

RIVERS AND THE ASSAMESE FOLK LIFE: A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP OF MAN AND NATURE

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ABSTRACT

Assamese Life and culture have been sustained by the huge number of rivers from the time immemorial. As such the river has formed its way into myths, legends, proverbs and folk beliefs, the rivers and the people are so interdependent that folk culture abounds in man's right relationship with nature. The myths and folk beliefs are not unscientific thoughts or superstitions. These are a system of thoughts and a way of life like other art forms. They can be opposed to science only as art is opposed to science. The myths and folk culture have very much been an influence upon the lives of people even today. The river based occupations are a part of the socio-cultural life of Assam and myth making continues. The rivers and the folk mind in Assam have been in an everlasting relationship. The study will be an evidence of river-centric folk life of the whole world, which have been represented as a mode of cognition of man's right relationship with the universe.

Keywords: River and human life, Relationship, Assamese Folk life, River-centric Literature and Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The place of agreement a larger group of human population was geographically determined in river valleys throughout the world. The way of life of that people has shaped in response to the natural environment of the river bank. While trying to co-exist and adjust with nature men started becoming nature-dependent. Hence, in case of Assam which is saturated with rivers and all aspects of life of the Assamese people including individual or social, cultural, economic, political and others have been controlled by rivers. Reflections of the fact that all dimensions of socio-cultural life in the specific geography of multi-river basis, the day to day life of the inhabitants are entirely river dependent, that complete river-dependent life are found in the novel 'Noi Boi Jai' of Lila Gogoi. Every event big or small including happiness and pain, joy and sorrow, smile and weep, love and tragedy, rise and fall of life that begins from early in the morning are intermixed in all phases being closely connected with the Dikhow river¹. It is also a fact that a damaging side also remains concealed behind the river-centric life of Assam, i.e. the flood have become sorrow for the life of the people each and every year. Everybody knows that every action has both side of reactions positive and negative and each and every experience of life makes a man more resourceful, more creative. For that reason a man has been living from long past of natural balance maintaining co-existence with river. The creative role of rivers remains more active for the cause and need of the process of co-existence. The sages of the ancient India usually lived in the natural world with fresh air, water and greeneries (Modhuwata Ritayate Modhu Khyaranti Sindhab: Madhowarna Santosadhi)². It is a great deal of importance that the principle of co-existence

¹ Gogoi, Lila, **Noi Boi Jai**, Banalata, Dibrugarh; Banalata Edition, 2006

² Wilson, H.H : **Rg. Veda Samhita**, Vol 1, page-279, Edited by- W.F. Webster, Nag Publisheres, Delhi-7, 2nd Enlarged edition, 1990

of nature with man incomparable, but many people do not agree to accept it is as equal as parallel with the speedy and widespread development of science and technology .i.e. they opined that the destructive character of river is becoming more active. An attempt is made to bring into the light all the aspects mentioned to determine the law of co-existence between man and river.

The area of the Field of Study

The field studies conducted in the different river bounded places of Assam. The selected areas for the field studies are Bongaigaon, Chidley, Chirang, Nalbari, Tihu, Dhubri, Gouripur, Chatrasal, Goalpara, Dudhnoi, Krishnai, Dhupdhora from the lower Assam; Barjhara, Dhaparbhita, Kukurkata from Assam- Meghalaya border and Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Duliajan, Sibsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat from the upper Assam.

Maps of the he Study Area of Assam



Indigenous Groups with Rights and Interests in the Study Area

The former Goalpara district is now divided into Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Dhubri, and Goalpara. More than this, Shidly and Chirang districts were also created from the old greater Goalpara district. These districts are mostly inhabited by Koch Rajbongshis and Muslims, and the widely spoken language is Goalpariya or locally pronounced 'Deshi Bhasa'. Mainly Ahoms, Missing, Hajong, Tea tribes, Sonowal Kacharis, Sutiya, Muttock, Moran peoples are found in the upper Assam districts and while they speak in Assamese as a lingua franca, in the same way use their own tongue of various languages . Indeed each and every part of Assam is a container of varied elements of human groups, the Brahmans and kalitas also built-in its multi ethnic society; which has a variety of religion also—the Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist, Muslims living together for centuries in peace and harmony.

METHODOLOGY

To identify indigenous cultural values relating to the River, including the waterway, flood zones is essential to proper discussions and site visits with appropriate ways. To gain an adequate understanding of these values and the complex systems from an indigenous perspective it is necessary to conduct inclusive discussions, consultations and fieldwork with indigenous people from all of the ethnic, religion and language groups mentioned above, who have an intimate connection in the study area. Comparative study has been followed to find out the pluralistic as well as unique identification of the feelings and sentiments of the people

of the river lands in their oral literature. It must focus on findings of the virgin data and information from the field study, and of course data from library also had to be accessed.

THE RIVER AND RIVER –CENTRIC HUMAN-LIVES: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM

The cultural forms created by the dreaming of people also included a system of live hood. River-centric lives are found in a state of right relationship bond, they not only bonded with the river but with the whole nature also. It was not happened in a day, from the time immemorial people have lived in a mutual arrangement with river. History recalls that the great human civilizations were grown up in the bank of the rivers. In the same way river-centric lives of Assam also built up far-off the past time away from today.

Development of River-centric civilization:

Both river and river side life of the world are being tied up in the principle of nature a mutual interdependence from the beginning of universe. It comes into light from studies of man and civilization that many of the ancient civilization of the world were inextricably related with river. Most of the great world civilizations have grown in the river valleys. The Egyptian civilization, the Dravidian civilization, the Mesopotamian civilization and the Chinese civilization which grew on the banks of the Nile, the Indus, the Eufretise and Tigris and Ho-Wang-ho and Yang`sikiang rivers respectively bear the testimony of river- centric civilization.³

Boundary determined River and Human-live on the banks:

Many of the continental and sub- continental, international and national, state and inter-state and inter-district boundaries are marked by rivers. Therefore, boundary determining rivers and the rivers of the frontier areas are also being included in the studies of river-dependence of the lives of the people living on the river banks of Assam. From this angle the studies of the lives of men inhabiting on both banks of rivers are included in the proposed Research paper.

River and River –centric life of Assam

Assam is a river-extensive state. Therefore the lives of people inhabiting on the river-valleys are naturally related to rivers. Discussion is made on this aspect dividing the whole theme into the following divisions:

- 1) Rivers
- 2) River-centric life
- 3) People with destructive aspects of rivers.
- 4) Practical aspects of human life interrelated with the rivers.

³ Kausambi, D D, 'Sindhu Upatyakat Sabhyata Aaru Barbarata' **Bharatar Itihas**, Translated by- Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya ,Publication Board of Assam, 3rd edition, 2003, p-58-123

Rivers

The natural environment of Assam is favorable for origin of rivers and rivulets, their flow and erosion, deposition and such other activities. Due to hilly areas on all sides of the state and also for high average rate of rainfall the number of rivers and tributaries is naturally more. Big rivers of Assam are only two- The Brahmaputra and the Barak. All others are only the tributaries of these two main rivers. Assam is resourceful with the tributaries and innumerable rivulets and tributaries of Brahmaputra and Barak. The length of the river Brahmaputra is about 700 kms. The course of the river within the state is East-West and many tributaries, springs and rivulets are falling into the river on both banks in her long course. The principle tributaries running from the North-Himalayan region are Gai, Sobansiri, Ranganadi, Dikrang, Buroi, Baranga, Jia Bharalee, Gabharu, Belshiri, Banchnoi, Dhanshiri, Barnadi, Puthimari, Pagladiya, Benki, Manah, Champawati, Saralbhanga, Sonkosh and so on. Similarly, many tributaries are meeting the Brahmaputra from the hills areas of part of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Karbi-Anglong and Meghalaya of which Dibru, Burhi-Dihing, Dichang, Dikhow, Janji, Bhogdoi, Diphalu, Kapili, Digaru, Kulshi, Dudhnoi, Krishnai and Jhinjiram etc. are worth mentioning. The other main river of Assam is the Barak which has also many tributaries. The tributaries of the Barak on her North are Jiri, Chiri, Madhura, Jatinga, Larang, Gumra and Balichara etc. The tributaries coming from the South are Sonai, Ghagra, Dhaleswari, Palanadi, Gumtee, Chila and Longa⁴.

River-centric human life

Human life in multi-river regions remains intrinsically connected with rivers. However, certain significant features taking into consideration, the river-centric life of people can be divided into some important dimensions. The divisions are: a) River-bank life b) Life of River-heath c) Life of people living apart from river

a. River-bank life

Due to existence of innumerable big and small rivers the natural environment which is interred related with human culture is river centric. The river-heaths fertile soils of river-bank and abundant water-resources have been attracting people from good old days. It is seen that the everyday life of the river-bank dwellers begins centering on river and ends in rivers. In their everyday which starts with leaving bed in the morning the people of Assam living on the river-banks naturally grow dependent on rivers for their agricultural, animal husbandry, river-based trade and commerce and travel. Therefore, the psychological aspects of the revering people like happiness and worries, love and hatred, unification and separation, struggles for survival, the shame and hesitations of the first attractions, loss and gains and the joys and sorrows all are spontaneously inter-woven.



⁴ 'Asomar Nad-Nadi'. Bhagawati, Aboni Kumar, **Biswakosh**, (8th Volume), ed.-Mohammed Taher, Asom Sahitya Sabha, 2005, p-123-125,

b. Life of River-heaths

The river-heaths and river silt-beds are two significant features of the river Brahmaputra. The silt-beds which are comparatively higher are called 'Char' in Assam. The river-heaths are the fertile cultivable land adjacent to the banks of the rivers. Centering the river Brahmaputra there more than two thousand 'chars' extending over nearly 860 kms land and there chaffers (heaths) in able double number over vast area in the course of the river.⁵

Besides a portion of the local Assamese dwellers, the Muslim cultivators who immigrated into Assam from East Bengal, the Nepalee immigrating from Nepal and rearing cows, the Hindu refugees and small number of Biharies and Bengalis live in the 'chars' and 'chaparries' of Brahmaputra.

In the midst of the rivers of Assam particularly in the heart of the Brahmaputra, there are many heaths (chars and chaparries) including Majuli, the biggest river-island of the world. The entire

life of the inhabitants of these 'chars' 'chaparries' and of course the biggest river-island "Majuli" also depend upon on the rivers. The river-routs are the only connecting travel-link for the inhabitants of Majuli with other parts of the state. The routs are also not extending from the heart of the rivers to the banks. The river is the only travel –rout not only to the banks but also the only rout to travel from one heath to another. Therefore the life of the people living in the river-islands is completely dependent on boats, carrying passengers for on bank to other across the river, transportation of necessary goods and services of everyday requirements, catching and selling fish, cooking and serving and staying in the boat itself keep their life river-centric.

c. Life of people living apart from the River

Those who due to folk and religious belief live through at a considerable distance from the river they also like to come nearer to the river, people of Assam also not an exception. They also depend upon the rivers in various way, such as the collecting (lifting) water from the river sources for bath of the Hindu marriage, Shradha (the funeral ceremonies), sath puja (a kind of Puja), Ashokashtami, emersion of Idols of various god and goddesses, Bole-bom and so-on it appears that the people of Assam appear to be river-centric. Besides, for fulfillment of necessities or amusement of the urban life, different technological provisions like water-supply, irrigation, hydro-electricity, fishery development, water- transport and pleasure trips also show that the dwellers living at distance from the rivers turn river-centric⁶.

Survival of people with the destructiveness of river

From the fine earlier days the people living on the banks come together with river in a beautiful environment. But gradually the rivers changed their calm and quite character and knock down to the destructiveness. Though, people themselves are responsible for the unnatural changes of nature, but the sorrow of flood offered by the river is too terrible to tolerate. The main causes of flood are rooted in the specific nature of the valleys of both the main rivers of Assam– the Brahmaputra and the Barak. Excessive rainfall, narrow valleys and the vastness of the downstream basins are the main causes of flood in Assam. In the same

⁵ Hossain, Ismail, *Asom Char-Chaporir Loka-Sahitya*, Banalata, Guwahati, 2009, p-45

⁶ Source: Sarma, Bodhen, (50), (Co-ordinator), Lakhimpur Aanchalik Meen Palan Samity, Deumorno, Mangaldoi

way the landslides caused from the hills or from slanting soil deposits, destruction of forest done by people in large scale without their sense of natural balances and also the growing construction activities are the principle cause of flood. Men have co-existed through hard struggle with the destroying conditions resulting from dangerous torrential currents taking place from floods of different areas of Assam; examples of which can be mentioned from heavy currents of the flood caused by the Jinari river of Goalpara district of Assam⁷. Though the associated problems like slow destruction, which destroy cultivations, paddy fields, village herbs and shrubs and animals, even then the river-bank dwellers find these as meaningful as the river itself. For example, like the inhabitants of the Rohmorja of Dibrugarh, thousands of families in river-banks have been victimized by erosion every year. Yet, they settle and construct residential houses nearer to the rivers by catching fish, catching timbers and bringing up buffalos etc⁸.



PRACTICAL FEATURE OF THE RIVER-CENTRIC MASSES

It is totally impossible to imagine of a life-feature of the river centric masses without river. That river attached people are quite river-dependent in different ways. People of the river-dominated regions are inter-related with the rivers in the following ways.

River in every-day need

People living in rural areas are seen performing most of their activities like morning –baths and so-on, collection of drinking water, washing clothes, feeding birds and animals, washing utensils and articles in the river etc⁹. River takes a main role in the life of the inhabitants of the river-bank people in the followings: Agricultural living life and Rive, Water route and transportation, River-centric other livelihood etc.

a. Agricultural living life and Rive

Crops like paddy, pulses, mustard, jute and variety of vegetables are produced in the fertile alluvium deposited on both the banks of the river. On many occasions water is supplied from the river to the agricultural lands lying at considerably distant places. Over and above, river is directly related with production-activities in the fields of agriculture.

b. Water route and transportation

The life of people is interrelated with variety of trade and business centering the boat-men and the river-transport stations for transporting goods etc. from one bank to the other and also the transportation system.

⁷ Source : Hossain, Dilwar, (70), Retired Agriculture officer, Krisnai, Goalpara

⁸ Source : Keshab Gogoi , (52), ,Gonrpora Gaon, Rahmaria, Dibrugarh

⁹ Source: Uttam Bhokat (30), Pholimari, Dhuburi, Md. Jajaluddin Hussain(52), Bhasani Char, Dhuburi , Durgawti Pau(38), Dhingmukh, Demow

c. River-centric other livelihood

A large number of labourers and workers are engaged in activities like construction of river-dikes, river-dams, bridges and such other activities¹⁰. Many of the people from a vast area of Assam are dependent on river by rearing cattle, cows and buffalos in river banks and carrying trade on milk¹¹. Many people lift timbers floating in flood-torrent and manufacturing furniture etc. from those timbers lifted from rivers and selling the wooden articles and maintain economic life¹². Some river-bank dwellers also collect grains of gold by washing sands in few rivers and earn money¹³.

FOLK LITERATURE CONCERNED WITH RIVER

Folk literature reflects the lives of the common people. Folk literature incorporates a lots of example of reflection of interdependent folk lives of river and people. This is an effort to discuss the characteristics of river based folk literature by dividing in to three parts on the basis of traditional flow and scientific base. These three divisions are:

1. Traditional flow of river-based Folk tune.
2. Indigenous folk mind attached with the river.
3. Scientific standpoint of the river based folk beliefs.

Traditional flow of river based Folk tune

All the traditions of the folklore with their own tune have been in a classy manner handed down from the time immemorial. Like other phases of life relationship of people with river also have turn into the present day from ancient time, river and people have been being together from the very ancient time. This traditional flow is discussed by dividing in the three parts.

a. Stream of ancient Myths and Legends

Almost all the rivers of Assam are related with colorful myths or legends. For example the mighty Brahmaputra or Louhitya has a lot of myths which are concerned with the origin of the river. A Good number of such myths and legends are collected during the period of field study. For Example, there are found a story behind the creation of the river 'Rangandi' of Lakhimpur district, which was called once as Raktaganga¹⁴. There are various legends also have found in many places related to the rivers. For instance, at Dhakhuakhana name of a river became 'Charikaria' because it was crossed by people by giving four (Chari in Assamese) Kari. Another river became 'Jiadhal' (Jia means-living, Dhal means-flood) because the flood changed the direction, this way it changed the names as 'Moridhal' (Died flood), 'Eradhal'(Given up Flood) and finally the place became Dhemaji¹⁵, the Merbil of Tinsukia district also changed from a floating river to a stagnant water¹⁶, the Deonornoi of

¹⁰ Source: Nabin Sonowal (48), Khagen Kurmi (35), Bogibil Site, Dibrugarh

¹¹ Source :Monbahadur Thapa, (50), Sisimukh Khuti, Sisiborgaon

¹² Source: Dharmendra Patir (45), Dihingmukh, Demow, Keshab Gogoi, (52), Garpora Gaon, Rahmaria, Dibrugarh

¹³ Source: Bhuban Doley, (62), Ghunasuti, Lakhimpur

¹⁴ Source: Prasanta Bora,(45), Pahumora, Lakhimpur

¹⁵ Source: Padmeshwar Dihingia, (56), Dhemji

¹⁶ Source: Binod Bora, (50), Chasoni Bhokot Gaon, Merbill

Mangaldoi became Mora nai¹⁷. There a story behind the rename of the river 'Deonornoi'. It has been seen that how the regional nature reflected their settings and how the stories are still alive in those places as a powerful experience. Once upon a time there was a great sage lived at 'Deo-mor-noi' of Mongoldoi along with his very beautiful wife, who was a person in command. His name was Sambatsar and he had got a nickname 'Siyala (Fox, as a symbol of cunning character) Baisnav' for his extreme slyness. There are found one temple in memory of 'Siyala (Fox) Baisnav' at "Deo-mor-noi". The story behind the name was very fascinating, which was twisted to a river. The river was passing through the place and some merchant's boats were moving across it every day. Everyday when the sage was busy with his lessons, wife was going to the river to bring water and wash. One day she was too late to come back to home, then the sage discovered that his wife was busy to see the sailing boats of the merchants. He was obsessed by irritation and lost his sagacity with dreadful anger. Not only he chastised his wife but also cursed the river for an extreme unkind future. The utterance of that dangerous curse has stopped the stream of the river and gradually it was going to die forever. From that incident the name the river was changed to 'Deo-mora-noi', 'Deu' means the Saint, 'mora' means killed and 'nai' means the river; the river, which was killed by a sage. In this way some folklores are concerned with the rivers like Burhai Khanda¹⁸ (Dug by oil people) Burha nai (Old River), Kanai Khanda river (River Dug by Kanai), the 'Tuni Nai' of Bangai Gaon created by angle Tuni¹⁹, In the same way the rivers like Gangadhar, Gadadhar, Gourang, Champawati etc are also have their own story.

Anybody cannot tell what is the time of creation of those folklores, but still all are flowing among the people and these are collected from the mouth of the local people during the time of field study.

b. Folksong

The folksongs which are found in field studies of different places of Upper and Lower Assam have reflected river and lives of river bank people. Songs like Bihugeet, Bongeet, Oinitom, Aainaam, Biyanaam, Apeswari sabahar geet, Baramahu geet, Kamrupi Lokageet, Goalparia Lokageet, Maishal geet, Beular geet, Mahutargeet etc reflect the lives of the river centric people.

The culture and folk literature of alluvial land (char-chapari) are developed by concentrating the life style of the people of river bank. So the culture of alluvial land has a intimate relation with the destruction and construction of a river. Among the divisions of folk literature of the people of alluvial land the folksong is the strongest and the most extended. These songs have a innumerable impact of the life style of the people of the alluvial land.

Folksongs say –

*“Nadir Ikul bhange ukul garh
Eitu Nadir Khela
Sei Khelaghare barat Kari
Aami Ekela”
“manush Kula janma labhi ki dushe dushi
More O' moula
Dubaia bhasaia moder jiwani
Kirer Karsa Khela Mur allab”²⁰*

¹⁷ Source: Jadab Chandra Sarma (55), Deumornoi, Mangaldoi

¹⁸ Source: Mrinal Talukdar, (67), Nalbari

¹⁹ Source :Manas Chokorovorty (45), Gouripur, Dhuburi

²⁰ Source :Md. Jajaluddin Hussain(52), Bhasani Char, Dhuburi

(A river destroys one bank, then creates other side; this is the game of river. But what is the fault of this poor people, who suffers in the flood.)

c. Folk beliefs

The creation of folk beliefs are a commending process towards the human society for their living smooth and secure. These beliefs must have to be related to the each and every part of the life of a man and the society. There are a huge number of the folk beliefs are created on the basis of river and river-centric humankind. Indeed these beliefs are changed and promoted according to the speed and demand of the changing time; the intimacy and experiences of the people with both the destructive and constructive nature of the river has created such kind of river-centric beliefs. For example, river water is used in some rituals and holly ceremonies of birth, death, wedding etc. in this way some activities like funeral and many other rituals are observes in the river bank. Nowadays it has generally shown in every parts of India that river is an inseparable part of some rituals and religious ceremonies, like Sath puja, Ashokastamy, Bolebam etc. The means and goods of rituals and some other images are also devoted into the river.

This is the era of science and technology, still it has seen some people devote coins in the river before crossing the river, consider sacrifice of animal as urgent in construction of bridge and dam. Even people never hesitate to consider accidental death of any labour in the construction site of a bridge or any damp as an acceptance of sacrifice. There are found another belief among the people that life of an expired people who is cut by snake can be possible if he is floated in a river. The Myth of Beula-Lakhindar represents this belief²¹, in which people beliefs that the believed wife Beula has brought her dead husband alive from the Heaven through the river-way. In the time of field studies a variety of beliefs relating to the river have found in many places of Assam which are still in the order of past formation.

Indigenous folk mind attached with the river

Every man is carrying secretly an indigenous folk mind inside him, when any vital need or issues of life take place in front him it is come to light in its natural method. In the same way, it is seen that river became one of the important part of the folk life, not only the whole but each and every individual man also associated to the river by means to express thire sorrow and happiness, love and disgust and all other straggles and pains of river-centric life. Such river-centric human expressions of the life are generally connected directly or indirectly with the river and it has seen in their daily life hood, which can be discussed as follows:

- 1) River in the canvas of life struggle
- 2) River in the Feelings of Love
- 3) River as a witness of Historical Incidents

River in the canvas of life struggle:

Many of the folksongs are carried very modestly the reflection of the life struggle of the people, live on the bank of rivers, means of livelihood of which people are farming, fishing, boating etc. Even today the modern songs have also carried the river-centric folk life as smooth as usual. The song “Parahi puwate Rangman machaloi gol” of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika

²¹ Source: Ahid Khan(37), Dhuburi

is also raising a picture of the life struggle of those people whose means of livelihood is fishing. The song “Boitha maro, Boitha Moro” of Boitamari region of Bongaigaon reflecting the life struggle of the people who lives on boating²². The popular folk songs of upper Assam like Bihugeet, Bongeet, etc. are reflecting the life struggle of agriculture dependent people with river.

River in the Feelings of Love

Like other feelings and experiences people have shared their love feelings with river; in many cases have seen that the river itself has taken a major role in between two love pairs. In Upper Assam the lovers use Bihugeet and Oinitam as means to express their feelings of love; in which generally river became the witness of the love. In the same way river people of the district of Goalpara of lower Assam consider “Maishal”(Buffalo-user) and “Mahut”(Elephant-user) song as means to show secret extra marital affairs.

*Oinitam is an example of the expressing such affair.
Achi Chikur Chikur ka/ Mikchi Chikur Chikur ka
Achi Chikur Prinyeko / Mikchi Chikur Prinpoma*²³

(Water of eyes is same with the water of a stream. Water of Stream can be ended, but not the water of eyes).

A river is not only a witness of two lovers, but a river takes part as a friend of the lovers also, who demonstrates their love and care for each other. Sometimes a river becomes a barrier among the lovers. It is found in the Bihusong –

*Tor ghar Ipare Mor ghar Shipare
Majate Buwati Noi*²⁴

(You are on the other side, I am in this side; the river is flowing between us)

River is the witness of Historical Incidents

There is an intimate relation between man and river since the time immemorial. The river centric people have been shared their every expressions with the rivers such as conflict, fear, anxiety, expectation, good feelings, bad feelings etc. Even in the context of the change and promotions of time and thoughts we cannot deny the contribution of river in changing the direction of history in Assam. River ways were the only communication to expand the religions like, Nova Vaishnab, Christen, Islam etc. Mugal were came to Assam to invade through river. The great historical battle of the Saraigaht was faught in river. The British were entered in Assam through the river way of the Brahmaputra. In the insurrection of Patharughat (a post of a river named Patharu) the British roller killed 140 farmers along with Patharu, the boat-man. That very incident can be considered as first incident of Indian

²² Source: Amarendra Borua (40), Boitamari, Bongaigaon

²³ Source: Manas Chokorovorty (45) , Gouripur,Dhuburi

²⁴ Das, Narayan ,Rajbanshi, Paramanada (ed.) Asamiya Sanskritir Kanika,Chandra Prakash, Guwahati, p-124

Freedom struggle²⁵, which was happened at Patharughat of Mangaldoi in Assam in 24 January, 1894.

Scientific standpoint of the river based folk beliefs

There are some scientific and realistic viewpoint is most of the decisions taken according to the demand of situation and time related with agriculture animal care / husbandry etc. River based folk literature has been conveying such scientific truth. Some realistic truth are related with the process of collection of Gold form the rivers like Brahmaputra, Subanshiri, Nowadihing, Barhidihing, Dhansiri, Disoi, Janji, Bharali, Dikrong, Borgang, Burhigang etc. The Sonowal vocational is an example²⁶ of the gold formation; they were produced gold from the sand of the river bank. In this way the vocational like Naosalia (Boat-man), paniphukan(Water-man) etc. are also conveying the same truth. So it is seen that there are some scientific base of river based folk literature. There is some reasonable truth in naming the rivers as Charikaria, Kani, Sencha, Dudhnai, bolbola Nai, Bhugoloi etc, about which discussed above.

CONCLUSION: THE LAW OF INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN RIVER AND PEOPLE

Apparent it has seen that a river and life of people are interdependent in the river bank areas. River centric thoughts, habits and works are connected with their daily life activities. Not only river people but also who live in far from river connected with river with some rituals and religious belief. There is no contribution of geographical and political limitation in the flow of river based life. The intimate curve of people with river is beyond of such limitations. They are nearer to each other by the intensity of feelings and homogeneity of their life style. That is why the expression of feelings and emotion through folklore has same humanity which is beyond of all kinds of limitations. The People of the river bank of Assam are very well known to their settings with river, they know to survive with the struggle and destructiveness. The flood of the Brahmaputra and other sub-rivers is a big problem for entire Assam. Thousands of people of Assam suffer from this problem in every year. But they are confident, they build name, start agriculture, start fishing and continue their life with the common struggle. Even today the new problem occurred in front of the flood affected people, the big dams of modern technology are causing some new problems for river bank people. But people are preparing themselves to fight against all these destructive forces. They have learnt to live with bother; they know how to face both of the unhelpful and creative character of the river. The folk-literature is ever flowing like the running stream of river, is carrying the river-centric tune of the folk life. Assamese folk-life is intimately tide-up with river in the process of inter-dependence and reflecting this eternal truth the flow of folk-lore in Assam is continuing and will continue in a changed from.

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²⁵ Source: Samsuddin Ahmed (58), Teacher, Roinagushi ME Madrasa , Patharughat

²⁶ Rajkumar, Sarbananda Konwar, *Itihase Sonwra Shasata Bashar*, Banalata, Dibrugarh December, 2000, P-173

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B. Areas of The Field Study

Kakoijana, Borkhata, Boitamari,Abhayapuri, Sukapara, Mespara of Bongaigaon District; Chidley, Chirang, Nalbari, Tihu; Gouripur,Aalokjhari Gaon, Aasharikandi, Bogoribari, Chatrasal,of Dhubri district; Dudhnoi, Krishnai, Dhupdhora, , Mornoi, Aagia, Dalgoma, Rongjuli of Goalpara District of lower Assam; Barjhara, Dhaparbhita, Kukurkata of Assam-Meghalaya border , Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Duliajan, Sibsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat of Upper Assam.

C. Sources of Data:

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2. Manas Chokorovorty (45) , Gouripur,Dhuburi
3. Bishwabihari Das (70), Bagheswaripara, Bongaigaon
4. Amarendra Borua (40), Boitamari, Bongaigaon
5. Pranab Barman, (32) Aasharikandi, Gouripur
6. Jadab Chandra Sarma (55) , Deumornoi, Mangaldoi
7. Kamakhaya Prasad Rai (38), Kakoijana, Bongaigaon
8. Ambikacharan Choudhuri (80), Borpara, Bongaigaon
9. Keshab Gogoi , (52), ,Garpura Gaon, Rahmaria, Dibrugarh
10. Banikanta Rabha, (40), Khermuhora Gaon, Tukura, Goalpara
11. Uttam Kr Sharma, (80), Baladmari, Goalpara
12. Khagaswar Rabha (59), Kukurkata Gaon, Assam Meghalaya Border
13. Nabin Sonowal (48), Bogibil Site, Dibrugarh
14. Khagen Kurmi (35) , Bogibil Site, Dibrugarh

15. Dharmendra Patir (45), Dihingmukh, Demow
16. Monbahadur Thapa, (50), Sisimukh Khuti, Sisiborgaon
17. Bhuban Doley, (62), Ghunasuti, Lakhimpur
18. Padmeshwar Dihingia, (56), Dhemji
19. Prasanta Bora,(45), Pahumora, Lakhimpur
20. Mrinal Talukdar,(67), Nalbari
21. Samsuddin Aahmed (58), Teacher, Roinagushi ME Madrasa , Patharughat
22. Binod Bora, (50), Chasoni Bhokot Gaon, Merbill
23. Md. Jajaluddin Hussain(52), Bhasani Char, Dhuburi