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Tribal Identity and Societal Formation: Reflection on Socio-economic Paradigm of Women Among the Deori Community in Assam

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Abstract:

India's Assam is the landscape of indigenous tribes. The Deori tribe of Assam is one of the highlighting frame fabrics of the rich Assamese Culture and heritage. Since the time immemorial, the Deori tribes have been living in the places of Sadia Jorhat, Majuli, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Jonai, Gogamukh, Silapothar, Bihpuria, Lakhimpur, Narayanpur, Gohpur etc. in Assam and Jaydam hill, Mahadevpur of Lohit District, Chusipol of Chuglung District of Arunachal Pradesh in India.

Feminism is a variety of socio-political movements, ideologies that share a widespread objective to identify, establish and realize political, economic, personal, and social rights for women. It covers seeking to establish identical prospects for women in societal formation. Thus, observed as identical with a movement and revolution to protect and endorse issues connecting women.

Tribal women face noteworthy challenges to the full enjoyment of their human rights, hence, experience manifold forms of discrimination, lack access to education, health care, face unreasonably high rates of poverty etc.

The position of tribal women can be reviewed primarily by the tasks they play in society. Their roles are resolute to a large extent through the system of descent.

The Deori Women in the indigenous Society are of great value. The proposed Research Paper is an effort to emphasize Tribal Identity and Societal Formation of Deori Community with special reference to women.

Keywords: Tribal Identity, Societal Formation, Socio-economic Paradigm, Women, Deori Community, Assam

Introduction:

India's North-East is inhabited by a lot of indigenous tribes and as constituent of their socio-cultural life. The Deori community is one of the major ethnic tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in India. The community is one of the plain schedule societies of Assam, who are

likely to present specific socio-cultural and demographic uniqueness which are dissimilar from those of other tribal and non-tribal populations of Assam in India.

Just about all of the tribal communities have certain culture and tradition and they develop it in their own and unique style. They have a immense contribution towards the making and well-being of Assamese culture. Deori, Bodo, Mishng, Kachari, Rabha, Karbi, Hajong, Tiwa are some major inhabitants of the land. Deori community has a distinguished culture and tradition which is a hidden treasure for the sociologists and Anthropologists. While talking about the issues of traditionalism and globalization, we have to talk about the discourse of the Deori Community of Assam with special Reference to Women.

Statement of the Research Problem:

The Deori women are unique and special regarding socio-economic facets in indigenous society which have its immense value on research.

Justification of the Study:

The Deori women have societal uniqueness. The present paper on the socio-economic aspects of the Deori women is of great importance.

Aims and Objectives:

- 1) To highlight tribal identity and societal formation.
- 2) To focus socio-economic paradigm of women among the Deori community.

Research Methodology:

Descriptive, historical and anthropological methodology will be followed depending upon the context of the research paper.

Research Questions:

What is the Relevancy, outline and context?

Rationale:

The Deori community has some special identities. Very fewer Studies have done about the Deori tribe entailed with the literature and culture. However, the identification in the field of socio-economic aspects of the Deori women in national and International level, need special attention so that these issues can be highlighted and can be tackled through adoption of certain appropriate ethnographers. Traditionalism and Globalization- a discourse on Deori Community of Assam with special Reference to Women is of immense value as a research.

Origin of Deori:

The name of the Tribe Deori indicates the home to the God. The Deoris prefer to introduce themselves as “Jimsaya”, the meaning of which is partly as – “Ji means water “No” means “Man”, “Cha” means “Sun” and “Ya” means “Moon”. The Deori Community believes that they are born from the moon, the sun and the water. The tribe Deori is one of most important parts the Assamese Nation. Even though the Deori Society is patriarchal, but there is no less sign of importance of women. There is seen some of the most incredible specialties seen in

the Deori Society from behavior to the social customs. The Deoris are one of the oldest tribes of Assam.

The word Deori is derived from the word “Devagrihik”. Dr. Banikanta Kakoty regarding the word “Deori” opined that the word came from the Sanskrit word “Devagrihik”, a word that got its origin from the new Indian Arya language.

According to some philosophers Deoris are Deori because of their worship to “Deo”. Another class of Philosophers says that the word Deori got its originality from “Deva” God.

Class of the Deori:

The Deori are divided into four classes. In olden days they generally lived on the Bank of River. Consequently the names of the classes go according to the names of the rivers. The class lived on the Bank of the Dibang River is called “Dibangiya”, the same way the inhabitants on the Bank of the Tengapani River is called Tengapania, inhabitants on the Bank of Barnadi are called Bargaya and the inhabitants on the Bank of Pator Sal are called “Pator Gaya”. The class pator Gaya is lost to the tides of time.

According to Dr. Bhimkanta Barua, the Deoris according to the legend believe that this class of Deori was appointed to behead man and got so infuriated upon by Goddess Tamreswari on being unable to do so that they were made to Vomit Blood to Death. Today a very small number of people of this class are seen in some place.

Some Specialties of Deori Language:

1. As long as going on discussing the specialty of the Deori language its periphery extends.
2. The mother tongue is the main resource of the Deoris. In the pages of history the Deori language is introduced as Deori Chutia language. In the present Day it is known only as Deori language. On the other hand the Government of Assam on the 28th day of January, 2005 positively announced the acceptance of the language of Deori.
3. In the Book, “An Outline Grammar of the Deori Chutia Language” spoken in Upper Assam. By P. W. B. Brown published in 1895, named Deori as Deori Chutiya and that the Deori Chutiya Language at that time was the richest language in Upper Assam was also made known.
4. Originally the language Deori is Tibetan Mongolian. Now it has got its form of written language. It is a matter of sad that at a Good time when Deori Sahitya Sabha did all possible things on behalf of the language for its Development. The number of people speaking in the language has become notably less.
5. The Language is alive and is used only by the Debongiya Deoris the other two Classes Tengapaania and Borgoyan sepak in Assamese rather that speaking in Deori.
6. Now there are raised arguments on behalf of the language which could be regarded as a Good Sign to give the language a new life.
7. The tribe of Deori got its rise in 1936. Giving Birth to Social Organization named “Sadau Asom Deori Sanmilan”, the Social activist Bhimbar Deori and others fought to save and developed the language.

8. Deori Folk Literature is introduced to some extent in the Book “Deori Krishti Aru Somu Itihash” edited by Sarat Chandra Deori Bharali and Turam Deori Bharali in 1950.
9. It is beyond doubt good news to have edited a Book named “Deori Sanskriti” by laureate pensioner Dambarudhar Deori in 1964.
10. 20th January, 1935, a red letter day, as this day, brought the governmental Acknowledgement, as a result of hard work towards the much expected Deori language and literature from the point of view its publicity.

Place of Worship-Deoshal or Midiku:

The Deoris pray to their gods and Goddesses. For the Goodness of all living being in their society in Deoshal or Midiku and this place of worship is the pivot of their rustic life.

Marriage the Deori Women are very concerned about their marriage. Their marriage is arranged between some special classes. Monogamy is allowed in case the death of the wife, a man can marry another woman. The essential item of a Deori marriage constitutes dried fish, pork, suize and Betel leaves and Nuts.

Worship:

1. The Deoris set an alter in their respective village. They go through a total democratic process to do it.
2. The Deoris Democratically (Wishing for Goodness of all) pray in the alter and to perform this ritual the society selects special person. There are four categories or ranks of the officials – they are as (i) Bar Deori (ii) Soru Deori (iii) Barbharali and (iv) Soru Bharali.
3. The Bar Deori is the most respected man in the village. The villagers choose as the Bar Deori must be a man of character.

Living Place:

- (1) Deoris live on the Bank of Rivers and elsewhere. They have traditionally been living in groups.
- (2) The first room to reach is called “Subasani” room which is set centering the home deity.
- (3) The process of arranging the “Subasani” room is seen only among the Tengapania Tribe.
- (4) Their dinning process differs from all other tribes that is performed upon a special table made of cane named “Mehenga”.

The Socio-economic paradigm of Deori Women:

The Deori women write the song of life in the handloom. They cherish in their heart the colourful aspirations of life. The Deori Girls become expert knitter from their very early age. It has now become a very important part in their daily life to develop the mode of education. It is our warm wish so that the Deori culture and unity be appreciated not only in Assam but the rest of India. Let their civilization, and culture be flown forever.

Costumes:

- (1) The only clothes knitted by Deori women are accepted in the society. Earlier these cloths were used to be knitted with cotton and worm,
- (2) The cloths knitted for males are namely – “IKU” (Dhoti), “Jema” (Gamosa), “De Isa” (Bar Kapoor), “Suru Isa” (Soru Kapoor) etc.

Ornaments:

One of the most important traditions hereditary coming on is the ornaments used by the Deori women. The ornaments women by the Deori women are as follows

- (1) Hand Ornaments : (i) Dirbuiyo Usu (Silver Bangles)
(ii) Pikiti Usung (Small Bangles)
(iii) Pujio Demasi Usung
- (2) Ear Rings : (i) Amiri Kotung (Ear ring made of tree twigs)
(ii) Jangpai Kurtung
(iii) Kunti Kutung (Made of Silver and Gold)
- (3) Necklace : (i) Dio- Yoli, (ii) Golpotali, (iii) Jogur Li
(iv) Medal Li, (v) Detegali ,
(vi) Pujio Li (Made of Gold), (vii) Dio-Yo-Li

Ethno Eco-tourism and Sujen- A Natural based Element:

All the ecotourism definitions regardless of their stance included the natural-based element. The methodologies of preparation were similar in the different villages of the Deori community; yet the number of plant species used varied from family to family. Sujen preparation consists of two parts, Mod Pitha (natural starter) preparation, and Sujen preparing (brewing). Sujen a well-liked local rice beer has a very significant task in the socio-cultural life. Sujen is drunk in all their cheerful occasions and celebrations. The starter cake is known as Mod pitha (natural starter) and consists of a variety of parts of several plant species.

For preparing Sujen different categories of rice are applied, nevertheless, the excellent beer was reported to be acquired from the sticky kind of rice extensively cultivated by Deori community. For preparing Sujen the role of the women is of great value.

Some Changes:

- (1) The influence of globalization has made a rapid change to the society.
- (2) The impact of globalization has even touched the religious point of view in the Deori Society. With the passage of time many Deori people have changed their religion to the Christianity, the religion of Anukul Thakur, the religion of Vaishnave etc.
- (3) With the passage of time the mentality of many Deori people has come down who instead of living in the Traditional manner have come out of the village to the city to earn a better living.

- (4) The changes have been made by the modern electronic technologies and cultures.
- (5) The advertisements have brought changes in the field of the costumes used by the Deori Youth. Nowadays they prefer contemporary dress.
- (6) The traditional treatment almost outdated in the Deori Society in the present day.
- (7) The Deori costumes are now can be seen throw the photo albums.
- (8) The well-liked traditional club of Youth (Dekachung) is obsolete at the present.

Impact of Globalization:

The word 'Globalization' is very well known in the learned society. Globalization is a word that excels the limit of a country and internationally binds the whole world in the field of economic strategy, export, import and financial amendment.

Globalization gives importance upon making the world changed by changing the features of daily life including development of every important aspect of life. Globalization has also put its importance upon the Deori Society. For instance we can take the familiar works of women knitting that has changed into depending upon the readymade cloth available in the market. All these because of the bliss of globalization mercantile group of people are becoming befitted more and more and the traditional cloth knitting custom is coming to an end gradually.

An environment of competition is now becoming a clear notion from the perspective of collecting more and more fashionable clothes on the auspicious occasions. This like is due to a wave rising to change oneself to an even wider world from the periphery of theirs since the birth they've seen.

Some Photographs:



A way of sustainable development



Deori girls producing their cloths



Research Scholar in a Deori Family



Preparing Sujen with celebrations

Concluding Remarks:

Studies on women's questions now exist all over the globe. These issues have newly caught the attention of many and have expanded impact in the academy through student and faculty activism. Social reformers all over the country explained deep apprehension for women issues for example sati, child marriage, female infanticide, widowhood, purdah, education, polygamy and so on.

Different scholars have been focusing critical explanation on women's position in the nineteenth century. From the early twentieth century women's unions began to form and a special category of women activities was constructed. It is noted that from the first decades of the twentieth century, the verbalization of women's topics was based on liberal ideologies of equality in each meadow of society.

It has really been a thing we must think over once that if globalization goes an unstoppable way ignoring the entire homemade including traditionally then there will come one day when the traditional customs will completely be forgotten. We modestly hope cogitative people and organizations must come forward to save our traditions.

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