

DOCUMENTATION
ON
LIFE AND CULTURE OF DEORI

CONDUCTED BY
ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH FOR TRIBALS AND SCHEDULED CASTES,
JAWAHARNAGAR, KHANAPARA, GUWAHATI-781022

INTRODUCTION :

The word Deori is derived from Sanskrit word Devagrihik. The meaning of Deori is the people who know Deo or Gods or Goddess and worship with devotion “De” means God, “U” means offering and “Ri” means manner or system. Those who know the proceedings of the Puja, and perform sacrifice before the deities are called Deoris.

There are four broad divisions amongst the Deoris viz. Dibangias, Tengapanias, Borgoyan and Patorgonga. These divisions are called ‘Gayan’ (Khel). Each of the divisions is said to be originated from a particular river or place name. The group settled on the banks of the river Dibang is called Dibangia. The group settled on the banks of river Tengapani is called Tengapania and the group settled on the banks of river Borpani or Bargang is called Borgoyan. The other group living at Patsadiya was known as Patorgonya. But at present existence of this group is not traced. Perhaps due to acculturation and assimilation process the members of the group were amalgamated with other communities. The name Borgoyan is said to have originated from the great number of households (Jakhela) in the village. It is said the village had one hundred and eighty households hence Bargaon / Borgand or Bargonya.

Although the Deoris of present generation refuse to accept the prevailing notion that Deoris were one of the divisions of Chutiyas, and they were only priests of the Chutiya kings, yet the linkage of Chutiyas with the Deoris cannot be underestimated.

The Chutiyas are believed to have been members of the great Bodo race. Entering Assam through the North Eastern passes, the Chutiyas established independent principalities in the upper regions of the Brahmaputra. The Ahom records indicate that they (Ahoms) entered Assam in 1224 A.D., the Chutiyas were established at Sadiya and were masters of the country Westwards as far as the Desang river. Hostilities broke out the middle of the 14th century and in 1423 A.D. (according to the Chutiya Chronicle about 1673 A.D.), the Ahoms finally defeated

the Chutiyas at Chantam or Chandangiri. "The Chutiya dynasty continued to hold the Southern Upper Assam and Sadiyay and part of Nowgong where they built a fortified city called Dimapur but about the middle of the 13th century they were subjugated by hordes of Shans from the South who after establishing themselves in Upper Assam, pursued their career of conquest in a Westerly direction." (Dalton, E. T., 1872 - Descriptive Etymology of Bangal, P5).

Brown mentions about three divisions of the Chutiyas viz. the Deori Chutiyas, the Hindu Chutiyas and the Ahom Chutiyas. Endle however, includes one more i.e. Barahi Chutiyas. About the Deoris Dalton writes, "An isolated colony on the river Dikrang in Lakhimpur calling themselves Deori Chutiya were found who had a peculiar language which they called Chutiya and they were styled Deoris." (Brown, W. B., - 1898 - An Outline Grammar of the Deori Chutiya Language, spoken in Upper Assam, P1; Endle, R. S. - 1911 - The Kacharis, P1; Dalton E. T. - 1872 - Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal - P5).

Elsewhere it has been mentioned the Deoris were representatives of priestly class among Chutiyas having distinct traditional ethnic characteristics including language where the two divisions namely Hindu Chutiya and Ahom Chutiya have long since lost all traces of language and have become merged in the vast majority of semi Hinduised Assamese.

The original abode of the Deoris was on the banks of the river Dibang, Tengapani and Patorsal which now falls within the jurisdiction of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and Chapekhoa Sub-Division of Tinsukia district of Assam. Due to constant feuds with the Abors and Mishmis they were compelled to move Westward. In the Census 1901 the original habitat of the Deori Chutiyas was shown as the banks of the Kundil river lying on the Eastern region of Sadiya.

Their present habitations are spread in the riverine areas of Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat and Sonitpur districts of Assam. As per 2001 Census, the Deoris had a total population of 41,161, male 20,809, female 20,352. They

constituted 1.24% of the total ST population of Assam. The percentage of literacy is reasonably high i.e. Male 72.72, female 58.03 in comparison with other plains tribes.

The Mongolian characteristics are visible on the Deoris. They are strong built and possess charming features. The non-tribal visitors to a Deori village are attracted with their simplicity and hospitality. They are amiable and always maintain cordial relations with non-tribal people of neighbouring villages. As they eke out their livelihood mainly by agricultural activities, that too in a difficult flood prone area, the Deoris have had to toil almost the entire day. During summer, they face the most trying time as the flood is a recurring feature and they have to depend upto boats.

Both men and women engage themselves in daily chores. Except for ploughing, cutting trees and jungles, the womenfolk help their men in all other daily activities. Besides taking responsibility for their children, the womenfolk have to weave clothes, cook meals, collect firewood and herbs and roots from forests; grinding paddy in the mortars. The position of women in the society is high and the women are treated as partners in the daily life. Co-operation among the villagers in all spheres is a salient feature of their daily life. Whether it is house building, house renovation, marriage, death ceremonies, reaping paddy, fishing, the villagers perform those in a spirit of co-operation and good neighbour lines.

Regarding language, Dibangia section maintains the traditional Deori language with Catholic sincerity, whereas the Borgonya and Tengapania sections have long left their traditional language due to socio-cultural exigencies arriving out of cultural dynamics i.e. acculturation and assimilation process. But all the three sections speak Assamese language and get their children educated in Assamese language.

CHAPTER - I

Village:

The Deoris prefer those areas having a river and suitable agricultural land. Thus most of the Deori villages are located near a river. The river not only supplies them with water but also provides fish. During Summer they collect firewood from the river banks. The firewood are carried by the strong currents of the river. Nearness to a forest is also considered for establishing a village as forests provide not only firewood but also herbs and roots other medicinal plants. Following villages were established by the Deoris after migrating from the original place.

Deoris in Lakhimpur District.

1. Siram Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
2. Temera Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
3. Baligaon Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
4. Dikrang Bor Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
5. Kasikat Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
6. Kinapathar Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
7. Pichala Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
8. Tunidal Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
9. Bahgora Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
10. Sisi Kalghar Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
11. Kapghuli Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
12. Gai Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
13. Chiripani Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
14. Borbam Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
15. Senia Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).
16. Mingmang Deori Gaon - (Dibamgia).

17. Foolbari Deori Gaon – (Dibangia).
Borgonya – 18 – Kapghuli Borgonya Deori Gaon
Tengapania -19 – Kalanloa Deori Gaon
20 – Ramyapur Deori Gaon

Deori villages under Sivasagar district

21. Borgonya Deori Gaon (Borgonya).
22. Rangali Deori Gaon (Borgonya).
23. Tengapani Deori Gaon (Tengapania).
24. Ghel Gheli Deori Gaon (Tengapania).

Deori villages under Dibrugarh district.

25. Udaipur Deori Gaon (Tengapania).
26. Madhupur Deori Gaon (Tengapania).

Deori villages under Jorhat district

27. Jorhat Upper Deori Gaon (Dibangia).
28. Naam Deoria Gaon (Dibangia).

Deori villages under Sonitpur district

29. Santipur Deori Gaon (Dibangia).

Deori villages under Tinsukia (Sadiya) district

30. Bura Buri Deori Gaon (Dibangia).
31. Sunpura Deori Gaon (Borgonya).
32. Mahadev Pur Deori Gaon (Tengapania).

Out of the 32 villages, 21 villages are extensively inhabited by Dibangias and 17 are in Lakhimpur and 2 in Jorhat, one each in Sonitpur and Tinsukia districts. There are only 4 Borgonya villages, one in Lakhimpur, 2 in Sivasagar

and one in Tinsukia district while 7 villages inhabited by the Tengapanias are found - 2 in Lakhimpur, 2 in Sivasagar, 2 in Dibrugarh and one in Tinsukia districts. (Source - Ganesh Ch. Deori - Deori Sakalar Atit Aru Bartaman - in Assamar Janajati, Ed. Dr. Promod Ch. Bhattacharjya, published by Assam Sahitya Sabha 2008, 3rd Edition).

The unique feature of traditional one clan one village is maintained by the Deoris at least in case of the broad divisions. Besides unlike some other tribes, the villages are solely inhabited by the members of the tribal community and non-tribal families are not found inside a Deori village. But this does not mean that the Deoris do not mingle with non-tribals rather they have a cosmopolitan outlook while dealing with non-tribals.

Dormitory
'Eleng Achcho'

Unlike some other tribes like Mising, Tiwas, Karbis, Dimasas, the Deoris do not have dormitories for bachelors in the village. Normally dormitories were used by the bachelors to spend the night and in the morning they leave the place for their respective homes. Among the Deoris the bachelors spend the night at the 'Michon' (an open veranda of a residential house). However, this prestigious institution is survived in one or two Deori villages only.

Normally an Eleng Achcho is located in a central place of the village or in a corner of a village. All the unmarried youths become the members of a dormitory. The members have to follow certain rules and behaviour. Women and even married adults are not allowed entry to the dormitory. Traditionally unlike some other tribes, the Deoris do not have any dormitory for unmarried girls. Outsiders can enter the dormitory with permission from the Gaonbura.

The dormitory is a big hall built on platform above 4 – 5 feet above the ground. Bamboos and timbers are used for construction of a dormitory. There is a wooden ladder for entry and exit of the members. The height of the house is about 10 – 20 feet.

The 'Eleng Achcho' plays a significant role in the social life of the Deoris, particularly of the youths. It functions as a training institute where the inmates learn various skills in cottage industry and music. They make various items like bamboo and wood, like baskets of various sizes, 'Data', bamboo mats, 'Kharahi', plough. Besides they learn the skill of making drum, flute by themselves. Besides they learn various dances and songs in the dormitory. In fact the dormitory can be called the modern day self-help group.

The disheartening fact is that this institution is fast disappearing and no effort has been made to revive this prestigious institution. The main reason for such state of affairs is that the present day youths are spending time in the school / college curricular and they have no leisure time to spend in dormitories.

Bamboo:

Tribal life without bamboo cannot be imagined as this product has multifarious use right from building a house, preparing fishing implements, weaving articles, for making fans and other household articles of daily use. In fact the material culture of the Deoris, by and large, can be called as bamboo culture.

Earthen Articles:

"The Deoris depend largely on market for their earthen jars which are required for storing water as well as storing 'Suja' (rice beer).

Bell Metal and Brass Articles: Today almost every household use bell metal and brass article collected from market. Bell metal plates and bowls are largely used by the Deoris in their day to day life.

CHAPTER - II

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Social Institutions: Among the social institutions, the foremost, the birth and birth related rituals are dealt here at the outset followed by family, property and inheritance and marriage. In the second order their broad divisions and clan system have been described. The kinship which forms the basis of social relationship is also dealt. Along with kinship, avoidance, joking relationship among the Deoris has also been described.

While describing the Deori social organisation two broad categories viz. secular village organisation and religious organisation have been described. It may, however, be mentioned that these two divisions are not exclusive. In fact the study of secular organisation can be dealt with broader religious perspective.

Birth and Birth Related Rituals: Birth must always take place in the house of husband in the usual sleeping room. As soon as a child is born it is washed and cleaned by the attendant women. It is customary to offer a 'Sarai'(a wooden or metal place with stand) having uncooked rice, eggs, areca nut , betel vine leaves, a coin, bow and arrow etc. is placed as an offering to deity near the bed of the mother by a woman of the house for the well-being of the new-born baby. The household along with the baby and its mother remains impure till the purificatory rite (Chua Labiruba) is performed. This rite is performed when the umbilical cord falls off from the baby. The entire household is cleaned.

One the day of the purificatory ritual, the mother takes out the baby to the sun for a better health. The old men and

women (Gira Girachi) of the village are invited. A pig or a fowl is sacrificed and the fleshed is cooked. Suje (rice beer) is also prepared for the occasion. Before partaking of the Suje and cooked meat, a portion of the same is placed on the floor to the deities seeking blessing for the child and of the mother. A special delicacy called 'Midiji Jubura' (arrow root curry) forms the important item of this ritual.

The people observe seven to ten days after the birth of a child as the polluted period. Pollution is confined to the concerned household and clan only. The priests do not go to the household where the child is born nor do they take food there till the purificatory ceremony is performed.

The birth ritual is vital for the baby, mother and the household too. At least seven members from seven clans attend the ritual there by giving recognition of purity from the pollution arising out of the child birth. After the ritual the polluted household as well as the families of their clan regain the purity.

Family:

Family can be recognised as one of the universal and permanent institutions of mankind. The origin of the family can be traced as reproductive and biological association what Bowie called "Socially approved form of sex relation". In course of time the institution become the prominent social institution of mankind. The biological need felt by the mother and infant was fulfilled when they were brought under the aegis of an institution. Again the perplexed individual got much relief when he got the assistance of other members in his economic pursuits. He also learnt the usefulness of an organised activity. The mother and the infant were looked after by the father. Thus basic grouping was formed which

had been called as immediate, nuclear or primary family. "The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes at least two of whom maintain socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted, of the co-habiting adults" (Murdock, George, Peter - Social Structure, 1965, P1).

A Deori family consists of father, mother and their unmarried children. However, the Deori elementary family has a variable where a further generation of old father, old mother of the existing head of the family i.e. member of the family of orientation, live together. In such families the son's wife ungrudgingly carries out the orders of her husband's mother.

Preponderance of lineal joint family is the characteristic feature of Deori life. Besides a father, his wife and children, the same homestead is also occupied by father's brothers or cousins, their wives and children. In other words the members are two or more lineally related kinsfolk. The Dibangias call the joint family as 'Jakarna Jupa.' The 'Jupa' is a primary social unit consisting a group of people living in a common residence under a single head. The 'Sukia Jupa' as the name indicates (Sukia - separate) consists of a man, his wife and married children, occupying a single residence under the overall governance of father while the 'Jakarna Jupa' is composed of two or more married brothers with their wives and children, unmarried brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents occupying a single residence under a single head. The father is the head of the family and all members obey his orders. Kinship, social and economic ties hold together the members of a family.

The reason for the preponderance of lineal joint family might be due to their sound economic condition. Majority of the people do not have food problem which is one of the causes of family discord leading to separation.

After the death of a father, the unmarried brother gets his share of the landed property which he cultivates jointly with his brothers. So his married brother ungrudgingly supports him. The brother has also a duty to support his unmarried sister till her marriage. After the death of the father one of the sons look after the widowed mother.

It is observed that separation does not weaken the emotional and inter family social bond. The partitioned families maintain good relationship among themselves. The younger ones continue paying their regards to their elders as before. The elders, too, maintains the same affection for the younger ones.

The attitude towards the father, father's father and father's brothers is one of respect and usually the father is considered as authoritative head having an effective voice in all matters that concern the family.

Within the family economic co-operation in the day to day life is maintained by all the family members. If the husband is busy in the fields, the wife is doing household works like cooking, weaving and even collecting firewood. The aged old father repairs a basket while the old mother looks after the children or performs petty works like scaring away the birds from the paddy placed in the courtyard for drying. The younger boys and girls study their lessons as well as assist their parents in their leisure hours. In social occasions like marriage parents and agnatic elders are invariably consulted. The paternal uncles i.e. father's brothers are

respected and their advice is sought in all social and economic matters when the father is dead.

The number of rooms ('Kotali') in a Deori house depends upon the nuclear units in the household. The first room on the Eastern side is occupied by the head of the family (Gira) and his wife and is known as 'Gira Girachiyo Kotali' or 'Demachi Kotali'. His younger brother's families are accommodated in other rooms according to their age seniority. As a head of the family he is required to receive guests in the Michon (portico) which lies adjacent to his living room.

The fireplace 'Dudepati' is constructed on the opposite side of the long corridor adjacent to the room occupied by the head of the family. His younger brothers can also construct fireplace inside their individual 'Kotali'. The fireplace is used by the male members for discussion of family affairs, cooking and eating. If the room of the father is big, the father may allow his married son to occupy a portion of the room. If the accommodation is inadequate the couple can occupy a newly constructed room adjacent to the 'Mojia' (The 'Mojia' is used to prepare 'Suje' and cooked food). This is exclusive place for the womenfolk and except young children others are not allowed to enter because there may be younger brother's wife. The unmarried adults sleep in the portico while the adolescent girls are accommodated in a separate room.

Adoption:

Membership to a family is determined by birth. It can also be acquired through adoption. Adoption is resorted to mainly for two reasons. The adopted son is expected to provide economic aid to the adopted father in old age. Secondly if the adopted son belongs to the same clan he can

perform the death ceremonies of the adopted father. A female child, therefore, gets less preference for adoption. In the Deori society membership acquired through birth has prestige than the membership acquired through adoption. The blood relation cannot be replaced by social ties.

Avoidance:

The Deori society has certain customary rules regarding avoidance of family members. The elder brother maintains avoidance with younger brother's wife. It is a taboo to accept even betel leaves and nuts from the younger brother's wife (Chinya). Breach of taboo entails the brother for offering oblations to the 'Kundimama'.

As there is avoidance between wife's elder sister and vice-versa. The elder sister does not take food in presence of younger sister's husband. The breach of the taboo entails the man to undergo 'Daibanga' ritual.

Property and
Inheritance:

The Deoris have two types of property viz., movable and immovable. Typical of what is called movable property are agricultural implements, weaving implements, musical instruments, utensils, livestock, dresses and ornaments. The immovable property includes lands and basti and these belongs to the family.

The Deoris also recognise individual property rights. The womenfolk of the joint house hold rear fowl, pig, duck etc., and the income, if any goes to the womenfolk who spend the same for bringing yarn and other items. The head of the family has no right over the individual property.

Properties are divided equally among the brothers by mutual agreement. But in case of disagreement assistance from elders of the village is sought. Agricultural land,

household utensils, cows, buffaloes etc. are divided equally among the brothers. The oldest brother gets a slightly higher share by virtue of his seniority. The parental residential house may be partitioned to accommodate the brothers but it is not divided among them after their complete separation.

After the death of the father his sons become the rightful owners of the properties which are equally divided among the sons. In case of a man dies without survivor, his property usually goes to the nearest agnatic relatives. The wife and daughters are not eligible to share the property.

The Deoris are patrilineal in descent and they count their relationship through the male line. The children take the clan of the father.

Clan:

There are four distinct broad divisions (Khel) or 'Goyan' namely, Dibangia, Tengapania, Borgonya and Pator Goyan, each originating from particular place name mostly of rivers. Thus Deoris who after coming from the hills lived on the banks of the rivers Dibang, Tengapani and Borpani (Borgaog) were known as Dibangia, Tengapania, Borgonya respectively. The Deoris who were living in Patsadia or Patorsal were known as Patorgonya. Each of these divisions is composed of number of exogamous clans called Bangshas (Jakus). The Bangshas of Dibangia are Sundaria (Bor Deori), Patriya (Saru Deori), Airio (Bharali), Saria (Bora), Chitikayo (Bhog randhani), Komtiyo, Lagachyo, Klaiya Chuhoya etc. There are 14 numbers of 'Jakus' among the Dibangias. A member of Sundaria clan can only become the Bordeori or Bederi (main priest). His main duty is to sacrifice offerings like goats, ducks, pigeons, fowls, pigs, buffaloes on the village shrine. The main duty of the members of Patriya clan is to

assist the Bordeori. He can officiate the role of Baderi in the absence of the latter. The office bearer called Bora is selected from the Chariyo clan. He collects dues, chicken, firewood from the villagers for rituals. The Lagasuya clan member has to supply four special baskets called Mechua which are required in the Morong Jar ritual. The Chitigayo man supplies man for cooking purposes in the shrines. The Airio clan member's duty is to supply suitable persons for the offices of Barbarali and Sarubarali. It is the duty of the Airio clan members to select brides for all the clans. The Kumatia clan member can hold only the office of Barbarali or Sarubarali in the absence of the member from Airio clan. The Telia and the Dupia clan members are responsible for supplying mustard oil and incense sticks at the time of ritual. Other clans like Murang, Sukrang, Kaliachaku and Mehedaya have no definite functions in the Midiku on account of their recent inclusion into Dibangia division.

The Bangshas of Tengapania are Machiaticka (Bor Deori), Bikramiyatika (Saru Deori), Khutiayotika (Bharali), Sakacharutika, Pagimegeretika, Phepariyotika, Chemabariyatika etc. The Borgonya division too, has several clans like Ikucharu (Bor Deori), Chimucharu (Saru Deori), Hizaru (Bharali), Busaru (Balikatia), Lafaru (Bora) and Gasaru. It may be mentioned that the members of the last clan are no longer traceable. As regards clan of Patorgonya, the Deoris are not able to locate their existence. It is probable that their clans might have merged with the people of Borgonya and Dibangia clans. Although enquiries about clan is often made and in general discussion people refer to clan, yet clan distinction within a Khel is hardly made except for marriage purposes.

Social Stratification

The Deori society can broadly be divided into two categories viz. secular and religious. In the former category the Gaonbura a village headman reigns supreme who is the head of all socio-political activities. He is the nucleus around whom all the village elders gather for smooth running of the day to day affairs of a village. The assembly of village elders headed by the Gaonbura can give judgement in the petty disputes arising out of land, property, theft, un-social activities etc. The Gaonbura has a high social position. Any outsider to a village has to meet the Gaonbura first.

The 'Sakta' believers perform various religious functions throughout the year. To conduct religious activities every village appoints nine office bearers who have been assigned specific duties. Out of these office bearers in the hierarchical order four office bearers namely Baderi or Bor Deori, Saru Deori or Saderi, Bar Bharali and Saru Bharali play important role. Generally Bor Deoris are selected from the Sundariya, Mechiatika and Ikacharu clans and they command highest regard from the villagers. A Bor Deori should be a pious man of integrity and high moral character. He must be free from all sins. His main duty is to offer pujas in the 'Than' (place of community worship). The Saru Deori assists the Bor Deori in the Than pujas. He is empowered to perform the duty of the Bor Deori in the absence of the latter. The Bharalis remain in-charge of the puja related activities while the Bora collects dues and other essential articles from the villagers during ritual occasions. In principle all the clans have equal status but in practice the Bor Deori gets a high status among the office bearers.

In addition to the four major office bearers, there exists

a set of other officials consisting of Bora, Barik, Ladani, Telia and Dupia etc. Besides 'Pariyas' selected from the 'Pasokial' (paik) are also engaged to assist the priests in conducting Than pujas. The Barik announces the date of holding the community puja. During ritual observances he also assists the priests. He also collects rice beer, rice, fowls, etc. from the villagers for the community puja. It is the duty of the Bora to employ persons for cleaning the place of the puja. He supervises the arrangements of the community feast. The Ladani or Randhani prepares the special food (Bhog) for the deity. The Telia and Dupia supply mustard oil and incense sticks for the Puja.

Not anybody and everybody can get the office bearer posts as certain restrictions are imposed on the selection. An office bearer should have devotion to save the community. There is a procedure to purify the newly selected office bearer by the priestly council in the temple (Thanghar). As a matter of fact each and every member of the priestly council must undergo purification.

The Deori society prescribes certain customary rules and code of conduct for the priests. After selection of a man to the post of priest he has to observe certain social norms. He must abstain from having food from others. A priest has to grow long hair during the priestly life. He can take food prepared in his home by the family women and he must not take food prepared by other women of the village. He, however, takes food outside his home if the same is prepared by a young girl.

The "Chari Deori" also perform non-religious activities like giving judgement to cases brought before it. Formerly the Chari Deori was the sole authority to decide cases or disputes

but the office of the Gaonbura for deciding disputes was introduced during British rule. It may point out that in deciding disputes by the Gaonbura, the priestly council members also take part. In a sense there is practically co-operation between the Gaonbura and the priestly council.

Deodai:

Another office bearer called 'Deodai' plays a significant role in the priestly order. The 'Deodai' by virtue of his long experience in religious lores commands high status like the priests. Although he is elevated to the rank and status of the priest, yet he directly cannot involve himself in the pujas. He cannot assist the priests in the priestly functions. He performs the private rites and rituals of the households. His succession to the office is not hereditary and he is not selected from any definite clan. While dancing along with beating of drums he is believed to be possessed by their benign deity and in that mood of transcendental glory he is able to forecast the fortune of the villagers and about the natural calamities that may occur. In the individual or family worship the Deodai or any other elderly experienced person examining the liver of the sacrificed pig, can forecast the entire population. Only a male member can become a Deodai. For private rituals the Dibangias have a separate set of functionaries where 'Chakani' plays an important role. 'Chakani' is generally selected from the elderly womenfolk of any clan.

Kinship:

In a homogeneous society kinship forms the basis of social relationship which is actually or putatively traced through parent child or sibling relations. In all the human societies kinship plays an important role both in the regulation of behaviour between persons and in the formation

of social and political groups. "Kinship is a variable institution in most simple societies, for it is the regulator of behaviour in innumerable situations. A kinman renders services gratuitously for which an outsider receives compensation. He is a natural adviser and assistant in difficult circumstances."(Robert, H. Lowie -Social Organisation, 1966, P50). Raymond Firth calls it "The rod on which one leans throughout life."(Raymond Firth - We the Tikopias, 1936, P92).

The important feature of kinship is that in all societies it is bilateral. An individual is related to certain persons through his father and to others through his mother. The kinship system of the society lays down as to what should be the criterion of his dealing with his relatives, both personal and maternal. In smaller communities social relation of the individuals are primarily regulated by kinship bond. Radcliff Brown says "Kinship is an arrangement which enables persons to live together and co-operate with one another in an orderly social life." (A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Forde Daryll - African System of Kinship and Marriages , 1950).

The study of kinship may be undertaken from two angles.. Firstly the network of relationship that bind the individuals to each other and secondly the total society, the kin groups and their different functions. Murdock opines, "Since they are universally involved in many of life's most important activities - economic co-operation, household routines, sex relation, child care and education. It is scarcely surprising, therefore that they set the standard for all other kin relationship standard to which the latter must conform or from which they must be differentiated."(G. P. Murdock - Social Structure, 1915, P 91-94).

Kinship
Terminology:

In all the societies certain terms of address and reference are used to designate the kin of various types. In order to study the kinship tie between the individuals we must ascertain the genealogical bond between them, the linguistic terms used to denote that bond and a classification of their behaviour in various aspects of their life. "The first step in the study of kinship system is to discover what terms are used and how they are used. But this is only a first step. The terminology has to be considered in relation to the whole system of which it is a part." (A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Forde Daryll - African System of Kinship and Marriages , 1950, P 7).

The analysis of kinship terms of address and terms of reference prevalent among the Deoris reveals that the terms of references are more distinctly applied than the terms of address. Thus father, mother, elder brother, elder sister are addressed and referred to by distinct terms while son, daughter, younger brother and younger sister are addressed by their personal names. However, separate kinship terms are used for referring them. Some kinship terms are applied by both male and female. The husband does not utter the name of his wife and the wife too, never utters the name of her husband. After the birth of a child they address each other technonimically like so on so's mother and so on so's father.

Kinship
Relationship Terms:

The Deoris use two distinct terms Bangand Yong to address father-in-law and mother-in-law respectively. These terms are used generally to address one's father and mother. The kinship terms used to address one's parents in law are Chigira and Chigirachi. They regard parents in law as their own father and mother. So also the parents in law treat them

as their own daughters.

The relationship between sister-in-law (Buji) and husband's younger sister (Chinu) is friendly. A Buji treats her Chinu as her younger sister. On the other hand the Chinu respects her sister in law and assists her in household activities.

A man regards his father-in-law as his own father. The relationship between mother-in-law and son-in-law is like that of mother and son.

Below some of the kinship terms of the Dibangia Deoris are shown:

Kinship Terminology (Dibangia)

Dibangia - English

Muka	- Husband
Michi	- Wife
Kài	- Elder brother
Pichinya	- Younger brother
Buji	- Elder brother's wife
Chinu	- Wife's younger brother and younger sister, husband's younger brother and younger sister.
Bebe	- Elder sister, elder brother's wife
Gumi	- Elder sister's husband
Amara	- Younger sister's husband
Sàlpati	- Wife's elder or younger sister's husband
Jyamu	- Son's wife's father, daughter's husband's father
Aji	- Younger sister's husband (wife speaking)
Bainai	- Younger's sister's husband (men speaking)
Goi	- Younger brother's wife
Chiupi	- Husband's elder brother

Miku - Father's younger brother's wife
Pichiamchi - Younger sister

Ascending Generation:-

<u>Dibangia</u>	<u>English</u>
Bāng	: Father
Iyong	: Mother
Pei	: Father's elder and younger sister
Momai	: Mother's elder and younger brother, father's elder sister's husband
Chigira	: Wife's father, wife's father's elder brother, husband's father
Chigirachi	: Wife's mother, wife's father's elder brother's wife, husband's mother
Judai	: Wife's father's younger sister's husband
Mai	: Wife's father's younger sister
Panyu	: Father's elder brother
Mānyu	: Father's elder brother's wife

Descending Generation :-

Picha	: Son, elder brother's son, elder and younger's brother's daughter's husband
Bagin	: Elder or younger brother's son, elder or younger sister's daughter, elder or younger brother's daughter
Ainya	: Son's wife
Pichachi	: Daughter, younger or elder brother's daughter
Aji	: Daughter's husband, elder or younger brother's daughter's husband.

Marriage:

Marriage is an indispensable ingredient in the Deori social life. Marriage is the accepted form of union between a man and a woman. The boys marry within the age of 20 - 25 years while the marriageable age for girls is 18 - 22 years. Tribal endogamous system as well as clan exogamy is strictly followed in respect of marriage. Marriage is regulated by moiety which is an exogamous group of related people. If anyone violates this social norm he is punished by the priestly council of the village. Monogamy is the general rule and the second wife is taken after the death of the first wife. Once a girl is married she belongs to the husband's family. The children take their family clan.

The Deori tradition prescribes certain norms regarding selection of bride. Thus a boy can only marry his maternal uncle's daughter known as Momai Peiyo Pisàchi system. Violation of the traditional practice entails punishment from the priestly council.

The status of married women in Deori society is high in as much as a bride receives oblation after her death from the members of her husband's family. The very ritual 'Suje Lugurubà' ensures the right to the bride for changing affiliation from her father's clan to her husband's clan.

The systems of levirate and surrogate are not in vogue in the Deori society. Although in most of ethnic societies the levirate has social approval yet the Deoris do not prefer the system. According to levirate system, after the death of the husband, the younger brother does not marry the wife of the elder brother. The Deoris do not approve the marriage of younger sister of the wife.

There are four different forms of marriage prevalent

among the Deoris viz. Borbiya, Majubia, Sarubia or Bhakatrupia and Gandharba which are also known as Deubia, Sachibachi, Bhakatrupia or Sarubachi and Jenengna Laharba. Although there are variations in the forms depending upon expenses and other detailed arrangements, the 'Kanya Samprodan'(giving away the daughter to the husband) is found to be similar.

In a Deori marriage, particularly in Borbiya the Pathriya or a mediator plays an important role. Both the families of bride and groom appoint Pathriya. On the marriage occasion he wears a special dress and he helps in the settlement of bride price and other details of the marriage.

Barbiya:

It is an arranged form of marriage and generally solemnised with much pomp and grandeur extending three to five days. A sizable expenditure and long drawn procedures are involved in such marriage. Only the well-to-do families request to this formal marriage. Normally opinion is sought from the bride and groom before finalizing the marriage. Guardians or parents of both the parties of boy and girl, negotiate. The one or two elderly persons of boy's family along with few other elderly neighbours proceed to girl's house for formal permission of the girl's parents. The Pathoria must accompany the party. The party carries an earthen pot with rice beer, betel leaves and nuts, a few rupees and offer these to the girl's parents. When the girl's parents give consent to the marriage the boy's party returns after partaking the rice beer and other eatables. The date of marriage is fixed on this visit.

After some days the boy's party again visits the girl's house with one big basketful of rice, dal, salt, mustard oil,

onion, potato etc. and a hen. This is called 'Bujani Diya'. Again the boy's party visits the girl's house two to three days before the date of marriage. In this visit the boy's party carries two rice beer pots wrapped with Kan leaves. A few pairs of betel leaves and nuts, a pair of fish (Kurhi) are also taken. This part of the marriage negotiation is called 'Chubi'. The 'Chubi' items are arranged in a 'Bher'(big basket) which should be carried by a young man whose parents are living. The party proceeds to the girl's house but before entering the girl's house some girls of the girl's family put a barricade and ask for betel leaves and nuts from the party. The parent of the girl carries the two rice beer pots to a second place inside the house. The party is entertained with rice beer and other eatables.

On the day of marriage the bridegroom, accompanied by friends and relatives and drummers proceed to the girl's house where relatives and elderly persons gather. The couple is blessed for a happy conjugal life by the elders.

In a formal Deori marriage, the office bearers like Kakati, Patheria and two partners of the couple known as 'Dara Saki' and 'Koina Saki' play important role. Besides these 'Dulia Talia', 'Nachani' and 'Nàmati' are engaged. All of them are honoured by offering 'Tupula' containing betel leaves and nuts.

Co-operation is the salient feature of Deori marriages irrespective of forms of marriage. The villagers voluntarily contribute the essential items which are known as 'Dali' or 'Bujani'. The essential items of a Deori marriage constitute fish, pork, rice beer (Suje), rice, vegetables, betel leaves and nuts.

In the formal marriage viz. Borbiya, Majubia, and Bhakatrupia or Sarubia, the main ritual i.e. 'Suje Labiruba' is

performed at the residence of the bride.

Both the parties belonging to the bridegroom and the bride participate in the grand feast. 'Suje' and 'Kaji' are most essential items in the marriage feast.

Majubiya:

The Majubia is also a popular form for those who are well-to-do. The expense of this type is slightly less than that of Borbiya. The only difference is that the duration of this form of marriage is only two days. Merry making and feasting continues for two days.

Bakat Rupiya:

It is a simple form of marriage performed without much pomp and grandeur. It is one day affair and all marriage formalities are completed in a single day. Expenses are considerably less.

It may be pointed out that all the three types of marriage i.e. Borbiya, Majubia and Sarubia or Bakatrupia are arranged by the prospective couple.

Gandhera Biya:

The most popular form of marriage among the Deoris is the Gandharba. In this type the couple themselves arrange the marriage. The boy takes away the girl on an appointed date with his intimate friends. Except a single feast called Biya Laguruba, no other formalities are done. The feast is held at the boy's residence. However, once during the lifetime of the couple a ceremony called Suje Laguruba has to be performed. Sometimes the period of holding Suje Laguruba may be extended to the old age when the marriage is called Buri Biya. At least three headmen of three major clans have to be invited who are entertained in a feast.

Widow Remarriage: The Deori society approves widow remarriage. Not much formality is observed in such marriages. Normally a widower marries a widow.

Bride Price: The system of bride price is prevalent among the Deoris. It may be noted that the bride price is not a suitable of dowry. The Deoris give dowry as a token of love, money value of which may be many times higher than the bride price. In other words it is a Streedhan. The dowry includes mainly bell metal utensils, wooden or steel boxes, garments, areca nuts and betel leaves etc., while bride price paid by the groom to the parents of the bride includes betel leaves and nuts and a cash of Rs. 126.00. In case of marriage by elopement bride price may rise upto Rs. 1,000.00.

Incest: The Deori abhor the incestuous relationship. There is a social religious ritual called 'Suchi Ji Ninema' to purify the boy and the girl for the illicit or unsocial relation. The boy and the girl each has to offer a she pig and four chickens to the local shrine which are sacrificed before the deity and the Than. The priests pray to the deity to forgive the boy and the girl for the commission of the sin. The head priest i.e. Bordeori sprinkles purified water ('Suchi Ji') from the copper jar on the heads of the boy and the girl. The priestly council imposes fine in cash upon both the boy and the girl which may vary form case to case.

CHAPTER - III

Material Culture: House :-

The Deoris are riverine tribe which necessitates the people to construct houses on piles. There are other regions for pile formation. The Deori inhabited areas were infested with wild animals and avoid the attack of the wild animals they had to build houses on platform. In the distant past there were often times attack from neighbouring tribes and the pile houses served as a defence mechanism so that sufficient vigil could be done from a distance. The tradition is still maintained in the plains mainly because of flood which occurs annually lasting for months together.

Houses are constructed facing the river and all the houses are of similar pattern, although there is variation depending upon the size of the family. The houses are extended lengthwise if more members are to be accommodated. A typical Deori house can accommodate more than 40 persons as joint family system was in vogue. The floor of the house is made of flattened bamboos or timbers and is raised from the ground on wooden posts. Today, however, most of the houses have RCC posts. With a long passage on one side and having a few small apartments, a Deori house resembles outwardly with that of a Mising house. The front portion of the house is called 'Misso' which is kept open on three sides. This is the place where visitors are entertained and there is no restriction for any one for entrance to this room. This part of the house is also used as a sleeping apartment for the unmarried youths. Formerly every village had dormitory where unmarried youths spent the nights. In the 'Misso' a fire place (Dudepati) is placed which also serves

for ordinary cooking. During winter it becomes an ideal place for gossiping, storytelling to the young children. The relatives and respectable persons are entertained here. The fireplace kept at the rear room of the house is considered as sacred and outsiders and non-tribal visitors are not allowed entry to the fireplace.

A few structural changes in the residential houses have been observed. A few families have now adopted Assam Type houses built on the plinth. But they have maintained the traditional style of the kitchen by constructing it separately on pile in the backyard house. E shaped Assam Type house is seen in a Dibangia village where the kitchen is also constructed on plinth. This is due to acculturation process. The thatch, bamboo and wooden piles of a few residential houses are now replaced by G I sheets and concretised posts because of the scarcity of the materials like wood, cane, bamboo etc. An old Dibangia villager lamented that the village where he is living at present was once surrounded by thick forests till the twenties of the twentieth century. Only after that deforestation was started by the villagers themselves. Now the villagers have to purchase all kinds of house building materials, telling badly on the already existing poor economic conditions.

The Deoris believe in the 'Bastu Shastra' system while selecting a site for construction of a house. They consult the local fortune teller for this purpose. The houses are constructed facing towards East. The Eastern direction is considered as auspicious by them. The 'Mididu' or 'Deoghar' is also constructed keeping this aspect in view. The main door of the house must face towards east.

The house can be approached with the help of ladder

(Essugu). The place under the platform (Aakum) is used to keep household essentials like the bullock cart, firewood, plough etc. Besides the 'Aakum' is the place where the womenfolk weave clothes in the looms. Some families keep the pigs, fowls, cattle in a corner of the 'Aakum'.

The 'Misso' or open portion of the house is extended which is used for drying fish, pulses, paddy and such other activities. The spacious courtyard in front of the house is used for various purposes like keeping temporarily the bundles of harvested paddy, thrashing paddy, mustard etc. The open and spacious courtyard is used for 'Bisu Nowa' during Bisu festival. The elderly people use the place for bamboo work like making 'Dala', 'Kharahi', 'Bisani' etc.

The Kitchen:-

The 'Dudepati' a fireplace is a 4' / 5' square wooden structure. Cowdung and earth are used for construction of the fireplace. A foot above the fireplace there is 'Giso' (a bamboo made hanging platform) and above the 'Giso' there is 'Gimo' (similar hanging platform). These are used for storing dried fish, and other items of daily use like salt, turmeric, chillies etc. The 'Gimo' is used for drying the earthen jars to be used for keeping 'Suje'. This platform is also used for keeping bamboo made implements like 'Dala', 'Kharahi', bow and arrow etc.

Domitory (Aleng Asso)

Although most of the Deori villages do not have a dormitory, yet the tradition could be noticed in certain villages although the activities are fading fast. Normally the dormitory is constructed in a middle place of the village. All the unmarried youths of a village become members of a

dormitory. The women and girls are not allowed to enter dormitory. Bamboo and wood or timber, cane etc. are used for construction of dormitory. The height may extend upto 20 feet. A wooden platform is made above the ground at least 5 feet high which can be approached with the help of a ladder made of wood.

The dormitory has a big role in moulding the character and development of skill. The youths spend the nights and in the morning they come to their respective families to perform the daily chores. The dormitory serves as a training institute as the youths learn various techniques to prepare bamboo arts and crafts.

Economy:

The people are mainly agriculturists and agriculture is the principal support for the families. They relish Ahui rice and Ahu paddy is widely grown. The main reason for producing Ahu paddy is that the Deoris live in flood affected areas and most of their fields are not suitable for Sali paddy cultivation. Of late due to construction of embankments some plots some plots are becoming suitable for Sali cultivation. Besides paddy they grow mustard seeds, sweet potatoes, pulses, cotton, few varieties of winter vegetables. Crops like wheat, lentil, patal, etc. are grown and a few families are earning good profits from the source. Modern agricultural practices have been adopted by quite a good number of families, but by and large, the people prefer to plough lands with bullocks and buffaloes. They rear cows, buffaloes, pigs, goats, fowls both for local consumption and for market. It may be pointed out that the Deoris worship their deities where sacrifice is a must activity. They sacrifices goats, pigs, chicken, ducks which are reared in their households. Some of the

families earn good amount by selling pigs and chicken.

Of late Sali paddy cultivation brought tangible changes in the Deori economy which reflects in their overall spending pattern and socio-cultural exchanges with non-tribal people. But the age old tradition of Ahu cultivation is scrumptiously maintained which could be traced in their rituals like eating new Ahu rice in 'Saon' (July - August). Unlike the Sali rice eating ritual in December - January ('Puh'), the customary practice followed in the 'Na - Khowa' ritual of 'Saon' (July - August) is more vivid. The Deoris observe the 'Na - Khowa' ritual of Ahu rice on the auspicious Wednesday of full moon fortnight of 'Saon'. Before partaking of the new rice on this occasion a puja is performed in the Deoghar (Than). But the occasion of new Sali rice eating in Puh is bereft of puja in the Deoghar. It customary to apply a tiny portion of new Ahu rice on the head before partaking of the same. But this tradition is not in practice in case of partaking of new Sali rice ritual. Besides the Deoris observe 'Puhar Chuà' in December - January when no auspicious ritual is held in the Deoghar (Than) for a month. But in the polluting period of 'Aahar' (June - July) continues for only 3 days.

Although Sali paddy cultivation is becoming popular among the Deoris which has commercial importance. The people resort to Ahu paddy cultivation as the same bears traditional compulsion. It is believed that if any family does not grow Ahu paddy in a year, there may be misfortune in the family.

Food:

The staple cereal food of the Deoris is rice. Along with rice they take boiled green vegetables seasoned with chillies and salt. For their meat supply they rear pigs, fowls, ducks

and goats. The meat of other animals is scrupulously avoided. The poultries and pigs are not only reared for household consumption but these constitute as good source of income for womenfolk who use the money for purchasing yarn clothes, ornaments etc. Fish forms a special delicacy in the Deori meal. Rice beer (Suja) is prepared in most of the households and it is served to all particularly during festivals. Today, however, rice beer consumption among the educated sections is fast disappearing. Rice beer is a prime item in their festive occasions which is also offered to the visitors. Habit of taking tea is fast coming up among the educated boys and girls. The elderly people take red tea without sugar.

Due to Government efforts, some families are growing wheat but wheat products like Atta, Maida etc. are not prepared in the families.

There is a section 'Buruk' among the Tengapania Deori who consider eating of mutton as taboo. A legend prevalent among them states that the Buruks were immortal and for years together they were deprived of feasts as nobody from them died. Seeing other sections of Deoris enjoying feast, they had also temptation to enjoy a feast. Accordingly they killed a goat and due cremation was observed symbolising the death of an elderly chief. A grand feast was arranged. Thence forward the goat is treated as their grandfather. Even today they scrupulously avoid mutton.

Community
Fishing:

Community fishing is resorted to by the Deoris during winter season when the water level of the beels and rivers goes down. They use their traditional fishing implements to catch fish. They also catch fish in the rivulets. The usual method followed for catching fish is to make the river bed go

dry by removing the water. For this a particular spot is selected and barricades are constructed at both ends of the spot. The water is taken out by a small boat like fishing implement and then fishes are caught. They use similar fishing implements that are used by the fellow Assamese villagers.

Fish forms an important item in the Deori food habits (Haba - Nima). The special delicacy (Chuccha) prepared out of the dried powdered fish and 'Chia Nakira' (dried fish) are prized items not only in daily menu but also an item for entertaining guests and relations.

The pork is an essential item which is prepared with wild leaves such as 'Mikasso' (Mezenda leaf), 'Michimi', 'Tebeju', 'Dijouju', 'Aideo', 'Nepapu', and 'Dhekia'. Another favourite item is Dudu Gajali (shoots of Taru plant), 'Chaka' (cane shoots), 'Mehi Mutu', 'Yuwa Chinu' (bamboo shoots).

Dress
(‘Gema Pomi’):

The Deoris wear their traditional which are woven by the ladies in their looms. The important dress items are :

- ‘Iku’ (Dhuti) - used by menfolk only.
- ‘Igu’ (Mekhela) - used by female only.
- ‘Jakachibba’ (Waist band) - used by females on their waist.
- “Gatigi’ (a towel worn on the head) - used by the females only.
- ‘Baiga’ (breast cloth) - the young girls use it on their breasts.
- ‘Loguru Isa’ (a long cloth) - this long cloth is used by the young girls during ‘Bisu’ (Bihu) festival.
- ‘Borkaku’ (big cloth) - used in winter season.

'Jimo Ing' (cotton cloth) - cotton cloth specially used in winter.

'Ariya Isa' - Endi cloth.

Ornaments (Dirbu Genuma): There are not many ornaments used by the Deoris. The males wear only rings made of gold or silver. The ornaments worn by the elderly women and young girls are 'Bibiring' (ear ring), 'Osu' (bangles), 'Likotu' (necklace).

Musical Instruments: Drum is the most important and essential musical instrument for the Deoris. The socio - religious festivals. Without beating of drum are simply impossible. The Bisu festival without drum is unthinkable. Besides drum the Dunis use cymbals to accompany drummers. Buffalo horn is also used by them especially during Bisu festival.

Arts and Crafts: Weaving : - The Deoris woman are expert weavers and one can find a loom in almost every household. They weave clothes for both men and women. Every woman has her personal skill which she dextrously presents in her clothes.

Wood :- Wood is not only used in the construction of their houses. It is also used for various other purposes like making wheels of bullock carts, hoes, plough, handles of dao etc. The ladders of all the houses, the piles of the platform houses are made of wood. Similarly the frame of the fireplace is made of wood.

Death and Disposal of Dead: Among the Deoris, cremation is the rule. The dead of children, pregnant women and epidemic cases are buried. They put great importance on the death of a man or a woman.

The cause of death is believed to be wrath of the deities like Gilakonwar Baliachaman and Binkonwar. When the death of a person is announced all the villagers irrespective of their clan affiliation attend the deceased person's house with a pot of Suje (rice beer) in their hands.

The dead body is disposed preferably on the same day and the clan and family members take initiative in this regard. Men and women of other clans also join in the funeral or burial of the corpse. Generally old men and women are cremated. The pyre has seven layers of wood. The traditional custom of laying layers of wood in pyres for a man and a woman is seven layers and five layers respectively. For the priests the layers of wood is raised to nine.

The second method of disposal of the dead is the burial. In the case of burial the traditional custom of pollution ('Chuwa') extends to only three days.

The dead body is washed with water and new white cloth is wrapped over the body. Soon after the wash a 'Kappali' (ornament worn on forehead) made of silver is tied to the forehead of the dead. The well-to-do families also place a few silver coins near the body. An egg is broken on the forehead of the the dead signifying disconnection of all relations with the family.

After performing all the above mentioned formalities the dead body is tied in a mat and carried to the cremation ground in a procession of close relatives and clan members. Generally the eldest son leads the procession. He carries food, rice beer and burning torch made of dried paddy straw. A relative of the dead spreads cotton thread along the road leading to the cremation ground. The dead body is carried seven times around the pyre before placing into the pyre.

The eldest son offers cooked food and rice beer to the soul of the dead. Some portion of the same is offered to the 'Gilakonwar' and his associates. The eldest son kindles the pyre. It is customary to perform the mortuary rites by the person who puts fire on the dead body. In the absence of the eldest son any male member can perform the rite.

Deposition of 'Asthi' (burnt bones of the dead): The Hindu custom of deposition of 'Asthi' of the dead person after cremation is also practiced by the Deoris but with a difference. The custom prevalent among the Hindus is that the Asthi is deposited ceremoniously in a big river preferably in Ganga (Tribeni Sangam) near Allahabad or in the river Brahmaputra on the occasion of Ashokastami. But among the Deoris the same ceremony is performed on the very occasion of cremation of the dead body. P. C. Saikia gives us details of this custom, "The eldest son offers food and rice beer for a second time near the cremation ground (seven parts are offered to the manes and one part to the deities). The Deodhai collects seven pieces of calcined bones and lets them fall on the seven parts of the food through the left hand fingers of the eldest son. The son then collects these parts, leaving aside the part offered to the deities and ties them into a packet. The packet is then thrown to the bottom of the river after diving into the water seven times. This is what is known locally as 'Asthi Utua' (Dibangias, 1976, P62).

Customs Related to Purification: In order to purify themselves, the members who attended the cremation take bath in a river and return to the house of the dead. In the house they purify again in a fire. Meanwhile the bereaved family prepares a 'Suchi Jal' containing cow dung, tulsi leaves, a copper coin etc. The

participants then are entertained in a feast of pork and rice beer. The unity and cohesiveness of the villagers is noticed when all the villagers gather at the house of the deceased with rice beer pots, betel leaves and nuts etc.

Offering of oblations to the departed continues from the next day after cremation to the fourth day when the final oblation is offered by the son who performed the cremation. It is necessary to sacrifice a chicken during these days. A few selected elderly villagers perform the 'Suje Labiruba' ritual in the room where the deceased took his last breath. They put rice beer and chicken curry on the floor and request the soul of the dead to give up all connections with the inmates of the deceased.

Final Purificatory
Ceremony:

The final purificatory ceremony called 'Daha' or 'Kaaaj' may be held any time of the year. As it is an expensive affair, they observe the ceremony when they can afford. The ritual requires a large number of chickens, pigs, huge amount of rice, rice beer, betel leaves and nuts etc. Generally it is held after one year. 'Suje Labiruba' ritual is performed by the old men to appease the manes of the deceased and to give farewell to the departed soul. The eldest son who performed the cremation kills a pig. The liver of the pig is examined by an expert diviner who forecasts remedies for any evil that may occur. After that all the villagers partake of the grand feast.

Taboos:

Certain taboos are observed by the family and clan members when a death occurs in a family. The Deoris close the granaries for a week and a white cloth is spread in front of the door. They also abstain from observing any ritual in the family and outside the village too at least for one week.

CHAPTER - IV

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The religious belief of the Deoris are centering round the beliefs arising out of their self-protection from natural calamities and other hazards owing to their habitations in flood prone areas. They have had to lead a life of struggle since decades and hence they propitiated the supreme deity for a happy and trouble free life. Every village has a shrine which is called as Deosal or Than by the Tengapania and Borgonya sections. The Dibangia sections calls the shines as 'Midiku' (abode of the deity). The Deoris pay great reverence and homage to the shrines and worship the presiding deity regularly. All the three sections of the Deoris are maintaining their traditional mode of worship. The Lord Shiva or Mahadev and his consort Parvati are chief God and Goddess. The Dibangias called the supreme deity as 'Kundi Mama'. 'Kundi' is identified as Lord Shiva and 'Mama' as Parvati of the Hindu pantheon. The Midiku consists of six houses viz. (1) Kundi Mama Van, (2) Chunketeri Numali Kunwari, (3) Jakarua Van, (4) Niyacha Van, (5) Tulakucha Van and (6) Morong Achan. The location of the houses relates to the hierarchy among the deities. Kundi Mama Van is the main house which is the abode of the five main deities. The abode of Chun Keteri and Numali Kunwari is on the northern side of the Midiku. The 'Jakarua Van' is the abode of seven deities. The Niyacha Van is the kitchen where food is cooked for the deities as food prepared outside cannot be offered to any deity. MorongAchan serves as a common kitchen where sacrificed animals and birds, rice, vegetables etc. are cooked and consumed by the members of the priestly council along with common villagers after the performance of community worship. The 'Bedar' is a store house where all the puja paraphernalia are preserved. The puja items are considered sacred and except the Than puja, these could not be used. The most important items are:-

1. Iban - artificial flower made of pure gold, copper and gold.
2. Baliyocha Yogi or Ton - sacrificial knife or cleaver.
3. Chandan wood.
4. Copper Argha.

5. Bell.
6. Trident.
7. Sangkha.
8. Brass basket.
9. Copper bowl.
10. Canopy.
11. Conch.

There are two sets of functionaries for conducting the rites and rituals in the village Than. The Chari Deori i.e. Bordeori, Saru Deori, Bar Bharali, Saru Bharali and their assistants constitute one set while the 'Deodai' forms a separate set. The Deodai cannot ascend to the rank of Chari Deori unless he is elevated to the rank of Chari Deori by the villagers. On the other hand a member of Chari Deori can perform the role of Deodai.

The main religious occasions of the Dibangias are - 1. Bakat Makan, 2. Bisu Midi Munuma (two socio - religious festivals of Bohagiyo Bisu and Magio Bisu), 3. Chak Chik, 4. Makan Chiban, 5. Metua, 6. Chai Labiruba, 7. Sauna Puja, 8. Raj Kabeng or Rajkema, 9. Yoi Nigi Numa or Bhur Utua.

1. Bakat Makam - This puja is related to the first partaking of Saliria. The Bordeori offers puja to the presiding deity by offering blood and head of the sacrificed chicken to the deity. A feast is arranged.
2. Bisu Midi Munuma - The Bisu puja is generally performed in the shrines of each village. The Bisu festival must be preceded a puja which starts on Wednesday. The Bisu festivals are observed before starting the agricultural operation (i.e. Bohagio Bisu) and after harvesting the paddy (i.e. Magia Bisu). Saranan Deori opines, "Sacrificing of the he goat (one coloured) is a must in BiHu puja. Nowadays once in every one to four years, a buffalo, preferably white colour or a white pumpkin is sacrificed which is said to be the substitute of the traditional human sacrifice especially by the Tengapania and the Borgonya groups for well-being of the general people. Bisu and Bisu puja being co-related, only after completion of the Bisu puja in their respective

village shrines can the Bihu festivities be started” (Religious Practices of the Deoris, 2002, P40).

3. Chik Chak - This annual purification of the village shrine is held in the month of Sravan (Saon) i.e. July - August. The Bordeori sacrifices four chickens and prays to the deities for a happy and a prosperous life of the villagers. A feast is held in the Morong.
4. Makan Chiban - Before partaking of the newly harvested crop, the villagers observe this puja in the local shrine. It is observed in Bhadra (August) and in Aghon (November). At least seven chickens are sacrificed before the deity. A feast is arranged with the sacrificed meat. The puja offerings are believed to be accepted by the ancestors.
5. Metua - In order to appease the deities for a happy and trouble free life especially from natural calamities the Deoris observe this puja thrice in a year i.e. Bohag (April - May), Ahin (September - October) and Phagun (March). They also observe Bormetua in the month of May - June. One he goat is sacrificed in Metua, while in Bormetua three he goats are sacrificed.
6. Sat Labiruba - This puja is related to the Ambu Bachi held all over Assam on the 7th - 10th Asar (June) every year when the Goddess Durga is believed to be in Her menstrual period. The Deori purify the shrine on the final day (10th Asar). A goat is sacrificed before the deity. A feast is also held.
7. Sauna Puja - This puja is held in Saun (July - August) for successful harvesting of the paddy. The Bordeori offers puja to the deity with blood of sacrificed chicken. A feast is held at Morong and the whole day is spent singing and dancing.

Above pujas are community level pujas where welfare of the entire community is ensured. But the Deoris have more deities who are worshipped individually as well as collectively in the households. The following deities are of this category: -

1. Achira or Achia.
2. Bakat Makan.

3. Bakat Midi or Purushia.
4. Bebaraja.
5. Biyu Midi Munuma.
6. Borchuan.
7. Chak Chik or Chua Labiruba.
8. Chàn - Yà.
9. Daha.
10. Dangaria.
11. Duachitera or Borkin.
12. Hàmkia Midi.
13. Jalkai.
14. Jalnarayan.
15. Ji Ibag.
16. Kalika.
17. Kania Julpan.
18. Kin Dabeba.
19. Makàn Chibàn.
20. Metua.
21. Minuchi or Miruchi.
22. Rajkebang or Rajkema.
23. Mora or Mimo.
24. Pijon Pe.
25. Risto.
26. Sat Labiruba.
27. Sauna Puja.
28. Subechani Midi.
29. Yàn Teruba.
30. Yoi Chàgeduba or Midi.
31. Yoi Midi.
32. Yoi Nigi Numa.

The rituals are observed by all the three divisions of the Deoris. There may be some minor deviations in the propitiation system from village to village as well as from division to division but overall the pujas are held in the households do not differ much. The nomenclature of the pujas may also vary as the Dibangias maintain their traditional language while Tengapanias and Borgonyas give simplified versions somewhat related to Assamese language. For example the common place of worship among the Borgonyas and Tengapanias is known as 'Than' whereas the common place of worship among the Dibangias is known as 'Midiku'. All the sections worship Lord Shiva and Parvati as the chief deities. They also worship Gai Lurung KUNDIAS as Lord Ganesh and Konwar KUNDI as Lord Kartik.

Throughout the year the Deories observe various rituals as per their calendar, every month except 'Chot' (March - April) and 'Puh' (December - January) of the Deori calendar. Thus in the Bohag (April - May) they observe the most important puja cum festival i.e. the Bohagio Bisu. It is held on the first Wednesday of the month. Ploughing for Sali paddy starts. On this occasion the Deoris prepare a Bisu delicacy (cakes). The entire village is surcharged with singing, dancing and merry-making. Suje is taken by all. In this month the 'Metua' ritual is observed on a Sunday for well-being of the villagers by sacrificing a goat. A sacrificial feast is held outside the shrine. Another important ritual named Midi - de - Ruba or Rajkebang is held in this month for the welfare of the villagers and other domesticated animals and birds as well as for bumper crops. The puja is held outside the shrine. Chicken, ducks, rice beer pots etc. are collected from each household for a feast.

In the month of Jeth (May - June) 'Barmetua' ritual is observed for securing good health by sacrificing goats, chicken, pigeon before the deity. Later on a feast is held at Morong where all the villagers and priests and attendants participate.

In Asar (June - July) 'Sat Labiruba' is performed to sanctify the shrine which is supposed to be polluted during Ambu Bachi. The functionaries prepare the sacrificial food and consume the same.

In Saun (July - August) the Deoris observe 'Chak Chik' to purify the shrine. Each family cleans the household . A feast is held at the 'Morong Ghar'.

The Maka Chiba ritual is observed during Bhado (August - September). Pujas with sacrifice are prepared at the shrine on the occasion. Only after this ritual the villagers are able to consume Ahu rice. As usual a feast is held in the 'Morong Ghar'.

In the month of Ahin (September - October) they observe Iyoi Midi (Aai Saba) in the outskirt of a village for bidding farewell to the Goddess of pox. All the members of a village participate in the ritual. The villagers partake of the food articles which remained after offering to the deity.

In the month of Kati (October - November) they observe Metua ritual at the shrine. A he goat is sacrificed before the deity. The ritual is attended by only male members of the village. Feast is arranged at the 'Morong Ghar'.

The Bakat Makan ritual i.e. eating formally the newly harvested Sali rice is held in Aghon (November - December). A feast is arranged in the Morong Ghar after puja in the shrine. The Paus (December - January) month is not considered by the Deoris for any Than puja.

Another important socio - religious festival is held in the month of Magh (January - February). This occasion is utilised by the people for ploughing the land for Ahu paddy. It is a big community festival of eating, drinking Suja and merry making. The villagers visit one another's house on this occasion.

In Fagun (March - April) the Metua puja is held at the shrine fro greeting the spring season. In the puja, a he goat is sacrificed before the deity. A grand feast is also held at the Morong Ghar.

The month Chot (March - April) is not considered as auspicious to held any puja.

Shamanism: Dr. P. C. Saikiain his book 'The Dibangias' gives us an interesting episode of Shamanism while providing details of

Midi Girachi i.e. woman possessed by a deity. "It was informed that a woman of a Dibangia village should be invariably possessed, at least for some time, by a female deity on the last day of the Bisu festival which was a Thursday. On May 1, 1969 Mrs. R was possessed by Chunketeri deity. She hurriedly came to the shrine uttering some inaudible words. The villagers followed her with packets of areca nuts and betel vine leaves. They had bath before their journey to the Midiku.

It was considered as a purifactory bath for the devotees. The chief priest opened the door of the Kundimama shrine for the Shaman woman. She sat there for a while, uttering some words and then came out and sat down on a plaintain leaf in front of the door of the shrine. She looked really dreadful while she was possessed. Her head and feet were trembling as she muttered those words.

The Baderi (Bordeori) accompanied by the Bar Bharali and the Deondai offered a packet of areca nuts and betel vine leaves to the Samaness and requested her to tell the events that awaited the villagers. She asked them soon to shift the Midiku site for the welfare of the villagers. Soon she regained her senses and left the premises of the shrine. It was observed that girls in their menstrual period the boys with long pants and shirts on and the men and women who came to the shrine without ritual bath were debarred from entering the Shamanistic ritual. Situations and conditions like these were considered as impure which might pollute the whole atmosphere of the Midiku, consequently affecting the total life of the villagers. Hence a strict adherence to conformity with rigorous rules" (1976, P 45 - 46).

It is observed that although there are three broad divisions among the Deoris i.e. Dibangia, Borgonya and

Tengapania, there is amity and good brotherliness among the three groups. Thus the Dibangias propitiate all the deities including the main deities of the Borgonya and Tengapania groups. Tamreswari, the eldest daughter of Kundi Aborchi is worshipped by the Borgonyas. Similarly Gailurung Kundi of the Dibangias is worshipped in the form of Baliababa by the Tengapanias. Both the Borgonyas and Tengapanias can participate in the rituals of the Dibangias held in shrines. There is no restriction on participation of the Dibangias by their fellow Borgonya and Tengapania groups. On the other hand there are restrictions between the Borgonyas and Tengapanias in the village shrine. P. C. Saikia narrates a mythological story regarding the non-conformity of the Borgonya and Tengapania in matters of ritual observances. The story goes like this.

“One day Kundimama decided to allot the main part of the North Eastern side of the country i.e. Kundil Nagar from Dibang river to Lohit and Chandangiri to the eldest son Gailurung Kundi (Baliababa). They allotted the Eastern part i.e. the Southern part of the Lohit and a part of the Jaidev hill, Deopani river to the eldest daughter Tamreswari.

But in the early morning Tamreswari in a disguised form i.e. in the form of her elder brother Baliababa, deceived her father and received the Northern part of the state as well as some other wealth allotted to Baliababa. Later on when Baliababa came to know about the mischief played by his younger sister, he became very angry and wanted to kill her. At the last moment Kundimama could settle the dispute. So Baliababa left the Northern state and came down to the Southern state and settled there permanently.

The conflict between Baliababa and Tamreswari is the

basis of ritual differentiation between the two groups. This has also led to the demarcation of their village territories as Borgonya and Tengapania respectively. They cannot live in the same village. If the Tengapania villager dies in a Borgonya village and vice versa, the guardian must purchase land for disposal of the dead bodies, otherwise they will not be allowed to dispose of the body. In that case the body is carried to his own village territory. This ritual conflict is not found among the Dibangias." (The Dibangias, 1976, P 47 - 48).

Ancestor Worship The Deoris have innumerable deities who are
'Mimo - Hare - worshipped throughout the year both in the Than or Midiku
Ruba': and in private plots outside the shrines. They also believe in
some local deities who are believed to be the causative factors
for various ailments. But there are benevolent deities i.e.
ancestral manes who are most important in the socio - ritual
life of the Deoris. The rites and rituals of ancestor worship
strengthen the inter family, inter individual bond. Such type
of worships constitutes the cementing factors for lineage or
clan cohesiveness.

The Deoris worship the ancestors in a secluded place lying towards North - West side of the residence. Some villagers also observe the ritual on the bank a river. As per their customs, the ritual for ancestors varies according to the method of disposal of the dead. The cremated ancestors are appeased with cooked food and the buried ancestors are appeased with some uncooked food. The Dibangias call these two systems as 'Munuma' (cooked) and 'Enwa' (uncooked). In the former system the meat is sacrificial bird or animal is cooked and then offered to the deity. The latter consists of bananas, uncooked rice, powdered rice, areca nut and betel

leaves.

Ancestor worship is observed thrice in a year i.e. during Borgonya Bisu, Magiyo Bisu and death anniversary of a person. Bisu festivals could be started only after the ritual observance of ancestors. The auspicious date of observance of ancestor worship is considered as Thursday. There is no permanent mane of ancestor among the Deoris. After selection of the date, a site is cleaned on the western side of a river and the head of the family prepares an altar made of earth. For Mimo Hareraba ritual quite a good member of domesticated birds, animals are require. Rice beer, areca nuts and betel leaves are essential items. Two persons i.e. the Deodai and the head of the family, Amukia performs the ritual. They take the articles on a few pieces of leaves and spread them on the altar. The articles are betel leaves and nuts, rice, etc. The Deodai conducts the ritual part. The head of the family which is directed to propitiate the ancestral manes on the left side of the altar.

Before starting the main ritual a small ritual is observed by the head of the family in the household kitchen. A few elderly men are invited form the clan. The head of the family offers rice beer and curry in the name of the ancestors and invites them to participate in the Memo Hareruba ritual.

The Deodai and the head of the family sacrifice a pig and four fowls and offer the blood and main parts to Gila Konwar, Balia Chaman and Bin Konwar and the manes of the ancestors respectively. After the formal offerings, the remaining portions of the sacrificed birds and animals are cooked. The best part of the meat i.e. liver, thigh and heap are offered to the manes of the ancestors. A portion of the cooked food is also offered to the buried ancestors. The offerings are

made by the left hand.

Divination:

The salient part of the ancestor worship is the divination performed with the help of the liver of the sacrificed pig. Examining the liver an expert diviner can foretell the future events of the villagers. Remedial measures are also suggested to avert the evil, if any.

The ancestor worship has much socio - religious significance as the head of each family assists the performer family and they gather in the residence of the performer on Mimo Hareruba day and partake the feast thereby strengthening the solidarity of the community.

Notes and references:

1. Dibangias by P. C. Saikia, B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1976.
2. Religious practices of the Deori by Saranan Deori, published by Bina Library, Guwahati, 2002.

CHAPTER - V

Festivals and Dances: The Deoris are observing the three important festivals that are currently observed all over Assam irrespective of ethnic and non-ethnic population. The three festivals are Bohag Bihu, Magh Bihu and Kati Bihu. The Deoris called their Bihu as Bisu. It is believed that the word Bihu might have originated from the Deori word Bisu. Opinions differ regarding the etymological meaning of the word Bisu. Some researchers opine that 'Bi' means too much and 'Su' means enjoyment or merry making. Thus Bisu signifies a festival of merry making, eating, dancing etc. Saranan Deori, a researcher of the Deori culture does not subscribe to this opinion. According to him there is no proof of using the two words, Bi and Su, in this manner certain authors claim to be. Secondly, the most important festival of socio - religious significances is engulfed in a narrow sence of the Bisu festival is thought to be mere merry making and dancing. The Bisu among the Deoris has much significance as Bisu puja and Bisu merry making has close resemblances.

Generally the word 'Bi' means to cut, to remove scale or carry. Similarly 'Su' means milk, elevated, wash or burn. The Deori priests in the puja mantra utter a wor 'Biba basu'. Various authors, therefore opine that the word Bisu is originated from the work Biba Basu or Bibasu - Bisu or Bihu (Saranan Deori - Deori Loka Utsav Bohag Bihu Aru Deori Bisu Puja - Janajati Samaj Sanskriti - Padma Pator (Ed) 2008, P 305 - 306).

Bohagio Bisu The Deoris observe the most important festival on the 'Sankranti' of 'Chot' (14th April). The festival is observed for

seven days with unrestricted joy and merry making. It may be mentioned that the Deori Bisu (Bohagio or Magio Bisu) does not always fall on the 'Sankranti' day rather it may be deferred to a day or two as they require Wednesday for starting Bisu puja. The Bisu must be preceded by worship of the deity on the shrine (Than / Midiku). This festival is observed before starting the agricultural operations.

'Biscula' (nocturnal pre - Bihu rehearsal dance)

As a matter of the fact the Bohagio Bisu preparations start from the last few days of the month of Fagun (February - March). Normally the pre Bihu dances are performed on the courtyard of Bordeori or one of the four Deoris of Chari Deori. This 'Rati Bihu' is called 'Biscula' and it can be called a pre Bihu rehearsal. Even for observing this 'Rati Bihu', the villagers including the elderly people, have to seek blessings from the shrine. The 'Husari' party offers betel leaves and nuts to the household owner where 'Biscula' is performed. This 'Biscula' continues till the Bohagio Bisu eve and on the eve of Bohagio Bisu the young boys and girls dance throughout the night. The elderly male and female also participate in 'Biscula'.

The Deoris have great reverence for the domesticated animals like cows, bullocks, buffaloes, elephants and during the first day of Bisu festival these animals are taken to a nearby river for bathing. Early in the morning the house owner smears the horns and body of the animals with a mixture of turmeric, 'Mati Mah' (black pulse). They are garlanded with black thread interwoven with 'Tanglati' (indigenous creeper) and bathed ceremoniously by the male villagers. After the bath the youths throw pieces of vegetable items like gourd, brinjal, turmeric, thekera etc. to the animals.

In the evening the animals are given a specially prepared rice cake. New 'Pagha' (rope) made of Tara stem is used to bind the animals. On this day an interesting event takes place called 'Iku Genema' (wearing dhoti). A person who is the relative (wife's elder sister's husband) teaches the nephews, who reach adulthood to wear dhotis and from this day he becomes socially approved adult.

The interesting and most attractive religious functions of the Bisu festival are 'Duja ccujuwabe' (egg fighting), 'Du ccujuwabe' (fowl fighting) and 'Masi ccujuwabe' (wrestling).

Bisu Puja:

The essential part of the Bisu festival is the Bisu puja held mainly at the local shrines of each village. Besides pujas are arranged in the individual households too. The Tengapania Deoris observe Suwasani or Ghar Deo puja while the Dibangias observe 'Yà Tema' or 'Cherà Labiba' in their houses. The Borgoyan Deoris ceremoniously start the Bisu by offering a cock to the household deity. Only after this puja they observe the community puja at the shrine (Deoghar). During Bisu puja the Dibangia priests sacrifice 16 fowls (12 fowl and 4 hen) before the deity. Besides many devotees offer goat, pigeon, flowers etc. praying for the individual household members' well-being. Besides the sacrificial items like goat, fowls, pigeon etc. some members offer rice, black pulse, 'Tanglati', flowers made of copper, gold, silver etc. to the shrine.

On the first day, they observe ancestor worship called 'Marateba' or 'Mimo Leba'. The womenfolk of the village visit the relatives' house with rice beer pots. The children visit the neighbour's houses and they are entertained with Bisu Kaji.

It is customary to formally dispose the Rati Bihu at the

shrine on this day. In the true sense the Bisu festival starts from that day. Although there are separate Bihu parties for young boys and girls (clan-wise), but the Dibangias arrange Bisu constituting both males and females. Simultaneously along with Bisu puja, an auspicious occasion takes place in the shrine which is known as Deodhani dance (Deodhani has been discussed in Chapter - IV). The Deodhani or Deodhai and the priestly council have a role in deciding the performance of 'Husori'. It may be mentioned that the Deoris do not observe 'Husori' every year. The Deodhai and the priestly council give assent to hold 'Husori' and after considering certain factors like natural calamity in the particular year, diseases and epidemic in the village etc.

There may be several Husori parties in a village. The Husori first starts at Deosol and later the same is performed in the households of Bordeori, Saru Deori, Bar Bharali, Saru Bharali and Barik. The Husori parties perform the Husori in every household irrespective of status and rich and poor.

The seven day Bisu festival (Bisu Jama) surcharge the whole atmosphere with merry making, dances and feasting. Bisu dance is mainly observed during Bohagio Bisu or Kati Bisu. In the dances mainly the young boys and girls (Mira - Mrasi) participate. There is, however, no bar for participating by the elderly men and women. The young girls (Jayesi Marani) wear traditional dresses like 'Muga - Isa' and 'Lagaru - Isi'. The dancers make a circle and dance with the tune of 'Dorom' (drum), Pepa (flute or buffalo horn) and 'Choising' (cymbal). The dancing continues for seven days in the courtyards of the households of the clan members. The subject matter of the Bisu songs is mostly romantic or love affairs. One specimen is mentioned below.

Mirach (Beloved) - 'O Āa Egārā, Āi Dāgāba,
Na Ayo Chekuyo Mosi.
Niyo Joy Bābāwā, Aana Nayā,
Nini, Aah Chāram Kirio Pichachi''

Free English

Translation:

The lover you are by beloved, you are my favourite dancer, you are a beautiful silver flower. In the Bisu festival I will pray to 'Kundimama' (the presiding deity) so that I can find you as my sweet heart. The beloved - you dearest person, I love you from the core of my heart. But your parents do not like our intimacy, because I am a daughter of poor parents.

Surāi Rāngali dance - This dance is a bit complex and sufficient rehearsal is necessary. The young boys find it difficult to participate in this dance. The boys and girls dance in a circle with rhythm of drum, cymbal and buffalo horn. Two or three girls start the song and others dance with the tune of drum. Normally the songs contain a story depicting social life.

Chinpai Dance or Chilan Dance- In this dance one girl starts a song and others dance clapping their hands. The subject matter of this song is description of old heritage or past events. The dancers make sound on the earth with their feet while dancing.

Lohari dance - The young boys and girls make a circle and holding each others hands dance along with the tune of the song.

Neula dance - This dance is restricted to the young boys and girls who dance like a 'Neol' (Ichneumon) dance. The hands

and the feet are closed together and jump hither and thither with the tune of drums. The head is moved once up and once down like a 'Neol'.

Āabaraba dance - The young boys and girls make a circle and dance in slow movement. The subject matter of the song is the description of the Deori migration and past glorious life of Sadiya.

Bisu Dābebā dance - The dance performed at the closing ceremony of the seven day Bisu festival is called Dābebā dance. Each young boy takes a stick on the hands and makes rhythm by beating the sticks. Only drum is used in the dance. On the last day of the Bisu festival, the Bisu is taken out from the Deosal and performs a dance at the Bordeori till midnight. After that the dancers proceed to the end of the village boundary and formally bid farewell to the Bisu festival.

Bahua dance - The Bahua (mock) dance of the Deoris has much socio - religious significance as the dancers can charge away the evil spirits from the village thereby relieving the households from various illnesses. When the villagers prepare for the dance the first task is to inform the local Deosal with a packet of betel leaves and nuts. The Bahua youths have to observe certain customary rules. They abstain from taking food on the day of dance. Nor they wear dresses. They smear their bodies with charcoal. They use masks made of dry leaves and cover the bodies with dry leaves. They carry some sticks on a bag which is hung over their backs. When all these preparations are completed, the Deodhani sprinkles purified water brought from the Deosal. Then the Bahua dance starts. When they marched through the village, the families close their doors. It is believed that if doors remain opened then the

evil spirits may enter the household. The Bahuas beat the roofs and walls of the houses utter some illegible words while marching. The group then ends proceedings towards a place on the lower end of the village.

Husori Jāma It is customary to formally seek permission from the
(Husori dance): preceding deity of the 'Than' or 'Midiku' for observing the
Husori dance. The Husori party contains a singer, a treasurer
(Dhan Bharali) and one 'Tekela'. The 'Tekela' plays an
important role in the dance and he controls the members of
the Husori party. Nobody can leave the party without his
permission. The Bisu Husori must be performed in each
household and only after completion of that the Husori could
be disposed. The Husori dance starts at the Than and the
Bordeori sprinkles purified water over the party blessings for
a successful Husori dance which lasts for seven days. The
party takes 3 - 4 long bamboos and the same are placed on the
courtyard of the household. The members take sticks in their
hand and make sound on the long bamboo while singing and
dancing.

(Ref. - Deori Janakristi by Dhiren Deori - Published by AIRT
& SC, Guwahati, 2011).

CHAPTER - VI

Changing Scenario:

Change is the constant of culture and the Deoris too have undergone changes over the decades, particularly in the post Independence period, more specifically since the last three decades of the twentieth century. To begin with, the family setup, a tendency towards setting up primary family (Sukiya Jupa) is growing up of late among the people. Today the functions of the head of the family, especially at the political level, appear to have passed on to the educated male member of the family, even though he is not its eldest member.

Changes have been noticed in matrimonial affairs too. Negotiated marriage is gradually losing its importance owing to huge expenses involved. Elopement becomes popular. Due to contact with non-tribals in connection with Government and private service, there are cases of inter-tribal marriage.

No longer is the Deori social life restricted to its traditional boundaries. Dancing parties consisting of boys and girls, participate in various functions in town and cities. It has consequently expanded their world view by breaking their age old isolation.

After Independence Government have undertaken a plethora of welfare measures, particularly after creation of Tribal Development Blocks, tangible socio - psychological changes have occurred especially in the sphere of material culture. It will be relevant to present a pen picture of the recent study entitled 'Women Status in Tribal Society' conducted by the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati where in the changes that crept in the Deori society over the past few decades have been depicted. The study covered 50 Deori villages from four

districts viz. 20 villages from Lakhimpur district, 6 villages from Jorhat district, 10 villages from Tinsukia district and 14 villages from Dhemaji district. Although basically it is a women's study but it depicts a holistic picture of the Deori psyche in the present day context. All the Deori villages of the four districts have mass communication facilities like television, radio, newspapers, libraries and community centres. At least 80% households have mobile phones. No more the Deori villages have to depend upon kerosene lamps as all the Deori villages of three districts viz. Jorhat, Tinsukia and Lakimpur have electricity while 52 % of the households of Dhemaji are provided with electric connection under Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Scheme and LPG is entering into Deori kitchen, of course in a limited scale.

Considerable changes have crept in the tradition bound society regarding professions. As many as 123 Deori males and females are engaged in Government service as primary occupation and out of those 40 are females. Today business as profession is resorted to by the youths. Thirty seven members are doing business, only 3 are women. Quite a good number of youths both male and female (59) are accepting non-Government jobs as primary occupation.

The egalitarian tribal society with emphasis, cohesiveness and togetherness is fast disappearing. Till 2 - 3 decades back few poverty stricken villagers lived mainly on help and co-operation of co-villagers. The few wage earners earned their bread by doing work only in the village. In Dhemaji district 100 male and 3 female are engaged in daily wage earning.

There is a growing consciousness of the Deori women in diverse apheres. They are becoming conscious about their

ability to do multifarious activities. No longer the Deori women remains satisfied with the household chores only. It is found that 14 women are becoming presidents of Mahila Samity, 10 women are becoming Secretaries and 129 are members of panchayats. Not only that, women are coming out to serve under MGNREGA Scheme to earn money. There are 32 male and 8 female under employment of MGNREGA Scheme. The womenfolk are now realising the saving habit and as many as 99 women have Savings Bank Account and 25 women have SHG account.

In the sphere of material culture some changes are taking place in the pattern of houses. Some of the well-to-do Deoris are constructing Assam Type houses. One will not be surprised to find one or two RCC house in some Deori villages. But by and large, the Deoris still prefer their traditional platform type house. Even in the traditional houses one can find chairs, tables, cup-plates and modern gadgets, furnitures etc. The survey report mentioned shows how consumerism has penetrated in a big way into the lifestyle of the Deori of Lakhimpur district. As many as 81% households possess mobile phones, 46.5 % households possess televisions and 30.2 % households possess motor bikes. Cars are owned by 27 households where as only one family possess a tractor.

The women specific study of the same report provides an interesting picture in respect of economic viability of the Deori families of Jorhat district. At least 10 - 25 % of the family income is shared by 48 women, 25 - 50 % income is shared by 41 women, 50 - 75 % family income is shared by 8 women and above 75 % family income is shared by 7 women. Over the decades winds of change have swept the shackles of bondage among the Deori women. Today they are eager to

accept the benefits of various schemes like MGNREGA, SHG, Textile schemes.

In spite of implementation of the well meaning schemes like Sarva Siksha Abhijan, Right to Education Act, Educational for all, the impact of removing illiteracy is not felt in the desired level. Illiteracy is rampant among the Deoris in the surveyed districts of Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Tinsukia and Dhemaji. There are 405 illiterates, 140 males and 265 females in Lakhimpur district (20 surveyed villages); 130 illiterate, 61 male, 69 female in Jorhat district (6 surveyed village), while 273 illiterates, male 113 and female 160 in Dhemaji district (14 surveyed villages). There is quite a big difference of illiterates among the females. But the overall educational level of the Deoris has shown much improvement over the decades. For example among the Deoris of Lakhimpur there were 309 males and 198 females who completed H.E. standard; 166 males and 104 females completed H.S. standard. Till four - five decades back there were no graduates, or one or two graduates, but today there are 19 graduates and out of these 6 are female graduates. There is one female post graduate among the Deoris of Jorhat district. The Deoris of Tinsukia district have done much improvement in the sphere of education. There are 87 graduates, 49 male and 38 female and 9 post graduates - 7 male and two female. Compared to the educational attainment of the last 2 -3 decades the present position is much better, a visible impact of various educational schemes implemented for the benefit of the tribal people.

Change Agents:

Various programmes of All India Radio, Doordarshan meant for the Deoris improved their outlook. Some of the Deori boys and girls have participated in the programme

meant for general people.

“It is observed that there is slight deviation from their traditional belief and faith in the Midiku or Than Ghar. This is primarily due to influence of Vaisnavism. They invariably keep a portion of their volive offerings to the Satradhikar.” (Saikia).

Hindu rituals like Janmashami, Saraswati Puja have been inducted into the socio - ritual structure of the Deoris.

The process of change, although superfluous, has been accelerated with the sending of their students to educational institutions affecting the routine of the womenfolk. Another factor for such changes is marked by initiation of some villagers into the Vaisnavite religion preached by Mahara Satradikara.

Change is a constant process and no society can escape changes. Although changes in various aspects of social life have crept in the Deoris, by and large, are maintaining their core of culture intact. For example even the educated Deori change to their traditional dress when they visit their families. The boys and girls change their uniforms as soon as they enter the houses. In socio - religious occasions, none can use modern dresses. Although some of the Deoris are constructing Assam Type houses, yet for their cooking purpose a traditional small cottage with platform is constructed as they require the fireplace to perform certain rituals. The Dibangia section which is the most conservative one among the three is maintaining the language intact and during their day to day transactions they speak only the local language. But they are learning through Assamese medium and can speak Assamese very well.

As regards changes in health care system, the Deoris

give preference to the village physician or the Deodhai who advices to perform rituals when a person falls ill, it is believed that he is influenced by evil spirits like Jalkai Dangaria. Very often the people got relief from the illness by worshipping deities or spirits. But today, the people do not hesitate to approach the MBBS doctors or Public Health Centres.

During recent years, the Deori society has undergone transformation and change. The grip of inertic or shyness has now been slackened. They have now come forward to accept the welfare schemes initiated by Government.

CHAPTER - VII

CONCLUSION

The North East Indian culture is an amalgam of Austric, Mongoloid, Aryan and Alpine cultures which had combined into form an integrated mixed culture. The Assamese culture consisted collective elements of Austric, Mongoloid and Aryan cultures. It has been formed out of the penetration of various cultural elements of Aryan, Kirata, Nisada, Dravidian through a long evolutionary process. The Mongoloid element is largely visible in case of the ethnic communities of Assam. The Tibeto Burman linguistic group predominates in the ethnic mosaic. Prof. Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya opined "The Tantric form of later Hinduism, which, however, is not divorced from its bases in Yoga and Puranic faith and ritual seems to have taken its final colouring from the character of Mongoloid cults, which is replaced. Among the Mongoloid tribes women had for greater freedom in marriage, divorce and other matters than we find in orthodox Hindu society. Certain aspects of Vamachara Tantricism have their bases evidently in this side of Indo Mongoloid life and ways. Infact the worship of the great mother in some of her various shrines of Assam and East Bengal, particularly in Kamakhya near Guwahati is looked upon as being originally Kirata or Tibeto Burman." (The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol - I).

The socio - cultural life of most of the plains tribes remained undiscussed during the pre - independence period. While ethnographic accounts, monographs reports of life and culture of various ethnic groups of India like the Oraons, Mundas, Santals, Baigas, Todas etc. were prepared even before the twentieth century, the colourful and hitherto neglected tribes of the North East could draw the attention of the professional and non - professional ethnographers only since the early part of the twentieth century. Assam in those days virtually represented the North East India and thrust was given to the study of hill tribes living within the jurisdiction of present day Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh (erstwhile NEFA), Manipur and the two hill districts of Assam, namely Karbi Anglong (erstwhile Mikir Hills) and Dima Hasao district (erstwhile NC Hills).

The concept of plains tribes has developed recently more particularly after the Independence when devplanning was initiated. Before that hill tribes and plains tribes had no differentiation. We find references about the life and culture (although in a nutshell) of the Kacharis and Rabhas in the writings of Montgomery Martin in his 'History of Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India', 1838. In 1841 William Robinson in his 'A Descriptive Account of Assam' mentioned about the Kacharis with some details of their socio - cultural life. In small paragraphs Robinson described about food habits, marriage system, fairs and festivals, religion and death rites. Robinson also dwelt upon the Miris (now Misings) with some details of the life and culture. A J. Moffat Mills in his 'Report on the Province of Assam' in 1833 wrote a brief account of the Miris. It was E. T. Dalton who in his 'Descriptive Account of Bengal' 1866 described about the characteristic features of the Miris, Kacharis, Lalungs, Chutiyas, Rabhas, Meches and other tribes; although in a brief.

After annexation of Assam as per the Yandabu Treaty, the Provincial Government of Assam made good attempts for preparing ethnographic accounts on various tribal communities, especially on the hill tribes. Very little was done for the plains tribes.

Plain tribal study started when the Missionaries and British administrators like Rev. Endle and E. A. Gait took up studies on plains tribes. Rev. Endle prepared a well documented monograph on the Kacharis, while E. A. Gait published the 'History of Assam' (1905) where in some details of plains tribes were incorporated. However Gait's description of tribes did not contain much about Anthropological accounts of Rabhas, Deoris, Miris and Lalungs. About the Chutiyas Gait wrote, "Their language which is still known to the Deoris or priestly section of the tribe is unmistakably Bodo. They worshipped various forms of Kali with the aid not of Brahmins but of their tribal priests or Deoris" (History of Assam, P41 - 43). Grierson in his 'Linguistic Survey of India' dwelt upon the Bodos, Rabhas, Lalungs (Tiwas) with some details. About the Deoris he wrote, "The Deoris, who are levites of the tribe (Chutiya) are less than four thousand in all. They are secluded people in the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts of Upper Assam whose principal

settlements are on the Majuli island in Sibsagar and on the Dikrang river in North Lakhimpur. They have preserved the language, religion and customs which we may presume have descended to them with comparative little change from the period anterior to the Ahom invasion. The original seat of the Deoris was in the region beyond Sadiya." (P118).

The Deoris represent the priestly section of the Mongoloid Chutiyas belonging to the Tibeto Burman linguistic group of families. They entered Assam from the North Eastern region. Among the four sections of the Chutiyas viz. Hindu Chutiya, Ahom Chutiya, Borahi and Deori, the Deoris became the most important section having maintained the traditional language. There is a new thinking among the educated and elite sections of the Deoris regarding their inclusion as one of the sections of the Chutiyas. They opine that they have no socio - ritual connection with the Chutiyas. They, however admit that they were priests of the Chutiyas but never a part of the Chutiya community.

There are four broad divisions among the Deoris, viz. Dibangia, Tengapania, Borgonya and Patorgonya. Each of the divisions is said to be originated from a particular river or place name. The group settled on the banks of river Dibang is called Dibangia. The Tengapanias originally settled on the banks of river Tengapani, while the Borgonyas settled near the Borpani or Borgang. The Patorgonyas lived in a place called Patsadiya were Patorgonya. At present this division is untraceable.

The present habitations of the Deoris are spread in the riverine areas of Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat , Sonitpur and Dhemaji districts of Assam. They belong to the great Mongoloid race and build their homes on platforms, about 4 - 5 feet above the ground. The Deoris eke out livelihood mainly by agricultural activities that too in difficult flood prone areas. Both men and women engage themselves in daily chores. Except for ploughing, cutting trees and jungles, the womenfolk help their men in all other daily activities. The women are treated as partners. The Deoris had villege dormitories in the earlier days but today the

institution remains in one or two villeges. Today the bechalors spend their nights at the Michon (an open portion on three sides of a residential house).

Birth must always take place in the house of the husband in the usual sleeping room. The household along with the baby and its mother remains impure till the purifactory rite, Chua Labiruba is performed. The people observe seven to ten days after the birth of a child as pollution period.

Preponderance of lineal joint family (Jakarna Jupe) is the characteristic feature of Deori family system. Of late 'Sukta Jupa' (primary family) is gaining ground, although in a limited scale. Adoption is resorted to in rare occasion. Normally a male child is adopted. Avoidance is resorted to between elder brother and younger brother's wife. There is avoidance between wife's elder sister and vice-versa.

The Deoris are patrilineal and patrilocal. Properties are divided equally among the sons. In case of a man dies without survivor, his property usually goes to the nearest agnatic relation.

Each of the three divisions of the Deoris viz. Dibangya, Borgonya and Tengapania have number of exogamous clans called 'Bangshas'. Although enquiries about clan are often made yet distinction is hardly made except for marriage purposes.

The Deori society can broadly be divided into two categories - secular and religious. In the former category the Gaonbura or village headman reigns supreme who is the head of all socio - political activities of a village. In the religious matters the priestly council is the supreme authority headed by Bordeori, Saru Deori, Bar Bharali, Saru Bharali etc. In this category the Deodhani also plays an important role.

The kinship is a veritable institution in most simple societies which plays important role both in regulation of behaviour between persons and in the formation of socio - political groups. The analysis of kinship terms of address and terms of

reference reveals that the terms of reference are more distinctly applied than the terms of address.

There are four different forms of marriage among the Deoris - 'Borbiya', 'Majubiya', 'Sarubia' or 'Bhakat rupiya' and Gandharba. Considering the huge expenses involved in formal marriages, the people mostly prefer the Gandharba system of marriage which is socially accepted. Widow remarriage is prevalent among them. The bride price system is prevalent. Normally Rs. 126.00 is fixed as bride price but in case of elopement the bride price may rise upto Rs. 1,000.00.

In respect of material culture, The Deoris construct platform type houses. The place under the platform is used for keeping firewood, plough, weaving and keeping animals. Every village has a 'Thanghar' or 'Midiku' for community worship. Dormitory system is fast disappearing.

The staple food of the Deoris is rice. Dried fish, pork form their delicacies. Rice beer (Suje) is consumed by all but today consumption is restricted among the educated sections. Rice beer is the most essential items in their socio - religious festivals. They prefer Ahu rice which is widely grown. Winter crops are also produced. They use the traditional dress and ornaments but modern dresses are becoming popular among the office goers and students.

The Deoris pay great reverence and homage to the shrines ('Midiku' or 'Than') and worship the presiding deity regularly. All the three sections of the Deoris are maintaining their traditional mode of worship. The Lord Shive or Mahadeo and his consort Parvati are chief God and Goddess. There are two sets of functionaries for conducting the rites and rituals in the village shrine. The Chari Deori and their assistants constitute one set while the Deodhai forms a separate set. Besides the presiding deity, The Deoris worship various household deities. Goats, pigs, chicken, pigeon are essential for sacrifice before the deities. Ancestor worship is prevalent among them which are observed thrice in a year i.e. during 'Bohagio Bisu', 'Magiyo Bisu' and death anniversary of a person.

The Deoris are observing the three important festivals namely, 'Bohagio Bisu' (April), 'Magiyo Bisu' (January) and 'Kati Bisu' (October). Merry making, eating, dancing constitute the salient feature of the Bisi festival. The festivals must start with a worship of the deity in the Thanghar or Midiku.

Acremation is the rule among the Deoris. The dead bodies of children, pregnant women and epidemic cases are buried. The final purificatory ceremony called 'Daha' or 'Kaaj' is held any time of the year after the death. It is an extremely expensive affair requiring huge quantities of rice, rice beer, chicken, pigs, betel leaves and nuts.

Certain taboos are observed by the family and clan members when death occurs in a family. For a week granaries are closed. They also abstain from observing any ritual during the taboo days.

Like other traditional tribal societies, the Deoris too, have undergone some changes both in respect of material culture and other social institutions, particularly in the post Independence period, more specifically in the last 2 - 3 decades of the twentieth century. For example the traditional 'Jakarua Jupe' (joint family) system has undergone changes and some well-to-do educated Deoris have started construction of Assam Type even RCC houses of course the kitchen is still in traditional platform design. Negotiated marriage is gradually losing its importance due to long drawn formalities and huge expenses involved. The age old isolation is fast disappearing. The present generation is coming forward to display their traditional dances in cities and towns inculcating a world view. In material culture changes have crept in. Modern dresses, modern furnitures, electricity, televisions, mobile phones, LPG arte found in Deori villages. Professional changes have taken place as quite a good number of males and females are engaged in Government and private services. Thye egalitarian Deori society with characteristic cohesiveness and togetherness is fast disappearing. Now wage earners do petty jobs to eke out their livelihood. The womenfolk are coming out to seek employment under MGNREGA. Today they have individual bank accounts and have contributed to the family income. Although illiteracy is continuing, there are tangible changes in respect of

higher education among both males and females. A study conducted by AIRTSC, Guwahati recently in Lakhimpur Deori villages showed that there are 309 males and 198 females who completed HE standard. 166 males and 104 females completed HS standard, 19 graduates and out of them 6 are females.

Various programmes of All india Radio and Doordarshan meant for the Deoris improved their world view. Quite a good number Deori boys and girls have participated in the programmes.

There is a slight deviation from the traditional belief and faith in the 'Midiku' or Than worship primarily due to spread of Vaishnavism. They invariably keep a portion of their votive offerings to Satradhikars of Vaishnava Satras. Besides Hindu rituals like Janmastami, Saraswati puja have been inducted into their socio - ritual structure.

Regarding health care both traditional and modern methods are in vogue. Now-a-days the people do not hesitate to get medical assistance from MBBS doctors. The people have now come forward to accept the welfare schemes initiated by Government. The grip of inertia and traditional shyness has now been slackened.

In spite of the changes all round, the Deoris have been able to maintain the core of culture, by and large, intact.

Education : The Deori language and its pristine glory is prevalent among the Dibangia Deoris only. Among the languages under the Bodo language, the Deori or Chutiya language is the oldest one. As early as 1895, W. B. Brown in his 'An Outline Grammar of the Deori Chutiya Language Spoken in Upper Assam', wrote "The people are generally called Deoris simply : the language is more properly known as Chutiya. The Chutiya language indeed may fairly claim to be the original language of Upper Assam" (Introduction, P1). Other than the Dibangias , the two other sections of the Deoris namely Tengapania and Borgonya have lost the language due to assimilation process. However, they too have good many vocabularies of the Deori language at present. Grierson, the doyen of linguistic study

in his 'Linguistic Survey of India' opined that the Deori language is the oldest languages of the Eastern languages (Vol-I, Part I, Ch-VI, P64).

In spite of the great tradition this language is less developed and limited to a section of the Deori community while the Kachari (Bodo) language, a cognate language of the Deoris is flourishing, perhaps due to the more speakers among them. Phonetically the Deori language contains seven vowels and eighteen consonants, besides there are two semi - vowels. All the three sections of the Deoris speak Assamese fluently as they get their education in Assamese medium schools. Today the new generation has come forward to compose literature in Bodo language and a revivalism has grown up to popularise Deori language. The people still use the terms of address and terms of reference in the social relationship in Deori language. Besides, they are maintaining the local Deori terminologies in the objects of material culture as well as intangible culture. There are folk stories, songs etc. in Deori language. A few specimens have been presented here.

A specimen from 'Husori Geet.'

Eramat Erilo Keremat Dharilo

Joydhamot Patilo Than

Joydhamat Para Chai Pathiyalo

Sadiyar Batole Sura

Tare Pasote Chai Pathiyalo

Sadiyar Putola Ghura.

In the song Deoris nostalgically remember their past abode at Joydham (present Arunachal Pradesh) and their migration to Sadiya.

Very recently Pratap Singh Deori Bharali brought out a book on the Deori songs depicting songs sung in various occasions and socio - religious ceremonies.

A few specimen from his selection of poems is presented here.

Dhinyā Jijiyā Sujenā Ningnā

Dāmmāi No Lākiyā Jounā

Sujeke Chchāni Igikā Chchāni

Eko Chiyāke Ni Chchā.

The Deoris consider the Deoghar (Midiku) as the holiest institution of community worships and while going to the Deoghar or coming out of Deoghar they sing songs like this.

Dini Dupur Ninā Denioni Surahi,

Moina Dehi Oi Kingke Basābe Luri,

Chāhini Gā Hare Baranke Hatāben,

Moinā Dehi Oi Nijimāyā Māne Chāram.

The Deoris are rich in riddles and proverbs which are presented during social situations in the leisure hours.

Lākiyā Pichnā Chāre Acanā Lebem

Bursi Midire Lekibem Oi.

x x x x

He Midi Girā Girāchi Laaju Nou

Dāi King Ne Rang Atari Oi.

x x x x

Jimchchaya Laaju Nou, Chikādemā Laaju Nou,

Bichchunā Dālahe Nou

Lākere Chāejran Bichu Chong Ichchāran

Bichuya Balio Jou

Oi Huikoli Burapi, Jinani O' Huikoli Burapi Kirari

Aaya Huikoli Igābā Achiyo

Jini Huikoli Igābā Achiyo – Pichomā Jini

O Huikoli Aanāje Lehedām, O Huikoli Aanāje Dābedām

Aayo Huikoli Igābā Dām Chchunā Na Dām

Na Huikoli Igābā Dāmchchunā Na Dām Na

O' Huikoli Lāranta Lāro Oi, O Huikoli Aanāg Lāro Oi,

Aanā Huikoli Igābā Achiyo Pichomāi Lāro

O Huikoli Otuchchang Diyāje, O Huikoli Chakuho

Aanā Huikoli Igābā Aanā Dā Lehedā Na.

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