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Traditional dresses of mising tribes of Assam

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Abstract

Assam the North-eastern sentinel of the frontier of India, is a state richly endowed with places of tourist attraction. Assam is part of the traditional zone between the Indian, Indo Malayan and indo-chinese biographical regions. There are many tribes in Assam which make Assam so rich in culture. The largest population in Assam is of the Tibe to Burmese origin like the Bodo tribe and mishing tribe. Major tribes of Assam earn their livelihood through Agriculture and by selling their handicrafts. In this study an effort is made to study different costumes of different tribes of Assam. There are different tribes in Assam like mishing tribe, bodo tribe, karbi tribe, rabha tribe, Tai phaledi tribe, deori tribe etc. Each tribe have different culture hence different costumes also. In this paper the researcher discuss about traditional costumes of Mising tribes. The men of the tribe wear dhoti, what is called a Gonru Ugon that is a piece of cloth worn from the waist down. Mibu Galuk is a shirt like a dress that is used by men to cover their upper body. The women of this tribe are also simple dresses when it comes to traditional dressing. They also wear the Mekhela Chador which is known as the Yakan Age-Gasar here and is black in colour.

Keywords: Mising, dress, tribe

Introduction

Assam is a state in India, situated south of the eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak River valleys. Assam is a beautiful place which happens to be one of the Seven Sisters in the North East. Assam is not just a budding state, but also a place with deep cultural roots and the people here take pride in the refinement of their cultural roots.

This state portrays its beauty not only in its serenity and lush green forests but also in the way the people dress traditionally. Tradition is the caravan of the heritage passed on to us by our forefathers, and these people here have very elegantly managed to carry forward the flame that was passed to them rightly.

In this study we will discuss detail about the traditional dresses of Mising tribes.

Objectives

- To know about the dresses of Mising tribes.
- To take a look at current scenario of weaving.

Methodology

The study carried out in five Mising villages namely- Ayengia borgaon, balipara lahuwal gaon, salmara goan, charapbhati gaonand lesera gaon of Lakhimpur district of Assam. Data collected through personal interview method and demonstration method.

Findings and Discussion

Traditional Dress of Mising Male

Mibu Galuk

It is a simple sleeveless front opening jacket available in different colours such as white, black, red, green, and yellow with different decorative designs. It is worn by all the male folks on special occasions or festivals and socio-cultural functions. The Mibu-Galuk is sewn by hand only but the Mibo-Galuk is sewn by machine also.

Erpob

It is a maflar, hang around the shoulder. Woven in red colour with cross stripes of different

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colours, black, white, yellow etc the stripes may be thickly or thinly placed transversely over the whole length of cloth.

Ugon (Dhoti)

It is a lower garment white in colour. There are two types of ugon. One is simple ugon without designs used in day to day life and the other is Gonro ugon with thinly placed decorative designs worn as loin cloth on socio-cultural and religious functions.

- **Tapum-Gasor (Eri Shawl):** A kind of shawl type cloth woven from hand spun eri silk yarn and worn for getting warmth in winter. Both plain gasor (shawl) and designs with simple motifs shawls are available.
- **Dumer:** A kind of cloth similar to Gamocha in Assamese culture. The dumer is basically white in colour with the border in red. Beautiful geometrical and floral motifs are worked as cross border at one or both the ends. It has multiple uses such as hang around the shoulder in special occasions and used in day to day life as turban cloth, towel etc
- **Jinrek or Tongali Dumer:** It is a piece of cloth a kin to Dumer but a little longer and wider. Traditionally Jinrek is white in colour with motifs of flowers, bars and diamonds designs are worked in red colour at both ends. It is tied as a girdle at the waist over Galuk and Gonro Ugon (dhoti).

Traditional dress of mishing female

- **Gero:** The design is always woven in the centre of the cloth with red and black colours on white background. Gero is used to tie around the waist and chest on top of ege (mekhela).
- **Ege:** Ege is a lower garment worn to cover the lower part of the body from waist to ankle level and two or three folds are given at the front waist. Mishing women use different type's ege such as Mosang ege, Geging ege, Tapum ege etc.

Sori Potali

It is a kin to Gero, except that the body in this case is woven in check with red, black and white colour also its design is simpler than the gero.

Segreg

A piece of cloth wrapped around the bust. Mostly used by the old ladies at home instead of Gasor (Chadar). It is plain in colour without any designs, but with contrasting colours on borders and both the ends of the cloths.

Ku- Pob

It is a dupatta kind of fabric used by grown up girls to wrap around the body beneath the armpits covering the upper part of the body. The colour of the ku-pob is mostly white, green or blue with contrasting borders.

Mosang Gasor

It is an upper garment worn with the mosang ege. The colour and design of the mosang gasor is similar to the mosang ege.

Ri: Bi

Woven with different stripes such as red, black and white. The stripes are distributed throughout the body at regular intervals. Simple designs of zig-zag lines and diamonds with red coloured threads are woven at both the ends of the cloth. Worn by the young girls on top of Ege on special occasions

such as Ali-A: ye-Ligang, Po: rag and other important cultural functions.

Gaseng

Similar to Ri: bi gasor but different in colour combination. It is basically made with red coloured thread giving intensively red look. Narrow stripes of black and white thread are sparsely woven in transverse direction over the body of the cloth. Floral and geometrical designs with red coloured threads are worked at both the ends of the cloth. It has important cultural significance and used by both male and female as shawls on special occasions.

Pe, Re

It is also a type of Gero. The cloth is designed with narrow stripes of red, black, yellow, green and white colour with black or green border. Stripes of red colour predominate to give out a reddish appearance of the cloth.

Seleng Gasor

The length is same as other gasor. It is woven out of light cotton yarn worn occasionally instead of a ri: bi or a gaseng.

Po: Tub

Use to cover the head during working time such as cooking, cleaning house etc. The length of the cloth is around three feet in length and one and half feet in width.

Current scenario of weaving-

- The traditional throw shuttle loom is built under the stilt house, such houses being a traditional practice among the Misings. Using a tedious process that needs patience, the weavers produce wraps like mekhela chador and gero, stole like gamosa, besides some utilitarian items. Traditionally, weaving in Mising community was for their own use. But these days Mising handloom products are much in demand. The demand of Mising handloom was beyond expectation in the handloom fair in 2014 when the total sale was for Rs 14 million over a period of five days. But due to low efficiency (weavers produce just two mekhela chador in a month) of traditional looms and limited product diversity, the weavers' remuneration is low. As a result, handloom weaving is not seen as a viable livelihood.

However, dovetailing modern technology with the traditional skill of the weavers, handloom can provide a lucrative livelihood opportunity for the families of the area. With the objective of bridging the demand and supply gap, and making handloom weaving a sustainable livelihood, Mising Autonomous Council (MAC) and the Center for Microfinance and Livelihood (CML) with the Tata Trusts planned an intervention to be executed over three years. The team decided to introduce technology to overcome the low production efficiency. As a first step, a warping drum was introduced for getting a defect-free warp. Unlike the traditional method, warping drum helped reduce the area required to make a warp.

Conclusion

The traditional craft of weaving is a very bright aspect of Mising culture. The Mising women are fond of colours and they weave their own dresses at their own looms. Clothing of the Mising folk is generally sparse and made of thin cotton. In the winter season, they use woolen and Eri-silk clothes for

their clothing. Men usually wear white cotton or silk dress while women wear colourful embroidered dresses.

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