CHAPTER V

MATERIAL CULTURE

In direct contrast to the oral folklore is physical folklife, generally called material culture. Material culture responds to techniques, skills, recipes and formulas transmitted across the generations and subject to the same forces of conservative tradition and individual variation as verbal art. How men and women in tradition oriented societies build their homes, make their clothes, prepare their food, farm and fish, process the earth's bounty, fashion their tools and implements and design their furniture and utensils are questions that concern the student of material culture. Material culture includes material or concrete things used by man such as house, household commodities, different kinds of apparatus, instruments, weapons, pots and means of conveyance, etc. It embraces arts and crafts of plastic and graphic nature. These arts and crafts of varied colours, light, shape, mass, volume, beauty are the propagation of people's imaginative aptitude.

The Hajongs of Assam are rich in the sphere of material culture. They have been carrying the tradition of material culture in course of their migration from original place. This has been handed down from generation to generation within the geographical area. Evolution of material culture of the Hajongs is a gradual process. This tribal group

surrounded by various alien cultures has to confront the emergence of 'great tradition' along with which their 'little tradition' conflux.

Observes W.E. Roberts, "In recent time older traditional system of transmitting the skills and knowledge of a craft has been partially supplemented by formalised training in schools and by printed manuals and books." ²

In the light of the statement quoted above, an attempt has been made to analyse the data, collected for the study of material culture of the Hajong society e.g., (a) Arts and Crafts, (b) Architecture (c) Cooking and (d) Costumes.

(a) Arts and Crafts:

The expression of beauty is art. Both art and craft are more or less similar, though their distinction are pausible in their utility. Art is associated with aesthetic sense and on the otherhand craft is connected with the daily life. As has been observed by Henry Glassic, "If a pleasure-giving function predominates, the artifact is called art, if a practical function predominates, it is called crafts."³ Generally speaking art is often concerned with the aesthetic view of life and is not straightly related with economic view of life. Artistic activity appears to be primary feature of a folk art. Art in promitive society is of the people and for the people. Hence folk art is social in its character. But on the otherhand

artistic nature appears to be subordinate in a folk craft. Utilitarian activity is the primary feature of a folk craft. Rightly does observe H. Glassie, "The artistic nature of a folk artifact is generally subordinate to its utilitarian nature so that most art exists within the immediate context of folk craft. The problem of folk art as appeared in folk craft scholarships, then lies less in identifying specific forms and technique then it does in identifying the characteristics of the traditional aesthetic philosophy that governs the selection production treatment and use of forms."4

The Hajongs have a rich storehouse of arts and crafts and it is chiefly reflected in their composite material culture. They are indigenous raw materials such as bamboo, wood, cane, metal, thatch, reed etc., for their functional, decorative purposes and other domestic and social avocations. Given below are the house materials of the Hajongs generally use for functional and decorative purposes.

**Basketery:**

The Hajongs employ distinct types of basket with unlike sizes and forms. Though most of the Hajongs are dependant for their livelihood on agriculture, there are some craftsmen who have acquired skill in the sphere of craft. The baskets are prepared from bamboo and cane. These are available in the forest and homestead. The distinct types of bamboo i.e., Jātī bāḥ, Bijuli, Bhalokā bāḥ, Kāko, Nal, etc., are grown in the forest and their homestead. These are made splints of different necessary forms. As for example, cane, the Hajongs depend

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upon the forest and the market. The process of preparation puts forward through stages as shaping the splints smoothly, weaving the base and then cover by winding to develop the wall. In addition, these are given finishing touches having tightened the termination by long cane splints known tangal. Some of the baskets need meticulous articulation.

The artistic activity of folk crafts shows its symptom is distinct kinds of pāchi. These baskets are of distinct forms. Every household has beared the convention of maintaining a pāchi for keeping various articles in it.

Two kinds of pāchi are current in Hajong society. Dol i.e., a long and big type basket which is made of bamboo stripes and plastered with cowdung for keeping rice, pulses, grains and mustered seeds. Another type of basket is smaller one known as don. It is also made of bamboo stripes for measuring the quantity of rice, oil seeds, etc.

Bichun is a kind of hand fan made of polished bamboo or cane stripes with a great variety of artistic designs. Another decorated article is phini i.e., comb made of bamboo stripes. Dhāri is a mat made of bamboo or straw for the use of sitting. Jhāpi is a decorative wicker hat which serves an umbrella and made of totau pat e.g., a kind of palm leaves. Murhā is a typical thickly knitted stool and made of bamboo stripes.

The kitchen accessories such as chānli (a sieve), doli (a small basket), kulā (a winnowing fan) are made of bamboo stripes. Though the method of technique is simple, yet these have artistic designs.

5. Informant: S. Hajong (52) Bijni, dt. 3.3.99
Fishing tools such as *sichani* (i.e., a bamboo scoop), *palok* (i.e., a kind of basket trap), *liphai* and *borun* (two bamboo traps for fishing), also testify their artistic activity.¹

Musical instruments such as *bansi* e.g., a long flute made of bamboo, *gubua, tharka, singa*² are the good instances of the artistic activity of the Hajong community. The artistic taste of this tribal group finds expression in the decoration of the bamboo and cane articles.

**Wood work:**

Assam is clothed by hills and forests which are abundant of valuable wood such as sāl, sagun i.e., teak and so on.

The wood has been occupying an important place and is one of essential raw materials for the Hajongs like other people of Assam. Says W.E. Roberts, "Throughout the history, wood has proved to be an immensely important raw material for mankind. Light in weight, durable, easily worked, elastic, smooth touch, capable of absorbing shock and possessing many other useful qualities, wood has served man in an astonishingly wide variety of ways."³ ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ⁸ ⁹

The Hajongs use wood for preparing variety of crafts and designs. So to say, they utilise wood for establishing house, building, agricultural instruments, looms and all other household tools.⁹

6. Informant: Shri Naresh Hajong (65), Vill. Dhanshiri (Darrang), dt. 7.3.99
7. For detail discussion supra, Chapter VI (C)
9. Informant: R. K. Rai Hajong (45), North Lakhimpur, dt. 10.3.99
Folk Painting:

Concern both for craftsmanship and artistic design is the most important substances of cane and bamboo in which the Hajongs exhibit their excellence. Cane and bamboo articles as for example, basket trays, seats and other implements prepared by them show great virtue, skill and aesthetic taste. Some of articles look fine in themselves while others are made to look beautiful with conscious artistic efforts. Bamboo goods are generally decorated with carving and pokerwork.

The Hajongs are well up in the context of fine wood carving. They prepare delightful wood figures representing human body, animals and birds. In addition to the front side door or residential house, the bedroom is also decorated with beautiful wood carving. These are associated with the traditional practice of head hunting and some have related to fertility beliefs. General articles such as smoking pipes, drinking mugs, spinning wheels and other accessories of music and fishing are often artistically carved designs. Aside from this, the Hajongs too carve important village gate prepared of wood, make interesting toys relating some ritualistic significance and weaving tools. They also design variety types of wooden images connecting with god and goddesses, animals as well as birds which are employed in the theatrical performances as Bakāsura gāhen, Gitālu gāhen, Mārai gāhen and ritualistic association.

The particular artistic craftsmanship is extant in the folk painting and the most of which is associated with Bisahari Pujā (i.e., Manasa pujā) rites among the Hajong community. Some individuals use the

10. Informant: Shri Kanuram Hajong (50), Goalpara, dt. 12.2.99
picture of the Manasā drawn in a paper and place it on an altar. These structures are very great in height and size. The paintings on them bring to light various local styles. The subject matters delineated in the pictures are always dealt with the Manasā cult and are frequently drawn from the popular God Siva, Manasā, Beulā Lakhinder, Merchant Chāndo and his boat. the floating raft of Beulā, Gods and Goddesses are some of the themes most depicted in these paintings. There are also unsubordinate i.e. paintings which do not make parts of a votive structures but are done separately and exclusively as such, which are called *pats*. The size of them are Bisahari pāts, Bisahari being generally a popular form of Kānideo (i.e., Manasā)

Aside from this, it is also the custom extant amongst the Hajongs that the paintings are drawn in the bed room of the residential house in which the newly married couple will have to say. In this context traditionally most of the pith articles made by them have been generally associated with native folk beliefs and rituals. Among the ritualistic articles, images and other articles associated with sun, moon, star and traditional deities predominate in number and variety.\(^{11}\) As has been observed by B. Dutta, "In fact, in most parts of Assam today the local traditions of folk paintings are as good as dead except in the above particular form. But fortunately in the lower Assam regions of Kamrup and Goalpara (undivided) particularly in the latter a tradition of folk painting still survives more or less vigorously. The medium of the painting sheets of pith or the Indian cork is rather unusual. Some work on pith is done in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. But perhaps nowhere else do the pith artists produce such a large variety of articles

\(^{11}\) Informant: R.K. Rai Hajong (45), North Lakhimpur, dt. 10.3.99
The Hajongs have a rich tradition of wood carving, although a few of them consider their art as a part time occupation. By professions however they are cultivators and daily labourers. As the need for artistic products is very low and occasional, the carvers engage themselves in this secondary activity at their leisure times. Raw material for their product is available locality and so they do not charge high prices for their products.

Blacksmithy and Pottery:

The occupation of blacksmithy and pottery is not so widespread among the Hajongs. They consider it as a mean occupation. Yet there are a very few professional blacksmiths centre round the areas of South Salmara, Matia (near Dudhnoi) and Boko. When the Hajongs want their agricultural implements like bās (a dao), kurāl (an axe), kodāl (a digging hoe), khantī (a spud), khuntā (an instrument for digging), kāčhī (an instrument for cutting rice), phāl (a plough share) and other items are collected from the non-Hajong professional blacksmiths who sell in the local markets.

The Hajongs are not attached with the pottery making work. Observes B.C. Allen, "As the wheel revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun-dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the
They buy various kinds of earthen pots and articles for the use of the households from the Hira community in the markets.

**Weapons:**

The Hajongs were warriors in the kingdom of Hajo during the reign of Kumar Bhaskar Burman dynasty.\(^{13}\) It is said that they were a brave race and gratified in terrible warfare in the past. They also offered fine resistance fights under agrarian uprisings of the peasantry in Assam against exploitation of their means of subsistence by an unsympathetic and alien bureaucracy.\(^{14}\) Their indigenous weapons used in battles were of course limited in number. The various weapons used by them are generally torowāl, deokhār, khāpor etc., are very useful and decorated swords of varied sizes. The various kinds of spears are jongsār, sul, and torjāp etc., are made of iron with varied sharp and poisonous weapons that are used in the arena.

The Hajongs are at home in hurling arrows in bows. This was popular weapon in the days of tribal feuds. Aside from this, another weapon both of daily practical use and for defence or offence is the dao (a kind of instrument) which is collected from the market. Next important weapon is the various sizes of guns. The Hajongs are well up in making different sizes of guns and cannons. The hodo is a gun weight upto 3.5 kg and jong badak upto 3 feet long cannons are

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13. Informant: R.K. Rai Hajong (50), North Lakhimpur, dt. 15.3.99
employed in hunting and fighting in arena. These are prepared with artistic design.

**Textiles, Handloom Design etc.**

The artistic taste of the Hajong folk art also finds expression in the clothes they weave and wear. Whatever they yield generally use for their daily life. They have a peculiar way of expressing their artistic tendencies. These are reflected through their textile designs which the womenfolk themselves weave. The Hajong community, in the hills or in the plains, has its own range of textiles produced by the women in their traditional loom i.e., bānā.

Handlooms is an important part of their domestic lives. There is not a single household, rich or poor that has not a loom. The Hajong womenfolk are very careful about the skill of weaving from immemorial time. In fact planting of cotton, spinning, dying, weaving and execution of designs on the looms constitute the themes for an important body of the oral tradition of the Hajongs. The womenfolk generally weave their traditional dresses i.e., pātin, āgrun, kamārbāndha, kāmpesh and so forth. They weave cotton cloths and also silk fabrics with a great variety of artistic designs. The colour combinations and designs have both artistic and social significance. Particular colours and designs are often meant for particular occasions. The womenfolk are very expert

15. Informant: Naresh Hajong (65), Vill. Dhanshri, Dist. Darrang, date 16.3.99
16. Informant: Dwijen Ch. Hajong (65), Bonda (Guwahati), dt. 14.3.99
weavers and most of the domestic requirements of their cloths are met from family looms. Any leisure time for a housewife is a spinning time in the traditional way. They can design on their weaving as they imagine and desire.

The designs and colours of their handloom clothes are so seductive that a non-Hajong female visitor to a Hajong village is quickly tempted to purchase one or two. The Hajong womenfolk are generally very sensitive to red, scarlet, chocolate and yellow colours. While the colours used by them are almost always bright and dazzling, the designs are mostly in stripes and diamonds and other geometric patterns planned in most striking manners.

The following table gives a list of colours used by them for weaving clothes.

Table No. 1
Name of colours used by the Hajong womenfolk for clothes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Light chocolate</td>
<td><em>Patalā khayār</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td><em>Kālā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td><em>Khayār</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deep yellow</td>
<td><em>Hildā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td><em>Rangā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td><em>Nilā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>White</td>
<td><em>Dhālā</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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18 Informant: N.M. Hajong (45), Vill. Dhamar, Goalpara, dt. 15.3.99
Preparation of indigenous dyes:

In the past the Hajong womenfolk used only indigenous colours for their clothes. But now-a-days due to lack of time, they almost abandoned it and choose to buy coloured thread from the market. According to them the trees and herbs varieties of colours are not easily available at present.

Still some of the aged Hajong womenfolk know the techniques of dyeing and a few of them dye white cotton thread at home. The following table gives a list of trees and herbs used by them for colours.

Table No. 2

Name of the trees and herbs used by the womenfolk for varieties of colours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
<th>Name of trees / herbs used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Light chocolate</td>
<td>Patālā khayār</td>
<td>Sidāi (a kind of wild herb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Kālā</td>
<td>Jiyā (a kind of wild herb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td>Khayār</td>
<td>Terminalia citrina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deep yellow</td>
<td>Hildā</td>
<td>Jack tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Rāṅgā</td>
<td>The Indian henna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(lawsonia- inermis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Nilā</td>
<td>Indigo 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. Informant : Same as the reference No. 18, dt. 15.3.99
Process:

The method of preparing colours is plain. Barks or leaves of a tree or of a herb are collected and boiled in water. When it is perfectly boiled, cotton thread is put into the mixture and boiled again for an hour or two. The boundaries of coloured thread are covered with mud for one night. Next morning these are washed careful and dried in shade. 20

(b) Architectures:

The folk architecture is hut which is generally related with architects who learnt the art of construction traditionally. The architecture of a house depends upon generally the availability of fund position and natural phenomenon. In the primitive society the architecture of a house is simple in design. As has been rightly observed by Warren E. Roberts "Folk architecture may be said to be traditional architecture. It is concerned with all traditional aspects of building, the shapes, sizes and layouts of buildings of all kinds, such as dwelling, barns, sheds and craft shops; the materials used and the tools and techniques of building; the sites chosen and the placement of various buildings on the site and the use to which buildings and various parts of buildings were put." 21 Architecture may again be subdivided into two distinct genres such as (a) folk architecture and (b) academic.

20. Informant: Same as the reference No. 18. dt. 15.3.99
21. Roberts, W.E. : "Folk Architecture" in Folklore and Folklife:

An Introduction, Ed. R.M. Dosson, Chicago, 1972., P. 253
But it is also expressive that folk architecture is more emphatic than academic architecture. Academic architecture is building which is chiefly associated with academically trained architects. Folk architecture conveys especial importance in the systematic study of the folk life.

The folk architectures of the Hajongs are mainly rooted with bamboo, wood and cane and the activity associated with these materials. They build houses with bamboo, cane and wood and other necessary articles.

The Hajongs generally reside in the clearing of the forest, in the hills and the factors which determine the location of Hajong village in the nearness of the cultivating plot and the source of water. In the Hills, villages are demarcated not by fencing around but the natural objects like ditch, small streams, hillocks which mark the limit of a village.

Regarding selection of site for newly constructing house, the Hajongs, however, consider some factors. The first factor is the location of the plot. Generally plots at a higher level are preferred so that the homestead is not affected by floods during monsoons. Other factors which determine the location of the plot are the approach path to the site and reasonable separation to the neighbour's house.

The selection of the site for the construction of a house was once a very important one in the life of the Hajongs. According to their

22. Ibid. P- 254.
23. Informant : Kanu Ram Hajong (50), Lakhipur, (Goalpara), dt. 17-03-99.
belief all the homestead lands were not favourable for the construction of a house. There were some places which were very suitable as house sites and other were not fit for the purposes as these were always hunted by several evil spirits. In order to test the suitability of the homestead land, they used to perform the magical rite for which they first provisionally selected a place for the construction of a house. The head of the family should always approach the magic man. He will fix the day for selection of the site which will always be done after nightfall. On the following night, the magic man along with the owner would demarcate the four corners of this plot of land by the bamboo sticks covered by the threads. If all these are found in tact in the morning, this plot of land use to be considered as favourable for constructing a new house. But if the materials in any corner of the plot are found disturbed, the site was generally forsaken. Now this belief is out of date. Of late, the educated Hajongs are constructing their houses at any place considered to be suitable.  

The most favourable months for constructing a new house are Māgh and Phāghun (Assamese months) for the Hajongs. It is during this period that they are free from agricultural works as such.

The Hajongs generally construct four or five houses on the four sides keeping the right middle portion for courtyard. The courtyard is employed as a place for religious occasion. Given below is the houses of Hajong family:

**Bar ghar:** The residential house is called as *Bar ghar* in the Hajong language. In a Hajong village, the residential houses are more or less

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25. Informant: Same as the reference No. 24, dt- 17-03-99.
of the same type with variations in sizes except the houses of the Adhikāri and some rich families. The house of the Adhikāri as well as the houses of rich families are of standard size. It is generally built on the northern side of the courtyard facing towards the east.

A typical Hajong house is very simple in design. The residential house of common people has an earthen plinth and two thatched roofs on both sides. A Hajong household has a residential house for each nuclear family. This type of houses is single-storeyed and stands on bare ground roughly levelled to form the floor after building. The plenty of bamboo groves plays a great role in as much as it provides to Hajongs the material for house building. The house is a work of bamboo and wood. The wall and roof, and wooden logs serving as the main pillars over which the architecture of the house is raised. The roofs of the house are too sloped and are made of thatching grass which is generally replaced after three or four years, when it gets rotted or damaged by natural processes. The walls are made of split bamboos and plastered with mud mixed with cowdung.

Each family has three or four singled room small house. There are no windows, and doors are the only ventilation of the house. The house has usually three doors, one at the front which serves as the main entrance, another at the back of the house and the third at either side of the walls. The doors usually measuring 5'6" by 4' are made of either wood or split bamboo. As there are no chimney so the smoke has to find its own way out of the house. The result is that the walls look black and dismal. Attached to the main house there is a protruding veranda either in the front side or in the back side where the family loom is installed.  

**Kachiri ghar**: Apart from the main house, there is another house called *Kachiri ghar* in the Hajong language and built in front of the courtyard especially for guest. As a part of the social tradition, guests from even distant villages visit their friends and relatives from time to time, hence the special provision for their lodging in every Hajong house, with a view to ensure every possible comfort to them.  

**Guli-ghar**: Moreover, the provision of cowshed is also made by each Hajong family which known as *guli ghar*. It is generally built in the western side of the courtyard.

**Dheki-ghar**: It is an important hut made of bamboo and thatch to keep the pedal shed. This hut is called *dheki ghar* in Hajong language. In this hut rice and other goods are grinded from time to time.

**Ākhāli-ghar** i.e., kitchen: In each Hajong family there is a provision of a small kitchen called *ākhāli-ghar*. In this hut food is cooked and attached to the main house (i.e., residential house) but in some households food is cooked in one of the rooms of the living house. Commonly a smally garden is attached to kitchen for cultivation of various vegetables. 

**Granary**: In addition to these, the provision of granary is also made by every Hajong household to keep grain for the year. This hut is called *chang-ghar* which is near the main house. It is constructed on a raised split bamboo platform which is about 1½ to 2' above the ground level. The roofs and the walls of the granary are similar to those of a living house.

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29. Informant: Same as the reference No. 26, dt.-17-03-99.
All the houses except the granary have the floors of beaten earth plastered with mud and cowdung. Bamboos and sometimes timbers are employed for super structure. The walls are made of *ikarã* i.e., reeds or split bamboos with mud plastering on both sides. The roofs are also sloped and are made of small bamboo splinters called *kāmi*. These splinters are knitted systematically and are made of thatch. Logs are locally available in the jungle used as pillars.30

The following table is a list of houses of a Hajong family.

Table No. 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
<th>Size in approximately</th>
<th>Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>residential house</td>
<td><em>bar-ghar</em></td>
<td>24'X12'</td>
<td>backside of the courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>guest house</td>
<td><em>kāchiri-ghar</em></td>
<td>14'X12'</td>
<td>front side of the courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>cowshed</td>
<td><em>guli-ghar</em></td>
<td>14'X10'</td>
<td>western or northern side of the courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>padelshed</td>
<td><em>dheki-ghar</em></td>
<td>12'X8'</td>
<td>western or northern side of the courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>granary</td>
<td><em>chāng-ghar</em></td>
<td>10'X10'</td>
<td>eastern or southern side of the courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>kitchen</td>
<td><em>ākhāli-ghar</em></td>
<td>10'X10'</td>
<td>attached with main house31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is customary that a person who builds a new house receives every assistance he needs from his fellow villagers are never paid for

30. Informant: Same as the reference No. 26, dt. 17-03-99.
31. Informant: Same as the reference No. 26, dt. 17.03.99
their labour but are entertained with rice beer and sometimes with food also. The thatch grass on the front portion of the roof of the house is made to suspend or hang down low. The edge is then neatly cut trimming with sickles by the people. With the assistance of neighbours, friends or relatives and the availability of materials, the construction of an average type of house does not require more than one or two days. On the day when work is completed a feast is given to the participants by the owner.

But those who are rich or those villagers in the vicinity of the urban areas, can afford bricks and cement plastered with tin houses. Such houses are a few in number.32

The houses in the Hajong villages are not compact. They are not constructed according to a define plan and are generally scattered throughout the village. In a few villages Assam Type houses are found.

The following table is a list of materials of a Hajong house.

Table No 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>thatch</td>
<td>kher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bamboo</td>
<td>bāngch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>wood</td>
<td>gāch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>rope</td>
<td>dari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>bamboo split</td>
<td>chāchh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mud</td>
<td>kādang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. Informant: Naren Hajong (50), Matia (Goalpara), dt.- 20-03-99.
Table No 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>cowdung</td>
<td>gubar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>soil</td>
<td>māti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>nail</td>
<td>gājāl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>reed</td>
<td>ekrua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>cane</td>
<td>bet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>stone</td>
<td>hil or sil.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) **Cooking**

The taste of food depends upon the act of cooking. To be tasteful a food we must know the process of cooking.

Folk cookery can be readily defined as traditional domestic cookery marked by regional variation. As every day, domestic family cookery based on regional tradition, it is obviously the opposite of the commercial, institutional and scientific nutritional versions of cookery.34 The cookery complex includes attitudes, taboos and meal systems. The whole range of cookery and food habits of a society may be termed as 'food ways'. Folk cookery is connected, integrally and functionally with all other faces of culture.

It is clear that in the primitive society people have no definite idea of the art of cooking. So the primitive method of cooking became unfit to some extent for the development of human body.

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33. Informant: Same as the reference No. 32, dt. 20-03-99.
The original food ways of the Hajongs have been gradually changing owing to the assimilation with the non-tribal people of Assam. They inherit the food habits and folk cookery of their forefathers to some extent. There is a separate traditional kitchen called ḍi ḍali ghar where they cook and take their daily meals. Duli (i.e., hard bamboo mat) hangs on the kitchendom to keep cooking articles such as chillies, spices, dried fishes etc. The cooking process of Hajongs is simple and general. Cooking utensils and dishes are washed after every meal. The household of Hajong utensils are generally earthen and aluminium. These are very cheap and locally available but brass and bell-metal pots are few.

Given below is a list of the utensils and their functions.

Table No 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
<th>Function.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cauldron</td>
<td>Kaira</td>
<td>a iron pot for cooking food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basin</td>
<td>Gabla</td>
<td>a brass or aluminium pot for keeping food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Kalaha</td>
<td>a brass or earthen vessel for keeping water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bucket</td>
<td>Bālti</td>
<td>an aluminium vessel for keeping water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ladle</td>
<td>Karchāli</td>
<td>a brass spoon for serving food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dish</td>
<td>Thāli</td>
<td>a bell - metal or aluminium plate for serving food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kettle</td>
<td>Keltai</td>
<td>an aluminium pot for preparing tea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Water pot</td>
<td>Lota</td>
<td>brass pot for keeping water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jug</td>
<td>Jug</td>
<td>an aluminium pot for keeping water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spoon</td>
<td>Chāmnuch</td>
<td>a brass or aluminium spoon for serving food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>Cup</td>
<td>earthen pot for taking tea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Informant: N.M. Hajong (45). Vill. - Dhamar (Goalpara), dt. - 19-03-99
The Hajongs have been applying wood and bamboo as fuel for cooking food still now. The modern methods like the smokeless Improved Chulā, Portable Chulā, or LPG have not yet been influenced upon their lives as almost of all they were living in the rural and hilly areas as well as they are backward in the economic also.³⁶

But those who are educated as well as living in the vicinity of the urban areas, can afford modern methods for cooking food. Such persons are a very few in number.

Both male and female of the Hajong society have good habit for cooking food. Generally the women cook the food in the house. During menses of women the male cook the food.

Like other communities of Assam, there are popular system of community feasts among the Hajongs. Sometimes male or female cook the feasts. In the Hajong society there are both non-vegetarians and vegetarians. The vegetarians are few in number. The Vaishnavas are generally vegetarians.

The Hajongs have been constantly struggling with nature for their survival. Rice is the principal cereal they produce but they have to depend on a number of green vegetables for their survival specially the two crops- kharif and rabi.

**Rice:** It is the main food of the Hajongs and is consumed throughout the year. Rice is traditionally pounded in a wooden mortar called *dheki* and *ural*. They take their meals three times a day— (1) in the morning (2) noon and (3) evening. All the members of the family

³⁶ Informant: Dhrubrangi Hajong (60), Boko, dt. 21-03-99.
The following table shows the set times for meals and the menu of food.

Table No 6.

Meals and menu of food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name of the meals in Hajong language</th>
<th>articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Nāstå bhāt</td>
<td>soft rice is taken with salt, chillies and vegetables if available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Diphur bhāt or Diphur chhundā</td>
<td>taken rice with vegetables, dal, vaji, fish (dry or fresh).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Night</td>
<td>Rāti bhāt or Rāti Chundā</td>
<td>as of th mid day-meal, occasionally meat (drake, pigeon) also forms an item of the menu.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dal**: Dal is another important item of their food. It is prepared from pulse grains boiling in water till they are soft and get a thick consistency. *Nun* (salt), *morich* (chillies), *nahur* (garlic), *payag* (onion), and *aadā* (ginger) are mixed with *dal* according to individual taste. Only mustard oil is used in the *dal*.

**Vegetables**: Vegetables of various kinds and creepers are generally taken by the Hajongs. Boiled vegetables are preferred. In the preparation

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of vegetables they add salt, chillies, onion, garlic and ginger. Vegetables are prepared using mustard oil.

The following table is a list of vegetables taken by the Hajongs.

Table No 7.

List of vegetables taken by the Hajongs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
<th>English name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rangálao</td>
<td>sweet pumpkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kachu</td>
<td>Arum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alu gotá</td>
<td>Potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chimau</td>
<td>Bean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kumarau</td>
<td>Gourd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lão</td>
<td>Bottle gourd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mulau</td>
<td>Radish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jhikā</td>
<td>Cornered gourd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bāgān</td>
<td>Brinjal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dherechh</td>
<td>Lady's finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Madu</td>
<td>Papaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Chuka bāgān</td>
<td>Tomato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alkali (Khar): Alkali is a common cooking material. The Hajongs like alkali called khar. It is prepared from the ashes of dried banana stems and is an important item of their food.

39. Informant: S. Hajong (50), Bijni Dist. Bongaigaon, dt. 22.3.99
Spices: The article of salt, chillies, onion, jinger and garlic is used by the Hajongs in the curry.\footnote{40}

Preparation of masang (i.e., meat) and machh (i.e., fish): Meat and fish are favourite items of food for the Hajongs. They have special prepared of meat and fish for different socio-religious occasions throughout the year. They, however, have a preference for meat, not only in taste, but in feasts, sacrifices, celebration and sorrows. The main item on certain occasions or festivals is meat irrespective of status. They do not generally eat pork and fowls. They, however, eat the meat of pigeon, goat, tortoise, drake, deer and wild birds such as dove. Beef is totally prohibited.\footnote{41}

Powder of dry fish: Special delicacy among the Hajongs is hidal (i.e., powdered dry fish). Dry fish is grinded in a mortar by a pestle and adding salt, chillies and other spices. The mixture is kept in a bamboo pipe. The opening of the bamboo pipe is tightly closed. The mixture can be kept for several months. According to them it is very nourishing and is almost always taken along with rice.\footnote{42}

Afaigura i.e., powder of fried rice: Afaigura is made from frying rice in an oven. Fried rice is grinded in a wooden mortar by a pestle.

Afaigura is taken with boiled water or tea adding sugar or salt.\footnote{43}

Muri (i.e., parched rice): Rice is fried in an oven. It is called muri and served with tea or water.\footnote{44}

\footnote{40: Informant: D.N. Hajong (62) Bonda dt. 24.3.99}
\footnote{41: Informant: R.K. Rai Hajong (50) North Lakhimpur. dt. 25.3.99}
\footnote{42: Informant: Same as the reference No. 41. dt. 25.3.99}
\footnote{43: Informant: Same as the reference No. 41. dt. 25.3.99}
\footnote{44: Informant: Same as the reference No. 41. dt. 25.3.99}
Pitha: (i.e., cake): Rice is pounded in a wooden mortar called *dheki* and *ural*. Grinded rice known as *pithāguri* is mixed with water. This mixture is prepared on a flat pan called *pithā* in a Hajong language. Different kinds of cakes are favourite items of food for them during the year. A few of cakes i.e., *pithās* are discussed as follows:

(I) **Khola pithā**: (a kind of cake): This kind of cake is common among the Hajongs. Rice is grinded first and then mixed with water. Salt is added to it. When it turns into thick paste, it is baked in an oven with or without oil.\(^45^\)

(II) **Pāni pithā**: (another kind of cake) It is a steamed cake. The powder of rice is mixed with salt and packed in a piece of cloth. The packet is steamed in a pot of boiling water. When softens it is ready to serve.\(^46^\)

(III) **Ghilā pithā**: It is another kind of cake. The powder of rice is mixed with water made a thick paste. The paste-like mixture is fried in oil.\(^47^\)

(IV) **Dhukari pithā**: This kind of another steamed cake. It is made from the powder of wheat. Water and salt are added to it and packed in a piece of cloth. The packet is steamed in a pot of boiling water.\(^48^\)

(V) **Kalkāpāt or kalāpāt pithā**: It is one of the popular cakes among the Hajongs. The powder of rice is mixed with water and salt and made a thick paste. The ingredient of mixture is covered by the leave of banana tree and boiled in water. When softens it is ready to serve.\(^49^\)

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45. Informant: N. M. Hajong (45) Vill. Dhamar, Goalpara, dt. 23.3.99
46. Informant: Same as the reference No. 45, dt. 23.3.99
47. Informant: Same as the reference No. 45, dt. 23.3.99
48. Informant: Same as the reference No. 45, dt. 23.3.99
49. Informant: Same as the reference No. 45, dt. 23.3.99
The Hajongs make familiar by cook and take the various varieties of special snakes made of rice on the different occasions in the year.

The following table shows the different types of snakes made of rice among the Hajongs.

Table No. 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of snacks made of rice</th>
<th>Essential ingredients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>bishi bhát</em></td>
<td>prepared from <em>borá chaul</em> (a kind of paddy) on the fire-vapour mixed with meat of tortoise or drake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>bukni bhát</em></td>
<td>prepared from the boiled rice of <em>binni</em> paddy (a kind of paddy) and powder of <em>borá chāul</em> (a kind of rice) and kept it in an earthen pot with triple quantity of water upto 24 hours and mixed with the fried rice after it is suitable to take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>chungā bhát</em></td>
<td>made from the wet <em>borā chāul</em> (a kind of rice) during the winter season and kept it in the bamboo pipe, fixed the mouth of it and fired by rice straw and take to suitable.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides the above, the Hajongs take the various types of food on the occasion of the different ceremonies and festivals.

50. Das, B.: *Hajong Loko Sanskriti*, P. 34
The following table shows the various types of food taken by them.

Table No. 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of ceremony and festival</th>
<th>Types of food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. | *Ambubāchi*  
(month of Ahārā) | taken curd, *chirā* (beaten rice), milk, *khoi* (fried rice), mango and jack, rice beer, meat, snack made of rice, etc |
| 2. | *Manasa puja*  
(on the day of shravan sankranti) | taken beaten rice, *muri* (parched rice), curd, *khoi* (fried rice), sweets and various fruits including cocoanut, guava, banana etc. |
| 3. | *Vijayā Dashami* :  
(month of Ahina) | taken curd, beaten rice, *afaigurā*  
(powder of fried rice), cocoanut, fish and meat. |
| 4. | *Saty Narayan puja*.  
(month of Bohāg..) | taken flour mixed with ripe banana, sugar, milk and honey. |
| 5. | *Naya khāwā*  
or  
*Chinik karā*  
(month of Aghona) | feast is arranged and beaten rice, rice beer, cake, rice and meat are served. |
| 6. | *Magh and Bohāg Bihu*  
(month of Jan. and April) | taken the various cakes, curd, beaten rice, parched rice, fish, meat, bitter, rice, parched rice, fish, meat, bitter, sour etc.\(^{51}\) |

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51. Karotemprel, S.: *The Tribes of North-East India*, P. 258-259
Chaha (i.e., tea): The Hajongs generally do not take tea regularly. Chaha (tea) is prepared in the same process like other people of Assam. First, water is boiled and then the tea leaves, sugar or gur (molasses) are mixed accordingly. The Hajongs often take tea without milk.

Mad (i.e., wine): Wine is a part of the Hajong diet both male and female. It is called mad in the Hajong language.

Mad (i.e., wine) is prepared generally from rice. The principles of wine preparation process in all the Hajong villages are the same. They prepare it in the earthen pot. There are three kinds of mad among them. They are - (i) Kachā mad, (ii) Ruhi mad, (iii) Ghāmāni mad. 52

Kachā mad is prepared from unclean rice. Rice is boiled in water, mixed up with bākhār (a kind of herb spice) and kept in the earthen pot for two or three days. This kind of wine is called kachā mad.

Second type of wine is ruhi mad. It is prepared from borachaul (a kind of rice), mixed up with bākhār (a kind of herb-made spice) and kept it in an earthen pot giving a small hole in it and under it there is a pot in which wine is stored up.

Third, ruhi mad can be kept even in a year and such preparation of wine is called ghāmāni mad. 53

Wine is a part and parcel of the Hajong community. It is an inevitable necessity of all rituals and celebrations. All festivities like birth and marriage need wine.

52. Das, B.: Op-cit, P. 34
53. Das, B.: Op-cit, P. 34
After the harvest and during winter season wine is prepared invariably by every family. The Hajongs enjoy their leisure time with wine.

Due to the economic hardship and enlightenment, some of them have already given up the idea of use of wine by leaps and bounds. The Hajongs are experts in cooking of food and take the traditional way of their own food. In fact their domestic requirements are produced by themselves.54

(d) Costumes

Costume is a mark of distinction of community identity. Every community loves to wear its traditional dresses. As has been observed by Don Yoder, "Folk - costume is the visible, outward badge of folk-group identity, worn consciously to express that identity. In every case the costume is distinct and identifiable, it identifies the wearer to the outside world as well as his own community; it is prescribed by the community and its form is dictated by the community's tradition."55

In the light of the above statement it is clear that costume is one of emblems of a community and one of the changeables of a culture. Costume varies from community to community.56

Folk-costume may be differentiated in accordance with sex, age, social status, occupation, work leisure and confession.56

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54. Informant: Naresh Hajong (65) Dhanshri (Darang), dt. 25.3.99
56. Ibid. P. 295
The Hajongs give special importance on the uses of indigenous products. Their dress and other garments are produced locally. The womenfolk are expert in spinning and weaving of all sorts of cotton and silk clothes. In the past, spinning was very common but, of late, they have almost left the art. They now purchase the cotton yarn from the markets and dye the same according to their likings.\textsuperscript{57}

The dress of both men and women is simple. They have to depend upon the plains for their wearing apparel. Chiefly menfolk wear the clothes which bear similarity with other neighbouring Hindus. Aside from this, the garments of the Hajong female folk are somewhat distinct. The dresses used by the Hajongs may be generally classified into two kinds -- garments worn on the lower part of the body and garments worn on the upper part of the body. They employ both stitch and unstitch clothes. Here an attempt has been made to describe about the clothes and garments employed by the Hajongs of Assam.

The dress of the malefolk is simple. They wear mostly cotton clothes. The dresses of the Hajong malefolk resemble with the dresses of non-Hajong people of Assam. But they show a certain fondness of coloured dresses and have well acquaintance with the art of dying. The following types of cloth are usually used by the malefolk.

\textit{Ningti} : The common malefolk put on a stripe of cotton cloth to cover the lower part of their bodies from waist to the knees. This piece of cloth is woven in the family loom. It is called \textit{ningti} in the Hajong language. A \textit{ningti} is 2.5 to 3 metres in length and about 0.75 metre in width. This resembles an Assamese \textit{dhuti} (the main garment of an

\textsuperscript{57} Informant: Dhrubrang Hajong (05) Bokodt. 25.3.99
Assamese male) but unlike the latter, the former hardly reaches the knees. The colour of a *ningti* is white.58

The *ningti* passes between the legs and coming up behind, is wound round the waist, the end being tucked in under the folds at the back.58

*Agan*: This is a piece of *eri*-silk cloth used by a man to warm the body during the winter time. This is about 2.5 metres in length and about 1.5 metres in width.

*Kâmpechh*: This is a piece of cotton cloth used by the malefolk as muffler around their neck. This piece of cloth is adorned with designs of flower. It is called *Kâmpechh* (in Hajong language) which bears similarity with *arnai*, muffler of Bodo. It is 1.5 metres in length and 0.75 metre in width.59

*Gamcha*: This is a hand-woven cotton cloth piece used by male folk while taking bath. The piece is adorned with designs of flowers. This resembles an Assamese *gamochā* (a towel). This is 1.5 to 2 metres in length and about 0.75 metre in width.60

In the past the Hajong malefolk do not put on shirts. But now-a-days they use shirts for which they purchase cloth from the market and are stitched by the local professional tailors.

The educated people and those who are living in town, give up their traditional dresses and they almost wear the European dress which has become the fashion of the day.

58. Das, B.: *Op.-cit.* P. 12
59. Ibid: P. 12
60. Informant: Paresh Hajong (55), Tamulpur, dt. 24.3.99
Boys generally put on shirts and pants instead of dhoti.

**Woman dress**: The Hajong womenfolk can be distinguished easily by their dresses. They wear mostly cotton clothes which are colourful and striking. The dress of women is roomy than that of men. The following types of cloth are generally used.

**Pātin**: The main dress is put on by the women folk called *pātin* (i.e., mekhala). It is a hand-woven cotton. It is also known as *rāṅgāpātin* because the colour of this piece of dress is generally red. *Pātin* is clothed by the womenfolk like Assamese *mekhālā* and it covers their bodies from the waist to the ankle. *Pātin* is woven by women at their family looms. The size of the cloth varies from individual to individual. There are three kinds of *pātin* eg., red, white and yellow. The young women prefer a red-*pātin* i.e., *rāṅgāpātin*. Generally, there are stripes of blue threads in this piece of cloth and it is woven and adorned with designs. A *pātin* is 2.5 metres to 3 metres in length and about 1 metre in width.\(^{61}\)

**Agrun**: The Hajong womenfolk generally do not use blouse. *Agrun* is a piece of wrapping cloth and used by womenfolk to cover the upper part of their bodies (from the waist to the breast). It is a hand-woven cotton scarf and adorned with various figures. Generally, *agrun* is 1.5 to 1.75 metres in length and 0.5 to 0.75 metre in width. It is also called *pasrā*. The colour of an *agrun* is generally chocolate. This piece of cloth is adorned with various figures of flower.\(^{62}\)

**Kamārbāndhā**: This is a piece of cloth woven by the Hajong womenfolk. Particularly during the festivals and plantation in the field

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\(^{61}\) Das, B.: *Op-cit*, P. 11

\(^{62}\) Ibid: P. 11
the women use a piece of cloth around the waist and it is called *kamārbändha* in the Hajong language. It is 1.5 to 1.75 metres in length and 0.5 to 0.75 metre in width like Assamese *gamocha*. The colour of *Kamārbändha* is usually chocolate and adorned with figures. Their traditional loom is called *bainā* where the use of two hands is only necessary.  

It may be stated here that all the clothes needed in the wedding of a Hajong girl are required to be woven at the family loom, preferably by the girl herself.

The Hajong womenfolk show not much interest in the modern types of dress with the exception of those living in town or in plains who generally put on modern type of dress. They still love to wear their traditional dresses. Their clothes are richly coloured with beautiful and elaborate designs woven on them according to their fancy and skill.

**Ornaments:**

The Hajongs, like the other tribes of Assam, have their traditional ornaments. The womenfolk have also a great charm towards their own traditional ornaments. Ornaments with modern designs which are locally available in the markets are not at all favoured by the Hajong womenfolk both young and aged. However, the number of traditional ornaments used by them is limited to a few only. They wear almost the same ornaments which are made of gold, silver, brass, copper, coral beads and iron. The ornaments used by them may be divided into the following heads.

*Kātābāju:* This type of ornament is worn by the women in the arm and made of silver. It can be fixed in the arm. It weights from 15 to 25

63. Informant: Shri Bipin Hajong (65), Bonda, dt. 26.3.99
Bagh: It is a kind of anklet used by womenfolk. It is made of silver. It weights from 35 to 50 grams. It is also called payer pata.

Hāsuli or Harmalā or Sunchisrā: Hāsuli is a kind of necklace which is made of silver or gold. It is also known as harmalā or sunchissrā. It weights from 35 to 50 grams having three rows of designed chains used by womenfolk.

Gunjari: It is another kind of anklet. It is round and heavy silver made anklets worn by womenfolk. It has a peculiar feature that anklets when put on produce tinkling sounds. It weights from 30 to 35 grams.

Nal Khāru: Nal Khāru is another set of ornaments used by womenfolk in their both hands. It is made of gold or silver and weights from 25 to 35 grams.

Nalas: Nalas is another variety of ornaments worn by womenfolk in their noses. It is made of silver or gold and also called nakful. It weights from 10 to 20 grams.

Kānphol: Kānphol is an ear ring ornament used by the womenfolk and girls at the ear - lobes made of brass with gold plating. It weights from 10 to 20 grams.

Sākhā: It is also a kind of ornaments particularly worn by the married womenfolk in their both hands. It is made of conch and weights from 25 to 35 grams.

64. Koch, S.N. : Chandardinga, P. 103
65. Ibid : P. 103
66. Ibid : P. 103
67. Ibid : P. 103
**Aongthi**: The ring is called *aongthi* in the Hajong language. It is a kind of ornaments worn by both malefolk and femalefolk in the fingers of the right hand. It is made of silver or gold or coral beads and weights from 10 to 20 grams.⁶⁸

In Hajong society, with the exception of ring no ornament is used by menfolk. Now-a-days their traditional ornaments have been disappearing by leaps and bounds. In place of these, modern designs of ornaments which are cheapest and available in the local markets, have been occupied an important position in the Hajong society.

Given below is the list of ornaments used by Hajong womenfolk.

### Table No 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Hajong name</th>
<th>English name</th>
<th>metal used and weight in gram</th>
<th>use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Kātā bāju</em></td>
<td>armlet</td>
<td>silver/15 to 25 grams</td>
<td>arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bāgh</td>
<td>anklet</td>
<td>silver/35 to 50 grms</td>
<td>leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hāsuli</td>
<td>necklace</td>
<td>silver or gold/35 to 50 gms</td>
<td>neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Harmalā</td>
<td>necklace</td>
<td>silver or gold/35 to 50 gms</td>
<td>neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sunchisarā</td>
<td>necklace</td>
<td>silver or gold/35 to 50 gms</td>
<td>neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gunjari</td>
<td>anklet</td>
<td>silver/30 to 35 grams</td>
<td>leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nal khāru</td>
<td>bracelet</td>
<td>silver or gold/25 to 35 gms</td>
<td>hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nalas</td>
<td>nose-ring</td>
<td>silver or gold/10 to 20 gms</td>
<td>nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kānphol</td>
<td>ear-ring</td>
<td>brass with gold/10 to 20 gms</td>
<td>ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sākhā</td>
<td>bracelet</td>
<td>conch bangle/25 to 35 gms</td>
<td>hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aongthi</td>
<td>ring</td>
<td>silver or gold or coral beads/10 to 20 gms</td>
<td>finger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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⁶⁸. Informant: Naren Hajong (50), Matia, dt. 26.3.99
The Hajong women folk have no time to wear the ornaments as they are almost all time engaged in the agricultural activities as well as daily labourers with the malefolk. During the time of puja and ceremonies, and when they go to their relatives houses, they wear the ornaments.

**Footwear:**

Footwear is seldom used both among the malefolk and femalefolk particularly in the villages. On the otherhand, the Hajongs who are living in the urban areas, particularly those who are office goers and a few young boys use modern footwear.

**Coifure i.e., Hair style:**

The style of hair dressing has been gradually becoming popular day by day among the Hajong society.

Regarding the hair style, the menfolk generally donot comb their hair when they stay at their home but they dress with a comb the hairs when they go out of door. The menfolk also employ mustard oil or cocoanut oil before combing their hair. The malefolk mow their hair short but femalefolk donot mow their hair. Long and black hair is prized most and considered an object of beauty. The Adhikāris (the Priests) and the kavirājs (village-doctors) keep long hair. Owing to the urbanization both youth boys and girls have to use various modern cosmetics. They dress their hair with small comb called phini. in the Hajong language. They generally use various oil such as mustard oil and cocoanut oil. The girls use phatā i.e., kajāl on their forehead. The married womenfolk use vermillion at their forehead like the non-Hajong Assamese Hindu womenfolk.

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70. Informant : Paresh Hajong (55), Lakhimpur, dt. 27.3.99