CHAPTER - VI
CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The social life of Garigaon may be broadly discussed under two headings, viz.- the Hindu social life and the Muslim social life. The Hindu Population includes a number of castes and communities, viz- Kālītā, Koch, Nāmāsudrā, Kāivārtā and Kāchārī etc. In the recent time many Brahmin families, coming from the different parts of Assam have settled in the area. At the present situation all of the castes and communities of Hindu People have followed the same social customs. Muslim population of this area includes mainly Gāriā or Zolā.

The social customs of the Garigaon society may be divided into four categories, viz.-

(1) Social customs related to life cycle
(2) Social customs related to agriculture
(3) Food habit and Cooking
(4) Taboos.

1. Social customs related to life Cycle:

The people of the Garigaon area both Hindu and Muslims follow social customs related to life cycle. At the outset we may discuss about the life cycle of the Hindu people of this area.
a) Social Custom connected with birth:

At the very beginning, the pregnant bride with the bridegroom are invited to her mother’s house after completion of three month’s and given them to eat Pāyāsh. And after that, again they are invited after five month’s to her mother’s house and given them to eat Pāyāsh. Moreover, after completion of seven months they are again invited to her mother’s house and to give eat cooked rice and on this occasion, a ānākātā (a piece of cloth weaven without a cut) cloth has been given to the pregnant bride.

When the child is born, after five days, the child is brought outside of the house and he is allowed to see the sun. Ghee, honey, milk etc are offered the child to eat. The child is again brought out the house on the eleventh day. Within the time of eleventh days, the umbilical cord is separated usually by the mother of the baby herself. If, however, she becomes unable owing to ill health, another women do it. Formerly a scrap of bamboo was used for the purpose. But at present it is replaced by a blade. At the time of severing the umbilical cord no one is expected to stay in the labour room for fear of ritual pollution. However, all the members of the family observe the period of “uncleanliness” (āsāucā) for eleven days. Different taboos prevalent during this period.
The mother throws areca nuts towards the Agni, Vāyu, Isānā and Nāirtā directions. This may be a reminiscence of the practice of propitiating the guardian deities of the eight directions in the early times. This custom is prevalent among the Brāhmāna family of this area. The first introduction of the child to the outer world and propitiation of the Gods for its protection from the natural and supernatural dangers remains the same.  

b) Annāprāsāna (First feeding):

The ceremony of the first feeding of the child with solid food is called annāprāsāna. In the Garigaon area, it is called Bhātcuwāni; i.e., the first taking of rice by the child. The ceremony is held usually in the sixth or eighth month from the date of birth of a male child, and in the fifth or the seventh month, if it is a female child. Sometimes the ceremony is performed even after a year. At present the home functions have been left out in case of a girl. The other rites and rituals, i.e., feeding the child amidst merriments, offering of presents like dolls, utensils, cloths to the child, entertainments of the invitees, etc. are almost the same for children of both sexes. The food associated with the ceremony besides being vegetarian, may also include meet, fish and egg.

48. (i). Parvati Das, Address: Vill. & P.O.: Kachari, Garigaon, Sex: Female, Age: 60 years
c) **Ceremony of Tonsure (Cūḍākārān):**

This function is held on odd month or year when the first baby was born. Astrologer decides the date of this function and on this function the *Vishnupuṇḍā* is also performed. The mother accompanied by female relatives and guests proceeds to the nearly tank or river carrying a water pot by her side. In front of the *Pucā Māndāp*, the child is seated and his/her father starting the ceremony of tonsure with cutting a simple hair and then the *Nāpit* finish it. On this day, men and women are received as like as marriage ceremony. The assembled public has given the best wishes to the child. Moreover, the guardian of the child has given a gift to *Nāpit* and the *Brāhmāṇā*.

d) **Ear Piercing Ceremony: (Kārnāvedāhā)**

The ceremony is usually performed in the fifth year after the birth of a child when the ear lobe becomes fit for being bored. The child on this day is given a good bath and good dress. She is seated towards east and offered sweets. Sweets are intermittently given to the child to divert her attention from the pain caused by the piercing of the ears. The ceremony is exclusively performed by the women folk in the Garigaon area. We may conclude that it is not a religious ceremony but it was a prelude to the wearing of ornaments by the girls. 49

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49 a) Srimati Basanti Das, Address: Vill & P.O. : Dehan Garigaon, Sex: Female, Age: 57 years.
b) Srimati Surabala Das, Address: Vill & P.O. : Dehan Garigaon, Sex: Female, Age: 52 years.
e) Tolâni-biyā:

Social custom related to women folk is that Tolâni-biyā. It is prevalent amongst the Hindu society of the area. When the girl showed the symptom of the first menstruation, she was confined in a secluded room for a certain period ranging from a few days to a month as prescribed by the astrologer who used to determine the period of her seclusion and vrātā (vows) on the basis of the time of the first sign of the menstruation had passed, the girl was brought out of her seclusion and ceremoniously given a bath after the prescribed period of seclusion. The accompaniment of songs sung by assembled women of the village. The news of the attainment of puberty was duly conveyed through a messenger who carried a bundle containing seven wild figs and a few coral and gold beads fastened together in a piece of cloths. This bundle is called Kānāi. The ceremonial birth of the girl and the practice of placing kānāi on the lap of the girl and other females on that occasion were called Tolâni biyā. It is not prevalent amongst the Muslims. A feast is held on the occasion. The invited guests offered best wishes to the girl.

When the menstruation is going on the women do not sleep in the original Pâleng (Bed). Instead of this she sleep on the floor of her room. For two days, she does not touch the dishes and other things of the house. On the third day, she has bathing and takes fast for a day and thus the
menstruation customs is flows by the women of the Hindu society of this area.

f) Funeral Rites:

The Hindu people of this area observe rites and rituals connected with the death. Hindu people burn the dead body. If a man dies indoors, the person is at once carried out of the house and laid on the courtyard with the head turned towards north. A Tulāsi Plant is kept near the head of the person or dead body. The body is wrapped with a white cloth with wreaths of flowers. Holy basils are scattered over the body. The nearest relatives and friends pay their last respect to the departed and make necessary arrangements for the cremation. The corpse is taken in a stretcher of bamboos constructed for the purpose and carried to the cremation ground in a procession utter the names of gods as “Rāmā bolā, Hārībolā”, etc for the peace of the departed soul.

The funeral pyre is usually made of bamboo fuels within four bamboo posts in a rectangular shape, sufficient to hold the corpse. Four coins are placed under the bamboo posts as a token price of the ground purchased from the mother earth, as it were. The capable survivor adds some pieces of sandalwood and ghee to the fuel of the pyre. The corpse is laid on the pyre upside down if it is a male and upwards if it is a female. The eldest son, or in his absence, the youngest or any other son performs
a function called *mukhāgni*. The chief performer of the obsequies is known as *kriyādhāra*. He performs the *mukhāgni* function by moving round the pyre for three times and after completing each round he touches the mouth of the dead with the flame, and the priest simultaneously recites the appropriate invocations. Lastly, the performer kindles the pyre.

After the body of the dead being consumed, fire is extinguished and the calcined bones (*āsthi*) are collected and preserved in a vase. It is believed that the soul of the dead attains salvation if the calcined bones are thrown into the *Gāṅgā* or some other holy rivers like the Brahmputra.

After clearing the ashes from the pyre-place a small round thatched shed is erected. The well-to-do survivors of the deceased, however, erect a semi permanent shed. An earthen pot is placed inside the shed. The pot is filled with water. Four long bamboo poles are connected with one or more pieces of cloth, each corner being tied to one of the poles. Lastly, some amount of mustard seeds are scattered around the cremation spot. The mourners then return from the cremation ground. They bath first and ceremonially cleanse themselves at the gateway on the deceased or of their own by wearing their feet over fire into which some cotton seeds are put. Lastly, they chew some *neem* or *titāphul* leaves. This is considered to be an antidote to poisonous vapours and evil odours. The mourners then take the second bath and change clothes. The performer of
the obsequies brings the corpse consuming fire from the funeral pyre and preserves it separately till the tenth day of cremation.

During the period of defilement the Hindu people of this area are to observe certain rites. They obtain from taking meat, fish, some kind of pulse and even mustard oil. Hair cutting and shaving are forbidden. They do not take meals for the first three days. They take only milk, gāji \(^1\) and fruits, which are usually offered by their friends and relatives. The household members of the deceased are to lead an austere life for these days. They sleep on the floor and walk on bear foot. The sons of the deceased are to stand the whole period by wearing a set of clothes.

1. **Gāji means** : The word gāji is derived from the Assamese root gāj meaning to sprout. The word gāji literally means a sprouting seed.

I. **Caturtha** :

On the fourth day, they performed a small ceremony called Cāturthā, which is exclusively performed by the Brahmins. On this occasion the persons present in the cremation ground, are fed with rice-powder or bokā-cāul, curd, molasses and ripe banana. The food is, however, served by the relatives only, because the members of the braved family and others of the same line are considered defiled at that period.
II. Daha:

The Hindu people of this area perform it on the tenth day from the day of death. On this day the calcined bones of the deceased person are purified and some pieces of them are thrown into water with due rites. The tenth pindā is offered to the spirit of the dead. The chief performer of the obsequies writes down the secret name (Guptā-nāām) of the deceased or an earthen can (Cāru), which is afterwards plunged into water. The sons of the deceased shave their hair and beard and pare their nails with the help of a bailer who is usually offered a token price afterwards. The son of the deceased touch māhānimbā leaves, a mirror etc. for self-purification. On this occasion some friends and relatives are fed with bokā-Cāul.

III. Suddhi:

Suddhi is a rite of purification. On this day the houses of the deceased person and those of his lineal are cleansed. The household articles used during the period of uncleanness are purified by sprinkling holy water. The sons of the deceased are to go through a series of rituals according to the Sāstric injunctions. They perform a rite for atonement and offer libations of water and sesamum to the departed soul. This is followed by the Srāddhā ceremony. The Srāddhā is called ādyā srāddhā or the first ceremony performed in honour of the spirit of the dead by the
surviving son just after being purified at the end of the period of defilement. On this occasion verities of articles, supposed to be used as viaticum by the soul of the dead in the next world, are offered in the name of the dead i.e.; clothes, utensils etc.

IV. Sapindikarana:

It is performed by the Hindu people of this area on the twelfth day after death. It is believed that just after death the soul of a person does not leave for the world of the forefathers. On the twelfth day it moves to the abode of the fore-fathers as a consequence of the performance of the sāpindikārāṇā ceremony. It means uniting the Pretā with the pitārās. On this ceremony fourteen pāndās are offered to the spirit of the deceased person and to the names of the five preceding generations. Srāddhā is also performed. Finally the priest is fed and offered dāksinā.

V. Feasting Ceremony:

On the thirteenth day after death, a grand feast is arranged by the supervisors of the deceased. On the occasion a good number of Brāhmīns, friends, relatives and neighbour are invited and fed with a sumptuous meal including fish and meat. On this day the members of the bereaved family and the members of the same lineage of the dead take fish for the first time after defilement.
On this occasion a meal, prepared with rice, fish meat, egg, etc. by the chief performer of the obsequies, is offered in the name of the dead in some nearby orchard. Sometimes a tāmol prepared with arecanuts, betel leaves, lime and tobacco, is also offered, if the deceased used to take it during his or her lifetime.

After the fasting is over a propitiatory rite (Sānti Kārmā) is performed in order to wearied off the evils. Here, the invited Brāhmīns are seated together in the courtyard, the sons and daughters- in-law of the dead are made to circumambulate them for four times while the officiating priest invokes blessings by sprinkling sacred water and scattering handfuls of husked rice and dūrvā grass on their heads. Besides, a holy book like the Bhāgāvātā gitā or kirtān-ghosā is also recited.

Thus the funeral rites of the Hindus of this area are celebrated with different mode and methods.

Social customs of the Muslim people of this area:

The Muslim people of the village Garigaon Celebrates various rites and rituals through out the life cycle like other Muslims of Assam.

b) Bhadreshwar Das, Address: Vill & P.O. : Dehan Garigaon, Sex: Male, Age: 65 years
Social Customs Connected with the first born baby:

At the very beginning, the pregnant bride along with the bridegroom invited to her mother’s house after three months. Again they are invited after five month’s to her mother’s house and Pāyāsā is served to them. Moreover, after the seven month they are again invited to her mother’s house.

And “Sātkhowā utsāv is celebrated. According to this festival, the bride and bridegroom are to be seated at a proper place dressed with new cloths. The bride’s mother serves boiled rice with seven curries cooked with verities of vegetables. One of the curry is cooking with varities vegetable flowers, i.e. – A flower of brinjal, A flower of pumpkin etc. after this, the bride prepare a cake or pithā with powdered rice. Women of the neighbouring locality also prepare seven types of cakes with Coconut, Molasses and Sesamum etc. we may included the name of cakes, i.e. – Nārikālār Pithā, Til Pithā, etc. The cakes are distributed amongst the neighbourers after the first eating of bride and bridegroom. The bride and bridegroom leave the bide’s house before sunset. Cakes and new dresses are presented to them. Thus the ‘Sātkhowā utsāv’ is over. 51

When a child is born, the mother and the child are placed into a proper room. Plum leaves are hung in the door and a rod is kept in the

51. Miss Juri, Address: Vill & P.O.: Dehan, Garigaon, Sex: Female, Age: 35 years.
doorstep to avoid from the ghost. A fire is kept burning by the side of the bed of the mother’s. She keeps a knife with her for the period of confinement. Mustard seeds are scattered in and around the house and another fireplace is kept near the doorway. The man is prohibited to enter into the room in night.

The Muslim are follows the same taboos, which are followed by the Hindu people of this area. Moreover, the head of the family or Maulābi or Jonāb performs Āzān to the Almighty Allah, for the welfare of the child.

AQIQAH (Name giving ceremony):

Twenty-one days after the birth of the baby name giving ceremony is observed on the twenty-first day of the birth, which is known as AQIQAH.² (AQIQAH means: A custom observed by the Arabs on the birth of a child, namely, leaving the hair on the infants head until the seventh day, when it is shaved, and animals are sacrificed, namely, two sheep for a boy and one for a girl. It is enjoined by the Muhammadan law, and observed in all parts of Islam). A cow is sacrificed in the name of Allah. The beef of the animal is distributed amongst the neighbourer. Performing of Korān is observed through Jānāb or Maulābi by the Muslim people, who celebrate the AQIQAH festival for the welfare of the
child. And after that, Jonāb has kept a name of the child. Beef is prohibited for the mother and father of the child.

**Sunnah or Sunnat (Circumcision):**

The next rites the passage of a male child is *Sunnah or Sunnāt*. "Sunnah" means: (A path or way; “A manner of Life”. A term used in the religion of the Muslim to express the Custom or manner of life). This rite is prevailing amongst the Muslim Population of the area. A child is generally circumcised between the ages of five (5) to ten (10) years. The person who performs the surgery is known as *Ahtā* or *Hājjām*. On that day, a feast is arranged by the family to their kits and kins. Performing of *Korān* is observed through *Jonāb or Moulābi* by the Muslim people of this area for the welfare of the child. The neighbourer are invited to attend the feast and they are asked with many delicious foods and beef. New dress and so many materials are presented to the child. In the case of female child, no function is observed when the girl attains Puberty.

**Ear Piercing Ceremony:**

The Muslim villagers do not observe any kind of ceremony at the time of piercing the ears. A new needle is used by the mother or any other old lady to pierce the ears when the baby is six or seven months old.
Specially to the female child only such ear piercing ceremony is offered. Before piercing they apply mustard oil and smears the ears.

**Jānāzāh:**

The Muslim people of this area observed rites and rituals connected with the death. Muslim people bury the dead body. If a man dies, Korān is recited by the Jonāb or Māulābi near the dead body. The dead body is carried out of the house to bathing the body. And it is laid on the courtyard with the head turned towards west. A Tulsi plant is kept near the head of the dead body. After that, the body is wrapped with a white cloth. Holy basils are scattered over the body. The nearest relatives and friends pay this last respects to the departed. The corpse is taken in a stretcher of bamboos constructed for the purpose and carried to the graveyard in a mourning procession the names of Allāh for the peace of the departed soul. Perform the Jānāzāh(4.Jānāzāh means; A term used both for the bier, and for the funeral service of a Muslim, also for the Corpse itself (BURIAL) on that days Millād – E-Shārif and performing of Korān is observed through Jonāb or Māulābi by the Muslim people for peace of the departed soul). Before bury the dead body. They place the dead body under the ground. The post mortuary rite is performed by
the Muslims of the area, on the 4th, 7th, 15th, (Ziyārāh) following a death.

5. 'Ziyārah' means:

From the root Zāur, "to visit", visitation, particularly of the tomb of the prophet, and of the grave of any martyr or saint of the Muhammadan faith. In India the word always pronounced Ziyārāt, is by way of abbreviation, used for Ziyārāt-gāh, i.e. for the place of such visitation, or the shrine connected with it.

Beliefs and Practices:

The Muslim people of the village believe in almighty Allāh. According to them Allāh is the omnipotent and none other equivalent except Allāh. The head of the families and the adult members of the families perform Nāmāz daily towards the Almighty Allāh at the Mosque and also their home. They also perform the weekly prayer on the holy Friday. They also perform the month of Rāmzān (i.e.-Arabic month) everybody (Above 10 years old) observes the fasting (abstaining from food and even not a single drop of water). Millād-E-Shārīf and performing of Korān is observed through jānāb or Māulābī by the Muslim people for removing the impediments from the family for the
welfare of the family and the society. They believe in *Leech* (a physician) when a person suffers from fever, pain, epidemic disease etc. they also use folk medicine particularly in the case of pain, small pox etc.

II. *Marriage custom:*

There are many customs relating to sacramental marriage ceremony, which has prevalent in the society of Hindu Garigaon or west Garigaon. Mainly the *Prāzā pāteyā vibhā* has prevalent in our Hindu society. In the sacramental marriage, the first customs is, which is called *Jorān diya* and it is also called locally *Tel Bhārdiyā*. On an auspicious day, two or three days previous to the marriage ceremony the guardians of the bridegroom send to the brides house; *tel* share and other clothes, ornaments, oil, parched paddy, cinnabar, banana, coconut, gur and two pots of curd and a packet of Vermillion. These are generally carried by a few women related to the groom. One or two male relatives also accompany the party. The articles are formally received by the mother, relatives and invited women of the bride’s house. The bride is dressed and bedecked with ornaments brought from the bridegroom’s house and the Vermillion mixed with oil is then applied on the forehead and the parting of hair of the bride amidst *ululū* sound of women. A part of the articles brought from the groom’s house including a pot of curd are sent
back to the bridegroom’s house with a dress and a ring meant for the groom. The bride has to touch all the articles intended for the bridegroom.

The female relations headed by the mother of the girl proceed to a neighbouring tank or river Brahmaputra accompanied by singers and drummers. The mother carries a water-pot. Having reached the tank, they carry a dialogue of set-word, the purport (signification meaning) of which is to ensure good fortune for the wedding couple. At the end of the dialogue the women carrying the water-pot throw a few cow rice shells and *Thuriyā tāmol*. (a piece of areca-nut rolled up with betel leaf) into water saying “oh, sun and moon, winds and clouds, bear witness I carry water for the marriage of so and so”. Then drawing three lines on the surface of water with a knife invokes the river Brahmaputra to bless the marriage with her water. Then they return filling the pot with water on reaching home they sprinkle some water from the pot on the eves of the house. “After returning the house they place the water-pot on the mādāl (māndāle means circle) prepared artistically with coloured powders and adorned with picture of Gods and Goddesses. A mirror is usually placed in the centre.”


A local custom is prevalent amongst the Hindu society of this area. Early in the morning, before the sun appears in the horizon, the bride or the bridegroom is asked to sit on a low stole at the doorstep of the sleeping room and the mother and other female relatives, each holding two betel leaves dipped in Curd - water, touches the cheeks, arms and feet of the bride or the groom with those leaves moistened in watery Curd and wipes with the end of his or her garment. Each woman does this three times while others gathered on the occasion Sing Sweet Songs fitting to the occasion with intermittent (Uruli) sound produced by twisting of tongues.

A remarkable custom is Suwāguritola which is prevalent in our Hindu society. It is held when the bridegroom arrives at the gate of the bride's house. The mother accompanied by female relatives and guests proceeds to the nearly tank or river carrying a water pot by her side. One of the women, carries on her head a broad circular bamboo data (tray) containing seven earthen lamps and another women carries a winnowing fan on which contains a few coins fastened in a piece of cloth and handful of rice. She also carries a small stick with which she frequently strikes the winnowing fan and create mirth by her behaviour. On their arrival the
mother draws water in the process noted earlier and carries a mouthful of water which she sprays on the floor of the dining room. When there is no nearby tank or river, the mother digs a symbolic tank with a knife and imitates the process of drawing water from that tank. In fact, she draws water from a tub carried by them. The water pot is placed in mādāl.

Besides the local customs noted above, the marriage system in Garigaon among the Hinduised people present a few other practices such as dārā-āgacha, āngāthi khelā, duārdhārā etc.

While the Dārā-āgāchā is concerned, here we noticed the young men of the bride’s party putting up a barricade against the bridegroom’s party when they arrive near the bride’s house. The party can proceed only after appearing the party, which put obstruction on the path.

**Angāthi khelā:**

*Angāthi khelā* is a play between the bride and bridegroom’s in the presence of young men and women. A ring is kept concealed in a heap of rice and the newly married couple is asked by turns, to find out the ring within a given time. Whoever, succeed in recovering the ring wins the game.
Duārdhārā:

Duārdhārā custom is start from after the marriage ceremony, when the bride is about to proceed to the bridegroom's house, the mother standing on the threshold tries to obstruct her movement by extending her hands both ways. The bride after trying to go out by the right side, steps out by the left side to accompany the groom. In the marriage function the women folk play a major role.

The local custom of āthmāngolā; i.e. – inviting the newly married couple to the house of the bride’s father for a dinner on the eight day of the marriage is prevalent amongst the Hindu people of this area.

The Muslims marriage custom is also more or less same as the Assamese Muslims. The wedding ceremony among the Muslims of the area, covers two separate ceremonies, the ring ceremony (Angāthi pindhowā) which is followed by the actual wedding ceremony (Biyā or Nikāh). The ‘Mehre’ or ‘Mahr’ (6. Mahr means: The dower or settlement of money or property on the wife, without which a marriage is not legal. Or Dower is considered by some lawyers to be an effect of the marriage contract, imposed on the husband by the law as a mark of respect for the subject of the contract-the wife, which others consider that
it is in exchange for the usufruct of the wife, and its payment is necessary, as upon the provision of a support to the wife depends the permanency of the matrimonial connection) is fixed on the day of ring ceremony. At the time of ‘Nikāh’, the proposal and acceptance is taken from the bride and groom by two prominent person in the society and hearing is observed by the two adult male witness. Another person is known as ukil (Advocate) asks the consent of the bride and the groom. After that, the Māuālbi or Jonāb performs the Nikāh(7 Nikah means: A word which., in its literal sense signifies conjunction, but which in the language of the law implies the marriage contract) by religious rites and rituals. Neotā or Āthmongālā, a ceremony on the eight-day, is also prevalent among the Muslims of the area. The bride and the groom are invited by the bride’s parents on the eight-day of marriage for feast. Songs are recited by the women folk, which is same as the Assamese Hindus of the area.

The social life or social custom of the Muslim of the village is a synthesis of the Islamic and the Hindu social custom. The custom of the presentation of Jorān before the marriage date is prevalent amongst the Muslim of the village like the Hindus but the Vermillion mark is not applied on the forehead and the parting of hair. "Jorān diyā is also called locally telbhārdiyā on an auspicious day, two or three days previous to
the marriage ceremony, the guardians of the bridegroom send to the bride’s house: tel, Sharee and other clothes, ornaments, oil, parched paddy, cinnabar, banana, coconut, gur and two pots of curd etc. These are generally carried by a few women related to the groom. One or two male relatives also accompany the party. The articles are formally received by the mother, relatives and invited women of the bride’s house. The bride is dressed and bedecked with ornaments brought from the bridegroom’s house. A part of the articles brought from the groom’s house including a pot of curd are sent back to the bridegroom’s house with a dress and a ring meant for the groom. A part of the articles brought from the groom’s house including a pot of curd are sent back to the bridegroom’s house with a dress and a ring meant for the groom. The bride has to touch all the articles intended for the bridegroom.

III. Social customs related to agriculture:

The both Hindu and Muslim people of the village Garigaon follow social customs connected with agriculture. Cultivators of this area light a lamp or bānti in the paddy field on the occasion of Kāti Bihu for the first growth of crops.
Rice is not only a food but it is used in the marriage ceremony by both the Hindu and Muslim. When the bridegroom is coming to the bride house then the members of the bride are used rice to fascinating the bridegroom. The rice is prepared with māntrā by a ojā.

There are some belief regarding the deposited of cultivation into the granary. During the hungry-hour, women are not allowed to go to the side of granary. The Hindu cultivators of this area light a lamp (bānti) in front of the granary on the occasion of Kāti Bihu.

The frog marriage is follows by the cultivators of this area, when drought. On the occasion of frog marriage, the womenfolk sing many songs describing the frog pair as bride and bridegroom (see Chapter-V, p-55)

“Na-Khowa-Bhoz” (Harvest-feast) :

After the harvesting the cultivator celebrate ‘nā-khowā’ or the Harvest-feast. The cultivators prepare pāyāsā with new rice and it is distributed amongst the neighbouring people. Moreover, Hindu cultivators distribute the offerings in the Nāmghār and Muslim cultivators have in the mosque. The harvest feast is followed on the occasion of Māgh Bihu or Bhogāli Bihu.
IV. **Food habit and Cooking:**

Rice is the main food of the Hindus and Muslims of the area. The cooking and serving of meals are always associated with different customs and beliefs and taboos. Both the Hindu and Muslim have their own customs, beliefs and taboos with the cooking of the meals and serving of the same. At the very outset we will discuss about social customs connected cooking and serving of meal in the village. The kitchen house is generally built attached to the *Bārghār*, i.e.- main house. No body except a Brahmin is allowed to enter the kitchen of a Brahmin family. The kitchen house is controlled by the female group of the family. The house is always kept neat and clean by washing with water, cow dung and mud. Then the main meals are cooked in the house. No body can enter in the kitchen house by wearing *chāppāls* and *shoes* of the both communities. During the meanstrual cycle, of the main cook; she does not allow to enter the kitchen house. In absent of her, another woman of her family has cooked their meal.

A *Bhākāt* of *Nāmghār* or who take *Sārān* never take anything in the house of a Muslim family. It is a social taboo.
Generally the older people of male group of a family take meal before the ladies or after the ladies. The housewife of the both communities never takes her food till her husbands have his food.

The housewife of the both communities cannot cook without taking bath. She also cannot prepare meal during the menstruation period. And after delivery of women cannot prepare meal for not less than thirty days.

There is another custom, among the Hindu people, after the death of parents; sons and daughter-in-law not take their meal for the first three days. From the fourth day, they can take only one meal as ḥābīṣyānnā at the evening time. The last function of death ceremony in the community feast. The son and other member of the family touch the fish, meat along with other people of the society. The Muslim people are also do not take meal for the first three days. But they could be take meal (mainly boil rice without meat & fish) from the neighbours who are not belongs to blood relation of the death body.

There is a social custom amongst the Hindus in the death ceremony feast. The oldest people start first to eat and then others follow in the feast. This is called āgbhāt khowā. After the death of the head of a family the main earthen oven is broken down and a new oven is installed.
Another custom of meal eating is that everybody starts to eat the meal in the feast at a time and finish it at a time. No body can get up from his seat for washing his hands before the completion of all people. The same customs are prevalent in the Muslim society also. The bride cannot cook rice for older people before pāgdāni function is celebrated. In that function the bride distributes the salt and ginger among the respected people. The another women related function is that both the Hindu and Muslim girl cannot take rice and other boil food within the puberty period. After the death of a person, the relatives and other people bring some rice, coconut fruits, sugarcane, milk etc. to the grieved family.

V. **Taboos:**

Taboos relating to the social life of the people of this area are as follows:

a) After the birth of a new baby, Afire is kept burning by the side of the bed of the mother. She keeps a knife with her for the period of confinement. Mustard seeds are scattered in and around the house and another fireplace is kept near the doorway. Outside the house, plum leaves are hang on the door, so that no evil-spirit can enter into the house. Male people are not allowed to enter the room where the baby is sleeping at night.
b) During the time of Ambuvāci or Āmāti ploughing the earth, sowing seeds and digging a land are strictly prohibited.

c) During the hungry hour, women are not allowed to go to the side of granary.

d) During the time of menstruation, women are strictly prohibited to enter the kitchen and cooking food.

e) A Bhākāt of Nāmghār or who take Sārān never take anything in the house of a Muslim family.

f) Food taboos like, Beef is regarded as taboos in Hindu society. Pork and tortoise meat are regarded as taboo in Muslim society.

g) Urāhi or bean is not allowed to take in the month of Cāitrā.

h) Eating raddish in the month of Māgh is a taboo.

i) Lāu or pumpkin or bottle guard is prohibited in the months Bhādrā.

j) There are also some food items of Garigaon, which are mostly prohibited to take in night. i.e. – Āmlākhi, Silikhā, Puisāk, Dhekiyā Sāk, titā or bitter etc.