CHAPTER XII

3.00 CULTURE AND SOCIETY OF THE MISHINGS:

3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE: Culture is an inseparable part of a society. Taylor, a former anthropologist, has defined it as 'culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, life, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. Thus culture refers to those way of thinking, feeling and behaving that are socially transmitted from one generation to the next. Culture is considered as the realm of styles, of values, of emotional attachments, of intellectual adventures. On the other hand, culture includes everything of the life and of activities of a society. It is actually an organised body of conventional understanding manifest in art and tradition. In fact culture refers to all distinctively humans activities on different traits. It can not be bounded by geographical landscape for having its quality of diffusion and acculturation. Culture can be diffused from one culture to another.

3.1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF MISHING CULTURE: The culture of the Mishings bears the above characteristics and their entire ways of social life were rooted in their hilly life of Arunachal Pradesh. Now they are plain dwellers of Assam and their pristine cultural forms also changed due to close contact with the various

tribes and communities of Assam. Their material and non-material cultural traits and folk-ways have bearing the characteristics of contra-culturation.

3.2 HOUSING: The Mishings are mainly agrarian and horticultural tribe. They believe different omens in the time of selecting a new land for their dolung 'village' and to construct their ekum 'house'. River banks are mostly preferred by them. Firstly they test the soil by a person of kardong clan of the Mishings, if it is testy, this particular plot of land is most suitable for setting up a village, otherwise not suitable. Most of the Mishing villages are contains of four to five hundred houses.

On the eve of the site selection for a residential house it is being tested in following manner: four holes are dug in the four corners and four packets of rice wrapped with talling leaves and kept in each hole and fillup with soil. In the following morning the packets are brought out from the hole and examined. Separation and loss of rice, entrance of insects etc. are bad omens and housing in that particular place is impossible, on lacking of such evil symptoms, this place is suitable for building a new house. This process is popularly known to the Mishings as amo-yukang.miboo the priest is essential for this purpose and they commonly recites the version in the name of their forefather as such: "tato yayo nulu gumin soin appinge, side okum kumdasem kateika".

It means "oh heavenly forefather! you please observe whether the place is suitable for our housing or not".
Housing materials are available in the Mishing areas such as varieties of reeds, cans, bamboos, woods like nahar, gamari, titachopa, etc. and thatch are used.

When all the housing materials are collected and ready, ekumkumda, a ritual being celebrated for this purpose and by this time one person of each family helped to build a new house, which is called rigbo-balig, the common duty of the village persons to perform.

Donyi poile, the Sun and the Moon is their main deity, they are shining above their heads, so their houses are being made on raised platform above several feet from the ground. The roof and the platform of their house is contains of five divisions each imagining 'talem rumngoka, keing rumngoka' i.e. the five heaven on the above and the five underground world to the below. From up to downwards tase-selap a slim reeds are being placed, next follows saing, a layer of bambooworks inter position of the layer of reeds or thatches, then to nipor, 'bamboo or wooden horizontal supporter' to the upper layer. ladang/dugying, the beams and the bankur, the lower beams are connects the roof with raised posts. Likewise, from earth to the platform, the five layers are as follows: ertok, zapong, bener, porpiyam, and piiso. They believed that above five layers will give them salter from rain, thunder, lightening and sun and the lower five layered
platform will save them from flood, wild beasts and other poisonous insects.

*Ekum-gisang* i.e. house entrance ritual is celebrated after completion of housing. The *mimbir-yame*, an organisation of the village youths are honorarily served to the guests consisting of *miboo, bokot 'bhakatas', adu 'sadhu*', and village elders.

The Mishing houses are established horizontally from northeast direction. Houses are built on bamboo or wooden platform supported by rows of wooden piles. The roof is made of thatches, reeds or the leaves of datpalms and the like. The platform is raised about five feet from the ground. The height of the roof from platform is about eight to nine feet. The walls are being made of reeds and bamboos which is plastered with the compound of mud and cowdung or sometimes unplastered. Except the front and back varendah there are another extension of the roof for the use of the housewives. Ventilators and windows are totally nil, only *tungeng-yapgo* the front door and *yapkur-yapgo* the back doors are there. Both the front and back side of the house there are extension of the platform, which is open and the housewives are used privately the back platform whereas the front is used for entertaining the guest and the house male members. This portion is covered by bamboo railings and sometimes by bamboo walls. These portion is forms the main entrance. Below from the platform
there is also an open place on ground where walls or platform is not available. **Kobang** the wooden ladder is placed on ground connecting with the platform for climbing up to the house. This open portico is used for husking paddy, and looming the clothes by women folk. Generally the houses are constructed facing the North, South and East, but not to the West. A typical Mishing houses is varying from 50 to 150 feet length containing 30 to 40 persons without any partition inside. The more family persons are going increased, the length of the house is going to be lengthy. **Meram** the family hearth is placed inside to the front. Formerly the outsider non-Mishings were not allowed to go near to the **meram** but during my field work every places or every houses of the Mishings are entertained me as their guest by offering a **kunke** or mat' near to the **Meram**, the fireplace. Above the **meram** there are three hanging ceiling which is call **Perap**, **Rapte/Rabbon** and **kombong**. **Namsing** or the dried fish, the **Apong** Vessels, bamboo cylinders and the spices are kept there. **Meram** or the fireplace is a square about 4 x 3 feet, in size made of wooden frame 6" inches depth covered with soil and placed on the bamboo platform. This meram is used for cooking food and warmth their body during the winter season. One more hearths can be exist in a Mishing house according to its increasing family members. The platform is served as chair for sitting and bed for sleeping. The doors are always kept closed and the domesticated pigs, poultries, goats and cows are generally kept underneath the platform.
There are separate houses in a close distance from the residing house with raised platform, which served as granery. Cowshed as well as goat shed is another one-storied uncovered house, situated a few yards away from the main house, where only bamboo railings are placed for safety of the cattle. Pigstays are made within the same compound of the residing house covering with bamboo posts. These varieties of housing is possible for very well to do family.

*Murong* the bachelors' dormitory is an important institution among the Mishings. It is constructed in the middle part of the village on platform or in plinth. Beams are decorated with archaic designs. *Murong* serves as *kebang*, the village political hall, as place for annual *pa:rag* and other festivals.

Among the tribes of Assam the Mishings are not only the pile dwellers but other tribes such as, Nagas, Khasis, Garos, Karbis, Mikirs, Meitheis, Hmars of Mizoram, Kukis of N.C hills, Khamptis, Singphos, Mishmis, Nishis, Gallongs, Minyongs, Padams, hill-miris and the Kukis and Mungs of Chittagong hill tracts are all


the pile dwellers with family hearths where exists a great similarity with the Mishing's housing system and patterns of dwelling. Now-a-days the Mishings are generally merging into hinduised habits so far so as to live in mud huts built on the ground in the neighbourhood of the Assamese.

3.3 DRESS AND ORNAMENTS: Clothes occupies an important place among primary needs for men to save himself from cool or heat or poisonous insects and one of the element for enhancement of the beauty. Varieties type of dresses are not possessed by the Mishing, it only varies with the age and sex. Dress bar is not acceptable for male but social prohibition or restrictions are there regarding married women and unmarried girls. Moreover village babies are roaming necked without any dress. During my field work interviews had taken to different octogenarian Mishings about their former dresses in the hoary past but hasitate to speak what it was. As offshoots from the Adis of Arunachal pradesh their dresses and ornaments are to a great extent not similar and it is happen due to the close contact with the Assamese society in the plains area. The researcher have seen during his field work that in many cases they use Assamese dress and sometimes, specially in ceremonial or festive occasion they use their traditional dresses.

Not doubt the Mishings were considered as a wild tribe in the long past and their social behaviour was almost identical
with the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh. Dalton pointed out that the Shayengia and Ayengia two clans among the Mishing have maintained some identity with the Abors of Arunachal Pradesh, specially in hair cut and hair fashion. Similarly the manfolk uses ear plucks of cylindrical can or bamboo. The women weave their petticoats of course cotton cloth in stripes of gray colours wrought with dyes obtained, as they say, from khamptis. Now their primitive unacquainted dressing and ornamentation pattern has changed a lot through the process of acculturation with modern civilised society.

3.3.1 MALE DRESS AND ORNAMENTS: Dumer, a long piece of cotton cloth about 5 meters length and 2 feet in breadth, woven in handloom and designed in both ends. Dumer is used as head gear. Now-a-days Dumer is replaced by the typical Assamese handloom towel.

Galuk is a kind of sleeves less front open shirt or garment which is hand woven out of cotton or tapum i.e. endi thread.

Galuk shows three stripes of colour design. It covers the upper part from shoulders to thighs. But now Galuk has lost its original status as it has been replaced by the modern dresses of the western India.

Ugon is a long piece of hand woven cotton cloth used to cover up the lower portion of the body from waist down words. It is wrapped circling the waist tightly and one end is joined with the circle at the back passing between the legs. Among the young folks ugon is not very popular now-a-days.

Tangali/Jinrek is a long piece of hand woven cloth like dumer. It is wrapped round the waist over glaluk or shirt to strengthening his waist.

Regarding male ornamentation, sometimes old male persons possessed ear with perforated hole as because they were in the habit of using gold or brass metal ornaments in their young stage. Ornaments, but, used by males are not many. Litek or Auin is a kind of necklace made of black or red beads or gold balls. Dagne and Tadok which inherited from their forefathers are two kinds of long necklace used specially in marriage and ritualistic functions.

3.3.2. FEMALE DRESS AND ORNAMENTS: The Mishing women fully use their traditional dress which are all hand woven. Their popular colours of their dresses are
red, black, yellow and bottle green. They used separate dress for married and unmarried female person.

_Ege_, is hand woven and round cotton cloth with designs used by the married and unmarried Mishing female persons to cover up the lower part from chest or waist downwards to the knee. _Kupap_, a piece of cloth is used to cover the chest and back during adolescence and _Ribi_ replaces the _kupap_ after attaining the puberty. Now-a-days blouse has been commonly used by them to cover up the upper part. _Ribi_ and _Gaseng_ are hand woven long piece of cloths with designs of red, black, yellow and white colours. It is used by the unmarried Mishing girls on upper portion, wrapped round the body. _Gero, Potali_ or _Sekrek_ are the two piece of designed colourful cloths or sometimes white coloured with designs. A married Mishing girl must worn the _Gero_ and _Potali_ instead of her former _Ribi_ and _Gaseng_. _Gero_ is used to cover wrapped round the breast and hangingdown to the waist and _Potali_ is used to cover the lower portion on _Ege_ wrapped round the waist, which is hanging down to the knee. _Tapum gasor_ and _Tapum Ege_ are made out of _Emdi_ cocoon thread. _Tapum gasor_ is used by both the sexes in winter season and _Tapum Ege_ is used by female person only.

The above dresses are prepared by the Mishing womenfolk themselves, and it takes somuch time, money and labour which at
present compelled themselves to use it rarely. On the other hand national dress of Assamese womenfolk i.e. mekhela-chadar are commonly used with varieties of modern mill made garments.

Ornaments: Simple ornaments are worn by the Mishing womenfolk. Takpar which is a piece of wooden or reed work are casually used in the ear lobes by the women. Turi, Jangpai and Kentu are made of gold or silver earrings worn in the lobes. Ear lobes are perforated in their childhood and apply some regular process to enlarge them for bearing ornaments hereafter. Kangre, Gamkaru and Ansarmora are the brass, silver or gold made ornaments, used by the women on their hands. Golpota, Madoli, Polomadoli which are made of gold and beads used by the women put round their necks. Doksiri is a kind of necklace, made out of gold or silver. During my field work this ancient traditional ornaments are seen with old persons but not with young persons. The above ornaments have a little similarity with that of the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh, but a vast similarity exists with the Assamease ornaments. Those ornaments are now-a-days used by the women in festivals or other ceremonial functions. On the other hand the young stages are accepted the modern lowcost ornaments in their day to day life.

3.4. FOLK SONG: Folksongs are exists depending upon its begeter, the rustic peoples. The life of the rustic peoples are centered round the real phenomenon of the
environment which is far from the processes of modernisation. Such songs have been survived through the ages on the lips of the people and that is why these have undergone some changes, but very often they keep the original theme and spirit. The Mishings are rich with their folk songs. Planly of folksongs are scattered among the Mishings in oral form which is known to them as \textit{Ni:tam}.

The Mishing folksongs are of different types which are shown in a diagram as follows:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node (root) {\textit{Ni:tam 'Folksong'}};
  \node (abang) [below of=root] {Abang Kaban Biriq Lupo Midang \textit{Ninotam} Manman Ko:ninam}
  \node (mibuabang) [below of=abang] {Mibuabang Miruabang}
  \node (doying) [below of=mibuabang] {Doying Kaban}
  \node (mimbiryame) [below of=doying] {Mimbiryame}
  \node (dayil:dam) [below of=doying] {Dayil:dam}
  \draw (root) -- (abang);
  \draw (abang) -- (mibuabang);
  \draw (mibuabang) -- (doying);
  \draw (doying) -- (mimbiryame);
  \draw (doying) -- (dayil:dam);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

(Diagram No. : 1)

\textbf{Abang} : \textit{Abang}s are classical type religious versions which are recited by the \textit{Miboo}, the religious soothsayer and the \textit{Miru}, the religious priest of the Mishings. The ageold \textit{Abang}s are not easy understandable for common people. The formation of the Earth and existence of the animat and inanimat beings and the aesthetic
advice to the Mishings are the contents of the Abangs. On the other hand Abangs are the holy song and rhythemic history of the Mishing society. Miboo-abang * is the oldest folk song of the Mishing.

Kaban: It means the lementation of sorrow. The songs possessing melancholic expression are known as Kaban nitam. The sad memory of the dearest person, which is passed away; individual memory of the past, the separation of the near kins and the feelings of lonliness in life are the main expression of the Kabans. Doyings are another division of Kaban which is comparable to the English ballad. Interior of the Doying kaban there are tragic events of some deserted lovers have been exit. The Gelake nitam i.e. song of Gela, Deobor-dentali, Binod-pipoli are the Doying kabans. Among the animate beings, the birds, mainly the doves have occupy a significant place in the Mishing Kaban nitam.

* Miboo Abang (as specimen):

'pazsum taguye gu:mvna
le:ni ta:be gu:mvna
nolu se:dike sa:jegem
jek je ma m0:peka.'
(i) "peki tomane petta tomane, 
alap tomane lapla tomane, 
ainam kilinka kala tomane."
It means 'as I could not be a
dove, nor I possessed the wings,
neither I could fly, nor I could
see my beloved.'

(ii) "pettagesin kabdubon etulasin ebokla
̫akkc asinaj adubaj rogkitlosin rojita."
It means 'what for the bird is crying?'
what for my heart is yearning?'

Birig : This nitoms are appears as seasonal songs which have
been sung on the festive or ritual occasion like Alithe-ligang
and the Porrag festivals. The songs embresses a description of
seasons and the importance of festivals. Birignitam, except one
particular festival can't apply or recite in the other festivals.

Luponitom : This type of nitam holds the conversational
quality. Same song has sung by two persons at a time and
progressed its subject matter. The heartiest expressions of two
lovers, mimbir-yame occupies the main place in the Lupa nitam.
The Tebo-tekang, the Lereli and the 'Dadam' nitoms are such kinds
of Lupa nitoms.
**Midang nitom**: There are some series of folk songs which have been sung at the Marriage festivals among the Mishings. Those nitoms are popularly known as **Midang nitom**. The melodious plot of the Assamese marriage songs are not available in the Mishing **midang nitom**. Here display or recite only the past life of a bride in her father's house and the painful departure to a new place.

**Ainitom**: Ainitoms are the expressions of love and yearning of the youthful heart. The most popular and numerous of this class of songs are those of the type known as **ai-nitom** which are comparable to the Assamese **Bihu** songs in both form and content. Short and terse compositions of normally two (occasionally three or four) lines, the **ai-nitoms** are exquisite pieces outstanding for their natural lyricism, poetic sensitiveness and picturesque imagery. Ainitoms are the full throated outburst for desire to draw the picture of the dearest lovers comparing with the beauty of the nature. The Mishing people uses to sing this in different situations such as paddy field, river bank, in jungle or in social festivals, or these are love songs which narrate the nature and its beauty profusely. Lovers, through these nitoms addresses his or her beloved expressing deep sense of willingness for union or passion that affected secretly.

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e.g., (i) "kaje oija molaja
azzi daggom okumko
obonori rekampe
donipoi do dunape"

It means 'oh darling, let us build a small house by the Subansiri bank, this will save us from sun and rain.'

Sometime it describes the extension of the Mishing habitation, such as,

(11) "odiya tolokkc buruli bolopc,
mising dagluckaj terene teren pc;
an obonori kerej kerel..." and so on.

It means 'mother subansiri is their back bone and they (Mishings) are extended through the body politic from Sadiya to Bharali river.'

Moman nitom: Moman nitoms are sang by the Mishing children in the time of their game, so it is not contain a particular subject. Some moman nitoms contain the description about how the Mishings migrated from the hills to the plains, how they hunt and what type of dresses the mishings worn and so on.

Kosninam: Kosnitams are not other then the lullabies and nursery songs among the Mishins sang by the Nebung the baby sister when the mother have busying with paddy field.
3.5 FOLK DANCE: Dance occupied an important place in Mishing social life. Some writers have mentioned as thus:

"The Miri (Mishing) of the Assam have also dance item with agricultural activities. They are another dancing tribes of the area. Miri dance has an exciting manner and have very swift movement while dancing their hips sway to the rhythm of drum beats. Miri combines the rhythm of hills and plains in their songs and dances and the fusion is a very happy one. They have even preserved the Bihu dance of the plains and have indeed perfected them. The Miri girls quiver to the rhythm of drumbeats in Bihu dance."

Pagso monam: Pagso monam is the pure and archaic form of dance among the Mishings, which is danced in the Ali-aye-legang festival. The age old Mishing folks are mostly takes part in that very dance with the youngs.

Nitam sum nam: Nitam sum nam is a kind of Mishing dance with rhythmic and slow motion and danced in the Païrag festival.

3.6 MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: The entire Mishing social life has been covered by singing and dancing. They used various type of musical instruments to enhance the better quality of their folk-song and to enhance the vigorous motions of their dances. Musical instruments are as follows:

Miboo-yoksa: **Miboo-yoksa** is a straight sword about a feet long with oneside edge. It might be an wapon during the old days, but at present it is not used for this purpose. Only the **Miboo**, the religious person of the Mishing could handle this during religious purpose. Some brass made thin plats are loosely placed round the root of the **yoksa**. During the time of **Miboo** dance, **Miboo** hold it in one hand and the brass plates are creates a soft musical sound with the motion of dance.

Dumdum: **Dumdum** which is popularly known as **dhol** in Assamese and 'drum' in English is a popular musical instrument among Mishing in every marriymaking steps. It is made off wooden or claymade cylinder and both ends are covered with soft leather. Beating with a stick on one side and with hand by other side creates different sounds and vibrations.

Loopi: **Loopi** 'cymbal', which is known as **Tāl** in Assamese is a helper instrument of **dhol**. It is a ball-metal product made of different size. **Loopi** is used by the Mishings with **Dumdum** 'drum' in every marry making.
Pempa: *Pempa* the hornpipe which is known by the Assames as *Maharsingar pepā*. Hornpipe is most popular musical instrument among Assamese. It is used as major instrument in *Bihu* songs. No doubt this instrument is non-arryan origin but the Mishings perhaps acquired it from Assamese in their plains life as a musical instrument. It is made out of Buffalo horn and the conical otherside there placed a flute of bamboo with four holes. Sometimes *pempa* is made out of a fine *Nal* 'reed' or light bamboo. It is played with *Dumdum* in their *Bihu* song.

Tapung: *Tapung* 'flute' is made of bamboo with seven holes on it. It is played along with *dhol*, *Loopi* etc. or simply. The tone of the *Tapung* is so melodius. *Tapung* are of three kinds, such as *Derki* (flute), *Ezek tapung*, *Mutki* 'lāobānhi'. *Derki* is simple type, used along with *Bihu* song. *Ezek tapung* and *Mutki* are the product of bamboo and wild Bourd. Both the flutes are of a vast similarities with that of the flute used by the snakecharmer. *Mutki* and *Ezek tapung* are used by the Mishings in ceremonial purpose, such as on the eve of their marriage when a bride is going to touch the *yamne appun* 'virgin flower' to prove her virginity, then it is used.

Kokter: The Assames term of the *kokter* is *tokā*. It is made out of split bamboo played with *bihu* and *Ainitom*. It is as a musical instrument popular among other mangoloid peoples of Assam.
Gung gung:  **Gung gung** is most popular among the Mishing boys and girls. It is popular among Assamese also, which is called *gaganā*. **Gung gung** is played an important role in *Bihu* songs and *Ainitoms*. The Mishing girls can speak about their secret desire to their dearest lovers with the soft sound of **Gung gung**.

Doompang:  It is simple musical tool made out of a cylindrical bamboo piece. It is played striking on the surface by another bamboo sticks.

Kuruli:  **Kuruli**, which is known as *bānhi* in Assamese is made out of bamboo with seven holes (pipe). The modulation of the **kuruli** is so melodious. It is played by young Mishing persons.

Lelong and Marbang:  Ghantā and barkānh is the Assamese word for the Mishing **Lelong** and **Marbang**. It is made out of bell metal and brass. **Lelong**, **Marbang** are used in Mishing ceremonial purpose, and used to announce something in the entire village or to alert everybody from outside sudden attack. It is mainly going with *Pagso monam* and *nitom sumnam* of the Mishing. **Ghantā** and **Barkānh** occupied an important place in the religious functions among the Hindus.

3.7 MISHING FESTIVALS: Festivals are sprang from the superstitions and fears of the primitive men. When men were roaming from jungle to jungle for fooding, many situations in nature puzzled or sometimes frightened themselves and they came
to worship objects and events he could not bear or understand. The sun provided themselves light, hence the sun worship came in to existence. For future more harvest they offered to the Earth God form their first produced fruit and harvest. Prior to the advent of Monsoon some of them observed festivals, sacrificing animals to satisfy their Gods for better yielding. These are the causes behind the festivals which exist among less civilized society rooted through the primitive society.

Festivals are divided into two broad divisions: (i) Social festivals and (ii) Religious festivals. The Mishing society have their own traditional customs and observe different festivals within a year. Among social festivals Poirag, Amrok and Ali-aye-legang are the most important among Mishings.

Ali-aye-legang: This is a prominent spring time festival observed by the Mishings. Ali-aye-legang means 'seed sowing'. This is a word, which contains three different Mishing words. Ali 'root', Aye 'fruits/seed', ligang 'sowing'. The Mishings are mostly agrarian people, and their entire livelihood comes from various agricultural products. So, on the eve of their yearly vegetation they observe this auspicious festival, the Ali-aye-legang on the first Wednesday i.e., ligang of the month of Fagun i.e. Ginmurpo:i1o, the eleventh month of the Assamese calender year.
Ali-aye-ligang is a festival of singing, dancing, praying, eating and drinking. An unknown excitement embresses to the whole Mishing community on that very day. The womenfolk engaged themselves with the preparation of Apong 'rice beer', Purang 'pecketed boiled rice' and dishes with different tastes of fish and meat. In the morning time on that very day the oldest man of the family has sown a handful of paddy on their paddy field. They pray to the mother earth for better yielding and also devoted to the dead ancestors. Danyi 'the sun' and Peila 'the moon' for abundant crops.

Community feast and guest entertainments are generally started by the midday with plenty of rice beer Apong and rice with fish and meat. Instant marrymaking goes on whole through the villagers.

All the persons irrespective of age and sex are participated in the Ligang dance, which begins in the evening and continued for the whole night. Pakso-sonam or Gumrak dance is danced with the musical note of Dum-Dum, Loopi, Pempa and the like. Different types of meaningful dances are performed by the girls, attaining them with the best Ribi-gaseng and Ribi-ege. Husari songs are also performed during this time. The whole marrymaking is ended by the fifth day through Lilen festival. During the time of this festival catching fish, cutting tree, burning jungles, ploughing, oil fried vegetable eating are strictly prohibited, those are the taboos performed by the whole Mishing community.
Porag: Porag is a harvest festival like Ali-aye-ligang which is celebrated after harvesting on some Wednesday. Due to its expensive manner it is celebrated at an interval of two or five years. Porag is also a festival of special type prayings. It also accompanied much eating, drinking and marrymaking. Murang the dormitory of the youths as well as a public hall of the village elders, where Porag festival is celebrated gorgiously by the entire village peoples. Necessary arrangements for the festival is made by the Mimbir-yame i.e., 'organisation of the village youths' through Daglik 'common duty'. They formed a committee consisting of Migom-bora 'festival incharge', Deka bora 'incharge of the young men', Tiri-bora 'incharge of the young women', Minom-bora 'receptionist' and Barik 'messenger' for disciplinary management of the festivals.

Murang is renovated and decorated for this special purpose. A huge quantity of Apong, boiled rice and pork are arranged for entertaining the guests i.e. Minom including special invitees which related to Jiori-gokkunam. Miboo is also invited to lead their prayer dance.

Inaugural function of the festival is starts with pouring of water encircling the Murong house with drum beating and dancing by the village folks. A pig is sacrificed by strangulation in the name of Donyi and Pola and prayers are also devoted to protect themselves and their farm from pestilence for better yielding. For
the main feast a number of pigs are sacrificed with strangulation to feed the gatherings. The whole village goes through dancing, singing, drumbiting, eating and drinking. Tonight the Miboo leads the dancing. Cultural exchange and competition among the troops changes the village atmosphere. During this time the Mishings make up themselves with traditional dresses and ornaments. The Porag continues for three or four days at a stress.

Amrok : This festival is observed in the session of Bhādra-Āhin i.e. August-September. It is observes by the every household on community basis. Apong. Pq, chiken and rice is served to the participants. Crops are offered to ancestors and the special prayer is offered to the malevolent deities i.e. Urom kusang. The feast followed by Pakso-sonam with melodious Ainitoms.

Boag-biu : Assamese 'bahāg bihu' is articulated as 'boag-biu' by the Mishings. It is celebrated by the Mishing at the same time with Assamese in the month of Bahāg. Boag-biu is mainly a springtime festival related with agriculture. Originally this type of festival was not observed by the Mishings at the past, it is a fruit of close contact with Assamese in the plains, so ritualistic activities are the same with Assames bihu. They bathed their cattle in the nearest ponds or in the rivers and fed them gourd and brinjal wishing their strengthness and better production and shunted -lau ka begna ka dine dine bari za 'eat gourd eat brinjal, grow (strong) from year to year'. Dancing and
singing the Ainitom and husori are two main items of this festival. On the closing day of the biu they goes collectively near to a Simalu tree 'Salmonalia Malburrycum' and dancing round encircling the tree with shunting verses like,

"Gosa tole e Modar tole e amar biu botijai zai
Kerela e begena e amar biu batijai zai".
It means 'our bihu is going beneath the Mondar and other trees, oh Kerela oh Begena our bihu is going back'.

All these festivals occupy a vital place in the mishing people and their cultural life and through some lights on their religious, social, recreational and artistic aspects of the mishing people. Most of their festivals are closely related to the religious practices, different Gods and Goddesses are worshipped. Festivals provided the Mishings from different places, a scope to exchange their views and contribute a lot to the mishing social life and progress. Festivals give them scope to come closer and closer by embracing each other. Festivals provide the agrarian Mishing a recreation through dance, music and marry makings. The Mishings portrays their artistic mind through the decoration regarding festivals and bring the unity to the Mishing society.
3.8 MISHING RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND RITUALS: Man is the only religious being. When men were compelled to face natural hardships and dangers, storms, floods, epidemics, lightening, famines, deluge, scarcity, dangerous animals etc, men has look for some invisible power to help and assist them. So fear and curiosity give birth to the religion in human mind. "It conceives of man as passing through life surrounded by a ghostly company of powers, elements, tendencies, mostly impersonal in this character, shapeless phantasma of which no image can be made and no definite idea can be formed".\(^{10}\) This way the Mishing have worshipped different deities considering the Gods and Goddesses of Cholera, small pox, cattle and so on of whom some dwells in rocks, other haunts trees, others, again, are associated with rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls or strange pods hidden in the depth of the hills. All of them are acquired to be diligently propitiated by reasons of the ills which proceed from them, and usually the land of the village provides the means for their protection.

3.8.1 The Mishing after migration to the plains of Assam, acculturate themselves with the Assamese socio-religious life. In the Brahmaputra valley they introduced their religion as Hinduism with preserving of their own primitive religion and faiths. In

Fact Mishing religion is a compound form of Hindu religion and primitive tribal religion. The Mishings are animistic and their religion is based on the belief of supernaturalism. Different primitive deities and spirits are being worshipped by them, which made them so conservative with their religion.

Deities: Mishing traditional beliefs accepts *Sedi babu* as the ethereal being, who created the universe out of nothingness. *Sedi babu* 'father Sedi' and *Melo nane* 'mother melo', as their conjugal efforts created the animate and inanimate objects in the universe. *Abo tani* is the first human being who created the human race. *Donyi* and *palo* the sun and the moon were born after the two generations of *Abotani*. Mishing are descendents of *Donyi* and *palo*. Mention here be made that the Mishing religion does not provide any place regarding to the functionary deities but *Chedi melo, Abotani, Donyi-palo* and so on are invoked in all ritualistic functions.

**Uii**: The Mishing believe that *Uii* 'Spirit' are the main cause behind all sorts of misfortune like death, calamity of the human being. *Uii* live everywhere around them and are hostile to the human being as because they possesses the same desire of food and drink as human being do. They caused troubles for men in order to fulfil such desires. So various rituals are performed by the Mishing to the greater satisfaction of their *Uii* through offering sacrifice of pigs, fowls and *Apong*. Among the spirits *Dabur Uii, Taleng Uii*, and *Urom Uii* are of great important.

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Dobur Uii: The spirit by name Dobur cause famine, flood, immature or sudden death, destruction of crops in the form of insects and diseases. The general welfare and prosperity of a Mishing village community are also believe to depend on the blessings of the Dobur Uii. So, sacrificial rites are performed by the villagers collectively or individually at the outskirt of the village concerned to keep the spirits out from the village. Among the Dobur Uii, Dalung Dobur, Mapun Dobur, Burte Dobur are performed with greater interest and devotion.

Dalung Dobur: Dalung means 'village'. Dalung Dobur is performed by the village folks individually or collectively at the outskirt of the village to keep away the malevolent spirits from the village. Inauspicious women are not allowed to take part in the Dobur. During the time of ceremonial performance the outsiders are not allowed to visit the village or the villagers are not allowed to going out from the village. Gonna is maintained for seven days. The special time for Dobur is the Tuesday or the Saturday during any month from Jeth (May-June) to Ahin (September-October) of Assamese calendar year. As a sign of Dobur festival Khagari 'reed' trees are firmly sets up through all the ways of the village.

In the appointed day the village male persons proceeds towards each of the family and demands Azeng 'contribution to the function' by beating the chang 'house platform'. The families
reciprocates them by Apong, pig, fool, rice, and the like. Airenqs are taken to the specified lonely place of the village to perform the Dolung Dobur. As a part of the function, two snake idols are made out of bamboo and fern. Pigs, Fowls and Apong are offered in the name of chedi-mela and Donyi Polo by beating the snake idols and prayed their blessings for the betterment of the village folks.

Mapun Dobur, is performed by individual family to save their agricultural fields from pest and pestilence. Burte Dobur, is performed by individually or by a collective form of several families when some occasions of crime take place.

Urom Uii: Urom Uii indicates the departed souls, which is call yalo 'soul'. According to the Mishing religious beliefs, after death of a person the yalo 'soul' goes to the Uii-among 'the land of spirits' and some times they visit to its former families in expectation of sacrificial offerings. The Urom Uii is show some symptoms to fulfill their desires by causing troubles to its former relatives, so, the family for immediate relief performed sacrificial rites in the name of Uroms, consisting of pigs, fowls and Apong. The departed souls remains their stay at Uii-among, till the Urom-Apin or Dodgang. Dodgang is expensive and a family cannot perform it within a short time after death. Urom Apin is the last sacrificial rites 'like Assamese Matsasparsa after, of
which the Uram of the dead is believed to transformed to another stage called Guminsoin. Gumin soin acts as the protector of the family. So sacrifices are offered to Gumin soin from time to time. Uroms, dodgangs and Urom Apins are dedicated to the yalos of a natural death person, infact it is not other than an Ancestor worship. But the yalos of unnatural death or premature death are not considered as Uroms and the yalos of such death generally goes to Taliu-yapo, a place hanging in air. These type of yalos becomes very hostile to men so the Mishings observes some sacrificial rites for satisfaction of the Taliu-yapos.

Taleng Uius are ethereal spirits which cause rain, drought, storm, lightening, thunder and so on. The Mishings believe that there are everywhere national spirits of the sky, the sun and the moon, rain and the flood, the forest and trees and of agriculture. The Mishings believe that nature is inseparable from men. Natural phenomenon is a question of life and death, so every spirits behind the natural aspects must be kept satified, through offerings from time to time. Rituals regarding Taleng Uius are performes individually or collectively by the villagers sacrificing pigs, fowls, and bagged their blessings on the families.

Besides the abovementioned spirits there are varieties type of spirits also among Mishings to whom they appease more or less by sacrifices to save themselves from their harmful notices.
3.8.2 Miboo 'THE PRIESTHOOD': Miboo acts as priest and initiated all ritualistic functions of the Mishings. Miboo is the father figure among Mishing community and perhaps the said term is derived from Ami 'man' and Abu 'father'. Miboo possesses certain spiritual power which does not by the ordinary common people. Miboo is initiated by a supernatural power called opom which live in dense forest. The Mishings believed that it kidnap children and out but prospective Miboo never be killed and can be return back to his parents. Attaining in the adulthood the child starts to show the symptoms of Miboo. The experienced Miboo can select any person as Miboo; so the post of Miboo is not inherited from forefather. They donot posses any totemic objects.

Miboo possesses certain spiritual power of looking into future and established himself as soothsayer. He can talk with the yales 'departed souls' living at sine mobo 'land of death'. He is asked to confirm the disease, cause of havoc or disaster and the means of safety. If any cause of disease cannot be determine through simple method, the Miboo proceeds through some elaborate processes. Different omens, good or bad are confirmed by the Miboo with the help of chicken liver. Another process which is known as Miboo-dagnam is performed in night time in the gathering of males and females. He recites some Abangs 'religious version' and try to follow the path of the yalo of the ill person and asked the actual cause of the illness. The Abang
recitation lasted many hours. The practice of Miboo had disappeared with the advent of vaisnavism among the Mishings.

3.8.3 PRACTICE OF HINDUISM: The Mishings are so conservative with their religious beliefs, but after migration from the hills to the plains of Assam they have been under constant influences of the Assamese society and religious practices. So their religious functions and beliefs are not a unified body which is practised in the past. They have gradually attracted and adapted to the great extent of Hindu religious practice and beliefs and likes to identify themselves as Hindus.

They performed the Assamese religious functions such as Āi-sakām 'the Goddess of pox', Dāngariā sakām 'the cowboy feast' for the appeasement of cattle deity' and so on.

One of the most important result of the influence of other religion is the emergence of the Mishing with the Bhakatiyā cult which is an admixture form of both - Mishing and Vaisnavism cum tāntricism. Vaisnavism or Bhakatiyā panthā advised to performing religious function with the help of Bhakats. So Bhakat system has replaced the traditional Miboo system. The Bhakats recites the versons from Kirtana and Nāmghosā by Sankardeva and Madhavadeva and slowly the Abangs 'religious versons' has disappeared. Mention should be made that after conversion with hindu religion
they preserved some of their primitive religious rituals and beliefs. Which is performed by offering pigs, fowls and Apong. But the **vaisnavism** allaged against the sacrificial process.

The **Bhakatiyā** system has introduced another religious faiths, by name Rātikhowā or Rātisewā cult. It is a strange religious process; only the elderly married persons irrespective of sex can participat with the Rāti Sewā and may be regarded as Rātikhowā Bhakat. Rāti khowā bhakats are also known by the Kewaliā bhakats with the different ranks of Adu 'xādhu'. Atula 'xātola', Adasar 'xadāsār' and so on. This type of sect keep their religious books and ritualistic observance in strict secrecy for which their doctrins are vague to the common ordinary people. **Purnadhabiyyā-bhakat** 'worshipper who hold the complete one' is a strict sect of religion found all over the Assam valley districts. They are commonly known as Rātikhowā bhakat 'worshipper who revel at night', from the fact that all the doings and worshippings are performed at night and in strict secrecy.11 The **Vaisnavism** and its **satra** institutions like Garmura, Āuniāti, Dakhinpāt has played an important role in the conversion of the Mishings. **Bhāonās** are most popular to them and performed regularly as a part of their culture. **Mulong** has replaced by the **Nāmghar** institution. Most of the Hindu God and Goddesses become familer with the Mishings. Most of them have totally givenup their traditional religious beliefs and practices and they never believe in their former

spiritism or tantricism but in *vaisnavism*. The non-convert Mishing practice both their traditional and other Hindu tantric beliefs and rituals.

3.8.4 FUTUROLOGY: The process of knowing the future is called by the Mishings as *Tagir kanam*. The longings for knowing the unknown is a part of human nature. The knowledge through the ages begeted some methods to know future events which is known to all as Astrology, Palmistry, Numerology etc.

The overall practice of the divination, beliefs in the significance of traditional faith and dream are deep among the Mishing community. The Mishings have different methods of *Tagir-kanam* 'Devination'. In this regard *Asin tagir* method must be mentioned because it is most popular and reliable to the Mishings. *Asin* means 'Liver', *Ayon* means 'pancreas', a part of the liver. So *Asin tagir* means study the future in the pancreas and liver of a sacrificial pig or fowl. The Mishings believe that all sorts of misfortune or the disease are caused by the *Uiis* 'spirits'. To diagnose the illness the process *Asin tagir* takes place. As the process a full grown pig without blemish sacrificed with strangulation. Hence the liver and pancreas are taken out and kept on the *taling* leaves. Only the *Miboo* or the old experienced persons lacking of *Miboo* are engaged to study the *Asin tagir* or *Asin-ayon*. The undermentioned signs over the *Asin* and *Ayon* are the major factors to study the future.
Any well marked depression on the Asin, unfortunately have found, it is considered as a symptom of death of a family person within a very short time. This type of mark is known as Ago by the Mishings. Any cut mark on the border of the liver is called Napyo which indicates the loss of prestige of a family in future. If a thin dermatic layer being found covering up the liver is indicates the recovery from illness. A well marked sign situated at the centre, known as Megu. It indicates the future loss of family or village property by havoc or fire burn.

The Mibao, not only apply the method of Asin-tagir but also apply such other methods, popularly known among the Mishings by name Amo-yukkang, Aki-ukkang, and panyuk-Tagir.

3.8.5 TRADITIONAL TABOO 'GENNA' :

Like the devination, the Mishing community strictly followed some traditional beliefs and maintained different taboos. When they starts for marriage, or proceeds for hunting and good business, they consider the following matters or signs as unfavourable:

(i) A woman carrying an empty vessel.
(ii) Appearance of a handicaped or defecting person.
(iii) Appearance of widow.
(iv) A barren woman.
(v) Any sign of woman, that keeping her hair scattered.
(vi) A woman preparing thread for loom.
Those are the bad signs as known by *Gommany-tagir* in the Mishing society.

3.8.6 BELIEFS ON DREAMS:

The Mishing traditional beliefs lay stress on the significance of dreams also. Such beliefs are:

(i) Seeing a person clad with white dress is considered as good omen.

(ii) Seeing an Elephant bears the significance of probable returning of the house elders.

(iii) Climbing mountain or ladder in dream bears the sign of success.

(iv) Falling teeth, newly constructed house or full moon in dream indicates the sure death of any family person within a very short time.

(iiv) Catching white fish in dream bears the signs of good fortune.

(iiv) Dreaming of marriage is a sign of separation of friendship.

(v) Embracing a woman in dreams, bears the sign of probability of illness.

3.8.7 BIRTH AND DEATH RITES:

Like marriage festivals, birth and death rituals are occupying an important place in the Mishing Sociocultural life. To them, marriage is a means to setup new family or families which
begins with birth and ends with death. So naming of newborn and burial ceremony of the dead and the purification ceremony, regarding both the cases are of great important to the Mishing.

During the time of pregnancy any ceremonial process is not observed. The Mishing women are very labourious, so their childbirth is normal without doctor. The senior women of the village positively helps her like nurses.

During the childish time and after birth, both husband and wife have follow certain gennas 'taboo'. During this particular period both the husband and wife must keep away themselves from doing any wrong or killing any animal. In the time of post childbirth the mother maintain the prohibition of certain food habit and allowed some special dishes. She may take rice and light drink of Apong 'rice beer'. She prefers the hot vegetable and chicken curry without adding oil, spices, chilli etc. She must follow this taboo for three to five days immediately after child birth. Prohibitions, like go to the forest for hunting, or visit to other village or cross a river are imposed on father of which he strictly maintained.

The newborn baby is, after five days of its birth, brought outside the house and kept in the sun. On that very day the old village folk naming the child with a new name beginning with the last letter of his father's name as initial of the new name. Both
father and mother, on that day, provisionally purified by the bhakats to enjoy a normal life. After one month from childbirth real or final purification takes place. The villagers are invited and entertained with rice, pork, chicken and Apang. They blessed the child with its parents and accept them as pure and allowed them to enjoy in the normal life of the community.

The Mishing generally buried their dead in graveyard but not burnt in cremation ground. The death of anybody is announced by ringing the Lelong 'brass made bell' or by drum beating. Immediately after hearing the sound the villagers stop their work and come to pay homage to the demised person.

Prior to the funeral procession the corpse is bathed, well clothed and wrapped with a mat of bamboo work, the Mishing term Empaa, then placed in a coffin made out of log. Funeral procession started with the villagers and coffin is carried by four person to the common burial ground situated in the outskirts of the village. There are some exceptions, at Jonai it is also seen that one of the family have burried the dead near to their residence. But generally the cremation gorund - 'Ago-Galung' is located in the outskirts of the village. The size of the grave is two mitres length, one metre wide and 1¼ mitre deep and it is dug east-west direction. The body is laid there with keeping the head westward direction. Over the coffin a symbolic house is built and the attendents are put soil in the grave by their left hand. When
the grave is being filled, another symbolic house is made over it and cover the grave with white cloth in the form of fench. Finally the area is fenched round with bamboo railings.

Certain taboos are maintained regarding death rites. The family members are suspended all the works till the purification Uci ceremony. Uci is maintained after three days. On the third day the first one is observed, second one is observed in the time of new moon day and the final one is observed after one month from the death or sometimes one year. The first two stage of Uci is observed with limited performance but the final one Dadgang is observed with pomp and show. A huge gathering of quests with villagers are entertained. Traditionally the quests are offered packets of Apong, salt, cloth and so on to the bereaved family. Relatives are helped with physical labour and cash or kind. A good number of pigs are sacrifice in the name of departed soul. Extreme use of pork, Apong, rice is the main characteristic of the Mishing 'Dadgang'.

3.9 MISHING MARRIAGE SYSTEM: Marriage is a traditional process and social recognition of union of the two opposite sexes, male and female for the purpose of 'sexual relationship', 'social needs and fulfilment of dharma' of a particular community. The formation of marriage is

begins with that union and ends with the death of any one partner or with the process of divorce. Marriage is a process which creates 'a marital group' and 'a way of binding family to family, kin group to kin group'. The Mishing marriage system bears these characteristics. Marriage is a sacred union to them to continue the hereditary line and to help their agrarian life with offsprings as a fruit of their conjugal life.

The Mishing society possess some special characteristics, they are patrilocal and patrilineal, and exogamous as regards clans and endogamous as regards groups. The Mishings are not polyandrous, they mainly practices the monogamy system. But there are a few exceptions where exist two wives for household purposes.

Due to the joint patrilocal system of the Mishing family a Mishing girl must leave for her husband's residence after marriage and lives like a member of the family. There are clan distinction in the Mishing society: marriage is not socially acceptable within the same clan.

Mishing marriage system is strictly bounded by the traditions and customs. Kebang 'organisation of the village elders' is the highest authority for imposing laws. Marriage is also not tolerated with any sub-clan. Moreover marriage with the

mother's sister's daughter or with the mother's sister's son is strictly prohibited. But inter-community marriage also takes place now a days among the educated Mishing people. Marriage with father's sisters and mother's brother's son and daughters 'Kakui-nanyi' is allowed. Widow remarriage is allowed. Child marriage is not practised by them, and normally marriageable age for boys is 18 - 25 years while for girls 17 - 20 years.

Types of Marriage: The Mishing marriages are of three types:

(i) Midang 'marriage by formal arrangement'
(ii) Kumnasola lanam 'marriage by informal negotiation'
(iii) Dugla lanam 'marriage by elopement'

Kumnasola lanam is rarely practised and the rest type are commonly practised.

Midang: This type is considered to be the best marriage system in Mishing society. It is highly expensive and practised by the well to do Mishing families. Pre-marital relation and partner selection is prevailed among the Mishings but matrimonial relation Midang may be affect after the approval of their parents.

After selecting mate the relatives and family concerned takes part and organised the Midang. A person of the bridegroom is deputed to the parents with Akun 'Packet of betlenut and pan leaves'. He handed over the Akun, repeating; "ngalum miture
nolukolok amli peliko molo se okumsem bitadung" we ask the hand of your daughter for offspring. Akun is received with positive mood by the maternal uncle of the bride and then bridegrooms party proceeds to the yamne tatnam, the final decision on the date of Midang, openion or consent of the bride and the Matbo-dugnam, a traditional voluntary service for a period of would be bridegroom rendering to his would be father-in-law. The time duration of Matbo-dugnam was two to five years in the past but timing is reduced at present. Are-akun offering is next stage of the Midang. Dried fish, po:ro apong and betlenut with pan leaves are includes in Are-akun, which is forwarded to the parents of the would be bride.

On the fixed date for the Midang bridegroom and the bride takes bathe and being dressed with traditional dress. The bridegroom proceeds to the bride’s house accompanying with relatives and friends. The bride and the bridegroom is surrounded by relatives with two women and both of them are allowed to drink apong from the same cup and to dine from the same dish. Then they bow down to the village elders for blessing and the elders congratulate them for a happy couple life and declares their union as moral, legal and social accepted.

Midang is programmed for two days. One the first day the bridegroom must have to stay at the bride’s house for the night. Next day a feast is arranged to entertaining the gatherings in the girl’s house. Paying Aliq ‘bride price’ with cash or kind is
a traditional practice of the Mishing which is now a-days minimised. After two days the ceremonial function and marriage-making comes to an end.

Kumnasola lanam: This is another kind of marriage in the Mishing society. The poor Mishing sections, to whom the Midang is financially beyond their reach generally practice this system of marriage. It is an informal marriage. The boy and the girl is wedded after their mutual understanding in a simple ceremonial arrangement.

Duglatanam: This type of marriage is most popular among the Mishing, which is practised from generation to generation and still prevailed in this society. This type of marriage is comparable with the 'Gandharba bibāh' among the Hindus. Kidnapping or coming recently the bride from her parents home is the main feature of this system of marriage. The base of Dugla lanam is formed when the boy and the girl belong to marriageable clan, working in the paddy field in a close distance or takes part in the porag or Ali-aye-ligang festival. After choosing mate, if they are faced any difficulties from their family or if the bridegroom's party is not capable to expense enough for Midang, the boy takes away the girl in an early fixed date with the help of his close friends and hide the girl in a secret place somewhere nearly villages for some days.
Some mediator is deputed to the bride's parent with a Orai within two or three days. Orai is consists of betelnut and Pan leafs, which is offered from the bridegroom's side to inform the matter. This process is known as Dugtat. After Dugtat the bride is received by the bridegroom's mother in an unceremonious function. As next process the father of the bride along with some fellow villagers proceeds towards the boy's house. The villagers and the boy's parents receive the bride's party and determine the Alig, the brideprice after negotiations. That price is generally paid by the bridegroom, then the pair is socially accepted as couple. Thus the entire process comes to an end.

3.10 MISHING FAMILY SYSTEM, CLAN ORGANISATION AND KINSHIP TERMS:

3.10.1 MISHING FAMILY SYSTEM: The family is a childbearing and rearing smallest unit of society. It is the only social institution other than religion which is formally developed in all societies. The family renders their services to the society such as reproduction of the young. Physical maintenance of family members, social placement of the child, socialisation and social control. The biological family consists of the male, the female and their children. As responsibility of the male he supports his child bearing wife and dependent children and incest is forbidden.
The groups of several generation of kins formed the Mishing family which is the primary social unit of the Mishing society. The Mishing family is patrilocal and patrilineal joint extended family. All the kins used to leave in an unpartitioned big hall ‘chang ghar’ with common property and hearths. The oldest male person is all in all in the family. The Mishing joint family consists of a lineage of great grand father and great grand mother, grand father and grand mother, paternal grand uncle and paternal grand aunts, sons and unmarried daughters, grand sons and unmarried grand daughters, cousin grand sons and unmarried adopted sons and unmarried adopted daughters. All the family members sometimes figured as 50 to 60 in number, which is gathered in a family stock from 4 to 6 generations consisting of 10 to 15 nuclear families with common property and joint residence. The persons within the family extends cooperation is actually a division of labour characterised by age and sex.

The Mishing joint family structure is explained with a diagram as follows:

(Diagram No: 2)

Key

'O' Female person
'@' Male person
'|' (Vertical line) The relationship of discent.
'=' Relation of male and female.
'-' The sibling relationship.
The contents of the diagram are shown in a tabular form as below:

- Great grand father and mother
- Grand father & mother
- Grand uncle & aunts
- Father & mother
- Uncles & aunts
- Sons & unmarried daughters
- Adopted sons & adopted unmarried daughters

(Table No: T-1)

The above diagram and tabular form of a Mishing joint family show the special characteristics; the family membership is determined by birth and it can also be acquired by marriage and adoption.

In fact the Mishing joint family is a combination of several nuclear families which is shown in diagram below:

(Diagram No. 3)
These nuclear families are centered round the eldest person of the family, so by nature of residence of the Mishing family is patrilocal. Common leaving of the nuclear families in a big hall without any partition inside, it does not maintain the family secrecy but it is their tradition because they feel that such partition inside the house might create some individualistic idea among the family members. Traditionally the Mishing family is patrilineal, and so, after marriage a wife comes to live with her husband and she loses all previous identification of her parent's family. Their traditional ancestry continues through the father. They are monogamous because they prefer to take marriage with one girl at a time. In regards clan they are exogamous because they prefer to take marriage outside their own clan. They also prefer cross cousin marriage within their group. Normally they prefer big family. Only the educated people are conscious about the size of their family.

3.10.2 CLAN ORGANISATION: Historical records, regarding Mishing clans are not available. The two divisions Dahgam and Baragam mentioned by the different authorities has not bearing any authentic value which alleged by the Mishings. These two terms are Assamese loan originated from dah 'ten' and bāra 'twelve' respectively. Gam means 'village headman', this is also a sanskrit origin (grāma). History is also silent over their separate political identity. They were ruled
and guided by the village headman. They were broadly divided into these two groups or divisions by the Ahoms for administrative purpose. The British use these terms to identify the different sub-groups of the Mishings as noted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Sub-group</th>
<th>Clan name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baragam</td>
<td>Pagro</td>
<td>Dole, Pegu, Kuli, Kutum, Morang Mili etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahgam</td>
<td>Chamoguria</td>
<td>Bori, Mili, Moranq, Paje, Taye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chayang</td>
<td>Borang, Bashing, Danq, Pame, Pashar, Regon, Padun etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maying</td>
<td>Chinte, Mili, Noroh etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dambuk</td>
<td>Kumbang, Lego, Megu, Patir, Pertin etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delu</td>
<td>Mili, Pang, yein, Taya, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oyeng</td>
<td>Bori, Payang, Paw, Patir, Taye etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamar</td>
<td>Bori, Morann, Paje, Paw, Taye etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some Common names of clan in all sub-groups such as Mili under Pagro, Chamoguria, Maying and Dambuk sub-groups. Taye clan is common to many sub-groups. Some clans show quite a number of sub-clans, as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Subclan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Letung, Patiri, Gejera, Garjiri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mili</td>
<td>Kutum Mili, Kardong Mili, Meda Mili, Lirol Mili, Regon Mili and so on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Narah Chinte, Payang etc.
Pegu Gupit, Gudang, Chondi, Jektum, Patri, Patgiri.
Taya yengin.

The following diagram will give a clear and complete idea of the Mishing clans and sub-clans.

![Diagram of Mishing Society]

There are four other sub-groups such as Chamua, Beelias, Bangkuals and Bebezias. Chamua villages are located in the place between Tezu and Namsai, of Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh. The Behias located in few members to the
The Mishings sub-group variations are the result of their migration to the plains of Assam. The group of Damne Damro Adis migrated to Assam known as Dambukial Mishings. These sections of Adis migrated from Maying are known as Mayingia. The Damne Adis migrated through the upperside of the Telao 'the luit river' are known as Delu Mishings. A section of the Adis settled in the Chamaguri of Sibsagar district which is known as Chamaguria Mishings. The group of Adis who settled on the bank of the river Temar are known as 'Temar ganya' Mishings. The Pagro clan is considered as first settler in the Assam valley while the Dambuks are considered as the latest migrator from Arunachal Pradesh.

The Mishings used to trace their clan from the name of a deity or from the name of their father. Thus they trace their Apiun 'clan' from the name of the great creator. According to their belief that creator is Kooyum 'the mystery', prior to the creation of the Earth. Six evolutions from the kooyum are yumkang, Kaishi, Shiang, Anbo, Bamuk, Muksheng, and She:di-Melo.

Another evolutions took place after the creation of the Sedi and Melo. The incarnations were She:di, diling, Li:tung, lu:ye, yepe. Pedong. The Mishing addresses the Pedong as Pedong Nane mother Pedong', they also believed as supreme creator of God and Goddesses, animate and inanimate beings. As for example the evolution of Regan and Pertin clans are shown in below:

(Diagram No. 5)
The above diagram shows some prominent characteristics as enumerated below:

(i) According to the Mishing folk beliefs, prior to the
Pedong (Pedang nane) there were no living being on the Earth.

(ii) Mother Pedong created the Earth, iani-larong 'man-ghost', Esing-Eling 'Plants-rocks', Tapum-Taruk (insects) and others.

(iii) The person known as Regon was born after evolution of eleventh generations since the creation of human beings by mother Pedong. Regon possesses two brother, Gonta and Gonme. Gonta, Gonme and their offsprings accepted Regon as their clan. Some cases happen in the Pertin and Parme clan. So Regon, Pertin and Parme are the name of the forefathers.

(iv) Each of the deities got the name consisting of two letters. The name of the fathers remain always with the name of the sons. For example,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kooyum} & \quad \text{kooyum} \\
\text{yumkanq} & \quad \text{yumkanq} \\
\text{Ka:shi} & \quad \text{Ka:shi} \\
\text{Shiang} & \quad \text{Shiang} \\
\text{Pedong} & \quad \text{Pedong} \\
\text{Do:lo} & \quad \text{Do:lo} \\
\text{Lonung} & \quad \text{Lonung}
\end{align*}
\]

So, it is clear that the Mishing clans are derived from the name of their forefathers. The name of the forefathers are used as surname of the family and it follows individual surname. Some clan names are not derived form their forefather but derived from
their occupation and profession. At present the Mishing are appeared to be much liberal in using term as surname.

3.10.2.1 FEATURES OF THE MISHING CLAN ORGANISATION:

(a) By birth the children will automatically have the father's clan, The daughter accept the clan of her husband.
(b) The groups accept the name of their forefather or the deity.
(c) The persons of the family is only allowed to perform any rituals.
(d) Adopted child gives identification of the clan only after social Purification.
(e) If one person takes another clan by mistaking his own clan, his property right is generally forefeited.
(f) Marriage within same clan strictly prohibited.
(g) Maternal relationship is not allowed.
(h) Marriage with non-Mishing compels them to face excommunication.
(g) By ritualistic performance a non-Mishing becomes a Mishing, taking some one Mishing clan term.

3.10.3 KINSHIP ORGANISATION AND KINSHIP TERMS:

Kinship system is a network of social relations and a part of social structure. It includes families of different forms, sizes and observing different manners of life. Kinship system
includes unilinear groups of consanguineal kins 'who are related to us by birth', affinal relatives 'who are related to us by marriage', collateral relatives 'Persons to whom we are related through a connecting person', cross-cousins 'a mother's brother's children and a father's sister's children', Parallel cousins 'a mother's sister's children and a father's brother's children' and lineal relatives 'who are direct ascendants and descendants'. Ancestor worship is an important part of Kinship system.

The traditional Mishing family system is joint patrilocal in nature of residence and patrilineal. In fact the Mishing joint family is a stock of nuclear families of several kindreds, consisting of parents and their childrens in each. All of them dedicate for the common interest of the family but usually the Mishing husband and wife likes to live together separately from main family within the geneological ties. The seniority is strongly emphasised among the kins. Sex is an important basis for differentiation between different members in Mishing kinship system. The Mishing relationship are well balanced with affineal, consanguinal and collateral relatives. The kinship terms used in the Mishing society are as follows:

ane/ai 'mother'
abu/babu 'father'
neng 'wife'
milbong 'husband'
Kai  'elder brother'
buiro  'younger brother', 'father's brother's son', 'mother's sister's son', 'husband's sister's husband'.
mamo  'brother's wife'
magbo  'sister's husband', 'father's sister's elder son', 'mother's brother's elder son', 'husband's elder brother', 'wife's elder brother', 'elder sister's husband'.
yigo  'wife's brother', 'father's sister's younger son', 'mother's brother's younger son', 'husband's younger brother', 'wife's younger brother', 'younger sister's husband'.
yigne  'wife's sister', 'younger brother's wife'.
yameng  'son's wife', 'elder brother's son', 'wife'.
aben nyanyi  'father's elder sister'.
amen nyanyi  'father's younger sister'.
buirme  'elder and younger sister'.
ao  'son', 'sister's son', 'brother's son', 'son's son'.
 eo (women speaking)  'brother's son', 'daughter's son', 'husband's sister's son', 'wife's brother's son'
 ome (women speaking)  'daughter', 'sister's daughter', 'brother's daughter', 'daughter's daughter'.
taku tato  'father's father's father'.
taku yayo  'father's father's mother'.
tato  'father's father'.
yayo  'father's mother'.
 babatta  'father's elder brother'.
aoatta  'father's elder brother's wife'.
kakui 'father's younger and elder sister's husband'.
baboi 'father's younger brother'.
nanoi 'father's younger brother's wife'.
dune magbo 'elder and younger brother's daughter's husband', 'daughter's husband'.
abine kakui 'mother's elder brother'.
ouoi 'mother's younger sister'.
amen kakui 'mother's younger brother'.
nyanyi 'mother's younger brother's wife'.
aoatta 'mother's elder sister'.
takutato 'wife's father's father'.
taku yayo 'wife's father's mother'.
atto 'wife's father'.
ayo 'wife's mother'.
alpoti 'wife's elder sister's husband'.

These Mishing kinship terminology is shown below in a diagram:

Relationship (Manspeaking)

Taku Tato + Taku Yayo

Tato + Yayo

Babatta + Aoatta + Aben Nyanyi + Baboi + Babo + Kakui + Nanoi

Abine Birme + Magbo + Abine Biro + Mamo + Ao + Yameng + Ame + Dune Magbo

Ame + Dune Magbo

Ao + Yameng + Ame + Dune Magbo

Ame + Dune Magbo

AO + Yme + Dune
The whole Mishing society centered round the consanguineal and affineal relations with highly obligations and respects towards their elders irrespective of sexes and maintained such relations with a rigid traditional manner and customs.

3.10.4 MISHING SOCIAL ORGANISATION: Social organisation is the arrangement of activities consisting of two or more persons which are adjusted to give united combined activity.

The Mishing prefer to the democratic social life and they organised themselves into different organisations for tying up each other and to develop in every aspect of the society concerned. Their social organisations are also shown in following diagram:
Kebang: This is a socio-political organisation of the Mishing with the democratic ideology. As a Village council it plays an important role on village administration. In fact it is a committee of village elders where 'Gam' acts as president. Each family is represented by an elderly person its member but women are not allowed to take part in it.

Kebang is the highest authority of all traditional customery laws of the Mishings. It controls over the village activities within its laws and customs. It is the highest authority of justice so all important matters must be placed before it and nothing can be done without its prior approval. Any serious offence done by anybody of the village placed before the Kebang. The Kebang deliver judgement and punish the offenders. Kebang's decissions are solemnly considered as final decision. Gam enforces the decissions. Murong the bachelor's dormitory serve as office of the Kebang.

Kebangs are of four type:

(i) Bane Kebang,

(ii) Agam Kebang,
(iii) Durbo Kebang.
(iv) Porine Kebang.

(i) Bane Kebang: The Mishing *bane kebang* was formed in 1924 at Gezera Mishing village of Majuli as 'Sodou Asom Miri Sanmilon' 'all Assam Miri conference'. After independence in 1955 it was known as *Sodou Asom Bane Kebang* 'all Assam Bane Kebang'. The main function of the *Bane Kebang* is to look after the education of the Mishings, and for that it takes interest in building up an educational atmosphere, community development and such other social developmental activities. Moreover inter village disputes are settled by the *Bane kebang*. *Bane kebang* is formed consisting of village elders and it possess a high religious and spiritual significance to the Mishing people.

(ii) Agom kebang: Mishing *Agom kebang* was organised by the Mishing residents of Gauhati in 1968 and it was known as 'Gauhati Mishing Kebang', but later on it was called 'Mishing Agom Kebang' in 1972 at Dishangmukh. The main functions of the Agam kebang to take interest for the development of the Mishing language and literature.

The other two *kebangs* are voluntary socio-cultural organisations of the Mishing people and their aims and objectives are mainly to look after their community interest.
Meimbir yame: Meimbir yame, the committee of the village young boys and girls are important institution for the Mishing society. It consists of married as well as unmarried boys and girls within the age group of 15 to 25 years. To maintain its discipline some persons are selected and ranked as Bora, Deka Bora, Tiri Bora, Borua etc; all these terminologies are Assamese loan words in Mishing. Bora is considered as the highest rank.

The main functions of the Meimbir-yame are to help the village people at the time of their need. They help in various works such as constructing houses, reaping and weeding paddy, clearing jungle etc. For that they are invited by offerings betelnut just like non-Mishings customary way. They collect wages for their service collectively, deposit it for celebrating the yearly Po:rag festival.

Rigbooguinam: This is a temporary organisation of the Mishing which render their service to its village people.

Daglik alik: This is another organisation to offer casual labour. They are invited by the individual family in need and render their help collectively to reciprocate the labour or for cash or kind.

3.10.4.1 SOCIAL INSTITUTION: Social institutions are the concrete isolates of organised behaviour, such behaviour always
involves a plurality of persons. So an institution is thus a social system, not a society but a 'partial'. Social system which is in some sense a sub-system of a society. Social institutions are formed on the ideology of social development and centralise the individuals into one unite for their greater interest.

Although the Mishing became Hindus by following the Hindu religion and beliefs even then they practice their primitive religion and beliefs. Two social institution namely Murong and Namghar are prevalent among them. The Murong is an output of their pristine religious beliefs and the Namghar is a fruit of their emergence with Hindu religion.

**Murog :** Murong plays an important role in Mishing social life. The Murong is generally built in the central place of the village. It is built on raised platform supported by wooden posts consisting of thatched roofs. It is an open hall without side walls, ladders are provided to climbing up the platform. Several *meroms* 'fireplace' are placed inside it.

The Murong provides multipurpose services. It is a public hall of the village concerned, so the villagers are responsible to maintain it. All the unmarried boys are the members of the *kebang*. Girls are not allowed to become member of it and their entrance is also strictly prohibited.

As primary function, Murang serves as bachelor's dormitory,
where the Mishing unmarried boys commonly spent the night and
work in their respective families at day time. But after
marriage the boy loses his membership of the Murong.

The bachelor's dormitory has a special characteristic among
several tribes of N.E region. It is known by different
nomenclatures among the tribes. Among the Adi groups it is known
by several names such as Moship, Bange, Dere and Ngaptok17.
Zawlbuk to the Mizo18, Nakpante among the Garo19, Nadrang among
the Dimasas and Barmans of Kachar20, Banzawi among the Hmar
tribes21, Marang or Rensi among the Nagas22, Forla or Jerke dem
among the Karbis23, Samadi among the Lalungs24 and Ghatul25
among the Muria Tribes of Bastar. The above nomenclatures are
indicates only one institution; the bachelor's dormitory, which
is known to the Mishing as Murong.

NEFA, See also - Choudhury, J.N. Comparative Adi Religion, P. 19 - 1971
and see Bhattacharjee T.K. Myth of the Shimonga of Upper Shiang, P. XXIV, 1965


the Garos, P. 12

P. 12, also see Tribes of Assam, Part - I

22. Ibid, P. 70 and P. 100.
24. Ibid - P. 83.
Indiam, P. 278
The unmarried Mishing boys assemble in the Murong after finishing their supper early in the evening. They gossips, sings and dances as they like. The unmarried youths are trained by the elders for which the Murong is called as training center for their future life.

Murong serves as Kebang's office. Kebang of the village elder's is held at Murong and discussed the important matters of common interest. Guests are entertained in the Murong. The old persons are spent their times with hand work. Porag festivals are observed in the Murong.

Murong had existed as vigour institution in the earlier days among the Mishings but at present, since the beginning of the 19th century it loses its functions and influence on Mishings. It is happen only for their peaceful living in the plains area and for the influence of other people of the plains of Assam.

Namghar: After migrating down to the plains of Assam the Mishings come in to close contact with non-Mishing Assamese society and other tribes. They adopted most of the Hindu religion and beliefs and introduced themselves as Hindus. Vaisnavism and the Rātikhowā cult are also achieved from the Hindu Assamese Society. Namghar is the religious institution of Assam and this type of institution come into being among the Mishing as a result of close contact with the plains people. It is generally built at a distance from the dwelling houses and is covered with walls.
3.11 SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MISHING:

Economic development of any society is the main factor to form a vigorous nation. To removing the economic embalances, by using different means for the development of economic soundness it is the prime concern of almost all the countries of the world. The growth of population and economic development is corelated, so 'population development is manifested in the occurence of continuous change in the population both in terms of quality and quantity and reflected in its growing overall productive force, man gaining better knowledge of the natural and social processes and mastering them, the rising potential of science, tools and technology, a rise in the educational, cultural and technical level; of all members of society and development of the personality'26, 'every community has its own way to meet its basic needs for the existence of its members failing which they are threatened with extinction. Nature here comes forward and joins hand with them to fulfil their needs fashioned, of course, in their own way depending on their customs, traditions, demographic structure etc. Owing to this people with the same natural surroundings have developed different economic processes to meet their needs'27. Such things are quite applicable to the Mishings of the Brahmaputra valley. The socio-economic structure of the mishing


are different from that of the Non-tribal groups. Their age old conservative mind and pristine ecological surroundings compelled them to have a very simple technology. Their economic activities are a means of supporting their life so they are at a same time engaged themselves with agricultural activities, hunting, fishing and so on. Agricultural products provide them most of their livelihood. Like any other tribes the Mishings are also an economically independent, possessed own labour system and the division of labour, ceremonial processes, value and barter system with having its own tribal speciality.

During the hill-dwelling period they were mainly the hunter gatherers and practised shifting cultivations but agriculture had been introduced, as permanent manner, among them since the very beginning of their living in the plains of Assam. The Mishing are mainly riverine people so their residence is far beyond the urbanisation and modernisation and resulting to the temporary settlement and the process of shifting cultivation.

3.11.1 AGRICULTURE : The Mishing economy is based depending upon their agriculture. But their agriculture practise is not in the broad sense but at the subsistence level. Their agricultural products provide all sorts of their day to day needs.

The Mishings are not only dwellts in the plains but also found in the jungle lands of the foot hill areas in the form of
hamlets, and those Mishing are practised the shifting cultivation. They clean an area of jungle and started cultivation and after two or three agricultural sessions, when this plot becomes unfertile, they leave to another plot of forest area.

At present permanent cultivation is most popular among the Mishing, due to their increasing population, non availability of jungle lands and the influence of the neighbours. Paddy crops are the main produced in large scale and garden crops are also cultivated. Due to the heavy floods in the summer season Rabi crops are popular then that of the Khrif crops. The Rabi crops mainly the Ahu paddy is sown in the period of February-March, and harvested in the time of May-June, the Bao paddy is sown in the February-March and collects it in the time of November-December, pulses are sown in the time of September-October and collected during the period of November-December. Non food crops like Tabacco, Jute, Cotton etc, are cultivated respectively during the time of October-November, February-March and March-April and collected the crops respectively during the time of February-March, July-August and November-December. Sali paddy is only the Khrif crops cultivated by the Mishings in small scale during the period of July-August and harvested in November-December. Mustard seeds are the main commercial crops of the Mishings, sown during the month of September-October and collects in the November-December. Besides food crops and
non-foodcrops the graden food crops like different vegetables, white gourd, water gourd, onion, bean, potatoes, chilli etc. are cultivated during the winter season. Except mustard seeds other agricultural crops are not used in commercial purposes which is against their tradition.

Their temporary land holding are the result of perennial high flood and erosion, and the use of primitive agricultural implements effected upon the socio-economic life of the Mishings.

3.11.2 FOOD AND DRINK: Before migrating down to the plains of Assam, The Mishings used to take fishes, meats, arums and different edible roots as their food. But in the plains life their dietary habit has changed. Now their staple food consist of rice, leafy vegetables, edible roots, arums, meat and fish. Again the wild roots, shoots, ferns and leaves are also used at large quantity.

Paddy grains are separated from its straw, by thrashing out with feet by the Mishing women folk. Paddy grains, then dried up and husk in a Kipar 'Ural' with a hand driven morter. This process is remains every early in the morning. The rice is not well cleaned and simply boiled before serve. The rice is redish colour instead of being white. The curry is also simply boiled. Salt and some spices like Ori 'coriander', Mursi 'chilli', Take 'ginger' are also added to enhance its test. Tulang 'musterd oil' is rarely used, so fried curry is unknown to them. Meat and fish
is delicacies to them. Dried smoked fish Ngasan and dried fish powder Namsing is most popular among them.

They takes rice two times a day, one in the mid-day and other in the evening. Between the two meals they drinks Apang irrespective of age and sex. Now tea is getting some important position in their society.

Like any other tribes of Assam every Mishing family brews their rice beer Apang as food and drink. It is considered as their prestigious community drink. It provides them Alcoholic content not exceed 4%, but its narrative value mostly in vitamins is of highest importance. It supplies 10% caloris, 55% of proteins, 53% of calcium, 11% phosphorus, 29% iron and 8% of niacin. Apang is a beverage which bears sweetish test and smell. The Mishings brews two kind of Apang by name Nagin Apang and Pasra Apang. The colour of Nagin Apang is creamy and fermented from boiled rice and the Pasra Apang is dark green in colour and prepare out of a mixture of straw, paddy husk and boiled rice. Adding Opap 'a tablet made out of rice powder and wild herbs and leafs' in right proportion is must for both type of Apang. The mixture, then keep in earthen vessels, tightly closed with taling leaves and preserve it for 6/7 days to enhance its taste and serviceable quality. Tasuk 'a conical shapped bamboo

container' is used to extract the *Païra Apong* and served with hot or cold water. It can be preserve for long time but *Nagin Apong* can be preserve for a week in its former conditions. In both the cases, once fermented the liquor cannot be preserve for 24 hours.

No doubt *Païra* and *Nagin Apong* possess food value but it bears drawbacks than to its advantages. It may be the cause of nervous sickness or ecstasis, visionary defect or loss of appetite. It takes too much time of its preparation and generally it is prepared by the Mishing women folk. On the other hand the lavish use of *Apong* in ceremonial functions like *Païrag*, *Ali-aye-ligang*, marriage, guest entertaining etc. are effected in wide range on their socio-economic life.

3.11.3 HUNTING AND FISHING:

Hunting and fishing occupies an important place in the Mishing socio-economic life. Every Mishing are expert in the game of hunt which is known by them as *Aptaguinam*. Bows and arrows are their main implement and 'they are expert marksman, and the poison used is as fatal, that even a scartch of their arrow is followed by certain death'. Besides the hunt for festive occasion, regular hunting troops are also organised during some special season. But now the system has been modernised to a great extent. After a rich game of hunt the flesh of wild deer, boar, pig etc. are equally distribute among the villagers. Hunting is

now disappearing among them because of insufficient and dramatically disappearance of the wild birds, animals etc. On the other hand government prohibition on hunting is also remarkable regarding this matter.

*Ongo-nignam* or the community fishing is more popular than that of the hunting. Rivers, streams, beels are their fishing ground where fishes are available. The Mishing males and females are expert in fishing. Fish catching is done collectively mainly in two seasons in a year. Firstly in advent of monsoon, when watery place are filled in by fresh water. Inssearching of breeding places the fishes rush everywhere which is known among the Mishings as *Uzan-quinam*. The other time is, when the beels and rivers are going to dry during the month of September and October. A havey ammount of fishes are collected during this two seasons and preserve them for hard days in dry condition which is known as *ngosan*. Another preparation, the fish powder keeping in tightly closed bamboo cylinder is known as *Namsing* is delicacy for them. Several fishing impliment are *Surki, chaloni, Dirdang, Padi, El-zamborok, Poncha, Dingora, Parang, Rashak*, and also seen the hooks and nets, during my field work in several Mishing areas. Community fishing is their tradition and still prevalent in original condition among the Mishings.
3.11.4 COTTAGE INDUSTRIES:

The weaving is highly practised by the Mishing women l ok as a cottage industry. Generally they are expert in weaving. Spinning and weaving is their traditional duty. Gadu 'Miri-jim' is their own weaving product which is most valuable and rare. Moreover the Mishing women folk rear Endi cocoon and made warm cloth Tapum gasor out of its thread. On the other hand they produce all necessary clothes for their family members. No doubt they are skilled in spinning and weaving.

The Mishing menfolk are also expert in cane and bamboo work. All household articles like baskets, containers, bags, mats and so on are made by the Mishings from bamboo and cane. Moreover all the necessary fishing instruments are cane and bamboo made. Those are made just to meet their requirements in their household works.

3.11.5 Poultry and Animal husbandary: Rearing poultry is their important income source. Every Mishing family have a good number of fowels. Fowls provides with its eggs and meat for households, for guests and for different cremonial functions of the Mishings. Surplus eggs and fowls are sold by them in the weekly markets.

Pigs, cows and goats are their main rearing animals. Generally Indian variety of pigs are tamed by them. Pork is
common and much popular to the Mishings. Pig is used for sacrificial purpose of their traditional rituals, marriage and festivals. Surplus pigs are sold in their weekly markets and earns a lot of money. Their pig rearing is not based on modern scientific knowledge but on their archaic processes. Cow rearing is also traditional but not commercial. Pair of bullocks are their principal means of tilling the agricultural fields. They do not take milk and excess cows are their source of income. Goats are also reared by them, but not in large scale. Many of the Mishing families possess an elephant for carrying timber or clearing jungles.