with ritualistic beliefs and practice. Best examples are provided by the *Mibu abangs* of the Mishings.

Abangs have come down from generation to generation to tell the history of the remote past of the Mishing. S. Roy describes the *aabangs* as “The aabang may be compared with the Puranas of the Sanskrit literature and the sagas of the Tetone. They are written in archaic esoteric language which is unintelligible to the uninitiated layman. They exist in the memory of a special class of Miris and even among them the most experienced and learned remember them correctly and understand and can explain their exact significance.”

N.C Pegu has cited a piece of *aabang* collected by an elderly person in 1945 from the plain Miris which narrates briefly the evolution of the tribe from near savagery to the civilization spreading over centuries.

\[
\text{Melo sigine totung rejinkang}\\
\text{Sidang kolokkem Dashing kitonem}\\
\text{Metpu pundore dorge kankune}\\
\text{Besu bednem romkang gelana}
\]

Doha tilangem dommo sutonem
Nei netorem tonge gelana
Melo silongem moman tulana
Poyi ponungem nupu gelana
Mepu pudorem dorge motonem

**Meaning:** Thus they (Miris) shivering in the freezing cold. It was from the days of Dashing and Sidang. The dry wood when spurned with a rope, the fire sparked off. And they found meat tested better when roasted over the fire. After cutting down trees and clearing jungle while humming melodies, the reaming branches and leaves were burnt down.

Si siprem pitmo sutonem
Sipek pakmorem germo sugela
Noi nosorem songe tokune
Geneke gatlingem limo sugel
Jine roriyem tore kankune
Gonro ugonem summen tokunem
Ribi gasengam tilln tokunem
Mibu galugem summen tokune

**Meaning:** The cotton seed sown in time. The plants flowered abundantly. They spume yarn from the cotton from their cloth. Then
dyed with spectrum of colours extracted from various plants. Various designs were developed. From them gonro-ugon and ribi-gasing were woven from men and women respectively. Mibo-galuk were also woven specially for Mibos.

However, the aabang is only a fragmentary one collected from an old man. The original aabang was collected in 1945. But the first part of the song was damaged during the devastating floods caused by the unforgettable earthquake of 1950 in Assam.²

The aabang are superior in their composition of works and quality. These sungs still continue to confine to some special person known as Mibu and still continue to song by them with aesthetic appeal.

Without a Mibu, the priest of the community, it is beyond to the common people to remember the songs and explain their exact meanings.

In religious situation Mibu is the supreme member.

The *aabang* are sung only on some particular occasions or festivals by the *Mibu*’s hence; the followings are the example –

\[\begin{align*}
Serki na: & \text{ ne na:na:na:ne batta} \\
Regvne na: & \text{ne regvne ba:ba} \\
Side di: & \text{dum sidona misinge} \\
Rugube & \text{dodo} \\
Abu tani: & \text{me remung reyune} \\
Silo bo: & \text{mo:lo:tu: so nemi gomlabem} \\
Leni belamem & \text{ablem boteika}
\end{align*}\]

Meaning: Oh mother you give birth first Abo Tani, then resolute the religious path for righteous occasion. When the Mishing people were in darkness a voice spoken from the above was descending on earth as light through your sublime command.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{umlaye rumna} \\
\text{donke ledinge rumne name} \\
\text{gorba :berne rumna} \\
\text{gorpo:yorne a:tana} \\
\text{ligu a :ne rumna} \\
\text{pasum togunge gu:mine nome} \\
\text{can meloke juic jeaddok} \\
\text{do:jing aneke do: jikko, jigbio namdem}
\end{align*}\]
nokke a:jí ta:be ka:linge

se:di a:bangko

ingkang yekula³

Meaning: Oh originator of the master of creator, originator of history, we salute you, you have taken the whole responsibility of giving birth on your shoulders and in your womb and you are like the mother of all families. we salute you.

bn:da deo cel dome ta:bo yem

lo:mor regobm blegela

ta: bo yekku ta: bo pnd:k jorka:kik

ta:gomtayo ta:k dongko.⁴

Meaning: Oh originator please help this female who remembering in this time.

Mibu, the priest occupies position of father figure in the Mishing society. The women has very high position and respect among the Mibus. They recite different aabang to recall their mother

3. Padun, Narendra: Mishing Sanskriti, p p-144,145
4. Regon, D.: Pragupta ganth, p-376
deity. Which reflect the position of women in their society and religious belief. One such common hymn recited by the Mibus at the commencement of Mibu-dagnam is-

\[
\begin{align*}
Dongke leginge rumna \\
Dungo le binge rumna \\
Ligu ane rumne namna \\
Pasum togunge gumin nomona
\end{align*}
\]

Meaning: Somewhat like hail mother who has given me these limbs and this body.

Mibu-dangnam is performed by the Mibus to appease his mother deity when somebody fell ill seriously.\(^5\)

\[
\begin{align*}
Lomor regomb blegela \\
Tabo yekku tabo pndk jorka kik \\
Ta gontayo tak dongko
\end{align*}
\]

Meaning: Oh originator please help this female who remembering in this time.

Mishing women play a vital role in the treatment of pox. It is believed that pox is caused by the Mother goddess or goddess of

pox known as Ai when she becomes angry on somebody. Ai travels this universe with her seven sisters and the spot on the body of the patient is said to appearance of flowers.

Womenfolk perform ritual singing songs to appease the goddess Ai. In this ritual Mibu or the priest does not take part. This is exclusively a female ritual. The songs recited to appease the goddess Ai. Are marked by simplicity of expression. These also reflected the high position of the women in the world represented by the Mother goddess. This is the meaning of one song recited in the ritual perform to appease the Mother goddess Ai is given bellow:

“They are coming, Ai’s seven sister, across the seven mountains all bow their heads- the grass, the creepess, the trees for Ai is coming. The golden batterfly, round does it circle on its two silver wings. The Ai’s have come to visit the place, we beg our lives of them. Unconsciously lid we trespass into Ai’s garden, unawares we did pick the bads/forgive our crimes this once, o Bhabani, we prostrate ourselves at your feet/ the Ais have come to poor houses nothing do we have to offer/we shall rub their feet with our tresses lie down to make fords of our bodies.”
Mishing women are very independent but they do not want to be like men. In this backdrop let us examine the case of status of plain tribal women of Assam placed in a patrilineal type of inheritance and patrilocal residence. The plains tribes are found in the plains of the Brahmaputra and Barak Valley.

Their habitations are intersparsed with non-tribal population. Naturally sizable section of the plains trials is an assimilated and acculturate people. Sanskritisation process is visible in many of them. Thus the status of plains tribal women cannot be treated in the typical tribal background of olden days. The cultural ethos of non-tribals have penetrated into the domain of the tribals. Spread of education, expansion of trade and business activities in or near a tribal village, have affected the traditional socio-cultural values, modes and morals. The role of tribal womenfolk has undergone some changes in the changing surroundings. Even Pritchard's observation is relevant in this regards. Women position in the society long run dependent on every body's position, that we all stand or fall together.

*Kaje oiy molaji

*Arjida Gam Akumka*
Awanari Roukampou

Donyai polo Dak Kampua

Meaning: Come my beloved, constructing a humble cottage on the bank of the beautiful river. Suwansiri let us live together as husband and wife. Under the moon and the sun and beneath the vast expanse of the sky we will pass our days in that humble cottage.

To the Mishing youths girl are the epitome of beauty. Every limb of beloved is pleasing to the eyes. Even the shadow is considered as golden and eye-catching.

Oi oi oisiri Amigolog Miksiri

Yal Lopou Genemon Kapau Moula Duhyenou-

Meaning: Beauty pervades though all the organs of your body. O my beloved; Even your golden shadow is treat to the eyes.

Women are a source of inspiration to maintain a congenial life. A Mishing can bear all the sufferings to gets his beloved.

Gru ai lagi mang jak ae lagimang

Oi nam pamil kayuba takla daye

Meaning: There is no need of buffaloes or bullocks for ploughing the fields. I am lucky because I got you as my wife. I will cultivate with spade alone.
The women too, prefer a life companion who is proficient in the realm of cultivation. They know very well that agriculture done systematically and sincerely alone can bring prosperity. As she will have to play a role in the smooth function of the family, the husband must be a true agriculturist and not a day dreamer.

Thus in *oi nitom* the beloved sings-

*Mela dula kapiyen person maril dagne do*

*Gimanei kapiyen ager ela daned-

Meaning : If one is always conscious in dresses then he fiends no time to work and becomes lazy. Instead of margin a fashion conscious man it is better to marry an emigration and diligent peasant.

A Mishings desire to got his sweet heart is sometimes frustrated due to social restriction. The Siyang river does not stand in the way as Mishing people are expert boat pliers but the economic disparity and social status put hindrances.

*Nokke dolung kekonse*

*Nokks dolung kekonse*

*Siyang asi dungkomna*

*Kali dakgom kapama-

Meaning : Your village is on this bank and my village is on the
other, separated by the Sing river the thirst of seeing you has never been satiated.

Among the Mishing arranged marriages are rare and young girls prefer the marriages, which have social recognition. The girls develop love towards the lovers during *Ali-ai-ligange* and *Pora-g* festival dancing sequences and they marry their lovers without studying the consequences. Sometime the advice of parents are of no avail. But in the later life they repent.

\[
\begin{align*}
A\ babke\ layrde\ mirsi\ dikpe\ digdang \\
Menamoke\ lunamde\ alotipe\ tigadai \\
Abaobi\ ludagai\ ngoluk\ bikula\ gilankka \\
Memura\ sulu\ gikala\ sempin\ dukem\ patku
\end{align*}
\]

Meaning: The advice of my parents burnt me like hot chillies, where my lovers pleadings appeared to be tasty salt. My parents advised me to accept the boy they selected for me but, I am accursed soul was tempted towards my lover as if to shoulder the burden of this pang of poverty although the life.

The process of acculturation deeply penetrated in to the living pattern of the plains tribes and the same can be traced in *Anun-nitom*. Here we have noticed that a beloved is considered as
Radha and the lover as Krishna. It may be noted that the Mishings maintain their love separation is unheard-

Oi ya Radabi na oiva Krishnabi na
Oi ya muruli badung
Gakula Brindaban addung kadung
Ngoike biuwe adung
Kayunnam——

Dunme dumyabulu dumdum mandung
Prime yame bulu pempe muddung.
Namil naseibubu nitom madung
Pantai plaibubu paksa sadung
Ngoike sisang oiya bipune baddung
Oiya kapsang
Oiya tatpasang
Kamnam——

Meaning : Oh my darling, you are Radh and I am Krishna. The divine flute is pouring melodious tune. The Gakul and the Brindabona are surcharged with that tune. Our Bihu is approaching, Dunam and Dumayma are beating the drums. Pirmi and Yame are playing with pipes. Nemil and Nasei are singing song. Pantai are Paloi are dancing. Our youth has found expression in the Bihu.
Therefore, my darling, let me enjoy your dance once and let me hear your song once.

Mishing glorify the women not only the youthful days but the company of the beloved is sought although, even after death.

_Chapori oi chaporí chapan dalo ramad kapam_

_Ai ngonyik Mikkide yipem suyepe._

Meaning: Though the moral remains of your being will be cremated in this bank and mind will be on the other, yet the smoke of the cremation ground will unite both of us.

The Mishing women contribute their mite for the welfare of the families and one will be surprised to see the busy schedules of the Mishing women if he passes a night in a Mishing house. They leave their beds when the cocks crow before dawn. Pounding of rice starts before dawn while the elderly women remain busy in cooking meals. By the time the sun changes its ready hue, they complete the preliminaries in the agricultural operation.

In the _Oi- nitom_ women’s role in agricultural operation is reflected in the following song-

_Ame oiyá gayume_

_Muti oiyá tuyuma_
Anke logne asido
Kasi nale bomyuma

Meaning: Oh, my darling, how you look beautiful at reaping crops, you look so nice while spreading the sheaves in the water abreast, you look so charming with the sickle.

Although the Mishings glorify the womenfolk in their Oi-nitom and women’s role is recognized in the smooth functioning of the conjugal life, yet there is no dearth of proverbs and folk tales depicting women as root cause of all evils. A proverb goes like this-

Ampe pemilake mega guda
Nang amelaka ayaryang lenda

Meaning: A neglected fire burns the house. Females are the root cause of all evils.

In a folk story of Mishings arrival in the plains we find how the beautiful girl named Buti caused irreparable damage to the eternal peace between the two villages. The story goes like this, Moying was a handsome young boy of Minyong clan. There was a very beautiful girl in the Damra village name Turi. When
she grew up her father announced that his daughter would be married to a wrestler only. In those days wrestling was the prevalent custom in the Mishing society to judge the vaguer of the contestant youths. Hearing Turi’s father’s announcement, Moying proceeded towards Damra village. Moying was a famous wrestler and could easily defeat the rivals of Damra village. Turi’s father was glad to find such a suitable match for his daughter and gave his daughter in marriage to Moying. Moying returned to his village along with his beautiful wife.

The young boys of Damra village wanted to take revenge upon Moying. As per custom after a few days of marriage the son-in-law has to pay a visit to the father-in-laws house accompanied by the wife. He should bring rice beer pots (apong) also. Accordingly Moying proceeded to the father-in-laws house with wife and other articles of good. In Damara village the young unmarried boys prepared a feast and a big pig was killed for the purpose. It was announced that the feast was arranged as mark of respect for Turi’s return to her village after marriage. Moying and Turi were invited for the feast. When Moying came to participate in the feast the boy of Damra village caught hold of him and tying his hands and feet with a rope and packing him in
a "tom" (a bamboo container) threw away in to the river. Turi could not bear this and committed suicide.

The news of this ghastly episode spread everywhere. The people of Moying's village become furious and they also made a plan to teach the Damra youths a lesson:

Accordingly they arranged a feast invited all the people of Damra village. The young boys of Damra village know about the conspiracy and they sent only the elderly people to the feast. The people of Moying village appeared to be very hospitable and they honored the quests with *apong*. When the guests were fully intoxicated the host villagers locked both the doors of the house where the guests were resting. The beheaded all the guests of Damra village. One old man, however, escaped miraculously and he spread the news of this ghastly massacre in his village.

The young boys of Damra village planned to take revenge and proceeded to Moying village. But in the meantime the Moyings vacated the village.

Dine Miram was the head of all the villages in that areas and all respected him. The Moyings pleased him by offering
potatoes and arums and told him about their plight. He allowed the Moyings to flee away and himself lay on the road. The Damra youth found Dine Miram in that position and could not dare to proceed further. They returned to their own village. In the meantime the Moyings reached the plains and till they are living in the plains.

In the PO:RAG festival the young girls and boy enjoying equality. But, the girls are only dancing and making food and rice bear.

Lo lo le lole :lole:
Dao lole: lole: lole:

Cicuk cukob cukub bodiya
Rugam gamba gamba bodiya
Ya-ru : ce pa:m cutka
Amum bulua ru: ce pa: m cutka,
y:kekta :bere: cutka,
anum buluya kekteya bere: cutka,

____________________________

gya :dyar doyar po: ker la je.

Meaning : O young girl, dress-up and dancing like a bird in this festival. we enjoying tighter.
The Murong house is necessary for performing the *PO:RAG* festival. Many villagers invents the youth organization from a neighboring village to participate in every aspect of the festival. A priest know as *Mibu* is invited who conducts the prayer to *SEDI-MELO, DO:NYI: PO:LO etc.*

The *Mibu*, at night sing *A:BANG* leading the dancing youth forming in a circle. The festival runs for three consecutive days. The whole village people irrespective of age, sex, and caste enjoy the feast and dance.

**KABAN**

These songs are the expressions of sorrow and grief*. These songs are commonly sung by a deserted lover at the time of death or departure of a very close relatives. The women sections are commonly associated with this song. The women sung recollecting the sweet memories of the past. They express how the past sweet memories still touch the heart deeply. The women only express that thing. Women composed that song.

Women reflect that how much she is important for the family members from birth to middle age how can she engaged with the
family, These are reflected by the song like this –

\begin{verbatim}
Ouwe ouwa asinng onama
Oko imurem itone oko lumurem lutene
Okko kapila ngomme silo
Bipage do:bo:ne ngammesile?
Ajone dokkebong ou:sangko ekumsem
Kape mepagla kape saktidla
Ami kalope gvpage yebo:ne?
\end{verbatim}

**Keban Nitom**

It know as"Doying kaban" where in some tragic events of some deserted lover are embodied.

**Birig**

These may be called as seasonal songs sing at festival. The song sing particularly in the annual festival and religious functions only are known as brig *nitom*. These songs give a description of seasons and the importance of festival.
MIDANG

The songs sing at the marriage festival. In Midang they generally display the beautiful past life of bride in her father house.

\[ ba:be ba:be ba:be ari:anga \]
\[ na: ne na:na na:ne pagyanga \]
\[ na:ne ba :ba nakke du:ne akiye \]
\[ jihtum namdeme \]
\[ ba:buke dum deng ngo \]
\[ na:neke ater omen go \]
\[ mu:I tomange \]
\[ go:be tomange \]

\[ aneke ome go \]
\[ aneke omenogo \]
\[ aneke ka:lingo giye:pemange ngo \]

Meaning: O father, my mother I am a piece of your entrails. The beloved daughter of my father and mother, I can no longer sleep careless in your laps. I shall go today along the uncharted path(marriage). Mothers lovely daughter as I am, I shall not be able to forget to keep her word.
Meaning: Don't go up yet, fair sister—in low, for the fresh wooden ladder is yet to be made. Don't go up (to the platform) yet, fair sister in low, for the smoke of the padoms is yet to rise. Please go up now, fair sister in low for the wooden ladder and the wooden seat are ready and the smoke of the padoms can now be seen in the skies.

This song is sung in occasion of marriage. A fresh wooden ladder leaning against a newly extended portion of the platform is used to usher in the bride. In side the house, the bride is given a fresh wooden set. so this song is apply.
KO:NI:NAM :- (Lullabies)

Those songs are sung to sleep the children. The lullabies are usually fanciful compositions, but they reveal a delicacy of sentiments, which are beyond the reach of literary plenty, those are composed by women.

These lullabies are few character agriculture is the main store of the Mishing people. They have to work hard in the field irrespective of sex and age during the season of agricultural production. The Mishing women work hard both at home and in the field. They get less time to look after their children. The lullabies are less sung while they are busy in the field or at home, the mother leave the young children in the charge of teenage girls who are keep particularly for that purpose.

(i) Don't cry, my pet
Let your parents work in the field,
When they come back
We shall cook rice for you
Your mother is not here

................... ................
(ii) Our little one will go to sleep,
We will plant a bogari
Plum in the orchard,
The bogari plums will ripe and drop,
Our little one will pick them up and eat.

(iii) Jonbay dear, let me have a needle,
Why a needle? – To sew my wallet.

(iv) me:maya me:moya mi mi otka
me:mi o ma: meal mendari gampako nom

Meaning: Our baby sleep on the bed. if you are not a sleep than the cat came in our place

This part covering by the women, we agree that women position in this situation is very high.

Status is variable depending upon the cultural ethos, modes and moral and interpersonal relations. Determining and measuring status in a Tribal setting is difficult task where status consciousness is at a low key and corporate life is the characteristic feature.
Thus the status of women in the patrilineal and patrilocal plains
tribal societies may at a casual glance appear to be low to non tribals but the womenfolk, born and brought up in their respective cultural milieu may not consider their status low. The women in these societies are least status conscious and they are happy if they get equal treatment. If we study the status of plain tribal women in this backdrop we find that the plain tribal womenfolk enjoy equal status in their societies. There are certain spheres like the village council where the entry of women is restricted, but the womenfolk have no grumbling over that nor they consider if as deprivation of their right. They accepted the prohibition as traditional necessity. Peace and harmony in the family front is of prime importance rather than hankering after status. Even the educated womenfolk do not consider the existing social position as inferior.