious problems in the process of implementation and more often than not schemes and projects have to be revised. If the implementing agencies take up implementation of the schemes and projects in right earnest and proper monitoring of the schemes is undertaken effectively, targets fixed can be achieved both in terms of financial expenditure and physical reality. NEC has been working as an integrating agency to accelerate the socio-economic progress of the people of the North-Eastern Region.



Constitutional Provisions and Reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes- A Brief Analysis.

M. C. Saikia.

The founding fathers of the Indian constitutions were quite serious in evolving a concept of protective discrimination under Article 15(4) and 16(4) for the realisation of economic and political aspirations of the weaker sections of society though article 14, 15 (1), 16 (2), and 29 (2) of the constitution speak distinctly about equality and non discrimination. These contradictions are however to be studied under the background of Article 38 and 46 if we are to understand the intentions of the framers of the constitution who tried to boost up the socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions of these sections of people. In Article 46, it has been said "the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from special injustice and all forms of exploitation". It is thus explicitly clear that Article 46 coupled with the enunciation of the concept of a welfare state under Article 38, are the sources of strength for practising discrimination by way of reservations in services and posts and also in electoral and educational matters.

The Articles 330 and 332 make provisions for reserved seats to the House of the people and State Assemblies respectively to the members of the community belonging to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. Similarly the Article 335 makes provisions for economic upgradation of the backward communities by giving them scope for 'claims' for reservations in posts and services in connection with the affairs of the states and the union.

Now let us identify these 'castes' and 'tribes' and see the process of their acquisition of the new status of 'scheduled castes' and 'scheduled tribes' under articles 341 and 342 respectively. It is however a fact that the constitution has not given precise definition of the terms and the article 366 (24) and 366 (25) have simply referred back to Article 341 and 342.

These two Article have identified those castes and tribes which the President of India has notified in the Public Notification. The two Presidential Orders of 1950 and 1956 and the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (Amendment) Act 1976 have specifically shown the scheduled tribes and Scheduled Castes of Assam. The castes and tribes not included in these Orders can not claim to be scheduled castes and tribes and are not entitled to the privileges specially the electoral reservations. Therefore, in recent years efforts for retribalisation and re-entry in to the original caste hierarchy are gaining momentum. In view of these developing tendencies to revert back to original tribe and caste hierarchy for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Status, the Government of Assam have laid down some eligibility criteria for consideration of proposals for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

These criteria in respect of Scheduled Tribes may be furnished as under :

1. Indications of primitive traits.
2. Distinct culture.
3. Geographical isolation.
4. Shyness of contact with the community at large, and
5. Backwardness-

Similarly for scheduling castes and sub-castes, it must be shown that the communities suffer from traditional practice of untouchability. How far these characteristics are partially or fully applicable to any ethnic group or castes, may only be known by intensive study supported by their cultural history, Tradition, process of social assimilation or acculturation etc. etc. In all these cases 'Backwardness' assume a primary consideration in view of the use of the term 'backward classes' to denote the members

of these castes and tribes under 16 (4). In the Kesava Vs State of Mysore Case (A. 1956 Mysore 20 (24, 28) 'Backward classes' have been explained as "In the absence of a definition, the expression would include all kinds of backwardness social educational or otherwise, and the state is the sole authority to classify communities as backward". In this context we may also refer to the statement made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly while explaining the concept of 'Backward Classes' under Article 16 (4). According to him, a backward community is a community which is backward in the opinion of the Government. We have left it to be determined by each local Government." ("Equality, Reservation and Discrimination"- By Dr. P. Sing (1982, P. 94). It is now clear that backwardness of a community will be determined by the state authority and this can not be questioned by any outward agency.

It is now seen that a backward classes become a scheduled castes soon after a tribal inclusion in the Presidential Order, Likewise a tribe or a tribal community becomes a schedule tribe. But in Assam a scheduled tribe of the plains area is not necessarily a scheduled tribe in the hills and a hills scheduled tribe may not be a scheduled tribe in the plains. The area restriction clause that has been eliminated with enforcement of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes Order (Amendment) Act. 1976, has not yet been put to operation in the North-Eastern Region though in other states all scheduled tribe communities have the same status throughout the territory of a state unless specifically mentioned otherwise. But in spite of the operation of the area restriction clause, members of the scheduled tribes whether in the plains or in the hills use to get all the facilities excepting of course the electoral reservation. In this context Government executive decision communicated vide No. TAD/BC/1/55 dated 27-12-60 repeated in No. AAP. 114/57/pt/1/149 dated 1-10-62 may be referred to. In pursuance of the above decision the scheduled tribes of the autonomous districts and erstwhile NEFA (Now Arunachal Pradesh) living in the plains districts and the scheduled tribes of the plains districts living in the autonomous districts should be entitled to the concessions mentioned in Government office Memorandum No. ABM. 18/56/pt 90 dated 2-2-60 regarding grant of preferential treatment in settlement of contracts, permits, fisheries, toll bridges, forest Mahals excise shops etc. etc. This broad policy decision taken under this memo was further extended to co-operative societies provided not less than 80% of the members thereof are persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It was laid down that as between individuals belonging to Scheduled Tribes/ Scheduled Castes and co-operatives formed by such individuals, the co-operatives should be preferred (vide Government Memo No. ABM. 70/61 pt/13 dated 5-7-62). A further clarification regarding benefits to non-scheduled hills and plains tribes has recently been issued by the Government of Assam vide letter No. TAD/ST/279/82/16 dated 24-12-82. This Government letter also indicated how certificates are to be issued to hill tribes in plains and plains tribes in hills for the purpose of giving economic, educational and employment benefits against quotas reserved for scheduled tribes (Hills) or Scheduled tribes (plains).

Regarding reservation in Government services and posts, major guideline was issued under Government Memo No. AAP. 108/49/16 dated 25. 1. 51 and this was subsequently superseded by Memo No. AAP. 66/63/482 dated 24-8-63. This Memo of 24-8-63 was partially modified by another Memo No. AAP. 66/63/pt/1/221 dated 26-12-64 where in it was laid down that there shall be no reservation of vacancies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to Scientific services and posts in connection with the affairs of the State of Assam so far as it concerns appointments to posts for conducting scientific research or organising, and directing scientific research.

The concession in application fee (vide Government letter No. AAP. 34/50 dated 7-5-50) and concession in age vide Government letter No. AAP. 20/51 dated 11-8-51 as modified by AAP. 34/50/47 dated 28-11-52 and by AAP. 171/55/23 dated 6-4-56) are also now embodied in the Assam Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of vacancies in services and posts) Act. 1978. This Act. has gone a long way in securing representation in posts and services from members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This enactment appears to be in consonance with Article 335 of the constitution besides incorporating the spirit of the Article 46. The objective of the enactment has been clearly stated in its preamble which goes on to say, whereas the members of the scheduled castes and

scheduled tribes who are back ward classes of citizens are not adequately represented in the services and posts within the state.

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the reservation of vacancies in services and posts for them; it is hereby enacted in the 29th year of the Republic of India by the Legislature of Assam.....

The main features of the Act. are reservation of vacancies in services and posts at the rate of 7% for scheduled castes, 10% for scheduled Tribes (Plains) and 5% for scheduled tribes (Hills) by means of a 20 point Roster both for direct recruitment and promotion cases. A relaxation of upper age limit by 3 years over the prescribed maximum age limit has also been provided for together with 50% reduction of fees if any prescribed for selection of candidates 50% reduction of fees if any prescribed for selection of candidates through examination to any service or post. Another important feature of this Act. is that an aggrieved party may lodge complaint before the Govt. against any appointing authority not withstanding anything contained in the Assam civil services (conduct) Rules, 1965. The Act. does not apply to employment under Central Government, Assam Judicial Service Grade-I, and domestic services. Excepting these the Act is applicable to all offices of the State Government, Local or Statutory authority, Universities, Colleges, Schools, receiving aid from the Government or Government owned and other establishment in public sectors.

In this context it may be pointed out that although the Act provides for reviewing the implementation of the reservation policy both in the direct recruitment and promotion cases including increases of percentage in both cases. (vide clause 4 (a) clause 5 (a), nothing has been said specifically as to the time limit for reservation as contemplated in the 45th constitution Amendment Act 1980, in respect of Article 334. It is also not clear whether with the improvement of the situation percentages of reservation will decrease though flexibility has been maintained in the enactment under section II for amending the schedule.

The enactment of this piece of legislation will go a long way in economic rehabilitation of the weaker section of society and thus carry out the wishes of Article 46 and 335 of the Indian constitution.



RAJADUAR MANIKARNESWAR VILLAGE- A CASE STUDY

B. K. HAZARIKA, B. A. (Hons) M. A. (Eng) ACS*

Rajaduar falls under ward No. 4 of North Guwahati. There are two hundred and fifty Kaibarta families in this village. A survey was carried out recently by our Institute to ascertain the socio economic condition of these people which are the largest scheduled castes group in Assam. Studies were also made about their cultural activities since the people of this community are found deeply religious and have excelled themselves in the cultural activities through the medium of religion.

Before we set about the task of finding out the socio-economic as well as the cultural life of a segment of this community in the aforesaid Rajaduar Manikarneswar village it will be perhaps proper to ponder over the past history of this community.

Out of the sixteen scheduled castes communities of Assam, demographically the Kaibartas occupy the second largest position. They are an important segment of the greater Assamese society who are considered as a backward caste and for whose economic upliftment various measures have been adopted under the Scheduled Caste Component Plan.

There is no compact area of the Kaibartas and they are spread in urban as well as in rural areas.

Opinions differ regarding the origin of the term Kaibarta. In Assam, this term is used mainly to indicate the people whose main profession is fish trade. In the early writings of the historians and ethnographers serious attempt was made to trace the origin of the Kaibartas.

B. C. Allen opines that Kaibartas are very few in numbers in Assam. "In Kamrup the names Kewat and Kaibarta seem to be interchangeable. The Kaibartas are divided into two functional groups which for all intents and purposes are separate castes, the Halowa and Jaliya.

The Kaibartas as found today are a scheduled caste community following both fishing and agriculture as professions. That their main profession till recently was fishing has been testified by the etymology of the name Kaibarta. 'Ka' means water and 'Varta' means to thrive.

A statistical survey was carried out by our Institute to get an authentic picture of the socio-economic condition as well as cultural activities of these people.

The findings of this survey which was carried out from 29th July to 31st July, 1994 are placed below. The findings are conclusive and a fair idea of socio-economic condition of the Kaibarta Community of the village can be had alongwith their cultural activities.

The village starts from the slope of Manikarneswar Hill. Manikarneswar Devalaya, which is an abode of Lord Mahadeva, is situated on top of the hill. It is believed that Ahom Swargadeo Rajeswar Singha had brought some Kaibarta families from Upper Assam to be engaged as labourers for the construction of the Shiva Temple in the Manikarneswar Hill. Legend has it that these people were also utilised as soldiers where battle of Saraighat took place.

26 families out of 169 families of the village have been taken up for random sampling, the percentage being 15%.

Out of these 26 families 9 are daily wage earners 9 belong to middle class status and 8 number of families are found solvent.

Among the comparatively well to do families there is one Bank Cashier, one High School teacher, one garage owner, one T. T. E., one President, Fishery Co-operative Society, and one Pisciculturist. In the developed towns they may be passed off as belonging to middle class family.

There are also carpenter, Chowkider, peon, driver, village headman, driver of machine boat, ticket seller of cinema hall, binder of press and welder in the village. The data concerning the 169 nos. of families are given below :

★ Director, Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati.

Total no. of household	169
Total no. of population	683
Total no. of Male population	325
Total no of female population	358
The ratio between male and female population	1000 : 1101
Total annual income of 26 nos. of families	Rs. 5,37,000.00
Average annual income of the aforesaid 26 nos. of families	Rs. 20,653.00
Total expenditure of 26 nos. families per year	Rs. 64,614.00
Average annual expenditure per family	Rs. 24,851.00

Most of the houses in the village are Assam Type houses, many houses are found in dilapidated condition.

Although, Guwahati, the nerve centre of educational institutions, is very near, yet the villagers are lacking in education.

There is one primary school, one middle English School, one Higher Secondary School and a college near the walking distance of the village.

The educational qualification of the inhabitants of the village are as follows :

Primary	Male	Female	Total
	41	72	113
Middle English School	Male	Female	
	51	52	
High & Higher Secondary School	Male	Female	
	103	153	256
College level	Male	Female	
	26	13	39
Illiterate	Male	Female	
	49	41	90

While conducting survey of 169 Nos. of families it was gathered that there are only two graduates in the entire village. Both the graduates are serving as teachers in the local high school. None in the village has as yet obtained Post Graduate degree. Poverty appears to be the main cause of higher rate of illiteracy. Although the students (being scheduled Caste) need not pay school fees, the soaring prices of all essential commodities have made them unable to pursue higher studies. Moreover, it appears that Guwahati being quite nearer and small type jobs being easily available, the urge for education is not strong in many of them.

The villagers have received some civic amenities namely, drinking water facility and electricity after the inclusion of the village within North Guwahati Town Committee. Some of the villagers have electricity. Although piped water system has been introduced many of the villagers do not get sufficient drinking water. Most of the water taps have gone dry. People living near famous Dol Gobinda Temple get water from the tapes installed in the area. As mentioned earlier, inhabitants of the area are living on the raised portion of the Rajaduar Hillock. As such they are to carry water from well or from the river Brahmaputra.

Many years hence people of this village earned their livelihood by catching fish from the Brahmaputra river and selling them in the market. Other source of livelihood was by carrying passengers to and

from Guwahati by country boat. After the introduction of ferry service by the Inland Water Transport the use of country boat has dwindled to a considerable extent. Nowadays, a section of the people of the village have started plying motor launches. However majority of the passengers prefer the IWT ferry services for economy and comfort.

There is one Fishery Co-operative Society known as Fulung Ouguri Fishery Co-operative Society in the village. The total number of members of this Co-operative Society comes to 180. The members, after catching the fish, are required to deliver 1/3 of their catch to the chairman of the society and rest they can sale in the market. Only 80 nos, of families are still subsisting on fishing as their only avocation. 150 families have got their houses built by timber and bamboo. The houses of daily wage earners are small and these are only thatch houses. Due to pitiable economic condition the villagers owning the Assam Type houses are not in position even to repair their damaged houses.

There are several joint families in the village. Except four families other families do not have sufficient Land even for any kitchen garden. They are required to purchase all daily needs. Three families are found to have 'Gumti' like shops where they sell bettle nut and cigarettes.

The villagers derive some profit by selling stationery and other goods during Janmastami Tithi and DouL Jatra to the pilgrims who throng the DouL Govinda Temple which is situated at a stone—throw distance of the village.

There is one pucca road stretching one k. m. and one kutcha road running half kilometer. These are the two existing roads in the village. Of course there are several narrow by lanes where no vehicles can ply.

There is one Post Office in the village. The distance of the telegraph office would be around 4 k. m. The hospital is at a distance of 3 k. m. (Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital) Doctor is available at a distance of half a kilometer.

Since village is situated on the side of hillock, drinking water remains the perennial problem. The villagers are perforced to carry drinking water. Some people use to carry water from Brahmaputra river itself. Only 5 (five) families have pucca well for drinking water. There is no tubewell in the village. Only 14 families have sanitary latrine. Except 4 nos. of families all families have homestead land to the extent of 1/2 katha to 1 1/2 katha. The villagers have neither flower garden nor kitchen garden. One widow has a fishery tank extending 1 1/2 Bigha land. But there is none to look after the fishery. As such no renovation was done. The fishery has no fencing and the miscreants, taking advantage of this, used to catch fish from the tank. Two other families have teak forest covering an area of 3 bighas each. Only 10 families in the village have electric connection. Others use Hurricane lamp, some families use firewood for cooking and resort to felling of trees. As a result, the number of trees have dwindled.

Although Rajaduar Manikarneswar village is backward in other respects, its cultural activities are of a very high order. The village has 4 Namghars namely

- (1) Baranatia Sankari Kalakristi Kendra
- (2) Pania Sankari Kalakristi Kendra
- (3) Sesa Sankari Kalakristi Kendra
- (4) Manikarneswar Kristi Bikash Kendra and Library.

Tithis of Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhab. deva, Ras festival and Janmastami etc are observed in these Namghars. They have a nice tradition of holding 'Bhaona' in their Namghars. Due mainly to religious impact the qualities of honesty, love and affection are still found very strong in the village.

The study reveals the following aspects of the village :

- (i) The inhabitants of the village, being very near to Guwahati, the premier city of Assam, are not free from the impact of city life.

(ii) Although fishing was their only occupation decades back, the competition and ever growing poverty have forced the Kabarta population of the village to try for other means of livelihood.

(iii) Poverty is found to be one of the main causes for the villagers remaining educationally backward.

(iv) The entire village being situated on the slanting portion of the hillock Manikarneswar shortage of drinking water has been a perennial problem. Although piped water supply scheme was introduced the scheme did not succeed as piped water connection was given to many houses outside the periphery of the village and there is no sufficient force for carrying the water any further.

(v) Majority of the villagers are in possession of small amount of land for which they cannot go for any kitchen garden or horticultural garden.

(vi) People in the village are found deeply religious. They have a rich cultural tradition which find manifestation in their beautiful rendering of Bargeet and presentation of Bhaona on auspicious occasions. There was a female Bhaona troupe in the village which is the first of its kind in Assam.

SUGGESTION

(i) Public Health Engineering Department may take immediate steps for supply of drinking water to the villagers by sinking deep tubewells.

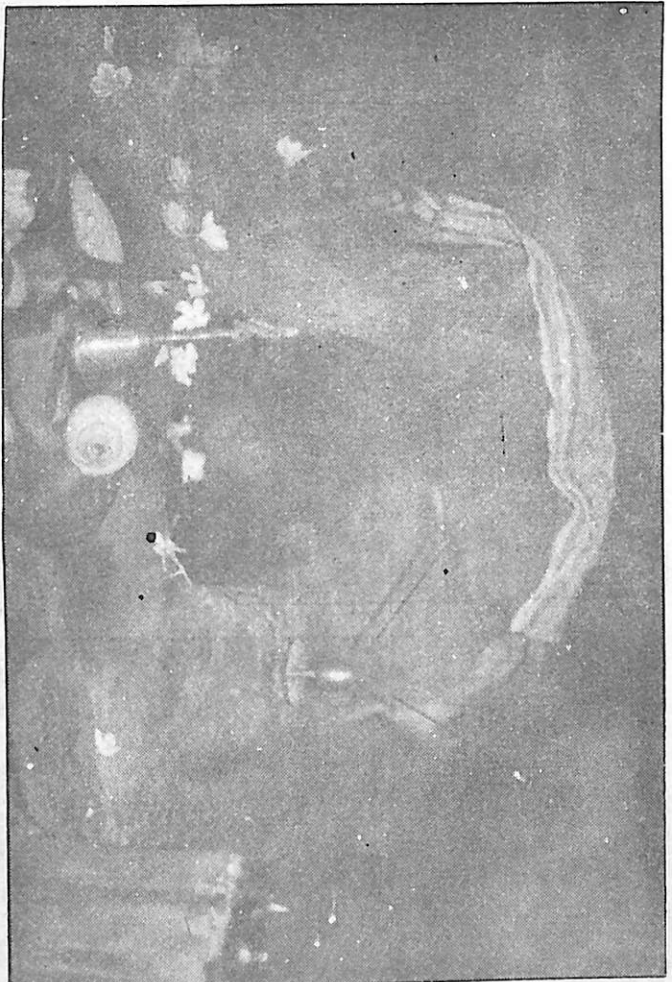
(ii) Tourism Department may explore the possibility of converting the Manikarneswar hillock and surrounding areas into a beautiful tourist spot overlooking mighty river Brahmaputra.

(iii) District Industries Centre, Guwahati may come forward to motivate the villagers for viable schemes for which bank finance may be forth coming.

(iv) Cultural Affairs Directorate may extend financial help as an incentive to the villagers to continue work for the presentation of more Bhaona performances thereby preserving the Sankari tradition as well as popularising 'the Bhaona' among the elites for its sheer artistic excellence.

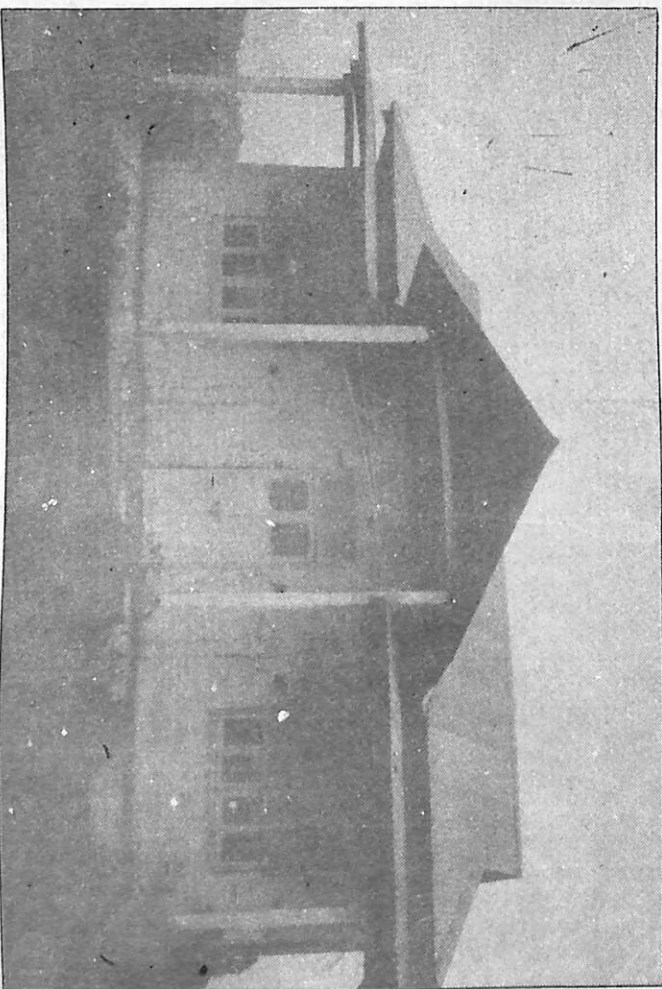
(v) More adult education programmes be taken up in the village so that the illiterate villagers can at least be able to read and write and be in a position to give vent to their feelings and meaningfully participate in developmental schemes of the Government.

I am thankful to shri P. Phukan, Inspector of Statistics and Shri U. S. Saikia Lecturer for ably assisting me in preparing this case study.



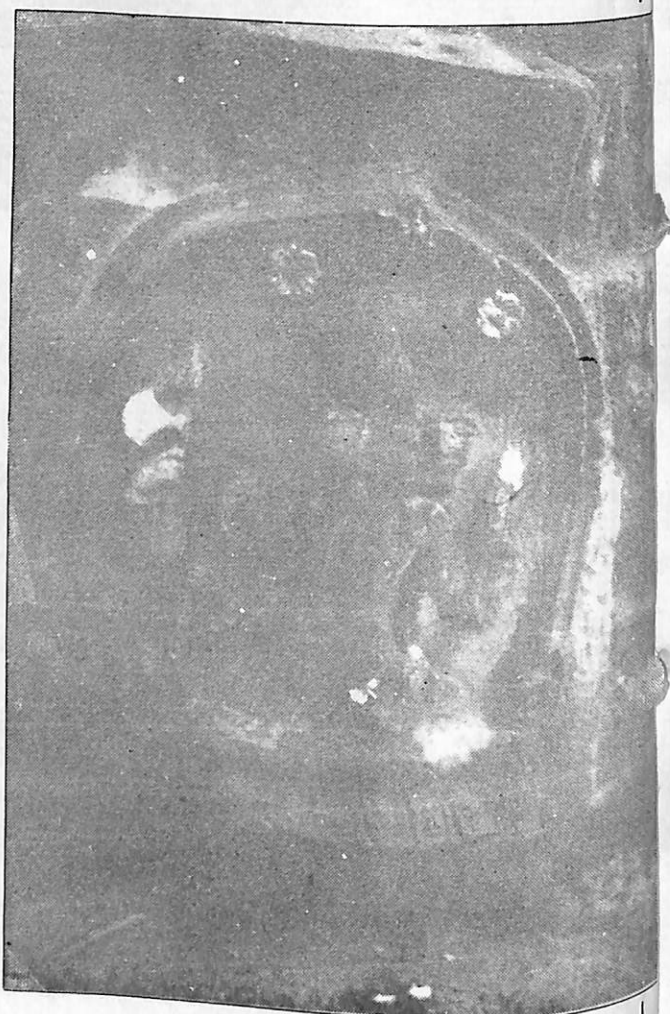
Altar of the Manikarneswar Siva Mandir.

A view of Sanskrit Sangha at Rajaduar, Manikarneswar.

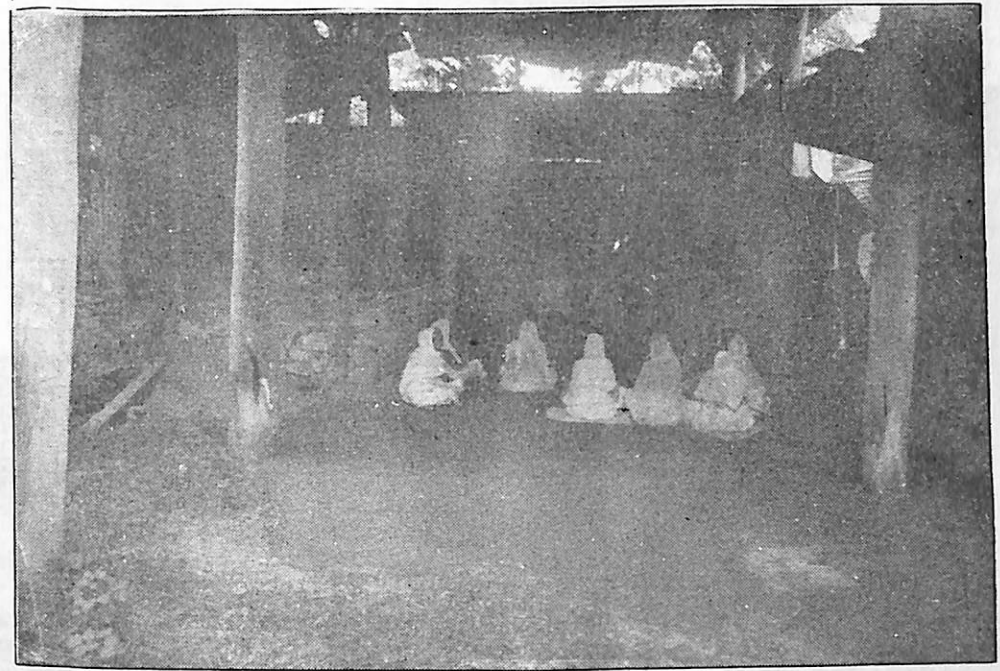




*A view of Sanskrit Sangha at Rajaduar,
Manikarneswar.*

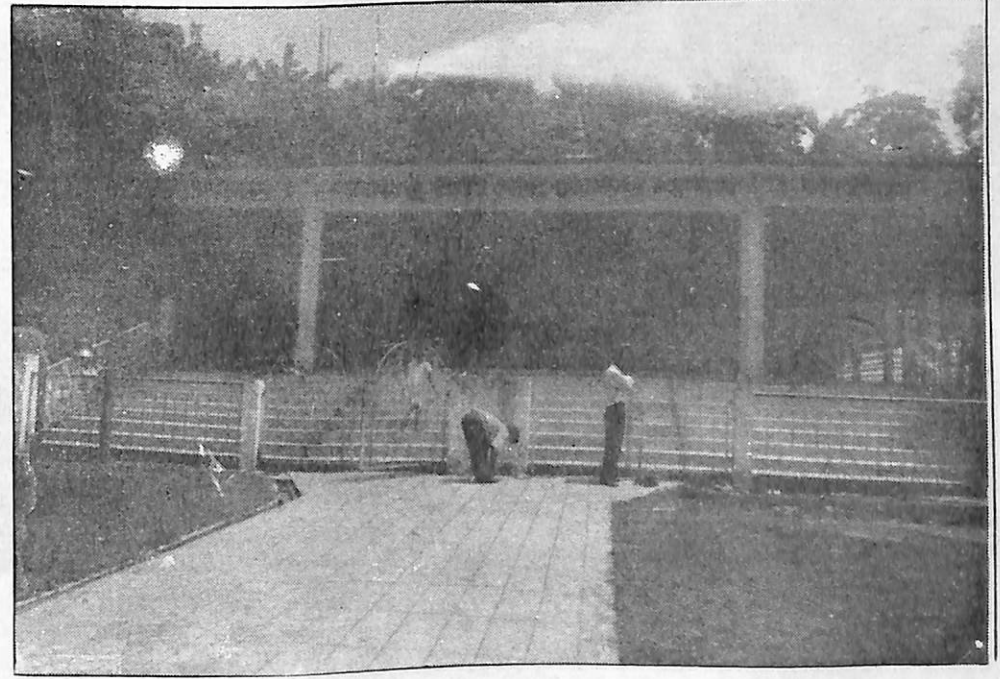


*Nam Prasanga at Sessa Mahila Sangha Namghar
of Rajaduar*

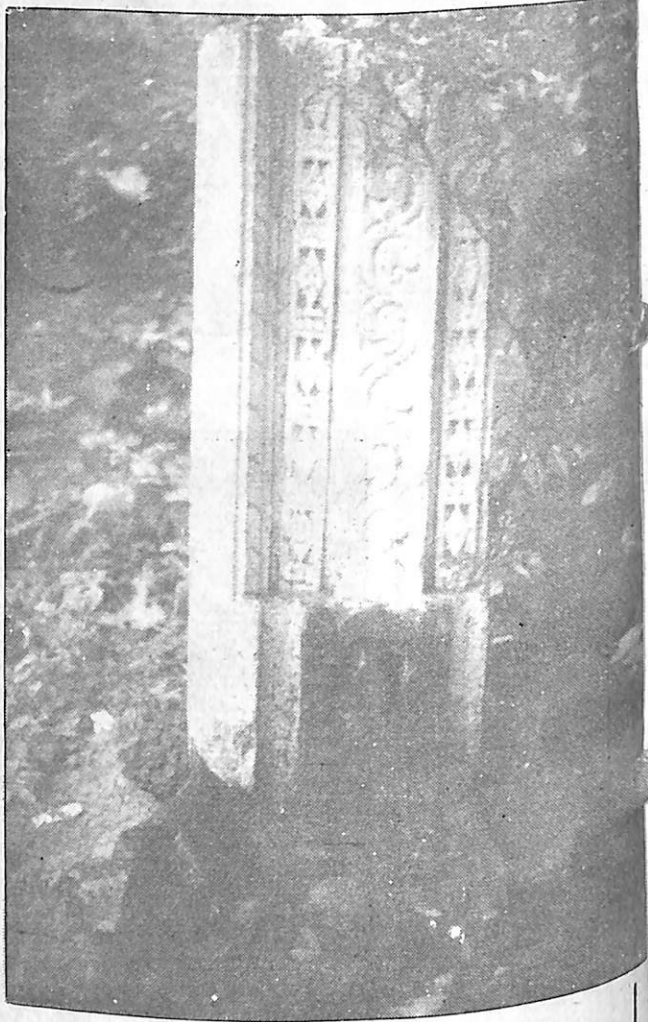


Nam Prasanga at Dihingia Khel Namghar of Rajaduar.

A view of Dol Govinda Temple of Rajaduar.



Brick wall of Manikarneswar Siva Mandir.

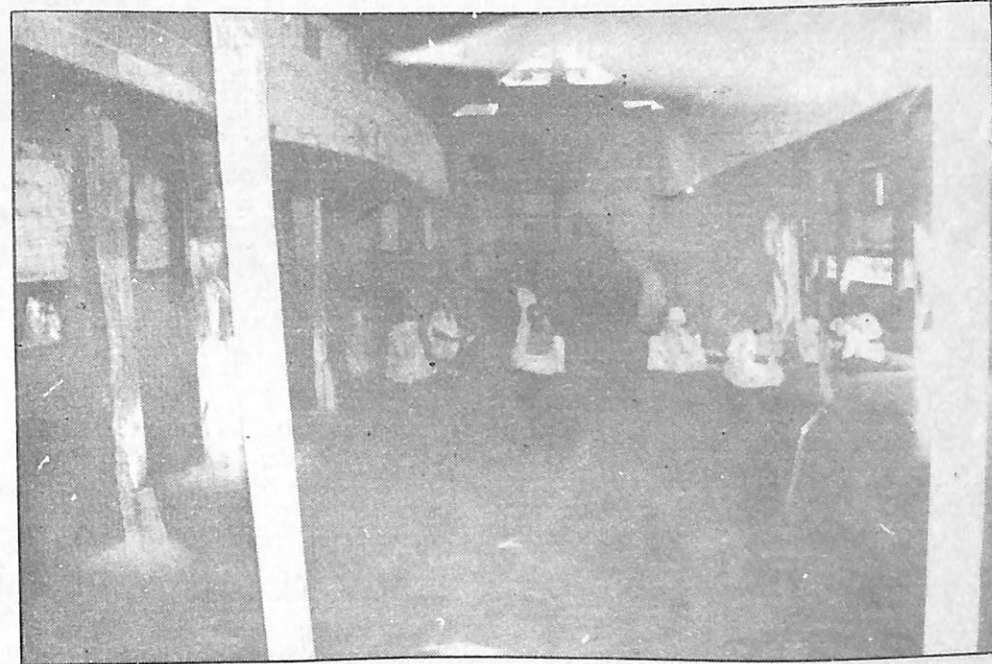


*A Sculpture at the entrance of Baranatia Sankari
Kala-Krishti Bikash Kendra at Rajaduar.*



*Nam Prasanga at Bara natia Sankari Kala Kristi
Bikash Kendra at Rajduar.*

Namerasanga at Sessa Sangha Namghar of Rajaduar.



ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF 26 H. H. IN CONSUMPTION GOODS.

SL. NO.	DRESS & ORNEMENTS	FURNITURE*	RADIO & TWO IN ONE	WATCH	TABLE/CELLING FAN.	SCOOTER	BICYCLE	T. V.	AMUSEMENT
1.	400.00	0	0	0	800.00	0	0	4000.00	100.00
2.	1000.00	0	500.00	200.00	800.00	0	0	0	100.00
3.	2000.00	1800.00	600.00	1200.00	0	0	0	16000.00	500.00
4.	1500.00	400.00	1800.00	600.00	0	0	800.00	3000.00	200.00
5.	600.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	3000.00	200.00
6.	100.00	80.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.	200.00	0	3000.00	400.00	800.00	0	600.00	3000.00	300.00
8.	200.00	0	800.00	0	800.00	0	0	0	200.00
9.	100.00	0	500.00	300.00	2400.00	0	0	0	100.00
10.	200.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	3000.00	200.00
11.	200.00	0	800.00	400.00	800.00	0	0	3000.00	200.00
12.	500.00	0	800.00	200.00	0	0	800.00	22,000.00	400.00
13.	200.00	200.00	0	800.00	0	0	0	0	0
14.	200.00	0	0	200.00	0	0	0	0	0
15.	250.00	300.00	0	200.00	0	0	0	0	100.00
16.	210.00	0	500.00	200.00	800.00	0	0	0	0
17.	220.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.00
18.	210.00	0	0	0	800.00	0	0	0	200.00
19.	212.00	120.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	200.00
20.	220.00	0	600.00	0	0	0	0	3000.00	200.00
21.	225.00	100.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	200.00
22.	226.00	0	0	200.00	0	0	0	0	200.00
23.	224.00	0	0	0	0	0	700.00	0	0
24.	223.00	0	500.00	300.00	800.00	0	600.00	300.00	0
25.	220.00	80.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26.	4,000.00	1,000.00	1200.00	200.00	1600.00	0	800.00	4000.00	500
	13840.00	40,800.00	11,600.00	5400.00	10,400.000	0	43,00.00	6,7000.00	4,200.00

FURNITURE AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF 26 H. H. IN THREE MAJOR HEADS/FOOD, EDUCATION & HEALTH

SL. NO.	FOOD	EDUCATION	HEALTH
1.	14,600.00	0	1500.00
2.	14400.00	3200.00	3600.00
3.	36,000.00	4000.00	2400.00
4.	16,000.00	3000.00	2000.00
5.	36,000.00	0	2000.00
6.	3,600.00	0	2000.00
7.	3,000.00	2000.00	3000.00
8.	14,400.00	100.00	2000.00
9.	7,000.00	1500.00	1000.00
10.	8,000.00	1500.00	1200.00
11.	36,000.00	0	1000.00
12.	9,000.00	1500.00	2000.00
13.	21,600.00	200.00	2000.00
14.	10,800.00	1500.00	400.00
15.	10,600.00	1000.00	500.00
16.	10,800.00	100.00	300.00
17.	10,800.00	200.00	400.00
18.	21,600.00	300.00	400.00
19.	21,400.00	400.00	800.00
20.	21,300.00	200.00	900.00
21.	21,400.00	300.00	400.00
22.	21,400.00	200.00	2000.00
23.	21,300.00	2000.00	1200.00
24.	21,200.00	1200.00	400.00
25.	21,100.00	1600.00	600.00
TOTAL :	467300.00	28000.00	34,200.00

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE UNDER DIFFERENT HEADS.

EXPENDITURE ITEMS	AMOUNT
FOOD	434900.00
EDUCATION	28000.00
HEALTH	34200.00
OTHER CONSUMPTION GOODS.	15,6240.00
GROSS ANNUAL EXPENDITURE	Rs. 65,3340.00
AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF THE FAMILY	Rs. 25,128.00
AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER HEAD	Rs. 25,128.00
	149
	Rs. 4384.00

PER CAPITA ANNUAL EXPENDITURE IS GREATER THAN PER CAP. ANNUAL INCOME.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS (SEX WISE & TOTAL)

EDUCATIONAL STATUS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	2	3	4
UNEDUCATED	49	71	120
UP TO L. P. SCHOOL	41	72	113
UP TO M. E. SCHOOL	51	52	103
UP TO HIGH SCHOOL/HIGHER SECONDARY	158	150	308
UP TO COLLEGE LEVEL.	24	13	37
POST GRADUATE.	0	0	0

GROSS ANNUAL INCOME FROM VARIOUS SOURCES OF 26 H. H.

SOURCES OF INCOME	AMOUNT (IN Rs)
HORTICULTURE & FISHERY	63000.00
COTTAGE INDUSTRY	0
TRADE & COMMERCE	13500.00
SERVICE INCLUDING DAILY WAGES	39900.00
OTHERS	3000.00
TOTAL G. INCOME	5,37,000.00
AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME OF THE FAMILY	Rs. 20,653.00
TOTAL POPULATION OF THE 26 H. H.	149
PER CAPITA ANNUAL INCOME	Rs. 3,604.00

LAND HOLDING PATTERN

LAND AREA	NO. OF HOUSE HOLDS
1	2
0-1 Katha	10
1-2 Katha	10
2-3 Katha	1
3-4 Katha	2
4 Kathas to 15 Kathas.	3
Total	26

A BRIEF NOTE ON THE ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH FOR TRIBALS AND SCHEDULED CASTES

The Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes (erstwhile Tribal Research Institute, Assam) with Headquarters at Guwahati was set up in 1977 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under "Research and Training." The scope of activities of the Institute includes both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The jurisdiction of the Institute extends to entire Assam covering both plains and hills.

As per guidelines laid down by the Government of India, the main functions of the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes are (1) Research, (2) Evaluation, (3) Planning and (4) Training. The other important functions include publication of Books, Research papers and Research Bulletins, organisation of Seminar, Symposia and Workshops, participation in Exhibitions at State, Regional, National and International levels, award of Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships, documentation of tribal life and culture through audio-visual media, establishment of a documentation Centre and a Data Bank on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, establishment of a Museum for their heritage, establishment of a Reference Library and so on.

The Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes has so far completed 39 Nos. Of important Research studies and a few such studies are in hand.

The Institute has also conducted 32 Nos. of studies, as per the guidelines laid down by the Government of India, on the communities who submitted memoranda to the Government for their inclusion in the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Such studies are referred to the Institute by the Govt. from time to time and the Institute's recommendations on such studies are carefully taken into account by the Government at the time of taking decisions on such cases. Studies on some of the communities have now been taken up afresh by the Institute as per Government's instruction. Evaluation studies numbering 9 (nine) have so far been completed and 3 Nos. of such studies are in hand.

The Institute had prepared project Reports for all the 19 Nos. of Integrated Tribal Development Projects during the Fifth Five Year plan and during the Sixth Five Year plan it had revised the Project Reports for 17 nos. of I.T.D.Ps.

In addition to this the Institute has also been helping the Government of Assam, in the Department for Welfare of Plains Tribes and Backward Classes, in preparation of the Tribal Sub-plan and the Scheduled Castes Component plan.

The Institute organizes Orientation Training Courses regularly out of its own annual budgetary allotment and also under the sponsorship of the Department of Personnel and Training (Training Division), Government of India.

The training courses are organised both for officials of various categories and non-officials connected with the welfare and development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Institute has so far conducted 48 Nos. of such orientation Training courses.

The Institute also organizes Seminars, Meet, etc., on the problems of development of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes at State, Regional and National levels. The Seminars/Meet, etc, organised so far by the AIRT&SC have not only been able to evoke response from the academicians but also from the General Public. The following Seminars/ Meet have so far been organised by the Institute:

1. The contribution of Assam Tribes to the Cultural Heritage of Assam and India. (State level seminar held at Bokq).
2. Alienation of Tribal Land and Indebtedness (National level Seminar held at Guwahati).

3. Socio-Economic problems of the plains Tribes of Assam (State level seminar held at B. B. Kishan College, Jalah).
4. Dimensions of poverty among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of Assam (State level seminar held at Dudhnoi College).
5. Application of Science and Technology for Tribal Development (State level seminar held at Guwahati).
6. Constraints of Tribal Development in North-East India (Regional level seminar held at Guwahati).
7. Socio-Economic Developments of the Scheduled Castes of Assam (State Level seminar held at Guwahati).
8. Tribal Women and Development (National level seminar held at Guwahati).
9. International Meet of Tribal and Analogous peoples. (State level Meet held at Guwahati. The meet was sponsored by the Indira Gandhi Rastriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal).
10. The core Problems of the Scheduled Castes of Assam (State level Seminars held at Guwahati).

The Institute has been participating in the State, National and International level exhibitions held from time to time within and outside the State of Assam by displaying the cultural heritage of the tribes of Assam— both plains and hills and also their fast disappearing artifacts. So far it had participated in 11 Nos. Of State level Exhibitions, 2 Nos. of National level Exhibitions and 1 No. of International level Exhibition. The Institute has won a number of prizes in these exhibitions for their excellence in displaying the life and culture of the tribes of Assam.

The Institute has also constructed 4 Nos. of life size hutments belonging to 4 tribal groups of Assam in the open air exhibition ground of the Indira Gandhi Rastriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal.

In the Tribal Habitat Exhibition held at Bhopal, the AIRT & SC got a Bodo-Kachari hutment constructed and a team of Bodo-Kachari artisans and artists drawn from Kokrajhar district had not only displayed the material culture of the tribe but also presented a number of cultural items during exhibition which were highly appreciated by the visitors drawn from different parts of India.

The Institute has also participated in the 'Eternal Voyage'- the International Meet of Tribal and Analogous Peoples held at Bhopal from 15th December to 17th December, 1993, under the auspices of I.G.R.M.S. by way of constructing two more tribal hutments belonging to the Zeme Nagas of N.C. Hills district and the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam respectively. The tribal cultural troops said Meet. Later, another life size Mishing house was also constructed.

A good beginning has already been made by establishing an Ethnographic Museum for the purpose of displaying and preserving the rare artifacts belonging to different ethnic groups of Assam covering both hills and plains. The Museum set up will not only help in displaying and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the tribes of Assam, but will also help the research scholars and persons of various walks of life in enhancing their knowledge and developing further research aptitudes. Many artifacts belonging to the Bodo-Kacharis, Mishings, Rabhas, Deoris, Sonowal Kacharis, Lalungs, Karbis, Dimasa Kacharis, Rengma Nagas, Zeme Nagas, Hmars, Kukis, Garos, Hajongs and Hiras of Assam have already been collected.

The artifacts of different communities along with coloured blow-ups and transparencies are now being displayed in the Museum of the new Building Complex at Jawaharnagar.

The AIRT & SC has also collected a good number of tribal artifacts which have been sent to the I.G.R.M.S., Bhopal for display.

The Institute offers Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships to deserving scholars on "Various Aspects of Tribal Development" sponsored by the Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India.

While three scholars had already obtained their Doctoral (Ph.D.) Degrees through the Research Fellowships awarded by the Institute, another two Research Fellows are conducting their research studies for Doctoral Degrees.

Three Research Fellows have already completed Post-Doctoral Research studies and submitted their study reports.

The Institute has recently introduced the scheme "Documentation of Tribal Culture". The North-Eastern Council, Govt. of India, Shillong, has also helped the Institute financially in implementation of this scheme. Different aspects of culture of tribal communities inhabiting the hills and plains of Assam are taken up for authentic documentation through Audio-Visual media.

Production of 16 mm short duration coloured Documentary Films on the 'Kherai' festival of the Boro-Kacharis of Assam, 'Baikhow' festival of the Rabhas, 'Ali-Ai-Lrigang' of the Mishings, the Deodhani dance of the Deoris (Midi-Jamuna) and the Bihu dances of Assam have already been completed. Another 16 mm colour documentary film on the 'Jon-Bil-Mela' of the Lalungs (Tiwas) is in the process of making. Steps have also been taken to produce 16 mm colour documentary films and Umatic Video Cassette on different aspects of the Karbis, the Mishings, the Bodos and the Dimasa Kacharis. Video Film Cassette on the 'Baikhow' festival of the Rabhas has also been produced by the Institute. 3 Nos. of 16mm coloured documentary films produced by the Institute have already been converted into Umatic cassettes for making them suitable for regional and national telecast. Necessary correspondences have already been made with the Doordarshan authorities for telecasting the films. Documentation of different aspects of Tribal life and Culture has also been undertaken through the medium of coloured Blow-ups (still photography).

The Institute maintains a Reference Library of its own. Important books numbering about 4000 have already been collected. It also subscribes thirty six Research Journals, Seventeen News Papers and three periodicals. The Library provides reading room facilities for scholars and others.

The Institute has to its credit, a number of valuable publications including an annual Bulletin. Besides its own publications the Institute also provides grants-in-aid to deserving authors who write on the life and culture of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

The new multistoreyed building of the Directorate of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, which was constructed at cost of Rs. 1.6 Crores at Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati, was inaugurated by Shri Hiteswar Saikia, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, on 2nd January, 1992. Fifty per cent of the cost of the building was borne by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India.

The building is a compact one having a total plinth area of 30,000 sq. Ft. In the training wing there is a provision of accomodating 30 Nos. Of trainee officers and 2 Nos. Guests/Guest Speakers. There is one Auditorium, one Conference Room and Lecture rooms. The Library and the Museum are also accommodated in the same building complex.

Under the sponsorship of the Department for Science, Technology and Environment, Govt. of Assam, the Institute has undertaken some schemes like translation of scientific books into different tribal languages for free distribution among the students and display of suitable captions on electro-tin plates in different tribal languages regarding environment protection, etc.

The Institute also provides grants-in-aid to the Universities for conducting research projects on the subjects relating to the tribal people of Assam.



SOCIO ECONOMIC SURVEY IN THE HIDIPI MINI COMPACT AREA PROJECT : : FEW OBSERVATIONS & SUGGESTIONS.

G. N. Das.*

The basic objective of Mini compact Area Projects in the autonomous Hill districts of Assam is to wean away the jhumiyas from the shifting cultivation by means of providing them better avenues of livelihood through implementation of the various developmental programmes. With this end in view in end, altogether four projects have been taken in hand - i) Miyungdisa and ii) Hidipi in the Karbi Anglong district and iii) Digerkuki and iv) Jinam Valley in the North Cachar hills district.

The Report of the National Agricultural Commission, 1976 reveals that in the Karbi Anglong district 45,600 tribal families depend on shifting cultivation and the total area of jhum land brought under operation is 4'15 lakh hectares while in the N.C Hills District the area of jhum land is 0'83 lakh hectares and the no. of families dependent on it is 13,000. On the contrary, the area of land under wet cultivation is 0'54 lakh hectares and 0'15 lakh hectares in the Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills district respectively. The extent of shifting cultivation in the hill areas of Assam may thus be realised very easily.

Various authorities are of the opinion that the practice of shifting cultivation should be prohibited since it leads to destruction of forests, erosion of soil, loss of soil fertility, occurrence of floods in the plain areas and imbalance in the eco-system etc. Moreover, minimum production is available from the jhum land at the cost of maximum labour.

With a view to regulating the practice of shifting cultivation, certain measures have already been adopted by the Government in the hill areas of Assam under the Five Year Plans. In this connection, we may refer to the implementation of the 'scheme for establishment of model villages' 'cash crop plantation scheme' and 'composite Projects in the N.C.Hills district were executed under the Integrated Jhumiya Development Programme. Over and above, 36 villages located within the jurisdiction of the Chinthong Development Block of the Karbi Anglong district and 40 villages of the Jatinga and Diyung Valley Development Blocks of the Karbi Anglong district have been brought under the Compact Area Development Programme. The recent approach is, however, the introduction of four Mini Compact Area Projects in the hill areas of Assam.

The main considerations for selecting the Hidipi Mini Compact Area by the Karbi Anglong District Council, Diphu have been recorded in the Hidipi Project Report prepared by the Council authority.

- i) The extent of jhuming is extensive and the target families are below the poverty line.
- ii) The Project Area is close to the Subdivisional Headquarter of Diphu.
- iii) The villages are situated in a geographically contiguous area.¹

The list of villages selected for implementation of various developmental schemes under the Hidipi Mini Compact Area Project is furnished below :

		Households
1. Nasoy Rongpi	-	3
2. Nohing Engti	-	22
3. Sarthe Teron	-	8
4. Harsing Rongphar	-	17
5. Joysing Teron	-	13
6. Alturam Kachari	-	49
7. Kaniya Teron	-	4
8. Kamala bagan	-	26
9. Dikrut Teron	-	8

* District Research officer, Diphu
1 Project Report - Hidipi - Karbi Anglong District, p.1

10. Upper Akehai	-	40
11. Jamuna Engti	-	29
12. Jorlep Teron	-	20

All the selected villages were visited by the Research Investigators appointed on Adhoc Basis for carrying out the survey. Moreover, efforts were made by them to contact the heads of households as far as practicable for the purpose of conducting the interview. The field data were collected through household and village schedules. The survey was undertaken in the month of December, 1990 while tabulation and analysis of data were carried out in the month of March, 1991. Report writing commenced from the month of April and by the end of that month the Draft Report was ready.

The Mini Compact Area project, under study, covers a dozen villages out of which 11 nos. are inhabited by the Karbis while the remaining village (Alturam Kachari) is inhabited by the Dimasa Kacharis. The total no. of households in the surveyed villages is 239 only and the no. of households in the villages varies from minimum 3 to maximum 49. The total population is 1,384. The distribution of the villages by size of population indicates that five villages fall within the category of '100-200'. The no. of villages within the category 'below 100' is also found to be the same i.e. 5. Only two villages fall within the category of '200 & above'. This shows that the selected villages are not thickly populated. Again, the distribution of population according to age-group reflects that 54% of the total population are in the active age-group '15-60' yrs while 46% of the total population are in the dependent age-groups i.e. '0 - 15' yrs. and '60 yrs. & above'. Sex-ratio is 1000 : 872. Interestingly, there are three villages where the females outnumber the male population.

With regard to transport and communication facilities, it may be said that the people do not face much difficulty due to location of the villages within the distance of 1 K.M. only from the nearest motorable road. The National Highway 36 runs by the side of several villages. Even then, availability of regular bus service at frequent intervals will help the people to derive much benefit out of the system. In respect of railway facilities, we observe that the people of the project Area are in a position to avail the services from the Diphu and Bokajan railway stations. But they have to arrive at the nearest railway station after covering more than 15 K.M. The location of all the villages except, one, within the comfortable distance of '0-10' K.M. from the nearest Block H.Q. has enabled the people to have a close touch with the Block authority. On the other hand, out of twelve villages, 7 nos. are located within the range of '15-20' K.M. and 5 nos. are located beyond 20 K.M. from the District H.Q., Diphu. 11 nos. (91'66%) of villages are situated within 5 K.M. from the nearest post office* is more than 15 K.M. That is why, it may be said that the people of the Project Area derive maximum benefit from the post office in comparison to that of the telegraph office. The medical institutions viz. P.H.C./Dispensary and Veterinary subcentre etc. are within easy reach of the people. However, the location of the civil hospital and veterinary hospital is at considerable distance from the surveyed villages and for this reason, the people sometimes experience extreme difficulty in proper treatment of various cases.

In respect of education it has been observed that the distance of the L.P. schools from the selected villages is not more than 2 K.M. As a result, the children do not face any problem in attending their classes. The no. of children attending primary classes in the year 1990 is worked out to be 104 out of a total of 237 in the age-group '6-10' yrs. In other words, 51'5% of the males and 33'9% of the females have attended classes. The no. of students attending M.E. schools from the selected villages in 1990 is found to be 71, the no. of boys and girls being 37 (52'11%) and 34 (47'89%) respectively. Similarly, 58 students attend high schools. The no. of boys (31) and girls (27) constitutes 53'4% and 46'55% respectively. It may, therefore, be assumed that the M.E and High Schools at Hidipi, Ronglingplum, Mohendijua and Manja etc. has contributed a lot towards spread of education in the Project area. But special efforts for improvement of the standard of education in the existing educational institutions by the District Council authority are also essential. Out of the total population of 1,384, the no. of literates is found to be 488 (35'26%). In respect of male literacy, the percentage is 44'25 while it is 24'96 only in case of female literacy. According to 1971 Census, the percentage of literacy is 19'2 (Male=26'9%, Female=10'3%) in the Karbi Anglong district. This indicates that the people of the Project Area the Karbi Anglong district. This

* But the distance of the villages from the nearest telegraph office.

the Karbi Anglong district. This indicates that the people of the project Area have realised the importance of education in the sphere of all-round development.

The people of the Project Area do not face acute problem for drinking water due to availability of ring/katcha well. But they do not adopt any scientific procedure for purification of water except the traditional method of filtration. That is why, occurrence of water-borne diseases in the surveyed villages is common. So far as marketing facilities are concerned, it is seen that the people from eleven villages can easily sell their domestic products and procure their necessary articles in/from the daily/weekly markets located at a distance of 0-3 K.M. from the villages. The people from only one village have to cover 7 K.M. to arrive at the nearest market. The Lumbajong LAMPS, Manja and Bokajan LAMPS, Bokajan have also rendered services to the people of the project Area.

With regard to Cottage industries, it may be said that out of 239 nos. of total households, 232 nos. (97.07%) are engaged in weaving while 117 nos. (48.95%) are engaged in bamboo & cane works. On the other hand, 55 nos. (23.01%) of households are found to practise sericulture. All the products are mainly utilised for domestic consumption. The only way to uplift the economic conditions of the people through cottage industries is to implement some income-generating schemes by the competent authority.

In the Project Area, 211 nos. (88.28%) of the total households have adopted cultivation as primary occupation while 27 nos. (11.29%) and 1 no. (0.42%) have taken service and business as primary occupation respectively. The people also resort to various types of subsidiary occupation. We find the no. of households to be 18 (7.53%) in cultivation, 2 (0.83%) in service, 42 (17.57%) in business, 7 (2.92%) in contract and 50 (20.92%) in daily wage. Although we observe certain changes in the occupational pattern even then agriculture is still the main source of livelihood of the people, under study.

Out of the total population of 1,384, the no. of earners is 257 (18.57%) while the no. of earning dependents is 596 (43.06%). On the other hand, the non-earning dependents are worked out to be 531 i.e. 38.37% of the total population. Therefore, the total workers which include both earners and earning dependents constitute 61.63% of the total population against 38.37% of non-workers.

With regard to land-holding pattern of the households, it may be said that out of 239 households, 129 nos. (53.97%) possess lands all the category '0-15' bighas while 87 nos. (36.4%) have lands in the category '15-30' bighas. Again, the no. of households possessing lands in the categories '30-45' bighas and '45 bighas & above' is worked out to be 12 (5.02%) and 11 (4.6%) respectively. Out of the total area of 4,223 bighas of land possessed by 239 households, the area of land under cultivation, homestead and fishery is estimated at 3,637.5 bighas (86.1%). 411 bighas (9.7%) and 20.5 bighas (0.5%) respectively. The amount of fallow land is 154 bighas (3.77%) only. It may be mentioned here that 12 households do not have cultivable land. The average land-holding per household is found to be 17.67 bighas. Per capita land-holding in the surveyed villages is 3.1 bighas only.

In the Project Area, out of the total 3,637.5 bighas of cultivable land, the area of land under jhum, and settled cultivation is 1,646.5 bighas and 1,991 bighas respectively. In jhum, the people practise mixed crops in the same plot of land and it is not possible to demarcate the area of land utilised for various crops. On the other hand, in settled cultivation, it is found that the total cropped area is 2422 bighas. But the total area of land under settled cultivation is already referred to as 1991 bighas. This has happened due to repeated use of the same plot of land under various crops in a year. In case of settled cultivation, the area of land brought under paddy is 1871.5 bighas i.e. 77.3% of the total cropped area. Again, the area of land under mustard is 316 bighas (13%) while it is 115 bighas (4.7%) only in respect of sesame. An amount of 1195 bighas of land (4.9%) is also brought under cultivation of ginger, chilli, cotton and vegetable etc. When we look at the production of major crops in both jhum and settled cultivation, we find that the quantity of paddy is 2756.25 Q1 from jhum land and 4328.5 Q1 from settled cultivation. The rate of production of paddy is 1.7 Q1 per bigha in jhum and 2.3 Q1 per bigha in settled cultivation. The total amount of production in respect of some other crops practised by the people of the Project Area is 438 Q1 in sesame, 337 Q1 in maize and 212.5 Q1 in mustard etc.

In respect of livestock population, it is observed that poultry goats and pigs constitute 62.22%, 12.09% and 11.83% respectively. Bullocks account for 7.18% against 4% of cows. The percentage of buffaloes is estimated at 24.0% only. According to the field study, 95.32% of the households possess poultry while 67.36% rear pigs. Again

31.92% are found to possess goats. The percentage of households having bullocks is 54.39. On the contrary, 30.96% are in the possession of cows. Only 9.92% of the total households possess buffaloes. It appears that the people are in the habit of rearing animals and birds to a considerable extent.

The impact of urbanisation is also observed among the people of the Project Area. In this case, we may refer to some of the important household properties such as bicycle (60 nos.), watch (104 nos.), tape-recorder (20 nos.), radio (69 nos.), television (nos.), and vehicle (3 nos.) etc. moreover, we find change in housing pattern. Most of the people have now discarded the construction of pile-dwelling house and instead they have started the construction of house on grounds. The field investigation reveals the no. of various types of house available in the Project area in this manner - thatched house - 288 nos., katcha A.T. - 131 nos., pucca A.T. - 2 nos. and pile-dwelling - 1 no.

In the Project Area, it has been found that land contributes the highest percentage of income (56.28) out of the various sources. The next source of income is worked out to be paid employment including daily wage, the percentage being 13.53. The people derive 12.86% of income from livestock also. Other sources of income are trade & commerce (6.97%), cottage industries (2.08%) and fishery (0.1%) etc. It may be mentioned here that out of 239 nos. of households, 15 households (6.3%) live below the poverty line (Rs.6,600/-per annum). The average gross annual income of a household is estimated at Rs.16,473.00. Per capita annual income is Rs.2,844.69 only.

The major head of expenditure of the households is food which accounts for 58.1% of the total amount of expenditure. Other important heads of expenditure are found to be dress & ornaments (7.9%), furniture & residential buildings (7.7%), kerosene, toilet, utensil (4.4%), betelnut, tobacco, beverage (4.2%), festivals & ceremonies (3.9%), education (2.6%) and health (1.8%), etc. The average annual expenditure of a household is Rs.14,627.90 and the per capita expenditure is Rs.2,520.06 only. As a consequence, the average household has a marginal surplus budget of Rs.1,845.10 only per annum. On the whole, the prevailing economy in the Project Area is of subsistence type.

With regard to the nature and extent of indebtedness in the selected villages, it may be said that out of 239 households, 99 nos. (41.42%) are in the habit of taking loan for meeting their household requirements and also for carrying out agricultural operations. The percentage of the total amount of loan taken from Shopkeeper is 56.86 while it is 17.39 from the village people and Mahajan. On the other hand, we find 25.75% of the total amount of loan taken from DRDA, Diphu. In case of DRDA, the rate of interest is Rs.10% per annum. On the contrary, the rate of interest varies Rs.10% to Rs.20% per month in respect of loan taken from the sources, already referred to. The average debt per household is estimated at Rs.545.10 and the average debt per indebted household is worked out to be Rs.1,315.96.

So far as trends of change in the Project Area are concerned, we observe noticeable change in the social institutions viz. family and marriage. The most widely prevalent joint family system has been disintegrated due to various reasons. This has ultimately led to the formation of nuclear family system. According to field investigation, the No. of joint and nuclear families is 73 (30.5%) and 166 (69.5%) respectively in the Project Area. With regard to marriage system, it has been observed that marriageable age of boys and girls has gradually increased. The attitude of the people towards treatment of diseases has undergone considerable amount of change. They visit the nearest medical institutions although some of them initially try to get relief by means of indigenous drugs. In the field of education, we find increase in the no. of students attending various educational institutions. Moreover, changes have also taken place in respect of dress pattern and hair design particularly among the younger generations. The people of the Project Area show keen interest in possession of household properties like cycle, radio, watch, tape-recorder etc. Structural change in residential house has also taken place. Although the people still practise jhum, they are also highly interested in settled cultivation. It is a fact that most of the households practise cultivation as primary occupation. But the attitude of the people towards acceptance of non-agrarian occupation is also observed from the fact that some of the households have taken service as primary occupation. On the whole, it may be said that proper execution of suitable programmes by the Development Departments will bring spectacular change in the entire socio-economic scenario of the people, under study.

In order to discourage the practice of harmful method of shifting cultivation and to bring about socio-

economic upliftment of the people inhabiting the Hidipi Mini Compact Area Project, we would like to place before the concerned authority the following few suggestions for favour of necessary consideration :

1. The people of the Project Area are already in the habit of carrying out settled type of cultivation and a limited number of households has even utilised chemical fertilisers, pesticides and high yielding crops etc. On the other hand, due to decline in Jhum cycle (at present, 4 to 5 years in the Project Area), the rate of production from Jhum field is also gradually going down year after year. As a result, proper motivation towards adoption of settled cultivation in a scientific manner by the people of the surveyed villages for maximum production is absolutely necessary. But uninterrupted supply of irrigation facilities must be provided at any cost. The people may also be encouraged for the practice of horticultural crops such as pineapple, orange and banana etc, and cash crops viz, rubber and coffee on a large-scale by means of providing necessary assistance so as to enable them to augment their economy to a considerable extent.

2. In the field of education, it has been observed that attendance of the students in the educational institutions from the Project Area has been increasing day by day. However, the number of females is found to be comparatively less than that of the males. As such, steps may be taken to make the people realise the importance of female education in the present day world. The District Council Authority should undertake suitable measures to improve the standard of education in the educational institutions located in and around the selected villages.

3. Since the people of the Project Area derive considerable amount of income out of livestock, attempts may, therefore, be made by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary to provide them with improved breeds of poultry, pigs and goats etc. This will not only fulfil their domestic requirements but also generate additional income to the people.

4. For accelerated development of cottage industry viz, weaving, bamboo & cane works and sericulture, efforts may be made to provide adequate supply of raw materials at a subsidised rate, financial assistance as well as technical guidance to the people. Moreover, marketing facilities for the finished products should be made available.

5. The selected villages which are not already covered by the Cadastral Survey should be brought under its operation for preparation of proper land records.

6. The habit of taking loans from the shopkeepers and village people/Mahajans at exorbitant rate of interest by the people may be minimised provided the financial institutions come forward to help them on easy terms and conditions.

In fine, let us conclude with the following words from the pen of a renowned anthropologist :

"We should not deny the fact that shifting cultivation is becoming more and more destructive of ecological balance and we should not argue for its continuance by saying that it is a way of life and that destroying the way of life will mean destroying the people themselves. The shifting cultivators have themselves understood that their method of cultivation is fighting a losing battle and that is why they themselves are trying to adopt other method or whenever opportunity offers change over to other occupations?"

2 Majumdar, D.N. - *An Assessment of Shifting Cultivation in North-East India, an article published in the book entitled 'Shifting Cultivation in North-East India', p.31.*

A REVIEW OF THE PROJECT REPORT ON RESEARCH PROJECT- DRYING OF FISH AND MEAT FOR SCIENTIFIC PRESERVATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE METHODS USED BY PLAINS TRIBALS OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY

PARAMESH DUTTA.★

Fish and meat are two important proteinous food items in the diet of the tribal people of Assam. The tribal people are expert in the art of catching fish by indigenous methods and have their own traditional techniques of preservation of fish as well as meat. The traditional techniques of preservation of fish include sun drying as well as smoking by putting the fish over the fire place. For the purpose of preservation of meat only smoking is done. Some tribal people practise fermentation of fish in raw bamboo pipes or earthen pots by putting some herbal preservations.

The research project on drying of fish and meat for scientific preservation under review was conducted by Dr. A. Dutta, Dr. U.C. Goswami and Dr. D.K. Sharma of the Department of Zoology, Gauhati University. The research team completed the study report in February, 1992. The project was sponsored by the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Government of Assam. The research was conducted with an intention to find out the different preservation processes of fish and meat traditionally followed by the tribal people of Assam and to assess their efficiency, durability, hygienic conditions etc. Another aim of the study was to develop some workable advanced scientific ways to boost up the process of fish and meat preservation for the economic development of the tribal people of Assam.

The report under review contains seven main topics viz. Introduction, Aim of present investigation, Plan of the work and presentation, Materials and Methods, Types of fish used in different types of preserved samples collected from different stations and Recommendations for improvement of the quality of preserved fish and development of low cost involvement for large-scale preservation/implementation in rural areas specially in tribal-belts of Assam.

The report is mainly confined to fish preservation only as fish forms a favourite item in the tribal menu and fish finds a prestigious place in the socio-religious life of the tribal people. Besides, fish catching on community basis is the favourite pastime among them. The tribal men and women are experts in fish catching by their indigenous methods and have own rudimentary techniques of preserving these when such catches become surplus to their requirement. Due to lack of adequate knowledge of scientific preservation, the tribal people are not in a position to accept the drying of fish and preservation as a viable trade and many tribal people sell their surplus raw fishes to the outside middle-men at throw away prices. One can have this experience in the river 'ghats' of the Brahmaputra and Barak where tribal people make such transactions. "Meat preservation by the plain tribes of Assam remains limited. This is owing to non availability of sufficient amount of meat at a time. However, in some places pork and occasionally deer (hunting or killing is prohibited by the law) meat are kept preserved for 2-3 months. Other types of meat like mithun/chickens or some other bird meat are not preserved because of their scarcity in these region." It has been mentioned in the report that during the present investigation only a few records on pork preservation could be observed among the plain tribes of Assam. Generally pigs are reared by almost all the tribes and pork forms an essential item in the socio-religious occasions. As pigs are available locally at any time the tribal people do not feel the necessity of preserving the pork.

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The samples for the study were collected from 57 stations/villages inhabited by the plains tribes of Assam and these samples were examined and analysed with the help of some National laboratories. The results of different scientific analysis have been shown with the help of 23 Nos. of tables.

The recommendations made in the report will go a long way in boosting up the process of drying of fish and meat and their preservation in the plains tribal areas of Assam. The report contains suggestions as to how fish and meat could be treated, dried and preserved for a longer duration in the tribal environmental condition. The report will definitely help in bringing out a set of new entrepreneurs from amongst the plains tribal communities bearings on tribal disease and health care system so much so that scientific preservation of dried fish and its utilisation as food component will reduce diseases specially of stomach and the tribal people will be in a position to take this delicacy during the lean season when fish becomes scarce.

It is hoped that the recommendations will get due attention from the Government in the Fishery Department to chalk out suitable development programmes in this sphere.

A SHORT STUDY OF BASKETRY TECHNIQUES AMONG SELECTED TRIBES OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to study the various techniques applied by the tribal people of Assam in the weaving of baskets and mats along with a comparative assessment between the techniques used in Assam and those used by the tribal people of the neighbouring States.

Baskets and mats are used in the day to day life of the tribal people of Assam. They are expert in this art of basket and mat making which is generally done by menfolk. Professional weavers among the tribals are very few. There is no definite conclusion that can be drawn on the origin and development of basketry in this earth. A popular myth runs like this "once there was a magician who used to perform miracles during his life time. He let the people to believe that digging up his grave on the sixth day of his death would lead to the discovery of something of interest there. Accordingly the people dug up his grave and found a large number of desings and pattens on basketry which has since then passed on from generation to generation."

Cane and bamboo are the raw materials used in basketry. Needless to say these two materials are available in ample quantities in the entire North Eastern Region. The most common tool used for manufacture of baskets and various objects is a long knife locally known as 'dao'. In the weaving of baskets and mats various stages are involved. They may be summarised as (a) collection of raw materials from the forest (b) making of splints (c) colouring of the splints, if necessary; weaving of the baskets and mats, and finally (d) giving the finishing touches.

Basketry techniques vary as per the needs of a particular society. Mason classified the Basketry technique into two primary divisions which has been prevalent since the earliest of time. They may be summarised below— (a) hand woven or plaited basketry built on a warp foundation and (b) sewed or warped basketry built on a coiled foundation. Mason (1901 : 109) the woven basketry as again being classified into four varieties— these are— (1) checker work (2) diagonal or twilled work (3) wicker work and (4) twined or wattled work. Likewise the coiled basketry has been divided into six different techniques,— these are— (a) single rod foundation (b) two rod foundation (c) rod and welt foundation (d) three rod foundation (e) splint foundation and (f) grass foundation (Mason, 1901; 109-128). However he has not mentioned any techniques as regards matting. Crowfoot has classified various techniques of basketry as well a different types of matting technique. He has classified altogether six principal classes of basketry technique. They are (i) coiled basketry (ii) twined work (iii) warped

work (iv) matting work (v) plaited work and (vi) wicker work or stake frame basketry. Besides the six principal classes he has further sub-divided coiled basketry, the twined work and the matting work-into four, five and three, different divisions respectively (Crowfoot 1954; 418).

The Principal varieties of basketry techniques can be classified on the basis of Notes and Queries on Anthropology into two broad divisions such as (i) plaited or woven and (2) coiled (1971 : 273-274). These two divisions- plaited and coiled have already been recognised by Mason (1901 : 109).

As pointed out in the Notes and Queries on Anthropology, the plaited technique is distinguished from the coiled.

Plaited basket-work is made by crossing of two or more sets of elements, called by analogy with weaving, warps and weft, when the warps are indistinguishable (rididity or direction), both sets of elements may called wefts (ibid).

Accordingly the main varieties of plaited basket-work are (1) Check - in which the warp and weft pass over and under each other singly, (2) Twilled- in which each weft passes over and then under two or more warps, (3) Wrapped- in which flexible wefts are wrapped round each warp or passing, (4) Twined- when two or more wefts pass alternately in front of and behind each of the warps, crossing then obliquely, Twining with two or three wefts is technically termed Fitching and Waling respectively; (5) in Hexagonal work the wefts instead of being horizontal and vertical, are worked in three directions, forming in open work hexagonal spaces in close work six-pointed stars, and (6) in Wicker work the warps or stakes are rigid, and the more flexible wefts or rods bend in and out (ibid).

Coiled work is not linked with weaving. But with sewing and it is usually done with a pointed implement which makes a hole through which the weft is passed. This has been identified with five different varieties of techniques, such as, - (i) simple oversewn coil, in which each stitch passes over the new portion of the foundation coil, and pierces a portion of the coil below. It is of two types (a) Furcate coil, in which the new stitch splits the stitch in the preceding coil, and (b) Bee-skep coil, in which the stitches are spaced widely apart, connecting the coil, at intervals, each stitch passing just behind, and appearing to emerge from the stitch in the preceding coil, and (2) Figure of Eight, in which the surface shows the same effect as simple oversewn coiling, but each stitch actually encloses two coils in a figure of eight, (3) Lazy Squaw, in which the long stitch passes over two coils at once; the sewing under the preceding coil, winding right round it once, twice, or more times, and down front, up and over the new coil, (4) Crossed Figure of Eight or Knot stitch, in which the stitch passes in front, up and over the new coil, and behind down and under the preceding coil, as in the long stitch of lazy squaw, but the sewing is brought out between the two coils; and (5) Cycloid or Single element work may be grouped with coiled work, there is no separate foundation; the coils are coiled or looped into each other (ibid).

Matting work is considered as a separate class and a link between basket work and weaving. Matting form is of two varieties- one diagonally worked at one corner in check or twill technique and the other worked horizontally in which the warp elements are arranged parallel to each other and the weft elements are inserted successively (Das; 1979 : 22).

On the other hand more sensible coiled technique can be cited from the New Encyclopaedia Britannica on the word Basketry (Vol-2, 1978 : 757-762). The coiled technique has been divided into two divisions, viz, (a) coiled construction and (b) non-coiled construction.

Coiled construction is made up of a single element or standard wound in a spiral around itself. It is of three varieties (1) Spiral coiling, in which the thread must squeeze the two coils together binding each to the preceding one and in which with a double or triple standard the thread catches in each stitch one of the standards of the preceding coil, (2) Sewed coiling in which a foundation of multiple elements-a bundle of fine fibres, and (b) in which the thread forms half hitches holding a coils in place.

Non-coiling construction, in which the standards form a foundation that predetermines the shapes and dimensions of the article. It is of three varieties, viz. (1) Wattle construction, in which the stakes are planted in the ground, (2) Lattice construction, in which the threads are wrapped in a spiral around two or three layers of standards, and (3) Matting or plaited construction, are either parallel and perpendicular to the edge or oblique. If it of a closely woven work in three layers, forming a six pointed star design.

From the above explanation it have been observed that there are almost thirteen different varieties of basketry techniques. According to Mason (1895 : 229) in the distribution of basketry technique almost every type of basketry is confined to a single tribe, or to a very restricted area. On the other hand Crowfoot observed (1954 : 415) that the earliest form of basketry technique is coiled work.

The under mentioned basketry techniques have been confined among the tribes of Assam which has been studied in a very short period.

Check : In this case the weft strip floats over the warp and on the other hand the warps float over the weft. That means the floating is equal in case of both the elements weft and warp; which show the closeness and extremely short bending of the strips leaving no space between the overlapping strips. This type of technique is found in *Khailim* of Dimasa Kacharis- Fig.- 2. This basket is used for keeping valuables having two layers. The upper layer is check technique and the lower layer is twill technique. The technique of weaving is-

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Twill- In the twill technique the floating of the warps over the weft and the weft over the warps are equal in number. In general the warps float over the weft and similarly the weft overlap the warp in varying degrees. Twill technique depends upon the nature and length of the floating space- covered by both the strips. Sometime the twills are open also. In Fig.-4 this type of technique is found. The strainer is called *Chi-Karbi (P)*, *Charai-Dimasa Kacharis*, *Chekhinikho-Bodo Kacharis*.

The twill technique of weaving is-

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The twill technique is further divided into (1) regular twill technique and (2) irregular twill technique.

Regular Twill Technique-In the regular twill technique the weft passes over two consecutive warps and then it goes below two consecutive warps in the next series. In this technique the work is less complicated and it consumes less time than other twill works. It has a definite floating and sinking movement and the technique shows an uniformity of execution throughout, so that this technique may be called regular twill weave. In Fig.-7 the regular twill technique is seen. This technique is found in *chakhan-Dimasa Kacharis*, *Changray-Bodo Kacharis* and *Baleng-Karbis (P)*. This winnowing fan is of two varieties.

The regular twill technique of weaving is-

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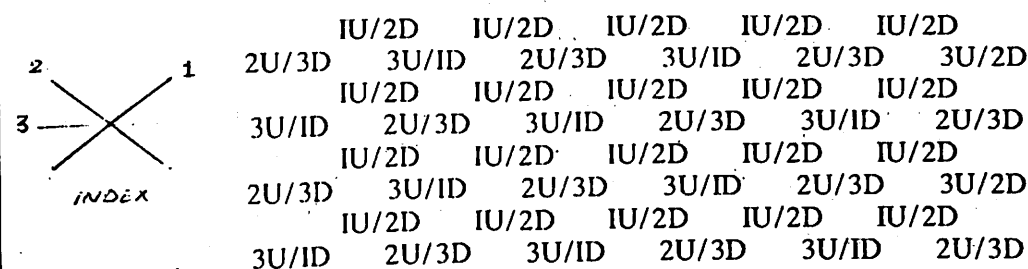
Irregular Twill Technique-In the irregular twill technique the weft and warp are not passed uniformly to the next series; it varies from one to another. In this basketry techning instead of a definite floating and sinking movement an irregular sequence in the interlacement of the strips is employed. In the basket weaving the irregular movement of the interlacing forms a wide range of sequences. This technique is seen in the Fig.-6. In *Khothom-Dimasa Kacharis*, *Khobay-Bodo Kacharis* and *Buk-Karbis (P)* the irregular technique are found. The irregular twill technique of weaving is-

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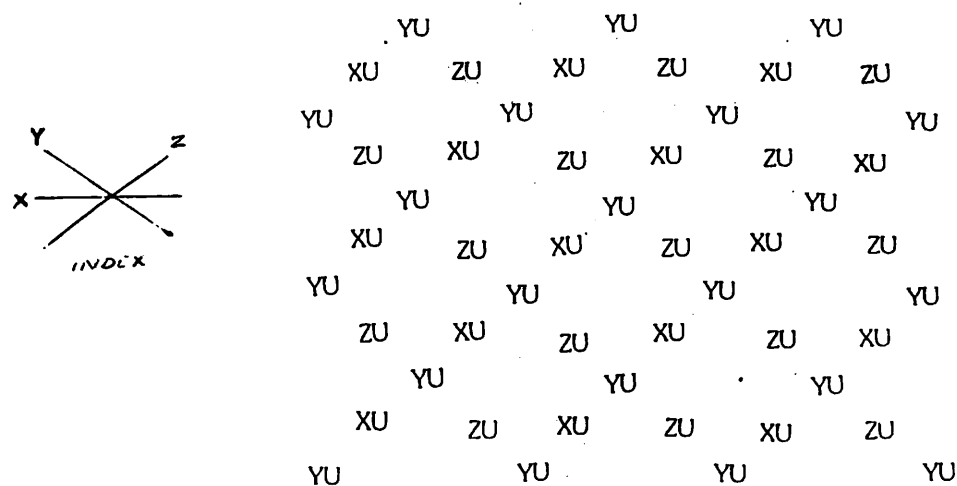
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UUDDDUUDDDUUDD
    
```

Hexagonal-In the hexagonal technique- open hexagonal and closed hexagonal techniques are found. Most of the tribes adopt open hexagonal technique for making baskets for prolonged use. The hexagonal closed technique is absent in basket making but is mostly adopted in the making of fans. Three elements of stands are required in this technique of interlacement. Here the first set comprises of three stands and the second interlacing set comprises of the same number of stands. The second set interlaces the first set at an angle of 45 degree. The open hexagonal technique is found in *Dikhangkhara-Dimasa Kacharis*, *Tilaokhreg-Tiwas*; and *Khangra-Karbis (P)*. This technique is appended in Fig.-12.

In Fig.-11 the open hexagonal technique are also found which is use in *Mchenga-Deuris*. Open hexagonal with check arc also seen in Fig.- 14. The techniques are found in *Japa-Rabha* and *Lalpi-Kuki*. The open hexagonal techniques of weaving are as follows :



On the other hand the close hexagonal technique of weaving is appended in Fig.-10. The technique of the close hexagonal weaving has been shown below :



Zig-Zag Pattern- In case of zig-zag pattern the weaving technique is simple twill. The floating of the weft strip over the warp is two up and two down or three up and three down or in some cases

three up and two down. The diagonal ridges which are brought out by the floating of weft may appear either dextrally-from left to right or sinistrally-from right to left or vice versa according to the mode of interlacement. The result is the zig-zag effect on the basket.

The zig-zag pattern is seen in Fig.-16 in *Khabaro-Twia*. The technique of the zig-zag pattern of the weaving is shown below :

```

UUDUUDDDDDUUDUUDDDDD
DUUUDDDUDDDUUUDDDUDD
DDUDDDUUUDDDUDDDUUUD
DDDDDUUDUUDDDDDUUDUU
UDDDUUDDDDUDDDUUDDDDU
UUUUDDDDDUUDUUDDDDD
DUUUDDDUDDDUUUDDDUDD
DDUDDDUUUDDDUDDDUUUD
DDDDDUUDUUDDDDDUUDUU
UDDDUUDDDDUUDDDUDDDU
    
```

Cross-Pattern- The cross pattern is very rare but occasionally noticed in certain carrying baskets (among Tiwas). In this pattern the technique is worked on the basket with equal number of floating weft strip over the warp. In this case the compactness of weaving the pattern is less vivid. Where to be compact. The ridges and furrows tend to become indistinct as a result of the same. This pattern is a series of ridges of contiguous diamond and the angle of two contacting inverted angles which looks like 'X' the sign of multiplication. The technique of the cross pattern of weaving is appended below :—

```

UUDDUUDUUDDUU
DUUDDUUDDUUD
DDUUDDUUDDU
UDDUUDDUUDDU
UUDDUUDUUDDU
DUUDDUUDDUUD
DDUUDDUUDDU
DUUDDUUDDUUD
UUDDUUDUUDDU
UDDUUDDUUDDU
DDUUDDUUDDU
DUUDDUUDDUUD
UUDDUUDUUDDU
    
```

Parallel Lines Pattern- In this form of technique the floating of the warps over the weft and the weft over the warps are equal in number. In general the warps float over the weft and similarly the

wefts overlap the warp in a varying effect. The usual technique of this pattern is two up and two down or three up and three down. In usual twill technique the placement of the strips is crosswise forming a right angle that means the sign of cross 'X' while in this particular technique the placement of the stands form a 45 degree angle

that means the sign of multiplication 'X'. The pattern of this particular variety has been shown in Fig.-1. This parallel lines pattern is commonly found in the baskets of *Tikha-Garos*, *Katha-Karbis* (P); *Kokir-Zemi Naga* and *Long-Khaidu-Dimasa Kacharis*. The technique of the parallel lines pattern has been appended below.

```

UUUUUUUUU
UUUUUUUUU
DDDDDDDDD
DDDDDDDDD
UUUUUUUUU
UUUUUUUUU
DDDDDDDDD
DDDDDDDDD
UUUUUUUUU
UUUUUUUUU
    
```

Angular Pattern- The angular pattern is woven by over lapping one layer over another in successive layers in most of the baskets. In this technique the angular design is the outcome of complex twilling, sometimes broughtout by the varying degree of preponderance of the warp and weft and sometimes by the equal number of floating of the warp and the weft strips. In Fig- 15 the angular pattern of weaving is shown below-

```

UUUDDUUDDUUDDUUUDDUUU
UUDDUUUDDUUDDUUUDDUU
UDDUUDDUUUUUDDUUUDDU
DDUUDDUUDDUUDDUUUDDU
DUUUDDUUDDUUDDUUUDDU
UUUDDUUDDUUDDUUUDDUU
UUDDUUDDUUDDUUUDDUU
UDDUUDDUUUUUDDUUUDDU
DDUUDDUUDDUUDDUUUDDU
    
```

Coiled-It consists of two divisions- (a) coiled construction and (b) non-coiled construction.

(a) *Coiled Construction*- It is made up of a single element or standard wound in a spiral around itself. The coils are kept in place by the thread, the work being done stitch by stitch and coil by coil. In this type the variations are defined by the method of sewing, as well as by the nature of coil, which largely determines the type of stitch, which has been divided into three groups, namely, (1) Spiral coiling (2) Sewed coiling and (a) Half hitch and knotted coiling.

(1) *Spiral Coiling*- The most common form is spiral coiling. In this form the nature of standard produces two divisions- when it is solid it is made up of a single whole stem, the thread must squeeze the two coils together binding each of the preceding one- giving a diagonal, or twilled effect, with a double or triple standard. The thread catches in each stitch one of the standard of the preceding coil. In Fig-9 this particular techniques are seen. The technique has been used by Rabhas in making cane plate with stand.

(2) *Sewed Coiling*- It has a foundation of multiple elements- a bundle of fine fibres. Sewing binds each coil to the preceding one by piercing it with the thread- which is done with a needle or an awl. The appearance varies according to whether the thread conceals the foundation or not or passes through the centre of the corresponding stitch on the preceding coil- spit stitch or furcate. This technique is seen in Fig.-13. The storage basket with a lid is made up of cane strips.

(3) *Half Hitch and Knotted Coiling*- In half hitch coiling the thread forms half hitch that means, simple knots, holding the coils in place, the standard serving only as a support. The half hitch and knotted coiling types of basketry each have a single element variety without foundation the thread forming a spiral by itself analogous to the movement of the foundation in the usual type. The basketry variety of the single element half hitch, which is called cycloid coiling, and knotted coiling are seen in Mishing areas. This particular technique is used for making table only which has been shown in Fig.-5.

(b) *Non-Coiled Construction*- All types of basketry have a certain unity of construction- the standards of the finished article. Nevertheless, if one considers the part played by the standards and the threads respectively, most of non-coiled basketry can be divided into three groups, viz. (1) Wattle construction (2) Lattice construction and (3) Matting or Plaited construction, (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978 : 757-759).

(1) *Wattle Construction*- In this type a single layer of rigid, passive, parallel standards is held together by flexible threads in one of three ways, each representing a different sub type- (a) The bound, or wrapped, type which is not very elaborate, has a wide spread distribution being used for poultry cases. (b) In the twined type the threads are twisted in two or three stands twining around the standards and enclosing them. The twining may be closed or open worked or may combine tight standards and spaced inter woven with flexible threads. (ibid). (c) The woven type is sometimes termed as wicker work. This type is made of stiff standards

(2) *Lattice Construction*- A frame is made in lattice construction. Two or three layers of passive standard is bound by wrapping the intersections with a thread. The ways of inter twining hardly vary at all and the comonest is also the simplest- the threads are wrapped in a spiral around two layers of standards. The lattice construction with check has been shown in Fig.-14. The lattice construction is used in most of the baskets like *Lalpi*, *Japa*, *Khabaro* and *Khailim* used by various tribes of Assam.

(3) *Matting or Plaited Construction*- In matting or plaited construction the standards and threads are indistinguishable- they are either parallel and perpendicular to the edge- straight basketry or oblique or diagonal basketry. In this type the materials use are almost always woven using the whole gamut of weaving techniques such as check, twill etc. as in Fig.8. Matting or plaited work consists of three or four layers of elements, which are in some cases completely woven and in other forms an intermediate stage between woven and lattice work. In this method the intermediate type with two layered elements, one woven- is known as hexagonal open work and is the technique most common in open work basketry using flat elements. This type of technique is found among *Yamsa*-Diamasa Kacharis, *Dahraha*-Bodo Kacharis, *Shylliah*-Karbhis in diagonal form and *Yamjalam*-Dimasa Kacharis Dhara-Karbhis in parallel form.

The techniques enumerated above are not an exhaustive list of all the methods of basketry found among the different societies of the world. However, it may be mentioned here that the above techniques are found to be prevalent among the tribes in the State of Assam. It is also to be noted that the techniques differ from tribe to tribe some being common to all the ethnic groups. No single group practices all the techniques. Though the techniques used may be similar, the end product almost invariably differs in size, shape and configuration among different tribes- the products being adopted to the varied use as per specific needs of a particular tribe.



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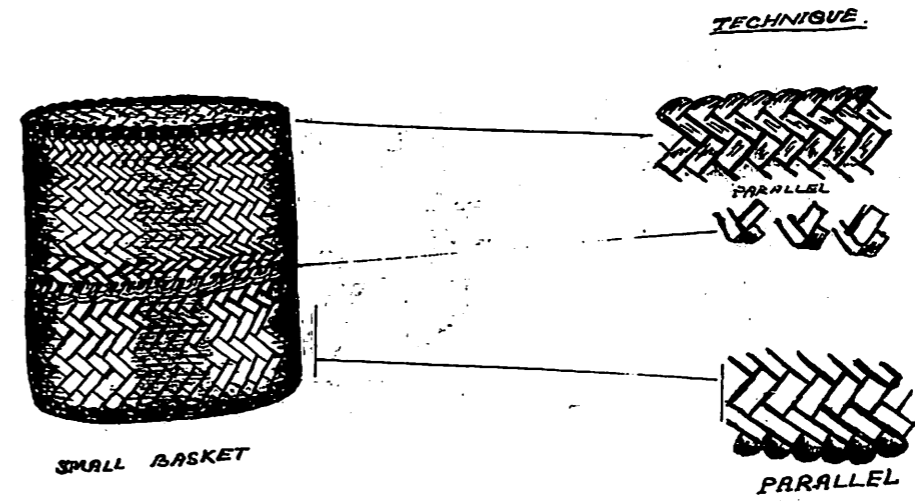


FIG - 1

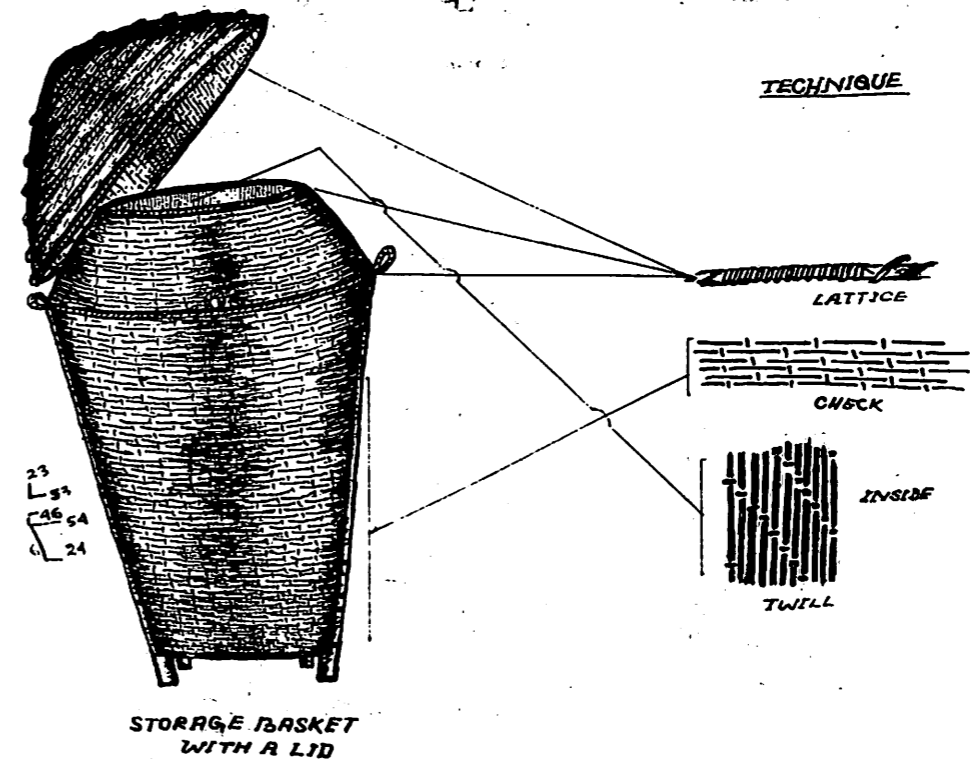


FIG - 2

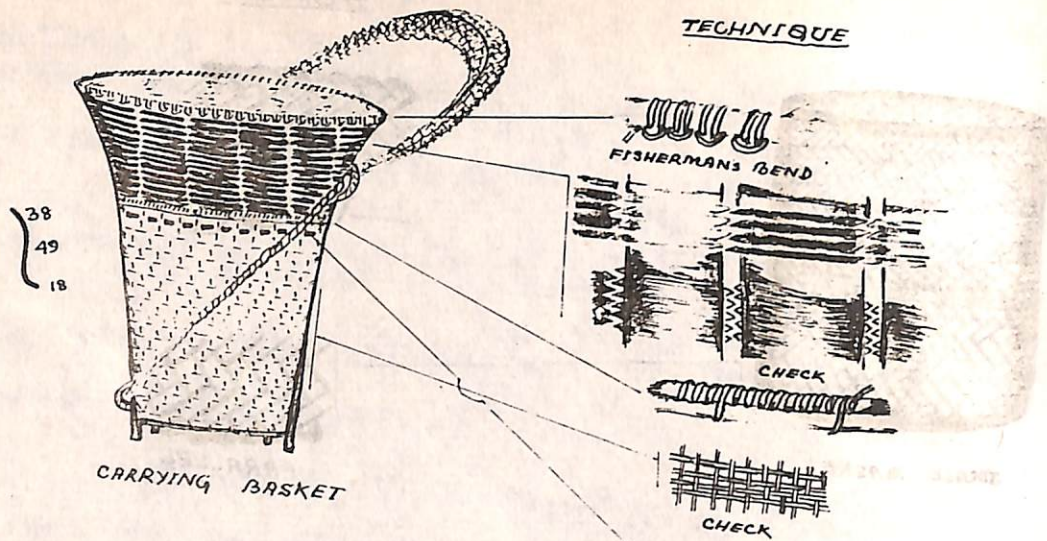


FIG-3

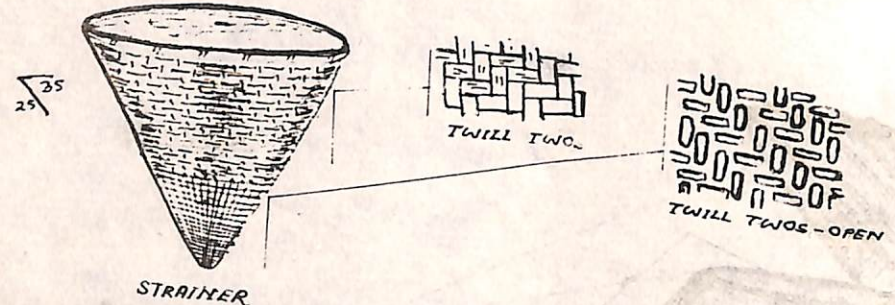


FIG-4

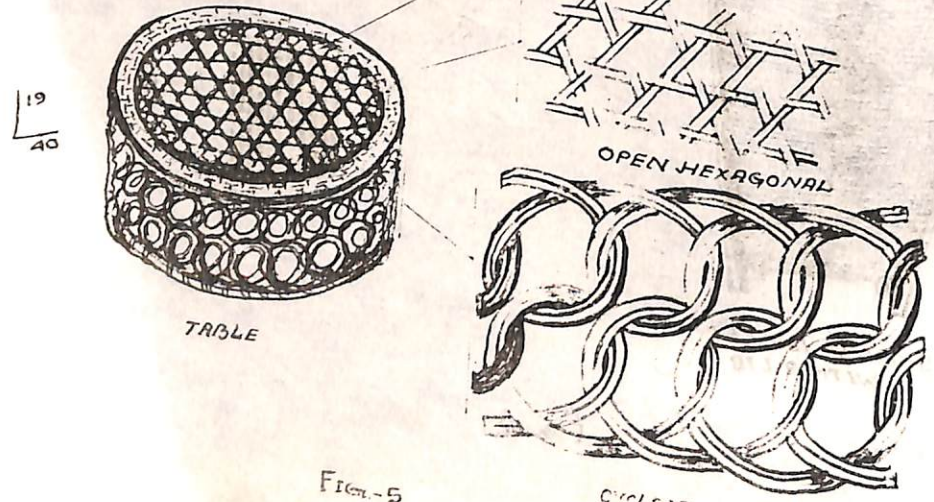


FIG-5

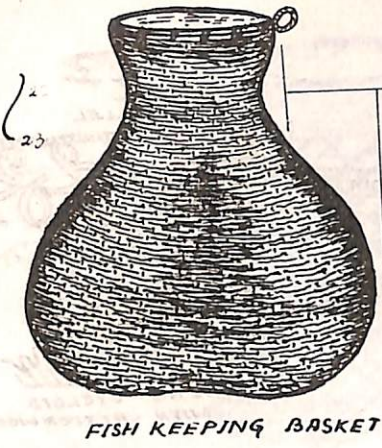
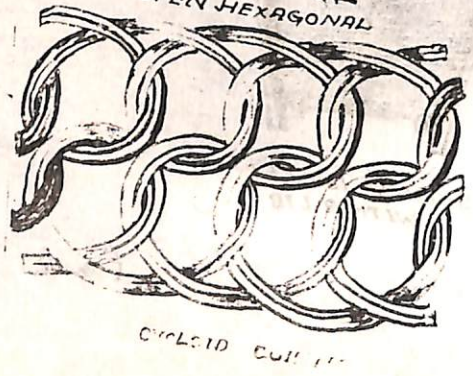


FIG-6

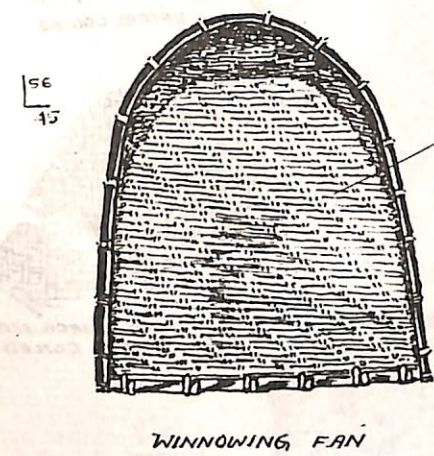
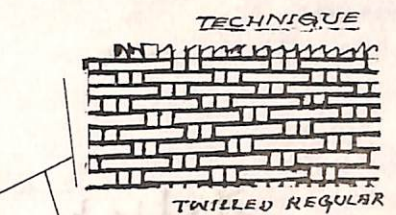
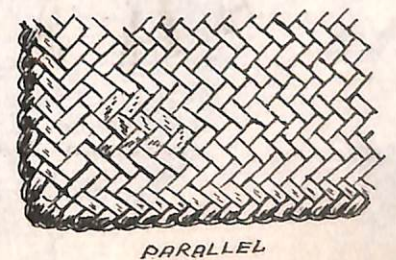
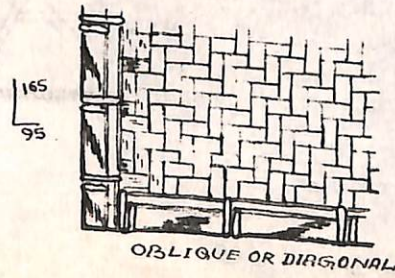
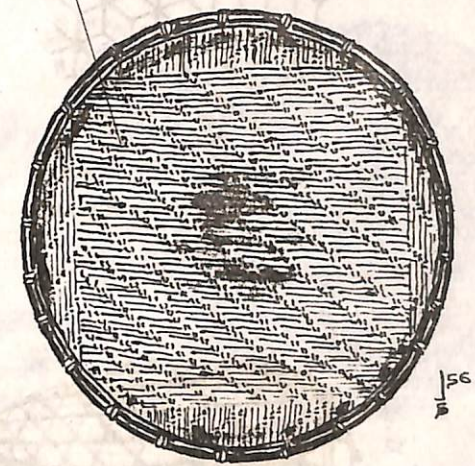
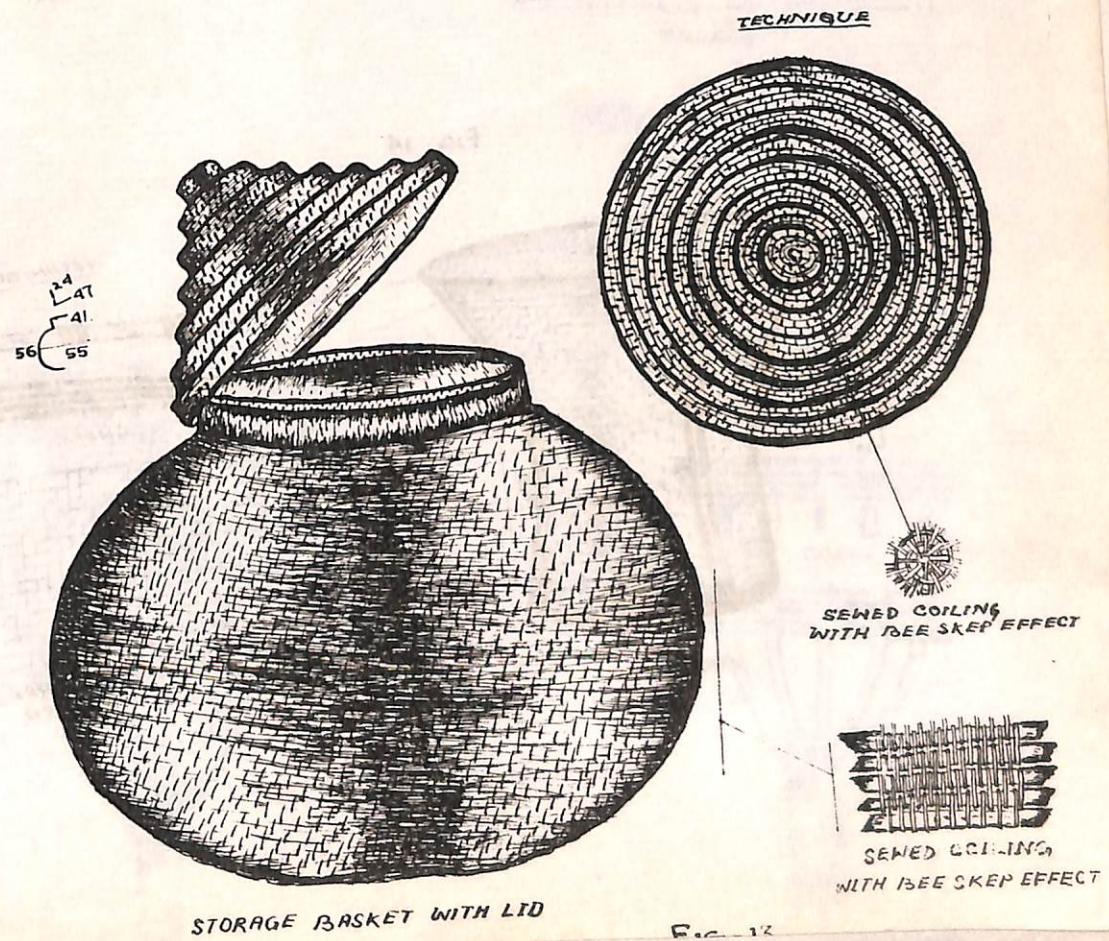
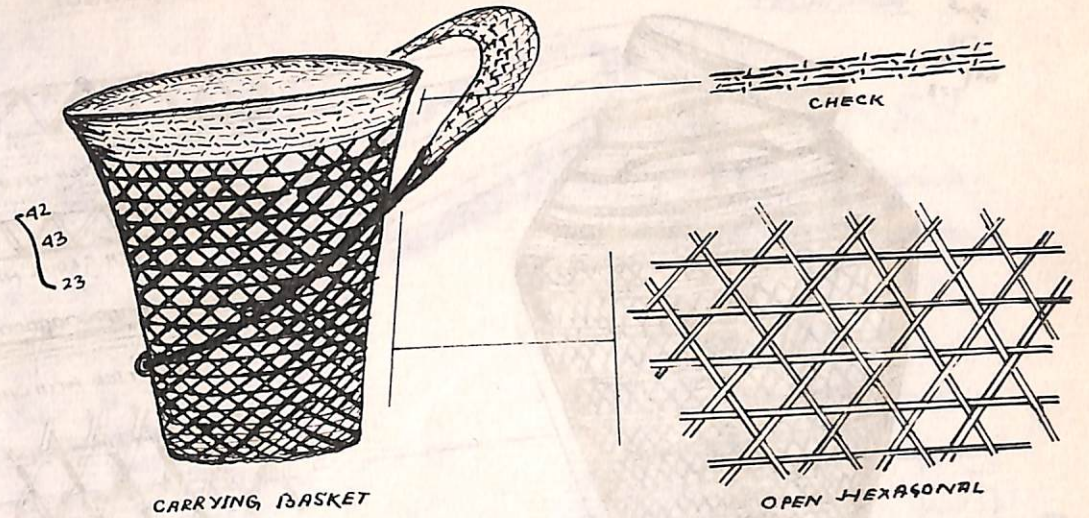
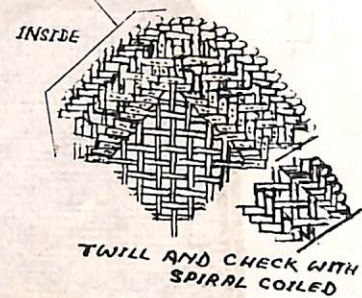
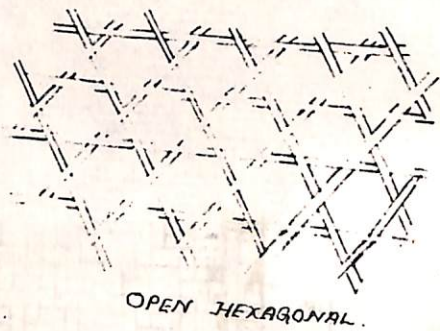
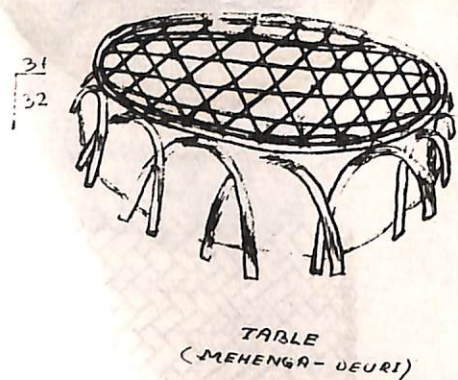
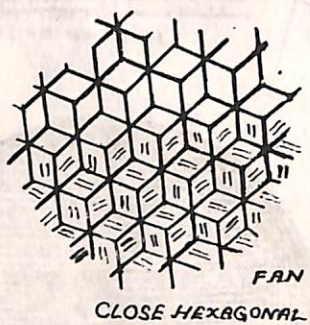
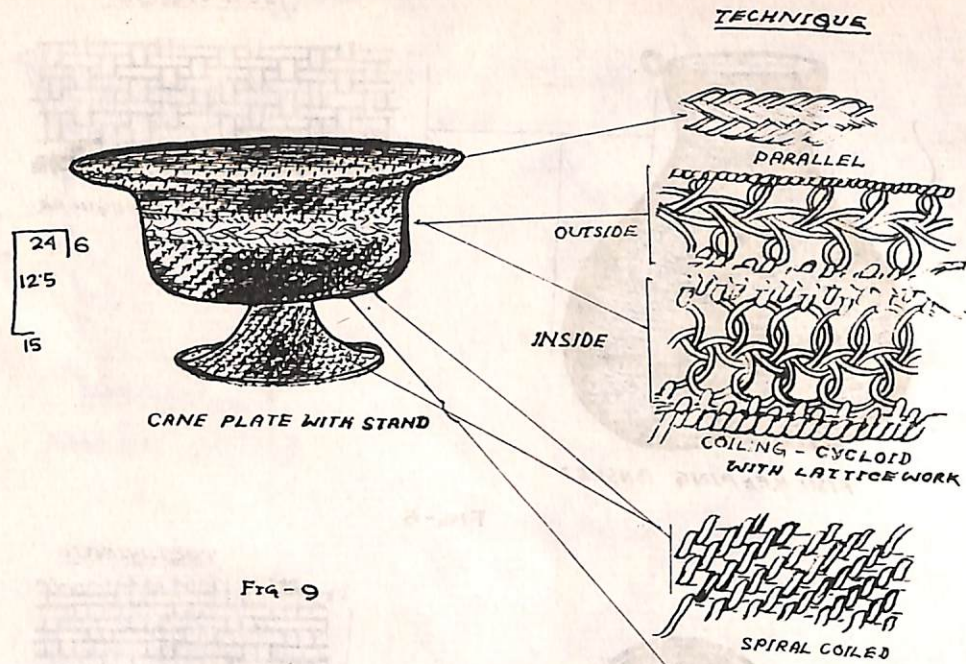


FIG-7

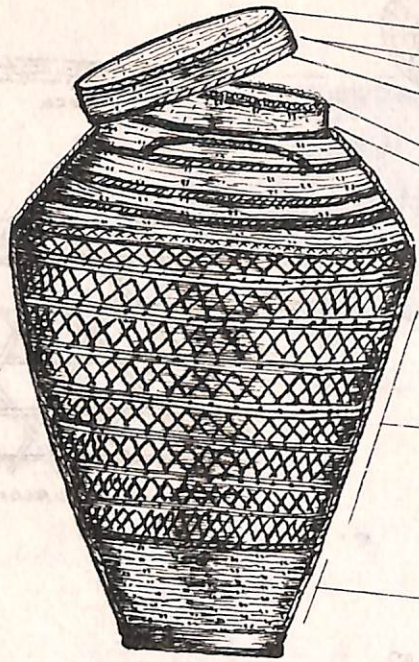


PLAITING OR PLATED CONSTRUCTION



TECHNIQUE

30
28
44
64
23



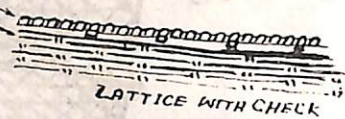
STORAGE BASKET WITH LID



CLOVE HITCH WITH CHECK



CHECK WITH CLOVE HITCH



LATTICE WITH CHECK



OPEN HEXAGONAL WITH CHECK

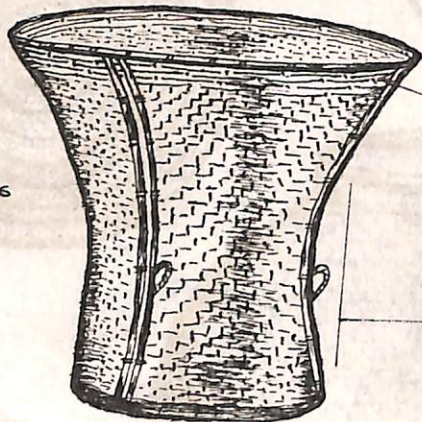


CHECK

FIG-14

TECHNIQUE

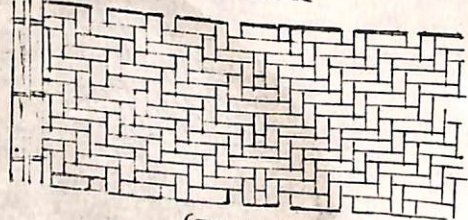
26
28
14



BASKET



CHECK

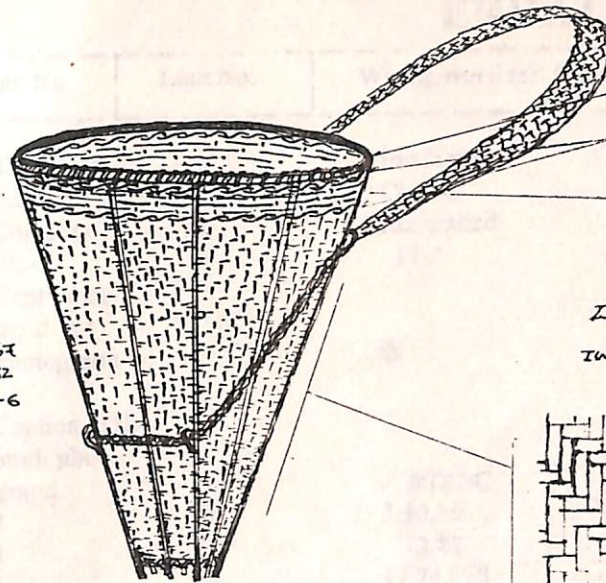


(TWILLED THREES)
ANGULAR

FIG-15

TECHNIQUE

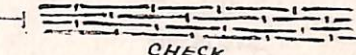
37
32
6



CARRYING BASKET



TWINED



CHECK



TWINED WITH PARALLEL EFFECT



ZIG-ZAG

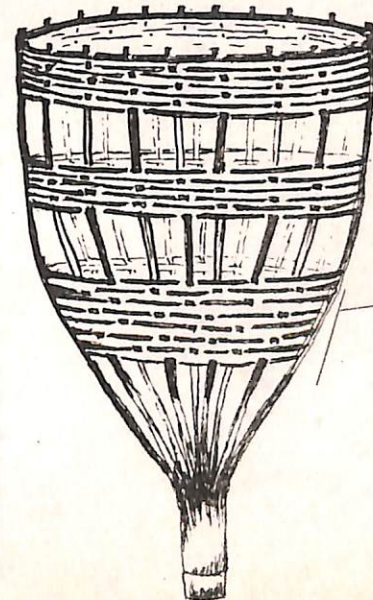


PARALLEL

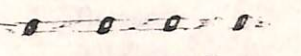
FIG-16

TECHNIQUE

38
59



CARRYING BASKET



CHECK

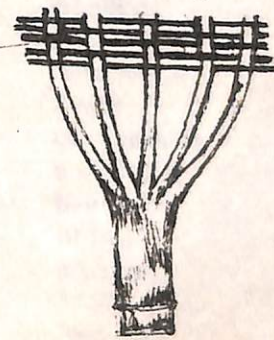


FIG-17

ERRATA

Page No	Line No.	Wrong word (s)/ figure (s)	Correct word (s)/ figure(s)
Title Page	8	Institutue	Institute
Editorial note	7	Councili	Council
Contents	9	Integratied	Integrated
-do-	14	17-2	17-24
Caption of the first Photograph		th	the
Caption of the tenth photograph		AIRTASC	AIRT & SC
1	9	5,50,35	5,50,351
1	10	12.87	12.82
1	12	17,74,378	17,74,778
1	13	6,59,565	6,53,565
1	16	25.71	25.81
1	19	althogh	although
1	23	EAStern	Eastern
1	Foot note	Asam	Assam
2	7	Cluture	Culture
2	9	repeation	repetition
2	14	8142	81.42
2	15	25.71	25.81
2	16	ethnically	ethnically
2	29	amont	among the
3	10	familes	families
3	30	abvove	above
3	43	intersting	interesting
3	45	monor	minor
3	46	Beacause	Because
3	47	quitols	quintols
4	2	arerroneou	erroneous
4	10	humudity	humidity
4	12	traditonal	traditional
4	25	therfcore	therefore
4	28	supplemts	supplements
4	37	immoveable	immovable
4	39	linving	living
4	42	compartment	compartment
4	44	tradional	traditional
5	11	urban in	in urban
5	16	[0.1]	[0.1%]
5	25	activites	activities
5	25	55.95%	55.9%
5	29	froodstaff	food-stuff

Page No.	Line No.	Wrong word (s)/figure (s)	Correct word (s)/figure (s)
5	36	depen	depend
5	37	foldsmithy	goldsmithy
6	5	scheduld	scheduled
6	8	mostily, cast	mostly, caste
6	15	whcih	which
6	18	know	known
6	26	to day	to-day
6	27	thishe	this the
6	30	furthe	further
6	34	gerncrally	generally
6	44	whcih	which
7	12	kaiborts	kaibartas
7	17	poistion	position
7	23	constituent	constituent
8	2	good	good food
8	4	thousands	thousands
9	37	[20.]	[20°]
11	4	diversty	diversity
11	14	formulationg	formulating
11	16	coud	could
11	18	shemes	schemes
11	37	theis	this
11	39	constrruction	construction
12	6	areaas	areas
12	22	implemntaion	implementation
12	24	concil	council
12	38	hydor	hydro
12	45	eind	end
13	5	implementaion	implementation
13	6	soci-economic	socio-economic
14	9	special	social
14	13	ther	the
14	14	scheduled	scheduled
14	20	given precise	given any precise
14	27	herirarchy	hierarchy
14	28	herirarchy	hierarchy
15	4	refere	refer
15	13	schduled	scheduled
15	14	are arecstrication	area restriction
15	21	repeated	repeated
15	22	earswhile	erstwhile
15	27	extenede	extended
15	40	triibes	tribes
15	41	scientific	scientific
15	45	ambodied	embodied
15	50	schedhled castes	scheduled castes
15	3	AND WHERAS	And where as
16			

Page No.	Line No.	Wrong word (s)/figure (s)	Correct word (s)/ figure (s)
16	5	vacaicies	vacancies
16	6	schedulde	scheduled
16	8	reducation	reduction
16	11	complint	complaint
16	17	scetors	sectors
16	24	peice	piece
17	39	develpoed	developed
17	Foot note	Instituti, gor, castis.	Institute, for, castes
18	8	aforsaid	aforesaid
18	10	64,614.00	6,53,340.00
18	12	24,851.00	25,128.00
18	17	Sceondary	Secondary
18	36	inhabitabts	inhabitants
18	37	Hilock	Hillock.
19	4	Nowdays	Now-a-days
19	35	rsult	result
21	27	40,800.00	4,080.00
23	7	Rs. 25, 128.00	Rs. 6,53,340.00
		149	149
		= Rs. 4384.00	= Rs. 4384.00
28	8	hetares	hectares
28	10	hecares	hectares.
28	25	selectiong	selecting
28	25	Hldipi	Hidipi
28	31	implemntation	implementation
29	15	avove	above
29	18	Interstingly	Interestingly
30	23	depdnts	dependents
30	24	Therfore	Therefore
31	6	morcover	Moreover
31	29	sounces	sources
31	32	for	far
31	38	mans	means
32	6	propoer	proper
32	18	therfore	therefore
32	19	poultary	poultry
32	21	came	cane
32	22	supplay	supply
32	33	nder stood	understood
32	33	havee	have
33	5	somking	smoking
33	5	fermantation	fermentation
33	34	nvestigatio	investigation.
35	13	desings	designs
35	13	pattens	patterns
35	30	a	as
35	30	techique	technique

Page No.	Line No.	Wrong word (s)/ figure (s)	Correct word (s)/ figure (s)
36	10	rididity	rigidity
36	23	whcih	which
37	5	bindin	binding
37	8	bundile	bundle
37	10	predetermins	predetermines
37	11	diamensions	dimensions
37	16	explaintation	explanation
38	16	them	then
38	31	techning	technique
40	4	khabaro-Twia	Khabaro-Tiwa
42	9	standard	standard
42	18	hilf	half
42	21	cycolid	cycloid
42	33	standads	standards
43	3	comonest	commonest
43	8	alwyas	always
43	13	Diamasa Kacharis.	Dimasa Kacharis
43	19	practices	practises.

N. B. 1. The following lines/part of lines should be omitted while reading the respective page nos. as shown below.

- (A) establishment of communications, (page no. 10, line no. 8.)
- (B) 50% reduction of fees if any prescribed for selection of candidates (page no. 16. line Nos. 9, 10)
- (C) This indicates that the people of the project area the Karbi Anglong district. This the Karbi Anglong district (page nos. 29, 30, line nos. 47 and 1 respectively).
- (D) The photographs of the paper entitled "Rajaduar Mani Karneswar Village-a case study" should have been placed in right order.

2. Please read the sentences/lines in respective page nos. as follows.

- (i) Page 5 line 3-5 : As there was no census in 1981 in Assam, the estimated projected Scheduled Castes population in March, 1981 is 12.42 lakhs. The bulk of the Scheduled Castes population live in rural areas, the percentage being 90.6.
- (ii) Page 15 line 11-12: It is now seen that a backward class becomes a Scheduled Caste soon after its inclusion in the Presidential Order.
- (iii) Page 22 : After Sl. No. 25 Sl. 26 will be as follows 26. 1600 --

The total of the head FOOD will be 434900.00

(All figures shown in the table are in Rs.)