

## **INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF DEURI COMMUNITY IN ASSAM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the 21st century, social scientists have become increasingly concerned with economics and material wealth rather than with society itself, emphasizing the maximization of income over the expansion of opportunities for people. Although the obsession with materialism may be relatively recent, economists, educationists, social philosophers, social scientists, geographers, and policymakers have long been preoccupied with augmenting the “national treasure” through surplus trade balances, often prioritizing material success over the development of human lives and values within society. As Segall (1984) defines, “Culture is nothing but a bunch of independent variables, which might include basic institutions, subsistence patterns, social organizations, languages, and social rules governing interpersonal relations.” In this context, the present study seeks to examine the **influence of the socio-cultural environment of the Deori community in Assam**, and to **explore the socio-economic background of the Deori people**. The concepts of culture and society are complex and constantly evolving. While society represents a web of social relationships that continually change, culture embodies accumulated knowledge and practices transmitted from generation to generation, adapting over time to shape human behavior and social life.

**Key words:** **Socio-cultural**, environment, community.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Education is the key to all round development of a society. The pace and shape of development depend heavily on education. Education plays a vital role in bringing about social and economic development of mankind. Education is an agent to change the attitudes and values among people and create in them a desire to progress. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the social scientists became increasingly concerned with economics and economics with wealth rather than with the society, with the maximization of income rather than with the expansion of opportunities for people. Although the obsession with materialism may be recent, the preoccupation of economists, Educationalist, social philosopher, social scientist, geographers, and policymakers with augmenting “national treasure”, in surplus trade balances, who preferred to concentrate on material success rather than on the development of human lives as well as Values among the present society. Socio-cultural factors have important role in the development of the personality patterns of children. So it is very much important to analyze the socio-cultural environment to reveal the variety of problems and prospects to development of children’s personality.

The socio cultural heritage includes the cultural environment in which the individuals live and accept cultural traditions, ideals, values accepted in a particular society. All these factors leave a permanent impression on the personality of the school children. The socio-cultural environment exerts a more powerful influence upon the personality of a person. Psychologist call Man as a human plant planted in the society that grows as it spreads its roots in the soil for Socio-cultural feeling. Every society places its values for the individual to grow his personality in its own way. The North Eastern region of India comprises the Seven Sisters States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Monipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The state, Assam, which is populated by various tribal groups of people, is situated on the North-east region of India. Physically the state is divided into two parts – the Brahmaputra Valley and the Borak Valley. The state of Assam is a meeting place of many races cultures, languages and religions, which have largely molded a unified cohesive cultural identity known as Assamese culture.

The state is bounded on the North by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, on the East-West Bengal, on the South Mizoram and Tripura and the West by the Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Monipur. The Indian constitution has regarded the Deoris as a Scheduled Tribe of Assam. According to 1971 census their total population stood at 23,080 of which 11,901 were males and 11,179 were females. Out of the total population the speakers of mother tongue stood at 12,190 and the PC of literary among them as per 1971 census was 27.72%. There are cultural diversities that exist amongst the different ethnic groups of Assam which is too glaring for us to ignore the role in the emotionally identified idealism of an all – embracing Assamese culture; unless, of course, we mean by the expression the abstract conglomeration of all the cultural entities in the state. There is the diverse cultural element of all ethnic groups in the state absorbed into this core, together with the cultural features shared by many of them, that has lent to Assamese culture its composite character. Considering from this point of view, the numerous elements of culture are found amongst the ethnic groups in Assam for larger entity than the expression ‘Assamese Culture Signifies.’ Deoris are distinguished from the other communities by certain mode of behaviour such as, their dresses, food habits and socio-cultural rituals and rites etc.

According to Pandit Vidyavino Tradition (Journal of Institute of Social Research, Shillong, Vol-No. 1, January, 1981), “a colony of Brahmins was set up in Sadiya region near the city of Kundil by Parasurama, Kuundiyan, well known as a founder of the kingdom of Kambojo belonged to this Brahmin colony. The existence of Aryan colony in North Eastern Frontier Region and the impact of Aryan of Mongoloid elements cannot be denied... After the coming of the Vedic cultures the synthesis of both the culture took place before 5<sup>th</sup> century A. D. they introduced the Aryan Language of “Pisachi Family” and popularized the propitiation of both the natural objects and malevolent spirits... Aboriginal Tibeto-Burmese, who had to be appeased by crude worship and sacrifices. Hence the priestly class of Bodo Tribe came to be known as Deuris.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

To assess the influence of Socio-cultural environment on Deuri community of Assam.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

Descriptive survey method is used for this study. The descriptive research or normative survey method has undoubtedly been the most popular and the most widely used research method in education. The present study has been designed with its conceptual structure, its objectives consisting of the grouping for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. It

has developed plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers for the research questions. The present study has its nine objectives and it has also developed research tools for the collecting of data.

#### **Delimitation of the study:**

The study was conducted into two Districts (a) Lakhimpur and (b) Dhemaji of Assam. Students had taken only from Govt. aided schools under the two districts. Total respondents is 250

#### **Analysis and interpretation of the study:**

#### **Socio-Cultural Environment of Deuri Community Of Lakhimpur and Dhemaji Districts**

**Table No. 1**

SI No.	Name Of the Block & School Name		Socio-Culture			
			H		L	
	NBLD R1	BBDD R2	R1 %	R2 %	R1 %	R2 %
1	MCHSS 5	BHSS 3	2 12.5	2 14.28	3 18.75	1 7.14
2	MDHS 8	BBTHSS 5	7 43.75	4 28.57	1 6.25	1 7.14
3	NHSS 3	BHS 6	1 6.25	4 28.57	2 12.5	2 14.28
Total	16	14	62.5	71.42	37.5	28.56

R1-	Respondents of NBLD	R2 –	Respondents of BBDD
NBLD-	Narayanpur Block in	BBDD-	Bordoloni Block in Dhemaji
MDHS -	Lakhimpur District	BHS -	District
MCHSS–	Mori Dikrong High School	BHSS –	Bhabali High School
NHSS–	Madhabdev Collegiate Higher Secondary School	BBTHSS–	Bordoloni Higher Secondary School
	Narayanpur Higher Secondary School		Bordoloni Borbam Tiniali Higher Secondary School

It is observed from the table no.1 that, 62.5% respondents of Boys are followed by traditionally high socio cultural environment and 37.5% respondents followed by traditionally low socio cultural environment in Narayanpur Block in Lakhimpur District and 71.42% respondents followed by traditionally high socio cultural environment and 28.56% followed by traditionally low socio cultural environment in Bordoloni Block in Dhemaji District.

**Table No. 2**

#### **Socio-Culture of Girls respondents of Deori in NBLD (R1) and BBDD (R2)**

SI No.	Name Of the Block & School Name		Socio-Culture			
			H		L	
	NBLD R1	BBDD R2	R1 %	R2 %	R1 %	R2 %

1	MCHSS 7	BHSS 5	4 14.28	3 17.64	3 10.71	2 11.76
2	MDHS 14	BBTHSS 8	13 46.42	6 35.29	1 3.57	2 11.76
3	NHSS 7	BHS 4	5 17.85	2 11.76	2 7.14	2 11.76
Total	28	17	78.55	64.69	21.42	35.28

R1- Respondents of NBLD

NBLD- Narayanpur Block in Lakhimpur District

MDHS - Mori Dikrong High School

MCHSS – Madhabdev Collegiate Higher Secondary School

NHSS- Narayanpur Higher Secondary School

R2 – Respondents of BBDD

BBDD- Bordoloni Block in Dhemaji District

BHS - Bhabali High School

BHSS – Bordoloni Higher Secondary School

BBTHS Bordoloni Borbam Tiniali Higher

S- Secondary School

It is observed from the table no. 2 shows that Socio Cultural environment of Deori Girls at Narayanpur Block in Lakhimpur District, 78.55% respondents followed by traditionay high socio cultural environment and 21.42% respondents followed by traditionally low socio cultural environment and at Bordoloni Block in Dhemaji District as 64.69% followed by traditionally high socio cultural environment and 35.28% followed by traditionally low socio cultural environment.

### Gender wise Socio Culture of Deori Secondary School Student of Lakhimpur District (R1) and Dhemaji District (R2)

Table-3

Sl No.	Name Of the District and Gender	Socio-Culture					
		High		Low			
		LD R1	DD R2	R1 %	R2 %	R1 %	R2 %
1	Boys	Boys	71 66.36	81 56.64	36 33.64	33 23.08	
2	Girls	Girls	101 88.60	96 70.59	42 36.84	40 29.41	
Total	250	250	154.95	127.23	70.49	52.49	

R1- Respondents of Lakhimpur District

R2 – Respondents of Dhemaji District

LD - Lakhimpur District

DD - Dhemaji District

It is observed from the above table that Socio Culture of the Girls is higher than the Boys in both the districts. Secondly it is found that Socio Culture of the Boys of Dhemaji district is higher than Lakhimpur District .Thirdly it is found that Socio Culture of the Girls of Lakhimpur district is higher than Dhemaji district. Lastly it is found that since preference for

High Socio Culture is higher in both the districts then the preference for Low Socio Culture is obviously less in case of Boys and Girls of both the districts.

### **CASE STUDIES ON THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES:**

**Case Study 1:** This is the case of Mr. H. Deuri (Name Changed) a 45vyears old farmer from Narayanpur block of Lakhimpur District. He has been engaged in paddy cultivation for over twp decades. He belongs to a joint family based on their traditional cultural practices and beliefs. They have multiple challenges in balancing between the traditional occupation and modern means of livelihoods. Besides these the follow traditional animistic beliefs intertwined with Vaishnavism. They belief that the influences of modern practices changing their younger generation's perceptions of their cultural practices. However, the forms of traditional agricultural practices using organic manure and old age plowing methods are still prevalent in their village. This case highlights the dilemma between the traditional lifestyles and the modern economic system. Limited access to technological advancements and government assistance restricts their potential growth.

### **Case Study 2:**

Another case study which has been taken the life experience of Mrs. Bandana Deori (name cahnged) a women of Narayanpur Block. She studied upto 10<sup>th</sup> and now engaged in weaving activities and supporting her family. They have four family member and husband is a farmer. The case study has been conducted on the marriage rituals that follow by Deori community of Assam. She responded on some of the practices related to marriage ceremony that everyone perform. The priest i.e. Deodar conduct the rituals Sujelongduraba for happy conjugal life for the married couple. One of the very special rituals they perform is that sacrificing pigs for the ceremony as a part of their tradition and they serve food and special drinks to their guests. One the ritual is completed, another ritual called Lakhi Lua where the bride leaves her house to the groom, elder brother or any other male member will take the bride and the groom in the back and cross steps as one of the part of their rituals. Later, they visit to the temples, bhoral ghar and etc. to seek blessings for their married life.

### **MAJOR FINDINGS:**

- The Present study revealed that the maximum boy Students followed by Traditionally High Socio Cultural Environment in Bordoloni Block Dhemaji District than the IXth standard boy Students of Narayanpur Block Lakhimpur District.
- The study revealed that the maximum Girl Students followed by traditionally high Socio Cultural Environment in Narayanpur Block Lakhimpur District than the IXth standard Girl Students of Bordoloni Block Dhemaji District.
- The present study revealed that the maximum boy Students followed traditionally high Socio Cultural environment in Bihpuria Block in Lakhimpur District than the IXth standard boy Students of Dhemaji Block in Dhemaji District.
- The present study revealed that the maximum Girl Students followed traditionally high Socio Cultural environment in Bihpuria Block in Lakhimpur District than the IXth standard Girl Students of Dhemaji Block in Dhemaji District.
- It was found that Socio Culture of the Girls of Lakhimpur district was higher than Dhemaji district.

- It was found that since preference for High Socio Culture was higher in both the districts then the preference for Low Socio Culture was obviously less in case of Boys and Girls of both the districts.

## CHALLENGES

1. Limited opportunities for quality education and vocational training. Though modernization has opened up the educational opportunities but due to economic challenges, most of the family member could not provide quality education.
2. Poor infrastructure in healthcare and transportation.
3. Fragmented farming techniques and limited financial resources.
4. The gradual disappearance of traditional knowledge and cultural practices. This has been shown gradual erosion in the traditional practices of their rituals especially among the young generation.
5. Language endangerment is another emerging challenges for the community. Deori language being a vital identity of the community is under threat in the mainstream other language.

## CONCLUSION:

Traditionally Deoris have been honest and clean. Though they live in interior rural places, they always try to keep their houses and villages as a tribal group maintain the essential cleanliness, which has been tallied with the research evidence. Moreover, honesty is another value preference of the people of this community. This is their traditional value. They like to live a plain and natural life remaining in remote places. They have the hesitation to think about monetary gains. From their real life it is also found that they are economically not so rich. So, they do not have any complicated life-style.

The research evidence shows that since they are tradition bound people they are very conscious of their culturally higher but educationally mediocre due to lack of competitive zeal. They are economically very poor for their honesty and little competitive spirit and due to shortage of actual resource for them and agricultural farming, the only resource for them which is not promising now a day. Average qualification also can't assure them with jobs. So, these are certain constraints in economic sphere for which they have not been that advanced socially and economically. Only culture and religion have enriched their life. They always like to follow their own cultural ways, living within the natural surroundings and their own community circle. So, they prefer not to be urbanized. Similarly, they worship their Gods and Goddesses following their rites and rituals.

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