

Mishing Tribe And Their Food Habits: A Case Study On Dhapak Gaon Of Majuli

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Abstract: Mishings are one of the most colourful tribal groups inhabited in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of north east India. In Assam they are mostly settled near river Brahmaputra. Mishings tribe are famous for their culture which includes food habits, dressing pattern, dance, and living style etc. But with the flow of time some sort of changes has come in day to day life among the mishings people especially in their food habits and dressing pattern. Though these changes are not so significant among the whole mishings people but some changes has come because of globalisation and modernisation of the country.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mishings or Mising, also called as Miri are ethnic tribal group inhabited in the upper Assam namely Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and also found in three district of Arunachal Pradesh that is in East Siang district, Lower Diban Valley and in Lohit district. The total population of mishings is more than 1million in Assam and about 50,000 thousand in Arunachal Pradesh. They are the second largest tribal group after Bodo people. The word Mishings is derived from two word 'Mi' mean man and Tosing/ Anshing means worthiness or cool. So, mishings means man of worthiness.

There is no written history about the migration of mishings people from hills to the plains of Assam. Though they belong to Tani group of tribes and they used to be hill dwellers, they started living on the banks of rivers in the plains of Assam. The reason for this change of habitat is not known, but there are theories. One of the theories says that Mishings which are presently living in plains of Assam were not a one single tribe, but evolved into one when many people of various tani tribes from Arunachal Pradesh migrated to the plains of Assam in search of fertile land as well as in search of civilization progress.

Majority of mishings people are engaged in their livelihood in farming on their small or medium sized landholding. They are generally landless labour or having extremely small and uneconomic land holdings. From the

ancient time they (mishings) basically depended on forest and water or any other natural resources.

The staple food of assam is rice and it is not different for mishings people. Mishings people prefer boiled dishes rather than oil used dishes. Different kinds of leaves and roots are eaten by mishings people. Their traditional drink is 'APPONG' (Rich bear) which is prepared by rich, adding different kinds of dry medicinal plant leaves. And appong is being offered by mishings people to the guests. Purang is also an important item for mishings. A kind of sticky rice packed in leaves of wild cardamom and boiled.

OBJECTIVE

- ✓ To study the food habits of the study area.
- ✓ To evaluate the changes in food habits of the study area.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through field survey using observation method and personal interview with the people of Dhapak gaon, Majuli and the secondary data is based on the books, newspaper and internet sources.

III. STUDY AREA

Dhapak gaon comes under dakhin kamalabari gaon panchayat of Majuli. The village is situated at the distance of about 2km from the mighty river Brahmaputra. The village is purely belongs to mishing people. There are 165 numbers of households in the village.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Food habits of particular community vary depending on geographical location of that area. They acquired the own traditional food habits as per the availability of food products, climate etc. And as a result of cultural contact, they also adopt certain types of food habits which are different from other. The best part of every festival of mishing is eating the traditional home made dishes as well as drinking apong too.

The mishing have their own food habits and people of the studied area are very concerned about their tradition. In due course of time, they have started accepting some new tradition. As accepting new things is in human nature. So, some changes have come due to factors like tourisms, education, flood, attitude economic conditions etc.

The people of the studied area thinks that their traditional boiled dishes are of great nutrient value and easy to digested. They rear pig, goat, duck, and hen and eat their meat. They avoid using any kind of oil or other packed spices. However, they use herbs and indigenous fresh spices. Rice is the staple food for all the tribal people of Assam. Fish is widely used by the people of the study area as Tuni River is near to the village, the people of the studied area engages themselves in fishing also as their livelihood. Other than that pork, chicken, duck etc are also used by the people of the study area.

As already mentioned above some sort of changes has come in food habits of the study area and some of them are:

- ✓ Now a day's use of oil and spice are common in the study area. They prepare a number of curries, fried items by using mustaed oil or refine oil.
- ✓ Uses of packed spice are also in their daily diet in the study area.
- ✓ Now a day it is seen that instead of apong they offer tea and coffee to the guest.

- ✓ The impact of modernization is also being seen in the food habits of the people within the studied area like using of oil and spices instead of their traditional boil dishes.
- ✓ Earlier the traditional drink 'apong' was used to serve the guest but now a days it is being used for commercial purpose as a source of income. As a result, the real picture of this traditional drink has been changed.
- ✓ Earlier different food items like *samosa, gosa, kachori, rosgolla, lalmohan*, cold drinks like *frooti, fanta, coca cola* etc., were not available in the village so people, who work outside, used to buy these items from towns. However, these are now easily available in Kamalabari and these are now bought daily by children who study in school or colleges.
- ✓ Today's young generation are more tempted to fast food like chow chow, maggi, momo etc and have less interest to home cooked and traditional made light meal and snacks like Purang, kumal chawal cira etc.
- ✓ Varieties of foreign liquors such as Whisky, Brandy, Rum etc are purchased for consumptions even in their festivals instead their traditional drink Apong.

V. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we may come to the conclusion that nothing is static in this world, with time everything has some changes, though some factors are responsible for these changes. If changes are positive then it is healthy for the society but negative impact are also there. Negative impact in food habits may be unhealthy and unhygienic food from the market may affect the health. And also young generation should know about the traditional food habits as well as its important and the method of preparing those foods.

REFERENCES

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