Introduction

North-East region of India is bounded by the political boundary of China in the North, Bhutan in the West, Bangladesh in the East and Burma (Myanmar) in the South. It comprises of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Of these, Assam is the biggest state (as per land area) in this region consisting of Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley. In Assam, languages belonging to different language families are found namely Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman.

Dimasa, belonging to Tibeto-Burman language family is spoken in different districts of Assam namely, Nagaon, North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong, in Barak Valley region of Cachar and Hailakandi district. Besides Assam, Dimasa is also spoken in Dimapur subdivision of Nagaland. The Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa is also known as Hawar dialect. The estimated population of Dimasa according to census report of India 2001 is 1,10,976.

Dimasa tribes, which belong to Indo-Mongoloid Kachari group are found in North East region of India. G.A. Grierson in his Linguistic survey of India, Vol. II, Pt. II. classifies Dimasa under the Bodo (Boro) of the Bodo-Naga division of the Assam-Burmese section of the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Chinese speech family. Robert Schefer classifies Dimasa under the western units of Barish branches of Barik division of the Sino-Tibetan family. In the classification given by Paul Benedict (1972), Dimasa is included under Bodo-Garo group of Tibeto-Burman Branch of Sino-Tibetan family.

Dimasa is the name of the language and also the name of the community. Literally the meaning of the word Dimasa is the children of the big river. There are different opinions regarding the origin of the word Dimasa. According to Sir Edward Gait, Dimasas were known as Timisa to the Ahoms which is a corrupted form of Dimasa. According to Sonaram Thaosen, the Dimasas were known as Bodosa before their arrival in Dimapur. In his opinion Dimasa refers to the people inhabiting the bank of the river Dhansiri and in Dimasa, the Dhansiri river is called Dima. Mrs. Nirupama Hagzer opines that it has been a
tendency among the Dimasas to introduce themselves by adding șađ meaning șchildrenș to the place of their habitation, so, the word Dimasađis derived from Dimapursađ the people who lived in Dimapur.

Dimasas had their capital at Dimapur. After the invasion of Ahom at Dimapur. The Dimasas shifted their capital at Maibang. However, the Dimasas could not stay for long at Maibang. A lethal assault from the Jayantia King forced the Kachari King to shift his capital to Khaspur in plains of Cachar. After the assassination of the last Dimasa Kachari King Gobin Chandra in 1830 A.D. and since there was no successor for the Kachari throne, the Kachari kingdom was annexed by a proclamation to the British East India Companyș territory on 14th Aug, 1832.

The Dimasas are patrilineal. A Dimasa family generally is composed of the head of the family, his wife, their children and the unmarried brothers and sisters of the head of the family. In Dimasa society, a marriage proposal comes from the bridegroomș side and need to pay brideș price.

When Dimasa Kachari King had his capital at Maibang, the processs of Hindunisation began among the royal families. Along with the conversion of the Kachari King by a Bengalee Brahman a large number of his subjects also adopted Hinduism.

The Barak valley Dimasas who are identified as Barman are highly influenced by the Hindu Bengali culture. Thus, the Barmans or Dimasas of Barak Valley are maintaining both Dimasa tradition as well as Hindu rituals. Thus, marriage and funeral rituals are performed by Bengali Brahmin.

Dimasas have their own traditional dress. Women can be seen wearing ėigu( lower garment), ěizamphain(upper garment) whereas for men it is ėisa(dhoti), ěimsao(chadar). Apart from traditional dresses, a married Dimasa girl puts red colour known as sindur over her forehead and wear red and white pair of bangles on both hands and all the boys have to wear ĉugunș on their body.
Organisation of the Study:

The present work is organized in seven chapters, excluding the bibliography. The chapters are Introduction, Review of Literature, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Vocabulary and Conclusion.

The Introduction chapter contains a brief discussion about the position of Dimasa language, the historical and cultural background of Dimasas.

The second chapter on Literature Review presents a review of selected books on Dimasa. It contains a review of grammatical works done so far on Dimasa.

The third chapter on Phonology establishes the six vowels which occur initially, medially and finally except /ǝ/. Seven diphthongs are available in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa. There are sixteen consonantal phonemes out of which /p, t, k/ are voiceless aspirated stops always found in the syllable initial position. The syllabic patterns are found up to hexa and it is available only in the compound words. The Hawar dialect does not have three consonant clusters at the initial position. It does not have final consonant clusters. Geminates are available in Hawar dialect of Dimasa. Like other Tibeto-Burman languages it has tones.

The chapter on Morphology discusses in detail the various grammatical categories like noun, pronoun, gender, number, case etc. To form words, Hawar dialect of Dimasa makes use of all the known techniques such as affixation, compounding, reduplication etc.

The fifth chapter on Syntax briefly deals with the grammar of Hawar dialect. Various constituents like noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, etc are discussed. It also contains different types of clauses, sentences including various kinds of interrogative sentences in Hawar dialect.

The sixth chapter on Vocabulary contains a detailed analysis of the words used in Hawar dialect. It is found out that a lot of borrowed words from Bengali and English have entered in Dimasa lexical items.
The seventh chapter is conclusion and in this chapter, we have summarized our findings. On the basis of the analysis done in the preceding chapters, we concluded the thesis by doing a summarization on the whole chapters in a nutshell and said that the Dimasas are maintaining their native language even though Dimasas are a minority community in Barak Valley. This language maintenance is accompanied by lexical interference.

At the end of the thesis, the bibliography is given.