

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ASSAMESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY**1] Jonmoni Das, 2] Anjan jyoti Sarma, 3] Biswajit Nath, 4] Ranadev kalita,**

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Abstract :

Culture is the Characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine social habits, music and arts. The word 'culture' derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin colere which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nature. Assam is the meeting ground of diverse culture. The people of the enchanting state of Assam are an intermixture of various racial stocks such as Mongoloid, Indo-Burmese, Indo- Iranian and Aryan. The Assamese culture is rich and exotic tapestry of all these races involved through a long assimilative process. The natives of the state of Assam are known as „Asomiya“, which is also the state language of Assam. Among all the states of the country, Assam is said to have the largest number of tribes showing a great difference in their tradition, culture, dresses and exotic way of life. The Assamese are noted for their mixed traditional culture because of the assimilation of various ethno-cultural groups in the past including the local elements and the local elements in Sanskritised forms can be seen. However the Assamese culture is mainly influenced by the Kamrupa Kingdom which had been grouped here for nearly 700 years. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Assam. It includes cultivation of various crops like rice, different pulses, jute, tea, fruits, sugarcane, potatoes, cotton, oil seeds, coconut and areca nut. Basically, the culture of Assam is traditionally a hybrid one, developed due to cultural assimilation of different ethno-cultural groups under various political-economic systems in different periods of history.

Keywords : Assamese culture, Society, Globalization, Social change, Assimilation.

Introduction :

North-East of India is culturally so rich and vibrant. Among the order north-east eastern culture, assamese culture is noteworthy which is the mixture of various tribal and non-tribal culture. The gather assamese culture has been composed of the reciprocal relation between the Aryan language group of people as well as the astroloid, Tibeto-Burman language group of people. Assamese culture is mainly an agriculture based culture which had been originated and developed among the illiterate rural villages. The impact of globalization can be seen through education since education is one of the medium through which culture is transmitted among the members of society. Assamese culture is the result of various religious groups assimilation and their common culture elements. Urbanization is another important factor of culture change and it is also to the process of adopts the modern day technology for its development and gives importance in industrial site and its production.

Objective :

- 1) To know the nature of Assamese culture and society.
- 2) How has been Assamese culture and society impacted by the industrialization and modernism.
- 3) To know the relation between Assamese and other culture.

Method :

As a methodology both the explanatory and analytical method have been used to complete this paper.

Source :

Both the primary and the secondary source of data have been used for this society.

Main topic :

Assamese has a large number of tribes and each tribe is unique in its tradition, culture, dress and way of life. There are several important indigenous traditional festivals in Assam. Bihu is the most celebrated festival among all. Indigenous traditional festivals are celebrated every year around different corners of Assam. Bihu is a series of three prominent festivals of Assam. Primarily a festival celebrated to mark the seasons and the significant points of a cultivator's life over a yearly cycle, in recent times the form and nature of celebration has changed with the growth of urban centers. Three bihu's are celebrated : Rongali bihu, celebrated with the coming of spring and the beginning of the sowing season; Kongali bihu, the barren bihu when the fields are lush but the barns are empty; and the Bhogali, the thanks giving when the crops have been harvested and the barns are full. Rongali, Kongali and Bhogali bihu are also known as „Bohag bihu“, „Kati bihu“ „Magh bihu“ respectively. Assam has maintained a rich tradition of various traditional crafts for more than two thousand years. Presently, cane and bamboo craft, bell metal and brass craft, silk and cotton weaving, toy and masking, pottery and terracotta work, wood craft, jewellery making, musical instruments making etc. are remained as major traditions. Historically, Assam also excelled in making boats, traditional guns and gun powder, colour and paints, articles of lac, traditional building materials, utilities from iron, etc. Painting is an ancient tradition of Assam. The ancient practices can be known from the accounts of the Chinese traveler XuanZang. Baisagu is a very popular seasonal festival of the Bodo of Assam. Baisagu means start of the new year. Baisagu is a Bodo word which originated from the word “Boisa” which means year or ago, and “Agu” that means starting or start. Ali-Ai-Ligang is the spring festival of the Missing people of Assam, India. The name of the festival is made up of three years, „Ali” root and seed, Ali fruit and Ligang to sow.

The most important social and cultural celebration are the three Bihu festivals observed with great enthusiasm irrespective of caste, creed and religious affinity. The Bohag bihu, celebrated in mid - April, is the most important one. It is also known as Rangaali bihu (rang means merry-making and fun) It is observed by dancing and singing in open spaces as well as in the houses. The second important bihu, Magh bihu is a harvest festival celebrated in mid - January. It is celebrated with community feasts and bonfires. It is also known as Bhogaali bihu ("bhog means enjoyment and feasting). The third bihu festival is observed in mid - October. It is also known as the kangaali bihu ("Kangaali" means poor) because by this time of the year which is before the harvest is brought home, the stock of food grains is low in a common man's house.

The people of Assam inhabit a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious society. They speak languages that belong to three main language groups „Tibeto Burman, Indo-Aryan and Tai-Kadai”. Geographically Assam, in the middle of North-East India, contains fertile river valleys surrounded and interspersed by mountains and hills. The economy of Assam based on agriculture since remote past. The origin of agriculture in Assam is traceable to „jhum” cultivation which is still noticed among some hill tribes. In course of time, the crude „jhuming” of primitive technology was replaced by more advanced technology of cultivation with the use of ploughs brought and introduced by Aryans. It is evident from early and medieval literatures that both vegetarian and non-vegetarian diets were prevalent in Assamese society in the past and rice was the staple food as today. The geotensive cultivation of paddy of different varieties met the day today requirements of rice. Medieval

literatures mention various types of cake and sweet dish. These include laddu, paramanna, pat-pitha, dahi, kshira, akhai, cira, khiricha, rice-cakes, pheni- pith ect. The non-vegetarian menu included mutton, pork, meat of duck, pigeon, tortoise, deer and varieties of locally available fish. But the most favorite curries of the Assamese have been the sour and alkaline preparations.

Assamese culture is the result of various religious groups assimilation and their common cultural elements. The process of globalization has also impacted on this religious aspects of Assamese culture. There were various religious folklore and rituals of Assamese culture in the early period. But those religious folklores and rituals have been reformed with the help of modern education system. In Assam urbanization is another point of cultural change and it also related to the process of globalization. There are always some pull and push factors in the urbanization process which help people to migrate to the urban areas and follow an urban life style. Assamese are known for their traditional crafts which includes bell and brass metal crafts, apart from these the Assamese are also noted for their cane and bamboo craft, silk cotton weaving, toy and mask making, pottery and terracotta work, wood craft, jewelry making, musical instruments making etc. They also excel in ivory crafts, colours and paints, articles of lac, agarwood products and traditional building materials, moreover, various ethno-cultural groups in Assam make different types of cotton garments with unique embroidery designs and wonderful colour combination. Culture in Assam in its true sense today is a cultural system compositions. It is more interesting to note that even many of the source - cultures of culture in Assam are still surviving either as sub systems or as sister entities.

At last, Changes will continue to come on the every Society, Culture, language but we all have to gather and work for its progress. Socio cultural change is a continuous process in every Society of the world. The study of Socio - cultural change is also a systematic study of variation in social and cultural systems.

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