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“Contribution Of Mishng Tribal Women To The Development Of Socio- Economic Status In Society”

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Abstract:

Assam is the state where reside diversified population of various ethnic and tribal peoples along with their diversified culture. Among them Mishng are one of the most significant tribe of this region. Since their presentation is the authentic history of Assam. They have contributed a lot for richness of greater Assamese culture. This paper is to make an investigation into the role and the socio-economic status of women in Mishng society of Assam considering different aspect of their contributions, such as participation in economic activity and other productive activities etc. Among them weaving is regarded as an exclusive contribution.

The socio-economic condition of this community is not quite well as compared to other communities. They are originally known as farmer. Now a days, a portion of them is being related with some other occupation too, but it is very limited portion. Form the very beginning of the development of this community weaving has been playing a significant role among the communities. In earlier they weave cloths only for their domestic purpose. But at present, they extended it in to commercial purpose too. But at present the weaving among Mishng's are facing serious problems many way. So it is the high time to give importance over the matter and take necessary steps for well functioning of the craft among them. This is an attempt through which a study is conducted to light out its role along with various obstacles faces by it by using descriptive method of study.

Keywords: Assam, Earnings, Mishng, Women, Weaving, Tribal people etc.

Introduction:

It is said that Assam is the melting pot of many diversified communities along with their distinctive cultural traits. Basically, Aryan, Mongoloid and Dravidian stocks of people melted here with those of Indo-Burmese, Indo-Iranian and Indo-Tibetan origins live in this state. Assam is populated by seventeen distinctive tribes that co-exist peacefully, each of them are unique in their traditions, culture, dress, and colourful ways of life.

The Mishing, an Indo-Mongoloid ethnic group formerly referred to as Miris, are the second largest ethnic group in Assam. With a population nearly 12 lakhs are scattered over the eight far eastern districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Sonitpur. The word Mishing derives from the two word Mi and Yasing. 'Mi' means 'men,' while 'yasing' means fair or worthy, so 'mishing' means a 'worthy man.' To depict other indigenous Assamese communities the word Mipak is used extensively. Mipak is the opposite meaning of Mishing.

The Mishings originally belong to hill tribe from Northwest China, Tibet and Mongolia. The Mising are one of Assam's aboriginal communities, travelled down from Manasa Sarovar, the highest freshwater lake in the world and an ancient holy site considered by pilgrims to be the source of the four greatest rivers of Assia (Brahamaputra, Karnali, Indus and Sutlej) and around the 8th century settled in Arunachal Pradesh. Around 700 or more years ago they spread down the course of tributaries feeding into the Brahamaputra like the Dihing, Disang, Dikhow, Subansiri, Ranganadi, and Dikrong to the Assam plains in search of a less hostile more economically viable life. But as comparative latecomers found the best lands had been already been taken. They therefore settled on the fertile riverbanks which also gave them protection against their enemies. After building up such a close affinity there they engage themselves as cultivator or as fisherman with rivers over the centuries. It is not surprising that many Mishing are accomplished boat and fishermen, however sadly some of the villages are being forced to relocate away from the rivers due to soil erosion.

Significance of the study:

The weaving and the Mishing women are two inseparable concepts since their appearance in the authentic history of Assam. Since then, the weaving has been playing a significant role in their domestic economy and as well as empowering themselves. Even in some time it represents as the main earnings in some families. Moreover, the Mishing women could able to draw worldwide attention through their Mirizim. So, it is an honest attempt to light out the matter among all.

Objectives:

The objectives of this paper is to highlight the contribution of weaving in the field of domestic economy and to the culture at the village status in such backward areas and for backward communities of the sub-division as a representative work for the whole communities on the following grounds-

The range of weaving among the Mishing women.

Facilities given from homely and by the government for weaving.

Activities taken in case of quality maintenance of weaving.

Problems faces and problems arising out of the matter on that community if any?

Public awareness and community participation etc.

Methodology:

The study is conducted by descriptive method of study. Basically the study is based on secondary source of data. Essential data have been collected from various published books and topics written websites.

Analysis:

Weaving is regarded as most essential works and that may not be detached from the Mishing women who start their training in this craft before their teenage. They weave cotton jackets, towels, endi (swals), thick loinclots and so ties shirts for their menfolk. They also weave ege (Skirt-like garments), Ribi(rectangular cloth with narrow wrapped over the lower garments from bodies to knees), Selenggusor (fabric occasionally worn instead of a ribi), Riya (a long scarf) and Niseg (a cloth tied over the shoulder for carrying babies). They also weave the Gamocha, the traditional cotton scarf and Assamese cultural symbol that are bestowed on honoured guests visiting the village.

Before cotton thread was readily available the missing used to grow their own cotton and spun the yarn themselves. They also use some silk yarns, but sparingly. They used to endi yarn obtain from silk worms fed on the leaves of castor-oil plants however they later learned the use of the golden Muga (silk obtained from worms fed on the Sum tree) and the white Paat (from worms fed on mulberry leaves) from neighboring communities.

The Mishing women of Majuli are specifically renowned for their exquisite handlooms, especially their mirizimshawals and blankets, and they reinvent their traditional diamoned pattern in cottonless weaves using their favourite colours like white, orange, yellow, green, black and red.

The Mishing also make a very special textile called Gadu, a blanket that is fluffy on one side and women on a traditional lion looms. It is extremely intricate and time-consuming work. The wraps is cotton spun into thick and strong yarn and the weft is spun into soft yarn, cut and inserted piece by piece to form the fluf. Sadly this particular form of weaving is fast disappearing due to the ready availability of inexpensive blankets in the market.

Here are some productive cloths produced by the Mising women along with their utilization shown on the table no-1.

Table No: 1

Sl. No.	Item	Meaning	Utilization by
1	Mibo galuk	Cotton jackets	Menfolk
2	Dumer	Towels	Do
3	Tapumgasor/ege	Endi (shawls)	For whole family
4	Gadu	Thick loinclots that is known as Mirizim	Do
5	Galuk	Shirts	Menfolk
6	Ege	Skirt- like garments	Girls
7	Ri-bi	Rectangular cloth with narrow strips wrapped over the lower garments from bodies to knees	Womenfolk
8	Selenggusor	Fabric occasionally worn instead of ri-bi	Do
9	Riya	A long scarf	Do
10	Miseg	A cloth tide over the shoulder for carrying babies	Do
11	Dumer	Gamocha- the traditional cotton scarf and	For honour guest

		Assamese cultural symbol	
12	Muga gasor	Muga cloth	Do
13	Pat gasor	Pat cloth	Womenfolk

It is evident that Mishing women's are well expert in weaving. They weave all the cloths those needed for either domestically used or social purpose. If they would have thought that they would not depend on modern market, it is possible for them they could have manage all the necessary things in the context of wearing, But now a days, a significant portion of the whole community are being depending on market cloths for assimilating with the changes of time and situation in some cases. It is observed that almost all of them among the Mishing women are more or lessly co-operate with weaving.

The Mishing women found to be more or less related with some particular cottage industries such as weaving, poultry etc. It is noticeable that the missing women who reside in villages tries to develop their economic and social status with the help of cottage industries and they are successful in case of empowering themselves in such rural and backward situation. The earning comes from the cottage industries are only the way of traditional income almost all of them.

There is lot of restrictions among the women of the communities the researcher studied. When we analyze the role of weaving in missing communities it can clearly be said that the women plays a role of great importance both economically and socially. In fact in economical structure women plays a very strong role. In fact women today have started weaving and all the products that they weave are marketed, which forms a considerable amount of money. Thus, it can be undeniably claimed that the women plays a role of great economic importance in the family.

The researcher observed some specific points in the context of weaving during the time of investigation are pin pointed as under-

Some loopholes observed by researcher:

The household accommodation is not comfortable for both weaving industries activities and also for leaving. The place use for weaving is generally outside of the main home is not sufficient in the context security.

Women are given financial help from the family is not sufficient in case of collection of tools and raw materials for weaving.

In the context of quality maintenance it is observed that they always tried to develop it through their limited knowledge of weaving.

Lack of consciousness of the women on the present elasticity of the price of market is observed.

Government giving some financial and infrastructural facilities which are inadequate through MAC (Mishing Autonomous Council) at present.

Suggestions:

The weavers should be inspired for expanding their business without hesitation and plan wise development is needed.

- Women's should be provided with better facility and sufficient infrastructures.
- They should provide attractive housing conditions for specially weaving cottage industry.
- They are needed sufficient training of modern weaving cottage industry.
- The weaving among Mishing women should find more focus and advertisement in the Medias.
- Effective policies should be increased.
- Provisions of adequate market to be made, so that they could earn enough profit with respect.

Conclusion:

During the whole observations there revealed a very encouraging picture of domestic economy among the Mishing through cottage industries of weaving. If such opportunities could be enhanced among all the Mishing women in our country then the entire picture of women empowerment could be changed. Another important observation which is worth mentioning here is that Mishing women are taking an active role in providing socio-economic support to their educated children through the earning of these industries. Maintaining cost of home consumption in their families, providing cloths, foods, etc. are worth mentioning works for them are possibly happened through weaving. In this way the women among Mishing if properly adjoined with weaving industry can take a leadership role in the society.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that more and more of this type of weaving industries should be established in the economically backward areas. So that the condition of domestic economy be improved and status of Mishing society will be strengthened. The weaving industry will be fully successful In only when the administration, societies, family members and social organizations will work whole-heartedly and in a co-operative manner.

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