

## A Case Study on Language Attitude among the tribal students in Radiant International School, Sonapur, Assam.

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### Abstract

Assam is very much diverse in terms of languages and cultures. It is a land where many cultures live together. Apart from Assamese and Bodo, Deori, Mising, Tiwa, Rabha, Koch, Karbi, Dimas and many more languages are spoken here. Besides different speech communities English, Bengali and Hindi are spoken too. It is obvious that different languages in Assam come in contact and interact one another in certain situations. Language contact in such linguistically diverse area is very much common and is an important aspect. As a multilingual state, research about language attitude due to its contact gives a space for studying and investigating sociolinguistic outcomes. It throws light in the linguistic status of the speech communities and their attitude towards it.

The study work has been carried out in Radiant International School, Sonapur, Assam. The school has students belonging to different speech communities, among whom few tribal students were picked up for the study. The whole study has been divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1: Bodo Language and Literature, Mishing Language and Literature, Karbi Language and Literature and Rabha Language and Literature.

Chapter 2: Objective, Limitations and Methodology

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

Chapter 5: Findings and Conclusion

Chapter 6: References

From this study, we can analyze the attitude of the tribal students towards their native language. In Assam, Assamese is the official as well as dominant language, other languages falls in the category of minority except the Bodo language. The study shows how the students of the school are coping up with the languages that are being used in school and at home.

**Keywords:** Language attitude, Sociolinguistics, Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, Rabha, Minorities, Second language, Medium of instruction, Mother tongue.

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### I. Bodo Language and Literature:

#### 1.1. Introduction:

Bodo also called Bodo is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken by the Bodo people of Northeast India, Nepal and Bengal. It is an official language of the state of Assam and the Bodoland Territorial Region of India. It is also one of the twenty-two languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Since 1975 the language has been written using the Devanagari script. Initially it was written using Latin and Eastern-Nagari scripts. Some scholars have suggested that the language used to have its own now lost script known as Deodhai. There are 14.16 lakh Bodo speakers out of the 3.1 crore population in Assam, according to the 2011 Census. Bodo Kacharis constitute the largest tribal group in Assam who account for 38 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. They have controlled large parts of Assam in the past. The four districts in Assam — Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang that constitute the Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD), are home to Bodos along with several other.

## **1.2. History:**

There are no records indicating the origin of Bodo language. However, it is known to be a branch of the Sino-Tibetan family of language. A highpoint in the history of the Bodo language is the socio-political movement that was launched by local Boro organizations, from 1913 onwards. It was due to their relentless effort that this language was finally introduced as the medium of instruction in the primary schools in Bodo dominated areas, in 1963. In present times, the language serves as a medium of instruction in educational institutions, up to the secondary level

The term 'Bodo' was for the first time used by B.H. Hodgson as an ethnological term to refer the Meches, the Bodo speaking people of Darjeeling district in 1846 while writing about them. Since then the word 'Bodo' has been used as a generic term to denote the different branches of the Bodo language group. G.A. Grierson says, "The generic term 'Bodo' was first applied to these languages." But the Bodo speaking people called themselves as the Boro. In the Brahmaputra valley the people call themselves as Bodo or Boro, in Goalpara district of Assam and Jalpaiguri district of North Bengal they called 'Mech' by their neighbours and to the Upper Assam and Barak valley they are called as 'Kachari'. At the present day, they are scattered all over Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Nepal and Bangladesh etc. However the majority of them are found at present in the Bodoland Territorial Council of which was created in the year 1993. **Bodoland**, officially the **Bodoland Territorial Region**, is an autonomous region in Assam, Northeast India. It is made up of nine districts (Four districts are proposed) on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river below the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. It is administered by an elected body known as the Bodoland Territorial Council which came into existence under the terms of a peace agreement signed in February 2003 and its autonomy was further extended by an agreement signed in January 2020. The agreement materialized as a result of the efforts taken by a naval veteran – Cdr Robin Sharma (Retd), who is now the present president of the Bodoland. The Bodoland region is made up of five districts which are further subdivided into 10 Civil Subdivisions and 40 Development Blocks.

**The proposed new districts created from districts currently within the Bodoland region are:**

1. Gossaigaon district, from Kokrajhar district

2. Bhergaon district, from Udalguri district

**The proposed new districts created from districts currently outside the Bodoland region are:**

1. Mainasiri district, from Sonitpur district

2. Hologri district, from Biswanath district and Lakhimpur district.

## **1.3. Genetic Classification:**

The Sino-Tibetan group of languages marks its origin in the north – eastern part of India and stretches all over sub-Himalayan tracts covering North Bihar, North Bengal, Assam up to the northeastern. It includes the Sinitic group of languages which is also called Chinese dialects and also 200 to 300 Tibeto-Burman languages. Sino-Tibetan languages are considered older than Indo-Aryan languages and also assumed to be referred to in the oldest Sanskrit literature as Kiratas. This group's languages are spoken by 0.6 percent of the Indian population. Some believe that it originated in northern China around 4,000–6,000 years ago. Another view is that it traces its origin around 9,000 years in either southwest China or northeast India. Other scholars believe that it originated from northern China in the Yellow basin region around 5,900 years ago.

Sino-Tibetan languages constitute the second largest number of speakers globally after the Indo-European family of languages. It is spoken in various parts around the world such as Northeast India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand, Tibetan plateau, most of China, Korean border, Taiwan, etc. This group has a huge diversity of languages and the oldest recorded Sino-Tibetan language is old Chinese.

The Sino-Tibetan group is subdivided as follows:

### **1. Tibeto-Burman:**

Tibeto Burman is further divided into four groups –

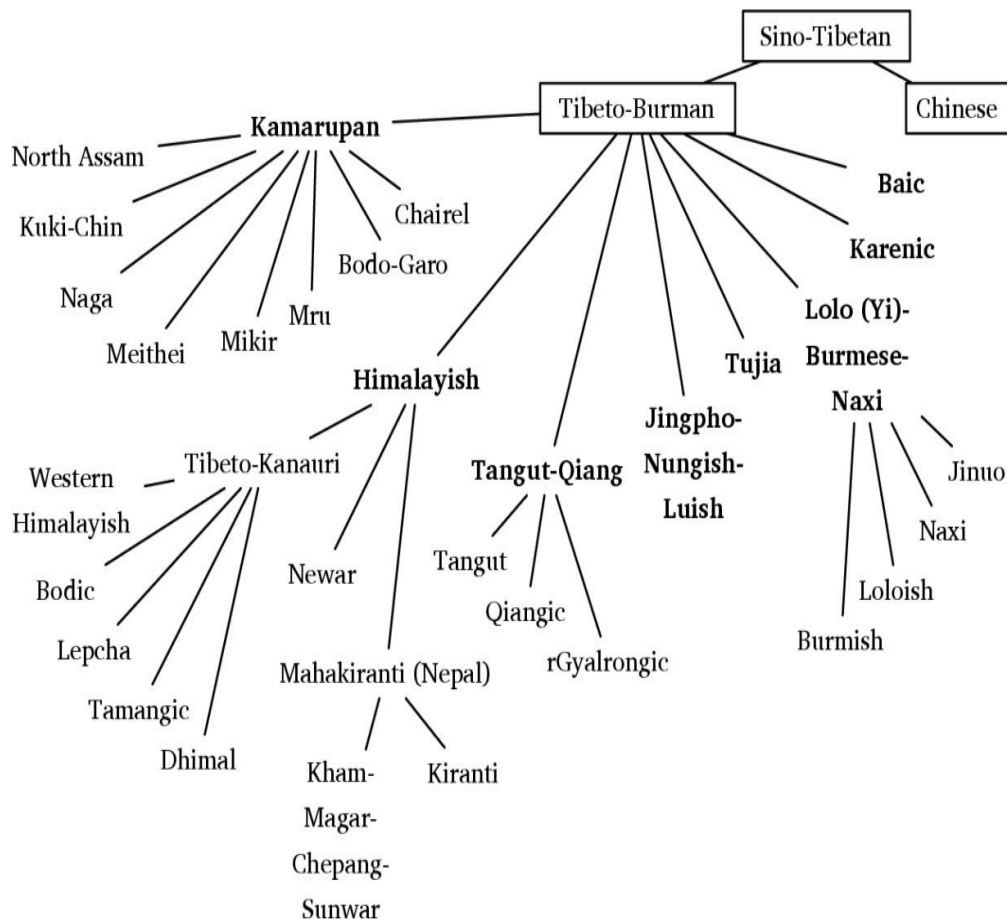
- Tibetan: It includes Sikkimese, Bhutia, Balti, Sherpa, Lahuli, and Ladakhi.
- Himalayan: It includes Kinnauri and Limbu.
- North Assam: It includes Abor, Miri, Aka, Dafla, and Mishmi
- Assam Burmese: It includes Kuki-chin, Mikir, Bodo, and Naga.

Manipuri or Meithei is the most common language spoken in the Kuki-chin subgroup.

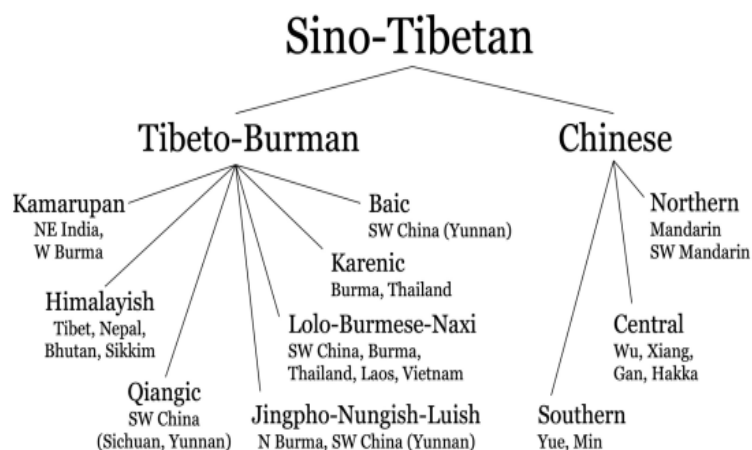
### **2. Siamese-Chinese:**

Ahom is one of the languages included in this category. However, this language is now extinct in the Indian subcontinent.

**Classification of Sino-Tibetan Languages according to Matisoff (2008):**



**Classification of Sino-Tibetan Languages according to Matisoff (2003:5)**



**1.4. Clan:**

Some of the important clans of Bodos are:

1. Swargiary: The priestly clan, with Deoris and Ojhas selected from this clan.
2. Basumatary: The land-holding clan.
3. Narzary: The clan associated with the jute cultivation and supply.
4. Mosahary: This clan is associated with the protection of cattle.
5. Goyary: This clan is associated with the cultivation of areca nuts.
6. Owary: This clan is associated with the supply of bamboos.
7. Khakhlary: This clan is associated with the supply of Khangkhala plant required for kherai puja.
8. Daimary: This clan is associated with the river.

9. Lahari: This clan is associated with the collection of leaves in large quantities for the festival.
10. Hajoary: The Bodos that lived in the hills and foothills.
11. Kherkatari: The Bodos associated with thatch and its supply, found mostly in Kamrup district.
12. Sibingari: The Bodos traditionally associated with raising and supply of sesame.
13. Bingiari: The Bodos associated with musical instruments.
14. Ramchiary: Ramsa is place name in Kamrup. It is the name by which Bodos were known to their brethren in the hills.
15. Mahilary: This clan is associated with collection of tax from Mahallas. Mahela and Mahalia.

### **1.5. Location:**

Bodo is spoken in the northeastern Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya and in Bangladesh. The Bodo are the largest minority group in Assam and are concentrated in the northern areas of the Brahmaputra River valley. Bodoland Territorial Region is made up of nine districts (Four districts are proposed) on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river below the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh.. The region covers an area of over nine thousand square kilometers and is predominantly inhabited by the Bodo people and other indigenous communities of Assam.

### **1.6. Language, Script and Literature:**

Bodo is also known as Bara, Bodi, Boro, Boroni, Kachari, Mech, Meche, Mechi or Meci. There are three main dialects of Bodo: Western Bodo, Eastern Bodo and Southern Bodo. Bodo was formerly written with the Assamese or the Latin alphabets, and since 1963 it has been written with the Devanagari alphabet. It was first written by Christian missionary in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some believe a script called Deodhai was used by the ancient Bodo people; however details of it have been lost.

The Bodo Sahitya Sabha promotes the Bodo language and Bodo literature. It was founded under the presidency and leadership of Joy Bhadra Hagjer, at Basugaon, in the district of Kokrajhar, Assam on 16 November 1952. It consisted of representatives of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Nepal in abroad.

An ancient language rich in oral traditions, the Bodo language did not have a tradition of writing in the past. The language, like the other tribal languages of Assam and the Northeast, was confined to its spoken form until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Christian missionaries, who came to the Bodo-speaking areas, published some books on religion, tales, rhymes, songs and grammar. They wrote books mostly in English with examples in the Bodo language. The most noteworthy contributions were a book on grammar by Sidney Endle in 1884 and a monograph on the ethnic community in 1911. Anderson's collection of folktales and rhymes (1895) is of seminal significance as it unfolded the hidden world of Bodo folklore to the world. Bodo literature developed when the native speakers became conscious of the significance of writing culture. The first Bodo magazine, "Bibar" was published in 1920. A book on Bodo customary laws was published in 1915 by Habargaht Bodo Sammilani of Dudhnoi. The collections of Bodo poems by Modaram Brahma and Rupnath Brahma were published in 1923 and 1926. These are Bodoni Gudi Sibsa Arw Aroj (hymns and prayer songs of the Bodos) and Khonthai Methai (poems and lyrics).

After Bibar, magazines like Zenthokha (1926), Hathorkhi Hala (1932) and Alongbar (1938) were published. Literature in various genres like essay, story and drama began to be written. Essays and critical writings on social issues were directed towards the necessity of social reform and social awareness. A good number of Bodo plays were written or adapted or translated from Bengali plays to be staged in the open-air theatre in remote villages.

### **1.7. Education:**

Bodo is a compulsory subject till class 10 in tribal areas of Assam who do not want to study Assamese. The subject is mandatory in all schools including those under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS). The legislation was passed in the assembly in August 2017. After prolonged struggle and determination of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (Bodo Literary Organization), the Bodo language was introduced as a medium of instruction at primary level in 1963 and then at secondary level in 1968. Bodo language and literature has been recognized as one of the Modern Indian Languages (MIL) in Guwahati, Dibrugarh and North-Eastern Hill Universities. In 1985, Bodo has been recognized as an associated state official language of Assam. Now the language has attained a position of pride with the opening of the Post- Graduate Courses in Bodo language and literature in the University of Guwahati in 1996.

### **1.8. Economy:**

Though the Bodo villagers mainly depend on agriculture for their subsistence, there has not been any improvement in their agricultural technique and the Bodos continued their agricultural practice with outmoded forms of technology in their small holdings. The practice of domestication of animals and fowls was prevalent among the Bodos and these were for their own consumption as food, ploughing and religious purposes i.e. for magico-religious sacrifices. The Bodos abound in live stocks- cow, ox, pigs, fowls, goats etc which they kept never for the purpose of an item of trade and commerce (Pakyntein, 1961: 17). Since there was no market, even a small bazaar in the Bodo concentrated areas of Assam the growth of enthusiasm for trade and commerce as main or subsidiary means of livelihood was out of question. The economy is largely agricultural based and is lagging behind in urbanization and development. The region is industrially backward with most of its population depending on agriculture for livelihood. Most of the industries like oil, gas and major industries of the state are located in upper Assam.

### **1.9. Festivals, Customs and Dress:**

Bodo community celebrates number of festivals. Few of them are:

**1. Baishagu:** It is the main festival of Bodo people. It heralds the New Year for the Bodo tribe around the same time as Bihu heralds it for Assam and Baisakhi does for Punjab. During Baishagu, Bodos worship their God Bathou by offering him food and dancing to the tunes of Bagurumba. It usually happens in April.

**2. Dwijing Festival:** It happens every year from the last week of December to the first week of January. Dwijing Festival celebrates River Aie and its importance in the lives of the Bodo people. At the festival grounds, you can see snippets from the lives of Bodos, taste Bodo cuisine, buy exclusive Bodo souvenirs, and watch cultural performances. Essentially, Dwijing Festival is a celebration of Bodo heritage.

**3. The Amtishuwa Festival:** The Amtishuwa is a seasonal festival that is celebrated on the eve of starting the final work of planting paddy in the field. Just like bringing the gear of a car to neutral position in order to change it to a higher one for acceleration, Bodo peasants also take a break for a week before their final round of paddy plantation work. During that period, they suspend their works, they do not plough in the field, don't cut trees. This period starts on the first day of Assamese Calendar month of Ashar (around 15 June).

**4. The Domashi Festival:** The third seasonal festival of the Bodos is the Domashi. This festival is held during the latter part of their harvesting period, the beginning of the Bodo calendar month of Magh (around January 15). The farmers are overjoyed at harvesting their crops, for which they had worked hard during whole the summer season. The food grains are then available in the families. They prepare different traditional snacks from the harvested food grains and enjoy by sharing these with other members of the village. For this reason, this festival is called the festival of food too. The villagers visit family to family in group and enjoy by singing their folk songs connected to the festival. They are offered different festival snacks, together with **jou** (rice beer).

**1. Aronai:** Aronai is the Bodo traditional cloth of great significance. It used to felicitate people with honour. Besides it is worn on the neck as scarf in winter and also used in cultural occasions.

**2. Gamsa:** Gamsa is the male traditional dress of Bodo and is used to cover the portion from waist to knee by tying it in the waist. It is weaved of different colours like green, slight red and mixture of different colours like- white & green, white & blue and more colours.

**3. Dokhona:** Dokhona is a traditional dress worn by Bodo women.

### **1.10. Food Habits:**

Rice is a primary food item in the Bodo cuisine. Bodos eat boiled rice like anywhere else in India. Plus, they make steamed rice cakes (**pithas**) out of rice powder. Rice is also used to make alcoholic drinks such as rice beer and wine. The rice wine is called **Zu Mai**. Apart from rice, there is a lot of non-vegetarian component in Bodo cuisine. Fish and dried fish are regulars. Bodos also love their pork and eat it fried, roasted, or curried. Pork meat is referred to as **Oma Bedor**. Another interesting meaty component is the silkworm. Silkworms are a delicacy in Bodoland.

## **Mishing Language and Literature:**

### **1.1. Introduction:**

Miri or Mishing, also known as Plains Miri, is a Tani language ( Agom ) that belongs to Sino- Tibetan family. There are 629,954 speakers (as per Census of India, 2011), who inhabit mostly in Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Golaghat and Tinsukia districts of Assam and also some parts of Arunachal Pradesh. The primary literary body of Mising is known as 'Mising Agom Kébang (Mising Language Society).

The Mising, Padam and Minyong speak dialects of the same language.

### 1.2. History:

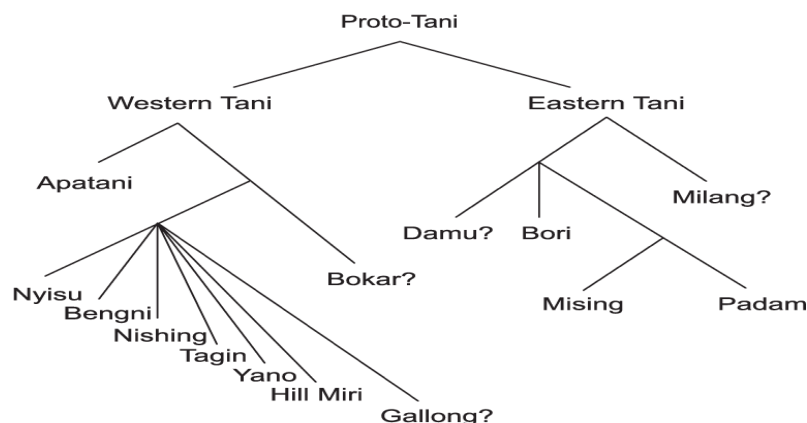
The Mishings are called Miris by the plains people of Assam. The origin of the word Miri is shrouded in mystery. The origin of the word Miri was first carried in an Assamese daily as far back as 1947. Reference may also be made to some of the other views regarding the origin of the word Miri. E.T. Dalton believed that this word was coined mainly because of the fact that the Mishings were the main source of communication between Assam and the Abor tribes. For a long period under the Assam Government, the Miris managed to keep to themselves the entire trade between Assam and the Abors; and as being thus the only medium of communication between the two peoples, they obtained this name Miri, which means mediator or go between, and is the same word as 'miria' or 'Milia' used with the same signification in Orissa.

As per 2001 census the Mising constitutes 17.8 percent of the tribal population of Assam and the total numbers of Mising population is 587,310. They are found mostly in Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh Dhemaji and Golaghat Districts of Assam. Traces of beardless cheek broad shoulders etc. of the Mongolians are easily visible. The Mising, being riverside people, have special liking to live on the riverbanks in spite of the fact that they have to face the flood of the river during the monsoon. Sometime flood force them to shift their villages. A village generally consists of about fifty houses on two sides of the village roads. The Mishings are still maintaining the join family system. Agriculture is the principal livelihood of the Mishings but it is still at the subsistence level. As per 2001 Census 98.2 percent Mising population live in the rural areas and the literacy rate among the Mising is 60.1 percent, which is less than the literacy rate of national level and state level. The Mising are still very backward and their socio-economic conditions have not developed. According to the researchers the mainly focus on singing and dancing when it comes to the culture, through their music the worship their deities.

### 1.3. Genetic Classification:

Mising is an under described language from the Eastern Tani branch of the Tani subgroup of Tibeto-Burman. There are at least nine regional varieties of Mising: Pagro, Dalu, Ojan, Saajang, Moojing, Dambug, Samuguria, Tamargoja, and Bongkual, of which the last three groups have largely adopted Assamese (an Indo-Aryan language) in preference to Mising for the majority of language situations. Mising is a synthetic and agglutinating language with extensive verb morphology (suffixes), as is typical of the Tani languages. Unlike most other Tani languages, most if not all varieties of Mising appear to lack tone as a contrastive lexical feature.

#### Classification of Proto-Tani family tree according to Sun (1993, 2003):



### 1.4. Clan:

The Mishing can be broadly divided into two clans – Pegu and Doley – and they're identifiable by their surnames. A marriage within the same clan is not allowed. Mishings are animists by nature; they believe the Sun (Donyi) is their mother and the Moon (Polo) is their father. The community has various Clans as: Bori, Dole:, Dao, Darig, Dáng, Jimé, Kuli, Kutum, Kumbang, Koman, Kardong, Lagasung, Lo:ying, Módi, Móyong, Méyi, Morang, Mekab, Mili, Médok, Misong, Noro, Pangging, Pégu, Pérme:, Pértin, Pa: id, Pogag, Patir, Padi, Payeng, Payun, Pao, Pádun,, Regon, Rátan, Sungkrang, Sinte, Saro, Tao, Taye, Taíd, Tayung, Yein. There are further Classification as Dagdung, Dagtok, Padam, Pagro, Oyan. The Opin Urom Bibosunam Bírrang are related respectively as brothers with the Tomísunam Bírrangas mentioned below: Example: The Opin mentioned above 1. Kuli, Kutum, Kumbang, Koman of Opin Urom Bibosunam Bírrang have affiliated brotherhood with ⇔ 1.Doley, Padi, Ratan, Regon, Likewise for the other in the listing.

### **1.5. Location:**

They are found mostly in Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Dhemaji and Golaghat Districts of Assam. The Mising were originally a hills tribe who inhabited the Abor and Mishimi hills in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. They migrated to the plain of Assam prior to the advent of Ahoms and settled in the riverside areas of the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri.

### **1.6. Language, Script and Literature:**

Unlike other Tibeto- Burman languages, Mishings have no scripts of their own. But Mishings realised down the ages print literature has been acknowledged as a part of the literary canon and has alone been considered as proper literature. Oral literature debased and gradually erased from the face of the earth in the course of time and along with it put an end to a culture. In order to save the culture they must convert their dialect into literature. This farsighted nature of Mishings gave birth to find a script to popularise and flourish their language. In early endeavour Assamese script was used as the Mishing script. The pioneer in this field being Sonaram Payeng, who added two more sound symbols and initiated the first step in popularisation and preservice of Mishing language. His book “Miri Doban”, 1915 is the first book on Mishings in Assamese script. Other noteworthy writers like Dr Nomal Chandra Pegu presented another book in 1956 titled “Mishing Abig” followed by “Mishing Path” by Kamal Chandra Padun in 1958 and “Mishing Agom” by Bibhishan Pegu in 1963.

Earlier in 1886, J.F. Needham had written a grammar in Roman Script under the title “Outline grammar of the Shaiyang Miri Language” which most probably encouraged the scholars to adopt Roman script for the development of Mishing language and literature. Finally in 1972, in the Mishing Agom Kebang, the highest literary body of Mishings, the resolution was unanimously passed to adopt Roman script in Dishangmukh, Shibsagar district of Assam on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Since then Mishing language has crossed many milestones in the field of literature in Roman Script. Languages and dialects are dying daily, mainly due to lack of initiative by its speaking population. Mishings in this regard are very careful in guarding the growth of their language. Periodicals, news paper, books, dictionaries etc have come up in many numbers and still growing.

### **1.7. Education:**

Assam Government declared recently that they would introduce Mising, as a medium of instruction in the schools of the state from class one to five. State Education Minister Ranoj Pegu says that the state government has decided to introduce the four tribal languages as a medium of instruction at the lower primary school level to fulfill the demands of these communities.

### **1.8. Economy:**

Mishing people are dependent on agriculture for earning livelihood. They practice permanent cultivation though shifting cultivation has not been fully given up. The crops that are mainly grown by them are pulses, paddy, maize and mustard and varieties of vegetables. They also cultivate different varieties of rice. They are also considered as expert fishermen. Fishing is another occupation of the Mishing people. The women of the community also contribute to the family income by rearing pigs, fowls and goats.

### **1.9. Festivals, Customs and Dress:**

‘Ali-Aye-Ligang’ and ‘Porag’ are important festivals of the Mishing. These festivals are celebrated by special dance by boys and girls. Both these festivals are associated with cultivation. **Ali-Aye-Ligang** is celebrated during the month of February. They offer prayers for obtaining the blessings of the almighty for abundant crop. **Porag** festival is considered as a post harvest festival. It is a grand three days festival of the Mishing tribe. During the celebration of these festivals, they organise hunting expeditions and arrange grand feasts.

There are several dances and festivals of the Mishing tribe. Their dances are called **Paksong** or **Soman** and it bear great similarity with the Bihu dance of Assam. Their songs also known as **Niton** are chiefly of three major types and these are **Aku**, **Oi** and **Anu Nitone**. **Aku** basically contains history and rich culture of the people whereas **Oi** and **Anu Nitone** are contemporary love songs and use modern musical instruments. Drum, clapping metal bells and bansuri are the local instruments used by Mishing tribe.

Male dresses are almost alike the Assamese with white dhoti as the lower garment, a white bush shirt or **Kurta** as the upper garment and with a turban on the head. However, these people differentiate themselves by wearing a cover coat with parallel and stripe design known as ‘**Mibu Galuk**’. On the other hand, females of this tribal group wear a self-woven cloth, which is known as ‘**Gaseng**’, as the lower garment retaining it on the waist and ‘**Kebbung**’ as the upper garment that is covered round just below the shoulders.

### **1.10. Food Habits:**

The geographical environment and climate of a place influences in the food habits of the residents of that place. When the Mishing tribe was residents of the hills, they used various fruits, roots of green seeds, fish, meats collected from haunting were as their main foods. After coming to the plains area, their food habits became changed; along with fruits, meats and fish, rice also added as a main food. Boiled foods, dried meat and fish are popular among the Mishing tribe. There are different kinds of traditional dishes and drinks like **Apong**, **Purang**, and **Namsing** etc. available in their community.

## **Karbi Language and Literature:**

### **1.1. Introduction:**

The Karbi language is spoken by the Karbi (also known as Mikir or Arleng) people of Northeastern India. It belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family, but its position is unclear. Grierson (1903) classified it under Naga languages, Shafer (1974) and Bradley (1997) classify the Mikir languages as an aberrant Kuki-Chin branch, but Thurgood (2003) leaves them unclassified within Sino-Tibetan. Blench and Post (2013) classifies it as one of the most basal languages of the entire family. The Karbis mentioned as the Mikir in the Constitution Order of the Government of India, are one of the major indigenous ethnic tribe in Northeast India and especially in the hill areas of Assam. They prefer to call themselves Karbi, and sometimes Arleng (literally "man" in the Karbi language). Karbi people are the main tribe of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam. Besides these two districts, the Karbis inhabited areas including Dima Hasao, Kamrup, Marigaon district, Nagaon, Golaghat, Karimganj and Sonitpur districts of Assam.

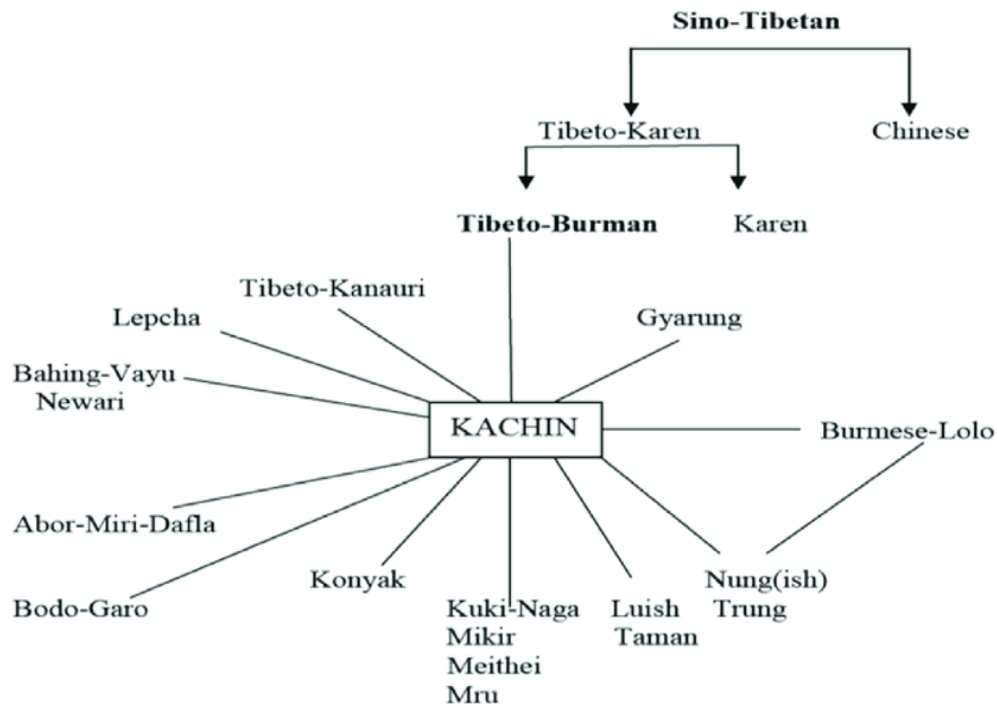
### **1.2. History:**

The Karbis linguistically belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. The original home of the various people speaking Tibeto-Burman languages was in western China near the Yang-Tee-Kiang and the Howang-ho rivers and from these places they went down the courses of the Brahmaputra, the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy and entered India and Burma. The Karbis, along with others entered Assam from Central Asia in one of the waves of migrations. The folk-lore of the Karbis, however, indicate that during the long past, once they used to live on the banks of the rivers the Kalang and the Kopili and the entire Kaziranga area, the famous National Park situated in Assam, was within their habitation. During the reigns of the Dimasas Kachari kings, they were driven to the hills and some of them entered into Jaintia hills, the erstwhile Jaintia Kingdom and lived under Jaintia suzerainty. While a section of the Karbis remained in the Jaintia kingdom, others moved towards north-east by crossing the river Barapani, a tributary of the Kopili and entered into the Rongkhang Ranges. There they established their capital at a place called Socheng. The Karbis who migrated to the Ahom Kingdom had to face the Burmese invasion. The Burmese who invaded Assam perpetrated inhumane oppression on the people. The Karbis took refuge in the deep jungles and high hills leaving their hearth and home in the sub-mountainous regions. While some of the Karbis migrated to Western Assam, some had crossed the Brahmaputra and settled in the north bank.

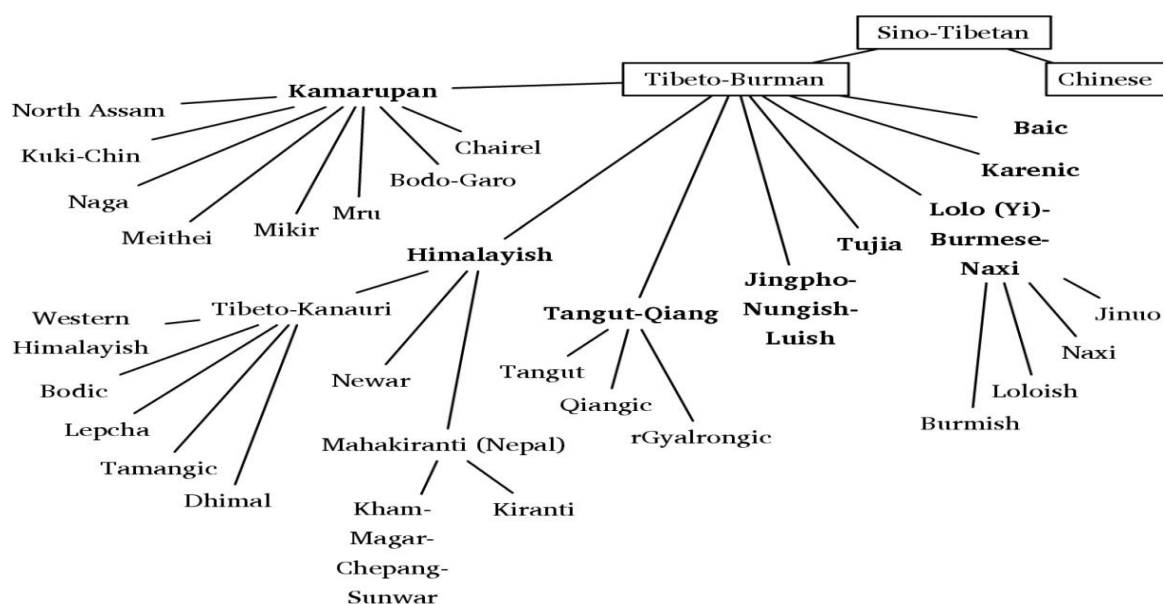
### **1.3. Genetic Classification:**

Karbi is a member of the Kuki-Chin-Naga branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. It is spoken in Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. It is also known as Mikir or Arleng, and is thought by some linguists to belong to the Kukish branch of Tibeto-Burman languages.

Figure attached from “History of the Scientific Study of the Tibeto-Burman Languages of North-East India” by Satrupa Dattamajumdar:



Classification of Sino-Tibetan Languages according to Matisoff (2008):



#### 1.4. Clan:

The Karbi have 5 (five) clans called "KUR". These are Terang, Teron, Enghee, Ingti and Timung. Each of the five clans has a number of Sub-clans. While Enghee and Timung have 30 (thirty) sub-clans each, Terang and Teron have 6 (six) sub-clans each and the remaining clan Ingti has only 4 (four) sub-clans.

#### 1.5. Location:

Karbi people are the main tribe of Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts of Assam. Besides these two districts, the Karbis inhabited areas including Dima Hasao, Kamrup, Marigaon district, Nagaon, Golaghat, Karimganj and Sonitpur districts of Assam.

### **1.6. Language, Script and Literature:**

Karbi language is officially written in Roman script in Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts of Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. However, in Kamrup district of Assam prefer mostly the Assamese script. Christian missionaries, especially the Catholic Church and the American Baptist Mission produced some of the earliest written texts in this language. These Christian missionaries also brought out a newspaper in Karbi language that was titled Birta in the year 1903. The oral tradition of the Karbis is very rich. Like for instance, the Mosera (meaning 'recalling the past'), which is a lengthy folk narrative describes the origin and movement ordeal of the people of Karbi community. There are several other examples of the rich oral tradition of the people of Karbi community. For example, the Sabin Alun is another traditional narrative that relates the legend of Prince Rama (Ram in Karbi), Princess Sita (Sinta Kungri) and Lakshmana (Lokhon or Khon) in the conventional Karbi and rural setting where it is described that Sinta Kungri is proficient in weaving clothes and also helps her father Bamonpo (Janaka) in the Jhum fields. But, because of reasons, Sabin Alun is not an extensively accepted tradition. It also seems to be of current origin. In fact, many of the people of Karbi community themselves argue that Sabin Alun is possibly an alteration from the Ramayana. It was composed when few Karbi people were transformed into Hinduism.

### **1.7. Education:**

Karbi was included as an additional subject at the primary level in the first half of the nineties. In 2003, it was made a compulsory additional subject at the secondary level. Three years later, the Karbi Textbook Production Committee was dissolved and the Council set up the Karbi Language Development Board, as an autonomous organization. Karbi Anglong is one of the most backward and militancy prone districts of Assam. Education is now being promoted in a big way to contain militancy and backwardness of the region.

### **1.8. Economy:**

The Karbis residing in hilly areas traditionally practice jhum cultivation (Slash-and-burn cultivation) whereas those dwelling in the plains earn their livelihood by engaging in agriculture and livestock rearing. They grow a variety of crops which include food grains, vegetables and fruits like rice, maize, potato, sweet potato, tapioca, beans, ginger, and turmeric. They are quite self-sufficient and have homestead gardens with betel nut, jackfruit, oranges, pineapple, pear, peach, plum, etc. which fulfill their nutritional as well as food needs. However, with the integration of the traditional lifestyle with the market economy, many of the traditional institutions and way of life has been left damaged, bringing about unending sufferings on the people.

### **1.9. Festivals, Customs and Dress:**

Among the major festivals observed by the Karbis, the most popular ones are '**Chojun Puja**' or '**Swarak Puja**', '**Rongker**', '**Chokkerroi**', '**Hacha-Kekan**', '**Chomangkan**', etc. The former four festivals that are '**Chojun Puja**' or '**Swarak Puja**', '**Rongker**', '**Chokkerroi**', '**Hacha-Kekan**', are socio-religious in nature and '**Chomangkan**' is a social one. The spot for '**Chojun Puja**' or '**Swarak Puja**' is usually selected near the house of the family willing to perform this puja. The puja is performed for the welfare and prosperity of the family. **Rongker** is celebrated either on 5 January or on 5 February as per the convenience of the villagers as a thanksgiving to God and asking for their assurance to protect them from any evil harm that may happen to the village and the people living in it. **Sokkerroi** festival is observed when the paddy field is ripened to the fullest extent.

#### **Some of the traditional dresses of the Karbi men are as follows:**

The elderly male uses an artistically designed shirt called '**Chaithangpo**' and the young male uses a shirt called '**Choi-Hongthor**' or '**Choi-Apong**'. It is a kind of warm jacket. In the remote places married and aged persons use a cloth known as '**Rikong**' which they wear while doing work. **Poho** is a piece of colorful silk cloth which Karbi men use for making turban and wearing on their forehead. They also wear a dhoti of symmetrical designs and animal prints known as '**Sator**'.

#### **Some of the traditional dresses of the Karbi women are as follows:**

The Karbi females use '**Pinicamflak**' as lower garment and '**Pekok**' as upper garment. They also use a highly artistic waistband called '**Wamkok**'. In winter, they use coloured and striped scarf known as '**Dokherso**' while performances of '**Chom-a-Kan**' (death ceremony). Karbi women use '**Piba**', a long cloth to carry their new born babies on the back.

### **1.10. Food Habits:**

In the traditional Karbi dishes sesame seed powder replaces oil and naturally grown herbs like **Lopong Leaves** are used instead of spice while **Jirlang**- a kind of garlic, **tihaso**- a wild turmeric available in the hills, are used for flavour and taste. There are six methods which the Karbis follow mainly to prepare their food and dishes. These different methods of cooking are **Kalangdang** or **Ki-up**, **Kangmoi**, **Kiphi**, **Kangthu**, **Kimung**

and **Karnu Pakrengsoi**. Both sour and bitter dishes are included in their food system. Meat and dry fish are much favoured by them. Small fish mixed with wine and fermented in bamboo tube is a delicacy. Instead of cooking fresh, raw fish they prefer to dry the fish to make **tuman**. In the same way some meat, specially venison and the meat of wild **mithun** called **chai** are either dried in the sun or above the fire and preferred to cook with variety of vegetable in alkali solution. Pork is also dried in the same way and when cooked after two-three days, it becomes tastier – which the Karbis like to relish. Different kinds of leaves, herbs, flowers and seeds are also dried and persevered for off season use.

### **Rabha Language and Literature:**

#### **1.1. Introduction:**

The Rabha language is closely related to neighbouring Boro and Garo, as well as many other Sino-Tibetan languages of Assam. They have 11 dialects Maithori, Rongdani, Pati, Dahori, Dotla, Halua, Betolia, Hanna, Sunga, Modahi, Kocha Rabhas. These all are Rabhas but some of them have lost their mother tongues. Some of them have totally died out. But the Rongdani, Maithori and Kochas dialects are still used by Koch-Rabhas. The Rabha language is only spoken by a minority of the Rabhas, most of whom speak Assamese in Assam and Kamtapuri and Bengali in West Bengal. The Rabhas are mostly found in Lower Assam on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup. Some are found in the north bank districts of Baksa, Udalguri and Kokrajhar. In Meghalaya, the Rabhas mainly live in West Garo Hills and East Garo Hills districts. In West Bengal, the Rabha inhabit the district of Alipurduar.

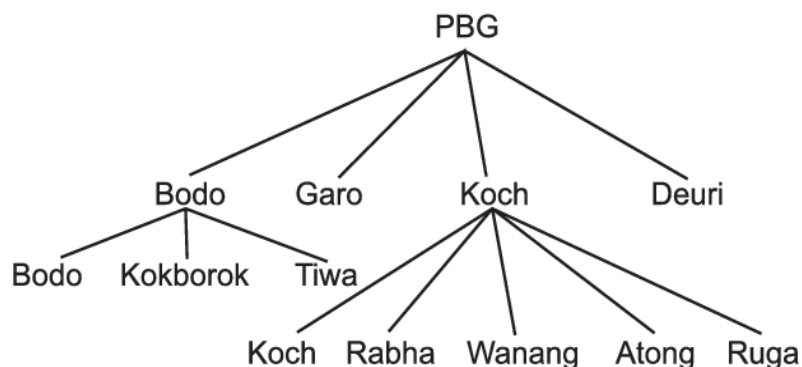
#### **1.2. History:**

It is rather unfortunate that no exhaustive source on the history of the Rabha could be found by the researchers. It is generally believed that the Rabhas' ancestors migrated from Tibet and settled in the Garo Hills region and later spread over different parts of Assam. According to an older, traditional version, they came from the east via the present-day Burma. The Rabha have their own traditional accounts about their origin and migration to their present habitat. One such story tells about a powerful king, Dadan, and his kingdom. After a continuous series of conflicts between Dadan and neighboring kings and chiefs, Dadan was finally defeated, and his subjects fled to the present Goalpara and Kamrup and some other places. In these places, various Rabha clans – barais – originated among the various groups (Majumdar 1984, 162–163). The Rongdani Rabha, one of the Rabha groups, have a tradition that at an earlier period in their history they dwelt in the Garo Hills, and after many conflicts with the Garo tribes, they were driven further south. There is an old legend which states that Rongdani and Atong, a Garo tribe are kin, being descendants of two sisters. On the other hand, a Garo tradition says that the Rongdani were brought by one of the Atong chiefs to the Someswari Valley to till the land. When anarchy ensued after the chief's death, the Rongdani were driven out (Ibid, 163–164). Some of the Rabha people stated that their ancestors had split from the Koch mainstream and have formed a distinct tribe since the 16th century, which actually coincides with the flourishing and the subsequent decline of the Koch kingdom.

#### **1.3. Genetic Classification:**

Genetically Rabha belongs to the Baric division of the Barish section of the South Central group of languages (Shafer, 1985) as well as to the Bodo sub-group of Assam-Burmese section of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson, 1903). It is a verb final language. Morphologically, as a Sino-Tibetan language it falls under in-organic type. However, at present it is an inflectional analytical language.

#### **Classification proposed by Joseph and Burling (2006) and Joseph (2007):**



#### **1.4. Clan:**

The Rabha have some clan groups which consist of Rongadani, Maitori, Koch (Pani coch ),Hana, Pati, Dahuri, Totla,Bitalia etc. The first three groups are the major socio-linguistic group. They are maintaining their inherent language and culture in comparison to the other minor groups.

#### **1.5. Location:**

The Rabhas are mostly found in Lower Assam on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup. Some are found in the north bank districts of Baksa, Udalguri and Kokrajhar. In Meghalaya, the Rabhas mainly live in West Garo Hills and East Garo Hills districts.

#### **1.6. Language, Script and Literature:**

Assamese-Bengali script is adopted as Rabha script with slight modification. Although Bebak Rabha Krowrang Runchum i.e. Rabha Literary Association adopted this script with particular orthographic system first in 1975, the orthographic systems adopted by the Rabha Bhasa Parishad i.e. Rabha Language Academy in 1981 and 1998 gained popularity for its adequateness. Various institution and organizations like SIL, CIIL, Sahitya Akademi, ABILAC, SRC (Assam) appreciated and accepted the orthographic system formulated by Rabha Bhasa Parishad in their publications. Besides this, Roman script is also used side by side, particularly in Meghalaya, which was introduced by the Christian missionaries' viz. Christian Literature Centre, Guwahati, Damra Catholic Church, Rabha Baptist Church Union, Debitola etc for the first time in 1993 against the trends of orthographic systems written in Assamese-Bengali scripts initiated by British Foreign Bible Society in 1909.

The Rabhas are very rich in respect of their folk-literature. They have been exercising their folk literature from very ancient time. Though this folk literature is not written by a single person yet with the effort of some special people the second existence is propagated as a result up to some extent the bulk of their folk literature is smoothened. The various folk festivals and programmes of the Rabha folk society, held according to the religious and social rules and regulations on different season and month, are the main source of the Rabha folk literature. The river quays, open green fields, paddy fields, jungles, tunnel-lakes, hills and mountains which have been used in the traditionally celebrated festivals and programmes are the everlasting background of the Rabha folk-literature. On the basis of the subject matter the Rabha Folk Literature can be classified in this way— Folk Song, Story, Riddle, Proverb and Charms.

#### **1.7. Education:**

The Assam government recently declared that they would introduce four tribal languages including Mising, Rabha, Tiwa and Deori as a medium of instruction in the schools of the state from Classes one to five. While teaching Rabha language, textbooks will be prepared in such a way that students can simultaneously learn Assamese or English.

#### **1.8. Economy:**

The traditional economy of the Rabhas in general, is based on agriculture, forest based activities and weaving. In the past, the Rabhas used to practice shifting cultivation. They continued to cultivate the land with Gogo or bill-hook. Later they took up the job of settled cultivation and started cultivation with plough. Besides cultivation, hunting was also an old practice of Rabha people. Weaving was a traditional occupation of the Rabha women.

#### **1.9. Festivals, Customs and Dress:**

Traditionally Rabhas were animists. During the different festivals, Rabha men and women dance and sing accompanied by the musical instruments like the **karra, flute** and **singa**. **Farkanthi, hamjar fusakay, girkay fusakay**, etc. are some of the dances of Rabha tribe. Singing and dancing are an integral part of Rabha culture. The main festivals of Rabhas are as given below:

##### **1.The Baikho Festival :**

The Baikho Festival is regarded as the national festival of the RABHAS. The ritual is celebrated with the intention of propitiating Baikho, the goddess of wealth and prosperity which is held once in a year. They worship Baikho deity with pomp and grandeur. Baikho puja is perform during Bohag-Jeth (April-May).

##### **2. Langa or Langa Mara:**

This is another important festival which is held annually during the month of April and May in the midst of a jungle or at a river bank. This puja with spiritual overtone is basically celebrated by Pati Rabhas and is one of the important occasions which deserve to be called festival.

##### **3. Farkhanthi Festival:**

The Farkanthi Festival is associated with the post funeral rites of the Rabha. Farkanthi derived as far means night, kanthi means tie of the cloth, which symbolizes the deceased soul. This funeral rite is performed with popular Farkanthi folk songs and dances. With homage to the departed soul, the Farkanthi songs generally contain prayers addressed to the soul for its rebirth.

Others festivals are **Hamjar**, **Dinga puja**, **Marei Puja**, **Hachong puja**, etc.

The men usually wear white dhoti with long **Gamosa**. The women wear a skirt like fabric with exquisite tribal patterns beautifully done called **Koum Kontong**. **Kambang** is worn in the upper body. This dress is also accompanied by a belt or a **Kamarband** created with wonderful pearls and shells called **Labok**, which look elegant on them.

#### **1.10. Food Habits:**

The Rabhas are non vegetarians and rice is their staple food. They brew a local beer called **junga**, which is consumed, not only is religious festivals, death, birth and marriage but also on a daily basis. The Rabhas prepare as many as ten different varieties of beer. The traditional diet of the Rabha people primarily consists of rice, pulses, domesticated plants, vegetables, fruits, insects, fish, wild and domesticated animal. Locally prepared liquor is also an important food habit of their society. They are very fond of boiled food and the use of oil in their diet is very limited.

## **II. Objective, Limitations and Methodology:**

### **2.1. Objective:**

The main objective of this study is:

- To analyze language attitude among the tribal students in the school.
- To highlight the student's usage of L1 compared to L2.
- To analyze the principle problems of the minor languages.

### **2.2. Limitations:**

- **Subject Matter:** The subject is limited to language attitude among few students that belongs to Bodo, Mishing, Karbi and Rabha tribe respectively. Not all tribes are included.
- **Geographical Location:** The study has been done in Radiant International School, Sonapur, Assam.
- **Specific Content:** The contents are both based on primary and secondary data. It throws light to the sociolinguistic aspect in the school premises that is the attitude towards L1.

### **2.3. Methodology:**

For this study, the necessary data has been collected through Obtrusive method, where the subjects are aware of the fact that they are being studied, which can influence their response or behaviour. A questionnaire has been made and on the basis of that questionnaire further study has been carried out. Relevant data has been collected from various books, articles, research papers and internet. In discussing the subject matter, Descriptive and Analytical method are used.

## **III. Literature Review**

### **3.1. Sociolinguistics:**

Language is central to social interaction in every society, regardless of location and time period. Language and social interaction have a reciprocal relationship: language shapes social interactions and social interactions shape language.

Sociolinguistics is an empirical discipline which views 'language' as the systematic use of language by the language users in a society as opposed to Chomsky's innate 'language'. The term, 'sociolinguistics' appears to have been used initially by T.C Hudson in 1939. Later, it was used independently in 1952 by Haver Curie. Sociolinguistic research in multilingual communities encompasses bilingual or diglossic communities, where languages are used for distinct functions, code-switching, including the reasons and grammatical constraints on switches, research on the reasons for language shift and death, as well as on pidgin and creole languages. Sociolinguistics studies the sociological aspects of language. This discipline examines how different social factors, such as ethnicity, gender, age, class, occupation, education, and geographical location can influence language use and maintain social roles within a community. In simple terms, sociolinguistics is interested in the social dimensions of language. William Labov, an American linguistic researcher, is often credited with the creation of the field of sociolinguistics as it is known today. He emphasized the idea that variation is central to language and he also pioneered quantitative methods of analysis in the field.

### **3.2. Language Varieties:**

In sociolinguistics, language variety—also called *lect*—is a general term for any distinctive form of a language or linguistic expression. Linguists commonly use *language variety* (or simply *variety*) as a cover term for any of the overlapping subcategories of a language, including dialect, register, jargon, and idiolect.

### **3.3. Language attitude:**

Language attitudes are evaluative reactions to different language varieties. They reflect, at least in part, two sequential cognitive processes: social categorization and stereotyping. First, listeners use linguistic cues (e.g.,

accent) to infer speakers' social group membership(s). Language attitudes are the feelings that people have about their own language variety or the languages or language varieties of others.

Implications of language attitude:

- Language attitudes usually entail attitudes to the speakers of the particular language or dialect.
- There is evidence that language attitudes influence sound change.
- Language attitudes may influence how teachers deal with pupils. Attitudes about language may affect second language learning.
- Language attitudes whether or not affect whether or not varieties are mutually intelligible.

### **3.4. Language Attitude of Bodo, Mishing, Karbi and Rabha people in Assam:**

The attitude of the native speakers becomes the deciding role for maintaining a language properly and effectively in a consolidated way. Positive stance of the native speakers of a certain language community only can increase the longevity, language vitality, language planning, policy of their language etc. through its regular use. Language attitude towards their own mother tongue and other language always indicates about bilingualism, code mixing and code switching, language maintenance etc. Language attitude becomes a significant subject for study when it is about promotion and extension of a language spoken within a minority speech community and determining its contemporary and impending positions. Regarding the language attitude UNESCO has also categorized six degrees, which are as follows:

- Firstly, the grade five: In this situation the each and every member of the respective community value their language and wish to be promoted.
- Secondly, the grade four: In this situation most of the members of the community support to maintenance their language.
- Thirdly, the grade three: in this situation many speakers of language support to maintenance of their language, but other members are unconcerned or they may even wish to language loss.
- Fourthly, the grade two: in this situation some speakers support language maintenance; others are unconcerned or they may even wish to language loss.
- Fifthly, the grade one: in this situation only a few speakers support to maintenance of their language; others are unconcerned or they may even wish language loss.
- Lastly, the grade zero: in this situation there are no any members who don't cares if their language is lost; all member support to use a dominant language. (UNESCO, 2003)

Regarding language attitude of the tribal people of Assam we have seen that most of the members of each speech community have positive attitude towards their language as well as their culture and they heartily wish that their language will get proper development and growth. But in the present days the evolution of science and technology, fast growth of transportation and communicating systems, wide spread of mass media, the mutual relation, mutual dependence and momentum are raised between various speech communities and ethnic groups. As a result the tribal people have come in contact with various communities and languages and compelled to use other dominant language i.e. Assamese, Hindi or English.

## **IV. Presentation of Data**

### **4.1. Student's name: Ujjal Boro**

**Class: VII**

**Mother tongue: Bodo**

#### *1. Importance attached to maintenance of L1.*

- "I can speak very few words of Bodo. My parents can speak Bodo fluently. As I read in English medium school and Assamese is the prime language here, since childhood I came in contact with more Assamese people than Bodo. At home I speak Assamese rather than Bodo."

#### *2. Importance attached to children's acquisition of L1.*

- "Whatever Bodo words I know, I've learn from my parents. My parents communicate in Bodo within themselves and with relatives. But as I'm unable to communicate I speak Assamese with them."

#### *3. Language preference.*

- "In school my preferred language is English as it is International school. At home I prefer Assamese."

#### *4. Cultural preference.*

- "Yes! We do celebrate Bodo festivals. We also wear the traditional attire during the festivals. Our relatives and people from Bodo tribe gather together to celebrate it. I love the festivals specially the tasty food items."

#### *5. Medium of contact with friends in school.*

- "In school we are allowed to talk in English with each other. Elsewhere we communicate in Assamese or Hindi sometimes."

6. *If Bodo as a subject is introduced in school, will you opt?*

- “Of course! It will be really good as I can learn my native language properly. I want to learn Bodo as in childhood I couldn’t learn it.”

**4.2. Student’s name: Luna Anow Taid**

**Class: IV**

**Mother tongue: Mishing**

1. *Importance attached to maintenance of L1.*

- “I speak Mishing at home and I can speak fluently. At home we always communicate through Mishing. I really feel proud of my mother tongue.”

2. *Importance attached to children’s acquisition of L1.*

- “From my parents I have learned my mother tongue. Since childhood I speak Mishing with my parents, relatives and neighbours. In my locality there are many Mishing people.”

3. *Language preference.*

- “In school I prefer English, Hindi and Assamese. But at home I prefer Mishing.”

4. *Cultural preference.*

- “I love to celebrate Ali-Aye-Ligang and other festivals. We also wear the traditional dress during the festivals. Our neighbours and we gather together to celebrate it.”

5. *Medium of contact with friends in school.*

- “Since this is an International school, there are students speaking different language. So I speak in English with them in school and outside the school I speak in Assamese or Hindi with my friends.”

6. *If Mishing as a subject is introduced in school, will you opt?*

- “I think so I will choose it. I could learn more specially the grammar part.”

**4.3. Student’s name: Bornil Ingti**

**Class: VI**

**Mother tongue: Karbi**

1. *Importance attached to maintenance of L1.*

- “I speak Assamese mainly at home. Though my mother tongue is Karbi, I can’t speak much but my parents speak Karbi. From my childhood I was more in contact with Assamese language.”

2. *Importance attached to children’s acquisition of L1.*

- “Very little Karbi I can speak. Whatever I know about Karbi is from my parents. If got chance I would love to learn my mother tongue properly.”

3. *Language preference.*

- “The language that I prefer in school is English, Hindi and Assamese. At home I prefer only Assamese. With my parents too I communicate in Assamese at home.”

4. *Cultural preference.*

- “I do celebrate the Karbi festivals with my family. I also wear the traditional attire during the festivals. I become excited usually during the festivals because I can have tasty food items. I am really fond of Karbi traditional foods.”

5. *Medium of contact with friends in school.*

- “In school I speak in English and Hindi as our school is International school. Outside the school premises I speak in Assamese with my friends.”

6. *If Karbi as a subject is introduced in school, will you opt?*

- “Absolutely! I would be grateful for this. I will definitely opt as I want to learn it.”

**4.4. Student’s name: Bonsita Rabha**

**Class: V**

**Mother tongue: Rabha/Assamese**

1. *Importance attached to maintenance of L1.*

- “I do not speak Rabha neither my parents. Our Grandparents speak Rabha. It is really sad that we don’t know a single word of Rabha.”

2. *Importance attached to children’s acquisition of L1.*

- “I’ve not heard my parents speaking Rabha so I also could not acquire it. My grandparents knew the language. But my parents speak Assamese due more contact with it since childhood; I did not have the opportunity to learn. Both my parents communicate in Assamese with my grandparents.”

3. *Language preference.*

- “In school I prefer English, Hindi and Assamese. But at home I prefer Assamese.”

4. *Cultural preference.*

- “It is really sad and embarrassing to say but we don’t really celebrate any of the festivals. It is just that being too much contact with Assamese language, we simply follow Assamese culture. But yes, we do enjoy our Rabha delicacy.”

5. *Medium of contact with friends in school.*

- “In school it is compulsory to speak English. Sometimes I communicate in Hindi with my friends. Outside the school it is always Assamese language.”

6. *If Rabha as a subject is introduced in school, will you opt?*

- “I would opt for Rabha. As being a Rabha I can’t speak the language nor do I know about the culture much, it would be nice if I get the opportunity to explore.”

## **V. Findings and Conclusion:**

### **5.1. Findings:**

In the study work, “**A Case Study on Language Attitude among the tribal students in Radiant International School, Sonapur, Assam**”, the language attitude was discussed in terms of their mother tongue. As Assam is linguistically diverse, people from different speech communities come together in an institution. Radiant International School is situated in Sonapur, a small town located in the outskirts (20 km away) of Guwahati city in Kamrup Metropolitan district of the Indian state of Assam. The school witnesses students belonging to different speech communities.

In the study, apart from the student whose mother tongue is Mishing, others were lagging behind in their native languages. Bodo and Karbi students were unable to speak their mother tongue properly. The Rabha student has no knowledge about her native language as her parents are much more in contact with the dominant language that is Assamese. This usually happens with most of the tribal people especially the students. Since, the school is in English medium, the main medium of instruction is English here. Apart from English, Hindi and Assamese are also the medium of instruction. In Assam, Assamese is the dominant language. Other tribal languages are the minorities. Most of youth of the new generation even know nothing about their own language and culture or a few of them suffer from inferiority complex. Moreover, as they opt for second language for education, there is a considerable change in their language for join impact of other languages. On the other hand, there are some parents take prides in learning other languages in lieu of mother tongue. Consequently, such children can’t play any role in safeguarding of these languages.

As per the interview based on the questions, we can see that language attitude towards their own mother tongue and other language always indicates about bilingualism, code mixing and code switching, people’s language selection, natural instinct of a certain community towards language change, language maintenance etc. Language attitude may have important effects on language behaviour and on language change. Regarding language attitude of the tribal people of Assam we have seen that most of the members of each speech community have positive attitude towards their language as well as their culture and they heartily wish that their language will get proper development and growth. But in the present days the evolution of science and technology, fast growth of transportation and communicating systems, wide spread of mass media, the mutual relation, mutual dependence and momentum are raised between various speech communities and ethnic groups. As a result, the tribal people have come in contact with various communities and languages and compelled to use other dominant language i.e. Assamese, Hindi or English.

The problems that the minor languages are facing on the path of their development are:

➤ **Impact of Urbanization and Globalization:** Currently it is seen that most of the tribal people are coming out of the pastoral arias and are attracted towards urban life. As an impact of the urban life, there has been visible change in the oral language of these people.

➤ **Linguistic Minority:** In Assam, Assamese is the official and main dominant language. Only Bodo language has got the recognition till the master’s level in Gauhati and Bodoland University and also can write research paper or thesis for pursuing Ph.D. or M.Phil degree. The Bodo language is being used as an official language in Bodoland Autonomous region. At the beginning, the tribes didn’t settle permanently. They kept on changing their habitation in search of livelihood. Consequently, for changing their habitat, the nexus of the earlier resident detached and they turned to be linguistic minority. At present the number of the native speaker of tribal language is also not satisfactory. According to the tribal languages of Assam, the native speakers of other languages don’t feel to learn these languages or there is not any necessity to learn it.

➤ **Unavailability of script:** Most of the tribal languages do not have their own script. For the time being, these languages were tried to be written in amended Roman script or Devanagari script.

➤ **Use of Second Language as a Medium of Instruction in Education:** Only the Bodo language of Assam has been recognized as a medium of instruction up to postgraduate level. On the other hand, the languages like Mising, Rabha, etc. are limited within a single subject till the primary level. If the languages gets recognition as a medium of instruction, many ways of various studies and research of the subjects in that language unblocks. Not getting recognition is one the main reason of lagging behind.

## 5.2. Conclusion:

The study is all about the attitude towards the student's native languages. In other words, it's a study that defines a student's nature and perspective towards his/her mother tongue. As the study has been carried out in **Radiant International School**, Sonapur, permission has been granted from the Principal and Chairman cum Managing Director's desk.

Based on the study work, we can say that many tribal languages in Assam are facing the problem of recognition. The principal problems, which are affecting on the languages, are: unavailability of script, lack of written literature, use of second language as a medium of instruction in education, impact of globalization and urbanization, linguistic minority, lack of lexicon grammar, mutually recondite language, isolation etc. These factors make the languages as endangered and the languages face arduous challenges in the path of development. Besides Bodo language each and every tribal language has not got the recognition as the instruction in formal education. Because the Assamese language is used as the medium of instruction in government schools of Assam as well as in private schools (both SEBA, CBSE) and most of the tribal people have taken education in the medium Assamese language. Most of the language speakers from the respective speech community have shown their positive attitude towards the development of their language. On the basis of such positive approach of the tribal communities will be very fruitful while the language has reached in dangerous situation and while the maintenance and development will have required in upcoming future. In the present days it is seen that the practical demand and necessity of tribal languages are decreased among the new generation of the respective language speakers.

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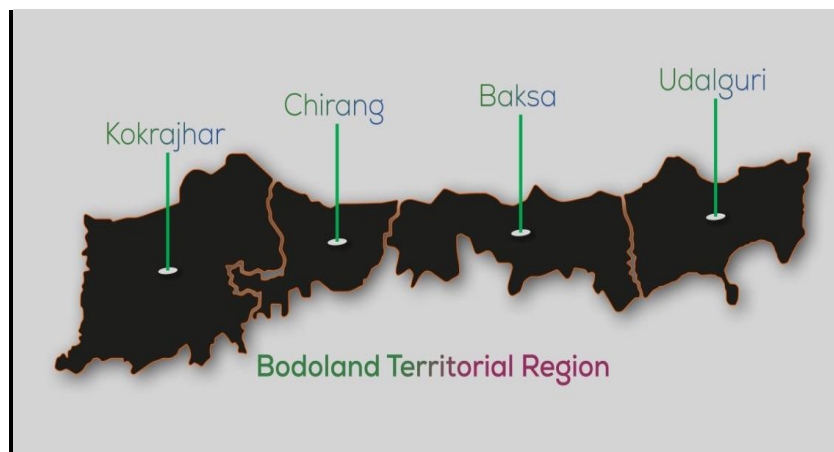
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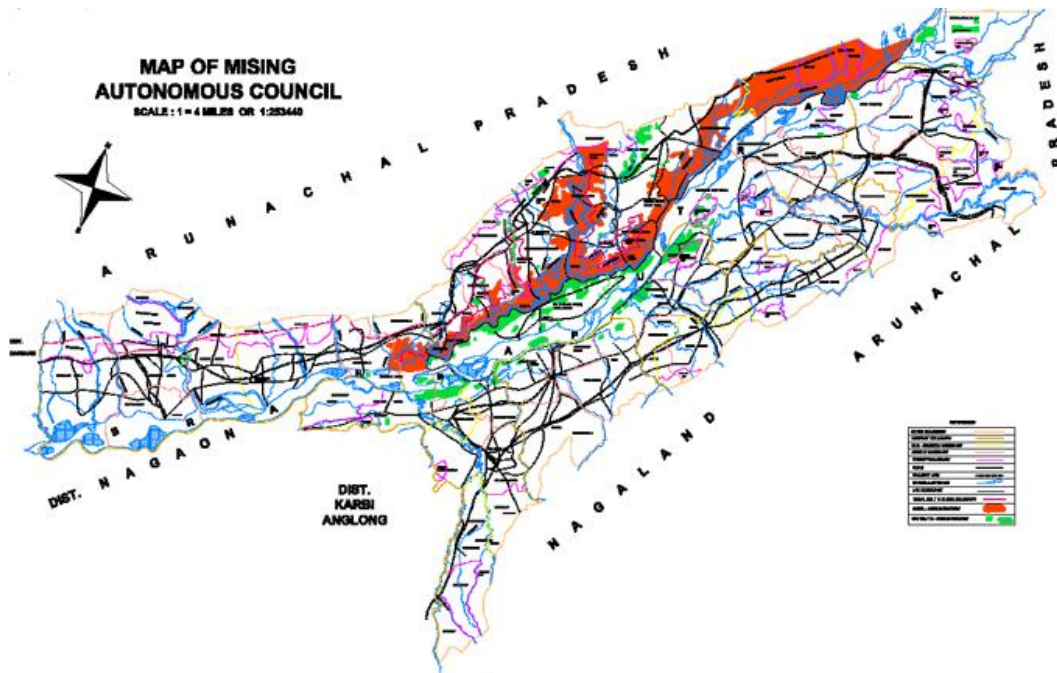
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## Maps and Photos:



**Map 1: Bodoland Territorial Region**

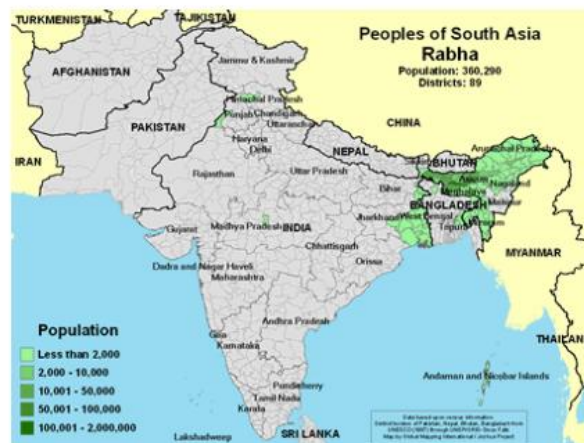


Map 2: Mishing Autonomous Council

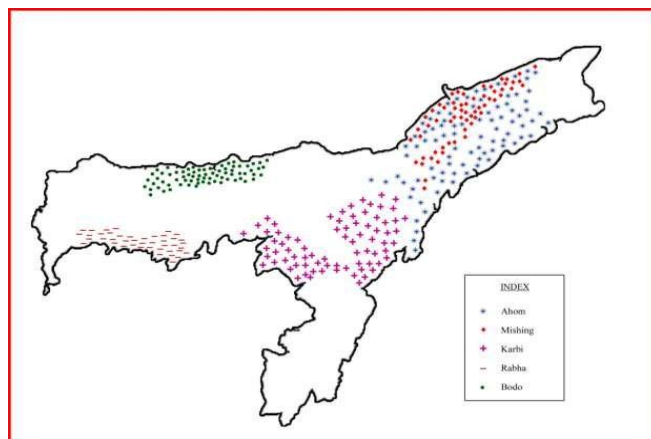


Map 3: Karbi Anglong

#### RABHA TRIBE OF ASSAM



Map 4: Rabha Tribe in Assam



**Map 5: Primary Distribution of Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, Rabha and Ahom Traditional Attire of the Tribes:**



**Photo 1: Bodo attire**



**Photo 2: Mishing Attire**



**Photo 3: Karbi Attire**



**Photo 4: Rabha Attire**

Meghali Misra. " A Case Study on Language Attitude among the tribal students in Radiant International School, Sonapur, Assam." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 11(07), 2022, pp 77-96 Journal DOI- 10.35629/7722