



A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECT OF ASSAMESE HINDU WITH THE MORIYA-ASSAMESE.

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Abstract

The main objective of the study is to make a comparative study on the socio-cultural aspect of Assamese Hindu with the Moriya-Assamese. The study is based on both primary and secondary data wherever necessary to make a comparative study on the socio-cultural aspect of Assamese Hindu with the Moriya-Assamese. The researcher has reviewed sufficient number of writings on Moriyas community found available at the time this study. This study will be helpful to know more about the Moriya community of Assam. It is noticed that the festival of Moriyas has a mutual connection with both Hindu and Muslim community. Moriyas tend to marry in a very early age. Marriages are two days affair in Moriyas culture. The custom of elopement is prominent among the Moriyas. Moriyas also has the custom of 'Xotna' or 'Sunnot' for the boys in their childhood. Moriyas believe the pox as 'Aai Dux'. The patient is kept neatly in a separate room in those days. The use of areca nut and betel leaf is also seen in Moriyas society. The food habits of Moriyas are same as Muslims. Although they are primarily an Islamic community; it is noteworthy that certain elements of Hinduism are also found in the practices of their everyday life.

Keywords: Assamese, Moriyas, Community, Socio-cultural.

Introduction

Moriyas are the integral part of indigenous Muslim of Assam. Those Muslim soldiers who were captured at Kaliabor in the Assam attack by Turbok Khan in the year 1532 under the direction of the Muslim King of Bangladesh, Nasrat Shah and those soldiers were later known as "Moriya". At that time, Swargadeu Suhungmung or Dinhingia Roja was the Ahom king. These prisoners of war initially stayed at Kaliabor in Nagaon district. Later they scattered to various areas of Assam mainly Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Kamrup, Darrang, North Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, etc. In the beginning, their number was twelve hundred according to Padmanath Gohain Baruah's "Axomor Buranji" and nine hundred according to other "Axom Buranji".



Objective

The main objective of the study is to make a comparative study on the socio-cultural aspect of Assamese Hindu with the Moriya-Assamese.

Sources and Data Collection

The study is based on both primary and secondary data wherever necessary to make a comparative study on the socio-cultural aspect of Assamese Hindu with the Moriya-Assamese. The researcher has reviewed sufficient number of writings on Moriyas community found available at the time this study. This study will be helpful to know more about the Moriya community of Assam.

Discussions and Findings

As the Ahom king freed them from imprisonment and let them stay independently, some of them stayed at Kaliabor and others started marrying the native girls and lived in both banks of the Brahmaputra. Moriyas starts the use of brass craft. They crushed the brass and made utensils, and those utensils were supplied to the members in the Palace, several temples, Satras, Namghar, Devaloi etc of Assam according to the advice of the king. The utensils made by the Moriyas were eminent in Assamese household. Among the Brass the primary utensils were Tou, Xorai, Koloh, Luta, Sariya, Doba etc ,although they also made guns , canons etc, thus making the royal armament rich. The Ahom king selected the suitable one among them and honoured them with the title of Bora, Saikia, Hazarika and offered them the royal position. The famous Bagh Hazarika was the best example. The role of Moriyas in the independent movement of Assam is noteworthy.

It is noticed that the festival of Moriyas has a mutual connection with both Hindu and Muslim community. Moriyas tend to marry in a very early age. In this case, they get married as soon as the girls reach puberty and boys age is about 20 years. In earlier days, there was a custom of among them of marrying with four women which is not so common custom now- a- days. Moriyas get marry primarily in two ways –a) Social custom b) Elope custom when both boys and girls fell in love. Marriages i.e “Nikah” are done socially in the presence of Maulvi, Kaji and close ones. After the meeting of both bride and groom’s family, the relative of groom offers Muga dress and ring to the bride. But this custom isn’t seen among the Muslims.

Marriages are two days affair in Moriyas culture. The first day is known as ‘Robha day’. On the other day, ‘Tel Xorai’ and the things of ‘Jurun’ are brought from the groom’s side. As like the Hindu culture, the bride’s family arranges a feast for the groom’s family. The groom and his relatives go to the bride’s home in the day time in the next day. The groom’s family take different sweets such as Jilapi ,Xurma, suruha ,Tamul – pan , sahpata etc and a special cake

along with them. Before Nikah, there was a custom known as ' Ukil Xudha'. In this ceremony, the elders of both side take consent seperately from the groom and the bride and after that their "Nikah" is done. They also fix the 'Muhrana' here in this ceremony. According to Islamic law, the lowest amount of Muhrana is two hundred fifty six rupees and there is no limitations bof the highest amount. It is noteworthy that the bride wears Muga dress and the groom wears white kurta pajama on the day of 'Nikah'. The groom is accompanied by one of his friend and he is known as 'Tamuli'. This 'Tamuli' has great importance and respect. He is given a lot of respect at groom's place. This 'Tamuli' has the responsibility from the starting of the marriage ceremony till the bride enters the groom's house.

The custom of elopement is prominent among the Moriyas. The person who goes for 'Jurun' ceremony for the marriage may elope or the girl's parents also give chance to elope. It's main reason is financial crisis. This act is done if the groom is unable throw feast, give ornaments, dress for the bride or if the bride unable to offer anything bro the groom's family. Sometimes, it is seen that a girl gets proposal from more than one boy and at the circumstances, she chooses the boy and elope with him. This act is regarded as crime in the society and there is a system of punishment too. This custom is known as 'letha bhanga custom'. This custom has a procedure. Nikah is not done till the leta isn't break.

There is another ceremony of feast i.e 'Aathmongola' after the eight days of marriage or nikah. The newly married couple visits the bride's home for the first time. The influence of Hindu society is seen in this ceremony. The bride's family fixes a date and invites the newly wedded couple. The couple spent the day joyfully at the bride's home and are carried gifts, sweets etc for the family members. As like the Muslims of the whole world, Moriyas also has the custom of 'Xotna' or 'Sunnot' for the boys in their childhood. During the day of Hazrat Ibrahim around 2000 B.C, 'Xotna ' or 'Sunnot' was prevalent. 'Xotna ' is mentioned in 'The Old Testament'. This custom is prevalent among the Muslim in the present time after Jewish and Christian has left it. This custom is celebrated collectively in the Mosque with enthusiasm. On that day, the child is regarded as 'groom' and anoint him like a groom in the marriage. Like Hindu culture, at the time first mensuration the girl is kept untouched under a net for seven days and she is accompanied by her friend. In those days, the girl is not let to see any male and she is given to eat only fruits, milk etc. After seven days, the small marriage or Tuloni Bia is organised extravagantly. Moriyas believe the pox as 'Aai Dux'. The patient is kept neatly in a separate room in those days. Nobody is allowed to enter the room wearing shoes or slippers. They even don't talk about beef. The patient is given a bath by mixing flowers, gold, milk, silver, grass in the water A function is organised to offer prayer to 'Aai'. It is seen in the society of Goriya Muslim.



Moriyas have been staying in Assam permanently after 16th Century. They were not expert in agricultural work initially. As the time passed, they permanently stayed at villages and like Hindus, they too started giving attention to agricultural work. They follow each and every culture like Hindus which are related to agriculture. At the time of reaping, the head of the house brings some peddy on his head and after that the act of reaping is started. Like this, after the ploughing and sowing is done, there is another small custom which is celebrated by Moriyas is 'Nangol Dhua' (Nangol puja) and after collecting peddy, Moriyas have another feasting ceremony i.e 'N-Xua'. They never buy or sell peddy on Tuesday, Saturday and after the sun sets. Even on that two mentioned day, the cutting of bamboo is prohibited. They don't work at field, buy or sell peddy or other auspicious act after the death of parents or close one for three days as like Hindu society. Moriyas also light earthen lamp as like Hindu in the month of Kati for prosperity in agriculture. On that day, they light candle and pray for their wellness in agriculture and family in the Mosque

The use of areca nut and betel leaf is also seen in Moriyas society. They at first offer areca nut and betel leaf to the guests. They also offer this during the invitation of marriage. Moriyas think that areca nut and betel leaf offering to the guest is an honour after the marriage ceremony is over. If someone makes mistake, they beg forgiveness by offering areca nut and betel leaf. It is seen that Hindu society influence a lot as they follow the same custom after the death of a person. Moriyas bury the deadbody as like Muslims. They organise a ceremony after the three days of death i.e 'Tiloni' and also organise 'Doha' on the tenth day. They even don't touch non-veg till the tenth day. They organise 'Solisa' after forty days. On the one year death anniversary, they organise funeral feast in the house. This society organised some function when a baby is born. The function that is celebrated for the new born baby is known as 'Akika'.

The food habits of Moriyas are same as Muslims. They eat beef during Eid festival. They also prepare chira, laru, pitha, xandoh, etc as like Hindus. The attires that they wear are same like Hindus. Women wear Sadar Mekhela at any time. They wear Muga attire in the festival and also in marriage ceremony. Though, Men wear dhoti in earlier days but now they wear lungi, shirt or pajama, kurta, and in the present time they also wear shirt and pant. They also use Gamusa. They love to wrap Gamusa on their neck at any time.

Conclusion

Among the various Islamic communities living in Assam, the Moriyas are the major ones. The Moriyas have been able to maintain their unique religious and professional uniqueness while they have integrated with the Assamese mainstream. It is important to note that Moriya community is not found anywhere in India. In reality the Moriyas are carriers of a mixed culture. Moriyas also celebrate Maharam, Sabberat, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Joha, Milad-e-Nabi with devotion as like other Muslims. They do all those religious things which are related to Islamic



religion. They read Namaz, keep Ruja, celebrate Sunni, etc. Thus, we came across that Moriyas celebrate each and every festival and live their livelihood as like Hindus though they follow the Islamic religion. They mix up the culture of both Hindu and Muslim celebrating all the festivals and following all the customs and blended up with the largest Assamese Hindu society. Although they are primarily an Islamic community; it is noteworthy that certain elements of Hinduism are also found in the practices of their everyday life.

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