



Traditional Agricultural Practices Of Mising Community With Reference -Pub Narayanpur Gaon Panchayat, Lakhimpur (Assam)

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1.Statement of the Problem

Agriculture has long been the backbone of rural livelihoods in India, especially among indigenous communities whose cultural identity and socio economic life are intricately linked to land and ecological practices. About 61 percent of population in Assam engaged in agricultural activities (Economic Survey, 2014-2015) and more than 75 percent population of the state continues to practice agriculture for their daily livelihood. Among the indigenous communities of North east India, the Mising community has deep rooted agricultural traditions that have evolve through centuries of interaction with the local environment.

The Mising community has faced various social problems from pre-time. They have faced not only social problems, but also economic, cultural and political challenges faced by the Mising people in society. Traditionally, Mising community have settled near to Brahmaputra and its tributaries rivers in Assam. People who live near river area their economy and sources of income depend on several primary sectors such as agriculture, fishing, and driftwood sales etc.

Agriculture is the main source of income among Mising community. The agricultural sector is at risk, because of increasing environmental challenges, like uncertainties and regular floods and river bank erosion that ruin standing crops, creating water logging, soil erosion, and harm huge harvests, posing a challenge to farmers who have struggled with increasing productivity and output of various crops. A huge area of land of many farmers in the study area is eroded every year into rivers due to river bank erosion and flood. The Mising community has a unique cultivation methods such as indigenous techniques of seed preservation, flood resilient farming etc. The traditional agricultural practices of the Mising community are not only about crop cultivation but it is also related with their social customs, festivals and ecological knowledge. The study aim

to explore the traditional agricultural practices of the Mising community in Nunibari village, located in Lakhimpur district of Assam. It focuses on how these practices are embedded in their socio-cultural structure and how they respond to environmental constraints like seasonal flood and changing climate patterns. The study endeavour to explore rituals and festivals related with agricultural practices of Mising community. In this regard we can say that sometimes the lack of indigenous knowledge systems are reflected on their agricultural systems and also modern technology and skills of agriculture is another problems of Mising community.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Mising community one of the major indigenous tribes of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in Northeast India has a rich tradition of agricultural practices deeply rooted in ecological knowledge and cultural heritage. Various scholar's has been studied on the Mising community. Various scholar's who has published their articles on the various perspectives of Mising community, and their published articles has significantly impact on the Mising society. This articles are most of the important to understand the Mising society clearly. And also various authors has been written books about the various of the perspectives of the Mising society and yes this book has also helpful for understanding to the Mising society.

In the study by Charah, Haren (2014), Mising personality is very unique, they had a developed culture and they had a good skill in farming. Generally they have engaged in paddy fields or agricultural practices. This Misings are one of the major tribes of Assam, specially in the Brahmaputra valley. Generally they have belonged to the tibeto-Burman language speaking group of the great mongoloid stock of human race. Generally Misings are found in upper Assam like- Lakhimpur Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivsagar Jorhat, Golaghat and Sonitpur etc. Also they have religious beliefs systems.

According to Chutia, H (2020), Mising people has significant agricultural practices. Though they are a very backward classes, but they have unity among members of the society. Generally agriculture is the primary or main of the occupational source of Mising people by which they can maintaining their livelihood. They practices various like of paddy like- Ahu, Sali, etc. And their some festivals are also related with agricultural practices. Mainly Ahu rice is related to Ali- Ai- Ligang, which is the main festivals of them. They have used various traditional methods, basically they have avoid chemical fertilizers. They have used various methods or implements like- Axe, Nangol, Moi, Lahoni etc.

Hossain, I (2015), mentioned about arrival and situated condition of Mising people. He also mentioned about the old religious rituals, beliefs systems of Mising people as well as the causes of Mising people backwardness in the society. He mentioned that religion plays an important role in the life of the Mising people. The folk life of this tribe is very rich in the traditions and cultural heritage. Therefore, religious ideas, traditions etc. There is no rule in the Mising society to make idols of Gods and Goddesses. They worship Donyi: Polo as the worship able force . Donyi means the sun and polo means the moon.

Kagyung, M & Saikia N (2020), mentioned about the cultural significance of the Mising society. Mising society has socio-cultural identify by which they lived in the society. Ali-Aye- Ligang, Pa: rag, also few people participating festivals like Aam Legad, Ama Hodgod, Kumuchu, Taugand, Moh: Aar etc. Are related their

festivals. The Mising community has traditional folklore such as: folklore related to magic, folklore related to natural folk medicine etc. Through their folklore they maintained their cultural identity. This folklore has significantly impact role on their society. This is one of the features of their society.

Doley, R (2010) mentioned on the agricultural festivals of the Mising community such as Po: Rag, Ali- Aye- Ligang, also discussed on the significance of this festivals on agricultural practices of Mising community and how this festivals crucial role play on the preserving cultural heritage and community bonding in the society. In the study by Sharma & Sagarika (2020), Mising society has a rich and colourful culture. This community uniquely celebrated their festivals and carry the ethnic identity. Their festivals like, Do: bur uie, Taleng uie, Urom uie, Dodgang, Gu: min- soin, Po: rag, Ali-Aye-Ligang, Yalo- Gognam, Okum Dhangaria, and Yumrang are some of the rituals and festivals performed by Mising community both annually and occasionally. Among these Mising people, Ali- Aye- Ligang and Po: rag are two main agricultural festivals having both socio-religious significance.

Kaman, Ranjit (2014), mentioned about the religious rituals of the Mising tribe of Assam. Dodgang is final purification festival to farewell the departed soul (Urom) form the world.

1.2.OBJECTIVE

The proposed study has the following objectives:

1. To study about the traditional agricultural practices, and farming methods, of the Mising community.
2. To understand the religious beliefs and rituals and festivals are related to their traditional agricultural practices.
3. To study about the challenge faced by farmer of Mising Community.

1.3.RESEARCH QUESTION

The study has the following research questions:

1. What are the traditional agricultural practices and farming methods followed by the Mising community?
2. How agricultural practices help them economically?
3. How religious rituals and beliefs influence on their traditional agricultural practices?
4. What is the economic significance of traditional agricultural practices of Mising community?
5. What type of changes observed in the farming tools and technique used by the Mising community over time?

1.6. METHODOLOGY

i. Universe: The universe of the study is Nunibari Village under Pub Narayanpur block in Lakhimpur districts. The village is predominantly inhabited by Mising community, whose primary occupation is agriculture. Given the relevance of the location to the objective, Nunibari village has selected as a field area for the study

ii. Research Design: The research is descriptive in nature. The qualitative data are used in the study.

iii. Sampling: A purposive sampling method is used to select the respondent. The researcher has selected the participants from different age group who are actively involved in agricultural practice to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

iv. Source of Data: The study is based on both primary and secondary source of data. Primary data are collected through fieldwork conducted in Nunibari village of North Lakhimpur district. Secondary data are collected from books, journals and reports of governmental and non-governmental organization.

v. Data Collection Techniques: In-depth interviews, observation method, both participatory and non-participatory, are used to collect the data.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is related with simply Mising community and their traditional agricultural practices, which are an essential part of their cultural identity and livelihood. This agricultural practice has maintained social solidarity, community engagement, problem solving, etc. This study highlight how traditional agricultural tool, seasonal cycles of agriculture practices and community based labor systems continue play a vital role to production and livelihoods of community. The study will be help to policymakers for make policy or program related to indigenous agriculture, rural development, and culture preservation of ethnic communities. It can also help to promote sustainable agricultural strategies those integrate traditional knowledge systems.

1.7.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

By studied this traditional agricultural practices of the Mising community, it can gain a deeper understanding of indigenous knowledge, sustainable agriculture, and community development. The study aims to explore the cultural and spiritual significance of these practices and their role in shaping the communities identity in their society. Examining how environmental effects on their agricultural practices which affects their livelihood. So the scope is very significant of this study. This study helps to understand about their agricultural practices as well as their community identity, social system etc.

1.8. LIMITATION

The research is constrained by some limitations. The study limited to a specific geographical areas, which may not fully represent the practices of the entire Mising community spread across different districts in Assam. Lack of literature review related to traditional agriculture practice of community is another important limitation of the study. Most of the literatures are found in community identity, culture, food habit, religion etc. On the other hand, language and culture barriers posed certain challenges in communication. Despite, efforts to maintain accuracy, some traditional terms and concepts might have been inadequately interpreted during the data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE OF MISING COMMUNITY

2.1 Historical Background

The *Mising* tribe is also known as 'Miri', second largest scheduled tribes (plains) of Assam with their unique style of life and culture. It is one of the distinguished tribes of Assam with a rich culture heritage. The *Misings* belong to the Mongoloid race and the language belong the Tibeto-

Burmese branch of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. Regarding to the origin of the words *Miri* and *Mising*, different thinkers have given different opinions. Jatin Mipun in his book *The Misings (miris) of Assam Development of a New Lifestyle (1993)* is of the opinion that the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh called their priests *Miri* or '*Mirin*'. It is probably the non-tribal people of Assam who called the tribe as *Miri* after they came in contact with the priest. Nevertheless, the term which they are popularly known today is '*Mising*' which is derived from two words '*Mi*' means man and '*Shing*' means water. *Mising*, then, refers to locals who reside close to the river. Originally from the Siang and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh, they were hill people who lived in the upper Brahmaputra valley's northern hills. They were living on the high mountainous ranges of Abor Hills migrated to plain of Assam around 13th century A.D. (Mipun, J. 1993). Others researchers advocate in their writings that the Misings are migrated from Arunachal Pradesh to the plains of Assam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Misings are the second largest ethnic group in the southern Assam, on both sides of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. The Misings are formed into several parts like- Ayan, Daula, chahyaang, M: Ying, pagar, dambug, chyung, taye, chah: Mua etc. In also they have different title like – Kuli, Kumbang, Kutum, Doley, Pegu, Misong, Payeng, Patir etc. They lived on the banks of the river but they earned their living by lowest and farming activities like agriculture. There is little available record of this tribe groups settlement of such a tribe in the Assam Valley, but oral traditions of when and how various tribes arrived and settled on the Brahmaputra Valley date on the back to their arrival into the Assam Valley. Therefore, it is important to note that the Misings of the Kar-Abar tribe were written in the 1935s in the third decade of the century. They have come down to the plains. Mainly there is a very few detailed information about the history of the Misings, but it is known that their ancestors had come from the China and settled into the Brahmaputra river Valley. There are various writers has mentioned about the historical background of Mising tribes. Assamese writer Chutia. Dr. Lakshmi Devi writes in this regard, she has mentioned that the Miris (Bhaiyamor Miris) were interested by the civilization of the plains long until to the arrival of the Ahoms in Assam! Dr. Leela Gogoi, said that the Misings had came to Assam before the fourteenth century. According to him "The Miris (Mising) were also originally inhabitant on the mountains. One part of them migrated relatively earlier and organised into the plains until the fourteenth century (Gogoi, L, 2006). According to Assamese history, the Misings came to the plains during the rule of the Chutia. Now they are occupying the plains and the foothills bordering Arunachal Pradesh, along with North bank of the Brahmaputra from Sadiya to Bharoli river and downstream upto Kaziranga National park on the south bank. They are riparian people and inhabit mostly the riverine tracks along the courses of river Brahmaputra, Subansiri, Bharoli, Dhansiri, Dichang, etc. According to the census

in 2011, the population of *Mising* in Assam is 687,836 and second largest tribal community of Assam, which is mostly concentrated in Dhemaji, North Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Majuli, Sivsagar, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sonitpur, Biswanath Chariali district of Assam. (Collected from secondary data).

2.2. Socio-Cultural Profile of Mising Community

A thorough knowledge of the community under study is very much necessary before studying traditional agricultural practices of *Mising* community in Assam. Following are the brief descriptions of socio-cultural profile of *Mising* community.

One major cultural trait the community is bearing for generations is its housing pattern *Chaang ghar* (stilt house). Typically, the stilt house (*Chang ghar*) rise six to seven feet above the ground which shows that building a house is a traditional way to deal with flood. The size of the family determines the size of the house. The beliefs and practices of *Mising* community falls under animism, believing each living or non-living being has a soul and can cause the good and bad to people. They believe in “*Donyi-Polo*” who is the chief god and goddess of worship according to the *Mising* religious faith. They regard *Doyni* (sun) as their mother and *Polo* (moon) as their father and always honor them first before holding a ceremony or any major decision in their life. The chief worshipper of the *Mising* religion is called ‘*Mibu*’ (priest).

The family of the *Mising* community is generally extended or joint family. The decent follows male line in terms of family authority, next to father comes the eldest son. Both endogamy and clan exogamy marriages are practiced among them. Marriage within the same clan is prohibited among the *Mising* community. Example: Doley cannot marry within the own Doley. In the *Mising* society cross cousin marriage is also prevalent. One can marry father’s sister’s daughter or mother’s brother’s daughter.

The main occupation of *Mising* community is agriculture. However, they also practice other activity likes animal husbandry and fishing. The people of *Mising* community cultivate different types of crops like potato, mustard, sugarcane, vegetable, rice etc. They also have domesticated animals like cow, buffalo, pigs etc.

Ali-Aye-Ligang and *Porag* are the two important festivals of the *Mising*. *Ali-Aye-Ligang* is celebrated in the first Wednesday of the month of *Phagun* (February) in the spring season. The main purpose of celebrating this festival is to seek the blessings of mother earth, *Donyi-Polo*, and their forefather for a good harvest. *Porag* is another important festival of the *Misings*. This is celebrated after crop harvest to offer thank to their God *Donyi-Polo*, *Sedi-Melo* and *Karsing-Kartang* (creator) for a successful harvest. It is celebrated once in a period of every three to five years or more. Both the two festivals are connected with their agriculture.

Clan organization of the *Misings* is interesting from the sociological point of view. The *Misings* trace their clan from the name of their old fathers or from the names of deities. According to their beliefs, there is a creator of the universe. They also believe that the living beings of the world were formed by a spiritual being and therefore they trace their *Opi’n* (clan) from the name of that creator. The *Mising* community has its own unique village organization for maintaining social order among themselves. These are *Kebang* (council), *Do: lung Kebang* (village Council), *Bane Kebang* (greater assembly of the *Mising*). Every *Mising* village has a ‘*kebang*’ which can be compared with a village Panchayat. The body takes all important decisions and settles disputes. The *Mising* village *Gam* known as Chief or village headman who is responsible to deal with village affairs. *Murong* is a symbol of village unity, integrity and assimilation of *Mising* society. *Murong* is another

social body where the village elders assemble under the village headman on specific occasions or problems to resolved quarrel, disputes, and any other matter related to the social, religious and political development of village etc.

The clan ties in the *Mising* community are strong. The community is recognized for its cooperative nature, which is seen in many cooperative organizations like *Rikbo-ge 'nam* and *mimbi-yame*. When a villager is unable to work or cultivate owing to certain circumstances, they ask for the assistance and cooperation of the *Rikbo-ge 'nam* (co-operative activities organized). For the construction of new house, the owner may inform the villagers in advance, and accordingly the villager will help him (Mipun, J.1993). *Mimbir Ya:me* (young women and men) is another important social body of the *Mising* community. The unmarried boys and girls are the members of this organization.

The Mising women are more hard working and play important role in rearing livestock, caring of children, participate in agricultural activities etc. All women weave clothes, rear pigs at home and have small vegetable gardens from which extra income is generated. Hinduism based on the complex Vedas and Vedanta rituals of the religion. Dakri-pal is the main religion of the Misings as their own religion. The Misings are very faithful to their folk beliefs. Chickens are often believed to be a shield against danger. The religious festival of Dabur Puja is very significant. To please various deities. Puja is offered at Dabur. It is believed that the gods are angry with the cleanliness and prosperity of the household. The Mising society believes that life is governed by the sun and moon from birth to death. The Mising women are very rich in weaving. According to the traditional weaving method, the Mising weavers dig two poles from one end for use in the chaanghar, lay a flat roll on them, pull the yarn from it and wrap it around their waist like a box on the other side. The tools used here are known in Mising language as – Yapa, Tahli, Gubang, Tange etc. The clothes woven by the Mising artisans for their men include Ganar Ugan, Dhuti called Yam Ugan and Chola called Tabg Galug. Women's clothing includes Rihbi Gachoung, Tapum Gachar, Kebbung etc.

CHAPTER III

TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AMONG MISING COMMUNITY

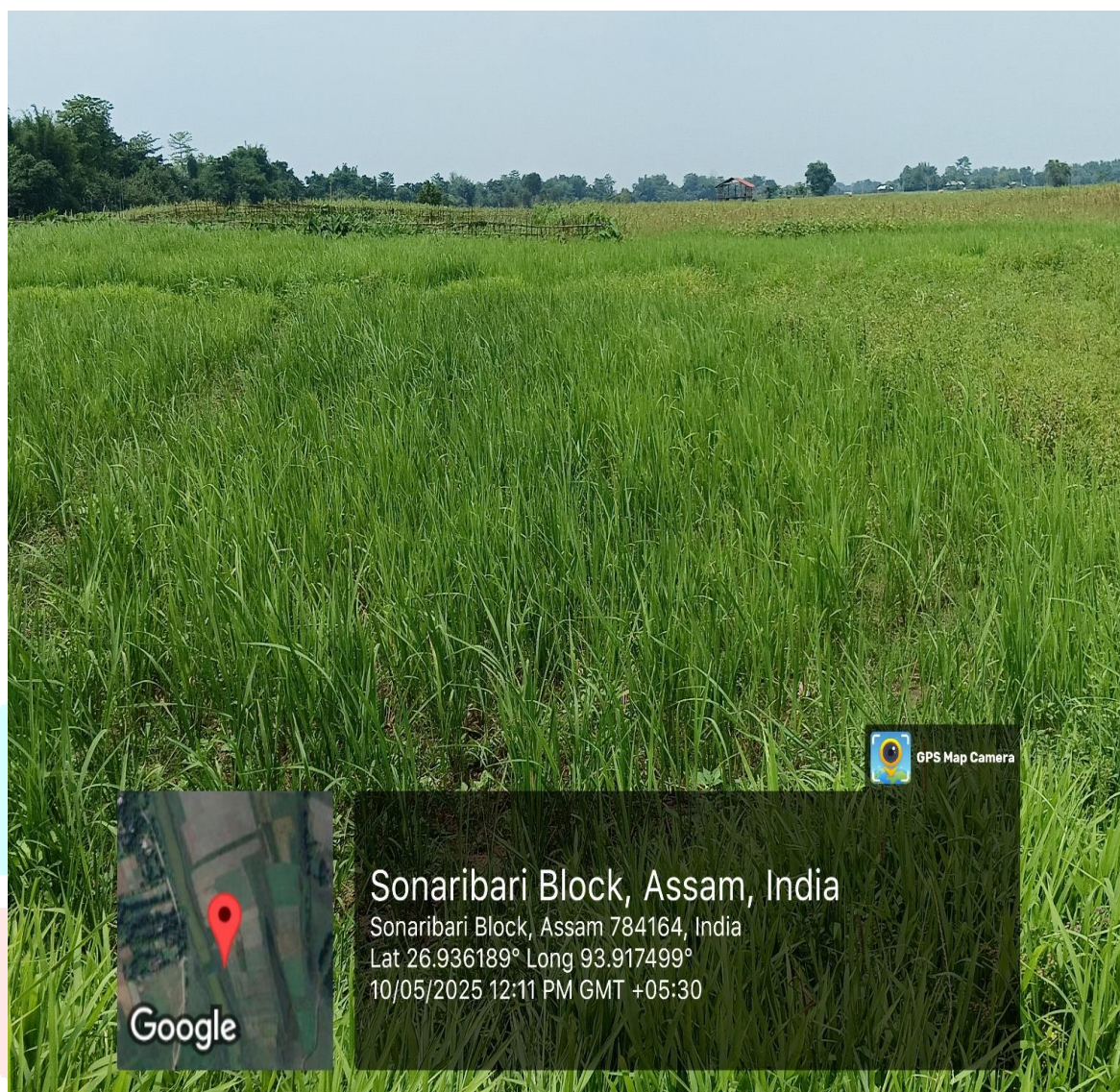
The Misings are one of the ethnic groups of Assam, who have their own language, culture, and traditions. Mising people are living near to the banks of rivers and their way of life is closely associated with the rivers. Agriculture in conjunction with the environment, the Misings practice environmentally conscious agriculture, use of traditional knowledge, and this knowledge transform from their ancestors to new generation. Their traditional beliefs are still available among their family members. This Chapter mainly discusses the traditional agricultural practice by Mising community, uses of tool and methods for cultivation, economic significance of agriculture and challenges faced by farmer to cultivate the different crops.

3.1. Traditional Agricultural Practices and Crops Grown by Mising Community:

The main economic source of the Misings is agriculture. They make their living from agriculture. The agricultural crops practices of the Mising people are an important part of their culture and traditions. They live in harmony with nature and their agricultural crops or practices are also influenced by it. The Mising people have always been richer in their agriculture than other ethnic groups. The methods of agricultural crops have been practiced from ancient societies to modern societies, but somewhat modern lighting has changed their traditional agricultural system. People in Nunibari village mainly grow two types of paddy during the year such as Ahu and Sali paddy. *Sali* (winter paddy) crops planted between June and October; *Ahu* (autumn paddy) crops grown between November and May; and *Bao Dhan* (deep-water paddy) crops are grown in areas susceptible to flood water.

Apart from paddy cultivation, the Misings people are also grow beans, pumpkin, potatoes, spinach, ginger, pepper, lime vegetables, etc. They used manual labour or cattle; it gradually came to use modern machinery such as tractors to a lesser extent. During field study it is observed that they use manure compost more than chemical fertilizers. Their agricultural practices are based on knowledge acquired from their ancestors. Certain customary practices are also followed in agricultural activities. For instance, during the sowing or harvesting season, it is customary for the eldest son to perform the initial ritual of turning the soil. The agricultural practices of the Misings are in harmony with the environment. They grow based on local conditions and climate. The Mising people's agricultural system is a special type of agricultural system in which they make good use of natural resources.

Figure 1: Paddy Cultivation



Source: Field Study

3.2.Uses of Agricultural Tools and Methods

The Mising community in Assam practice unique traditional agricultural methods, utilising locally available tools and resources. People have been using various implements in their cultivation. Tools are often handmade and passed down through generation, and used for specific tasks such as land preparation, planting, harvesting etc. They use almost old instruments in their cultivation. In fact, the implements used in their agricultural practices are almost the same as those of the Assamese. First of all, these tools are known by different names in their language or dialect. The following table presented key Mising term related to agricultural tools and techniques along with their functions.

Table: 3.1.

Use of agricultural tools and their function

Use of Agricultural Tools	Local Term	Function/Use
Knife	Katak	Katak Used for harvesting crops.
Pit/ kur	Quap	Used for digging and related work.
The ax	Ankurang	Cutting the tree's
Plow and yoke	Mien and Mien pam	The land is plowed using a plow and a yoke is a yoke of oxen used to pull the plough.
Lahoni	Lahoni	A tool for harvesting rice.
Okhon	Okhon	Used to extract rice from paddy.
Mai	Mai	Used to level the soil.
Birya	Birya	Used to cut down small trees
Katari	Matchik	Used for harvesting..
Kechi	Kechi	Used to cut grass.

(Source: Field Study)

In addition to these tools, the Misings also use other tools such as tools used for cultivation of rice, beans, soybeans etc. These tools are used in the Ali-Aye-Ligang festival. The names of the tools currently used among the Mising people indicate that sustainable agriculture is not the traditional method in the Mising society. There are no words like plough, yoke, fal, dila shalmari, axe, jotni etc. In Mising language except for tools like knife, knife, mit, kor, khanti, the ax etc. The word is derived directly from the Assamese culture and language

3.3. Family and community Cooperation in Agriculture: Community networks play a significant role in common water management, handling livestock, shared grazing, and agricultural activities of Mising. People have close connections and support one another in times of need. Family and community cooperation is a significant aspect of the agricultural practices of the Mising people. Agricultural work is carried out collectively, often involving the entire family. In Nunibari, men, women, and children all contribute to farming activities. Men usually take on tasks such as plowing, irrigation, and land preparation. Women are

involved in sowing seeds, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest processing. Children contribute by performing lighter tasks such as herding livestock, watering plants, or assisting elders in the field.

In the absence of hired labour, kinship networks and sibling cooperation are particularly important. When parents are engaged or when children are young, elder siblings or extended family members contribute their time and labour. This intergenerational cooperation is central to agricultural success and a reflection of social unity within the Mising community.

3.4.Economic Significance Of Agriculture Among Mising Community

Agriculture plays an important role in the economic life of the Mising people. Their main source of livelihood is agriculture, and they mainly grow oats and paddy during the year. In addition, they also grow beans, soybeans, various types of potatoes, spinach, ginger, pepper etc. In Nunibari village, the majority of the Mising population practices agriculture primarily for subsistence. Only a limited number of individuals derive significant economic benefits from farming. Most families meet their food requirements through the crops they cultivate, while some supplement their income by selling surplus produce in local markets. This underscores the economic importance of agriculture in the village.

3.5.Challenges Faced by the Farmer among Mising Community

Farmers of this community have faced many problems in agriculture. Farmer of the Nunibari Village mainly problems faced in agriculture are floods and pests. During the field study, the majority of the respondents reported that the breach of the embankment in 1984 led to severe flood in their area, resulting in extensive damage to their homes and agricultural lands. Floods and river bank erosion in Assam are caused by natural factors that negatively affect livelihood, socioeconomic status, and assets as house, land etc. Catastrophic floods have significant impact on agricultural land and crops

The Misings community are more vulnerable to floods during monsoon season, which inundate and damaged their crops fields. River bank erosion and flood reduce the crop productivity. The use of improved seeds is low among the Misings. They use traditional seeds, which have lower yields. Climate changing problem faced by Mising farmers during their agricultural practices. These reduce their agricultural productivity and make it difficult for them to sustain their livelihoods. This sometimes leads to their lack of food also it. To improve their agricultural livelihood, the State Governments and NGOs (Non-governmental organization) should take steps to address these issues, and support them to improved seed supply, training in proper use of pesticides and fertilizers, flood control measures, and market access. There are different problems are related their agricultural systems which are such as:

1. **Flood problems faced by the Mising farmers:** This is one of the biggest problems faced by the Mising farmers during their agricultural practices. Flood has destroyed their all crops. For that they have lost their valuable crops or seeds.
2. **Pests Problem: one of the Challenges faced by the Mising farmers is the problems of pests. Pests damaged their agriculture sometimes.**

3. **River Erosion:** river erosion is one of the problems of Mising peoples. Since they live in riverine areas, river erosion affects their agricultural practices badly or severely.
4. **Lack of quality inputs:** This problem is like the lack of quality inputs like fertilizer, modern technology. For that this has led to the decline of their agricultural practices.
5. **Low Investment or lack of capital:** They lack the investment in agriculture. It means that the lack of resources, capital is another Challenges faced by the Mising farmers or people.
6. **Lack of irrigation:** lack of irrigation has also faced by the Mising farmers and it has impacted on the agricultural systems of Mising peoples.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, RITUALS, FESTIVALS RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

4.1 Religious Beliefs and Rituals

There are certain important religious customs and beliefs associated with agriculture of the Mising people. In the case of Mising community, when someone dies in their village, they take a few days absent from agriculture to satisfy the souls of the deceased. It is a religious belief of theirs. They also believe that farming on Saturdays and Sundays makes cows lame and people get sick. The main of religion of the Mising people is *Donyi-Polo*. This religion worships the sun (Donyi) and the moon (Polo) as gods. The Misings identify themselves as descendants of the Moon and the Sun. They consider the moon as their father and the sun as their mother. In addition, they have their own worship, caste festivals, and folk beliefs. Many Mising people have now converted to their Hinduism or Christianity, but they also have their own religious traditions. In addition, their folk beliefs and worship are influenced by agriculture. They offer sacrifices to the dead ancestors and the gods of evil and misfortune in the presence of 'Dahni-Pahla' as a witness in any worship. The religion and culture of the Mising people is based on agriculture. Their Ali-Aye-Ligang festival marks the beginning of agriculture and their folk beliefs and worship show the influence of agriculture. They follow certain rules before sowing the crop, such as collecting cotton, preparing Purang Apin, etc. During this one of the festival, they worship trees and stones and sacrifice pigs and chickens. So Therefore, agriculture is an integral part of the life of the Mising people and is closely associated with their religion and culture. Similarly, at any religious ceremony or festival, they pronounce 'Anouh Da'ni' and 'Abu Pahl' first. They have some agricultural festivals which significantly impact on their socio-cultural life.

4.2. Festivals Related with Agriculture

i. **Ali-Aye-Ligang:** Ali-Aye Ligang is one of the major festivals of the Mising people. The term *Ali- Aye- Ligang* means *Ali-roots, Aye-fruits and Ligang-sowing, which* stands for 'sowing of seeds'. This is celebrated in the first Wednesday of the month of *Phagun* (February) in the spring season. The main purpose of celebrating this festival is to seek the blessings of mother earth, *Donyi- Polo*, and their forefather for a good harvest. This festival is celebrated in every year on the first Wednesday of the month of *Fagun*. It is also known as the festival of the beginning of sowing. The Mising people celebrated this festival with their various

folk dances, songs and feasts. “Ali” means potatoes or seeds growing underground, During the time of this festival, the Mising people likely to be celebrated the sowing of their new crops and prayers to God for good harvests. The Misings perform various folk dances such as *Gumrag*, *Dabu*, and *Pahrag*. In addition, they enjoyed playing various musical instruments such as taka, sutuli, tambourine, gagna, etc. The Mising people celebrate this festival with various types of pitha-pana and meat and rice. Ali-Aye Ligang is an important part of Mising culture. This festival formation of unity and joy between the Mising community. In also it this festival of their represents the agricultural lifestyle and traditions of the Mising people.

ii.Porag: The Porag festival is another agricultural festival of the Mising people, also known as *Nara-Siga Bihu*. This Porag festival is celebrated after the harvest of paddy. This is celebrated after crop harvest to offer thank to their God *Donyi-Polo*, *Sedi-Melo* and *Karsing-Kartang* (creator) for a successful harvest. It is celebrated once in a period of every three to five years or more. The Porag festival wishes the members for well being and always prays for the growth of their seeds or crops. The festival is celebrated by the Mising people wearing traditional costumes, clothes, dancing, singing and performing various religious rituals. The Porag festival represents the culture and traditions of the Mising people and is a prominent part of their social life.

4.3 Traditional Food System Related With Festivals

Rice is the main food of the Mising people. In fact, they do not have such a tradition of eating light meal or Breakfast. They use “Purang Apin ”during the traditional festival Ali Ai Lrigang. They also have a custom of eating “pinkang”, or crispy rice. It is noteworthy that there are two main types of apang or liquor used among them – Pa:r apang or which is called ash liquor and Nagin apang or white liquor. The use of apang in this pa:r is a notable feature of the Misings. Vegetables are used with fish and meat. Dried fish, meat, and kharichha are one of their staple foods. It is worth mentioning that the use of oil in the diet of the Mising people is almost non-existent. Namching is a very popular and important food of the Mising people. This dish carries a distinct identity to the Misings. Namchink is made in bamboo pots with dried fish or meat. The Misings consider Namching food as a traditional food associated with their customs.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

Studies on agriculture of the Misings show that agriculture is their main source of livelihood. Agriculture is the main activity in the village of Nunibari. The Misings are agriculturalists. Before migrating to the plains, the Misings used the Jhum system of farming. There was no use of cows at that time. Their agricultural implements included shovels, The knife, khanti, and axes. Cross-sectionality and party or aggregate. Ownership was the main characteristic of land relations in their society at that time. At that time, the Misings temporarily cultivated under the Jhum system under the management of the village headman or Gahm. The agricultural practices of the Misings are mainly field-based and land ownership was collective. After the Misings entered the Brahmaputra Valley, they did not settle in any particular place for a long time.

Accordingly, their farmland was not permanent. After cultivating the same land two or three times, they left it and migrated from one place to another in search of new fertile land. They mainly grew oilseeds, wheat, soybeans, cotton, opium, etc. With such agricultural methods. It was only later that they adopted permanent agricultural practices under the influence of other ethnic groups living in Assam. The names of the tools currently used in agriculture among the Misings. It is easy to see that permanent agriculture or land tenure is not the prevailing practice in the Mising society. For example, there are no words like plough, yubali, fall, dila, shalmabi, esabi, jotni or jotjari in Mising language except for tools like knife, mit, kor, khanti, axe etc. The Misings have adopted these words and cultural resources directly from the Assamese culture and language.

It is noteworthy that while the Misings adopted these words and cultural resources from the Assamese language and culture, their agricultural practices retained some tribal characteristics such as frequent change of agricultural land, collectivization of labour, etc. For many centuries. Rice is the main crop of the Misings. The Misings also grow legumes and vegetables such as potatoes, spinach, ginger and pepper. In the past, the Misings were the main cultivator of paddy. Nowadays they also grow paddy. The Misings did not produce crops on a commercial basis. Nowadays, in addition to the necessities of daily life Some people also cultivate for commercial purposes.

1. This study is entirely based on the traditional agricultural practice of Nunibari village. They are mainly growing Ahu and Sali paddy. Certain customary practices are also followed in agricultural practices. For instance, during the sowing or harvesting season, it is customary for the eldest son to perform the initial ritual of turning the soil.
2. Another observation found that the sense of unity and fellow feelingness among members of this community. Community networks play a significant role in common water management, handling livestock, shared grazing, and agricultural activities of Mising. People have close connections and support one another in times of need. Family and community cooperation is a significant aspect of the agricultural practices of the Mising people.
3. The people of Nunibari village are very hardworking. Majority of the people are cultivating the paddy and vegetable used by the traditional tools and methods. Most of them are still away from usage of modern machinery and chemical fertilizers.
4. Both men and women are actively participating in agriculture activities. Women are primarily involved in seed preparation, weeding, and post harvest process. On the other hand, men are involved in land preparation and irrigation for cultivation.
5. Religious customs and beliefs are influenced on their traditional agricultural practices in where indigenous knowledge systems are followed by the agricultural practices.

6. They have maintained their cultural significance in the agricultural activities. So they always focused on the availability of food. They always focus on agriculture so that they can celebrate agricultural festivals by making ash wine from the rice from that crop.

7. Studies show that there are no advance measures to avoid floods, but they maintain their crops by building sheds in the fields or through manual labour. They also take some measures to protect the crops from pests

8. Therefore, in conclusion, the Mising society means a civilized and well-ordered society. The lack of class discrimination has made the standards of this society very high. It can also be said that Mising women participate equally in agriculture, household work etc. Like all men. Like men, a Mising woman or girl raises ducks, chickens and pigs to strengthen the family financially. It is noteworthy that Mising women participate in all activities of the society. However, there are some obstacles in this regard. However, some changes have also taken place in the Mising society. Its customs and traditions have also changed. There are many customs and stereotypes that have helped the Mising society to move towards development and open the door of change for the society. Chaanghar is the best examples of it.

5.2 Conclusion

The Misings of Assam have lived in unity and harmony as a distinct social group through the combined development of their cultural values and behaviour, knowledge, customs, traditions, beliefs, etc. Prevalent among them. Every Mising member has maintained social relations with the community concerned by expressing loyalty to such social and cultural customs and values. Their cultural wealth has not been without additions and subtractions over time; Instead, such characteristics have given continuous momentum and strength to the society and culture of the Misings. Therefore, it is necessary to take care of the preservation, enhancement and dissemination of the invaluable cultural resources of the Mising people. The agricultural practices of the Misings are not only a means of livelihood for them, they are an important part of their culture, environment and social cohesion. Their agricultural practices are linked to their culture. The “*Ali-Aye-Ligang*” festival is a prime example of this, where they celebrate the sowing of new crops. The whole family and community members work together in agriculture, which increases social cohesion. Nunibari Village is one of the example of it. The Misings pass on their agricultural knowledge from their own generation to generation. They use traditional methods as well as new techniques, thus improving their farming practices. The Misings usually live along rivers and their agricultural practices are developed in harmony with the environment. They farm in a traditional way, which is not harmful to the environment. It is one of the positive impact of them. Overall, the agricultural practices of the Misings are an integral part of their lifestyle. It provides food and plays a vital role in maintaining their culture, traditions and social, as well as cohesion. Agriculture is a social and cultural aspect of the Mising people, in which their social norms, festivals and beliefs play an important role. The *Ali Aye-Ligang* festival expresses their agricultural thoughts and folk beliefs. The Misings usually live in *Changhars*, which are closely associated with their agricultural life. Their front and back porches are used for various social and cultural activities. The diet of the Mising people depends on their agriculture and animal husbandry. They use the crops and animals they produce to prepare a variety of foods. The Misings use the agricultural knowledge they received from their ancestors. They use traditional techniques for tillage,

seeding, and irrigation. This knowledge is socially disseminated among them. The Misings live in harmony with nature and their agricultural practices are environmentally friendly. They use fewer fertilizers and pesticides, protecting both the soil and the environment. The agricultural practices of the Misings are a social and cultural aspect in which their mutual cooperation, festivals, traditional knowledge, respect for the environment.

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