



LAND RELATION AMONG MISHINGS OF ASSAM: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON MALIPUR VILLAGE OF BISWANATH DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

Unequal land ownership is present in every society. Tribal relationship with the land is the basis of social stratification in rural society. It has determined the social, political and economic status of people. Most of them used improvised seeds and chemical fertilizers and some of them don't have land to cultivate. In case of tribal society, through the study of land relation, we can examine class relation. By studying the phenomena of land relation, one can give an overall picture of social stratification in Mishing society.

KEYWORDS : land relation, stratification, agriculture, economy.

Introduction:

India is a diverse country. North-east region of India has its uniqueness. In this region the tribal communities represent an important social category. Mishing is the second highest community of Assam. They have their own culture, language and social institution. But among them, heterogeneity is also present. Clan-based, gender-based, class-based inequalities are clearly visible among them. It has been mentioned that tribal relationship with the land is the basis of social stratification in rural society. It has determined the social, political and economic status of people. In case of tribal society, through the study of land relation, we can examine class relation. By studying the phenomena of land relation, one can give an overall picture of social stratification in Mishing society. This is a sign of the significance of the study of tribal social stratification.

Malipura area is situated in Biswanath District of Assam. Biswanath is a newly recognised district of Assam, which was formed on 15 August 2015. Malipur village is located under Gohpur revenue circle. Caste wise population of Gohpur is Schedule caste is about 5.3% and Schedule tribe is about 44% of total population.

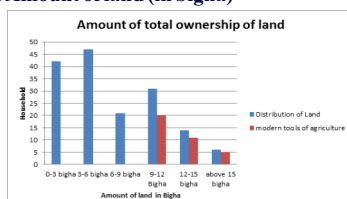
METHODOLOGY

In conducting the study, fieldwork was undertaken within the particular village, Malipur. For studying land relation and mobility both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. For the primary data collection, both structured and unstructured interview was taken by researcher. The researcher has collected data from Malipur village. Firstly the researcher found difficulties to collecting data due to the language problem. But later the cooperative natures of the Mishing society hugely helped are gathering the data. The researcher visited the field in 2 different phases.

Discussion: Mishing society is primarily agricultural society. In Malipur village, peoples have their own land and cultivated paddy farming with some cash crop cultivation. Mishing social stratification is largely based on land ownership and income source. More the half of the population hold cultivation as primary occupation. It's about 51 percentages. In addition to cultivation, they earn means of livelihood through with the animal husbandry.

Table. 1.a: Amount of land people have?

Amount of land	No. Of respondent	Percentage
0-3 bigha	42	26
3-6 bigha	47	14
6-9 bigha	21	28
9-12 Bigha	31	19
12-15 bigha	14	9
above 15 bigha	6	4
Total	161	100

Figure.4.1.b: Amount of land (in bigha)

Inference: To get clear picture, Researcher arranged data into six strata, such as- 0-3 Bigha, 3-6 Bigha, 6-9 bigha, 9-12 bigha, 12-15 bigha, above 15 Bigha. 26% household are 0-3 bigha, 28% of household have amount of land about 3-6 Bigha, 14 % of household have amount of land between 6-9 Bigha, 20% of people have amount of land between 9-12 Bigha. 9% of Household have amount of land between 12-15 bigha and 4% of household have land between above 15 bigha land. Most of the people have engaged with agriculture but who have land between 0-3 bigha, those are insufficient for their livelihood and people who have good quality land above 9bigha they produce surplus. People who have land above 9 bigha land have used improved seeds, chemical fertilizers.

Land ownership:

Unequal land ownership is present in Mishing society. On the basis of unequal ownership of land researcher divided land ownership in six strata, such as- 0-3 Bigha, 3-6 Bigha, 6-9 bigha, 9-12 bigha, 12-15 bigha, above 15 Bigha. 26% household are 0-3 bigha, which is mainly wetland. 28% of household have amount of land about 3-6 Bigha, 14 % of household have amount of land between 6-9 Bigha, 20% of people have amount of land between 9-12 Bigha. 9% of Household have amount of land between 12-15 bigha and 4% of household have land between above 15 bigha land. Most of the people have engaged with agriculture but who have land between 0-3 bigha, those are insufficient for their livelihood. Whereas, people who have good quality land, they produce surplus. It is agricultural based society so that land distributions the income are also different. Majority of people of Luhitmukh produce *ahu bao* and *Sali*. But mustard cropping is gradually increases in that area. Due to limited use of chemical fertilizer, new tools of agriculture, productivity of land is not high. Only during the harvest reason they perform wage labour and after harvest them mortgaging their labourer into money lenders. The family member of those household has also supposed to done agriculture labourers. Most of the landless labour have huge amount of land at a time but it had disappeared due to the erosion. It can be concluded that erosion problem have also contributed to unequal land ownership in that area. Due to different land ownership, their income source is also different.

Among Mishing who have control over 6-9 bigha of land. Their family members have also participated in cultivation and other economic aspect. Some of the family member has also engaged with other occupation like corporative society, tailor, mobile repairing centre etc. They hardly ever sell their labor power. Middle peasants have some marketable surplus. They use Animal dung's and chemical fertilizers, improved seeds then poor peasant.

Only 4% of household has above 15 bighas of land. This class is important for understanding class distinction of Mishing society, because of the amount of land, they can use fertilizers, improved seeds etc. Large landowners are highly depended on wage labor. Female member of those household serves as an essentials labor. They produced heavy amount of surplus production.

Mishing society is generally regarded as equal. But economic inequalities have been observed among Mishing people. It has been noted that, *Pegu* clan are economically influential in diverse side. They have supremacy over land ownership and income. The majority of people from the *pegu* clan has above 11 bighas land and produce heavy

amount of profit. They have awareness about the market price of the production, so that they could earn maximum profit from the cultivation. Most of the Pegu clan has sufficient land for cultivation and income source are above 27000 Rs. All of the government employees are belongs to that clan. Due to the modern education system they are become significantly advanced. For the reason of economic supremacy, their standard of living is also highly influence by modernity, without compromising traditional belief, practices, norm and values. In that village, researcher found that people have unequal land ownership. Primary data shows that people who have political supremacy that have large land ownership. Their dominance over land also leads economic supremacy. People who have above 5 bigha land; they used agricultural labor of their field.

Conclusion:

Ghanashyam Shah has a term called "do not know", which indicated that government implemented policy on development of poor cultivator but it is goes to hand of middle and rich cultivator, so they do not know about the government Policy. In Mishing society same case applies. Large land owners are attending political meetings, participating in election campaigning. The Poor have rarely visited Panchayat and local level office. They need the help of others to approach for the officials. But rich and middle peasant has good relation with political leader and officers. In terms of Government benefit, large and middle landholder enjoys most of the benefit. They are covered by different government scheme. Because of they have close relationship with the political leaders. Scheme of Government has help to rich peasant to avail IGAYs, improvised seeds, irrigation facilities, modern means of production etc. It is shows that to some extent middle strata people also get benefit from government but needy and poor are excluded from those schemes, because they have no close relation with the political leaders.

In Malipur village, Government employees and large land owners occupies position in most of the political organization and they have authority over the political affairs. Those politically powerful people are belonging to large land owner's families and have high education qualification as graduate. They are more exposed to the outside world.

In Malipur village area, people are belonging to 0-15 bigha land. There are 54% of people having less than 6 bigha lands; they are struggling for their livelihood. Most of the people of that area are owner cultivator. The mashing society have always based on the mutual aid. Through the corporative organization, people have helped each other. Mashing people are cultivated paddy, Mustard, black pulse etc. They are cultivated three types of paddy like *Ahu*, *Sali*, *bao*. Women of Mishing society are actively participated in paddy field. There are primary occupation is cultivation. People who have not enough land to cultivate, they worked as wage laborers and migrated laborer. Another important phenomenon has rises in Mishing society, 6% total household adopting new occupation like shop keeping, mobile repairing centre, tailoring etc. We can conclude that according to Neo-Marxism Rajatubhra Mukhopadhyay tribal social stratification is moved towards the class formation. Another important Mishing society has their uniqueness is that we can differentiated them in terms of economy, land ownership and property but there are no discrimination in terms of economy.

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