



CLASS FORMATION AMONG MISHING TRIBES OF ASSAM: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF MALIPUR VILLAGE OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT The term they are generally regarded the original dweller of India. The tribe has their distinct identity like endogamous, own religion, distinct area, own culture and identity. But modern education, property ownership and adaptation of new occupation has significant role in the formation of the class. Mishing is the second highest tribal community of Assam. They have their own culture, language and social institution. The new class system is emerging among Mishing people so that now a day's social stratification is there. It gives birth to division based on income, wealth and privilege. Through this study of economic inequalities and the land relation of Mishing society can help to the portrayed class formation and class position in Mishing society.

KEYWORDS : class formation, economy, occupation, stratification, income.

Introduction: The term 'tribe' is not clearly mentioned in the constitution of India. They are generally regarded the original dweller of India. In the Indian subcontinent, the tribe has their distinct identity like endogamous, own religion, distinct area, own culture and identity. Tribal people of India are known as "Schedule tribe" by the Indian constitution under the fifth schedule. In article "Class formation among tribes in India: a brief review" written by Rajat Subhra Mukhopadhyay mention that tribe is a homogeneous, non-hierarchical, non-differentiated or un-stratified unit. But modern education, property ownership and privileged has significant role in the formation of the class.

Mishing is the second highest tribal community of Assam. They have their own culture, language and social institution. Mishing is considered as homogeneous communities. But among them, heterogeneity is also present. Clan-based, gender-based, class-based inequalities are clearly visible among them. In Mishing society women are often neglected and they are next to men. On the other hand, the new class system is emerging among Mishing people so that now a day's social stratification is there.

Sachchidananda (1990; 297-98) argues that "a significant impact of political-economic change in independent India is the accentuation of social inequality in tribal society". He summarized that with the tempo of modernization and developments, the tribes in India are getting differentiated on class line. Hence, in modern India, the state has also vital role to creating classes. Constitutionally, the state is trying to empower economic, educational and political interests of tribal groups but it's become family or individual centric. Therefore a new class emerges among tribes of India. It gives birth to division based on income, wealth and privilege.

An appropriate understanding of economic inequalities and the land relation of Mishing society can help to the portrayed class formation and class position in Mishing society. By examining those phenomena it can help to formulate policies and development scheme by the legislator in general.

METHODOLOGY

For this 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. The cooperative natures of the Mishing society hugely helped in gathering the data. The researcher visited the field in 2 different phases.

Discussion:

Economic aspect:

In that village, 9% of people are Government employees. They earn regular salaries and have some savings. Government employees have dominant over the land and agricultural facilities. They invest money to develop their means of production. They also are willing to do cultivation. Government employees have dominance on economic aspects too; they lend money and land to disadvantaged villagers. They have close contact with non-tribal people therefore their lifestyle is

comparable to Assamese people. Life-style of those large land owners are similar to upper class non-tribal people, where poor peasant stick to their traditional lifestyle.

Tribal society is not similar to caste based society. In India, caste system provides us a strict sense of occupation. But in tribal society this kind of strictness of occupation has not seen today. According to the primary data, Mishing society is primarily agricultural society. In Malipur village, peoples have their own land and cultivated paddy farming with some of cash crop cultivation. Mishing social stratification is largely based on land ownership and income source. It's about 51 percentages. In addition to cultivation, they earn means of livelihood with engaged with the animal husbandry. There are 6 percentage of people are occupied with small scale business like mobile repairing centre, shop, tailoring, beauty parlor, cooperative shop, motor cycle repairing centre etc. Those professions are newly emerged in Mishing society. Wage laborers are another important section of the society. They constitute 32 percentages of the total Mishing people of that area they are mainly engaged with manual works at the low price. Wage of those laborers in between Rs 100-300. People who work on agricultural field earn around 100-150 Rs and people who works on building construction may earn about 200-300 Rs. Wage laborers of Mishing society faced problem on improbability of work. In winter season rate of work availability is high. They are bottom of the social strata and economically, politically backward people. Wage laborers are strict towards their traditional belief, practices. Any kind of Modern aspect, development scheme of government could never cover up them.

Along with the different occupation pattern, income sources of Mishing society are different. But it is an important characteristic that, there are not vast varieties in annual income. Even most of them did not give proper picture about their annual income. In Malipur area, most of the people were not able to get annual income of them. They gave an approximate monthly income. According to the above information, income of 29 household has 0000-27000, which is very low. Those section of society always struggle for the survival. They are mainly wage earner. Their work is like agricultural labour, construction labour, domestic labour etc. On the other side 21 household has between 27001-54000, 16 household has 54001-81000, 23 household has annual income about 81001-108000, 28 of household has 108001-135000, 11 of household has annual income about 135001-162000, and 9 household has about 162001-189000, 2 household has 189001-216000, 2 household has 216001-243000, 3 household has annual income 243001-270000, 1 of Household who have 270000-297000, 1 household has 2970001-324000 and has 2 household has above 324000rs, who are government employees. So it has been seen that, Mishing people are not equal in terms of economic point of view. Due to the modern education system, Mishing people are become highly educated. On other case, Mishing women are become aware for their development so that, they engaged with skill development programme as well as some vocational courses like beauty parlour, tailoring etc. A very minimal number of Mishing women are engaged with organized work like ASHA, Anganbadi workers, teacher etc, it's about 4% to total household. In case of boys, they engaged with training programmes like mobile repairing, ITI etc. It has been show that, Mishing society is not homogeneous. There are occupies with

varieties of work. Therefore, economic differences have seen in Mishing society. Literacy rate of Luhitmukh village is 67.80%. Modern education highly influenced on them. There are 30 male/female members who are graduate. 9 students are pursuing graduation. Therefore modern education system has also helped to create stratification system in Mishing dominated area.

Their own land and cultivated paddy farming with some cash crop cultivation. 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. There are 6 percentage of people are occupied with small scale business like mobile repairing centre, shop, tailoring, beauty parlor, cooperative shop, motor cycle repairing centre etc. Those professions are newly emerged in Mishing society.

Due to commercialization of traditional cloths women in Mishing society are highly engaged with the weaving or textile. Women of that area make various product like Mekhela, chador, Gamusa, shawl etc. Traders from Guwahati, came in that area and collect their cloths with best prices. Through selling that product, most of the women in that area become independent, which help to look after their family. But due to heavy household activities many of them can't give time to weaving.

Modern education system, adaptation of new occupation and developmental scheme has given rise to stratification nature of Mishing society. Now a day they are aware of boodles of work opportunities. Now Mishing peoples are engaged with the different works like but mobile repairing centre, computer center, driver, small scale business, tailoring, company job in outside the state etc. Therefore due to their new occupation their social status is become higher in society. In Luhitmukh village, there are two private schools. People who are economically strong visit their child to those schools. So it's also a marker of stratification. Modern education system has also created political awareness among Mishing society. Now a day they are alert of their rights and duties. Modern education system has changed Mashing society lots.

Adaptation of new occupation is a good sign for the development of Mishing community. But it has leads to variation of income. With adaptation of new occupation, new science and technology Mishing society has also become heterogamous. Some new class is way to emerge in Mishing society. Due to those circumstances a newly emerge economic class has been form in Mishing society which gives new dimension to social stratification system.

With the adaptation of modernization, new tools of agriculture and implementation of developmental scheme tribes are under class structure. Today class formation becomes the major elements of social stratification. After independence, commercial market has increased day by day. Meanwhile, tribal peoples have been changing them towards the new economic nature system. According to Marxist approach homogeneity of tribal society is become myth, not reality. Among the Mishing tribe also some kind of differential infrastructure is create in terms of tribe to the caste. Peasantry has help to process of tribal differentiation. According to No-Marxist view, tribal differentiation is moved towards the class formation. So that Mishing society is not different from universal characteristic

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