CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to highlight the status of women as reflected through the folklore and folk life of Mishing of Assam. As Mishing is the major community of Lakhimpur District (889325) ethnographic description of this tribe has been collected from 16 villages in the same district. Further, for this intensive study 120 households were identified from these 16 villages. In the study we have tried to give a comprehensive picture of social, economic and folk life of the Mishing women.

Mishing tribe is the second largest tribal group of Assam. They inhabit in the Brahmaputra valley in the upper Assam. Mishing community mainly lives in the riverbank. They have been occupying the upper Subansiri and plain Assam. But, the main population of Mishing is spread in the Lakhimpur district. This district is predominantly rural in nature and its economy is agrarian. Culturally in the area, interaction between tribal and non-tribal culture is also very conspicuous.
In the foregoing chapter, we have tried to throw light on the status of women of the Mishing of Assam. The Mishing is a patrilineal group of people, although the women are not treated as inferior to men in the society. It is connected to many other ways of living, institutional network, economy, religion political organization, social organization etc. The upper Assam is inhabited mainly by Mishings the total Mishing population in Assam is 4,67,790 among with 2,39,388 is male and 2,28,402 is female. And among those the Mishing population living in rural area is 4,62,928 and 4,862 in urban area.

Although the Mishing is a seemingly backward tribe educationally they are doing fine. In the field of education, progress has been accelerated by the establishment of educational institution for both boys’ and girls. The condition of health, sanitation and water supply of the village is not so bad. But there is also some persons who use the river water. The Agriculture is the main occupation of of the villagers. They are totally dependent on agriculture. But as they live in river bank, the annual flood damages their agriculture. They have gradually become poor and in search of alternative jobs for livelihood.
Mishing families are generally joint family. They live in a big house. This system helps them in agriculture. The folk culture also support to the joint family system. Now they live like a nuclear households.

There is a village administration which can not give settlement in the village contrary to giving punishment the offender.

The Mishings and their allied group of Adis belong in general to the Tibeto-Barman branch of Sino Tibetan family.

In the Ahom period, we do not get a full and composite picture of the Mishings (Miri) as a tribe. Unfortunately, some histories written with great care in recent times could not give a proper picture of this ethnic group due to, lack of objective studies o their social structure. Certain erroneous information have been inserted. Even the distinction between the Hill Miri and the Mishing (Miri of plain) has not been maintained. To make the confusion more confounded, the reference to Dohgum and Barogam and clans constituting them are wrongly enumerated. These records need proper study and correction.
In the preceding chapter we have discuss the folklore and folk life of Mishing women and development as visible among them. Apart from describing these processes, we have tried to examine their relationship. The above process helps to understand in the folk life of Mishing and the interaction through Hindu and Neo-Vaishnav a religious institutions. The North-East India is full of diversities as visible in tribes, languages and dialects, customs and traditions. The different communities are not at the equal level of material and non-material development. The sociologist have tried to probe that the literary and educational development is comparatively higher in these tribes who are converted to Christianity and less among those who profess Hinduism along with their tribal rituals. The Mishing of Assam are in the second group who have been professing Hinduism along with their primitive customs and traditions. There is a village administrative unit, which is culled kebang. The kebang is represented by male members of each family and the organization of the Mimber-yame are same of the finest example of their democratic social structure. But in this kebang the female members are not active member. They only attend the discussion of the meeting. The Mishing have own dialect. Presently the women folk represent the state Govt.
and Panchayat also. They are becoming highly educated.

Few years ago the women folk of the village was not allowed for higher education to be absorbed in paid job or to do any outside work other then household duties. Now a days a new trend comes to this community with the changing time. The women have attained more liberty than their predecessors. The folk belief and customs are more flexible in compression to some other tribal group, like the Bodos, Rabhas, Tiwas, Karbis, of the state.

In the introductory chapter an outline of the Mishing folk lore and folk life is given. The relation of the women with the belief and customs and the changing pattern with other communities is also discussed. This chapter also includes the history of the Mishing.

In the second chapter the historical and geographical location of the Mishing their relation with other tribes and their history is discussed. The original home ground of the people and their migration alone with the local environment is also discussed.

The third chapter we discuss about the social system Mishing. The status of women in the society and social condition are discussed.
In this chapter we have discussed childbirth, marriage, motherhood adolescent age, old age etc. We have found that Mishing is a patrilineal group of people. The birth of a girl is not treated as troublesome exist. The feeling of happiness of the parents is equal in both the cases i.e. in birth of a son a daughter. In the childhood the life of a first is as free is that of a boy. She can do anything she wants and also can go any where like a boy. But after attaining the puberty same social restrictions are imposed on her life. Her freedom decreases often the puberty. In this period, she is trained by her mother and other after elderly women of the family like cleaning, cooking, weaving, housing etc. in short, from child hood until her marriage the life of a girl is a period of long training for the responsibilities, which would ultimately fall on her after the marriage. A unique feature in the Mishing social system is that the boy has to work for a period before his marriage at his father-in -laws house which is known as majab – dagham. In the final fixation of marriage the boys side has to pay asoodum to the bride side. Though dowry system is not in the Mishing marriage system the practice of offering of the apong and pig on its equivalent in rupees to the bride side reflect the status of women in the society.
Nowadays besides these household works almost every girl continue their study. In the village, the number of school going girl is increasing day by day. The educated girls are engaged in different paid jobs also. In the Mishing society before marriage a girl must have to remain obliged to her father and after marriage, she must obey her husband and in-laws. In the earlier day in case of a marriage parents decision was taken as final decision. But today a girl can select a boy herself as her life partner. Lowering age of marriage is now changed in comparison to the earlier age.

Divorce is very rare but it is accepted in their society. After marriage a women has to follow some unwritten lows and regulations. She has to look after her husband, in-laws and her children. The women of the house are the last to retire to bed and the first to rise long before the crack of the dawn. Because of their labour and movement the Mishing women have secured a position in the society and family centers as much as a male enjoyed.

In the fourth chapter study on the status of Mishing women as reflect through oral folklore is made. The Mishings have no written history. The oral history or folklore help us to know something about the status of the people in society. In many part
of upper Assam, the Misings are living along with other Hindu castes in multicast villages. Some of them have lost their compact territories and have forgotten their dialects. In the Hindu hierarch, their position is low by constitutionally in all parts of Assam and socially and culturally they have preserved same of the basic features of tribal structure. The folk tale and folk belief reflect the comparatively lower position of women then the man. Every thing is controlled by the man. In the part of religion the male is playing the leading role. The women are engaged in preparing the *apong* and food. In the study of it is see that man is the hero of the stories.

In fifth chapter we have gone through the material culture of the Mishings. The Mishing live in the river bank an *changghar*. This is a typical character of a Mishing. Their use separate articles in their life. Their dress, ornament, using materials all are different from other. The Mishing women weave their dress materials won. They are expert in handloom. They make all type of dress materials for their own. They are hard working and engaged in the paddy field from morning to evening.
The sixth chapter we have discussed about the economic condition of the Mishing women. Few years ago the position of women was lower to man in the economic arena. Their activities were concerned only round the household and agricultural affairs. Outer would is unknown to her. Restriction imposed on marketing by women reveals a secondary position of women in their society. But now certain change have taken place among the villagers. The women have now attained more liberty then their predecessors. They now go to the market for buying the necessary goods and also sell their surplus product in the market by themselves. Number of elucidated girls has been increased along with the engagement in different government, semi-govt. and private service. In the political situation women is not developed even now. The village administrative council is composed of male numbers only. But now folk are also gradually but steadily entering to the village political system.

It is found that two disorient groups opposing each other have emerged among them. The first group, which is composed of, illiterates and elders, try to retain their traditional practices,
norms and institutions, whereas the second group composed of educated and young is more prove to modern ideas and values. Due to the process of acculturation, some of the traditional law and customs are abandoned among the Mishings. For instance, the function and position of the *miboo* are being replaced by *bhakats* and *hatulas*. Similarly, the place of *murong-ghor* is replaced by *namghor* so a gradual process of detribalization is visible among them.

Mishings are developing with time. The education system helps them to develop. The womenfolk and the system of social conditions have been developed with other situation. The women folk have been able to pierces the iron curtain of traditional seclusion and have mixed up with the outside world to some extent. After consideration of all these factors, it can be surmised that in near future the Mishing women will be able to establish themselves as equals to their man counterparts of the society.