Marriage System of Cribal Societies of Cripura

Anugatamani Akhanda





Tribal Research and Cultural Institute

Govt. of Tripura, Agartala

Marriage System of the Tribal Societies of Tripura

(A Study Based on Major Tribes)



Marriage System of the Tribal Societies of Tripura

(A Study Based on Major Tribes)

Anugatamani Akhanda



Tribal Research & Cultural Institute
Government of Tripura

Marriage System of the Tribal Societies of Tripura By Anugatamani Akhanda

Published by :

Tribal Research & Cultural Institute
Government of Tripura

© Tribal Research & Cultural Institute Government of Tripura

First edition: July, 1995 Reprint: March, 2020

Cover Design: Shaabdachitra, Agartala

Type Settings : Kishalay Chakraborty

Illustration: Shaabdachitra, Agartala

Printed by : Kalika Press Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata

ISBN: 978-93-86707-47-5

Price : ₹ 120/-

Foreward

Tribal Research and Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura has decided to reprint this valuable book as the 2nd reprint as this is exhausted due to its huge demand among the readers.

Hope, this reprint will met the demand of the researchers, students to impart knowledge about the tradition and marriage system of the Tribal Societies of Tripura.

28.02,020

Dated, Agartala 28th February, 2020

(D. Debbarma)

Director,

Tribal Research & Cultural Institute,

Government of Tripura



Acknowledgements

The present project report is prepared on 'Marriage System of Tribal Societies of Tripura' and this research work has been sponsored by the Tribal Research Institute Govt. of Tripura.

To accomplish the report, I have received the valuable inspiration and guidance from my respected teacher Dr. P.K. Haldar, Reader, Department of Commerce, Tripura University, who indeed paved the way for my study and for that purpose I feel much grateful and obliged to him.

I would also like to mention here my gratitude to Sri. S.R. Bhattacharjee, Reader of B.B. Evening College for his sincere help.

In the finalization of the project report, I got immense help and guidance from Sri B.C. Das, Asstt. Prof. of Belonia College. I am indebted to him for extending his sincere and cordial help

and co-operation.

I would like to express my gratitude and indebtedness to Shri S. Sailo, Ex-Director of TRI, Govt. Of Tripura, Shri Nagendra Jamatia, Ex-Agricultural Minister of Tripura, Shri Niranjan Chakma of Information, Culture & Tourism Department, Shri R.G. Singh, Shri Debesh Choudhary, Shri Arun Debbarma, Shri Amarendra Debbarma, Sri Prafulla Reang of TRI, Govt. of Tripura, Shri Mohini Mohan Chakma, Shri Deb Charan Jamatia, Shri Brighu Ram Reang, Smt. Kakoli Chakma and Smt. Debabhakti Jamatia. I am also indebted to them for their frank and sincere co-operation in collection of various information and data regarding the marriage customs of different tribal communities of Tripura.

I also like to record my gratitude to the Directorate of census Operation, Settlement Department and Tribal Research Institute who extended their active help and co-operation to me in

completing this project report.

Finally, I will be much grateful to the Tribal Research Institute, Govt. of Tripura, if this humble work of mine is accepted and published for the greater interest of the tribal community of this tiny state.



Contents

SI. No. Description		Page No.	
Chapter – I	hapter – I Introduction and place of marriage in Tribal Society		
Chapter – II	Social, Religious and ceremonial rites of Tripuri Marriage	13-40	
Chapter – III	Social, Religious and ceremonial rites of Reang Marriage	41-59	
Chapter – IV	Social, Religious and ceremonial rites of Chakma Marriage	60-79	
Chapter – V	Social, Religious and ceremonial rites of Jamatia Marriage	80-97	
Chapter-VI	Summary and concluding remarks	98-101	
	Bibliography	102-105	
	Appendix./Questionnaire	106-109	



Chapter-I

Introduction and Place of Marriage in Tribal Society

Man social being he always wants to live in a social unit. The simplest form of social unit based on marriage is family. The first institution in any Social Organization in the family which is formed by marriage.

Defination of Marriage:

Marriage is a domestic institution. Widely speaking, marriage may be defined as a relation of one or more men to one or more women who is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of children born of it. Marriage is a legal-tie between a man and a woman of living together or in other words, marriage may be viewed simply at the ceremony for recognizing formal union between a man and a woman. However, in the context of Indian culture marriage implies more than a socially sanctioned relationship between opposite sexes. Traditionally, marriage in tribal society means a kind of religious bond between a man and a woman for the fulfillment of certain religious duties by mutual sex life and procreation and upbringing of progeny.

Ideally, it is a relationship through which both partner can grow and realize their full potential as human beings sustained and supported by their mutual sharing of joys and sorrows, strong in the knowledge that there is another by the side, each struggling to contribute to the other's happiness and fulfillment, carrying and concerned in need. Besides the regulated this relations, marriage has other factors.

It is an economic institution. The husband should maintain his family i.e. wife and children and other social duties. Moreover, there are other social and ceremonial aspects of marriage. According to my observation, the system of marriage is developing or changing day by day from the primeval habit in the tribal society. It can be said that the family at first was a biological society. This unit letter on got the sanction of the society and formed a social institution called 'marriage'.

Necessity of Marriage:

Marriage is the dependable support on which family built. The family in turn provides the such dependable support on which society rests its foundation. A good marriage provides the right environment in which children can be nurtured and raised to become useful, productive or generated citizen of the country. Therefore marriage constitutes a very important step in the individual's life. And the sum of individual relationships reflects on the condition of society. However, the economic cooperation as found in the division of labour between the husband and wife is a common object to marriage in tribal societies. Therefore, marriage is needful in every man and women's social life.

Selection of Life Partner:

Each tribe or community has it respective rules for selection of mate. Now-a-days much importance is given to family background and the moral character of the girl or the boy. Economic condition, educational qualification, physical beauty etc. are also play a vital role while selection of a boy or a girl. The parents exercise utmost care and solemnity in the selection of the life partner of their daughter/son. It is the duty of the parents to carefully and enquire into the character and lineage of the bridegroom of the bride to be in order to avoid any marriage into the family where there has been any case of insanity or irrationality of almost any kind. But it should be noted that at present ages due to the influence of neighbouring non tribal culture and modernity the life-partner may be selected by himself or herself.

Age of marriage:

The age at which a girl and a boy should be married is very important in all societies. Every society according to its social needs, sanctions that a certain age should be proper for the marriage of a girl or a boy. Marriageable age may vary from tribe to tribe. In tribal society, there is no age bar for marriage. In general, after attaining the puberty or adolescence they perform the marriage of the boy and girl. Among the educated tribes and urbanized tribes adult marriage is the general rule. In this kind generally, the age at marriage range between 20 to 25 years in case of male and 16 to 20 years in case of incase of female. Marriageable age of boy must be adult in the sense that he is not only well-versed with the customs and traditions but also mature enough to shoulder the responsibilities of a householder. Marriages usually hand over the additional responsibilities of a family. A boy must be physically mature and economically able to take on these responsibilities. An immature boy will find it difficult to maintain such responsibility of married life.

Before the marriage the boy should accomplish his education and entered a proper occupation. It is equally applicable for the girl. A girl should complete her education and acquired the skills that enable her to stand on her own feet. Generally, bride is younger than bridegroom. But exceptional case, there is no social objection if a girl is elder than a boy. I have observed in the present study, the bride may be senior to the groom by a few years and it is only perform in the case of love affairs. The influence of economic factors on the age of marriage has been tendency in all tribal communities today.

Place of Marriage in Tribal Societies:

Marriage play an important role in tribal women's life. It has religious aspects. In the tribal society, the social and economical protection is the sole or the most important cause of marriage. It was suggested that only marriage makes a tribal women complete person. Proprietorship of paternal property is to be an important element in the marriage settlement of almost all the tribes of Tripura such as the Tripuris, the Reangs, the Chakmas, the Jamatias, and the Kukis etc. A tribal woman gets paternal property after the marriage according to her father's economic ability.

There is no denying the fact that marriage occupies an important place in the life of tribal society¹, particularly, in the life of tribal women².

^{1. &}quot;Lives were continued in the lives of their children....and so long the bearing of children continued, the ancestors were perpetuated. It was only through marriage that one lives natural life'....."Society in Tribal India" – B.B. Sinha., Page no. 412.

^{2. &}quot;The existence of a women in the tribal society depended on marriage. Marriage was the main aim of her life"—IBID.

Types of Marriage:

Monogamy types of marriage are usually approved. Polygamy is strictly prohibited. Child marriage is not largely practice in tribal society. Bride-prices also prevalent among the tribal.

There are generally 4 (four) types of marriages are found among the tribal communities which are socially approved. These are discussed below:

- i) Negotiated Marriage.
- ii) Marriage by Service.
- iii) Marriage by payment or bride-price marriage.
- iv) Marriage by elopement.

Let us now narrate the said customs of marriage --

- i) Negotiated Marriage: Out of four types of marriages, the most prevalent form is negotiated marriage. Formal negotiation is initiated by the guardian i.e. parents of the bridegroom through the negotiator. In finalizing of setting up a marriage the guardian of the either side plays the soul role. The bride or the groom has no choice. This type of marriage always takes place in the house of the bridegroom.
- ii) Marriage by Service: Now-a-days marriage by service is not vastly solemnized. In the past it was most prevalent among the different tribes in Tripura. When a young man wishes to marry a girl he is to search for some years in the prospective bride's house. This practice is known as 'Chamari Kamung' in kokborok dialect.

period of service is generally fixed by the bride's side and varies from one to three years or even more. During this period, he does all sorts of work. He is to obey all orders of his

prospective father-in-law during this period. Now-a-days influence of education, this system is going out of fashion among the tribal people. However, in the interior places this custom of marriage is still prevalent but such instance is so rare.

- iii) Marriage by Payment or Bride-Price Marriage: Instead of rendering physical service the groom is more inclined to pay a certain amount of money to the bride's father for acquiring the mate. Such amount of money is known as bride-price. This bride-price is fixed by the bride side. At present, with the inclusion of education and influence of modernity in lieu of service a boy is prefer to pay a certain amount of money as bride-price for attaining the matrimonial alliance where there is such system of marriage is in vogue.
- iv) Marriage by Elopement: Marriage by elopement is also an another way for acquiring the mate. The marriage by mutual consent and elopement has been transformed into socially sanctioned love marriage with some formal proceedings as seen in formal marriages in tribal societies. If a boy falls in love affairs with a girl, the proposal is send to the guardian of such boy and girl through a suitable medium and the guardian accept such proposal then the marriage take place the formal ceremonies. Otherwise the boy elopes with the girl and they reside in a remote places from their village.

The elopement is the outcome of the amorous relation between the boy and girl by mutual understanding. In few cases, the accused party is fined by the social judgment. In modern ages, this kind of marriage is most prevalent among the tribals like non-tribal society.

Divorce:

Divorce is the formal dissolution of marriage. According to the concise oxford dictionary of Sociology, 'divorce is the formal legal dissolution of a legally constituted marriage". Divorce is allowed among the tribe of Tripura. The system of divorce is vary from tribe to tribe. Divorce may be initiated on the following reasonable grounds:-

- 1. When a wife or husband fall illicit relation with another male or female;
- 2. When there is dearth of mutual understanding between the husband wife;
 - 3. When the husband or wife is insane;
- 4. When the wife is barren or the husband is hermaphrodite;
- 5. When the wife or husband suffered from incurable disease or chronicle disease;
- 6. When the husband or wife has an amatory relation with another man and woman;
- 7. When a wife or husband live in different places and no longer maintain any connection for a long period;
- 8. When a husband is tortured mentally to his wife then divorce must initiated by the wife;

If anyone of the aforesaid conditions arises then a men or women may want divorce to the village council.

And the village council is to seek the solution about such report. For that purpose, they are not go to court, particularly, the tribal people of interior places. But in the present study a change has been noticed among the urbanized and educationally advance tribal group of Tripura. To dispose of dispute about the conjugal life, the urbanized tribal people go to court of justice.

If the divorce is initiated and caused by the husband, he is to pay a lump-sum amount s a fine to the rejected wife. Moreover, the husband is bound to refund all ornaments, dress, etc. of the rejected wife. On the other hand, divorce is initiated by the wife, then she is to compensate.

It is a common picture, if a husband divorces his wife during her pregnancy, the newly come offspring will belong to the mother. It is also a general rule, after the separations the minor child and suckling child are remain with the mother.

Advantage and Disadvantage of Divorce:

Although divorce is allowed among the tribal people of Tripura but it has both good and bad effect. The good effect towards the divorce should be narrated in the following manner:

The separation makes a man or a woman completely free from all sorts of family problems or bindings and any unforeseen event like suicide. After the divorce a man or a woman can start a new life through remarriage.

The bad effect of divorce is not pervasive. After getting the children are deprived from properly care or look after and as result they grown up with much negligence. Moreover, the children are also deprived from their parent's affection after the separation.

Another point should be noted here as a bad effect of divorce, generally, the male persons are the main earning member in the maximum families. Particularly in the interior places of tribal sections and all sorts of expenses of the family is to be borne by him. After the divorce, the husband is not under the moral obligation to bear all expenses of the family. As a result, the rejected or divorce wife is fallen in economic problem. So, it

TABLE-I NUMBER AND RATE OF DIVORCE AMONGST THE DIFFERENT TRIBAL COMMUNITIES OF TRIPURA

Particulars	P	otal Ma opul- cion	arried W		Divorced or Separated	Rate (%) of divorced or separated on the married people
1	2	3	4	5	6	
TRIPURI	M	168334	66060	3112	1059	1.59
	F	162538	66643	8715	1595	2.39
REANG	M	42972	18185	1013	363	2.00
	F	41031	18361	1599	420	2.29
JAMATIA	M	22368	9569	406	225	2.35
	F	22133	9630	681	280	2.91
CHAKMA	M	17965	6934	295	55	0.79
	F	16832	7089	646	79	1.11
HALAM	M	14666	5839	312	74	1.27
	F	14303	5922	706	130	2.20
ORANG	M	2670	1079	67	15	1.39
	F	2547	999	125	19	1.90
SANTAL	M	1428	555	64	11	1.98
	F	1298	517	64	6	1.16
MUNDA	M	4190	1598	144	36	2.25
	F	3803	1580	199	17	1.08
GARO	M	3632	1418	38	10	0.71
	F	3665	1479	274	43	2.91
KHASIA	M	235	87	9	7	8.05
	F	222	88	11	10	12.50
KUKI	M	2831	1028	48	11	1.05
	F	2870	1059	95	35	3.31
LUSHAI	M	1936	586	38	10	1.71
	F	1798	592	127	71	11.99
MAG	M	9389	3624	172	152	4.19
	F	8842	3687	505	171	4.64
NOATIA	M	3696	1474	77	16	1.09
	F	3486	1481	175	17	1.15
LAPCHA	M	49	24	-	-	-
	F	57	21	02	-	-
BHIL	M	450	179	17	-	-
	F	388	171	43	-	-
BHUTIA	M	14	04	-	-	-
	F	08	04	-	-	-

Note: M = Male, F = Female. Source: Census Report, 1981, Govt. of India.

may say, divorce is the blameworthy at the sight of the tribal society and rest of the Hindu Society.

The Occurrence of divorce is not so less among the different tribal communities of Tripura. The Table No.1 (P/9) shows the number and rate of divorce on the married people of different tribal communities in all areas (rural and urban combined) of Tripura on the basis 1981 Census Report.

Remarriage of Widow, Widower and Divorcees:

Remarriage is permissible among the tribal societies of Tripura. A man or woman remarries after the legal dissolution of marriage or after the death of his/her previous wife/husband. A man or woman cannot remarry during the life time of his/her husband/wife except divorce. However, the widow remarriage is allowed in tribal society but it is not performed with much pomp and festivity. Nevertheless, few certain rites and rituals are must be performed in such cases. For instance, among the Tripuris, on the day of marriage the "Lampra owathop" and "Tuisangrama" worship are performed through the Ochai (Priest), among the Chakmas the 'Chungulang" worship and 'Khana siranoo" ceremony are performed positively which are connected with marriage, among the Jamatias at the time of marriage the worship of "Chowdhya devata" are must be done.

In the present study, few obstacles are noticed about the remarriage of widow, widower and divorcee. Widow and Widower are cannot remarry before the funeral ceremony (Sradha) of his/her dead husband/wife. The study has also found that the widow/widower are nor re-married within the one year of death of his/her husband/wife. Mentionable that

no rigidity is maintained in the case of arranged marriage of widow/widower as such as divorcees. An unmarried man or woman do not prefer to marry a widow/widower. And a celibacy boy or girl do not want to marry a divorced lady or divorced man. If a widowed or divorced lady wants to remarry then she searches a widower or divorced man as a life partner. But in the case of male it is not an obstacle. It is a common picture, the parents of unmarried girl do not desire to marry their virgin girl with a widower or a divorced person. The simple ceremony is performed in the wedding ceremony of widow/ widower or divorcees.

Scope of the Study:

There are 19 (nineteen) tribal communities are found to dwell in Tripura. Of these 19 tribes, the major tribes comprises the scope of the study.

Methodology:

The present study is empirical in nature and there is dearth of published and unpublished materials. As such, field survey has been the primary source of information. The view of different tribes towards the marriage custom has been collected through the personal interview and frank discussion with the respective community on the basis of set questionnaire. A sample questionnaire has enclosed herewith.



Chapter-II

Social Religious and Ceremonial Rites of Tripuri Marraige

Out of the 19 (nineteen) tribal communities of Tripura, the Tripuri is the largest and dominating tribe in number. This community has been occupied directing power in the field of almost all political, social, cultural and religious organizations. According to 1981 Census Report, the total tribal population were 5,83,920; which represents only Tripuris were 3,30,871. The Tripuris resides Scatteredly in all the district of Tripura. The midst of that Amarpur, Kamalpur, Khowai, Belonia, Udaipur and Sadar are main residence of them.

It is not to deniable that the other minor tribal communities are also followed their own social customs and practices but the influence of the Tripuris have some impact on those communities, e.g. their rituals of worship, marriage customs etc.

Marriage is a socially recognized and formal way of young man and a woman to take entry into the combine domestic life of a society that carries certain economic rules and obligations. In a different light it may say, marriage is a formal way for acquiring mate. According to this formal system, marriage is solemnized by the practice of virtu in presence of elders and respectable persons of the family and society. At the beginning, the marriage of the bride and groom would be completed by various traditional rituals and worships. The following worships

were performed by Tripuri community in connection with the marriage ceremony at the ancient period:

'Takchamai', 'Kathe Rimani', 'Fara Tanmani' — these worships are performed before the entrance of married life of bride and groom for their well-being.

Marriageable boy and girl could not face any obstacle on the way of their present and future life and switch over to married life honestly and smoothly to avoid any kind of impurity and unfavourable situation and evil god/ Goddess cannot focus any ominous situation or create any detrimental effect upon married couple, for that purpose 'Sree kuruktti – Kurukray', 'Mani Sajhuoula', 'Jampeera Krishna Kara' etc. deities are worshipped by make presents to 'Kathe Rimani' or 'Kathimani'. This worship is performed on the day before the marriage or after the marriage.

On the appointed day of marriage at morning "sree Jamjujadu", 'Jamai Raja', 'Sree Jampur Kalipur', 'Jamni Ma Debi' etc. God and Goddess are worshipped to keep at a safe distance from any danger which may affect the bride and groom and to overcome any dangerous situation.

The 'Lampra owathop' is the main worship which is connected with marriage ceremony in Tripuri society. This worship is a must in conection with the marriage ceremony. During such Puja, the worship of 'Akhatra & Bikhatra', 'Ma Sangram Debi', 'Tuibuk', 'Kalakshiraja' etc. deities are also worth-mentioning. The seat of the deities of above mentioned worships are placed in the eastern side.

It is mentionable that the 'Lampra owathop' worship is performed at first in all kinds of social rituals such as marriage, house inauguration, rice feeding ceremony, success of any important work, to overcome any danger etc.¹ The 'Lampra owathop' worship also prevails in among the Reang, jamatia, Noatia, Uchai, Kalai, rupini etc.²

Such worship occupies an important place in the field of socioreligious life of the tribals. The Tripuris are no exception of it.

In this context, it is important to mention here that the custom of idolatry does not prevail in tribal society. The Tripuris are also no exception of it. In lieu of particular deity they set up in the seat of worship the image of God or Goddess e.g., four bamboo pieces with artistic work are used as image of "Lampra owathop". This worship is officiated by the Ochai (Priest).

The influence of social and agricultural system of that time has some effect on the ancient marriage system of Tripuri community. The Tripuris depend on shifting cultivation. It is needless to mention that there was the necessity of skill and efficient person in any Jhumia tribal family. The selection of Jhum-fileld starts from Poush-Magha (December-January). For the selection of suitable agricultural land, burning the selected Jhum-fieldm, for sowing seeds. Preserving the crop from worms and insects and for harvesting, they would require the help of skilful persons.

In short, a skilful person is efficient and has all knowledge of Jhumias life and culture. Idleness and whimsical attitude were not allowed in that case. Although they depend on nature, they are hard-working and labourious.

For the aforesaid causes, the custom of 'Chamari Kamoungh' (which is called in Bengali dialect 'Jamaikhata') was introduced in the ancient system of Tripuri marriage. Moreover, In the service period there was a system for testing the ability of the

would be groom and his ability would be tested asking him to crack a special type of fruit covered with the thorn the name of which 'khangorong Bwthai Nagmung' by his feet. However, This type of fruits are not available now.

Another system was that the would be groom generally would be asked to uproot the root of a tree over the earth surface and this was the test for judging his physical test. This system was known as 'Morong Phuisamung'.

It will not be wrong to mention here that the place of woman is not inferior to that of male, thought the society is not matriarchal. The woman can also compete with man in social and economic works. For example, a woman take part with great zeal to look after the offspring, in weaving, sowing, harvesting, cooking and in looking after the livestock etc. As a result, th3e utility of the woman has obtained high priority than man in any family. However, it was needful to examine the prospective groom's activity and character by the parents before the marriage of a girl as a suitable bridegroom. And as a result, the parents free from any uncertain thinking about their daughter's domestic life. Generally, the period of service may vary from one to three years³. Although in next time, due to influence of modernity the period of service has reduced and at present the custom of 'Chamari-kamoung' is not prevalent in the Tripuri society. The only in exception in this regard is that a very wealthy father and who has one daughter wants to Keep his daughter with him by selecting a groom or by matrimonial alliance. In such case, the father-in-law proposes to that groom to give movable or immovable property as gift. Till now this custom is in vogue. But the number of this instance is really less.

Proposal of Marriage:

The customs and rituals of 'Chamari kamoung' or 'Jamai Khata' does not differ much from other customs of marriage. The match-maker (Raibai) go to the bride's house with the proposal of marriage. This 'Raibai' i.e. match-maker is so near and dear person of both family (bride & groom). It is worth-mentioning that there is no fixed person as a 'Raibai' in Tripuri society. Any person may play the key role for match-making as match-maker. If the proposal of 'Raibai' is acceptable or satisfactory, the next process starts. If the father of bride gives his willingness regarding marriage, the 'Raibai' is go to the groom's house with the news of willingness and after that a day is fixed to formally see the bride. On that appointed day the relatives of groom go to the bride's house to see her (bride) and the rituals of this appointed day is called in Kok-borok 'Chwrainaimoung'.

Chwrainaimoung:

'Chwrainaimoung' is a day which is fixed through 'Raibai' with the consent of both party (bride & groom) to see the bride. On that particular day the parents of groom and other relatives visit the bride's house with 'Raibai' and express their choicer and give words for marriage. At present, after that the groom himself with his friends visit to the bride's residence and look at each other. If the parents and guardian of groom select the girl As bride they invite the parents of bride to attend the groom's house. In this occasion the expenses of feast is to be borne by the concern party. A feature is notable here that if the father of the bride spends a very small amount of money to observe formalities in the groom's house or on the other hand if it is

done by the groom's father in bride's house it will not be objectionable. Generally, in this occasion the parents and guardians of groom offer presentation like goods or cash as blessing to the prospective bride. A date is settled for fixation of the auspicious date of marriage with the recognition between the two families. The fixation of the date and time of marriage is called 'Kaksungamani' (Mangalacharan).

Kaksungamani (Mangalacharan):

On the appointed day of 'Kaksungamani' a few married women of neighbourhood assemble at the respective house of the prospective bride and groom and arrange to cut betel nuts with kindled sacred earthen lamp and typical 'Ulu' sound is made by the women. The ritual of to cutting betel nuts is known as 'Kuaitan mani'. After the completion of cutting betel nuts, the betel leaves and nuts are distributed in every house of the neighbours and the system of distribution is very cultured and beautiful.

A bell-metal plate is covered with a piece of white cloth and betel l;eaves and nuts with flowers are put separately in bell-metal plate. Then the plate is carried door to door to inform the good news to every family of neighbours. Betel leaves and nuts are kept in front of the 'Randhok', (The imageof 'Mailooma' and 'Kholooma' are called together 'Randhok'). Two earthen pots with full of sunned rice are placed in front of the bedi of house-deity in Tripuri society. These two earthen pots with full of rice are worshipped as the image of Goddess 'Mailooma' and 'Kholooma'. 'Mailooma' is the presiding deity of paddy and 'Kholooma' is the presiding deity of cotton and cloth. Wine is offered in every worship in respect of god/Goddess in the tribal

societies. It is mentionable that like the Tripuris, the Jamtias, the Noatias, the Uchais, the Reangs, the Kalais, the Kukis, the Rupinis etc. are also placed 'Randhok' as a same manner⁴. At present, the betel leaves with nuts are given in two sides of the doors of each neighbor. The ceremony of 'Kuaitanmani' is completed in that way.

After the ritual of 'Kuaitanmani', the parents and other aged persons (who stand the near relationships) of groom side are set out to bride's house. The entire expense of feast of the 'Kaksungamani' is to be borne equally by both the parties (bride & groom side). The elder persons of groom side bless the bride with money, ornaments and dress etc. Thereafter, the conversation of both parties are started with drinking and the amount to be spent be decided at that time. In the mean time, after cooking, the feast starts. Long ago, a worship would be performed in bride's house as a recognition of this matrimonial relationship and this worship was called 'Takchowmai rimoung'. In some cases, the elder persons of groom affectionately demand to the would be bride to offer help in washing their hands at the end of the feast. However, such custom was not obligatory.

After the feast, the would be bride again takes the blessing with expression of reverence to the parents and would be parents-in-law and other elderly persons. At present, the influence of Brahmanism or Hinduism in Tripuri society, at the ritual of 'Kaksungamani' the conch-shell, vermilion, gold ornaments and new cloth are used as a materials of this ritual.

The main rituals of marriage is performed in the bride's or groom's house, according to economic ability of the concern

party. The date of marriage is fixed on that very day of 'Kaksungamani' and it is also decided where the main ceremony of marriage will be performed and which party will bear the expenses of marriage. In Tripuri's dialect, the main ceremony of marriage is called "Kailaimani' or "Kailabari".

Kalibari (Marriage Ceremony):

On the appointed day before the marriage the bride/groom side (where the main ceremony connected with marriage will be performed) invites the 'Ochai' (priest) by offering betel leaf, betel nut or one bottle of wine to perform the puja on the wedding day. In the same day, the 'Aiajul' (two women are selected for helping the bride at the time of marriage ceremony is known as 'Aiajuk'0 and 'Jamai aya' (a person is selected for helping the groom at the time of marriage and this is known as 'Jamai Aya') are also invited by the bride side. Two minor boys are selected as the water carrier for bathing of the bride and groom. These two boys are called 'kenju-Kenjuya' or 'Thwaikhaknairak'.

In this context it is worth mentioning that if the wedding ceremony is fixed to be performed in bride's house at the dawn on the day before the auspicious time of marriage. But it is not obligatory. On the other hand, if the marriage ceremony is fixed in groom's house, the bride is to rich within the auspicious time of marriage. In the well to do families the bridal possession is marked by the band party, fire work. The bride/groom is brought with affectionate welcome by the bride's/groom's sister's husband. The rituals of to welcome the bride/groom is called 'chamari Songmani' or 'Hamjuk Songmani.

Receiving the Bride/Groom:

Let us now narrate the rituals of 'Chamari Songmani' or 'Hamjuk Songmani'. After the arrival of the groom in bride's house, the mother of bride cordially offers a warm reception to him. A flat basket containing with some paddy, durba, egg, cotton and soil is put in front of the bridegroom, just after the arrival of bride house. Two earthen pitchers with full of water and mango twigs in them are placed on two sides of the doorway. Two earthen oil lamps are also kept by the side of the pitchers. During the welcome to the groom, mother-in-law of groom sprinkles sanctified water upon him with a bamboo made fan (thrice out of the room and again thrice in the room) as a childhood affection. It is an ancient custom to welcome an unknown young boy as near and dear one before the act of giving away daughter in marriage. It is a prominent example, to make near and dear one of a boy of different family with love and affection. In this manner the reception of bride-groom and bride is made.

In Kok-borok a warm reception to bridegroom/bride is called 'Dangdua'. A room is reserved for groom and groom's party in bride's residence. After reception they (groom and groom's party) take their seats in a specially reserved seats for the groom party. The parents of the groom and other relatives can also accompany along with the groom's party. But the parents of bride can not accompany with bride's party.

The Rituals of Worship Connected with Marriage:

According to the ancient social custom of Tripuris, various kinds of worships would be performed at that time during marriage. But the influence of modernity, the rituals of such

worships connected with marriage have changed a lot among the urbanized Tripuris.

On the afternoon of the day before the marriage, the 'Kathe Rimani' worship is to be performed at the wedding house for well-being or the couple. This worship is executed by the 'Ochai'. The following deities are to be worshipped in such worship:

- i) Sree Kuruktti Karukray,
- ii) Mani Sajhwala,
- iii) Jampeera,
- iv) Krishnanakara etc.

On the morning of the wedding day a worship is solemnized through 'ochai' having a name 'Pharatanmani'. At the time of this worship 'sree Jamdujadu', 'Sree Jampur Kalpur', 'Jamni Ma devi', 'Jamni Raja', 'Burasa' etc. deities are worshipped. This worship is accomplished for newly married couple's better future life, e.g. to spend the future days smoothly and to avoid any unfavourable situation.

Except the aforesaid Pujas, the main worship of marriage ceremony is to be performed by the 'Ochai' (Priest) on the morning of the wedding day. That worship is called 'Lampra owathop Thwai'. The image of 'Akhata Bikhata', 'Ma Sangrama Devi', 'Thwaibookma', 'Kalakshi Raja' etc. are worshipped in the 'Lampra owathop Thwai'. Shri Debapriya Deb Barma has rendered a short account of the Tripuris marriage system as a whole. He stated that during the 'Lampra owathop' worship which is connected with marriage the Ochai pronounces the following mantras: 'Hengnai dangnai Nachiri Chiri adung, bale Akata bala Bikhata tuituibu elakhkhiraya dung balae Nusa

Kamalapati Nusa Jaduram, hamaychai tangnai tuibuk laktai aiugalagay, tangnani halangni aiugamanay tangthun dangnay'. "The inner meaning of the mantras is as follows – Let the couple Jaduram and Kamalapati be laborious and happy in their married life. Let their life be as long as river and unaffected by any thing like an undecaying stone"⁵.

The sacred water of such puja is to be conserved for sprinkling on the head of the couple. The sacred water are sprinkled with blessing to 'didung' (newly married couple) at the time of marriage by the parents, relatives and well-wishers of the couple. At the time of sprinkling the sacred water the elderly person bless the couple to lead a happy conjugal life. It is worth mentioning that long ago, the 'Lampra owathop' worship was performed at the wedding ceremony and this tradition is also in vogue at present.

In this context it is mentioned here that during the period of King, the influence of Brahmanism was introduced in the custom of Tripuri marriage. As for instance, to construct wedding platform, completion of marriage by the Brahmin Priest, to take the help of a barber for shaving or purification etc. As a result, some aspects of the modern Hindu marriage system have mixed with the custom of Tripuri marriage. This act of mixing has some bearing and is responsible for a mixed culture. However, we can not deny that these influence of Hinduism in Tripuri marriage custom has created some complexity inn social and economic structure of Tripuri Society.

Of late, the prevalent custom of marriage in Tripuri Society in some different in many respect and full of modernity from the ancient custom of marriage. It has already started above that during the reign of the King some modifications were followed with the influence of Hinduism in Tripuri marriage system. They followed royal culture in many respect like the dress up of the bride and groom. The groom would put on turban on head, keep the sword in waist along with other royal dress. It will not to be wrong to mention here that this royal-style of rituals is not at all followed in interior rural areas for monetary reason. The groom wears dhoti, Panjabi, and crown on the head (like Bengalees) in the rural areas. The bride wears Sari, scarf on the head, conch-shell, vermilion, garland etc. on the day of marriage the bride and groom are to be abstained from taking food until the completion of marriage ceremony.

The Rituals of Wedding:

On the appointed day of marriage, the religious and ceremonial rites are started from the morning. It is mentioned that, on the morning of the wedding day the 'Lampra owathop' and 'Tuisangrama' worships are performed by the 'Ocahai'. Beside that the ritual of purification and the offering of water in the names of deceased ancestors are done through the Brahmin priest. At that time the names of preceding seven forefathers are to be remembered. In this circumstances it is worth mentioning that the 'Ochai' has some obligationable features, i.e. the 'Ochai' must be a male and a married person. The widower or re-married person can not play the role of 'Ochai'. Moreover, his marriage must take place formally and the 'Ochai' would be an occupant of the area of incantation and must have proper knowledge of different rules of worship.

The Tripuris put special importance on an auspicious date and time of marriage. According to the almanac the auspicious

time of marriage ceremony is settled in the first half of the day. But of late with the influence of neighbouring Bengalee Society the marriage ceremony accomplished at dusk.

On the appointed day of marriage, from the morning the 'Aiajuk', 'Jamai aya', and 'Kenju-Kanjuya' are busy with their respective duties in wedding house. At noon the two 'Jamai Ayas' go to the river with band party and 'Ulu' sound to cut the water of the river with a sword. This ritual is known as 'Tuitanmani'.

Two 'Aiajuks' also accompany the 'Jamai aya'. They bring the water in 'Jharis' (water pot) from then river. At the time of the bringing water the typical 'ulu' sound is made by the women. Thereafter the 'Kenju-Ken-Jaya' also water for their (bride & groom) bath. A special feature of that custom is that in ancient times the custom was that the couple had to bring water from the river for the bathe of all elderly persons. Although at present this tradition is not in vogue largely but till now it is exist in the Tripuri Society.

At the auspicious time of marriage, the bride and the groom are to be 'bedi' (wedding platform). In this platform a winning fan is covered by a white cloth and it is kept on couple's as an umbrella. A new cloth is spread out on the way of them and it is drawn upto bedi by the 'kenju-kenjuya'. Brahmin complete the sacrificial rite with the uttering incantation and in this manner the act of giving away or 'Sampradan' of a daughter in marriage is accomplished. After the completion of 'Sampradan' the last part of the cloth of the bride and groom are tied jointly. The bride and groom are placed in front of the pandal of 'Lampra owathop' and then they pay respect to deities. At that time the

'Ochai' sprinkles some sanctified water upon the head of the couple with bless.

Thereafter, the couple is brought out from the 'Wedding platform' and they take their seat on two chairs facing each in another platform. A quadrangular fence is constructed as the boundary around wedding platform. Then the bride (in the sitting position on the chair) moves round the groom seven times by the married male persons and then drawings a line round the bride sprinkles flower with obeisance to the groom.

A flower-basket is kept on the lap of the groom and before each time of circumambulate the flowers are given to the bride's hem of the garment. Here a taboo is noticeable. Any widower and unmarried men can't participate in helping the couple to complete the seven rounds.

An interesting feature is noticeable that after the above rite, the bride and groom are lifted up by their own concern party to upwards higher than the opponent as far as possible with jokingly. Of the two he/she who will reach maximum high will be a victory. The concerned party, then enjoy their enjoyment which is nothing but self-satisfaction. The ritual of sprinkling of flowe4r is called in Kok-borok dialect 'Khumsarmani' and the person who carry the chair as known as 'Pat Ramnairaks'. At the time of sprinkling flower, each the flower is collected carefully from the ground by the 'Aiajuks' and other relatives of the couple. In the Tripuri society there is a belief that-if any of thet flower is hand over to anybody he may make harm of the newly married couple.

After the completion of flower-sprinkle the ritual of exchange of garlands is performed. At the auspicious moment the groom

takes vermilion in his finger and puts it on the forehead of the bride and then the bride convey obeisance to her husband. It may be said that this system is performed as an imitation of Hindu marriage system.

Then the parents and relatives sprinkle holy water of the 'Lampra owathopThwai' with blessing. At the time of sprinkling water and to convey blessing the parents and relatives stand on the 'Rama' (wooden husking tool). The groom stands behind the bride and in this position the elderly persons bless them (couple).

After that the couple is to be brought inside a room accompanied by the 'Aiajuk', 'Aya', 'Kenju-Kenjuya' and other relatives. It is state before that the bride and the groom do not take any food on the wedding day. After completion of marriage the couple stays in a particular apartment and then fried-rice, curd and other edible materials are served to them.

In that particular apartment an earthen cooking pot with some fried rice and a ring is placed on a thin mat in order to play the ring game. The ring is hidden in fried rice. The bride sits beside the groom. The couple put their right hand in the earthen pot at a time. Then they start together to search the ring from the hidden place. In this manner the ring hiding is performed three times and searching is also performed three times. He/she wins the game, who can find out the ring two times from hidden place. If the groom wins, the bride side demands with pleasure from his in the said language "as a husband you have conquered, what will you give/present to your wife?" The groom then gives his words to present anything to his wife according to her choice and within his

ability. On the contrary, if the bride wins in ring game she is also asled to make a promise in the same manner.

After the said ritual, best food with wine are served to the parents of the couple along with other elderly guardians of neighbouring areas. The groom and bride are brought in front of them (elderly persons) and the newly married couple show their respect to them and elderly persons also convey their blessing with some presentation. On the occasion of marriage giving of such gifts is known among Tripuris as 'Heli Rimung'. System and Arrangement of Wedding Feast:

The system of the guest invitation is very well-arranged in Tripuri Society. Some flowers and betel leaves with nuts are kept on a bell-metal plate which is warp with a piece of new white cloth. On the morning of wedding day the plate is carried on by the minor boys to convey the invitation to every house holder in the neighbouring area. Betel nuts and leaves with some flowers are put in front of the two sides of the doorway of each family. These systems of offering betel nuts and leaves along with flowers to neighbours are the symbol of invitation. Among the Tripuris this site of invitation is known as 'Khum-Phunug-Ma'. Invitation to the marriage-feast is made by offering blackpepper and clove to every family, situated outside the neighbouring area. But in present study a change has been notice that due to influence of modernity among the urbanized Tripuris for the marriage ceremony invitation is done by written invitation cards.

Among the Tripuris, the marriage-feast is highly expensive and it is recognized as royal affairs. The Tripuri marriage is celebrated with great pomp. Generally, three/four hemlets are invited in marriage ceremony along with the neighbours. To tell the truth, in fact, the Tripuris are very hospitable. In the marriage-feast, the main items of menu 'Chakhwai' (one kind of salt curry, it is made by ash of special trees), 'Chakhwai Muituru', fish, meat and specially wine. The feast is performed on that very night of wedding day.

The Ritual of Hikchang Grasimani:

On that very night, after the completion of feast the groom hides away in a distant place to spend the night. This ritual is called 'Chamiri Kharmung'. Another right is noticed in the morning of the next day of marriage. When the bridegroom is brought by the 'Jamia Aiya' to the bride's house from that hiding Place, his feet is plastered with the mixture of oil and ink and this work is done by the brother-in -law /sister-in-law of the groom. At that time, the bride is to come in front of the groom and bow. Then the bride washes the feet of her husband and wives the feet with her hair. Of course, at present that ritual is not prevalent. Instead of, such rite at right (Plastered with the mixture of oil and ink), the bride only washes the feet of her husband's with water and then wipes with her hair.

Thereafter and obstruction is created at once on the way and entrance of door. An apartment is fixed for the couple. A bamboo is horizontally set on the middle height of the door of that apartment. The bride sits down of the doorway and the groom lifts his wife with two arms and keeps her inside the said apartment. After that the groom enters in the room. This ritual is called 'Hikchang Ghasimani'. On that day the bride departures to the groom's house with her friends and relatives. Mentionable that the groom may return to his own house with the bride at

the wedding night, after performing the rituals of marriage. In such cases the groom is hidden on that night to go and another place of his locality or residence.

The Ritual of 'Khunjarsamani':

Next day of marriage, another feast is also arranged for the neighbours and relatives. This feast is called 'Khunjarsamani'. On that day, the newly married couple brings water to wash the hands and feets of the elderly persons. In this feast, the bride and groom jointly serve 'Muituru' and 'Berama-butui' to the invited persons. 'Muituru' is one kind of curry by meat mixed with paste rice or other things. On the completion of the feast, the bride and groom help the elderly persons in washing their offal hands.

After the ritual of 'Khunjarsamani' (at any day), a day settled for the special feast of 'Ayajuk', 'Jamai Aiya', 'Kenju-Kenjuya' and to present the dress as a symbol of their honour for completion of their duties. In this manner the major portion of marriage comes to an end in Tripuri society.

The Ritual of 'Owaying Kalai Beraimung':

After two or three days of marriage, the parents of the groom accompany with the bride to her paternal residence and on that very day they return home after taking meals. This function is known as 'Owaying kalai Beraimung' in Tripuri Society.

The Ritual of 'Haiteram Thangmani':

After the performance of 'Owaying kalai Beraimung' again the groom visits to his father-in-law's house with the bride and this visit takes place after six or seven days of the said ritual. At that time they stay three nights in bride's house. After spending three nights they return to their own house (i.e. groom's house). This ritual is called 'Maiteram Thangmani'. In this way 'kailabari' and its incidental rituals are performed among Tripuris.

Some Additional Forms of Marriage:

Except the aforesaid system of marriage, the following forms of marriage are also observed.

- i) Chamari Kaimu,
- ii) Chamari Tisai kaimu (chamari Amar, Chamari Kampaa/Ampaa),
 - iii) Hamjuk Tisai Kaimung,
 - iv) Khari Kailjaklaimu,
 - v) Randha Randhi Nak Nalaimung etc.

However, these systems of marriage are not followed by a large number of people, but these are observed now and then. This system of marriage is followed observing about the above mentioned rituals. Only exception is found in the custom 'Chamari Ampaa' or marriage by service.

In 'Chamari Ampaa' system of marriage the groom is work hard in his would be father-in-law's house for one year or more. Then the groom is to marry formally. This period of service may be called probationary period of marriage. In this said period, the would be groom engages himself in Jhum cultivation and other agricultural works. He also is to look after the livestock etc. in his prospective father-in-law's house. Ability and expertness is shifting cultivation, husbandry of livestock etc. have to be exhibited during the service period. After such period of service the groom is to marry observing the aforesaid marriage custom and then the couple lives in bride's house for ever. Instead of rendering physical service

the groom may pay a fixed amount of money to the bride's father for acquiring mate.

In the custom of 'Randha Randhi Nal Nalaimung', vermilion is put in the forehead of the bride in presence of only six or seven persons and in this way marriage is ended. In this case also the simple marriage-feast is arranged.

Beside the above mentioned forms of formal marriage system marriage by love has also been noticed among the Tripuris like other societies. In such cases the parents of both parties, generally give their consent and solemnize the marriage in a formal way, if the families do not come within the prohibited position of affinity. If the two families become near relatives, the marriage can not be materialised. Then only a way is left for the boys and girls to get eloped and lived together as couple. However, the marriage by mutual consent and elopement are also practiced among the Tripuris, but it is looked down upon by the society.

Age of Marriage:

There is no special mention of the marriageable age of Tripuri, only thing is that the couple must be efficient and skilful young man and woman. The marriage of a person, especially a girl must take place at a comparatively younger age. As long as the young boys were not physically able for Jhum cultivation and young girls were not fully equipped with the cooking ability and weaving of cloth, question of marriage did not arise. But at present, with the gradual social changes and spread of education that obligatory rules are not in vogu and the age of marriage may vary from infancy to adult.

Generally, the marriageable age of woman is 16/17 to 22/23 yrs. and in the case of man it is 18/19 to 25/26. It is worth-

mentioning that now-a-days, in many cases the age of marriage is much more than previous among the educated section of tribal people for attaining self-sufficiency. The Tripuris are also no exception from it. The custom of child marriage does not prevail among the Tripuris. Normally, the groom is elder in age than the bride. It is also not objectionable if the age may not be an obstacle in the cae of marriage by love (Hamjuk laiai Kailaimani) or marriage by elopement (Kharlaiai kaijakmani).

Inclusion of Bengalee Beahmin Priest in Marriage:

In ancient period, the function of marriage would not be performed by the Bengalee Brahmin priest in the Tripuri society. They were depended on 'Ochai' for the conduct of the rituals of marriage ceremony. However, at present the 'Lampra owathop' connected with marriage is officiated by the 'Ochai'. Bside that a Bengalee Brahmin will be present. During the reign of kind kind the Bengalee Beahmin priest were introduced in Tripuri marriage. It is no denying the fact gradually the engagement of Brahmin priest at marriage ceremony and other socio-religious function is increasing. They are inclined towards the Brahmin priest. During my field study I have observed that a dramatic change has taken place among the educated and urbanized Tripuris and the respondent has given their opinion towards the Brahmin priest to performed the marriage. A section of Tripuri people who are educationally advance give more emphasis. On the Brahmin priest for performing the rituals of marriage. I have also observed among the rural Tripuris, the 'Ochai' has high priority at the marrage function and other social worships. But in different places, the system of wedding ceremony and acquiring mates is followed in different manner.

The Auspicious Period (Month) of Marriage:

Marriage is generally performed in the month of Magha (January - February), Phalgun (February - March). These two months are best for performing the marriage. The performances of marriage are prohibited in the month of Chaitra (March-April), Bhadra (august-september) and Pousha 9december-January). They consult with an astrologer for forecasting the married life of the boy and girl before the marriage.

At present, most of the Tripuris are influenced by neighbouring Bengalee culture. In few cases, the well-to-do families follow the Hindu rituals in conducting marriage ceremony and they mostly dwell in urban areas. The demand of dowry is also be noticed and it is initiated by groom side. If the bride's father is unable to fulfil such demand of the groom the malignant incident upon the bride is also noticed in some cases.

Prohibition of the Tripuri Marriage:

The following prohibitions are noticed in Tripuri marriage system:

- Marriage cannot be performed among the relatives unless there is seven generations is present between the bride and groom.
- 2. Marriage is prohibited in 'Sandhai' line.
- 3. Marriage is not performed formally with the mother's sister and father's sister.
- 4. A young man can not marry his cousin.
- 5. Marriage is strictly prohibited between the step-brother and step-sister.
- 6. A widow can not re-marry socially a celibate boy. On the other hand, social marriage is also restricted between the

widower and the virgin girl. Of course, the marriage is taken place between the widower and his dead wife's younger sister provided they get the consent of the guardians of both parties.

- 7. A widow/widower can not marry second time before the completion of one year i.i. yearly funeral ceremony (Sradha) of his/her dead husband/wife.
- 8. Among the Tripuris a boy can not marry to his father's sister's daughter and mother's sister's daughter.
- 9. If the date of marriage is fixed and the father/mother of the bride/groom dies before that auspicious date then the marriage can not be solemnized within the one year.
- If the boy or groom is involved in illicit relationship with another girl and it is proved after the final decision of marriage, the marriage is cancelled.
 Even on the eve of marriage if it is heard, the marriage

can not be performed. In this case, the accused party is to pay fine as compensation for the required expenses of marriage to the opponent party.

- 11. Child marriage is strictly prohibited.
- 12. A man can not marry during the period of rendering service.
- 13. Marriage is prohibite in the month of poush (December-January), Chaitra (March-April), Bhadra (August-September).
- 14. According to the customary law of Tripuri, a married woman can't claim her parental movable or immovable property. Generally, property is devided only among the sons equally.

Marriage System of the Tribal Societies of Tripura

- 15. After attaining the widow-hood, a Tripuri woman can not use ornaments and coloured dress. This system is also present in Hindu Society.
- 16. The parents of bride can not accompany with the bridal party. (Once in a while the parents of groom may participate with the groom's party).
- 17. Direct parallel-cousin marriage with one's father's brother's son or daughter is strictly prohibited.
- 18. In my own experience it is observed that tribal woman can not utter the name of their husbands. This is present in Tripuri Society also.

To utter the name of the husband is a taboo to a woman, particularly, in rural primitive tribal society, this exits like that of Hindu Bengalee Society.

Divorce (Kaklaimani) and Its Impact:

Divorce is formally legal dissolution of socially approve or legally recognized. It varies from place to place and tribe to tribe and for various reasons or grounds. So divorce is a method for the rearrangement of the family.

Divorce is almost universally recognized dissolution of marriage. The matrimonial alliances are not followed by both the parties on major or minor grounds.

Like other societies, divorce is permissible among Tripuris. In Tripuri dialect divorce is called 'Kapseng' or 'Kaklaimani'. According to the condition of concerned parties, a divorce man or woman can remarry second time for passing free life. Divorce occurs on the ground of misunderstanding within husband and wife, barreness of husband or wife, illicit relationship with another man or woman, chronic disease of husband or wife,

incapability of economic and biological necessity and insanity problem of husband or wife. On the basis of above stated causes, a man or woman may claim divorce to the Judge of the society or 'Choudhari'.

In presence of the Judge of the village along with few persons of both parties (husband and wife), the application of divorce is read and both are allowed to speak for their complain. The judge gives his decision after listening to him or her complain. Among the rural Tripuris, they do not go to the court for divorce case. But the urbanized Tripuris now take the help of courts for settlement of any dispute like divorce.

If the husband claim divorce and it is sanctioned, he is bound to compensate the lion's share of expenses of marriage. On the other hand if it is initiated by wife, she is to compensate the expenditure of marriage.

Moreover, according to the customary law of Tripuri marriage, if the husband or his family torture mentally or physically his wife, the verdict will be in favour of wife through the village headman. In the case, the accused party is bound to pay fine to his divorce wife. Except such fine, he (husband) is bound to give a lump-sum amount money for maintain his rejected wife and progeny.

No specific ritual or ceremony is associated with divorce. A divorce is allowed even during the pregnancy provided divorce is sought on account of the act of omission of wife. In such cases, if the child is born after the divorced, the mother then take the child until the child attains maturity but the father must pay a lump-sum amount to the mother for the purpose of maintenance of the child. According to my observation and to analyse the

divorce case it is found that most common cases for divorce are misunderstanding and adultery among the different tribal section of Tripura. it is a common picture that the suckling children remain with the divorced mother.

In conclusion, it may b said that the bad effect of divorce are long-standing. After divorce, nursing of the progeny is neglected. Problem is created for looking after the progeny.

Although the divorce is allowed, it is treated as a curse of the society. After the separation, a problem arises regarding distribution of movable or immovable property and about the absolute right of progeny. Thus it is blame-worth to the society.

Widow Remarriage and Remarriage of Divorcees:

A man or woman can remarry after his/her divorce or after death of his/her previous wife or husband. Widow remarriage is permitted among the Tripuris. A man or woman whose husband or wife is living, can remarry only after formal dissolution of marriage. Moreover, a widow/widower and divorcees are also permitted to remarry, according to their social status or custom.

A widower or widow can marry second time after performing the yearly funeral ceremony of his/her dead wife/husband. But in case of unnatural death a widow/widower can marry after three days of abnormal death of his/her husband or wife.

The marriage of widow or divorced woman is not performed with pomp and festivity. Only a few villagers assemble in the marriage ceremony and simple marriage-feast is arranged. The 'Lampra owathop' worship and 'Tuisangrama' worship are also performed in such marriage.

In the present study a tendency is noticed that widower marries a widow and on the other hand a widow marries a widower. Moreover, it is also noticed that a boy and a virgin girl does not want to marry a widow or widower in celibacy position.

References:

- Shri Debapriya Deb Barma, Treatise on Traditional Social Institutions of the Tripuri Community.
- 2. Priyabrata Bhattacharjee, 'Tribal Pujas and Festivals in Tripura'.
- 3. J. Ganchoudhury, 'The Reangs of Tripura'.
- 4. Priyabrata Bhattacharjee, 'Tripurar Upajati Sanskriti'.
- 5. Shri D. Deb Barma, 'Treatise on Traditional Social Institutions of the Tripuri Community'.



Chapter-III

Social, Religion and Ceremonial Rites of Reang Marriage

The Reangs Scatteredly reside in the seven North-eastern regions of India. Out of seven North-eastern states the maximum numbers of them have been residing in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. According to the census report, the Reangs are the second largest tribe of Tripura. Reangs of this tiny state have been residing at Dharmanagar, Kailashahar, Amarpur, Belonia, Udaipur & Khowai. Apart from the above areas, a small number of them have concentrated at Agartala, the capital city of the state. According to the census report of 1981, their population was 84,002. The existence of this tribe is also found in Myanmar, the another Asian country. However, they have their same social customs and practices in their isolated and migratory life. In present time, due to the spread of education and mixing with neighbouring tribals and non tribals a remarkable change is noticed in their ancient matrimonial system. But it has not created on ebb-tide on the way of its flow. On the other hand, it has claimed more superiority. However, from the point of view, the Reang marriage system may be discussed from the following fronts:

- i) Ancient marriage system number
- ii) Modern marriage system.

Latest now discuss first the ancient marriage system of Reangs :-

i) Ancient marriage system:

According to the ancient system, generally the proposal of marriage would be sent from the father or guardian or any relative of groom to the guardian of the bride. If the proposal was acceptable, every aspect regarding marriage ceremony would be discussed and considered. According to the Reang customary law, there was a rare scope to see the groom by the bride before marriage. In this respect, the father would enjoy the supremacy.

Marriage generally was solemnized by negotiation in Reang society. This negotiated marriage has two different sides;

- a) Marriage by service (Chamari Kami)
- b) Marriage by payment (Dafa)

Marriage ii general is arranged by parents through negotiation. The following rituals are to be solemnized after the selection of bride:

1. "sunglaimi": This ritual is performed after the affirmative sign of marriage from bride side. The meaning of "Sunglaimi" is exchange of words in connection with the marriage. After the exchange of words of both sides, if agreeable to matrimonial alliance then that very day/night the "Andra Khutuima Chami' is solemnized (Andra = groom party, Khutui = a light feast, Chami = eating).

Generally, the guardians of bride and groom are to attend in this occasion. Fish, meat and specially wine are arrange for that purpose. The consequent expenses for this ceremony are to be borne by groom side except the cost of rice and curry. It is worth mentioninhg that this ritual (i.e. "Sunglaimi") is performed before the marriage for finalizing the day and date of ceremony.

- **2.** "Soi khemi": In "SoiKhemi" system of ritual the difference is that neighbours are in the function. It is obvious is the expenditure of this function is high as the number of invited guest is more. For a special feature, this function has some special importance. Formal declaration is made in presence of the elders of the society about the good news of marriage. This occasion is to be solemnized before the actual marriage ceremony. If the guardians of both side consent them this item can be avoid.
- 3. "Kowktti Malaimi": A meeting is arranged with the guardians of the bride and groom for finalizing the actual date and time of auspicious day which is called "Kowktti Malaimi". During this meeting the two parties (guardians of bride and groom) take decision on the date of marriage, particulars of items to be taken by the groom's party, period of service by the groom in bride's house either by remaining physically present at the house or by making payment in kind or cash in lieu if his physical presence. In this occasion no major expenses are involved, only few bottles of wine are sufficient. If they so desire a minimum quantity of meat may also be arranged. All expense for this function are to be borne by groom side. In this occasion neighboures are also invited to take part.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY (KAILAMI):

After the aforesaid occasion the marriage ceremony is held on the appointed day of which is called "Kailami" in the Reang term.

The groom and groom's party set out in a procession in a fixed time to bride's house with a good singer and a good fluter after completion the ceremony i.e. "Tawtui Taing Khowmi" (To examine the weal and wee on the eve of departure).

Let us now discuss the "Tawtui Taing Khowmi" ceremony. It takes place just before the groom starts with his party for bride's house. An 'Ochai' who is called for to perform the rituals of this ceremony, cuts an egg into two pieces for forecasting the good & evil in to and fro passage of the wedding profession. At that time 'Ochai' is to be given of wine bottles by a lady/ladies of bride's house.

After the "Tawtui Taing Khowmi" function the "Parkami" is performed. Two mango leaves of an identical size are pasted by face to face and then allow to fall on the ground from hand. It is considered that if one leaf falls prostrate out of two leaves the time of departure of groom and groom's party be considered prosperous. If this weal sign is not obtained byb three chances, the "Parkami" work is tried until the good sign is seen. This ceremony is performed in groom's house. On the eve of departure of the groom party, the parents of groom extend their blessing to them.

After the aforesaid ceremony the groom and his friends, relatives set off for the bride's house with the following materials:

- 1. Chawh (Langi) Two vessels.
- 2. Arah (Wine) More or less 70/80 litres.
- 3. A new quilt,
- 4. A new thin mat,
- 5. A new 'DA' (one kinds of implement),
- 6. Two new pillow,
- 7. Meat, fish and other dowry,
- 8. One 1/1-1/2 metres new white or coloue napkin.

A good singer and a good fluter are also taken part with the aforesaid materials. The groom and groom's party, after their

arrival; are accommodated in the house of any relatives of the bride. Singing and playing of flute continue then. A separate room is arranged there for them and they take their seats there and stay in that very place upto the auspicious moment.

A special feature in the marriage system of Reang society is that before the departure of the groom party, the parents or guardians of groom are set off to go ahead to the bride's house so that they may reach within the evening. They there wait in a room of bride's house where the rituals of wedding ceremony are performed. It is an obligatory rule that the groom and groom's party will reach at an auspicious moment.

On the eve of the entrance of the groom and groom's party to the bride's house an interesting thing is noticeable. This I have observed during my field survey. It is very interesting to narrate that song and plays of musical instruments (flute) have a vital role specially in Reang marriage ceremony. The wedding house is resounded by dance, songs and tunes of other musical instruments. On the eve of entrance to bride's door the groom and groom's party obstructed. But this is not done by force ar by men and women.

The obstruction is made by cyclone of song. A song is sung by one party and the answer of that is a must from the other side. This continues as an obstruction in the entry. An inner significance is hidden in every sentence of the song. It is very difficult to get entry if they cannot conqueror the opponent by their reply in the same way by songs. It is a shameful event if the groom is to wait more at the entrance of the house. So an expert singer is taken with groom's party who would as the protector of groom's prestige in the entrance of the house.

Two wedding songs are continued in the following manner (one song is sung by a singer of bride's side and the other song is sung by a singer of groom's side):-

Wedding song of Groom side:

Jati Bai Jati Sowhaini Khe, Jati Maidu Mashih Thangnai, Amina Jati Maidishih Sihthangnisa

Phai Shra Takhu Sarmah Khurang Nangrao.

[Oh all my brothers! To make relationship like own relatives, to form keenness like 'Maidu' (ball of cooked rice0 and to fulfill this desire we habe come to this world.]

Wedding song of Bride side:

Yawhphabu Dang Tangakha, Khaphangbu Kha Tangakha Jati Maidu Sithangmani Nai, Sithangthing Blang Parbat Kheing Mainaiya Ara takhurao.

[If there is a monetary power and heartfelt good wishes, will there be no hindrance at all to form perfect relationship?]

Conquering the opponent by the song they (groom and groom's party) cross the obstruction and enter the room and take seats. A thin mat is scattered over the ground and the new napkin is placed on the thin mat. The 'rasa' (Breast cloth) is also set up on that napkin. The groom is occupy one seat on the right side of 'rasa' (a piece of breast cloth). A Peculiar feature is noticeable hear that at the Reang wedding ceremony it was not necessary to present physically the bride and in accordance with ancient system before few days of the marriage a girl of almost shame natural was to hide herself in a hidden place (in the house of kith and kin are friends). After the completion of marriage ceremony a piece of cotton touching the bride's head by the groom party is

used for completion of the marriage ceremony. It is called 'Tip Kemi'.

It is not mentioning that this work is very difficult for them (groom's party) as the hiding brides where about is not known to them (groom's party). At any cost the where about must be located the bride and then 'Tip kemi' is observed.

From the bride side, the following materials are must for the marriage ceremony.

A baileng (winnowing fan); on this baileng (winnowing fan) a handful of rice, a piece of cotton, a piece of stone, a small quantity of green or dry Chilli, 5 or 10 grams mustard oil, flower and two bottles of 'Arak' or wine (one bottle is collected from groom's side) are placed. Moreover, a small metal water-pot full of water, a takkal (one kind ofaAgricultural implement, it is collected from groom side) are also placed there. Explaining the naturally significance and usefulness of each material, the 'Ochai' make the bride and groom take oath so they make their life accordingly the significance and usefulness of each material, forever.

The significance is very important behind the use each of the materials in marriage ceremony.

Let us now narrate the significance 'Rice' is the image of 'Laxmi,' cotton is the symbol of conjugal life. It cannot crack in a tie of two lives, if it is a grey hair like cotton. 'Stone' is the symbol of hardness. Various unfavourable situations may crop up in the way of life. The newly married couple can tolerate all these and stone symbolizes the idea of tolerance. Therefore, it is used in this auspicious marriage ceremony.

The meaning of 'Hiyaumo' is pungent. 'Hiyaumo' is also indicate the love, affection etc. Chilly represents the symbol of love and affection and his matrimonial tie is pungent or sharp like chilly.

Oil helps in making a man's skin beautiful, sparkling clean and soft. This softness is symbolized by oil in the whole of their lives.

Wine plays an important role in the tribal life. The Reang are of no exeption to it. It is closely associated with their socio-religious and cultural life. During field visit it has been specially noted that solemnization of marriage is unimaginable without 'Arak' or wine. 'Arak' is the sysbol of truth and cheerfulness. Marriag ceremony cannot be solemnized without this truth-cheerful item. From the sides of bride and groom two bottles of wine are a must.

The 'Takkal' which is used in marriage ceremony has a great role in the auspicious ceremony. These implement also occupies a very important place in the field of social and economic life. 'Takkal' (an agricultural implement which is used in shifting cultivation) is made of iron. It is not discussed or discarded by a single or simple use. Rather, its useful life expectancy is extended over a long period of Jhum cultivation. Accordingly, 'Takkal' symbolizes the life expectancy of the newly married couple. A proverb is in vogue-

"Aya Bu Sordei Laulai Tung Yakh Nai Ma-Ni Bahu"

(Let the life Be long like Iron). - The actually believe in this proverb.

'Takkal' also occupies an important place for another reason in marriage ceremony. It is a symbol of struggle for existence. There is no alternative way in primitive tribal society to live without struggle. It might be used in facing different obstacles. The Reangs also depend on Jhum cultivation and 'Takkal' is main implement for Jhum cultivation. It is used in every stages of this cultivation system.

'Water' is the symbol of life and material for making the body after holy water bath. Moreover, 'Water' is used for cleaning the body and dirt of all types. So, on the beginning of the domestic life of the newly married couple it is treated as a symbol of holiness. They believe that the life of newly married couple would be holy and spotless like 'Ama Ganga' and for thus a small metal water-pot with full of water is a must in the marriage ceremony of the Reangs.

After that a holy festival i.e. 'Kapatuilumi' is arranged with this small metal water-pot (Kepa = Fore-head, Tui = Water, Lumi = pour out). The utility of aforesaid materials is expressed. The oath is utter by 'Ochai' (Priest). He must be a male. In this contxt it is notable that a widower, a re-married person, a divorced and an unmarried person can not be 'Ochai' (Priest). He must posses the first wife and his marriage must be held the proper norms of the marriage.

Striking the stone by 'Takkal' the oath is rea out. A chilly is put into the groom's mouth. The names and address of bride and groom are pronounced in this oath. The aforesaid function is conducted by Ochai (Priest).

After the above rituals, the groom conveys pranamas to the 'Ochai' (Priest), father-in-law, mother-in-law, father, mother, elder brothers, sisters and other elders and relatives respectively and they also extend their blessings. For this purpose his (groom)

friends also extend their help to him. The customs of exchange of garland, sprinkle of flowers towards the groom and seven circles are not prevalent in the Reang marriage.

At the end of the function feast starts with dancing, singing and drinking and this continues for the whole night. But the main feast of marriage ceremony is solemnized after that very day. On that very day the sacrifice of he-goat and boar is started from the early morning. Unity among neighbours is a apecial feature in the marriage ceremony of the Reangs. The marriage-feast is arranges in the every house of neighbours. All invited guests arrange this feast with their mutual settlement in neighbour's house.

All sorts of expenses wine, rice and other curry are arranged for the feast is borne by the neighbours jointly, but only meat is sent to neighbour's houses (where the marriage-feast is arranged for invited guests) from the wedding-house. But a major parts invited guests attend the feast in wedding-house. It will not be wrong to mention that the rules of marriage-feast have some exception too. During my field study it is observed that for some social upliftments and to avoid disorder at present this marriage-feast is organized in wedding house only. In this context it is mentionable thatin ancient ti,e th funeral feast of Reang society was also arrange in neighbour's house. The mutual understanding to each other specially in primitive Reang society was in the high level.

Notwithstanding, after the marriage ceremony on the morning 'Soung grama taot haihmi' woraship is performed. Two cocks (one is bride's another is groom's) are sacrificed in this worship. After the incantation the Ochai (Priest) would examine the entrails

of the cock to forecast the fortune of new couple. It is considered that the future of newly married couple will be happy if the entrails are intact i.e. there is no hole in between or they do not tear. The Reang would believe that the 'ochai' appropriate person who can properly forecast the fortune.

It has already been metioned that four earthen pitchers of 'Choh Kala' (one kind of wine which is made of 'Vinni' rice) were essential with 'Arak' (wine) in the Reang marriage system. Out of these four, two pitchers are collected from bride's side and rest from groom side. These four earthen pitchers of 'Choh Kala' are placed in wedding house this drink is meantn for all of them.

Drinking from this pitcher continues day and night on the day after the marriage ceremony.

The Reang society is strictly against the dowry system. In the past, the dowry system was unimaginable. However, the bridal party could demand as stated below, to groom party on the occasion of 'Kaopti Malaimi'. However, it was not expensively in forces. Generally, the bridal party would demand a band party, arrangement of dramatic song, a fixed quantity of sweets, meat and fish etc. All the items were utilized for the invited guests on the eve of marriage function. In this context it is mentionable that the groom cannot claim anything from the bridal side in Reang society. Over and above all the expenditures exceot the expenses for rice and curry are borne by groom. Even after one year og the marriage when the groom visit his paternal residence with his married wife, various types of ornaments, dress etc. were to be presented to his newly married wife. In Reang dialect this tour is called 'Baraini Thungmi'. In this way 'Kalaimi' ends.

Chamaroikami and Dafa (marriage by service and Marriage by payment :

Marriage by service and marriage by payment are included in marriage by negotiation. Marriage by service and marriage by payment are also similar to each other.

Let us now narrate the marriage by service and marriage by payment. Marriage by service or marriage by payment was one of the most primitive ways of having a wife. It was a preliminary step to monogamy. Service being personal in nature, it was impossible to serve for more than one wife at a time. One who has served for protecting his wife can understand thoroughly the character and antecedent of his future companion.

The economic role of the wife was the mainstay behind primitive marriage system in tribal societies. The social approval is confirmed in such a marriage. A tribal woman is the back-bone of their economy. The transfer of prospective groom's physical labour to the bride's family is rewarded when he gets the bride as a permanent economic asset. From that very side service is justified.

The 'Gharjamai' system of some of the modern communities of India is nothing but a modern form of marriage by service. In primitive Reang society 'Jamai khata' was the custom of marriage. This 'Chamaroikami' i.e. 'Jamai Khata' is now almost absent due to spread of modern education and influence of modernity. If a young man wants to marry a girl, he had to serve for three years or more than in the would be bride's house. The period of service was fixed by the bride's side. During the service period all sorts of work like Jhum cultivation, other agricultural work would have to be done by him (Prospective groom). In the Institution of

'Chamaroikami', the prospective groom had to prove his ability by his potential labour. After the completion of service period he (groom) can marry and stay in father-in-law's house for ever or he may return to his own residence. If he proposes to stay on with the bride's family he generally receives some portion of his father-in-law's property as gift. If anyone does not want to serve his prospective father-in-law's house for acquiring mate, it is a must to pay his prospective father-in-law a fixed amount of money as dowry (Dafa sing). It is called 'marriage by payment' (Dafa).

It will not be wrong to say that the custom of 'Chamaroikami' or marriage by service and 'Dafa' or marriage by payment for acquiring a bride exits even today among the Reangs in Tripura living in rural areas.

During the field survey a remarkable change has been observed in the period of service and it may reduce from four years to one years. It is mentionable here, in the past the marriage was solemnized after rendering physical service to the family of the bride in Reang society. But of late, with the introduction of formal education and influence of neighbouring cultures the boys have become more inclined to pay money in lieu of the customary physical service, in negotiating a matrimonial alliance. However, the customs of marriage by service and marriage by payment are both looked down upon by the urbanized educated groom.

Position of Reang Woman:

In this context it may be mentioned that the Reang woman occupy a very high position in the family and in the society. They play an important role in the management of the family affairs in the Reang society. Woman not only manage the hearth but also look after piggery, poultry and all sorts of agricultural

works. They also take part in weaving during their leisure time. But married women get generally a small share of paternal property.

ii) Modern Marriage System:

Let us now look at the modern system of Reang marriage.

It prevails only in the well-to-do families of present era. Presently due to spread of education and with the influence of modernity the ancient customs and culture have changed a lot. This attitude has brought an immense effect on the prevailing customs of marriage also. But no change has yet been taken place in dowry system, arrangement of materials and wine for invited guests in connection with the marriage. All these are similar to that of early system. But it is worth mentioning that if any groom demands dowry he is neglected by the society specially, in modern time. In short, it may be said that the Reangs are strictly against the dowry system.

The ancient rituals of marriage 'Sunglaimi', 'Sai Khem', 'Kowoktti malaimi' also prevail in modern Reang marriage system. Following the rituals the weding ceremony i.e. 'Kalaimi' is performed. But presence of the bride in wedding ceremony is only the exception in modern marriages. Now-a-days the customs of 'Chamaroikami' is back dated. In lieu of physical service by the groom paying 'dafasing' (a fixed amount of bride-price) is well accepted. But now-a-days this custom is also rare.

Prohibition of Reang Marriage:

Marriage is a legally recognized relationship between a male and a female. This institution carries certain right and obligations. The following obligatory condition in connection with the marriage is to be noticeable:

Marriage with Muslim prohibited in the Reang community. But with other community it is permissible.

Marriage is forbidden between the daughter and son of two brother and sister. But many a time the cross-cousin marriage and parallel cousin marriage takes place. But this kind of marriage is not treated as punishable offence in the Reang Society.

Marriage by elopement (Tuikhaik) is also in vogue in this society. This system of marriage is performed with an unmarried boy and girl. But it is not under the social coverage. If a married man elopes with an unmarried girl and marry her the following punishment are imposed on him by the village administrator of the Reang society:

- a) He cannot claim his children and any other movable or immovable property.
- b) If he found guilty by the decision or social judgement (Para Choudhury) on the ground of illicit relation, he must have to pay a fine as fixed by the chief of the village and the amount will be Rs.60 and this amount of Rs.60 must have to be paid to the chief of the village who is called 'Para Choudhury'. In Reang vocabulary this fine is called 'Chong cheing mai yak mi'.
- c) Moreover, a financial grant is to be paid by him will be spent for his rejected wife.

Remarriage of widow and widower is allowed in the Reang society. But here a taboo is noticeable. A widow/widower can marry second time after the seven days of 'Sraddho' ('Kthoinaimo' in Reang word) ceremony of his/her dead wife/husband. The 'Sraddho' ceremony is generally performed after one month of death. But it is not objectionable if the 'Sraddho'

ceremony is performed after one or two years of death. In past, a widow/widower not marry before passing one year of death of the wife/husband. Violation of this customary law was a punishable offence and monetary fine is also a must for the violation. It may be mentioned here that incase unnatural death the 'Sraddho' ceremony is performed on the 3rd day of death. A widow/widower cannot re-marry before the funeral ceremony (sraddho ceremony) of death. In this context it is mentionable that a widow woman can attend social functions but cannot take part in songs, dances etc. before the completion of days of funeral or Sraddhyo ceremony. Even during this period she cannot dress up with flowers. Needless to mention that the Reang lady is found of flowers and they arrange flowers themselves for social occasion. Dancing, singing and making sound with the whistle are also restricted in that very looked down upon by the society and same cases it is be fined. Generally, the age of marriage for Reang boys is 20 and for girl it is 16 years.

Marriage is prohibited in the month of Poush and Chaitra.

They have no customs of exchange of garland, sprinkles of flower, a fire oblation.

During the ceremony of marriage the 'Lampra Owathop' worship is not perform.

Before the completion of service period the prospective groom should not associate with the prospective bride among the Reangs.

Pre-marital and extra-marital sex-relation are strictly prohibited among the Reangs and rest of other tribes.

After divorce, the husband cannot claim his suckling child. Generally, after divorce the suckling child remain with the mother.

Divorce (Kaklaimi):

Like other tribal societies in the Reang society also divorce is allowed. Generally, a man or woman can divorce his/her wife/husband on any reasonable ground. Divorce may be initiated by the husband or by the wife. If a divorce is initiated by wife, she is to compensate 'Yaksam' (the expenditure) to his divorced husband in cash. Even all ornaments and other presentation which she got on the occasion of 'Baraini Thangmi' are to be returned to her husband. Moreover, she will have to refund the 'Yaksam' (bride-price) as well as children to her divorced husband. Amount of 'Yaksam' is fixed, but its amount is more than the yaksam of wife i.e. if a wife divorced her husband then yaksam, is more than the yaksam in the divorce case initiated by husband.

On the other hand, if the husband claims to divorce his wife, the fine is to be fixed from three fronts.

- a) If a man divorced his wife during pregnancy that the child will belong to the mother. And the husband is bound to bear all sorts of expenditure of that child during the infancy at least up to 4/5 years. It is one kind of punishment to him.
- b) If the divorced wife is a mother of more than one child, the amount of fine is increased.
- c) If the divorced wife has no child then the fine is reduced. Moreover, the divorcee is also bound to pay a large amount of money as a fine and the disputations party is to be get a portion of that cash money a s 'Yaksam'.

In fine, if I fail to include the real truths, my report will exhibit a untruth story of Reangs. So to speak the truth it is to be expressed that the Reang society has lost their past sweet memories. That is a saying that in the campus of a 136 Reang families there was a

Marriage System of the Tribal Societies of Tripura

'Sardar' or a 'Choudhury' who was called 'Canscow' and under his able administration all social performances were organized neatly. Due to the spread of education and influence of mixed culture the rites and rituals of marriage custom has been changed. In the urbanized Reangs, the matrimonial relation with other caste has also been introduced. Marriage by service and marriage by payment are not vastly in vogue. These type of marriage are almost abolished. Particularly the wave of new modern touch of life has immensely changed the social, cultural and old values of the Reangs and the past heritage will remain as reminiscence only, it cannot be a history in full.

Chapter-IV

Social Religious and Ceremonial Rites of Chakma Marraige

The present chapter has been focused on the Chakma marriage customs and practices. Among the 19 (nineteen) tribes of Tripura, the Chakma Community holds 4th position. They are no doubt a major group in the Tribal Community, but they scatterdly reside in this tiny state of Tripura. as per the Census report of 1981 the total population of such tribe is 35,079. They speak in Chakma language.

The Chakmas of Tripura mainly reside in Kamalpur, Amarpur, Gandacharra, Sabroom, Kanchanpur, Longtarai Valley and Belonia Sub-Division. Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh is the present home land of the Chakmas. From long years ago, the Chakmas were the inhabitants of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is worth mentioning that due to some political reasons a large number of Chakma families had to take shelter in Tripura from the present Bangladesh previously Eastern Pakistan. But when Seikh Hasina become the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and accord was made between India and Bangladesh and all the families return to their homeland in six phases and the process was started from 15th February, 1994 and ended on 27th February, 1998.

The Chakmas practice superior livelihood specially in social rites and customs. There are so many rituals in Chakma

marriage customs like that other tribals. In the past they would follow many rituals in marriage.

However, at present due to spread of education and expansion of modern thinking the rigidity of ancient marriage customs has changed and is being changed. But such traditions have not lost completely.

Generally, marriage is arranged by the parents. The proposal of marriage, usually comes from the groom side. However, such proposal from the bride may also be initiated as this is not objectionable. The parents or the guardians of the groom at first send the marriage proposal to the guardians or parents of the bride. If the proposal is acceptable, the following rituals are followed:

- a) On a fixed day, the groom party is to see the bride and after selection of the bride, the guardians of groom visit the house of the intended bride and the proposal of marriage is made.
- b) The consultation about the proposal continues in the bride's family. A $3^{\rm rd}$ person of groom's party is to confirm whether they are willing in the marriage or not/
- c) After obtaining the willingness of bride's party, the guardians of the groom and other elderly persons visit the intended bride's house with a bottle of wine, cake and other food. At that time, the groom's party submit the claim for marriage to the parents of the bride. The date of marriage is finalized in this step and on that very day a feast is arranged in the bride's house. It is known as 'Tinpur' in Chakma language.

On the 3rd step of marriage proposal, a bottle of wine is to be offered to the bride's house by the groom side. Such bottle of wine is to ne given to the bride's guardians or parents only.

In Chakma dialect, this ritual is called 'Madh Pilang Gajhani'. If the guardians of bride is to accept this 'Madhpilang Gajhani', then theb affirmative signal of marriage is disclosed.

It is a compulsory custom to take a bottle of wine and a vessel of cake for the parents of bride on the occasion of 'Madhpilang Gajhani'. The bottle of wine is given to the prospective bride's father by the prospective groom's father and the vessel of cake is given to the bride's mother by the groom's mother. There is beautiful and cultured ritual to give such presentations. The bottle of wine and the vessel of cake are transferred occasionally with devotion and reverence. To accept such wine and cake is called 'Madhpilang Gajhani' in Chakma language.

It is worth mentioning that, the auspicious rituals related with the marriage are followed in particular day in the Chakma society. This is to say the $1^{\rm st}$ step of marriage proposal is performed on the Friday and after that $2^{\rm nd}$ and $3^{\rm rd}$ steps are performed on the fixed days. Generally a gap of 7, 14 and 21 days respective among the each rituals of marriage proposal is maintained.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the actual ceremony of marriage is performed after 15 or 20 days of 'Madhpilang Gajhani'. A male person goes to the prospective bride's house before 2 or 3 days of actual, Marriage ceremony to remind about the auspicious day. This person is called 'Salikkya'. If any obstruction arises to perform the auspicious ceremony on that appointed day, he (salikkya) is re-scheduled another date after consultation with both the parties (bride and groom's guardians).

Another kind of marriage is socially recognized in Chakma society in which the proposal is initiated by the parents of groom

and it is performed after negotiation of both the sides. Of course, this negotiated marriage may be initiated by the bride side also. Most prevalent customs of marriage in Chakma society is 'Bow Ana'. In the custom of 'Bow Ana', the bride is brought by the groom's party with much pomp. In this system a very special feature is noticeable that the expense of the ornaments, dress and all sorts of cosmetics dress or decorate the girl as a new bride are borne by the groom side. Moreover, it may be said that, the bride price still remain in the Chakma society. But no bride-price is paid now a day among the urbanized and educated section of the Chakmas. This society does not allow the customs of 'Ghar Jamai' (one who lives at once in father-in-laws house). In some cases the wealthy father (who is the father of only one daughter and who has not another off spring) may claim affectionately, the husband of the daughter to stay with his married daughter after the marriage. But this instance is very rare. Of course, the progeny of well-to-do family never goes to live in father-in-law's house for ever. Marriage ceremony is performed generally in groom's residence by bringing the bride. The expense to dress the bride is borne by the groom-side. But an exception is also noticed. If the groom's father is very poor, such expenses are borne by the bride's father willingly.

Among the Garo, Khashia, Lepcha and the Bhutias, the ceremony of marriage is performed in bride's family and remains there forever. For the marriage ceremony the groom's house is avoided.

Let us now explain the customs of 'Bow Ana'. On the appointed day of marriage, the bride-groom party goes to the bride's house to bring the bride. The friends, relatives of groom

and the other elderly persons of village should participate in the bridegroom procession. At present, the groom himself may accompany the procession, but here a taboo is noticed. Any widow lady cannot accompany with the groom party. Because, as a result they believe that presence of a widow lady may be detrimental to the couple.

It is already stated that, the bride-price is compulsory in the Chakma society. From that point of view, it is understood that the dignity of woman is higher than the man in Chakma society. A minor girl is selected to carry the cloths, ornaments and other articles of the bride. Generally the younger sister of groom carries such materials. She is called 'Fulbareng Buganee' in Chakma Language. A married woman (whose husband is living may also be selected as the helpers of the bride). She is known as 'Bou Dharanee'. The procession is conducted by the husband of groom's elder sister. Of course the wife's of groom's elder brother or elder sister of groom may lead this procession. He/she is called 'Shala'/ 'Shali'. Generally, the male person plays the role of director to conduct the marriage-procession.

In ancient period, the Chakma society did not allow the groom to go to bride's house to bring her. But at present the groom himself accompanies with the groom's party. On the eve of the departure of the groom and groom's party, all the members stand in rows and the parents of the groom are bestow their blessing.

Thereafter, they start for the bride's house. In the middle of the road, no person is included. In the well-to-do families the band party also accompanies and the bride is brought with palankeen. Of course, at present instead of that the bride is brought by various kind of vehicle. After the arrival of them (groom party) at the bride's house they are received cordially with the lighted earthen lamps. A feast is arranged in bride's house for the invited guests of both sides. After the completion of the feast, all ornaments, dress and other cosmetics of bride are kept on a tray and then show such materials to the assembled persons in the bride's house. Thereafter, with the permission of the bride's parents they begin to dress up the bride. With this event a new life of bride is started. During this period the bride cries as she is to leave the parent's house. Generally, the emotional impact of the event has a tendency to make the near and dear one's quite gloomy.

A special feature is to be noted that the chief of the groom party is offered some money for the bride's mother on behalf of groom side at the time of dressing the bride. There is an inner significance behind such presentation. Mother had to bring up her daughter from her mother forever, such remuneration is offered as cash money. It is called 'Dudholi' in Chakma dialect. Usually, the quantity of this remuneration is Rs.5 or more.

The procession is arranged to bring the bride soon after decorating the bride. On the eve of the departure of the bride, accepts blessing of the parents and elderly persons.

At that time, they (parents & relatives of bride) bestow their blessing to the outgoing bride with some seedless cotton and rice touching to the head of the bride by uttering 'Thu-Thu' sound. The Chakmas believe that the cotton and rice are the symbols of longevity and solvency of human life.

There is a significant reason behind the use such materials in this auspicious moment. 'Cotton' is the symbol or source of apparel and 'rice' is the symbol or source of food and livelihood. The newly married couple can pass their conjugal life through happily and smoothly with food and cloths. Therefore, cotton and rice are used in this auspicious ceremony.

After completion of bestowal of blessing and other rituals, the groom party has to depart for the groom's house with the bride. At the time of departure of the bride, the groom's party are busy to go ahead. Usually, the deserted bride make delay on the eve of departure of the husband's house. The friend and relatives of the bride can accompany with the bride. Of course, it is also not objectionable to participate with bridal party by the bride's parents.

On the occasion of wedding ceremony, the bride groom's residence is decorated nicely. An apartment is specially fixed for the bride in groom's house. Two plants of plantain are planted in two sides of the door of such apartment. Two earthen water vessels are placed under the two plantain plants and two mango twigs are also put in the water-vessel. At the time of the entry of the newly bride to such apartment, the mother of the groom is acquainted cordially gives reception to them with lighted earthen lamps.

According to Chakma customary law: there so many rituals observed at the time of entry of the bride to the groom's residence. Just after arrival of the bride in front of the groom's gate, the younger brother or sister of the groom washes the bride's feet. Thereafter, the groom's mother or elder sister of groom pulled towards the apartment and ties a thin rope in her (bride's) little finger of the left hand. The bride remains in that room up to the auspicious moment of marriage. There is a prohibition by general consent that no widow lady can tie a thin

rope to the bride's finger. If the elder sister and the mother of the groom are widowed, they are cannot perform the said ritual.

According to the Chakma customary law, the bride is brought and the fundamental rituals of marriage are performed in groom's house. On the morning of the day of marriage ceremony, a few married women (whose husband are alive) assembled in wedding house and go to any rivers to bring water with pitchers. At that time, the newly bride must also participate with them (married women). Out of them, a woman takes two pieces of leaves of banana tree in her hand. Two betel leaves and nuts are placed on that two pieces of leaves and then these are allowed to float in the river and this I paved the way for examining the future conjugal life of the couple. If the two pieces of banana leaves floating together in the water, it is taken assumed that the conjugal life will be delightful. Of course, at present it is considered as a prejudice. After return to the house with water-vessels, two vessels are placed on two sides of the groom's house.

A water vessel is kept on the pulpit of 'Chungulang' – worship and this water-vessel is brought by the bride and it is only used for worship. To bring water vessel is called "Ag pani-Tula".

The fundamental worship of Chakma society is 'Chungulang' which is connected with marriage ceremony. Through this worship, the marriage is accepted socially and also legalized. The 'Ojha (priest) officiate the 'Chungulang puja'. 'Ojha' this the thin rope at neck of the water –vessel which is a part of 'Chungulang' worship. Two bracelet of seven-barreled thin rope are made for bride and groom with a measured out of the size of their hands. The bride wears such bracelet in left hand

and groom puts it in his right hand. In Chakma dialect this ritual is known as 'Sathnali Sudha'.

On the appointed day of auspicious ceremony, the 'Chungulang' worship is arranged in a particular room. At night the couple is to be dressed and taken to that particular room and is a ritual arranged and that is known as 'pair tied together'. The couple is tied together and this is called in Chakma language of 'Jadan'. According to Chakma customary law, the ritual of 'Jadan' has covered a special side of wedding ceremony. The bride sits on the left side of the groom and then the pair is tied together by 'Shala' and 'Shali' (who are specially select for directing of marriage procession and helping of the couple). With the permission of the assembled persons of wedding house, the pair tied together the 'Shali' and 'Shala' utter loudly in presence the assembled persons—'Jora Bani Dibar Hoghum Aghani Nai?' (whether there is any persmission of doing so?).

Generally, the answer is always to be given in the affirmative sign. After getting the permission, the couple's waists are fastened together with a piece of white cloth by the 'Shali' and 'Shala'. Thereafter, they (bride and groom) exchange their ring to each other. The 'Shali' and 'Shala' assist them in this act. The custom of exchange of garland and sprinkles of flowers is not in vogue among the Chakmas.

In this context, an interesting feature is noted that in many a time the assembled persons of the wedding house should disclose an objectionable sign or may play the role of silence in the custom of 'Jadan' (the pair tied together). A significant reason is there in the system. If the marriage takes place between the relatives who has a blood relation i.e. between maternal uncle

and sister's daughter or with the wife of another man, the negative sign is to be disclosed in this ritual. In such cases, the marriage ceremony cannot be performed. Of course, at present, generally nobody observes any objectionable sign in this ritual.

It is already stated that on the appointed date of marriage the 'Chugulang' worship is performed and this worship is officiated by 'Ojha'. He (Ojha) is invited occasionally by the concerned party of wedding house at least before one day of the marriage ceremony for performing the worship. The 'Ojha' is to be invited on behalf of the groom's side and a bottle of wine, a betel leaf or a pair of flowers with devotion is to be offered to him, on that night (the day before marriage) and in his night dream (ojha) can visualize the weal and woe of the future conjugal life of the couple and the very next day he will pass on his remarks.

Among the Chakmas, the marriage gets social acceptance through the 'Chungulang' worship which is arranged in a pulpit. The marriage is incomplete without the custom of 'Chungulang'. The pulpit of the 'Chungulang' worship is constructed in a corner of a particular room. Specific deity is not placed in that pulpit. In lieu of specific deity, the chakmas worship the image of deity which is called 'Marakaim' in Chakma language. Two bamboo splits are planted with an artistic way in the alter of the worship as the image of 'Chungulang' deity. In the alter of worship, two image of deity are established. The image of male deity is 'Chungulang' and the image of female deity is 'Parameshswaree'.

In this connection it is worth-mentioning that the customs of idolatry is not prevalent among the tribal societies. They worship

the image of deity which is placed in pulpit. The Chakmas are also not exception to it.

The main materials of the 'Chungulang' worship are one boar, three fowls, an egg, some paddy, some fried grains, a bottle of wine etc. The boar and the fowls are sacrificed to show respect to the deity.

The legs, heads, and hearts of the fowls and the head and four legs of the boar are placed on a plantain tree for boiling and thereafter these are offered in the honour of the 'Parameshswaree'. At that time the bride and groom are brought in the front of the 'Chungulang' deity and the couple offer to the goddess a bottle of wine, with devotion.

In present study a changed has been noticed that at present time in lieu of boar and fowl, only the flowers and lamp are used in the 'Chungulang' worship.

Thereafter, the 'Ojha' predicts about the future life of the couple examining the position of boiled legs and beaks of the fowls. According to their perception, this custom can identify the good and evil side of the newly married couple.

After that the forefront of two mango leaves or bamboo leaves of an identical size are set in the middle finger, ring finger and fore-finger respectively and allow to fall on the ground in front of the image of 'Parameshswaree'. This act is done three times by the 'Ojha'. It is considered that if one leaf falls prostrate and other falls on the back, the 'Parameshswaree' is approving this matrimonial alliance. If two leaves fall prostrate it is considered that the Goddess is dissatisfied with the alliances. On the other hand, if the both leaves fall on the back, is is discloses that the Goddess smiles on the occasion.

In this manner, the weal and woe of this auspicious ceremony is examined.

The 'Ojha' completes the worship with uttering the incantation and after that the couple are brought in front of the pulpit and they (bride & groom) bow to the deity. At that moment, the 'Ojha' sprinkles sanctified water on the head of the newly married couple and bestows the bless to lead a happy conjugal life. It is noted that the 'Chungulang' worship is not only performed in marriage ceremony. This worship is also done after performing the marriage ceremony for well-being of domestic life.

Moreover, this worship is done to overcome any kind of ominous situation. In the well-to-do families the 'Chungulang' worship is arranged every year. The 'Ghar chungulang' is performed on the occasion of marriage anniversary.

A portion of arranged food is given to the 'Ojha' as a honorarium and he is to be entertained specially with wine. After that he remarks about the good and evil side of the conjugal life of newly married couple.

The customs of presentation is not prevalent in Chakma society. But on the occasion of marriage, the invited guests render financial assistance for the expenditure of marriage. This custom is known in Chakma dialect as 'Sighalee'. During the field study, it is notice that at present the aforesaid ritual is not in vogue. It may be due to influence of modernity and spread of education. Such custom has waned, particularly in urbanized group.

After performing the aforesaid rites, a feast is arranged or invited guests and other relatives. On completion of such marriage-feast, another feast is arranged which is particularly for the specific aged persons of the bride's and groom's side. This feast is known as 'Khana Siranoo'. On that occasion the groom's party are offered warm reception with liquor and a grand feast as a token of their honour. The major part of marriage ends through the process of 'Khana siranoo'. The best food is served in this feast. A specially prepared curry i.e. (sour) is a compulsory item in the menu of such feast. It is called 'Khada'. The custom of 'Khana Siranoo' is performed either in the same day of marriage ceremony or after 1 or 2 years.

In this connection, it is worth-mentioning that the ritual of 'Khana Siranoo' is inevitably followed customs on the occasion of wedding ceremony among the Chakmas. Even, if marriage is not performed properly in other words the customs of marriage is performed through love affairs or by a elopement, in such cases the rituals of 'Khana Siranoo' and 'Chungulang' woprship are to be followed. Mentionable that if anybody does not perform the ritual of 'Khana Siranoo' o the occasion of wedding ceremony, in that case after death of the said person no people of the society will carry the dead body to perform the funeral obsequies. Such matter is very disgraceful to the family of the dead person.

On the next morning of marriage the bride and groom accompanying with 'Ojha' go to the river. There they bathe and purify them with sprinkle of the water of gold, silver and turmeric on their (bride & groom) heads. And such act is done by the 'Ojha'.

Thereafter, they return home. This custom of bathe is called 'Bur-para'. During the ritual of 'Bur-para' the 'Ojha' utters the following mantras (incantation):

"Deyray Ganga, Deyray Pani Paththar Vangi Daijhya Garang Daijhya pani Hujth Tulang Deyray Ganga, Deyray Pani Abuj Manai Sudhdha Karang".

The inner meaning of the incantation is as follows:-

Mother Ganges, give me thy holy water to purify this innocent couple, I shall break the stone to create an ocean on the earth. And in shall sprinkle this water on them to purify them.

After the performance of this rite, the newly married couple sits side by side and the aged persons bless them (Bride & Groom) with cotton and rice and desire a happy conjugal life.

On the second or third day after marriage the couple visit the bride's house with cake and other edible foods. The date of such visit is decided on the occasion of 'Khana Siranoo' through the aged persons. According to Chakma social customs, this visit is called 'Bisuth vanga'. Mentionable that if the newly married couple do not follow this ritual they will not be allow to spend a night in other residence.

The popular and colourful festival of the Chakmas is 'Bizhu'. This festival is performed on the last two days of the month of chaitra (March-April) and the first day of Vaisaka (April-May). If the wedding ceremony takes place in the bride's house instead of the bridegroom's house it is compulsory to visit the residence of groom the bride before the festival of 'Bizhu' of that very year. It is caleed 'Bizhu Barun'. In this manner the marriage ceremony and its related rituals are ended in Chakma Society.

Among the Chakmas the customs of child marriage is not in vogue in comprehensively. They do not allow to marry before attaining the puberty. Generally a boy marries from the age of 20 and the girl the age of 15. The most usual ages of marriage for boys is 20-25 and in the case of girl is 15-22. The bride is generally junior to his husband. Usually, the gap of age between the husband and wife varies from 2 to 7 years.

Mantras

At present, in many cases, the marriageable age of boys and girls has increased from that of earlier period due to economic reasons. Of course, such instance is noticed particularly in educated section of urbanized people.

The ceremony of marriage is performed in any month except the month of Jaisthwa (May-June) and Poush (December-January). They do not emphasis on almanac to decide thh date of marriage. Among the Chakmas, the marriage is not socially approved with other tribal communities.

A marriage is generally does not take place within the relatives. But sometimes marriage takes place between maternal brother and sister, cousin (mother's sister's daughter), the son and daughter of father's sister. According to Chakma customary law, the matrimonial alliances between the son and daughter of mother's sister are best. A proverb is in vogue in Chakma language —

"Moiladi pijori pichadi jay,

Moijaga jadanga phiri phiri chaiy".

The inner meaning of this proverb is as follows:-

The matrimonial alliances between the maternal brother/sister and the son/daughter of brother's sister are beautiful. It

is more than beautiful if it takes place between the son and daughter of mother's sister.

Long ago, the Chakma girls were not shares of the paternal property. But at present the girls get a portion of paternal property (movable or immovable).

Divorce and Re-Marriage:

Divorce is permissible in Chakma society, like other society. But for this purpose they do not seek the help from court. Divorce is effected in presence of aged persons of village after discussion and mutual understanding. On various reasonable grounds divorce takes place. Generally, divorc takes place for misunderstanding, barrenness, illicit relation with another man or woman, incurable disease, insane, hermaphrodite etc.

If divorce is initiated by the husband he is bound to return all sorts of bride-price and gifts which he got in marriage. And he is to pay some fine to the village elders and to his rejected wife. The initiator of the divorce forfeits the bride-price/gifts were received during marriage.

If divorce is to be wanted or initiated by the wife then she does not get any compensation from the husband. It is a common picture, after dissolution of marriage the suckling child remains with the mother. Of course, after divorce the husband may claim his children after attaining majority.

It is stated above that the divorce is effected through the panchayet. But among the urbanized Chakmas a tendency is noticed that they go to court for settlement of any disputes.

Remarriage of divorce male/female is admitted in Chakma society. The divorced man or woman can marry second time according to their respective social status. Apart from that the remarriage of widow/widower is not objectionable.

Widow/widower can remarry after the funeral ceremony (Sradha) of his/her dead husband/wife. Generally, the funeral ceremony performs after the seven days of death. But in few cases it may be performed after 1 or 2 years of death.

During the field study it is observed that the virgin girl do not want to marry a widower and the celibacy boy also do not prefer to marry a widow woman. Generally, the widow's/widower's marriage takes place with divorced man or woman. Of course, it is not an obstacle in the case of marriage by love or elopement.

In this context, it is worth-mentioning that the remarriage of widowed or divorced woman is not performed with much festivity and great pomp. In such cases, the marriage is solemnized through the simple rituals. But in such cases, it is customarily obligatory to perform the rituals of 'Chungulang' worship and 'Khana Siranoo'. Only few villagers are invited for the feast are invited for the feast (Khana Siranoo).

Prohibition of Chakma:

The following prohibitions and taboos are noticeable in Chakma marriage customs.

- According to the Chakma Customary law, the marriage is not socially taken place within the same clan/blood relations.
- 2. Marriage does not take place within the same clan unless five generations are over between the bride and groom.
- 3. Marriage is prohibited between the step brother and sister.
- 4. Matrimonial alliances are strictly prohibited between the maternal uncle and niece (sister's daughter).

Marriage System of the Tribal Societies of Tripura

- 5. It is customarily taboo to marry the elder sister of dead wife after the death of wife. However, it is approved to marry the younger sister of wife.
- 6. A man/woman can not marry second time during the life time of his/her husband/wife except legal separation between husband and wife.
- 7. A marriage does not take place between the son of step brother and the daughter of step sister.
- 8. There is a taboo in vogue that the widow/widower can not remarry before the funeral ceremony (Sradha) of his/her dead husband/wife.
- 9. If the mother or father of bride or groom dies after the fixation of the date of marriage, it is prohibited to perform the marriage before the lapse one year.
- 10. Among the Chakmas, the marriage is strictly forbidden with Muslim community.
- 11. During the period of proposal of marriage between the two parties (bride & groom), another third party can not send the proposal for marriage of that concerned bride or groom. In such case it is taboo to make proposal with another party and even a punishable offence.
- 12. If the bride or groom is involved in illicit relation with another man or woman after final decision of marriage then such marriage is not performed formally. Of course, if both the parties is agree to perform such marriage this may be arranged.
- 13. It is a customarily taboo for widow to accompany with groom's party.

- 14. To perform the marriage ceremony in the month of Poush (December-January) and Jaistha (May-June) is forbidden.
- 15. To accompany with the groom's party of the groom's parents is a taboo in the interior areas. Although it is observed that in the present study among the educationally advanced and urbanized section of Chakmas, they do not follow this. It will not be wrong to say that they (urban group) are being influenced by the neighbouring Bengalee culture.
- 16. The customs of seven circle, exchange of garland and benevolent look do not prevail in Chakma marriage. Instead of exchange of garland, they exchange ring.

There are so many prohibitions in Chakma society relating to marriage. If anybody violates the above customary laws it is a punishable offence.

In some cases a fine is imposed in the offender through the panchayet. But it will not be wrong to mention here that the rigidity of Judgement is not followed. That is to say, the rigidity of judgement has changed in many respects and the guilty person is to be exempted from punishment if serious offence is not proved against him.



Chapter-V

Social Religious and Ceremonial Rites of Jamatia Marraige

In Tripura, 19 (nineteen) different types of scheduled tribes are reside who are proud with their own social customs and practices. This customs differs from tribe to tribe. The Jamatias are concentrated in Amarpur, Udaipur, Sonamura, Khowai of this tiny state. A good number of Jamatia people who are concentrated in Agartala, the capital town of Tripura are educationally and economically advanced than that of their village dwelling counter part.

The census report of 1981 mentioned that the total populations of Jamatia community were 44,501. As per census data, the populations of Jamatia are rising gradually. They speak in kok-borok language. Though the Tripuri, Jamatia, Noatia, Rupini, communities are linguistically same but the social custom tends to differ in some respect.

Accordingly, the system of marriage of one tribal community is likely to differ from that of the other in many respects because of the cultural diversities, social standard and traditional believes in marriage. Apart from that the influence of urban life as well as non-tribal societies in shaping the system of marriage is no less pervasive.

Ι

Marriage system prevalent in the Jamatia community can rightly establish a claim of superiority. Quite in conformity with modern thinking the dowry system is looked upon with hatred in most cases, like other civilized communities.

Marriage performs with formal proposal and discussion of both parties. The parents or guardian play a key role for arrangement of marriage, the proposal of marriage generally sent by the mediator (who is too nearer person of the respective party). The parents bring their daughter to negotiate a chosen groom with as much rewards as they can manage to offer. The ceremony of marriage can be solemnized either in the house of the bride or in that of the groom. No rigidity is maintain in this respect.

According to Jamatia custom of marriage, if the ceremony occurs in the house of the groom then the expenses of marriage is to be borne i.e., the expenses of marriage e.g. cost of marriage-feast, dress & ornaments of bride etc. are to be borne by the groom party if the proposal is initiated by them and in that case such ceremony is performed in groom's residence. On the other hand if the marriage is initiated by the bride side it is performed in bride's residence and the groom is brought in bride's house which is popularly known as 'Jamai Utha'. The expenses of marriage in that case is borne by the father of the bride.

Most prevalent system of marriage is 'marriage by negotiation' is not in vogue in Jamatia society. The following two kinds of marriage are involved in this custom.

(i) Hamjuk-Tisy-Kaimung: This kind of marriage is performed in bride-groom house to bring the bride. And all sorts of marriage cost bears the bride-groom side.

(ii) Naga-Chamari-Tisy-Kaimung (one who lives at father-in-laws's house): This custom of marriage is performed in bride's house to bring the groom and the groom is lived in bride's house forever after the formal marriage ceremony.

II

Let us look at the original aspect of their marriage custom. As a matter of custom no social marriage can be negotiated beyond their own community. With the permission and proposal brought about by guardians, the act of marriage is sought to be initiated. Generally, the proposal takes their root from the guardians of the groom. However, such proposal from the side of the bride is also not unknown or objectionable.

In ancient time there was no bar in the marriage of a couple where the bride is elder by age. In this context it should mention here that presently due to spread of modern thinking and influence of education this ancient custom like many other custom is on the wane.

Marriage is not an instantaneous episode. There are a different stages through which a marriage is materialised in the Jamatia community.

The parents of the groom or his relatives first make a proposal to the bride's guardian. If the proposal is acceptable to the guardian, the groom side proceeds further to collect necessary information about the bride. They may even directly make contact with the inmates of the bride house.

A very special feature of the Jamatia marriage system is that no one from the side of the groom is allowed directly to see the bride. Even if the groom party arrives in the house of the

bride for making necessary contact (before marriage), the shameful bride usually go to hiding place. Of course, now-adays due to the proximity of Bengalee such custom is not followed strictly and the bride and groom directly make necessary contact before the marriage. If an agreement arrived at the respective party fixed up a particular day in which feast is arranged in the house of the bride for the refreshment of the groom party. Wine is used as a special drink in this occasion. In Kok-borok language this function called 'Chakkhamoung'. The custom of 'Chakkhamoung' may be arranged under the system of 'Hamjuk-Tisy-Kaimung' where in the bride is brought in the house of groom. In this case the incidental expenses of such function are borne by the groom party. In the opposite case if the 'Chakkhamoung' is arranged the house of the bride with the groom and his fellow men being brought in the house of the bride. In that case the expenses is borne by the guardian of the bride.

After completion of said rituals, the date of marriage is decided according to consultation of both parties. The act of fixing date of marriage is known as 'Dinkara chamani'¹. In this manner the auspicious date of marriage is finalised.

Wine as a drink occupies a significant place in the tribal society. Jamatias are no exception. It is intimately connected with the socio-economic and religious custom of the Jamatia. Wine is prepared in every house hold, particularly in marriage ceremony. This drink produced in this method is called 'Langi'. During survey it has been specially noted that solemnization of marriage is unimaginable without this liquor. The invited guest in the day of marriage is at first served with this drink.

Ш

Under the system of 'Hamjuk-Tisy-Kaimung' the proposal of marriage comes from the side of the groom and a day of marriage is fixed up through discussion between the concerned party. In this custom the entire expenses of marriage ceremony is borne by the guardians of the groom. A very special feature of the 'Hamjuk-Tisy-Kaimung' is that the ornaments and jewellery required to decorate the girls as a bride not arranged under any mutual agreement. In fact, any discussion on such thing is looked upon with a disdain. On the other hand the bride is dressed with new cloth and ornaments in accordance with the capacity of the concern party where the custom og 'Hamjuk-Tisy-Kaimung' is in vogue the entire expenses in connection with the decoration of the bride is borne by the side of the groom and it is denoted by the term as 'Bride-price'.

In the appointed day the groom party proceeds to the house of the bride in a procession. In addition to the father and mother of the groom other relatives and friend also may take part in this marriage procession. A girl is specially selected to carry the ornaments, clothing and cosmetics meant for decorating the bride. This girl is selected from the groom side and she is called in tribal vocabulary 'Randhinijuk'. Moreover, two girls are selected as a helpers of the new bride and take part in marriage procession from the bridegroom's house to bring the bride. These two girls are known as 'Aiya'. At the departure of the marriage procession, the 'Aiya's are symbolically carried one 'Langi' (an earthen pitcher of wine) to followed an ancient tradition and after arriving of them (i.e. marriage procession) it (langi) is placed on the right side of the door of the bride's house. An earthen

lamp is kindled up and placed in the door-way of the room before making an entry into the house of the bride as a mark of invocation. Thereafter, all members of groom party are receptioned by the bride's family and specially to serve the wine to them.

Meanwhile, the house of the bride is full of invited relatives and guests. Taking their (groom party) seats in a place specially reserved for the groom party. They start exchange of words. Some of them with the permission of the parents of the bride began to dress up the bride. With this event a new life of the girl is started. In many cases the bride profusely cries in anticipation of giving up the parents house. The emotional impact of the event has a tendency to make the near and dear one's quite gloomy.

A special feature is followed in this custom of marriage. In the institution of 'Hamjuk-Tisy-Kaimung' is offered the presentation as new clothing (sari) and milk bowls to the mother of the bride on behalf of groom side at the time of bringing the bride from her parents house. This ritual is called 'Abaktwy sey'. Of course, accepting or non-accepting of such presentation was optional to the mother. It is open up regarded and undignified thing to accept such offer.\There is a significant reason behind the presentation of milk bowl. Mother had to bring up her daughter with 'Abaktwy' (breast milk). Therefore, at the time of giving away of her daughter or at the time when the groom party bring the daughter forever, the bowl is offered is recognition to debt owed to a mother. Thus accepting the offer of such presentation is looked upon as a matter of disgrace.

According to the social custom of Jamatia community the groom himself do not go to the house of the bride to bring the bride. It is worth-mentioning here that such custom observed in the ancient marriage custom of the Chakma community. But here no rigidity is maintained.

In this context it may say that the rigidity of the rituals of marriage is relaxing gradually day by day. According to my observation the rites and rituals of marriage and the ancient ways of marital alliance is also changed. At present the solemnization of marriage is performed on same day when the bride/groom is to bring.

In the evening of the day before the marriage, the bridal procession takes place in the house of the groom. The brother and sister, friends and relatives are participated in bridal party. To participate the parents of bride with bridal party is a taboo. After the marriage ceremony all of them return back. Next day in the first half of the morning the ritual of marriage occurs.

On that particular day, the gate is foisted in front of the house with plantain trees and other modern materials like electric light etc. Two water vessels are also put up under the plantain trees. The vessels are also decorated with mango-twigs.

In the system noted above the feast which is arranged in the occasion the ceremony and the cost involved in this matter is wholly borne by groom party. Generally, whole villagers are invited in a Jamatia marriage. However, it depends upon the financial conditions. For pecuniary reason this age-old practice is very often avoided.

It is important to mention that in the Jamatia community, the guest control practice in a marriage ceremony is very interesting and cultured. The concern party moves from door to door with a dish full of betel leaves and betel nuts, offering a betel to every household in the house as a mark of invitation. An adult person is nominated to supervise whether all the guests arrived in the appointed day. In kok-borok language this person is called 'Pushini' to ensure his arrival in that auspicious day. Mentionable that in the custom of 'Hamjuk Tisy Kaimung' the 'Pushini' is selected on behalf of the bridegroom side and the arrangement of feast is performed in bride-groom's house.

At the departure of the bride, the parents and aged persons are conveyed their blessing. And the Ochai (priest) pronounced some incantation and to lead their happy life and well being setting out. In this way the act of giving up the parents house of the bride is performed.

After arriving of the bride and bride's party, they are receptioned by the elders of groom through the songs and other rituals. Thereafter the bride enters the groom's house.

In the well-to-do families the arrival of the bridal procession is marked by the band party, fire work and the bride is carried in a palanquin. Presently one can notice many changes in such age-old custom some people cannot effort anything exceptmaking the bride on her foot or at best make use of modern public vehicles.

IV

In the custom of 'Nagha chamari Tisy Kaimung', nobody comes to bring the groom from his house. In the appointed day the groom and other relatives and friends moved in a procession to reach the house of the bride, blowing bamboo flute and yelling with joy. The groom receives the blessing of his parents just before the moment for setting out in the wedding procession. The friends, relatives and the other aged persons of the village may take part in the wedding procession. With the arrival of the groom in the courtyard of the bride house, the young brothers and sisters of the bride come forward and wash with water the feet of groom and his friends.

An interesting thing is noticed in this custom. At that time the groom and the groom party hide their faces with a piece of cloths. The inmates of the house coming forward for invoking has to find out the groom. If there (who are washing the feet) finding proved wrong it become a matter of ridicule.

In discussing the customary side of the Jamatia marriage we can through light upon some special rights. In order to bothe bride and groom on the appointed day before the marriage is solemnized, two minor boys and two minor girls are appointed to bring the water. They are known as 'Aiya'.

On the particular day of marriage, the 'Aiyas' accompany with the ochai (priest) and the other persons to the bank of the river. At the time of going to bring water with the earthen pitcher, the musical instruments are being played and typical 'ulu' sound is made three times by the married woman.

It is prohibited to made the 'ulu' sound of any barreness woman and even any widow and barren lady cannot take part at the time of bringing water. Thw water brought by the 'Aiyas' are used for bathing of the bride and the groom.

In this ritual has an obligatory condition which is strictly followed. The bride has to bathe with water brought by the girls and the groom has to be bath with water carried by the boys. In the Jamatia marriage custom the said rite is regarded as an important aspect of the wedding ceremony.

After completion of bathe the groom and the bride are dressed with new clothing and ornaments (in the case of bride). On the appointed day, in one corner of the courtyard the image of fourteen deities are set up and necessary arrangement is made for worship. In Jamatia society such worship is connected with wedding ceremony and this worship is connected with wedding ceremony and this worship is offered by the 'Ochai' i.e. priest.

In the Jamatia marriage custom two bamboo made pandal are raised. In one of these two pandal for the worship of 'fourteen deity' (Chauddha Devata) and other is meant for the marriage ceremony. It should be mentioned here that the 'Lampra owathop' worship is not performed in Jamatia marriage which is inevitable to followed in the Tripuri marriage custom.

Then the bride and groom jointly are brought together in front of the pulpit for showing reverence with obeisance. 'Ochai', the worshipping priest sprinkles the sanctified water upon the new couple as a mark of sacramentation and to bless for a happy conjugal life.

Thereafter, the couple sit with the priest for pronouncing the mantras. The sacrificial rites or the holy fire is also kindled there. At that time, the bride is to be put vermilion on the forehead by the groom. After that, the new couple are being led to 'wedding platform' for moving the bride seventh times around the groom.

After that rites, the famous game of 'Pasha Khela' is being observed as the concluding event of the marriage ceremony. On that very day a feast is also arranged for the invited guests.

On the morning of the next day the bride and groom accompany with the 'Ochai' to the bank of river and to wash the cloths which used in the day before through uttering the incantation. At that time one goat is sacrificed in respect of the deity for prosperity of the married couple. Of course, it is not a obligatory ritual. To sacrifice the goat, depends upon the respective financial ability.

The invited guests of the ceremony are to be offered wine and the arrangement of rice and meat is of course made for all, young and old. In the Jamatia community the custom of offering presentation in the marriage ceremony is absent. Instead of that, the custom of rendering blessing with 'Paddy' and 'Durba' and some money are prevalent. At the end of the ceremony after the marriage feast is over, the relatives, honourable aged persons of the village and other invited guests take their seats in different rooms in scattered manner. The new couple with a tray full of betels move around the rooms and offer 'Kuway fatwy' (betel leaf & nut) in the hands of their superior with obeisance.

At ability on that time the superior guest give money according to their ability on that tray, and their blessing to the couple. In tribal vocabulary this rites is called 'Hiyalli'. In this manner the rituals of the Jamatia marriage ends.

V

Right from the day, just after the day in which the marriage ceremony has occurred, the newly wedded couple has to sleep in a common apartment seven nights at a stress. In Jamatia marriage customs, it is an obligatory rites and it is also denoted an important to follow such ritual. In case of either of the couple has any appoinmenmt else where during that time, it must be

ensured that he or she returns home at night. Ominous consequences are being anticipated in the life of the newly married couple if there is any exception of this rule.

Under the system of 'Nagha Chamari Tisy Kaimung' (one who lives at one's father-in-law's house), the groom is tom live in the house of the bride forever. In this custom all the expenses involved for the purpose of marriage ceremony is borne by the bride party. On the other hand, if the ceremonies of marriage is performed in groom's residence, then it is must to give all kinds of materials like dress, ornaments and other cost of marriage to the bride. Of course, if the newly married couple faces any problem in the house of the bride due to some quarrel with the members of the bride family, the groom is allowed to go away else where with his married wife or he may even live in the same house by his own expenses with a separate room built for the purpose.

The marriage among the maternal cousin is usually prevalent in the Jamatia community, but in modern times the incident of such marriage is conspcious by its absent. The marriage of a widow with her brother-in-law has a place in Jamatia customs, but now-a-days such marriage is also not to be found much.

As long as the young boys are not fully able for Jhum cultivation and young girls are not fully equipped with the cooking ability and wearing of cloth there was no question of marriage. Now-a-days this custom is only followed as an exception. In ancient time, the system of child marriage was prevalent in Jamatia society which due to the expansion of modern education has not become quite conspicuous. Generally, a girl is given to marriage not before the age of 15-

16 which is of course 20-22 in the case of male. Of course, the matter of age may not be an obstacle in the case of marriage by love or marriage by elopement. Generally, the groom is senior to the bride with respect to age. 'Ghar Jamai' or one who lives at one's father-in-law's house is a common practice of the Lepchas and Bhutias community. In modern time these are very rare incident.

In the Jamatia marriage system, a peculiar feature is observed. From the beginning to the end of the marriage ceremony the bride and the groom both put their faces in hiding with the help of fans made of canes of bamboo. The faces are exposed only after the rituals of the marriage are completely over. There is a significant reason behind this incidents. Various types of people generally assemble in the marriage ceremony. There are may be barren ladies in that assemble and it is held that something ominous may occur to th newly married couple if they happen to see the faces of such woman.

The marriage is generally occurs in the month of Magha (January-February) and Phalgun (February-March). These two months are chosen as best time for marriage. At that time Jhum cultivation and raising of other agricultural crops are all ready over. The month of Vadhra (August-September), Chaitra (March-April) and Poush (December-January) are not regarded suitable for marriage. Most of the marriage takes place in the first half of the day. One thing to be noted here that the Jamatias are fixed the auspicious date and time of marriage in accordance with almanac. At present, in some cases due to the influence of neighbouring Bengalee culture, the marriage is performed at evening/night.

Remarriage is allowed in Jamatia society. After securing divorce or widowhood, a man/woman can marry second time, according their social status. Generally a widow re-marriage to widower or divorcee. The celibacy boy and virgin girl are not inclined to marry a widow/widower or divorcee.

Prohibition of marriage:

The following prohibitions are followed in the Jamatia marriage customs :

According to the customary law of the Jamatia, to set up the matrimonial alliance with the blood relationship are strictly prohibited. Generally, marriage does not take place inside of relatives i.e. from maternal side and from paternal side unless at least three generations are across between the bride and groom.

Direct parallel-cousin marriages with one's father's brother's son or daughter are strictly forbidden among the Jamatias.

There is a taboo in vogue in Jamatia marriage customs. A younger brother may marry an elder brother's widow wife, but an elder brother cannot marry formally the widow-wife of his younger brother. On the other hand, the marriage with one's wife's younger sister (after death) is permitted but not with the elder.

Long ago, the widow re-marriage was strictly forbidden among the Jamatias. Of course, at present such rigidity is relaxed and widow/widower are permitted to re-marry. According to the Jamatia customs, a widow lady cannot marry second time without penance where the widowers are not under this customarily obligations. Though in present time, the widow re-marriage is permitted but at the sight of society it is blame-

worthy. In the case of widow marriage, simple ceremony is performed.

According to my observations, among the Jamatias a widow is required to marry a widower or divorced man and a widower is also required to marry a widow or divorced lady.

I have learnt from that study that the parents of girls do not want to give the marriage of his/her virgin girl with a widower or divorcee. To keep up the spirit of their social custom, a virgin is prohibited to do so.

Marriage with cross-cousin was prevalent among the Jamatias. A person could marry his mother's brother's daughter and similarly, a girl could marry her mother's brother's son. In present time, due to spread of education and influence of modernity, among the urbanized Jamatias this ancient custom is on the wane.

It is a customary taboo, to marry second time of a widow before the funeral ceremony (Sradha) of her dead husband. On the other hand a widower is also under this obligatory rule.

According to the Jamatia customary law, the marriage is not socially performed outside of their community. However, I have learnt in the present study a Jamatia boy can marry beyond their community with the permission of the Head of the village council i.e. 'Hoda okra'.

The solemnization of marriage in the month of Vadhra (August-September), Poush (December-January) and Chaitra (March-April) are prohibited.

In the Jamatia marriage, the custom of 'Lampra owathop' worship is not performed. The worship of Fourteen deities (Chowdha devata) is performed in marriage ceremony.

However, after the marriage they are worshipped the 'Lampra owathop' puja for well-being of the newly married couple.

The custom of exchange of garland and sprinkling of flowers are not prevalent in Jamatia marriage system.

In the Jamatia marriage custom, the practice of 'Jamai khata' (marriage by service) is not prevalent. However, long long ago such custom was practiced.

If the dissolution of marriage is initiated from the wife then such lady is deprived from any compensation and the brideprice i.e. which is got at the marriage function from the groom side.

It is a customary prohibition to marry second time during the life of his/her husband/wife without divorce. Even, it is punishable offence.

The customs of child marriage is strictly objectionable in Jamatia society and rest the others. A boy and a girl do not marry below 21 and 18 years respectively.

A man or woman cannot divorce his/her wife/husband without the consent of the head of the village council i.e. 'Hoda okra'.

Under the aforesaid circumstances, if anybody violated these rules he or she may punishable offence and the punishment are enforced by the 'Hoda okra' (head of village council).

Divorce (kaglaymung):

Like the other society, divorce is permitted among the Jamtias. On the various ground the event of divorce is not so rare case in Jamatia society. A man can divorce his wife or any reasonable ground. Divorce can be takes place on the cause of barrenness, incurable disease, illicit relation with another man or woman,

misunderstanding of each other and few cases divorces are the result of irritableness of husband or wife.

Divorce is effected through the discussion and decision of the 'Hoda okra' (chief Judge of village). It deserves special mention that the Jamatia tribe is still following its social customs and laws under the supreme authority of its social chief who is called 'Hoda okra'. The 'Hoda okra' generally elected for a period of five years².

In this context it is notable here, that the 'Hoda okra' must be religious minded with adequate experience of the functions of customary laws. He should also be acquainted with their marriage and other social customs. Moreover, he should also be a married person. Divorce, adultery, kidnapping and antisocial activities etc. all sorts of cases are dealt with by him i.e. 'Hoda okra'.

As a result of divorce, the offender is to be fined and the quantity of fine is decided by the village council. After the divorce, a mother can naturally claim her suckling progeny. It is a common picture after the divorce, during the infancy period of the children remain with their mother.

References:

- 1. Bhattacharjee, P.N. 'The Jamatia Folklore: A socio-economic study'.
- 2. Bhattacharjee, P.N. 'The Jamatia of Tripura'.



Chapter-V

Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this project report is to be discussed regarding the marriage custom of different tribal communities of Tripura on the basis of self-evident.

The term 'marriage' means an unification or intimate union of two souls or minds. It is the life-long partnership between a man and a woman. Marriage becomes an important aspect of life when it is viewed as a means to end of carrying forward the identity of family.

In view of the foregoing discussion, the system of marriage of one tribal community is likely to differ from that of the other in many respect because of the cultural diversities, social standing and traditional believes in marriage. In the field of marriage the influence of urban life as well as non-tribal societies in shaping the system of marriage is no less pervasive. It will not be wrong to say that the marriage occupies an important place in the life of tribals.

In the preceding chapters, the system and arrangement of marriage of thr Tripuris, the Reangs, the Chakmas, and the Jamatias has been narrated. According to the self evident, it is visible thing that a section of scheduled tribes who are mainly reside in interior rural areas are strictly followed their traditional marriage custom. Till now, even the ancient custom for acquiring mate i.e. marriage by service (jamai-khata) is prevalent among

the Reangs of interior places of the state who are identified as primitive tribes.

However, it was observed at that time of interview, the respondents are not given their affirmative opinion towards the such customs. Rather it, (the custom of Jamai-khata) is looked down upon by the society at present ages. In another words, it may say in lieu of rendering physical service the customs of bride-price for acquiring the bride prevails among the Reangs of Tripura who are living in remote areas of the state.

Marriage is generally taken place through negotiation. Some important system of acquiring of mates in vogue amongst the different tribal communities are marriage by negotiation, marriage by service, marriage by payment or bride-price marriage, marriage by elopement etc. Though, marriage by elopement not permitted and taken into account unlawful, sometimes, does occur. Elopement takes place due to too much the power of restraining exercised by parents over their words and also denying them the freedom to select their mates.

Marriage was not hold beyond their respective community. But in the present study it is learnt that at present the marriage may takes place within the kok-borok speaking tribes. Divorce is permitted on the reasonable grounds as determined by a particular group. If one pays for divorce then the one is to pay compensation to the opponent party. Remarriage of widow, widower and divorcee are allowed on consideration of various factors. But such cases, the marriage are not performed with great pomp. Dowry system is existent and it is initiated by the bride side. Child marriage is not encouraged by the tribes of Tripura.

The legal minimum age of marriage in India is 21 years for boys and 18 years for girls. The child marriage restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978, makes it a offence for a boy to marry before he completes 21 years and for a girl before the age of 18 years. Anyone who contracts a marriage with one below this age limit or who are performs, conducts or directs such a marriage, is liable or under an obligation to punishment under the laws. The court can also prohibit any marriage proposed to be performed contravening the prescribed age limits. The sais law is partially true for tribals of Tripura.

In the present study it is to be noticed that generally t6he Jamatias do not marry outside their community. If anyone is married to the outside their community like the Tripuris and for the performance of such marriage, the permission of 'Hoda okra' (i.e. head of the Supreme council) is to be required.

Intermarriage between the Chakmas and other tribes are not much in vogue. However, in Tripura where they have been living in company with other tribal and non-tribal people for a long period, the event of intermarriage are an exclusion. On the other hand, among the Tripuris the custom of intermarriage are not objectionable.

It should be noted that like the past, the customary laws and practices of the tribes of Tripura are not strict or punctilious today. Over the years many of the customary laws have undergone changes.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the society and the custom of culture are dynamic like a rolling stone.

Some changes are constantly or uniformity followed in the urban dwelling tribal marriage custom due to the influence of

neighbouring non-tribal culture. It is no denying the fact that with the change of surroundings conditions, the life style of tribals are gradually developing and they are inclined towards the modern thinking. It should be noted that among the urbanized tribal section, some modification of rites and rituals of marriage are to be followed. Such modifications of the tribal marriage custom is the bearing and conveying of mixed culture.

Bibliography

Adhikary, A. K. Status and Role of women among the

Birhor: a Nomadic Hunting and Gathering Community of Eastern India, in Tribal women in India, Calcutta: Indian Anthropological Society, n 1978.

Archer, W.G. Tribal Law3 and Justice (A Report on

the Santhal) Concept Publishing

Company, New Delhi, 1984.

Basu, P.C. The Social and religious ceremonies of

the Chakmas, Journal of Asiatic Society

of Bengal, Vol.N.S XXVII, 1931.

Basu, M.N. Sociology, An Applied Limb of

Cultural Anthropology.

Bhandari, B. Tribal marriage and Sex Relation.

Bhattacharjee, S.R. Tribal Insurgency in Tripura.

Bhattacharjee, P. Tribal Pujas and Festivals in Tripura,

Tripura Upajati Sanskriti.

Bhattacharjee, P.N. Loko Britter Aloke Koloi Sampradaya,

Directorate of Research, Govt. of Tripura. The Jamatias of Tripura, Directorate of Research, Govt. of Tripura. The Jamatia Folklore: A Socio

Essassis Chada

Economic Study.

Marriage	System	of the	Tribal	Societies	of Tripura
----------	--------	--------	--------	------------------	------------

Bisht, B.S. Tribes of India, Nepal, Tibet

Borderland, A Study of Cultural Transformation, Gyan Publishing

House, New Delhi-110002.

Chakma, S. Chakma Parichiti, Bargang

Publications, Tribal officers colony,

Rangamati, Bangladesh.

Chakma, N. A Short Profile of Chakma Language,

Literature & Cultural C.B.S.A.

Publication series No.4.

Chatterjee, H. The Social background of the Forms of

Marriage in Ancient India (vol.I).

Choudhury, D. Chakma Prabad, Calcutta.

Choudhury, A. Census Report, 1310 Tripura (1901 AD).

Dalton, E.T. Tribal history of Eastern India, Cosmo

Publications, New Delhi-110002.

Das Gupta, M. Status of Tribal Women in Tripura.

Das, S.T. Life Style of Indian Tribes. Tribal Life

of North-East India.Gyan Publishing

House.

Debbarma, S. Sadharan Simisksher Aloke

Uchai, Directorate of Research, Govt. of

Tripura.

Debbarma, S.C. Tripura Census Bibarani, 1931.

Debbarma, D. Treatise on Traditional Social

Institutions of the Tripuri Community, Directorate of Research, Govt. of

Tripura.

Gan Choudhury, J. The Reangs of Tripura, Directorate of

Research, Govt. of Tripura.

Guhathakurata, S.N. Tripura.

Hunter, W.W. A Statistical Account of Bengal.

Jahoda, M. Research Method in Social Relations,

The Dryden Press, 1951.

Kapur, P. Love, Marriage and Sex, Vikash

Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Kanpur, London.

Carotemprel, S The Tribes of north-East India.

Lal, P. Hindu Customary Law in Kumaun,

Allahabad, Govt. Press, 1942.

Mazumdar, D.N. A Tribe in Transition : a Study in

Culture Pattern, Calcutta, 1937.An Introduction to Anthropology, Asia

publishing House, Bombay-1963.

Marak, J.L.R. Garo Customary Laws and Practices (A

Sociological Study).

Mead, M. The Changing Culture of Indian Tribe,

New York, 1932.

Nair, P.T. Marriage and Dowry in India.

Publicity Department,

Govt. of Tripura, Profile of Tripura

Agartala.

Rajaraman-I Economics of bride Price and Dowry,

Economic and Political Weekly, Vol-18,

No.8, Feb. 19, 1983.

Rao, D.L.P. An Analysis of kinship, Economy and

Religion of the Jatpus : A Scheduled Tribes in Andhra Pradesh, Research

Thesis, Andhra University, 1970.

Roy Choudhury, N.R Tripura Through the ages, Bureau, of

Research and Publication of Tripura,

1977.

Roy, S. Tribal Customary Law of North-East

India.

Rizvi, S.H.M. B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi-

110007.

Saha, S.B. Socio-economic Survey of the Noatia

Tribes. Tribal welfare Department,

Govt. of Tripura, Agartala.

Shashi, S.S. The Tribal Women of Eastern India.

Sen, S. Tribes of Tripura.

Sinha, S.B. Society in Tribal India.

Sinha, K. Rajmala, Comilla, 1896.

Sinha, R.G. The Kukis of Tripura, A Socio-

Economic Survey, Directorate of

Research, Govt. of Tripura.

Smith, W.R. Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia,

London, 1903.

Tylor, E.B. Primitive Culture, New York, 1874.

Westermark, E. The History of Human Marriage,

London, 1921.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Sl.No. Date of Interview:

- 1. a) Name of respondent:
 - b) Sex: Male/Female:
 - c) Community : Tripuri/Reang/Chakma/Jamatia.
 - d) Religion:
 - e) Marital Status : Married/Unmarried/Widow/
 - Widower/Divorced.
 - f) Residence:
- 2. What is the concept of marriage? Is it biological necessity only? Is there any economic consideration or social consideration?
- In your opinion, is marriage essential for girl? Yes/No. If yes, Why?
 - a) Companionship,
 - b) As a social obligation,
 - c) For over all security,
 - d) Financial gain,
 - e) To avoid loneliness,
 - f) For emotion satisfaction,
 - g) Desire for children.

If no, why?

- a) It is a oppressive institution,
- b) A woman can do more important things than marriage,
- c) Do not want to live under any obligation.
- 4. Who takes the major decision regarding the choice of life partner for the matured boy/girl of your family?

- a) Eldest male,
- b) Eldest female,
- c) Father of the boy/girl,
- d) Mother of the boy/girl,
- e) Boy/girl himself/herself,
- f) Joint affairs,
- g) Other persons.
- 5. Whether plural wives are allowed in your community? If so, what is the social effect?
- 6. Can a woman marry second time during the life time of her exhusband? If so, is there any social restriction?
- 7. Is monogamy practiced in your community?
- 8. Whether polygamy is practiced in your community? Is it punishable offence? Id so what is the quantum of punishment?
- At what age people should marry?
 Male Female –
- 10. How marriage ceremony is solemnized? What are the rituals for the ceremony?
- 11. Can a tribal socially marry a Bengalee girl or boy? If so, what is its social effect?
- 12. Whether inter-tribal and inter-ethnic marriages are permissible in your community?
- 13. Whether social marriage is allowed among the close relatives? If no, why?
- 14. How many types of marriage generally are in practice in your community?

- 15. Whether the marriage by service is still in practice in your community?
- 16. How 'marriage by service' is solemnized? What is the minimum time of service period? What duties the bride-groom is to perform in the bride's house during this period?
- 17. Whether such service by the groom can be substituted by the money compensation?
- 18. Whether the bride-groom can stay in the bride's house permanently after the service period is over?
- 19. Whether the son-in-law is given some property by the father-in-law as a gift?
- 20. Whether marriage by payment is in vogue? How it is solemnized?
- 21. Under what circumstances, generally marriage by elopement takes place?
- 22. Who play the role of priest in marriage? What amount is to be paid as honorarium to him? What qualities he must possess?
- 23. Is there any special dress for bride and bride-groom for the marriage ceremony?
- 24. Under what circumstances divorce may be permitted?
- 25. What are the procedures of divorce?
- 26. If divorce takes place due to the fault of the wife, in that case whether the divorce son-in-law is given to any compensation?
- 27. Whether the divorce is allowed when a woman is pregnant? If so whether the husband is to bear the expenditure connected with the delivery of the baby? Under such circumstances who is the rightful custodian of such a child?

- 28. Is re-marriage of widow or widower permitted in your community?
- 29. With whom the children stay if the divorce takes place with approval of father and mother?
- 30. What is the usual season of marriage? In which month's marriage is prohibited?
- 31. Whether dowry system is prevalent in your community? If so, what is the role of dowry system? From which side it is initiated? Is there any obligation to give dowry?
- 32. Which kind of dowry is given in marriage ceremony? Cash money/gold-ornament/land/any assets.
- 33. Is there any terms and conditions to demand dowry in your community? If so, what are these?

