

Social-Economic Conditions of The Contemporary Deori Women of Assam in India

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Abstract: IDifferent Studies on women's questions now exist all over the globe. These issues have newly caught the concentration of many and have expanded impact in the academy through student and faculty activism. A variety of issues interrelated to women have been evolving in the feminist movement in India from the demand of changing socio-economic values and demands. In nineteenth century for the first time the women's issues comes to the front position. 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. A mixture of works is going on through out the academia on women's concerns. Although a hub from a verity of viewpoint is needed when we talk of the problems connected to tribal women, as it differs a bit in there nature. While the condition of tribal women in India has been recognized as being better than that of their non tribal counterparts, in actual fact, these meticulous women are deprived of social and economic autonomy in lots of respect. The proposed Research Project is an effort to highlight the different socio-economic conditions of Deori women, who form one of the weakest sections of the society in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Contemporary, DeoriWomen, Assam, India, Ethnic, Tribe

Introduction: Deori is one of the foremost ethnic tribes in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The Deori community has its own Society, culture and traditions which are hidden treasures for the Anthropologies, sociologists and the Researchers. The Deoris were originally priests and worshippers and depended mostly on agriculture for their livelihood. In North-East India the Deoris are identified as well civilized people. They have their own language to converse amongst themselves. History states that the Deori language was the original language in the Chutaan kingdom before the reign of the Ahomes in Assam they worship kundi Mana (Shiva-Parvati) and hence fall under Hinduism by default. Deori women contributed whole heartedly towards Society, culture, language, literature and economic status for the making of entire Assamese culture. They have century long culture and tradition. It is important that the Deori women have something more peculiarities which may have been a

matter of study. The contributions of men are void without the contributions of the Deori women in the field of transformation of the society. Still in some societies women are deprived from the social justice.

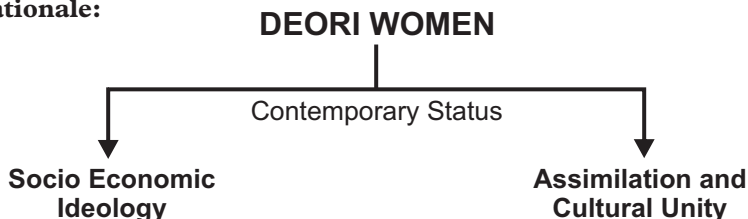
Statement of The Research Problem: The Deori community is one of the pivotal ethnic tribes. They have been highlighting socio-economic and cultural aspects. In some Records and research there some references regarding the Deori Community but there are no available research on the subject of the Contemporary Deori women in the filed of Socio-economic conditions. Some researchers have given on their language and culture. Nevertheless, their studies did not cover historical aspects and the present position and changes. But my research is not similar to the previous researches. The present study will cover hitherto uncovered areas such as socio-economic and cultural conditions of the contemporary Deori women which will provide new light and research of the Deori women towards the Deori community.

Review of Related Literature: Review of related studies implies location studying and evaluating reports or relevant researches study of published articles going through related portions of journals and research abstracts study of pertinent parts out of comprehensive books on the subject and going through related manuscripts if any. In order to justify the statement of the problem following literature review has been done.

1. Sir Edward Gait opines that the Deoris are the priestly section of the Chutiya kings of Sadiya who worshipped the Goddess Kundi-Mama or Gira-Giracchi, Tamreswari or Kechaikhati and Baliababa. Gait says," the traditional rulers of Assam do not profess to be at all exhaustive. Religious books and other old writings contain lists of many other kings, but it is impossible to say if they are genuine, and if so', who the kings were and where they reigned; and to refer to them at length would be a waste of time and space.
2. W. B. Brown says – 'In the upper ward of sadiya, Deoris lived here originally and before first century they came there to inhabit the area. The people are generally called Deoris simple, the language is more properly known as chutiya. The Chutiya language indeed, may fairly claim to be the original language of upper Assam'.
3. Bishnu Rabha states 'Kundil' is a two phase word. Kundi meaning God and I denoting place, according to the chutiyas. Therefore, Kundil dignifies the place where God is omnipotent, Archeologists believe the relies of Malini. Then in the border area of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh are of the ancient Bidarbha kingdom.
4. Dr. Bani Kanta Kakati is of opinion that word 'Deori' is originated from a Sanskrit word 'Devagrihik'. Deori is a New Indo-Aryan formation connected with 'Devagrihik'.
5. According to Upendra Nath Goswami's 'Deori-Chutia the

concept 'Deori' refers to a person who is well-versed in worshipping Deva (God).

6. B. Dutta in his "Tribal Songs of Upper Assam" says that the Historians and Anthropologists also opine that the Deoris were the court priests of the Kachari and Chutiya Kings.
7. Regarding the Chutiyas of Sadiya Sir Edward Gait remarked "The Chutiyas now number about a twelfth of a million and are found chiefly in Lakhimpur and the adjacent part of Sibsagar. Their language which is still known to the Deoris, or priestly section of the tribe, is unmistakably Bodo, but their appearance suggests that they have in their frames a considerable infusion of Shan blood."
8. W.B. Brown says: "In the upper ward of Sadiya, Deoris lived here originally and before first century they came there to inhabit the area. The people are generally called Deoris simply; the language is more properly known as Chutiya. The Chutiya language indeed, may fairly claim to be the original language of Upper Assam."
9. W. B. Brown in his "An outline Grammar of the Deori Chutiya Language" states that the Deoris are a small and schedule tribe of Upper Assam. Their very name implies that they are the representatives of the priestly class among the Chutityas who are said to be one of the most numerous castes of Upper Assam and whom it is learnt from history to have been the ruling race in Upper Assam before the invasion of the Ahoms in the fifteenth century.
10. An Assamese Dictionary named "Hemkosh" (1900) refers to the Deoris as one of the disobedient tribes who live on the plains of Assam. On the other hand, "Chandrakanta Abhidhan" (1993) says that they were originally hilly people, now living in Assam plains as a priestly class of the Chutiyas.
11. According to some scholars like Lakhyapati Deori, Deoris are a section of the Chutiya community, which is objectionable to the Deoris. They feel pride to introduce themselves as 'Gimo- Chanya' among themselves. The present generation of the "Deori" community disclaims outrightly to be regarded the Deoris as one of the sections of the Chutiyas.
12. Dr. Bani Kanta Kakati is of opinion that word "Deori" is originated from a Sanskrit word "Devagrihik". Deori is a New Indo-Aryan formation connected with "Devagrihik".
13. An eminent Deori writer Saranan Deori states in his book i.e. Deori Bhasa Sahitya Samaj, Published by Bina Library regarding the relevance Deori language.
14. Saranan Deori highlights in his title i.e. *Religious Practices of the Deoris*, Published by Bina Library opines that there is the possibility of getting some ideas or sources about the identity of the Deori from the word "Deori" which is created on the basis of their original word-system.

Rationale:

Justification of The Study: The Deori women have some special Identities. Some Studies have done about the Deori tribe entailed with the literature and culture. But the Identification in the field of socio-economic aspects of the contemporary 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. The present study is an attempt towards this direction. Here lies the justification of the study of the particular topic.

Aims And Objectives: The main aims and objectives of the proposed research are:-

1. It aims to bring out the background, social customs, ceremonies and religious life of the Deori Women.
2. To investigate the economic life such as Profession of the contemporary Deori Women who are involved into making such type of handicaps and others agricultural activities.
3. It will also focus the implementations of various government measures to develop the life style of the Deori Women.

Research Materials and Methods: The Socio-Cultural approaches need to construct different aspects of the contemporary Deori Women. It also traces out environmental life style, occupation, status etc. The component related to the contemporary Deori Women will be analyzed with the primary and secondary sources. The Primary Sources such as government orders, interviews, field survey, manual, photographs etc. Secondary data will be based on various published sources like books, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, paperclips, journals, official circulars, different statistical reports, internet, website etc.

Socio-economic Aspects of The Contemporary Deori Women:

While talking about the contemporary Deori women we have to talk about their socio-economic transformations. There are essentially three facets to determine the position of women. These are— education, employment status and intra-household decision-making authority. It is collective fact that women with higher education are likely to have an enhanced position. Due to a variety of religious reasons the India women, particularly the Deori women have to face inequity. In India, it is too



common and very pathetic that the if the family members (excluding mother) come to know the first identity of a newborn child as 'girl' they turn out to be dissatisfied and starts suppressing the girl child from the moments 'go' in terms of personal development. The hypothetical structure to examine category of women includes the seven roles women play in life and work. The level of societal expansion is a complex, dynamic and multidimensional idea. Urbanization as is recognized to accountable in forming nuclear families in the 21st century advanced world. Women of Deori society carry out the custom work meant for them and participate in profitable economic activities. The daily activities of Deori women include providing food for the majestic birds and animals, washing cloths and arranging breakfast, etc. They engage themselves in the income, making works like poultry piggery etc. Trade and commerce constitutes a very important element in the economic life of the women of the community.



Cultivation is the main economic activity of Deori community. It is obvious from the fact that more than 90% people of the community are related with it. The women have to carry out various types of functions in the agricultural field like transplanting, harvesting, irrigating, uprooting the harmful seedlings, sorting seeds, etc. At the contemporary time, the Deori women practice multiple cropping systems and thus increase the role of women in this sector. It is noted that rice is the staple food and Suzen (Rice



Beer) is the prime drink of the Deori people. They regard 'Suzen' as the chief native beverage and refreshment of them. It is like a fundamental part of their laborious life. The Deori women prepare the essential cloths for themselves. They rear silk worm like edi and mulberry which gives considerable self-support to the community. The school or college going females helps their mothers and other ladies of the family in their spare time.

The Deori community, particularly the women loves the task of weaving. The young girl and women weave 'Boche' (Gamocha or Bihuwan) which is a great deal alike the Assamese culture and tradition. Since, the women who are getting a salaried job are educated and



reside in the town area. Only the School Teachers, Asha Workers, Anganbadi Workers, Insurance Agents, Nurses of the health center in the villages are found. The woman with a salaried job possesses a better status in the family and society. On the other hand, the striking issue is that, even the educated women do not waste their time by sitting idle and waiting for a salaried job.

The womenfolk of the Deori women add greatly to the economy of the Deori community. Motionless, there subsists work inequality in the society, though they have to carry out activities like– cleaning, washing clothes, cooking etc. also their economic activities. The social viewpoint towards women has been variability in the course of time and most prominently education playing a vital role in it. At the present-day time the women of the Deori community are organized by means of Mahila Samity, Sahitya Sabha, etc. They are concerned to serve the community for its best advantage from side to side Non-Governmental Organizations and Community based Organization. Even, the Deori women are well organized by means of SHGs in their villages.

Conclusion: Despite the wonderful changes the Deori community has maintained their traditions with right perspectives though some changes have been found in the various socio-economic and culture activities. In the modern time a lot of changes have been found in dress pattern and social life as well as in education and medical practices.

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